CHAPTER - V
Chapter –V

Pattern of Urban Leadership in Scheduled Castes

Introduction

While the Indian Constitution has duly made special provisions for the social and economic uplift of the Dalits, comprising the so-called scheduled castes and tribes in order to enable them to achieve upward social mobility, these concessions are limited to only those Dalits who remain Hindu. There is a demand among the Dalits who have converted to other religions that the statutory benefits should be extended to them as well, to “overcome” and bring closure to historical injustices. Another major politically charged issue with the rise of Hindutva’s (Hindu nationalism) role in Indian politics is that of religious conversion. This political movement alleges that conversions of Dalits are due not to any social or theological motivation but to allurements like education and jobs. Critics argue that the inverse is true due to laws banning conversion, and limiting of social relief for these backward sections of Indian society being revoked for those who convert. Bangaru Laxman, a Dalit politician, was a prominent member of the Hindutva movement.

Another political issue is over the affirmative action measures taken by the government towards the upliftment of Dalits through quotas in government jobs.
and university admissions. About 8% of the seats in the National and State Parliaments are reserved for Scheduled Cast and Tribe candidates, measure sought by Bhim Rao Ambedkar and other Dalit activities in order to ensure that Dalits would obtain a proportionate political voice.

Anti-Dalit prejudices exist in fringe groups, such as the extremists far-right militia Ranvir Sena, largely run by upper-caste landlords in backward areas of the Indian state of Bihar. They oppose equal treatment of Dalits and have resolved to violent means to suppress the Dalits. The Ranvir Sena is considered a terrorist organization.

In 2008, Mayawati, a Dalit from the Bahujan Samaj Party, was elected as the Chief Minister of India’s biggest state, Uttar Pradesh. Her victory was the outcome of her efforts to expand her political base beyond Dalits, embracing in particular the Brahmins of Uttar Pradesh. Mayawati, together with her political mentor Kanshi Ram, saw that the interests of the average Dalit (most of whom are loudless agricultural labourers) were more in conflict with the middle castes such as the Yadav caste, who owned most of the agricultural land in Uttar Pradesh, than with the pre-dominantly city-dwelling upper castes. Her success in welding the Dalits and the upper castes has led to her being projected as a potential Prime Minister of India.¹ This study undertakes a number of variables namely age, Education, SCDC, occupational material status etc.

¹ Dalit, Wikipedia, the Free Encyclopedia, New Delhi, p. 8.
Table 5.1
Age Group of the SC’s Councillors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Group</th>
<th>2002</th>
<th>2007</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Young</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21-30 Years</td>
<td>2 (0.74%)</td>
<td>1 (0.74%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31-40 Years</td>
<td>1 (1.42%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle Age Group</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41-50 Years</td>
<td>4 (4.47%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51-60 Years</td>
<td>1 (0.74%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Old Age Group Above 60 Years</td>
<td>1 (0.74%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Available</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>13 (9.35%)</td>
<td>46 (16.92%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Source:** Delhi Election Commission Office Kashmiri Gate.

Table 5.1 indicates that the Councillors belonging to middle age group 35(8.62%) rank highest in both the corporation followed by the youngest age group 24(5.91%) and old age group 2 (0.49). A party-wise analysis shows that the Congress party respondents the highest number of Councillors in the middle age group 23 (5.66) whereas the Bhartiya Janata Party 11(2.70%) only in 2007.
Table 5.2 shows that the average of the councillors are degree/diploma holders. 20% (4.92%) ranks highest in both the elections followed by the high school.

A party-wise analysis reveals that the Congress Party represents the highest councillors in high school in 2002 (6% (4.47%)) and in 2007 (2.20%) of the degree/diploma holders, but the Bhartiya Janata Party represents the highest councilors as high school and degree/diploma holders are same 6% (2.20%) in 2007.

Table 5.2: Educational Level of SC’s Councillors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Not Available</th>
<th>Post Graduate &amp; Above Diploma</th>
<th>High School</th>
<th>Middle Primary</th>
<th>Primary</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Delhi Election Commission Office Kashmiri Gate.
Table 5.3

Sex Ratio of SC’s Councillors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sex Ratio</th>
<th>Congress</th>
<th>BJP</th>
<th>Janta Dal</th>
<th>JMM</th>
<th>BSP</th>
<th>Independent</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Congress</th>
<th>BJP</th>
<th>BSP</th>
<th>NCP</th>
<th>LJP</th>
<th>JMM</th>
<th>INLD</th>
<th>Independent</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Grand Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SC’s Male</td>
<td>9 (6.71%)</td>
<td>1 (0.74%)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1 (0.74%)</td>
<td>11 (8.20%)</td>
<td>15 (5.51%)</td>
<td>14 (5.14%)</td>
<td>1 (0.36%)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>30 (11.02%)</td>
<td>41 (10.09%)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SC’s Female</td>
<td>4 (2.98%)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>4 (2.98%)</td>
<td>8 (2.94%)</td>
<td>6 (2.20%)</td>
<td>1 (0.36%)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1 (0.36%)</td>
<td>16 (5.88%)</td>
<td>20 (4.92%)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>13 (9.70%)</td>
<td>1 (0.74%)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1 (0.74%)</td>
<td>15 (11.19%)</td>
<td>23 (8.45%)</td>
<td>20 (7.73%)</td>
<td>2 (0.73%)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>46 (16.91%)</td>
<td>61 (22.42%)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Delhi Election Commission Office Kashmiri Gate.
* % shows that total No. of Councillors 134 & 272.

Table 5.3 point out that the male SC’s ranks highest 41(10.09%) both corporation followed by 2002 11(8.20%) male councillors and 30(11.02%) in 2007. Female councillor’s are 20(4.92%) in 2002 4(2.98%) and 16(5.88%). A party wise analysis shows that Congress has maximum female councillors in both the corporation.
Table 5.4 shows that councilors from the Rs. 21,000-40,000 income group rank highest in both the corporations followed by the second income group Rs. 41,000-60,000. Others are insignificant. A party-wise analysis depicts that the Congress party represents the highest number of councilors in the Rs. 27,000-40,000 income group in 2002 whereas in the 2007 election the Bhartiya Janata Party emerges highest.

### Income of SC's Councillors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Income Group</th>
<th>2002</th>
<th>2007</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rs. 21,000-40,000</td>
<td>27(6.65%)</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rs. 41,000-60,000</td>
<td>11(2.70%)</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rs. 61,000-80,000</td>
<td>6(1.83%)</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rs. 81,000-100,000</td>
<td>3(0.73%)</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Above Rs. 100,000</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Delhi Election Commission Office Kashmiri Gate.
Table 5.5
Occupational Pattern of SC's Councillors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>2002</th>
<th>2007</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cong-Ress</td>
<td>BJP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional, Lawyer, Teachers</td>
<td>2 (1.49%)</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business</td>
<td>6 (4.47%)</td>
<td>1 (0.74%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political and Social Workers</td>
<td>2 (1.49%)</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industry</td>
<td>1 (0.74%)</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture</td>
<td>1 (0.74%)</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retired or No present Occupation</td>
<td>1 (0.74%)</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Available</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>13 (9.70%)</td>
<td>1 (0.74%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Delhi Election Commission Office Kashmiri Gate.
Table 5.5 shows that maximum number of councillors 22(5.41%) are businessmen both the Corporation followed by Professional, Lawyer, Teachers i.e. 14(3.44%) political and social workers 10(2.46%). A party-wise analysis depicts that the Congress party represents the highest number of councillors with business in both the corporation 16(3.94%). Also the Bhartiya Janata Party has maximum members of Corporation with avocation of political & social service, agriculture, professional, lawyer and teacher in 2007 but in 2002 Congress party commands the majority.
Table 5.5 shows that maximum number of councillors in 2007 were businessmen (22 (5.41%)) followed by professional, lawyer, and teacher (14 (3.44%)). A party-wise analysis depicts that the Congress party represented the highest number of councillors in both the corporations, while the Bhartiya Janata Party had the most members in the Corporation with occupations such as political and social workers, agriculture, professional, lawyer, and teacher in 2007. However, in 2002, the Congress party commanded the majority.

### Occupational Pattern of SC's Councillors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>2002</th>
<th>2007</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industry</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political and Social Workers</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lawyer</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Source
Delhi Election Commission Office, Kashingi Gate.

#### Table 5.5

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>2002</th>
<th>2007</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industry</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political and Social Workers</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lawyer</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 5.7
Political and Administrative Experience of SC's Councillors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Political &amp; Administrative Experience</th>
<th>Congress</th>
<th>BJP</th>
<th>Janta Dal</th>
<th>JMM</th>
<th>BSP</th>
<th>Independent</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10 Years</td>
<td>3 (2.23%)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1 (0.74%)</td>
<td>4 (2.95%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 Years</td>
<td>5 (3.73%)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3 (1.83%)</td>
<td>4 (1.47%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30 Years</td>
<td>2 (1.49%)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3 (2.23%)</td>
<td>5 (1.83%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40 Years</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>5 (1.83%)</td>
<td>1 (0.73%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hereditary</td>
<td>2 (1.49%)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2 (1.49%)</td>
<td>7 (2.57%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Experience</td>
<td>1 (0.74%)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1 (0.74%)</td>
<td>2 (0.73%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Available</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2 (0.73%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>13 (9.70%)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1 (0.74%)</td>
<td>15 (11.19%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Delhi Election Commission Office Kashmiri Gate.
Table 5.7 indicates that councillors with 20-30 years experience rank higher 27(6.65%) in both the elections followed by hereditary 11(2.70%). A party wise analysis shows that the Congress party represents the highest number of councillors having 10-20 years experience in 2002 9(6.71%) whereas the Bhartiya Janta Party takes its place in 2007 election.
Dalit

Dalit is a term for a group of people traditionally regarded as untouchables (outcastes) or of low caste. Dalits are a mixed population of numerous caste groups all over South Asia and speak various languages. It is impossible to differentiate between Dalits and the various other caste groups on the languages. It is impossible to differentiate between Dalits and the various other caste groups on the basis of phenotypes or genetics. As a result, population statistics remain controversial and are often subject to political agendas.

The caste system is a social construct among South Asian people and has no genetic basis, while the caste system has been formally abolished under the Indian Constitution, there is still discrimination and prejudice against Dalits in South Asia. Since independence, significant steps have been taken to provide opportunities in jobs and education. A large majority of social groups have encouraged proactive provisions in the constitution to improve the conditions of Dalits through reservations in educational institutions, welfare schemes and government jobs.

The word ‘Dalits’ comes from the Hindi root dal and means ‘held under check’, ‘suppressed’ or ‘crushed’ – or, in a looser sense, ‘oppressed’. The usage of the term ‘Dalit’ seems to have originated from the Arya Samaj and their dalitoddhara (improvement) programme. The Arya Samaj began the All Indian Shraddhanand Dalitodwar Sabha to improve the lot of Dalits.
The term was used in the 1930s as a Hindi and Marathi translation of “depressed classes”, a term the British used for what are now called the Scheduled Castes. In 1930 there was a newspaper published for the depressed classes in Pune called ‘Dalit Bandu’ (friends of dalits). The word was also used by Bhim Rao Ambedkar in his Marathi speeches. The so-called Dalit Panthers revived the term in their 1973 manifesto and expounded its referents to include the Scheduled Tribes, Neo Buddhists, working people, landless and poor peasant women and all those being exploited politically, economically and in the name of religion. Thus the term ‘Dalit’ is a broad definition, encompassing all those considered the terms ‘Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribes’ (SC/ST) are also used in the Indian legal system. However, in 2008 the National Commission for Scheduled Castes asked the Government to end the use of ‘Dalit’, calling it ‘unconstitutional’ and to replace it with the term ‘Scheduled Caste’ instead. After the order, the Chhattisgarh government ended the official use of the word. The term Harijan was coined by Mahatma Gandhi, which means ‘Children of God’ – Hari is another name for the deity Vishnu. The usage of term ‘Harijan’ is objected to by Dalit activities as patronizing. In Tamil Nadu state the word ‘Adi Dravida’ is used, whereas in Karnataka it is ‘Adi Karnataka’ and in Andhra Pradesh it is ‘Adi Andhra’. It means the original inhabitant of the land.  

2 Ibid.
Social Status of Dalits

In the context of traditional Hindu society, Dalit status has often been historically associated with occupations regarded as ritually impure, such as any occupation involving butchering, removal of dead animals, removal of night soil (human feces) and leather work. One million Dalits work manual scavengers, cleaning latrines and sewers by hand and clearing away dead animals. Engaging in these activities was considered to be polluting to the individual who performed them, and this pollution was considered to be ‘contagious’. As a result, Dalits were commonly banned and segregated from full participation in Hindu social life (they could not enter the premises of a temple or a school and stayed outside the village), while elaborate precautions were sometimes observed to prevent incidental contact between Dalits and other castes. Discrimination against Dalits still exists in rural areas (where two-third of India’s people live) in the private sphere, in everyday matters such as access to eating places, schools, temples and water sources. It has largely disappeared in urban areas and in the public sphere.

Most of the Dalits are bounded workers and many work in slave - like conditions to pay off debts that were incurred generations ago. The majority of Dalits live in segregation and experience violence, murder, rape and other atrocities to the scale of 110,000 registered cases a year, according to 2005 statistics. Common belief is that these numbers do not approach the real total of
crimes committed against Dalits. Many crimes go unreported, and few registered cases over get to trial. ³

In the mid 1950's I did ethnographic fieldwork in a basti (colony) of 'untouchable' (now-a-days Dalit) chuhras in Khalapur village in Saharanpur District, Uttar Pradesh. All one hundred or so were lineally or affinally related to each other. Most of the adults had worked outside in various cities, mostly on sanitation crews of municipalities, railways or the military, or as cleaners in private homes and offices. Some had done other kinds of work – one oldster had once worked in coal mines, another a handsome young man, had been a ticked-taker at the Race Course Cinema in Delhi. Most of the work-experiences the chuhrs told about had taken place before 1947, before the British rulers had lift. Indeed, they were generally of the opinion that urban sanitation jobs were more plentiful under the British than after. My unpublished data indicate that the older chuhra men and women had all worked in several different cities. Out-migrating men often left their families in the village to clean back to the village, they did sweeping work, and/or share – cropping, construction work, raised animals for owners on a half and half basis, cut harvest wheat, worked on sugar making teams, raised and sold pigs, etc.

All this I really to the reader to explain why I am unconvinced by Vijay Prashad’s assessment in chapters one to three that the Delhi Municipal Corporation (DMC) had a stangleheld on the sweepers it employed. I do not

³ Ibid.
dispute the fact (taken from archival record) that, as told in chapter one, the Delhi Municipal Corporation in 1884 made the sweepers of Delhi their direct employees, rather than letting them continue as servants of individual households. The Delhi Municipal Corporation did this because all the sweepers of a Mohalla (section of town) so readily went on strike if one of the householders abused one of them. Under the Delhi Municipal Corporation, the sweepers were not allowed to strike nor take private clients, they also were badly paid. Nor do I doubt Prashad’s account in Chapter 2 that beginning in 1912, because the British land law for the Punjab left artisans and menial castes landless, chuhras began migrating to Delhi where they joined the Municipal sanitation crews, so that by 1921, 82.5% if Delhi Municipal Corporation sweepers were chuhras. Nor can I question Prashad’s account chapter 3 that the colonial sections of Delhi had better water supply, drainage and sewage than the native sections, what I doubt is Prashad’s statement that the chuhras always migrated from villages with their families because local landlords would not allow only part of a family to serve them or to stay in the village, clearly that had not been the case in Khalapur, just across the river from the Punjab from where, Prashad says, the Delhi chuhra sweepers came. The Khalapur data make me doubt the implication that Delhi Municipal Corporation sweepers were all permanent residents of Delhi, or that they could not get other kinds of work than sanitation work.

Prashad says that because the Delhi British went to the summer capital Shimla, that only 25% of the usual Delhi Municipal Corporation were employed
during the hot season. Does he mean that the other 75% remained unemployed for those months because they could not return to their villages and could not get other kinds of work? Are there Delhi Municipal Corporation records on the length of employment of their chuhra employees? Were there not temporary sanitation workers as well as permanent ones?  

**Dalit Politics in Contemporary India**

Dalit are the marginalized people. They are the weaker section of India. Today, the SC and ST Dalits are at the core of the weaker sections of India. Seen from any perspective, Dalits as Baba Saheb Bhim Rao Ambedkar had said, are the Broken People. It is nearly fifty years since Baba Saheb said this. And they still remain as Broken People, even in the twenty first century world.

Baba Saheb, Dr. Bhim Rao Ambedkar, who had been struggling all through his life to develop the Dalits, had won at the risk of his own life, safety and physical well being, many rights, concessions, legal guarantees and social promises for his people – the Dalits. In fact as part of this struggle, Baba Saheb had forsaken all feasible better life in India or abroad, based on his higher education at the best of the Universities in the world. Not satisfied with his struggles and winning the rights etc. Baba Saheb had built-in, almost all the concessions he had won for the Dalits, into the Constitution of India. Baba Saheb had hoped that those would ensure Dalits get all of them in Independent India in

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4 Untouchable Freedom : A Social History of a Dalit Community (Reviews), New Delhi, p. 17.
future, as assured Constitutional Guarantees and promises. That he could do, in spite of all the oppositions from Dalit Antagonists. He also expected that the Dalits would jealously safeguard those constitutionally protected Dalit Rights and build more further on them.

Baba Saheb dreamt rather fondly, that with all the rights concessions, administrative assurances, social promises, legal guarantees and constitutional promises, SC & ST Dalits would rather soon develop to be on their own, and get their due recognition as being the real makers of India. Given their long historic evolution, stamina and sustaining capacity even in the face of adverse circumstances, they should have established themselves as a force in the democracy that followed independence. With their massive numbers of more than two hundred and sixty million today, SC & ST Dalits collectively could have became the Kingmakers.

SC & STs Dalits could have played big crucial role, during the last five and half decades of Free India. Their voice could have become decisive in politics, and in the formation of governments, in many states and at the centre. This was not a tall dream at all. Today the SC & ST Dalits in India, are the third largest population of the world, next only to China, and the whole of India. Therefore, the SC/STs pale into insignificance many sovereign states of the world. What is more, with shrewd practical alliances, SC/ST Dalits could have formed the governments at the centre. This should have been possible, much
before the end of the twentieth century, or at least at the beginning of the third millennium.

Baba Saheb once even said that, the Dalits and other backward classes together, could send more than fifty percent of representatives to the Assembly of United Provinces. But he had not foreseen, the extent of manipulations by others, and the depth of failures by the Dalits, even in protecting their own self-interests. He had not expected that in spite of the liberal constitution that he had helped to draft pilot and adopt in Free India. That too, in a democracy and with Republican Form of Governments! As a cumulative effect, the weaker sections of India fail even today, and remain at the bottom, content with what crumbs they get. He did not think that with all the modern liberal education, scientific and rational thinking, their analytical faculties would fail almost all the different SCs, STs, Backward Castes and Minorities. Sadly they all with each other, to pay their increasing individual and separate group obeisance to establish their allegiance and further serve the Brahmins Brahmanism and brahmanic cause and interests more than the others.

Like any other thing in Free India, politics and those in politics – the politicians, had failed the country and the people. At the time of Independence, the founding fathers and particularly Baba Saheb Dr. Bhim Rao Ambedkar had opted for Democracy and Republican form of Government. That he expected would provide every citizen including SC & ST Dalits the freedom and leeway to move around, demand and get their dues, and develop like anyone else.
Influenced by the Christian Protestant ethos in United State of America, the Democratic Republican form of Government, and the due process law, Baba Saheb could not but believe in the development of SCs & STs like anyone else in Free Democratic and Republic of India.

Baba Saheb strongly believed that politics was the key to open all the doors to freedom development and power, but strangely enough, it is exactly through the politicians and politics of democratic processes and republican form of Government, real democracy had been defeated, and had been deeply buried alive. It remains so, till date.

The National Bourgeoisic, elites, dominant castes of freedom movement had given room, to the rule of oligarchy with vested interests. They even allowed a big foothold to some members of the erstwhile princely families, which had survived through the Mughal and British Rules. All these put together had naturally paved the way for dynastic rule and emergence of emergency. Individual intolerance and arrogance of those in power had now become a reality in most parts of the country. There is hardly any room for justice and deliverance today for the poor, weak and the marginalized in India. And here in this country, democracy had just become a ritual. So, we have democracy in form, but not in content on the other hand, the growing and increasing gaps between the politicians and governments from the people, had resulted into the growing administrative intolerance, police state and political dictatorship. And these had also paved the way for concentration of wealth, growing economic powers in
individual hands of the traditionally dominant castes and groups, and damn respect for political values and politicians.

In India today, politics had ceased to be a public service, and politicians are no more Public Servants or people's representatives. Politics today, has become an exclusive business, and a full time employment for many without any business. Going with the character of business and employment in India politics had become an exclusive caste, of the modern day. Once a politician, always a politician! And true to the characteristic of castes in India, the sons, daughters, sons-in-law, daughters-in-law and other-in-laws, dominate politics in India. These had effectively stopped evolution of real democracy in the country, and frustrate the republican forms of government.

In the absence of democracy in content, the massive numbers of SC & ST Dalits, Backwards and Minorities, could naturally never understand their intrinsic capacities, the strength of their massive numbers, and the power of cohesive and collective campaigns, that is the main reason, for the frittering away of opportunities and wastage of emerging opportunities. The emergence of small splinter Dalit parties that can not hold together is therefore natural. That is why we see today, various shades of Republican Parties, Dalit Panthers of Maharashtra, Bhartiya Samajwadi Party, Pudhiya Tamizhagam (New Tamil Nadu) and Vidudhalai Siruthaigal (Liberation Cheetahs) of Tamil Nadu, Ambedkar Samaj Party, Lok Jan Shakti, Justice Party and so on while some of them are of historical repute, had also governed some International Recognition,
National Followings, Regional Parties with Representations in the Assemblies, many other are only making some ripples in the street, some noise on the stage here and there. Some of them are of doubtful backgrounds, and their motives are suspect.

There are many splinter and small nameless one – man SC/ST Dalit parties and paper organizations all around the country. Some of them are dormat and sleeping, others are making great noises and at times are proving to be of small nuisance. That is understandable, because individual SCs & STs are so oppressed, they don’t find freedom and opportunities to speak out their mind and develop with due balance. Bottled up as they are, they want to speak whenever they can, and whatever they want. And oftentimes they speak out, to give unwanted and unsolicited suggestions to others. This is true of even many in their forefront of politics. And many speak out, to give unwanted and unsolicited suggestions to others. This is true of even many in the forefront of politics. And many speak not so much, but very little to help the Dalit Community and serve the nation, than about themselves. In spite of all these weaknesses, one has to concede that all of them – small and big alike – are making some ripples. And by that, are contributing in their own limited ways, to the emergence of some distinctly different Dalit political identity. But Dalit politics, to emerge as a determinant force, truly reflecting the strength of their absolute numbers in the country today, is sadly much a long way off. Main reason for this said state of affairs are the traditional Dalit weaknesses.
The massive size and disbursement of the Dalit population all over the country, which is fact ought to be the strength and power of Dalits, are proving to be the main weaknesses. The facts that neither the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes are a single identity, nor the SCs are single caste, and the STs are a single Tribe – are also proving to be handicaps. And the present governments at the centre and in the states, are also adding to the woes, by doing all they can to split SCs & STs. This is a big danger today.

Different Governments and the ruling parties there in want to separate the SC/ST Dalits to take them out and apart, in totally different directions. They want to turn the SC & ST Dalits, into compact pockets of their own distinctly different separate areas of influence. They are converting the SC/ST Areas, into dangerous playgrounds, to enforce their fascist politics to divide the people and ruin democracy from within. Thus, the fascists in different parts of the country are new trying to pitch either the SC Dalits or ST Dalits, or both the SC/ST Dalits against the Muslims in most parts of the country. In some places they arraign them antagonistically against Christians – the church and colleges, schools and seminaries, hospitals and Nunneries, Nuns and Priests, NGOs and Missionaries. Other times, they are selectively thrown out against other minorities, or against Backward Castes. All these, to sustain still and further prolong, the dominance and rule of the dominant castes. But when the real crunch comes, they betray the SCs & STs and leave them suffer as criminals, who could never be employed or accommodated as respectful and trustworthy people and community.
It is in milieu, Dalits, Dalit Parties and Dalit Politicians stand today, in the politically complex confused contemporary India, with all their strengths, weaknesses and handicaps. Dalit strengths are their sheer numbers, and spread all over the country, as well as their poverty and misery. Yes, Dalit sufferings are truly their strength which other community in the whole world had suffered, and is still suffering like the Dalits? But, the world strangely, even today is either indifferent or ignorant to the exploitation of Dalits in India.

The Dalits in India still have no land, no wealth, no riches, no properties, and in fact most of the times, no houses. They continue to wallow in misery and penury even today in the twenty first century. Hence, Dalits as a community and individuals have nothing to loose, and can become entrepreneurs in any field they want to and can enter. Without much of the risks, they can try their hands and test their capacity and resilience to survive and succeed, in the chosen fields. Hence wherever Indians had moved out of their rural homes and urban slums, and whatever they may be, those are their gains – however small or a little that may be. As a Dalit intellectual said :-

_We as Dalits are born to grace cows and sheep._

_Rear the pigs goats chicken ducks and bullocks,_

_Bathe the buffaloes donkeys horses or elephants_

_Plough the lands and sow the seeds for survival!_

_Whatever else we are indeed great big bonuses!!_
Yes, whatever SC/ST Dalits are today, as they come out of their homes to get education, employment, service in private, government, police, military, railways, public sector, banks, universities, business etc. are all gains. Yet there are far too few SC & ST Dalits who venture out to take risks. One the one-hand the massive numbers of Dalits traditionally had been caught in the web of poverty and ignorance, illiteracy and superstition, backwardness and exploitation. Hence they are unable to come out of them. On the other, the few conscious and educated amongst the Dalits, appear to be exclusively dependent on reservations. They are hence trapped in the circle of the hope from reservations. Hence they live within the closed circle of a little education, reservations for jobs, employment, and again reservations in promotions, or reservations to get elected into the state and Union Territory Assemblies or into the Lower House of Parliament from reserved constituencies.

SC & ST Dalits as a distinctly different community, leaders, intellectuals and even as individuals are unhappy for having fallen short of the goals and expectations. Also true and sure it is almost all educated SC & ST Dalits have not got, what are their dues – be that good jobs, better services, right postings, proper trainings, timely promotions and due career progress. That is true in every walk of life – from play grounds to politics. Imagine what had happened to Baba Saheb, the Messiah of Dalits, who ceaselessly fought for and got reservations. Repeatedly he could not be elected. Gaint he was. Yet, he was defeated and
humbled by nameless and faceless SCs, who only served their masters, but not their Dalit communities.5

**Political Status**

Women constitute half of total population, but are unable to get equal share in active politics. Their socio-economic status directly depends on their participation in politics. Political parties in India speak much about equality of women but have totally ignored the dalit women.

Traditionally, leadership in the village was confirmed to ‘rural elites’, who were aged and belonging to higher castes. In the year 1993, 73rd Amendment in the Constitution granted reservation to dalits, tribals and women in local government. This amendment made it compulsory that one third of the seats reserved for dalits be filled by dalit women. In some states, there has been little or no acceptance of reservation for the lower castes and dalit women by the upper castes. This has resulted in atrocities against panchayat members including women. Dalits who stood for election were beaten, and dalit women were raped and ill-treated. The members of the higher castes, who are not prepared to relinquish power to the lower castes, grabbed their land. An easier method to retain power is to put up proxy candidates but keep the control in the hands of the dominant castes, always men.

5 Dalit Politics in Contemporary India, Guest Paper, Mr. Ram Vilas Paswan, MP, India, November, 4., 2003.
The incapacity of women, particularly dalit women, to assert their rights is at the root of the problem. The reservation for dalits, particularly for women, is accepted in form but seldom in substance. Any change in the status quo is resisted. Dalit women’s sitting on chairs is seen as threat to social hierarchy. So, the upper castes in the village vetoed chairs in the panchayat office.

Dalit women also faced many problems in performing their duties due to illiteracy, lack of information and dependency on the male members of their families. An important obstacle is the no-confidence motion against dalit women as pradhan by the dominant sections. Rural elites are unable to accept the power, which has been given into the hands of the poorer and disadvantaged women. Despite recognition and legal sanction for political rights, rigid caste system and patriarchy directly and indirectly has been suppressing dalit women and violating their political rights.

This prove that human right of dalit women are violated right from her family to the society at large by one and all. All these factors are largely responsible for the precarious position of dalit women as far as their social, cultural, religious, economic, health and political status in the society is concerned. These factors force them to mutely allow violation of their civic human rights. Thus they become victims of universal violence.

Caste is one of the major factors in politics of India. Independent India has seen intense debates over reverse discrimination, caste-based quotas and
reservations. According to a report by Human Right watch, “Dalit and indigepovs peoples (known as Scheduled or adivasis) continue to face discrimination, exclusion and acts of communal violence. Laws and policies adopted by the Indian Government provide a strong basis for protection, but are not being faithfully implemented by local authorities.”

“The ‘dalit’ comprise roughly a fifth of the population of Uttar Pradesh and are geographically evenly spread.” Points out Manini Chatterjee, political editor of the ‘Indian Express’ newspaper. She told that many candidates put up by the Bahujan Samajwadi Party belong to the upper-castes in a strategic move made by Mayawati, India’s talks dalit leader.

“The Bahujan Sawajwadi Party is assured of the support of those from the lowest castes who also belong to the lowest economic class, in addition, those belonging to other castes and classes are going along with the Bahujan Samajwadi Party because they perceive the party’s candidates as individuals with the greatest chance of winning.” Chatterjee adds.

Haran says she will not be surprised if upper-caste Hindu remain with the Bhartiya Janata Party, especially in urban areas and areas where there has been communal polarization. The Bhartiya Janata Party has opportunistically supported the Bahujan Samajwadi Party’s Mayawat as Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh on
previous occasions. But whether such an alliance would again be forged is not at all certain.6

**Parties ignore City Dalits at their own Peril**

There is a political time-bomb in Delhi and funily, the two dominant parties don’t seem to hear it ticking. Dalit population in the city has increased substantially, and utter neglect of its concerns has fudled discontent with traditional party politics. The Bahujan Samajwadi Party’s growing interest and presence in Delhi may well be explained by these factors although the census of 2001 but the proportion of dalits in Delhi at about 17%, later surveys suggest their share in much higher now. A survey by the National Sample Survey Organization (NSSO) in 2004-05 estimated the share of dalits at about 25%. Even if inaccuracies of a sample survey are taken into account, the proportion of dalits in Delhi’s population is definitely likely to be more than 17%. More likely, it is somewhere around 22%. That’s Delhi with its huge army of government employees. But as per the National Sample Survey Organization survey, the monthly per capita expenditure among dalits in Rs. 796, which is less than half that of others of Rs. 1,606. In fact, the average monthly expenditure of dalits in Delhi is not much higher than the All India average of Rs. 758 for urban areas. Among the non-dalit population, on the other hand, the monthly expenditure in Delhi is 53% higher than the All India average of Rs. 1,052.

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6 Paranjay Guha Thakurtia, Politics India Dalit Women Favour to win polls in Key State, IPS News, 23 April, 2009, New Delhi, p. 1.
In short, there is a huge invisible population of dalits in the capital, which has been confined to the periphery of prosperity. An increasingly larger section of this is educated. Yet it struggles to find an honorable place in the city's life. The political process in Delhi largely ignores this disturbing reality, except in times of elections. This is evident from the policies implemented by the Delhi government for assisting the dalit community in overcoming its multiple social and economic disadvantages.

The Delhi government has been running several schemes for the welfare of dalits. The department of welfare of SC/ST, as it is called, has received about Rs. 264 crore in the past 10 years for a range of schemes scholarships, training for employment, loans, for needy and so on.

Off the total funds allocated for the welfare of under-privileged sections in a decade, only about 56% was actually spent by the government. There was wide variation from year to year. In some years, like in 1998-99, the government spent only 12%, in others it spent over 90% of the allocation. Total expenditure on the welfare of dalits and other weaker sections is a minuscule 0.4% of the total money spent in Delhi by its government. This is less than the amount spent on looking after and flood control.

How has this money been spent? During the 10th plan period of 2002-07 here is a sample of how the welfare schemes were implemented in the field of education. 3.7 lakh children were to be given free text books and stationery, but
only 1.4 lakh were actually given, that is 38% of the target, 1.25 lakh students were to be given scholarships, but only about 48,000 were helped, pre-exam coaching was to be given to 950 students, but only 115 were so helped, reimbursement of public school tuition fees was provided to only 728 students out of the target of 1,650 students.

A similar story can be read in schemes related to economic development. Under a scheme for giving financial assistance for self-employment, training and loans were to be given. However, it boiled down to just training in various trades, and that too, to just 14,416 persons as opposed to the target of 54,350 persons. On the other hand, composite loans were given to 3,596 persons while the target was just 500 persons.

Under a scheme forgiving financial assistance to families when a daughter is born, only 171 families were reached, whereas the target was 1,000 families. Just 439 of the 825 slum clusters with predominant dalit population were provided with finances for improving civic amenities.

In short it is a tale of neglect and indifference, while the Congress has been in power for the past 10 years, a look at the debates in the Assembly shows that none of the other parties ever raised these issues, or demanded a better deal for the dalits. Clearly, there is a complacent feeling among them that the dalits can
be won over with the standard bag of tricks celebrating Dr. Ambedkar and Sant Ravi Das, bhashans by a few dalit leaders, etc. 7

It is in Uttar Pradesh that we see the new face of post-Congress Dalit politics. If Dalit politics is more powerful in this state than other states with a greater proportion of Dalit votes, it is due to the political strategies adopted by the Bahujan Samajwadi Party. In the last few elections, the Bahujan Samajwadi Party has come to secure nearly three-fourths of the Dalit vote in Uttar Pradesh. But its success is due to the ability to add other communities to this core vote. The 18 constituencies in the upper Doab that go to the polls in this phase comprise the Samajwadi Party’s traditional area of strength, a region where it hopes to benefit from the informal and controversial alliance with Kalyan Singh. The Bhartiya Janata Party on the other hand is confident that its alliance with Ajit Singh will pay dividends in some of these constituencies. But the Bahujan Samajwadi Party is very much in the race having chosen its candidates strategically on the basis of caste. 8

Dalit Get Posts, But Not Power

Lathur Jatav, a member of the Scheduled Caste Berwa Community, was elected deputy sarpanch of Unchakheda village in Madhya Pradesh’s Sheopur district in 2005, but is seldom invited to panchayat meetings. Also most development initiatives have been sanctioned without his knowledge.

7 The Times of India, 17 Nov., 2008 ‘Parties Ignore City Dalits at Their Own Peril, New Delhi, p. 2.
8 Yogendra Yadav, The Many Faces of Dalit Politics, May 7th 2009, New Delhi, p. 3.
"Though the upper castes (Meenas, Brahmins and Jats) are in a minority in the village, they influence all the important works," said Jatav. Most of the important decisions are taken by the upper caste sarpanch and panchyat secretary while the panchs are seldom involved, he added. These facts – a sad commentary on the functioning of Indian democracy at the grass-root level – came to light following an Hindustan Times expose of caste based apartheid in four districts of Madhya Pradesh under the government's Mid-Day-Meal Scheme for school children.

On visiting Unchakheda, this correspondent founded Jatav sitting at the feet of an assistant nursing Matron and her supervisor, who occupied a charpoy at his house, while they had a discussion. "Caste based discrimination is common here and extends beyond schools," he said. Pointing to the anganwadi centres in his village, he said, "We have two centres and one for the Berwas."

The discrimination doesn’t stop there. If a so-called "lower caste" person touches an earthen pot belonging to a member of the upper caste, he has to pay for a new vessel, Jatav alleged. He could not, however, independently verify this claim. The situation is no different in nearby Kotara village. Here upper castes refuse to send their children to the anganwadi centre managed by Phoola Bai Berwa, an SC worker. Berwas are in a majority here too but aren't allowed to celebrate marriages or take out processions near upper caste localities. Gowardhan Berwa lodged a complaint against the discrimination with the police
but was forced to withdraw it. "If we raise our voices, the atrocities increase," he said.

Sheopur Magistrate S.N. Pupla said, "What can anyone do if discriminatory practices are followed by some (lower caste members)." On discrimination against elected representatives, he said, "Everything depends on how you view it. If you are negative in your approach, you will notice discrimination. If you are positive, you will not find it."

**Something Never Change**

While Indian democracy completes yet another cycle of elections, a report in Hindustan Times about the discrimination suffered by Dalit children and women in schools, child care and health centres in Madhya Pradesh has shaken us all. However, such discrimination is not new: last year, we read about 'How Dalit customers are discrimination against at tea-shops in Tamil Nadu, once a bastion of the anti Brahmin-movement. Once these incidents are brought to the notice of the government, the elitist high-caste dominated bureaucracy sends fact-finding teams and appoints inquiry commissions. But the local officials see these incidents as minor aberrations. Instead of bringing the culprits to book, they are at best sent on transfer punishment.'

In last 30 years I have witnessed various forms of discrimination against Dalits. Sociologists tell us that modernization will bring about social change. Yet

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9 Hindustan Times, New Delhi, Tuesday, May 12, 2009, p. 9.
with every passing year, the frequency, forms and styles of discrimination have only increased. In fact, it has found a new lease of life in the overarching politico-cultural ideology of Hindutva. This ideology has underlined the return (or rise?) of Brahminical theocracy. It is also said that inequality goes down with development. For example, Dalits tend to do well in the developed pockets of India. This, I am afraid, is not entirely true empirical evidence and salaried sections, who predominantly come from the high castes and dominate the Indian bureaucracy, are well-off in all regions, irrespective of weather they live in developed or under-developed areas.

The structure of dominance in the hierarchical social order of India have thus remained in fact, notwithstanding minor modification. But why has the process of modernization failed to change the lives of so many? Political sociologists say the dominant social groups capture and appropriate both traditional and the rational legal orders, be it the state, government bureaucracy, schools, universities, hospitals and even the judiciary. The failure of the modernization project is indeed located in the story of how these institutions, which were created to safeguard the interests of the vulnerable segments, have become ineffective. The question is how did they become ineffective?

Notwithstanding the social and political struggles for equality unleashed by the Dalits in the 20th century, it was the state that negated the gains of social and political movements. No matter which party/ideology formed the
government, the dominant social groups have denied the gains to the Dalits. This was done in three ways since 1947.

First, the dominant social groups adopted a patronizing stance towards the deprived sections. Aided with liberal and radical instruments, they wanted to remove social and economic inequities. This started in the years following independence and continued in the later years because the dominant castes were confident that even if the traditional structures of discriminations were demolished, their control of the economic, social and political resources would keep them miles ahead of the rest.

The result was that India failed in implementing land reforms and land ceiling acts in different parts of the country. Access to education through reservations went without a hitch till the fear or lack of confidence in retaining the traditional edge over Dalits, preferably in professional education, took over. In the name of excellence, new structures of dominance were created in the educational sphere. India is perhaps the only country in the world to have created multitudes of educational institutions that corresponded with various social groups, thus creating social segmentation in this sector.

The process of political co-optation, in the name of nation-building, quelled the radical postures of Dalit movements. The structures of Brahminical ideology based on hierarchy and untouchability were thrown out of the window, but were never fully given up.
Second, the two-faced profile of the high-caste dominated and elitist bureaucracy deliberately excluded Dalits from harnessing the benefits of social, political and economic inclusive policies of the state. To illustrate this point, let's discuss the educational infrastructure of the country. The principle of taking primary schools to every locality has been profitably used to create spatial and social segmentation and reclusion on cast lines given the social morphology of Indian villages. There's also a marked difference in both the quality and quantity of schools available to different castes. Instead of recognizing that every child must attend a primary or elementary school which is multiethnic and multi-caste, the decision-makers thought otherwise and this gave a fillip to discrimination.

Third, the weakening of the constitutional and institutional safeguard mechanisms, particularly those constituted for Dalits. The authors of our constitution believed that the dream of an independent and progressive nation could not be fulfilled without adhering to the principles of equality and social justice. Equal opportunity cells or SC/ST cells have been established in various universities, colleges and government institutions. In addition to these, there are national panels on Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes and in the civil and high courts. But none of these institutions is allowed to work independently, someone or the other tries to protect the interests of the dominant castes/group overtly or covertly.

These three problems have operated singly or simultaneously in time and space. What has made the Brahminical ideology return or rise can be seen directly
as a consequence of the fragmentation of the Dalit movement, both ideologically and politically. The return of Brahminical ideology has been necessitated by the high castes. It is being used as a multi-pronged weapon to deny any future gains to Dalits because the upper castes are afraid that the Dalits might succeed in their struggle for equality. This development has taken place after the emergency, which saw the rise of the backward classes to the echelons of power. The ideology of Hindutva is geared towards cementing political alliances against Dalits and Muslims. The other Backward Castes may prove to be just powers in this whole project.\textsuperscript{10}

**Future of Dalits Safe Under Leadership of Sonia : Delhi Pradesh Congress Committee Chief:**

Delhi Pradesh Congress Committee President J.P. Agarwal on Tuesday said that Dalits had always extended insisting support to the Congress and expressed confidence that the party would win the upcoming Delhi Assembly elections next year for the third time in a row riding on their support. Addressing a convention at Rajiv Bhavan here, Mr. Agrawal said his party had always protected the interests of the Dalits and the community in return had reposed full faith in the party for its efforts towards their growth and uplift. He said the Delhi Government had been taking new initiatives for their welfare and the efforts had helped a great deal in protecting the interests of the community.

\textsuperscript{10} Hindustan Times, New Delhi, Tuesday May 12, 2009, p. 8.
“The future of Dalits is safe under the dynamic leadership of Congress President Sonia Gandhi and the dreams of Father of the Nation Mahatama Gandhi and Bharat Ratna Bhim Rao Ambedkar will be realized under her stewardship.” Said Mr. Agarwal.

Hailing the appointment of Rahul Gandhi as All India Congress Committee General Secretary, Mr. Agarwal hoped that his young and dynamic leadership would help the Congress grow. Senior party leader Yogendra Makwana exhorted the Dalits to unite under the Congress flag and flight for their own uplift and betterment of the country as a whole. “The “Congress alone can serve the community well and help it accomplish its objectives.”

Karol Bagh Member of Parliament Krishna Tirath claimed that the party had been working tirelessly to provide food, shelter and employment to the community and the efforts had brought about visible changes in the condition of the community.

All India Congress Committee Scheduled Castes department chairman Lal Chand Chandewa said Mr. Gandhi had laid much emphasis on improving the lot of the poor and downtrodden and the community would continue to strengthen her hands by extending firm support to the party.11

Last-Minute Intervention ‘Saved’ Congress Dalit Rally

The timely intervention of senior Congress leader and Chief Minister Sheila Dikshit salvaged the dalit chunauti rally held on August 19, the infighting that had triggered between the dissidents and the loyalists over who would convene the rally, that was addressed by President Sonia Gandhi, was doused by Kamal Nath and Dikshit. They had to take the arrangements in their own hands, several outer Delhi Member of Legislative Assemblies had opposed the selection of former Member of Legislative Assembly from Sultanpuri, Jai Kishan, as the convenor of the rally. Kamal Nath, the All India Congress Committee General Secretary In-charge of city Congress, was then forced to take reins with the help of Delhi Pradesh Congress Committee Chief Subhash Chopra and Dikshit, he was able to mobilize the support of both functions.

However, for Dikshit supporter, the success of the rally proved to be yet another political victory by retaining Jai Kishan as the convener of the rally, and making it successful despite the boycott by several member of Legislative Assemblies, the loyalists were able to pit the former member of Legislative Assembly against the dissidents. Jai Kishan, a dissident leader himself, had recently fallen out of favour from the group, according to sources, the loyalists were able to cash in on this development “by supporting Jai Kishan, they helped him consolidate his hold in outer Delhi. He has emerged as a dalit leader. This is likely to work against the dissident group who also have a stronghold in this
area,” said a senior leader. According to sources, had the senior leadership not intervened at the last minute, the rally would have a fiasco. Prior to Kamal Nath’s intervention, the Member of Legislative Assembly of the loyalist faction had refused to cooperate with Jai Kishan. According to them, Jai Kishan’s alleged involvement in the 1984 riots, for which he was denied the party ticket in the last elections, did not augur well for the party’s image. Dikshit supporter Raj Kumar Chauhan, a legislature from Mangolpuri, had expressed his dissent in the party meeting at Dikshit’s residence last week. Chauhan and other outer Delhi Member of Legislative Assembly including Tughlaqabad Legislator Shishpal, Saket MLA Tek Chand Sharma, Palam MLA Mahinder Yadav, and Kanwal Singh Yadav from Nazafgarh did not even participate in the rally. However, the leadership was able to placate other Member of Legislative Assembly, All City Minister and most of the MLAs were present in the rally. Dikshit could not attend the rally on health grounds. The Congress was able to score a point over the opposition by holding two big rallies in last six months. Both were addressed by Sonia Gandhi “said a senior leader as a run up to the Municipal Corporation polls. The city Congress had held the rally to consolidate its Dalit base in the city. Previously, the party had organized a Kisan rally in outer Delhi to make in roads into the rural vote bank.\footnote{The Times of India, New Delhi, Aug., 20, 2001, p. 2.}
Power Struggle for Dalit Leadership in Congress

In fast-changing political equations within the Delhi Congress, a new and forceful section of new Dalit leaders are trying to establish their identity, triggering off a power struggle among various leaders to gain control over this important vote bank that has the potential to throw up an alternative leadership at the state level.

The Dalit leadership in the Delhi unit of the Congress is headed by the Assembly Speaker, Chaudhary Prem Singh, who has set a record of sorts by having won all the elections he has contested so far. However, his age and the new crop of Dalit leaders has somewhat marginalized the position held by Chaudhary Prem Singh although they continues to command respect among his party men and voters. Political observers here are of the view that the real struggle is now between the Development and Food and Supplies Minister, Raj Kumar Chauhan, the All India Congress Committee Secretary and Sultanpuri MLA, Jai Kishan and the Bawana MLA, Surinder Kumar.

Though Mr. Chauhan has managed to hold his own as a Minister in the Sheila Dixshit Government, he has failed to extend his area of influence beyond his own constituency. Mr. Chauhan continues to be the favourite of the Chief Minister Sheila Dikshit, despite the fact that his relations with his one time political guru and outer Delhi Member of Parliament, Sajjan Kumar, have come under strain. Mr. Chauhan also has a running battle with Mr. Jai Kishan and
though the boundaries of their constituencies run almost paralleled, they leave no opportunity to run down each other. Observers feel that in view of the changing equations, a lot of re-positioning is taking place to capture the leadership of this strong vote bank. It is learnt that Mr. Sajjan Kumar is now focusing on promoting Mr. Surinder Kumar as the new Dalit leader of the area and his name has come up as a strong contender for the post of District President of the Rohini District Congress Committee.

A two-time MLA, Mr. Surinder Kumar, is a strong opponent of Mrs. Dikshit and has been at the forefront of the campaign against her. This is also being seen as a snub to Mr. Jai Kishan, one-time protégé and now rival of Surinder Kumar. Interestingly, Mr. Jai Kishan is the only leader who has held rallies and public meeting to highlight the plight of the Dalits and secure them their rights, even getting the Congress President, Sonia Gandhi, to address one of the meetings. In fact, he has also developed a good rapport with Mrs. Gandhi, something that is resented by his rivals. However, after having fallen out with Mr. Kumar, he has failed to capitalize on the situation and build his own leadership among Dalits. “They continue to be directed by other senior party leaders leaving hardly any space for them to grow, they have to break out of the shackles and cultivate their own independent identity,” said a senior party leader.13

13 Sujay MehdudiaThe Hindu, New Delhi, Friday, June 24, 2005, p. 1.
Dalit Leader in Delhi Joins Bhartiya Janata Party

The Bhartiya Janata Party in Delhi made a big dent in Congress 'Dalit' vote bank after its former chairman in the Municipal Corporation Delhi and Standing Committee member Kunwar Sen joined the saffron party saying the Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe voter in the Congress had been sidelined completely. Mr. Sen, who joined the Bhartiya janata party along with Jhuggi Jhopri Niwasi Federation Vice-President Ishwar Singh (also from the Congress), cited Ch. Prem Singh's sidelining by the Congress despite him winning the Assembly elections 11 times, as one example “I had lot faith in the Congress long back, but Mr. Singh’s dumping was the last straw. Despite serving the party for 23 years, I had to undergo humiliation several times, but there is always a limit.”

“I have come with an open mind in the Bhartiya Janata Party because I was impressed by its thinking and ways of functioning” added Mr. Sen, who was also Congress Deputy Chairman of the party’s Scheduled Caste Cell (South Delhi).

Welcoming the Congress leader into the party, Delhi Pradesh President O.P. Kohli said it was a pleasure welcome two members. Debunking talks of any allurement that brought them to the Bhartiya Janata Party, Mr. Kohli said, “Neither any assurance has be promises made. They are joining the Bhartiya Janata Party because they lost faith in the Congress.” In this ‘acceptance’ speech, Mr. Singh gap between what the Congress professed and what it actually did.
"My disillusionment emanates from the Congress sidelining of old timers" speaking on the occasion, Bhartiya Janata Party general seere candidate for the coming Lok Sabha elections Vijay Goel said ‘B’ and ‘C’ class government workers were greatly agitated the raw deal they got in the Sixth Pay Commission “The Bhartiya Janata Party will set those anomalies in proper order and also take care of the residential needs of government employees,” already spoken on behalf of the middle class by exempting the service class from income tax payment for income up to Rs. 3 lakhs, he added.14

In Show of ‘Strength’, Congress Pradesh Dalit Leaders

The Bahujan Samaj Party’s huge rally at Ram Lila ground on February 24 seems to have made political parties, particularly the Delhi Congress, jittery as it today paraded its Dalit Member of Parliament, Member of Legislative Assemblies and Councillors before the media. According to resources, the reason for the Congress - which sees the Bahujan Samaj Party as a contender for the important Dalit vote in Delhi – to be tense is because the Bahujan Samaj Party had bagged 17 seats in the Municipal Corporation Delhi polls last year besides gaining an overwhelming majority of Dalit votes in neighbouring Uttar Pradesh. There are 12 Assembly seats and one Parliamentary seat in Delhi reserved for the Scheduled Castes.

14 Times of India, Dalit Leader in Delhi Joins BJP, New Delhi, Sunday, April 19, 2009, p. 2.
Dalit number almost 17 percent of the population of Delhi. Mayawati’s caste (Jatav or Chamar) constitutes 38.1 percent of this. The proportion of people belonging to the Scheduled Caste in the population of the newly delimited Chandni Chowk is 15.99 percent in north-east Delhi, it is 17.3 percent, 15.23 percent in east Delhi, 17.73 percent in New Delhi, 21.52 percent in north-west Delhi (which is reserved for the Scheduled Caste), 13.03 percent in west Delhi and 17.73 percent in south Delhi parliamentary seats. In other words, if the Bahujan Samaj party – fresh after its Uttar Pradesh victory – replaces the Congress as the preferred party of Delhi’s Dalits, it can surely defeat the Congress even if it fails to register victories itself, say source.

In many of the Municipal Corporation Delhi seats won by the Bahujan Samaj Party for instance, the Bhartiya Janata Party was second, indicating that the Bahujan Samaj Party replaced the Congress as the preferred party of Dalits, thereby relegating the Congress to the third position.

All India Congress Committee Secretary Jai Kishan, a prominent Dalit face of the Congress in Delhi, said the Congress would soon hold a Dalit panchayat in Delhi to prove that “Dalit activists are with the Congress and that only ticket-seekers were with Mayawati.” He alleged that the Bahujan Samaj Party and the Bhartiya Janata Party “divided people on the basis of caste and religion” Congress MLA Rajesh Lilothia claimed Mayawati had misused the official machinery of Uttar Pradesh to “force people to come to Delhi for the Bhartiya Samaj Party rally. The leader also claimed that Mayawati “had done
nothing for Dalits in Uttar Pradesh and that all she had done what to amass personal wealth in their name." They claimed the Congress was instrumental in the progress of Dalit post-independence.

According to political experts, the problem that the Congress party faces in north India is that though the reservation policy created a small Dalit elite in government jobs, it did not get a good share at top political decision making levels. This denial of political agency – as a political expert Sadha Pai calls this – led to this Dalit elite to break away from the Congress and join late Kanshi Ram’s Backward and Minority Communities Employees Federation, Dalit Shoshit Samaj Sangharsh Samiti, and later the Bahujan Samaj Party. Today Mayawati has shown that Dalits can acquire political agency on their own – and not through subordination to the Congress High Command – outside the Congress, Pai told News-line.

Trying to ensure that Bahujan Samaj Party, working overtime in far long areas of NCR, does not gain a foothold in the city and take advantage of any possible anti-incumbency against the ruling Congress Party, the Bhartiya Janata Party, now appears to be all out to woo Dalit voters here.

All a rally organized by Vijay Jolly, senior Bhartiya Janata Party leader and Saket MLA, the Bhartiya Janata Party organized a ‘Dalit-Kisan-Mazdoor Sammelan’ to woo the ‘neglected voters’. Thousands of migrants from the area and Deoli village attended the Bhartiya Janata Party rally at Sangam Vihar on
Sunday. Bhartiya Janata Party state president Dr. Harshvardhan spoke at length about the neglect of the Dalit voter' in the city, "The Rajiv Ratna Housing Scheme for slum-dwellers has been a non-starter. Despite 20 lakh forms sold by the DDA, till date only 637 flats have been completed for allotment. This is a cruel joke on the Dalits in the capital," Harshvardhan said.

The Sangam Vihar Constituency has been declared a reserved constituency by the Election Commission after the delimitation process was completed in Delhi. The move to win over Dalit voters in the constituency is, party workers said, aimed at securing what Bhartiya Janata Party leaders term an "extremely important" constituency. MLA Vijay Jolly speaking to news-line said, "I am the present MLA from the constituency and I wish to address the issues of Dalits' who have been neglected even by the Bahujan Samaj Party."

Harshvardhan and Jolly said, "The Delhi government has failed to address the issue of the neglect of unauthorized colonies in the capital." "The fast-running electronic meters in auto-rickshaws and inflated power bills have added to the woes of the common man in Delhi. The interest of farmers and the labourer class have been ignored." Harshvardhan said. Claiming a "right over the Dalit vote" in his constituency, Jolly said, "The Dalits have always got a raw deal from the Congress government in power, we wish to change that. The move by the Bhartiya Janata Party is a significant shift in their stance. Party workers, refusing to speak on record said that the new wing set up in the Delhi Bhartiya Janata Party to address issues of Dalits in Delhi has been working "over time" to work up an
“intelligent success formula”. The Bhartiya Janata Party, over the past few months, has been targeting this vote bank along with voters in the unauthorized colonies in Delhi, which according to various estimates, comprise around 40 lakh people. The Bhartiya Janata Party had organized an ‘unauthorized colony mahasang’ at the Ram Lila ground on the issue of regularization of unauthorized colonies in Delhi by the Congress government. Sunday’s rally was attended by senior Municipal Corporation Delhi Councillor Mool Chand Sharma, Dr. Jai Singh Bhadia and all Resident Welfare Association office-bearers along with Manal President of the Bhartiya Janata Party’s Sangam Vihar wing and Delhi Village and Delhi Road Colony.15

Today’s society is asking for a New Social Contract for several social classes are clamouring for a revegotiated settlement. The Dalit has emerged as a clear winner.

Forget Uttar Pradesh’s social revolution – even cosmopolitan Delhi has joined in a spectacular social upheaval. In the just-concluded Municipal Corporation Delhi polls, Bahujan Samaj Party earned 9.89 percent of the votes and 17 seats. The party led in the north-east Lok Sabha constituency, stood second in north-east Delhi with 13-81 percent vote share, and demonstrated its arrival in east Delhi with a 10.93 percent vote share.

Bahujan Samaj Party’s exceptional performance in the Municipal Corporation Delhi polls anticipated the party’s historic win in Uttar Pradesh. In eight assembly segments in Delhi, Bahujan Samaj Party polled over 20 percent of the votes. In 15 assembly segments, the party polled over 15 percent of the votes. In other words, the Bahujan Samaj Party can hope to win at least 15 assembly seats and lay its claim on three Lok Sabha seats. Contrary to the popular perception that Bahujan Samaj Party performed well in crowded, low-lying areas, the elephant secured acceptability in posh areas such as Greater Kailash, Malviya Nagar, Kalkaji and Model Town. And, Mayawati did not spare even a minute for the Municipal Corporation Delhi polls.

Even as the Municipal Corporation Delhi polls pointed to the dawn of a new politics in India, many questionable theories did the rounds on Bahujan Samaj Party’s Uttar Pradesh performance. One was that the people of Uttar Pradesh wanted a change, and voted for Bahujan Samaj Party because the party was seen as the potential force to dethrone Mulayam Singh’s goonda raj. Others said that non-Yadav castes voted for Bahujan Samaj Party, that Uttar Pradesh’s experiment could not be replicated elsewhere, and that the Dalit Brahmin coalition too had some role to play. However, a deeper inquiry throws up the Dalit-Brahmin coalition as the principal driving force around which all factors came together. The Dalit-Brahmin coalition is a new political phenomenon that works independently of ‘anti-incumbency’ or goonda raj situation. To return to the Municipal Corporation Delhi polls, amidst the sealing controversy the
elections were bitterly fought between Congress and Bhartiya Janata Party. Yet, in a polity that was believed to be highly polarized, Bahujan “Samaj Party governed 10 percent of the votes a jump of about 90 percent since the assembly election of 2003. Only an exceptional political phenomenon can explain this jump in vote share. Was it a Dalit Brahmin political undercurrent blowing inside the entire Hindi heartland?

We must understand why Indian society is asking Dalits to lead, why Uttar Pradesh rejected both Bhartiya Janata Party and Congress, and how the Dalit-Brahmin thesis works. By definition, the hierarchical Indian varunasharm society is made up of two major social blocks – Darjas (Brahmin-Kshatriya-Vaishya) and Shudras (Mandal Castes). Untouchables/outcastes or Dalits are at the margin of the varna order. Tribals are segregated even demographically. By tradition, the Brahmin-led Dwijas have ruled society. Every social movement target Dwijas as tormentors and identified Brahmins, quite justifiably, for all the ills of Indian society.

After Independence, the hegemony of Dwijas started to crumble. Mandal implementation in 1991 was the final blow while the desperate Dwijas fought Mandal, no other social class supported them. They lost the moral mandate to rule. Today, only two states of India, Uttarakhand and West Bengal, are ruled by Brahmins. Post Mandal India was mesmerized by the slogan of social justice, and Shudras got an historic opportunity to restructure India on egalitarian lines. They got the moral mandate to rule society, with Dalits going along with them. But
Shudras, instead of breaking social hierarchies, set out to replace Dwija hegemony with their own, emerging as a partisan social block. Under them, even core democratic institutions faced unprecedented threat. Dalits found their right to adult franchise under attack.

Now, Shudras have lost the moral mandate to rule, who would then rule India'. Shudras rejected Dwija, and vice-versa, Dalits began rejecting both. The result was a hung Parliament and hung assemblies all these years. The decade-long social churning produced an unarticulated social consensus – a third force with Dalit as social harmonizers. Why didn’t that consensus grow inside Congress and Bhartiya Janata Party, the two main national parties." Arguably, the Congress had the inner strength to play a social harmonizer. But it frittered away that historic opportunity by alienating friends and later choosing to fish in Mandal waters. Not only did it enter the pond when there was nothing left, it alienated both Dwijas and Dalits in meanwhile, as traditional anti-Congress voters, the Mandal castes refused to take Congress’s call. The isolated Congress couldn’t entice Muslims either.

Bhartiya Janata Party the capacity to be a social harmonizer. Spurred by its successes in Punjab and Uttarakhand, the Bhartiya Janata Party reinvented Kalyan Singh as the Chief Minister candidate, unmindful of the fact that other Backward Classes were facing political isolation in Uttar Pradesh. Angry Dwijas deserted Bhartiya Janata Party on masse. Bhartiya Janata Party revival plan came a cropper. Bahujan Samaj Party did not win because of Dalit-Brahmins votes
alone. It got votes from other castes as well, in particular, from a section of MBCs. The perception that the Brahmins too will vote for Bahujan Samaj Party, prompted the rest to fall in line. Bahujan Samaj Party will be instrumental in formation of the next government at the centre. It will lay its claim on at least the Lok Sabha seats in the Hindi belt.16