Conclusion
CONCLUSION

India, after its freedom from the clutches of colonial power, had to face other internal problems like as social and economic backwardness of some sections of its society. Among them the most backwards were “Scheduled Castes” (SCs). The basic reasons for their backwardness were the prevailed inhuman activities in society like as ‘untouchability’ and their ‘impure’ occupation for their livelihood. In this context, Dr. Ambedkar’s view was that, “The root cause of untouchability lies in a pronounced cultural or racial difference of contempt and hatred coupled with a close economic dependence of the inferior society on the superior one”. In such a society birth in a particular caste determines their occupation. Caste, in the words of Martindale and Monachere, ‘an aggregate of persons whose share of obligations and privileges is fixed by birth, sanctioned and supported by religion and magic, led to the discrimination and social injustice in society’. To tackle this discrimination and social injustice, the concept of ‘affirmative action’ originated in independent India, having an important position in Constitution. The importance of this concept lies in the fact that it is in the favour of ‘Scheduled Castes’ and ‘Scheduled Tribes’ as they were being discriminated for a long time on the grounds of their castes. It also provides them proportional representation i.e. reservation according to their proportion in the total population. These reservations are in the fields of education, employment and industry etc. Only by such attempt, a middle class of Scheduled Castes could emerge who at the time of independence, had the lowest literacy rates of all ethnic categories, and majority of them were in labour and service occupation. Despite these equitive measures, the condition of Dalits (SCs) did not improve on satisfactory level and they remained marginalized and discriminated on account of their caste.
This oppressed section of Indian society needed a support and a platform from where they could raise their voice against those inhumane activities and atrocities of which they were being subjected. Though various Social Movements were started for their cause and great leaders sacrificed their lives to give a dignified life to these depressed sections in society, like Ambedkar and Kanshi Ram. But Kanshi Ram was the person who realized that the political empowerment of Dalits is the only way which could give them their due place and identity in society. To give practical touch to his thought he represented himself as the leader of Dalits and made efforts to create a homogeneous identity for the diverse Dalit castes that represent the lower level of caste hierarchy in Hindu religion. He believed that their representation in democratic power is the only means by which they could enjoy a respectful and dignified life in the society. Kanshi Ram united a large section of Dalits with other Minorities and OBCs who were earlier excluded from the democratic process of the country, and led the foundation of ‘Bahujan Samaj Party’ (BSP) in April, 1984 under its shadow these people came together with a new political identity, crafted by Kanshi Ram, known as “bahujan identity”. He established this party with a belief that the exploited groups could obtain access to electoral power, aimed at to establish a just society based on the principles of equality and justice. He termed his constituency as the “Bahujan Samaj” (majority community) constituting all those castes which were oppressed by the twice-born upper castes community.

Originally, BSP has its roots in Social Movement as a struggle against ‘Brahminism’ and aimed at to create awareness amongst these exploited sections to form a socio-political block. Its mission was to form a s and the way to this was the “bahujan rule”. The first step, towards achievement of this rule was to organize the educated and employed people of these sections, was taken by Kanshi Ram in 1973 so
that they could be motivated to pay back to the society; and it resulted into the formation of "All India Backward and Minority Communities Employees Federation" (BAMCEF) in 1973, "Dalit Shoshit Samaj Sangharsh Samiti" (DS-4) in 1981; and finally "Bahujan Samaj Party" (BSP) in 1984 in UP.

Since India’s independence Congress was in a dominant position in the state UP and controlled its politics through the alliance of Brahmins, Dalits and Muslims. But since the mid-1980s both party system and the structure of parties had undergone a process of change. This change resulted into the transformation of single dominant party system into an unstable, fragmented party system. Due to this transformed nature of party system, two type of political parties emerged in UP: one form was "caste and community" based parties and second one was "religion based" parties. It means that narrower and sectarian parties based on identities of caste, religion and region were emerged. Such type of transformation can be seen in the origin of BSP in UP which emerged as an ‘identity based Dalit party’ in 1984, because of the development of political awareness among Dalits. As an identity based political party, it challenged the hierarchical structures of social and political power dominated by upper castes and has contributed in strengthening Dalit identity. It has a clearly defined political agenda aimed at the political empowerment of the Dalits and some Most Backward Castes in UP.

Uttar Pradesh, having largest parliamentary constituencies in India, is neither a ‘two party system’ state nor had any majority party which have its social presence and electoral power in all the regions of state. The reason behind this is the social structure of the state where a religion based party like BJP with its ‘Hindutva’ ideology is challenged by the ‘caste based parties’ SP and BSP. Furthermore, since caste is not a hegemonic construction in society, important sub-castes have been used by different
caste leaders for electoral victories. BSP is one among them whose targeted base is Dalit caste. But out of 66 Dalit castes, only four: Shoemaker (Cobbler) caste known as Ravidasi or Harijan, Pasi, Dhobi and Kori (Weaver) are actively represented while rests are invisible. In fact, the Chamar category in Uttar Pradesh, for example, includes four categories: Chamar, Dhusia, Jhusia, and Jatav whose members sometimes describe themselves collectively as the Chamaras and sometimes emphasize their distinct identities. ‘Cobbler Caste’ that is the largest Dalit community in UP constitutes 56.20 percent of the total Scheduled Castes population i.e. 21.1 percent of the state’s total population according to the 2001 census. However, it becomes a dominant Dalit sub-caste because of its numerical strength. Besides its numerical strength, their education during colonial power was another reason which brought this Dalit sub-caste in mainstream of the party. It also enabled them to get jobs on the basis of ‘positive discrimination’ in the country. Consequently, Chamar is the category of Scheduled Castes who modernized earliest even much before the emergence of BSP, a middle class within this caste had emerged and with the emergence of BSP they became politically more empowered and contributed to strengthen the democracy because they were among the first SCs elites to obtain posts within the BSP and became dominant one making BSP successful in attracting Chamar support. Being dominant one, they prevented the incorporation of new elites from other Scheduled Caste categories. Though Constitutional provisions and their own political party, BSP, improved the position of Dalits, yet these could not provide similar status to other marginalized sub-castes like Jogi, Nat, Musahar, Kanjar, Dom, Domar, Hela, Basor and Bansphor etc because of which they remained unbeneftitted. It shows that in state we not only find discrimination between religions, castes but also sub- castes.
However, in this hierarchical social setup and diverse religions and castes, sub-castes, proliferation of political parties took place whose sole aim become pursuit of ‘political power’ on any basis. BSP is one of the examples of this which has become a narrowly-based electoral party since the mid 1990s. Before this, it emerged as a radical Social Movement but it was the period mid-1990s since when it started to adopt various mobilization strategies through which it could achieve its aim of capturing state power or ‘pursuit of power’ that is central concern of politics. This transformation in BSP’s politics is criticized by some observers for adopting an ‘opportunistic strategy’ because such opportunistic attitude has replaced the party’s earlier ideology of Dalit identity. This was the period of 1985 to 1993 when BSP, a Dalit based party made attempts to mobilize the poor and underprivileged on caste line, as an ideology to break the existing system and criticized the mainstream parties as ‘manuwadi’ parties like BJP and Congress. However, during this period it represented itself as a ‘secular’ Dalit party, for which BSP can be categorized as an ethnic party. During this phase it adopted an ‘isolationist’ policy.

After this first stage, BSP started an alliance game and became an opportunist party. This period started in 1993, from where UP politics took an important turn when for the first time BSP, a party headed by, run by and voted for by the lowly ‘untouchables’ castes formed part of the winning coalition in a state election. This Assembly election was the aftermath of demolition of Babri masjid in December 6, 1992 during the rule of Bharatiya Janata Party but this incidence led to the fall of BJP government. In this situation political parties got an opportunity to play communal politics in state. In this way when 1993 Assembly elections was to be held communal politics was already in its full height that dividend the society on communal lines and an instability occurred in political sphere. However, during this Assembly
elections in 1993 BSP joined hands with Backward Caste party, the SP to establish the rule of Bahujan Samaj consisting of Dalits, Backwards, Tribals and Minorities. But only after sixteen months this electoral unity failed due to the lack of social alliance between these two opposite constituencies’ castes of these parties. Then BSP realized that it was not capable to receive sufficient support from the Backward Castes who did not concern for Dalits so, the BSP came closer to the ‘manuwadi’ BJP with a hope that this alliance would be more workable than the SP – BSP alliance because between these two: BSP and BJP clashes are not as sharp as between the Backwards and Dalits. So, BSP, in this Post-bahujan phase, decided to compromise with its radical goals and capture state power by any means. Following this strategy BSP entered into coalitions with BJP in 1995, 1997 and 2002 under the leadership of Mayawati. These coalitions were not based on any common ideology but only were a real politics: the ‘pursuit of power’ through extending its vote base among other castes and communities irrespective of their past unfriendly social relations and distinct ideologies. That is why the alliance of 1995 between BSP – BJP was described by Prime Minister, Atal Bihari Vajpayee as a “miracle of democracy”.

Another electoral strategy is visible in BSP since 2005, when BSP is competing for the votes of upper- castes, particularly Brahmins who are moving away from the BJP and the Congress. It was ambition for electoral competitiveness and politics among parties which prepared it to go beyond its Dalit constituency by reaching out to new caste groups. The characteristic point of this mobilization strategy is that for this BSP is approaching directly to twice born castes through various sammelans only in order to broaden its base so that it could help it in winning electoral war. Because of new political phenomenon this Dalit Brahmin coalition, BSP became successful in forming its government by getting majority of votes in
2007 elections of Uttar Pradesh Legislative Assembly where since 1991 not a single party was able to acquire an absolute majority. But an important point which is to be discussed here that what was the reason which made it possible for Brahmans, the top most in the caste hierarchy in Hindu religion to cast their votes in the favour of a party of Dalits, who are an outcaste in the caste ridden society of our country? The hierarchical Indian Varnashram society is made up of two major social blocks: constitute Brahmin, Kshatriya; and Vaishya, Shudras while ‘untouchables’ (Outcasts) known as Dalits are at the margin of the Varna order. Traditionally, Brahmans led Dwijas were in dominant position to rule but after independence due to the Mandal implementation and development of slogan of social justice, Shudras (Mandal Castes) got an opportunity to rule the society and on other hand Dalits were also being empowered, politically. And gradually Dalits, the outcastes, started to reject both Dwija’s and Shudra’s rule. This development resulted into the Hung Assemblies in UP where votes were divided among the ‘Anti-Brahminical Social Forces’ represented by Mulayam Singh’s ‘SP’ and Miss Mayawati’s ‘BSP’; and a type of instability occurred in state’s political sphere for a long period. But due to the competitive nature of politics BSP leader Mayawati started making efforts to build bridges between heterogeneous constituencies with the Brahmin votes and also bring the Muslims closer to the BSP. This was the revival of old Congress Social Alliance but this time under leadership of the Dalits, but with a major difference between Congress’s Social Alliance and Bahujan Samaj Party’s Social Engineering is that in Congress’s mobilization strategy the real power was in the hands of Brahmans, upper caste while in present BSP’s engineering formula the political power was in the possession of Dalits, the outcastes. In Uttar Pradesh, it can be seen that after the decline of Congress not only the trend of single majority party was ended but
instability occurred in the states political sphere where one positive sign can be seen in the rise of Backwards and lower castes and in their empowered positions upto a larger extent. This point shows the major turn in electoral politics in which such sections of society became politically aware and mobilized for their cause that they transformed the nature of politics where dominant one were only upper castes giving no powerful and prestigious positions to other marginalized castes.

But a negative aspect of this transformation is that since these sections are being mobilized for a great causes i.e. their upliftment and dignity or their identity but the criterion, on which basis they are being mobilized are not democratic in nature, castes and communities. This has dividend the society into various constituencies and a large number of political parties, with confined social base and narrower ideologies, have emerged. This has created the electoral war among parties of distinct nature. Such prevailed situation there is the lack of secular parties, accommodating the interests of large sections of society. Each one is busy in checking the other one’s spreading constituencies. This is one of the reasons of the failure of the Congress Party, in Uttar Pradesh, a secular one and placed it at the weakest position in electoral fight of major parties in UP.

For the purpose to mobilize the heterogeneous constituencies under their fold parties have to set certain policies and programmes in their favour. Its example could be seen in Uttar Pradesh when Bahujan Samaj Party launched a number of Pro-Dalit Schemes like “Ambedkar Village Programme” (AVP) for which she made her statement clear that she was concerned with eth upliftment of ‘only one section of society’ that was Dalit. Such kind of favourable treatment was in order to consolidate the Dalit vote bank. During its distinct ruling periods it represented itself as the party of Dalits. While its competitor Samajwadi Party whose vote banks are Yadavs,
particularly and Muslims minority also. For Muslims mobilization purpose it started the appointment of Urdu teachers in government schools etc. Such type of electoral politics going on in the state aimed at the attainment of political power by using castes and community identities. It has resulted into the lack of parties based on secular ideologies providing an effective political structure to state and strengthen democratic processes. Instead of this we find that type of political culture in state where we see the upsurge of political participation of people but without any sense of correct use of their democratic rights. Their rights are easily controlled by their so called elites in the name of caste and communities and by several schemes in their favour but what is the importance of such kind of programmes that have to be changed with the change in the government. In fact it should be of progressive nature for both state and its inhabitants.