CHAPTER III
GENESIS AND GROWTH OF BJP

The spectacular rise of the BJP is one of the major political stories of the 1990’s. During the last decade the party has undergone a rapid geographical and political expansion, the like of which has never been seen before. From its lowly position in 1989 when the BJP was a small localized party with a political presence restricted to just a few states in the Hindi-heartland, the acquisition of new territory and new allies has transformed it into being the main political force in India with a mass national following. The aim of this chapter is to explore the effect these expansions have had on the social base of the Bharatiya Janata Party. Has its appeals widened to attract voters from different social background? Or has it merely strengthened its whole on its traditional support base? Do the allies give the party an entrance into new states and new sections of society? To know and explore these all questions we must know about BJP’s genesis and growth.

The party system is the product of many complex factors like tradition and history, social and economic structure, religious beliefs, racial composition, national-rivalaries, social conflicts and so on. Particularly, social and economic conditions account for the development of parties at any given time. The complexity of the party system across the world, however is such, that it is not possible to relate the panorama of parties to a particular configuration of social class.

According to Maurice Duverger, there are three chief factors common to all countries i.e. socio-economic, ideological and technical (electoral regime) which lead to the birth and growth of political parties. However, Jean Blondel emphasises that social conflicts and some communal groups based on tribal, ethnic, religious and class groupings lead to the development of political
parties. Thus the development of political parties seem to be bound up with democracy which means existence of adult franchise, parliamentary prerogatives and electoral machinery. The people feel the need to group themselves for the achievement of their common goals. Nevertheless some deviate, more or less, from the general scheme. They originate outside the electoral and parliamentary cycle which is their important characteristic.

Parties, which are accepted by the people, have their particular programme, organization, ideology and leadership patterns. The expectations of the people tend to vary from place to place and from time to time.

The nature and working of Indian Party System has been the subject of keen interest and much discussion on it has been made by various scholars from time to time. India, represents the spectacle of a multi-party system on the surface. But for long periods of modern India’s electoral history, it has been characterised by “One dominant party system” with Congress occupying the Centrestage.

Broadly speaking, Indian politics moved forward with the Congress in the centre flanked by the left on the one side and right on the other from 1885 onward for freeing itself from the British domination. The whole gamut of party relationship however, remained a highly complex phenomenon, governed not only by consideration of power politics as a major category, but also by personal prejudices and group rivalries. This antagonism was more loaded with religious overtones than backed up by economic considerations.

Parties in India have been influenced by personality, socio-economic and ideological factors. Many parties are the result of anti-Congressism particularly after partition. It is noteworthy that parties in India were formed inside the Parliament i.e. by forming a separate opposition group within the Parliament and later got recognition as a separate political party - Congress Socialist Party,
Socialist Party, Praja Socialist Party, Bharatiya Lok Dal, Bharatiya Kranti Dal and Lok Dal. The Janta Party (it came into being after the merger of five non-Congress-I and non-Communist parties like Jana Sangh, Socialist, Congress-O, Congress For Democracy and BKD and Janta Dals too were formed against the Congress due to one reason or the other. Janta Dal (S) came into being after the split within the Janta Dal and got recognition as a separate party in the Parliament where as the left parties (Communist Party of India and Communist Party of India (Marxist) of India were organized in India on the ideological ground under the influence of Communist movement of Russia and China.

The fourth oldest existing party in the country is the Bharatiya Janata Party. In fact, it is the new addition of former Bharatiya Jana Sangh, founded in 1951. Thus to know about BJP we must begin from the beginning as to how and why the BJS was founded in 1951 and what were its foundation stones.

The Bharatiya Jana Sangh was the only party whose founders and leaders had no Congress background of any kind. While even the communists, as we know, were mixed up with the Indian National Congress in the beginning. The Bharatiya Jana Sangh came into being when the country was out of British clutches. Most of the political parties in India have their roots in the national freedom movement which because of proximity with the British and other European intellectuals, were influenced by the form and content of their politics broadly described as Liberal democratic or Marxist.

The Bharatiya Jana Sangh with a radical right image was a product of a post-independent India. It was the scion of parentage of the Hindu Mahasabha and the RSS. If it is argued that the Hindu Mahasabha had nothing to do with the founding of the Bharatiya Jana Sangh, it can be rebutted that its very founder President of the party, Shyama Parsad Mookerjee was the President of the Hindu Mahasabha for quite some years. The Bharatiya Jana Sangh attracted many former members of the Hindu Mahasabha founded in 1913 and the...
Ram Rajya Parishad’ set up in 1948. The Jana Sangh in respect of politics, religion, language and education is described as “the history of Hindu reaction to the western impact”.

The most direct and powerful influence on Bharatiya Jana Sangh at ideological and organizational level has been that of RSS founded by Hedgawar in 1925. He used to believe that only Hindus could attain freedom, but for this they needed cultural and physical strength. The assassination of Mahatma Gandhi led to the ban on RSS by the govt. and there were unsuccessful efforts to convert this cultural organization into a political one. This led to a search for an alternative. The Bharatiya Jana Sangh was born out of some historical events. In Aug 1947, the partition of the country brought forth a strong wave of refugees from the East Pakistan now known as Bangladesh. Dr. Shyama Prasad Mookerjee was then a senior minister in the first central cabinet of free India. There was a similarity of views between him and Sardar Patel. It may be recalled that under the Nehru-Liaquat Pact, both Pakistan and India were bound to give full protection to the minorities. Pakistan never honoured its commitment and the Prime Minister Pandit Jawahar Lal Nehru adopted a kind of neutral posture on the Question of forcing Pakistan to play its role honestly.

Dr. Shyama Prasad Mookerjee resigned from the cabinet and decided to launch a new political party which would appropriately serve the national interest. He formed a new political organization and named it People’s Party. At that very time, some influential persons in RSS were also thinking of forming a political party. It was decided that the co-operation and leadership of Dr. Shyama Prasad Mookerjee should be sought to concretise their plans.

The final decision came about in a meeting held at the Sangh office at Calcutta between Dr. Mookerjee and the then Sarsanghchalak of the RSS Sh. Guru Ji i.e. Sh. Madhavrao Sadashivrao Golwalker. It was decided that the RSS would place some of the workers at the disposal of Dr. Mookerjee. Prominent
among those who were spared from the day to day activities to devote
themselves completely to politics were Pandit Deen Dayal Upadhayaya, Sh. Atal
Bihari Vajpayee, Sh. Nana Ji Deshmukh, Sh. Bhai Mahavir, Sh. Sunder Singh
Bhandari, Sh. Jagan Nath Rao Joshi. Mean while Dr. Shyama Prasad Mookerjee
of Hindu Mahasabha resigned from Nehru cabinet in protest against Nehru-
Liaquat Pact and began to look for a new party. There are two views about the
formation of Bharatiya Jana Sangh. One view is that it is the result of
combination of partyless leader Dr. Shyama Prasad and Sh. Kushabahu Thakre.
It was made clear that apart from providing some workers, the RSS would have
nothing to do with politics and newly formed party. The Bharatiya Jana Sangh
would have to stand on its own feet. The Jana Sangh was formed and its
activities became quite prominent in a short span of time. Dr. Mookerjee found
the solid support of the RSS and Guru Golwalker for his mission. Golwalker
picked up his “staunch and tried workers, who could respectfully and
unflinchingly shoulder the burden of founding the new local party and who
had the ability to lay broad, unshakable foundations for its rise to the status of
popular and respectable All India Political Party”.13

Finally, on October 21, 1951, The All India Bharatiya Jana Sangh, as an
All India Party, was inaugurated with Dr. Shyama Prasad as its founder
President. Mostly the new party included the hard core RSS activists, staunch
Arya Smajists or former members of Hindu Mahasabha within its fold. This party
kept itself away from the secular and liberal traditions as established by
Gandhi and Nehru, and became pre-occupied with the ideology of Militant
Hindu Nationalism of RSS and the orthodoxy of Hindu Mahasabha. Dr. Shyama
Prasad Mookerjee was of the view that Bharatiya Jana Sangh should act as a
conservative and democratic opposition party in the country which might
become the tribune of the people and guardian of their democratic rights and
liberties. The aim it set before itself was to dispel the clouds of darkness and
frustration that had begun to gather on the horizon so soon after freedom due to unrealistic and confused policies of the men in power. It choose Deepak (diya) as its party symbol which brightens the humble hamlet’s and cottages in which real India lives.\(^{14}\)

Ideologically, the Bharatiya Jana Sangh based itself upon the traditional ideas of Hindu Nationalism considering Hindu Society and Nation as identical. It was of the belief that Hindus do not form a religious community but the nation to which all individuals belong irrespective of their caste, class, creed and language. The Jana Sangh stands for “Bharatiya Sanskriti” which means ancient Hindu culture. This led to its lack of support from the religious minorities for the fear of Hinduisation in the name of Nationalism.\(^{15}\)

The Hindu based organizations like Ram Rajya Parishad, Hindu Mahasabha, Arya Samaj and RSS shaped the ideology and the objectives of Bharatiya Jana Sangh in its commitment towards ‘Hindu Cause’. Besides, Indian nationalist thinkers and reformers like Swami Dayanand Saraswati, Tilak, Vivekanand influenced the Jana Sangh people a lot. The Bharatiya Jana Sangh never supported the concept of Gandhian Secularism, Secular Interpretation of Hindu religion and Nehru’s Secular Democracy. The Hindu nationalists including Bharatiya Jana Sangh remained worried by the communist threat. They severely attacked the communists for their anti-national bias and idea of class struggle as it creates division in the Hindu society. The Bharatiya Mazdoor Sangh was established in 1955 with the approval of Bharatiya Jana Sangh at Jodhpur. D.P. Thenagadi was made to take charge of Bharatiya Mazdoor Sangh and it was to function within the framework of Hindu nationalist plans. At this point of time, Bharatiya Jana Sangh appeared more like a social movement than a political party for rehabilitating Hindu social base.

The RSS continued to contribute militant Hinduism to consolidate the foundations of Bharatiya Jana Sangh people, in spite of its increased support
from 1950’s upto 1960’s due to socio-economic protest movement, the BJS did not leave its Hindu identity. But RSS again took initiatives to create another organization i.e. Vishav Hindu Parishad to promote the cause of Hinduism from 1964 onwards. S.S Apte, a Brahmin from Maharashtra headed the Vishav Hindu Parishad. The VHP became the advocate of socio cultural reform programme. It undertook ethno-religious campaigns in late 1960’s to bring an end to cow slaughter. It was exploited by Bharatiya Jana Sangh to get political dividends.

It was noteworthy that Dr. Mookerjee had extolled the services of Dr. Deen Dayal Upadhayaya by saying that if he had the services of two more devoted workers like him, he could soon change the face of Indian politics. The Bharatiya Jana Sangh popular base was confined to the northern states of India like Madhaya Pradesh, Delhi, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, Gujrat and Himachal Pradesh. Its influence in the southern states remained almost negligible. The leadership concentrated work only in urban areas and it had support amongst the upper- caste Hindus only and negligible part from the low caste and other minority groups like Harijans, tribals and Muslims.

Soon after the formation of Bharatiya Jana Sangh in Oct 1951, it joined the electoral field in the 1952 General Elections. People were hopeful of the Party’s victory in certain states, particularly in the PEPSU province which had been constituted with the amalgamation of princely states of the East Punjab. The basis of this hope was the votes of the displaced persons who had come from the other side after partition. The workers of the party had worked hard, even at the risk of their life, to protect the life, property and honour of thousands of families. It was expected that the grateful people would cast their votes in favour of Jana Sangh. They had suffered a lot from the partition of Punjab in terms of lives and property, and were full of praise for the assistance rendered to them by the RSS. But what happened was just the opposite. The reason was quite evident. For rehabilitation, they needed the
attention and assistance of Congress govt. Therefore, they voted for the Congress and the Jana Sangh suffered a heavy defeat. Only three candidates were elected- Dr. Mookerjee and Mr. Bannerjee (Bengal) and Umashankar Trivedi (Rajasthan). Inspite of this defeat, the Jana Sangh was accorded recognition as a National Party by the Election Commission on the basis of number of votes cast in its favour.¹⁹

The first All India session of Jana Sangh was held at Kanpur in December 1952 and January 1953. Dr. Mookerjee was elected as President of Bharatiya Jana Sangh. It is an irony of fate that within two years of the formation of Bharatiya Jana Sangh, its President Dr. Mookerjee died in the Srinagar jail. His untimely death was a great blow to the new organization-Jana Sangh, it appeared, had become an orphan on his passing away. Many people thought of adopting it. Some even thought that this infant will die a natural death. Who could have imagined at that time that novice looking players in the political arena like Pandit Deen Dayal Upadhayaya and Atal Bihari Vajpayee will make this apparently orphaned child into an extremely courageous wrestler.²⁰

The Bharatiya Jana Sangh suffered from the stigma of communalism and being a mouthpiece of RSS. It, sometimes, led to clashes of approach between RSS and the BJS. An inner struggle was there among the leaders of both the organizations. The Bharatiya Jana Sangh leadership was naturally apprehensive of the domination by the RSS in its political, social, economic programme as well as foreign policies. The modernist Jana Sangh members were against giving undue importance to RSS. But they could not break their relations with RSS because their own existence and popularity depended upon RSS to a great extent. There was a general belief that RSS might survive without Jana Sangh but it was difficult for Jana Sangh to survive without RSS.²¹

To counteract the stigma of communalism the party made certain tactful provisions in its policies and programmes. It advocated the welfare oriented
pragmatism. By these tactics the leaders of BJS tried to wash away the stigma of the communalism thereby making the party acceptable to less traditional Hindus and minorities. In 1952 at Bhagalpur Annual Session the Bharatiya Jana Sangh announced a very progressive economic programme to adopt to the changed situation which was reverberating with the slogans of socialism.

The situation was very alarming as there was great deterioration in economic conditions, unemployment, pervasive corruption and inefficient administration. There were certain protest movements in India specially by the youth and the students. The Youth wing of the party i.e. Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad was playing active part in the politics. The student intensified their movement in Bihar, Gujrat and other states to dissolve the state assemblies which were governed by Congress Government. The agitating students were of the view that Congress govt. were not seriously and sympathetically solving their problems. There was great hue and cry in different parts of the country. J.P. Narayan, who had left the party and power politics 20 years ago i.e. 1954, got drawn towards the student movement. On June 5, 1974, in a massive gathering in Gandhi Maidan at Patna, he gave a call for Total Revolution. The student movement changed into a political and people’s movement. The opposition parties also joined the movement under J.P. The Congress govt. under Mrs. Indira Gandhi imposed National Emergency in the country on June 25, 1975. The govt. started arresting all those who were active in J.P. movement under MISA.

Actually during 1973-74 opposition parties had started feeling the necessity of forging a united forum as an alternative to the Congress. The Bharatiya Jana Sangh enthusiastically responded to the movement. Sh. Atal Bihari Vajpayee also called for a total revolution against the existing situation. He urged the other opposition parties for forming a united bloc within the Parliament too. The leaders of Congree-O, Bharatiya Jana Sangh, Bharatiya Lok
Dal, Bharatiya Kisan Dal and the socialist parties decided to contest the forthcoming elections as a united opposition under the banner of Janata Party. There was widespread antagonism against Congress. So, in the sixth Lok Sabha (1977) the Janta Party was voted to power on a vote cast against Mrs. Indira Gandhi for her excesses.

So we see that Janata Party came to power by dislodging the Congress from the Centre in sixth general elections. In fact, the Janata combine had risen to power on the crest of anti-emergency wave. The Janata party emerged as an alternative to the Congress and led to speculation about the prospect of political polarization in the country. But after one and a half years in office, it became a house divided against itself, but there was a great clash of personalities and insatiable political ambitions among the newly elected Janata Government.

So this Janata party govt. could not work properly and for long. Born out of marriage of convenience of various political parties, personality clashes, prejudices and deep personal ambitions, the Janta party continued to present an image of a bunch of desperate office seekers, for whom the party was only a means to achieve their personal end. They never thought to serve the people. There was no accepted leader and it led to chaos. There was a lot of infighting within the party on various important issues such as Expansion of ministry, Organizational elections, Distribution of Assembly tickets, Making of Nuclear bomb, Replacement of Minority Right Commission, Regarding Article 370 and Dual membership issue. Everybody wanted to and tried to keep his own separate identity. There was no unity in the party and hence it splitted. The Jana Sangh group left the Janata Party on the Dual membership issue. Jana Sangh preferred the breakup of the party rather than breaking off the relations with Rashtriya Swayamsewak Sangh.
The Janata party was unable to capitalize on its 1977 election victory for a number of reasons. First, conflicting historical legacies characterized the factions that constituted the fledgeling party. The leaders of the erstwhile parties who had subsequently reconstituted parties were old time nationalists. Each had reason to believe that his claim to leadership of the new party was as good as or better than his rivals. The parties and factions had become accustomed to function separately from one another and had adjusted their expectations to garner the small rewards of permanent opposition. Second, the party leadership avoided the mechanism of party democracy-elections that would have required bargaining and compromise among components. They relied instead on decision making by the leader of the component units. Third, factional leaders resisted integration of the functional organization- such as youth and labour- that constituted the active base of component parties. Finally, it was difficult to understand the failure of the party without taking account of human nature. Ambition, pride, hypocrisy and folly were spectacularly on display for these years.

From the beginning, therefore the Janata Party was plagued by internal conflicts and squabbles. These conflicts were centered around the political ambitions of the powerful personalities of Charan Singh, Morarji Desai and Jagjivan Ram, all former Congress men. All of them aspired to be the Prime Minister of the country as well as the leader of the party. Since there was constant struggle among these leaders for the top position, the Jana Sangh contingent of the MP’s represented a solid bloc of votes, able to tip the balance in favour of one or the other contestants and its leaders were dragged into this power struggle.

The Bharatiya Jana Sangh had first accepted Morarji Desai as the leader of the party and Prime Minister of the country. When Charan Singh challenged Desai’s leadership, however, the Jana Sangh accepted Jagjivan Ram rather
than Charan Singh, as the leader of the party and potential Prime Minister. This made the followers of Charan Singh to cause a split within the Janata Party. The political battle brought down the Desai govt. and raised questions about the “Secular” credentials of Jana Sangh.

Since a large number of Jana Sangh contingent of Members of Parliament came from the ranks of the RSS, they were still associated with its activities. The followers of Charan Singh objected to this “dual membership”. They branded the RSS-a Hindu communal organization and claimed that any association of Jana Sangh Members of Parliament with the RSS compromised the secular character of the Janata Party. Singh’s contingent charged that the political activities of the Jana Sangh Members of Parliament within the Janta Party were controlled by the RSS leadership. The Jana Sangh Members of Parliament countered that the RSS was purely a cultural organization. These issues were never raised either during 1977 elections or at the time of the merger of Jana Sangh into the Janata Party. These were raised only later when the struggle for power within the party became intense. It has been correctly pointed out “The Jana Sangh cohesiveness, not the RSS manipulation, was the problem. The Jana Sangh group acted as a unit, and this capability enhanced its potential to assert power because other groups were not nearly so united. The Jana Sangh leadership had a broader agenda than just joining the mainstream of Indian Politics. The members accepted Morarji Desai as the party leader not just because he was chosen by Jai Parkash Narayan but also because he was looked upon as an elder statesman, had a national reputation and came from a non-Hindi speaking state. Charan Singh was recognized as only a regional leader with a narrow caste- oriented power base in North India.

When Morarji Desai resigned, the Jana Sangh accepted Jagjivan Ram a former untouchable as their leader. By doing so, the Jana Sangh’s leadership also wished to demonstrate that it was not restricted to upper caste leaders
but could also work with political elites originating from the lower caste. The efforts of the Jana Sangh leadership to stay in the mainstream of Indian Politics and to establish its secular credentials did not pay many dividends. Even after the split of the Janata Party at the revival of Bharatiya Lok Dal by Charan Singh, the Jana Sangh continued to be part of the Janata Party which was then headed by Chander Shekhar. Charan Singh and socialists, in a bid to weaken the position of Morarji Desai, demanded that the former Jana Sangh members should give up their membership of RSS in order to continue as full-fledged members of the Janata Party. This issue sparked off an intense debate on the “fascism” of the Sangh Parivar, which further boosted the factional struggles within the Janata Party. It also provided a welcome stepping stone for a well-staged comeback of Congress as the only true protector of secularism in India.

In Jan 1980, when India held its seventh Lok Sabha elections, the Jana Sangh group contested the election as the part of the Janata Party. It was humiliated at the poll results by the Congress-I, winning only 31 seats compared to 203 it held when the party split in 1979. In 1977, the Jana Sangh contingent had won 93 seats in the General Elections, in 1980, it captured only 16. Such a pathetic electoral performance forced the different groups within the Janata Party to re-think their strategies. It was public disgust with the performance of the different factions of the Janata Party that led to its defeat.

At this moment, the Indian political scene was thrown into mess and confusion. The political parties began to look forward to a new strategy, new methods and new alignment devoid of all ideological considerations and dream of the emergence of a two party system after the March 1977 election dashed. The Jana Sangh’s leaders were left with no choice but to go it alone. Logically they should have resumed their old name (Jana Sangh) and identity. But they did not, because they were convinced themselves that the old name limited their appeal and J.P. movement culminating in the formation of Janata Party
had created a reservoir of goodwill and support. They thought they can take some advantage of this goodwill if they keep a similar name. It is no secret that there was a strong difference of opinion over the name of the new party among leaders. Mr. Nana Ji Deshmukh was of the view that the Jana Sangh still commands a great deal of loyalty and respectability among its committed cadres. Mr. A.B. Vajpayee was of the view that it would be more prudent to provide the new party with a more secular and broad based image since the old Jana Sangh suffers of being sectarian and communal. So they did not revive Jana Sangh. They named it Bharatiya Janata Party. After this some non-Jana Sangh members also joined the Bharatiya Janata Party.

In a nutshell we can say that the defeat of the Janata Party and disenchantment within the RSS, with the Janata experiment resulted in the formation of a new political affiliate of the RSS, the Bharatiya Janata Party in April 1980. This party led by Sh. Atal Bihari Vajpayee and his populist wing, claimed to be the true inheritor of the "spirit" of the Janata Party. It aimed at retaining a substantial part of the popular goodwill and the newly required respectability in the public realm that the Jana Sangh Parivar had earned during the Janata years. A deliberate effort was made by the leadership of the BJP to distance itself from the legacy of Jana Sangh in order to capture political power, the Hindu nationalists needed to broaden their electoral reach on both the geographic and demographic basis.

The new party sought to build a new image through its ideological rhetoric. This change, both in ideology and strategy was prompted by its recent political experience. Leaders like J.P. Narayan, Morarji Desai had considerable impact on the thinking of the leadership. In Dec 1980, A.B. Vajpayee in his inaugural address at Bombay stressed that BJP was not a new name for the former Jana Sangh and added that it represented the inspirations of J.P. Narayan. Vajpayee also stretched the need for value-based politics. He said,
"I believe that the country's crisis is essentially a moral crisis. The biggest curse of our life is that moral values have given way to self seeking and power lust, and politics has become a pure power game."  

A.B. Vajpayee held that this moral decay had also permeated the Indian society in order to rebuild both the society and the polity, they needed to resurrect the programme and the policies advocated by Mahatma Gandhi, J.P. Narayan and Deen Dayal Upadhayaya. These men had sought to focus the nation's development strategy to benefit the weakest sections of the society by removing social inequality. To achieve such a goal, Vajpayee called upon the new party to mobilize the "poor peasentry, workers, the harijans, the tribals and other exploited sections of the population".  

The Bharatiya Janata Party leaders decided to become a national alternative to the ruling party. For this it was necessary to leave the philosophy of Hindu Rashtra and adopt some liberal ideology which must appeal to the minority section of the country and dilute its emphasis on Militant nationalism and Indian values. The new party, Mr. Vajpayee, declared, would endeavour to realize Lok Naik J.P.'s unfulfilled dreams. So, the BJP did not claim any departure from the Janata Party's ideology and on the contrary stressed that it would seek to work for the ideals of J.P. Narain for which the non-Congress-I group got together in 1977.  

To present itself in more moderate and humanistic guise, the BJP leadership adopted Gandhian Socialism as the cornerstone of its new political ideology. Many people believed that Gandhian Socialism fits the Indian cultural milieu better because it is based upon the spiritual heritage of India. The BJP was of the view that there should be such a scheme of economic distribution based upon ethical and moral principles. They rejected Marxism, because it favoured violence and it advocates concentration of power in the state. Vajpayee said that increased productivity had not led to an equitable
distribution of wealth. The leaders of the BJP party asserted that both Marxism and Capitalism are based upon the exploitation of human by other human. If Capitalism creates inequality in society, Marxism denies individual freedom. The Gandhian concept of trusteeship provides an alternative model of economic and political democracy that can lead to the end of exploitation. There was repeated stress at the inaugural convention on the faith in Indian nationalism, democracy based on respect for all religions, socialism based on Gandhian principle of decentralization of political and economic power.33

Moreover the party aimed at building up India as a strong and prosperous nation, which is modern, progressive and enlightened in outlook and which proudly draws inspiration from India’s ancient culture and values and it is able to emerge as a great world power, playing an effective role in the comity of nations for the establishment of world peace and a just international order.34

To further modify the radical thrust of Militant Hindu nationalism, the Bharatiya Janata Party leadership also committed itself to nationalism and national integration, democracy, positive secularism and value based politics. These five commitments were stressed as the striking features of the new party distinguishing it from the Congress.35

According to the BJP leadership the Congress Party represented the denial of democracy by imposing National Emergency in India in the Year 1975, its policy of appeasement of minorities and thus distortion of secularism, its debasement of Indian Politics by tolerating corruption in public life, its unprincipled pursuit of power, and the introduction of consumerism in disregard to India’s cultural traditions. The Bharatiya Janata Party asserted that “secularism of the Congress has been totally immoral and opportunistic and a fraud played on the people of this country because it increasingly communalized the Indian politics”.36
Reflecting these five commitments, the party leadership expressed its willingness to co-operate with all political parties to help the poor masses of India. In this way the leaders indicated that even though the BJP was ready to be flexible on specific policy issues, it was not ready to compromise on such fundamental issues as the territorial integrity of the country and its opposition to authoritarianism and political corruption.

On the other hand, the relations between RSS and BJP remained intact. RSS and various other organizations promoting Hindu interest, formed an umbrella organization called Bharatiya Janata Yuva Morcha, which was to be official wing of the BJP and would follow the policies of the BJP. The party in its policy matters declared that the membership of the RSS will not be considered inconsistent so long as the members concerned continued to subscribe to the ideology and programme described by the party. The party members were allowed to attend the Sakhas of RSS and other activities related to RSS. In the initial stages the party could not draw substantial support from any section of society other than the one under RSS influence, but a large part of this section got confused about the character of Bharatiya Janata Party because of its secular veneer. If they were to support a secular party what was wrong with Congress-I. That is why, in 1983, many of the traditionally Bharatiya Janata Party votes went over to the Congress in Delhi and Jammu.

The Seventh Lok Sabha elections which were the first election for the new avtaar (BJP) of the Bharatiya Jana Sangh in which it captured only two seats with 7.66 percent votes. The Congress-I had weaned the Hindu votes away from Bharatiya Janata Party which was indeed painful to the leaders of Bharatiya Janata Party. It was also thought that what was going on in Punjab was the beginning of Hindu-Sikh conflict. The leader of the Congress thought that it would give advantage to the party. It means that this post Janata period
from 1980 onward was characterized by two important forces that operated simultaneously: the awakening of India’s electorate to the logic of electoral politics and the decay of political institutions, particularly of the Congress Party. Voters became more assertive and competitive. During this period there was a renewal of opposition fragmentation, unsuccessful efforts at realignment and an increased regionalisation of Indian politics. There was abundant alteration between parties in power at the State and National levels, by a continued decay and fragmentation within the parties.

Opposition to Congress did not achieve much unity in 1980 or 1984. There are a number of ways to review its failure to do so. But one view argues that in 1980, the wounds from the internecine squabbles of the Janata years were too fresh and that in 1984, popular sympathy for Rajiv Gandhi, in the wake of assassination of Mrs. Indira Gandhi, rendered opposition action irrelevant so that there was no incentive to unite. The manner in which Rajiv Gandhi and his party won the election of 1984 can be attributed to certain factors. First, Rajiv Gandhi’s Youth, his freshness and his apparent lack of a political past helped him to represent himself both as a figure of stability and continuity on the one hand, and one of renewal and change on the other. Another crucial factor was the widespread perception that national unity was in danger. This fear was crystallized in many minds by the trauma of the assassination and was relentlessly exploited by the Congress. Finally, there was a related Hindu backlash, which was supposedly encouraged by the Prime Minister and his party. To point to these factors as decisive is to identify this election of 1984 as distinct from most of the National and State level elections since 1972. The earlier elections tended to be decided on concrete issues and particularly on the quality of the incumbent govt.’s performance. The 1984 election was decided at the level of anxieties, images and symbols. It is important to note here that the landslide victory was achieved by the Congress. Both Mrs. Indira
Gandhi's assassination and resultant Hindu backlash benefitted the Congress-I. Many RSS activists were reported to have vigorously campaigned for the Congress. The BJP which had stood for the Hindu ethos was left in the lurch by the majority community. The Congress-I's masterstroke proved to be a stunning blow to the Bharatiya Janata Party. Congress-I, in the beginning, could not establish its hold in South and several areas in the East.

The problem with the BJP was that it was still in the process of political transformation. It wanted to broaden its political base but was apparently constrained because of its past image. Muslims and other minorities did not accept BJP from their heart. Mrs. Indira Gandhi, who at crucial moments stole its thunder by exploiting the psychology of Hindu votes. Since its rebirth as the Bharatiya Janata Party in 1980, its policies had undergone a fundamental change with a thrust towards liberalization. The new orientation is supposed to be founded on what is called Gandhian Socialism in BJP's official literature.

This electoral debacle made the leaders of BJP to review its policies and also to draw a future course of action, if it wants to improve its position in the days to come. Its poor performance in Lok Sabha and assembly elections came as a shock to the party which had hoped to win a sizeable number of votes from the Hindi belt. It wanted to regain its lost ground specially among Hindus. It tried to keep its supporters, rank and file intact.

The Bharatiya Janata Party, in order to come in the forefront, introduced new policies and programme. Earlier it used to depend mainly on the votes and support of urban-middle class Hindu traders. But after 1984 Parliamentary elections, the party decided to expand its support base by wooing the rural farmers as well. Vajpayee's eight point programme covers much from building the party's organization to use party cadres to get various
governmental programmes implemented properly to fight corruption in order to
give protection to Harijans and petty labourers.  

In October 1986, in Jammu, the BJP National Executive adopted 15 page
'Charter of Rights of Kisans', the party, for the first time, came forward to
support the rural section in general and farmers in particular. In the year May
1986, L.K. Advani was elected as the President of the party. More outspoken in
defense of his own RSS ties and of RSS norms than former party President
Vajpayee. Advani seemed to be emerging as the most powerful figure in the
party. Having the support of organizational leaders he was expected to re­
orient the party in the Jana Sangh image. In his Presidential address on 9-11
May 1986 Annual party session, Advani emphasized the BJP’s Jana Sangh
roots. Barely concealing his appeal for the support of RSS cadres, he
demanded the scrapping of Article 370 of the Constitution, which gives Kashmir
a special status. In addition, Advani’s warning about the threats to National
unity may have been intended to convince the RSS cadres that the Bharatiya
Janata Party would be a better manager of national interests than Rajiv
Gandhi’s Congress Party. Besides, the appeal to the RSS cadre his massage
seem to have been calculated to regain Hindu support in anticipation of May
1987 state elections in Haryana, Himachal Pardesh, Kerala, Mizoram, West
Bengal as well as possible mid-term polls in Punjab and Kashmir.

Advani flatly denied that the Bharatiya Janata Party was hardening its
stand and attributed the changes to the altered situation. By then Rajiv
Gandhi’s popularity had begun to wane. The Bofors disclosures in April 1987
accelerated the process and the opposition’s fortunes revived. The BJP had its
share of the gains when it formed a Coalition with Devi Lal’s Lok Dal after his
spectacular victory in the Haryana assembly elections in June 1987. But there
was no doubt that RSS was now in ascendant. In October 1987 it organized a
meeting of prominent swayamsevaks working in Bharatiya Janata Party, Vishav
Hindu Parishad, Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad, Bharatiya Mazdoor Sangh which was attended by Vajpayee and Advani. On October 21, 1987, Advani justified the conclave. After all there is a linkage, all these organizations consist of people belonging to the RSS. There began a clear hardening of BJP’s line in the year 1988. This had been in the making for some time. Two features of this phase stand out. One is candour. More than ever before were a series of blatantly communal utterances by Advani. The other is an openness about the linkage with the RSS coupled with greater assertion by the latter. The BJP shed its ambiguities and the RSS stopped its pro-Congress-I statements. Merrily or sadly, Vajpayee sailed with these currents.

The Bharatiya Janata Party’s Plenary session in Agra on April 1988 was a landmark. And Advani, who had on April 4, 1980, unconditionally pledged itself to preserving the composite culture of India, now discovered that emphasis on the composite character of Indian culture is generally an attempt to disown its essentially Hindu spirit and content. Advani, at an Rashtriya Swayamsewak Sangh meeting at Coimbatore, said India’s culture is essentially a Hindu culture and it should be reflected in the various policies, programmes, attitudes and positions we take.

The BJP now openly vowing that it sought to protect Hindu interests. On September 30, 1990, in Mumbai Advani complained that today’s leaders were afraid of speaking for Hindus. In the same breath he asked the minorities to accept this country and its culture. Once he said that even after forty years of independence, almost all the political parties which have ruled the country have done nothing for the 'betterment of the Hindu community' but had taken special interest in appeasing the minorities for their own political gains. Advani, in Bombay said "When Muslims, Sikhs and other communities practise their religion, then we call them secular, but if parties like the Bharatiya Janata Party and the Shiv Sena practise Hinduism then we are branded as
communal.” The Jana Morcha and later the Janata Dal could not possibly have an alliance with the BJP especially in its post 1986 incarnation.

In the Ninth Lok Sabha elections (1989) all non-Congress-I opposition contested from one platform with complete seat adjustment under the name of National Front. BJP’s decided not to merge with any political party and retain its identity. It helped the party to make certain gains. The 1989 general elections yielded a fragmented verdict. The left parties as well as the Bharatiya Janata Party pledged support to National Front headed by the Janata Dal from outside in order to enable its leader V.P. Singh to form a govt. Advani wrote a letter on Nov 29, 1989 to V.P. Singh which was as follows "If it is acknowledged by the Janata Dal that though the Janata Dal and BJP differ on issues like Article 370, uniform civil code, Human right commission, Rama Janam Bhoomi etc., the Janata Dal does not regard the Bharatiya Janata Party as communal, that would go a long way in removing misgivings in our rank and file. I hope the National Front will take note of these reservations and exert to remove them. Even while expressing these reservations, we have not made our support to you conditional to your agreeing to remove them. In response to your letter the BJP wishes to convey to you its readiness to give general but critical support to National Front Government. On Nov. 30, 1989 Advani went back on this only a few months later when he launched the Rath Yatra which could not have failed to bring down the National Front govt. The reference to Human Right Commission was a valid demand for the abolition of the Minorities Commission. The RSS demanded its abolition and replacement by Human Right Commission. The Bharatiya Janata Party fell in line.

On February 27, 1990 elections were held in Eight state assemblies. The BJP won the largest number, 498 seats, against the Dal’s 458 and Congress-I’s 444. It formed govt. in MP, Rajasthan and Himachal Pardesh. On Aug 7, 1990 Prime Minister V.P. Singh announced his govt.’s decision to implement the
Mandal report which had recommended that 27 percent of Government jobs be reserved for backward class. Advani’s riposte was sharp and calculated. He declared on September 12, that he would go on a Rath Yatra from Somnath to Ayodhaya from September 25 to October 30, 1990. The challenge to National Front could not have been more explicit.

Advani was arrested in Bihar by Laloo Prasad Yadav’s govt. So the Bharatiya Janata Party withdrew its support from V.P. Singh’s government on Oct 23, 1990. It was voted out of office on a no confidence motion on Nov 7 by 356 votes against 151 with 6 absententions. Both the Bharatiya Janata Party and Congress-I voted for the motion. Chander Shekhar split the Janata Dal on Nov 5 and formed a govt. with Congress-I support. It was, predictably, withdrawn in March 1991. The Lok Sabha was dissolved. On Rajiv Gandhi’s tragic assassination in May 1991, P.V. Narasimha Rao became leader of the Congress-I Parliamentary party and was sworn in as Prime Minister on June 21. At the national level, the BJP also had an opportunity to influence the policies of the new govt. headed by P.V. Narasimha Rao. Even though Rao led a minority govt., the uncertain conditions created by Rajiv’s assassination and frequent outbreaks of political violence in the country demanded responsible behaviour on the part of both the opposition and the new govt.51

During this critical period, the country also faced a serious economic crisis created by the severe shortage of foreign exchange, so the Rao govt. introduced a far reaching liberalization of the economy. Thus he brought about drastic changes oriented towards a market economy, all of which were advocated by the BJP election platform. The BJP thus supported the new economic policies of the govt. Advani and Rao developed a close personal relationship, leading to frequent consultation and co-operation of the leaders of the two parties. Such co-operation also reflected the statemanship qualities of Advani, the leader of the opposition in the Lok Sabha. Advani called Rao the
best Prime Minister India had since Lal Bahadur Shastri. This co-operation between the leadership of Congress-I and Bharatiya Janata Party was influenced by the power struggle between the factional leader of the two parties. Within the Congress-I, Rao was under pressure from Mr. Arjun Singh and Mr. Sharad Pawar. Both of them had adopted a militant anti Bharatiya Janata Party posture in public. Arjun Singh demanded dismissal of BJP govt. in Madhaya Pradesh. Actually Arjun Singh wanted to build an independent support base by mobilizing defeated and demoralized Congress men in the Hindi speaking states of North India, where Rao had very little support.

Advani was also under pressure from his party’s hardliners. The Bharatiya Janata Party had used the Ram Janam Bhoomi - Babri Masjid issue to mobilize the Hindu vote. The party hardliners headed by Murli Manohar Joshi were bent upon undertaking EKTA YATRA. They wanted to highlight the govt.’s failure to protect Hindu and suppress the Muslim-militant led insurgency in Kashmir and other secessionist movement in India. Observers, inside and outside the Bharatiya Janata Party looked upon the Ekta Yatra as a political gimmick employed by Joshi to enhance his personal political stature. By this time, it was evident that the Bharatiya Janata Party was not free from political infighting. Whatever the motives of these factions (VHP and Bajrang Dal), given the volatile situation existing in India, the Bharatiya Janata Party moderates led by Vajpayee and Jaswant Singh, sought a cooling off period to sort out complex issues through negotiation, mediation and legal action.

In April 1992 this co-operation between Congress-I and Bharatiya Janata Party suffered a sharp set back when Arjun Singh called upon the Congressmen "to rise and fight the Bharatiya Janata Party so that the country could be liberated from its communal tentacles." Rao asserted that non-secular parties (implying BJP) had no place in a secular state and that "these militate against the spirit of constitution" and he called for a legal ban on such
parties. While commending Rao for his bold stand, the Times of India commented that "....Mr. Rao is mentally and politically preparing himself to do, if need be, without the BJP's support in Parliament". \(^5^5\)

It was evident that Rao had yielded to the pressure from within his party and break the working relationship with the BJP leadership. These developments within the Congress Party put the BJP leadership especially its moderate section in a quandary. The factional lines had become clear, the hardliners led by Joshi were no longer willing to wait to strike against the Rao govt. They wanted to exploit the issue of construction of Ram Temple in Ayodhaya to whip up Hindu sentiments against the Congress-I. While the moderate section of BJP believed that the Temple issue had outlived its political utility, it could not deliver any more votes for them. In May 1992, National Council meeting held at Gandhi Nagar, Gujarat, the Bharatiya Janata Party leadership strongly denounced Rao govt. not only for its failure to solve the Punjab Problem, to complete its enquiry on the Bofors, and to control inflation but also for its economic programme.

In the Tenth Lok Sabha elections, Bharatiya Janata Party contested independently and won 119 seats. \(^5^6\) Besides the landmark victory in the Ninth and Tenth Lok Sabha elections, its performance in the succeeding assembly elections was better. It succeeded in making the govt. in Himachal Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh and in Coalition with Janata Dal in Rajasthan and shared power with Janata Dal in Gujarat in 1991 assembly elections. It succeeded in making government in Uttar Pradesh.

The Bharatiya Janata Party in Punjab is the virtual re-incarnation of erstwhile Jana Sangh. Though the Bharatiya Janata Party was formed in 1980, it was in existence in the politics of the state in various forms upto 1977, the Jana Sangh, as a matter of fact was nothing but the same political Organization as the BJP now. In 1977, the people belonging to this Organization merged into
Janata Party. In 1980, the people belonging to the former Jana Sangh in the Janata Party broke away and formed a separate Organization.

Mr. Yagya Dutt Sharma was appointed as convener of Punjab. Many RSS and non-Jana Sangh members also joined the Bharatiya Janata Party in Punjab. It is worth mentioning here that before the re-Organization of Punjab in 1966, the Jana Sangh was not a major political force from the point of view of its electoral strength. In the assembly elections of 1952, 1957, 1962 the party got 5.0 percent, 8.6 percent and 9.7 percent votes with 2, 9, 8 seats respectively. After the re-Organization, Punjab became the Hindu minority state but the electoral fortunes of the Jana Sangh (now Bharatiya Janata Party) did not make any special mark. The urban middle class and Hindu refugees became the main base of the party. The Sikhs never voted to Jana Sangh because they considered it a party of urban Hindus. In the assembly elections of 1967, 1969 and 1972 the party secured 9.85 percent, 9.01 percent and 4.96 percent votes and won 9, 8 and Zero seats respectively. As a constituent of Janata Party it polled 14.93 percent votes.\(^{57}\)

A decline in its mass base began immediately after the party joined the govt. as the Akali partner in 1967 and 1969. Its popular percentage of votes came down from 9.01 percent in 1969 and 4.96 percent in 1972 from 8 seats to Zero seats. The impression went round that the party had failed to protect the interest of Hindus. The party could capture only 1 and 6 seats with 6.93 percent and 5.11 percent votes in the assembly elections\(^ {58}\) of 1980 and 1985. Its noisy criticism of Akali extremism did not appear to have earned it the confidence of Hindus in Punjab. The party had lost its base to the Congress.\(^ {59}\)

The 1992 Lok Sabha elections was, therefore, a major step toward the revival of normal democratic processes, even though in this election around 24 percent of the people voted and it was labelled 'an apology for a
representative character of democratic polity’. This was the lowest turnout since the re-Organization of Punjab in 1966. Punjab had the highest turnout of 72 percent in 1969 mid-term elections which ushered Punjab into an era of Coalition politics. However the percentage of votes polled continued to decline gradually since 1969 with 62.67 percent votes polled in the 1989 Lok Sabha elections. In 1992 Lok Sabha elections, the decline was unprecedented due to the exceptional political situation. The turnout was the lowest in Jat dominated Rural areas. The response of Rural population was naturally apathetic since these elections were boycotted by Akali factions resulting in a landslide victory for the Congress-I in one of the lowest voter turnout since 1947.

The Eleventh General Elections (1996) in India catapulted the Bharatiya Janata Party to a position of the largest political party in India. While the party retained significant elements of its Hindu nationalists discourse, the election performance was not linked directly to militant propagation of Hinduatava as in the case of 1991 elections. The Jana Sangh and later the BJP has always been oscillated between a Militant and Modern approach to politics. Jana Sangh relied on ethno-religious movements such as the 1966 cow-protection agitation and Ayodhaya issue. The Bharatiya Janata Party relied on more broadly legitimate and patriotic themes concerning national unity and the defense of the common man often with populist overtones. The Bharatiya Janata Party leaders have always been trying to adopt a moderate line which enabled them to make alliances with other parties.

For the first time in 1996, the BJP increased its share of representatives in the Lok Sabha through a rather moderate campaign and limited alliances with regional parties. In 1996, the BJP won 161 seats as against 136 of the Congress-I but in terms of valid votes, its progress was negligible. It received
the support of about 20.7 percent of the electors, while the Congress-I retained 29.7 percent of valid votes. The Bharatiya Janata Party also remained a predominantly Urban party since 32 percent Urban electorate voted for it as against 19 percent of the rural electorate as a whole. If one considers the upper caste graduates living in the towns and cities, 52 percent of this category opted for the Bharatiya Janata Party in 1996.

After the declaration of result of Lok Sabha elections (1996) the BJP emerged as the largest single political party. There were speculations all around that there is possibility of the BJP forming its first ever national govt. So Akali Dal (B) made a public declaration of support for the Bharatiya Janata Party claims. This declaration surprised many observers. Why, they, conjectured, was a party which was the premier representative of the Sikhs prepared to give support to the leading Hindu nationalist party? Was there not something fundamentally irreconcilable in Sikh agitation (which AD(B) had supported) for the Anandpur Sahib resolution with its call for political autonomy and the Bharatiya Janata Party national agenda for Hindutava.

Political developments since 1996 elections clearly point toward a further diversification of Hindu nationalist mobilizational strategies in various states and regions of India. The significant formation of a ruling Coalition between the Bharatiya Janata Party and Akali Dal in Punjab, as well as the reformation of the pragmatic alliance between the Bharatiya Janata Party and the BSP in Uttar Pradesh certainly bear evidence to the BJP's adaptation to the general trend of regionalisation of politics in India. Historically Punjab had experienced electoral competition between Akali Dals of different shades and the Congress Party. Competitive politics has been observed functioning in the post-terrorism phase only during the direct elections to 40 percent of the seats
of the Panchayat Samitis and Zila Parishads in Sept 1994, because the Akali Dal had boycotted the 1992 elections. 67

The same competition was witnessed during the three assembly by-elections. The Congress was forced to give political space to other political parties. Out of the three assembly by-elections in mid 1994 few seats were captured by the Akali’s and the ruling Congress could only retain the Nakodar seat. In the 1996 Lok Sabha elections, the Congress secured 35 percent of the total valid votes polled and won just two seats. This was its worst performance since the 1977 election when it could not win any seat and secured merely 33 percent of the votes.

So the results of 1996 Lok Sabha elections were significant because this perhaps was the first election after 1980, held without the fear of the gun. In comparison to the 1980 Lok Sabha elections, the Congress Party’s performance in the 1996 elections was dismal. In the 1980 elections, the Congress secured 12 seats with 52 percent of the votes. The success of AD (B) securing 8 seats in 1996 Lok Sabha elections, appeared to vindicate its slogan of ‘Panth, Punjab and Punjabiyat’. The result of elections during the period between 1992-1996 show that the Congress could not improve its support base even though it controlled the govt. Nevertheless, in these elections, voters were committed to restoring representative and competitive character of democracy. 68

The 1997 assembly elections in Punjab witnessed the worst ever performance of the Congress which secured only 14 seats with 26 percent of the votes. The SAD (B) won the largest number of seats i.e. 75 and polled 37 percent of the votes. The BJP won 18 seats and polled 8.33 percent of the votes. This performance is a marked change for Punjab’s major political parties. In terms of electoral politics, the 1997 elections experienced record participation of the people in the post 1967 phase. Around 80 percent of the people voted as against 23.69 percent in 1992 elections. The main reason for
this massive turnout was the people’s assertion of their faith in the democratic mode for the redressal of their grievances and also due to the return of competition politics in Punjab after Twelve years.

So we can say that these 1997 assembly election marked the beginning of a distinct political trend in Punjab and also offered some lessons to those who believed in the violent mode to bring about social change. In this election, Akali Dal (B) entered into an alliance with the BJP. The main reason for this alliance was the emergence of the Bharatiya Janata Party as a major national party and the electorate’s concern for Punjabi unity rather than pursuing a divisive separatist agenda. This alliance was political and not merely electoral, because the Akali Dal (B) needed a political space at the National level to shed its anti-national image and the BJP needed to counter the Congress and the left propaganda that the BJP’s policies were anti-minorities.

Further more, it was argued that this alliance would promote and cement unity between the two religious groups and help to reconstruct Punjab’s fractured society. A section of the media termed this alliance as communal and therefore it had the potential to create tensions. They expressed the fear that it might not last long like the three Coalition government formed in the mid 1960’s. In response to this, it was argued that the earlier alliances were post election Coalitions.

This was pre-election unity move which had obtained the mandate of the people and adopted the agenda set by the people. Therefore, it might not be easy for the parties to return to their own agenda. In their agenda, peace ranked high, accompanied by concerns such as unemployment, price rise and better returns for the crops. While summing up, it is interesting to note that the main plank of the politics of merger, post or pre election Coalitions has been to promote Punjabi unity.
Political parties having lost control over events in the wake of terrorism could not impose their ideological and political programme in the post 1992 phase. Earlier, political postures taken by the Akali Dal (B) had been instrumental, to a large extent, in giving direction to Punjab politics. Even the Akali Dal (B) had to shift its agenda from politico-religious identity to non-communal formations. The SAD President S. Parkash Singh Badal, brought the notion of Punjabi unity to the Centrestage of Punjab politics mainly to draw legitimacy for its slogan of ensuring lasting peace in the state. The Akali Dal manifesto for 1997 Lok Sabha elections put emphasis on co-operative federalism rather than anti-centrism.

The Akali-BJP govt. opened a new chapter in center-state relations ushering in the age of co-operative federalism in the country. The era of confrontation has been effectively ended and replaced with a forward looking thrust on working together for the over all good of the state and the nation.

The 12th Lok Sabha (1998) continued to be split one causing re-emergence of a hung Parliament for the fourth successive time. The Bharatiya Janata Party with its old allies and some new partners emerged as the largest vote puller in the country, securing 31 percent of the votes and there by overtaking the Congress. The Bharatiya Janata Party captured 180 seats by polling more than 25 percent of the votes and its allies added a crucial 6 percent of the total. In these elections the Bharatiya Janata Party gave the slogan of stable govt. and able leadership. It continued to project its social, economic, cultural, national and regional issues during the election. Remarkably the Bharatiya Janata Party and its allies demonstrated good electoral performance in each of the four regions of the country. They secured 86 out of 151 seats in Northern region, 61 out of 118 seats in Western region, 53 out of 142 seats in Eastern regions and 50 seats out of 132 in Southern region. Besides the Bharatiya Janata Party and its allies did well among the
cross-section of the Indian voters. They secured maximum percentage of votes from upper caste Hindus (56 percent), OBC (42 percent), unlettered (31 percent), lower educated group (37 percent), middle educated groups (42 percent), higher educated groups (49 percent), rural section (35 percent), urban section (41 percent), males (39 percent), females (33 percent) of votes. Thus the Bharatiya Janata Party and its allies crossed their traditional barrier mostly.\textsuperscript{72}

These Parliamentary results reflect to a significant degree, the political significance of smaller state parties as they ally with one of the two national political parties, and thus raises the question of which party dominates or the complementary nature of the alliance.\textsuperscript{73}

So we observe that Punjab is a clear example of single state party being the dominant partner at the state level in a winning Coalition with a national political party. The sikh and rural centered Akali Dal (Badal)\textsuperscript{74} entered into a formal alliance for the 1998 elections with the Bharatiya Janata Party following its informal alliance\textsuperscript{75} in 1996. It enabled a sweep for the alliance with the Akali’s winning 8 and the Bharatiya Janata Party 3 of the 12 seats. The 12th seat could also be counted in their list as they supported outgoing Prime Minister I.K. Gujral, who won on a Janata Dal ticket for ‘pardoning’ Punjab huge debt to the centre. This sweep also reflects the respective strengths of the Akali’s and the Bharatiya Janata Party in Punjab. Akali Dal (Badal) won 75 of the 117 state assembly seats in 1997, while its urban based Bharatiya Janata Party partner won 18. Congress, the major opponent won only 14 seats.\textsuperscript{76} In the 1998 Parliamentary elections, the Congress lost all three of its seats. Thus the decline of Congress party continued, from 12 Parliamentary seats in 1992, to 3 in 1996, to none in 1998.
The Rural Akali-Urban Bharatiya Janata Party Punjab sweep in 1998 emphasizes the complementary nature of the alliance when the social bases of the partners are distinct from each other. But 1998 elections have strengthened the relationship between both parties. Akali Dal (Badal) secured its Number One priority by coming to power in the Punjab state assembly in 1997 and re-affirming its dominance in the 1998 Parliamentary elections. It also gained a window into national politics. The Bharatiya Janata Party gained all but one of the Parliamentary delegation of 12 (8 Akali Dal (Badal) and 3 BJP) for its Coalition govt. and an enhanced position in Punjab state politics.

The 1999 Lok Sabha elections is third mid-term poll within a period of four years imposed on this poor country. It reflects the political opportunism, irresponsible behaviour and greed for power of the heterogeneous opposition parties, with Congress at the forefront on the one hand and the failure of the ruling alliance led by the BJP to effectively manage the floor as well as govern the nation on the other. The 13 months old 12th Lok Sabha was dissolved and fresh elections were held. The entire nation was thrown into grave political instability. The people started losing confidence in the Indian democratic set up and also became cynical about the political parties and the politicians.  

With the trauma of Kargil war and serious political uncertainty, the nation went to polls in September-October 1999. The Bharatiya Janata Party resorted to socio-political engineering for achieving success in the election. It made alliance with 23 smaller and regional political parties of diversified character and background. In other words the Bharatiya Janata Party led National Democratic Alliance was redesigned, with the combination of number of new allies to face the election. The Bharatiya Janta Party and its allies proudly characterized National Democratic Alliance as the representative of both national interest and regional aspirations with the mirror image of Indian national unity in multifaced diversity, rich pluralism and federalism.
However, this election became a watershed for the Bharatiya Janata Party in its history of two decades. For the first time, it did not publish its election manifesto which seriously led to the severe dilution of the image and identity of the party. In fact, the Bharatiya Janata Party fought the 1999 Lok Sabha elections more as National Democratic Alliance and less as Bharatiya Janata Party. Fortunately Sh. Atal Bihari Vajpayee became the universal leader of National Democratic Alliance and he was projected as an able Prime Minister candidate to provide a stable and strong govt. at the centre. The National Democratic Alliance adopted a National Agenda for Governance for rebuilding a proud and prosperous India. The BJP led National Democratic Alliance designed its electoral campaign solely on the plank of Atal Bihari Vajpayee’s personality and virtues. He was projected as an “able and stable Prime Minister candidate” to lead the nation. Besides, the achievements of 13 month rule of the NDA, Kargil success, ultimately collapse of National Democratic Alliance govt. by the evil designs of the opposition parties have been few other emotional issues which the BJP and its allies used to mobilize the voters. The following Tables (3.1 to 3.6) presents a clear picture about the Genesis and Growth, and success rate of BJP in India, in general, and states in particular.

Table 3.1: Position of BJP where it opened account for first time

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<td>Daman and Diu</td>
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Source: Election Commission Reports, Election Commission of India, New Delhi.
Table 3.2: Statewise Lok Sabha Seats Won by BJP (1989-1999)

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<td>5</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goa</td>
<td>No Presence</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gujarat</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Haryana</td>
<td>No Presence</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H.P.</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jammu and Kashmir</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Karnataka</td>
<td>No Presence</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M.P.</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maharashtra</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orissa</td>
<td>No Presence</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Punjab</td>
<td>No Presence</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rajasthan</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tamil Nadu</td>
<td>No Presence</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Bengal</td>
<td>No Presence</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uttar Pradesh</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Andaman and Nichobar</td>
<td>No Presence</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chandigarh</td>
<td>No Presence</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dadar and Nagar Haveli</td>
<td>No Presence</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daman and Diu</td>
<td>No Presence</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delhi</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pondicherry</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>No pres.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>161</td>
<td>182</td>
<td>182</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With others</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Table 3.3: Areas Where BJP scored nil during last five Lok Sabha

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>States</th>
<th>Total number of seats</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Arunachal Pradesh</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kerala</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manipur</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meghalaya</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mizoram</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sikkim</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tripura</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lakshadweep</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Election Commission Reports, Election Commission of India, New Delhi.

### Table 3.4: Success Rate of BJP in Lok Sabha Elections 1999

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>Success rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Andhra Pradesh</td>
<td>77.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assam</td>
<td>18.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bihar</td>
<td>79.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goa</td>
<td>100.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gujarat</td>
<td>76.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Haryana</td>
<td>10.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Himachal Pradesh</td>
<td>100.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jammu and Kashmir</td>
<td>33.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Karnataka</td>
<td>36.84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Madhya Pradesh</td>
<td>72.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maharashtra</td>
<td>48.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orissa</td>
<td>100.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Punjab</td>
<td>33.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rajasthan</td>
<td>64.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tamil Nadu</td>
<td>66.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uttar Pradesh</td>
<td>37.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Bengal</td>
<td>100.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Andaman and Nicobar Islands</td>
<td>100.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delhi</td>
<td>100.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Election Commission Reports, Election Commission of India, New Delhi.
Table 3.5: Region-wise Analysis of BJP Performance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>1998</th>
<th>1999</th>
<th>Gain/Loss</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>North</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>-25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>-2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>+7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>+20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Maximum loss = Uttar Pradesh  
Maximum gain = Maharashtra and Rajasthan

Table 3.6: BJP's Gain/Loss in 1999 Lok Sabha Election over 1998

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>Gain/Loss</th>
<th>State</th>
<th>Gain/Loss</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Andhra Pradesh</td>
<td>+3</td>
<td>Assam</td>
<td>+1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bihar</td>
<td>+3</td>
<td>Delhi</td>
<td>+1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goa</td>
<td>+2</td>
<td>Gujarat</td>
<td>+1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Haryana</td>
<td>+4</td>
<td>Himachal Pradesh</td>
<td>+1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J &amp; K</td>
<td>+1</td>
<td>Karnataka</td>
<td>-6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Madhya Pradesh</td>
<td>-1</td>
<td>Maharashtra</td>
<td>+9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orissa</td>
<td>+2</td>
<td>Punjab</td>
<td>-2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rajasthan</td>
<td>+11</td>
<td>Tamil Nadu</td>
<td>+1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uttar Pradesh</td>
<td>-28</td>
<td>West Bengal</td>
<td>+2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chandigarh</td>
<td>-1</td>
<td>Dadra Nagar Haveli</td>
<td>+1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daman and Diu</td>
<td>-1</td>
<td>Andaman Nichobar Islands</td>
<td>+1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Election Commission Reports, Election Commission of India, New Delhi.

It is difficult to draw generalization from the results. All the same, performance as perceived by the voters has emerged as the most contributing factor. Incumbency seems to have lost relevance. The BJP is now acceptable in almost all parts of the country. While the Congress has revived in states like U.P. and Karnataka. The country needs a stable and performing Government. The future of the country and the NDA allies will depend upon performance as there is no substitute for good governance. Atal Bihari Vajpayee, who has taken the oath third time in less than four years as Prime Minister (though he accepted in his book 'Decisive Days' that it is difficult to run Coalition government) has to match now his performance skills with his oratory. The
voters have given their verdict. Now it is for the BJP-led Coalition government to live up to their expectations and show results.  

The electoral verdict of 1999 continued to throw up another ‘hung parliament’ in a row for the fifth time. But one unique feature of this election is that a pre-electoral alliance led by BJP crossed majority mark i.e. magic number to form the govt. for the first time in the last decade. In other words, the BJP and most of its allies emerged winners in the 13th Lok Sabha elections so far as the number game in a Parliamentary democracy is concerned. This winning alliance or combination increased its strength in 13th Lok Sabha by around 50 seats. They had 265 seats sharing 42.8 percent of the popular votes in the 12th Lok Sabha. In the new Lok Sabha they captured 299 seats sharing 40.8 percent of the popular votes. The marginal increase in the kitty of the BJP led- National Democratic Alliance is mainly due to better performance of its new allies. In spite of the various problems, the BJP led National Democratic Alliance government has been trying to be people friendly and people oriented.  

The 1999 Lok Sabha election results clearly reveal the erosion of the traditional social base of the Bharatiya Janata Party. This creates new and unusual political compulsions and challenges for the party. In order to face these, the Bharatiya Janata Party has restructured itself considerably with a new leadership and new programme. In its pragmatic pursuit of power, the party has already down-sized the Hinduatava plank, compromised its ideological commitment to Swadeshi with liberalization and globalization, considerably restrained sadhus and saints in its political sphere and started to attract Muslims and other minorities into its fold.  

Significantly Bharatiya Janata Party is the only dominant politico-ideological force at the national level which has truly understood the emerging Coalition politics in India and how to work with the diversified allies honouring their interests. Of course, the Coalition journey of the Bharatiya Janata Party
has never been so smooth. Sometimes, severe bargaining is made by the allies and it is upsets the Bharatiya Janata Party leadership.

**References and Notes**


8. B.B. Mishra., *The Indian Political Parties*, New Delhi, Oxford University. Press, 1976, p.3.


11. BJP its Birth-Memorable Events, New Delhi, BJP Publication, 2000, p.4.


26. Dev Raj Urs described the Janata Party as an ”anti emergency and anti Sanjay polarisation”, Sunday, October 7, 1979, p.47.
33. The Hindu, Madras, April 7, 1980.
34. Organizer, New Delhi, October 18, 1987.
38. The Hindustan Times, New Delhi, April 9, 1980.
42. Prithvi Chakarvarti.,"A New Image for the BJP", Indian Express, New Delhi, August 7, 1986.
43. Indian Express, New Delhi, October 17, 1984.
49. Ibid, p.63.
54. The Times of India, April 17, 1992, p.6.
55. The Times of India, April 17, 1992, p.6.
58. In 1980 it put up 41 candidates and in 1985 it put up 26 candidates.
67. P.S. Verma., “Zila Parishad and Panchayat Samiti Elections in Punjab : Revival of Political Activity”, Economic and Politicla Weekly, Vol. XXX, No. 22, 1995, p.1325. (Direct Election to 40 percent of the seats to the Panchayat Samities and Zila Parishad were held in the second phase. In the First phase, on September 27, only Sarpanches caste their votes to 60 percent of the seats.)


(Excerpts from the Anandpur Sahib Resolution on Oct. 23, 1983 adopted by the SAD (B). In this resolution, the main aims of Akali Dal have been propagation of atheism, maintaining the realization of Panth’s independent entity, and creation of such an envirionment where Sikh sentiments can find its full expression.


74. The Election Commission used the formal name ‘SAD’ (Shiromani Akali Dal) and abbreviates it SAD in its official Election results. In Punjab this can be confusing as there are several SAD’s functioning at any one point of time and opposing each other. Thus the name of the leader is always used as in Akali Dal (Badal)


76. Ibid, p.2967.


79. Ibid, p.4.

80. J.C. Aggarwal and N.K. Chowdhary., Lok Sabha Elections 1999: Last of the Millennium, New Delhi, Shipra Publication, 2000, p.IV.