CHAPTER 3

Congress Party in Haryana: A Profile
Chapter – III

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This chapter attempts to present a brief perspective of the Congress party by discussing the ideology and programmes of the party, organizational structure and pattern of factionalism in the Haryana Pradesh Congress Committee. It is necessary to describe and analyze these aspects of the party because they have made a profound influence in shaping its support base in Haryana and on its failure and success in broadening the same.

The Congress Ideology

Ideology occupies a significant place in study of a political party. It is a bond that combines the people having common views about certain major socio-economic and political issues. An ideology is not only the result of socio-economic conditions of the society, the inspirations of the people and leanings of the leaders that lead the party, but in turn, it also influences the conditions prevailing in the society.¹

The Indian National Congress from its very birth has emphasized Nationalism, secularism and has been guided by faith in democracy. It has represented a kind of historical consensus and thus enjoys a continuous basis of support and trust among the masses. The History of the Congress is the history of making a nation. In fact, it became synonymous with the Indian Nationalism. The Congress was from the very outset committed to the concept of a composite Indian Nationality. Hindus, Muslims, Christians, Sikhs and Parsis could be and were members of that organization. The Congress approach to nationalism as it

may be called developed as a reaction to British rule, was an All India Nationalism.²

Beginning with its first session, it had demanded the introduction of democratic institutions in the country and used the democratic principles as the main basis for its demand for self government and at a later stage, for complete independence. However, the moderates considered that the representative institutions could be introduced into India only gradually and that in the beginning the franchise would have to be limited to the educated classes. Thus, they did not press for the immediate application in India of the abstract doctrines of liberty and democracy to their logical extreme.³

The emphasis of the technique of the nationalist movement on democracy or on the form of government could replace British rule. Yet they generally assumed and often proclaimed that the aim of Indian political endeavour was the establishment of parliamentary form of government.⁴ Granville Austin rightly highlights the faith of Congress leaders in democracy: The leaders of the assembly who played the same role in the Congress and in the Union government were national heroes and had almost unlimited power; yet the decision-making in the Assembly was democratic.⁵

The Indian National Congress was from the very beginning committed to the concept of secular ideal. Hindus, Muslims, Christians, Sikhs and Parsis could be and were its members. The report of the second Congress session held in 1886 made it clear that religion was not in any way relevant so far as the membership of the Congress was concerned.⁶ Though some of the members were religious but so far as the politics was concerned, they were secular. Whereas Gandhi agreed

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⁴ Ibid, p. 218.
with extremists in introducing religion into politics but at the same time he was almost one with the moderates in having the greatest tolerance for all religions.  

After the attainment of independence, the constitution which came into force on January 26, 1950, guarantees the religious freedom of Indians professing different faiths. It ensures equality before the law and prohibits discrimination on grounds of religion and caste. Article 17 of the constitution declares that untouchability is abolished and it forbids its practice in any form. Later in 1955, stringent punishment was provided for the practice of untouchability. Keeping in view the significance of the Secularism, the AICC meeting in New Delhi on May 29-30, 1976 suggested the inclusion of the word Secular in the preamble of the Indian Constitution. The same was implemented by the 42nd Amendment of the Constitution.

Secularism is another important aspect of the Congress ideology. Although influenced by the main currents of socialist thought in Europe, Congress' approach to socialism is not a copy of any foreign model but has grown out of Indian thinking in the context of Indian conditions, over a long period of time. This thinking is as old as the history of the Congress.

At the instance of Nehru, the 1929 AICC at Lahore passed a resolution which ascribed the poverty of India not merely to foreign rule but also to the economic exploitation. Since then the socialism has been the creed of the Congress. Next significant resolution passed at the Karachi Session of the Congress held in 1931 stated that the economic life of the community must be so organized as to conform to the principle of Justice and that the state should ensure to every citizen a decent standard of living. The state was also to safeguard the interests of the industrial workers and ensuring to them living, wages, healthy conditions and limited hours of work and protection against the economic consequences of old age, sickness and unemployment. The state was

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7 Sankar Ghose, Political Ideas and Movements in India, op. cit., p. 143.
8 Congress Ideology, All-India Congress Committee, New Delhi, p. 15.
9 Ibid, p. 17.
able to own or control the key industries, mineral resources, railways, waterways, shipping and other means of public transport.\textsuperscript{10}

The young group of socialists in the Congress (Jai Prakash Narayan, Ashok Mehta, Achyut Patwardhan, M.R. Masani, S.N. Joshi, N.G. Goray etc.) was not satisfied with merely nationalization of key industries. They wanted the nationalization of all essential means of production. This young group along with senior Congressmen like Acharya Narender Deva, Sampurnananda and Sri Prakash founded the Congress Socialist Party in 1934 which sought to work as a ginger group in the Congress party.\textsuperscript{11}

Being aware of the balance of forces in the country and in the Congress organization during the years 1937-39, Nehru’s approach to socialism underwent a radical change. His views about socialism became less doctrinaire and more pragmatic for which he had to face criticism by Subhash Chander Bose in 1939. As a result of his association with the Planning Commission, he began to visualize the actual process of modernizing the Indian economy. To him, socialism was to be attained not at once but gradually by measured steps. It was to be the pattern of development which would lead the country towards establishing some of the fundamentals of the socialist structure. He was already groping towards the concept of, what was known, later on as a mixed economy and democratic socialism through planned development, formulated in the Five Year Plans of the post-independence India.\textsuperscript{12}

The leadership of the Congress fell into the hands of Nehru after independence. He sought to make it a socialist organization without giving to it the name of a socialist party. In 1948 his critics like Narayana, Dev and Lohia left the Congress Party. After the death of Patel in December, 1950 he had no peer to challenge his ideological stand. As such, for some time he assumed the office of the party President while working as the Prime Minister of the country. In 1955

\textsuperscript{10} Sankar Ghosh, \textit{Indian National Congress – Its History and Heritage}, op. cit., p. 158.
the Congress adopted the goal of ‘Socialist Pattern of Society’ at the Avadi Session. The second five year plan drafted in 1956 incorporated the same ideal and thus it became clear that Nehru wanted to implement his socialistic programme through the process of democratic planning.\textsuperscript{13}

Due to this, the Congress stole the thunder of the socialist parties. On the occasion of the requisitioned meeting of the AICC in New Delhi in November 1969, Mrs. Gandhi declared, “The Congress party must continue to be the instrument of India’s revolution, her massive thrust into the future. Economic policy will demand urgent attention. It is of immense concern to every man and child. We shall take steps to revive the faith of people in the party and its socialist programme. In doing so, we shall also take a total view of our revolution—secularism, toleration and international understanding.”\textsuperscript{14}

As a matter of fact, the Congress cannot be designated as a socialist organization for the obvious reason that its socialistic professions are too vague and, more than that in different directions. These factions have different approaches to the matters of social and economic significance and they “intract in a continuous process of pressure, adjustment and accommodation to provide an in-built opposition.”\textsuperscript{15}

In the field of foreign policy, the Congress stood for world peace and disarmament and anti-imperialism and anti-racism. When the country became free, the world had already divided into two rival polls. The Congress refused to join either bloc. The architect of India’s foreign policy, Jawaharlal Nehru enunciated the doctrine of non-alignment.\textsuperscript{16}

In the AICC session held at Delhi in 1970 the Congress foreign policy reiterated in the Foreign Policy Resolution as follows:

\textsuperscript{15} Rajni Kothari, “Party System”, \textit{Economic Weekly} (Bombay), 3 June 1961, p. 849.
"The relations of a country are aimed at maintaining its freedom and integrity and promoting the prosperity of the people. While these objectives are essential, the Indian National Congress has always viewed them in larger context of world peace and progress. It has been the consistent and constant endeavour of the Congress to promote international co-operation and development of friendly relations with all countries. The Indian National Congress reiterates its conviction that the policy of peaceful co-existence and international co-operation based on non-alignment are the best means for promoting peace and progress.\textsuperscript{17}

It recognizes that in the new context trade, economic co-operation and commerce have become the new language of diplomacy. The Congress does not want to overlook the fact that the world economic system is becoming more and more globalised. Therefore, it does not want to dissociate itself from this process. While extending the hand of friendship towards Pakistan it does not lose sight of the nefarious activities of Pakistan such as organizing terrorist actions, smuggling of narcotics and espionage etc. and it pledges to fight against this menace. The manifestoes of the party reaffirm its traditional policy of consolidating friendly relations with neighbouring countries, Russia, USA and countries of European Union.\textsuperscript{18}

The legacy of national movement has taught us the essential unity among people professing different faiths. Therefore, it was quite natural that in spite of its many failings, the Congress is, by and large, a secular organization. The Congress in its manifestoes reaffirms its commitment to the secular principles.

During the 1970s, the J.P. movement (named after its leader Jaya Prakash Narayan Gandhian), in which the BJP/RSS activists played an important role, looked like the nemesis for the Congress. To thwart this challenge Indira Gandhi aligned herself with the ideology of Hindu Nationalism to bolster her mass

\textsuperscript{17} Sankar Dayal Sharma, 'The Indian National Congress, in Indian Political Parties: Programmes, Promises and Performance', The Institute of Constitutional and Parliamentary Studies, Delhi: RESEARCH, 1971, pp. 8-9.
\textsuperscript{18} Sadhna Chaturvedi, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 43.
appeal. She started making publicized visits to Hindu temples and talked of the rights and fears of the majority community as never before.¹⁹

The Congress during the 1980, was largely attributable to the growing importance of religion in Indian politics. Several events on the national and international scene contributed to this development. With the Iranian revolution in the late 1970s, the most publicized aspect of which was the hostage crisis, there was a resurgence of international Islam. The fallout of this phenomenon was the politicization of religion all over the world. India was no exception. The Khalistan movement with its thrust on Sikhism and with active support from Pakistan, the Assam agitation behind which was the issue of unauthorized Muslim settlers from Bangladesh, the use of the Hindu card by the Congress in Jammu and Kashmir elections, the assassination of Indira Gandhi by her Sikh bodyguards and the resultant anti-Sikh riots in Delhi, all these happenings in the first half of the 1980s were clear indications of this trend. The massive victory of the Congress in the elections of 1984 demonstrated how the Hindu felt concerned about ‘their’ nation’s territorial integrity which seemed to be endangered by the non-Hindus whether, they were the Sikhs of Punjab, the Muslims of Kashmir, the Christians of the northeast, or the Muslims settlers in Assam. Notably, all these religions were in the bordering areas of the country.²⁰

For betterment of the conditions of the rural poor, the Congress stood for the abolition of Zamindari system. In urban areas also, the Congress government enacted Minimum Wages Act. Through various plans it has sought to advance the country towards modernism. Nehru knew that without building a scientific technological infrastructure the country could not come up to the level of advanced countries. Therefore, all through the years Congress government has been giving impetus to the development of Science and Technology. For this purpose during the Congress rule Indian Council of Agricultural Research,

Council of Scientific and Industrial Research, Indian Council of Medical Research and many defence and other laboratories were established.\textsuperscript{21}

This ideology has remained with Congress to this day as is evident from its latest manifesto of course there have been deviations and vacillations from the accepted ideology of the party as laid down by the first Prime Minister of India. Here a few examples may be cited. Initially, the party ideology laid emphasis on powerful public sector. Then again in the name of globalization and liberalization, multinationals were given a free access to the vital sectors of our economy.

\textbf{Election Manifesto 2005}

Since the ideology is concretized in broad policies and programmes and articulated by the party in its election manifestoes released at the time of elections particularly and in the utterances of the leaders generally, it would be worthwhile to give a brief analysis manifesto of 2005 of the Congress party.

The Manifesto of 2005 pointed out that more than five years rule of the Chautala Clan in Haryana has done incalculable harm to Haryana state. The phenomenon of criminalization of politics and politicization of crime in Haryana has assumed alarming proportions. Murder, kidnapping for ransom, decoity, highway robbery, rape and such other henious crimes are everyday occuring in the state. The Chautala family to consolidate its hold over their own party and to bully used crime as a tool; to beat and terrorize its opponents and dissidents. This has strengthened the nexus between criminals, police and politicians.

It also pointed out that as per the findings of the National Election Study 2004, overwhelming citizens of the state agree that “Chautala’s sons are looting the state” under the devilish guidance of their father. Haryana today has become a paradise for looters. It is alleged that every government post in the state carries a price tag, rendering recruiting agencies as sales agencies. Similarly, all other

\textsuperscript{21} Partha S. Ghosh, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 41-42.
organs of the state involving quotas, contracts and purchases have been converted into money spinning industry.

In its 2005 Manifesto, the Congress party laid emphasis on the following programmes:-

- The change in crop pattern is possible only if the marketing and remuneratively minimum support price is assured to the farmers. This cannot be left to the market forces, which are rarely farmer friendly. The Congress, if put into power, will evolve a comprehensive policy to meet this requirement.

- The Congress party is committed to maintain all existing irrigation channels at their design level and will strive for enhancing the capacity of distributaries and equitable and justifiable distribution of water to farmers. Besides enhancing the present irrigation resources, the Congress, it voted to power, will construct new canals.

- The Congress party will strengthen the working of Haryana Vidyut Prasar Nigam and also ensure minimum loss of energy during transmission. It will endeavour to adopt the farmer friendly approach and would give relief to weaker sections also. The party will constitute district level committees to redress the grievances regarding over billing, disconnection and other power related problems such as low voltage, burnt transformers, etc. Effective steps will be taken to supply, assured regular and quality power to all consumers.

- Congress party pledges to evolve rapid/comprehensive policy for the growth of industries in the state. Regular power supply to the Industrial units will be ensured. Red tapism will be curbed and a single window system would be introduced to deal the entrepreneurs. Special scheme will be devised to set up big industrial units in public, private or joint sector to create jobs.
Congress party will also ensure that all taxes on raw material and final products will be at par with other states, which will give relief to trading community.

Congress party will take all necessary steps to invite Direct Foreign Investment in a big way and create conducive and hassle free conditions for this purpose.

The Congress party is committed to provide employment to all the youth in the state.

The Congress party would take effective steps to rejuvenate the education system in the state. The Congress party would seriously review the situation and take remedial steps to have quality education in the technical institutes.

The Congress government’s emphasis would be laid on preventing common maladies that afflict people in the absence of basic facilities like portable drinking water, hygienic surroundings and such other things.

Every effort would be made to make weaker section feel secure. Functional residential plots will be provided to SC/BC and the weaker sections.

It will make a Sainik Welfare Board more effective and autonomous to solve the problems of service men and ex-servicemen.

Congress party is committed to women empowerment and will work to remove gender discrimination in all fields.

Effective steps will be taken for the proper fiscal management of the state economy.

The Congress party will take effective steps to make the functioning of the state administration transparent and accountable.
The Congress party will constitute a Development Council comprising experts from different fields.*

**Organization of the Haryana Pradesh Congress Committee**

In a democratic set up, a party has to compete with other such entities. To mobilize votes and to broaden its support base, it has to have an organization at different levels. Since these functions are best performed by Pradesh level organs of the party, it is necessary to analyze and discuss of the organization i.e. the Pradesh Congress Committee.

The Haryana Pradesh Congress Committee came into existence as a separate entity in November, 1966, after the Haryana state was created as a result of bifurcation of the Punjab state. In the beginning, the Haryana Pradesh Congress Committee constituted under the Presidentship of Bhagwat Dayal Sharma. It consisted of those members of Punjab Pradesh Congress Committee who belonged to this region. Prior to the framing of its own constitution, the HPCC followed the constitution of its parent body, the PPCC. At present, the structure of the HPCC is based on its constitution framed in 1974 with minor amendments made from time to time in order to cope up with the demands of the Pradesh and changes in the constitution of the Indian National Congress.22

The Indian National Congress organization is basically the same which was designed by Mahatma Gandhi in 1917. Of course, the organizational structure has undergone some changes as a consequence of few amendments made in its constitution. To comprehend the Congress organization it is necessary to make ourselves conversant with Gandhiji’s attempt to engineer the basic structure of the national movement for establishing communication with the Indian masses. He used symbols which were readily understood by the people and made provisions of direct election at the grass root level. After these direct elections, the leaders at the higher level were elected indirectly till the formation of an All India body known as All India Congress Committee. The apex

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* See for more details: www.aicc.org.in
organization was comprised of an All India Congress Committee, a Congress Working Committee and a Congress Party President. In a way the Congress President became a sort of elected dictator. Gandhiji used this position to full advantage as he guided the country towards independence. In this way Gandhiji sought to reach the Indian masses at their lowest level and to morally recharge them with a zeal and courage to fight for the national cause.  

Here it is necessary to remember that the organizational structure of the Congress party has been, historically, highly centralized. This point is very often overlooked by those who lament the imminent demise of democracy in the party’s internal politics.

In 1969 the Indian National Congress split into two parties: The Ruling congress and the Opposition Congress. But still the Ruling Congress remains the only political party in India whose influence permeates throughout the length and breadth of the country without a break. The Congress has been till 1947, more or less a platform, a national organization to express the nation’s urges, the prominent among them being the urge for freedom.

The highest organizational unit of the Congress party is the All India Congress Committee. It consists of the state representatives, the President of the Congress, the ex-President of the Congress and other office bearers. It meets regularly, usually more than once a year. Seventy or one-fifth of the total number of members whichever is less shall form the quorum for a meeting of AICC. The AICC formulates principles for the guidance of the ministers through its resolutions. Its resolution serve also as a guide for the draft of the election manifestoes.

Organizationally the real executive powers in the states or at the centre exist with the respective working committees. The Working Committee, a smaller body which meets more frequently is the most important agency in the

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Congress structure. Most of the top leaders of the party are members of the Working Committee. It is composed of the President of the Congress and twenty members of whom ten will be elected by the AICC and the rest are nominated by the party President. The Working Committee has become the centre of decision-making in post-Independence, although its functions have undergone considerable change in the past two decades. It is the nerve centre of the party and its Chief Policy-maker. It has become deeply involved in the centre-state coordination and in the solution of disputes between the states and centre. The Working Committee is responsible to the AICC, which, according to the rules, meets as often as is required by the Working Committee. The quorum for a meeting of the Working Committee is seven.25

The legislative wing of the Congress party is known as the Congress Parliamentary Board. The Parliamentary Board is an important organ. It is set up by the working committee. This board consists of seven members and the Congress President. Out of seven members one will be the leader of the Congress party in Parliament. The Congress President acts as the Chairman of this board. It lies in its jurisdiction to regulate and co-ordinate the work of the Congress legislators in various states. It has played a key role in shaping government policies.

The Working Committee's function as final authority in the selection of candidates for the states and national legislatures are performed by the Central Election Committee (CEC), a sub committee of the Working Committee. The CEC consists of the members of the Parliamentary Board in addition to seven members elected by the AICC. The Prime Minister is an Ex-Officio member of the CEC. It drafts election manifestoes and other literature. The AICC holds its session once in two years and ratifies the major decisions of the Working Committee. During AICC sessions, important members are asked to divide

25 K.N. Kumar, op.cit.
themselves in subject committees for considering important resolutions dealing with policy matters.26

The smallest official unit of the Organization is known as Block or Constituency Committee. A Block Committee covers an area of an assembly constituency and consists of a membership at the rate of one member for about 2000 population. The Block or Constituency Congress Committees are grouped under District Congress Committees. The District Congress Committee consists of:

a) Four members elected by the members of the immediate subordinate Congress Committee of the DCC as per rules prescribed by the Working Committee;

b) Ex-Presidents of DCCs who have completed one full term and are active members;

c) Members of PCC who reside in or have been elected from the District;

d) Presidents of immediate subordinate Congress Committee, provided that they shall not be eligible to became either President or Secretary of the DCC;

e) Members of Legislative Congress parties, both Centre and State from the District provided that they are active members;

f) Leaders of Congress party in Municipal Corporation, Municipalities and District Boards/Zila Parishads or Janapads in the District, provided that they are active members;

g) Members co-opted by DCC executive as per rules prescribed by Working Committee.27

26 K. N. Kumar, op. cit., pp. 44-45.
A Pradesh Congress Committee consists of:

a) members to be elected at the rate of one for about 2000 population;

b) Ex-Presidents of the PCC who have served one full term and are active members of the Congress;

c) Presidents of DCC provided that they shall not be eligible to become either President or Secretary of the PCC;

d) AICC members who reside in the Pradesh;

e) Members elected by Congress Legislative Party at the rate of 5 percent of the number of PCC or DCC members subject to a maximum of 15;

f) Members co-opted by the PCC executive from special elements not adequately represented and others in accordance with the rules prescribed by the Working Committee.28

The Block or Constituency Congress Committees rarely function. Both the state and national organizations view the District Congress Committees as the basic units of the party organization. Both the State and National organizations communicate almost exclusively with the DCCs. It is rare, that National and State organizations deal directly with the smaller units under the DCC. It is the DCC which communicates in the local language with the Block Committees under its jurisdiction. The DCC, though it does not coincide with any electoral unit, takes primary responsibility for the organizational elections with the District. It makes recommendations to the Pradesh Election Committee at the state level and to the Central Election Committee at the National level as to who in the party ought to receive tickets for Assembly and Parliamentary Elections and it suggests to the state organizations, the names of candidates for District, Local board elections.29

28 K. N. Kumar, op. cit.
29 Ibid.
The Structure of the INC

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Annual Congress Session

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All India Congress Committee

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Pradesh Congress Committees

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District Congress Committees

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Block or Constituency Congress Committees

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Working Committee

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Central Parliamentary Board

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Central Election Committee

The Structure of the HPCC

AICC

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AICC Members

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Ex-Officio Members

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Co-opted Members

PCC

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Office Bearers

↓
President

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Working President

↓
Vice President

↓
General Secretaries

Haryana Pradesh

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Mahila Congress

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Youth Congress

↓
Frontal Organizations

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Presidents of District Congress Committee

↓
DCC

↓
BCC
In other words, the undemocratic pattern can be illustrated by the fact that at the top there is Congress President who is elected by the Pradesh Congress Committees, then there is Parliamentary Board which comprises of President plus five Working Committee members, then there is Congress Working Committee, two-third members of which are appointed by the Congress President and one third are elected by the AICC. Below the Working Committee there is All India Congress Committee. Each PCC elects one-eighth of its members to AICC plus the Congress President plus other co-opted by the Working Committee. The Congress organization also provides for Youth Congress, Mahila Congress, Sewa Dal and Indian National Trade Union Congress. Each state has its own Pradesh Congress Committee. Besides all these committees at the grass root level there are District Committees and Block Committees also.\(^{30}\)

The Congress party in Haryana had no specific class character. It was a mass party open to all people. However, it was predominantly a rural organization. Even in urban areas, the party was not weak. Haryana Pradesh Congress Committee, ‘the action-arm’ of the AICC, performs a number of functions within its jurisdiction prescribed by the INC constitution at the time of election and between the elections. At the time of elections, it selected the candidates and organized the campaign work for its party candidates. So far as the selection of candidates was concerned, the PEC prepared the list of candidates and sent it for the approval of the CEC. But the two factors made the task of the PEC in Haryana very difficult. Firstly, the Congress party in Haryana suffered from factionalism and castism. So to prepare one list unanimously was an uphill task. Secondly, the final decision being in the hands of the CEC, its recommendations remained at the mercy of the centre.\(^{31}\)

The HPCC explained the party point of view to masses through propaganda, information, demonstrations and meetings. The AICC had been using the HPCC and its DCCs and other lower Congress Committees to advertise

\(^{31}\) Chander Prakash, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 208-209.
and popularize Congress policies and mobilize support to the central leadership in Haryana. In this direction, the AICC as well as HPCC took keen interest. Even the government also showed liberal attitude and extended full support because it ultimately helped the government itself. The correspondence that went on between the AICC and DCCs directly and through HPCC was ample proof of this. This indicated one thing that initiative had always come from the AICC, but in implementing those decisions taken by AICC, the contribution of the HPCC had been positive. But the proper working system of the HPCC depended upon the capacities and capabilities of the HPCC president plus the interest he look into organizational work. But when we came to the working of DCCs and lower Congress Committees, we might see that lower the organization the weaker it was from the point of view of organizational work. In fact much depended upon the Presidents that headed them and the team they had to work with them.\footnote{Chander Prakash, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 241-42.}

In short, we find that the organizational structure of the Congress, as indicated above, demonstrates that it was meant to inculcate the feeling of involvement of an ordinary congressman in the affairs of the party. It was designed to establish democracy at the grass root level and visualized from this angle it may be said that it is very much similar to the organizational principle of Congress party which are based on the concept of democratic centralism which means democracy at the lower level and centralism at the top. It was believed that an organization designed in this manner would prove to be a proper vehicle of social change.

**Factionalism in Haryana Pradesh Congress Committee**

As mentioned in the second chapter, Haryana came into existence on November 1, 1966. At that time elections were not possible, so the state assembly was formed of the 54 MLAs who represented the Haryana region in the erstwhile Punjab Legislative Assembly. Out of them 48 belonged to the Congress party. The Congress party chose Bhagwat Dayal Sharma as its leader and he was
appointed as the first Chief Minister of Haryana. Politically, the state did not inherit any of the Punjab’s problem but the intra-factional rivalries in the Congress party made the situation alarming.

Haryana went to polls on February 1967. It was therefore, an occasion for the people not merely to give their verdict in favour of one or the other political party but to give to Haryana a political pattern and direction. The Congress could secure only 48 out of 81 seats in this assembly election and was still in a comfortable majority to form its government. Bhagwat Dayal Sharma was re-elected the leader of the Congress Legislative party in the new assembly on March 4, 1967. He was sworn in as the Chief Minister for the second time.

The Chief Minister’s haughty temperament and rigid attitude probably made matters worse for him. Birender Singh, Chand Ram and none of their supporters were included in the Council of Ministers. Even Rizak Ram and Hardwari Lal were taken in the council on the assurance of personal loyalty to the Chief Minister. In retrospect, it was a political blunder on the part of the Chief Minister, Bhagwat Dayal Sharma, to have ignored the claims or under estimated the power of the dissidents. This made the political atmosphere all the more uncertain. There were doubts about the stability and smooth running of the Ministry. The political parties restarted the preparations for the mid-term elections.

The Congress party in Haryana was a house divided against itself. There were three factions: one led by the former Chief Minister, Bhagwat Dayal Sharma, the second under the influence of the Congress President, Ram Krishan Gupta and the third led by the Jat leader Devi Lal who had acquired the reputation of a King maker and an expert in toppling down ministers.

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33 Chander Prakash, *op. cit.*, p. 126.
36 *The Hindustan Times*, March 5, 1967.
37 Chander Parkash, *op. cit.*, p. 130.
38 *Indi*, p. 36.
In the mid-term elections, the Congress party was neither gainer nor loser in comparison to the 1967 election. It won 48 seats out of 81 seats. Now, there were many aspirants in the field for the post of leadership. The Congress high command was in search of a person of a dynamic personality having clear past and acceptable to all the factions in the party. 39

Congress High Command was against Bhagwat Dayal Sharma being chosen as the party leader because of past experience. The high command intervened and an unassuming and non-controversial, Bansi Lal was chosen as incumbence for the Chief Minister's office on May 19, 1968. 40 To provide political stability and economic development to a state suffering from economic backwardness on one hand and defections and counter defections on the other hand was a challenge to the new Chief Minister. However, the Congress party organization itself had warring factions. 41

Nevertheless, Congress politics in the state in keeping with its traditions once again became full of factionalism in which caste as a factor continued to dominate. The Jats in Haryana irrespective of their party affiliations felt that the moves of Bhagwat Dayal Sharma were directed against their community. They believed that Bhagwat Dayal Sharma, a Brahmin was not prepared to accept a Jat as the Chief Minister. 42

An attempt was made to create major crisis when on September 17, 1968 four of Bhagwat Dayal Sharma's supporters (Mahabir Singh, Ran Singh, Khurshid Ahmed and Ramdhari Gaur) complained of Chief Minister Bansi Lal's rude behaviour and the victimization of Mr. Sharma's followers. 43 In protest, they submitted their resignation letters to the Chief Minister. But Khurshid Ahmed, who was one of them, withdrew his resignation. The resignations of all other three ministers were accepted. As a result Bhagwat Dayal Sharma was suspended

39 The Times of India, May 16, 1968.
40 Chander Parkash, op. cit., p. 138.
41 J. N. Singh Yadav, op. cit., pp. 171-172.
43 Ibid.
from the party on December 9, 1968. After this, the Samyukta Vidhayak Dal was formed and Sharma was elected its leader.

Haryana went to poll in March, 1972. In this election, the Congress won 52 seats out of 81. Bansi Lal was sworn in as the Chief Minister on March 14, 1972. Haryana set the example by its economic development during the Chief Ministership of Bansi Lal. Rao Nihal Singh was unanimously elected the HPCC President and Ram Saran Chand Mittal was included in the cabinet. On December 1, 1975, Bansi Lal was included in the central cabinet of Indira Gandhi and Banarsi Das Gupta sworn in as the new Chief Minister of Haryana.

The elections for the Lok Sabha and Haryana Assembly were held in 1977. The weakness of the organizational wing that had led to the erosion of the support was exposed. That is why the Congress party had to suffer a setback. In the Assembly Election it could win only 3 seats out of 90 seats. The regime of Bansi Lal provided the stability and the development in the state. However, the neglect of organizational wing and his way of functioning gave a setback to the healthy development.

Many senior Congress Legislators in Haryana expressed their dissatisfaction with Bhajan Lal’s functioning. Some of them had adopted the strategy to embarrass the government at every opportunity. The Congress group which opposed Bhajan Lal also tried to win over the High Command. It also submitted a list of charges against the Chief Minister, desiring the Prime Minister to get them verified at her own level. Bansi Lal also met her and appraised of the situation created by the farmers’ stir in Bhiwani.

However, Bhajan Lal got some reprieve when S. S. Surjewala, Agriculture Minister expressed his faith in the Chief Minister. He was included into the ministry from the old Congressmen quota. But the faction led by union ministers, Dalbir Singh and Rao Birender Singh were busy in consolidating their positions. The real tug of war was between the camps handed by the Chief

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44 The Statesman, December 10, 1968.
45 The Tribune, Chandigarh, March 29, 1981.
Minister and former Defence Minister, Bansi Lal. The later organized a public meeting at Jind, on August 22, 1981 which was largely attended by the Jats. Bansi Lal and his followers openly criticized Bhajan’s faction which had not only stayed away from the meeting but also worked against the show. The meeting gave birth to an interesting controversy and Bhajan Lal blamed Bansi Lal for hob-nobbing with the Lok Dal. Encouraged by the success of the meeting, Bansi Lal declared the next meeting in Barwala, but Bhajan Lal thought that the majority community of Jats could be defeated by minority communities if they were combined.

The Congress was defeated badly in Jat-dominated districts in the 1987 Assembly Elections whereas the BJP could make a dent there because of its alliance with the Lok Dal. The Congress did not seem to have learnt any lesson from its humiliating defeat. One of the reasons for its poor show was factionalism. Union Environment Minister Bhajan Lal was never reconciled to prominence given to Bansi Lal. He never stopped dreaming of becoming the Chief Minister again till he realized that the situation could not be retrieved.

In 1988 the leaders of Congress High Command and of Haryana unit devised a three pronged strategy to shake up the Haryana government. The objective was to create a situation warranting for dissolution of the Assembly and hold elections along with that of Lok Sabha. The strategy sought to encourage the bureaucrats to disobey the government’s order and to exploit the infighting in the police, to mislead the public about the use of central assistance given to Haryana and to highlight the deterioration in the state government to face an enquiry into the use of funds allocated by centre.

Moreover, the HPCC Chief Balbir Pal Shah was replaced by S. S. Surjewala much against the wishes of Bhajan Lal and Bansi Lal to arrest the growing factionalism in the Congress. He refused to attend the rallies and sammellans convened by Bansi Lal and Bhajan factions. Instead he organized the

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46 S. S. Chahar, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 44.
47 The Tribune, Chandigarh, September 6, 1981.
48 S. S. Chahar, op. cit., p. 17.
49 S. S. Chahr, op. cit., p. 154.
Congress convention at Rohtak.\textsuperscript{50} In November 1990, the HPCC became more divided after assumption of charge of its President by Birender Singh. He was a follower of Bansi Lal but parted his company when he floated the Vikas Manch. He tried to win the members of Vikas Manch which led to a open tussle with Bansi Lal. However, Shamsher Singh Surjewala, former chief supported Bansi Lal’s Manch activities. Moreover, a rift between Birender Singh and Bhajan Lal also started when the former extended an indirect support to the mass contact programme of Bansi Lal. Birender Singh also announced the ‘Jan Sampark’ in rural areas.\textsuperscript{51}

The election of HPCC chief was fixed for January 29, 1992 but it was postponed to February 6, 1992 in view of fierce-fighting between Surjewala and Birender Singh about their differences to fight the election. They advocated the principle of one man one post. They also decided to oppose the candidate of the Chief Ministership Surjewala declared that in case Birender Singh emerged as a consensus candidate, he would withdraw his candidature. On the other hand, Bhajan Lal sponsored his own candidate Dharam Pal Malik who had held the post for the some time in the past.\textsuperscript{52}

Ultimately the HPCC authorized the party high command to nominate the office-bearers and thus avoided the election to project an image of unity in the party. However, 130 of the 150 delegates of HPCC were in favour of nomination of Chief Minister’s candidate Dharam Pal Malik. The dissidents led by S. S. Surjewala did not mention any candidate by name. But they stressed that office bearers should be chosen on consensus basis. But the Bhajan Lal’s group was in favour of holding the elections to get the dissidents’ group humbled.\textsuperscript{53}

Surjewala alleged that the Chief Minister was included in all kind of malpractices including the use of government machinery for the party elections. He started a signature campaign to get the support of maximum delegates in his favour. On his part Bhajan Lal issued show cause notices to the dissidents

\textsuperscript{50} The Tribune, Chandigarh, February 26, 1989.  
\textsuperscript{51} The Tribune, Chandigarh, November 12, 1992.  
\textsuperscript{52} S. S. Chahar, \textit{op. cit.}  
\textsuperscript{53} Ibid.
including Birender Singh and S. S. Surjewala. But the dissidents' leader said that under the rules of the Congress party constitution only the AICC President was competent to seek the explanation of its members.\textsuperscript{54}

Finally, after a long tussle between the Chief Minister and dissidents, Dharam Pal Malik, M.P. was appointed as HPCC Chief in place of Birender Singh by the Party High Command on April 10, 1992. However, the appointment of Malik created wide fissures in party organization and separate public meetings were held by the Chief Minister and the dissidents' groups.\textsuperscript{55}

Bhupender Singh Hooda, who was appointed HPCC President in March, 1997 was declared elected after the PCC elections. Birender Singh withdrew from the contest saying 'he was constraint to withdraw from the contest in protest against immoral and degenerated politics indulged in by certain leaders'. The Bhajan Lal’s group which had earlier declared that it would not allow Hooda to become the party President unopposed, did not file the nomination papers of any candidate. Hooda was authorized to elect other office bearers of PCC.\textsuperscript{56}

Bhupender Singh Hooda was replaced by Bhajan Lal as HPCC Chief on August 6, 2002. While assuming the charge Bhajan Lal said he would strive to end groupism in the party. However, he did not rule out the necessity in function at Chandigarh that he would reinstate all employees retrenched by the Chautala government. However, the deep rooted factionalism in Haryana Congress came to the surface once again at the function when eleven MLAs led by Hooda, leader of the Congress Legislature Party stayed away.\textsuperscript{57} The rivalry between Bhupender Singh Hooda, HPCC President and Bhajan Lal factions over the question of supremacy damaged the Party's strength and prospects, otherwise it could have been a challenge to the INLD-BJP alliance.

\textsuperscript{54} The Tribune, Chandigarh, May 6, 1992.
\textsuperscript{55} Ibid, April 11, 1992.
\textsuperscript{56} The Hindustan Times, New Delhi, May 14, 1997.
\textsuperscript{57} The Tribune, Chandigarh, August 7, 2002.
An overview of this chapter shows that like every political party, Congress has its distinct ideology. We may say that it is an ideologically neutral organization. It subscribes to certain policies and programmes of social, economic and political significance that display a curious blending of three different currents – Gandhism with its emphasis on rural reconstruction of the lines of decentralization of power and economic self-sufficiency; liberalism recognizing the right of free enterprise in a mixed economy; and socialism with its emphasis on state ownership and control on the means of production and distribution. The role of ideology in shaping the configuration of electoral responses of the Haryana voters has been marginal. The ideology as expressed through the manifestoes of the parties has had little bearing on Haryana politics.

The Congress has the structures of the party organization at the State, District and Block levels. Besides, it has some fronts and cells for several sections. We find that at the HPCC level, we might expect the house in order and working properly. However, it depends upon the capacities and capabilities of the HPCC president plus the interest he took in the organizational work. The Congress organization in Haryana has accommodated the support of all the sections of society though in varying degree. It has been more popular in the scheduled castes and backward classes. It has also been much popular among Jats in the Haryana Lok Sabha Election 2004 and Assembly Elections of 2005.

The Congress party has been suffering from the factionalism in Haryana Pradesh Congress Committee since its inception. It has to be explored as to how far has this factor hampered the growth of the support base of the party in Haryana. This has been the result of caste conflicts and personal ambitions of Congress leaders in Haryana. The impact of factionalism on the support base of the party requires to be traced.