CHAPTER-I
INTRODUCTION: ELECTORAL DEMOCRACY IN CONTEMPORARY INDIA

It has been widely noted by the political analysts working on Indian democracy that democracy as an idea has got embedded in the political consciousness of Indian people. This has been hailed not as a mean achievement given the formidable challenges that confronted India at the time of independence. Some of these challenges still persist in contemporary India. Even then India continues to have an ‘actually existing democracy.’ Unlike most of the Asian, African and Latin American ‘new’ democracies. Like those other great democratic experiments inaugurated in the eighteenth century in France and United States of America, democracy arrived in India without much preparation. The very idea of democracy was alien to most of India’s electorates. Constitutional democracy based on universal adult franchise did not emerge in India as a result of popular pressures/movement politics. The idea of democracy like that of socialism, development, secularism were basically the political choices of the elites which they brought to the people. Yet the democratic ideas have penetrated the Indian political imagination to an extent that people have accepted democracy, and have provided it legitimacy while voting, not individually but in groups.1

India as such has defied the textbook models/western liberal democratic models. As per the western liberal literature on democracy, democracy as an institution was not likely to survive in a country like India, where the prerequisites, considered necessary for its survival hardly existed. India at the time of decolonization suffered from the absence of a homogeneous population, an industrialised economy, high levels of education or a shared civic culture.2 Notwithstanding these limitations, democracy in India has not only survived, but has grown in a multi-cultural, multi-religious, multi-ethnic society. In terms of regular elections, which has been free and fair, peaceful change of governments has ensured arrangements of civil and political rights. The

The deepening of Indian democracy can be well defined in terms of rising political participation and high voter turnouts. Contrary to electoral behaviour in western democracies in India it is the poor, illiterates, lower castes and rural voters who, of late, have been more likely to vote than the rich, educated, upper caste and urban voters. They are more likely to believe that their vote will make a crucial difference to their life. This is the reflection of growing sense of political efficacy. The major factor influencing the rising political consciousness of the poor is the growing realization that the state can play an important role in dispensing public goods and an increasing awareness that politics can be a route to greater self-respect, dignity and confidence in protecting their interests. This has been the running theme in the literature on electoral politics in India and has been dubbed as the ‘second democratic upsurge’ / ‘democracy from below’ by the election analysts. India, unlike most of the new democracies has also witnessed peaceful and periodic transfer of political power. This, however, has not meant that it has been the same political elites that have remained in power. The election outcomes reveal that anti-incumbency has been a major factor in the Indian elections. Almost half of the sitting legislators and the parliamentarians tend to lose their elections. Elections in India have witnessed greater level of participation and contestation not only in terms of quantifiable number but also in terms of wider sociological base.

One can take pride for being the citizens of Indian democracy. Since elections have been ‘democratic minimum’ at least for ensuring procedural democracy, on procedural front, Indian democracy is a great success. Elections in India have received wider acceptance of the people as they have strengthened the very basis of the democracy. Its success can largely be attributed to the accomplishment of its electoral democracy in terms of its deepening and widening.

4 Hasan, loc. cit., p. 6.
5 M. P. Singh and Rekha Saxena, loc. cit.
On many counts, one can also argue that Indian democracy has not only established well itself on procedural front but also has gone beyond this, to the contours of substantial democracy and that is an achievement for a ‘new democracy’ like India. Indian democracy has not only survived but has gone from strength to strength albeit in its procedural form. A review is needed at this political juncture not only due to the dawn of new century but also because of certain other remarkable developments, which have been the signifiers of the deepening and expansion of a maturing democracy and have heralded a new era in electoral politics of last decade of the 20th century. The reconfiguration has come in the form of the assertion of identity politics be it on the basis of caste, gender, minority status or even region.

Indian democracy has witnessed three phases of electoral systems. The changes in electoral patterns and trends during the five and half decades of Indian polity can be viewed in three distinct phases: First Phase of Electoral Democracy (1952 to 1967), Second Phase of Electoral Democracy (1967 to 1989), and Third Phase of Electoral Democracy (1989 onwards).

First Phase of Electoral Democracy (1952 to 1967)

The first electoral phase of Indian polity included four general elections. During the period from 1952 to 1967, Indian democracy on the front of party politics witnessed single party dominance. Indian National Congress (INC) being the pole around which all the political contests used to take place. This was an era of limited democracy, which means that the democracy was installed in its institutional form without its historical basis.

This phase was marked by low levels of electoral competition. In terms of representation, the leadership was provided with homogenized elite, which was urban, western educated in terms of participation. In the name of active citizenry, it was an elite democracy due to low levels of party competition. During the first phase, limited

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8 Hasan, op.cit., p. 6.
choice was available for electorates in the sense that Congress had an all encompassing social base, which constituted the support across the cleavages of caste, class, region and religion. Congress was the only party with an all India presence in ideological, institutional, and organizational terms. The opposition had mostly been in the form of factions within the Congress as an umbrella party rather than in the form of the opposition parties, which were regionally fragmented and very weak in electoral terms. In other words, there were opposition parties, which used to be present in the parliament but on the front of policy making, they just could influence them instead of altering them.

The dominance of Congress during the pre-1967 phase could be explained by the factors like its legacy regarding nationalist struggle, its centrist ideology, its commitment to democracy, secularism, minority rights, a federalism with centralized tendency, mixed economy, above all its nation-building agenda and charismatic leadership. Indian National Congress had been the leading and preponderant party along with the party of consensus and pressures which obtained the absolute majority of seats in parliament as well as in state assembly polls except Kerala in the pre-1967 period aptly called 'Congress System' by Rajni Kothari.10

1967 polls marked the watershed in the career of Indian electoral democracy. The fourth general elections had been very crucial for the electoral politics in particular and Indian democracy in general. This election reconfigured the party system in India and had wider implications for national as well as regional level politics. It heralded new trends in the electoral politics in India.

Second Phase of Electoral Democracy (1967 to 1989)

The second phase witnessed significant changes taking place having long-term implications, both in terms of the nature of party politics and the emergent social cleavages. The period was marked by the passage from single party dominance to multi-party politics and intensification of party competition, the fragmentation of parties and the rise of regional parties of non-elites.

9 ibid., p. 9.
10 ibid., p. 8.
The growing challenge to the dominance of Congress party became clear by the time fourth general election took place. It was evident from the emergence of non-Congress coalitions in some of the states like Kerala, West Bengal and Tamil Nadu, which paved the way for multiparty system at the state level because at the national level Congress continued to rule, albeit with a reduced majority till 1977.\textsuperscript{11} The decline of Congress was further accelerated with the split in 1969 that led to the centralising personalised mode of leadership in the party. It also marked the decline in ideological and organisational sense of the Congress. By the general elections of 1977, Indian polity ushered into a new era of broad based coalitions forming part of an unstable multiparty system; one at the state level and second at the national level. At the national level, it was unstable multiparty system but at the state level it was followed by a relatively stable party system.

With the decline of Congress, the vacuum was filled by the emergence of the regional / state level parties as well as the parties at the national level. Mainly four types of parties came up due to the decline of catch-all Congress party, also called a ‘rainbow’ party. In the first place, non-Congress coalitions emerged at the national level in the form of Bharatiya Jan Sangh and later on Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) in 1990s. The non-Congress coalitions did not provide standing opposition against the Congress at least during 1967 to 1989 except 1977, because during 70’s and 80’s, Congress remained dominant at the centre.\textsuperscript{12}

Other three kinds of parties also came out at the regional level, the first among them were the parties formed by Congress dissidents, for instance, Bangla Congress, Kerala Congress, The Utkal Congress, The Telangana Rashtriya Samithi, Tamil Manila Congress, The Trinamool Congress and so forth. The second type of parties referred to the tribal parties, which came into existence in order to give impetus to the tribal identity and worked as catalysts to demand more concessions from the centre. They were namely Naga National Council, Mizo National Front and All Party Hill Leaders Conference. The third types of regional parties have been larger political formations based on ethnic, religious, cultural and linguistic lines. For instance Dravida Munnetra Kazhagham (DMK) and All India Anna Munnetra Kazhagham (AIADMK) in Tamil

\textsuperscript{11} Yogendra Yadhav, \textit{op.cit.}, p. 2395.
\textsuperscript{12} M. P. Singh and Rekha Saxena, \textit{op.cit.}, p. 252.
Nadu, Akali Dal in Punjab, National Conference in Jammu and Kashmir, Telugu Desham Party in Andhra Pradesh, Shiv Sena in Maharashtra, Jharkhand Party and Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD) in Bihar, Bharatiya Kranti Dal (BKD) and Lok Dal in Uttar Pradesh and Haryana are the parties with bigger and well-knit organizations and provide stable challenge to Congress in states.13

Along with the changes in party system, Indian democracy also witnessed some significant developments regarding the rise of social cleavage along the lines of caste and class during the second phase. The rise in the state autonomy due to over-centralization and personalization of political power also resulted into the rise of non-Congressional alternatives. The period witnessed ‘first democratic upsurge’ in the form of the rise of dominant castes, as the rise of Kammans and Reddys in Andhra Pradesh, Patidars in Gujarat, Vokkaligas and Lingayats in Karnataka, Marathas in Maharashtra, Jats in Punjab, Ahirs and Jats in Haryana, Yadavs and Jats in Uttar Pradesh were the part of that mobilization.14 During the phase, these castes came out in state wide alliance namely AJGAR (Ahirs, Jats, Gujjars and Rajputs) in Uttar Pradesh and Haryana; and KHAM (Kshatriyas, Harjans, Adivasis and Muslims) in Gujarat. It was a period of cross-sectional mobilization.15

Due to the emergence of these new social groups, which were historically dormant in political sense, the electoral processes experienced significant changes. The system became somewhat more competitive due to the rise of state parties. During this phase, polity became more inclusive as a tilt of balancing forces. Democracy moved in the direction of rural India and it moved to become mass democracy. Elitist mode of politics was replaced by mass mode of politics based on populist promises and slogans. The assertion could be explained in terms of decline of Congress culture of accommodation,16 as during the first two decades of Indian polity, Congress was seen as the representative of interests of all social groups including poor and religious minorities. Its leadership was till then considered capable of rising over and above the sectional interests. Under the changed political scenario, the newly emergent

13 ibid., p. 253.
15 Yadav, op.cit., p. 2394.
16 Atu Kohli, op.cit., p. 209.
dominant peasant castes faced gradual de-centralization of political power and empowered with electoral process came out as independent political forces having their own identities and demands.

The emergent groups, especially the middle class peasantry and that too predominantly in north India, were the beneficiary classes of green-revolution process and the implementation of land reforms. Moreover, their numerical strength in the electoral democracy also paved the way for the rise of state politics in late 60s and early 70s.

The remarkable changes at the institutional level could be attributed to the decline of Congress in organizational, institutional, and ideological terms. Congress was able to come to power afterwards. It, however, did not come to power with the same preponderance that it had enjoyed in the first two decades of the polity. Its decline started with 1967 elections onwards although it was gradual in many ways and directions. After 1967, Congress found itself under pressure and strains to accommodate various newly emergent socio-economic forces and upcoming multidirectional changes due to its internal weakness. Its internal pluralist and federal organizational processes were undermined due to the centralizing tendencies. Congress faced the problem of articulation and accommodation of newly mobilized and politicised sections of society. Its decline further could be explained in terms of its failure of generating a capacity to accommodate rising expectations of the electorates. Ideologically, it was an era of populism and the erosion of ideologies suited the popular taste.\(^7\)

**Third Phase of Electoral Democracy (1989 Onwards)**

The third phase of electoral democracy was very significant for the deepening and expansion of Indian electoral base. Changes have been witnessed at two levels first, at institutional level and second, at the level of the social cleavages. The decade of 1990s experienced the ‘second democratic upsurge’. 1991 general elections marked the beginning of the third phase of electoral democracy, with certain new significant trends in Indian politics.

\(^{17}\) Yadav, *op.cit.*, p. 2394.
The advent of 3 M’s in recent Indian politics i.e. Mandal, Mandir and Market have reconfigured the nature of Indian politics. There has been an Ambedkarization of Indian politics due to the implementation of recommendations of Mandal Commission, rise of Hindutva politics in the form of rise of Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and in 1992 demolition of Babri Mosque and finally the implementation of neo-liberal economic policies oriented towards market reforms as a result of the failure of planned / command economy that was followed in Nehruvian India. On the political front, Congress no longer remained the ‘natural party of governance’ as the non-Congress parties could now successfully win the elections and also run the government. The period has been characterized as ‘post-Congress polity’. The rise of bi-nodal party system was a feature of this polity. BJP as the main competitor of Congress emerged as the single largest party at the centre in 1998 and 1999. The decade of 1990s witnessed the rise of BJP due to its Hindutva nationalism in the backdrop of demolition of Babri mosque and its opposition to the implementation of Mandal Commission’s recommendations.

The rise of the BJP has been viewed as a process of the party occupying the centrist political space vacated by the Congress. It was true that the period witnessed the fastest growth of the BJP as an electoral force. It coincided with the phase of the most rapid decline of the Congress. On the contrary, the party was reduced to third position in UP, behind the Samajwadi Party and the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) in the recent Assembly elections. In Bihar the Congress was reduced to having a marginal presence. Congress remains on the margin in Bihar though in neighbouring Uttar Pradesh it has shown the sign of revival. Laloo Prasad Yadav’s Rashtriya Janata Dal or its forerunner the Janata Dal played the role of the destroyer, taking away the voters away from the Congress on the plank of politics of identity.

In Orissa, Assam and Karnataka, the BJP grew rapidly, more often than not by consolidating the anti-Congress political forces. If one looks at the period between the late1960s and the mid-1980s, there were already signs of the Congress losing ground

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18 ibid., p. 2394.
19 Hasan, op.cit., p. 23.
gradually to the regional parties. Andhra Pradesh and Maharashtra, traditional strongholds of the Congress witnessed similar trends even if the process did not lead to the complete marginalization of the Congress. In Andhra Pradesh, the Telugu Desham Party rose from almost nowhere to become a powerful challenger to the Congress in the mid-1980s and has remained the main contender for power with the Congress as other parties like Praja Rajyam Party and Telangana Rashtriya Samiti have also emerged on caste / regional identity based mobilisation and politicisation. Similarly, in Maharashtra, it has been the rise of the Shiv Sena followed by NCP rather than the BJP, which first raised questions about just how firm the Congress' grip on power in the state was.

The rise of BJP was multi-dimensional in the sense that it has over the decades asserted itself in geographical, social and political terms. BJP is the only party, which has observed a consistent rise in its vote share since 1984. In its geographical scope, it has gone beyond Hindi-heartland and has registered its presence in states like Gujarat, Maharashtra and Karnataka as its core. In social terms, it was no more an upper caste, urban-based party. BJP has made significant headways in other social groups especially due to its electoral alliances. It has created a new kind of ‘majoritarianism’ and its rise to power has created a new social bloc beyond its Hindutva agenda based on the notion of cultural agenda.

As BJP reached to a plateau in terms of the percentage of votes polled due to the limited nature of its support base, it woke up to the need of extending its support base to the other classes and the castes also. Now, BJP has not been concentrating only on its Hindutva agenda but also looking for the electoral gains on the basis of governance and leadership. It has also made attempt to broaden its support base among the marginal communities including the tribal community in the states like Orissa and Gujarat as evident in the last parliamentary and assembly elections in the states. The BJP has found the way to come to power on the basis of forging right kind of alliances while moderating its ideology. Congress, however, has been the only party

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22 Yadav, op.cit., p. 2395.

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with an all India presence in the organizational and institutional terms and BJP nowhere stands with Congress in this particular regard.

The b-nodal competition at the centre has been accompanied by somewhat more stable bipolarities at the state level.\textsuperscript{23} The bipolar system has varied from one state to another state although the differences have been very slight. Bipolarities at the state level, however, were on the scene from 1967 onwards, but by the end of 80’s and during 90’s, they had stabilized themselves firmly. This trend again signified a post-Congress polity, in fact more emphatically. In states like Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Himachal Pradesh and Delhi, we have had a bipolar competition between Congress and Jan Sangh since 1967, which got replaced by a competition between the Congress and the BJP in 1990s. In the states like Kerala, West Bengal and Tripura, the bipolar contest is between the Congress led alliances and Left parties led alliances. In another set of states namely, Punjab, Jammu & Kashmir, Andhra Pradesh, Goa and Assam, the political competition took place between the Congress and a regional party. With the emergence of BJP, the party system has become two plus party systems.\textsuperscript{24}

Tamil Nadu has been a distinct state where Congress since 1967 elections has not been a serious contender for power but has merely marked its presence only as an alliance partner of regional parties namely, DMK and AIDMK. In the north eastern states like Mizoram, Nagaland, Manipur, Sikkim again we have a bipolar contest but somewhat unstable ones. The main contenders for power here have been Congress and a variety of regional/state level parties. In some of the states like Gujarat, Haryana, Maharashtra, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Karnataka and Orissa Congress had retained preponderance till 1989 except 1967 and 1977. But by the end of 1990s these states also have started exhibiting bipolar trends, although Uttar Pradesh and Bihar have been moving towards multi-polar competition.\textsuperscript{25}

The last decade was also marked by the expansion of choice in front of electorates in the form of multi-party electoral contests. This period has witnessed the rise of the era of coalition governments. This was the reality, which seems to be accepted by both

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\item \textsuperscript{23} E. Sridharan, \textit{op.cit.}, p. 481.
\item \textsuperscript{24} ibid., pp. 482-483.
\item \textsuperscript{25} Sridharan, \textit{op.cit.}, pp. 483-485.
\end{itemize}
the major political parties being Congress and BJP or in terms of party coalition’s viz. United Progressive Alliance (UPA) and National Democratic Alliance (NDA), respectively. By the end of 1980s with the practice of electoral politics the nature of party completion has changed to a great extent in the sense that political contests which used to take place between various political parties now has been replaced by a competition between alliances and more aptly between winnable alliances or coalitions. The 1990s was an era of political instability as a result of the formation of minority governments. The Congress led UPA government, formed in 2009, was the 10th coalitional government formed in a row since 1989.

During 2004, Congress for the first time formed a coalition government under the rubric of UPA with Left Front providing support from outside. By now, the formation of electoral alliance and post-poll coalitions both had become the needs of the hour which was realized by the Congress in its Shimla convention. Congress till then had thought of fighting elections on its own. With the completion of the full terms by BJP led NDA and Congress led UPA governments, it can be argued that coalition politics seems to have grounded itself firmly in India and it has come to stay. In India, we have been witnessing the erosion of legitimacy of political leadership politicians and political parties. No single party between the two major parties namely Congress and BJP is able to come into power on its own which makes the coalition politics desirable and necessary. At this juncture it would be apt to quote Pratap Bhanu Mehta, what he writes about the unclear electoral mandates that, “we are consistently getting results at the national level, with no clear mandates because no political formation had the capacity to break the logjam of electoral strategy.”

It has often been argued that the country’s polity is essentially bi-polar in nature and that smaller parties have no alternatives but to align themselves with one or the other. It can be contended that the process of fragmentation of the polity is not yet over and that smaller parties, including regional and caste-based outfits, do not necessarily have to become appendages of either the BJP or the Congress.

An agenda of good governance or general politics of redistribution is limited by the capacities of the state and no party has yet found a way of transcending these limits decisively. Moreover, the decade of 1990s was significant for the assertion of dormant identities be it women, Dalit, poor, minorities or Adivasis as they came up in a politically powerful manner in the form of groups. This was the era of mobilization and assertion of lower castes, as middle peasant castes had already been mobilized earlier. The women turnout went up during 1990s and they also registered their presence as ‘fully informed citizenry’. The decade also recorded the decreasing voters’ turnouts of socially and economically better placed but increased participation of women, Dalits and Adivasis. The trend was indicative of their rising political efficacy due to their active involvement. So, this was the era of expansion of participatory base of electoral democracy, along with intense politicisation and mobilization than ever before in political arena. An electoral volatility was witnessed.

The ‘third electoral system’ has been important for emergence of the regional states on the forefront, playing decisive role in national politics. States became the effective units of political and economic choices. It led to a differentiation of trends and patterns in different states. Gone were the days of nationwide waves, now the national mandates were not more than an aggregation of state level verdicts. During 1950s and 1960s, state did not matter much for the electorates while deciding for national leadership. In the decade of 1970s and 1980s, people voted in state legislative elections as if they were electing the central government. The decade of 1990s, however, witnessed a drastic shift regarding this particular respect; as the political affiliations, aptitudes were determined at the state level. These days, peoples vote in Lok Sabha elections as if they are electing their representing for the local bodies or assemblies. State specific verdicts, the rise of state wide parties were the attributes of decade of 1990s. Each state developed its own pattern of electoral politics imparting specificity to its politics.

27 Yadav, op.cit., p. 2399.
28 ibid
Thus, in order to understand electoral politics properly one needs to have a common framework. While trying to ensure a common framework, one comes across certain similarities like emergence of electoral bipolarities in almost every state with a minor difference and assertion of weaker sections of society or second democratic upsurge. But there are distinguishing features and patterns, which are specific to each state and are more in number than commonalities.

The ‘third phase’ of electoral democracy in India has also marked the ‘naturalization of electoral democracy’. The electorates have created their own meta-narratives of democracy and social justice, while discarding the established western parameters of democracy. The ‘vernacular’ politicians like Ram Vilas Paswan, Lalu Prasad Yadav, Mulayam Singh Yadav, Kanshi Ram and of course, Mayawati have created their own vocabularies and idioms of democracy and social justice. Reliance on the western dynamics to judge the working of their democracy would no longer work.29

As politics is about continuities as well as discontinuities, by the verdict of May 2004, some of the trends and patterns of party politics in particular and electoral politics in general got consolidated. Some of them were marked with a maturing point that had emerged during the last decade of 20th century.30 The rise of casteism and its tightening grip over electoral politics has been the distinctive attribute of 1990s. Since caste has been a deciding factor in Indian politics from its very inception the patterns, which have got consolidated. Regarding coalition politics, it is apparent that the trend of coalitions is here to stay. As no single party between the two major parties namely Congress and BJP have been able to secure a winnable majority on their own along with the third front remained in disarray.

The verdict of 2004 marked the end of a period of fluidity that characterized the first phase of third electoral system. The reconfiguration of the party system witnessed in the last 15 years also came to a point of completion. With the May 2004 Lok Sabha elections verdict, it could be assumed that the party system in India has already taken a definite shape. Again it could also be argued that the participatory upsurge of the

29 ibid., p. 2397.
dormant identities has reached to its optimum mark but this was not the stagnation. As far as political party system was concerned, it was clearly bi-nodal party system at the centre with their alliance partners. Another trend, which got consolidated, was regional states emerging as the prime arenas of political contestation. State politics gradually has gained enormous importance, in fact the unclear verdicts of general elections since the last one and half decade were seen as aggregated verdicts of states. The point was illustrated in the form of the verdict of 2004, as it was not about a clear defeat of BJP or a clear victory of Congress. But it was the alliances which have proven decisive because both Congress and BJP have been facing a structural deficit. None of them were and are capable of coming anywhere close to securing a formidable majority on their own.

So, the question, which was and remains of prime importance, relates to the strategy of forging winnable alliances. There was another factor, which was getting more and more consolidated after every elections and that was anti-incumbency factor. The mandate of 2004 marked the revival of left front along with the Congress. So the mandate of 2004 witnessed certain structural shifts and changes. The verdict marked the defeat of Hindutva forces and a victory of secular space. Its alliance with the UPA should be seen in the light of the following factors: its support for secularism, its opposition to NDA and lastly its attempt to influence the process of liberalization to make it peoples friendly. UPA has thus formed a government with a view to consolidate secular forces in Indian polity along with its common minimum programme to provide a solace to millions of Indians.

The Lok Sabha polls of 2009 seem to have heralded a new era in electoral politics of the nation. The verdict has marked the political stability at the national level after the turbulent decade of 1990s. This was a ‘normal election’ as there was no anti-incumency wave nor was any emotive issue on the agenda. The voters gave Congress led UPA another chance on the basis of ‘good governance’. There was nationwide pattern in the verdict. The final verdict reflected the balance of political forces in all the states. The newly acquired strength of Congress and its alliance partners gave an impression that the national political parties were at the centre stage once again. Besides, the poor performance of caste based parties has pointed out the

saturation of that particular kind of politics if not the end of it which was one of the dominant features of the electoral politics of 1990s in India.

Congress has gained significantly all over the country although in terms of seats but not on the front of votes, while the BJP has lost considerably in terms of the seats. Notwithstanding its electoral debacle, BJP has been broadening its support base attracting new social groups or new political allies or geographic expansion in terms of getting into new states. Although, Congress has gained its lost support to an extent but it was still partial.

Regional parties were still important although their bargaining power as partners in central government have reduced considerably in and after the recent elections. State will remain as the primary arena of politics which was one of the dominant features of electoral politics during 1990s. The combined vote share of regional parties has shown considerable consistency from the past three Lok Sabha polls. The elections saw a significant rise in the number of woman Members of Parliament, as many as 59 legislators reached to the House as compared to 45 in 2004.

The Left parties, especially its core CPI (M) had lost heavily as its strength got reduced to 25 seats from 61 in 2004. The last two decades had witnessed an expansion of the third space in Indian politics apart from the Congress and the BJP. This third space was represented by the Left and many regional parties which brought new issues and new leaders. The third and fourth fronts were crashed before finding their ways. The verdict opened a new political space for the Congress. Clearly, this result was not simply an aggregation of state-level verdicts. A verdict like this cannot be attributed only to local factors. Factors like positive image of the Prime Minister and the Congress president, its major pro-people initiatives like the NREGA, the farm loan waiver, and the Right to Information Act created conducive environment in the party’s favor. For the general electorates, Congress appeared relatively more dependable party than the available alternatives in the form of non-Congress parties.

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being a part of NDA or on their own. However, the real challenge for the Congress now is to respond to the increased expectations of the electorates and its regained social support base.

To conclude this part, one can argue that during last five and half decades, electoral democracy in India has come a long way in its procedural form. But on substantive front, it is still lacking. Because the identity based mobilization, assertion of disadvantaged masses can also be deployed for wrong causes, for example, the demolition of Babri Mosque or the violence for or against the Mandal commission report based reservations. It is beyond doubt that Indian democracy has become more representative and inclusionary in character, but this has not found expression in the making of the public policies. With the introduction of the ‘new economic policies’, the nature of Indian democracy has changed to a great extent because market is exclusionary and it is coming in the way to inclusive politics of democracy. Somehow Indian democracy has not done so well on socialistic and secularist fronts, because representation is not well enough. Erosion of mass movements, professionalism and decreasing level of morality in politics has led to the erosion of democracy itself. Still, on a positive note, we have achieved right of education and right of information along with implementation of 73rd and 74th constitutional amendment acts which have broadened the democratic space.

**Evolution of State Level Electoral Politics**

In the field of electoral politics, there has now been much more emphasis on the study of the elections at the local/state level. This trend started with the bifurcation between the assembly and the Lok Sabha elections in 1971. The introduction of the periodic regular elections for the local bodies after the implementation of the 73rd and 74th constitutional amendment acts also brought the local into focus. State electoral politics as an area of study never received adequate importance in the first years of

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independence as the whole focus was on the study of the electoral politics at the national level. Pan-Indian perspective on political economy and political sociology were undertaken.

The possible factors responsible for India being a homogenized political structure for a considerable period of time after independence were defined by a dominant party system, a similar sociological origin of leadership with shared political ideology based on ideas of democracy, development, welfarism and secularism.

During the initial years of its independence, India had a limited/elitist form of democracy in the sense that nascent democratic structures / institutions that had been set up without having a historical legacy or experience. Procedural democracy was established with a hope to realize democracy in its substantive form. On economic front, Indian state had opted for a statist model of development based on command/planned economy approach. Wherein, Indian economy got a pyramidal shape under ‘command economy’ with centre being a major actor at the level of making, execution, implementation and assessment of the public policy at the federal level with the help of planning commission, finance commission and national development council. Apart from these factors, the partition legacy and nation-building agenda further fostered the pan Indian perspective. So, under the development planning model, there was a homogeneous picture as far as the political system and its working was concerned and as a result most of the analysis of Indian politics was undertaken at the national level.

Further, Indian politics was considered a segmented polity as Iqbal Narain argued that the experiences of one state did not compare with the other states. However, the situation changed after 1967 which marked the watershed impact on Indian politics. It was for the first time noticed that Congress no longer remained the coalitional, rainbow party with its preponderance both at the national and state level, as the decline in its political prospectus already had started and from than onwards it was not able to retain its social base because its social coalition was being broken. Although, Congress was able to retain its political space (its dominance at the national level throughout 1980’s) but at the state level it had already started producing diminishing

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38 Iqbal Narain, (ed), (1956), State Politics in India, Minkashi Prakashan, New Delhi, pp. 16-40.
returns. For the first time in 1967, Indian states witnessed non-Congress governments. Although, these non-Congress coalitions did not last long but the foundation of non-Congress governments and coalition politics had taken roots for the first time. Further, there was ideological and institutional decline within Congress party as there was over-centralization and personalization of political power due to populist politics of Indira Gandhi who was out to consolidate her position vis a vis her rivals within the party.

Over centralizing tendencies and shrinking democratic space within the Congress provided growing space for the regional/state level parties. The electoral space of Congress was being narrowed down further by the ways it handled the state ministries in 1977. The regional pressures were too strong to overcome. So, the emergence of regional parties as independent forces at the state level was being seen as a logical consequence of Congress policies during 1970s. In some states, regional parties became so strong that they compelled Congress to come at par with them and Congress too had no choice but to compromise and adjust with them to avoid its ouster from the political space of those states.

As a result of the over-centralization accompanied with the decline of social coalition of Congressional social base, centre-state relations underwent a radical change which culminated not only in resolutions and demands for decentralization and economic devolution, but also in autonomist and secessionist demands. It was the resentment that was lapped up by various political groups leading to the fragmentation of the polity. The resentment against the traditional urban elite extended to a rejection of all that the elite stood for, including the notion of the Indian identity over-riding sub-national identities. The world of political possibilities in India seems to be simplifying into the frightening choice before most of the modern world’s political communities craft imperfect democratic rules by which increasingly mixed groups of people can carry on together an existence, or the illusion of a permanent and homogeneous, unmixed single nation, a single collective self without any trace of a defiling otherness. The fragmentation of India’s polity undoubtedly was an outcome of the feeling among very large sections of the population that they had been left out of the development process.
Indian polity during 1970s and 1980s witnessed the assertion of intermediate dominant castes especially in north India due to the impact of green revolution, implementation of land reforms measures and electoral politics being the numbers game. As new emergent groups demanded political power which resulted into the shifting of balance of Indian polity from urban to rural areas, more aptly, Indian polity witnessed regionalization and ruralization processes. Also took place the processes of fragmentation or federalization of Indian polity, party system. Strong regional/state parties and groups came up on the horizon.

In 1977 general elections, regional/state level parties came along with the national parties to form a coalition in order to oust Congress and for the restoration of democratic institutions and civil liberties. In 1977, regional actors merged their identities in the Janata coalition for the larger interest. The merger was driven by the pragmatic concern of ousting Congress rather than on the basis of ideology. Not surprisingly, the Janata experiment did not last long. During 1989 these forces again challenged the Congress on the basis of anti-Congress sentiment, but this time they retained their identities. In both the cases, national parties remained dominant actors but the real assertion of the regional parties became possible in 1990s. In 1996, National Front government was formed, which was essentially a coalition of various regional parties with their own regional agendas.

The 1996 elections marked the arrival of regional political formations on the national scene as they due to the strength of their electoral performance came to share political power not only at the state level but also became indispensable at the centre as well. The decline of the Congress became the reason for the emergence of regional parties to fill the gap created by Congress while withdrawing from its political space throughout 1980s. The majorities gained by Congress during 80’s could not avoid its decline. It was the realization of incapacity of national parties to form the governments on their own that forced them into active alliances with regional political parties. Besides the numerical strength of regional parties in terms of their representatives in the legislative bodies, they also captured a sizeable vote share. They also emerged in the large number of states.

The rise of regional political formations in a way coincided with the socio-economic developments along with the breakdown of Congress led social coalition as well as
national consensus, as witnessed over the years, after fourth general elections. After 1967, the peasant middle castes like the Jat Sikhs in Punjab, Hindu Jats in Haryana, Lingayats and Vokaligas in Karnataka, Yadavs in Uttar Pradesh and Bihar, Kammas and Reddies in Andhra Pradesh, Patel-Patidars in Gujarat, and Maratha-Kunbis in Maharashtra dominated the political scene especially at the state level. The logic of deepening of political consciousness not remained limited to dominant peasant castes which had challenged the dominance of upper caste. This process in fact went further and many backward castes challenged this growing power of dominant peasant castes. It was the third stage of mobilization, which strengthened the regional outfits both within and outside the Congress. During 1980’s backward castes backed non-Congress parties signified the erosion of Congress. Congress also suffered due to the decline in terms of internal democracy and the absence of a mechanism to ensure constant recruitment of the leadership within the party, thereby witnessing the circulation of the same elite with the similar sociological background, naturally the middle/intermediate castes especially the landed peasant castes looked for their own party in order to empower themselves. The same logic led to the emergence of what Kanchan Chandra calls the ethnic caste based parties representing the OBCs and the Dalits.

The decade of 1990s witnessed the culmination of the processes of politicisation, which eventually brought the various dormant and marginalized sections to the political arena. The democratic churning of massive electorates over the years has changed the political scenario entering first at the state level and then at the national level. This churning resulted in the politicisation of every social and caste group. Indian democracy thus no longer remained confined to the educated, urban, upper castes and elitist sections of the population, which further gave rise to several state political parties.

The democratic process has been instrumental in the politicization and mobilization of new and underprivileged social groups into politics, assertion of ethnic regional identities and movements based upon caste. The acceleration of this process since the 1980s accompanied by the decline of the Congress and constantly shifting alignments have contributed in the 1980s to unstable coalition governments at the centre dependent for support on allies based on the states. The process of state-led economic
development; planning and the goals of equitable growth were conceived as part of this process of gradual democratisation of state and civil society.

However, the lack of implementation of many programmes and the inability of the states to tax and maintain fiscal discipline and populism contributed to the financial problems in the early 1980s. The states could no longer depend upon the centre to provide them funds for development and welfare. The implementation of the new economic policies, which was based on the idea of fiscal/monetary discipline, saw the gradual withdrawal of the central state from the economic arena. Today, the states enjoy much greater autonomy from the centre due to their being partners in the governance at the national level. The state level leadership and the parties are now directly involved in the negotiation with the corporate sector looking for bringing in the domestic as well as foreign investment. Now, they have greater financial freedom and following liberalization can independently enter into negotiations with foreign countries for technological collaboration and aid.

As on the economic front, states on the electoral front also have emerged as the effective units of electoral choice during 1980s and afterwards, while playing decisive role in national governance. Political loyalties, opinions and even social identities started getting crystallized at the state level. The process underlined a gradual shift of power from single centre to many poles located in the states, though this has not been a continuous process. The balance of power has shifted back and forth over these phases between the centre and the state. It has been a multidimensional process visible in the emergence of regional consciousness spread of electoral process, political mobilization, functioning of the federal structure and the party system. The coalitional mode of politics has ensured that the regional/state level parties not only ask for greater incentives for the states they represented but also asked for the lucrative portfolios.

The rise of states as the major area of political and economic power is not a new phenomenon but the pace has been accelerated during the last two decades. The post-1991 India has witnessed the emergence of the ‘post-Congress polity’ in much bigger way, as Congress no longer remains the first or the ‘natural’ choice of electorates and also not remaining one of the main contenders in many states. The most important structural shifts during 1990s were marked by the 3 M’s of Indian politics namely
Mandir, Market and Mandal. The first led to the rise of Hindutva Politics in the form of rise of BJP and demolition of Babri Mosque in 1992. The second involved the implementation of new economic policies or liberalization as a result of failure of planned/command economy. The third process resulted in *Ambedkarization* of Indian politics due to implementation of recommendations of Mandal commission.

**Survey/Review of Literature**

**Literature Concerning National level Politics**

The relevant literature for the purpose of the present study has been categorised into three different kinds of studies. The first kind includes the literature that caters to the themes of Indian electoral democracy, politics and party politics. For the purpose, the present study mainly focuses on the literature on developments, which have taken place in Indian politics in the last decade of century. The second kind includes the literature that is related to state politics in general. The third kind of studies deals with the literature on electoral politics mainly relating to the state of Haryana.

Zoya Hasan in her edited volume on party politics in India has focused on a number of issues in the Indian politics and placed them within broader debates concentrating on politics, society, economy and culture. The authors in general have made an attempt to understand and examine the Indian political and democratic discourse while focusing theoretically upon the intricate interaction of social-economic forces, political processes and the dynamics of social configuration and political conversion in the post -1947 period.

Essays in the volume examine the processes of state formation and theorise the options chosen by the leadership out of the available alternatives. The essays aim to explore the course of the state action from the viewpoint of social change experienced under democratic conditions and also examine the reasons that might have made and mired this transition. Besides, the specific themes the volume also aims to examine are the three themes that have dominated the course of the Indian states in the first fifty years after independence. These issues have closely been linked.

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with the limitations “imposed by the class project of bourgeoisie on economic development”.40 The volume also highlights the “state’s failure to ‘carry out its transformative agenda to its logical end, the increasing tension between a strong centralizing government and decentralizing tendencies and finally the increased participation in electoral politics of groups long considered peripheral which has exacerbated pressures on the cohesion of political parties and the response of the state to the political battle for equity, for justice.”41

The volume consists of five parts. First part essays deal with the historical evolution of the Indian state and observe the evolving relationship between class power and state power along with the changing relationship between state and society and how the state has come to dominate, not to serve the civil society. The essays focus on the post-colonial India. The second part includes the essays that address the issues of state and planning in order to inquire how planning could become an instrument of politics and power. The section also traces the changing role of the state in economic development and further examines the challenges posed by liberalization and globalisation. The third part essays examine the crisis of Indian state both in ideological and institutional terms. The essays in this part also analyse the struggles of domination and opposition at the national level to describe the basic causes of the inclination towards centralization of power. The fourth part discusses the processes that have resulted into the reformation and domination of state power. It also explores the shifting public opinion regarding the state policy of affirmative action and its effect upon the state transformation. The relationship between the state and minorities has also been discussed. The fifth part critically examines the profound linkages between the bureaucracy and the local elite and also explores the practice of corruption at the local government institutions.

The volume edited by Ajay K. Mehra et. al. 42 provides a comparative perspective on party and party systems in Germany, EU and India while keeping in view the undergoing collaborating and federalizing experience. The essays in the volume aim

40 ibid., p. 30.
41 ibid., p. 31.
to explore the existing and upcoming political processes which shaped and transformed the life of ordinary citizens along with their political organizations in their respective states. The volume also examines the complex political communications and alliances in the backdrop of ongoing process of changes taking place at various levels namely, the national, state and local level. The volume aims to analyse the emerging trends in the party system in India. First, it focuses the position and courses of political parties as well as issues and key questions which determined the party system in India. Secondly, it evaluates and analyse the texture and pattern of political alliances from the perspective of national parties. Thirdly, it reviews and analyses the processes of forging alliances from the viewpoint of the regional political players. And finally, it examines the parties and party politics in small states and at the local level especially after the implementation of the 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act. The volume highlights the significant changes that have taken place within the political party system along with the electoral behaviour. These changes have ineradicable influence over the Indian polity. Two prominent processes which have impacted over the party system and polity were the politicisation and mobilization of the dormant identities along with the federalization of the party politics. These changes have marked a power shift both at the social and political front of Indian polity.

Zoya Hasan43 in her another more recent edited volume on the theme of electoral and party politics has included the seminal writings of the eminent scholars including Rajni Kothari which still remain useful in making sense of the party politics of the Nehruvian India. The essays in the volume have undertaken the study of the parties and party politics in India right from the beginning of the journey of Indian republic to the end of 1970s. The volume essays were concerned with wide range of issues related to working of parliamentary or more appropriately with electoral democracy in India.

Section one has taken up the overarching theme of the dominance and decline of the Congress. The Congress party dominated Indian politics for the first four decades. Rajni Kothari in his classical essay on ‘Congress System’ describes Indian party

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44 ibid.,p.8.
system as ‘Congress system’ or ‘one party dominant system’ rather than one party system as Congress dominated the Indian politics for the four decades both at the centre and state level. Pradeep Chibber and John Petrocik in their article present a different picture while suggesting that the federalization of Indian party system was on its way in the decade of 1960s. They have also points out that support base of Congress depended on definite social base. The social support base varies from one state to another state. Kochanek point out that the dominance of Congress party under the leadership of Mrs. Indira Gandhi in the post-1969 period, was a relatively different system from the dominance of Nehruvian era. The centralized style of command of Mrs. Gandhi had its own dilemmas and tensions. Yogendra Yadav and Antony Heath in their article titled ‘The United Colours of Congress: Social Profile of Congress Voters, 1996 & 1998’ based on NES 1999, CSDS survey findings argues that the Congress party was no longer the pole against which every political formation was defined. In other words, Indian polity, they observes, might be dubbed as ‘post-Congress polity’. The Congress vote or social base in the decade of 1990’s was being re-defined by its opponent in the sense that Congress was no longer the catch-all coalitional party encompassing the cross caste class and sectional and regional support base. The BJP then has made significant headways in rural areas and also had extended its base among the lower sections of society. The formation of NDA in 1999 symbolizes its ability to come up as the single largest party in the parliament.

The second section has taken up the theme of the rise and growth of Hindu nationalist politics aimed to analyse the Hindu Nationalist politics in general and rise of BJP in particular. BD Graham’s article dealt with historical growth of Hindu nationalism in organizational and leadership development context. Christophe Jafferlot’s analysis of BJP reveals that the party followed the agenda of its building wherein the main concern was to develop a strong organization along with the mobilization of masses.

Oliver Heath in his article titled ‘Anatomy of BJP’s Rise to Power: Social, Regional and Political Expansion in 1990’s’, examines the relationship between BJP’s entry into new regions and its alliance building on the one hand and the broadening of its social base on the other. The article further reveals that the rise of BJP to power and a consistent rise in the vote share with every election since 1984 has been accompanied by a three dimensional expansion in the 1990s. In geographic terms it has expanded
much beyond its Hindi Heart land core and included Gujarat and Maharashtra as its core areas. In social terms, it has no longer been Brahmin-Bania, upper class, urban areas based party. It has also undertaken the mobilization and increased politicization of dormant identities. The article co-authored by Max Katzenstin, Uday Mehta and Usha Thakkar provides an analysis of the collective role played by Hindutva ideology and party organization which altered the Shiv Sena party from a party restricted to Mumbai to the major political force of Maharashtra state politics.

The third section has taken up the radical class politics of the left parties through an analysis of the communist parties and their politics. Javeed Alam concentrates on the early days of Communist Party of India to understand the current condition of the withdrawal of class politics. Amrita Basu examines the Parliamentary communism in democratic structure.

The fourth section undertakes the study of the social diversity, party politics and the changes in party system. The Indian democracy witnessed some significant developments regarding the rise of social cleavage along the lines of caste and class. The rise in the state autonomy due to over-centralization and personalization of political power also resulted into the rise of non-Congressional alternatives. Jyotirindra Das Gupta focuses his study on the political developments related to the Janata party phase of Indian politics. Zoya Hasan in her essay explores the creation of state parties due to rise of state politics, especially the BSP (Bahujan Samaj Party) in Uttar Pradesh (U P). Narendra Subramanian in his paper examined the approach and course of action of Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhgham (ADMK) when it was in power from 1972-1977 in Tamil Nadu.

The fifth and the final section essays take up the common theme of the party competition and transformation of the party system. The decline of Congress in institutional terms has given rise to the multiparty system. The rise of coalition politics has made state parties partners in the power. James Manor in his study presents an outline of the transformations in the party system from the 1960-70s to the 1980s. The author also provides an account of the ramifications of the decline of Congress party in organizational front. Eswaran Sridharan examines the process of party fragmentation in the evolving party system. He refers the factors responsible for the party fragmentation like the politicisation and mobilisation of the identity groups,
lack of internal democracy within Congress, assertion of the regional aspirations based on language, caste etc. Balveer Arora’s paper glances at the relationship developing amongst the Indian federalism, the changes in the political party system and the evolving trends in coalition politics.

Rajendra Vora and Suhas Palshikar\textsuperscript{45} in their edited volume aim at developing a critical understanding of the set of meaning and practice of democracy in the post-independence period. The volume no doubt contributes to the ongoing debate and has examined how Indian democracy has survived the challenges posed by widespread illiteracy, poverty, secessionism and communalism. The contributors locate the reasons for the resilience of Indian democracy in its history. The essays in this volume, however, show that despite having stood the test of time, Indian democracy has not been a democracy in substantive sense. The economic policies of successive governments since 1985 had been basically anti-people. The rampant casteism, communalism and the use of money and muscle power had infiltrated the body politic. Mass mobilization has been empowered by hate, a feature more typical of an emerging neo-fascist state than of a democracy, proper representation and people’s participation in decision making had remained a distant ideal.

The fifteen essays included in the volume under study have been divided into two parts following the introduction. Section one is titled “Re-appropriating Meanings” in which the essays included look at the various contrasting ways in which democracy has been understood in India and tried to assess the overall democratic experience in post-independent India. The section reveals that all the authors presuppose continuity in Indian democratic experience and also attempt to make an appraisal of the democratic experience/practices with the common objective of expanding its meanings to make the same, more substantive. The second section ‘Practices: Expanding Spaces’ focuses on four important developments that have dominated Indian politics since the beginning of 1990’s: the crisis of secularism, backward caste assertion, the volatility of party politics and the decline of social movements. The chapters in this volume directly or indirectly touch upon two central themes of Indian politics today, namely the grassroots civil society initiatives and the middle class

appropriation of democracy. Both are relevant to the crisis of substance and contestations being witnessed currently.

India at the Polls: Parliamentary Elections in the Federal Phase (2003) a co-authorized work by M.P. Singh and Rekha Saxena examines the dynamics of parliamentary elections along with the party processes in India at an occasion when due to the evolution of Indian party system from single party dominance to a multiparty system, India’s parliamentary system has become distinctly federalized. The study aims to explore Indian electoral practice through the three consecutive Lok Sabha elections held in 1996, 1998 and 1999. The authors suggest that the success of coalition government based on the support of regional allies at the national level indicate towards the growth of Indian federalism. They also argue that the emerging electoral trends clearly signify fragmentation and federalization of Indian party system.

The essays, in the special number of Economic and Political Weekly (December 18, 2004), mainly based on the findings of the surveys undertook national election study (NES) of the Lok Sabha elections held in 2004. The essays present in-depth analyses of the elections. These essays include two different types of analysis. Firstly, state wise/state specific analysis and secondly analyses based on the collective understanding about the major structural shift in political competition in India at the national level. The essays focus on the various themes that the questionnaires of NES 2004 emphasized. The essays in this collection further attempts to make sense of the 2004 electoral verdict in the context of the structure of people’s opinions about the economic reforms, their perceived impact on people’s lives, the questions of majoritarianism and religiosity. In other words, an effort has been made to contextualize the election verdict in terms of the deeper sentiments and expectations of the electorates, beyond mere partisan politics and personality issues. The special volume is also an intellectual enterprise that tried not only to study elections but was also a means to define the issues in Indian politics. The NES 2004 survey findings grasp the core issues before democratic politics in India.

Yogendra Yadav in his article captioned ‘The Elusive Mandate of 2004’ argues that elections of 2004 marked continuities as well as discontinuities. With these elections, processes like participatory upsurge of lower caste and reconfiguration of party system, the remarkable features of 1990s, came to the completion point. States emerged as primary units of contestation. Congress became ‘coalitional’ in the states like UP and Bihar where the party was relegated to third or fourth position. The emergence of state level parties, who on their own could not win elections but always got a small percentage of votes allowed the national parties to have alliance with the state level parties. BJP was the initial beneficiary having entered into alliance with regional parties to get a foothold in the states where it had negligible presence like with INLD in Haryana or with Janata Dal in Karnataka. However, UPA won the elections due to the arithmetic of electoral alliances.

K.C. Suri attempts to look at 2004 election results in relation to the economic reforms in the country using the NES 2004 data. He argues that the Indian electorates are divided and unsure of the path the country should take on for its economic development, it showed that there had been no consensus on economic reforms i.e. opinions were divided across classes, castes occupations and locations.

Suhas Palshikar in his essay ‘Majoritarian Middle Ground’ argues that the verdict of 2004 polls should not be seen as a setback to communal forces due to the defeat of BJP. He further argues that BJP did not emphasize the Hindutva issue during its campaign and there was already some polarization among electorate over religion. The defeat of BJP, therefore, posed a challenge in interpreting the verdict in the best possible way.

Partap Banu Mehta\textsuperscript{50} interprets the unclear electoral verdict of 2004 Polls, in his paper titled 'Constraints on Electoral Mobilization'. In his essay, Mehta suggest that “the political formations are unable to break the logjam of electoral strategy.” The phenomenon in a way suggested that populism had its limits and it seemed that social cleavages in contemporary India were more or less frozen then. Further, the process of reconfiguration that commenced with the decline of Congress appears to have reached its culmination and has left little scope for any other major transformation.

Sridharan’s paper on electoral alliances concludes on the note that coalition proved to be the deciding factor in the victory of Congress led UPA and the defeat of BJP led National Democratic Alliance in the Polls of 2004. He argues that the states of Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Bihar and Jharkhand contributed more than half of the seats in UPA under electoral alliances. The paper focuses on the participatory norms and comprehendingly analysed the questions about mobilization of new social groups. The analysis shows that the pattern of participation in 2004 was in line with the pattern noted in the 1990s i.e. high turnout, higher than average turnout of marginalized sections. Steady increase at the levels of interest and involvement in electoral politics and an expansion in the proportion of active citizens. Yet, there was little in this trend that might have helped in explaining the reversal of electoral fortunes in 2004. The trend suggested stagnation of the participatory upsurge of lower orders and pointed to the emergence of a counter mobilization, as well as the continued over-representation of this group among the active citizens.

Ritu Rao’s\textsuperscript{51} paper based on an assessment of electoral system and electoral reforms reveals that despite persistent short comings/problem areas the overall picture was satisfactory. The electorates continued to retain faith in the system and the people’s overall verdict on the electoral system was positive.


Rajeshwari Deshpande in her paper analyses the pattern of voting by gender. NES '2004 data by gender showed that Congress has continued to enjoy an edge over gender representation in terms of the election held in 2004. Deshpande suggests and argues that the pattern of voting behaviour should be viewed from their structural / contextual location in terms of caste, class and urban rural context.

The special number of *Economic and Political Weekly* includes a collection of articles on the theme of electoral politics in India from 1989 to 1999. Most of the articles are state-specific and took a close look at the trends and patterns being highlighted in the parliamentary and assembly polls during the last decade of the century. Electoral outcomes have been examined in the context of structural attributes of state politics. Interpretations by various authors had been weaved with the CSDS survey (NES 1999) findings. The collection of essays contained in the volume has some general articles that attempted to examine and explore the electoral process and political change at the national level during the decade of 1990s by focusing national parties; social groups are processes of caste and politics. The growing significance of state politics was underlined in almost all the articles whether state specific or general in nature. An article by Yogendra Yadav and the collection of other essays suggests that electoral politics in India had experienced a major change especially during the last two elections of the decade. The interplay of socio-economic and political processes more appropriately three M’s of Indian politics in the last two decades put forward some of the remarkable structural changes on electoral front and signalled a break from the earlier patterns and trends. Due to these developments, the period has been symbolized and projected as third electoral system by Yogendra Yadav. The state specific electoral developments highlighted the emergence of certain bipolarities in terms of party competition, either between two parties or between two competing alliances. The parties would look for residual constituencies, which has not being mobilized and politicised by its opponents.

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Niraja Gopal Jayal54 in her article presents a critical analysis of working of Indian democracy and raised questions about the substantiveness of Indian democracy. She argues that an ineffective and uncritical view of democracy has made us complacent and discouraged us from reflecting on the limits of democracy or expanding our understanding of the conditions both institutional and social, under which democracy could be made more robust. The author identifies three dogmas of Indian democracy which needs to be addressed and critically examined. The first dogma, Jayal identifies is about the representation. She admits that although Indian democracy has become more representative in recent years yet the change has not been reflected at the public policy level. The second dogma she finds in the conviction that despite the adequate political mobilization as a result of the widening and deepening of democracy; electoral behaviour was even then being sought to be understood from the prism of caste. The third dogma the author refers to is about treating democracy as a "shibboleth and as self-referential and also related to the falsification of elections and considering democracy a holy cow."55 She argues that democracy is an instrument of governance; however, it is not an end in itself. Elections have been important for democracy but are not the only and most accurate indicators of democratic governance. Further, the two developments which she regards as the symbolic of substantive democracy in India are the reassurance of democratic ethos in the post-1977 period in addition to the political assertion of dormant identities during the decades of 1970s and 1980s but all the more speedier in the decade of 1990s. She views the more substantive ways of deepening of democracy in the processes leading to decentralization, achievement of right to information, National Rural Employment Guarantee Act, from right to education to campaign for right to food. She suggested that the success and substantiveness of Indian democracy needs to be judged on the basis of realization of social justice.

**Literature Concerning State Electoral Politics**

Studies concerning state politics were not fashionable in pre-1967 period. It was only in the post-Congress polity that the academic interest in the state politics became significant. The first comparative volume on the state politics came in the form of a

54 Nirja Gopal Jayal,(2006), 'Democratic Dogmas and Disquiets', Seminar,557, January, pp. 30-34.
55 ibid.,p.32.
volume edited by Myron Wiener 56 namely *State Politics in India* (1968). Wiener argues in his book that the states after 1967 elections had become very important as the dominance of Congress party came under threat, which enforced the need of studying the state level politics. He says that the study of state politics has become altogether more important due to Indian State being a developmental state wherein the states under the Bank-IMF agenda have been considered responsible for accessing, evaluating and implementing development policy performances which further necessitates the study of the developmental experiences of states.

Wiener further argues that in order to contextualize and understand Indian politics in a comparative manner/mode, state level studies always has been important. He said that in post-1967 period, there were some significant developments and the most important of them were the change in the structure of party system accompanied with the change in the federal structure of democratic set up or the centre-state relations. For Wiener, three factors have been of prime importance which need to be addressed, namely the federal structure of the polity, the emergence of competition with the use of regional or state based parties and the performance of the state developmental experience of each state. The overall emphasis of the volume has been on the study of socio-economic processes, basis of conflict and condition for political stability in each state. For him state party system from 1967 onwards has became different from the party system at the national level, further he has been very much concerned with the process of institution building and the factor of political stability. His approach was political development approach.

The essays in the edited volume on state politics by Iqbal Narain 57 drew attention towards the central position occupied by the states in the Indian federal polity in terms of providing institutional, psychological and interactional determinants of its politics. He constructs a three dimensional framework namely contextual, structural and operational. In the contextual dimension, he included six components, (i) history of a state; historical identity of state, its political status before and after independence (ii) the geographical locale (iii) infrastructure (iv) the level of economic development and (v) urbanization. The structural dimension according to him consists of formal

constitutional structure. In the third category of operational dynamics the author includes the role orientation of the actors, political behaviour and functional dimension having a district connotation. The collaborative work/volume includes 16 case studies, has been predominantly descriptive in nature, stating the obvious empirically informative. The emphasis has been on structural analysis of development in specific states. The essays emphasize much on electoral politics and follow structural-functional approach.

*Democracy and Social Change in India: A Cross-Sectional Analysis of the National Electorate* (1999) has been another co-authored volume on the theme by Subrata K. Mitra & V.B. Singh. The volume provides a critical analysis of the opinions and attitudes of a cross section of the national electorate. The work basically deals with the analysis of the post-election survey of 1996 (NES 1996) undertaken by the Centre of the Study of Developing Societies (CSDS). The basic issues that form the part of the analysis (survey) were related to democracy and social change, perception of the main issues facing the country and the interaction of democratic rights and political order. The main objective of the volume seems to present the values, beliefs, attitudes, popular perceptions, political preferences and information which underpin the choices of the electorate to the students of Indian politics.

The volume on state politics in India, authored by Sudha Pai (2000), has been a collection of 13 essays veering around different issues related to state politics. The essays analyse the developments which took place in the decade of 1990s in the Indian states. The work highlights that during the decade of 1990s, certain crucial changes have occurred at the state level politics which have influenced the national politics in a big way. These developments, author suggests, included the changes in the party system from single party dominance to multiparty competition resulted into the formation of unstable coalition governments with the support of regional parties, assertion of identity politics at the regional level in terms of rise of new social/caste groups in politics had altered the nature of Indian politics and finally the politics of new economic policies. These processes were interconnected and had transformed the

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electoral politics and emerging party system. The underlying argument is that the developments taking place at the state level influenced the national politics in a much bigger way than earlier. Papers in Part I discuss the transformation of the Indian party system. Part II examines changes taken place in the four states of Utter Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh, Punjab and Tamil Nadu, which have contributed to the transformation of party system.

The concluding section discusses the issue of a framework for the study of state politics in the light of the changes in the last decade. Collectively, the essays try to provide a picture of Indian politics in 1990s. Pai argues that during the momentous decade of 1990s, states came to occupy a central position because the regional parties played crucial role in the formation of coalition governments at the centre and therefore they have come to enjoy much greater autonomy from the centre and have much financial freedom due to policies of liberalization. Furthermore, new social identities and groups based in states have asserted themselves leading to fresh political alignments.

An edited volume on state politics by T.R. Sharma60 has attempts to categorize and analyse the challenges posed by the forces of modernization and political development on Indian politics. The editor in his introductory essay argues that state politics had gained importance with the end of 1960s and the study of state politics has facilitated the understanding of the dynamics of the nature of political power in India. State politics has been central for the understanding of national and local level politics as it represent the bilateral linkage between the two. The editor also describes the socio-economic backgrounds wherein the transformations have been taking place in the centre-state relations. The volume aims to analyse the politics of four states of India namely Punjab, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh and Jammu & Kashmir. The study argues that the politics of these states in general present in a way the representative characteristics of the state politics in India as a whole. Nonetheless, the politics of each of these states possess its own peculiarity, which differentiates it from the others. Thus, there has been something common about the nature of the state politics in India and within something specific about each particular state.

The book authored by Subhash C. Kashyap\textsuperscript{61} attempts to put forward the political discourse in the post-1967 general elections, followed by defections and counter-defections. It has been a phenomenon which at the time was somehow new to Indian democracy showing the onset of institutional decay. Part 1 of the study presents an analysis of the phenomenon of defections and of the resultant changing contours of the political power structure. Besides, the author also provides some general observations regarding the political system and the upcoming style in Indian politics. Chapter one as introductory chapter throws light upon the dimensions of the phenomenon of factionalism and the consequent impact on the governments at the state level. The most significant developments in the post-fourth general elections period have been the formation of many coalition governments of widely heterogeneous character and the constant process of shifting party affiliations by legislatures in large numbers thereby affecting the fate of ministries and the course of politics newer and newer combinations of groups and parties came into being in many cases, operation alliance and operation topple continued side by side. Part-II comprises case studies of seven Indian states namely Rajasthan, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar Punjab, Madhya Pradesh and West Bengal. On a whole, these case studies offer an account of political histories of the respective states with special reference to the post-1967 period. Part III of the book reviews and analyses the struggle for power and dominance at the national level. Factionalism at the centre and other development led to the political crisis and split within the Congress party.

\textit{State Politics and contemporary India: Crisis or continuity (1984),} an edited volume by J.F. Wood\textsuperscript{62}, presents an analysis of more of Indian politics in general than the study of the politics of separate states in the context of their social factors. The volume is remarkable because it points towards the emerging dimensions of state politics in India. Wood argues that centre’s intervention in the state politics especially during Indira Gandhi era had shaped the Indian politics. This trend was likely to be challenged by two factors, Wood argued. The first was the decline of Congress party and the rise of backward classes to the position of power at the state level. Wood


36
argues that Indian politics over the years at the state level became more complex not only due to reorganization of more states but major developments like as the split in Congress and the de-linking of Lok Sabha and Assembly elections. Besides, the federalization of Indian party system, the experience of emergency and the coalition experiment of Janata party led government had altered the Indian politics. Further, significant changes in India at social and economic front had brought fresh and conflicting contexts for political behaviours in each state. The volume essays concentrate on focusing on the politics in the Indian states where the Congress faced major challenges.

Among the remarkable literature on state politics have been two volumes edited by Frankel and Rao, which presents linkage between the electoral politics and party politics with the issues of resource control and domination. The party politics for the first time was being studied from the political-economic perspective. The mobilization of caste in the states like Utter Pradesh, Bihar and Maharashtra was being studied in relation to the changing economic relationships in these states. The states were seen as autonomous units having their own model of caste mobilization changing caste and class relationships.

**Literature Concerning Haryana Electoral Politics**

There has been an absence of a coherent and systematic work on the electoral politics in Haryana. Most of the literature is of journalistic kind and lack in terms of analytical rigour. The following review of literature-both popular as well academic- also includes literature related to Dalits and gender, albeit in limited manner.

A study by S. P. Shukla deals with the period from 1930 to 1945. It analyses the role of Haryana region regarding the national liberation movement. Shukla has pointed that during the period, the people of Haryana acquired a pro-British outlook, which was a cumulative result of various factors namely, weakness of Congress party to stabilise itself in the region, mobilization of peasantry by Unionist party and a

63 Francis Frankel and MSA Rao (eds), (1990), *Dominance and State Power in Modern India: Decline of a Social Order*, Oxford University Press, USA.
constructed environment of British policies which enforced a sense of identity among peasant castes by projecting them as martial races along with the land laws. The book provides a good insight into the socio-political conditions of the region in pre-1947 period which has had a long-standing impact upon the political life of the state. The work provides an explanation regarding the relatively weaker presence of the national movement in the region despite the fact that the people of Haryana had participated in the revolt of 1857 with great zeal and fervour. His study also deals with the dynamics of Punjab politics as the compulsions of the Indian politics in totality. The emergence of identity politics in the region can be attributed to that period and environment.

Prem Choudhary65 has analysed the role of Sir Chhotu Ram in the politics of colonial Punjab. She presents an overview of the socio-economic conditions of the period which was behind the political realities of Punjab with special reference to its south-east region which came to be known as Haryana. It highlights the factors which have gone into making the Unionist politics. The Unionist party politics basically addressed to the loyalist factor to the imperial interests. The success of the Unionist party was made possible by Sir Chhotu Ram, who forged an enduring political alliance between the predominant unionist Muslims and Hindu agriculturalists, which proved instrumental in forming one of the most successful non-Congress ministries under the provincial autonomy. The book under study highlights the relationship of various castes and mobilization of dominant caste. Her analysis reveals as to how Sir Chhotu Ram emerged first as the leader of Hindu Jats of Rohtak and than gained acknowledgment by officials and others as leader of the Hindu agriculturalists of Punjab.

Chaman Lai Jhamb66 in an important academic work which is concerned with the modern history and politics of the state provides a chronological account of political events that took place during the reign of different Chief Ministers of the state after it came into inception. In other words, the book presents the biographical account of the terms of all the eight Chief Ministers of Haryana right from Baghwat Dayal Sharma to the current chief Minister BS Hooda.

Bhim S. Dahiya\textsuperscript{67} in his book presents an account of Haryana politics from the time of Chaudhary Chhotu Ram, when it acquired a distinct nature, to the time of Chaudhary Bhupinder Singh Hooda, when it has come of age. Placed in the immediate context of the parent state of Punjab and viewed in the larger context of national developments, Dahiya’s work offers valuable insights into different types of political personalities, into different forms of sociological forces, and into different modes of human behavior, which combines to create the political milieu of a society. The book traces the complex character of the political growth of Haryana, with its various caste and community interests working at cross-purposes, determining the crooked course that makes and mars the fortunes of contending individuals.

SS Chahar’s \textsuperscript{68} in his two volumes study of Haryana Politics deals with the contours of electoral politics in Haryana, since 1967 to 2000. Volume I focus on legislative assembly elections from 1967 to 1972 and discuss the dynamics of electoral politics in Haryana from 1921 to 1977. The volume II presents a very detailed account of each and every aspect, related to assembly elections from 1977-2000, be it nominations, manifestoes, campaign and afterwards till the formation of government to the next assembly polls. The work focuses on electoral trends in reserved assembly constituencies. It also refers to the women participation and their performance. It has been the first ever detailed work based on Haryana electoral politics.

SS Chahar\textsuperscript{69} in his other scholarly work on Haryana electoral politics presents a cohesive analysis of social characteristics of Haryana legislature from 1972 to 2005. The socio-economic dynamics of the state have also been taken into consideration. The work provides the analytical description of legislators belonging to the different castes and communities with special reference to leadership pattern among the scheduled castes along with the women. The study analyses the leadership pattern while taking into consideration the various factors namely, age, education, prior experience, background (rural-urban), gender, caste and marital status.

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Ranbir Singh⁷⁰ in his essay focuses upon the Lok Sabha polls of 1999. He has referred to the importance of social cleavages as the determinant of Haryana politics. He also points towards the changing political alignments of social groups and also the changing support basis of the parties. The author provides an analysis regarding the division of state into two demographic, three linguistic, and four caste groups.

Similarly, Shivlal⁷¹ and Siwach⁷² also highlight the two main social divisions related to caste and class compositions in the state namely the agriculturist and the non-agriculturist. These divisions or cleavages had been viewed as a contribution of politics led by Sir Chhotu Ram. According to the authors, some of the castes in the state have set patterns of political behaviour. Siwach’s study regarding social dynamics, defections, counter-defections which defines the initial period of the politics of the state indicates that politics of “Aya Ram and Gaya Ram” was essentially a manifestation of caste politics. The root cause of widespread defections in the state was an inadequate political representation of dominant castes at that time. He called it doing Haryana style.

After 4th general elections, Indian polity has experienced a dynamic shift from a smooth kind of phenomenon. The politics of defections at state level provided new contours of Indian politics. Haryana represents a case of its kind, as it gave new contexts and terminologies to politics of “Aya Ram Gaya Ram”. Subhash Kashyap⁷³ saw it as corrupt and opportunist politics devoid of ideological concerns. He was of the opinion that the phenomenon of defections or loyalty and commitment to a particular party depends upon the nearness to the seat of power. According to the author, the strongest influence on the people of this region has always been of caste. He also provides the causes of dominance of land owning classes, being their

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numerical strength, land ownership and mobilization by Unionist party and Sir Chhotu Ram. The dominant castes have enjoyed preponderance in electoral politics in recent decades. In other words, economically and socially privileged groups have greater access to political opportunities. Within the numerically strong and economically powerful peasant castes, the Jats have been the most dominant category.  

A study by D R Choudhary also reveals the gloomy picture of state of affairs in state politics especially in its electoral arena. Choudhary feels that state lacks in terms of a developed political culture and the situation has been further worsened due to economic prosperity, which has taken the form of ‘jeep-gun culture’. While analyzing the verdict of Parliamentary polls of 1989, Choudhary maintains that democratic ethos is still to take roots in the state firmly. The state lacks all the necessary determinants of socio-political consciousness. For Choudhry, Haryana politics has essentially been witness to the interplay of a good economy and bad politics and Haryana society has lost its cohesiveness and is driven with sharp dissentions.

Similarly Rajbir Prashar in his article points out that democracy along with economic development has failed to undo the social and cultural backwardness in the state and it seems that a common Haryanvi has forgotten the principle of peaceful co-existence. He also indicates that political parties for their electoral gains perpetuate social problems and issues. He demands a mature and responsible behaviour on the part of political elite instead of patronizing negative forces to the detriment of the democratic content of the state polity.

Vinay Kumar Malhotra in his study points out that Haryana during 1990s hit the headlines for all the wrong reasons. He highlights the use of illegal electoral means in Haryana bi-elections and also the political instability during the period. While

viewing the situation in the state; it seemed that politics had been experiencing the erosion of legitimacy on the part of political leadership. Its manifestation was seen in the form of anti-incumbency factor due to lack of a viable alternative. Ruling parties’ kept changing but the dismal states of affairs have remained the same. The rural Haryana for long has been experiencing serious social imbalance.

Dhananjay Joshi and Parveen Rai\(^78\) in their analyses regarding the Lok Sabha polls of Haryana argues that the Congress won nine out of total ten Lok Sabha seats especially due to anti-incumbency wave against INLD. The authors point out that the electoral verdict was an expression of state wide resentment against the autocratic ways of functioning of Choutala government—the reign of terror.

Yogendra Yadav and Dhananjay Joshi\(^79\), Nonica Dutta\(^80\) Ranbir Singh and Kushal Pal\(^81\) P.S. Verma\(^82\) and S.S. Chahar and Anu\(^83\) in their separate articles point out that the assembly polls verdict in 2005 in form of the landslide victory of Congress after loosing two consecutive assembly elections in the state was not the result of positive vote in its favour but it was due to negative vote polled against ruling INLD. The loss of INLD got translated in favour of the Congress. The erosion of legitimacy could be attributed to the fact that almost every established political party and leaders were accused of corruption, mishandling of governmental affairs.


Ranbir Singh and Kushal Pal present an analysis of Lok Sabha polls of 2009 in Haryana. The authors have pointed out that the Lok Sabha elections result indicated that people haven't yet forgotten the rule of INLD. Congress registered its victory despite intra-party differences and factionalism and also the presence of vote splinters like BJP, INLD, HJC and BSP. Electoral verdict was explained both in terms of development and governance. The impact of regional issues was more visible than national issues despite the fact that state located in the proximity/vicinity of NCR. The BSP although could not win even a single seat but emerged as the major gainer in the polls as it emerged the second largest party in terms of votes polled after Congress’s has been able to penetrate in the votes banks other than SCs. Congress has been able to win due to clean image of B.S. Hooda. The election witnessed further consolidation of Jat support base in favor of Congress.

Kushal Pal and Parveen Rai in their joint paper on Lok Sabha elections of 2009 in Haryana argues that clean honest and humble image of the Congress chief minister has helped the Congress to a great deal in repeating the previous electoral performance. The electoral verdict marked the reversal of the trend of strong anti incumbency factor prevalent in a state. The authors also point out that during the elections the state level factor played more important role than the national factors and development was the major poll plank in the state.

A study by Ashutosh Kumar regarding the Assembly polls of 2009 consists of two parts. Part I of the article deals with the peculiar characteristic features of Haryana electoral politics which distinguishes it from the other North Indian states. These features include lack of coherent and stable party system, weak support base of BJP in Haryana, adhocism in state party system or lack of stable opposition to Congress, lack of strong regional identity, lack of contiguous and meaningful electoral regions, lack of assertion of weaker sections of the society, dominance of middle class peasantry in the post-Mandal era and concept of Panchayati candidates. The second part of the

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article analyses the electoral verdict of 2009 assembly elections. The author highlights that the opposition parties have had no substantive issues for wooing voters and the electoral verdict is to be seen in terms of lack of anti-incumbency factor against the Congress. Congress formed the second consecutive government with the support of independents and others. Congress was not able to attain 2/3rd on its own. The below expectations performance of the Congress was seen as the fallout of the lopsided nature of development limited to Rohtak region only, over-confidence of Congress leadership due to victory in Lok Sabha polls, factionalism, intra-party differences, unwise ticket distribution/selection of candidates, impact of delimitation of assembly constituencies, resurgence of otherwise lying low INLD. The verdict was also being viewed as a response to good governance and developmental works done by Congress government.

T.K. Rajalaxmi in her article related to socio-political status of Dalits in Haryana reveals that the backward castes are landless, oppressed and marginalized in the state. They have been prone to discrimination and target of attack from dominant castes especially Jats and the traditional social institutions like khap panchayats and the state machinery including police. She views the situation as unique one, which distinguished Haryana from its neighbouring states. She points out that BSP including other mainstream parties of the state have not done much for them. Political parties have been more interested in making electoral gains rather than bringing out a qualitative change in their lives, or to ensure them a secure social status. She illustrated various instances revealing the atrocities committed upon Dalits by police and dominant caste. Time and again they have to pay the cost of their hard earned prosperity.

P. Sainath in his article argues that people of dominant castes have not been ready to accept the changing power relations in the economic and the social arena.

Ranbir Singh in his article argues that there have been many incidents which speak volumes of discrimination against Dalits in Haryana. He further points out that from

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the media coverage of the happenings at Jhajjar, Dulina (Sonipat), Harsola (Kaithal),
Gohana (Sonipat) and Salwan (Karnal) the happenings have become quite clear. He
underlines certain factors which have been responsible for the kind of treatment Dalits
have been receiving across the different regions in the state. First, the breakdown of
the Jajmani system has decreased the dependence of Dalits on Zamindars/land
owners. Second, implementation of the 73rd Amendment to the Indian Constitution
has led to certain amount of empowerment of the community. Third, the affluence of
a section of the Dalits due to implementation of affirmative policies and actions of
government including reservation, the role of Khap Panchayats, the lack of political
assertion of Dalits, lack of unity among them, the lack of Dalit leadership at the state
and so forth. However, the first three factors were of positive in terms of
democratisation in the sense that they have led to the betterment among Dalits but the
newly attained betterment have become the contentious issue between the Dalits and
dominant castes as Dalits are no more dependent upon them for their livelihood.
Urbanisation, the small land holdings, the growth of other employment avenues has
brought change in the traditional caste dominant-dependent relationship. In fact, some
of the Dalit families are leading far better lives than the families of dominant castes.

There are academic studies \(^9\) related to political participation of women in Haryana
politics that highlight the limited role of women in political process of the state. It also
has been indicative of lack of proper politicization and mobilization among women.
The reason behind such condition in the state which has one of the worst sex ratio in
the country could be given in terms of highly patriarchal social structure and
confinement of women’s sphere to the task of household management and farming
activities. As far as electoral politics is concerned, an interesting fact is revealed that
in case of a considerable number of women, the pre-condition to get registered as a
voter has been considered marriage. Although some of the women representative are
doing well but the number is essentially small. The reason behind the inadequate
representation of women is given in terms of their lack of winnability by various
political parties.

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\(^9\) Sidharth Singh,(2005), ‘Voter’s List has Few Misses in Chief Minister Terf’, *Times of India*,
January 30.

(a)Hitender Rao( 2005), ‘But Where are the Women?’, *Hindustan Times*, January 16.
The study undertaken by Ranbir Singh\(^91\) highlights the role of women in Haryana politics. Besides, a very small number of women have come forward to become members of political parties and very few of them have shown the active involvement in active politics in terms of being office bearers and participating in public meetings and addressing them. Although, some of them have been able to become office bearers of women cells which exists mostly on paper. However, women working in the women organization having affiliations to leftist parties have been active. They have led the agitations regarding various social causes but due to limited support bases of these parties their participation and impact has remained limited and localized.

**Relevance of the Study**

It would be pertinent to argue that a study of electoral politics of Haryana is relevant in many ways. First and foremost, there has not been any systematic and coherent study of the electoral politics of Haryana despite the passage of more than four decades of its creation. Most of the studies that have come up are in the form of articles and have simply been too empirical in nature as they record the electoral verdict without analysing it or putting them in the theoretical context.

Second, such a study would enable us to examine whether the emergent trends in the state electoral politics at all India level, briefly mentioned above, have been visible in Haryana or not. For instance, it has been argued that despite sizable population of the Dalits i.e. 19.75 percent of overall population in the state, their assertion in terms of share in political power has not been there. Likewise it has also been argued that in Haryana there are no specific social, cultural and geographical regions like in other states but there are administrative regions in electoral terms.

Third, the study investigates as to whether the politics of Haryana is in the form of ‘satellite politics’ that veers around the ‘national’ politics of Delhi.

\(^91\) Ranbir Singh, (1993), ‘Political Participation and Share of Women in Political Power and Decision-making – A Case Study of Haryana’, a Paper Presented at an International Round Table on Women, Politics and Developing Countries, No.VIII, in Centre for Women Studies and Development, Panjab University, Chandigarh, August 17-21.
Fourth, the turbulent electoral history of Haryana has been marked by the politics of opportunism that has been witnessed in the recent period in other states also and has come to be known as the politics of ‘Aya Ram and Gaya Ram’. Moreover, the state has been viewed with low level of political efficacy and involvement in terms of participation. Till its emergence as a separate state, it was merely an appendage on Punjab politics. However, all this has not come in the way of rapid progress of the state over the last four decades. So ‘bad politics’ or the unstable party system for a long period has not supposedly hampered the state’s progress. Do we have similar situations in other states of India also? Such kinds of questions need to be addressed. The present thesis is a modest effort to undertake the task of looking for possible answers.

Methodology

For the purpose of the present research, a theoretical analytical approach was undertaken. The theoretical framework was grounded on the basis of empirical material for analysing the emergent trends in the electoral politics at state level in general and Haryana in particular. The study refers extensively to the Election Commission data. The data generated by the surveys undertaken by CSDS-NES survey has also been referred. This primarily library based study has undertaken a survey of the available relevant literature on the electoral politics concerning Haryana which has been academic as well as journalistic in nature. Both secondary as well as documentary sources have been referred. Besides, for the collection of primary data interviews of present and former MLAs belonging to the different parties as well as the academicians who have done work on Haryana have also been conducted to have a feel of the ground level concrete reality. The data was collected in a two years period from 2008 to 2010. Opinion related questions dealing with socio-economic and political situation of the state were included while conducting face to face interviews.

Methodologically, the qualitative research techniques namely observation and interview methods have largely been adopted. Interviews were based on the non-probability sampling, designed on the pattern of the convenience sampling. Interview schedule with structured and open-ended questions was framed for the respondent legislators. A structured schedule was used as a means to ensure some consistency in the data gathered during the phase of research. The former and present respondent
legislators were asked about their sociological background. Then followed the factual and opinion based questions. Keeping in mind the state’s scenario, a modest attempt was also made to ascertain and empirically analyze the views of legislatures on various socio-economic and political issues through opinion seeking questions. Although, the convenience sampling method was followed for the interview purposes, yet there was a conscious effort to make the sample as representative as possible. Efforts were also made to choose a robust sample. There was an effort to have proportional number of legislator respondents in proportion to the strength of the political parties in the Vidhan Sabha into consideration. In fact geographically speaking also, the selected legislators belonged to all the four administrative regions of the state namely Ambala, Hisar, Rohtak and Gurgaon. The interview schedule based on structured questionnaire took into cognizance the factors to ascertain sociological background information about socio-economic and political profile of the respondents. Questions were asked pertaining to the party they belonged to, their constituencies, level of education, and experience in active politics and also about the general trends in the state electoral politics.

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48