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National Political Parties in Haryana: Electoral Performance and Support Base

Gurjeet Kaur
Assistant Professor
Multani Mal Modi College Patiala, Punjab

Abstract

The present study attempts to understand the nature of National Political Parties in Haryana. Political parties are complex and ideologically homogeneous organizations with multiple links to various other organizations in civil society. This is because political parties arise in civil society or are rooted in civil society. The democratic government may not work well without the presence of political parties. This paper explains electoral performance and support base of national political parties in Haryana. The role of national parties has been significant in Haryana politics. Congress has been in the lead role since its inception, but for the past few years, the BJP has dominated Haryana politics. Other national parties like BSP, CPI and CPI (M) have failed to make any significant headway in the state.

Keywords: Political Parties, Elections, State, Government, Democracy, National Parties,

Introduction

In a democracy, the responsibility of political parties is to check the arbitrary power of the executive through their ability to express public opinion. Political parties play a remarkable role in working all types of government. India, after its independence, adopted the parliamentary system. That's why political parties are increasing in number. They compete for power at both the Centre and the States level. The nature of the political parties influences state politics to a great extent. Therefore, it is imperative to understand party politics to understand its electoral politics. Political parties decide the nature of politics in the state. Whenever there is a discussion based on authority, power, or government, the importance of political parties is also discussed.. India has adopted a multi-party system having national parties, state parties and regional parties. The socio-economic structure of Haryana has notably influenced its political system. India has been having a multi-party system with one dominant party for a very long time. It was the Congress party which dominated the political scenario of the country. As in other regions, Congress was the dominated party in Haryana too.

Congress

Congress has been in existence since 1885. Unlike parties in western democracies, which historically emerged out of a struggle for representation, the Congress is the product of an anti-colonial movement. The Congress is one such party that has so far always remained central to calculations of competitive politics in India. Its role as the ruling party for a very long time makes it distinct from most other parties in India.[1]

Immediately after the formation of the Haryana, the Congress government took over power in the state. Haryana never witnessed the single-party dominance of the Congress party. Even in the pre-independence period, the Congress party organization in the joint Punjab state was very weak compared to its strength in the other provinces. However, the party improved its position in the state in Assembly elections held from 1952 to 1962. [2] By the time of the creation of the state, the 'one-party dominance' phase of the Congress at the National level had already come to an end. Although in the absence of serious competition, it won several elections held in the first decade after the creation of the state. Subsequently, when the decline came, it was also not as dramatic as in some neighbouring states. Amongst the Hindi states, the Congress party was started with the lowest starting point in Haryana.

The electoral politics of Haryana from 1967 to 1989 saw steady decline of the Congress party. It was never as dominant in Haryana. It won all elections held from 1967 to 1972, despite the dramatic game of defections and counter defections that took place after the 1967 elections.[3] During this period, Bansi Lal was responsible for strengthening the Congress party in Haryana. The decline phase of Congress started after the 1977 elections and was completely wiped out in Haryana. In the Assembly elections of 1982, Congress did emerge as the single largest party under Bhajan Lal's leadership.[4] By the time of the 1987 Assembly elections, Congress position was very down because Lok Dal and its alliance partner BJP got massive victory in these elections. The decline of the Congress, which had started in the previous decade, was accelerated in the decade of the 1990s. The main reason for the political weakness of the Congress was stoppage of support that it derived from the numerous peasant castes in the state. Congress attained its best results in the Lok Sabha and Assembly elections held in 1991. There was a general wave in favour of Congress in the aftermath of Rajiv Gandhi's assassination. As a result of the combination of national and local factors, the people of the state overwhelmingly voted for Congress.

In the 1996 Assembly elections, Congress faced a major debacle. Strong anti-incumbency factors against the Bhajan Lal led government resulted in the rout of the Congress regime.[5] By the time of 2000 Assembly elections, the continuing decline of the Congress had taken place and it lost two consecutive Assembly elections. The factionalism in the Congress had been the main reasons for the party's poor performance. In 2005, Assembly elections witnessed the landslide victory of Congress, as there was again a clear wave against the incumbent INLD have worked in favour of Congress. As a result, the Congress party

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1 Pranab Mukerjee and Aditya Mukerjee (eds), *A Centenary History of the Indian Nation Congress* , Vol 5(1964-1984) , Acedemic Foundation, New Delhi, 2011, p. 63.

2 *Ibid., p.64.*

3 G. Gopa Kumar, *The Congress Party and State Politics*, Deep and Deep Publications, New Delhi, 1984, p. 94.

4 *Ibid., p. 95.*

5 Sudha Pai, *State Politics- New Dimensions (Party System, Liberalisation and Politics of Identity),* Shirpa Publication, Delhi, 2000, p. 22.

secured the decisive lead in the 2009 Assembly elections. However, in the 2009 Legislative Assembly elections, Congress experienced a loss in seats and votes secured compared to previous Assembly elections.

In 2014, the Congress-led UPA government failed in both Lok Sabha and Legislative Assembly elections. The Congress party in Haryana faced anti-incumbency at both the state and national levels. The ruling party, Congress suffered both in terms of the seats and votes.[6] The reasons for losses in seats and votes were ascribed to the following factors like factionalism in the party, uncontrolled bureaucracy, poor delivery system, and party failure to catch up with Jats votes.[7] It also suffered on account of dissatisfaction of people in general with the UPA government at the centre due to price rise and large scale corruption. They also paid for anti-incumbency of their own. In the Lok Sabha elections of 2019, Congress did not win a single seat in Haryana. But in 2019 Assembly elections, Congress showed good progress from its performance in the last Assembly elections.

Support Base of Congress

Political parties try to find support from the people through periodic elections and the verdict largely determines their influence and effectiveness at the polls. Elections have shaped the trend of events and focus on underlying social and political order. The Congress party has a relatively more heterogeneous and differentiated social, economic and demographic support base.[8] The support of the Congress party has come from nearly all regions and all social and occupational groups, with overall support from the young, the highly educated, the urban voters, the upper caste and higher-income groups from the other sectors of the society.

Before the independence of India, the level of the national movement was weak in Haryana then a part of pre-partition Punjab. The position of Congress in the region was not very impressive. With the disappearance of the Unionist party, the region came under Congress influence. The party's support base was comparatively narrow and was confined mainly to urban areas. However, it had a small base in the rural areas after the independence. The support base of the Congress party increased in all segments of the population by the recognition of its historic role in the freedom movement.[9]Congress had to work hard against tough opposition given by the peasant-based parties, especially in electoral performance in rural areas. Agriculturist castes, which constitute a significant component of the rural electorate, were initially attracted to the Congress but subsequently withdrew their support and have tended to become the core of the opposition.

Social policies adopted by the Congress, particularly the emphasis on secularism and the policy of reservation and protective discrimination of the weaker sections like the BCs and SCs, created a durable support base for the party in these sections. On the other hand, the Jats, Ahirs and Brahmins mainly showed a tendency to shift loyalties according to the political stance of their prominent caste leaders. As a result, Congress drew its primary support among urban middle classes and rural Scheduled Castes. In addition to this, in pre-independence era, Congress attracted peasantry to an extent, when Unionist Party emerged as a

6 Kushal Pal and Anita Agarwal, "The Congress Rout in Haryana", *The Hindu*, June 26, 2014.
7 *Ibid.*
8 Ranbir Singh, "Social Cleavages and Political Alignments in Haryana", in Paul Wallace and Ramashary Roy (eds,), *India's 1999 Elections and 20th Century Politics*, Sage Publications, New Delhi, 2003, p.353.
9 *Ibid., p. 356.*

peasant-based party. After independence, when Jan Sangh started to create a base in the refugee and urban middle classes, Congress came to represent rural rich and poor votes.

Similarly, other parties like Vishal Haryana Party and INLD have represented the Ahir and Jat peasantry from time to time. These parties collectively undermined the rural support base of Congress.[10] On the other side, Congress had met the challenge of these parties by consolidating its urban base and focusing on the vote bank of SCs in the rural area. This task of Congress kept it remained in the middle position. The end of 1970 was a critical and significant turning point in the support base of the Congress in Haryana. The Congress lost its core support among the BCs, SCs and minorities. The early period of 1980 marked a significant change in the electoral strategy and electoral support of the Congress party. The urban and rural poor, particularly the SCs and BCs, came back to the Congress fold and extended to its strong support.[11] The Congress succeeded in getting large scale support from urban voters and the party also succeeded in getting increased rural support.

Congress faced a significant loss at the beginning of the 21st century. The party's decline can be traced to its inability to retain its support base. Factional feuds had come into the open when choosing the Congress legislature party leader. The verdict of 14th Lok Sabha Elections 2004 and Assembly Elections 2005 came as a political boon for the Congress party. The Congress returned to power after a long gap. In these elections, the Jats who have emerged as an economically and politically influential community came with Congress. Traditionally, they were not in favour of the Congress in Haryana. The Congress has been considered a party of other communities than Jats. But in these elections verdict had helped Congress shed this image. It became clear from the evidence that the Jats got attached with Congress.[12] As the second-largest community, the Dalits also shifted towards Congress.

In the next Lok Sabha and Assembly elections, 2009, the positive image of the Congress government led to a subtle change in the caste profile of Congress supporters in the state. Hooda's efforts at mobilising the Jats did succeed as the Congress enhanced its vote share by 17.22 percentage points among this powerful community that accounts for about a quarter of the state's electorate. Congress also gained significantly among the other lower OBCs in the state. But in the 2014 Lok Sabha and Assembly elections, Congress strategy of polarizing the Jats in favour of the Congress did not succeed. On the contrary, it proved counter-productive as it eroded the non-Jat base of the party. Dalits also started feeling suffocated under Congress rule because they thought the party only supported the Jats.[13] The government failed to fill the job backlog of the Dalit community. It was unable to implement the system of reservations in promotions for the Dalits despite the Supreme Court ruling in this regard. However in the 2019 Assembly elections, the Congress showed a comeback. The Dalit community too showed confidence in the Congress again. This means that it was mainly due to the Dalit community, that the vote share of Congress was increased.

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10 *Ibid., p. 357.*

11 *Ibid., p. 355.*

12 Dhananjai Joshi and Parveen Rai, "Haryana Landslide Victory for Congress", *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol. 39, No. 51, December 18-24, 2004, p.5448.

13 https://www.indiatoday.in/magazine/cover-story/story/20141020-bjp-haryana-assembly-polls-nare- d ra -modi-805475-2014-10-09

Bharatiya Janata Party

The formation of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) in 1925 marked the beginning of a broad movement with cultural, religious and political aims. After the independence, the movement strengthened itself within the political arena by supporting a new political party named the Bharatiya Jana Sangh (BJS). Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) is the reincarnation of Bhartiya Jan Sangh, which Shayama Prasad Mukerjee established in 1951. Until 1977, when the BJS was merged into the Janata Party, its political agenda was mainly on religious and cultural issues like cow protection and the introduction of Hindi as a national language. Despite its nationalist ideology, it was never successful outside its traditional stronghold of northern and central India.[14] After its break-up with the Janata Party, the BJS was resurrected under the name of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). The BJP emerged as a new political party on April 6, 1980, having all the leaders associated with the Bharatiya Jana Sangh. Atal Bihari Vajpayee was given the responsibility to lead the party. Over time, this party has become one of the largest political parties in the country. It has challenged the supremacy of the Congress, which upholds a form of secular nationalism and has held sway over Indian politics for quite an extended period.[15]

The formation of Haryana in 1966 was on a linguistic basis, but Jan Sangh never favoured a separate state of Haryana. Instead, it supported the demand for "Maha Punjab". But the Congress government in the centre had accepted this demand. The support of Jan Sangh improved among Punjabi Hindus, who opposed the demand because they were a minority. Jan Sangh stayed the main opposition party in the state yet after merging small regional parties in the Congress. In Haryana Assembly elections of 1967, Jan Sangh emerged as the second-largest party. With the fall of the Congress government in 1967, Jan Sangh became a partner in the United Front which formed the government.

Further the party's position got weakened in the 1968 and 1972 Assembly elections because the Punjabi Hindus withdrew their support from the party. But 1977 Assembly elections, the merger of Jan Sangh in the Janata Party recovered its traditional support base among Punjabi Hindus and made progress in other sections of society. The Jan Sangh faction got its due share in the Janata party governments headed by Ch. Devi Lal and Bhajan Lal group.[16]The defection of Bhajan Lal from the Janata Party government to the Congress Party led to the transformation of the Janata Party government into Congress government after Congress won in 1980. BJP was formed after the 1980 elections. The party was again able to recover its eroded support base through the participation in Nyaya Yudh of Haryana Sangarsh Samiti from 1985 to 1987.

Unlike other Hindi states where the BJP performed well during the 1980s and the 1990s, its fortunes dipped further during the same period in Haryana. From 1987-2009 BJP made alliances with regional parties from time to time. The party was dependent on its alliances with regional parties. In both Lok Sabha and Assembly elections, BJP did not performe well. Its vote share was also limited. But in 1996, the HVP-BJP alliance formed the government but the government soon lost its popularity due to the failure of its polices.[17]

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14 Henrick Berglund, *Hindu Nationalism and Democracy*, Shipra Publication, New Delhi, 2004, p. 2.

15 C. P. Bhambhri, *Bhartiya Janata Party: Periphery to Centre*, Shipra Publications, New Delhi, 2001. p.17

16 Ranbir Singh, "Political Development in Haryana: A study of Interaction between Society and Politics" *Journal of Haryana Studies*, Vol. 9, No. 1-2, 1977, p. 68.

17 S.S. Chahar, *Dynamics of Haryana Politics*, Vol. 1, Sanjay Parkashan, New Delhi, 2004, p.253.

While realizing the situation, the BJP withdrew its support from the three-year-old HVP-BJP government before the Lok Sabha elections of 1999.

In the Assembly elections of 2000, BJP decided to restart the alliance with INLD. The setback for the BJP in Haryana was attributed to the harm caused by its ally INLD. The alliance with INLD was not perceived as sincere and the BJP could not retain its gains which it made in 1999 Lok Sabha and 1996 Assembly elections. In the state Assembly elections of 2005, the party contested on its own as its leadership had decided not to tie up with INLD.[18] As a result, all the parties except Congress suffered a sharp decline in their vote share and seats. In the Lok Sabha elections of 2009, BJP again formed alliance with INLD but drew blank. The BJP decided to contest all the seats on its own in 2009 legislative Assembly elections, but again failed.

The extraordinary success of the BJP in the Lok Sabha elections of 2014 brought a significant shift in India's electoral politics. BJP achieved an absolute majority in Lok Sabha on its own. The BJP won 282 seats leading the NDA to a tally of 336 seats in the 543-seat Lok Sabha. The vote share of the BJP was near about 31 per cent of all votes cast.[19] This was the first instance after 1985 that a single party achieved an absolute majority in the Indian Parliament.

In the Lok Sabha elections of 2014, Haryana was one of the states of the North-Western region where the BJP did well by winning 7 out of the 8 seats it had contested. The party secured 34.7 per cent votes while its vote share was merely 12.1 per cent in previous Lok Sabha elections in Haryana. However, its alliance partner Haryana Janhit Congress, lost the 2 remaining seats contested by it. The impressive victory of the BJP in the Lok Sabha elections of 2014 did assure its leaders to break alliance with the Haryana Janhit Congress. BJP in 2014 contested Assembly elections on its own.[20] The representation of the BJP in the Haryana Assembly increased from 4 to 47 and its vote share enhanced from 9.4 to 33.2 per cent. Hence Assembly elections of 2014 in Haryana were labelled as elections with the difference in terms of the main competition between the Congress and the BJP instead of the Congress and the INLD. Earlier BJP had always been restricted to the second fiddle role to either INLD or HVP.[21] But in the Assembly elections of 2014 party came to power on its own under collective leadership.

In the Lok Sabha election of 2019, BJP won all the 10 seats in Haryana. It was the BJP's best-ever performance in Haryana. As a result, the BJP was taken a larger portion of the INLD votes. In the Assembly election of 2019, BJP emerged as the single largest party. It formed the government with the Jannayak Janta Party as a post-poll alliance. The JJP received the largest chunk of the INLD's base, followed by Congress and other parties.[22] Though the BJP marginally increased its vote share in this election, the party vote-seat ratio declined significantly.

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18 Yogendra Yadav and Dhananjay Joshi, "How Haryana Voted: The Wave and What Caused it", *The Hindu*, March 6, 2005, p. 16.

19 Sanjay Kumar, "Interpreting the electoral verdict of 2014 Lok Sabha Elections in India: A Significant Shift in the Nature of Electoral Politics", *Panjab University Research Journal* (Arts), Chandigarh, Volume XLIV, Number 1, January-June 2017, p.27.

20 *Ibid., p. 29.*

21 *Ibid., p. 29.*

22 https://theprint.in/opinion/haryana-bjp-invincible-assembly-election-dushyant-chautala-jjp-hooda-co- ngress.ncp/311120/

Support Base of BJP

Since the BJP came into existence there was no big support base for the party. BJP was weak in the Haryana region. Like the other political parties BJP was not able to expand its support base. The party situation remained fragile among the many peasant castes of the state, especially the Jats. BJP was not able to pull a major chunk of the votes from the upper castes of the state, which was the main hold of its support in other states. In Haryana, BJP was considered an urban-based party that mainly affects the Punjabi Hindus who migrated from West Punjab. The BJP had a support base among the trading castes mostly the Banias in the urban areas. In the Punjabis or the Refugees, who were migrants from Pakistani Punjab, it had a relatively broader but unpredictable support base because they have been shifting their support to Congress whenever they felt that the BJP was not having a chance to share power. Because of its image of an urban-oriented party, it did not get support in the rural areas. Thus because of its image as a party of the trading castes, the support base of the BJP was not extended to the agriculturist castes. Further the BJP did not expand its support base among the BCs and SCs because they perceived BJP as a party of the high castes. But the picture of support base was changed in the Lok Sabha and Assembly elections of 2014 in Haryana.

The Lok Sabha elections of 2014 brought a qualitative change in the state's political landscape. In the Assembly elections the BJP unit of Haryana had adopted the strategy of cashing on the Jat, non-Jat divide. As a result, BJP broadened its support base in a big way among all the castes and communities, except the Jats, Sikhs and Meos. Before these elections, the party had virtually no support among the OBCs (the Ahirs, the Gujjars and the Sainis). But in these elections it expanded its support among the upper castes and lower castes, except the Jats. It succeeded in getting large support from them because of its strategy of selecting candidates from these castes. This enabled the party to make a huge gain. It fielded Rao Inderjeet Singh, son of the legendry, Ahir leader, Rao Birender Singh from Gurgaon parliamentary constituency. This helped the party to gain enhanced support from the Ahir community not only in Gurgaon but also in Mahendergarh, Bhiwani, Rohtak, Faridabad Lok Sabha constituencies. Likewise, the replacement of a Jat candidate, Ram Chander Bainda, by a Gujjar candidate Krishan Pal in Faridabad consolidated, the Gujjars gave their support not only in Faridabad but also in Karnal and Ambala Lok Sabha constituencies as they were in sizeable strength in all these areas.

Likewise, the selection of Raj Kumar Saini for the Kurukshetra Lok Sabha constituency helped the BJP to consolidate the support of this caste not only in Kurukshetra but also in Ambala and Mahendergarh-Bhiwani parliamentary constituencies where they were in substantial numbers. The support from the upper castes – Brahmins and Khatri Aroras for the BJP was also consolidated by its electoral strategy of nominating a Brahmin-Ramesh Kaushik from Sonipat and a Khatri-Ashwani Kumar Minna from Karnal. The party also achieved success in getting substantial support from the BCs because of their alienation from Congress due to the decision of the UPA government to include the Jats in OBCs. The Dalits' support also got enhanced due to their separation from Congress after the instances of atrocities on them. The decision to field Rattan Lal Kataria, a powerful Dalit candidate from Ambala Lok Sabha constituency, also helped the party in this context.[23]

[23] Sanjay kumar et.al, "BJP's Victory in Haryana: Riding on the Modi Wave or a Smart Social Coalition?", *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol. 49, No. 48, November 29, 2014. p.103.

The BJP retained its non-Jat base, which it had built on during the Lok Sabha elections. In Assembly elections of 2014, BJP used the political strategy of fielding candidates according to their caste background. And thus the party was able to create an anti-Jat feeling among the non-Jats. The Jat quota agitation in February 2016 triggered violent protests in Haryana. The agitation paralysed law and order in the state for ten days. The Jat agitation began in non-violent protests with strikes and road jams but quickly got translated into violent riots. Hundreds of stores specially owned by the non-Jat community were burned in the city of Rohtak.[24] Various incidents were also seen in Sonipat and Jhajjar. BJP took charge of the state in 2014, but the government failed to tackle the violence and rioting. Another incident happened in August 2017. Violence broke out in various parts of the state following the arrest of a religious leader, Gurmeet Ram Rahim Singh of Dera Sacha Sauda. It caused damage worth over Rs 126 crore to the public property.[25] In spite of that, BJP won all the Lok Sabha seats in Haryana first time in 2019. The party was able to secure the non-Jats upper caste and OBC votes in this election. Even in the Assembly elections of 2019, BJP managed to make a government with the support of JJP, but it did not get the support of Dalits and Muslims.

Bahujan Samaj Party

Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) is a national political party in India. The word 'Bahujan' means the majority of the people and 'samaj' means society.[26] The BSP represents mainly the oppressed sections of society. The Bahujan Samaj Party has its origin in the All India Backward and Minority Communities Employees Federation (BAMCEF), a non-political organization established by Kanshi Ram on December 6, 1978. The BAMCEF was an organization of educated employees of oppressed and exploited communities amongst Indian society.

After BAMCEF, Kanshi Ram set up the DS-4 (Dalit Shoshit Samaj Sanghrash Samiti) on December 6, 1981. The DS-4 was initially conceived as a non-political body, but in 1982, 46 candidates of DS-4 contested the elections of the Haryana Assembly. Having gained political experience and using the BAMCEF and the DS-4 as base organizations, Kanshi Ram formally established a political party on April 14, 1984 (B.R. Ambedkar Jayanti), and called it Bahujan Samaj Party. BSP has introduced some radical aspects into the ideology underlying the Dalit movement in India and its central ideology has been Ambedkarism. The party's primary goal is to bring about social and economic equality like political equality, which has been safeguarded in the Constitution of India.[27] Although the party has its main base in Uttar Pradesh, the party has been attempting to spread in the northern states of Punjab, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Rajasthan Madhya Pradesh and Delhi.

The electoral politics of BSP was unbalanced. Many of the experts are of the opinion that as the BSP has a support base of BC's, SC's and minorities (Meo's) it can never get into political power and form the government in Haryana as the percentage of these groups itself is not enough to win elections on a large scale.[28] The Dalit population is spread all over the state and Dalits are not in favour of BSP alone because

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24 *Ibid.*, p. 104.

25 https://scroll.in/article/jat-agitation-split-in-a-state-party-are-helping-bjp-in-haryana

26 Sudha Pai, *State Politics New Dimensions – Party System, Liberalisation and Politics of Identity,* Shirpa Publication, Delhi, 2000, p.122.

27 Sudha Pai, *Dalit Assertion and Unjustified Democratic Revolution – The Bahujan Samaj Party in Uttar Pradesh and the Dalit Challenge,* Vol. 3, Sage Publication, New Delhi, 2003. p.22.

28 *Ibid.,p. 24.*

Dalit vote has been divided between Congress and BSP since then 1980's. Further, strong organization and leadership at various levels are essential for a party's progress. Assuming the unstable organizational structure of BSP, it seems that the party will not get control over the other parties in the near future because presently BJP is in power in the state and the Congress and INLD are the other two major players in the state.

Every Indian state has its specific characteristics and political patterns. When talking about the Haryana state, it can be said that the state has always been dominated by rich peasants and agricultural castes like Jats, Rajputs, Ahirs, Bishnois, etc. They incidentally do not belong to BC's. BSP seems to have a tough time making its ground in the state's electoral politics. In Haryana though BSP has not been able to gain much success but its vote share in elections has been impressive from time to time. It has managed to win just a single seat in the Assembly elections held in the 1991, 2000, 2005, 2009 and 2014 elections. The BSP formed an alliance with JJP in 2019 Assembly elections, but BSP's performance was worse than ever.[29]

Support Base of BSP

BSP has not been able to mobilise oppressed sections in its favour because the organisational structure of BSP is very weak in Haryana. A dominant proportion of Dalits favour Congress in the state. BSP needs to choose a more rigorous approach to mobilise Dalit in its favour. The process of identity formation among the Dalits in Haryana is still at an emerging stage. Both Assembly and Lok Sabha elections have weakened the BSP support base over the past decade. Thus BSP is mainly a fringe party in Haryana.

The Communist Parties: CPI and CPI (M)

The Russian Revolution (1917) inspired the Communist Party of India. It had its roots in the erstwhile Soviet Union and the party was born in Tashkent in 1920. The Communist Party of India was founded in 1925. The Communist movement in the country has been increasingly under pressure from the domestic environment within India. Its fundamental problem has been how to gain control of national or local affairs and escape direction from communist fountain heads outside India. In simple terms, Indian Communism has been under pressure.[30] After the split in the CPI in 1964, the challenge of India's, social-political culture and systems has been the principal preoccupation of the two Communist Parties CPI and CPI (M). CPI (M) held that revolution could be brought about in the country only through the working-class leaders. Both parties played an important role in national politics in India. Both are the parties of the Indian working class and claim Marxism and Leninism as the basis of their ideology. However, the communist parties, by the very nature of its ideology, have their support among the poor peasants and a section of the middle class.

Both parties have a history of their own, with definite ideologies and committed cadres. After its split in 1964, CPI has remained only a poor cousin in the family of communist parties. The CPI (M) has stayed as a stable organization always active through its units doing special public jobs. The CPI (M) in Haryana has a history longer than the history of Haryana itself. In Haryana it has not been keen on contesting many seats in elections. Once or twice they secured a couple of seats in the state Assembly with the support of Lok Dal, headed by Ch. Devi Lal. The party does not hope to play any decisive role in the power politics of the state,

[29] Ashok Kumar, "JJP and BSP join hands for assembly election", *The Indian Express,* August 12, 2019.
[30] J. S. Brar, *The Communist Party in Punjab,* National Book Organisation Publishers, New Delhi, 1989,p.5.

being marginal in mass support. But the party has been able to make its presence felt in the student sector, where its student wing, the Student Federation of India (SFI), has been raising sensible issues of interest to students in particular and society in general. Also, if one political force in the state enjoys reputation for genuine secularism, it is CPI (M).

Through literature and pamphlets, seminars and symposia, demonstrations and confrontations, this has consistently and continuously opposed all forms of casteism and communalism. Though limited, the activism of the CPM in selected areas has been unfailing.[31] This party has always supported human rights and civic liberties in Haryana. Some political parties are unaware of what these concepts mean. The landowning peasantry of the state did not like communist ideology and the trade union movement remained very weak. So the Communist parties have been unsuccessful in gaining any noticeable support in Haryana. Casteism had a powerful hold in Haryana, so there was little class consciousness. The parties like CPI and CPI (M), with their definite histories and ideologies have not been able to make their existence in the state's politics. In both Assembly and Lok Sabha elections, the performance of these parties has been poor.

It is pertinent to understand the history of the political reality in the state. The support base and electoral performance of various national and regional parties in Haryana politics helps in understanding the dynamics of the state politics. The Congress party has been dominating national politics as well as Haryana politics. In 1967, Congress faced various challenges on national level and it also faced various defections within party during this period, this was also the period of formation of Haryana. It is very important to note that due to the dominance of caste factor in Haryana the rightist politics of BJP could not flourish in the state and it took long time to establish with the mixture of caste and religion.

[31] Bhim S. Dahiya, *op.cit.,* Pp. 233-237.