Caste politics in India with special reference to Uttar Pradesh

Aaqib Bhat

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“Caste politics in India with special reference to Uttar Pradesh”

by

Aaqib Ahmad BHAT

Abstract:
The present study highlights the factor which were responsible for the emergence of caste system, and how it continues to survive as a significant aspect of our society over the centuries. In Indian politics caste plays a vital role as the political behavior of the mass is often influenced by the caste consideration. Since independence the factor of caste has influenced U.P. politics, especially the voting behavior of the electorates. Though Congress dominated U.P. politics with the strong support of upper castes, it also received substantial vote share of lower castes. Since 1989 caste factor acquired a greater salience when for the first time in the Vidhan Sabha elections, the Congress received 27.9% votes. The caste system has influenced all the areas like education, economy, politics, marriage, and religion. Since endogamy is the only characteristic that is peculiar to caste. People are not ready to compromise with endogamy. There is a significant influence of caste from birth to death in the life. People are more influenced by Manusmrati than Indian constitution.

INTRODUCTION

The substance of Indian politics has been largely modeled by its social, economic, religious and geographical conditions and these special conditions have further provided a clear-cut shape to Indian politics that is dominantly marked by the caste politics. Various scholars’ view that Indian politics is mainly caste ridden politics as caste is long in the tooth and is a notable foundation of social stratification in India and interestingly we see some of the specific castes to be given superior place with social and economic entitlements that were denied to the lower caste of people. During Vedic period, the system of Varna became the foundation of social stratification and according to this system there were namely four Varnas like Brahmin, Kshatriya, Baishya and Sudra where each were assigned with specific role. However, with the progress of time the caste system came to the in endowment status, which got resolved by birth and as a result it has now become a divisive factor in our Indian society today. Even in the post-independence period also these remain same although different measures had been seen to be taken to reduce the differences among the various existing castes, but the conclusive outcome was not so much positive as the influencing nature of caste system was seen to strongly affect the political dynamics of India from all levels and thus given a
prominent disposition to the Indian politics. Like now, every political party is observed to give an alert and commanding view to the caste consideration in every candidate selections and appointment of ministers in the governance. However, not only these but also its influence has strongly affected the bureaucracy also. Within this backdrop, the most recent reservation policy has given a new impetus to the role of caste in Indian politics and the role of caste in the different aspects of politics can be viewed by the given points as it is seen to influence the entire policy making of the government; example is vivid like Reservation policy in favor of certain castes.

- Caste plays a prominent role in the elections and voting behavior where as a usual phenomenon the political parties select their candidates on caste lines.
- Caste factor naturally becomes central contemplation in all the programmes, policies and manifestoes of the political parties and even different position within political parties is seen to get distributed in terms of various caste configurations.
- As a result, this caste factor also influences in the genesis of council of ministers and making appointment to various political positions in the government.
- Most interestingly, caste also acts as pressure group in politics where mostly political bargaining is
- The bureaucracy i.e., the administration also gets influenced by the caste consideration as mostly, the postings, transfers and appointments of public officials get influenced by the caste considerations and even more importantly, the behavior of the public officials in carrying out the administrative duties eventually gets influenced by caste considerations.
- The political leadership in many political parties as a matter of fact emerges and sustains in politics on the foundation of support of certain caste groups.

However, taking all these into considerations the increasing role of caste in politics as many political experts view it as a tendency that seem to develop a negative role for the overall system which is not at all helpful for the development of democracy as regarded by scholars namely D.R. Gadgil and the famous sociologist M.N. Srinivas. Again on the contrary, some experts in the area also hold an opposite view point by saying that the role of caste is absolutely essential as it gives momentum to the political process specially in Indian context. American political experts I. Rudolf and S.H. Rudolf in their book “Modernity of Tradition” hold the view that caste politics in India has reduced the divergence among caste and has brought about political non-discrimination among the members of different castes and so it is worth to mention here that the former President of India K.R. Narayanan had rightly mentioned that, “What is obstructing the unity and emotional integration of India is not so much the large divisions into regions, languages and religions, but the atomization of our society into numerous castes, sub-castes and tribes.

Significance

The study of this project is important in many respects. It helps us to trace the roots of “caste politics in India” and its development from different periods. How Indian politics is known as caste ridden politics. The study emphasis on major causes which led to the rise of caste movements in U.P and how caste influenced U.P. the study also focuses on how Dalit assertion accelerated after Mandalization of U.P politics and how BJP came into power in U.P.

Objectives:

- To trace the roots of caste politics in India.
- To understand how the caste associations became platforms for political leadership.
- How caste is the most salient feature of the Hindu social structure.
- To assesses the Post Mandal politics in U.P. OBCs assertion and role of SP in Uttar Pradesh.
• To study the political behavior and levels of political participation.

Methodology:
In order to understand the caste politics in India with reference to U.P. The study follows Historical descriptive, analytical approaches. The sources of my project involves a number of books written on caste politics. Besides I have consulted many newspapers, magazines and articles mainly written by various scholars, professors and academicians.

I have divided my project under the following headings, these are:

- Historical perspective.
- Caste politics in Uttar Pradesh.
- Conclusion.

**Historical perspective**


Caste system continues to survive as a significant aspect of our society over the centuries. In Indian politics, caste plays a vital role as the political behavior of the mass is often influenced by caste consideration. Andre Beteille aptly said, “Caste enters much more directly in to the composition of political elites at the state level”. Particularly in the states of Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Haryana, Karnataka, Kerala, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu and Uttar Pradesh caste has been a major and dominant factor in politics. The electoral politics in Andhra Pradesh is virtually caste politics. The Reddy’s, Kammis and Velamas constitute the three angles of Andhra Pradesh political triangle. The history of development of political parties in Andhra Pradesh can be legitimately described as a history of competition between Reddy and Kamma communities. Political awareness and participation of backward communities, identities have surfaced as a strong force in contemporary Indian Politics. The situation demands for redress of the inequalities and exploitation generated by this age old system. However, a changed situation has stimulated fresh thinking in academic circles on the questions of the essence and dynamics of caste. The origin of caste system in India cannot be ascertained. The Indo-Aryan literature is available from Vedas and Upanishads throw light on the caste system. The Rig-Veda hymn of Purushasookta contains the earliest reference to chaturvarna. According to it, the great Purusha’s mouth became the Brahmin. His two arms were made into the Rajanya (Kshatriya). His thigh turned into Vaishyas and from his two feet, the Shudras were born. The Taittiraya Samhita ascribed the origin of Chaturvarna to the limbs of the creator and interpreted it theologically. It gives divine justification for their functional division. In Gita, Lord Krishna says the fourfold order was created by him on the basis of quality and action. Thus, the Hindu Dharma Sastras take caste for granted. All Puranas assume the existence of caste and if a person commits evil acts he will be born in a low caste or even as an animal.

The Caste system in India is generally related to the occupational pattern of different groups. Caste is the general form of social organisation in India and it differs from the social groups. Noted Sociologist G.S. Ghurye observes: ‘Caste in India is Brahman child of the Indo-Aryan culture cradled in the land of the Ganga and Yamuna and hence transferred to other parts of the country.

The caste is the most salient feature of the Hindu social structure. It divides and stratifies the Hindu society into a number of sub-groups, separate and yet integrated. ‘In India, the caste system comprises a large number of groups whose mutual relations are of an extremely complex in nature. Buddhism was the greatest challenge to the priestly elites of Brahmanism
and on the other hand it gained popularity among masses. Many kings found Buddhism more suitable and they contributed to its spread in India and abroad. There were no restrictions to join Buddhism. Buddha made the low caste people as saints and tried to annihilate the caste system. The caste system describes the social stratification and social restrictions in the Indian sub-continent. Social classes are defined by thousands of endogamous, hereditary groups, often termed as jatis or castes.6 India has been for about 3000 years, a country with a highly rigid caste-based hierarchal structure, with ascending order of privileges and descending order of disabilities, which was formed on the basis of a need to form a social order in ancient India. other aspects it differs in the thoroughness with which the scheme is worked out and in the number of differentiated groups.

Caste system in ancient period

India derives its name from the river Sindhu (called Indus in Greek and Hindu in Persian), and the earliest civilization of this country named Indus Valley civilization took birth in the valley of the same river. Indus Valley civilization flourished around 2500 B.C and was a contemporary of ancient civilizations of Egypt, Iraq and Iran. The developed city life, use of potter’s wheel, kiln-burnt bricks, and vessels made of copper and bronze and the pictorial writings were the distinctive features of this civilization. The Indus Valley people appear to have professed a religion that was iconic and laid emphasis on the worship of the Mother Goddess and a male deity who seems to have been the prototype of Siva Majumdar et al., Nehru in 1993. Their social life was matriarchal. The caste system which formed the framework of the succeeding civilizations was unknown to the Indus valley people.

However according to the some historians Indus valley civilization also demonstrated certain traits which might have led to the development of castes. It has been argued that Indus Valley civilization consisted of a set of chiefdoms and caste possibly developed out of chiefdoms. The reasoning is that it is not unusual for an aristocracy to close ranks and become endogamous. Such segmental endogamy might have spread to occupational specialists of lower ranks within the chiefdoms. Caste also might have developed out of social classes. This is suggested by differences in type of houses in the Indus cities. Moreover, there was occupational specialization too. Although it is difficult to say whether the specialists formed closed endogamous descent groups, it is likely that the occupational specialists of Indus Valley civilization held some ideology which justified the worthiness of their trade and that the Indus culture was integrated by some stabilizing shared values.

As regard, the pollution-purity concept, it was suggested that the showers, the bathing ghat, and the elaborate system of underground drainage demonstrated the preoccupation of Indus people with cleanliness. This may be taken as an early form of the Hindu purity-pollution complex.

But the above mentioned traits are insufficient to prove that a caste like institution was transmitted from the Indus Valley culture to the Aryans.

Around 1500 B.C., Aryans came to India from north-eastern Iran and the region around Caspian Sea. They settled at first in Punjab and gradually moved south-eastward into the region north of Delhi. Here, they remained for many years and prepared the collection of hymns known as Vedas. Later, they moved further eastwards into the Ganga Valley.

Aryans of the Rig Veda inhabited a territory which included portions of the south-eastern Afghanistan, the north-western Frontier Province, and the Punjab. The Ganga and the Jamuna were also known in the time of the Rig Veda; but at that period they merely formed the extreme limit of the geographical outlook. The Yojur Veda marks the advance of the Indo-Aryan from the Indus basin to the great central plains of India. Its geography is that of the
Kurukshetra on the eastern 111. G.S Ghurye “caste and race in india” 1.Sangeet kumar “Changing role of caste system” Rawat publication

portion of the plain lying between the Sutlaj and the Jamuna, and Panchala or the territory between Jamuna and the Ganga. The Brahmans indicate that the Aryans had advanced from Kuru-Panchala country to the country of Videha (north Bihar)

Before the close of the later Vedic period the Aryans had thoroughly subdued the fertile plains watered by the Jamuna, the upper Ganga and the Sadanira (the Gandak). Adventurous bands penetrated into the Vindhya forest and established powerful kingdoms in the Deccan to the north of the Godavari (Majumdar et al.) Thus nearly the whole of the northern India, from the Himalayas to eh Vindhyas had come within the ken of the Aryan before the sixth century B.C. The Aryans came from the pastoral nomads. Who fought and defeated the Dasas or the Dasyus, did not treat them kindly and enslaved many of them. The Dasyus had to work for the Aryans and were made to do the most difficult and lowly work. They were excluded very early from the religious worship and social contact with the Aryans. This led to the cultural differences between the conqueror and the conquered. This division of society into the white-hued Aryans invaders and the dark skinned opponents was the first indication of a stratified society as mentioned in the Rig Vedic hymns, it becomes clear that Aryans were ‘Racist’ in the sense that they regarded themselves as superior and tended to look down upon and deprecate the earlier inhabitants of the land for whom they coined several derogatory terms.

Aryan varna, in the first stage of Rig Veda period, was made up of three classes the membership of which was based on individual traits and less upon descent. There is nothing in the hymns of the Rig Veda to show that the classes had become hereditary. They were not watertight compartments but rather open classes.

In the Rig Vedic period the increase in agricultural production had led to a wide range of other occupational groups besides the four varnas. The carpenters, the metal workers, using copper, bronze, and iron, the potter, the tanner, the reed-workers, and the weavers were importantly members of Aryan village community. In fact, In the hymns of Rig Veda there is little trace of the rigid restrictions on inter varna interaction. There was hardly any taboo on inter-marriage, change of occupation or commensality. Families were not wedded to a particular profession. There was no trace of heredity defining the occupation of an individual. A Brahman rishi and author of the hymn in Rig Veda (IX, 112,3) says, “I am a poet, my father is a physician, my mother a grinder of corn.” Nowhere in the Rig Veda is any mention of a Vaishya being regarded as less pure than a Brahman. In later Vadic age or the age of Brahmans and the Samhitas, there was no restriction regarding marriage between the varnas, expecting the restriction upon marriage with a Shudra male or female by a member of another varna, The first three varnas were enjoined not to marry a Shudra female before any other restriction of an endogamous nature was tried to be promulgated. Aitareya Brahmana mention that Kavasa Ailusa was expelled from a sacrifice because his mother was a dasi, i.e., slave; but he was readmitted after the Gods had shown him special favour. Thus the varna system in the later vadic period was flexible enough to give due recognition even to those rishis and saints whose mothers belonged to Shudra varna. For example the composer of the Aitareya who was the son of Brahman rishi and his Shudra wife named Itara. Similarly, Vyasa and Vaibhandaka, though born of very low origin, were respected and honoured as dwijatis; and so was vaishista who was the son of a courtesan. That the Shudras were no totally denied educational opportunities is also apparent from the above example. In other words, the doors of occupational mobility were not closed completely despite increasing distinction between varnas.

In the Bramanic literature of the post-vedic period, the first three varnas were predominantly
mentioned as dwijas (twice born) once at physical birth and a second time when initiated into varna status through the Upnayana –Sanskara ceremony. In other words, through this initiation ceremony the young ones were formally received into the Aryan society. The event was symbolic of rebirth and was marked by the investiture of the sacred thread. This privilege was denied to the Shudras were called ekajati (Once born). The word jati which was used in the Vasishtha Dharmasutra to denote once-born and twice-born groups, was from then on employed more often to mean the numerous sub-divisional of a varna. The term jati is vernacular term for a ‘caste’ while the term varna approximated a ‘class’ in meaning. By implication, the varna system referred to the set of four large classes of Brahman, Kshatriya, Vaishya and Shudra and their interrelationship while the caste system referred to the interdependent network of hereditary, professional sub-divisions within each varna.

Thus the caste system continued to act as an important system of social relation. Despite severe challenges put forward by heterodox sects, the caste system could never be eliminated. Brahmminism, in one way or the other, remained the religion of the multitudes and purohit remained the nucleus of socio-religious activity in the society, as it was in agreement with the temper of the people who believed in the joy of living. The organic character of the system, the interdependence of different caste group upon each other, continued to make it indispensable.

Caste system in medieval period

During the middle-ages, the Varna system was metamorphosed into caste system. It is a typical hierarchical system that promoted division of labour which led to division of labourers. This second process is unique to caste system. The service castes of sudras were further divided into touchable and untouchables based on wrong theory of purity and impurity. Mahatma Joti Rao Phule redefined this division of Bahujans as two categories of producer sudras and ati-sudras (Dalits). In the subsequent periods in the form of Bakti movements many social revolts surfaced for the cause of Sudras and Atisudras.

In the modern age, some of the agricultural castes of the sudras adopted certain processes of social change viz., sanskritisation and westernization. In order to elevate their social status in the social hierarchy, the dominant castes tried to imitate the upper castes and lead such a life style. As a result, they were recognized as dominant, if not forward castes. These sudra-dominant castes in turn led to some powerful anti Brahmin movements in some parts of India. They have successfully established their supremacy in place of Brahmins during this period. However, the non-agrarian majority sudras had remained as serving castes. The word ‘dalit’ came to light in the 1930s though it is not known who exactly used the word and when. This term was found in a Marathi daily “Dalit Bandu” which was founded in 1930. The word was also used by Dr. B.R. Ambedkar during the same period in his Marathi writings and speeches. The ‘untouchables’ who were driven away from caste system are now reasserting themselves as Dalits to protect their interests and fight for justified rights in all walks of life. Meanwhile, the people who are out of caste system, civilization and social life came to be known as Aboriginal or Adivasis. At present these social groups are also expressing their identity as Schedule Tribes (STs) and fighting along with Dalits, also known as Scheduled Castes (SCs), for self-respect and social justice in India. Besides, the Backward Classes (BCs)
are also on the race with the marginalized communities on the one hand and with the upper castes on the other hand, so as to secure their rights and opportunities in the society.

Caste politics in Uttar Pradesh

11Rajni Kothari ‘Caste in Indian Politics”; The Times of India, New Delhi, September 28, 1990, p. 8; The Times of India, New Delhi, October 17, 1990, p. 8

since independence the factor of caste has influenced U.P. politics, especially the voting behaviour of the electorates. Though Congress dominated U.P. politics with the strong support of upper castes, it also received substantial vote share of lower castes. Since 1989 caste factor acquired a greater salience when for the first time in the Vidhan Sabha elections, the Congress received 27.9% votes. Downfall of the Congress gave rise to other parties like BJP, SP and BSP. These parties appealed to different castes and used it overtly to increase their vote share. Hence politics of U.P. is often based on caste and thus caste acts as a political faction. Either it is visible in the exploitation of caste or it is used as an issue for elections.

Rajni Kothari holds that casteism in politics is no more and no less than politicization of caste.’ The key process was and is politicization. He further argues that caste is ‘the great seculariser’. In response of Mandal Commission report he suggested that forces like OBCs cut across religious barriers. They unite people of the same caste either they belong to one religion or other. While M.N. Srinivas responded to him by saying that it is Kothari’s illusion of secular upsurge.” He claims that every caster itself is internally differentiated and which according to Kothari is cutting across religious division is at best a partial truth and at worst an illusion. Hence, what castes do to the politics is still to be debated. Whether it is a binding or a dividing force, whether caste based politics plays a negative role or a positive role by giving great importance to lower classes, should also be examined carefully. In U.P. caste is a factor of instability, violence and fractured verdict. It gave rise to multiparty system, impetus to regionalism, Mandalisation with anti-Mandal agitation and rise of lower castes on the political front. Earlier Congress has been a dominant party with a very weak factional opposition. Now Congress is losing its ground in U.P. and with this three other parties BJP, SP and BSP are building their base rapidly. In the fierce struggle for power of four parties, no single party is able to gain majority and multiparty system is an established trend 22Christophe Jaffreiot “The BJP and the Compulsions of Politics in India, Oxford University Press, Delhi, 1998, p. 70; Kanchan Chandra; Post-Congress politics in Uttar Pradesh;” The Times of India {Sunday Review) November 5, 1989, New Delhi and is forcing parties to make unbelievable alliances. Caste politics is also making regionalism more prominent. Caste based parties can realize their potential largely at different regional levels than national level. So, parties like SP and BSP can be seen as dominant parties only in U.P. than other states. Parties also use caste against other caste. Post Mandal politics in U.P. witnessed clashes between upper castes and OBCs on the one hand and lower castes opposition to OBCs on the other. Caste may be a secularizing force cutting across religious barriers but it gave rise to a different kind of struggle and violence in the state. Though dalits feel proud and have a sense of dignity but their upsurge is not a welcome move and they are subject to fierce opposition in the state. Parties like BSP used caste politics as their ‘natural right’ opposing other castes openly and parties like BJP are heading for ‘indirect dalitization’, realizing its weak support base in the state by making alliances with BSP. Kanchan Chandra claims that post Congress politics is characterized by two transformation first, the second democratic upsurge and second, ethnification. The second democratic upsurge is characterize by the participation of subordinate social groups in the political process and ethnification refers to the emergence of party system in which all major parties make open appeal to ethnic identity central to their political campaign.

1989 General election is very crucial in the history of UP as it liquidified the support base of Congress and only in this election caste based parties like BSP could emerge as a force.
Results of 1989 elections gave a jolt to the Congress when first time in U.P. it received only 27.9% vote share and received 94 seats. BJP playing its Hindutva card rightly gained 57 seats with 11.6% vote share. Janata Dal got overwhelming majority 208 seats with 29.7 per cent vote share while BSP got 13 seats and with 9.4% vote share.

In 1989 elections Congress banked on its traditional Brahmin Harijan-Muslim votes. BJP relied on its Hindutva politics with an eye on upper castes. Janata Dal appealed to OBCs, Muslims, Jats and Rajputs while BSP emerged solely as 'Dalit' party and raised its old slogan, Brahmin, Thakur, Bania chor, Baki sab hain DS4 (Brahmin, Thakur and Banias are thieves and others belong to Dalit Shoshit Sangharsh Samiti).

Major developments after 1989 elections were, appointment of V.P. Singh as Prime Minister, Mulayam Singh as Chief Minister of U.P., the growth of BSP and BJP. All these were set to change the political history of U.P. Keeping in view the importance of caste politics, in U.P., the present chapter aims to analyse these issues;

(1) Post Mandal politics, OBCs assertion and role of SP in Uttar Pradesh.
(2) Dalit Upsurge and Role of BSP
(3) BJP and hunt for vote bank after Hindutva
(4) Caste Vs caste competition.

OBCs Assertion and SP’s role in Uttar Pradesh

In U.P. Brahmans are 10 per cent, thakurs 6.5 per cent, backward castes 50% and SCs 20%. It is evident that being 50 per cent, i.e. half of the UP population OBCs can play a decisive role in the formation of government in U.P. After 1989 elections, V.P. Singh became the Prime Minister with the victory of the Janata Dal whose main support base were OBCs. In August 1990, V.P. Singh’s announcement to implement Mandal Commission report invited strong opposition from various sections of the society. Mandal Commission Report recommended 27 per cent reservation for OBCs in the government jobs. V.P. Singh declared it a more intended effort to make social reform which was long delayed. Before election V.P. Singh promised to reserve 60 per cent of posts within the party to OBCs. He realized that positive discrimination can be a right technique to provide long term upliftment of OBCs. His affirmative action programme was based on his inspiration and appreciation of R.H. Lohia. Many scholar, argues that V.P. Singh used Mandal politics to increase Janata Dal’s vote share, keeping its long term implications in view. C.P. Bhambhri claims that, "Mr. V.P. Singh, the “messiah” of the worst kind of casteist politics in India, proclaimed the acceptance of Mandal Commission Report on reservations in public services in the name of social justice for the backward castes. It is ironical that the worst kind of casteist politicians of UP conceal their activity of vulgar manipulative politics by taking recourse to the ideology of social justice”.

While Mandal Commission report states that “what caste has lost on the ritual front, it has gained on the political front. (The) caste system has provided the political leadership with readymade channels of communication and mobilization” (from the Report of Mandal Commission, 1980.
Implementation of Mandal Commission Report sparked off a sharp polarization along caste lines in U.P. Yogendra Yadav claims that rise of OBCs as a political community are examples of how marginalized groups used competitive politics to make a place for themselves. He also believes that this type of politics though strengthening regionalism would also strengthen the process of democratization, though locus has been shifted from nation to states.”

V.P. Singh called this phenomenon, a silent revolution, a long term transformation under which more and more people from the politically marginalized section of the society were given access to power. This view was further popularised by Christophe Jaffrelot who claims that this silent revolution is an attempt to establish their dignity. Though this revolution became a victim of severe opposition from upper castes. This opposition helped the OBCs to transform themselves into an interest group. They began to vote for candidates from their own caste instead of supporting Congress which led to eventual downfall of the party. Zoya Hasan argues that OBCs politics in the 1980s was not routine politics of ‘vertical clients variety but rather a much more assertive politics of horizontal aggregation.’ Rajni Kothari declares that move to implement Mandal Commission will make castes a great seculariser.

The decision to implement Mandal Commission Report was enough to change the history of politics in the state. All upper castes were up in arms against OBCs. Their demonstration of anti-Mandal agitation, ignited the tension between the two, parties like Congress and BJP were against this policy especially BJP was angry because upsurge of lower caste was considered against Hindu Nationalism theory of BJP. OBCs realized their potential and asserted themselves as an interest group. Students in UP founded the Arakshan Virodhi Sangharsh Samiti and the Mandal Ayog Virodhi Sangharsh Samiti.” Those students who dominated the samiti fanned out in the state to mobilize support among lawyers, teachers and bureaucrats. They wanted to abolish all reservations, including the reservation for the SCs. These groups were against reservation in the jobs, where merit should be the only criteria. One of the argument put forward was that the heterogenous nature of the OBC grouping means that a job reservation policy is likely to create elite among the OBC group without necessarily accomplishing the basic purpose of a positive discrimination policy. It cannot also remove the inequality of access to opportunities arising out of educational or social backwardness. Anti-Mandal lobby was guilty of manufacturing a remarkable hysteria over the problem rather than trying to solve the problem peacefully and analyzing the real nature of the problem. They believe that those who are coming in the government job through reservation are inferior to those who did not. It was precisely this kind of presumption that led the youths like Rajiv Goswami to self-immolate to show his anti-Mandal stand. He was the first of 152 people, mostly students who tried to immolate themselves, of whom 63 succeeded.

Much of the agitation was based upon the fact that developments through reservation are cornered by elite group among the OBCs and depressed will remain deprived. Indra Sawhney challenged the constitutionality of V.P. Singh’s decision to implement MCR in the Supreme Court in September 1990.’ Supreme Court decision came on 16 November 1992 in which Supreme Court held that government of India should specify within four months ”the relevant and requisite socioeconomic criteria to exclude socially advanced persons/sections (the creamy layer) from ”other Backward classes”.

Janata Dal won the loyalty of OBCs but it could not eat the fruit of its labour for long. Mandalisation of U.P. politics made Mulayam Singh Yadav, the real beneficiary. His Sama-jwadi party was formed out of a series of splits from the Janata Dal. In Mulayam Singh’s government of 1990, OBCs ministers were above 14 percent, while Upper castes continued to...
clinging to half of the Ministerships. Analysts says that "clearly the Janata Dal was not an OBC party in the way the Samajwadi party was to become one. This is confirmed by the 1993 watershed". Mulayam Singh Yadav united OBCs under Yadav leadership with strong support from Muslims. He could exploit both Mandal politics of V.P. Singh and Hindutva politics of BJP, well in his favour. Being a socialist he has been urging the government to implement the recommendation of Mandal Commission report since 1980s. V.P. Singh’s decision of reservation only in the central administration while leaving aside educational institution annoyed him badly. However he supported V.P. Singh’s decision to shift towards Quota politics in the context of Mandal affair.” He could become a real beneficiary of Mandal politics by gaining strong support from Yadav’s and could win 109 seats with 17.8% vote share in 1993. It could also gain smartly from BJP’s Hindutva politics, which is also dubbed as Mandal Vs kmandal on the one hand and on the other hand, a pro-Hindu, Christophe Jaffrelot; op.cit. No. 13, p. 370.

upper caste communal party which is anti-Muslim, Even putting forward Kalyan Singh (a Lodha) could not bring much OBCs votes to the BJP and it's communal strategy with the appeasement policy of Congress provided Samajwadi party with strong Muslim support. Mulayam Singh’s tough dealings of the Hindu agitators, during rath yatra to Ayodhya in 1990 led him to be dubbed as ‘mullah Mulayam’ by the BJP. He also liquidified the Congress support base which was a ‘catch all party’ and received support from all sections of the society. Now Congress declined badly in U.P. in 1993 by capturing only 28 seats which was the lowest since independence and it could receive only 15% per cent votes. BSP and SP alliance reduced it to this minority. Realising this threat the BJP tried to influence OBCs, through projecting Kalyan Singh as the party’s Chief Ministerial candidate. This helped BJP to win a sizeable section of non-Yadav OBC votes, in particular those of the Lodha and Kurmis. BJP could emerge as the single largest party in 1993 Assembly election, it gained 178 seats with 33.3 per cent vote share but it could not form the government as it was short of about 37 seats to gain majority. It’s Mandal Vs. Kamandal politics could not bring majority votes and victory of SP and BSP alliances was seen asvictory of secular forces against Congress and BJP.

Victory of SP-BSP alliances was a landmark in the upsurge of lower castes, still this coalition could not work for long. Opportunistic strategy of both the parties on the one hand and assertion of Dalits on the other hand made both the castes hostile to each other. Soon differences were so great that in 1995 the coalition broke. After the breakup of the alliances, BSP openly revealed that it can enter into an alliance with any party to come in power. Capturing power was its main motto and so despite being an anti-Manuwadi party it came in power first time, truly, when Mayawati became Chief Minister, with an alliance with BJP which was an upper caste party. By aligning itself with an upper caste dominated party, BSP gave a jolt to the so called silent revolution of lower castes.

Congress finding no other option but to stick to its non-sectarian approach lost its vote bank to SP and BSP. Being a catch all party it was representing multi-ethnic groups. Now these groups, identifying their own potentials, under new leadership started leaving Congress. Hindutva politics saved BJP for the moment but caste politics emergence played an important role in the decline of congress. Vivek Kumar; “Dalit Leadership in India” Sudha Pai; From Harijans to Dalits in Ghanshyam Shah’( ed) “Dalit Identity and Politics” pg,268. Assertion of Dalits under the leadership of Kanshi Ram and Mayawati also needed a close examination to understand the character of caste politics in U.P. and its implications hereafter.

Dalit Upsurge and Role of BSP

Rise of Janata Dal not only benefited OBCs but also Dalits. Dalit assertion accelerated after Mandalisation of UP politics. Through ‘Mandalisation’ OBCs realized their potential and it also led dalits to recognize their numerical strength in the state. Political mobilization of the lower castes mainly dalits started with the emergence of Bahujan samaj party in the
state politics. However, Dalit politics is not a recent phenomenon. Before the rise of BSP, RPI in 1952 (Republic Party in India) Dalit Panthers in the early 1970s, BAMCEF in 1978 (Backward and Minority Communities Employees Federation and DS4 (Dalit Shoshit Samaj Sangharsh Samiti) in December 1981 under the leadership of Kanshi Ram worked for the emancipation of Dalits. Kanshi Ram worked hard to convert dalits from a social community to a political community. He preached the masses that only way of emancipation is to capture political power first and after that by constitutional means rest can be changed peacefully and legally. His main motto was 'jati todo samaj jodo' aimed to unite bahujans to capture power. From the very beginning Kanshi Ram knew that only dalit assertion cannot bring success for the Bahujan Samaj party and potentials of other backward castes and minorities can be utilized. As OBCs were represented by Janata Dal in General and Samajwadi party in particular, BSP became a party of Dalits. Sudha Pai argues that BSPs emergence and establishment as an important political force was a result of the steady decay and in fact a collapse of the "Congress system" in U.P. Congress dominated by upper caste leaders failed to throw up BC or SC leaders and therefore became increasingly marginalized, where lower castes were becoming important. So, it can be assumed that BSP emerged in the response of upper caste domination in the state. BSP projected itself as a party which was very much against any kind of 'manuwad'. It's slogan Tilak, Tarazu aur Talwar, Marc inko jute char shows its outlook though under its 'bahujan or Manaywad' it tried to enclose all the groups which have majority in number but are economically and socially depressed. BSP’s main support came from rural areas as Vivek Kumar says nearly 80% of 11Vivek Kumar; Dalit Leadership in India,p.141; Economic and Political Weekly, January 27, 1996, p. 215 Ravindra K. Jain; Hierarchy, Hegemony and Dominance:India's population still lives in the rural areas and also around 90 per cent of the Scheduled caste population in the country is rural. Ravindra K. Jain explains that 'bahujan' refers to 'majoritarianism' helped it to make popular alliance with Mulayam Singh Yadav’s Samajwadi party. Secondly he explains that connotation of the term Samaj saying that it refers to the community, and in that sense it has a number of meanings which embrace the notions of 'self and the 'others' as well as sociocultural pluralism. The last term 'party' is to be understood in Weberian terms. Parties, he said according to Weber, reside in the sphere of power. The action of parties is oriented toward the acquisition of social power, i.e., toward influencing social action, no matter what its content may be. He also finds it interesting that Weber does not include 'ideology' as a defining characteristic of 'party'. From his assessment of BSP it can be assumed that BSP though being a party of Dalits does not have a specific ideology. And this trend is visible from BSP’s alliances with the BJP. Although it was an anti-manuwadi party but it has no ideology to retain its stand. It could change its policy whenever circumstances were not in its favour. Ravindra K. Jain analyzing Weber’s theory of ethnicity in case of Uttar Pradesh says, "Weber’s theory of ethnicity and Gramsci’s concept of hegemony can illuminate recent trends in UP politics - particularly the rise of the BSP. The former hierarchical caste system characterized by 'integral hegemony' has been transformed into one of ethnicised status groups and minimal hegemony, a process that has been primarily political. Under this scenario a counter hegemonic regime becomes a theoretical possibility, but this depends upon the advent of a revolutionary ideology and leadership".While BSP has the charismatic leadership of Kanshi Ram and Mayawati. It has been short of as revolutionary ideology or an ideology as such. BSP's lack of commitment resulted in the decline of dalits assertion and led to Hindutvising the dalits in future elections after 1993. Kanchan Chandra says BSP draws a cross-cutting line between different kind of minority 'alpjan, and majority 'bahujan’.' Thus minority constitutes three Hindu upper castes, Brahmin, Bania and Thakur and majority constitutes backward castes, scheduled castes, scheduled tribes Muslims, Christians and Sikhs. For BSP present politics is dominated by Hindu upper castes parties vs the rest or majority 22Kanchan Chandra,
BSP leadership tried to mobilize BCs, OBCs, SCs, STs and religious minorities on a common platform of 'Bahujan' as it knows clearly that 20 per cent scheduled castes in Uttar Pradesh cannot provide stable political base, enough to capture power on its own. Out of this compulsion it united different oppressed sections in the society to create a stable lifelong base for itself. Sudha Pai claims that U.P. has 66 SC and 58 BC groups, out of which 21 are Muslims groups whom BSP hoped to mobilise. He further claims that the main aim of BSP was to establish a new social order and this BSP needed to capture political power. By this new social and political order, a different kind of redistribution was to be made so historical wrongs could be rectified. 'The new social order could be achieved by using state power for 'social engineering' from above, i.e., introducing developmental programmes for dalit upliftment and mobilisation rather than a revolution based upon destruction of the social order 'from below'. BSP especially speaks about castes and not about different economic classes or occupational groups. It treats poverty as an attribute associated with certain ethnic categories but not as an organizing category in itself. BSP used caste as an ideology instead of having any political ideology to capture power. It's alliance with SP also helped to consolidate Muslim votes though Muslims were a part of bahujanwad but soon in 1995 Muslims become suspicious of BSP as it became impatient to come in power and allied with a hindutva party. Vivek Kumar says that BSP leaders believe in the parliamentary Democracy. It can be proved by their slogans "vote se lenge PM, CM; Arakshan se lenge SP, DM and vote hamara raj turn hara! Nahi chalega, nahi chalega (from vote we will have Prime Minister and Chief Minister, and from reservation the Superintendents of police and District Magistrates and our votes and your
rule, No more. No more). In 1991 Assembly Election BJP emerged as a force riding high on its Hindutva politics, but in 1993 Assembly Election it could gain only 178 seats. In December 1992, Babri Mosque was demolished, Muslims were alienated, Dalits being anti-upper castes could not become part of mainstream Hindutva, they were also a big force to reckon with, BJP’s policy of Mandal Vs. Kamandal also alienated OBCs. These three groups found their emancipation in SP-BSP alliance. SP captured 109 seats and BSP 69 seats with the help of the Congress support, under Mulayam Singh Yadav, a new government was formed in the state. This victory received appreciation from almost every corner of the state. It was declared that 1993 Assembly Elections brought new social forces (not from top but from below) in power. It was a victory of secular forces in the state though BJP being the single largest party failed to form the 11K. Srinivasulu; Centrality of Caste: Understanding UP elections, Economic and Political Weekly, January 22, 1994, p. 159. 37government. K. Srinivasulu said the outcome of the recent UP elections signaled the formation of a new subaltern subjectivity forged on caste identity, which has potential to break through the confines of traditional, political discourse in contemporary India”. Once they were in power real game of politics started. Fierce hunt for issues and areas through which expansion of vote support could take place, resulted in various tussles between the two. Mulayam Singh became the Chief Minister and BSP obtained II ministerial portfolios in the ministry of 27. In the beginning it was felt that SP-BSP will make a new history in UP but soon relations between the two deteriorated. Among many reasons of the tussle was the ‘Yadavisation’ of the state under Mulayam Singh.

Backward castes while improving their own social status, kept the SCs in their places and reacted violently to the latters moves for development. Amaresh Misra analysed the danger posed by assertiveness on the part of Dalits and the aggressive response from the backward castes. He said that it will lead to the breakup of fragile backward Dalit alliance. He also blamed backward castes for committing atrocities on Dalits. In Fatehpur dispute over the land allotted to the kanjars by the government, but in the possession of the kurmis, led to the brutal massacre of Dalits. Mulayam Singh Yadav was also blamed for indulging in this process of Yadavisation of the state while neglecting Dalits. There were about 60 clashes involving the backward and lower castes in U.P. in the first five months of the government’s tenure in which 21 SCs and 3 BCs were killed, one important among them was the clash at Meerut in March 1994. The commission of scheduled castes and scheduled tribes enumerated 1,067 cases of atrocities in U.P. in its 1989-90 report and 14,960 in its report of 1995. These atrocities were caused mainly by upper castes but Yadavs also were a major force behind it.”

Though atrocities and advance move of Yadavs were the main reasons, one of the most important causes of disputes between the two was the result of bye election in November 1993 and Panchayat elections in April 1994. SP was fast gaining ground in OBC-Dalit constituencies, dilating the support base of BSP. Though SP-BSP combine won four out of the six assembly seats against BJP, the elections in fact were seen as a triumph for Mulayam Singh. In the Panchayat elections, the SP gained control over 45 percent of the 52,111 gram panchayats the BJP and Congress won just over 20 percent and 10 percent respectively, BSP11Amaresh Misra; Challenge to SP-BSP Government, Economic and Political Weekly, Vol. XXIX, No. 8, Feb. 19, 1994, p. 409; The Times of India, March 30, 1994; Sudha Pai, op.cit. No. 27, p. 279 was shocked to get only 10 percent of the seats. BSP condemned Mulayam Singh for the large scale irregularities in the ‘rapid census’ ordered by Mulayam Singh to estimate the OBC population, following the amendment of Panchayat Act 1994, granting electoral reservations to the OBCs and SCs subsequently repolls were ordered.” Both Kanshi Ram and Mulayam Singh started issuing statements against each other. Kanshi Ram held an anti-defection rally on July 10, 1994 and it appeared that BSP would withdraw support on the same day. Kanshi Ram accused Mulayam Singh for engineering the biggest defection of all times in the state.
BSP terminated its coalition with the SP in June 1995. Amaresh Misra argues that Congress also played an important role in the downfall of the alliances. The anti-Mulayam Singh lobby in the Congress, led by Ajit Singh, prevailed and Narasimha Rao was also not in favour of a strengthened Mulayam Singh who was no longer an asset to him. So, it was better for the SP not to undermine its partner and save the alliance.” BSP’s first flirtation with the BJP started in June 1993. Sudha Pai claims that fall of SP-BSP coalition government inaugurated a new post Bahujan phase of Dalit movement” in which two contradictory mobilization trends are visible, coalition building with upper castes parties and a deepening of the movement at the grass root level. BSP leadership became too hostile to the SP that it could not keep patience to continue the coalition and it became so impatient to capture the power that breaking the alliance was the only solution. For capturing power, it moved closer to the upper caste parties like Congress and BJP. BJP used BSP to gain support of lower castes and this led to Dalitisation of UP politics. This decision marked BSP’s conversion from a movement to a party led by an opportunistic leadership.

In June 1995, Congress supported the breakup of the alliance but did not support the BSP to form the government. It could not allow any small regional party to rule India’s largest state. BJP which was looking for an opportunity to appeal to lower castes extended support to BSP. BJP leaders publicly declared that the party’s support to the Mayawati’s ministry in Uttar Pradesh was solely motivated by its desire to oust Mulayam Singh.’ These parties declared that they were against Mulayam Singh’s Gunda politics and mal-administration, so they were joining hands. Chamar and pasis were unhappy with this development as the party was in the hands of OBCs, mainly the Karmis, who were the main supporters of the BJP in the state.” They were proud of Mayavati, a ‘dalit ki beti’ to bring dignity to them. But by aligning itself with a manuwadi party, BSP was in danger of losing its distinct identity as a movement for the oppressed achieved after a period of struggle. Yet by forming a government, the BSP leadership hoped to strengthen its position in the state. Once in power, BSP started Dalitisation of UP politics like Yadavisation of Mulayam Singh. She appointed her supporters in key administrative jobs; more than 1,500 transfers took place in Uttar Pradesh during the 136 days of Mayawati’s government.’ She started Ambedkar Rozgar Yojna for Dalit women, construction of roads, electricity, water supply were the main part of development of Dalit areas. She started Ambedkar village scheme and to give dignity to the dalits, installation of Ambedkar statues was a main part of BSP’s scheme. She also changed names of the universities and places after the name of Ambedkar. She continued reservation for OBCs and extended reservation for Muslims also.

BJP which superficially accepted the policy of social justice due to compulsion of the political situations, in reality, it considered this policy as a contest aberration. BJP refused to grasp the significance of the concept of preferential opportunity to socially oppressed. Being an upper caste party it was against any kind of affirmative action. BJP started opposing Mayawati’s government soon. It was against of installation of a statue of Periyar (a social reformer from Tamil Nadu) and against BSP’s policy of reservation to the Muslims. BSP’s main support base is among dalits, MBCs and minorities. Alliance with BJP led to apprehensions among Muslims and to appease them BSP extended reservation to the Muslims. This move was very difficult to swallow for BJP which was against its communal politics. Though BJP extended unconditional support to BSP, it tried to impose its conditions from the backdoor. Casteism was considered inimical to both the country as well as the BJP. It, according to Prafull Goradia prevents the bulk of the nation from coming together and distracts Hindus from electing a nationalist party to govern India. He argued to nullify casteism, through Hindutva. Obviously both the alliances could not work for long and the coalition fell in October 1995.
First time, the BJP came to power in U.P. in 1991. Its rise to power resulted through Hindutva politics. Riding Rama wave it marketed itself openly as a pro Hindutva party. BJP has been an upper caste dominated party since its formation and it remained an upper caste party until 1990s when after the upsurge of OBCs and Dalits in the political arena, it realized its weakness and insufficiency of upper caste Hindu votes to win power. Since then it started moderating its position, winning over a large section of OBCs especially kurmi and lodha votes but it failed to gain a big share of Dalit votes.

In 1993, though BJP was the single largest party. SP-BSP combine could form the government. Congress and Janata Dal supported the to form the government and check communal forces from coming to power. It’s loss and incapacity to win majority seats compelled BJP to have new outlook towards the society. Upper caste character of the party became a liability for the BJP. It opposed Mandalisation of UP politics but was in the grave danger to loose OBC votes. BJP claimed that any kind of caste politics will demoralize U.P. politics and Hindutva should be guiding principle to choose a party for power. BJP assumed that its upper caste support and Hindutva wave will bring majority seats for it but soon BJP realized that it was short of majority after the elections. So, it changed its stand towards dalits and OBCs. BJP used Kalyan Singh to capture OBC votes mainly Lodha and Kurmis against Yadav votes to Mulayam Singh. BJP tried hard to consolidate OBCs votes but it could not provide Kalyan Singh his due place in the party. Upper castes leaders could not allow and accept this resurgence of lower castes in the politics. Kalyan Singh used every opportunity to provide representation to the OBCs in the state Assembly and reservation in the jobs which was opposed by leaders of upper castes. When BJP failed on OBCs front it turned towards Dalits. BJP which is also known as Congress ‘clone’ used Congress age old politics, ‘alliances of extremes’ to come to power. It aligned itself with a Dalit party, BSP. But BSP emerged as the real gainer and BJP’s attempt of indirect ‘dalitisation’ of U.P. politics failed. After the proved incapacity and failure of Hindutva politics in the state, BJP’s hunt for votes and appeasement policy of lower castes needs close examination. After demolition of Babri Mosque, BJP alienated Muslims, who were angry with the Congress and were looking for a party which could foster their cause. Muslims found refuge in Janata Dal and Samajwadi party. To counter Muslims enbloc voting for SP, BJP targeted Dalits. Now BJP was locked in fierce competition for the support of backward castes 100 with the SP and BSP, both of which were pursuing backward castes by promising them a share in power in proportion to their population. BJP benefited greatly from the hostile politics of SP and BSP combine. These parties could rule the states for years but their antagonistic interest for power, invited parties like BJP to erode their support base. Two factors led to the growth of BJP in the state, one its communal politics, second downfall of the Congress. Though decline of Congress gave resurgence to SP-BSP but both could do well only in the state. On the other hand BJP could realize its dream on national level also. Mulayam Singh Yadav became the Chief Minister of UP in 1993, cashing on Mandal card. But Mulayam Singh’s Yadav oriented politics resulted in the division of OBC votes. Yadavs supported him and Kurmis and lodhas formed another powerful camp against Yadavs in the state. Mulayam Singh’s Yadavisation of UP politics was also not accepted by dalits who were being victim of atrocities and were deprived from ages. BJP used this opportunity to make caste based mobilization which it has been criticizing. BJP made an effort through its policy of social engineering to bring to its fold 'other' OBCs particularly those that resented the position of the Yadavs. K. Srinivasulu also acknowledge this strategy of BJP. He said that the SCs are structurally homogeneous but the OBCs are internally differentiated and heterogeneous. The BJP’s mobilization strategy aimed at cashing on this, as was apparent.


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in the projection of Kalyan Singh, belonging to Lodha community, as the visible leader of the BJP. Kalyan Singh became the Chief architect of the BJP’s Mandalisation strategy in UP. BJP could become successful in engineering some of most backward castes votes. MBCs were convinced that only creamy layer will be benifitted. They were more fascinated by Mandal plank than Mandal plank. Though projection of an intermediate caste leader helped BJP to win over a sizeable section of non-Yadav votes, but it could not provide a stable power base to the BJP. In reality these MBCs were behind OBC leaders in the upper caste party rather than accepting BJP as their own party. Break up of coalition of SP-BSP provided BJP a chance to play a very crucial role. Now, it shifted its attention from OBCs to Dalits, which could be easily appealed to by a few concessions and promise of dignity. BJP used this illusion of welfare and other cultural factors to mobilize dalits. BJP wanted dalits to be a part of Hindu society. BJP did not recognize dalits as a separate force but called for integration of different castes under one big umbrella. To remove differences BJP calls for adoption of sanskritisation. BJP or Sangh parivar has been adverse to any casteist politics and it considered that sanskritisation is the right process for upward social mobility. Its policy of reunifying the Hindu vote beyond caste barriers by using the Ayodhya issue was attacked by BSP, As Ambedkarisation and reservation were not acceptable to the sangh parivar. Sanskritisation was not acceptable to dalits. Instead of abolition of their identity, they preferred to stick with a party which could provide them a place and dignity in the society.

Analysts believes that the modus operandi of the BJP is more or less the same in the case of OBCs and the SCs. The party tends to select candidates from the lower OBCs (MBCs) and the non chamari scheduled castes, small castes, not so politically aware or economically affluent. Sangh parivar evolved a strategy of focusing on the small castes of untouchables such as the Bhangis (sweepers) and the Mangs (basket weavers). It attempted to incorporate the SCs in the religious, social and political way. The result were mixed and in most of the parts were unsuccessful. BJP extended unconditional support to BSP after its break up with SP. On June 2, 1995, the day after the BSP withdrew its support to Yadav’s government, supporter of Mulayam Singh Yadav’s attacked the guest house in Lucknow, where Mayawati was staying and virtually kept her under house arrest. Sensing an opportunity to build ties with the BSP, the BJP helped Mayawati to come out of the guest house. BJP had started working on dalits vote before 1993 elections. In 1993 BJP organized Samoohik bhojan in Dalit bastis and to capture their votes, it made a dalit to lay the foundation stone of Ram Mandir in Ayodhya. Now, BJP could not afford to loose its chance to appease dalits by uniting itself with BSP, and to stop BSP from uniting with the samajwadi party. This created confusion among the dalits masses who supported BSP’s anti-Manuvadi politics and recognized BJP as a status quoits force. BSP was in the danger of loosing its bahujan identity. Some scholars already declared this move as a post bahujan phase of the BSP party. Mayawati and Kanshi Ram said that they prefer a majboor sarkar (a dependent government) to a Mazboot sarkar (a strong and stable government). They considered that a government dependent on them for survival will be forced to listen to the voice of the dalits; one that is stable would ignore them as most governments have done. The BSP is the only party to publicly favour unstable governments.

Once in power, Mayawati pursued dalit oriented politics. She made policies and programmes suitable for the development of the dalits, Ambedkarisation of universities and places were main schemes of Mayawati government with the reservation to uplift the dalits. BJP aiming to benefited from indirect dalitisation saw BSP becoming sole beneficiary of the alliance projecting itself as advocate of dalits. Instead of loosing its vote bank (which was a strong assumption after the alliance with BJP) BSP emerged more powerful. BJP extended uncondi-
tional support but tried to force BSP government from the backdoor. When Mayawati proved herself a very shrewd politician, BJP took back its support on June 1995 and pulled down the government. This move further alienated Dalits who were opposed to BJP for being an upper caste party. Dalits believe that Brahmanism is based on hierarchy which exploits SCs. Dalits voters became hostile to BJP for pulling down the government.

Now BJP is in a difficult situation. Its policy to appeal to both OBCs and SCs failed. Dalits were anti-BJP from the very beginning for sanskritisation and Brahmanism. They were anti-BJP before 1996 elections because BJP pulled down the government. They were also against OBC lobby in the BJP camp under the leadership of Kalyan Singh. On the other hand OBCs became suspicious of BJP’s alliance with BSP. Though BJP could capture a few seats from OBCs and SCs constituency but it became the real loser by making alliance with BSP. Dalits could recognize themselves better with BSP and MBCs also started looking for other options.

If dalits have to find another option other than BSP, they will not turn towards BJP. Congress party seems to be a much more likely choice to them because it does not bear the weight of sanskritization and Brahmanism. Only valmikis, pasis, koris and khatiks constitute, the BJP’s main SC supporters. They are easy to mobilize because they are still widely under the influence of Hindu religion and social practices.

Caste Vs Caste Competition in the State

1989 elections brought Janata Dal in power. With the decline of Congress, a cut throat competition started between political parties to gain over different caste groups. Caste factor has acquired immense significance in the electoral politics of UP. Parties started gaining ground within the caste community they were relying and then playing them against other castes to win power. Logic is that who is numerically dominant should dominate U.P. politics. These castes based parties fight for the welfare of their own caste at the expense of other castes. Before 1996 elections caste based voting data is not available but different field works conducted by analysts like Jasmine Zerinini-Brotel provides a clear picture of castes and community representation in the Uttar Pradesh Assembly in different years. With the help of these data one can analyse caste appeal of different political parties. Before 1989 Congress was in power in the state receiving more votes from Harijan (Dalits) and Muslims. Caste composition of Congress government in 1987 shows that upper castes were having 57.1 per cent while Intermediate castes were negligible. OBCs were also not finding adequate representation having only 8.6 per cent share. Scheduled caste and Muslims were having better representation 20 and 14.3 per cent respectively (Table 1). Upper castes ML As in Uttar Pradesh Assembly also stood at 39.7 per cent in 1985. OBCs representation was almost half with 19.6 per cent when they constitute almost half of the UP population. Scheduled Caste and Muslims were 21.9 and 12.1 per cent respectively (Table 2). This uneven distribution of seats were resented by OBCs but they found their organized appeal in the Janata Dal which gave 27% reservation to the OBCs, Janata Dal decision to implement recommendation of OBCs resulted in the mobilization of OBCs in UP politics. In 1989, Mulayam Singh’s government, OBCs found better representation than in the Congress. Though gap between Upper castes and lower caste was still very high. In Mulayam Singh’s government upper castes were 42.85 per cent among them Brahmin were 28.57, while Rajput and Brahmins both had 7.14 per cent share. The per cent of OBCs doubled
from 8.6 to 14.3 per cent while percentage of Muslims also increased upto 21.42 per cent. Though scheduled castes representation declined in Mulayam Singh’s cabinet from 20 to 14.3 per cent (Table 3). These figures clearly show that Mulayam Singh’s government gave steady rise to OBC candidates in the cabinet. In his cabinet upper castes were 42.85 per cent but in the Assembly these castes were 35.7 per cent, share of Muslims also declined from 12.1 to 9.6 in 1985-1989 (Table 2).
**Table-3**

Caste and Community of Members of three Uttar Pradesh Governments, 1985-89

<table>
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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>N.D. Tiwari 1985</th>
<th>V.B. Singh 1987</th>
<th>Mulayam Singh Yadav 1989</th>
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<td>n.a.</td>
<td>7.14</td>
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<td>Bhumihar</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td>7.14</td>
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<td>OBC</td>
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<td>11.8</td>
<td>21.42</td>
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<td>2.7</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td>7.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kurmi</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td>7.14</td>
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<td>-</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td>7.14</td>
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<tr>
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<td>-</td>
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<td>14.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>11.8</td>
<td>21.42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unidentified</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>-</td>
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<td>N=37</td>
<td>N=34</td>
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### Table 4


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<td>51.12 (113)</td>
<td>46.6 (83)</td>
<td>50.54 (88)</td>
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<td>Rajput</td>
<td>18.75</td>
<td>15.52</td>
<td>19.00</td>
<td>19.10</td>
<td>22.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bania</td>
<td>12.50</td>
<td>12.07</td>
<td>7.24</td>
<td>8.98</td>
<td>6.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kayasth</td>
<td>12.50</td>
<td>5.17</td>
<td>2.26</td>
<td>1.68</td>
<td>1.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Khatari</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3.45</td>
<td>1.81</td>
<td>2.24</td>
<td>1.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bhumihar</td>
<td>6.25</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0.45</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0.57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tyagi</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0.45</td>
<td>0.56</td>
<td>0.57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intermediary castes</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3.16 (7)</td>
<td>3.93 (7)</td>
<td>4.59 (8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jats</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3.16</td>
<td>3.93</td>
<td>4.59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Backward Classes</td>
<td>31.25(5)</td>
<td>18.96(110)</td>
<td>18.1(40)</td>
<td>19.06(34)</td>
<td>21.66(36)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Yadav     | 12.50    | 1.72     | 2.26     | 1.12     | 2.87     |
Kurmi     | -        | 5.17     | 5.43     | 5.61     | 5.17     |
Lodhi     | 12.50    | 5.17     | 4.97     | 5.05     | 4.59     |
Gujjat    | -        | -        | 0.90     | 1.68     | 1.15     |
Kewat     | -        | 1.72     | 0.90     | 0.56     | 1.15     |
Malah     | -        | -        | -        | -        | -        |
Kacchi    | -        | -        | -        | -        | 2.29     |
Saini     | -        | -        | 2.26     | 2.24     | -        |
Sainthwar | -        | -        | 0.90     | 0.56     | 0.57     |
Gadariya  | -        | -        | -        | -        | 0.57     |
Jaiswala  | -        | -        | -        | 0.56     | -        |
Rajbhar   | -        | -        | 0.45     | -        | 1.15     |
Others    | 6.25     | 5.17     | -        | 1.68     | 1.15     |
Scheduled Castes | 12.50(2) | 22.41(13) | 25.80(57) | 19.07(34) | 21.82(38) |
Chamar    | 6.25     | 5.17     | 4.52     | 5.05     | 4.02     |
Valmiki   | 6.25     | -        | 0.45     | 0.56     | -        |
Dhobi     | -        | 3.45     | 4.07     | 0.56     | 2.87     |
Kori/Koli | -        | 6.89     | 3.16     | 3.37     | 3.45     |
Pasi      | -        | -        | 2.71     | 1.68     | 1.15     |
Khatik    | -        | -        | 1.35     | 1.12     | 1.72     |
In U.P., BJP remained basically an upper caste party. It is evident by the data in (Table 1, 2 and 4). In 1991, BJP came to power but percentage of MLAs from upper castes remained more or less same. Among upper castes, share of Brahmins have been relatively higher than Rajput and Banya. That is why BJP is known as a ‘Brahmin party’. Among OBCs Yadavs are not a better choice for BJP. It relied upon Kurmis and lodhis. Kurmis always ranked first with more or less 5 per cent share. Among scheduled castes, BJP received much votes from Dhobi, Kori, Pasi and valmiki. Though chamal MLAs ranked first among SC but they are more earnestly with the BSP. Worst affected section was of course Muslims. Only 5.5 per cent MLAs were Muslims in 1991, Uttar Pradesh Pradesh Assembly (Table 2). OBCs MLAs were 27.1 per cent while SC 22.1 per cent. Caste composition of 1991 UP government shows 0 per cent representation of Muslims (Table 1). Their share came down from 21.4 to 0 per cent and this figure remained same even in 1993 SP-BSP government. SP-BSP combine were dying to give more and more representation to the members of their own caste to increase their support base. So, in BJP government all the three groups found better place, of course at the expanse of Muslims. Still, the proportion of upper castes MLAs in the BJP remained above 45 per cent during 1990s. After Mandal polarization of upper caste Vs lower castes, BJP could not ignore the potential rise of OBCs. 1993 election brought some major changes in the caste composition of U.P. Government under SP-BSP (Table 1). In Congress government the proportion of upper caste ministers stood clearly above 50 per cent with a share 8 to 13 per cent to OBCs and 20 per cent going to scheduled castes. In Congress government upper castes, scheduled castes and Muslims received largest number of Ministrieships. But still the prominence of upper castes was visible over lower castes. This trend was followed by the BJP in 1991 with few exceptions in case of minorities and OBCs. Realising the growing potential of OBCs, BJP increased its ministers in the government. When SP-BSP came in power, they turned earlier pattern of representation upside down. Upper castes ministers in SPBSP government were only 6.7 per cent. An all-time low in the history of U.P. while Muslims and intermediate castes were 0 per cent. This fact is very surprising because SP could come into power, with the help of majority of Muslim’s voting en bloc. Still

| Source : J. Zerinini-Brotel’s fieldwork, Numbers figure within brackets. |

*Adopted from Christophe Jaffrelot, Jasmine Zerinini-Brotel and Jayanti Chaturvedi; The BJP and the Rise of Dalits in Uttar Pradesh in Rogver Jeffery and Jens Lerche (eds) Social and political change in Uttar Pradesh (European perspective), Manohar Publication, Delhi, 2003, p. 156.*
Muslims ministers were only 0 per cent. Both SP-BSP, at the time of election were shouting to protect minorities interest but they only increased their own caste’s representation in the government, knowing well, that Muslims having no other option will turn to SP as Muslims are against upper caste or Hindu dominated parties like BJP and Congress in the state. So, SP-BSP government did not feel the need to put them in the government. In 1993 under SP-BSP government there was a twofold rise in the OBCs and SCs representation from 19 per cent to 40 per cent in OBCs and 16 per cent to 33.3 per cent in SCs respectively (Table 1). Same trend was followed by SP-BSP government in 1995. This phenomenon clearly described Yadavisation and Dalitisation of U.P. politics. Upper castes were surpassed by subordinate ethnic categories for the first time in the SP-BSP government and this trend was followed in 1995 government also. Sudha Pai’s study reveals that about 28 per cent of the backwards consisting mainly of the upwardly mobile Kurmis and lodhas voted for BJP in 1993 elections while 15 per cent supported Congress. This fact shows that this election did not make complete polarization of OBCs votes under SP-BSP alliance. The SP-BSP gained about 33 per cent of backward votes while the share of the JD fell to 16 per cent. Muslim vote was also divided between SP-BSP, Congress and Janata Dal. Congress was able to poll 1520 per cent and the Janata Dal around 16 per cent of Muslims vote. In 1995 these figures remained more or less same (Table 1). This year was marked by 3 per cent increase in OBC ministers and 2 per cent decline in SC ministers while upper castes remained very low. Impact of caste on electoral politics is felt by the emergence of lower caste based parties. In U.P., competition between two national parties and two state parties like SP and BSP shows the growing resurgence of caste based parties. Now National parties like Congress and BJP are unable to dominate U.P. politics because of presence of state based parties like SPBSP who have strong support of their own caste. It will not be wrong to say that caste based mobilization is a key feature of U.P. politics and seems to be an established one.

Conclusion

Finally I came to the conclusion That politics of casteism should be legally banned with strict operation. It has been observed that although the caste practice is legally banned through the constitution by Article 17 yet, these have been practiced the society and ultimately penetrate into politics. Eventually, advantages of these have been taken by the political parties and leaders. In the states like Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, West Bengal these have been more pronounced hence, the political leaders and parties easily take the chances of these. The ultimate solution lies to the attitude of the men. The people of the modern society should have modern attitude not traditional attitude. Although, India is largest democracy in the world, yet it has to get a mature stage. All the pre-requisite of vibrant democracy in India is not available because of variety of reasons like (a) There is a lack of democratic training. (b) There is a lack of well-educated society. (c) There is lack of committed political parties. (d) There is a lack of committed political leadership. (e) There is a lack of initiative for women empowerment. (f) Neglect of girl’s education. (g) There is lack of inter-party and intra-party democracy. (h) Passive role of civil society. (i) Believes in traditionalism. (j) Widespread poverty and many more. There is a need to establish inter-party and intra-party democracy to diminish undemocratic element in the society. There is a need to stop political corruption, mismanagement and clientalism. There is a need to eradicate extreme poverty. The strict operation of constitutional mechanism is required to mitigate different problems arising out of huge diversity in India. A great, vibrant and constructive role should be played by the civil society along with the every section of the society because this task is the collective responsibility of all citizens, politicians, educationists, teachers, students, intellectuals, businessmen and trade union leaders not of one section of the society. Proper decentralization must be materialized through the Panchayati Raj System to readdress the grievances of all the communities and
regions of India. Good and positive attitude of one community to another is essential to establish religious and communal harmony and thus to intact national unity and integrity. Even though, the government of India is committed to protect the unity and integrity of the country by following the ideals and goals of the constitution yet the unhealthy practices of democracy and the above cited problems stand on the way to national integration. Not only these but the government of India has taken certain measures like the establishment of National Integration Council (1962), organizing national integration conferences and conferences of Chief Ministers of States from time to time etc. to achieve these objectives. But, the official and procedural efforts are not adequate and many times failed. As many of the problems of national integration are political problems and has cultural and psychological dimensions. The government should ensure that the operation of political practices and system are just and equal to all groups, regions and communities. The political leadership and political parties should also rise above narrow interests to face the challenges of national unity and integrity. We have to come to certain conclusions and offer viable solutions to the problems created by a wrong understanding and application of the standard of Caste in India. What has been there for centuries cannot be undone in a day or two. Therefore, there is change all over the place – in the thinking of people about caste, community, religious and philosophical values. Nothing is objectionable so long as there is no compulsion, hatred, animosity. The world is created by God in a wonderful and mysterious way. Diversity is the Art of Nature; but Unity is the Heart of God. This is what the Rgveda (I.164.46) declared ages ago: ‘eka adviprΨabahudΨavadanti (What exists is One but wise men call it by different names). Let people do what they think is right and good for them; but let them not battle in the name of religion, philosophy, race, caste, class, community or political affiliations.

The caste system imposes restrictions on marriage. Caste is an endogamous group. Endogamy is a rule of marriage according to which an individual has to marry within his or her group. Each caste is sub-divided into several subcastes, which are again endogamous. Inter caste marriages were strictly forbidden then. Even at present, inter caste marriages have not become popular. Violation of the rule of endogamy was strictly dealt. This rule of endogamy has resulted in close in-breeding. Some writers like Hutton regard endogamy as the very essence of the caste system. Today the people who violated the caste rule and got inter caste marriage are living in the fear of honour killing. Even though there are legislation to deal with these issues people are not bothered. People are more influenced by Manusmriti than Indian constitution. Even today choice in marriage, in education, politics, business, food habits, family customs, practices, etc. are often dictated by the caste. The caste instead of disappearing in the wake of modernism has become still stronger.

Bibliography: