

**NMML
OCCASIONAL PAPER**

**PERSPECTIVES
IN INDIAN DEVELOPMENT**

New Series

3

**Politics of Social Justice:
An Evaluation of the Bahujan Samaj Party
in Uttar Pradesh**

Jayabrata Sarkar



Nehru Memorial Museum and Library
2012

© Jayabrata Sarkar, 2012

All rights reserved. No portion of the contents may be reproduced in any form without the written permission of the publisher. The views expressed in the article are of the author and not of the institution.

Published by

Nehru Memorial Museum and Library
Teen Murti House
New Delhi-110011

e-mail : ddnehrumemorial@gmail.com

ISBN : 81-87614-43-9

Price Rs. 100/-; US \$ 10

Page setting & Printed by : A.D. Print Studio, 1749 B/6, Govind Puri
Extn. Kalkaji, New Delhi - 110019. E-mail : studio.adprint@gmail.com

To understand Bahujan Samaj Party's (BSP) effort to resurrect a failed 'Dalitist project' in the north Indian state of Uttar Pradesh (UP) in the early 1980s, one does not need to enter into a debate on the multiverse of Bahujanism, its politics and its philosophy. Kanshiram, the chief architect of the BSP since its inception in 1984 till late 1990s, was, at the onset disinclined to engage with the central question that Bahujan thinkers and philosophers have grappled over time - humiliation and deprivation of self-respect that are characteristically marked out by social institutions that Dalit and so called "lower castes" confront and which leave a long term impact on the constitution of their selves. BSP's early Dalit politics symbolizes Phule's 'anti-brahminical ideology' - the 'perpetual battle between the Aryans, the invaders, the Sanatanis, the upper castes progenitor of Brahminical ideology and the moolnivasis' (original inhabitants)¹ visualized within the 'exploiter-exploited' category. The BSP began with a stated position that if caste is exploited it could also be used as a 'political weapon' by the oppressed against their oppressors, and thereby, convert a 'negative description into a confrontational identity'² — a modernist adoption of Phule's thesis of political struggle. However, Kanshiram did not explore Phule's ideas within objective historical and social conditions that defined the sufferance of the poor and the oppressed. Neither did the BSP leader introspect the legitimate grounds for a specific form of political struggle, for instance, nurturing Bahujan culture, not necessarily the 'valourisation', as Phule stated, but on an insistence of according political form to egalitarian aspects of customs and traditions of caste groups, against brahminical hegemonic social and political systems of thought, social order and political governance. The BSP's discourse also finds no mention of the need to elevate Phule's universalistic dimension of human rights that would broadly form the context not only of the reconstitution of the self, an endorsement of equality - based rights, but also provide space for the realization of rights, claims and responsibilities that are equal with shared public and community experience when values

deeply inimical to rights rule the roost in the domain of society³. Instead, the BSP has exclusively devoted attention to strategizing through electoral politics a newly conceived representative community experience counterpoised against 'Brahminical ideologization in political democracy' constructed by upper caste political parties. The discursive space for an alternative plural politics was embedded in the political sphere and the course of new Dalit-Bahujan politics would be defined in the political outcomes and not in the structures that engendered a process of inequality and exploitation.

In the initial years of BSP's politics it was widely believed that the de-brahminizing of the political sphere was inversely proportional to the urgency to carve a distinct Dalit constituency in the state. It was common to hear the party's supremo Kanshiram state the 'irreconcilable opposites' between the adherents of the manuvadi order - the 'minority oppressors' and the Dalit-Bahujans - the 'majority oppressed'; that Dalits have been 'divided into thousands of caste segments, and that caste is akin to a pyramid through which the Brahmin community and other upper castes maintain hegemony in social and political spheres of life denying the bahujans any notable means to acquire wealth and respect'.⁴ Yet again it was unlikely that Kanshiram was interested in understanding the deep and complex relational engagement between a modernized caste identity and a range of acts that produce caste stigma — spatial segregation, sexual violation, the use of insults and epithets, demeaning caste labour and the caste body; caste massacres; technologies of the body from rules governing physical proximity to the comportment of the physical body and its appearance — in essence caste violence.⁵

However, it would be a misconception to suggest that the BSP is merely an opportunist political party that emerged at a critical period in UP politics, ideologically and organizationally reaching out to the Dalits, Bahujans, especially the 'lower orders' and Muslims in the backdrop of the decline of the Congress Party in the 1980s underlined by the emergence of 'Mandal-Kamandal politics'. Working as a chemical assistant in Explosive Defence Research Laboratory, in Pune, in the early 1960s, Kanshiram had been truly 'Ambedkarized' by D.K.Khaparde, a neo-Mahar Buddhist, well known among

Scheduled Caste (SC) government employees of Post and Telegraph, Defence and Railways in the region. Kanshiram was not, what one might call, an 'intellectual politician' like Ambedkar. Yet he wanted to monopolize Ambedkar's legacy. To begin with, he did not wish to engage with 'warring Ambedkarite politicians', a reference to the fractious politics of the Republican Party of India (RPI) and Dalit Panthers (DP) that had enervated the political forms of Dalit struggles since independence. Kanshiram claimed in 1971, a year that decided the political fate of the RPI in Maharashtra, that he had the 'patience to build a Bahujan Samaj'. In later years he would confirm that it was difficult to build a bahujan samaj than a bahujan party' thus conceding that the fate of the 'emancipation of the oppressed' lay in a 'different kind of a political organization'.⁶

In the light of formulating a newly conceived political organization to build, what the BSP states, a 'samta-mulak samaj (equality-based society)', perhaps it might be useful to explore Ambedkar's ideas on the matter. From a vantage point of systematizing a proper form of organizational politics of the poor, Ambedkar, a few years before his death, had outlined a thesis on the possibility of exploring a 'federation of a caste-class formation' to capture political power. Ambedkar's strategy was directed to maintain the autonomy and leadership of the Dalits but at the same time sought a broader alliance or coalition which would include peasants and workers in class terms and all middle castes, that is, non-Brahmins and Backward 'lower castes' in caste terms. Ambedkar's oscillations between two party building strategies were premised in socio-economic terms which would allow untouchables to seek allies among other castes suffering from similar handicaps. He was aware that the so called "untouchables" were irreducibly separate from the rest of society and the hold of Hinduism on other castes, even the lowest, was such that it was impossible to collaborate with them. Eventually, he conceived of a political party that would transcend the logic of class, while no longer confining itself to the untouchable milieu, a party which would become the mouthpiece of all groups comprised of the lower castes and tribes. Ambedkar envisaged that 'graded inequalities would become blurred, allowing for the emergence of horizontal solidarities between castes and tribes

of subordinate status, which in course of time could form a block against the elite'.⁷

Averse to the notion of class mobilization, Kanshiram's idea of joining hands with the backward castes and forming a Bahujan samaj drew inspiration from Ambedkar's conception of an autonomous Dalit movement with a constantly attempted alliance of Dalits and shudra. Kanshiram added to these coalition representatives of Muslims and Christians, a fact that was visible in 1971 when he launched the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, Other Backward Castes and Minorities Communities Employees Association in Pune. Like Ambedkar he considered that Dalits were the most politically aware component of this social coalition, an ethnic group, India's original inhabitants. When Kanshiram founded the Backward and Minorities Communities Employees Federation (BAMCEF) in Pune in 1973 and in Delhi in 1976, his early focus on the emerging Dalit middle class and his cumulative neglect of peasant interests is also reminiscent of Ambedkar. In fact, the strong parallels, one can draw, between the attitude of the leaders of the Uttar Pradesh Scheduled Caste Federation in the 1940s and 1950s and the BSP on the neglect of the peasants in general and the need, to improve, the socio-economic conditions of the impoverished sections of the society through grassroots activism, in favour of a belief in the primacy of capture of political power through caste-based political movements, reflected the same imbalance. As the BSP began to contemplate a shift from being a 'broker' of Dalits to being a 'power sharer' in coalition politics in UP by expanding its influence beyond the SC vote bank, Kanshiram returned to the Ambedkar project of uniting ascriptive groups on the basis of caste who were victims of discrimination to their social status rather than those who suffered economic hardship.

Kanshiram's political focus was solely directed to construct a durable political organization of Dalit-Bahujan politics on which past, present and future struggles could refer. A strong organization and an unquestioned political leadership remains the most important feature of a new ideological comport of social justice. What prompted Kanshiram to refashion 'organization and leadership' for launching

successful Bahujan struggles was his unhappy political experience as an 'ordinary party worker' in RPI. Bickerings within the RPI suggested to Kanshiram that 'inner-party democracy was not a healthy way of sorting out mutual differences. It was a breeding ground for too many leaders and therefore a potential source of dissent among party workers', a fact that he notes in his book *Chamcha Yug*. On the other the debate of the DP of what constitutes a Dalit identity did not interest Kanshiram. Nor was he excited by Marxist, Buddhist and other kinds of Ambedkarite interpretations of Dalit identity that was being debated within the DP during the early 1970s. He felt that unless an 'intellectual authority like Balasaheb Ambedkar kept arbitrating between warring intellectuals the political form was bound to get blurred'.

Charisma and Political Leadership

The importance of an authoritative political leadership can be traced to a BAMCEF convention held in Nagpur in 1978. In that convention it was stressed that 'Dalit-Bahujan movement must be identified by its ability to lead [and] not be led' and importantly, '...not be deterred by the displeasure of ...the people'. It at once vindicated the point that 'BAMCEF leadership would continue to pursue "socially desirable goals", irrespective of the kind of political support it would get from the people for the programme'.⁸ Kanshiram's initial effort at organizing Dalit politics prominently displayed an emphasized political role of leadership within the BAMCEF and later in the BSP. One that maintained the unquestioned loyalty to the chosen 'President'/ 'Leader(s)' of the political organization engaged in the task of building a political communion of the poor castes. In an effort to ensure that followers combined a shared conviction with faith in both the leaders' sincerity and ability to the 'cause', Kanshiram and Mayawati constructed a cult of personality representing the party in totality with the leader's legitimacy linked with his/her personality, a 'super-person', than a mere office-holder. The personal character of a 'super-person' was displayed in his book *Chamcha Yug* by Kanshiram as he 'discovered' Mayawati, a Dalit leader from Badalpur, Ghaziabad, UP, belonging to the Jatav caste, who could represent the politically conscious Scheduled Caste (SC) group in the state. Exemplary leadership

qualities required one to be '...value-based...stable and imaginative...knowledgeable and popular...possess [foresight] ...show patience and determination...demonstrate required sensitivity [to understand] the configuration of social and political forces...be sensitive to time and priority and undertake difficult political tasks.⁹

Ethnic Organization of Caste Groups

However, what remains 'un-Ambedkar like' is the curious way of organizing party support among diverse Bahujan caste groups that in course of time would be extended to include upper castes at the other end of the social spectrum. Cautious of fissures and splits which might weaken the Party, the BSP, has relied on lateral expansion and multiplication of monolithic factions, unlike the general practice followed by other political parties, which incorporate new elites by expanding vertical linkage within existing factions and groups. Since the BSP as a party promises representation to elites on the basis of demonstrated support (*apna samaj banao*) (make your own community) among their own ethnic categories, each of these elites have an incentive to beat the competition by further subdividing the category itself. The incentive to become an aspiring community leader of their own ethnic category could pave the way for induction into the Party's leadership. Thus, the pressure of expanding party support came not only by way of the successful induction of new monolithic factions but also incentives for repeated 'involution' of existing factions through the activation of sub-ethnic differences. Second, in alignment with the above contention, BSP's method of campaigning, has, furthermore relied on highly segmented methods of building support, so that members of each caste category and their sub-ethnic divisions are encouraged to approach others of their 'own kind' and not build cross-ethnic support.¹⁰

In a significant way Kanshiram did not want to deal with any of the organizational debris and ideological fallout from the RPI in Maharashtra. As a totally new organization and political leadership it could start afresh in the state of UP. Kanshiram's choice of UP does predate the ascent of Mayawati as a Jatav Dalit leader. Though Kanshiram did not offer any plausible explanation to the political

decision there is a possibility that he had seen the probability of politically mobilizing the conscious educated Chamar*-Jatav elite and the poor amongst them. This was seen through BAMCEF activities and the political split from Khaparde's 'Maharashtra branch' of the BAMCEF in the mid-1970s. Further, UP was a potential cauldron of impoverished caste groups, both Dalits and non-Dalits, who were in significant numbers. In UP, political power rested with the Brahmins but was 'shared' with Kayasths, Banias and the Muslims. While a wide range of upper castes and communities shared power it was increasingly being challenged by the assertive landowning middle castes. This 'caste and community equation' of power presented Kanshiram with an opportunity to organize not a non-Brahminical movement as in south India but an exclusive political constituency of Dalits and Bahujans, a sort of a 'political caste(s) association based party'.

More generally speaking, to pursue the one-dimensional project of social justice through electoral politics mass mobilizations and long drawn campaigns, the ideological merits of class struggle and caste identity in the fight for Dalit emancipation was out. In contrast to almost all Dalit and Dalit-based organizations the BSP has consistently refused a reactive agitational stance which has meant in practice staying out of many Dalit struggles. This refusal to join on-going agitation struggles has been more of an orientation to decide its political direction as much as the stated proposition of the BSP leader that 'expenditure of effort on any object other than the mechanism to capture political power was superfluous'.¹¹

An authoritatively composed Dalit political leadership and a political party have outlined a brand of 'empowerment through electoral politics' to negotiate a changing social and political equation of power in the state by giving primacy to the political role of caste. Kanshiram states "...we do not expect anyone's support"; "we have to take responsibility to protect our rights...only then we will achieve

* The word 'Chamar' has been used in the text to distinguish it as a dominant sub-caste among Dalits in UP. In western UP Chamars are known as Jatavs. The author wishes to state categorically that the usage of the word in the text by no means is intended to offend or denigrate a community.

political power [What we need is] 'a government based on more (Dalit-Bahujan) votes'.¹² The BSP leader directs his supporters to "stop voting for the upper castes", "deny upper caste political parties space to manipulate caste [so that they cannot] buy and loot votes" of the exploited sections of society. Bahujans should 'not give their votes to anyone except [for their own benefit]', 'build strength' by voting for their own candidates [and in later years] even those who are upper caste BSP candidates. The primacy of BSP as a distinct political party is emphasized.¹³ Thus, mobilizing Bahujan groups around caste and turning votes into 'priceless political capital,' would, it was believed, fundamentally alter the political ritual of voting 'as a one day interruption' in a life underlined by disrespect and indignity in society. Votes would no longer be ineffectual, an insignificant source of self-esteem, an act of rebellion at the polling booth that compounds feelings of inferiority. Votes would demonstrate a genuine capacity for self-assertion through political power. During each election the BSP presents its supporters with a 'precise goal' and offers a clear road map showing how this goal might be reached.¹⁴ BSP candidates have to be in 'a position to decide who has to win and who has to lose'. This is identified by a three-fold process. First, participate in elections and lose to measure the extent of support. Second, to make other candidates lose, the objective being to defeat certain, preferably 'national' political parties to enable other regional political parties to win. Third, to participate in elections and win, the objective being to be in a position to leverage power and pursue the agenda of social justice.¹⁵ In other words, the political and electoral strategies of the 'Party of the Oppressed' impinged on a relationship between augmenting 'vote share' 'pragmatic political alliance' and the advocacy of an 'unstable polity'. Vote share is symptomatic of an open-ended mobilization strategy centred on the 'ethnicization of caste' and fraternizing 'Bhaichara banao' 'promote fraternity' politics and manipulated to serve the political necessity of uniting amorphous and disparate caste groups, even across the social spectrum as post 2000 BSP's Dalit politics would indicate. Kanshiram's position on an unstable polity and pragmatic political alliance till achieving a political majority to form government was clear. The BSP leader stated that a "...representative government (with the participation of Dalit-Bahujan party) is better than merely

an efficient government to ensure justice for all sections of society. Stability would consolidate entrenched dominant castes/groups. 'We are looking for an unstable polity' 'to feed on the carcass of other political parties'.¹⁶ A '*majboor* (dependent) not a *mazboot* sarkar (stable government)' in a fragmented coalition politics would enable the Party to even antagonize sections that support its coalition partner. BSP's need was less than its partner to keep the coalition going. In coalition government on four occasions the Party has been categorical on the 'ability of the government to deliver on BSP's political promises'.¹⁷ This is Kanshiram's 'innovative politics', the 'guru-killi', the master key of political power by which the BSP intends to open 'every lock whether social, economic, political or cultural'.¹⁸

Prestigious Electoral Contests

In two successive elections in UP and Punjab in 1985 the BSP was able to dent the electoral prospects of the Congress Party. In UP all BSP candidates lost but were successful in cutting into Congress vote base taking away 2.44 per cent of votes polled enough for the Congress to lose in the districts of western UP. It led to the defeat of the Congress candidates on 51 seats to the benefit of Lok Dal and Janata Party. In Punjab the BSP's support among Dalit-Mazhabi Sikhs translated into 2.2 per cent of the vote share and forced the Congress to relinquish 30 seats that benefited the Akali Dal. Kanshiram cautioned his supporters particularly in UP that candidates who have been given tickets to contest elections only had "...platform ticket...and with this ticket [one] could not [even] reach Lucknow (the seat of political power)..."¹⁹ The second feature that is highlighted during this period of political expansion of the BSP in UP is the ascent of Mayawati. The three 'losing electoral battles' Kairana (1984), a pro-Congress wave following the assassination of Indira Gandhi, Bijnore (1985), a wafer-thin victory for Meira Kumar of Congress (I)²⁰ and Hardwar (1987) in western UP with a sizeable Dalit (Jatav) and Muslim population enabled Mayawati to gain public stature in UP. Kanshiram states that his protégés emergence as a mass Dalit leader was complete. He said: [In each election]...[she] went from village to village...[and continued] to increase the vote bank....In Hardwar [for instance] she improved

the vote bank of BSP 14 times... 'In 1989 Mayawati ultimately won the parliamentary seat in Bijnore defeating Mangal Ram Premi, a SC leader of the Lok Kranti Dal and then BJP by 5000 votes. However, Mayawati lost the seat to Premi in the 1991 Parliamentary elections. Another facet of BSPs politics can be gauged by the high profile Allahabad parliamentary bye election in 1988. V.P.Singh who in the wake of Bofors scam left the Congress Party was to contest for the seat against Congress candidate Sunil Shastri, the son of late Prime Minister Lal Bahadur Shastri. The seat had been vacated by cine actor Amitabh Bachchan in the wake of his name figuring in the scam. A broad anti- Congress alliance was formed to defeat Sunil Shastri. High percentage of Brahmin and Thakur support in the Parliamentary constituency veered towards the BJP and V.P.Singh. Kanshiram mobilized the lower castes particularly the Chamars and the Pasis, the former found in significant numbers in Allahabad. With the Muslims bearing a grudge against the Congress in the wake of communal riots in the 1980s the Congress candidate was in for a difficult electoral contest. Predictably the Congress lost the seat by a huge margin. Kanshiram who had contested to fragment the Congress vote base came third with 19 per cent of the votes and 'securing his Dalit constituency.....'²¹

The BSP's vision of transforming itself into a '*jeetne wali party*' (a party that can win)²² received momentum with the 1989 Lok Sabha and Assembly Elections. Earlier, a proof of the growing popularity of the BSP was seen in the 1988-89 Municipal and Gram Panchayat elections in which the party captured 188 municipalities and 24,000 Gram Panchayats.²³ The 1989 national election was fought along the divided lines of reservation politics and Hindu majoritarian ideology. Both these phenomenon upstaged the Congress Party electorally especially in north India. The progenitor of 'mandal politics' the Janata Dal (JD) was led by V.P.Singh, a Rajput, and a melange of personality-driven leaders such as Devilal, Ajit Singh, Chandrasekhar, Mulayam Singh Yadav, each laying claim to leadership of the emerging powerful middle class backward landholding elite of north India. Within a few years the JD would fragment into numerous political parties each representing a narrow social base. In 1989 the JD along with the BJP ushered in an unstable

coalition government at the Centre that ended with the arrest of Advani leading the Somnath '*Hindu chetna* (Hindu awareness)' march in October, 1990. In the backdrop of the coalition government at the centre the BSP was able to win 13 state assembly seats and 2 Lok Sabha seats in UP. In each assembly segment the party won the Chamar–Dalit–Muslim combine played a significant role.

A 'pact' between Congress and breakaway factions of JD led to the formation of a Congress propped minority Chandrasekhar government at the Centre that enabled Mulayam Singh of the dominant Yadav caste to remain as Chief Minister of UP. After seven months the Chandrasekhar government was toppled by the Congress on the basis of evidence of surveillance of former Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi's house by the Haryana police. But it was evident that not only the Congress but other political parties were bracing for a national election. The BJP was the biggest gainer of the May-June 1991 Lok Sabha elections held in the midst of the tragic assassination of former PM Rajiv Gandhi. In UP the BJP won the support of the upper castes and successfully presided over a fragmented OBC vote as some of the constituent caste groups, such as the Jats, Kurmis, Lodhs, even Rajput castes in the absence of a united JD voted for the BJP. The BJP won 51 Lok Sabha seats and 221 state assembly seats in UP. The BSP was engaged in quadrangular and triangular electoral contests with the JD, BJP and Samajwadi Party (SP) of Mulayam Singh Yadav. In the 1991 assembly elections the BSP won 12 state assembly seats almost all first-time winners for the Party with an increased vote share from 9.7 % in 1989 to 10.26% in 1991.

The 'turn' in BSP's politics was evident in the Etawah Parliamentary seat (1991) when BSP and the SP combined to defeat the BJP. Viewed as a 'mini contest' between the forces of Hindutva on the one side and Bahujan-secular politics on the other Kanshiram won a close election victory with the assistance of Mulayam Singh Yadav's 'political constituency of Yadavs and Muslims', the latter supportive of the SP leader due to his pro-minority stand to counter the BJP. Commenting after winning the seat Kanshiram said: "...that Yadav votes can be transferred to Dalit candidates and vice versa, clearly a future alliance is in the making".²⁴ The possibility of

maximizing the potential of bahujan politics beckoned the BSP to explore in future a 'steady' political alliance with the SP.

BSP's maiden entry into UP state politics needs to be contextualized within the crescendo of communal politics of the BJP which led to the destruction of the Babri masjid in December 1992, the dismissal of the Kalyan Singh government and the imposition of President's rule that lasted till November 1993. Cleavage politics, a dominant feature of coalition politics in the state, had been casted on the electorate. If Kalyan Singh, 'a Lodh Rajput' by caste and the 'OBC mascot' of the BJP increased the social base of the party with large sections of the backwards and lower backward communities, the SP-BSP combine had a strong presence among the Yadavs, Muslims and the Dalits. BSP's political objectives were clear. The Party wanted to acquire the centre stage in UP politics, and in pursuance of its political goal entered into a tactical partnership with the SP. In the assembly elections of November 1993 the SP displayed an 'over enthusiastic rhetoric' towards the Muslim. The BSP keen to entice the support of the Muslims did not tend to an excessive posturing about the need to 'defend Muslims', though the party promised employment benefits for the community in state services if the SP-BSP combine came to power.²⁵ However, the BSP felt that the real political challenge to the coalition would come from the BJP and not the Congress. In this regard Kanshiram stated: 'I have been trying to destroy the Congress, but I have felt that [in this endeavour] Narasimha Rao is better than me. I have laid down my arms. Let him deal with the Congress, we will now give attention to the BJP'.²⁶ The real objective of the pre-poll alliance became evidently clear when Kanshiram stated that "...neither Mulayam Singh Yadav..." "...who was a bit apprehensive of joining forces with Kanshiram..." "nor [I] can stand alone in UP..." "That is why we got together...to get the BJP defeated". Kanshiram even went on to suggest that "[we] have to snatch the *kursi* (chair) from BJP and give it to Mulayam...". Mulayam Singh stated that while "the Congress and the JD wanted an alliance [with SP]... I chose the BSP..." Kanshiram suggested that the SP-BSP combine would be a representative government ...than merely efficient government... that would ensure social justice for all sections of society'.²⁷ The November 1993 assembly

elections were held in the absence of a 'wave' that had dominated UP politics in 1984, 1989, 1991 respectively. A strong Dalit electorate in the assembly election was as much a reason attributed to the 'magic of Kanshiram' as it was a political consequence to the ensuing tension between former Thakur landlords and the OBC peasantry, such as Yadavs and Kurmis, the smaller landowners in eastern UP, which gave political space to the Dalit agricultural labourers to organize protest into a strong wave of support for the BSP.²⁸ The Muslims voted strategically to defeat the BJP. Muslims voted primarily for the SP in all parts of UP except the west where the party had a negligible presence. In this region following the advice of Imam Bukhari, Muslims voted for the 'better-equipped' JD ensuring that 'anti-BJP vote' was not fragmented.

SP-BSP Coalition Government: A Tenuous Secular Pact

The plebeian alliance between the SP and the BSP that formed the government was, as BSP would prefer not *sthayi* (permanent) but *tikau* (durable). The 'durability' of the government would depend upon 'Mulayam Singh's performance...' as well as the ability of the government to deliver on 'BSP's principles' of 'land reforms, physical protection of Dalits' etc. It would be a government 'dependent on the BSP for survival, forced to listen to the voice of the Dalits....[not] ignore them as most governments have done in the past'.²⁹ Prevention of atrocities against SCs acquired the stature of 'high-ground' politics, a 'priority' of social justice rather than the static age-old problem of landlessness suffered by the poor which required a more complicated manoeuvring at the level of the government.

In a bid to keep a check on the government the BSP national secretary Mayawati assumed the role of a 'caretaker' of Dalit interests making it a point to visit Lucknow [frequently]. She was prepared to give the alliance 'pass marks' since Mulayam's attention [was] never drawn to atrocities against Dalits until [she] pointed them out to him...' Mayawati cautioned the government that the BSP '...may ask the people to vote [the BSP] to power independently'. The BSP began interfering with senior bureaucratic postings, transferring upper caste officials indicating to Mulayam's government that 'their

favourites' be given 'plum posts'. The unabated interference of Mayawati in senior bureaucratic appointments led the UP Indian Administrative Service (IAS) Association to take the unprecedented step to petition the Governor that expressed the 'officers' ire against caste and other extraneous considerations in the posting and transfer of bureaucrats'. The BSP even demanded that 25 per cent of the key posts in police force and civil administration be reserved for Dalit officers. Kanshiram even went to the extent of suggesting that 'government land in the state belonged to his party' which was enough for party activists to go on 'installing statues of Ambedkar on any plot of land that was lying vacant'. Such incidents were witnessed in Allahabad, Barabanki, Badaun and Meerut and became a focal point of violence between supporters of both the parties. Such incidents were to be seen in the midst of regular clashes that took place between assertive Dalits and propertied backwards that occurred in Dauna, Fatehpur, Badaun Barabanki, Hardwar, Azamgarh, Basti and Varanasi in the first five months of the coalition government's tenure in the state.³⁰

By April 1994 the SP had begun making inroads into OBC-Chamar Dalit constituency and increased its support among the Lodhs and Kurmis. The BSP held 'rallies to mobilize other sections of the Dalits such as the Pasis, Khattris, Kewats, Kushwahas etc. to dilute the Party's image as a 'Chamar Party'. In May 1994 the SP won four assembly bye elections. The BSP failed to win a single seat. In July 1994 Mulayam Singh began to enlist the support of the ousted BSP Muslim leader Masood Ahmed who claimed to have the support of 40 out of 69 BSP MLAs. On the other the 'Raj Bahadur episode' exposed the opposition of a section of BSP MLAs, cadres and party functionaries to Mayawati's 'superior control over organizational structure...' The SP leader began to treat with 'greater consideration BSP legislators' some of whom made 'no secret of their admiration for Mulayam Singh Yadav'. The SP eventually 'assisted' a split in the BSP as '25 BSP MLAs under Raj Bahadur broke away from the BSP. Apart from the victories in the bye-elections the SP increased its seats in the legislative assembly from 109 seats to 131 seats owing to defections from JD and the CPI. In April 1995 the SP won 45 per cent of gram panchayats compared to BSP's 10 per cent.

An earlier indication of the imminent fall of the government was evident in a press conference in which Kanshiram suggested that 'a date for withdrawal of support had been set'. A few days before the collapse of the SP-BSP government an unsavoury incident took place in which 'angry SP activists' gheraoed, picketed and (surrounded) Mayawati and her supporters in a guest house over the night 'without electricity, water supply, telephone and power supply'. Mayawati and BSP party activists were eventually rescued by the Central Industrial Security Force.³¹

Political Votes or Ideological Agenda: BSP-BJP Pact towards Caste-Percentage Politics

Since the Panchayat elections in the state in 1995 the BSP had nurtured a tacit political agreement with the BJP which promised to extend the support of 177 MLAs to prop up the next 'minority government with Mayawati as Chief Minister. On June 2, 1995 the BSP withdrew support from the SP as the BJP stepped in to support the first 'Dalit government' in the country. BJP's decision to support a minority government headed by Mayawati led BSP indicated a shift in Hindutva politics towards 'percentage politics' and 'social engineering' to cobble together a full range of non-upper caste groups. In the manner of broadening its social base the BJP would have to accommodate Dalit interests by supporting the BSP 'in the interests of the weaker sections of society' along with the natural clientele of upper caste Hindus and non-Yadav OBC support. The BJP felt assured that the political association with BSP would ensure the transfer of Dalit votes in the long run as well as ensure a split between the Dalits and the 'lower orders' of the OBC to weaken the social base of the SP and the BSP. Public posturing by the BJP was evident as Advani declared that 'no party was untouchable' and that the party supported the BSP precisely because it could form the first Dalit government in UP'.³² The BSP was clear that the support of an 'upper caste party' was necessary to 'achieve political power', though publicly Kanshiram stated that other political parties approached him to 'change Mulayam Singh Yadav ...' Under such circumstances [he] got the opportunity to make Mayawati the Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh' as well as to 'get rid of Mulayam Singh Yadav's *goonda raj*

(lawlessness)... Political support of BJP was critical to the survival of the BSP led coalition government. Kanshiram added: '...We are two entirely different parties with different goals and different ideologies... We have only joined hands as co-sufferers of Mulayam Singh Yadav'.

As Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh Mayawati said that '...she would be a leader of the *sarva samaj* (society for all)', a fact that was seen in her multi-ethnic cabinet in which SC, OBC, Yadav, Kurmi, Muslim, Brahmin, Bania, Gujjar were represented.³³ Mayawati's four and a half months tenure highlighted the BSP's perspective on a Dalit agenda to social justice. Fifty-seven IAS and 108 Indian Police Service (IPS) officers were transferred in just 18 days and 60 per cent of them 'replaced by SC officers'. There were complaints that some Dalit officers were becoming extra-constitutional authorities with powers not commensurate to their positions. Mayawati however declared that there must be '...a SC District Magistrate in each district'. By late July more than 400 orders of transfers and re-transfers had been issued. Some officials had been transferred five times within a month. More than 1100 IAS, IPS and Public Service Commission (PCS) officers were transferred in three months. Crime and lawlessness were to be countered by reviving the Gangster and Goonda Act. District administration was to be responsible for checking crime and maintenance of law and public order. As reported by the BSP government, Mayawati put '1,45,000 rowdies, criminals behind bars'.³⁴

The BSP government introduced the Ambedkar Village Programme (AVP) to ensure welfare for Dalits. The Mayawati government's ambitious plan of popularizing the AVP programme was based on lowering the required Dalit population from 50 per cent to 22-30 per cent to cover more villages. 'Development programmes' sponsored under the new scheme was implemented in various 'villages' depending on their requirements. Eleven programmes were specifically monitored and funded, such as, link roads, primary schools, drainage schemes, drinking water, rural electrification, etc. till December 1995. Mayawati stopped all other social welfare programmes so that funds could be diverted to the

selected Ambedkar villages and all officials were instructed to give maximum attention and priority to such villages. A special drive was initiated in which 81,500 Dalits were granted ownership of 52,379 acres of land, 158,000 Dalits were given actual possession of land. In addition 20,000 Dalits were given about 15,000 acres of *gaon sabha* (village council) land and all cases of illegal occupation of such lands against them were withdrawn. *Bhumidari* (land ownership) rights were given to tenants who owned land for a continuous period of ten years. The Civil Rights Protection Act ensured that officials were directed to lodge FIR made by Scheduled Castes based on complaints of exploitation. Officials not lodging complaints made by Dalits would face enquiry by the BSP government. All cases affecting the interests of the SC/ST had to be solved within sixty days from the date the complaint was registered. A Dalit from Hapur in western UP said: "...after *behen* (sister) Mayawati came things have changed. The police will now register a case and even if nothing happens thereafter.... (the) policeman knows that if word reaches Mayawati that he has ill-treated Dalits or refused to register their complaints, there will be hell to pay".³⁵

Programmes for Muslims and OBCs were also initiated. In Muslim-majority constituencies primary schools and senior basic schools were set up to assist so that religious minority teachers could "overcome backwardness" and achieve '*bhagidari*' (equal partnership) in society. The BSP earmarked 27 per cent of the budget for the benefit of the OBC and reserved 25 per cent of government posts for these communities. A 'Backward Caste Development Department' was initiated and many lowly placed castes were included in this category to avail of welfare programmes. A Bhagirdari Bhawan was instituted to train talented students belonging to the backward castes to appear in numerous competitive examinations in the state. Government land was freely given away to the Most Backward Classes such as Nishads, Kewats and Mallahs and only if there were no claimants would it be passed on to the Dalits and Adivasis.³⁶

To inculcate awareness among Dalits in UP, memorials, institutes, roads, universities and districts were renamed after revered Dalit icons and social reformers. Sixteen new districts were carved out

and named after Dalit 'saints' and gurus. The Agra University was re-named Dr. Bhimrao Ambedkar University and the Agra Stadium after Ekalavya 'sufferer and victim of oppression by manuvadis'. Kanpur University became Shahuji Maharaj University. A *Parivartan Chowk* (courtyard of change) was set up in 'the heart of Lucknow' and a *Parivartan Sthal* (site of change) in the 'chowk' in honour of Dr Ambedkar. Awards were instituted in the name of Valmiki, Sant Ravidas and Dr. Ambedkar.³⁷

In her tenure as Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh, Mayawati had started taking 'independent decisions and creating her own faction within the BSP'. In a bid to reign in his protégé Kanshiram urged Mayawati to attend a Periyar *mela* (fair) shortly after he had organized a 'three-day' Sahu Maharaj festival, a respected leader among the Kurmis, to 'endear his party' to the community. In the 'political festival' the statues of Ambedkar and Periyar were installed in the Parivartan Chowk in Lucknow. Kanshiram's political message to Mayawati was clearly to 'secure the Bahujan constituency, not as Chief Minister but as 'General Secretary' of the party to emphasise that 'anti-Manuvadi (anti-Brahminical hegemony) fires did not move into the background'. It was a political strategy to distance Mayawati from the BJP but apparently brought the downfall of the government. Acharya Giriraj Kishore, Joint Secretary of the Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP) opposed the '*atmasamman*' (self-respect) Periyar mela on the ground that the BJP could not permit the installation of Periyar's statue near the historic Begum Hazrat Mahal Park in the state capital since Periyar had 'abused Lord Rama and charged [him of] perpetuating injustice on his consort Sita'. Kalraj Mishra, President of the BJP state unit supported the VHP stand on the 'Periyar issue'. The VHP's stand forced the BSP to shift the location of the statue to the Uttar Pradesh Bhawan in New Delhi. But the Mayawati government responded by going back on the 'oral sanction' it had given to the VHP-sponsored *mahayagna* (a great ritual of offering) at a spot close to the Sri Krishna-Idgah mosque complex, in Mathura. The VHP was forced to shift the venue of the ceremony to a spot over 3 kms away. It proved to be the catalyst that signalled the end to the pragmatic political alliance between the BSP and the BJP.³⁸

By the mid-1990s political parties in UP underlined a tactical strategy towards 'technocratic rationality' to increase votes by means of 'vote arithmetic'. Despite the BJP's image as political pariah due to its inability to extend its '13 day tenure' at the centre post 1996 Lok Sabha elections, the BJP did remarkably well in UP Lok Sabha elections winning 52 seats. The SP improved its tally to 16 seats and the BSP 6 seats. In the 1996 assembly elections in UP except the Congress, the BJP (21.51%), SP (31.19%) and the BSP (37.30% even more than 29.84% given to the Dalits) increased representation of the OBC candidates. Political parties were clearly keen to pursue a more 'inclusionary politics' to strategize the expansion of a social base outside ethnic blocks that traditionally belonged to it - from 'core votes' to 'plus votes'- in a bid to form a majority government in the state. But the Vidhan Sabha elections led to a 'hung' assembly. The election results were almost exactly similar to the 1993 assembly elections. The BJP won 174 seats, the SP 109, BSP 67. It was as if no elections were held.³⁹

On the political situation prevailing in UP Kanshiram stated that the Congress with which it had a pre-poll alliance based on a Dalit-backward front, had been reduced to a 'C-team' in the state. The major political challenge came from the BJP and the SP. The SP needed to be eliminated politically since it could 'cut into BSP support'.⁴⁰ Coalition negotiations began between political parties even as the state entered another phase of Governor's rule. A 'BSP Congress United Front' alliance failed primarily because SP, a major political partner of the United Front would not agree to BSP's precondition on making Mayawati the Chief Minister of UP. Ultimately the BJP national leadership tided over a reluctant state leadership of the party led by Kalyan Singh to forge a six month rotational Chief Ministership of the state. The first six months would be headed by Mayawati 'from March 21, 1997 and consequently, at the completion of her tenure, pass the mantle of chief minister's post to Kalyan Singh on September 22, 1997'.⁴¹ Thus, the BJP, the 'political untouchable' and the BSP, the 'social untouchable', came together. As Vajpayee concluded "[big] issues kept us apart but bigger issues brought us together". The 'bigger issue' was the SP which even under Governor Romesh Bhandari was able to effect mass transfers of bureaucrats

to the district level and rule the state by proxy for six months prior to the coalition agreement reached by the BJP and the BSP.⁴²

The Axiom of BSP's Politics: BSP-BJP in an Inverse Relationship of Coalition and Dependency

Mayawati's cabinet consisted of 40 ministers and all major caste groups were represented. The BJP national leadership prevailed over Kalyan Singh restraining him from 'criticizing the government and the chief minister in public', and stated that the 'mistakes committed under Mayawati's [political tenure] could be corrected' once the BJP assumed power in the state. Mayawati, aware of the 'dependency' of the BJP on the BSP re-started her prime objective of enforcing 'Dalit' development programmes. The financial health of the state did not worry Mayawati. In her own words "she [would] do in three months what others have not been able to do in three years". Five new districts were carved out of existing districts, viz, Buddha Nagar (Ghaziabad), Kaushambi (Allahabad), Jyotiba Phule Nagar (Moradabad), Mahamayanagar (Aligarh) and Shahuji Nagar (Banda). The new districts had large sections of BSP's core Dalit supporters. The creation of each new district entailed an expenditure of Rs. 150 crore that was diverted out of other development projects in the state.⁴³

An ambitious 'Ambedkarisation project' was started in the state to be built at an escalated cost of Rs. 80 crore over 28 acres of prime land. It would include domes, statues within the 'park' that would signify Ambedkar as the 'tallest statesman of India' and eight huge elephant statues symbolizing the strength of the bahunjan samaj. Questioned on the relationship between 'Ambedkar parks' and how they could benefit Dalits, Mayawati said that the government was 'not inventing history' but "...only highlighting history that has been consciously suppressed." The BSP government planned to set up 'schools for 1000 children of sweepers' to be opened on the outskirts of Lucknow and a B.R. Ambedkar IAS and Provincial Civil Service coaching centre to be set up in Aligarh, Agra and Varanasi. The Shahuji Centre that would coach SC and ST students, 'housing 500 boarders' had been completed. The BSP continued to settle disputes

over land rights and take up issues related to social abuse and violence against the Dalits through a SC officer or the *pradhan* (village headman) in a village. The AVP programme was taken up seriously as the party claimed that development work had indeed reached the 'Ambedkar hamlets'. A statement released by the government suggested that '...electricity [had begun to reach] 11,524 Ambedkar villages ...and that 1500 link roads were being constructed in such villages'. The villages' scheme cost the states rural development budget an escalated cost of Rs. 700 crores to benefit 22 per cent of the population. A senior bureaucrat said that the project [was] "...an answer to the Green Revolution that empowered the middle castes in UP". The Mayawati government continued to 'name and rename' colleges, universities, hospitals, guest houses, roads after 'Dalit heroes'.⁴⁴ 'Transfer and posting, the political agenda of the party to create a 'more responsive administration' continued. By April 22, 1997, 442 orders of transfers and postings were issued, an average of '15 order per day'. The BSP also initiated 'punishment transfers' of Inspector General of Police, Deputy Inspector General of Police, a District Magistrate and three Superintendent of Police. Mayawati's 'transfer raj' accounted for the transfer of 1,500 officials that included 470 IAS and 380 IPS officers. Mayawati lifted the ban on recruitments to fill the SC/ST quota 'for lower rung government employees'. 'Peons, *lekhpals* (clerical post) and other Class III and IV employees [began to be] employed in hundreds'.⁴⁵

The Mayawati government prepared a data of 1385 police officers from constables to Superintendent of Police alleged to have 'connections' with undesirable elements or criminals'. During President's rule in the state it is alleged that Mulayam Singh Yadav was not only the de-facto ruler in UP for six months but ensured the 'Yadavisation' of the police force in each district of the state. The BSP held the SP responsible for 'criminalization of the police forces' to explain the decline in law and order situation in the state. The SP alleged that 'crime fighting ...turned into a witch hunt against (party) workers'. The controversial SC Act enabled 'authorities to book anyone who oppresses or uses derogatory language against a person belonging to a scheduled caste or scheduled tribe'. In defence of the SC Act the BSP government indicated that atrocities against Dalits

which stood at 2767 in 1995 came down to 1611 in 1997. The state unit of the BJP demanded a 'thorough review of the implementation of the Act so that it [was] not used to harass members of the upper caste'.⁴⁶

After becoming the Chief Minister Kalyan Singh issued a Government Order (G.O.) aimed at preventing the misapplication of the SC Act. It was a decision that brought the government into direct conflict not only with Mayawati whose government had enacted the legislation but also national party leaders who had given an undertaking to the BSP that no decision of the outgoing government would be reversed. What prompted the Kalyan Singh government to show urgency in issuing the G.O. was, in essence, to limit Mulayam Singh Yadav's anti-Dalit campaign that 'had won him many sympathizers among the upper castes, as well as to send the right signals to the upper castes that under BJP administration they [would] not be hounded'. With the quashing of the SC Act riots against Dalits flared up in October 1997 beginning with the desecration of Ambedkar statues. Rohana, Ghaziabad, Muzaffarnagar and Faizabad districts were affected by political violence and declared 'disturbed areas'. On October 19, 1997, the '67 member' BSP withdrew support from the Kalyan Singh government. By the afternoon of 20 October 1997 Kalyan Singh had successfully engineered a split in the BSP despite public assurance to the contrary given by Vajpayee. Seventeen legislators had shifted loyalty towards the BJP. Thereafter, Kalyan Singh 'cobbled together' a 'majority' by splitting the Congress and the Janata Dal. The defectors swelled the BJP-led government to a loosely-knit 222 member coalition that consisted of the 22 member Loktantrik Congress, the 3 member JD (Raja Ram Pandey faction) and 12 members who split from the BSP apart from Samata Party members and independents.⁴⁷

However, the BJP coalition government characterized by 'large sized ministries with little interest in formulating policies for economic development'⁴⁸ was gripped by factionalism that divided the once unqualified support of the 'Brahmin-Bania-Thakur' entente. Political competition within the BJP among rival factional leaders was characterized by the efforts of the Kalyan Singh led faction to

reach and maintain a predominant position vis-à-vis rival caste groups, such as, Rajnath Singh of the Thakur community, an upper caste, and Lalji Tandon and Kalraj Mishra, the Brahmin lobby 'mascots' of the party.⁴⁹

The impressive electoral performance of the BJP in the 1998 Lok Sabha elections in UP winning 57 seats, recording impressive gains in vote share, with the popular vote going up to 36.5 per cent (a gain of 4.0 per cent since the 1996 Lok Sabha elections) in the state, and a winning margin of almost 10 per cent was expected to be the Party's best moment since it had a government at the centre and a government in UP. Instead maladministration and economic crisis in UP, the party produced three chief ministers in three years - Kalyan Singh (1999), Ram Prakash Gupta (2000) and Rajnath Singh (2001).⁵⁰ A 'soft Hindutva', a new political alignment of politics between the upper castes and Dalits became the basis for intra-party opposition to Kalyan Singh that culminated in his exit from the party. Kalyan Singh sabotaged the party's electoral appeal, by engaging in a backward caste 'motivational campaign' that resulted in huge loss of voters and seats in 1999 Lok Sabha elections in UP. The BJP's Lok Sabha tally came down from 57 seats to 29 seats. Kalyan Singh not only shifted the influential Lodh Rajput caste but his ouster from the BJP led to a chain reaction as increasingly assertive MBCs such as Bhinds, Kashyaps, Nishads, Majhis, Khagis, Kewars, Nais and Kumhars left the BJP depleting the substantial lower backward OBC base of the party. By 1999-2000 the Rajput community in western UP that had been supporting the BJP for nearly a decade, shifting loyalty from the JD to further their interest in rural UP, began to distance from the BJP. In eastern UP the influential Thakur community representing 8 per cent of the state's population began to be successfully mobilized by the SP. With the imminent fragmentation of the BJP in UP upper caste such as Brahmins, Tyagis and Thakurs started perceiving the growth of the BSP and the Dalit-Muslim-Bahujan combination as a major political challenge to their dominance in state politics.⁵²

In 1998 Lok Sabha elections, the BSP had adopted a policy of withholding prior electoral arrangement with any party, emphasizing

the objective of the party to selectively nurture political constituencies with the intention to realize specific electoral goals. For the first time in the history of the BSP the Dalit share of candidates fell to 25 per cent as the Party targeted the other backward classes who were given 41 per cent of the BSP tickets (though 66 per cent went to the MBC), an increase of 10 per cent from the 1996 assembly elections. In the 1998 Lok Sabha elections in UP the BSP underlined a political strategy to clear any possible misconception that may arise between different subcastes among SC candidates of the party. Mayawati categorically stated that

"...the BSP has given 21 seats to the SC... [to contest the Lok Sabha elections in UP]. Among these 21 seats we have given 5 to the Pasi community, 1 to the Dhobi community, 1 to the Koeri community, 1 to the Khatik community and 13 seats to the Chamar community. Further, 'I want to tell my Muslim brothers also that this time [1998] the BSP has given the single largest number of seats in UP to Muslim candidates. We allotted these seats where the Muslim samaj had at least 2 lakh votes... If in all these constituencies the 2 lakh Muslim votes come to us then I can assure you that all of the 14 candidates from the Muslim community will become MPs...I want to tell my backward caste brothers that your population in UP is also very large...keeping this in mind...we have given [OBCs] 35 seats... In addition, we have given opportunities to other communities [such as] the Sainis, the Mauryas..., Shakya, Kashyap and the Kushwaha [communities] in other parts of UP".⁵³

The 1998 Lok Sabha elections in UP was a disappointment for the BSP. The BSP in spite of registering 20.90 per cent of the vote share in UP could manage to win 4 seats, viz, Akbarpur, where Mayawati emerged as the winner with 34 per cent vote share, Misrikh, Bahraich and Azamgarh that went to Muslim BSP candidates. Kanshiram was defeated at Saharanpur, a Dalit majority area, by a wide margin of 59,000 votes. The BSP was pushed back to its original social base in the eastern districts of UP, gaining no seat in any other region.⁵⁴

In June 1999 BSP leader Kanshiram argued the need for a 'revival' of the BSP-SP alliance combining Dalits, Yadavs, Muslims and a section of Thakurs and OBCs. It was felt that such a community-based alliance would poll 45 per cent of the total votes and win more than 70 per cent of the 85 parliamentary seats in the state. Importantly, such an alliance would 'create instability and elections' which suited the BSP. Mulayam Singh Yadav alluded to the idea on the ground that at the national level political parties needed to break the 'bipolar politics' of the Congress and the BJP. However, Mayawati's perspective was quite different. The BSP leader perceived the ensuing fermentation in UP politics as an opportunity for the Dalit-based party to give tickets to 'backwards', Muslims and upper caste candidates that would enable the BSP to broaden its social base and increase the number of seats. Mayawati was prepared to take a calculated chance to bring necessary changes in the political ethos of the BSP to build a multi-ethnic constituency. It had been experimented with in the 1996 Lok Sabha and assembly elections in UP, and extended to the 1998 Lok Sabha elections in the state to broadly comprehend the changed perception of the Party towards UP politics. Mayawati suggested that the BSP had not properly exploited the changed social and political dynamics of electoral politics in UP. Thus the 1998 Lok Sabha 'electoral fiasco' of the BSP could be quickly redressed if the correct strategy of electoral mobilization was adopted. In the late 1990s SP's support among Muslims had registered a sharp decline, from 79 per cent in 1996 to 37 per cent in 1999. The OBC non-Yadav votes had also decreased substantially, from 38 per cent in 1996 to 18 per cent in 1999. The upper castes affected by divisive politics in the BJP state unit could no longer be deemed secure. In order to improve the position of the party in the state, Mayawati embraced the 'offensive battle' strategy underlined by a 'secure' Chamar caste base. It fuelled a realization that the BSP must 'raid' the vote-banks of other political parties to get a significant number of seats.⁵⁵ In the 1999 Lok Sabha elections in UP the BSP allotted 20 seats to the Dalits, 38 to the backward castes and 10 to the upper castes - 5 each to Brahmin and Thakur candidates. The strategy to increase the tally of votes, and hence, seats, was based on 'the selective distribution of tickets to candidates according to their strength in the population in a constituency'. The

BSP wished to evolve a 'constituency-specific' winning caste combination. First, 'seats were allotted to Dalit candidates who won, successful in Bundelkhand, eastern and central UP. "Muslim candidates were selected in 17 constituencies, such as Amroha, Bareilly, Pilibhit, Unnao, Agra, Saharanpur and Nainital where it was felt that the Muslims were moving away from SP". On this principle 'the BSP fielded a Gujjar in Baghpat, a Kashyap in Kairana, a Saini in Muzzafarnagar, a Burman in Hardwar and Muslim candidates in Saharanpur, Meerut and Hapur'. Mayawati made serious efforts to gain support of the Muslims by promising them reservations if they helped the BSP gain enough votes so as to be part of the new government which she pointed out would enable them to have their own representatives in power. The BSP believed that Muslims, at a disadvantage due to the 'Yadavisation' campaign in SP, would be successfully wooed from the SP.⁵⁶ However, alienation of the Muslims from the SP did not mean a consolidation of political support for the BSP. Apparently, the 'BSP [was] down in the rating because the Muslim voters found Mayawati to be untrustworthy'. 'She joined hands with the BJP twice even to form a government on a six monthly basis', recalled Aizaz Ahmad, a voter from the Ayodhya assembly constituency. Further, "when [Muslims] voted for her in the last two elections it was to oppose the BJP, but she insulted our sentiments... We will never support her again. Mulayam Singh Yadav can decisively stop the Vishwa Hindu Parishad (right wing Hindu religious association) and [he] is the only person who has proved on that count". In all respect, Muslims felt that Mulayam Singh Yadav was best equipped to deal with the 'anxieties of the (community)' and limit the rise of the BSP.

The upper and backward caste candidates of BSP were carefully selected and were expected to campaign using the party ideology. The party nominated Brahmin candidates in districts, such as Sitapur, where they had expressed their displeasure with the BJP prior to the elections in no uncertain terms. In Bithauli village in the district, the Brahmins, who had shifted from the Congress to the BJP, in 1991, organized a *Virat Brahmin Mahasammelan* (big Brahmin conference) prior to the elections where Brahmin ministers, MLAs and MPs in the state, met to discuss their future political strategy towards state

political parties. In east UP the BSP managed to gain the support of the Kurmis among the OBCs and sections of the MBCs. The party also developed leadership across the state among 'neglected castes' such as 'Pal, Shakya, Baghel, Maurya, Pushkar and Saini' among the backwards and 'Sankhwar, Pasi, Dhobi, Balmiki and Khatiks' among Dalits. The BSP also held 'awareness rallies' as a result of which Dalits voted for the first time in constituencies like Ballia, Gonda, Pratapgarh even if the BSP did not win there. The Party concentrated its political campaign on the selected 16 seats, out of which it won seven, in Shahabad, Sitapur, Ghosi, Lalganj, Banda, Jalaun and Saharanpur. The 'constituency-wise approach' was also based on the assumption that rather than national issues, ground realities in each constituency would be more important. The BSP performed well in the elections. It increased its percentage of vote share from 20.90 per cent to 22.08 per cent and won 14 seats as against 4 in the 1998 Lok Sabha elections in UP. Two upper castes, two Muslims, two backward and eight Dalit candidates won on the BSP ticket. Importantly, the upper caste BSP candidates won in constituencies in central UP which had a high proportion of upper castes.⁵⁷ In the reserved constituencies of Ghatampur, Jalaun, Chail, Lalganj and Akbarpur the BSP was able to maintain a vote share between 28-35 per cent in a very competitive electoral contest, largely due to the ability of the BSP leadership to call upon its traditional stronghold, the influential Chamar caste, to vote in large numbers. At Amroha, Shahabad and Saharanpur the electoral alignment of the bahunjan samaj's 'oppressed Dalit-Muslims' was evident in the victory of BSP's Muslim candidates. At Sitapur, Salempur, Banda, Ghosi, Hamirpur and Sultanpur 'upper caste-backward caste' candidates were chosen not only to represent their respective communities but was also seen as an opportunity for Dalit, primarily, "Jatav" votes, to be transferred to non-"Jatav", non-SC, non-Muslim BSP candidates. The success of this 'social engineering' strategy was evident in the number of second positions the BSP achieved in this election. At Bilhaur, Bahraich, Basti and Fatehpur the BSP lost narrowly. To cite one instance, at Bilhaur it was 30.37 per cent to 29.86 per cent vote share in favour of the eventual winning of BJP candidate. A similar pattern to BSP's 'impressive gains in the 1999 Lok Sabha elections' was evidenced in the Party's losses that

were spread across the state', in constituencies, such as, Pilibhit, Unnao, Faizabad, Khalilabad, Azamgarh, Saidpur (SC), Aligarh, Hathras (SC), Etawah, Misrikh, Hardwar (SC).⁵⁸ The 1999 Lok Sabha elections in UP marked the beginning of a political transformation in intra-elite linkages, represented by groups and communities seeking access to patronage, privileges and representation within the BSP. Clearly, an effort was being made by the BSP leader Mayawati to address and negotiate two intersecting political themes, viz, Bahujan Samaj and *Sarvajan Samaj* (a society for all), which denoted the emergence of a rainbow coalition of castes within the party to win political power. While 'programmatic benefits' would continue for the bahujan constituency, 'patronage benefits', which was vested with the "Jatav" BSP legislators began to decrease. The BSP had continued, especially since 1996, to nominate increasing number of MBCs non-'Jatav' SCs and Muslims in place of Dalit nominations, eventually accommodating upper caste and advanced OBCs. The BSP realized that "not only non-'Jatav' sections of the Bahujan Samaj but certainly large sections of the upper castes and economically advanced OBCs would vote for the BSP on those occasions when the party nominates candidates from their own communities. Hence, the Chamar legislators, now, were to be 'accessed' by communities belonging to the *savarna samaj* (upper caste groups)".⁵⁹

In the 2002 UP assembly elections the BSP gave 86 tickets to Muslims. This was based on the assessment that in the late 1990s SP support among the Muslim community had shrunk. As many as one-third of the Muslim candidates, mostly from the backward caste such as the Ansaris and Querishis contested from Doaband-Rohilkhand region in western UP. They formed a significant part of Mayawati's attempt to forge a Dalit-Muslim electoral equation.⁶⁰ Rashid Alvi, a BSP MP said: The SP "...[used] issues like Ayodhya demolition to fool illiterate Muslims ... he [knew] the Muslim pulse. What about the real [development] issues".⁶¹ The BSP equated the Muslims with the 'category of the MBCs' that would dilute the distinction of ascriptive loyalties based on religion and caste and expand BSP's multi-ethnic constituency. The BSP was keen to exploit the MBC population predominant in parts of Awadh, and central UP,

a stronghold of the SP, and southern UP. The SP like the BSP had not adequately represented the MBC within the party. Realistically, in the context of the 2002 assembly elections a large section of the 'lower backwards' appeared as free floating political capital, a 'large bloc of voters' seeking to ally with a political party(s) capable of mobilizing and articulating their interests.

There was another political contest to secure the Brahmin, Kayasth, Bania and Thakur votes of the BJP. SP's designated move towards a 'social coalition', than an 'electoral coalition' was politically rewarding for the party. It intersected BSP's strategy of forming no alliance and allotting tickets to candidates belonging to the upper castes. The BSP fielded 37 Brahmins and 36 Thakurs to contest the 2002 assembly polls. The Party initiated a policy of the 'melting down' of caste polarization by creating '*bhaichara banao*' (create fraternization) committees to bring upper caste voters into the party's fold. It was symptomatic of the Party's changing perceptions on bahun politics - "*tilak, tarazu aur talwar, saab ho haathi par sawar* (let the upper castes ride the elephant)". Another slogan that was coined for the 2002 assembly elections in the state was "*haathi nahi, Ganesh hai, Brahma, Vishnu, Mahesh hai*" (the BSP mascot elephant is Ganesh, the Hindu god, as well as Brahma, Vishnu and Mahesh, the three supreme Hindu gods).⁶² The SP despite the presence of Amar Singh, the 'Thakur face' of the Party was not able to successfully forge the support of the community in the 2002 assembly elections. Upper caste support in SP was 8%, an increase of 5%. But the SP registered the biggest increase in the support by Muslims from 37% in the 1999 Lok Sabha elections to 51% in the 2002 assembly elections. With traditional support for the Party among the Yadav community at 71% and Muslim support intact and the non-Yadav OBC base at 17% the SP won 143 seats but was well short of a simple majority needed to form government in UP.⁶³

In the February 2002 assembly elections in UP the BSP secured 98 seats (32 upper castes, 16 Muslims, 27 Dalits, 23 OBC), a net gain of 32 seats since the 1996 assembly elections. The BSP gained 67 per cent of its vote share from Dalits, 10 per cent of Muslim votes, 7 per cent of the OBC, primarily, the MBCs but only 6 per cent of

the Brahmin votes. It was evident that despite infighting in the BJP the party managed to retain 49 per cent of Brahmin/upper caste support, down from 74 per cent, which it had in the 1999 parliamentary elections.⁶⁴ BJP lost the OBC vote to Kalyan Singh whose Lodh-based Rashtriya Kranti Party won 4 out of 333 seats but damaged the electoral prospects of BJP candidates to a significant extent and dented the OBC support base of the party. In the assembly elections the BJP won 88 seats with a vote share of 20.12% that was lesser than SP (25.43%) and BSP (23.20%).⁶⁵

The inability of the SP to garner support from the Congress (25 seats and 8% vote share) and Mulayam Singh Yadav's lack of success in splitting off the Muslim BSP MLAs meant that the progressive development of a political coalition of the BSP and the BJP prevailed to form a government for the third time in UP in May 2002. The permanence of the political coalition was underlined by the fact that 13 BSP MLAs enabled the BJP headed NDA government at the centre to pass the vote of confidence in the Lok Sabha on the 'Godhra riots' as one of the alliance partner Telugu Desam Party had distanced itself away from the NDAs stated position on the complicity of the BJP state government in Godhra riots of 2001. With the 2004 Lok Sabha elections in sight the BJP and the larger Sangh parivar was keen to transcend its Brahmin-Thakur-Bania base. But more crucial was the electoral 'plan' devised by BJP's national leadership. It was felt within BJP that Mayawati would help the BJP 'win a chunk of Lok Sabha seats from UP in exchange for the chief ministership'.⁶⁶

BSP-BJP: Limited Political Options is Space for Social Justice Politics

Mayawati's tenure as Chief Minister from May 2002 to August 2003 was characterized by a 'set of achievement targets' to fulfil the social justice programmes of the party. Within a week of assuming the post of CM of Uttar Pradesh Mayawati brought the 'transfer raj' back by transferring 47 IAS and Indian Revenue Services (IRA) and 17 IPS officers that included a select of senior DIGs, SPs and Sub-Superintendent of Police (SSP). Despite a Supreme Court decision ordering the UP government to follow a transparent administrative

procedure in cases of transfer of public officials, by the end of her tenure 95 per cent of IAS officers in the state had been transferred. The BSP government came out with statistics to defend the performance of the government. A government report suggested that 'crime had been reduced by 69 per cent'; and crime against Dalits and oppressed reduced by 62 per cent'. To ensure that 'justice and equality' are enjoyed by Dalits, backward castes and religious minorities the government extended 'the principle of reservations in the selection of police-officer-in-charge of a police station'. The break up according to the policy of reservation followed by the government — SC/ST 20 per cent, backward castes 25 per cent, religious minorities 5 per cent. The government 'ensured a communal riot-free year' at the end of BSP's first year in office. The Mayawati government clearly spelt out that the 'temple issue' was on BJP's agenda and 'warned that the government could deal firmly with those trying to disrupt communal harmony in Ayodhya'.⁶⁷ At the economic level the BSP government speeded up the completion of development programmes in 'notified' Ambedkar villages. Villages, numbering 12,000 enjoyed the benefits of AVP. Each year, in each segment, 25 'new' Ambedkar villages would be identified for development. In 2002-03 3047 Ambedkar villages were enrolled in eleven development programmes. Electrification of 1829 Ambedkar villages was completed in early 2003. Landless farmers numbering 89,000 were given ownership rights. Occupancy rights were also given to SC/ST over 1.87 lac populated areas under the *gram samaj* (village community) due to a 'special initiative' taken by the Mayawati government.⁶⁸ Populist socio-educational programmes such as the *Balika Shiksha* (education for girls), *Swarnima Plan* (golden girl plan) and the *Sarvashiksha Abhiyaan* (mega-campaign for education for all) were launched by the BSP. The BSP government ensured 20 per cent reservation for women in engineering and medical schools and 'special entry for SC/ST and members of the backward castes in engineering colleges. The government outlined measures to open 7023 primary schools and 2,217 middle schools 'in backward areas of the state'. Medical institutions named after Chatrapati Shahuji Maharaj in Lucknow, National Law University in Allahabad and Gautam Budh Vidyalaya were opened in Greater Noida in Uttar Pradesh. The BSP government also initiated the *Annapurna* (lit. full

supply of food and grains) and *Antodaya* (bottom stratum) Plans for people living below the poverty line.⁶⁹

BSP: Defence of Agenda of Social Justice

The BSP-BJP government was marked by heightened personal animosity between Mayawati and Mulayam Singh Yadav. It was clearly an immense source of political benefit for the BSP leader, as the struggle was seen as one between a conscientized victim, resisting the 'social' oppressor section of society, which Mulayam Singh Yadav and his party, the SP represented. The SP observed the day 'she was administered the oath' as CM, as *dhikkar diwas* (condemnation day). Mayawati categorically stated, that, "...if Mulayam was really secular he would have extended support to the BSP-led government;" and further that "he only pretends to be a messiah of the Muslims while doing nothing for their development". The BSP government's stated position on the SP and the Muslims came even as the leader of the Shia Muslim Front Maulana Kalbe Jawaad asked "...Muslims [to] put pressure on their [Muslim] MLAs in BSP [to] split from the party since in its quest for power the [party] had joined hands with the BJP". Perceptions differed as Dr. M.A.Halim, speaking at a function organized by the Muslim Samaj Sammelan demanded 10 per cent reservation, up from 8.44 per cent out of 27 per cent reservation for the OBC. Halim suggested that 'if the [government] is interested in the progress and welfare of the Muslim community and undertakes a concrete step towards that objective then Muslims would never leave BSP'. After assuming power in UP Mayawati announced a package for 'Muslim-dominated villages' that would form ...[the] basis for the selection and implementation of *Ambedkar Gram Yojna* (Ambedkar village plan) for the benefit of minorities and backwards. The BSP also finalized a policy to open 577 new primary and 144 senior basic schools in districts where Muslims had a sizeable population. Professionalization of education in the form of 'new mini Indian Technical Institute (ITI)' in *madrasas* (collegiate mosque) in rural sector was also undertaken.⁷⁰ Personal vendetta continued throughout Mayawati's tenure as Chief Minister in the state. Mulayam Singh Yadav's remarks describing Mayawati's pet Ambedkar Park project as *aiyyashi ka adda* (a den of vices) led BSP to launch a political attack on the SP with a September 28, 2002

'*dhikkar rally* (rally that symbolizes shame)'. The rally also displayed the mobilization capacity of the BSP as an 'array of BSP supporters descended on to Lucknow to see and listen to *behenji* (respect for sister) and *saheb* (gentleman)'. At the rally Kanshiram addressing BSP supporters said that 'make (Mulayam) run so much that he runs away from the state for ever'. Mayawati remarked that if Muslims and backwards desert him, the SP leader will be back to his traditional calling of grazing buffaloes'. The SP reacted by organizing the *thoo-thoo* rallies where SP workers would 'spit abuses' at the BSP in political rallies held at various places in UP. The rallies were organized by the SP to remind people that BSP leaders were opportunists, and would 'stoop to any level for the sake of power; that the Party was based on rank opportunism demonstrated in its alliance with the BJP'.⁷¹ The SP launched a campaign against Mayawati arguing that in her 2002 'birthday bash' the 'CM had collected Rs. 5 crores'. Mayawati accused back saying that 'Mulayam Singh Yadav's possessed illegal assets worth Rs 10 crores'. This attack on the Mayawati government came at a time when the SP was intensively working towards a strategy to 'divide Muslim MLAs' and independents supporting BSP. The SP leader was also mobilizing support across party lines to urge MLAs belonging to various political parties including workers and students organizations to mark January 9, 2003 as a protest day on the 'state of the Mayawati government'.⁷² The SP student activists continued with their anti-Mayawati campaign targeting the BSP leader with 'having accumulated Rs. 300 crore during her January 15, 2003 birthday celebration'. Political criticism of ostentatious birthday celebrations of Mayawati, the Dalit icon, over successive years, has failed to check the intensity of Dalit participation in what is deemed as a symbolic political 'event'. Not only is the birthday celebration a confirmation of Dalit pride but the very act of involvement in this 'celebration' by Dalits-Bahujans legitimizes 'free and equal' participation. Mayawati said her birthday was to be celebrated as *swabhimaan diwas* (a day of self-respect, honour, dignity).

The personal battle between the SP and the BSP continued with the SP publicizing the infamous 'tape scam' that alleged to have contained a recorded voice of Mayawati 'urging money for favours'. The SP also charged Mayawati on the grounds that her chief

ministership was an 'agency to make money that involved pacts with political parties, engineer splits in political parties, distributing elections tickets and decision regarding development programmes'. Mayawati retaliated with a *pardafaash* rally (rally to expose) on Ambedkar's birthday, on April 14, 2003. In her speech she launched an attack on the anti-BSP political forces in the state, arguing that 'SP was entrapped in a *chakravyuh* (maze)'. The BJP, BSP's coalition partner was warned not to weaken the government, otherwise the BJP would be reduced to the 'status of SP'. Mayawati lodged '135 cases' against Mulayam Singh Yadav 'spread over 40 districts', primarily on grounds of misappropriation of funds. It was a charge that was specifically levelled for the misuse of discretionary funds from the state treasury, bringing into question the role of the Governor Motilal Vora. A case was lodged against Mulayam Singh Yadav and his associates for 'falsely implicating Mayawati' in the '*farji*' (fake) 'CD case'. The '*pardafaash* rally' also included a tirade against Hindu dharma, a public denigration of Hindu gods and goddesses and a recipe to embrace Buddhism if injustice is continually perpetuated on Dalit and low caste groups. Reacting to the political rally of Mayawati the BJP state unit consisting of Rajnath Singh, Vinay Katiyar and Kalraj Mishra felt that the Party [had] become *savarna prakosth* (upper caste cell) of the BSP in UP. However BJP General Secretary Venkaiah Naidu of the BJP said the "alliance was essential if the BJP [wanted] to continue [to be in power] in New Delhi".⁷³

In August 2003 it came to light that Mayawati had sanctioned Rs. 175 crore to build a Taj Corridor highway that was subsequently cleared by the Ministry of Forest and Environment, Government of India. Mayawati alleged that the BJP had initiated a Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) enquiry into the Taj corridor project to weaken the BSP government.⁷⁴ With Mayawati's impending arrest what demoralized the BSP cadres was the success of the SP in 'managing to break away 37 BSP MLAs'. Muslims and non-Dalit upper caste MLAs had always constituted a 'risk zone', demonstrated by the events of September 2003 when they defected en bloc to the SP. Out of the 37 BSP MLAs 15 were Thakurs, 9 Muslims, 4 Brahmins and 3 each Yadavs, SC's and others. The strength of the SP coalition

increased to 181, Congress 16, RLD 14, RKD 4 MLAs besides 26 others, a total of 241 as against 160 of the BSP, BJP and the Hindu Mahasabha. On September 9, 2003 the SP proved its majority in the assembly. Out of 398 votes 244 were in favour of the 'confidence motion'.⁷⁵

The Unity Experiment of Dichotomous Politics: Building the Bahujan-Savarna Electoral Model

In the 2004 Parliamentary elections BSP candidates were well placed in many seats in Bundelkhand (south UP) and western UP. In these two regions the BSP had selected a sizeable number of Muslims candidates (17), Jats and Shakyas (OBC) and also upper castes (8 Thakurs, 5 Brahmins) and 2 women candidates whose candidature would be supported by 30 to 40 per cent Dalit votes. For the first time Mayawati enlisted the support of 'defectors' like Akbar Ahmad Dumpy, Rizwan Zaheer, Illyas Azmi, Talat Aziz, Mitrasen Yadav, Afroz Ali, Chaudhary Dalvi Singh, Chaudhary Lakshmi Narayan, Ravi Gautam.

The 'Muslim factor' compelled the SP to intensify its electoral campaign to ensure that the Muslim vote in UP was not split. Mulayam Singh Yadav was 'highlighted as a leader' who 'tried to save Allah's *ghar* (house) a.k.a the Babri masjid'. It also became evident in the Lok Sabha polls in UP that despite Mayawati's repeated dalliance with the BJP the BSP leader had not lost her Muslim support base of 10 per cent. This was because the 'Muslims still [considered] her a lesser evil than the BJP' but not a 'first choice' party of the community. Poll results indicated that the Muslims had resorted to tactical voting. The most number of winnable candidates to defeat the BJP rested with the SP.⁷⁶

With the re-induction of Kalyan Singh in the BJP Lodh voters returned to the BJP. However, as Manoj Mishra, a psephologist said: "...the BJP was under the impression that it had the copyright on the Brahmin and Thakur votes". Amar Singh of the SP successfully mobilized Thakur votes in the 2004 Lok Sabha elections in UP expanding to 19% of the total vote share across all parliamentary

constituencies. With an enhanced Yadav-Rajput-Muslim-Thakur base the SP increased its tally from 26 to 36 seats in the UP parliamentary elections. The BJP's tally plunged to an all-time low of 10 seats as poll trends suggested that in at least half of the 80 seats in the state the Thakurs and the Brahmins voted for non-BJP parties. The BSP with a select group of 'rebel' candidates and a multi-ethnic constituency base in the distribution of tickets increased its share of seats from 14 seats to 19 seats in the elections. Its vote share also increased to an all-time high of 24.67 per cent (but upper caste support including Brahmins stood at 4 per cent and OBC at 14 per cent. Dalits 72 per cent and Muslims 10 per cent registering no increase since the 2002 assembly elections). Two rebel candidates Ilyas Azmi and Mitrasen Yadav won from the Shahbad and Faizabad in central UP.⁷⁷

In 2004 Lok Sabha elections in UP, the future political impress of 'sarvajan politics' could be seen. In this election the BSP fielded 'four Yadav candidates', viz, Bhalchandra Yadav won from Khalilabad (eastern UP) with 33.5 per cent vote share, Ramakant Yadav won from Azamgarh (eastern UP) with 36.30 per cent, Umakant Yadav won from Machhlishahr (central UP) with 35.10 per cent and Kailash Nath Singh Yadav won from Chandraulih (eastern UP) with 29.05 per cent, a close electoral race over Anand Khatra Maurya of SP. Maurya had 28.81 per cent vote share as Rajputs cast their vote in favour of the winning BSP candidate. In each case the BSP was able to transfer a sizeable number of Dalit and Muslim votes towards these 'non-Bahujan' BSP candidates. Three Muslim candidates also won - Mohammad Tahir from Sultanpur (central UP), Mohammad Muqem from Domariaganj (eastern UP) and Mohammad Shahid from Meerut (western UP). The winning caste-community electoral arithmetic was predictably based on SC and Muslim support though one Muslim candidate Mohammad Muqem did receive moderate political support from Brahmins. The early indications of Mayawati's calibrated exercise to woo the upper caste-Brahmin samaj to the BSP fold were clearly evident in the 2004 Lok Sabha elections in UP. The BSP won a close electoral contest at Sitapur in central UP where Rajesh Verma won with 28.79 vote share over Mukhtar Anees of SP with a vote share of 27.91 per cent. Rajesh Verma won with SC-

Brahmin support. At Unnao, the winning BSP candidate Brajesh Pathak won with a 32.57 per cent vote share. Pathak, an upper caste candidate received a large chunk of political support from the SC and ST communities. At Fatehpur in central UP, the winning BSP candidate Mahendra Kumar Nishad, belonging to the MBC, won with SC and Muslim support.⁷⁸

In the background of the 2004 Parliamentary elections in UP, the BSP outlined a new electoral strategy to extensively mobilize the Brahmin samaj. The BSP also pursued with seriousness the need to increase Muslim support for the party. With the state unit of the BJP in disarray, plagued by a massive erosion of upper caste support for the party, the BSP was well placed to exploit the void left by the BJP. By strategizing an ethnically segmented model of political mobilization, that would form the basis of a sarvajan samaj, the BSP, effectively, reduced the electoral contest to 'a two-way fight' with the SP prior to the 2007 assembly elections in the state.

Ideology of Sarvajan Politics

Much of the electoral success that the BSP received in 2007 assembly elections in UP rested on two related premises; one, Brahmin *sammelan* (conference) and rallies that were held to neutralize savarna caste anxieties against BSP political activities, and two, Brahmin-Dalit *jodo sammelans* (Brahmin-Dalit unity conferences) at the grassroots level that reinforced the transferable nature of Dalit votes to 'Brahmin BSP' candidates. However, the success of sarvajanism needs to be contextualized within a larger socio-political reality that gripped the state in the aftermath of the 2004 parliamentary elections. This decisive strategic shift was attempted by the BSP at a time when the Party came to be perceived as a weak challenger to the SP. The decline in the political status of Brahmins, a 'shorthand' for upper castes, from the position of the dominant ruling caste to a virtual political non-entity in UP, and the anxiousness of the community to regain their dominance in state politics was seen as political disenchantment of Brahmins with the BJP. Rajendra Bajpai, a *sanghi* (a member of the RSS/BJP), and a 'convert' to the BSP prior to the 2007 assembly elections said: "The

BJP is no longer a party that works for the benefit of Hindus [upper castes]. It only works for its own benefit".⁷⁹ The upper caste sections of society were ready to gravitate towards any political party that would provide them with a core vote base so that they could add to their individual's support base [that is, aspirants of a BSP ticket] and get elected. This is when the BSP 'saw a chance to make quick political capital using the [upper caste] community and started wooing them'. It was evident that a majority of the total value of the support base of the two influential political communities, upper castes (20%) and Dalits (21%), a fair measure of support among the Muslims, would give the BSP at least 33-34 per cent of the total vote share. It would be a winning margin to form the government in UP.⁸⁰ In order to translate the mission of a sarva samaj into reality, the first major step Mayawati undertook was the induction of the former advocate-general of UP Mr. Satish Chandra Mishra, a Brahmin lawyer within the BSP. Mishra, an acceptable Brahmin face, who could take along the state's powerful bureaucracy, was eventually nominated to the Rajya Sabha. Mishra was 'entrusted with the task of mobilizing Brahmin support for the party. In numerous Brahmin conferences Mishra urged 'terror-stricken Brahmins', who were 'the target of deteriorating law and order' to join hands with Mayawati to end the 'lawless' SP regime in UP. Putting the argument in perspective Satish Chandra Mishra added that it was the 'helplessness of Brahmins before the Thakur and Yadav dons, who have the patronage of the SP, [which] motivated the party leadership to take up the cause of the Brahmins'. Nirranjan Pandey and Devendra Mishra, belonging to the Brahmin community stated at the June 9, 2005 Lucknow rally that '... only [Mayawati's] party had come to [their] rescue when faced attacks from communities, such as Thakurs and Yadavs'. Devendra Mishra added that 'the BSP leader Mayawati enhanced the dignity of Brahmins by appointing them to high positions in her party'.⁸¹ Mayawati was 'not suffering from any illusion about the political commitment of upper castes of BSP' in spite of the fact that on June 9, 2005, more than five lakh BSP supporters of the Brahmin community came to a political rally held at Ambedkar maidan in Lucknow. In a speech on June 3, 2005, on the occasion of the founding of the *Bahujan Samaj Prerna Kendra* (Bahujan Samaj Centre for Inspiration) in Lucknow, a few days before the Brahmin rally Mayawati said:

"Bahujan samaj should not trust the upper castes [that] are joining the party...because...it will take some time to change their hearts. Hence, they should not rely or trust upper castes in the constituencies where the candidates are from [the] Bahujan caste. The upper caste will not cast their votes in the favour of [the] Bahujan caste candidate. But Bahujan caste voters should prop up their natural alliance and transfer their votes totally in favour of [the] upper caste candidates in every constituency where they are contesting on [the] BSP ticket, though in such constituencies also the upper castes will not vote en masse for the upper caste candidate contesting on the BSP ticket. But in this process if [the] upper caste candidate gets 2 to 3 per cent of the upper caste votes, the BSP as a party will enhance its tally from the present by 50 to 60 seats. This will give the BSP a chance to form a majority government for a full five years term in the state'.⁸²

Brahmin jodo abhiyaan (unity movement) and its fraternal alliance with Dalits was formulated in two interrelated parts by the BSP. It was a coalition of the 'top-bottom' of the society, 'seemingly trapping all other social denominations in between. Externally, it appeared as an attempt towards apex social engineering through Brahmin jodo sammelans and bottom social engineering through *bhaichara* (fraternization) committees'.⁸³ The BSP's *bhaichara* committees were based on the slogan '*vote dena aur lena*' (give and take votes). Simply put where there was 'a Brahmin candidate this slogan would be sold to the Dalits and where there was a Dalit candidate this slogan would be sold to Brahmin', said a BSP worker from Kanpur. The Brahmin-Dalit alliance was centred on treating the Brahmin almost like a 'separate party' within the BSP. The '*Bhaichara Banao Samiti, Brahmin Samaj BSP*' was formed in all the 403 assembly constituencies. Every samiti had 400 members, 300 Brahmins and 100 Dalits, with a Brahmin Chairman and Dalit General Secretary. These committees 'visited villages and fastened the feeling of a "bhaichara" conveniently interpreted as a pragmatic political unity between the Dalits and the Brahmins'. The composition

of the '*samitis* (committee/association)' did give the impression that it was the Brahmins who were extending their support to the Dalits.⁸⁴

The stage was set for a political revival of the Dalit-Brahmins alliance in UP of the pre-1990 era. However, there would be a crucial difference between the 'social alliance' that the Congress Party sustained and the *sarvajanism* of the BSP. In Congress, 'the Brahmins and other sections of the upper castes controlled the levers of power, while individuals among the scheduled castes and Muslims were useful as poster boys'. The BSP's scheme is a 'reversal of that order'. The coalition that has re-emerged would now be led by Dalits and not the upper castes. The social equilibrium has thus changed remarkably. The upper castes would now receive patronage and not the Dalits.⁸⁵

Preceding the 2007 assembly elections in UP the BSP entrusted a 'network of party commanders' (Dalit Secretary and 'President' from the designated caste group) each on a mission to integrate a particular lower caste non-Dalit group at the state, mandal, district and constituency level - '*Pal bhaichara samiti*', '*Rajbhar bhaichara samiti*', '*Nishad bhaichara samiti*', and also seeking to mobilize Mauryas, Kushwahas, Bindhis, Sainis, Noniyas, Kewats, Mallahas, Kumhars etc.⁸⁶ To 'integrate the Muslims' in the grand coalition alliance with Dalits and Brahmins, Naseemuddin Siddiqui, the popular BSP youth leader from Banda district, was entrusted by Mayawati to become the 'minority face' of the BSP. Siddiqui's political acumen in selecting winnable Muslim candidates was underlined by the aim to play the 'social marginalization card', to bring Dalits and Muslims together, as also to highlight that years of political loyalty to the Congress and SP had given them no return. Under Siddiqui the BSP advocated the need to enlighten the Muslim masses of the 'critical value of progress that the party offered for the community'. The BSP's intention not to enter into any political coalition was seen as a change from the past, since on earlier occasions, BSP's alliance with the BJP had 'negatively' transferred Muslim votes to SP.⁸⁷

A few months prior to the 2007 assembly elections Municipal Corporation elections were held in October-November 2006. The BSP chose not to participate in the elections. Mayawati said that the '[assembly] elections [were] the single most important item on the BSP's agenda'. 'A plan developed so painstakingly cannot go waste, it has to work, and it will'. However, despite staying away from the municipal elections, the presence of the BSP was felt everywhere. The elections were BSP-centric since the BSP controlled the agenda to defeat the SP. It dictated the behaviour of the electorate by allowing tactical voting by the Dalits for the first time and forcing Muslims to drift away from SP and towards the Congress. The BSP, thus, decided the outcome of the Municipal Corporation elections by ensuring the 'victory of Congress and the BJP candidates', who were themselves surprised by the outcome. The primary target of the BSP was to ensure that the Muslims switched loyalties from the SP to the Congress.⁸⁸

BSP's preparation for the assembly elections was planned meticulously. The Party collected vast constituency-wise database of 'caste population' and 'voting blocks'. In as many as 150 seats the party announced its candidates more than a year ago. The party had built strong organizational machinery extending to the remotest villages and this helped advance the plan systematically. Divided into 25 sectors (with ten polling booths in one sector), each constituency was closely monitored by the party 'high command'. In tandem, each polling booth, hosting roughly with 1000 voters, was made the responsibility of a nine-member committee, comprising of at least one woman to motivate and mobilize women voters.⁸⁹

In the seven-phase poll conducted to hold the UP assembly elections in 2007 the BSP emerged victorious with 206 (ultimately 219) seats in the UP legislative assembly. Retracing Kanshiram's comment on the BSP geared to achieve support of '35 per cent of the population', the 2007 assembly elections in UP was won by the BSP with a 30.43 per cent of the total vote share, registering a 7.40 per cent increase since the 2002 assembly elections.⁹⁰ Most of the BSP MLAs who won in 2007 were 'fresh faces'. For instance, out of 61 tickets given to Muslims by the party, only 7 had been 'sitting MLAs since 2002'. The BSP won close contests at Ghatampur,

Bhognipur, Bilhaur (SC), Derapur, Auraiya, Gauriganj, Mahoba etc. by only a few thousand votes. Second, based on an increasing number of constituencies decided by a slender margin of victory the BSP was successful in consolidating the Muslim vote, along with Dalit and OBC support, behind its candidates in constituencies where the Muslim community could influence the poll results. In Hasanpur, Bahjoi, Kunderki, Afzalgarh, Bisalpur, Moradabad (West), Bareilly Cantonment, Laharpur, Nanpara, Domariaganj, Sandial, Shahbad, Gopalpur etc. the BSP won, confirming that it had systematically chipped away the Muslim base of SP. Muslim support for SP till 2002 stood at 55 per cent which fell by 7 per cent. One factor could be the pre-election arrangement between Mulayam Singh Yadav and Kalyan Singh. Conversely, the BSP benefited increasing its overall Muslim support from 10 per cent to 17 per cent. The Congress, despite being an indirect recipient of an enhanced Muslim support base (10 per cent in 2002 to 14 per cent in 2007) suffered in the elections. For instance, at Bhinga, Muslim vote did not split between the Congress and the BSP, but went to the BSP. The All India Muslim *Majlis-e-Mushawarat* (an assembly to consult) posed two objectives before the Muslim voters; one, to defeat the BJP and two, to raise Muslim representation in the UP legislative assembly. The *Mushawarat* even issued a 'list of 98 Muslim constituencies and endorsed winnable candidates in 92 constituencies.'⁹¹ The BSP performed very well in the reserved constituencies. The party bagged 62 out of 89 seats for the SC. The BSP scripted its electoral victories at Hargaon, Sidhauri, Siddhaur, Khalilabad, Bawan, and numerous other reserved constituencies. There were indications, which could not be confirmed, that in certain reserved constituencies Brahmins voted for BSP's SC candidates, a tribute to the party's Dalit-Brahmin bhaichara committees. Fourth, a detailed analysis of caste affiliation of elected members reveals that the party's support base among the OBC had increased substantially. Contrary to expectations 51 BSP candidates from the OBC, that included a number of MBCs, including four Yadavs, won.⁹²

There was 'democratization', if one notes the number of caste based bhaichara committees of the MBC. MBC political leaders became prospective BSP candidates for elections and won by a combination of 'own caste' votes and transferable Dalit-Bahujan and

Muslims' support. At Dataganj, a Shakya won, at Katehari and Pipraich, a Nishad, at Akbarpur, a stronghold of the BSP, a Rajbhar. Other MBC groups such as Kushwaha, Maurya, Jaiswal, Dhimar, Patel, Saini, Kanwaria, Pal etc. also won. The increased number of winning MBC candidates justified the stated reality that the BSP doubled its base of MBC support from 15 per cent in 2002 to 30 per cent in 2007 elections. During the same period the SP's MBC vote bank underwent a dramatic fall from 18 per cent to 11 per cent, while the BJP's MBC vote share fell from 21 per cent to 17 per cent. Fifth, the BSP did well with the 'defector case' constituencies. For instance, at Dhampur, the BJP candidate's base was cut by the RLD, who since then defected to the BSP and won. At Faridpur (SC), Milkipur and Nawabganj BJP candidates defected to the BSP to win. At Captainganj, the flip-flop of defection ultimately gave the BSP a victory. Here a SP candidate defected to the BSP, then to BJP and back to BSP. At Masauli, the SP suffered due to the 'Beni Prasad Verma factor', whose revolt hurt the party. The BSP consolidated Muslim-Dalit-MBC votes in this constituency and won. Sixth, the success of the Brahmin jodo sammelan and Dalit-Brahmin caste conclaves ensured the victory of 34 Brahmin BSP MLAs out of a total of 86 tickets that was allocated to the community by the party. Brahmin candidates won close contests with SC support in numerous assembly constituencies such as Sadabad, Dhaurehra, Mahoba, Bilgram, Bilhaur, Auraiya, Machhlishahr, Barsathi, Karchana, Chillupur, and Atraulia, and significantly in two out of three seats in Agra and Allahabad. Mayawati hoped that 2-3 per cent of upper caste support, especially in constituency where Brahmin population is between 10-15 per cent would ensure that the party would win a number of close contests. Seventh, in the 2007 assembly elections, the BSP had improved its support among the Rajputs/Thakurs (12 per cent), the other upper castes, primarily the Banias, and Kayasthas (13 per cent) and propertied landed elite OBC, such as the Jats (11 per cent), Yadavs and Ahirs (8 per cent), Kurmis (15 per cent) and Lodhs (19 per cent). With an 8 per cent support among the Yadav/Ahir community, the BSP won 5 seats in the assembly including Balrampur, Chitrakoot and Sonabhadra. The victory of BSP's Yadav/Ahir candidates once again highlights 'the central role that political actors undertake to nurture their specific social communities through

political networks or factions-building, rather than operate through the medium of political parties, that are primarily based on rewards and the actors owing allegiance to it'. The BSP allocated 38 tickets to the Thakur/Rajput community to ensure that the party benefited from en bloc community voting preference for the party candidate, whose victory could be cemented by transferable Dalit-MBC support. Out of 38 BSP Thakur candidates 18 were elected to the Legislative Assembly. Lastly, the BSP did not do well in urban centres, such as Lucknow, Mathura, Kanpur. However, the Party posted wins in all the three seats (north, south and west) in the Allahabad assembly constituency.⁹³

Sarvajan Politics Exposed

Since 2007 the BSP had adopted the '*sarvajan sukhaye, sarvajan hitaye*' principle to mean that the government was for every caste group and community's welfare and interests. The BSP made a conscious effort to shed its image as a 'Party of the Dalits'. Capitalizing on popular disenchantment over law and order of the SP government the centrepiece of its electoral success was the forging of the Dalit-Brahmin alliance. In a bid to 'placate the Brahmins' Mayawati diluted the SC Atrocities Act's implementation giving upper castes in villages a carte blanche to caste violence. The Brahmins/upper castes were over-represented in the composition of the ministry in spite of the fact that MBC and Muslim candidates contributed much more to the victory of the BSP. The BSP government did initiate a policy for reservation of economically weaker sections among upper castes and religious minorities. Mindful of fractious politics, Mayawati engaged in an unpopular decision to create a 'sub-category' among Dalits, a new religious denomination of Dalit-Christians and Dalit-Muslims ostensibly to bring them within the framework of affirmative action. The era of 'transfer raj' ended with the BSP coming to power. A Service Establishment Board was instituted to determine transfer and postings of administrative officials below Additional and Principal Secretary. Economic growth was targeted in certain sectors of the state's economy. Public-Private Partnership (PPP) development schemes, for instance, Rs. 30,000 crore Ganga Expressway 1047 kms road

project, between Ballia and Noida was initiated by acquiring farming land through dubious land acquisition policy. No proper rehabilitation policy was implemented. The Ganga project remains incomplete mired in litigation and schemes of 'rehabilitation for land' deals. In five years of BSP's governance the 4000MW Ultra-Mega Power Project of the National Thermal Power Corporation to be located at Lalitpur continues to 'remain on paper' three years after the memorandum of understanding (MOU) was signed by the BSP government. However, housing schemes for urban poor through Nagar Palika Parishads and Nagar Panchayats have been partially fulfilled. The AVP scheme has ensured electricity for 3382 villages.

The 2009 Lok Sabha results were disappointing for the BSP. The Party had expected 50 seats but won 19 seats, even less than the Congress Party. The Congress did well in certain parts of UP making voters respond to its performance at the centre, particularly with employment guarantee schemes like National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA). During the 2009 elections Mayawati had briefly entertained the idea of becoming a 'potential PM'. Like the previous two years of her rule she neglected the core Dalit and Bahujan support for the Party. Mayawati engaged the Left Front, campaigning throughout the country, even addressing a rally in Kohima, Nagaland. It was only in the fourth phase of Lok Sabha elections in UP that Mayawati joined in election campaigning. In the elections the feedback from party cadres suggested that the drop in the number of Dalit voters who did not go to the polling booth was as high as 25 per cent in some parliamentary constituencies. A number of Dalit voters felt that if they go to the polling station they would be compelled to vote for the BSP. Brahmins, non-Jatav Dalits, Muslims, and MBC in certain proportions voted for other political parties to defeat BSP candidates. Reacting to the disappointing election results Mayawati scrapped all bhaichara committees since they had failed to bridge the gap between Dalits and OBC and further the transfer of 'political votes' to candidates nominated by the BSP leader. In the Dalit-Brahmin bhaichara committees it was the upper castes who got election tickets often at a huge price and the BSP organization at the local level was directed to mobilize BSP voters. The failure is attributed to the fact that the tenuous coalition post -

2007 between the Dalits and Brahmins had alienated the BSP's Dalit base. Local party units and non-Dalit MLAs were in a state of conflict that interfered with the Party's organizational activities at the local level. Mayawati's megalomaniac tendency illustrated by the 'history-making spree', of building statues, memorial parks, institutions and her own giant statues stood in marked contrast to the demands of the Dalit-Bahujan voters who wanted a better standard of living and much improved healthcare and provision for education and a more visible share in power structure which had so far been dominated by the upper caste.

Re-capturing Core Constituency

After May 2009, Mayawati changed the focus of her government. In name it remained a sarvajan government. But, in practice 'Dalit agenda' became a prominent feature of the administration. Mayawati side-lined Satish Chandra Mishra, her Brahmin mascot. Dalits, especially the educated began to get jobs; the SC Atrocities Act's implementation became more stringent; the landless began to own small pieces of land; a major policy initiative was undertaken by the BSP in the rural and urban housing sector; pending AVP projects were completed; and measures were initiated to provide monthly doles in cash to cover 30 lakh beneficiaries under the Mahamaya Scheme.

The BSP government's performance between 2009 and 2012 was mired in corruption and bad governance. The dubious role of the 'developer' in PPP mega projects, the nexus between politicians, middlemen, corrupt officers and mafia elements having a stranglehold over 'contract business' became a notable feature of the BSP government. In UP (West) for instance, the Mayawati government initiated a set of mega projects in Gautam Budh Nagar and Ghaziabad. It is alleged that two 'developer' companies were given projects. They acted as 'personal firms' of Mayawati and her family. In Noida, Greater Noida and Noida Extension the level of corruption in development projects is high with the BSP government selling off farmers' land to builders. The Yamuna Expressway, a 6 lane highway between Agra and Delhi is complete and the highway

is opened to public. Nevertheless the SP has instituted a committee to look into the angle of corruption that it alleges played a major part in its construction. On the other, populist programmes, for instance, National Rural Health Mission was caught in a Rs. 2500 crore scam as 30 per cent money meant for improving rural health was siphoned off by a strong political-bureaucratic nexus. The State Teachers Eligibility Test turned out to be fraud with the seizure of Rs. 86 lakhs by the administration in Kanpur Dehat. The money was meant to pay bribes to officials in Lucknow to get candidates through the 'test'. Bribes were also to be paid for jobs into various government departments. In the rural areas, in Bundelkhand, for instance, there was a rising number of famishing farmers, rising unemployment and a declining human index which created a perception of total political and bureaucratic apathy. Accessibility to functioning schools suffered due to bad roads, and of course, getting work done in *tehsil, thana* (administrative division, police station) and court came at a price. Poverty alleviation remained a non-starter even as CM Mayawati scrapped the centrally monitored Below Poverty Line (BPL) list for the state. The UPA government charged Mayawati for misappropriating NREGA funds meant to provide rural employment. Landless and Dalit farmers suffered. Shady land deals were struck in Noida, Ghaziabad between the Mayawati government and a few builders and real estate running into thousands of crores. Weighed in by the local context, the impact of bad politics and governance, viewed through the prism of caste or community began to create resentment against the BSP government. As the BSP government lurched from one crisis to another, Mayawati became even more whimsical, self-indulgent and inaccessible. Mayawati bought a fleet of best planes and choppers; her official residence was fortified and expanded on the pattern of '7 Race Course Road', the official residence of the Indian PM. Mayawati was obsessed with her security. When she left her residence she was escorted by a fleet of 25 Prado bulletproof cars. She rarely interacted with her cabinet colleagues and insulated herself with a set of bureaucrats who virtually ran the administration. Unaffected by a lack of any tangible benefits of governance and development, Mayawati spent more funds on monuments, even public posturing by wearing a garland of notes and describing it as empowerment of the downtrodden.

In the 2012 assembly elections, almost half the number of Brahmins (almost 60 per cent) who had voted for Mayawati voted against the BSP. Brahmins and Bhumihar would rather have voted for the Congress or the BJP but voted for the SP to make sure that anti-BSP votes of the upper castes did not split. Their story was one of victimhood apparently suffered over the last three years. They wanted to avoid another '*harijan raj*' (rule of SC's). Almost 11 per cent Brahmins and 9 per cent Rajputs voted for the SP. There was a sharp erosion of the Muslim vote. Muslim support for the SP increased to 72 per cent largely due to the active campaigning by Akhilesh Yadav, son of Mulayam Singh Yadav whose clean image appealed to the Muslim youths numbering about 45 per cent of the community, who are no longer interested in emotional issues or sectarian ideology — Hindutva, minoritism and a siege psyche mentality — but in favour of development, employment and education, the three planks on which Akhilesh Yadav campaigned across UP. The Kurmi support for SP was 21 per cent. Importantly, the Chamar-Jatav vote for the BSP fell to 55 per cent down by 27 per cent as it showed prior to the last phase of election in the state. The non-Chamar Dalit and MBC vote went down by 15 per cent. Pasi, Sonkar, Swarnkar, Valmiki, Nishad, Jaiswal etc. voted against the BSP due to their exclusion from economic benefits of a 'Dalit government'. The Chamars of UP displayed a duality in voting preference — the older generation continuing to support Mayawati and young voters preferring non-BSP political parties in the state. This was largely a result of poor record of the BSP government in development and governance. In significant ways their concerns were no different from Muslim youths. The SP was able to get 17 per cent of Jatav votes. The SP won a record 231 seats in the assembly as the BSP tally fell to 80 seats. Despite a decrease in Dalit support Mayawati had 'recaptured' her core constituency. The loss of a Dalit vote bank might have signalled the end of her political career. For the moment the victory of the SP bothers her less than the prospect of 100 seats either for the Congress or the BJP since the SP is the 'ideological and caste-opposite' of the BSP. UP electoral politics, according to BSP's calculations, should not leave the political space for the Congress and the BJP. It should be akin to two regional political parties competing for power and there being no role for the all India parties, a fact that is evident in Tamil Nadu.

The emergence of the BSP is not reactive but deliberately intended to negate the dominant political and institutional space of political parties in electoral politics. The 'Party of the Oppressed' through pragmatic political alliances, an unstable polity and increase in vote share by subverting representative politics through caste-based electoral democracy seeks to replace an unequal socio-political order by a Bahujan state. The Bahujan state is to be based on proportionate representation of disempowered groups and as recent sarvajan politics would indicate, to create institutional space for upper castes supporting BSP ideology, in government, bureaucracy and educational institutions. In all, it would fulfil the political aspiration of an assemblage of social groups, specially the low caste and Dalit sections of society. Logically, BSP's politics aims to gain access and exclusive control over state structures with the intention of changing state policies beneficial for the Party that is constantly engaged in acquiring social resources and political capital to attain a position of dominance in politics. Viewed in the social and political context that led to the emergence of the BSP, 'territorialization of power as politics' substantially captures the comparable political presence of the Party in UP. Electoral victories are a rarity for the BSP in other regions and states characterized by divergent sociological factors, complex political histories and competitive electoral/party formations. BSP as a virtual non-entity in other states can be assessed by the Lok Sabha results of 2009. The party received a paltry 6.22 per cent votes across other states. What might be the reasons that have stalled the BSP's 'march of the oppressed'? It could possibly not be ascertained by a theoretical/conceptual or dialogic engagement with the 'Dalit political subject', placed within the larger social categories across social and ideological spaces — class, gender, environment etc. that would explore the notion of democracy, development and representation. Perhaps, the reason rests in the primacy of electoral politics to the exclusion of addressing entrenched social and economic issues that must certainly configure as a conclusive indicator of popular politics. The BSP as a political agency of an 'equality-based society' has embraced success and failure in elections. A viable option could be to infer the reasons for the limited influence of the Party in India's political democracy.

The political praxis of the BSP considered as an 'agent' of the backwards and the Dalits has enervated the deep and complex interrelationship between untouchability as a social stigma, a dehumanizing selfhood and the emergence of Dalit subjectivity in the public/political sphere. With a focus on electoral politics, untouchability as a state of social existence has been transformed into an objective relationship defined by the Party to construct a fractal political identity that is directly proportional to the political value it fetches in the electoral marketplace of Indian politics. If recent post-sarvajan politics are any indication, the Party's policy of a Dalit vote bank through a transferable vote may have to be rethought. It cannot be indefinitely diluted for electoral reasons simply due to the reason that 'leadership-sectional linkage' calculates future electoral value to a particular caste group(s) by peripheralizing deserving castes. Ethnicization of social groups as a form of party-building is fragmentary and disruptive. The BSP replicates the 'asset-building' within the Party on to the political sphere redefining political values of self-determination and group participation. But dominant culture is complex where power is decentred through multiple social and institutional sites to a modern civic polity. Lack of cohesive counter-values and the inability to express the manifold interests of social groups as 'wholes' in terms of general social and economic indicators negates a purposive political challenge to inequality and social injustice.

References

¹ Shivmurti Pathak, *Rashtra Nayak Kanshiram*, Allahabad, Shekhar Prakashan, 1995, pp. 17, 18, 19, 27, 53; Vivek Kumar, *India's Roaring Revolution: Dalit Assertions and New Horizons*, Delhi, Kalpaz Publications, 2006, pp. 129-30.

² Anupama Rao, *The Caste Question: Dalits and the Politics of Modern India*, Ranikhet, Permanent Black, 2010, p.1.

³ Valerian Rodrigues, *Dalit-Bahujan Discourse*, New Delhi, Critical Quest, 2008, pp.17,27,29,30)

⁴ Pathak, *Rashtra Nayak*, p.53

⁵ Rao, *Caste Question*, p. 27

⁶ Mayawati, *Mere Sangharshmay Jeevan Evam Bahujan Movement ka Safarnama, Part 1*, New Delhi, Bahujan Samaj Party, 2006, p. 260; R.K.Singh, *Kanshiram aur BSP: Dalit Andolan ke Vaicharik Adhar Brahmanvad Virodh*, Allahabad, Kushwaha Book Publishers, 1994, p. 56; Anuj Kumar, *Bahujan Nayak ke Avismaraniya Bhashan*, Delhi, Gautam Book Centre, 2000, pp. 76, 82, 85; Abhay Kumar Dubey; *Aaj ka Neta Aalochnatmak Adhyayanmala: Kanshiram*, New Delhi, Rajkamal Prakashan, 1998, p. 23; Christophe Jaffrelot, 'The Bahujan Samaj Party in North India: No Longer Just a Dalit Party?', *Comparative Studies in South Asia, Africa and the Middle East*, 18, 1 (1998), p. 37.

⁷ Ramesh Chandra and Sangha Mitra, *Dalit Identity in the New Millenium*, Dalit Leaders, vol 8, New Delhi, Commonwealth Publishers, 2003, p. 160; Christophe Jaffrelot, *Dr. Ambedkar and Untouchability: Fighting the Indian Caste System*, New York, Columbia University Press, 2005, pp. 84, 88.

⁸ Gail Omvedt, *Reinventing Revolution*, New York, ME Sharpe Incorporated, 1993, p. 67; 'The Changing Scene in UP', *Frontline*, 11, 2, Jan 15-28, 1994, pp. 4-5; Sudha Pai, (Ed). *Political Process in Uttar Pradesh; Identity, Economic Reforms and Governance*, New Delhi, Pearson Longmans, 2003, p. 195; Ajoy Bose, *Behenji: A Political Biography of Mayawati*, New Delhi, Penguin Viking, 2008, p. 34.

⁹ Kanshiram, *Chamcha Yug* (Hindi Edition), Bombay, Samta Prakashan, 1998, pp. 101. 104.

¹⁰ Jaffrelot, *Dr Ambedkar and Untouchability*, pp. 154-55, 156, 157, 159; Sudha Pai, *State Politics, New Dimensions (Party System Liberalisation and Politics of Identity)*, Delhi, Shipra Publications, 2000, pp. 122, 123; Kanchan Chandra, *Why Ethnic Parties Succeed: Patronage and Ethnic Head Counts in India*, UK, CUP, 2004, pp. 217, 257-58.

¹¹ Vinita Damodaran, Maya Unnithan-Kumar (Eds), *Post Colonial India: History, Politics and Culture*, New Delhi, Manohar Publishers, 2000, pp. 134-136; Zoya Hasan (Ed), *Parties and Party Politics in India*, New Delhi, Oxford University press, 2002, p. 391.

¹² R. K. Singh, *Kanshiram aur BSP*, pp. 61-62; Author's Interview with Mr. Ambeth Rajan, New Delhi, 21.01.2009.

¹³ R. K. Singh, *Kanshiram aur BSP*, p. 59; Pathak, *Rashtra Nayak*, pp. 28-29; Mayawati, *Safarnama*, p. 191; Sudha Pai, *Dalit Assertion and the Unfinished Dalit Revolution: The Bahujan Samaj Party in Uttar Pradesh*, New Delhi, Sage Publications, 2002, p. 118; Anuj Kumar, *Bahujan Nayak Kanshiram*, pp. 14-15, 71-72.

- ¹⁴ Kanchan Chandra, *Why Ethnic Parties Succeed*, p. 227.
- ¹⁵ Interview with Ambeth Rajan, 21.01.2009.
- ¹⁶ Kalyani Shankar, *Gods Of Power: Personality Cult and Indian Democracy*, New Delhi, Macmillan Publishers, p. 281; Ghanshyam Shah (Ed), *Dalit Identity and Politics: Cultural Subordination and Dalit Challenge*, vol.2, New Delhi, Sage Publications, p.289.
- ¹⁷ 'Mulayam se samjhauta mahaj UP mein, who bhi sthayi nahi', *Amar Ujala*, Lucknow edition, October 19, 1993; Paranjy Guha Thakurta and Shankar Raghuraman, *A Time of Coalition: Divided We Stand*, New Delhi, Sage Publications, 2004, pp. 185-6.
- ¹⁸ Ghanshyam Shah, *Dalit Identity*, p. 289.
- ¹⁹ 'The Changing Scene in UP', *Frontline*, 11, 2, January 15-28, 1994, p. 5; Kanchan Chandra, *Why Ethnic Parties Succeed: Patronage and Ethnic Head Counts in India*, UK,CUP, 2004, p. 236; URL: <http://www.drshreshmaneb.com> [accessed on 15.09.08]; Anuj Kumar, *Avismaraniya Bhasan*, p. 73; Christophe Jaffrelot, *Dr Ambedkar and Untouchability: Fighting the Indian Caste System*, New York, Columbia University Press, 2005, pp. 154-155.
- ²⁰ Pai, *Dalit Assertion*, p. 156.
- ²¹ *Indian Express*, New Delhi Edition, August 3, 1988; *Hindustan Times*, New Delhi Edition, June 10, 1988; URL: <http://www.eci.gov.in/Bye-Elections/bye-elections.Asp> (accessed on 21.07.07); Pai, *Dalit Assertion*, p. 156.
- ²² Kanchan Chandra, *Why Ethnic Parties Succeed?*, p. 149.
- ²³ URL: <http://www.drshreshmaneb.com> [accessed on 15.09.08].
- ²⁴ Ghanshyam Shah, *Caste and Democratic Politics*, New Delhi, Permanent Black, 2002, p. 301.
- ²⁵ Sanjay Verma, 'The Elusive Samajwad', *Seminar*, 571, March 2007, pp. 44-45.
- ²⁶ Abhay Kumar Dubey, *Aaj ka Neta*, p.23.
- ²⁷ 'Kanshiram: My ultimate goal is Delhi', *Sunday*, 20, 48, 5-11 December 1993, p. 38; 'Man of the Year', *Sunday*, 20, 51, 26 December - 1January, 1994, p.29; Praful Bidwai, 'The backward bandwagon: A regressive social agenda would not fit the bill', *Frontline*, 11, 3, February 11,1994, p. 98;

Kalyani Shankar, *Gods of Power, Personality Cult in Indian Democracy*, New Delhi, Macmillan, 2002, p. 72.

²⁸ Duncan, *The Bahujan Samaj Party in Uttar Pradesh*, p.47; 'Enter Kanshiram', *Sunday*, 21, 4, 23-29 January, 1994, p.37.

²⁹ 'Mulayam se samjhauta mahaj UP mein', woh bhi sthayi nahin', *Amar Ujala*, Lucknow Edition, October 19, 1993; Thakurta and Raghuraman, *A Time of Coalition*, pp.185-186.

³⁰ 'Soft Target', *Sunday*, 21, 31, 31 July-6 August, 1994, p. 47; 'Maya Memsahib', *Sunday*, 21, 28, 10-16 July, 1994, p. 25; 'Where might is right', *Sunday*, 22, 2, 8-14 January, 1995, p. 27.

³¹ Sudha Pai, *Dalit Assertion*, pp. 167-168; 'Enough is enough', *Sunday*, 22, 23, 4-10 June 1995, p. 41; 'The great fall', *Sunday*, 22, 24, 11-17 June, 1995, p. 37; 'Reprieve in UP', *Frontline*, 11, 15, July 29, 1994, pp. 4, 9; 'A topsy turvy tenure', *Sunday*, 22, 1, 1-7 January 1995, p. 44; 'Toppling to conquer', *Frontline*, 12, 13, June 30, 1995, p. 9; 'Maya memsahib', *Sunday*, 21, 28, 10-16 July 1994, pp. 24, 25; 'Allies of convenience', *India Today*, June 30, 1995, p. 51.

³² *The Pioneer*, Lucknow Edition, June 2, 1995; Sudha Pai, *Dalit Assertion*, pp. 84, 85, 99, 127, 137; 'The Great Fall', *Sunday*, 22, 24, 11-17 June, 1995, p. 41.

³³ Mayawati: 'I am not merely the leader of the Bahujan Samaj', *Sunday*, 22, 25, June 18-24, 1995, pp. 22.

³⁴ 'Cracks to the fore', *Frontline*, 12, 15, July 28, 1995, p. 25; 'Living on the edge', *India Today*, July 15, 1995, p. 49, 50; 'State of limbo', *Frontline*, 12, 17, August, 1995, p.88; *The Pioneer*, Lucknow Edition, June 10, 1995.

³⁵ Sudha Pai, 'Dalit Question and Political Response, Comparative Study of Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh', *Economic and Political Weekly*, 39, 11, March 2004, pp. 1145, 1146; Sudha Pai, *Dalit Assertion*, p. 172; Mayawati, *Unki Disha: Hamarey Prayas, Vartaman Uttar Pradesh Sarkar ki ek Saal ki Uplabdhiyan*, Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh, Department of Information and Public Relations, May 2003, pp. 7, 9, 13, 14, 16, 18, 19, 20, 21; Thakurta and Raghuraman, *A Time of Coalition*, p. 186.

³⁶ Sudha Pai, *Dalit Question*, pp. 1145, 1146; Sudha Pai, *Dalit Assertion*, p. 172; Mayawati, *Uplabdhiyan*, pp. 7, 9, 13, 14, 16, 18, 19, 20, 21.

³⁷ Sudha Pai, *Dalit Question*, pp. 1145, 1146; Sudha Pai, *Dalit Assertion*, p. 172; Mayawati, *Uplabdhiyan*, pp. 7, 9, 13, 14, 16, 18, 19, 20, 21.

³⁸ 'State of limbo', *Frontline*, 12, 17, August 25, 1995, pp. 38-39; 'Falling apart', *Frontline*, 12, 21, October 20, 1995, p. 26; Sudha Pai, *Dalit Assertion*, p. 172; 'Convenience to confrontation', *India Today*, September 30, 1995, p. 89; *Hindustan Times*, New Delhi Edition, September 18, October 1, October 18, 1995; Mayawati, *Uplabdhiyan*, pp. 6.

³⁹ Christophe Jaffrelot and Sanjay Kumar, *Rise of the Plebians? The Changing Face of Indian Legislative Assemblies*, New Delhi, Routledge, 2009, p. 57; Vivek Kumar, Behind the BSP victory, *Economic and Political Weekly*, 42, 24, June 16, 2007, p. 2237; Sudha Pai, *Political Process in Uttar Pradesh*, pp. 114-5; Sudha Pai, *Dalit Assertion*, pp. 172-6; Sudha Pai, 'Electoral Identity Politics in Uttar Pradesh: Hung Assembly Again?', *Economic and Political Weekly*, 37, 14, April 6, 2002, pp.1334-45; Christophe Jaffrelot, *Ambedkar and Untouchability*, p. 158.

⁴⁰ 'Kanshiram: Congress is reduced to a C-team now', *Outlook*, 2, 28, July 10, 1996, pp. 4-5; 'Kanshi's one point plan', *Outlook*, 2, 33, August 14, 1996, pp. 20-21; 'Kanshiram: A helpless Congress will toe our line', *Outlook*, 2, 37, September 11, 1996, pp. 10-12.

⁴¹ *The Tribune*, Chandigarh Edition, March 20, 1997.

⁴² 'Together again', *Outlook*, 3, 14, April 2, 1997, p.8, 6-12; 'Uneasy partners', *India Today*, April 15, 1997, p.43.

⁴³ 'Opportunism Inc', *Frontline*, 14, 6, April 18, 1997, pp. 13, 17, 18; 'We have no reason to disbelieve the BJP', *Frontline*, 14, 6, April 18, 1997, pp. 14-15; 'Fractured legacy', *Outlook*, 3, 31, July 30, 1997, p. 27; *The Tribune*, Chandigarh Edition, March 20 and May 15, 1997; 'Divide and rule', *India Today*, May 31, 1997, pp. 74-75; 'Pressures of UP alliance', *Frontline*, 14, 11, June 13, 1997, p. 36.

⁴⁴ 'Fractured legacy', *Outlook*, 3, 31, July 30, 1997, pp. 24-31; 'A captive legacy', *India Today*, September 1, 1997, p. 47; 'Double duo', *India Today*, September 22, 1997; pp. 24-25; 'Statue symbols', *India Today*, July 28, 1997, pp. 38, 39; 'Mayawati: I'll definitely hand over charge to the BJP', *India Today*, August 11, 1997, p. 55; Zoya Hasan, 'Transfer of Power: Politics of Mass Mobilization in UP', *Economic and Political Weekly*, nos. 36, 46 and 47, 24 November, 2001, p. 4044.

⁴⁵ 'Uneasy partners', *India Today*, April 15, 1997, p. 42; 'Opportunism Inc', *Frontline*, 14, 6, April 18, 1997, p. 18; 'Déjà vu in Uttar Pradesh', *Frontline*, 14, 9, May 16, 1997, p. 45; 'Pressure on UP alliance', *Frontline*, 14, 11, June 13, 1997, p. 37; 'Rallying Forces', *Frontline*, 14, 13, July 11, 1997,

p. 33; 'The reign of pawnbrokers', *Outlook*, 3, 40, September 29, 1997, pp. 8-9; *Times of India*, Bombay Edition, July 2, 1997.

⁴⁶ 'Together Again', *Outlook*, 3, 14, April 2, 1997, pp.11-12 ;*The Tribune*, Chandigarh Edition, May 30, 1997; 'The mandir spillover', *Outlook*, 3, 41, October 6, 1997, p. 8; *The Pioneer*, Lucknow Edition, August 3, 1997; *The Tribune*, Chandigarh Edition, May 10, 1997; *Times of India*, Bombay Edition, August 5, 1997; *The Pioneer*, Lucknow Edition, July 28, 1997; 'Rallying forces', *Frontline*, 14, 13, July 11, 1997, pp. 31-32.

⁴⁷ *The Pioneer*, Lucknow Edition, August 10, 1997, August 18, 1997, September 13, 1997, September 17, 1997, September 9, 1997, September 1, 1997. 'Lonely at the top', *India Today*, October 6, 1997, p. 44; 'The Mandir Spillover', *Outlook*, 3, 41, October 6, 1997, pp. 8-9; Sudha Pai, *State, Politics: New Dimensions (Party System, Liberalisation and Politics of Identity)*, Delhi, Shipra Publications, 2000, p. 125; 'Uttar Pradesh: Shame or Sham', *India Today*, November 3, 1997, pp. 28, 30; 'Advantage Kalyan', *India Today*, November 3, 1997, p. 18; 'Stooping to conquer', *India Today*, November 10, 1997, p. 34; *The Pioneer*, Lucknow Edition, September 3, 1997.

⁴⁸ Andrew Wyatt, 'The Limitations on Coalition in India: The Case of Electoral Politics in Uttar Pradesh', *Journal of Commonwealth and Comparative Politics*, No.2, July 1999, pp.1; *The Hindu*, New Delhi Edition, October 20, 2008.

⁴⁹ Thomas Blom Hansen and Christophe Jaffrelot (Eds), *The BJP and the Compulsions of Politics*, New Delhi, Oxford University Press, 1998, pp. 78-81.

⁵⁰ Vidya Subramaniam, 'From Heady Hindutva to Voters Disenchantment', *Seminar*, 571, March 2007, pp. 52-56; 'Message from the states', *Frontline*, 15, 6, March 21-April 3, 1998, pp.33-36.

⁵¹ Schwecke, *Rationality in Politics*, p. 19; 'It's Gupta, Period', *Outlook*, 15, 20, May 29, 2000, p. 18; 'Writing on the wall', *Outlook*, 5, 19, May 24, 1999, pp. 10-14; Venkitesh Ramakrishnan, 'Continuing Crisis in UP', *Frontline*, 16, 11, May 22-June 4, 1999, pp. 33-34; Bhaumik, 'Caste no bar', *Outlook*, 15, 34, September 4, 2000, pp. 24-26.

⁵² Saba Naqvi Bhaumik, 'Caste no bar', *Outlook*, 15, 34, September 4, 2000, pp.24-26; 'Distress signals', *Frontline*, 17, 14, July 21, 2000, p. 22.

⁵³ Sudha Pai, *Dalit Assertion*, pp. 180-81; Kanchan Chandra, *Why Ethnic Parties Succeed?* pp. 217, 226, 235.

⁵⁴ URL: http://www.eci.gov.in/KR_KeyHighlights/LS_1998/vol_1_LS_98.pdf; Vivek Kumar, 'BSP and Dalit Aspirations', *Economic and Political Weekly*, 39, 18, May 1-7, 2004, p. 1779; 'Umbrella of the oppressed', *Outlook*, 5, 36, September 20, 1999, p. 33; Sudha Pai, *Dalit Assertion*, p. 179.

⁵⁵ A.K.Verma, 'Reverse Osmosis in Uttar Pradesh', *Economic and Political Weekly*, 42, 10, March 10, 2007, pp. 818-19; 'Umbrella for the Oppressed', *Outlook*, 5, 36, September 20, 1999, p. 33.

⁵⁶ Sudha Pai, 'Elections 1999', 'Uttar Pradesh: BSP's New Electoral Strategy Pays Off', *Economic and Political Weekly*, 34, 44, October 30, 1999, pp. 3099-3100; Sudha Pai, *Dalit Assertion*, p. 182; Sudha Pai, *Political Process in Uttar Pradesh*, p. 229.

⁵⁷ Purnima Tripathi, 'The churning in Uttar Pradesh', *Frontline*, 19, 4, February 16-March 1, 2002, pp.28-3; Sudha Pai, 'Elections 1999', pp. 3099-3100; Sudha Pai, *Dalit Assertion*, pp. 184-85; Vivek Kumar, 'BSP and Dalit Aspirations', *Economic and Political Weekly*, 39, 18, May 1, 2004, p. 1779.

⁵⁸ URL:http://www.eci.gov.in/Statistical Reports/ LS_1999/Vol_I_LS_99.pdf [accessed on 01.03.08]; H.D.Singh, *543 Faces in India*, New Delhi, Newmen Publishers, 1996, pp. 254-87; J.C. Aggarwal and N.K. Chowdhry, *Elections in India: 1952-96*, Delhi, Shipra Publications, 1996, pp. 232-37.

⁵⁹ Sohini Guha, 'Asymmetric Representation and the BSP in UP', *Seminar*, 571, March 2007, pp. 59-60.

⁶⁰ Verma, 'Reverse Osmosis', p. 819; Sanjay Verma, 'Elusive Samajwad', p. 43; 'Uttar Pradesh: Uneasy Outcome', *Economic and Political Weekly*, 37, 9, March 9, 2002, p. 815.

⁶¹ Ranjit Bhushan, 'The Deep Rising', *Outlook*, 42, 9, March 11, 2002, pp. 18-20.

⁶² Purnima Tripathi, 'The Drubbing of its Life', *Frontline*, 19, 5, March 2-15, 2002, p. 12; Sanjay Kumar, 'The Prospects', *Seminar*, 571, March 2007, p. 67; R.Upadhyay, 'Verdict of the UP Assembly Elections: An Analysis', *South Asia Analysis Group*, Paper No 419, 04. 03.02.

⁶³ Sudha Pai, *Political Process in Uttar Pradesh*, pp.176, 180; A.K.Verma, 'UP Assembly Elections: Caste dominates Ideology', *Economic and Political Weekly*, 37, 21, May 25-31, 2002, pp. 1977-78.

⁶⁴ Sudha Pai, *Political Process in Uttar Pradesh*, p.286; Sanjay Kumar, 'Prospects', p. 67.

⁶⁵ A.K.Verma, 'UP Elections: Caste dominates Ideology', *Economic and Political Weekly*, 37, 21, May 25-31, 2002, pp. 1977-78 p. 1975, 1976; Purnima Tripathi, 'In a cleft stick', *Frontline*, 19, 2 January 19-February 1, 2002, p.34; Purnima Tripathi, 'Desperate measures in Uttar Pradesh', *Frontline*, 18, 17, August 18-31, 2002, pp.124-125; 'Uttar Pradesh: Uneasy Outcome', *Economic and Political Weekly*, 37, 9, March 9, 2002, p. 815; Purnima Tripathi, 'An Uphill task', *Frontline*, 18, 12, June 9-22, 2001, p. 43.

⁶⁶ 'Adventures in Wonderland', *Outlook*, 43, 35, September 8, 2003, p. 30; 'Kanshiram: BSP will fight the polls on its own', *Frontline*, 18, 9, April 28-May 11, 2001, p. 43.

⁶⁷ *Hindustan Times*, New Delhi Edition, July7, 2002.

⁶⁸ URL: <http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/articleshow/23009224.cms> [accessed on 16. 07.08]; *The Statesman*, New Delhi Edition, September 13, 2002 and September 17, 2002.

⁶⁹ *Uplabdhayan*, pp. 4, 6, 7, 10, 11, 12, 18, 19, 22, 39, 41, 46.

⁷⁰ Purnima Tripathi, 'The Great Game', *Frontline*, 19, 10, May 11-24, 2002, p. 21-22; *Amar Ujala*, Lucknow Edition, 26 June, 2002 and 30 June, 2002; *The Hindu*, New Delhi Edition, October 12, 2002.

⁷¹ *Amar Ujala*, Lucknow Edition, September 28, 2002; Purnima Tripathi, All for Bahujan Samaj, *Frontline*, 19, 21, October 12-25, 2002, pp. 43-44; Purnima Tripathi, 'All for Bahujan Samaj', *Frontline*, 19, 21, October 12-25, 2002, pp. 43-44; 'Uttar Pradesh: Politics over Governance', *Economic and Political Weekly*, 37, 42, October 19, 2002, p. 4253.

⁷² *Amar Ujala*, Lucknow Edition, October 28, 2002, December 23, 2002, January 11, 2003 and February 25, 2002.

⁷³ *Amar Ujala*, Lucknow Edition, April 15, 2003; *Amar Ujala*, Lucknow Edition, April 15, 2003; Poornima Joshi, 'A few sharp dog bytes', *Outlook*, 43, 15, April 21, 2003, pp. 22-23; *The Pioneer*, New Delhi Edition, February 16, 2003 and February 15, 2003; *The Statesman*, New Delhi Edition, June 16, 2003; *The Pioneer*, Lucknow Edition, February 15, 2003.

⁷⁴ Yogesh Mishra, Sutapa Mukherjee, 'A tag on the Taj', *Outlook*, 43, 31, August 11, 2003, p.23; *The Statesman*, New Delhi Edition, July 4, 2003.

⁷⁵ Sudha Pai, 'Choices before the BSP', *Seminar*, No. 534, February 2004, pp.12-15; *Hindustan Times*, New Delhi Edition, September 9, 2003; A.K.Verma, 'BSP's Strategy in Uttar Pradesh: Wooing the Brahmins for a New Alliance', *Economic and Political Weekly*, 40, 26, June 25, 2005, p.

2647; 'Behenji's Brahmin Gamble', URL: [http://www.shivamvij.com/2007/04/behenji% E2% 80% 99s brahmin-gamble.html](http://www.shivamvij.com/2007/04/behenji%E2%80%99s%20brahmin-gamble.html) [accessed on 24.08.07]; *The Pioneer*, New Delhi Edition, September 6, 2003; 'BSP-BJP Alliance', *Economic and Political Weekly*, 37, 23, June 8, 2002, p. 2204.

⁷⁶ *The Times of India*, New Delhi Edition, April 23, 2004; A.K.Verma, 'Uttar Pradesh: Will BSP and Congress gain?', *Economic and Political Weekly*, 39, 15, May 1, 2004, p. 1776; Purnima Tripathi, 'Feel good wearing thin', *Frontline*, 21, 9, April 24-May 7, 2004, pp. 14-16; Purnima Tripathi, 'Decisive defeat for Hindutva', *Frontline* 21, 11, May 22-June 4, 2004, pp. 19-20.

⁷⁷ Purnima Tripathi, 'Decisive defeat for Hindutva', *Frontline* 21, 11, May 22-June 4, 2004, pp. 19-20; A.K.Verma, 'BSP's Strategy in Uttar Pradesh: Wooing the Brahmins for a New Alliance', *Economic and Political Weekly*, 40, 26, June 25, 2005, p. 2647; Venkitesh Ramakrishnan, 'The Battle for UP', *Frontline*, 21, 10, May 8-21, 2004, pp. 4-5; Sanjay Kumar, 'The Prospects', p. 67.

⁷⁸ URL: <http://www.indian-election.com/uttarpradesh/index.html#cont> [accessed on 24. 10. 07]; H.D.Singh, *Faces in India*, pp. 254-287; Aggarwal and Chowdhury, *Elections in India*, pp. 232-237; Ramashray Roy and Paul Wallace (Eds.), *Indian Politics and the 1998 Elections: Regionalism, Hindutva and State Politics*, New Delhi, Sage Publications, 1999, p. 62.

⁷⁹ Dipankar Gupta, Yogesh Kumar, 'When the Caste Calculus fails: Analysing BSP's victory in UP', *Economic and Political Weekly*, 42, 33, August 18, 2007, p. 3393; URL:<http://www.indianmuslims.info/news/2007/may/12/impt/-being-mayawati.html> [accessed on 22.12.07]; URL:<http://www.opinionasia.org/article/print/255> [accessed on 24.08.07]).

⁸⁰ *The Hindu*, New Delhi Edition, June 16, 2005.

⁸¹ Ramakrishnan, 'A new caste formula', *Frontline*, 22, 13, June 18-July 1, 2005, 27-28, pp. 27-28.

In a desperate move Mulayam Singh Yadav went on a high-publicity 'ad-blitz' 'Uttar Pradesh mein hai dum/yaha jurm hai kum' (Uttar Pradesh is powered by development/and crime is less) to negate the sharp criticism of the SP government. The campaign featured veteran cine actor Amitabh Bachchan, husband of Jaya Bachchan, a SP member.

⁸² Pradeep Kapoor, Brahmins, BSP's new found love [URL: <http://www.sify.com/news/fullstory.php?Id=13725355>] [accessed on 24. 08. 07]; *The Times of India*, Lucknow Edition, May 24, 2005; Ramakrishnan, 'A

new caste formula', *Frontline*, 22, 13, June 18-July 1, 2005, 27-28; Sudha Pai, *Political Process in Uttar Pradesh*, p. 265; Interview with senior BSP leader, Bahujan Samaj Party, CD-ROM, Vol I &II, Lucknow, UP, 2005.

⁸³ *The Hindu*, New Delhi Edition, May 12, 2007; Vivek Kumar, 'Behind the BSP Victory', *Economic and Political Weekly*, 42, 24, June 16, 2007, p. 2238; Interview with senior BSP leader A.K.Verma, 'Mayawati's Sandwich Coalition', *Economic and Political Weekly*, 42, 22, June 2, 2007, p. 2040.

⁸⁴ Verma, *BSP's strategy in Uttar Pradesh*, pp. 2247-48; Venkitesh Ramakrishnan, 'For a Winning Formula', *Frontline*, 24, 6, March 24, 2007, pp. 121-122; Venkitesh Ramakrishnan, 'The new behenji', *Frontline*, 24, 8, April 21, 2007, pp.11-13 ; URL: <http://www.shivamvij.com/2007/3/the-elephant-paradox.html> [accessed on 25. 08. 07]; URL: <http://www.news.speeple.com/instablogs.com/2007/05/12/change-in-ideology-puts-BSP-in-power-for-5-tears-in-UP.htm> [accessed on 24.08.07]; Interview with senior BSP leader.

⁸⁵ Suhas Palshikhar, 'Beyond Uttar Pradesh: New Implications for Party Politics', *Economic and Political Weekly*, 42, 21, May 26, 2007, pp. 1892, 1891; 'Mayawati's Revolution', *Economic and Political Weekly*, 42, 20, May 19, 2007, p. 1796.

⁸⁶ Vivek Kumar, 'Behind the BSP Victory', *Economic and Political Weekly*, 42, 24, June 16, 2007, p. 2238; *The Hindu*, New Delhi Edition, May 3, 2007; Suhas Palshikhar, 'Beyond Uttar Pradesh: New Implications for Party Politics', *Economic and Political Weekly*, 42, 21, May 26, 2007, p. 1892; *Hindustan Times*, New Delhi Edition, May 25, 2009.

⁸⁷ Vivek Kumar, 'Behind the BSP Victory', p. 2238; Palshikhar, Beyond Uttar Pradesh, p. 1891; A.K.Verma, 'Sandwich Coalition', *Economic and Political Weekly*, 42, 22, June 2, 2007, p. 2040; Pratap Somvanshi, 'King Mayawati', *Himal*, June 2007, p. 18; *Hindustan Times*, New Delhi Edition, 8.12.07; URL: <http://www.twocircles.net/2007,May 13/naseemuddin-siddiqui-muslim-face-bsp.html> [accessed on 24.08.07].

⁸⁸ A.K.Verma, 'Municipal Elections in Uttar Pradesh', *Economic and Political Weekly*, 41, 51, December 23, 2006, pp. 5218-5221.

⁸⁹ Ramakrishnan, 'For a Winning Formula', *Frontline*, 24, 6, March 24, 2007, pp. 121-122; URL: <http://www.opinionasia.org/article/print/255> [accessed on 24.08.07]; *Tehelka*, New Delhi Edition, April 7, 2009.

⁹⁰ *The Hindu*, New Delhi Edition, May 12, 2007; *The Telegraph*, Kolkata Edition, May 14, 2007; Election Commission of India URL: <http://>

[www.eci.gov.in/Statistical Reports/SE_2007/Stat Report AS 2007_UTTAR_PRADESH.pdf](http://www.eci.gov.in/Statistical%20Reports/SE_2007/Stat%20Report%20AS%202007_UTTAR_PRADESH.pdf) [accessed on 21.04.08]; Sanjay Kumar, 'The Prospects', pp. 66-69.

⁹¹ *Hindustan Times*, New Delhi Edition, May 13, 2007; Syed Shahbuddin, 'Muslim and UP Assembly Elections-2007: Some Gains and Guidelines for the Future', *Muslim India Monthly*, Journal of Reference, Research and Documentation, 24, 276, June 2007, p. 27.

⁹² *Hindustan Times*, New Delhi Edition, May 13, 2007; Interview with a senior BSP leader. The BSP leader added that the Dalit-Brahmin alliance accounts for 104 of 206 seats the BSP won in the May 2007 assembly elections.

⁹³ Interview with Ambeth Rajan, New Delhi, 1.01.09; URL: <http://www.bloggersnews.net/15800.htm/15972.htm/16109.htm/16252.htm/16436.htm/16472.htm/16617.htm> [accessed on 21.04.08]; Schwecke, *Rationality in Politics*, p. 20; URL: <http://www.indian.express.com/story/298296.htm> [accessed on 20.04.08].