

Electoral Politics of Regional Political Parties in Haryana: An Analysis

*Rajni Arora, Research Scholar,
Dept. of Political Science, GKU, Talwandi Sabo

** Dr. Sukhdev Singh, Asst. Prof.,
Dept. of Political Science, GKU, Talwandi Sabo

*** Dr. Rajni Bala, Assoc. Prof.
Dept. of Political Science, GKU, Talwandi Sabo

Abstract

Regional political parties are incredibly important to the operation of all forms of government. This essay explains Haryana's regional political parties' electoral results and base of support. In Haryana politics, regional political parties have played a big influence. There were two new regional parties: the Haryana Janhit Congress (HJC) and the Haryana Vikas Party (HVP). In 2005, HJC, and HVP combined to become Congress, respectively. The only regional party with significant influence in the state has been INLD. However, the INLD divided into the Jannayak Janta Party (JJP) in 2019. The existence of numerous regional parties is a significant aspect of India's political system. But in 2019, INLD split into another faction named Jannayak Janta Party (JJP).

Keywords: Regional party, politics, Assembly, Election, Caste, Haryana

1.1 Introduction

Regional political parties were also formed before the state of Haryana was created. For example, Sher Singh launched the Haryana Lok Samiti, Sir Chhotu Ram built the Unionist Party, and Pt. Sri Ram Sharma founded the Gandhi Janata Party. These groups occasionally joined forces to establish the Congress party. After its formation, regional parties had a comeback in the state of Haryana¹. Factionalist tendencies began to surface among numerous political organizations once the state was created. The regional parties were further formed as a result of factionalism within the Congress party led to the formation of additional regional parties. The first group to break away from the Congress (I) and create a new regional party in 1967 was the Vishal Haryana Party (VHP). But eventually the party's power was limited to the Ahir belt, despite his best efforts to protect the interests of the peasantry. Following the fall of B.D. Sharma's Congress (I) government, the VHP for a short time held power while Rao Birender Singh led the United Front government. The party lost power after the government was toppled in November 1967, but it was able to resurrect itself as the main

¹Sharma,R.K. (1967). Voting Pattern in the Fourth General Election-III: Congress Gains from a Divided Opposition in Haryana”, Economic and Political Weekly, Vol. 2, (No 26), July 1 p. 1183

opposition party in part because of the support of Ahirs, who viewed Rao Birender Singh as their unquestioned leader. Rao Birender Singh, however, realized that the party had little prospect of success in the state because of Haryana's lack of a strong sense of regional identity. As a result, the party united to establish Congress (I) in 1978. After the 1967 assembly elections, Ch. Charan Singh established the Bhartiya Kranti Dal (BKD), another regional party. In a similar vein, Vedic socialism served as the foundation for the 1970 establishment of the Arya Sabha by Swami Agnivesh. In Haryana, neither was able to make a name for them. There also emerged other regional parties like the Haryana Vikas Party (HVP) and the Haryana Janhit Congress (HJC). HJC and HVP merged to form Congress in 2005, respectively. The INLD has been the only significant regional party in the state. However, the INLD broke away to become the Jannayak Janta Party (JJP) in 2019.

1.2 Objective

- To analyze the role of regional party in Haryana
- To understand the continuity and changes in Haryana Electoral Politics

1.3 Research Methodology

This study is descriptive and analytical that is based on secondary data. Secondary data is used to analyze needful information. The sources of data are such as books, journals, newspaper, articles and internet etc. The data is collected from different libraries of universities, colleges and other institutions. All the Information related to the topic will be collected from relevant sources.

1.4 Review of Literature

Chahar, S. S. (2004) observed that it is the first-ever complete research work on the political process in the state since the British rule in his book “Dynamics of Electoral Politics in Haryana.” Socio-economic shape of the state effect on the electoral process has also been considered. It focused mainly on the critical description of the general elections of 1967, the mid-terms polls of 1968 and the Assembly elections of 1972. **Dahiya, B. S. (2008)** highlighted that an Outlook from the Bridge is an exciting account of Haryana Politics from the time of Ch. Chhotu Ram, up to Ch. Bhupinder Singh Hooda, when it has come of age in his book “Power Politics in Haryana”. **Jodhka, S.S. (2019)** focused the history of political pattern in Haryana in his article “The Haryana State Assembly Election 2019”. He is also traced out the ground realities of the changing electoral behavior in Haryana. **Veerbhadreppa, T. (2020)** Explained the importance of regional Political parties in India electorap politics in his article “Regional Political Parties: An Indian Experience.” He is also

covered the journey of regional political parties in Indian Election. **Bharti, M.S. (2022)** in her article "The Dynamic of Party System in India: A Comparative Study of National and Regional Parties" highlighted the structure of political parties and role of formation the government in center and state level. **Srinivasa, T.S. (2023)** in his article "Role of Regional Political Parties in Democracy" focused the history of political pattern in Haryana in his article Focused the role of regional political parties in India and he also described the functions and classification of regional political parties in India..

1.5 Indian National Lok Dal

The well-known Indian politician Ch. Devi Lal is widely known as "Tau of Haryana" formed the INLD. In Punjab, Ch. Devi Lal rose to prominence as a farmer leader during the 1950s peasant movement. He went on to become the President of the Punjab Congress in 1956. With Punjab's language reform in 1966, Devi Lal became more well-known in the Haryana political arena. After resigning, he and Charan Singh launched the new political party Bhartiya Lok Dal in 1971.

The entire country's political system experienced a dramatic change in June 1975 when the then prime minister, Indira Gandhi, declared a state of emergency through the President of India. Around this period, Haryana's political system started to be influenced by the state's anti-Punjab prejudice. All of Haryana's political groups were too zealous in their opposition to Punjab's demands because of the Chandigarh and SYL issues and the accompanying political storm in Punjab, which brought Punjab's and Haryana's interests together. The scenario quickly descended into a Hindu-Sikh rift. Devi Lal steadfastly defended Haryana's interests against Punjab while avoiding communal slander.

At this time, the neighboring state of Punjab was going to be the scene of some of the bloodiest terrorist conflicts in Indian history. The SYL issue was one of its triggers. By now, Devi Lal had founded the Lok Dal in 1980. Though they disagreed with one another on a number of political issues, the political parties in Haryana came together essentially to resist the demands made by the Akalis in Punjab. They felt that any concessions made to Punjab by the Centre would have an impact on Haryana, particularly with regard to the SYL and Chandigarh issues. The political climate in Haryana exacerbated the strife in Punjab. By 1980, the Lok Dal administration in Haryana had initiated the process of building SYL, as part of its manifesto. Together with the BJP, Lok Dal ran candidates for the Legislative Assembly in 1982. That year was the first time these parties had formed an alliance. In contrast to its ally, Lok Dal did well in urban areas but performed poorly in rural ones. Only

in the 'Jat-belt' did the INLD and BJP win the majority of seats. Devi Lal, its leader, presented his case for the establishment of the administration. However, the Governor initially required him to demonstrate his majority. Later, the government swore in Congress leader Bhajan Lal as Chief Minister after inviting him due to pressure from the Center. Devi Lal organized the Haryana Sangharsh Samiti to lead Nyayayudh, or the "battle of justice," prior to the 1987 Assembly elections.

In 1987, the Lok Dal and its former alliance partner, the BJP, fared incredibly well and were able to form government in Haryana². In 1987 Lok Dal not only secured electoral victories in new areas but was also able to capture vote share in the Rural-South region. These regions were traditionally weak for Lok Dal. After this, Devi Lal decided to join the Janata Dal government in 1989 and got the chair of the Deputy Prime Minister in the government of V.P. Singh and Chandrasekhar Rao. This was the time when Devi Lal's identity emerged as a major national leader³. After becoming Deputy Prime Minister, his son Om Prakash Chautala captured the CM's chair in Haryana. The President's Rule was imposed in the state before the Assembly elections of 1991 because the government lost the majority in the House when the Speaker expelled three government supporters under the anti-defection law. Lok Dal had to pay the price for the poor performance of its government and ultimately lost in the Assembly elections of 1991. The Om Prakash Chautala created Haryana Lok Dal in 1996 and then renamed it to Indian National Lok Dal. INLD improved its position in the state during the Assembly elections of 1998. It contested in alliance with BSP. The unpopular rule of the HVP-BJP combine and the continued downslide of Congress were the reasons for the improved position of INLD. The INLD was a member of the National Democratic Alliance (NDA), which formed the Union government under the dominant role of the BJP from 1998 to 2004. Further, Assembly elections of 2000 clearly showed that INLD was no longer a party of Jats only, but its roots were extended to other sections of society too. INLD received support both from urban and rural areas but again mainly big support from the rural sector. The 14th Lok Sabha elections of 2004 were in favour of Congress. There was an Anti-INLD wave that got converted in favour of Congress. People were disappointed with INLD. After that, INLD faced defeat in both the 2005 and 2009 Assembly elections. During these elections, the party in alliance with BJP was trying to give a tough fight to Congress in the state. However, the alliance got rejected by the electorate. From the Lok Sabha elections of

2004 to the Assembly elections of 2009, INLD was nowhere in the electoral scene. During the Lok Sabha and Assembly elections of 2014 in Haryana, there was conversion to national factors (including Modi factor) than the state-level factors.

The state's main opposition party, the INLD, which had remained in power in Haryana from 1999 to 2005, suffered a heavy loss. Its seats had been reduced by more than one third. However, its vote share declined only from 25.79 to 24.1 per cent which was a loss of only 1.69 per cent. Thus, a marginal decline in vote share caused a significant decrease in the number of seats won. This happened mainly because of the logic of the first past the post system and the pattern of division of INLD votes between the BJP and Congress. But the party was able to retain its support base even though its supremo Om Prakash Chautala was in jail due to the JBT teacher recruitment scam. However, the party failed to expand its support on account of sympathy for Chautala as perceived by its supporters. Further, the party went into a spiral of downfalls as a power struggle emerged in the Chautala family and resulted in a split in the party. A new party named Jannayak Janata Party (JJP) was formed by Dushyant Chautala the grandson of Om Prakash Chautala against Abhay Chautala, the younger son of Om Prakash Chautala. Both claimed to be the true heirs of the political ideology of Ch. Devi Lal^{4,7} The newly formed JJP performed better than its counterpart – the INLD in the Assembly elections of 2019 and formed an alliance with BJP which resulted in forming the government with Dushyant Chautala as Deputy Chief Minister. In the Assembly elections of 2019, the INLD forged an alliance with Akali Dal. The Chautala family had maintained close relations with the Badals' of Punjab who have created a monopoly over the Akali Dal in Punjab. However, the issue of SYL often becomes the deal-breaker in the Akali-INLD alliance.

INLD is one of the principal political parties in Haryana. It is always supposed to stand in the interest of the farming community and rural people. The ideology of the party and its programmed is to guard the interests of the peasantry. The party started to safeguard the interest of the peasantry against the urban rich and the capitalist class. The party color of INLD has been green, representing agriculture. It could be stated that INLD was same to the peasantry of Haryana was what the Akali Dal was to farmers in Punjab in the good old days. The party has a strong support base of the majority population (peasantry). Party has been concentrating upon the issues related to the welfare of the peasantry even during the mass movements against the Punjab Accord. The party has fits significantly in the socio-economic

and political background of the state. Haryana is primarily a rural state with a majority population dependent on agriculture. In rural Haryana, peasantry dominates due to its numerical and economic strength. INLD ideology is stated to be dedicated to the all-around upliftment of farmers, laborers, the downtrodden and the exploited. It draws inspiration from Jan Nayak Ch. Devi Lal's principles. The party considers the right of peaceful and democratic dissent, including Satyagrah or Non-violent resistance as a fundamental right of the people⁵. The politics in the state of Haryana is primarily affected by caste dynamics. The INLD has enjoyed widespread support from the Jat community as INLD emerged as a farmers' party wherein Jats are closely associated with agriculture. Ch. Devi Lal maintained a personality of a simple Jat which intrigued the Jat peasantry of Haryana. He was often seen playing cards in his village like a simple Jat, thus also called 'Tau' (Uncle). O.P. Chautala has also tried to maintain that Jat imagery.

Furthermore, INLD has maintained a centrist stance with no definite tilt towards political left or right. The policies put forward by INLD come under the social liberal structure. As a regional party, INLD has maintained that the fulfillment of the interests of the people of Haryana is its primary motive. While representing Haryana, the INLD as a regional party, has supported SYL even when they had close political relations with Akali Dal in Punjab. As a regional party, it also supports the distribution of powers to states and the decentralization of powers in India. The INLD's top leadership equation has always stood in favor of the Jat peasantry. So, the most committed supporters of the party come from the so-called Jat-belt. Although the party has always done much better in Assembly elections than Lok Sabha elections, the phenomenon exhibits that there is a section of voters who preferred to vote for the party only in Assembly elections and not in Lok Sabha elections. The INLD claimed the Jat interest in the state and but now it has got split into two parties. After the split, supporters of the INLD admitted that a majority of the party's support base has shifting to JJP.

Haryana Vikas Party

The year 1990 was an eventful year of political upheaval in Haryana. President rule was imposed in April 1991 and elections were held in June. Bansi Lal entered the fray under the banner of his own party Haryana Vikas Party. Bansi Lal floated this party after he left Congress in 1990. He was in opposition to the leadership of Bhajan Lal who enjoyed the

support of the Congress's high command. The party contested Lok Sabha and Assembly elections in 1991 and could win 1 out of 10 Lok Sabha seats and 12 out of 90 Assembly seats. Although, it attained limited success during the 1991 elections, but the Assembly elections of 1996 clearly belonged to Haryana Vikas Party and its alliance partner BJP.⁶ In this election, the alliance secured 44 seats nearly the half-mark in 90 members of the Haryana Assembly. The mandate was in Bansi Lal's favour and the electorate voted for the HVP-BJP alliance. In 1996, it had become clear that Bansi Lal would return to power.⁷ More important to his electoral triumph in the Lok Sabha and Assembly elections were the public's negative reaction to the previous Bhajan Lal regimes. Consequently, the HVP went from third to the first position. But the government headed by HVP lost its popularity by the time of the 1998 Lok Sabha elections. The government also lost the peasantry's support during elections and the HVP-BJP alliance could win only 2 seats out of 10. In 1999 'Aya Ram Gaya Ram' political culture again repeated itself.⁸ This time the national party, BJP withdrew its support to Bansi Lal and switched its loyalty to INLD. It proved beneficial to BJP during the next Lok Sabha elections. Congress came to its rescue and assured support to the beleaguered HVP supremeo but it also changed its stance within 19 days. The disgruntled elements of HVP with 17 members also deserted Bansi Lal and finally merged into INLD. As a result, the HVP government fell and Bansi Lal resigned from the Chief Minister's post. The HVP was completely routed in Assembly elections of 2000. It could win only 2 out of the total 82 seats that it contested and secured just 5.7 per cent vote share. HVP was the biggest loser and saw the continuous loss of its support base in the Lok Sabha elections of 2004. Consequently, it led to its merger in its parental party Congress before the Assembly elections of 2005. In 2005, Bansi Lal decided not to contest elections from Congress. In 2005, Surendra Singh and Ranbir Singh, both sons of Bansi Lal managed to win the election. In the government of Bhupinder Singh Hooda, Surendra Singh was made a Cabinet Minister. Shortly after becoming the minister, Bansi Lal's son Surendra Singh died in an air crash. After Surendra Singh's death, his wife Kiran Chaudhary stepped into politics and managed to become an MLA from Tosham. Bansi Lal too died in 2006⁹.¹³ Kiran Chaudhary's daughter Shruti Choudhary got a Congress ticket from the Bhiwani-Mahendergarh in the 2009 Lok Sabha seat and she managed to win the election. Shruti Chaudhary had to face defeat in 2014.

Despite the defeat, the rule of the Bansi Lal family in the Bhiwani area still persists. Kiran Chaudhary became MLA from the Tosham seat, in 2014 and she became the Leader of the Congress Legislature Party in the Assembly. In the meantime, Bansi Lal's family came face-to-face with the controversy over the property. This also shows the persistence of dynastic politics in Haryana. In 2019 the credibility of the Bansi Lal family was once again at stake. In the 17th Lok Sabha election of 2019, Congress had shown confidence in Shruti Choudhary from the Bhiwani-Mahendragarh seat but she lost. On the other side, in the Assembly elections of 2019, Kiran Choudhary again won from Tosham constituency.

1.6 Haryana Janhit Congress (Bhajan Lal)

The history of regional parties in the state usually has a short life and sooner or later they get merged into their parent party. The Congress's victory in Haryana in the Assembly election of 2005 caused a major rift in its State unit, as it opted to make Bhupinder Singh Hooda, leader of the Jat caste, the Chief Minister instead of Bhajan Lal. However, the party's decision was not accepted by the Bhajan Lal family. Bhajan Lal's son Kuldeep Bishnoi criticized the central leadership and started showing a rebellion against the Gandhi family. On December 2, 2007, Bhajan Lal and Kuldeep Bishnoi decided to end their journey with the Congress¹⁰.¹⁵ They laid the foundation of the Haryana Janhit Congress with the rising sun as its symbol, which was subsequently changed to a village woman and then to a tractor. Kuldeep Bishnoi became the chief of the new outfit. He accused Sonia Gandhi for foisting Bhupinder Singh Hooda as Chief Minister of Haryana. Haryana Janhit Congress (BL) opened its electoral account in the by election in 2008. In this by-election, the former Chief Minister Bhajan Lal retained his traditional Adampur seat. The Lok Sabha elections of 2009 were very crucial for Haryana Janhit Congress, which contested its first Lok Sabha elections. The party had at stake not only its political future but also the question of reputation and survival of the legacy of Bhajan Lal in Haryana politics.

In March 2009, the Haryana Janhit Congress suffered a setback when the secretary of its Mahila Wing, Meena Sheokand, joined the Congress. Earlier, another party leader, Ramesh Kumar Solanki, also joined the Congress after meeting the Chief Minister, Bhupinder Singh Hooda. In the Lok Sabha elections of 2009, the party won in Hisar, where Bhajan Lal emerged as the winning candidate, but its candidates lost badly in most constituencies. Interestingly, the Haryana Janhit Congress (BL) performed better than the INLD. In June 2009, the BSP forged an alliance with the Haryana Janhit Congress for the

forthcoming Haryana Assembly elections in 2009. Under this agreement, the BSP was to contest 40 and HJC was to nominate candidates on 50 seats in the 90-member Assembly. But the BSP severed its ties with the HJC (BL) ahead of the Assembly election following their differences over seat sharing. The HJC was contested 87 out of the 90 seats. HJC won six Assembly seats, i.e. Adampur, Assandh, Charkhi Dadri, Hansi, Narnaull, Samalkha. But five MLAs joined Indian National Congress and called it a merger, thus leaving only Kuldeep Bishnoi from Adampur as the party's legislator in Haryana Assembly. After that Kuldeep Bishnoi declared his support for the BJP in September 2013. He supported the BJP's Prime Ministerial candidate, Narendra Modi. In 2014, the party other claimants have emerged in different parties in the state on behalf of the Jat vote¹¹.

1.7 Jannayak Janta Party

JJP is the latest regional political party in Haryana. It emerged as a splinter group. It was founded on December 9, 2018, by Dushyant Chautala with the claimed ideology of Devi Lal, who served as Deputy Prime Minister of India and Chief Minister of Haryana. JJP emerged from a split in the INLD because of the ups and downs in the Chautala family. Dushyant Chautala (son of Ajay Chautala) promised that the new outfit would follow the path shown by Devi Lal. The formation of the new party was the result of power struggle within the Chautala family. On December 9, 2018 Dushyant Chautala formally launched the 'Jannayak Janata Party'¹² The new party's name begins with 'Jannayak', attributed to Devi Lal. Various speakers at the rally pledged to walk the path shown by the late leader. The inauguration gathering was of over 6 lakh people in Jind. This was the highest ever gathering Haryana had seen in a political event since 1986 when Devi Lal addressed the public in rally.

Ajay Chautala was absent from the Jind rally, being in jail because of his conviction of JBT scam. On January 31, 2019 a little over a month after its formation, the JJP fought a crucial Assembly by-election from Jind in Haryana. They lost the election, but certainly not by a massive margin. The party contested in the 17th Lok Sabha elections of 2019 in alliance with the AAP in the state. However, it failed to impact that time, and the BJP swept all 10 Lok Sabha seats from Haryana. In the Assembly election of 2019, JJP recorded a vote share of 15.3 per cent. It made an impressive debut by securing 10 seats which led it to make a deal

with the BJP to form a coalition government¹³. JJP has emerged as a key regional player in Haryana politics and appears to have swayed the INLD's core vote bank i.e the Jats. It is pertinent to understand the history of the political reality in the state. The support base and electoral performance of various regional parties in Haryana politics helps in understanding the dynamics of the state politics.

Conclusion

It is concluded that political parties are necessary for any democratic nation. India has 7 national and many regional political parties. After Independence, regional political party plays major role to form national and state government. So it may say that Haryana's regional political party plays vital role in electoral process. After 1967 regional political party played major role to form the In government. The influence of National parties in Haryana continues to overshadow regional parties, with Congress and BJP dominating the 2019 assembly election. Recently BJP has formed the government with absolute majority in Haryana and regional political parties have been wiped out.

Reference

- Sharma, R.K. (1967). Voting Pattern in the Fourth General Election-III: Congress Gains from a Divide
- Dsouza, S. M. (2024). Indian National Lokdal, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Indian-National-Lok-Dal>
- Jhamb, Chaman Lal, (2004). "Chief Ministers of Haryana" Chandigarh: Arun Publishing House, p.163,
- <http://inld.com.in>
- Wallac, Paul, (1997). "General Elections 1996: Regional Parties Dominant in Punjab and Haryana," Economic and Political Weekly, Vol. 32, issue 46, p. 2967.
- Ibid, p. 2968.
- Chahar, S.S. (2004). Dynamics of Haryana Politics, New Delhi: Sanjay Prakashan, p. 407.
- <http://frontline.thehindu.com/politics/politics-of-caste/article5914997/ece>



-
- <http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/bhajanlal-quits-congress-flots-new-party/articleshow2589681.cms> <http://frontline.thehindu.com/politics/politics-of-caste/article5914997/ece>
 - <http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/bhajanlal-quits-congress-flots-new-party/articleshow2589681.cms> Election 2014: BJP Double its Vote Share in Haryana” (2014).
 - <https://economictimes.indiatimes/news/politics-and-nation/elections-2014-bjp-double-its-vote-share-in-haryana/articleshow/35219806.cms?from-mdr>
 - <https://www.tribuneindia.com/news/archive/Haryana/news-detail-742392>
 - Vasudeva, V. (2023). Abhay Chautala Rules out INLD’s Merger with JJP, <https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/other-states/abhay-chautala-rules-out-inlds-merger-with-jjp/article29820948.ece>