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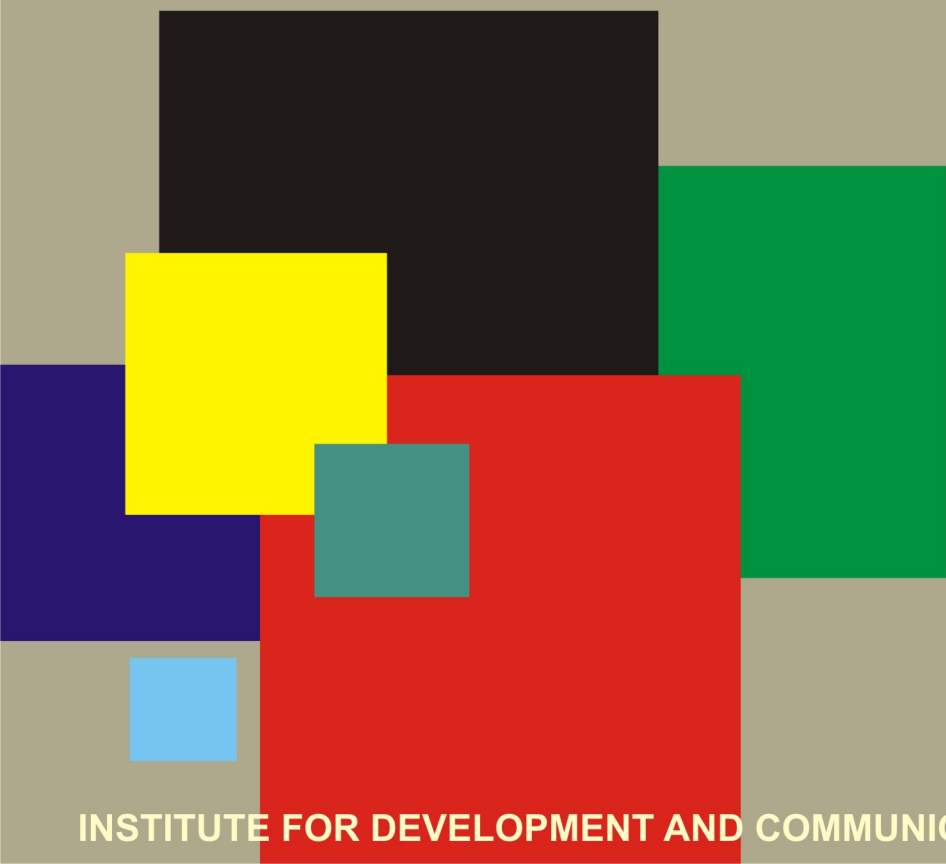


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PUNJAB ELECTORAL SPECTRUM :

Unfolding Challenges for Democracy

Pramod Kumar



INSTITUTE FOR DEVELOPMENT AND COMMUNICATION

FOR PRIVATE CIRCULATION

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I am grateful to Paul Wallace and E. Sridharan for their untiring efforts to inspire me to put my thoughts in a cogent manner.

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PREFACE

This collection of articles deal with the challenges of Democracy. Democracy in India has become synonymous with electoral politics, and elections have acquired an autonomous space. This has liberated political parties from adopting ideological positions. In other words, democracy could become representative in electoral sense, but could not become participatory in terms of decision-making. It is yet to become distributive, on the contrary, it has become accumulative. To term these elections as an expression of people's vote for issues relating to development is a kind of truism. In most of the elections people have mentioned unemployment, poverty, scarcity of water, electricity, roads, corruption as major issues, but still continued to vote for those political parties who promised, but did not perform. The real issue is the manner in which these problems are being addressed. In other words, it is the kind of politics when unleashed only perpetuates the problems.

The shift from a command to market economy has redefined the role of the state. The mandate of the governance changed from welfarism to fiscal management; public sector growth and employment to leveraging public resource for private growth and retrenchment of jobs in the public sector; subsidies to the private sector for making provision for health and education; and imposition of user charges on the citizens. This shaped two divergent kinds of discourse - one emanating from the shift in the path of development manifesting in what has been termed as 'state politics', and another found articulation at the time of elections in the form of 'populist politics'.

The practice of democracy has a select domain restricted to those who govern and those who avail of its governance. The two have entered into a collaborative relationship and emerged as custodians of the state shaping the terms of political discourse under the banner of 'state politics'. People on the

margins remain outside the realm of democratic practice and need doles for their survival that is provided by electoral politics, which further becomes their mainstay lending content to what is known as 'populist politics'. This has provided dominant space in mainstream politics to a coalition of interests in negation to the participation of citizens, diversities and regions in democratic governance. This tension has been reflected in the dichotomous relationship between populist politics and state politics. In populist politics it emanates from an articulation of politics of representation as synonymous with the presence of citizens, diversities and regions in exclusion of their stake building in state politics. The 'politics of presence' has overtaken politics of ideas, values and purpose. The outcome of this vacillation is that the ideological difference between political parties has got blurred while the difference between 'populist' and 'state politics' has become more manifest.

This collection of articles has discussed, that how far the institutional changes and popular pronouncements having a bearing on federalism, social democracy and social and economic inclusiveness. Above all, the attempt has been made to answer that how far politics of presence, of citizens, diversities and regions effected the distribution of justice or even goods and services.

Pramod Kumar

I

COALITION POLITICS IN PUNJAB: FROM COMMUNAL POLARISATION TO CATCHALL PARTIES?

The history of Punjab is replete with political parties entering into mergers, post-election coalitions and pre-election alliances. Pre-election alliances are a more recent phenomenon, occasional seat adjustments notwithstanding. While mergers have taken place even among parties with a competing support base (Congress and Akali Dal in 1948 and 1956), post-election coalitions and pre-election alliances have been among parties drawing upon well-defined social segments. As such there have been two main groupings: one led by the Congress, partnered by the communists, and the other consisting of the Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD) and Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). The Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) has moulded itself so as to be able to join any grouping as per its needs. Fringe groups that sprout occasionally, position themselves vis-à-vis the main groups to play the spoiler's role in the elections.

These groups are formed around common minimum programmes which have been used mainly to defend the alliances rather than nurture their ideological basis. For instance, the BJP, in alliance with the Akali Dal, finds it difficult to make the anti-terrorist law, POTA, a main election issue since the Akalis had been at the receiving end of state repression in the early 1990s. The Akalis, in alliance with the BJP, cannot revive their anti-Centre political plank. And the Congress finds it difficult to talk about economic liberalisation, as it has to take into account the sensitivities of its main ally, the CPI, which has campaigned against the WTO regime. The implications of this situation can be better understood by recalling the politics that has led to these alliances.

These contexts can be understood against the backdrop of nation-building projects in their interaction with Punjab's political, economic and cultural specificities. This interaction has

shaped and nurtured regional aspirations and political and electoral articulations. This can be categorised around three axes: historically, Punjab has had a culture and language which transcends religious group boundaries; it has a unified politico-administrative unit; and has promoted a modernising culture which has initiated the integration process of diverse religious, caste and other ascriptive group identities. In spite of the process of formulation and reformulation of the composite linguistic-cultural consciousness, the tendency to evolve a unified sub-nationality with a common political goal remained weak in Punjab. This, in a way, provided sufficient space for a competitive multi-party system and emergence of coalition politics.

‘Dwarfed’ Identity Assertions

The state and its interaction with the structural conditions muted the articulations of a secular Punjabi identity and assertions of communal groups and distinct religious identities. All these identities co-existed simultaneously.¹ To illustrate, linguistic and regional issues were articulated within the communal frame. The most obvious examples of this were the Hindi agitation, the Punjabi Suba movement in the pre-reorganisation phase and Khalistan assertions in the mid-1980s. At the same time, a secular Punjabi identity also coexisted. For example, an estimated 47 per cent of the Punjabi Hindus, according to the 1971 census, mentioned their mother tongue as Punjabi, even though the language question had become communalised, but by 1991 this proportion increased to 84 per cent². The adoption of the Moga Declaration by the SAD and the

¹ This has posed a dilemma for political analysts to capture competing identities. Although Punjab political history provides evidence to support contradictory viewpoints, namely, that political parties sometimes reflect communal antagonisms and sometimes moderate them, the predominating tendency in Punjab legislative politics has been towards intercommunal political coalition-building, whether this is done by a single broadly aggregative party or by inter-party alliance and coalition. Paul R. Brass. *Language, Religion and Politics in North India*. (London: Cambridge University Press, 1974), 362.

² Even a pamphlet published by the Shiromani Akali Dal on May 19, 1960, held the view that only a small minority of urban Hindus were opposed to the formation of a Punjabi-

BJP emphasising Punjab, Punjabi and Punjabiati is testimony to this fact.³

Minority-Majority Persecution Complex

The second axis emerges out of the state's peculiar demographic composition which has provided space for the co-existence of competing identities. Of the three religious groups, Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs, in 1931 the Sikhs were in a minority in undivided Punjab including Haryana and Himachal Pradesh: the percentage share of Hindus was 28, compared to the Muslims who were 56 and the Sikhs who were 13⁴. This configuration provided a conducive ground for coalition politics in the state as all religious groups considered themselves a minority.⁵

speaking state. To quote: "Recent agitation over the Punjabi-Hindi controversy has highlighted the fact that it is the Hindu urbanites living in the cities of Amritsar, Jullundur, Ludhiana and Ambala who alone oppose the formation of the Punjabi-speaking state. These urbanite Hindus do not form the majority of the Hindu population and can in no way form a substantial minority in the Punjabi-speaking zone." *A Plea for a Punjabi State*. (Amritsar: Shiromani Akali Dal, 1960), 27. According to the 1971 Census, the total population of the state was 13,472,972 with 37.54 per cent being Hindus, i.e. 5,057,754. The number stating Hindi as their mother tongue stood at 2,711,490; assuming all these to be Hindus, the percentage of Hindus mentioning Hindi as their mother tongue is estimated at 53.61.

Pramod Kumar et.al. *Punjab Crisis: Context and Trends*. (Chandigarh: Centre for Research in Rural and Industrial Development, 1984), p. 39.

³ The Moga declaration was adopted on April 14, 1995. To quote from the document, "the spirit of Punjabiati would be strengthened so that these matters get projected as common problems of the entire Punjabis rather than a section thereof." Kanwaljit Singh. *The Policy Programme of Shiromani Akali Dal*. April 14, 1995, p. 4.

⁴ J.H. Hutton. *Census of India 1931: India: Imperial Tables*, Vol. 1, pt. II, 1933, p. 582.

⁵ The argument advanced is that wherever the Hindus and Sikhs are in a minority and the Muslim League ministry is a possibility, it is desirable to join the coalition to protect 'Hindu' and 'Sikh' interests. Veer Savarkar, leader of Hindu Maha Sabha, described its policy in 1943 and later in a telegram to Master Tara Singh: "In the Hindu minorities provinces wherever a Muslim ministry seems inevitable – whether it was sponsored by the Muslim League or otherwise – and Hindu interest can be bettered by joining it, the Hindu Maha Sabha should try as a matter of right to capture as many seats as possible in the ministry and do their best to safeguard the interests of the Hindu minority." He further added, "a coalition ministry if it is actuated by just and patriotic motives can be an effective process which will train us in team work, remove the sense of annihilation and lead to national consolidation in spite of differences of race and creed". Ajit Singh Sarhadi. *Punjabi Suba: the Story of the Struggle*. (Delhi: U.C. Kapur and Sons, 1970), 73.

To illustrate, in 1937 the Akali Dal fought the elections in alliance with the Congress on a Congress-cum-Akali ticket. In the Legislative Assembly they shared seats with the Congress and their representative became leader of the opposition. In 1942, differences arose between the parties on the issue of supporting the Second World War: the Congress opposed participation in the war, while the Akali Dal argued that non-participation would adversely affect the interests of the Sikhs in the army. Consequently, a pact was signed between the Muslim League and the SAD, and the Akali Dal representative S. Baldev Singh joined the Cabinet.

At the time of partition, the migration of population had a significant impact on the future course of political, economic and social events in the state. The Sikh population increased from 13 per cent to 33 per cent and the Hindu population from 28 per cent to 64 per cent in post-partition, pre-linguistic reorganisation Punjab (1961 census). During this period Punjab was divided into two regions, Punjabi-speaking and Hindi-speaking; in 8 of the 12 Punjabi-speaking districts, Sikhs were in a majority.⁶

With the reorganisation of the state in the mid-1960s, the Sikhs became a majority with 60 per cent and the Hindus accounted for 37 per cent⁷ of the population (see tables 1.1 and 1.2). This introduced a situation in which both the Hindus and Sikhs continued to suffer from a minority persecution complex but with a difference. Interestingly, the Hindus suffered from a majority-minority complex as they perceived themselves to be a majority in India but a minority in reorganised Punjab; the Sikhs for their part were perceived to have a minority-majority complex, as a majority in Punjab and a minority in India. This complex was not based merely on numbers, but their differing relative presence in various occupations provided the basis for interest articulation along religious group lines even in secular spheres.

⁶ Ibid. p. 152.

⁷ *Statistical Abstract of Punjab, 2012*.

Table 1.1
Districtwise Population by Religion in Punjab 2001

District	Total Population	Hindu		Sikh		Muslim		Christian		Others	
		Population (no.)	%	Population (no.)	%	Population (no.)	%	Population (no.)	%	Population (no.)	%
Gurdaspur	21,04,011	996246	47.35	934963	44.44	20768	0.99	148981	7.08	3053	0.15
Amritsar	21,57,020	561461	26.03	1551024	71.91	5295	0.25	34973	1.62	4267	0.20
Tarntaran	9,39,057	86823	9.25	832551	88.66	1876	0.20	16975	1.81	832	0.09
Kapurthala	7,54,521	286438	37.96	448654	59.46	6408	0.85	4353	0.58	8668	1.15
Jalandhar	19,62,700	1158868	59.04	740841	37.75	17308	0.88	22106	1.13	23577	1.20
SBS Nagar	5,87,468	356710	60.72	219856	37.42	4057	0.69	619	0.11	6226	1.06
Hoshiarpur	14,80,736	871923	58.88	574862	38.82	15394	1.04	12726	0.86	5831	0.39
Roopnagar	6,28,846	244428	38.87	369441	58.75	12816	2.04	1332	0.21	829	0.13
SAS Nagar	6,98,317	298154	42.70	383664	54.94	13255	1.90	1789	0.26	1455	0.21
Ludhiana	30,32,831	1205128	39.74	1744446	57.52	52220	1.72	11656	0.38	19381	0.64
Ferozpur	17,46,107	820234	46.98	896628	51.35	3370	0.19	23093	1.32	2782	0.16
Faridkot	5,50,892	119702	21.73	427104	77.53	1739	0.32	939	0.17	1408	0.26
Shri Mukatsar Sahib	7,77,493	196039	25.21	576231	74.11	2643	0.34	1403	0.18	1177	0.15
Moga	8,94,854	117786	13.16	767769	85.80	5996	0.67	2564	0.29	739	0.08
Bathinda	11,83,295	292984	24.76	876426	74.07	9847	0.83	1659	0.14	2379	0.20
Mansa	6,88,758	139225	20.21	539514	78.33	7071	1.03	398	0.06	2550	0.37
Sangrur	14,73,242	318101	21.59	1034064	70.19	115638	7.85	1521	0.10	3918	0.27
Barnala	5,26,931	116772	22.16	366085	69.47	42200	8.01	550	0.10	1324	0.25
Patiala	16,33,879	688264	42.12	907092	55.52	31358	1.92	4078	0.25	3087	0.19
Fatehgarh Sahib	5,38,041	122656	22.80	401172	74.56	12789	2.38	1085	0.20	339	0.06
Total	243,58,999	8997942	36.94	14592387	59.91	382048	1.57	292800	1.20	93822	0.39

Source: Statistical Abstract of Punjab 2012

Table 1.2
Rural-Urban Population by Religion in Punjab 2001

Location	Total Population	Hindu		Sikh		Muslim		Christian		Others	
		Population (no.)	%	Population (no.)	%	Population (no.)	%	Population (no.)	%	Population (no.)	%
Rural	16096488	4064199	25.25	11567437	71.86	215518	1.34	211161	1.31	38173	0.24
Urban	8262511	4933743	59.71	3024950	36.61	166530	2.02	81639	0.99	55649	0.67
Total	24358999	8997942	36.94	14592387	59.91	382048	1.57	292800	1.20	93822	0.39

Source: Statistical Abstract of Punjab 2012

Caste, Religious and Class Axes

The third important aspect was the interaction of caste with politics within the broad boundary conditions reformulated by religious reform movements. Punjab has been known for its liberal ritualistic religious practices in relation to caste. Both Sikhism and the Arya Samaj liberated the dalits from stringent purity pollution-based behavioural patterns. This can be termed the regionalisation of caste. For example, in 2001 the dalits constituted nearly 29 per cent of the total population of the state, perhaps the highest in the country⁸ (2001 census). A unique regional feature is that the dalits share a common cultural reservoir to acquire social parity without accepting the hierarchical system⁹. This has given them greater political and social bargaining capacity without their becoming hostage to any particular dalit party. Therefore, it would be appropriate to see the relationship of these axes with party dynamics and coalition politics.

Interface of the 'Axes' with Party Dynamics

These features have shaped the politics of the state, so that caste has yet to become an idiom of politics, and religious, linguistic and regional identities have become so intermeshed that no one parameter alone has emerged as an exclusive factor in electoral mobilisations and coalitions. For example, the Shiromani Akali Dal's (SAD's) political assertions ranged from religious identity to a secular Punjabi identity, and its birth on January 24, 1921, can be traced to the anti-caste thrust of social and religious interactions.¹⁰ The underlying politics was to attain

⁸ *Census of India. 2001. India: Final Population Totals. Series 1, p.1.*

⁹ Pramod Kumar and Rainuka Dagar. 'Gender in dalit Identity Construction in Punjab' in Harish K. Puri (ed.) *dalits in Regional Context*. (Delhi: Rawat Publications, 2004).

¹⁰ In 1920, at a religious conference where 'amrit parchar' took place, many members of the congregation belonged to the scheduled castes. Some of them had been baptised and were later taken to Sri Darbar Sahib for *ardasa* (prayer) and distribution of *karah parshad*. The irony of the situation was that the priests present at Sri Darbar Sahib refused to allow the participation of these "Harijans" (scheduled castes) who had been baptised in the *ardas*; this annoyed the congregation present, who protested at this un-Sikh-like discrimination and insisted at the participation of the Harijans in the *ardasa*

freedom in political, social and religious domains. However, its core support base has been the Sikhs; its leadership and cadres comes from Sikh Jats with a rural background particularly in the post-reorganisation phase, and electoral support from the rural Sikh Jat peasantry, dalit Sikhs, a section of urban Sikh traders and small commission agents and shopkeepers from small towns.¹¹ A sample survey of party activists of the SAD in 2004 shows that 42 per cent are farmers, 27 per cent belong to business and industry, and 25 per cent are small shopkeepers. An overwhelming majority of 85 per cent of these are Sikhs (tables 1.3 and 1.4).

Table 1.3
Occupation and Party-wise Distribution of Activists

	Congress	SAD (B)	BJP	Akali Dal (Mann)	BSP	CPI (M) / CPI	Total
Executive (business and trade)	24 (38.10)	16 (27.12)	19 (50.00)		3 (9.68)	1 (3.03)	63 (27.75)
Lower executive (teachers, etc.)	1 (1.59)		1 (2.63)		3 (9.68)	5 (15.15)	10 (4.41)
Self-employed (shopkeepers, etc.)	20 (31.75)	15 (25.42)	12 (31.58)		12 (38.71)	16 (48.48)	75 (33.04)
Land owners (5+ acres)	8 (12.70)	23 (38.98)		2 (66.67)			33 (14.54)
Cultivator (< 5 acres)	2 (3.17)	2 (3.39)		1 (33.33)	2 (6.45)	2 (6.06)	9 (3.96)
Labour work (unskilled)	4 (6.35)				2 (6.45)	1 (3.03)	7 (3.08)
Artisans (semi-skilled)			1 (2.63)				1 (0.44)
Retired	4 (6.35)	3 (5.08)	5 (13.16)		8 (25.81)	8 (24.24)	28 (12.33)
Unemployed					1 (3.23)		1 (0.44)
Total	63 (100.00)	59 (100.00)	38 (100.00)	3 (100.00)	31 (100.00)	33 (100.00)	227 (100.00)

Source: Punjab Legislative Assembly.

SSP: Samyukta Socialist Party

RSP: It is not RSP, but PSP and full form is Praja Socialist Party

Note: Figures in parentheses denote the percentage share of the occupation among total activists in the party.

and their sharing in the distribution of the *karah parshad*. Ajit Singh Sarhadi. op.cit. p. 20.

¹¹ Till the mid-1960s a coalition of urban Sikh traders, peasantry and Sikh government employees under the leadership of Master Tara Singh dominated Akali politics. But in the post-reorganisation phase, rural Jat peasantry became dominant both in the Akali Dal and the SGPC.

Table 1.4
Religion and Party-wise Distribution of Activists

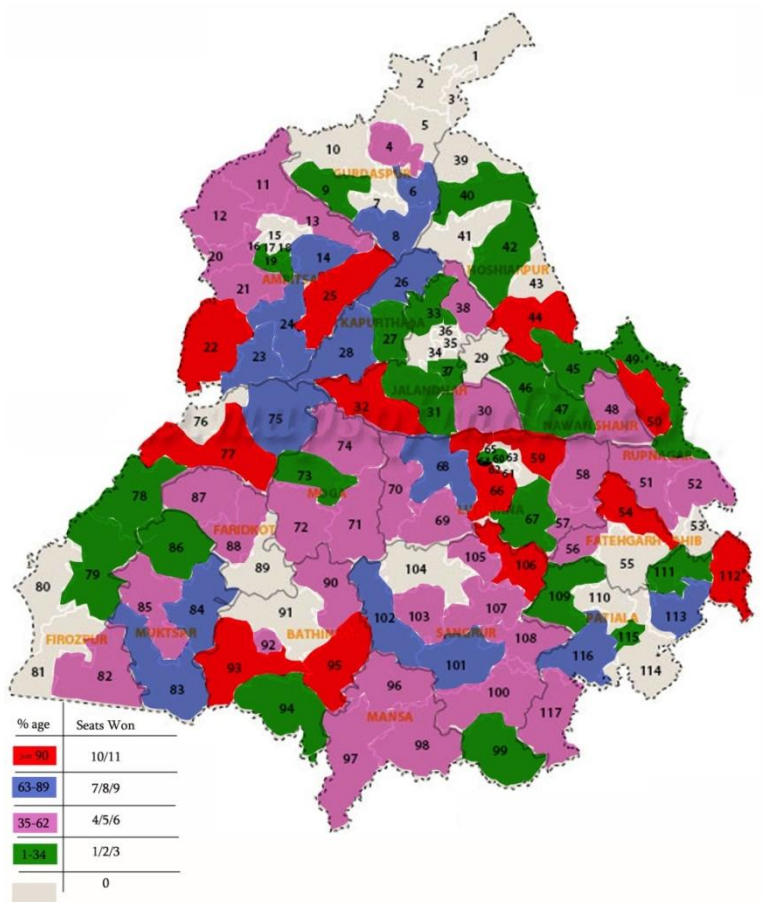
	Congress	SAD (B)	BJP	Akali Dal (Mann)	BSP	CPI (M) / CPI	Total
Sikh	20	50	1	3	6	15	95
	(31.75)	(84.75)	(2.63)	(100.00)	(19.35)	(45.45)	(41.85)
Hindu	42	9	36		25	18	130
	(66.67)	(15.25)	(94.74)		(80.65)	(54.55)	(57.27)
Christian	1		1				2
	(1.59)		(2.63)				(0.88)
Total	63	59	38	3	31	33	227
	(100.00)	(100.00)	(100.00)	(100.00)	(100.00)	(100.00)	(100.00)

Source: Field Survey, 2004

Note: Figures in parentheses denote the percentage share of the occupation among total activists in the party.

An analysis of seats won by the SAD in all elections between 1967 and 2012 shows that it had a clear edge in 28 of the 117 assembly seats and that a majority of these were predominantly rural (Map 1.1). A comparative analysis of the vote share shows that the Akali Dal secured the maximum votes in rural constituencies, i.e., 43 per cent in the 1997 Assembly elections, around 17 per cent in urban constituencies and 33 per cent in semi-urban constituencies in the 2007 Assembly pre-election coalition phase (Table 1.5). As a consequence, it articulates agrarian interests and appropriates Sikh religious symbols to blur the emerging contradiction between the agrarian and other sectors of the economy. However, in the post-terrorism period, urban Hindu traders, in response to the Akali Dal's pre-election alliance with the BJP based on Hindu-Sikh amity, have shown a preference for the Akali Dal. Interestingly, for the first time, the SAD fielded 9 Hindu candidates in 2012 elections. The Akalis' urban vote share in 2007 increased to 17 per cent from 16 per cent in the 1997 assembly elections in pre-election alliance with the BJP.

Map 1.1
Percentage Share of Constituencies Won :
Shiromani Akali Dal (Badal) 1967-2012



There has been a qualitative shift in the Akali support base. The first shift took place at the time of the reorganisation of Punjab coupled with the Green Revolution. The rural Jat Sikhs constituted its main support base and its leadership also came from this section.¹² The second shift took place in the aftermath of Operation Blue Star and the anti-Sikh riots of 1984. The Akalis' urban vote had revolved around 5 per cent but in 1985 it touched the 12 per cent mark with the active support of the urban khatri Sikhs (table 1.5, 1.6 and 1.7). The third shift took place after the resurgence of democracy in 1997, whereby a substantial number of urban Hindus supported the Akali Dal¹³ (tables 1.8, 1.9, 1.10 and 1.11).

¹² The Jat Sikh legislators in general and, of the Akali Dal in particular, belonged to the upper strata. The two groups into which the Akalis had split represented different tendencies and styles of functioning. Sant Fateh Singh represented the incremental-conformist group and a section of the religious fundamentalists, whereas the Master Tara Singh Akali Dal represented the extremists and a minority of the religious fundamentalists and incremental conformists. H.S. Deol. "Analysis of Political Elite in Punjab with special reference to the Legislature", Ph.D. thesis submitted to Punjab University, 1979.

¹³ Pramod Kumar. 'Transcending the Divide'. *Deccan Herald*, February 16, 1997.

Table 1.5
Location-wise Major Party and Year-wise Votes Polled, Constituencies Contested and Won

			BJS/ BJP	CPI	CPM	INC	SAD	PPP	JP/JD	BSP	Others
1997	Rural	1997 Won/ contested	4/6	2/9	0/17	7/62	53/62	–	0/10	1/41	3/155
		Votes polled(%)	3.65	3.13	2.09	26.34	42.87		0.28	8.27	13.37
	Semi-Urban	1997 Won/contested	9/9	0/5	0/8	4/32	19/26	–	0/10	0/18	3/112
		Votes polled(%)	12.25	2.69	1.71	25.77	33.44		1.02	6.48	16.64
	Urban	1997 Won/contested	5/7	0/1	–	3/11	3/4	–	0/8	0/8	1/72
		Votes polled(%)	26.81	3.01		31.44	16.30		0.86	5.55	16.02
2002	Rural	2002 Won/contested	1/6	1/8	0/11	32/61	32/62	–	–	0/61	4/298
		Votes polled(%)	2.76	2.22	0.45	34.63	35.99			6.26	17.69
	Semi-Urban	2002 Won/contested	2/9	1/2	0/2	19/33	9/26	–	–	0/29	4/210
		Votes polled(%)	8.16	1.86	0.27	35.46	27.16			4.65	22.45
	Urban	2002 Won/contested	0/8	0/1	–	11/11	0/4	–	–	0/10	1/71
		Votes polled(%)	18.41	2.75		46.51	8.57			5.52	18.25
2007	Rural	2007 Won/contested	5/6	0/15	0/8	25/70	35/64	–	–	0/69	5/336
		Votes polled(%)	3.74	0.69	0.31	39.99	41.99			4.54	8.74
	Semi-Urban	2007 Won/contested	7/9	0/9	0/5	17/35	–	–	–	0/35	0/235
		Votes polled(%)	10.98	0.77	0.27	42.85	33.38			3.67	8.08
	Urban	2007 Won/contested	7/8	0/1	0/1	2/12	3/4	–	–	0/12	0/95
		Votes polled(%)	29.94	1.09	0.07	40.29	17.14			2.64	8.83
2012	Rural	2012 Won/contested	3/5	0/6	0/6	19/61	38/56	0/47	–	0/61	1/266
		Votes polled(%)	3.38	0.61	0.21	39.40	41.14	4.77		4.57	5.92
	Semi-Urban	2012 Won/contested	4/8	0/5	0/1	21/41	15/33	0/34	–	0/41	1/251
		Votes polled(%)	6.47	0.99	0.09	40.08	31.83	6.88		4.25	9.40
	Urban	2012 Won/contested	5/10	0/3	0/1	6/15	3/5	0/11	–	0/15	1/95
		Votes polled(%)	27.93	1.32	0.08	43.45	12.69	1.66		3.10	9.76

Source: Election Commission Reports Punjab, 1997-2012

Table 1.6
Location-wise Major Party and Year-wise Votes Polled, Constituencies Contested and Won

		Year of Election	BJS/BJP	CPI	CPM	INC	SAD/ASD	JP/JD	BSP	Others
1967	Rural	1967 Won/contested	/15	3/14	2/9	29/54	16/35	–	–	6/182
		Votes polled (%)	3.39	6.43	4.50	38.35	24.34			22.99
	Semi-Urban	1967 Won/contested	2/25	1/4	1/3	19/38	8/24	–	–	7/144
		Votes polled (%)	12.10	3.16	2.02	37.80	19.74			25.18
	Urban	1967 Won/contested	7/9	1/1	/1	/10		–	–	2/34
		Votes polled (%)	39.79	6.14	0.80	30.48				22.78
1969	Rural	1969 Won/contested	1/11	2/19	2/8	24/55	23/36	–	–	4/117
		Votes polled (%)	4.79	6.08	4.65	38.44	30.67			15.37
	Semi-Urban	1969 Won/contested	5/11	1/8	0/2	9/38	19/27	–	–	4/77
		Votes polled (%)	9.56	2.81	1.47	39.63	33.23			13.28
	Urban	1969 Won/contested	2/8	1/1	–	5/10	1/2	–	–	1/41
		Votes polled (%)	32.75	5.56		41.88	5.12			14.68
1972	Rural	1972 Won/contested	0/11	7/9	1/10	31/45	14/40	–	–	3/121
		Votes polled (%)	1.36	8.19	4.54	39.53	31.58			14.79
	Semi-Urban	1972 Won/contested	0/13	2/3	0/7	26/35	10/24	–	–	0/93
		Votes polled (%)	4.93	3.96	2.16	46.81	27.21			14.94
	Urban	1972 Won/contested	0/9	1/1	–	9/9	0/8	–	–	0/30
		Votes polled (%)	27.53	7.05		46.31	5.00			14.10
1977	Rural	1977 Won/contested	5/16	4/13	8/8	9/54	43/47	–	–	1/241
		Votes polled (%)	8.05	7.43	5.98	31.07	36.66			10.82
	Semi-Urban	1977 Won/contested	12/15	2/4	–	6/31	14/21	–	–	1/136
		Votes polled (%)	19.43	5.18		36.95	30.05			8.40
	Urban	1977 Won/contested	8/10	1/1	–	2/11	1/2	–	–	0/72
		Votes polled (%)	41.02	6.09		37.79	5.78			9.32

Source: Election Commission Reports Punjab, 1967-77

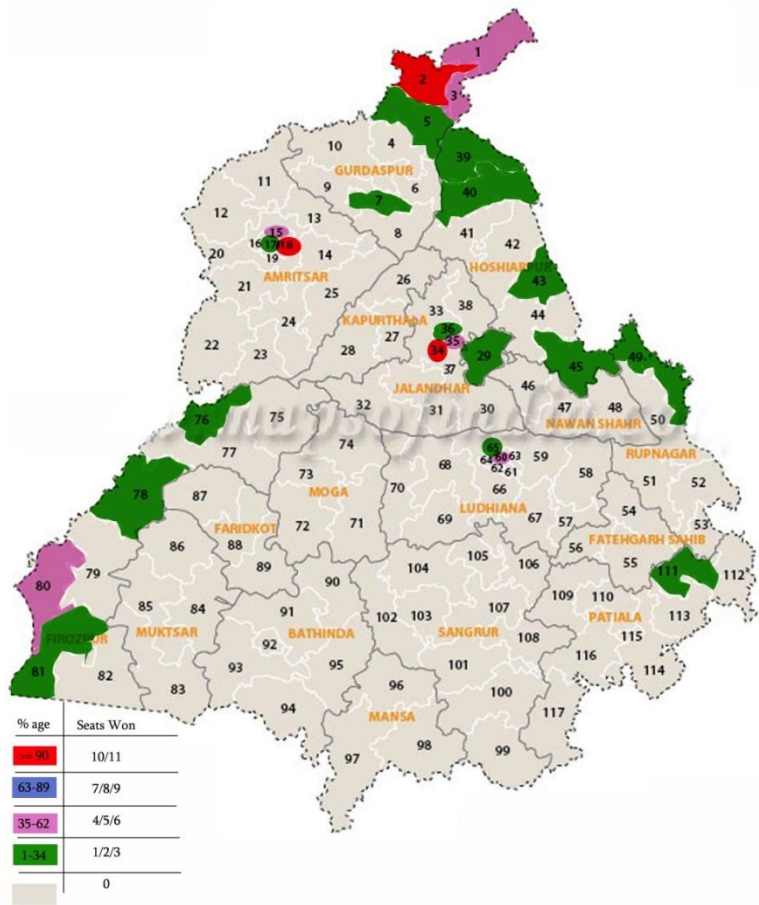
Table 1.7
Location-wise Major Party and Year-wise Votes Polled, Constituencies Contested and Won

			BJS/BJP	CPI	CPM	INC	SAD	JP/JD	BSP	Others
1980	Rural	1980 Won/contested	1/18	7/10	4/11	30/70	28/45	–	–	0/217
		Votes polled(%)	3.24	6.39	6.15	44.59	30.56			9.07
	Semi-Urban	1980 Won/contested	0/13	2/7	1/2	21/35	9/23	–	–	2/159
		Votes polled(%)	7.58	7.53	1.40	44.66	26.54			12.29
	Urban	1980 Won/contested	0/10	0/1	–	12/12	0/5	–	–	0/84
		Votes polled(%)	22.59	3.37		50.62	5.98			17.45
1985	Rural	1985 Won/contested	1/5	1/23	0/20	12/70	53/64	–	–	3/249
		Votes polled(%)	1.58	4.84	2.62	35.96	42.40			12.61
	Semi-Urban	1985 Won/contested	3/10	0/13	0/7	11/35	20/31	–	–	1/188
		Votes polled(%)	7.14	3.82	1.11	39.12	37.33			11.47
	Urban	1985 Won/contested	2/11	0/2	0/1	9/12	0/5	–	–	1/111
		Votes polled(%)	19.47	4.07	0.18	45.67	12.03			18.57
1992	Rural	1992 Won/contested	1/31	3/15	1/13	51/70	2/36	1/21	9/63	2/81
		Votes polled(%)	10.98	4.76	3.23	41.74	6.05	3.04	19.47	10.73
	Semi-Urban	1992 Won/contested	3/23	0/4	0/4	27/34	1/19	0/11	0/33	4/51
		Votes polled(%)	18.20	1.89	2.29	42.97	5.97	1.46	16.41	10.79
	Urban	1992 Won/contested	2/12	1/1	–	9/12	0/3	0/5	0/9	0/28
		Votes polled(%)	29.95	4.16		52.49	0.65	0.93	6.10	5.73

Source: Election Commission Reports Punjab, 1980-92

The BJP has been traditionally seen as a party of urban Hindus. Around 95 per cent of its party activists were Hindus mostly involved in trade and business (50 per cent) followed by small businessmen (32 per cent) (tables 1.3 and 1.4).

Map 1.2
Percentage Share of Constituencies Won :
Bhartiya Janata Party (BJP) 1967-2012



An analysis of the Assembly election results between 1967 and 2012 shows that the BJP has its presence in urban and semi-urban constituencies (Map 1.2). Traditionally, the BJP has

opposed the Akali demands of a Punjabi Suba and Sikh homeland. However, in the post-terrorism phase, the changed stance of the BJP from backing a strong Centre to greater autonomy for states, their opposition to Operation Blue Star and the November 1984 riots increased their acceptability among the rural Jat peasantry. It was mainly political considerations rather than electoral arithmetic which nurtured the pre-election alliance. S. Prakash Singh Badal, President of the SAD, was of the view that the SAD's alliance with the BJP was historical and political, but not an opportunistic alliance.¹⁴ Another senior leader of the SAD who was opposed to the alliance, considered it an electoral burden which was diluting the ideological base of the Akali Dal.¹⁵ A quick glance at the data shows that the SAD has gained by the pre-election coalition, but the BJP has suffered major losses. The BJP's loss has been Congress' gain as both parties compete for the same support base. The selective regionalisation of the Indian National Congress has ensured its continuation as a major political party in the state. In other words, its continuation has been shaped by meshing its nation-building ideological thrust with the pragmatic responses of its regional leadership consisting of former Akalis and Hindu Maha Sabhites. This three-pronged dissonance, i.e., pronouncements of its national leaders, Sikh leaders, and Hindu leaders provides much-needed electoral sustenance but also contributes to the existing conflicts.¹⁶

Paradoxically, the Congress has to compete with a strong regional party, but within the boundaries defined by the

¹⁴ Interview with Prakash Singh Badal, President Akali Dal, February 5, 2005.

¹⁵ Interview with Captain Kanwaljit Singh, senior Akali leader, December 7, 2005.

¹⁶ To illustrate, the Sachar Formula was adopted by winning the support of the "Akali Congressmen" (who joined the Congress in 1948) and was opposed by the Arya Samajist Hindu Congressmen. The factional fight between the Bhim Sen Sachar group and the Gopi Chand Bhargava group kept conceding demands of the Akali or Hindu Congressmen. The national leadership seem to be distraught by this game. Sardar Patel reported having reprimanded the state leadership. "You do not seem to understand... the political and religious game behind it." Harish K. Puri. "Religion and Politics in Punjab" in Moin Shakir (ed.) *Religion, State and Politics in India*. (Delhi: Ajanta Publications, 1989), p. 331.

national leadership. The only action which seems to have defied this norm has been the Punjab Agreement Repealing Act 2004 on the Sutlej-Yamuna Link (SYL) passed by the Punjab Assembly much to the annoyance of the national leadership of the Congress.¹⁷ The main architect of this was the then Chief Minister Captain Amarinder Singh, who happens to be a former Akali.¹⁸ The action was mainly focused on wooing the rural Jat peasantry. Traditionally, the Congress's support base consists of a large majority of Hindu dalits with their 'uncertain religious allegiance', urban Hindu traders, Sikh khatri and migrant landless labourers. A small faction of the rural Jat peasantry also supports the Congress because of village-level factionalism, kinship ties, etc. An analysis of party activists shows that 67 per cent are Hindus. By occupation, the activists are businessmen (38 per cent), small shopkeepers (32 per cent), farmers (16 per cent) and unskilled workers (6 per cent) (table 1.3).

An analysis of the percentage of seats won from 1967 to 2012 shows that the Congress has a strong base in the urban constituencies and the dalit-dominated Doaba region of the state (Map 1.3). Further, the vote share analysis between 1997 and 2012 shows that the Congress secured a maximum of 46 per cent of the votes in the urban constituencies and 39 per cent in the scheduled caste-dominated Doaba region in the 2002 elections (tables 1.5, 1.6, 1.7, 1.8, 1.9, and 1.10). However, Operation Blue Star and the brutal riots against the Sikhs in 1984 provided content to the anti-Sikh politics of the Congress¹⁹. Its alliance with the Communist Party in the 1990s was to overcome the accusation of being anti-Sikh and, therefore, communal.

¹⁷ "SC Orders Centre to Construct SYL Canal". *The Tribune*, June 4, 2004.

¹⁸ Stated in an interview by Amarinder Singh, Chief Minister of Punjab, 10 September 2004, "I have to protect the interests of Punjab farmers".

¹⁹ Pramod Kumar. "Electoral Politics in Punjab: From Autonomy to Secession" in Paul Wallace and Ramashray Roy (eds.) *India's 1999 Elections and 20th Century Politics*. (New Delhi: Sage Publications, 2003), 379.

Map 1.3
Percentage Share of Constituencies Won :
Congress (INC) 1967-2012

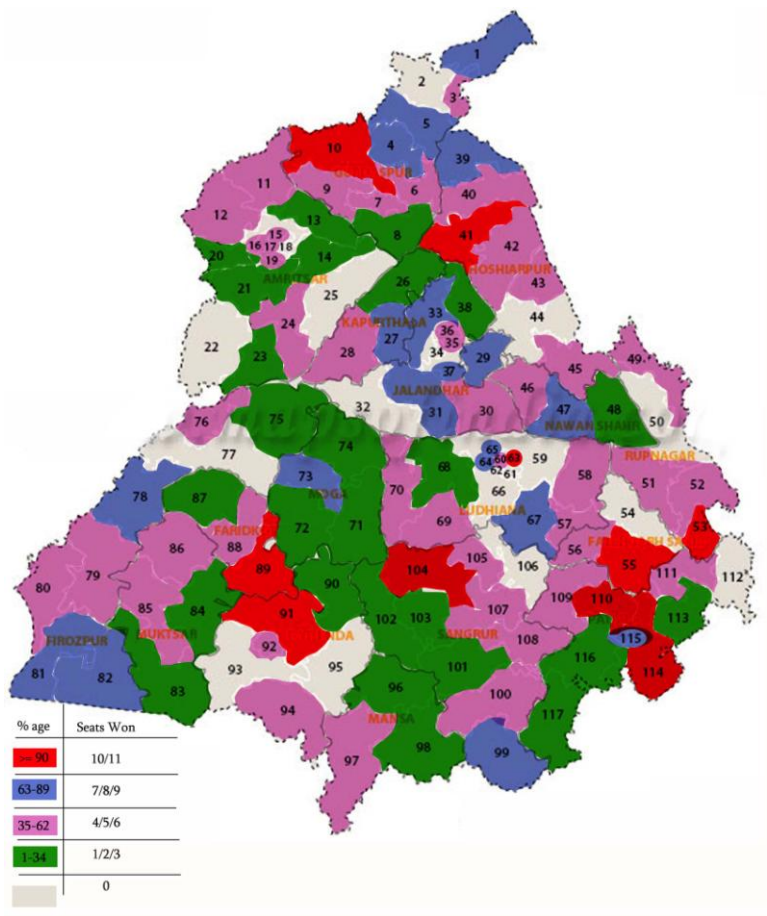


Table 1.8
Region-wise Major Party and Year-wise Votes Polled, Constituencies Contested and Won

		Year of Election	BJS/BJP	CPI	CPM	INC	SAD/ASD	JP/JD	BSP	Others
1967	Doaba	1967 Won/contested	2/8	/4	1/3	12/23	1/9	–	–	7/87
		Votes polled(%)	8.65	5.95	4.13	38.22	6.65			36.40
	Majha	1967 Won/contested	4/13	1/3	1/2	12/22	5/15	–	–	0/76
		Votes polled(%)	15.15	3.93	3.40	37.82	22.43			17.27
	Malwa	1967 Won/contested	3/28	4/12	1/8	24/57	18/35	–	–	8/197
		Votes polled(%)	8.16	5.42	2.86	36.99	25.19			21.38
1969	Doaba	1969 Won/contested	1/9	1/6	0/4	14/23	5/9	–	–	2/58
		Votes polled(%)	10.95	4.94	4.46	41.61	18.22			19.82
	Majha	1969 Won/contested	3/8	1/6	1/2	7/23	10/14	–	–	1/58
		Votes polled(%)	12.31	12.31	5.28	4.16	40.01			10.44
	Malwa	1969 Won/contested	4/13	2/16	1/4	17/57	28/42	–	–	6/119
		Votes polled(%)	6.90	6.90	4.61	2.08	37.89			14.11
1972	Doaba	1972 Won/contested	0/8	1/2	0/4	20/21	0/11	–	–	2/47
		Votes polled(%)	4.78	3.80	4.78	49.14	12.24			25.26
	Majha	1972 Won/contested	0/13	3/3	0/3	18/19	2/15	–	–	0/46
		Votes polled(%)	9.85	7.50	3.00	46.96	23.19			9.50
	Malwa	1972 Won/contested	0/12	6/8	1/10	28/49	22/46	–	–	1/151
		Votes polled(%)	3.22	7.12	2.80	39.03	34.85			12.97
1977	Doaba	1977 Won/contested	9/14	1/2	3/3	4/21	8/9	–	–	0/117
		Votes polled(%)	21.45	2.98	6.62	34.07	20.62			14.27
	Majha	1977 Won/contested	6/10	1/5	2/2	3/22	14/15	–	–	1/84
		Votes polled(%)	18.77	7.45	3.32	35.02	27.77			7.66
	Malwa	1977 Won/contested	10/17	5/11	3/3	10/53	36/46	–	–	1/248
		Votes polled(%)	11.06	7.59	2.42	32.83	36.90			9.20

Source: Election Commission Report, Punjab, 1967-77

Table 1.9
Region-wise Major Party and Year-wise Votes Polled, Constituencies Contested and Won

			BIS/BJP	CPI	CPM	INC/ CONGRESS	SAD	JP/ID	BSP	Others
1980	Doaba	1980 Won/contested	0/13	1/2	1/4	16/25	6/11	–	–	1/90
		Votes polled(%)	6.44	3.52	6.43	45.09	20.83			17.69
	Majha	1980 Won/contested	0/11	2/3	1/3	15/27	9/18	–	–	0/98
		Votes polled(%)	9.76	5.17	3.49	46.13	27.16			8.29
	Malwa	1980 Won/contested	1/17	6/13	3/6	32/65	22/44	–	–	1/272
		Votes polled(%)	5.22	8.03	3.42	44.87	29.06			9.41
1985	Doaba	1985 Won/contested	2/6	0/6	0/8	10/25	11/16	–	–	2/119
		Votes polled(%)	4.64	2.46	2.47	41.25	27.28			21.89
	Majha	1985 Won/contested	2/8	0/7	0/7	10/27	14/21	–	–	1/109
		Votes polled(%)	9.23	4.56	1.78	39.25	35.07			10.12
	Malwa	1985 Won/contested	2/12	1/25	0/13	12/65	48/63	–	–	2/320
		Votes polled(%)	3.61	5.12	1.76	36.14	42.92			10.45
1992	Doaba	1992 Won/contested	0/17	0/5	0/5	19/25	0/8	0/13	6/23	0/45
		Votes polled(%)	13.04	2.14	3.54	42.35	1.80	2.85	25.18	9.11
	Majha	1992 Won/contested	2/16	2/3	0/3	21/27	1/10	0/6	0/21	1/24
		Votes polled(%)	26.39	4.25	1.60	51.93	2.52	2.57	5.60	5.15
	Malwa	1992 Won/contested	4/33	2/12	1/9	47/64	2/40	1/18	3/61	5/91
		Votes polled(%)	14.50	4.23	2.08	41.48	8.11	1.61	15.64	12.35

Source : Election Commission Report, Punjab, 1980-92

Table 1.10
Region-wise Major Party and Year-wise Votes Polled, Constituencies Contested and Won

			BJS/BJP	CPI	CPM	INC/ CONGRESS	SAD	PPOP	JP/JD	BSP	Others
1997	Doaba	1997 Won/contested	5/8	0/1	0/4	5/25	13/16	–	0/9	1/22	1/66
		Votes polled(%)	14.77	0.20	1.65	26.67	28.60		0.50	16.98	10.61
	Majha	1997 Won/contested	7/8	0/3	0/8	0/24	18/18	–	0/6	0/13	2/69
		Votes polled(%)	14.10	2.45	2.22	28.03	37.32		0.31	2.61	12.95
	Malwa	1997 Won/contested	6/6	2/11	0/13	9/56	44/58	–	0/13	0/32	4/204
		Votes polled(%)	4.07	4.12	1.68	26.05	40.81		0.67	6.02	16.58
2002	Doaba	2002 Won/contested	2/8	0/1	0/4	16/24	7/15	–	–	0/25	0/138
		Votes polled(%)	10.36	0.33	0.81	39.02	23.34			13.91	12.22
	Majha	2002 Won/contested	0/8	0/2	0/3	17/24	7/19	–	–	0/18	3/105
		Votes polled(%)	9.00	1.21	0.17	37.58	31.80			1.48	18.75
	Malwa	2002 Won/contested	1/7	2/8	0/6	29/57	27/58	–	–	0/57	6/336
		Votes polled(%)	2.99	3.06	0.27	34.15	33.34			4.50	21.68
2007	Doaba	2007 Won/contested	7/8	0/1	0/5	4/25	13/17	–	–	0/25	1/125
		Votes polled(%)	15.96	0.04	0.63	38.30	30.71			8.48	5.87
	Majha	2007 Won/contested	7/8	0/7	0/2	3/27	17/19	–	–	0/27	0/120
		Votes polled(%)	12.75	1.03	0.12	40.12	36.70			1.87	7.40
	Malwa	2007 Won/contested	5/7	0/17	0/7	37/65	19/58	–	–	0/64	4/421
		Votes polled(%)	4.27	0.88	0.22	42.02	39.36			3.50	9.75
2012	Doaba	2012 Won/contested	5/7	0/0	0/2	6/23	11/16	0/21	–	0/23	1/106
		Votes polled(%)	13.01	0.00	0.29	37.07	28.29	3.99		12.08	5.28
	Majha	2012 Won/contested	5/8	0/5	0/3	9/25	11/17	0/16	–	0/25	0/103
		Votes polled(%)	12.58	0.79	0.22	41.20	34.64	1.24		1.12	8.21
	Malwa	2012 Won/contested	2/8	0/9	0/4	31/69	34/61	0/55	–	0/69	2/403
		Votes polled(%)	3.56	1.08	0.09	40.63	36.75	6.86		2.98	8.05

Source : Election Commission Report, Punjab, 1997-2012

Table 1.11
Caste-wise Party Preference, 1997 (per cent)

Religion	Akali (B)	BJP
Sikhs	38.00	34.00
Hindu SC	12.00	10.00
Sikh SC	23.00	11.00
Hindus (general)	27.00	45.00

Source: IDC Sample Survey, 1997

The Congress Party's support base has kept changing in response to political developments in the state. In the initial years and till the mid-1960s, the rich and middle peasantry supported the Congress which under the leadership of Partap Singh Kairon initiated reforms in the rural areas.²⁰ Between 1967 and 1980, its support base shifted to urban Sikhs and Hindus, the scheduled castes and a small section of the Jat peasantry. In 1985, in the post-Operation Blue Star period, a section of urban Sikhs shifted to the Akali Dal.²¹ However, in the 1992 elections held against the backdrop of pervasive terrorism most of the elected MLAs were from a rural background and were young. The change in leadership shaped politics from then on and brought about a qualitative shift in the agenda of the Congress Party.

In the 1997 elections, the urban and semi-urban vote bank of the Congress moved away from the party (Table 1.5), but its rural vote share increased from 26 per cent in 1997 to 39 per cent in the 2012 elections. The alliance of the Congress with the Communist Party of India (CPI) was termed political rather than electoral. The CPI has influence among a section of small and marginal peasants, landless labourers in the districts of Faridkot, Sangrur, Bathinda and Ferozepur (southern districts of Punjab) and industrial workers in urban areas.

²⁰ Harish K. Puri 1989. op.cit. p. 331

²¹ M.S. Dhami. "Religio-Political Mobilisation and Shifts in the Party Support Base in the 1985 Punjab Assembly Elections" in Moin Shakir (ed.) *Religion, State and Politics in India*. (Delhi: Ajanta Publications, 1989), 352.

CPI politics appropriated the pro-minority discourse in response to Hindu communal assertions and highlighted economic demands shorn of religious and communal content. It spearheaded tenant movements and water agitations in different areas of Punjab in the 1950s, and kept the discourse of social and economic justice alive in the state. It secured a maximum of 10 seats in the 1972 elections and entered into an alliance with parties opposed to the Congress, including the BJS, from 1967 to 1977. However, in the 1990s it formed a pre-election alliance with the Congress, which competed for the same support base as the BSP. The BSP used the dalits as political capital for the first time in 1992,²² but the party has received a declining response in Punjab. For example, in 1992 it secured 16 per cent votes in Punjab, which declined to 6 per cent in 2002 and 4 per cent in the 2007 and 2012 Assembly elections (Table 1.12). The ideological content of the BSP has been unable to thrive in the regional cultural and economic specificities of Punjab. The opposition to entrenched caste discrimination based on purity-pollution and *Manuvaad* that constitute the BSP's main ideological plank does not find expression in the socio-cultural terrain of Punjab. The 'uncertain religious allegiance' of the dalits made it easy for other political parties in the state to attract their support.²³ Both the Congress and the Akali Dal gave representation to dalits while distributing tickets. From 1967 to 2012, of the 314 scheduled caste MLAs, 36 per cent and 44 per cent were in the Congress and the Akali Dal, respectively. The share of dalits in the BJP was 5 per cent, in the BSP 3 per cent and in the communist parties [CPI and

²² The BSP was founded in 1984 by Kanshi Ram. Chandra Kanchan. *Why Ethnic Parties Succeed: Patronage and Ethnic Head Counts in India*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 145.

²³ Paul R. Brass on the basis of his study of the Punjab Assembly elections over the period 1952-72 argues: 'A thorough going polarization of Punjab politics has been prevented by the presence of a large Scheduled Caste population, of uncertain religious allegiance, to whom all parties must appeal. Second, the leading secular parties in Punjab, particularly Congress and the CPI, have successfully appealed to both Hindus and Sikhs in the past.' Paul R. Brass. "Ethnic Cleavages in the Punjab Party System, 1952-72" in Myron Weiner and J. Orgood Field (eds.) *Electoral Political in the Indian States: Party Systems and Cleavages*. (Delhi: Manohar Book Service, 1975), p. 60.

CPI(M)] 9 per cent (Table 1.13). It is worth noting that a substantial number of scheduled caste legislators are represented in the Akali Dal and Congress. For instance, in 1969, of a total of 25 scheduled caste MLAs, 44 per cent were in the Akali Dal and 40 per cent in the Congress. Similarly in 1977, 1985, 1997, 2007 and 2012 a majority of the scheduled caste legislators were elected as members of the Akali Dal. In 1967, 1972, 1980, 1992 and 2002 elections, too, a majority of the elected scheduled caste legislatures were in the Congress (Table 1.13). Interestingly, in 1997 and 2007 around 14 per cent of the elected scheduled caste members were from the BJP.

Table 1.12
Election and Electoral Coalitions in Punjab 1967-2012

Year	Parliament				Assembly			
	Party	Seats Contested	Seats Won	Vote	Party	Seats Contested	Seats Won	Vote
		No.		%		No.		%
1967	BJS	8	1	12.49	BJS	49	9	9.84
	ADM	7	0	4.42	ADM	61	2	4.2
	ADS	8	3	22.61	ADS	59	24	20.48
	CPI	3	0	4.28	CPM	13	3	3.26
	CPM	2	0	1.89	RPI	17	3	1.79
	INC	13	9	37.31	PSP	9	0	0.51
	Others	9	0	7.69	CPI	19	5	5.2
	IND	25	0	9.32	INC	102	48	37.45
1969					Others	18	1	1.22
					IND	255	9	16.05
					BJS	30	8	9.01
					SAD	65	43	29.36
					CPI	28	4	4.84
					CPM	10	2	3.07
					SSP	7	2	0.83
					SP	6	1	0.91
1971					INC	103	38	39.18
					Others	62	2	3.92
					IND	160	4	8.89
	BJS	5	0	4.45				
	SAD	12	1	30.85				
	CPI	2	2	6.22				
	CPM	3	0	2.2				
1972								
					BJS	33	0	4.97
					SAD	72	24	27.64
					CPM	17	1	3.26
					CPI	13	10	6.51
					INC	89	66	42.84
1977					Others	39	0	2.49
					IND	205	3	12.29
	SAD	9	9	42.3	SAD	70	58	31.41
	CPI	3	0	1.65	JNP	41	25	14.99
	CPM	1	1	4.94	CPM	8	8	3.5
	INC	13	0	34.85	CPI	18	7	6.59
	Others	8	3	12.97	INC	96	17	33.59
1980					Others	14	0	0.33
	IND	45	0	3.29	IND	435	2	9.58
	JNP	9	0	9.97	BJP	41	1	6.48
	SAD	7	1	23.37	SAD	73	37	26.92
	CPI	1	0	1.27	CPI	18	9	6.46
	CPM	1	0	2.53	CPM	13	5	4.06

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Year	Parliament				Assembly			
	Party	Seats Contested	Seats Won	Vote	Party	Seats Contested	Seats Won	Vote
		No.		%		No.		%
	INC (I)	13	12	52.45	INC	117	63	45.19
	BSP	1	0	0.07	Others	84	0	4.36
	Others	10	0	5.03	IND	376	2	6.52
	IND	105	0	5.31				
1985	BJP	3	0	3.39	BJP	26	6	4.99
	SAD	11	7	37.17	SAD	100	73	38.01
	CPI	3	0	3.84	CPI	38	1	4.44
	CPM	3	0	2.98	CPM	28	0	1.92
	INC	13	6	41.53	INC	117	32	37.86
	Others	2	0	2.24	Others	6	1	1.09
	IND	39	0	8.85	IND	542	4	11.69
	BJP	3	0	4.17				
1989	SAD (B)	9	0	5.38				
	SAD	4	0	1.27				
	SAD (M)	8	6	29.19				
	CPI	4	0	2.1				
	CPM	3	0	3.9				
	INC	13	2	26.49				
	BSP	12	1	8.62				
	JD	4	1	5.46				
	Others	28	0	0.71				
	IND	139	3	12.72				
1992	BJP	9	0	16.51	BJP	66	6	16.48
	SAD	3	0	2.58	SAD	58	3	5.2
	CPI	1	0	1.57	CPI	20	4	3.64
	CPM	3	0	3.98	CPM	17	1	2.4
	INC	13	12	49.27	INC	116	87	43.83
	BSP	12	1	19.71	BSP	105	9	16.32
	JD	4	0	1.3	JD	37	1	2.15
	JP	1	0	0.93	Others	9	2	0.74
	Others	3	0	0.13	IND	151	4	9.24
	IND	32	0	4.01				
1996	BJP	6	0	6.48				
	SAD (M)	7	0	3.85				
	SAD	9	8	28.72				
	BSP	4	3	9.35				
	CPI	3	0	1.6				
	CPM	3	0	2.68				
	INC	13	2	35.1				
	JD	1	0	2.66				
	JP	1	0	0.03				
	Others	31	0	2.01				
1997	IND	181	0	7.51				
					BJP	22	18	8.33
					SAD	92	75	37.64
					CPM	25	0	1.79
					CPI	15	2	2.98
					INC	105	14	26.59

Year	Parliament				Assembly			
	Party	Seats Contested	Seats Won	Vote	Party	Seats Contested	Seats Won	Vote
		No.		%		No.		%
					BSP	67	1	7.48
					JD	27	0	0.56
					JP	1	0	0.01
					SAD (M)	30	1	3.1
					Others	65	0	0.65
					IND	244	6	10.87
1998	BJP	3	3	11.67				
	SAD	8	8	32.93				
	JD	1	1	4.18				
	CPI	1		3.4				
	CPM	3		1.06				
	INC	8		25.85				
	BSP	4		12.65				
	SAD (M)	4		2.73				
	Others	21	0	0.64				
1999	IND	49	1	4.91				
	BJP	3	1	9.16				
	SAD	9	2	28.59				
	DBSM	1		2.71				
	SAD (M)	1	1	3.41				
	CPI	1	1	3.74				
	CPM	1		2.18				
	INC	11	8	38.44				
	BSP	3		3.84				
	JD(S)	2		0.03				
2002	JD(U)	2		0.1				
	Others	29	0	5.34				
	IND	57		2.45				
					BJP	23	3	5.67
					SAD	92	41	31.08
					DBSM	2	0	0.33
					SAD (M)	84	0	4.65
					CPM	13	0	0.36
					CPI	11	2	2.15
					INC	105	62	35.81
2004					BSP	100	0	5.69
					JD (S)	4	0	0.03
					JD (U)	2	0	0.01
					Others	213	0	2.94
					IND	274	9	11.27
	BJP	3	3	10.48				
	SAD	10	8	34.28				
	SAD (M)	6	0	3.79				
	CPI	1	0	2.55				
	CPM	1	0	1.81				
	INC	11	2	34.17				
	BSP	13	0	7.67				
	JD (S)	1	0	0.01				

Year	Parliament				Assembly			
	Party	Seats Contested	Seats Won	Vote	Party	Seats Contested	Seats Won	Vote
		No.		%		No.		%
	Others	26	0	2.5				
	IND	70	0	2.75				
2007					BJP	23	19	8.21
					SAD	94	49	37.19
					CPI	25	0	0.75
					CPM	14	0	0.28
					BSP	116	0	4.1
					INC	117	44	40.94
					SAD (M)	37	0	0.51
					Others	191	0	1.23
					IND	438	5	6.79
2009	BJP	3	1	10.06				
	SAD	10	4	33.85				
	SAD (M)	3	0	0.36				
	CPI	2	0	0.33				
	CPM	1	0	0.14				
	INC	13	8	45.23				
	BSP	13	0	5.75				
	Others	59	0	1.94				
	IND	114	0	2.33				
2012					BJP	23	12	7.18
					SAD	94	56	34.73
					CPI	14		0.82
					CPM	9		0.16
					BSP	117		4.29
					INC	117	46	40.09
					PPOP	92		5.16
					Others	612	3	7.56

Source: Election Commission Reports 1967-2012

To sum up, in Punjab the inter-party relationships can be contextualised along three axes. The muted identity assertions are signposts within which religious minorities and castes along with their demographic positioning shape intra- and inter-party interactions. This has also led to the defining of the regional space giving rise to a strong regional party. Regional interests became a filter for the national parties in the context of political competition and found an escape route in mergers, i.e., the Indian National Congress and the Akali Dal. The national and regional parties in competition for social segments having a bearing on electoral arithmetic resorted to post-election coalitions or pre-election alliances, i.e., the BJP and the SAD.

Punjab Electoral Spectrum: Unfolding Challenges for Democracy

Table 1.13
Caste, Year and Party-Wise Distribution of MLAs, 1967-2012 (number and %)

	BJP				CPI				CPM				INC			
	SC	OBC	Other	Jat	SC	OBC	Other	Jat	SC	OBC	Other	Jat	SC	OBC	Other	Jat
1967			8	1	2	1	1	1				3	12	5	10	21
			7.69	0.96	1.92	0.96	0.96	0.96				2.88	11.54	4.81	9.62	20.19
			88.89	11.11	40.00	20.00	20.00	20.00				100.00	25.00	10.42	20.83	43.75
1969	1		5	2	1	1	1	1	1			1	10	5	8	15
	0.96		4.81	1.92	0.96	0.96	0.96	0.96	0.96			0.96	9.62	4.81	7.69	14.42
	12.50		62.50	25.00	25.00	25.00	25.00	25.00	50.00			50.00	26.32	13.16	21.05	39.47
1972					2	1	2	5	1				14	7	17	28
					1.92	0.96	1.92	4.81	0.96				13.46	6.73	16.35	26.92
					20.00	10.00	20.00	50.00	100.00				21.21	10.61	25.76	42.42
1977	4	3	16	2	4	1	1	1	5			3	3	3	6	5
	3.42	2.56	13.68	1.71	3.42	0.85	0.85	0.85	4.27			2.56	2.56	2.56	5.13	4.27
	16.00	12.00	64.00	8.00	57.14	14.29	14.29	14.29	62.50			37.50	17.65	17.65	35.29	29.41
1980		1			4	1	1	3	3			2	13	8	24	18
		0.85			3.42	0.85	0.85	2.56	2.56			1.71	11.11	6.84	20.51	15.38
		100.00			44.44	11.11	11.11	33.33	60.00			40.00	20.63	12.70	38.10	28.57
1985	1		5			1							10	2	15	5
	0.85		4.27			0.85							8.55	1.71	12.82	4.27
	16.67		83.33			100.00							31.25	6.25	46.88	15.63
1992			6		1	1	1	1		1			20	9	22	36
			5.13		0.85	0.85	0.85	0.85		0.85			17.09	7.69	18.80	30.77
			100.00		25.00	25.00	25.00	25.00		100.00			22.99	10.34	25.29	41.38
1997	4	2	11	1	1	1							1		4	9
	3.42	1.71	9.40	0.85	0.85	0.85							0.85		3.42	7.69
	22.22	11.11	61.11	5.56	50.00	50.00							7.14		28.57	64.29
2002		1	2		2								14	5	21	22
		0.85	1.71		1.71								11.97	4.27	17.95	18.80
		33.33	66.67		100.00								22.58	8.06	33.87	35.48
2007	4	1	13	1									7	2	11	24
	3.42	0.85	11.11	0.85									5.98	1.71	9.40	20.51
	21.05	5.26	68.42	5.26									15.91	4.55	25.00	54.55
2012	3		7	2									10	3	12	21
	2.56		5.98	1.71									8.55	2.56	10.26	17.95
	25.00		58.33	16.67									21.74	6.52	26.09	45.65
Total	17	8	73	9	17	8	7	12	10	1		9	114	49	150	204
	1.36	0.64	5.85	0.72	1.36	0.64	0.56	0.96	0.80	0.08		0.72	9.13	3.93	12.02	16.35
	15.89	7.48	68.22	8.41	38.64	18.18	15.91	27.27	50.00	5.00		45.00	22.05	9.48	29.01	39.46

Contd..

Coalition Politics In Punjab: From Communal Polarisation To Catchall Parties?

	SAD				BSP				Other				All Parties				Total
	SC	OBC	Other	Jat	SC	OBC	Other	Jat	SC	OBC	Other	Jat	SC	OBC	Other	Jat	
1967	6			18					3	2	4	6	23	8	23	50	104
	5.77			17.31					2.88	1.92	3.85	5.77	22.12	7.69	22.12	48.08	100.00
	25.00			75.00					20.00	13.33	26.67	40.00	22.12	7.69	22.12	48.08	100.00
1969	11	3	2	27					1	2	1	5	25	11	17	51	104
	10.58	2.88	1.92	25.96					0.96	1.92	0.96	4.81	24.04	10.58	16.35	49.04	100.00
	25.58	6.98	4.65	62.79					11.11	22.22	11.11	55.56	24.04	10.58	16.35	49.04	100.00
1972	6			18						1		2	23	9	19	53	104
	5.77			17.31						0.96		1.92	22.12	8.65	18.27	50.96	100.00
	25.00			75.00						33.33		66.67	22.12	8.65	18.27	50.96	100.00
1977	15	2	2	39								2	31	9	25	52	117
	12.82	1.71	1.71	33.33								1.71	26.50	7.69	21.37	44.44	100.00
	25.86	3.45	3.45	67.24								100.00	26.50	7.69	21.37	44.44	100.00
1980	9	3		25						1		1	29	14	25	49	117
	7.69	2.56		21.37						0.85		0.85	24.79	11.97	21.37	41.88	100.00
	24.32	8.11		67.57						50.00		50.00	24.79	11.97	21.37	41.88	100.00
1985	18	4	17	34						2	3		29	9	40	39	117
	15.38	3.42	14.53	29.06						1.71	2.56		24.79	7.69	34.19	33.33	100.00
	24.66	5.48	23.29	46.58						40.00	60.00		24.79	7.69	34.19	33.33	100.00
1992	1			2	8	1			2		2	3	32	12	31	42	117
	0.85			1.71	6.84	0.85			1.71		1.71	2.56	27.35	10.26	26.50	35.90	100.00
	33.33			66.67	88.89	11.11			28.57		28.57	42.86	27.35	10.26	26.50	35.90	100.00
1997	23	7	4	41	1					1	1	5	30	11	20	56	117
	19.66	5.98	3.42	35.04	0.85					0.85	0.85	4.27	25.64	9.40	17.09	47.86	100.00
	30.67	9.33	5.33	54.67	100.00					14.29	14.29	71.43	25.64	9.40	17.09	47.86	100.00
2002	12	4		25					1	1	1	6	29	11	24	53	117
	10.26	3.42		21.37					0.85	0.85	0.85	5.13	24.79	9.40	20.51	45.30	100.00
	29.27	9.76		60.98					11.11	11.11	11.11	66.67	24.79	9.40	20.51	45.30	100.00
2007	16	6	2	25					2	2		1	29	11	26	51	117
	13.68	5.13	1.71	21.37					1.71	1.71		0.85	24.79	9.40	22.22	43.59	100.00
	32.65	12.24	4.08	51.02					40.00	40.00		20.00	24.79	9.40	22.22	43.59	100.00
2012	21	3	7	25						1		2	34	7	26	50	117
	17.95	2.56	5.98	21.37						0.85		1.71	29.06	5.98	22.22	42.74	100.00
	37.50	5.36	12.50	44.64						33.33		66.67	29.06	5.98	22.22	42.74	100.00
Total	138	32	34	279	9	1			9	13	12	33	314	112	276	546	1248
	11.06	2.56	2.72	22.36	0.72	0.08			0.72	1.04	0.96	2.64	25.16	8.97	22.12	43.75	100.00
	28.57	6.63	7.04	57.76	90.00	10.00			13.43	19.40	17.91	49.25	25.16	8.97	22.12	43.75	100.00

Source: *Punjab Vidhan Sabha Compendium of Who's Who of Members* (1960-2002), Chandigarh: Punjab Vidhan Sabha Secretariat, 2003; *Election Commission Reports*, Punjab (1967-2012)

Note: Parenthesis figures pertain to percentage of representation of MLAs from party total

COALITION POLITICS: ELECTORAL OVERVIEW

Coalition politics in Punjab follows a history of electoral alliances ranging from mergers in the post-partition phase to the more recent pre-election alliances. The electoral coalitions can be mapped in four distinct phases: the politics of mergers, 1947 to 1966; the reorganisation of Punjab, 1966 to 1980; from autonomy to secession, 1980 to 1992; and resurgence of democracy and a composite Punjabi identity, post-1992. Politics in post-Independence India and partitioned Punjab was shaped by issues related to identity politics and competition for political power. The questions of separate religious identity, linguistic identity, communal and sectarian mobilisation, and secular class-mobility factors, remained dominant in the political discourse.

In the first phase between 1947 and 1966, the two main competing political parties merged, whereas parties representing sectional interests resorted to agitational politics. The Indian National Congress and SAD merged in 1948 and again in 1956. The merger was guided by the politics of accommodation by the dominant party and shifting the arena of political activity from popular movements to elite manoeuvring. The parties that merged soon de-merged, but a majority of the leaders active in legislative politics continued to function in the Congress as was the case in the pre-Independence phase. The politics of merger reduced the Akali vote share from 15 per cent in 1952 to 12 per cent in 1962.²⁴ The CPI continued to agitate for the economic interests of the peasants and landless labourers, while the Bharatiya Jana Sangh continued to agitate for the interests of urban Hindus. The support base of the Jana Sangh increased from 5 per cent in 1952 to 9 per cent in 1962, while that of the CPI increased to about 10 per cent in the Punjabi-speaking rural areas. The overall increase for the CPI in

²⁴ Pramod Kumar et.al. 1984. op.cit. p. 45.

the then Punjab was from 5 per cent in 1952 to 7 per cent in 1962.

The second phase (1966-80) marked the end of one-party dominance in Punjab. Re-organisation of the state in 1966, the introduction of the Green Revolution strategy and the demographic transformation to a Sikh majority state initiated a new process of political alliances and economic differentiation. Political discourse revolved around restructuring of Centre-state relations and anti-Congressism.

In this phase, four coalition governments were formed and each of them was a post-election coalition. The first post-election coalition was formed after the fourth general election in 1967 under the Chief Ministership of Gurnam Singh consisting of an ideologically diverse united front of parties opposed to the Congress. This minority coalition lasted only for eight months and fell after the defection of 17 SAD members of the Legislative Assembly (Graph 1.4). The main opposition party, the Congress, gave outside support to the Akali breakaway group and a minority government under the Chief Ministership of Lachman Singh Gill was formed on November 25, 1967. The Congress withdrew support after nine months.

The third coalition was formed after the mid-term elections in February 1969, in which the Akali Dal and Jana Sangh were the main partners. The minority coalition government was headed by S. Gurnam Singh. The Jana Sangh withdrew support after 13 months when differences arose among the coalition partners over issues like language, Centre-state relations and the status of Chandigarh.

The fourth minority coalition government came into being after the removal of S. Gurnam Singh as Chief Minister. S. Prakash Singh Badal was sworn in as the Chief Minister on March 27, 1970, with a new agenda for the coalition government. The Jana Sangh withdrew from the coalition in June 1970, on the

question of the jurisdiction of Guru Nanak Dev University, however, the main differences were on issues relating to the transfer of some of the Punjabi-speaking areas to Punjab. This minority coalition lasted for 15 months. The post-election coalitions were formed either to keep a political formation out of power or to put together a convenient power-sharing arrangement. These coalitions were unstable marriages of convenience between political parties.

The third phase (1980-92) in Punjab politics brought about a qualitative shift in the mechanics of government formation. The political discourse moved away from autonomy to secession on a communal basis. Competitive electoral and moderate politics suffered a severe set-back and violence became the dominant mode of articulation of grievances. Popularly elected governments were dismissed and elections were postponed. Elections were held to legitimise non-democratic and communal politics in 1985, 1989 and 1992. An important lesson learnt was that democracy was the only antidote to terrorism.²⁵ The revival of the democratic process witnessed a major shift in the political agenda.

The fourth phase (since 1992) witnessed a major shift in the political agenda of the parties. The Akali Dal shifted its stance from Sikh identity to Punjabi identity, from the human rights of 'Khalistan' activists to peace at any cost, and from state autonomy to co-operative federalism. Similarly, the BJP moved from a strong Centre to greater autonomy for states. The Congress apologised for Operation Blue Star and the brutal riots of 1984. In view of these shifts and lessons learnt from the decade of terrorism, the political parties entered into pre-election alliances.²⁶ In the 1997 Assembly elections, both the Akali Dal and BJP on the one hand and the Congress and CPI on

²⁵ Pramod Kumar. 'Need for Reposing Faith in People'. *The Tribune*, May 13, 1990.

²⁶ In the 1996 Lok Sabha elections, the Akali Dal entered into a pre-election alliance with the BSP and seat adjustment with the BJP. The alliance adversely affected the Congress Party's performance and resulted in an erosion of its support base among the Scheduled Castes. (Of the 13 parliamentary seats, the SAD won 8 and the BSP 3).

the other formed pre-election coalitions. It was an oversized coalition of the Akali Dal and BJP (in which the former had a majority on its own) which emerged victorious and it completed its full term.²⁷

The Akali Dal-BJP alliance performed better because it provided the Akali Dal with the much-needed political space at the national level to shed its anti-national image, and gave the BJP a political plank to counter the Congress and Left propaganda that its politics was anti-minority. The political parties, having recovered from the terrorism phase, started carving out their own autonomous space. The SAD's pre-Blue Star politics of emphasising Sikh identity coupled with anti-incumbency led to a massive defeat of the coalition in the 1999 election.²⁸

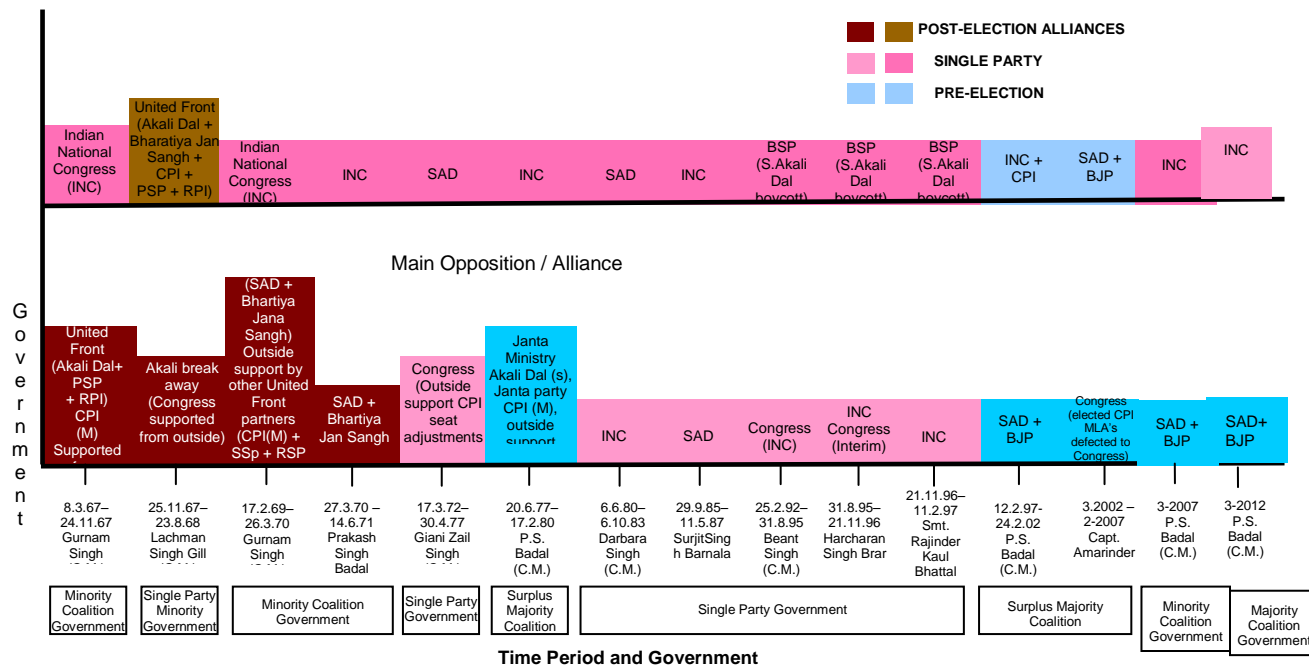
In the 2002 elections, pre-election alliances (similar to those in 1997) were formed between the Akali Dal and BJP on the one hand and the Congress and CPI on the other. The Congress formed the government with outside support from the CPI. It was a single-party majority government, but the merger of the two-member legislative wing of the CPI into the Congress created fissures in the alliance between the two parties. Consequently, in the 2007 Assembly elections the Congress and CPI did not enter into a pre-election alliance. However, the SAD and BJP entered into a pre-election coalition and formed a minimal winning coalition government.

In the section that follows, we analyse the dynamics of these mergers, post-election coalitions and pre-election alliances.

²⁷ That the SAD and the BJP formed the ministry together irrespective of the fact that the SAD was in majority shows that the alliance was based on mutual understanding and to advantage Punjab. (Interview with Sukhbir Singh Badal, SAD Member of Parliament, January 2006.) In the 1998 parliamentary elections, the Akali Dal entered into an alliance with the BJP. The SAD won the largest number of seats, i.e. 8, and polled 33 per cent of the votes; the BJP won 3 seats and polled 12 per cent of the votes. The Congress, BSP, and the communists entered into a pre-election alliance and could not win a single seat.

²⁸ In the 1999 Lok Sabha elections, the pre-election SAD-BJP alliance failed miserably with the Congress-CPI alliance winning 9 seats.

Chart 1.1
Post-Election Alliances, Single Party and Pre-Election Alliances



POLITICS OF MERGER: 1947 to 1966

In the first phase, from 1947 to the 1966, one-party dominance blocked the assertion of regional interests as anti-national. The aura of the national freedom movement led to the Congress Party hegemony of the entire political spectrum. The politics of co-option of regional interests was practised by the Congress to maintain its hold on power. It encouraged the Akali Dal to merge with it first in 1948 and then in 1956. The partition of Punjab necessitated consensus-based political governance, and the Akali Dal legislative wing elected in 1946 was invited to merge with the Congress.

The Akali Dal contested the 1946 elections in opposition to the Congress. In the 175-member Punjab Assembly, the Akali Dal won 22 of the 32 seats reserved for Sikhs, the Congress won 51 seats including 10 reserved for Sikhs; the Unionist Party won 20 seats including 15 reserved for Muslims; Independent Christians won 1; Independent Labour 2; Independent Dalits 1; Anglo-Indians 2; and the Muslim League won 75 seats (Brass, 1974: 358).²⁹

A coalition ministry was formed under the leadership of Sir Khizr Hayat Khan, consisting of the Unionist Party, Congress and Akali Dal. However, the ministry submitted its resignation on 3 March, 1947 and Governor's Rule was promulgated in the state. After Independence, the Congress, Akali representatives and six Independent MLAs formed the ministry under the leadership of Gopi Chand Bhargava. The SAD passed a resolution on 22 April 1949 withdrawing from the Congress Government after the Constituent Assembly turned down safeguards for the Sikhs³⁰.

²⁹ Gur Rattanpal Singh. *The Illustrated History of the Sikhs*. (Chandigarh: Akal Printmatics, 1979), 84

Paul Brass. 1974. op.cit. p 358.

³⁰ The Sikh members of the Assembly prepared a charter of demands in November 1948 which was not accepted. The demands were:

1. Representation for Sikhs on the basis of the 1941 Census, without excluding Sikhs who had migrated to other provinces.
2. Sikhs should be given 5 per cent representation in the Central cabinet.

Master Tara Singh made a statement on October 19, 1949, that 'every minority except the Sikhs had been given justice. The Muslims demanded Pakistan and they got it.'³¹ The SAD adopted a resolution and directed its MLAs to leave the Congress on 20 July, 1950. Interestingly, only one MLA resigned from the Congress Legislative Party. The Akali Dal fought the 1952 general elections on the demand for a Punjabi Suba with an emphasis on the creation of a Punjabi-speaking province.³² During this period in Punjab the issue of states' reorganisation on a linguistic basis acquired communal overtones. Though the Akali leaders emphasised language as the basis for the division of the state, at the popular plane they tended to mix religion with language.³³

The indoctrination that the Sikhs were a single political entity with common secular interests provided continuity to the pre-partition politics of the Akali Dal. The growing strength of Master Tara Singh among the various occupational groups created the fear that the movement for a separate independent Sikh state might become stronger. To counter the demand for a

3. Sikhs should have one minister and one deputy minister in the Central cabinet.

4. The post of Governor and premier of the province should alternatively go to a Hindu and a Sikh.

5. Sikhs should have 50 per cent representation in the provincial cabinet.

6. Gurgaon district and Loharu state should be separated from east Punjab.

7. 40 per cent of the services should be reserved for Sikhs.

8. If the above demands were rejected the Sikhs should be allowed to form a new province of 7 districts, i.e., Hoshiarpur, Jullundur, Ludhiana, Ferozepur, Amritsar, Gurdaspur and Ambala.

Ajit Singh Sarhadi. 1970. op.cit. p. 167

³¹ Ibid. p. 190.

³² "The SAD is in favour of the formation of provinces on a linguistic and cultural basis throughout India, but holds it as a question of life and death for the Sikhs that a new Punjab be created immediately." Ajit Singh Sarhadi. 1970. op.cit. p. 221.

³³ The SGPC which was under the control of 'nationalist Sikhs' was captured by the Akalis. In 1955, the Akali Dal won 112 seats and the Khalsa Dal supported by the Congress won only 3 of the 132 contested seats. This convinced the Congress of the growing strength of the Akalis, and in December 1953 the Government of India appointed the State Reorganisation Commission. In 1954, the Akalis launched a vigorous agitation for a Punjabi Suba. They launched processions in Ludhiana (on the eve of Guru Gobind Singh's birthday) and in Amritsar (the Hola Mohalla procession) on December 1954 and March 1955, respectively.

Punjabi Suba raised by the Akali Dal led by Master Tara Singh, an agitation for Hindi was launched, which advocated a 'Maha Punjab' irrespective of language. Communal overtones in this were explicitly visible, though there was not much tension between the two communal groups. The increasing strength of the Akali Dal alarmed the Congress leadership.

In 1956 an understanding was reached between the ruling Congress Party and the Akali Dal, after which several of the Akali Dal stalwarts joined the Congress.³⁴ The Akalis accepted the regional plan at their meeting on 30 September 1956. The new state was to be divided into the so-called Punjabi-speaking and Hindi-speaking regions and two regional committees consisting of the members of the legislature belonging to the respective regions were to be constituted.

The Akalis did not contest the second general election held in 1957. But due to internal compulsions and dissensions among them, the understanding they had with the Congress did not last long. The Akali Dal decided to take part in politics on its own and asked its members in the Congress to return to their parent organisation. Of the 28 Akali MLAs who had joined the Congress, only 7 returned to the Akali fold.³⁵ It is relevant to note that most of the Akalis who joined the Congress in 1937, 1948 and 1956 did not return to the Akali fold. Prominent among them were Pratap Singh Kairon (later Chief Minister of the Congress government), Gurmukh Singh Musafir (later

³⁴ The State Reorganisation Commission recommended the merger of Punjab, PEPSU and Himachal Pradesh. PEPSU was merged with Punjab in 1956. The new state was divided into the so-called Punjabi-speaking and Hindi-speaking regions, and two regional committees consisting of the members of the legislature belonging to the respective regions, were set up. In October 1956, a convention was held at Amritsar attended by the members of the Akali Dal Working Committee, the Akali MLAs from Punjab and PEPSU, the Jathedars and other prominent leaders. It formally resolved to amend the Constitution of the Akali Dal to continue its activities towards the religious, educational and economic welfare of the Sikhs. (Interview with Captain Kanwaljit Singh, General Secretary, SAD on December 7, 2005.)

³⁵ Baldev Raj Nayar. *Minority Politics in the Punjab*. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1966), p. 125.

President of the Congress Party), S. Swaran Singh (later India's foreign minister in the Congress government), and Baldev Singh (later India's defence minister). It is interesting that most of the 'Sikh' leaders in the Congress have had a stint in the Akali Dal.³⁶ The success of the Akalis in the SGPC elections encouraged them to launch agitations for a Punjabi Suba in 1959 and 1961.³⁷

The failure of the 1961 morcha discredited Master Tara Singh's leadership. The 1962 general election was projected by the Congress as a referendum on the Punjabi Suba issue, a challenge which was accepted by the Akali Dal. The latter's defeat in the general election demoralised its leadership; they won only 19 of the 154 seats and lost even in the Punjabi-speaking areas. Master Tara Singh was held responsible for this defeat and was accused of sacrilege because he had broken his fast unto death.

The data indicate that the Akali Dal lost considerable electoral support in the 1962 elections. The erosion in their support base led to renewed attempts to accelerate the process of communalisation, and they again raised the demand for a Punjabi Suba. The political demography of Punjab was not considered favourable by the Akali Dal in its bid to capture political power in the state; hence the demand for a Punjabi Suba.

The split in the Akali Dal in 1962 facilitated the concentration of power in the hands of those speaking for the rural Jat peasantry in the organisation. In January 1965, the Sant Akali Dal won 95 of the 138 seats in the Shiromani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee (SGPC) elections, delivering a crushing defeat to the Master Akali Dal. It also increased its share of political power.³⁸

³⁶ Ibid. p. 129.

³⁷ In January 1960, elections to the SGPC were held. Giani Kartar Singh opposed Master Tara Singh but failed miserably as he could win only 4 seats against 132 seats of the Akali Dal out of a total of 140 seats.

³⁸ In the 1950s when Master Tara Singh (a khatri himself) was president of the SGPC, the non-Jat Sikhs controlled 54.6 per cent of the key positions. Now, the SGPC came under

This coincided with the reorganisation of the state on a linguistic basis in September 1966 and the initiation of the Green Revolution. This was the beginning of coalition politics with anti-Congressism as its main plank.

THE REORGANISATION OF PUNJAB: 1967 TO 1980

In the period 1967 to 1980, the Fourth and Fifth State Assemblies of Punjab witnessed three coalitions and one minority government. The three coalition governments were formed by the Akalis with the support of its main coalition partner, the Bharatiya Jana Sangh. The single-party minority government was that of a breakaway group of the Akalis supported by the Congress.

This phase is characterised by the establishment of a Sikh majority with the reorganisation of Punjab on the basis of language. The numerical dominance of the Sikhs as a single political entity was now unchallenged, and the electoral dominance of the Congress receded. The other factor that had an overarching impact on state politics during this period was the initiation of the Green Revolution agricultural development strategy. The Green Revolution strategy empowered the Sikh Jat peasantry, but led to differentiations between the peasantry and the trading classes. This phase then witnessed a shift in political discourse from political deprivation of the 'minorities' to economic discrimination. Therefore, while the demand for a separate Sikh state could not find expression, greater state autonomy became an issue for emerging agrarian interests. This issue was, however, raised by the Akalis in 1973 and acquired the character of a movement in 1978.

The first coalition was formed after the fourth general election in 1967. In this election, the Congress won 48 seats in the 104-member state legislative assembly. The Akali Dal (Sant Fateh

the control of the Jat Sikhs whereby the influence of non-Jat Sikhs diminished drastically.

Singh) secured 24 seats, the Jana Sangh 9, the CPI 5, the CPI(M) 3, the Republican Party 3, and the Akali Dal (Master Tara Singh) 2 (Table 1.12). A united front of all the parties was formed with S. Gurnam Singh as their leader. A minority coalition government was formed with a combination of divergent ideological groups with the sole purpose of keeping the Congress out. A common programme was adopted at Khanna which read:

“Whereas we stand for amity and goodwill among all sections of Punjabis irrespective of caste or creed, and promise to take steps to strengthen the new state of Punjab economically and politically, we resolve to oppose all separatist trends and moves aimed at weakening the unity and integrity of the country.”³⁹

A common minimum programme was evolved to provide stability to the government. Similarly, ministry formation was guided by the principle of giving adequate representation to coalition partners.⁴⁰

The election results mirrored the support bases of the political parties and an effort was made to reflect these in government formation. For instance, the Akali Dal won the highest number of seats, 18 of the 24 seats and polled the highest share of votes, 25 per cent, from the Malwa region, compared to 7 per cent and 22 per cent from Doaba and Majha, respectively (Table 1.8). The Jana Sangh reflected its strong urban hold by securing 40 per cent of the votes polled from the urban seats contested, with a negligible count of 3 per cent from the rural constituencies and only 12 per cent in the semi-urban constituencies of Punjab (Table 1.6). The CPI made its mark in its pocket borough. The support base of the coalition partners is further reflected in the MLAs' backgrounds in terms of caste,

³⁹ “Sangh-Akali Bid to Form Government: Complete Accord Reached”. *The Tribune* (Ambala), March 2, 1967.

⁴⁰ S. Gurnam Singh's speech in the Punjab Vidhan Sabha on 26 March 1970. The Chief Minister emphasised that he had made every effort to accommodate the coalition partner.

occupation, religion and formation of ministry. Around 67 per cent of the Akali Dal MLAs were from an agricultural background and 75 per cent belonged to the rural Jat community (Table 1.13); dalits including Mazhabis and Ramdasias constituted 25 per cent, while the representation of the urban Sikh trading community was a mere 4 per cent.

The Bharatiya Jana Sangh, the post-coalition partner of the SAD, had more legislators from trading and industrial backgrounds; more than 56 per cent of its legislators belonged to the urban khatri caste and 22 per cent were from the urban bania castes. This is a reflection of its support base among the urban Hindus. The CPI had more legislators from an agricultural background but belonging to the mazhabi Sikh and rai Sikh castes. The Congress had 44 per cent of its MLAs from the rural Jat peasantry, with twice the number of legislators from the scheduled castes compared to the Akali Dal (Table 1.13). The representation of urban khatri traders in the Congress was competing with the Jana Sangh. The coalition represented a demarcated electoral support base in the allocation of ministerial berths. The negotiations between the SAD and Jana Sangh responded to the leadership considerations of S. Gurnam Singh and consequently the Jana Sangh got the best deal in Cabinet formation.⁴¹ With two ministers, it had charge of the ministries of finance, industry, excise and taxation, local bodies and health. However, this coalition proved unstable and could last only eight months.

According to Akali activists the concentration of power in the Jana Sangh ministry led to discontent among the Akali legislators. The Congress saw an opportunity and assured support to the disgruntled Akalis if they defected and formed their own ministry.⁴² In November 1967, a breakaway Akali

⁴¹ "In 1967 the Jana Sangh had two ministers but held all the relevant portfolios like finance, industry, health, excise and taxation, local bodies, etc." (Interviews with Balramji Das Tandon, senior BJP leader, October to December 2005.)

⁴² The Chief Minister preferred Jana Sangh ministers to the Akali ministers and was not partial to the Akali Jathedars. This created resentment among the senior Akali ministers and Akali Jathedars who were not prepared to tolerate it for long. The Congress

group led by Lachhman Singh Gill formed a single-party minority government with outside support from the Congress. The United Front with the Akali Dal, Bharatiya Jana Sangh, CPI, PSP and RPI formed the opposition. This government was also shortlived and survived only nine months with the Congress withdrawing support.

The fifth state Assembly witnessed the second post-election coalition led by the Akali Dal with Gurnam Singh as Chief Minister. The main alliance partner was the Bharatiya Jana Sangh with outside support from the other United Front partners — the CPI (M), SSP, RSP, SP and CPI. The Akali-Jana Sangh alliance forged an agreement on the language question.⁴³ Technically, this coalition was a minority coalition since the Akali Dal and the Bharatiya Jana Sangh (BJS) had 51 of the 52 seats required to form the government, with outside support from the Left parties. The seat distribution in the government was: 43 with SAD, 8 with the BJS, 4 with CPI, 2 with CPI (M) and 38 with Congress. The percentage of votes obtained by the SAD in Punjab was 29.36; this is perhaps the only time semi-urban voters eclipsed the vote share of the rural constituencies when they drew 33 per cent of the votes compared with 31 per cent of the rural vote. The vote share of the Jana Sangh as a subsidiary partner was 9 per cent (Table 1.12).

The elected members continued to reflect the traditional support base of their representative parties. The Akali Dal had as many as 60 per cent of its MLAs belonging to the peasantry, with only 5 per cent drawn from the trading and industrial occupations. Somewhat out of tune with its customary base, in the 1969 elections the BJS had 37 per cent of its MLAs from an agricultural background, and regionally had 50 per cent of its MLAs from Malwa rather than its domain of Majha or Doaba

government in the Centre contacted S. Lachhman Singh Gill the seniormost Akali minister in Front government and offered him unconditional support if he defected along with a considerable number of MLAs, and offered all the defectors ministerships. S. Narinder Singh Bhuler. *White Paper on Sikh Issues*. Batala, 1983, vol. 1, p. 103.

⁴³ Devinder Pal Sandhu. *Sikhs in Indian Politics: Study of a Minority*. (New Delhi: Patriot Publishers, 1992), 113.

(Table 1.8). Demarcations on the basis of religion were most stark and most reflective of the social base of the party. None of the 43 Akali MLAs was a Hindu and the BJS had only one Sikh legislator out of 8 (Table 1.14). The shift in representation in the Akali political leadership became apparent as 63 per cent of the legislators were rural Jat peasants and 25 per cent were dalits (Table 1.13). In contrast, in the BJS a majority of 62 per cent of the MLAs were from the Hindu bania/khatri caste. The Congress reflected its wider social base as its elected members came from the scheduled and backward castes (39 per cent), or were Hindu and Sikh khatri (21 per cent) or Sikh Jats (39 per cent) (Table 1.13). While the Congress did have a dominant representation of the dominant castes, i.e., the peasantry (53 per cent), it differed from the other parties by having an equitable distribution of votes polled among the rural, semi-urban and urban constituencies, increasing its vote share towards the urban areas (38 per cent in rural, 40 per cent in semi-urban and 42 per cent in urban) (Table 1.6). But its regional share in this election came starkly from Doaba which accounted for 42 per cent of the votes polled, with only 4 per cent and 2 per cent from Majha and Malwa (Table 1.8). The 1969 coalition was short-lived with the Jana Sangh withdrawing its support within 13 months over differences on language, Centre-state relation and the status of Chandigarh. This was a minority coalition government ridden with factionalism in the Akali Dal⁴⁴, high expectations among the Jana Sangh and the fear of defections in the shadow of the numerical strength of the Congress.

⁴⁴ "Keeping in view the mandate and decision of the Akali Dal, I brought the Bill in the Legislative Assembly for abolition of the Legislative Council. Sant Chanan Singh came to Chandigarh and persuaded the members not to abolish the Council.... Even after that both Sants tried their utmost to flout the decision of the legislators and the Shiromani Akali Dal by persuading several members of the Parliament to see that Council was not abolished." From the speech by the outgoing Chief Minister Gurnam Singh on the floor of the Assembly on 26 March 1970. S.C. Arora. *Turmoil in Punjab Politics*. (New Delhi: Mittal Publications, 1990), 132.

Table 1.14
Year and Party-wise Distribution of Hindu and Sikh MLAs

Year of Election	BJP			BSP			CPI			CPM		
	Hindu	Sikh	Other	Hindu	Sikh	Other	Hindu	Sikh	Other	Hindu	Sikh	Other
1967	9						1	4			3	
% of total MLAs	8.65						0.96	3.85			2.88	
% of party MLAs	100.00						20.00	80.00			100.00	
1969	7	1					2	2			2	
% of total MLAs	6.73	0.96					1.92	1.92			1.92	
% of party MLAs	87.50	12.50					50.00	50.00			100.00	
1972							3	7			1	
% of total MLAs							2.88	6.73			0.96	
% of party MLAs							30.00	70.00			100.00	
1977	19	6					2	5		1	7	
% of total MLAs	16.24	5.13					1.71	4.27		0.85	5.98	
% of party MLAs	76.00	24.00					28.57	71.43		12.50	87.50	
1980	1						1	8			5	
% of total MLAs	0.85						0.85	6.84			4.27	
% of party MLAs	100.00						11.11	88.89			100.00	
1985	6							1				
% of total MLAs	5.13							0.85				
% of party MLAs	100.00							100.00				
1992	6			4	5		2	2			1	
% of total MLAs	5.13			3.42	4.27		1.71	1.71			0.85	
% of party MLAs	100.00			44.44	55.56		50.00	50.00			100.00	
1997	17	1		1			1	1				
% of total MLAs	14.53	0.85		0.85			0.85	0.85				
% of party MLAs	94.44	5.56		100.00			50.00	50.00				
2002	2	1					1	1				
% of total MLAs	1.71	0.85					0.85	0.85				
% of party MLAs	66.67	33.33					50.00	50.00				
2007	17	2										
% of total MLAs	14.53	1.71										
% of party MLAs	89.47	10.53										
2012	10	2										
% of total MLAs	8.55	1.71										
% of party MLAs	83.33	16.67										
Total	94	13		5	5		13	31		1	19	
% of total MLAs	7.53	1.04		0.40	0.40		1.04	2.48		0.08	1.52	
% of party MLAs	87.85	12.15		50.00	50.00		29.55	70.45		5.00	95.00	

Contd..

Coalition Politics In Punjab: From Communal Polarisation To Catchall Parties?

Year of Election	INC			Other			JD			SAD			Total
	Hindu	Sikh	Other	Hindu	Sikh	Other	Hindu	Sikh	Other	Hindu	Sikh	Other	
1967	16	31	1	7	8					1	23		104
% of total MLAs	15.38	29.81	0.96	6.73	7.69					0.96	22.12		100.00
% of party MLAs	33.33	64.58	2.08	46.67	53.33					4.17	95.83		
1969	13	25		2	7						42	1	104
% of total MLAs	12.50	24.04		1.92	6.73						40.38	0.96	100.00
% of party MLAs	34.21	65.79		22.22	77.78						97.67	2.33	
1972	27	38	1	1	2						24		104
% of total MLAs	25.96	36.54	0.96	0.96	1.92						23.08		100.00
% of party MLAs	40.91	57.58	1.52	33.33	66.67						100.00		
1977	8	9			2					1	57		117
% of total MLAs	6.84	7.69			1.71					0.85	48.72		100.00
% of party MLAs	47.06	52.94			100.00					1.72	98.28		
1980	34	28	1		2						37		117
% of total MLAs	29.06	23.93	0.85		1.71						31.62		100.00
% of party MLAs	53.97	44.44	1.59		100.00						100.00		
1985	22	10		3	2					2	70	1	117
% of total MLAs	18.80	8.55		2.56	1.71					1.71	59.83	0.85	100.00
% of party MLAs	68.75	31.25		60.00	40.00					2.74	95.89	1.37	
1992	32	54	1	3	3		1				3		117
% of total MLAs	27.35	46.15	0.85	2.56	2.56		0.85				2.56		100.00
% of party MLAs	36.78	62.07	1.15	50.00	50.00		100.00				100.00		
1997	6	8		2	5					3	71	1	117
% of total MLAs	5.13	6.84		1.71	4.27					2.56	60.68	0.85	100.00
% of party MLAs	42.86	57.14		28.57	71.43					4.00	94.67	1.33	
2002	30	31	1	1	8					1	40		117
% of total MLAs	25.64	26.50	0.85	0.85	6.84					0.85	34.19		100.00
% of party MLAs	48.39	50.00	1.61	11.11	88.89					2.44	97.56		
2007	7	36	1	1	4					5	44		117
% of total MLAs	5.98	30.77	0.85	0.85	3.42					4.27	37.61		100.00
% of party MLAs	15.91	81.82	2.27	20.00	80.00					10.20	89.80		
2012	12	33	1	1	2					9	46	1	117
% of total MLAs	10.26	28.21	0.85	0.85	1.71					7.69	39.32	0.85	100.00
% of party MLAs	26.09	71.74	2.17	33.33	66.67					16.07	82.14	1.79	
Total	207	303	7	21	45		1			22	457	4	1248
% of total MLAs	16.59	24.28	0.56	1.68	3.61		0.08			1.76	36.62	0.32	100.00
% of party MLAs	40.04	58.61	1.35	31.82	68.18		100.00			4.55	94.62	0.83	

Source: *Punjab Vidhan Sabha Compendium of Who's Who of Members (1960-2002)*, Chandigarh: Punjab Vidhan Sabha Secretariat, 2003.

Election Commission Reports, Punjab (1967-2012)

Note: Parenthesis figures pertain to percentage of representation of MLAs in party total

Sikhs were predominantly represented in the Akali Party, while Hindus were predominant in the BJS/BJP. Both religions find representation in the Congress, as also in the BSP (religion permeates the caste base in Punjab).

At the time, there were 28 ministers for the ministry. Around 50 per cent of the Jana Sangh and Akali Dal MLAs became ministers (Table 1.15). The allocation of portfolios to the Jana Sangh was reduced even though they had more ministers. The important departments of finance, excise and taxation and health were not allocated to them which could have been the reason for their eventual withdrawal of support. The then Chief Minister Gurnam Singh made a statement on the floor of the Assembly which reinforced this interpretation:

My honourable Jana Sangh members created a lot of noise over the allocation of finance to another colleague who does not belong to their party. I must take the House into confidence that at no stage was it agreed that the finance portfolio would be given to the Jana Sangh. It was my prerogative as the Chief Minister and I exercised it. Nevertheless, beneath this demand for key portfolios by the Jana Sangh, in reality is the desire to use the state machine to rehabilitate themselves among the people.⁴⁵

⁴⁵ Speech made by outgoing CM Gurnam Singh on the floor of the assembly on 26.3.1970.

Coalition Politics In Punjab: From Communal Polarisation To Catchall Parties?

Table 1.15
Election Year-wise, Ministerial Representation According to Party and Region

		Akali				BJS/BJP				INC				Total (SAD+BJP+INC)			
		Majha	Malwa	Doaba	Total	Majha	Malwa	Doaba	Total	Majha	Malwa	Doaba	Total	Majha	Malwa	Doaba	Total
1969	Ministers	4	15	5	24	2	1	1	4					6	16	6	28
	MLAs	10	28	5	43	3	4	1	8					13	32	6	51
	**	40.00	53.57	100.00	55.81	66.67	25.00	100.00	50.00					46.15	50.00	100.00	54.90
1972	Ministers									4	8	5	17	4	8	5	17
	MLAs									18	28	20	66	18	28	20	66
										22.22	28.57	25.00	25.76	22.22	28.57	25.00	25.76
1977	Ministers	1	7	3	11	1	2	2	5					2	9	5	16
	MLAs	14	36	8	58	6	10	9	25					20	46	17	83
		7.14	19.44	37.50	18.97	16.67	20.00	22.22	20.00					10.00	19.57	29.41	19.28
1980	Ministers									2	10	4	16	2	10	4	16
	MLAs									15	32	16	63	15	32	16	63
										13.33	31.25	25.00	25.40	13.33	31.25	25.00	25.40
1985	Ministers	6	18	4	28									6	18	4	28
	MLAs	14	48	11	73									14	48	11	73
		42.86	37.50	36.36	38.36									42.86	37.50	36.36	38.36
1992	Ministers									8	14	9	31	8	14	9	31
	MLAs									21	47	19	87	21	47	19	87
										38.10	29.79	47.37	35.63	38.10	29.79	47.37	35.63
1997	Ministers	9	17	7	33	2	3	3	8					11	20	10	41
	MLAs	18	44	13	75	7	6	5	18					25	50	18	93
	*	50.00	38.64	53.85	44.00	28.57	50.00	60.00	44.44					44.00	40.00	55.56	44.09
2002	Ministers									8	10	7	25	8	10	7	25
	MLAs									17	29	16	62	17	29	16	62
										47.06	34.48	43.75	40.32	47.06	34.48	43.75	40.32
2007	Ministers	5	6	2	13	2		3	5					7	6	5	18
	MLAs	17	19	13	49	7	5	7	19					24	24	20	68
		29.41	31.58	15.38	26.53	28.57	0.00	42.86	26.32					29.17	25.00	25.00	26.47
2012	Ministers	3	8	3	14	1	2	1	4					4	10	4	18
	MLAs	11	34	11	56	5	2	5	12					16	36	16	68
		27.27	23.53	27.27	25.00	20.00	100.00	20.00	33.33					25.00	27.78	25.00	26.47

Note: Percentages mentioned are per cent of ministers selected out of total MLAs of particular region.

** 5 MIA from other parties joined the Akali Dal in 1969

* 1 MLA from another party shifted to the Akali Dal in 1997

Source: *Punjab Vidhan Sabha Compendium of Who's Who of Members (1960-2002)*, Chandigarh: Punjab Vidhan Sabha Secretariat, 2003
Election Commission Reports, Punjab (1967-2012)

Further executive business in the Assembly centred on the coalition's concern over economic development and on Centre-state relations and language.⁴⁶ While economic development was the rallying point, the language issue and Centre-state relations remained contentious among the coalition partners. This along with factionalism within the Akali Dal led to the downfall of the Gurnam Singh ministry.

A third coalition, also a minority coalition government, came into being within the fifth state assembly itself after S. Gurnam Singh was replaced by Prakash Singh Badal as Chief Minister, who was sworn in with a new agenda for the coalition government.⁴⁷

⁴⁶ "I frankly tell the House that though the Jana Sangh in Punjab had staged a right-about-turn on its attitude towards the Punjabi language after the creation of the Punjabi-speaking state, their outlook on this crucial question is still revolving in the old grooves. Though they claim that Punjabi should be given the status of a state language and should be developed as a lever to unify the Punjabi-speaking people irrespective of their religion, they in their own way are persisting in the policy of making Punjab a bilingual state. Naturally, I opposed all the attempts of the Jana Sangh leaders in this direction, though all along I did my best to promote Hindi as the national Language." From the speech by the outgoing Chief Minister Gurnam Singh on the floor of the Assembly on 26 March 1970.

⁴⁷ The agenda included the following:

1. Besides steps to "restore Hindu-Sikh unity, the government will develop and promote Punjabi as the state language and Hindi as the national language.
2. Educational facilities will be extended both in the rural and urban areas with a view to achieving full literacy in the state within the next few years.
3. The government will root out corruption from public life as well as from the administration.
4. It will try to bridge the gap between the common man and the administration.
5. Special emphasis will be placed on schemes for the welfare of members of the scheduled castes and the backward classes.
6. Immediate steps will be taken to distribute the evacuee lands to landless Harijans. A sizeable revolving fund will be created for their welfare schemes.
7. In the field of agriculture, a new strategy will be evolved to maintain Punjab's position as the granary of India and also to promote the cultivation of commercial crops. Small land-owners will be given special incentives.
8. The programme for rural electrification and also rural development works and the construction of link roads in the state will be streamlined with a view to electrifying every village and connecting every village with main roads.
9. A blueprint for the growth of industries, particularly large and medium-scale industries both in the private and public sectors, will be prepared and special incentives will be given to new industrial entrepreneurs.

The Jana Sangh bargained for three cabinet berths and one minister of state and they received the ministries of finance and industry with the change in the leadership of the Akali Dal Legislative Party. Akali factions, clamouring for ministerial berths, threatened to destabilise the government. The Chief Minister amended the rules to co-opt these legislators as chairpersons of financial corporations which were earlier treated as offices-of-profit.⁴⁸ The Jana Sangh again withdrew support to the coalition over the issue of the transfer of Punjabi-speaking areas to Punjab. The withdrawal was sparked by the question of Guru Nanak Dev University's jurisdiction and the exclusion of Hindi language by Punjabi University.

The 1977 election was unique in that it was an anti-Emergency election that saw the Janata Party and its allies voted to power in the Lok Sabha and state Assembly. A surplus majority coalition government of Akali-Janata-CPI (M) was formed. The Akali Dal also fought under the banner of the Janata Party. The Akalis won 58 seats, the Janata Party 25, CPI 7 and CPI (M) 8 (Table 1.12). The Janata Party coalition in Punjab was led by the SAD Chief Minister Prakash Singh Badal and had the smallest ministry (16) with only 20 per cent of its MLAs provided with ministerial berths, in contravention of the trend in coalition governments. The legislature saw dissensions on account of intra-party Akali factionalism (Akali-Nirankari conflict and limits to state autonomy) as well as clashes of interests between the Bharatiya Jana Sangh and the SAD.⁴⁹

10. Industrial workers, government employees and teachers will be given a fair deal, and all loopholes in the existing legislation relating to them will be plugged.

11. Efforts will be made to remove anomalies in the Pay Commission and Kothari Commission grades.

S.C. Arora 1990. op.cit. p. 129

⁴⁸ Ibid. p. 130.

⁴⁹ It was primarily the intra-party conflict among the coalition partners which continued to rock the workings of the ruling alliance. The inter-party differences and ideological incompatibilities of the two partners did not pose a serious obstruction to the working of the coalition. Arun Mehra. "Akali-Janata Coalition: An Analysis." *Punjab Journal of Politics*, 9(1), 1985, p. 85.

These post-election coalitions revolved around anti-Congress and anti-Centre sentiments. The Akali Dal supported by the Sikh majority of the newly organised state found itself within striking distance of forming a government. The other parties in the state such as the Jana Sangh and CPI rallied to ally with and support the Akalis as an alternative to the Congress in a post-election coalition. Such coalitions were marked with the cooption of leaders representing divergent ideological frameworks and regional interests. These were marriages of convenience of party leaderships with the sole aim of capturing power, with their ranks regarding each other with suspicion due to the clash of ideological moorings. Even in the CPI's support base, the inherent contradiction between the landed peasantry and landless workers resulted in a decline in this base. Despite stark differentiation in religious symbolism, economic issues cut across religious divides to regroup people on the basis of their agrarian and trade interests.

Legislators and ministers were considered to be representing clearly differentiated groups in Akali-led coalitions, whereas in the Congress government diverse elements were not presented as representing social differentiations, but as articulating specific cultural and linguistic interests in the decision-making process. These coalitions brought about competition between a single party and a multi-party alliance. The post-election coalition brought into focus elite manoeuvrings rather than massification of democracy. To illustrate, a large number of offices-of-profit were declared offices-of-non-profit in the 1970s to accommodate legislators. This distorted governance in the state with disproportionate discretion granted to legislators. The legislature became an arena for raising contentious ideological issues to appeal to differentiated support bases.

From autonomy to secession: 1980s to 1990s

This phase is characterised by an assertion of demands for state autonomy. The differentiation in the economy was sharpened

with the political assertion of the Sikh Panth. Three simultaneous trends emerged during this period which were: demands for state autonomy without unduly disturbing existing political arrangements; the demand for self-determination within the constitutional framework; and the slogan of a separate Khalistan. The path of development and the denial of the legitimate cultural and economic claims of the people sharpened political assertions. Their range, from state autonomy to the demand for Khalistan, reflected the factionalism in the Akalis and their inability to congregate under one banner. Political demagogues used communal and religious symbols to outdo and eliminate each other with a view to increasing their support base for greater leverage in politics. They provided an ideological cover for the use of violence. The differentiation in the economy sharpened political assertions but the political process represented sectional interests.

Demands were articulated by using methods ranging from peaceful to just short of physical violence, to even violent acts. The first major agitation after 1980 was launched in February 1982 against a bus fare hike by the Akalis, CPM, CPI and Janata Party. These parties laid siege to the state Assembly and the Governor could not open the budget session for over two hours.

The Congress Party, which was faction ridden, allowed the situation to drift and then degenerate into communal conflict. In the meantime, sacrileges were committed in religious places; the demand was made for relaying the Gurbani from the Golden Temple, and banning the sale of tobacco, meat and liquor in Amritsar. However, all these assertions to a very significant extent could not adversely affect the four-party opposition alliance. In April 1982, Indira Gandhi came to Kapoori village in Punjab to formally launch the Sutlej-Yamuna Link (SYL) project. The four-party alliance sensed Indira Gandhi's strategy to use this plank to win the Haryana Assembly election slated for May

that year and, therefore, launched an agitation in Kapoori against the project.⁵⁰

At the same time, the ruling party also started appeasing the extremist elements in the Akali Dal, like Sant Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale, with disastrous consequences. Sant Bhindranwale started questioning the SGPC leadership. In order to counter the threat posed by the extremists, moderates within the Akali Dal shifted the venue of the agitation from Kapoori to the Golden Temple. This was the end of the four-party alliance, and further led to the communalisation of the secular SYL canal project. The Akali Dal continued its agitation but called it a *dharma yudh* (religious struggle) from August 4, 1982. Akali volunteers continued to court arrest off and on. Even after the arrest of over 200,000 persons, no compromise could be reached.

It is this state of affairs that enhanced the appeal of the militants among the middle and small peasantry. The agitation started waning because of increasing state repression and factional fights within the Akali Dal. In response, the Akali leadership took specific protest measures, such as a *rasta roko* (road block) agitation on April 4, 1983, declaring a protest day on July 17, and a *rail rook* (rail stoppage) on August 29. Efforts were made to stop work in all offices.

For its part, the Congress allowed the situation to drift. It half-heartedly pressed for or offered negotiations and blamed the Akali Dal and the rest of the opposition for blocking solutions to the economic demands being raised. However, the ruling party unilaterally accepted the religious demands of the Akali Dal on February 27, 1983. It was an attempt to shelve real issues such as the demand for more autonomy, water and territorial adjustments. This move had two outcomes:

⁵⁰ Pramod Kumar. 'Punjab Crisis: A Political Diagnosis'. *Mainstream*, November 14, 1987, p. 18.

- (a) It made it difficult for the Akalis to mobilise support for other economic demands. Acceptance of religious demands further aggravated the problem as the Akali Dal-L raised new demands to protect and promote the economic and political interests of the rural elite. For instance in January 1984 the Akali Dal-L raised a demand for the amendment of Article 25 of the Indian Constitution, a demand which it had not raised in any of its earlier resolutions or charters of demands; and
- (b) It helped the Congress establish its bona fides with the Akali support base.

The demand for an independent Sikh state could not find effective expression in political discourse as it was a slogan raised by marginal politicians rather than mainstream political forces. The demand for Khalistan did not acquire mass support despite the protagonists' brutal and senseless killings and ruthless political and administrative initiatives. Nonetheless, Operation Blue Star of 1984, the assassination of Prime Minister Indira Gandhi in November 1984, and the subsequent anti-Sikh riots did thwart the democratic process.

Despite these events, attempts were made to hold elections to legitimise non-democratic and communal politics in the state. The 1985, 1989, and 1992 elections were held against this background. The 1985 Assembly and Lok Sabha elections took place in the context of the Rajiv-Longowal Accord signed in 1984, while the 1989 Lok Sabha elections were held against the backdrop of failure to honour the Accord.⁵¹ In the 1985

⁵¹ S.S. Barnala, then Akali Chief Minister, was alleged to be appeasing the militants, so the Congress government at the Centre dismissed the ministry. Moderate leaders like Prakash Singh Badal and G.S. Tohra were arrested and hundreds of others sent to distant Jodhpur jail to languish in detention for some years. Liberals who had full faith in the system were isolated and those nursing serious grievances against the system were patronised. This approach was adopted to counter people who were a potential threat to the legislative power of the ruling party at the Centre. Political rivals (even when they subscribed to the same political beliefs) were attacked and political forces representing extreme views were patronised. President's Rule was thought to be the most conducive,

Assembly elections, the Congress secured 32 seats with 38 per cent votes and the Akalis secured 73 seats with 38 per cent votes⁵² (Table 1.12). In the 1989 Lok Sabha elections, the Akali Dal (Mann) won 10 seats with 39 per cent votes.

Elections to the state Assembly were postponed on the pretext that the gun would influence voting and the victorious militants would dictate terms. This was an afterthought to rationalise the success of the Mann-led Akali Dal in the 1989 election and to ward off future electoral losses of the same shattering magnitude. Incidentally, parties opposing the election secured more than 61 per cent of the votes. In these elections, the agenda of peace was dominant and was reflected in the signing of the Rajiv-Longowal Accord in 1985, creating conditions for the political participation of hardliners in Sikh politics in 1989 and providing a façade of representative politics in 1992. The 1992 elections were boycotted by the Akali Dal resulting in a turnout of only 24 per cent. It was therefore rightly labelled as an “apology for a representative character of democratic polity.”⁵³

During the destabilisation of the democratic polity in the violent phase of militancy and state responses, the 1985-89 and 1992 elections were used to revive legislative politics. In fact the issues in the 1992 elections were the restoration of peace, unemployment and better returns for farmers rather than state autonomy or the Anandpur Sahib Resolution.

if not the sure instrument, to put down militancy. That these measures failed is not a surprise.

⁵² The massive Akali victory of 1985 should not be seen as an expansion of the support base of the SAD, since in aggregate it polled only one per cent more votes than the Congress (I). Jatinder Kaur. *Punjab Crisis: The Political Perceptions of Rural Voters*. (Delhi: Ajanta Publications, 1989), 126.

⁵³ Pramod Kumar and Yogendra Yadav. “The Real Contest in Punjab.” *The Tribune*, February 9, 1992.

The Resurgence of Democracy and a Punjabi Identity: Post-1990 Phase

The triumph of democracy and assertion of the people's agenda for peace over that of factional party interests characterised the politics of this period. The Akali Dal was quick to respond to the people's demand for peace within the framework of its identity-based politics by widening its agenda from politico-religious identity confined to the Sikh identity to the broader agenda of Punjabiyyat. The SAD President, Prakash Singh Badal, brought the notion of Punjabi unity to the centrestage of Punjab politics mainly to draw legitimacy for the party's slogan of ensuring lasting peace in the state. This gave the Akali Dal an added advantage over the Congress which was seen as anti-Sikh after its role in the November 1984 riots. It is against this background that the Akali Dal structured its campaign with a major focus on anti-Congressism. Prakash Singh Badal asked 'all Punjabis to join hands in the massive task of social restructuring and economic rebuilding by making sure that an anti-people and anti-Punjab Congress regime is routed in the state, lock stock and barrel.'⁵⁴

The main plank of the Akali Dal was that the unity of all Punjabis was the only dependable basis for lasting peace and there could be no social and political stability without Punjabi unity. This seems to have been prompted by the fact that during the phase of terrorism, legitimate demands like state autonomy, a greater share in river waters and the transfer of Chandigarh to Punjab had degenerated into the movement for "Khalistan" which played havoc with people's lives. Both the single-party governments stuck to the people's agenda of peace: the Beant Singh government promoted prosperity with peace, while there was a marginal shift in the Congress agenda's emphasis in the post-Beant Singh phase from pro-market reforms to economic

⁵⁴ From a statement issued by Prakash Singh Badal at a meet at the Press Club, November 9, 1996.

subsidies for most sections of society. The concessions covered the peasantry, landless labourers, dalits and urban traders.

The revival of democratic politics and institutions was accompanied by a resurgence of Punjabi identity. Political parties which had historically articulated the language question along communal lines shifted their stance. For instance, the Akali Dal-BJP in their Common Minimum Programme (1997) asserted, "Punjabi being our mother tongue is the state language of Punjab, every Punjabi is proud of the richness of the Punjabi language and culture." This was a major shift because the underlying thrust of the dominant political discourse in the pre-1992 phase was that Punjabi was the language of the Sikhs and the Hindus never owned Punjabi as their language. In addition, the Akali Dal in its policy programme adopted on 14 April 1995 emphasised disputes over the apportionment of river waters and allocation of Punjabi-speaking territories as discrimination against Punjab, rather than against the Sikhs (as it used to in its pre-1992 resolutions), and linked the prices of agricultural products with the price index. To quote:

Over the decades, Punjab has continually been a victim of the discriminatory and repressive policies of the Centre, in particular the rights of Punjab in respect to its left-out territories and the river waters have been ruthlessly suppressed and undermined ... For pursuance of the above objectives, the spirit of Punjabin would be strengthened so that these matters get projected as common problems of the entire Punjabis rather than a section thereof ⁵⁵.

The resolution implies that the demands raised pertain to Punjabis, and that their non-acceptance is discrimination against Punjabis rather than Sikhs. Further, that the struggle for

⁵⁵ Kanwaljit Singh. 1995. op.cit.

realisation of these demands had to be launched in the spirit of Punjabi-ness rather than as Khalistanis or Sikhs.

Another major shift in the political discourse was on issues relating to greater autonomy for the states. The BJP changed its position from calling for a strong Centre to greater autonomy for states in its 1997 election. To quote:

We [BJP] shall pursue with the Centre for the implementation of the main recommendations of the Sarkaria Commission⁵⁶,

- (a) Restoring the balance of resources in favour of the states;
- (b) Ending the misuse of Article 356 of the Indian Constitution;⁵⁷ and
- (c) Consulting states on the choice of governors.

All these issues were incorporated in the Common Minimum Programme 1997 evolved by the Akali-BJP alliance. However, it was interesting to note that the thrust of the Akali Dal agenda changed from anti-centrism to co-operative federalism. To quote:

The Akali-BJP government has opened a new chapter in Centre-state relations, ushering in the age of co-operative federalism in the country. The era of confrontation has been effectively ended and replaced with a forward-looking thrust on working together for the overall good of the state and the nation.⁵⁸

⁵⁶ The Sarkaria Commission was set up on June 9, 1983 to restructure India's Centre-state relations.

⁵⁷ Article 356 of the Indian Constitution deals with measures in the event of a failure of the constitutional machinery in a state

⁵⁸ *Akali Dal Election Manifesto*, 1998.

This position marked a radical shift from the anti-Centre stance of its 1973 autonomy resolution and later its 1985 memorandum to the Sarkaria Commission. Further, there was a noticeable shift in the Akali Dal (Badal) resolutions and assertions with an emphasis on human rights. The main plank of the Akali Dal was that the unity of all Punjabis would become a reality only if lasting peace was ensured.⁵⁹ There was also a pragmatic consideration of cementing the Akali-BJP alliance which demanded that human rights be played down and peace be reinforced at any cost:

Peace in Punjab is very dear to us. We will make all endeavours to ensure peace and harmony that will last. The unity of all Punjabis could be the only true and dependable basis of lasting peace and there can be no social and political stability without Punjabi unity.⁶⁰

This gave the Akali-BJP alliance an advantage over the Congress which was seen as anti-Sikh due to its role in Operation Blue Star and the 1984 anti-Sikh riots. The Congress continued to harp on the restoration of peace as its main achievement; whereas the Akali Dal-BJP alliance presented the maintenance of peace as their main agenda. The Congress wanted to take credit for the restoration of peace, but was reluctant to own the manner in which peace was brought about, particularly when a large number of policemen were being hauled up by the

⁵⁹ "In the following year when elections for the state Assembly were held, 'peace' continued to be the core issue. Recognising the changing political scene at the national level, and the growing significance of the BJP, the Badal Akali Dal did everything possible to consolidate its alliance with the state unit of the BJP. It merely abandoned its politics of regional identity and spoke a very different language." Surinder S. Jodhka. "Return of the Region: Identities and Electoral Politics in Punjab." *Economic and Political Weekly*, 41(3), 2005, p. 227.

⁶⁰ Statement issued by Prakash Singh Badal at a press meeting at the Chandigarh Press Club, November 1996.

judiciary.⁶¹ This ambivalent position led to a shift in the mood of the electorate.

For the smooth functioning of the pre-election alliance between the Akalis and BJP a committee was constituted to allocate seats. The main criteria listed by the committee to allocate seats were of 'status-quo claim' and an ideological support base⁶². The BJP staked its claim to 34 seats and was allocated 22 for 1997 and 23 seats for the 2002, 2007 and 2012 Assembly elections. In 2012, it exchanged 2 of the 23 allocated seats, i.e., Batala and Garhshankar, with Amritsar (East) and Ludhiana (West) with the SAD. Thus, most of the BJP seats were urban and had Hindu candidates. The Akalis, on the other hand, were confined to their traditional support base in the rural and semi-urban areas and the Malwa region of the state. The 'status-quo claim' was based on the following principles;

- (a) Seats which *had been contested* by one of the coalition partners in previous elections. From this quota 14 and 42 seats were allocated to the BJP and the Akali Dal, respectively.
- (b) Seats which the coalition partners had contested against each other in previous elections were allocated on the basis of the *number of times a seat was contested by a party irrespective of the outcome*. There were 23 seats in this category. The BJP had contested more often from 9 constituencies compared to the Akali Dal. In the 1997 elections it was allocated 8 seats and in the 2002 elections it was allocated 9 seats from this category. Of the remaining 14 seats, the BJP staked its claim to 7 seats, but

⁶¹ Sarbjit Pandher. "A Peace Card Which May Spell Trouble." *The Hindu* (New Delhi), January 25, 1997.

⁶² For the 1997, 2002 and 2007 Assembly elections a committee consisting of Captain Kanwaljit Singh and Sukhdev Singh Dhindsa of the SAD and Balramji Das Tandon and Madan Mohan Mittal of the BJP was constituted to decide about seat-sharing. However in 2012 the decision on seat-sharing was taken by a committee chaired by then Chief Minister S. Prakash Singh Badal, with Ashwani Kumar the BJP State President and Balramjit Das Tandon a senior BJP leader as members.

its claim was not conceded. There were 3 seats which were contested by both parties an equal number of times and the Akali Dal was ahead of the BJP in 2; the remaining seat was rural and closer to the Akali ethos. The other four seats were contested more often by the SAD.

- (c) There were 38 seats which the BJP and SAD had contested, but not in opposition to each other. The BJP staked its claim to 4 constituencies, but the SAD had contested 3 of these more often, so the seats were allocated to the latter, and one seat remained contentious.

An analysis of seat-sharing in terms of bargaining power of coalition partners shows that the BJP managed 12 seats (120 per cent) beyond its quota in the 1997 elections compared to its performance in the 1996 parliamentary elections, whereas, the SAD managed 17 seats (17 per cent) beyond its quota (Table 1.16).

Table 1.16
Bargaining Power of Alliance Partners:
Seats allocated to Alliance Partners beyond Normal Quota
(1997 Assembly Election based on 1996 Parliament Election)

Alliance in 1997 Assembly Election	No. of Seats Contested in 1997 Assembly Election	Performance in 1996 in Assembly Segments of Parliamentary Election		
		Winner	Runner-up	Seats Managed Beyond Quota
BJP	22	2	8	12 (120%)
SAD	92	59	16	17 (23%)
CPI	15	0	0	15
Congress	105	32	77	-4 (4%)

Source : Election Commission Reports, 1996-1997

The Akali Dal-BJP pre-election coalition won the 1997 elections. This was an oversized coalition in which, for the first time in the electoral history of Punjab, the Akali Dal had such a large majority it could have formed the government on its own. The SAD won 75 seats out of the 92 contested seats and polled 38 per cent votes (Table 1.12). It maintained its dominance in the rural areas with 53 legislators (71 per cent), in the semi-urban areas with 19 MLAs (25 per cent) and in the urban areas with 3 MLAs (4 per cent) (Table 1.5). A majority of these were Sikh Jats

(55 per cent) and agriculturists (60 per cent) (Table 1.13). The BJP as a minority partner in the coalition won 18 of the 22 contested seats with 8 per cent votes. Its MLAs were mostly Hindus belonging to the khatri and bania castes (61 per cent) involved in trade and the professions. The party continued to provide representation to scheduled castes and backward castes, which constituted around 33 per cent of its legislators (Table 1.13). Whereas, in SAD, the urban Hindus, traders and professionals, were in a minority. Interestingly, 31 per cent of the MLAs belonged to the scheduled castes and 9 per cent to the backward castes (Table 1.13). The urban khatri also found representation in the Akali Dal. In other words, the SAD represented a wide social spectrum. While a majority of the BJP legislators, i.e., 14 (78 per cent) were from the urban and semi-urban areas, 4 won from the rural areas (Table 1.5).

It would be worthwhile to examine the links between social categories and legislative representation with the ministerial representation in this cabinet. This was a jumbo cabinet with 41 ministers. Chief Minister Prakash Singh Badal allocated berths to its coalition partner, the BJP, in proportion to the MLAs elected. The SAD had 81 per cent of the legislators and its share in the cabinet was 80 per cent; the BJP had 19 per cent of the legislators and its share in the cabinet was 19 per cent (Table 1.15). The wide spectrum of social representation of the SAD MLAs influenced its decision on the allocation of portfolios.

The portfolios on which the BJP had traditionally staked its claim, such as finance, industry, excise and taxation, were kept with the SAD, and specifically shifted into the domain of the Chief Minister and his loyalists, even though the BJP leadership negotiated for their traditional portfolios to cater to their support base. To quote, a senior BJP leader: 'We have put forward our claims for local bodies, industry, finance, housing and urban development, food and civil supplies, excise and

taxation, and health in this order of priority.⁶³ A senior Akali leader in an interview mentioned that the BJP's claim for the finance ministry was discussed in the Akali Dal's Political Affairs Committee (PAC), but was unanimously rejected. The BJP retained some of its traditional departments like local bodies, health and family welfare, and also got other portfolios like food and supplies, forest, legislative and legal affairs, education and excise and taxation (Minister of State), rural development and panchayats (Minister of State).

This clearly indicated that the respective traditional support bases of the political parties had branched into other sectors of the economy and that the pre-election coalition worked more to the advantage of the major partner, especially if it is an oversized coalition. As is evident, the BJP's bargaining capacity was much higher in the post-election coalitions particularly when the Akali Dal was faction-ridden.

The other competing coalition, the Congress and CPI, could not register its presence among their diverse social, economic and regional support bases. The Congress won 14 seats with 26 per cent votes (Table 1.12), of which only 3 were urban and 4 were semi-urban seats (Table 1.5): it also could elect only 7 per cent of its legislators from the scheduled castes, and its vote share was lowest till then.

In the 2002 election, the Congress and CPI pre-election coalition formed the government. This was mainly because the Akali-BJP coalition was formed around a common minimum programme, which was used to defend the alliance rather than nurture the ideological position carved out in 1997. The process of redefining religious identities and building bridges with the Sikh

⁶³ "In 1967 the ministerial allocations were according to our choice. In 1997 claims were registered but the portfolios of industry and finance could not be given to the Bharatiya Janata Party as the CM kept industry, and finance was allocated to a senior Akali leader. The allocation of the finance portfolio was not contested as the state finances were in doldrums." From interviews with Balramji Das Tandon, senior BJP leader, October to December, 2005.

fundamentalist fringe elements sharpened factionalism within the SAD and alienated a large section of urban voters.⁶⁴ The noticeable shift from Punjabi identity to reinforcement of Sikh identity made urban Hindu voters align with the Congress Party. The efforts of the SAD to represent a large section of the scheduled castes in the legislature in 1997 suffered a set-back as its policies like free power to landowning peasants made rural-based scheduled caste apathetic to the SAD-BJP alliance. A sample survey in 2004 showed that 39 per cent of the SAD workers and 34 per cent of the BJP workers perceived communal amity as the basis of a coalition (Table 1.17) whereas 27 per cent of the Congress workers and 52 per cent of CPI workers stated that the Akali-BJP alliance was a ruse to exploit religious sentiments. The politics of confrontation of the then Chief Minister Prakash Singh Badal with Gurcharan Singh Tohra, the then SGPC President, and Bhai Ranjit Singh, the Akal Takht Jathedar, led to divisions within the Akali support base,⁶⁵ but did not weaken the alliance. In this election the BJP was allocated 23 seats against 22 seats in the 1997 elections.

⁶⁴ Pramod Kumar. 2003. op.cit. p. 384.

⁶⁵ P.S. Verma. "Akali-BJP Debacle in Punjab: Wages of Non-performance and Fragmentation." *Economic and Political Weekly*, 34(50), 1999, pp. 3519-3531.

Table 1.17
Party Activist Perception on Basis of Coalition Between BJP and
Akali Dal (Badal)(number, % of responses)

Party	Amity Between Hindus and Sikhs	Electoral Arithmetic	Anti- Congress	Promotes Interests of Upper Castes	Exploits Religious Sentiments	National Development	Traditional Allies	No Idea	Good Gover- nance	Total
Congress	2	23	4		17			17		63
	(3.17)	(36.51)	(6.35)		(26.98)			(26.98)		(100.00)
SAD (B)	27		8			11	15		8	69
	(39.13)		(11.59)			(15.94)	(21.74)		(11.59)	(100.00)
BJP	15	2	4			12	7		4	44
	(34.09)	(4.55)	(9.09)			(27.27)	(15.91)		(9.09)	(100.00)
Akali Dal (Mann)		1						2		3
		(33.33)						(66.67)		(100.00)
BSP	1	14		5	5			6		31
	(3.23)	(45.16)		(16.13)	(16.13)			(19.35)		(100.00)
CPI (M) / CPI		9		3	17			4		33
		(27.27)		(9.09)	(51.52)			(12.12)		(100.00)
Total	45	49	16	8	39	23	22	29	12	243
	(18.52)	(20.16)	(6.58)	(3.29)	(16.05)	(9.47)	(9.05)	(11.93)	(4.94)	(100.00)

Source: Party Activists Survey, 2004

The seat-sharing principle was based on the status-quo claim as in the 1997 elections. The bargaining power of the alliance partners indicates that the BJP managed to win 3 seats or 12 per cent less than its quota compared to its performance in the Assembly segments in the 1999 parliamentary elections. The SAD managed to win 16 seats or 21 per cent over its quota.

Table 1.18
Bargaining power of different alliance partners:
Proportions of seats allocated to alliance partners beyond normal quota
(2002 Assembly Election Based on 1999 Parliament Election)

Alliance in 2002 Assembly Election	No. of Seats Contested in 2002 Assembly Election	Performance in 1999 in Assembly Segments of Parliamentary Election		
		Winner	Runner-up	Seats Managed Beyond Quota
BJP	23	11	15	-3 (-12)
SAD	92	22	54	16 (21%)
CPI	11	8	1	2 (22%)
Congress	105	66	33	6 (6%)

Source : Election Commission Reports, 1999-2002

The CPI-Congress alliance proved to be more beneficial to the CPI as it could manage to win 2 seats (22 per cent) beyond its quota and the Congress won 6 seats (6 per cent) beyond its quota (Table 1.18). The state Congress leadership was opposed to any alliance with the CPI and to the fact that so many seats had been allocated to the CPI.⁶⁶ It was the direct intervention of the Congress High Command which made this alliance functional. On the other hand, the CPI leadership opined that it had been allocated seats for which it had not staked a claim, for instance, Pakakalan instead of Khanna, and Panjgrahin instead of Rampura Phul. And in three constituencies⁶⁷ Congress rebel

⁶⁶ The Chief Minister Captain Amarinder Singh was not in favour of allocating 11 seats to the CPI. "Every single seat allotted to the CPI is to add to the tally of the SAD". Interview with Captain Amarinder Singh, 10 September 2004. In a press statement on 23 August, 2006, Captain Amarinder Singh stated that, "I have told party president Sonia Gandhi that an alliance with the left parties – CPI and CPI (M) – will not benefit the Congress in any manner since their votes do not get transferred to us". "I was the PCC president then and I had a harrowing time trying to convince the left leaders to send their cadres for Congress support but they failed to do so." from 'Captain Dullu Don't See Right on Left'. *Hindustan Times*, August 24, 2006.

⁶⁷ These constituencies were Sri Hargobindpur, Mansa and Dhuri.

candidates were in the contest. Interestingly, 21 per cent of the Congress Party activists reported that the alliance was based on the decision of the central leadership. In contrast, 91 per cent of the CPI activists felt that the coalition was to fight communal forces (Table 1.19). The SAD (78 per cent) and BJP (84 per cent) viewed the Congress-CPI coalition as mere electoral arithmetic.

Table 1.19
Party Activist Perception on Basis of Coalition between Congress and CPI or CPI (M)

If yes, give name of party	To Oppose Communal Parties	No Idea	Electoral Arithmetic	No Other Party Ready for Coalition	Decision of Central Leadership	Natural Allies / Same Ideology	Ideological Commonalities
Congress	30 (47.62)	2 (3.17)	8 (12.70)	2 (3.17)	13 (20.63)	12 (19.05)	67 (100.00)
SAD (B)	1 (1.69)	5 (8.47)	46 (77.97)	7 (11.86)	4 (6.78)		63 (100.00)
BJP		4 (10.53)	32 (84.21)	2 (5.26)	4 (10.53)		42 (100.00)
Akali Dal (Mann)		2 (66.67)				1 (33.33)	3 (100.00)
BSP	1 (3.23)	8 (25.81)	20 (64.52)	2 (6.45)	3 (9.68)		34 (100.00)
CPI (M) / CPI	30 (90.91)		3 (9.09)				33 (100.00)
Total	62 (27.31)	21 (9.25)	109 (48.02)	13 (5.73)	24 (10.57)	13 (5.73)	242 (100.00)

Source: Party Activist Survey, 2004

If we analyse the election in terms of votes polled we find that the Akali vote bank remained intact but was divided between the SAD (Badal) which secured 31 per cent votes and the Akali Dal (Tohra) which got 5 per cent votes in the 2002 elections; the SAD won 61 seats. There was a major shift in the vote banks of upper caste Hindus and scheduled castes, which adversely affected SAD's main ally, BJP which won only 3 seats and 6 per cent votes. Shifts in urban Hindu votes and actionalism within the Akalis led to a defeat for the Akali Dal (Badal)-BJP alliance.⁶⁸ The SAD suffered a defeat in the semi-urban areas and the BJP was routed in the urban areas.

The Congress formed the government in the state with the outside support of its electoral ally, the CPI. This was a single-

⁶⁸ If the share of votes of the BJP, Akali Dal (B) and Akali Dal (Tohra) were added and converted into seats, the Akali Dal and BJP would have formed the government.

party majority government as the Congress had won 62 seats with 36 per cent votes, and the CPI won 2 of the 11 seats allocated (Table 1.12). The Congress made significant improvements in all three cultural zones of the state. It fielded 44 Sikh Jat candidates and 21 won. The Congress gained largely from the urban electorate as it was seen to pursue policies against Sikh extremism even though the urban votes polled declined. The Congress elected almost equal numbers of Sikh Jats and urban khatri and banias, followed by a smaller number of people from the scheduled castes.

In the 2007 election, the Congress and CPI could not enter into an alliance, mainly because of the opposition of the state-level Congress leadership, particularly the then Chief Minister, Captain Amarinder Singh. In a press statement, he said that the Left parties had failed to transfer their votes to the Congress in the 2002 Assembly elections and had collected their workers from all over the state to work only in constituencies where their candidates had been fielded.⁶⁹ The Left parties attributed the break in the alliance to differences on policies. The CPI (M) General Secretary Prakash Karat stated that the Left mantra for the polls would be to defeat the SAD-BJP combine and expose the Congress. "We will give a call for the defeat of the SAD-BJP combine and expose the Congress which for the past five years has been pursuing policies that have been harmful to the state as well as the people."⁷⁰ The impact of this break in the alliance was visible in the political agenda advocated by the Congress. The Congress Party's political campaign lost its *aam admi* (common man) thrust. For example, one of the advertisements released by the Congress government claimed it had "inspired top industrial houses to invest Rs. 86,161 crore in 282 mega projects, thereby generating 20 lakh jobs". It was also claimed that if the Akali Dal was brought back to power, land prices would crash. A large section of the voters, i.e., 53 per cent, as per a sample survey,

⁶⁹ Raveen Thukral. "Captain Dullu Don't See Right on Left". *The Hindustan Times*, August 24, 2006.

⁷⁰ 'No Alliance with Congress: Karat'. *The Hindustan Times*, October 11, 2006.

mentioned that the increase in land prices had no impact on them as they had no stake in land; 30 per cent stated that it had benefited land speculators and illicit businessmen; around 12 per cent said that the increase had benefited rich peasants; and 5 per cent were of the view that it had made it impossible for the common man to own a shelter (Table 1.20).

Table 1.20
Impact of Rise in Land Prices

	Frequency	Per cent
No stakes in land	164	52.90
Rich land owners	39	12.58
Land speculators and illicit businessmen	93	30.00
Difficult to own a shelter	14	4.52

Source: Field Survey, February 2007

Such a claim was contrary to the ideological filter of the *aam admi* as used by the Congress-CPI alliance in previous elections. Those who did not have the means might be deprived by the rising prices of land of even owning a shelter or a house. The irony of the situation was that the compensation received by farmers, ranging from Rs. 40 lakh to Rs. 60 lakh for an acre of land, was not adequate to get them a shelter of five marlas on the same land. Had the Congress Party aligned with the Communists it may not have marketed this as its main electoral plank. Further, an alliance with the Communists might have checked the Congress Party's vacillation between a religious identity and a secular Punjabi identity. The Congress Party focused more on the rural Jat peasantry and the Sikh identity by highlighting the termination of the river waters agreement and its overactive participation in the religious celebrations of the Sikhs and the SGPC elections.

These policies and pronouncements had an adverse impact on the poll performance of the Congress in the 2004 parliamentary elections. In these elections the urban and dalit votes shifted away from the Congress. The 2007 and 2012 Assembly election results can be seen against the background of the 2004 parliamentary election. The Congress Party's vote share in the semi-urban constituencies in the 2004 parliamentary election decreased from

40 per cent to 35 per cent and in the urban constituencies from 54 per cent to 48 per cent compared to the 1999 parliamentary elections. However, in 2007 and 2012 the Congress Party regained its vote share in the semi-urban constituencies which increased from 35 per cent (2002) to 43 per cent (2007) and to 40 per cent (2012). But, in the urban constituencies it decreased from 47 per cent (2002) to 40 per cent (2007) and 43 per cent (2012) (Table 1.5). Interestingly, the Congress Party's rural vote share has been steadily increasing since 1997, from 26 per cent to 35 per cent in 2002, 40 per cent in 2007 and 39 per cent in the 2012 Assembly elections. Traditionally, its core support base consists of a large majority of Hindu dalits with their uncertain religious allegiance, urban Hindu traders and migrant landless labourers. The shift from a Punjabi identity to a narrow religious identity testifies to the fluid response of the voters. In this context, alliances between political parties if reflective of existing social dynamics have the potential to change election outcomes. And to also changes the political discourse – from identity politics, say, to citizen rights, from pro-rich to *aam admi* (common person), from strong Centre to decentralisation, and so on. For instance, an alliance between the Congress Party and the Communist parties has the capacity to create a pro-poor constituency apart from enabling a transfer of votes to each other. In a sample survey conducted before the 2007 elections, around 26 per cent mentioned that an alliance between the Congress and the Communist parties could be politically formidable, i.e., the lack of an alliance should work to the advantage of the SAD-BJP alliance; 10 per cent said that it would work to the advantage of the Congress; and 64 per cent said that it would make no difference (Table 1.21).

Table 1.21
On lack of Congress-CPI Alliance

	Frequency	Per cent
Advantage Congress	32	10.32
Disadvantage Congress and CPI	80	25.81
No impact	198	63.87
Total	310	100.00

Source: Field Survey, February 2007

The election results showed that the Congress Party won 7 of the 11 seats which in the 2002 elections were allocated to the CPI, whereas the Communists acted as a spoiler for the Congress in four seats, i.e., Batala, Balachaur, Dina Nagar and Bhadaur. It is clear that the alliance between the Congress and the Communists had political advantages rather than merely electoral advantages. Therefore, the impact of the alliance should be measured in the political domain rather on an electoral arithmetic scale.

In the 2012 elections, a third front emerged in Punjab under the banner of the Sanjha Morcha. At the core of the Sanjha Morcha was the People's Party of Punjab (PPP) led by Akali rebel four-time legislator Manpreet Badal. The communist parties forged an alliance with the PPP to form the Sanjha Morcha. In a survey conducted before the elections, a majority of the respondents mentioned that the absence of an alliance between the communist parties and the Congress would work to the disadvantage of the Congress and to the advantage of the PPP; only 20 per cent mentioned it would work to the advantage of the SAD (Table 1.22).

Table 1.22
On Lack of Alliance Congress – Sanjha Morcha 2012

	Frequency	Per cent
Advantage Congress	50	10
Disadvantage Congress, CPI and People's Party	125	25
Advantage People's Party	200	40
Advantage SAD	100	20
No impact	25	5
Total	500	100

Source: Field Survey, January 2012

The election results showed that the PPP proved to be a wild card. It secured 5 per cent of the votes, which adversely affected the fortunes of the Congress candidates in 10 constituencies and in 13 constituencies it worked to the disadvantage of the SAD. Clearly, a pre-election alliance of the Congress and the Saanjha Morcha would have electorally benefited the Congress.

The Akali-BJP pre-election coalition formed the government after both the 2007 and 2012 Assembly elections. In the 2007 elections, the SAD-BJP alliance won 68 seats and 45 per cent of the total votes polled; the Congress won 44 seats with 41 per cent of the votes; and the communist parties could not win a single seat, but secured one per cent of the votes. (The alliance articulated its 1997 election plank of *Punjabiya* (Punjabi identity) and peace, along with a focus on inflation, corruption and mega projects.) In 2012 the SAD-BJP alliance won the same number of seats with 3 per cent fewer votes compared to the 2007 elections. In terms of seats won compared to the 2007 election, the SAD contested 94 seats and won 56 seats with a gain of 7 seats and its coalition partner the BJP contested 23 seats and won 12 seats with a loss of 7 seats. The Congress registered its win in 46 constituencies with a gain of 2 seats over the previous election. The newly formed People's Party of Punjab (PPP) with its alliance with the Left parties could not win a single seat. The distinct feature of this election was the SAD's non-Panthic thrust in the election campaign with an emphasis on development and governance reforms. In these elections, the SAD made no emotional appeals about danger to the "Sikh Panth".

The assertions of Dera Sacha Sauda in the 2002 and 2007 elections against the SAD and in favour of the Congress, and the frenzy against the followers of the Dera Sacha Sauda as before the 2009 Parliament elections, had to a large extent subsided by the 2012 elections. In the 2007 elections the Political Affairs Wing of the Dera Sacha Sauda sect (founded by Shyam Mastana in 1948) issued a directive to its followers to vote in favour of the Congress Party. For the first time in Punjab a religious sect openly supported a political party (other than the SAD). This brought the Dera into direct conflict with the SAD, and led to the defeat of several SAD candidates in the south-western districts of the state, a traditional stronghold of the Akalis.⁷¹ The

⁷¹ The Akalis-BJP blamed the religious sect for their poor show in Malwa in 2007, *Indo-Asian News Service*, 28 February (FACTIVA); Lionel Baixas, "The Dera Sacha Sauda Controversy and Beyond". *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol. 42, No. 40. October 6, 2007, pp. 4059-4065.

SAD, however, won the elections. The SAD-BJP alliance openly criticised the Dera Sacha Sauda for having “behaved like a political party.” After the elections, in the second week of May 2007, the Dera Chief Baba Gurmit Ram Rahim allegedly imitated the most revered tenth Sikh Guru (from the seventeenth century) which led to large-scale violence against the Dera.⁷² The stand-off between the Dera Sacha Sauda Chief Gurmit Ram Raheem and the highest Sikh temporal seat the Akal Takht and the Punjab Chief Minister led the BJP to issue a warning to the SAD to restore peace in the state, or the BJP may have to review its alliance with the SAD. Despite initial laxity the state government defused the tensions and restored peace in the state. The SAD was caught between its obligation to its support base amongst followers of the Sikh religion and the influence of the Dera in around 33 constituencies. The compulsions of the SAD-BJP coalition also played a crucial role in bringing moderation to the relationship between the institutionalised Sikh religion and Dera Sacha Sauda. In 2010, the SAD president categorically stated that ‘the SAD has never shown any intolerance towards any sect. Our regular visits to these religious sects clearly prove that we have not nurtured any vendetta. It is the endeavour of the Akali Party to provide peaceful and conducive conditions to all religions, sects and castes.’⁷³

In the post-1997 phase the SAD-BJP alliance started nurturing a new constituency around communal amity and peace. In 2007, their politics evolved from peace to development and governance.⁷⁴ The SAD further added another dimension in its politics by co-opting the urban Hindu businessmen into their party and government. A number of prominent urban Hindus were given party positions and a leading industrialist was made head of the planning process in the state. Further, the dalits

⁷² Jaideep Sarin. “Most in Punjab had Nothing to do with Faith Frenzy”, *The Hindustan Times*, 19 May, 2007.

⁷³ From a series of 71 interviews with Sukhbir Singh Badal, SAD President in October 2011.

⁷⁴ Manifestos of the SAD (2007 and 2012)

(particularly the balmikis and mazhabis) were targeted for receiving social security benefits. In other words, a systematic social reengineering was initiated bringing both the urban Hindus and dalits into its fold. It is against this backdrop that, to the discomfort of the Congress, a 'Sikh' Prime Minister could not emerge as a vote catcher. Most of the election rallies addressed by Prime Minister Manmohan Singh were thinly attended and without the usual Punjabi enthusiasm. The fact that Manmohan Singh has never presented himself as a 'Sikh', but as a professional economist, cannot be denied. Therefore, the extent to which he mirrors the economic reforms agenda along with his opposition to free electricity and water to the farmers may have distanced him from the common man. Similarly, the shift from Sikh identity to Punjabi identity has pushed leaders like Uma Bharti and Narendra Modi to the margins of electoral politics in Punjab.

The electoral agenda had an impact on the outcomes of both the 2007 and the 2012 elections, and also shaped the alliance between the SAD and BJP. For instance, in a sample survey in 2007, a majority of SAD supporters (72 per cent) considered an alliance with the BJP a symbol of communal amity rather than an electoral arrangement (Table 1.23). Similarly, in 2012 a significant number of SAD supporters considered an alliance essential for communal amity. In contrast, a majority of the BJP supporters, 85 per cent in 2007 and 58 per cent in 2012, considered it an electoral necessity (Table 1.24). However, in 2012, an increased number of BJP supporters, i.e., 42 per cent, considered it a political alliance for maintaining communal amity.

Table 1.23
On SAD-BJP Coalition (SAD Supporters)

	2007		2012	
	Frequency	Per cent	Frequency	Per cent
Electoral liability	63	20.32	150	30
Electoral savvy	24	7.74	20	4
For communal amity	223	71.94	330	66
Total	310	100.00	500	100.00

Source: Field Surveys, 2007 and 2012

Table 1.24
On SAD-BJP Coalition (BJP Supporters)

	2007		2012	
	Frequency	Per cent	Frequency	Per cent
For community amity	43	13.87	210	42
Electoral liability	2	0.65	-	-
Electorally useful	265	85.48	290	58
Total	310	100.00	500	100.00

Source: Field Survey, 2007 and 2012

Table 1.25
Bargaining power of Alliance Partners: Proportions of seats Allocated Beyond Normal Quota (2007 Assembly Election based on 2002 Assembly Election)

Alliance in 2007 Assembly Election	No. of Seats Contested in 2007 Assembly Election	Performance in 2002 Assembly Election		
		Winner	Runner-up	Seat Managed Beyond Quota
BJP	23	3	18	2 (10%)
SAD	94	41	44	9 (11%)

Source: Election Commission Reports, 2002-07

In 2007 and 2012, seat-sharing was based on the status-quo claim, as it was in the 1997 and 2002 elections. The bargaining power of the alliance partners in 2007 indicates that the BJP could manage to get 2 seats (10 per cent) beyond its quota share compared to its performance in the Assembly elections of 2002. The SAD could get 9 seats (11 per cent) beyond its quota (Table 1.25). In 2012, the BJP got the same number of seats as per its quota of 2007 elections and the SAD got one seat (one per cent) beyond its quota.

If we analyse the elections in 2007 in terms of votes polled and seats won, the SAD managed to get 37 per cent votes and 49 seats and the BJP polled 8 per cent votes and got 19 seats; the Congress managed to get 41 per cent votes and 44 seats. In 2012, the SAD managed to get 35 per cent votes and 56 seats and the BJP polled 7 per cent votes and got 12 seats; the Congress managed to get 40 per cent votes and 46 seats (Table 1.12). In both these elections, the SAD could not get a majority on its own and therefore became dependent on the BJP to form a government. In the 2007 Assembly elections, the SAD did not perform well in its traditional support base of the Malwa region as many of the SAD stalwarts suffered a defeat here. In 1997 it had won 44 seats in this region which declined to 19 seats in the 2007 elections (Table 1.10). In the 2007 elections, however,

open support for the Congress from the popular religious sect Dera Sacha Sauda⁷⁵ contributed to the defeat of the SAD. But in the 2012 elections, the SAD improved its tally from 19 to 34 seats and could neutralise the Dera Sacha Sauda factor in this region. In 2007, there were around 37 seats under the influence of the Dera of which the Congress could win around 65 per cent; in 2012, however, the SAD could win 54 per cent of these seats. In the other two regions, i.e., Doaba and Majha, the trends of the 1997 elections were repeated. The Congress did not learn from the Akali-BJP alliance in 2002 and its own defeat in the 2004 parliamentary elections that it was not electoral wisdom to cater to sectional interests and indulge in identity politics. It made inroads into the Akali Dal bastion, but suffered a major loss within its own support base of dalits, urban traders, slum dwellers, etc. The Congress suffered a defeat in the semi-urban areas and was routed in the urban constituencies. In 2012 it gained 2 seats and the SAD lost 2 in Doaba; similarly, in Majha the Congress gained 6 seats and the SAD lost 6 seats, while in Malwa, the Congress lost 6 seats and the SAD gained 15 seats.

The SAD could get only 25 Sikh Jats elected in 2007 and in 2012, compared to 41 in the 1997 elections. In 2007, the Congress managed to have almost an equal number of Sikh Jats elected as the SAD, and in 2012 this rose significantly to 21 Sikh Jats elected on the Congress ticket. This clearly signifies that the Sikh Jats are not exclusive supporters of the SAD. This shift was also significant in the post-Blue Star phase. In contrast, the number of dalit MLAs in the Congress fell from 14 in 2002 to 7 in 2007 and 10 in 2012. The BJP maintained its tally of 4 Dalit legislators in 2007, which fell to 3 in 2012. The number of Dalit MLAs in the SAD decreased from 23 in 1997 to 16 in the 2007 elections. In 2012, the SAD registered an increase of 5 legislators compared to the 2007 elections (Table 1.13). It is interesting to note that the main political parties evenly represent the caste configuration.

⁷⁵ Raveen Thukral. "Sirsa Dera Add Spice to Malwa Contest". *The Hindustan Times*, February 9, 2007.

The linkages between the social matrix and legislative representation in terms of religious affiliation has shown that the number of Hindu MLAs increased in the SAD in the 2012 and 2007 elections over the 2002 and 1997 elections. While a majority of the BJP MLAs were Hindus from the khatri, brahmin and bania castes (68 per cent in 2007 and 58 per cent in 2012), a majority of the SAD MLAs were rural-based (71 per cent in 2007 and 68 per cent in 2012), with the semi-urban (22 per cent in 2007 and 27 per cent in 2012) and urban constituencies (6 per cent) carrying far less weight. Interestingly, the 2012 elections gave increased representation to the urban areas compared to the 1997 elections: the number of BJP MLAs from the urban areas increased from 28 per cent in 1997 to 37 per cent in 2007 elections and 42 per cent in 2012 elections. It also gave greater representation to the rural areas which increased from 22 per cent in 1997 to 26 per cent in 2007 and 25 per cent in 2012. Both parties now represented a wider social spectrum than before (Table 1.5).

Chief Minister Prakash Singh Badal was authorised to give representation to its coalition partner the BJP. The SAD has 72 per cent of the legislators and its share in the Cabinet is 72 per cent; similarly, the BJP has 28 per cent of the legislators and its share in the Cabinet is 28 per cent. In 2012, the SAD had 82 per cent of the legislators and its share in the Cabinet was 78 per cent; while the BJP had 18 per cent of the legislators and its share in the Cabinet was 22 per cent.

The BJP, however, did negotiate for portfolios that were linked with the urban areas.⁷⁶ It staked its claim to portfolios like industries, excise and taxation, local bodies, health, transport and urban development; while it obtained local bodies, health and family welfare, forests and medical education, industries and commerce, it could not get urban development, excise and taxation. It also staked its claim to Deputy Chief Minister's post.

⁷⁶ Gautam Dheer. "SAD-BJP Fissures on Portfolios". *The Indian Express*, March 3, 2004.

In terms of regional representation, the 2012 ministry gave greater representation to Malwa and reduced its representation of both the Doaba and Majha region, compared to 2007. The SAD, however, gave proportionately higher representation to Malwa (31 per cent), Doaba (15 per cent) and Majha (29 per cent) in 2007. The BJP, for its part, gave greater representation to Doaba (43 per cent) and Majha (29 per cent) from among the MLAs elected from each region. In 2012 in terms of regional representation, 22 per cent of the ministry was from Majha, 56 per cent from Malwa and 22 per cent from Doaba. The SAD gave proportionately higher representation to Malwa (24 per cent), Doaba (27 per cent) and Majha (27 per cent), while the BJP gave greater representation to Doaba (20 per cent) and Majha (20 per cent) from among the MLAs elected from each region (Table 1.15).

In 2007 the coalition gave greater representation to the rural areas (50 per cent) followed by the semi-urban (39 per cent) and urban (11 per cent) areas. The pattern was repeated in 2012, with higher representation given to the rural areas (61 per cent) followed by the semi-urban (28 per cent) and urban (11 per cent) areas. The SAD for its part gave a proportionately higher representation to the semi-urban areas (36 per cent), followed by the rural (26 per cent) areas from among the MLAs elected from these regions in 2007. In 2012, SAD's representation was highest from the rural areas (29 per cent), followed by the semi-urban areas (20 per cent) with no representation from the urban areas; thus it gave no representation to any of its urban MLAs in the ministry. In 2007, the BJP gave higher representation to MLAs from the semi-urban areas (43 per cent) followed by the urban areas (28 per cent) and no representation to its rural elected MLAs, a pattern it followed in 2012, when its MLAs from the semi-urban areas accounted for 50 per cent, followed by those from the urban areas with 40 per cent, and no representation to rural elected MLAs (Table 1.26).

Table 1.26
Election Year-Wise Ministerial Representation by Party and Location

		Akali				BJS/BJP				INC				Total (SAD+BJP+INC)			
		Rural	Semi-Urban	Urban	Total	Rural	Semi-Urban	Urban	Total	Rural	Semi-Urban	Urban	Total	Rural	Semi-Urban	Urban	Total
1969	Ministers	13	10	1	24	1	1	2	4					14	11	3	28
	MLAs	23	19	1	43	1	5	2	8					24	24	3	51
	**	56.52	52.63	100.00	55.81	100.00	20.00	100.00	50.00					58.33	45.83	100.00	54.90
1972	Ministers									6	8	3	17	6	8	3	17
	MLAs									31	26	9	66	31	26	9	66
										19.35	30.77	33.33	25.76	19.35	30.77	33.33	25.76
1977	Ministers	6	5	0	11	1	2	2	5					7	7	2	16
	MLAs	43	14	1	58	5	12	8	25					48	26	9	83
		13.95	35.71	0.00	18.97	20.00	16.67	25.00	20.00					14.58	26.92	22.22	19.28
1980	Ministers									9	4	3	16	9	4	3	16
	MLAs									30	21	12	63	30	21	12	63
										30.00	19.05	25.00	25.40	30.00	19.05	25.00	25.40
1985	Ministers	22	6		28									23	6		28
	MLAs	53	20	0	73									53	20		73
		41.51	30.00		38.36									43.40	30.00		38.36
1992	Ministers									15	12	4	31	15	12	4	31
	MLAs									51	27	9	87	51	27	9	87
										29.41	44.44	44.44	35.63	29.41	44.44	44.44	35.63
1997	Ministers	23	10		33	0	6	2	8					23	16	2	41
	MLAs	53	19	3	75	4	9	5	18					57	28	8	93
	*	43.40	52.63	0.00	44.00	0.00	66.67	40.00	44.44					40.35	57.14	25.00	44.09
2002	Ministers									14	5	6	25	14	5	6	25
	MLAs									32	19	11	62	32	19	11	62
										43.75	26.32	54.55	40.32	43.75	26.32	54.55	40.32
2007	Ministers	9	4		13		3	2	5					9	7	2	18
	MLAs	35	11	3	49	5	7	7	19					40	18	10	68
		25.71	36.36	0.00	26.53	0.00	42.86	28.57	26.32					22.50	38.89	20.00	26.47
2012	Ministers	11	3		14		2	2	4					11	5	2	18
	MLAs	38	15	3	56	3	4	5	12					41	19	8	68
		28.95	20.00	0.00	25.00	0.00	50.00	40.00	33.33					26.83	26.32	25.00	26.47

Source: Punjab Vidhan Sabha Resume,

Punjab Vidhan Sabha Compendium of Who's Who of Members (1960-2002)

Note: Percentages mentioned are per cent of ministers selected out of total MLAs of particular location.

** 5 MLAs from other parties joined the Akali Dal in 1969; * 1 MLA from another party shifted to the Akali Dal in 1997

Interestingly, the representation of the Jats (a peasant caste) continued to be highest, i.e., 55 per cent, in 2007 and 61 per cent in 2012 in the respective ministries. However, the representation of the dalits declined from 22 per cent in 1997 to 11 per cent in 2007 and 17 per cent in 2012, that of the backward castes increased to 11 per cent in 2007 from 7 per cent in 1997, but again declined to 6 per cent in 2012 (Table 1.27). The SAD gave proportionately higher representation to the Jats, 40 per cent in 2007 and 44 per cent in 2012, but this is lower than the 49 per cent representation in the 1997 ministry. There is a noticeable decrease in the representation of dalits in the ministry, from 35 per cent in 1997 to 6 per cent in the 2007 and 10 per cent in 2012 (Table 1.27).

Table 1.27
Election Year-Wise Ministerial Representation by Party and Caste

		Akali					BJS/BJP					INC					Total (SAD+BJP+INC)				
		SC	OBC	Jat	Other	Total	SC	OBC	Jat	Other	Total	SC	OBC	Jat	Other	Total	SC	OBC	Jat	Other	Total
1969**	Ministers	3	4	17	0	24	1		1	2	4						4	4	18	2	28
	% of total ministers	12.50	16.67	70.83	0.00	100.00	25.00	0.00	25.00	50.00	100.00						14.29	14.29	64.29	7.14	100.00
	MLAs	11	3	27	2	43	1		2	5	8						12	3	29	7	51
	%from total MLA	25.58	6.98	62.79	4.65	100.00	12.50	0.00	25.00	62.50	100.00						23.53	5.88	56.86	13.73	100.00
	%from total MLAs of the caste	27.27	133.33	62.96	0.00	55.81	100.00		50.00	40.00	50.00						33.33	133.33	62.07	28.57	54.90
1972	Ministers											2	1	9	5	17	2	1	9	5	17
	% of total ministers											11.76	5.88	52.94	29.41	100.00	11.76	5.88	52.94	29.41	100.00
	MLAs											14	7	28	17	66	14	7	28	17	66
	%from total MLA											21.21	10.61	42.42	25.76	100.00	21.21	10.61	42.42	25.76	100.00
	%from total MLAs of the caste											14.29	14.29	32.14	29.41	25.76	14.29	14.29	32.14	29.41	25.76
1977	Ministers	1	2	8	0	11	1	0	1	3	5						2	2	9	3	16
	%from total minister	9.09	18.18	72.73	0.00	100.00	20.00	0.00	20.00	60.00	100.00						12.50	12.50	56.25	18.75	100.00
	MLAs	15	2	39	2	58	4	3	2	16	25						19	5	41	18	83
	%from total MLA	25.86	3.45	67.24	3.45	100.00	16.00	12.00	8.00	64.00	100.00						22.89	6.02	49.40	21.69	100.00
	%from total MLAs of the caste	6.67	100.00	20.51	0.00	18.97	25.00	0.00	50.00	18.75	20.00						10.53	40.00	21.95	16.67	19.28
1980	Ministers											3	2	6	5	16	3	2	6	5	16
	%from total minister											18.75	12.50	37.50	31.25	100.00	18.75	12.50	37.50	31.25	100.00

Coalition Politics In Punjab: From Communal Polarisation To Catchall Parties?

		Akali					BJS/BJP					INC					Total (SAD+BJP+INC)				
		SC	OBC	Jat	Other	Total	SC	OBC	Jat	Other	Total	SC	OBC	Jat	Other	Total	SC	OBC	Jat	Other	Total
	MLAs											13	8	18	24	63	13	8	18	24	63
	%from total MLA											20.63	12.70	28.57	38.10	100.00	20.63	12.70	28.57	38.10	100.00
	%from total MLAs of the caste											23.08	25.00	33.33	20.83	25.40	23.08	25.00	33.33	20.83	25.40
1985	Ministers	6	1	12	9	28											6	1	12	9	28
	%from total minister	21.43	3.57	42.86	32.14	100.00											21.43	3.57	42.86	32.14	100.00
	MLAs	18	4	34	17	73											18	4	34	17	73
	%from total MLA	24.66	5.48	46.58	23.29	100.00											24.66	5.48	46.58	23.29	100.00
	%from total MLAs of the caste	33.33	25.00	35.29	52.94	38.36											33.33	25.00	35.29	52.94	38.36
1992	Ministers											8	4	11	8	31	8	4	11	8	31
	%from total minister											25.81	12.90	35.48	25.81	100.00	25.81	12.90	35.48	25.81	100.00
	MLAs											20	9	36	22	87	20	9	36	22	87
	%from total MLA											22.99	10.34	41.38	25.29	100.00	22.99	10.34	41.38	25.29	100.00
	%from total MLAs of the caste											40.00	44.44	30.56	36.36	35.63	40.00	44.44	30.56	36.36	35.63
1997*	Ministers	8	3	20	2	33	1	0	1	6	8						9	3	21	8	41
	%from total minister	24.24	9.09	60.61	6.06	100.00	12.50	0.00	12.50	75.00	100.00						21.95	7.32	51.22	19.51	100.00
	MLAs	23	7	41	4	75	4	2	1	11	18						27	9	42	15	93
	%from total MLA	30.67	9.33	54.67	5.33	100.00	22.22	11.11	5.56	61.11	100.00						29.03	9.68	45.16	16.13	100.00
	%from total MLAs of	34.78	42.86	48.78	50.00	44.00	25.00	0.00	100.00	54.55	44.44						33.33	33.33	50.00	53.33	44.09

Punjab Electoral Spectrum: Unfolding Challenges for Democracy

		Akali					BJS/BJP					INC					Total (SAD+BJP+INC)				
		SC	OBC	Jat	Other	Total	SC	OBC	Jat	Other	Total	SC	OBC	Jat	Other	Total	SC	OBC	Jat	Other	Total
	the caste																				
2002	Ministers											5	2	10	8	25	5	2	10	8	25
	%from total minister											20.00	8.00	40.00	32.00	100.00	20.00	8.00	40.00	32.00	100.00
	MLAs											14	5	22	21	62	14	5	22	21	62
	%from total MLA											22.58	8.06	35.48	33.87	100.00	22.58	8.06	35.48	33.87	100.00
	%from total MLAs of the caste											35.71	40.00	45.45	38.10	40.32	35.71	40.00	45.45	38.10	40.32
2007	Ministers	1	2	10	0	13	1			4	5						2	2	10	4	18
	%from total minister	7.69	15.38	76.92	0.00	100.00	20.00	0.00	0.00	80.00	100.00						11.11	11.11	55.56	22.22	100.00
	MLAs	16	6	25	2	49	4	1	1	13	19						20	7	26	15	68
	%from total MLA	32.65	12.24	51.02	4.08	100.00	21.05	5.26	5.26	68.42	100.00						29.41	10.29	38.24	22.06	100.00
	%from total MLAs of the caste	6.25	33.33	40.00	0.00	26.53	25.00	0.00	0.00	30.77	26.32						10.00	28.57	38.46	26.67	26.47
2012	Ministers	2	1	11		14	1			3	4						3	1	11	3	18
	%from total minister	14.29	7.14	78.57	0.00	100.00	25.00	0.00	0.00	75.00	100.00						16.67	5.56	61.11	16.67	100.00
	MLAs	21	3	25	7	56	3		2	7	12						24	3	27	14	68
	%from total MLA	37.50	5.36	44.64	12.50	100.00	25.00	0.00	16.67	58.33	100.00						35.29	4.41	39.71	20.59	100.00
	%from total MLAs of the caste	9.52	33.33	44.00	0.00	25.00	33.33		0.00	42.86	33.33						12.50	33.33	40.74	21.43	26.47

PUNJAB VIDHAN SABHA RESUME

Punjab Vidhan Sabha Compendium of who's who of members (1960-2002)

Note : Percentages mentioned in fifth row corresponding to each year are per cent of ministers selected out of total MLAs of particular caste

** 5 MIA from Parties joined Akali in 1969

* 1 MLA from other party shifted to Akali in 1997

Punjab Election Commission's Reports 1967 to 2012

A comparative analysis of the SAD-led coalition with the Congress-led coalition in terms of their reflecting social coalition in the cabinet yields the following trends:

- (a) The Akali-BJP coalition gave higher representation to Sikhs, whereas the Congress tried to balance it.
- (b) The Akalis overrepresented their stronghold the Malwa region and the Congress overrepresented the Doaba and Majha regions.

The impact of pre-election coalitions was that they introduced competition into the hitherto exclusive support bases of the political parties. The major parties, the Congress and Akalis, increased their vote share in each others' strongholds. For instance, the Akalis increased their support in the urban and semi-urban areas, the three cultural zones and the other-than-Sikh Jat castes. The Congress expanded its base in rural Punjab. These two parties having diluted their ideological positioning, relied on policy interventions.⁷⁷ The BJP could not compensate for its ideological compromise with proactive policy interventions to keep its support base intact. There has been a sense of neglect and a perception of relative deprivation among the urban voters. The social spectrum was represented in the legislature but power-sharing at the level of the executive was seen to be discriminatory by a section of dalits. Their assertions have become visible in non-electoral spaces.

The culture of coalition formation has its roots in the pre-Independence phase. The Congress and Muslim League were the two nuclei around which coalition politics revolved. The Akali Dal and Hindu Maha Sabha clearly stated that to protect

⁷⁷ The continuation of coalition politics in Punjab has not only witnessed competitive populism but on a positive note has led to the 'gradual discarding of radical stances by political parties all over the state'. This has been evident from the manifestos of the Akali Dal and its ally BJP which aim to maintain 'peace, brotherhood, communal harmony, socio-economic welfare, all-round development and sustainable and profitable agriculture through diversification'. Ashutosh Kumar. "Electoral Politics in Punjab: Study of Akali Dal". *Economic and Political Weekly*, 39(14-15), 2004, p. 1519.

the interests of their support bases they might even form a coalition with the Muslim League. After Independence, in partitioned Punjab, the SAD merged with the Congress twice and added a regional flavour to the national politics of the Congress. For instance, factions in the Congress supported the Punjabi Suba and Save Hindi agitations, whereas, the mandate of the Indian National Congress was to oppose both. This politics of merger was replaced by coalition politics in the reorganised state of Punjab.

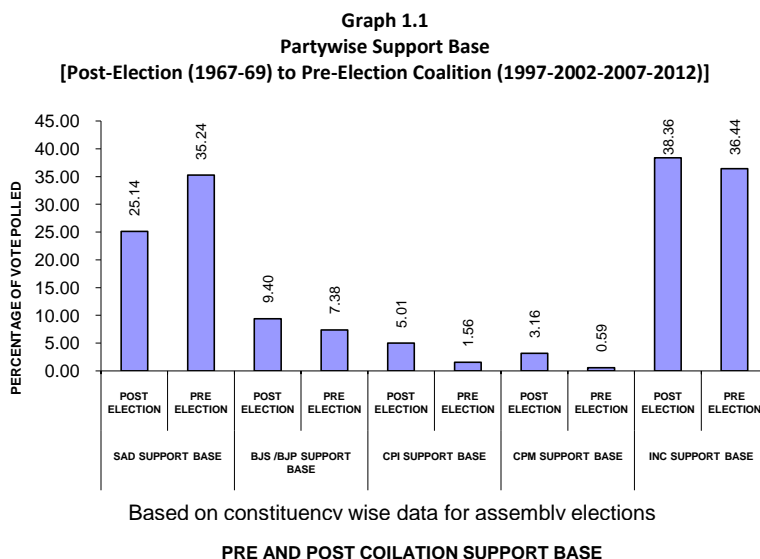
Therefore, it would be appropriate to characterise the 1967-80 phase as the initiation of coalition politics which coincided with the decline of one-party dominance in legislative politics. The decline of one-party dominance initiated two distinct trends in the party dynamics in Punjab: the effective number of parties by seats increased in the post-election coalition phase (3.5 in 1967 and 3.2 in 1969, and in the pre-election coalition phase it was 2.4 in 2002, 2.9 in 2007 and 2.5 in the 2012 elections); the effective number of parties by votes the highest, 4.5 in the 1967 elections (Table 1.28).

Table 1.28
Taagepera and Shugart Index for General Assembly Elections in Punjab,
1967 to 2012

Election Year	Effective Number of Parties by Votes	Effective Number of Parties by Seats
1967	4.5	3.5
1969	3.9	3.2
1972	3.5	2.1
1977	4.0	3.1
1980	3.4	2.5
1985	3.3	2.1
1992	3.9	1.8
1997	4.2	2.2
2002	4.1	2.4
2007	3.1	2.9
2012	3.4	2.5

Source: Calculated from data from the *Election Commission Report, 1967 – 2012*

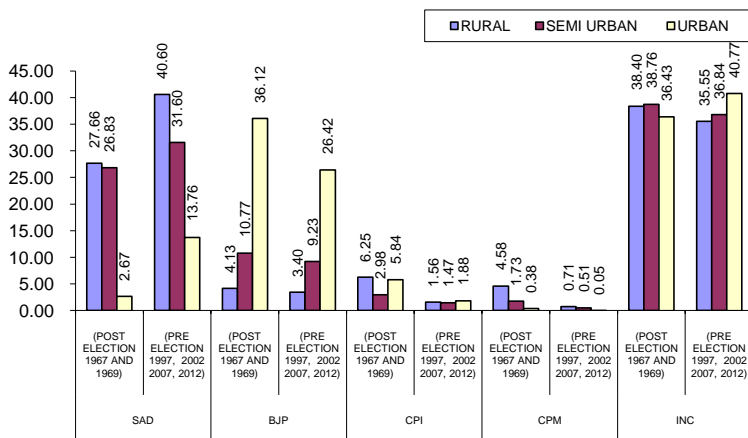
It can, therefore, be hypothesised that at the micro-level political parties follow the strategy of expansion in post-election coalitions and the strategy of consolidation in pre-election coalitions. However, the Congress remained capable of forming a government on its own, averaging above 30 per cent of the votes, while the SAD needed a coalition partner to be electorally viable and politically stable. It is interesting to note that only the SAD base, with a 25 per cent vote share in the post-election coalition phase, increased to 35 per cent in the pre-election coalition phase (Graph 1.1), while the support base of the BJP, CPI and Congress decreased in pre-election coalition politics.



Source : Election Commission Report, Punjab 1967-2012

The BJP support base declined as it underplayed its ideological thrust and could not make policy interventions for its urban base through executive decisions. The Congress gained in the urban areas not because of executive decisions but because it was seen to pursue anti-Sikh politics. In the absence of urban-centric policy interventions the urban votes polled continued to decline (Graph 1.2).

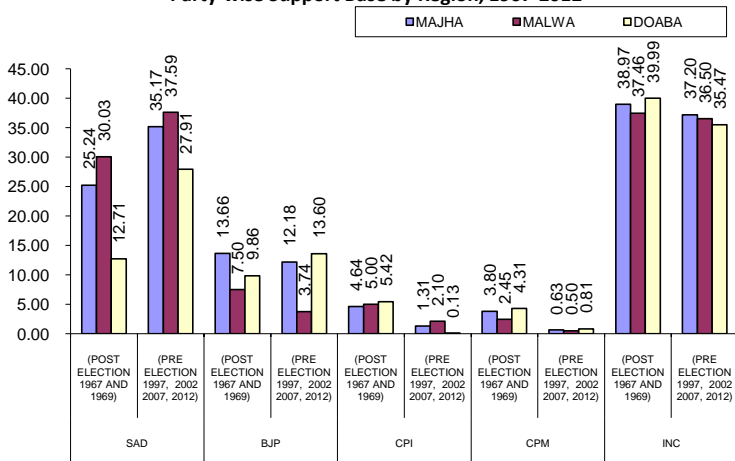
Graph 1.2
Party-wise Support Base by Location 1967-2012



Source : Election Commission Report, Punjab 1967-2012

The pre-election coalition phase helped the SAD to increase its support base outside its stronghold Malwa, into Doaba and Majha (Graph 1.3).

Graph 1.3
Party-wise Support Base by Region, 1967-2012



Source: Election Commission Report, Punjab 1967-2012

In so far as the representation of social diversity in the legislature and cabinet is concerned, there are imbalances. For example, out of the 1,248 MLAs in the state from 1967 to 2012, a plurality, i.e., 44 per cent were from the rural Jat peasants, whereas 25 per cent were dalits, 9 per cent OBCs and 22 per cent were urban traders (khatris) (Table 1.13). The representation of rural Jat peasants is much higher than their population share. The representation of various caste groups in the legislature became more diverse in the pre-election coalition phase as compared to the post-election coalition phase; for example, the Sikh Jat peasants had a greater share in the Akali Dal than in the pre-election coalition phase. In fact, in the pre-election coalition phase the SAD had a more even representation of dalits and OBCs, and the BJP had more dalits and OBCs and a relatively lower share of urban khatri and bania traders. This clearly shows that pre-election coalitions capture the social spectrum in a more inclusive manner.

In 1969, the SAD gave less representation to BJP MLAs than it did in the 1997 and 2007 pre-election coalitions. Interestingly, the share of ministers in the SAD was higher in the pre-election coalitions than in the post-election coalitions, but social diversity was better represented in the cabinet in the pre-election coalitions. The share of Jats in the ministry declined from 64 per cent in 1969 to 51 per cent in 1997, 55 per cent in 2007 and 61 per cent in the 2012 elections (Table 1.29) while the share of the dalits in the ministry increased to 22 per cent in 1997 but again decreased to 17 per cent in the 2012 elections. In the post-election coalitions, the SAD gave higher representation to rural Jats than to the dalits. The BJP tried to accommodate the dalits and Jats to increase its support base, but in the pre-election coalitions the BJP negotiated higher representation for urban traders. Further, in the post-election coalitions, higher representation was given to legislators from Doaba, where the coalition base was weak, while in the pre-election coalitions regional representation was proportionate to the number of MLAs.

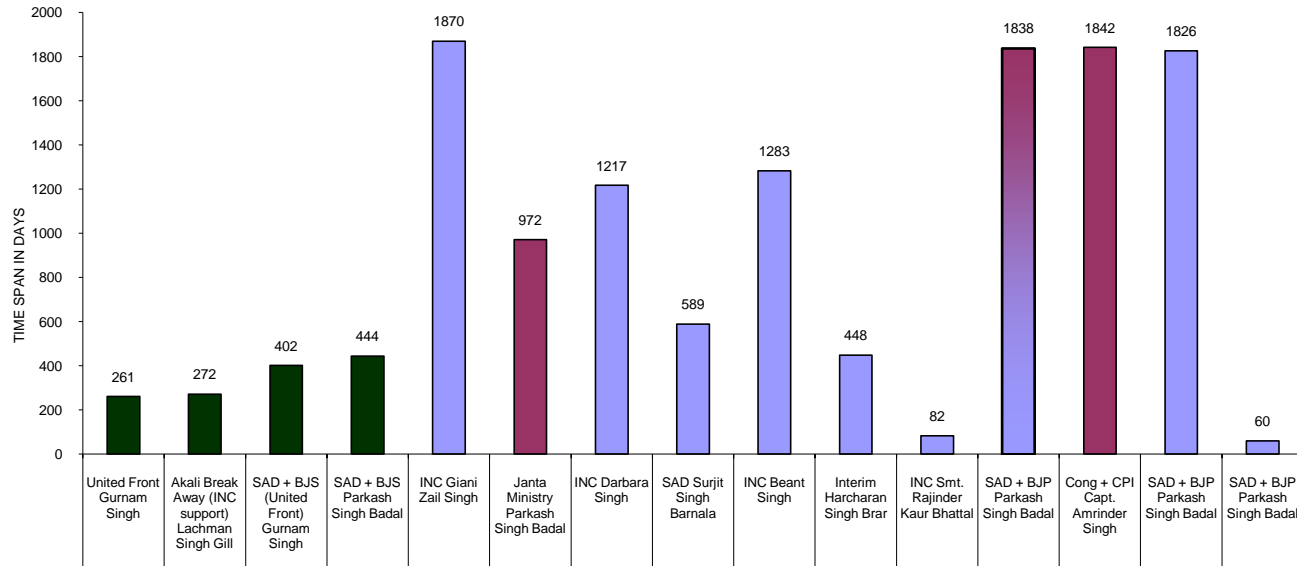
Table 1.29
Year and Caste-wise Distribution of Council of Ministers
at Initial Constitution of Ministries

Year	SC	OBC	Other	Jat	Total
1969	4	4	2	18	28
	14.29	14.29	7.14	64.29	100.00
1972	2	1	5	9	17
	11.76	5.88	29.41	52.94	100.00
1977	2	2	3	9	16
	12.50	12.50	18.75	56.25	100.00
1980	3	2	5	6	16
	18.75	12.50	31.25	37.50	100.00
1985	6	1	9	12	28
	21.43	3.57	32.14	42.86	100.00
1992	8	4	8	11	31
	25.81	12.90	25.81	35.48	100.00
1997	9	3	8	21	41
	21.95	7.32	19.51	51.22	100.00
2002	5	2	8	10	25
	20.00	8.00	32.00	40.00	100.00
2007	2	2	4	10	18
	11.11	11.11	22.22	55.56	100.00
2012	3	1	3	11	18
	16.67	5.56	16.67	61.11	100.00
Total	44	22	55	117	238
	18.49	9.24	23.11	49.16	100.00

Source : *Punjab Vidhan Sabha Compendium of Who's Who of Members* (1960-2007), Chandigarh: Punjab Vidhan Sabha Secretariat, 2003; *Election Commission Reports*, Punjab (1967-2012) Resume, Punjab Legislative Assembly

The coalitions have tended to give relatively even representation to the social spectrum in government formation, which in turn has had an impact on durability. The post-election coalitions in Punjab were the least durable as is evident from the number of days the ministries could last, while the pre-election coalitions have completed their full terms (Graph 1.4).

Graph 1.4
Durability of Government and Tenure



VIDHAN SABHA NUMBER, CM AND TYPE OF GOVERNMENT

Source : Resume of the Punjab Assembly

Coalition politics has mirrored the changing character of Indian democracy. With the introduction of economic reforms, populist electoral promises are not in convergence with the economic policy framework. In other words, in the earlier phase, populist electoral promises were ideologically in convergence with the policy framework, but in the later phase they diverged from the policy framework. This shift created a crisis of trust in the leadership and party system. Political parties started relying excessively on electoral arithmetic through the appropriation of social segments and the pro-poor discourse.⁷⁸

Additionally, the alliance of the Congress with the CPI was to provide content to its *pro-aam admi* and anti-communal stance. It is worth noting that the Congress in Punjab is branded a communal party.

The Congress-CPI alliance is guided more by immediate political and electoral needs. It is for this reason that the local Congress and CPI leadership were not inclined to enter an electoral alliance, and consequently in the 2007 elections an alliance did not materialise between them. On the other hand, the Akali-BJP coalition has arisen from a historical context. It has shown a tendency to evolve broad boundary conditions for links between social diversity, and electoral and executive coalitions. It is within these boundary conditions that the dynamics of

⁷⁸For example, the Congress Party in Punjab was caught between Assembly election (2002) and Parliamentary elections (2004) and became a victim of the paradox between electoral promises and the government mandate. In the 2002 Assembly elections its promise of free electricity to farmers contributed to its victory over its opponent the Akali Dal. The election manifesto committee was headed by Dr. Manmohan Singh, present Prime Minister of India. After coming to power, it started implementing the mandate of the government to introduce economic reforms and consequently it performed poorly in the 2004 Parliamentary elections. The Congress Party was quick to announce the implementation of sops like free electricity in the wake of the forthcoming Assembly elections, but this was opposed by Dr Manmohan Singh. It also passed the Punjab Repealing Act of 2004 on SYL, much to the annoyance of the central leadership. In other words, the Congress in competition with a regional alliance started appropriating the anti-Centre constituency in the state.

coalition takes place, i.e., from pre-electoral seat-sharing to cabinet formation.

Another trend which acquired currency in the coalition era is that fragmented ideological spaces are increasingly replaced by socially differentiated but unified political spaces. These differentiations are articulated in policy interventions to compensate for the absence of identitarian mobilisations. For instance, the SAD has formulated policies which are consistent with its social base; on the other hand, the BJP did not make much effort in this direction and lost its electoral base to the Congress, which led to the weakening of the Akali-BJP coalition.

II

DECODING ELECTORAL VERDICT IN PUNJAB: FUTURE OF REGIONAL PARTIES?

Elections are about winning and for some, to make others lose. Elections in India are shorn of competitive ideological persuasions. For one set of political leadership the language of power became legalistic, procedural and threatening. While for the new breed of agitators or dissenters-turned politicians, it is theatrical, surgical, musical and puritanical (with numerous entertainers, professionals and others taking the plunge) and of course, divorced from ideological positioning. Another distinct articulation presented that the face of politics that was decisive, concerned and connected with a promise to perform in the realm of governance and development in the generic sense. These tendencies emanate from a common contextual structural base.

This invites attention to uncover a combination of factors to understand the 2014 elections through exceptions like Punjab. In Punjab, persistence of anti-incumbencies of both the Congress-led UPA in the Centre and the SAD-BJP coalition in the state neutralised 'Modi Magic'. This election has also shown that voter behaviour is not guided by a wave, but a measured response to the available electoral choices. For instance, in Punjab, in two constituencies where choices were available from within the mainstream political parties, voters did not park their votes with the new political rookie party Aam Admi Party (AAP). Where such choices were not available they voted for AAP even though these candidates were political novices. Is this voting behaviour in dissonance with the historical trends in predominantly agrarian society like Punjab? Further, this paper also attempts to examine the validity of the hypothesis that 'Modi's phenomenon' has been largely shaped by semi-urban and urban aspiring classes and has to be understood through urban prisms. An inferential analysis may conclude that since

Punjab is a predominantly an agrarian society and, therefore, it has remained insulated from 'Modi's urban-centric' political discourse. Such a conclusion would lead to empiricist trap. This paper has attempted to decode electoral verdict in Punjab and has shown that a form-centric reductionist analysis may help to describe a phenomenon, but it amounts to undermining of the historical analytical approach to capture the long-term trends.

It may not be, therefore, correct to focus on these apparent changes or discontinuities as these are form-centric. Forms are descriptive categories – static in nature, reductionist in interpretation, problem-centric in its approach. While acknowledging the discontinuities, it would be pertinent to analyse emerging politics in terms of system continuities that remain central and determining factors.

In this chapter, an attempt is made to answer some of the following questions. Why the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) along with its ally the Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD) could not maintain its electoral position in Punjab? How did the Aam Admi Party (AAP) win only in Punjab? How come the so-called 'right wing shift relating to role of state' in right wing ruled state of Punjab could not garner more votes for the BJP-Modi led coalition? Why Narendra Modi's charisma as a leader could not win votes even for a stalwart like Arun Jaitley with an unblemished image in Punjab?

Let me preface focusing on these questions with four contextual postulates. These postulates define continuity and boundaries for electoral discourse in the country.

Consensus on Structural Issues: Harnessing Continuities

Given the consensus amongst the political parties on a neo-liberal path of development and in the absence of any alternate vision, the electoral discourse conveniently located crony capitalism, unemployment, poverty and inequalities in policy paralysis.

Overtly the content of politics of consensus on economic reforms is to: (i) reduce employment in the public sector and allow market forces to generate or curtail employment in the private sector; (ii) encourage people to participate in self-help groups and launch small businesses in the face of intense competition; (iii) tell people to mind their own health and give subsidies to private hospitals; and (iv) teach them to pay for life-saving services even if they do not have the opportunities to earn a livelihood. This contributed to tension between the path of development and redistribution of income and citizens capacity to access various resources.

Also in Punjab there is a near consensus on neo-liberal economic reforms among all the major political parties. All the political parties are in favour of FDI. But, the SAD and the BJP qualified it with a rider that they are in opposition to FDI in retail. The Congress has decided to support the FDI in multi-brand retail “to transform agrarian economy and ensure better returns for farmers” (INC 2014: 32).

Notwithstanding the political rhetoric, it is worth noting that the process has already begun. FDI in wholesale sector has already been allowed in Punjab. Walmart has opened 14 wholesale stores in four states in collaboration with Bharti Retail and the retailer also supplies backend assistance to Bharti Retail’s 150-plus supermarkets and compact hypermarkets in nine states. Out of these 14 stores, one-third are in Punjab. Another global retailer Metro Cash and Carry has started the process of launching 15 outlets in India of which six are in Punjab. These stores are functional in Ludhiana and Jalandhar, and are under construction in Bathinda, Patiala, Zirakpur and Amritsar. These stores make their products available to local retailers and also procure produce from local farmers. The process of intermediation has begun. According to an informal survey, 70 percent of customers in Zirakpur Bharti-Walmart are retailers. In electoral discourse, these issues have not been debated (Kumar 2012: 4). Is there a blueprint to make retailers, farmers

and small manufacturers and small industrialists competitive? Is there a long and short-term plan to make farmers produce globally competitive through new technologies and research innovations that enhance competitive?

No doubt, there is a consensus on Neoliberal path, of course with minor differences, but at the same time, political parties are proactive in moderation of the callousness of the market and provide much needed legitimacy to the political system.

Politics of Moderation of Exclusion: Right-based Politics Laced with Doles

Politics is seen as the means to resolve the tension between the opposing claims of market, efficiency and economic growth as against with those of social equity and justice. It has guaranteed various rights to meet the challenges and experiences of exclusion. On one hand, accumulation by dispossession and accumulation by encroachments rather than through transparent institutional mechanisms has been practiced. “The state continued to work for speculators and rentiers in a highly unequal milieu. It took upon itself to encourage FDI, introduces user fees, withdraw subsidies, encourage privatization in social development” (Sood 2014). The main feature of this has been values of indiscriminate acquisition of material assets and over-consumption. Simultaneously, it has introduced a rights-based regime providing transparency and deliverables, but not accountability.

A number of legislations ranging from Right to Information, Right to Employment (MNREGA), and Right to Food, were passed. It has also introduced the Right to Fair Compensation for Land. This proposed Act clearly demonstrate the attempts to moderate the tension between opposing claims of market and social equity. To illustrate, “the new proposed Act on land acquisition focused on pricing, compensation, resettlement and rehabilitation. This is a shift from an earlier Act in which the

main thrust was redistribution of land rather than on 'fair compensation'. It will replace the Land Acquisition Act of 1894" (Sood 2014). The political parties promised to extend this right-based regime to other spheres of governance also. The Congress party in its manifesto promised Right to Health and Right to Home to create a conducive environment for capital accumulation and acquire legitimacy for politics (INC 2014: 10).

In Punjab, to moderate the impact of privatisation and public sector disinvestment parties continue to be in favour of power subsidies to the farmers. This was an outcome of the lesson learned by the Congress Party in the 2004 Parliament elections. After coming to power in the 2002 state elections the Congress initiated reduction of power subsidy to farmers, expenditure in government and disinvestment of the public sector. As a consequence, it lost 53 percent of the seats in the 2004 Parliamentary elections as compared to the 2002 assembly elections. Similarly, the SAD/BJP alliance that took an initiative to rationalise power subsidies to farmers by introducing a productive bonus suffered a setback in the 2009 Parliament elections.¹

Congress and Akali Dal promised not only free electricity and water, but sops ranging from free laptops, allowances for unemployed youth and cable connection for Rs. 100/- to subsidised *atta-dal*. And all these were neatly packaged in a market driven governance in which subsidies were given and people were exhorted to pay user charges. How far this cocktail of doles and user charges could provide much-needed legitimacy to neoliberal reforms and translate into votes in elections has to be gauged?

(De)constructing Vote Banks: Blurring Structural Inequalities

Along with moderation of politics, electoral discourses tend to present voters as population and (de)construct them in electoral discourse as homogeneous groups and collectivities

locating 'Hindu civilisational symbolism' in ethnic particularism and linking these with universal categories like citizens. The manner in which the process of globalisation has claimed to be undifferentiated, similarly in elections politics is being presented as universal. It attempts to blur the distinction between the centre and the periphery and hierarchical system of power, exchange and benefits. In a way, it reinforces blurring at the level of manifest form. For instance, 'development for all, along with all' and Punjabi, Punjabiati and Punjabi identity slogans claim to be universal, more pure and unadulterated underplaying structural inequalities located in caste, religion, gender and ethnicity. In other words, from conglomeration of identities to catch-all categories to maximise votes (Kumar 2014: 276).

This kind of electoral discourse has not only taken away politics from people, but also blurred their structural position for them. And the use of symbols including Ganga (river), Geeta (Scripture) and Navratras (ritual), as well as national icons Madan Mohan Malviya, Deen Dayal Upadhyay, Sardar Vallabh Bhai Patel have been appropriated to provide content to 'Hindu' and Indian nationalism.

The Modi-led BJP campaign selectively appropriated symbols and icons from Indian history and invoked ideology to make these sound inclusive. Martyrdom and national pride was evoked against "an untrustworthy 'Delhi Empire' that tolerated gruesome acts against Indian soldiers by Pakistan" (Modi: 2013 Hyderabad). A rally was addressed with two minutes of silence for martyred soldiers in Tamil Nadu. Collectivities were identified for appreciation, 'Biharis are hardworking and very inspirational' (Modi: Patna); 'Tamilians are sincere and above all, they are royal and loyal people! For Tamil people, workplace is worship place' (Modi 2013: Trichy). Rousing of cultural idioms and regional symbols of pride and group values were activated to seek reinforcement of the slogan 'Welfare of all'. The national icons were located in diverse regions in the country to

establish their link with Indian culture. Whether it was farmers in anguish over their grain rotting, while citizens starved or the Tamil to whom work is worship. If Gandhiji is from Gujarat, his conscious keeper Rajaji is from Tamil Nadu (Modi 2013: Trichy).

The symbols so selected interlocked the religions with the cultural terrain. For instance, 'Muslim' symbols were linked with national pride and 'Hindu' symbols treated as synonymous with Indian civilisation. The Taj Mahal as a tourist destination was projected as an 'Indian Brand' icon (Modi 2014: Hardoi). Colonel Nizamudin was acknowledged with reverence in his capacity as a colleague of Subhash Chandra Bose (Modi 2014: Rohania). Sufi poets such as Azan Fakir in Assam were acknowledged as legends (Modi 2014: Guwahati). In contrast, certain values were labelled as 'Hindu' values and were located in Indian culture. Haryana is the land of Kurukshetra and Lord Krishna provides the message of Geeta to the world (Modi 2013: Rewari). Assam is the land of Maa Kamakhya, and Jammu crowds into the rally attributed to Maa Vaishno Devi blessings (Modi 2013: Jammu). Respects are paid to the Goddess of Basta Aradhya Devi and Mata Dhantswar in Chhattisgarh (Modi 2013: Jogdalpur). Bengal is renowned for Durga Puja, Rosgulla and drum beats (dhaak), and songs (saankh) as an integral part of Durga Puja (Modi 2014: Kolkata). Gujarat became the 'land of Somnath', while Bihar's historic and glorious role was hailed during the Ramayan, Mahabharata, Buddhist and Mauryan era, and during the British period (Modi 2013: Patna). Uttar Pradesh as the land of Ram Rajya was evoked with the strength, traditions and cultural heritage. 'People of this land, your own ancestors realized the idea of Ram Rajya' (Modi 2013: Kashi).

Further, 'Hindu' symbols were identified with purity. 'Uttar Pradesh the holy land of mother Ganga' (Modi 2013: Kashi). It was not the cleanliness of Ganga that was promised, but its 'purification'. Similarly, Yamuna river was not to provide safe drinking water, the development terminology, but 'pure water' (Modi 2013: Agra). Funds sanctioned for cleaning Ganga were

accused of being flushed down Ganga. Corruption and non-performance was linked to vilification of 'Hindu' symbols 'who have sinned even in the holy name of Ganga. The people who cannot take care of Ganga, how will they take care of the nation?' (Modi 2013: Kashi)

And above all, Modi and Gujarat were presented as synonymous with religious, traditional connections drawn to rally locations. Yadavs in Bihar were reminded that the king of Yadavs, Lord Krishna resided in Dwarka, Gujarat the home of Modi (Modi 2013: Patna). Speaking at a rally in Muzaffarpur in Bihar on 3 March 2014, Narendra Modi emphasised his own lower-caste origins, and said: "The next decade will belong to the Dalits and the backwards". In South India, inaugurating the centenary meet organised by the Kerala Pulayar Mahasabha in Kochi, Modi said that the saints and social reformers in the past century had belonged to either the Dalit or backward sections of the society. He wondered why a memorial honouring the contribution of Ayyankal was not built in Kerala" (Palshikar and Suri 2014). No doubt, he identified himself humbly as a small man, but from the land of Mahatma Gandhi and Sardar Patel.

Historically, a number of leaders and political parties used religious and national symbols and spaces. They argued that the bifurcation of politics among Muslims, Sikhs and Hindus shall help to represent the secular interests of religious groups in politics. This is nothing but communalism.

The protagonists of the BJP-Modi (Hindu) civilisational approach argue that labelling this type of politics as religious or communal is wrong. The correct approach is to find out whether this politics has a vision, clearly defined ideology and alternate political mode of reaching out to people. This politics has brought a shift in BJP's pronouncements from communal to 'Hindu civilisational'. It has put into the backburner all issues like Article 370, Ram Mandir, Ram Setu, religious conversions and population stabilisation.

However, the question remains, under what conditions and political contexts this nuanced use of 'Hindu civilisational' symbolisms will degenerate into a 'clash of civilisations'? Is it not a fact that the blurring effect of this cocktail of symbolisms saps the will of the people to transform the system; in other words, civilisational reservoir is being used to make individuals more humane, moral and honest without addressing the basis of their miseries. Commercial interests would be the main beneficiaries of this morality of austerity, thrift and healthy life for the poor, as it will facilitate them to multiply and accumulate wealth.

These articulations blur the multicultural dimensions of Indian society and politics. For example, in Punjab, all the political parties vacillated between religious identity to Punjabiat as per the electoral and political needs. Consequently, religious, linguistic and regional factors became so mixed up that none of these emerged as a single factor in electoral mobilisation. And it has weakened the struggle for people's survival. Punjab has the highest percentage of Dalits in the country and poverty among them is more than double as compared to non-Dalits. In addition there is no engagement of Dalits to bring about transformation in their social conditions and build their capacities to have access to resources. One of the reasons is that contemporary politics is reproducing itself within a broad range of bounded and unbounded seriality, centre with periphery or without and historical (in terms of symbolism) and a-historical (in ideological persuasions). This brings us to another level, i.e. how this cocktail of symbolisms facilitates a catch- all approach?

Convergence of 'Deficient' Citizens with Electoral Democracy

Having blurred structural inequalities, commonalities of experience of (deficient) citizens interaction with the state is captured for providing access to so-called good governance.

There are certain commonalities of experience of the citizen's interaction with the state between various segments of society. The claims to identity, dignity, productivity and democratic engagement with the institutions also becoming part of electoral discourse not only at the national level, but in Punjab as well. Non-realisation of these claims for a large section of population results into an experience of exclusion in their interaction with the state. It is this dimension of 'deficient citizenship' that is appropriated in electoral discourse i.e. fight against corruption, governance reforms, simplification of procedures, etc. Because it is common deficient experience and, therefore, becomes consistent with the 'welfare of all' thrust of electoral mobilisations. It is this experience of exclusion that has been made central to political discourse and not the exclusion of marginalised sections from market and the dominant politics.

Connects and Disconnects in Post-1997 Phase

These contextual postulates in interaction with three axis relating to identity politics have produced distinct results in 2014 elections. The three axis in Punjab are 'dwarfed' identity assertions, majoritarian assertion and minority aspiration, and intermeshed caste and class social categories. A perusal of history shows that in Punjab the religious, communal and secular articulations have all remained deficient. Both Hindus and Sikhs suffered from a majority-minority persecution complex (Kumar 1982: 27; Wallace 1986: 363-377). A large section of Hindus suffered from a majority-minority complex as they perceived themselves to be a majority in India and a minority in re-organised Punjab. Similarly, Sikhs are a majority in the state and a minority in India, thus also suffer from a minority-majority complex.

At the political level, Sikhs as a minority finds expression in anti-centrism and demand for strengthening of federal polity while urban Hindus look towards the Centre for protection for their perceived insecurities. In the socio-political domain, the caste

and class are intermeshed and religion as a category in political discourse remained dominant. These characteristic features in their interaction with the catch-all politics produced electoral volatility. This process is an outcome of ten years of turmoil in Punjab. Emerging out of terrorism, the democratic resurgence in Punjab proved to be a panacea and was impregnated with lessons for political parties. Simply put, it took Punjab out of 'teach a lesson approach' to learn lessons for strengthening of democracy. It was widely believed that this was the only insurance against re-emergence of terrorism.

Having learnt lessons from the ten years of turmoil in the state, political parties shifted their agenda – in the religio-cultural domain from a competitive religious identity to a composite Punjabi identity; in the political sphere from intermeshed religious demographic categories (i.e. urban Hindu traders seen as the BJP's support base and the rural Jat peasant a support base of the SAD) to citizens unbounded by religion, caste and demographic location. Later, in 2014 elections, this discourse found articulation in the BJP-Modi campaign. The traditional categories having been blurred, the citizen as a voter became unbound and footloose. The major parties, i.e. the Congress and the Akali increased their vote share in other party strongholds.

In post-1997, people's agenda for peace over that of political parties sectional interests characterised this phase (Kumar 2014: 277)². There was also a shift from politico-religious identity confined to the Sikh identity to the agenda of Punjabihood with the adoption of Moga Declaration 1995. To quote, 'The spirit of Punjabihood would be strengthened so that these matters get projected as common problems of the entire Punjabis rather than a section thereof' (Singh 1995: 4). Political parties, which had been historically articulating the language question on communal lines also shifted their stance. For instance, the Akali-BJP in their Common Minimum Programme (1997) asserted, "Punjabi being our mother tongue is the state language of Punjab. Every Punjabi is proud of the richness of the Punjabi

language and culture” (Kumar 2014: 277). In addition, the Akali Dal in its policy programme adopted on 14 April, 1995, emphasised disputes over the apportionment of river waters, allocation of Punjabi-speaking territories as a discrimination against Punjab rather than the Sikhs (as it used to be in pre-1992 resolutions), and linking the prices of agricultural products with the price index.³

Another shift has been on issues relating to greater autonomy for states. The BJP changed its stance from strong centre to a greater autonomy for states and the SAD changed its position from anti-centrism to co-operative federalism. The BJP’s 1997 election manifesto reinforced this shift. To quote; We [BJP] shall pursue with the centre for the implementation of the main recommendations of the Sarkaria Commission, to restore the balance of resources in favour of the states, for ending the misuse of Article 356 of the Indian Constitution, and consulting states on the choice of governors (NDA 1999).⁴

All these issues were incorporated in the Common Minimum Programme 1997 evolved by the Akali-BJP alliance with the thrust of the Akali Dal agenda changed from anti-centrism to co-operative federalism.⁵

This shift in agenda converged with people’s quest for peace and survival and paid dividend to its main proponents the SAD and the BJP. In 1997 it elected them to power in the state legislature. In the 1998 parliamentary elections, the SAD won the largest number of seats i.e. 8 and polled 33 percent of the votes. The Bharatiya Janata Party won 3 seats and polled 12 percent of the votes (see table 2.1).

Table 2.1
Punjab Elections 1992-2014

Year	Parliament				Assembly			
	Party	Contested	Won	Vote %	Party	Contested	Won	Vote %
1992	BJP	9	0	16.51	BJP	66	6	16.48
	SAD	3	0	2.58	SAD	58	3	5.2
	CPI	1	0	1.57	CPI	20	4	3.64
	CPM	3	0	3.98	CPM	17	1	2.4
	INC	13	12	49.27	INC	116	87	43.83
	BSP	12	1	19.71	BSP	105	9	16.32
	JD	4	0	1.3	JD	37	1	2.15
	JP	1	0	0.93	OTHERS	9	2	0.74
	OTHERS	3	0	0.13	IND	151	4	9.24
1996	IND	32	0	4.01				
	BJP	6	0	6.48				
	SAD(M)	7	0	3.85				
	SAD	9	8	28.72				
	BSP	4	3	9.35				
	CPI	3	0	1.6				
	CPM	3	0	2.68				
	INC	13	2	35.1				
	JD	1	0	2.66				
1997	JP	1	0	0.03				
	OTHERS	31	0	2.01				
	IND	181	0	7.51				
					BJP	22	18	8.33
					SAD	92	75	37.64
					CPM	25	0	1.79
					CPI	15	2	2.98
					INC	105	14	26.59
					BSP	67	1	7.48
1998					JD	27	0	0.56
					JP	1	0	0.01
					SAD(M)	30	1	3.1
					OTHERS	65	0	0.65
					IND	244	6	10.87
	BJP	3	3	11.67				
	SAD	8	8	32.93				
	JD	1	1	4.18				
	CPI	1		3.4				
1999	CPM	3		1.06				
	INC	8		25.85				
	BSP	4		12.65				
	SAD(M)	4		2.73				
	OTHERS	21	0	0.64				
	IND	49	1	4.91				
	BJP	3	1	9.16				
	SAD	9	2	28.59				
	DBSM	1		2.71				
1999	SAD(M)	1	1	3.41				
	CPI	1	1	3.74				
	CPM	1		2.18				
	INC	11	8	38.44				
	BSP	3		3.84				
	JD(S)	2		0.03				

Decoding Electoral Verdict in Punjab: Future of Regional Parties?

Year	Parliament				Assembly			
	Party	Contested	Won	Vote %	Party	Contested	Won	Vote %
	JD(U)	2		0.1				
	OTHERS	29	0	5.34				
	IND	57		2.45				
2002					BJP	23	3	5.67
					SAD	92	41	31.08
					DBSM	2	0	0.33
					SAD(M)	84	0	4.65
					CPM	13	0	0.36
					CPI	11	2	2.15
					INC	105	62	35.81
					BSP	100	0	5.69
					JD(S)	4	0	0.03
					JD(U)	2	0	0.01
2004					OTHERS	213	0	2.94
					IND	274	9	11.27
	BJP	3	3	10.48				
	SAD	10	8	34.28				
	SAD(M)	6	0	3.79				
	CPI	1	0	2.55				
	CPM	1	0	1.81				
	INC	11	2	34.17				
	BSP	13	0	7.67				
	JD(S)	1	0	0.01				
2007	OTHERS	26	0	2.5				
	IND	70	0	2.75				
					BJP	23	19	8.21
					SAD	94	49	37.19
					CPI	25	0	0.75
					CPM	14	0	0.28
					BSP	116	0	4.1
					INC	117	44	40.94
					SAD(M)	37	0	0.51
					OTHERS	191	0	1.23
2009					IND	438	5	6.79
	BJP	3	1	10.06				
	SAD	10	4	33.85				
	SAD(M)	3	0	0.36				
	CPI	2	0	0.33				
	CPM	1	0	0.14				
	INC	13	8	45.23				
	BSP	13	0	5.75				
	OTHERS	59	0	1.94				
	IND	114	0	2.33				
2012					BJP	23	12	7.18
					SAD	94	56	34.73
					CPI	14		0.82
					CPM	9		0.16
					BSP	117		4.29
					INC	117	46	40.09
					PPOP	92		5.16
					OTHERS	612	3	7.56
2014	BJP	3	2	8.77				
	SAD	10	4	26.37				

Year	Parliament				Assembly			
	Party	Contested	Won	Vote %	Party	Contested	Won	Vote %
	CPI	5	0	0.4				
	CPM	3	0	0.13				
	INC	13	3	33.19				
	BSP	13	0	1.91				
	AAAP	13	4	24.47				
	OTHERS	75	0	1.15				
	IND	118	0	3.61				

Source: Election Commission of India Reports 1992-2014.

Congress, BSP, and communists entered into a pre-election alliance and could not win even a single seat. The Akali Dal-BJP alliance performed better because it provided the Akali Dal with the much needed political space at the national level to shed its anti-national image, and to the BJP it gave a political plank to counter the Congress and the Left propaganda that its politics is anti-minorities. But, its performance in state politics remained dismal as it failed to provide corruption and harassment-free governance. As a consequence, in the 1999 Lok Sabha elections the pre-election alliance of SAD-BJP failed miserably with the Congress-CPI alliance winning 9 seats with a 42.18 percent vote share. This election witnessed the BSP and the Akali Dal (Tohra) in the role of spoilers. The SAD (B) secured 28.5 percent of the votes. The Akali Dal (Tohra) acted as spoiler for the SAD (B) with around 4.6 percent votes. And the BSP acted as a spoiler against the Congress in nearly 27 assembly segments in the 1999 Lok Sabha elections. This was followed by the Congress victory in the 2002 assembly elections, winning 62 seats with 36 percent vote share (see table 2.1).

BJP and the Akali Dal after winning the 1997 elections on Punjabi as reflected in the Moga Declaration of 1995 subsequently started operating in the Sikh religious domain. This was mainly due to the competition for 'Sikh Jat votes' between the two Akali Dal factions. The outcome of this approach led to the alienation of a large section of urban Hindus, the moderate Sikhs and the Dalits. Whereas, the vote share of the Congress party in the 2002 elections in semi-urban constituencies increased from 26 percent to 35 percent and in the urban constituencies from 31 percent to 46 percent as compared to the 1997 assembly elections (see table 2.2).

Table 2.2
Punjab Assembly Elections Party Results 1997-2012:
Votes Polled & No. of Constituencies Contested & Won

		Location	BJS/BJP	CPI	CPM	PPOP	INC	SAD/ADS	ADM	JP/JD	BSP	OTHERS	Total
1997	RURAL	won	4	2	0		7	53		0	1	3	70
		Contested constituencies	6	9	17		62	62		10	41	155	362
		Poll %	3.65	3.13	2.09		26.34	42.87		0.28	8.27	13.37	100
	SEMI URBAN	won	9	0	0		4	19		0	0	3	35
		Contested constituencies	9	5	8		32	26		10	18	112	220
		Poll %	12.25	2.69	1.71		25.77	33.44		1.02	6.48	16.64	100
	URBAN	won	5	0	0		3	3		0	0	1	12
		Contested constituencies	7	1	0		11	4		8	8	72	111
		Poll %	26.81	3.01	0.00		31.44	6.30		0.86	5.55	16.02	100
2002	RURAL	won	1	1	0		32	32			0	4	70
		Contested constituencies	6	8	11		61	62			61	298	507
		Poll %	2.76	2.22	0.45		34.63	5.99			6.26	17.69	100
	SEMI URBAN	won	2	1	0		19	9			0	4	35
		Contested constituencies	9	2	2		33	26			29	210	311
		Poll %	8.16	1.86	0.27		35.46	7.16			4.69	22.45	100
	URBAN	won	0	0	0		11	0			0	1	12
		Contested constituencies	8	1	0		11	4			10	71	105
		Poll %	18.41	2.75	0.00		46.51	8.57			5.52	18.25	100
2007	RURAL	won	5				25	35				5	70
		Contested constituencies	6	15	8		70	64			69	336	568
		Poll %	3.74	0.69	0.31		39.99	1.99			4.54	8.74	100.00
	SEMI URBAN	won	7				17	11				0	35
		Contested constituencies	9	9	5		35	26			35	235	354
		Poll %	10.98	0.77	0.27		42.85	3.38			3.67	8.08	100.00
	URBAN	won	7				2	3				0	12
		Contested constituencies	8	1	1		12	4			12	95	133
		Poll %	29.94	1.09	0.07		40.29	7.14			2.64	8.83	100.00
2012	RURAL	won	3				19	38				1	61
		Contested constituencies	5	6	6	47	61	56			61	266	508
		Poll %	3.38	0.61	0.21	4.77	39.40	1.14			4.57	5.92	100.00
	SEMI URBAN	won	4				21	15				1	41
		Contested constituencies	8	5	2	34	41	33			41	251	415
		Poll %	6.47	0.99	0.09	6.88	40.08	1.83			4.25	9.40	100.00
	URBAN	won	5				6	3				1	15
		Contested constituencies	10	3	1	11	15	5			15	95	155
		Poll %	27.93	1.32	0.08	1.66	43.45	2.69			3.10	9.76	100.00

Source: Election Commission of India Reports Punjab, 1997-2012.

But after winning the 2002 elections, the Congress party led by Capt. Amarinder Singh, a former Akali focused more on the rural Jat peasantry and the Sikh identity by repealing the Punjab

agreement on sharing of river waters and overactive participation in religious celebrations of the Sikh and SGPC elections. The purpose of these mobilisations was to weaken S. Prakash Singh Badal's hold over rural Jat Sikh vote bank. Much needed urban renewal was neglected and urban Hindus being minority in the state could not find articulation in state policy and adequate representation in the decision-making institutions. Consequently, the vote share from largely Hindu voters in the 2004 parliamentary elections in semi-urban constituencies decreased from 40 percent to 35 percent, and in urban constituencies from 54 percent to 48 percent as compared to 1999 parliamentary elections (see table 2.3).

Table 2.3
Vote polled in Parliament Elections: Assembly Segment-wise,
Party-wise And Location-wise 1999-2014

			AAP	INC	SAD	BJP	CPM	CPI	BSP	SAD (M)	Other	Total Valid Votes
1999	Rural	Vote %		35.73	34.53	3.36	2.79	3.80	4.51		15.27	100.00
		Seats contested		57	58	6	7	6	18		449	601
		won		34	23			5	1		7	70
2004	Rural	Vote %		31.84	41.18	3.67	2.28	2.59	7.86	4.43	6.16	100.00
		Seats contested		57	64	6	7	6	70	31	507	748
		won		13	52	4				1	0	70
2009	Rural	Vote %		41.98	43.09	4.08	0.15	0.38	6.11	0.24	3.97	100.00
		Seats contested		61	55	6	4	11	61	12	766	976
		won		20	39	2					0	61
2014	Rural	Vote %	22.33	32.48	34.87	3.63	0.11	0.39	2.15	0.32	3.72	100.00
		Seats contested	61	61	56	5	8	19	61	44	860	1175
		won	17	11	28	5					0	61
1999	Semi Urban	Vote %		40.12	29.09	8.15	1.50	4.46	3.44		13.25	100.00
		Seats contested		30	24	8	2	3	9		268	344
		won		22	6	2		3			2	35
2004	Semi Urban	Vote %		35.18	34.11	10.86	1.37	3.12	8.05	3.49	3.82	100.00
		Seats contested		30	26	9	2	3	35	22	247	374
		won		8	18	6	1	1		1	0	35
2009	Semi Urban	Vote %		46.55	32.25	8.48	0.18	0.34	6.23	0.68	5.29	100.00
		Seats contested		41	32	9	5	6	41	15	536	685
		won		31	9	1					0	41
2014	Semi Urban	Vote %	29.89	30.67	25.78	7.28	0.18	0.43	1.91	0.24	3.62	100.00
		Seats contested	41	41	33	8	14	20	41	35	523	756
		won	15	13	9	3					1	41
1999	Urban	Vote %		53.99	15.93	22.81	0.00	0.00	0.00		7.27	100.00
		Seats contested		12	5	7	0	0	0		111	135
		won		10		2					0	12
2004	Urban	Vote %		48.03	14.76	28.49	0.00	0.00	4.72	0.04	3.96	100.00
		Seats contested		12	4	8	0	0	12	1	119	156
		won		8	1	3					0	12
2009	Urban	Vote %		56.93	17.05	20.94	0.00	0.11	2.48	0.00	2.49	100.00
		Seats contested		15	7	8	0	1	15	0	255	301
		won		14	1						0	15
2014	Urban	Vote %	17.94	43.64	8.05	18.60	0.07	0.35	0.86	0.03	273.00	100.00

			AAP	INC	SAD	BJP	CPM	CPI	BSP	SAD (M)	Other	Total Valid Votes
		Seats contested	15	15	5	10	5	6	15	2	1	74
		won	1	13								15
1999	Total	Vote %		38.44	31.46	6.28	2.18	3.74	3.84		14.05	100.00
		Seats contested		99	87	21	9	9	27		828	1080
		won		66	29	4	0	8	1		9	117
2004	Total	Vote %		34.17	36.87	7.89	1.81	2.55	7.67	3.79	5.25	100.00
		Seats contested		99	94	23	9	9	117	54	873	1278
		won		29	71	13	1	1		2	0	117
2009	Total	Vote %		45.23	36.43	7.48	0.14	0.33	5.75	0.36	4.26	100.00
		Seats contested		117	94	23	9	18	117	27	1557	1962
		won		65	49	3					0	117
2014	Total	Vote %	24.46	33.19	28.41	6.73	0.13	0.40	1.91	0.26	4.50	100.00
		Seats contested	117	117	94	23	27	45	117	81	1656	2277
		won	33	37	37	8					2	117

Note: Seats adjusted Between BJP and SAD according to their Previous Assembly seats
Source: Election of India Commission Reports Punjab, 1999-2014.

Having learnt their lessons, the SAD-BJP combine promised development visibly shifting from a Panthic (Religious) to non-Panthic (non-religious) agenda in their election manifesto and public pronouncements. The alliance won the 2007 assembly elections and formed the government.

Congress did not learn from the Akali-BJP alliance in 2002 and its own defeat in the 2004 parliament elections. It continued to cater to identity-based sectional interests to make inroads into the Akali bastion, but suffered a major loss within its own support base of Dalits, urban traders, slum dwellers, etc. Congress suffered defeat in the semi-urban areas and was routed in the urban constituencies. To illustrate, the SAD elected only 25 Sikh Jats in 2007 as compared to 41 in the 1997 elections. In 2007, the Congress elected almost an equal number of Sikh Jats as compared to the SAD. It is clear that Sikh Jats are not exclusive supporters of the SAD. This shift is especially significant in the post-Blue Star phase. On the contrary, the number of Dalit MLAs in the Congress was reduced from 14 in 2002 to 7 in 2007. And the BJP could maintain in 2007 its 1997 tally of 4 Dalits. The number of Dalit MLAs in the SAD is 16 as compared to 23 in the 1997 elections (Kumar 2014) (see table 1 Annexure I).

In the 2009 parliamentary elections, the SAD-BJP alliance performed poorly due to intra-alliance differences over sharing

the spoils of power. The SAD won 4 seats as compared to 8 in 2004, and the BJP secured one seat as compared to 3 in 2004. However, the SAD could win in 49 assembly segments in the 2009 parliamentary elections as it did in the 2007 Assembly elections (see table 2.1 and 2.3). The BJP attributed their defeat to the indifferent attitude of the SAD leadership towards their urban support base and party activists.

Another major shift in electoral politics took place in giving representation to all the existing fault-lines of religion and caste by the competing political parties. For instance, the SAD party, which has been mainly a party of Jat-Sikh peasants gave representation to Punjabi Hindus with 11 out of 94 SAD candidates for the 2012 assembly elections. The BJP that largely represents urban Hindu traders in Punjab politics gave representation to Sikhs. Similarly, Congress made inroads into the SAD support base of rural Jat Sikhs by fielding an equal number of rural Jat Sikhs with the SAD. Dalits who constitute around 32 per cent of the population have been represented in all the political formations. Thus, Punjab's electoral politics has shown signs of blurring religious and caste fault-lines.

In post-terrorism phase, in the 2012 assembly elections, for the first time in Punjab, the incumbent party was voted back to power. This was mainly because of the promise of development and good governance. However, in the 2014 parliament elections despite the Modi wave in the North and West India, the BJP-SAD performed miserably in Punjab. The SAD could win 4 seats with 26 percent votes and the BJP could win 2 seats with 9 percent votes. The Congress party could survive because of strong anti-incumbency faced by the SAD-BJP winning 3 seats with 33 percent votes (see table 2.1). It fielded its top leadership in the electoral contests including former Chief Minister Captain Amarinder Singh, Punjab State Congress Party President Pratap Bajwa, Leader of Opposition in state legislature Sunil Jakhar, and Central Ministers Ms. Ambika Soni and Ms. Praneet Kaur⁵. All of them lost the elections except Captain Amarinder Singh. The AAP was a surprise winner with 4 seats

and 24 percent vote share.

Electoral Outcomes: From Bound to Footloose Voters

Historically, in Punjab political power is altered between the SAD-BJP alliance and the Congress; the presence of a spoiler to work to the disadvantage of a particular party as per prevalent political context. But in 2014 parliament elections, the combined vote share of the SAD-BJP alliance and the Congress party was 68 per cent as compared to 89 per cent in 2009 parliament elections. This decline has been reflected in increase in number of parties by votes, that in turn signifies, effective competition for every seat.

Let us briefly summarise the outcomes of 2014 elections. This election marked the closure of consequences of deadlier politics of eighties and nineties, a complete reversal of the voters turn out (24 per cent) in 1992 elections to 71 per cent in 2014 (see table 2.4).

Table 2.4
Voters turnout in parliament elections

Constituencies	1998	1999	2004	2009	2014
Total	60.07	56.11	61.59	70.04	70.89

Source: Election Commission Reports Punjab, 1998-2014.

This election has also shown an increase in urban voters turnout from 63 per cent to 67 per cent, for semi-urban from 70 per cent to 72 per cent in 2009 and 2014 parliament elections respectively. And there is decline in rural vote share from 72 per cent in 2009 to 71 per cent in 2014 elections (see table 2.5).

Table 2.5
Location wise voters turnout

Constituencies	2009	2014
Urban	62.87	67.15
Semi Urban	69.61	71.63
Rural	72.02	71.32
Total	70.04	70.89

Source: Election Commission Reports Punjab, 2009, 2014.

Decline in Vote Share of Main Political Parties

All the main political parties registered a decline in vote share. As compared to 2009 parliament elections, the SAD, the BJP and the Congress lost 7.4 per cent, 1.3 per cent and 12 per cent respectively. These parties lost their support base in urban, semi-urban and rural constituencies.

The SAD in rural, semi-urban and urban reduced its vote share of 8.2 per cent, 6.5 per cent and 9 per cent respectively as compared to 2009 parliament elections. The BJP vote share in semi-urban and urban has declined by one per cent and 2.3 per cent respectively (see tables 2.1 and 2.3). The SAD leads in Scheduled Caste reserved constituencies also decreased from 21 in 2012 to 6 in 2014 parliament elections (see table 2 of index).

The Congress like the SAD has reduced its vote share in rural, semi-urban and urban by 9.5 per cent, 16 per cent and 13 per cent respectively as compared to 2009 elections. The Congress party decline in semi-urban segment as compared to the SAD is almost double.

Interestingly, the decline in vote share of the SAD, the BJP and the Congress is in all regions, locations and religio-caste groups.

Electoral Volatile Elections

This election was also significant in terms of electoral competition and coalition politics. In 2014, the effective number of parties by votes was 3.76 and effective number parties by seats was 4.02, whereas, in 2009 effective number of parties by votes was 2.09 and effective number of parties by seats was 3.0. This clearly shows that the number of parties by seats that could make a difference increased from 3.0 in 2009 elections to 4.02 in 2014 elections.⁷ (See table 2.6).

Table 2.6

Taagepara and Shugart Index for Parliamentary Election in Punjab 2004-2014

Election year	Effective Number of Parties by Votes	Effective Number of Parties by Seats
2004	2.19	3.93
2009	2.09	3.00
2014	3.76	4.02

Source: Calculated from Election Commission of India Reports Punjab, 2004, 2009 and 2014.

Whereas, at the national level, the trend was contrary. At the national level, 'the effective number of parties by seats used to be five to six, this time it was 3.45... the number of parties that matter in the conduct of the 16th Lok Sabha has declined in this elections.' (Palshikar, Suri 2014)

However, there has been significant shift in electoral support from one party to the other both at the national level as well as in Punjab. The electoral competition can be captured from the rate of movement of electoral votes from one party to another.

The electoral volatility multiplied from 11 between 2004 to 2009 to 25 between 2009 to 2014.⁸ (See table 2.7) This shows shift in party preference in Punjab. At the national level the shift worked to the advantage of the BJP, whereas, in Punjab, the new political formation AAP took maximum advantage of the electoral instability. Another change witnessed in this election was the surge of AAP in the political scene of Punjab. It has taken maximum advantage of asymmetry between seat and vote share as compared to both the SAD and the Congress. But, this was less than the BJP.

Table 2.7

Pedersen Index of Electoral volatility

	BJP	AAP	SAD (B)	SAD(M)	CPI	CPM	INC	BSP	OTHERS	Total Net Change (TNC)	Pedersen Index of Electoral Volatility
2004 to 2009	0.42	0	0.43	3.43	2.22	1.67	11.06	1.92	0.99	22.14	11.07
2009 to 2014	1.29	24.47	7.48	0.1	0.07	0.01	12.04	3.84	0.23	49.53	24.77

Source: Calculated from Election Commission of India Reports Punjab, 2004, 2009 and 2014.

The BJP could get more seats for each percentage of votes polled in 2009 and 2014 parliament elections (with multiplier of 0.76 and 1.75 respectively) as compared to the SAD (with a multiplier of 0.91 and 1.17 respectively) and the Congress (with a multiplier of 1.36 and 0.70)⁹. The Congress party even with higher percentage of votes polled more than the AAP in 2014 could win less number of seats. The AAP could win four seats with a multiplier of 1.26 as compared to the Congress (with a multiplier of 0.70, see table 2.8).

Table 2.8
Seat-Vote Multiplier for Different parties in previous Parliament Election

	BJP	AAAP	SAD (B)
2004	2.20		1.80
2009	0.76		0.91
2014	1.75	1.26	1.17

Source: Calculated from Election Commission of India Reports Punjab, 2004, 2009 and 2014.

This shows that the BJP has greater capacity to translate vote share into seats as compared to the AAP.

The moot question, is whether the SAD-BJP alliance will be able to improve their performance in the forthcoming assembly elections in 2017 as compared to their performance in the 2014 parliament elections? Another related question is, whether the BJP with greater capacity to translate votes into seats, be able to capture on its own in the forthcoming assembly elections, the space occupied by the AAP in 2017 assembly elections. Or, will AAP without much ideological support be able to hold on to the space it occupied in 2014 parliament elections in the 2017 assembly elections? The early signs emerging out of two assembly bye elections i.e. in Patiala and Talwandi Sabu shows that the AAP may not be able to consolidate its support. For instance, the AAP won in Patiala parliament elections and in Patiala assembly segment it secured more than 36 per cent votes, but in assembly By- elections caused by the seat vacated by Capt. Amarinder Singh, it could secure merely 6 per cent votes (see table 3 of index). It will be interesting to see, whether this shift in electoral competition and vote share from dominant

party to other parties will bring an electoral transformation in terms of electoral alliances in the state.

Implications for Coalition Politics

Punjab has a history of electoral alliances and mergers. After independence, between 1947 and the mix-sixties, the SAD and the INC merged in 1948 and 1956. Politics of merger between these two parties is a pointer towards a fact that even diametrically opposed political parties can enter into alliances. The mergers were followed by four post-election coalitions. The two post-election coalitions were formed one under the leadership of Gurnam Singh consisting of a United Front of parties opposed to the Congress and the other under the leadership of Lachman Singh Gill breakaway Akali group with the support of the Congress Party in 1967. The third post-election coalition government was formed in 1969 led by Gurnam Singh. The main alliance partner was Bharatiya Jana Sangh (BJS). The fourth coalition was Prakash Singh Badal with the support of BJS. Both these post-election coalitions were marriages of convenience of the leadership with the sole aim of capturing power with their ranks regarding each other with suspicion and a clash of ideologies. These were formed to keep a political formation out of power.

The pre-election alliances between the SAD and the BJP in post-1990 phase were formed in the background of triumph of democracy and assertion of people's agenda for peace over that of political party's sectional interests like in post-election coalition of seventies. And the Congress and the Communists on the other hand also entered into alliance for 1997 elections. However, this alliance could not last in 2002 assembly elections. The SAD and the BJP continued their alliance in subsequent elections for both the assembly and the parliament elections.

The mergers, post-election coalitions and pre-election alliances have their own dynamics. The outcome of 2014 elections also

has implications on the coalition politics in the state. The election outcome at the national level and the performance of the SAD in Punjab has weakened the alliance. For the first time, the BJP has emerged as dominant party at the national level and has shown inclination to emerge as a main player in Punjab. A number of developments in the electoral politics like the defeat of the BJP's national level strategist Arun Jaitely in Amritsar and assertion of the state level BJP leadership for greater share in decision-making processes has strained the relationship between the SAD and the BJP. There are signs that this alliance may become unsustainable ideologically in the context of changing political idiom in the country. At the pragmatic level also, an analysis of seat sharing between the SAD and the BJP has shown that in 2009 parliament elections, there is a change in the bargaining power of the alliance partners. To illustrate, as compared to 2009 parliament elections, the BJP got 15 per cent less than its quota and the SAD got 4 per cent more than its quota in 2012 assembly elections (see table 2.9).

Table 2.9
Bargaining Power of Alliance Partners: Proportions of Seats Allocated to Alliance Partners Beyond Normal Quota, 2012 Assembly Election based on 2009 L.S. Election

Alliance in 2012 Assembly Election	No. of Seats Contested in 2012 Assembly Election	Performance in 2009 in Assembly Segments of Parliamentary Election		
		Winner	Runner	Seat managed to get beyond Quota
BJP	23	11	16	-4 (-15%)
SAD	94	41	49	4 (4%)

Source : Election Commission of India Reports, 2009-2012.

The emergence of BJP in the dominant position at the national level and change in their bargaining power at the state level has brought exclusive support base i.e. rural Jat Sikh of the SAD and urban traders of the BJP into the competitive spectrum. The BJP earlier having underplayed its ideological thrust could not make policy interventions for consolidation of its urban support base through decisions like slashing of urban property tax, waste management, renewal of urban spaces, subsidies for industries etc. And, the SAD, undoubtedly, pursued its agenda for rural population with decisions like free electricity and water to

peasantry etc., but without pursuing Sikh minority politics. And its catch- all approach has brought it into competition with its alliance partner the BJP. After post-2014 elections, the BJP has signaled to expand its support base in the state. It has nationalised regional agenda by raising issues like transfer of Chandigarh to Punjab, resolution of river water disputes and social issues like drug addiction, female foeticide and more powers for the states. This has made its alliance partner the SAD on a weak wicket and may push it to look back and revive ideological persuasions for survival i.e. rejuvenation of Sikh identity and anti-centrism. The 2017 elections may witness a radical change in Punjab politics.

Why Punjab Went the Other Way?

Electoral politics has taken a new shift in Punjab. Outcomes of 2014 elections in the state are diametrically opposed to the national trend. The voters have voted against corruption and incapacity of leadership to deliver justice. At least in this election voters have negated the popular notion that doles, subsidies, bribes and caste can influence their preference. A relevant question is, what values do voters prefer in selecting their representatives? If 'Aam Admi' is to be believed, it is 'good people who can do good'. A majority of the voters as recorded in Table 2.10, i.e. 68 percent mentioned honesty, 30 percent decisive leadership and 27 percent nationalist, whereas, only 12 percent mentioned secular and pro-people leader.

Table 2.10
Preferred Attributes in Elected Representative

	Frequency	Percent
Honest	286	67.77%
Decisive & Determined	126	29.86%
Nationalist	112	26.54%
Secular	52	12.32%
Not Applicable	1	0.24%
Total	422	100.00%

Source: Institute of Development and Communications (IDC), Chandigarh. Field Survey in Punjab, March-April 2014. Total number of respondents was 422. Due to multiple responses, the sum of all is not equal to the total number.

Different politicians and would-be-politicians use this moral

space to pull different strings, therefore, what is bad and good is situational and contingent. Corruption is bad and honesty is good. Personal honesty has a higher value because it has the markings of scarcity. In popular political parlance, individual honesty on its own has been marketed as a superior value than even the fight against hunger, poverty, inequality, greed, conspicuous consumption or even corruption.

This situation defined by public recognition of circumscribed value of honesty, acts as an invitation to those who have proved their worth in their respective professions ranging from cinema to sports to social activism. These 'celebrities' with their reservoir of social credit drift into politics. The 'celebrities' mortality rate in politics is alarming, but there are exceptions, particularly in South India.

AAP's recent emergence in politics is a commentary on this political culture and the absence of political ideology. AAP has the dual advantage of being an outcome of a protest movement and an aggressive appropriator of the space created by the propagation of 'honesty' as a supreme value rather than an historical struggle against capital accumulation, inequalities, hunger and poverty. AAP has successfully used a popular screen to make their concerns appear pro-people, and it provided legitimacy to these by using civilisational and national freedom movement symbols. People have voted for AAP, but a negligible number of voters believed that it can emerge as an alternative in Indian politics. They argued that AAP has forced political parties to adopt corruption, Jan Lokpal as an agenda and provided a platform to common people. It has also introduced some changes for common people's engagement with politics (see table 2.11).

There were other voters who believed that they are inexperienced in state craft and have introduced instability in politics; that their approach to politics is guided more by demand side consideration without appreciating supply side constraints. It is more agitational than reformist. Notwithstanding, people in Punjab who voted for AAP were not

anticipating that they would capture power in the parliament, but as a warning to dominant political parties to reform or perish. In other words, they have parked their votes with AAP hoping that other parties learn their lessons.

Table 2.11
Will AAP Make a Difference in Politics?

	Frequency	Percent
Set the national agenda on corruption, Jan Lokpal, women issue etc.	134	31.75%
Provided platform to common people	16	3.79%
Honest educated and secular leadership	39	9.24%
Changed approach to Indian Politics	37	8.77%
Merely a group of Social Activists	10	2.37%
Inexperienced in politics	71	16.82%
Failed in Politics(Delhi)	28	6.64%
Instability in Politics	22	5.21%
Don't know/ no response	90	21.33%
Total	422	100.00%

Source: Institute of Development and Communications (IDC), Chandigarh. Field Survey in Punjab, March-April 2014. Total number of respondents was 422. Due to multiple responses, the sum of all is not equal to the total number.

A majority of voters i.e. 66 percent in the IDC Election Survey in Punjab observed that the main factor in this election is corruption, followed by inflationary price rises. Government performance on other issues like infrastructure development, power generation, subsidies and social security was referred to by only 20 percent of voters (see table 2.12).

Table 2.12
Factors in Parliament Election 2014

Age Category	Anti incumbency	Corruption	Inflation	Don't know/ no response	Total
18 – 26	17	79	51		116
	14.60%	68.00%	43.90%		100.00%
27 - 49	48	121	75	1	182
	26.30%	66.50%	41.20%	0.50%	100.00%
50 and Plus	22	77	63		124
	17.80%	62.20%	50.90%		100.00%
Total	87	277	189	1	422
	20.60%	65.70%	44.80%	0.20%	100.00%

Source: Institute of Development and Communications (IDC), Chandigarh. Field Survey in Punjab. March-April 2014. Total number of respondents was 422. Due to multiple responses, the sum of all is not equal to the total number.

A large majority of young voters mentioned corruption as the

main factor. From amongst those who mentioned price rise as one of the main factors, a sizeable lot were from the higher age group. From those who referred to anti-incumbency, the majority was from the middle-age group. It is, therefore, not surprising that a majority of young voters i.e. 55 percent in Punjab preferred AAP leader Arvind Kejriwal as their choice.

Table 2.13
Voters Preference for Leader

Age Category	Narinder Modi	Rahul Gandhi	Sonia Gandhi	Kejriwal	Prakash Krat	Mayawati	Don't know/ no response	Total
18 - 26	32	16		64		1	3	116
	27.59%	13.79%		55.17%		0.86%	2.59%	100.00%
27 - 49	56	40	6	70		1	7	180
	31.11%	22.22%	3.33%	38.89%		0.56%	3.89%	100.00%
50 and Plus	38	14	30	33	2	3	6	126
	30.16%	11.11%	23.81%	26.19%	1.59%	2.38%	4.76%	100.00%
Total	126	70	36	167	2	5	16	422
	29.86%	16.59%	8.53%	39.57%	0.47%	1.18%	3.79%	100.00%

Source: Institute of Development and Communications (IDC), Chandigarh. Field Survey in Punjab. March-April 2014. Total number of respondents was 422. Due to multiple responses, the sum of all is not equal to the total number.

Anti-incumbency was so strong that the people of Punjab did not cast their votes on the leadership issue, but on performance. Whereas, in centrally administered Chandigarh, capital city of Punjab and Haryana, people voted for the leadership of Modi as anti-incumbency was a factor against the Congress and not the BJP. In Punjab, people were of the view that a change in central leadership is needed. Neither the Congress nor the BJP will be able to transform their conditions in the state. They voted against corruption, price-rise and dismal performance in justice-delivery of the SAD-BJP alliance. A woman voter decoded anti-incumbency as 'the incidents of snatching, drug peddling and petty crime are on the rise. The police has neither a sense of responsibility nor do they talk to women properly'. A farmer concluded, 'the highhandedness of Akali workers and the police' are the main factors (Singh 2014: 2).

As a consequence, Mr. Modi's leadership as a factor became secondary to anti-incumbency. This can be inferred from the results of two constituencies, Bathinda from where Harsimrat Kaur Badal (Chief Minister Prakash Singh Badal's daughter-in-law) was pitted against the Chief Minister's nephew Manpreet Badal, and in Amritsar where Captain Amarinder Singh was pitted against the BJP stalwart Arun Jaitley. In both these constituencies people did not vote for the Aam Admi Party as they found an alternative in Capt. Amarinder Singh in Amritsar and Harsimrat Badal in Bathinda.

In these two constituencies, to overcome the anti-incumbency suffered by the Congress Party in terms of corruption scams, rising prices, violation of rule of law and above all policy paralysis on account of indecisive political leadership, Congress followed a different strategy. Its main feature was to regionalise the national elections and nationalise the regional agenda. This helped the Congress to overcome its anti-incumbency of ten years of rule at the centre; its victory from Amritsar is a testimony to this strategy. Its former Chief Minister Captain Amarinder Singh defeated the BJP stalwart Arun Jaitley. Captain Amarinder Singh raised regional issues and activated the anti-incumbency issue against the SAD-BJP government within the state. Arun Jaitley lamented that he could not have a dialogue with Amarinder Singh on issues that are municipal. He raised issues relating to India's foreign policy, relations with India's neighbours and food policy, whereas Amarinder Singh raised issues relating to drug abuse in Punjab, the prices of sand and gravel that are allegedly controlled by people close to the ruling establishment, and cleanliness and sanitation in Amritsar City. He successfully nationalised the regional agenda.

Another factor that influenced peoples' verdict was their perception regarding the role of regional parties. Around 53 percent preferred national parties, i.e. the BJP and the Congress and 40 percent the AAP. Only 7 percent favoured regional parties to rule at the national level (see table 2.14).

Table 2.14
Relevance of Regional Parties in Indian Politics

	Frequency	Percent
Regional parties	29	6.8
National Parties	225	53.4
Newly emerged parties like AAP	168	39.8
Total	422	100

Source: Institute of Development and Communications (IDC), Chandigarh. Field Survey in Punjab. March-April 2014. Total number of respondents was 422. Due to multiple responses, the sum of all is not equal to the total number.

To sum up, the competing anti-incumbencies of the SAD-BJP coalition in the state and the Congress in the centre was one of the major factors for the electoral volatility in the 2014 elections. In addition, the change in political agenda from identity politics to catch them all, from governmentality to dignified access to government services, from rotational corruption among political class to fight against corruption, influenced to a large extent the outcomes in this elections. This agenda was activated by the SAD-BJP alliance in the 2007 elections and votes were cast on their dismal performance in this domain.

Within three months of coming to power in 2014, the BJP has changed its electoral strategy. In assembly elections in Haryana and Maharashtra the BJP did not enter into alliance with its traditional allies. This may have implications for the SAD-BJP alliance in Punjab. In an election rally in Tasgaon, Sangli district, Maharashtra, Prime Minister Modi appealed to the voters to give a clear majority to the BJP. To quote, 'Alliances did you no good... No party takes responsibility in alliance. The BJP will take responsibility if you vote it to power' (Modi 2014: Tasgaon). The BJP is following a two-pronged strategy, i.e. consolidation and expansion to emerge as a national alternative. This entails regionalisation of its leadership and symbolism. It has undertaken social engineering at the micro level by recruiting leaders from diverse social groups and articulating local issues

in convergence with national politics. It is reconstructing federal polity not through alliances with regional parties, but appropriating regional politics at the national level.

This may pose a challenge to the survival of regional parties, as the BJP has regionalised its politics, electoral discourse, co-option of leaders representing regional diversities, propounding decentralisation and federal principles. It has appropriated regional discourse leading to the marginalisation of regional parties. In Punjab, the only rider is pragmatic relevance of the SAD as a 'Sikh party' to attest to the BJP not being against minorities. This is a challenge for the SAD either to go back to the Panthic (religious) agenda to maintain its alliance or perform in the secular domain to deliver corruption and harassment-free just governance. For the Congress, also there is an urgent need to regionalise its organisation, agenda and leadership.

ENDNOTES

1. There are divergent views on this issue. It has been argued by followers of neo-liberal path of development that price distorting subsidies must be eliminated, or drastically reduced. But, there are others who argue that agriculture subsidies have to be given to provide survival to the poor. Further, the developed countries subsidizing their agriculture by labeling it as green or blue box subsidies. The free electricity and water given in Punjab is not in convergence with WTO framework and, therefore, it must be rationalized and given as productivity bonus. To provide food security and ensure food sovereignty agriculture must be subsidized to keep food grains globally competitive.
2. There is a qualitative shift in the support bases of the political parties in Punjab (Kumar 2014: 277)
3. To quote: Over the decades, Punjab has continually been a victim of the discriminatory and repressive policies of the Centre, in particular the rights of Punjab in respect of its left-out territories and the river waters have been ruthlessly suppressed and undermined ... For pursuance of the above objectives, the spirit of Punjabihood would be strengthened so that these matters get projected as common problems of the entire Punjabis rather than a section thereof (emphasis added) (Singh 1995: 4).
4. The Sarkaria Commission was set up on June 9, 1983 to restructure India's Centre-State Relations. Art 356 of the Indian Constitution deals with the provision in case of failure of constitutional machinery in state.
5. The Akali-BJP government has opened a new chapter in Centre-State relations, ushering in the age of co-operative federalism in the country. The era of confrontation has been effectively ended and replaced with a forward looking thrust on working together for the overall good of the state and the nation (SAD 1998).
6. Accidents in history sometimes change the course of history. This has precisely what has happened in the electoral competition amongst the parties and the leadership in the state. Had the SAD, in order to oust Navjot Sidhu a BJP former Member of Parliament from Amritsar, not wooed the BJP national leader Arun Jaitley to contest from Amritsar (who subsequently suffered defeat) the relationship between alliance partners may not have deteriorated so soon. Similarly, in the Congress Party, the fall of its state level

President P. Bajwa may not have happened, had he not forced the former Chief Minister Capt. Amarinder Singh to fight against Arun Jaitley from Amritsar.

7. Taagepara and Shugart Index: The effective number of parties, in terms of percentage of votes and seats secured by parties in elections to the directly elected chamber of parliament, is calculated for all the general elections using the Taagepera and Shugart procedure ($N=1/\sum P_i^2$ where P_i is the fractional share of i -th party and \sum stand for the summation of overall components).
8. Pedersen Index of Electoral volatility: It is computed by adding the absolute value of change in percentage of votes gained and lost by each party from one election to the next, then dividing the sum by 2. Thus in a party system with “ n ” parties, electoral volatility is = $TNC/2$, where TNC is total net change in party support. The electoral volatility thus has a range of “0” (perfect stability of electoral support to parties, where no party gained or lost votes) to 100 (perfect instability, where there is total shift of voters from one party to the other).
9. Seat-Vote Multiplier: is a ratio of the proportion of seats won by a party to the proportion of votes won by it. It is expression of the relationship between percentage of votes a party secures in an election and the seats it secures in the legislature. It is given by: $1/[(\text{vote share of a party}/100)/(\text{numbers of seats secured by the party}/\text{total number of seats in the legislature})]$.

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Annexure I

Table 1
Caste, Year and Party Wise Distribution of MLAs

	BJP				CPI				CPM				INC			
	SC	OBC	OTH	JAT	SC	OBC	OTH	JAT	SC	OBC	OTH	JAT	SC	OBC	OTH	JAT
1967			8	1	2	1	1	1				3	12	5	10	21
			7.69	0.96	1.92	0.96	0.96	0.96				2.88	11.54	4.81	9.62	20.19
			88.89	11.11	40.00	20.00	20.00	20.00				100.00	25.00	10.42	20.83	43.75
1969	1		5	2	1	1	1	1				1	10	5	8	15
	0.96		4.81	1.92	0.96	0.96	0.96	0.96				0.96	9.62	4.81	7.69	14.42
	12.50		62.50	25.00	25.00	25.00	25.00	25.00	50.00			50.00	26.32	13.16	21.05	39.47
1972					2	1	2	5	1				14	7	17	28
					1.92	0.96	1.92	4.81	0.96				13.46	6.73	16.35	26.92
					20.00	10.00	20.00	50.00	100.00				21.21	10.61	25.76	42.42
1977	4	3	16	2	4	1	1	1	5			3	3	3	6	5
	3.42	2.56	13.68	1.71	3.42	0.85	0.85	0.85	4.27			2.56	2.56	2.56	5.13	4.27
	16.00	12.00	64.00	8.00	57.14	14.29	14.29	14.29	62.50			37.50	17.65	17.65	35.29	29.41
1980		1			4	1	1	3	3			2	13	8	24	18
		0.85			3.42	0.85	0.85	2.56	2.56			1.71	11.11	6.84	20.51	15.38
		100.00			44.44	11.11	11.11	33.33	60.00			40.00	20.63	12.70	38.10	28.57
1985	1		5			1							10	2	15	5
	0.85		4.27			0.85							8.55	1.71	12.82	4.27
	16.67		83.33			100.00							31.25	6.25	46.88	15.63
1992			6		1	1	1	1		1			20	9	22	36
			5.13		0.85	0.85	0.85	0.85		0.85			17.09	7.69	18.80	30.77
			100.00		25.00	25.00	25.00	25.00		100.00			22.99	10.34	25.29	41.38
1997	4	2	11	1	1	1							1		4	9
	3.42	1.71	9.40	0.85	0.85	0.85							0.85		3.42	7.69
	22.22	11.11	61.11	5.56	50.00	50.00							7.14		28.57	64.29
2002		1	2		2								14	5	21	22
		0.85	1.71		1.71								11.97	4.27	17.95	18.80
		33.33	66.67		100.00								22.58	8.06	33.87	35.48
2007	4	1	13	1									7	2	11	24
	3.42	0.85	11.11	0.85									5.98	1.71	9.40	20.51
	21.05	5.26	68.42	5.26									15.91	4.55	25.00	54.55
2012	3		7	2									10	3	12	21
	2.56		5.98	1.71									8.55	2.56	10.26	17.95
	25.00		58.33	16.67									21.74	6.52	26.09	45.65
Total	17	8	73	9	17	8	7	12	10	1		9	114	49	150	204
	1.36	0.64	5.85	0.72	1.36	0.64	0.56	0.96	0.80	0.08		0.72	9.13	3.93	12.02	16.35
	15.89	7.48	68.22	8.41	38.64	18.18	15.91	27.27	50.00	5.00		45.00	22.05	9.48	29.01	39.46

Contd..

Decoding Electoral Verdict in Punjab: Future of Regional Parties?

	SAD				BSP				OTHER				ALL PARTY				TOTAL
	SC	OBC	OTHER	JAT	SC	OBC	OTHER	JAT	SC	OBC	OTHER	JAT	SC	OBC	OTHER	JAT	
1967	6			18					3	2	4	6	23	8	23	50	104
	5.77			17.31					2.88	1.92	3.85	5.77	22.12	7.69	22.12	48.08	100.00
	25.00			75.00					20.00	13.33	26.67	40.00	22.12	7.69	22.12	48.08	
1969	11	3	2	27					1	2	1	5	25	11	17	51	104
	10.58	2.88	1.92	25.96					0.96	1.92	0.96	4.81	24.04	10.58	16.35	49.04	100.00
	25.58	6.98	4.65	62.79					11.11	22.22	11.11	55.56	24.04	10.58	16.35	49.04	
1972	6			18					1			2	23	9	19	53	104
	5.77			17.31					0.96			1.92	22.12	8.65	18.27	50.96	100.00
	25.00			75.00					33.33			66.67	22.12	8.65	18.27	50.96	
1977	15	2	2	39								2	31	9	25	52	117
	12.82	1.71	1.71	33.33								1.71	26.50	7.69	21.37	44.44	100.00
	25.86	3.45	3.45	67.24								100.00	26.50	7.69	21.37	44.44	
1980	9	3		25					1			1	29	14	25	49	117
	7.69	2.56		21.37					0.85			0.85	24.79	11.97	21.37	41.88	100.00
	24.32	8.11		67.57					50.00			50.00	24.79	11.97	21.37	41.88	
1985	18	4	17	34					2	3			29	9	40	39	117
	15.38	3.42	14.53	29.06					1.71	2.56			24.79	7.69	34.19	33.33	100.00
	24.66	5.48	23.29	46.58					40.00	60.00			24.79	7.69	34.19	33.33	
1992	1			2	8	1			2		2	3	32	12	31	42	117
	0.85			1.71	6.84	0.85			1.71		1.71	2.56	27.35	10.26	26.50	35.90	100.00
	33.33			66.67	88.89	11.11			28.57		28.57	42.86	27.35	10.26	26.50	35.90	
1997	23	7	4	41	1				1	1	5	30	11	20	56	117	
	19.66	5.98	3.42	35.04	0.85				0.85	0.85	4.27	25.64	9.40	17.09	47.86		100.00
	30.67	9.33	5.33	54.67	100.00				14.29	14.29	71.43	25.64	9.40	17.09	47.86		
2002	12	4		25					1	1	1	6	29	11	24	53	117
	10.26	3.42		21.37					0.85	0.85	0.85	5.13	24.79	9.40	20.51	45.30	100.00
	29.27	9.76		60.98					11.11	11.11	11.11	66.67	24.79	9.40	20.51	45.30	
2007	16	6	2	25					2	2		1	29	11	26	51	117
	13.68	5.13	1.71	21.37					1.71	1.71		0.85	24.79	9.40	22.22	43.59	100.00
	32.65	12.24	4.08	51.02					40.00	40.00		20.00	24.79	9.40	22.22	43.59	
2012	21	3	7	25						1		2	34	7	26	50	117
	17.95	2.56	5.98	21.37						0.85		1.71	29.06	5.98	22.22	42.74	100.00
	37.50	5.36	12.50	44.64						33.33		66.67	29.06	5.98	22.22	42.74	
Total	138	32	34	279	9	1			9	13	12	33	314	112	276	546	1248
	11.06	2.56	2.72	22.36	0.72	0.08			0.72	1.04	0.96	2.64	25.16	8.97	22.12	43.75	100.00
	28.57	6.63	7.04	57.76	90.00	10.00			13.43	19.40	17.91	49.25	25.16	8.97	22.12	43.75	

Source: Punjab Vidhan Sabha Compendium of Who's Who of Members (1960-2002), Chandigarh: Punjab Vidhan Sabha Secretariat, 2003.

Election commission Reports, Punjab (1967-2012)

Note: Parenthesis figures pertain to percentage of representation of MLAs from party total

Table - 2
Reserved Assembly Constituencies (34) Won by Parties
in 2012 and 2014 Elections

AC. No.	AC Assembly Name No	Category	Winning party 2012	Winner Party 2014
2	Bhoa(SC)	(SC)	BJP	BJP
29	Phagwara(SC)	(SC)	BJP	INC
34	Jalandhar West(SC)	(SC)	BJP	INC
5	Dina Nagar(SC)	(SC)	INC	BJP
16	Amritsar West(SC)	(SC)	INC	INC
46	Banga(SC)	(SC)	INC	AAAP
51	Chamkaur Sahib(SC)	(SC)	INC	AAAP
69	Raikot(SC)	(SC)	INC	AAAP
89	Jaithu(SC)	(SC)	INC	AAAP
91	Bhucho Mandi(SC)	(SC)	INC	SAD
102	Bhadaur(SC)	(SC)	INC	AAAP
104	Mehal Kalan(SC)	(SC)	INC	AAAP
109	Nabha(SC)	(SC)	INC	AAAP
8	Sri Hargobindpur(SC)	(SC)	SAD	SAD
14	Jandiala(SC)	(SC)	SAD	SAD
20	Attari(SC)	(SC)	SAD	INC
25	Baba Bakala(SC)	(SC)	SAD	SAD
30	Phillaur(SC)	(SC)	SAD	INC
33	Kartarpur(SC)	(SC)	SAD	INC
38	Adampur(SC)	(SC)	SAD	INC
42	Sham Chaurasi(SC)	(SC)	SAD	INC
44	Chabbewal(SC)	(SC)	SAD	INC
54	Bassi Pathana(SC)	(SC)	SAD	AAAP
66	Gill(SC)	(SC)	SAD	AAAP
67	Payal(SC)	(SC)	SAD	AAAP
70	Jagraon(SC)	(SC)	SAD	AAAP
71	Nihal Singh Wala(SC)	(SC)	SAD	AAAP
77	Firozpur Rural(SC)	(SC)	SAD	SAD
82	Balluana(SC)	(SC)	SAD	INC
85	Malout(SC)	(SC)	SAD	INC
93	Bathinda Rural(SC)	(SC)	SAD	INC
98	Budhlada(SC)	(SC)	SAD	SAD
100	Dirba(SC)	(SC)	SAD	AAAP
117	Shutrana(SC)	(SC)	SAD	AAAP

Note : For 2014 Parliament elections assemblies adjusted as per 2012 for BJP and Sad

Table - 3
Votes polled to different parties in Patiala Assembly in 2014
Election and 2014 Assembly Bye-Election

	2014 Assembly Bye Election		2014 Parliament Election	
Party	Votes Polled	Votes %	Votes Polled	Votes %
AAP	5724	6.44	35674	35.99
INC	52967	59.55	43238	43.62
SAD	29685	33.37	16342	16.49
IND/Others	571	0.64	3862	3.90
Total votes polled	88947	100.00	99116	100.00

Source: Website Chief Electoral Officer Punjab



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