

I N T R O D U C T I O N

Maharashtra was comparatively a stable state under the undisputed leadership of Y.B.Chavan upto 1977. The year 1977 marked the beginning of a new era in the country as well as in the state with the rise of a new party the Janata party - an amorphous coalition of five parties and some former individual congressmen. The Janata party challenged the congress monolith in the state. As a result the chief Minister S.B.Chavan was replaced by Vasant Dada to cope with the challenge. But following serious tensions between pro and anti Mrs. Gandhi elements the congress got split which invariably had some impact over Maharashtra. A new force in the form of Cong (I) largely dependent upon the support of depressed classes came to fore. Under the two-fold attack from the Janata and the Cong(I), the leadership of Y.B.Chavan and his congress party under him were cut to size. The caste-class-party combination was cracked and there emerged new pattern of political elites in the form of coalition governments. The state experienced new trend of instability as no single party was in a position to form government on its own following the assembly elections 1978. Coalition governments abetted instability. First it was Cong (R) Cong (I) front-government under leadership of Vasant Dada who was emerging as strong leader checking Y.B.Chavan's influence. Out of political opportunism Vasant Dada struggled to unite both the congress parties but failed. Meanwhile, Vasant Dada government was brought down by Sharad Pawar and 40 MLAs with the blessings of Y.B.Chavan and Sharad Pawar formed the Progressive Democratic Forum

-2-

government with the help of Janata and its allies. Soon Sharad Pawar consolidated himself.

Meanwhile, the ruling Janata party at the Centre was undergoing stains due to serious infighting ultimately leading to the collapse of Janata government under Morarji Desai as Charan Singh's group formed new party called the Janata (S) after enblock resignations from the Janata. In Maharashtra the Janata (S) had no worthwhile influence. Under these circumstances, the Lok-Sabha was dissolved and fresh elections were held. The MPCC(S) merged enblock with the Cong (I) and many other leaders also (joined the Cong (I). Thus the consolidated Cong (I) swept the polls defeating the Janata and the cong (U) of Y.B.Chavan. This was almost an end of Y.B.Chavan's leadership and like wise the Janata which had failed to consolidate itself among the various social strata it was on the decline. Aftermath the lok-sabha elections, the PDF government was dissolved.

The Janata party was split for second time over the same issue of "dual membership" i.e. the Jana Sangh faction was asked to sever its ties with the R.S.S. The Jana Sangh denied to oblige and instead formed a new party called the "Bharatiya Janata Party". This further weakened the Janata party which was already declining. The Janata party fared very poorly in the assembly election of 1980. But Sharad Pawar emerged as strong opposition leader in it.

Present thesis is an attempt to study the rise and fall of the Janata party mainly in terms of electoral performance in Maharashtra. The Janata party promised to emerge as the alternative of the Congress but in the fluid post emergency politics it failed to do so and sharply declined when the congress (I) challenged it in 1980. The entire history of rise and fall of the Janata is critically narrated with the help of newspapers journals and several other Secondary sources. The problem is studied through historical descriptive method. Data is collected from many sources and consultations with some prominent Janata leaders of the state.