

CHAPTER - III"THE P.D.F.GOVERNMENT IN MAHARASHTRA".1. The Congress (R) - Congress (I) front -Government :-

In the assembly elections held in 1978, no party was in a position to form the government, while the Janata party got 99 seats and the strength of the Janata with its allies together was 130 seats, 15 short of absolute majority while the cong (R) the RPI (G) were 73 seats and the Cong (I) and the Forward Block and allies had 71 seats. Thus it was clear that any two major parties would form the coalition government despite the fact that during elections they had fought against each other.

Initially, the Janata party leader Mr. Madhu Limaye, the Janata party's General Secretary held talks with Y.B-Chavan to seek support of Cong (R) to form the Janata - Cong (R) coalition government. While the shrewd Vasant Dada was maintaining links with the Janata as well as Cong (I) as he was determined to form the government as he had declared before the elections, that (victory or defeat) - he would be the Chief Minister after the elections. The Janata party had offered Chief Ministership to Dada but that the Janata party would be sharing power in the Government; this was unacceptable to Vasant Dada, who wanted Janata to support from outside. The reason for not accepting Janata party's offer was also the fact that Vasant Dada was confident of getting the Cong (I) support and he knew that

the Janata would dominate the government.

Vasant Dada chose to align with the Congress (I). But the Congress (I) leaders were clever enough to capitalize on the situation. Mrs. Gandhi agreed to extend her party's support to form the Congress (R)-Congress (I) front Government under Vasant Dada's leaders on three conditions (i) Equal representation to both the parties in the ministry (ii) Equal distribution of important portfolio and (iii) In case of any controversy Mrs. Gandhi would be the sole Arbitrator. Thus Vasant Dada obliged to accept Mrs. Gandhi's leadership - a vital condition over which the congress had split. Vasant Dada was authorized by the congress working committee to hold talks with the cong (I) to form government. But according to Mr. Swaran Singh acting President of the Cong.R Vasant Dada did not apprise the High Command of the controversial condition - Accepting Mrs Gandhi as the arbitrator of the front government.

The first ever coalition Government led by Vasant Dada and was formed with the support of 144 MLAs which increased to 149 with the declaration of support by 5 independeants. The Governor was convinced about the front's majority and hence invited Vasant Dada to form the Government. This irritated the Janata leaders.

The Janata party failed to form the Government because of the delay caused in electing the leader of the Janata Legislative party.

There was infighting among two Janata constituents; the Jana Sangh and the Socialists each trying to capture the post. The Jana Sangh constituent was detrimed in the decision taken by the

-3-

party's High Command that no Lok-Sabha member would be sent back as the chief Minister. The Socialist could not draft Dr. Kaldate due to this. In between an idea to leave the issue to the Central parliamentary Board emerged, but before this view could gain ground some leaders thought otherwise and finally "secret election" emerged as the solution acceptable to all. The Janata party general secretary Mr. Nanaji Deshmukh keenly campaigned for Uttam Rao Patil, of the Jana Sangh. Mr. Nihal Ahmed of the socialists camp was the candidate. Uttam Rao Patil defeated Nihal Ahmed by 58 to 48 votes mainly due to the Congress supports. All this process involved the party leaders for 3 crucial days. No one could realize the importance of time. Thus the process let loose the opportunity to form government Vasant Dada very shrewdly seized the opportunity and succeeded in forming the Government.

Vasant Dada's strategy to under-mine the Janata's party helped the cong(I) in building up its organisation in the state, as because of the reach of power, the already growing organisation got momentum and its bases were spreading faster with defections from the Congress (S) and new recruits. Similarly the coalition government brought into focus the second rank leadership especially Mr. N.K.Tirpude who was deputy Chief Minister and Home Minister who began to assert and was hitting at the weakest link of Y.B.Chavan. In fact, he was out to degrade Y.B.Chavan politically and in that direction he kept

on criticizing Y.B. Chavan. It was evident to all that an attempt was being made to alienate Y.B. Chavan from the state congress. The pro-Y.B. Chavan elements in the front government to counter the Congr (I) move. Cleaver Vasant Dada read between the lines and within no time he intercepted and urged both the counter parts to stop criticising each other and to maintain harmony in the front. But despite his efforts tensions prevailed in the front Government.

Formation of the Cong (R) - Cong (I) front Government was another set back to the leadership of Mr. Y.B. Chavan. He was ambitious to emerge as the national leader with the ouster of Mrs. Gandhi. The dream was partly fulfilled when he became the leader of the opposition. But soon his position the leadership of the opposition was snatched by the newly formed Cong (I) and Stephen became the leadership of the opposition in the Lok-Sabha due to defection from Congress (S). Thus at national level Y.B. Chavan had suffered set back at the hands of the Cong (I). Not content with this Mrs. Gandhi was keen to put Y.B. Chavan to size in his own home state Maharashtra. This she achieved partly when Vasant Dada formed the coalition Government with the Congress (I). In fact Mrs. Gandhi was trying to bring up Vasant Dada and as a result he was growing stronger. Vasant Dada was consolidating his position in the state politics. He was essentially a man of compromise.

In fact, he rose to this political status only through the policy of adjustment and compromise with the stronger and powerful leader. Since long he was playing second fiddle to Y.B.Chavan and now, under the changed circumstances in which Y.B.Chavan - and less powerful and less popular especially after the two elections. Mrs.Gandhi - emerged as a powerful and popular leader. Vasant Dada chose to adjust with Mrs.Gandhi. It was because of this that Vasant Dada accepted Mrs. Gandhi's leadership and then to more than anybody else, he was active towards uniting the Congress parties. Also he succeeded in selling his policies to the fellow congressmen. All other Congress leaders of the State by then realized the growing prospects of Mrs. Gandhi and they were siding with Vasant Dada's in his stand of unity with Congress (I). Thus Y.B.Chavan was facing two - fold threat (politically) - to his position - Firstly at the national level which was largely dependant on the state ✓ level support and secondly at the state level where Vasant Dada his own follower was challenging his position though not openly. Vasant Dada was also keen to see to it that his lengthy talks did not go against the opinion of the CWC as well. For this, he used to seek legitimacy for his unity moves through the CWC resolutions. Y.B.Chavan was outdone, out manoeuvred and out placed from his position by Vasant Dada and Mrs.Gandhi. The options before Y.B.Chavan were becoming narrower. Y.B. Chavan was proving ineffective leader. For instance he failed to

-6-

drive home the point that unity with cong (I) should not be effected on that his party should, maintain its identity to the State leaders as well as party High Command. The unity moves were carried out against his wishes. And interestingly all this was happening with the sanction of G.W.C. under the blessing of the acting president Mr. Sawaran Singh. Still Y.B. Chavan was adamant in his stand to oppose unity and he openly criticized unity moves. He assigned Sharad Pawar the task to check Vasant Dada in the State. Sharad Pawar decided to protect political base of Y.B. Chavan which was eroded by the Congress (I). He was not comfortable in the Government as N.K. Tirpude continuously attacked him.

2. Formation of P.D.F. Government :-

a) Vasant Dada on the Defensive :- Since the coming over of Vasant Dada Government, strains in the Cong.(R) party were becoming more and more acute. Vasant Dada V.P. Naik, Narendra Tidke, Yashwant Roa Mohite etc. were emphatic on unity - as this was a must for the party's survival as well as their leadership over which the grip was getting loose with the emergence of Janata and the Congress (I). The opponents of unity, were frustrating pro-unity leaders attempts at unity by making anti-Indira remarks. Anyway, under these circumstances there was no possibility of continuation of the frong government. Above all, Y.B. Chavan had to do something to reduce the influence of both the Cong (I) and the pro-unity leaders in the State. Fortunately for him, the Janata party leaders were having soft corner for him and his associates

Sharad Pawar etc. the Janata Party leaders were wanted to exploit this position in their favour. One could see that S.M. Joshi¹¹ was publicly inviting Y.B.Chavan to join Janata party. While Nanaji Deshmukh¹² was praising Y.B.Chavan for his principled stand. At the same time State Janata leaders were asking Sharad Pawar to quit the Congress coalition and¹³ from government with the help of the Janata party. Clearly the Janata party leaders' policy was to strengthen¹⁴ Y.B.Chavan and his associates in their fight against Mrs.Gandhi. In other words, the Janata leaders were trying to exploit the already strained relations of the Congress leaders. This was a move in the direction of Congress (R) Split and weakening of Vasant Dada's position. Vasant Dada was aware of the far reaching consequences of the Janata move. He was working hard to bring about unity sooner much to the embarrassment of Y.B.Chavan and Sharad Pawar. The gulf gap between Y.B.Chavan, and Sharad Pawar and Vasant Dada was widening and both Y.B. Chavan, Sharad Pawar were taking rigid stand and wanted to shut the doors for unity once for all. ✓ Y.B. Chavan declared unity is surrender"¹⁴ and Sharad Pawar¹⁵ set the deadline to stop unity talks by 10th June 1978 .

In the game of Pawar, Y.B.Chavan and Sharad Pawar put Vasant Dada on the defensive and Vasant Dada was under pressure. In order to appease defiant Sharad Pawar and Y.B.Chavan he¹⁶ declared "Unity talks are stopped" .

n) The Nagar Palika (Municipality) Elections :-

The Congress (S) led by Y.B.Chavan was suffering blow after blow and his leadership was on the verge of decline.

At national level also the party candidates were losing their deposits in bye-elections its performance in Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka was miserable. Vasant Dada was moving ahead exploiting Y.B.Chavan's undoings. Thus the Congr. (R) in the state was - a divided house though the split was not materialized. Under these circumstances Nagar Palika elections were held for 30 Municipalities in which the Congress(S) experienced another set-back getting only 3 Nagar Palika¹⁷ Presidentships and majority in only one Nagar Palika.

This was poor performance despite the fact, that the Cong (R) was ruling party. The Cong (I) which was constantly consolidating its position secured 6 Nagar Palika Presidentships¹⁸ and majority in 4 Nagar Palika Presidentships. While the Janata party maintained its position and secured 11 Nagar Palikas. and got majority in 9 Nagar Palikas. It was another proof of the failure on the front of Janata party to consolidate its position as a party did not get majority in majority of Nagar Palikas. The Janata Party could not make dent into Congress - strong holds. It might be partly because of the constant infighting in the Janata party at the centre eroding its image as a strong party and the growing influence of the Jana-Sangh, RSs in the party. In Maharashtra too, there was infighting to capture the party though behind the scene and not publicly.

For instance, the revolt against appointment of Shanti Patel¹⁹ as President of Bombay Unit by the former Jana Sangh members and similarly the infighting at the Pune convention of the state Unit in which some 150 odd members of the former Cong (O), CPD etc held separate meeting secretly under Presidentship of Mr. R. A. Patil.²⁰

C. The Formation of P.D.F. Government :- After the Nagar Palika elections, Sharad Pawar began to muster support for his move. 31 MLAs of the Cong (R) had issued a memorandum asking Dada to stop the "Unity efforts" or "lest we would reconsider something otherwise"²¹. Under mounting pressure Vasant Dada had already declared to stop unity talks but he was still active.²² In fact he was determined to unite both the Congress parties. It was beneficial to him more than anybody. Therefore, it was alleged that Vasant Dada had decided to oust Sharad Pawar and other anti-unity ministers from his government in order to remove the obstacle in unity. The unity moves were in fact proving to be counter-productive to the Cong (R) as the morale of the rank and file was running low. The party organisation was demoralised. On the other hand the image of the Cong (I) was becoming more and more bright. A large number of workers at the grass-root level crossed over from the Cong (R) to the Cong (I). To sum up, the prospects of the Cong (R) because of the Vasant Dada group's enthusiastic unity moves were becoming black; to such an extent that one could see the possibility of a

conspiracy of sabotaging the Cong (R) under the garb of "unity" as the efforts to unity were almost one sided. The Cong(R) leaders Vasant Dada and V.P. Naik. Y. Mohite etc.....; etc were always active on their own to approach the Cong (I) leaders - This was attempted by Dada to undermine Y.B.Chavan and his supporters.

It was the situation in which Sharad Pawar pre-empted Vasant Dada's strategy and suddenly resigned from the Cong(R)-Cong(I) front government alongwith 3 ministers, Mr. Sushilkumar Shinde, Mr. Datta Meghe²³ Sunder Rao Solunke on 12.7.1978. Sharad Pawar succeeded in his immediate goal as 45 MLAs (36 cong R; 8 Cong(I) same group and one independant) withdrew their support to Vasant Dada Government.¹⁴

The same day a resolution of no. confidence motion signed by Uttam Rao Patil, Nihal Ahmed, Jagannath Rao Jadhav, S.T. Samant (All Janata Party) Kisan Rao Deshmukh (PWP) Prhalad Kurne (CPM), Tryambak Rao Kamble (RPI-K) was admitted by the speaker Mr. Shivaji Patil.²⁵ Vasant Dada resigned three days later. Tirpude, the Cong (I) leader, however tempted Sharad Pawar to form the government with the support of Cong (I). Tirpude further appealed Sharad Pawar not to seek support of the Janata Party.²⁶ Unmoved Sharad Pawar formed the government with the help of Janata party. The new front was named as the Progressive Democratic Front enjoying the support of 180 MLAS.²⁷

-11-

Sharad Pawar and his colleagues were expelled from the Congress party much to the dislike of Y.B.Chavan who had engineered Vasant Dada government's dismissal. Sharad Pawar called his party as the Maharashtra Progressive Legislative Congress. The new P.D.F. Government was comprised of 34 ministers. 1) Cabinet level and 17 ministers of state. 8 Cabinet rank and 6 ministers of state with a total of 14 ministers belonged to the Janata while Sharad Pawar's congress party had 6 cabinet rank and 7 ministers of state including chief ministership. The P.W.F. had a 2 cabinet rank and the minister of state. While the Cong (I) rebels under Mr. Survey and Mulik who had formed the Vidarbha congress had 2 cabinet ministers and one minister of state S.B.Chavan's Maharashtra Socialist congress had one cabinet post.

Looking at the strength of the MLAs, the Janata legislative Party was not adequately represented in the ministry while small groups were over-represented just to keep them in the fold.

Within 5 months of coming to power the PDF government faced the Bombay Municipal Corporation elections. The Janata party contested elections as a front partner much to the dislike of the party workers as Bombay was a strong-hold of the Janata party. The Janata party contested 103 seats out of 136 and the remaining seats were allotted among the front partners. The Cong (S) and Cong (I) had formed alliance

defying the CWC decision notto do so. This was because of Vasant Dada who was out to finish the leadership of Y.B.Chavan. The PDF secured majority. This was the first ever victory of any single **front** in the 21 years history of Bombay Municipal Corproa-
²⁸tion Elections. The Janata party got 66 seats and the details of the other party position were as under :-

²⁹
T a b l e No. 179.

Parties	Seats contested.	Seats won.
Janata Party	103	66
Progressive Congress	21	14
Cong S.	64	8
Cong I.	76	17
Maharashtra Muslim League	6	3
RPI (Kamble)	4	1
CP(I) M.	7	1
Shiv Sena	117	21
I.U.M.L.	16	2
C.P.I.	16	3
P.W.P.	14	-

The Janata party emerged as a single largest party but it failed in getting majority. One of the reasons was the formation of 'Jagrit Janata' the candidates of this group cornered some of Janata votes. The Janata party suffered a loss of $\frac{25}{30}\%$ of votes. In this election, the Janata got 34% of votes while in the Assembly elections it had secured 59% of votes. This was clearly an indication of the waning popularity of the Janata.

On the whole, the victory of PDF in Bombay Corporation was a morale booster to the front Government as the idea of front was going to be consolidated at the bottom level as well. Sharad Pawar was looking forward to strengthen himself and the party under him though he and his associates were expelled from the party, he was maintaining links with the Cong (S) leaders, especially those opposing unity with the Cong (I) viz. Karan Singh, Priya Ranjan Das Mushi, Unnikrishnan and T.A.Pai etc. Meanwhile the unity efforts were going on without any progress. The Cong (S) President Mr. Swaran Singh, in his capacity as President appointed pro-unity men in the C.W.C. and got appointed pro-unity men in the C.W.C. and got passed the resolution 10 Vs to 6 votes seeking unity with the Cong (I).³¹ The C.W.C. decision was criticized by 10 PCCS(Assam, Rajasthan, Himachal Pradesh, Bihar, J & K; Orissa, Kerala, W.Bengal, MP. and Gujarat).³²

-14-

Sharad Pawar decided to go it alone. He invited a political convention of what he called "the real congress" ³³ The convention was attended by only 3 C.W.C. members. Karan Singh, the CWC member ³⁴ Presided over the convention. According to Swaran Singh, only 4 of 34 DCCS, 14 of the 60 LCC executive members, ³⁵ 480 of 350 members of the general body attended this convention. Dada Saheb Rupawate, the joint Secretary of the A.T.C.C.(S) was elected president of the new D.C.C. replacing N.M.Tidke" as they called it. With this convention of Pawar group, the Cong.(S) split once again though in Maharashtra only. Thus there were three Congress parties in the State. The Cong (I), the Cong (S) and the Cong (P) (Farallel) as it was called.

Thus, Maharashtra witnessed the fragmentation of political forces and no prioritization at all as was visualised at that time by some political commentators. The process of fragmentation started with the emergence of Janata which was challenging the elites - in -power. Thus the former elites or the interests which the political elites were representing, were constantly striving to maintain the status quo. The Cong (S)-Cong (I) front was a part of this strategy and afterwards the PDF was also a part of that strategy. It was only a struggle to seek power - bases; in this direction only there was adjustments and readjustments just to preserve the status-quo. It was because of this that the congress was undergoing political fragmentation.

-16-

3. Z.P. Elections :-

(a) Janata Party's Reorganisation : After the firm establishment and smooth functioning of the P.D.F. government the Janata party began to reorganize itself on democratic lines³⁶ As per the National executive's decision, it was decided to hold organisational elections, the last date for enrolment of primary membership was fixed 30th November, 1978 and the General Secretary Mr. R.K. Hegde declared that those enrolled after 30th November would not be eligible to vote.³⁷ The Maharashtra Janata enrolled 7 lakh primary members according to the state organizer of the election panel Mr.J.T.Wadhvani.³⁸ There were 350 Block units in the state and 35 lakhs members and the party had 10,000 primary units in the state. Each primary unit had to elect 25% representatives belonging to the SCS/STS.

The Janata constituents were playing a tug-of-war in the party to establish their respective control. The Presidentship of Bombay unit of Janata party went to the Jana Sangh. Mr. Ram Naik (49 votes) defeated Mr. Mukundrao Bhujbal Patil (40 votes). Similarly the socialists were frustrated in their efforts to control the party. The position of party, the state President was hotly contested as between Bapu Saheb Kaldate who was keen to become the state Janata legislative party's leader but as mentioned elsewhere Nanaji Deshmukh frustrated him⁴⁰ and

Baban Rao Dhakne was consensus candidate of R.A.Patil, Sonu Singh Patil the Jana Sangh. Baban Rao Dhakne got elected with 200 votes while Dr. Bapu Saheb Kaldate secured 127 votes. There were 334 voters out of which 7 remained absent. ⁴¹

The state unit of the Janata was also marred by infighting between its counterparts in other states. But the only difference was that the Maharashtra Janata infighting was not serious. The main reason was that it was a front partner and did not enjoy the complete hold over the state government.

b) Z.P. Elections :- The Janata party through organisational elections consolidated its organisational units. In fact, it was gearing up for the Z.P. elections.

Similarly Sharad Pawar was also consolidating his position. The dismissal of Vasant Dada Cong (I) combine brought Y.B. Chavan group to reins of power. But it was to be consolidated and support for the action was essential so as to rehabilitate Y.B.Chavan's damaged reputation, Sharad Pawar was exactly doing the needful. He was spreading his influence among the social stata through patronage. He was looking to the Z.P. elections as an opportunity to consolidate.

There were totally 1236 seats of the 2 ZPs, throughout the state and 2432 seats of the panchayats Samities. There were 4425 candidates for the Z.Ps and about 8000 candidates for the panchayat samities. Except Vidarbha, the state saw triangular

elections in the state.

This election was very important for all parties. First and foremost being the consolidation of political bases in the rural Maharashtra where 68.8% of the total population of the state was living.⁴²

Secondly, as Maharashtra politics was heading towards instability, it was quite essential to check this trend, the main reason of this was that the major political partners were virtually turned into regional parties in the state.

For the Janata party it was the test of its bonafides in the Maharashtra politics especially as political force representing the whole state or least a larger part of it. Thus the Z.P. elections were an opportunity to expand its base upto the rural level which was dominated by the congress factions. The Janata in the previous elections was handicapped party because of the absence of its existence at the rural level power bases which played vital part in almost all elections.

The Cong (S) was further split this time and the splinter group was also a force to reckon with because of Vasant Dada to some extent. The task was very difficult as there were three congress factions and there was a possibility of division of congress votes much to the benefit of the Janata party which was in the fray for the first time.

-18-

For Sharad Pawar also the election was important as he was emerging as an important leader in the state politics. He had to seek legitimacy for his policies and his new role which he had adopted under the changed circumstances. He had to carve out a base for himself in rural are of the state.

Z.P. Election - Results and Analysis. The Z.P. Elections were contested without any understanding at the state-level though the PDF front partners reached some understanding in some places.

Out of the 23 extra Zilla Parishads which went to the poll the PDF secured majority in 12 ZPs, the Cong (I) got majority in 10 while the Cong (S) secured majority in just one Zilla Parishad - Sangli. The Janata Party got majority in 2 Zilla Parishads Ratnagiri and Bhandara, While cong (P) of Sharad Pawar got majority in 5 Zilla Parishads - Nagar, Satara, Pune, Bhir and Solapur - and won good number of seats in Kolhapur and Nasik. The Janata secured good number of seats in the Chandrapur and Thane Zilla Parishads. ⁴³ Totally 204 Janata candidates were elected in the Zilla Parishads and 438 members in the panchayat samities. ⁴⁴ And 100 candidates lost with very narrow margin. The PDF in all got elected 1200 Panchayat Samity members (Janata 428, cong (P) 549, PWF 108, CPM 15 and others. 100).

-19-

The Cong (S) had 369 members.

Table -1.

Z.P. Results.

<u>Parties.</u>	<u>Seats Won.</u>
Janata	204
Cong (P)	289
Cong (S)	134
Cong (I)	342
C.W.P.	49
C.P.M.	7
C.P.I.	9
Independant and ors.	112

Table -II

Results of Panchayat Samities.

<u>Parties.</u>	<u>Seats won.</u>
Janata	438
Cong (P)	549
Cong (S)	369
Cong (I)	
P W P	108
CP M	15

others total

in all, the P D F Secured majority.

in 108 out of 268 Panchayat Samities. The Cong (I) secured majority in 80 panchayat samities. Most of the Cong (I) wins were from Vidarbha and North Maharashtra. The Cong (S) secured majority in 26 panchayat samities. The independants secured majority in 3 panchayat samities.

The Cong (I)- Cong (S) a liance totally got 535 seats in the Zilla Parishads while the PDF collectively got 530 seats.⁴⁵

The PDF partners after the ZP elections decided to work unitedly in all the Zilla Parishads. 46 The Janata party got one Z.P. Presidentship Cong (P) -6, the Cong (I)-5 and Cong (S)⁴⁷ -4.

Analysis :- The Z.P. elections represented some new trends which clearly helped one to see what was in the store. The rise of the party - the Cong (I) and the decline of another - the Janata party or the rise of cong (P) and the decline of Cong (S) - this was the clear verdict of the Z.P. elections. The Janata party which was on the verge of establishing itself after its emergence following the Lok-Sabha elections miserably failed to overcome the levers of the power in Maharashtra single-handedly. One could observe this clearly from the fact that the Janata had got on 7 rural seats in 1977 Lok-Sabha elections while it was rejected in the remaining rural constituencies. Then in the Assembly elections, it once again failed to win the support of rural Maharashtra. It could be seen that out of 99 seats it won, in the assembly elections 50 seats were in Bombay Division

-21-

which includes Kokan as well. And from the rest of Maharashtra, it could hardly manage 49. To add to it these were hardly rural. It was manifest from this that the Janata party failed to establish firmly in the rural areas. The same trend was visible in the Z.P. elections. The Janata party failed to maintain its position as the most important party in the state as it did in Lok Sabha and assembly elections, to the ^{reduced} third position in the state in the Z.P. elections as it got only 204 Z.P. seats throughout Maharashtra out of 1236 (16.5%). Interestingly the Janata had secured 39.6% seats in the Lok-Sabha which reduced to 34.4% in the assembly elections - what was clear, was the gradual erosion of Janata base on support which crawled to 16.5% in Z.P. elections. The Janata party did not perform well even in Kokan which was supposed to be its stronghold where it had almost swept the previous polls. It got majority only in Ratnagiri in the whole Kokan region. The Z.P. results could lead to the conclusion that Janata was heading towards decline. Why should this have happened? The Janata failed to secure base in rural Maharashtra. If one looked and observed the Janata leadership and the constituents of Janata one could see that they were unlike all congress parties, urban-based and their areas of influence were also urban. While the congress set-up was essentially rural-based and leaders were deeply involved in the policies of rural development.

Another significant aspect of the Z.P. elections was the emergence of Sharad Pawar's Cong (P). Though newly formed (it was enjoying support of some Z.P. already) Sharad Pawar shrewdly mobilized support through patronage and was keen to consolidate himself. He was very much successful. His party emerged as the single largest party. He successfully out manoeuvred the Janata & capitalized over its infighting. The Cong (P) of Sharad Pawar also succeeded in its policy vis-a-vis the Cong (S) under Vasant Dada. It was a personal relief to Mr. Y.B. Chavan who master-minded the strategy as a measure to find a way out of the Cong (I)-Vasant Dada Tangle. The over-all performance of the front partners was not bad if not very good. It was successful in seeking the much required legitimacy for its continuation as front government.

The Cong (I), one could see was the only party which was growing stronger. It successfully got the support in the strong-pockets of the Cong (S) and the Janata. This was the Cong (I)'s most distinguished success in the Z.P. elections. The rural elites which were changing their loyalties to Mrs. Gandhi. It was a personal victory to Mrs. Gandhi who had already emerged as a force to reckon with in the state politics. Mrs. Gandhi successfully claimed that ^{her} party was the true Congress as 68.8% population of rural Maharashtra supported it.

The Cong (S) was withering away especially after the emergence of Sharad Pawar because the real opposition was between the Cong (I) and Cong (P). The Cong (I) was doing the same job of opposing both Cong(P) and Janata effectively. Thus what was

-23-

becoming clear was the most probable emergence of alignment of forces the alignment between the Congress (I) and the Congress (S) led by Vasantdada who tenaciously held on his strongholds and the alignment between the Janata and the Congress (P).

The PDF government in Maharashtra was established to counter growing strength of the congress (I) and the Janata party realized that it lacked leadership and capacity to do this single-handedly. Hence it commissioned services of Sharad Pawar and Y.B.Chavan to do this. It can be said that throughout 1978 and beginning of 1979, Sharad Pawar showed remarkable political skill and capacity to rule the state. He kept warring Janata factions within the limits and became popular despite the fact that he had to face the movements like Namantar & similar movements. But stability of the PDF government was based on stability of the Janata government at centre and there were signs of tension in the national government by the middle of 1979.

References -Chapter III.

"The P D F Government in Maharashtra"

1. Nav Shakti 1.3.1978-p-1
2. Ibid 2.3.78 p-1
3. Ibid 22.2.78 p.1
4. Indian Express Bombay 2/3/78 p-1.
5. Nav Shakti 8.3.78 p.1.
6. Ibid 3.3.78
7. Lok-Satta Bombay 9.3.78
8. Nav Shakti 5.3.78
9. Pannal Surajin 'Maharashtra Vidhan Sabha
Nivadnukiche Nikal wa Pudhil Raj Karan-P.14
10. Nav Shakti 5.3.78
11. Ibid
12. Ibid 2.4.78
13. Ibid
14. Free Press Journal 5.1.78
15. Mumbai Sakal 7.6.78.
16. LOK Satta 3.7.78
17. Mumbai Sakal 23.5.78 and 24.5.78
18. Ibid
19. Ibid 5.1.78
20. Nav-Shakti 10.6.78 The R. S. S. and former Yukrand
workers also fought with each other at the convention
in which 15 workers were injured.

21. Lok Satta 5.7.78. p-1
22. Mumbai Sakal 14.7.78 p-1-
23. Ibid 13.7.78
24. Ibid 14.7.78
25. Lok Satta 14.7.78
26. Ibid 15.7.78
27. Ibid 18.7.78.
28. Mumbai Sakal 10.11.1978.
29. Ibid 10.11.78
30. Ibid 17.11.78
31. Ibid 25.11.78
32. Ibid 29.11.78
33. Indian Express Bombay 8.1.79
34. Ibid 9.1.79
35. Statesman 12.1.79 New Delhi.
36. Ibid 25.11.78
37. Ibid
38. Indian Express- Bombay 25.1.79 p-5
39. Mumbai Sakal 27/2/79.
40. Ibid 8/3/79 p-4
41. Ibid
42. Statistical Abstract of Maharashtra 1978-79 p.
43. Ashok Chousalkar in "Parliamentary elections in Maharashtra (1980)- A political analysis" p 4 & 5
44. Mumbai Sakal 27-5-79 p-1.
45. Ibid
46. Ibid 29/5/79 p-1
47. Ibid 21/6/79

DR. BALASAHEB KHARDEKAR LIBRARY
SHIVAJI UNIVERSITY, KOLHAPUR

