



Changing Political Scenario in Karnataka

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.Politics in Karnataka - Post-Independence to 1983

This phase is marked by Congress dominance and rule of two dominant castes i.e. Vokkaligas and Lingayats. Before state reorganization in 1956, most of the rural Mysore was dominated by Vokkaligas and had prominence in government. With the enlargement of the state in 1956 to include the Lingayat dominant districts of Bombay Karnataka, Lingayats gained ascendancy in the politics. (Manor,1977 pp1865,1867) The dominance of these two communities continued till 1969, when the Congress party at the national level underwent a transformation. In 1969, there was a split in Congress. The ruling elite in Karnataka which was in the opposite group of the Congress, referred to as the Syndicate, later known as Congress (O) found it difficult to continue in office. The Congress(R) emerged victorious in 1972 Assembly election. (Rajashekaraiah, 1987, pp 583-584) The trend of major caste domination in the state politics was broken, when Sri Devaraj Urs from a minority community and loyalist to Mrs. Indira Gandhi was chosen as the Chief minister of the state on 23rd March, 1972. Devaraj Urs was considered as the champion of the Backward classes in the state. He had many from backward classes, minorities and SCs / STs as ministers in his cabinet and council of ministers. It was during his regime many developmental scheme and welfare measures for the farmers and agricultural labourers were taken up. Karnataka Land Reforms Act on the principles of “Tillers are the owners of the land” was implemented.

In January 1978, Devaraj Urs joined Congress (Indira) as Mrs. Indira Gandhi split the party yet again. The new party won the assembly elections in February 1978 and Urs was appointed Chief Minister again.

The political developments within the Congress party during 1979 resulted in the breakdown of the alliance between Devaraj Urs and Mrs. Indira Gandhi. And Devaraj Urs joined the other faction. He continued as Chief minister as many MLAs joined him. The other Congress faction was even known as Congress(Urs) briefly when he became its president. But in the 1980, Lok Sabha election, his party won just one seat in Karnataka. Devaraj Urs interpreted the result as a moral defeat for himself, and resigned from Chief ministership. However, his party still commanded majority in the state assembly. Gundu Rao, the leader of the Congress (I) party in Karnataka, engineered defections of leaders from Urs's party into his party and succeed in becoming Chief minister of the Karnataka on 12th January, 1980. Eight years earlier, Devaraj Urs himself had deserted his leader Nijalingappa and had engineered the downfall of Congress (O) which was then in power (Srinivas, 1984, p 69). With Gundu Rao, it marked the beginning of the rule of Chief minister belonging to Brahmin caste. Single party domination of Congress continued under Gundu Rao.

Shift in Power

Major Changes took place in 1983 general election. Before the election, Bangarappa, a popular backward class leader came out of Congress party and started his own political party known as Karnataka Kranti Ranga, along with his supporters and the supporters of former chief minister Devaraj Urs, who was no more by that time. And Karnataka Kranti Ranga entered into an election alliance with the Janata Party in the state. While the Congress leaders were over confident about their victory, the result of this election presented an altogether different political scenario. The Congress party for the first time in the history of Karnataka politics lost the election. Of the 220 seats, the Congress(I) contested, it managed to win only 81 seats, The Janata party won 95 seats out of 193 it contested. Gundu Rao himself lost the election in his constituency Somwarpet to B.A. Jivijaya, of the Janata Party (Rao,1995, p 193) The Karnataka kranti Ranga, The Janata party and their allies formed the majority in the assembly. There was a deadlock on who should be the Chief minister of the state. There were three strong claimants, Bangarappa, leader of Karnataka kranti Ranga, S.R. Bommai, leader of the Janata Party belonging to lingayat caste and H.D. Deve Gowda belonging to vokkaliga caste. S.N. Nijalingappa (former Chief minister of the state and a lingayat) was asked to resolve the matter. Nijalingappa's choice was Ramakrishna Hegde, a new face, who was nowhere in the state politics, after being a minister in the Nijalingappa's

ministry. Ramakrishna Hegde secured outside support of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), Left parties and 16 Independents. Though Bangarappa was responsible for the victory of the Janata Party allies, yet he was denied of the post of Chief minister, because of caste factor. Bangarappa was left with no alternative but to go back to the Congress party. Under the Chief ministership of Ramakrishna Hegde, the popular 20 point programme of the previous regime was substituted by Karnataka Development Programme (KDP) and the three tier system of Panchayat Raj – Mandal Panchayat, Taluk Panchayat and Zilla Parishat was introduced. (Politics and role of caste in Karnataka, pp 65-66)

Following the poor performance of the Janata Party in 1984 Lok sabha election (It won only 4 out of 28 seats from Karnataka), Hegde resigned and sought a fresh mandate for his government. In the 1985 general election to the Karnataka assembly, the Janata party came to power on its own.

During his tenure as Chief Minister there were several allegations on Ramakrishna Hegde's family. His son was accused of taking money for a medical seat. Following the phone tapping allegation made against him by Subramanian Swamy, he resigned in 1988. S.R. Bommai became the Chief minister of Karnataka on 13th August, 1988.

Within the party serious differences emerged between Hegde and Deve Gowda. As a result, Deve Gowda was deprived of the opportunity to succeed Hegde as Chief minister and S.R. Bommai's candidature was backed by Hegde.

Meanwhile, the Janata Party was rechristened as the Janata Dal. But Deve Gowda and his supporters rejected the change of label and decided to keep the Janata party alive (Shastri,2004, p 1491)

Soon S.R.Bommai was charged of inducting more number of lingayat ministers in his cabinet in an disproportionate manner. The dissidents withdrew their support to his government. As a result, the Governor recommended the dissolution of the assembly and President's rule was imposed in the state on 21st April, 1989. Thus the Janata Dal regime and tenure of S.R.Bommai came to an end.

The Governor's rule continued till 30th November, 1989 and in the General election conducted during November 1989, the Congress party came to power, and Veerendra Patil became the Chief minister of the state. Due to Veerendra Patil's ill health, he was replaced by Bangarappa, a leader from the backward community. Bangarappa became the Chief minister of the state on 17th October, 1990. He was soon replaced by Veerappa Moily on 19th November, 1992, and S.M. Krishna became the Deputy Chief minister. (Politics and role of caste in Karnataka, p 69)

Emergence of Multi-party system

As the 1994 assembly election approached, the leaders of various factions of Janata Party / Dal decided to bury their differences and work for the party. Mr Hegde made it clear that he will not contest for the leadership and his support is for Deve Gowda. In this election Janata Dal secured a slender majority in the legislative assembly (115 seats), BJP emerged as the principal opposition party securing 40 seats. (Shastri,2004, p 1491)

In the 1996 Lok Sabha election to parliament, no party secured majority and Atal Bihari Vajpayee leader of the largest party from the BJP failed to prove majority in the parliament. As a result, a coalition government of 13 political parties with Janata Dal at its head, named United Front was formed with outside support of Congress and CPI(M). Deve Gowda became the Prime minister on 1st June, 1996. As a result of Deve Gowda becoming the Prime minister of India, he had to resign from Chief ministership of Karnataka, and J.H.Patel was chosen as Chief minister of Karnataka.

Within days of Deve Gowda government securing a vote of confidence in lok sabha, Hegde was expelled from the Janata Dal for “anti-party activities”. When United Front had questioned the decision of President Shankar Dayal Sharma to invite the leader of single largest party (BJP) to form the government instead of inviting the leader of United Front, Hedge supported the President's decision (lok Shakti). Hegde decided to launch a non-political organization called Rashtriya Nava Nirmana Vedike (RNNV) and later in February 1997, Hegde launched the Lok Shakti as a political party.

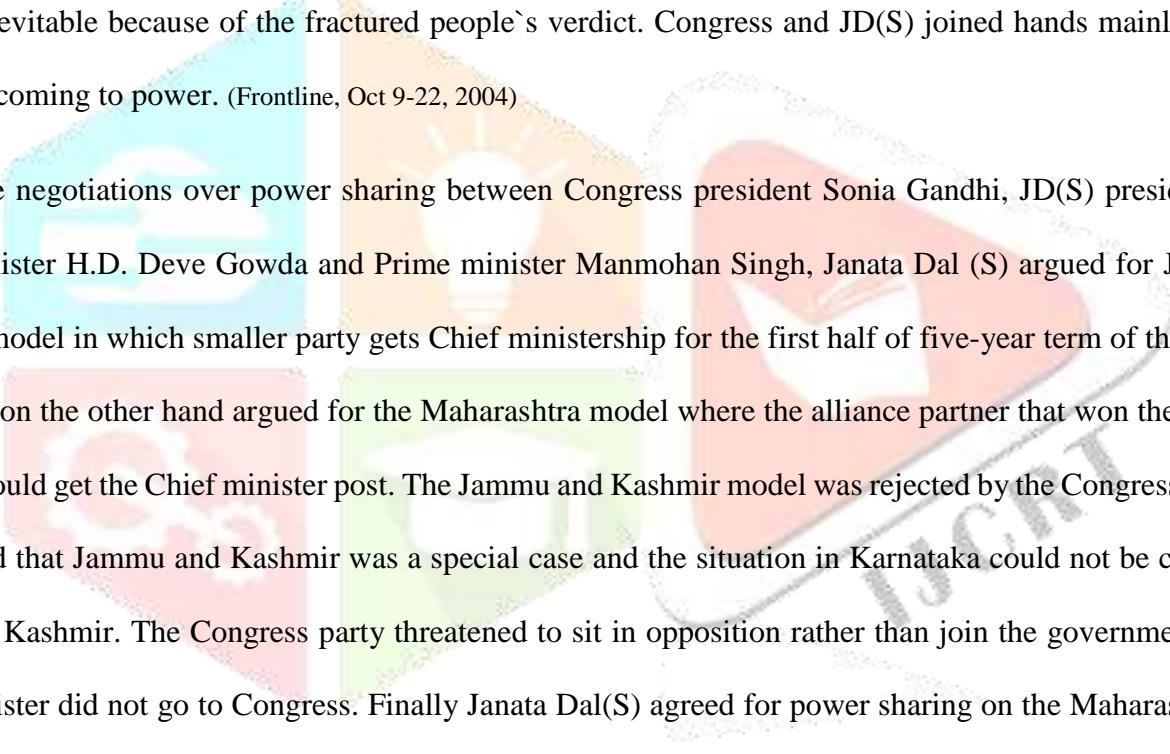
In the 1998 Lok Sabha poll, Lok Shakti entered into an alliance with BJP. Of the 28 seat in Karnataka, BJP /Lok Shakti alliance could secure 16 seats.

With the increasing interference of Deve Gowda in state administration, Chief minister J.H.Patel seemed to have lost interest in governing and was merely biding his time. This further resulted in a split in the Janata Dal. With the Patel faction deciding to align with Lok Shakti and seeking entry into the National Democratic alliance (NDA), they christened themselves as Janata Dal (United). While those who wished to retain the identity of the party called themselves as Janata Dal (Secular). The Lok Shakti merged with Janata Dal (U) and sought to have powerful role and say within the NDA. (Shastri,2004, pp 1492 1493)

In the 1999 Karnataka legislative assembly election, the Indian National Congress secured a huge majority by winning 132 seats. The National Democratic Alliance composed of the Bharatiya Janata Party and Janata Dal (United) faction won 63 seats. The Janata Dal (Secular) faction of Deve Gowda could win only 10 seats. And S. M. Krishna of the Congress was sworn in as Chief minister on 11th October, 1999. (1999 Karnataka Assembly election results)

An era of Coalition governments and Political Instability

In the 12th state assembly election held in May 2004, The Bharatiya Janata Party won the highest number of seats (79 seats) followed by Congress (65 seats) and JD(S) (58 seats). Later on May 14th the All India Congress committee after a lengthy discussion decided to go for an alliance with Janata Dal (S). (Frontline, July 02, 2004) Coalition government became inevitable because of the fractured people's verdict. Congress and JD(S) joined hands mainly to prevent the BJP from coming to power. (Frontline, Oct 9-22, 2004)



During the negotiations over power sharing between Congress president Sonia Gandhi, JD(S) president and former Prime minister H.D. Deve Gowda and Prime minister Manmohan Singh, Janata Dal (S) argued for Jammu Kashmir coalition model in which smaller party gets Chief ministership for the first half of five-year term of the assembly. The Congress, on the other hand argued for the Maharashtra model where the alliance partner that won the largest number of seats would get the Chief minister post. The Jammu and Kashmir model was rejected by the Congress high command which held that Jammu and Kashmir was a special case and the situation in Karnataka could not be compared to that of Jammu and Kashmir. The Congress party threatened to sit in opposition rather than join the government if the post of Chief minister did not go to Congress. Finally Janata Dal(S) agreed for power sharing on the Maharashtra model, but Congress had to accede to the request of Deve Gowda to nominate someone other than former Chief minister S.M.Krishna as the new Chief minister. Deve Gowda argued that JD(S) had after all fought the election against the Krishna led Congress and MLAs of his party would refuse to work under him. The JD(S) had projected Siddaramaiah as their candidate for Chief minister. As part of the final agreement Siddaramaiah was offered a cabinet berth at the centre, which he initially appeared inclined to accept. However, he declined the offer at the last moment stating that he wanted to stay in the state level politics (Frontline, June 05-18, 2004)

And on May 28, 2004 bringing to close two weeks of hard political bargaining between the two parties the Congress leader Dharam Singh (Rajput), an eight time MLA from Jewargi in Gulbarga district and state president of Janata Dal(S) Siddaramaiah were sworn in as Chief minister and Deputy Chief minister respectively. This was the second time Siddaramaiah held the position of Deputy Chief minister. He had held this position under Chief minister J.H.Patel.(The Hindu, May 29, 2004)

Soon after the Coalition government came to power, the Congress started dominating its junior partner. The Congress started playing every trick in the book to contain the influence of the JD(S). (BJP-Today, Feb 16-28, 2006). S.M.Krishna and another factional leader of Congress D.K. Shivakumar who were kept out of the ministry by Deve Gowda indulged from day one to split the JD(S) party.

Congress succeeded to engineer the first split in JD(S), which resulted in the expulsion of Deputy Chief minister Siddaramaiah a popular backward classes leader from the post of Janata Dal Legislature Party (JDLP). (Red Star, Feb, 2006) At a meeting of JDLP on August 04th an overwhelming majority of JD(S) legislators expressed lack of confidence in Siddaramaiah and elected Revenue minister M.P.Prakash as the leader. Chief minister Dharam Singh was forced to drop Siddaramaiah as Deputy Chief Minister. The charges against Siddaramaiah was that he attended a convention of backward classes Alpasankytaru, Hindulidavaru, Dalitharu, (AHINDA) in Hubli, which was seen as an act of indiscipline. In political sense the convention was organized by Congress with a number of prominent Congress leaders such as R.L Jalappa and Tejaswini Ramesh (who defeated Deve Gowda in the last elections in Kanakapura). The speaker had less to say on the issue of social justice than on the political ambitions of Deve Gowda and his family.

Siddaramaiah was actively wooed by the anti Dharam Singh faction in the Congress led by D.K. Shivakumar. (Frontline, August 13-26, 2003) Siddaramaiah launched a new party with the active backing from the Congress. Siddaramaiah's JD faction participated in panchayat polls and made a big dent in the areas traditionally known as JD(S) bastion. JD(S) lost in all Vokkaliga district except in Hassan. This made Deve Gowda furious and he threatened the Congress to withdraw support if it continued flirting with Siddaramaiah. The Congress did not take his warning seriously and discontentment in JD(S) peaked so high that the majority of Janata Dal (S) MLAs (46 out of 58) under the leadership of Shri. H.D. Kumaraswamy revolted against the Congress led coalition government. In the JD(S) legislature party meeting presided

over by its President N. Thipanna held on January 18, 2006, JD(S) decided to withdraw support to the government and join hands with BJP to form government.

The BJP and JD(S) breakaway faction led by the H.D.Kumarswamy met Governor T.N.Chaturvedi on January 18, 2006 and staked the claim to form an alternative coalition government in Karnataka.(BJP-Today, February 16-28, 2006) Meanwhile Governor T.N.Chaturvedi gave Chief minister nine days' time, that is till January 27th to prove his majority. Meanwhile Deve Gowda asked Governor not to give any credence to the letter given by a section of his party MLAs withdrawing support to the government. (Rediff.com, January 18, 2006) On January 27th, 2006 when governor asked the Chief minister Shri Dharam Singh to prove his majority, the Congress conspired not to go for voting on technical grounds of pandemonium in the house. The house was adjourned sine die, without the vote of confidence being moved. Congress continued to hope that Shri. H.D. Deve Gowda would save the government. But Deve Gowda was pivotal in the alternate arrangement his party had decided for. A coalition with BJP might affect his 'Secular' image and his traditional vote bank. So while he was behind all the game of his son Kumaraswamy, he was still discussing with Congress high command to save the coalition government.

Before this political drama in Karnataka could take a new turn, Governor T.N.Chaturvedi called Chief minister Shri. Dharam Singh and later he resigned as the Chief Minister of Karnataka. (BJP-Today, February 16-28, 2006) This ended the 18-month old Congress and Janata Dal(S) coalition government. On January 29th, 2006 Governor invited JD(S) rebel leader Shri. Kumaraswamy and Bharatiya Janata Party leader B.S.Yediyurappa to form the government. (Business Line, Jan 29, 2006)

The coalition leaders agreed to share power for the remaining 40 months of the 12th Assembly on Jammu & Kashmir model. They decided to hold office of Chief minister by rotation (20 months each). It is for the first time the BJP came to power in South India. The coalition was named as Karnataka Development Front (KDF). On February 3rd, 2006 Shri. Kumaraswamy was sworn in as Chief minister and B.S. Yediyurappa was sworn in as Deputy Chief minister. (The Hindu, Feb 04, 2006)

According to power sharing arrangement reached between JD(S) and BJP, JD(S) had to transfer power to BJP at the end of 20 months which was to complete on October 2nd, 2007. However, on September 27th, 2007 JD(S) supremo H.D. Deve Gowda announced suspension of talks on power transfer. This decision of JD(S) came after the BJP state Tourism

minister Sriramulu along with party MP G.Karunakar Reddy and his brother G.Janardhana Reddy accused Chief minister of hiring a contract killer to murder him. (The Times of India, September 28, 2007) The main reason given by JD(S) supremo H.D. Deve Gowda to the media was to prevent Karnataka from being turned into 'Hindutva Laboratory' on lines of Gujarat. (The Times of India, October 07, 2007)

Later on October 6th, 2007, the BJP submitted a letter to Governor Rameshwar Thakur withdrawing support to JD(S) government reducing it to a minority government. (Express.India.com, Oct 06, 2007)

As a result, on October 8th, 2007 Chief Minister Kumaraswamy dropped his plans to face a floor test and tendered his resignation letter to the Governor. (Sify news, Oct 09, 2007)

Later JD(S) MLAs too resigned from the assembly. Thereafter Governor sent a report to President Prathiba Patil recommending imposition of central rule in the state in the view of constitutional crisis. The union cabinet approved President's rule on October 9th, 2007 placing the legislative assembly in suspended animation in the light of the Supreme court's judgement in the Bommai case that had laid down that President can dissolve the state assembly only after the Parliament approves it in its session. (The Times of India, October 10, 2007)

And in a sudden development, the JD(S) on October 27th, 2007, decided to extend support to its estranged coalition partner BJP to form another government in Karnataka. A decision to revive its strained relations with BJP was taken in the backdrop of the Congress plunging into action to split the JD(S) and to form its government. (Sunday Times of India, October 28, 2007)

The BJP and JD(S) leaders paraded the 129 MLAs before Governor Rameshwar Thakur for head count on October 29th, 2007. And on November 8th, 2007 in the union cabinet meeting President's rule was revoked paving the way for the formation of the first BJP government in South India. (News Vision of India, Nov 09, 2007)

B.S. Yeddyurappa was sworn in as Chief minister on November 12th, 2007, bringing an end to the 34-day President's rule imposed in the state. However, JD(S) decided that its 18 ministers would take oath on November 21th, 2007. (Express India.com, Nov 12, 2007)

On November 16th, 2007, H.D.Deve Gowda issued an ultimatum to the BJP to accept the 12 conditions and sign the Memorandum of Understanding, before Chief minister B.S.Yeddyurappa seeks the trust vote in the assembly on

November 19th. These conditions included a major say for JD(S)LP leader H.D.Kumaraswamy in decision making and administrative matters like postings and promotions of top officials, allotment of portfolios to ministers to be done in consultation with H.D.Kumaraswamy, the term of legislative assembly should be co-terminus with that of Lok Sabha, either partner having the right to walking out of the alliance if things go wrong, and JD(S) would retain two portfolios of Urban development and mines. These portfolios were to go to the BJP as per the January 2006 power transfer agreement. (Times of India, November 16, 2007)

Deve Gowda wanted Chief minister B.S.Yeddyurappa to sign on Gowda's conditions, before Chief minister seeks the trust vote. As BJP did not heed to the JD(S) demand of signing the 12 point MOU that would have led to the BJP's parting away from the crucial portfolios, JD(S)LD leader Kumaraswamy issued a whip to its MLAs to vote against the confidence motion moved by BJP led government on November 19th, 2007. With this, Chief minister B.S.Yeddyurappa submitted his resignation to the Governor, who then recommended imposition of President's rule for the second time in little over a month after President Prathibha Patil signed the proclamation bringing the state under the central rule was accepted by the union cabinet. (Express India. Com, Nov 20, 2007)

In 2008 Karnataka assembly election BJP secured majority. The period of political instability seemed to have favoured BJP. BJP generated sympathy vote for having been denied its rightful share of power by its coalition partner JD (S). The electoral strategies adopted by BJP to have decided its candidates relatively early and Yediyurappa being projected as its candidate for the Chief minister worked in its favour. The Congress campaign lacked unity and focus. Each leader appeared to be pulling in different direction. There were more than 20 candidates who were Chief ministerial hopeful and did not hide that they were in the leadership race. This cost the Congress dearly. The new delimitation of constituencies and increase in the number of urban constituencies seemed to have favoured the BJP. (Shastri, 2009, pp 43-44)

The Bharatiya Janata Party won 110 seats. Although the party fell short of a clear majority, it was able to form the government with the support of 6 independents. This was the first time BJP came to power on its own in Karnataka and in South Indian states. (2008 Karnataka legislative assembly election wikiwand). B.S.Yediyurappa was sworn in as Chief minister on 30th May, 2008. However, the Karnataka lokayukta indicted Yediyurappa and Reddy brothers – Janardhan

Reddy and Karunakara Reddy who were members of Yediyurappa's cabinet and mining barons from Bellary, in the coal mining scam. (Ndtv.com, July 29, 2011)

Saddananda Gowda was chosen as the Chief minister of Karnataka on August 2011. But within a few months he fell out with Yeddyurappa and was unable to unite the various factions of the party and ten ministers loyal to former Chief minister B.S.Yeddyurappa resigned, demanding change in leadership. BJP chief Nitin Gadkari announced that Jagadish Shettar, who is a nominee of the Lingayat strongman B.S.Yeddyurappa would replace Saddananda Gowda. Jagadish Shettar was sworn in as 21st Chief minister of Karnataka on 12th July, 2012. Because of the ill treatment meted by the BJP central leadership, Yeddyurappa quit the BJP in November 2012 and formed the Karnataka Janata Paksha (KJP)

In the Karnataka assembly election held in 2013, the Congress won 121 seats, BJP won 40 seats and JD(S) won 40 seats. The 2013 assembly election arrested the southern expedition of the saffron party. The electorate of Karnataka punished the BJP for its vulgar display of corrupt and communal practices. The 2013 assembly elections witnessed a record turnout of voters at 71.29 percent, the second highest since 1978 when it was 71.9 percent. Out of 3.12 crore votes polled, the Congress won 1.14 crore, an improvement of 1.96 percent over its tally in the 2008 assembly elections. The JD(S) and BJP both got 62.32 lakh votes. JD(S) increased its vote share by 0.65 percent and BJP saw a loss of 13.96 percent of its vote share. The two important regions where the BJP lost heavily, were in the Coastal Karnataka and the Malnad region. Right from the 1990's these two regions saw a polarization of Hindu votes. But the unseemly behavior of the BJP leaders, corruption and nepotism in administration, attack on churches, attack on Muslims lead to enormous resentment not only among the Muslims and Christians but also among the traditional voters of the BJP. The Hyderabad- Karnataka region comprises eight districts and has 54 assembly seats. In 2008, B.S. Yeddyurappa could gather sympathy vote and The Reddy brothers of Bellary mobilized the Schedule Castes in favour of the BJP. This time Sriramulu broke away from BJP and formed the BSR Congress party and won two seats and Yeddyurappa's KJP gained three seats and BJP which had won 27 seats in 2008, was now reduced to 6 seats. (Shivasundra, 2013, pp16-18) The Karnataka assembly election in 2018, saw a fierce battle between 3 prominent parties- Congress, BJP and JD(S). The elections were held on May 12th, across 222 assembly constituencies. Elections in RR Nagar constituency was deferred to May 28th, due to voter fraud scandal and in Jayanagara constituency election was postponed due to death of BJP MLA and contestant B.N. Vijay Kumar. The results of the election were declared on May 15th, and BJP emerged as the

single largest party with 104 seats, Indian National Congress won 78 seats, while JD(S) secured an embarrassing loss as the party came down by nearly 50 seats compared to 122 seats in the previous assembly elections held in 2013. On the other hand, the performance of BJP improved significantly as the party's seats went up by 64 seats compared to 40 seats in 2013. (Karnataka election result 2018 live) Governor invited the leader of BJP, single largest party Yeddyurappa to form the government. Yeddyurappa was sworn in as Chief minister. However, he resigned before the motion for trust vote was taken up, as BJP failed to secure the numbers needed to cross the majority mark. Congress managed to form a post poll alliance with JD(S) and thus formed the government with H. D. Kumaraswamy of JD(S) as Chief minister. However, the alliance lacked stability. 16 MLAs of the ruling government submitted their resignation on July 6th, 2019. Of this 13 MLAs were of Congress and 3 of JD(S). Two more MLA's who had offered their support to the government R. Shankar of Karnataka Prajnavantha Janatha Party (KJKP) and an Independent MLA, H. Nagesh also withdrew support. As Speaker of legislative assembly rejected the resignation of MLAs, the rebel MLAs approached the Supreme court challenging the decision of Speaker K.R.Ramesh. On July 16th Supreme Court hearing the case, Mukul Rohatgi, counsel for the MLAs said that speaker should be ordered to rule immediately on the resignation. Rajeev Dhavan, who appeared for the Chief minister of Karnataka, argued that the MLAs never met the speaker and so the speaker should rule on their disqualifications first. Ranjan Gogoi, the Chief Justice, said that the court would have to balance two competing claims, first, the excuse of resignation could not be used to circumvent anti-defection measures, and second, claims of defection should not be used to prevent resignation. (2019 Karnataka Political crisis)

With the disqualification of 17 rebel MLAs the strength of 224 assemblies was reduced to 207 and the magic figure for majority came down to 104 from 113. The absence of 20 MLAs- 17 rebels, as also one each legislator from Congress, BSP and Independent during the vote of confidence on July 23rd, moved by the Congress-JD(S) coalition government fell as 105 MLAs voted against the government, while only 99 MLAs voted in support of the government. On 26th July 2019, B.S. Yediyurappa was sworn in as Chief minister. (News 18-Politics, July,2019)

Conclusion

Since Independence to pro-emergency period, the Karnataka politics was dominated by Congress party. With the formation of Janata Party in the post-emergency period, Karnataka has witnessed bi-polar contest between Congress and the Janata Party/Dal. In 1990's, BJP was able to expand its presence in state politics and the electoral contests in

the state became increasingly triangular, with BJP emerging as the principal opposition party in the assembly after 1994 election.

Rejection of regional parties and clear mandate in favour of National party is the main feature of Karnataka politics. These factors had kept coalition governments at a distance. The 2004 assembly election, witnessed a fractured verdict and the Congress and JD(S) coalition government, had a bumpy ride from the beginning in the wake of JD(S) supreme H.D.Devegowda holding the trigger. The second major coalition government of JD(S) –BJP also failed as JD(S) failed to keep up the power sharing agreement. Again in 2018, assembly election, the fractured voter's verdict led to formation of Congress – JD(S) coalition. However, it failed to resolve many issues from the beginning. And BJP's strategy of Operation Kamala 2.0 was successful in engineering defection of JD(S) and Congress MLAs and was able to come to power.

The political history of Karnataka shows that owing to various reasons, no coalition government has been able to complete its full term. Even in 1983, when Hedge formed the government with outside support of BJP and independents, it could not even complete two years in office.

In the present political scenario, it appears that Congress seem to be losing the lingayat and AHINDA votes. JD(S) is losing its support base even in vokkaliga dominated areas in the old Mysore region. In the bypoll to 15 assembly seat held on December 5th 2019, BJP won in 12 seats steadily making inroads in these regions and has been successful in banking on lingayat votes.

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