

POLITICAL POWER STRUCTURE OF HIMACHAL PRADESH IN TERMS OF PARTY-WISE REPRESENTATION IN PARLIAMENT

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Abstract

A democracy cannot exist without the presence of a political party. The presence of the political party is actually a healthy situation for the nation. It gives people a choice to make a more evolved and effective decision. By competing in elections parties offer citizens a choice in governance, and while in opposition they can hold governments accountable. When citizens join political parties, volunteer their time, donate money and vote for their leaders, they are exercising their basic democratic rights. Participation of citizens in political parties offers unique benefits, including opportunities to influence policy choices, choose and engage political leaders, and run for office. In order to understand the political power structure of any state it is essential to understand the party-wise composition of the state legislature as well as party-wise representation in central legislature from the state. In this paper an attempt has been made to understand the political power structure of Himachal Pradesh in terms of party-wise representation in Parliament from the state since 1952. The study is mainly based on secondary data and personal observation of the researcher.

Key –Words: Democracy, Elections, Political –Parties, Representation, Parliament.

INTRODUCTION

Modern democracy leads to party-politics; as political representation in most democracies depends on political parties. Decision-makers in public institutions are political elites and they operate through political parties. Where party politics is in vogue, one party holds the power and others always contending with the first to get the power for itself. The party in power boasts to the people about its own great qualities and achievements; the opposition points out its shortcomings and mistakes. Every party speaks ill of the other parties, and this absorption in fault-finding is the result of their longing for power. Each party claims that if you return it to power, it will lead you to heaven, but that if you return the other fellows to power, they will lead you into hell.¹ In a multi-party system like India, several political parties operate simultaneously and compete with each other. For the attainment of their goal i.e. control over power, each of the parties propagates its ideology and programme, criticizes its opponents and tries to mobilize people and bring them in its fold. It is during election, particularly the general election, that political parties put their best in the form of candidates and campaign organizers to win the elections.

As this study aims to analyze the political power structure of Himachal Pradesh it is essential to have the knowledge of profile of this state. Himachal Pradesh one of the most progressive state of the country came into existence as a Centrally Administered Territory on April 15, 1948 by the integration of 26 Shimla hill states and four Punjab hill states. After independence with the inauguration of the Constitution, Himachal Pradesh was made a Chief

Commissioner Province and N.C. Mehta was appointed as the first Chief Commissioner. On January 25, 1971 Himachal attained the status of full fledged state and became the 18th state of the Union of India.

It extends over an area of 55,673sq.kms.which is about 1.69 percent of India's total area. According to the census of 2011, Himachal Pradesh with a population of 68,64, 602 persons (3481873 males and 3382729 females)constitutes 0.57 percent of the India's total population and is ranked 21 among all the states of India. It consists 12 districts namely Chamba, Kangra, Lahaul & Spiti, Kullu, Mandi, Hamirpur, Una, Bilaspur, Solan, Sirmour, Shimla, and Kinnaur having their own administrative divisions. For the administrative purpose, presently, the State has been divided into three administrative divisions (Kangra, Mandi and Shimla,), 71 sub-divisions, 80 developmental blocks, 106 Tehsils and 63 Sub-tehsils.² For political purpose, there are four Lok Sabha parliamentary constituencies, three Rajya Sabha seats, 68 Legislative Assembly Constituencies, 3226 Gram Panchayats, 78Panchayat Samities, and 12 Zila Parishads.³ There are 61 urban local bodies including five Municipal Corporation i.e. Shimla, Dharamshala and Palampur, Mandi and Solan, 29 Municipal Councils and 27 Nagar Panchayats.⁴

In order to understand the political power structure of any state it is essential to understand the party- wise composition of the state legislature as well as party- wise representation in central legislature. Like India and other states of Indian union, Himachal Pradesh is also governed through a parliamentary system of representative democracy. The Himachal Pradesh has mainly two national political parties i.e. the Indian National Congress (INC) and the Bhartiya Janta Party (BJP). There is also existence of the Communist Party of India (CPI) and the Communist Party of India (Marxists) (CPM) but these are not very significant. The political Power structure in Himachal Pradesh revolves around the two national political parties i.e. the Indian National Congress and the Bhartiya Janta Party. In this paper researcher has tried to explore the party wise representation in parliament from Himachal Pradesh.

Tables 1.1 shows the party-wise representation in Rajya Sabha from Himachal Pradesh since 1952.

Table 1.1: Party-wise Representation in Rajya Sabha from Himachal Pradesh (1952 -2020)

Sr. No.	Name of The Political Party	Name of The Candidate	Tenure
1.	Congress	C.L. Verma	1952 -1958
2.	Congress	Lila Devi	1956-1962
3.	IND	Anand Chand	1958-1964
4.	Congress	Shiva Nand Ramaul	1962-1968
5.	Congress	C.L. Varma	1964-1970
6.	Congress	Salig Ram	1966-1972
7.	Congress	SatyavatiDang	1968-1974
8.	Congress	Roshan Lal	1970-1976

9.	Congress	Jagan NanthBhardwaj	1972-1978
10.	Congress	Gian Chand Totu	1974-1980
11.	Congress	Roshan Lal	1976-1982
12.	Janta.Party	Mohindr Kaur	1964-1967, 1978-1984
13.	Congress(I)	UshaMalhotra	1980-1986
14.	Congress(I)	Roshan Lal	1982-1988
15.	Congress(I)	Anand Sharma	1984-1990
16.	Congress(I)	Chandan Sharma	1986-1992
17.	Congress(I)	Sushil Barongpa	1988-1994
18.	BJP	Krishan Sharma	1990-1996
19.	BJP	Maheshwar Singh	1992-1998
20.	INC	Sushil.Barongpa	1994-2000
21.	INC	Chandresh Kumari	1996-2002
22.	HVC	Anil Sharma	1998-2004
23.	BJP	Kripal Parmar	2000-2006
24.	BJP	Suresh Bhardwaj	2002-2008
25.	INC	Anad Sharma	2004-2010
26.	INC	Viplov Thakur	2006-2012, 2014-2020
27.	BJP	Shanta. Kumar	2008-2014
28.	BJP	BimlaKshyap.Sood	2010-2016
29.	BJP	Jagat.Prakash Nadda	2012-2018
30.	INC	Anand Sharma	2016-2022
31.	BJP	Jagat.Prakash Nadda	2018-2024
32.	BJP	Indu Goswami	2020-2026
33.	BJP	Sikander Kumar	2022-2028

Source: *Who's Who, Members of Parliament from Himachal Pradesh, 1952-2009*, Shimla: Himachal Pradesh Legislative Assembly Secretariat; and <https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki>

Table 1.1 reveals that the Congress party has represented the State for the maximum number of times in the Rajya Sabha since 1952. Till date, the BJP has represented the State in the Rajya Sabha for ten times, the HVC one time, the Janta Party one time and for rest of the times (21), the Congress party has represented the State in the Rajya Sabha. This could be due to the role played by the Congress party in the freedom struggle of India. One Independent member, Anand Chand from the erstwhile royal family of Bilaspur also represented the upper house from 1958-64. Mohinder Kaur of the Janta Party; C.L. Verma, Sushil Barongpa and Viplov Thakur of the Congress; and Jagat Prakash Nadda of the BJP represented the upper house for two times whereas Roshan Lal and Anand Sharma of the Congress represented the house for three times. So far, eight women candidates have represented the upper house of the Parliament. Out of them, two women were elected twice. Leela Devi (1956-62), Mohinder Kaur (1964-67 & 1978-84), Satyavati Dang (1968-74), Usha Malhotra (1980-86), Chandresh Kumari (1996-2002), Viplov Thakur (2006 -2012& 2014-2020), Bimla Kashyap Sood (2010-2016) and Indu Goswami 2019 onward remained members of Rajya Sabha from the State. It may be mentioned here that women's representation from Himachal Pradesh has remained comparatively better in the Rajya Sabha than in the Lok Sabha.

Table1.2 shows the partywise representation in Lok Sabha from Himachal Pradesh since 1952. Table reveals that in 1952 Lok Sabha elections, three seats were won by the Congress

Party in the State. Anand Chand, an independent candidate represented Bilaspur Part-C State in Lok Sabha from 1952-54. After integration of Bilaspur Part-C state to Himachal Pradesh, he represented Himachal Pradesh in the Lok Sabha from 1954-57. From 1952-1971, in Himachal Pradesh, all the four seats of Lok Sabha were won by the Congress Party. Till 1977, the Congress party represented the State in the Lok Sabha due to its role in attaining the statehood. For the first time in 1977, Janta Party won all the four seats in Himachal Pradesh. After that things have undergone transformation in the political power structure of Himachal Pradesh with the emergence of Bharatiya Janata Party.

Table 1.2: Party-wise Representation in Lok Sabha from Himachal Pradesh (1952-2019)

		Year of Election															
Political Parties	1952	1957	1962	1967	1971	1977	1980	1984	1989	1992	1996	1998	1999	2004	2009	2014	2019
Congress	3	4	4	4	4	-	4	4	1	2	4	1	-	3	1		
JP						4											
BJP									3	2		3	3	1	3	4	4
HVC													1				
IND	1																
Total	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4

Source: *Statistical reports on General Elections to Lok Sabha, 1952-2019*, New Delhi: Election Commission of India.* In 2022 bye elections Lok Sabha Mandi constituency was won by Congress candidate Pratibha Singh..

In 1980 Lok Sabha bye- election, the Congress Party under Indira Gandhi came to power at the Centre and at State level also. The Congress Party won all the four seats of Lok Sabha. So 7th and 8th Lok Sabha again were represented by the Congress party from the State. In 1989, three seats were won by the Bhartiya Janta Party and one seat (Shimla SC) was won by the Congress candidate Krishan Dutt Sultanpuri who represented this seat for six times consecutively from 1980 to 1999, till the 12th Lok Sabha. After that this constituency was represented by Dhani Ram Shandil twice in the 13th and 14th Lok Sabha. Shandil was elected to Lok Sabha from Himachal Vikas Congress (HVC) during 13th Lok Sabha and from the Congress in 14th Lok Sabha. The 15th and 16th Lok Sabha was represented by Virender Kashyap. At present this constituency is represented by Suresh Kashyap. Till 1977, the lower house of the Parliament was entirely dominated by the Indian National Congress. In 1992, during 10th Lok Sabha Elections the Congress and the BJP both won two seats each in the State whereas in 1996 again all the four seats were captured by the Congress. In 1998, 1999 and 2009 Lok Sabha elections, the BJP got three seats each.

In 2014 and 2019 during 16th and 17th Lok Sabha elections, the electorate of this hill state voted for all the four candidates of the saffron party to power. Anurag Thakur son of former Chief Minister Sh Prem Kumar Dhumal has been representing Hamirpur since 2008 when for the first time he was elected to the house in by-election in 2008 where he replaced his father in 14th Lok Sabha. Prem Kumar Dhumal was the candidate of the BJP from this constituency during 9th, 10th and 14th Lok Sabha elections. In 2019, Anurag Thakur was elected for fourth time from this constituency. Suresh Chandel was elected to Lok Sabha from Hamirpur in

1998,1999 and 2004 on the BJPs ticket. Ahead of 2019 Lok Sabha Election, Chandel joined the Congress Party. Virbhadra Singh of the INC represented Mandi and Mahasu constituency in the lok sabha five times. First time, he represented in 1962 from the then Mahasu constituency. Second time in 1967 from the same constituency. During 5th, 7th and 15th Lok Sabha, he was elected from Mandi Parliamntary constituency.

It is clearly visible that there is Dominance of Congress in the Parliament. It may be pointed out that most of the members of the Rajya Sabha and Lok Sabha from Himachal Pradesh have also remained members of State Legislative Assembly of Himachal Pradesh. The list Include Shanta Kumar, Virbhadra Singh, Pandit Sukh Ram, Maheshwar Singh, Dhani Ram Shandil, Prem Kumar Dhumal, Chandresh Kumari, Durga Chand Kanwar, Narain Chand Prashar, Rajan Sushant, Sat Mahajan, Suresh Bhardwaj, Viplove Thakur, Anil Sharma etc. Some prominent members also have represented both the houses of the Parliament. The list include Anand Chand, Chanderesh Kumari, Maheshwar Singh, Shiva Nand Ramaul, Rajkumari Amrit kaur, Shanta Kumar, etc.

Rajkumari Amrit Kaur, Chanderesh Kumari and Pratibha Singh are the only three women who have represented the State in the Lok Sabha till now. They all belonged to the Congress Party and royal families. Rajkumari Amrit Kaur was the first woman elected to the Lok Sabha from Himachal Pradesh on the Congress ticket in 1952 general elections. She was elected from Mandi –Mahasu constituency and was also inducted in the central council of ministers as cabinet minister. Chandresh Kumari as a Congress candidate was elected in 1984 to Lok Sabha from Kangra constituency. Pratibha Singh was elected to the Lok Sabha in 2004 from Mandi Parliamentary Constituency after the demise of Sh Ram Swaroop.

Study reveals that political leader once in power tend to remain in power for a long time and become relatively impervious to influences from below. New leaders enter their ranks primarily by being selected or co-opted from above by the old leaders rather than by rising on their own from below. Our study also reveals that most of the time circulation of power in the state is only among elites not between elites and non elites. Majority of the power holders of the state have represented the same institution repeatedly and the same leaders have also represented the other institutions of power of the State.

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