

CHAPTER XVIII

PUBLIC LIFE AND VOLUNTARY SOCIAL SERVICE ORGANISATIONS

REPRESENTATION OF DISTRICT IN LEGISLATURES

Vidhan Sabha (Legislative Assembly)

At the time of the general elections of 1952, the area covered by the district formed part of Almora district and was included in the Pithoragarh cum Champawat legislative assembly constituency which was a double-member constituency, one of the two seats being reserved for members of the Scheduled Castes. Eight candidates contested the elections of whom three were Independents, two belonged to the Indian National Congress and two to the Socialist party and one was put up by the Kisan Mazdoor Praja party. Both the seats were won by the Congress.

In the general elections of 1957 the district was included in the Pithoragarh legislative assemble constituency of the Almora district. The number of seats and their allotment from this constituency remained unchanged but this time there were only four candidates in the field of whom two belonged to the Congress and two were set up by the Praja Socialist party. In this election, too, both the seats were won by the Congress.

For the general elections of 1962, the constituencies had been delimited in 1961 and Pithoragarh, which was then a separate district was divided into two single-member constituencies – Pithoragarh and Champawat. The greater part of the district of Pithoragarh came under the Pithoragarh constituency and the Champawat constituency was reserved for the Scheduled Castes candidate. Seven candidates contested the election from both these constituencies of whom two each belonged to the congress and the Praja Socialist party. One candidate was an Independent; one belonged to Socialist party and one to the Akhil Bhartiya Jan Sangh. Both the seats were again won by the Congress.

In 1952, the number of electors in the constituency concerned was 1,51,600, the number of votes actually cast was 66,219 and the total number of valid votes polled was 62,599. In the general elections of 1957 and 1962, the electors numbered 1,54,130 and 1, 61,207, the total votes actually cast were 47, 153 and 34,136 and valid votes polled were 44,792 and 32,360, respectively.

The following statement shows the numbers and percentages of votes polled for each party and the number of seats contested and won by it in the Vidhan Sabha constituencies from the district (including Champawat tahsil of Almora district):

Party/ Independents	1952				1957			
	Contest ants	Seats won	Valid votes polled	Percent age	Contest ants	Seats won	Valid votes polled	Perce ntage
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Congress	2	2	33,351	53.30	2	2	26,915	60.09
Independents	3	..	15,558	24.80	..	..	..	..
Jan Sangh	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Kisan Mazdoor Praja Party	1	..	2,561	4.10	..	..	..	..
Praja Socialist Party	..	..	..	..	2	..	17,877	39.91
Socialist Party	2	..	11,129	17.80	..	..	..	..
Total	8	2	62,599	100.00	4	2	44,792	100.00

Party/ Independents	1962			
	Contestants	Seats won	Valid votes polled	Percentage
1	10	11	12	13
Congress	..	2	15,217	47.03
Independents	..	1	3,435	10.67
Jan Sangh	..	1	673	2.07
Kisan Mazdoor Praja Party
Praja Socialist Party	..	2	12,041	37.21
Socialist Party	..	1	976	3.02
Total	..	7	32,360	100.00

Vidhan Parishad (Legislative Council)

No member has been returned for the Vidhan Parishad of Uttar Pradesh from the region covered by the district of Pithoragarh so far.

Lok Sabha (House of the People)

In the general elections of 1952, the district formed part of the Almora Parliamentary constituency. Three candidates contested the election from this constituency and the seat went to the Congress candidate.

In the general elections of 1957 only two candidates, of whom one belonged to the Praja Socialist Party and the other to the Congress, contested the election from the Almora Parliamentary constituency and the seat was won by the Congress candidate.

In the general elections of 1962, the number of contestants from the Almora parliamentary constituency rose to four of whom one candidate each was put up by the Congress, the Jan Sangh and the Praja Socialist Party and one contested the election as an Independent. The Congress candidate won the seat.

The following statement show the numbers and percentages of valid votes polled by each party and number of seats contested and won by it from the Almora Parliamentary constituency which covered the districts of Almora and Pithoragarh:

Party/ Independents	1952				1957			
	Contestants	Seats won	Valid votes polled	Percentage	Contestants	Seats won	Valid votes polled	Percentage
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Congress	1	1	54,264	54.4	1	1	49,549	55.07
Independents	31	..	21,534	21.4	..	..	..	..
Jan Sangh	....	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Praja Socialist Party	1	..	..	..	1	..	40,422	44.93
Socialist Party	..1	..	24,169	24.2	..	..	..	..

Party/Independents Independents	1962			
	Contestants	Seats won	Valid votes polled	Percentage
1	10	11	12	13
Congress	1	1	51,507	48.82
Independents	1	..	17,805	16.88
Jan Sangh	1	..	24,509	13.23
Praja Socialist Party	1	..	11,680	11.07
Socialist Party	..	..	..	..

Rajya Sabha (Council of States)

No person belonging to the district of Pithoragarh has so far been returned as a member of the Rajya Sabha.

Political Parties

The political parties active in the district belong to all-India or State level organizations, none being of purely local standing. Their numerical strength varies from time to time. The Indian National Congress was the only party which contested all the three general elections in the district, those of 1952 and 1962 also being contested by the Socialist party and those of 1957 and 1962 by the Praja Socialist party. The parties which contested only one of these elections were the Kisan Mazdoor Praja party (in 1952) and the Akhil Bhartiya Jan Sangh (in 1962).

NEWSPAPERS AND PERIODICALS

Hindi— *Uttarakhand Jyoti*, a weekly newspaper is being published from the district since 1960 and has a circulation of about 2,000 copies.

Other Periodicals— About 40 newspapers and periodicals published outside the district find their way into this district. The more popular of the Hindi dailies are *Hindustan* and *Nava Bharat Times*. The Hindi magazines, *Dharmyug*, *Saptahik Hindustan*, *Sarika*, *Navneet*, *Sarita*, *Kadambini*, *Madhuri*, *Nai Kahaniyan* and *Parag* are also popular in the district. The Urdu dailies usually read in the district are *Milap* and *Qaumi Awaz*. Among the English dailies read here are the *Statesman*, *National Herald*, the *Pioneer*, *The Hindustan Times*, *The Times of India* and *The Northern India Patrika*. The English weeklies read are the *Blitz*, the *Link* and the *Illustrated Weekly of India*; the English fortnightlies are the *Filmfare* and the *Caravan* and the English monthlies are the *Imprint*, the *Mirror*, the *Reader's Digest* and the *Mother India*.

VOLUNTARY SOCIAL SERVICE ORGANIZATIONS

There are a number of voluntary social service organizations in the district for looking after certain social and economic needs of the people in general and the special needs of the socially neglected in particular.

In the past, such institutions depended mostly on the philanthropy and zeal of the people of the district, but with the posting, to the district in January, 1966, of the district Harijan and social welfare officer, efforts have been made to strengthen these organizations and to co-ordinate their activities with those of governmental institutions in the field. This officer supervises the working of institutions, run by the State, and implements the various social welfare schemes initiated by his department.

A brief account of the more important of the voluntary social service organizations in the district is given below:

Institutions for Community Welfare

The Bharat Sewak Samaj endeavors to find and develop avenues of voluntary service for those who are prepared to do such work, to promote their advancement and mitigate the privation and hardships of those who are socially and economically backward. It works on a non-political basis and organizes camps for youths, teachers and students for rendering *shramdan* (voluntary labour) in order to execute public utility works.

There are 134 Yuvak Mangal Dals in the district with a membership of 3,864. Organizations of Boy Scouts and Girl Guides and the Temperance Society are also functioning in the district.

Institutions for Women's Welfare

A Mahila Ashram established by Sher Singh Karki and Lilavati (a Sarvodaya worker) is functioning at village Muwain since 1963. Its main object is to provide shelter to widows and destitute women and to rehabilitate them. The number of inmates has never exceeded 12. At times, it receives aid from the government for different purposes. Several Mahila Mangal Dals are also functioning in the district.

Institutions for Child and Youth Welfare

A Bal Kalyan Parishad for the welfare of children has been organized under the chairmanship of the district magistrate. For the help of Harijan boys, four Junior Basic schools and a boarding house are functioning under the supervision of the district Harijan and social welfare officer.

A sports council has been established in the district, which arranges and encourages tournaments and games and imparts training in different indigenous and modern sports to young men and others interested in them. The Prantiya Rakshak Dal organizes activities relating to sports, agriculture, horticulture and other spheres of youth welfare. It also arranges monthly sittings of Yuvak Mangal Dals.