

Chapter- 2

Parties and Politics in Bihar: From 1990 to 2015

“History testifies that Bihar has been at the centre of politics in India since a very long time as many significant political changes that have taken place in India during the last several decades have had their genesis in Bihar”¹. The state was the epicentre of the anti-Emergency movement of 1975 against the national Emergency imposed by then Prime Minister Mrs. Indra Gandhi which was led by great socialist leader Jai Prakash Narayan. The state was also the epicentre of the anti- and pro- Mandal agitations in the 1990s. “The post-Mandal politics in Bihar that began with the national party- Congress- versus the regional party- the Janata Dal (JD) - in the 1990s has finally turned into an electoral battle between the two dominant regional parties- the Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD) and the Janata Dal (United) or JD (U), with two national political parties- the Congress and the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) - playing secondary roles as alliance partner with the regional parties”². The Political Landscape of Bihar in the past was largely dominated by the Congress party, like many other states in India. The Congress party didn’t face much challenge in Bihar till 1990 with only minor interruptions in 1967 and 1977 when the state had a non-Congress government. The major changes in the nature of electoral politics and political representation in the state was witnessed during the post-Mandal Politics. “This period witnessed the rise of regional political parties and regional leaders with a reasonable support base, especially among the voters belonging to the lower social strata-namely, the Other Backward Classes (OBCs), the *Dalits*, the *Adivasis* (in undivided Bihar), and the Muslims”³.

The politics of the state can be divided into three phases. The first phase (1951-1990) of the four decades belonged to Indian National Congress with minor interruptions in 1967 and 1977. The second phase (1990-1997 & 1997-2005) of 15 years, belonged to Janata Dal and Rashtriya Janata Dal respectively. The third and the current phase which continue till date belongs to Janata Dal (United)-Bhartiya Janata Party alliance with minor disruption from 2013-2017. The major political party that has governed the state

¹ Kumar, S (2018), ‘Post Mandal-Politics in Bihar: Changing Electoral Patterns’, New Delhi: Sage Publications India Pvt Ltd.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

is Indian National Congress, Janata Dal, Rashtriya Janata Dal and JD (U) with coalition partner BJP. But since 1990s and especially in the 21st century, many other political parties in the state which seeks their origin from Janata Dal have played an important role in the politics of Bihar. Political parties like Lok Jan Shakti Party (LJNSP) of Ram Vilas Paswan, Rashtriya Lok Samata Party (RLSP) of Upendra Kushwaha and Hindustani Awam Morcha (HAM) of Jitan Ram Manjhi may not have become a major force to form the government in the state but their collective effort or coalition may shape a different picture of politics in Bihar in near future. Hence this chapter not only covers the important political parties of Bihar which have been the ruling force in the state but these minor parties and their leadership structure have been also discussed. This chapter deals with the politics of Bihar from 1990 to 2015 with reference to the political parties of Bihar that have been in the government during this period. The chapter includes the brief introduction to the origin of political party, their leadership structure and electoral performance in the various elections in the defined phase of 1990 to 2015. Though the period of the study is limited to 1990-2015 but any explanation of politics in Bihar without involving the history of Indian National Congress would not be fare and justifiable to understand the political nature, party structure and pattern of politics in the state. Hence 'Congress rule in Bihar' is also an important part of this chapter. This chapter systematically discuss first the Congress rule in Bihar, then discusses the emergence of Janata Dal in Bihar politics. The chapter further discuss the split of JD and formation of RJD in the state and Lalu Yadav as the Chief Minister of Bihar. This chapter then discusses the role of small political parties like LJNSP, HAM and RLSP to understand the contemporary political situation in Bihar. Since the subject of the study is JD (U) and chapter 3 and 4 have been dedicated to discuss the emergence and electoral performance respectively, in this chapter JD (U) has not been discussed.

The Congress Party in Bihar:

“As the Indian National Congress was the dominant player in the freedom struggle, eventually liberating the country from the colonial power, the party became the natural political heir of the British in the state, as elsewhere in India”⁴. The political history of Bihar is more or less similar to the political history of India in that Congress lost its domination and political position in the post 1990s period in Bihar. In the absence of any organised opposition groups, combined with the towering leadership of Srikrishna Sinha in the state, Congress party enjoyed the monopoly of political space. Other political parties, especially the Left Parties could not capitalise their mass base despite having some support in the districts of Begusarai, Madhubani, Muzaffarpur, Gaya and Sitamarhi. As a result Bihar is one of those states where congress dominated state politics till 1990 with minor interruptions in 1967 and 1977 when the state accepted a non- Congress government.

Leadership in Congress.

Congress was believed to be the party of upper caste in Bihar dominated by *Brahmins*, *Rajputs*, *Bhumihars*, and *Kayasthas*. The leadership of Congress party in Bihar reflects the domination of the upper caste in the party structure. The table 2.1 reflects the name of Chief Minister of Bihar representing Congress party from 1952 to 1990. Srikrishna Sinha was the first Chief Minister of Bihar who belonged to *Bhumihar* community, which is considered as the dominating caste in the state. The politics of Bihar was not very stable after 1962 as continuous struggle to get power within the party was seen. The average life of government under Congress regime after the retirement of Srikrishna Sinha was very short and despite getting majority in the state. After Srikrishna Sinha it was Lalu Prasad Yadav who completed his full term as a Chief Minister in the state. “So one may be constrained to say that at least in the case of Bihar, Single-party governments make for greater instability while coalition governments contribute to a greater stability”⁵. If we look at the Congress rule in Bihar from 1980 to 1990, it was unchallenged with the opposition parties in shambles. One would have expected a stable government as Congress party had a handsome majority in the

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ See Kumar, S (2014), “Coalition Politics in Bihar: From One-Party Dominance to Bipolarity to uncertainty?” in E, Sridharan’s *Coalition Politics in India: Selected Issues at the centre and the states*, New Delhi: Academic Foundation.

assembly and the leading opposition party had only 40 seats in the 1980 election and 45 in 1985 election but on the contrary, the Congress government was so unstable that the state saw six changes of government (Chief Minister) during this period.

Table 2.1

List of Chief Minister from Congress Party in Bihar from 1952-1990.

Name of Chief Minister	Date took office	Date Left office	Duration of Government
Krishna Sinha	January 1952	January 1961	10 Years
Deep Narain Singh	February 1961	February 1961	18 Days
Binodanand Jha	February 1961	October 1963	2 Years 8 Months
Krishna Vallabh Sahay	October 1963	March 1967	3 Years 5 Months
Bhola Paswan Shashtri	February 1968	June 1968	5 Months
Harihar Prasad Singh	February 1969	June 1969	5 Months
Bhola Paswan Shashtri	June 1969	July 1969	2 Months
Daroga Prasad Rai	February 1970	December 1970	11 Months
Bhola Paswan Shashtri	June 1971	January 1972	8 Months
Kedar Pandey	March 1972	January 1973	11 Months
Abdul Gafoor	July 1973	April 1975	1 Year 3 Months
Jagannath Mishra	April 1975	April 1977	2 Years
Jagannath Mishra	July 1980	April 1983	2 Years 9 Months
Chandrashekhar Singh	August 1983	March 1985	1 Year 7 Months
Bindeshwari Dubey	March 1985	February 1988	2 Year 11 Months
Bhagwat Jha Azad	February 1988	March 1989	1 Year 1 Months
Satyendra Narayan Sinha	March 1989	December 1989	10 Months
Jagannath Mishra	December 1989	March 1990	4 Months

Source: Coalition Politics in India: Selected Issues at the Centre and the states edited by E. Sridharan. P. 209.

Note 1: The table include only the name of Chief Minister from Congress party.

Note 2: The Congress party here represents both Congress (O) and Congress (I).

Electoral Performance of Congress Party in Bihar

National leadership of Congress party became the symbol of freedom and future care taker of the nation. As a result we see the domination of Congress in electoral politics of India at both national as well as in state politics. The congress party had been the leading figure of electoral politics in Bihar before the rise of JD. Though Congress leadership in the party structure of Bihar was highly dominated by upper caste but the electoral base of Congress party was not limited to this group. Congress drew support from SC, ST, Muslims and other marginalised groups in electoral politics of Bihar. Congress party in Bihar remained unchallenged till 1967, when for the very first time a non-Congress government was formed in the state with Mahamaya Prasad Sinha becoming the Chief Minister of Bihar from JKD. Except 1967 and 1977 assembly election in the state, Congress party were successful to mobilise people in their favour to win the battle of electoral politics. The electoral map of Lok Sabha in the state was more or less similar to assembly election for Congress till 1990 and after the formation of RJD in 1997, Congress party joined hands with Lalu Prasad Yadav as a coalition partner in many assembly and Lok Sabha elections. The state assembly election of 1985 was an election to remember because Congress party not only secured 196 (This was the highest number of seats secured by the Congress party in state assembly after 1957, as could be seen in table 2.2) seats in the state but it was also the last election when Congress party formed government in the state being the largest party in terms of winning seats in the assembly election in Bihar. Similarly in the Lok Sabha elections Congress party did well till 1984 in Bihar but after the formation of Janata Dal at the centre, Congress not only lost its dominant position in the state assembly but also lost strength in the Parliamentary elections. The Parliamentary election of 1977 was the worst performance of Congress in the state where party couldn't win a single seat. The table 2.2 shows the electoral performance of Congress in assembly elections and parliamentary elections respectively.

Table 2.2

Electoral performance of Congress Party in Bihar 1952 to 2015.

Assembly Election		Lok Sabha Election	
Year	Seats	Year	Seats
1951	239	1952	45
1957	210	1957	41
1962	185	1962	39
1967	128	1967	34
1969	118	1971	39
1972	167	1977	0
1977	57	1980	39
1980	169	1984	48
1985	196	1989	4
1990	71	1991	1
1995	29	1996	2
2000	23	1998	5
2005 February	10	1999	4
2005 October	9	2004	3
2010	4	2009	2
2015	27	2014	2

Source: Election Commission of India.

“The defeat of Congress in 1990 marked the end of an era in Bihar’s politics which can be best described as Feudal democracy”⁶. Congress party failed to fulfil the promises made to the public of Bihar related to Land reforms, poverty alleviation (which was the theme and slogan of Indira Gandhi’s government during the General election of 1971), discrimination and indignity of dalits and OBC. Muslims community of Bihar also virtually knocked the Congress party out of their electoral imagination after Bhagalpur riots. The upper caste also shifted their trust to BJP after 1990. The victory of Janta Dal

⁶ Witsoe, J (2011), Corruption as Power: Caste and the political imagination of the postcolonial state. *American Ethnologist*, 38(1), 73-85.

in 1990 state assembly election not only saw the formation of non- Congress government after a very long time but it also marked the systematic decline of the long rule of Congress in Bihar.

Janata Dal in Bihar

“Given the structural condition of one-party dominance in India, the evolution of opposition parties, presents an interesting case, where the contours of opposition politics have been largely determined by the dominant party, namely the Congress Party”⁷. The rise of oppositional consolidation characteristically around “anti-Congressism” or non-Congressism” was parallel to the decline of Congress in the late sixties. The base of oppositional consolidation was based on Lohia’s strategy to mobilise the backward and lower caste to challenge the dominant position of Congress in the country. The emergence of Janata Dal also traces its pedigree from this Lohiate strategy to put an alternative to the Congress party.

“The Janata Dal is essentially a regrouping of old Janata Party splinters along with some Congress (I) rebels”⁸. The Janata fragments which had been virtually swept aside in the parliamentary election of 1980, soon realised the suicidal step they took in outwitting each other and misleading the confidence that people had placed in them. Janata Dal was born from this retrospection on the part of the leaders of the Janata Party and the Lok Dal. The victory of TDP and Janata Party in Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka respectively gave more optimism to the opposition parties in the country to defeat Congress at the centre. All the opposition parties’ leaders were aware that the only way to replace Congress (I) at the centre was to make a coalition at national level. The formation of Janata Dal was also helped by Rajeev Gandhi government with the series of blunders committed by the government, which prompted many important Congress (I) leaders to leave the party and join the opposition ranks. Political leaders like V.P Singh, Arif Mohammed Khan⁹ and later Arun Nehru resigned from the Congress party and three came together to form the ‘Jan Morcha’, which acted as a catalyst in opposition unity effort. The victory of Devi Lal in Haryana assembly election of 1987

⁷ Kumar, S (1997), ‘Parties and Politics: Janata Dal in Bihar (1989-1995), M.phil Thesis, New Delhi: Jawahar Lal Nehru University.

⁸ See Sundar Suri (1990), *The Rise of V.P Singh and the 1989 and 1990 Elections*, Delhi: Konark. P. 54

⁹ Arif Mohammad Khan resigned from the Congress party on the issue of ‘Protection of Rights on Divorce) Bill, 1986.

also consolidated the opposition's unity at the centre. A seven party convention on July 19, 1988 was held which was attended by four national and three regional parties. While the national parties were the Lok Dal (both Ajit and Bahuguna faction), the Janata Party, the Jan Morcha, and the Congress (S), the three regional parties were the TDP, the DMK and the AGP¹⁰. The four national parties after preliminary discussion decided to merge themselves into the Samajwadi Janata Dal, which de facto came to be known as the Janata Dal. V.P Singh became the Prime Minister of India representing after defeating Congress in the General election of 1989. Bihar gave 31 MPs to the Lok Sabha in the 1989 Parliamentary election. The assembly election of 1990 saw the rise of Janata Dal in Bihar defeating the long rule of Congress in the state. Lalu Prasad Yadav became the Chief Minister of Bihar and served his full terms after Shri Krishna Sinha.

Leadership of Janata Dal in Bihar

There were three candidates for the position of Chief Minister after 1990 state assembly poll, where Janta Dal led collation secured the majority. Each candidate had the support from particular faction of the central leadership. Lalu Prasad Yadav was backed by Devi Lal, Dalit leader Ram Sunder Das was backed by V.P Singh and Raghunath Jha was backed by Chandra Sekhar (Former Chief Minister of Bihar, April 1979-February, 1980), (Kumar, 2018)¹¹. Lalu Prasad Yadav became the Chief Minister of Bihar by winning the intra-party election defeating Ram Sundar Das by securing 59 votes compared to 56 secured by Ram Sundar Das, while Raghunath Jha secured 12 votes. Nitish Kumar in the intra-party voting favoured Lalu Prasad Yadav and he also mobilised the backward MLAs of the party in favour of Lalu Yadav. Lalu Prasad Yadav in his autobiography writes that "I had been a leader of the opposition in the assembly and thus dropped the idea of being in national politics at that stage. I returned to Patna to stake claim to the Chief Minister's post. I thought that, rooted in the JP movement and hugely popular among Bihar's masses, I was suitably equipped to occupy the position and carry out revolutionary changes in Bihar, which was mired in

¹⁰ Kumar, S (1997), 'Parties and Politics: Janata Dal in Bihar (1989-1995), M.phil Thesis, New Delhi: Jawahar Lal Nehru University. Pp. 27-28

¹¹ Kumar, S (2018), 'Post Mandal-Politics in Bihar: Changing Electoral Patterns', New Delhi: Sage Publications India Pvt Ltd.

backwardness, feudalism and deprivation”¹². Nitish Kumar, who started his political carrier with Lalu Prasad Yadav from Patana University in an interview favoured his decision to support Lalu Prasad Yadav at that time because “*There wasn't any other choice at that time. We came from a certain kind of politics, backward communities had to be given a certain prime space and Lalu belonged to the most powerful section of Backwards, politically and numerically. The choice fell upon Lalu because there was nobody else*”. Nitish Kumar who supported the candidacy of Lalu Prasad Yadav for the post of Chief Minister in 1990 later parted away in 1994 when he along with George Fernandes formed Samata Party. While Nitish blamed Lalu Prasad Yadav for not giving any space to other leaders within the party and not working to fulfil the promises made to the people in Gandhi Maidan during his Chief ministerial speech. On the other hand Lalu Prasad Yadav in his autobiography calls Nitish Kumar a *bandar* (monkey), who swings from one branch to another. He referred him as ideologically uncertain and called him “A clever operator in power politics, who always looked for the right opportunity to get into positions of power to pursue his self-serving agenda”¹³.

The leadership of Janata Dal remained in the hands of Lalu Prasad Yadav before the he was accused for corruption in the fodder scam. Due to demands of his resignation both from within party and outside, eventually he resigned from the post of national president of JD and formed his own party RJD in 1997. After his resignation Sharad Yadav was elected as the national president of Janata Dal. This time onwards two leaders of Janata Dal, Sharad Yadav and Ram Vilas Paswan emerged as the known figure in Bihar. One major split in Janata Dal took place in 1999 when party was divided between two factions Janata Dal (United) led by Sharad Yadav and Janata Dal (Secular) led by H.D Dev Gowda. One years later, Ram Vilas Paswan too left his parental party (Janata Dal) and formed Lok Jan Shakti Party in 2000. Janata Dal (United) merged with Samata Party in 2003 and is the current ruling government in the state under the leadership of Nitish Kumar since 2005.

Electoral performance of Janata Dal in Bihar

The assembly election of 1990 were held in the background of the Janata Dal victory at the national level in the 1989 General elections. It was observed by the political

¹² See Nalin Verma and Lalu Prasad Ydav (2019), ‘*GOPALGANJ TO RAISINA: My Political Journey*’, New Delhi: Rupa Publications India Pvt Ltd. Pp. 46-47.

¹³ Ibid. P. 172.

analyst that the Janata Dal was certain to win the assembly elections in the state. The assembly election of 1990 were fought more or less on the similar issues of Lok Sabha polls. The issue of Bofors, Corruption, waiving of farmer loans and implementation of Mandal Commission's recommendations were promised during the election campaigns. Nitish Kumar and Lalu Prasad Yadav played a defining role in the electoral campaign from Janata Dal during 1990 assembly election. "Both Lalu and Nitish attacked the Congress party at its upper caste leadership for graft, law and order, backwardness of Bihar and perpetuation of upper caste hegemony in the state"¹⁴. While Lalu Prasad Yadav was very open about perpetuating Yadavization during electoral campaigns and within party structure, Nitish Kumar on other hand was very reluctant to identify himself with the Kurmi caste. To consolidate his bid in the state unit of Janata Dal, Lalu Prasad Yadav nominated 100 Yadavs as candidate in the 1990 assembly election out of 270 seats on which the party was contesting elections¹⁵. The Janata Dal contested on 270 seats in the assembly election of 1990 and won 122 seats with 25.71 percent of the total valid votes polled. (See table 2.3). Lalu Prasad Yadav became the Chief Minister of Bihar after winning the intra-party election held after getting majority in the assembly to decide the candidate for Chief Minister from Janata Dal. The Charisma of Lalu Prasad Yadav remained for long time in Bihar politics which is evident from the performance of his party during various elections held after 1990. The assembly election of 1995 also elected Lalu Prasad Yadav as the favourite leader to govern the state from Janata Dal, despite Nitish Kumar contesting election against Lalu Yadav in the state. Nitish Kumar's Samata party manage to win only 7 seats in the election.

Table 2.3

Electoral performance of Janata Dal in Bihar.

Assembly Election		Lok Sabha Election	
Year	Seats	Year	Seats
1990	122	1991	31

¹⁴ Kumar, S (2018), '*Post Mandal-Politics in Bihar: Changing Electoral Patterns*', New Delhi: Sage Publications India Pvt Ltd. P. 58

¹⁵ Arun Sinha in "*Nitish Kumar and Rise of Bihar*" writes that 'This was highly disproportionate allocation (37 per cent) to a caste that had a total share of 11 percent in the state population. It exposed the duplicity of the party in attacking the upper caste for enjoying 40 percent or more share in the Congress with a population of less than 15 per cent'. P. 139.

1995	167	1996	22
-		1998	1

Source: Election Commission of India.

Rashtriya Janata Dal in Bihar

On the origin of Janata Dal in Bihar, Lalu Prasad Yadav writes in his autobiography that “Call it the outcome of my complacency, the competing ambitions of leaders in the Janata Dal, or the Sangh Parivars’s machinations, Sharad Yadav came forward to contest the position of JD president against me in the presidential election of our party, in July 1997. I was already mired in the RSS-BJP’s protracted conspiratorial activities. I had reached the end of my patience at the unholy machinations, and decided that enough was enough. I walked out of the Janata Dal and formed the Rashtriya Janata Dal on July 5, 1997”¹⁶. Whenever the journey or rule of Lalu Prasad Yadav in Bihar is discussed, the fodder scam or Chara Ghotala is bound to come up. The fodder scam issue not only led to the resignation of Lalu Prasad Yadav as the Chief Minister of Bihar and national president of Janata Dal but it also resulted into the formation of Rashtriya Janata Dal in 1997. As pressure mounted on him to quit as Chief Minister, he split Janata Dal- its parliamentary party as well as Bihar State legislature party- leading to the formation of the RJD in a convention held in Delhi on July 5, 1997¹⁷. He was backed by 18 MPs out of 45 and 137 Janata Dal MLAs out of 167. He also conveyed congress to support his new party and promised ministerial births to most of its MLAs. He also received support from the independent candidate and other influential parties in the states like, CPI, CPM and JMM²¹. Lalu Prasad Yadav resigned as the Chief Minister of Bihar on 25th July, 1997 and his wife Rabri Devi became the next CM of Bihar on the same day. Since its formation in 1997, RJD remained one of the most influential party in the state and also an important coalition partner of UPA government at the centre. . Despite Lalu Yadav’s name cropping in the fodder scam and denting his public image, he had appeared as the uncontested leader of not only the Yadav’s and Muslims but also a section of the lower backward caste. The opposition’s hope to get back into

¹⁶ See Nalin Verma and Lalu Prasad Ydav (2019), ‘*GOPALGANJ TO RAISINA: My Political Journey*’, New Delhi: Rupa Publications India Pvt Ltd. P. 118.

¹⁷ Kumar, S (2018), ‘*Post Mandal-Politics in Bihar: Changing Electoral Patterns*’, New Delhi: Sage Publications India Pvt Ltd. P. 81

power in the state after Lalu Yadav resigned as the Chief Minister was dashed to the ground when RJD formed the government in the state after winning the 2000 state assembly election. The BJP-JD (U) and Samata Party alliance which had performed well in the Lok Sabha election of 1999 couldn't form the government in the state. Though RJD could manage to form government in the state after 2000 assembly election, the party has started experiencing a steady electoral decline in the aftermath of the fodder scam. The rule and domination of Lalu Prasad Yadav was challenged in the state after the merger of Samata party and JD (U) in 2003 and as a result the JD (U)-BJP alliance ousted RJD rule from Bihar from 2005 assembly elections onwards.

Leadership of RJD in Bihar

Leadership signifies the role of providing direction, guidance and coordination to a group, organization or a country. Leadership is also the question of degree determined by the extent to which a single person can build control on the basis of influence. Thus those leaders are defined as influential who exercise great casual impact on social events¹⁸. “Though personality and institutional arrangements affect the character of the leadership itself, the environment is the substance, the raw material and also the framework for the goals and policy initiatives; it is, to use another image, the chessboard on which leaders have to play”¹⁹. One point of certainty about the charismatic authority is that it is based on the direct relationship between followers and leaders. “Charismatic authority is lodged neither in office nor in status but derives from the capacity of a particular person to arouse and maintain belief in himself or herself as the source of legitimacy”²⁰. Max Webber on Charismatic leadership states that charisma is a “certain quality of an individual’s personality by virtue of which he is considered extraordinary and treated as endowed with supernatural, superhuman, or exceptional forces or qualities”²¹.

Lalu Prasad Yadav is the most prominent leader of RJD in Bihar who fits into the category of ‘charismatic leader’. After leaving Janata Dal in 1997, he formed his own party on July 5, 1997 and many other political leaders of Janata Dal like Raghuvansh

¹⁸ See Mcfarland, A.S (1969), *Power and Leadership in Pluralist System*, California. Pp. 174-5.

¹⁹ Paige, G.D (1972), *Political Leadership*, New York: Free Press.

²⁰ Willner, A.R (1985), *The Spill Binder: Charismatic Political Leadership*, New Haven: Yale University Press. P. 4

²¹ See Webber, M (1968), *Economy and Society*, New York: Bedminster Press, Vol. 3 p. 214.

Prasad Singh, Smt. Kanti Singh along with many other Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha MP joined his newly formed party. Lalu Prasad Yadav was a political activist since his student days in Patna University. He was also elected as the president of PUSU in 1973-74. Lalu Prasad Yadav writes in his autobiography “the PUSU back then only existed only on paper and a coterie of students- nominated by the university administration controlled it. I still believe that this election was the first revolution that I spearheaded as a student leader”. He was associated with Socialist party during his student days and was highly impressed with Ram Manohar Lohia, Jai Prakash Narayan and Karpoori Thakur. Lalu Yadav recalls the memory of being impressed with Lohia slogan and speeches. He writes, the first slogan of Lohia that caught my imagination was ‘SamSoPa ne baandhi gaanth, pichhara pave sau mein saath’ (SSP is determined to get 60 percent representation for the backward calluses in all spheres of all life). He was highly impressed with Lohia’s Seven-fold revolution too that talked about end of inequality, liquidation of vestiges of colonialism, decentralization, disarmament etc. Lalu Prasad Yadav also accept the impact of Jai Prakash Narayan and Karpoori Thakur in his life. He was highly impressed with JPs Idea on the role of youth in establishing equality, secularism and justice in the society. Lalu recalls JPs speech in Patna College addressing students ‘You should concentrate on your studies but during vacation, you should go home and explain the true meaning of democracy to your parents and villagers. You should tell the people that they are the actual master in democracy in independent India’. Soon after his student life he was elected as the Member of Parliament from Janata Party in 1977. Later he was elected as the Member of Legislative Assembly on Lok Dal ticket. After the death of Karpoori Thakur, he became the leader of opposition in Bihar assembly. The victory of Janata Dal in 1990 assembly election made him Chief Minister of Bihar. He served as Chief Minister of Bihar for seven years before leaving Janata Dal in 1997. He was elected as the president of Rashtriya Janata Dal after its formation in 1997 and projected his wife Rabri Devi as the new Chief Minister of Bihar.

Rabri Devi was sworn in as the 29th Chief Minister of Bihar on July 25, 1997. She had done nothing to reach this position, her only merit was being the wife of Lalu Prasad Yadav. A senior IAS officer from her time says: “Chief Minister Rabri Devi had a problem in reading and writing. She would hardly make notings on any file. But she was good at grasping a subject and whenever there was any confusion, she would keep

it for consultation”²². Lalu Prasad Yadav had great faith in Mukund Prasad, Shanker Prasad Tekriwal and Jadganand Singh who ruled Bihar in his absence when Rabri Devi was Chief Minister in the state. “Rabri Devis’s tenure remained turbulent with a spurt of kidnapping and caste massacres as she continued in the job of a filler for the period, which was the bitter half of Lalu-Rabri rule”²³.

The present leadership of Rashtriya Janata Dal is in the hand of Tejashwi Yadav, the second son of Lalu Prasad Yadav and Rabri Devi. He became the leader of opposition after Nitish Kumar separated himself from Mahagathbandhan (Grand Alliance) in 2017 and allied with BJP to form government in the state. On the question of dynasty politics in the party Lalu Prasad Yadav considers it as baseless and uncalled-for allegations. He writes in his autobiography “Usually, children are influenced by the atmosphere they are born and brought up in. I don’t find anything wrong with the progeny of lawyers, doctors, writers and professors adopting the vocation of their parents”²⁴. Misa Bharti, Tej Pratap and Tejashwi Yadav have taken interest in state politics and are ready to carry forward the RJD flag in Bihar in future. Among three Tejashwi Yadav has become more popular as the successor of RJD and even media is also inviting him regularly to their shows and special events. In the recent India Today Mind Rocks Youth Summit 2018, the anchor remarked that Tejashwi possessed the innate genius of being witty and rustic, just like his father. Lalu Prasad Yadav on the role of Tejaswi Yadav in politics, he writes “Tejashwi has to be honest to the cause of the people, sober in his public conduct, and work hard consistently for years to come as he has a long way to go”²⁵.

Electoral Performance of RJD in Bihar

“The opposition’s hope of the fall of Lalu’s government after his arrest were dashed to the ground when he tendered his resignation as Chief Minister and called for a RJD party vote in which his wife Rabri Devi was elected as the new Chief Minister of Bihar”²⁶. One year later after the formation of RJD in 1997, the premature dissolution

²² See Singh, S (2015), *Ruled or Misruled: The Story and Destiny of Bihar*, New Delhi: Bloomsbury Publishing India Pvt Ltd. P. 117.

²³ Ibid. p. 121.

²⁴ See Nalin Verma and Lalu Prasad Ydav (2019), ‘*GOPALGANJ TO RAISINA: My Political Journey*’, New Delhi: Rupa Publications India Pvt Ltd. P. 189.

²⁵ Ibid. P. 194.

²⁶ Singh, A (2013), *Bihar: Chaos to Chaos*, New Delhi: Har-Anand Publications Pvt Ltd. P. 103.

of the Lok Sabha pushed the country towards another Parliamentary election held in 1998. Due to the formation of new party, the possibility of a fresh alignment among various political parties were open. Although there had been no major shift in the already existing alliances between BJP and Samata party on one hand and Janata Dal and CPI & CPM alliance on the other. RJD formed an alliance with Congress, which had performed badly in last few elections and JMM, which had little presence in the south Bihar. This alliance was carried for next Parliamentary election held in 1999 also but results were different from the last election where RJD had managed to win 17 seats and allied partner Congress secured 5. Table 2.4 shows the electoral performance of RJD in Bihar. The electoral results of 1999 Lok Sabha elections were not fruitful for RJD and its allied partner and speculation were made about the coming of JD (U)-BJP alliance government in the state after experiencing great support for the alliance in the Lok Sabha election of 1999. But the electoral outcome of 2000 assembly election was a setback for Nitish and allied partner BJP in the state. Both the parties couldn't outnumbered RJD in the assembly election despite getting popular votes in 1999 Lok Sabha election. Though Nitish Kumar became the Chief Minister of Bihar after getting a call by Governor to form government in the state but Nitish had to resign due to lack of majority in the assembly. RJD on the other hand in a pro-election alliance with Congress, JMM (The party which was promised for the formation of new state of Jharkhand by RJD leader Lalu Yadav, who once was totally against it), and independent MLAs formed the government naming Rabri Devi as the Chief Minister of Bihar for the 2nd term. In next two assembly election happened in 2005 and 2010 JD (U)-BJP alliance formed the government and RJD had to satisfy with opposition role. But after the separation of JD (U)-BJP alliance in 2013, RJD again came into political rule as a coalition partner of JD (U) and Congress after winning the peoples mandate in 2015 assembly election. Tejashwi Yadav became the Deputy-Chief Minister of Bihar in the government led by Nitish Kumar. The Mahagathbandhan²⁷ (Grand Alliance) which was formed before 2015 assembly election finally broke in 2017 when Nitish Kumar resigned from the post of Chief Minister and joined hands with BJP again to form new government in the state. Since then RJD is the largest opposition party in the assembly and expecting to regain power in the upcoming assembly election of 2020.

²⁷ The three major party which were part of Mahagathbandhan (Grand Alliance) were Congress, RJD and JD (U).

Table 2.4

Electoral Performance of RJD in Bihar

Assembly Election		Lok Sabha Election	
Year	Seats	Year	Seats
2000	124	1998	17
February 2005	75	1999	7
October 2005	54	2004	22
2010	22	2009	4
2015	80	2014	4

Source: Election Commission of India.

Lok Jan Shakti Party in Bihar

The first major setback to JD (U), which was formed in 1999 was given by Ram Vilas Paswan in the year 2000 when he decided to first left JD (U) in 2000 and then separated himself from NDA after 2002 Gujarat riots. Lok Jan Shakti Party was formed in 2000 by Ram Vilas Paswan along with his brother Ram Chandra Paswan. On the matter of leaving NDA in 2002, Ram Vilas Paswan in an interview given to Santosh Singh (a journalist cum author of the book, *Ruled or Misruled: The Story and Destiny of Bihar*) in July, 2015 said “I have always enjoyed a good personal relationship with Narendra Modi since our days of anti-Congressism and was among few important guests to attend his swearing-in ceremony as Gujarat CM in 2002. The biggest reason of my resigning as NDA minister was Nitish Kumar and George Fernandes, who played a role in changing the portfolio of Sharad Yadav and me”²⁸. Ram Vilas Paswan joined NDA before the 2014 Lok Sabha election by leaving Congress led UPA in which he had served as a Cabinet Minister from 2004 to 2009. Ram Vilas Paswan is often called a weather vane of the shifting political fortunes in Delhi’s power corridors. He is also labelled as a seasoned politician who changes political party to remain in power.

²⁸ See Singh, S (2015), *Ruled or Misruled: The Story and Destiny of Bihar*, New Delhi: Bloomsbury Publishing India Pvt Ltd. P. 309.

The party since its inception in 2000 have performed well in both assembly and parliamentary elections. At centre Lok Jan Shakti Party was part of NDA government till 2002 but after Godhra case Ram Vilas Paswan separated himself from NDA and later joined Congress led UPA in 2004 and remained an alliance partner before again joining NDA in 2014. In February 2005 assembly election in Bihar, Ram Vilas Paswan led LJNSP had the key to form government in the state as no single party or coalition parties had secured majority in the state. Without the support of the LJNSP, no party or alliance could have proved a majority on the floor of the house. Being a Cabinet Minister in UPA government at the centre Ram Vilas Paswan couldn't support NDA in the state and he also refused to support RJD to form government in the state because in his opinion the party had led the state to darkness and people wanted to get rid of it. His decision of not supporting any party or alliances resulted into imposition of President Rule in the state and fresh election for Bihar assembly was declared in Oct, 2005. In next two assembly election in the state didn't give much hope to Ram Vilas Paswan led LJNSP to come in power but remained influential during the parliamentary elections. Currently LJNSP is part of NDA government at the centre and in state too Ram Vilas Paswan is sharing power with Nitish Kumar, to whom he had blamed for his resignation from NDA in 2002.

Leadership OF LJNSP in Bihar

Ram Vilas Paswan is often accused of not looking beyond his family. Three of the six MPs won in 2014 are from his family-himself, his son-Chirag Paswan and brothers. "Before 2000, Paswan's politics revolved around sparring and settling with rivals like Lalu Prasad, Nitish Kumar and Sharad Yadav but post 2000 when he formed Lok Jan Shakti Party (LJNSP), he has been engaged in the politics of survival, relevance and bargain" (Singh, 2015)²⁹. On personal level, Ram Vilas Paswan has been elected nine time as Member of Parliament from Bihar and he has been also the longest serving Union Minister from Bihar since his debut as a Union Minister in V.P Singh's government in 1989. He continues to be the national president of LJNSP since its formation in 2000 but since his son's debut in politics in 2014, he may in near future give this responsibility to him. Chirag Paswan is on the most important youth face in Bihar along with Tejashwi Yadav. Chirag Paswan became the Member of Parliament

²⁹ Ibid. p. 311.

from Jamui constituency in Bihar in 2014 and is expected to be the successor of Lok Jan Shakti Party in future. He has been recently re-elected as the Member of Parliament from same constituency in 2019 Lok Sabha election. Though he is very new in politics compared to his father but he has the responsibility to carry forward the agenda of LJNSP 'to fight for those who has been at the last rung of the social order' on which party was formed and got support from the masses in last one and half decades.

Electoral Performance of LJNSP in Bihar

While during the 1999 Lok Sabha elections, Ram Vilas Paswan got elected as a JD (U) candidate, a few months after the formation of the government, he decided to resign from the current government and formed his new party, the Lok Janshakti Party. Just before the 2004 parliamentary elections, he had entered into an alliance with the RJD and contested on 8 of the 40 Lok Sabha seats in Bihar. The alliance of RJD-LJNSP did contribute to the success of the Congress alliance in Bihar to a great extent. The impressive victory of Congress-RJD-LJNSP alliance in 2004 Lok Sabha election could be assigned to the popularity of Ram Vilas Paswan and Lalu Prasad Yadav among the Muslim, Yadav, poor and Dalit voters of Bihar, whose support in favour of the alliance led to resounding victory. The assembly election of February 2005 were different from Lok Sabha election of 2004. Due to differences over the ministry at the centre between Lalu Prasad Yadav and Ram Vilas Paswan along with a general personality clash on who was the popular leader of Dalits and other marginalized sections in Bihar led to the drift in the popular alliance of the 2004 Lok Sabha elections. The undisputed gainer from February, 2005 assembly election was Ram Vilas Paswan and his party, the Lok Jan Shakti Party, which had succeeded in creating a slot in the state's electoral space by pushing the party above the threshold of viability³⁰. Though both BJP and JD (U) had improved their tally of seats in February assembly election of 2005 but even putting together their seats, both the parties were far from the majority mark. The Congress and RJD combine too was unable to form government in the state, despite RJD getting 75 seats in the election³¹. However, the key to power was in the hand of Ram Vilas Paswan, even though his party, the LJNSP had won only 29 seats in the February, 2005 assembly

³⁰ Kumar, S (2018), '*Post Mandal-Politics in Bihar: Changing Electoral Patterns*', New Delhi: Sage Publications India Pvt Ltd. Pp. 154-55.

³¹ RJD emerged as the largest party in February 2005 assembly election after getting 75 seats. JD (U) on the other hand won 55 seats which was a gain of 37 from last assembly election held in 2000. BJP and Congress managed with 37 and 10 respectively.

election. (Table 2.5 shows the electoral performance of LJNSP in Bihar). His denial to support any party or alliance led to imposition of President Rule in the state and a fresh election for Bihar assembly was declared in Oct, 2005. The Ram Vilas Paswan led LJNSP was punished in the Oct, 2005 assembly election by the people of Bihar as its seat tally reduced to 10 from 29 in the February election. The JD (U)-BJP alliance got clear mandate in the October assembly election which ended 15 year rule of Lalu Prasad Yadav in the state. “The results of both the 2009 Lok Sabha and 2010 assembly elections in Bihar didn’t surprise many which were more or less on expected lines”³². The alliance of JD (U)-BJP won 206 seats and polled 39.1% of total votes polled in the states. What came as a surprise was the way RJD-LJNSP alliance performed in both these elections. In assembly election of 2010, the RJD-LJNSP alliance managed to win only 25 seats of which LJNSP share was only 3. The results of 2010 assembly elections was the continuation of the decline of the LJNSP and RJD which had begun in Oct, 2005 assembly election. The electoral battle of 2009 Lok Sabha election also reflects the same pattern in which LJNSP couldn’t even open its account and all 4 seats were won by alliance partner RJD. Though, Ram Vilas Paswan’s decision to leave UPA and joining NDA proved fruitful for the party in next Lok Sabha election as the party won 6 Lok Sabha seats out of 7 which it contested in the state. The assembly election of 2015 was a major shift in the electoral politics of Bihar as two rival camps of Nitish Kumar and Lalu Prasad Yadav came together along with Congress to stop the influence of saffron party, the BJP led coalition in the state. LJNSP had received great support in the 2014 Lok Sabha election was expected to perform well in assembly election of 2015 also. But the long suspense about Bihar assembly election of 2015 came with the JD (U)-RJD-Congress alliance, pulling a stunning victory in the state. The performance of LJNSP was worse than the last Lok Sabha election as the party could win only 2 seats in the assembly elections.

Currently LJNSP is part of NDA in the state and performed really well in 2019 Lok Sabha election. Ram Vilas Paswan who once rejected Nitish Kumar and his leadership in the state is expected to be the coalition partner of JD (U)-BJP alliance to contest assembly election in 2020.

³² Kumar, S (2018), ‘*Post Mandal-Politics in Bihar: Changing Electoral Patterns*’, New Delhi: Sage Publications India Pvt Ltd. P.198.

Table 2.5

Electoral Performance of LJNSP in Bihar.

Assembly Election		Lok Sabha Election	
Year	Seats	Year	Seats
February 2005	29	2004	4
October 2005	10	2009	0
2010	3	2014	6
2015	2	-	

Source: Election Commission of India.

Rashtriya Lok Samata Party and Hindustani Aawam Morcha in Bihar

When Nitish Kumar had resigned as the Chief Minister of Bihar on May 17th, 2014 taking the moral responsibility for JD (U)'s massive defeat in the 16th Lok Sabha election, most of his party MLA's desperately wanted him to withdraw his resignation as there were no other unanimous face in the party. When names of Narendra Yadav, Uday Narayan Choudhary, Vijay Kumar Choudhary and JD (U) state president Bashistha Narayan Singh had been doing the rounds, Nitish Kumar called Jitan Ram Manjhi to CM residence and confirmed his position in the state. Manjhi was stunned and at a loss of words. No Political pandit had predicted his name for the Chief Ministerial birth after Nitish Kumar's resignation. "But only few months later, Nitish Kumar started realising that Manjhi was not a brief case and even Jitan Ram Manjhi had started realising that it was his surname, not his political potential and credentials that had got him the top job"³³. Jitan Ram Manjhi formed Hindustani Awam Morcha on 8th May, 2015 and separated himself from Nitish Kumar politics in Bihar. Since its inception in 2015, the party has contested one assembly election in 2015 as the coalition partner of NDA and one Lok Sabha election as the coalition partner of UPA. In both these election Jitan Ram Manjhi's party was on the wrong side. While BJP led NDA had received a great mandate in 2014 Lok Sabha election but suffered badly in assembly

³³ Singh, S (2015), *Ruled or Misruled: The Story and Destiny of Bihar*, New Delhi: Bloomsburry Publishing India Pvt Ltd. P. 261.

election of 2015. Similarly the Grand alliance in Bihar registered massive victory in the 2015 assembly election but after Nitish left Grand Alliance in 2017, the coalition of RJD, Congress, HAM and RLSP couldn't challenge the NDA in Bihar in Lok Sabha election of 2019. While in 2015, HAM was part of NDA alliance but later Jitan Ram Manjhi joined UPA to fight Lok Sabha election of 2019. The next assembly election in Bihar is expected to happen in 2020 and Jitan Ram Manjhi would like to mobilise the caste dynamics of the state to get some say in the government if no part or alliance would get majority in the state assembly.

Upendra Kushwaha is another political leader in Bihar who traces his origin from Samata Party but due to differences and political ambitions later formed 'Rashtriya Lok Samata Party' in 2013. He is currently the national president of RLSP. In the very first election after its formation in 2013, RLSP marked its arrival in the political scenario of Bihar with 2 seats in its bag which was equal to JD (U)'s total number of seats won in 2014 Lok Sabha election. RLSP remained the coalition partner of NDA in 2015 assembly election but couldn't help BJP to form government in the state. RLSP could win only 2 seats in the assembly election with 3.6% of total votes polled in the state (Table 2.6 & 2.7 represents the electoral performance of RLSP and of HAM respectively in Bihar). In the recent Lok Sabha election held in 2019, RLSP like HAM, was coalition partner of UPA and against Modi-Nitish Charisma couldn't win even a single seat in the state. The next assembly election in Bihar is going to happen in 2020 and Upendra Kushwaha led RLSP may play an important role to influence the Koeri-Kurmi vote bank in Bihar³⁴.

Table 2.6

Electoral performance of RLSP in Bihar.

Assembly Election		Lok Sabha Election	
Year	Seats	Year	Seats
2015	2	2014	2
-		2019	0

Source Election Commission of India.

³⁴ Upendra Kushwaha belong to 'Koeri' caste in Bihar which is taken as influential in assembly elections in Bihar along with 'Kurmi'- the caste of Nitish Kumar.

Table 2.7

Electoral Performance of HAM in Bihar.

Assembly Election		Lok Sabha Election	
Year	Seats	Year	Seats
2015	1	2019	0

Source: Election Commission of India.