

Chapter-3

Emergence of Janata Dal (United): An Evaluation

The state of Bihar has so far witnessed three sets of regimes roughly since Indian Independence. The first phase (1951-1990) of the four decades belonged to Indian National Congress with minor interruptions in 1967, 1969 & 1977. The second phase (1990-1997 & 1997-2005) of 15 years, belonged to Janata Dal and Rashtriya Janata Dal respectively.¹ The third and the current phase which continue till date belongs to Janata Dal (United)-Bhartiya Janata Party alliance with minor disruption from 2013-2017.² During the first phase of Bihar politics (1951-1990), we see a fare participation of regional parties in state assembly election but their impact and influence were limited in the presence of dominant player like Congress party in the state. From the very first state assembly election held in 1951, the state saw the participation of 4 regional parties winning 50 seats with voting percentage of 13.4. In the next three assembly election held in 1952, 1957 and 1962 respectively, the regional party's participation decreases election by elections and in the 1967 state assembly election where for the very first time Congress Party couldn't form the government in the state, we see no participation of regional party in the particular election³. The number of National political parties have always been more than the number of regional parties in the assembly election of Bihar till 1990. (See table 3.1).

Table 3.1

Number of National and Regional Parties participated in assembly elections from 1951-2015, along with number of seats won by them.

Party/Year	National	Regional	Seat Won (National/Regional)
1951	11	4	265 /50

¹ 15 Years of rule have been included under one regime despite two different parties governed the state because in both the party Lalu Yadav and his wife Rabri Devi were Chief Minister of Bihar.

² By 'current date I mean 10/07/2019. The date I have finished my dissertation.

³ The first non-Congress Chief Minister of Bihar was from Jan Kranti Dal, which was not given the status of 'Registered (Unrecognised) party by Election Commission of India.

1957	4	2	248 / 54
1962	6	1	286 / 20
1967	8	0	272 / 0
1969	7	4	253/15
1972	7	5	291/0
1977	4	2	296/0
1980	10	2	289/0
1985	7	3	285/0
1990	8	5	264/19
1995	7	9	276/16
2000	8	12	123/178
2005 (Feb/Oct).	6/6	10/12	56/141- 73/159
2010	6	12	96/140
2015	6	13	80/155

Source: Election Commission of India.

Note: In 2005, there were two assembly elections held in Bihar.

The 1990s saw the emergence of regional parties in many state of India including Bihar.⁴ Janata Dal (United) & Rashtriya Janata Dal, the two dominant player in Bihar, also emerged during this phase and ruled out Congress from the politics of Bihar. The victory of Janata Dal in 1990 state assembly election not only resulted into Non-Congress government in the state after long time but it also saw the rise of regional party's participation and dominance in assembly elections after that. (See table 3.1). The second phase of Bihar politics saw the emergence of Janata Dal and Lalu Prasad Yadav simultaneously. While Janata Dal emerged as the leading political party in Bihar defeating Congress in the elections, Lalu Prasad Yadav became the Chief Minister, ending the high caste dominance in the state Politics. The Spilt of Janata Dal in 1994 resulted into the emergence of Samata Party and Nitish Kumar as a separate identity in party politics of Bihar. The split of Janata Dal is an important event for the current study to understand the factors responsible for the rise and growth of JD (U) and Nitish Kumar in Bihar Politics.

⁴ Regional political parties like SP (In U.P), RJD (In Bihar), BJD (In Orrisa), AITC- now a national party (In West Bengal), PDP (In J&K), JD (U) (In Bihar) etc. all emerged during 1990-2000.

This chapter is an attempt to examine the emergence of JD (U) in Bihar by making an evaluation of the factors responsible for the emergence. The chapter also deals with the ideological mooring of JD (U) and the implication of various policies and programmes under that ideology. This chapter further deals with the JD (U)-BJP alliance and Emergence of Nitish Kumar as the face of development in Bihar. The last section of this chapter defines the reasons behind the breakdown of JD (U)-BJP alliance in 2013 and formation of *Mahagathbandhan* in 2015 and again breakdown of JD (U)-RJD-Congress alliance in 2017 and return of Nitish Kumar in NDA.

Ideological Orientation of JD (U)

Idea is the main idea in the core of ideology. An idea can become an ideology only if it will get social acceptance. Thus the formation of ideology in all areas of political, social, religious and cultural is in accordance with this process. “The nature and character of a political party can be understood with making a references to its ideology because ideology that constitutes mirror of the core value of political parties are said to be most important ideological carrier and interpreter”.⁵ As a political party, the ideology of JD (U) is influenced by the ideology of Mahatama Gandhi, Ram Manohar Lohia, Jaiprakash Narayan and Baba Saheb Bhimrao Ambedkar. The party work on the principles of Socialism, Secularism, and Democracy. As a party JD (U) is determined to safeguard the unity, integrity and sovereignty of the country by taking inspiration from the values, ideals and traditions of Gandhian principles and independence movement.⁶ JD (U) under the leadership of Nitish Kumar have been formed⁷ and developed on the basis of the political legacy of ideas, ideals and values of great men of freedom movement. While Mahatama Gandhi gave freedom to the country, Ram Manohar Lohia and Jaiprakash Narayan showed the path of struggle to protect that freedom and Dr. Ambedkar defended the constitution to protect democracy. Nitish Kumar as a Chief Minister of Bihar under the Flag of JD (U) have been also influenced

⁵ See Ball, A.R (1977), ‘*Modern Politics and Government*’, London: Macmillan, p.260.

⁶ The ideology of JD (U) can be found here: <http://janatadalunited.online/Ideology>.

⁷ Here, credit for the formation and development of JD (U) has been given to Nitish Kumar because he has been the main face of JD (U) since the merger of Samata Party-JD (U) in 2003 despite Sharad Yadav was selected as the National president of JD (U).

by the ideas of Karpuri Thakur and have tried to follow his path so that the benefits of the government policies should reach to the last person of the society.

Janata Dal (United)

Janata Dal (United)⁸ was officially formed in 1999 after a split in the erstwhile Janata Dal. The party led by Sharad Yadav, Ram Vilas Paswan and J.H Patel formed JD (U) while faction led by H.D Dev Gowda formed the JD (S). In 2003, there was a merger between JD (U) and the Samata Party.⁹ The Samata party was formed in 1994 by George Fernandes and Nitish Kumar after a split in the erstwhile JD. Over the years, four major splinter have left JD (U) and formed new political parties in Bihar. In 2000, Ram Vilas Paswan left the JD (U) and formed a new political party called Lok Jan Shakti Party. This was the first split in JD (U) after its formation in 1999 under the leadership of Sharad Yadav. But after Nitish Kumar became the face of JD (U) since its merger with Samata party in 2003, the first major split took place in 2013, when senior Koeri leader Upendra Kushwaha left JD (U) due to growing differences with Chief Minister Nitish Kumar and formed the Rashtriya Lok Samata Party. In 2015, after Jitan Ram Manjhi was ousted from the Chief Minister's position, he left the JD (U) and formed the Hindustani Awam Morcha. Sharad Yadav who was not only the founding member of JD (U) in 1999 but was also elected as the president of JD (U) for three time in 2006, 2009 and 2013 had to finally leave the party due to differences with Nitish Kumar's decision to join NDA again in 2017. In May 2018, Sharad Yadav formed a new party called Loktantrik Janata Dal. Nitish Kumar became the national president of JD (U) in and since then he is commanding and leading the party flag in Bihar and in other parts of the country as well. Janata Dal (United) remained an important coalition partner of NDA and has contested numerous Lok Sabha and state assembly election in Bihar. After the merger of Samata party and JD (U) in 2003, the Janata Dal (United)

⁸ Janata Dal (United) is the main subject for the study of this dissertation which was formed after the merger of Samata party in 2003. The timeline for the study have been defined from 2003-2015. Hence Janata Dal (United) which was formed in 1999 under the leadership of Sharad Yadav shouldn't be confused with the subject of the study.

⁹ The current chapter which explains the factors responsible for the emergence and growth of JD (U), starts with the formation of Samata Party in 1994.

contested Lok Sabha election of 2004 in alliance with BJP and saw a massive progress in the number of winning seats and in voting percentage. (See table 4.4)¹⁰. The JD (U)-BJP alliance made history in the October 2005 state assembly election by forming government in the state under the leadership of Nitish Kumar. The rule of Lalu Prasad Yadav was challenged in Bihar after 15 years of his government by someone who started his political journey along with him in Patna University and parted away in 1994 due to differences in the approach of governance in the state.¹¹ The split in Janata Dal in 1994, not only led to the formation of Samata Party but also became an essential factor for the emergence of Nitish Kumar in Bihar politics that still remain most influential.

Split in Janata Dal: Formation of Samata Party

*“It is not possible to speak to you any longer, because you are not, to my mind, earnest about discussing serious or important issues. When we worked to elect you, we believed you would work to undo the corruption and misgovernance under the congress rule. Genuine workers of the party are demoralized and angry and alienated because you are not prepared to listen to them”.*¹²

The book, *Bihar: The Politics of letter or Bihar: Chitthiyon ki Rajneeti*, contains little known missive that Nitish Kumar wrote Lalu Yadav. From 1992 onwards Nitish Kumar was not on talking terms with Lalu Yadav. The letters¹³ written during that time speaks about the bitter relation between the two most influential leaders of Bihar. Nitish Kumar had also written a letter to Sharad Yadav, the then National president of Janata Dal about his intention to leave the party under such circumstances. Lau Yadav had promised Bihar a new dream during his inaugural speech in the Gandhi Maidan after taking oath as the Chief Minister of Bihar but he displayed little intention to deliver his promises. In his speech Lalu Yadav said *‘Ab koi bhrashtachar nahin hoga, ab koi beimani nahin hogi, yeh kasam hum khaye hain, naya lok raj kayam karna hai, JP aur Karpoori ke sapno ka Bihar banana hai, V.P. Singh ke siddhanton ka Bihar banana he,*

¹⁰ Before the merger of Samata party and JD (U) in 2003, both the party had contested Lok Sabha elections of 1999 in alliance with BJP separately and senior leaders (i.e. Sharad Yadav of JD (U) and Nitish Kumar of Samata party) of both the parties had held important portfolios in the government.

¹¹ While Lalu Prasad Yadav was elected as the President of Patna University Students Union (PUSU), Nitish Kumar was elected as the president of Bihar Abiyatran Mahavidyalay Students’ Union (BAMSU).

¹² See Sankarshan Thakur, ‘Single Man: The life and Times of Nitish Kumar of Bihar’ 2015, p.129.

¹³ The letters have been published by Journalist Srikant, in the form of a book named, *‘Bihar Chitthiyon ki Rajneeti’*.

lok raj laana hai, ek naye Bihar ka nirman karna hai... ('There shall henceforth be no corruption, no dishonesty, I have taken this vow, we have to build a new people's government, we have to build the Bihar of the dreams of JP and Karpoori, we have to build the Bihar of V.P. Singh's principles, we have to usher in the rule of the people, we have to make a new Bihar'). Nitish Kumar kept reminding Lalu Yadav of his promises to Bihar, about the socialism of Lohia and about the government that serves the interest of the people rather than to rule them but Lalu Yadav never liked these morals of good governance. In a meeting with the counsel of Nitish Kumar he said 'Power comes from vote-banks, from the people, what is this governance- governance you keep ranting on all the time? Are you going to teach me how to rule? Quickly enough, the reasons piled up high enough to become a wall between Lalu Yadav and Nitish Kumar. It began with the differences in perceptions over how the new government should rule the state but soon it became the personality conflict. Lalu Yadav during many meetings mocked Nitish Kumar as the Clerk, who knows only about reading and signing files which he considered as a useless bureaucratic work. He said 'we are politician, our job is to lead people, not to read files, leave that to the babus'. Lalu Prasad Yadav not only neglected the interest of the people of Bihar after becoming the Chief Minister in 1990, but he also didn't give much importance to the senior leaders¹⁴ of his party, as evident from the letters written by Nitish Kumar to Lalu Yadav. Since becoming the Chief Minister of Bihar, he was backed by strong support from his own caste and Muslims which resulted into the yadavization of party and governance that forced Nitish Kumar to part ways with him.¹⁵ The first incident that gave a hint towards the split of Nitish Kumar from Janata Dal was seen in February 1994 when Nitish Kumar agreed to join the '*Kurmi Chetna Rally*' in Gandhi Maidan. Nitish Kumar was fully aware that if he would climb the Chetna Rally stage, the split would become formal as days before the scheduled gathering, Lalu Yadav had conveyed a message to Nitish Kumar that if he would join the rally, if would be treated like an act of treason. 'Nitish No longer had to take decision, the decision took him'¹⁶.

¹⁴ Apart from many senior MPs who felt the same ignorance and insult as Lalu did to Nitish, among the seniors leaders were George Fernandes, Abdul Ghafoor, Hari Kishore Singh etc.

¹⁵ Kumar, S (2018), '*Post Mandal Politics in Bihar: Changing Electoral Patterns*', New Delhi: Sage Publication India Pvt Ltd, p.69.

¹⁶ Thakur, S (2014), '*Single Man: The life and Times of Nitish Kumar of Bihar*', Noida: Harper Collins p.144.

Nitish Kumar roared from the Gandhi Maidan ‘We seek our rightful share, not charity, a government that ignores our interests cannot be allowed to remain in power’.

The split in Janata Dal in 1994 led to the formation of Janata Dal (George), which was later named as Samata Party. At least 14 MPs, from Janata Dal, including three prominent Muslims parliamentarians- Syed Shahabuddin, Mohammad Yunus Saleem and Mohammed Taslimuddin- formed a separate group in parliament under the banner of Samata Party¹⁷. George Fernandes became the face of Nitish’s revolt against Lalu Prasad Yadav and was supported by figures like Abdul Ghafoor, Shivanand Tiwari, Brishen Patel, and Bhola Prasad Singh¹⁸. Despite being considered as the biggest challenge for Lalu Yadav in 1995 state assembly election, Nitish Kumar and his party couldn’t impress public of Bihar and secured only 7 seats in that particular election. (See table 4.3). In 1996 Nitish kumar decided to make an alliance with BJP to contest Lok Sabha election of 1996, which resulted into an electoral success for both the parties. See table (4.4). The coalition of Samata-BJP had challenged the charisma of Lal Prasad Yadav for next two assembly election but couldn’t stop him from making government in the state.

Split in Janata Dal: Emergence of RJD

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 quit¹⁹ 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, 1997²⁰. He was backed by 18 MPs out of 45 and 137 Janata Dal MLAs out of 167. He also conveyed congress to support his

¹⁷ Kumar, S (2018), ‘*Post Mandal Politics in Bihar: Changing Electoral Patterns*’, New Delhi: Sage Publication India Pvt Ltd. p.69.

¹⁸ Bhola Prasad Singh was the candidate who defeated Nitish Kumar in his first state assembly election in 1977.

¹⁹ Then Prime Minister, H.D DEV Gowda, was pressurising Lalu Yadav to resign to save Janata Dal- led government from public embarrassment.

²⁰ Kumar, S (2018), ‘*Post Mandal Politics in Bihar: Changing Electoral Patterns*’, New Delhi: Sage Publication India Pvt Ltd. p.81.

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. 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 received great support not only from Yadav and Muslims but also from the lower backward caste. The opposition's hope to get back into 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. (See table 4.3 and 4.4). 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.

Split in Janata Dal: Emergence of JD (U) & Samata-JD (U) Merger.

The emergence of RJD in 1997 and resignation of Lalu Prasad Yadav as the Chief Minister of Bihar was a significant event for the rise of two influential leader of JD, Sharad Yadav and Ram Vilas Paswan into the main stream of Bihar politics. Sharad Yadav was elected as the national president of Janata Dal after Lalu Yadav's resignation in 1997. The split in JD took place in 1999 when Karnataka Chief Minister J.H Patel lent support to the BJP led NDA government at the centre which was opposed by H.D Dev Gowda. The split resulted into the formation of Janata Dal (United) led by Sharad Yadav and Janata Dal (Secular) led by H.D Dev Gowda. The premises for the split was its opposition to National Democratic alliance (NDA) but Dev Gowda equally stayed away from the Indian National Congress at the centre. However JD (S) formed the first

²¹ JMM's 19 MLAs favoured Lalu Prasad Yadav with promise of a separate state in the form of Jharkhand.

coalition government in the Karnataka assembly election with the support of Indian National Congress in 2004. JD (U) on the other side remained a coalition partner of BJP in the state along with Samata party before its merger in 2003. Sharad Yadav, Ram Vilas Paswan and Nitish Kumar was given the important ministry in the central government led by Atal Bihari Bajpai from 1999-2004.²² The first major setback to JD (U) was given by Ram Vilas Paswan in 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. He later joined the Congress led UPA and became the Union Minister in the UPA government from 2004-2009. His party also performed well in the state assembly election of February 2005 and won 29 seats with a voting percentage of 12.62 (See table 4.5). Ram Vilas Paswan didn't support either JD (U)-BJP alliance nor RJD alliance to form government in the state which resulted into the assembly election of October 2005. The assembly election of October 2005 proved to be the election for the rise of JD (U)-BJP alliance in the state which still continues with a minor interruption from 2013-2017²³. The electoral performance of JD (U) have been explained in details in chapter 4.

An anticipated merger of the JD (U), the Lokshakti party and the Samata party failed to unfold in 2000 due to differences over the designation of president in the party. The Samata party wanted Sharad Yadav (then president of JD (U)) to step down from president position and offer the responsibility to George Fernandes, which was not accepted by Sharad Yadav in 2000. But in December 2003, the long anticipated merger of the JD (U) and Samata Party took place with George Fernandes then becoming the president of JD (U)²⁴. Sharad Yadav was given the responsibility to be the head of Parliamentary board of the new party. The new party adopted the arrow symbol of JD (U) and the green and white flag of Samata party, which was announced by then Samata Leader and Railway Minister Nitish Kumar in a press conference in New Delhi on Oct 30, 2003²⁵. George Fernandes in the same press conference held on Oct 30, 2003 said

²² Sharad Yadav – Union Cabinet Minister: Civil Aviation, Labour, Minister of Consumer affairs, food and public distribution

Nitish Kumar- Union cabinet Minister: Railways, Surface transport, Agriculture etc.

Ram Vilas Paswan- Minister of Communication and Information Technology, Ministers of Mines etc.

²³ During this period JD (U) contested Lok Sabha election of 2014 alone and the state assembly election of 2015 with coalition partner RJD and Congress, which was called MAHAGATHBANDHAN.

²⁴ See Lansford, T (2017), '*Political Handbook of the World 2016-2017*', Gulf Coast: CQ Press.

²⁵ <https://www.rediff.com/news/2003/oct/30jd.htm>.

that the merger fulfilled a “long-felt need”²⁶. Mr. Fernandes said there is a need of ideology in politics and for that purpose he would be in touch with such groups who are in the NDA or have gone away. George fernandes hinted at talks with TMC but denied that he had been in contact with Navin Patnaik, Mulayam Singh Yadav and H.D Dev Gowda. He also said that the Indian National Lok Dal leader, Om Prakash Chautala had attended a meeting but he was against a merger. Sharad Yadav in the same press conference said that “the aim of the merger is to strengthen the party and its ideology and there is no meaning in functioning separately”. Sharad Yadav said that “both the parties had contested elections together and there was a pressure from the people and party workers for the unification of like-minded partners to strengthen the party. The merger however met with objections from both the parties, including the former JD (U), parliamentary leader Devendra Prasad Yadav who plotted formation of a (JD- U Democratic), faction in the Lok Sabha²⁷. Justifying another split in Janata Dal, he said that he is following the path of socialist leader Ram Manohar Lohia, who had said: “Break and Purify”. Devendra Prasad Yadav and other dissenters however joined the RJD before the 2004 Lok Sabha elections, in which JD (U) could win only eight seats. (See table 4.7). The results of 2004 parliamentary election was very disappointing for the leaders of JD (U), as their party couldn’t make much impact against the charisma of Lalu Prasad Yadav in Bihar. RJD fought the 2004 Lok Sabha election as a coalition partner of LJNP, which separated itself from NDA after 2002 Gujarat Riots and secured 26 seats, as can be seen in table 4.7. On the other hand compared to the 1999 Lok Sabha elections, JD (U) and its coalition partner BJP lost in terms of both number of seats and percentage of votes polled in Lok Sabha election of 2004. (See table 4.7). In the state assembly elections of October, 2005 JD (U) secured majority with coalition partner BJP and formed the government in the state. In 2006 Sharad Yadav was elected as the president of JD (U) replacing George Fernandes, who had refused to step aside²⁸. In an inner party election, George fernandes was defeated by Sharad Yadav, who was elected as the president of JD (U) after he won 413 votes against fernandes’s 25²⁹. Sharad Yadav remained party president till 2016³⁰ when Nitish Kumar replaced him as the new

²⁶ <https://www.thehindu.com/2003/10/31/stories/2003103104371100.htm>.

²⁷ See Lansford, T (2017), ‘*Political Handbook of the World 2016-2017*’, Gulf Coast: CQ Press.

²⁸ Lansford, T (2017), ‘*Political Handbook of the World 2016-2017*’, Gulf Coast: CQ Press.

²⁹ <https://www.telegraphindia.com/opinion/by-george-he-s-out-i-have-never-seen-him-so-out-of-touch-with-his-own-party-men/cid/1024917>.

³⁰ He was elected as the president of JD (U) for three time in 2006, 2009 and 2013 and had to finally leave the party due to differences with Nitish Kumar’s decision to join NDA again in 2017.

president of Janata Dal. One year later, Sharad Yadav also left the JD (U) and formed a new party, LKD.

Coalition partner BJP:

Since the merger of Samata-JD (U) in 2003, the party has been successful in forming government in the state with coalition partner BJP except 2015 assembly election³¹. Even before the merger of two parties, the JD (U) and Samata Party in 2003, BJP was the coalition partner of Samata Party in 1996, 1998 and 1999 Lok Sabha election and Samata-BJP contested the state assembly election of 2000 together also. Similarly after the emergence of JD (U) in 1999 after a split in JD, the party joined hand with BJP to contest Lok Sabha election of 1999 in Bihar as a coalition partner and secured 6 seats in the particular election. JD (U) has not been able to form government in the state without the support of BJP except in 2015 state assembly election. The partnership of JD (U) and BJP in the state can be analysed from three different perspective. First, the mobilisation of caste factor, second the compromise of ideology with an agenda of development and last the acceptance of Nitish Kumar as the leader of coalition.

1. Caste Factor:

‘The phenomenon of casteism has been much more pronounced in Bihar than in any other state of India’³². The number of castes and sub-castes are not only very large and complicated but even the political assertion of each castes and sub-castes have also left an imprint on the political process of the state. Writing about Bihar, Harry W. Blair noted that although “Relatively poor by Indian Standard, it is by most measures of modernity, backward region in backward economy”³³. The Indian National Congress was dominated by the upper castes in Bihar till 1990. Twenty years before Lalu Prasad Yadav polarised Bihar’s electoral scene, Jayaprakash Narayan had already articulated the fundamental dictum of Bihar Politics. In 1974, he had said, ‘Caste is the biggest political party in Bihar’³⁴. After becoming the Chief Minister of Bihar in 1990, Lalu Prasad Yadav backed by strong support from

³¹ In 2015 assembly election of Bihar, JD (U) contested election with coalition partner RJD and Congress and formed government in the state.

³² Jain, S. K. (1989), “Caste and Politics in Bihar”, New Delhi: Commonwealth Publishers.

³³ See Hanry, W. Blair (1972), “Ethnicity and Democratic Politics in India: Castes as a Differential Mobilizer in Bihar” *Comparative Politics*, 5:107-127.

³⁴ See Jha, V.K (1996), *Satta ke Sutradhar*, Delhi: D.K Publishers, p. 172.

men of his caste and Muslims stared the Yadavization of the party and the government³⁵. ‘After Nitish Kumar formed the Samata party in 1994, the battle lines between the two camps, Lalu and Nitish were drawn, Yadav on the one side and Koeris-Kurmi on the other. In the political history of Bihar, for the very first time two rival camps were led by upper backward leaders after the formation of Samata party in 1994. Nitish Kumar led Samata party won only seven seats in the 1995 state assembly elections and the BJP won 41 seats and emerged as the principal opposition party replacing Congress in the assembly but couldn’t stop Lalu Prasad Yadav to register a massive victory in the same election. The JD got 167 seats and Lalu Prasad Yadav became the Chief Minister of Bihar again. The upper castes had supported the JD and Congress in the 1990 assembly elections, but when Lalu Prasad Yadav became the Chief Minister, he left no stone unturned to heap insults on the upper castes, when he allegedly said in 1992, “Bhura Baal Saaf Karo,” meaning “Remove Bhumihar, Rajput, Brahman, Lala (Kasyahthas)” and in 1996 he referred the Kurmi-Koeri community as Kukur (Dog)³⁶. A huge Kurmi Chetna Maha Rally was organised on February 12, 1994 in the Gandhi Maidan as the symbol of political protest and to show political might and strength. Nitish Kumar was reluctant to go to the Kurmi Chetna Maha Rally due to his aversion to caste politics but he feared that Kurmi will declare him as an outcaste if he does not stand with the people of his own caste at this time when Lalu Prasad Yadav was promoting the Yadavs in the JD. Similarly upper caste had virtually no place to go in the assembly election of 1995. The Samata party forged an alliance with the BJP for the 1996 general elections despite their ideological differences. The alliance of BJP and BJP became a symbol of anti-Lalu mobilization in Bihar. The decision resulted into the consolidation of Kurmi-Koeri support for Nitish Kumar on one side and upper caste support to BJP on the other which by then was being identified as the party of upper caste. The alliance of BJP-Samata was very successful in the next three Lok Sabha elections held in 1996, 1998 and 1999. (See table 4.4). Different castes and communities have been voting according to pattern in Bihar, while the upper caste generally had favoured the BJP and the JD (U) along with the Kurmi and Koeri, the Yadavs and Muslims, along with a section of Dalits have

³⁵ Kumar, S (2018), ‘*Post Mandal Politics in Bihar: Changing Electoral Patterns*’, New Delhi: Sage Publication India Pvt Ltd.

³⁶ Ibid. p.70.

supported the RJD, the Congress party fragmented the votes of Dalits, Muslims and the upper castes in few pockets³⁷. The support of caste and community to the political parties varied from election to election. During the early 1990s, the Muslim supported the JD/RJD but gradually it started to fragment to Nitish Kumar during the later period. (See table 3.4). Similarly the Dalit vote was divided between the RJD and BJP-JD (U) led alliance since 1996 and got consolidated more in favour of BJP led alliance in Bihar after the merger of Ram Vilas Paswan led LJNSP in NDA, as shown in table 3.5. The Kurmi-Koeri vote was always tilted toward the JD (U)-BJP led alliance in Bihar due to Nitish Kumar factor. The same was with upper castes who are intense supporter of the BJP. (See table 3.2 and 3.3).

Table 3.2

Upper caste vote for BJP-JD (U) during various elections (1996-2009).

Elections	% of Voting in Favour of BJP-JD (U).
1996 Lok Sabha Elections	77
1999 Lok Sabha Elections	75
2000 Assembly Elections	71
2004 Lok Sabha Elections	49
2005 Feb, Assembly Elections	63
2005 Oct, Assembly Elections	50
2009 Lok Sabha elections	

Source: Sanjay Kumar, Post Mandal Politics in India: Changing Electoral Pattern (2018).

Note: All figures are in percent.

Table 3.3

Kurmi-Koeri caste group vote for BJP-JD (U) during various elections (1996-2009).

Elections	% of Voting in Favour of BJP-JD (U).
1996 Lok Sabha Elections	69
1999 Lok Sabha Elections	71
2000 Assembly Elections	50

³⁷ Here, voting pattern of different castes and communities is taken after 1995 state assembly elections.

2004 Lok Sabha Elections	64
2005 Assembly Elections	40
2005 Oct, Assembly Elections	61
2009 Lok Sabha elections	62

Source: Sanjay Kumar, Post Mandal Politics in India: Changing Electoral Pattern (2018).

Note: All figures are in percent.

Table 3.4

Muslim vote for BJP-JD (U) during various elections (1996-2009).

Elections	% of Voting in Favour of BJP-JD (U).
1996 Lok Sabha Elections	69
1999 Lok Sabha Elections	71
2000 Assembly Elections	50
2004 Lok Sabha Elections	64
2005 Assembly Elections	40
2005 Oct, Assembly Elections	61
2009 Lok Sabha elections	62

Source: Sanjay Kumar, Post Mandal Politics in India: Changing Electoral Pattern (2018).

Note: All figures are in percent.

Table 3.5

Dalit vote for BJP-JD (U) and RJD during various elections (1996-2009).

Elections	% of Voting in Favour of BJP-JD (U).	% of Voting in Favour of RJD.
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1996 Lok Sabha Elections	28	31
1999 Lok Sabha Elections	44	39
2000 Assembly Elections	29	31
2004 Lok Sabha Elections	28	42
2005 Feb, Assembly Elections		23
2005 Oct, Assembly Elections	15	20
2009 Lok Sabha elections	29	31

Source: Sanjay Kumar, Post Mandal Politics in India: Changing Electoral Pattern (2018).

Note: All figures are in percent.

2. Ideology and Development: A parallel negotiation.

“The socialist leader Ram Manohar Lohia took the help from the Jan Sangh in 1963 to defeat the congress in a Lok Sabha by election in east-central Uttar Pradesh”³⁸. To Ram Manohar Lohia the fundamental requirement of that time was to defeat the congress and throw it out of power: ideology became secondary to that political necessity. Similarly for Nitish Kumar the sole objective was to liberate Bihar of Lalu Raj. Nitish Kumar failed to challenge the charisma of Lalu Prasad Yadav in the state assembly election of 1995, as his newly formed Samata party could win only seven seats in that elections. It was a massive defeat for Nitish Kumar and a bigger victory for Lalu Prasad Yadav as his party won 167 seats in the assembly election of 1995, which was 22 more than the last assembly election held in 1990. On the other hand though BJP could manage to win 41 seats in that particular election and became the opposition party in the assembly replacing Congress but couldn’t affect the winning track of JD in the state. As a result the Samata party under the leadership of Nitish Kumar and BJP fought the 1996 general elections as a partners in Bihar despite their ideological differences³⁹. The

³⁸ Thakur, s (2015), ‘Single Man: The life and Times of Nitish Kumar of Bihar’, Noida: Harper Collins Publisher. p.168.

³⁹ By ideological differences what I mean is the pattern of ideology followed by both the party in their orientation towards political and sociological mobilization through party structure and leadership following. While Nitish Kumar is considered to be a follower of Ram Manohar Lohia, Mahatama Gandhi and Jayprakash Naryan as evident from his personal and political journey, on the other hand the BJP is considered to be a party which promote the ideology of Hindutva and have been associated with anti-secular notion which is debatable and cannot be proved empirically. The rejection of Narendra Modi,

BJP won eighteen seats and the Samata Party managed to win six seats in the 1996 Lok Sabha election. Since then BJP-JD (U) have consolidated the mass support in their favour to form government in the state for 2005, 2010 and despite separation in 2013, both the parties came together in 2017 and is the part of current government in the state. “Many political commentators who summarized the electoral politics in Bihar in the past, simply in terms of caste-based voting, now concluded that the 2010 assembly elections were only about development and nothing else, as the people of Bihar, irrespective of their caste, voted for development work done by Nitish Kumar led JD (U)-BJP government”⁴⁰. The findings from the micro-level study conducted by CSDS indicated there was a shared perception of things having improved in Bihar during the last five years (2005-2010).

Table 3.6

Perception on improvement in Law and order situation in Bihar.

Categories of Crime	Decreased	Increased	Remained the same
Incident of theft	92	3	5
Incident of robbery	91	5	4
Incident of kidnapping	93	2	5
Incident of murder	87	5	8
Tension between religious groups	87	4	9
Tension between different castes	85	5	10

Source: Sanjay Kumar, *Post Mandal Politics in India: Changing Electoral Pattern* (2018). P. 210.

Note 1: All figures are in percent.

Note2: Bihar Election study 2010.

(who is blamed for Gujarat riots in 2002) by Nitish Kumar in various events shows his reluctance towards this type of ideology and leadership.

⁴⁰ Kumar, S (2018), *Post Mandal Politics in Bihar: Changing Electoral Patterns*, New Delhi: Sage Publication India Pvt Ltd. p. 180.

Table 3.7

Perception on improvement in medical facilities in governmental hospitals in Bihar.

Categories of Hospitals	Free Medicine	Facility for Free Delivery	Free pills for family planning	Free facility for Blood, Urine, and the like tests	Facility for free X-ray
Primary health centres	54	48	41	15	8
Government hospitals	57	63	51	29	23

Source: Sanjay Kumar, Post Mandal Politics in India: Changing Electoral Pattern (2018). P. 209.

Note 1: All figures are in percent.

Note 2: Bihar Election study 2010.

Table 3.8

Popularity graph of Nitish Kumar

Leaders	2000	2004	2005 February	2005 October	2009	2010
Lalu Yadav+ Rabri Devi	26	29	29	28	23	28
Nitish Kumar	5	22	24	43	60	53

Source: Source: Sanjay Kumar, Post Mandal Politics in India: Changing Electoral Pattern (2018). P. 211.

Note 1: All figures in are in percent.

3. Nitish Kumar:

“Just as Lalu Prasad Yadav could not have thanked L.K Advani and V.P Singh enough for Kamandal and Mandal respectively for his political rise, Nitish Kumar could not have thanked enough the retrogressive governance of the Lalu-Rabri Raj”⁴¹. Nitish Kumar has gradually emerged as a popular leader in Indian politics. He was the choice of merely 7% of the voters in 1995 state assembly election but gradually overtook Lalu Yadav as the most popular leader of Bihar. “In February, 2005, he was the choice of about 22% of voters which surged to 42% in October, 2005, while his rivals Lalu Yadav was at 16% and Ram Vilas Paswan a poor third at only 14%”⁴². Nitish Kumar became the Chief Minister of Bihar for the first time in 2000 but he had to resign due to lack of numbers to form government in the state. Nitish Kumar became the Chief Minister of Bihar after getting majority in the Oct, 2005 state assembly election with coalition partner BJP. He continued to be the Chief Minister of Bihar after getting majority in the assembly election of 2010 and 2015 respectively⁴³. “Nitish Kumar during and after his first tenure as the Chief Minister of Bihar, become the symbol of development not only in India but also outside the India and being called *Sushasan Kumar*”. While at one side Nitish Kumar has received praises for his model of governance in the state, on the other side he has been criticised for compromising with his ideology and often called as the political opportunist⁴⁴. He started his political journey with Lalu Prasad Yadav but separated himself in 1994 after the formation of Samata Party. Lalu Prasad Yadav in his co-authored book “GopalGanj to RAISINA: My Political Journey” have

⁴¹ Singh, S (2015), *Ruled or Misruled: The Story and Destiny of Bihar*, New Delhi: Bloomsbury Publishing India Pvt Ltd. p. 154.

⁴² Kumar, S (2018), *Post Mandal Politics in Bihar: Changing Electoral Patterns*, New Delhi: Sage Publication India Pvt Ltd. p. 180.

⁴³ In the 2010 assembly election JD (U) fought election with coalition partner BJP but after separation with BJP in 2013, JD (U) became the part of MAHAGATHBANDHAN and fought the assembly election of 2015 as a coalition partner of RJD and Congress.

⁴⁴ When Nitish Kumar had decided to break alliance with BJP in 2013, Narendra Modi in a rally called Nitish Kumar as the opportunist who had betrayed and backstabbed Jaiprakash Narayan, Ram Manohar Lohia and also people of Bihar for Prime Ministerial dreams. Similarly after resigning as the Chief Minister of Bihar to break an alliance with RJD & Congress in 2017, many political leaders including Tejsawi Yadav, Lalu Prasad Yadav, Anand Sharma called him opportunist and in the newspaper articles of that time have written him as the opportunist. <https://www.firstpost.com/politics/bihar-crisis-history-will-record-nitish-kumar-as-an-opportunistic-politician-not-as-a-guardian-of-pure-politics-3860417.html>.
<https://www.hindustantimes.com/analysis/bjp-the-big-winner-in-bihar-opportunist-nitish-kumar-will-struggle-to-explain-u-turn/story-nSSRygYvT3j3CB7XT2MuOP.html>.

dedicated one chapter to Nitish Kumar and called him ‘Younger Brother Nitish’. Lalu Prasad Yadav ended this chapter by writing Nitish Kumar as “A clever operator in power politics, Nitish always looked for the right opportunity to get into positions of power to pursue his self-serving agenda, he was and is, committed to opportunism, never to socialism or secularism”⁴⁵. He merged his Samata party in Sharad Yadav led JD (U) in 2003 and became Chief Minister of Bihar under the banner of JD (U) only but in 2017, even Sharad Yadav had to leave the party due to conflict with Nitish Kumar⁴⁶. Similarly Nitish Kumar broke his alliance with BJP when Narendra Modi was projected as the candidate of Prime Minister from NDA in the 16th Lok Sabha election held in 2014⁴⁷. The declaration of Nitish Kumar as the Chief Ministerial candidate in the assembly election of 2015 worked for Grand Alliance (MAHAGATHBANDHAN) but on other hand NDA’s decision to fight the election on Narendra Modi’s didn’t help BJP led NDA to win majority in the state. A survey conducted by CSDS on finding how voters ranked both leaders on various indicators, “Nitish Kumar did better than Modi on all five dimensions related to development, removing unemployment, stopping kidnapping maintaining brotherhood between forward and backward caste and maintaining Hindu-Muslim brotherhood”⁴⁸. (See table 3.9). But in 2017 he resigned as the Chief Minister of Bihar from MAHAGATHBANDHAN and joined hands with BJP to become Chief Minister again.

Table 3.9

Effectiveness of Narendra Modi and Nitish Kumar on various parameters.

Parameters	Nitish Kumar	Narendra Modi
Bihar’s Development	56	35
Removing Unemployment	48	38

⁴⁵ Nalin Verma and Lalu Prasad Ydav (2019), ‘*GOPALGANJ TO RAISINA: My Political Journey*’, New Delhi: Rupa Publications India Pvt. Ltd. P. 172.

⁴⁶ Sharad Yadav blamed Nitish Kumar to break an alliance with MAHAGATHBANDHAN and snatched the party which belonged to him as he was the founder of JD (U) in 1999.

⁴⁷ During Gujarat riots in 2002, Nitish Kumar was the Cabinet Minister in the NDA government but at that time he didn’t resign from his post to show his protest against the then Chief Minister of Gujarat, Narendra Modi which he eventually found a base to break alliance with BJP in 2013.

⁴⁸ Kumar, S (2018), ‘*Post Mandal Politics in Bihar: Changing Electoral Patterns*’, New Delhi: Sage Publication India Pvt Ltd. p. 239.

Stopping Kidnapping	53	32
Maintaining Brotherhood between upper and backward cases	45	36
Maintaining Hindu-Muslim brotherhood	51	29

Source: Source: Sanjay Kumar, Post Mandal Politics in India: Changing Electoral Pattern (2018). P. 239.

Note: All numbers are in percent. The rest are those who said “both”, “neither” or gave no answer.

Prof. Ashutosh Kumar in his published paper “Development Focus and Electoral Success at State Level: Nitish Kumar as Bihar’s Leader” have focused on Nitish Kumar’s leadership for three reasons. First Nitish Kumar, is a powerful state leader from a state level party with a national ambition receives much attention for his impressive electoral victories and have been widely credited for bringing about a turnaround in a state which was almost given a tag of ‘failed state’ or ‘Bimaru Rajya’. Second “the rise of Nitish Kumar like the case of Lalu Prasad Yadav have coincided with the emergence of two significant trends in state politics in contemporary India: Assertion of the newly mobilised and empowered lower/middle castes in Hindi-speaking states of North India (with exceptions like the majority of the upper castes in Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand) and the rise of states, state-level parties and leaders” (Kumar, 2013)⁴⁹. Third, “there is a critical need for a deeper realistic assessment of the leadership model of Nitish Kumar by using conventional parameters of politics rather than merely stereotyping him, as happened to Lalu Prasad Yadav, portrayed by the media as well as academics either as lower caste hero or a showman”⁵⁰.

⁴⁹ Kumar, A (2013), ‘Development Focus and Electoral Success at State Level: Nitish Kumar as Bihar’s Leader, 33 (2): 101-121.

⁵⁰ Ibid.