

Chapter- 4

Electoral Performance of JD (U) From 2005-2015: An Era of Nitish Kumar

“The political processes that had begun in 1990 offered a window for studying political reconfiguration marked by the end of hegemonic politics in Bihar but there didn’t appear any serious studies capturing the dynamics underlying this long-awaited political change nor did there appear any scholarly work explaining how far the political change or political reconfiguration beginning in 1990 kept its promises; its impact on corresponding changes in other aspects of life, and why even the newly reconfigured politics was giving way to yet another political reconfiguration”¹. However there have been many explanations of these new developments and periodic change in political process, some based on empirical evidence and others simply based on impression or personal association with the state affairs. This chapter is an attempt to understand and analyse the emergence and Progress of JD (U) in state politics through electoral outcomes from 2005-2015. The chapter explains the electoral politics of Bihar with reference to the electoral performance of Janta Dal (United) in the state. The study focuses on the state assembly election of 2005, 2010 and of 2015 in particular and Lok Sabha elections during this period in general. During this period many significant events took place in the state, which have been measured through various elections and their outcomes. The chapter has been divided mainly in four segment which starts with the Congress Rule in Bihar. Then chapter discusses the systematic decline of Congress and rise of Janata Dal in Bihar and emergence of Lalu Prasad Yadav as the Chief Minister of state. The assembly election of 2005, 2010 and 2015 have been explained in detail and through various events and electoral outcome during this period, the role of Nitish Kumar have been also analysed.

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

The Congress Rule:

Being the leading political party of Indian National Movement, liberating country from British rule, Indian National Congress became the natural choice for people to vote in elections after independence. The leadership of Congress was well known to people of the country. 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. 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. The congress party had been the leading figure of electoral politics in Bihar before the rise of JD. 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. Congress party, in the absence of organised opposition groups, combined with towering leadership of Srikrishna Sinha, the first chief minister of Bihar, and low voter turnout, enjoyed monopoly of political space². Congress was believed to be a party of upper caste 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.

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. SC (Ex- Untouchables) supported Congress because under the flag of Congress party, Mathama Gandhi fought for their dignity and status and incorporated many provisions in the constitution of India to uplift their socio-economic condition in the country in general and Bihar in particular. To ensure their fair representation in the central as well as in state legislature, reservation was given to them; provisions of reservation in other public sphere such as educational institution and public employment were also embodied in the constitution. All the measures were seen and propagated as a gift of the Congress to *Dalits*, who rallied behind the Congress³. Similarly a large number of Muslims also supported the

² Ibid.

³ Frankel, F & Rao, M.S.A (1989), *Dominance and State Power in Modern India: Decline of a Social Order*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press.

Congress party despite their low representation in the party structure as well as in the Ministry. Muslims loyalty to the country was always questioned after the partition. Their loyalty was suspected by many Hindus. Further, there were no major and viable political formation that could have been an alternative to the Congress. Thus, they had no other option but to vote for Congress in the elections⁴. As a results we see Congress becoming the mass political party in Bihar with the support of all social groups in various elections. Table 4.1 shows the Electoral performance of Congress party from 1951-1990 in the state assembly election of Bihar.

Table 4.1

Performance of Parties: Assembly elections, 1951-1990.

Party/Year	1951	1957	1962	1967	1969	1972	1977	1980	1985	1990
INC	239	210	185	128	118	167	57	169	196	71
JHP/JP	32	31	-/20	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
CPI/CPM	0/-	7/-	12/-	24/4	25/3	35/0	21/4	23/6	12/1	23/6
SP/PSP	23/-	-/31	-/29	-/18	-/18	-	-	-	-	-
JNP/JNP(SC)	-/-	-/-	-/-	-/-	14/-	-/-	214/-	-/42	13/-	-/-
SSP	-	-	-	68	52	-	-	-	-	-
BJS	0	0	-	26	34	25	-	-	-	-
JD	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	122
BJP	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	21	16	39
JMM	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	11	9	19
JKD	-	-	-	13	-	1	2	0	-	-
IND	14	45	12	33	24	17	24	23	29	30

Source: Election Commission of India.

Note 1: Selected political parties performance have been shown in the table based on their existence and influence in the state assembly elections of Bihar.

⁴Kumar, S (2018), 'Post Mandal Politics in Bihar: Changing Electoral Patterns', New Delhi: Sage Publication India Pvt Ltd.

Note 2: INC: Indian National Congress, JHP: Jharkhand Party, CPI/CPM: Communist Party of India/Marxist, SP: Socialist Party, PSP: Praja Socialist Party, JP: Jharkhand Party, JNP: Janta Party, JNP (SC): Janta Party (Secular), SSP: Samyukta Socialist Party, LKD: BJS: All India Bhartiya Jan Sangh, JD: Janta Dal, BJP: Bhartiya Janta Party, JMM: Jharkhand Mukhti Morcha, JKD: Jan Kranti Dal, IND: Independent.

The first challenge to the monopoly of Congress party in Bihar was seen in the year 1967, when Mahamaya Prasad Sinha became the first non-Congress Chief Minister of Bihar. Although in the mid-1960s country started witnessing political change in the form of various non-Congress government in different states of India (In 1967, Bihar being one of them), it was the year of 1977 when Congress lost its power in the centre which was a major shift in the politics of India. Congress not only lost its hegemony at the national level but also in large number of states, non-Congress government was formed with thumping majority. Bihar played a major role in the formation of both these non-Congress governments at the centre as well as in the different states of India. Formation of non-Congress government at the centre could not run for long period of time and due to internal conflict and split in the party structure, Janta party lost its power to the Congress again. Congress party regained its political surface not only at the centre but consolidated their position in the state assembly election of 1980 as well. While congress could manage to win only 57 seats in the state assembly election of 1977 in Bihar, the same party secured 169 seats in the next election held in 1980. 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 4.2) 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. “The defeat of Congress in 1990 marked the end of an era in Bihar’s politics which can be best described as Feudal democracy”⁵. 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

⁵Witsoe, J (2011), Corruption as Power: Caste and the political imagination of the postcolonial state. *American Ethnologist*, 38(1), 73-85.

of Bihar also virtually knocked the Congress party out of their electoral imagination after Bhagalpur riots.

Janata Dal Rule and Lalu Yadav as the Chief Minister:

The 1990s marked the beginning of the political domination of regional parties in many states of India including Bihar. The general election of 1989 set the stage for political transformation that occurred in the 1990s. While at national level, V.P Singh's Janta-Dal led National Front defeated Congress with the support of BJP and Left parties in General election of 1989, one year later, Congress was defeated in the state assembly election of Bihar by Janta Dal under the leadership of Ram Sundar Das and Lalu Prasad Yadav. The victory of Janta Dal 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. This in a way also hinted towards the beginning of OBC politics in Bihar after Lalu Prasad Yadav became the Chief Minister. The Politics in Bihar till 1990 was virtually dominated by one party, the Congress. The Congress party was dominated by upper caste in both the party organization and elected member to legislature⁶. Thus the power sharing among the different social groups was disproportionately in favour of the upper caste. But the beginning of 1990s had ushered a new era in the politics of Bihar, with declining influence of Congress which was so far the perfect choice for people. Yet, another important thing that took place was the mobilization of marginalized section of the society⁷. The Janta Dal under the leadership of Ram Sundar Das, Lalu Prasad Yadav, Nitish Kumar and Ramvilash Paswan etc. aimed at garnering the support of the backward caste, the Muslims and a section of upper caste in the state assembly election of 1990. The congress had suffered a major setback in the Loksabha election of 1989 and not only Congress lost most of the parliamentary seats in the election but it also lost its traditional support base- the upper caste, the Muslims and the Dalits. The Muslim detached itself from Congress following the Bhagalpur riots and demolition of Babri masjid in 1992. In both the cases Congress was the ruling party, in

⁶Jaffrelot, C (2003), *India's Silent Revolution: The Rise of Lower Castes in North India*, London: C. Hurts & Co.

⁷Yadav, Y (1999), Electoral Politics in the time of change: India's third electoral system 1989-99, *Economic & Political Weekly*, 34(34/35), 2393-2399.

the state during Bhagalpur riots and at the centre during Babri Masjid demolition. The Ram mandir movement and politics of Hindutva adopted by BJP in its campaigning shifted the upper caste support from Congress to BJP. On the other hand 'Mandal Wave', in the late 1980s had been sweeping over the country. Thus, the 'Mandalization' of politics offered the backward caste an opportunity to get united to capture power in the state politics.

Lalu Prasad Yadav and Nitish Kumar played a significant role in the 1990 assembly election' campaign. Both the leader finds their origin from student politics in Patna University and also was the hero of JP movement in Bihar. Though they found their political carrier under one umbrella (JD- Janta Dal), under one ideology (Socialism, Social Justice), later they chose different path due to difference in approach towards politics. During 1990 state assembly election, while Lalu Prasad Yadav was very open and vocal about perpetuating Yadavization, Nitish Kumar on the other hand was very reluctant to identify himself with Kurmi caste. In his bid, to consolidate his position in the state unit of JD, he nominated 100 Yadav as candidate in the 1990 state assembly election out of 270 seats on which the party fought the election. During the election campaigning, Lalu Yadav attacked the Congress pattern of upper caste leadership in Bihar and considered this as an important reason for the chronic backwardness of OBCs and Dalits in Bihar. He also promised to implement the recommendations of Mandal commission if voted to power in the 1990 assembly election. As a result the Janta Dal led collation emerged as the dominant party replacing Congress in the 1990 Bihar assembly election. (See table 4.3). Similarly, the OBC replaced the upper caste as the dominant caste in Bihar politics. The Backward caste representation increased to 34.3% in the Bihar assembly compared to 17.4% in 1985 and 43.9% in the JD. The share of upper caste in the Bihar assembly came down to 34.6% in 1990 from 38.5% in 1985, upper caste constituted 25.6% of the total MLAs in the JD in 1990 compared to 41.8% in 1985. (See table 4.2).

Table 4.2

Changing pattern of Bihar assembly from 1985 to 1995: From upper caste domination to OBC emancipation.

	Congress (1985)	Total % in Bihar Assembly	JD (1990)	Total % in Bihar Assembly	JD (1995)	Total % in Bihar Assembly
Upper Castes	41.8	38.5	25.6	34.6	16.1	21.8
OBCs	17.4	25.2	43.9	34.3	52.6	43.7
Muslims	14.3	10.2	9.1	6.2	9.2	7.1

Source: Post Mandal politics in Bihar: Changing Electoral patterns (page no- 73).

Lalu Yadav as the Chief Minister

There were three candidates for the position of Chief Minister after 1990 state assembly poll, where Janta Dal led coalition 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)⁸. Lalu 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.

“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. But I was never a follower of Lalu. I never wanted to be his advisor or his Chanakya, as many people believe. I found nothing in Lalu to follow”⁹.

Lalu Yadav sworn as the Chief Minister of Bihar on March 10, 1990 in the historic Gandhi Maidan in the middle of common people and JD supporters and not at the traditional Raj Bhawan. He was a person who didn’t like elitisms and considered it as politically incorrect. Hence soon after moving into the Chief Minister’s residence, he

⁸Kumar, S (2018), ‘Post Mandal Politics in Bihar: Changing Electoral Patterns’, New Delhi: Sage Publication India Pvt Ltd.

⁹See Thakur, S (2014), ‘Single Man: The life and Times of Nitish Kumar of Bihar’, Noida: Harper Collins. p. 111.

opened it to the public, attracting large crowds on the lawn outside the house¹⁰. These gestures earned him a reputation of being different from other Chief Ministers of Bihar. Soon after becoming the Chief Minister, he took a very strong decision to stop the Rath Yatra of Lal Krishna Advani and arrested him which made him the darling of Muslims community especially in Bihar. No other leader in the history of Bihar was outspoken in the support of Muslim. Though this action resulted into the withdrawal of BJP support to V.P Singh government at the centre and Lalu Yadav led government in the Patna. With the support of Left parties and independent MLAs, Lalu Yadav saved his government by winning the vote of trust in state assembly and not only became the champion of social justice but also of secularism. During the 1995 Bihar assembly election, Lalu Yadav was at the peak of his charisma. Despite separation with Nitish Kumar in 1994, he single-handedly led the JD to a majority of its own. In the assembly election of 1995, JD secured 167 seats out of 324. Nitish Kumar and his newly formed Samta Party, failed to stop the wave of Lalu Yadav in the assembly election of 1995. Due to a fragmented opposition and charisma of Lalu Yadav, JD secured a simple majority of its own despite getting only 28% of the total votes. It was a personal victory of Lalu Yadav, as he had achieved this feat even with heavy weights like Nitish Kumar being in opposition. The charisma of Lalu Yadav remained in Bihar electoral politics, even after 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 called RJD. By this time, Lalu Yadav had emerged as the undisputed leader of not only the Yadavs and Muslims but also a section of the lower backwards despite his name cropping up in the fodder scam. As pressure mounted on him to quit as the chief minister, he split the JD- its parliamentary party as well as Bihar state legislature party-leading to the creation of RJD in a convention held in Delhi on July 5, 1997¹¹. He struck a deal with Congress, CPI and CPM and also got support from JMM along with the independent candidates. He resigned as the Chief Minister of Bihar and made his wife Rabri Devi as the new Chief Minister of Bihar on the same day. The electoral outcome of the 2000 State assembly election was a setback for the NDA. In the 1999 Lok Sabha election, the NDA had notched 41 out of 54 seats in Bihar,

¹⁰Singh, A (2013), *Bihar: Chaos to Chaos*, New Delhi: Har-Anand Publications Pvt Ltd.

¹¹Kumar, S (2018), '*Post Mandal Politics in Bihar: Changing Electoral Patterns*', New Delhi: Sage Publication India Pvt Ltd. Pp. 81-82.

comprising Jharkhand and it was widely believed that days of Lalu-Rabri raj would end after 2000 state assembly election. But the voters of Bihar again made RJD the single largest party in the Bihar assembly and Rabri Devi the Chief Minister. Table 4.3 indicates the electoral performance of parties during assembly election of 1990, 1995 and 2000.

Table 4.3

Electoral performance of parties in assembly election, from 1990-2000.

Party/Year	1990	1995	2000
INC	71	29	23
BJP	39	41	67
JD/RJD	122/-	167	-/124
CPI/CPM	23+6= 29	26+6=32	5+2= 7
Samata Party/JD (U)	-	7	21
JMM/JMM-S/JMM-M	19	19	12
IND	30	12	20

Source: Election Commission of India.

“Your attitude towards the party, the government and democratic institutions is such, that there is no space or occasion for meaningful dialogue. The Janata Dal and this government are the results of years of struggle....it was a struggle led by such big leaders as JP and Karpoori Thakur but this government has belied all our expectations and has become the playground of power cliques around you”¹².

The above statements are taken from the letter written by Nitish Kumar to Lalu Yadav regarding his dissatisfaction with the approach of Lalu Yadav towards the government and party members. Since taking over as the Chief Minister of Bihar, Lalu Yadav’s quest for concentrating all powers in his own hand made him to ignore the discipline and organisational aspects of JD in Bihar. Lalu Prasad Yadav backed by strong support from men of his caste and Muslims started the Yadavization of the party and the government, so much that his close associate Nitish Kumar was forced to part ways

¹²See Thakur, S (2014), ‘Single Man: The life and Times of Nitish Kumar of Bihar’, Noida: Harper Collins. Pp.128-129.

with him. Nitish Kumar along with George fernandes formed another party named Janta Dal (George), which was later transformed into Samata paty in 1994 only. “It is a revolt against overlordship of Lalu,” Nitish Kumar said after splitting the party (Ansari, Farz, & Ahmed, 1994)¹³.

Samata/JD (U)-BJP Alliance:

Sankarshan Thakur in Nitish Kumar’s biography ‘*Single Man: The life and Times of Nitish Kumar of Bihar*’ writes that “after a massive defeat in the assembly election of 1995, Nitish Kumar started reading the different version of Mahabharata. He even read, a fictional autobiography of the lord Krishna called *Krishna ki Aatma Katha*, written by Manu Sharma in epic style across eight volumes presented by someone to him in 2001. The Nitish’s central takeaway from Manu Sharma’s work was not the struggle but objective was the key”¹⁴. Impact of these texts reflects on Nitish’s decision to form an alliance, first with BJP in 1996 Lok Sabha election despite his ideological differences with the Saffron party and second in 2002 when Nitish’s eye remained riveted on outing Lalu Yadav and claiming Bihar, like Arjun’s eye on the revolving Fish in epic Mahabharata tale, despite unspeakable horror tormented Gujarat.

The alliance of Samata party and BJP became a symbol of Anti- Lalu mobilization in Bihar. The decision resulted in to the consolidation of Kurmi- Koeri support for Nitish Kumar, along with the BJP which by then was being identified as the party of upper caste. The alliance was very successful in the next three Lok Sabha election held in 1996, 1998 and 1999. As can be seen in table 4.4.

Table 4.4

Electoral performance of different parties in Lok Sabha election of 1996, 1998, and 1999 in Bihar.

¹³ Ansari, J.M., Farz, & Ahmed. (1994), Requiem for a doomed party. India Today. Retrieved from; <http://indiatoday.indiatoday.in/story/latest-split-ends-the-janata-dals-national-relevance-and-may-prove-to-be-Lalus-waterloo/1/293690.html>.

¹⁴Thakur, S (2014), ‘*Single Man: The life and Times of Nitish Kumar of Bihar*’, Noida: Harper Collins. Pp. 180-81.

Years/ Party	1996	1998	1999
BJP	18	20	23
Samata/JD (U)	6	10	18
JD/RJD	22	17	7
INC	2	5	4
CPI/CPM	3	0	1

Source: Election Commission of India.

In general, people who even vote for regional party in the state assembly elections tend to vote for national party during the parliamentary election¹⁵. Nitish Kumar consolidated the non-Yadav votes along with the upper caste due to alliance with BJP and also secured the favour of a section of EBCs in the consecutive parliamentary elections held in the state. As a result the alliance of Samata/JD (U)-BJP was winning Bihar, elections after elections. In 1996, Lok Sabha election JD became the largest party winning 22 seats from the state and BJP secured the second position but in the next two Parliamentary election held in 1998 and 1999 BJP was the Party with the highest number of seats in the state. JD/RJD's positioning was declining in every election of Lok Sabha and in 1999 parliamentary election couldn't even secured the second position in the state despite winning the state assembly election of 1995 with the thumping majority. On the other hand Samata/JD (U) saw a massive improvement in its parliamentary seats from 6 secured in 1996 to 18 in the 1999. Though the results of Lok Sabhah election didn't help the alliance to form a government in the state for long time despite the controversial decision of the Governor of Bihar to invite Nitish Kumar to form the government in the state by neglecting Lalu Yadav as the leader of the RJD and the single largest party. Nitish after becoming the Chief Minister of Bihar for seven days in 2000 had to resign due to lack of majority in the assembly. RJD in a pro- election alliance with Congress, JMM (The party which was promised for the formation of new sate 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.

¹⁵Kumar, S (2018), '*Post Mandal Politics in Bihar: Changing Electoral Patterns*', New Delhi: Sage Publication India Pvt Ltd. P. 87.

The three election held in Bihar between 2004 to 2005 shows a different kind of results. In the parliamentary election of 2004, RJD and its allies managed to register convincing victory over the JD (U) - BJP alliance despite the performance of the state government under RJD regime was rated negatively. A year later, the same RJD and its allies got defeated in the assembly election held in February, 2005. The result was very similar to 1999 parliamentary election and 2000 state assembly election, where the party gaining the majority in the Lok Sabha didn't get the majority or highest number of seats in the state assembly election. The picture of 2004 and 2005, parliamentary election and assembly election respectively was just opposite. While in 1999 Samata-BJP alliance had lead in Parliamentary election held in Bihar but couldn't capitalise the winning momentum in 2000 assembly election. Similarly in 2004 parliamentary election, RJD led coalition secured the highest number of seats but failed to register a victory in the assembly election of 2005. "While the result of 2005 state assembly election was welcomed by those who opposed the rule of RJD under the leadership of Lalu Prasad Yadav, still a puzzle remained in the minds of many as to what changed between the two elections that led to the defeat of the ruling RJD which had just registered an empathetic victory in the Lok Sabha election"¹⁶. The puzzle was not very difficult for the people of Bihar to understand. The poor performance of RJD government during its rule in Bihar from past 15 years became one of the significant reason for the decline of its regime and rise of Nitish Kumar in the Politics of Bihar with a moto to end the Jangal Raj of Lalu Yadav from the state and implement the Law and order, bringing prosperity and glory to the state after becoming Chief Minister in 2005.

¹⁶Ibid.

The Election of 2005

After Nitish Kumar's Samata party won only seven seats in the assembly election of 1995, the Nitish led Samata party aligned with the BJP. The Janata Dal led by Sharad Yadav (and Ramvilas Paswan) with whom Lalu had broken, renamed the party as Janata Dal (United) and joined the Samata-BJP alliance. The Samata-JD (U)-BJP alliance became the part of the 1998 NDA government at the centre and many MPs from Bihar got important ministry. Before the 2004, Parliamentary election, Samata Party merged into JD (U), to consolidate their position in the state assembly election of 2005. Lalu Prasad Yadav led RJD finally lost Bihar in the assembly election of 2005, but nobody won. The election of Feb, 2005 didn't give clear mandate to any party or alliance. While RJD, won 75 seats, JD (U)-BJP alliance secured 92 seats, which was not enough to form government in the state. Ramvilas Paswan led LJNP, (who first separated from NDA after 2002 Gujarat riots and later with RJD before the 2005 state assembly election) secured 29 seats. But he decided not to support any party or alliance to form government in the state, as he proclaimed in Patna- 'I have the key to this government'. Nitish too was not much interested in running a government where people have not given a clear majority to him. He had the memories of 2000 state assembly election, where he had to resign due to lack of majority in the assembly. Though many backstage plans were going on to break away MLAs from LJNP to establish majority for Nitish but he was not ready for a government of Compulsion. Meanwhile president rule was imposed in the Bihar off which NDA criticised and went to Supreme Court against the decision. But Nitish didn't want the fractured assembly revived even if he had the numbers to form the government. Nitish wanted the fresh election, a clear majority from the people. This time he wanted a face against Lalu Prasad Yadav. He convinced Arjun Jaitley that 'People of Bihar want to defeat Lalu, but equally they want to know, who it will be after him'¹⁷. As a result NDA projected Nitish Kumar as the candidate for CM and sought the vote in his name in the assembly election of October, 2005.

The October assembly election sealed the fate to 15 years of the RJD rule in Bihar. The decline of RJD was signalled in the February election of 2005 and October, 2005 assembly election saw the RJD government being thrown out of power. RJD couldn't

¹⁷Thakur, S (2014), '*Single Man: The life and Times of Nitish Kumar of Bihar*', Noida: Harper Collins.

even become the second largest party in the Bihar assembly as BJP secured more seats than RJD. This was the worst ever performance of RJD in the state assembly election of Bihar, as can be seen in table 4.5.

Table 4.5

Electoral performance of Parties in the assembly election of February, 2005 and October, 2005.

Party	February, 2005		October, 2005	
	Seat Share	Vote Share	Seat Share	Vote Share
BJP	37	10.97	55	14.55
Congress	10	5.00	9	6.00
JD (U)	55	14.55	88	20.46
RJD	75	25.07	54	23.45
CPI,CPM and CPML	3+1+7= 11	4.71	3+1+5+=9	5.14
LJNSP	29	12.62	10	11.10

Source: Election Commission of India.

Note: Vote shares are in percentage.

The politics of leadership and personality conflict had resulted in total neglect of development in Bihar during RJD regime. There had been hardly any development in the state during the 15 year of the RJD rule¹⁸. While RJD was successful in consolidating vote of Dalits, OBC and Muslims based on their agenda of ‘Izzat and Security’, they couldn’t bring development and prosperity in the state during their rule of 15 years. People were not satisfied with only ‘Swar if not Swarg’ which Lalu claimed to have given to the poor people. People of Bihar wanted some development and rule of Law after 15 years of RJD rule, prompting the rise of Nitish Kumar. The alliance of JD (U)-BJP led by Nitish Kumar received huge support from people in the October election of 2005, with an expectation that he will bring development and rule of law in Bihar as promised in his manifesto of October assembly election. A large section of

¹⁸Kumar, S (2018), ‘*Post Mandal Politics in Bihar: Changing Electoral Patterns*’, New Delhi: Sage Publication India Pvt Ltd. P. 169.

people believed that Bihar would change under this government. While JD (U) became the largest party in the assembly, BJP secured the second position, strengthening its position and alliance in the state.

The Nitish Kumar led government not only came with huge support of people in the election but it also carried the responsibility to meet the aspiration and expectations. After becoming the Chief Minister of Bihar, the first thing that he did was to tell his council of ministers and top officers that political patronage of crime was a thing of past.

“Crime no longer pay. Criminals have extended their influence to the Chief Minister’s residence but that will have to stop. The message should go out that not only crime not get any protection, it will not pay to be a criminal”¹⁹.

Soon after becoming the Chief Minister, Nitish Kumar decided to turn his attention to governance, to conform development with restoring law and order in the state. H.C sirohi, senior civil servant, who was then home secretary, in his interaction with media recalled “I was sitting talking to the CM late into the night at the state guest house, shortly after he was sworn in. I asked him, ‘What you have promised the people? He said I have promised them nothing except that I will bring governance to their doorstep. And that was how the idea for the Aapki Sarkar, Aapke Dwar programme was born”²⁰. Rule of Law was one of the first priority for Nitish Kumar to establish in the state. He organised a conference on ‘Rule of Law in Bihar’ and invited people from his entire cabinet and selected legislators, Judges of Patna High courts, top officials of the government and police chief of all Bihar’s thirty-nine districts under one roof. He pleaded for speedy trails to the judicial officers, and ‘zero tolerance to the Police on conviction oriented investigation’. “Nitish Kumar had begun to demonstrate that the law would come down on the lawless, that the state would assert its authority”²¹. Close to 70,000 convictions were nailed down, in his first term as the Chief Minister of Bihar. Tackling law and order issue was one of the many problems that Nitish Kumar had to deal, along with Education, Health, Roads, migration, employment etc. On the education front, since taking over as the Chief Minister chair,

¹⁹See Thakur, S (2014), ‘*Single Man: The life and Times of Nitish Kumar of Bihar*’, Noida: Harper Collins P.194.

²⁰ Singh, A (2013), *Bihar: Chaos to Chaos*, New Delhi: Har-Anand Publications Pvt Ltd.

²¹ Thakur, S (2014), ‘*Single Man: The life and Times of Nitish Kumar of Bihar*’, Noida: Harper Collins.

he started giving Rs, 10,000 to girls of all categories after passing class 10th examination with first division as an incentive to continue education. Then, principal secretary of human resource department under Nitish Kumar's government, Madan Mohan Jha, would often tell reporters that 'our idea is to first bring children to school'. During that time over 25 lakh children in the age group of six to fourteen years were out of school. The Nitish government appointed 1.20 lakh teachers in its first batch and in its urgency to hire untrained teachers, however lost sight of mass scale favouritism in teacher's appointment. Lalu Yadav often criticised, Nitish Kumar's policy to recruit teachers based on percentage without taking any written test. Lalu Says:

*"It is a great irony that the Nitish government conduct written test for recruiting sub inspector and constable but chooses teachers on mark basis without any test. I had at least given them slates, Nitish has given them plates (with reference to midday meal scheme)"*²².

Despite many criticism on his educational policies and programmes, Nitish Kumar received praise for his schemes like Mukhyamantri Balika Cycle Scheme, Mukhyamantri Balika Poshak Yojana and many scholarship programmes for students registered in government school of Bihar. NDA government led by Nitish Kumar also received praise for their work on construction of Roads and Bridges. As a result from second year in his power, Nitish Kumar began to get awards after awards- 'Politician of the Year', 'Best Chief Minister', 'Leader of Most improved State', 'Gates foundation Innovation Award', 'Forbes Person of the Year' etc.²³. On stage in 2009, after receiving the award of 'Economic Times Business Reformer of the Year' in Mumbai he said, 'I receive this award humbly, but if you do not look at Bihar and don't invest in my state, I do not know why I should bother making the journey here again. He was the leader of a state which was called BIMARU state and hardly anyone from outside cared about. But it was Nitish Kumar's vision and policies that grabbed the attention of people and organisation within India and outside India, during his first tenure as Chief Minister of Bihar.

Salman Bashir, the High Commissioner of Pakistan wrote:

"The Bihar model of development is very impressive. This is a matter of discussion in Pakistan. There is a great interest in Pakistan about the work done in Bihar on the social and economic

²²See Singh, S (2015), Ruled or Misruled: The Story and Destiny of Bihar, New Delhi: Bloomsbury Publishing India Pvt Ltd. P. 174.

²³Thakur, S (2014), 'Single Man: The life and Times of Nitish Kumar of Bihar', Noida: Harper Collins.

front. We are very much impressed by the success stories here. The Nitish Kumar government had surprised others by registering a 14.8 per cent growth rate in 2010-2011, the state police had convicted over 90,000 criminals, the state government had constructed or repaired 1.7 lakh km road and brought down out of school children from 25 lakh to about 2.5 lakh”²⁴.

Nitish Kumar during and after his first tenure as the Chief Minister of Bihar, became the symbol of development not only in India but also outside the India and being called ‘*sushasan kumar*’. He received praised for his model of development and governance in Bihar from personalities like Bill Gates (Founder of Microsoft), Barack Obama (President of U.S.A), Amartya Sen (Noble Prize Winner in Economics) etc. His work have been appreciated by many contemporary leader of his time including Sheila Dixit, who said to CNN-IBN, at Indian of the year function that we “Have to learn the technique of good governance from Nitsih ji”.

²⁴ See Singh, S (2015), Ruled or Misruled: The Story and Destiny of Bihar, New Delhi: Bloomsburry Publishing India Pvt Ltd. 197.

The Election of 2010

An editorial in Times of India dated 21st October 2010 observed that a victory for Nitish Kumar could bring a fundamental change to Indian politics. Another term for Nitish Kumar as Chief Minister of Bihar could force a paradigm shift in the state's political trajectory and perforce make a case for development as a viable formula for electoral success. The Election commission on September 6, 2010 had announced the six phase election for Bihar state assembly. The division of seats were already confirmed by most political parties. JD (U) was contesting on 138 seats and its allied BJP managed to contest on 103 seats. On the other hand Lalu Yadav led RJD made an alliance with Ramvilas Paswan's LJNSP. Congress party decided not to make an alliance with RJD

& LJNSP in the state assembly election of 2010. While Nitish Kumar was hoping to ensure a victory based on his model of development and good governance in last five years, the RJD-LJNSP alliance was in a plan to cash the caste dynamics of Bihar politics. Congress too was looking to strengthen their position in the state by contesting assembly election of 2010 alone. Leading political parties released their manifesto and criticised their opponents during electoral campaigning before the first day of polling on 21st October, 2010. While RJD supremo Lalu Prasad Yadav led RJD promised to setup a "vikas sena" besides strengthening administrative units to ensure that the benefits of development reach to oppressed section of the society. Lalu Yadav also promised to support the Women Reservation Bill pending in Parliament, adding however that, his party will pursue our old demands for fixation of quota for women belonging to SC/ST, OBC and minorities on the basis of their population (Singh, 2013)²⁵. Lalu Yadav also criticised Nitish Kumar's led NDA government during his campaigning and called Nitish government has not worked for common people but for special people. Ram Vilas Paswan, who was the leader of Lok Janashakti Party (LJNSP), released the joint election manifesto with RJD supremo, Lalu Prasad Yadav in Patna. LJNSP leader promised to build a modern and crime free Bihar, if voted to power. He pledged to establish a real and secular government committed to work for the establishment of law & order in the state. The manifesto also promise to provide 10% reservation to Muslims who are educational and financially backward. Congress

²⁵ Singh, A (2013), *Bihar: Chaos to Chaos*, New Delhi: Har-Anand Publications Pvt Ltd.

party too promised to take effective initiative to establish social harmony and bring development in the state.

The ruling coalition partners JD (U) and the BJP launched their manifesto separately. While JD (U) released its manifesto on 18th October, 2010 in Patna in presence of party president, Sharad Yadav and Chief Minister Nitish kumar, the BJP manifesto was launched on 21st October 2010 by senior BJP leader Venkaih Naidu. Nitish led JD (U) promised to carry forward the development with justice. Nitish kumar also pledged to exert pressure on central government to give special status to Bihar, if voted in power for the second time. On the other hand BJP in its manifesto highlighted the achievements of NDA government and praised it received from great personalities like President Pratibha Patil, Dalia Lama, and vice president Hamid Ansari etc. Venkaih Naidu during the launch of party manifesto said that “It is not sufficient to turn around 15 years of jungle raj within a short span...This government lead by Nitish Kumar and Sushil Modi needs one more chance.

The results of both the 2009 Lok Sabha and 2010 Bihar assembly election did not surprise many, which were more or less on expected lines²⁶. In both the elections people of Bihar favoured Nitish Kumar’s model of development and governance and rejected the RJD-LJNSP alliance totally particularly in state assembly election of 2010. While JD (U)-BJP alliance managed to win 206 seats in the assembly election by securing 39.1 percent of vote, on the other hand RJD-LJNSP alliance could win only 25 seats out of 243 state assembly seats by securing 25.5 percent votes. Congress saw further decline in sharing number of seats in Bihar assembly after 2010 state assembly election as it could win only 4 seats with voting percentage of 8.4% as can be seen in table 4.6.

Table 4.6

Electoral results of 2010 Bihar assembly election.

Party	Seat share	Vote share
Congress	4	8.4

²⁶Kumar, S (2018), ‘*Post Mandal Politics in Bihar: Changing Electoral Patterns*’, New Delhi: Sage Publication India Pvt Ltd. P. 198.

BJP	91	16.5
JD (U)	115	22.6
RJD	22	18.8
LJNSP	3	6.7
CPI, CPM	1+0= 1	2.4

Source: Election Commission of India.

Note: Vote share are in percentage.

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 election were only about development and nothing else²⁷. Bihar's economic survey for 2010-11, released in February 2011 claims that Bihar highlights, "the parameters for state that is on the path to resurgence, not only on the economic front but also on the social front. The basic foundation for a functioning state- in terms of minimum facilities for education and health, good roads and bridges connecting villages with towns and law and orders has been established. Teachers, doctors and policemen have been appointed to fill many vacant positions"²⁸.

After getting desired mandate from people of Bihar in 2010 assembly election, Nitish Kumar attributed the victory to his government's hard work and praised the people that had voted for development and progress. He stated that Bihar had voted for change, this means a lot is still needs to be done. We have the trust of the people and work must go on. The state assembly election of 2010 in Bihar was considered by many as the beginning of a new phase in politics of the state. For the very first time women participation as a voters in the assembly election of 2010 was recorded more than the male voters. Nitish Kumar first thanked to the women of the state saying they have contributed more in the victory of the NDA government in the state. There are many other reason that supports the argument 'Assembly election of 2010 was the beginning of new phase in Bihar politics. The election not only saw a significant increase in the voter turnout (from 45.9 during 2005 to 52.8 during 2010 election) but also marked an end to caste based politics in Bihar as believed by many after seeing the massive victory

²⁷ Ibid. P. 201.

²⁸ Singh, A (2013), *Bihar: Chaos to Chaos*, New Delhi: Har-Anand Publications Pvt Ltd. P. 180.

of JD (U)-BJP alliance in the state. In this election JD (U) managed to win almost a required majority in the state alone by winning 115 seats out of 243. The required number of seats to form a government in the state is 122, of which JD (U) was missing by 7 only. The popularity and developmental policies of Nitish Kumar also helped the allied party of JD (U) in the state to secure 91 seats in assembly. Though vote share of the ruling coalition was less than 40% (39.1%), but was in itself a remarkable achievements as there have been few occasions in the past when ruling party/coalition managed to secure 40% of votes. Even at the peak of his popularity, Lalu Yadav could managed to poll only 35.5% in the state assembly election of 1995. The result of the 2010 assembly election was not only the continuation of JD (U)-BJP impressive victory from 2009 Parliamentary election but it was also the continuation of the decline of the RJD and LJNSP which had begun after October 2005 assembly election and continued in the 2009 Lok Sabha and 2010 Bihar state assembly election. While JD (U)-BJP alliance registered an impressive victory on 32 (JD (U) 20 and BJP 12) seats out of 40 by securing 38% (JD (U) 24.1 and BJP 13.9%) of total votes polled in the state, on the other hand the RJD-LJNSP alliance managed to win only 4 Lok Sabha seats (all four seats was won by RJD) by securing 25.8% of votes. Congress though remained in power at the centre but couldn't help its tally of seats in the state. Congress could win only 2 seats, even one less than previous Lok Sabha election of 2004, as can be seen in table 4.7.

Table 4.7

Results of Lok Sabha Election from 2004 to 2014 in Bihar.

Party/Year	2004		2009		2014	
	Seat won	% of Votes	Seat won	% of Votes	Seat Won	% of Votes
Congress	3	4.5	2	10.3	2	8.6
BJP	5	14.6	12	13.9	22	29.9
JD (U)	6	22.4	20	24.1	2	16.0
RJD	22	30.7	4	19.3	4	20.5
LJNSP	4	8.2	0	6.5	6	6.5

Source: Election Commission of India.

Note: Vote share are in percentage.

Before 2014 Lok Sabha election the picture of JD (U)-BJP alliance in Bihar was totally different. The two parties which shared partnership in the state government since 2005 state assembly election had to face ideological differences after naming Narendra Modi as the candidate of PM from NDA in the coming Lok Saha election of 2014. Nitish Kumar was not happy with this decision of allied partner BJP. On many occasions before 14th Lok Sabha elections, Nitish Kumar had stated that the BJP led NDA's Prime Ministerial candidate should be secular, a hint that he does not want Modi to be the candidate for PM. He Once Narendra Modi was named the chief of the BJP's campaign committee in Goa on 9 June 2013, and Rajnath Singh told a public meeting thereafter that his party and country were impatiently he looking forward to Modi's leadership, within a week Nitish Kumar called to quit the 17 years of alliance with BJP in the state. The NDA split had many prequels, started from the October 2005 assembly elections²⁹. In 2005, Nitish Kumar disagreed with name of Narendra Modi to be the star campaigner of NDA alliance despite losing previous two state assembly elections in the state. Defeat did not tempt Nitish Kumar to import Gujarat's rising star to see if he could add to the NDA kitty³⁰. Nitish Kumar had very different approach and ideas of how he wanted to govern the state. He believed that, anti-Muslim violence under Modi rule in 2002, was one of the significant reason for the loss of 2004 Lok Sabha election, despite good governance of Atal Bihar Bajpayee in the country. The Bihar Chief Minister never liked to share any stage or events with Narendra Modi despite being the coalition partner of BJP. Before 2010 assembly election in Bihar, during a national executive meeting of the Bhartiya Janata Party held in Patna, Nitish Kumar cancelled a dinner that he was to host for his allies from the BJP and refused to share a bread with Narendra Modi. His decision to return the Rs. 5 crore offered by Gujarat CM (which was highlighted as a full page advertisement of thanking Narendra Modi for the Rs. 5 Crore flood relief money without permission of Nitish Kumar, which CM, not only called Politically immoral but also a case of legal violation) was not well received in the BJP camp and ruling NDA in Bihar came under strain.

²⁹ Singh, S (2015), *Ruled or Misruled: The Story and Destiny of Bihar*, New Delhi: Bloomsburry Publishing India Pvt Ltd.

³⁰ Thakur, S (2014), *'Single Man: The life and Times of Nitish Kumar of Bihar'*, Noida: Harper Collins. P. 256.

The split of two parties on June 16, 2013 was again the beginning of new chapter in Bihar politics. The separation not only saw the massive consolidation of upper caste in favour of BJP but it also saw the support of OBC and Dalit to the saffron party in the state during Lok Sabha election of 2014. BJP along with its allied partner LJNSP led by Ram Vilas Paswan and RLSP led by Upendra Kushwaha managed to win 31 Lok Sabha seats out of 40 with combined voting percentage of 38.8 percent. The BJP alone won 22 seats of 30 seats it contested and saw a massive growth in voting percentage (from 13.9 in 2009 to 29.9 in 2014). The other two allied partner of BJP in the state also managed to establish their position in Parliamentary election of 2014. Lok Jana Shakti Party secured 6 seats out of 7 it contested with a voting percentage of 6.5, very similar to 2009 but saw an increase of 6 seats (in 2009 Lok Sabha election, LJNSP couldn't win a single seat) from its last election contested as an alliance with RJD. Upendra Kushwaha's RLSP also managed to win 3 out of 4 seats it had contested in the election. JD (U), which was the largest party in Bihar to secure 20 Lok Sabha seats with a voting percentage of 24.1 in 2009 parliamentary election saw a massive decline in sharing number of seats in the parliament and in voting percentage after splitting with BJP before 2014 Lok Sabha election, as can be seen in table 4.7. The RJD-Congress alliance won only 7 seats and polled 29.9 percent of votes together. RJD and Congress didn't see any improvement or decline in both the number of winning seats and percent of votes polled in its favour, as reflected in table 4.7.

The results of 2014, Bihar Lok Sabha election changed many discourses in the politics of Bihar. First it saw the massive victory of BJP in Bihar Lok Sabha elections and formation of NDA government at the centre under the leadership of Narendra Modi after Lok Sabha election of 2014 and one year later the Bihar saw the alliance of two rival parties for the upcoming state assembly election of 2015. One would have never thought that the two leader who trace their origin from same party, later became rival in state based on their approach and ideas to rule state, will one day come together to stop the Hindutva politics of BJP in the state. While many saw this coalition as a fear of losing the state to a party which remained as a supporting hand to JD (U), the others saw this as an alliance of secular politics.

The Election of 2015

“We have been trying to merge six parties for six months now. We have already accepted Mulayam Singhji as our leader and ready to accept the Samajawadi Party election symbols. But neither a merger nor an alliance has taken place. Perhaps, Laluji and I have different path to follow. Time is running out and I have to take a final decision on whether we should continue our alliance”³¹.

The above statement was given by Chief Minister Nitish Kumar after a meeting with Mulayam Singh Yadav at his Delhi residence before 2015 state assembly election of Bihar. There was a speculation of Janata Party merger including Samajawadi party of Mulayam Singh to contest election in the state. A close Nitish Kumar aide often talks of Lalu Prasad giving missed calls to Nitish’s ID caller landline number occasionally after the 2010 results. Nitish had said: ‘Maybe he wants to say something’. Nitish had responded to the missed call five year later³². The long suspense about the Bihar state assembly election of 2015 came with the JD (U)-RJD-Congress alliance, popularly known as “Mahagathbandhan” or Grand Alliance. The Grand Alliance pulled a stunning victory by winning 178 seats with 41.9 percent of vote in favour. This popular mandate gave Nitish Kumar a third term in Chief Minister Office continuously. On the other hand the alliance of BJP led NDA was totally rejected by the people of Bihar in assembly election of 2015. The NDA alliance was badly defeated and was restricted to 58 seats only with 34.1 percent of popular vote pooled in their favour. The independent candidates and smaller parties together managed to win 7 seats with 24 percent of votes in their favour. The results of 2015 assembly election in Bihar was totally opposite to what was expected seeing the influence of BJP led NDA in the Lok Sabha election of 2014. Just one year back, BJP and its allied in the state outnumbered the JD (U), and Congress-RJD alliance with massive victory in Parliamentary election but found themselves at bottom in the state assembly election. In the previous state assembly election of 2010, BJP was the alliance partner of JD (U) and won impressive number of seats to be the ruling partner in Bihar. While JD (U) had secured 115 seats in the election, BJP on the other hand managed to win 91 seats with 16.5% of vote share. BJP had similar expectation in the assembly election of 2015 also.

³¹ See Singh, S (2015), Ruled or Misruled: The Story and Destiny of Bihar, New Delhi: Bloomsbury Publishing India Pvt Ltd. P. 293.

³² Ibid. P. 306.

Based on their performance in Lok Sabha election of 2014, BJP drew their first impetus from its assembly wise performance in the state and was expecting 174 seats against 69 seats by opponents³³. Despite Narendra Modi taking the central role of campaigning in Bihar during state assembly election, BJP couldn't repeat the charisma of 2014 Lok Sabha election and Lalu-Nitish duo secured majority in the assembly election.

Lalu Yadav's RJD finished ahead of Nitish Kumar's JD (U) in terms of both winning number of seats and percentage of votes polled in the election. Despite contesting election on Nitish face as the candidate of Chief Minister of 'Mahagathbandhan' and his agenda of development, RJD managed to win more seats than JD (U). Both the parties contested on equal number of seats, while JD (U) could win 71 seats out of 101 contested, RJD on the other hand managed to win 80 seats. The congress party which contested on 41 seats managed to win 27 seats, being the third partner of Grand Alliance. The electoral performance of various parties in state assembly election of 2015 have been shown in table 4.8.

Table 4.8

Results of 2015 Bihar assembly elections.

Party	Seat won	Voting share
Congress	27	6.0
BJP	53	24.1
JD (U)	71	14.4
RJD	80	21.5
LJNSP	2	3.5
RLSP	2	3.6
HAM	1	2.9

Source: Election Commission of India.

Note: Vote share are in percentage.

³³Ibid.

There were many significant factors that led to the victory of Grand Alliance in assembly election of 2015. Other than the name of Nitish Kumar as the Chief Minister candidate for Grand Alliance, the issue of development, governance and leadership played an important role in the victory of 2015 assembly election. The debate over caste vs development remained influential during electoral campaigning. There was a clear consolidation of voters on caste lines behind one alliance or others in the assembly election of 2015 in Bihar. While NDA was supported by upper caste voters, the Mahagathbandhan was supported by the Yadavs- Muslims- Kurmis. While 84% of upper caste voters voted for NDA, 68% of Yadavs and 71% of Kurmis voted for Grand Alliance³⁴.

BJP led NDA contested election under Narendra Modi' name and didn't propose any name for the candidate of Chief Minister in the state, on the other hand Grand Alliance had agreed to fight election with primary face of Nitish Kumar as their candidate for Chief Minister. It would not be wrong to say that the state assembly election of 2015 became more of Nitish vs Modi. BJP managed their campaign with primary face of Narendra Modi and national party president Amit shah which was criticised by Nitish-Lalu duo and made "Bihari vs "Bahari" an issue of the campaign. The leadership of Nitish Kumar was one of the other reasons for the victory of Grand Alliance. His successive two term as the Chief Minister of Bihar saw development and establishment of law & order in the state which many political analyst believed influenced voter of Bihar to support Grand Alliance. Narendra Modi's comment on problem in Nitish Kumar's DNA also raised the issue of Bihar's dignity and respect. Nitish Kumar was rated much higher than any other name for Chief Minister Race in the study of CSDS conducted before 2015 assembly elections. While 40% favoured Nitish Kumar as the Chief Minister of Bihar, Sushil Modi was favoured by 14% and Lalu Yadav by 7% (Kumar, 2018, pp. 238). The Grand Alliance under the leadership of Nitish Kumar, being the Chief Minister of Bihar and Tejsawi Yadav the Deputy Chief Minister took the responsibility to govern the state under common minimum programme.

³⁴Kumar, S (2018), '*Post Mandal Politics in Bihar: Changing Electoral Patterns*', New Delhi: Sage Publication India Pvt Ltd.

But the Journey of Grand Alliance in Bihar couldn't last long and in the summer of 2017, Nitish Kumar decided to resign as the Chief Minister of Bihar and separated himself from 'Mahagathbandhan'. Though within twenty four hour of his resignation he again took the oath as the Chief Minister of Bihar after making an alliance with the old partner BJP in the state. While the charges of corruption followed by raids against Tejashwi Yadav and other members of Lalu Yadav turned to be the final point of breaking the alliance between them, it is also true that relations between them had been less than cordial ever since they formed the government together³⁵. Even before the formation of Grand Alliance, two parties found disagreement on several issue, one of them was to include Jitin Ram Manjhi's HAM in the Grand Alliance to which Nitish disagreed and left Lalu Yadav unpleasant. The Bihar unit of Congress had succeeded in convincing the Central high command about preferring Nitish over Lalu because of the former's development was also unpleasant to Lalu Yadav before the elections in the state. In one of the rally said "We have attacked each other so much in the past but we have found a meeting ground now by matching our qualities. It is I who made Nitish Chief Minister after BJP left him, it is I who have promised to make him Chief Minister again"³⁶. Nitish knew the internal suffering of Lalu Prasad Yadav while projecting him as the CM candidate of Mahagathbandhan. After forming government in the state the two parties found many differences on various issues ranging from the appointment to legislation to policy formulation and implementations. On the matter of Sharabbandi the two coalition partner had different stands. Similarly when RJD leader Shahbuddin was released on bail and issued statements criticizing Nitish Kumar, it was not so pleasant for the supporters of JD (U) in the state. The two of Nitish Kumar's widely acclaimed traits- honesty and integrity are turing out to be a liability for him. In order to uphold his honest image, he ended up compromising on Secularism when he first decided to contest election with BJP as a coalition partner in the state in 1996 and later he formed government in the state with coalition partners like RJD and Congress which he always had blamed for leading the state in turmoil, he compromised with his integrity too. "What Nitish Kumar failed to realize was that his image as an honest leader might have got some boost nationally but having formed the government

³⁵Ibid. P. 254.

³⁶Singh, S (2015). Ruled or Misruled: The Story and Destiny of Bihar, New Delhi: Bloomsburry Publishing India Pvt Ltd.

in alliance with the BJP within hours of breaking the alliance with the RJD would also make him a leader of opportunity”³⁷ .

³⁷Kumar, S (2018), '*Post Mandal Politics in Bihar: Changing Electoral Patterns*', New Delhi: Sage Publication India Pvt Ltd.