

**The First Post-Bifurcation Parliamentary Election (2004) in
Bihar and Jharkhand: A Comparative Study**

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Binoy Shanker Prasad, PhD

United Bihar was the second largest province of India. Endowed with natural resources, it was roughly as large as Germany, as populated as France and as impoverished as any sub-Saharan country in Africa. A new province called Jharkhand was carved out of Bihar by the end of 2000 which covered almost entire industrialized area and the land with sub-ground resources like coal, mica and other minerals. Bihar was, therefore, left amputated and bereft of sources of employment. Agriculture, the main source of livelihood, too depended on the vagaries of nature like flood, draught or cold-wave.

In 2004 general (federal) election to the Lower House of Parliament (the Lok Sabha) which elected a coalition government led by the Congress, Bihar and Jharkhand showed different election trends. In Bihar, the ruling state government party, the Rashtriya Janata Dal (the RJD) and its allies won 29 of 40 seats contested, whereas in Jharkhand, the opposition Congress party-led alliance won 13 out of 14 Lok Sabha seats against the Bharatiya Janata Party (the BJP). The voters of Bihar did not express their anti-incumbency sentiments against their state government whereas the voters in Jharkhand did vote against the BJP-led government both in the state and the center. The verdict, therefore, was against the pro-Hindu BJP government in both the states: Bihar and Jharkhand. Shifting social alliance at the local level, failure of the BJP to make its impact in rural areas and the limits of its 'India Shining' slogan were among the reasons for its electoral set back. The following paper takes up a comparative study of the electoral behavior of the two states in 2004 parliamentary election¹.

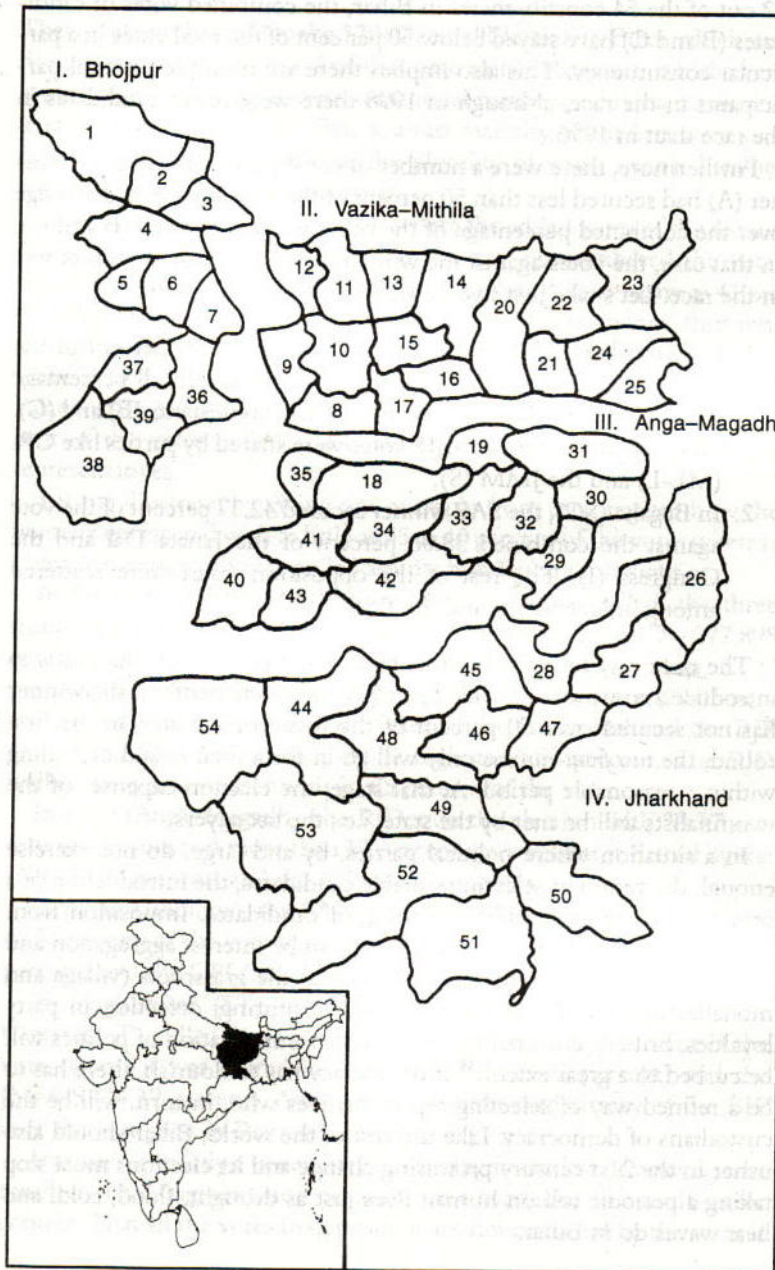
Understanding the state by lingo-geographical region

The Jharkhand region having been carved out as a separate state, Bihar province is left with primarily three regions recognized by their geography and dialect: Bhojpur, Vazika-Mithila, and Anga-Magadh. This kind of a demarcation, although unofficial, makes the study easier (see the map).

The Bhojpur region-longitudinal west- consists of 11 parliamentary (Lok Sabha) constituencies: Bagaha (SC), Bettiah, Motihari, Gopalganj, Siwan, Maharajganj, Chapra, Arrah, Buxur, Sasaram (SC), and Bikramganj. In brackets SC and ST means constituencies reserved for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes.

The north-eastern region of Vazika-Mithila, which borders with Nepal and West Bengal, covers 16 Lok Sabha constituencies: Hajipur (SC), Vaishali, Muzaffarpur, Sitamarhi, Sheohar, Madhubani, Jhanjharpur, Darbhanga, Rosera (SC), Samastipur, Saharsa, Madhepura, Araria (SC), Kishanganj, Purnea, and Katihar.

The central part of Bihar along the river Ganga is Anga-Magadh region which includes Barh, Balia, Banka, Bhagalpur, Khagaria, Monghyr, Begusarai, Nalanda, Patna, Aurangabad, Jehanabad, Nawada (SC) and Gaya (SC) Lok Sabha constituencies.



Source: Binoy Shanker Prasad, "Split the Votes and Win the Election: An Analysis of the 12th Lok Sabha Election in Bihar" in Ramashray Roy and Paul Wallace (eds.), *Indian Politics and the 1998 Election: Regionalism, Hindutva and State Politics* (New Delhi: Sage Publications, 1999), p. 154

Alliance formation

The two major alliances formed during the 1999 Lok Sabha election: the NDA (National Democratic Alliance) and the UPA (United Progressive Alliance) continued to exist and were the major players. The NDA consisted of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and the Janata Dal (United) and the UPA had the Indian National Congress, the Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD), National Congress Party (NCP) and the Communist Party of India (Marxist) as major constituents. The BJP, a right-of-the centre Hindu-first party, was aligned with a left-of-the centre democratic socialist faction of the former Janata Party (United). The BJP mainly represented the urban nationalist-tradesmen and upper caste people whereas the support base of the JD (U) is provided by a combination of the OBCs (Other Backward Castes) primarily Koeris and Kurmis. On the other side, the Congress party led by an Italian-born widow of an assassinated Prime Minister could not claim to have represented a specific social group. Formerly, the Congress was a mainstream umbrella party which could broker an alliance between the *harijans* (the former untouchables, also called *dalits*), the Muslims and the high caste Brahmans. But that configuration changed after the late-80s following the emergence of the BJP and the upwardly mobile middle peasantry castes. In Bihar the Congress, although a national party, had to reconcile as a junior partner to the state-level RJD led by Lalu Yadav. The RJD also represented the OBCs but mainly the Yadav faction of it. Ever since the Muslims in Bihar realized they had received a raw deal from the Congress, they switched their loyalty to the RJD.

Lok Jan Shakti Party as an alliance partner

Another leader of repute from Bihar, Ram Vilas Paswan, was also a member of the JD (U) and the NDA in 1999. Over the decades, he has built up his image as a formidable leader of the harijans (dalits) in Bihar, particularly of his own caste, Dusadh. After 1999 election, he served as a cabinet minister in the NDA administration. However, he fell out from the BJP-led alliance on policy issues (mainly the BJP-led federal government's attitude towards the communal riots in Gujarat) and formed a splinter group, Lok Jan Shakti National Socialist Party (LJNSP), in the parliament. When the 2004 election approached, Ram Vilas Paswan was co-opted by Lalu Yadav and the LJNSP became a constituent of the UPA for the forthcoming election. In the context of Bihar, this realignment of social factions amounted to a major shift. A majority of the leading factions of the OBCs, the Yadavs, the Muslims and now the harijans all came on the side of Lalu Yadav. The CPI (M) and the National Congress Party (NCP), a breakaway group of the Congress party, were already electoral partners of the RJD.

The CPI, which could not be accommodated in the anti-NDA alliance, formed a third front, as in previous election, with small parties like Revolutionary Socialist Party (RSP) and others. The parties with following in the neighboring Uttar Pradesh also made their presence in the Lok Sabha election of Bihar. They were Socialist Party (SP) of Mulayam Singh Yadav and Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) of Kanshi Ram or Maya Devi fame. Both the parties have distinct following among the Yadavs and the dalits respectively.

However, they have not been able to sway their counterparts in Bihar very much. Only at some places, their candidates have played the role of spoilers. The two parties have also, in the process, incurred the displeasure of Lalu Yadav and Ram Vilas Paswan who are established leaders of the Yadavs and the dalits. The two leaders frown upon the external parties gnawing at their support base. It is an interesting aspect of state politics in this

region that the parties very much influential in neighboring states could not make a noticeable dent in Bihar politics. The same is true with the CPI (M) which has had its government in neighboring West Bengal for three decades and yet it didn't command any significant influence in Bihar or Jharkhand. In action, their role seemed to have been taken over by the far left Marxist Communists, known as CPI (ML)-L.

Ticket Distribution or Allocation of Seats

The United Progressive Alliance (UPA)

Just as in previous elections, Lalu Yadav was the main distributor of tickets not only to his party men but also to the alliance partners like the Congress and the LJNSP. Like a good strategist, however, he kept the caste and the 'win' factor at the back of his mind. He conceded only four spots to the Congress absolutely essential: two went to the political families (a daughter of former central minister Jagjivan Ram and a son of former chief minister of Bihar Satyendra Narayan Singh), one to a Muslim Congress leader from Madhubani, Dr. Shakeel Ahmad and one to a lady candidate from Begusarai, Krishna Sahi, traditionally a seat held by a Bhumihar. Out of eight seats given to LJNSP, two went Ram Vilas Paswan and his brother, Ramchandra Paswan and two went to people with known criminal background, Suraj Singh (Balua) and Rajesh Ranjan aka Pappu Yadav (Purnea).

The United Progressive Alliance (UPA): Parties, Candidates and the Constituencies:

Rashtriya Janata Dal (26): Kanti Singh (Arrah), Matur Rahman (Bettiah), Ram Prasad Singh (Bikramganj), Shivanand Tiwari (Buxar), Lalu Yadav (Chapra), Anirudh Prasad, aka Sadhu Yadav (Gopalganj), Jitendra Swami (Maharajganj), Akhilesh Prasad Singh (Motihari), M. A. A. Fatmi (Darbhanga), Devendra Prasad Yadav (Jhanjharpur), Taslimuddin (Kishanganj), Lalu Yadav (Madhepura), Bhagwanlal Sahni (Muzaffarpur), Mohammad Shahabuddin (Siwan), Alok Kumar Mehta (Samastipur), Sitaram Singh (Sheohar), Sitaram Yadav (Sitamarhi), Raghubansh Prasad Singh (Vaishali), Giridhari Yadav (Banka), Vijay Krishna (Barh), Rajesh Kumar Manjhi (Gaya SC), Ganesh Prasad Singh (Jahanabad), Rabindra Kumar Rana (Khagaria), Virchandra Paswan (Nawada SC), Ram Kripal Yadav (Patna), J. P. N. Yadav (Monghyr)

Congress Party (4): Mira Kumar (Sasaram), Dr Shakil Ahmad (Madhubani), Nikhil Kumar (Aurangabad), Krishna Sahi (Begusarai)

Communist Party of India (Marxist) (1): Subodh Ray (Bhagalpur)

National Congress Party (1): Tariq Anwar (Katihar)

Lok Janshakti National Socialist Party (8): Hiralal Ram (Bagaha SC), Ramsevak Hajari (Araria SC), Ram Vilas Paswan (Hajipur SC), Ramchandra Paswan (Rosera SC), Ranjeeta Ranjan (Saharsa), Suraj Singh, aka Suraj Bhan Singh (Balua), Rajesh Ranjan, aka Pappu Yadav (Purnea), Dr Kumar Pushpanjay (Nalanda)

One LJNSP candidate, Dr. Kumar Pushpanjay was fielded against formidable Nitish Kumar of JD (U) in Nalanda and two went to the candidates for the reserved Scheduled Caste (SC) constituencies of Bagaha and Araria. Lalu also left Bhagalpur for his caste man, Subodh Ray of the CPI (M). Lalu had earlier worked for him in the constituency persuading other caste men to leave the field for Subodh Ray. But he was pitted against a major state level BJP leader, Sushil Modi and had a little chance of winning. Katihar Lok Sabha constituency was left for Tariq Anwar, a senior leader of the National Congress Party (NCP). The NCP is an offshoot of the Congress party which came out under the leadership of Sharad Pawar. Later, Sharad Pawar became an alliance partner of the Congress, the party he defected from. Obviously, many aspirants in the allied parties were left out and they held grudge against Lalu.

Out of his own share of 26 seats, he fielded himself from two places, Chapra and Madhepura, gave 5-7 seats to the forward castes, 3-4 to the Muslims, two to the reserved SC constituencies and the rest to the Other Backward Castes (OBCs), the main component being the Yadavs. Under Lalu Yadav's dispensation, the political (caste) landscape of Bihar which had changed against the forward castes became much more formalized. The Congress party from where a challenge to Lalu's supremacy could have been expected remained subdued and worried keeping itself alive under Lalu's wings.

The National Democratic Alliance (NDA)

Nitish Kumar was almost a mirror image of Lalu Yadav on his own side. Although far more suave and polite, this engineer-turned politician asserted his own unquestioned leadership in his only alliance with the BJP. He settled for 24 seats to his own JD (U) and 16 to the BJP.

The National Democratic Alliance (NDA): Parties, Candidates and Constituencies:

Janata Dal (United) (24): Ashok Kumar Verma (Bhojpur), Kailash Baitha (Bagaha SC), Ajit Kumar Singh (Bikramganj), Prabhu Dayal Singh (Gopalganj), Prabhu Nath Singh (Maharajganj), Chhedi Paswan (Hajipur SC), Jagannath Mishra (Jhanjharpur), Sharad Yadav (Madhepura), George Fernandes (Muzaffarpur), Dashai Chaudhary (Rosera SC), Dinesh Chand Yadav (Saharsa), Ramchandra Singh (Samastipur), Nawal Kishore Rai (Sistamarhi), Dr Harendra Kumar (Vaishali), Sushil Kumar Singh (Aurangabad), Ramjivan Singh (Balua), Digvijay Kumar Singh (Banka), Nitish Kumar (Barh), Rajiv Ranjan Singh (Begusarai), Arun Kumar (Jahanabad), Renu Kumari (Khagaria), Dr Monazir Hassan (Monghyr), Nitish Kumar (Nalanda), One name and place missing.

Bharatiya Janata Party (16): Dr Madan Prasad Jaisawal (Bettiah), Lal Muni Chaube (Buxar), Rajiv Pratap Rudy (Chapra), Radha Mohan Prasad Singh (Motihari), Muni Lall (Sasaram SC), Sukdeo Paswan (Araria SC), Kirti Azad (Darbhanga), Nikhil Kumar Chaudhary (Katihar), Syed Shahnawaz Hussain (Kishanganj), Hukumdeo Narain Yadav (Madhubani), Uday Singh (Purnea), Muhammad Anwarul Haq (Sheohar), Sushil Kumar Modi (Bhagalpur), Balbir Chand (Gaya SC), Sanjay Paswan (Nawada SC), C. P. Thakur (Patna)

The BJP, unlike in Jharkhand, allowed the JD (U) the leader's role. Nitish moved George Fernandes, his own party senior, to Muzaffarpur to allow him-self a run from two of his favored places-- Nalanda and Barh.

On NDA's side there was a remarkable scarcity of candidacy from women and Muslim minorities: only one woman (Renu Kumari, Khagaria) and one Muslim (Dr. Monazir Hassan, Monghyr) were fielded by the JD (U) and two Muslims (Syed Shahnawaz Hussain, Kishenganj and Muhammad Anwarul Haq, Sheohar) by the BJP. Although JD (U) is also a party of OBCs, its list of candidates reflected a fair balance of forward and backward castes. Along with its alliance partner BJP, the JD (U) was able to give representation to practically every segment of the Bihari society. Since the caste background of every candidate is not known, a determination of percentage-wise allocation of tickets is not attempted. One general observation about the leadership of Nitish Kumar was that his vote base came from his own Koeri-Kurmi caste-men, but he kept the upper caste, particularly Bhumihars in the Ang-Magadh region, well-served. He realized the significance of the socio-political clout of the upper castes as against the OBCs and, therefore, guarded their interest. In the process, he was viewed more as a leader of the upper castes than of the OBCs. To paraphrase a quote, politics, after all, is an art of taking votes from the poor and funds from the rich by assuring each against the other. Nitish played this strategy very well.

The battle groups formed and lines drawn, the state went in for poll for which is a great administrative undertaking in India.

Election Preparation

Sometimes election season in Bihar appeared like preparation for a combat operation: administration and police officers in the Naxalite-affected districts launch raids, carry out intensive patrolling, vehicle checking and deploy intelligence machinery to detect mines. In Adhaura village of Kaimur district, for example, a landmine blast bid had been foiled due to timely coordination between administration and intelligence. Still land mines blast and casualties occur regularly. Armed police forces were deployed on a war footing in the sensitive districts. For the period of election under study, the state had at its disposal 100 companies of Central Para Military Forces (CPMFs) over and above its Bihar Military Police (BMP) personnel, district armed police (DAP) and home-guards. The election boycott call by the extreme left of the Marxist-Leninist group always posed stiff challenge to the administration.

Election Results

Lalu Yadav reaped benefit of the alliance and his front won 29 out of 40 seats. The alliance partners, in total, secured 45.2 per cent of the vote as against 36.9 per cent of the vote and 11 seats won by the NDA (see the table below)²

Parties	Seats Contested	Seats Won	Vote Share (Per Cent)
Congress	4	3	4.5
RJD	26	22	30.7
LJNSP	8	4	8.2
CP	1	0	1.0
CPI(M)	1	0	0.8
CPI	6	0	1.2
BJP	16	5	14.6
JD(U)	24	6	22.3

Source: CSDS Data Unit.

The result was almost a reversal of the 1999 Lok Sabha election when the BJP-JD (U) alliance had gathered 30 seats. The RJD-led team had gotten only nine seats. Many observers had begun to write Lalu's political obituary then³.

The five constituencies the RJD lost were Bettiah (Mataur Rahman), Bikramganj (Ram Prasad Singh), Buxar (Shivanand Tiwari), Maharajganj (Jitendra Swami) and Muzaffarpur (Bhagwanlal Sahni). The CSDS data and other sources put the number of RJD winners at 22. According to my count, if there were 26 seats in all allocated to and contested by the RJD and they lost five, the number of winners should be 21. Rajesh Ranjan (Pappu Yadav) who was defeated in Purnea as an LJNSP candidate was later rehabilitated by Lalu Yadav in Madhepura as an RJD candidate. He was given RJD ticket to run for Madhepura byelection after Lalu vacated Madhepura in favour of Chapra. After a few months of the election Lalu and Ram Vilas Paswan parted ways. This was Lalu's move to wean one Yadav away from Paswan's camp. This story is detailed later.

Three out of four Congress candidates won, losing only Krishna Sahi (Begusarai) to Rajiv Ranjan Singh of the JD (U). The CPI (M) and NCP candidates, partners of the RJD, were also defeated. Four out of eight LJNSP candidates won the election.

The NDA on the other side which had done so well in 1999 winning 30 out of 40 seats in Bihar had to remain content with only 11 seats. The NDA constituents, the BJP and the JD (U) lost 22 seats in total.

The JD (U) couldn't retain 14 seats (Gopalganj, Hajipur, Sitmarhi, Jhanjharpur, Rosera, Samastipur, Barh, Balia, Saharsha, Madhepura, Banka, Khagaria, Munger and

Jehanabad) whereas the BJP lost eight seats (Motihari, Madhubani, Darbhanga, Kishenganj, Patna, Sasaram, Nawada, and Gaya.)

The BJP and the JD (U) picked up three and two seats respectively which did not belong to them in 1999. Bhagalpur, Araria and Purnea were taken away by the BJP from the CPI-M, Independent (Pappu Yadav) and the RJD respectively. The two seats that the JD (U) bagged were Begusarai and Bikramganj snatched from the Congress and the RJD. In a spectacular electoral performance, the RJD wrested Motihari, Gopalganj, Sitamarhi, Jhanjharpur, Darbhanga, Samastipur, Barh, Madhepura, Kishenganj, Banka, Khagaria, Munger, Patna, Nawada and Gaya from the NDA.

The RJD only conceded Araria and Bikramganj to the NDA and retained Vaishali, Sheohar and Arrah. It also had a coat-tail effect on the Congress, its ally. The Congress retained Aurangabad and unseated the BJP from Madhubani and Sasaram.

A Few Sample Cases of Contest

Mithilanchal: a bastion of the RJD

.In the Lok Sabha election of 1999, the BJP-JD(U) combination (the ruling coalition at the center) had defeated a few RJD candidates in the Mithila region (Mithilanchal). That had created an impression that the NDA could penetrate the bastion of the UPA and hold on to its ground. However, in the election of 2004, the RJD-Congress-LJNSP recovered most of the lost grounds. The performance of the RJD-led alliance in this region could be considered spectacular because it did not depend on the support of the Communist Party of India (CPI), a traditional ally of the Congress party. In 1999 too, the RJD had gone without the CPI and paid the price. The CPI, making its presence as a third formidable party in a number of constituencies, secured close to 3 percent of the votes in 1999 elections and caused RJD's defeat in as many as 12 constituencies. In 2004 election also, there were triangular contests with the CPI, but it did not cause that much harm. From a different angle, say, if there had been seat adjustments with the CPI, the RJD could have made a clean sweep in the region.

Prominent candidates of the NDA defeated in Vazika-Mithila were Sharad Yadav (Madhepura), Shahnawaz Hussain (Kishen Ganj), Hukumdeo Yadav (Madhubani), Jagannath Mishra (Jhanjharpur), and Kirti Azad (Darbhanga). In Madhepura, where Sharad Yadav had surprised everyone by defeating Lalu in 1999, lost by 60,000 votes. Shahnawaz Hussain, the only poster-boy representing Muslims in the NDA cabinet, lost to RJD's Mohammed Taslimuddin.

On the UPA side R.V. Paswan was locked in a competition with a JD(U) candidate, a former Bihar minister, Chedi Paswan. In a massive victory, the seventh of his parliamentary career, Paswan won the Hajipur constituency by over 200,000 votes.

Anga-Magadh region

In Ang-Magadh region, of the two constituencies--Nalanda and Barh-- from where Nitish had contested, he won the former but lost the latter. The notable defeats of the NDA in this region were of central ministers like Digvijay Singh (Banka), Sanjay Paswan (Nawada SC) and C. P. Thakur (Patna). In Bhagalpur, Sushil Kumar Modi, the BJP candidate brought from outside, defeated the sitting CPI (M) candidate and an RJD ally.

In Begusarai, D.P.Ojha, a former Police chief of the state who towards the end of his career acted like a whistle blower and tried to bring a few reputed criminal-politicians (like Muhammad Shahabuddin of Siwan) to justice was defeated. Ojha had created a stir briefly and it seemed anti-Lalu political parties would quickly adopt him as their candidate. But the stir quickly subsided and none of the parties sponsored him. He ran as an independent and finished a distant seventh. Ojha's case tells a lot about the administration and politics of Bihar. He was viewed by the parties and the people as an opportunist who benefited from the Lalu-Rabri regime through out his administrative career. As he approached retirement, he wanted to take a big leap into politics with a Robin Hood image. The BJP-JDU would not have risked their time-tested cadre for him. But, there were other places where candidates with more questionable credentials were sponsored by the parties.

The Bhojpur region: Bikramganj

Bikramganj has been a strong hold of the Rajputs. Tapeswar Singh, a Rajput Congress leader, represented this constituency for a long period. Tapeswar Singh helped promote Bihar's co-operative movement and also amassed wealth abusing power and connection. At one time, when Mrs. Gandhi was trying to cleanse her Congress (I) party of corruption, Tapeswar Singh was likely to be dropped. However, he bought his way to the Congress list in the 70s. After the death of Tapeswar Singh, the monopoly of the Rajputs was challenged by the combined strength of the OBCs. A Rajput candidate could win only if the backwards extended their support. Earlier their support was taken for granted⁴.

In 2004, Bikramganj still witnessed a contest between a Rajput vs. the rest. Ajit Kumar Singh, Chairman of NAFED, a cooperative undertaking, was fielded by the JD(U) replacing its 1999 candidate. Ram Prasad Kushwaha, a non-Yadav backward caste, was the RJD candidate. The JD(U) forged a strong alliance of the Rajputs and the Kurmis whereas the RJD relied on the support of the Muslims, the Yadavs and the remainder of the backward castes. Both sides counted on the charisma of Nitish Kumar and Lalu Yadav. The NDA capitalized on the BJP government slogan of "India shining". Luckily for the NDA, the alliance of their social forces worked.

Marxist-Leninist challenge to the RJD in Arrah

Ram Prasad Singh Kushwaha's candidacy in Bikramganj was expected to have a bearing on the neighboring constituency of Arrah from where Ms. Kanti Singh was contesting as an RJD candidate. It was calculated that Kanti Singh would benefit from Kushwaha votes

as Kushwaha might get some votes from Kanti Singh's caste (Yadav) in Bikramganj. But the picture in Arrah was completely different. Ms Kanti Singh, now a veteran of many elections, was challenged by the CPI (ML)(L) candidate who finished second. Arrah was the only constituency where the CPI (ML)(L) challenged the winner so closely. However, the gap was substantial. Kanti Singh, with her 38.03 per cent of the vote polled, was a beneficiary of the split in the votes against her. The CPI (ML)(L)'s 19.01 per cent added to 18.92 per cent votes of an independent and 18.74 per cent of the JD (U) candidate amounted to more than 56% of the votes opposed to the RJD.

Arrah was again a case which illustrated that the winner had so much less of a mandate. If there had been a run off between the two leading candidates, the outcome of the election would have had more legitimacy⁵

Madhepura and Chapra: Alchemy of crime, politics and the voting behaviour

Lalu had his candidacy in the Mithila (Madhepura) as well as the Bhojpur (Chapra) region whereas Nitish confined himself to the two constituencies of the Magadh region only. Also, in both constituencies, Lalu had challenged two incumbent central ministers⁶. In Madhepura, the Janata Dal (United) leader and Union Food and Civil Supplies Minister, Sharad Yadav was one-time protégé of Lalu. He later claimed to be the leader of the Yadavs of at least Saharsa-Madhepura belt if not of Bihar as a whole. Lalu sponsored Sharad from Madhepura in 1991 and supported him in the election of 1996. Later, in the wake of the fodder scam, a division developed between the two. Lalu broke away to form the RJD. The 1998 parliamentary election saw the RJD chief winning again, but a year later Sharad regained that seat. In 2004, Sharad lost to Lalu by a margin of more than 39,000 votes. Lalu re-established his popularity among the Yadavs by winning Madhepura. However, Sharad Yadav was not eliminated either. Sharad Yadav had certain disadvantage to begin with. There was a third candidate from the Samata Party, N.K. Singh, who took away certain high caste Rajput votes. The Union Minister of State for Social Justice, Nagmani, a candidate in Jharkhand had sent instructions to his caste men Koeris not to support Sharad as the latter had fielded a candidate against him in Jharkhand.

In Chapra, Lalu challenged the Bharatiya Janata Party nominee and Union Minister of State for Civil Aviation, Rajiv Pratap Rudy. Madhepura had gone to polls on May 5, 2004 more than a week after Chapra (April 26). In Chapra, the Election Commission found irregularities against Lalu Yadav and ordered a repoll throughout the constituency. The EC had kept a strict vigil on elections in Madhepura as well. In the 1999 Lok Sabha elections, Mr. Sharad Yadav had staged a dharna while the election was in progress and accused his nemesis, Lalu, of having rigged the elections. But the end result turned out to be in his favor.

On the other hand, Lalu had the advantage of the Congress support but more importantly, the support of the Lok Janshakti Party chief, Ram Vilas Paswan, who ensured the support of the Dusadhs.

As far as the election platforms were concerned, Sharad had to defend the record of the NDA government at the center whereas the RJD chief hammered home the dangers of

Gujrat type riots. In his propaganda warfare, Lalu cleverly appealed to the sentiments of the Muslims by showing pictures of riot victims.

On September 21, after the parliamentary elections were over, a former MP Rajesh Ranjan alias Pappu Yadav, under judicial detention in connection with the 1998 murder of a CPI-M legislator in Purnea, announced that he had left the Lok Janshakti Party of Ram Vilas Paswan and joined the RJD. He was instantly rewarded by Lalu with a party ticket to contest for the Madhepura Lok Sabha. Pappu Yadav cited “lack of inner party democracy” in the LJP as the reason to quit the party. Lalu was on a pilgrimage with his family to the temples of South India when he confirmed Pappu’s nomination from Madhepura.

Ideally, people of Bihar in general and voters of Madhepura in particular should have been outraged at the fact that Lalu chose a candidate whose credentials were so controversial. By that time, the Congress-led coalition government at the center had dignified Lalu by giving him a cabinet level position, number six in the cabinet hierarchy. The Congress ignored the ‘the fodder scam’ case against Lalu and Lalu ignored the criminal background of Pappu Yadav.

Thus, Bihar witnessed one more time how in political schemes corruption cases were forgotten. There was an opportunity for Lalu, in his reincarnation and as an unquestioned leader of his party to restore some dignity to the political process in the state. Pappu Yadav had lost the just concluded Lok Sabha election from Purnea to the BJP on an LJP ticket. Honouring people’s verdict, Lalu could have selected any other loyal Yadav to represent Madhepura. In the absence of Sharad Yadav, who found his way to the Rajya Sabha (the Upper House) after his defeat, any Yadav candidate sponsored by Lalu would have won given the demographics of Madhepura.

But, understandably, Lalu wanted to project his own image as a saviour of the Yadavs. Pappu Yadav retained his Robin Hood image and presented himself as a victim of political opposition and conspiracy. Lalu expected people to forget Pappu’s criminal background. Just before the election, Pappu would stealthily come out from his high security custody (courtesy lax, corrupt and conspiratorial administration of the state) to supervise his electioneering. He was held firmly behind bars only after TV camera had caught him and the Supreme Court special bench intervened. The voters of Madhepura rewarded both Lalu and Pappu. In the middle of October, he won with a huge margin of more than two hundred thousand votes. Pappu Yadav secured 365,948 votes against his JD (U) opponent, a former M.P, R.P. Yadav with 157,088 votes. Curiously, Pappu’s wife Ranjeeta Ranjan continued to be LJNSP M. P. from Saharsa and an election agent of her husband. Also, against Pappu Yadav the CPI-M pursued a case of murder. The CPI (M) was an alliance partner of the RJD in the state and an ‘outside’ supporter of the Congress in the centre. This also indicated where the left party was headed.

Results of 2004 Lok Sabha election from Bihar

BIHAR					
Constituency	Candidate	Party	Total Votes	Status	Margin
Araria	SUKDEO PASWAN	BJP	216677	Won	27744
Araria	RAMJI DAS RISHIDEO	SP	188933	Runner-up	
Arrah	KANTI SINGH	RJD	299422	Won	149743
Arrah	RAM NARESH RAM	CPI(ML)(L)	149679	Runner-up	
Aurangabad	NIKHIL KUMAR	INC	290009	Won	7460
Aurangabad	SUSHIL KUMAR SINGH	JD(U)	282549	Runner-up	
Bagaha	KAILASH BAITHA	JD(U)	237989	Won	65375
Bagaha	HIRALAL RAM	LJNSP	172614	Runner-up	
Balia	SURAJ SINGH	LJNSP	233869	Won	76227
Balia	SHATRUGHNA PRASAD SINGH	CPI	157642	Runner-up	
Banka	GIRIDHARI YADAV	RJD	339880	Won	4669
Banka	DIGVIJAY SINGH	JD(U)	335211	Runner-up	
Barh	VIJAY KRISHNA	RJD	426856	Won	37688
Barh	NITISH KUMAR	JD(U)	389168	Runner-up	
Begusarai	RAJIV RANJAN SINGH	JD(U)	301562	Won	20491
Begusarai	KRISHNA SAHI	INC	281071	Runner-up	
Bhagalpur	SUSHIL KUMAR MODI	BJP	345151	Won	117853
Bhagalpur	SUBODH RAY	CPM	227298	Runner-up	
Bikramganj	AJIT KUMAR SINGH	JD(U)	305392	Won	58801
Bikramganj	RAM PRASAD SINGH	RJD	246591	Runner-up	
Buxar	LALMUNI CHAUBEY	BJP	205980	Won	54866
Buxar	DADAN	IND	151114	Runner-	

	SINGH			up	
Darbhanga	MD. ALI ASHRAF FATMI	RJD	427672	Won	143463
Darbhanga	KIRTI AZAD	BJP	284209	Runner- up	
Gaya	RAJESH KUMAR MANJHI	RJD	464829	Won	102934
Gaya	BALBIR CHAND	BJP	361895	Runner- up	
Gopalganj	ANIRUDH PRASAD ALIAS SADHU YADAV	RJD	336016	Won	192919
Gopalganj	PRABHU DAYAL SINGH	JD(U)	143097	Runner- up	
Hajipur	RAM VILAS PASWAN	LJNSP	477495	Won	237801
Hajipur	CHHEDI PASWAN	JD(U)	239694	Runner- up	
Jahanabad	GANESH PRASAD SINGH	RJD	400063	Won	46438
Jahanabad	ARUN KUMAR	JD(U)	353625	Runner- up	
Jhanjharpur	DEVENDRA PRASAD YADAV	RJD	323400	Won	12835
Jhanjharpur	JAGANNATH MISHRA	JD(U)	310565	Runner- up	
Katihar	NIKHIL KUMAR CHOUDHARY	BJP	288922	Won	2565
Katihar	SHAH TARIQ ANWAR	NCP	286357	Runner- up	
Khagaria	RABINDRA KU RANA	RJD	322440	Won	67123
Khagaria	RENU KUMARI	JD(U)	255317	Runner- up	
Kishanganj	TASLIMUDDIN	RJD	420331	Won	160497
Kishanganj	SYED SHAHNAWAZ HUSSAIN	BJP	259834	Runner- up	
Madhepura	LALU PRASAD	RJD	344301	Won	69987
Madhepura	SHARAD YADAV	JD(U)	274314	Runner- up	
Madhubani	DR. SHAKIL AHMAD	INC	328182	Won	87079
Madhubani	HUKUM DEO NARAYAN YADAV	BJP	241103	Runner- up	

Maharajganj	PRABHUNATH SINGH	JD(U)	283506	Won	46465
Maharajganj	JITENDRA SWAMI	RJD	237041	Runner-up	
Monghyr	JAY PRAKASH NARAYAN YADAV	RJD	480150	Won	127303
Monghyr	DR. MONAZIR HASSAN	JD(U)	352847	Runner-up	
Motihari	AKHILESH PRASAD SINGH	RJD	348596	Won	97024
Motihari	RADHA MOHAN SINGH	BJP	251572	Runner-up	
Muzaffarpur	GEORGE FERNANDES	JD(U)	370127	Won	9693
Muzaffarpur	BHAGWAN LAL SAHANI	RJD	360434	Runner-up	
Nalanda	NITISH KUMAR	JD(U)	471310	Won	102396
Nalanda	DR. KUMAR PUSHPANJAY	LJNSP	368914	Runner-up	
Nawada	VIRCHANDRA PASWAN	RJD	489992	Won	56006
Nawada	SANJAY PASWAN	BJP	433986	Runner-up	
Patna	RAM KRIPAL YADAV	RJD	433853	Won	38562
Patna	C. P. THAKUR	BJP	395291	Runner-up	
Purnea	UDAY SINGH	BJP	244426	Won	12883
Purnea	RAJESH RANJAN ALIAS PAPPU YADAV	LJNSP	231543	Runner-up	
Rosera	RAM CHANDRA PASWAN	LJNSP	394240	Won	138411
Rosera	DASHAI CHAUDHARY	JD(U)	255829	Runner-up	
Saharsa	RANJEET RANJAN	LJNSP	350426	Won	30787
Saharsa	DINESH CHANDRA YADAV	JD(U)	319639	Runner-up	
Samastipur	ALOK KUMAR MEHATA	RJD	399059	Won	121173
Samastipur	RAM CHANDRA SINGH	JD(U)	277886	Runner-up	
Sasaram	MIRA KUMAR	INC	416673	Won	258262

Sasaram	MUNI LALL	BJP	158411	Runner-up	
Sheohar	SITARAM SINGH	RJD	303243	Won	73883
Sheohar	MOHAMMAD ANWARUL HAQ	BJP	229360	Runner-up	
Sitamarhi	SITARAM YADAV	RJD	326165	Won	98005
Sitamarhi	NAVAL KISHORE RAI	JD(U)	228160	Runner-up	
Vaishali	RAGHUBANSH PRASAD SINGH	RJD	361503	Won	105935
Vaishali	VIJAY KUMAR SHUKLA	IND	255568	Runner-up	

Source: Election Commission of India Website: www.eci.gov.in

First Parliamentary Election of the State of Jharkhand

The state of Jharkhand (literally translated, Jharkhand means an area covered with forest). Clockwise, Jharkhand is surrounded by the state of Bihar on north, West Bengal on east, Orissa in south and Madhya Pradesh or Chhattisgarh on the southwest. Jharkhand has 14 Lok Sabha constituencies: Rajmahal (ST), Dumka (ST), Godda, Chatra, Koderma, Giridih, Dhanbad, Hazaribagh, Ranchi, Jamshedpur, Singhbhum (ST), Khunti (ST), Lohardagga (ST), and Palamau (SC).

Alliance formation and social base

The Jharkhand region has traditionally been a battle ground for the BJP and the Congress with local tribal parties joining the two sides to make a difference. The BJP estimated it had been strong enough to carry its electoral campaign on its own. The JD (U) with its non-Yadav OBC following in the heartland could not be of much help to the BJP. Therefore, there was no electoral alliance between the BJP and the JD (U). Nor did the BJP have electoral (seat) adjustments with the All Jharkhand Students Union (AJSU) and Vananchal Congress, the state level allies⁷. Their alliance had not always been easy. In fact, the allies of the BJP in the state government had in the past rebelled against the BJP chief minister Babulal Marandi and replaced him by Arjun Munda. Just before the 2004 election, the BJP and its allies could not forge seat adjustments. The BJP was reportedly of the view that since the other parties i.e. the Janata Dal (U), Vananchal Congress and AJSU had no representation from the region in the previous Lok Sabha, they did not deserve to be a party in the seat adjustments. The lack of understanding led JD (U) and others to field candidates in certain constituencies where they felt strong.

The Parties, Candidates and Constituencies of the National Democratic Alliance (In Jharkhand there was no alliance between the JD (U) and the BJP)

Bharatiya Janata Party (14): Nagmani (Chatra), Rita Verma (Dhanbad), Sonelal Hembrom (Dumka), Ravindra Kumar Pandey (Giridih), Pradeep Yadav (Godda), Yashwant Sinha (Hazaribagh), Abha Mahto (Jamshedpur), Kariya Munda (Khunti SC), Som Marandi (Rajmahal ST), Ramtahal Chaudhary (Ranchi), Laxman Gilua (Singhbhum ST), Dukha Bhagat (Lohardagga)

Janata Dal (United) (05): Inder Singh Namdhari (Chatra), Inder Deo Mahato (Giridih), Suraj Mandal (Godda), Dr Ramdayal Munda (Khunti SC), Radhakant Kishore (Palamau SC)

The RJD, with its own vote bank, was also not expected to add much weight to the other side, the Congress in the Jharkhand tribal region. Still, the Congress was able to put together a grand rainbow coalition of the RJD, the Jharkhand Mukti Morcha (JMM), the CPM and the CPI.

The United Progressive Alliance (UPA) in Jharkhand: Parties, Candidates and Constituencies

Congress Party (09): Chandrashekhar Dubey (Dhanbad), Phurkan Ansari (Godda), Sushila Karketta (Khunti SC), Tilakdhari Prasad Singh (Kodarma), Vijay Kumar (Palamau SC), Thomas Hansda (Rajmahal ST), Subodh Kant Sahay (Ranchi), Bagun Sambrai (Singhbhum ST)

Rashtriya Janata Dal (02): Dharendra Agrawal (Chatra) , Manoj Kumar (Palamau SC)

Jharkhand Mukti Morcha (05): Shibu Soren (Dumka), Tek Lal Mahto (Jamshedpur), Champa Verma (Kodarma), Hemlal Murmu (Rajmahal ST)

Communist Party of India (01): Bhuvaneshwar Prasad Mehta (Hazaribagh)

In addition to one candidate of the CPI (M) who clashed with the Congress candidate in Ranchi, there were nine **Lok Janshakti National Socialist Party (LJNSP)** candidates in Jharkhand.

The **Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist)(Liberation)** and **Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP)** had fielded eight and 14 candidates respectively.

The JMM was believed to have a strong following among the 27 percent aborigines (*adivasis*), the Congress had its influence on 13 percent *harijan* or *dalit* voters. The OBC

which constituted about 30 percent of the state population could come under the sway of the RJD. The Congress-JMM-RJD alliance therefore seemed to be a winning coalition.

Election Results

The BJP being in power both at the center and the state and perhaps because of its overconfident ‘go it alone’ policy, it had to face the anti-incumbency sentiment of the voters. The party was trounced by the combined opposition. The BJP could only poll 33 percent of the votes compared to 45.5 in the 1999 Lok Sabha election. The Congress-led alliance won 13 of the 14 seats in the state. Out of 13, six seats were won by the Congress, four by the JMM, two by the RJD and one by the CPI. The RJD, thus, made its presence in Jharkhand. The party the RJD did not like very much in Bihar, the CPI, defeated Yashwant Sinha, a stalwart of the BJP in Hazaribagh constituency. The Congress-led alliance must have cashed in on the Muslim support for the RJD in general. The only seat the BJP could retain was Koderma where a veteran BJP candidate Babu Lal Marandi defeated the JMM candidate, Champa Verma. In 1999, the BJP had bagged 11 out of 14 seats (see tables in appendix).

Tables showing Lok Sabha election results for Jharkhand 2004

JHARKHAND (14 Seats)					
Constituency	Candidate	Party	Total Votes	Status	Margin
Chatra	DHIRENDRA AGARWAL	RJD	121464	Won	18855
Chatra	INDER SINGH NAMDHARI	JD(U)	102609	Runner-up	
Dhanbad	CHANDRA SHEKHAR DUBEY	INC	355499	Won	119378
Dhanbad	RITA VERMA	BJP	236121	Runner-up	
Dumka	SHIBU SOREN	JMM	339542	Won	115015
Dumka	SONE LAL HEMBROM	BJP	224527	Runner-up	
Giridih	TEK LAL MAHTO	JMM	350255	Won	149794
Giridih	RAVINDRA KUMAR PANDEY	BJP	200461	Runner-up	
Godda	FURKAN ANSARI	INC	373138	Won	26754
Godda	PRADEEP YADAV	BJP	346384	Runner-up	
Hazaribagh	BHUBNESHWAR PRASAD MEHTA	CPI	356058	Won	105328
Hazaribagh	YASHWANT SINHA	BJP	250730	Runner-up	
Jamshedpur	SUNIL KUMAR MAHATO	JMM	396056	Won	105633
Jamshedpur	ABHA MAHTO	BJP	290423	Runner-up	
Khunti	SUSHILA KERKETTA	INC	216155	Won	51163
Khunti	KARIYA MUNDA	BJP	164992	Runner-up	
Kodarma	BABULAL MARANDI	BJP	366656	Won	154944
Kodarma	CHAMPA VERMA	JMM	211712	Runner-up	
Lohardaga	RAMESHWAR ORAON	INC	223920	Won	90255
Lohardaga	DUKHA BHAGAT	BJP	133665	Runner-up	

Palamu	MANOJ KUMAR	RJD	206733	Won	55144
Palamu	BRAJ MOHAN RAM	BJP	151589	Runner-up	
Rajmahal	HEMLAL MURMU	JMM	226411	Won	2974
Rajmahal	THOMAS HANSDA	INC	223437	Runner-up	
Ranchi	SUBODH KANT SAHAY	INC	284035	Won	15421
Ranchi	RAM TAHAL CHOUDHARY	BJP	268614	Runner-up	
Singhbhum	BAGUN SUMBRAI	INC	221343	Won	59196
Singhbhum	LAXMAN GILUA	BJP	162147	Runner-up	

Source: Election Commission of India Website: www.eci.gov.in

What went wrong for the BJP?

Of the three states—Uttaranchal, Chhattisgarh and Jharkhand—created during the governance of the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) at the centre, the movement for Jharkhand was the longest. Its creation gave further rise to expectations the state government led by the BJP could not fulfill. There were divisions among the coalition partners based on policies and personal ambitions. Except for a few road constructions which were characterized as ‘cosmetic measures,’ no serious and large scale plans were proposed to mitigate the problem of unemployment and corruption. On top of that, the state government pushed for a legislation called the Panchayati Raj Extension to Scheduled Area Act, 1996 (PESA). It threatened the state domicile (residency) status of a large number of OBCs (e.g. Sahus, Surhis or Kurmis) who had settled in Jharkhand for generations and who were also voter-supporters of the BJP. They became disgruntled and began to lobby against the government through their caste legislators⁸. The controversial domicile issue, largely a creation of the state government itself, crippled the governance for full two years. The question was who deserved to be a full domicile of the state: the tribal aborigines (the *adivasis*), or the people who were born at the time of national independence or everyone living in the state since its formation (November 2000). According to an opinion poll, all the three propositions had the support of 18, 35 and 57 percent of the respondents respectively. The official stand of the government favored the second proposition.

The BJP rank and file was not very happy with many non-performing MPs such as Rita Verma (Dhanbad), Abha Mahato (Jamshedpur), Nagmani (Chatra) or Braj Mohan Ram (Palamau). Many leading players including the Chief Minister himself were turncoats to the BJP from other parties and did not enjoy full confidence of their partymen.

In the 1998 and 1999 Lok Sabha elections, the BJP secured more than 45 percent of the votes and 12 and 11 seats respectively. It was only in 1991 when an alliance of the JMM and the Janata Dal came close to the BJP’s performance and polled 21.4 percent of the votes and six out of 14 Lok Sabha seats.

A Few Representative Contests

Hazaribagh

Hazaribagh was considered to be a safe zone for Yashwant Sinha, a former union finance and foreign minister and a leading figure on the side of the NDA. It apparently surprised everyone when he was defeated by a CPI candidate, a partner in the Congress-led alliance. Analyzed closely, however, his defeat should not be unexpected given the nature of voters or constituencies. Unless there was a popular wave for or against a particular party or a candidate, the constituencies took their local workers and issues seriously. The CPI candidate in Hazaribagh was a local leader having close connection with the rural people. Yashwant Sinha and his out of town election apparatus concentrated on Hazaribagh town whereas his opponent mobilized his rural supporters. He was able to cash in on the dissatisfaction of the constituents. The common people did not get to see their elected representative as often as they wanted to. And add to it the Muslim factor. The Hazaribagh constituency has a large percentage of Muslim voters who were not inclined towards the BJP.

Godda, Chatra, Palamau and Singhbhum constituencies could have gone to the BJP side had there been an alliance with the JD (U) and AJSU. But the election results did not depend on these hard numbers alone. There was a ‘dissatisfaction factor’ as well.

Godda

The three time (1996, 1998 and 1999) winner of this parliamentary seat, Jagadambi Prasad Yadav was deceased and therefore, the BJP fielded Pradeep Yadav. The Congress pitted a Muslim candidate Furkan Ansari who won by 26, 754 (44.88 percent) votes. In 1991, the JMM had this seat and after that its MP Suraj Mandal was defeated twice by the BJP Jagdambi Prasad Yadav. Here, the BJP and the JD (U) paid the price for not having an alliance. Suraj Mandal, the JD (U) candidate chipped away a valuable 5.27 percent of the vote. A Yadav candidate of the BSP also claimed 2.75 votes which might have been attracted by the BJP-JD (U) alliance in case of an alliance.

Chatra

RJD retained this seat but with a changed candidate. In 1999, Nagmani (RJD) had defeated Dharendra Agrawal (BJP) with a convincing margin (52.73 vs. 39.51 percent of the votes polled). Dharendra was the winner of Chatra parliamentary seat in 1996 and 1998. The dynamics of local politics found Nagmani and Dharendra Agrawal swapping parties in 2004. Dharendra Agrawal was picked up by the RJD and the BJP fielded Nagmani. A new player in the game was Inder Singh Namdhari, a Sikh politician and a former speaker of the Jharkhand state legislative assembly. He was given a ticket by the JD (U). In a closely balanced triangular contest, the RJD candidate was a beneficiary of the ‘B+C>A’ factor. In the election which recorded a low turn out (44.51%), Namdhari secured second position with 23.56 percent of the votes whereas the incumbent Nagmani was relegated to the third position with 22.88 percent. The winner secured 27.89 percent and maintained a lead of 18, 855 only over the runner-up. Absence of electoral alliance between the NDA partners damaged the prospects of both the BJP and JD (U), whereas the United Progressive Alliance was a clear winner as there were no candidates from

other alliance partners, the Congress or JMM. An independent candidate Ramlal Oraon had an impressive 11.92 percent of the votes. There were candidates from the SP, BSP and CPI (ML) (L) who, with 3.29, 2.57 and 1.98 percent respectively, could not make an impact.

Palamau (SC)

Palamau (SC) was a typical case where there was a contest between the JD (U) and the BJP, the two allies in Bihar. But also there was a clash between the RJD and the Congress. The RJD candidate, Manoj Kumar won hands down with 32.22 per cent of the votes, the immediate rival being the BJP with 23.63 per cent. The JD (U) candidate was the third (16.64%) and the Congress finished a poor fifth (8.42%). The contest would have been closer had there been a polarization along the lines of alliances. The JD (U)-BJP combine would have done a lot better than the RJD-Congress combine.

Rajmahal (ST)

In a keenly contested triangular election, the JMM candidate Hemlal Murmu (32.76) trounced the Congress candidate Thomas Hansda (32.33), the winner of 1996 and 1999. In 1998, Thomas Hansda was defeated by the BJP candidate Som Marandi who this time around secured an impressive 27.85 percent of the vote. There seemed to be no clear understanding between the JMM and the Congress. The voters' turn out was higher (64.47) in this constituency.

Dumka (ST)

Babu Lal Marandi was not a candidate this time. The BJP held this seat since 1998 by snatching it from Shibu Soren but lost to him this time around. The BJP fielded a new face, Sone Lal Hembrom (35.92) against Shibu Soren (54.32) and was decidedly defeated. This was a direct bipolar contest where Shibu Soren was boosted by the absence of the Congress and the RJD candidates. The presence of a BSP candidate, with a little over two percent vote, did not make any impact. Shibu Soren is a veteran leader who had represented Dumka in 1980, 89, 91 and 96. One of the pioneers for the creation of Jharkhand, he aspired to be the Chief Minister of the state. He was also mired in court case where he was accused of being involved in the murder of his personal secretary. Immediately after winning, Shibu Soren was given a cabinet rank birth in Manmohan Singh's government. He had to be relieved from the cabinet— turned fugitive for a brief period -- when the murder case was allegedly opened up by the BJP. Subsequently, he was reinstated in the cabinet. Whatever be the truth of the case, the moral practically every one in and out of Jharkhand derived was: "you could get away with anything as long as you were in politics." Shibu Soren's career, nevertheless, exemplified that politics was a tough business.

Ranchi

Subodh Kant Sahay was denied ticket in 1999. In 2004, with the voters' turn out registering around 50.45 percent, Sahay defeated the incumbent MP Ram Tahal Choudhary (BJP) (40.82 vs. 38.61) who had been winning since 1991. In 1999 the Congress candidate was defeated handily by Choudhary who secured 65.72 per cent of the vote against 23.93 by K. K. Tewari. In 1989, Sahay had defeated Choudhary as a

Janata Dal leader (35.16 vs. 31.94). At that time, following the split in the Janata Party, Sahay was with Lalu and the Janata Dal. After that Sahay broke ranks with Lalu and joined the Congress. In 2004, he is back with Lalu in the same coalition government. During 2004 election, the voters were very dissatisfied with Ram Tahal Choudhary. Subodh Kant Sahay won the Ranchi seat only by a small margin of 15, 000 votes, nevertheless, his lead was established in four out of six assembly segments.

Conclusion

So, what were the major differences between the politics of Bihar and Jharkhand. In Bihar, the BJP and the RJD were the major players, the Congress party assisting the RJD from the sideline. In Jharkhand, the Congress party and the BJP were the lead players with the RJD and the Jharkhand Mukti Morcha (Shibu Soren) assisting the Congress. The UPA partners were able to benefit from their seat adjustments whereas the lack thereof between the BJP and the JD (U) in Jharkhand cost them dearly. The anti-incumbency sentiments were in evidence in both the states but in a different way. In Bihar, Lalu Yadav was successful in harvesting anti-incumbency sentiments in the state against the BJP rule at the center. The Lok Sabha election was after all a process for choosing the federal rulers. In Jharkhand, the BJP was the immediate target of people's dissatisfaction. In both the states, the RJD got away from the accountability of being in charge of one state whereas the BJP had to bear the brunt as a national party.

In many cases Lalu and his party got back what they had before 1999 i.e. their social base. A division in it had allowed a number of JD (U) and BJP candidates to win the election by a paper-thin majority (Digvijay Singh in Banka, for example). Any time in future (as it happened in 2006 State Assembly election), whenever there would be a split in the RJD's Muslim-Yadav coalition, electoral reverses will follow. Whenever, the RJD leadership is successful in stitching it back, they will gain politically. That's the reason the RJD could not be written off for a long time. Along with the Congress, it had the greatest ability to attract the minority Muslims and majority of Yadavs. Other parties, at present, could not meaningfully recruit members of these social groups on their side.

Both in Bihar and Jharkhand, the interplay of social groups, caste and other factions will continue. It may only take different shape and form to adapt to the new conditions. One may add to this the tribal factor and the emergence of violent Maoist⁹ extremism in both the states.

Endnotes and References

1. I am thankful to all my colleagues in the Department of Politics, Ryerson University (Toronto) for their continued encouragement and support. This study, still in progress, has benefited from five of my earlier research on Bihar spanning over more than two decades. They are:

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2. The CSDS data quoted in Muneshwar Yadav, "Bihar: Politics from Below," in *Economic and Political Weekly* (Mumbai), December 18, 2004, pp. 5510-5513.
3. All election-related data have been taken from the website of the Election Commission of India. See www.eci.gov.in.
4. Sanjay Singh, "Changing equations in Bikramganj," *TheTimes of India*, April 16, 2004.
The movement for backward caste/class solidification in Bikramganj went back to the 1930s when the three non-forward castes, Yadav, Kurmi and Kushwaha, had formed a powerful triumvirate association ('triveni sangh'). Later under the influence of the socialist ideology and leaders, the constituency saw a few pro-Lohia leaders emerge.

In the post-Emergency Janata period, when the state went through a phase of social and political turmoil caused by the Mandal Commission report (the report

recommended reservation in government services for the OBCs, i.e., Other Backward Castes), there was a clear cut polarization in Bikramganj as well. Ramawadhesh Singh Yadav, a supporter of the reservation movement, came to challenge the supremacy of Tapeshwar Singh. But Tapeshwar Singh was able to prevail.

In terms of generating economic wealth, Bikramganj still has a unique place in Bihar. Regarded as the “rice bowl” of the state, Bikramganj is blessed with very fertile soil and an elaborate system of canals. Most of the hundred plus rice mills were running on alternative source of energy. It was a great place to have attracted agro-based industries, but economically the place had stagnated. Still the place would produce and supply rice bran to other places for the manufacture of talcum powder and talcum.

5. I have argued a case for an electoral reform that should eliminate what has been described as ‘B+C>A’ factor. This abounds in the first-past-the-post system that is in practice in Indian parliamentary election particularly in Bihar and Jharkhand. See Binoy Shanker Prasad, “Split the Votes and Win the Election: An Analysis of the 12th Lok Sabha Election in Bihar” in Ramashray Roy and Paul Wallace (eds.), *Indian Politics and the 1998 Election: Regionalism, Hindutva and State Politics* (New Delhi: Sage Publications, 1999), pp. 152-53.
6. K. Balchand, “Chapra factor follows Laloo into Madhepura,” *The Hindu* (Chennai), May 4, 2004.
This author acknowledges the hard work of all reporters who risk their life and report from the field where they are vulnerable to the murderous behaviour of the contesting parties.
7. Sanjay Kumar and Harishwar Dayal, “Jharkhand: Reversal of Past Trends,” in *Economic and Political Weekly*, December 18, 2004, p. 5515.
8. *Ibid*
9. Binoy Shanker Prasad, “Caste, Regionalism, and Political Violence: Maoist Violence in Nepal and Bihar,” A paper presented at the Annual Conference of the Canadian Political Science Association in London (Ontario), June 3, 2005.
<http://www.cpsa-acsp.ca/papers-2005/Prasad.pdf>

Appendix I

The following table shows percentage of votes secured by major parties in the Jharkhand region before and after its statehood (1991-2004). As indicated, this is compiled by the Centre for the Study of Developing Societies (CSDS) data unit.

Year	Congress		BJP		JMM		JD (1991 and 1996) RJD (1998, 1999 and 2004)	
	Seats Won	Votes Polled (Per Cent)	Seats Won	Votes Polled (Per Cent)	Seats Won	Votes Polled (Per Cent)	Seats Won	Votes Polled (Per Cent)
1991	0	17.9	5	32.9	6	21.4	2	9.7
1996	1	15.9	12	34.0	1	12.2	0	22.2
1998	2	15.7	12	45.5	0	10.4	0	9.2
1999	2	23.8	11	45.5	0	9.5	1	7.5
2004	6	21.4	1	33.1	4	16.3	2	3.5

Note: In the 1991 elections, the Janata Dal and JMM had an electoral alliance. The alliance won eight seats: six seats by the JMM and two by the Janata Dal. Their combined vote share was 31.09 per cent. In the 1998 elections, the Congress, RJD and JMM had an electoral alliance. The alliance won two seats, both by the Congress. Their combined vote share was 35.39 per cent. In the 1999 elections the RJD and the Congress had an electoral alliance, which won three seats, two by the Congress and one by the RJD. Their combined vote share was 31.26 per cent. In 1999, the JD (U), an ally of the BJP, had not contested any seats in Jharkhand. In 2004 the Congress had an alliance with the JMM, RJD and CPI.

Source: CSDS Data Unit.

Appendix II

The following table shows the swing in percentage of votes secured by major parties in 1999 and 2004

Party	Seats Contested (2004)	Seats Won (2004)	Change Since 1999	Vote (2004) (Per Cent)	Change Since 1999 (Per Cent)
Congress	9	6	+4	21.4	-2.4
JMM	5	4	+4	16.3	+6.8
RJD	2	2	+1	3.5	-4.0
CPI	1	1	+1	3.8	+1.2
BJP	14	1	-10	33.0	-12.5

Note: The Congress, RJD, JMM and CPI had an alliance in the 2004 elections, though the JMM and Congress contested against each other in two constituencies. The Congress and RJD had an alliance in the 1999 Lok Sabha elections, though in two constituencies the candidates of the two parties contested against each other.

Source: CSDS Data Unit.

Appendix III

The following two table shows variation in support for the Congress and the BJP

	Congress+	BJP	N
Rural	44	32	589
Urban	51	36	142
Young (up to 25 years)	51	33	172
Old voters (above 56 years)	43	33	560

Source: National Election Study – 2004, weighted data set. Sample size: 887.

Social Group	Congress +	BJP	N
Adivasi	50	25	198
Dalit	41	29	91
OBC	44	34	171
Muslims	73	13	86
Upper caste	24	63	120

Source: National Election Study – 2004, weighted data set. Sample size: 887.

