

Bihar Political alliances and Democracy

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ABSTRACT

Electoral systems are the practical instruments through which the idea of representation is transformed into reality. Election is a procedure through which votes of the voters are converted into seats in a legislature. India is having a parliamentary democracy and alliance government system is getting special significance at present due to increase in the number of political parties and decrease in the significance of single political parties. The trend of hung parliament has put a question mark on the stability of the government. Efforts on the part of various political parties to establish government has resulted into the formation of pre-poll and post-poll alliances between and among the parties. The trend of pre election alliance is emerging in all Indian states with few exceptions. In the state of Bihar, pre election alliance is most messy deal. The present paper tries to analyze the patterns of election alliance formation in Bihar and the extent to which these alliances affected the outcome of elections. The study will be descriptive in nature. Data collected for the purpose of this study is based on secondary sources as researcher has reviewed the statistical reports of election commission of India and various articles for the purpose of collecting data for the same.

Keywords

Alliance, coalition, Pre alliance, Post alliance, Political Party

1. Introduction

In a parliamentary democracy, it is not new for Political Parties to follow alliance in order to occupy political power. In most of the successful parliamentary system of the world we find a stable two party system. "The Indian experience slightly departs from this conventional and received customs based on experience of the north Atlantic politics. While coalition were not unknown to Indian Politics, the overall dominance of the congress Party both at the centre and in most of the states during 1952-1967 characterized India's experience of parliamentary competitive democracy. But, even than in past 1967 period coalition became much more common feature of the state level political competition".²

Before, explaining the term political alliance which is one of dominant trend in state politics of India, we need to know the meaning of term alliance—"A Political Alliance is an agreement for co-operation between different political parties on common political agenda often for the purpose of contesting an election to mutually benefit by collectively clearing

election thresholds or otherwise benefitting from characteristics of the voting system for government formation after election".³

Political Parties do not seek to form alliances in normal circumstances, it is only when they observe the achievement of the objective is problematic in nature, they restore to alliance which ensures joint action to seek the objective. Alliance politics witnessed the emergence of new crisis, conflicts and their resolutions. The basic necessities of alliance politics are great tact and resourcefulness otherwise alliance became difficult and sometimes impossible. The alliance cease to be a pre-mature death if the participants deviate from expected roles. Alliance politics being transitional in the ambition of a party, have been bargaining counters rather than partnership concerns. Riker calls it Zero sum condition because if one participant gains in the terms of popularity and payoff, the other participants lose, and the gains of one may be equal to the losses of other.⁴

In context of Indian Political system, the ever increasing number of regional parties that take part in the elections is also favorable to the formation of large alliances. The decline over the years of the once dominant congress party has left a vacuum that state(s) based parties are ready to occupy and has led to the formation of pre-electoral alliance to govern the country. ⁵ The trend of pre-electoral alliance is emerging in all Indian states with few exceptions. In the states of Maharashtra, U.P. and Bihar, pre election alliance is most messy deal. In this article, an attempt is made to deal with the trend of alliance formation especially with reference to Bihar.

2. Political Alliances operational in Bihar during Elections

The state of Bihar saw the alliance government in 1967 for the first time, it was an anti congress government. Since then to the period of 1989, whenever the alliance or coalition government was formed it was most of time post-election alliance or coalition. Post election alliances are based on political pragmatism of the leaders. Wherever no single Party acquired absolute majority to form the government. Such a method is frequently adopted. The intending Parties started negotiations with other faithful parties anticipating to form government on common minimum programmes with sharing of ministries. The coalition government of 1967 was example of this. This method suffers with deficiency of legitimacy as the parties make compromises in their policies & principles behind the back of electorates. However these governmental alliances in Bihar were not stable to complete its full tenure.

The trend after 1990 got changed and Bihar began to experience new pattern of alliance politics which was pre- election alliance in its typology. Pre-election alliances are made by some parties on some minimum common programme of action. The Parties to the alliances promised to implement this programme, if they were returned to power. If they

got victory such alliances would be converted into governmental alliance or coalition government. This method contains legitimacy in so far as the ideologies, methods and personalities of such a regime are approved by the electorate and nothing is done by the people representative behind the back of the electorate. 6 The state of Bihar experienced such alliance in Bihar legislative election of 1977 where all opposition party came under one umbrella of Janta Party in order to give a strong opposition to the monopoly of congress Party in Bihar .7 However, such alliance government couldn't complete its full tenure on account of dissolution of the legislative Assembly by the congress government at centre under act 356. We witnessed, the strong domination of alliance politics in Bihar since 1995 legislative assembly. During 1995 legislative assembly election Janta Dal made alliance with BCP, CPI(M) and JHAMUMO (Soren). Samta Party made alliance with CPI(MALE). other parties like congress and BJP did not go for an alliance & contested elections independently. Due to divided opposition, JD and allies got massive victory. In a house of 324, Janta Dal contested on 265 Assembly seats and able to win 167 seats. The samta party contested on 310 assembly seats and managed to win only 7 seats which is only 7.1 percent. The BJP won 41 seats while the congress won 29 assembly seats. The alliance partners of Janta Dal also performed well. The BCP with 4.76% of votes, captured 26 seats. CPI (M) got 6 seats with 1.44% of vote and JHAMUMO got 10 seats with 2.32 % of votes. The 1995 assembly elections were a high mark for the JD. However the opposition learnt a lesson that a divided opposition could not defeat the JD. So they formed alliances against JD. 1996 Loksabha election demonstrated that a new era of alliance politics was beginning in politics of Bihar. The state witnessed the formation of alliances. The BJP and Samta Party entered into an alliance; the Samta Party had the BJP and Samta Party entered into an alliance; the Samta Party had to meet the severe criticism on account of alliance with a so called communal party. However, the prominent leaders of Samta Party described it- "The need of the hour". Is to have special arrangement in special time in order to challenge the casteist Politics of Laloo Yadav .8 BPP merged with Samta Party. It was anticipated that this alliance will broaden the support base of Samta Party much beyond only backward castes. BJP played the role of major partner and contested on 32 seats leaving 22 seats for the Samta Party. On the other hand Janta Dal contested along with its traditional partners CPI(M) and CPI dominating over them this time in terms of seats sharing. Janta Dal decided to contest on 44 seats leaving merely seats 8 for CPI and 2 seats for CPI(M). The Congress contested the election alone and marginalized to a great extent.9

The new formula of BJP –Samta Party alliance worked and the alliance marked victory with 24 seats. BJP got 18 seats with 20.5% vote & Samta Party got 6 seats with 14.45% vote. The benefit of BJP alliance turned into the loss of JD alliance, this time JD saw the decrease in the seats as compared to 1991 Lok Sabha elections. This time JD got victory on 22 numbers of seats and its alliance partner CPI won 3 seats. Congress party marked victory on 2 seats only.

The Lok Sabha Election of 1998 had seen the growing unpopularity of Laloo Prasad Yadav in the state, simultaneously with the strengthening of BJP-Samta party alliance. Laloo Prasad Yadav was in a search of allies, this time he was in the battle field with his newly formed party RJD with lantern as its election symbol. He wanted support of a national party in order to win the battle. He made alliance with congress and JMM. But in reality this alliance was not operative on ground level. RJD contested on 38 seats leaving 8 seats for congress and another 8 for JMM but congress contested on 21 seats. Janta Dal and its allies contested on 35 seats, (CPI) 15 seats, CPI(M) 4 seats respectively. The BJP – Samta alliance raised issue of corruption and deteriorating law and order in the state. While JD and its allies warned the masses against communal BJP – Samta alliance and corrupt RJD. RJD blamed BJP-Samta alliance of being communal. However results were rejoicing for BJP-Samta alliance and embarrassing for JD alliance. The BJP – Samta alliance won 29 seats, 5 more than in 1996. The alliance got almost 39% of the total vote, 4% more than earlier. RJD won 17 seats. The results were shocking for JD as its sole winner Ram Vilas Paswan only managed to capture 1 seat. However left parties did not ever open their accounts, same is applicable with JMM. The congress contested on 8 seats and won five seat only.

Table-1 LOK SABHA Election 1998				
Party Alliance	Pol. Parties		Seats Won	% of Votes
BJP-Samta	BJP		19	23.1
	SAMTA		10	15.8
JD & Alliance	JD		1	-
	CPI		0	-
	CPM		0	-
Congress	CONG.		5	7.2
	JMM	8	0	2.45
RJD	RJD	38	17	25.2

The after result of 1998 parliamentary elections saw the establishment of NDA government at centre under the leadership of Atal Bihari Vajpayee. Meanwhile, Nitish Kumar supported the merger of the Samta Party and Janta Dal to consolidate the anti Laloo vote in Bihar. The two famous leaders George Fernandes & Sharad Yadav agreed to it and finally the two parties merged to form a new party, the Janta Dal (United). At the same time, the Vajpayee Government lost the majority in the house and fresh elections were called in 1999. The 1999 Lok Sabha elections saw the battle between two major

alliance and elections were completely bipolar. on one pole it was BJP-JDU alliance and on the other pole it was congress-RJD alliance. However, left parties this time did not join any alliance. The BJP contested on 29 seats & JD(U) on 23 seats, one seat they left for BPPA. RJD contested on 38 seats and congress on 16 seats. The BJP-JD(U) alliance got 42 seats which was 13 more than in 1998 Lok Sabha election in Bihar. BJP won 23 seats out of 29, JD(U) won 18 seats out of 24 and BPPA won 1 seat. The percentage of voting of BJP-JD(U) alliance was 43.8%. However RJD- Congress alliance did not cast its spell this time and limited to 11 seats only. RJD won only 7 seats which was 17 in 1998 elections. congress won only 4 seats. The congress-RJD alliance got 37.1 % of votes. One of the important achievements of BJP-JD (U) alliance was Kurmis and Koyaries got consolidated towards this alliance. Also, support of lower backward classes and Dalits inclined towards it. The upper caste voters turned away from the congress to the BJP.

Table-2 LOK SABHA ELECTION 1999

Party Alliance	Pol. Parties	Total Seat Contested	Seats Won	% of Votes	Total
BJP-JD(U)	BJP	29	23	23.01	47.80%
	JD(U)	24	18	20.77	
	BPPA	1	1	15.8	15.80%
RJD & Congress	RJD	38	7	28.29	37.10%
	CONGRESS	16	4	2.45	

One of the most important things to be noted about the 1999 election result was the rise of Nitish Kumar's outfit from a junior partner to almost an equal one. The NDA won a clear majority (298 seats) and Atal Bihari Vajpayee enjoyed the office of PM for full tenure of five years.

After, 1999 Lok Sabha election in Bihar, it was time for legislative assembly election of 2000. The results of Lok Sabha elections were an indication that BJP-JD (U) alliance might come on the political throne of Bihar. It was also anticipated that this time Laloo government had to meet its Waterloo. The poor performance of RJD-Congress alliance in previous election also had an adverse effect on existing alliance pattern. The congress blamed RJD's negligence to provide good governance and development the key

reason of poor performance of alliance in 1999 Lok Sabha election. So, the congress Party decided not to have an alliance with RJD and contested the election alone on 324 seats. The RJD contested the 2000 Assembly Elections in alliance with the CPI (M) and the MCOR. The NDA in its manifesto for the assembly election of 2000 declared development as its

slogan. However, a notable feature of this alliance was, just before the assembly election of 2000, the JD (U) again splitted into JD (U) and Samta Party. Although, they together act as an alliancebut also in various assembly constituencies, they contested against each other. The alliance together won 122 seats BJP -67 seats, Samta Party-34 seats

Table-3 BIHAR ASSEMBLY ELECTION 2000

Party Alliance	Pol.Parties	TotalSeat Contested	Seats Won	% of Votes
NDA	BJP	168	67	14.64
	JD(U)	120	34	8.65
	SAMTA	87	21	6.47
RJD & CPI(M)	RJD	293	124	28.34
	CPI(M)	21	2	0.91
Congress	CONG.	324	23	11.06
CPI & CPI(MALE)	CPI(MALE)	107	6	2.5
	CPI	153	5	3.6
BSP	BSP	249	5	1.89

and JD (U) won 21 seats. The RJD won 124 seats and got 28.34% vote .Its allies CPI (M) won 2 seats and got 0.91 % vote. The congress won 23 seats with 11.06% of vote. The NDA needed 41 more seats & RJD – CPI (M) allies needed 37 more to establish majority. The CPI & CPI (Male) contested in alliance and got 5 & 6 numbers of seats respectively. The RJD chief Laloo Prasad Yadav wanted to form coalition government in support withcongress.However ,leaders of Bihar congress were not ready to go with Laloo Prasad Yadav as they won this election with a motive and slogan of anti Laloo. Meanwhile Laloo Prasad Yadav won support from Sonia Gandhi who was more concerned about weakening the NDA nationally than strengthening her party in Bihar¹¹. Thus, Laloo Prasad was able to form the third government in alliance with congress party and also got CPI support on account of secularist posturing of Laloo Prasad. Thus, here we find the pattern of post – election alliance, which was made to form the government .Here we find the rise of seats for BJP-Samta alliance from 48 in 1995 to 122 in 2000 which was a two and half timesgreater.

The Lok Sabha election of 2004 was conducted in a divided Bihar¹². The Lok Sabha election 2004 was important from point of view of alliance politics. The pre – election alliance brought an unexpected results for both the then existing two alliances RJD alliance & JD (U) –BJP alliance. The RJD alliance got convincing victory despite dissatisfaction of general masses over existing government. However ,another important notable feature of this election was formation of LOK JAN SHAKTI Party by Ram Vilas Paswan. Ram Vilas Paswan deserted the NDA on the issue of riots in Gujarat.¹³ So in, this way he presented himself as the champion Of Muslims and maintained his secularist image .The RJD managed to have Pre-election alliances with LJP, congress, CPI (M) & Nationalist congress.

Table-4 LOK SABHA ELECTION 2004				
Party Alliance	Pol.Parties	Total Seat Contested	Seats Won	% of Votes
RJD Alliance	RJD	26	22	30.7
	CONG.	4	3	4.5
	LJP	8	4	8.2
	CPI(M)	1	0	0.8
	NC	1	0	1
JD(U) Alliance	JD(U)	24	6	22.3
	BJP	16	5	14.6

The RJD contested on 26 seats and won 22 seats with 30.7 % vote, congress contested on 4 seats and won 3 seats with 4.5% vote, LJP contested on 8 seats and able to win 4 seats with 8.21 % vote ,CPM & NC contested on one seat each but not able to win. However, BJP contested in alliance with its traditional alliance partner .JD(U) contested on 24 seats and won 6 seats ,BJP won 5 seats contesting on 16, with 14.6 % of vote .The alliance got 36.9 % of vote. A major change appeared in NDA alliance in 2004. The role of major partner shifted from BJP to JD(U). After division of Bihar ,Samta Party completely merged into JD(U) and newly formed party retained its old name as JD(U). This merger projected JD(U) as a major alliance partners in the state shifting the role of BJP to minor alliance partner.

In this election ,the supremacy of RJD was established in the state. But ,it also exhibited political limitations of RJD. If RJD had contested election alone ,it would not have been able to capture as much seats it won with alliance partner. Alone RJD managed to win only 30.7% of vote while JD(U) alliance got 36.9% of vote so, it is quite clear Pre-alliance formation played important role in the victory of RJD in Lok Sabha Election 2004.

The 14th assembly elections in Bihar considered a landmark as Bihar remained the only state in India where polls had been conducted twice in the same year 2005 because February, 2005 elections gave a hung Assembly in Bihar. As the Feb. 2005 Assembly

elections came closer, the NDA camp began to influence “Paswan” to come into alliance with NDA, anticipating it would bring Muslims-Dalit votes, in favour of new alliance exploring the chances of clear majority in the Legislative Assembly of Bihar. But, Paswan refused and decided to have alliance with congress but this alliance was inoperative at ground level. Thus, in Feb. 2005 election alliance was mainly operational between JD(U) and BJP. LJP decided to fight election alone as it wanted to consolidate the Muslims and Dalit vote in its favour. Another notable feature of this election was distribution of tickets by political parties among notorious candidates having criminal records. In this way all the parties have contributed to the growth of the criminalization of politics.

The UPA alliance which was operational in 2004 Lok Sabha Election disappeared leading the parties of alliances fought separately, the February 2005 assembly election. However, no party got clear majority and it was a hung assembly. In fact, the results of this election were an indication that the destination for the RJD was far away from its easy reach and would have to perform the role of opposition in the state.

Table-5 Bihar Assembly election 2005 BIHAR ASSEMBLY ELECTION NOVEMBER 2005			
Alliance	Party	Seats won	%Vote
JD (U) alliance	JD(U)	88	20.46
	BJP	55	15.65
RJD alliance	RJD	54	23.45
	CONGRESS	9	6.09
	CPM	1	0.68
	Nationalist Congress	1	0.79
LJP Alliance	LJP	10	11.1
	CPI	3	2.09

The result of 2005(November) assembly election indicated a sign of change in politics of Bihar. The RJD which was once a ruling party of Bihar was badly thrashed by JD(U) alliance, which received absolute majority and formed new government in the state. The JD(U) alliance got total of 36.11% of votes. RJD alliance got total of 30.92%. LJP suffered loss in this election as it won only 10 seats which was 19 less than previous election in February 2005. The LJP alliance got total of 13.19% of vote.

The lok sabha election held in 2009 further witnessed the change in parties of opposition alliance. Taking lessons from previous 2005 assembly elections RJD and LJP came on a common platform in an alliance with samajwadi party and named it fourth front. However, congress decided to contest alone on all seats.

Table-6 LOKSABHA ELECTION2009			
Alliance	Party	Setas Won	%Vote
NDA	JD(U)	20	24.04-
	BJP	12	13.93-
Fourth Front	RJD	4	19.31
	LJP	0	6.55-
	SP	0	-

The decision of LJP to contest election in alliance proved to be disastrous as the party was not able to win a single seat in this election. Meanwhile the windfall of development made fortune for NDA and it registered unexpected victory. The increased number of seats for NDA brought downfall of RJD alliance. The magic spell of alliance which helped RJD to win 29 seats in 2004 loksabha reduced it to only 4 seatsonly.

Table- 7 BIHAR ASSEMBLY ELECTION2010			
Alliance	Party	Setas Won	%vote
JD(U) Alliance	JD(U)	115	38.56
	BJP	91	39.56
RJD Alliance	RJD	22	27.31
	LJP	3	21.78

Table 7 represented above show in 2010 assembly election JD (U) alliance once again registered landslide victory and formed government in the state for the second time. Capitalizing the wave on the theme development JDU –BJP alliance registered massive victory in Assembly elections .This routed RJD LJP Combine and congress to return to power for a second consecutive term. RJD alliance like earlier witnessed the trend of decline in their seats. The scale of victory can be measured from the fact that from 143 seats in the 2005 the ruling alliance captured 206 seats in 243 member House. Nitishkumar with the tag of development man was able to cashdown the government „s

Table 9 BIHAR ASSEMBLY ELECTION 2015

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performance in the state into massive victory. He also worked towards OBC empowerment politics by reaching out to the disadvantaged sections among OBC and scheduled caste by granting package for Mahadalits and extremely backward castes. He also adopted the strategy of attracting Muslims votes even at the expense of earning BJP's wrath. The opposition which ruled Bihar continuously for 15 years till 2005, was reduced to just 22 seats from its tally of 54 in 2005. Its alliance partner LJP led by Ram vilas Paswan was down at 3 from 10 in 2005.

Table 8 LOK SABHA ELECTION 2014

Alliance	Party	Seats won	Vote share percentage
NDA	BJP	22	29.86
	LJP	6	6.5
	RLSP	3	3
UPA	RJD	4	20.46
	INC	2	8.56
	NCP	1	1.2
JDU	JDU	2	16.04
	CPI	0	-

The political scene of Bihar witnessed a change during Lok Sabha election of 2014. The NDA was not getting support of its old allies JDU. JDU decided to kick his partner out in 2013, when it was announced that Modi would be the BJP's prime ministerial candidate in 2014. Then JDU decided to go to the battle without having alliance with BJP. The Lok Sabha election of 2014 was remarkable for BJP and its allies. In Bihar, the BJP and its allies had bagged 31 seats out of 40. The BJP alone won on 22 seats while Lok Janshakti Party (LJP) and the Rashtriya Lok Samata Party (RLSP) have won six and three seats respectively. A Narendra Modi wave helped the BJP and allies swept Bihar. The ruling party Janta Dal (United) ate humble pie, it won just two of Bihar's forty seats to the lower house. The Congress was reduced to two seats. The Rashtriya Janta Dal managed to get four seats but failed to retain Rabri Devi's seat of Saran where she was defeated by BJP candidate.

Alliance	Party	seats contested	seats won	vote share percentage
Mahagathbandhan	JDU	101	71	16.83
	RJD	101	80	18.35
	INC	41	27	6.66
NDA	BJP	157	53	24.42
	LJP	42	2	4.83
	RLSP	23	2	2.56
Left Alliance	CPI	98	0	1.36
	CPI-M	43	0	0.61
	Socialist Unity Centre of India	-	-	-
	All India Forward Block	9	0	0.2
	CPI-ML	98	3	1.54

The Bihar Assembly election of 2015 saw a new tie up of alliances. JDU, RJD and Congress formed the grand alliance and shared common platform to contest Bihar Assembly election of 2015. On the other hand, the BJP had high hope that Modi wave once again would cast its spell on Biharis. Instead, the Mahagathbandhan thrashed the BJP and its allies. The coming together of top two politicians of the state one with the history of Mandal politics while the other who transgressed and created post-Mandal development politics and the Congress has won rich electoral dividends. The traditional RJD voters Muslim-Yadav communities played key roles in re-establishing Nitish Kumar in Power. Another alliance was made by left parties who came together to fight the Assembly election of 2015.

3. Conclusion

After reviewing the data of Bihar Lok Sabha and Assembly elections it can be concluded that due to the dominance of Regional Parties in Bihar alliance politics occupies prominent position in Power sharing. One of the notable features here is NDA alliance (BJP-Samta party), (BJP-JD(U)) was one of the most stable alliances in the state as it completed the term of seventeen years before its break-up in 2013. On the other hand the alliance of RJD has been quite unstable and it changes its alliance partners in accordance with changing political situation. Grand alliance of 2015 assembly elections is a proof that there are no permanent friends and enemies in Politics. These frequent adjustments for poll alliances create confusion for the general voters in giving a clear verdict in favour of any political party. On account of above analysis the following points can be concluded that due to the pattern of alliance politics now a days each party naturally becomes complementary for other parties. Also, during these years, the pattern of alliance politics has reduced the rush of multi party system in Bihar by making competition bi polar or tri

polar. At the same time, the chief reason for the formation of such alliances are to broaden the support base of Political Parties and have easy access on all communities which ultimately resulted in vote maximization. Thus, it can be concluded alliance politics is a part of opportunistic politics through which the Political Parties in Bihar attempt to capture power in legislature both at the centre and in the state.

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3. political alliance-wikipedia
4. Riker William, Theory of political coalitions. Oxford press, pg- 15;
5. The decline of the dominance of congress in 1989 parliamentary election led to the emergence of pre-electoral alliances in the form of third front. Till then NDA alliance and UPA alliances are able to form government at the centre.
6. Sukhadev Nanda, coalition politics in Orissa, pg-20
7. Bihar experiences electoral alliance for the first time in 1977 assembly election where all opposition parties formed alliance against congress and able to win the election. Major parties which formed such alliance under the motivation of Jay Prakash were Jan Sangh, Bhartiya Lok Dal, Socialist parties and congress (O).
8. Sanjay Kumar; New phase of backward caste politics in Bihar, Ghanshayam Shah Democratic politics in India.
9. Ibid
10. BPPA - Bihar People's Party was a political party in Bihar. It was founded in 1993 by leader of the Samajwadi Krantikari Sena and former Janta Dal MLA, Anand Mohan Singh.
11. Arun Singh, Nitish Kumar and rise of Bihar, pg 187.
12. Bihar was divided under Bihar reorganization act 2000, and a new state of Jharkhand came into being on November 15, 2000, the birth anniversary of legendary Bhagwan Birsa Munda.
13. The burning of a train in Godhra on 27 February 2002, which caused the death of 58 people including Hindu activists returning from Ayodhya is believed to have triggered the violence. The riots resulted in the killings of 790 Muslims & 254 Hindus. Narendra Modi who belongs to BJP then CM of Gujarat has been accused of initiating and condoning the violence. So, as a result Paswan moved out of the BJP alliance.

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