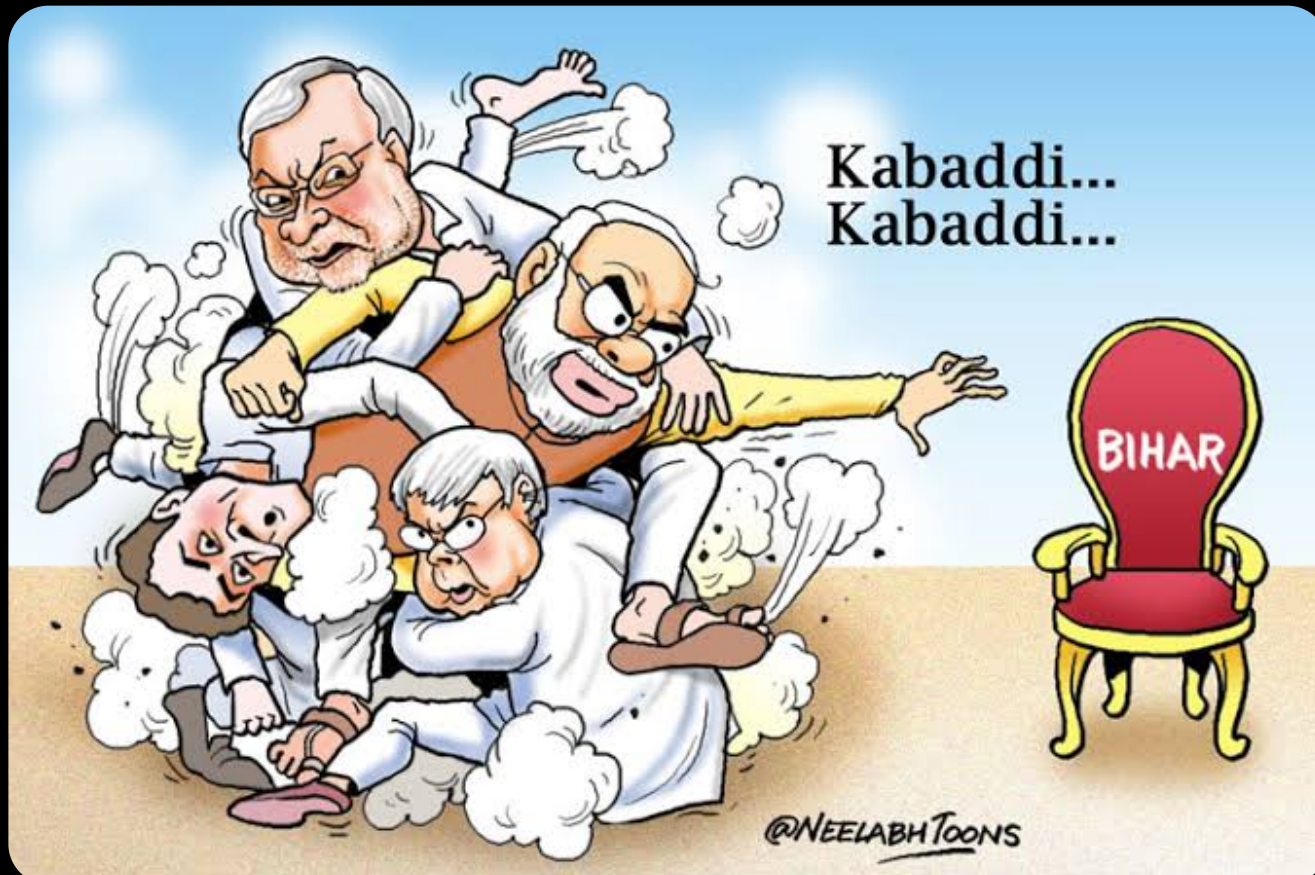


BIHAR ASSEMBLY ELECTIONS 2020: AN ANALYSIS



@ Sanket 🕒 16th Nov 2020 📁 Current Affairs

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Bihar, a state in eastern India, is characterized by the dominance of regional political parties in assembly elections.



Image Courtesy: [India Tv](#)

From Dr. Rajendra Prasad to the “hero of quit India movement” Jayaprakash Narayan, the state has always been fortunate in terms of political heritage.

Bihar: Once the land of Wisdom

The name Bihar has been derived from the Sanskrit word Vihara, which means the monastery. State’s capital Patna, once called Patliputra, was the capital of the largest empire ever on the Indian subcontinent, the **Great Mauryan Empire**. Bihar is the origin of Buddhism and Jainism. The age old Nalanda University used to be the destination for thousands of knowledge



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seekers coming from the different parts of Asia. Bodh Gaya, a site where Buddha is said to have attained enlightenment is in the district Gaya of Bihar.



Despite such a wonderful history, today Bihar gets the top place in the mess of Most Backward States in India.

Elections amid Covid-19

Bihar is the first state where elections are being held, after the beginning of Corona in March 2020. By the way, Biharis have considered themselves immune to corona, atleast that is what it looks like by seeing the crowd in rallies.

Elections are being held in 3 Phases:

First Phase: 28th Oct. (71 seats)

Second Phase: 3rd Nov. (94 seats)

Third Phase: 7th Nov. (78 seats)

Results will be declared on 10th November. Total no. of voters are **72927396**, out of which **33907979** are females and **160000** are service voters. Total no. of seats are 243, 122 for victory. 39 Seats are reserved using the Article 332 of the Indian Constitution.

RJD is the largest party in the current assembly with 80 seats. Right behind is Nitish's JD(U) with 71 Seats , then BJP (53 seats).

Looking back into the History

It was 1990, Biharis struggling with poverty, social discrimination all around, were looking for a new leader who would create the Bihar of their dreams and this is where Lalu Prasad Yadav's political empire begins.



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For the next 15 years, the politics of the state revolved around Lalu Prasad. However, his wife Rabri Devi also took power for some period, after Lalu went to jail in the well-known fodder scam case.

When Lalu failed to deliver his promises and anarchy started to become the identity of Bihar, Biharis expressed their trust in Nitish. But their hope collapsed in just 7 days and Lalu’s RJD again came into power in the March 2000 elections.

Bihar Towards Change

It was November 2005, Nitish, with the support of BJP, was being given the power of Bihar. With the hope that there would be some qualitative improvement in the Law and Order situation in the state, people voted for him.



At some extent, Nitish preferred to leave the traditional caste politics and favored developmental politics. People’s trust remained intact, Nitish was re-elected in 2010. The politics of this decade begins from here. In 2014, going against Narendra Modi’s PM candidature, Nitish Kumar disassociated himself from NDA. Here NaMo became PM, their Nitish resigned as CM. He handed the throne to his most trusted partner Jitan Ram Manjhi. In February 2015, sacking Manjhi, Nitish himself took power. The reason was much clear, the upcoming November 2015 assembly elections, also the increasing popularity of Manjhi at the party.

The November 2015 Elections

Going against Nitish Kumar, Manjhi left JDU and formed his new party Hindustani Awam Morcha(HAM). The equation was much inverted. The two old political rivals were together, Lalu and Nitish.

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The main fight was b/w the Mahagathbandhan and the BJP-led NDA. Modi wave was a big challenge in front of Nitish. Politics had come down to a very low level. There was a flurry of personal allegations from both sides. Return of **Jungle-Raj**, the one thing on which the NDA warned the voters most, proved ineffective. Election results came, Lalu's RJD emerged as the largest party. Nitish with the support of RJD, again elected as CM. Lalu's younger son Tejashwi held the post of deputy CM.



It seemed as if the politics of the state had stabilized. But this so-called stability collapsed in just 20 months. Tejashwi faced serious allegations of corruption. Nitish resigned as CM, said goodbye to the Mahagathbandhan, adios. Once again, the NDA-JDU government was formed, the BJP again came in power. As if Nitish had now started to feel good with Narendra Modi.

The Grand 2020 Bihar Elections:

On 25 September 2020, Election commission of India announced the dates for Bihar assembly elections. Though, wooing voters had already started much earlier. During the nationwide lockdown, Nitish opposed special trains in March and refused to pay for shramik special trains, the opposition made it an important issue. The main battle is b/w the Mahagathbandhan and the NDA, though some new players will also try their luck this time.

Mahagathbandhan, led by RJD, is an alliance of parties including Congress and left parties. While NDA in Bihar is led by JDU, along with the support of BJP. Late Ram Vilas Paswan's party **LJP** has distanced itself from the NDA in Bihar, although their displeasure is only with the JDU.



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LJP is sensing an *anti-incumbency* against Nitish Kumar and is helping the BJP leverage that to aim for a single largest party slot. The party won just 2 seats in the house of 243 in 2015 assembly elections, but in 2019 general elections, the Modi factor was worked properly and LJP won all 6 seats it contested. In the current election, LJP is planning to contest 143 seats includes fielding a candidate in each seat being contested by JDU. Chirag Paswan, the current party president is making all the right noises ahead of election. He has made the emotional pitch of bringing back Bihari's lost Pride. It is clear, LJP win or loses, it will play a spoilsport for Nitish's game. The left's Poster boy Kanhaiya Kumar is not contesting the elections this time, he is contributing to the election campaign only.

The arrival of a new Personality: Pushpam Priya Choudhary

Full-Page advertisements in different newspapers in the mid of March 2020 caught the attention of many, with a young lady staring at readers along with the caption...CM Candidate of Bihar 2020.



She is Pushpam Priya Chaudhary, daughter of former MLC from Bihar, Vinod Chaudhary. Pushpam, based in UK's London, promised to turn Bihar into Europe by 2030. According to her, she has a Masters in Developmental Studies from the University of Sussex and a Masters in Public Administration from the London School of Economics and Political Science.

Caste Equation:

Winning the Bihar election without a proper Caste Equation would be just a hypothetical event. Here the pattern of voting is largely decided on the basis of caste similarity. Political parties also distribute tickets on the same basis.



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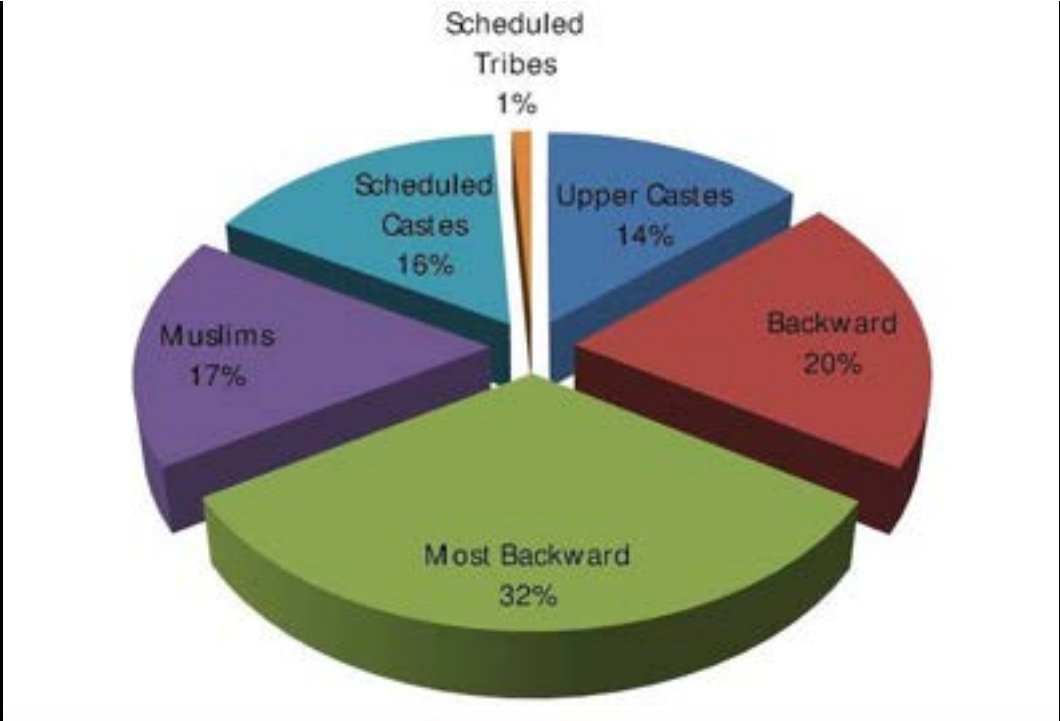
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MY Combination:

MY stands for **Muslims** and **Yadavs**, a formula wrought by RJD supremo Lalu Prasad to climb to power in 1990. MY together makes 30% of the total population in Bihar. There are about 20% upper castes in Bihar of which **Rajput** are the highest. **Brahmins** and **Bhumihars** also have a significant number. Their inclination has always been towards BJP.

Nitish’s party JDU has the support of the **Kurmi** caste, because Nitish himself comes from the same caste. At the same time, Nitish has a lot of popularity b/w the extremely backward classes. LJP is very popular among the Dalits because of their charismatic leader Late Ram Vilas Paswan.

PROMISES

The bigger the promises, the more the votes. This is Politics.



Starting with the opposition, the RJD has promised 10 lakh jobs if voted back to power. Unemployment is the biggest problem in Bihar. People have to migrate to other states for employment. Same promise also came from BJP side, 19 lakh employments.

- **Reservation in Government Jobs**

There is a common belief in Bihar that only a government job can meet the need of a good wife and a good dowry. Although, dowry is prohibited in the state. The RJD has promised that 85% of the posts in government jobs will be reserved for the youth of Bihar as soon as they came to power. Obviously, this will attract a large section of youth. Another big promise has been made

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about spending on education, saying that 22 % of GDP will be spent on education. In the season of promises, BJP has also opened its pamphlets. Promised that Corona Vaccine will be free for Biharis, if they won. Nitish along with his previous [Saat-Nishchay](#) disclosed that in the upcoming state polls his main promise to voters will be irrigation facilities to all the agricultural land in the state.



Emerging from the mourning of the demise of their leader, LJP also promised that they will implement their **Bihar First, Bihari First** policy without delay. As well as, the party promised to set up a coaching city on the lines of Kota, Rajasthan.

Conclusion

There are only a few days left in the election. Bihar is in dire need of change. Each side has promised change, it is to be seen who the people of Bihar trust.

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