



Evolution of Bihar Legislative Assembly with special reference to caste

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Last two decades have witnessed a lot of change in the functioning as well as the structure of Bihar Legislative Assembly. Therefore a research work on the evolution of Bihar Vidhan Sabha mainly focusing upon the relation between the Assembly and the Council, electoral turmoil from 1990-2005, change in the structure of Bihar Legislative Assembly, following the formation of Jharkhand state, Caste ideology versus development ideology and nature of present government were undertaken. For this purpose, we administered a set of questionnaire from MLA's as well as common people and analyzed their answers for content analysis and generalizing facts. We also visited Vidhan Sabha Library for collection of secondary data.

At present, only five states have a bicameral legislature and Bihar is one of them. Council is often described as White Elephant but during the research it was found that people as well as MLA's recognize it as a vital body. Bihar is famous for caste-politics. During the research it was found that people like to vote for their caste members and even politicians, to some extent, are sure of getting votes from their own caste people. Though caste is losing its social significance with every degree of increase in education and awareness, its political significance is being accelerated at the same rate. Thirdly, study of gradual shift of power from the congress to RJD and then to NDA-coalition headed by Mr. Nitish Kumar was quite interesting. Congress faced defeat in 1990 elections probably due to its inability to give adequate representation to backward castes. Mr. Laloo Prasad Yadav (JD now RJD) had come to power by mobilizing caste through the 'backward' identity.

But his party was voted out of power in 2005 when Bihar's economic growth came to be characterized by a bull, because caste as a factor cannot be stretched too far. Sooner or later 'development' issue had to come to the scene. Among the significant changes that followed the formation of Jharkhand were (a) strong increase of RJD's proportion within the Assembly (b) small growth in the strength of JD(U) and Samata party within NDA in Bihar (c) Almost disappearance of ST-member from Bihar Legislative Assembly.

At present, the opposition blames Nitish Kumar's government as a 'rule of bureaucracy' However the research revealed that his attaching more importance to bureaucrats has proved fruitful in the accomplishment of valuable tasks and in checking undesired influence of local politicians upon the public officials. There has been much politicization of caste. But gradually people have started understanding that only 'development' ultimately matters. 3\4th of the people agreed that if the government works efficiently they will cast votes in their favour irrespective of caste, creed or sex. It is important to note that people are ready to vote for the party that works and the party they vote will have to work.

Keyword : MLA - Member of Legislative Assembly.