

Chapter V

Emergence of Multiple Fragments: A study of Selected State Party Systems

The Chapter similarly discusses the state party systems of the eastern and western regions. This chapter discusses some of the selected politically significant states such as Bihar, Jharkhand, West Bengal and Maharashtra. The chapter aims to study some of the selected state party systems and its central features as well enlist some of the most significant immediate factors that led to the bifurcation of the Indian party system into two levels- national and state. Through the chapter attempts has been made to see how the newly formed political novices in the state such Rashtriya Janata Dal in Bihar, Trinamool Congress in West Bengal and Shiv Sena and Maharashtra Navnirman Sena in Maharashtra introduced changes in the state party systems.

Bihar

Bihar had been an equally significant state in the Hindi heartland and was under the Congress rule since independence. Bihar exhibited a competitive multiparty system with Congress as the 'majority party' in the state party system till the third assembly election. With the 1951 state election to the Legislative assembly of Bihar, Congress emerged as the largest political party with 239 seats out of the 322 contested seats with 41.38 percent of votes and 42.16 percent of seats. Jharkhand Party (JP) could bag just 32 out of the 53 seats with 8.01 percent of votes and 38.57 percent of seats. Socialist Party stood distant third with 23 seats polling 18.11 percent of votes and 22.18 percent of seats (<http://www.eci.nic.in>). With the second consecutive assembly election of 1957, INC bagged largest share of votes and seats for itself with 210 seats polling 42.09 percent of votes and 42.56 percent of seats. Praja Socialist Party (PSP) could fetch for itself 31 seats with 16.01 percent of votes and 21.76 percent of seats. Jharkhand Party won 31 seats out of the 70 seats with 7.08 percent of votes and 29.84 percent of seats (<http://www.eci.nic.in>). Congress with the 1962 state election secured majority of seats and won 185 seats out of 318 seats with 41.35% of votes. PSP secured 14.17% of votes and won 29 seats out of the 84 contested seats with

6.23% of votes. Jana Sangh secured only 2.77% of votes and could win only 3 seats. Jharkhand Party, the state-based party could bag 20 of the 75 contested seats polling 4.39 percent of votes and 21.98 percent of seats. The state remained under the rule of the Congress Party since the first assembly poll with Srikrishna Sinha as the chief minister of the state (<http://www.eci.nic.in>).

Factors that led to Emergence of Non-Congress Alternative in the State Party System

The incompetent handling of Bihar famine by the then Congress ruled state government under the leadership of Chief Minister K.B Sahay¹ coupled with factionalism within the Bihar Congress over the post of the chief minister after the death of Srikrishna Sinha eroded the credibility of the Indian National Congress in the state. The K.B Sahay government was discredited for not being able to assess the situation that developed during the famine of 1966-1967 adequately and was neither able to organize relief for the suffering masses of the state. The overemphasis on industrialization by the Congress ruled central government led to the neglect of the agricultural sector in the country. The nation in general faced food crisis. Bihar was worst effected by drought as well as famine. Bihar has been primarily an agricultural state. The capacity of the industrial sector to create employment opportunities was very restricted as the state was never prosperous industrially. Hence, the agricultural sector remained one of the most primary sectors for the state and the rising population depended heavily on it for consumption. Hence, a good monsoon is always very important for the state because sufficient rainfall can yield the required food grain for the growing population of the state. Hence, the drought and famine situation led to starvation for the masses (Dyson & Maharatna, 1992, pp.1325-1326). In addition to it, the inefficiency of the Congress ruled state administration to deal with the grave situation created dissatisfaction towards the Congress Party and the newly formed non-Congress coalition benefitted from the situation and it emerged as the most viable alternative to the electorates who were also facing numerous other crises. A general wave of anti-Congressism had swept the country and Bihar too was influenced by it.

¹ For chronological names of successive chief ministers of Bihar
See <http://vidhansabha.bih.nic.in/cm.html>

Congress was already riddled with factionalism and lacked the necessary organizational zeal and strength and therefore its electoral performance had suffered a nosedive in the state.

Since the death of Srikrishna Sinha in 1961 who had been in charge of the state mantle since 1937 a battle for succession developed among three potential contenders namely, Mahamaya Prasad Sinha, Binodanand Jha and K.B Sahay (Navneeth, 1968, p. 1311). However, with the support of K.B Sahay, Binodanand Jha became the chief minister of the state after the death of Sinha and he remained in the position till 1963 (www.biharassembly.org). However, he was dislodged from his position under the Kamraj Plan and was replaced by K.B Sahay who remained in power till 1967. Bihar with the 1967 assembly polls for the first time since independence had a non-Congress government. Since the 1967 assembly election and till the 1977 assembly election, Bihar exhibited a competitive multiparty system that was bipolarized (between Congress Party and a non-Congress alternative) in nature and was characterized by coalition politics. Large number of Congress Party workers had defected from the party and new political parties came into being. This weakened the strength of the Congress Party in the state. Apart from the drought during the Kharif season of 1966, other grave issues were also brewing in the state prior to the 1967 assembly election which included discontentment over rising prices of essential commodities, student in general were dissatisfied with the Congress-led administration in the state due to the death of a student in 1967 by police firing, the government employees were unhappy with the administration due to stagnant pay structure with no increase in dearness allowances. Bihar voted in favour of a non-Congress government (the Samyukta Vidhayak Dal Government) which comprised of the Sanghatha Socialist Party (SSP), Praja Socialist Party (PSP), the Jana Sangh (BJS), the Jan Kranti Dal (JKD) and the Communist Party of India (CPI). In the 1967 State election to the Legislative Assembly of Bihar, INC secured 128 seats out of the 318 seats with 33.09 percent of votes whereas BJS secured only 26 seats, PSP got some 18 seats, SSP managed to secure 68 seats, JKD bagged just 13 seats and the CPI won 24 seats (<http://www.eci.nic.in>). SVD formed a coalition and secured majority in the assembly and Mahamaya Prasad Sinha of Jan Kranti Dal² became the first non-

² The political novice JKD was formed after Mahamaya Prasad Sinha and Kamakhya Narain Singh (Raja of Ramgarh) defected from the Congress party and formed the party. JKD led to realignment of

Congress Chief Minister of Bihar. The 1966 famine and drought situation, heavy flood in North Bihar during 1967 and the poor handling of these crises by the Congress ruled state administration, student unrest over the death of a student due to police firing, growing dissatisfaction and agitations by government employees for better salaries and allowance, rise in the rate of mortality in the state along with rising cases of starvation and malnutrition jeopardized the Sahay ministry's prospect of coming back to power with the 1967 state election (Brass, 1986, pp.251-252). Besides, the electoral fortune of the Congress party suffered in the state because of the internal differences, dissensions and bickering among the party bosses and workers (Navneeth, 1968, p. 1311).

However, even the United Front ministry headed by Mahamaya Prasad Sinha was not able to emerge as a powerful alternative to Congress Party in the state. The government was displaced from power following a no-confidence motion within a year of its formation. Many UF ministers defected and formed the Shoshit Dal, another political novice which then came to power with the support of the Congress party. The defection by Bhindeshwari Prasad Mandal with numerous ministers from the SVD government led to the downfall of the United Front government. Mandal defected from Congress (due to differences with RamLakhan Yadav, another important Yadav leader in Congress) and joined SSP. On February 1968, B.P Mandal was sworn in as the chief minister of the state. This new ministry however lasted for more than a month and was replaced by another non-congress coalition with the backing of U.F under the chief ministership of Bhola Paswan Shastri, a dalit, following a defection by 17 Congressmen who voted with the UF on a motion of no-confidence. The Shastri-led government too fell on 1968 after a major defection and President's rule was imposed in the state for 244 days. The Paswan ministry also did not remain in power for long. Raja of Ramgarh, one of the greatest Zaminder of Bihar who always played an active role in Bihar politics in order to secure his own interest, rebelled against the Paswan government with his followers due to differences with the Paswan government over the allocation of portfolios (Brass, 1968, pp.1183-1184). Thus, Bihar witnessed formation of a series of unstable and underperforming governments that failed to provide any services to its masses and was only

the state party system by relegating Congress to the position of the Opposition party in the state and itself emerging as the one of the constituents of the ruling coalition.

characterized by internal dissensions, factionalism and instability. The interest of the state and its masses was overshadowed by the personal interests of the power craving prominent leaders. The state witnessed large-scale assault of democracy due to the conflict over political opportunities.

The state went for assembly election in 1969 and the Congress restored its position in the state and it won 118 of the 318 contested seats polling 30.46 percent of votes and 30.46 percent of seats. Shoshit Dal won six seats and Janata Party bagged 14 seats. Bharatiya Kranti Dal (BKD) could fetch just 6 seats for itself and BJS could capture 34 of the 304 contested seats polling 15.63 percent of votes and 21.85 percent of seats (<http://www.eci.nic.in>). The Congress did not get a majority in the legislature and formed a coalition government by allying with the Shoshit Dal, the Janata Party and the Jharkhand Party. The Sardar Harihar Singh ministry lasted for only 77 days (www.biharlegislativeassembly.org). This was replaced by the formation of another non-congress United Front ministry that came to power in the state. The CPI, the Jan Sangh and the SSP supported the ministry from outside and the Bhola Paswan Shastri-led government remained in power for only one year. A 255 days President rule was imposed in the state. Between 1969 and 1972 five ministries were formed (Shah, 1977, p.609). Congress remained in power with the 1972 assembly polls as well with 167 seats polling 33.12 percent of votes and 41.22 percent of seats. Indian National Congress (Organisation) could win just 30 of the 272 contested seats polling 14.82 percent of votes and 16.84 percent of seats. BJS fetched for itself only 25 seats out of the 270 contested seats with 11.69 percent of votes and 13.80 percent of seats (<http://www.eci.nic.in>). The socialist policies adopted by the Congress (I) enabled the party to improve its tally of seats and share of votes. However, the socialist measures such as move for immediate land reform measures, public distribution of food grains, provision of housing sites for rural poor, ceiling on rural holding, removal of disparities in income and opportunities, etc. were implemented inefficiently. Moreover, the party remained riddled with factionalism and rivalries for ministerial positions among each caste, viz. Kayasthas, Bhumiards, Rajputs and Brahmins aggravated and it became a dominant feature thus making the governments in power inefficient and underperforming. Simultaneously, the dalit and backward caste community of Bihar continuously kept struggling to challenge and replace pre-dominance of the upper caste groups over state politics and administration. People of

the country were much more interested in 'performance' and substantial socio-economic developments rather than on vague promises and manifestoes.

With the 1977 assembly polls the contest for power in Bihar oscillated mainly between Congress and the Janata Party, the newly formed anti-congress coalition. The Janata Party was able to dislodge the Congress party from power by bagging 214 of the 311 contested seats, polling 42.68 percent of votes and 44.23 percent of seats following the anti-congress wave in the state and in the country as well. INC could fetch for itself only 57 of the 286 contested seats, polling 23.58 percent of votes and 26.58 percent of seats (<http://www.eci.nic.in>). With the 1977 assembly polls, it secured 9.54 percent less number of votes and 14.64 percent of less number of seats. Indira Gandhi began to lose her credibility and popularity from 1973 onwards due to nationwide spread of droughts and some other serious challenges. Although the 1971 Indo-Pak War which led to the creation of Bangladesh owing to the political maturity of Mrs. Indira Gandhi gave her a stature of a national leader but it caused a huge strain on India's economy. The economy toiled through the effects of inflation. Prices of all commodities increased manifold. Oil prices shoot up following the Arab-Israel War in 1973. Hence, there was an international oil crisis. The economy got engulfed with the after effects of inflation which caused hardships to the people. There was a decline in industrial growth and agricultural productivity, along with reduced employment opportunities. With the deteriorating economic situation sporadic agitations of discontentment erupted in several parts of the country and eventually took the form of movement. Therefore, the Congress party in general lost its popularity.

The country witnessed Naxalite upsurge in various parts of the country organized mostly by poor peasants and the landless as they were grossly deprived of their legitimate claims and rights and were oppressed by the feudal lords. The Naxalite movement have had spread almost throughout the country but was most prominent in the state of West Bengal (in the Naxalbari area of Darjeeling District), Kerala, Andhra Pradesh, Punjab and in Bihar as well.³

The country also witnessed movements organized by the students in protest against corruption in the government, rising prices of food grains, cooking oil and other

³ The naxalites used to forcefully take away lands from the rich landlords and gave it to the poor and the landless.

essential commodities, food scarcity, unemployment etc. Under the leadership of Jay Prakash Narayan these students movement, which were mostly intense in Bihar and Gujarat, gained rigorous momentum and assumed a national stature.⁴ The movement demanded dismissal of the government at the centre led by the Congress. Besides, there was a nationwide strike by Indian Railway and its workers in 1974, paralyzing the entire nation.⁵ Bihar was no exception and it saw emergence of a non-Congress coalition government in the state. The Bihar Movement (1974-1975) under the leadership of Jayaprakash Narayan aimed at bringing about a revolution in the economic, educational, social, political and other spheres. It challenged the existing system (Shah, p.605, 1977). Bihar was engulfed with acute backwardness. Its per capita income was lowest among all the states which in turn affected the pattern of consumption and production. Thousands of people died due to flood, famine and epidemics. Health services were abysmally poor. Agricultural labourers led a very pathetic life and was deprived of proper irrigational facilities and failed to get proper price for their produce. They had to pay high prices for seeds, fertilizers and the landlords from the upper castes exploited these small cultivators or the agricultural labourers who mostly belonged to the scheduled caste, scheduled tribes and middle and low castes groups. The state administration took no measures to redress these grave issues and remained riddled with factionalism and competed for more powerful ministerial positions. The Bihar administration remained under the control of upper castes and landed class who dominated the administration and influenced government's decision-making process and failed to adopt a pro-people image. This created a resentment among the oppressed and deprived sections of the society who revolted by voting for a non-Congress coalition in the state. Corruption, black marketing, hoarding was rampant in the state. Agrarian tensions were intense in the state since late sixties. Hence, Bihar witnessed Naxalite upsurge in the state which involved mobilising poor peasants, landless labourers to demand for better services from the state administration. These sections of the society remained deprived of every essential service such as health services, basic education, etc. During the seventies due to rising inflation the other sections of the society such as the teachers,

⁴ These movements were non-violent in nature and had assumed a political character

⁵ The National Coordination Committee for Railway men's Struggle led by George Fernandes gave a call for nationwide strike by all employees of the Railways for pressing their demand related to bonus and service conditions.

government employees, and middle class had to face increasing hardships. The state in protest of uncontrolled rising prices of essential commodities got engulfed with agitations, demonstrations, protest movements and bandhs. Meanwhile, the state also witnessed agitations by students for reduction in fees, prices of books and essential commodities, allowances for unemployed youths, better facilities in student hostels, etc. Moreover, the imposition of national emergency by the Indira-led central government and the excesses committed during the emergency further jeopardized the electoral credibility of the party in the state. The excesses committed by the Indira led Congress Party invited large scale unpopularity for the party in the country as well and therefore the Congress (I) ministry was replaced by the Janata government in the country as well as in most of the states (Shah, 1977, pp. 606-614). The Jagannath Mishra⁶ administration during the emergency period of 1975-1977 further escalated the level of unpopularity of the Congress Party in the state of Bihar. The Mishra administration was marked by corruption, favouritism, nepotism, criminalization of politics, ineffectiveness of the state administration and the State Police, unconstitutional political interference in matters of appointment and administration, increasing intensity of riots and peasant rebellions due falling standard of living (Kohli, 2009, pp. 264-265). Hence, even in the state of Bihar Congress (I) didn't emerge victorious with the 1977 assembly election.

The Emergence of Identity Politics in Bihar

Karpoori Thakur after assuming power in June 1977 as a populist initiative and in order to create a backward caste based vote bank introduced reservation for the backward castes in government services as recommended in the Mungeri Lal Commission in order to facilitate these sections of the society to scale up economically and socially. The former Congress ruled Jagannath Mishra government did not take any initiative to implement these recommendations which prescribed for reservation for backward caste groups in jobs and educational institutions and this further destabilize the position of the party in the state (Bharti, 1990, pp. 309-310).

⁶ Mishra as a Sanjay Gandhi loyalists and he was made the chief minister during the emergency periods to keep the state administration under the indirect control of the Indira Gandhi and Sanjay Gandhi.

However, the Janata government was not able to prove itself as a viable alternative to Congress party because it too got riddled with factionalism, dissensions and internal squabbles because of its incoherent character. Moreover, the upper castes coterie felt threatened by the rise of a backward class leader and ultimately an upper caste-dalit alliance succeeded in replacing Karpoori Thakur, (a barber, who represented the entire backward community) by Ramsunder Das, a dalit, as the chief minister of the state. He continued to rule till 1980 under the banner of the Janata Party. Increasing incidents of violent riots and demonstrations by the students from upper-caste backgrounds along with the Bihar Congress workers threatened the survival of Karpoori Thakur and his reservation policies. Eventually, in April 1979 Karpoori Thakur resigned from his position of the chief minister of the state and Ramsunder Das succeeded him.

Therefore, with the 1980 state election to the legislative assembly of Bihar, due to the incompetent administration by the Janata Party, Congress was bestowed with the largest number of seats. It won 169 of the 311 contested seats polling 34.20 percent of votes and 35.05 percent of seats. Janata Party contested the election in the form of various factions, namely, JNP, JNP (JP) and JNP (SC). JNP drew a blank. JNP (JP) secured only 13 of the 240 contested seats with 7.211 percent of votes and 9.48 percent of seats and JNP (SC) bagged only 42 of the 254 contested seats polling 15.63 percent of votes and 19.38 percent of seats. BJP, the offshoot of Jana Sangh could fetch for itself only 21 of the 246 contested seats with 8.41 percent of votes and 11.29 percent of seats. Jharkhand Mukti Morcha (JMM) won 11 of the 31 seats with 1.69 percent of votes and 25.11 percent of seats (<http://www.eci.nic.in>). The Congress party reemerged as the largest party with the 1985 assembly polls as well with 196 of the 323 contested seats polling 39.30 percent of votes and 39.35 percent of seats. BJP could secure just 16 of the 234 contested seats with 7.54 percent of votes and 10.53 percent of seats. JNP won 13 of the 229 contested seats with 7.21 percent of votes and 10.2 percent of seats. JMM could win only 9 of the 57 contested seats with 10.82 percent of votes and 13.75 percent of seats (<http://www.eci.nic.in>). With both the state elections Congress came to power owing to 'Indira wave' and 'Rajiv wave' (Louis, p. 979, 2000). Hence since the 1980 assembly election till the 1985 assembly election, Bihar remained characterized by a competitive multiparty system with restoration of Congress Party as the majority party in the state party system. For almost a decade

Bihar remained entangled with maladministration, riots, increasing incidents of political violence, brutal murders, socio-economic problems such as rising prices, caste rivalry and atrocities, political discontentment, police atrocities, massacres, militancy, naxalism, agrarian and economic stagnation, insufficient infrastructural development. Governmental ineffectiveness and no major policy initiatives undertaken during the Mishra, Dubey, Bhagatwat Jha Azad and Satyendra Narayan Singh tenures contributed and worsened the socio-economic and political condition of Bihar. Hence since 1990 Congress Party has lost ground in the state of Bihar (Kohli, 2009, pp 271-275).

Due to vacuum created by the unpopularity of the Congress party many state-based political parties acquired prominence at the national and state level politics. With the demise of Rajiv-led Congress (I) at the national level due to various drawbacks, Janata Dal emerged as an alternative force to reckon with at the national level as well in various states. The socialist forces in the state combined under the banner of Janata Dal came to power in the state of Bihar with the 1990 assembly polls. Janata Dal (JD) emerged as the new alternative for the state with the 1990 assembly election and INC was reduced to the position of an opposition party with 71 of the 323 contested seats with 24.78 percent of votes and 24.86 percent of seats. Janata Dal bagged 122 of the 276 contested seats polling 25.61 percent of votes and 29.84 percent of seats. BJP 39 seats with 11.61 percent of votes and 16.35 percent of seats. JMM, a state-based party secured 19 of the 82 contested seats with 3.14 percent of votes 15.20 percent of seats (<http://www.eci.nic.in>). The implementation of the Mandal Commission report at the central level empowered the backward castes section of the country and made these sections politically more significant. The backward caste groups deserted the Congress for being apathetic to their aspirations and rallied behind parties that promised to represent their cause and fulfill their aspirations. The votes by the Yadavs, Kurmis and the Koeris, the numerically more significant backward caste in the North Indian state such as U.P and Bihar have since 1989 exercised a huge impact in the reconfiguration and realignment of the party system in these states. The implementation of the reservation policy by the Janata Dal-led central government accentuated the trend of caste-based politics in the country as well as in various states such as UP and Bihar. The implementation of the reservation policy by V.P Singh government enabled consolidation of the Other Backward Caste (OBC) vote behind

the Janata Dal. The electorates voted on caste line. Political parties of the state contesting elections appealed to the masses in the name of identity. The OBCs rallied behind the Janata Dal, the upper caste continued to remain inclined towards the Congress or towards the BJP. The Janata Dal swept the assembly polls of 1990 due to the absolute support from these three OBC castes, namely the Yadavs, the Kurmis and the Koeris⁷ (Jenkins, p.126, 2004). In Bihar, the Janata Dal could consolidate its base due to the support it had received from the OBCs, dalits and the minorities (Sinha & Sinha, 1996, p.1650). The Janata Dal emerged as an 'alternative' to Congress and could come back to power in the state with the 1995 assembly election as well. Hence again since 1989 assembly election the state party system acquired a bipolarized nature with a competitive multiparty state party system. However, the Yadavs were numerically more powerful than the kurmis and the koeris and were the biggest gainer of the reservation policy. The Yadavs are the political elites among the backward castes and benefitted the most from the reservation policies. Laloo Prasad Yadav emerged as the new leader representing the backwards in the state. He became the chief minister of the state in 1990 and in 1995 as well. After the death of Karpoori Thakur (who for the first time implemented affirmative policies for the backward caste as per the recommendations of the Mungeri Lal Commission) new leaders such as Laloo Prasad Yadav, Nitish Kumar and Jai Prakash Yadav emerged as the representative of the community (Verma, 1991, p.1143).

The implementation of Mandal Commission Report invited large-scale protest from the upper caste section of the society whose dominance was threatened in the political, administrative and bureaucratic life. The anti-Mandal agitation was backed by BJP to consolidate and expand its base among the Hindu and upper caste vote bank and the pro Mandal-agitations were spearheaded by Janata Dal. This enabled Janata

⁷ They possessed agricultural lands but the sector remained mainly dominated by the upper caste such as the Rajputs, the Bhumiars and the Brahmins. The lower castes had to face repression and therefore they demanded strong agricultural reforms. Bihar witnessed key land reform movements such as the Bhoodan movement and the movement led by the Kisan Sabha which fought for abolition of the zamindari system, wages to agricultural labourers, abolition of land ceiling, etc. With time some of the backward castes group could improve their economic position emerge as the new agrarian class or the 'kulaks' and began to assert their position in the social and political spheres. They resented the rule of the Congress party, largely labeled as the party representing the interests of the upper caste in various instances and became more assertive in their resistance with the JP movement. Infact following the JP movement with its epicenter in the state of Bihar the Janata Party could come to power and installed a backward as the chief minister of the state breaking the dominance of the upper caste in the Bihar's political system. The implementation of the Mandal Commission Report provided impetus to their assertiveness and enabled the OBCs, mainly the Yadavs to bring an overhaul transformation in the political and bureaucratic life of Bihar.

Dal to emerge as the new alternative and ushered the commencement of the process of consolidation of the hegemony of the backward and dalit caste in the state of Bihar. It intensified the backward caste solidarity in the state which existed since late 1960s. The backward and the dalit aspired for dignified and decent life free from exploitation and suppression and wanted to scale up economically, socially and educationally in the society. The BJP in order to consolidate its base also organised massive protest. A *rath yatra* was announced after the V.P Singh, the then Prime Minister of 1989 Janata Dal-led central government announced partial implementation of the Mandal Commission Report to ensure affirmative policies for the backward castes and empower the backward caste against the upper castes. This led to large-scale anti-mandal agitation mostly led by upper-caste organisations, parties and student association. The anti-Mandal agitation which involved road blockades, self-immolation, boycott of classes in colleges and universities, demonstrations, ransacking of government offices and properties, vandalism, processions, etc. gained momentum in Uttar Pradesh and gradually started spreading its tentacles in the adjoining states. Bihar was also engulfed by it besides Madhya Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, Delhi, etc (Bharti, 1990, p.309). However, in Bihar the incidents of violence was negligible as the Laloo Prasad Yadav government in power prevented the Advani-led *rath yatra* from entering the state and arrested Advani during his campaign at Samastipur thereby preventing incidence of communal riots in the state. Bihar reported not a single communal violence at the aftermath of the Babri mosque demolition. The Muslims of the state felt secure under the leadership of Laloo Prasad Yadav. These incidences perpetuated and consolidated the OBC-Dalit-Muslim-Tribal support for the Laloo Prasad Yadav-led Janata Dal government in the state. However, the truncated implementation of the reservation policy mostly in favour of the Yadav community invited unpopularity for the leader. The Yadavs have benefited more than any other lower caste groups because of its numerical strength and they were also favoured by their own caste leaders. The trend of ‘Yadavization’ invited resentment from other components of the OBC section of the society, namely the kurmis and the koeris (Jaffrelot, 2010, p.475). This led to a split in Janata Dal in 1994 when Nitish Kumar, a prominent Kurmi leader along with George Fernandes, an eminent socialist resented against the biasness of the Laloo Prasad government towards his own caste fellows and formed a party known as the Samata Party (SP)

(www.samataparty.org.in). Soon after the formation of the party the kurmis and koeris switched over their allegiance to the Samata party and voted for the Samata Party-BJP alliance to uproot the Laloo Prasad Yadav's Janata Dal from power. However, the alliance could not tilt the position of the Laloo-led Janata Dal in the state.

Coupled with this the Laloo Prasad Yadav-led Janata Dal government got indulged in anti-people and corrupt practices. The government used repressive measures to curb the demands of the people. The peasants' organisations fighting against the landed class and their oppressions had to face serious difficulties and repression such as illegal arrest, police firing ban over peasant organisation, etc. in the hands of the state machinery. The demand for the separate state of Jharkhand was neither fulfilled despite the fact that JMM were allies of the ruling Janata Dal (JD). JD had earlier promised to fulfill the demand of JMM once it comes to power. Apart from the peasant class, the working class also had to undergo numerous injustices such as retrenchment during the rule of JD government. His style of function became a one-man show; democracy was butchered due to the authoritarian functioning by the party and the government. The party and the government were riddled by infightings and rivalries. The arrogance of Laloo Prasad led to the waning of his charisma and invited unpopularity for Janata Dal (Kumar, 1999, pp.2474-2475). He embarked upon an anti-encroachment policy during the late 1995 to beautify Patna, the capital city of Bihar and this drive by his government made him more unpopular among the masses. Although during the election campaign he spoke for development for the common masses but his support for the New Economic Policy of the Rao-led Congress (I) government robbed him of his pro-people image (Sinha & Sinha, 1996, p. 1651).

The 1995 state election in fact, increased the tally of seats for Janata Dal. It secured 45 more seats with the 1995 assembly polls. It bagged for itself 167 of the 264 contested seats polling 27.08 percent of votes and 34.50 percent of seats. INC secured only 29 of the 230 seats with 16.27 percent of votes and 16.51 percent of seats. BJP won 41 of the 315 contested seats polling 12.96 percent of votes and 13.37 percent of seats. Samata Party (SP) could fetch for itself just seven seats out of the 310 contested seats with 7.06 percent of votes and 7.37 percent of seats (<http://www.eci.nic.in>). Laloo Prasad could secure clear majority and could sustain himself in power for the

next few assembly polls because of the continuous support from the Muslim-Yadav-Dalit combine.

Moreover, the state was subjected to massive underdevelopment, lawlessness, increasing cases of kidnapping and ransom, lip service about land reforms and apathetic attitude of the Laloo-led government towards these serious issues further disenchanted the people of Bihar. The involvement of Laloo Prasad Yadav in the fodder scam culminated the undisputed rule of the leader in the state. Governor A.K Kidwai sanctioned a CBI prosecution against Laloo Prasad Yadav for his alleged involvement in the famous fodder scam in which the state exchequer was plundered and it had to incur heavy losses (Kumar, 1999, p.2475). He was succeeded by his wife, Rabri Devi in 1997. However, the Rabri Devi-led government was arbitrarily pulled down and President's Rule was imposed by the then BJP-led NDA government at the national level. Soon with a span of twenty-five days she was reinstated to compensate for their unconstitutional act by the Vajpayee-led Union government.

Meanwhile, Laloo Prasad Yadav was evicted from Janata Dal due to his involvement in the scam by Sharad Yadav. In July 1997 he formed his own political party namely, the Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD) along with Raghuvansh Prasad Singh, Smt. Kanti Singh and seventeen other Lok sabha MPs and eight other Rajya sabha MLAs⁸. It emerged as the breakaway group of Janata Dal (www.rjd.co.in). Other scandals that have further tarnished the image of Laloo Prasad and his government were the bitumen scandal of Rs. 100 crore, housing scam utilizing the land meant for the poor tribals of Rs. 400 crore, the supply of need scam of Rs. 100 crore and a state patronized loot of forest resources of Rs. 50 crore⁹.

The 2000 state election to the legislative assembly of Bihar produced Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD), a state-based party of Laloo

Prasad Yadav and a political novice in the state, as the largest party with 124 seats and 28.34 percent of votes and 31.28 percent of seats. INC secured only 23 of the 324 contested seats, polling 11.06 percent of votes and 11.06 percent of seats. BJP won 67 of the 168 seats polling 14.864 percent of votes and 28.89 percent of seats. Samata

⁸ A 'national' party convention called by Bihar chief minister Laloo Prasad Yadav in New Delhi passed a resolution renaming the Janata Dal as the Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD). Its mandate: to further social justice and secularism. Its promise: to back the United Front government to the hilt.

⁹ See Ranjit Bhusan, "Seasons Of Scandals", Outlook, July 24, 1996.

Party, another state based party, could fetch for itself 34 of the 120 contested seats with 8.65 percent of votes and 22.77 percent of seats and JD (U) secured 22 seats (<http://www.eci.nic.in>). The election produced a Hung Assembly as no party was able to secure absolute majority. Both Rabri Devi and Nitish Kumar staked claim to form the government in the state. Nitish Kumar with the support of NDA, JMM and few Independents staked his claim to form the government in the state whereas Rabri Devi of RJD along with the support of Congress (I), CPI-M and BSP expressed their willingness to form the government in the state¹⁰. Although RJD was the largest party but the Governor invited Nitish Kumar-led NDA to form the government in the state and was sworn in as the chief minister by Governor V.C Pande¹¹. Following the swearing in of Nitish Kumar, RJD launched vigorous agitations against the unconstitutional decision of the Governor and accused him of acting in a partisan manner. Soon Nitish Kumar had to step down as he failed to prove his majority in the legislative assembly. RJD had greater number of seats than NDA¹². RJD's Rabri Devi was sworn in as the chief minister and was directed by the Governor to prove her majority in the assembly within 10 days. On March 17, 2000 she proved her majority with 166 Members of Legislative Assembly (MLAs) along with the support of Congress (I), KSP, MCC, CPI-M and 11 Independents¹³. She continued in office till March, 2005. The state conducted its assembly poll in February, 2005 and RJD¹⁴ fetched 75 of the 215 contested seats with 25.07 percent of votes and 28.35 percent of seats. INC had secured only 10 seats, whereas BJP secured 27 seats polling 10.97 percent of votes and 24.91 percent of seats. Lok Janshakti Party (LJP)¹⁵ bagged only 29 of the 178 contested seats polling 12.62 percent of votes and 17.33 percent of seats (<http://www.eci.nin.in>). The electorates delivered a fractured verdict and no political party was able to secure an absolute majority. Soon a stalemate situation developed around the issue of government formation in the state as no political party or coalition

¹⁰ "NDA, RJD stake claim", The Hindu, March 02, 2000.

¹¹ "Nitish Kumar sworn in as CM", The Hindu, March 04, 2000.

¹² "Nitish Quits, Rabri stakes claim", The Hindu, March 11, 2000.

¹³ "Comfortable win for Rabri Devi", March 17, 2000.

¹⁴ Meanwhile, RJD had suffered a split when Ranjan Prasad Yadav in April 28, 2001 deserted the party and spearheaded the formation of RJD (Democratic). He was expelled from RJD after he rebelled against RJD supreme Laloo Prasad Yadav. Hence due to internal dissensions the strength of the party in the state had weakened and its share of votes got scattered between splinter groups. Earlier Sharad Yadav, Nitish Kumar and Narendra Singh all have deserted RJD. Dissidents had made every effort to throttle Rabri Devi government and have actively propagated for an alternative government in Bihar.

¹⁵ Ram Vilas Paswan parted ways with Janata Dal (United) and formed the political Lok Janshakti Party (LJP) on November 29, 2000.

of parties was in the position to form the government in the state. Rabri Devi staked claim to form the government with 75 MLAs as the leader of the largest party along with the support of Congress (I), NCP, CPI-M, and BSP. NDA too staked its claim¹⁶. LJP of Ram Vilas Paswan refused to support either RJD or BJP-led NDA and rather favoured the decision of Governor Buta Singh to impose President's rule in the state¹⁷. LJP had 29 MLAs. LJP, a political novice, acted as spoiler and wrested the chances of RJD as well as NDA to form the government in the state¹⁸. Hence, Bihar came under Presidential rule since March 08, 2005 for almost 262 days due to a deadlock over the government formation (www.vidhansabha.bih.nic.in).

In Bihar, JD (U)¹⁹ came to power in the state by winning 88 seats with 20.46 percent of votes and 37.14 percent of seats with the October 2005 mid-term assembly polls in alliance with BJP which secured 55 of the 102 contested seats polling 15.65 percent of votes and 35.64 percent of seats. INC secured only 9 seats and won only 10 of the 203 contested seats (<http://www.eci.nic.in>). Nitish Kumar was sworn in as the chief minister of Bihar of the NDA government²⁰. The alliance of JD (U) with BJP paid manifold. The disintegration of RJD and fall in popularity of Laloo Prasad Yadav enabled JD (U) and BJP to fill the vacuum. Moreover, the populist rhetoric and progressive image of Nitish Kumar yielded electoral benefits for the combine.

Bihar got swayed away by Nitish wave and installed Janata Dal (United) to power with 115 seats polling 22.58 percent of votes and 38.77 percent of seats with the 2010 assembly election. BJP bagged 91 of the 102 contested seats polling 16.49 percent of votes and 39.56 percent of seats. INC secured only 4 of the 243 contested seats. RJD bagged only 22 of the 168 contested seats with 18.84 percent of votes and 27.31 percent of seats. LJP could bag just 3 of the 75 contested seats (<http://www.eci.nic.in>).

¹⁶ "Rabri Devi stakes claim", The Hindu, march 06, 2005.

¹⁷ "Bihar Governor Recommends Presidential rule", The Hindu, March 07, 2005.

¹⁸ "I Take the Blame, says Paswan", The Hindu, March 07, 2005.

¹⁹ The Sharad Yadav faction of the Janata Dal, the Lokshakti Party and the Samata Party merged to form the the Janata Dal (United). On 30 October 2003, the Samata Party led by George Fernandes and Nitish Kumar merged with the Janata Dal. The merged entity was called Janata Dal (United) with the arrow symbol of Janata Dal (United) and the green and white flag of the Samata Party. The uniting force is believed to be common opposition to Rashtriya Janata Dal in Bihar especially after the RJD welcomed Samata Party rebels like Raghunath Jha into the party. The JD (U) along with its alliance partner, the BJP defeated the RJD-led UPA government in Bihar in November 2005. Janata Dal (United) (JD-U) is a centre-left Indian political party with political presence mainly in Bihar and Jharkhand. Janata Dal (United) party mentor and patron is the veteran socialist leader George Fernandes. See <http://janatadalunited.org>

²⁰ "Nitish Kumar to be sworn in today", The Hindu, November 24, 2005.

The Assembly Election in Bihar this time was very crucial in the electoral politics of the country. Caste divisions had always dominated elections in Bihar. Through October 2005 assembly polls people voted for 'change'. Since then the whole political grammar of Bihar has changed. It was the most significant election in the history of Bihar in the past two decades as 'development' and not caste decided the election in Bihar. Combination of pro-people futuristic visions and well crafted social engineering contributed to Nitish-led JD (U) combine's victory. The election was contested by the Janata Dal (United), Rashtriya Janata Dal of Lalu Prasad Yadav, Lok Janshakti Party of Ram Vilas Paswan, BJP- led NDA, the Left combine, INC, Independents. The election was scheduled to hold in six phases in October-November 2010. The result on 24th November saw JD (U)-BJP-led NDA combine coming to power in the state for the second consecutive term²¹.

The Rashtriya Janata Dal and Lok Janshakti Party constituted the main opposition and resorted to caste and community considerations for creating vote banks for themselves. BJP allied with JD (U) and this alliance was crucial to keep itself intact in the state politics. Although BJP's support base in the state has decreased as large number of upper caste voters has drifted towards the congress party. The party had enjoyed support bases among the Bhumikars, Thakurs, and the Brahmins. JD (U) base consisted of the OBCs, Most Backward Castes (MBCs) and a section of the Muslims. Yadav, Kurmis, Koeris and Lower OBCs supported JD (U). RJD enjoyed support mostly among the Yadav community and LJP enjoyed support mostly among the Dussadh Dalits.

The JD (U) and the NDA combine swept the polls bagging 206 seats of the 243 assembly seats. JD (U) accounted for 115 seats and BJP secured 91 seats. Other parties were made to bite the dust. Congress won four seats and independent and others accounted for six seats. CPI won one seat, RJD won 22 seats and LJP won 3 seats. The performance of the JD (U) in fact improved. In 2005 the combine bagged 143 seats, JD(U) got 88 seats while BJP got 55 seats, RJD got 54 seats, LJP won 10 seats while Congress secured a mere nine seats 3 seats combining it to only 25 seats (<http://www.eci.nic.in>).

²¹ "Landslide for JD (U)-BJP combine in Bihar", The Hindu, November 25, 2010.

Bihar has been a most depressed and unruly state. Bihar faced certain problems like pot hold roads, indolent teachers, apathetic officials, insurgent Maoists, devastating floods, shortage of power, skewed landholdings, caste resentment, low per capita income, cases of kidnapping which were high, there was no law and order situation in the state, etc. Bihar saw some glaring transformation under the regime of Nitish Kumar. He has transformed Bihar by imposing law and order, has put the gangsters behind the bars, resorted the state its role of one which will ensure security, ensured speedy trials, compelled gun-owners to conceal their weapon, ensured that no convicted criminals get license for ration or liquor shops, ensured safety for the people, people now move out of their homes after dark and drive through the new flyover, the economy has surged at double digits (10.5%). As per observers he has built over 2,400 km of road during 2009, uprooted jungle raj, activated the state police and has improved infrastructure (Kumar, Ranjan, 2014, pp. 262-282). During the JD (U)-BJP regime attempt has been made to ensure vast improvement in public health along with improvement in the primary and the secondary sector, initiated legislation to empower the extremely backward caste communities, proposed special schemes for empowering Maha Dalit communities and reserved seats for the MBCs in the local bodies. Initiated welfare schemes for Pasmada Muslims like giving scholarships and pensions, ensuring reservation of seats in local bodies, etc. He has not sidelined the major communities of the state and has without any mistake wooed their sentiments for creating support bases. The new base of MBCs-EBCs-Muslim proved to be a deciding factor towards the survival of the JD (U) combine. Moreover, the chief minister's personality added to its success. He was projected as a visionary leader capable of steering Bihar towards a prosperous future. His popularity increased with some measures such as provision of 50 per cent reservation for women in local bodies, financial grants for girl students scoring more than 60 percent marks, bicycle schemes. Politics surpassing identity markers actually paid dividends for the JD (U) combine. Development and series of initiatives adopted to empower the Extremely Backward Caste (EBCs), Maha Dalits and women paid off manifold for the combine, merely caste based politics finds no more appeal among the people of Bihar²².

For his second consecutive term he had to meet and live up to the expectations of his people. He had to confront some enormous challenges such as revitalize the

²² "Caste dynamics have taken a backseat: Nitish", The Hindu, November 25, 2010.

panchayats, problem of implementation had to be met; the allocated funds had to be used judiciously. His government was expected to do away with the problem of corruption and deal the Maoist problem with heavy hands. The state government had to acknowledge the existence of the local level government. The former should establish connection with the latter. During his second tenure the Nitish-led government also had to meet the problem of shortage of electricity to encourage and boost investment and entry of private players, create jobs, unleash land reform measures.

This election has proved that only ‘performance’ has been the key determining factor in deciding the fate of a political party in a developing country whether at the centre or at the state.

Similar has been the case at centre with UPA coming back to power for the second consecutive term, as well the JD(U) combine witnessed a similar fate. Parties with Pro-people and futuristic visions that can enable the nation or a state to tread the path of development will enjoy people’s mandate. The election of 2010 testified a single fact that caste and identity based politics is no more the only appeal among the common people. Common masses aspire for development and a prosperous future and electoral verdict certainly is dependent on it. The visionary and the energetic image of the Chief Minister has been an added advantage. RJD and LJP wedded to caste and community based politics had nothing more to offer to the people who now urge only for development and progress and peace. They could yield few seats only. But the time to write obituary has not come till now considering its bases among the Yadav and Dussadh communities as well as it had secured 25 percent of the popular votes. In a turn of event Nitish Kumar tendered his resignation owning the responsibility for the dismal performance of the JD (U) in the 2014 Lok Sabha election. The Modi wave swept almost the entire country and Bihar was no exception²³. Meanwhile JD (U) had snapped its long term alliance with BJP²⁴. Nitish Kumar had serious reservations about the anointment of Narendra Modi as the prime ministerial candidate for the 2014 Lok Sabha election. After breaking his alliance with BJP prior to general election of 2014, JD (U) entered into an alliance with Congress, CPI and five

²³ “MLAs back Nitish, Sharad isolated”, The Hindu, May 19, 2014.

²⁴ “BJP not in Nitish Kumar Governmnet anymore, but its leaders refuse to quit post”, www.ndtv.com, June 27, 2013 (accessed on May 09, 2015 at 09:20 am).

Independents and remained in power in the state²⁵. Following Nitish Kumar's resignation, Bihar Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe Welfare Minister, Jiten Ram Manjhi was installed as the chief minister of the state²⁶. Manjhi belongs to the Maha Dalit community of the Mushahars. Kumar played his caste equations well and transferred the reign to a lower caste as a gesture to retain the rein of the state machinery in the hands of the lower castes. With this initiative he primarily aspired to win over the EBCs. Manjhi remained in the office from May 20, 2014 till February 22, 2015. After a feud with Manjhi who was reluctant to disown his position and demanded for floor test in the assembly through secret ballot, Nitish Kumar again stepped in as chief minister in February 22, 2015²⁷. Manjhi parted ways with JD (U) and formed his own political party Hindustani Awam Morcha (HAM). When Manjhi refused to comply with the directives of Nitish Kumar and started to express his opinion and aspire to function independently and assertively and not as a 'puppet' it was then differences arose between Manjhi and Nitish Kumar. Finally, Nitish Kumar returned as chief minister and promised to continue ensuring good governance and social justice to the people of the state.

With the 2015 assembly polls JD (U)-RJD combine came to power with Nitish Kumar as the chief minister²⁸. With the 205 assembly polls RJD emerged as the largest party with 80 out of the 101 contested seats polling 18.35 percent of votes and 44.35 percent of seats. The JD (U) bagged 71 seats out of the 101 contested seats with 16.83 percent of votes and 40.65 percent of seats. INC could secure 27 out of the 41 contested seats and BJP could win 53 out of the 157 contested seats with 24.42 percent of votes and 37.48 percent of seats. LJP won 2 out of the 42 contested seats. RLSP bagged two seats and HAMS could win just a single seat (<http://www.eci.nic.in>). The Grand Alliance of RJD, JD (U) and Congress (I) won 178 seats in a 243 member Assembly, polling 42 percent of votes. NDA stood distant second with 58 seats and Left Parties could secure 3 seats and the Independents bagged 4 seats (<http://www.eci.nic.in>). BJP allied with LJP (represents the Dalits, mostly the Dussadhs), HAM-S (represents the Mahadalits), Rashtriya Lok Samata Party-RLSP represents the Kushwahas, the second most important backward caste in

²⁵ "Nitish quits as dissent brews in JD (U)", The Hindu, May 18, 2014.

²⁶ "Jiten Ram Manjhi is Bihar's New CM", The Hindu, May 20, 2014.

²⁷ "Nitish to return as CM tomorrow", The Hindu, February 21, 2015.

²⁸ "Two-third majority for Nitish-Lalu Grand Alliance", The Hindu, November 09, 2015.

the state after the Yadavs) in order to consolidate its base among the backward section of the society as well but still it could not reap much benefit. On the contrary the Grand Alliance was much more secular in appeal for the people as BJP has traditionally been a party representing the upper caste and it has been anti-Dalit and anti-Muslim in terms of ideology as well. Grand Alliance was perceived to be a coalition of marginal and subaltern castes. The Yadav-Kurmi-Koeri-Muslim-Mahadalit rallied behind the RJD-JD (U) combine²⁹. The JD (U) has been able to establish a strong foothold among the Extremely Backward Castes (EBCs) section of the society with various welfare measures and this section had hence remained loyal to JD (U) for the 2015 assembly election as well. JD (U) affirmed to remain loyal to its policy of ensuring development blended with social justice and hence promised to provide clean water supply to every household, electricity for all the villages, 35 percent of reservation for women in all government jobs, allowance for the unemployed youths and education loan of Rs. 4 lakh to students pursuing higher education (<http://nitishkumar.co.in/nitishnishchay.php>). Although BJP promised for clean water, electricity to every household, better roads but it solely banked upon Brand Modi and his development model as the sole medium to win over the people of the state (<http://www.bjp.org/en/media-resources/press-releases/press-release-regarding-special-package-to-bihar-for-development>)³⁰. BJP-led NDA lacked a CM face. It projected Narendra Modi who was not locally from Bihar. Hence, Nitish Kumar in the election rallies gave a call to vote for a “*Bihari than a Bahari*” (vote for a Bihari than an outsider)³¹. Thus people of the state failed to identify themselves with NDA. As discernible the electorates preferred governance by Narendra Modi at the central level and voted for Nitish Kumar and his development model for the state level. RJD and JD (U) both are state-based parties whereas BJP traditionally has no such substantial base in the state. Hence for the time being the people of the state remained loyal to the RJD-JD (U) combine and preferred to continue with the governance by the Nitish Kumar-led government thereby ensuring stability to the system. Moreover, some inflammatory remarks also jeopardized the electoral prospects of BJP in the state. The need to review the reservation policy statement of

²⁹ “*Lalu’s M-Y combine proved the game changer*”, The Hindu, November 10, 2015.

³⁰ Also See http://www.bjp.org/images/pdf_2015/highlights_18.8.15.pdf

³¹ “*Bihari or Bahari: Nitish Kumar asks voters*”, <http://www.financialexpress.com/india-news/bihari-or-bahari-nitish-kumar-asks-voters/153137/>, October 18, 2015 (accessed at May, 09, 2016 at 07:30 am).

RSS supreme Mohan Bhagat alienated the backward castes, such as the SCs, STs, OBCs and EBCs from the party³². A three day meet was also scheduled in Ranchi to discuss religious census of the state also made the backward section insecure about the ulterior motive of BJP. The polarising controversial statement that ‘crackers will be burst in Pakistan if BJP losses in Bihar’ by Amit Shah in an election rally in the Raxaul region of East Champaran district also affected the vote share of the party³³. It might have antagonised the Muslims section of the state population. Janata Dal, RJD and JD (U) are such political novices in the state party system that has realigned the party system to a great extent. They have altered the social dynamics of the state. These parties have used caste as one of the important medium for mobilisation. With their emergence no parties has been able to secure absolute majority in the party system as the various caste and communities existing in the society vote in a fragmented pattern based on their allegiance. Congress has never been able to come back to power after the 1962 assembly polls. Alliance politics has been a predominant phenomenon in the state party system since 1967, although Congress was able to restore itself partially in the wake of Indira and Rajiv wave.

The Features of Bihar State Party System

The state party system is a competitive multi-party system. It is marked by coalition politics. Conflict over political opportunities makes the state party system unstable in nature. Large-scale defection and factionalism has led to multiplicity of political parties within the state party system. Caste equations have largely shaped the state party system. In recent times performance of the ruling government and socio-economic development ensured by the government in power has largely determined the course of the state party system. Mobilisation in the name of identity is also prevalent and has affected the evolution of the state party system.

³² “*BJP distances itself from RSS supremo, Mohan Bhagat’s call for Quota Review*”, www.indianexpress.com, September 22, 2015 (accessed at May, 09, 2016 at 09:30 am).

³³ “*Pak will burst crackers if BJP losses: Amit Shah*”, www.deccanherald.com, October 30, 2015 (accessed at May, 09, 2016 at 09:35 am).

Jharkhand

The state of Jharkhand was carved out of the state of Bihar. The state of Jharkhand came into existence following the enactment of the Bihar Reorganisation Act, 2000 on 15th November, 2000 by the Parliament. Historically, the state was under the rule of Raja Jai Singh Deo of Orissa who had declared himself the ruler of Jharkhand in the 13th century. It largely comprises of forest tracks of Chhotanagpur plateau and Santhal Pargana and has distinct cultural traditions. In post-independence era, the Jharkhand Mukti Morcha (JMM) started a regular agitation along with the people of South Bihar for ensuring justice to the tribals of South Bihar and safeguard their economic, political and cultural identity and hegemony over the region from the onslaughts of the non-tribals of North Bihar, mainly the *Dikus* as well as the landlords. Hence, they continued a long struggle in demand for a separate state and this impelled the government to establish the Jharkhand Area Autonomous Council in 1995 and finally a full-fledged state came into being in 2000 by an Act of Parliament during the reign of BJP led NDA government at the centre³⁴. The present state has been carved out of Bihar by transferring eighteen districts from the state of Bihar to the new state. 81 assembly seats have been allocated to the newly created state of Jharkhand, besides a seat has been reserved for Anglo-Indian community. It has a unicameral legislature (<http://www.legislativebodiesinindia.nic.in>). After the formation of the state which was carved out of Bihar in 2000 no assembly election was conducted in the state. The state went into polls only in February, 2005. BJP by virtue of their majority with 44 MLAs and one nominated member from the Anglo-Indian community in the new assembly formed the government in the state (Kumar, 2005 p. 346,). Jharkhand is with its first ever assembly polls till the 2014 assembly polls is been marked by a consistently bipolarized competitive multi-party system with coalition governments.

³⁴ This struggle for a separate state of Jharkhand has a long history that dates back to the colonial times when leaders like Birsa Munda was spearheading the movement for autonomy. This struggle has passed through various phases when numerous revolts were launched to protect their rights over their land and forest and its resources from British encroachment such as the Chaur, Kol, Bhumij and Santhal rebellion. The Jharkhand movement gained momentum with the formation of Adivasi Mahasabha and the Jharkhand Party in 1950. The Union government after independence did not concede to the demand of the tribal leaders for a separate state of Jharkhand. Since 1970 these movement has been primarily driven by the Jharkhand Mukti Morcha (JMM), a splinter group of the Jharkhand Party, under the leadership of Shibu Soren. See Arunabha Ghosh, “*Ideology and Politics of Jharkhand Movement: An Overview*”, Vol. 28, No. 35, August 28, 1993.

Babulal Marandi from BJP became the new Chief Minister of the state after an unsuccessful attempt by the JMM supreme, Shibu Soren to form government in the newly formed 28th state of the Indian Union³⁵. Marandi remained in the position from November 15, 2000 to March 17, 2003. In March, 2003 he was replaced by Arjun Munda (<http://www.legislativebodiesinindia.nic.in>). On March, 13, 2003, the Marandi-led BJP government lost majority in the Assembly following the sudden resignation by seven ministers who crossed the floor after a crucial vote on a financial business. The Opposition insisted on a vote on a cut motion to the demands for grant which the speaker conceded and claimed that there was a voice vote on the cut motion. Mr. Namdhari, the speaker of the assembly forwarded the cut motion to vote. The government lost mandate as the majority of the members supported the cut motion forwarded by the Opposition. The Opposition parties also expressed their willingness to support Mr. Namdhari as the head of the alternative government³⁶. It was Arjun Munda, the welfare minister in the Marandi cabinet who staked claim to form the government in Jharkhand along with 40 MLAs and continued in office till March 1, 2005³⁷.

“Aspiration” remained the sole barometer for mandate

Following the 2005 assembly election to the state of Jharkhand, when the state went into polls for the first time since its formation in 2000, BJP secured 30 seats out of the 63 contested seats, polling 30.19 percent of seats and 23.54 percent of votes. INC bagged 9 of the 41 contested seats, polling 0.43 percent of votes whereas BSP, CPI, CPI (M) drew a blank. State-based parties such as JD (U) secured 6 seats, JMM fetched only 17 seats for itself polling 14.29 percent of votes (<http://www.eci.nic.in>). The NDA-JD (U) combine garnered 36 seats and along with the support of Independents staked claim to form the government in the state. The Congress-JMM combine too rallied behind and staked claim to form the government in the state as well. However, after a meeting between the Governor Syed Sibtey Razi and JMM leader Shibu Soren the Governor administered the oath of office and secrecy to Mr. Shibu Soren. He was sworn in as the third chief minister of the state and headed a

³⁵ “*Marandi election a formality*”, The Hindu, November 12, 2000.

³⁶ “*Marandi government loses majority*”, The Hindu, March 14, 2003.

³⁷ “*Munda stakes claim*”, The Hindu, March 18, 2003.

minority government and was directed to prove his majority in the floor of the assembly. The Governor Syed Sibtey Razi was accused of adopting a policy of favouritism by resorting to a 'delaying tactics' thereby not enabling the NDA-JD (U) leading combine to form the government in the state. A senior BJP leader M. Venkaiah Naidu was quoted alleging the centre where the Congress-led UPA was in power, for putting too much pressure upon the governor in not allowing the NDA to form the government in the state. The UPA-JMM alliance could not fetch absolute majority for itself. Moreover, it suffered a setback following a revolt by senior leader Stephen Marandi against JMM leader Shibu Soren over denial of ticket from the Dumka constituency. It also committed a blunder by not entering into a pre-poll alliance with RJD and Left parties which would have enabled the UPA-JMM combine to soar up its tally of seats and prove its majority in the assembly.³⁸ However, Soren-led minority government failed to prove his majority in the house and hence was directed to step down and the governor invited Mr. Arjun Munda, the BJP leader, to run the state government. He remained in office from March 12, 2005 till September 14, 2006. The 18 month long government of Munda lost majority in the floor of the assembly after few of its MLAs deserted government. Madhu Koda, the Minister of Mines, in the Munda government was responsible for bringing down the government along with three other independent MLAs. Arjun Munda opted not to go for the floor test and rather forwarded his resignation to the governor leading to the fall of the BJP-led government. It was replaced by the non-NDA Madhu Koda-led government. He was an independent MLA who was chosen to lead the coalition comprising of parties like Congress and RJD. Koda also enjoyed the support of four Independent MLAs from parties like United Gomantwadi Democratic Party, CPI (ML), Jharkhand Vikas Morcha (JVM) and Forward Bloc³⁹. He remained in office from September 18, 2006 till August 24, 2008. However, in a turn of event, JMM led by Shibu Soren withdrew its support from the Madhu Koda government for its alleged involvement in a money laundering case on August 17, 2008 following which the government lost its majority in the assembly⁴⁰. The state was engulfed under horrifying incidents of Maoist

³⁸ "Governor Installs Soren, NDA up in arms", The Hindu, March 3, 2005.

³⁹ "Madhu Koda to lead UPA government", The Hindu, September 16, 2006.

⁴⁰ See Venkitesh Ramakrishnan, "The War Zone", Frontline, Vol. 26, Issue. 22, October 27 - November 06, 2009.

onslaughts⁴¹ which included beheading of police officer and it had invited a nationwide outrage. Due to these incidents Koda government became unpopular in the state. Finally, Koda had to tender his resignation and was succeeded by Soren himself and he remained in office from August 17, 2008 till January 12, 2009⁴². After his defeat in the Tamar by-polls Soren had to step down from the post of chief minister in January 2009 following which Mr. Champai Soren was elected the chief of JMM and the chief ministerial candidate. Soren vacated his Dumka Lok Sabha seat and was seeking for a seat in the assembly within the stipulated six months after assuming the office of the chief minister of the state in August, 2008. His defeat in the Tamar constituency in the by-election inflicted a severe blow to the party in the state. UPA did not budge to the JMM's choice of Champai Soren as the chief minister and this led to the downfall of the government. The state then came under President's rule for a year as no political party staked claim to form government in the state⁴³.

A five phase assembly election was held in the state during the month of November and December 2009. The 2009 assembly polls were fought mainly based on two issues- 'corruption' and 'stable government'⁴⁴. Considering the involvement of the Madhu Koda government in money laundering scam worth Rs. 4000 crore approximately by facilitating illegal mining contracts of iron ore and coal, the issue of 'corruption' occupied a significant position in the electoral campaign of the 2009 assembly polls⁴⁵. Following the fall of two consecutive governments in a span of less than five years and a year of President's rule in the state, 'stability' became another significant issue of the election campaign. The poll bound Jharkhand was presented with plethora of promises by all the prime contenders of power which in general included provision of food grains at subsidized rates, electrification of villages, stable and corruption free government, culmination of Maoist violence in the state, assurance of resolving the problem of displacement and assurance for tribal development.

⁴¹ See Venkitesh Ramakrishnan, "The War Zone", Frontline, Vol. 26, Issue. 22, October 27 - November 06, 2009.

⁴² "Madhu Koda resigns", The Hindu, August 28, 2008.

⁴³ "Sibhu Soren, Deputy CM resigns", Outlook, January 12, 2009.

⁴⁴ "Fractured Verdict in Jharkhand", The Hindu, December 29, 2009.

⁴⁵ See Venkitesh Ramakrishnan, "Deep pockets of Jharkhand", Frontline, Vol. 26, Issue. 24, November 26 -December 04, 2009.

With the 2009 assembly election to the state of Jharkhand, BJP secured 18 of the 67 contested seats with 24.44 percent of seats and 20.44 percent of votes. BSP, CPI (M) and NCP drew a blank. INC could fetch for itself 14 of the 61 contested seats with 21.43 percent of seats and 16.16 percent of votes. State based party such as JD (U) could secure just two seats, AJSU and RJD won five seats respectively and JMM bagged for itself 18 of the 78 contested seats polling 15.79 percent of seats and 15.20 percent of votes. Jharkhand Vikas Morcha (JVM) of Babulal Marandi, a political novice in the state formed in 2006 and a break-away group from BJP, could win only 11 seats with 28.24 percent of seats and 8.99 percent of votes (<http://www.eci.nic.in>). Clearly, no political party was able to get absolute majority in the assembly. The election produced a hung assembly. JMM played a key role in the formation of the government as neither Congress-JVM alliance nor BJP- JD (U) combine could garner absolute majority for themselves. However, it was Shibu Soren of JMM in alliance with BJP ultimately formed the government in the state and remained in power from December 30, 2009 till May 31, 2010. JMM did not settle for anything less than the post of chief minister for its leader. However, his five month long rule came to an end after BJP and JD (U) withdrew its support from the Soren-led government. It was reduced to a minority government but it failed to muster sufficient number in the assembly as Congress and its ally JVM refused to extend its support to Shibu Soren. Hence, Jharkhand again got engulfed into political instability. With no one staking claim to form a government in the state Governor M.O.H Farooq sent a report to the Union Home Ministry to impose President's rule in the state⁴⁶. The President rule continued till September 2010. On September 11, 2010, Arjun Munda was sworn in to lead the eighth state government in the state after he expressed his desire to form the government along with the support of parties like JMM and AJSU. Congress and its ally JVM staked no claim to form the government in the state and sat as opposition in the assembly. The Munda government remained in power till January 18, 2013. Jharkhand was again placed under President's rule after the Arjun Munda Government was reduced to a minority government after the withdrawal of support by the Jharkhand Mukti Morcha (JMM)⁴⁷ following disagreement over power-sharing. Hemant Soren, son of Shibu Soren became the ninth chief minister of the state. He headed a coalition government led by JMM in alliance with Congress, RJD, other

⁴⁶ "Congress welcomes Soren's Resignation", The Hindu, May 31, 2010.

⁴⁷ "President's rule imposed in Jharkhand", The Hindu, January 19, 2013.

small parties and Independents. His government remained in power till December 12, 2014⁴⁸. A five phase poll was announced on November 25, 2014.

With the 2014 assembly polls BJP could win 37 of the 72 contested seats polling 35.16 percent of seats and 31.26 percent of votes. INC performed abysmally poor by securing 6 of the 62 contested seats with 13.98 percent of seats and 10.46 percent of votes. JMM, the state based party could bag just 19 seats for itself with 20.93 percent of seats and 20.43 percent of votes. JVM, the political novice of the state could fetch for itself only eight seats. With the 2014 election BJP came to power by toppling Congress-JMM coalition government. The duo broke their alliance for the 2014 assembly polls following the Congress's poor performance in the state and due to its loss of incredibility among the common masses following its association with numerous corruption scams and scandals. BJP along with its ally AJSU formed the government in the state. The combine could garner 42 seats in the 82 member assembly. Raghuvar Das is heading the BJP-AJSU coalition government in the state. The people of Jharkhand have reposed their faith in the BJP to free themselves from the corrupt governance and in the hope of development and stability. The aura of Narendra Modi, the sculpted icon of development for the Lok Sabha election 2014 has cast its spell in the state of Jharkhand as well⁴⁹.

The Features of the Jharkhand State Party System

The politics of the state of Jharkhand is largely marked by factionalism and internal squabbles over power sharing and seat sharing. The petty interests of the local leaders dominate the state politics thereby making the interest of the tribals and their development irrelevant for the political leaders. The political leaders tend to further their political aspirations rather than promoting the development of the mineral rich state. The state was created to safeguard and promote the interest of the tribals rather it is now crippled by issues like Maoism, unemployment, underdevelopment, lack of availability of basic facilities to the people (mostly, the tribals), illiteracy, poverty and hunger, deprivations among the masses, etc. Successive governments have invited investments in mining and power sector to serve their petty interests and amass large

⁴⁸ “LD Jharkhand”, The Hindu, July 14, 2013.

⁴⁹ “Jharkhand gives clear verdict”, The Hindu, December 24, 2014.

amount of wealth. Land grabbing and clearance of forest areas by corporate giants have only increased the problems of the masses making displacement a serious issue in the state. Hence, development indices have suffered a massive decline. Coalition government has become the predominant form of government in the state. The state party system is marked by multiplicity of political parties. The party system is also largely affected by the problem of defection which has been rampant in all the successive governments. JMM is synonymous with the creation of the state of Jharkhand to protect and promote the interests of the tribals from the onslaughts of outsiders. However, the party largely stands deviated from its goal and its supreme leader, Shibu Soren is mostly linked up with charges of corruption and scams as well as criminal charges. He is also alleged to have not promoted the interests of the tribals but rather his own political ambitions thereby encouraging dynastic politics. Hence, it could not usher its electoral fortune in the state as was expected. The contest for state mantle has largely revolved around three main political parties, namely Congress, BJP and JMM. Jharkhand Vikas Morcha (JVM), a political novice in the state of Babulal Marandi (who was an important leader of BJP of the Jharkhand state unit) emerged as a marginally significant force in the state since its formation in 2006. With its first entry into the electoral battle it could win just 11 seats out of the 25 contested seats mainly making inroads in the constituency of BJP. It won from Poreyahat, Simaria, Dhanwar, Jamua, Sindri which was initially won by BJP in the 2005 assembly polls. It also occupied the constituency of Maheshpur, Giridih, Ichagarh in 2009 which was earlier won by JMM in 2005 assembly election. In 2009, JVM also won from Bokaro which had been earlier won by INC in 2005. It replaced JD (U) and occupied the Baghmara constituency in 2009 and RJD from the Garhwa constituency (<http://www.eci.nic.in>). With the 2014 assembly polls JVM retained Poreyahat and Simara constituency. JVM also won from Sarath constituency which earlier was won by RJD in 2005 assembly election and by JMM in 2009 assembly election. It grabbed the Barakatha constituency in 2014 from BJP from where the latter won in both 2005 and 2009 assembly polls. It also grabbed the Hatia constituency from INC which was won by the latter in both 2005 and 2009 assembly polls. It also occupied Chandankyari from where JMM had won in 2005 and AJSU in 2009. Latehar also voted in favour of JVM in 2014 which was earlier won by RJD in 2005 and by BJP in

2009 assembly polls. Daltonganj too voted in favour of JVM in 2014 assembly polls. Earlier it voted in favour of JD (U) in 2005 and INC in 2009 (<http://www.eci.nic.in>).

West Bengal

West Bengal lies at the eastern end of the Gangetic plains and is one of the two states (the other being Tripura) which had been under the leftist rule for more than three decades considering the fact that the Left does not have a strong national base in India. Hence the state of West Bengal deserves attention so that the factors can be traced to locate the reasons for the persistent Leftist rule in the state as well its debacle that largely made an impact upon the state party system of West Bengal. With the first state election since independence in 1952 Congress remained in power in the state with 150 seats with 38.82 percent of votes and 38.93 percent of seats whereas CPI could bag just 28 seats and BJS secured 9 seats (<http://www.eci.nic.in>). The Congress formed the government in the state headed by Dr. Bidhan Chandra Roy⁵⁰. The state remained under the rule of Congress party uninterruptedly till 1967 under the leadership of Dr. B.C Roy (<http://www.wbassembly.gov.in>

. Hence the state of West Bengal exhibited a competitive multi-party system with the predominance of the Congress Party. In 1957 state election the Congress secured 152 seats polling 46.14 percent of votes and 46.20 percent of seats whereas CPI could bag just 28 seats and with the 1962 state election the Congress captured 157 seats with 47.29 percent of votes and 47.29 percent of seats (<http://www.eci.nic.in>). However, after the death of Dr. B.C Roy, Shri Prafulla Chandra Sen, the most trusted political associate of Dr. B.C Roy, succeeded him as the chief minister of the state.

However, with the 1967 state election, the Congress was replaced by the Bangla Congress-led anti-Congress opposition Front. The entire country was almost swept by

⁵⁰ Prior to Dr. B.C Roy, Dr. Prafulla Chandra Ghosh was the chief minister of the state from 15th August, 1947 till 22nd January, 1948. He was the popular choice of the Congress High Command for the august post but he soon became unpopular among many of the Congress leaders of West Bengal and the Marwari industrialist community of Calcutta for his rigid style of administration and was finally ousted from the position of the chief minister of the state. Ghosh was replaced by Dr. B. C Roy who was favoured by Nehru, Patel and the industrialists and he finally formed the ministry on 23rd January 1948 and he continued in office even after independence and served as the chief minister of the state till 1st July, 1962. Shortly after his resignation Ghosh left Congress along with 100 other Congressmen and formed the Krishak Praja Mazdoor Party (Peasants, People and Workers Party) which later on combined with other parties to form the Praja Socialist Party (PSP).

the anti–Congress tide and this led to the change of guard in the state as well. With the 1967 assembly election the state party system entered into a bipolarized competitive multi-party system with coalition government. Many of the congress leaders of the state defected from the party and joined the Bangla Congress. Ajoy Kumar Mukherjee of the Sen-Ghosh group came into confrontation with Atulya Ghosh who was one of the most influential leaders of West Bengal Pradesh Congress Committee⁵¹ and following the rift Mukherjee left the Congress party to form his own Bangla Congress⁵². The United Front which was formed by a coalition of fourteen parties and an independent came to power in the state with Ajoy Kumar Mukherjee as the chief minister on 1st March 1967 and he remained in power till 21st November, 1967. The United Front consisted of two major blocs of parties namely the People’s United Left Front (PULF) led by the CPI and the United Left Front (ULF) led by the CPI (M). These two fronts came together to provide a united opposition to the Congress party in the state and were able to assimilate the cooperation of all the Marxist left parties in the state as well as of the Bangla Congress and the SSP along with the Gurkha League, the Lok Sevak Sangh and the PSP (Franda, 1969, p. 291).

Following the 1967 state election Congress was for the first time reduced to the role of an opposition party in the assembly. It managed to get just 127 seats out of 280 assembly seats polling 41.13 percent of votes and 41.13 percent of seats. The ULF together secured 68 seats of which CPI (M) alone secured 43 seats with 18.11 percent of votes and 36.14 percent of seats, while the PULF together secured 65 seats with Bangla Congress winning 34 seats and CPI bagging 16 seats only (<http://www.eci.nic.in>). However, the first United Front government was dislodged from power when Dr. Prafulla Chandra Ghosh and 17 other legislator resigned from the ministry and formed a government under the banner of Progressive Democratic Alliance (PDA)⁵³ with the support of the Congress party on 21st November 1967. However, the 88-day ministry was replaced by the second United Front government

⁵¹ See Marcus F. Franda, “West Bengal” in Myron Weiner (ed.), “*State Politics in India*”, 1967, pp. 271-283.

⁵² The Bangla Congress, a then political novice in the state, spearheaded the significant realignment in the party system by drawing an end to the continuous rule of the Congress party in the state and reconfiguring the state party system by ousting the Congress from the reign of the state mantle. It became the part of the United Front ministry and its leader remained the chief minister of the state during the late sixties.

⁵³ Progressive Democratic Alliance was declared unconstitutional by the Speaker of the Assembly and Ghosh had no other option but to tender his resignation and thereafter a President’s rule was imposed in the state.

on 25th February 1969 following the mid-term poll of the West Bengal State assembly (<http://www.wbassembly.gov.in>)

After a brief period of President's rule in the state in 1968 the same coalition of parties that had earlier fell apart in less than nine months came back to power in the state after the assembly polls of February 1969 with much larger number of seats. The Congress with the mid-term poll was again reduced to a minority government in the state with 55 seats in the assembly of 280 seats polling 41.32 percent of votes the CPI (M) won 80 out of the 97 seats with 19.97 percent of votes and 54.12 percent of seats whereas the CPI would bag just 30 seats (<http://www.eci.nic.in>). With the mid-term poll, the United Front ministry came back to power but could not complete its term and it collapsed following the sudden resignation that was tendered by the chief minister Ajoy Mukherjee. The state then came under President's rule.

In 1971 the state conducted its sixth assembly polls and CPI (M) emerged as the largest party with 113 seats polling 32.86 percent of votes and 37.42 percent of seats. CPI could secure just 13 seats and Congress won 105 seats with 29.19 percent of votes and 34.91 percent of seats (<http://www.eci.nic.in>). However, the CPI (M) was not provided with the opportunity to form the government in the state but the Congress was provided with an opportunity by the then Governor, following the direction from the Union government, to form the government in the state under the leadership of Ajoy Mukherjee who had by then rejoined Congress. However, the government again collapsed without completing its term and for the third time President's rule was imposed in the state (<http://www.wbassembly.gov.in>).

The electoral base of the Congress party had weakened in the state due to its split in 1966 and defection of many congress leaders, factionalism and friction among prominent leaders of the party are some of the reasons for the downfall of the Congress party in the state. The United Front was a coalition of numerous parties that had come under a single banner to provide opposition to the veteran Congress party in the state. However, it failed to emerge as a potential alternative in the state because it lacked in unity on policy issues, issues of political strategy, it also lacked in terms of organizational coherence and ideological affinity. It was infected with internal dissensions and disagreements. The Congress recovered its lost bastion with 1972 state election following the overall resurgence of Congress party at the national level

by winning 216 seats out of the 238 contested seats, polling 49.08 percent of votes and 58.35 percent of seats (<http://www.eci.nic.in>). Besides, numerous factors like Ajoy Mukherjee of Bangla Congress himself rejoined the Congress party, the alliance of Congress with CPI, the incorporation of socialism in the ideals, promise for devolution of central fund in the development of the state and its infrastructure if voted back to power in the state, elevation in the stature of Indira Gandhi as a national leader due to her role in the Bangladesh liberation war positively contributed towards the resurgence of the Congress party in the state electoral map (Dasgupta, 1972, pp. 805-806). Moreover, although the people of Bengal twice rejected Congress and bestowed United Front the opportunity to rule the state but on all the occasions since 1967 to 1971 their expectations were bulldozed as the United Front failed to provide governance to the people, neither did they introduce pro-people administration in the state. On the contrary, the disparate Front remained riddled with rivalries and factionalism with regard to issues like land reform, industrial relation, law and order situation, etc. Hence the people of Bengal failed to find an alternative for themselves and therefore provided another chance to Congress to rule the state. Congress during its 1971 election campaign promised for overall development in the state including eradication of unemployment problem in the state. It remained in power in the state till April, 1977 under the leadership of Shri Siddhartha Sankar Ray. However, there was loss in the glory of Congress in the entire country following the series of events during the President's rule in the country during the Indira Gandhi-led Congress (I) regime at the central level. However, since 1977 state election, the electoral base of the Congress in the state deteriorated significantly and the CPI (M)-led Left Front came to power in the state with Shri Jyoti Basu as its chief minister with 178 seats polling 35.46 percent of votes and 46.23 percent of seats whereas INC could bag just 20 seats with 23.02 percent of votes and 23.39 percent of seats. CPI could win just 2 seats and Janata Party which was then in power at the centre could win just 29 seats in the assembly polls (<http://www.eci.nic.in>). The state party system continued to remain bipolarized in nature and exhibited a competitive multi-party system with coalition governments till 2016. The left Front came to power in the state with CPI (M) as its leading partner with Jyoti Basu as the chief minister of the state. Jyoti Basu emerged to become the longest serving chief minister by coming to power consecutively five times till November, 2000.

The people of Bengal severely punished Congress for its misrule, lawlessness and brutal repression, for unleashing tyrannical rule in the state in its fanatic attempt to withhold its base, for its ideological degeneration, for meting out atrocities upon the common people, for not being able to provide pro-people governance laced with social justice to the people of the state. Ray's tenure was marked by police atrocities which included killing of thousand of naxal⁵⁴ youths and CPI (M) cadres, deaths in police custody, incidence of indiscriminate police firing on democratic movement and rallies, suspension of civil liberties and democratic rights and extreme highhandedness of the arrogant party cadres (Acharya, 1999, pp. 2298-2299).

The Invincible CPI (M)-led Left Front (1977-2011)

Left consolidated its base by stabilizing its support in the rural areas which comprises of the landless agricultural labourers, the poor peasants and urban poor (Chaudhuri, 1987, p.1230). By adopting land reform measures, distributing land to the landless agricultural labourers and the poor, adopting and implementing of Operation Barga⁵⁵ and food for work programme which ensured employment to the rural poor in lean months and revitalization and creation of new popular institutions in the state in the form of three-tier panchayat (decentralization) system which in turn had generated employments for local youths and landless labours, declaration of pro-worker policy,

⁵⁴ In 1967 a peasant uprising took place in the Naxalbari region of the Darjeeling district in West Bengal under the leadership of the local cadres of CPI (M). Gradually this movement popularly known as the Naxalite movement started to spread in other parts of the country. In 1969, CPI (M) suffered a split and the militant faction formed a new party known as Communist Part of India (Marxist-Leninist). It adopted the strategy of guerilla warfare to fight against the administration. The Naxalite movement has used force to snatch land from rich landowners and give it to poor and the landless. It adopted violent means to achieve their goal. Congress led state administration took stern measures to pacify and uproot this movement. Insecure tenancies, denial of share in produce, exploitation of moneylenders, forced labour, exorbitant rents are some of the immediate causes that led to the growth of the Naxalite movement.

⁵⁵ The left consolidated its base with Operation *Barga* which achieved some success in improving the conditions of the rural peasantry after the abysmal failure of the *Tebhaga* movement of 1946-47 and 1948-49. The *Tebhaga* Movement sought to increase the distribution of the produce in favour of the tenant from half to two-thirds. However, it could not achieve much success. The Operation *Barga* which was relaunched to improve the conditions of the tillers of soil and through it names of the sharecroppers were recorded through group action and security of tenure was ensured to the *bargadars* (who were person lawfully cultivating the lands of another person, namely, the landowners). Moreover, their rights over the land they were tiling were made inheritable and fair share of produce were ensured and this raised their sense of security, solidarity and power among the agricultural labourers as well as curtailed the exploitative consequences meted out by the big landowners. See D. Bandyopadhyay, "*Tebhaga Movement in Bengal: A Retrospect*", Economic and Political Weekly, Vol. 36, No. 41, Oct. 13-19, 2001, pp. 3901-3907.

setting up number of primary and secondary schools as well as colleges, making education free till the secondary stage, increasing emoluments of teachers at all levels, the Left Front was able to build some credibility for itself among the people of Bengal (Chaudhuri, 1987, p.1230).

The CPI (M)-led Left Front was able to repeat its term with the 1982 assembly election with 172 seats out of the 209 contested seats and 34.49 percent of votes and 53.77 percent of seats whereas INC could garner only 49 out of the 250 contested seats, polling 35.73 percent of votes and 42.08 percent of seats (<http://www.eci.nic.in>). The left front was consistently voted back to power with the subsequent assembly elections of 1987, 1991 and 1996⁵⁶. The CPI (M)-led left front emerged as the largest party with 187 seats, polling 39.30 percent of votes and 53.61 percent of seats in 1987 election whereas INC secured only 40 seats, BJP drew a blank and CPI scored 11 seats. In 1991 assembly polls the Left Front's leading party again emerged as the leading party with 189 seats with 36.87 percent of votes and 49.88 percent of seats whereas INC scored 43 seats. With 1996 state election the CPI (M) secured 157 out of 213 contested seats polling 37.92 percent of votes and 50.48 percent of seats and INC bagged 82 seats (<http://www.eci.nic.in>).

However, with the 2001 assembly polls the All India Trinamool Congress (AITC), the then political novice in the state of West Bengal, made inroads in the state party system⁵⁷. Moreover, Buddhadeb Bhattacharya succeeded Jyoti Basu as the seventh chief minister of the state. Jyoti Basu failed to continue to serve the state because of his deteriorating health conditions⁵⁸. Under the leadership of Buddhadev Bhattacharya, the CPI (M)-led Left Front came to power in the state for the sixth time consecutively with the 2001 state election securing more than 200 of the 294 assembly seats. The CPI (M) secured 143 seats out of the 211 seats polling 36.59

⁵⁶ Left could consolidate its base in the initial years with the aid of rural teachers who were either member of the party or of their frontal organisations. These teachers help the Left to build its base due to their amicable relationship based on trust with the parents of their students and other villagers among whom they earned immense respect. Rural voters had been the primary support base of the Left parties, primarily the CPI (M). The base constitute of the farmers, agricultural workers, skilled and semi-skilled workers of the production sector of the rural areas, the disadvantageous sections of the society such as the SCs, STs, Muslims and the woman. See Dwaipayana Bhattacharya, "Left in the Lurch: The Demise of the World's Longest Elected Regime?", Economic and Political weekly, Vol. 45 No. 3, January 16-22, 2010.

⁵⁷ This political novice in the long run initiated the biggest change in the state party system by coming to power in the state and relegating the CPI (M)-led Left Front which had enjoyed a long spell of power in the state to the position of an 'opposition' party.

⁵⁸ "Buddhadev sworn in as Bengal CM", The Hindu, November 07, 2000.

percent of votes and 49.96 percent of seats. Among the Front partners Forward Bloc secured 25 seats, RSP secured 17 seats, the West Bengal Socialist Party secured four seats (<http://www.eci.nic.in>). The principal opposition partner the AITC⁵⁹ contested the polls in alliance with Congress and could bag 60 seats out of the 226 contested seats polling 30.66 percent of votes and 39.42 percent of seats. INC secured only 26 seats with 7.98 percent of votes (<http://www.eci.nic.in>)⁶⁰. The state economy was in doldrums with stagnant growth in the industrial sectors, inadequate funds at the disposal of the state, the state had also failed to attract abundant foreign investment. Hence, Buddhadeb Bhattacharya during his era adopted new pragmatic approach of 'continuity' and 'change' by intricately integrating elements of capitalism and socialism to suit the changing needs of the era of Liberalization, Privatization and Globalization (LPG). He unleashed an 'open door policy' for encouraging investment and adopted a new economic policy of 2006 with increased thrust upon industrialization and entrepreneurship. He had expressed his willingness to generate employment opportunities through privatization and assured investors of infrastructural development. He undertook an initiative to create conducive peaceful environment to carry out business in the state and for administrative revamp to ensure easy and hassle free functioning of the big industries. He had also encouraged setting up of agro-based industries and tried to improve urban facilities to facilitate smooth operation of business with new airports, sea ports, etc. He did earn laudable appreciation from big industrialists. These measures rekindled hope and aspirations of the progress-minded urban and young population and hence the party could create a new base for itself by bringing into the fold the urban middle class and young population within its traditional base of agricultural labourers, peasants and workers. He gave a call to reform, perform or perish to his fellow comrades and requested them to embrace the change. The catchphrase "Agriculture Our Foundation and Industry Our Future" coined by Left Front during the 2006 state election campaign could cut a niche in people's mind (Basu, 2007, pp. 292-304). Bhattacharjee vowed to accelerate progress in agriculture, ensure greater industrialization with emphasis on the need for enhanced investment as well improve the conditions of people living below the line of poverty and improve the work culture among the government employees in the state.

⁵⁹ The AITC came into existence in January 1st 1998 following a break up in the West Bengal unit of the Congress.

⁶⁰ "Left Front retains Bengal", The Hindu, May 14, 2001.

He insisted that the need of the hour was to go for greater reform and drastic changes in the policies of the administration⁶¹.

The Left Front returned back to power for the seventh consecutive time with the 2006 assembly polls completing a rule of three decades in the state. The CPI (M) secured 176 seats out of the 212 contested polling 37.13 percent of votes and 50.83 percent of seats. The other partners of the Front such as the RSP secured 20 seats, the Forward Bloc secured 23 seats. The Trinamool Congress bagged only 30 of the 257 contested seats and INC could fetch only 21 seats (<http://www.eci.nic.in>). Buddhadeb Bhattacharya-led Left Front remained in power till 2011. He did attract some investment, the cities were fast changing and new flyovers, plazas, townships, multiplexes were cropping up and the IT sector was proliferating along with numerous other changes. However, he was ousted out of power with the 2011 assembly polls by the principal opposition party in the state, the All India Trinamool Congress (AITC), a break-away group from the Congress party which came into existence in 1997 and it has always provided a violent opposition to many of the government's loopholes in the state under the energetic and fiery leadership of Mamata Banerjee.

Why did the CPI (M)-led Left Front Faltered?

In West Bengal the unchallenged rule of Left Front for almost three decades witnessed a severe blow and this became evident from the 2009 Lok Sabha polls itself⁶². The left front was cut to size by the Congress-Trinamool alliance which secured 25 seats out of 42 leaving 16 seats for the left front; significant loser was the CPI (M) which could bag only 9 seats in the 2009 Lok Sabha polls

⁶¹ "A vote for development, says Buddhadeb", The Hindu, May 12, 2006.

⁶² The key to survival of the Left front is the well build network between the party and its frontal organisation which functions tirelessly in maintaining a liaison between the government and the people by securing benefits, addressing problems related to various sectors and occupation and by influencing policy-making with day-to-day inputs (Chakraborty, 2006, p. 3524). These frontal organisation provide inexplicable performance during election campaign by mobilising voters in favour of the Left Front. The full-time cadre work tirelessly to ensure victory for the front. The employees of the secondary and tertiary sectors owe and invisible allegiance to the Left parties, more particularly, the CPI (M). Frontal organisations like All Bengal Teacher's Association, West Bengal College and University Teacher's Association, Centre of Indian Trade Unions, Krishak Sabha, Student's Federation of India, DYFI play a crucial role in sustaining and consolidating the base of the Left in the state. Besides, unorganised and divided opposition is another crux towards the survival of the left front. Absence of any other potential alternative was another reason for the uninterrupted reign of the Left in the state for 34 years.

(<http://www.eci.nic.in>). The left were extending issue based support from outside to the earlier Congress-led UPA Government which came to power with 2004 Lok Sabha polls but suddenly 6 months prior to the expiry of the term of the Lok Sabha they withdrew their support and brought a no-confidence motion opposing UPA's economic reforms programmes and the Indo-US Nuclear Deal as the major threat for the country. The left front realized that they were gradually losing ground among the voters, even in their home grounds of West Bengal and Kerala and thus in their attempt of regaining lost ground and with their so called pro-people image they took the risk of withdrawing support and going to the general election. Apparently such action of the Left front did not leave any positive impact, as they could not convince people and convey their reasons of refuting the harmful consequences of the economic reforms and the nuclear deal⁶³.

Although the attempt of industrialization as a means of stimulating growth and creating employment opportunities was seen to be a step of appreciation⁶⁴, the Left Front Government of West Bengal, under Chief Minister Mr. Buddhadeb Bhattacharya, went about doing it in a wrong way. It tried to be dictatorial and did not feel the need to answer and explain the merits and advantages to its people about the steps that was about to be taken by them. It attempted to acquire productive land of farmers for the "Nano" project of Tata Motors in Singur and for Special Economic Zone (SEZ) in Nandigram. It even used force in its own way to evict owners of the land and displayed arrogance only to antagonize a large section of people of West Bengal. Further, the party's irresponsible cadres extended aggressive support to the government's misguided policy and the State Police remained either a mute spectator or an active supporter⁶⁵. The government lost the sustained support of the rural masses, which has always been its strength and alienated itself from the urban intellectual base⁶⁶. The coercive action of the state government towards acquiring 400 acres of land at Singur from unwilling farmers was resented by the peasants and landless labourers. Ms Mamata Banerjee and Trinamool Congress with others took advantage of the situation and were able to mobilize people against the State Government and the CPI (M) party in particular. She went on a 25 day hunger strike

⁶³ "Buddhadeb will have to play a major role: Basu", The Hindu, May 12, 2006.

⁶⁴ "Industry lauds Left Front Victory", The Hindu, May 12, 2006.

⁶⁵ "Mamata demands dismissal of Left Front government", The Hindu, March 14, 2007.

⁶⁶ "Singur, Nandigram were our biggest mistake: Buddhadeb", www.ndtv.com, April 18, 2011 (accessed on March 07, 2016 at 9:30 am).

to press for party's demand to return land to the landowners⁶⁷. The land acquisition controversy accelerated when incidents of violence started to spread in adjoining areas of Nandigram, Khejuri, Netai village⁶⁸ in the Lalgarh area of West Bengal's Paschim Medinipur district where local residents protested and this led to bloody clashes between local residents, opposition cadres, activists and the state Police against the land acquisition grab of the Buddhadeb-led state government⁶⁹. Violent clashes between CPI-M and TMC cadres took place over the return of people displaced by violence in Kejuri near Nandigram⁷⁰. The general populace felt disgruntled about the role of state Police and the administration and these was adequately exploited by opposition party, the Trinamool Congress in giving her party a 'pro-people' image. She organized agitations, gheraos, demonstrations and hunger strikes against land grab for industries and SEZs and immediately could make substantial inroads into rural Bengal and gain moral support among the urban population as well.

The utter failure of the government in the implementation of NREGA scheme in West Bengal, large-scale privatization of education and health-care, failure in reviving the traditional and manufacturing industries such as tea, jute, textile, etc., full-scale assault of Public Distribution System (PDS) and also the manner in which the Rizwanur Rahaman case was dealt with, increased the wrath of common people. The entire episode projected the tainted picture of the administration. Improper handling of Rizwanur case⁷¹ drew enough ire of the Muslim population. The Kolkata Police failed to abide by its duty and punish the culprit and instead helped the alleged culprits in concealing the facts related to the murder case⁷². Coupled with it the *madrassas* (Islamic religious centres) were labeled as dens of terrorism and campaign were launched to marginalize them under the tenure of Chief Minister Buddhadeb Bhattacharya in 2007 (Chakraborty, 2011, p.304). As expected, left front performed

⁶⁷ "Buddhadeb renews offer on talks", The Hindu, Dec. 28, 2006.

⁶⁸ "Seven killed in Lalgarh Violence", The Hindu, January 08, 2011.

⁶⁹ "11 killed in Nandigram police firing", The Hindu, March 15, 2007.

⁷⁰ "*Tension near Nandigram*", The Hindu, November 26, 2010.

⁷¹ The influential Todi family residing in Bengal who are Hindu never endorsed Rizwanur Rehman's (a muslim) marriage with their daughter. It has been alleged that Rizwanur was abated to commit suicide. The case is pending before the judiciary.

⁷² "Calcutta High Court to hear Rizwanur Rehman Case", Jan. 11, 2008, www.articles.economicstimes.indiatimes.com (accessed on March 07, 2016 at 11:50 am).

dismally in North & South 24 Parganas, Nadia, Murshidabad, Malda and Birbhum which have a high density of Muslim population⁷³.

Moreover, the alliance of Congress and TMC managed to accumulate all the anti-left votes in their favour which led to electoral downfall of the left. Cadre-based organizational structure, the hitherto strength of the left parties, over a period of time dissociated themselves from community works and social services. Cadres, holding posts of key functionaries at grass-root levels, started thinking to be the lords of the areas under their command, turned corrupt by virtue of the party being in power for a long spell and ignored all the issues relating to welfare of common masses only to invite wrath, unacceptability and a crashing downfall. Complacency grasped the entire party base and they took governance very lightly. Growing party control in many spheres such as appointment and transfer of government employees in service and educational sectors, undue advantage and favours to its party supporters had led to rise in unpopularity of the CPI (M) led Left Front rule in the state. Industrial stagnation led to growing index of unemployment and underemployment among the urban working class, lower middle class, and the youth. Frequent lock-outs, retrenchment, closure and suspension of work in factories and industrial unit are some of the factors which acted as catalyst towards growing dissatisfaction about the Left rule in the state (Dasgupta, 1998, pp. 1116-1117). In addition to these West Bengal was in fiscal deficit with a debt burden of about Rs. 1.92 lakh crore and hence the economy of the state was in gloomy condition. Apart from the issue of corruption practice among the ration shop dealers under the Public Distribution System (PDS), allegation of nepotism and favouritism against the CPI (M) party in general as well as against the CPI (M)-led state government, Buddhadeb Bhattacharjee can certainly be charged for his arrogance, complacency and an extremely insufficient knowledge of present-day social dynamics. Results of election have established that the electorate rejected, rather disbelieved, the main campaign of the Left that Trinamool Congress was coming in the way of developmental prospects. A large number of people in India might be illiterate but their political verdicts have always carried significance and strength.

⁷³ On the status of Muslim, See Abhijit Dasgupta, "On the Margins: Muslims in West Bengal", Economic and Political Weekly, Vol. 44, No. 16, April 18-25, 2009.

Rise of TMC in the State Party System

These drawbacks of the CPM further jeopardized the position of the party in the state and contributed positively towards the electoral growth of TMC in the state. Trinamool Congress emerged as a major player in the state and was believed to be the sole party who can fight the high-handedness of the Left leaders. It projected itself as the party of the downtrodden people who can ensure social justice to the people. TMC emerged as an alternative for the people of Bengal after a long spell of years under the enigmatic leadership of Mamata Banerjee. The people of Bengal remained haunted for years with the authoritarian rule of the Ray-led Congress government during the seventies and were highly disenchanted by the rule of both the United Front Governments during the late sixties and early seventies. The magic of “Brand Buddha” seemed to gradually wane away and the imaginations of the common masses got gradually painted with the rhetoric of change and development. Mamata Banerjee undertook a frivolous campaign to take the message of her party across the length and breadth of the state and assured an administration that will work for the people and ensure good governance and vowed to ensure an administration for “*Ma, Mati, Manush*” (A party which stands for Mother, Land, People). She gave a call for change and vowed to tread the path of progress and development but not at the cost of poor farmers and rural population. She even affirmed that she wishes to pursue politics of *poribortan* (change) and not politics of *protishod* (revenge). The party manifesto spoke about reconstructing and revitalizing Bengal. The manifesto also assured to revive the industrial sector by making every attempt to attract large investments in the sector of tea, jute, steel and other areas with focus on employment generation. The party also expressed its intention to create employment with focus on labour intensive sectors, revamp healthcare sectors with multifacility hospitals in each sub-division and multiply diagnostic centers. The manifesto reflected the party’s intention to undertake massive infrastructure building programmes with focus on rural roads and state highways and undertake farmer centric rural development programme, restore financial health of the state through restoration of state finances. It assured to rejuvenate state culture to one of hope and innovation with a people-friendly administration. It declared its intention to develop industrial town with focus on Public Private Partnership (PPP) and revive micro, medium and small enterprise using IT technologies, financial advice through collective marketing structures as well as

modernize jute mills. The manifesto reflected the intention of the party to revitalize the education sector set up new universities, colleges, schools and unfurl an education system based on merit and not based on cadre raj. The party through its manifesto assured to solve Darjeeling statehood demand problem and develop Jangalmahal and ensure basic services in these areas⁷⁴. With the 2011 assembly election the Trinamool Congress came to power in the state drawing an end to an unchallenged rule of the CPI (M)-led Left Front rule in the state of West Bengal. Trinamool Congress secured 184 seats out of the 226 seats polling 38.93 percent of votes and 50.15 percent of seats. CPI (M) could bag just 40 seats with 30.08 percent of votes and 41.39 percent of seats whereas INC could capture only 42 seats and CPI could win two seats (<http://www.eci.nic.in>). TMC fought the 2011 assembly election in an alliance with the Congress and Socialist Unity Centre of India (Communist). Mamata Banerjee-led Trinamool Congress was unanimously elected by the people of Bengal and came to power in the state in alliance with Congress and the SUCI⁷⁵. The state party remained bipolarized in nature with competitive multi-party system with TMC-led coalition government in power. The populist slogans, the pro-people image and the progressive leadership by Mamata Banerjee enabled TMC to come to power in the state⁷⁶. Opposition used the weapon of moral politics for electoral gains, besides using populism blended with personality cult and dashed with a ray of hope and positivism to ensure pro-people good governance. However, her ability to retain the state mantle depends solely on her ability to ensure economic development of the state, establishment of order in the society. Translating the promises into actions will actually determine the party's chances of retaining the power in the state. However, the party during its first tenure was rocked by the multicore Saradha scam and Rose Valley chit fund scam⁷⁷. These scams had links with ruling Trinamool Congress. Saradha scam was a major financial scam caused by the collapse of the Ponzi scheme run by the Saradha group, a group running collective investment schemes. Many prominent political leaders were arrested in relation to the scam which involved Members of Parliament of Trinamool Congress, Kunal Ghosh and Srinjoy Bose,

⁷⁴ See www.aitcofficial.org (accessed on 19 March, 2016 at 01:30 pm).

⁷⁵ "Trinamool Stakes claim to form government in West Bengal", *The Hindu*, May 16, 2011.

⁷⁶ The state lacked any viable alternative for long and this was one of the factors that enabled Left Front to remain a popular choice of the electorates of Bengal. Trinamool Congress (TMC) eventually could emerge and present itself as a potential alternative in the state politics.

⁷⁷ "Rose Valley scam much bigger than Saradha: Enforcement Directorate", *The Economic Times*, November 12, 2014.

former West Bengal Director General of Police Rajat Mazumder, football club official Debabrata Sarkar and Sports and Transport Minister of west Bengal, Madan Mitra. These political leaders received financial support from these groups which was accused of money laundering charges and of evading regulators such as SEBI⁷⁸. These scams has seriously questioned the ‘probity’ of the TMC riding on which the party came to power dethroning the 34 year old CPI (M)-led Left rule in the state. The much flaunted honesty and integrity and pro-people image of the party has come into question and might seriously jeopardize the party’s electoral fate with the upcoming assembly election. The recent sting video released by Narada News showing many of the state’s ministers and other elected Trinamool members presently holding portfolios and contesting the upcoming election as Trinamool candidates is accepting bribe from a fictitious company had further wrecked the credibility of the pro-people, honest image of the Mamata Baneerjee-led Trinamool Congress party.⁷⁹ The ruling government of Mamata Banerjee had not been much successful in accelerating industrial growth in the state and neither has been able to attract investment in the industrial sector in the state despite of holding numerous industrial summits during her tenure⁸⁰. The withdrawal of Tata from the Singur car plant had immensely affected the industrial fate of the state thereby discouraging other big business companies in investing and doing business in the state. The probable surge in the rate of employment in the state that would have occurred due to establishment of industrial houses was consequently hampered. However, the chief minister has taken several initiatives like improving infrastructure, putting an end to Maoist violence in the southern districts of Bengal when Kishenji, a Communist Party of India (Marxist) was gunned down by security forces in November 2011 during her era. This was followed by a series of arrests and surrender of other Maoist activists, establishing few colleges and universities, making recruitment of teachers in primary and secondary schools, colleges, unleashing new schemes like *kanyasree* which has curbed down early marriages and school dropouts of girl child in the state, *yuvasree* for youths, *Sabuj Sathi* (distribution of bicycles for girl students), rice at the rate of Rs. 2 per kg (extended the provision of National Food Security Act to the entire tribal

⁷⁸ “*Saradha scam turning out to be Trinamool Congress’s worst nightmare*”, The Economic Times, September 15, 2014.

⁷⁹ “*Bribery sting: Narada can’t wreck TMC’s poll march*”, The Hindustan Times, March 15, 2016.

⁸⁰ See <http://aitcofficial.org/aitc/bengal-global-business-summit-to-kick-off-tomorrow/> (accessed on August 16, 2016 at 11:45 am).

population of Jangalmahal), recruitment of special police constables from the Maoist belt of Jangalmahal, free shoes to primary school children, recreation facilities through numerous entertaining events etc. However, Mamata-led government has not been able to make any break through with relation to the land rehabilitation act, neither it has been able to give back the land that was taken away from the farmers of Nandigram and Singur. When incidence like anti-Nano agitation, rape and murder case of Tapasi Malik took Mamata Banerjee to new political heights then incidents like Park street rape case, Barasat rape and murder case during the reign of Mamata-led Trinamool Congress have jeopardized her credibility. In the first instance the response of the State Police and the ruling government was to play it down. This invited severe criticism for Mamata Banerjee who once portrayed herself as the apostle of honesty; a leader who stood for women's right and was accused of partiality by the ruling government to conceal the loopholes of the State administration.

The CPI (M) in order to oust the TMC from power had aligned with the Congress to fight the 2016 assembly polls to recover the lost bastion of the Left. Moreover, the Left to woo the hill population has extended their support to the Gorkha Jan Mukti Morcha (GJMM) that had previously parted ways with Left and had withdrawn their support from the Left for the 2011 assembly election which had actually led to substantial erosion of votes for the Left combine⁸¹. Mamata appealed for support for TMC by referring to her concern for the hill people and their welfare and her frequent visits to the hills during every calamity that the hill region had faced during her reign. The TMC-led government during its reign had established the Gorkhaland Territorial Board for the autonomous administration for the region in certain specific areas⁸². Many other boards such as the Boards of the Lepchas, Bhutias, Rai, Tamangs, etc. have been established by the ruling government for the development of these specific communities in the region. This has been considered as an attempt by the Mamata Banerjee-led government to marginalize the Gorkha monopoly in the hills. Moreover, the split in GJMM which led to the birth of Jan Andolan Party (JAP) of Harka Bahadur Chettri has led to the decrease in the strength of GJMM. JAP has extended

⁸¹ North Bengal has primarily voted in support of Left Front. See Ranajit Das Gupta, "1998 Elections in West Bengal: A Major Setback for Left Front", *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol. 33, No. 19, May 9-15, 1998, p. 1113).

⁸² "Peace restored to Darjeeling hills", *The Hindu*, March 16, 2012.

support to TMC for the 2016 assembly polls. TMC has suffered a drubbing in the recent Siliguri Municipal election where the Left has surpassed the ruling Trinamool Congress. The issue of corruption has been the major plank of the campaign of the Left and Congress riding on which the alliance sought to dethrone the so vouches *Ma, Mati, Manush* government of Mamata Banerjee. The contest largely revolved around the Left-Congress secular combine and the AITC along with attempts by the BJP-led NDA to make large-scale inroads in the state's electoral map. However, with the 2016 assembly polls TMC resurged victorious with 211 seats in the House of 294. BJP could secure 3 seats and the Left-Congress alliance could garner 76 seats (<http://www.eci.nic.in>). Due to some serious drawbacks of the TMC-led government it was expected the Left-Congress alliance might benefit in the 2016 assembly election. The Left failed to cast its spell because it had no young leaders to project, the organizational workers are less zealous due to the decreasing popularity of the Left in the state. Moreover, it had no impressive welfare agenda or prospective plan of action and its campaign revolved primarily around the issue of anti-corruption with a one point agenda of removing TMC government from power. Its pre-poll alliance with Congress further sealed its fate. The popularity of Congress among the electorates has faded away. Hence, the combine failed to attract the votes of the common people. On the contrary, TMC was still able to sell hope for a better future with its development oriented rhetoric. Mamata Banerjee's personal standing among the people fetched enormous share of votes for TMC. Mamata Banerjee while in power pursued development oriented activities. She adhered to welfare economics to sustain her popularity and retain the rein of control. She could maintain the communal harmony of the state, extended funds to maintain burial grounds of the Muslims, provided scholarships to meritorious minority students and gave tickets to minority leaders like Abdur Razzak Mollah and Siddiqullah Choudhury to attract minority votes. In 2016 assembly polls TMC had an edge over in most of the districts like Nadia, North and South 24 Paraganas, Kolkatta, Howrah, Hooghly, East Midnapore, West Midnapore, Purulia, Bankura, Burdwan, Birbhum, South Dinajpur, Cooch Behar, Jalpaiguri⁸³. Hence, the state party system has been able to retain its stability with the people of the state giving some more tenure to the Trinamool Congress to translate rhetoric into palpable actions. The state party system has with the 2016 assembly election has

⁸³ *"Mamata's political capitals on a high"*, The Hindu, May 20, 2016.

remained bipolarized and competitive multi-party in nature with pre-dominance of Trinamool Congress. The Mamata Banerjee-led TMC government will have to ensure peace and communal harmony, industrial development, economic development and create avenues for new jobs to sustain itself in power.

The Features of West Bengal State Party System

The party system of West Bengal has always been a competitive multi-party system in nature as numerous political parties have co-existed and competed for power in the state. Till 1967 it had been a multiparty system with Congress as the pre-dominant party. Since 1967 an era of coalition politics had set in and had acquired a permanent feature of the state party system. This was replaced by the emergence of Trinamool as the pre-dominant party⁸⁴ in a competitive multi-party system. The parties that constituted the party system were marked by frictions and this led to birth of many other parties and hence made the party system homogeneous in nature. The practice of defection by political leaders due to friction and dissensions made the party system more volatile in nature. The party system was not significantly influenced by ‘identity’ based aspects due to the long spell of presence of the Leftist rule which does not subscribe much to the politics based on “identity” factors and hence the party system was largely determined by the ability on the part of the government in power to ‘deliver’ and ensure ‘good governance’ to its people. The dominance of the educated middle class in the political system has also disabled the politics based on “identity” makers leave much imprints in the political system in Bengal. The role of opposition has always remained noteworthy and has always effected reconfiguration and realignments in the party system.

Maharashtra

The State of Maharashtra is situated in the western part of the Indian Union. The state has been a bastion of the Congress Party. The state has survived all the tumultuous years between 1967 and 1972. In 1989 as well Maharashtra did not give verdict

⁸⁴ Trinamool emerged as the majority party with the 2011 assembly election but it retained its pre-poll allies as a mark of courtesy and humility.

against the Congress Party. Maharashtra emerged as one of the most stable state regime of the Congress party. Maharashtra always played a pivotal role in the nationalist movement. Many eminent Maharashtrians leaders provided leadership to the Congress in the early years. Maharashtra was largely influenced by the impact of western education. Hence, a new class emerged comprising of the western educated elite and they enjoyed greater access to education, civil services, employment, politics, etc. This new class led the national movement for independence. This elite class was composed mostly of the Brahmans and non-Maharashtrians that retained a superior and leading position in all the spheres. This created resentment among the non-Brahman section of the Maharashtrian society who remained deprived of all such basic facilities. Hence, a revolt brewed and the non-Brahmans demanded for greater participation in the political system and enhanced access to basic facilities such as education, employment, etc. The numerically less Brahmans due to their access to western education became more eligible than their counterparts. The non-Brahmans demanded for a separate state, comprising of Marathi speaking areas, to end the domination of the elite Brahmans and the non-Maharashtrians for their greater representation, better access, enhanced economic, social, political opportunities. Peasants and Workers Party (PWP) emerged partly as the revolt against the Brahman and non-Maharashtrian's domination in the State Congress Organisation. Certain non-Brahman leaders deserted Congress and in 1948 formed their own party PWP. The first revolt to protest against the upper caste domination was initiated by Jyotiba Phule in 1873 in Maharashtra by founding the *Satya Shodak Samaj* which was a group which fought to liberate the Sudhras and the untouchables from the exploitation of the upper caste people. The central leadership remained reluctant and refused to comply with the demands for the creation of a new state of Maharashtra. Finally after independence when reorganization of states were initiated in 1956 Bombay Presidency was reorganized along the linguistic lines and the Marathi speaking areas of the Marathawada region from the erstwhile Hyderabad which remained neglected under the Nizams rule and the Vidarbha region which comprised of four districts of Berar and four districts of the Mahakoshal were merged into the Bombay Presidency. However, the spur did not subside when another revolt emerged that demanded for division of the erstwhile bilingual Bombay state into two separate state, namely, the state of Maharashtra and state of Gujarat. Simultaneously in 1956 the Mahagujarat

Movement was started that demanded for the creation of the state of Gujarat. In 1960, Maharashtra and Gujarat was created out of the erstwhile Bombay Presidency. Maharashtra Congress remained riddled with dichotomous attitude towards the demand for the proposed Marathi-speaking state of Maharashtra. Many Congress leaders were in favour of the new state. Y.B Chavan⁸⁵ was one such leader who favoured creation of the new state but was careful enough in not to antagonize the central leadership and thus gained the appreciation of Nehru and other senior Congress leaders (Joshi, 1969, pp. 177-206). Finally, he was elected unanimously by the central leadership as the chief minister in 1956 when Morarji Desai joined the cabinet ministry in Delhi (www.maharashtracongress.org). The state of Maharashtra conducted its first poll in 1962. Hence with the 1962 assembly election Indian National Congress (INC) emerged victorious by winning 215 out of the 264 contested seats, polling 51.22 percent of votes and 51.22 percent of seats. Praja Socialist Party (PSP) and Socialist (SOC) could secure nine and one seats respectively. Peasants and Workers Party (PWP), the state party, could bag 15 seats. In the 1967 assembly election as well INC could win 203 out of the 270 seats with 47.03 percent of votes and 47.03 percent of seats. PSP could bag 8 seats, CPI won 10 seats and BJS secured 4 seats. PWP, the state party, won 19 seats with INC emerging as the majority party in the assembly polls. In the 1972 state election INC again emerged victorious with 222 out of the 271 contested seats polling 56.36 percent of votes and 56.36 percent of seats. BJS won five seats and PWP won 7 seats (<http://www.eci.nic.in>). Till 1978 Congress enjoyed a smooth sail in the state party system in the absence of any potential alternative. Although Jana Sangh, PWP, SOC, Republican Party India (RPI) represented the opposition forces in the state party system but they could never create a substantial base for itself to emerge as the ruling alternative in the state party system. Hence till 1978 the state party system remained competitive multi-party in nature with predominance of Congress Party as the largest party.

However, since the ascendance of Indira Gandhi to power she made repeated attempts to concentrate power in her own hands and establish a unilateral control over the Congress organization and throttle state units. Hence, since 1970 Indira Gandhi has tried to erode the authority and the hegemony of the Maratha leadership. This has

⁸⁵ Y.B Chavan popularised the concept of *Bahujanwad* (majoritarianism) which made him gain popularity. The term epitomised the non-elite, oppressed and non-Brahmin castes.

created resentment among the state bosses and has led to fissures and fractures in the state unit of the Congress. Moreover, severe drought of 1970, the rigidity of the central leadership during the 1977 national emergency, factionalism within the State Congress unit, the defeat of Congress (I) in the 1977 Lok Sabha election eroded the credibility of the Congress Party in the state of Maharashtra (Palshikar & Birmal, 2004, p. 5472). By 1970s Congress was split into factions, namely, the Indira Congress, Maharashtra Socialist Congress, Vidarbha Congress and Congress (S) (EPW, Congress still supreme, 1979, p.930). Indira Gandhi has always tried to challenge the traditional Maratha lobby which has always dominated the course of state politics and even in 1975 she was successful in appointing S.B Chavan, a Maratha, as the chief minister of the state who has always maintained an estranged relationship with Y.B Chavan. The Maratha leadership fought the 1978 state election as a separate faction of the Congress Party as opposed to Indira Congress. Sharad Pawar too led a faction of Maratha leaders which formed the first non-Congress coalition government in the state (Palshikar & Birmal, 2004, p. 5472).

In the 1978 state election INC (I) won 62 out of the 203 seats with 18.34 percent of votes and 25.97 percent of seats and INC bagged 69 out of the 259 contested of seats, polling 25.33 percent of votes and 28.00 percent of seats. Janata Party (JNP) could fetch for itself 99 out of the 215 seats polling 27.99 percent of votes and 37.05 percent of seats. PWP could secure 13 seats (<http://www.eci.nic.in>). Although Janata Party emerged as the single largest party but Congress (I) with 62 seats and Congress (U) with 69 seats ⁸⁶formed a coalition and came together to form a coalition ministry under the leadership of Vasantdada Patil. Hence with the 1978 assembly election the state party system entered into a competitive multi-polarized multi-party system with coalition governments.

However, the Patil ministry had to step down when Sharad Pawar and his associates withdrew their support from the ministry. Pawar and his associates formed an alliance known as the Progressive Democratic Front (PDF) with the non-Congress opposition parties and became the chief minister of the state in July 1978. He remained in power till February 1980. At the national level the Janata experiment collapsed and it could not emerge as a strong alternative to the Congress party. Hence, the political ascendancy of the Congress (I) was reinforced with the 1980 assembly election. Since

⁸⁶ See <http://www.eci.nic.in>

1980 till 1990 the state party system acquired a competitive, multi-polarized, multi-party system character and it witnessed a partial restoration of the Congress Party as the largest party. In the 1980 state election BJP won 14 out of the 45 contested seats. INC (I) won 186 out of the 286 seats with 44.50 percent of votes and 44.91 percent of seats. INC (U) won 47 out of the 192 contested seats with 20.49 percent of votes and 29.44 percent of seats. Janata Party and its splinter groups could not secure enough seats. JNP (JP) could only secure 17 seats. Janata Party Secular (Charan Singh) JNP (SC) and Janata Party-Secular (Raj Narain) JNP (SR) drew a blank. PWP bagged nine seats (<http://www.eci.nic.in>). Antulay, a non-Maratha, was appointed as the chief minister of the state unanimously by the central leadership. Henceforth, the INC (I) remained in control of the state mantle and Indira Gandhi and later on Rajiv Gandhi scrupulously was able to maintain control over the Maratha politics and was efficiently able to suppress the hegemonic position of the Maratha lobby in the state politics. Internal factions, defection and conflict over political opportunities were some of the significant factors that had gradually weakened the strength of the omnipotent Maratha lobby in the state (Palshikar, 1994, p.273). In 1985 assembly election BJP occupied 16 seats. INC emerged as the largest party in the assembly by winning 161 out of the 287 contested seats, polling 43.41 percent of votes and 43.55 percent of seats. Indian Congress-Socialist (ICS) bagged 54 out of the 126 contested seats with 17.28 percent of votes and 38.86 percent of seats. JNP won 20 seats. PWP bagged 13 seats (<http://www.eci.nic.in>). In the 1990 assembly polls BJP won 42 out of the 104 contested seats. INC again emerged victorious in the assembly election with 141 seats, polling 38.17 percent of votes and 39.81 percent of seats. Janata Dal (JD) could win 24 out of 214 contested seats with 12.72 percent of votes and 17.04 percent of seats. Shiv Sena (SHS/SS) could bag for itself 52 seats with 15.94 percent of votes and 24.99 percent of seats (<http://www.eci.nic.in>). Even during the late eighties when a pronounced non-Congress coalition era emerged at the central level Maharashtra did not give verdict against the Congress party. Janata Dal could not impose itself as a viable alternative among the Maratha populace.

In 1989 BJP formed an alliance in the state with Shiv Sena making the competitive multi-party state party system acutely bipolar in nature. Shiv Sena emerged as an important political force in the state of Maharashtra since 1980s and more particularly since 1990s. It participated in the city election of Mumbai and Thane from 1967

onwards. Between 1967 and 1972 Shiv Sena emerged as a prominent party both in Thane and Mumbai. It happens to be the longest ally of BJP. Before 1989 Lok Sabha polls, Shiv Sena had earlier entered into alliance with BJP for the 1984 Lok Sabha polls as well. Shiv Sena was formed in 1966 as a small outfit to preserve and promote the interests of the Marathi-speaking job seekers of Mumbai city. It pursued regional and communal identity to widen its base. It tried to spread its appeal with its son-of-soil policy and informal network of social service by its Sena activists (*karyakartas*) and populist rhetoric. During its nascent stage it resorted to violent movements and riots against the non-Maharashtrians and South Indian establishments accusing them of usurping the employment opportunities of the local Marathi youths. Sena had uprooted the trade union movement of Mumbai spearheaded mostly by the Left and the Socialists. It had resorted to unconventional fanatic semi-fascist tactics to implement its ideologies in the society. It has adopted aggressive stands over the Hindu-Muslim issue. In 1984 Sena had established the Hindu Mahasangh to protect the Hindu interests. Since 1980 it has mostly remained anti-Congress in nature although it had supported the Congress during emergency period and during the 1977-1978 election (Lele, 1995, pp. 1523-1524). Finally, Shiv Sena succeeded with the 1995 assembly polls by installing its own chief minister in alliance with BJP. Later on Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) which was formed in 1999 by Sharad Pawar as a party of the Marathas after deserting Congress over difference with Sonia Gandhi⁸⁷, the AICC president, added itself as another player in the state party system.

Ascendance of BJP-Shiv Sena Alliance

The 1995 election realigned the state party system by dislodging the Congress from the position of the ruling party. In the 1995 state election BJP occupied 65 out of the 116 contested seats with 12.80 percent of votes and 32.16 percent of seats. INC captured 80 out of the 286, polling 31.00 percent of votes and 31.23 percent of seats. Shiv Sena bagged 73 out of the 169 contested seats, polling 16.39 percent of votes and 27.69 percent of seats (<http://www.eci.nic.in>). The Shiv Sena and BJP formed an

⁸⁷ It was formed by rebel Congressmen such as P.A Sangma, Sharad Pawar, Tariq Anwar on May 1999 after being expelled from the Congress party for not readily accepting the stewardship of Mrs. Sonia Gandhi and questioning the dynastic succession. They ridiculed the choice of Sonia Gandhi as the Congress President in 1998 after the stepping down of Sitaram Kesari for her foreign origin.

alliance along with the support of 10 Independents to oust the Congress party from power (Purandare, 2009, p. 20). The Sena-BJP alliance came to power in Maharashtra following the 1995 assembly election based on the anti-corruption plank⁸⁸. The Congress was voted out of power in Maharashtra for the first time since independence in the state primarily because of the alleged involvement of the Sharad Pawar government in cases of corruption. Besides, charges like criminalization of politics, the stock market scam, the incidents of cases of serial bomb blast and the communal riot of 1992-93, the Enron issue, rising unemployment, the issue of immigration which seriously affected the interests of the natives, etc. grossly had a negative impact upon the electoral fortune of the Congress-NCP combine (Purandare, 2009, p.18). The electoral verdict was in favour of an ‘alternative’ to the Congress party. Manohar Joshi and later on Narayan Rane became the non-congress chief ministers of the state. The SS-BJP alliance could not perform inexplicably and failed to emerge as a very strong alternative in the state party system. Discord and disunity between chief minister Manohar Joshi and Thackeray was the primary reason for the collapse of the alliance government. Manohar Joshi was removed and Narayan Rane was installed as the new chief minister on February 1999 (Palshikar, 1999, p. 743). Corruption charges against the government wrested the chances of the coalition government to return to power. The SS-BJP combine failed to implement their proclamations. The slum rehabilitation scheme of housing one million slum dwellers by the end of 1999 did not achieve the complete mark and the government helplessly had to lower its target. The combine during its tenure could not generate employment opportunities for the native Maharashtrians and the promise to stabilize the prices of five essential food items such as rice, sugar, oil, jowar and lentils was never achieved, severe drinking water problems remained unresolved. The zunka bhakar scheme which aimed at providing food at a very nominal rate to the poor and the lower income group failed abysmally. Urbanisation gained importance and the interest of the rural poor remained unaddressed. The manufacturing sector grew at a rapid pace but the agricultural sector remained neglected (Purandare, 2009, pp. 18-19). The city of Mumbai (then Bombay) witnessed large-scale violence and communal riots between Hindus and Muslims during December 1992 and January 1993 in response to the 1992 Babri Masjid (Mosque) demolition and this was followed by the horrifying March 1993 Bombay

⁸⁸ “*Thackery allows Sutar’s Sacrifice*”, The Hindustan Times, May 01, 1997.

blasts in which Yakub Menon became the prime convict⁸⁹. The riot was largely designed to evoke the 'Hindu' identity by marginalizing and mutilating the minority community, the Muslims. It was alleged that Shiv Sena had resorted to play the communal card by instigating Hindu masses to consolidate its base and improve its electoral fate in the state. Following the submission of Srikrishna Commission⁹⁰ report three cadres of Shiv Sena were sentenced in connection to the Bombay (now Mumbai) riots⁹¹.

Return of Congress-NCP alliance in the state

Since 1995 assembly election till the 2004 assembly election, the state party system exhibited a competitive multi-party acutely bipolarized character with coalition governments. In 1999 state election BJP won 56 out of the 117 contested seats with 14.54 percent of votes and 35.82 percent of seats. INC secured 75 out of the 249 contested seats, polling 27.20 percent of votes and 31.39 percent of seats. NCP bagged 58 out of the 223 contested seats with 22.66 percent of votes and 29.19 percent of seats. SHS won 69 out of the 161 contested seats polling 17.33 percent of votes and 31.16 percent of seats (<http://www.eci.nic.in>). Vilasrao Deshmukh led-Congress government came back to power in the state in alliance with NCP, following the collapse of the SS-BJP alliance in the state due to the latter's misrule in the state. Vilasrao Deshmukh had the arduous task of providing good governance, accelerating power sector reforms, ensuring infrastructural development and its expansion, improving the financial condition of the state which was into doldrums following the poor management by the outgoing BJP-SHS coalition government. However, Deshmukh failed to live to the expectations and hence was asked to step down by the Congress High Command. The Congress High Command elected Sushil Kumar Shinde, a Dalit, as the leader of the Maharashtra Congress Legislature Party (CLP) on

⁸⁹ *"Implement Srikrishna Panel Report on 1992-93 riots: Samajwadi Party's Abu Azmi"*, The Economic Times, August 03, 2015.

⁹⁰ Justice B,N Srikrishna, a sitting judge of Bombay High Court was appointed to the head the Commission to probe into the circumstances that led to the riots of 1992-93 by the Sudhakar Rao Naik led Congress government in 1993. The report criticised the Naik-led Congress government for inefficient handling of the crisis situation. The Report by the Commission indicated that Shiv Sena played a role in inciting violence against the Muslims and their properties which was flared up by inflammatory speeches and slogans by BJP workers in various rallies.

⁹¹ *"Shiv Sena Politicians convicted over 1992 Mumbai riots"*, July 09, 2008, www.in.reuters.com (accessed at 12:05 pm on 29 April, 2016).

January 2003. NCP too supported his candidature as Sharad Pawar preferred Shinde over Vilasrao Deshmukh. Chhagan Bhujbal, a NCP leader continued as the Deputy Chief Minister of the state. Shinde was installed as the new chief minister of the multi-party Progressive Democratic Front (PDF) government along with Independents and small parties like Janata Dal (Secular), RPI (Gavai), Gondwana Ganatantra Party, etc⁹². The replacement of chief ministers was a gesture of the Congress party to project itself as a party which wishes to perform and deliver progressive good governance to its masses.

In 2004 assembly polls INC won 69 out of the 157 contested seats, polling 21.06 percent of votes and 39.39 percent of seats. NCP secured 71 out of the 124 contested seats with 18.75 percent of votes and 42.72 percent of seats. BJP won 54 out of the 111 contested seats polling 13.67 percent of votes and 36.53 percent of seats. SHS bagged 62 out of the 163 contested seats, polling 19.97 percent of votes and 34.93 percent of seats (<http://www.eci.nic.in>). The Congress-NCP alliance came back to form the Democratic Progressive Front government in the state. Vilasrao Deshmukh, a Maratha from the backward Marathawada region was reinstated as the chief minister of the state⁹³. However, he could not complete his tenure and had to tender resignation owning the moral responsibility for the Mumbai terror strikes. He invited severe criticism after he visited the Taj Hotel, which was one of the targets of the terrorists, with a popular film maker along with his actor son which weakened his political stature in the state as well as in the country and questioned his sensitivity towards such a grave issue as a state leader. The state administration had failed to prevent the horrifying 26/11 terror attack which took thousands of innocent lives and brought the vibrant life of the state to a standstill. He was succeeded by Ashok Chavan, the industry minister, in the outgoing Deshmukh-led coalition government⁹⁴.

With the 2009 assembly election the state party system became competitive multi-party multi-polarized in nature with coalition governments. With the 2009 assembly election the BJP won 46 out of the 114 contested seats with 14.02 percent of votes and 33.56 percent of seats. INC won 62 out of the 170 contested seats polling 21.01 percent of votes and 36.51 percent of seats. NCP won 62 out of the 113 contested

⁹² “*Shinde to be Maharashtra CM*”, The Hindu, January 17, 2003.

⁹³ “*No lobbying to elect me: Deshmukh*”, The Hindu, October 29, 2004.

⁹⁴ “*Ashok Chavan to be chief minister*”, The Hindu, December 06, 2008.

seats with 16.37 percent of votes and 40.27 percent of seats. SHS secured 44 out of the 160 contested seats, polling 16.26 percent of votes and 29.90 percent of seats. Maharashtra Navnirman Sena (MNS), a political novice in the state bagged 13 out of the 143 contested seats and LSP drew a blank (<http://www.eci.nic.in>). Congress and NCP emerged as the largest party and staked their claim to form the government in the state along with support from Independents and other small parties like Bharip Bahujan Mahasangh, Bahujan Vikas Aghadi, Rashtriya Samaj Paksha, Swabhimani Paksha. MNS emerged as was the spoiler for the Shiv Sena⁹⁵. With the support of the small parties and Independents Congress-NCP acquired the majority in the assembly and formed the coalition government with Ashok Chavan as the chief minister for second time in a row⁹⁶. He was not able to continue as the chief minister of the state as well and was succeeded by Mr. Prithviraj Chavan. The Adarsh Society scam rattled the Chavan ministry and was the immediate cause of his resignation. Charges of corruption and nepotism grossly distorted the credentials of Prithviraj Chavan. It highlighted an infamous nexus between politicians, bureaucrats, builders⁹⁷. Defense Minister A.K Antony told the Parliament that Asok Chavan was one of the 13 people named by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) in the Adarsh Housing Society Scam. Chavan was also accused of nepotism when he assigned flats in the Adarsh

⁹⁵ MNS was the result of the family feud over the issue of succession. Raj Thackeray, nephew of Bal Thackeray wanted to be anointed as his successor. However, Bal Thackeray appointed his own son Udhav Thackeray as his successor. Hence Raj Thackeray revolted and deserted Shiv Sena and floated his own political outfit Maharashtra Navnirman Sena on March 2006. It is ethnocentric in ideology as well and projects itself as an all inclusive party to widen its support base. He took up the cause and need of the new Maharashtrian middle-class who demanded a party embedded in Maharashtrian ethos and interests. It harps on the ideology of Marathi sub-nationalism. He took up the cause of unemployment.

⁹⁶ *“Congress, NCP retain power in Maharashtra”*, The Hindu, October 23, 2009.

⁹⁷ The Adarsh Housing Society is a cooperative society in the city of Mumbai in India. It was reserved for the war widows and veterans of the Kargil War. In 2010, the Indian media brought to public the violations of rules at various phases of construction in the Adarsh Society. Questions were raised on the manner in which apartments in the building were allocated to bureaucrats, politicians and army personnel who had nothing to do with Kargil War and the way in which clearances were obtained for the construction of the building of the Adarsh Society. The Adarsh society high-rise was constructed in the posh Colaba locality of Mumbai, which is considered a sensitive coastal area by the Indian Defence forces and houses various Indian Defence establishments. The society is also alleged to have violated the Indian environment ministry rules. Many activists like Medha Patkar had been trying to uncover this scam since a long time. Several inquiries have been ordered by the army and the Government to probe into the irregularities. Some of the current occupants of the flats in the Adarsh co-operative society building have offered to vacate their flats at the earliest, denying allegations that they were allotted flats because they influenced or helped, in some manner, the construction of the society by violating the rules. The environment minister Jairam Ramesh formally set the ball rolling for the demolition of the entire 31-storey scam-tainted Adarsh building in Colaba's eco-sensitive zone on Friday November 12, 2010. It was being reported that the environment minister had sent a show cause notice to the Adarsh housing society for violating the green norms.

Society to some of his close relatives whereas the society was actually meant for the war widows. President's rule was imposed in the state after the NCP, the biggest ally of the Congress party in the Democratic Front coalition government withdrew its support from the government and reduced it to a minority government on September 26, 2014⁹⁸.

In 2014 assembly election BJP emerged victorious by winning 122 out of the 260 contested seats, polling 27.81 percent of votes and 31.15 percent of seats. INC won 42 out of the 287 contested seats with 17.95 percent of votes and 18.10 percent of seats. NCP bagged 41 out of the 278 contested seats polling 17.24 percent of votes and 17.96 percent of seats. MNS could bag a single seat for itself. SHS won 63 out of the 282 contested seats with 19.35 percent of votes and 19.80 percent of seats (<http://www.eci.nic.in>). The parties like Congress, Shiv Sena, BJP and NCP fought the elections on their own and did not enter into any pre-poll alliance. The pro-Modi wave and series of corruption scam which had rocked the Congress-led UPA II contributed positively towards the victory of the BJP in the state election in the state of Maharashtra. BJP contested the election alone breaking the 25 year old alliance with Shiv Sena. Riding on the slogan "Narendra in Delhi and Devendra in Maharashtra", Devendra Fadnavis, a Brahmin, became the present chief minister of the state⁹⁹. Thus with the 2014 state election BJP emerged as the largest party in the competitive multi-party, multi-polarized state party system.

The features of the Maharashtra State Party System

Community prowess has since the inception of the state shaped the state party system. The Maratha lobby has dominated the course of evolution of the state party system. The state party system is marked by multiplicity of parties. Dissensions have led to factionalism which has led to the growth of many small parties that time and again has led to reconfiguration of the state party system. Political opportunities, favouritism, family patronage, nepotism, corruption has always been the deciding factor that led to realignment in the party system. Presently, urge for development is what best shapes the party system.

⁹⁸ "President's rule in Maharashtra", The Hindu, September 29, 2014.

⁹⁹ "It's Fadnavis in Maharashtra", The Hindu, October 29, 2014.

Conclusion

Hence it is discernible that each state with its own set of people, culture, language, caste compositions, issues, problems, grievances and aspirations voted in varied pattern only produce multiple state party systems. A single country possesses a bifurcated party system into national and state level. The contest between upper caste and lower caste to acquire the rein of political power initiated the process of bifurcation of the Indian party system into two levels. It deepened with the process of defection and factionalism. Conflict over political opportunities, the lust to acquire and retain power led to splits in parties. Hence emergence of new parties and multiplicity of political parties led to increased availability of choices at the disposal of the voters. This led to scattered electoral verdict and thus fragmentation of the Indian Party System and rise in multiple state party system. Asymmetry between rhetoric, intent and implementation of poll promises, agenda of actions and vision plans, an intense urge for a better tomorrow, good governance and positive development in tune with social justice and equity are some of the factors that guide the voting pattern of the population. Hence, these parameters are also largely responsible for the bifurcation of the Indian Party Systems. The initial years since Independence many states opted to vote in a diversified pattern because the ruling Congress government was not able to provide abundant return to the masses. Hence, the above mentioned factors guided their electoral logic to give verdict against non-Congress Alternatives thereby producing multiple state party systems. The perfect blending of promises and performance will determine the future course of the Indian Party System at both the national and state levels.