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Bihar Election 2025 Sociological Review

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Abstract

This paper aims to discuss 2025 Bihar election which demonstrated that the older mode of politics was no longer sufficient to explain political behaviour as it used to be the case with the older model of politics which was based on the concept of caste. Caste had ceased to be significant, yet new sub-identities and aspirations to groups took on an even greater influence. The women became an independent group of voters influenced by the access to welfare and safety issues, and an increase in financial agency. The young people were not as devoted to caste, having been led by migration, mobility ideals, and frustration with lack of jobs to seek alternatives such as Jan Suraj. Intra-group division was also manifested in the Muslim community as some of them turned over to AIMIM. According to these tendencies, the identity becomes increasingly diversified and the voter is also guided not only by caste unity but also by the needs of classes, by gender experiences and symbolic appreciation. Social media also directed political impressions and collective accounts. In general, the election represents a transition to movable caste blocs to more permeable, overlapping identities due to gender, class, the young generation dreams, and new political communications.

Keywords: Bihar election 2025, caste politics, identity politics, women voters, youth voters, welfare politics, migration, class-based voting

Introduction

Bihar has been among the most socially stratified states in India whereby caste, religion and class have been influential in the voting pattern. This election offers an uncommon glimpse into the manner in which identity politics is being transformed in the contemporary state of Bihar, as the 2022 caste survey (published in 2023), and the political mobilization of parties. Through the sociological lens, the election does not only re-create the ancient caste systems, but also offers new social systems. The theories applied in this review are the conflict theory, identity theory and structural functionalism of how caste and community identities determine political power and social change.

Caste Organization and Demographic Board

The 2022 Bihar caste-based survey is regarded as one of the sociological points of departure according to which the state has 36.01 percent Extremely Backward Classes (EBCs), 27.12 percent Other Backward Classes (OBCs). The SCs make 19.65, STs 1.68 and the general/forward castes approximately 15.5 each. This population chart is elementary: more than 63 percent of the voters represent retrogressive or very retrogressive castes - a colossal block, which cannot be ignored by political forces.

This caste system is a sociologically defined institutional system: it sets the political representation, the political party policy, and the distribution of resources. The structural functionalist school of thought holds that caste is an organizing principle that involves incorporation of large units of people in the political life in terms of role structures and patronage networks. Nevertheless, the same structure is the source of severe inequalities and discord, the outcomes of the conflict theory: Groups compete regarding power, reputation, and resources.

Political Alliances, Identity and Social Fragmentation

Both, NDA and MGB have their personal agendas, the vote bank they are targeting or we can say their own targeted social groups in the society and their own plans which they use to win their own social group to their camp.

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NDA's Strategy

EBCs in particular Kurmis and other backward castes have always stood behind the JD(U) that is headed by Nitish Kumar. The alliance percentage of BJP is more inclined to consolidation of the upper-caste and simultaneously gains momentum among non-Yadav OBC and very backward castes.

This coalition shows how the process of negotiation of the power on the basis of classes and statuses takes place: JD(U) offers to the backward castes, and BJP demands the assistance of the socially dominant groups and combines the caste-based representation and ideological hybridism.

The Strategy of MGB (Mahagathbandhan)

RJD continues to cling onto the Yadav-Muslim coalition (M-Y) of long-established politics of Bihar. The MGB has also been particularly out of its way to reach out non-Yadavs, non-Muslims. Indicatively it has included such parties as the VIP (including the Koeri/Kushwaha OBCs) to contact the non-Yadav OBCs and EBCs. According to the ICPR analysis, MGB has been using its caste identity as well as its social justice assurances to establish a wide based coalition.

That is one instance of identity mobilization in operation: caste identities are not so fixed but rather are constructed through the assistance of political alliances. MGB targets the restoration of a social field where backward castes, Dalits, and Muslims are fighting to have power and recognition.

Such an alliance formation, according to a Weberian approach to stratification, is not merely an economic redistribution one but a status-related and a legitimacy-related one: the parties give status empowerment to different caste groups.

Minority Identity and religion

Although caste is the most predominant discourse, the religious identity with particular reference to that of the Muslims is yet to be a central factor. The Muslims constitute about 17.7 percent of the population in Bihar.

Previously, Muslims had been the same side with RJD. And the 2025 election will be no exception: their identity is one of the essential elements of the MGB social coalition. Rejection of AIMIM as a possible partner in MGB however had its effects on MGB alliance during this election. This could lead us to the direction that traditionally attached to RJD, muslim quarters were not happy and thus they wanted alternatives, AIMIM turned out to be a better alternative.

More to the point, symbolic interactionism helps us on the understanding that events and discourses and campaign commitments are symbolic recognition: parties do not just offer policy, but identity recognition. Strong representatives of belonging and respect are commissions, nomination of candidates and social messaging.

As such, religion continues to be caste bound not only to a communal identification, but also to a political resource mobilised in relation to caste bodies.

Class Youth and Migration: New Sociological Forces

Caste competition does not disclose the whole social game. Socioeconomic change particularly migration and youth ambitions is the main reason the social environment in Bihar is changing.

Many of the Bihar population particularly the youth relocate to other states in search of jobs. Such exposure can aid in changing the perceptions of the world, raising ambitions and breaking the loyalty to the caste that was in existence since time immemorial.

The sociological approach to this can be studied by the intersectionality theory, which is also applicable: young women living in EBCs or SCs have a disadvantage in layers (gender + caste) and can be supportive of parties which guarantee them welfare, representation, and social upliftment.

Parties are familiar with these changes. To illustrate this, the rhetoric of MGB concerning work and infrastructure reflects the wish to know that the problems of the youth can be even more significant than the pure identity politics.

but, also, youth voter succumbed to PK(Prashant Kishore) factor, who appeared to be an educated speculation to youth, or we may say progressive educated youth, whose first and foremost demands are jobs, a steady income, etc. Jan suraaj could get some votes which would otherwise not have been converted into seats but they could get the young generation who were experiencing anti-incumbency sentiment towards the government and were not finding RJD led MGB as a better option.

Therefore, the 2025 election is not merely the caste conservation but the social change via mobility and the generational change.

The Women Factor

There was an increase in vote casting during this election. This could be explained by the fact that more women went out to support NDA. The support has many reasons such as recently introduced scheme of government which vowed 1000 to women. In this those benefitted wished to be benefitted in future thus they turned out to vote and even influenced the other women voters in their region and other were the supposed beneficiary and wanted NDA to be in power so that they can also be benefitted in future.

Another factor that influenced the change of women voters in NDA camp is Clean image of Nitish kumar and his earlier ruling such as liquor ban. And Central Govt initiatives like "Free ration" or Direct benefit transfer. All this has somehow resulted in the financial independence of women and some additional savings, but not that much.

And other than that there I something which influenced younger women population, is that story which was created around Non safety of women in case RJD became president, mainly because of some posts and songs which were published in support of RJD by his or her party affiliated people or by people who supported his party. They developed a story whereby women were not safe in case RJD ascended to power.

Theories of Sociology in Practice

We will carry these observations into the terms of the classical sociological theory:

Conflict Theory (Marx / Gramsci): The caste politics in Bihar is dominated by the issue of resource conflict and redistribution of power. The promises of commission, welfare and representation by parties are one method of throwing state resources to marginalized castes. Such promises do not only bear a symbolic nature, but it is a struggle over the structural inequality.

Structural Functionalism (Parsons): Caste Systems provide the means of maintaining the social order. A tool of social integration used by the political parties is called caste which includes the hitherto marginalized groups when it comes to the voting process. The caste survey, as such, that is to say, the introduction of caste into the governmental institutions, is a structural recognition mechanism, in its turn.

Social Identity Theory (Tajfel and Turner): The reason that causes voters to identify with parties based on their caste and religious identity is because the group identities provide them with a sense of belonging and social solidarity. Identity is also applied as a prism where policy pledges are evaluated.

Symbolic Interactionism (Mead, Blumer): Political plays important role in the construction and negotiation of caste identities. These representations are group respect, recognition and belongingness.

Weberian Stratification Caste in Bihar by no means is economic. Status (honor), legitimacy and political representation is also worrying. The concept of power-sharing via the caste groups (or sub-castes) hopes to promote the social status of the groups.

Conclusion

The 2025 Bihar election is an intriguing example of factors in play, given the sociological prism. Not only according to Caste as it had previously been, other aspects and sub aspects came into play and influenced the outcome of election. Such as

Women support to the present government that may be attributed to present schemes that guaranteed women 10000 rs(that is huge in the rural set up of Bihar) or previous schemes that have provided women, even a not very big but yet financial freedom.

Muslims emerge out of past decisions making a new one in the name of MIM.

Youth that was seeking third option and received third option in front of Jan Suraj.

Influence of social media: BJP was considered to conquer the social media through whatsapp which resulted in the spreading of their ideas and campaigning to be interviewed to be elected which the other parties were unable to do and the only media they could use was the Instagram and facebook.

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