

## Bihar: A 'Modi Wave' or the End of Politics of 'Social Justice'?

Mohd. Sanjeer Alam\*

Bihar is one of the largest states in terms of both population and the number of seats for the Lok Sabha. With 40 Lok Sabha seats, Bihar plays an important role in shaping national politics as well as formation of the government at the centre. Although the results of the sixteenth general elections to the Lok Sabha in Bihar are in tune with many states (northern and western states in particular), they throw up many questions having implications for sociopolitical processes that have got firmly rooted during the past two decades. This paper seeks to analyze and understand the factors that inform the way voters in the state expressed their political choice in the general elections to the Lok Sabha (2014). It proceeds as follows. The following section presents a brief review of the political processes in the state since 1990s so as to understand the meaning of electoral outcomes in the Lok Sabha election. The second section summarizes outcomes of the 2014 Lok Sabha election. The third section attempts to understand why people voted as they voted. Fourth and final section concludes the discussion.

### 1. The Wider Context

Bihar has always played a major role in national politics. It is one of the states that have contributed to decline of the formidable Congress Party in both national and state politics in the early 1990s. The new kind of social and political mobilization (consolidation of backward castes and religious minorities) and of power sharing arrangements underpinned by "social justice" that ushered in the 1990s entailed two but intertwined sociopolitical consequences. First, it pushed the Congress to the margin and put the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) in its place. Second, it brought the backward castes to the political centrestage and thereby diminished the political prowess of the forward castes (Alam 2009).

While the consolidation of backward castes ensured that the regime of social justice would last for longer years, it was not too compact a political bloc to get broken. Within a period of ten years, it began to show fissures. The internal squabbles among the ambitious champions of backward castes finally led to division of the social justice regime into two streams, one represented by Lalu Prasad Yadav under the Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD) and the other by Nitish Kumar under the banner Samata Party, later renamed as the Janata Dal United (JDU).

The raptures in backward class mobilization gave rise to a new process of social and political coalition/alliance. The Nitish Kumar faction joined hands with the BJP and formed a pre-poll alliance before the assembly elections held in 2000 (Kumar et al 2008). It thus signaled that the upper-lower castes divide was not a durable feature of politics in the state. However, given the ideological inclinations and social bases of support of the two parties, this was an alliance of "extremes". Therefore, in order to make this alliance work, it was packaged under "development" and "good governance" as against the "jungle raj" being run by the RJD. Although the alliance did well in the assembly election held in 2000, yet it fell far short of forming the government. Five years later, in 2005, the alliance came to power with a huge mandate. The National Democratic Alliance (NDA) government led by Nitish Kumar was seen to have worked well on the front of development and law and order situation in the state (Kumar and Ranjan 2009). The alliance was rewarded handsomely by the people of state in the general elections to Lok Sabha in 2009 and the assembly elections in 2010. Of the 40 seats (Lok Sabha), the alliance won 32 seats in the 2009 Lok Sabha election (JD (U) won 20 seats and its ally, the BJP, 12 seats). The NDA registered even more spectacular success in 2010 assembly election by winning 206 out of 243 sets (JD (U) -115 and BJP - 96). The RJD was reduced to mere 22 seats.

As soon as the alliance came to power the second time in a row, uneasiness within the alliance began to appear. The distance between the two partners got widened day by day and eventually reached the breaking point with the announcement of Narendra Modi as the "prime ministerial"

\* The Author is Assistant Professor at the Centre for the Studies of Developing Societies, Delhi.

candidate of the BJP/NDA. The alliance was formally broken in June 2013. What led to breaking of this alliance has been interpreted variously. According to one view, the scintillating performance of the JD (U) in 2009 and 2010 Lok Sabha and Assembly elections respectively made Nitish Kumar overconfident of his popularity. He might have thought that his popularity had by now reached a stage where he could afford to dump his ally, the BJP, which was seen to be creating problems for him on many key issues including land reform. Others argued that given the volatility of political situation in the wake of the 16<sup>th</sup> general elections to Lok Sabha, he might have thought that he could emerge as the leader of the Third or the Federal Front for which efforts were on. If both the UPA and NDA did not do well, he could be the prime ministerial choice of the non-BJP/no-Congress front. Even if he failed to do so, he would clearly, play crucial role in the national politics.

Confident of its strength and popularity, the JD (U) jumped into the fray all alone. Its campaign relied largely on clean and image and track record of developmental initiatives of its leadership. It also harped on keeping the communal forces at bay. On the other hand, the BJP formed an alliance with the Lok Janashakti Party (LJP) led by the veteran Dalit leader Ram Vilas Paswan and the Rashtriya Lok Samata Party (RLSP), an offshoot of JD (U) formed in 2013, by Upendra Kushwaha. This alliance while did not lose sight of the micro political factors, it vigorously projected the image of Narendra Modi as the “strong leader” who could solve all the problems facing India. Learning lesson from the poll outcomes of the last Lok Sabha election (2009), the RJD stitched an alliance with the Congress. Its major poll plank was welfare of underprivileged (*aam aadmi*) and a fight for secular future of the country and the state as well.

There were thus three major players in the 2014 Lok Sabha election in the state – the UPA, the NDA and the JD (U). For the forty Lok Sabha seats in the state, the seat sharing arrangements in the two alliances were as follows. In the UPA alliance, the RJD with 27 seats got the lion’s share, followed by the Congress (12 seats). The NCP was given the lone seat of Katihar. In the NDA alliance, the BJP contested in 30 seats, and thus was

the largest partner of the alliance in the state. The LJSP and RLSP contested in 7 and 3 seats respectively. The JD (U) fielded its candidates in 38 constituencies.

## 2. Outcomes of the Sixteenth General Elections to Lok Sabha (2014)

### *Turnout:*

Consistent with the trends in last few general elections to the Lok Sabha, the overall turn out in the country increased from 58.4 per cent in 2009 to 66.4 percent in 2014, an increase by 8.0 percentage points. The turnout in Bihar also followed this trend. It increased from 44.45 per cent in 2009 to 56.3 percent in 2014. Thus, while the turnout in the state remained below the national average, the increase in turnout this time was higher than the national average. It is also important to note that females turned out to vote slightly more (57.66 percent) than males (55.08 percent).

### *Vote and Seat Share:*

In a three way fight, the NDA polled the largest number of votes and seats (38.8 percent votes and 31 seats). A comparison with 2009 elections suggests that the BJP, the LJP and the RLSP mutually benefited from forging an alliance. In a situation of political wave in north India as in other parts of country in favour of the BJP, it is difficult to quantify how much the BJP benefited from forming alliance with its two partners. However, it can be safely concluded that spectacular success of the LJP and the RLSP owes a lot to their alliance with the BJP.

The UPA got 29.7 percent of votes polled. Compared to the last parliamentary election (2009), the vote share of its constituents increased only marginally. Even as the RJD forged alliance with the Congress, it gained too little to change its fortune. The party could increase its vote share by less than 1 percent. Nor did the Congress gain much by joining hands with the former. As a result, the alliance failed improve its seat tally compared to 2009 Lok Sabha elections, except the gain of one seat won by the NCP. The decision of the JD (U) to go alone in the fray cost it heavily. With 15.8 percent of votes and 2 seats, it was placed third. Compared to 2009, it lost 8.2 percent votes and a disproportionate 18 seats (Table 1).

Table 2

Political Preference by Socio-Demographic Characteristics of Voters – 2014 Lok Sabha Election

| Socio-demographic Background | UPA (%) | NDA (%) | JD (U) (%) | Others* (%) | N   |
|------------------------------|---------|---------|------------|-------------|-----|
| <i>Age</i>                   |         |         |            |             |     |
| 18-25 years                  | 31      | 42      | 15         | 12          | 193 |
| 26-35 years                  | 29      | 41      | 17         | 13          | 405 |
| 36-45 years                  | 30      | 43      | 16         | 11          | 297 |
| 46 years and above           | 26      | 34      | 16         | 24          | 483 |
| <i>Caste/Community</i>       |         |         |            |             |     |
| Upper Caste                  | 5       | 78      | 8          | 9           | 252 |
| Yadav                        | 64      | 19      | 6          | 11          | 270 |
| Kurmi+Koeri                  | 15      | 26      | 30         | 29          | 138 |
| Other OBCs                   | 10      | 53      | 18         | 19          | 245 |
| Dusadh                       | 10      | 68      | 6          | 16          | 79  |
| Other SCs (Scheduled Castes) | 10      | 33      | 25         | 32          | 162 |
| Muslims                      | 64      | 2       | 21         | 13          | 208 |
| <i>Economic Class</i>        |         |         |            |             |     |
| Poor                         | 31      | 32      | 15         | 22          | 377 |
| Lower                        | 30      | 42      | 15         | 13          | 596 |
| Middle                       | 24      | 40      | 17         | 19          | 331 |
| Rich                         | 30      | 41      | 22         | 8           | 74  |

Note: \* includes NOTA (none of the above)

Source: National Election Study (Post poll) 2014, CSDS

percent who held that their economic conditioned had remained same). In brief, the UPA – II government was not essentially seen as a failed regime.

Does then the NDA owe its historic success in Bihar to declining popularity of Nitish Kumar for various reasons? In the run up to the elections, Nitish Kumar appealed people to vote for his party on the basis of the work his government had done. Moreover, his tone and tenor and body language during the campaign made it quite clear that he took this election as a

referendum on his way of doing things and turning Bihar as a well governed and fast developing state. If his party was routed in the election one could argue that people no longer saw in him the leader who would fulfill their aspirations. The survey data indicate that there was a sense of skepticism among the electorates. About half the respondents (52 percent) agreed that 'the development in the state was not as much as claimed by the Nitish Kumar government'. As a matter of fact, only one fourth of respondents disagreed with this statement. It is not just this. Over half the respondents also held that the conditions of schools and electricity in particular had either remained same or worsened during past five years. However, these responses should be taken or analyzed with a pinch of salt. As stated earlier, Nitish Kumar had snapped ties with the BJP barely a year ago. This had angered the traditional supporters of the BJP. The same regime that was doing quite well a day before the JD (U) broke alliance with the BJP had now become inept and directionless. As per the survey findings, about a fifth of respondents said that they liked Nitish Kumar earlier but disliked now. But all this does not adequately explain drubbing of his party. It may be noted that despite Lalu's conviction in the fodder scam few months before the elections and the baggage of looting state resources in the past, he was able to consolidate his core constituency of support, that is, Yadavas and Muslims.

The survey data, though in a limited way, suggests that a great deal of BJP's spectacular success owes to emergence of the 'Modi phenomenon'. Although his rapid rise as a pan India leader owed itself to some of the crises poorly handled by the UPA government at the centre, nonetheless he successfully projected himself as the one who would liberate the country from the shackles of "policy paralysis" and "corruption" at higher levels. He talked of the problems common people wanted to get rid of. Through the fables of development in Gujarat and his excellent communicative skills he was able to win the confidence of people, of the 'aspirational section' in particular. As it is evident from the survey data, over a third of respondents said that Narendra Modi was the most capable leader to be the next Prime minister of India; the best leader for national security, containing price rise

and overall development of the country. About 39 percent of respondent said that they voted keeping in mind the prime ministerial candidate and even a greater proportion preferred Narendra Modi as the next prime minister of India. Clearly, the image of Modi broadly packaged with development and strong leadership but also with a tinge of 'Hindu Hirday Samrat' helped cementing many fault lines that have been crucial determinants of political preference in the state.

#### 4. Conclusion

The results of the general elections to Lok Sabha (2014) have caused a tectonic shift in party politics in Bihar. On the face of it, the scintillating performance of the BJP and its allies in this election has fundamentally altered the sociopolitical landscape as well as the contours of political mobilization in the state. However, a deeper scrutiny of the mandate suggests that a great deal of the success of the BJP is rather to do with the popularity of Narendra Modi as the PM (Prime ministerial) candidate than with people's disapproval of the work done by the Nitish Kumar government or growing discontent over the politics of social justice, more strictly of caste politics. It is too early to say whether the BJP will be able to keep this momentum intact up till the assembly elections to be held in 2015 and thereby formalize the end of the politics burdened by Mandal legacies. But BJP's spectacular success in the Lok Sabha election has forced restructuring of sociopolitical forces in the state. Of late, not only have two arch rivals, Lalu Prasad and Nitish Kumar, come closer, they fought the assembly bye elections together and succeeded in containing BJP's increasing might.

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## BJD's Dominance Continues in Odisha

Pramod Kumar Ray  
Prabhat Chandra Mohanty<sup>1</sup>

Like in 2004 and 2009, Odisha saw concurrent Lok Sabha and Assembly polls taking place in 2014 as well, and like always the Biju Janata Dal (BJD) won both the elections convincingly. The ruling party bucked anti-incumbency yet again by retaining power for a fourth consecutive term with a landslide victory in the Assembly election. The Lok Sabha election too saw the party winning all but one seat. Significantly, this victory of the BJD in both elections was greater in magnitude than the one it had achieved in 2009. The Congress, the main opposition party in the state, failed to emerge as a credible alternative yet again, receiving a drubbing not just in the Assembly polls but also in the Lok Sabha election where it could not win a single seat. The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) despite the so called Narendra Modi wave in the rest of the country could not gain much ground in Odisha, although it did improve its vote share. While the main issues of the 2014 election at the national level were corruption, price rise, development, unemployment, Modi factor etc., in Odisha the key factors in both the Lok Sabha and Assembly elections were Naveen Patnaik's charismatic leadership, the politics of populism, Odia 'Swabhimān' or pride, and the absence of a strong opposition against the incumbent government. Patnaik's clever and tough handling of the 2012 rebellion by his long time advisor Pyarimohan Mohapatra as well as the pre-election poaching of leaders from opposition parties also seems to have played a role in the BJD's unprecedented success.

In the Lok Sabha election, the BJD won 20 out of 21 seats on offer, leaving just one seat for its opponents which went to the BJP (Table 1). The Congress party which had won six Lok Sabha seats in Odisha in 2009 could not win a single seat. In the Assembly election too it was a landslide victory for the BJD with the party winning 117 of the total 147 Vidhan Sabha seats, almost a four-fifths majority (Table 2). Here too the Congress performed

<sup>1</sup> Pramod Kumar Ray teaches Political Science at L.B. College, Jajpur, Odisha Prabhat Chandra Mohanty teaches Political Science at Govt. College, Koraput, Odisha.

disastrously, emerging a distant second with only 16 seats and the BJP ended up winning a mere 10 seats. As far as the vote shares are concerned, compared to 2009 the BJD's vote share went up by nearly seven percentage points in the Lok Sabha elections and by four percentage points in the Assembly polls. In fact with each election since the party's inception in 1997 the BJD has become stronger, with more seats and an enhanced support base. The BJP too saw its vote share increase in both elections. In the Lok Sabha election the party's vote share went up by nearly five percentage points, from 16.9 percent in 2009 to 21.5 percent. The party gave the BJD some tough competition in the Western part of the State where it secured a vote share of 30 percent, which was only six percentage points behind the BJD. The only parliamentary seat that the BJP won (Sundargarh-ST) also came from this region (Table 3). In the Assembly election, the party registered a three percentage point vote gain. It was the Congress party which was the big loser, losing votes in both in the Lok Sabha and the Assembly elections. The party's vote share declined by almost seven percentage points in the Parliamentary election and by three percentage points in the Vidhan Sabha election. The only consolation for the Congress perhaps was that the BJP was not able to relegate it to the third position in terms of vote share as many had predicted before the elections.

Table 1

Odisha Lok Sabha Election Results 2014

| Party         | Seats Contested | Seats Won | Seat Change from 2009 | Vote (%) | Vote Change from 2009 |
|---------------|-----------------|-----------|-----------------------|----------|-----------------------|
| Congress      | 21              | 0         | -6                    | 25.98    | -6.77                 |
| BJP           | 21              | 1         | 1                     | 21.54    | 4.66                  |
| BJD           | 21              | 20        | 6                     | 44.08    | 6.85                  |
| BSP           | 21              | 0         | 0                     | 1.01     | -0.89                 |
| NOTA          | 21              | 0         | 0                     | 1.55     | 1.55                  |
| Other Parties | 112             | 0         | -1                    | 5.84     | -5.40                 |

Source: ECI data compiled by CSDS Data Unit.

Table 2  
The Voting Pattern in Odisha – Assembly Elections, 2014 and 2009

|          | 2014           |           | 2009           |           |
|----------|----------------|-----------|----------------|-----------|
|          | Vote share (%) | Seats won | Vote share (%) | Seats won |
| Congress | 25.7           | 16        | 29.1           | 27        |
| BJP      | 18.0           | 10        | 15.0           | 6         |
| BJD      | 43.4           | 117       | 38.9           | 103       |
| Others   | 12.9           | 4         | 22.0           | 11        |

Note: Other's vote share in 2014 includes NOTA; Source: ECI data compiled by CSDS Data Unit.

By voting so overwhelmingly for the BJD in the Lok Sabha election, Odisha went with the national trend of voting against the Congress party. However if looked at from another angle, Odisha was also among the few states that bucked the other national trend which was in favour of the BJP. The so called Narendra Modi wave hardly had any impact in Odisha even though the BJP's prime ministerial candidate was extremely popular in the state. NES post poll survey data shows that on the question of choice for prime minister, 44 percent of the respondents in Odisha said they wanted Narendra Modi to be the prime minister of the country, 16 percent opted for Rahul and 12 percent wanted to see Naveen Patnaik as the Prime Minister (Table 4). While Modi was the choice of two in every five voters in the state, his party's popularity eventually was much less as it secured slightly more than one fifth of the votes. It seems the BJP was unable to convert Modi's popularity into votes due to its over-reliance on the Modi factor which may have caused complacency among the party cadre and local leaders. The BJD on the other hand was organizationally much stronger and its sweeping victory can be partly attributed to this factor. In the assembly election, the BJD's victory was shaped not only by the good administration provided by the party but also the fact that there was no reliable and strong competitor to Naveen Patnaik, who has provided a stable leadership to the state for the last fourteen years. In the fifteen years preceding Naveen Patnaik's rule, the state had seen as many as four chief ministers. As per the NES post poll survey, Naveen Patnaik was the most preferred choice

Table 3  
Odisha Region-wise Results 2014 Lok Sabha

| Regions      | Total Seats | Turnout %    | Congress |              | BJP      |              | BJD       |              | Others   |             | NOTA<br>Vote % |
|--------------|-------------|--------------|----------|--------------|----------|--------------|-----------|--------------|----------|-------------|----------------|
|              |             |              | Won      | Vote %       | Won      | Vote %       | Won       | Vote %       | Won      | Vote %      |                |
| Coastal      | 11          | 71.42        | 0        | 26.04        | 0        | 18.40        | 11        | 50.14        | 0        | 4.47        | 0.95           |
| South        | 4           | 76.09        | 0        | 32.66        | 0        | 16.42        | 4         | 39.34        | 0        | 8.74        | 2.84           |
| West         | 6           | 76.72        | 0        | 21.73        | 1        | 30.16        | 5         | 36.50        | 0        | 9.83        | 1.78           |
| <b>Total</b> | <b>21</b>   | <b>73.78</b> | <b>0</b> | <b>25.98</b> | <b>1</b> | <b>21.54</b> | <b>20</b> | <b>44.08</b> | <b>0</b> | <b>6.85</b> | <b>1.55</b>    |

Source: ECI data compiled by CSDS Data Unit.

for CM with 64 percent of the voters wanting to see him lead Odisha once again (Table 5). Clearly both the BJP and the Congress failed to bring up popular leaders at the state level who could successfully challenge Patnaik. In fact when people were asked during the NES pre-poll survey to identify the reason behind Patnaik and his party's repeated success in elections, one in five respondents cited the absence of a strong alternative as being the reason, while others hailed his clean image and good governance.

Table 4  
2014 Lok Sabha Elections - PM Choice in Odisha

| Name of leader       | Percent |
|----------------------|---------|
| Narendra Modi        | 44      |
| Rahul Gandhi         | 16      |
| Naveen Patnaik       | 12      |
| Sonia Gandhi         | 3       |
| Manmohan Singh       | 2       |
| Other leaders        | 1       |
| Don't know/Can't say | 22      |

Source: NES 2014 Post Poll; Sample size - 807.

Table 5  
2014 Odisha Assembly Elections - CM Choice

| Name of leader       | Percent |
|----------------------|---------|
| Naveen Patnaik       | 64      |
| Jaydev Jena          | 5       |
| Srikanta Jena        | 3       |
| Other leaders        | 8       |
| Don't know/Can't say | 20      |

Source: NES 2014 Post Poll; Sample size - 807.

Apart from not being able to offer a strong leader to counter Naveen Patnaik's popularity, the debacle of the Congress was also due to indiscipline within the party, infighting among state leaders, embarrassing pre election defections

of senior party leaders to the BJD (The Hindu, March 8, 2014) and the overall negative sentiment regarding the UPA government at the Centre. Despite charges of corruption against BJD leaders in the mining scam, the Congress could not go all out on the issue due to its own corrupt image at the Centre. Moreover, the BJD's repeated allegation that the UPA government had neglected the interests of Odisha also seems to have worked against the Congress. The party was put on the defensive as Naveen Patnaik demanded from the central government for a special category status for Odisha along with his emphasis on the Swabhiman or self pride of four crore Odias (The Telegraph, March 30, 2014). While the state government was extremely popular, the central government was quite unpopular. The NES pre-poll data shows that whereas the net satisfaction level (satisfaction minus dissatisfaction) with the UPA government at the Centre was only ten percent, net satisfaction with the BJD government in the state was more than five times at 55 percent (Table 6).

**Table 6**  
**Satisfaction With Performance Central Government and State Government in Odisha**

|                               | Congress-led<br>UPA Govt. (%) | BJD led<br>State Govt. (%) |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|----------------------------|
| Satisfied with performance    | 53                            | 76                         |
| Dissatisfied with performance | 43                            | 21                         |
| Net satisfaction              | +10                           | +55                        |
| Don't know                    | 4                             | 3                          |

Source: NES 2014 Pre Poll; Sample size - 796

What explains such high satisfaction levels with the BJD government? One of the reasons was people's positive assessment of the BJD government's handling of cyclone Phailin that had hit Odisha in October 2013 and caused much damage to property. In a survey conducted by CSDS in January 2014, seven out of ten respondents had expressed satisfaction with the way the Naveen Patnaik government had handled the aftermath of the cyclone. No surprise then that the BJD's performance was the best in the

coastal part of the state with the party securing 50 percent of the vote in the Lok Sabha election in this region (See Table 3). The other major reason for high satisfaction levels with the BJD government seems to have been the populist welfare policies initiated by the State Government a year before the assembly elections. The state government's scheme to provide 25 kg of rice at Re. 1 per kg every month to every BPL household instead of the earlier Rs. 2 per kg was one such welfare initiative. Another initiative was the decision to share profit of the Kendu leaf trade among the leaf pluckers. This seems to have helped the BJD to make further inroads among the lower income groups and tribals, who have traditionally been Congress supporters. The BJD government also wooed women voters by waiving interest on loans provided to women self-help groups. The '108 ambulance' service and a health insurance cover for six million farmers were the other popular state government schemes. In addition to this the Patnaik government also doled out several freebies in the form of free laptops to meritorious students, free cycles to girls students and construction workers, free mobile phones for farmers, and free umbrellas to pensioners (Times of India, May 22, 2013). Clearly the Naveen Patnaik government left no stone unturned to target all sections of society and this seems to have paid off as reflected by the party's social base in the 2014 elections.

### **BJD enjoys a broad based social support across different communities**

The post poll data indicates that the ruling BJD continues to enjoy a broad based social support across different communities and social sections. It also shows that the BJD's social base in Odisha is very similar to that of the BJP in the rest of the country— the upper castes and OBCs support the party in large proportions and continued to do so in the 2014 elections (Table 7). This is not to say that the party does not receive support from Dalits and Adivasis, but here, the Congress is nearly as strong. In fact among Dalits the Congress received more support (42 percent) than the BJD (38 percent) in the 2014 election. Among the Christians (6.9 percent of the population and the largest religious minority in the state) the Congress received 39 percent support giving the BJD a tough fight. In rural areas the Congress was the BJD's main challenger albeit a distant second, whereas in urban

areas the BJD's main opponent was the BJP with the former being marginally ahead. The only category of voters among whom the BJP had a marginal an edge over the BJD was the more educated voters, particularly those who were college educated. Interestingly, gender seems to have played a significant role yet again. Data reveals that the BJD's support among women was as much as six percentage points greater than the support the party received among men. In 2009 it had been eight percentage points higher.

**Table 7**  
Social Basis of Voting in the 2014 Lok Sabha Election

| Social Background       | Congress (%) | BJP (%) | BJD (%) |
|-------------------------|--------------|---------|---------|
| <b>Area</b>             |              |         |         |
| Rural                   | 27           | 20      | 45      |
| Urban                   | 21           | 32      | 38      |
| <b>Education</b>        |              |         |         |
| Non Literate            | 33           | 18      | 49      |
| Upto Primary            | 26           | 27      | 40      |
| Upto Matric             | 20           | 37      | 35      |
| College & Above         | 18           | 31      | 25      |
| <b>Economic Class</b>   |              |         |         |
| Poor                    | 25           | 13      | 42      |
| Lower                   | 29           | 23      | 48      |
| Middle & Rich           | 23           | 21      | 42      |
| <b>Caste -Community</b> |              |         |         |
| Upper caste             | 9            | 26      | 49      |
| OBC                     | 22           | 24      | 45      |
| SC                      | 42           | 17      | 38      |
| ST                      | 32           | 18      | 44      |
| Christian               | 39           | 17      | 44      |
| <b>Gender</b>           |              |         |         |
| Men                     | 28           | 24      | 41      |
| Women                   | 24           | 19      | 47      |

Note: The rest of the voters voted for others; Source: NES 2014 Post Poll; Sample size - 806

### Examining the Verdict: Does it a Signal a Single Party Dominance in Future?

To conclude, the massive victory of BJD in Odisha was a result of both a negative vote and a positive one. It was a negative vote, at least at the Lok Sabha level, against the Congress due to the unpopularity of the Central government, the Centre's perceived discrimination towards the state and the failure of the state Congress unit to provide a strong, united and credible alternative to the BJD. It was at the same time a positive mandate in favour of Naveen Patnaik's governance record, his string of populist schemes and most importantly his charismatic leadership which had succeeded in providing Odisha long term stability. While this further strengthening of the BJD and the decimation of the Congress signals the rise of single party dominance in the state for now, the improved performance of the BJP in the state on the back of Narendra Modi's popularity and the fact that the BJP is now the ruling party in New Delhi is a factor that cannot be ignored and could well lead to changes in the nature of political competition in Odisha in the future. The BJD may have a tough rival in the form of the BJP which not only has a similar social base but which gave the ruling party a tough fight in several parts of the state, particularly in western and coastal Odisha. Moreover, the BJD once again finds itself in a position of double isolation. Being the ruling party in the state, it is faced with the tough task of opposing the ruling party at the Centre, the BJP, without hurting the interests of the state, and at the same time the chances of any understanding with its traditional arch rival at the State level, the Congress party, are bleak. The way it handles this twin isolation will to a large extent determine the success of the BJD in the future.

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