

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

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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 'Swabhiman' 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

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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



Regions	Total Seats	Turnout %	Congress		BJP		BJD		Others		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
Total	21	73.78	0	25.98	1	21.54	20	44.08	0	6.85	1.55

Source: ECI data compiled by CSDS Data Unit.

Table 3 Odisha Region-wise Results 2014 Lok Sabha

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 UPA Govt. (%)	BJD led 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

