



# Election and Social Structure in Bihar (1920-1947) : A Historical Study

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## Abstract

*The year 1920 has special significance in the history of Bihar and the legislature of Bihar. In the same year, Bihar and Orissa got full state status and the Governor was appointed. Not only this, the construction work of the main building of Bihar Legislature was also completed this year. With this view, it has been 100 years since Bihar became a full state, when it got the status of Governors State. The Governor was appointed in place of the Deputy Governor and Lord Satyendra Prasanna Sinha became the first Governor of Bihar. He addressed the first meeting of the newly formed Bihar and Orissa Provincial Council held on 7 February 1921 under the chairmanship of Sir Walt More in this new building. The present paper tries to produce a historical study on election and social structure in Bihar (1920-1947)*

**Key-words:** Election; Social structure; Legislature; Constitutional progress.

## Introduction

Earlier, during the British rule in the mid-18th century, the land of Bihar became part of the Bengal Presidency. However, the people of Bihar were successful in maintaining a separate identity on the strength of their activism and diligence. During this period, the demand to separate Bihar from Bengal continued to rise. The most important day in this direction was 12 December 1911, when the British Emperor George V announced the creation of a separate state from Bengal by mixing Bihar and Orissa in the Delhi court. Thus, on 22 March 1912, the state of Bihar and Orissa came out of Bengal and Sir Charles Stuart Bailey became its first Deputy Governor. Bihar's own legislature came into existence on 22 March 1912, 24 elected, 19 nominated members.<sup>1</sup>

After the state of Bihar and Orissa came into existence on 22 March 1912, a 43-member legislative council was also formed as the legislature of the new state. It had 24 members elected and 19 members nominated by the Deputy Governor. The same council exists today as the Bihar Legislative Assembly. Its first meeting was held on 20 January 1913 in Patna. Later the member count increased to 103. After the formation of the Legislative and Legislative Council under the Government of India Act 1935, the number of members of the Legislative Assembly was increased to 152. The first general elections were held in 1952. It held direct election of 330 members, while one member was nominated. The number increased to 324 in proportion to population growth in the year 1977 and one nominated member remained the same. After the formation of Jharkhand state after the year 2000, the number of members in the Legislative Assembly decreased from 324 to 243. 81 members and one nominated member became members of the Jharkhand Legislative Assembly.<sup>2</sup>

### **Material and method**

The study has been used the descriptive and analytical research design as a historical fact finding investigation. Both analytic and qualitative techniques have been made used for the study. Secondary sources of facts have been collected through literature, journals, internet, etc. The study has been done on the basis of secondary sources of data collection. The intensive study has been done with the help of related inscriptions, research papers. The research paper has been produced on the basis of available facts, proofs and inscriptions under the supervision of the learned person. The internet has been also used for the facts finding. The present research paper has been based on the analytical study.

### **Result and Discussion**

Legislative Council constituted in the year 1936 under the 'India Act 1935', the number of members is 30. The Government of India Act 1935 was passed. Under this, Bihar and Orissa became separate independent states. Here, a bicameral legislature was introduced in the provinces wherein the Legislative Council already functioning in Bihar was nominated as the Bihar Legislative Assembly, while the Bihar Legislative Council was constituted as a separate higher and reviewing house. Thus the Legislative Council came into existence. The first meeting of the 30-member Legislative Council was held on July 22, 1936 under the chairmanship of Rajiv Ranjan Prasad in the new House Room constructed in the same building to the north of the Assembly Hall. Even today the meetings of the Legislative Council are being held in the same room. After the constitution came into force, the number of members in the council was reduced to 72. It increased to 96 in the year 1958. At the same time the number of members came down to 75 in the year 2000 after the partition of Bihar.<sup>3</sup>

*Address by the first Governor Lord Satyendra Prasad Sinha<sup>4</sup>*

*'Education means less English and more knowledge of French, German and Japanese. Our invitation to the country is that it should adopt the discussion because it is such a tool for the development of national industries, which can be trusted most. Also, social reform efforts should be encouraged through prohibition. I also cannot assume that you will resort to other measures to restrict alcohol addiction, rather than a well-known product*

*policy to control alcoholic alcohol or the manufacture, storage or sale of drugs. To control all these matters, a policy should be made which properly respects your wishes as well as the aspirations of the people. '*

### **Giving of our Legislature: For the first time in the country**

• *Lay the foundation of the first constitutional amendment:* Immediately after independence, in 1947, under the leadership of the first Chief Minister Shri Krishna Singh, the Bihar State Habitat Act was enacted for the landless poor which is an example in the whole country. Then in 1950 Bihar Land Reform Act' i.e. Zamindari Abolition Act was passed. This happened in Bihar for the first time in the country.

The social and economical classes played a significant role in the political life of Bihar ahead and were responsible for all the changes. But socio-economic-political power does not always follow. Those who have social power in their hands, there is no need that all the economic power will also be in their hands. In the same way, those who have political power in their hands, they should own all the economic and social power, it is not necessary. Most landlords were with Bhumihars but were considered socially behind Brahmins and Rajputs. Kayasthas had a greater presence in Bihar politics than their socio-economic status. The Brahmins, despite being at the top of society, lagged behind Kayasthas and Bhumihars in political-economic matters. After 1920, the new category of politicians that were coming out through the electoral process was a financially rich category.<sup>5</sup>

There was no such thing; he was financially weaker than the landlords and big lawyers. Therefore, they used to misuse the power and tried to achieve this distinction. In the decades of 1920–1930, drone and financial irregularities were attempted in the district boards by these categories.

The ambitions of these different classes influenced Bihar's politics over time. The caste equation continued to dominate Bihar's politics during elections and even after the election, which continues to affect even today.

The influence of these social classes was also seen in Bihar in 1937 during the election activities and allocation of posts, keeping in mind all these things, all rules related to disability were made and the salary and allowances for these politicians were also made in the law, prepared by the government so that there is no communication of habits like corruption. Apart from this, it was the result of the political influence of these powerful social classes that the cabinet could not recover the reform work related to farmers and economic problems as was done in the promises of the election manifesto. Due to which the cabinet also had to bear the criticism of the farmers.

The Simon Commission came to India in 1928 to report on the constitutional progress in India and to give a report on the suggestion of establishment of responsible governance. But due to not having a single Indian member in this commission, black flags were boycotted across the country. This commission was boycotted in Bihar as well. In Patna, national leaders boycotted the commission with the slogan 'Go back Simon'. Lala Lajpat Rai died of a police stick in Punjab. On his death, Bihar was also mourned and a tribute was paid to him.<sup>6</sup>

## Constitutional and educational progress and development of nationality in Bihar province

Bihar province was formed on 22 March 1912, combining Bihar and Orissa. There was a need to set up a Legislative Council for the new province. As a result, in 1913, legislative authority was established in Bihar. Legislative Council for Bihar and Orissa was constituted by the Government of India Act 1909, as follows-

The amended Indian Council Act 1861 was made under the provisions of 1909 which had 43 members - 24 elected members and 19 nominated.

The establishment of Patna University in 1917 started a new chapter in the expansion of higher education in Bihar. Postgraduate Department in Arts Department was opened in Patna College in 1917.. Patna Science College was established in 1928 as an independent school to impart higher science-related education. Patna Medical College was established in 1925 AD. In 1947 a medical college was established in Darbhanga.

In the field of higher education, this province is very backward and a few Hindu and Christian women are found above the secondary level, yet now some signs of awakening were visible. By this time (1912-1935 all the newspapers in Bihar had started editing. These newspapers gave active support in the development of the national movement of Bihar. The Searchlight, Motherland, Youth Mukti, Hakuar, etc. - The journals made an unprecedented contribution to the development of national consciousness.

### Conclusion

India has been most pronouncedly a multicultural society. She has, throughout most of her history, lived with all her diversity. The caste system had once provided the economic and social framework for the operation of this multicultural society. The caste system was a form of division of labour linked to the production system of the time. The tolerance which characterized the Indian society itself had been, in many ways, a product of the caste system. Its hierarchical character that troubled us now was the price that had to be paid for it. This was one view. Another view urged the recognition of the fact that Indian society had accepted inequality as a principle of social organisation.

### References

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