

# From Silent to Authoritarian Revolution: Modi, Hindu Rashtra and the Paradox of Indian Democracy

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*India is currently undergoing an authoritarian revolution. During the 10 years of Narendra Modi's rule, liberal aspects of India's democracy were attacked by malpractices and the institutionalization of illiberal laws under his government. Additionally, the freedom of the media has been seriously damaged by the arrests of journalists who have criticized Modi's government, which was, in particular, enabled by the amendment of the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA) in 2019. The nationwide anti-Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) was crushed by the sudden declaration of the All-India Lockdown under the guise of an anti-COVID-19 measure, which I have termed the practice of "Disaster Authoritarianism". After the crackdown on the anti-CAA movement, its participants were arrested under the provisions of a renewed UAPA. These are representative examples of Modi's authoritarian revolution. Before this authoritarian revolution, India had been a democratic country for 70 years, a rarity among the countries of the so-called Global South. Why and how is this authoritarian revolution happening? Indian democracy underwent democratization that empowered the lower sections of society in the 1990s in what has been called the "Silent Revolution". I hypothesize that this "Silent Revolution" invited Modi's Authoritarian Revolution, which would constitute the paradox of Indian democracy. In this article, I seek to analyze the political process that led to the current Authoritarian Revolution and how it could occur without formal regime change.*

**KEYWORDS:** Indian democracy; authoritarian revolution; silent revolution; Hindu supremacism; Narendra Modi; backward caste politics.

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## Modi's Authoritarian Revolution

The recently conducted 2024 General Election in India gave a substantial blow to Narendra Modi's Authoritarian Revolution, which has been accelerating under his 10 years of rule. In this election, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) reduced its tally from 303 seats to 240 seats among 543 members of the parliament, which falls short of the majority. However, the BJP-led National Democratic Alliance (NDA) secured 293 seats, which enabled the Modi government to retain power for a third term. Although it is too early to judge whether his Authoritarian Revolution will slow, NDA partners may gain more importance in policy decisions, which will impact the ongoing trust of the Authoritarian Revolution.

First, what does "Authoritarian Revolution" mean? After obtaining majority in 2014 General Election, the Modi government began to steer the country toward the autocratization of Indian democracy. In *How Democracies Die*, Levitsky and Ziblatt (2018) identified four key indicators of authoritarian behavior that undermine democracy, such as "(1) rejects, in words or action, the democratic rules of the game, (2) denies the legitimacy of opponents, (3) tolerates or encourages violence, or (4) indicates a willingness to curtail the civil liberties of opponents, including the media" (pp. 21–22). All of these four elements can be observed in Modi's 10-year rule. Here, I briefly present some examples.<sup>1</sup>

Regarding the first indicator, a typical example is the enactment of three controversial farm laws. These laws aimed to liberalize the agricultural market, in which farmers are afraid of lowering the price of agricultural products because of the entry of large capital companies. Farmers, consequently, resisted the enactment of these laws and argued instead for the government to give them an institutionalization of minimum support price for the main crops. In the monsoon session of parliament in 2020, the Modi government forcibly enacted these laws, violating democratic procedures in the parliament. In the name of anti-COVID-19 measures, the Modi government cut the duration of the session to half and abolished the question hour, which is crucial for discussing the content of proposed bills. By containing oppositions in this very undemocratic manner, the Modi government succeeded in enacting these laws. Immediately after this move, farmers started moving against these laws, which led to the repeal of these laws by the Modi government after one year.

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<sup>1</sup>I examined below examples based on their framework in Nakamizo (2024b). I add some more examples in this paper.

Regarding the second indicator of authoritarian behavior, the Modi government arrested and detained political rivals of the opposition parties for minor causes or corruption charges. Rahul Gandhi, an heir of the Nehru–Gandhi family and the current leader of the opposition, was arrested on the charge of criminal defamation (Mollan & Biswas, 2023) and was sent to jail in March 2023, just one year before the general election. The defamation in question was his statement in the 2019 general election rally: “Why do all these thieves have Modi as their surname? Nirav Modi, Lalit Modi, Narendra Modi.” He was sentenced to two years in jail, which disqualified him from being MP for eight years. The Supreme Court finally stayed his conviction in August 2023, ruling that there was a “complete lack of reasons for giving Mr. Gandhi the maximum punishment” (Rajagopal, 2023). Another recent case was the arrest of Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal, a star campaigner of the Indian National Developmental Inclusive Alliance (INDIA, the opposition alliance), on corruption charges just before the 2024 general election (“Arvind Kejriwal arrest updates,” 2024). Targeting popular opposition leaders through corruption charges has been the typical strategy of the Modi government for damaging opposition parties.

The third indicator is exemplified by the activation of vigilante groups, mainly cow vigilante groups. After Modi took office as Prime Minister, the attack on Muslims by vigilante groups increased remarkably (Nakamizo, 2023a). Modi remained silent for more than a year after the first killing case in 2015 and then finally criticized their activities one month after the Una incident in his home state of Gujarat, in which Dalits who were engaged in the leather business, not Muslims, were attacked by the vigilante group in 2016. The protest movement of Dalits pressured Modi to make a statement. However, the Modi government has not sufficiently policed their activities. In 2017, the number of Muslim victims reached as high as 37 deaths, and the killing of Muslims continued, as the recent incident just after the 2024 general election shows (Rehbar, 2024).

The last indicator has become more pronounced under the Modi government, which is exemplified in a few cases. In 2017, an independent journalist, Gauri Lankesh, was killed at her home. She had been a vocal critique of Hindu supremacism, so it is suspected that Hindu supremacists murdered her. On her 6th remembrance day in 2024, Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah remarked that “Just like Mahatma Gandhi, Gauri was killed by communal forces for fighting peace and communal harmony” (Navya, 2023). Recently, the founder of an independent media *NewsClick*, which has been critical of the government, was arrested in charge of “using Chinese funding to promote ‘anti-national propaganda’” under the framework of an antiterrorism law, the Unlawful Activities Prevention Act (UAPA), in October 2023

(Rajagopal, 2024). After spending six months in custody, he was released following a Supreme Court judgment. An internationally known case is pressure against the BBC, which telecasted documentaries on Modi politics in January 2023. Although these documentaries were not telecasted in India, the Modi government strongly condemned the content of documentaries and used the emergency provisions of the Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules of 2021, which have been criticized as censorship laws, to suppress the spread of the program on social media and arrest students who organized screenings. They also conducted a tax audit of BBC and put blatant pressure on the organization (Wright, 2023). These examples highlight governmental pressure on the freedom of the media. In addition to suppressing the media, the Modi government cut international funds to human rights NGOs such as Amnesty International, which led to their deactivation. As such, these actions show the Modi government's intention to diminish the democratic space for civil society activities.

In summary, the Modi government exactly follows the steps toward authoritarianism that have been outlined by Levitsky and Ziblatt.

Modi's authoritarian turn has been widely noted by scholars in Indian politics as well. For instance, Harris, Jeffery and Corbridge (2017) have described it as "authoritarian populism." While Hansen (2019) has identified Modi's rule as "illiberal democracy," Mukherji & Zarhani (2023) have gone a step further with the term "competitive authoritarianism," denying the concept of democracy itself. Jaffrelot (2021), who has been studying Hindu nationalism for a considerable period, analyzes that Modi's India is heading toward competitive authoritarianism in his voluminous book, which contains sufficient evidence. Seth (2022) has also noted that "India is in danger of becoming the world's largest failed democracy" (p. 29).

Last year, the widely read and academically distinguished *Journal of Democracy* held a symposium on authoritarianization in India, titled "Is India still a Democracy?" In this symposium, Tudor (2023) noted that Indian democracy is dying gradually, not in formal organization as in military coups, but in informal ways, as "the norms and practices underpinning democracy have substantially deteriorated" (p. 121). In the same symposium, Ganguly (2023) characterized the Modi regime as an "Undeclared Emergency." A human right activist Fr. Cedric Prakash recently went further, saying that the Modi regime was "worse than emergency" (Prakash, 2024).

Additionally, global democracy watch dogs have identified the backsliding of Indian democracy. Renowned V-Dem institute has been categorizing India as "electoral autocracy" since 2020 (V-Dem Institute, 2021) and has described it as "one of the worst autocratizers lately" (V-Dem institute, 2024, p. 13, Box 3). Similarly,

Freedom House has changed its categorization of India from “Free” to “Partly Free” from 2020 onwards (Freedom House 2022). As noted by Tudor (2023, p. 126), CIVICUS, an international organization that watches global civil liberties in 197 countries, downgraded the status of India from “obstructed” to “repressed” in 2019.

The above works show that, under Modi, India is certainly heading toward authoritarianism. India experienced an authoritarian regime as a form of Emergency from 1975 to 1977 under the Indira Gandhi-led Indian National Congress (INC) government. However, the Emergency period constrains was summarily ended by the defeat of the INC in the 1977 general election, thus lasting less than two years. As Ganguly (2023) argues, the difference between Indira’s Emergency and Modi’s authoritarianism is that while the Emergency under Indira had instrumental and temporal short-sighted character to win the next election, Modi’s authoritarianism has a clear ideological aim to realize Hindu *Rashtra* (nation), which is lasting much longer than Indira’s Emergency. In addition, unlike the Emergency, Modi’s authoritarian turn is unsettling the very basis of Indian democratic institutions, which is increasingly tending to give the impression of becoming irreversible, unlike the Emergency years. I explain these institutional changes for realizing Hindu *Rashtra* in “The Politics of Obedience” section. Considering the longer duration and qualitative difference with the Emergency period in the 1970s, I termed it the “Authoritarian Revolution”.

## **Paradox of Indian Democracy**

Why is the Authoritarian Revolution happening? Since India has an exceptionally long history with democracy, especially compared to Global South countries, this question needs to be addressed. I hypothesize that the failure of the “Silent Revolution” in the 1990s led to the current Authoritarian Revolution.

The Silent Revolution is an analytical concept that was proposed by Jaffrelot (2003) and refers to the rise of backward castes in Indian politics in the 1990s. The political power of backward castes was one of the important factors that broke the INC’s one party dominant rule and changed the power structure of Indian politics (Nakamizo, 2020a). In this Silent Revolution, the center of political power shifted from the upper castes to the backward castes with broader participation of electorates, especially the lower strata of society, which had not or not been allowed to actively participate in politics in earlier times. The changes in power structure also affected society as the dominance of upper-caste landlords declined, resulting in the unsettling of traditional hierarchies in village society, although caste-based discrimination still

existed (Nakamizo, 2020a). In this sense, the Silent Revolution was a kind of democratization, that is, the deepening of Indian democracy.

In other words, the Silent Revolution both resulted from and intensified the emergence of identity politics. In this context, identity politics means that a specific political party had a specific caste/religious identity-based support base. The intensification of identity politics reflected the broader participation of the electorate, which invited a fluid political situation called “anti-incumbency rule,” in which the incumbent government tended not to be re-elected (Takenaka, 1999, pp. 37–38). According to Yadav (1999, Table 6, p. 2396), while 23% of incumbent state governments were re-elected, 77% of them failed to be re-elected during the period from 1989 to 1999. This contrasted with the general tendency of the incumbent government to gain the merit of re-election by utilizing its governmental resources.

In such a fluid political situation, political parties naturally pursue a more solid support base for winning elections. In the context of India, caste/religious identities play this role. Thus, the Silent Revolution had two contrasting dimensions: the voter’s fluid voting behaviors and the political parties’ efforts to consolidate identity-based support bases. In the fiery battle to win over elections in “the competitive multi-party system” (Yadav, 1999), broader identity formation was the key to winning elections. The BJP, the Hindu supremacist party, has been trying to both generate and consolidate the notion of the “Hindu vote,” which comprises almost 80% of India’s population, for many years. In the 2014 general election, the BJP had largely succeeded in creating a strong appeal around the idea of the “Hindu vote” by combining backward castes politics in which Modi emphasized his backward caste origin.

Needless to say, identity politics alone cannot explain the rise of the BJP and Narendra Modi. The era of the Silent Revolution was simultaneously an era of economic liberalization. Although India has been achieving economic development, unemployment has become the bottleneck of the Indian economy. As I explain later, voters’ expectations that Modi would solve this problem led to him becoming Prime Minister in 2014.

Thus, by examining the political process after the 1990s, we can find several connections between the Silent Revolution and the emergence of Modi’s Authoritarian Revolution. This means that the democratization of Indian politics invited the authoritarian turn of Indian democracy, which is exactly the irony of Indian democracy. I explain this irony process in more detail by examining the case of an important state of Bihar, which was the center of the Silent Revolution. But first, I wish to briefly dwell on my previous writings in which I sought to discuss Modi’s Authoritarian Revolution through the concept that I termed as the “Politics of Obedience.”

## The Politics of Obedience

First, I explain the substance of Modi's Authoritarian Revolution, which I conceptualize as the "Politics of Obedience."<sup>2</sup> The implication is the politics of ordering people to obey Modi's wishes, rewarding them for obedience, and punishing them for disobedience. To understand the "Politics of Obedience," we need to understand the two contrasting founding ideas of India.

### The Clash of the Two "Ideas of India"

Currently, we are observing the severe clash of two contrasting "Ideas of India" that guide the ideal of independent India. The Founding Fathers of the Nation, such as M.K. Gandhi and J. Nehru, pursued the secular state of India, in which everyone born in India could enjoy Indian citizenship irrespective of their religion. However, the partition of India and Pakistan at the time of independence led to a grave tragedy in which massive religious violence caused an estimated 1 million people being victimized and 15 million people becoming refugees, which was statistically unprecedented in world history at the time. The Nehru-led INC government vowed not to repeat this tragedy and to construct a new India in which a person would not be killed because of religious difference. This pledge is the basis of secular India. In accordance with this principle, Indian citizenship law follows the principle of birthright citizenship. The state should also treat all religions on equal footing, and following colonial legislation, separate personal laws based on religion have been retained, although the formation of a uniform civil code has been set as a future goal in the constitution. The first Prime Minister, J. Nehru, expressed his determination in early 1950 in relation to the actions of the Hindu Mahasabha (one of the Hindu supremacist organizations), stating, "My mind is clear in this matter and, so long as I am Prime Minister, I shall not allow communalism to shape our policy, nor am I prepared to tolerate barbarous and uncivilized behaviour" (quoted in Brown, 2003, p. 194).

In sharp contrast to this idea is the Hindu *Rashtra* (nation). This ideology of making India into a Hindu state that is composed of the Hindu nation can be described as Hindu supremacy. In his 1923 book *Hindutva* (which means Hinduness), the ideologue of Hindu supremacy, Sarvarkar (1989, pp. 115–116) describes Hindus as a people of a common nation (*rashtra*), common race (*jati*), and common culture (*sanskriti*) for whom India (*Sindhusthan*) is their fatherland (*pitribhu*) and holy land

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<sup>2</sup>I first used the concept of "Politics of Obedience" in Nakamizo (2021). Later, I developed this idea in Nakamizo (2023b, 2024a). This section is based on these works.



(*punyabhu*). Hence, anyone who has converted to Islam or Christianity cannot be a Hindu, despite sharing the same fatherland and culture as Hindus do, because their holy land is outside India (Savarkar, 1989, p. 113).

Since most Muslims and Christians living in India are converts from Hinduism, exclusion based on religion has become more pronounced. M. S. Golwalkar, the second president of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (National Volunteer Corps, RSS) — the most influential Hindu supremacist group — clearly stated the following in his key publication:

From this standpoint, sanctioned by the experiences of shrewd old nations, the non-Hindu peoples in Hindustan must either adopt the Hindu culture and language, must learn to respect and hold in reverence Hindu religion, must entertain no idea but those of glorification of the Hindu race and culture, i.e., they must not only give up their attitude of intolerance and ungratefulness towards this land and its age-long traditions but must also cultivate the positive attitude of love and devotion instead — in one word, they must cease to be foreigners, or may stay in the country, wholly subordinated to the Hindu nation, claiming nothing, deserving no privileges, far less any preferential treatment — not even citizens' rights" (Golwalkar, 1947, pp. 55–56).

The clash between the two “Ideas of India” climaxed in the assassination of M. K. Gandhi in 1948. The assassin, N. Godse, a former RSS member, was trying to destroy secular India and construct a Hindu *Rashtra* by killing the Founding Father of India. For the RSS, “power” equals physical violence, not the spiritual power at the core of Gandhi’s non-violence. The nuclear tests conducted in 1998 under the first BJP government are symbolic of this devotion to physical power, as its code name “Operation *Shakti* (power)” indicates. This “politics of violence” is the essence of Modi’s politics.

### **Innovations of Modi’s Politics: Two-sword Strategy and the New Form of “Politics of Violence”**

The Bharatiya Jan Sangh (BJS, the predecessor of the BJP) was ostracized in Indian politics as “the party that assassinated M. K. Gandhi” and could not gain support for a long period after independence. The BJP’s policy has alternated between a moderate approach, in which it seeks to win seats by restraining its Hindu supremacist ideology and forming alliances with other parties, and a hardline approach, in which it strengthens its Hindu supremacist claims to consolidate support among Hindus (Jaffrelot, 1996). The innovation of Modi politics lies in the integration of



these two approaches: emphasizing the moderate approach of economic growth to solve unemployment problems while simultaneously adopting the hardline approach by strengthening rather than weakening Hindu supremacist claims. This type of two-sword strategy contributed to strengthening the regime's support base (Nakamizo, 2020b).

Moreover, the hardline approach is also supported by a new "politics of violence." One of the original main strategies of the RSS to achieve the "Hindu Rashtra" was to provoke major religious riots to inflame Hindu religious sentiment and convert it into the "Hindu vote." A typical example is the 2002 Gujarat carnage, in which Prime Minister Modi himself is suspected to have been involved (Nakamizo, 2018, pp. 58–60). This carnage occurred when Modi was the Chief Minister of the state. According to the official records, 1,180 people were killed. However, several surveys by human rights groups indicated that more than 2,000 people, many of whom were Muslims, were killed in these massacres. In the carnage, which began in retaliation for the train fire incident in Godhra, Gujarat, in which 59 Hindus were burnt to death, the then Chief Minister Modi allegedly instructed the police to help Hindus vent out their anger. Indeed, the police did not interfere with the massacres by the Hindu mobs but rather instigated them in some cases. Modi strongly denied his involvement, and his legal immunity paved the way for him to become Prime Minister. However, according to the aforementioned BBC documentary telecasted in 2023, an internal British government investigation at the time found Modi to be clearly responsible. The UK government imposed a *de facto* diplomatic boycott on him, and the US government formally refused to issue him a visa in 2005.

This experience was presumably unforgettably humiliating for Modi. The BJP, which was predicted to win the 2004 Lok Sabha elections, was defeated, and A. B. Vajpayee, the first BJP Prime Minister, regretted not dismissing Modi. A long legal battle was waged in the country, and his political qualifications were constantly questioned, as he was rejected by the UK and the USA. This experience led to the new "politics of violence," i.e., the activation of vigilante groups, after he became Prime Minister (Nakamizo, 2023a).

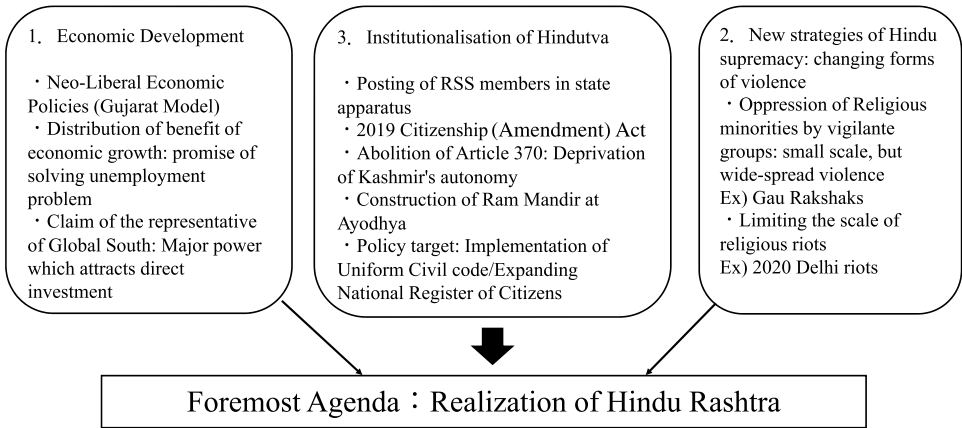
After the Modi government came to power in 2014, there was a noticeable increase in the number of violent incidents by Hindu supremacist vigilantes, especially Gau Rakshaks, who would lynch and kill Muslims, as I mentioned in the "Modi's Authoritarian Revolution" section. Vigilante violence is small in scale, with each incident claiming at most a few victims, so it does not attract as much media attention as the 2002 Gujarat carnage did. Moreover, as this violence is a vigilante operation, the government can avoid direct responsibility. However, a wide range of vigilante

activities subjects Muslims to a sense of fear in their daily lives, as they may be attacked anytime and anywhere. The subjugation of Muslims, as desired by Golwalkar, could be achieved at no great cost. This is the new “politics of violence,” an innovation seen under the Modi regime: in February 2020, Delhi riots occurred to crush the campaign against the Citizenship (Amendment) Act (CAA), 2019, but the number of casualties was limited to 53, unlike in the 2002 Gujarat carnage.

Development of the “Politics of Obedience”

What, then, have these innovations accomplished? The final goal of the “Politics of Obedience” is the realization of the Hindu Rashtra, which consists of three pillars, as shown in Figure 1.

The first pillar is the “reward” of his politics, namely, the promise of economic development and a solution for the unemployment problem. Since the economic liberalization of India in 1991, the Indian economy has continued to grow as a winner of globalization. Its population structure is also ideally pyramidal, which means that the demographic bonus is expected to continue for some time to come. However, the growth in unemployment has been a bottleneck in the Indian economy, as mentioned above, as the government has been unable to provide sufficient formal employment to support its enormous youth population. What propelled Modi to the Prime Minister seat was his record of achieving a higher economic growth rate than the all-India



Source. Made by the author.

Fig. 1. “Politics of Obedience.”

average in Gujarat, where he served as Chief Minister for 13 years, and the hope that his “Gujarat model” would solve the long-standing chronic problems of unemployment. Thus, this pillar represents the vital rewards to gain the obedience of people, upon which the success of his “Politics of Obedience” hinges.

The second pillar is the new strategy of Hindutva, the aforementioned new “politics of violence,” which we see here as a means of securing Muslims’ obedience with small-scale but widespread violence, which can be expected to have the same effect as the 2002 Gujarat carnage.

The third pillar is the institutionalization of Hindutva. Full-fledged institutionalization commenced after his re-election in the 2019 Lok Sabha elections. The first step was the abolition of the autonomous status of the states of Jammu and Kashmir, which had been stipulated in Article 370 of the Constitution. Immediately after the repeal of this article was unexpectedly declared, the opposition leaders in the state were detained, and the opposition movements were forcefully suppressed with torture. The next step was the enactment of the Citizenship (Amendment) Act, 2019, which excluded only Muslims when granting citizenship to refugees of other religions (Hindus, Sikhs, Parsis, Christians, Buddhists, and Jains) from the three neighboring Muslim-dominant countries. This was the first law to make religious affiliation a requirement in Indian citizenship law and was seen as an important first step toward realizing a Hindu Rashtra. Consequently, nationwide opposition movements intensified immediately after the legislation was passed, and the 2020 Delhi riots were triggered by the Sangh Parivar (RSS group) to suppress this movement, as mentioned above. Although the opposition movement continued even after the riots, it was severely suppressed and forced to end in March 2020 with the sudden declaration of the all-India lockdown ostensibly as an anti-COVID-19 measure, which I have termed as “Disaster Authoritarianism” (Nakamizo 2020c). Even during the lockdown, members of the opposition movements, many of whom were Muslims, continued to be arrested under the amended UAPA.

These pillars are the essence of Modi’s authoritarian revolution, but why has this drastic change occurred?

## **Examination of the Silent Revolution in Bihar**

### **Importance of Bihar**

To analyze the paradox of Indian democracy, I focus on the politics of the North Indian state of Bihar. Bihar is the third most populous state in India, and its politics have affected national politics since independence. Before the bifurcation of the state of

Jharkhand from Bihar in 2000, it was the second most populous state, occupying almost 10% of the Lok Sabha seats (54 of the 543 seats). In the 2014 Lok Sabha elections, the BJP-led NDA held 31 of Bihar's 40 seats. This number accounted for 8.8% of the total number of NDA seats (352) and hence contributed to the victory of the BJP.

Bihar being at the forefront of the change in Indian politics is not a recent development. In the 1967 elections, Bihar was one of the eight states in which the INC lost its majority. The first change of the party system from the Congress system to the Congress–Opposition system commenced at this point (Yadav, 1999). In 1974, Bihar was the center of the JP movement. This movement, which proclaimed the goal of realizing a “Total Revolution,” led to the declaration of an Emergency in 1975. Since the late 1970s, Bihar has been one of the centers of backward caste politics, which aims to realize “social justice,” and it triggered the collapse of INC rule in 1989, which resulted in a second party system change from the Congress–Opposition system to the Competitive Multiparty system. Additionally, Bihar was one of the centers of secular politics in the midst of the religious violence of the 1990s, which was precipitated by Ayodhya mobilizations that led to massive religious riots in the early 1990s (Nakamizo, 2020a, pp. 251–262). In short, Bihar politics represents political change in India. By analyzing the political process of Bihar, we can gauge the paradox of Indian democracy, that is, the shift from the Silent Revolution to the Authoritarian Revolution.

### Silent Revolution in Bihar

Before independence, Bihar was one of the strongholds of the INC. After independence, the INC dominated Bihar politics throughout the years, excluding 1967–1972 and 1977–1980, until the 1989 General Election. The INC rule in Bihar was characterized by the dominance of the upper castes. Most of the chief ministers of the INC state governments belonged to the upper castes, which alienated the other backward classes (OBCs) from the INC. In this context, socialist parties had a presence in Bihar politics, especially in the OBC-dominant region. They succeeded in defeating the INC in the 1967 state assembly elections by allying with other non-INC parties (including the BJS) and pressing the implementation of public job reservations for OBCs. After 10 years, the Janata Party government, which represented socialist parties and the BJS, decided to introduce public job reservations for OBCs in the state bureaucracy. This success helped expand the support base of socialist parties, especially among the backward castes (Nakamizo, 2020a, pp. 104–108).

However, infighting between socialist parties and the BJS intensified in the Janata Party government. One of the reasons was the ideological dispute, which climaxed in the 1979 Jamshedpur riots. The Jamshedpur riots, in which more than 100 people, mostly Muslims, were killed, were instigated by RSS, the parent organization of the BJS. The socialist parties held the BJS culpable, which resulted in the collapse of the Morarji Desai-led Janata Party government at the center (Nakamizo, 2023a, pp. 17–18). By leveraging the split of the Janata Party government, the INC won the 1980 General Election and the succeeding state assembly election in Bihar.

Although socialist parties were the opposition in the 1980s, they were gradually expanding their base. One of the main contributing factors for this was that OBCs had become independent of upper-caste landlords in economic terms. Even in Bihar, which was known for low agricultural productivity, the production of wheat had increased owing to the technological innovation of the Green Revolution, which primarily benefited OBC farmers. This economic independence led to political independence from the upper castes. OBCs started supporting socialist parties instead of the INC, as revealed in my field study (Nakamizo, 2020a, Chapter 4).

Moreover, religious identity was politicized, especially in the latter half of the 1980s. After its defeat in the 1984 General Election, the BJP reverted to its hardline strategy, namely, the intensification of religious mobilization, especially on the Ayodhya issue, which precipitated many religious riots. The INC governments, both central and state, failed to contain these religious riots, especially the largest Bhagalpur riots in Bihar, in which more than 1,000 people, mostly Muslims, were killed, in the midst of the 1989 General Election campaign (Nakamizo, 2020a, pp. 168–204). This breach of the promise of secularism caused Muslims to lose faith in the INC, which eventually led to the defeat of the INC in the 1989 General Election (Nakamizo, 2020a, Chapter 6). In Bihar, Muslim support for the Janata Dal (JD) which had united socialist parties before the 1989 elections, enabled the JD to form a government after the 1990 state assembly elections.

Under the JD government, “social justice” was realized. Laloo Prasad Yadav, a former student leader of the JP movement, became the Chief Minister of the JD government. His “social justice” comprised three agendas: (1) breaking upper-caste dominance, (2) eradicating poverty, and (3) protecting secularism. During his 15 years in power from 1990 to 2005, the power structure of Bihar politics was completely transformed such that upper caste dominance was replaced by the dominance of upper backward castes. As Table 1 shows, the total number of Members of the Legislative Assembly (MLAs) from backward castes (117) exceeded the number of upper-caste MLAs (105) for the first time since independence in the 1990 state assembly election.

Table 1.  
*Caste Composition of the Bihar State Legislative Assembly*

Caste	1967	1969	1972	1977	1980	1985	1990	1995	2000	2005
Upper castes	133	122	136	124	120	118	105	56	56	68
Backward castes										
Yadav	37	47	35	51	46	47	63	86	64	58
Kurmi	14	12	20	21	20	12	12	13	12	13
Koeri	13	13	8	6	12	18	18	27	22	18
Bania	13	16	8	10	13	9	18	18	12	11
Total upper backward	77	88	71	88	91	86	111	144	110	100
Total lower backward	5	5	6	4	5	3	6	16	11	12
Backward castes	82	93	77	92	96	89	117	160	121	112
Assembly seats	318	318	318	324	324	324	324	324	324	243

*Note.* The top row shows the years in which the state legislative assembly elections were held. In 2005, elections were held twice, first in February and then in October. The numbers in the table are from the former. The number of seats was reduced to 243 after the 2000 election due to the secession of Jharkhand.  
*Source.* Nakamizo (2020a, Table 7.2, p. 238).

The dominance of the upper backward castes in the government is confirmed in the composition of the cabinet ministers in the Laloo ministry; upper backward castes ministers (36%) exceeded upper castes ministers (30%) in 1990 (Nakamizo, 2020a, Table 2.9, p. 65). The dominance of the upper backward castes became more evident during his rule, which ended in 2005.

Laloo also succeeded in containing religious riots to protect Muslims and secular India. As Table 2 shows, religious riots were contained during Ayodhya mobilization in 1990. What increasingly began to be referred to as the “MY combination” (Muslim–Yadav combination), namely, the alliance of Yadavs (Laloo’s caste) and Muslims, became the keyword for understanding 1990s politics in Bihar.

### BJP: Road-to-power

As I just explained, Bihar was the center of socialist politics and anti-communal politics, especially in the 1990s. However, the BJP has been enjoying power at the state level since 2005 owing to its alliance with Janata Dal (United) (JD(U)), although the alliance broke up from 2013 to 2017 and from 2022 to 2024. The BJP found it difficult to overcome the division by caste and construct the “Hindu vote” in the caste-ridden society of Bihar. Thus, it had to make an alliance with a regional party, which could secure sufficient votes to come to power. The partner was the JD(U), which had parted with the Laloo faction of JD, which later became the Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD).

Table 2.

*Modes of Killing Used in Religious Riots (August–November 1990)*

State	Police shooting	Inter-religion clashes	Unknown	Total
Andhra Pradesh	5	16	20	<b>41</b>
Bihar	0	3	15	<b>18</b>
Delhi	0	10 (1)	0	<b>10</b>
Gujarat	26	26	40	<b>92</b>
Kerala			1	<b>1</b>
Karnataka	15	7	100	<b>122</b>
Maharashtra	1	1	0	<b>2</b>
Madhya Pradesh	0	10	8	<b>18</b>
Rajasthan	13	11 (2)	31	<b>55</b>
Uttar Pradesh	36	32 (1)	130	<b>198</b>
West Bengal	4	12	5	<b>21</b>
Adjustment			32	
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>128 (3)</b>	<b>382</b>	<b>610 (3)</b>

*Note.* (1) “Police shooting” and “Inter-religion clashes” refer to factors contributing to killings. “Unknown” means that the cause of death was not mentioned in newspaper reports. The typical description was “killed” and where the cause of death was known for some victims and unknown for the rest; the latter were included in the “Unknown” category. For example, *The Hindustan Times* (New Delhi) (25/10/1990: 1) reported that 30 people were killed in a riot in relation to the Bharat Bandh on October 24, the day after Advani’s arrest, but the cause of death was mentioned for only 19 of them. The remaining 11 victims for whom the cause of death was not reported were listed as unknown. However, it is perhaps reasonable to treat these deaths as the result of “interreligion clashes,” as they were reported in relation to religious riots even though the cause of death was unknown. At least it is certain that they were not killed in police shootings. (2) The numbers in brackets denote police officers. They have been listed under “interreligion clashes,” as some were killed in the line of duty in their attempt to control clashes between protester groups, and some were killed in violence carried out by either community.

*Source.* Nakamizo (2020a, Table 7.6, p. 259).

For the JD(U), allying with the BJP was a risky move, especially considering the presence of the Muslim vote (Muslims comprised almost 17% of the voters in Bihar). This was one of the main reasons for the first break-up with the BJP after Narendra Modi stood as the BJP prime ministerial candidate in 2013. However, their relationship continues, as revealed by Nitish’s surprising return to the NDA for the second time in January 2024. Why has JD(U) been collaborating with the BJP since 1996?

The following four underlying factors can be identified: (1) failure of power sharing among the upper backward castes elite and upper castes elite, (2) failure to deliver the benefits of “social justice” to lower backward castes and Dalits, (3) failure in poverty alleviation, and (4) reduced antipathy toward the BJP’s Hindutva agenda. In what follows, I explain these four factors.



*Power-sharing*

First, Laloo's "social justice" gradually transformed into Yadav dominance. Yadav is the largest Hindu community among not only the four upper backward castes (Yadav, Kurmi, Koeri, and Bania) but also all Hindu communities in Bihar. For Laloo, being a Yadav, consolidating the Yadav vote was the surest way to secure power at the state level. We can confirm Yadav dominance in Table 1, which shows that Yadavs occupied 26.5% of the total seats in the 1995 state assembly election, despite accounting for just 11% of the total population (before bifurcation in 2000).

However, Yadav dominance alienated the other upper backward castes, especially the traditional rival Kurmi caste. This failure of power-sharing with other upper backward caste elites led to the formation of a new party, namely, the Samata Party, under Kurmi leader Nitish Kumar, who has been Chief Minister almost continuously since 2005, with a brief interruption from 2014 to 2015.

Additionally, Laloo's "social justice" meant the exclusion of upper-caste elites from power. They supported the INC before 1990, but the success of the silent revolution deprived power from the INC. Facing political upheaval, the upper castes shifted support to the BJP, which claimed that it would realize the Hindu Rashtra; this would involve a state and society that would follow the Hindu religious order, or more specifically, the Brahmanical order. Thus, the BJP's ideology aligned with the interests of the upper castes, as the BJP was known as the party of upper castes, especially Brahmins and Baniyas.

The changes in voting behavior outlined above are proven by the data. As shown in Table 3, 60–70% of the Kurmi and Koeri have been supporting the NDA, except for in the 2014 Lok Sabha elections, in which JD(U) broke ties with the NDA and their votes were divided. Moreover, 60–80% of the upper castes support the NDA.

*Empowerment of the lower sections*

Second, while Laloo's "social justice" succeeded in curbing upper caste rule in politics, it failed to empower the lower strata of society, namely, the lower backward castes and Dalits. Despite the economic growth accelerated by economic liberalization in 1991, Bihar lagged behind other states. As Table 4 shows, its per capita net state domestic product was the lowest among India's 15 most populous states from 1980/81 to 2005. Moreover, its economic growth rate was negative in the 1990s at the height of "social justice," which was the worst record among the 15 most populous states.

Laloo's JD, later the RJD, initially succeeded in gaining support from the lower strata of society but failed to sustain their support after the 1995 state assembly

Table 3.  
*Voting Behaviors of Social Communities for Lok Sabha Elections at Bihar (1996–2019)*

Election years	1996	1998	1999	2004	2009	2014	2019
Upper castes							
BJP+	77	75	71	63	65	78	65
Yadav							
RJD+	81	74	76	68	65	64	55
Kurmi + Koeri							
BJP+	69	—	71	64	62	26	70
JD(U)	—	—	—	—	—	30	
Lower backward castes							
RJD+	37	26	30	38	12	10	9
BJP+	36	41	45	36	58	53	76
Dalits							
RJD+	31	32	39	42	31	10	5
BJP+	28	22	44	28	29	42	76
Muslims							
RJD+	61	68	77	79	30	64	77

*Note.* Figures are in %. “BJP +” refers to BJP + JD(U) from 1996 to 2009, BJP + Lok Jan Shakti Party + Rashtriya Lok Samata Party in 2014, and BJP + JD(U) + Lok Jan Shakti Party in 2019. “RJD +” refers to JD + Communist Party of India + Communist Party of India (Marxist) in 1996, RJD + INC + Jharkhand Mukti Morcha in 1998, RJD + INC in 1999, RJD + INC + Lok Jan Shakti Party + Nationalist Congress Party + Communist Party of India (Marxist) in 2004, RJD + Lok Jan Shakti Party + Samajwadi Party in 2009, RJD + INC + Nationalist Congress Party, and RJD + INC + Rashtriya Lok Samata Party + Hindustani Awami Morcha (Secular) + Vikassheel Insaan Party in 2019.

*Source.* Compiled by the author based on Kumar (2014, Tables 3–6, pp. 97–98) and Ranjan, Singh, and Alam (2019).

election. As Table 3 shows, their votes were divided among the NDA, the RJD alliance, and other parties, such as the Communist Party of India (Marxist–Leninist) Liberation, before Modi’s rise to power. After defeating the RJD in the 2005 state assembly election, the Nitish Kumar-led NDA government first introduced the reservation quota for extreme backward castes (lower OBCs),<sup>3</sup> compensating for the neglected dimension of Laloo’s “social justice.” The Nitish government later introduced the Maha-Dalit policy, which focused on the uplift of all Dalit communities, excluding the Paswan caste, with the same aim of balancing Laloo’s social justice (Nakamizo, 2014).

<sup>3</sup>In an interview with Nitish Kumar on August 29, 2010, he emphasized that the implementation of reservation policy for EBC was his first major policy after assuming Chief Minister.

Table 4.  
*Per Capita NSDP and Growth Rate (1980–2007) in Bihar*

Price (in Rupee)						Average growth rate (%)		
1980/81	1985/86	1990/91	1995/96	2000	2005	1980/81– 1989/90	1990/91– 1997/98	1999/2000– 2007
917 (15)	1,074 (15)	1,197 (15)	983 (15)	6,554 (15)	6,745 (15)	2.17 (11)	–1.29 (15)	5.82 (6)

*Note.* For the per capita NSDP, the data up to 1998 are based on the 1980–81 price, and the data after 1999 are based on the 1999–2000 price. The figures in brackets indicate rankings within the 15 major Indian states.  
*Source.* Indiatat.

### Poverty alleviation

Regarding this point, Laloo’s social justice could not meet the expectations of economic development, as mentioned above. Poverty alleviation was one of the pillars of his “social justice,” and he repeatedly emphasized that he prioritized reducing poverty in Bihar. During my fieldwork on the 2004 Lok Sabha election, I found that Laloo emphasized in his speeches that he was the son of an impoverished man and therefore understood how poor people felt. In an interview, he even stated that he was born Naxalite, quickly adding “non-violent Naxalite.”<sup>4</sup> However, his “social justice” was undeniably an empty promise, as the data show.

As shown in Table 5, the percentage of people below the poverty line in Bihar (55%) was the highest among the 15 most populous states from 1993–1994. Although this figure improved from 1999–2000, with a reduction of more than 10 points, the ranking was still the second worst. Reflecting on this failure, the Nitish government

Table 5.  
*Number and Percentage of People Below the Poverty Line in Bihar (1983–1999/2000)*

	1983		1993–94		1999–2000	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Bihar	462.1 (2)	62.2 (2)	493.4 (2)	55 (1)	425.6 (2)	42.6 (2)
All India	3229	44.5	3203.7	36	2602.5	26.1

*Note.* Figures in brackets refer to rankings in the 15 major populous states. The population is expressed in units of 100,000, and percentages are given as percentages.  
*Source.* Indiatat.

<sup>4</sup>See Nakamizo (2020a, pp. 321–322). At the time of his inauguration as chief minister in 1990, he was staying in the public dormitory where his siblings, who worked as janitors at Patna University, resided. See also (“No one dare topple me,” 1990, p. 41).

has been prioritizing Bihar's development. Most importantly, Modi's rise to the prime minister was explained by the expectation of solving the unemployment problem through his hyped "Gujarat model," which helped him successfully gain support in Bihar as well.

### *Secularism*

Finally, we can observe the mixed response of voters with respect to religious issues. Our survey of the 2019 General Election (Lok Sabha Election) and 2020 Bihar State Assembly Election (Vidhan Sabha Election) have showed that concern for communalism/communal harmony was not high (Table 6).

At the same time, the Ayodhya issue was prioritized in the 2019 election. Needless to say, we should be very careful in interpreting the meaning of "most important," as it could indicate both support for the construction of the Ram Mandir and opposition against it. However, our survey data show that of the respondents who chose "5 (very important)" on the Ayodhya issue, 47.9% voted for the BJP and 25.5% voted for JD(U). In other words, 73.4% of them voted for the NDA. We asked about this issue further, as shown in Figure 2. More than 92% of NDA voters supported the claim that the Ram temple should be built on the Babri Mosque site. Notably, more than 50% of RJD voters supported this claim, though 50% of INC supporter opposed it.

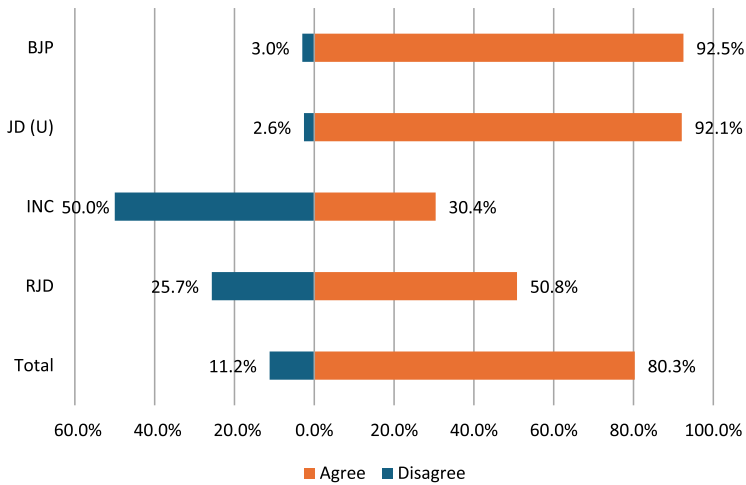
We asked about this issue again in a survey on the 2020 Bihar Vidhan Sabha election following the 2019 Ayodhya verdict, as shown in Figure 3. In total, 83% of NDA (BJP and JD(U)) voters and 80% of RJD voters supported the claim that the Ayodhya verdict by the Supreme Court (2019 November) was a landmark judgment, though the rate of INC voters was 49%. This indicates that the Sangh Parivar's Hindutva ideology has proliferated in present-day Bihar.

Table 6.  
*Most Important Issues in the 2019 and 2020 Elections in Bihar*

Ranking	2019 Lok Sabha	2020 Vidhan Sabha
1	Ram Mandir	Job creation
2	Jobs/unemployment	Access to education
3	Farmers/agriculture	Caring and protecting poor
Ranking of communalism issue	25	15

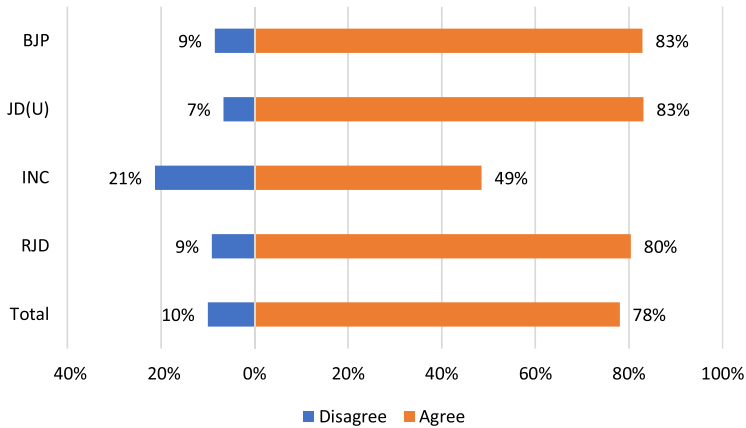
*Note.* In the 2019 survey, we asked respondents to use numbers on a scale from 1 (not at all important) to 5 (very important) to indicate their views. Ranking is based on the average of the scales. In the 2020 survey, we asked respondents to mention the most important issue. Ranking is based on the percentage of all issues.

*Source.* 2019 and 2020 Bihar election survey.



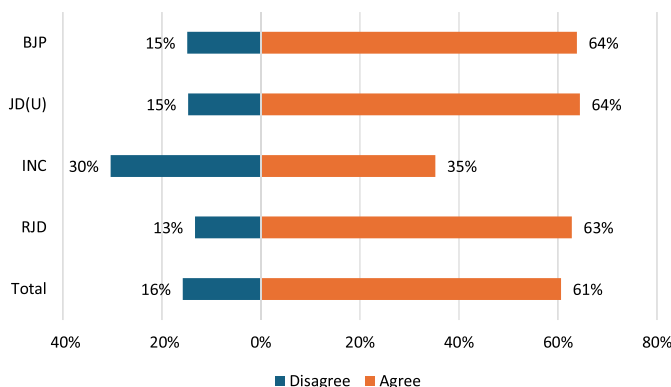
*Note.* The statement is “Ram temple should be built on the site of Babri Mosque.” “Agree” is the sum of the scores for “Strongly Agree” and “Tend to Agree.” “Disagree” is the sum of the scores for “Strongly Disagree” and “Tend to Disagree.” For the methodology, see Appendix A.1.  
*Abbreviation.* BJP: Bharatiya Janata Party, JD(U): Janata Dal (United), INC: Indian National Congress, RJD: Rashtriya Janata Dal.  
*Source.* 2019 Bihar election survey.

Fig. 2. Ayodhya issue and party support in Bihar (2019 Lok Sabha election).



*Note.* The statement is “The Ayodhya verdict by the Supreme Court (2019 November) is a landmark judgement”. “Agree” is the sum of the scores for “Strongly Agree” and “Tend to Agree.” “Disagree” is the sum of the scores for “Strongly Disagree” and “Tend to Disagree.” For the methodology, see Appendix A.2.  
*Abbreviation.* BJP: Bharatiya Janata Party, JD(U): Janata Dal (United), INC: Indian National Congress, RJD: Rashtriya Janata Dal.  
*Source.* 2020 Bihar assembly election survey.

Fig. 3. Ayodhya judgment and party support (2020 Bihar election).



*Note.* The statement is “The Citizenship (Amendment) Act is a good policy.” “Agree” is the sum of the scores for “Strongly Agree” and “Tend to Agree.” “Disagree” is the sum of the scores for “Strongly Disagree” and “Tend to Disagree.”

*Abbreviation.* BJP: Bharatiya Janata Party, JD(U): Janata Dal (United), INC: Indian National Congress, RJD: Rashtriya Janata Dal.

*Source.* 2020 Bihar election survey.

Fig. 4. CAA and party support in the 2020 Bihar state assembly election.

Finally, we examine the voters’ attitudes toward the 2019 CAA, as shown in Figure 4. The CAA was an important milestone for realizing a Hindu Rashtra, and it was implemented by the Modi government just before the 2024 Lok Sabha election following a long suspension due to the strong anti-CAA movement (Singh, 2024).

In total, 64% of NDA (BJP and JD(U)) voters and 63% of RJD voters believed that the CAA was a good policy, so we cannot find much difference between the NDA and RJD, though the rate of INC voters was 35%. This reflects the tendency of the spread of the Hindutva ideology.

Bihar was once the center of secular politics. Currently, however, it seems that the Hindutva ideology is becoming dominant. What does our future hold?

## Future of Modi’s Authoritarian Revolution

One of the curious aspects of Modi’s “Politics of Obedience” is his high level of popularity. Despite his many policy failures, he is still more popular than other political leaders are. For example, his sudden declaration of an all-India lockdown in March 2020 as a drastic measure against COVID-19 led to tremendous chaos, especially in metropolises, and affected migrant laborers very negatively. They lost their jobs, wages, and housing, and they had no option but to return to their homelands without any transportation. Consequently, many of them had to walk hundreds or even

more than a thousand kilometers to return home. While the news of the “bicycle girl” who rode 1,300 km with her disabled father to Bihar was reported as a marvelous story worldwide (“‘Bicycle girl’ Jyoti turns down,” 2020), many others lost their lives in road accidents or for other reasons during the journey (“Members of PM’s COVID-19 task force,” 2020). Although the migrant laborers from Bihar were affected the most, the BJP received the most support (20%) from them in the 2020 Bihar Vidhan Sabha election (Nakamizo, 2021, p. 50). In sum, we do not observe much difference between the NDA (30%) and RJD alliance (32%).

More data highlight Modi’s personal popularity. According to the CSDS post poll survey, “51 per cent of those who voted for the BJP said that they would not have supported the party if Modi had not been its candidate” (Jaffrelot, 2019, note 8, p. 155). His popularity is confirmed by our 2020 Bihar survey, in which 43% of all NDA voters replied no to the same question (Nakamizo, 2021, pp. 52–53). In India’s first-past-the-post system, these percentages directly affect the election result. If Modi were not the PM, it is highly likely that the NDA would lose the elections.

Is this “Politics of *Vishwas* (trust)?” After the victory of the BJP in the 2019 Lok Sabha election, Sircar argued that “the extraordinary level of support for Modi and the BJP” was because voters expected delivery from Modi in the future and were not judging him on the basis of what he had actually accomplished over the previous five years (Sircar, 2020, p. 179). His argument is attractive for explaining Modi’s popularity despite his many policy failures. However, the following question remains: why do they trust Modi?

In this article, I have outlined how socio-political structural change via the Silent Revolution prompted and created the political conditions for Modi’s Authoritarian Revolution. The Silent Revolution certainly deepened Indian democracy and changed its elite-oriented conservative character. However, although the Silent Revolution succeeded in changing the power structure in the political field, it failed to meet the expectations of the lower strata of society for the betterment of their lives, as shown by the case of Bihar, one of the centers of the Silent Revolution. This led to high fluidity in politics in the 1990s, which journalists termed the “Anti-Incumbency law,” as aforementioned. To overcome the “Anti-Incumbency law,” political parties pursued more solid support bases, which were specific caste and religious identities in the Indian context. The most radical form of this strategy is the clearer-minded pursuit by Modi’s Authoritarian Revolution for Hindu Rashtra which is based on combining backward caste politics, upper caste anxieties about the loss of political and economic power and religious mobilization,<sup>5</sup> as shown by

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<sup>5</sup>Regarding the anxiety of upper castes, see D’Souza (2024).



Modi's emphasis on his backward caste background and his devotion to the Hindu Rashtra.

As I analyzed in this article, however, his "Politics of Obedience" accelerated the authoritarianization of Indian politics. This is the real paradox of Indian democracy. To deepen the Silent Revolution, the citizens of India are raising their voices against the "Politics of Obedience." This is represented by the anti-CAA movements and the farmers' movements during Modi's second term. Moreover, the discontent of people was revealed in the recent 2024 General Election. Compared with the previous 2019 general election, the NDA lost 2.2 points in rural areas ("[Rural voters pull down NDA,](#)" 2024), and the opposition INDIA alliance increased the number of Muslim votes by 20 points (5 points for INC and 15 points for INDIA allies) ([Ahmed, 2024](#)), which contributed to the decreased seats of the NDA alliance. Indian democracy is dying but still alive. This is the hope not only for India but also for the future of democracy worldwide.

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## **Appendix A**

### **A.1. Methodology for the 2019 Bihar Election Survey**


The 2019 Bihar survey was conducted by the author and Dr. Taberez Ahmed Neyazi (National University of Singapore) as a two-wave pre- and post-poll panel survey, using the fund of the JSPS Grant-in-aid for Scientific Research (A) (18H03624, Representative: Prof. Kazuya Nakamizo, Kyoto University). The respondents were

selected via multistage sampling among 52 state assembly constituencies. The face-to-face interviews were conducted by trained interviewers from a Delhi-based research firm, who worked closely with the main researchers on all aspects of sampling and data collection. The pre-poll survey was conducted from March 25 to April 22, 2019, and received responses from 3,025 voters, with a response rate of 69.3% for WAPOR RR1. The post-poll survey was conducted from April 24 to May 22 among the same respondents from wave 1, resulting in responses from 2,558 voters, for a response rate of 83.8%. In this analysis, I used the results of the post-poll survey. To correct for data bias, we applied weights for gender and religion on the basis of 2011 census figures since women and Muslims were underrepresented in the data.

## A.2. Methodology for the 2020 Bihar Election Survey

The 2020 Bihar election survey was conducted by the author and Dr. Tabereh Ahmed Neyazi (National University of Singapore) as a two-wave pre- and post-poll panel survey using funding from the JSPS Grant-in-aid for Scientific Research (A) (18H03624, Representative: Prof. Kazuya Nakamizo, Kyoto University). The respondents were selected via multistage sampling among 49 state assembly constituencies. The face-to-face CAPI survey was conducted by trained interviewers from IPSOS, who worked closely with the main researchers in all aspects of sampling and data collection. The prepoll survey was conducted from 26 September to 10 October 2020 and received responses from 2,497 voters, for a response rate of 53% for WAPOR RR1. The post-poll survey was conducted from October 29 to November 9 among the same respondents from the prepoll survey, and responses from 1,766 voters were obtained, for a response rate of 71%. After the declaration of the results, we conducted a telephone survey among agricultural laborers regarding the issue of migrant labor. This survey was conducted from December 23, 2020, to January 4, 2021. We obtained responses from 193 of 224 agricultural laborers (response rate: 86%). To correct for data bias, we applied weights for gender and religion on the basis of 2011 census figures and vote percentages on the basis of election Commission reports.

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