Part One

The Prospects
Chapter-One

Patna: the nucleus
An Account of the City in the Seventeenth and Early Eighteenth Century
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"The city is more beautiful than the face of the beloved; The inhabitants of the city are more charming than the city..."

Mirja Muhammed Sadiq

The coming of the Mughals witnessed the creation and stabilization of provincial administration that continued more or less on same pattern till today in India. Mughals clearly demarcated the Subah boundaries and settled their capitals and administrative systems efficiently, and in that period, Bihar Subah had an important place because of its location and resources which was even recognized by various foreign travelers including the Europeans. Walter Hamilton noted in the East India Gazetteer that

"Bihar is one of the most fertile, highly cultivated and populous of Hindustan, in proportion to its extent of plain arable ground, which may be computed at 26,000 square miles, divided naturally into two equal portion, north and south of the Ganges."²

The Subah of Bihar with its prominent cities witnessed hectic political and commercial activities both by indigenous as well as foreign groups in this period. Bihar was the scene of many political events and conspiracies (Battle of Chausa, revolt of Salim, revolt of Farukhsiyar, Battle of Buxar, etc. to cite a few) and economic activities (setting of Europeans factories, rise of the House of Jagat Seth, large scale trade in Saltpeter and Opium, etc. among others).

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Important towns and cities mentioned to have flourished during this period included Patna, Monghyr, Rajmahal, Bhagalpur, Chapra, Singhiya, Hajipur, Dariapur, Gaya, Muzzafarpur, etc. Almost every traveler traversing through Bihar had visited these cities and had positive observations about them.

Monghyr was located halfway between Rajmahal and Patna. John Marshal, an English official, describing this town noted:

“...this town stands upon an ascent, the river bank by it being 8 or 10 yards high...a wall made of bricks by the river side about 5 yards high and 20 long, with a little tower at each end, which wall is a fortification to put guns in.”

Important commodities produced at Monghyr included textiles, Opium, Saltpeter, fruits etc., but John Marshal was of the view that “best Opium comes from near Patna, and that from Monghyr, is not so good.”

Rajmahal was an important Mughal city. It was also a mint town and the Europeans frequently visited here for financial purposes. Located along the river Ganges in the hills of Rajmahal, this city was strategically important too. But even then, there was no permanent establishment of any Europeans there. John Marshal mentioned that

“The English had no factory at Rajmahal, and the houses used by the Company’s servants, who transacted business with the officials in charge of the Mughal mint at that place, was of insignificant size-consisting of only 3 little small rooms and little upper room.”

Bhagalpur is also located on the bank of the Ganges. Main commodities produced there included rice, junera, poppy, mango etc. It had also abundance of iron which was smelted by a race called Korah and Nyah. Main exports from Bhagalpur were Opium, indigo, timber, tobacco and Saltpeter. According to Marshal, “this is a

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5 Ibid, 10.
6 W. S. Sherwill, *Captain Sherwill's report on Bhagalpur, 1846-1850*, 149.
7 Ibid, 173.
very great towne of thatch houses and this is a place for bowes and arrows to be bought at, and also neat hubble bubbles." \(^8\)

Chapra is situated near the junction of the Ghaghara and the Ganges. It grew in importance as a river mart in the 18th century when the Dutch, French and English established Saltpeter refineries there.

Singhiya is located about dozen miles beyond Patna on the north bank of the Ganges. Here, both the Dutch and the English had their factories. As Marshal points out: "the place is situated in a pleasant but not whole some place, by reason of its being most Saltpeter ground, but is convenient by reason thereof, for Saltpeter men live not far from it." \(^9\)

Muzzafarpur was also an important town of Bihar *Subah* in this period. It had always borne a high reputation for its cattle among other things, and the English Company used to get draught bullocks for the ordinance department from here. \(^10\)

Gaya, one of the most important religious centers in Bihar is situated 100 kilometers south of Patna, the capital city of Bihar. Located on the banks of Falgu, it is surrounded by small rocky hills (*Mangala-Gauri, Shringa-Sthan, Ram-Shila* and *Brahmayoni*) on three sides and the river flowing on the fourth (western) side. The commodities produced here included textiles, turmeric and several fruits.

Dariapur located near Patna was a small town. John Marshal mentioned that "this town hath all thatch houses, and at each end a neat tope of trees. Here is a bazaar where people brought provisions." \(^11\)

Among the earlier mentioned towns of Bihar *Subah*, Patna was the most important because of its being the administrative capital, financial and commercial hub and cultural centre of the region.

The modern city of Patna, designed by J.B. Munnings in 1912, when Patna became the capital city of newly created province of Bihar and Orissa, has a long

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\(^8\) S.A. Khan, *John Marshal...*, 221.
\(^9\) Ibid, 23.
\(^10\) *Imperial Gazetteer of India, Provincial series, Bengal*; Calcutta, 1909, Vol., II, 111.
period of settlement. In fact, from the very outset the rise of Patna as a central place was tied to a political act. In the period of this study the city provided a complex mixture of Indians and jingling Europeans, helmets and tall colour-washed houses, tang of spices, chillies, turmeric, ginger, and bullock carts through the narrow streets along with various types of riverine vessels going to and fro in the Ganges. The river along with rich hinterland of Patna provided wide avenues of settlements populated with peasants, artisans, merchants and rulers; thus, confirming the fact of interdependence between natural resources and human beings.

Human being has tried to modify and manipulate the nature for his luxurious survival. The nature, in turn, has posed several regulations on the degree of its use and this has resulted in conflicts and cooperation among men for the wide but scarce natural resources. Patna, during this period also witnessed struggle for monopolization of resources between various groups, both indigenous and Europeans and this marked the transition of Patna from a Mughal town to an English one in the late 18th century.

During the Mughal period, the city of Patna was a commercial hub.12 It was a true riverine port (see photograph).13 The transfer of capital by SherShah, from Biharsharif to Patna in 1545, strengthened the process of urbanization. However, it may not be entirely correct to see the transfer of capital as a factor for Patna’s eminence, as there are references to merchant colonies at Patna earlier than 1545.14

Several thesis have been put forward on the origin of the city of Patna. Folklores attribute the foundation of the city of Patliputra (ancient Patna) to prince Putra and princess Patali.15 It is this folk memory that is institutionalized in the form

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12 The bazaar paintings clearly depict the traditional importance of Bihar in commercial sector. The bazaar paintings by the Patna school painters and independent artists portrayed various bazaar tradesmen, craftsmen and peddlers. These paintings also depict the town and village sites as well as various means of transport such as bullock carts, palanquins etc. The portraits by Bani Lal and Sewak Lal shows variant economic life of the people of Bihar; Mildred Archer, Patna paintings.

13 Folklores also confirm to the commercial importance of Patna as a riverine port. There is a song titled- pania ke jahaj se palatia bani ayeha piya, lele ayehe ho piya senura Bangal se; written and sung by Dr. Sarda Sinha.

14 The inscription regarding the founding of the Begu Hajjam mosque (AD 1510-1511) refers to a body of merchants living in an urban environment at least 30 years before SherShah transferred his capital to Patna from Biharsharif. F. Lehmann, ‘the 18th century transition in India: response of some Bihar intellectuals’. Ph.D. Diss; University of Wisconsin, 1967, 22n 44, cited in Kum Kum Chatterjee, op.cit, 14.

15 There is a story of Putra, the son of Bikusha, who married the princess Patali of Ceylon and then founded the kingdom of Patliputra; in Mira Pakrasi, Folktales of Bihar ; Origin of Patna, Sterling Publishers, 1999, 112-4.
of the *Patani Devi temple* (See photograph). The temple of *Patani Devi* is located in the Patna city area of Patna). In 1817, Lieutenant Colonel William Franklin, in order to prove the foundation of Patna, published “ancient Palibothra” part one and two, respectively. According to him, the ancient *Patliputra*, now accepted as Patna, was at Bhagalpur in Bengal. But the geographical and historical factors make us believe that the thesis of Franklin is not true. Whatever be the course of foundation of the city, it amply supports the status of Patna as a reverine city. On the left bank of the Ganges, the most important harbinger of civilization evolved the city of Patna long ago as *Patliputra*.

**The Region, Land and Waterways, Climate and Natural Hazards**

Located at 25° 37' North and 85° 12' east, along the west bank of the Ganges, Patna was almost at the heart of the rich alluvial Gangetic plains. Evidently, it was the stability in the course of the river Ganges at this point that enabled the city to endure through the ages.

Patna was the capital city of Mughal *Subah* of Bihar during this period. The central position of Patna was accentuated by its strategic situation between the eminent cities of the rich *doab* on the west and the bounteous Bengal, which apart from other trading advantages possessed a convenient sea outlet. The immediate Hinterland of Patna too greatly supported its trade. Tirhut, Saran, Gaya, Singhiya (on the left bank of Gandak, about 15 miles north of Patna), Bhagalpur, Lakhawar, Dariapur etc. were among the more important Hinterland of Patna as mentioned above.

The three great rivers—the Ghagra, the Gandak and the Son—joined the Ganges not far from Patna. Further east Punpun at Futwah joins the Ganges from south. Thus, Patna was a city well guarded by the rivers from three sides. These rivers

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16 In support of his thesis, Franklin made a journey up the river *Chandan*, in order to prove that it was the river *Erranboan* at whose point of confluence with the Ganges the ancient historian Arrian of Greek recorded *Palibothra* as standing; Mildred Archer and Ronald Lightbown, *India observed; India as viewed by the British Artists*, 1760-1860, 100.


provided great communication prospect apart from land routes that were widely used. Patna was connected to Agra, Allahabad and Banaras on the west by the rivers Ganges and Yamuna and by over-land routes as well. Through these routes it was incorporated into the larger matrix of the overland traffic in to Central Asia, West Asia and Africa including Egypt. However, the “tyranny of distance” due to antiquated means of transport always imposed serious constraints.

Almost every traveler visiting Patna and its environs has drawn attention to the magnificence and utility of both the land and the water routes. Peter Mundy, the English traveler informs us that Jahangir, the Mughal Emperor, mindful of the comforts of the travelers, had ordered the construction of a road to link Patna and Agra. From Patna to Banaras, there were two possible routes. One ran with the Ganges through Danapur, Maner, Arrah, Bhojpur, Buxor, Chausa, Zamania and Mughal Sarai, whilst a second ran through Phulwari, Nawbatpur, Arwal, Daudnagar, and Sasaram to Mughal Sarai. On the eastern side, Patna was linked to the Hughli via Monghyr- Rajmahal- Kasimbazaar and Balasore. The city of Patna was also connected to Nepal via Hajipur- Mehsi- Motihari- Hitoura, while Nepal was linked through hilly route to Tibet, Bhutan etc.

Manrique mentions that these routes were well equipped with Sarais built by wealthy men with philanthropic interests. Ever since the days of antiquity, the State also had been known to have built rest houses for the comfort of travelers and merchants. In the medieval period the State started building khanquahs for the benefit of the travelers, by using the taxes collected on the highways. However, by the time of the Lodhi Sultans, the term khanaqah seems to have been replaced by the term Sarai. Sher Shah also built a number of Sarais, totalling nearly 1700, for the benefit

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20 Thomas Bowery noted that “this country is really the great gate that opens into Bengal and Orissa and so consequently into most parts of India viz- from the northern kingdoms (by land) namely Persia, Kirman, Georgia, and Tartaria....” Thomas Bowrey, A geographical account..., 221.
22 K. M. Karim; The province of Bihar and Bengal under Shahjahan; Asiatic Society of Bangladesh, Dacca, 1974, 172.
23 S.A. Khan, John Marshal..., 161.
24 S.A. Khan, John Marshal, 161,166.
26 I. H. Khan (art), ‘The process of urbanization and Social change in pre- Mughal India', Islamic Culture, Vol. LXXVII, no. 3, April 2003, 38.
of the common people. They were in reality, fortified inns. Sher Shah also led markets to be set up in every Sarai. Many of the Sarais became mandis i.e. markets, where the peasants came to sell their produce. These in turn became, in time, the nuclei around which towns (gazbas) grew, where trade and handicrafts developed.

Peter Mundy noted that “here (Patna) is also the fairest Sarais that I have yet seen, or I think is in India…”

He also mentions:

“This place is chiefly for merchants... where the merchants may lodge and keep their goods, the time of their stay here, paying so much by the month. These are usually in great cities but the other sorts of Sarais are in all places serving for all sorts of travelers that come at night and go away in the morning.”

The Sarai mentioned by Peter Mundy, as a matter of fact, was built by Jafar Khan, the Governor of Bihar. In fact, as we have seen above, it was the duty of the rulers to make arrangements for the travelers and merchants, and the Sarais were a part of that arrangement.

There is distinct reference to four Sarais, namely, Sarai at Barh, (John Marshal noticed this Sarai en-route from Rajmahal to Patna; he claimed it had two hundred rooms), Rani Sarai 11¼ miles of Barh, Asmulika Sarai and Gusarpur Sarai 18¾ miles west of Barh. Apart from these, there was the Amwakantha Sarai, two days journey short of Benares and Mendroo Sarai. Likewise, in the route from Banaras to Patna, there were many Sarais namely MughalSarai, Saiyadraja Sarai, Mowhanea Sarai, Jahanabad Sarai, Sasaram Sarai, Makrain Sarai, Vukeley Sarai, Aganur Sarai, Naubatpur Sarai and others.

Further, it was for the convenience of the travelers that bridges were built over various water bodies on the trade route. John Marshal noticed two such bridges, one at

28 Peter Mundy, Travels, Vol. II, 159.
30 S.A. Khan, John Marshal, 160.
Kalyanpur (on Patna-Rajmahal route) and the other at Garhi Sarai which was under construction when he visited the place. 31

However, the cost of communication on these land routes was much higher than the waterways as the distance traveled by water was shorter. English factors noted that on the route from Patna to Agra goods sent were usually charged a rupee and four annas or a rupee and eight annas per maunds for a journey of 35 days duration. 32 John Marshal discussed in detail the transportation system from Patna to Agra. He noted that

“at Patna coaches, oxen, horses, & ca. are every month let to Agra (except in the 4 months in the rains). An ox is let for 12 rupees, the owner, thereof, being at the charge of a man to go with the ox, and also for the ox meat; and this ox will carry 4 maund……. A coach which will carry 40 maund and goes with 6 oxen is let for 80 rupees. A coach that will carry 4 men and goes with 2 oxen is let for 22 rupees. A horse is let for 10 rupees. Cahars (kahars) to go with a palanquin will have 5 rupees per piece, besides 1 seer dall (dal, pulse) a piece every day, which will amount to 1½ rupees per piece more. In all these cases of the oxen, coaches, horses or wagons, the owners, thereof, are all paid charges, except custom paid at places for the goods carried.” 33

Apart from these, of course, the merchants also had to pay the agents who accompanied their caravans. Robert Hughes noted in a letter to Agra Factory dated 6th October, 1620 that

“we have delivered into the hands of our servant Dayala, fifteen rupees to defraye (sic) the charges of the goods on the way… we had sent Abdul Karim with the cartes,… we have paid our servants which went with the goods 4½ per piece for their journey.” 34 The distance from Agra to Patna was about 300 Jahangiri Kos. 35 Yet, Manrique, we are told, took only 25 days to

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31 Ibid, 120, 123.
32 E. F. I., 1618-21; 191.
34 ‘Documents relating to the first…,’ 78.
reach Agra from Patna. The difference in the time taken was due, I daresay, to the better quality bullocks and carts used by Manrique.

Yet, land routes were not always safer and hence, fauzdars were instructed to keep a constant vigil on the roads so that the caravans and other travelers might not be attacked by the robbers and thieves. Apart from robbers, Thevenot also talks about fakirs who molested travelers and caravans and emphasized that “they are all over India.” Yet, despite such cases, land routes witnessed large-scale caravan traffic. Tavernier on his way to Patna met 110 wagons carrying the revenue of Bengal, each drawn by oxen. Bullock carts and pack oxen were, in fact, the major means of transport on the over-land route.

The waterways were far more important for trade, since they were faster and easier to commute on. English factors noted that “the current of the Ganges from Patna towards the south east was so strong that it could carry down freight in five or six days while the upcoming voyage took thrice the time.” The cost of transportation by boats ranged from approximately one-third to one-fifth the cost of overland freight by carts, depending on whether they were moving up-stream or down-stream. Bowery mentions that “many patellas” came down yearly laden with wheat and grain and go up laden with salt and beeswax on the Ganges. The boats used for conveyance of merchandise were variously called ‘ulaks’, ‘patellas’ (large flat bottomed boats), Bajra (a kind of large boat, fairly clean, the center of which form a little room) and large ones --- ‘Huliyas.’ Here, one must note that the trade east ward from Patna was mostly carried on by means of riverine transport while west ward transportation of

37 S. N. Sen ed., Indian travels of Thevenot and Carrie, New Delhi, 1949, 94. Sometimes, even the banjaras, moving in groups were so strong in their strength of number and their contempt of the petty officials of the government that they looted the people on the travellers, Jadunath Sarkar; art., ‘ the condition of the people in Aurangzeb’s reign’, 307, in M. Alam and S. Subramaniam ed., – The Mughal State, 1526-1750, Delhi, O. U. P., 1998; In one such incident, on the complaint of a Naik against some banjaras for looting him and wounding and killing his followers, Aurangzeb issued orders to make investigations, Yusuf Hussain Khan, ed., Selected Documents of Aurangzeb’s reign 1639-1706, Andhra Pradesh Publication, 1958, 19; In eighteenth century when Alivardi Khan was the deputy Governor of Bihar, he sent an expedition against the banjaras who according to Ghulam Hussain, were a class of marauders and murderers and who in the guise of traders and travelers used to plunder the imperial domain and treasure, Abdus Salam trans. & ed., Ghulam Husain Salim, Riyas-us-Salatin, Calcutta, 1903, 296.
39 E. F. I., 1618-21; 214.
40 Thomas Bowery, A geographical Account of..., 225.
goods was largely over land. The traffic pattern, thus, were conditioned by the marketing commodities and time.

The land cum waterways were so important for the Government of Bihar that it used to levy taxes on the entry and the exit points of these routes and for this purpose they had set up customs house called 'chaukis' or 'chabutras', where merchants or travelers were checked with their goods for payments of the dues, unless they could show passport in favour of exemption. The out going trade of Patna was carried through Sultanganj chauki in eastern part of the city situated on the river Ganga. Trade passed through these chaukis and custom dues were collected there. Robert Hughes mentioned one such 'chabutras', which according to him, ‘was a shed used as a resting place for the travelers or for the transaction of public businesses.’

Merchants traveling in northern India had to take a passport (dastak) from the place of departure and show it at the custom posts in order to be allowed to pass without paying customs. While traveling from Dacca to Patna, Manrique had to wait at every check post because the officers were very busy owing to the pressure of the work. His boat tried to pass a small custom check post situated between Rajmahal and Monghyr but could not do so because of the vigilance of the watchmen on the duty. The boat was hauled up and the boats men brought before the kotwal of Rajmahal. However, Manrique was forgiven on the ground that being a foreigner, he was liable to make an error. John Marshal also mentioned that “at Rajmahal there is a great chaukidar who watches that no goods go from here to Cassimbazaar without a dastak.”

Shiahabuddin Talish has described the collection of customs and transit duties in an interesting way. According to him:

“on the roads and ferries matters came to such a pass that no rider was allowed to go unless he paid a dinar and no pedestrian unless he paid a dirham. On the river highways if the wind brought it to the ears of the toll

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43 E.F.I., 1618-1621; 198.
45 S.A. Khan, John Marshal... , 115-116.
collectors (rahdars) that the stream was carrying away a broken boat without paying hasil, they would chain the river."  

The transit duties were charged as ways of guarding the roads or for the renovation of the road patrols. This road tax, *rahdari*, amounting to about 10% of advalorem of the value of the goods was taken on every highway (*guzar*) and yielded large revenue.  

The geographical factors, thus on one hand, provide wide avenues to local development while on the other hand, a certain fragility of the ecosystem is an inbuilt pre-condition underpinned by its vulnerability to the climatic conditions. This can be clearly visualized in the prophecy of *Gautam Buddha*, in case of Patna. 

Climatically, Patna lies in a belt of transition between the wetter environs of Bengal in the east, and drier Uttar Pradesh to the west. The city has three seasons into which the year is divided. Abul Fazl noted about the climate of Patna that

"summer months are intensely hot while the winter is temperate. The rains continue during six months and through the year the country is green and fertile. No severe winds blows, no clouds of dust possible."  

Fazl’s views, however, seem a little over romanticized in the face of references to both droughts and floods by other commentators. 

Thomas Bowery, for instance, noted that "in 1670, there had a great scarcity in so much that many thousands of the natives perished in the streets and open fields for want of food and many had to sell their own children for a handful of rice." John Marshal who lived in Bihar for two years had also vividly described the devastations that swept over the whole country from Banaras to Rajmahal. He mentioned that

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48 Gautam Buddha prophesied that "a Great city will rise at Patiligram but it shall be endanger from internal feud, fire and flood", *Bihar shows the way*, 1977, Nachiketa publication Ltd.
"...since the beginning of October 1671, there have died of famine in pattana (sic) and the suburbs about 20,000 persons, and there cannot in that time have gone fewer from the city than 150,000 persons. The corps in the river generally ly (sic) with their backs upwards. Great numbers of slaves to be bought for 4an. and 8an. per peece, and good ones for 1 r. per peece; but they are exceeding leane(sic) when bought, and if they eat but very little more than ordinary of rice, or eat flesh, butter or any strong meat, their faces, hands and feet and coods(sic) swell immediately exceedingly; so that this esteemed enough to give them at first ½ seer or rice, and those very leane ¼ seer per day, to be eaten at twice."51 This is also well corroborated by other travelers of that period.52

Again, the rainy season lasts up to October and a premature cessation may involve both the failure of standing Kharif and very unfavorable sowing conditions for the Rabi crop. Also, during the cold season a blighting frost was sometimes experienced in the province that led to destruction of crops.53

Famine and scarcity were such that even the English Company which was there for pure profit had to be considerate for the lives of the poor people. The consultation dated 9th July 1711 noted that

"Here having a famine in the country for this several months, so that several thousands have perished for want of rice and the poor people of this place complaining that they are not able to pay their monthly rental agreed that we forbear taking it from them till such time as grain becomes cheaper otherwise, if oppression should be used they will leave the place."54

Also, it was noted in 1712 that

51 S.A. Khan, John Marshal., 149-50.
52 De Graffie, the Dutch traveller noted that "We saw nothing but poverty and misery of the country folk. Scarcity and famine were greater than had ever been known within the memory of men. The cause was the failure of the rice crops and the inundation of the Ganges... the people died in heaps and their corpses remained extended on the road, streets, and common market places and on the sandy banks of the Ganges, since there was no one to bury them or even throw them in the river. The corpses were devoured by wild horses, tigers, wolves and dogs. We even saw poor wretched that had still in their mouths grass, leather and such like filths, they died in flocks. A woman ate her own child. Slaves could be bought for next to nothing; cited in S. H. Askari, Medieval Bihar Sultanate and Mughal period, Khuda Baksh O.P.L., Patna, 158.
54 Consultation dated 9th July 1711; C.R.Wilson, Early Annals...; vol. II, part I, 15.
“Rice already being very scarce and dear and to all appearance this ensuing season threatens us with a famine for want of grains where of agreed that we allow the poor of this place the liberty of our dustiks(sic) for rice only, and that the zamindar registered all dustiks so given, and that care be taken that every person hads his rice in this place to whome(sic) dusticks are given.”55

Summers were intensely hot. Walter Hamilton noted that

“...both Patna and Gaya are found to be hotter than most other parts of the province. The heat of the first seems owing to a great extant of nacked sand on an island immediately fronting the town, and that of Gaya, partly to the sands of Falgu and partly to the reflection of the sun from the arid rocks that surrounds it.”56

In summers, there were cases of fire in the city, which engulfed several houses and market places. Robert Hughes, writing in the year 1621 at Patna, noted that

“At west part of the suburbs belonging to this city, in the Allamganj, a terrible fire kindled which having consumed all those parts, by the force of a strong andhi, break into the city and within the space of two ghari came into the very heart thereof, where our abode is; who being environed with neighbouring chhaper....”57

Some times the Company’s Saltpeter boats were destroyed by severe storms. In a letter written to the Calcutta council, Mr. Pattle writes that

“...he has despatched the peter boats also they advised of a violent storm that has happened with them in so much that drove ashore and sunk a great number of laden boats amongst which were of belonging to our masters after

55 Consultation dated 24th January 1712, C.R. Wilson, Early Annals..., vol, II,part I, 36.
56 W. Hamilton, East India Gazeeter, Vol., I, 107
57 E. F. I., 1618-24; 246-47; Letter from Robert Hughes at Patna to factors at Agra, dated 31st March 1621.
having saved what possibly they could by the assistance of small boats they
write the loss they sustain will be 8086 mounds of petre.”

The heat waves in the summer season greatly reduced the outdoor activities in
the day. It was too great to allow the indigenous people to be freely exposed to the
direct rays of the sun; to the Europeans such exposure would most likely be fatal in a
few hours.

However, as Walter Hamilton noted that

“this summer season was perhaps essential for the formation of nitre, one of
the most coveted commodities among the Europeans, the production of
which was greatest during the prevalence of hot winds.”

In the rainy season, trade and commerce was hampered due to the heavy rains
and floods, which were a recurrent annual phenomenon. Transportation during the
rainy season became a veritable impediment. In a letter to the Surat Factory dated 12
July 1620, from Patna, Robert Hughes noted that “the general transport of goods from
hence (Patna) to Agra is by carts, but now in the season of the rains the ways are so
deep that no carts can pass, and therefore for necessity whatever goods hence is laden
on oxen.” Robert Martin noted that “little or no advantage is taken of the immense
torrents to float down any kind of commodity and during rainy seasons all internal
commerce is at a complete stand still.” English factory record also noted that there
were “no goods sent to Agra by cart due to the rottenness of ways in season of rain.”

In eighteenth century also, English Company had to face problems because of
floods in the Ganges. The consultation dated 21st October 1704 noted that “The news
from the factor Mr Chitty arrives of the grounding and sinking of four of the peter
boats on the sand at Barr, the other boats were saved with much pain.” Thus, in an
era when man was still largely a slave to his natural environment, the natural factors
had a major role-play in the city’s economic life.

58 C.R. Wilson, Early Annals..., Vol. II, part I, 29.
59 W. Hamilton, East India Gazetteer, Vol., I, 103
60 ‘Documents relating to the first ...,' 70; Robert Hughes letter to Surat factors, 12 July 1620, Patna
63 Consultation dated 21 October 1704, C.R. Wilson, Early Annals..., vol I, 268.
Natural and Agro-Based Resources

Patna, as the chief metropolis of the region, undoubtedly attracted large quantities of goods and commodities from the surrounding areas, apart from its own local production. In fact, in no civilization is city life evolved and developed independently of its hinterland. There is a close interaction of services between cities and surrounding areas. The rural economy older than the urban economy continued to exist side by side with the later.

Self sufficiency in agricultural products was an important factor in the commercial development of Patna. Abul Fazl noted that "agriculture flourish in a high degree, especially the cultivation of rice which for its quality and quantity is rarely to be equaled."64 There were many varieties of rice produced at Patna. Again, Abul Fazl says that 'if a single grain of each kind were collected, they would fill a large vase.'65

Thevenote’s observations also testify the dominance of rice over other crops.66 System of crop rotation was in vogue since earliest times.

Cotton was cultivated all over northern India and was also an important crop of Patna.67 Peter Mundy, in 1632, saw cotton fields in the area between Naubatpur and Patna.68 Among the several varieties that were cultivated, the most common was the ‘Herbaccous’ annual variety, used for the manufacture of fabrics. The other variety inferior in quality was grown on trees called ‘sanbal’ and was used for stuffing and quilting purposes. Sugarcane was also produced. Abul Fazl says that it was quite abundant in Bihar.69 Patna’s sugar cane was of two varieties. The thinner one was used for extraction of sugar while the thicker one was used for chewing.

Raw silk was also an important commodity of Patna. Silk was grown of three varieties- the ‘brown’, the ‘ordinary’ and the ‘fine’ one. Most of the raw silk, however, was brought from Bengal. Serbandy (Sirbandi, head winding) silk, the best

64 Ain-i-Akbari, Vol. II, 164.
66 Indian travels of Thevenote and Carrie, 68.
68 Peter Mundy Travels..., Vol. II, 134.
of Maksudabad and Murshidabad, Satgaon and Saidabad silk were brought to Patna. Other cash crops of the region were oilseeds, indigo, and tobacco, which were cultivated in substantial quantities.\textsuperscript{70} Peter Mundy talks about the production of indigo at Patna, which was an important commodity used in dyeing.\textsuperscript{71} However, other cotemporaries did not mention such production, therefore, it can be said that before the late 18\textsuperscript{th} century it was not considered as an important item of export by the European companies.

Among spices, long pepper grew wild in the forest of the hinterlands of Patna. \textit{Ain-i-Akbari} mentions the production of long pepper in Sarkar Champaran.\textsuperscript{72} Turmeric greatly produced at Patna, was used by the English Company mostly to complete the tonnage of the ships leaving Patna.\textsuperscript{73} Saffron was brought to Patna from Nepal and Kashmir.\textsuperscript{74} Patna was also the important producer of various types of drugs and the English authorities once enquired that “send us a list and sample of what drugs are procurable at Patna and the adjoining and in what quantities and prices.”\textsuperscript{75} The important drugs produced at Patna included Opium, Tinkal etc.

Opium was highly placed among drugs and we have numerous references of its production and use worldwide. It was manufactured at Patna and Monghyr since the early days of seventeenth century. Regarding the harvesting of the Opium, Walter Hamilton mentioned that

“in the evening, each capsules of the poppy, as it attains the proper stage of maturity, has a slight incision made in its whole length, and next morning what Opium has exuded is collected. After two or three days another incision is made, at some distance from the first, and according to the size of the capsule, it admits of being cut from 3 to 5 times. The extraction of the Opium does no material injury to the seed which is chiefly reserved for further sowing.”\textsuperscript{76}

\begin{footnotes}
\item[70] Master's Diary, Vol. II, 81-82; Bernier Travels, 440.
\item[71] Peter Mundy, Travels, Vol. II, 156.
\item[73] Master's Diary, Vol. I, 308; Vol. II, 64.
\item[74] S.A.Khan, John Marshal..., 413.
\item[75] Master’s Diary; Vol. I, 309-10.
\item[76] W.Hamilton, East India Gazetteer, Vol., I, 104.
\end{footnotes}
John Marshal, however, noted that “out of an acre of ground will not come above 40 or 50 seer, which sometimes is worth 70 or 80 rupees.”\textsuperscript{77} The Opium produced at Patna was the cheapest and of better quality among other Indian varieties.\textsuperscript{78} Opium was used by the Mughal Emperors, nobles and the common men alike.\textsuperscript{79} Patna also produced tincall (tinkal, native borax).\textsuperscript{80}

Patna and its environs were also rich in forest products of various kinds. Lignumaloe (aguru) was available in large quantities at Patna.\textsuperscript{81} The price of the lightest and commonest kind ranged from 8 Annas to 4 or 5 rupees a ser. Gumlac was also an important product. John Marshal noted that “in pattana(sic) they lack wood by heating it well and then heating the wax and clamping upon it and rubbing it with some green thing that is soft and moist; so they will make it very thin and it will last well, but not so as Japan work will.”\textsuperscript{82} 50 maunds of Gumlac were purchased by the Patna factors of the English Company even in 1620-21 for Persia, the Red Sea and England.\textsuperscript{83}

Musk from the two-foot-high Musk deer of the locality was available at Patna. Patna was also the center of production of bottles and fine earthenwares, including cups of clay finer than glass, lighter than paper and highly scented. Minapure, near Ghajipure was a pottery center.\textsuperscript{84} The earthenware was made at Mainpur and Begum Sarai near Hajipur.\textsuperscript{85} Abul Fazl noted that gilded glass was also manufactured in Patna.\textsuperscript{86}

Patna was equally fortunate in respect of fruits. Kathal (jack fruit) and Barhal were produced in abundance.\textsuperscript{87} But the most important fruit grown in the region was Mango. The abundance of vegetables and fruits testifies the vegetarian dietary nature

\textsuperscript{77} S.A.Khan, \textit{John Marshal...}, 414.
\textsuperscript{78} Ibid, 414.
\textsuperscript{79} Van linschoten mentions an interesting and sensuous use of Opium. He says that “the Indian use it mostly for leisure. For it makes a man to holds his seed long before he sheddes it which the Indian women much desires, that they must shed their nature likewise with the men”, A. C. Burnell, ed., J. H. Van Linschoten, \textit{The Voyage of Van Linschoten to the East Indies}, London, 1885, Vol. II, 114.
\textsuperscript{80} Strynsham Master reported that in the year 1677, 400 maunds of Tincall were bought for export from Patna, \textit{Master's Diary}, Vol. II, 64.
\textsuperscript{81} E. F. I., 1618-21; 200.
\textsuperscript{82} S.A.Khan, \textit{John Marshal...}, 415.
\textsuperscript{83} Peter Mundy, \textit{Travels...}, Vol. II, 156.
\textsuperscript{84} William Irvine, trns. and ed; Manucci, \textit{Storio de Monger, \textit{(here aftet Storio de Monger )}} Vol. II, 246.
\textsuperscript{85} S.A.Khan, \textit{John Marshal...}, 414.
\textsuperscript{86} \textit{Ain-i-Akbari}, Vol. II, 164.
\textsuperscript{87} Ibid, 164.
of the people. *Pan* (betel leaf) especially of the *Maghahi* variety, delicate and beautiful in colour, thin in texture, flawless, without cracks (*be-jarm*) fragrant and pleasant to taste, was even then grown in Patna. The Europeans used to chew betel leaf imitating the local elites.

The self sufficiency in agricultural products helped Patna to grow into a manufacturing center of eminence. The artisans and peasants could concentrate more on the production of manufactured goods. Patna was famous for cotton textiles and so great was the demand for it that it was felt once by the factors of the English Company that cotton textiles along with raw silk was sufficient to uphold the English factory at Patna.  

Patna’s speciality lay in two varieties of cloth, the ‘*Ambertees*’ and the ‘*Aljah*’.  

There are references of three varieties of ‘*Ambertees*’ that were made in Patna and its suburbs. These were ‘*Rasseyyes*’, a coarse variety, thick woven wrapper about rupees 2 for a piece of 13 yards × 0.75 yards, ‘*ZafarKhani*’ was a fine variety in no way inferior to the ‘*Bafies*’ of Broach and the price of which ranged between 2 rupees to 6 rupees for a piece of the same length as above, and the third variety was ‘*Jahangiri*’ which was the broadest and the finest cloth made at Patna and was also highly priced. However, low priced varieties of ‘*Ambertees*’ were considered safe from commercial point of view. The Patna factors of the English Company declared in early seventeenth century that they could provide 20,000 pieces of ‘*Ambertees*’ annually from Patna alone.

The localities around Patna, within a radius of nearly 50 miles, were important centers and markets of cotton products. Manucci observed that fine white cloth was manufactured at Patna and was very plentiful in the province of Bihar. The weavers who made cloth, both of cotton and silk at Patna, were confined to three vicinities, Fatuha, Gaya and Nawada. Lackhawar (English factors noted that it was a *Penth*, market town or fayer (sic) for *amberty* Calicoes, 14 course from Patna),

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88 *E. F. I.*, 1618-1621; 213.  
89 Ibid, 168-1and 192-3.  
90 Ibid, 192-3, 213, 270.  
91 Ibid ,213.  
produced a great quantity of fine cloth of four, five, six, eight to ten rupees per piece.\textsuperscript{93}

By far the greater part of the weavers were employed in making coarse cloths for the country use, but a good many also worked at finer goods for exportations. This indicates the volume of production of textiles at Patna and its suburbs. Patna equally produced other varieties of calicoes, such as ‘Sahan’, ‘Hammam’, ‘Chautaha’, ‘Ravat’, ‘Ramsukha’, ‘Carsa’, and ‘Dupattas’, both fine and coarse.

As regards silk textiles, Patna was equally fortunate. Pelseart, the Dutch traveler, mentions the production of a coarse variety of muslin at Patna sold at four or five rupees per piece.\textsuperscript{94} Manucci, while talking about Patna’s Muslin simply praised their quality without actually naming the varieties or going in further details.\textsuperscript{95} Baikunthpur, ten miles east of Patna, was an important silk manufacturing center, producing quantities of ‘Alachaah’ (Ellachas), ‘Layches’ and ‘Tuckrees’ (tukri) or ‘Becutpoores’ (silk for women’s petticoats). These were generally purchased for Persia by the Mughal traders,\textsuperscript{96} and were considered by the English factors as likely to command a market in England. Silk products of Bihar were of two kinds, namely, a) those which were imported from outside and b) those produced locally.

At Patna three kinds of carpets were produced. One was shatranji made entirely of cotton. The second kind was a mixture of wool and cotton. The base of the third was made of cotton and the woolen part was neatly piled over this cotton warp and woof.\textsuperscript{97}

Ralph Fitch, the English traveler mentioned the mining of gold at Patna. He noted that “here at Patna, they find gold in this manner. They dig deep pits in earth and wash the earth in great boilers and therein they find the gold.”\textsuperscript{98}

\textsuperscript{93} ‘Documents relating to the first...,’ 70, 73; Robert Hughes letter to Surat Factory, Dated 12\textsuperscript{th} July 1620 and 6\textsuperscript{th} August 1620
\textsuperscript{95} Storio de Mongor..., Vol. II, 246.
\textsuperscript{96} Peter Mundy, Travels..., Vol. II, 154.
\textsuperscript{97} Ranjan Sinha, art., op.cit.,184-85.
\textsuperscript{98} W. Foster ed., Early Travels in India, 1583-1619, First Published, 1921, Oriental Book Reprint, New Delhi, 1985, 23.
Patna and its hinterland was the major producer of Saltpeter. Almost every traveler visiting Patna testifies to the production of Saltpeter. Bernier was of the opinion that a prodigious amount of Saltpeter was exported from Patna. Though Patna was not the only place of production of peter in India, yet its Saltpeter was of the best quality and of cheap rate. Artificial Nitre beds consisted of the refuse of vegetables and animal matters undergoing putrefactions, mixed with calcereous and other earths. Especially at Tirhut, where the soil contained large proportion of saline matter such as nitrate of potash (peter) lime, sulphate and soda, great production was done. This peter generally called the Patna peter was regarded as of good quality and of low price. Also, it was much easier to shop around for better qualities of peter at Patna, while at the ports the buyers were obliged to buy whatever quality had been brought there.

**Mode of Resource Use**

The nature of ecological setting (climatic condition) favours resource utilization. Patna, as described above fortunately had a favourable climate, both for cultivation and industrial production. Settled cultivation was the main occupation of the masses. The cultivation of paddy, cane, spices and fruits and vegetables was on a considerable scale. The transplantation of paddy was done by the females. The process of crop rotation and mass irrigation was implemented. Rivers like Son and Punpun were greatly helpful for irrigation.

Cash crops like cane, Opium and spices were produced in considerable quantities. Opium (poppy) was cultivated by the peasants, with the extent of cultivation depending upon the prevailing prices of food grains. In seasons when food grains fetched low prices, more and more acres were devoted for poppy cultivation; in seasons when food grains prices rose, this acreage was smaller. After the harvest, small traders-cum-intermediaries who collected the poppy from the growers on behalf

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100 Peter Mundy, *Travels…*, Vol. II, 156.
101 According to the English factors, in 1650, Saltpeter at Patna cost one rupee per maund, where as at Hugli it cost 1 ¼ rupees per maund and at Balasore it was 2 5/8 rupees per maund. *E. F. I.*, 1646-50; 337; Letter from James Bridgman to the Company abroad *Lioness*, dated, 15th December 1650.
of big city merchants often processed it and made it ready for the market in their own homes. Later on indigo was also produced in Patna.

Saltpeter was produced and marketed collectively by the 'nunias' or the Peter men. Later the dramatic enlargement in the demand, with the coming of the European companies, set into motion a process by which the great merchants gradually moved into this line of business. The brokers employed by the European companies for the procurement of Saltpeter were called as Moostajeers. But as there was a state monopoly on Saltpeter, the indigenous brokers of the Company had to reach the person monopolizing the sale of peter.

The combination of purely agricultural work with manufacturing processes was a notable feature of peasant life in the period of this study. It is supposed that in case of food grains, the peasant's part in the productive process generally ended with the threshing of the corn. The milling of flour and rice husking took place usually in the household of the consumer and were confined, in that of the peasant, to whatever was meant for the consumption of the family. It was chiefly in respect of the cash crops that not only the existing techniques but also the conditions of transport made it necessary for certain manufacturing processes to be carried out before the produce left the hands of the peasant or, at least, the precincts of the village. Thus, cotton was picked and ginned by the peasants and then cleaned or carded with a bow by a special class of itinerant labourers, called dhuniyas. Thereafter, it was spun into yarn within the peasant households and so, became ready for sale to be passed on to the weaver.

Most of the articles were manufactured on the basis of artisan and peasant production. But manufacturers also worked without advances. The manufacturing of textiles involved the participation of innumerable service groups. That was the reason that advances were not possible to all those involved: In Lakhawar, weavers frequently sold textiles directly to customers and often transported them to Patna for direct retail sale. Big buyers from outside the region made their purchases through

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102 B R: Opium, 18 June 1789. Translation of Ramchand Pandit's... observations on the cultivation of Opium; originally cited in Kum Kum Chatterjee, op.cit., 29.
103 K. N. Chaudhuri, Trading world..., 340.
advances to the primary producers. The European companies adopted the *dadni* system of production.\textsuperscript{106}

Both inter-regional and intra-regional trade in produces of Patna and its hinterlands were regularly carried upon. Up the Ganges, Bengal exported rice and silk to Patna,\textsuperscript{107} receiving wheat, sugar and Opium in return. The long distance consignment of provisions from the west arriving at Patna mainly comprised salt brought both by land and river.\textsuperscript{108} Bowery also mentions that “many patellas’ came down yearly laden with wheat and grain and go up laden with salt and beeswax on the Ganges.\textsuperscript{109} Saltpeter was carried down the Ganges with great facility and the English and the Dutch send large cargoes to many parts of the Indies and to Europe.\textsuperscript{110} Peter was usually carried from Patna down to Hugli in various types of country crafts known as ‘Patellas’, ‘Boras’, and ‘Palwars.’\textsuperscript{111}

**Conflicts and Cooperation in Resource Use**

There were several players in the production and consumption process and several strata of conflicts and cooperation existed among them. The peasants produce was the basis of sustaining the large population of the city. The urgent need of cash for paying revenue in time or otherwise loosing out his land forced the peasantry to sell their produce in local market. Or, in the case of a high-grade crop like Opium, indigo etc, he would be approached in the village by the merchants interested in the trade. The artisans of Patna working with or without advances from the merchants were not allowed to reap the benefits of the labour. They had no avenues to sell their products in profitable manner. A very large number of artisans were not able to reach the open market at all, being compelled to sell on contracted terms, to their creditors. Whether the creditors were merchants or the moneylenders, the result was always to depress the price received by the artisans.\textsuperscript{112}

\textsuperscript{106} E. F. I., 1618-21; 204.

\textsuperscript{107} E. F. I., 1618-21; 193-4; Peter Mundy, *Travels* 153; Bernier, *Travels* 153,437.

\textsuperscript{108} W.Foster, ed; *Early Travels*..., 94 and 124.

\textsuperscript{109} Thomas Bowrey, *A Geographical Accounts*..., 225.

\textsuperscript{110} Bernier, *Travels*..., 440.


\textsuperscript{112} Irfan Habib, *Agrarian system*..., 85-86.
Before the coming of Europeans, the system of production was based on the artisan and peasant production. *Dadni* system was also the prevalent one. In that method, the merchants were in direct contact with the manufacturer. In the main, the artisans still worked on a domestic basis. In general, the artisans owned their own tools of trade. This provided them the basis for producing designs and quality according to their wishes and as the profit arising from that was solely theirs, they preferred this type of manufacturing. But very often, big buyers from outside the region also made their purchase through advances to the primary producers. Merchants made advances to ensure the requisite supply of goods but they do not appear to have used them to control the specific details of production. However, when trade and manufacture grew the merchants gradually extended their control over the professional artisans through the ‘*dadni*’ or putting-out system. They not only brought the artisans under their control by giving them loans, but providing raw materials and even laying down the size, pattern etc. of the goods.

With the coming of the European companies, the European factors seldom visited the site of production. Initially, the English factors bought cotton textiles from the merchants and weavers coming to Patna from the Hinterland. Robert Hughes in a letter dated 12\(^{th}\) July 1620 to the Surat Factory noted that

> “the usual custom of buying the Amberty, calicoes is as follows: they are daily brought in from the neighbouring Ganj, a village, by the weavers, from whome (sic) they are bought raw, of length 13 coveds Jahangiri, from which the buyer, of an ancient custom, tears of 1½ or 2 coveds and so delivers them marked to the whitster, (sic) who detaines (sic) them in whiting and starching about 3 months, the charge whereof is near upon 3 rupees per score, and the abetments and *dasturi* (commission) in buying them raw from the weavers 4 rupees or 25 percent.”

Later on, they appointed indigenous agents who bought textiles, Saltpeter and other commodities from the producers. They only provided advance to the artisans through their brokers. The Patna merchants had agents in far-off places like Agra,

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113 E. F. I., 1618-21, 204.
114 ‘Documents relating to the first ….,’ 70.
Banaras and Calcutta, who assisted in developing their master’s business on a wider scale. The Company chose to rely more heavily on the indigenous merchants of Bihar.

However, the English contacts with the commercial groups of Bihar were greatly limited to the upper crust of the society and this was true up to the mid 18th century. The brokers, in turn, used unfair means to extract profits in the procurement process, which directly hampered the profit of the producers. The monopolizing tendency of the indigenous merchants was troublesome for the Company especially in case of Saltpeter and Opium. This was acute in the early 18th century as in the 17th century these commodities were the monopoly of the State itself.115

The indigenous merchants employed by the Company sometimes acted secretly in collaboration with the private traders and rival European companies. When the English Company implored one of its broker Mathura Das not to deal with the private traders, he shrewdly replied that being a merchant in the King’s country he was free to correspond and deal with anyone he liked.116 Also, whenever the indigenous merchants anticipated that they would loose money, they tried to recover their debt from the Company by using political links.117

The mode of production and procurement worked within the overall framework of the political system of the region. The political groups, thus, were also indirectly a part of the production process. Apart from their political role, the Mughal officials also traded on their own through set of agents.118 The political group of Bihar was also in a position to recover their gains from the European companies. In order to augment their commercial benefits, these groups followed certain practices like monopolization of trade of a particular commodity or all of them; forceful use of

115 About the middle of the 18th century, Khwaja Wajid, the Armenian, held the monopoly of Saltpeter in Bihar till 1758.
117 In 1659, some merchants of Patna complained to the Nawab Daud khan about the denial of Chamberline to pay their debts incurred by one Robert Black. Chamberline was forced to pay the money to the merchants, *E. F. I. 1668-69*, 177.
118 The growing commercial mindedness of the Mughal nobility, which was the result of the idea of Abul Fazl to permit a Noble to “indulge in a little commercial speculation and engage in remunerative undertakings”, *Ain-i-Akbari*, Vol. II, 57-58.
merchant’s ships and agents etc.\textsuperscript{119} Political turmoil also had its effect on the production process.\textsuperscript{120}

Thus, during our period, there were both cooperation and conflicts in the process of resource use. The nature of conflict or cooperation, however, was calibrated to the many aspects of status and power, organized through social collectivities and delivered to a range of resources and their users at many levels of the socio-economic hierarchy.

The status and position of the indigenous groups especially from the lower rung of the production process remained unchanged as it was before the coming of the Europeans on the scene. The companies though at most times thought it improper to dismiss their indigenous servants, yet this was by no means a unilateral law, and exceptions to this rule are not difficult to come by. The Company’s suspicion of these groups also led it to perpetually place an emphasis upon its officials learning the native tongue.

Though Patna and its hinterland produced almost every thing considered exportable by the indigenous merchants and European companies, the difference was in the quantity and not in the quality at all. The artisans and peasants with their age-old means of production were perhaps capable of serving the growing population of the region, as well as to some extent that of other parts of India. The regional commercial system within which the merchants of Patna operated in seventeenth and early eighteenth century also witnessed the activities of different kinds of traders.

The major difference in the mode of resource use by the indigenous merchants and the European companies was that while the former preferred and often traded in almost all commodities available in the region, the later, on the other hand, liked and were fascinated by the trade in only those commodities, whose marginal profit were

\textsuperscript{119} In 1664, Job Charnock, the English chief of Patna factory wrote that “the agents of Shaista Khan so abused the merchants that they almost ran away. He pretends that all the Peter he buys is for the King”, E. F. I., 1661-64, 395-96.

\textsuperscript{120} The war of succession also affected the trading activities. Patna witnessed wide spread exaction and plundering especially in early 18\textsuperscript{th} century as a result of wars of succession. In a letter to the Hugli authorities, English factors of the Patna factory wrote that “they are in fear of Farukhisiyar who is an acknowledge king of Patna and will force them to visit him in Patna with a Peshkash… they are fearful that when the new King’s son with his Omrah and army come against the Patna king that there will be plundering”, C.R.Wilson, \textit{Early Annals...}, Vol. II, part I, 14.
enormous. This was the reason that the English Company, unlike the Dutch V.O.C., found country trading less profitable, and Patna’s products mostly comprised of this type of trading. As for textiles and raw silk, the Europeans preferred the products of Bengal proper, to those of Patna. Saltpeter and Opium were, during this period, the major products of Patna and its hinterland that attracted the visitor’s activities.

With the coming of Europeans and intensification of commercial process of the Patna city, the use of river as a mode of transport also increased to a larger extent. Regular movement of large riverine vessels to and fro between Patna and Bengal became the order of the day. Earlier river transport was used mainly for military purpose and for the transportation of food grains from Bengal to Agra via Patna. Saltpeter and Opium were added in this list with great emphasis.

The Europeans and Christianity now being an integral part of the city, the infrastructural and religious milieu of Patna changed to an extent. The upper level both of production and consumption witnessed a change but the basic structure of resource use almost remained same but extended and intensified in our period. It was poised to transform with the battle of Palasey and Buxur in the eighteenth century and the coming of railways in the nineteenth century.