RISE AND GROWTH OF INTELLIGENTSIA IN BIHAR

Karl Mannheim, the man who popularised the term ideology in Sociology had written in 1935:

"... first stage in the epoch of industrialization produced a relatively larger elite whose members were rather independent in their judgements." He calls this larger elite intelligentsia who grew up during the early stage of industrialization. These larger elites were crucial for Mannheim, as these elites did not owe allegiance to any particular class and who wished to represent the society as a kind of super class. Mannheim had traced the emergence of this super class in the transitional phase in which society was moving towards becoming modern society. He sums up his views by saying:

"In modern society there are fewer positions from which the major structural connections between different activities can be perceived, a fewer men can reach these vantage points. We see the growing distance between the elite and the masses. The average person surrenders part of his own cultural individuality with every new act of integration into a functionally rationalized complex of activities. He becomes increasingly accustomed to being led by others and gradually gives up his own interpretation of events for those which others give him. The incompetence of average person reduces him to state of terrified helplessness. Just as the nature was intelligible to primitive man, and his deepest feelings of anxiety arose from the incalculability of the forces of nature so for modern industrialized man the incalculability of the forces at work in the social system under which he lives, with its economic
crises, inflation, and so on, has become a source of equally pervasive fears.”

It can be argued that in the late nineteenth century north Indian context there had been a sizable number of people who had become significant in the transitional phase in which society had been experiencing the pressures of a modern system and ideas. In the age that witnessed the introduction of modern education, institutions, press and administrative measures that brought structural changes the role of an educated class became crucial. Christophe Jaffrelot's view that threat of modernity for the traditional elites has already been mentioned before.54

Talking about the formation of Western-educated elite in a non-Western society John Breuilly points out about the identity crisis of these elites. The elite belongs to neither Western nor traditional society. “Such an elite (intelligentsia) can be vulnerable to political ideologies which offer new identities. Nationalism is not the only such ideology.”55

Mannheim has further emphasised the significance of intelligentsia by saying, “the task of the intellectual elite is to inspire the life of culture and to lend it form, create a living culture in the different spheres of social life.”56 He categorised elites into the political, the organising and the intellectual, the artistic, the moral and the religious. He underlined:” the political and organising elites aim at integrating a great number of individual wills, it is the function of the

54 See Chapter 1, p. 2.
56 Karl Mannheim, *Man and Society* (London: Routledge, 1971 [1935]), pp. 82-83. Jean Breuilly has also stressed that intelligentsia can play the leading role within the new national identity after its creation. It can not only direct the fight for independence but also recreate the national culture in its fullest form. (See John Breuilly, *Nationalism and the State* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1985 [1982]), p. 29.)
intellectual, aesthetic, and moral-religious elites to sublimate those psychic energies which society, in the daily struggle for existence, does not fully exhaust."  

The historians have dealt extensively on the political elites but the roles of intellectual, aesthetic, and moral-religious elites have not been adequately researched. In this study these ignored aspects of these elites’ role have been studied. These elites had played a crucial role during the early encounters with colonial modernization.

Having said that, we need to clearly state whom we should refer to as intelligentsia. Mannheim explains this very simply: “In every society there are social groups whose special task is to provide an interpretation of the world for that society. We call these the “intelligentsia”. The more static a society is, the more likely is it that this stratum will acquire a well defined status or the position of a caste in that society.”  

The term intelligentsia became popular after the Russian intelligentsia of 1860s who were considered a class in itself aiming to bring changes in society. It is widely accepted notion among historians of nineteenth century Russia that in the second half of the nineteenth century the intellectual class, who were referred as intelligentsia, aimed to bring changes in Russian society along the lines of Western countries. Economically and socially the members of this class came from different classes but they owed their primary allegiance not to their profession or class but to a group of men and women with whom they shared a common set of beliefs, including faith in revolution, atheism, and materialism. Most of them closely and faithfully accepted the book What Is to Be Done of

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Chernyshevsky\(^{59}\) as their most important book for inspiration. To intelligentsia literature was a form of socialist propaganda and they were less concerned about the aesthetic criteria.

In historiography of modern India the term is at times used very differently. Often it is used to refer to a class of people who were educated and who came into existence as a group or a class during the British rule. Asoka Kumar Sen understands by intelligentsia “that segment of the Indian society which took to education either indigenous or western, formally or through private efforts.”\(^{60}\) To him, “a section of this category by virtue of higher education came into contact with the progressive ideas and ideologies of the time... (which) inspired them to interpret society, religion and polity from a new angle.” Sen divides intelligentsia into two categories- productive and reproductive; “productive” or core group formed their consciousness which they transmitted through the public associations, newspapers, books and tracts to the periphery of the area of the “reproductive” intelligentsia.\(^{61}\) If this definition is taken then it is easy to say with Sen, “the intelligentsia consciousness was created and diffused and subsequently becoming the dominant Indian literate culture. It was accepted as the Indian public opinion claiming to represent both the elite and the masses.”\(^{62}\)

In the nineteenth century colonial Bihar context the intelligentsia can be equated with an educated class, although the term intelligentsia presupposes an ideological position that may not necessarily come with education.\(^{63}\) Here again, Mannheim’s observation is relevant:

\(^{59}\) Nikolai Chernyshevsky (1828-1889); a radical journalist and politician; jailed for his political ideas and activities; wrote highly influential utopian fiction *What Is to Be Done?* (1863); hailed as a precursor of Bolshevism in the annals of Russian socialist literature.


\(^{61}\) Ibid.

\(^{62}\) Ibid, p.vii.

\(^{63}\) John Breuilly has separated the professionals and intellectuals to discuss different kind of associations these two educated sections had with nationalism. See John Breuilly, *Nationalism and the State* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1985 [1982]), pp-328-30.
"Although intelligentsia are too differentiated to be regarded as a single class, there is, however, one unifying sociological bond between all groups of intellectuals, namely education, which binds them together in a striking way. Participation in a common educational heritage progressively tends to support differences of birth, status, profession, and wealth, and to unite the individual educated people on the basis of education they have received."64 In Bihar, the educated people had been trying to be associated with the process of change and thereby they contributed towards changes in society. These educated people, as a social stratum, invariably engaged with the forces of change that were trying to guide society towards a particular direction. In some cases they helped the forces of change while in some cases they opposed them. It can be argued that a dominant and educated section of society had been trying to shape the societal orientation through their intellectual and social activities.

In the context of colonial United Provinces, historians have argued that there had been a 'Hindi intelligentsia' in the early twentieth century. In this context the term 'Hindi intelligentsia' generally refers to a closely-knit group of intellectuals and scholars. They worked together in Hindi associations and later in educational institutions, gaining cultural authority from such roles and pursuing a cultural agenda.65 If 'Hindi intelligentsia' existed in the early years of twentieth century with a cultural agenda the question naturally arises as to what they did in the preceding three decades? It can be argued that the people who could read, write or communicate publicly in the late nineteenth century U. P. and Bihar had a tendency to move towards the group characteristics. Orsini has attributed this to the 'Hindi intelligentsia' of the twentieth century. The educated public men of the nineteenth century had not yet formed very closely-knit groups. They were, however, ideologically linked in such a way that their coming

together to form such a group that would pursue a cultural agenda was a matter of time. The use of ideologically driven intelligentsia term the term “ideologically driven intelligentsia” seems to be applicable to the late nineteenth century Bihar’s educated people.

We have evidences to suggest that the size of the educated people in Bihar was numerically quite substantial. Although Bihar lagged behind neighbouring states in education it had a substantial number of people who could read and write. According to the census of 1881, the number of people who could read and write in three divisions of Bihar clearly suggests that. In Patna division the number of people who could read and write was 282,578. In Bhagalpur division this number was 1,20,624. In Chhotanagpur the number of people who could read and write was 53,974. If these figures are correct then the total number of people who could read and write in these three divisions was 4 lakh and 57 thousand of whom 18317 were women.⁶⁶

If this data is reliable we can say that Bihar, though lagging behind the neighbouring states, had a fairly large number of educated people by 1891.⁶⁷

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⁶⁶ These figures are taken from Census of India, Bengal, Vol III. For a detailed and caste wise prepared table see Census of India, 1881, Vol. III, p. 230.

⁶⁷ Bengal Education Department, Proceedings, September 1875, File No.152-53 (Bengal State Archive) provides us the details about the state of education in Bihar. According to the minute by the Lt. Governor of Bengal dated 31 August 1875, a comparison between the divisions of Bihar and Bengal has been made:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Division</th>
<th>Population</th>
<th>No. of pupils</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Patna Division</td>
<td>13 million</td>
<td>41,306</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burdwan Division</td>
<td>7.5 million</td>
<td>99,005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presidency Division</td>
<td>6 million</td>
<td>94,567</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rajahahi Division</td>
<td>9 million</td>
<td>57,769</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dacca Division</td>
<td>9.5 million</td>
<td>59,907</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The report also added that Bihar lagged behind the adjoining areas of the North West Provinces in respect to education as well.
The challenge of Christianity

In a fairly large amount of nineteenth century literary evidences the threat of Christianity has been discussed. Many Hindi writers and social reformers had held Christianity as a major threat for all Hindus. On the basis of *Statement Exhibiting the Moral and Material Progress and Conditions of India during the year 1859-60* a scholar Louis Fred Knoll says that the British had a deep feeling of responsibility to bring “purity” and “enlightenment” to the world. It was their commitment to help this “grand” responsibility that motivated the Government to help the Christian religion. The Government took some measures to bring changes in religious practices, as these practices were “inhuman”. These interventions were probably part of Government’s efforts to introduce some modern changes in public life. He sums up this development as follows: “It indicated the government’s involvement in changing Hindu religious practices and festivals and the education processes of the Muslims and in building and operating schools. The government felt obliged to change some of the vital life-customs in the country. For example marriage became a function of the government, in that licensing and registration was required. It was no longer the intimate communal celebration sanctioned by its own community. Similarly, the government interposed itself to change funeral customs, inheritance laws and the calendar of religious festivals. All of these actions were aimed at changing the social structures of Indian communities.” Knoll mentions - “Instructions were issued by the Lt. Governor to the Commissioners of Divisions...(to) induce the people...”

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68 Mention can be made of Balmukund Gupta’s writings. This well known Hindi writer had written famous ‘Shiva Shambhu ke Chitthe’ in which this aspect has been highlighted.

69 Following the establishment of colonial rule that was directly responsible to the Crown (in 1858) the Parliament of England asked for and received an annual report on ‘The Moral and Material Progress and Condition of India’. This report covered all parts of India and all phases of government activity. See Louis Fred Knoll, ‘State and Religion in British India, 1814 to 1865,’ (Ph.D dissertation., Graduate Theological Union, Berkley, 1971), p.37.


voluntarily to abandon the practice...the magistrate was authorised to prohibit the exhibition (charak pooja) as a local measure of police for the preservation of order and decency.”

A number of Christian missionaries had started coming to India and after 1833 the number of mission societies and missionaries in India from Europe and America increased remarkably. Knoll suggests that many people looked upon the government’s attitude as interference. By suppressing Hindu religious practices that had intense significance to the people, the government did much to alter the public religious expressions of Hinduism. He says: “By creating new structures of control the Government started a chain of changes in Hinduism... on the one hand you might not persuade many people to leave Hinduism. But, on the other hand you might be successful in transforming Hinduism to fit into a new pattern controlled by western ideas, beliefs and style of living.”

The government also interfered with the religious calendar of non-Christian religions by limiting through law, the number of annual religious festivals to be observed. In 1860 the government passed an act, which contained provisions for limiting the number of religious holidays. The Commissioner of the North West Provinces reported that, under the provision of this act the Hindu and Muslim holidays had been reduced to 18 and 9 respectively as a tentative measure. This act empowered the Sudder Court to fix the number of holidays to be observed at the commencement of each year. Now the performance of all festivals required the permission of the government. “The schools and the education provided was without question the most effective method used by the government to change the ideas, desires and

72 Ibid, pp. 38, 39, 61, 62.
73 Ibid, p. 73.
74 Ibid, p. 137.
75 Ibid, p. 140.
lifestyles of the non-Christian people." Knoll adds- "The most significant result of the Christian phenomena was the fact that Hinduism had to make allowance and adjustments for government intervention. Christianity forced on Hinduism the possibility of change."

This was the period when the Indian press and other internal lines of communication were increasingly becoming independent of the government and public men were coming into their own in India. Gyanendra Pandey has observed that in the second half of the nineteenth century, an entirely new breed of petty bureaucrats, teachers, lawyers and other 'representatives' had arisen in the Bhojpuri-speaking area of the United Provinces and Bihar. They were "ready to take up a variety of causes and act as intermediaries between the people and the colonial power". In this context, the intelligentsia emerged as a powerful section of society in Bihar. This intelligentsia tried to act as the social voice of the society around it.

Post 1857 economic changes and mounting pressure on traditional elites

The penetration of the colonial administration and the spread of modern education intensified in the Post-1857 phase. It resulted in the severe dislocation of existing social and economic relations in Bihar. This, in turn, led to many changes in the attitude of the people, especially those who now saw themselves as the representatives of the people. It was also the time during which the government had started making some structural changes. These changes included the changes related to religious practices gradually affected the educated people's perception and some of them started becoming more conscious of their religion. A look into

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76 Ibid, pp.143-145.
77 Ibid, p.147.
the kind of changes that took place would be helpful in understanding how they affected the intelligentsia.

The society of Bihar had experienced some important internal changes after the revolt of 1857. Over the three generations during which the Permanent Settlement had been operative, the zamindars of Bihar had multiplied their assets many times over and the condition of the ryots had deteriorated to the same extent. In the second half of the nineteenth century large landholdings and investments in agriculture existed alongside debt-bondage. In rural Bihar the law had no meaning and only the strong arm of the landlord backed by the police set the limits for exploitation. The revolt of 1857 and its aftermath brought some changes in the government’s attitude towards the zamindars.

Gyanendra Pandey’s comments about the Bhojpur region in the late nineteenth century are valid for other regions of Bihar as well. He says: “A century of forced commercialisation of agriculture, violent fluctuations in the conditions of trade, the general trend of de-industrialisation in the region combined with the closing of important sources of subsidiary income such as services in the native armies and courts and the growth of population greatly increased the pressure on large sections of the agricultural community.”

The experience during the revolt of 1857 had made the British officials realise that the landed aristocracy in Bihar still exercised an enormous influence on the peasantry. The British Government made a consistent effort to win the big landlords over to its side. Towards this end, the government decided to give awards and honours to those who had shown loyalty to

the government both during and after the Mutiny. In June 1859, the Government of India took steps to put all the titles and honours conferred by it on a regular and systematic footing, so as to create a genuine craving within the Indian gentry to acquire them by displaying loyalty.\(^\text{82}\) At the same time the government sought to weaken the influence of the zamindars over the peasants.\(^\text{83}\)

The tenancy acts of 1859 started a process whereby the government put pressure on the zamindars. The aim was to wean the peasantry away from those who were supposed to be their natural leaders, like the zamindars of the old historical houses of Darbhanga, Bettiah, Hathwa, Dumraon, etc. The zamindars tried to organise themselves under the leadership of the Maharaja of Darbhanga, Lakshmishwar Singh, to oppose the Bengal Tenancy Bill which was introduced in the Imperial Legislative Council in 1883. Despite this opposition of zamindars the Bengal Tenancy Act of 1885 was passed. "This came as a rude shock to the zamindars of Bihar. The maharaja put forth the argument that British bureaucrats could not protect the people better than their own natural leaders, who lived and died with them."\(^\text{84}\) But all efforts were ineffective and the Tenancy Act of 1885 was passed.

The Tenancy Act recognised for the first time that the tenants had some rights over the land they worked in. Even the mere declaratory nature of the rights of the tenants in the Act was enough to annoy the zamindars and increase the expectations and morale of the


\(^{83}\text{Aditya Prasad Jha, 'Political History of Bihar', p.191.}\)

\(^{84}\text{Ibid, p. 244.}\)
tenants. Agrarian tensions increased sharply since the times of the Survey and Settlement Operations.\(^{85}\)

Aditya Jha suggests that the Government wanted to put the zamindars under some pressure by the dissemination of vernacular education in the countryside and the enactment of measures for the protection of tenants’ rights. These steps were calculated to ensure the gradual liberation of the ryots from the influence of the landlords.\(^{86}\)

Another social development has taken place in the nineteenth century Bihar. The pressure from the intermediary castes on the traditional elite classes in Bihar had started to grow in the last quarter of the nineteenth century. It came into prominence in the last decade of the nineteenth century but the process had begun much earlier. In this context Raghavendra Lal Das’ opinion is worth considering. Using the insights of Satish Saberwal Das observes –"The changes, brought by colonial rule to serve its own purpose, had a profound impact on Indian society. The traditional social relationship was enlarged, without having a sound material base. The cumulative inequality was dispersed among various sections. This meant loss or threat for upper castes and hope for backward castes."\(^{87}\) This coming up of lower and intermediary castes is significant development, as a new social equation emerged in Bihar in the late nineteenth century. Yadavs and Kurmis, the strongest of intermediary castes of Bihar, although they controlled land on the village or local level, came into prominence only in late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.\(^{88}\)

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\(^{86}\) Ibid, p.192.


\(^{88}\) Raghavendra Lal Das, ‘Role of Caste in Pre-Independence Bihar Politics’, p.35. He remarks that there were no Yadava or Kurmi landlord in the eighteenth century Bihar.
In the last three decades of nineteenth century different caste sabhas began to organise their members through various programmes by which large numbers of people started attending meetings and conferences. The Kayasths started the trend of organising caste associations. Soon other castes started organising caste associations. It inspired other castes to organise themselves on caste lines. In 1889 Pradhan Bhumihar Brahman Sabha was formed in Patna. It was followed by Surajpuri Brahman Sabha (1905), Rajput Sabha (1906), Revani Kahar Sabha (1906), Marwari Youngman’s Association (1907), Khatri Youngmen’s Association (1907), Dusadh Sabha (1911), Gope Jatiya Mahasabha (1912), Keot Sabha (1912), Kurmi Sabha (1912) and other organisations.89

The zamindars felt the effects of this pressure and it led to insecurity among their families. Many members of the zamindar families migrated to the cities and towns in search of employment.90 In this age personal supervision (if not cultivation) was required of landholdings which were getting smaller and smaller, and the zamindars were unable to relinquish their old ways and customs. They thus they became victims of the age.91 For these traditional elites who were ‘victims of the age’, it is not surprising, the present was becoming more and more uncomfortable and they found it imperative to fight for their lost rights. While struggling to get back their rights which they were losing slowly over other people of their society they experienced that the new age, the fallen age, was encouraging disturbing trends. More and more people were coming from lower backgrounds to threaten these elites’ legitimacy and status in Hindu society. In this kind of a situation the threatened elite was exposed to a process where they were unable to make adjustments with the forces at work in

89 For more details see Jata Shankar Jha, Early Revolutionay Movement in Bihar (Patna: K. P. Jaiswal Research Institute, 1977), pp. 16-18.
91 Ibid, p.72.
the social system under which they had lived and dominated so far. This threatened elites encouraged an intelligentsia that was sensitive to their higher status as most of the intelligentsia members came from this stock of high caste threatened elites or were dependent on them for their livelihood.

Education Prior to the Introduction of English Education

The traditional education system in Bihar has been a little researched area. Very little attention has been paid to education in Bihar before the advent of Western, institution-based education. Most accounts focus mainly on the attempts made by the government to open schools or colleges in Patna or elsewhere.

The studies so far conducted suggest that like other parts of pre-colonial India the traditional education system of Bihar relied heavily on the study or memorisation of religious scriptures and rituals for the purpose of training believers, or in the use of religious texts or stories to teach. Colonial penetration of these areas introduced the new model of Western education. In this new model, the curriculum was dominated by material whose truth-claims were not based on religious faith, and which was not taught through the medium of religious texts. This was a new and disturbing thing for many people who were used to traditional mode of education. So much so that the western education was taken as a factor for growing discontentment among people against the British government. Lord Ellenborough\(^\text{92}\) believed that “the aid of Government to missionary schools was the source of widespread discontent... He alleged that even the Government schools had aroused a great deal of unrest in Bihar.”\(^\text{93}\)

The Government “officials charged with introducing an expanded network of schools had

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\(^{92}\) Lord Ellenborough (1790-1871); Lord Privy Seal 1828; President of the Board of Control 1828-30, 1834-35, 1841, 1858; Governor-General of India 1842-44.

encountered strong local opposition. There the people were convinced, the Education Inspector, R. B. Chapman, reported in 1856, that the educational system was part of a "general scheme for the forcible conversion of the natives to Christianity." Chapman was convinced, "The idea of any Government, and especially of an alien Government, 'advising' and 'persuading' is either absolutely intelligible to (the natives of Bihar).

The British discovered that the Indian education system was concerned with teaching students the language of the local area, Hindu religious writings and Mathematics. In a government report of 1833 it is mentioned that this system consisted primarily of the study of the 'Vedas and Puranas as well as mythological pursuits'. In general the British system of education covered the following subjects: (1) the local language, but with a greatly decreased emphasis (2) Mathematics; (3) Moral readings; (4) Western philosophy; (5) History; (6) English; and (7) commerce and accounting.

These reports are similar to Adam's report, which gave details of the state of education in Bihar in the 1830s. He divided the educational institutions of Bihar into five categories: (1) indigenous elementary schools; (2) elementary schools supported by missionaries and planters; (3) traditional schools of learning; (4) native female schools and (5) English schools and colleges. Of these five the first four categories were already in existence.

The number of vernacular schools in Bihar in 1859 was 62 (supported by the government) in addition to 30 other vernacular schools that were supported by the zamindars.

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The number of Sanskrit schools in Tirhoot division around the year 1839 was 56. Adam’s report mentioned that in Tirhoot division the number of Hindi schools run by teachers with the assistance of the local people was 80 and the number of students was 507. The same report also gave details of the schools in South Bihar. In 36 schools, students were given commercial education like commercial book keeping. In 20 schools, they learned agricultural bookkeeping.

Adam’s main emphasis was on vernacular education. By ‘indigenous elementary schools’ Adam meant, “those schools in which instruction in the elements of knowledge is communicated and which have been originated and are supported by the natives themselves.” He said, “The system of village schools is extensively prevalent; that the desire to give education to their male children must be deeply seated in the minds of the parents even of the humblest classes.”

Non-indigenous elementary schools means those schools established and supported by missionaries, planters or religious and philanthropic societies, in which the indigenous methods of teaching had been improved upon by the adaptation of European methods and means.

In the Third Report Adam deals with:

1. Bengali and Hindu schools
2. Sanskrit schools
3. Persian and Arabic schools
4. Domestic instruction
5. Adult instruction.

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99 Adam, Reports on the State of Education in Bengal (Calcutta: University of Calcutta, 1941 [1838]), pp.18-34.
100 Ibid, p.33-34.
102 Ibid, p.31.
103 Ibid, p.32.
In the indigenous elementary schools, Adam noted, teachers were recruited from all classes, castes and communities. "Parents of good caste, do not hesitate to send their children to schools conducted by teachers of an inferior caste and even of a different religion."

Adam added that the indigenous elementary schools were by no means the preserves of the children of the upper classes of society. He comments on the mutual disposition of Hindus and Muslims towards each other in the matter of giving and receiving instruction that shows the tolerance between the two communities. 104

Tirhoot had been the centre of Sanskrit learning in Bihar for centuries. People from other states went there to study Sanskrit. It was mainly confined to the Brahmins, although there was no restriction for people of other castes to study it. The name of Babu Gopal Saran, a Rajput of Buxar and two or three Kayasths in Shahabad district are specially mentioned in Buchanan's report on Shahabad, as examples of non-Brahmins who were well versed in

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S.No.</th>
<th>Thanas</th>
<th>Hindi</th>
<th>Sanskrit</th>
<th>Persian</th>
<th>Arabic</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Jehanabad</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Sheherghat</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Daudnagar</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Aurangabad</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Arwal</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Nabinagar</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Bihar</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Nawaada</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>Sahebgunge</td>
<td>121</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>286</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>279</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

104 This table gives us an idea about how different communities were exposed to education in different language schools of the Districts of South Bihar. This data can not be further studied in the absence of any other reliable source so not much can be added to what comes to us by this report. Particularly interesting figure is the number in the column of Persian which is almost equal to that of Hindi.

In the north Bihar region some similar details are available. In the district of Tirhoot, in sixteen thanas the numbers of schools were: Hindi 80, Sanskrit 56, Persian 234, and Arabic 4. 104 Nine thanas had 285 Hindi schools. The number of teachers was the same as the number of schools. Of these teachers 278 were Kayasths. It is evident that vernacular instruction was almost completely in the hands of the Kayasths. In 285 schools the total number of students was 3,090. See, Adam, Reports on the State of Education in Bengal (Calcutta: University of Calcutta, 1941 [1838]), pp.243-4.
Sanskrit. But, due to the British Company's indifference Sanskrit education did not get enough support and it suffered. Due to an individual officer's initiative a Sanskrit college was founded at Arrah in 1801.

Sensing the decline in Sanskrit learning, Minto's Minute of 6 March 1811 drew attention to the higher authorities regarding the general decay of learning for want of patronage. He strongly recommended the establishment of Sanskrit colleges in Bihar (Tirhoot), along with Nadia and Varanasi, and madrasas at Bhagalpur. But, after protracted correspondence for nearly a decade the idea of establishing a college in Tirhoot was finally given up. Instead, the proposed college was set up at Calcutta in 1821.105 It was not until Campbell's scheme of 1871 was implemented that a real and effective impetus was given to vernacular education in Bihar.106

Introduction of English Education

Introduction of English education in Bihar was not a smooth affair. For various reasons government-sponsored schemes did not make much headway till the beginning of the 1860s. Government indifference was the most important reason for this. Jatashankar Jha, a leading authority on the history of education in Bihar says- "No serious attempt was made to establish a government educational institution in Patna before 1835. The only educational institute run by the government in Bihar during this period was the Bhagalpur Hill School, meant for the hill sepoys of Santal Parganas. So the only way that the Biharis could avail themselves of the government arrangements for instruction was getting their wards admitted

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into the colleges at Calcutta, Varanasi and Agra. The number of such students was naturally very small."\textsuperscript{107}

There was strong suspicion and distrust among the people regarding the intention of the government and became in many instances one of the causes for anti-British plots and uprisings in Bihar.\textsuperscript{108} Attempts to introduce English were made in the 1840s but the initial efforts proved ineffective. When an Anglo-vernacular school was established in 1844 at Muzaffarpur, no upper caste people sent their children to the institute. An institute was established at Darbhanga in 1855, but closed down in two years due to the lukewarm response of the local people.\textsuperscript{109} The aversion towards English education was so strong that even listening to English was forbidden in many upper caste Hindu families. In 1867, the Inspector of Schools for the Bihar division reported that a large section of the influential classes "persistently kept aloof for the most part from English schools, where the pupils acquire foreign dress and manners which will shut them out from paradise."\textsuperscript{110}

Even the two most educationally advanced social groups of Bihar—the Muslims and Kayasths—were averse to English education and preferred Persian and Arabic education.\textsuperscript{111} In South Bihar the picture was no different where the Kayasths and Brahmins were dominant. The upper castes were however the first to realize the importance of western education in Bihar.\textsuperscript{112}

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\textsuperscript{107} Jatashankar Jha, ‘Education in Bihar,’ pp.361-62.
\textsuperscript{109} \textit{Ibid.}, p. xvi.
\textsuperscript{111} \textit{Ibid.}
\textsuperscript{112} Surendra Gopal has observed that in Patna, which was the main centre of Western education in Bihar, almost all of the students belonged to the upper castes of the Hindus and Muslims and from affluent zamindar and professional families. For more on this see, Surendra Gopal, \textit{Patna in the Nineteenth Century: A Socio-Cultural Profile} (Calcutta: Naya Prakash, 1982), p. 9.
\end{flushright}
Some efforts were made to establish schools for Western education by those people who realised the importance of modern education. The early initiatives came from Christian missionaries and educated Bengalis. Bishop Hartmann obtained the help of the Institute of the Blessed Virgin Mary of Munich, Germany. They sent two sisters from Calcutta and one from Bombay, who established St. Joseph's Convent in Patna in 1853. It served both the Christian and Non-Christian communities. After getting permission to work towards the spread of Christianity some Christian missionaries started coming to Bihar. They introduced Christian missionary schools. St. Joseph Convent in Patna, Bettiah's Mission School, St Teresa's High School and the Christian Missionary School were set up in Bhagalpur.

Some educated Bengalis established a girl's school in 1867. Aghor Kamini Devi, a devout Brahmo lady (mother of Bidhan Chandra Roy), opened the Bankipore Girls High School in 1892. The T.K. Ghosh Academy (1882), B.N. Collegiate School (1883). P.N. Anglo Sanskrit School (1895), Raja Ram Mohan Roy Seminary School (1884), Baldev High School, Danapur were some of the other institutions in Patna. In 1868 Md. Aziz Khan, perhaps a locally prominent citizen, was running a girls school. Patna College was established in 1863 by the government. B. N. College was established by Bireswar Prasad Singh, a rich zamindar of Kulharia, in the Arrah District in 1889. Babu Shaligram Singh, a lawyer, supported him.

External Connections with Calcutta and Other Places

It was natural for the educated people of Bihar to be in touch with the important centres of Bengal presidency particularly with the happenings in Calcutta, Banaras and Allahabad. Many educated people went to these centres to get employment and other options. Besides this, we have evidences to show that they were inspired by the happenings in these places. Iswarchandra Vidyasagar’s campaign for widow remarriage was widely noticed and discussed amongst the educated Biharis in the 1850s and 1860s. His writings were translated into Hindi and some of the Bihari Hindi writers were in close personal contact with him. Later, Bankimchandra Chatterjee’s works were translated and widely circulated in the Hindi-speaking regions largely through publications from Bihar. A list of his publications from the press of Bihar shows how his works were widely circulated among the Hindi readers of Bihar.117

A look at the Hindi newspapers of Calcutta clearly proves the close connection between the journalists in Calcutta and the happenings of Bihar. Ever since the publication of the first Hindi newspaper from Calcutta Udant Martand in 1826 the newspapers of Calcutta were widely read by the people of Bihar. We find a large number of letters from Bihar in these newspapers and the space devoted to news from Bihar clearly shows the connection. Most noticeable is Sarsudha Nidhi,118 a newspaper from Calcutta, which gave maximum coverage to Bihar and the issues related to Biharis.

117 According to the list of publications of Khadagvilas Press 19 works were translated from Bengali to Hindi. Bankimchandra was the most preferred writer. The translations were done by leading Hindi writers like Bharatendu Harischandra, Ishwari Prasad Sharma, Pratap Narayan Mishra, Ayodhya Singh Upadhyay 'Haraiudh' and others. See Dhirendra Nath Singh, Aadhunik Hindi ke Vikas Mein Khadagvilas Press ki Bhumika (Patna: Bihar Rashtrabhasha Parishad, 1986), p.299.

118 Sarsudha Nidhi was published from Calcutta. Durga Prasad Mishra started it with the help from Sadanand Mishra, famous Hindi journalist. This weekly newspaper was closed in 1890 but it got published regularly from 1879 to 1882. It was influential during this phase. The paper's last issue was published during which a large number of Hindi writers from Bihar got associated with it. See Ashutosh Singh, 'Sar Sudha Nidhi Parichay', Shambhunath & Ramnivas Dwivedi (eds.), Hindi Navajagaran: Bangiya Viraat, Vol I, (Calcutta: Coal India Limited, 1993). Going by the issues this paper took up which were related to Bihar and the number of letters received from Bihar it can be said that intelligentsia of Bihar had closely followed this paper. A good collection of this paper is available in a Patna library.
The Biharis were impressed by the progress the people of Calcutta had made in the fields of knowledge and education. The press was identified as the medium that made it possible. The people of Bihar and the United Provinces were amongst the first to realise the importance of the press. It is not a well-advertised fact that the first Hindu who established a newspaper in Calcutta was Babu-Ram, “a native of Hindustan”. Some of them started publications in Calcutta and later shifted their base to Patna to reach out to the educated people of Bihar. Among those who shifted their base from Calcutta to Patna was Keshavram Bhatt, the man who single-handedly heralded the beginning of modern journalism in Bihar. He started the first Hindi weekly newspaper of Bihar- Bihar Bandhu in Calcutta. After gaining adequate experience he decided to start publishing it from Bankiput (Patna). The biographical details of many notable citizens of Bihar bear testimony to the fact that the happenings in Calcutta had a significant effect on them. They would go to Calcutta in search of books and journals. Ramdeen Singh, the founder of Khadagvilas Press, Bankipur was so fond of books from Calcutta that he is once said to have spent the entire amount of money he had with him buying books, without keeping anything back for his return fare!

Connections with Bengal were more direct because of the Bengali presence in Bihar. Though they mainly lived in their own Bengali paras (localities), they were a useful link with Bengal. Bengalis started many of the early organisations in the district headquarters and some schools and colleges. Mrinal Kumar Basu suggests that during the post-mutiny period the hectic activities of the Bengalis could have inspired the Biharis to organise themselves. This

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120 Balmukund Gupta has written that when he used to come to Calcutta his enthusiasm for books was such that at times even the return rail fare was not cared for. Such was his enthusiasm for books.” Cited in Dhirendra Nath Singh, Aadhbunik Hindi ke Vikas Mein Khadagvilas Press ki Bhumika (Patna: Bihar Rashtrabhasha Parishad, 1986).

is true in many cases as we find local newspapers showing significant interest in the reform activities in Bengal.¹²²

Growth of district courts' activities led to Lawyers becoming important professional groups based in district headquarters in the nineteenth century. Many of these successful lawyers were Bengalis who had family links with Calcutta. The strong domination of Bengalis in the public life of later nineteenth century explains why so many roads and lanes in Patna are named after the Bengali lawyers—Brajendra Mohan Das Road, Khazanchi Road (named after Karunamoy Gupta, Treasurer of the Bengal Bank), Biharilal Bhattacharya, Sarada Prasad Ghosh Lane, Govindra Mitra Road. Bengalis largely populated Langertolli Mohalla, an important area of Patna.¹²³ The Bengali community domiciled in Bihar gave Bihar the first English newspaper from the province—Bihar Herald. Maharaja of Dumraon, a Bihari zamindar, provided the fund but the Bengali lawyers of Patna conducted it.¹²⁴

In Patna the presence of a strong Muslim elite was also helpful for outside connection as many of them sent their children to Calcutta for education.¹²⁵ Many distinguished lawyers belonging to Muslim elite families practiced in Calcutta before the Patna High Court came into existence.

The educated Bihari presence in Calcutta, however, remained small, and the issues related to Bihar were not much in circulation among the educated people of Calcutta. Even the existence of Bihar as a separate state was not acknowledged. Sachidananda Sinha, the most

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¹²²In 1856 when widow remarriage was being discussed in Calcutta, the newspapers of Patna gave detailed reports on it.


¹²⁵ This somewhat ignored elites' social history is little known so far. In 1881, Bihar Bandhu wrote: "Whatever cultural activity was there in the city, it was due to the Muslim gentry. The Hindu gentry was indolent and did practically nothing." (Bihar Bandhu, 2 June 1881.)
enlightened Bihari intellectual of his days, was shocked when as a student he found that his fellow students were ignorant about Bihar as a province. Bihar remained in the backwaters of the Bengal Presidency. Even in the first decade of twentieth century Bihar had no separate identity and was a mere appendage of Bengal.

The beginning of modern consciousness in Bihar

In the post-1857 period the Bengalis in Bihar made “great impact on the political life of the province.” But, this “great impact” was largely confined to the Bengalis only. Jata Shankar Jha says — “Despite the fact that the Bengalis in Bihar wielded much political influence they could not become the natural leaders of the people of Bihar owing to their exclusiveness. They could not merge their identity with the Biharis.” He quotes famous Bengali revolutionary Sachindra Nath Sanyal approvingly: “The Bengalis have settled in several provinces out of Bengal but they do not easily give up their peculiarities of their race. Even after living for three or four (or even more) generations in other provinces, the Bengalis in most such places remain Bengalis. Nay they have converted these places into Bengali mohallas.”

The beginning of modern consciousness among Biharis can be traced to the activities of some Muslim and Kayasth aristocrats and professionals. It started with the Bihar Scientific Society that was established in 1868 in Muzaffarpur by some Muslim aristocrats under the guidance of Imdad Ali, who was its secretary. It was a non-political organisation that intended

126 Mrinal K. Basu, ‘Regional Patriotism A Study in Bihar Politics (1907-1912)’, Indian Historical Review (New Delhi) III, 2 (1977), p. 287.
128 Ibid, p.4.
to spread modern ideas. It also published an Urdu journal Akbharul- Akhiyar. Another organisation, Ameer Ali's National Muhammadan Association wanted to bring the Muslims closer to the British. It established branches in several district towns in Bihar.\(^{130}\)

The Kayasths followed the example of the Muslim elite. The pioneers in this initiative were Munshi Pyare Lal and Harbans Sahay. “Perhaps inspired by the activities of Syed Ahmad and other Muslim leaders”\(^{131}\) Munshi Pyarelal of Rohtas started a movement to fight against extravagances in marriages. He resigned from the post of Munshi of the Government of North Western Provinces in the 1860s and threw himself heart and soul into marriage reform movements. He received encouragement from “leading Indians of intelligence and enlightenment”\(^{132}\). To propagate his ideas he founded Sadar Anjuman-I-Hind with branches in almost all the districts of Bihar. The members prepared elaborate rules for observance. It not only restricted the amount of tilak (dowry) to a maximum of Rs. 1.25, but also regulated every item of expenditure connected with the celebration of marriages with the aim of effecting economy. Harbans Sahay, a pleader in Arrah, was one of the first public men in Bihar to lend his complete and unstinted support to the movement. The first Anjuman in Bihar was set up at Arrah in 1868. With official encouragement and the support of the leading zamindars of Dumraon, Darbhanga and Hathua, a network of anjumans covered the entire province within a few years. This movement that had started amongst the Kayasths soon spread to other castes too. By 1873 Bhumihar Brahmins and Tirhoot Brahmans decided to take part in the society’s activities.\(^{133}\)

A branch of Sadar Anjuman-I-Hind was established in Darbhanga. In 1876 Pyarelal

\(^{130}\) Aditya Prasad Jha, ‘Political History of Bihar,’ p. 229.


\(^{132}\) Jata Shankar Jha, Aspects of the History of Modern Bihar, p. 60.

\(^{133}\) Ibid, p. 61.
was present at the famous Saurath Sabha of Maithil Brahmins. In 1878 the S.D.O. Madhubani and the Maharaja of Darbhanga, a patron of the marriage reform movement, delivered speeches under the auspices of the Sadar Anjuman. The Maharaja of Darbhanga, Lakshmiswlar Singh, personally supervised the working of both Saurath Sabhas and according to the registrar of marriages, 2,289 marriages had been celebrated in accordance with the rules framed by the committee. 134

Grierson also refers to the rules framed for regulating the marriages (with the approval of the headmen of fourteen castes who approved the rules). In 1873 an Ikramnamali was signed by three Maharajas and fifteen other “persons of note” including Siristadar Munshi Avadh Chandra Mishra of Hathua, as Secretary, with the members restricting their expenses on marriages. Dumraon was a stronghold of the movement. Maheshwar Bux Singh and his son Kunwar Radha Prasad Singh were “great patrons and supported the movement financially and otherwise.”135 They addressed a number of meetings organised for that purpose and the estate brought out a pamphlet Jug Upkarak to educate the general public about the movement. Dewan Ramkumar Singh of Surajpur was also a strong pillar of the movement. 136

All this did not occur without resistance from traditional elites’ quarters. “It was too much an affront for the reis (the elite) of Patna to be led by a commoner like Munshi Pyarelal.”137 This resistance and some internal weaknesses138 weakened the movement and

135 Ibid.
136 Ibid.
138 The main reason for the failure of this movement was the lack of sincerity on the part of the more affluent members of the community, especially in Patna, to adhere to the austerity rules. On one occasion Pyare Lal himself failed to abide by the rules he had set. Harbans Sahay wrote in 1873, “Munshi Pyare Lal’s failure at Patna produced a very injurious effect upon the working of the rules in Patna and threatened to shake the very foundation of the movement.” Cited in Aditya Prasad Jha, ‘Political History of Bihar,’ p. 231.
“Pyarelal died a disillusioned man”.139

The movement failed but it had made a significant contribution in organising the Kayasths in Bihar. This in turn helped in consolidating support for the movement to make Bihar a separate state under the leadership of a Kayasth leader Sachidanand Sinha.

Intense mobilisation of the intelligentsia in Bihar began with in the 1870s and with two movements—Hindi Movement and the Cow Protection Movement, about which detailed study is taken up separately in Chapter 3 and Chapter 7 respectively.

Organisations formed by the Intelligentsia in Bihar during the late nineteenth century

Bihar could not boast of many organisations in the last quarter of the nineteenth century. The first two political associations established in 1878 were the Bihar Landholders Association and the Bihar Indigo Planters. “Some branches of the Indian Association (1851) had been established at some district headquarters but their influence was by no means significant.”140 There is a view that these political organisations came into existence largely as a result of the great famine of 1874 in Bihar. Investigations have shown that it was the oppressive conduct of the zamindars and indigo planters that was responsible for their formation.

During the controversy over the Ilbert Bill, the general public opinion was in its support. Maharaja Lakshmishwar Singh even showed the courage to move an amendment to give the defendant the option of claiming a jury trial for Indians in all session cases. This plea

140 Jata Shankar Jha, Early Revolutionary Movement in Bihar, p. 29.
was strongly hailed by *Bihar Bandhu* of 31 January 1884. The Maharaja had to withdraw his amendment, but the intelligentsia appreciated his gesture.

With the passing of the controversial bill the breach created between the educated Indians on one hand and the Europeans and Eurasians on the other, widened and led to the realisation in Bihar that Indians needed strong political organisations. When an organisation, the Indian Union, came into existence in Calcutta Lakshmishwar Singh was given the credit for its foundation and he became its founder President. He also felt the need to support organisations that were active in social and political activities in other parts of India and he helped Poona Sarvajanik Sabha.¹⁴¹ He gave Rs 2000 each year to Poona Sarvajanik Sabha as 'annual subscription'.¹⁴²

An association named the Bihar People's Association was established in July 1879 for the progress and general improvement of the common people of Bihar. It was a secular organisation and its constitution clearly stated that religion would have no place in it. The language of functioning was Hindi and it was open to anyone who was ready to pay an annual membership fee of Rs. 3. If somebody was unable to pay the fee he could write to the secretary for a waiver or reduction of the fee. The zamindars were allowed to become members of this organisation on payment of donations.¹⁴³

The Muslim participation in the Congress was minimal in the nineteenth century Bihar.

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¹⁴¹ Jata Shankar Jha, Lakshmishwar Singh's biographer, claims that he was a great patron of the Poona Sarvajanik Sabha. See, Jata Shankar Jha, *Biography of an Indian Patriot- Maharaja Lakshmishwar Singh of Darbhanga* (Patna: Maharaja Lakshmishwar Singh Smarak Samiti, 1972), p.31-33.


¹⁴³ The information about this modern, democratic and secular organisation is available only from the Congress Reports of the Madras session (1887) where Bisheshwar Prasad, Gajadhar Prasad, Kuldip Sahay and Govind Charan attended the session as delegates from the Bihar People's Association. No information about this organisation and its activities is recorded in any government reports. So, it seems that it could not have remained active for very long. According to Congress reports the Bihar Public Association continued to send delegates to the Congress till 1890. For more details see, Jata Shankar Jha, *Aspects of the History of Modern Bihar*, pp.20-21.
With some exceptions like Syed Md. Sharfuddin who later became the first Bihari judge of the Calcutta High Court, most of the Muslim leaders remained indifferent to the Congress. A speech delivered by Md. Sharfuddin in the Allahabad Congress of 1888 sums up the attitude of most Muslim leaders: “In 1885 when the first meeting of the Congress was held at Bombay...it was no longer called a Congress of a few native gentlemen, but a Congress of Bengalis; and in the 1887, when the Congress was held in Madras it was not called a Congress of native gentlemen of Bengal but a Congress of Hindus.”\(^{144}\) The Anjuman Islamia of Patna held a meeting on 9 September 1888 that was attended by about two thousand Muslims. In this meeting a resolution was moved by famous Khuda Bux Khan and was seconded by Syed Fazle Imam. This resolution was passed unanimously. The resolution gives some idea about the Muslims’ attitude towards the Congress: “That the Anjuman considers that the aims and objects of the so-called National Congress, if carried out, virtually injure Muhammadan interest and the Muhammadan religion.”\(^{145}\)

The relationship between the Hindu and the Muslim intelligentsia deteriorated in the 1890s due to three factors: the Hindi-Urdu controversy, the Cow Protection Movement and the rift in the Landlords Association.

Around this time, the separation of Bihar from Bengal was supported by many educated Biharis, and for the time being it remained their main concern. This resulted in putting the Congress movement into the background.\(^{146}\)

\(^{144}\) In his speech he claimed that in Bihar the Muslims had the “fullest sympathy” with the objects of the Congress, but it seems an overstatement. Anjuman Islamia of Patna, in a meeting attended by nearly two thousand local Muslims, had unanimously passed a resolution in 1888, which was moved by Maulavi Khuda Baksha Khan and seconded by Syed Fazle Imam, the two stalwarts of Muslim intelligentsia in Bihar. In this resolution it was said that, “the Anjuman considers that the aims and objects of the so-called National Congress, if carried out, would virtually injure Muslim interests and Islam.” (Quoted in Jata Shankar Jha, Aspects of the History of Modern Bihar, pp.24-25.)

\(^{145}\) Cited in Jata Shankar Jha, Early Revolutionary Movement in Bihar, p. 21.

During this period the public library and some literary activities were trying to spread awareness among the educated sections of Bihar. In 1881 Pandit Kishori Lal Goswami had established an Arya Pustakalaya, which was the first Hindi Public Library in India. It was established in Arrah where Goswami lived for many years. These libraries and the teachers in some of the local schools had played a very important role in the spread of Hindu consciousness along with mobilising support for Hindi. A few examples will suffice to show this.

Babu Shivanandan Sahay, a regular visitor to Arrah district, used to ask his admirers to instruct students to read the Ramayana as much as possible. This would, in his reckoning, enable them to write good Hindi. He was the translator in the Patna Court and was a scholar of Persian and Urdu. He also wrote a book ‘Pichale Pachas Barshon Mein Bihar mein Hindi ki Awastha’ (The state of Hindi in Bihar in last fifty years).

Ishwari Prasad Sharma was a prolific writer and translator. He was equally proficient in Marathi, Gujarati, Bengali, English and Sanskrit. He brought out Manoranjan in 1912 in Arrah. It was a successful and respected magazine and remained in publication for two years. Sharma then became the associate editor of Patliputra, which was edited by the famous scholar Babu Kashi Prasad Jaiswal. After leaving Patliputra Sharma became the editor of Lakshmi in Gaya. He also edited Sree Vidyā, a monthly magazine, during this period. He returned to Arrah.

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147 Himalaya (Patna), Year 1, No. 2, 1945.
148 Shivanandan Sahay (1860-1932); one of the prominent writers of Bihar of the period of this study; Translator in Patna court; Founder Member of Nagari Pracharini Sabha, Varanasi; wrote many books among which most important were the biographies of Harischandra, Saheb Prasad Singh, and plays like Sudama Sankat, translated famous Hindi play Go Sankat (1886) of Ambikadatta Vyas into English; lived at Arrah after his retirement in 1915.
149 Parjat (Patna), January 1948.
150 Ishwari Prasad Sharma (1893-1927); a famous Hindi writer of Bihar who edited and translated number of books too; a prolific writer penning more than 30 books; editor of Manoranjan, a literary magazine of repute from Arrah; he had the credit of penning some very distinguished Hindi writers like Shivapujan Sahay; later went to Calcutta; wrote, edited and translated at a feverish speed; edited Hindu Punch, a powerful organ of ‘Hindu nationalism’ in Calcutta. For a detailed biographical sketch of Pandit Ishwari Prasad Sharma, see Shivapujan Sahay, Shivapujan Sahay Rachanawali Vol IV, pp. 225-27.
and started editing *Siksha* and *Dharma Abhyuday* in Agra. Finally he went to the Burman Press in Calcutta and got close to its owner, Ramlal Verma. When Verma started the publication of the weekly *Hindu Punch*, Sharma became its editor. During this period he undertook a part-time job for *Maheswari Panchyat* for a salary of Rs.200 per month.\(^{151}\) His premature death was deeply mourned by a large number of Hindi writers. All these writers and magazines had a role to play in the spread of Hindu and Hindi consciousness.

**The Arya Samaj and Other Hindu Organisations in Bihar**

Between 1870 and 1900 many organisations tried to influence the people by popularising the ideals they stood for. The Arya Samaj, the Theosophical Society and the Brahma Samaj were some of the more important ones. They may not have created a big impact in transforming society as such but in their limited ways, they all contributed to it.

Arya Samaj activities had been recorded since the 1870s in Bihar. Its influence was never widespread but it acted as a stimulating group within the Hindu fold and served to introduce modern trends of thought.\(^ {152}\) The internal sources of Arya Samaj inform us that Madholal, Ramnarayan and Janakdhari Lal had described how these people had been seeking new paths of religion since 1864. They were dissatisfied with their religion and they met regularly. They started a school and called themselves *vicharpanthi*. Shivagulum Prasad, Thakur Prasad Shah, Babulal, Shyamlal and Hiralal were some others involved in the same group. They organised the Vichar Sabha and held discussions with some Brahma Samajis like Tarak Babu, Nandalal Gupta, Shivachandra Singh, Munshi Ganesh Prasad.\(^ {153}\) After a year or two

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\(^{151}\) *Sudha* (Monthly), Lucknow, Year 1, Vol. I, No.3, October 1927.


when the number of members increased the name of the organisation was changed to Hindu Satya Sabha.

When Janakdhari Prasad went to Banaras he came into contact with Swami Dayananda's books. In April 1878 on Swami Dayananda's advice the name of the organisation was changed to Arya Samaj. The Arya Samaj was first established in Bihar at Danapur in April 1878. This became the nucleus of the Arya Samaj movement in Bihar.

Bholanath, Makhan Lal and Buddho Lal went to Delhi to request Dayanand to come to Patna. By a letter dated 12 October 1879 Dayanand agreed. The magistrate was approached and he gave his permission for the Swami to come to Patna, on the condition that no trouble would be caused as a result of his anti-religious beliefs.

The census reports record a fair number of Arya Samajis in the province: 4,085 in 1911 and 4,578 in 1921. The majority of the Arya Samajis in Bihar belonged to the lower castes. The Arya Samaj raised their social status much to the chagrin of the upper castes. From Danapur the Arya Samaj spread to other parts of Bihar. It was established at Patna, Patna City, Arrah, Motihari, and several other places. In Danapur a school named Ved Ratna Vidyalaya, was established in 1915. The most important educational institution set up by the Arya Samaj in Bihar was Gurukul Mahavidyalaya at Deoghar, which had the unique history of imparting Vedic education. There were four smaller gurukuls, three orphanages and many Sanskrit pathshalas run by the Arya Samaj.

Arya Samaj rejected idolatry and the caste system and thereby posed a serious challenge to the Sanatan Hindus' understanding of society and history. An important aspect of

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155 One of the slogans of the Arya Samajis was to stop feeding the Brahmans on the occasion of Sraddha. See Dr. Panchananda Mishra and Dr. N. K. Jha, 'Social and Religious Reform Movements in Bihar in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries', p. 110.

156 Ibid, p.111.
Arya Samaj activities in Bihar was its aggressive campaign against conversion of Hindus to Islam or Christianity. Its rejection of the caste system particularly appealed to the lower castes. This, along with some other reformist actions like the movement for simple marriages without dowry, widow remarriage, dispensing with purdah and efforts in the direction of education especially of women made them popular among low and intermediary caste young men. Many workers of the Arya Samaj who later served the Samaj in Bengal and elsewhere came from Bihar.

The Arya and Sanatan debates in Bihar had been widely reported in the contemporary newspapers. The Samaj did not get organised support, as its activities were controlled from Calcutta till the formation of Bihar as a separate state. In 1899 the Bihar and Bengal Sanjukta Arya Pratinidhi Sabha was founded at Danapur. Its office was initially at Patna and then at Ranchi. Later, it was shifted to Calcutta from where its activities were controlled. It was only in 1926 that a separate Bihar Arya Pratinidhi Sabha could be formed.157

There was a debate between the Arya Samajis and the Sanatanis at Bhagalpur that got wide publicity. Bihar Bandhu covered the debate extensively.158 Debates and discussions on religious themes were regular features of the intelligentsia's daily lives.

The Theosophical Movement, with its headquarters at Banaras, also influenced the intelligentsia in Bihar because of its element of mysticism as well as its attempts at a rational and scientific explanation of the principles of Hinduism. At one time, there were many active branches in Bihar. The Patna branch of the Theosophical Society was started in 1882. The Arrah branch had been established even a little earlier.159

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158 Bihar Bandhu, 5 April 1888, pp.6-8.
With the coming of the railways, dramas and circuses from Bombay and Pune came to Patna and staged shows. They usually borrowed themes from the epics and from folklore. 160

The teachings of Ramakrishna and Aurobindo Ghosh also spread among the higher classes in Bengal and Bihar. 161 Maharshi Devendra Nath Tagore, Keshav Chandra Sen, Rabindranath Tagore and J. C. Bose were some of the prominent leaders of the Brahmo Samaj who visited Bihar. Brahmo missionaries like Trailokya Nath Sanyal, Nagendra Nath Chatterjee, Gurudas Chakravarty and Braj Gopal Neogy visited most of the districts of Bihar. Though the numbers of converts to this sect was small their influence was widespread and long lasting, especially among the intellectuals. It was mostly confined to Bengali families, but Brahmo Samaj mandirs existed in almost all the advanced districts of Bihar, such as Patna, Gaya, Bhagalpur, Muzaffarpur and Ranchi. 162

Besides being a religious movement, the Brahmo Samaj was a great force for social reform. It “declared war” 163 against the caste system, seclusion of women under purdah (veil) and child marriage. It arranged for remarriage of widows and opened many educational and welfare institutions. Its most important welfare institutions were the Ram Mohan Roy Seminary at Patna, a charitable homeopathic dispensary at Hazaribagh, the Patna Brahmo Samaj and the mental hospital with a charitable homeopathic dispensary at Lalpur, Ranchi. The movement did not reach the masses, but was confined to a few thousand families. However its influence liberalised Hinduism to very great extent and stimulated new trends and introspection. 164

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162 Ibid.
164 Ibid, p. 678.
We need to keep in mind that at that time there a complex relationship existed between these reformist organisations and orthodox (Sanatani) Hindus. On the one hand these reformists were critical of Hinduism but on the other all of them shared the same concerns against the Muslims. It was possible for a person to be a Hindu and an Arya Samajis at the same time and as far as the general public was concerned they were regarded as one. Rahul Sankrityayan, the great Hindi writer, has mentioned how he was an Arya Samaji and at the same time was in charge of a Sanatani Math in 1918-19.\textsuperscript{165} The people of Bihar until that time had not been influenced by modern ideas and movements and they were rooted to their Sanatani traditions. The organisations that believed that they needed to save the Sanatan dharma against the reformers, maintained that the people of Bihar did not need to be saved from the bad influences of the modern reformers.\textsuperscript{166} Still, the Sanatan pracharaks Pandit Ambikadatta, Pandit Devnath Sharma B.A. and a few others founded many dharma sabhas in Bihar. With the help of these people and others like Babu Rameshwar Prasad Sahab Mahta a fair was organised every year at Harihar Khetra in which all the sabhas participated. The Maharaja of Darbhanga would preside over these festivals.\textsuperscript{167}

In Bihar, according to the Bharat Dharma Mahamandal\textsuperscript{168} reports, there were five Arya dharma pracharini sabhas at Monghyr, Bhagalpur, Motihari and Santhwada (Chhapra).\textsuperscript{169} Apart

\textsuperscript{165} Rahul Sankrityayan was born in a Sanatani pandit family and he was to take charge of a Parsa Math. He had wandered aimlessly for years and around 1916, he accepted Arya Samaj as his ideal dharma. When he returned to his native place he heard that the respected Mahanth of the Parsa Math was very old and wanted to pass on the charge of the Math to Kedar (Rahul). It was not difficult for Kedar to once again become a Sanatani sadhu in 1918, only to leave it again and go back to his Arya Samaj path. See Rahul Sankrityayan, \textit{Meri Jivan Yatra}, Vol I (Delhi: Radhakrishna Prakashan, 1996 [1944]), p. 211.

\textsuperscript{166} \textit{Bharat Dharma Mahamandal ki Report} (1889), p.63.

\textsuperscript{167} \textit{Bharat Dharma Mahamandal ki Report} (1889), p.63.

\textsuperscript{168} Shri Bharat Dharma Mahamandal, the first organized organization of Sanatan dharma supporters, which was formed in 1887 at Haridwar by Pandit Deen Dayalu Sharma, a leader of Sanatan dharma.

\textsuperscript{169} \textit{Ibid.}, p.166.
from these there were dharma sabhas at Riyasat Sursar, Bankipore, Maune Sereyya (Chhapra), Sultanganj, Benailaa, Navani (Darbhanga), Hajipur, Gazipur, Danapur, Chhapra, Nayagaon (Saran), and Sahabganj. There were six dharma sabhas called Suniti Sancharini at Bankipur, Gaya, Monghyr, Jamalpur, Madhubani and Arrah. There were dharma sabhas named Hari Sabha at Bankipur, Maradpur, Jamalpur and Darbhanga. There were also Haribhakti Dayini Sabhas. If Bharat Dharma Mahamandal claims are true there were 240 dharma sabhas in India at that time. If this gets added to the number of Gaurakshini Sabhas and the different caste associations which were looked upon as followers by the Mahamandal it can be said that a large number of people and organizations were active in saving the Sanatan dharma in Bihar.

To analyse these changes, the ideas of Mannheim, briefly referred to in the beginning of this chapter, could be useful again. He analyses the changes in the status of intelligentsia due to introduction of new sociological changes. In the new scenario of "modern life", he writes, "intellectual activity is not carried on exclusively by a socially defined rigid class, such as priesthood, but rather by social stratum which is to large degree unattached to any social class and which is recruited from an increasingly inclusive area of social life." In this new situation, he adds further, "the intellectual is no longer, as formerly, a member of a caste or rank whose scholastic manner of thought represents for him thought as such... Now they

173 Some aspects of the activities of these Hindu organisations would be further discussed in Chapter 6.
(intellectuals) had to compete for the favour of public, which unlike the public of the clergy was no longer accessible to them without their own efforts.  

In Bihar, it can be said, intelligentsia had been witnessing uncontrolled expansion of its boundaries as a social stratum due to new changes. These changes put the old intelligentsia under pressure. In this new situation they had to compete for new kinds of jobs requiring proficiency in modern languages, as well as address new questions about the composition and nature of the communities they belonged to. In this pressured situation, the intelligentsia of Bihar progressed towards a new consciousness which gave birth to ideologies. But, as the subsequent chapters suggest, this new consciousness was also moving them towards the idea of an organized communal identity of ‘Hinduism’ and a new social order which was centred around the ideals of this new ‘Hindu’ nation.

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175 *Ibid*, p.11.