Chapter-11

BIHAR, LAND PEOPLE AND HISTORY
Bihar is located in the eastern part of the country in the indo gangetic plain and it is an entirely land locked state. Bihar lies in the mid-way between the humid west Bengal in the east and the sub-humid Uttar Pradesh in the west, which provides it with a transitional position in respect of climate, economy and culture. It is bounded by repel in the north end newly divided Jharkhand in the south. It lies between the $24^0 20' 10"$ to $27^0 31' 15"$ of the north latitude and $83^0 19' 15"$ to $88^0 17' 40"$ of east longitude. The area of whole Bihar is 94163 sq. km i.e. 2.86% of the India’s area. It lies between the north to south 345 km and 483 km from east to west and is the 2nd biggest state among 28 states in India on the basis of geographical area.

Bihar is the third most populous state after the U P and Maharashtra, despite the creation of Jharkhand from the state of Bihar in 2000. The total population of Bihar according to 2001 census is 82878796. The male population is 43153964 that is (52.1%) and female population is 39724832 that is (47.90%). The rural population is 89.54% and urban population is 10.46%. The Hindu population is 68994943 that is (83.13%). The male population of Hindu is 36033500 and female population 32961343. The rural population of Hindu is 62083392 that is (83.54%) and urban population is 6911551 that is (79.61%). The Muslim population is 13677393 that are (16.48%).
male population of Muslim is 7038743 and female population is 6638650. The rural population of Muslim is 11979830 that are (16.12%) and urban population is 1697563 that are (19.55%). The state has a lowest literacy rate 47.53%. the rural literacy rate is 43.92% and urban literacy rate is 71.93%. The male literacy rate is 59.68% and female literacy rate is 33.12%. The Hindu literacy rate is 47.9 %. The male literacy rate is 61.2 % and female literacy is 33.4%. The rural literacy rate is 30.5% and urban literacy rate is 44.28 %. The Muslim literacy rate is 42%. The male literacy rate is 51.8 % and female literacy rate is 31.5 %. The rural literacy rate is 38.68% and urban literacy rate is 64.34 %. According to 2001 census.

“Bihar” has been coined from the word “vihara” which means Buddhist monasteries. At one time in history, these “viharas” were strewn all over the landscape of Bihar, around village and cities alike. Bihar finds mention in the Vedas, Purans, epics etc (Bhatt and Bhargava, 2005:19). The history of the landmass currently known as Bihar is very ancient. In fact, it extended to the very down of the human civilization. Earliest myths and legends of Hinduism the Santana (eternal) Dharma – are associated with Bihar. Sita, the consort of lord Rama, was a princess of Bihar. She was the daughter of king Janak of videha. Janakpur, the capital of king Janak, and the place
where lord Rama and Sita were married, lie just across the border of Nepal. Maharishi Valmiki, the author of the Ramayana lived in ancient Bihar. It was here that prince Gautam attained enlightenment and became the Buddha at Bodh Gaya, a town in central Bihar, and the great religion of Buddhism was born. It was here also that Lord Mahavira was born and attained nirvana and established the great religion of Jainism. It here also that Guru Govind Singh was born and became the tenth Guru of Sikhism. The ancient kingdom of Magadh and Licchvi were here around about 7 to 8th century B C which produced a numbers of great rulers. One of these was Chandra Gupta Maurya and in his court was kautalya, the author of Arthashastra, the first treatises of the modern science of politics who was Chandra Gupta’s adviser. Another Mauryan king, Ashoka (also known as preyadarsh and prayadashi), around 270 B C was the first to formulate firm tenets for the governance of people. He had these tenets, the so called edicts of Ashoka, inscribed on stone pillars which were planted across his kingdom. The figure of lions atop a pedestal, with inscribed of a wheel, was adopted as the official seal of the independent republic of India in 1947. Ashoka’s empire extended from what is now the North West Frontiers Province (in Pakistan) in the West, to the eastern boundaries of present Assam India in the North, and certainly, up to the Vindhyanchal range in the south and its capital was Patliputra.
which is at present Patna the capital of Bihar (Bhatt and Bhargava, 2005:19-20).

In medieval times Bihar lost its prestige as the political and cultural centre in India. The Mughal period was a period of centralized administration from Delhi which became the political and cultural centre of India. The only remarkable person of these times in Bihar was Sher Shah or Sher Khan Sur, an Afghan. Based at Sasaram which is now a town in the district of the same name in Bihar. He successfully defeated the Mughal king Humayun, the son of Babur, twice once at Chausa and then, again, at Kannuj. Through his conquest Sher Shah became the ruler of territory that, again, extended all the way to the Punjab. He was not only a ferocious warrior but also a noble administrator in the tradition of Ashoka. Several acts of land reform are attributed to him and he also made ainns (sarais) on the side of the road which he constructed across north India now known as G T road (Bhatt and Bhagava, 2005:21).

During most of British rule, Bihar was a part of the presidency of Bengal and was governed from Calcutta. When separated from the Bengal presidency in 1912, Bihar and Orrisa comprised a single province. Later, under the Government of India Act 1935, Orrisa became a separate province and the province of Bihar came into being.
an administrative unit of the British India. At independence in 1947 the state of Bihar with the same geographical boundary formed a republic of India. In the year 2000 Bihar was divided to the form a new state of Jharkhand. During the struggle for India’s independence, it was from Bihar that Gandhiji launched his civil disobedience movement, which ultimately led to India’s independence. At the persistent request of a farmer, Raj Kumar Shukla from the district of Champaran in 1917 Gandhiji took a train ride to Motihari the districts headquarter of Champaran. Here, he learned, first hand, the sad plight of the indigo farmer suffering under the oppressive rule of the British. He sent latter’s to the viceroy of India describing what he saw in Champaran and made formal demands for the emancipation of these farmers. He launched a movement for the emancipation of the indigo farmers and the success of this movement was first instance of the success of civil disobedience as a tool to win freedom. The British received their first “object lesson” of the power of civil disobedience and Gandhiji became a national leader after his visit to Bihar. Thus, in 1917, began a series of events in a remote corner of Bihar that untimely led to the freedom of India in 1947 (Bhatt and Bhargava, 2005:21-22).