CHAPTER I

MODERN POLITICAL
AWAKENING IN BIHAR:

Rule of Western Education,
Association, Press
and Vernacular Literature
The history of the British rule in India is the history of oppression and exploitation and uprising and civil disturbance. The battle of Plassey in 1757, sowed the seeds of British political supremacy in India and within a century it was marked by its rapid development. This naturally conducted India through manifold processes of transition, i.e., political, economic, social and cultural, which for many reasons, generated fumes of discontent leading to secret plots or open revolts against the growing power of the English in India. The very nature of the British role resulted in the growth of nationalist sentiments among the Indians. It produced the material, moral, intellectual and political conditions for the growth of a powerful national movement.

The British rule in India started with the acquisition of Bihar, Bengal and Orissa. Thus, it was natural that the earliest manifestation of the spirit of defiance should have occurred first in these regions. Bihar remained a constant source of challenge to the British in India. The first challenge against the British imperialist power came from Mir Qasim, the Nawab of Bengal, in 1762-3 and then from a confederacy of three allias Mir Qasim, Shujauddaulah, the Nawab of Awadh and the Mughal Emperor Shah Alam II at the battle field of Buxare in 1764.

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The history of modern political awakening among the people of Bihar was accompanied by a series of political events leading to the liberation of India from the British rule. The Kol insurrection in 1831-33 in Chotanagpur, The Patna conspiracy of 1846, and the Santhal insurrection of 1855-57, are noteworthy. In the revolt of 1857-59 Bihar played a very significant role under the inspiring leadership of Babu Kunwar Singh, Amarpal Singh, Sheikh Bhikhari, Peer Ali, Rahat Ali, Peer Baksh and others who had carried the message of the movement inside and outside Bihar very successfully. The revolt of 1857 was a mass movement with popular support of the Sepoys and peasants both Hindus and Muslims, who carried out the movement to every nook and corner of Bihar. John Kaye believed that the prime movers in the rebellion of 1857 were the Muslims while Brown held that they were mostly Wahabees of Patna who aimed at overthrowing the British Government from India and wanted to re-establish the Muslim rule in India.

4. Datta, Unrest Against British Rule in Bihar, pp. 10-16.
5. Ibid., pp. 17-18.
7. K.K. Datta, Biography of Kunwar Singh and Amar Singh (Patna, 1957), pp. 59-78. See also, Datta, Unrest Against British Rule in Bihar, pp. 41-54.
As the Muslims were considered more aggressive and militant, the heavy hands of the Britishers fell upon them more heavily and harshly than on the Hindus. It was really a very tragic event in the history of the Muslims Indian that everyone of them was considered a rebel or suspected as a Mahabi, a conspirator and an enemy of British rule in India. This a conspirator and an enemy of British rule in India. This was followed by a period of economic ruin, intellectual stagnation and general degeneration of the Muslims of India. The British also looked upon the Muslims "as their opponents - hostile to their rule and tried to suppress them". For the expansion of the new power and its continuance" says M. Noaman, "the only course was to crush the Musalman", and the government "deliberately adopted policies which had their aim the economic ruin of the Muslim and their intellectual stagnation and general degeneration". It was Sir Syed Ahmad who realized the need of the times and started a cultural renaissance among the Muslims of India by providing them facilities of studying modern science and technology. On the other side he wrote Asbab-i-Bagawat-i Hind and the Loyal Mahommedans by which he clarified the cause of the revolt and proved that the Muslims were not anti-British and tried to fulfill the gap between the two the ruler and ruled.


12. Noaman, Muslim India, p. 23.
In the modern history of India, the political awakening has been traced from Bengal first which subsequently helped other provinces in the growth of political, social and intellectual consciousness. The centre of political activity then shifted from Bengal to Bihar which soon held a high position in the political set-up of India. It was a significant aspect of the history of Bihar that the beginning of social and political consciousness appeared first among the Muslims and Kayasthas of Bihar who took the lead in the political salvation of the province. The Muslims of Bihar were keen to opt modern education. No wonder, Bihar had a galaxy of good Muslim leaders by the end of 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century. They went abroad and brought in new ideas on liberty and democracy from the West. They were Syed Abdullah, Maulvi Abdul Hasan Khan, Maulvi Sharafuddin, Maulvi Sakhavat Hussain, Khuda Bakhsh, Nurul Hoda, Mazharul Haq, Hasan Imam, Ali Imam and many others.

The emergence of educated middle class in Bihar created an anti-Bengali movement which led to the separation of Bihar from Bengal. This anti-Bengali sentiment created an unprecedented unity among the non-Bengali population - the Hindus, Muslims and

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others speaking different dialects. An Urdu Monthly *Al-Hadi* had rightly observed the Bengali dominance: "in addition to the government of the British there was a government of the Bengalis because Calcutta had a modern university but Bihar had none."\(^{15}\)

The Bengalis and emigrated to Bihar in large numbers and had captured almost all the fields of employment like educational institution. Government Offices, the railways, etc. The Biharis and had been left merely with a handful of clerical jobs. The educated Biharis disliked them for "Swamping the collectorates, the courts, the police offices and schools like locusts, depriving the local people of the job opportunities."\(^{16}\) The detail has been discussed elsewhere. The political consciousness among the people of Bihar was reflected in the activities of the leaders of the public opinion. Khuda Bakhsh gave up his government job and started his legal practice at Patna. Later on, he became the vice-chairman of the Patna Municipality and of the Patna District Board and set up the famous Khuda Bakhsh O.P. Library in Patna.\(^{17}\)


Two other factors were also responsible for the growth of new political consciousness among the people of Bihar, i.e., Western education and the Press. The Western education brought about certain very important development and far-reaching changes. In the beginning, there was some resistance to English education as it was considered to be a means of conversion to Christianity. Slowly and gradually the Kayasthas and the Muslims took to English education. For the Muslims it was Sir Syed Ahmad Khan who tried to enlighten the Muslims by propagating the importance of the Western education and checked the intellectual bankruptcy from the Muslim community. Very soon some other contemporary leaders like Abdul Latif, Ameer Ali, Nawab Mohsin-ul-Mulk, Nawab Viqar-ul Mulk, Agha Khan, Shibli Nomani, Suleman Nadvi, Khuda Bakhsh, Syed Sharfuddin and others felt the deterioration position of the Muslims and decided to promote English education among the Muslims.


The Muslims of Bihar were also influenced by the new ideas of educational reforms propagated by Sir Syed Ahmad Khan. The Muslims of Bihar also made similar attempts to popularize Western education and worked for intellectual development. There were a large number of Madrasas and Maktabs in the different districts of Bihar where they were imparting traditional religious teaching, now they turned to modern education and learning.

To promote the English education in Bihar, "the Muhammadan Education Committee" was formed at Patna in March 1884 with the main objective to induce and encourage modern education and science among the Muslims youth of Bihar. It had planned to start new schools and colleges to impart Western education. On the pattern of Aligarh Collegiate School, the Muhammadan Anglo-Arabic school was founded in the Patna city in 1884 and many other schools were opened in Bihar to promote Muslim education. Up to 1845, there were only five schools in Bihar, one at Patna with 102 students, Muzaffarpur with 21 students. Bhagalpur with 193 students. Chaibasa with 60 students and Chotanagpur with 110 students.

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While Sir Syed Ahmad Khan was leading the Muslims along the path of modernity, at the same time Bihar showed that they did not want to fall behind others on the path of educational progress. Bihar witnessed the foundation of many societies in the later half of the 19th Century. The first literacy society the Anjuman Islamia was established at Arrah in August, 1866. The Chief patrons of the society were Waris Ali Khan, Babu Surajmal, Khwaja Fakhruddin, Munshi Ahmad Husain and Khuda Bakhsh Khan of Patna. The society was open to both the communities, the Hindus and the Muslims. It played an important role in field of literary activity in Bihar. Syed Imdad Ali started the Bihar Scientific Society at Muzaffarpur in May 1868 with the similar aims and objectives as those of Sir Syed Ahmad's Scientific Society of Ghazipur. The society had about 500 members. Both the Hindus and the Muslims supported the society. It had its many branches in Gaya, Patna, Bhagalpur and Monghyr. The another society called the Anjuman-e Tahzib was founded at Muzaffarpur. Its main objective was to organize educational and cultural activities in the province. At Patna a society was organized to impart social and cultural reforms to the Muslims of Bihar. A school named Madrasa Zubdatul Madaris was founded. Wilayat Ali was its


president and Ali Shad was its Secretary. It was educating the people up to entrance examination.

A few more Scientific and literary societies came into existence in Patna. They were the Bihar literary Society (1873), the Bihar Association (1871) and the Bihar Upkar Sabha (1876). These societies worked for the welfare of all classes. The Mohammedan Educational Committee, Patna, was founded in 1884 on the pattern of M.A.O. College, Aligarh. A Darul-ul-ulum was set up at Bankipur (Patna) on the Deoband pattern which helped in the development of education in Bihar. Even the Muslims of Bihar founded Sir Syed Memorial Fund and generously contributed towards the fund. The foundation of all these associations and institutions were a clear manifestation of the Muslim consciousness of education which produced so many great sons who devoted their whole life for the cause of independent India.

Like the Muslims, the Hindus of Bihar had also founded many associations like "Suddar Anjuman-i Hind, the Kayastha Sabha, the Bihar Landholders' Associations (1978), the Bihar Indigo Planters' Association (1978) and the Anglo-Indian Defence Association.

27. Shah Azimabadi, Shad Ki Kahani Shad Ki Zabani (Urdu), p.70.
29. Imam, Role of Muslims, p.21.
In the early phase of the movement, all the Anjumans and the Associations took leading part in representing genuine grievances and interest of the people before the government.

The press as we know today was, however, brought to India in the wake of Western ideas and civilization. The invention of the printing press revolutionized the whole Europe by propagating information of day to day events. In India, the development of a free press is one of the remarkable features of the 19th century awakening which created modern political consciousness among the Indian people.

The printing-press played a vital role in inspiring the birth of newspapers. In India, since the Britishers came to Bengal and settled over there, it received the earliest impact of Western civilization.

The first printing-press was set up in Calcutta in 1778 by Augustus Hicky who published the first English newspaper in India. The Bengal Gazette or Calcutta General Advertiser which appeared on January 29, 1780. The Bengal Gazette became famous as the “Hicky Gazette”\(^\text{31}\). Hicky described his paper as "A weekly Political and Commercial paper, open to all parties but influenced by none"\(^\text{32}\). But due to his outspoken criticism of the


\(^\text{32}\) Chanda, *History of The English Press in Bengal*, p.1
government, officials and scurrilous attack on Warren Hastings, the then Governor-General the Hicky press was seized in 1782.

Hicky’s weekly was followed by several others newspapers in English and Vernacular languages. Mention may be made of the India Gazette, the Calcutta Gazette, the Bengal Journal, the Oriental Magazine or the Calcutta Amusement, the Asiatic Miscellany, the Calcutta Chronicle and General Advertiser.

A number of newspapers and periodicals were started in English and Indian languages. They played a significant role in the creation of Indian Nationalism and freedom struggle. During that period many vernacular papers from Bengal were brought out. They were: Sulabh Samachar started by Keshav Chandra Sen, a Brahmo

34. The Indian Gazette or the Calcutta Public Advertiser came out on November 18, 1780 by Peter Reed, a salt agent and B. Messinck associated with the Calcutta Theatre.
35. Francis Gladurin, an Officer of the East India Company Started the Calcutta Gazette which came in March, 1784.
36. The Publication of the Bengal Journal commenced in February 1785. It was a weekly periodical edited by William Duane.
37. The Publication of the Oriental Magazine came out on April 6, 1785 by M/S Godon and Hay. It was a monthly periodical.
39. The Calcutta Chronicle and General Advertiser came into publication in January 1786.
Samaj leader, in 1817-40, Dig Darshan41, Samvad Kaumudi42 and Samachar Darpan43.

After the revolt of 1857, Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar and Dwarika Nath Vidyabhusan started the Shome Prakash with political objectives. Many other newspapers and journals of great importance appeared from Bengal. For example Gram Varta Prakashika44 Amrita Bazar Patrika,45 Bangadoota46, Bihar Bandhu47, Bharat Mitra48 and Swatantrata49, etc.

40. N.Kumar Journalism in Bihar, p.36.

41. The Dig Darshan a monthly magazine was started by the Baptist missionaries at Serampur in April 1818. (see N.Kumar, Journalism in Bihar, p.37.

42. The 'Samvad-Kaumudi' a Bengali weekly was started by Bhandari Chandra Banerjee in December 1821, for the political and social purposes (see N.Kumar, Journalism in Bihar, p.37.

43. The Samachar Darpan a Bengali weekly magazine started by the Baptist missionaries at Serampur in June 1818, (see N.Kumar, Journalism in Bihar), p.38.

44. The Gram Varta Prakashika was founded by Harinath Mazundar in April, 1863.

45. The Amrita Bazar Patrika appeared as a Bengali weekly, later on some pages were devoted for English. The three brothers Hemant Kumar, Shishir Kumar and Motilal Ghosh launched this venture and the first issue of this paper appeared on April 22, 1874. This paper prompted the nationalist aspiration for freedom movement.

46. The Bangdoota was founded and edited by Raja Ram Mohan Roy which appeared on May 10,1829.

47. The Bihar Bandhu was founded by Bal Krishan Bhatt with Keshawram Bhatt in 1872 in Calcutta.

48. The Bharat Mitra was started by Durga Prasad Mishra and Pandit Chhotelal Mishra on May 17, 1878. Earlier this paper was fortnightly but turned into a weekly from its 10th issues. It became daily in 1897.

49. The Swatantrata appeared on August 4, 1920, as a daily and was edited by Ambika Prasad Bajpai. It throws light on national views on Gandhian era. p.158
The growth of modern vernacular newspapers and journals specially in Bihar assumed a central place in the history of the freedom movement. First such newspaper was an Urdu Weekly the *Urdu Akhbar* published in 1810 from Calcutta and was edited by Maulvi Akram Ali. The next weekly was *Noor-ul Anwar* published in 1853 by Syed Mohammad Hashim from Arrah. William Tayler, the Commissioner of Patna took a special interest in the publication of an Urdu weekly named *Akhbar-i Bihar* which came to light on September 3, 1856. His main aim was to educate the people and for that he provided all the facilities to promote the circulation of the paper.

The *Bihar Scientific Society* was primarily devoted to the translation work. But later on it started a monthly newspaper in Urdu *Akhbar-ul Akhyar* under the joint editorship of Munshi Surajmal and Rai Sohan Lal. Later on, Munshi Surajmal started another Urdu Journal *Chashm-i Ilm* in 1875.

The first English as well as Hindi newspaper of Bihar started in the Year 1872. It was the *Bihar Herald*, an English

51. Ibid.
52. Ibid.
53. It was Syed Imdad Ali who founded *Bihar Scientific Society* at Muzaffarpur in May 1868 with the similar aims and objectives that was of Sir Syed Ahmad Khan, *Scientific Society at Gazipur* (see Imam, *Role of Muslims*, p.21).
54. N.Kumar, *Journalism in Bihar*, p.50.
55. The *Bihar Herald* was started by Babu Guru Prasad Sen, a leading Lawyer of Patna, with the cooperation of Babu Saligram Singh, Govinda Charan and others. (see *Journalism in Bihar*, pp.50-51.)
newspaper and the *Bihar Bandhu*, a Hindi Weekly from Patna and Calcutta respectively. In 1874, its printing-press was shifted to Patna which played an important role in the public life of Bihar.

Another English weekly, *The Indian Chronicle* started from Patna in 1881, *Bihar Patriot* in 1884, *Kayastha Gazette* in 1889 by Babu Mahesh Narayan, *Bihar Times*, in 1894 which later on became famous as the *Beharee*. This paper played a very important role in the agitation for the separation of Bihar from Bengal. *The Express* was started in 1913. *The Motherland* started by Mazharul Haque in 1921, the *Indian Nation* founded by Kameshwar Singh in February 1931.

Bihar being a predominantly Hindi-Speaking region the absence of Hindi newspaper was noticed. The first Hindi paper published from Patna was the *Bihar Bandhu*, in 1874. It was followed by a number of newspapers and journals like "Motichur", Hindi Gazette, *Vinoda, Bhasha Pradash, Harishchandra Kala, Udyog, Shiksha, Sarva Hitaishi".

Besides these papers other papers and journals appeared in the different parts of Bihar. From Arrah the *Nagari Hitaishi Patrika, Sahitya Patrika* and a monthly magazine, *Manoranjan*, *Mithila Mihir* from Darbhanga, *Khadi Sevak* and *Dharmavarta* from Madhubani, *Aryavarta* from Ranchi, the *Kishan*, *Haldhar*, and

56 The *Bihar Bandhu* had been founded by Keshava Ram Bhatt and his younger brother Madan Mohan Bhatt under the editorship of Munshi Hasan Ali (see Kumar, *Journalism in Bihar*), p.64.

57. See Kumar *Journalism in Bihar*, pp. 50-62.

58. *Ibid*, pp. 64-86.
Palamu Samachar, 'Aryavarta' from Ranchi, the Kishan', Haldhar', and Palamu Samachar, from Daltanganj (Palamu), 'Yugantar' from Jharia (Dhanbad), 'Saran Saroj', Mahila Darpan, and Saptahik Vijaya', from Saran, 'Tirhut Samachar' and Satyug', from Muzaffarpur.  

Besides these newspapers, revolutionary papers containing seditious articles against British Imperialism were propagating mass awareness. The 'Yugantar, the first and the most militant, the revolutionary paper of Calcutta was started in 1906 by Barindra Kumar Ghosh and Abinash Chandra Bhattacharya. This paper in its issue of 16th June, 1907, contained two articles entitled "Away with Fear", and "The Medicine of the Big Stick" for which Bhupendra Nath Dutt, the editor, was prosecuted. Moreover, the earlier articles of this paper discussed the economic aspects. In one such article, we come across the following: "the foreigners manage by artifice to obtain and take away the wealth of the country and everything substantial in it, and throw the Indian, reduce them to skeletons, into the horrid jaws of famine, pestilence and poverty... why should he who was born a man and of a man, die like a worm?... if you cannot show yourself a man in life, show yourself one in death. That is the teaching of the times".

59. Ibid.
60. J.C. Ker, Political Trouble in India, pp.69.
61. Ibid.
62. Ibid. pp.72-73.
The revolutionary secret societies have been described in its issue of 15 July 1907, entitled "shall we be able"? This paper contained many articles which created a sensation among the masses as "Hindu Heroism in the Punjab", the first Indian war of independence, the Bengali's Bomb and the Traitor's extirpation.

Moreover, the Sandhya, the Bandematram and the Karamyogin were also revolutionary papers which endeavoured to develop public consciousness among the masses about the nature of the British Government. These papers were declared extremely dangerous by the British rulers as they contained seditious articles.

63. The same article appeared in its issue of December 14, 1907. See J.C. Ker, Political Trouble in India, pp.76.

64. See in its issue May 2, 1908, J.C. Ker, Political Trouble in India pp. 76-77.

65. Ibid., p. 77

66. Ibid., p. 78.

67. The Sandhya was very closely associated with the yugantar. This paper was edited by Brahmo Bandhap Upadhyaya, printed and published by Haricharan Das on Sept. 3, 1907. (See J.C. Ker, Political Trouble in India), pp. 76-77.

68. The Bandematram was an English daily which was started in November, 1906 by Arabindo Ghosh. The paper was intended to appeal to the educated class of readers about the then Government.

69. The Karamyogin (The Devotee of Action) Magazine was started by Arabinodo Ghosh in June 1909. (See J.C. Ker, Political Trouble in India, p.87.)