II AGRICULTURAL PRODUCT

The Patna-Gaya region was predominantly based on agriculture. Agricultural sector had become the mainstay of the economy especially during the period we are concerned with.

Patna was in advantageous position because of relatively larger concentration of irrigation works and it is reflected in the fact that it had the largest net cropped area in Bihar, i.e., 81 percent. As the following statement shows the cultivable land of the region was divided into two major categories:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Districts</th>
<th>Percentage of Net cropped area on total area.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Champaran</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muzaffarpur</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Darbhanga</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purnea</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Bhagalpur</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Bhagalpur</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patna</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shahabad</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gaya</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saran</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Munger</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Munger</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(source: Gaya Settlement Report, p. 761.)

(a) *Dhanhar:* land upon which winter rice grew.

(b) *Bhit:* was the land all known crops except rice was grew.
II.1 Technology

Mode of agricultural operation was similar to the rest of India, and implements were also not forming any exception.¹ These implements were simple in their construction and their working.² Ploughing of the field was directly linked to crop to be cultivated. A popular rhyme of the nineteenth century from the south Bihar reflects this aspect of Ploughing. It reads,

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Sao chas ganda} \\
\text{Pachas chas manda} \\
\text{Tekar adha mori} \\
\text{Tekar adha tori}
\end{align*}
\]

(A hundred ploughing for cane, fifty for wheat, half that (25) for rice, and half that (12 ½) for oilseeds)³

Plough used in this region had “a bit of iron” used as ploughshare.⁴ Since the region had predominantly stiff dry clay, hence to make it cultivable, cultivators frequently used an instrument called chauki (hurrow).⁵ A couple of poorer peasants who owned one pair of cattle for drawing the plough used to combined their cattle’s to draw chauki.⁶ The third instrument was designed as chonga (a seed drill) to sow seeds of

² Ibid.
⁴ Buchanan, p. 531.
⁵ Ibid.
⁶ Ibid.
Plate I: The Harrow (Henga or Chauki), (G. Grierson, *Bihar Peasant Life*, p. 8)
wheat, barley, lintel (masur) and linseed in unirrigated fields. Buchanan further reports that the chauki was a popular device especially in the absence of mayi (an ‘instrument like a ladder’). Some improvements were added to this basic device. Buchanan reports those hooks presumably made of iron were added. But generally it was drawn with the help of an iron chain. It was found very useful because “one chauki serves for then or twelve ploughs”. Those chauki fitted with chain were considered expensive. It cost Rs. 1 ½ per unit.

In order to meet the expanses involved in the employment of the poor peasants resorted to pooling together of their resources. It is instructive to note that iron being scarce and expensive in the early nineteenth century was nevertheless put to use by poor peasants. Like mayi (ladder), the other notable absentee was the bida (rake) from the Patna-Gaya region.

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7 Ibid.  
8 Ibid.  
9 Ibid.  
10 Ibid.  
11 Ibid.  
12 Ibid.  
13 Ibid.
Three kinds of hoe were used by the cultivators. Large quadrangular hoe called ‘Kodal’ or ‘Phaura’ was used for digging fields and gardens. The smaller one of this kind was called phauri and used for weeding. The third one was a triangular iron tool used on digging ditches and tacks.14 Comparatively, hoe was primarily used for digging ditches.15 Hoe was considered more useful instrument. A plough could scratch the surface of land only by about 2 or 2 ½ inches deep while hoe or kudali could penetrate deeper (about 4 inches) into the land.16 Hoe was considered more efficient for weeding out grass roots than the plough.17

Another mode of sowing was furrow sowing. In this method a plough goes in advance of sowing and seeds were carried in a basket. Seeds were dropped into the furrows as soon as the latter became visible. By this method the seed was sown deep, and the stalk became stronger.18 Sickle was another useful implement. This was used for harvesting and

14 Ibid.
15 Ibid.
17 Volcker, p. 223.
18Grierson, p. 182.
known as *hangsuya*. There were separate appliances used in different agricultural operations or in the processing of different agricultural products.

Agriculture technology of India during the nineteenth century at least was primitive nature and hence could in manufacture or repaired by the village carpenters or ironsmiths. Like other parts of the country in Patna-Gaya region also, village's had their own specialized craftsmen of specific castes groups. They performed those works as their caste based occupational duties. Carpenters, blacksmiths and other artisans rendered their services and skills to sustain the self sufficiency and natural economy

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19 Ibid, p. 15.
20 *Khurpi, Pana, Chilohi & c*, Grierson, in his account gave details of these implements. Grierson, p. 182.
21 E.g. Oil and Sugar processing had done with the establishments called *Kolhu*. In cotton cleaning and rice husking, number of appliances were used. See Grierson, p. 182.
of the village. These artisans had their share in agricultural production. They did not pay any house rent. Grains which they received as their allowances valued at harvest price. This was certainly low and nominal reward.

Tapan Raychaudhauri's explanation that backward technique was the consequence of poverty of the agricultural masses appears to be true in the case of Patna-Gaya region also. The poor peasants lacked very often a pair of oxen to draw the simple plough. In order to obtain a chauki (a Beam) costing Rs. 1 ½, the poor peasants of Patna-Gaya region used to pool their resources. Carts were not used for carrying agricultural products from the fields to the houses of the peasants, Buchanan reports, "carts and cars form no part of a farmer's establishments, nor is produce of his fields ever carried home by means of cattle or carriages of any sort except from the threshing floor, which in the dry season is often a distance


26 Tapan Raychaudhuri, p. 17.

27 Buchanan, p. 531.

28 Ibid.
from his house, and except some sugarcane and maize that are occasionally carried home by buffaloes.  

The peasants did not have any negative attitude towards technology and is apparent from their acceptance of sugar mill at a popular level. The sugar mill was readily accepted by pooling together the resources by those who used the mill. Buchanan noticed, “the sugar mill entirely resembles that of Bhagalpur. The whole expense is about 31 rupees, and the machinery requires to be renewed once in five years. Some old iron remains, but that does not more than pay for annual repairs. The machinery therefore costs six rupees. The total annual expanse is therefore about fourteen rupees. This is usually raised by a contribution among those who use the mill, no person having as much field as one mill will clear, although this does not exceed 10 bigahs Calcutta measure or about three acres. They mutually assist each other at their mill”. Situation apparently remained the same till the last quarter of the nineteenth century when Grierson reported about Bihia sugar mill. It is interesting to note that traditional wooden sugar mill nearly disappeared by the end of the nineteenth century and was supplemented by iron made sugarcane

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29 Ibid, p. 532.

30 Ibid.
crushing mill. Grierson found that all the wooden sugarcane mill had not only became obsolete but they were dismantled and used as firewood.

II.2 IRRIGATION

The climate and topographical conditions of the area under discussion, namely, Patna-Gaya region, seems to have exercised tremendous influence on the socio-economic life of the people.

The agrarian economy of Patna-Gaya region was primarily based on rice production. Monsoon water retention was inadequate owing to sloping nature of the larger part of the cultivable tract. Hence the peasant resorted to various artificial irrigation methods.

Two major river channels viz, the Ganges and the Sone watered the southern part of this region. Besides these two major rivers, other rivers like Pumpun, Morhar, Phalgu, Dhadar, Tilaiya, Dhananjay Khuri and Sakri were other sources of river water. Agriculture in the region under discussion had to depend heavily on artificial sources of water. The distribution of crops and their yields were accordingly influenced by the nature of the soil. Tanr land (upper land in a strip of land created by two

31 Grierson, p. 50.
32 Ibid.
river courses) were reserved for *rabi* (March to May) and *bhadai* (August to September) crops. The water table being lower, excavation of wells was difficult and stiff clayey soil resisted any effort in this direction. Hence these crops depended entirely on the surface moisture, fed by the rain water. These lands were called *apta* or un irrigated land.\(^{34}\)

Since, majority of the rivers received water only in the rainy season; hence their capacity to cultivate was seriously hampered. Secondly, during the rainy season water would flow towards north and eventually entered into the Ganges and thus leaving the soil with inadequate moisture. This had serious implication for the economy and the inhabitants of the region.\(^{35}\) These difficulties were overcome by inhabitants by block the natural drainage water was impounded for use. They diverted the water towards desired directions. It was better known as *ahar* and *pyne* system.\(^{36}\)

To retain an adequate supply of water peasants had an elaborate system of damming water (popularly known as *gherawa*) and leading it to their fields.\(^{37}\) They had multiple earthen embankments (known as

\(^{34}\) Grierson, *A Note on District of Gaya*, Calcutta, 1893.

\(^{35}\) Alok Sheel, *South Bihar Geography and Agricultural Cycle: Gaya and Shahabad in the Nineteenth Century*, in IESHR,

\(^{36}\) It seems that it was a common indigenous method of irrigation was practice of the people. Cf. W. Willock, *Ancient System of Irrigation in Bengal*, Delhi, 1930, (I Pub.), 1984,

\(^{37}\) Grierson, op. cit., p. 53.
gilandazi, i.e., heaps of clay) to retain water and those were exposed to seasonal inundations. They required frequent repairs. Repair works were performed by a specialized group of locally available professionals (called beldars...).

In this region irrigation was based on the twin methods of ahars and pynes which suited the topographical conditions of the era under discussion. A pyne may be describe as a water channel originating from a river and running parallel to the main source of water. Its course petered off with the general slope of the country. The pyne's level adhered to the spot where from it received the supply of water. When the pyne was filled, a temporary earthen dam was thrown across to divert the water into another pyne. Each river or stream ordinarily served several pynes. The utilization of the water of the upper pyne was necessarily delayed by the fact that the flow of water had to be held up at each lifting spot. Another type of pynes was smaller in course, originating from the ahars instead of rivers carried water to the cultivated fields. To secure flow of water

39 Grierson, p. 56.
40 C.P. Sinha, Decline to Destruction, New Delhi, 1997, p. 243.
41 Tanner, op. cit., p. 139.
presumably could be obtained by the sloping nature of the soil. The *pyne* could fill an *ahar* usually two or three miles before the water of the *pyne* reached the level of the cultivated land.\(^{42}\)

From the river with deeper bed and clay soil (like Punpun and Jamune)\(^{43}\) was had to be moved into the *pynes* for which a substantial embankment across the flow of the river was erected.\(^{44}\) The flow of water was facilitated by the tapering nature of the landscape. This is possibly the reason behind the popularity of *pyne* based irrigation system in the entire Patna-Gaya region. The peasants could cultivate large and distant fields which otherwise was not possible with water drawn from wells. These *pynes* were of variable sizes and lengths. Many of them were of great length. Some were as much as 10, 12 or even 20 miles longer.\(^{45}\) They fed a number of distributaries and irrigated large part of the cultivated land known as *desiain pynes*.\(^{46}\) The main channel was called as *payne* and the smaller channels branched off from them were called *bhoklas*, while the

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\(^{43}\) This Jamune was different from the river Jamuna of Northern India, Jamune in Patna-Gaya region is a local river.

\(^{44}\) Tanner, p. 139

\(^{45}\) Buchanan, op. cit., p. 534.

\(^{46}\) Desiain, literally pynes with ten branches.
smallest channel leading immediately into the field were known as karhas.\textsuperscript{47}

An ahar was an artificial collection of water by embanking on three sides (leaving one side open). Usually it was made on most elevated land of a village, and the open side was on even more elevated position of the land which could prevent the flow or loss of water even after the ahrs were full of water, unless there was a cut in the banks.

However, such ahrs were enclosed from all sides. This was done only in such villages which did not have elevated grounds. These ahrs were different from the tanks because these were not dug like a tank. This was built on the surface of the ground and from its position the bottom of the ahar was higher than the other land of the villages intended to be irrigated.\textsuperscript{48} Grierson in his account give a detail description of such ahrs.\textsuperscript{49} The sloping topography of land was not easy to determine with naked eyes. It was marked by the peasants in rainy season, when the flow of water helped them determine the direction of slope with certainty. The slope was generally from north to south. Strong embankments were erected, accordingly on elevated side (north) of the land, which was called


\textsuperscript{48} Tanner, op. cit., p. 139.

\textsuperscript{49} Ibid.
pind. This was at the foot, but the main bank was especially called alang. Sometimes the turning banks on both sides of the ahar(s) (east and west) added, to conduct the surface water into the ahar. The bed of the ahar, inside the embankment was called pet, and the portion behind and below the alang was called peeth. The two side’s banks were called banhua and turning banks were called the singa. The ahar was only intended to hold water within the square. This was deeper near it’s across embankment and getting shallower and shallower towards the southern part. To prevent an overflow of water from the ahar, a drain kanwah (simply a ditch) was provided to it.

The size of the ahar(s) varied according to the availability of sloping terrain. Some of the ahar(s) ran into even two miles in length. Whereas in others it could be only an acre in the total area. An ahar was well adapted for catching the surface water, but his alone was not sufficient. It, therefore, was also fed by pyne. These ahar(s) were considered as store-house of water and the cultivators, therefore, curiously enough called them

50 Belly.
51 Back of body.
52 Horn
53 Tanner, op. cit., p. 139; Grierson, p. 56.
54 Grierson, p. 56.
khazana (a treasure house).\(^{55}\) Ahar\(s\) of the smaller sizes used to get dried during winter, which was helpful for sowing *rabi* crop e.g. wheat. The bigger ahars retained water and hence the fishes collected during rainy season served as 'compensatory remuneration' for the loss of the crop, and helped in defraying the expenses incurred in maintaining the ahars.\(^{56}\) The construction of such ahars involved considerable expenses. The wages of construction labour varied between Rs. 2.50 to Rs. 4 [for 100 Sikandari cubical gaz (i.e, 2 ft. 9 inches long)].\(^{57}\)

Construction of an ahar was a specialized crafts and required engagement of substantial labour. Therefore labour was generally drawn from the people belonging to musahar caste. The musahar had earned a special reputation in examining the soil.\(^{58}\) During pre-colonial period, these social groups were used to get land in gift along with 'proper remuneration' for their services.\(^{59}\)

\(^{55}\) Treasure, James, op. cit.

\(^{56}\) Buchanan, p. 534.

\(^{57}\) M. Martin, *Eastern India, I*, 1838, (I Pub.), Delhi, 1976, p. 294. The wages were not paid on the basis of the work days rather they were paid in accordance with the job performed by the workers.


\(^{59}\) Ibid.
The use of *pynes* and *ahars* for irrigation did not have uniform pattern. Mode, sealer and other uses of irrigation varied according to the local conditions. In the district of Patna rivers were not numerous. Consequently larger *pynes* were required in the region.\(^{60}\) In further south i.e., in Gaya region, *ahars* were frequently filled with water by mere drainage owing to sloping topography of the ground. In Patna *ahars* were directly connected to a running stream by a *pyne*.\(^{61}\)

To raise the water for irrigation number of water lifting tools were used. When the quantity of water was considerable a ‘canoe’ like tool was used to lift the water which was called *‘Dhoon’*. This boat shaped wooden scoop was attached at one end to a lever having its fulcrum located near the rear side. A mud lump was tide to it for providing weight at one end. The hollow portion of *dhoon* was generally about 10ft. long and 6 1/2 inches wide and varied in depth from 3 to 4 inches to 6 or 7 inches in different parts. The highest convenient lift was 4 1/2 feet. It facilitated lifting of water about 500 cubic feet in an hour.\(^{62}\) Such large haulage of water possibly helped the peasants in irrigating the larger portions of land which not possible by well irrigation. Second device used was called *chhangar*. This

\(^{60}\) C.P. Sinha, p. 243.

\(^{61}\) Ibid.

\(^{62}\) M. Martin, p. 294.
was a basket suspended with ropes. The estimated cost for irrigation varied from Rs. 3-14 *anas* to Rs. 13 per acre. The cost depended on the height to which water was to be lifted. For irrigation the field’s cultivators needed assistances. They assisted each other and they called this practice as *palti* (exchange of labour).

For the distribution of water from a *pyne*, certain practices were followed. Water was provided to different villages on rotational basis; called *parabandi* (literally means rotation wise). Temporary embankments erected near the place where the *pyne* left the village. After water was led to the fields for the first set of villagers, villagers of the next village who had already raised their temporary embankment would conduct the water by making a cut into the embankment erected by the previous village.

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63 Letter from the Executive Engineer, to the Superintending Engineer, Soane Circle, 20 March, 1870, in Extract from Note by Officiating Inspector General of Irrigation Works on Soane Canal Project, 8th September, 1869. in selection from the records of the Government of Bengal; Paper Related to Soan Canals, Chiefly report on Estimates, 1867 to 1886, Irrigation Branch, P.W.D, Govt. of Bengal, 1880.

64 Note by Chief Engineer, Bengal, Irrigation Branch, Public Work Department, January, 1871.


66 Tanner, p. 143
Within the village internal parabandi has done on various strips or patties for distribution of water.  

Well irrigation was another prominent feature of the region. This was extensively used in the southern part of the river Ganges where due to proximity of the river, pynes and ahars were not suitable for irrigation.  

Well also served as popular source of water for irrigation as well as domestic purpose in Gaya. According to an estimate at the beginning of the twentieth century, total number of wells in the district was estimated to be 37,412. One well used to irrigate about 49 acres of net cropped area.  

Wells were exclusively used to irrigate the garden crops, e.g. poppies, which gave money rent. This was able to draw the attention of landlords who promoted and assisted the cultivators to dig wells for the cultivation of commercial crops. The cultivation was encouraged under the monopoly regulations for it was an important source of revenue. To assist the cultivators to grow poppy and increase the production certain

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69 Tanner, p. 138.
70 Buchanan, p. 574.
71 Ibid, p. 552.
measures were adopted by the government.\textsuperscript{72} Poppy cultivators where advanced loan to dig the wells for irrigating fields under poppy crop.\textsuperscript{73} The significance of well irrigation is highlighted by the Famine Commission of 1880, which recommended distribution of 'taqavi' loans to the peasants for digging wells to irrigate their fields.\textsuperscript{74}

Well irrigation was exclusively dependent upon the individual cultivator, while irrigation from \textit{ahars} and \textit{pynes} involved the entire village community. The zamindars had developed superior rights over the entire mechanism of \textit{ahars} and \textit{pyne} and over water carried by them. They served as a supra local authority to keep this system in order.\textsuperscript{75} Water-works and other natural resources were within the domain of the zamindars in permanently settled areas. Beside this, landlords were the only agency from whom the peasants could expect capital required for irrigation by

\textsuperscript{72} Government of Bengal, Revenue Department Miscellaneous Revenue Branch, Dated April, 1860, no. 10/21.

\textsuperscript{73} Ibid, in 1860 this was decided to give Rs. 60 as loan to poppy cultivators for dug the wells.

\textsuperscript{74} K. Bagchi, op. cit., pp. 40-41.

\textsuperscript{75} Peter Robb, \textit{State, Peasant and Moneylender, in Rural India}, ed. by P. Robb, New Delhi, 1986, pp. 108-109.
ahar and pyne. The zamindars took care of the construction, maintenance, and repair of ahars and pynes, in their localities.\textsuperscript{76}

The zamindars performed their ‘duty’ with the help of their village officials, viz., brahil and gorait. These two were responsible for distribution of water among the peasants.\textsuperscript{77} In this region bhrahil system or produce-rent was widely prevalent. This was beneficial for both, ryots as well as zamindars. Ryots believed that water would be distributed equally among the participants because landlords were also interested in preventing damage to each ryot’s crop.\textsuperscript{78} Village officials had their own interest as they were also associated directly with the crop (their share was also given in kind under bhaoli system).\textsuperscript{79}

When the zamindars were not taking their interest in maintaining the irrigation system their ryots were facing certain problems. Mostly in the case of the subletting thikadars did not spend money on forming and repairing the pynes and ahars.\textsuperscript{80}

\footnotesize
\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{76} Buchanan, p. 534.
\item \textsuperscript{77} Buchanan, p. 566.
\item \textsuperscript{78} Remark of A. Oglivy, Manager, Tikari Estate, July 1888, Government of Bengal, Revenue Department, Land Revenue Branch, 1888.
\item \textsuperscript{79} Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{80} Buchanan, p. 569.
\end{itemize}
Gradually the villagers had developed an understanding on the basis of which they cooperated in the working of this system. This was known as goam, which envisaged that one adult out of every benefit family was to be deputed to assist in the repair work of pyne and ahar without receiving any remuneration in lieu of the work done.\textsuperscript{81}

By the middle of 19\textsuperscript{th} century, an English Officer Co. C.H. Dickens was the first one who conceived the idea of using the water of river Sone for the irrigation purpose in 1853.\textsuperscript{82} In the year 1873-74, an anicut across the river Sone for irrigation purposes was built and other canals were completed a few years after. They covered an area of 735 acres, of which 80 percent of the irrigation was done in Shahabad, 11 percent in Gaya and 9 percent in Patna.\textsuperscript{83}

In Patna, Eastern main canal originating from Sone River was extended up to Monghyr.\textsuperscript{84} To divert the water in this canal an ancient was built across the river at the distances of four miles from the Sone. The Patna canal was branched off from the eastern main canal, which runs


\textsuperscript{82} U.M. Jha, Irrigation and Agricultural Development, Delhi, 1964, p. 61.

\textsuperscript{83} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{84} W.W. Hunter, Statistical Account of Bengal, Patna, XII, London, 1878, pp. 22-23.
parallel to Sone. This canal was 79 miles long and covered 7980 sq. miles or 499200 acres of land for irrigation. Of the whole length of this canal, 43 miles were located in the Gaya district and 36 miles in Patna. At the very early stage of its construction it started serving the envisaged purposes. During 1873-74, this project work provided employment to as many as 40,000 persons. Around 160000 acres of area was irrigated by its unfinished channels and there augmented the food supply by 70,000 tons. For the distribution of water a great care was observed. Unprepared fields were not entitled for irrigation from the governments canals. For the cultivators, water rates were charged according to classification of crops and the nature of lease. For annual lease, the charges for water were Rs. 2-8 ana per acre. Three years lesas were divided into two categories, viz, kharif and rabi. Kharif leases included the gross area under canal irrigation of the village and paid at the rate of Rs. 1-8 ana per acre. Rabi leases were charged at the rate of Rs. 2-4 per acre.

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85 Ibid.
86 Ibid.
87 Ibid.
88 Letter from F.T. Haig, R.E. Joint Secretary to the Government of Bengal, Public Work Department, Irrigation Branch, to the Superintending Engineer, Sone Circle, dated Fort William 31st January, 1878, no. 381-5.
89 Ibid.
Plate II: The Irrigation Lever (lātha) raised with the bucket out of the well.
(G. Grierson, *Bihar Peasant Life*, p. 200)
Plate III: Irrigation lever (lātha) showing the method of discharging water, (G. Grierson, *Bihar Peasant Life*, p. 208)
A person was nominated by the villagers to look after the distribution of water among the Shareholders. He was responsible to collect the official orders. He was to withhold 5 per cent of the assessment of the canal rates for maintenance of the canal and in lieu of his services; he received 3 per cent of the assessment in remuneration. Village official's patwaris and amins were made responsible to maintain the record or Khatiani. They received a share of the assessment for their services.

These new canals were brought certain improvement in the region. Waste lands were brought under cultivation and this led to the increase of rice cultivation.

II.3 CROPS

Rice: Peasant production in India was depends upon peasant's choice. But the determining factor of this choice was in actuality, the need

90 Ibid.
91 Ibid.
92 Report of the Committee appointed under the orders conveyed in Bengal Government, 23678/91, of the 1st July 1878 to consider the question of expediting the collection of water rates on the Sone canals.
93 Note by Col. C.W.I Harrison, Chief Engineer, Bengal, on the report of the committee appointed to enquire into the administration of the Sone Canal, January 14, 1890, Irrigation branch, Public Work Department.
of the rural society.\footnote{David Ludden, \textit{Agricultural Products in Indian History}, Cambridge, pp. 23-24.} Beside this, urban demand was also important in this regard.\footnote{C.A. Bayley, \textit{Rulers, Townsmen and Bazars}, cited by Ludden, p. 12.} And rice cultivation in the Patna-Gaya region should also be evaluated in this context.

Except on the immediate bank of the Ganges, which was high land, rice was cultivated everywhere in the region.\footnote{Buchanan, op. cit., p. 493.} Rice was cultivated throughout the year. However, quality and quantity of production was determined by the specied seeds and season. \textit{Aghani} or winter rice was the best quality rice produced in this region.\footnote{T. Kumar, \textit{History of Rice in India}, Delhi, 1988, pp. 167-168.} This was also one of the most important crop upon which cultivators were excessively dependent. Failure of this crop meant distress and scarcity in the region.\footnote{O. Malley, \textit{Census of India}, V (1), Calcutta, 1913, p. 3. During second half of the nineteenth century, failure of this crop was one the factor for the scarcity and famine of this region. See for detail Report of famine.}

This \textit{aghani} rice was manually broadcast on low lands after the commencements of rains. Initially seed was made to sprout and then paddy was sown in the field in June and July.\footnote{T. Kumar, op. cit., pp. 167-68.} \textit{Aghani} rice could be cultivated simply by sowing one field or being transplanted. First method was known as \textit{bhoga} or \textit{baog} and the later, the transplanted rice was known
as *ropa*. *Bhoga* might be *ropa* in one place and *ropa* might be *bhoga* in other place.\(^{100}\) Being aquatic plant rice was always sown in watered field. At the end of the September, water was allowed to drain off from the rice field, so that the field could be without water for fifteen days. After that rice field was again flooded. This practice was known as *nigar*.\(^{101}\) Rainfall or failing that irrigation was essential for the successful harvest of rice crop.\(^{102}\) The last phase of the monsoon rain which was locally known as *hathiya* in Patna-Gaya region was very conducive for the rice crop.\(^{103}\) These *hathiya* rains provided enough moisture to the land for the next *rabi* crop.\(^{104}\) *Sathi* was the *bhadai* rice. This rice was broadcasted and not transplanted.\(^{105}\) The winter rice covered more than fifty percent of the net cropped area.\(^{106}\) In Patna this was called *kartika* or early rice because this was regarded as 60 days crop.\(^{107}\) There were number of varieties of rice crops produced in this region. These were as follows: *basmati, dolangi, laldiya, kamaudh, thakurprasad, sirikwal, karibank, batasa, samzira* etc. These were fine paddy of

\(^{100}\) Grierson, Bihar Peasant life.


\(^{103}\) P.C. Raychowdhary, op. cit., p. 196.

\(^{104}\) T. Kumar, op. cit, p. 168.

\(^{105}\) P.C. Raychowdhary, pp. 45-47.


\(^{107}\) Hunter, pp. 107-108.
first class. Fine paddy of second class were as follows: dudh kahar, ramdayi, kapurar, sibladu, kijra, badarphuli, chandragahi, baitharni, lohra, rat, bakoi, baranti, katika, karhani, gora, jaltham, batari, sahil, khatayil, dhusra, gordulan, gahpata, bansphul, gajmukta, sahla, balam, edli, gajmukti, dhanmanwan, saringi, batasphani, saranga, ghorsar, ghurra, rarhiya, sikisar, karanga, dakaha, sara, sathi, silhati.

In the last quarter of the nineteenth century irrigation facilities were improved in this region, with the opening of Sone canal\textsuperscript{108} and it accelerated the process of the bringing waste land under the plough. This led to the expansion of rice cultivation particularly in southern part of Gaya district.\textsuperscript{109} According to Hunter’s estimates the total area under cultivation in Gaya covered 895620 acres of land.\textsuperscript{110} The rice cultivation claimed more land by the close of the 19\textsuperscript{th} century and stood at 1322800 acres (1895-96).\textsuperscript{111}

\textsuperscript{108} We have discussed it in another chapter.

\textsuperscript{109} Tanner, op. cit., GSR, pp. 78-80.

\textsuperscript{110} Hunter, op. cit., p. 82.

\textsuperscript{111} Agricultural Statistics of India, Calcutta, 1898. p. 120.
This increase in the areas of rice production was due to the growing demand of the rice in Bengal and other parts of India. Railway facilitated its export. The prices of rice at Calcutta port doubled during this period. If its price rose from Rs. 1-2 ana per maunds in 1855-56 to 2 rs. 15 ana 10 paise by 1865-66. It supplied rice to Bombay and North West Provinces. From the south Bihar 3029155 maunds of grain were exported by railway to N.W. Provinces. Increased market demand of rice or other food grains led to the exhaustion of the stocks. And the wages which were not corresponding with prices implied that rice became dearer and hence beyond reach for the common people.

WHEAT:

Wheat (a rabi crop) was cultivated in two ways. In good clay land, wheat was sown by drills, without watering the field. This was sown broadcast then it sown in watered field. The finest quality of wheat grew

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114 Ibid. p. 45.

115 Ibid.

116 Ibid. p. 4.

117 Buchanan, II, pp. 496-497.
in this region was known as *dudhiya gehun*, which was called cultivated on a sandy tract. Another variety of wheat grown in this region was *desiya gehun*. This was a coarse variety.\textsuperscript{118} Very often barley was sown intermixed with wheat in the same field and reaped together. This mixed grain was called *gujai*.\textsuperscript{119} During early days of the nineteenth century, probably this was a common practice because Buchanan did not mention separate value of wheat. He mentioned the produce and value of wheat along with barley. This region produced 55,28,547 maunds of wheat and barley, worth Rs. 37,24,791 in a year.\textsuperscript{120} *Gujai* was used generally as floor and was consumed by the poorer classes of the region. The stubble of *gujai* was trodden by cattle, and its straw (bhusa) was used as a fodder.\textsuperscript{121} Wheat was also sown along with gram and mustard.\textsuperscript{122} A good soil could produce 4 maunds, 37 ½ seers of wheat on each acre.\textsuperscript{123} During the second half of the nineteenth century, there was a downward trend exhibited in its price. In 1861-65, average price of wheat was 23-81 seers per rupee in Gaya and 20.94 seers per rupee in Patna. There was an increased during 1885-90.

\textsuperscript{118}Ibid.
\textsuperscript{119} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{120}Ibid, II, p. 754.
\textsuperscript{121} Hunter, op. cit., p. 85.
\textsuperscript{122} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{123} Grierson, op. cit., p. 87.
During this period, it cost one rupee for 18-26 seers of wheat whereas in Gaya one rupee could fetch 16.03 seers.\textsuperscript{124}

Barley was cultivated mainly for the home consumption.\textsuperscript{125} This was parched and then pounded; in this form this was called \textit{satis}, which was consumed by the poor labouring class.\textsuperscript{126} Buchanan mentioned that barley was among the export goods, by the last quarter of the century this was not exported.\textsuperscript{127} Being the food of the poorer class of the society, barley was comparatively cheaper than the other crops. During 1861-65, each rupee could fetch 38.15 seers of barely.\textsuperscript{128} From 1865 price of the barely started increasing tremendously and in 1893 its price reached 19.47 seers per rupee in Gaya and 22.43 seers per rupee in Patna.\textsuperscript{129}

\textit{Marua} was next important food crop of the region. This was also, largely consumed by the poorer people. This was a summer crop and was transplanted as well as broadcast. Being a garden crop, this was watered by wells. Hunter informs us that 80,000 acres of land was covered with

\textsuperscript{124} Index of the Prices and wages pp 93-94
\textsuperscript{125} P.N. Bose, op. cit., p. 181.
\textsuperscript{126} Hunter, op. cit., p. 85.
\textsuperscript{127} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{128} Index of the prices and wages, pp. 18-19
\textsuperscript{129} Index of Prices and Wages, Calcutta, 1895, pp. 18-19.
it. Till the close of the nineteenth century, area covered under its cultivation almost remained the same. In Patna, in the year 1894 to 1896 this was covered the area of the 71,500 acres and 89100 acres respectively, while in Gaya, between 1890-96, area varied 7700 to 78000 acres.

Next to the marua, maize and janera were important crops of the region. These were cultivated on the bank of the river Ganges.

Chana (gram) was a rabi crop and sometime sown mixed with wheat and barley. When this was sown mixed with the wheat, produced 4 maunds 27 2/16 seers on each acre in good kewal soil and when this was sown along with barley, the field was 9 maunds 21 seer.

A vide variety of leguminous plants were cultivated in this region. Khesari was the most important among them and constituted an important part of the poor people's food. Pea was was sown in various ways. Some were sown on mud of inundated lands as the water receded some were sown among standing rice and some were sown mixed with barley. Some were cultivated as winter crop on watered land intermixed with various

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130 Hunter, op. cit., p. 85.
131 Agricultural Statistics of India, Calcutta, 1898, p. 120.
132 Ibid.
133 Buchanan, op. cit., p. 499.
134 Grierson, op. cit., p. 87.
135 Buchanan, p. 499.
other crops. Masur, Kurthi, Mung, Arahur, Mothi, Urd, Bhetmash and Ghangra were the other leguminous pulses cultivated in this region. These were the important constituents of food of the masses. Few among them were cultivated for the oil. Sarso, Rayi, Tisi, and Til were such crops. Oil of the tisi was maxed with the poppy seed and used as lamp oil.

OPIUM CULTIVATION:

Opium was most (in)famous product of Indian colonial history. During the nineteenth century opium was extensively grown and prepared in two specific tracts in India: (i) in the valley of the Ganges, around Patna and Banaras and (ii) in fertile table land in Central India (Malwa region). In Malwa, cultivation of poppy was not liable to any state control. A duty was levied on it when it passed through the territory of British Indian Government. In the valley of the Ganges, cultivation of poppy and its processing was under the state control. This was supervised by two agencies, Patna and Ghazipur. These two places served as the manufacturing centres of opium during the nineteenth century.

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138 Ibid.
139 W.W. Hunter, Indian Empire, pp. 392-93.
140 Ibid, Imperial Gazetteer of India, vol. xx, p. 70.
a centre of opium production, had earned a name even before the advent of English East India Company as a ruling authority in this region.\textsuperscript{141} This region was at that time, already famous for production of excellent quality of opium in great quantity.\textsuperscript{142} After acquiring political control, English East India Company’s government succeeded in monopolizing the poppy cultivation and opium production in 1773.\textsuperscript{143} The reason behind adopting this measure was possibly the line of thinking that this would be helpful for encouraging peasants for poppy cultivation and would lead to regular supply of poppy juice to the English East India Company.\textsuperscript{144} Company procured opium juice from the cultivators through their contractors. These Indian contractors were notorious for their mischievous activities of adulterating, manipulating prices and exploiting the poppy cultivators.\textsuperscript{145} This ‘contract system’ was found unsuitable to get desired result, and hence it was finally abandoned in 1797 and replaced by ‘Agency

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{141} Watt, Dictionary of Economic Products of India, vol. vi, (2), London, 1893, p. 37
\item \textsuperscript{142} George Foster, A Journey from Bengal to England, I, London, 1798 (Rep.), New Delhi, p. 24.
\item \textsuperscript{143} H.R.C. Wright, The Abolition by Cornwallis of forced Cultivation of Opium in Bihar, in the Economic History Review, New Series, XII (1), 1959, pp. 112-119.
\item \textsuperscript{144} Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{145} H.R. Ghoshal, Economic Transition in Bengal, Calcutta, 1966, p. 113.
\end{itemize}
System'. 146 Under this system certain districts were identified as opium districts. 147 In these districts (Patna and Gaya were also among them) agency offered advances to the poppy growers which was equal to about two third of the value of the produce, which was determined to be grown in his field. 148 Cultivation of poppy was strictly regulated by the Company. Cultivators who wanted to cultivate poppy in his land needed to obtain a license from the company then only he could cultivate poppy in his fields with an advance sum of money. Any cultivator without obtaining a license from the Company could not grow it. 149 This settlement between cultivators and Company was made for only one year. Cultivator had to renew his license every year if he wanted to continue with poppy cultivation. 150 In this system price of the raw opium was fixed prior to harvesting and accordingly cultivator had to deliver his entire produce to the Company, which were later on sent to Patna factory for processing. 151 In the Patna-Gaya region beside the chief factory at Patna, there were

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146 Ibid.
147 Botts, Considerations of Indian Affairs, London, MDCC LXXII, p. 148.
149 Ibid.
151 Ibid; See also Irfan Habib, Indian Economy, 1858-1914, New Delhi, 2007, p. 140.
number of subordinate satellite factories for collecting the poppy juice from the cultivators. These were situated at Biharsharif, Tehta, Rampur, Jwaffer, Anti, Khagaul, Sadikpur and Nawada. These factories and outstations were in charge of native gomashtahs (contractors) who were under the supervision and control of the opium Agent at Patna.

This system of advance attracted the cultivators for poppy cultivation for two reasons. Firstly, cultivators received the advances at the beginning of the agricultural season when the requirement of money was optimum for the cultivators. Secondly, under Permanent Settlement, cultivators had to pay their rents in cash and the agricultural produce like poppy which was a cash crop suited the situation.

Being an expensive crop for the cultivators, poppy was always cultivated as a garden crop. All garden crops were irrigated by wells. Crop like poppy was able to fetch a high rent for the land. Therefore landlords also encouraged the cultivators by extending them financial help to dig wells, which was necessary for extending the cultivation of all

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152 S.B. Singh, op. cit, p. 456.
153 Ibid.
154 British Parliamentary Papers, xix, p. 170.
155 Buchannan, p. 522.
156 Ibid, p. 534.
garden crops, included poppy.\footnote{Government of India, Revenue Department, \textit{Miscellaneous Revenue Branch}, 10/21, April 1860, No. 39, and No. 116.} Cultivators were in an advantageous position after accepting the loan for wells. This would be helpful for them. Cultivators grew another crop on the same field in the same year and irrigation facility (in the form of new wells) could increase the productivity of their land.\footnote{Ibid.} The company’s government adopted it as their policy to enhance the production.\footnote{Ibid.} Company was compelled to adopt this policy due to the certain developments which took place in this regard during the first quarter of the nineteenth century.

After adopting the Agency System, Company followed the policy of restrict cultivation in the most fertile land in Bihar,\footnote{Michael Greenberg, \textit{British Trade and the Opening of China}, Cambridge, 1951, pp. 108-09.} as mentioned earlier, specific districts were selected for its cultivation. Fall of the Marathas in 1818 led to the shift in opium policy of in Bengal.\footnote{J.F. Richards, \textit{The Indian Empire and Peasant production of Opium in India}, in Modern Asian Studies, 15 (1), 1981, pp. 59-82.} With a view to increase the production the Government adopted a policy to attract the peasants through liberal advances for irrigation, additional payment for delivering

\footnote{Government of India, Revenue Department, \textit{Miscellaneous Revenue Branch}, 10/21, April 1860, No. 39, and No. 116.}
\footnote{Ibid.}
\footnote{Ibid.}
\footnote{Michael Greenberg, \textit{British Trade and the Opening of China}, Cambridge, 1951, pp. 108-09.}
\footnote{J.F. Richards, \textit{The Indian Empire and Peasant production of Opium in India}, in Modern Asian Studies, 15 (1), 1981, pp. 59-82.}
a quantity in excess and offered increased prices to the cultivators.\textsuperscript{163} Therefore even, waste lands were also reclaimed.\textsuperscript{164} These efforts proved to be a success. Numbers of license seekers increased in this region.\textsuperscript{165} Company desired that cultivators offered their best land for poppy cultivation. But cultivators realised that there were other garden crops which equally more remunerative for them. Landlords also realized high rent from the best land. In such circumstances cultivators preferred to raise other crops like sugarcane.\textsuperscript{166} To meet their desired goal, the government adopted certain harsh measures. It was declared that the peasants in opium districts of Patna and Banaras were bound to ear mask certain fixed portion of their land for poppy cultivation.\textsuperscript{167}

Regulating prices was an important mechanism of opium monopoly. Prices were fixed by the government. This fixation of price was arbitrarily done by the government. Earlier this was fixed at Rs. 3, then 3 rupees 10 \textit{anas} 10 \textit{paisa} in 1838.\textsuperscript{168} A cultivator had to spend 17 rupees 11 \textit{anas} in Gaya

\textsuperscript{163} B.B Chaudhari, \textit{Growth of Commercial Agriculture in Bengal}, Calcutta, 1964, p. 36.
\textsuperscript{164} R.R. Diwakar, \textit{Bihar Through the Ages}, p. 723.
\textsuperscript{166} B.B Chowdhary, op. cit., p. 67.
\textsuperscript{167} M. Martin, \textit{Our Indian Empire}, p. 24.
\textsuperscript{168} Financial Proceeding, Board of Custom Salt and Opium, 6 September, 1850, no. 19, National Archives of India, New Delhi.
and 19 rupees 7 *anas* in Patna on each *bigha* as the cost of production.\(^{169}\) So cost of production on an average 3 rupees 10 *ana* per *bigha* and at this rate of expenditure an average cultivator was which included his profit, seeds for next season and leaves. The same land also gave one more crop in same year.\(^{170}\)

High prices offered to the cultivators by the Company were a stimulator of poppy cultivation. But reduction of the prices in perpetuity created hurdle for the cultivators. In 1855 the price was further reduced to 3 rupees 4 *anas* per *ser.*\(^{171}\) This caused hardship to the cultivators. *Zamindars* were not reducing their rents on poppy cultivating land and the prices were reduced from 3 rs-10 *ana* to 3rs-8*ana* and subsequently 3rs and 4*anas*. In between cost of labour had also increased. This resulted in the decline of its cultivation. The average produce of per *beegha* declined drastically during this period. The table helps us in understanding fair phenomenon during 1849-1859.

Later on increase in the price of poppy at the rate of 4*ana* per *seer* to some extent could attract peasants for its cultivation and thus supply of

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\(^{169}\) Ibid, no. 22.

\(^{170}\) Ibid.

\(^{171}\) Government of Bengal, op. cit. This was reduced from Rs. 3- 10 *ana* to Rs. 3- 8 *ana* and further Rs. 3-4 *ana*.  

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In the last decade of the nineteenth century the price was raised to 5 rupees per seer which gave cultivators 20 rupees 10 anas per bigha yield. Though this was argued that this offered price was not adequately remunerative to the peasants but rise in the number license seekers present a different picture of it between 1873 to 1893: this number in Patna agency alone rose to 699,000.

People of a particular caste, Koeris were considered as traditional poppy cultivators but certainly this was so remunerative that Brahman, Rajputs and others upper caste people also started the cultivation it in their fields. Due to superior position in caste hierarchy, they got their lands cultivated through the hired labourers. Secondly unlike Koiri women, women from upper caste families did not assist the men fold in their cultivation.

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172 Correspondence of R. King, Sub Deputy Opium Agent of Patna, dated 6th January, 1860.
174 J.F. Richards, op. cit. p. 80.
175 B.B Chaudhari, op. cit., p. 171.
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[Source: Letter of J.G. Pughe, English Sub-Deputy Opium agent of Sewan, dated 21st November, 1859]
Koiris possibly could improve their economic status and were able to make a claim a better position in caste hierarchy during census period of last quarter of nineteenth century and early of the twentieth century.\footnote{Risley, \textit{Caste and Tribe in Bengal}, Calcutta, (Rep.), 1891, 1981, pp. 501-503.}

**SUGAR**

In Bihar, Patna-Gaya region constituted an important tract for sugarcane cultivation during the colonial period.\footnote{Watt, \textit{Dictionary of Economic Products of India}, VI (1), London, 1893, p. 279.} Probably in the last quarter of the 18\textsuperscript{th} century sugarcane cultivation was found unremunerative by the cultivators and there was only 1200 \textit{bigahs} of land offered for sugarcane cultivation in Patna-Gaya region.\footnote{S.B. Singh, \textit{Economic Condition, 1757-1858}, in \textit{Comprehensive History of Bihar}, III (1), ed. K.K. Dutta, J.S. Jha and A. Thakur, Patna, 1976, p. 467.} At this time East India Company's government showed their desire to increase the production for not only to meet the demand of sugar in England but also to increase the general export trade of Bengal.\footnote{C.P. Saha, \textit{Decline to Destruction}, p. 130-31}
districts were directed to give attention to promote the cultivation of sugarcane and to inform the cultivators and dealers in sugar, and to assure them of their profits irrespective of the quality of sugar.\textsuperscript{180}

Cultivators who cultivated sugarcane did not pay their rent at a uniform rate. This varied from Rs. 1 to Rs. 8, according to the nature of soil.\textsuperscript{181} Cost of sugarcane cultivation was higher. This amounted to Rs. 17 per bigha.\textsuperscript{182} At the same time, for the cultivators this was highly remunerative. Each bigha of sugarcane earn a profit of rupees 15.\textsuperscript{183} This was very lucrative for cultivators because no other article of vegetable production yielded such profit for them.\textsuperscript{184}

When Buchanan visited this region he recorded that some 20000 bighas of land was claimed by sugarcane of different varieties.\textsuperscript{185} The apparent substantial portion of land under sugarcane cultivation possibly suggested that cultivators found it profitable to raise this crop in their fields.

\textsuperscript{180} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{181} From E.E. Pote, Commercial Resident of Patna to Board of Trade (commercial), Proceedings, 25 November, 1793.

\textsuperscript{182} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{183} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{184} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{185} Buchanan, op. cit., p. 521.
For the manufacturing of refined sugar or *chini* in their manufactory at Patna, it was decided to procure *raub* or syrup through the *pykars* (agents). They extended advances to the *paykars* (agents) for annual supply.¹⁸⁶ These *pykars* generally entered into contract with cultivators at the end of agricultural season. Cultivators, on the other hand needed help at the commencement of the season; therefore, the contract system did not really serve the purpose of encouragement for cultivators.¹⁸⁷

After 1793 situation changed and remarkable increase was recorded in sugarcane cultivation. Sugarcane was a valuable crop but at the same time this was an expensive and difficult crop to grow. Buchanan reported generally absence of provision of accepting money in advance in due Patna-Gaya region.¹⁸⁸ But sugarcane was an exception in this regard. Landlords took keen interest to enhance their profit increasing their production under permanent settlement. They usually gave rupees 2 per *bigha* to his cultivators (who were growing sugarcane) which cultivators were expected to repay.¹⁸⁹ Unlike opium cultivation, sugarcane cultivation

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¹⁸⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸⁸ Buchanan, p. 552.

¹⁸⁹ Ibid.
helped the zamindars in securing rent. Rupees 5-13 was paid sugarcane whereas it was 5-17 rupees in case of opium and in few places e.g. in estate of Pilich it was 4-7 rupees on sugarcane and 3 ½ -5 rupees on opium.190

Till 1820, individual peasants were involved in sugar production and Company was not finding it viable for trade.191 But soon after the situation changed and particularly after 1833 there was a tremendous increase observed in sugar trade.192 Cultivator found it more suitable to sell their product to the agents who offered them better price after 1813.193

Juice of sugarcane was extracted by two ways. Firstly with mortar and pestle device made wood or stone and driven by men or cattle.194 This was the conventional Indian method of this region and used by common peasants. But the second one was an outcome of the effort of improvement. This was known as iron sugar mill (also called Bihia iron Mill) as discussed earlier.195

During last decade of the 19th century sugarcane cultivation continued to be an extensive cultivated crop in this region. However, the

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190 Ibid, p. 578.
191 Watt, op. cit., p. 333.
194 Watt, op. cit., p. 257.
195 Ibid.
ordinary peasants were not much interested in it owing to high cost of production.

**BETEL LEAF:**

Betel leaf of this region was considered to the superior to all others cultivated in other parts of India.\(^{196}\) This was cultivated in little amount as garden plant on presumably best productive lands. At the time of Buchanan’s visit this was cultivated in 265 *bigha* of land but it was highly remunerative contributing Rs. 300 per *bigha* annually.\(^{197}\) The situation not witness change at any remarkable level and Hunter in his *Statistical Account* reported that it was cultivated on small level.\(^{198}\) Its cultivation needed utmost skill and care. It was grown on a mound called *bhit* with some special arrangement to protect this delicate plant. This plant was supported by low *roof*.\(^{199}\) People from the Barai caste were engaged in its cultivation in this region.\(^{200}\) This was a remunerative product and cultivators of betel leaves in Bengal rose to the status of zamindars and

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\(^{196}\) Buchanan, II, p. 526.

\(^{197}\) Ibid.

\(^{198}\) Hunter, op. cit., p. 93.

\(^{199}\) Gierson, *Bihar Peasant Life*, New Delhi, 1975, pp. 204-205.

occupancy raïyat. But in Patna-Gaya region very few cultivators had risen above the status of occupancy raïyats. 201

INDIGO:

Buchanan did not give any importance to the cultivation of indigo in Patna-Gaya region, which was one of the important commercial crops of the north Bihar.

Buchanan mentioned that Raja of Tekari estate ordered to cease its cultivation. 202 Its cultivation was trifling in the thana of Naubatpur and Bankipur, Jayawar in Patna. Both these thanas merely produced indigo worth rupees 1145. 203 Different thanas of Gaya produced indigo which was worth rupees 14660. 204 But a change occurred in Sherghaty and Daudnagar where indigo factories were established in 1830. 205 Buchanan did not mention Daudnagar as a centre of production while establishment of a factory here suggests that an expansion took place. 206 In the second half to the nineteenth century W.W. Hunter reported that cultivation of indigo

201 Ibid.
202 Buchanan, op. cit., p. 527.
204 Ibid.
206 Ibid.
was exclusively confined to the thana of Arwal. 2535 bigahs of land was engaged in its cultivation and its average turn out was 420 maunds. But its quality was not considered good.

Buchanan has mentioned that safflower was grown by the cultivators as a crop in for dye this region worth rupees 30573.

II.4 STATE OF AGRICULTURE

A substantial part of the Patna-Gaya region was cultivated. As Buchanan described that “most part of the district are as fully occupied as possible”. This, suggests that a normal agricultural season gave a good harvest. During first half of the nineteenth century, this region did not experience any noticeable natural calamities. Therefore, this was the period of productive stability in agrarian economy. Good harvest in an agrarian economy stabilises supply which in turn stabilises prices. At harvest time prices tended to be low. Production beyond the consumption needed an outlet in form of market. During nineteenth century there was a limitation of market for agricultural product in south

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207 Hunter, op. cit., p. 92.
208 Buchanan, p. 527.
210 David Ludden, p. 40.
Bihar. For the cultivators access over market was restricted. This intervention was due to the prevailing produce rent in the region. Money lenders had their own interest. They purchased these grains at the lowest prices, just after the harvest, or even at the discount on those prices. For cultivators these prices reflected relative economic and social power, in reality not the market forces.

The resourceful cultivators could have had an access over the grain market. According to Peter Robb, owing to their upper caste background they had attitudinal in habitation and so they abstained from marketing their own crop. On the other hand, lack of surplus, difficulties in communications and trade which was expressed in money terms, create hindrance for the agriculturists. And above all his dependency upon Bania or merchant was indispensable, who represented the local power.

So far cost of cultivation in Patna-Gaya region. In comparison to other part of Bihar this was low in this region is concerned it was comparatively low in this region. The cost was equal to half of the

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211 Reginald Hevel, Narrative of a Journey, P. 314.
213 Ibid.
214 Ibid.
215 Ibid.
produce.\textsuperscript{216} This lowness of the he cost of cultivation was in accord with the social and economic setting of the region. \textit{Ashrafs}, high caste, rich peasants were not directly cultivating their land. Except the resource less poorer people among them, they abstained from the manual labour. Many of them were dependent upon land, which they farmed with the help of hired labourers. The wages of the labourers were mainly paid in kind which was considerably low.\textsuperscript{217} Above all, the rents were higher in this region. Therefore, in such circumstances produce rents was suitable one for the cultivators. This lowness of wages resulted in low cost of cultivation and assured fair profit. From 30-40 acres of land holding, these \textit{ashrafs} could earn Rs. 90 as their annual income in the first quarter of the nineteenth century, which was considered to be the fair enough.\textsuperscript{218} In such rental structure agricultural development became a difficult task. For improvement in agriculture, expenditure would be needed to improve.

And peasants due to produce rent did not show any willingness for the improvement in production. There was a realization that improvement would be more profitable for the \textit{zamindars} rather then the tenants. In the

\textsuperscript{216} Buchanan, op. cit., p. 550.

\textsuperscript{217} Therefore, prevalence of wages in kind was able to keep labour at subsistence level. For that this was important to regulate the price of commodities and kept low.

\textsuperscript{218} Buchanan, op. cit., p. 550.
reverse of it situation was different. If tenants were able to reduce the expenditure of the cultivation, that would be more profitable for them. Therefore, cultivators in this part mainly cultivated their land with this objective, to reduce the expenditure of the cultivation.\(^{219}\)

During the second half of the nineteenth century there was a rise in agricultural prices. But at the same time rent had also increased.\(^{220}\) This increase in prices were again profitable to the zamindars rather cultivators. During this period 'danabandi system', was largely adopted by the zamindars. This was based upon the concept of division of crop. After assessing the share, cultivators had to pay in cash for his rent, which was arbitrary and fluctuating in nature.\(^{221}\) Therefore there was hardly any improvement in the economic position of cultivators during the 19\(^{th}\) century;\(^{222}\) they did not have resources or capital for improvement.

In this region produce from the land did not have a suitable quality for the grain market. Therefore, local prices responded to harvest yields,

\(^{219}\) Ibid.


\(^{221}\) Bengal Board of Revenue Program's, 26 March 1852, no. 28, cited by B.B. Chouwdhuri, op. cit., p. 125.

which greatly reduced the return from the good harvest.\footnote{Peasant Choices? Indian Agriculture and the limits of Commercialization in Nineteenth Century Bihar, in Economic History Review, XLV, (1), 1992, pp. 97-119.} In case of commercial crops, situation was not quite favourable for the cultivators. For example, Poppy was the main commercial crop of this region. This was under the monopoly of state. Its price, market and productivity were strictly regulated by the government.\footnote{Cf. H.R. Ghoshal, Economic Transition of Bengal, Calcutta, 1967; B.B. Chouwdhuri, Growth of Commercialization of Agriculture in Bengal, Calcutta, 1964, p. 32.} During mid of the century cultivators did not find poppy cultivation very remunerative and they were looking for some better option e.g. sugarcane.\footnote{See, chapter on poppy.} On the other hand this poppy cultivation was also discouraged by the landlords, who considered this state’s intervention as an opportunity for cultivators to become independent in terms of peasants production. In case of commercial crop sugarcane, which grew out of state monopoly, the whole process of its cultivation within a complex system of indebtedness and dependencies benefited the intermediaries or wealthy class of the rural society, not the cultivators. These intermediary classes, which comprised new zamindars, mahajans and rich peasants, had sufficient capital. This
class, through the advance or debt mechanism, was major claimants of the peasant surplus.  

Therefore, 'peasant choices' about cropping and work depended upon a wide range of controls which did not allow a substantial structural change in agronomy of this region.

II.5 AGRARIAN RELATIONS

*Zamindars* occupied the most superior position in the rural hierarchy to evaluate the position of *zamindar* in Patna-Gaya region, it is necessary to understand the 'Permanent Settlement' of land revenue which was introduced with an explicit aim of regenerating the disrupted economy and securing a moderate assessment, which would be collected regularly and punctually.  

The 'Permanent Settlement' had two main features, firstly, the assessment was fixed and, secondly, this was settled with the *zamindars* to declare them as the proprietor of the areas from which their revenue was extracted.

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During pre-colonial period, there were different classes of zamindars or revenue payers. Permanent Settlement leveled all classes under the same denomination. These zamindars were declared as ‘Proprietor’ of the land but in reality this concept had a limitation. They acted as an intermediary of the state for the collection of land revenue from the tenants. If they failed to pay their revenue by sunset of the latest day fixed for each installment, their estate was to be sold out for the realization of arrears of revenue. This new concept of zamindars introduced by the ‘Permanent Settlement’; was in reality, a creation of the British legal system. In this regard ‘Permanent Settlement’ was responsible for giving birth to the new social and economic formation in the region.

Patna-Gaya region at the time of implementation of ‘Permanent Settlement’ was characterized by the small zamindaris. Therefore, in this region, settlement was mainly made with these small zamindars, who were locally known as maliks. These maliks managed

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230 Ibid.
231 Ibid, p. 18.
233 B.B. Chaudhuri, Movement of Rent in Eastern India, IHR, III, 2,
234 Buchanan, An Account of the District of Patna and Bihar in 1811-12, p. 565.
235 Ibid.
their affairs with small establishments, comprising quite a few officials.\textsuperscript{236} Big zamindars, e.g., Tikari and others managed their affairs with large establishments and large number of officials.\textsuperscript{237} These big zamindars were spending rift and ignorant regarding their affairs.\textsuperscript{238} These traditional and old zamindars found themselves in such a position where they could not be able to serve merely as tax collecting machines like the new zamindars. So, they created a class of intermediary who were at best revenue farmers.\textsuperscript{239} Through this these zamindars were able to rescue themselves from extinction and protect their interest. But they did not really bother that in their estates, they handed over the fate of their tenants in the hands of these intermediaries.\textsuperscript{240} These intermediaries or thikadars were guided by the objective of profit. Their presence greatly affected the productivity because they were concerned with the maintenance of the reservoirs for irrigation which was so important for cultivation, and it was considered

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{236} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{237} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{238} Parliamentary Papers, VII, 1831-32, p. 15.
\textsuperscript{239} W.W. Hunter, Bengal M.S. Record, London, 1894, p. 104.
\textsuperscript{240} Ibid.
\end{flushleft}
the responsibility of zamindars. Therefore, when these intermediaries left the places, they left behind land ‘sucked and dry and tenants varying on misery’.242

Force and prestige was the twin aspects of zamindar’s power. Zamindars used coercive power to keep their tenants under their hegemony. They were also equipped with certain legal provisions. Regulation VII of 1799 or ‘haftam’ rule empowered the zamindars for exercising the power of distraint.244 However, zamindars preferred to distrain outside the court. In such cases the cost of procedure was borne by the ryot which diminished their revenue paying capacity. Therefore, zamindars preferred to settle it outside the court.245

The practice of realizing, excessive realization of rent and illegal cesses had adverse impact on common peasants. In this region, the collector of Patna reported in 1880 that, mass of the peasantry was obliged to pay rent which was doubled within the last 16 years. Particularly in

241 Correspondance, Variously dated (1888), relating to the Naqqi, Bhauli, Gilandazi lands, the Relative Revenue etc. of Tikari Raj, District Gaya, Government of Bengal, Revenue Department, Land Revenue Branch, no. 757, 1888; Hunter, op. cit., p. 104.
242 R.N. Sinha, Bihar Tenantry, p. 112.
245 A. Godley, East India, (Bihar Cadastral Survey), London, 1893, p. 71
Patna, the rent, were higher than any other district of Bengal and Bihar. Similarly in Gaya, these rents were also higher in comparison to many of the districts of Bihar. In absence of any record of rent fixation these zamindars used enhance their rent arbitrarily.

In the opinion of Henry Maine, the most important object of the Permanent Settlement was, not second even to the adjustment of the government revenue, to construct a ‘record of right’. This record of right, which was known as patta rule was proved to be a failure one. According to the rule patta means lease renewable in perpetuity, prepared by, and at the expense of the zamindars, and delivered to the ryots. Zamindars deliberately avoided to comply with this rule, which could be a check upon them from any enhancement of rent in future and an effective a limitation on his control over ryots. Therefore, the zamindars were discouraging it. They seldom made written leases, and if they did hardly ever gave full receipts. They deliberately manipulated their record to prevent occupancy holdings. For this, they even opposed the physical

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246 Ibid, p. 71
247 Ibid.
249 A. Godley, op. cit., p. 57.
evidence of the ryots holdings.\textsuperscript{250} This was the reason that prior to Bengal Tenancy Act, only about one percent of \textit{ryots} in this region were shown on \textit{zamindar's jamabandi} papers as having retained the same land continuously for twelve years, though, sixty percent of the \textit{ryots} in practice, held the same land for that long. \textsuperscript{251} \textit{Zamindars} were generally opposed to confer the \textit{ryots} their rights, which they perceived would diminish the prestige of \textit{zamindars} and also reduce their power to choose his tenants.\textsuperscript{252}

\textit{Zamindars} were exercising authority to increase the rental on fields cultivated with the higher priced crops.\textsuperscript{253} Price rise of any crop implied enhancement of rent. But fall of price did not mean the reduction of rents, as was evident in the case of poppy cultivation in this region.\textsuperscript{254}

During second half of the nineteenth century the base of the zamindars power was increasing. Prices increased and \textit{zamindars} found it more profitable to cultivate their land rather than to give it on rent. Small \textit{zamindars} were largely driven by this idea because they did not have any

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{250} P. Robb, p. 155
\item \textsuperscript{251} \textit{Gaya Revenue Administration Report, 1889-1890, Patna Commissioners Record, 352, Rev. and Ag., Rev. Branch, July 1883, p. 16-46.}
\item \textsuperscript{252} P. Robb, p. 101; Marx, \textit{Notes on Indian History}, p. 96.
\item \textsuperscript{253} See Chapter on poppy cultivation.
\item \textsuperscript{254} P. Robb, op. cit., pp. 151-180.
\end{itemize}
inhibition like the big *zamindars*. In this phase resources were important and became more valuable. Therefore there were efforts to strengthen the hold on waste land.

During the course of nineteenth century these *zamindars* started annexing waste lands. They brought more and more waste land cultivation and did not pay any revenue for it.

Thus after the introduction of Permanent Settlement the position of *zamindars* witnessed several changes. For many, the fixation of revenue assessment in 1798 was higher, which caused their ruin. Mainly big *zamindars* were affected by the new rules. They could improve their position when after fifteen or twenty years, brought new land under cultivation. Since the introduction of Permanent Settlement, landlords whose estate were underdeveloped at the time of assessment, found themselves in advantageous position after couple of decades when large

255 Ibid; Dr. Lees, *Land and Labour in India*, Calcutta Review, 45, 1867, p. 401. The term waste was not synonymous with un owned or unclaimed land, actually waste land means, such lands which were at the disposal of the government.


areas in their zamindari was brought under the plough. Another important noticeable change which occurred during 19th century, was the change in the attitude of zamindars. Big zamindars were mainly from old zamindari families, they held, not legal, but effective control over the village society. Within a century this nature of relationship had changed. This transformed their relationship from patriarchal to strict legal contract. During last quarter of the century zamindars were generally defined as oppressive and small zamindars were more oppressive. Even in the estate of Tikari, where government itself held the zamindari, 'mostafir' or thikadar were equally oppressive to the tenants.

A peasant can be defined as ‘a person who undertakes agriculture on his own, working with his own implements and using the labour of his family’.

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260 Revenue and Agriculture, Land Revenue, no. 5, B, December 1899.
261 Ashely Eden, Zamindari Settlement of Bengal, Delhi, 1995, 1879 (I Pub.), p. 323.
262 John beams, Memoirs of a Civilization, Delhi, 1984, p. 135. Tikari became a ward estate in the year of 1880. Officially a manager was appointed by the government to look after the matter of estates’s affairs. Because after the death of its zamindars, the heir was minor. Cf. Anan Yang, Court of Ward- An Institutional Shelter of the Nineteenth Century, in MAS,
263 Ibid.
264 Irfan Habib, Essays in Indian History, p. 109.
Control over peasants labour and productivity was the basis which decided the individual’s position in the peasant society. In reality every society is/was dominated by the state superstructure of the sector which determines the socio economic formation to operate the society belongs.\textsuperscript{265} At the base, state operates through its representative. In Indian peasant society at this level zamindars represent the state. Permanent Settlement as a first experiment of East India Company’s government relies on this existing institution to appropriate the surplus. Zamindars enjoyed traditional and legal superiority in the peasant society. His influence was unparalleled where he exercising his domination accordingly to the custom of the land. During nineteen century, his influenced was shared, not equally, by the people, those who also dependent upon the peasant production. These were the intermediaries and money lenders.

Among the peasantry, there were no uniformity existed and they were divided into various classes. This division was based upon the use of labour. Rich peasants were used extensively the hired labour, middle peasant use family labour and poor peasant, did not have sufficient land to provide subsistence to their family through their labour.\textsuperscript{266} This last

\textsuperscript{265} V.I. Pavlov, \textit{Historical Premises for India’s Transition to Capitalism}, Moscow, 1979, p. 13.

\textsuperscript{266} Ibid.
dictum suggests us that land along with labour was the basis component of these production relations in peasant society. In actuality, hold over land was serving as a determinant of control of labour and production.

Stratification of peasantry on the basis of owning means of production has one more criterion as it also operative in Patna-Gaya region, i.e., caste group based operative class struggle. Ashrafs or rich peasants in the Patna, Gaya region was constituted with the higher caste people of the village society. From the both religion, Hindus as well as Musclerman’s, Brahman, Rajput, Bhaban, Kayastha and among the Muslims, Syed, Shaikh, Moguls were fall into this category. Members from this group have abundance of pride. By rule they abstain from the manual labour which could be diluted the social hierarchy of labour. Therefore this was a noticeable feature that during survey of Patana-Gaya region, Buchanan found that many of these ashraf people are cultivating with their own hand. These were the ashrafs who did not have recourses to hire the labour.267

This rich section of the peasantry, who by renting some land and possessing some capital stock, were normally able to meet their

267 Buchanan, *An account of Behar and Patna in 1811-12.*
requirement for agriculture.\textsuperscript{268} But their income mainly depends upon the exploitation of labours of others, \textit{viz} servants and slaves.\textsuperscript{269} These few of them were also engaged in loan interest, another mechanism to exploit the labour and their income.\textsuperscript{270}

These \textit{ashrafs} were privileged class in the rural society. They paid no rent for their houses. But this was of no great value for them. Usually they rent a farm because they have no free law. Any people who rent a farm as a rule paid no rent for houses.\textsuperscript{271} They usually get the lower rent for their land, which was not uniform and solely depend upon the landlords.\textsuperscript{272} Further, they usually paid their rent \(1/8\) of their produce in spite of one half or \(9/16\), which were paid by the other cultivators as their rent.\textsuperscript{273}

Bucklas were the people who constituted the next to the \textit{ashrafs} in the hierarchy. They were the traders of low birth, but abstain from the manual labour. These were the resourceful section in the society. They were largely concentrated in trading activities and quite a few among them

\begin{thebibliography}{99}
\bibitem{mitra} M. Mitra, \textit{Agrarian Social Structure}, N. Delhi, 1985, p. 164.
\bibitem{buchanan1} Buchanan, op. cit., I, p. 266.
\bibitem{mitra1} Mitra, op. cit., p. 164.
\bibitem{buchanan2} Buchanan, op. cit., p. 547.
\bibitem{ibid} Ibid
\bibitem{hunter} W.W. Hunter, \textit{Bengal M.S. Records}.
\end{thebibliography}
have farm which they cultivated by the means of servant. Bucklas social status suggests that they were the influential section of the society.

Bucklas in Patna-Gaya region constituted the next section of the social hierarchy. They were mainly traders of low birth. These people were also abstaining from the manual labour. These were resourceful section of the society; and its members were mainly engaged trading activities. Few among these have farms which they cultivated by mean of hired labour or servants.274

Artificers were constituted as third group and called as pauniyas. These people were the farm holders and also cultivate their land by their own hand. When these artificers were found that their profession or trade was not remunerative, they concentrated on land. Sometimes, in a family. One brother engaged himself, in agricultural activities and other carried on the trading activities.275 In the last of hierarchy in the peasant society, jyotiyas were placed. These people were generally serve as ploughmen and work as a labourers in the fields of ashraf or rich peasants. Many few of them have land which they cultivate with their own hand.276 They own some farm implements, but these were not adequate. These poor peasants

274 Buchanan, op. cit., p. 266.
275 Ibid.
276 Ibid.
were exposed to exploitation by law rent, loan interests and in distress they hired themselves to the others for the limited period.277

Agricultural workers or the farm labourers were the last in this social hierarchy. They did not possess any property in land. They depend solely upon their labor power which they called sale.278 Therefore the agrarian class structures means the arrangement of groups or class determined by access or denied access, to the land, which was the principal means of production. This access or denial was depending upon the cast group in traditional Indian society.279 The agricultural labourers were meaning belong from the lower castes that were barred from holding land and compelled to work as landless labourers.280

Among the rich section of the peasant society of Patna-Gaya region one more group of the peasants included. They were different from the others in the respect of their relations with the zamindars. These people were the representative of the absentee zamindars and member of zamindars families. These people were occupied ryoti holdings at nominal

278 Ibid.
rates. They exercise certain influence due to their association with the zamindars, in rural society. In reality these people were zamindars in disguise.\textsuperscript{281}

Castes were an important component to understand the composition of the peasant society. But these were not always corresponds the class structure. Petty traders or grihastha-beparis, owned farm and were economically independent placed in the category of ploughmen. Kories were another group, many of them possessed money and they lent out this money to others. They were purely cultivating cast, few into the category of ploughmen.\textsuperscript{282} In general these were three categories of cast exist. First constituted with Brahman, Rajput, Brahman and Kayastha considered as upper caste. Next one was the cultivating caste in which cast like koeri and kurnis fall those who purely pursuits agricultural activities. In it goy alas or yadavs were also placed, though these were mainly associated with non agricultural activities. Below these categories, the sudras or untouchables placed, who were performers of menial tasks within the village.


\textsuperscript{282} Buchanan, op. cit., p. 548.
community. The *Dom, Chamar, Mussahar* and host of other specialized cast special functions constituted this third group.283

The high cast peasants, unlike the other class of peasantry, were not helpless and subject of exploitation by the zamindars. When *zamindars* wanted to act as a class, and use the force as a mean to exercise his 'supra authority'.284 To maintain their own interest these rich peasant were often find themselves in a position to challenge prevailing motion of *zamindar* authority.285 Among the rich peasants Jeth ryot or village headman was important institutions.

Jeth ryot or *Mehato* were considered as a chief of the cultivators in every village. He holds his office hereditary and considered as up holder of tenants rights being and educated person. This was his responsibility that if a tenant left his village, he appointed new one to cultivate the land in his place.286 He holds office by hereditary tenure. Buchanan mentioned that he did not join the *zamindar* feature of Indian village.287 He holds an

284 P. Robb, *Hierarchy and Resources,*
285 See Chapter on *Zamindars.*
286 Buchanan, op. cit., p. 568.
287 Ibid.
important position in Indian villages as a peasant with special managerial functions.288

This head ryot or jeth ryot received fees for his services from the ryots. He usually contracted for the whole land of the village and distributed it among the ryots, settling the revenue from the other classes of ryots. He apportioned this revenue to the tenants, according to the nature of the soil. He was also responsible for the partitioning of water for irrigation and settling disputes were regarded as a part of his duties.289

For performing his duty he received certain privileges. He holds few begah of revenue free land and paid lower rate of rent for his land.290 He was allowed services of one or more of the servile laborers of the villages and of their families; 1/7th of 1/8th of his grain crop was set apart for their maintenance before his crop was assessed.291

In spite of jeth ryots role to provide security to the peasant, this has been reported that, quite often they compromise with the revenue farmers.


291 Ibid.
They manipulated and lowered his own rent, without any diminution in what he has received, by throwing the difference upon the lower ryots.292

In survey, regarding the rights of tenants in Bengal, this has been reported that ryots were in general unaware regarding their status in Bihar.293 This certainly reflects this idea that jeth ryots were not performing their duties with honesty. The same reports also contain that leading ryot hold area larger than stated in leases and jeth ryots were similarly hold lands on favorable term; and occupied more land than stated in the leases.294

Therefore whatever the ideal position and duty, which jeth ryots supposed to perform, it transformed during nineteen century as an institution of exploitation to the peasantry.

In the peasant society, village officials and money lenders were important feature. These two were act in certain manner which resulted the immiserisation of the peasants. Important segment of the village officials were a village revenue administration. Gomashtahs were among the head the head among them. He generally employed to manage from

292 Ibid.
293 Field Survey and Records of Rights in Bengal, Revenue and Agriculture, Agriculture, File No. 105, Proceedings No. 1 and 2, December, 1884.
294 Ibid.
one to five mauzas or villages. He was responsible to keeps the account and
distribute the share of profit amounts others. He was not under the strict
subordinations of zamindars. They act freely even he could render services
for than one zamindars.\textsuperscript{295} He usually received Rs.3-Rs.5 per month as his
allowances. He was assisted by a clerk called Patwari, who received Rs. $\frac{1}{2}$
to Rs 3 as his monthly allowances. Besides that, they often realized a
commission from 2 to 4-56 lbs on the receipt, and in others a fee from the
tenant on each annual receipt. This was called hujjutanah, and usually
amount to 2 paysas, our $1/28$ of a rupee from each man.\textsuperscript{296} Besides this they
also collected their share (Rasum), few chitak from each maund of grain.\textsuperscript{297}
They received their share from the undivided grain.\textsuperscript{298} This is was
important because it reflected his position in the village society. This mode
of realization reflected his independent position both of these officials
where, reported to have illicit gains, which chiefly arise from the division
of the crops they conniving with the tenants against the landlord.\textsuperscript{299}
Barahil and gorait where patwari's assistants. They watch the crops on the

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{295} Buchanan, II, p. 566.
\item \textsuperscript{296} Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{297} Grierson, p. 75.
\item \textsuperscript{298} Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{299} Buchanan, II, p. 566.
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
thrashing floor, collect money and where is also responsible to distribute water from the *ahar* and *pynes*. They receive Rs 1 \(\frac{1}{4}\) to Rs 2 a month. *Gomastahs* had also a *pasban* or *chowkidar* to guard his house. People from the *dosadh* cast where appointed to perform this duty. In some places these were received one *bigah* of rent free land or as much of land for rent as can be cultivated with one plough. In other places their allowance of free land was much more considerable. Land which paid the money rent needed a survey for the fixation of rent. This survey had been conducted by the village official called *Ameen*. He was the chief surveyor and assisted by a group of smaller denominations. Peasants were required to oblige the *Ameen* for just or moderate fixation of rent.

These village officials were under the sway of the zamindars, *e.g.* the *patwaries*, an important official in this establishment, was in reality a representative of the land lords. To make his office more responsible and efficient, in 1817, *patwaries* were converted from zamindar’s servants in to the government’s agent. Office of the *Qanoongo*, who was a really a part of Mughals village administration was received with an objective to put a check on *patwari’s* activities. But these *Qanungos* were failed to attain this

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300 Ibid.
301 Buchanan, II, p. 567.
objective. Finally office of the Qanungo was again abolished in 1827.303 These *patwaris* who were now government’s servant and appointed for the betterment of the tenants, became an ally to the zamindars for their own personal gains on the cost of peasants.304 While *patwaris* were converted into an instrument of state machinery, his own position was, in reality, placed, due to changes, as a subordinated on of the zamindars.305 They were appointed by the zamindars and also paid through the zamindars.306 Therefore these important officials became an important component of village society meant for the exploitation of peasants.

Moneylenders were another important figure in the village society. These ‘*shark*’ were present in every village and mainly responsible for the decay of the rural economy.307

In this region Buchanan (1811-12) reported that peasants were not rich but not greatly involved in debt.308 This situation changed by later half of the

303 Arun Kumar, *Rewriting the Language of Politics: Kisan In Bihar*, p. 41.
304 K.K. Sharma, *Kisan Movement and Congress Politics in Bihar*, Delhi, 19**. **-**. **-**
305 Ibid.
306 Ibid.
308 Buchanan, II, p. 566
nineteenth century. The peasants from Patna-Gaya region were not only heavily indebted but few of the zamindars were also the client of these moneylenders.\textsuperscript{309}

The mahajans were people of different background. Money lending confined to the moneylenders as a class only. Landlords were also lending money to the ryots and wanted to keep them under debt. Zamindar could thus claim higher rent from the independent peasants. Beside the interest earned from lending they also had an opportunity to keep ryots under perpetual threat of eviction. This credit mechanism further equipped the landlords to maintain his 'supra authority' upon the peasants.\textsuperscript{310} These landlords entered into this lending money to the tenants business in the late 19th century. It seems that the practice of lending money to tenants by the landlords began in the later half of the nineteenth century.\textsuperscript{311} Beside mahajans, baniya or landlord, rich peasants with sufficient capital, were also lending money to their proper neighbors. They made advances to them at usurious rate of interest and were repaid by the peasants from

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{309} Girish Mishra, \textit{Agrarian Problem of Permanent Settlement}, New Delhi, 1978, P. 214.\\
\textsuperscript{310} Peter Robb, p. 111.\\
\textsuperscript{311} Sunil Sen, \textit{Peasant Movement in India}, p. 1.
\end{flushright}
crop at the time of harvest.\textsuperscript{312} Moneylenders were forced the cultivators to sell their crop on low prices.\textsuperscript{313}

This mode of exchange had isolated the peasants' production from the market which could raise the market value of peasant's product. A ready buyer at the next hand during harvest time could be able to enhance the price of grains of 10 to 20 per cent more.\textsuperscript{314} These money lenders were buying or acquiring the grain at the lowest prices just after harvest.\textsuperscript{315} At the harvest time the peasant were compelled to sell their crop to pay rent and repay loan. Frequently he had to buy grain in the later year for his own need, higher prices from the same grain dealer to whom he had sold his crop and to whom he was indebted because the dealer was also moneylenders in the village.\textsuperscript{316}

During later half of the nineteenth century a new development took place. This development was an outcome of the economic condition of peasants and the debt mechanism was responsible for creating such a situation. This was termed as commercialization of tenant rights. Peasants under heavy indebtedness were selling out their tenants rights. From

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{312} P. Robb, p. 111.
  \item \textsuperscript{313} Ibid, pp. 110-111.
  \item \textsuperscript{314} Reginald Heber, \textit{Narrative of Journey}, I, p. 314.
  \item \textsuperscript{315} P. Robb, \textit{Rural India}, p. 111.
  \item \textsuperscript{316} Dietmar Rothurmund, \textit{Government, Landlord and Tenants in India}. p. 12.
\end{itemize}
districts of Patna and Gaya, 250 such sales were reported in 1883-84 and this increased to 898 sales of occupancy right by 1892-93; these distress sales were in spite of dispossessing the tenants, it only meant transfer of the land right. B. B. Chaudhuri has pointed out that there was a continuity in this process. In reality moneylenders were the buyers of these rights. They did not replace the cultivators after transfer of the legal title over the land. This change led to the gradual accumulation of property in the hand of a small stratum of the upper classes, which accompanied by a shift down to the social hierarchy and further led to the ‘de-peasantisation process.

One can safely assume that these moneylenders were a parasitical class in the village society and contributed to pauperization of the peasants, particularly small cultivators and hamper the process of development in Indian village society.

During nineteenth century, cultivators were divided into three categories. First was the jeth raiyat or head cultivator as stated earlier, he enjoyed a superior status in the rural society. The next groups of cultivators were termed as khudkasht ryots. These ryots or cultivators were in reality, the

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‘resident’ cultivator of the village. Third group of cultivators were the ryots those who were not reside in the villages, where they cultivated their farms. These cultivators were known as paikasht.\textsuperscript{319}

The Khudkasht ryots resided in a fixed spot; and cultivate their land and built or inherited substantial houses.\textsuperscript{320} These khudkash raiyats were known as permanent tenants. They were also known as resident, hereditary and occupancy ryots or dehi in Patna.\textsuperscript{321} They had an occupancy right over the land by virtue of long occupancy. But his did not empower them to transfer their right to the others. In reality land belonged to the zamindars and a cultivator could obtain property rights from the zamindars.\textsuperscript{322} In practice, however, there were evidences that they sold their holdings to others and trespassed this legal aspect. The rights of Khudkash riyots, however, were limited. He could enjoy his right but he had to pay rent on time.\textsuperscript{323}


\textsuperscript{320} Fifth Report, I, p. 1.

\textsuperscript{321} M. Elphinston, p. 73; Grierson, p. 328.

\textsuperscript{322} Fifth Report, I, p. 1.

\textsuperscript{323} Ibid.
Paikasht raiyats were the third category of cultivators. They were not the resident cultivators of the villages. Therefore, they did not enjoy the maurusi or Kadimi rights.\(^{324}\) (maurusi or kadimi rights means old hereditary occupancy right). They entered into contract with the zamindars through the patta. They were granted the land for a limited period, and the tenure of their holdings was quite indefinite.\(^{325}\) In the eighteenth century there was plenty of cultivable land and there were paucity of cultivators to cultivate these lands. These paikasht cultivators were desired by the landlords. To attract them landlords levied less amount of rent upon these paikasht raiyat in comparison to the khudkasht raiyat.\(^{326}\) Due to the availability of cultivated (land, landlords were competing for tenants. These landlords even indulged in enticing away the cultivators from the neighboring villages of other landlords.\(^{327}\) This was the period when landman ravio was quite low and these non residents' raiyats were, on this account able to make their own terms to enter into contract with the


\(^{325}\) Grierosn, p. 325. Pahi means foreign and Kasht means cultivation. In other meaning the word pai is corruption of word pahi from pah, means pas or near- 'living near', 'non-resident' and kasht means cultivation. See also R.N. Sinha, Bihar Tenantry, 1783-1833, Bombay, 1986, p. 82.

\(^{326}\) R.N. Sinha, P. 82.

\(^{327}\) W.W. Hunter, The Indian Empire, 1st pub. 1885, rep., New Delhi, 2005, p. 48,
landlords. 'Permanent Settlement' did not bring any alteration in this regard. Distinction of cultivators on this basis was accepted by the settlement.328 These paikasht cultivators also took land under rent. This kind of tenure they held usually for a season. Enhancement of rent caused the desertion of paikasht because, as stated earlier, they paid less amount of rent than the khudkasht.329 These non resident raiyats were different from the dohat raiyats. Dohat raiyats were raiyats who kept two different establishments and cultivate at two different villages.330 On the other hand the paikasht cultivated the land only in one village.331

Chaparband or residents raiyats had better rights than the other class, the paikasht, who were at best as tenants at will. Paikasht had temporary accidental interest in the soil which they cultivated.332

Resident and occupancy raiyats as stated earlier paid higher rent. The introduction of State Laws further added problems for them. Once they became subject to sale laws, rights of the tenants were greatly affected. The buyers of 'new' zamindaris generally led the enhancement of

328 R.N. Sinha, p. 82.
330 Ibid.Grierson, p. 326.
331 Ibid.
332 Fifth Report, II, p. 54.
the rent of the land. In this regard to check this practice and protect the peasants, Rent Act X of 1859 was introduced. This classified the ryots into three following groups:

- *Ryot* holding land at fixed rates
- Occupancy *ryots*
- Non occupancy *ryots*

*Ryots* holding land at a rate which was unaltered since last twenty years or more before the date of rent suits brought against them by zamindars belonged to the first group. Zamindars could not enhance the rent of this group. Any *raiyat* who had cultivated or held land for a period of twelve years was an occupancy *ryots* as long as he paid rent. Zamindars could enhance their rent only when cultivation has extended or where the rent rate of peasants was lower than the *pargana* rate or where the value of the produce had increased. *Ryot* without the right of occupancy were not protected by law. They were entitled to *pattas* only at such rate which was agreeable between them and their landlords. This was probably the first major attempt by the government regarding the land tenure rights. In

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334 Section III and IV, Act X of 1859.
335 Section VI, Act X of 1859.
336 Section VIII, Act X of 1859.
reality there was a disregard for existing customs of defining land rights to the *ryots*. This was an effort to provide occupancy rights to non resident *ryots*. But for the *ryot* "it was difficult for them to prove continuous possession for twelve years because he did not posses any documentary evidence as rent receipt was seldom granted".\(^{337}\) This was not only difficult to the non occupancy *raiyats* to prove their continuous possession, but equally difficult for the first and second category of tenants to prove their length of possession.\(^{338}\) This legal move was based upon the assumption that reasonably stable cultivator's tenure and stability in rent rates would have improved the condition. Surprisingly enough, government considered the question of protection important but for as special group of *ryots* called 'occupancy *ryots*' (that is a person continuously occupying their lands for twelve years).\(^{339}\) This was a unique development in the sense that to define cultivator officially, direct involvement in cultivation was not thus obligatory. This enactment of law deprived large number of cultivators of the legal safeguards and where the occupancy *ryots* did not cultivate their lands, the person, who cultivated as tenant, could not claim


\(^{338}\) Ibid.

occupancy rights.\textsuperscript{340} Therefore this change not only brings a new distinct class of cultivators as ‘occupancy’ and ‘non occupancy’ \textit{ryots}, but also favoured the landlord or renters.\textsuperscript{341}

This further equipped them to consolidate control over the rural economy.\textsuperscript{342} Against this backdrop the Bengal Tenancy Act of 1885 was enacted. This act made the acquisition of occupancy right a much easier process. A peasant can claim his occupancy rights who cultivated land for twelve years and, any piece of land in a given village, not necessarily the same plot of land for twelve years.\textsuperscript{343} This provision was certainly favorable to the \textit{ryots} as a check on zamindars who often changed the plots of cultivators to prevent him from acquiring the occupancy rights.\textsuperscript{344} But the most deplorable aspect of the act was that it left under-tenants entirely unprotected.\textsuperscript{345} These acts declared certain rights for \textit{ryots} but the cultivators seldom had this right.\textsuperscript{346} These regulations were proved to be a failure in Bihar. Thus one finds that the position of peasants changed

\textsuperscript{340} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{341} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{342} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{343} K.K. Sharma, p. 32.

\textsuperscript{344} Ibid.


because it transformed them from old peasant proprietors to various types of tenants without any security of tenure. Rich peasants and landlords were the direct beneficiaries as a class by it and small cultivators were further pushed to margin, both economically and socially.

**SMALL CULTIVAROS**

The peasants of the Patna-Gaya region were no exception to the Zamindars', money lenders' and rack renters combined influence. They ground the *ryots* to a state of extreme depression. State adopted certain measures for their protection against rent enhancement and providing occupancy right which proved a dead letter for his *ryots*.348

*Ryots* in district of south Bihar were comparatively in worst condition than their other part of Bengal counterpart. Zamindars were prosperous. But in general the condition of the petty cultivators and agricultural labourers has been worse off, which comprised forty percent of the population.349

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348 Karl Marx, *Notes on Indian History*, p. 96.

349 Letter of P. Nolan, Secretary to the government of Bengal, to the Secretary of the Government of India, Revenue and Agriculture Department, Confidential Revenue
Conditions of these small cultivators from Patna-Gaya region were
drew ample attention of the colonial officials in the last decade of the
nineteenth century. The 'Poverty' became a subject matter of debate
among the officials in India as well as in England.\textsuperscript{350} It might have added a
substance in the ongoing debate among the nationalists and their
imperialist counterpart on qestion of the 'poverty'.\textsuperscript{351} Grierson's attempt to
depict the penury of common people still remains a profound commentary
on contemporary situation.\textsuperscript{352}

In 1832, it was observed in the official reports: "Every where in India
the progress of wealth has been necessary causes slow. Many of the \textit{ryots}
are men who live from the hand to mouth----, they are men of no capital;
many cultivate upon borrow capital; ---- the great mass of the \textit{ryot} are in
the condition of daily labourers. These \textit{ryots} were in a state which gives
them little more than a bare subsistence".\textsuperscript{353}

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{350} Report on the Economic condition of people of Gaya, Government of Bengal, Revenue
Department of Agriculture, K.W.A. Produs., File No. 7-R/9, Nos. 57-93, August, 1899.
\textsuperscript{351} This period 'poverty' in India became an issue for exposing the colonial objectives of
British rule in India. This discourse was initiated b D.B. Naoroji, Cf. D.B.Naoroji,
\textit{Poverty and Un-British rule in India}
\textsuperscript{352} A \textit{Note on District of Gaya}, Calcutta, 1893, p. 326
\textsuperscript{353} Parliamentary Papers, Vol. VI, 1832, pp. 303-04.
\end{flushright}
In Gaya, the petty cultivators constituted with 53 percent, agricultural labourers 23 percent, artisans 23-8 percent and beggars 2 percent in the whole district.\textsuperscript{354}

According to Grierson’s estimation, 10 acres or 16 bighas of land was the average holding in Gaya with some variations. In less fertile area of south west Gaya, the land holding was 20 local bighas or 12 $\frac{1}{2}$ acres of land.\textsuperscript{355} Presumably this amount of land was not sufficiently productive. In comparison to Gaya, in Patna, cultivators had 4 bighas of average land holding. Patna had dense population, but, these 4 bighas of land were more productive than the neighbouring due to its fertility.\textsuperscript{356} They were able to earn Rs. 36 was considered adequate for bare subsistence. According to an official estimate, a family needed Rs. 33, for survival and 4 bighas of land could give a margin of Rs. 3 surplus. In Patna, however, 40 percent of the petty cultivators had less than 4 bighas in possession.\textsuperscript{357} Critical assessments of the productivity of land suggest that even 4 bighas of land was unable to provide the desired amount of subsistence. According to a contemporary estimate 12 rupees were an average yield of per bigha.

\textsuperscript{354} Grierson, p. 88.
\textsuperscript{355} Grierson, p. 90.
\textsuperscript{356} Government of Bengal, Land Revenue, Agriculture, no. 286 G, 2 June, 1888.
\textsuperscript{357} Ibid.
excluding the cultivator’s cost production (i.e. Rs. 6). Therefore after deducting rent, each bigha could actually yield 4 maunds of grains for cultivators alone. The report also states that 40 percent of the cultivators had less than 4 bighas whereas to fulfill the basic needs minimum of 7 bigha were required.358

In Gaya, Grierson estimated that the cultivation of 12.5 acres had an average income of only Rs. 12-14 per head per annum less than the required amount of Rs. 15, as a minimum for ‘the bare subsistence’ of the cultivators family.359 Petty Cultivators became ill fed and ill clothed, along with other poor classes of the society.360

In the year 1893 British Indian Government conducted enquiries regarding small agriculturists and labourers and their condition in Gaya.361 C.J. Stevenson Moore was entrusted with this task and came out with his own ‘Report on the material conditions of small agriculturists and

358 Ibid.
359 Government of Bengal, Land Revenue, Agriculture, 7-R/9, K.W.A Proceedings, no. 57-93, August, 1899.
360 From John Boxwell, Commissioner of the Patna Division, to the Secretary to the Government of Bengal Revenue Department, Confidential, No. 286 G. Bamkipur, 2nd June, 1888.
361 Government of Bengal, Revenue, Agriculture, 7-R/9, no. 1014 A, dated Calcutta, 16 March, 1899.
labourers in Gaya’ (1898).\textsuperscript{362} After conducting a ‘careful enquiry’ he concluded that Grierson’s estimates were ‘wholly inaccurate regarding the ‘miserably poor’ class of the society’ because it was thought (by Moore) that a family of an agriculturist needed Rs. 15 per head per annum as their ‘cost of living’.\textsuperscript{363} Small cultivators were not able to get this amount even in the fertile tract. Stevenson Moore observed that proper calculations gave an average productivity of Rs. 13-5-6 which one holding of $12 \frac{1}{2}$ acres gave Rs. 160-4-9. This amount gave an average of Rs. 26-11 per head for a family size of six persons. Therefore “a holding of $7 \frac{1}{2}$ acres, or 10 highas will support in comfort an average family anywhere, except perhaps in the fourth tract”.\textsuperscript{364} This fourth tract was least fertile or infertile area and according to the Moore’s estimate gave only Rs. 6-8 ana as average value of yield per acre.\textsuperscript{365} A comparative statement is given of Grierson’s and Moore’s estimates:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of</th>
<th>Average yield per</th>
<th>Average yield of</th>
<th>Average yield of</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

\textsuperscript{362}Government of Bengal, Revenue, Agriculture, no. 472 R, 21 February, 1899.

\textsuperscript{363}Grierson, p. 89.

\textsuperscript{364}C.J. Stevenson Moor, Report on the Material condition of small Agriculturists and labourers in Gaya, Calcutta, 1899, pp. 18-22; Government of Bengal, Revenue Department, Agriculture, 7-R/9, K.W.A Proceedings, no. 325 A, 14 April, 1899.

\textsuperscript{365}Ibid.
Grierson had estimated that small holding of moderately fertile tract were unable to provide the basis of livelihood while Stevenson Moore opined that only infertile southern tract of Sherghati thana lacked capacity for it.\textsuperscript{366} Moore further strengthened his argument that indebtedness among the peasantry was a striking feature of the peasant life. Among the cultivators of Gaya extent of indebtedness was in direct proportion to the prosperity of cultivators.\textsuperscript{367} Incidence of debt per families holding under five bigha (Rs. 607) on those who had 5 to 10 bighas of land and so Rs. 11 per head for family as debt.\textsuperscript{368}

\begin{table}
\centering
\begin{tabular}{|c|c|c|c|}
\hline
the Tract & acre according to Dr. Grierson & Paddy per acre in Moore’s Enquiries & Paddy in a year according to last crop \\
\hline
I tract & 10.8 & 14.95 & 15.93 \\
\hline
II tract & 8.6 & 12.95 & 13.8 \\
\hline
III tract & 7.2 & 10.96 & 12.9 \\
\hline
IV tract & 6.2 & 8.63 & 8.0 \\
\hline
\end{tabular}
\end{table}

(Source: C.J. Stevenson Moore, \textit{Report on the Material Condition of Small Agriculturists and Labourers in Gaya})

\textsuperscript{366} Grierson, pp. 89-90; S. Moor, pp. 12-16.

\textsuperscript{367} Moor, p. 25.

\textsuperscript{368} Ibid.
Grierson estimation of yield per acre might be erroneous but his other findings help us in drawing a true picture. In the district of Gaya 70 percent 10 local bigha of land in the category of these tract and 87 percent of the cultivators had holding of 20 bighas (12 \(\frac{1}{2}\) acre) in the tract.\(^{369}\) 70 percent of the land was under Bhaoli or produce rent. A moderate capital and proper irrigation was needed for its better return. Naqdi or cash rents were always occupy best land and capital support.\(^{370}\) Therefore, cultivators on 87 percent of the land were deprived of the base subsistence. So they supplement their income through work for others, collecting forest products and selling cow dung. They could not afford adequate quantity of food. They largely depended upon coarsest crops like khesari dal. The quantity was insufficient during considerable part of the year. They survived on one meal a day, lived in a poor house and were badly clothed during the winter.\(^{371}\)

\(^{369}\)Grierson, p. 90.

\(^{370}\) Ibid, pp. 70-71.

\(^{371}\) Government of Bengal, F.No. 325 ; See also Ishu Cappers, Three Presidencies of India, p. 478
II.6 ASSESSMENT OF RENT IN THE PATNA-GAYA REGION

In Patna-Gaya region, high caste *ashrafs* had privileges in rent and land use agriculturally. Land was divided according to its productivity. The fertile lands were divided into three categories:

First category of land could field good crops by efforts of the cultivators only. Second category needed landlord’s substantial support for improvement in production and in the third category of land cultivators were solely dependent upon the landlords for any improvement in production.

Lands of the first category were highly fertile and earmarked to the *nagdi* or money rent, second kind of land was called *paran* land and third quantity of land was called *bhaoli* or produce rent.

Money rent was of two kinds, *shikmi* and *chakath*. *Shikmi* was prevalent in Tikari in Gaya. In it cash rent was fixed forever, *chikath* lands were temporarily settled for cash rent. *Bhaoli* or produce rent was the common practice of the Bihar, especially in south Bihar. The *paran* land was specific feature of the Gaya. This land was mainly used for sugarcane.

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372 Buchanan, p. 266.
373 Grierson, p. 68.
374 Ibid.
375 Ibid.
376 Ibid.
and poppy cultivation in rotation.\textsuperscript{377} These lands were divided into three equal plots, in each of which every tenant had a share of 33 percent. Each was in turn, year by year, planted with sugarcane, poppy and rice. Every two plots were on cash rent. In the third year when a large expenditure was required landlords intervened demanded their share in the form of produce rent especially on rice. This saved sugarcane and poppy crops for next year.\textsuperscript{378}

In south Bihar rent structure was mainly based upon \textit{Bhaoli} system or produce rent system. This system was in practice in northern Bihar also but in southern Bihar its extent was comparatively enormous (as in evident from Table I).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>Percentage of the Area under Produce rent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>North of the Ganges</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Champaran</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saran</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muzaffarpur</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Darbhanga</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Monghyr</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bhagalpur</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Bihar</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Bhagalpur</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Monghyr</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patna</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\textsuperscript{377} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{378} Ibid. In rotation principle rice was in turn.
The produce sharing system was prevalent in this part at the time of introduction of Permanent Settlement.\(^{379}\) 87 percent land of Gaya and 56-6 percent land of Patna was under produce rent at the time of Permanent Settlement.\(^{380}\) Money rent was also in practice in the Patna-Gaya region. Buchanan aptly reported that market was an important factor for money rent. It prevailed largely in those areas which were near urban centers. As in the case of Pargana Azimabad, which included city of Patna, the proximity of market rated up to 7 re. per \textit{bigha} as rent on best fertile tract.

Buchanan found that landlords were eager to convert produce rent into money rent. This produce rent has its own characteristics. Produce rent depended upon the particular level of productivity of the land. This had been clearly noticed at places like \textit{pargana} Geyaspore where produce rent was leveled due to its backwardness.\(^{381}\) The produce rent system discouraged improvement. Any improvement in productivity enhanced the profit of landlord, therefore, peasants were also not willing to improve

\(^{379}\) B.B. Chowdhary, \textit{Rent Movement in Eastern India}, in IHR, p. 311.

\(^{380}\)ibid.

\(^{381}\) Buchanan, op. cit.
the productivity. Secondly less fertile tract needed more capital to enhance the productivity which peasants could not afford.

Irrigation system based upon ahar and pyne system was important for the peasant production in south Bihar. Produce rent or Bhaoli was profitable for the cultivators in this regard. It was difficult for ordinary peasants to maintain such an irrigation system; therefore they depended on landlords for maintenance of the irrigation system. Bhaoli rent served as an assurance of support, because increase in productivity ensured enhancement of landlord's share in the agricultural produce.\(^{382}\)

The Permanent Settlement encouraged the landlords to promote cultivation of commercial crops. They even tried to enhance the money rent which was against the principle of Permanent Settlement which fixed the rent at pargana rate. Under Permanent Settlement system, cultivators' rights were protected by the granting of pattas by landlords. In these pattas, details of rent were stipulated. By the close of the century, this has been reported that in Patna, less than one percent of the cultivators were issued

\(^{382}\) Remark of A. Oglivy, Manager, Tikari Estate, July 1888, Government of Bengal, Revenue Department, Land Revenue Branch, 1888.
pattas, and rent enhancement was a common practice. Between 1860-1880 rent was almost doubled everywhere.383

Landlords devised a series of ways to maximize their falling profit from the land produce. Danabandi or appraisement of the crop became a prominent feature of the Patna-Gaya region. In this system an appraisement of crop took place. When the crop was suitable for harvesting, Patwari, gomashta, amin (assessor), jaribkash (or khatadar) or measurer, a salis or arbitrator, a navisinda (writer) along with jeth ryot and cultivator assessed the value of the produce and fixed the rent with the consent of the ryot.384 Cultivator could pay the rent either in kind or in cash, according to the agreement. This system proved to be an exploitative one. Fixation of revenue and its collection was oppressive for the peasants.

Collector of Gaya, P. Taylor was critical about this 'danabandi' system and brings it into light as an oppressive system as early as in 1849. He remarked “just and simple system which formerly prevailed all over has now given way almost universally to that of danabandi”.385 In batai system zamindars had to depend upon their agents at the time of harvesting. To

383 P. Robb, Hierarchy and Resources, MAS, 13 (1), 1979, p. 115.
384 Grierson, p. 72.
385 Bengal Board of Revenue Progs., 10 July 1949, no. 21; Taylor’s letter to Patna Commissioner, 19 May 1849, cited by B.B. Chaudhuri, p. 317.
manage this system was difficult for them. Therefore they preferred *danabandi.* The *danabandi* system was based on the idea of appraisement of crop which was considerably oppressive for the peasants. Therefore by the middle of the nineteenth century peasants were not asking for change but desired revival of *batai* system.

In later years of the nineteenth century zamindars of many estates preferred produce rent. The incidence of cash rent was higher in Patna-Gaya in comparison to other parts of Bihar which appears from the accompanying table:

Table 2. Money Rent per bigha (in Rs)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Regions</th>
<th>Rupees</th>
<th>Ana</th>
<th>Paisa</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Champaran</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saran</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muzaffarpur</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Darbhanga</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Monghyr</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purniya</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bhagalpur</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Munghyr</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patna</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shahabad</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gaya</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Despite fact that land was more fertile in North Bihar but cash rents were higher in south. This was possibly because of the fact that *Bhaoli* land

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386 Remark of Oglivy.
387 B.B. Chaudhuri, p. 316.
(the third category land) was cast fertile and hence the peasant's ostensibly did not expect any increase in productivity. On the other hand, over to the money rent system in order to enhance their rental income.\textsuperscript{388}

In course of time, commercializations of agriculture did not only remain confined to crops and sugarcane, even food crops came under its domain because of their demand for export. In fact by 1880's food grains became the largest single exportable item.\textsuperscript{389} In such circumstances it was realized by the landlords that profitable, could also be more profitable. Therefore, they demanded change from money rent to produce rent.\textsuperscript{390} Rent was the main source of income for the landlords and they wanted to grab every opportunity to maximize it. They never hesitated to use force. Landlords and peasants had equal share in the \textit{Bhaoli} lands and here division of the harvest took place on the threshing floor, but the 'rokhing or seizure) of the crop in the field was common a common feature of the countryside.\textsuperscript{391}

\begin{footnotesize}  
\begin{enumerate}
\item \textsuperscript{388} Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{389} D.P. Bhattacharya, \textit{Curse of Colonial Rule, in} Socio-Economic Trends in India, p. 17.
\item \textsuperscript{390} Chaudhuri, op. cit., p. 317.
\item \textsuperscript{391} P. Robb, \textit{Hierarchy and Resources, in} MAS, 13 (1), 1979, p. 100.
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
By the end of the nineteenth century, rent was an important source of discord between landlords and tenants in this region. The tenants were so suppressed that they left no opportunity to challenge it.\footnote{Ibid.}

Those sections of the society which did not hold any land had to pay their rent \textit{in form of labour}. They had to work certain days in the \textit{farm of the landlord} without any payment in nature. In this way they had to pay their rent.\footnote{M. Mitra, p. 203.} It is surprising to note that this section of population could not secure any legal cover for it against such a feudal exploitation.\footnote{Irfan Habib, \textit{Indian Economy 1858-1914}, p. 70.}