Chapter – V

GROWTH OF SOCIAL MOBILITY

During the period between 1757 and 1856 western influence began to play greater influence on Indian society. During this period people started to think in modern ways and to take effective measures for material advancement and social uplift.¹

Though Muslim population was quite large, the society was predominantly Hindu, other minority groups being Christians and Sikhs. The social changes started when the western influence began to penetrate in India and Bihar readily responded to it.²

In Bihar food habits changed according to financial status of the people. The babies of poor class ate boiled rice or its gruel and the infants of the rich ate Purls, rice and milk.³ The people in general, had two meals a day, one at noon and other in the evening.

Wheat was less commonly used by the people. The rich some time took it for a change and the poor took it on special occasions.⁴ Chapatis were cooked from it. Barley being comparatively cheaper was used by the common people, either in the form of Sattu (powdered barley) with chillies and salt or baked into Chapatis. Maize and Marua were also among the cheaper grains and were eaten in the form of Ummi, Morha, Habus and Ghunghni. Many types of grains such as Janera, Arhar, Mung, Urid, Bajra, Kurthi, Khesari, peas and gram were by the common people. In Patna the bread made of Arhar called Bhabhra was frequently eaten. In times of scarcity Mahua flowers and sweet potato were used as common food.⁵

Rice was the principal food in Bihar. The rich used rice once or twice a day but the poor classes ate rice once or twice a week only. In fact, eating of rice was considered a luxury. A person once said to Grierson that
“we know he is a thief, because he does little work and eats rice”. Rice was used in many forms. Chura was one of them and was usually taken on the days of fast. Lawa was also one of the forms of rice and was liked very much by children. Plain boiled rice was called Bhat and if boiled with pulses it was called Khichri.

The vegetables commonly used by people were potato, brinjal, pumpkin and gourds. Among the fruits, mango, guava, jack fruit and plantains were in great demand. The very poor people used sag, or spinach because it cost nothing. Garlic and onions were prohibited among Brahmin and Rajput families, but Muslims and some time lower caste Hindus ate these things.

Sugar was commonly used in preparing sweetmeats and feasts on the occasion of festivals. It was also used for preparing Sharbat or sweet soft drinks. Rich people used salt and oil in their cooking’s but the poor people used it on their marriage or some other special occasion.

Milk was used in several forms in Bihar. Milk products like curd and Matha were generally used by the common people. Chhena, Makkhan, Ghee and Khoa were made out of milk and were also used for preparing sweets. But these items were known to the rich families only. The sick or children used goat's milk, which was considered to be easily digestible next only to mother's milk.

Meat eating was quite common among the people. Goat's meat was generally sold in the market. The meat of birds was also very much liked by the rich people but was not very common. Muslims and Europeans ate beef which was totally prohibited to the Hindus, who considered the cow as a sacred animal. Buffalo’s meat was not commonly used. Persons belonging to the Vaishnava sect never ate meat. Pork, fowl, pigeons and quails were supposed to be eaten by the impure castes only. Musahars
also ate the field rats. Fish was very popular among the people. The upper class ate Hilsa, Carp and Meh and the lower class ate Turtles, and crabs.\textsuperscript{12}

Palm-juice was the favourite drink of the people. Distilled spirits were prepared from Mahua flower. A cheaper spirit was made from the extract of sugarcane. The cultivators liked to have sugarcane wine. Sudras drank distilled liquor frequently.\textsuperscript{13}

Most of the adult used tobacco. Men and women both smoked or chewed tobacco. Many proverbs and tales concerning tobacco were prevalent. For example, it was said that if a man mixed tobacco with time (for chewing) and offered it without being asked, was bound to be the conqueror of heaven, earth and the lower regions.\textsuperscript{14} The persons of rank smoked Hukkha (Hubble-bubble).\textsuperscript{15} In Patna Pan or betel was very common both among men and women. It was commonly taken after breakfast and meals. It was also offered to the guests. The Brahmins specially used betele, and many of them had their mouths always full of it. Ganja and Bhang were taken in many forms. A favourite way was in the form of sweetmeat called ‘Majurn’. Charas was another form of it. Some people used it everyday.

The society in Bihar in the first half of the nineteenth century was still feudal and theocratic with local lords and Brahman priests or Muslim Kazis at its apex. Social custom, profession and way of living, all were determined by the religious injunctions issue by the Brahmans and the Kazis and enforced by the landed aristocracy.

The Hindus, who formed the majority of the population had a very rigid caste system. Among them the Brahmans occulted the highest place, so much so that it was considered a great sin to cause harm to a Brahman. The Kshatriyas, Vaisyas and Sudares ranked next in the descending order. Each of these Varnas was again divided into numerous sub-castes. Some
Sudras were considered impure and men of higher castes never took food or water from their hands. Even the priests who performed the religious rites of the Sudras were looked down upon and were socially degraded.

There was hardly any social mobility. The profession of a Hindu was governed by the caste or sub-caste to which he belonged by his birth irrespective of his talents or skill for anything else. A person born in a Lobar family was expected to be a blacksmith and nothing else. Similarly a Hajam must follow his father's trade of a barber. There was no feeling of equality among the different members of the society. There was of course some amount of fraternity and social mixing but, by and large, these were limited among the members of the same caste or sub-caste.

The Muslims did not suffer from the divisions and prejudices of caste to the extent the Hindus did. Nevertheless, they had two main social divisions among them. (1) the higher caste Muslims, the Ashrafs, consisting of Syeds, Mughals, Pathans etc. and (2) the lower caste Muslims the Ajlañ which consisted of the Momin (Jolhas), Kunjras etc. The Ashrafs were free to take up any trade or profession and they formed one compact unit of the social strata. The lower caste Muslims, like their Hindu counterparts, must take up their ancestral profession. A Momin must work as a weaver, and a Kunjra was vegetable dealer. There was no social mixing or marriage relation between the higher and lower castes of Muslims. Outwardly, of course, every Muslim professed the universal brotherhood of Islam and showed unity of purpose.

Christians were a small community of Indian converts. They were, however, socially divided according to their respective Roman Catholic and Protestant Churches. They were only slightly influenced by the way of life of the foreign Christian missionaries or the European laity.
People in general, lived a simple unsophisticated life except those who were financially well off. Food habits, dress, customs and housing facilities were controlled by the still prevalent feudal economy. Two simple meals a day was that the people could commonly afford to have. In this also rice was considered a luxury. By and large, people were mostly vegetarians. The Hindus did not take fowl, and beef was looked down by them with great horror. The Muslims and Christians, however, ate beef. Vegetables, spices and sugar were consumed by those who could afford them. These were not common articles of food as these are today. Country liquor and palm juice wine or today were used mostly by sudras. The higher caste Hindus abstained from drinking in the public, and the Vaishnavas never touched wine.

Chewing of betel and smoking was quite common both among men and women.

Only the wealthier class could afford brick-built houses, Others had tiled, katcha houses and the poorest people had straw-huts. There was greater emphasis on segregation of the female folk than on providing ventilation or structural elegance. Utensils of brass and other metals were used. Life was simple and the household did not have multiplicity of furniture.

There were no fast moving vehicles for transport. Carriages were driven by the ponies in the towns and bullock carts provided means of transport both in rural and urban areas. Besides these, there were palanquins carried by labourers, and some rich persons had elephants. It was a period of slow- moving transport.

The people of the higher classes indulged in the luxurious elegant and expensive clothes of the Indian type, viz., Chapkans, trousers, choga and
Pagri, dhoti, kurta, short dhoti, and a simple wrapper. People were not so fastidious about dress and fashion as they are today, and dress accounted for only a small fraction of the purse. CAP (Topi) was the head-gear and some were turbans (Pagri). Head dress was an important item although it is no Linger so to-day. Among women folk Sari was the common garment except some who used long drawers. The women were fond of silk and fine muslim saris. Short jackets, choli and in this their modern counterparts are not much ahead of them. The poor women could hardly afford these luxuries. Shoes were not common among the ladies. The common mass of Muslims used lungy except for middle class and rich ones who used paijama. The dress of a Muslim woman was more or less the same as that of a Hindu woman.

The women folk both Hindu and Muslim, were fond of heavy ornaments of gold and silver. They were these ornaments on the different parts of their body from head to foot; some of them were also fond of tatoo marks.

People amused themselves from various games of skill and chance and even gambled with kowri and cards. Besides these they entertained themselves with dance and music. Dancing girls provided great amusement.

Religion played a dominant role in the life of the people. Though religion had different forms and had divided the people into several sects, it served as an unifying force. The Hindus were divided into three sects— namely, the Sakta, Saiva and Vaishnava. The Saktas worshipped goddess Sakti in her various forms and particularly in the form of goddess kali. The Saivas worshipped, Lord Siva and the Vaishnavas worshipped Lord Vishnu generally in the forms of Ram and Krishna.
The people of Bihar, both Hindus and Muslims, were superstitious and believed in witchcraft and in the magical and supernatural powers of the priests, Sadhus, Fakirs and local godlings. They were generally afraid of ghosts and the influence of evil spirits. In every village there was a Sthan (abode) dedicated to the worship of the local deity who, it was believed, would protect them from all kinds of dangers and evil influences. People in general believed that noble and pious deeds in this world would be rewarded in life hereafter. The Brahmans and priests were regarded as representatives of the Almighty on this earth and they exercised immense moral and social power over individuals. The words of a Kazi or an Ulema were regarded infallible by the Muslims. Nature worship was common both among the Hindus and the Muslims. In spite of diversity of religion, the Hindus, Muslims and Christians had religious tolerance and lived in amity and communal riots were unknown.

Marriage was a sacrament in Hindu society. Child marriage was prevalent. A girl must be married before she attained the age of puberty. A person must marry in his own caste but not in the same mul (common origin) or same gotra (common descent). Among the higher castes marriages were settled on the basis of indications in the respective horoscope of the body and the girl. The Pandits had, therefore, a great say in fixing up marriages. Marriage by mutual arrangement of the bride and the bridegroom was unknown, and any affair before marriage between a boy and girl was looked down upon. Payment of dowry in marriages by the girl's father was a must. In a society where a marriage depended upon caste, mul, gotra and payment of suitable dowry, very few young lads were turned into bridegrooms.

While monogamy was prevalent among the Hindus, the Muslims were permitted to have as many as four wives. There was no provision for
divorce among the higher castes Hindus. Even among the Muslims divorce was not a common phenomenon.

The occasions of birth and death in a family were observed with all religious fervor and according to local customs. The midwives were untrained and superstitious. The number of births and infant mortality was large. Infanticide was not unknown. In a funeral and the Sradh ceremony a family had to spend much in feeding the people and giving in charity. The expenditure during sradh and marriage ceremonies accounted for much of the indebtedness.

The women did not enjoy an independent status or position of honour in the public. They were dwarfed by purdah system which kept them confined within the fore walls of the house and were not allowed to move about or mix in the society. They were subordinate to the men folk. Within the house they enjoyed the position of the mistress and were responsible for managing household work, cooking and bringing up the children. The women had, therefore, a limited jurisdiction which was confined to the home and they had to undergo a life of hardship and little freedom. They had not even the right to choose their husbands. A girl was considered a financial burden on account of the dowry system.

The life of a widow was most pitiable. She had to abstain from all the pleasures of life and lived a life of self—effacement. Many widows burnt themselves alive with their husbands and committed the practice known as Sati. It shows that the position of a woman was entirely subservient to and dependant on her husband. Widows were, however, looked upon with great honour and dignity within their family because of the pure life of abstinence they lived.
Prostitution was in existence both among the Hindus and Muslims. Some women took to prostitution as a regular trade. There was no law to ban such an immoral traffic as exists today.

Hired servants and slaves were available in plenty both among the Hindus and the Muslims and for rich persons it was a Sign of luxury to have a large retinue of servants.

Eunuchs formed a special class of slaves who dressed like women and had an easy entry into the female apartments. They amused the people on the occasions of the birth of a child. A deformed child was often converted into an eunuch. On account of purdah system the eunuchs had a definite place as a common link between the male and female members in the household of both the Hindus and the Muslim aristocracy.

Education was not the concern of the state and it depended upon the munificence of a few individuals here and there. It was not meant for the entire class of people. It was limited to the aristocracy. It was communicated through snored classical languages of the Hindus and Muslims namely Sanskrit, Arabic and Persian. The subjects taught were scriptures, grammar, logic etc. There were Pathsalas for the Hindu boys and Makhtabs for the Muslim boys for teaching of three R's. Girl's education was almost nil and there were no schools for it.

The Government of the East India Company did not at first interfere in Indian social and educational matters. But as they consolidated their political position they tried to promote the English education. In 1813 the Government was asked to take steps for the instruction of sciences among the Indians, but nothing important followed. In 1835 a more definite step was taken by Lord Bentinck and the Government declared its policy to give encouragement for the promotion of western, learning in
Bihar, accordingly several schools were established for the instruction of English language and sciences. But the very idea of English education was looked upon with great suspicion by the people as an attempt to turn them into Christians. It took quite some time for the people to get rid of their prejudice against English education.

The social history of Bihar in the first half of the nineteenth century describes the state of affairs where the element of progress was dormant and pace of development extremely slow. The attempts to social and religious reform in Bengal during this period had hardly any influence on the society in Bihar. Until the administration of the East India Company took definite measures to check superstitions, infanticide, and burning of Sati and to spread western education the society in Bihar remained feudal and theocratic. The greatest change in the society of Bihar for better, came, however, the opening of railways, the establishment of proper transport and communication system and the industrialization and urbanization of the province in the second half of the nineteenth century.

The condition of women in Bihar was often deplorable. Purdah system was greatly in vogue. The women were not allowed to go in public. While going out they were carefully screened from the public view. As pardanashin the Gayawalina could receive foot—worship only from their own sex in their own houses and nowhere else. Purdah was practiced to such an extent that in Rajput families of Tirhut division it was considered improper for a young married couple to see or speak to each other during the day time or in the presence of their parents. Purdah was recognized as a social custom even by the British courts. Ladies of high rank were examined either on commission or by the judge himself and their evidence was heard through the double screen of the palanquin. But the restrictions differed from place to place. Some women at Dariyapur and round about in
Patna district did not conceal themselves so much as those of Bhagalpur did.

The birth of a son was looked upon as an honour whereas that of a daughter was regarded as a burden to the family. Men could perform various religious rites and ceremonies but the women's religious exercises were very little. At Manihari in Bhagalpur division they were not allowed to pray or make offerings or to be present at sacrifices, or to partake of offerings and man could. The women could only join feasts at marriages, funerals etc. Men usually looked upon their wives as a part of their possessions rather than as life companions. Women could not speak freely, even if the husband's character was loose. But the slightest doubt cast on a wife's character was enough to spell ruin on her.

The practices of Sati was not confined to Hindus alone but it was prevalent among some of the other religious sects and communities. In Purnea on the 20th July 1813 a Hindu women, at her own will, buried herself alive with her deceased husband who was a sunjogee. The Muslims were also not completely free from the influence of the Sati system. In Shahabad the widow of a Muslim weaver was heard to have buried herself alive with her husband’s corpse.

After the establishment of the British rule several steps were taken to suppress the barbarous custom. The first step was taken by Wellesley in 1805 who sought the opinion of the Appellate Judges on this issue. They suggested the immediate abolition of the system but their suggestion was not immediately accepted. In the year 1813 orders were passed to prohibit widows becoming Satis if they voluntarily or were under the influence of intoxicating drugs or had a child under three years of age. These measures also were not quite successful.
In Bihar both Hindu and Muslim slaves were available, the former being called Kahar and the latter Maulazadah. Some had been captured as slaves in war, while others had become slaves by occasional purchase, especially in times of famine. Slaves of either denomination were treated as any other property. They could be transferred by the owner and at the owners demise they descended to his heirs. Children born of slaves we also the property of the owner of the women who gave them birth, even though she might be married to a slave of a different family.

Further check on slavery was introduced through Act 51 of George III and Regulations X of 1811 and III of 1832 which provided against the importation of slaves by sea or land from foreign countries.

The system of making children eunuchs was also a part of slavery. The magistrate of Monghyr in his letter dated the 28th July 1858 wrote that "the custom appeared to have been handed down from the Emperor of Delhi, for the eunuchs state that formerly one of the officers of the Emperor's court used to accompany them levying a tax of one—third on their receipts which was paid into the royal treasury. In another letter he wrote that the eunuchs go round about on the occasion of child being born to either a Muhammedans or Hindu and if the child is born deformed it is frequently given to them. They have the entry to the apartment of the women both Hindoo and Muhammedans and acknowledge prostituting themselves when opportunity offers some of them dress like women and others like men. They are hideous to look at. They state that poverty and being orphans lead them to this situation. In Patna there was a portion of the city called the place of the Eunuche. Once a Hindu child named Nainsook was sold by his father to the chief of the eunuchs in Patna for rupees three and a piece of cloth. Later on the child was mutilated by the eunuchs.
Buchanan also writes about the eunuchs who were called Hizras. In Bhagalpur and Rajmahal they had organized themselves into one society and in Monghyr they were living a comfortable life.

Till the early nineteenth century the system of education was not under the control of the state. It depended upon the Patronage of the rich, pious and benevolent individuals.

In Bihar there were four types of educational institutions at work viz. Sanskrit chatuspathi or Tol. Pathsala, Madrasa and Maktab. The Tol and Madarsa were institutions for higher learning in Sanskrit and Persian or Arabic. The Pathsala and aktab were schools for elementary education in hindi and Urdu respectively.

There was specialization in Sanskrit learning at different institutions which provided for teaching separate subjects such as Naya, poetry, grammar, astronomy, law, literature etc. of which grammar, law, metaphysics and astronomy were more popular. Learning of higher sciences was supposed to be the preserve of the higher, especially the priestly caste but in practice it was not so. There were instances of non-brahmans making a sound study of various branches of Sanskrit learning. Gopal Saran a Rajput of Shahabad had a good study of the Sanskrit grammar and a few Kayasthas had acquired the knowledge of the sciences.

Generally, the teachers took great pride in supporting the students at their own cost and gave them the privilege of boarding and lodging. Some gave gratuitous instructions without having any endowments from their patrons but some had grants and endowments.

Institutions for primary education were widespread in the urban and rural areas throughout Bihar. Almost every village had a school where instructions were given to the children in reading, writing and Arithmetic.
The medium of instruction was mostly Hindi or the language of the locality.

The children usually went to school at the age of six and studied there for four years. Their lessons began with their writing on the ground with a pencil of white clay (Khari). There—after they wrote on a blackboard with a red and white ink prepared to clay, mica dust and water. Finally they wrote on paper with ink made of lampblack. In the districts of Purnea the boys first began writing on ground, then on palm-leaves with ink made of Kharimati, then on plantain leaves and finally on paper.

During the first stage the students were taught the formation of alphabets, words, etc. In the second and third the boys were instructed to learn agricultural and commercial accounts.

Thus it would be seen that even in the beginning of the nineteenth century there was a kind of mass education existing in Bihar. But with the destruction of village communities and the unpoverishment of the people, which was inseparably connected with the British mode of administration, the indigenous system of education and the erstwhile flourishing educational institutions decayed.

In the beginning the East India Company did not take any interest in the education of her Indian subjects. The spread of education in Bihar in the beginning was due to the efforts of private individuals, government officials and the Christian missionaries. From time to time the district officials moved the government for establishing new vernacular or English schools and colleges in certain localities and recommended government grant for such institutions. Although the company’s educational policy had not yet taken shape, the result of individual efforts and the efforts of the missionaries was not altogether discouraging. In 1801 J. Dean, collector of
Shahabad established a Sanskrit college at Arrah. He erected a building for the college at his own expense. Two pensioners Asha Ram Mishra and Rajballav Mishra were appointed teachers in the college.

Thus efforts were made to establish schools at various places to promote English education among the natives of Bihar. The schools, however, could not Progress much. There was a general feeling among the Biharis that the object of English instruction was to proselytize the pupils to the Christian faith. The natives dreaded English teachers and preferred an avowed missionary to a European teacher. They felt that “The missionary is paid secretly, but he works openly while you who are Paid openly, work secretly. Now the former is less dangerous for he attacks men who are able to defend themselves, while your work is the wiser seduction of children.”

In the beginning of the nineteenth century there was no separate public institution for the education of females. For ladies of respectable families, the study of classical and vernacular literature was considered to be a pious pursuit and recreation. Secular considerations chiefly the management of property prompted some members of the aristocracy to educate their daughters privately. During the survey of the districts of Bihar, Buchanan found ten or twelve ladies in the district of Shahabad who could read and write letters and understand accounts. he mentions that the ladies of Tilauthu “not only wrote a fair hand but understand the poetical effusion of Tulsidas.” In Patna and Gaya a few women of Brahman, Kshtriya and Kayastha caste could read and write. In the district of Purnea there were about twenty women who could correspond. In Bhagalpur Buchanan found that some women of the Brahman and other higher castes, could understand the meaning of Ramayana of Tulsidas.
William Adam who was appointed by Bentinck's Government to inquire into the condition of indigenous education observed, “extensive class of population unprovoked with the means of instruction by the natives themselves is the female sex. I need not dwell on the necessity of female cultivation in any country to its advance in civilization. This is of course admitted and the privacy, subjection and ignorance of the sex in this country amongst both Hindus and Muslimans are equally well known. All the established native institutions of education exist for the benefit of the male sex only and the whole of the female sex is consigned to ignorance and left wholly without even the semblance of a provision for their instruction. The ignorance and superstition prevailing in native society, the exacting pride and jealousy of the men, the humiliating servitude and inaccessibility of the women, early marriages and consequent vice and degradation are obstacles to amelioration which but inseparable.

India has been a predominantly agricultural country right from the ancient days. During our period the north-eastern part of the country happened to be particularly fertile owing chiefly to the regular succession of periodical rains, the prevailing heat in the atmosphere, and the fertility of the soil. Agriculture was an important feature of the economic life of the people. The total area under cultivation in Bengal and Bihar in 1790 was about 94,790,100 Bighas, or 31,335,570 acres. The Maratha invasions and the ravages of the Portuguese and the Mugs, affected agriculture to some extent. The Maratha eruption of the mid-eighteenth century was indeed a great calamity. For several years it disturbed the tenor of life of the bulk of the people. Under the pressure of the repeated incursions of the Marathas and the ravages of the Portuguese and the Mug pirates, the villagers experienced great
difficulty in following their peaceful vocations and activities. After 1757 the oppressions of the revenue farmers and Anvils added to the miseries of agriculturists. Famines also laid waste vast stretches of lands in the provinces.

The East India Company did not at first care to pay attention to agriculture and their trade in agricultural products was limited. The factories in the interior of the country had all been established in the manufacturing centers and nowhere do we meet with instances of their having any arrangement for stocking agricultural goods. But after the introduction of the Permanent Settlement some portions of the waste land were gradually reclaimed. The chief agricultural products were paddy, wheat, rabi crops, sugarcane, tobacco, cotton, betel etc.

Vast tracts of land were cultivated in Patna district at the close of the eighteenth century and lowest quality of rice was sold at 721 seers per rupee. In the beginning of the nineteenth century Patna greatly extended its acreage under cultivation and rice became the most important crop here. Valentia visited Patna on 2 March 1803 and he concluded that rice produced in Patna was excellent. Certain varieties of Patna rice were of a very superior quality, small grained, rather long and wiry, but remarkably white and was the kind most esteemed by Europeans. Apart from the introduction of the Permanent Settlement, which seems to have given a definite encouragement to agriculture in the Company's provinces by extending proprietary rights to the Zamindars in the soil, further measures for the intensification of agriculture were adopted from time to time. Unfortunately, little success attended such efforts. However, in 1820 the Agricultural and Horticultural Society was set up in Calcutta at the initiative of a number of individuals, and the society devoted its attention to the improvement of cultivation.
Its efforts were particularly directed to improved cotton cultivation—a task which drew the sympathy and attention of the Company's Court of Directors. But the record of its activities does not show much success.

There were, moreover, several standing impediments to agricultural progress in this country. Small farms, want of enclosures and insufficient manuring of the fields were some of the obstacles in the way, while the mixture of professions, "the peasants indifferently quitting the plough to use the loom, and the loom, to resume the plough, must also have somewhat hindered its development." Not that the peasants were lacking in skill, but there was a regrettable want of initiative and enterprise among them. The neglect of scientific methods, especially the rotation of crops, and an almost universal want of capital among husbandmen, were also equally responsible. And in this connection it should be added that the Raiyats, as in the case of indigo or poppy cultivation, often received scanty remuneration for their labour, besides being not infrequently deprived of a free choice in their business. The most appalling misfortune that they had to face was, however, the frequency of famines which were a natural sequel to drought or inundation.

The natural causes of Indian famines including failure of the monsoon, recurrent floods and occasional insect pest have been known in India from the earliest times. Hymns invoking rain in the Rig Veda, mention of excess of rain or drought damaging crop in the Atharva Veda, and many such references made in the Jatakas prove the occurrence of famines in those times. Later, in the time of Chandra Gupta Maurya, there occurred a severe famine in 298 B.C. in Bihar, which is said to have lasted for twelve long years. We get references to famine in the writings of medieval chroniclers also.
The first famine during the East India Company's rule took place in 1770. It severely affected Bihar, Bengal and Orissa. This was a catastrophic event. No such widespread and devastating famine has taken place in Bengal during the last 150 years.\textsuperscript{30} It could only be compared with the famine of 1630-31 in Gujarat which had turned that 'garden of the world' into wilderness.\textsuperscript{31} There was a partial failure of crops in Bengal in December 1768 on account of scanty of rains. From the middle of August 1768 there was no rainfall till the beginning of January 1769. In the early month of 1769 there were high prices. (The Rabi crop harvested in March-April that year was very scanty.\textsuperscript{32} The field of corn turned into field of dried straw.) The drought was so severe that even the oldest inhabitants did not remember to have had a similar experience. Consequently, scarcity conditions prevailed throughout the greater part of that year (1769). (Naturally, the Kharif crop was also much short of expectation.) Mohammed Reza Khan wrote—"hitherto grain was scarce but this year it cannot be found at all.\textsuperscript{33} Even the President and Council at Calcutta felt worried and wrote that “there is the greatest possibility that this distress will increase and a certainty that it cannot be alleviated for six months to come”\textsuperscript{34} Bihar was the worst sufferer. The famine regard in all its severity throughout 1770. On account of the failure of rains tanks and water sources dried up. There were frequent and dreadful fires which destroyed thousands of lives. Giving a vivid account of the calamity Mohammad Reza Khan thus wrote, “how shall I describe the misery of the country from the excessive droughts, the dearness and scarcity of grain hitherto, but now a total failure.” He further informed. The Governor-General that “the tanks and springs are dried up, and water grows daily more difficult to be procured. Added to these calamities
frequent and dreadful fires have happened throughout the country, impoverished whole families, and destroyed thousands of lives.\textsuperscript{35}

The stores of grains preserved at various places including Purnea were consumed by fire. To add to this distress not a drop of rain fell till the month of May 1770. Consequently, the maize crop was completely destroyed and seed for the Kharif crop could not also be sown. Referring to the extensive nature of the drought Reza Khan wrote thus: "If the scarcity of grain and want of rain had been confined to one spot of the province, management and attention might find a remedy, but when the evil is total, there can be no remedy, but in the mercy of God... The calamity is past the ingenuity of man, the Almighty alone can deliver us from such distress.

The Ganga was remarkably low from Karmnasa near Buxar in the west to Monghyr in the east. This long stretch of fertile belt remained barren on account of the failure of rains. Inspire of such distress in the province government revenue amounting to Rs 38 lakhs had been collected though the original target was Rs 25 lakhs only.\textsuperscript{36} Therefore Mohammed Reza Khan invited to Governor General to assess the extent of scarcity and wrote, "If Your Excellency would honour us with your presence here that the new Bundobust may be settled before you, it would be a means of more general satisfaction."\textsuperscript{37}

In Purnea the famine raised with full fury for about twelve months “in a degree of severity hardly to be paralleled in the history of any age or country” The famine was attended with frightful mortality. The Faujdar, Duhammad Ali Khan reported in April 1770, that multitudes had already perished and even children were offered for sale but there were no buyers.\textsuperscript{38} Ducarel, the English Supervisor of Purnea reported that miseries of the down-dwellers were not less shocking
than those of the country-dwellers. Within three days of his arrival in Purnea at least one thousand dead bodies had to be buried in order to guard against the outbreak of cholera and other dreadful diseases. The famine swept away nearly half of the population of the district.

Agricultural labourers employed in fields were of two categories—the regular ploughmen and the ordinary day labourers. The ploughman generally cultivated his master's land on Batai (i.e. share of the crop) as now. He used to get one-half of the crop, provided he met the expenses of cultivation himself. Among the village poor people the Adhiyars were cultivators for a share. They were generally landless but cultivated that of others. Poor villagers worked on daily wages because they had not got enough land to keep them engaged throughout the year. Small farmers employed part of their time in cultivating for a share. Many who could not afford to have a plough of their own joined with neighbours employing it by turns in their respective lands and also hired themselves out as day labourers. They were employed by higher caste Hindu traders, who owned land and those who had more land to cultivate than they could manage by their own ploughs.

In many cases the Raiyats employed hired labourers or ploughmen, and more often slaves. The regular wages of ploughmen in Bihar were higher than those of day labourers, and some time they received an additional allowance. The day labourers, who were usually employed to weed, transplant and water the plants, and specially for reaping received an allowance of 5% percent of the produce for reaping only. The usual allowance of ploughmen both for reaping and thrashing was 11 percent of the produce. Women, too, were employed as day labourers and by weeding, transplanting
and thrashing they earned almost as much as men and at times even more.\textsuperscript{42} In 1807 Buchanan found in that Patna, where money wages were paid ordinary workers were getting in place of three or four seers of grain, three pice or one anna which purchased from 42 to 6 seers of coarse grain that they consumed. Elsewhere they obtained 3 seers of grain or in some places from 12 or 2 price and in addition half a seer of sattu. Total value of money and grain was between 3/4 anna to one anna (i.e. 5 to 6 paise) per day. Wages of men and women were almost the same. According to Buchanan's survey of 1807 the daily wages for unskilled workers was 3 pice to 1 anna (i.e. 5 to 6 paise) and for skilled artisans was 2 annas to 3 annas (i.e. 12 to 19 paise).\textsuperscript{43}

There was scarcity of non-agricultural labour. The Magistrate of Patna was frequently asked to provide the army officers with men to serve as porters, and he had to use his influence to get such men. Frequent complaints were made to the Magistrate by the Company's officers regarding the general conduct of the bearers.\textsuperscript{44} Much difficulty was experienced in finding escorts for conveying the Company's treasure and goods from one part of Bengal Presidency to another. A similar difficulty was felt in procuring boatmen for carrying the Company's goods up and down the river Ganga.\textsuperscript{45} The boatmen hired for the purpose deserted after having carried the goods to a certain distance.

In a letter to Henry Douglas, Magistrate of Patna, dated the 22nd September, 1803 one of the Secretaries to the Bengal Government wrote that the public service having been "considerably impeded from the delay and difficulty in obtaining Manjes (Manjhis-Boatmen) and Dandies (the Oarsman) to conduct boats laden with public goods for the upper provinces and from attempts made by persons of that description to desert after they had engaged." He was required to assist
the officers in charge of boats in obtaining boatmen and in providing for the faithful discharge of the duty assigned to them. Buchanan observed that labourers employed in indigo works and similar concerns had very often to be paid in advance, without which it was sometime impossible to have their service.\textsuperscript{46}

The dearth of labour necessarily led to the use of forced labour in Bengal and Bihar. Sometimes Raiyats were dragged from their fields and forced to make and repair the roads in their localities.\textsuperscript{47} But common practice was to make the roads by convict labour. For conveyance of goods from one place to another forced labour was frequently used.\textsuperscript{48} More often the weavers of roadside villages were called upon to perform the duties of porters.\textsuperscript{49} The evil practice of employing weavers as porters seem to have been more specially prevalent in Bihar which caused a great distress to the weaving population. Consequently, in certain cases weavers of roadside villages migrated bag and baggage to out-of-the-way places. Thus in many causes important villages used to be deserted by as a result of this evil practice. For in-instance, the village Baikunthpur or Baikunthpur in the Patna district, once a flourishing centre of cotton manufacture become practically depopulated in this way.

The scarcity of free labour was partly also on account of prevalence of slavery in Bihar. The sale of slaves for transportation to other countries was prohibited by a proclamation of the Governor-General-in-Council in 1794, and their importation from outside was forbidden in 1811. But the employment of slaves for domestic or agricultural purposes and their sale and transfer under bonafide conditions within the Presidency of Bengal were not declared illegal. The institution of slavery, therefore, continued longer. Many persons voluntarily sold themselves through necessity specially in times of
famine. Slavery as an institution was abolished by the Charter Act of 1833.

The most remarkable feature of trade and industry in Bihar during the period under review was the participation of foreign merchants, especially the English, both in the internal and external trade. Before the advent of the English trade and commerce of Bihar was generally agro-based. The Company's government tried to change the pattern, though nothing radical could be done. Ever since the days of Shah Jehan the English had been carrying on trade in Bengal Presidency, which included Bihar then. For the merchants and traders Bihar provided a rich hinterland. In some of the items like opium, saltpetre, indigo, salt and textile, Bihar happened to be the centre of attraction for merchants from far off parts of the world.

The year 1765 has an unique importance in the trade history of Bihar. It was in this year that the English Company established its monopoly over trade and cotton production at Patna after passing through several vicissitudes. Some of the reasons for the varying fortunes of trade and industry were a series of Maratha incursions and destruction of the factories and godowns in Bihar. To add to this there were the invasions of the Afghans and the protracted warfare between the English and the Dutch. But we must remember that with the establishment of the English monopoly the indigenous trade and industries suffered a severe setback. This led to a sad history of gradual decline of Indian skill, labour and craftsmanship and a penetration of English power into the remotest corner of Bihar.

Cotton manufacture was quite flourishing in Bihar in the early eighteenth century. Manucci observed that between 1653 and 1708 ‘fine white cloth’ was manufactured at Patna and was “very plentiful” for internal use and export too.\(^{50}\) The two factories at
Patna belonged to the English and the Dutch.\textsuperscript{51} The other centres engaged in the manufacture of textiles in Patna or near about were Bankipore, Lakhawar, Salimpur, Nunonpur, Biharsharif, Fatwa, Nawada, Jahanabad, Mogra, Miabigha, Lauknath, Shahabad, Singhia and Chapra. These factories were supervised by Indian Comaslas.\textsuperscript{52} In 1712 the Dutch traders provided Rs. 3,000 for the manufacture of cotton textiles in the factory of Fatwa near Patna.\textsuperscript{53}

The French East India Company started their trade in cloth in Bihar from 1763. But in 1765 after the monopoly of the English in the production of cotton goods at Patna it began to decline. A couple of years later there was again a fire in the English factory at Patna. The loss amounted to Rs. 62,512 and 11 annas and 6 pice.\textsuperscript{54} After the restoration of the factory in 1768 C.'hint also began to be manufactured and its production continued till 1771. Stavorinus, who was present at Patna during this period reported that from Patna Amertee had three grades, coarse, Zafar Khani and Jahangiri.\textsuperscript{55} The famine of 1770 again hampered the manufacture of cloth. Many weavers died and the production was badly affected in Bengal and Bihar.\textsuperscript{56}

In the year 1772 a fire again broke out in Patna destroying many buildings, including Chaleston's building in which the Company’s cloth was stored. Vansittart directed Warren Hastings to construct a separate godown for storing the Company's cloth. Hastings agreed to establish three godowns Nils at Patna.\textsuperscript{57} But the outcome of it is not known.

From what little glimpse one gets into the previous accounts as mentioned above, the great significance of saltpeter trade during the past becomes easily manifested. Out of the 40,000 factories for crude saltpeter, many were situated at Patna, which also had the best
refineries for production of pure salt. In 1845 the amount of saltpetre produced was 5,00,000 cwt. while in 1903 and 1904, 3,92,000 cwt. a major part of this production was from Patna. This was the time when other salt from which explosives could be prepared was discovered in Chile. This caused a rapid decline in saltpetre trade. The foreign market no longer encouraged Indian saltpetre. Only two countries which mainly imported this item from India were the United Kingdom and the United States of America. This caused steep decline in revenue and, therefore, the government appointed a committee. Buchanan investigated in detail the causes of decline of saltpeter industry at Patna. This report gives in detail the causes of decline of saltpeter industry. Some of the important reasons were alternative salts, unscientific method of working, lack of incentive from the government and loose regulations of the trade. The fall in saltpetre trade in Patna was linked with the poor capacity of Indian purchasers as well as low cost of the imported salt. The Indian farmers could hardly afford to purchase refined nitro for manure purposes and, except in sugar cane cultivation, very little of this salt was sold in the local market. Conventionally therefore, crude nitre obtained as saltpetre was used locally as manure, particularly for rice, wheat and tobacco. Though there were refineries and factories for purifying saltpetre at Patna, yet the trade was gradually dropping on account of the money-thirst policy of the Britishers. The local people became less and less interested as they found little future prospect for the trade locally. Almost all the refined salt was sent from Patna to Calcutta for export. There was one more reason of the decline of the industry. This was the lack of poor capital-capacity of the local people to develop modern scientific technology for the manufacture of pure nitro from saltpetre. Consequently, this trade remained in the
hands of locally skilled labour. The Britishers, inspite of several recommendations did not like to invest huge capital and preferred to get their own requirements from other colonies of the British Empire. This discouraged more and more people to come forward in this trade and gradually the saltpetre industry at Patna faced a virtual closure at the end of the nineteenth century. Had the local people received encouragement from the British rulers and this trade would have been given protection against foreign import and also had the services of some trained scientists utilized for this purpose, there was no reason why this trade could not have thrived, especially because of cheap local labour and easy method of working the saltpetre deposits. It may be mentioned that until recently Nonias in some parts of Patna district prepared small quantities of nitre from local saltpetre by their simple indigenous methods.\(^6\)

Indigo. The Indigo industry was one of the most important industries in Bihar from the later half of the eighteenth century till the whole of the nineteenth century. Through Indigo was cultivated in north Bihar even before the British came to India, after the latter gained power over Bihar this industry grew more rapidly. After the grant of Diwani the Company authorities gave greater attention to the production of indigo.\(^2\)

Finding it a profitable crop the Britishers got themselves interested in it and took to its cultivation.\(^3\) Soon in Tirhut indigo factories grew in number. In Patna district the manufacture of indigo was relatively unimportant.\(^4\) Buchanan also found that its cultivation was on the decline. Many of the Zamindars were opposed to indigo cultivation. In the first half of the eighteenth century there was a remarkable progress in the indigo trade at Patna. Maximum production was reached in 1843, when more than three crores of
indigo was produced in the century.\textsuperscript{65} However, there was a decline in production from 1845 onwards for a period of 15 to 20 years. This was the time when indigo formed the most important trade item of Patna division and besides the English people many Indian nobles got engaged in this trade.\textsuperscript{66}

In the second half of the eighteenth century Alexander Noel encouraged indigo plantation in Muzaffarpur and adjoining areas of north Bihar.\textsuperscript{67} At a later stage the district of Champaran became the pioneer indigo producing region in Bihar.\textsuperscript{68} With new methods for manufacture of this dye developed by the Europeans, especially the Collector of Tirhut, Francis Grand more and more land came under indigo cultivation.\textsuperscript{69}

The people became so crazy that in place of cultivation of other crops and sugarcane, indigo was grown, so much so that about 25,000 areas of land came under indigo plantation. Along with Champaran and Muzaffarpur the adjoining sub-division of Darbhanga and Samastipur and Purnea also began to cultivate indigo and compete with other areas.

From the very beginning two systems of cultivation were widely prevalent. One was Zeerat and another was Assamiwar system. Besides these there were two more systems, Khusgee or Khushki and Kurtauli. Under Zeerat system planters carried on cultivation with hired labour on land which was in their possession.\textsuperscript{70} The planters had to arrange ploughs, carts, etc. at their own expense in the cultivation of their land.\textsuperscript{71} The Raiyats had to render service to the planters either by working on the land or by sending their Gomastas to serve in their place. The Zeerat system was very advantageous to the planters because everything was done under their supervision. But this proved harmful to the Raiyats.
Under the Assamiwar system, indigo was grown by the factory tenants. Efficient factory employees supervised it. The Raiyats got a fixed amount per Bigha for the product. They had to execute a Satta while receiving advances to produce indigo. As a result of this they were bound to grow indigo on a fixed portion of their land. They had to bear every expense incurred in the cultivation. Good seed was supplied to them the price of which was realized later. If they failed to fulfill the agreement the Raiyats had to pay back advances. According to the terms of the Sattas they had to grow indigo on three Kathas per Bigha of land. This system was known as Tinkathia system. The Tinkathia system was introduced near about 1767 before which indigo was produced on five Kathas per Bigha. In a few cases after the coming of Tinkathia system, two Katha system was practised.

Under the Tinkathia system, Raiyats were forced to give the best portion of their land for indigo cultivation. The indigo, plants, being deeprooted, used to exhaust the fertility of the soil and the system of rotation was fatal to other crops. The planters universally followed this practice in the name of Badlain. Consequently, the production of food grains suffered. The arbitrary selection of land by the planters was "an intolerable grievance" of the Raiyats.

Under the Khushki system the cultivators voluntarily produced indigo. The factories used to supply improved seeds on moderate charges. Sometimes the planters gave advances at nominal interest to the Raiyats to get indigo. On the other hand, under Khushki system the Raiyats got money on payment of interest. This system was based on principle on free trade. The Raiyats were under no compulsion to grow indigo and sell it to the planter. As the planter did not get any direct benefit and the Raiyats did not want to risk
their harvest of food grains by reserving the best portion of their land for indigo, this system was practiced on a very small-scale.

Under Kurtauli system the factories grew indigo with the help of their own men on the land taken from the Raiyats. The factories were practically sub-tenants. Like other systems this also did not pay the Raiyats, but they were easily induced to accept Kurtauli system because of utter poverty. Under this system the Raiyat mortgaged his entire holding and the very site of his house for long periods and thus sold himself “body and soul into a helpless servitude.” This system was prevalent in certain areas under Motihari only and disappeared altogether from the district after 1917.

The tenants were not generally unwilling to grow indigo because it required a good deal more time and labour than other crops, and with the rise of prices of other products, they objected strongly to having to grow what they considered a less profitable crop like indigo. Though the abuse of the above system had long been recognised nothing was done to ameliorate the condition of the peasant. Advances were generally made at the beginning of the agricultural season to the peasants to grow indigo and many a times they were forced upon him. The Raiyat, when he once took the advance was ruined. The indigo Commission also bore testimony to this state of affairs prevailing in Bihar.

In this connection we may mention the following facts for consideration. Firstly, till a long time no scientific base existed either in the cultivation or manufacture of this materials. Soil and proper rainfall being the principal factors governing a good crop were such that did not depend under the control of the cultivators. Many a time poor rain very adversely affected the crops and since in international trade market no consideration could be given for such
factors, the cultivators did not venture after some time. Secondly in the beginning years the cultivators and manufacturers were mostly in the hands of Britishers and their treatment of the local labour was not always satisfactory. The 1859 Bengal riot is an example of this. Thirdly, not all the indigo plants yielded high quality and higher amounts of the dye. The selection of seed was an important factor but the small cultivators could not fulfill these conditions. Inspite of an overall higher crop yield the production of the dye was not always the same. The fourth factors were prevalence of diseases in the crop due to insects, pests, fungus growth or wilt.

Opium is a product of poppy plants. Poppy is cultivated in villages on rich high land where water could be easily procured. It is a very laborious employment. The land has to be ploughed several times, once in July, five times in August and six times in September and has to be watered well. The field is divided into squares before sowing the seeds in the month of November. Two or three days later the field is again watered and gently turned up when dry. After sixteen to twenty days the plants start sprouting. In the beginning of February flowers begin to appear. As soon as the pods of the poppy appear sufficiently full and ripe and the flowers ready to drop, they are gently pierced from top to bottom with a small pointed instrument. From the incisions opium juice trickles down and is scraped off the pod the next day and collected in flat cups. This process of incision and collection is repeated four times before the entire juice of the pod is extracted. The opium in this fluid state starts being collected from the beginning of March and the process ends in May. It is then made into cakes and dried for consumption. Forty such cakes were packed in a gunny bag, the total weight being
two maunds. This was exported to China, Malaya Peninsula, Sumatra, Borneo Celebes where it was always in great demand. Before delivery to the Company the opium had to be dried and formed into cakes. The drying took nearly six months, during which constant attention had to be given by persons employed by the contractors and the opium lost a fifth in weight during the process. It was calculated that the opium cost the contractors about Rs. 200 per chest in Bihar.

The rent of the opium lands, at the time the Company assumed the monopoly varied between Rs. 6 to 10 per Bigha according to the quality of the land. But the farmers of the land often raised the rent in the absence of any fixed Patta. Therefore, a regulation was adopted in 1778 whereby the rates of opium land were fixed at the commencement of the season on the basis of the rate prevalent during the last three years. This rate was entered in the register maintained for this purpose in each village.

The contractors employed agents and Gomastas for making agreements with poppy cultivators. The cultivator received advances from the contractor. The price paid to the cultivator varied from 60 to 65 rupees per maund for the inferior sort and 70 to 75 rupees per maund for the best in the year 1773.

Early in the eighteenth century opium was manufactured abundantly in several replaces in Bihar. Patna produced so much opium that it was sent to all parts of the country. From 1640 to 1750 the Dutch had their factories in Patna and they produced a large quantity of opium.

During the time of Alivardi Khan the Indian merchants of Patna exercised the monopoly over its trade, This was known as the Mughal Monopoly. The government encouraged individual initiative
instead of curbing private enterprise in opium trade. The government paid advances to Ryots for opium manufacture.\textsuperscript{88}

This system produced a number of abuses. As a result of which the Mughal Monopoly came to an end. The conflict between the English and the Nawabs of Bengal gave an opportunity to the Dutch to strengthen their position in opium trade. Now the Ryots worked under the Dutch factories.\textsuperscript{89} But after the battle of Plassey the English factories produced opium freely at Patna for their commerce.\textsuperscript{90} After the battle of Plassey, an English Chief came to Patna and brought opium at Rs. 75 per maunds. The competition between English and Dutch raised its price to Rs. 150 per maund. After the expulsion of Mir Qasim the price future rose to Rs. 200 per mounds. Within a few years the Company's servants brought the bulk of opium trade under their control. And by 1761 they were able to establish their monopoly over this trade in Patna.\textsuperscript{91} The Patna merchants had a monopoly right to purchase the opium from, the peasants and the cultivation was free.\textsuperscript{92} The Dutch and the French were deprived of their right and were made to pay duty to the English Company for opium trade.\textsuperscript{93}

During the time of Verelst the Dutch complained to the Nawab of Bengal against the monopoly of the East India Company over opium manufacture. Consequently, the Nawab of Bengal appointed Muhammad Raza Khan as the Deputy Nawab on 12 March 1767 and instructed him to remove such monopoly. The Dutch and the French sent their Gomastas to make their purchases. This led to a conflict between them and the English Gomastas. So the Deputy Nawab was directed to throw the opium transaction open to all people, who were required to pay duty to the Company.
The Patna monopoly was ended by Warren Hastings who gave the right to the Dutch and French to purchase a stipulated quantity of opium at cost price from the English Company. Hastings also introduced the contract system for the annual provision of opium. According to this system contracts were generally given to the person, who could win the special favour of the contraction authority. After 1785 the public competition system was introduced. This system led to over production as a result of which the cultivation declined.

The Patna opium was different from the Bihar opium as the two varieties had their own separate offices at Patna. This is evident from the Muzaffarpur old; records which cite some of the advances made to the various opium concerns. The production of opium prospered and the volume of its export grew. Though it was brought by the Company mainly for export, it was not equally anxious to bring in the money thus earned within the country, or to any of the three places (Patna, Banaras and Ghazipur); it was used for further investment abroad resulting in the drain of the wealth of Patna. Almost all the opium produced used to be requisitioned by the Company leaving a very small amount for local medical purposes. Thus, for instance, in 1796 only one chest was allotted at Patna to the apothecary worth Rupees 129.

Certain now conditions were imposed on the contractors by Cornwallis, with a view to removing certain irritants between the opium Ryots and the contractors. While doing so he stuck to the mode of supply by contract. By Article XI of the opium Regulation, passed on 29 June 1789, it was provided that all the cases relating to opium were to be given priority over other cases by the Judges of Diwani Adalats. Furthermore, according to the circumstance of the
cases the suffering parties got due award of damages. In 1793 the Board of Trade took over the administration of the Opium Department from the hands of the Board of Revenue.

On the whole, these reforms proved to be satisfactory. However, there were some curious results due to the fixing of price payable to the cultivators. For example, the contractor had to supply the article to the Company at a rate that did not exceed its purchase price. The quality of opium deteriorated. This was quite natural because, in order to make a good margin of profit the contractors freely resorted to adulteration.

From 1797 a new system, known as agency system was introduced. Under this system the condition of the peasants improved. The agents were generally the close relations of the peasants. Everything was done by the Gomostas of the factory. The agents were called Mahtos. They were of two types. One was known as Sadar Mahtos. They acted as security to government for the fulfillment of the Ryots engagement and advances. The second was known as Gayu Mahtos. They were the agents appointed by the Ryots to tender their engagements and receive their advances. The opium was generally delivered by them to the Gomastas.

With the introduction of the agency system a new phase started in the history of the Company's opium monopoly. The Ryots received advances direct from the agents for the supply of raw opium to the Company's factories. The advances were made in proportion to the extent; of land, over which the Ryot agreed to cultivate opium.

In July 1799 some Regulations were framed for the guidance of all persons concerned in the trade of opium. The government paid advances to the peasant for cultivating opium compulsorily on a part
of their land and the entire produce was to be handed over to the government.\textsuperscript{102}  

In 1803 Valentia found a thriving trade of opium at Patna.\textsuperscript{103} The advances were regularly paid to the agents and contractors and the government opposed any increase in price. 

This led to a new development. In the region between Phulwar-is harif (adjacent West of Patna town) and Arrah the cultivation of poppy declined due to greater attention to the cultivation of potatoes which became more popular with the peasants.\textsuperscript{104} Larger number of Ryots started cultivation of potato in place of poppy. 

The decline in production of opium caused great hardship to the people. To remove these hardship many retail shops were opened throughout Bihar. The revenue from these shops was utilised to maintain Chowkis for the prevention of smuggling and illicit cultivation.\textsuperscript{105} 

There was an overall increase in the production of opium in Bihar as a result of the agency system. In 1808-1809 the amount of produce was about 8000 maunds.\textsuperscript{106} The price at Patna in February 1810 were from 1525 to 1565 Sicca rupees per maund. 

According to Buchanan the cultivators, both rich and poor were satisfied with the advances received. The Company's opium business in Bihar was, on the whole, conducted on liberal terms. It became "the safest and most gentlemen like speculation.\textsuperscript{107}"

Sugar is the most important industry depending on agriculture. Sugarcane is the principal cash crop of Bihar. It was cultivated on modern scientific lines by the European planters who made white sugar direct from cane.\textsuperscript{108} But the ordinary peasants followed the antiquated system as elsewhere in India.
There were many sugar factories in Bihar and some of these were owned by the English and the Dutch. There were factories owned by private individuals also. A number of towns and cities emerged as centres for the manufacture of sugar.\(^{109}\) After the acquisition of Diwani in 1765 the production of sugar passed from the hands of the Indians to those of the English.

In the year 1772 a good deal of sugar was manufactured at Patna. The condition of sugar industry in South Bihar was not satisfactory towards the end of the eighteenth century. The commercial Resident of Patna established a factory to increase the production of sugar.\(^{110}\) In Patna and Gaya districts nearly 1200 Bighas of land were brought under sugarcane cultivation in 1793.\(^{111}\) By the end of the century 7,000 acres of land were brought under cultivation of sugarcane in these districts.\(^{112}\)

Each Bigha of land, yielded about seven maunds of sugar per annum. Gur or Shakkar was made in almost all parts of Bihar. The Commercial Resident of Patna supplied a smaller quantity and sent agents to interior places for obtaining Raab from the indigendus dealers.

In 1787 agency system was introduced. Under this system advances were given to the sugar manufacturers. But this system was not suited for all times. The other system was of ready purchase. The system of Dalali was also used. The Commercial Resident at Patna procured sugar from two sources. Firstly, it was produced in the Commercial Resident's factory, and secondly, it was obtained by the agency system. Stavorinus has described the process of the manufacture of sugar in his travel account.\(^{113}\)

After 1801 the sugar market became rather dull and heavy for some years.\(^{114}\) But a small quantity of sugar was also manufactured
in the Company's factory at Patna. However, after few years the sugar market became favourable and the Company’s factory at Patna carried on a great trade in sugar. The Danes also manufactured sugar at Patna and here they had an extensive range of godowns for this purpose. Most of these factories had, however, to incur losses and were either wound up in the course of a few years or converted into indigo Kothis. They had no regular method of rotation of crops except in the irrigated tract of South Bihar where cane generally followed rice. On planter's estates cultivation was more advanced than on farmer's land. Sugarcane jnice after pressed out of cane was brought consistence by fire, put into bag and pressed by heavy weights for some time. The purity of sugar depended upon the continuation of the pressure. During this operation a liquid like substance dropped from the bag called Choa which was preserved in pans and sold to the distillers for spirits or Araq. The contents of the bag when purified from the Choa was called Shakkar. It was put into a vessel and kneaded and worked up with a proportionate quantity of milk, then boiled and carefully scummed. When by the heat it had obtained a proper degree of consistence or rather ropiness it was strained through a cloth into another vessel. It was now taken in certain quantities, proportionate to the extent of manufacture and brought to a great degree of consistence, over the fire. Afterwards it was put into an earthen vessel with a small hole in its bottom, through which the molasses drained off into the vessel below. The remaining contents in the upper vessel were covered with a cloth on which an appropriate quantity of a marshy creeper, called Sewar, was placed. The heat within the vessel steamed the creeper so that its moisture dropped in and acted as a purifier of the sugar. After this operation the sugar or Chini was taken off from the surface and dried.
in the sun. When sufficiently dried it was spread out on a platform, pound-ed and ground down to powder by foot in order to give it the requisite degree of fineness. It was again dried and finally packed into bags for despatch.\textsuperscript{120}

A large quantity of raw silk was produced in Bihar during the first half of the eighteenth century. But due to various political disorders at the time and lack of full encouragement of the Company the silk industry did not show good progress in the beginning.\textsuperscript{121}

There were Dalals, who took contracts to supply the goods. These Dalals received Dadni or advance money from the agents of the factories. On failure of contracts they were some time liable even to be failed. The Dalals occasionally created trouble. Sometimes they felt no scruple in hindering the Company's trade by charging exorbitant commissions.\textsuperscript{122}

The condition of sericulture became favourable after 1757, when the Court of Directors sent an expert named Wilder to Calcutta for the purpose of improving this industry.\textsuperscript{123} Another expert, Josheph Pouchon offered to go to Bengal to improve the breeding of silk worms. Marriott, the Collector of sericulture industry agreed to given him all necessary assistance.\textsuperscript{124} After acquiring Diwani in 1765 the Company took more concrete steps to improve the industry. The Ryots were encouraged to cultivate the mulberry plant and were sometimes given rent-free waste lands for two years for that purpose.\textsuperscript{125}

Experts from France and Italy also came to teach the methods of winding to the local revelers, The Court of Directors compelled these persons to work as winders in the Company's factories and prohibited them to work else-where.\textsuperscript{126} But due to the famine of 1770-72 the industry received a set-back. In this famine one third of
the population engaged in silk cultivation was swept away. Inspite of this havoc, the Company persisted in their efforts to augment the production of raw silk. A large number of reeling factories were established about this time, and the cultivation of mulberry was greatly extended to the province of Bihar. Now the cultivation of mulberry started in Bihar and many reeling factories were established. Moreover, from 1771 seeds were obtained from China. In 1775 the progress was satisfactory and the export of raw silk increased. Shortly afterwards a period of recession set in because of the progress of English manufacture but still a greater part was in the hand of the Company. But by 1792, probably as a result of the agency system (which had been adopted in 1787) for the supply of silk the Company's silk business showed brighter prospects.

In the manufacture of silk money was advanced to the people around Patna and other places, where large tracts of low land were brought into cultivation for growing mulberry plants and for the working the filatures. As the quality of the silk largely depended on a full supply of goods and fresh leaves for the worms the demand for mulberry fluctuated accordingly as the worms were plentiful or scarce.

The mulberry had several kinds of worms, of which two were most important. These were known as country worms or deshi palu, which was hatched four time a year; and the large or bara palu, which was hatched only once in the year. The cocoons of the first kind yielded far superior quality than the latter but this kind produced more silk.

Trade and Industries 99 In the dry season, that is during November and March bands, the cocoons were usually put in the sun
for five or six days. Charpoys (bedsteads worked with strings), mats, pieces of cloth and similar other things were used as receptacles for them. They were then banked and were kept with care for about a month, affording much time for working off. But the July or rainy season band had to be worked off at once, or the chrysalides would change and the cocoon would be spoiled. It was necessary to heat the water in which the cocoons were kept whilst being spun off. Each pair of Katanis or spinners had to be provided with a fireplace to heat their basins of boiling water. About one hundred and fifty maunds of wood were necessary to work off a maund of silk. The time for buying the best silk was in December, when the November band or sortment came from the worm and in April, when the March band was made.\textsuperscript{132} The size of new filatures was reckoned by the number of ‘basons’, each heated by its own furnace, in which the silk was separated from the cocoon before being wound off on a reel, and they used their buildings for cocoons storage, ovens for killing the worms, and ware-houses for silk.\textsuperscript{133} Some of the new filatures were built by the Company, but others were put up with private capital, either by arrangement with the Company or as independent speculations.\textsuperscript{134}

In the silk industry mainly four classes of people worked. The first were the cultivators of mulberry, the second were the racers of silk worms, the third were the winders and the fourth were the weavers.
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