

ASPECTS OF REGIONAL CONSCIOUSNESS IN BIHAR, 1870 - 1912

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This is to certify that the dissertation entitled, "ASPECTS OF REGIONAL CONSCIOUSNESS IN BIHAR, 1870-1912" submitted by NARENDRA JHA, in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the Degree of Master of Philosophy of this University, is an original work and has not been previously submitted for any other Degree of this or any other University.

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P R E F A C E

The phenomenon of regionalism can be seen to be in existence in many countries of the World. It is often viewed as a problem standing in the way of the creation of an integrated nation. Regionalism, in its extreme form, can indeed become a threat to the unity and integrity of a nation, more so in a country like India where different linguistic - cultural zones exist. It is a complex phenomenon, like other social phenomena, with a number of factors in their total effects giving rise to it. Although this phenomenon can and does exist in many countries with long independent historical traditions, yet it is both extremely important and interesting to see how regionalism emerged in the period of colonial rule in India.

The present study seeks to understand the rise and growth of regionalism in Bihar and the movement for its separation from Bengal. The study covers the period from 1870 to 1912, as it was in the decade of 1870s that the first expressions of regional consciousness were made in very emphatic terms. The movement for separation finally ended in 1912 when Bihar was separated from Bengal.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

1. Lt.-Governor : Lieutenant-Governor
2. RNPB : Report on Native Papers (Bengal)
3. SAB : Statistical Account of Bengal
4. Vol. : Volume.
5. N.D. : Not dated.

CHAPTER I

I N T R O D U C T I O N

C H A P T E R _ I _

INTRODUCTION

The State of Bihar, as it exists now, is a recent creation and came into being only in the twentieth century. In 1912 Bihar and Orissa were separated from Bengal¹ and constituted into a separate province, known as the Province of Bihar and Orissa. Thus Bihar got a political identity of its own. Orissa was separated from Bihar in 1937.²

Except for some territorial adjustments made in the post-independence period, the territory and boundary of Bihar remained the same as they were constituted in 1937 when Orissa was separated from Bihar.³

The State of Bihar lies between latitude $21^{\circ}58'$ and $27^{\circ}31'$ N and longitude $83^{\circ}20'$ and $88^{\circ}32'E$. It has a total area of 67,202 square miles and is bounded on the east by West Bengal, and on the west by Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh. To the south lies Orissa and to the north, Nepal.⁴

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1. R.R. Diwakar (Ed.) : Bihar Through the Ages., Calcutta, 1959, p. 62.
 2. Ibid., p. 62.
 3. Ibid., p. 64
 4. Ibid., pp. 23-24.

Although many factors contributed to the creation of Bihar as a separate province in 1912, a very significant factor was the rise and growth of regional consciousness in Bihar in the last three decades of the nineteenth century and the consequent demand for separation from Bengal and the movement launched by Bihari leaders to achieve this objective.

The rise of regional consciousness was symbolized by the beginning of 'Bihar for Biharis' movement in 1876. Although this movement itself was occasioned by a number of factors, what initially began as a fight over jobs between Biharis and Bengalis soon involved the whole question of Bihar's identity and gradually took the shape of a separatist movement.

The present study is an attempt to understand the rise of regionalism in Bihar in the last thirty years of the nineteenth century and early twentieth century, and the movement for its separation from the Presidency of Bengal.

This theme has not received much attention from the historians so far. There have been some general surveys of the history of Bihar from ancient period to the present period. Two notable example of this kind of historical work

are 'History of Bihar'⁵ written by R.K. Chaudhary and 'Bihar Through the Ages'⁶ edited by R.R. Diwakar. Both the works mention about the subject, but by their very nature these fail to give much attention to the subject. These works contain a great deal of information on various aspects of polity, society, economy, culture and history of Bihar, which do have a bearing on the subject. A very significant work on the subject is 'The creation of Modern Bihar'⁷ by V.C.P. Chaudhary. The author has pointed out with clarity the reasons why Biharis set up a demand for the creation of a separate Bihar in the last years of the nineteenth century. But the book is mainly concerned with the movement for the separation of Bihar. The growth of social and political consciousness is not discussed in any great detail. Not much attention is given to find out the implications of the establishment of colonial rule. The third volume of 'The Comprehensive History of Bihar'⁸ edited by K.K. Datta which deals with the history of modern Bihar also discusses the subject of political evolution of Bihar from being a part of the Bengal Presidency to a full-fledged province of

5. R.K. Chaudhary : History of Bihar, Patna, 1955.
6. R.R. Diwakar (Ed.) Bihar Through the Ages, Calcutta, 1959.
7. V.C.P. Chaudhary : The Creation of Modern Bihar, Darbhanga, 1964.
8. K.K. Datta (Ed.) : The Comprehensive History of Bihar, Volume III in two parts, Patna, 1976.

of British India. The various factors, which contributed to this, are discussed. The above volume also includes a survey of the vernacular literature, which should have been of some interest, but here what one finds is mere information about various authors and their works, and not much attempt is made to examine the themes of their works. The 'History of Indian National Congress in Bihar, 1885-1985'⁹ edited by P.N. Ojha although mainly concerned with the history of the Indian National Congress, discusses the emergence of political consciousness in Bihar in the pre-Congress period and is both informative and analytical in its approach.

Although a number of papers and articles are available on the above subject, the amount of secondary works available on it is rather scanty.

Towards the Problem

The term 'Regionalism' is of comparatively recent origin and has not acquired any precise definition.

But in a very general way the term has been defined as "counter movement to any exaggerated or oppressive form of centralization. It must not, however, be considered solely

9. P.N. Ojha (Ed) : History of Indian National Congress In Bihar, 1885-1985, Patna, 1985.

from the viewpoint of political control or governmental administration. Regionalist problems arise only when there is a combination of two or more such factors as geographical isolation, independent historical traditions, racial, ethnic and linguistic peculiarities and local economic or class interests. It is different from mere sectionalism in that, it is not exclusively based on regional economic or class interests but involves certain ethnic factors, such as cultural, traditional or linguistic peculiarities which provide a basis for what is often term as sub-nationality."¹⁰

To put it more simply, regionalism is the belief that because a group of people live in a particular geographical region and have common ethnic characteristics such as language, culture, they have as a result, common political, social and economic interests. Region is the basis of their basic social relationships. It responds to and expresses the social urges and serves the social needs of certain contemporary groups at a given time.

The existence of the elements of a common regional identity like common cultural and ethnic attributes of the

10. Encyclopaedia of the Social Sciences, Vols. . xiii.
New York, 1924. pp. 208-9..

people of a region, an independent historical tradition of its own and presence of local class interests, as seen above, are necessary to the growth of regional consciousness but these need not automatically lead to the growth of regional consciousness, (although it cannot be denied that the very growth of regional consciousness contributes to the growth of regional identity and vice versa).

In the opinion of one scholar, four things are required for the transformation of an objectively different people into a subjectively conscious community.¹¹ These are the existence of a pool of symbols of distinctiveness, an elite willing to select, transmit and standardise those symbols for the group, a socially mobilising population to whom these symbols of group identity can be transmitted and the existence of one or more group to be differentiated from.¹²

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He further points out that it is perception of objective differences between groups and particularly of

11. P.R. Brass, Language, Religion and Politics in North India, Delhi, 1975, pp. 43-44.

12. Ibid., pp. 43-44.

uneven rates of social change between them, which provides the catalyst for the development of group consciousness.¹³

He also draws attention to the role of the government in the development of group consciousness. In the decisions and policies they make and in the general strategies they follow the government influences the development of group consciousness and the patterns of group conflict.¹⁴

Marxist scholars have provided useful insights as to how and under what circumstances the problem of regionalism or sub-nationalities occurs. As it is known, the problem is not uniquely faced by independent countries only but even a colonized country like India had to face this problem. In fact, it was one of the major problems with which Indian nationalist movement had to contend.¹⁵

A number of modern European states such as the Austrians, the Hungarians and the Russians had to face similar problems.¹⁶

13. Ibid., p.33

14. Ibid., p. 41

15. A.R. Desai : Social Background of Indian Nationalism, Bombay, 1989, Reprint, p. 381.

16. Russia and Yugoslavia are facing serious problems of this nature now.

Marxist scholars have tried to find the roots of the problem of sub-nationalities in the nature of historical evolution of a country. As one scholar has put it "A survey of the historical development of modern nations reveals the crucial fact that they are product of the capitalist development of society. The extending process of the capitalist economic development overcomes the economic, social and political disunity of a people, unifies them in a single political and economic system, and welds them into a cohesive nation.¹⁷ Stalin was to put it like this, "A nation is not merely a historical category, but a historical category belonging to a definite epoch, the epoch of rising capitalism. The process of elimination of feudalism and development of capitalism is at the same time a process of constitution of people into nations".¹⁸

In those countries the problem of sub-nationalities did not grow much or regionalist consciousness did not emerge much where "the process of economic and resultant

17. A.R. Desai - op.cit. pp. 381-82.

18. J. Stalin : "Marxism and the National Question" Works, Vol. II, Moscow, 1953, p. 313.

linguistic and cultural consolidation of loosely existing peoples into united and compact nations preceded the establishment of centralized national states".¹⁹ The examples are France, Great Britain without Ireland and Italy.

But in those countries, where due to some reasons, a centralized state emerged before the capitalist economic development could overcome the linguistic and cultural differences of disparate people and transmute them into a well-knit nation, living in a common economic and cultural life, such problem arose,²⁰ and they emerged into multinational states. The major example of such states is Russia. What finally contributed to the growth of such problems was that with further economic and other developments as well as some oppression by the dominant nationality, nationality consciousness developed among the suppressed groups, who were living in different regions, and they started movements for political freedom.²¹

19. A.R. Desai : op.cit., p. 382.

20. Ibid., p. 382.

21. Ibid., op.cit., p. 383

The Indian Scene

In India, the factors responsible for the growth of sub-nationalities or, in other words, regional identities were not exactly similar to those that were at work in East European countries like Austria and Russia. As seen above, it depended on the nature of historical evolution of a country.

India's historical evolution, it being a colony of Great Britain, was influenced and determined by two major factors. Partially it depended on the nature of economy, society and polity of the pre-British period but a far more important factor was the role of the colonial government and the nature of changes that were brought about by it in India's economy, society, polity and culture. The rupture brought about by the colonial intrusion not only brought some latent tensions to the surface but also created new tensions in the Indian society.

In the nineteenth century was initiated the prolonged historical process of welding the Indian people into a nation or a people.²² It was under the aegis of British colonial

22. Bipan Chandra, : Communalism in Modern India, New Delhi 1984, p. 123.

rule that this process was initiated. British rule performed a double mission in India : one destructive, the other regenerating. These were the annihilation of the old Asiatic society, and the laying of the material foundations of western society.²³ The British not only established political unity but also by gradually introducing a uniform system of government unified it administratively. Through the destruction of the rural and local self-sufficient economy and by introducing capitalist system they made India's economic life a single whole. They built up, although sparingly, as Indian educated class and established modern means of communication.²⁴ All these steps made for an all-round consolidation of Indians into a modern state. But as the transformation of the Indian society was intended to serve the interests of the colonial power and was adjusted in character, extent and depth, to the exigencies of these interests, it remained incomplete and had a distorted character.²⁵ It created a new unevenness in the Indian society

23. See, R.P. Dutt ; India Today, Calcutta, 1989, Reprint, pp. 92-93.

24. Ibid., p.93.

25. A.R. Desai, op.cit., p.384.

as a whole and thus stood in the way of the creation of a true and compact nation.

The British rule created a new unevenness of development between different regions.²⁶ This was because of the fact that in the colonial regime social development was not uniform in all regions. What led to it was the fact that the conquest of India was a prolonged affair and was completed in stages. Hence the impact of colonialism on the people occurred in a differential manner.²⁷ The formation of new social classes also occurred unevenly.²⁸ As the growth of Indian nationalism was the result of the conditions created by the British conquest and rule, and the action of the forces accompanying that conquest and rule uneven development of Indian society was reflected in the uneven growth, both in time and space, of national and anti-imperialist consciousness among different social classes as well as people belonging to different religions or linguistic areas.²⁹ But the "growing economic, political and administrative unification of the country, the process of making India into a

26. Anil Seal : The Emergence of Indian Nationalism, Cambridge, 1968, pp. 25-26.

27. Bipan Chandra, op.cit., p. 123.

28. Ibid., p.123.

29. Ibid., p.123, also see A.R. Desai, op.cit., p. 387.

nation, the developing basic contradiction between colonialism and the Indian people and the formation of modern social classes and strata made it imperative to have wider links and loyalties among the people and to look for wider unities and identities."³⁰ Where the national consciousness could not grow, regionalism and similar other identities emerged to fill the gap and became the basis for such identification.³¹ It had the result that the development of nationalist movement was paralleled by independent political movements of not only different socio-religious groups like the Muslims but of regional groups like Biharis, Oriyas and others.³²

With the growth of regional consciousness, which were promoted by a number of factors, the sub-nationalities felt a keen desire to have a free corporate life, where they could develop to their fullest potentialities. But this was not possible so long as the existing provincial divisions continued, which were created for the administrative

30. Ibid., p. 20.

31. Ibid., Footnotes p. 22, and p. 124.

32. A.R. Desai, op.cit., p. 387.

convenience of the British and did not correspond to linguistic - cultural regions.³³ This fact lay at the root of the demand for a separate political identity made by different sub-nationalities in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

Although increased pride in local culture and tradition and an increased attention to the history of local regions are phenomenon observed even during earlier periods of Indian history³⁴ and even during the colonial period the growth of regional feeling was greatly influenced by the factors like independent historical traditions (History being an integral part of social consciousness its appropriation has always been crucial to the rise of social and political movements)³⁵ and other cultural factors, but the whole process was greatly accentuated during the colonial period, and what made these factors relevant was the total situation created by the colonial rule.

33. Ibid., p. 388.

34. R. Thapar : A History of India, (Penguin), Vol.I; 1966, p.244.

35. K.N. Panikkar, "Appropriation of History and Historian's Role", Presidential Address, Historiography, South Indian History Congress, Calicut, 1991.

Steps like administrative unification, improvement in the means of communication and the creation of a modern educated class, in their total effects, contributed to the consolidation of regions and helped in the further crystallisation of a regional identity.

But what gave fillip to the whole process was a perception of uneven development within the country and where lines of division between the developed and undeveloped were perceived either in terms geographical areas or between ethno-cultural communities or both.³⁶

In the colonial regime, as said earlier, economic change and social development was not uniform in all regions. Because of their imperial connexion, the various interests of the people, living in the regions of most concentrated colonial presence, ranged far and wide. However, with the growth of political consciousness among wider strata of the population, the inevitable lop-sidedness of colonial **created an awareness of uneven development** development, even within large dependencies.³⁷ And, whenever,

36. Partha Chatterjee : "Bengal : Rise and Growth of a Nationality" Social Scientist, August 1975, p. 69.

37. Ibid., p. 70.

the perception developed among the people of backward regions, that the interests of a people of a particular region are being given prominence or people of such regions were seen to be dominating the interests of backward regions, it led to an accentuation of the growth of regional consciousness there (as the people developed a common feeling of aversion against the dominant regional group). This almost inevitably led to the demand of a separate political identity. The demand was made not only on the ground that the existing administrative set-up did not correspond to linguistic-cultural divisions of India but also on the grounds that they had led to a situation where one regional group came to dominate the interests of other regional group and backward regions could not flourish until and unless they were given a separate political identity. A study of the rise and growth of regional consciousness in Bihar and its demand for an independent political identity separate from the Presidency of Bengal can be situated in the light of our discussion so far.

To locate the specificity of the growth regionalism in Bihar some questions would need to be answered. How far was Bihar a 'region' in the pre-British period and how did the

the imposition of British rule affect the polity and society in Bihar? How did the spread of English education and the emergence of an English educated class affect the question of Bihar's identity and contribute to the growth of regional consciousness? What was the role of the press and public platform - the symbols of political consciousness - to the growth of regionalism? How did the British perceive Bihar and what was the role of the government to the growth of regionalism? And finally why did the movement for separation start?

An attempt is made in the next chapters to discuss all these questions. The second chapter deals with the history of Pre-British Bihar and aspects of its polity and society so as to find the elements of a common regional identity that already existed and to bring into greater relief the impact of colonial rule, which is discussed subsequently.

The third chapter deals with the growth of English education and the emergence of an English educated class.

The fourth chapter discusses the British perception of Bihar and the administrative steps taken by it, which

promoted regional consciousness. The role of the press and public platform in the construction and articulation of regional consciousness is discussed next.

The fifth chapter deals with the movement for the separation of Bihar. The different stages of the movement and the reasons behind the demand for separation are discussed.

The last chapter would summarise the discussion of the earlier chapters and would conclude the discussion.

The dissertation is based on primary sources like Annual Reports on the Administration of Bengal, Report on Native Papers (Bengal), different Gazetteers prepared by the British, A statistical Account of Bengal, Government Proceedings, Writings of the leaders of the separation movement, some 19th Century Hindi literary works and some secondary sources. The list of these sources is given in the bibliography.

CHAPTER II

PRE-BRITISH BIHAR, COLONIALISM AND CHANGE

C H A P T E R I I

PRE-BRITISH BIHAR, COLONIALISM AND CHANGE

Though ancient texts do not refer to a territorial unit called Bihar, the region now known as Bihar has played a very important role in the history of India. In the ancient period four important states flourished here. These were Vaisali, Videha, Anga and Magadha.¹ Vaisali, initially a monarchy, emerged into a republic towards the end of the eighth century B.C. and remained so far a very long time.² Magadha formed the nucleus of an empire and under the Mauryas its boundary covered a great portion of the Indian sub-continent. Patna was the metropolis of large political units for centuries. The two great faiths of Buddhism and Jainism flourished here. While the Buddha attained enlightenment at Bodh-Gaya, Vardhamana Mahavira had both his birth and Nirvana in this region.

As this brief sketch makes clear, the region of Bihar, though not under the name of Bihar, had seen periods

1. V.C.P. Chaudhary, op.cit., preface p. 1.
2. Ibid., Preface. p.i

of political unity in the ancient period.

The Appellation 'Bihar'

But the appellation Bihar was a new contrivance. The region got its present name around the beginning of the thirteenth century A.D. For the first time it is from the *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri*, a historical work written by Maulana Minhajuddin Abu - Umar-Uzman in the second half of the thirteenth Century A.D. that one comes to learn that the word 'Bihar' was used to denote the name of a place.³ Minhaj, while recording the origin of the name of Bihar as a territorial unit, says that Bakhtiyar Khilzi attacked Hisar-i-Bihar (Bihar fort), captured it and pillaged it.⁴ What Bakhtiyar had pillaged was not a fort actually but a fortified monastic educational institution (Buddhist monastery), which was called as whera in local language.⁵ This was situated near modern Bihar sharif. Bakhtiyar called the entire area around Bihar sharif as Bihar.⁶

Later, in the medieval period, the area of south Bihar was called by the name of Bihar.

3. U. Thakur, : "Bihar : A Geographical Introduction and A Historical Review" in Bihar Past and Present, K.P. Jayaswal Research Institute, Patna, 1987, p.5.

4. Ibid, p.5

5. Ibid, p. 5

6. Ibid, p. 5

It was in 1324 A.D. that present area of north Bihar was conquered by Ghiyasuddin Tughlaq. With this north and south Bihar was politically and administratively unified. But the real basis for the formation of a separate province embracing most of the territories of modern Bihar was outlined by Sher Shah. He conquered Monghyr and Bhagalpur and thus extended the eastern boundary of Bihar to the Rajmahal hills. South Bihar and Tirhut were placed under a single government and Patna was made capital of this unified region in 1541 A.D.⁷ The process was carried further when in 1575 A.D. Bihar was constituted into a subah by Akbar.⁸ The Subah, according to the Ain-i-Akbari, was divided into seven sarkars. Later the number of sarkars went up to eight. The sarkar Bihar was the largest. It covered the greater part of the old districts of Patna, Gaya and northern parts of the old districts of Hazaribagh, Ranchi and Palamau.⁹ The sarkar Monghyr covered Bhagalpur and parts of santhal Pargana.

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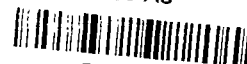
7. U. Thakur, Ibid., pp. 7-8.

8. Ibid., pp. 7-8.

9. Q. Ahmad : "Aspects of Historical Geography of Medieval Bihar" in S.H. Askari and Q. Ahmad (Ed.) The Comprehensive History of Bihar, Vol. II, Part I, Patna, 1983, pp. 17-19.



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The appellation Bihar had thus been crystallized by 1575 A.D. and it came to denote the entire area which is now known as the state of Bihar.

Bihar continued to remain an important subah of the Mughal Empire. It was in 1703 that Aurangzeb gave Bihar to Ajim-us-shan as an appendage to the governorship of Bengal.

The situation continued to remain the same under Bahadur Shah, When Azim-us-Shan held governorships of Allahabad, Bengal, Bihar and Orissa. But at certain periods Bihar had independent governors. Fakhr-ud-Daula, who governed Bihar at least from 1727 to 1734, was the last independent governor of Bihar for, after him, the governorship of Bihar became an appendage of Bengal.¹⁰

But Bihar's distinct identity continued to exist as becomes evident from the fact that when in 1765 the Mughal Emperor conferred Diwani of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa on the East India Company, three separate Farmans were issued for

(Ed.)

10. R.R. Diwakar /- op.cit., p. 502.

the three provinces.¹¹

In later years too, the special status of Bihar, was not lost sight of and special arrangements were made for the collection of revenue of that area.¹² In 1817, the Board of Commissioners in Bihar and Benaras was established and was vested with all the authority which had been previously enjoyed by the Board of Revenue in Calcutta.¹³

It is clear that even under the British rule the special position of Bihar was taken note of and ^{it} was recognized that the affinity of Bihar was with the United Provinces.¹⁴

Bihar, at that time, was governed by Governor-General from Calcutta, in the similar way, as other British areas in Upper India. However, with the separation of the Upper Provinces from the Lower Province in 1836 Bihar was tied up with Bengal.¹⁵

11. Ibid., op.cit., p.63

12. V.C.P. Chaudhary, op.cit., preface. p.ii.

13. M. Narayan and S. Sinha, : "The Partition of Bengal or the separation of Bihar", Patna, 1906, Typescript. Pp. 64-65.

14. Ibid., pp.64-65.

15. V.C.P. Chaudhary, op.cit., preface, p. -ii.

The Objective of the above description was to make ~~the~~ three facts clear. Firstly, before ~~the~~ imposition of colonial rule Bihar had already had two hundred years' of continuous political and administrative unity. Secondly, Bihar's separate identity was taken notice of even till the early years of the 19th century. Thirdly, Bihar could claim to have a fine and distinct historical tradition.

In the rise of regional consciousness in Bihar all these factors were to play a role. While the establishment of political and administrative unity by the Mughals had initiated the process of integrating different linguistic groups in Bihar, the memory of a separate existence and a great past was to add poignancy and force to their quest for a separate identity.

That the memories continued to exist in the minds of the people and had become an integral part of their social consciousness is attested by two gazetteers prepared by the British during the course of the 19th century.

'The East India Gazetteer' Vol. I, first published in 1828, says "In a remote era of Hindoo history, as conveyed down

by their mythological legends Bahar (Bihar) appear to have been the seat of two independent sovereignties".¹⁶

And again, "Buddhists and Jains both agree in placing within the limits of south Bihar and its immediate vicinity the locality of the death and apotheosis of the last Buddha as well as of the last Jina."¹⁷

'A Gazetteer of the Territories under the Government of East India Company',¹⁸ first published in 1858, quotes Wilfred "It is universally acknowledged that the courts of the Kings of Magatha, now the province of Bihar, was one of the most brilliant that ever existed."¹⁸

It was not that people only remembered the ancient glory of Bihar. Even in 1877 one urdu paper 'Qasid welcomed the publication of a Gazettee for 'soubah Bihar',¹⁹ even though the subah had long ceased to exist.

16. W. Hamilton, The East India Gazetteer, Vol. I, First Published 1828, First Reprint, Delhi, 1984, p.106.

17. Ibid., pp. 108-9.

18. E. Thornton : A Gazetteer of the Territories under the Government of East India Company, 1858, Reprint, Delhi, 1984, p. 84.

19. Report on Native Papers (Bengal), 1877, No.3.

Bihar may have a great past but the present looked gloomy. To understand some of the factors which lay behind this gloom, it is necessary to record the changes made in the system of administration by the British and their implications for the people of Bihar. This, in turn, makes it necessary to have a look at the Pre-British system of administration.

The provinces under the Mughals were divided into Sarkars.²⁰ Under Aurangzeb, the number of sarkars in Bihar was eight. Faujdar was the administrative head of the sarkar, and exercised functions of modern District Magistrate, Superintendent of Police and Military Commandant. Amalguzar was the Chief Revenue Officer.

In the next lower administrative unit, that of Pargana, Shiqdar was the representative of the Government and was in charge of police as well as of criminal justice. Civil justice was in the hands of Pargana Qazi and the revenue administration was overseen by the Amil. So far as

20. Administrative Division of a territory during Mughal rule corresponding roughly to a division under British Rule.

judicial administration was concerned, in religious and social matters, Hindus and Muslims were governed by their own separate laws. In other cases, they alike were subjected to the Islamic law.²¹

Patna, the capital of Bihar, had its own provincial Qazi. A Qazi was posted at every major town and at the seat of the Sarkar. In every pargana headquarters there was a Qazi, who tried criminal suits according to Islamic law.²²

An account of the working of the judiciary, as operating in Bhagalpur towards the end of the eighteenth century and immediately prior to the establishment of the Company's Courts' gives very useful information regarding the judicial administration.²³

Bhagalpur, which was a pargana in the Sarkar of Monghyr, had a Zila Qazi. The Zila Qazi, himself appointed by the provincial Qazi, had the power of appointing naib Qazis, who were appointed for different important places within the pargana. These, in turn, appointed their subordinate Qazis.

21. R.R. Diwakar (Ed.) op.cit., p.512.

22. Ibid., p. 512.

23. Ibid., p. 512.

In Bhagalpur district, in all, there were eighteen Qazis conducting the judicial administration.

Persian was recognized as the language of the Revenue department by Sher Shah and thus entered administration, where it held sway for two hundred years.²⁴ The fact of its being the language of the administration made its knowledge a must for those who wanted posts in the administration. Its study, therefore, was widely prevalent and Hindus too, participated in it. This becomes evident from Adam's report on the educational system of two Bihar districts.

After the British took the decision to introduce English education in India, an inquiry into the existing state of affairs was ordered. William Adam conducted the survey in two Bihar districts. These were Behar (Patna-Gaya) and Tirhut.²⁵ Adam started survey in February 1837 and the report concerning Bihar was submitted in 1838.²⁶

In the field of higher education Persian schools heavily outnumbered Sanskrit schools. While there were 27 Sanskrit

24. Ibid., p. 555.

25. J.S. Jha, : "Education in Bihar" in K.K. Datta (ed.) The Comprehensive History of Bihar, Vol. III, Part II Patna, 1976, p. 363.

26. Ibid., p. 363.

schools with 437 students in South Bihar, in the district of Tirhut there were 56 sanskrit schools with 244 students.²⁷

But the corresponding number of Persian schools in South Bihar was 279 with 1,424 students and in Tirhut 238 with 569 students.²⁸ In these schools Hindu students were in a great majority.

Adam attributed the popularity of Persian schools to the fact that Persian had been the language of court and business till very recently.²⁹

The changes made by the British in the administration and the abolition of Persian as the language of administration and their effects dealt Bihar a severe blow.

The British indulged in a number of administrative experiments and gradually evolved a system with the district as its core. Lord Cornwallis brought the Civil Service into existence. Important changes were also made in the administration of criminal justice. But changes made by Cornwallis

27. R.R. Diwakar (Ed.) op.cit., p. 714.

28. Ibid., p. 715.

29. J.S. Jha in K.K. Datta (ed.) op.cit., p. 390.

were firmly grounded on the principle of divesting Indians of any real authority in all matters of administration.³⁰ In 1793 it was officially laid down that all higher posts in administration worth more than £ 500 a year in salary were to be held by Englishmen³¹ and 'Indians were excluded from every office which the lowest Englishman could be prevailed to accept'.

The above changes did not apply to Bihar only and affected people of other parts of Bengal, too, of which Bihar had also become a part. But the evolving administrative system also needed people to man subordinate posts and Indians could be appointed to these posts, as they were cheaply and readily available.

Indians were, even before 1829, appointed as Munsifs but during the period 1829-1858 they were entrusted with a larger share in administrative work. An Act of 1843 provided for the appointment of uncovenanted deputy magistrates, the object being to recruit Indians and associate them with administration.³²

30. R.C. Majumdar, H.C. Raychaudhuri and K.K. Datta : An Advanced History of India, Madras, 1985, Reprint, p. 791.

31. Bipan Chandra, Modern India, Delhi, 1971, pp. 108-9.

32. R.R. Diwakar, op.cit., p. 624.

But in the meantime a decision was taken in 1835 which was to influence the future course of Indian history and of Bihar as well. The Government of Lord William Bentinck in that year (1835) decided that all funds appropriated for the purposes of education would be spent on English education.³³ The pressing need for clerks and public servants who could be appointed for small salaries actually motivated the government in taking this decision. As a consequence of this decision other changes followed.

Persian was abolished as the court language in 1837³⁴ and the Government of Bengal decided to conduct its business either in English or in the local vernacular.³⁵ In 1844, Lord Hardinge introduced the regulation that all public services were to be filled by an open competitive examination held by the council of Education, preference being given to the knowledge of English.³⁶ From 1859 a quarter of the posts of deputy magistrates and deputy collectors were reserved for

33. R.R. Diwakar, op.cit., p. 717.

34. Imperial Gazetteer of India Provincial Series (Bengal) Vol. I, 1909, N. Delhi, Reprint 1984, p. 152.

35. Anil Seal, op.cit., Footnote. p. 302.

36. R.C. Majumdar, H.C. Raychaudhuri, K.K. Datta, op.cit., p. 812.

those who knew English.³⁷ In 1863 it was ruled that half of the posts as munsifs, darogas and pleaders would be reserved for those who had passed the university entrance or higher examinations.³⁸ In 1864 the High Court ruled that all law examinations would henceforth be in English; in 1866 it was laid down that only Bachelors of Law would be eligible to become munsifs.³⁹ Thus gradually English education was made the only passport to higher appointments available to the Indians.⁴⁰

But while this process was going on, English education was making very slow progress in Bihar, as we shall see in the next chapter. But in Bengal proper it was making very spectacular progress. Bengal proper had come into very close contact with the British very early. The metropolis of Calcutta was not only the capital of British India but also the seat of educational experiments and English education had taken roots there much earlier than ⁱⁿ Bihar. In 1857 ten Arts' colleges were affiliated to the Calcutta University⁴¹

37. Anil Seal, op.cit., Footnote, p. 302.

38. Ibid., Footnotes. p. 302.

39. Ibid., Footnotes, p. 302.

40. R.C. Majumdar, H.C. Raychaudhuri, K.K. Datta, op.cit., p. 812.

41. Imperial Gazetteer of India (Bengal) p. 156. However, the number also included Patna College which did not exist then.

and most of these were in Bengal proper. Colleges were founded besides Calcutta at Hooghly in 1836, Krishnagar (1845) and Dacca (1846). In 1870 there were eighteen colleges in the Lower Provinces. Calcutta had a heavy concentration of colleges. Besides Presidency College, there were four aided missionary colleges in or around Calcutta and three unaided colleges besides St. Xaviers.⁴² Patna College, then, was the only college in Bihar.

This uneven development of English education meant that when the evolving administrative structure needed people trained in English Educational system, as they did as we have seen, people from those areas, where such people were available, were called up to fill public posts in those areas where they were not available locally. In Bengal proper such people were available. But in Bihar, due to poor progress of English education, they were not available. Hence Bengalis came to Bihar in large numbers to man subordinate posts in the administration. Also, because of the

42. General Report on Public Instruction in the Lower Provinces of Bengal for 1870-71, cited in Anil Seal, op. cit., Footnotes, p. 57.

fact that Bihar was a part of the Presidency of Bengal, it was easier for them to come to Bihar. When schools of western type were started they, too, needed teachers from Bengal. Along with these came the professionals and, in course of time, Bengalis came to form the biggest intellectual group in Bihar.⁴³

The growing restrictions in the field of public service for the literate classes of Bihar, caused by the absence of English education in them, were bound to give rise to resentment in them. This was because of the fact that in India 'government had always been the larger employer, and service under it the main avenue of employment for the literate and professional classes in the country.'⁴⁴ This resentment of the Bihari literate class was directed against the advanced people of Bengal, as we shall see in the next chapters of our discussion. When Bihar began throwing up its own English educated class, the resentment grew even more as

43. S. Gopal : "Social Changes in Bihar in the Second half of the 19th Century", Man in India (47), 1967, p.83.

44. Anil Seal : op.cit., pp. 115-16.

Bengalis were seen to harming the interests of Bihari educated people and ~~this~~ inevitably led to a clash of interests between them.

This discussion makes clear that before the arrival of the British, Bihar already possessed the necessary elements of a regional identity. The people had shared a common historical tradition. Bihar, as a territorial and political unit, had been defined. At the level of educated elite they shared a common language - Persian, apart from sharing in the popular language Hindi or its dialects. But the colonial intrusion created a situation, where local interests started suffering. And this gave impetus to the growth of regional consciousness and the process of region-in-the making.

CHAPTER III

EMERGENCE OF THE EDUCATED MIDDLE CLASS

C H A P T E R I I I

EMERGENCE OF THE EDUCATED MIDDLE CLASS

A very significant factor, which contributed to the growth of regional consciousness in Bihar, was the growth of English education and the emergence of an educated middle class. In fact, the most important event in the social life of Bihar in the second half of the nineteenth century was the emergence of an English - educated middle class as a result of the opening of new schools and colleges.¹

English Education before 1859

The first beginnings, in English education were made in 1835, the year in which the Government of Lord William Bentinck decided to introduce English education in India. According to William Adam, a school for English education had already been started at Purnea in 1835.² In the same year, Patna High School was also started. But the popular feeling was positively hostile to this school, due to many factors. These were rumours regarding the motives of

1. S. Gopal, op.cit., p. 81.

2. R.R. Diwakar, (Ed.) op.cit., p. 717

the government in establishing the school, the Resumption Proceeding which had impoverished many members of the old aristocratic families and the proselytizing activities of the Christian missionaries.³ Two schools at Arrah and Chapra also failed to strike firm roots. In 1844, Patna High School was raised to the status of a Central College.⁴ But this did not imply the introduction of a full-fledged college, courses of study or college organization of the modern kind. The main idea underlying the establishment of the Central College was to centralize the education of Bihar with a view to provide efficient instruction by attracting meritorious students from all parts of the province by the award of scholarships.⁵ This experiment, too, failed.

But in spite of these failures, by 1845, five English schools had come to be established. These were at Patna with (102) students, Muzaffarpur (21), Bhagalpur (193), Chaibasa (60) and Chota Nagpur (110) students.⁶

3. J.S. Jha, in K.K. Datta (Ed.) op.cit. p. 409.

4. Ibid. p. 411.

5. Ibid. p. 411

6. J.C. Jha, "Political Consciousness in Bihar before the formation of Indian National Congress" in P.N. Ojha (Ed.), op.cit. p. 7

Till the middle of the nineteenth century English education made extremely slow and hesitant progress. In 1955, a most restless feeling was apparent. Seeing the slow progress of English education in Bihar, the Inspector of Education in Bihar, R.B. Chapman tried to use authority.⁷ He issued a circular to the effect that it was the order of the Sarkar that the children should be sent to government schools. The Biharis, who were already aggrieved at an earlier government notification restricting official employment to the English - educated, resorted to passive resistance. Chapman's office was designated as the 'shaitani Daftar' (The Devil's office) and people tabooed it.⁸

Growth of English High Schools

In 1859, however, Zila Schools at Patna, Arrah, Chapra and Hill School at Bhagalpur were established. In 1863 Deoghar, Motihari, Chaibasa and Hazaribagh got one

7. S.R. Mehrotra, : The Emergence of the Indian National Congress, Delhi, 1971, p.86.

8. Ibid., p. 86.

Zila school each.⁹

People gradually began to shed prejudices against English education. In 1862-63 the Inspector of schools noted with satisfaction that Bihar was showing signs of taking to English education as was indicated in the number of rise of students from 1085 in April 1862 to 1396 in 1863. He attributed it to the effect of the recent introduction of English in the Chief Appellate Court and the opening of the rail to the Chief City of Bihar in 1862 December.¹⁰ There was further progress in the field of education at the secondary level. There was a growing conviction in the official circles that to promote education in Bihar it was necessary to link it up with jobs prospects. In 1869 the Lt.-Governor recorded a resolution which enjoined strict adherence to the rules circulated in 1865 for the selection of candidates for ministerial appointments. The local officials were urged to counteract as far as possible the local influence which might tend to ^{the} exclusion of better qualified and educated candidates

9. S.N. Pandey : Education and Social Change in Bihar, (1900-1921)., Varanasi, 1975, p.4.

10. Report on Public Instruction (Bengal) 1862-63. Appendix A p- 194 quoted in J.S. Jha, K.K. Datta, Ed. op.cit., p. 424-25.

in favour of those who have connections in the offices,¹¹
Such steps helped in the growth of education.

In 1871-72 Bihar had altogether 15 government and aided higher schools with a total 2,363 students.¹² The proportion of the students to the total population was much lower than that of Bengal.

The growth of higher schools can be seen from the fact that in 1906 Patna district alone had 13 high schools for boys with a total number of 2,192 students.¹³ Muzaffarpur district had five schools at the time with more than twelve hundred students.¹⁴ In Shahabad district there were six high schools in 1910-11 with 1,037 students.¹⁵ Gaya district had four high schools in the first decade of the 20th century.¹⁶ Darbhanga district had six high schools. Chaibasa Zila School had 230 students in 1908.¹⁷ In 1908, the five high schools in Santhal Pargana had a total of 572 students.¹⁸

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- (Ed.)
11. J.S. Ma in K.K. Datta, op.cit., pp. 424-25.
 12. Calculated from the Report on the Administration of Bengal for 1871-72. p. 212.
 13. S.N. Pandey, op.cit., p.56.
 14. Ibid., p, 59
 15. Ibid., p. 58.
 16. Ibid., p. 61
 17. Ibid., p. 62
 18. Ibid., p. 63

High school education, thus, made substantial progress since the 1870s and the number of those taking to it greatly increased.

A very significant feature of the growth was the participation of Muslims in it. The proportion of Muslim pupils to the Muslim population was twice as large as that of Hindu pupils to Hindu population, in English schools. The main reason for this imbalance was attributed to the fact that they were more addicted to letters and public service.¹⁹

High Education

The first beginnings in the field of higher education were made with the establishment of Patna College, Patna in 1863.²⁰ The college was started with five students. It received liberal donations from landed magnates of Bihar like the Maharajas of Darbhanga and Bettiah and Syed Wilayat Ali of Patna.²¹ In 1864 a law class was also added and it got a degree college status in 1865-66 by providing instruction upto B.A. class. The college made slow progress. By 1871

19. J.S. Jha in K.K. Datta, ^(Ed.) op. cit., p. 426.

20. J.S. Jha in K.K. Datta (Ed.) op. cit., p. 415.

21. Ibid., pp. 415-16.

the number of students had risen to 84.²²

The slow progress made by Patna College led to an appraisal of its status. The Lt.-Governor considered "that the great Hindustani province of Bihar had a claim to have a full-fledged College, even though the number of undergraduates had hitherto been comparatively small. Still it appeared that the majority of third and fourth year students were Bengalis and not Beharis."²³ The Lt.-Governor wanted to reduce degree, class, if feasible and to devote all savings to the establishment of a strong physical science and agricultural college with civil service classes in the province of Bihar. Inquiries were made from educated natives and interested person of Bihar. The Lt.-Governor in a meeting with prominent people of Bihar at the Patna College announced that since they were nearly unanimous in preferring to retain third and fourth year "Arts" classes he would yield to their wishes."²⁴

22. Report on the Administration of Bengal, 1870-71.

23. Report on the Administration of Bengal, 1871-72. p.226.

24. Ibid., p. 226.

The number of students in the college mainly depended on the results of the entrance examination. From 1873 the proportion of Bihari students in the college showed an increase.²⁵ While there were 84 students in 1871²⁶ the number rose to 107 in 1877.²⁷

In 1879 the Director of Public Instruction noted with satisfaction that the proportion of Bihari students was increasing with every year and whereas the schools of Patna and of Bhagalpur division contributed 34 students to the first year class, the schools of lower Bengal contributed 5 only.²⁸

The second college that was established in Bihar was the Tej Narayan Jubilee College (T.N.J. College) at Bhagalpur. It was established in 1887 and was affiliated as a second grade college. In 1890 it was made a first grade college.²⁹

It was at Patna that the third college in Bihar was started. This was Bihar National College and it was established in 1889. In 1892, it became a first grade College.³⁰

25. J.S. Jha in K.K. Datta (Ed.), op.cit., pp. 415-16

26. Report on the Administration of Bengal, 1872-73, p.435.

27. Report on the Administration of Bengal, 1876-77, p.351.

28. J.S. Jha in K.K. Datta (Ed.) op.cit., pp. 415-16.

29. S.N. Pandey, op.cit., p. 6.

30. Ibid, p. 6.

In 1898 a college was established at Monghyr. The name of the college was the Diamond Jubilee College.³¹

Till 1899 there was no college in North Bihar. The students who wished to join a college were compelled to go either to Patna, to Bhagalpur or to Calcutta. To meet the educational needs of people of North Bihar, the Bhumihar Brahman Sabha decided to establish a college at Muzaffarpur. The College named the Bhumihar Brahman College was established in 1899.³²

The Dublin University Mission established a College at Hazaribagh in 1899. This was St. Columba's College.³³

Thus, at the end of the century, there were six colleges in Bihar. Out of these, only the Patna College was a government college. The college at Hazaribagh was run by the missionaries. The rest of the colleges were established by private efforts of the people.

In 1896, the total number of students studying in the three Colleges, which existed then, was 452. The number went

31. Ibid., p. 6

32. Ibid., p. 7

33. Ibid., p. 7

up to 538 in 1897. In 1900 (by which year all the six colleges had come into existence) the number of students had gone up to 800.³⁴ B.N. College, Patna had the largest number of students which was 263. The Patna College with 205 students came next.³⁵

The number of students, however, fell in the early years of the twentieth century because of the outbreak of plague. But by 1910 the situation improved. In that year, the total number of students in these colleges was 948.³⁶

Thus there was growth of education at the secondary and college levels, although the rate of growth was slow. But inspite of the slow rate, there was a definite increase in the number of English-educated people.

The advantages of the new education were not reaped by all sections or castes evenly.

The Muslims as a group, were more responsive to English education. They made voluntary efforts to popularize it. A prominent Hindi paper of Bihar noted in 1880 that every

34. Ibid., pp. 24-25.

35. Ibid., p. 24.

36. Ibid., p. 83.

sunday some Muslims gathered in the house of Shah Hifazat Hussain and read excerpts from English books.³⁷ The Muslims also opened a Mohemmadan Anglo-Arabic School at Patna to popularise English education among them.³⁸

Their eagerness for new education was also evident from their number in professional institutions. In the Temple Medical School, Patna there were in 1876-77, 141 Muslim students as against 51 Hindu students,³⁹ while in the Patna Survey School there were 22 Muslims as against 23 Hindus.⁴⁰

This relatively advanced attitude of the Muslims had historical and sociological reasons. As one Report on the Administration of Bengal noted "The number of Mohamedans in Bihar is comparatively small, and they mostly belong to the upper orders living in towns such as Patna, Barh and Bihar."⁴¹

They were closely associated with the Pre-British administrative system and even despite their gradual elimination from public services continued to maintain a sizeable presence

37. S. Gopal : Patna in the 19th Century, Calcutta, 1982, p.25

38. Ibid., p. 25.

39. Report on the Administration of Bengal, 1876-77, p.355.

40. Ibid., p. 359.

41. Report on the Administration of Bengal, 1872-73. p. 103

in it. The Lt.-Governor of Bengal, George Campbell (1871-74), observed that although in Bihar the Muslims were quite in a minority they had a full share of government service and the competition they had to fear was from the Bengalis who came and got many good things.⁴²

They also showed greater propensity for going abroad, as they did not face any religious taboos. Syed Abdulla, a school teacher and later a Deputy Inspector of Schools at Muzaffarpur, taught oriental languages in the London University for some time. Maulvi Abdul Hasan Khan was called to the bar in U.K. around 1880, returned and set up practice at Patna.⁴³

Among Bihari Hindus, the lead in English education was taken by the Kayasthas, who were traditionally associated with administration and did not depend entirely on land for their livelihood. The Bhumihars and Rajputs who formed the bulk of the landed aristocracy followed suit.⁴⁴

Law was a very popular professional course. The attraction for law was due to many factors.

42. A.P. Jha, "Political History of Bihar (1859-1912) in K.K. Datta (Ed.) : The Comprehensive History of Bihar, Vol. III, Part I, Patna, 1976, p. 205.

43. J.C. Jha in P.N. Ojha (Ed.) : op.cit., p. 10.

44. S.N. Pandey, op.cit., p. 15.

First, among Hindus, the dogmas of caste enjoined a strong code of purity and pollution and therefore, any technical education was taboo, because it involved manual work. Also the profession in no way meant coming into touch with undesirable elements.

Also, Bihar had a predominantly agrarian society. The agrarian structure was highly complex giving rise to conflicting claims, which could only be resolved in a court of law. Thus there was a great demand for the service of the lawyers and they received fabulous fees.⁴⁵

In Bihar, Law classes were attached to some of the first grade Arts College, as there was no separate institution for teaching Law. These classes were attached to the Patna College, T.N.J. College, Bhagalpur and B.N. College, Patna. In the beginning of this century the average number of law students in Patna College was 25, while in T.N.J. College, it was 40. The B.N. College, Patna had 113 students.⁴⁶

By the end of the 19th century an educated middle class emerged in Bihar.⁴⁷ This class became the most vocal section of the society. A look at its composition shows that

45. S. Gopal : "Socio-Cultural contours of Patna at the turn of the present Century" in Q. Ahmad (Ed.) Patna Through The Ages, Delhi, 1988, pp. 127-29.

46. S.N. Pandey, op.cit., p. 33

47. All the important public leaders of Bihar in the late 19th Century and early 20th Century like S. Sinha, Bishe-shwar Singh, Mahesh Narayan, Parmeshwar Lal and All Imam had received school education in the schools of Bihar. However, some of them received college education outside Bihar.

it predominantly consisted of upper caste and upper class people.

The group of people which had thus emerged was not satisfied with reservation ^{of} minor posts for the Biharis. They wanted a respectable share in the Provincial Executive and Judicial service. Going further they demanded representation in Provincial Legislative Council and senate of Calcutta University. They also wanted a seat on the bench of the Calcutta High Court.⁴⁸

The emergence of this class of English-educated people led to an inevitable clash of interests with the Bengalis, who had come to occupy important posts in Bihar. This served to create an anti-Bengali sub-nationalism, creating an unprecedented unity among the non-Bengali population.⁴⁹

These people also very keenly felt the fact that Bihar did not have a political identity of its own.⁵⁰ They became firmly convinced that Bihar would not progress unless it was separated from Bengal and given a political identity of its own.

The result was the launching of the movement for the separation of Bihar from Bengal in 1894.

48. A.P. Jha in K.K. Datta (Ed.) op.cit., p. 226.

49. J.C. Jha in P.N. Ojha (Ed.), op.cit., p.10.

50. See S. Sinha, Some Eminent Bihar Contemporaries, Patna, 1944, Introduction, pp. ii-iii.

CHAPTER IV

PERCEPTIONS OF REGIONAL IDENTITY

C H A P T E R I VPERCEPTIONS OF REGIONAL IDENTITY

The last three decades of the nineteenth century were marked by a tremendous growth of political consciousness, which was articulated largely in regional terms. A number of associations were launched, all with the intention to do something good for the people of Bihar and in the name of Bihar. The large number of papers, which came into existence, ventilated the grievances of the local people, pointed out the incongruity of the union of Bengal and Bihar and harmful effects on the people of Bihar resulting from this union.

This assertion of Bihar's identity and attempts to take care of its interests, all manifestations of regional consciousness, served to accelerate the process of region-in-the-making which, in turn, created the momentum for the growth of regionalism in Bihar. The demand of 'Bihar for Biharis', made through the columns of a paper in 1876 and which took the shape of a movement, marked in a way the climax of the growth of political and regional consciousness in Bihar.

Although regions, like nations, are not fixed entities. Yet it cannot be denied that Bihar had possessed elements of a regional identity in the Pre-British period, as we have seen earlier. Yet the colonial rule, through various measures, greatly reinforced that identity.

The British Perception of 'Bihar'.

The special attention of the British rulers towards the problems of Bihar and its distinctiveness from Bengal was most evident in the 1870s as we shall soon see, but it was the culmination of the process of the 'discovery' of Bihar, which had begun much earlier.

'The East India Gazetteer's (1828) prepared by Hamilton, referred to Bihar as being a large province situated between 22° and 27° of north latitude,¹ it clearly included Palamu, Ramgarh and Chota Nagpur in Bihar.² and referred to the existence of mythological legends regarding the antiquity of the region.³

'A Gazetteer of the Territories under the Government of East India Company' (1858), prepared by Thornton, knew

1. W. Hamilton, The East India Gazetteer, op.cit., p. 102.

2. Ibid., pp. 102-3.

3. Ibid., p. 106.

that Bihar was a great subah of the Mughal Empire, referred about the great history of Magadha,⁴ which was identical with Bihar.⁵

The process went on and by 1870s Bihar and Biharis were being perceived as being different from Bengal and Bengalis, and as being more akin to the people of North Western Provinces and Oudh (Avadh). Successive official reports emphasised this.

At one place, while describing the varieties of population in the province of Bengal four distinct groups or races were recognized, where Bengalis were described as unwarlike and physically a feeble race, the Hindustani races it was said, "who inhabit Bihar and a portion of adjacent plateaus resemble the people of Oudh and North Western Provinces in many respects, many of them are physically fine men of the Aryan type, they are not unwarlike".⁶

Another report stressed the point. It said "The people of Bihar are Hindoostanis speaking the same language and in their manners .. identical with the forty or fifty millions

4. E. Thornton, A Gazetteer of the Territories Under the Government of East India Company, op.cit., pp. 83-84.

5. Ibid., pp. 83-84.

6. Report on the Administration of Bengal, 1870-71. p.10.

of Hindoostanees who inhabit North Western Provinces, Oudh. Rajpootana Besides Bihar proper a good many are resident in the Santhal Parganas. Throughout the largest districts of Chota Nagpur they are numerous, and their language, manners and customs are those that prevail there, as the aborigines succumb to external influences."⁷

The British also had some ideas regarding the composition of Bihar society and its historical evolution. The Muslims were seen as mostly belonging to the upper orders and being small in number, while the great mass of the people and the cultivating classes were Hindus.⁸ The fabric of Hinduism was probably too firm to be shaken by the Muslim invasion and conversions had comparatively little success. But in Bengal, the Muslim invasion probably found Hinduism resting on weak and uncertain foundations, with feeble hold over the minds and affections of the people and hence conversions had greater success.⁹ The Lt.-Governor George Campbell (1871-74) observed "Bihar is a country very different from Bengal and

7. Report on the Administration of Bengal, 1872-73, p.102.

8. Ibid., p. 103.

9. Ibid., pp. 103-4.

inhabited by a people extremely different. I think in Bihar also there should be a special administration".¹⁰

It was also under his administration that there was a proposal from the Government of Bengal to the Government of India to start the publication of ^aGovernment Gazettee in Hindi and Hindustani for the province of Bihar and Chota Nagpur,¹¹ as the Lt.-Governor desired that the great province of Bihar should have an official organ.¹² The twenty million people of Patna, Bhagalpur and Chota Nagpur were seen to be Hindi speaking.¹³

An earlier report had also testified to the wide prevalence of Hindi or Hindustani which was seen as the mother tongue of 18 million people in Bihar and also that it was spoken and understood by two millions of aboriginal races who inhabited the high lands of Chota Nagpur.¹⁴

The stage was thus set for the official introduction of Hindi in Bihar, which together with the reservation of jobs for the Biharis helped the process of region-in- the making

10. India, Home (Public) A Proceedings, April 1873, Nos. 205-08.
11. India, Home (Public) A Proceedings, July, 1873, Nos. 241-45.
12. Resolution of statistical Department dated 13th June, 1873 in Ibid.,
13. Ibid.,
14. Report on the Administration of Bengal 1871-72.

in Bihar and in the growth of regional feeling but they were also official responses to the growth of regional feeling.

Introduction of Hindi in Bihar

In the post-1857 period the British rulers started giving emphasis on vernacular education as they had come to realize the need of educating the masses so as to establish proper communication with them. In Bihar Urdu written in Persian character was chosen the vernacular to be taught to the people.¹⁵ But this proved to be a major cause for the unpopularity of these schools among Bihari Hindus. The non-teaching of Hindi as the medium of instruction in Schools and non-requirement of the language in the conduct of business in public offices greatly contributed to the educational backwardness of Bihar.¹⁶

In 1862 itself the Commissioner of Chotanagpur E.T. Dalton proposed that in the district of Lohardagga (which covers the present Ranchi and Palamu districts) and Hazaribagh

15. A.P. Jha in K.K. Datta (Ed) op.cit., pp. 208-09.

16. Ibid., p. 209.

Hindi written in Devnagri or Kaithi script should be substituted for Urdu as the native language of the courts. The government of Bengal approved the proposal and declared under the terms of the code of criminal procedure that Hindi was the language in ordinary use in these districts. It further made it obligatory for all ministerial officers in these districts to make themselves acquainted with the Kaithi character.¹⁷ Thus Hindi was introduced in Chota Nagpur.

The process of introduction of Hindi in Bihar was carried further by George Campbell. In a tour of 'Bihar',¹⁸ he discovered that Persian, although abolished as the official language, continued to be in use in the form of Persianized Urdu both in public offices and the schools. He decided to end ^{this} situation and orders for the introduction of Hindi as the medium of instruction were issued. For certain purposes it was also introduced as the language of the courts.¹⁹

This decision of the government was opposed by the Muslims and Kayasthas, but supporters of Hindi in a 'Memorial from the people of Bihar' in 1875 prayed that Hindi in Devnagri script should be exclusively used throughout Patna

17. Ibid., p. 209.

18. Bihar in official circle meant Patna and Bhagalpur divisions. See Report on the Administration of Bengal, 1872-73, p.90.

19. A.F. Jha in K.K. Datta (Ed.) op.cit., pp. 211-12.

division and Hindi-speaking districts of Bhagalpur division.²⁰
 The language controversy, however, continued but from 1881 Hindi was to be exclusively used in Patna division and Hindi speaking districts of Bhagalpur division.²¹

Bihar thus received official recognition for Hindi before any other province.²²

The linguistic assimilation of Bihar by Hindi had started long before the advent of British rule and had been carried by the traders and the army.²³ The region produced a number of famous poets and writers who wrote in Hindi. Vidyapati (15th Century)²⁴ was a notable example. Every sub-linguistic region of Bihar continued to produce Hindi writers and poets in the second half of the 19th century.

But in spite of these evidences and official assessment regarding the popularity of Hindi, it cannot be denied that the decisions taken by the government accelerated the process of linguistic assimilation of Bihar by Hindi and helped in integrating various sub-regions together.

20. Ibid., p. 214.

21. Ibid., pp. 214-17.

22. R.R. Diwakar, (Ed.) op.cit., p. 745.

23. Shaibal Gupta : "Non-Development of Bihar : A Case of Retarded Sub-Nationalism", Economic and Political Weekly, Vol. 16, No. 37, September 1981, p. 1497.
 (Ed.)

24. R.R. Diwakar, op.cit., p. 549, also see Acharya Ramchandra Shukla : Hindi Sahitya ka Itihas, Kashi, Samvat, 2038, p. 41.

Reservation of Jobs for Biharis

The second decision taken by the government, namely, reservation of jobs for Biharis in Bihar was yet another admission on the part of the government of Bihar's distinct interests and identity.

We have already referred to the problem of regional imbalance in the employment situation created by the uneven development of English education and how Bihar suffered as a consequence in earlier chapters.

The Lt.-Governor of Bengal George Campbell was to put the problem very succinctly. Observing about the Muslims in Bihar, he said 'the competition they have to fear is rather that of the educated Bengalis, who come and get many good things. It is hardly possible that it should be otherwise, while Bihar is attached to Bengal, and the administration is conducted by Bengal Officers under a system under which English-educated and English-speaking natives have a very great advantage.'²⁵

25. Bengal General (Education) A Prog. August, 1872, Nos. 71-98. Cited in A.P. Jha in K.K. Datta (Ed.) op.cit., p. 205.

The Commissioner of Patna division in the annual report on Education in Patna division for 1870-71 observed that Bihar boys were not showing sufficient enthusiasm for higher education because they were excluded from public services in their own province by the Bengalis. He pointed out that in all district offices it had become a practice to appoint Bengalis as much as possible. A similar partiality was said to be shown in the appointment of judges ^{and} deputy magistrates.²⁶ He, therefore suggested the reservation of some appointments in the subordinate judicial and executive service for the people of Bihar. Even if this step meant a sacrifice of administrative efficiency, he was prepared ^{to} / tolerate it for the sake of political expediency.

The Government of Bengal passed orders by which it was made obligatory to give a certain number of probationary appointments to ministerial posts, as they fell vacant, in the districts of Patna division, to persons, who had received a good education in the government institutions or other schools in Bihar.²⁷ Except as English clerks no Bengali was to be appointed in any office under the commissioner without his

26. A.P. Jha, in K.K. Datta (Ed.) op. cit., p. 220

27. Ibid., p. 221.

special permission. As far the appointment in the subordinate executive service the claims of natives of Bihar were to be favourably considered and in their case the standard of qualification in English was to be relaxed.²⁸

With the growth in the number of English-educated people the clamour for such reservation went up and newspapers took up the cause. The Murgh-i-Suliman, an Urdu paper, in 1876 raised the demand 'Bihar for Biharis' while pleading the case for larger employment of Biharis.

Ashley Eden (1877-82), the Lt.-Governor of Bengal, after a tour of Bihar districts in 1880 during which he was requested by the Biharis intelligentsia to reserve public employment in Bihar to the Biharis, ordered that the order of 1871 regarding the employment of Biharis in Bihar should be strictly observed in all government and semi-government offices.²⁹

The circular issued by Eden to the Commissioner of Patna on the subject of employment was condemned by the Bengali press on the ground that it was not only injurious to the interests of the Bengalis but also tended to create ill-feeling

28. A.P. Jha in K.K. Datta (Ed.) op.cit., p. 221.

29. Bengal Appointment A. Prog. January, 1881 Nos. 21-22 cited in A.P. Jha in K.K. Datta (Ed.) op.cit., p.224.

between two important sections of the Indian community.³⁰

The orders were later modified upon protest of domiciled Bengalis, and descendants of permanently domiciled Bengalis were to be treated as native of Bihar.³¹

When Hindi-speaking residents of Bhagalpur division made a request to exclude Bengalis from appointments in the Bhagalpur division and Bengalis protested against this, orders were issued to the effect that so far as the question of employment of Biharis was concerned, Monghyr and Bhagalpur were to be considered as included in Bihar and preference was to be given to the duly qualified Biharis, domiciled Bengalis considered Biharis for this purpose.

While these two steps, apart from the existing administrative arrangements³³ and improvement in the means of communica-

30. Report on the Vernacular Newspaper in Bengal for 1881 Home (Pub.) 13 June 1882, No. 159.

31. A.P. Jha in K.K. Datta (Ed.) op.cit., p. 225.

32. A.P. Jha in K.K. Datta (Ed.) op.cit., p. 225.

33. The present day Bihar was then divided into three divisions, Patna division contained Tirhut too. See Report on the Administration of Bengal 1872-73 p. 91. This meant that this division had Magahi Bhojpuri and Maithili-speaking areas under it, all these are related to Hindi.

tion³⁴, did contribute immensely to the growth of a consciousness in the minds of people of Bihar of having a common regional identity and common regional interests but these were also partly responses to the growth of political consciousness as manifested by the launching of public associations and press which all emphasised the distinctive identity of Bihar and struggled to solve its problems in various ways.

Role of Public Associations

The first such association was the Bihar Scientific Society. It was founded in 1868 and was initially known as British Indian Association.³⁵ The chief promoter was Syed Imdad Ali, a subordinate judge at Muzaffarpur.³⁶ In 1872 it was

34. In 1874- 53 miles of railway lines were laid from Champa Ghat to Darbhanga in 53 days. In 1875 extension from Samastipur to Muzaffarpur was sanctioned by the Government. By 1881 Tirhut state Railway and Patna Gaya state Railway were open for traffic. See C.E. Buckland Bengal Under the Lieutenant Governors, New Delhi, 1976, Vol. II, pp. 594-604, also p. 701.

A

35. W.W. Hunter :/Statistical Account of Bengal (henceforth SAB) in 20 Vols. London, 1877, Reprint, Vol. XII, p. 164 Delhi, 1976.

36. A.P. Jha, in K.K. Datta (Ed.) op.cit., pp. 228-29.

reconstituted as Bihar Scientific Society. The aim became to spread the western science through the medium of the vernacular and with this view to translate scientific books from English into the vernacular of the province.³⁷ A branch was opened at Patna in 1873 and another at Gaya. The society in 1871 had 511 members.³⁸

Although most of the members of the society were Muslims, yet some leading North Bihar zamindars gave it financial support.³⁹

The society also published a bi-monthly journal Akhbar-ul-Akhiyar.

From the very beginning the members of the society showed a tendency to assert their own interests. When in 1870 the Government of India stated while announcing the new educational policy, that the government intended to educate natives through their own vernacular, in a meeting the society thanked the government for its vernacular policy while the Bengalis saw it

37. Report on the Administration of Bengal, 1875-76
Return of the Scientific and Literary Societies in Bengal
p. CLXXIX.

38. SAB op.cit., Vol. XII, p. 164

39. A.P. Jha in K.K. Datta (Ed.) op.cit., pp. 228-29.

as calculated to withdraw assistance from higher English education.⁴⁰

Bihar Literary Society was formed in 1873 at Patna. Its object was to acquire useful knowledge and practical science. The Bihar Association was established at Patna in 1871. Its object was the literary, scientific, social and moral improvement of the inhabitants of Bihar.⁴¹ The Bihar Upkar Sabha was established in 1876 and its object was the general improvement of Bihar by establishing schools and various other charitable purposes.⁴² In 1879, Bihar People's Association was formed at Patna for the progress and general improvement of the people of Bihar.⁴³ It intended to take up all such works which in its opinion augured well for the good of the common people.

The first overtly political association was the Bihar Landholders' Association. It was launched into existence at the famous sonapur fair in 1878.⁴⁴ Most of the leading zamindars of Bihar like the Maharajas of Darbhanga, Bettiah, Hathwa and

40. A.P. Jha in K.K. Datta (Ed), op.cit., p. 229.

41. Report on the Administration of Bengal, 1875-76
Return of the Scientific and Literary Societies in Bengal,
p. CLXXIX.

42. Ibid., p. CLXXIX

43. Ibid., p. CLXXIX

44. Speeches of the Hon'ble Sir Rameshwar Singh n.d. p-9.

Dumraon were its members.⁴⁵ An immigrant Bengali lawyer of Patna was greatly instrumental in bringing it into existence. This sub-national organization tried to remove the backwardness of Bihar.⁴⁶

Most of these organizations worked from Patna. The main reason was that the urban development of the city of Patna in the second half of the nineteenth century led to the concentration of an educated elite there.⁴⁷ What was common in them was desire to work for the improvement of 'Bihar'.

Role of the Press

But the real articulation of regional consciousness came from the fourth estate.

In Bihar the first plans for the publication of a paper were made in the 1850s. William Taylor, the Commissioner of Patna, division, had a plan for the education of Bihar which also included the organizations of a vernacular paper for dissemination of useful knowledge and rectification of all misconceptions concerning local government. He made arrangements for publication of a Urdu Weekly

45. A.P. Jha in K.K. Datta (Ed.) op.cit., p. 242.

46. J.C. Jha in P.N. Gajha (Ed.) op.cit., p. 19.

47. Ibid., p. 11.

Akhbar-i-Bihar But it had very short career and ended after Taylor left Patna in 1857.⁴⁸

The decades of 1870s and 1880s were extremely fruitful in this matter. The encouragement given by George Campbell, the Lt. Governor of Bengal (1871-74) to social and educational activities in Bihar produced its effects in this field also.

The promotion of Hindi led to the publication of first Hindi newspaper in Bihar, the Bihar-Bandhu in 1872.⁴⁹ The policy of this paper was to propagate the cause of Hindi with a view to securing its adoption as the real official language. This newspaper represented the views of the lower middle class of the Hindu population.⁵⁰ This weekly paper had a circulation of 509 copies.⁵¹ Motichoor, a monthly paper also had come into existence by 1876. In its publication help was rendered by people of Darbhanga and Purnea. This Hindi journal was edited by Munshi Hasan Ali.⁵² Kshatriya Patrika a monthly paper

48. Nand Kumar : Journalism in Bihar, A supplement to Bihar State Gazetteer, Patna, 1971, pp. 49-50.

49. R.R. Diwaker (Ed.:) op.cit., p. 745

50. A.P. Jha in K.K. Datta (Ed.) op.cit., p. 232

51. Report on Native Papers (Bengal) (Henceforth RNPB) 1878, No. 29.

52. Motichoor 15th June issue, 1876.

with a circulation of 400 copies was also published from Patna.⁵³ Hindi Samachar, a weekly from Bhagalpur had a circulation of 700 copies.⁵⁴ From Bettiah Champan Hitkari was started.⁵⁵

There was a vigorous growth of Urdu journals which was to a great extent the language of the two most advanced people - the Muslims and the Kayasthas. Apart from the paper of the Bihar Scientific Society Akhbar-ul-Akhiyar, there was a chasm-i-ilm. This was published from Patna. In Patna district Aries, Behar, Nasim Sahar and Behar Punch were also published.⁵⁶ A monthly journal Guldasta-e-Nazzair published from Gaya had a Hindu Babu Umesh Chandra Sarkar as its editor.⁵⁷ Similarly Merat-e-Hind published from Monghyr had a Hindu editor. Munshi Ram Prasad Wali.⁵⁸ From Monghyr

53. RNPB, 1884- No. 19.

54. Ibid.,

55. RNPB, 1884, No. 26.

56. Report on the Administration of Bengal, 1877-78
Annual Return of Presses Worked and Newspaper published.

57. N. Kumar, op.cit., pp. 77-78.

58. Ibid., pp. 77-78.

itself a very important Urdu Weekly, Murgh-i-Suliman was started in 1874-75, ceased publication for sometime and reappeared for a few months in 1875-76.⁵⁹ Another very important Urdu Weekly Qasid also made its appearance from Patna.⁶⁰ A satirical paper Al PUNCH was launched in 1885.⁶¹

In 1872, the first English paper of Bihar, the Bihar Herald was started by Guru Prasad Sen, a leading lawyer of Patna. The editor was Babu Govind Charan.⁶²

The most important English paper the Bihar Times was started in 1894- by Sachchidanand Sinha and Babu Mahesh Naryan⁶³ with the declared objective of furthering the cause of the children of the soil.

The issues taken up by these papers give an insight into the minds of that period as no other source can possibly give.

The Murgh-i-Suliman (Soloman's bird), a weekly paper published from Monghyr, was the first paper to espouse the cause of Biharis, and in the process gave birth to the 'Bihar for Biharis' slogan.

59. Report on the Administration of Bengal, 1875-76, p. 432.

60. RNPB 1876 No. 47.

61. J.C. Jha in P.N. Ojha (Ed.) op.cit., p. 14.

62. N. Kumar, op.cit., pp. 50-51.

63. S. Sinha : Some Eminent Behar Contemporaries, Patna, 1944, p. XI.

In its issue of 7th February 1876, it impressed on the Government the necessity of employing in Bihar educated men of that province instead of Bengalis, more so in the Education Department, where Bengali explanation given by masters were as unintelligible and difficult as English, especially to the younger pupils.⁶⁴

The Bihar. Bandhu in its issue of 5th April 1876 accused the Bengali Vakeels, who for the sake of fee became enemies of Nagri.⁶⁵

The Qasid (Messenger) dated 22nd January 1877 was the first paper to point out the incongruity of the union of Bengal and Bihar and evils arising out of it. It said that such a union was no more suitable, than for a crow and bulbul or an Englishman and Frenchman to live together. It said that though coinciding to a great extent in matters of religion, the manner and customs of Biharis and Bengalis were quite distinct and that they were of different nationalities. They neither intermarried nor their families associated together. How could there any friendship

64. RNPB, 1876, No. 8.

65. RNPB, 1876, No. 15.

develop between them? On the contrary, they used the harshest possible expression against each other and the greatest indifference, contempt and scorn existed between them.

While pointing out the evils the paper said that when new people came from England, they landed first at Calcutta and were in constant intercourse with Bengalis. When these Englishmen were posted in Bihar, Bengalis followed them and were given high posts by them and these, in turn, started serving the cause of fellow-Bengalis with the result that the Biharis suffered. As a consequence of this Biharis neglected education because they took to education to improve their prospects.

The paper said that the languages of these two provinces were distinct and the appointment of Bengalis as headmasters in Bihar schools contributed to the deterioration of its dialect.

The paper also made the charge that because of their English education the Bengalis had learned English manners and had learned to despise their own religion. Since they carried with them this bad example into Bihar, association with them tended to deprave the Biharis.

It was further pointed out that with the construction of railway links between Bengal and Bihar, they were no longer coming

to Bihar to settle down, but came only as visitors. When they used to make it their home, no injury resulted but now the situation was changed.

The paper concluded by saying that although Bihar and Bengal were ruled by the same nation, Biharis were in reality subordinate to two races - the English and the Bengalis. It made an appeal to the government to end the double burden and expressed the fear that if this was not done Biharis would become weak and cowardly. It also charged the government of crying down the people of Bihar.⁶⁶

The papers had a virulent anti-Bengali tone. The fact of double burden and increasing employment of Bengalis were greatly stressed.

The Bihar Bandhis (11th February, 1880) accused the Bengalis for 'swamping the collectorate, the courts, the police offices and the schools like locusts, depriving the local people of job opportunities'⁶⁷ and Al Hadi said "in addition to the government of the British there was a government of the Bengalis because

66. RNPB, 1977, No. 4.

67. Quoted in J.C. Jha in P.N. Ojha (Ed.) op.cit., p. 11.

Calcutta had a modern university and Bihar had none".⁶⁸

When a Bengali paper Sahachar condemned Sir Ashley Eden for reserving jobs in Bihar for the Biharis and said that the plea advanced by the British officers that the Biharis were opposed to the appointment of Bengalis was a specious one, as it believed that, none but an idiot could believe that the Biharis preferred Europeans who were aliens, both in race and creed, to the Bengalis who were their fellow countrymen,⁶⁹ a paper published from Calcutta but most likely managed by a Bihari, almost as if to prove Sahachar wrong, demanded that the headmastership of Muzaffarpur school, which was to fall vacant should be given to an European or Eurasian, but never to a Bengali, who belonged to a people who were so much opposed to the advancement of Biharis.⁷⁰

The Bihar Bandhu of 16th February, 1882 wanted the removal of a Bengali sub-divisional officer, accusing him of acting with high handedness and said 'It is men like him who have made Bengal's unpopular in Bihar'.⁷¹

68. Al Hadi (April-May, 1891) quoted in Ibid., p.10.

69. RNPB, 1881, No. 5.

70. RNPB, 1884, No. 19.

71. RNPB, 1882, No. 8.

The exploits and independent bearing of Kunwar Singh and Santals were also part of people's consciousness. The Bihar Bandhu of 6th September, 1876 accused the Englishmen of not trusting the Indians and said "when will God show us the day in which the people of Bihar will be eligible as captains of the regiments colonels and Generals. We wish not to rebel and take by force the above appointments, for us possess neither the nature nor the ability now so to do. If anytime our Biharis have rebelled and shown that they were heroes and had still a spark of independence left in them, of what avail is it? Since we have not the same koer Singh nor the same independent Santals."⁷²

These papers performed the great function of ventilating the grievances of the people and espousing their cause. Their appeal was not restricted to a very small audience as the figures of circulation reveal. They clearly spelt out the harm resulting out ^{of} what they perceived as incogruous union of Bihar with Bengal. It was within their perception that Bihar was culturally and linguistically different from Bengal. The presence

72. RNPE, 1876, No. 38.

of Bengalis tended to set bad example before Bihar people, as they had learnt western culture. The Bengalis were monopolising jobs in Bihar because of their lead in English education and also because of their contacts with the English people who tended to favour them. The claims of natives of Bihar in the field of public employment championed by them and which, incidently, gave birth to 'Bihar for Biharis' movement was thus, in reality, symbolic of the whole course of historical development that had taken place since the English intrusion into Bihar.

" Bihar for Biharis" Movement

The demand for jobs for Biharis in Bihar, which was first made in 1876, was symbolic of the whole course of historical development of Bihar, as we have said above. It was significant that the claims of Biharis were put forward in the name of Bihar. It meant that the crystallization of Bihar's identity had taken place to a great deal. It also meant that Biharis had subordinated every other identity to the regional identity and claims were not made on behalf of any particular group or section. The most important factor which contributed to this was ^{the} /simulta-

neous' progress of both Hindus and Muslims in the field of higher education, so that they did not see each other as the enemy, and, in fact, saw the Bengalis as the common enemy, who were more advanced in the field of higher English education. As the number of Bengali migrants increased so did the bitterness of Biharis. The total number of Bengalis emigrants in the year 1881 was 49,321.⁷³ While 37,282 were concentrated in those districts, which had a contiguous territory with Bengal, more than 12 thousand were dispersed over other districts. The total number of emigrants had gone up to 1,26,318 in 1891.⁷⁴ Most of these emigrants were white-collared people.⁷⁵ There is no wonder that such a great cry was made over the problem of employment of Biharis.

The stagnation in economy also served to create the context for the emergence of this problem.

The post-1857 period was a period of gloom for Biharis in this respect. The agriculturists were suffering from a number of problems. Heavy indebtedness kept them perpetually depressed.

73. H. Chattopadhyay, Internal Migration in India : A Case Study of Bengal, Calcutta, 1987, p. 262.

74. Ibid., p. 265.

75. Ibid., p. 475.

Constant fragmentation of holdings and low prices of agricultural products added to their problems.⁷⁶ There was a marked decline of cottage industries. In the absence of new industrial ventures and opening in trade and commerce people were forced to depend on public employment.

With the emergence of an English-educated class the problem took a new turn. Now Bihar had a class of people whose claims could be really advanced.

The emphasis on a regional identity to buttress claims over public employment was an attempt to seek wider term of unity and identity to protect and promote own interests than could be had if only caste or communal identities were projected.

With the emergence of a band of young educated people towards the close of the 1880s, the movement took a new turn^{and}/_{soon} assumed a separatist character, as these people were firmly convinced that Bihar would not make progress unless it was separated from Bengal. The intellectual spade work had already been done to a great extent by the Bihari newspapers, although

76. J.C. Jha in P.N. Ojha (Ed.) op.cit., p. 6

they fell just short of demanding separation. Now only a demand for separation could be made.

CHAPTER V

THE MOVEMENT FOR SEPARATION

C H A P T E R V

THE MOVEMENT FOR SEPARATION

The two decades of 1870s and 1880s were very important in the history of Bihar, as we have seen earlier. There was a marked growth of regional consciousness. The idea that the union of Bihar with Bengal was not based on any sound principles and that it was proving detrimental to the interests of Bihar had been propagated through the columns of papers. Although, one paper, the Qasid in 1877 did urge the government to relieve the people of Bihar of the double subordination - that of the English and the Bengalis - that had been imposed on it,¹ yet there was neither any clear-cut demand for the separation of Bihar from Bengal nor any struggle for this.

There were many reasons for this. The most important reason was that the idea, that a region could not flourish properly unless it had a separate political identity of its own, had not sunk into the minds of the people.² Also there was no leadership available to work for the objective³ nor was any

1. Qasid at 22nd January in RNPB, 1877, Nos. 4

2. V.C.F. Chaudhary, op.cit., p. 24.

3. Ibid., p. 25.

other organ to promote this cause.⁴

But by the end of 1880s the situation had changed considerably. English education spread more widely. This led to a further increase in the number of English-educated people who could provide leadership to any such movement. These people resented what they saw as loss of Bihar's identity as a result of the union with Bengal, which was brought home to one of the most important leaders of the separation movement Dr Sachchidanand Sinha, while he was prosecuting his studies in London. To quote him "This was forced on my attention during my stay in London, as a student, during the early nineties of the last century, when I made the painful and humiliating discovery that not only was Bihar a terra incognita to the average Britisher, and even to the retired Anglo-Indians, but also to the majority of the Indians there. Some of my Indian friends, in Britain even challenged me to a literary combat and dared me to point out any such province as 'Bihar' in a recognized text book of geography. It would be difficult for me to convey the sense of shame and humiliation which I, and some other equally sensitive Biharee friends, felt while prosecuting our studies in

4. Ibid., p. 25

Britain, on realizing that we were a people without any individuality, without any province to claim as ours, in fact, without any local habitation with a name".⁵ They also came to believe that Biharis were being discriminated against in the matter of appointments, especially higher appointments and the progress of Bihar was not taking place. From the very beginning they were convinced that there was not much in common between Bihar and Bengal, although the most articulate intellectual exposition of their views came in 1906. It was in this background that a struggle for the separation of Bihar came to be launched.

The leaders of the movement felt the necessity of having 'an organ of their view' as without it "the Bihari politicians were in a helpless plight as their opinion did neither gain publicity, nor carry any weight with the local Government".⁶

With this objective in view, in January 1894, a weekly journal named 'the Bihar Times' was started under the editorship of Mahesh Narayan.⁷ Dr. Sachidanand Sinha played a major role

5. S. Sinha : op.cit., Patna, 1944
Introduction, p. ii.

6. S. Sinha : op.cit., Introduction, pp. VI-VII

7. S. Sinha; op.cit., Introduction, p. xi.

in starting the paper. Nand Kishore Lal⁸ and Babu Bisheshwar Singh⁹ also supported the venture. With the launching of this paper, the movement for the separation of Bihar began.

The major emphasis, during the ^{whole} period of the movement, was laid on trying to convince the Government of the desirability of separation of Bihar from Bengal rather than go in for any other kind of territorial rearrangement in the areas of the Bengal Presidency.¹⁰ In similar fashion attempts were also made to convince the leaders of Bengal to accept and support the desirability of this proposition. Also, simultaneously, an attempt was made to bring to light, through the help of facts and figures, the various kinds of discrimination that was being done with the people of Bihar.¹¹

The Movement between 1894-1905

An occasion to put forward the case of Bihar was provided in 1894. The Government of India had been worried about the size of the Presidency of Bengal since the 1860s.¹² The

8. J. Prasad in Pandit Ram Dahin Mishra (Ed.) Bihar Ke Ratna (Hindi) Bankipur, n.d. p. 9.

9. Ibid., p.25.

10. See the Pioneer .. dt., March 26, 1896.

11. See V.C.P. Chaudhary, op.cit., pp. 65-82.

12. Sumit Sarkar, : Modern India, 1885-1947, Madras, 1983, p. 106.

growing unwieldiness of the Presidency was a matter of concern. The separation of Assam and Sylhet in 1874¹³ was an attempt to reduce its size.

By 1893, the Government of India came to decide on the transfer of the Chittagong division to Assam. But this was to be done only after the construction of a railway link connecting the port of Chittagong to silchar in Assam was completed.¹⁴ The proposal to transfer the entire Chittagong division had come from Sir Alexander Mackenzie, who was a member of the Viceroy's Council . Its main aim was to relieve the growing administrative burden caused by a fast growth of population.¹⁵

The news of the proposed transfer provided the Bihar leaders the occasion to demand the separation of Bihar. They put forward such a proposal through the Behar Times in 1894.¹⁶ They argued that this transfer of Chittagong division to Assam would give no appreciable relief to the Lt.-Governor. They pointed out that Chittagong is a Bengali-speaking division. On the other hand, if Bihar was separated which was a homogeneous

13. Ibid., p. 106.

14. R.P. Cronin : British Policy and Administration in Bengal 1905-1912, Calcutta, 1977, p.4.

15. Ibid., p. 4.

16. V.C.P. Chaudhary, op. cit., p. 54.

tract, it would give an appreciable measure of relief and and would save the Bengali people from being divided under two governments.¹⁷

Although the proposal was opposed by the Behar Herald¹⁸, a paper which was started by an immigrant Bengali Mr. Guru Prasad Sen, who wrote a number of articles on the subject, the demand made by the Behar Times aroused tremendous enthusiasm in Bihar.¹⁹ Many public meetings were held in various towns demanding the separation of Bihar from Bengal.²⁰

In 1894 an address was presented to the Lt.-Governor of the Lower Provinces Sir Charles Elliot at Gaya in which it said "We crave leave to submit that it is the fate of Bihar that it forms, for administrative purposes, a mere appendage of the Lower Provinces of Bengal. Perhaps by the reason of the very position which that province occupies as the most advanced in India, the interests of Bihar and its people are liable to be lost sight of, but we earnestly hope that its importance as a separate province, containing a separate people, will be always consistently recognized in matters of legislation and adminis-

17. The Behar Times quoted in Mahesh Narayan, S.Sinha : The Partition of Bengal or the Separation of Bihar, 1906, Patna Typescript, pp. 5-7.

18. S. Sinha - op.cit., Introduction, p. xiv.

19. Ibid., p. xiv

20. Ibid., p. xiv

tration.²¹

The Pioneer, an Angle-Indian paper published from Allahabad, threw its weight behind the demand for the separation of Bihar. As the proposal of the transfer of Chittagong to Assam continued to exist, the Pioneer maintained that Bihar was in some respects more easy to separate from the parent province.²² The Pioneer argued that the most logically ideal method of diminishing the responsibilities of the Lt.-Governor of Bengal did not lie ⁱⁿ / successively hewing off slices of Eastern Bengal and adding them to Assam. It pointed out that the administration of the existing province of Assam had been so chequered that an addition to its charges was of doubtful policy.²³ The paper had suggested that the real solution of the problem lay not in the separation from Bengal of Bengali districts but in giving Home Rule to a homogenous tract such as Bihar, inhabited not by Bengalis but by a race closely akin

21. Quoted in M. Narayan and Sinha, op.cit. p. 7 (Typescript)

22. See the Pioneer, March 26, 1896.

23. See the Pioneer, June 30, 1896.

to the adjoining population of these provinces, speaking not Bengali but Hindi and possessing administrative problems with which Calcutta had not always proved to be in touch.²⁴

Although the Behar Times in January, 1896 had already said "We are for the constitution of Behar as a separate provincial administration. It is merely an accident that Behar is linked to Bengal for administrative purposes, there is less in common between the people of Bengal and the people of Behar, than between the people of Bengal and the people of Assam...."²⁵ and had already advanced reasons such as given by the Pioneer in favour of the separation of Bihar, yet the support extended by the Pioneer had a major impact on the movement. The strong support of the Pioneer brought the question in the forefront of politics with the result that waverers and fence-sitters joined the movement.²⁶ In Patna a very representative public meeting was held.²⁷

24. See, the Pioneer, June 30, 1896.

25. Quoted in M. Narayan and S. Sinha - op.cit., p. 8 (typescript)

26. S. Sinha, op.cit., Introduction, p. xv.

27. Ibid., p. xi

The suggestion of the Pioneer was also taken notice of at Bhagalpur, and people were not slow in appreciating the worth of the suggestion as it concerned the future well-being of the Biharis.²⁸ A grand meeting was held at Bhagalpur on the 20th May and a resolution was adopted therein to memorialise the government.²⁹

Emboldened by the support of the Pioneer the Behar Times put forward the thesis that Bihar possessed all the elements for the successful creation of a local Administration.³⁰ It said "Geographically it may be said to be complete and compact for this purpose, it is inhabited by a homogeneous people, who are differentiated from the people of Bengal in manners and customs, language and literature, in the degree of their educational and political progress, in the measure of their requirements, in the character of their aims and ambitions, and in the quality of the treatment they require at the hands of the government".³¹ It pointed out that the growing administrative needs of Bihar had already led to the creation of

28. A letter to the editor, in the Pioneer dtd. March 26, 1896.

29. Ibid.,

30. See the Pioneer dtd. March 26, 1896.

31. Ibid.,

special arrangements in the administration. The paper argued that the difficulty of governing Bihar from Calcutta was bound to increase and before long the establishment of a local Government in Bihar would cease to be a matter of choice and become one of urgent administrative necessity, hence the Government of India was asked to think, before finally sanctioning the separation of Chittagong from Bengal, whether the separation of Bihar would not be a matter of greater administrative convenience and political wisdom.³² It also called attention to the fact that Chittagong was opposed to the separation, whereas practically there would be no opposition in Bihar.³³

The support extended by the Pioneer and the demand made by the Bihar leader came in for sharp attack from the Bengal press. The Bengali dated the 20th June, 1896 'decried the whole separatist movement and regarded it as a political manoeuvre of the Anglo-Indian Community in India'.³⁴ The

32. ^{The} Bihar Times referred in the Pioneer dt. March 26, 1896.

33. Ibid..

34. V.C.P. Chaudhary, op.cit., p. 60.

paper also showed traces of blackman's burden. It said, "We firmly believe that a close association with an advanced province not only tends to keep up the standard of administration in the less favoured districts but also levels up their (less favoured districts' inhabitants)...."³⁵

Nevertheless the movement got wide support from the people and the matter was discussed at crowded public meetings.³⁶

The Bihar leaders became emboldened enough to present an address to the Lt.-Governor of Bengal, Sir Alexander Mackenzie (1895-98) during his tour of Bihar, in which the question of separation was also to form a part. The address was presented at Gaya but the reply of the Lt.-Governor was extremely disappointing.³⁷ It gave the movement a big blow and many of those who had come round to support it, deserted it.³⁸ For all practical purposes, the strength was reduced to four people - Mahesh Narayan, Nand Kishore Lal, Rai Bahadur Krishna Sahay and Sachchidanand Sinha.³⁹

35. Quoted in Ibid., p. 61.

36. The Pioneer dtd. June 30, 1896.

37. S. Sinha, op.cit., Introduction, p. xv-xvii.

38. S. Sinha - Ibid., Introduction, pp. xv-xvii.

39. Ibid., Introduction, p. xvii.

But simultaneously with all these developments, the Behar Times was engaged in the task of bringing to light the various discriminations, practised against the people of Bihar. In an issue in 1896, it drew attention to the fact that there was no medical college in Bihar and as a consequence there was no Bihari medical graduate. It wanted that through the aid of public subscription the status of the Temple Medical School at Patna should be raised to the status of a college.⁴⁰ The paper in 1899 complained that in the administration of the Calcutta University Biharis had no role, although they attached great importance to this university.⁴¹ Also there were only five Biharis fellow of the University, all of them Muslims. Although the paper welcomed this fact because Bihari Muslims were also Biharis, but it wanted a greater representation of Bihar as a whole and wanted the inclusion of worthy Bihari Hindus, too. Hindi, too, was not included in the curriculum of the University.⁴²

The paper also voiced the grievances of the Bihari Hindus in the matter of recruitment to the provisional service.

40. Behar Times dtd 1st January, 1896 referred in V.C.P. Chaudhary, op.cit., p. 63.

41. The Bihar Times dtd. 15th January, 1899. Quoted and referred in V.C.P. Chaudhary. op.cit., p. 64.

42. Ibid., p.64.

No Bihari was recruited that year and the paper charged that they were not appointed because Bihar had started an agitation for a separate government.⁴³ Such grievances continued to be raised. The demand was for a fair representation of Biharis in different branches of administration.⁴⁴ For example, in the case of judicial appointments, it was submitted that all the posts that existed in Bihar should have gone to Biharis. The rights of the children of ^{the} soil were emphasized.⁴⁵

In the similar vein, even the proportion of distribution of funds on education between Bihar and Bengal came in for attack, as it was seen that less money was spent in Bihar than should have been the due share.⁴⁶

It went to the extent that even in matters like the conferment of titles people of Bihar were seen to be neglected.⁴⁷

43. Ibid., pp. 64-65.

44. Ibid., pp. 66-67.

45. Ibid., pp. 69-70.

46. Behar Times dtd. 17th June, 1898. Quoted and referred in Ibid., pp. 78-79.

47. Behar Times quoted in Ibid., p. 66.

The growing consciousness set the stage when movement for the separation of Bihar could be accelerated.

This time the occasion was provided by the proposed move of the government to make territorial changes in Bengal.

1905 - 1912

We have seen that earlier in the 1890s the Government of India had proposed to transfer the Chittagong division to Assam to relieve the administrative burden on the Lt.-Governor of Bengal. At that time Sir William Ward, the Chief Commissioner of Assam, had supported the proposal, and also favoured the transfer of the Dacca and Mymensingh districts of the Dacca division and the creation of a new "North Eastern Provinces".⁴⁸ However Ward's successor Sir Henry Cotton strongly opposed the move⁴⁹ in early 1897. However, the proposal was revived by Bengal's new Lt.-Governor Andrew Fraser in a note of 28 March 1903.⁵⁰ It was accepted by Curzon in a minute on territorial redistribution in India (1 June, 1903).⁵¹ The

48. R.R. Cronin - op.cit., p. 4.

49. Ibid., p.5.

50. S. Sarkar, op.cit., p. 106.

51. Ibid., p. 106.

proposal was announced in Home Secretary Risley's letter of 3rd December 1903.⁵² The two reasons offered in support of the transfer plan by Risley were, the relief of Bengal and the improvement of Assam.⁵³ This transfer plan was, however, soon transformed into a plan to partition Bengal into two provinces, which was formally announced in July, 1905. Under the Plan a new province of East Bengal and Assam was to be created, which was to include Chittagong, Dacca and Malda apart from Assam.⁵⁴ The other province was to consist of Presidency and Burdwan divisions, Patna, Bhagalpur minus Malda, Chota Nagpur and Orissa division and also some feudatory states.⁵⁵

From the very beginning the plans of the Government were bitterly attacked in Bengal. The opportunity was grasped by the leaders of Bihar who started proposing the separation of Bihar as an alternative scheme to reduce the growing burden on the administration of Bengal.

The demand of the Bihari leaders drew wide support. A

52. Ibid, p.106.

53. Ibid, p. 106.

54. Ibid, pp. 106-7. Also see M. Narayan and S.Sinha - op.cit., p. 29.

55. See M. Narayan and S. Sinha - op.cit., p. 30 (typescript).

leading Bengali publicist, P.C. Ray wrote an open letter to Lord Curzon in 1904 supporting the demand of the Bihari leaders.⁵⁶ Mr. Ray drew attention to the fact that the cry 'Bihar for Biharis' set up in Bihar was growing in strength and persistence. He pointed out that Bihar differed from Bengal in language, and customs.⁵⁷ He added "under the circumstances it would be at once prudent, as well as just, to detach willing Behar from Bengal, instead of dividing unwilling Bengal into two. Under the Mughals Behar formed a separate province. I want the Mughal idea to be followed by the British by making Bengal and Behar two distinct provinces, as Behar has no sentiment to remain tied up as an appendage to Bengal from which it would much rather be severed politically, as it is historically and ethnically."^{57a}

Mr. Dilawar Hussain, a retired Inspector General of Registration wrote in 1904 that statesmanship demanded that the the commissionership of Assam should be abolished and merged

56. Ibid., p. 12.

57. Ibid., p. 12.

57a. Quoted in Ibid., p.12

into the Lower Provinces and Behar and Chotanagpur should be detached from the Lower Provinces and with or without the permanently settled districts of the United Provinces i.e. Benares division, should form an independent administration.⁵⁸ Many important people like Sir Charles Stevens who was an Ex-Lt.-Governor of the Lower Provinces also supported the demand.⁵⁹

Meanwhile, an alternative plan to the proposed transfer of the Bengali-speaking areas to Assam also came under the consideration of the government.

J.B. Fuller, the Chief Commissioner of Assam, in April, 1904 raised objections against the proposed transfer plan.⁶⁰ As an alternative to the plan which amounted ^{to a} partition plan of Bengal, Fuller recommended the transfer of Chittagong division alone to Assam and suggested the creation of a Chief Commissionership for Bihar and Chotanagpur.⁶¹

But the government did not accept the proposal, as it was seen to contain various problems, which outweighed the supposed advantages of the scheme. In a despatch to the

58. Quoted in Ibid., p. 20

59. Ibid., p. 19.

60. R.P. Cronin - op.cit., p. 25.

61. Ibid., - p. 25 and 29.

secretary of state dated the 2nd February, 1905, the objections to the proposed formation of "a chief commissionership of Behar, which would include the Patna division the Hindi-speaking districts of Chotanagpur....the Benares division and possibly the districts of Monghyr and Bhagalpur" were pointed out.⁶² It was said that the proposed Commission would not be large enough to recruit for itself and the government would have to recruit officers from outside, who might be unwilling to serve in Bihar. Secondly, it would take from the Lower Provinces all of its best districts and would make the province unpopular".⁶³

But while the government was deliberating over the matter, the Bihari leaders tried to win support from other quarters to their demand for the separation of Bihar from Bengal as an alternative to the proposed partition plan. In 1904 the Indian National Congress was held at Bombay. In the subjects Committee of that Congress this suggestion was put forward by Sir Henry Cotton and was supported by Sachchidanand Sinha and also by Ganga Prasad Verma of Lucknow. But the suggestion was laughed down by the Bengali delegates

62. Despatch dtd. February 2, 1905, quoted in M. Narayan and S. Sinha, op.cit., pp. 37-38.

63. Ibid., pp. 37-38.

with the result that their prepondering voice in the deliberations prevented any such scheme being proposed',⁶⁴ and the resolution of the Congress opposed partition of Bengal in any manner, whatsoever.⁶⁵ However, Sir Cotton, in his presidential address had argued for the separation of Bihar and Chotanagpur as a separate administration as a preferable solution to the problem, if a redistribution of territory was necessary to give relief to the Lt.-Governor of the Lower Provinces.⁶⁶

The partition plan became a fait accompli in 1905. Neither the leaders of Bengal nor the government were willing to accede to the demand of the Bihari leaders. But the scheme of the partition provided the Bihar leaders a chance to put forward their case more forcefully as an alternative to the unpopular partition scheme. The Bengal leaders lost the chance of cornering the government (its argument of administrative convenience) by not supporting the demand of Bihari leaders.⁶⁷ The demand of the Bihari leaders got support from prominent people. However, they did not start any open agitation on this occasion.⁶⁸

64. M. Narayan and S. Sinha, op.cit., p. 11

65. V.C.P. Chaudhary, op.cit., pp. 85-86.

66. M. Narayan and S. Sinha, op.cit., p. 11.

67. S. Sinha, op.cit., p. xdi.

68. Ibid., p. xix-xx

The partition of Bengal brought a qualitative change in the separation movement in Bihar. New Social groups like that of native aristocrats and Muslims joined it, which had till then been dominated by the Hindu educated class. Although the partition aroused great resentment throughout educated India, in Bihar, it did not make much impact.⁶⁹ The Bihari leaders were preoccupied in working for the separation of Bihar. Also they did not want to offend the government as it could have resulted in the neglect ^{of} their demand by it. They put all their energy into the movement and, 'on the whole, they showed their loyalty towards the government'.⁷⁰

"The partition of Bengal though it did not give the Biharis all they wanted gave them a great deal more than they had ever obtained under the old system".⁷¹ In 1906 Sir Andrew Fraser, the Lt.-Governor of Bengal, acquired for his residence a house at Patna. Lord Minto in the course of his Darbar speech referred to it as the "charming Government House",

69. S. Sarkar - op.cit., p. 125.

70. V.C.P. Chaudhary - op.cit., p.91

71. S. Sinha - op.cit., p. xxii.

a declaration which was seen by the Biharis as a recognition of the new status of Bihar and of its capital.⁷²

The Bihari leaders continued their efforts to convince the government of the desirability of the separation of Bihar. Gopal Krishna Gokhale, at the Banares Congress, had already said that if it was really necessary to reduce the charge of the Lt. Governor of the Lower Provinces, the most natural course to take was to separate, Behar, Chotanagpur and Orissa from Bengal and from them into a separate province.⁷³ Now with the view of "educating our masters" to use the words of the two authors, Mr. Mahesh Narayan and Sachchidanand Sinha, the two principal leaders of the movement, brought out a pamphlet in January 1906 designated as 'The Partition of Bengal or the Separation of Bihar'.⁷⁴

In it they proposed an alternative scheme of the separation of Bihar against that of the partition of Bengal and its merits. But in addition to this, this pamphlet was the most clear intellectual exposition of the various grounds - cultural historical, sociological, ethnological and geographical.

72. S. Sinha - op.cit., p. xxii

73. M. Narayan and S. Sinha, op.cit., pp. 34-35;

on which they demanded and justified the separation of Bihar.

They began by accepting the fact that the partition of Bengal had proved^{to} be an unpopular measure all over India, and in a spirit of loyalty, advised the government that under these circumstances statesmanship lay "not in driving the disaffection down into the hitherto unaffected strata of society (Bihar), nor by repressive measures in directing it underground to do more real mischief; the essence of good statesmanship lies in applying such a remedy as may convert the force now ranged against the Government into those for the Government and it is the duty of all loyal supporter of the Government to suggest ^{such} a remedy....."⁷⁵ They proposed the remedy.

The authors by giving figures showed that the total area and population of the new province of Eastern Bengal and Assam was 106,074 square miles and 31,303,282 persons respectively. The left out province consisting of Presidency and Burdwan divisions, Patna, Bhagalpur minus Malda, Chotanagpur, and Orissa

75. M. Narayan and S. Sinha - quoted in V.C.P. Chaudhary, op.cit., p. 94.

divisions and some feudatory states had a total area of 135, 697 sq. miles and the population was 57,182,889 persons.⁷⁶ In this calculation, the authors omitted from consideration, the area and population of certain states transferred from the Central Provinces to Orissa and Chotanagpur and certain states transferred from Chotanagpur to the Central Provinces, as they were very small as compared to the total ^{area} and being almost equal in size cancelled out each other.⁷⁷

The authors refused to accept the ^{two} grounds offered by the Government in transferring additional area to the new province of E. Bengal and Assam. These were that they would provide a definite western boundary corresponding with recognized characteristics both geographical and ethnological social and linguistic to the new province.⁷⁸

They pointed out that the erection of boundary constituted by a river did not mean that geographical characteristics became different on the two sides. They also refused to accept that there was ethnological difference between the two

76. M. Naraynand S. Sinha - op.cit., pp. 29-30.

77. Ibid., pp. 30.

78. Ibid., p. 30.

Bengal. There was also no linguistic difference as both spoke Bengali.⁷⁹

The second ground offered by the Government that it would concentrate the Muslim population in one province was countered by saying that millions would still remain in West Bengal.⁸⁰

Under the new scheme, proposed by the authors, the old Lt.-Governorship was to consist of all Bengali speaking divisions, district of Malda, some feudatory states and Assam. The Chief commissionership of Assam was to be abolished and it was to be transferred to Bengal. The total area was to be of 133,202 sq. miles and the population 48,785,503 persons.⁸¹

The new Lt.-Governorship of Bihar was to consist of Patna division, Bhagalpur division minus Malda, Chotanagpur division Orissa division and some feudatory states. It was to have a total area of 109,682 sq. miles and a total population of 35,549,785 persons.⁸²

79. Ibid., pp. 31-32.

80. Ibid., pp. 30-32.

81. Ibid., pp. 39-41.

82. Ibid., p. 42.

The figures excluded areas and population exchanged between the lower provinces and Central provinces and also that of Darjeeling which had been tagged with Bhagalpur division.⁸³

The authors argued that their scheme was better as under it areas and population of the two provinces would be more evenly matched.⁸⁴

But even more significant was the superiority of the scheme in point of view of geographical, sociological and linguistic aspects over the scheme actually carried out.⁸⁵

The authors began by proving that Chotanagpur was essentially a part of Bihar. They pointed out that a very large population of these districts was of the same race as the people of Bihar. They quoted the Bangalee, which in 1904 had said 'The population of the district of Chota Nagpur is closely akin to that of Behar and as a matter of fact these districts have been regarded as Behar districts'.⁸⁶

The authors stressed the differences between Bengal

83. Ibid., - p.42.

84. Ibid., - p.43.

85. Ibid., - p. 44

86. Ibid., pp. 46-47.

and Bihar and pointed out that there were differences between the two in matters of physical features, climate, the nature of soil and food supply and food habits.⁸⁷

They also pointed out the linguistic differences and argued that although there was philological affinity between Bengali, Hindi and Oriya but this did not make it possible for the speaker of one language to follow the other language and did not act as a unifying force. While Hindi (or Bihari according to Grierson) was the language spoken in Bihar and in the greater portion of Chotanagpur, Bengali was spoken throughout Bengal.

Ethnological differences were also stressed and the authority of Mr. Beverley's Report on the Census of Bengal was cited in the favour. It was also pointed out that the Bengalis considered themselves as separate and distinct from Biharis.⁸⁹

Through a recounting of the historical traditions of Bihar it was also sought to be proved that Bihar had a

87. Ibid., pp. 47-52.

88. Ibid., pp. 53-54.

89. The Maharaja of Cossimbazar, while presiding a meeting on the 7th August 1905 said "Among the six divisions of the old province, there will be left only a division and a half containing a Bengali-speaking population. We will be in a hopeless minority". The authors pointed out how can Bengalis be in a hopeless minority if the Bengalis and Biharis were one. See. p. 59. Ibid.,

great antiquity. The traditions of Magadha, Mithila were recounted. The names of the Buddha and Mahavira were used. It was pointed out that even during the Mughal period, Bihar had a separate entity of its own. They pointed out through a narrative of administrative and political developments that Bihar's connexion with Bengal was a recent development, and there was no ground to treat it as immutable.⁹⁰ They pointed out that the same arguments which "tell" against the partition of Bengal "apply" in favour of the separation of Bihar.⁹¹

The pamphlet pointed out that under the proposed scheme a homogenous group (Bengalis) won't be divided. The other major argument put forward was that this would place the boundary on the basis of geographical, ethnological, social and linguistic considerations unlike the government scheme. Also that the proposed scheme would be carried out without hostility and will be received with enthusiasm by some people.⁹²

The political grounds were also emphasized. It was pointed

90. Ibid., pp. 60-65.

91. Ibid., p. 65.

92. Ibid., pp. 67-68.

out that the government in Calcutta was not always in touch with the problems of Bihar. The Lt.-Governor did not visit Bihar frequently and as his surroundings were wholly Bengali, he tended to side with them whenever their interests clashed with those of the Biharis. It was pointed out that if Bihar was separated the local government would be more solicitous of the welfare of the Biharis than any administration in Calcutta. Bihar would also hope to have Medical and Engineering Colleges. Then with a local government of Bihar, the competition for the Provincial Civil Service would be confined to the Children of the soil, the large ministerial departments, which were monopolised by the Bengalis, would be thrown open to the indigenous employees, the revenue of the province would be spent here only. Local talent would get a healthy stimulus and apart from being absolutely necessary for the progress of the province, it would lead to a general progress of the country.⁹³

After the partition of Bengal new social groups joined the movement. The first to show a sympathetic attitude towards the movement was the Behar Landholders' Association. In a

93. Ibid., pp. 3-5.

resolution it decided that in view of the fact that in the now constituted province Behar was the predominant partner both in terms of area and population, the Association should memorialise the Government that the said province should now be designated as the Province of Behar, West Bengal and Orissa and the Lt.-Governor be further addressed as the Lt. Governor of Behar, West Bengal and Orissa.⁹⁴

In an address presented to the Lt.-Governor Andrew Fraser in 1907, he was addressed as such.⁹⁵

In April 1906 the Behar Times was rechristened as the Beharee with Mahesh Narayan continuing to be its editor.⁹⁶ His death in August, 1907, however, dealt the movement a major blow.⁹⁷ It had to be built anew. This made it necessary to tap new sources of strength and to form new alliances.⁹⁸ This led to the forging of an alliance with the educated Muslims. Messers Ali Imam and Hasan Imam, who were then the leaders of the Patna bar and Sir Muhammad Fakhruddin associated themselves with the movement.⁹⁹ In this

94. Ibid., p.73.

95. S. Sinha, op.cit., p. xdi.

96. V.C.P. Chaudhary, op.cit., p. 98.

97. S. Sinha, op.cit., p. xdi

98. Ibid., p. xdi

99. V.C.P. Chaudhary, op.cit., pp. 98-99.

new alliance the Muslims were to play a very important and honourable role. This alliance had an immediate result in the holding of the first session of the Bihar Provincial Conference in 1908 (In early 1908 a Bihar Provincial Congress Committee was formed; The provincial Congress Committee used to hold a political conference).¹⁰⁰ The first session was held at Patna in April 1908 under the Presidentship of Mr. Ali Imam. In it Sir Muhammad Fakhruddin moved a resolution on the separation of Bihar and its constitution as a separate province. It was supported by the representatives of most of the districts.¹⁰¹

By 1908 a broad-based leadership consisting of the three articulate sections of the province - the Hindu educated bourgeoisie, the aristocratic class and the upper strata of the Muslim community - emerged.¹⁰²

In 1908, a joint memorial was submitted to the Lt.-Governor by a deputation, which was jointly organized by the

100. R.R. Diwakar, op.cit., p. 652.

101. S. Sinha, op.cit., p. xxiv.

102. V. P. Chaudhary, op.cit., p. 102.

three leading public associations in Bihar - the Bihar Landholders Association, the Bihar Provincial Association and the Bihar Provincial Muslim League in which he was requested to redress the grievances of Bihar.

In it they demanded adequate representation in the Governor's Council. Another major demand was that Patna should be made the second capital of Bengal and the Lt.-Governor should also stay here for three or four months a year so that he could give personal attention to the problems of Bihar.

Bihar's educational requirements were emphasized. It also demanded that all Bihar Public posts should be reserved for Biharis. It also pointed out the ill-representation of Biharis in the services ^{to} / the Lt.-Governor through figures. The Lt.-Governor showed great sympathy with the demands and grievances of the Biharis, accepted the injustice done to Bihar and gave the assurance that the views presented would receive at the hands of the government careful and favourable consideration.¹⁰³

103. India, Home (Pub.) A Prog. Oct. 1908, No . 15-17.

Bihari leaders continued to press for the separation of Bihar. The Bihar Provincial Conference at Gaya wanted the modification of the partition of Bengal by uniting the two Bengals together and by separating Bihar, Chotanagpur and Orissa under a separate Governorship. It once again reiterated that Bihar was not likely to flourish so long as it remained tied up to Bengal.¹⁰⁴

The demand of Bihar's separation had gained new respectability as it was no longer seen as the demand of one particular section. The Bengal leaders also gradually softened their attitude and came round to the view that ^{the} demand was preferable as an alternative to the abrogation of the partition.¹⁰⁵ There was a change in the attitude of the government also. The Government was getting worried by the continued problems in Bengal caused by the partition and wanted to undo it. At the same time it was impressed by the fact of non-participation of Bihar in the post-partition agitation and took it as a loyal gesture but it apprehended that the refusal to accept Bihar's demand for separation could create agitation there also.

104. V.C.P. Chaudhary, op.cit., pp. 158-159.

105. Ibid., p. 162.

Lord Hardinge in June 1911 drew up a scheme as a solution to the impasse created by the partition of Bengal keeping in mind the convenience of administration.¹⁰⁶ Among other proposals it also suggested the creation of a new Lt.-Governorship with a Legislative Council for Bihar, Chota Nagpur and Orissa.¹⁰⁷ He won the approval of this Council to the proposals and also secured the consent of the secretary of state for India Crewe to proceed in the matter.¹⁰⁸ Hardinge prepared a despatch which was sent on the 25th August 1911.

With other proposals, the Despatch also proposed "to create a Lieutenant-Governorship in Council to consist of Bihar, Chota Nagpur, and Orissa with a Legislative Council and a capital at Patna. The area of the province would be approximately 113000 square miles, and the population about 35,000,000."

The grounds for the above decision were clearly expounded. It said "We are convinced that if the Governor of Bengal is to

107. Ibid., p. 215.

108. Ibid., pp. 215-16.

do justice to the territories which we propose to assign to him and to safeguard the interests of the Mahomedans of his province, Bihar and Chota Nagpur must be dissociated from Bengal. Quite apart, however, from the consideration, we are satisfied that it is in the highest degree desirable to give the Hindi-speaking people, now included within the province of Bengal a separate administration. These people have hitherto been unequally yoked with the Bengalis, and have never therefore had a fair opportunity for development. The cry of Bihar for the Biharis has frequently been raised in connexion with the conferment of appointments, an excessive number of offices in Bihar having been held by Bengalis. The Biharis are a sturdy, loyal people and it is a matter of common knowledge that although they have long desired separation from Bengal, they refrained at the time of the partition from asking for it, because they did not wish to join the Bengalis in opposition to Government. There has, moreover, been a very marked awakening in Bihar in recent years, and a strong belief has grown up among Biharis that Bihar will never develop until it is dissociated from Bengal. That belief will, unless a

a remedy be found, give rise to agitation in near future, and the present is an admirable opportunity to carry out on our own initiative a thoroughly sound and much - desired change. The Oriyas, like the Biharis, have little in common with the Bengalis, and we propose to have Orissa (and the Sambalpur district) with Bihar and Chota Nagpur. We believe that the arrangement will well accord with popular sentiment in Orissa and will be welcome to Bihar as presenting a seaboard to that province".¹⁰⁹ The secretary of State gave his approval to the above proposal and informed the Government that at the Delhi Durbar on the 12th December, 1911 His Imperial Majesty would make the announcement of the same along with other declarations.

George V, the King Emperor, on the 12th December announced the creation of a new Lieutenant-Governorship in Council administering the areas of Bihar, Chota Nagpur and Orissa at as early a date as possible.

The new province came into existence on the 1st April, 1912 marking the end of Bihar's struggle for separation from Bengal and creation of its own political identity.

109. Quoted in V.C.P. Chaudhary - op.cit., pp. 163 -64.

Appraisal

The movement passed through two stages. The first stage was between 1894 to 1905. The second stage was from 1905-1912. While in the first stage it was clearly led by Hindu educated class, in the second, other groups also joined it. But it cannot be denied that even in the second phase the intellectuals dominated it. By and large, it remained a middle class movement. It was at times seen as anti-national and the leaders were charged with the accusation that they were working for self interest. But as we have seen : the leaders were moved by a sincere desire to create a condition for the proper development of Bihar and in it they were continuing an old tradition. Apart from various reasons put forward for demanding separation, there was an intellectual conviction on their part, as revealed by S. Sinha, that in a country like India it was not possible to evolve, at least for a very long time, a nation of the unitary type. All that one could hope for, under the existing conditions, was to form different nationalities based not on communal but linguistic and territorial considerations, yet bound politically with the

people of the other provinces, for the purpose of general advancement of the country as a whole. Their ideal was the existence, side by side, of state patriotism with national patriotism. Hence they tried to promote, what Lord Balfour had termed as subordinate patriotism, among the Biharis. This was similar to what scotchman feel for Scotland, while sharing in a common patriotism with the English and the Welsh, as Britons. It was argued that various patriotisms need not be and should not be mutually exclusive. The rationale behind the movement lay in this.

CHAPTER VI

C O N C L U S I O N

CHAPTER VIC O N C L U S I O N

Bihar got a political identity of its own in 1912, marking the end of a long struggle to achieve this objective. The struggle, in reality, had started in the 1870s, when the first articulation of a regional consciousness were made. Since then the events took the inevitable course ultimately leading to a demand for separation from Bengal.

The British rule and its accompanying effects created the context for the growth of regionalism in Bihar. The distorted and lop-sided transformation of the Indian society led to the creation of an uneven society. Some people and regions became more developed and advanced, both in social and economic fields. The people of the advanced regions, where the British rule had made the greatest impact, started dominating the interests of backward regions. Once political consciousness developed among the people of backward regions they started questioning the dominant position of other regional groups in their regions.

Bihar was a part of the Presidency of Bengal and here the Bengalis were seen as dominating the interests of the people of Bihar, ultimately giving rise to a separatists movement.

Bihar, in the Pre-British period, possessed elements of a regional identity. It was a subah of the Mughal Empire. Living under a common administration for more than two hundred years produced certain common habits of life. At the level of the educated elite Biharis shared a common language. At the popular level, too, Hindi or its dialects were spoken by the people. The colonial intrusion, however, created a situation where local interests started suffering. As English education was made the pass to official employment, and as it did not make much progress in Bihar before the 1860s, Bengalis came to occupy important positions in Bihar, as among them English education had made great progress.

But in the second half of the 19th century English education also spread among the people of Bihar, leading to the emergence of an educated middle class. This class was to question the domination of the Bengalis in the public services. The emergence of this class served to create an unprecedented unity among the people of Bihar.

In the beginning of the 1870s the British rulers also paid special attention to the problems of Bihar. They had come to perceive that the people of Bihar were essentially

different from the people of Bengal and also that they needed some special attention. This led them to reserve jobs for the people of Bihar at certain levels. Hindi was also introduced in Bihar as the medium of instruction in the schools. These steps served to promote a sense of common identity among the people there. Improvements in the means of communication also promoted this feeling. In the 1870s there was also a marked growth of political consciousness. Many public associations were established, which all emphasized the identity of Bihar and worked for the improvement of the people of Bihar. Many newspapers were started. It was through the columns of vernacular papers that the incongruity of the union of Bengal and Bihar and the consequent harmful effects on the people of Bihar, were pointed out. Thus papers greatly contributed to the construction and articulation of Bihar's identity. These papers first made the demand that public employment in Bihar should be given to the Biharis only. Thus they gave rise to the slogan 'Bihar for Biharis' which soon took the shape of a movement aimed at the separation of Bihar.

The struggle proper was started in the early 1890s.

The first opportunities for making the demand for separation

from Bengal were provided in 1894, when the colonial government was planning to make territorial rearrangements in the Presidency of Bengal to reduce the administrative burden on the Lt.-Governor of Bengal. The leaders of Bihar pointed out that the best method of solving this problem was to separate Bihar, as it was a homogenous territory and did not want to remain with Bengal. The second opportunity was provided when the Government was contemplating the partition of Bengal again in the name of relief of Bengal. The leaders of Bihar again repeated the same arguments that they had made in the 1890s. They pointed out that it was fair that Bihar be separated rather than a common people be divided. They appropriated history to buttress their claims for a separate identity, pointed out the ethnic and cultural differences between the people of Bengal and Bihar and above all they made the political argument that no administration running from Calcutta could take care of Bihar's interests. They pointed with the help of facts and figures the discrimination done to the people of Bihar in matters of public employment and in the grant of funds for various purposes. They also used the argument that a local government would be more solicitous of the welfare of the people.

In doing all these things, the leaders of Bihar were firmly convinced that unless the distinctive identities of the people were recognized the country would not progress. The demand was made on the ground that a people could not flower unless they had an identity that they could claim as their own.

Once Bihar became a separate state it joined the mainstream of national movement with great vigour. It was no wonder that it became one of the strongest centres of the freedom movement in India.

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