

HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE OF EVOLUTION OF THE CITY OF MUZAFFARPUR (BIHAR)

Ranjeet Kumar

Research Scholar,

L.N.M.U. Darbhanga

Introduction

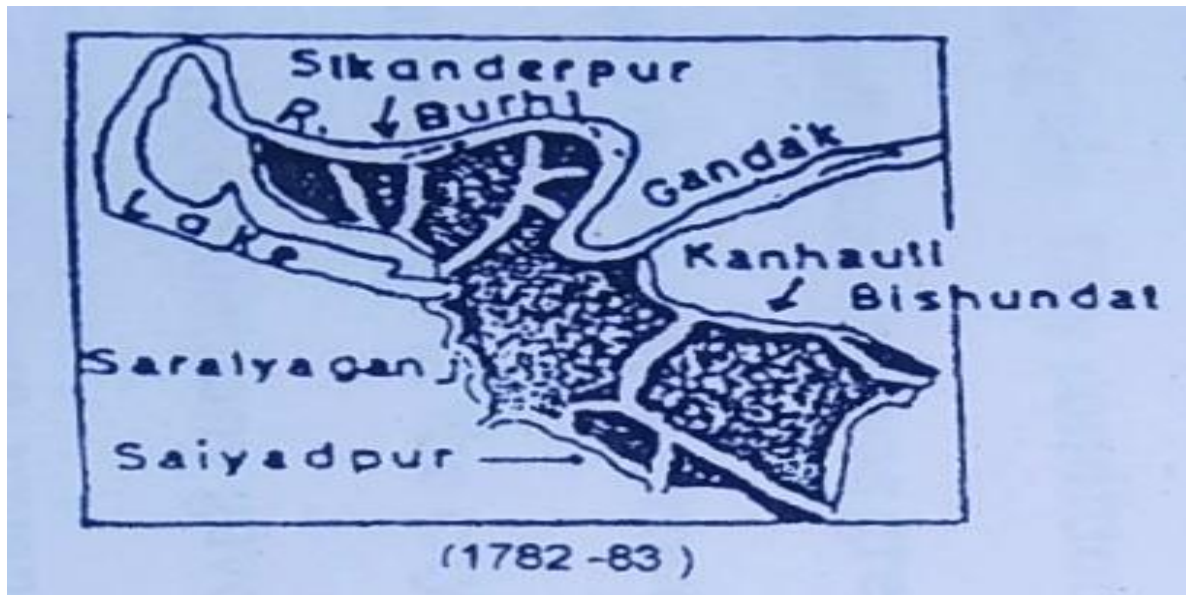
Muzaffarpur city is geographically located between 26⁰12'0" north latitude and 85⁰18'0" and 85⁰29'0" east longitude, occupying 4135.74 acres of land. The city has a sizeable population of 3,54,462 as per 2011 census. Having an inter-stream area between a shifting river of Burhi Gandak and Fardo Nallah, Muzaffarpur city became collecting and distributing centre of North Bihar plain. The Physical panorama of the city exhibits the presence of the valley flood plain, levee, interfluvies and other depositional features. The ox bow lake adds to the beauty of the city. The smooth rolling inter river basin is rich in agriculture produce which are catalysts to the progress of the city.

Historical Perspective of Evolution of the City of Muzaffarpur :

The process of evolution and growth of any urban centres has impact on the spatial pattern of land use of the city. The unplanned and haphazard growth of the old cities shows the nature of growth of slum pockets due to congestion of houses, lack of roads, sewerages, water supply and other sanitary facilities. The parts of urban settlements which are of recent origin shows comparatively either absence of slum pockets or a very small pockets of slum due to presence of almost all possible facilities of urban life with a planned development of all the urban land uses. A comprehensive understanding of the origin and growth of the city is, therefore, essential to have at least a working knowledge of its political, economic, social and cultural heritage, artistic and technical skill, architecture and spatial pattern of nucleus around which different land uses successively grew and the city evolved to the present status.

The city of Muzaffarpur has developed out of many complicated intersections. These intersections are influenced by such human and natural factors over which human beings could have at the most a partial control. The city represents high intensity in production and distribution. Its location in the fertile land has been favoured by social and natural conditions of the region which helped in weaving an economic design to bear the increasing burden of the growing needs of its inhabitants.

Muzaffarpur city shows a very complex historical background of its origin and growth. Its origin cannot be ascertained with certainty. The geographical study and analysis of its location has brought to light its various necessities and circumstances which caused the origin and evolution of the city. The dynamic characters of the various requirements and circumstances during the different periods of the country's history have helped the anatomy of the city to be cast accordingly. No city in Bihar except Patna illustrates so clearly an impact of political, social and economic development through the ages. The geographical setting, the social change and, mobility, religious metamorphism and the political modes of the nation have impressed greatly Muzaffarpur to such an extent that the each and every remarkable area of the city shows a separate socio-cultural unit reminding a distinctive period of historical origin and growth. Muzaffarpur was founded in 1760 by Muzaffar Khan, an amil (a revenue farmer) of Chakla Nai Pargana. It encompasses four villages Sikandarpur, Kanhauli, Saidpur and Saraiyaganj. It was a Kasba market before the appropriation of the above four villages. These villages were the nucleus for the further development of the city. On this settlement Muzaffar Khan has control. Hence the city may be called proprietary city. The inception of the city, therefore seems to be in medieval period. So it is a medieval city, as its origin shows.



The East India Company gradually removed the control of Muslim authorities. After the great battle of Buxar in 1764 the region in which the city is located came under the rule of East India Company. This change over of power during the transition period brought some confusion and lawlessness, when the British rule came things were set right in almost all possible. Administration improved and corruption was removed to a great extent¹². During a period of First twenty years of British Rule there were confusion and complete anarchy in the several areas leading to the blockage of trade routes, roads. Consequently even the traffic between two city was negligible. This condition continued up to 1780 and the growth of Muzaffarpur city was greatly hampered by the situation. In following years the British improved the situation. So, trade and commerce got a new status and the city again began developing in many directions. East India Company gave way to the British rulers and the company's aim was to earn revenue by developing trade and commerce. As Muzaffarpur is located in the heart of the fertile agrarian belt, which stimulated Muzaffarpur to grow as an agrarian city acting as an accumulating and distributing centre's of grain produced in the catchment area of Muzaffarpur city. Consequent upon the improved law and order situation, healthy environment and favorable climate for economic growth, Muzaffarpur formed a nodal point of various specialized activities like agriculture and agro-based industries as well, though it is not an industrial city. Thus developed trade and commerce in the city provided incentive to the growth of the city of Muzaffarpur.

People of the region manufactured indigo by their native method at non-commercial level before the advent of the British Rule. The first collector of Tirhut, 1 Francis Grand, with headquarter at Darbhanga, for the first time started manufacturer of indigo on large scale on commercial basis. In 1785 the collector wrote himself that he himself and introduced manufacturing of indigo work and plantation and erected thereon his own expense. During the eighties of the century indigo manufacturing began to develop into an organized industry and consequently European traders were attracted and many European were provided trading licenses. There was then a continuous influx of European planters and traders due to the attraction of these powerful activities. This rush may be called as 'Indigo' or 'Blue Gold' rush, as there was a large profit from the indigo trade. Around Muzaffarpur city a number of large indigo workers establishment with big factories were started. The indigo industries were regarded as 'the goose that laid golden goose'. The Europeans who came for the purpose settled in the countryside with Muzaffarpur as a centre of their main activities. They were planters, manufacturers and traders of indigo simultaneously. They also compelled the farmers to grow indigo to be sold at cheaper rate and later on the indigo started replacing the bumper cultivation of sugarcane which was grown for local manufacturer. The indigo got better favorable position than the sugarcane, as indigo gave greater margin of profit and less capital investment.

Gradually Muzaffarpur city grew as a city with chief activities relating to indigo works. It may be called 'indigo polis' in another terms. The profit margin was great. So, the Board of Directors stopped all financial assistance to the indigo planters in 1802. Till then the planters became a powerful economic and political force in the area. The city of Muzaffarpur and its adjoining area were considered as 'indigo planters paradise'. Besides indigo the important articles

of trade and manufacture were saltpeter, sugar and opium from Muzaffarpur city and so the city became a political and economic centre of the area.

Throughout the nineteenth century indigo planters and other related activities were decisive and dominant factor for the growth of the city and city gradually grew, the establishment of institutions and factories gave several new nuclei within the city for further growth. In 1840 Chandwara Jail was constructed in the eastern section of the city which formed such a nucleus. An another nucleus was the Engineering workshop of Messers Arther Butler and Co. Ltd. which was established in 1858. It employed 107 persons¹³ and manufactured various kinds of steel and parts of machines which were used in sugar and other nulls of North Bihar. Thus Muzaffarpur at that time became an industrial centre of North Bihar.

As time passed the action of Europeans started becoming hard and nefarious towards the farmers more and more. It is therefore, the relation between the European planters and the native peasants grew strained. The planters looked to Muzaffarpur for safety in time of crisis. A large number of peasants also rushed to Muzaffarpur city during the political unrest of 1857. The Bihar Indigo Planters Association was formed by the European planters to protect their interests on the pretext of giving fair deal to the farmers. The city of Muzaffarpur was the headquarters of the association of the Bihar Planters. In 1864 Muzaffarpur municipality came into existence to facilitate the people of Muzaffarpur with various civic amenities. It is a landmark in the history of development of the city of Muzaffarpur. Muzaffarpur district was declared in 1875 and the district headquarter was established in Muzaffarpur city. Consequently various administrative units were constructed in Muzaffarpur city and this opening of the district administrative units attracted the people to live in the city for various purposes and provision of civic amenities. Then the new district comprises the district of Sitamarhi, Sheohar, Muzaffarpur and Vaishali district and also a part of Begusarai district. Muzaffarpur city was holding the central position as well as pre-eminence in this delimited jurisdiction. It was the largest settlement with more civic amenities and social provisions. It is therefore, the choicest place for districts headquarter was Muzaffarpur city. Muzaffarpur was a part of Tirhut District with headquarters at Darbhanga and revenue centre at Hajipur till 1875. During the rule of Muslim, Hajipur was a headquarter of Subedar. So, it continued to be revenue centre.

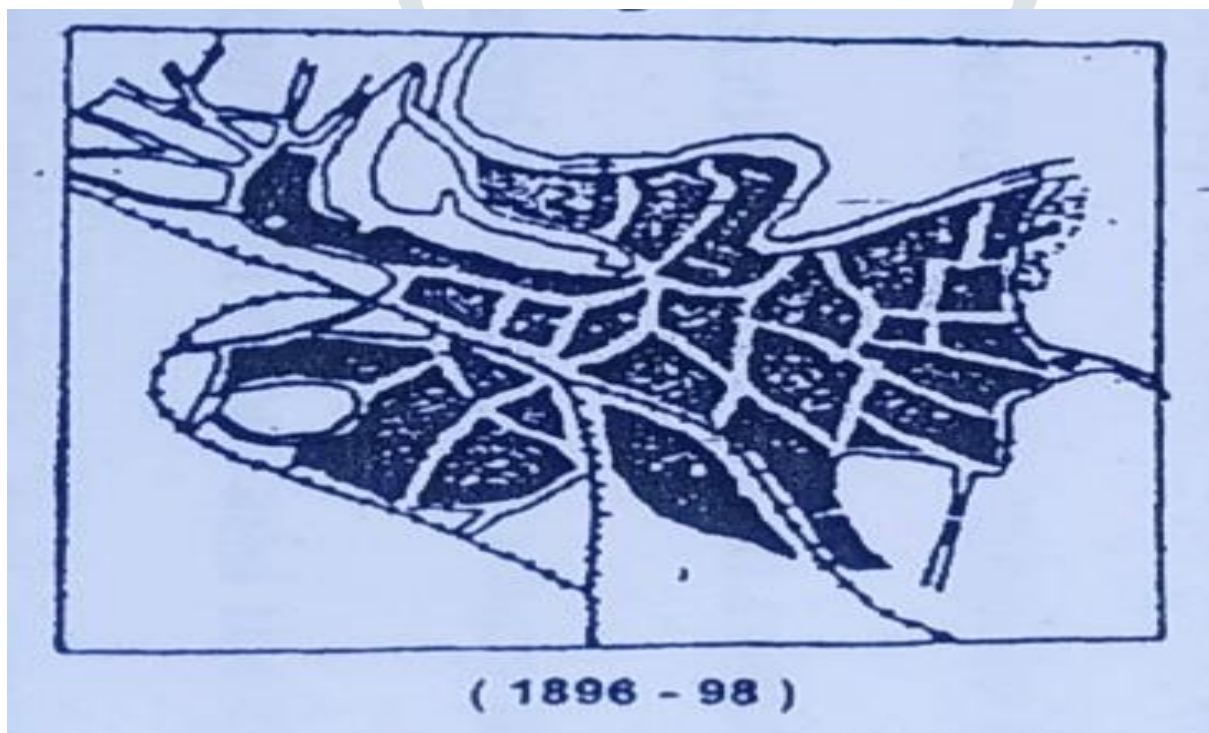
Thus in comparison to Darbhanga in respect to the administrative level Muzaffarpur came at par with Darbhanga in further growth of the city. Thus the city became the focal point in the region with increased vitality and grew by leaps and bounds. In the same year 1875 the Tirhut State Railway was extended to link Muzaffarpur. In this way Muzaffarpur was for the first time located on the railway map of India. So this was another important factor for the growth of the city. All the factors taken together gave a new impetus to the growth of the city. In 1872 the first census was completed when the population of the city of Muzaffarpur was estimated at 38241 which were considered the largest urban centre in North Bihar Plain.

Muzaffarpur During 1876 - 1910 :

Old buildings were occupied for the different office works of the district administration for time being. Most of the arrangements were on adhoc basis. The court was located in Chandwara Mohalla which is in the eastern part of the city. A large chunk of land of Maharaja of Darbhanga was lying west of Saraiyaganj. it was called Majoraji. The government acquires that bit of land for the establishment of court, Sadar Hospital, Official, Residences of Collectors, The district and session judge. The approach roads were straightened and made wide and up to date. Magnificent buildings on the European pattern were constructed with ample open spaces and grid-iron pattern of circulation system. Thus a posh built up area was added to the city. In 1884 an European Club was started for entertainment of the officers mostly European and elite of the city. The club building was located near Sikandarpur Man (Lake) which had scenic beauty. It was just to the east of the bungalow of District and Session Judge. Moreover, Chakkar area was also developed for the residences of high officials and high class buildings were constructed. It includes the official residences of civil surgeon, both offices and residences of Superintending Engineer of Public works department and other buildings. Military cantonment or barrack were also constructed to cater to the needs of maintaining law and order situation and controlling the violence and political instability and upheavals. The railway station building was erected in 1877. It has been followed by development of railway colony adjacent to the railway station mostly to the

south of the railway line. During the same period Hajipur was linked with a loop line. This railway line was aligned straight way for Muzaffarpur to RamDayalu Nagar Station in the route in the very beginning. It formed the southern limit of the city. Generally efficient transport provide by the railway attract industries to be located around the railway line or railway station. It also has impact on the anatomy of the city. In the close vicinity of Muzaffarpur railway station the workshop of M/s Arther Butler and Co. Ltd. was established. A colony sprang up near the workshop for the residences of manager and other industrial workers.

Langat Singh College, the oldest prestigious college level institution came into existence in 1899. This college was started in a house in Saraiyaganj in 1899 and was established by the name of Bhumihar Brahmin College which indicates that the city had been dominated by the Bhumihar Brahmin caste or the richest families were of the same caste. The present site was selected in 1902 which was previously agricultural land. The city became an important educational centre with the start of this college. The city expanded mostly towards north and east. The population grew constantly with a slight decrease in 1901. This negative growth was more apparent than real as one of the ward had been excluded from the Municipal limit. It must be remembered that the old Tirhut District fell in the jurisdiction of Bhagalpur Commissioner. Later on a new Tirhut Commissioner was made in 1908 to promote effective administration and the headquarter was made at Muzaffarpur. In this commissioner four erstwhile districts of Muzaffarpur, Darbhanga, Saran and Champaran were brought. Thus the city of Muzaffarpur became the largest administrative centre in North Bihar. The Commissioner office was located in the court campus. The residences of the Commissioner and the Deputy Inspector General (DIG) of Police of this range were built in Chakkar area on European architecture with ample facilities of roads and open spaces.



With the invention of Badische Synthetic Dye in Germany the highly named indigo plantation of this region lost its glory. To obtain indigo from plants was no more profitable. So the prices of indigo fell down from Rs. 156.00 per pound (37.5 kg approximately) in 1895 to Rs. 140.00 in 1901. This was the beginning of the end of the indigo plantation and gradually it vanished from this region. The growth of city and the economy of the city was much affected by the end of indigo plantation.

Muzaffarpur During 1901 - 1947 :-

Many ups and downs have been faced by the city of Muzaffarpur during this period and the growth of the city was hampered because of various natural and human calamities. The plague and cholera epidemic caused heavy loss of life in the city in early part of this period. The great earthquake in 1934 brought a big damage to the city and brought worst disaster to the city also. Besides these, the two world wars and partition of the nation also dislocated the life of city.

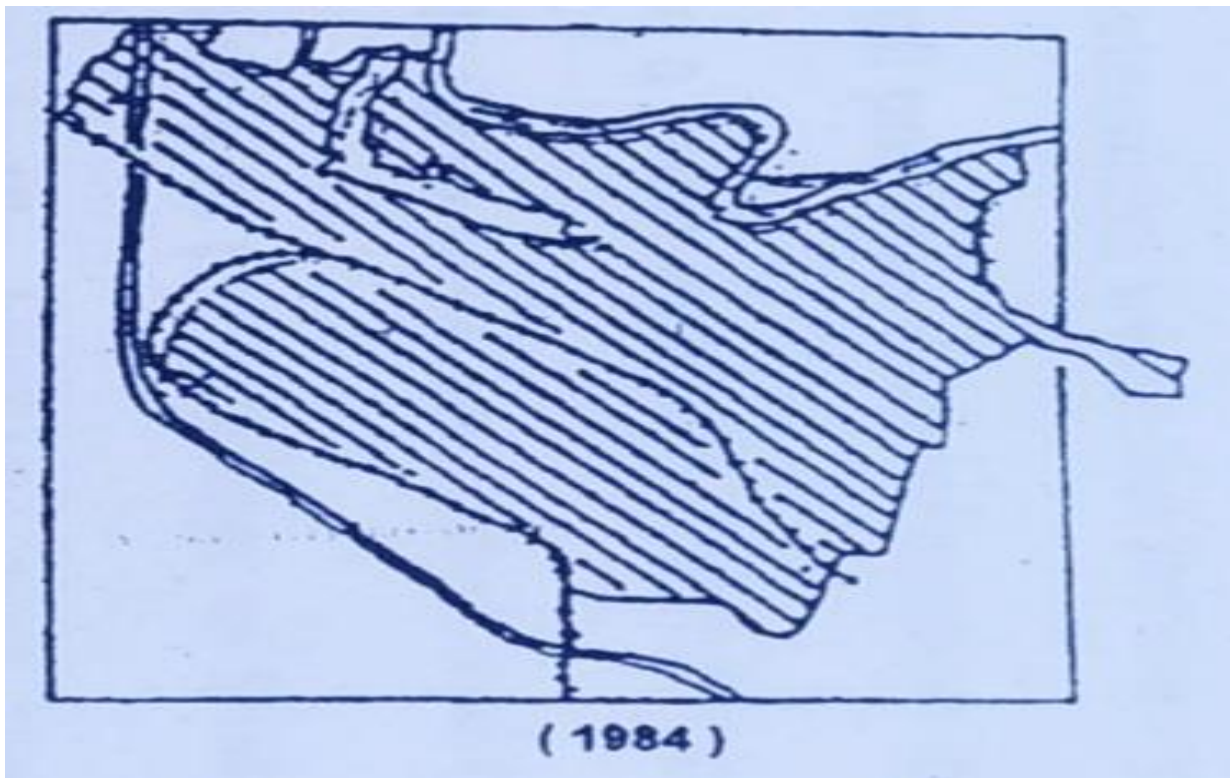
The city of Muzaffarpur lost sizeable population by the natural disaster during 1911 and 1921. The census year of 1921 has been considered as the "Great Demographic Divide" in India. The census figure of Muzaffarpur shows that minimum population in 1921. The Bhumihaar Brahmin College was taken over by the government during this period in 1914. It was renamed as Greer Bhumihaar Brahmin College (GBB College). After independence the college was again named on its founder as Langat Singh College, Muzaffarpur. The great economic depression of the thirties came after the 1st world war. On the grave of indigo, sugar industry began to stand and sugar industry was given protection for rapid growth, as the region was very much suitable for sugarcane cultivation and sugar industry flourished much.

The city was worst affected by the earthquake of 1934. The closely built up areas of the city was severely affected and the densely populated area was heavily damaged. These areas included the old sector of the city like Purani Gudri Bazar, Brahmin Toli, Chaturbhuj Asthan, Bhairo Asthan, Purani Bazar, Nai Bazar and Mahajan Toli. The houses were old and in dilapidated condition. About 90 percent of them were brick built with mud and 75 percent of them were completely damaged. The Chandwara water works and pipelines were most affected and were completely damaged. Thus, the city was practically reduced to heaps of debris. After earthquake almost the whole city was reconstructed and the city got a new look. Thus in one way earthquake was a blessing for Muzaffarpur. "The earthquake was, however, in a sense blessing in disguise for Muzaffarpur city, because it made a clean sweep of the unhygienic congestion and helped the building up of a cleaner and healthier city".¹⁴

During the period some new administrative and other official buildings were built. The major portion of development was the reconstruction of building demolished by the earthquake of 1934. The municipality office was constructed in the court campus a few year after earthquake. During this period India got freedom in 1947 and the country was divided which had much impact on the growth of the city at least in near future.

Muzaffarpur During 1947 - 2011 :

Due to the division of Indian and Pakistan in 1947 a large number of population was uprooted in West and East Pakistan. They came India to take shelter. The refugees from West Pakistan were mostly Sindhis and Punjabis and from the East Pakistan were Bengalese. The government rehabilitated the refugees in different cities. Some new areas were added to the city for their residences. In the already existing urban limit in Muzaffarpur city the refugees were accommodated. The administration provided the land abandoned by railway track in the south of Kalambagh Chowk for the settlement of the refugees and they settled down in the given area. The said area is called as refugee colony. The refugees started their workshops and hardware shop on Jawahar Lal Road. They were mostly Sindhi and Punjabi and in course of time they became dominant trading community in Muzaffarpur. Some Sindhi families settled in Chandwara area near Banaras Bank Chowk. Some very poor Bengali families settled south of Kalambagh Chowk and they prepared paper envelope which are sold to Kirana store. In this way the influx of refugees increased the pace of urban growth which has been called as refugee incentive urbanization. Muzaffarpur city acted as 'Shock Observer' during the fifties. The incoming of refugees had great impact on the coming census of 1961 and there had been a substantive increase in population of the city. The city reached the status of a city in 1961 when the population crossed the requisite mark of population of more than one lakh.



In the city so many technical and educational institutions had been established. The Central and State Government also opened several new offices in the different areas of the city which caused spatial expansion of the city. In 1954 the Muzaffarpur Institute of Technology (MIT) was opened near Brahmura mohalla occupying a big chunk of land. It further acted as a new nucleus for the future expansion of the city around its campus in the north western part of the city. A new railway zonal office was opened near GPO on the bank of Sikandarpur lake. But very soon the railway zonal office was shifted to Pandu near Guwahati in Assam and thus Muzaffarpur was deserted by this office. In lieu of this Muzaffarpur was provided the office or centre of zonal training as a consolation. The same building is now meant for Railway Service Commission office, In 1965 many educational institutes were added to the city. A large bit of land adjacent to L.S. College was acquired for the Bihar University Office building and the various post graduate departments of the different faculties and residential quarters of the teachers and the officers. Accordingly magnificent building sprang up and a large educational complex came into existence. The adjoining areas of this complex also developed as residential pockets of the city. Other educational institute of follow were M.P. Science College, Rameshwar Singh College, L.N. Tirhut College, R.M.L.S. College, R.B.B.M College, R.D.S. College and M.S.K.B. College, Nitishwar Singh College etc all constituent colleges of Bihar University.

During 1970 both the state government and central government started institutions and offices in the city. Muzaffarpur city was made a centre of Railway Service Commission in 1974 and started functioning in already constructed building for the Railway Zonal office in 1950. In 1977 the Television relay centre was established. The college of Business Management now named as Lalit Narayan Mishra college of Business Management was opened in 1972 which was functioning in Mukherjee High School. The college had been shifted to a new building near the Bhagwanpur Chowk. The Indian Drugs and Pharmaceuticals Ltd. (IDPL) was established in 1977. No other city in Bihar has such prestigious institutions. Other institutions are worth mentioning are S.K.M.C.H. in 1972, VIT in 1980, RBTS Homeopathic College and Hospital in 1979, Nitishwar Institute of Ayurvedic Science in 1970. Some of the institutions are outside the municipal limit but now they come under the municipal jurisdiction of the city of Muzaffarpur. They all taken together have dominating impact on the growth of the city and the different land uses. The Bela Industrial Estate was nearing the death for a decade but it again stood up and came into limelight. With the establishment of IDPL a new chapter in the history of industrialization of Muzaffarpur started. Several other industries were also added to this industrial complex like a leather corporation, and undertaking of Bihar State Government leather tanneries, glass factory, gas cylinders factory and others. This industrial estate is a planned one. The Thermal Power Station at Kanti supplies adequate electric power for consumption of the industrial area. Though thermal power station at Kanti outside municipal boundary, it has every impact on the growth of the city and it has boosted the urban growth. The

conversion of meter gauge railway to broad gauge upto Muzaffarpur brought continuity in the flow of goods and men removing break of bulk and change of journey at various points like Garhara near Barauni. It has now direct link with Mumbai, Delhi, Kolkata, Guwahati etc. This change of line and increase in traffic volume gave birth to a new railyard near Narayanpur Anant just by the side of Bela Industrial Estate.

The city of Muzaffarpur struggling with many ups and dows qualified as a city in 1961. It recorded a sizeable population of 190416 showing an increase of 50.67 percent during a decade between 1971-1981. This may be said a very conspicuous growth of the population of a city. This remarkable growth of the population is due to inclusion of several employment centers, institutions and mohallas into the Municipal limit. The population of those establishments was not added to the city although they are functional part of the city. Those are S.K Medical College and Hospital, L.N. Mishra College of Business Management, Bela industrial Estate, Agricultural Marketing Yard, M.P. Science College, Regional Office of both State Bank of India and Punjab National Bank, the Government Housing Colony, Housing Colony of Electricity Board, BHEL Colony, Khadi Gramodyog and many other small institutions and other rural pockets of the adjoining area.

The Municipality of Muzaffarpur was converted into Municipal Corporation by the government in order to include these urban pockets into Municipal limit in May 1981. Consequently the area of Muzaffarpur Corporation increased to 192.04 Sq. Kms with a population of 3,54,462 according to 2011 census. Which male and female are 1,87,564 and 1,66,898 respectively. Some of the mentioned institutions or establishments act as nuclei for the future urban expansion. Those are named as S.K.M.C.H. across the north of River Burhi Gandak, Kanti Thermal Power Station and Sudha Dairy in the west of Bela Industrial Estate in the south east and also Narayanpur Anant Rail Yard.

On the basis of above description it can be concluded that the present Muzaffarpur City has passed through different phases of evolution over the time. Like any other rural city its base is also agro-rural. Its future evolution will remain very pulsating because of growing connectivity in its surroundings.

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