

ECONOMY OF BIHAR: AN OVERVIEW

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ABSTRACT

The name 'Bihar' is the perverted form of (B 'Vihar' which means a Buddhist monastery. Bihar finds mention in the Vedas, Puranas, epics etc., and was the main score of activities of Buddha and 24 Jain Tirthankaras. Great rulers of the state before the Christian era were Bimbaar, Udayin, who founded the city of Patliputra, Chandragupta Maurya and Emperor Ashok and Maurya dynasty, the Sungas and the Kanvas. Then came the Kushan ruler followed by Chandragupta Vikramaditya of the Gupta dynasty. During medieval period, Muslim rulers made inroads into the territory. The first to conquer Bihar was Muhammad Bakhtiyar Khilji. Shingles were followed by the Teglaqs and then the Mughals. Taking advantage of the disintegration of the Mughal Empire, the British established their foothold in Bihar with the battle of Plessey in 1577. Through successive battles annexation the British consolidated their position. Bihar formed the part of the Bengal Province till 1911. When on 12 December 1911, as separate province of Bihar and Orissa was created. In 1936, Bihar was made a separate province. Again, on November, 15, 2000 new state Jharkhand comprising the Chotanagpur plateau of Bihar was created.

The History of Bihar, according to the available record, goes back to the last three thousand years. The most outstanding get in the history of Bihar is the growth of an all India empire abrading nearly the whole of India, Nepal and Afghanistan. What do why the ancient history of Bihar covers the major portions of ancient history of India? Sir John Hutton in MS famous book, Bihar the Heart of India has rightly observed that in the days of the greatness of Magadh, of Mithila and the Lichchavis and Vaishali of Gautam Buddha and Mahavir, of the Mauryan Emperors, it was indeed the Central point of the culture and activities of the Indian Peninsula But gradually, the all India Character of this region started melting out and, in course of time, once ruled as an independent empire, shrines into a province which hardly enjoyed independent till 1911, being always linked with ether Bengal & Delhi or Jaunpur.

In Bihar, over the centuries, Many Republicans and Empires have come and gone, system of administration have been tried and replaced, changes have taken place in religious beliefs and creeds, languages have formed and reformed, arts have flourished and decayed, but the stream of human life, like the very Ganges that passes through Bihar, has flown on seeking fulfilment of economic, social aesthetic and normal urges and ideals have survived the people from time to time These changes have always been looked by the historians social scientists, reformers, philanthropists and activists with great interest to understand the various facts of the life of this region.

Bihar, before November 15, 2000, stretched from the Himalayan foothills in the north to Orissa in the south and from Uttar Pradesh in the east to west Bengal in the east. The state was located between latitudes 21 degrees, 58 minutes 10 seconds and 27 degrees, 31 minutes 15

seconds. north, and Longitudes 83 degrees, 19 minutes 50 seconds and 88 degrees, 17 minutes and 40 seconds east.

Bihar of today (i.e., after November 15, 2000) stretches from the Himalayan foothill in the north to Jharkhand in the south Uttar Pradesh in the West Bengal in the east. Bihar is located in the Eastern India and is completely land loaded. The divided Bihar located between latitudes 24 degrees, 20 minutes 10 seconds and 27 degrees. 31 minutes and 15 second and between longitudes 83 degrees 18 minutes 60 second and 88 degrees 17 minutes and 40 second east. It is spread over 345 K.M from north to south and 483 K.M from east to west. The area of state is 94,163 Sq.kms, the (areas of rural and Urban Bihar being 92,358.40 and 1,804.60 Sq.kms respectively.

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- (1) The north Ganga Plain
- (2) The south ganga Plain
- (3) The south Bihar (Chhonagpur) lateau).

The river Ganga flows right across the state from west to east dividing it into two unequal parts, the southern portion being double the northern portion. Thus the mainline of physiographic division is between the great monotonous alluvial plain of the Ganga and her tributaries on the one hand, and the Chhotanagpur plateau made up of several smaller plateaus and dissected hilly country inter sparse with valleys on the other.

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The Chhotanagpur plateau (now Jharkhan), and undulating trace of land full of hills and ridges and with many winding rivers, valleys and basins, is very different in character, condoling with main part of the Chhotanagpur plateau, and ranging from 300 meters to 900 meters above sea level. Average annual rainfall in Bihar is estimated at 1270 an (approx), the national average being 1100mm. Another estimate is 1500 mm for plateau and 1360 mm for the plain region. Out of the 52 districts, 24 are in the high rainfall region, having 68, 72 lakh hectares, and 7 districts in the low and medium rainfall regions having 11.63 lakh hectares. Eighty percent of the annual rainfall is received from the south-west monsoon during June-September in most parts of the state. More rainfall is associated with a humid atmosphere.

One of the most striking features of the river system of Bihar is the dominant role of the Ganga. First impinging on the boundary of Bihar near Its confluence with the Kermanase it is joined by the three great affluent- the chaghare The Gandak and the son very far from Patna. Further east, the Punpun joins its form the south at Fatwah in Patna district while the Harohar and kiul join at Surajgarha in Munger. The important rivers which join the Ganga from the north are from east to west the Haghara the Gandak, the Burhi Gandak the Koshi, the Mahananda and their tributaries. The principal rivers of the Chotanagpur plateau are the Damodar, the Swarnrekha, the Baker and Koil Bihar is struck every year by flood and often by drought besides hailstorm and blight which are ignored. The National commission on Food (1980) identified Bihar as one of the most flood-affected states in India Bihar accounts for 56.6 percent of the total flood affected area in the country. Sixteen percent of the total land area of the state is flood-prove. This amounts to about 64 lakh hectares of land. Per 100 hectares of agricultural real land 37 hectares of 3 and area is flood prone. As against the norm of 33 percent of the geographical area required to be covered with forest, only 16.82 percent of the geographical area was covered with forests. In 1974-75, the tourist area in Bihar was 2923000 hectares. The forest area per capita was observed to be 0.05 hectares, as against 0.13 hectare at the national level. There has been a continuous decline in the area under forests in India as well as in Bihar. Before November 15, 2000, Bihar happened to be the richest state in India from the point of view of mineral weal the accounting for 20 percent of its total mineral production by after the separation of Jharkhand from Bihar, the share of the mineral belts has gone to the newly born state sharkhan. Still the minerals like mica uranium, lead, tin gold, limestone, sodium, asbestos, pyrite dolomite, and China clay are available In Bihar in more or less volume. The population of her as per 2001 census was 8,28,78,796 population of the state has increased at the rate of 28.43 percent during 1991-2002 The sex ratio has been observed to be 921 females per 1000 males in the state. The density of population in Bihar has been observed to be 880 person per sq. km.

In 1991, 37.5 percent of the total population was literate this figure rose to 47.5 percent in 2001. The male literacy rate increased from 51.4 percent in 1991 to 60.3 percent in 2001. Similarly the female Literacy Rate increased from 22 percent in 1991 to 33.6 percent in 2001. The value of the human development Indies for rural India, Urban India and Rural Urban combined were 0.263, 0.442, and 0.302 respectively in 1981. The values of the corresponding figures for Bihar were 0.220, 0.378, and 0.237, respectively, placing Bihar at the respective ranks of 30th, 29th, and 32nd (the last). The gender equality index for India was 0.620 in 1981. The corresponding figure fur Bihar was 0.471 placing the state on the 30th rank out of the 32 states/union territories. In 1991 the values of human development indices for indices for rural India and rural urban combined were 0.340 0.511. 381 respectively, The respective values form Bihar for thank indices were 0.286, 0.460, and 0.308, putting the state at the respective ranks of 30th 31st and 32nd out of the 32 states/union territories. The gender equality index for India WAS 0.676 IN 1991. In the value of gender equality index was 0.469 putting it at the last rank (32nd) In Bihar the total reported area was 17.33 million hectare. Of this 44.52 present was net sown area. This gave 0.91 hectare per capita. Between 1950-51 and 1986-87 the net sown area declined by 13.5 percent. Between 1955-56 and 1987-88 the net set sown area declined by 2.92 percent. The acreage under food crops fell by about 5.5 percent daring 1955-56 to 1990-91, and that under a non-food crops rose by about that percentage. The range of fluctuations in the gross cropped area has been

almost about 29 percent. The acreage devoted to cereals fell by 6 percent during the period, while that devoted to pulses rose by about 05 percent. This is as good as remaining constant me static. With increased irrigation facilities Land allocated to oilseed has normally increased. Between 1950-51 and 1980-81 food crops storage fluctuates to the extent of 22.2 percent. Whereas the acreage under sugarcane declined by 0.29 Percent, that under wheat moved up by 12.02 percent causing 1955-56 o 1990-91, he decline in gram acreage is maximum (3.99 percent). Maize acreage fell by 0.94 percent. The degree of instability of allotted acreage was the highest in the case of rice and the lowest in the Case of sugarcane. On the basis of agrarian, system prevalent in British India, the agricultural economy of India can be divided in four regions, namely- Maninder, Roti, Mahalward and Jagirdari. The zamiudarl region covers vest Bonga, Bihar, orissa, Vetar Uttar Pradesh and Assam. The Ryotwari region covers Tamil Nadu Karnataka, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra and Gujrat. The state of Punjab and Haryana come under the Jurisdiction of the nahalwari region. The Jagirdari region covers Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan.

The development of agriculture in the major states India can be expressed in terms of agricultural efficiency. The agricultural efficiency has been represented by the composite based index based on the total vectors of five indicators, namely cropping intensity, intensity, per agricultural worker availability of net area sown, share of commercial crops in gross cropped area and per hectare productivity of selected crops each indicator having different values across the states in India. During the period 1947-48 to 1999-2000 the Mahalwari region has been observed having consistently the highest score of agricultural efficiency (121.99), followed by the rayotwari region (113.32) In contract the Zamindari region has been observed with the lowest score of agricultural efficiency (86.80) following by Jagirdari region (104.84).

The acefilcient of variation over time has been observed to be the highest (8.71) in the Jagirdari region, followed by the indari region (7.47). The corresponding figure has been found to be the lowest (2.08) in the Mahalwari region, followed by the Rayotwari region (5.06). This clearly shows that the agriculture in the Zamindari region suffers from the twin problems of low growth and high instability. The coefficient of variation over space observed to be the highest (11.98) in the Jagirdari region, followed by the zamindari region (9.87). The corresponding figure has been found to be the lowest (1.84) in the Mahalwari. Region followed by the Ryotwari region (6.99) at the national level, the coefficient of regional variation during the period under consideration has been found to be 14.71. The Mahalwari region and the Zamindari regions are situated on the two opposite extremes of the agricultural development in terms of agricultural aifielency index- the Mahalwari region with the highest and the Indian region with the lowest indices of agricultural efficiency respectively. If the regional boundaries are waived, then Bihar of the zamindari region and Punjab of the Mahalwari region appears to be located on the two opposite poles of agricultural development Bihar with the lowest index of agricultural efficiency and higher fluctuation, and Punjab with the highest index of agricultural efficiency and lower fluctuation. The root cause of regional disparity in the agricultural development in India and backwardness of agricultural development of Bihar is believed to be deep rooted in the historical fact of protracted colonial domination and mechanism of imperial exploitation which affected differently the various segments and regions of the Indian economy. The imperial interest in Indian agriculture, was mainly as a provider of revenue. The surprise times expedited was partly transferred to the homes country, partly invested in military and bureaucratic machinery to sustain extend the territorial aggrandizement, and partly to strengthen the sources of revenue through public Investment in railway, canal, etc. The strategy of imperial exploitation changed with the dual establishment of political supremacy and Britain advancing in the capitalist development. Hence the major differentiation arose in the way of which colonial mechanism operated in the eastern, south-western and north-west regions.

The agriculture of Bihar differs from the elements of low productivity. High instability, high instability and disguised unemployment as well the maximum member of district of north Bihar falls in the highest pressure range (40 to 60 percent) of surplus labor. It is worth pointing out her here that incidence of poverty is also maximum in these districts of Bihar. The humbler of districts in the how –pressure range (below 20 percent) is just four-two in north Bihar (Muzaffarpur and Gopalganj) one each in south Bihar (Aurangabad and

Chhotanagpur region (Singhbhum). This except these four districts, the percentage of surplus labour in all the rest districts in Bihar ranges between 20 to 60 percent showing thereby the seriousness of the situation. The total volume of surplus labour in Bihar agriculture as a whole comes to be 17208 lakh Mondays (36.49) percent of the total work force.

Bihar has been observed as the most backward state in almost all of the eight indicators (prosperity and budget, law and order, education, a agriculture, health, infrastructure, scenario and consumer market)y as it has secured the 19th (the last rank in the overall ranking in 2001., white goa has been observed as the most developed state with the first rank in all overall development in 2001.

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