

## CHAPTER III

### PEOPLE

#### POPULATION.

This district returned a population of 15,55,774 at the census of 1872\*. The next census showed an increase of 1,96,860 (12.7 per cent\*\*). Much of this should be attributed to better enumeration in the second census and not real increase in population. The 1891 census showed that the population was more or less stationary, the net increase being just below 1 per cent†. The following table shows the population as enumerated at the successive decennial census, their respective variation, both males and females as well as net variation over a period of 60 years :—

The following table shows variations in population of the district from 1901 to 1961.‡

| Census year. | Persons.  | Variation. | Net variation. |       | Males.    | Variation. | Females.  | Variation. |
|--------------|-----------|------------|----------------|-------|-----------|------------|-----------|------------|
|              |           |            | 1901.          | 1961. |           |            |           |            |
| 1901 ..      | 1,624,231 | ..         | ..             | ..    | 804,157   | ..         | 820,074   | ..         |
| 1911 ..      | 1,608,674 | —15,557    | ..             | ..    | 809,307   | +5,150     | 799,367   | —20,70     |
| 1921 ..      | 1,576,879 | —31,795    | ..             | ..    | 809,082   | —225       | 767,797   | —31,570    |
| 1931 ..      | 1,846,474 | +209,595   | ..             | ..    | 956,124   | +147,042   | 890,350   | +122,553   |
| 1941 ..      | 2,144,552 | +298,078   | ..             | ..    | 1,108,273 | +152,149   | 1,036,279 | +145,929   |
| 1951 ..      | 2,528,272 | +383,720   | ..             | ..    | 1,297,266 | +188,993   | 1,231,006 | +194,727   |
| 1961 §       | 2,949,746 | +421,474   | +1,325,515     | ..    | 1,522,687 | +225,421   | 1,427,059 | +196,053   |

In the next decade (1891—1900) the population fell by 8.4 per cent. This may be attributed to unsatisfactory public health in 1892, 1894 and 1896 and also to failure of crops in 1891 and 1896 both factors affecting the general longevity. There was a serious outbreak of plague epidemic in January, 1900, which re-appeared with renewed vigour in 1901 on the eve of the census. The plague took a heavy toll of lives

\*Census 1961 : *District Census Handbook*, I, Patna (1966), p. XIV.

\*\**Ibid.*, pp. XIV-XV.

†*Ibid.* p. XV.

‡*District Census Handbook*, Patna (1951), p. 3.

§*Census of India*, 1961, Vol. IV, Bihar, Part II-A, General Population Tables (1963), p. 21.

and also caused a heavy exodus from the district. The census arrangements were also disorganised to some extent by the appearance of plague. It might be mentioned that this district did not suffer from famine in 1897. During the next 10 years (1901—10), plague continued to levy a heavy toll year after year; epidemic of cholera was also frequent; there was partial failure of crops in three years, and the river-borne trade was declining fast. The census of 1911 disclosed a fall in population by 1.0 per cent. There was a large influx of labourers from other districts in the Mokameh *tal* for harvesting *rabi* crops at the time of the census but for this the fall registered at the census would have been larger. The population decreased further by 2.0 per cent in the 1911—20 decade. The last serious outbreak of plague was in 1911, but it was present in a comparatively mild form also in other years. There were outbreaks of cholera epidemic in 1917. In 1918, the influenza epidemic took heavy toll; there were also epidemics of plague and cholera and the district was in the grip of scarcity due to almost complete failure of principal crops. The number of emigrants had fallen during this decade by over 30,000. The real loss in population was therefore greater than what is indicated by the percentage variation figure. In the 1921—30 decade there were virulent outbreaks of both cholera and plague in 1921 as also a large number of deaths from fever. After 1921 however, there was neither a severe epidemic of cholera nor of plague. There was also an appreciable reduction in the death rate from fever. The economic conditions were satisfactory throughout the decade. Crops were satisfactory in all years except in 1923 when crops of the Danapur subdivision were damaged by a severe flood. There was also increase in the number of immigrants and though separate immigration figures for the district are not available, there are reasons to believe that there was considerable decrease compared with the earlier decade. The 1931 census disclosed an increase of 17.1 per cent in the population of the district. The largest increase (33 per cent) occurred in Patna City but there was no revenue thana in which the increase in population was less than 10 per cent over the 1921 total. In the next decade (1931—40), public health conditions were even better than during 1921—30. Plague had disappeared completely. There were mild epidemics of cholera in 1930 and 1934 and a further fall in the fever death rate. The *bhadai* harvest was deficient in 1934 and other crops were damaged due to floods in some parts of the district in 1936, 1937 and 1938. On the whole, however, economic conditions were satisfactory throughout the decade. The 1941 census showed an increase of 16.1 per cent over the 1931 total, there being large increase in all revenue thanas except Mokameh which had suffered from floods, almost year after year. In the decade (1941—50), cholera appeared in epidemic form in 1944, 1945, 1947 and 1948 and was also present in other years, but the mortality caused was not large. There were fewer deaths from small-pox and fever than in the earlier decade. Except in 1950 when all principal crops suffered due to want of rain during September to

December, crops were normal or better than normal in the remaining years. The 1951 census has revealed an increase of 17.9 per cent in the population\*.

The greatest increase in population has occurred in the Patna urban areas, and Phulwari and Maner thanas, but the following statement shows substantial increase in all the remaining thanas, except Mokameh where a very extensive area remains submerged under water for several months in the year :—

| District. | Population, Percentage, |          | Variation | Density, |
|-----------|-------------------------|----------|-----------|----------|
|           | 1951.                   | 1941—51. | 1931—41.  | 1951.    |
| Patna     | 2,528,272               | 17.9     | 16.1      | 1,195    |

The rate of growth during the last decade (1951—61) was almost at par with the growth rates during each of the previous three decades. The rate of growth at 16.67 per cent during the last decade is considerably lower than the State average of 19.77 per cent. Except Saran, Santhal Parganas and Ranchi, the growth rate in Patna in the last decade is the lowest among the districts of Bihar\*\*.

One of the factors having an important bearing on the growth of population in the Patna district is migration which is dependent upon general economic conditions prevailing in the district and outside. The district of Patna with the State capital in it has always attracted large number of people from other parts of the State as well as outside. In 1951, the number of immigrants to Patna from other districts of the State outnumbered the emigrants from Patna to other districts of the State by 57,428. This difference was reduced to 50,728 only in 1961. This may be one of the reasons for relatively lower rate of population growth in Patna district during the last decade†.

Over a period of 60 years, the net variation of population in the district has been 13,25,515, i.e., the population has tended to double.

\*Census of India, 1951, Vol. V, Bihar, Part I, Report 1956, p. 3.

\*\*District Census Handbook, Patna (1966), pp. XV-XVI.

†Ibid, pp. XV-XVI.

*Total population subdivisionwise according to 1961 Census\*.*

|                            | Total.   | Males.   | Females. |
|----------------------------|----------|----------|----------|
| Patna City subdivision ..  | 1,88,499 | 99,956   | 88,543   |
| Patna Sadar subdivision .. | 5,61,901 | 3,03,257 | 2,58,644 |
| Danapur subdivision ..     | 6,15,081 | 3,12,065 | 3,03,016 |
| Barh subdivision ..        | 6,06,120 | 3,09,718 | 2,96,402 |
| Bihar subdivision ..       | 9,78,145 | 4,97,691 | 4,80,454 |

During the decade 1951—61, the Bihar subdivision has shown an increase of 1,43,755 persons while the other four subdivisions, viz., Sadar, Danapur, Barh and Patna City recorded an increase of 95,451, 81,529, 74,110 and 26,629 persons respectively\*\*.

#### RURAL AND URBAN POPULATION ACCORDING TO 1961 CENSUS†.

According to 1961 census there were 2,335 inhabited and 199 uninhabited villages and 10 towns in the district. The number of occupied residential houses was 3,98,665. The rural and urban population was 23,55,850 (11,95,162 males and 11,60,688 females) and 5,93,896 (3,27,525 males and 2,66,371 females) respectively. The rural-urban ratio comes to about 4:1. The population of towns‡ was: Patna (3,64,594 persons), Dinapur Nizamat (35,159 persons), Khagaul (20,549 persons), Danapur Cantonment (15,058 persons), Fatwa Town (11,823 persons), Barh (18,808 persons), Bakhtiarpur Town (4,543 persons), Mokameh (35,743 persons), Bihar (78,581 persons) and Rajgir (9,033 persons).

#### *Urban Population.*

Patna district has an urban population of 5,93,896 comprising 20.13 per cent of the district population. The corresponding proportion for the State is 8.43 per cent, and for the Country 17.97 per cent. Thus Patna is ahead of both the State and the country in the matter of urbanisation. In Bihar, only two other districts, viz., Dhanbad and Singhbhum, have higher proportions of urban population (25.02 per cent and 21.50 per cent respectively) than Patna§.

\*Census of India, 1961. Vol. IV, Bihar, Part II-A (1963), pp. 374, 380 and 386.

\*\*District Census Handbook, Patna (1961), pp. XVI-XVII.

†Census of India, 1961, Vol. IV, Bihar, Part II-A, General Population Tables, p. 24.

‡District Census Handbook, Patna (1961), pp. XIX-XX.

§Ibid, p. XIX.

The increase in urban population in 1961 census is due to a spurt of small-scale industries mainly in and about Patna as also in the *mofassil* and removing of the families of many ex-landlords to the towns after the abolition of zamindari. The towns of Bakhtiarpur and Danapur Railway Colony are newer additions to those existing at the 1951 census. The expansion of communications developed the trade centres which received more population. Many of the block headquarters such as Bihta (5,495), Maner including Sarai Maner (5,525), Hilsa (6,881), Islampur (8,588), Masaurhi Buzurg (7,494) and Phulwari (12,262) are developed into townships\*, while the expansion of the administrative departments owing to the Five-Year Plans increased the population of the subdivisional and district headquarters. The highest incidence of urbanisation of Patna was followed by Bihar, Mokameh, Danapur Nizamat, Khagaul, Barh, Danapur Cantonment, Fatwa town, Rajgir and Bakhtiarpur town\*\*. Patna being the headquarters of the State has many industries, cottage and small-scale, and a large number of educational institutions, all of them being crowded. The Secretariat, the High Court, the lower courts, a large number of divisional and district offices of administrative departments and private firms have had their expansions. The same trends are also found in respect of the subdivisional headquarters. The development of small-scale industries along Patna-Ranchi Road (i.e., Patna by-pass road) and Patna-Arrah Road has naturally led to greater expansion of the urban areas, which have extended far south of the by-pass bundh to Kankarbagh.

### *Rural Population.*

Rural population has also had an enormous increase. The growth of population is quite high in all the Revenue thanas. 79.87 per cent of the population of the Patna district is rural. The proportion of rural population in this district is much lower than the corresponding proportion in the State (91.57)†.

The table below shows the total population of the Revenue thanas in Patna district according to 1961‡:—

| Name of the Revenue thana.      | Total population. |
|---------------------------------|-------------------|
| <i>Patna Sadar subdivision—</i> |                   |
| (1) Patna City (part) ..        | 99,048            |
| (2) Phulwari ..                 | 2,44,321          |
| (3) Masaurhi Buzurg ..          | 2,17,226          |
| (4) Hilsa (part) ..             | 1,306             |

\*They have not been given the status of town in the census (1961) mainly because 3/4th of their actual population was not found engaged in non-agricultural pursuits for livelihood.

\*\*Census of India, 1961, Vol. IV, Bihar, Part II-A, General Population Tables, pp. 24—26.

†District Census Handbook, Patna (1961), p. XVII.

‡Census of India, 1961, Vol. IV, Bihar, Part II-A, pp. 82—84.

| Name of the Revenue thana.     |    |    | Total population. |
|--------------------------------|----|----|-------------------|
| <i>Patna City subdivision—</i> |    |    |                   |
| (1) Patna City (part)          | .. | .. | 1,88,499          |
| <i>Danapur subdivision—</i>    |    |    |                   |
| (1) Maner                      | .. | .. | 1,54,681          |
| (2) Danapur                    | .. | .. | 1,32,566          |
| (3) Bikram                     | .. | .. | 3,27,834          |
| <i>Barh subdivision—</i>       |    |    |                   |
| (1) Fatwa                      | .. | .. | 1,24,582          |
| (2) Barh                       | .. | .. | 3,26,117          |
| (3) Mokameh                    | .. | .. | 1,55,421          |
| <i>Bihar subdivision—</i>      |    |    |                   |
| (1) Bihar                      | .. | .. | 5,75,086          |
| (2) Hilsa (part)               | .. | .. | 2,81,522          |
| (3) Islampur                   | .. | .. | 1,21,537          |

## DENSITY OF POPULATION.

From 1921 onward there has been a steady rise in the density of population.

The comparative density of the population of the Patna district and that of the State of Bihar since 1921 are given below \*:

| Name of the State and district. |    |    | Density |       |       |       |         |
|---------------------------------|----|----|---------|-------|-------|-------|---------|
|                                 |    |    | 1921.   | 1931. | 1941. | 1951. | 1961**. |
| Bihar                           | .. | .. | 415     | 463   | 519   | 572   | 694     |
| Patna                           | .. | .. | 729     | 853   | 991   | 1,168 | 1,386   |

With an average density of 1,386 persons per square mile, Patna is the most densely populated district in the State. Its density is almost double of the State average (694 per square mile) and about four times the all-India average (358 per square mile). There are only 7 districts in India having higher density of population than Patna†.

\*Census of India, 1961, Vol. V, Bihar, Part I—Report P. IV of the Subsidiary Tables.

\*\*Census of India, 1961, Vol. IV, Bihar, Part II-A, p. 24.

†Of them, four districts are in Kerala (Alleppey, Trivandrum, Ernakulam and Trichur). two in West Bengal (Howrah and Hoogly) and one in Madras (Kanya Kumari).

Danapur is the most densely populated subdivision (1,368 per square mile) in the district. It is followed by Patna City\* (1,264), Patna Sadar (1,261), Bihar (1,234) and Barh (1,050).

No Anchal in the district has lower density of population than the State average (694). The Patna Rural Anchal (which includes the urban population of Patna Municipal Corporation) has the highest density of population (7,255 per square mile). The Danapur-cum-Khagaul (2,544) and Bihar (2,270) Anchals follow next in order of density. It may be noted that these two Anchals also include urban areas. Besides these, as many as nine Anchals in the district have density varying between 1,250 and 1,500 persons per square mile. These are : Phulwari, Barh, Rahui, Noorsarai, Bihta, Naubatpur, Asthawan, Fatwa and Hilsa. Ten others have density between 1,000—1,250. There are only six Anchals in the district having density less than 1,000 per square mile. These are : Harnaut (992), Islampur (959), Mokameh (883), Rajgir (878), Pandarakh (840) and Sarmera (770). Of them, Pandarakh, Mokameh and Sarmera lie in *tal* area and Rajgir contains forests and hills\*\* which account for their respective lower density.

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\*Excluding the Patna Municipal Corporation area.

\*\**District Census Handbook. Patna* (1961), pp. XIII-XIV.

# **EMIGRATION AND IMMIGRATION\*.**

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The distribution of population of the Patna District in 1961, enumerated on the basis of places of birth is given below :—

## **DISTRIBUTION OF POPULATION IN PATNA DISTRICT BY THEIR BIRTH PLACE, 1961.**

(Figures within brackets indicate percentage.)

| Birth Place. .                                                       | Total                |                      |                    | Rural.               |                      |                    | Urban.             |                    |                    |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------|----------------------|--------------------|----------------------|----------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
|                                                                      | Persons.             | Males.               | Females.           | Persons.             | Males.               | Females.           | Persons.           | Males.             | Females.           |
| Total population .. ..                                               | 2,949,746<br>(100)   | 1,522,687<br>(100)   | 1,427,059<br>(100) | 2,355,850<br>(100)   | 1,195,162<br>(100)   | 1,160,688<br>(100) | 593,896<br>(100)   | 327,525<br>(100)   | 266,371<br>(100)   |
| Born—                                                                |                      |                      |                    |                      |                      |                    |                    |                    |                    |
| (i) At the place of their enumeration.                               | 2,067,276<br>(70.08) | 1,299,501<br>(85.34) | 767,775<br>(53.80) | 1,701,425<br>(72.22) | 1,089,945<br>(91.20) | 611,480<br>(52.68) | 365,851<br>(61.60) | 209,556<br>(63.98) | 156,295<br>(58.68) |
| (ii) Elsewhere in Patna district                                     | 620,308<br>(21.03)   | 122,273<br>(8.03)    | 498,035<br>(34.90) | 520,329<br>(22.09)   | 77,646<br>(6.50)     | 442,683<br>(38.14) | 99,979<br>(16.84)  | 44,627<br>(13.63)  | 55,352<br>(20.78)  |
| (iii) In other districts of Bihar                                    | 2,2,970<br>(7.56)    | 79,450<br>(5.22)     | 143,520<br>(10.06) | 126,501<br>(5.37)    | 23,764<br>(1.99)     | 102,737<br>(8.85)  | 96,469<br>(16.24)  | 55,636<br>(17.00)  | 40,783<br>(15.31)  |
| (iv) In other States of India (includes birth-place unclassifiable). | 32,107<br>(1.09)     | 17,437<br>(1.15)     | 14,670<br>(1.03)   | 6,685<br>(0.28)      | 3,501<br>(0.29)      | 3,184<br>(0.28)    | 25,422<br>(4.28)   | 13,936<br>(4.25)   | 11,486<br>(4.31)   |
| (v) Outside India ..                                                 | 7,085<br>(0.24)      | 4,026<br>(0.26)      | 3,059<br>(0.21)    | 910<br>(0.04)        | 306<br>(0.02)        | 604<br>(0.05)      | 6,175<br>(1.04)    | 3,720<br>(1.14)    | 2,455<br>(0.92)    |

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\*Non-migrants are persons who were born at the places of their enumeration and migrants are those who were born at places other than those of their enumeration.

See, *District Census Handbook, Patna* (1961), pp. XXII—XXV.

It may be of interest to ascertain the extent of immigration to, and migration from the Patna district in relation to other districts of Bihar. The statement below gives the number and distribution per 1,000 of each separately for males and females—

NUMBER OF IMMIGRANTS TO, AND EMIGRANTS FROM, PATNA DISTRICT  
TO OTHER DISTRICTS OF BIHAR, 1961.

(Figures within brackets give the distribution per 1,000.)

| District. | Males. | Females. | District. | Males. | Females. |
|-----------|--------|----------|-----------|--------|----------|
|-----------|--------|----------|-----------|--------|----------|

|                           |  |  |  |  |  |                          |  |  |  |  |  |
|---------------------------|--|--|--|--|--|--------------------------|--|--|--|--|--|
| Immigrants to Patna from— |  |  |  |  |  | Emigrants from Patna to— |  |  |  |  |  |
|---------------------------|--|--|--|--|--|--------------------------|--|--|--|--|--|

|                 |         |         |                 |         |         |
|-----------------|---------|---------|-----------------|---------|---------|
| Total           | 79,450  | 143,520 | Total           | 69,712  | 112,530 |
| ..              | (1,000) | (1,000) | ..              | (1,000) | (1,000) |
| Gaya            | 18,940  | 56,382  | Gaya            | 10,596  | 30,869  |
| ..              | (238)   | (393)   | ..              | (177)   | (274)   |
| Shahabad        | 12,148  | 18,503  | Shahabad        | 5,176   | 17,832  |
| ..              | (153)   | (129)   | ..              | (87)    | (159)   |
| Saran           | 9,724   | 11,990  | Saran           | 1,855   | 6,389   |
| ..              | (122)   | (84)    | ..              | (31)    | (57)    |
| Champaran       | 1,939   | 1,580   | Champaran       | 785     | 769     |
| ..              | (25)    | (11)    | ..              | (13)    | (7)     |
| Muzaffarpur     | 12,891  | 11,182  | Muzaffarpur     | 2,035   | 7,013   |
| ..              | (162)   | (78)    | ..              | (44)    | (62)    |
| Darbhanga       | 7,576   | 5,774   | Darbhanga       | 2,129   | 5,232   |
| ..              | (95)    | (40)    | ..              | (36)    | (47)    |
| Monghyr         | 8,967   | 30,925  | Monghyr         | 7,437   | 26,047  |
| ..              | (113)   | (215)   | ..              | (125)   | (232)   |
| Bhagalpur       | 2,204   | 1,940   | Bhagalpur       | 2,144   | 2,181   |
| ..              | (28)    | (13)    | ..              | (36)    | (19)    |
| Saharsa         | 445     | 233     | Saharsa         | 1,237   | 826     |
| ..              | (6)     | (2)     | ..              | (21)    | (7)     |
| Purnea          | 730     | 569     | Purnea          | 2,316   | 1,580   |
| ..              | (9)     | (4)     | ..              | (39)    | (14)    |
| Santal Parganas | 846     | 817     | Santal Parganas | 2,407   | 1,535   |
| ..              | (11)    | (6)     | ..              | (40)    | (14)    |
| Palamau         | 426     | 373     | Palamau         | 1,142   | 566     |
| ..              | (5)     | (3)     | ..              | (19)    | (5)     |
| Hazaribagh      | 682     | 1,296   | Hazaribagh      | 3,926   | 2,524   |
| ..              | (9)     | (9)     | ..              | (66)    | (22)    |
| Ranchi          | 1,294   | 1,156   | Ranchi          | 3,130   | 2,014   |
| ..              | (16)    | (8)     | ..              | (52)    | (18)    |
| Dhanbad         | 298     | 445     | Dhanbad         | 7,610   | 4,067   |
| ..              | (4)     | (3)     | ..              | (127)   | (36)    |
| Singhbhum       | 340     | 355     | Singhbhum       | 5,187   | 3,086   |
| ..              | (4)     | (2)     | ..              | (87)    | (27)    |

The six adjoining districts (Gaya, Shahabad, Saran, Muzaffarpur Darbhanga and Monghyr) account for 93.9 per cent of female and 88.3 per cent of male immigration to the Patna district. So far emigration from Patna is concerned, Gaya, Monghyr, Shahabad and Dhanbad districts provide the main outlet. The mining and industrial district of Dhanbad attracts a large number of males from this district for economic reasons.

As for influx from other States of India, Uttar Pradesh contributes the largest number (M—6,979, F—4,980) followed by West Bengal (M—4,423, F—5,016), Punjab (M—1,890, F—1,227), Rajasthan (M—1,532, F—612), Kerala (M—168, F—399), Gujarat (M—280, F—222), Madras (M—267, F—227), Delhi (M—215, F—254), Assam (M—217, F—167), Orissa (M—199, F—154), Madhya Pradesh (M—138, F—187), Maharashtra (M—126, F—167), Andhra Pradesh (M—101, F—70), Jammu and Kashmir (M—89, F—56) and Mysore (M—69, F—74). The immigrants from other States and Union Territories have almost insignificant number\*.

Among the immigrants to this district from other countries in 1961, Pakistan comes first having sent 5,288 immigrants (M—2,779, F—2,509), followed by Nepal with 1,461 immigrants (M—1,032, F—429). These two countries taken together account for 95.26 per cent of the total immigrants (7,085)\*\*.

#### LANGUAGE.

The vernacular current over the whole district is the dialect known as Magahi or Magadhi. It is spoken in the country roughly corresponding to the present districts of Patna and Gaya, northern Hazaribagh, north-eastern portion of Palamau, and south-western portion of Monghyr. The dialect of the Patna district is practically the same as that of Gaya but not so pure, being infected on the one hand by the Maithili spoken north of the Ganga, and on the other by the Muhammadan elements of the city, from which it has borrowed several Urdu idioms†.

The statement below shows the distribution of major mother-tongues (having more than 1,000 speakers) in the district giving figures separately

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\*Similar information in respect of emigrants from Patna district to other States not available.

\*\*M—Males. F—Females.

†Patna District Gazetteer (1924), p. 50.

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for rural and urban areas. The mother-tongues have been arranged in descending order of their numerical importance\*.

## SPEAKERS OF MAJOR MOTHER-TONGUES IN PATNA DISTRICT, 1961.

(Figures within brackets indicate the number of speakers per 1,000.)

| Language. | Total. | Percentage of each language. |        |
|-----------|--------|------------------------------|--------|
|           |        | Rural.                       | Urban. |

|               |    |              |              |
|---------------|----|--------------|--------------|
| All languages | .. | 2,949,746    | 2,355,850    |
| Hindi         | .. | 1,807,974    | 1,469,474    |
|               | .. | (633)        | (624)        |
| Magahi        | .. | 789,213      | 737,520      |
|               | .. | (268)        | (313)        |
| Urdu          | .. | 195,453      | 96,697       |
|               | .. | (66)         | (41)         |
| Bhojpuri      | .. | 65,187       | 47,101       |
|               | .. | (19)         | (20)         |
| Bengali       | .. | 18,975       | 824          |
|               | .. | (6)          | (30)         |
| Maithili      | .. | 7,954        | 1,766        |
|               | .. | (3)          | (1)          |
| Punjabi       | .. | 6,657        | 519          |
|               | .. | (2)          | (9)          |
| English       | .. | 1,715        | 133          |
|               | .. | (1)          | (3)          |
| Nepali        | .. | 1,417        | 234          |
|               | .. | (Negligible) | (Negligible) |
| Others        | .. | 6,201        | 1,583        |
|               | .. | (2)          | (8)          |

Hindi has been returned as the mother-tongue of 63.3 per cent of the population. Magahi is spoken by 26.8 per cent and Urdu by 6.6 per cent. The three taken together account for 96.7 per cent of the district population\*\*.

\* District Census Handbook, Patna (1961), p. XXXIV.

\*\* Ibid, p. XXXV.

Among other important languages or dialects in the district, Bhojpuri was returned by 55,187, Bengali by 18,975, Maithili by 7,954, Punjabi by 5,657, English by 1,715 and Nepali by 1,417. The speakers of Bengali, Maithili, Punjabi, English and Nepali were mostly enumerated in urban areas while those of Bhojpuri in rural areas of the district. This is explained by the fact that the speakers of the former are engaged in trades and professions in towns, while that of Bhojpuri are numerically strong in the region adjacent to the river Sone, which forms the physical boundary between Patna and Shahabad.

### RELIGION\*.

The following table shows the number and per cent distribution of population by religion in total, rural and urban areas of the district :—

#### DISTRIBUTION OF POPULATION BY RELIGION IN PATNA DISTRICT, 1961.

(Figures within brackets indicate percentage.)

| Religion.        | Number of followers. |                      |                    | Per cent of each religion in— |        |
|------------------|----------------------|----------------------|--------------------|-------------------------------|--------|
|                  | Total.               | Rural.               | Urban.             | Rural.                        | Urban. |
| All religions .. | 2,949,746<br>(100)   | 2,355,850<br>(100)   | 593,896<br>(100)   | ..                            | ..     |
| Hindus ..        | 2,727,211<br>(92.46) | 2,241,766<br>(95.16) | 485,445<br>(81.74) | 82.20                         | 17.80  |
| Muslims ..       | 213,031<br>(7.22)    | 112,063<br>(4.76)    | 100,968<br>(17.00) | 52.60                         | 47.40  |
| Sikhs ..         | 4,096<br>(0.14)      | 359<br>(0.02)        | 3,737<br>(0.63)    | 8.76                          | 91.24  |
| Christians ..    | 3,676<br>(0.12)      | 1,011<br>(0.04)      | 2,665<br>(0.45)    | 27.50                         | 72.50  |
| Jains ..         | 932<br>(0.03)        | 225<br>(0.01)        | 707<br>(0.12)      | 24.14                         | 75.86  |
| Buddhists ..     | 265<br>(0.01)        | 91<br>(Negligible)   | 174<br>(0.03)      | 34.34                         | 65.66  |
| Others ..        | 535<br>(0.02)        | 335<br>(0.01)        | 200<br>(0.03)      | 62.62                         | 37.38  |

\*District Census Handbook, Patna, 1961, p. XXXV.

The Hindus comprise 92.46 per cent of the district population and the Muslims 7.22 per cent. Other religious groups together constitute a mere 0.32 per cent.

The rural-urban break-up indicates that the less numerous communities such as, Sikhs, Christians, Jains, and Buddhists flourish mainly in urban areas. The Hindus and the Muslims are the only two communities found mostly in rural areas, the latter being comparatively more urbanised.

#### SCHEDULED CASTES AND SCHEDULED TRIBES\*.

The total population of Scheduled Castes in Patna district was 474,501 according to 1961 Census. They comprised 16.09 per cent or a little less than one-sixth of the district population.

In the State as a whole, the Scheduled Castes comprise 14.00 per cent of the total population. Patna ranks sixth among the districts of Bihar in the population of Scheduled Castes. The districts having higher proportions are : Palamau (25.93 per cent), Gaya (24.54 per cent) and Saharsa (17.18 per cent).

The statement below gives the population of individual Scheduled Castes having more than 1,000 persons in the district (1961) :

| Name of Scheduled Castes.           | Population,<br>1961. | Number per 1,000 of—                                              |                                                                                  |
|-------------------------------------|----------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                                     |                      | Total<br>Scheduled<br>Castes<br>population<br>in the<br>district. | Total<br>population of<br>the respective<br>Scheduled<br>Castes<br>in the State. |
| 1. Dusadh including Dhari or Dharhi | 181,793              | 383                                                               | 105                                                                              |
| 2. Chamar or Mochi .. ..            | 114,157              | 241                                                               | 60                                                                               |
| 3. Mushar .. ..                     | 79,323               | 167                                                               | 79                                                                               |
| 4. Pasi .. ..                       | 59,334               | 125                                                               | 228                                                                              |
| 5. Dhobi .. ..                      | 18,733               | 39                                                                | 56                                                                               |
| 6. Dom or Dhangad .. ..             | 6,180                | 13                                                                | 39                                                                               |
| 7. Rajwar .. ..                     | 4,723                | 10                                                                | 30                                                                               |
| 8. Hari, Mehtar or Bhangi ..        | 4,305                | 9                                                                 | 48                                                                               |
| 9. Nat .. ..                        | 2,199                | 5                                                                 | 181                                                                              |
| TOTAL .. ..                         | 470,747              | 992                                                               | 84                                                                               |

\* *District Census Handbook, Patna* (1961), pp. XXXVI-XXXVII.

The above nine castes comprise 99.2 per cent of the total population of the Scheduled Castes in the district and 8.4 per cent of their population in the State. Out of every 100 members of Scheduled Castes in the district 38 are Dusadhs (including Dhari or Dharhi) and 24 Chamar (or Mochi). It may be noted that out of every\* four Pasis in the State one hails from the Patna district, the corresponding proportion among the Nats being one out of every six.

In 1961 Patna had 1,511 persons returned as members of the Scheduled Tribes. This district lies outside the tribal belt and the small number returned in the district evidently relates to immigrants.

Among individual tribes, the Oraons with a population of 446 are the most numerous in the district. The Gonds come next with a population of 328 only. Other tribes are: Mundas (124), Hos (115) and Santals (90). The remaining tribes have populations below 15 in each case. None of the tribes have any particular habitation.

#### CASTES.

There has been no castewise enumeration in the censuses of 1951 and 1961. Probably this was not done with a view to discourage caste-consciousness; but the hold of the caste on Indian life is so deep that for various academic purposes castewise figures are interesting study, particularly because of the impact of modern trends of education and industrialisation on the rigours of the caste system. It is also interesting to trace the trends of changes in occupations which have followed castes and *vice versa*.† The position of caste in the present urbanisation and industrialisation of the district is also an interesting study for which castewise figures in the towns are of interest. Castes have certainly not become extinct from the district and still continue to be a strong social and political force. The traditional division of occupations or functions according to caste has, however, been disintegrating. A potter's son or a cobbler's son may not usually follow the traditional caste-function. Untouchability is losing its hold more due to social education than law. However, its liquidation has been a very slow process. In political ambit caste has played an ugly role and led to social unrest. This trend has been noticed in the General Elections of 1957, 1962 and 1967.

The last castewise enumeration was done in 1931 census\*\*. A brief note on the principal castes will be of interest to show the particular occupational or functional role which some of these castes still play.

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\*Mainly because of the abundance of Palm trees and the association of this community with toddy business.

\*\*In 1941 census, owing to war exigency this along with the compilation of some other tables were omitted.

*Principal Castes.*

The most numerous Hindu castes are Ahirs or Goalas, Kurmis, Babhanas, Dusadhs, Kahars, Koiris, Rajputs, Chamars and Telis. Next in numerical strength are Barhis, Brahamans, Dhanuks, Hajjams, Kandus, Musahars, Pasis and Kayasths. Among the Muhammadans, Sheikhs and Jolahas are most strongly represented.

*Goalas.*—The Goalas or Ahirs are the most numerous caste in the district. They are industrious and thrifty. Their women folk are also economic assets. They look after domestic dairy and also go about selling milk, butter, *ghee* and cowdung cakes. This community is generally cultivators and cattle-breeders, the poorer ones being farm labourers.

On the 16th *Kartik*, the day after the *Diwali*, they observe a festival called *Gaidarh* or *Sohrai*. On the *Diwali* night rice is boiled in all the milk left in the house, and the mixture, called *Khir*, is then offered to *Basawan*. All the cattle are left without food, and next morning their horns are painted red, and red spots are daubed on their bodies. They are then turned into a field in which a pig is kept with its feet tied together and the cattle are instigated to attack the poor creature until it has been trampled or gored to death.

*Kurmis.*—Next to Goalas the Kurmis are the largest caste. They are almost entirely employed in cultivation, the poorer ones being farm labourers. Some also take to service, a few are *thikadars*, and in the towns a few are money-lenders. As cultivators, they confine themselves to the staple crops as a rule, and do not breed cattle. They are apt to engage in disputes about the possession of crops and land.

As regards their religious observances, Hanuman and Kali are favourite deities. They also worship the Muhammadan Panch-Pir. In cases of illness exorcism is regularly practised, *ojhas* or wizards being called in to expel the spirits possessing a man, which are supposed to be cast out by the superior strength of the *ojhas* familiar spirit; when cast out they are imprisoned in a small bamboo tube or earthen pot, which is burnt or buried. The *Churail*, or disembodied spirit of a woman who has died in child-birth, is particularly feared. To pacify her needles are driven into the ground; and when a woman dies in child-birth, her feet are pierced with needles, and sand and *urid* are thrown on her body to prevent her haunting her family. One spirit, called Bandi Mai, furnishes an exception to the general rule, in that she is regarded as benevolent; the Kurmis also worship Karta, a spirit with no image or visible representation and bearing a name which seems to show that he is intended to represent the creator of the universe.\* However, with the spread of education, superstitions are gradually disappearing.

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\* *Patna District Gazetteer* (1924), pp. 52-53.

*Babhans*.—The Babhans (i.e. Bhumi-har Brahmans) are big cultivators of this district. It is said that Babhan is merely the Prakrit form of Brahman, and that the word is often found in Asoka's edicts. It has, therefore, been conjectured that those now known as Babhans remained Buddhists after the Brahmans around them had reverted to Hinduism and so the Pali name continued to be applied to them; while the synonym *Bhuinhar* or *Bhumiharaka* is explained as referring to their having seized the lands attached to the old Buddhist monasteries. This theory is borne out by the Brahmanical titles which are used along with the Rajput titles of Singh, Rai and Thakur, and by the fact that in this State they are practically confined to the area covered by the ancient kingdom of Magadha, which long remained the centre of Buddhism.\*

*Dusadhs*.—The Dusadhs are a backward caste, who work as cultivators and practically monopolise the duties of road and village watchmen, *goraits* and *chaukidars*. Those who cannot find such employment and have no land, work as farm labourers, ploughmen, etc. They are also employed as cooks. They appear to have traces of aboriginal descent. The main features of their worship are the sacrifice of pigs and libations of liquor, and their ceremonies generally terminate in a drunken orgy and feast on swine's flesh.

The gods mostly worshipped by them are Rahu, Salais, Sokha and Goraiya. The worship of Rahu takes place twice every year on *Pus Sankranti* day and on *Chaiti Satuni* day, and is held with great ceremony on the occasion of a marriage. Two bamboo posts are erected with two swords placed edge upwards across them, thus forming a small ladder. The Dusadh who officiates, and is called the Bhagat, stands on the rungs formed by the swords, chanting some incantations and holding two canes bent in the form of a bow, while some balls of flour are boiled in milk close by; these, when ready, are offered to Rahu. The next ceremony consists of three persons walking over the red-hot embers of a fire burnt in a shallow pit, including the Bhagat and the man on whose behalf the ceremony takes place\*\*. This is now almost archaic.

*Kahars*.—The Kahars are cultivators and are also largely employed as *palki*-bearers and general labourers. A large number of them are personal servants, a capacity in which they excel. Like other backward castes, they worship Bandi, Sokha, Ram Thakur, Panch Pir and Manus Deva, the deity last named is the defined spirit of a dead man, who is propitiated with offerings of goats when a marriage takes place.

\*Patna District Gazetteer (1924), p. 54.

\*\*Ibid., pp. 54-55.

One custom peculiar to this caste is the worship of wolves. This worship is based on a tradition that a wolf once carried off a *Kahar* boy, and on being pursued by his relatives, gave him up. Since then, it is said, wolves have been worshipped by the *Kahars*. On the occasion of a birth or marriage, the *Kahars* hold a feast, and before anything is eaten, some of the food is set aside in a dish and placed in the courtyard. When the feast is over, it is thrown away, and this is regarded as an offering to the wolves. Another legend connects the *Kahars*, and makes them the builders of the great embankment called *Asurenbandh* near *Giriak*\*.

*Koiris*.—The *Koiris* are industrious, peaceful and contended cultivators. In addition to the staple crops, they largely cultivate potatoes and country vegetables. They do not breed cattle or run dairy. A few of them are merchants in towns and usually successful due to their industry.

*Rajputs*.—The *Rajputs*, who are the descendants of *Rajput* soldiers who settled at an early period in the district, are well-to-do cultivators and agricultural *thikadars*; some are money-lenders. Their ancient village communities have in some cases survived to the present day, particularly in the *Barh* subdivision, where we find villages which are composed entirely of *Rajputs*, even down to the *Chaukidars*. Many of them consider themselves superior to the *Babhans*, whose claims to Brahmanical origin are controversial. They have a reputation for straight forward dealings. True to tradition they are largely employed in the police and the army.

*Chamars*.—The *Chamars* work as tanners and labourers. They supply the villagers with leather thongs for their whips and fastenings for their ploughs, repairing the latter when necessary. They also act as village criers and as musicians at ceremonies; their wives are the village midwives. They get grain and crops from their clients at harvest and sometimes have small *jagirs*.

*Telis*.—The *Telis* have a monopoly of making and selling oil, this being the traditional occupation of the caste. A large proportion, however, are grain merchants, and many combine money-lending with their trade.\*\* The *Telis* have a firm belief in evil spirits, and every *Teli*, whether he dies a natural or unnatural death, is believed to become a very powerful and malignant spirit called *Masan*; it requires, it is said, a very expert *ojha* and the strongest spells to cast out a *Masan* from a possessed person. Jugglers often use the skull of a *Teli* as symbol of their art, and thereby invoke the aid of *Masan*.

\* *Patna District Gazetteer* (1924), p. 54.

\*\* Of popular proverb "*Sara hua Teli, Phirbhi nau sau adhehi*" (i.e. even an indigent *Teli* is worth nine hundred and half rupees).

The Telis were formerly a very powerful clan in Bihar, and Telarha, or as it was formerly called Tailadhaka, is said to have been a centre of their power. The great doorway at the Buddhist monastery of Nalanda was set up by one Baladitya, "chief among the wise man of the Tailadha clan"; it was a Teli who set up the colossal image of Budha there, which is known as the Teli Bhandar, and another set up a great Buddhist statue at Tetrawan. Nearly the whole trade of the district is in their hands, and a popular saying is "*Turk, Teli, tar in tinon Bihar*," i.e., Bihar is made up of Muhammadans, Telis and toddy-palms.

*Brahmans.*—Till the early decades of the present century the Brahmans were averse to the study of English and thus deprived themselves of the employment opportunity in Government offices, for which many were intellectually fitted. The most numerous divisions of Brahmans in this district are the *Sakadwipi* and the *Kanyakubja*. Among the *Sakadwipis* are a few substantial cultivators, but as a class, they are *Vaidyas* and priests of the people. The *Kanyakubjas* are mostly teachers of Sanskrit and Hindi; many are agriculturists; the very poor among them become cooks as any caste can eat food cooked by a Brahman. They are divided in two sections, viz., *Sarwariya* and *Saryupari*, and in general do not act as priests, as they do not accept gifts. The progressive families among them have adjusted themselves to modern times and are taking positions in various professions as also in public service. The Maithil Brahmans have also settled in fair number in the capital, mainly in the post-independence era and they are well represented in professions and public services and have made their mark in cultural life of the metropolis. Irrespective of their classification however, all the Brahmanas are highly individualistic. There is a social taboo against marriages *inter se* among their sects.

*Musahars.*—The Musahars work as labourers, ploughmen, etc. They are very poor, live in wretched huts, and will eat almost any animal.

*Pasis.*—The Pasis are almost entirely occupied in tapping palm-trees and selling toddy (*tari*). Those who cannot find support in this work are labourers. Some have also a little cultivation. It is characteristic of this caste that they make offerings to the east wind in order that they may have a good toddy season.

*Dhanuks.*—The Dhanuks are diggers and excavators, workers on embankments, etc. Locally they are supposed to be descended from Kurmis; but the name shows that they were originally bowmen, and they are probably an offshoot from one of the non-Aryan tribes.

*Kandus.*—The Kandus are the grain parchers of the district. They also sell parched grain, sweetmeats, etc., and some work as labourers.

A feature of their religion is the worship of Ganinath, who has a temple at Nawada (Khusrupur) in the Barh subdivision and is worshipped elsewhere in the family *devataghar*. Like other low castes, they attribute illness to demoniacal possessions; and the usual method of exorcism is to kill a pigeon, and pour some country spirit and a drop of the exorcists, blood on it, while the latter expels the evil spirits by means of incantations. / \

*Hajjams*.—The Hajjams are by profession barbers, being attached to certain families and paid in grain, a not unusual payment being ten seers per adult per annum; sometimes also they have small lands. They are also employed as messengers to take invitations to festivals and ceremonies, and for this they receive payment in money as well as kind. At harvest time they have a recognised claim to a small quantity of grain from each cultivator among their clients, and thus eke out a living in good seasons, though they have no capital to fall back on in times of want. The enterprising ones among them migrate to towns to earn better living in hair-cutting saloons, a few of them setting up their own saloons in partnership.

*Barhis*.—The Barhis are carpenters by profession, and as such form a recognised part of the village community. They make and repair ploughs and other agricultural implements for the villagers. They are paid partly in grain and kind, and are given about a maund of grain a year for each plough they make or mend.

*Kayasths*.—The Kayasths are the writer caste of Bihar. They are employed in all professions and public services and fill up high positions. They have little interest in trade. They have a special festival, the *Dawat Puja*, when they worship their pen and ink (i.e., symbol of prosperity) and observe general holiday.

#### RELIGIOUS BELIEFS OF THE HINDUS.

The largest sections of the community in this district, as elsewhere in the State are Hindus. By and large they are polytheists, though a microscopic section among them, viz., Arya Samaj and Brahmo Samaj are believers in monotheism. The Hindu religion is still ritualistic and the worship of gods is looked upon as the supreme duty of men. Oblation, prayer and the recitation of the sacred hymns are also observed. The leading gods and goddesses are Lakshmi-Narayan, Sita-Ram, Radha-Krishna, Shiva and Parvati, Durga, Saraswati, Sun, Ganesh and Mahavir. All over the district there are a large number of temples, old and new, dedicated to gods, Shiva and Mahavir being most popular. Among the godlings, *Bhairav* is supposed to be the village guardian and watchman and the destroyers of malevolent spirits. The community worship of *Durga*, *Kali* and *Shiva* has a tremendous hold on the masses.

The *peepal* and *bat* trees are ascribed to be possessed of divinities and as such they are also worshipped. Even so may be the case with stones and mounds.

#### RELIGIOUS BELIEFS OF THE MUSLIMS.

Monism is the cardinal principle of Islam and a devout Muslim has no other God but *Allah*, and has his *Rasul* or Messenger, the prophet Mohammad. But saint or *Pir* worship has become a common feature among Muslims. A *Pir's* tomb often becomes a place of pilgrimage. In the Patna district there are several tombs of the Muslim saints where *urs* ceremony is held. The devout Muslims keep awake for the whole night and after the recital of the *maulood*, the *chadar* or the sheet by which the tomb of the *Pir* is covered, is changed. The wahabi sect of the Muslim community do not favour the *urs* worship.

#### CUSTOMS AMONG THE HINDUS.

The orthodox Hindus observe various customs from the conception in womb till death. There are forty *samskars* which should be observed, but now only few are observed strictly.

*Birth.*—During the period of pregnancy the mother is subject to various taboos. In the case of first pregnancy, the woman has to be saved from attacks of evil spirits and she has to observe a number of restraints. During eclipse she is not permitted to cut anything with force and is asked to hold *kus* grass and stone in her hand till the eclipse continues. Bitter and sour food and acid fruits are not to be given to an expectant mother. She is also not to sleep in the courtyard or under a tree. She usually wears amulets to ward off the evil eye.

In rural areas where there are no hospitals to effect delivery a woman on the inception of labour pain lies down in a room which has been swept clean and kept warm, dimly lighted and free from draught. A midwife, generally a *chamain*, is called to attend the expectant mother from the time of delivery of the child to a period of ten or twelve days thereafter. Thorn, old shoes, fire and a sword are kept at the door of the room to ward off the evil spirits. The expectant mother often ties up a herb with a pair of rings round the waist. A brass dish may be beaten to herald the birth of a male child. After delivery the navel chord of the child is cut and ashes and oil are first applied and then the baby is washed. The mother is supposed to follow various taboos for the first twelve or twenty days.

A ceremony called *chhathihar* is observed on the sixth day of the child-birth with a good deal of rejoicing. *Puja* is performed by a Pandit or priest and food is offered to relatives and friends. Presents are given to the mother and child by the elders. A major custom is observed if the child is born during a particular period known as *sataisa* which is supposed to be inauspicious. If the child is born during the *sataisa nashatra*, the father is not permitted to see the child unless the *sataisa puja* is performed after the lapse of 27 days and sometimes for another 27 days. The naming ceremony or the *namkaran* is generally held on the 12th day of the child-birth, provided the child is not born during the *sataisa* period.

The other major *samskar* is *mundan* or the first shaving of the child. But now in some cases this rite is held simultaneously with the *upanayan* or sacred thread ceremony. *Upanayan* is the ritualistic ceremony of investing the boy with *jajnopavita* (sacred thread). A *mandap* is erected in front of the house decked with plantain trees, mango leaves and green fruits and a pitcher (*kalsa*) is kept full of water and turmeric. Relatives and friends are invited and the sacred thread ceremony is performed after observing various rites. Priests, barbers and other attendants usually receive gifts in the form of cloth, money, corn and even lands. Feasts are given to relatives and friends. Hindu law-givers like Manu and others had sanctioned this rite obligatory only to the Brahmans and the Kshatriyas but now a great laxity is seen as Vaisyas and Harijans also take the sacred thread.

*Marriage.*—The next important *samskar* is the marriage rite which is performed with some pomp. The Hindu *Dharma Sastra* has classified eight types of marriages\*. Marriage is generally settled after examination of horoscopes of both the bridegroom and the bride by an astrologer who predicts whether the stars of both are in harmony. But this practice is slowly falling into disuse among the enlightened people. Cases of love marriage as also inter-caste or even inter-racial marriages are not uncommon\*\*.

Marriage is usually settled by the guardians of the parties, but the consent of the bridegroom or the bride is not ignored. An auspicious day according to the Hindu calendar is fixed for performing marriage. On the stipulated day the bridegroom with a party consisting of relatives and friends visits the house of the father of the bride. At the

\*According to the ancient Hindu Law Brahma, Daiva Arsha and Prajapatya were approved forms while Asura, Gandharva, Rakshasa and Ishachha were unapproved forms. Now the only forms recognised are Brahma (approved) and Asura (unapproved). See : Mulla, D. F., *HINDU LAW* (12th ed.), 1960, P. 60.

\*\*Cf See. The Hindu Marriage Act, 1955 (No. 25 of 1955).

auspicious time the marriage rite is performed by a priest and hymns are uttered to solemnise the marriage. *Saptapadigaman* or going seven steps around the sacred fire is held to be essential. After the performance of some rites, the ritual of *Kanyadan* or giving away of the bride is done by the guardian of the bride which is followed by *kanyapanigrahana* or accepting of the bride by the bridegroom on the utterance of solemn pledges. The rite of marriage usually comes to a close after applying vermillion or *sindurdan* by the bridegroom on the forehead of the bride.

*Funeral rites.*—It is taken to be the religious duty of a son to perform the last rites of the deceased father for his spiritual salvation. The dead body is carried on a bier by persons and is usually cremated on the bank of a river or a tank. The last rites are generally performed by the eldest son of the deceased father and in the case of a mother by the youngest. The dead body of the new born up to the age of five or six years and of the *sanyasi* or ascetic is usually buried. Lepers and persons who die of snake bite or small-pox, are immersed by fastening an earthen pot to the neck.

The person who kindles the fire in the pyre is called the *karta* or the chief mourner and has to observe several restrictions for a period. The main *shradh* is performed on twelfth day of the death of the deceased. *Tarpan* and *pinda* or oblation and ball of rice or cake is offered to the deceased by the *karta* and the family priest utters hymns for the salvation of the soul. *Shradh* is performed according to the social status of the deceased, but an extravagance beyond the means is not unusual. *Shradh* at a later date at Gaya is often performed.

#### CUSTOMS AMONG THE MUSLIMS.

Some of the customs of the Muslims are different from those of the Hindus.

*Birth.*—Muslim women during pregnancy observe like Hindus a number of restrictions. After the birth of a child, the father or any male member present recites the *azan* into the ears of the child. For the first forty days the mother abstains from the regular prayers. The Muslim circumcise their male children before they reach the age of seven or eight years. They also perform the *Bismillah* or *Maktab* ceremony of the child at the age of five by reciting the verses of the holy Quran. This ceremony is supposed to mark the beginning of educational career of the child. On the occasion of this ceremony sweets are distributed to friends and relatives.

*Marriage.*—The marriage customs of the Muslims are simple. Two male witnesses hear the testimony to the celebration of the marriage after taking the consent of the bride. After her consent they declare her intention to the public and then the sermon of the *Khutba-e-nikah* is recited. The bride's father or *wali* gives away the bride in marriage to the bridegroom. On the eve of the departure of the bride to the house of the bridegroom, the *jalya* ceremony is performed. They are made to see each other's face in a mirror and to read the Quran together.

*Death.*—Into the ear of the dying man verses from the holy Quran and Kalma are recited in low voice. The dead body covered with cloth (*kafan*) is placed in a bier (*janaza*) and is carried by men to the graveyard. The last prayer is offered near the graveyard. The dead body is laid in the grave, the head being kept towards the north and the face towards the west to face the Kaba. After the grave is closed the Imam recites verses of the Quran and all present pray for the peace of the soul. On the fortieth day alms are distributed to the poor and a dinner is given to friends and relatives.

#### INTER-CASTE RELATIONS.

The traditional division of *varna* or caste among Hindus is a part of the society, but its vehemence as in the old days has practically died out. Untouchability is now punishable under law. People of different castes now do not hesitate to take food on a common table in restaurants and hotels. Inter-caste dining is common in hotels. Inter-caste marriages also are now tolerated. The development of modern means of communications encouraging frequent movement of people from villages to urban areas and *vice versa*, urbanisation and spread of education in the masses and the uplift of the down-trodden and their appointment to public services have moderated the rigour of the caste system in society, though the shift of the caste to political plane has created imbalance leading to tensions among castes *inter se* which sometimes erupt into violence. Inter-caste relations are also getting new connotations with the change in traditional pattern of occupations. Thus a Chamar or a Dom doing plumbing or sanitary work may have no difficulty in access to a household of a caste Hindu. A Dusadh cook is common in the household of an enlightened Hindu.

#### FESTIVALS.

Festivals form part of the life of the people. Their importance in social life has been recognised both by the Central and the State

Governments which allow a number of holidays in their offices to enable their employees to celebrate them. They have religious origin, and are observed with fast, offerings and prayers by the orthodox. Some also provide occasions for general mirth and rejoicings.

### *Hindu Festivals.*

The important festivals of the Hindus starting from the month of *Chaitra* are—

- (1) *Ramnavami*, (2) *Janmastami*, (3) *Durga Puja*, (4) *Lakshmi Puja (Deepavali)*, (5) *Chhath*, (6) *Kartik Purnima*, (7) *Saraswati Puja*, (8) *Sivaratri*, and (9) *Holi*.

The *Ramnavami* celebrates the birth of Rama, an incarnation of God, who destroyed Ravana, the epitome of dark forces. It is observed on the ninth day of the bright fortnight in the month of *Chaitra*.

The *Janmastami* commemorates on the eighth day of the dark fortnight in the month of *Bhadra*, the birth of Lord Krishna, who destroyed Kamsa, who represented the evil force.

The *Durga Puja* is celebrated in the month of *Aswin*\*. The *Puja* commences on the first day of the bright fortnight and lasts for nine days, the seventh, eighth and ninth day being most important. The *Vijaya* is celebrated on the tenth day. The goddess *Durga* is worshipped as mother\*\*.

She is regarded as supreme saviour of mankind against the dark forces. *Saraswati* (goddess of learning), *Lakshmi* (goddess of fortune), *Kartik* (Commander-in-Chief) and *Ganesh* (harbinger of good omen) are traditionally associated with her.

The *Lakshmi Puja* or *Deepavali* is celebrated on the new moon day of *Kartik* to welcome *Lakshmi* the goddess of fortune. The traders and business classes observe it with great devotion, decorating their houses profusely with light to welcome the goddess.

The *Chhath* is observed on the sixth day of bright fortnight of *Kartik*. It is sun-worship, which has been popular in this district since time immemorial. There are two offerings to sun god, the first in the evening and the other early next morning. People come from remote villages to observe this festival on the banks of the Ganga at Patna.

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\*In Bihar the *Durga Puja* in the month of *Chaitra* is rare.

\*\*In Bengal *Durga* is likened to *Uma* or *Parvati* visiting her parents and staying with them three nights. This is in keeping with the sentiment of Bengalis who welcome their married daughters from their husband's place during the *Puja* festivities.

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Besides, huge congregations assemble around the tanks at villages Bargaon near Nalanda and Ongari about 5 miles south-east to Ekan-garsarai to observe the festival. This festival is also observed by some people in the month of *Chaitra*.

The *Kartik Purnmasi* attaches special virtue to a bath on the confluence of the rivers Ganga and Gandak near Hajipur where the mythological fight between *Gaja* (elephant) and *Grah* (crocodile) is said to have taken place and in course of which Lord Vishnu came to the rescue of *Gaja*. Millions of people take dip in the confluence on that day.

The *Sarswati Puja* is celebrated on the fifth day of the bright fortnight in the month of *Magh*, mainly by educated sections of the community to invoke blessings from the goddess of learning.

The *Sivaratri* is celebrated on the fourteenth day of the dark fortnight in the month of *Phalgun* to commemorate his wedlock with *Parvati*. Lord Siva is a very popular deity both as a symbol of love as well as destruction. There are temples of Siva in most villages in this district. One at Baikatpur, about 20 miles east to Patna attracts large number of devotees.

The *Holi* is celebrated on the full moon day of *Phalgun* to rejoice over the death of *Holika*, sister of *Hiranyakashyapu*, who, at the instigation of her brother, is said to have set fire to herself with *Prahlad* in her lap; but *Prahlad*, a devotee of God escaped unhurt while *Holika* was burnt to ashes. The burning of the *sambat* which resembles funeral pyre is popularly attributed to this episode, namely, victory of virtue over evil forces. The day following is spent on feasts and merry-making by the masses. However, it degenerates into wild revelry by the people who usually indulge in throwing dust and mud (*dhurkhel*), coloured water and greasy matters on others.

The other religious festivals observed in this district are *Ganga Dasahara* for a dip in the holy river Ganga on the tenth day of the bright fortnight in *Jestha*; *Jhulan* observed usually in *Thakurbaris* for a period of ten days in *Sravan*; *Nag-Panchmi* on the fifth day of the bright fortnight in *Sravan* to propitiate the *Nagas* (serpents); *Ganesh Puja*: on the fourth day of the bright fortnight of *Bhadra*; *Anant-Puja*: on the fourteenth day of the bright fortnight of *Bhadra*; *Chitragupta* (or *Dawat Puja*): observed by the *Kayasthas* only on the second day of the bright fortnight of *Kartik* to pay symbolic homage to *Chitragupta*, said to be endowed with celestial powers as ascribe for keeping accounts and from whom they claim their descent; *Devasthan Ekadasi*: on the eleventh day of the bright fortnight of *Kartik*.

The womenfolk observe *Tij* and *Chauth* by keeping fast for the welfare of their husbands.

The festivities connected with new harvests are observed by the peasantry, *Makar Sankranti*, *Satuani* being very popular.

#### *Muslim Festivals.*

The *Muharram* is observed to commemorate the death of Hussain, grandson of the prophet Mohammad, who was killed in the battle of Karbala in Arabia. The *Taziyas* (i. e., replica of funeral shrouds) are taken in procession in the memory of the departed soul. The Shias particularly observe this with great sanctity and pathos. The 40th day after the *Muharram* is known as *Chehlum* when the last rites of the deceased are performed and the poor fed and given gifts.

The *Fatiha-duaz-dahum* commemorates the birth anniversary of prophet Mohammad when life and works of the prophet are highlighted\*.

The *Shabe-Barat* is observed on the night of the fourteenth day of the month of *Shaban* when Muslims read the Quran and visit the tombs of their ancestors to offer prayer.

The *Id* is celebrated on the visibility of the moon after the last day of the *Ramzan*. According to the Quran, *Ramzan* is the month of fasting when there is a religious obligation on every adult Muslim to observe fast during day time for one whole month. On breaking fast every day after sun-set Muslims congregate in some mosque to offer prayer. The *Id* prayers are often held in open places to accommodate large congregations. It is a festival of thanks giving to God and an occasion to promote fellow-feelings among the faithful.

The *Bakrid* is celebrated in the memory of prophet Ibrahim Khalil Ullah who is said to have a vision from God to sacrifice the dearest thing in his possession to Him. The prophet in obedience to God's command, when he was about to sacrifice his only son, Angel Gabriel, under order from God substituted the child with a *dumba* an animal.

#### *Sikh Festivals.*

The most important festivals of the Sikhs are the birth days of Guru Nanak and Guru Govind Singh when processions are taken out and congregational prayers and recitation from the Granth Sahab are held.

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\*The Islamic calendar being based on lunar days, the Muslim festivals rotate throughout the year so that a festival which is held one time in summer may at sometime be held in winter.

*Jain Festivals.*

The Jains celebrate the birth and *Nirvana* anniversaries of their *tirthankaras*, particularly Parashvanath and Mahavira. Their other important festivals are *Paryushan* (the last ten days of *Bhadra*) and *Ashtanlika* (the last eight days of *Kartik*). On these occasions the orthodox among them, fast, worship in their temples and recite or listen to Jain scriptures.

*Buddhist Festivals.*

The principal festival of the Buddhists is the *Buddha-Purnima* on which day the Buddha is believed to have taken his birth and also attained enlightenment as well as *Nirvana*. On these occasions they devout worship in their temples and recite verses from the Pali *Tripitaka*.

*Christian Festivals.*

The Christmas is the most important festival of Christians. It is celebrated on December 24th and 25th to commemorate the birth of Jesus Christ. On Christmas Eve scenes from the nativity of Christ are enacted and cribs usually put up in Churches which people, particularly children flock to see. People attend services, exchange presents and hold festivities.

The Easter is observed on first Sunday after calendar full moon on or after March 21, to commemorate the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

## RELIGIOUS MOVEMENTS.

The history of religion in Patna has a special interest, as this district was the early home, both of Buddhism and of Jainism. A great part of Buddha's life was spent at Rajgir, and there the first great Buddhist Council was held. Several centuries before the commencement of the Christian era, Buddhism had become the religion of the royal house of Magadha and in later days the district was a centre from which Buddhist learning radiated and Buddhist missionaries penetrated to distant parts of Asia. Patna also witnessed the rise and development of Jainism; at Pawapuri its founder Mahavira died; and it was from this district that in the Fourth Century B.C. the Jain order began to spread over India. Buddhism as an active faith has passed away, but there are still traces of its influence in a few popular superstitions; and though Jainism has an insignificant number of adherents in this district, the sacred shrines of the land of its birth still attract pilgrims from all over the country. Patna is also the birth-place of the great Sikh saint and leader Guru Govind Singh who was born here in 1666.

A.D. and one of the most sacred of all spots to his followers\*. This city is again the headquarters of one of the earliest Christian Missions established in 1620 A.D\*\*. Early in the present century it was the centre of the Wahabi movement. But above all these religious movement, Hinduism has dominated as the faith of the great bulk of the people.

### NEW RELIGIOUS MOVEMENTS.

The British administration did not interfere with the religious beliefs of the people. Christianity being the religion of the rulers, it received definite encouragement. From the days of Raja Ram Mohan Roy we find a break with the various orthodox ways which gave rise to new religious movements. Along with the growth of the spirit of nationalism there came quite a few religious saints who preached the older religions in a new form. Raja Ram Mohan Roy who was a great scholar, linguist and a profound nationalist sponsored the Brahmo Samaj. Swami Dayananda Saraswati founded the Arya Samaj. Theosophy was preached by its exponents throughout India and came to be a potent factor in shaping the cultural life of the intelligentsia. The ideas of Sufism had also spread. The Christian Mission spread far and wide and pioneered schools and hospitals along with their evangelical work. These were some of the currents that had their impact on Bihar generally and Patna being the capital of the State received it in full measure. The gospel of Christianity was a new religion but the creed of Arya Samaj†, the Brahmo Samaj‡ or the school of Theosophy§ was a reorientation of Hinduism to suit the progressive times. They gave different interpretations, and it will not be correct to say that they were opposed to the basic ideas of Hinduism. The Sufism was preached mainly at Maner, Phulwarisharif and Biharsarif. The Christianity could not make headway against Hinduism and Islam.

### PROPERTY AND INHERITANCE.

The Hindus are governed by the Banaras School of *Mitakshara* Law, according to which a son may claim partition in ancestral property as soon as he is born. The Bengalis follow *Dayabhag* system of Hindu Law. The traditional Hindu Law has since been modified by the statutory enactments which have conferred liberal rights on females, which were denied to them previously.

\*The tricentenary of Guru Govind Singh's birth was celebrated at Patna during 13th to 19th January 1967 which is estimated to have been attended by over 3 lakh Sikh pilgrims from all over India and abroad.

\*\**Of. Patna District Gazetteer* (1924), p. 73.

†Patna City and Danapur still have a fair number of adherents.

‡The Ram Mohan Roy Seminary and the Brahmo Mandir on Baripath are the existing remnants.

§ The Theosophical Society and Hall, opposite Patna College.

The Muslims, by and large, are governed by *Hanafi* School of Mohammedan Law.

### *Marriage and Morals\*.*

The Hindu marriage is now monogamous\*\*. According to his personal law, a Muslim may take four wives at a time, but on account of economic factors, this practice is much on decline. A Christian is invariably monogamous.

### *Prostitution.*

Prostitution has been in existence in this district as elsewhere in the world since ancient times. The feudal society has been its great patron and encouraged it in the most overt form. The accumulated wealth and leisure in the hands of the Nawabs, Rajas, Zamindars, etc., attracted highly accomplished prostitutes from all over the country to Patna City and some of them came to occupy or own *Pucca* residential houses in the very heart of the town. Gradually quite a big colony of the prostitutes grew up in Patna City. In some families in this district this profession has been hereditary. In this district prostitutes are found even in small towns and till recently they were found even in big villages.

Entertainments by dancing girls in functions like marriages, *tilak*, etc., are still in vogue. Some fifty years back going out in phaetons with one's concubines or a famed dancing girl was not considered improper on the part of a *Rais*.

There are usually two classes among the prostitutes. One claims to be the descendents of the mythological Gandharva famous for dancing and singing. Many belonging to this class are experts in dancing and they are usually engaged to entertain at social functions like marriage. It is not that some of these dancing women do not become concubines of the richer folk but they consider themselves superior to those of the other class which earn their living by sex. In this district except a very few all others earn their livelihood by the latter. The number of these prostitutes was previously fairly large. But now it is on decline due to the disappearance of patrons, i.e., Nawabs and Zamindars and also because of change in the social outlook.

After the enforcement of the Suppression of Immoral Traffic in Women and Girls Act of 1956 in 1960, the prostitutes do not sit openly on their balconies in Patna City. They have now formed a

\*See, *Hindu Marriage Act*, 1955 (No. 25 of 1955).

\*\*See, *Customs (Supra)*.

group called *Nritya Kala Sangh*. A signboard as *Gayika Sangh* has been hung up at many houses. They claim that they have now taken to music and dancing and given up prostitutions. But people still visit their houses for sex purposes. In spite of occasional raids by police in the red light area of the city and the crusades by reformers to reform the prostitutes it will take long before this institution is radically exterminated.

### *Drinking and Gambling.*

The Patna district is not a prohibited area. Both country and foreign liquors are sold openly.

The innumerable number of *tal* and *Khajur* trees in this district have led to a craze for toddy, i. e. (*tari*). The beverage of *Nira*, i. e., unfermented *tal* juice is said to contain medicinal property. The toddy of Bihar town is said to be very tasty. Toddy is poor men's beer and its prohibition will deprive them of a source of joy. The sale of toddy is controlled by the Excise Department but illegal tapping of *tal* trees for toddy is difficult to check.

There has been no proper census of *tal* trees in this district but the number must run to thousands. There are licensed shops to sell toddy both in towns as well as in rural areas where country liquor of different grades is sold. There is a ban on the consumption of country liquor within the premises of the shop. This, however, is mostly followed by breach. The purpose of the ban on the consumption of country liquor within the shop premises is to reduce the consumption of the liquor. This expectation has not been fulfilled. Drinking is on the increase in all the strata of society. The premises and vicinity of a toddy shop is a vast club towards the evening in hot season, where many people, regardless of their high castes, sit together with the rest of the society to enjoy this drink. The sale of foreign liquor is also controlled. There are very few shops in the district for the sale of foreign liquor. The enormous rise in the price of foreign liquor stands as a check to its promiscuous consumption. The use of *Nira* has yet to become popular.

A common offence associated with drinking is gambling which is quite common and fully manifests itself during *Diwali* festival. It is also prevalent in the *melas* of the district. Certain games also could be described as gambling, the most favourite being the play with dices and cards. The card games such as bridge, flush and rummy are popular in modern society also.

### *Dwellings.*

*Rural.*—The impact of economic development, contact with the outside world and availability of building materials like cement, iron rods, etc., have

brought in some changes in the types of houses in the rural areas. The houses of the people of the upper income-group are being built with iron rods, cement, brick, mortar, etc. Reinforced concrete buildings are common. The building materials for houses of the people of lower income-groups still continue to be mud, bamboos, reeds and tiles. The houses of the well-to-do cultivators have *pucca* roofs and some of them have a second storey which is known as *kotha*. Electricity is now available in many villages, but it is not popular yet because of high charges.

In the villages the well-to-do people have their *huts* in their fields. These huts are of mud or brick with verandahs and usually containing a big hall. They serve the purpose of barn, the land in their front being used for keeping harvested crops and threshing. The huts on *diara* lands are very temporary structures on account of submersion during the rains.

There is no sewerage system within the villages, and consequently dirty water accumulates. Cattle tied up in and about the houses cause filth and insanitation. Compost pits are maintained just in front of the houses and naturally lead to the breeding of flies and mosquitoes. There are very few houses in the villages with lavatories.

*Urban.*—Reinforced concrete houses built with iron rods, cement and mortar are becoming common in urban areas. The older *pucca* houses were constructed with mud, lime and mortar. They were mostly ill-ventilated. The modern houses of the higher income-groups are well ventilated, spacious and usually provided with modern conveniences. The houses of poorer sections of the community are small, dull and drab. In all the towns of this district there are slum areas where houses are rather hovels and overcrowded.

Most of the traditional old houses both in the rural as well as urban areas have a separate apartment for ladies. They may have a high gate wide enough to allow an elephant with riders to pass through, on the gate would be two small rooms known as *nakar khana* for locating *shahnai* parties during festivals or marriages. The modern houses have the usual set of living rooms, drawing rooms, bath and lavatories. In some of the old type houses there is a quadrangular open space known as *angan*.

Most of the towns in this district are still rural in character. They have been allowed to develop rather in a lop-sided manner and the housing conditions are far from satisfactory. The growth is hardly controlled by the municipalities and many living areas are growing

without proper roads or sanitary arrangements. Congested bazars, narrow and ill-maintained roads, lanes and slums are their common characteristics. The very fact that the number of lavatories is far less than the number of houses is suggestive. The municipal services for health, sanitation and supply of drinking water are meagre. The district has only one Improvement Trust at Patna.

#### HOUSEHOLD UTENSILS, FURNITURE AND DECORATIONS.

The utensils and furniture of the olden days still continue to be in vogue in rural areas, though the richer people are now gradually taking to modern things. Aluminium wares have almost wholly replaced brass or copper utensils. Steel furniture is gradually making its way into villages on account of economic prices as well as portability. Crockery of China-clay and cutlery of modern type have also come into vogue.

The poor use mostly earthen utensils. The houses in villages as also in the poorer localities in towns generally provide only shelter to their occupants and the usual features of a comfortable home or even simple decorations are lacking. The houses of the rich, built one or two decades back, are marked by clumsy overhanging small balconies, domes and minarets and useless cornices and want of proper lavatories. However, architectural designs of houses are changing and plain houses with an eye to personal equation are slowly coming up. Individual gardening has still to develop and there is no lead given in the provision of proper parks and gardens or arboriculture by the municipalities.

#### DRESS.

There has been a material change in dress particularly among the urban population. Except in the case of the older people, the typical *kurta* or *mirzai* or *chapkan* and the pair of *chamarua* shoes are almost extinct.

Bush shirts have become very popular after the World War II among the urban people, particularly the educated section. Among the richer people both in rural and urban areas the use of *kurta*, *dhoti* and a sort of buttoned-up short coat has become common. The stuff of the garment is usually mill-made. The Non-Co-operation Movement since 1921 ushered *khaddar* or hand-spun and hand-woven cloth and after the independence, the Government patronised *khadi* and encouraged its use in offices. However, *khadi* being more costly and easily worn out, it is not popular. A kind of tight waist coat commonly known as "Jawahar Jacket" has become common. Head gear is going out of use. The western type of dress is coming back again. Youths in schools and colleges are fond of wearing English costumes or at least shirt and a pair of trousers. Drain-pipe trousers are becoming popular

among the youth. The white *khadi* cap, a symbol of awe and authority in post-independence era is now fast disappearing.

Shoes and a sort of sandals known as *chappals* have become popular. The lower and middle class cultivators and the villagers still use *panhi* or *chamarua* shoe, manufactured by village cobblers.

In the villages there has not been much change in the dress of the women excepting among the educated and upper income-groups. The changes consist in using more of undergarments and modern type of blouses instead of the old type of *jhula*. In the urban areas the women use footwear and more of undergarments and modern cut blouses. Different modes of wearing the *sari* have come in vogue, particularly among the middle and upper classes both in the rural and in the urban areas. In villages, women of the poorer classes still use the coarse cloth and *jhula*. Brassiers, bodice and petticoats are becoming common among the women of the middle and upper classes.

A close-fitting outfit of *salwar*, *paijama* and *urhni* (a light cover for the upper part of the body) has become the favourite dress for young girls, particularly in schools and colleges. This dress is very well suited for undergoing physical training or drill.

#### ORNAMENTS.

The metals used for ornaments are gold, silver, copper, brass, etc. The principal indigenous ornaments in use in the district are : *tiara* and *mangtika* for head; *mala*, *har* and *hansuli* for neck; *ghumka*, *karnphool*, *bali*, *kanaili* for ears; *nath*, *nakbesar*, *bulaki*, *nakphool* for nose; *pakhunchi*, *bala* for wrist; *anant* for arms; *kamardhani* for waist; *jhani*, *payal*, *chhara*, *kara*, *panzeb* for feet. Rings are common for fingers.

Some of these ornaments, such as *tiara*, *bulaki*, *ghumka*, *bali*, *kanaili*, *hansuli*, *pakhunchi*, *anant*, *nath*, *jhani*, *panzeb*, *chhara* and *kara* have become obsolete among the upper classes. *Sautin*, an ornament used by a second wife in memory of her predecessor has almost disappeared. *Mangtika*, *nath*, *payal*, *nakbesar*, *karnphool*, *nakphool* are also confined to a very few high caste but uneducated people. *Nath*, *mangtika* and an ornament for the neck called *Tak-pat-ka-dholna* is supposed to be auspicious by Hindu women. Some of the common modern ornaments include bracelets, armlets, chains and earrings. Nose ornaments are disappearing. Formerly *matarmala* and *chandrahari* were popular. Lighter and less ornate ornaments are now preferred.

Males in the urban areas do not normally wear ornaments excepting rings, chains or a wrist-watch. In rural areas males still wear *anant*, gold chains, and rings set with diamonds and other precious stones.

## FOOD.

Rice has been the staple food of the people in the Patna district since time immemorial, both due to its availability and the climatic conditions in which people live, but on account of its rising prices and supply of wheat at comparatively much cheaper rates, people by and large are substituting rice by wheat of foreign import. The mass of people live on bread, made of flour prepared from wheat or one of the many kinds of coarse grains and pulses, vegetables, salt and a few simple condiments. Maize and *arhar dal* also supplement their diet. *Marua* is consumed largely in the Bihar subdivision. Of the poorer sections of the community the morning meal usually consists of parched or boiled grains of various sorts, and the evening meal of boiled rice, *dal* and vegetable curries. The vegetables are ordinarily potato, gourds, cucumber, brinjal, etc. and the other seasonal vegetables. The use of tomatoes and onions is becoming more popular. Various kinds of savoury food preparations of meat, fish and eggs, sweets, curd and other milk products are usually meant for those who can afford. The cooking media are *ghee*, mustard oil and the various brands of hydrogenated oil. As *ghee* is becoming scarce hydrogenated oils have become popular.

## AMUSEMENTS AND FESTIVITIES.

The traditional pattern of religious entertainment, such as *Tulsi Ramayan-katha*, *bhajans* or devotional songs accompanied with musical instruments like *jhal*, *dholak* and harmonium are becoming obsolete. However, the lyrics adapted to the different seasons of the year and attuned to the various emotional moods of the masses are still so deeply rooted that they can well resist the onslaught of modernism in art for a long time to come. Thus folk music like *kajri* and *birha* sung during the rains have a special appeal. *Jatsari* songs are sung by the woman-folk while grinding the wheel to break the grains. *Sohar* is sung to mark the birth of a child while *jhumar* is a synthesis of music and dance. Pastoral songs are sung by woman labourers while transplanting paddy seedlings. At *Holi* time songs with an erotic slant are common. Many of the songs are rich in thought and are great specimens of a delicate web of words.

The *melas* and fairs are common in the district. Some of them have a religious or economic origin. The roving cinemas, *Ramlila*, *Nautanki* and social plays are some of the usual features of these *melas*.

Football matches and wrestling have also a great hold on the rural masses. Regular theatres are not common. But during festivals like *Durga Puja* or *Holi*, a stage is often set up in big villages and towns and dramas are performed. Such dramas always attract big crowds. The cinemas, however, now attract many people of rural areas also.

The cinema songs have now penetrated into the remotest villages of the district.

In the urban areas there are better facilities for amusements and recreations; but the universal media is cinema\*. On festive occasions, such as the *Durga Puja*, music conference are arranged. Sports such as cricket, football and tennis also attract good audience. The student population which is increasing in the towns of the district has very little engagement in the evening time. The majority of the students either roam about or congregate near the tea shops, betel shops or restaurants or attend cinema shows. The towns do not have adequate playing-grounds, parks or centres of cheap amusement and recreations. There are hardly any permanent organisations for cultural shows or recreations.

#### HINDU SHRINES.

Of the more orthodox deities of the Hindu pantheon the most popular is *Kali*, whose chief temple is in Patna City at *Kalasthan* near Mangles Tank. In her various forms she is worshipped by all Hindus at all times of the year. In the form of *Durga* she is regarded as the tutelary goddess of the city, and there are two old shrines there dedicated to her under the name of Patan Devi, one in the Chauk called Chhoti Patan Devi and the other in Maharajganj called Bari Patan Devi. The *Nawaratra* in the autumn is of special sanctity when popular worship is offered to them by multitudes of people. As *Shitala* she is worshipped by all Hindus. The most noted temples of *Shitala* in the district are at Agam Kuan near the Gulzarbagh Railway Station and at Maghra in the Biharsharif Subdivision. A *mela* is held at Agam Kuan on the 8th day in the month of *Asarh*. People congregate there to worship goddess *Shitala*. On this occasion goats are sacrificed and pigeons are flown. The *mela* lasts for three days. At village Maghra a *mela* is held on the 8th day of *Chait* to worship goddess, the devotees being mostly women.

Rajgir is also a place of pilgrimage among Hindus of all classes. This sanctity is due to the numerous hot springs here, which are worshipped as manifestations of the divine power. These springs are on both banks of the Saraswati rivulet, seven at the foot of Baibhar hill, and six at the foot of Vipulagiri. The names of the former group are Ganga Jamuna, Anant Rikhi, Sapta Rikhi, Vyas Kund, Markanday Kund, Brahma Kund and Langat Kund. They are flanked by Hindu temples. The six springs at the bottom of Vipulagiri are called Sita Kund, Suraj Kund, Ganesh Kund, Chandrama Kund, Ram Kund and Sringi Rikhi Kund. The spring last mentioned, which is about a quarter of a mile east from the others, has been appropriated by the Muhammedans, and is called by them Makhdum Kund, after Makhdum Shah

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\*At present (1968) there are six cinema halls at Patna proper. Besides, all mofassil subdivisional towns as well as other urban centres have one or more such halls.

Sheikh Sharif-ud-din Ahmad, a Muslim saint who lived at Rajgir. The *Malmas*, a triennial religious fair, lasting a month, attracts thousands of pilgrims to the springs every day. This is held in the leap year according to the Indian calendar. Great sanctity is attached to a bath in the Sapt-Dhara, Brahmkund, and other time-honoured Kunds in the Rajgir hills. The popular belief is that during this month all the gods and goddesses of the Hindu pantheon congregate at Rajgir and thus to visit the place at that time is a rare opportunity of appeasing all gods and goddesses in one single act of worship.

At Punpun pilgrims to Gaya begin the ceremonies incidental to the *pitripaksha* pilgrimage. It is incumbent on them to bathe here and shave their heads preparatory to performing funeral rites (i. e. *Gaya Shradha*) for their ancestors at Gaya. It is also visited by pilgrims from Nepal.

At Fatwa *Baruni Snana* on the 12th day of *Bhadra Shukla* carries special sanctity. Large congregation flock there to take bath in the junction of the holy rivers Punpun and Ganga.

There is a temple of Lord Shiva and Parvati at Baikatpur about four miles east of Fatwa where on the occasion of the *Shivaratri* devotees assemble in large number.

At Barh, as at Varanasi the Ganga flows south to north and this attaches great sanctity to the place. A Shiva temple called the temple of Uma Nath is situated on its bank. This attracts a large number of pilgrims annually on the 30th day of *Chait*.

#### MUSLIM SHRINES.

The *dargahs* or tombs of *Pirs* or saints are places of pilgrimage to which people, mainly women resort for blessings, to seek cure of disease or ward off evil spirits. At Biharsharif there are the *dargahs* of Mallick Ibrahim Baya and Hazrat Makhdum Shah Sharif-ud-din, the tomb of the latter being held in special veneration by the Muhammadans, who assemble there at the anniversary of the death of the saint on the 5th *Shawwal*. At Jethuli near Bankaghat the *dargahs* of Shihab-ud-din Jaggiat and Shah Adam Sufi are also places of pilgrimage and a fair is held there on the 21st *zikad*. In Patna there are the shrines of four *Pirs* called Mansur, Maru, Jafar and Mahdi, and also the shrine of Shah Arzani, which attract large gatherings. At Manersharif there are the tombs of saints Makhdum Yahia and of Shah Daulat. A *urs* is held there on the day of *Shabe-barat* in the month of *Shaban* according to Mohammedan calendar. A large congregation offers prayer to commemorate the memory of the saints. A *urs* is also held at Phulwarisharif every year on the day of *Fatehaduaz-dehum*. A large number of Muslims from all over Bihar and other States congregate there to celebrate the *urs*.

## SIKH SHRINES.

Patna City was the birth-place of Guru Govind Singh, the great founder of the Sikh military brotherhood, who was born in 1666 in a house near Chauk. The spot is now marked by a temple called Har Mandir, containing his cradle and shoes and the holy book of the Sikhs, the Granth Saheb, which is said to contain the Guru's name written by himself with the point of an arrow. There is a small *sangat* or subsidiary place of worship attached to this temple; and another *sangat*, which is in the hands of the Nanakshahis, contains a sacred tree believed to have sprung up miraculously from a tooth-pick placed in the ground by Guru Govind Singh. The temple is one of the four great sacred places of the Sikhs, who visit it on pilgrimage. The pilgrims are bound to appear before the Guru Granth Saheb on the first day of entering the town, and offer *ardas* or *Kara parshad*, i. e., sweetmeats specially prepared for the purpose.

There is a Gurudwara of the Sikhs at Rajgir Kund also.

## JAIN SHRINES.

Though Jainism has very few local adherents, there are some very sacred Jain Shrines and places of pilgrimage which are visited every year by Jains from all over the country. These shrines are at Patna, Rajgir and Pawapuri.

At Patna there are two temples in the quarter known as Kamaldah near the Gulzarbagh railway station. One, built on a high mound of brick ruins, bears an inscription stating that in 1848 (Sambat) the congregation dwelling at Pataliputra began the building of the temple of the illustrious Sthulabhadra. This saint was the patriarch of the early Jain church in the first part of the Third Century B. C., at the time when the canon of the Svetambar sect was collected by the Council of Pataliputra. According to local tradition, he died at this spot, which is now a favourite place of pilgrimage amongst the Jains. In the lower temple is a shrine dedicated to Sudarsan, where the attendant priest paints every morning a fresh footprint in saffron on a block of stone, and near the door is a *pinda* or food offering to the fierce deity, Bhairav.

Rajgir is a famous *tirtha* of the Jains, who visit it in large number. There are shrines on the tops of the five hills; on Baibhar hill alone there are five Jain temples. The temples are all of recent date and generally contain a stone with the footprints of some Jain Tirthankara. Older shrines of the middle ages, with numerous Jain images, are also found, but they are no longer used for worship. Of all the places of Jain pilgrimage in the district perhaps the most sacred is Pawapuri. Here a temple called Thalmandir marks the spot where Mahavira died, and

another temple called Jalmandir stands in the midst of a great tank on the spot where he was cremated.

#### RISE OF NEW ECONOMIC AND PROFESSIONAL CLASSES AND IMPACT OF ZAMINDARI ABOLITION ON SOCIAL LIFE.

The post-Independence period has witnessed a shift in the economic and professional groups and classes in society. Till the end of the Second World War, the people of this district as elsewhere, had more or less a set pattern of life based on the feudal system in vogue since long. Broadly speaking, the social groups at the apex consisted of zamindars and aristocratic propertied classes, professionals like lawyers, doctors, teachers, etc., and service-holders. Small businessmen teeming millions of cultivators including landless ones and other manual workers like potters, blacksmiths, oilmen, etc., formed the base.

In the pre-war era the administrative set-up was bureaucratic. The Government service commanded great respect, irrespective of emoluments, inasmuch as even the educated sons of prosperous Zamindars aspired for it. The civil servants of the highest cadres dominated the society. The Rajas, the big Zamindars, the Chairman of the Local Bodies, Government Pleaders and Public Prosecutors mattered most. The businessmen got scant notice and the common man was seldom thought of. The philanthropy of the aristocratic class was mostly prompted by the bureaucracy. A tradesman or a rich cultivator would pay handsome donation to charities for the privilege of an interview with the Governor. The professional classes, mainly concerned with law and medicine, enjoyed prosperity but the lot of the cultivators who formed bulk of the population was unenviable. The landless labourers and the craftsmen just merely existed.

In the pre-Independence days the *Darbar* held at the district headquarters used to provide an index to the social status of the people. On the dais along with the Governor and the Commissioner of the Division would be seated the Maharajas, the Rajas and some highly distinguished members of the nobility. Down below there would be groupings into A, B and C classes of different blocks and the distinction counted a lot to the invitees. The middle classes supplied the brains, opened their purse liberally and sponsored many social and educational institutions throughout the district. They also supplied successions of great teachers, lawyers, statesmen and administrators. The caste played a great role in the society. A Brahman, a Rajput, a Kayasth, irrespective of his material worth or educational qualifications, enjoyed a higher social status than a well-to-do Koeri or Goala. Caste meant an accepted tradition with a social value just as occupations also meant a particular social standing. A clerk in the Govern-

ment service getting a small salary commanded more respect in society than a *mahajan* who employed *munshis* of similar rank. Thus a Goala earning a good income by selling his milk and milk products would rather see his son as a clerk or even as a *chaprasi* than continue the family trades. The women, as usual, continued to be the custodian of home. The higher female education among the people was still in its infancy and therefore the presence of the fair sex in liberal professions was rare.

In the wake of the Second World War, a new class of people who had made good fortune in war time came into prominence. The unsatisfactory working of various restrictions on the free flow of essential commodities enhanced their prices arbitrarily and enabled the profiteers and blackmarketeers to flourish at the cost of common man. These new forces gave a death blow to the traditional social pyramid. The petty cultivators and labourers, who formed its base and had allowed the load of the pyramid to be put on them, were shaken up and realised that they had been denied the basic social justice. Once the base was shaken the result was inevitable. The aristocracy at the apex led by the landed magnets received the most severe jolt while the tiers below also showed cracks. The classes forming the base were the most restless and started coming up in the forefront to confront the vested interest.

The 1942 Movement ultimately ended in the withdrawal of the British power from India on 15th August, 1947. It was followed by the Congress regime which took politics to the remotest villages in the country and thus aroused the political consciousness of the masses. The Congress had come to power making certain pledges, one being land reforms which abolished the intermediary and brought the tenantry in direct touch with the Government. The most prominent feature of post-zamindari abolition period was disappearance of Zamindars from the rural scenes and the migration of the resourceful among them to towns. The vacuum left by them was quickly filled up by the local politicians, who formed integrated links of the Congress party. Since Independence there have been four elections to the Assembly\* and the Parliament and the results have shown that while some have risen in the estimation of the public, a few have gone down not for any other reason, but because they had lost election. The factions within the party have had their impact. The man who gets elected has got to be heard in a Welfare State. Since the very character of administration has changed the people's representative has his definite place in society. In the present set-up the politician has a glamour of his own, but the people are also conscious of their rights.

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\*A mid-term election to the Assembly is being held on 9th February, 1969.

The aristocracy and the propertied Zamindars have been affected very badly. With the abolition of Zamindari they had a great slump in what was considered a social prestige, apart from the decline in financial resources. The flow of charity from them has stopped. Some of them have turned to business. A few have also become industrialists. Quite a few have taken to politics.

The intellectual classes have had an apparent slump in social prestige which is often deeply resented by them. The professional classes, such as, teachers, doctors and lawyers have had a general rise in their income. A few of them have also come into prominence by taking part in politics. The businessmen and the industrialists have also come into greater prominence, some by making huge fortune and some by taking part in politics.

But the real shift has been in the rural areas where the cultivators and labourers live. Politics has gone into the villages and the elections of Mukhiyas and Sarpanches are now very keenly contested. The ex-landlords, who continue to live in villages take prominent part in village politics and still wield some influence. The landless labourers find employment mostly on earthwork in the tea gardens of Assam, as factory hands in the industrial undertakings or as dairy-keeper in towns. The welfare measures for the Harijans, Scheduled Tribes and the Backward Classes have given them a peculiar caste consciousness and the different castes have started organising themselves on caste lines. Elections have often been decided on caste lines. This emergence of casteism has been a disturbing element for the newly born democracy.

The Government is now the biggest employer. It has started numerous public undertakings to absorb the suitable personnel, but the rapid expansion of education has outpaced the available avenues of employment leading to much unrest which is manifested through constant strikes, particularly in Engineering schools and colleges. Government service has not lost all its charms, though many of the best men are now seeking employment in private sector. The expansion of Government machinery has given employment to a tremendous force of non-technical hands. A very recent tendency is to bring about trade unionism among the non-gazetted employees of the Government.

With the advent of modern trends in Indian society there has been a tendency to educate females on the same line as males. The result has been that co-education has become the order of the day. In this system the difference in the actual needs of the different sexes is being ignored. There is now a tendency for women to seek the same job as men do and thus become independent of their male partner, but this is gradually leading to the break-up of families.

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