

CHAPTER XI.

COMMUNICATION.

COMMUNICATION IN THE EARLY YEARS OF BRITISH ADMINISTRATION.

The district of Muzaffarpur was a part of Sarkar Tirhut which had passed with the rest of Bihar under British rule in 1764 when the decisive battle of Buxar finally made the British masters of lower provinces of Bengal. Sarkar Tirhut comprised the modern districts of Muzaffarpur and Darbhanga. The separate district of Muzaffarpur was created in 1875.

Regarding the state of communication in the district of Muzaffarpur before the advent of the British rule it may be recalled that while Darbhanga was the political centre, Hajipur in Muzaffarpur district was the revenue centre. In the Muhammadan period it has been known that at one time seventy thousand horses were maintained at Darbhanga, Hajipur, Mahnar, etc., where important trade centres and the subordinates for revenue collection were located. Another significant factor was that almost invariably the marauding hordes from Delhi downwards for loot or for territorial aggression would usually avoid the Grand Trunk Road and make a detour by the roads (even if they were not fully developed) which ran parallel or near about the Nepal frontiers. The reason may be that there were stronger men with large landed interests by the side of the Grand Trunk Road, who might have opposed the onward march. The existence of scattered villages or townships with a large proportion of Muslims in the population near about the roads of North Bihar and particularly near the frontiers of Nepal support this theory. As a matter of fact if one studies this aspect, he may find that the trend of Muslim population on the borders of North Bihar ultimately fanned out into East Pakistan after crossing the limits of the district of Purnea.

It will not be correct to say that North Bihar did not have important roads in pre-British days. The road economics of North Bihar is very much fettered by the scarcity of proper materials for road construction, such as, stone-chips, morum, etc., and the many rivers that pass through the district partially rob the roads of some importance. There could still be a Grand Trunk Road for North Bihar, as one can say it existed in pre-British days, although not properly systematized. This proposed Grand Trunk Road for North Bihar, if ever executed, will connect the districts of Muzaffarpur with Darbhanga on one side and Bettiah on the other, while Hajipur will remain as a very important station in the middle.

The economic condition of the district in the pre-British days had a very important feature in *melas* and fairs. Throughout North Bihar and particularly in Muzaffarpur district there are a large number of *melas* well distributed in the year, but with a particular concentration

during the months when the villagers are comparatively free from agricultural operations and have got some cash in hand owing to the advent of new crops. The original factors behind the *melas* might have been religious or economic, but gradually the *melas* have become great social centres and a clearing house for commodities. Some of the *melas* in the district is noticed in detail in a separate chapter. What is sought to be impressed here is that the many *melas* and fairs in the district which still continue led to the development of communication, either by road or by water.

It appears that owing to the uncertain times and want of a strong central power, the local administration in North Bihar including the district of Muzaffarpur had become rather weak. As a result, several small ruling chiefs raised their heads and existed more to enrich themselves than to stabilize the administration by concrete steps, such as, the construction of good roads. From the advent of the British rule in 1764 till the rise of the planters about a century after the roads in Muzaffarpur district were rather neglected.

The Old Correspondence in the early years of British rule maintained in the Collectorate Record Rooms, however, indicate that the trade routes were blocked by freebooting zamindars and it was almost nobody's concern to develop the means of communication. In a letter addressed to Hon'ble Charles Steward, President and Member of the Board of Revenue on 5th February, 1790, the Collector of Tirhut made the following observations :—

" I cannot forbear now that I am writing of Tirhut to remark that whilst many indulge their fancy in expatiating on the natural advantages of this district, the richness of its soil and its multifarious streams, not a single individual stops to reflect that along their solitary banks, scarce hamlet is to be seen and for miles and miles not a human footstep to be traced. *Golas*, *Gunges*, *Bazars*, *Beoparies*, manufacturers, the inland trader and the foreign purchasers (without which rivers flow to no purpose and the earth's productive to no end) exist only in imagination. From one town to another even the high roads (on which the traveller and the merchants used formerly to pursue their journey in safety and in ease) are in some parts choked up with weeds and grass and in others are excavated by the periodical rains. In such a province if Government will be at no expense; if its roads are not to be repaired; if its inhabitants that now occupy and enrich the adjacent country are not to be invited back by suitable indulgences and merchants and manufacturers, all which it once had are not encouraged to settle in it upon terms that might allure their service and excite their industry, the Collector must be content to confine himself to the painful task of wringing from the hands of the laborious peasant his monthly portion of the annual revenue."

Since the earlier British administrators wanted to develop trade and industry with a view to obtain more revenue, Europeans were licensed to settle down in the interior of the district in the capacity of traders. In the 19th Century and earlier along with some other districts of North Bihar, Muzaffarpur was an important area for trade in indigo, opium, salt-petre and to some extent sugar. Due to the establishment of factories and godowns by the Europeans in connection with business in indigo, opium, salt-petre and sugar some areas in the interior came to be well provided with roads. Previous to 1820, convicts used to be commonly employed for the construction or maintenance of the roads. The roads in the vicinity of factories and godowns were maintained by the persons interested in their trade. Zamindars of the locality paid little attention to the roads with the result that the other roads were not properly maintained.

Apart from the particular commodities mentioned for which Muzaffarpur was an important zone in the 18th and the 19th Centuries, the Old English Correspondence in the Record Rooms show that in 1800 the articles imported into the district consisted of fine rice, salt, sugar of all kinds, cloves, cardamom, pepper, betel, cocoanut, cotton, iron, shawls, fine cloths and muslins, etc. The articles exported from the district consisted of coarse rice, wheat, barley, *dal*, turmeric, tobacco, *ghee*, salt-petre, indigo and timber. Principal *hats* and trading towns in the 18th Century were Lal Gunge (Lalgunj), Hadjeepore (Hajipur) and Muzaffarpur. The mode of conveyance for the goods was mostly bullocks or bullock-carts or head load. The surplus produce used to be chiefly sent to Patna for the Calcutta and the western markets. The Old Correspondence Volumes of the 19th Century in Muzaffarpur Collectorate also mention a certain amount of trade with Nepal. The principal *hats* and trading towns with Muzaffarpur district were inter-connected with roads. There used to be mostly undeveloped pathways from Muzaffarpur to the interior of Nepal which were used by Nepalese who came down in the dry season with certain commodities for barter in the Muzaffarpur district. The commodities used to be brought down or taken away by pack-animals. Waterways were fairly developed as the bulk of the trade with Patna and Calcutta used to be done through the waterways. *Bajrahs* or big boats of 1,000-maund capacity were common. Singhia and Lalgunj were important trade centres for water-borne merchandise in 18th and 19th Centuries. Singhia has been shown in Rennel's Map of 1778.

The following extract from a report written by the Collector of Tirhut in 1829 quoted in the last District Gazetteer of Muzaffarpur by O'Malley will show the improvements since 1790 as pictured in the quotation from the Collector's letter to the Board quoted before :—

"The roads are not under my control, but under that of the Magistrate, who usually repairs them with his prisoners as far as they can be conveniently sent. The zamindars do little or nothing in the way. The roads in the

immediate vicinity of the different indigo factories are usually in good order, but they are kept solely at the expense of the proprietors of the factories. The roads in most directions from Muzaffarpur are in good order, but the roads or bye-ways in the interior of the district are very bad and barely passable for hackeries. There are a number of *jheels* in the district, therefore, bullocks are not much used; hackeries are, however, used near the indigo factories, and occasionally towards the northward, but the wear and tear of the same is great in consequence of the usually bad state of the roads. Owing to the number of streams much of the produce of the district is conveyed by water. Where the roads are good, it is either owing to their being repaired by the Magistrate or the planters."

Postal communication was more or less confined for administrative purposes. The Collector of the district was also the Postmaster. *Daks* used to be carried by postal runners and there were postal *ghatis* or centres for the change of the runners. The Police through the village *chaukidars* also used to distribute the *daks*.

As mentioned before, the district along with the other districts in North Bihar owes quite a lot to the European planters for a large number of roadways. By the end of the 19th Century it may safely be said that there was a *kothi* of a European planter within every 10 to 15 miles. The *kothi* usually meant a consolidated block of land running from a hundred to a thousand acres or more in the midst of which will be the residential houses of the planters, their subordinates, vats for steeping indigo and the factories for the *khas* cultivation of the planters. There used to be extensive indigo cultivation in the villages at the instance of the planters. The indigo plants from the interior villages had to be brought to the factory site in the *kothi* and the manufactured indigo in boxes had to be taken to the railhead and the riverhead for being exported. Apart from this the planters had a world of their own for social contacts and there would be frequent meets, races, dances, and parties, often interspersed with *shikar* of wild animals, crocodiles, birds and pigsticking. Besides the social meets at Muzaffarpur and other places in the district, there would be frequent meets in Champaran, Saran and Darbhanga districts. All this necessitated a fairly good system of roads. The soft soil of the district did not present any problem for making some sort of roads. It was easy to cut a road after the crops were removed. The rivers excepting one or two did not have a wide bed or a swift current throughout the year and *melnees* could easily be arranged to cross the rivers. The *melnees* were flat boats wide enough to carry loads, carts, and cars across the river.

A peculiar feature in Muzaffarpur district is that the Public Works Department for roads was brought into existence only a

few years back (1948).^{*} This may have been due to the influence of the planters, who had a good deal of say in the local administration of the district and often controlled the Road Cess Committee, which was ultimately converted into the District Board. It is only when the condition of the roads in the district had considerably deteriorated that the State Government in the Public Works Department took over a number of important roads of North-Bihar and particularly the inter-district roads. With the taking over of some of the main arteries of communication by the Public Works Department, there has been an enormous improvement of roads in spite of the bottle-neck of transshipment of goods across the Ganga. There is also another factor which affects the roads of the district. Coal, coaltar, cement, morum, stone-chips, bitumen, etc., have all to be brought to Muzaffarpur district from across Ganga river. The transport across the river has a bottle-neck.

Incidentally the advent of the Public Works Department in Muzaffarpur district only a few years back explains the existence of a very few rest houses or inspection bungalows by the roadside, unlike the districts of South Bihar. The planters had their houses thrown open to the fellow planters and the top European officials on the tours. There was hardly any need for proper inspection bungalows or rest houses for them. This want is being slowly removed.

The decline of the planters was complete in the thirties of this century. Synthetic indigo sold cheaper and the planters' regime had brought in a large number of evils mostly through the subordinate *amlas* (staff). The first struggle of Gandhiji in 1917 soon after his return from South Africa was on the soil of North Bihar to remove the evils of indigo plantation. His historic struggle brought in an Agrarian Act which removed most of the evils of *abwab*, forcible cultivation of indigo, obligatory sale of indigo plant at a cheap price, etc. The decline in the prestige of the planters, who had a tremendous influence on the European administrators and were mistaken as one with them by the common man was also a great factor which made most of the European planters sell their concerns to Indian *zamindars* and farmers. The latter, however, had no interest in maintaining the roads and all this meant an extra burden on the District Board. The democratization of the District Board which followed the removal of the District Magistrate as the Chairman did not always have a salutary effect on the maintenance of the links of communication. The position has been aggravated by large-scale sugarcane cultivation throughout the district. In a way indigo has been replaced by sugarcane cultivation. This cash crop has caught the imagination of the agriculturists in spite of the exhaustion of the soil, unless properly manured. A result of the extensive sugarcane cultivation is the existence of thousands of bullock carts throughout the district. The iron-shod wheels of the carts

^{*}The Public Works Department had functioned for Government buildings only prior to 1948.

damage considerably the roads. Not even one per cent of the cart wheels have been replaced by tyred wheels, although many of the cart-owners can afford this. The roads of the district covering more than twelve hundred miles, are much too damaged by these carts. The District Board has not chosen to tax the bullock carts, although this source of a considerable receipt appears to be open to the Board.

ROAD CESS COMMITTEE, 1875.

A District Committee for Tirhut was created in 1870 for the administration of the funds set apart for the construction, repairs and maintenance of roads, bridges, etc., which were mainly derived from the cess.

With the establishment of a separate district of Muzaffarpur in 1875, a Road Cess Committee was established to look after the maintenance of roads, bridges and culverts, etc. It appears that in 1875 the mileage under the charge of the Road Cess Committee was 719. As a part of famine relief work the major part of the road was repaired during the famine of 1874. Bullock carts with iron-shod wheels were practically the only mode of conveyance for the transport of goods for the roadways. By 1885 the mileage was increased to 1,483. In 1895 the Road Cess Committee was reconstituted as the District Board and the mileage had increased by then to 1,679.

O'MALLEY'S DESCRIPTION OF THE ROADS, 1907.

In the last District Gazetteer of Muzaffarpur by O'Malley (1907) it has been mentioned that the District Board maintained 1,226 miles of roads of which 82 miles were metalled, besides 543 miles of village roads. O'Malley mentioned that the District Board had paid special attention to the extension of roads as feeders to railways and over half a lakh of rupees was spent on the maintenance of the existing feeder roads during the quinquennium ending 1904-05. According to O'Malley the roads were maintained properly and even the unmetalled roads were so well kept that carriages could be driven over them without any severe jolting or discomfort. The important roads of the district in 1907 were the roads running from Hajipur through the towns of Muzaffarpur and Sitamarhi to Sonebarsa on Nepal frontier and the roads connecting Muzaffarpur town with Darbhanga, Motihari and Saran. Those were the days when the planters flourished.

Since the last District Gazetteer was compiled there has been a great development in industry, transport and communication. The traffic has considerably increased along with the development of trade and industry. Bullock carts and *palkis* carried by human agency have been replaced for long distance journey by power-propelled conveyance, viz., motor cars, buses and trucks. To country crafts and *bajrahs* have been added modern power steamers and boats. Even in the countryside, *ekkas* drawn by single horses are slowly being replaced. Since the last war there has been an enormous development in the vehicular

traffic which has been encouraged by better maintained and more durable roads but at the same time it causes a severe strain on the roads.

ROADWAYS NOW.

The total mileage of the roads under the charge of the District Board prior to the recent transfer of some of the roads to Public Works Department was 1,044 under the District Board and 1,289 under the Local Board. Out of this, 246 miles were *pucca*, viz., metalled with brick-bats or *kankar* or with both, 1,175 miles *kutch*a and 912 miles of village roads. The length transferred to the Public Works Department consists of 42.50 miles of National Highway and 219.59 miles of State Highway. These roads are maintained from the State and Central grants. There are 20.3 miles of roads around sugar factory areas maintained from State grants.

NATIONAL HIGHWAY.

Alignment of National Highway no. 28 constituting Muzaffarpur-Champaran border road and Muzaffarpur-Pusa roads passes through this district.

The Muzaffarpur-Champaran border road is 21.0 miles in length. It forms part of Raxaul (Nepal border)-Muzaffarpur-Hajipur road and connects the headquarters of the two districts at Motihari and Muzaffarpur. It runs parallel to the railway line and serves as a feeder to the Railway. The road is bridged.

The Muzaffarpur-Pusa road is 17 miles long. The road is bridged and is motorable throughout the year.

Government of India have approved of the cost of improvement of Sitamarhi-Sursand road for the first phase only. The approved cost of improvement in the first phase amounts to Rs. 7.6 lakhs. The length of this road is 19.75 miles. This road has been provincialized.

PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT ROADS.

The following roads are now under Public Works Department :—

Name and classification.	Length in miles.
1. Japaha-Minapur (Major District Highway) ...	8.00
2. Hajipur-Muzaffarpur (Provincial Highway) ...	34.34
3. Muzaffarpur-Sitamarhi (Provincial Highway) ...	36.75
4. Muzaffarpur-Rewaghat (Major District Highway)	23.00
	102.09

Japaha-Minapur road is a portion of the Japaha-Belsund road, connecting Muzaffarpur town with Minapur police-station. The road serves an area without any railway communication. The road was taken over from District Board in 1946.

Hajipur-Muzaffarpur road was formerly classed as National Highway but before improvement could be completed it was dropped out of the scheme and was classified as Provincial Highway. A length of 3.04 miles was later on added to and treated as a part of this road.

Muzaffarpur-Sitamarhi road was taken over from District Board in 1949. A length of 0.46 mile under the Sitamarhi Municipality was later on added to this road. In the first mile of this road, a bridge over Burhi Gandak at Akharaghat has been constructed. It had cost Rs. 11.89 lakhs.

Muzaffarpur-Rewaghat road is a continuation of Chapra-Rewaghat road and connects the town of Muzaffarpur with the town of Chapra. There is ferry arrangement at the river.

EARTHQUAKE.

In the afternoon of the 15th January, 1934, there was the great Bihar Earthquake and Muzaffarpur was one of the districts that suffered very badly. The principal roadways were seriously affected by the Earthquake. Many of the high-banked roads were reduced to country level, a number of masonry and steel bridges had collapsed or were twisted. Wide fissures tore the surface of the roads. A sum of Rs. 7 lakhs was spent to open the communication and a further sum of Rs. 48 lakhs was spent to restore the roads, bridges and culverts. It took about five years to complete the constructions and improvements. But even after spending about 55 lakhs of rupees the roads which were affected by the Earthquake could not be restored to their previous level. Some of the roads came to be maintained only as fair-weather roads.

DIFFICULTIES IN ROAD MAINTENANCE.

Till the advent of the second World War there was a certain amount of rigid control on the vehicular traffic with a view to the proper maintenance of the roads. Heavy bus and truck traffic were not allowed over the roads specially on portions which were unmetalled. Previously vehicular traffic was also negligible. Labour was cheap and with the finances available, the District Board could just manage to maintain the roads in a tolerable condition. But the second World War brought about changed conditions. The allotment of funds for the maintenance of the roads remained more or less the same while the rates of labour and the price of the materials increased enormously. Some of the important requirements like cement, tar or bitumen became scarce or their supply was controlled. Besides Muzaffarpur district has one disadvantage that stone is not locally available. The type of *kankar* which is available is hardly suitable for heavy traffic. Rubber-tyred traffic is almost nil.

The incidence of the rise in the rate of wages and the price of materials still continues and at present it is about four times above the pre-war rates. The problem of maintaining the roads became more acute with an increased motor traffic and particularly of the heavier type. A Regional Transport Authority was set up in 1946 to give permits to taxis, buses and trucks. The District Board has since been faced with the problem of buses and trucks using some roads which were hardly meant for such heavy traffic. As a result some of the roads have deteriorated very badly. The road connecting Muzaffarpur, the district headquarters, with the subdivisional headquarters of Sitamarhi, an important business centre, has a length of 37 miles and passes through some important villages. The condition of this road and the bridges on it had become so deplorable that in 1947-49 it used to take three to four hours to negotiate this distance by a car. During those years people would rather go from Muzaffarpur to Sitamarhi by train *via* Samastipur and Darbhanga which meant a railway journey for about 6 to 7 hours. This road has now been taken over by the Public Works Department and was converted into an all-weather road. The District Board has, however, partially been relieved of their responsibility by the transfer of some of the important roads to the Public Works Department.

BRIDGES AND CULVERTS UNDER THE DISTRICT BOARD.

There are 33,256 feet of waterways in the shape of major bridges, minor bridges and culverts. Out of this 7,166 feet have been transferred to the charge of the Public Works Department.

SOME OF THE PRINCIPAL ROADS.

Sitamarhi road no. 1.

This road connects Muzaffarpur, the district headquarters, with the subdivisional headquarters of Sitamarhi, an important business centre for rice, other food-grains and timber. The length of the road is 37 miles. The road passes through the important villages of Rampurhari, Saidpur and Carha, etc. This is an all-weather road maintained by the Public Works Department.

Darbhangā road no. 2.

This road connects Muzaffarpur, the district headquarters, with Laheriasarai, the headquarters of Darbhanga district, and passes through the important villages of Ather, Berua and Benibad of Muzaffarpur district and Kansay and Simri of Darbhanga district. The total length of the road is 37 miles and up to the border of Muzaffarpur district is 26 miles.

Pusa road no. 3.

This road connects Muzaffarpur with Samastipur *via* Pusa and Fajpur and also connects Darbhanga *via* Saidpur Bridge. The total length of the road in Muzaffarpur district is 18 miles. This passes

through the important villages of Rohua, Manika and Dholi in the district of Muzaffarpur.

Shahpur road no. 5.

This road connects Muzaffarpur with Mahua and Jandaha *via* Mustufapur road no. 63 and Mohaddinagar road no. 20 and connects the important railway station and village of Shahpur Patoree, an important centre for tobacco in the district of Darbhanga. The length of the road is 19 miles up to the junction of Mustufapur road no. 63.

Hajipur road no. 6.

This road connects Muzaffarpur, the district headquarters with the subdivisional headquarters of Hajipur and passes through the important villages of Turki, Kurhani, Bhagwanpur and Sarai. Total length of the road is 34 miles.

Rewaghat road no. 7.

This is the main road which connects Muzaffarpur with Chapra, the headquarters of the Saran district with a ferry at Rewaghat over river Gandak. The total length of the road in this district is 25 miles. It passes through the important villages of Patahi, Karja, Saraiya and Bakhra.

Deoria road no. 8.

This serves the area of Kanti and Paroo thanas which are not connected by roads. This road also connects Saran district *via* the important villages of Repura, Panapur, Barkagaon, Deoria and Dharfari in the district of Muzaffarpur with a ferry over river Gandak at Sohansi Ghat. The total length of the road in this district is 31 miles.

Motihari road no. 9.

This road connects the district headquarters of Muzaffarpur with Motihari, the district headquarters of Champaran and passes through the important villages of Kanti, Motipur and Mahuwal in this district. The total length of the road within the district is 23 miles.

Sahebganj road no. 10.

This road connects Motipur, an important market with a sugar mill, with Sahebganj which has a considerable grain business. The total length of the road is 16 miles.

Bettiah road no. 11.

This is an inter-district road which starts from Lalganj, a thana headquarters of Hajipur subdivision and connects the district with Bettiah and subsequently goes to Nepal *via* the important villages of Bhagwanpur Ratti, Daudnagar, Amwara, Basaitha, Deoria and Sahebganj. The total length of the road in this district is 36 miles.

Lalganj road no. 16.

This road connects the subdivisional headquarters of Hajipur with Lalganj thana headquarters and an important business centre and passes through the villages of Ghataro and Harauli. The total length of the road is 21 miles.

Mahua road no. 17.

This is also an inter-district road which starts from Hajipur and passing through Mahua, Sukki in Hajipur subdivision and Dihuli in Sadar subdivision enters the district of Darbhanga near Pusa. The total length of the road in this district is 32 miles.

Mahnar road no. 19.

This road joins Hajipur with the thana headquarters of Mahnar and then leads to Darbhanga district passing through the important villages of Bhairampur, Bidupur, Mahnar and Hasanpur. The total length of the road in this district is 23 miles.

Mohaddinagar road no. 20.

This road joins Mahua, an important thana and business centre, with Jandaha and subsequently runs to Shahpur Patoree railway station in the district of Darbhanga. The total length of the road is 16 miles.

Sursand road no. 23.

This is an important road with a length of 32 miles. It starts from Bishunpur and passes through the important villages of Gaura, Koili, Nanpur, Bahera, Pupri (an important business centre), Sursand, another important business centre and joins Bela road no. 34 at Parihar.

Pupri road no. 24.

This road starts from Sitamarhi and joins Pupri, a thana headquarters and then leads to Darbhanga district. The total length of the road within the district of Muzaffarpur is 24 miles.

Sheohar road no. 25.

This road starts from Sitamarhi and connects Sheohar, an important thana. The road is 16 miles in length and passes through the important villages of Dhangar, Dikuli and Parsauni.

The following roads were taken up in First Five-Year Plan either for the first phase or the second phase :—

First phase.

- (1) Jhapha-Minapur road—8 miles.
- (2) Muzaffarpur-Sitamarhi road—37 miles.
- (3) Muzaffarpur-Rewaghat road—23 miles.
- (4) Mahnar-Mahnar Bazar road—4 miles.
- (5) Muzaffarpur-Hajipur road 34.25 miles.
- (6) Muzaffarpur-Champanan Border road—21 miles.

Second phase.

- (1) Hajipur-Bhairampur-Mahnar road—19 miles.
- (2) Muzaffarpur-Pusa road—17 miles.

All these roads have been improved and thrown open to passenger buses and carriers, both private and public. The number of passengers using the service buses is very large. An enormous goods traffic is also carried on through the carriers, private and public. No precise data are, however, available to show the number of passengers or the volume of goods traffic that are catered for by the vehicular traffic both inward and outward.

ARBORICULTURE.

Muzaffarpur is fortunate in having fairly long avenues along the roads. The initiative of planting trees along the road was taken by Mr. C. F. Worsley, a former Collector. Extensive plantation was done between the years 1877 and 1901 and a sum of about Rs. 69,000 was spent.

The dead trees are replaced and effort is made to maintain the avenue. *Simal, babul, sal, jamun, mango* are some of the trees by the roadside. There is a great scope for a proper plantation which is not being kept up.

During the scarcity of 1951 *sisum* plantation was done along the roads. Though due to drought the plantation was not very successful but a good percentage has survived and in the years to come they will prove a useful property for the District Board.

ROAD FINANCES.

The average expenditure in repairs and improvement of roads during 1876-77 was Rs. 20,000 which was increased to Rs. 1,30,000 in the year 1886-87 and to Rs. 1,70,000 in 1904-05. The average annual expenditure on roads prior to the second World War, viz., 1939-40 was Rs. 2,30,036. As the cost of labour was cheap and the roads were improved and restored out of the Earthquake grant, all the roads under District Board and Local Boards were in a fairly good condition and the amount available was just sufficient to maintain the roads.

The amount spent on repairs to roads during the year 1952-53 is as follows :—

	Rs.
(i) Maintenance, repairs and minor improvements	4,88,708
(ii) New construction	1,77,431
(iii) Administration charges	1,23,687

The main sources of expenditure on roads are—(i) Road Fund; (ii) Provincial revenue, (iii) Local Fund, and (iv) Special loans raised for construction of new roads.

The main sources of income for maintenance of roads under the District Board are road cess, grants from the Government and a small amount received every year out of motor vehicle taxation. No loans have been raised so far for construction of new roads.

VEHICULAR TRAFFIC.

Bullock carts have been in existence since the ancient days. The recent wholesome change very slowly coming in is the substitution of tyre wheels in place of iron-shod wheels. Light vehicles drawn by a single pony known as *ekka* have been in vogue since a very long time. *Ekkas* are, however, on the decline because of power propelled faster vehicles. It is understood the first motor car was brought to Muzaffarpur in 1910. The hand rickshaw was introduced in 1937 while the cycle rickshaw came into vogue in 1940. The first passenger bus and the first public carrier were introduced in 1946.

STATISTICS OF VEHICLES.

The statistics for 1954 of different kinds of vehicles are given below :—

- (i) Motor Taxis—3.
- (ii) Motor Cars—332.
- (iii) Motor Buses—84.
- (iv) Motor Trucks—251.
- (v) Motor Cycles—26.
- (vi) Bullock carts—40,000 (roughly).
- (vii) Bicycles—No figure is available.
- (viii) Rickshaws—1,300.
- (ix) Horse carriages—100.
- (x) Hand carts—100.

WATER TRANSPORT.

The district has got a number of rivers and rivulets of which the more important from transport point of view are Naraini Gandak and Burhi Gandak, Baghmati, old and new, Adhwarra and Sicaou. Naraini Gandak remains navigable all the year round and grains, timber and other commodities are carried by these rivers and taken to different places lying in the western boundary of the district, namely, Mahnar, Bhairampur, Hajipur, Lalganj and Rewaghat. Burhi Gandak is navigable for heavy boats only during rainy season when merchandise are carried by boats to Muzaffarpur from West Bengal. *Sal* logs are brought down from Nepal by river Burhi Gandak and Baghmati. A daily cargo steamer service plies between Mahnar and Patna and then onward to Bengal. Steamers ply between Patna and Hajipur during rainy season only when Naraini Gandak remains full.

• LOCAL FERRIES.

There are ferries on all the important rivers where they cross the District and Local Board roads. These are settled by the District Board and the ferry farmers realise tolls from passengers and goods as per rates approved by the District Board. The number of rivers and rivulets being large the ferries are very important to maintain the link of communication besides clearing a large volume of merchandise.

Following are the more important ferries in the district :—

- (1) Atherghat.
- (2) Amer-Chechar-Rapura.
- (3) Balha-Basanta.
- (4) Madhopur-Bangra.
- (5) Sohansi-Sarangpur Saguni.
- (6) Simra-Jalalpur-Barway.

Two ferries were served with pontoon bridges both over the Burhi Gandak, one at Akharaghat on Muzaffarpur-Sitamarhi road and the other at Atherghat on Muzaffarpur-Darbhanga road. Since the transfer of Muzaffarpur-Sitamarhi road to Public Works Department, the toll on Akharaghat pontoon bridge has been abolished. Now a cement concrete bridge has been put up at this place by the Public Works Department. Toll is still realised at Atherghat pontoon bridge. It is not possible to have an estimate of the volume of trade carried through these ferries as no statistics are maintained. Generally on each ferry, a *melnee* is maintained along with one or two *dakota* boats for the crossing of the passengers and regular traffic.

BRIDGES.

The important bridges are described as follows :—

- (i) *Cement concrete bridge over river Burhi Gandak.*—This bridge has been recently constructed at Akharaghat in place of the previous pontoon bridge over river Burhi Gandak under the supervision of the Public Works Department. The total cost of its construction is estimated to be 18 lakhs of rupees.
- (ii) *Pontoon bridge at Atherghat.*—This is also over river Burhi Gandak and was constructed in 1895. The cost of this bridge at that time was Rs. 91,000.
- (iii) *Buniyadganj girder bridge.*—This bridge is over old Baghmata and was constructed by Messrs. Jessop and Co., Calcutta. The amount spent over its construction is not available.
- (iv) *Tabular girder bridge at Benibad.*—This bridge is also over old Baghmata called Siari. It is reported that this was originally constructed by the Maharaja of Darbhanga and was subsequently repaired after the Earthquake by the District Board.

• REST HOUSES.

There are Circuit Houses maintained by Government at Muzaffarpur, Sitamarhi and Hajipur. There is an Inspection Bungalow at Sitamarhi and a Youth Hostel at Vaisali. The District Board maintains a furnished Dak Bungalow at Muzaffarpur and also Inspection Bungalows at Hajipur, Gaighutty, Pupri, Dumra, Sitamarhi and Lowton. The District Board also maintains Rest Houses at Sahebganj, Aurai, Sursand and Sheohar, for the benefit of the out-door staff of the District Board. Food has to be arranged for at all these places. The reasons for a much lesser number of Inspection Bungalows in this district have been given before.

There are *dharamshalas* at Muzaffarpur, Sitamarhi, Hajipur, Pupri and Bairagnia founded by philanthropists where free lodging is available. The Muzaffarpur Municipality maintains one *sarai* or rest-shed at Muzaffarpur. Hotel accommodation is available at Muzaffarpur, Sitamarhi and Hajipur but the standard is very low. There are wayside eating places on all the principal roads where some sort of lodging is also available.

RAILWAYS.

The civil district of Muzaffarpur is served with four-meter gauge lines, namely,—

- (a) Hajipur-Muzaffarpur-Samastipur trunk line.
- (b) Hajipur-Bachhwara main line (chord),
- (c) Samastipur-Narkatiaganj main line, and
- (d) Muzaffarpur-Narkatiaganj main line *via* Motibari.

This Railway was first established by the Tirhut State Railway and the name was changed on the 18th July 1890 to Bengal and North-Western Railway. It was renamed on the 1st January, 1943 as the Oudh Tirhut Railway. The name was again changed to North-Eastern Railway on the 14th April, 1952 when the zonal system was adopted and a regional headquarters was established at Muzaffarpur.

The Railway system in the district is distributed as follows:—

- (a) The trunk line *via* Muzaffarpur enters the district after the Gandak river between Sonapore and Hajipur and leaves the district after Dholi railway station. It serves important places as Sarai, Goraul, Bhagwanpur, Turki, Kurhani, Muzaffarpur and Dholi.
- (b) The main line (chord) between Hajipur and Bachhwara starts from Hajipur and leaves the district at the bridge between Mahnar Road and Shahpur Patoree railway station. It serves the area of Hajipur subdivision which runs along the Gandak.

- (c) The main line Samastipur to Narkatiaganj enters the district after Jogiara station and passing through Sitamarhi leaves the district after Bairagnia station. It serves the important places of Pupri, Sitamarhi and Riga. The name of the station for Pupri is Janakpur Road. From this station a District Board road leads to Janakpur, a place of pilgrimage in Nepal territory.
- (d) The main line Muzaffarpur to Narkatiaganj starts from Muzaffarpur and leaves the district after Mahwal station. It serves the area of Kanti and Motipur.

The total mileage of the Railway system in the district is 137. Considerable improvements have been made in providing amenities for the travelling public in the trains and at the railway stations since the publication of last Gazetteer. These include provision of platforms, benches, drinking water taps, hand pumps, additional booking windows, planting of shady trees and pan type latrines on the stations on Hajipur-Bachhwara section and provision of additional benches, lighting arrangements, drinking water arrangements, raised platforms, additional booking facilities, planting of shady trees at most of the stations on the other trunk and main lines. Platform shelters have been provided at Hajipur, Muzaffarpur and Dholi stations. Improvements to waiting rooms at Hajipur, Goraul, Muzaffarpur and Jogiara have been made. Bathing cubicles have been provided at Muzaffarpur railway station. There is scope for further amenities to the passengers.*

Through Railway the agricultural products are sent out from Sitamarhi, Pupri (Janakpur Road railway station), Muzaffarpur, Hajipur, Desari and Mahnar. The manufactured goods and iron materials are brought through the railway to Hajipur, Muzaffarpur, Sitamarhi and Pupri (Janakpur Road railway station).

The Railway also helps import and export with Nepal. Commodities imported to Nepal are salt, iron, mustard oil, lime, cotton piece goods, brass, from Janakpur Road station and cement, coal, and empty gunny bags from Bairagnia railway station, whereas commodities exported from Nepal include tea and mixed grains to Hajipur, linseeds, rice, paddy, jute to Janakpur Road and grains, hides, oil-seeds and oil-cake to Bairagnia.

The district of Muzaffarpur is famous for several places of pilgrimage and religious festivals. The most important religious festival is that of *Kartik Purnima mela* which takes place on both the sides of river Gandak at Sonapore in the district of Saran and at Hajipur in the district of Muzaffarpur. The Railways cater for *mela* traffic. Other important festivals catered by the railway include

*The O. T. Railway was commonly described as the 'Old and Tired' Railway because of the enormous delays that had become common. There is scope for more trains running to scheduled timings. Roof-riding owing to congestion is not an uncommon sight.

Ramnavmi Fair at Sitamarhi and Janakpur Road, *Bhagwati Bridge* Fair at Dheng and Bairagnia, *Basant Pachmi* Fair at Janakpur Road and Sitamarhi and *Haldi Mela* at Motipur.

The main railway stations are Muzaffarpur, Hajipur, Sitamarhi and Bairagnia. Details of daily average traffic for these stations are given below :—

Name of stations.	Average number of passengers booked daily outward.	Average daily sale-proceeds of tickets sold.	Average number of passengers received daily.	Average quantity of goods booked outward.	Average quantity of goods received daily.	Remarks.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
		Rs.		Maunds.	Maunds.	
Muzaffarpur	41,361	7,366	4,307	229	8,567	80,000 baskets of litchies (average) are booked from this station for destinations in North Bihar and Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal and Assam by parcel during the litchi season yearly.
Hajipur ...	1,412	1,038	1,500	847	1,393	
Sitamarhi	1,341	1,490	736	2,100	4,000	
Bairagnia	560	880	440	825	721	

The inward and outward traffic in goods commodities to other stations of Muzaffarpur civil district is as follows :—

Name of station.	Average quantity of goods received daily.	Average quantity of goods booked outward daily.
	Mds.	Mds.
1. Bidupur	61	184
2. Chak Sikandar	7	18
3. Desari	315	155
4. Sahdai Buzurg	5	18
5. Mahnar Road	308	272
6. Sarai	15	25
7. Bhagwanpur	1,001	533
8. Goraul	7,025	1,450

MUZAFFARPUR.

Name of station.	Average quantity of goods received daily.	Average quantity of goods booked out- ward daily.
	Mds.	Mds.
9. Kurhani	300	100
10. Turki	19	40
11. Silout	25	50
12. Dholi	500	200
13. Jogiana	1	4
14. Janakpur Road	2,357	6,524
15. Bajpatti	10	300
16. Riga	1,400	1,967
17. Dheng	20	17
18. Kanti	Nil	3,000 (Sugar- cane).
19. Motipur	1,580	3,197
20. Mahwal	5	5

AVIATION.

Muzaffarpur is the first district in the State of Bihar to have private pilots who owned their planes. The first plane was brought to Muzaffarpur by Mr. Bhabadev Mukherjee in the decade 1920—30. Later Mr. Fairweather who owned an automobile concern in Muzaffarpur had his own plane and his services as a pilot were of great help immediately after the great Bihar Earthquake. In the forties Mr. H. M. Weatherall of Messrs. Arthur Butler and Co., and Mr. Corbett, a businessman also had their own planes. Ex-Squadron-leader Majithia who bought the automobile concern of Mr. Fairweather brought his own plane to Muzaffarpur. It is from Muzaffarpur that in 1949 Mr. H. M. Weatherall and Ex-Squadron-leader Majithia negotiated the first successful air trip from Muzaffarpur to Kathmandu in a "Bonanza" and theirs was the first plane to land on the soil of Nepal when she alighted at the improvised airstrip on a football field at Kathmandu. These private aviators had popularised aviation in Muzaffarpur district.

Muzaffarpur has been put on the air map of India for civil aviation from time to time. There was one air service of Nalanda Airways between Patan and Muzaffarpur but after a short existence the Nalanda Airways stopped their service. The Bharat Airways linked up Muzaffarpur for sometime in their Calcutta and Kathmandu route. At the moment Muzaffarpur is connected by air in the route between Calcutta-Muzaffarpur-Patna-Kathmandu route of the Air Lines Corporation. By air the journey from Muzaffarpur to Patna takes about 20 minutes as against six hours by the train. Calcutta could be reached in 2 hours by air from Muzaffarpur while the train journey will take more than 15 hours. The present bottle-neck of goods

traffic at Mokamehghat, should encourage an air freighter service to Muzaffarpur from Calcutta and Patna. The neighbouring district of Darbhanga has a freighter air service from Calcutta to Darbhanga.

There is one landing ground at Patahi, six miles off from Muzaffarpur on Muzaffarpur-Rewaghat road. This landing ground is being modernised for an all-year round air service. The present airstrip has no proper terminal building or all-weather runway. Small planes can land in the *maidan* known as Race-course in the town of Muzaffarpur. There is also one landing ground for small planes at Dumra at a distance of 3 miles of Sitamathi railway station.

MOTOR TRANSPORT SERVICE.

There is no regular limited company to run the buses or trucks lines. Excepting the Ganga Motor Service of Muzaffarpur there is no other motor service owning a large number of buses. Private persons having one or two buses have been given permits for running the services. A list of routes showing bus services will be found later. There has been no nationalisation of the transport services in Muzaffarpur district so far. The bus and truck transport is administered through the North Bihar Regional Transport Authority with the Commissioner of the Tirhut Division as the Chairman. The number of buses plying in the district is nearly one hundred and of trucks nearly three hundred. The number is going up rapidly.

POSTS, TELEGRAPHS, TELEPHONES AND WIRELESS.

There are 41 post offices and 408 branch post offices in the district. About 3,010 square miles are served by the sub and branch offices. The details of the working of the post offices in the district of Muzaffarpur for 1952 are given below :—

Details.

1. Total number of postal articles ...	1,04,45,376 nos.	
including letters, packets, news papers, parcels delivered.		
		Amount.
2. Total value of money orders issued in the Muzaffarpur district. ...	Rs. 98,02,597-15-5.	
3. Total value of money orders paid in the Muzaffarpur district. ...	Rs. 2,20,23,110-13-10.	
4. Total value of Savings Banks deposits ...	Rs. 76,07,109-10-3.	
5. Total value of Savings Banks withdrawals. ...	Rs. 72,54,835-10-8.	
6. Total value of National Savings Certificates deposits. ...	Rs. 9,38,660-0-0.	

Details.	Amount.
7. Total value of National Savings Certificates discharged. ...	Rs. 1,66,640-11-0.
8. Total value of 5-year Cash Certificates discharged. ...	Rs. 57,447-11-0.
9. Total number of registered parcels posted. ...	12,463 nos.
10. Total number of registered insured parcels posted. ...	2,245 nos.
11. Total number of registered letters and packets posted. ...	1,89,544 nos.
12. Total number of registered insured letters posted. ...	6,562 nos.
13. Total number of V. P. parcels posted ...	7,280 nos.
14. Total number of V. P. letters and packets received for delivery. ...	16,515 nos.
15. Total number of V. P. letters and packets posted for despatch. ...	8,922 nos.
16. Total number of messages received for delivery. ...	Figures not available as H. O. is a non-combined office.
17. Total number of messages booked ...	Figures not available as H. O. is a non-combined office.
18. The areas from where the bulk of money orders come. ...	From West Bengal specially from Calcutta and Assam.
19. The areas where the bulk of money orders are sent for payment. ...	Bombay, Madras, Chapra and Patna.

In 1952 there were 635 radio sets and the amount of license fee realised was Rs. 17,920. From the small number of the radio sets it cannot be said that radios have become popular in the district.

There are 27 telegraph offices but the figures of telegrams sent out or received are not available.

Muzaffarpur town is well served with telephones for both local and trunk calls. The board which was originally meant for 100 connections has been increased to 300 connections recently. There is no telephone exchange at Hajipur or Sitamarhi but public call offices have been recently established at both the places.

Muzaffarpur and the subdivisional headquarters of Sitamarhi and Hajipur are connected by wireless for administrative purpose.

BUS ROUTES IN MUZAFFARPUR DISTRICT.

- (1) Muzaffarpur-Bedauli *via* Daudnagar and Amwara.
- (2) Muzaffarpur-Daudnagar.
- (3) Muzaffarpur-Darbhanga *via* Benibad.
- (4) Muzaffarpur-Darbhanga *via* Pusa.
- (5) Muzaffarpur-Samastipur.
- (6) Muzaffarpur-Motihari *via* Mehsi and Chakia.
- (7) Muzaffarpur-Sitamarhi.
- (8) Muzaffarpur-Sheohar.
- (9) Muzaffarpur-Sursand *via* Sitamarhi.
- (10) Muzaffarpur-Sonbersa.
- (11) Muzaffarpur-Belsund *via* Runisaidpur.
- (12) Muzaffarpur-Katra *via* Runisaidpur and Aurai.
- (13) Muzaffarpur-Katra *via* Benibad.
- (14) Muzaffarpur-Sahebganj.
- (15) Muzaffarpur-Fatehabad *via* Basaitha.
- (16) Muzaffarpur-Bakhra.
- (17) Muzaffarpur-Basaitha.
- (18) Muzaffarpur-Vaishali.
- (19) Muzaffarpur-Rewaghat.
- (20) Muzaffarpur-Jaffarpur-Paro.
- (21) Muzaffarpur-Motihari *via* Sahebganj.
- (22) Muzaffarpur-Dharfari.
- (23) Muzaffarpur-Hajipur-Mahua-Muzaffarpur.
- (24) Muzaffarpur-Mahua.
- (25) Sitamarhi-Sursand.
- (26) Sitamarhi-Sonbersa.
- (27) Sitamarhi-Sheohar.
- (28) Sitamarhi-Bella.
- (29) Belsand-Riga *via* Sitamarhi Court.
- (30) Hajipur-Lalganj.