

## Education and Dissemination of Knowledge in Colonial Bihar: 1765-1900

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This is an unusually comprehensive paper which aim sat examining a specific but generalized historical problem, within a holistic and interdisciplinary analysis of two locales (Patna and Bhagalpur Districts, Bihar Province/State) between 1765 and 1900. The historical problem is the consensual assumption that British colonial education played a largely positive role in India during the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, as it was considered constituting the introduction of “modern education” to the subcontinent. To reassess this assumption, this paper analyses colonial policies on education and how it impacted the indigenous/informal centres of learning, within practical limits, of Patna and Bhagalpur Districts over the period 1765 to 1900, thus allowing the experience of colonial education after 1835<sup>1</sup> to be interpreted. During the eighteenth century, in addition to this statutory limit, a handful of missionary charity schools were opened, mostly in South India, which were indirectly helped by local Company employees, and with public subscriptions.<sup>2</sup> With the growth of territorial responsibilities, between 1765 and 1815, the Company became fearful of the impact of Christian missionaries on the new subject populations. A policy of religious neutrality therefore became politically expedient. This policy was conveniently reinforced by a growing fascination with the late eighteenth century discoveries, and diffusion in Europe, of Indian philosophies, texts and languages. Those Europeans who were appreciative of this intellectual heritage, the Orientalists, barely outnumbered the pro missionary lobby in the 1793 Charter renewal debates (the Company's

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<sup>1</sup>The choice of pre-colonial practices as a baseline was determined from two considerations. First, British colonial education began to take an institutional form in the district after 1835. Therefore, in order to measure and understand the consequences of this event, a baseline prior to 1835 was needed. Secondly, a major source for understanding early nineteenth century Bihar society, including education, is the 1811 description by Francis Buchanan. Francis Buchanan (later Hamilton) (1762-1829), the physician and natural historian, conducted a seven year de tailed “statistical survey” (1807-1814) covering the modern Bihar, Bengal, and Uttar Pradesh districts of Rangpur, Jalpaiguri, Dinajpur, part of Bogra, Maldah, Purnea, Bhagalpur, Santhal Parganas, Monghyr, Patna, Gaya, Shahabad, and Gorakpur. The final product consisted of thirty-seven folio volumes. None was published before his death. In 1838, Robert Montgomery Martin published three volumes of excerpts covering all these districts without crediting Buchanan as the sole source. See Montgomery Martin, *The History, Antiquities, Topography, and Statistics of Eastern India*, (London, 1838).

<sup>2</sup>N. N. Law, *The Promotion of Learning in India by Early European Settlers (Up to About 1800 A.D.)*, (London, 1915),

Charter was formally renewed every twenty years). Through tense debate in the House of Commons, the Orientalist position in the Company's Court of Directors was carried, saying:

The Hindus have as good a system of faith and of morals as most people and that it will be madness to attempt their conversion or to give them any more learning or any other description of learning than what they already possess.<sup>3</sup>

We have lost our colonies in America by imparting our education there; we need not do so in India too.<sup>4</sup>

With comparatively fewer uses and cultural compulsions for literacy after the eclipse of Buddhism in the twelfth century, than many other agrarian societies (China, Japan), the pre-colonial patterns of indigenous education were small-scale schools and domestic tutoring. The cultural character of this pre-colonial patterns were profoundly influenced by the Hindu tradition of renunciation, of which the act of studentship (brahmacharya) was a symbolic version. Teachers, as representatives of renunciation, carried a moral authority that could confer political legitimacy and reproduce traditional values in the political economy. The political economy, or raja-praja system, was undermined after 1793 by the act of formalizing hitherto customary land-use rights. This caused long-term interference, real and perceived, in the local authority spheres of land controllers (patrons), exploding in the 1930s with increased client assertiveness. This role and cultural meaning of indigenous education was severely affected by the spread of colonial education which institutionalised thereby crystalizing preindustrial, literary education by 1854, henceforth becoming increasingly tied to the imbalanced colonial economy. In a dialectical manner, patrons both supported colonial

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<sup>3</sup>H. Sharp, *Selections from Educational Records: Part I, 1781-1839*, (Calcutta, 1920); reprinted 1965, p. 1, 22.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid*, p. 23.

education as ritual adoption of colonial rule and opposed it as undermining local authority; they also both favoured indigenous education as it reproduced traditional values in the political economy and opposed its expansion because it also undermined local authority. With this dialectical neutralization of patrons, the increasing assertiveness of clients, who supported both kinds of education, propelled the expansion of literacy.

### **Dissemination of Knowledge in the Localities of Bhagalpur**

Bhagalpur was one of the oldest districts under the rule of the East India Company. A 'Committee of Circuit' was constituted by the Company's government for the settlement of the district for revenue collection. The committee divided the district into Bhagalpur and Rajmahal, on 4 May 1773, the later also being called Greater Bhagalpur. In the Greater Bhagalpur district, a Diwani Adalat as well as a Faujdari Adalat with sair duties<sup>5</sup>, those of revenue collection were established.<sup>6</sup>After the Battle of Buxar (1765), the East India Company occupied the Diwani of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa. In 1769, a series of Muslim governors were terminated and an Englishman named William Harwood was appointed the first supervisor with headquarters at Rajmahal to superintend the local collection of revenue.<sup>7</sup>After a few years, a direction from Fort William, the office of the East India Company, was received by Harwood to deliver over the charge of Bhagalpur to James Barton. On 4 May 1773, James Barton, reported that he had taken over charge of the Collectorate from Harwood as a collector of Rajmahal and Bhagalpur.<sup>8</sup>After Barton, Augustus Cleveland succeeded as collector of Bhagalpur district and continued to hold office till his death, i.e. from 20 November 1779 till 13 January 1784.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>5</sup>Sair duties: Revenue accruing to the government in addition to the Land Tax, from a variety of imposts, as Customs, Transit Duties, License Fees, House Tax, Market Tax, and so on.

<sup>6</sup>Press List of Ancient Documents preserved in the Secretariat Record Room of the Government of Bengal, Revenue Department, volume 3; 13 October 1772 to 30th December 1774, Calcutta, Bengal Secretariat Press, 1915, p. 81.

<sup>7</sup>P. C. Roy Choudhary, *Bihar District Gazetteers*, Bhagalpur, 1962, Patna, p.51.

<sup>8</sup>K. K. Datta (ed.), *The Comprehensive History of Bihar*, volume 3, part 2, Patna, 1976, p. 388, Kashi Prasad Jayaswal

Before 1 April 1912, Bihar was not a separate State. It was under the Bengal Government, which makes Bhagalpur one of the oldest districts of the Company. Pre-colonial Bhagalpur had followed the indigenous method of education. Francis Buchanan has referred to a number of Persian and Arabic institutions in Bhagalpur.<sup>10</sup> However, the new awakening in Bhagalpur in the early nineteenth century, produced by the import of British rule and western education, brought in its wake the desire to bring a new enlightenment. 'The eighteenth century was a passage from darkness to light'<sup>11</sup> and as such, the period was of great significance in relation to the social and educational movements. The reputation of the Indians regarding their quest for higher knowledge and learning goes back to the days of remote antiquity. Indeed, as F. W. Thomas has observed 'there is no country where the love of learning had so early an origin or has exercised so lasting and powerful an influence'.<sup>12</sup> Charles H. Heimsath has argued that 'the social reform movement was uniquely a result of English education'.<sup>13</sup>

### **Bhagalpur madrasa**

Maulana Shahbaz a native of Bihar founded the Bhagalpur *madrasa*, during the reign of Jahangir (1605-1627).<sup>14</sup> He was a man of vast learning and soon gathered round him about 200 pupils who were supported from the funds of the madrasa.<sup>15</sup> He died at the beginning of the reign of Shahjahan (1628-1658) and was succeeded in the superintendent ship of the madrasa by his sons one by one, who kept

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<sup>9</sup>Press List of Ancient Documents, op. cit., p. 155.

<sup>10</sup>K. K. Datta (ed.), *Selection from the Judicial Records of the Bhagalpur District Office (1772 – 1805)*, Patna, 1968, Introduction, p. VIII, published under the authority of State Central Record Office, Political Department, Bihar, Patna. See also K. K. Datta (ed.), *A Handbook of Bhagalpur District Revenue Records: 1774-1855*, Patna, 1975, Introduction, Superintendent Secretariat Press, Patna p. I.

<sup>11</sup>S. P. Sen (ed.), *Studies in Modern Indian History: A Regional Survey*, Institute of Historical Studies, Calcutta, 1969, p. 185.

<sup>12</sup>F. W. Thomas, *The History and Prospects of British Education in India*, Deighton Bell and Co., Cambridge, 1891.

<sup>13</sup>Charles H. Heimsath, *Indian Nationalism and Hindu Social Reform*, Oxford University Press, Bombay. 1964, p. 47.

<sup>14</sup>Jata Shankar Jha, *Education in Bihar (1813 – 1859)*, Kashi Prasad Jayaswal Research Institute, Patna, 1979, p. 13.

<sup>15</sup>K. K. Datta (ed.), *The Comprehensive History of Bihar*, 1976, p. 387.

up the tradition of their father and ran the institution on an efficient footing. By the time of Muhammad Asim, a grandson of Shah-baz, the madrasa was turned into a fraternity of learned and religious people. His eldest son Maulvi Muhammad Muwahid succeeded Muhammad Abid.<sup>16</sup>In Bhagalpur district, there were at least three renowned teachers who instructed the students both in Persian and Arabic. Muhammad Faik of Bhagalpur belonged to a family of which 20 persons were called maulvis. Their houses were themselves called madrasas. Muhammad Hayat of Bhajua was also a great patron of learning. Both Muhammad Faik and Muhammad Hayat were Qazis, but so great was their love for teaching that each of them had employed an assistant to enable them to instruct the youth.<sup>17</sup>Persian was the official language under the Mughal government and it continued to be so for a considerable time, i.e. till 1837, during the British government. Naturally, those wishing to pursue a career in the government must possess a fair knowledge of Persian.

### **Bhagalpur Hill School**

In 1813, by the Charter Act of the British Parliament, a provision for the sum of one lac rupees to be spent annually for the revival and improvement of literature and the encouragement of the learned Indians was made.<sup>18</sup>In Bihar, however, the Bhagalpur Hill School was the only institution, which was then maintained at the government's cost. No serious attempts were made to establish a government institution in Patna before 1835, the only government educational institution during this period in Bihar being the Bhagalpur Hill School. It was established in 1823 with a view to impart elementary education to the recruits and children of the soldiers from the Rajmahal hills.<sup>19</sup>Francis Buchanan mentions about the school thus:

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<sup>16</sup>Jata Shankar Jha, *Education in Bihar (1813 – 1859)*, 1979, op. cit., pp. 13–14.

<sup>17</sup>K. K. Datta (ed.), *The Comprehensive History of Bihar*, 1976, op. cit., pp. 388–389.

<sup>18</sup>Ibid., p. 360.

<sup>19</sup>Jata Shankar Jha, *Education in Bihar (1813 – 1859)*, 1979, op. cit., p. 59.

‘With a view to increase the efficiency of the Corps of Rangers, and to promote the happiness and civilization of the hill people, a school was established for them at Bhagalpur. Augustus Cleveland, the collector of Bhagalpur, originally set this school on foot and Lord Warren Hastings revived it. The school situated within the lines, provided an accommodation for about 350 scholars, including 230 or 250 young sepoy of the Corps, and about 80 children who were relations of the native officers and sepoy, residing in the lines waiting for vacancies in the Corps. Captain Graham of the Hill Rangers, an intelligent officer, was appointed to the charge of the school and he drew up regulations for its internal management’.<sup>20</sup>

The Bhagalpur Hill School was thus established with the express purpose of promoting efficiency of the Corps of Hill Rangers. It was also hoped that such a school would not only educate the Hill Sepoy and their children but also contribute to the 'civilization' of the Hill people by attracting boys, the sons of chiefs and others, from the Hill for the purpose of acquiring the rudiments (the first principles of a subject) of knowledge.<sup>21</sup> Previous to the enlargement of the corps of Hill Rangers, in the month of March 1825, only a third of the students on the institution were sepoy. Although the superintendent, Captain J.Graham, wished that a greater portion of them should benefit by the institution, a larger number could not be spared owing to the then weak state of the Battalion.<sup>22</sup> The books taught in the Bhagalpur Hill School were the Hindi Spelling Book and Hindustani Arithmetic, Bell's Instructions, Stewart's Historical Anecdotes and Tales and Rajniti.<sup>23</sup> In the Persian class, the books taught were Punaanameh, Khosalsema, Amadnama and Bostan.<sup>24</sup> The Persian class was

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<sup>20</sup>P.C. Roy Choudhary, *Bihar District Gazetteers*, 1962, op. cit., p. 485.

<sup>21</sup>Report on the Proceedings of the General Committee of Public Instruction (GCPI), dated 27 October 1831.

<sup>22</sup>From J. Graham to the Local Committee of Superintendence of the Bhagalpur Hill School, dated 1 July 1826.

<sup>23</sup>Copybook of letters received and issued by the GCPI, vol. 3, Report on the progress made by the scholars at the Government Hill School Bhagalpur, dated 1 June 1826, pp. 450–462.

<sup>24</sup>J. Graham's letter to the Local Committee of Public Instruction (LCPI), dated 1 July 1826.

abolished towards the close of 1828.<sup>25</sup> An English class was opened in January 1829.<sup>26</sup> By the J.Graham's recommendations the adoption of the Hindustani language in Kaithee or Devanagari alphabets and promotion of students to an English class by way of encouragement took place.<sup>27</sup>

In the year 1841, Bhagalpur Hill School showed marked improvement in the school. In the annual public examination, which was held on the 23 December 1840, the progress of the students gave general satisfaction to the members of the local committee.<sup>28</sup> Following were the members of the local committee of the Bhagalpur Hill School, most of them also being members of the Bhagalpur government school, G.T. Brown, R. Williams, H.F. James, T. Leckie and Major J. Graham (Superintendent).<sup>29</sup> The credit for the success of the institution was given to its headmaster, Guru CharanMitter.<sup>30</sup> The school continued to make good progress during the period under the guidance of Guru CharanMitter. In December 1844, Captain W.G.Don, secretary and superintendent of the school, suggested to the government the award of half-yearly prizes for ensuring further regularity of attendance.<sup>31</sup>

Meanwhile, the question of combining the Hill School with the Bhagalpur government school came under the serious consideration of the authorities. C.Ridge, the headmaster of the Bhagalpur government school, was transferred to Bauleah, after the death of the headmaster of the Bauleah School, Babu Sharda Prasad Bose, in December 1844, and Babu Guru CharanMitter of the Bhagalpur Hill School was appointed as headmaster of the combined school.<sup>32</sup>

But the arrangement of the combined school did not appear to meet the requirements of the hill students. In March 1854, the Council of Education submitted to the government an application from

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<sup>25</sup>J. Graham's letter to A. Stirling, Secretary to the Government in the Persian Department, dated 13 August 1829.

<sup>26</sup>Jata Shankar Jha, *Education in Bihar (1813 – 1859)*, 1979, op. cit., p. 79.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid., p. 80.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., p. 131.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., p. 168.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., p. 131.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid., pp. 191-192.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid., p. 193.

the Local Committee of Public Instruction at Bhagalpur suggesting the transfer of hill boys from the government school to the missionary institution under Rev.Droese of the Church Missionary Society (CMS), a mission which was situated in close proximity to the Hill Rangers Lines and which, in the opinion of the committee, was 'better adapted to the minds and habits of the hill people'.<sup>33</sup> The proposal was accepted by the government and Rev.Droese was sanctioned Rs. 25 per month for the mess establishment and a subsistence allowance.<sup>34</sup>

In April 1850, Rev.Droese and his wife reached Narga (near Champanagar), where the Bishop of Bhagalpur's compound is now situated. Rev.Droese leased some land at Champanagar, on the outskirts of Bhagalpur, which now forms part of the Bishop's compound (confirm), and by the end of 1853 had built a bungalow. Before Droese arrived in Bhagalpur, a school had been started for the children of the paharia(Hill) soldiers, and he soon found that the 'Paharia were more responsive than the people of other races whom he met'. Droese was one of the early pioneers of education in Bhagalpur. A girl's school started by Droese's wife met with difficulties as some pupils of other castes left when 'paharia girls' started to attend. These girls came from the families of paharia soldiers belonging to the Corps of Hill Rangers.<sup>35</sup>

### **Vernacular Schools**

The district of Bhagalpur had been allotted three vernacular schools with an instruction that one of them should be established 'in some locality in the vicinity of Rajmahal Hills'.<sup>36</sup> Sahibganj was accordingly selected as the place where children of the hill people and inhabitants of Hari Prasad Dearah, a populous village in the neighborhood, could easily attend.<sup>37</sup> The other two places selected for

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<sup>33</sup>General Department, General Branch, Educational Proceedings No. 100, dated 17 August 1857.

<sup>34</sup>Jata Shankar Jha, *Education in Bihar (1813 – 1859)*, 1979, p. 194.

<sup>35</sup>P. C. Roy Choudhary, *Bihar District Gazetteers*, 1962, op.cit., pp. 113-114.

<sup>36</sup>From the Commissioner of the Bhagalpur Division to the Collector of Bhagalpur, dated 24 February 1845.

<sup>37</sup>From the Collector of Bhagalpur to the Commissioner of the Bhagalpur Division, dated 9 April 1845.



the purpose of opening schools were Bhagalpur town and Supaul. The authorities hoped to receive liberal assistance from the respectable inhabitants of those places. During the first year of the inauguration of the scheme, G. W. Batty, the collector, and his successor, C. D. Russel, made known the wishes of government to the people by direct communication with the more influential local gentlemen, and through the amlahs and mokhtears of the court. The commissioner of Bhagalpur also addressed personal letters to several local zamindars explaining the intention of the government and soliciting their aid. But with great difficulty a sum of Rs. 402 only could be collected till the month of April 1846.<sup>38</sup> As to the cause of unfavorable popular response, Russel reported thus: 'It is not in my power to give information further than I have heard that the sale of the Bungalow<sup>39</sup> which was built by public subscription purposely for a school has caused many to withhold assistance in the present instance'.<sup>40</sup> The bungalow that had been constructed for opening an English school was sold by public auction for Rs. 1840 in February 1845.

On 28 April 1846, however, the school at Bhagalpur was opened in the MynoodeniChak Mahalla (Mundichak Mahalla).<sup>41</sup> The other two schools could not be established owing to want of funds. In 1847, the progress of the school was greatly hampered by the arrest of Lala Sheo Sahay, a teacher, on the charge of complicity in a murder case. Kunj Behari Lal, who succeeded Lala Sheo Sahay as the schoolmaster, although well qualified, could not maintain the same progress. Large number students withdrew from the school with the result that their number came down from 63 in 1847, to 36 at the close of 1848.<sup>42</sup>

The existence of the missionary school in the town also affected the numerical strength of this

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<sup>38</sup>By the middle of 1847, the total subscription amounted to Rs. 1370 of which Maharaja Rudra Singh of Darbhanga contributed Rs. 600, cited from Jata Shankar Jha., *Education in Bihar (1813 – 1859)*, 1979, p. 267.

<sup>39</sup>The bungalow which had been constructed for opening an English school was sold by public auction for Rs. 1840 in February 1845, cited from *ibid.*, p. 267.

<sup>40</sup>Jata Shankar Jha., *Education in Bihar (1813 – 1859)*, 1979, op. cit., pp. 222-223

<sup>41</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 223; K. K. Datta, *The Comprehensive History of Bihar*, 1976, op. cit., p. 397.

<sup>42</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 223-224.

institution. The students of the missionary school not only got education gratis but also books. Naturally, the children of the lower classes mostly took resort in the missionary school. But nothing was done to improve the school and it was closed on the 4 July 1851. The schoolhouse was recommended by the collector to be handed over to Rev. Droese of the Church Missionary Society for using it as a missionary school.<sup>43</sup>

In 1813, as mentioned earlier, by a Charter Act of the British Parliament, a provision for a sum of one Lac of rupees had been made to be spent annually for the revival and improvement of literature and the encouragement of the learned Indians. This particular Act also envisaged the introduction and promotion of the knowledge of science among the people of British India. Various plans were accordingly submitted for the consideration of the government. For nearly a decade, no substantial progress could be made in the absence of suitable machinery to take up the work. In 1823, therefore, the General Committee of Public Instruction (GCPI) was set up to administer the educational grants and to supervise the working of the few existing government educational institutions.<sup>44</sup>

This arrangement (GCPI) continued till 1842, when certain considerations led the government to replace it by Council of Education, which was divested of some important powers. The Council of Education was dissolved on the creation of the Education department in 1854.<sup>45</sup> The educational policy of the government had undergone a tremendous change owing to the domineering influence of the Occidentalists headed by T. B. Macaulay in the General Committee of Public Instruction. The famous Resolution of 7 March 1835 of Lord Bentinck laid down that all government funds for educational purposes were to be employed thereafter on English education alone.<sup>46</sup>

Persian was the official language under the Mughal government and it continued to be so for a considerable time mid 1830s, i.e. during the rule of the British government too. Naturally those

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<sup>43</sup>From G.T. Brown, Commissioner of the Bhagalpur Division, to the Secretary to the Board of Revenue, letter no. 512, dated 23 March 1852.

<sup>44</sup>K. K. Datta, *The Comprehensive History of Bihar*, 1976, op. cit., pp. 360-361.

<sup>45</sup>Jata Shankar Jha, *Education in Bihar (1813 – 1859)*, 1979, op. cit., preface, p. III.

<sup>46</sup>K. K. Datta, *The Comprehensive History of Bihar*, 1976, op. cit., pp. 362-363.

wishing to pursue a career with the government must possess a fair knowledge of Persian. The British government, therefore, took certain measures to remove it and to promote the cause of English education. Accordingly, Persian was abolished as the court language in 1837.<sup>47</sup>

The Lieutenant Governor, George Campbell (1871 – 1874), made an extensive tour of Bihar in 1871 in order to be acquainted with its social and administrative problems. During this tour, he was surprised to observe that although Persian had been abolished as an official language of British India as far back as in 1837, it was still flourishing in full force both in the public offices and the schools of Bihar in the form of Persianised Urdu. He observed:

Persian (the language of former Rulers of India) was abolished as an official language before I came to this country; and in the early years of my service vigorous efforts were made to root out from our official proceedings the bastard hybrid language of which the old Persian writers were too fond. I thought this had been done with some success. I was astonished then, on lately visiting Bihar, to find that this bastard language was not only flourishing in its fullest force in our official proceedings, but that we were perpetuating it by teaching it in our schools. I have heard during this visit a language more debased and artificial than I have even heard before, or deemed possible; and I found that in all our so-called vernacular schools this monstrous language, if it can be called a language, is being taught by Maulvis instead of the Vernacular. Unfortunately, too, a pretext has been given for this practice by the introduction of the very inappropriate term Urdu. I believe that is a term chiefly introduced by the Bengal Educational Department, and I do not know that it has any definite meaning whatever; but so far as any meaning is attributed to it in books, it is the court and camp language of the Delhi country. I am determined to put a complete stop to the teaching of this language in our schools.<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>47</sup>Ibid., p. 411.

<sup>48</sup>Minute on the Teaching of the Vernacular Languages, dated 4 December 1871, Bengal, General (Miscellaneous) A, Proceedings, December 1871, no. 17-19; K. K. Datta (ed.), *The Comprehensive History of Bihar*, 1976, p. 210-11.

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One of the impacts of the Revolt of 1857 on the British Indian rulers was their realization of the necessity of having an easier and quicker means to know the native mind. The spread of vernacular education in the masses was, therefore, strongly emphasized. In Bihar, the teaching of vernacular turned out to be that of Urdu, also called Hindustani, written in Persian character. This was one major reason why schools opened by the government were not popular among the Bihari population, especially, among the Hindus there. An inevitable result of this antipathy was that nearly all the public employments in Bihar went into the hands of either the Muslims or the Bengalis.<sup>49</sup>

With the growth of territorial responsibilities, between 1765 and 1815, the Company became fearful of the impact of Christian missionaries on the new subject populations. Through tense debate in the House of Commons, the Orientalist position in the Company's Court of Directors was carried, concluding, that the Hindus have as good a system of faith and of morals as most people and that it will be madness to attempt their conversion or to give them any more learning or any other description of learning than what they already possess. They thought to have lost their colonies in America by imparting their education and need not do the same in India too. This caused long-term interference, real and perceived, in the local authority spheres of land controllers (patrons), exploding in the 1930s with increased client assertiveness. This role and cultural meaning of indigenous education was severely affected by the spread of colonial education which institutionalised, thereby crystalizing preindustrial, literary education by 1854, henceforth becoming increasingly tied to the imbalanced colonial economy. The committee divided the district into Bhagalpur and Rajmahal, on 4 May 1773, the later also being called Greater Bhagalpur. After the Battle of Buxar (1765), the East India Company occupied the Diwani of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa. Pre-colonial Bhagalpur had followed the indigenous method of education. The reputation of the Indians regarding their quest for higher knowledge and learning goes back to the days of remote antiquity. Maulana Shahbaz a native of Bihar founded the

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<sup>49</sup>K. K. Datta (ed.), *The Comprehensive History of Bihar*, 1976, pp. 208-209.

Bhagalpur madrasa, during the reign of Jahangir (1605-1627). He died at the beginning of the reign of Shahjahan (1628-1658) and was succeeded in the superintendentship of the madrasa by his sons one by one, who kept up the tradition of their father and ran the institution on an efficient footing. In 1813, by the Charter Act of the British Parliament, a provision for the sum of one lac rupees to be spent annually for the revival and improvement of literature and the encouragement of the learned Indians was made.

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