

History Of Patna University

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The educated Biharis became more vocal in their demand for a separate University. They pleaded that their dependence on a University outside the province did not cater to their educational needs. The chief organ of educated men of Bihar, *The Beharee* which had worked strenuously for the creation of a separate province, carried a campaign for the establishment of a University in the Bihar.¹

A meeting of the citizens was held at Patna in February 1912. The intellectuals in general and some political leaders participated in the meeting in which Mazharul Haque proposed that the new province of Bihar and Orissa should have a separate University of its own as soon as practicable. Meanwhile he wanted a proportionately adequate representation of the people of Bihar in the Senate and the Syndicate of the Calcutta University. Purnendu Narain Sinha seconded this resolution.²

The agitation for the establishment of a University engulfed the whole of Bihar. The residents of the Saran district assembled in a public meeting, under the presidentship of Durga Prasad Vakil on 26 June 1912 and passed a resolution demanding a University for the new province.⁴ Another public meeting under the presidentship of the Giddhour Maharaja was held on 19 July 1912 at Munger. This meeting was attended by the leading Zamindars, traders, merchants and pleaders of the district. Deep Narayan Singh of Bhagalpur, an old Congressman moved a resolution for the establishment of a University at Patna which was adopted with great enthusiasm.³

Sachchidanand Sinha raised the question of establishing a University at Patna in the Imperial Legislative Council at Calcutta. Harcourt Butler replied that the government was aware of the necessity of providing a university to the new province, but the opinion of the local-government in the matter was awaited.

Meanwhile the Lieutenant-Governor-in-Council of Bihar and Orissa was convinced that there was a strong and growing demand for a

separate University for the province. Charles Bayley proposed to constitute a representative committee with a view to the formulation of a definite scheme. The Committee's report would be examined and submitted for the consideration of the Government of India.

The Government of India approved of the proposal to appoint a Committee to consider the question of establishing a University at Patna. On 19 May 1913 the Government of Bihar announced that the Government of India had, on several occasions, explained the necessity of circumscribing the limits of universities in India and the desirability of the teaching and residential system of University.

The resolution of the Lieutenant-Governor-in-Council constituted the Patna University Committee, popularly known as the Nathan Committee, to frame a scheme for the establishment of a University at Patna.⁴

The committee which met at Bankipur (Patna) from 16 to 23 July 1913 to settle the main outlines of the scheme had two models before it: a federal university of the type established under the Act of 1857 and the Dacca model under which the whole university might be constructed at our centre. The report of the Dacca University Committee served as a basis for discussion. The President and several members of the committee visited Muzaffarpur, Bhagalpur and Cuttack, where schemes for local colleges were prepared with the aid of local advice. The committee held its last meeting on 15 and 16 December and outlined its final report.

The committee submitted its report in March 1914. The Government of Bihar and Orissa resolved on 19 March 1914 that this report of the committee now published, should be circulated for comments and advice. The copies of the report were forwarded to the newspapers, the leading associations of the province and interested persons. Comments were solicited by 31 May 1914.

The committee's scheme envisaged a central institution at Patna which would undertake the higher branches of instruction, conduct the examinations, supervise the general life and training of the students, and regulate the teaching and organization of a number of incorporated colleges. Some of these colleges would be in the University area, and others would be situated in different parts of the province. In the Central University, laboratories, lecture halls, and seminars, a library and a museum, and other similar facilities would be provided for the common use, while ample accommodation and opportunities would be afforded

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for all kinds of games, and for the various associations and social amenities which a University should encourage.⁵

The committee recommended that the University of Patna should contain the departments of Arts, Science, Sanskrit studies and Law, and a department for the training of teachers. The Central University and the external colleges would share between them the work of the department of Arts and Science. The more advanced studies were suggested to be concentrated in the Central University and the department of Sanskrit studies, Law and teaching would also be attached to the Central University. The Patna College, Bisheshwar (Bihar National) College, King's College, Mission College, Non-Collegiate Department, Sanskrit College, and Training College for teachers were included as Central instructions under the scheme of the Proposed University.

The committee included all the existing colleges under the new University, except the Diamond Jubilee College at Monger. The committee was convinced that this was a weak institution which would not flourish. So, this college was left out from the new University scheme.

The Patna College and the Bihar National College were to be shifted from Bankipur to the western part of the new capital. Therefore a site was selected. As the ordinary colleges accommodated the students of Law after passing the intermediate level examination, the law college was to cease to exist. The training college was to be divided into two branches, a college for the graduates being included in the University area and the existing college being reserved for the undergraduates who were henceforth to be eligible only for a departmental diploma or certificate.⁶

The provincial Government after getting the reactions on the report of the committee, sent its comments to the Government of India on 28 May 1915. The provincial Government suggested a separate University as soon as possible. The eagerness of the Biharis to have their own University could not be ignored.

The Patna University Bill was introduced in the Imperial Legislative Council by C. Sankaran Nair, the Member of Education in the Viceroy's Executive Council, on 27 September 1916, after the due examination of the scheme by the education department of the Government of India and the Secretary of state-in-Council.

In the bill the Chancellor was empowered to nominate 4 out of 16 members of the Syndicate. Of the ordinary Fellows 12 were to be

elected and the remainder (40 to 60) nominated by the Chancellor. The Vice-Chancellor was to be the principal executive officer of the University.⁷

The various protests made against the Patna University Bill were mainly with regard to the undue power vested in the local government, to the peculiar and unlimited powers given to the Vice-Chancellor and to the constitution of the Syndicate and the Senate. In the light of these criticisms, the Bill was modified in certain respects. But it is remarkable that for more than twenty years after the passing of the Act, Chotanagpur had to content with only one first grade and one second grade college, the Bhagalpur and Tirhut divisions with one college each and the Patna division with only three—one first grade and two second grade institutions.⁸

The Patna University Bill was referred to a Select Committee which modified the draft, increasing the popular control in the Senate. On 23 September 1917 the Bill as amended by the Select Committee, was passed unanimously by the Imperial Legislative Council. Thus Patna University Act came into force on 1 October 1917. But the University was actually inaugurated in November 1917.

The regulations of the new University were drafted on the pattern of the Calcutta University and were modified from time to time. Two important changes were made for the abolition of the age limit at the Matriculation stage and the institution of a system of Supplementary Examinations.

The new Act provided for “imparting education, of promoting original research, of examining students and conferring degrees, of admitting educational institutions to its privileges and of supervising and controlling the administration of colleges of the University in all matters of education and discipline and of inspecting and supervising external colleges.”⁹

The Governor of Bihar and Orissa was the Chancellor. He was empowered to nominate four persons to the Syndicate of whom not less than two should be the members of the University staff or of the teaching staff of the colleges. The Vice-Chancellor as a whole time officer would be appointed by the local government for five years. He might be reappointed after the first term. The Vice-Chancellor would be charged with due carrying out of the provisions of this Act and of the Regulations.¹⁰

The Act was amended time to time to suit the special needs and sometimes to meet administrative expediency. But the basic principle underlying the Act, namely, that the University should be both an affiliating and a teaching one, remained unchanged for a long time.

The new University had no building of its own. It was allowed to function in a wing of the recently built High Court building at Patna. The meetings of the Faculties used to be held in the Hall of the New College. The Senate used to meet in the Conference Room of the Secretariat. The distance between these places was about five miles.

Later the office of the University was shifted to a building near the Golghar. The Convocation used to be held in the Durbar Hall in the Government House (now Raj Bhawan) before the construction of the Wheeler Senate Houses.

The Governor of Bihar and Orissa who also functioned as the Chancellor of the University, invited the Vice-Chancellor and the members of the Senate to an inaugural meeting in the Durbar Hall of Government House on 8 December 1917. The members of the Senate were mostly nominated by the Chancellor. The enlightened persons of the province like Rajendra Prasad, Ali Imam, Syed Hasan Imam, Sachchidanand Sinha, Jwala Prasad, RaiBahadurDwarka Nath, RaiBahadurPurnenduNarain Sinha, Khan Bahadur Syed Mohammed Fakhr-ud-din, and scholars like Oldham, Ramavatar Sharma, RaiBahadurJogesh Chandra Roy, R. P. Khosla, D. N. Sen, Sarat Chandra Ray and JogendranathSamaddar adorned the first Senate of the Patna University.

The post-graduate work was conducted directly under the new University and not under the college authorities. The University was able to avail itself of the voluntary help of the college employees, who might be appointed as University lecturers. First a few lecturers in M. A. (Economics) and M. A. (History) were appointed from among the teaching staff of the Patna College. Then came proposals for increasing the number of University lecturers. Four University Readers were also to be appointed.¹¹

The Regulations drafted by the Vice-Chancellor and approved by the Senate and the Provincial Government provided four faculties, namely Arts, Science, Law and Education. Medicine had lately been added along with Engineering. J. G. Jennings organized the University as the first Vice-Chancellor and he discharged his duties with great

ability and sincerity and in a conciliatory spirit. This disarmed much hostile criticism.

The various University bodies were active from the very first year. The Senate called into existence the whole code of Regulations. The faculties, aided by the twenty Boards of Studies prescribed the courses in all the subjects for the examinations of 1920 or in some cases 1919 or 1921. With the aid of the twenty Boards of examiners the first University examination was held in 1918 not only for B. A. but also for M. A. in History and Economics as well as for the Bachelor in Law degree.¹²

The Patna University had jurisdiction over the whole of Bihar and Orissa. The Nepal Government requested the Patna University through the India government to grant affiliation to a college to be established in Nepal and Darbar High School. A request was also made for the recognition of the *Parbatia* language as a vernacular for the purposes of University examination.

The Vice-Chancellor wrote to the Under Secretary of the Government: "Under Section 27 of the Indian University's Act, 1904 the Government of India prescribed the territorial limits of each University. The jurisdiction of the Calcutta University extended to Bengal, Burma and Assam."¹³

By a resolution the University indicated its willingness to accept students of the Nepal College as private students for the B.A. examination of the Patna University provided they would sit for the examination at centers in Bihar and Orissa.¹⁴

The Bihar and Orissa Government informed the Government of India that the Syndicate of the Patna University was willing to accept the students of the Tribhuvan College for the B. A. examination of the Patna University.

The year 1927 might also be considered a milestone in Science teaching of the University. The Science teaching was separated from the Patna College and the Patna Science College with one of the best equipped laboratories in the country and with other modern science teaching facilities, was established. Since then this college has been leading the lamp of Science teaching in this State. During the next two decades several other colleges in Bihar started instruction in Science.¹⁵

Rajendra Prasad, a Senator of the Patna University moved the following resolution in the Senate on 26 November 1937: "The Senate

recommend to Government that they appoint a Committee to report on the progress of education in Bihar—primary, secondary and University and technical, industrial, professional—and to prepare a scheme for its expansion and intensification, always keeping in view the needs of the people, their economic condition and the financial resources of the provincial Government.”¹⁶

Soon after the independence of India Patna University Amendment Bill was brought to the Legislative Council to rectify some of the provisions of the previous Act. Indian (provisional constitution) order, 1947, made under the Indian Independence Act 1947, the Patna University (Amendment) Act 1944, which was enacted by the Governor in exercise of the powers assumed to himself by the proclamation of 3 November 1939, issued by him under the Section 93 of the Government of India Act should cease to be in force with effect from 2 April 1948. The existing Senate and Syndicate of the Patna University had been constituted under the provisions of the Patna University Act of 1917 and was modified by the Patna University (amendment) Act 1944. With the expiration of the latter Act, there would be no law in force to govern the constitution of these Universities. Pending the formulation of a comprehensive scheme for the re-enactment and consolidation of the Patna University act 1917, it was necessary to continue the operation of the Amendment Act of 1944 after the 1 April 1948.¹⁷ The Patna University (Amendment) Act, 1944 was repealed by the Patna University Amendment Act (No. 9) of 1948.

The year 1950 was remarkable in the history of the Patna University. A Bill was brought into the Bihar Legislative Assembly to make the Patna University a teaching and residential University for evolving high academic traditions and paving the way for the utmost degree of administrative independence and making autonomous in the pursuit of learning. This had been a long felt demand of the enlightened persons of the province. Since the idea was first mooted, there had been a phenomenal growth of higher education in the State.

The Patna University had jurisdiction over not only the whole of Bihar but also over the colleges situated in Orissa. But the Patna University (Amendment Act of 1944) confined the jurisdiction of the Patna University to Bihar alone, as a separate University was created for Orissa. Between 1944 and 1951 all the colleges within the province of Bihar were under the jurisdiction of the Patna University. But from 2

January 1952, the colleges situated outside the Municipal limits of Patna went under the jurisdiction of the newly created Bihar University with its headquarters located in Patna.

References:

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3. Deep Narain Singh was a member of the Bengal Legislative Council since 1910.
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6. The First Quinquennial Review of the Progress of Education in Bihar and Orissa (1912-1917), P.-43.
7. Proceedings of Imperial Legislative Council, Sept. 1916, P.-86-87.
8. The Gazette of India, 1 October, 1916, Part-VI, P.-573-574.
9. The Gazette of India, 30 September, 1916, Part-II, P.-79.
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