

## C H A P T E R IX

### TRADE AND COMMERCE

The sūba of Bihar, due to its geographical situation, was one of the important regions of trade and commerce in India during the 17th century. Patna, the Principal town of the sūba, was the largest commercial town of Eastern India which acted as an inland emporium for the onward supply of commodities to the ports of Bengal and Orissa. On the other hand, all the overland trade between Bengal (and Orissa) and the rest of India was largely conducted through Patna.<sup>1</sup> Again Patna was also the chief mart for the goods from Nepal, Bhutan, Sikkim and Tibet.

The commercial activities of the sūba may be divided into three categories: local commerce; inter-regional trade; and foreign trade.

#### (i) Local Trade:

(a) Let us first take the local trade. Most of the local exchange of commodities was done at the hāts or penths which were held weekly or biweekly. Such hāts were held

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1. Mundy, II, p.157: "It is the greatest mart of all this countries, from whence they repaire from Bengale that way to the sea-side, and from Indostan and other Inland countries round about, plentiful in provisions, abounding sundrie commodities."

even during the 14th and 15th centuries.<sup>1</sup> There were separate hāts for different commodities with well-established trading regulations.<sup>2</sup> For the 17th century, we do not have direct evidence for such regulations but we do come across many references to such penths in the literature of the period.<sup>3</sup> These hāts played significant role in the village economy of those days. The commodities exchanged were produced primarily by the local peasants and artisans. The items included all sorts of grain, various vegetables, fruits, salt, cotton thread, coarse fabrics, articles of iron, cattles and many other goods.

These hāts seem to have fulfilled the requirements of the rural areas. Moreover, they served as links between rural production and urban markets. For example, the English factors at Patna wrote in 1620:<sup>4</sup>

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1. Indrakant Jha, 'Chaudhevin-PandrehaVin shatabdi mein Mithila ka Vyapar', JBRS, 1968, Vol.54,pt. 1-4,pp.385-86.
  2. R.K.Chaudhary, Mithila, op.cit., p. 196.
  3. Sometimes place names suggest the presence of such hats. Narhat (Āin, p.419); Pirpainti for example, suggests that hats were held on Mondays (cf. Marshall, pp.72,96). In a report of the Collector of Bhagalpur in A.D.1791, as many as 178 hāts have been mentioned in the whole district. Cf. K.K.Basu, 'Account of the Trade of Bhagalpur in the 19th century', JBRS,1943,vol.29,pt.1-2, p. 107.
  4. EF, 1618-21, pp. 192-93.

"The usuall custome of buyinge the amberty calicoes at Lackour (which is the pente or fayr for that commoditye, and is a towne 14 course from this place) is as follows: theye are dalye brought in from the neighbouring gonges by the weavers, from whom they are bought rawe ----- In this manner, by reporte dalye may there bee bought 50,60 and some daye 100 peeces. Almost in the like nature are theye sould here in Pattana, being likewise brought thence by the weavers."

In the same manner, silk cloth from Baikantpur was brought to Patna.<sup>1</sup> Again, cotton cloths from Nundanpur and Salimpur served the Patna markets.<sup>2</sup> Marshall speaks of grapes he ate at singhee which were grown at Hajipur.<sup>3</sup> Similarly, Tirhut being a large centre of animal husbandry,<sup>4</sup> would have supplied cattle and dairy products to other parts of the sūba.<sup>5</sup>

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1. Mundy, II, p. 155.
  2. Ibid., p. 155.
  3. Marshall, p. 142.
  4. Āin, p. 317.
  5. Ghashal, op.cit., p. 371.

Annual or biannual fairs at religious shrines or near rivers on the occasion of bathing festivals also provided an opportunity for promoting local commerce. Marshall refers to great bathing festival near Hajipur (Sonpur Fair) where 50,000 people participated from such far off places as Central Asia and Nepal.<sup>1</sup> The fair is still held every year and a great trade in all sorts of commodities takes place there.

(ii) Urban Markets:

Markets, big and small, played a very important role in the commercial activities of the sūba. The small commercial centres provided a link with rural areas on the one hand, and larger commercial centres on the other. The latter in turn facilitated inter-regional and foreign trade. Patna,<sup>2</sup> Munger,<sup>3</sup> Bhagalpur<sup>4</sup> and Dariapur<sup>5</sup> were large commercial centres. Many of these towns could boast of well-known markets. The

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1. Marshall, pp. 141-42.

2. Fitch, Mundy, Tavernier and Marshall and almost all the travellers passing through Patna, as well as the English factory records, mention it as a very big commercial centre of the region.

3. Cf. C.E.A.U. Oldham, 'An old description of the Monghyr Fort', BPP, 1924, Vol.27, No.54, pp.159-60.

4. Marshall, p. 121.

5. Ibid., p. 77.

Urdu Bazar in Darbhanga was another important centre of trade during Akbar's reign. Cities like Patna had many big markets. The market in the middle of the town (Patna) was called Katra-i Shaista Khāni which was said to be full of the choicest pieces or cloths and goods. Other important markets were Sultanganj Begamganj, Alamganj, Mandvi Rampur, etc. In the town of Munger in 1812-13, out of 16 mohallas or wards eleven had a suffix of gunj or bāzār. On the basis of nomenclature, many of these, such as Mogul Bazar, Faujdari Bazar and Topkhana Bazar may be traced to Mughal period. In 1802, it was reported about the bāzār of the Munger fort (probably the market in and around the fort referred to by De Graaf in 1670-71) that this was attached

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1. R.K.Chaudhary, History of Muslim Rule in Tirhut, p.148.

2. Manucci, p. 83.

3. Cf. S.Hasan Askari, 'Madan-ul-Insha'-a Rare Collection of Letters', IHRC, XXXIV, pt.II,1958, p.194.

4. The list of the mahāls of sūba Bihar for 1712-19 and 1736 included Mandvi Begampur and Sultanganj. The latter having an estimated income of one Karor dāms and included five mandvis (Kāghazāt, Add. 6586, ff.100a, 147b). These in all probability were the big markets of Patna which constituted as separate revenue-paying mahāls. All ~~xx~~ of these find mention in the map of Patna prepared by Buchanan in 1811-12. Besides there, a number of places in the same map are shown with the suffix gunj (see Bihar and Patna, II, map at the end of the volume). The main market of Patna, Alamganj, was the place where Hughes and Parker in 1620-21 rented a house (see EF, 1618-21, p.198).

5. Buchanan, Journal of Bhagalpur (map at the end). The other eight were Barabazar, Gedar Bazar, Belan Bazar, Bateman gunj, Puranigunj, Daburibazar, Chaok or Wesley bazar and Karem Bazar.

to the garrison under the "ancient" government (perhaps the Mughals) and continued to be so under Kasim Ali Khan till 1763-64 when the English Company took it over.<sup>1</sup> Bhagalpur also had six mohallas or wards (1812) with the suffix bāzār or gunj. The main of these was Shuja Ganj, named after Prince Shuja.<sup>2</sup>

A late 18th century survey of Bihar by John/Share differentiates between hāts, bāzārs and gunges. According to him, "hauts" were markets held on certain days usually in the open places, while bāzārs were established markets doing daily business. Some times hāts were organised on certain days in the bāzār itself. The gunges were wholesale trading centres of grain mainly, and in big towns there were also bāzārs and hāts within these gunges.<sup>3</sup>

(iii) Inter-regional Trade:

Bihar had regular commercial contacts with many places and regions of India, namely, Agra, Hugli, Qasim bazar, Lahore, Surat, Masulipatnam, Balarore, Tipperah, Benaras, Kashmir, Jaunpur, etc.

(Continued from the previous page)

6. Cf. C.E.A.U.Oldham, 'Monghyr Fort', op.cit., pp.159-60.

1. Bhagalpur Records, Vol.21, p.353.

2. Buchanan, Journal of Bhagalpur, map at the end. Also see Q.Ahmad, Inscriptions, p.107.

3. British Parliamentary Papers, III, p.460.

Our evidence is inadequate for ascertaining the total volume of the inland trade conducted from and to Bihar. We will therefore restrict our study to the pattern of trade only.

The various articles of trade may be grouped as follows:

- A. Textiles
- B. Saltpetre
- C. Agricultural products
- D. Other commodities.

A. Textiles:

Several sorts of cotton and silk fabrics produced in Bihar, Bengal and Orissa took the first place among other commodities. Large quantities of 'Ambartee' calicoes of Lakhawar,<sup>1</sup> 'Nundownpore' and Salimpur<sup>2</sup> and 'Caym Conyes' were purchased by the Indian and foreign merchants for sale in Agra and Lahore.<sup>3</sup>

Mundy gives a list of cloths to be had at Patna. A number of them such as 'Ambarees', 'Charconees (chequered muslin), Hammomes (a thick stout cloth used for wrappers

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1. EF, 1618-21, pp. 193, 204.

2. Mundy, II, p.154.

3. EF, 1618-21, p.193. Also IA, 1914, vol.43, p.79.

were brought from Orissa.<sup>1</sup> 'Gringhams'<sup>2</sup> and 'Sannoës'<sup>3</sup> were other varieties procured from Orissa.<sup>4</sup>

A variety of cloths from the different regions of Bengal were also taken to Patna. Mundy in 1632 noticed the sale of 'Ckanaes' (khāna) from Sonargaon and Dacca, 'Molmol-shahees' (Malmal Shahi) and Ellachas (alaches) from Malda, Ambar of 'Jettalees' from Sherpur Mircha, 'Cuttanees' or Agabahees<sup>5</sup> (from Bengal) at the Patna market.<sup>6</sup> Other varieties of textiles from Bengal 'oramalls' (Rumāls)<sup>7</sup> 'Mandles', girdles and 'doupattas' of Malda.<sup>8</sup> 'Sahannes' and Hammoms were brought from the lower parts of Bengal.<sup>9</sup> Qasimbazar provided sundry sorts of raw and wrought silk stripes interwoven with gold and silver.<sup>10</sup> Benares "mandiles" (mandil,

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1. Mundy, II, pp.154-55.

2. Mixed silk and cotton piece goods see S.Chaudhuri, Appendix 'C', p.261.

3. A sort of plain cotton cloth of Orissa, see John Irwin, 'A Glossary of textile terms', Indo-European Textile History, p.70.

4. Mundy, II, pp.154-55.

5. Mixed silk and cotton piece goods, see S.Chaudhuri, p.260.

6. Mundy, II, pp.154-55, 230.

7. Bowrey, p.231. Rumal were a sort of silk or cotton piece good with handkerchief pattern, see S.Chaudhuri, p.262.

8. EF, 1618-21, p.195.

9. EF, 1618-21, pp.193, 195. They were probably brought from Orissa (see John Irwin, op.cit., pp. 66,70.)

10. Bowrey, p.230.



a turban cloth woven with silk and gold thread) were sold at Patna.<sup>1</sup> Quilts of Satgaon<sup>2</sup> and coarse carpets of Jaunpur<sup>3</sup> also found a place in Patna markets.

Large amounts of cloth were purchased at Patna for Surat.<sup>4</sup> Manucci found one Khwaja Safar purchasing cloths at Patna worth 30,000 rupees for despatching them to Surat.<sup>5</sup>

Sericulture was not practised in Bihar. Cocoons were brought from Bengal to Patna, where, after winding, it was sent to all parts of India. The main centres of the cocoons supply in Bengal were "Makhsudabad" (Murshidabad) and Saidabad.<sup>6</sup> In 1620-21, silk trade formed the bulk of the English trade, a part of which was marked for sale at Agra.<sup>7</sup> Pelsaert estimated that 1000 to 2000 mds. of silk from Patna was purchased, the larger part of which was sent to Gujarat and the rest to Agra.<sup>8</sup> Much of the silk weaving industry of Gujarat was

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1. EF, 1618-21, pp. 73, 206.

2. Ibid., pp. 195, 198.

3. Ibid., p. 195.

4. Mundy, II, p.156.

5. Manucci, II, p.84.

6. Mundy, II, p.156.

7. EF, 1618-21, p.197. In 1620, Hughes and Parker wrote that they could provide 300 maunds of silk annually, p.213. Also see IA, 1914, pp.78-79. EF, 1622-23, pp.9-10.

8. Pelssert, pp.4,7,31 (The maund of 50 Holland pounds is the Akbari maund (about 55 lb. avoirdupois, Ibid., p.7).

dependent on the supply of silk from Bihar, largely replacing the Chinese.<sup>1</sup>

All sorts of gold embroidered and other finer varieties of cloths from Gujarat, Benaras and Jaunpur were available at Patna.<sup>2</sup>

It seems that the profit derived from inter-regional trade was fairly encouraging, and even small merchants purchased cloths from Bihar for sale at Agra.<sup>3</sup>

#### B. Saltpetre:

An estimate made in 1688 tells us that of the total production of 1,27,238 mds. of saltpetre, 1200 mds. were sent to Hugli and 3000 mds. to Dacca.<sup>4</sup> The Dutch took saltpetre to Pulicat for manufacturing gunpowder there.<sup>5</sup>

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1. Pelsart, pp. 7, 31.

2. Cf. Wilson, I, p. 379.

3. Banarsi Das, Ardh Katha, ed. Mata Prasad Gupta, Prayeg, 1943, pp. 31, 35.

4. Cf. S. Chaudhuri, p. 161.

5. Thevenot, p. 148.

C. Agricultural Products:

'Of the agricultural products, the main article of trade was rice, which was sent to Bengal. Bowrey was amazed to see export of grain from Patna "to such a planti-<sup>1</sup> full country as Bengala." Wheat and other grains were supplied to Orissa also.<sup>2</sup> Even the English factors at Masulipatam in 1659 asked their counterparts at Patna to supply rice to them.<sup>3</sup>

Sugar was another commodity which was carried to many places including Masulipatam.<sup>4</sup> Hugli too had a good market for Bihar sugar.<sup>5</sup>

Large quantities of opium produced in Patna were taken to all regions of India.<sup>6</sup>

Ginger from Bihar was sent to Hugli in large amounts.<sup>7</sup>

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1. Bowrey, p. 226.

2. Ibid., p. 225.

3. EF, 1655-60, p. 262.

4. Fitch, p.24; EF, 1655-60, p.263.

5. Hedges, Diary, I, p. 164.

6. Hamilton, p.414.

7. EF, 1646-50, p.338.

Other Commodities:

Blake, the chief of the Bengal English factory, purchased spices worth 12,000 rupees and sent them for sale to Patna.<sup>1</sup> Huge amount of Musk was brought to Patna from Bhutan which, in turn, was supplied to Agra and other regions.<sup>2</sup>

For salt, Bihar was dependent on other regions. The boats carrying saltpetre from Bihar to Balasore returned with salt to Patna.<sup>3</sup> Salt was also supplied from Bengal. However, the English trade in salt was stopped in 1727 by the government.<sup>4</sup> Caravans with salt, among other things, used to frequent Patna regularly.<sup>5</sup>

Quicksilver and vermilion were also vendible at Patna.<sup>6</sup>

Merchants from Tipperah used to visit Patna and Dacca to purchase coral, yellow amber, tortoise shells, sea-shells bracelets and other items for their territories.<sup>7</sup> These items

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1. Cf. S. Chaudhuri, pp. 222-23.

2. Tavernier, pp.143,146. Also see, Wilson, Annals, I, p.378.

3. EF, 1655-60, p.297.

4. Cf. Bhattacharya, op.cit., pp. 41,44.

5. Cf. Askari, 'Bihar in the time of Akbar', BPP, Vol.LXV, Jan-Dec 1945, No.128, p.22.

6. Mundy, II, pp. 78, 138.

7. Tavernier, II, p.273.

were not produced in Bihar but they were brought from the coastal regions.

Saffron came from Kashmir.<sup>1</sup>

Horses called Goonts (gunth) or Tangans were brought to Bihar from Kuch Bihar (in Bengal).<sup>2</sup>

The large number of commodities imported and exported, and the presence of merchants of various regions and diverse nations indicate that the size of inter-regional trade was substantially large in the overall commercial activities of the sūba.

#### Foreign Trade:

The foreign trade of the sūba, which until the 16th century was small, swelled during the 17th century. Among the European merchants, the Portuguese were the first to have established regular commercial contacts with Bihar.<sup>3</sup> In 1620, the first English commercial mission was sent to Patna to explore the possibilities of trade there.<sup>4</sup> The Dutch were the next, followed by the French.

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1. Marshall, p. 413.

2. Mundy, II, p.136.

3. EF, 1618-21, p.195. Hughes on reaching Patna in 1620 found the Portuguese busy in commercial activities there. Also see T.R.Chaudhary, Bengal under Akbar and Jehangir, p.104.

4. Cf. EF, 1618-21, p.191. Also see R.C.Temple, 'Documents relating to first English Commercial Mission to Patna,' IA, 1914, Vol. 43, pp.69-111.

Among the textile goods, Amberty calicoes of Lakhawar were considered better than those of Samana (Punjab) and Baftas (of Gujarat), and were exported to England.<sup>1</sup> Caym Conyes (Qāimkhāni) of Bihar were found more suitable for Persia than England; they also vended well in Barbary or Turkey.<sup>2</sup> They were sent to Lahore and then carried to Persia.<sup>3</sup> In 1620, the English factory's purchases of ambertees was 2000 pieces<sup>4</sup> which rose to 5000 pieces per annum in 1620.<sup>5</sup> 'Ambertees', Mandyles (Mandil), 'Caym Conyes' 'Elachas' and 'Doupattas' of Malda were purchases in bulk by the merchants for Persia.<sup>6</sup> A variety of cotton textiles 'Elachas', 'Bihari Khara' and 'Cheera' were taken to Nepal and Tibet.<sup>7</sup>

Around 1661, 'Ambertees' and 'Caym Conyes' worth ten hundred thousand of rupees per annum were purchased by the Armenian and other merchants who took them to Surat to be sent to Persia.<sup>8</sup>

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1. IA, 1914, pp. 77-78.

2. Ibid., p.82; EF, 1618-21, p. 206.

3. Ibid., p. 195.

4. IA, 1914, p.77.

5. Ibid., p. 104.

6. EF, 1618-21, p.195.

7. The Ledger of Hovhannes, pp.163-69. For the details about there cloths see Chapters on crafts and Industries.

8. CF. Wilson, I, p.379.

The main commodities purchased by the Portuguese in Bihar were carpets of Jaunpur, Amberteas, Khassa and all sorts of thin cloth from Patna for sale in the South-East Asia.<sup>1</sup> 'Baikanthpuries' (Baikanthpur Elachas, referred by Hughes) were exported to Persia by the 'Mogul' merchants and to England by the English, where they were supposed to make good profits.<sup>2</sup> 'Tafftas' of Bihar, considered better than those of Qasimbazar, were also exported.<sup>3</sup> The English factory in 1668 ordered for 2000 pieces.<sup>4</sup> Other purchases made by the English from Patna included 'Sahannas' 'Hammomes', Tussers, quilts and Maldawares, the last named for Persia.<sup>5</sup> Huge quantities of silk, winded and dyed at Patna, were procured by the English for England.<sup>6</sup> In 1620-21, the English demand for this silk at Patna was 30 mds. per month.<sup>7</sup> A special variety of silk (dyed and dressed) called sleeve silk (Floss silk) was prepared by Hughes for export to England.<sup>8</sup>

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1. EF, 1618-21, pp. 195, 213-14.

2. Ibid., p. 197.

3. Cf. Wilson, I, p.379.

4. EF, 1668-69, pp. 169-70.

5. IA, 1914, p.77; EF, 1618-21, p.197.

6. IA, 1914, pp. 78-81.

7. Ibid., p. 81.

8. EF, 1618-21, p.198.

In the last decades of the 17th century, the chintz of Patna were also in great demand for export to Europe, because they were cheaper and of better quality than those of the Coromandal and Gujarat.<sup>1</sup> The English factors wrote in 1700:<sup>2</sup>

"The Patna chints with white ground now grow into demand again, as the painting will be brisk and lively colours and not too full of work as many of the Matchlepatam (Masulipatam) chints be, send us any sorts under this qualification ."

The demand for foreign textiles in Bihar was almost nil. As late as 1714, the English factors found that their woollen cloths had no market in Bengal and Bihar.<sup>3</sup> It seems small quantities of good quality woollen fabrics were brought from Tibet.<sup>4</sup>

Next to textiles, saltpetre was the most important commodity exported to Europe from Bihar. Perhaps it came to

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1. John Irwin, 'Indian Textile Trade in the Seventeenth Century', JITH, III, pp.60-61. Also see, S. Chaudhuri, pp. 193-94.

2. J. Irwin, 'Indian Textile Trade', op.cit., p.60.

3. Cf. S. Chaudhuri, p.112.

4. The Ledger of Hovhannes, p.161.



occupy the first place among items of export from Bihar during the second half of the 17th century.<sup>1</sup> The English company was always asking the Patna factors for more and more supply of saltpetre. It was wholly dependent on Patna for saltpetre supply because it had discontinued its purchases on the west coast in 1668, and at Masulipatam in 1670.<sup>2</sup> At the same time, the Dutch were taking away larger quantities,<sup>3</sup> and around 1650s the Dutch were exporting ten times than the English.<sup>4</sup> Before 1650, Mundy is the only European traveller who refers to Bihar saltpetre, but he considered it of inferior quality.<sup>5</sup> The **first** reference to large-scale exports are found in the Dutch records. In 1649, 8,40,000 lbs. of saltpetre from Patna were collected by the Dutch.<sup>6</sup> In the English records, its export from Patna to Balasore and Hugli is mentioned for the first time in 1650.<sup>7</sup>

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1. Cf. Bowrey, p.229; Manucci, II, p.426; Oldham, 'Description of Monghyr Fort', op.cit., p. 157.
  2. Wilson, I, pp. 45-46.
  3. Moreland, Akbar to Aurangzeb, p.120.
  4. Balkrishna, op.cit., pp. 101-102.
  5. Mundy, II, p.155.
  6. T.R.Chaudhuri, Jan Company, op.cit., p. 170.
  7. EF, 1646-50, p.337. Also see, Wilson, I, pp. 25-26.

The English demand at Patna in 1658 was for 25,000 mds.<sup>1</sup> In 1659, 5000 pounds were sanctioned for investment in saltpetre.<sup>2</sup> In 1660, the quantity purchased was 1200 tonnes.<sup>3</sup> But in 1661, the demand in England was low and the Company decided to purchase only 600 - 800 "tonnes" from all parts of India (100 from Surat), out of which not more than 200 tonnes were to be purchased from Patna, it being cheap at Coromandel.<sup>4</sup> Again in 1662, the English demand was low and only 4000 pounds were allowed for saltpetre at Patna.<sup>5</sup> In 1661 and 1662, the Patna factors were asked to send 150 and 200 tonnes respectively to Bantom.<sup>6</sup> In 1664, the English demand was for 20,000 mds. of refined (twice boiled) saltpetre.<sup>7</sup> From 1663-64 to 1678-79, the English Company exported saltpetre as follows:<sup>8</sup>

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1. EF, 1655-60, p. 193.

2. Ibid., p. 275.

3. Ibid., p. 393.

4. EF, 1661-64, pp. 45, 46, 61.

5. Ibid., p. 165.

6. Ibid., pp. 46, 165.

7. Cf. S. Chaudhuri, pp. 45-46.

8. Ibid., p.170. Almost all the saltpetre exported from Bengal was brought from Bihar.

<u>Year</u>	<u>Quantity</u>
1663 - 64	943,650 lbs.
1664 - 65	990,450 lbs.
1668 - 69	1,977,300 lbs.
1669 - 70	712,950 lbs.
1670 - 71	630,900 lbs.
1671 - 72	937,500 lbs.
1675 - 76	1,331,400 lbs.
1676 - 77	1,253,250 lbs.
1678 - 79	1,876,800 lbs.

In 1679, the amount of 29,890 mds. was sent in one instalment and then 8000 mds. was sent in another.<sup>1</sup> The years from 1681-82 to 1685-86 was the period of the highest demand. In an order of the Court of Directors in 1682, the Patna factors were asked to supply 1500 "tonnes" of salt-petre.<sup>2</sup> The total exports from Bihar in the year 1688 were around 105,238 mds.<sup>3</sup> The English factory's exports after 1680 were as follows:<sup>4</sup>

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1. Streyntsham Master, I, p.109.

2. Ibid., p. 323.

3. Ibid., p. 161.

4. Ibid., p. 170.

<u>Years</u>	<u>Quantities</u>	<u>Average</u>
1681-82 to 1685-86	6,298,208 lbs.	1,259,641 lbs.
1690-91 to 1695-96*	2,652,964 lbs.	530,592 lbs.
1696-97 to 1700-01	2,226,132 lbs.	445,226 lbs.
1701-02 to 1706-07**	3,785,486 lbs.	757,097 lbs.
1710-11 to 1714-15	4,202,514 lbs.	840,502 lbs.
1715-16 to 1719-20	5,352,689 lbs.	1,070,537 lbs.

(\* Excluding 1691-92;      \*\* Excluding 1703-04)

The Dutch East India Company exported a far greater quantity of salpetre than the English. In 1669-70, the Dutch exports to Holland and to her Asiatic factories amounted to 3,443,440 lb. (Dutch).<sup>1</sup> During the three years (1701-02, 1702-03, 1704-05), the Dutch Company exported to Holland 8,494,754 lb. at an average of 2,381,918 lb. yearly, while from 1705-06 to 1710-11 their annual export rose to 2,999,789 lb.<sup>2</sup>

During the first half of the 18th century, saltpetre occupied a prominent position on the export list of the English Company.<sup>3</sup>

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1. Streyntsham Master, I, pp. 170-71. The Dutch lb. was equivalent to 1.09 English lb.
  2. Master, I, p.171.
  3. Bhattacharya, op.cit., pp. 150-51; K.K.Datta, Bengal Subah, I, pp. 368, 370-71.

Saltpetre was of immense importance for the Europeans and Indians because of its use in the gunpowder. The English factory at Patna was allowed to borrow money for this commodity only, in spite of the exorbitant rates of interest.<sup>1</sup> During the Civil War in England (1688-89), the English Company pleaded for maintaining its privileges for the supply of saltpetre.<sup>2</sup> The abolition of the Dutch factory at Patna in 1692 was opposed by the Dutch factors on the grounds of saltpetre supply.<sup>3</sup>

The next important articles for export were some agricultural products of Bihar.

We have shown in the third chapter that Bihar produced opium on a large scale in the 16th and 17th centuries. During the 17th century, regions around Patna and Munger were the main centres which supplied opium, but the opium of Patna was regarded better in quality.<sup>4</sup> In 1670, De Graff noticed a number of boats carrying opium from Patna to Bengal.<sup>5</sup>

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1. EF. 1646-50, p. 337.

2. S.A.Khan, The East India Trade in the 17th Century, p.13.

3. Niharranjan Ray, Dutch Activities in the East, Seventeenth century p.51.

4. Marshall, p.414.

5. Cf. Oldham, 'Monghyr Fort', op.cit., p.157.

In 1692, the abolition of the Dutch factory was opposed on the ground of opium supply along with saltpetre and their main fear was that the English might establish their monopoly.<sup>1</sup> In a collection of papers concerning the affairs of the English Company in Bengal (1661-85), the list of commodities procurable at Patna gives details of the prices of opium and also discusses at length other aspects of its trade.<sup>2</sup> Competition between the English, French and Dutch for opium trade ended with the monopoly of the English when they established themselves comfortably in the 18th century.<sup>3</sup>

Bihar also exported sugar in the bulk.<sup>4</sup> The English and Dutch were the main buyers. In 1650, the instructions issued to the Bengal factors included the one about sugar when the factors were asked to follow the methods adopted by the Dutch for exporting it.<sup>5</sup> The Patna sugar was exported to Gambroon (Bandar Abbas) by the English company, but it could not fetch a good market there.<sup>6</sup> Sugar from Patna was also taken to Nepal.<sup>7</sup>

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1. Niharranjan Ray, op.cit., p. 51.

2. Cf. Wilson, I, pp. 378-79.

3. B.Chowdhury, Growth of Commercial Agriculture in Bengal, p.3.

4. R.Fitch, p.24.

5. Wilson, I, p.26.

6. EF, 1655-60, p.224.

7. The Ledger of Howhannes, p.168.

Ginger was purchased by the Dutch which they exported to Europe.<sup>1</sup> The Armenians also purchased Ginger for export.<sup>2</sup> In 1676, the English company purchased 1800 mds. of turmeric.<sup>3</sup> The court of Directors in 1682 asked for 200 "tonnes" of turmeric from Patna.<sup>4</sup> Saunf (Aniseed) was also purchased by the Armeniana and English to be exported to Persia and Europe.<sup>5</sup>

Gumlac in large amount (200 mds) was purchased by Hughes and Parker for export to England, Persia and the Red Sea.<sup>6</sup> But, lateron, no reference to large scale dealings in this commodity is available.<sup>7</sup>

Saffron was brought to Patna from Nepal.<sup>8</sup>

Besides agricultural products, transactions in a number of sundry commodities took place.

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1. EF, 1646-50, p. 338.

2. The Ledger of Hovhannes, p.162.

3. Master, I, p.64.

4. Cf. S.Chandhuri, pp. 177, 263.

5. The Ledger of Hovhannes, pp. 162-63, 166.

6. IA, 1914, pp. 108,110.

7. The quality was reported bad and prices higher. Mundy, II, pp. 151,156; also Wilson, I, p.379.

8. Marshall, p. 413.

Musk was the main item of import from the eastern countries of Bhutan<sup>1</sup> and Nepal.<sup>2</sup> From Bhutan it was brought in cold season to Bihar wherefrom it was exported to Persia via Agra.<sup>3</sup> It was also exported to England, Holland and other European countries.<sup>4</sup> Tavernier is reported to have purchased musk worth 26,000 rupees.<sup>5</sup> The Armenian merchant, Hovhannes, brought 483 kg. of musk to Patna.<sup>6</sup>

The commodities supplied in return to Bhutan were iron, butter, oil, hemp and corn.<sup>7</sup> Sometimes coral, yellow amber, tortoise shells, bracelets and other sea shells were also taken to Bhutan from Patna and Dacca.<sup>8</sup>

Borax or tincall was brought from Tibet and adjoining territories to Bihar where the French<sup>9</sup> and the English

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1. Tavernier, II, pp.143,146,259. Also, Wilson<sup>I</sup>, p.379.
  2. Marshall, p.163.
  3. Tavernier, II, pp.143,146,258-59. Also, Wilson, I, p.378.
  4. Tavernier, II, p.258; Bowrey, pp. 229-30.
  5. Tavernier, II, p.258.
  6. The Ledger of Hovhannes, p.161.
  7. Wilson, I, p. 379.
  8. Tavernier, II, p.261.
  9. S.P.Sen, The French in India, Calcutta, 1958, p.91.



purchased them. In 1676, the English Company purchased 400 mds. of borax from Patna.<sup>1</sup> Marshall noticed its import in Bihar from the 'north country', (probably Nepal).<sup>2</sup> As late as 1792, Nepal exported Borax to Tirhut.<sup>3</sup>

Precious stones from foreign countries were brought to Gaya where ornaments were made from them.<sup>4</sup>

Spices brought by the Dutch from Siam and the "South Seas" found their way to Patna via Bengal.<sup>5</sup> The portuguese also brought spices to Patna, probably from the same areas.<sup>6</sup>

"Lignum alloe" was exported by the English to England.<sup>7</sup>

"Spicknard" (spikenard) were imported from the "north country" in the cold weather (probably Nepal).<sup>8</sup>

The Armenian merchants took amber, coral beads, silk, chints, silver-striped silk and precious stones to Lhasa.<sup>9</sup>

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1. Master, II, p.64.

2. Marshall, p.24.

3. HR Ghoshal, op.cit., p.376. Buchanan in 1811-12 also noticed import of Borax from Nepal (Bihar & Patna, II, p.682).

4. Āīn, p. 417.

5. EF, 1665-67, p. 261.

6. EF, 1618-21, pp. 195, 213-14.

7. IA, 1914, p.105.

8. EF, 1618-21, pp. 198-99.

9. Marshall, p.169. Also see The Ledger of Howhannes, pp.163-66, 169-70.

Some spices and tobacco from Lhasa and Candles, tea and textiles from Nepal were also brought to Patna.<sup>1</sup> Gold was also imported in substantial quantities.<sup>2</sup> The Portuguese used to bring to Bihar silk stuffs of China, tin and jewel wares.<sup>3</sup>

Some articles were also imported from England. In 1634, some lead and broad cloth received by the Masulipatam factors from England were sent to Patna.<sup>4</sup> In 1679, 100 mds. of lead were sent to Patna by the English factory at Hugli.<sup>5</sup>

Bihar was short of copper, so the English and the Dutch factors brought the essential articles of copper used in refining saltpetre from outside.<sup>6</sup> In 1739, the Patna factors asked the Calcutta council to send up all the coppers they received from England, which they believed would go in the mint.<sup>7</sup> Two thousand and six hundred maunds of copper were

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1. The Ledger of Houhannes, pp. 161-62, 171.
  2. Armenian merchant Houhannes purchased more than 5 kg. of gold from Tibet and sold it in Patna Ibid., pp.161-62.
  3. EF, 1618-21, pp. 195, 213-14.
  4. EF, 1634-36, p. 42.
  5. Master, II, p.354.
  6. EF, 1651-54, p.95. Also T.R.Chaudhuri, Jan Company, p.169.
  7. Cf. Bhattacharya, op.cit., p.128.

accordingly sent to Patna under special guards.

Sword Blades,<sup>1</sup> bonelace,<sup>2</sup> and a number of luxury items brought from England were also sold in Patna.

The extent of commercial activities in and through Bihar may be gauged from the number of coins issued from the Patna mint: the turnover was larger than that of all the mints of Bengal put together. Upto 1655, the production in the Patna mint was the largest in the region.<sup>3</sup> This was due to the influx of silver (and copper) in Bihar as a result of the brisk trade. For example, in 1682, the amount of treasure sent to the English factory at Patna was 7,601 pounds sterling, while the amounts in goods was equivalent to £ 824 only.<sup>4</sup>

#### Trade Routes and Means of Transport:

In view of the large volume of inter-regional and foreign trade carried out from and through Patna, we must

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1. Marshall, p. 12.

2. IA, 1914, p. 79.

3. See Aziza Hasan, 'Mints of the Mughal Empire', PIHC, 29th Session, 1967, pt. I, pp. 327, 330.

4. Cf. S. Chaudhuri, p. 213.

study the trade-routes through which it was conducted.

We may divide the trade routes into two: (a) land routes and (b) river routes.

(i) Land Routes:

Towards the western regions, the land route most frequently used by the merchants was Patna-Agra route which ran through Agra-Firozabad-Etawah-Ajital-Bhagalpur-Fatehpur-Shahzadpur-Allahabad-Benaras-Mogulsarai-Sasaram-Agnusarai-Naubatpur to Patna.<sup>1</sup> From Banaras to Patna there were two roads to reach Patna; the one described above, and the other ran parallel to the Ganges via Ghazipur-Buxar-Ranisagar and Patna.<sup>2</sup> This route was used by Prince Khurram at the time of his rebellion while marching to Allahabad from Bengal.<sup>2</sup>

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1. Cf. Mundy, II, pp.78-134. Also Tavernier, I, pp.113-121. Marshall, pp.159-60. It took Mundy more than 40 days to reach Patna from Agra while his predecessor, Hughes, reached in 29 days (EF, 1618-21, p.191). Tavernier covered the same distance in 30 days. The time taken by the transport of goods was also 30 days (IA, 1914, p.78). It seems that during the rainy season when Mundy travelled the roads were not in good shape. Also see A.K.M.Farooque, Roads and Communications in Mughal India, Delhi, 1977, p.33.
  2. J.N.Sarkar, India of Aurangzeb, pp.cix-cx.
  3. B.P.Ambasthya, 'Rebellions of Salim and Khurram', JBRs, 1959, vol.45, pt. 1-4, p.339.

Agra was connected with Delhi, Surat and Lahore by land routes. From Agra, all commodities destined for Persia, were taken to Lahore. In the early years of the English Company's trade with Bihar (1620-21), since the ports of Bengal and Orissa were under the control of the Portuguese, all commodities were taken to Surat where they were shipped for onward journey.<sup>1</sup> The route from Patna to Delhi as traced by Marshall was also via Agra.<sup>2</sup> But the Delhi-Patna route mentioned in the latter sources was Delhi-Ghaziabad-Napur-Moradabad-Rai Bareilly-Benaras-Buxar-Arrah and Patna,<sup>3</sup> thus by passing Agra.

Towards the Eastern region, the main land route was through all the important commercial centres. It passed through Munger, Rajmahal-Qasimbazar-Hugli and Balasore.<sup>4</sup> Marshall travelled from Hugli to Patna by road taking the following route: Hugli-Satgaon-Plasey-Qasimbazar-Maksudabad-Rajmalah-Burgungall-Garhi-Pialpur-Kahalgaon-Bhagalpur-Ghoraghat-Munger-Surajgarha-Dariapur-Barh-Baikanunthpur-Patna.

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1. EF, 1618-21, pp. 217,256.

2. Marshall, pp. 159-60.

3. J.N.Sarkar, India of Aurangzeb, pp. cviii-cx.

4. Marshall, p.161.

The land route from Hugli almost ran parallel to the Ganges and took 20 days to reach Patna.<sup>1</sup>

In the North, Patna was linked with Nepal by a route passing through Hejipur-Singhee-Mughlani Sarai-Butsula-Mehsi-Motihari-Hitaure and Kathmandu.<sup>2</sup> On the other hand, Nepal was linked through hilly routes with Tibet, Bhutan, Lhasa, etc.<sup>3</sup> Howhannes (1686 & 1692-93) took a different route from Marshall from Patna to Kathmandu to Tibet. His route was Patna-Hajipur-Muzaffarpur-Batnailai-Chantee-Gogrigot-Naraingot-Damami-Erajvarai-Kotraihai-Patrinikai-Golghibas-Sanku-Kambu-Batgam-Kathmandu-Sanka-Listi-Kasai-Kuti (Tong-li)-Zignichai-Lhasa.<sup>4</sup> The merchants going from Kashmir to Bhutan and Nepal also passed through Patna, the hill route being dangerous by reason of forests, full of beasts.<sup>5</sup> The Patna-Kashmir route was via Agra and Delhi and took 40 days.<sup>6</sup>

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1. Marshall, pp. 111-127.

2. Ibid., p. 161.

3. Ibid., p. 161.

4. The Ledger of Howhannas, pp. 159,161-62.

5. Marshall, p. 169.

6. Marshall, pp. 169-70.

## (b) (ii) River Routes:

The most important river route was from Patna to Hugli. Marshall and Tavernier, while covering the route in a boat, have recorded the whole journey.<sup>1</sup> The route was Patna\_Munger-Bhagalpur-Kahalgaon-Garhi-Rajmahal-Donapore-Qasimbazar-Nadia and Hugli. It took Marshall only 10 days to reach Hugli while, by land, the same distance on return journey was covered in 20 days, the season (September) being favourable for the laden boats to go downwards when the river was full. From Hugli, goods were sent to different destinations by ships.

On the Western side, the river Ganges connected Patna with Agra via Allahabad, the boats sailing from Agra on the Jamuna followed the course of the Ganges from Allahabad (where the two rivers meet). Fitch (1584) accompanied a fleet of one hundred and forty boats with diverse kinds of merchandise from Agra to Satgaon (via Allahabad and Patna).<sup>2</sup> Abul Fazl has also given the detailed description of the route on the occasion of Akbar's expedition by river to the eastern provinces.<sup>3</sup>

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1. Ibid., pp. 95-101; Tavernier, I, pp. 123-128.

2. Fitch, pp. 18-26.

3. Akbarnama, III, pp. 87-99.

(iii) Bridges and Sarāis:

Numerous rivers criss-crossing Bihar would have made the road transport difficult without bridges, especially in the rainy season.

Many bridges in Bihar have been referred to in our sources. Mundy noticed a bridge at Khurramabad over the river Koodra, which joined Sasaram-Patna road. Marshall on his journey from Rajmahal to Patna took note of a bridge at Ghoraghat which was made of stones having seven arches. The bridge was 140 yards long, 15 or 20 high and 6 or 7 broad. There was a stone bridge at Fatuha (near Patna) also.

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1. Mundy, II, p.129; Tavernier, I, p.120. The bridge was built in 1612-13 (see Q.Ahmad, Inscriptions, pp.208-11).
  2. Marshall, p.74. Kuraishi, Protected Monuments, op.cit., pp.219-20. Kuraishi describes it as the 'Hadaf' bridge built around 1650. According to him, it had six arches each 11 feet in span. "It is 236 feet long bastions of stone masonry one on either side of the road way..... like the hindu bridges in Orissa this bridge also rises in the middle, where the arches are higher than at the ends ..... The total height of the bridge including the parapets (which are 3 feet 9 inc.high) varies from 21 feet to 25 feet above the bed of stream. Also see Ancient Monuments in Bengal, pp.460-62, where almost the same description of the bridge is given.
  3. Marshall, p.77. According to Buchanan the bridge was built by Ikhtiyar Khan around 250 years ago (Bihar and Patna, I, p.76). Actually Ikhtiyar Khan was the agent (vakil) of Said Khan the governor of Bihar (1584-88, 1594-1600) and said to have constructed many sarāis and bridges in Bihar see Ma'āsir-al Umarā, II, pp.429-37).



Another stone bridge at Kalianpur x had 3 arches, and a small watch-house at each side of the bridge.<sup>1</sup> Marshall saw a bridge which was under construction near Garhi.<sup>2</sup>

Buchanan refers to a ruined bridge near Munger as the "largest which I have yet seen in the course of my survey." This was built by Prince Shuja when he was in Bihar (around 1658).<sup>3</sup>

The other bridges of importance were on Pun-Pun in Fatuha,<sup>4</sup> Telhara,<sup>5</sup> near Gobinddas Ki saraf<sup>6</sup> and the one in Munger Fort.<sup>7</sup>

The temporary bridges of boats (pantoon bridge) etc. were also erected by the royal army at the time of expeditions.<sup>8</sup>

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1. Ibid., p.123.
  2. Ibid., pp. 119-20.
  3. EI, II, p.48.
  4. Buchanan, Bihar and Patna, I, p.76.
  5. Ancient Monuments in Bengal, p.270.
  6. Marshall, p.115.
  7. Marshall, p.123.
  8. See A.K.M. Farooque, op.cit., pp. 41-44.

One such bridge was erected in 1583 by the soldiers of Khan-i Azam over the Ganges about 12 kos from Tirhut.<sup>1</sup>

### S a r ā i s:

Sarāis played an important role in trade and commerce. A large number of sarāis were built on all the important routes and commercial centres to provide rest and halting.<sup>2</sup> In Bihar, particularly on the Agra-Patna-route, there were a number of sarāis.<sup>3</sup>

Patna, the chief commercial town of Bihar, had a number of sarāis for the stay of merchants of different nations. Saif Khan's sarāī in Patna was the largest. Mundy writes: "Here is also the fairest sarae (sarāī) that I have yett seen or I think is in India ..... This place is chiefly for merchants of straying countries, as Mogolls, Persians, Armenians where they may lodge and keepe their goods."<sup>4</sup>

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1. Askari, 'Bihar in the time of Akbar', BPP, Vol.LXV, Jan.-Dec., 1945, No.128, p.22.
  2. Manucci, I, p.116. Also see Ravindra Kumar, Sarais in Mughal India (M.Phil.dissertation, AMU, Aligarh, unpublished).
  3. Mundy, II, pp.78-134; Tavernier, I, pp.113-121; Marshall, pp. 117,159-60.
  4. Mundy, II, p.159.

There was a large fortified sarāi at Daudnagar to give shelter to merchants; it was surrounded by a rampart of brick, with battlements and bastion and had two large gates.<sup>1</sup> Marshall en route from Rajmahal to Patna noticed a very big sarāi at Burhjangal where customs on merchandise from Bengal were cleared. Describing the town, Marshall wrote:

"Tis close by the river Ganges and almost all surray (sarāi, inn). I believe there are 200 severall roomes in it, every room esteemed enough for 4 persons, who pay for one night lodging in it 1 pice or 1/28 rupee amongst them. The sarai is all thatched and the roomes like hogties. The ground on which the surray (stands) is let to the natives who built upon it. My land lady paid for the roome in which I lodged, and for 4 more, 5 pice per month. The 5 roomes in all about 400 square yards.<sup>2</sup>"

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1. Tavernier, I, p.121. Ancient Monuments in Bengal, pp. 334-35. EI, I, p.107. Buchanan had a doubt 'whether it was a stronghold.' Actually in the Mughal times it was conventional to make such fortified sarais for security purposes. See Ravindra Kumar, 'Planning and Layout of Mughal Sarais', PIHC, 38th Session, 1977, pp. 360-61.
  2. Marshall, p. 117.

It seems that the place was of no commercial importance, but because of the custom clearnace, merchants made their sojourn there. A number of sarāis were built to provide food and lodging facilities to the merchants which sometimes grew into small townships. The people who managed sarāis belonged to a special caste called bhatiyāras. It was reported in 1812-13 that there were 200 families of Inn keepers (bhatiyāras) in Shahabad.<sup>1</sup>

The routes from Patna to Hugli and Patna to Nepal also were dotted with a number of sarāis.<sup>2</sup> (For a detailed list of sarāis in Bihar, see Appendix).

(iv) Mode of Transport and Freight:

The main mode of land transport for commercial goods was the ox-driven cart.<sup>3</sup> Oxen and horses without carts were also used at Patna for taking goods to Agra.<sup>4</sup> An ox could carry 4 maunds and a cart 40 maunds. The oxen, which draw carts, could travel 20 or 30 days without break, covering

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1. Buchanan, Shahabad Report, p.181.

2. Ibid., pp. 111-127, 161.

3. EF, 1618-21, pp. 191, 256, 283-84.

4. Marshall, p. 425.

20 - 25 miles per day. The price of the oxen was 4 or 5 rupees per pair.<sup>1</sup> Oxen were also used between Balasore and Patna.<sup>2</sup> There is no evidence, however, of horse-drawn carriages for commercial purposes in Bihar. During the 14th-15th centuries in Bihar, slaves were purchased for specific purposes e.g., to work as coolies and this was mentioned in the sale deeds also.<sup>3</sup> In the 16th and 17th centuries, the coolies were also used for carrying goods for long distances.<sup>4</sup>

In 1620, the charges of transport by cart between Patna and Agra were Rs. 1 1/2 to 1 3/4 per maund during ordinary days,<sup>5</sup> but Rs. 2 per maund (Jahangiri) during the rains.<sup>6</sup> In 1621, transportation became slightly expensive, that is, Rs. 2 1/2 per Jahāngīrī man.<sup>7</sup> At times, there was an agreement for delivering the goods within the prescribed period with a deduction of 25% in case of failure to do so.<sup>8</sup>

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1. Marshall, p.377.

2. EF, 1655-60, p.297. EF, 1668-69, p.303.

3. Cf. Vidyapati, Likhnowali, ed. Indrakant Jha, p.45.

4. Banarsidas, Ardhakatha, pp.31-35; Marshall, pp.111, 425-26.

5. EF, 1618-21, pp.191, 256; IA, 1914, p.82.

6. IA, 1914, p.78.

7. Ibid., p. 110.

8. Ibid., p.78.

In 1670-71, between Patna and Agra, an ox which would carry 4 maunds, was let for 12 rupees, and a coach (with 6 oxen) with a capacity of 40 maund was charged 80 rupees, while a coach with two oxen 22 rupees. A horse was let for 10 rupees, while the coolies (who accompanied the palanquin) charged in all 6 1/2 rupees per pieces.<sup>1</sup> The charges of the kahārs (palanquin bearers) and the men who accompanied the palanquin as coolies were Rs. 5 per head for the same distance.<sup>2</sup>

From Patna to Bhutan, oxen, camels, and hill ponies were used as far as Gorakhpur. On hilly routes, women carried people on their back and goods were loaded on goats or sheep. The rates were Rs. 2 per woman for 10 days journey and the same amount for one quintal of goat or sheep load.<sup>3</sup> Howhannes in 1686 refers to the use of yaks (he calls it cow) as pack animals on the hills.<sup>4</sup>

Most of the goods for Hugli were transported over the Ganges.<sup>5</sup> In fact, the Patna-Hugli river route was a very busy one. Manrique at Rajmahal saw more than two

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1. Marshall, pp. 425-26.

2. Ibid., p. 111.

3. Tavernier, II, pp. 262-64.

4. The Ledger, p. 159.

5. EF, 1618-21, pp. 197, 213-14; Ibid., ¶ 1651-54; p.95; Ibid., 1655-60, p.297.

thousand vessels at anchor.<sup>1</sup> A number of boats laden with diverse goods which left Agra for Hugli also passed through Patna.<sup>2</sup>

The variety of boats operating in this region have been mentioned in the contemporary literature.<sup>3</sup> Hamilton has given an account of boats carrying saltpetre from Patna to Hugli. They were fifty yards long, five yards broad and two and a half yards deep, and could carry about 200 tonnes of load.<sup>4</sup> They were probably 'Patellas' referred to by Bowrey, having a capacity to carry four to six thousand Bengal maunds.<sup>5</sup> On one occasion, in 1679, a fleet of 31 boats laden with 29,890 mds. of saltpetre was sent by the English from Patna to Hugli.<sup>6</sup>

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1. Manrique, II, p.135.

2. Fitch, Early Travels, ed. Foster, pp. 18-26.

3. Cf. Bowrey, pp.227-229 (and plates XIII and XV); Marshall, p.79. See A. Jan Qaisar, 'Shipbuilding in the Mughal Empire during the Seventeenth Century', The Indian Economic and Social History Review, vol.5, 1968, pp.156-58. As many as 29 types of boats are mentioned in the 16th century literature of Bihar, cf. R.K.Chaudhuary, Mithila & c., p.199.

4. Hamilton, p.414.

5. Bowrey, p.225; Marshall, p.83. Also see, Jagdish Narain Sarkar, Studies in Economic Life & c., pp.87-88. For different types of boats see the Chapter on Crafts and Industries (supra).

6. Cf. S.Master, II, p.275.

The river transport was speedy and took far less time than the land.<sup>1</sup> Another advantage was that the river transport was always cheap.<sup>2</sup> Though we have no evidence regarding the river freight rates in this region, an idea may be formed by the report of the English factors in 1650 saying that the saltpetre cost 1 rupee per maund at Patna but was raised to 1 3/4 rupees at Hugli because of freight and custom.<sup>3</sup>

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1. It took five or six days from Patna to the Bengal ports but while coming back against the current it took thrice the time, EF, 1618-21, p.214. On the other hand, it took 20 days by land from Hugli to Patna. Marshall, pp.111-127. Maurique travelled in about from Patna to Agra in five days while by road it was 35 days Journey.
  2. Irfan Habib, Agrarian System, p.63.
  3. EF, 1646-50, p.337.