

Documentation of Ganga from Gaumukh to Gangasagar

Buxar District

Intangible Cultural Heritage



INTACH

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March-April 2021

Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage

National Mission for Clean Ganga
(Reg. Society)
Ministry of Jal Shakti
Department of Water Resources, River Development & Ganga Rejuvenation
Government of India

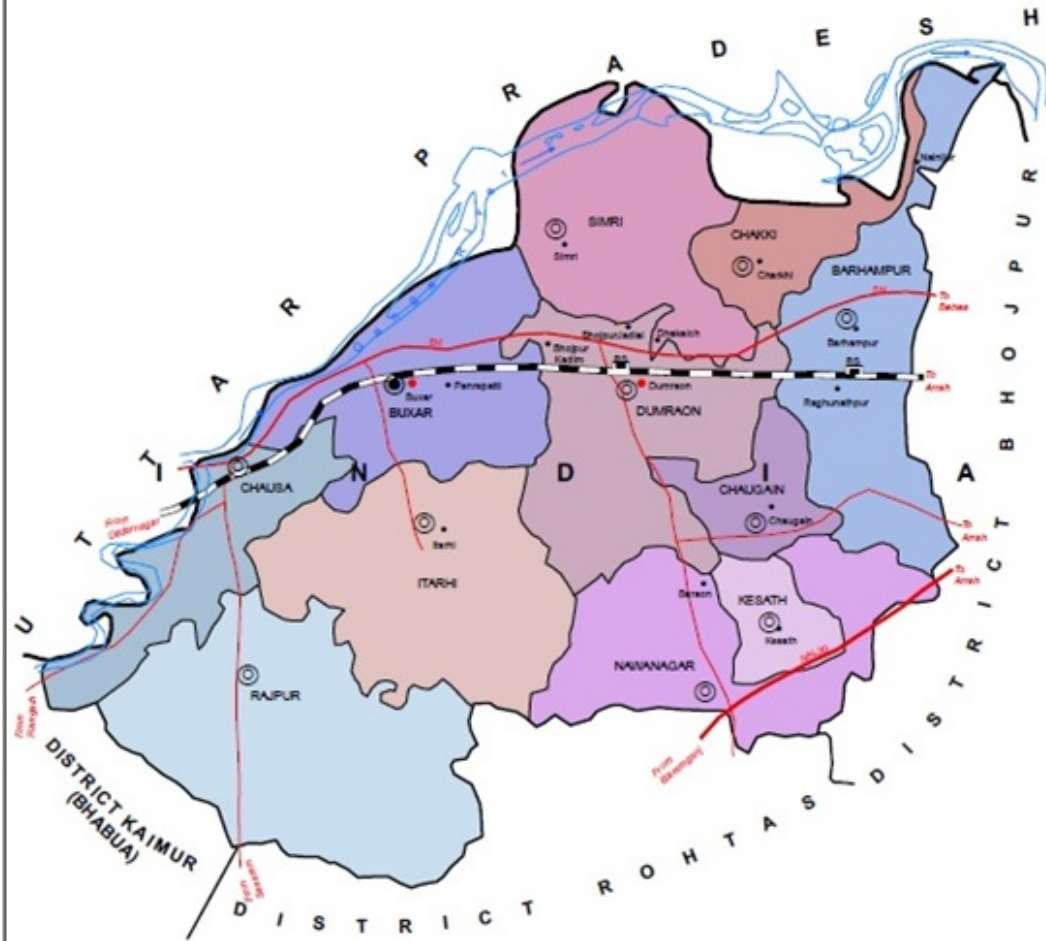



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BIHAR
DISTRICT BUXAR
KILOMETRES



- BOUNDARY, STATE _____
- _____ DISTRICT _____
- _____ C. D. BLOCK _____
- HEADQUARTERS: DISTRICT _____
- _____ C. D. BLOCK _____
- VILLAGES HAVING 10000 AND ABOVE POPULATION WITH NAME _____
- URBAN AREA WITH POPULATION SIZE >= 10000 _____
- NATIONAL HIGHWAY _____
- STATE HIGHWAY _____
- IMPORTANT METALLED ROADS _____
- RAILWAY LINE WITH STATION, BROAD GAUGE _____
- RIVER AND STREAM _____

	Total	Rural	Urban
Area (Sq.Km)	1703.00	1681.50	21.50
Population	1706352	1541853	164499
No. of Villages	1133		
No. of Towns	02		
No. of C.D. Blocks	11		
Distance of District HQ to State HQ 127 Km			

Note:- District Headquarters is also the CD Block Headquarters.

Introduction

The present-day Buxar was part of the erstwhile Shahabad district. We find many references of Buxar as a subdivision in the Gazetteer of Shahabad. The district of Shahabad formed the western portion of the Patna division (O'Malley 1). According to the Gazetteer of Shahabad, the Ganges formed the northern boundary of the district, separating it from Ghazipur, Ballia and Saran.

'Buxar is said to have been the home of many of the authors of the Vedic hymns and to have been originally called Vedagarbha, i. e., the womb or origin of the Vedas' (O'Malley 163). Local legends also say that the name of the district is derived from the name of a tank near the Gaurishankar temple which was originally called 'Aghsar' or effacer of sin, but in course of time came to be called 'Baghsar'. Another story of the name Buxar is believed to be derived from the word 'Vyaghrasar'. The story behind this name originates from the tiger face of Rishi Vedshira, which was an outcome of the curse of the sage Rishi Durvasha and is believed to have been restored after bathing in a holy tank which was later named VyaghraSar (Ahmed). 'According to mythology, sage Vishwamitra, the family guru of Lord Rama and eighty thousand saints, had his sacred ashram on the banks of the holy river Ganges inside the modern district of Buxar. He was disturbed in the yagna (sacrificial offering) by the demons. The place where due killing of the famous rakshasi (demoness) Tadika by Lord Rama, is said to fall within the present Buxar town area' (Ahmed). Buxar is also mentioned in ancient epics like *Brahamana Purana* and *Varah Purana*.

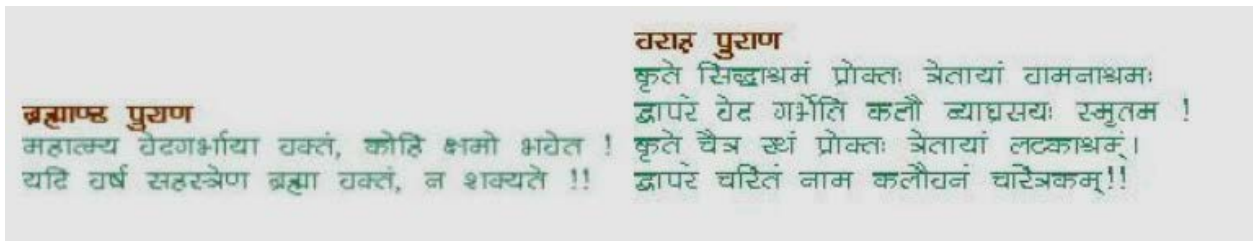


Image source: buxar.nic.in

Geography and Demography



The district is bounded on the north by Ballia district of U.P., on the south by Rohtas district, on the west by Ghazipur and Ballia districts of U.P. and on the east by Bhojpur district. The northern boundary of the district is marked by the river Ganga, and the river Karmansa joins the Ganga near Chousa. The climate of the district is moderate and it receives maximum rainfall during the months of July and August. 'Due to deforestation, the forest area of this district is very thin. Some common trees of this district are Mango, Seesum, Mahua, Bamboo, while some types of long grasses (Jhalas) are found near the diara area of the river Ganga' (District Administration Buxar). River Son and River Ganga form the perennial source of surface water for the district.

According to the census of 2011, the total population of the district is 1,706,352, out of which the percentage of urban population is 9.64%. Buxar ranks 29th in terms of population (17,06,352) and 30th in terms of area (1,703 sq.km.) in the state of Bihar. In terms of population per sq.km, Buxar is the 24th most densely populated district in the state with 1002 persons per sq.km as against the state's 1,106. Buxar ranks 15th in terms of sex-ratio (922) against the state's 918. There are 298 inhabited villages (out of 1,133 total villages) in the district of Buxar (Directorate of Census Operations, Bihar)



Figure 1 A paddy field at Buxar, Source: Wikipedia

Historical Overview

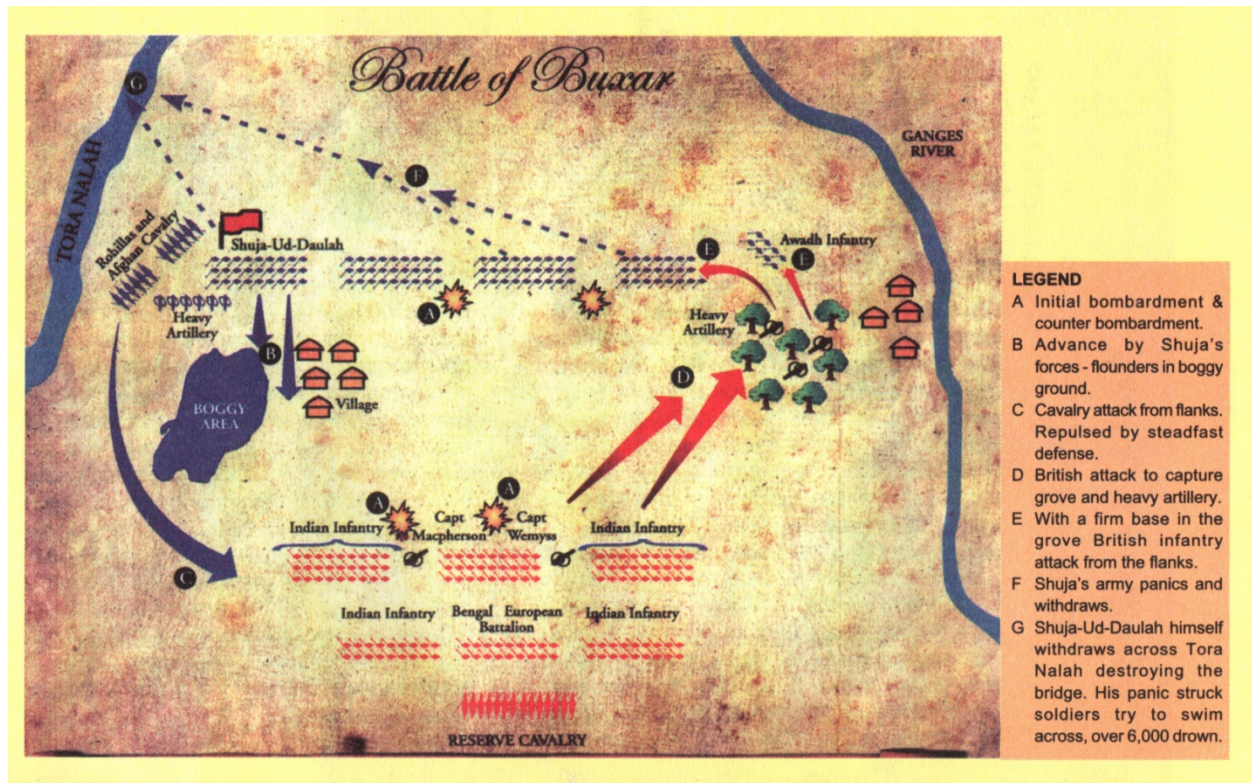


Figure 2 Battle of Buxar, Source: Ajay Singh

In prehistoric times, the area of the Buxar subdivision was occupied by the Bhars. The Bhar tribe once inhabited a wide tract of land extending from Gorakhpur in Northern India to Saugor in Central India' (Sherring and Horne 1). There were several other tribes also living in this region but the Bhars were considered the most powerful amongst them all. They had a lot of influence in the area of Oudh and the country lying between Allahabad and Benaras, especially in the region on either side of the Ganga.

During the ancient period, the region of Buxar was ruled by all the kingdoms and kings that had control over the Patna and Gaya districts. Hence, it was also ruled by the great king Ashoka and came under the kingdom of Magadha. There are also inscriptions present which corroborate this. The Chinese traveller Hiuen Tsang also visited the region during the seventh century A.D.

We learn from the evidence of various inscriptions that this region also came under the Gupta rule. After the collapse of the Gupta dynasty, the region of Shahabad passed into the hands of a number of petty aboriginal chiefs. 'The ruling indigenous tribe at this period was the Chero, and apparently the chieftains of this race ruled over the country until they were driven southwards by the inroads of immigrant Rajputs' (O'Malley 21).

In 1193 A.D., Shahabad district passed on from the hands of petty Rajput chieftains to that of the Muslim rulers. It became a part of various kingdoms in the process. For example, in 1397, it was attached to the kingdom of Jaunpur with the rest of Bihar, but a century later it was taken in possession of the Emperors of Delhi (O'Malley 21). Subsequently, it passed into the rule of Babur when he invaded Bihar in 1529. After the death of Babur, the influence of Sher Shah became strong on the borders of Bengal and he came into direct conflict with Humayun. A memorable battle was fought between the two kings near Buxar at a place called Chausa.

Battle of Chausa - The Battle of Chausa was an important battle fought between the Mughal emperor, Humayun and the Afghan king, Sher Shah Suri. It was fought on 26 June 1539 at a place called Chausa, lying 10 miles south of the Buxar district in modern day Bihar. The Mughal forces of Humayun were badly defeated in this battle and Humayun escaped death narrowly by escaping to Agra. After this battle, Sher Shah took over the title of Farid al-Dīn Shēr Shah. 'Excavations around Chausa have yielded bronze statues of Jain tirthankara, ancient coins and a terracotta panel now housed in the Patna museum among other antiquities' (Ahmed).

The area in and around Bengal became an important centre of power during the British rule. This area saw many battles being fought by the British to solidify their position in India. The most significant ones being the Battle of Plassey and the Battle of Buxar. The victory in these battles firmly established the rule of the East India Company.

Battle of Buxar - The famous Battle of Buxar was fought in 1764 between the East India Company on one hand and the combined armies of Mir Kasim, the Nawab of Bengal; Suja-ud

Daula, the Nawab of Awadh; and Shah Alam II, the Mughal Emperor, on the other. The British forces were led by Major Munro. The British forces were ten times lesser than the enemy's forces, but still ended up winning this battle. It was after this battle that the East India Company got control of the region of Bengal and Bihar. The British victory at Buxar also resulted in a large area of the Indian subcontinent coming under British control (Britannica). While the Battle of Plassey secured a foothold for the British east India company in India, the Battle of Buxar made them the dominant force in India.

Gandhi, Quit India and Buxar



Figure 3 Mahatma Gandhi during a rally at Buxar, Source: ETV Bharat

Buxar played an immensely significant role in Gandhi's Satyagraha movement. The Mahatma, known for non-violence, laid the foundation of the freedom movement in Shahabad. It can be safely said that Gandhi's Buxar chapter eventually led to his transformation into the Mahatma. Gandhi visited Buxar five times and his simple thoughts still inspire people there. Bapu came here on August 11, 1921, in connection with the Non-Cooperation Movement and then on April 25, 1934, during the Civil Disobedience Movement. Bapu had also visited Buxar earlier in 1914, 1917, and 1919.

In Buxar, August 16th every year commemorates the sacrifice of four martyrs, Kapil Muni, Ramdas Sonar, Ramdas Lohar and Bhikhi Lal who played a crucial role during the Quit India movement of 1942.



Figure 4 Srichand temple complex, Source: ETV Bharat

The Father of the Nation first made his visit to Buxar's Srichand Temple where he met the local agitators. Thereafter, he addressed public meetings in the historic Fort Ground and Banbigha Ground. However, the famous Srichand temple is now in a state of ruins, where leaders like Dr Rajendra Prasad, Jawaharlal Nehru, Anugraha Narayan Singh, once used to stay.¹

¹ <https://react.etvbharat.com/english/national/bharat/bharat-news/gandhis-buxar-chapter-eventually-transformed-him-into-mahatma/na20190912075436976>



Figure 5 Ruins of Srichand temple, Source: ETV Bharat

Kapil Muni

The matter is dated 16 August 1942. At four in the evening, hundreds of agitators gathered at Dumraon market under the leadership of Kapil Muni and his associates. The fire of Quit India movement has spread all over the country. Nationalist leaders had called for hoisting the tricolor on all government buildings. The group of agitators proceeded to hoist the tricolor at Dumraon police station. While chanting Bharat Mata ki Jai, Bande Mataram, etc., under the leadership of Kapila Muni, people marched to the police station and before the British soldiers could understand anything, they went up to hoist the tricolor on the building. The police of the British government were shocked by this sudden incident. According to the Shahabad Gazetteer, the police fired indiscriminately on unarmed agitators on the orders of the then Inspector Devnath of Dumraon police station. One bullet hit Kapil Muni's chest, and he died while hoisting the tricolor on the building, and became a martyr.

Places of Importance

Buxar fort



It forms one of the biggest landmarks of the city. The fort was built by King Rudra Deo I in 1054. It is a stone fort located on the banks of the river Ganga. Since the fort provided a great position of strategic importance, after the Battle of Buxar, the fort was taken over by the British and the land around the fort was acquired for military purposes in 1770 (O'Malley 164).

Sita-Ram Upadhyaya Museum



This was founded in 1979. It was renamed in 1993 as Sita Ram Upadhyaya Museum in honour of Upadhyaya, a resident of Buxar who donated many artefacts to the museum. The museum has many stone statues, coins and terracotta figures amongst its exhibits (Ahmed).

Kathkauli Maidaan



This is located near the Kathkauli village in Buxar. On this ground, the Battle of Buxar was fought, and a memorial was established by the British to commemorate their victory.

Ram Rekha Ghat



It is one of the most sacred and important places of the district. This place derives its importance from the epic of *Ramayana*. It is mentioned in the *Ramayana* that Rama drew a line on the Ganga river with his bow so that demons could not cross into that territory (Ahmed). The literal translation of Ram rekha is 'Rama's line' and this ghat is believed to be that holy site where Rama drew this line. The folklore also suggests that it was at this spot that Rama, his brother Laxmana and sage Vishwamitra crossed the Ganga to reach Janakpur for Sita's Swayamvara. There is a mark on the riverbank, which is believed to be the impression of Rama's feet (Ahmed). The ghat is thronged by devotees on the festivals of Makar Sankranti and Chhath Puja as taking a dip here in the Ganga is considered very auspicious.

Sacred Complexes

Navlakha Mandir



This mandir is one of the most famous temples of Buxar. The Navlakha temple is also known as Charitravan Baikunth. 'According to the folklore, Lord Rama (of the epic *Ramayana*) completed his studies under sage Vishwamitra in Charitravan, where the temple is located' (Ahmed). The architecture of this temple very closely resembles the South Indian style of temple architecture.

Rameshwarnath Mandir



This temple is located close to the Ram Rekha Ghat on the banks of the river Ganga. The temple is dedicated to Lord Shiva. It is believed that the Shivlinga present in this temple was established by Lord Rama himself. It is believed that during his exile of fourteen years, Rama established this temple to worship Lord Shiva. Hence, it is considered a holy site by many people and devotees often come to visit this holy place (Prabhat Khabar).

Brahmeshwarnath Mandir



This temple is famous for its grandeur and ancient relevance throughout the country. It is located 40 kms away from the main town of Buxar. This temple is also dedicated to Lord Shiva. It is believed that the Shivalinga here was established by Lord Brahma himself. According to the local legends, once Nadir Shah tried to destroy the temple and came in with his army. The priests of the temple convinced him to trust in the power of their God. He challenged them that they would have to ask Lord Shiva to turn the face of the temple from the east to the west then only would he leave the temple as it was. To everyone's surprise, the face of the temple shifted from the east to the west. It is believed that it is the only temple of Shiva in the world that faces the west (Prabhat Khabar). During the month of Shravan, many Shiva devotees walk from Ram Rekha Ghat to Brahmeshwarnath temple to make offerings.

Bihariji Mandir



The temple is dedicated to Lord Krishna and devotees from different parts of Bihar come here to offer their prayers. Jaiprakash Singh, the Maharaja of Dumraon estate, ordered the construction of this temple in 1825. 'The temple is significant because Ustad Bismillah Khan, the renowned shehnai maestro and a native of Dumraon, used to play the instrument in the temple along with his father Bachai Miyan, who was the official shehnai player of the estate' (Ahmed).

Fairs and Festivals

Panchkroshi Parikrama



The Panchkroshi parikrama is a pilgrimage in which people walk through five villages around Buxar in five days. During the pilgrimage, they eat litti chokha.



Sita Ram Vivah Mahotsav



The Sita Ram Vivah Mahotsav is a marriage celebration held in November. Thousands of saints and pilgrims from across the country descend upon the Sita Ram Vivah ashram in the Naya Bazar locality of Buxar to celebrate the occasion.

Baba Nath Temple



The Brameshwarnath is a temple dedicated to Shiva. It is believed that Tulsidas, the author of the *Ramayana*, worshipped Shiva here. During Shravan, many Shiva devotees walk from Ram Rekha Ghat to Brahmeshwarnath temple to make offerings.

Amongst the variety of the numerous ascetic traditions existing in India, the Sect of Nathas is the one of most ancient and remarkable. The order itself appears to be about one thousand years old, but the principles on which it based trace their original too far remote past. Nathas are also known as Yogis because the foundation of their order is based on the ideals of Yoga.

The appearance of Nath Sampradaya Yogis



As all other Shaiva ascetics, the Nāthas wear saffron-coloured clothes, or go around half-naked, after besmearing their body with ash from their sacred fires. Many of them keep their hair matted, some are clean-shaven. The most striking detail of the Natha appearance, which makes them very easily distinguished from the ascetics of all others sects of India, is their huge earrings called kundala (kuṇḍala),

inserted into lobes of their ears. The word kuṇḍala translated from Sanskrit means earring, ring, coil or circle of rope. From the same root comes the word Kundalini (the coiled Goddess) the famous name of the mysterious Goddess Durgā. The splitting lobes of the ears and the inserting of the earrings is an important part of the Natha sadhanā and the second stage of their initiation. The Natha Yogis believe that the two important nadies (subtle channels) are cut in the process, which becomes helpful for the permanent rising of the Kundalini. Another purpose of this custom is to demonstrate the faith and determination of an adept to follow the path once selected by him. The procedure of splitting the ears by itself is very painful, and traditionally no medicines were applied to keep the pain in control. After earrings, another important distinctive mark of the Nathas is their sacred thread called janeū, worn around the neck. It consists of six dark brown threads with Savitri (pāvitrī ring), rudrākṣa and siṅgnād (whistle) attached to it. Janeū is given to an adept at the time of entering into the order, along with a new name ending on Natha and Guru Mantra. This is the first stage of initiation into the order, after which the yogi becomes known as aughar. For aughar, his janeu is the only mark of his belonging to the Natha sect, without which he would not be recognized as its member. The fully initiated Nathas, who have accomplished the task of splitting their ears and inserting

earrings, are called Darshni (darśanī). Darshni yogis have much more respect than aughars, and are considered to be full-fledged members of the sect, while the latter are still looked upon as 'candidates' for the complete initiation.

Folktales and Folk Songs

Most of the folklore found in the region of Buxar is tribal folklore. According to texts on folklore, Buxar's religion was an agglomeration of Hinduism, animism, animatism and spiritism. The boom states that like the other tribes, Buxas were also great believers in spirits and they called them 'bhut pret'. It was believed that these were the humans who died of unnatural causes. Most men and women were liable to be possessed by 'bhut pret' (Hasan 16). The word 'Bharra' seems to hold a lot of importance for the people of this region. 'Bharra' or 'Bharrara' seems to have been the corrupted form of the word Bhagat which means a devotee. He has a lot of roles to perform but he is primarily a witch doctor. Bharras were more popular among the Tharu tribe than the Buxa tribe.

different occasions. The following is a mantra chanted by the Bharrara to cure an illness.

**Brahma's abode
Indra's abode
Let Guru Govinda
Occupy abode
Let me meditate
Whoever argues with thee
Let his argument go against him
Clad in loin cloth
Forest dweller
Let no spirits or Mari and Masan
Come near
Be seated, Brahma
And protect my body and soul
Let this mantra, words of God, succeed
The words of Guru are true.**

Image source: The Folklore of Buxar by Amir Hasan

Superstitions and omens were also an integral part of the life of the people of Buxar. 'The brahmans exploited the tribal's blind faith in such matters and charged fees when the locals approached them to fix some auspicious dates etc.' (Hasan 25).

The main themes that find place in the folktales of Buxa include kings, animals, mythological figures, legends, childbirth, festivals, and devotion. These stories deal with a variety of subjects like poverty, common everyday problems, love stories of princes and princesses, sacrifice, loyalty and many such innumerable topics. 'The language used in Buxa folktales is western Hindi or Hindustani mixed with Brijia and Kumayuni' (Hasan 133). Maximum number of stories are written in prose but some are also available in verse format. These folktales were the source of entertainment for everyone and a source of moral stories for children.

Folk songs along with the folktales form a major portion of the literature of Buxar. Folk songs take us through the passage of history as they have been passed down from one generation to another. 'These songs convey simple thoughts pertaining to community's traditions, beliefs, rituals, traditions, exploits and heroic deeds, love and hate and everyday problems, in simple language and style. In short, folk songs present the community's way of life' (Hasan 141). Buxa songs were sung by both men and women. There were 'male' songs and 'female' songs. Women used to sing during festivals, rituals and on special occasions. The men used to sing for entertainment and recreation.

Buxa musicians classify their songs excluding ritual and a few other “female” songs into *ragas*. These *ragas* have a prescribed time for singing as detailed below :

***Khayal* is sung before dinner and before lamps are lighted. As is well known, *Khayal* is no *raga* in classical music. It is a style of music.**

***Kanahari* is sung 2½ hours after the lamps have been lighted. *Mundi Kanahari* is also recited at this time.**

***Kanahare* begins after *Kanahari* and continues till midnight.**

Image source: The Folklore of Buxar by Amir Hasan

There were religious and devotional songs, songs connected with life-cycle rituals, songs with Krishna themes, love songs, general and social songs. Buxa songs provide a lot of diversity and though many songs may have been brought from outside, they have formed an inseparable part of the identity of the Buxa people.

Both the folktales and the folk songs throw considerable light on the culture and life of the tribes that have lived and have been living in this area of Buxar.

Foodways

Most people in Buxar prefer vegetarian food. The main diet of people here includes dal, roti, sabzi and rice. The main ingredients of the diet include sattu, gramflour, vegetables, and wheat flour. Some of the very famous local dishes of Buxar are Dalpuri, Litti-Chokha and Baingan-ka-Bharta. Litti-Chokha in recent times has gained popularity around the world for its finger licking taste. It is also counted among the best street foods of India. Dalpuri is a traditional food of Buxar and is made by stuffing boiled-crushed gram-pulse fried with special spices in salted wheat flour. It is a common dish of Buxar which can be relished from road side vendors as well as the restaurants in Buxar. Litti-Chokha, which is the most famous dish of entire Bihar, has gained popularity around the world. It is served with ghee. Baingan-ka-Bharta (brinjal treated with spices) is very popular in Buxar. It is also served with Litti in many parts of Buxar. Litti with Bhanta (Baingan-ka-Bharta) is the traditional dish prepared when people visit the religious area famous for the panchkoshi parikrama and stay there for five days to perform various rituals.

Dal Puri



The love for Dal Puri is never-ending for Biharis. A special occasion or a reason to cook dal puri is not required to prepare this dish. The stuffing for the puri is made with boiled and mashed chana dal mixed with salt and spices. This is stuffed inside the dough made for puris. It is further fried till golden brown and best served with kheer (a milk-based dessert). In Buxar, it is especially made on the occasion of Ram Navami and Dussehra.

Litti-Choka



The filling of Litti is prepared with “Sattu” mixed with chopped onions, garlic, green chilies, mustard oil, salt, and lemon juice. It is further stuffed inside the dough and baked or deep-fried to perfection. It is served with Chokha which is a mixture of roasted eggplants, tomatoes and boiled potatoes. This famous dish is the glory of Bihar which is served throughout India. One of the religious facts about Litti-Chokha dates back to the era of Lord Ram and Goddess Sita who cooked the recipe to satiate their hunger during the fourteen years of their exile at Charitravan (now a part of Buxar). Buxar district celebrates and organizes the “Litti-Chokha mela” where people from other regions of Bihar visit to taste this divine cuisine.

The people of Buxar also love sweets, and hence a variety of sweets are prepared and relished here. The most popular sweets here are Laddoo, Khaja, Belgrami, Tilkut and Anarsa, and Malpua. Ladoos are sweet balls made from gram-flour, sugar and ghee. Khaja is a sweet made

up of refined wheat-flour, sugar and ghee and available in different varieties, like round Chandshahi. Belgrami is a sweet made up of cheese, sugar and ghee. The most famous Belgrami comes from Udwantnagar near Buxar. Tilkut, Anarsa, Malpua, Laai, Sonpadi, Perukia, Balushahi, Kheer Makhana and Thekua are made on same special occasions only.

Belgrami Sweet

Paneer Khurma is a paneer or cheese-based sweet from Bihar. This sweet is also known as Belgrami.



Notable Personalities of Buxar

Vimlanand Saraswati









Vimlanand Saraswati (14 Jan. 1921 - 9 July 2008) was an Indian Bhojpuri writer and author and spiritualist. He is credited with writing the first short story collection in Bhojpuri.




He was born as Awadh Bihar Suman on 14th January 1921 at Mangraon village of Buxar, Bihar. During 1939-40 he was the editor of the weekly Hindi journal *Krishak*. He went to jail during the independence struggle in 1942. Later he became a saint and changed his name to Dandiswami Vimlanand Saraswati. His first book was the Bhojpuri short story collection, *Jehal ke Sanadi*,

which was published in 1948. In the same year his collection of Hindi poems *Makarand* was published. After becoming a monk he started writing an epic on the life of Gautama Buddha, which was published in 1983 as *Baudhayan*. For his works in the field of Literature, he was awarded many awards by the Bihar government and the Bhojpuri Academy. In 1993, he became the President of the thirteenth session of Bhojpuri Sahitya Sammelan in Arrah.

Hindi Tithi Calendar 2020-21: Buxar

<p>January</p> <p>10th Jan - Paush Purnima</p>  <p>शिव पूर्णिमा 2019</p>	<p>Paush Purnima is a significant day in the Hindu calendar. The full moon is the lunar phase when the moon appears fully illuminated from Earth's perspective. In lunar calendar, Magha month starts from the next day of Paush Purnima. During Magha Mahina, people take a holy dip at Triveni Sangam at Prayag; this is considered highly auspicious and important on Paush Purnima day. It is believed that the holy dip on the auspicious day of Paush Purnima liberates the soul from the continuous cycle of birth and death.</p>
<p>15th Jan - Makar Sankranti</p> 	<p>Numerous rituals are followed during Sankranti. These rituals vary from state to state and within a state, region to region. The following rituals are celebrated all over the country:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• ritualistic bonfire a day before Makar Sankranti• worshipping of rising Surya Deva, the Sun God• holy dip in sacred water bodies• making Pongal and distributing it as Prasad (in Tamil Nadu)• performing charity by giving alms to the needy• flying kites especially in Gujarat• worshipping livestock• preparing sweets with sesame and jaggery• taking oil bath, mostly in South India .
<p>24th January - Mauni Amavasya</p> 	<p>It is believed that the water of the most sacred and holy river in Hinduism, the Ganga, turns into the nectar on Mauni Amavasya day. Due to this belief Mauni Amavasya day is the most important day in Hindu calendar to take holy dip in the Ganga. According to the beliefs, Mauni Amavasya falls in the middle of Magha month and is also known as Maghi Amavasya.</p>
<p>29th January - Basant Panchami</p> 	<p>Vasant Panchami day is dedicated to Saraswati, the Goddess of knowledge, music, arts, science and technology. Goddess Saraswati is worshipped on this day. This ritual of initiating education to children is known as <i>Akshar-Abhyasam</i> or <i>Vidya-Arambham/Praasana</i>, which is one of the famous rituals of Vasant Panchami.</p>

<p>February</p> <p>9th Feb - Magh Purnima</p> 	<p>Magha Purnima is an important day in the Hindu calendar. Religious texts describe the glory of the holy bath and austerity observed during Magha Purnima. It is believed that every single day in the month of Magha is special for doing charity.</p>
<p>21st February - Mahashivratri</p> 	<p>Shivaratri is a great festival of convergence of Shiva and Shakti. Chaturdashi Tithi during Krishna Paksha in the month of Magha is known as Maha Shivaratri.</p>
<p>March</p> <p>9th March - Holika Dahan</p> 	<p>Holika was a demoness in Hindu Vedic scriptures, who was burnt to death with the help of God Vishnu. She was the sister of King Hiranyakashipu and aunt of Prahlad. The story of Holika Dahan (Holika's death) signifies the triumph of good over evil. It is believed that all sorts of fears can be conquered by doing Holika Puja on Holi. Holika Puja bestows power, prosperity and wealth.</p>

<p>10th March – Holi</p> 	<p>Holi is a religious festival celebrated by Hindus all over the world. Holi is considered the second biggest festival in the Hindu calendar after Diwali. Holi is also known as the Festival of Colours. The second day is known as Rangwali Holi, the day when people play with coloured powder and coloured water. Rangwali Holi which is main Holi day is also known as Dhulandi or Dhulendi.</p>
<p>16th March - Sheetala Ashtami</p> 	<p>Basoda Puja is dedicated to Goddess Sheetala and is celebrated on Krishna Paksha Ashtami after Holi. Basoda is also known as Sheetala Ashtami. Usually it falls after eight days of Holi but many people observe it on first Monday or Friday after Holi. Sheetala Ashtami is more popular in North Indian states like Gujarat, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh. According to Basoda customs, families don't light a fire for cooking. Hence most families cook one day before and consume stale food on Sheetala Ashtami day. It is believed that Goddess Sheetala controls smallpox, chickenpox, measles, etc. and people worship her to ward off any outbreak of those diseases.</p>
<p>APRIL</p> <p>8th April - Hanuman Jayanti</p> 	<p>Chaitra month: Hanuman, who is also known as Vanara God, was born on this day and Hanuman Jayanti is celebrated to commemorate the birth of Hanuman. Celebrations at Lete Hanuman and Gore Hanuman temple at Prayag are very famous. Rituals during Hanuman Jayanti:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shodashopachara Hanuman Puja • visiting Hanuman temple • offering Sindoor i.e. red vermilion to Lord Hanuman.

30th April - Ganga Jayanti



Ganga Saptami day is dedicated to Goddess Ganga. This day is also known as Ganga Pujan and Ganga Jayanti as Ganga was reborn on this day.

According to Hindu Mythology Ganga descended to the Earth on Ganga Dussehra day. Lord Shiva took her in His locks to break Ganga's descent. Later Lord Shiva released Ganga.

JUNE

1st June - Ganga Dusshera



Ganga Dussehra falls during Dashami Tithi of Jyeshtha Shukla Paksha and falls in the months of May or June. Ganga Dussehra is also known as Gangavataran which means the descent of the Ganga. This festival is dedicated to Goddess Ganga and this day is commemorated as the day when Ganga descended to the Earth to accomplish her mission to purge the cursed souls of Bhagiratha's ancestors. Before coming to the Earth, the Goddess Ganga was residing in Kamandal of Lord Brahma and along with her the Goddess Ganga brought the purity of heaven to the Earth. On Ganga Dussehra devotees worship Goddess Ganga and take a dip in the Ganga. Taking dip in the Ganga and offering charity or Daan-Punya on Ganga Dussehra day is considered highly auspicious. It is believed that holy dip in Ganga on Ganga Dussehra day can purge all type of sins.

JULY

05th July - Guru Purnima



During the Ashadha month, full moon day is celebrated as Guru Purnima or Vyasa Purnima. Traditionally this day is reserved for Guru Puja or Guru Worship. On this day disciples offer Puja or pay respect to their Gurus. Guru refers to spiritual guide who enlightens disciples by his knowledge and teachings.

This day is commemorated as the birth anniversary of Veda Vyasa. Veda Vyasa was the author as well as a character in the Hindu epic *Mahabharata*. Devout Hindus observe Guru Purnima as one of the main festivals.

<p>AUGUST</p> <p>3rd August - Hariyali Teej</p> 	<p>Teej festivities are celebrated by women in states like Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Bihar and Jharkhand. Hariyali Teej is celebrated by women during Sawan month. Hartalika Teej Vrat is observed during Shukla Paksha Tritiya of Bhadrapada month. On this day, makeshift statues of Lord Shiva and Goddess Parvati are made with the sand and worshipped for marital bliss and progeny.</p> <p>Hartalika Teej is known by this name due to the legend associated with it.</p>
<p>5th August - Nag Panchami</p> 	<p>Nag Panchami is a significant day and it is observed on Shukla Paksha Panchami during Shravana month. Nag Panchami falls in the months of July or August and women worship Nag Devta and offer milk to snakes on this day. Women also pray for the wellness of their brothers and family. Nag Panchami is a traditional worship of serpent Gods observed by Hindus throughout India.</p>
<p>3rd August - Shrawan Purnima / Rakshabanadhan</p> 	<p>Rakhi, which is also known as Raksha Bandhan, is a Hindu festival which is celebrated across India. Raksha Bandhan is recognized and celebrated among Hindus for its symbolic significance. Raksha Bandhan draws its significance from a sacred thread which is known as Rakhi. It is believed that the thread protects the one who wears it, especially during the auspicious time of Shrawan Purnima.</p>

11th August - Janamshtami



Devotees, who observe fast on Janmashtami, should have only a single meal a day before Janmashtami. On fasting day, devotees take Sankalpa to observe a day-long fast and to break it on the next day when both Rohini Nakshatra and Ashtami Tithi are over. Rituals performed during Janamashtmi:

- a day-long fast
- worshipping Bal Krishna at midnight
- visiting Krishna temple
- cooking sweet dishes specially made of milk products.

23rd August - Rishi Panchami



Rishi Panchami is not a festival, but a fasting day observed by women to pay homage to the Sapta Rishis, i.e. the seven sages, and to get purified from Rajaswala Dosha.

Hinduism gives highest priority to purity and there are strict guidelines to maintain purity of the body and the soul. In Hinduism women are believed to be contaminated during their menstrual cycle. During menstrual cycle women are not allowed to enter in the kitchen for cooking, to participate in any religious activities and to touch any family members. Avoiding these guidelines creates Rajaswala Dosha. Rishi Panchami fasting is advised to get rid of Rajaswala Dosha.

OCTOBER

25th October - Dusshera



Vijayadashami is celebrated as victory of Lord Rama over the demon Ravana and also victory of Goddess Durga over the buffalo demon Mahishasura. Vijayadashami is also known as Dussehra and the Prayagraj Dusshera is famous across the country. Apart from Magh Mela, Dusshera is a famous and popular festival in India. Huge crowds gather to pay obeisance to the gods and watch the burning of the effigies of Ravana.

NOVEMBER

8th November - Ahoi-Ashtami



Traditionally, on Ahoi Ashtami mothers used to keep fast from dawn to dusk for the wellbeing of their sons. The fast is broken during twilight after sighting stars in the sky.

The lore goes: Once upon a time, there lived a kind and devoted woman in a village situated near a dense forest. She had seven sons. One day in the month of Kartik, just a few days before Diwali festivities, the woman decided to repair and decorate her house for Diwali celebrations. To renovate her house, she decided to go to the forest to fetch some soil. While digging the soil in the forest, she accidentally killed a lion cub with the spade with which she was digging the soil. She felt sad, guilty and responsible for what had happened to the innocent cub.




Within a year of this incident, all the seven sons of the woman disappeared, and they were considered dead by the villagers. The villagers assumed that her sons might have been killed by some wild animals of the forest. The woman was very depressed and correlated all the misfortune with the accidental death of the cub by her. One day, she narrated her woes to one of the old ladies of the village.

She discussed the incident, of how she had committed the sin of killing the cub mistakenly. The old lady advised the woman that as atonement for her sin, she should offer her prayers to the Goddess Ahoi Bhagawati, an incarnation of Goddess Parvati by sketching the face of the cub. She was suggested to observe fast and perform puja for the Goddess Ahoi as She is believed to be the protector of offspring of all living beings.

13th November - Narak Chaturdashi



Narak Chaturdashi is a festival celebrated in the month of Kartik, on the 14th day of the waning moon. It is also known as Narak Chaudas, Roop Chaudas or even Kali Chaudas. As per ancient Indian mythology, people revere the Lord of death 'Yamraj' with utmost devotion and adoration. As it is celebrated a day before Diwali, it is also known as Choti Diwali. On this day, people light up diyas at their homes after dusk. By lionising the god of death, people make sure that they are absolved from the clutches of untimely death, as well as pray for better health.

<p>14th November –Deepawali</p> 	<p>Diwali is the most significant religious festival among Hindus. The festival spiritually signifies the victory of light over darkness, knowledge over ignorance, good over evil and hope over despair. In India, Diwali is celebrated all over the country.</p> <p>Being Amavasya day, people also perform Shradha for their ancestors at Sangam. Traditionally, most Puja is performed after keeping a day-long fast. Hence, the devotees observe a day-long fast on the day of Lakshmi Puja. The fast is broken after Lakshmi Puja in the evening.</p>
<p>20th November - Chhatt Puja</p> 	<p>The Sun God, Surya, the god of energy and of the life-force, is worshipped during the Chhatt Puja to promote well-being, prosperity and progress.</p> <p>Chhatt Puja is also known as Surya Shashti, Chhath, Chhathi, Chhath Parv, Dala Puja and Dala Chhath.</p>
<p>26th November - Tulsi Vivah</p> 	<p>Prabodhini Ekadashi, also known as Devotthan Ekadashi, is the 11th lunar day (ekadashi) in the bright fortnight of the Hindu month of Kartik. It marks the end of the four-month period of Chaturmas, when god Vishnu is believed to sleep. It is believed that Vishnu sleeps on Shayani Ekadashi and wakes on Prabodhini Ekadashi, thus giving this day the name '<i>Prabodhini Ekadashi</i>'. The end of Chaturmas, when marriages are prohibited, signifies the beginning of the Hindu wedding season. It is also known as Kartiki Ekadashi, Kartik Shukla ekadashi and Kartiki. Prabodhini Ekadashi is followed by Kartik Purnima, which day is celebrated as Dev Diwali or Diwali of gods.</p>

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