

National Mission for Clean Ganga

(Reg. Society)

Ministry of Jal Shakti

Department of Water Resources, River Development & Ganga Rejuvenation
Government of India

 Indian
National Trust
for Art and
Cultural Heritage
INDIA@75
Azadi Ke Rang Bharatiya Sanskriti Ke Sang

**नमामि
गंगे**

Documentation of Ganga from Gaumukh to Gangasagar Samastipur District Intangible Cultural Heritage



INTACH

Front Cover Image:Krishna-Madhubani Painting by Bharti Dayal

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March-April 2022

Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage

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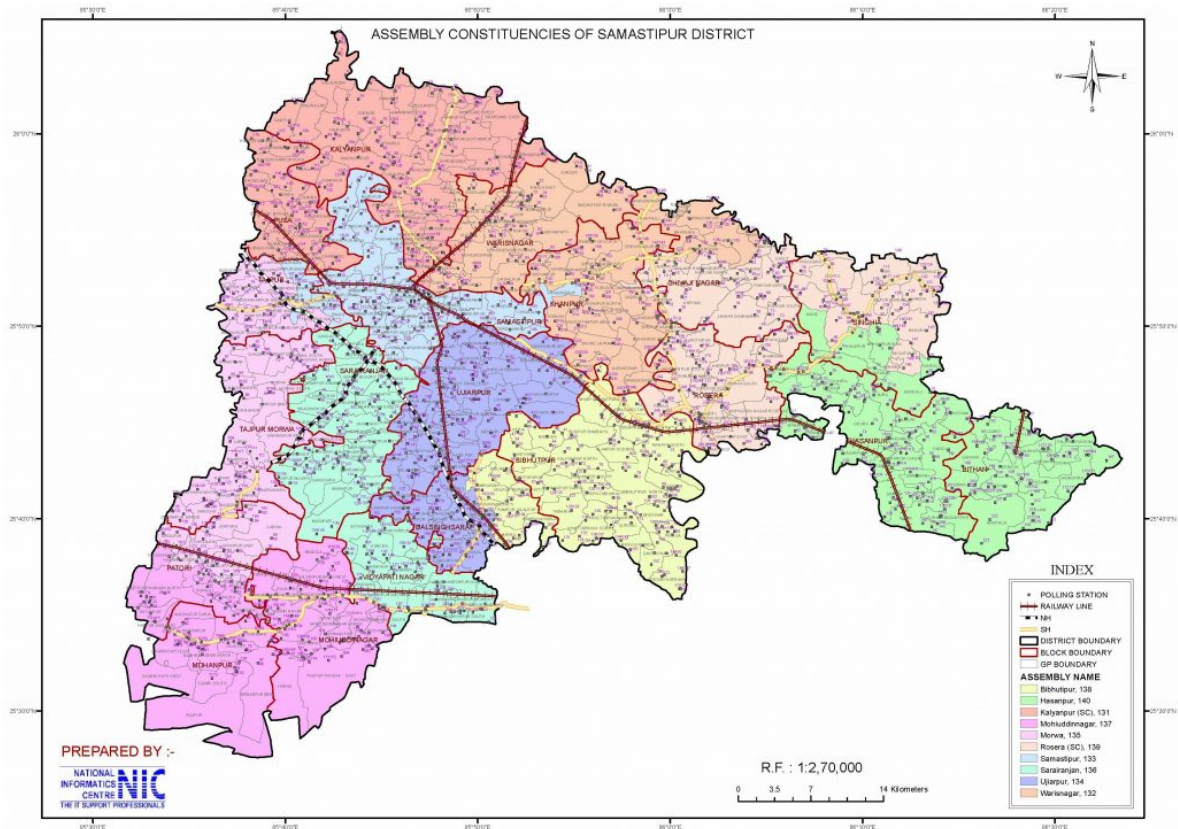

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Samastipur District

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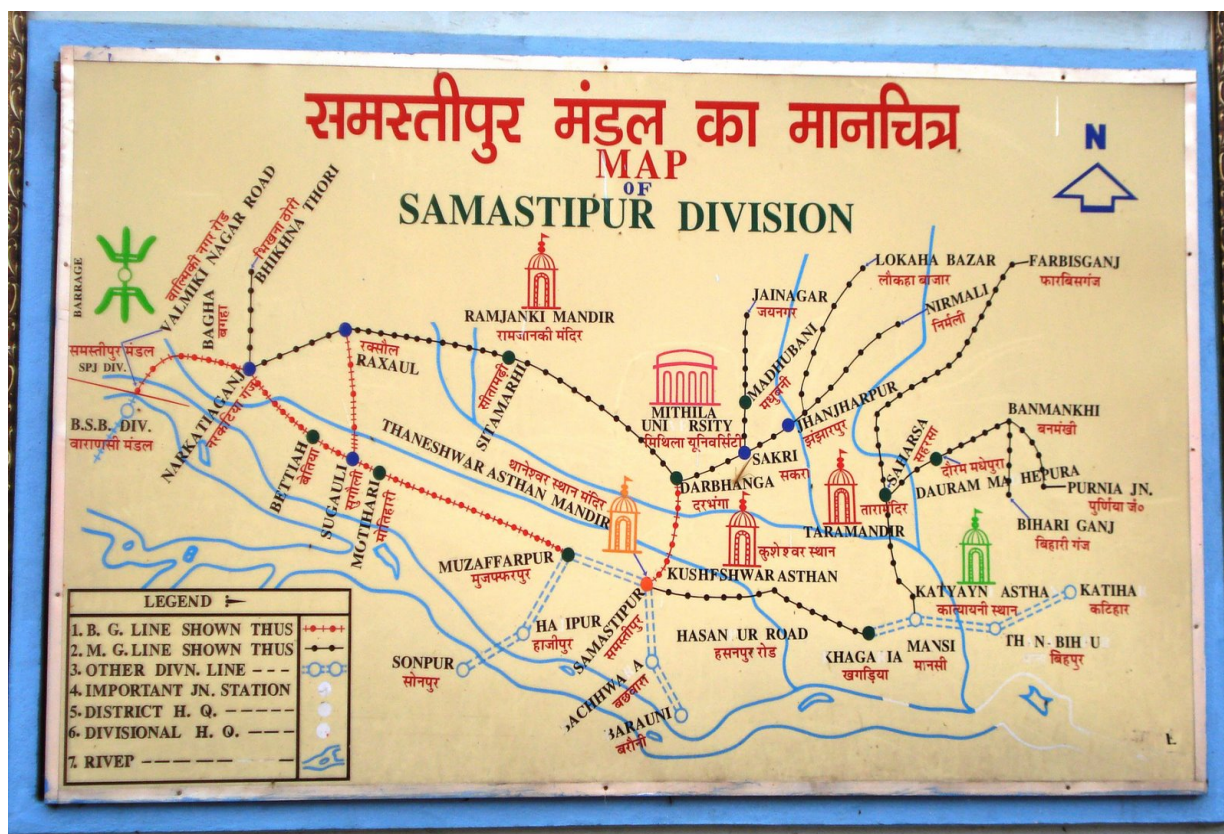
MAP OF SAMASTIPUR



Map of Samastipur District. (Source: National Informatics Centre, Bihar, <https://samastipur.nic.in/about-district/map-of-district/>)

History

The modern-day Samastipur district of the Bihar state of India (25° 29'-26° 02' N Latitude; 85° 33'-86° 24' E Longitude) was originally a part of the Darbhanga district and got split from it in 1972. The Bagmati River separates these two districts. Several other rivers, including the Budhi Gandak, Baya, Kosi and Balan, traverse the district. The Ganga River skirts the district in the south. While the district lies almost 660 kilometres to the east of Kanpur, it is surrounded by the Darbhanga District in the north, Begusarai and Khagaria districts in the east, and Muzaffarpur and Vaishali districts in the south (Kumari 2018).



Map of Samastipur District in the Bihar State of India

(Source: <http://samastipur-district.blogspot.com/2008/11/samastipur-division.html>)

The Origins

Originally known as Shamsuddinpur, the modern-day Samastipur area is said to have been founded by Sultan Hazi Shamsuddin Ilyas, from the Ilyas Shahi dynasty that ruled over Bengal in the fourteenth century. The territorial limits of the Early Historic state formation of Videha (with its capital in Mithila), or in some cases the state formations of Vajji and Lichhavis, are thought to be coterminous with that of the present-day Samastipur region

(Kumari 2018). This is evident from the use of the term “Mithilanchal” or “Mithila Region”, for these areas of Bihar. Thus, the cultures of Mithila and Videha, along with references to the king Janaka in later- Vedic and Puranic textual sources, often feature as elements in the early history of the region (Jha 2005).

Archaeological evidence from the site of Panr (in Samastipur District) has yielded potsherds of the NBPW and BRW types (Choudhary 2005-6). Situated around 22 kilometres to the north of the Ganga River, this archaeological site was first explored around 1971, and then more systematically excavated from 1998-99 to 2004-5. The latter work at the site revealed around four occupational levels, of which Period I (labelled “Chalcolithic”) yielded BRW pottery, along with evidence of use of Copper and bone implements¹, and Period II yielded NBPW ceramics, bone implements, terracotta objects (including what have been identified as “Naga figurines”²) and relatively greater quantities of Copper and Iron implements, as compared to Period I (Choudhary 2005-6).

The site of Mangalgarh (also in Samastipur District), 35 kilometres northeast of Panr, has probably yielded evidence of occupation from a pre-NBPW context as well (Choudhary 2005-6).

The Mauryan and Post-Mauryan Period

Around five-pillar edicts dating to the Mauryan times, inscribed as well as uninscribed, on the eastern banks of the Gandak River, are found to be occurring across the territory from Vaishali to Rampurva (Kumari 2018). These lay within the territorial limits of the Vajjian confederacy. Figurines dating to the Mauryan Period have been obtained from the site of Mangalgarh.

Excavations at the sites of Vaishali, Chechar (south-east of Hazipur), Panr (Samastipur) and Katragarh have revealed Shunga Period occupational mounds, constructional material as well as defensive wall-formations

¹Evidence of Neolithic occupation at Panr has also been reported, dating from a time range of roughly 4261-2412 BCE; there seems to have been regular interaction between the Neolithic peoples of Panr and those living in the nearby site of Chechar-Kutubpur (Kumar 2015). Evidence from the pre-Chalcolithic levels of Panr also include that of long cattle bones , reported by P.P. Joglekar (Joglekar and Singh 2017).

²The evidence of Naga figurines have been interpreted as some kind of evidence for Naga or serpent worship, of a cultic nature (Chaudhary 2005-6).



Brick structures from Shunga, Kushana and Gupta-Period levels at Panr

(Source: <https://kjpri.res.in/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/Pand-Excavation-1998-2010.pdf>)

The archaeological evidence from Panr Period III revealed structures of bricks in two identifiably different phases, a terracotta token with Kushan-Brahmi inscriptions, and Kushan-Period Copper coins. Based on this evidence, this phase was identified as the “Shunga-Kushana” phase at Panr (Choudhary 2005-6). Copper coins of the Kushan Period have also been recovered from the archaeological levels at Vaishali. These are said to be associated with the Kushan Emperors Kanishka, Huvishka and Vasudeva (Kumari 2018).

The Gupta and Post-Gupta Times

From the time of Samudragupta’s reign (*circa* mid-fourth century CE) and thereafter, the emergence of the Tirbhukti (or later day Tirhut) could be noted, which indicated an administrative zone within the Gupta Empire³ (Kumari 2018). The name TirBhukti probably meant people living on the river bank (Sajjad 2008). Several temples of the Early Medieval Times, whose construction was probably initiated under the Guptas, are situated at Pandavgarh in Samastipur (Kumar 2003).

Period IV at the site of Panr yielded broken-brick structures and some ceramic assemblages akin to the Gupta Period, though this phase has not been identified as about the Guptas and

³Vaishali could have served as the provincial headquarters of the Tirbhukti and was probably being ruled by a prince and heir-apparent named Govindagupta, as is indicated by the Basarh seal (Choudhary 1954).

has been interpreted as a phase of decline from the urban efflorescence of the Kushan times (Choudhary 2005-6). Recently, the research conducted by Shanker Sharma, Assistant Superintending Archaeologist of the ASI, has probably hinted at the evidence of a flood event at Panr, along with several other archaeological sites across North Bihar and Uttar Pradesh, indicted by heavy siltation. This flood event has been argued to have been a major cause for the decline of the Gupta Empire as well as the flourishing Buddhist religious institutions in this region.



Mr Shanker Sharma pointing to a thick silt deposit over a chance discovery of a ring well belonging to the Gupta Period

(Source: <https://www.telegraphindia.com/india/deluge-drowned-mighty-guptas-study/cid/1685500>)

The site of Mangalgarh has yielded evidence of Gupta-Period gold coins, as well as some Pala-Period sculptures, from different levels of the archaeological mound.

Medieval Period

The year 1097 CE is also considered to be of some importance as this marked the year when Nanyadeva had founded the Karnata Dynasty (r. *circa* 1097-1324 CE) in this region of Tirhut (Choudhary 1954). As already noted earlier, in the fourteenth century, Sultan Shamsuddin Ilyas Shah of Bengal laid the foundations of two urban centres in the Tirhut province—Hazipur and Shamsuddinpur (Kumari 2018). According to the Darbhanga district gazetteer, the Oinwara Dynasty⁴ (*circa* 1325-1525 CE) would have ruled over large areas of modern-day Samastipur in the fourteenth century. This dynasty, also known as the Sugauna Dynasty⁵, was probably founded by one Kameshwar Thakur, who was some kind of a governor of the Tughlaqs of Delhi, and had received the area of Tirhut from Sultan Ghiyasuddin Tughlaq. It is probable that while the Sugaunas were ruling over the northern parts of Tirhut, the Ilyas Shahis held control over the south. The territories under the control of the Ilyas Shahis could later have passed on to the hands of the Lodhi Sultanate of Delhi, and later the Mughals (Kumari 2018). The Kosi River would probably have served as a natural boundary between Tirhut and Bengal (Choudhary 1954). In the fourteenth century, communication between Bengal and Awadh would probably have been facilitated through the riverine tract of Bhagalpur and Munger, lying north of the Ganga River (Choudhary 1954).

Several legendary scholars such as Gadadhara, Shankara, Vidyapati and Amyakara are said to have been a part of the Sugauna court. The site of Vidyapatidham is believed to be the revered site associated with the death of the legendary Maithili poet Vidyapati. He wrote the following lines in reverence to the Ganga River:

बड़ सुखसार पाओल तुअ तीरे।
छोड़इत निकट नयन बह नीरे।।
करनोरि बिलमओ बिमल तरंगे।
पुनि दरसन होए पुनमति गंगे।।
एक अपराध घमब मोर जानी।

⁴The name Oinwara is probably derived from Oini village, the administrative centre established by Kameshwar Thakur for the domain under his control. This village is presently situated somewhere around Pusa, in the present-day Samastipur District (Kumari 2018).

⁵The name Sugauna would have probably referred to the new capital of the Oinwaras, that came into being around the modern-day Maudhubani region, once the Oinwaras moved to northern Tirhut and made it their capital; the Ilyas Shahis would have held control over the southern parts (Kumari 2018).

परमल माए पाए तुम पानी।।
कि करब जप-तप जोग-धेआने।
जनम कृतारथ एकहि सनाने।।
भनई विद्यापति समदजों तोही।
अन्तकाल जनु बिसरह मोही।।



Vidyapatidham, Samastipur

(Source: <https://samastipur.nic.in/historical-places/>)

The Samastipur region is also known for its association with the Kabirpanthis and their doctrines. One of the four immediate disciples of Kabir, Jagudas, is said to have created *math* (religious institution) in Andhratharhi and Basantpur areas, which lay in the present-day districts of Madhubani and Samastipur (Ranjan 2007). Two prominent “Acharya Gaddis”⁶ are also located at Rosara, a small town in the Samastipur District (Ranjan 2007). Another also probably exists at Satmalpur in the Samastipur District (Lorenzen 2010).

⁶The earliest *maths* of each of the recognized branches of the Kabirpanthis are known as the “Acharya Gaddis”, a coveted term (Ranjan 2007).

Colonial Period

Tirhut played an important role in the establishment of contacts between the early European traders and the Nepalese kingdoms, somewhere in the eighteenth century (Sajjad 2008). The village of Pusa in Samastipur District acquired military and administrative importance during the mutiny of 1857. The village was founded in around 1795, in the middle of the Saraisa *Parganas*, as large farmland of almost 1500 *bighas* (Jha 2017). Because of its strategic location in close vicinity to the three important towns of Muzaffarpur, Darbhanga and Hazipur, the Bengal Yeomanry Cavalry led by Richardson, consisting of almost 300 troopers, was stationed here by December 1857. All the ghats in the vicinity were put into thorough repair at this time (Sajjad 2008). Pusa also emerged as an important centre of horse breeding around 1805. Later, in 1872, the horse-breeding activities here were put to a halt, and a fully equipped agricultural farm came up in its place (Jha 2017). A college for agricultural sciences was also established here, which then got shifted to Delhi (around the road now renamed Pusa Road) after the 1934 Earthquake.

Peasant protests in the Samastipur region are also recorded under the leadership of the Kisan movements' leader, Swami Sahajanand Saraswati (1889-1950), who led the peasants in the tobacco belts of North Bihar (Samastipur and Darbhanga) into an uprising against the big landholders (Sinha-Kerkhoff 2016). Tobacco had been the most paying crop from the late eighteenth century itself, and according to one estimate, around five-sevenths of the total area under tobacco cultivation was to be found in the Samastipur and Dalsinghsaraithana areas (Jha 2017). The tobacco produced in the Saraisa *pargana*, covering large parts of the erstwhile Samastipur and Hazipur subdivisions, was perhaps the most famed of all these. Samastipur had also emerged as an important *ganj* or trading mart for tobacco and other spices, around this time. The Samastipur town was also majorly trading in tobacco (Jha 2017).

Much of Samstipur's ancient history remains unclear and inadequately explored in the existing research. More archaeological explorations and systematic studies into Samastipur and its adjacent areas could offer answers to some of these questions. The rich tradition of local legends and myths surrounding the identity of "Mithilanchal" need to be studied more closely concerning their underlying meaning and implications.

Although an attempt has been made to study the history of Samastipur through an evolutionary scheme, from the ancient through the medieval into the modern, there is a need to apply caution and if possible, problematize the evolutionary and linear narration of this history. It also needs to be borne in mind that while Samastipur is a relatively recently constituted administrative territory, its history and heritage go beyond such modern geographical limits.

Fair and Festivals

Sama Chakeba

The Hindu holiday Sama Chakeba originated in the Mithila area of the Indian subcontinent. It's a holiday dedicated to the bond between brothers and sisters. It is observed in November and coincides with the start of bird migration from the Himalayas to India's plains.⁷ The celebration, which incorporates folk theatre and singing, is based on a fable told in the Puranas and honours the love between brothers and sisters. It narrates the narrative of Sama, Krishna's daughter who was wrongfully convicted of misbehaviour. Her father punished her by turning her into a bird, but her brother Chakeba's love and devotion allowed her to reclaim her human form. The festival begins on the night of Chhath puja. This is the seventh day of the Kartik month. At night, young, largely unmarried ladies gather along the Chhathghats with a basket carrying miniature idols of Sama and Chakeba, candles, kohl, clay-made everyday appliances, and other items. They practice several rites, such as creating kohl and sharing baskets and singing traditional songs. This festival will last until Kartik Purnima. On the auspicious day of Kartik Purnima, females bathe in the Ganga river, and the idols of Sama and Chakeba are submerged.⁸

⁷ Bansal, Sunita Pant. *Encyclopaedia of India*. New Delhi, India: Smriti Books, 2005: 71-72.

⁸ Jha, Bishnu K. "Mithila's Submerged in Sama-Chakeva Celebrations Bishnu." *Hindustan Times*, November 22, 2012. <https://www.hindustantimes.com/patna/mithila-s-submerged-in-sama-chakeva-celebrations/story-yeEeRXFEx5y6nZWkhTqN7K.html>.



Clay models of Sama and Chakeba in Samastipur

(Source: <https://www.jagran.com/bihar/samastipur-now-the-echo-of-samachak-samachak-ayeh-ayeh-o-21090602.html>)



Little girls holding clay idols of Sama and Chakeba in Samastipur.

(Source: <https://www.bhaskar.com/local/bihar/muzaffarpur/samastipur/news/sama-chakeva-begins-as-a-symbol-of-unbreakable-love-of-siblings-129108941.html>)



Clay models of Sama and Chakeba, Bargama, Samastipur

(Source: <https://icharchive.intach.org/Detail/objects/15128#>)

Malipur

The village of Malipur is famous for the Ram Navami fair held there, annually, in the vicinity of the nineteenth century Mahadeo Temple, from which the village is said to have derived its name. The annual fair lasts for almost five days. Ram Navami and Vivaha Panchami fairs are also popular among the residents of the Muktapur village, in the Kalyanpur Block. A popular fair is held on the occasion of Durga Puja in the Ram-Janaki Temple at Narghoghi village (*Census 1981, 1987*).

Nagpanchmi Mela

At the festival of Nag Panchami, a snake fair is conducted in Samastipur every year. This fair is organized on a small or large scale across the entire area of Samastipur, including Singhia, Narhan, Dumaria, Khadiahi, Besari, Chakhabib, and Mustafapur. Locals collect snakes and preserve them in their houses, then on Nagpanchami, they create a herd of thousands and march to the river Ghat early in the morning. The celebrations take place in the Bela Bhagwati Sthan. The responsibility for looking after the Sthan is passed down through the generations. A “night-long awakening” occurs the day before Nag Panchami. Everyone

gathers with snakes, snakes, and after a night of worship, walk to the river in a procession in the morning, take a wash, and offer milk to the snake or nag. They feed them and then abandon them in the woods.⁹

Snakes are held aloft by believers to fend against evil and ill karma. The guys queue up at the local temple to obtain blessings from the snakes as the priests chant hymns. Thousands of people around the country celebrate Nag Panchami, which occurs in July and August. These snakes, on the other hand, are captured two weeks ahead of time to be paraded as part of the celebrations. Before the procession, these snakes are sometimes plucked from their snake burrows with sticks and placed in pots.¹⁰



Naag Panchami Mela celebrations in Samastipur. -1.

(Source: <https://www.amarujala.com/photo-gallery/bizarre-news/nag-panchami-2020-snake-fair-in-bihar-samastipur?pageId=5>)

⁹ Rathore, Navneet. “बिहारकावोइलाका, जहानागपंचमीपरलगताहैसांपोंकामेला.” (lit. The area of Bihar where a snake fair is held on Nag Panchami) Amar Ujala. Amar Ujala, July 25, 2020. <https://www.amarujala.com/photo-gallery/bizarre-news/nag-panchami-2020-snake-fair-in-bihar-samastipur>.

¹⁰ Anthony. “Devotees in Bihar Take out 'Snake Procession'.” TheQuint, July 31, 2017. <https://www.thequint.com/videos/news-videos/devotees-in-bihar-take-out-snake-procession>.



Naag Panchami Mela celebrations in Samastipur. -2.

(Source: <https://www.amarujala.com/photo-gallery/bizarre-news/nag-panchami-2020-snake-fair-in-bihar-samastipur?pageId=5>)



Naag Panchami Mela celebrations in Samastipur. -3.

(Source: <https://www.amarujala.com/photo-gallery/bizarre-news/nag-panchami-2020-snake-fair-in-bihar-samastipur?pageId=5>)

Janmashtami Mela

On the occasion of Janmashtami, the Nagar Basti village of Samastipur has been celebrating with a special fair for 100 years, as it is believed. All the *avatars*, or reincarnations of the Hindu god, Krishna are shown through *jhankiya*, or floats, during a procession.¹¹ Janmashtami is an annual celebration of the birth of Krishna, the 8th reincarnation of the

¹¹ Ranjan, Abhishek, and Bihar Live Now. "समस्तीपुरमेंजन्माष्टमीका 100 सालपुरानामेला. (lit. 100-year-old Janamashtami fair inSamastipur) YouTube. YouTube, August 24, 2019. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-wu1s2Y2Cg4>.

HinduGod Vishnu. It is celebrated on the *Ashtami* of the Krishna Paksha in Bhadrapada Masa according to the Hindu calendar.



Celebrations during the Janmashtami Fair- 2

(Source: https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?id=471705452878991&story_fbid=895069997209199)



Celebrations during the Janmashtami Fair- 2

(Source: https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?id=471705452878991&story_fbid=895069997209199)



Jhankiya, or floats, during the procession.

(Source: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1dThTQwh1qg>)

Chhata Holi Mela

The Chhata Holi Mela is held annually in Mohiuddinnagar at the Baba Niranjan Swami Mandir. It is said that the fair was first held in 1935. The organisation of the fair is done by the residents of the Dhamon village. Thousands of people visit the fair every year and the people who create the best umbrella are also given a special award.¹²

On the morning of Holi, villagers with umbrellas offer *Abir-Gulal* to their deity Swami Niranjan in the temple. There they sing 'Dhammar' and 'Phaag'. Chhatri Milan takes place on the temple premises. Acrobatic performances using umbrellas also take place. The whole area reverberates with bells. After this, the festivities proceed to a procession and reach the door to door after eating and drinking. Late in the evening, the procession reaches the temple. Their people end Holi by singing 'Chaita' after midnight.

According to the villagers, their ancestors first started this tradition by making umbrellas out of bamboo. Gradually it became quite famous and started making its own identity among the people. This umbrella Holi reminds people of the Holi celebrated in Mathura, Vrindavan, Braj and Rajasthan. Hundreds of people from the surrounding area gather to witness this fascinating and unique tradition.¹³

¹² Ray, Ramrup. "समस्तीपुर:जिलेमेंछातामेलाकोलेकरसजधजकेतैयारहुआनिरंजनस्वामीमंदिर." (lit. Samastipur: Niranjan Swami Mandir decorated for Chhata Fair) PublicVibe. PublicVibe, March 19, 2022. <https://www.publicvibe.com/video/mohiuddin-nagar/samastipur-jile-me-chata-mela-ko-lekar-saj-dhaj-ke-taiyar-huaa-niranjan-svami-mandir/1647651876487178218>.

¹³ Roy, Avinash. "समस्तीपुरकेधमौनकीछतरीहोली, मतलब- उत्तरप्रदेशकेबरसानेकाआनंद, दोसालबादछाताहोलीमनानेमेंजुटेला." (lit. The Chhata Holi of Samastipur'sDhamon, meaning- The joy of Uttar Pradesh' Barsana, People organise Chhata Holi after two years) समस्तीपुर Town, March 18, 2022. <https://www.samastipur-town.com/samastipur/2022/03/samastipur-patori-chatri-holi/>.



Decorative umbrellas in the Chhata Holi Mela

(Source: <https://www.samastipur town.com/samastipur/2022/03/samastipur-patori-chatri-holi/>)



People enjoying the Chhata Holi Mela

(Source: <https://www.samastipur town.com/bihar/2020/03/bihar-is-one-but-there-is-many-ways-to-celebrate-holi/>)

Performing Arts

KathghodwaNach

The Kathghodwa dance style is usually performed during auspicious occasions like weddings, festivals, *mundans*, religious events etc. The purpose of the dance is to provide entertainment as opposed to any ritualistic connotations. Kathghodwa translates to 'wooden horse.' The costume is therefore made of wood and bamboo in the shape of a horse and decorated with brightly coloured cloth and flowers. The figure of the wooden horse is tied to the back of the maledancer, who also wears attractive bright clothes. The performance usually consists of the main dancer and other 4 to 6 musicians who play various instruments such as shehnai and mridang. The main dancer plays the character of a soldier riding a horse. This dance form is widely performed in Bihar and Uttar Pradesh.¹⁴



KathghodwaNaach being performed in Smastipur.

(Source: Bihar Coverage)

NatuaNach

NatuaNach is an ancient folk dance from West Bengal's Purulia district, as well as districts in Bihar's Mithila region, such as Samastipur. It is far less well-known than the more well-known Chho, which has martial roots. Natua is the mother form of Chho, and it is thought to be between 600 and 700 years old. Some of the attitudes of the two dances resemble each

¹⁴Chhapra Post. "दमतोड़रहीहैबिहारकीप्रसिद्ध 'कठघोड़वानृत्यशैली'." (lit. Bihar's famous Kathghodwa dance style is dying) CHHAPRA POST, January 11, 2022. <https://www.chhaprapost.com/bihars-famous-kathghodwa-dance-style-is-dying/11/>.

other. Chho requires a thorough understanding of Natua. The form is predominantly tribal and is viewed as a demonstration of “vigorous, physical feats” to the rhythm of drums. Natua is performed by enthusiastic males who have their body chalk painted. The Natuas perform a high-powered blend of martial art and acrobatic routines, brightly costumed and with colourful strips of cloth tied to their body. They prance, leap, roll, somersault, and do exceedingly risky moves with logs of wood, bullock wagon wheels, hoops, and fire, accompanied by the throbbing rhythm of the “*dhamsha*, a kettledrum, and the *dhak*,” and sometimes the wail of the *madan* (or *madanbheri*, a trumpet-like instrument).

The atmosphere is packed with energy and tension, and spirits are high. The pounding of the drums inspires the performers to move forward and undertake feats of tremendous risk and thrill, all while being cheered on by the spectators. The leader sings a brief Jhumur song, much like in the Purulia Chho. Natua is traditionally done on Chaitro Sankranti, the last day of Chaitro (March-April) in the Bengali calendar, which concludes the month-long Gajon festivities in honor of Shiva celebrated in the countryside. The dance is a wonderful crowd-pleaser in a carnival-like setting. The Kalindis are the ones who usually perform the dances. It is also conducted on rare occasions at weddings.

The origins of this folk form are said to be rooted in a ceremonial plea to the gods for rain, as the Chhota Nagpur plateau, which is home to this folk style, is a dry mountainous region. Natua, according to another hypothesis, is an ancient dancing form mentioned in the Shiv Puranas. The word Natua is thought to be derived from Lord Nataraj's name. Lord Shiva, according to the dancers, performed this dance as component of his tandav nritya. Lord Shiva is claimed to have created the gigantic Jai Dhak, whose rhythms accompany the dance. Local rulers used to hire Natua dancers to be a part of their parade, and they would put on a spectacular, spirited show, complete with acrobatics and heroic physical feats, to the accompaniment of enormous, heavy drums.¹⁵

¹⁵Daricha Foundation. “Natua.” Daricha Foundation. Accessed April 1, 2022. http://www.daricha.org/sub_genre.aspx?ID=54&Name=Natua.



The 84-year old Hariram Kalindi group performing NatuaNach

(Source: <https://www.sangbadpratidin.in/pujo/pujo2019/84-years-old-hariram-kalindi-in-purulia-still-performs-tradiational-natua-dance/>)

Jhijhia

Jhijhiya is mostly performed at the time of Dusshera, in dedication to Durga Bhairavi, the goddess of victory. While performing jhijhiya, women put lanterns made of clay on their heads and they balance them while they dance. This is mostly performed on the occasion of Dusshera when women put clay lanterns on their heads and dance while balancing them. Associated with the cultural landscape of Mithila, this dance form is marked by women taking the charge of propitiating the deities for the wellbeing of their family and close ones, as well as the participation of women from the marginalized sections of the rural society. Jhijhiya is generally seen all over Bihar.



JhijhiyaNaach

(Source: https://m.facebook.com/watch/?v=1739324289566189&_rdr)

Jat-Jatin Dance

Also associated with the cultural landscape of Mithila, this dance form is generally dedicated to Lord Indra, the Hindu god of rains and thunder. It is generally only performed at the time of the rainfall. However, the subject matter and the content of these songs have very little to do with the seasons. Again, this is primarily performed by women, across castes and classes, and the audiences also include only women. The word “*jat*” refers to the husband, while “*jatin*” refers to the wife. The dances are performed by groups of women representing the “*jatin*”, while a single man represents the “*jat*”. The women can be seen adorned in flower garments, mostly in white. The subject matter of the accompanying songs is mostly the playful relationship of a married young couple and their journey through married life.

Some of the accompanying songs say as follows:

“-’0 jatin (in your new home) you should move about meekly in deference to the elders, bent gently likely the paddy-plant laden with the grains.’

-'Not me jat. I am the beloved daughter of my father. I shall move about straight and fearless like the bambooshoots.'" [Mathur, 1969]



Jat-Jatin Dance

(Source: https://www.flickr.com/photos/ramesh_lalwani/5074449506)

Dom Kach

Domkach is a traditional Indian folk dance from the states of Bihar and Jharkhand. Domkach dance is practised in the Mithila and Bhojpur regions of Bihar. During all major wedding ceremonies in a courtyard, the women and men of the groom's and bridegroom's families conduct this dance. The dance usually lasts for ten to twenty days before the wedding. They form a semi-circle, holding hands, to execute this unique dance, and the song's lyrics are humorous and joyful. The performance usually starts after *biari*, the last meal of the day, and lasts until after midnight. ¹⁶

¹⁶ Rosner, Victor. "An Adivasi Drum (The Manara)." *Anthropos* 57, no. 1/2 (1962): 89–96. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40455696>.



Dom Kach performance

(Source: <https://jharkhandculture.com/node/19>)

Fine Arts and Crafts

The Folkart of Mithilanchal

As already noted in the previous chapter, the territory of the present-day district of Samastipur is often believed to have been part of the larger cultural landscape of Mithila, known as Mithilanchal. Mithilanchal refers to a 25 000 square miles-geographical region, bounded by the Himalayan ranges in the North (excepting the Terai- foothills of the Himalayas, which are considered to be a part of the Mithila region), the River Kosi in the East, the River Gandaki on the West and the River Ganga on the South (Karan, 1984). Much of Mithila's history is dominated by mythical and folkloric elements (often identified with the Hindu Puranas), which offer a rich repertoire of oral traditions and folklores to the peoples living across the Mithila region. Thus, for instance, a lot of the important orthodox, as well as non-orthodox Indic philosophical traditions, are thought to have originated in this region. Similarly, the region has been associated with the native place of Sita, the heroine of the Indian epic, *Ramayana*, and Mithila (or Videha) is identified as the capital of the mythical rulers Nimi and Janaka (Karan, 1984).



Map showing the geographical extent of Mithilanchal

(Source: <https://skbhittha.wordpress.com/2013/05/31/mithila-history/>)

The folk art of Mithila is an integral part of the lives of the peoples living across Mithilanchal, and this continues to be one of the best-known cultural manifestations of this region (Karan,

1984). Maithili paintings are generally executed on the walls and floors of houses, by women, using bamboo reed tipped with raw cotton, or some other medium. These paintings are made on every important occasion or ceremony associated with the daily lives of the people, be it someone's marriage or the birth ceremony of a newborn. The themes incorporate elements from the daily lives of the peoples and the rural imagery, combining these with the images of gods and goddesses (Mandal, 2018). These art forms manifest themselves in various forms on various media: handicrafts, utensils, clothes, woodwork, and several others (Mandal, 2018).

According to the purposes and specific meanings of these paintings, they are named and classified into different types. Thus, *kohbar* paintings are the ones executed on the walls of the room or house of the newly-wed couple, or in their bed-chamber, where several of the nuptial rites after marriage are to be performed. On the other hand, *aripan* paintings are generally sacred squares or other geometric figures, made on the floor with ground rice-flour, to sanctify the place of worship. It is made during auspicious and popular celebrations, such as the Deepavali (Mandal, 2018).



Kohbar painting

(Source: <https://www.patnabeats.com/reviving-bhojpuri-paintings/kohbar-painting-3/>)

A traditional song sung during the *kohbar* rituals wonderfully encapsulates the aura and meaning of the *kohbar* paintings:

“In the *kohbar* daintily decorated, the bridegroom removed the cover from the bride's head and asked her-'With what jewels, my darling, have you bedecked yourself'?

She replied-'My love! You will be the ornament of my hairparting. My *devar* will be the rare conch-shell bangle for me. My mother-in-law is like the necklace, my *nanad* the blouse with nine colours, my *bhainsur* the shining piece on the forehead, and when the son comes, he will be the delight of my eyes.

These, my love, are my jewels.” [Mathur, 1969]

Sujani Embroidery

This needlework is a craft that arose out of need. Swaddling clothes for newborn babies were made by sewing patches from old saris, dhotis, and outgrown clothing together. The worn, soft, and comfortable old textiles were ideal for wrapping the baby in. Sujani embroidery, as it is known (su means aiding and jani means birth), is a mark of a mother's affections.

Sujani work, which was once limited to swaddling newborn babies in village houses, has now expanded to include cushion covers, letter holders, and embroidered patches to adorn kurtas and sarees, among other items. Embroidered items are typically sold at art and craft fairs and exhibitions. It is often referred to as Mithila painting's relative.¹⁷

¹⁷ Kumari, Lovely. “As They Sew, so They Reap: Women in Bihar Use Sujani Embroidery to Empower Themselves - Gaonconnection: Your Connection with Rural India.” Gaonconnection, January 19, 2022. <https://en.gaonconnection.com/bihar-sujani-embroidery-women-empowerment-unesco-handicraft-mithila-livelihood-fashion-covid19-pandemic/>.



Sujani Embroidery in process

(Source: <https://acrosstheborderoverthesea.wordpress.com/2012/07/05/getting-traditional-at-happy-hands/>)

Two ancient ideas underpin the Sujani method. It symbolized the presence of a divinity known as "Chitiriyā Ma, the Lady of the Tatters" in one ritualistic practice. It represented the concept of holistically uniting disparate pieces into a united whole. The second goal was to create a soft coverlet to wrap around the newborn kid, as though it were in the warm embrace of its mother.

Currently, expensive cotton pieces such as "Salita" or a less expensive kind of white or coloured marking, Tussar silk, casement fabric, and embroidered threads such as moon thread, rangoli, or anchor thread are used to make this product. The motifs are usually chosen by the women who are stitching the quilt. The embroidery is done with a fine running stitch using the same colour thread as the background fabric. Chain stitch with black, brown, and red thread is utilized for the primary outline of the proposed pattern.¹⁸

By encouraging such traditional crafts as bamboo and cane work, and *sujani* embroidery works, the government, as well as other local authorities, can help improve the livelihoods of the people in the district. There have been cases of women in such areas as the Tajpur Block in Samastipur earning money and improving their living conditions by practising

¹⁸ "Craft Cluster: Sujani Embroidery". National Institute of Fashion Technology. Archived from the original on 18 April 2016. Retrieved 31 March 2022.
<https://web.archive.org/web/20160418004555/http://www.nift.ac.in/patna/craft%20cluster.pdf>

bamboo crafts in an organized manner, collectively. Similarly, the district authorities, along with government bodies like the Khadi Board, have emphasized the need for places like Samastipur to focus more on their bamboo crafts, for export-oriented business. Such efforts, it is hoped, would contribute to better preservation and documentation of the intangible cultural heritage resources of Samastipur.



Sujani embroidery work in Samastipur

(Source: <https://icharchive.intach.org/Detail/objects/15126>)

Sikki Grass Craft

Sikki grass crafts are a variety of handicrafts fashioned from a unique type of grass found in Bihar and Uttar Pradesh, India. In Bihar's province, the art of crafting objects out of sikki grass is centuries old.

The Sikki grass is taken from the base and dried to prepare it. Following that, the flowering stem is eliminated. After that, the grass is shaved and cut. They'll now have a lovely golden tint to them. This fibre is now ready to be woven into various things. Munj, raffia grass, or khar, which is much cheaper and more widely accessible, is used to shape the framework or form. The product's core strength comes from this. The munj is then coiled and wrapped

with Sikki so that the framework is hidden. The Takua is a 6-inch long needle-shaped instrument used by artists. It features a lac circular head that is used to hold the needle while coiling the grass. The Takua is gripped firmly in the left hand while the object being created is grasped in the right hand. There are no other materials used. The Sikki is lightly moistened before coiling around the munj. The painting is completed afterwards with the use of special dyes that are boiled. Dolchiis weaved baskets that have been passed down through generations. These items are occasionally painted in bright pinks, blues, and greens, or a colour that contrasts with their original colour. Pauti is the name given to sikki boxes. The Pauti are given to daughters by their parents on their wedding day. Sindoor, decorations, and jewellery are kept in these boxes.¹⁹



Weaving in process.

(Source: Handicrafts.nic)

Women used to make these things all year long, depending on their requirements. To appeal to urban audiences, artists are now employing Sikki to create coasters, bowls, tablecloths, vases, and two-dimensional figurines of birds, deities, and animals, as well as more conventional motifs.²⁰At one point in time, a very large part of the population in North Bihar was engaged in this craft, which was mainly practised in some of the pockets in Darbhanga, Madhubani and Sitamarhi districts of Bihar. Sikki work was a skill possessed by women in this region and gradually with the active intervention of some of the local NGOs like Adithi this was carried actively to generate income along with an expression of a form of their lives, their love and their aspirations. It is estimated that today there are about 1500 skilled artisans but the majority are not as actively involved with this craft anymore and the craft is almost on the verge of extinction.

The wide range of Sikki products can be categorized into two:

¹⁹ Rakesh, Sonali. "Sikki Grass Craft." Talent Zone, December 6, 2019.

<https://talentzone.home.blog/2019/11/27/sikki-grass-craft/>.

²⁰ Rakesh, <https://talentzone.home.blog/2019/11/27/sikki-grass-craft/>.

Religious & Mythological: Human figures, replicas of gods and goddesses, models of chariots, temples, relief & sculpture.

Ornamental & Functional products: baskets, boxes, toys animals, birds and, animal & bird modals, trays & baskets, jewellery, beads, pendants, necklaces bangles, bowls etc of different sizes and shapes.²¹



Lampshade with motifs of the Buddha

(Source: <https://talentzone.home.blog/2019/11/27/sikki-grass-craft/>)

²¹ National Institute of Design-Outreach programme, and Protection and Development of Handicrafts of India. "Sikki Grass Craft." Development Commissioner (Handicrafts), Ministry of Textiles, Government of India. Accessed April 1, 2022. <http://handicrafts.nic.in/CmsUpload/11402017114016sikki.pdf>.



An Ornamental Owl

(Source: <https://talentzone.home.blog/2019/11/27/sikki-grass-craft/>)

Folklore and Legends

Dudhpura

Dudhpura, a site in the district, is believed to have derived its name from Budhpura (or *Buddhapura*), where the Gautama Buddha is believed to have stayed for some time and preached. A local king named Mangaldeo is said to have requested the Buddha to stay here for some days. This king's palace complex is identified with the remains of the fort that has been recovered from the village of Mangalgarh, deriving its name from Mangaldeo (*Census 1981, 1987*).

Vidyapati

The site of **Vidyapatinar** is believed to have been named after the legendary poet Vidyapati, who has been associated with this region. Vidyapatinar is situated on the banks of the Ganga River and is believed to mark the site where the poet breathed his last. A temple of the Hindu god Shiva, named "Vidyapati Dham", is located here. In the Hindu month of *Shravan*, residents from neighbouring villages congregate here and offer their prayers at the Shiva Temple. Another fair is also organized here on the occasion of Vasant Panchami [*Census 1981, 1987*].

Vidyapati, as already noted in the previous chapter, occupies an important place in the history and culture of the peoples of Samastipur. Vidyapati's lyrical compositions, themed around the love of Radha and Krishna and adorations for the Hindu god Shiva, reflect the everyday life of the peoples in the Mithila region, as observed by Vidyapati. They speak of various domestic occasions and ritual celebrations. Their beautiful lyrical quality, combined with their relatability to the lives of the peoples of Mithilanchal, made them a part of the folk culture of Mithila (Mathur, 1969).



Statue of Vidyapati in Bisfi

(Source: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Statue_of_Maha_Kavi_Kokil_Vidyapati.jpg)

Dina and Bhadri- The Musahar Brothers

A very significant and rich body of folk tales and oral traditions revolve around the two Musahar Dalit brothers, Dina and Bhadri, who were hunter-gatherers by occupation (Sharma, 2021). Several Dalit communities living across Bihar, Uttar Pradesh and further north in the Nepal Terai region, especially the Musahars (who are officially designated as Scheduled Castes), preserve these folk narratives and incorporate them as part of their daily activities. The folktales and accompanying folk songs are communicated through different languages spoken by the peoples living across these geographical areas: Maithili, Bhojpuri, Magadhi, Angika, etc. Several important episodes narrated in the folk tales and songs include Dina and Bhadri being asked by the landlord to plough his fields, and upon their refusal to do so, they being beaten up; Dina and Bhadri venturing into the forest and being killed by wild animals; Dina and Bhadri coming back for revenge. The tales revolve around

the oppression faced by migrant and landless labourers in the hand of rich landlords, and the Dalits' assertion of their land and ecological rights (Sharma, 2021).

The Mangauli Kothi region in Samastipur is the site of a popular Dina Bhadri Temple, where the worships and fairs are organized, and which at times houses the idols of Dina and Bhadri (Sharma, 2021). At Mangauli, a group of young people perform the *mridanga* dance to ward off evil energy and protect their deities. The Musahar priest (or *dhami*) officiating the worship at this temple is often believed to be possessed and enter into a state of *bhava*, in organic union with the deities in the temple. Several Musahars in the Bajjika-speaking villages of Samastipur are known to create mud scaffolds outside their houses, representing Dina and Bhadri. Mud is believed to be a significant building material by the Musahars, and these scaffolds without any apparent external protection are seen as protective devices for the Musahar households. Such practices are also prevalent among the Musahars of the neighbouring Madhubani district.



A commonly found idol of Dina and Bhadri, in Bihar

(Source: <https://www.folkartopedia.com/folklore-of-bihar-dina-bhadri-part-2-hindi-sk/>)

Several songs are also popular among the Musahar agriculturalists and labourers at Samastipur (Sharma, 2021). In the Kohlara village of Samastipur, farmers during the agricultural season for paddy cultivation sing songs expressing gratitude to Dina and Bhadri, for agricultural prosperity:

Emerged from the soil

Played into the soil

Made up of soil

Ended in soil

Oh, Dina-Bhadri! Oh our forefathers!

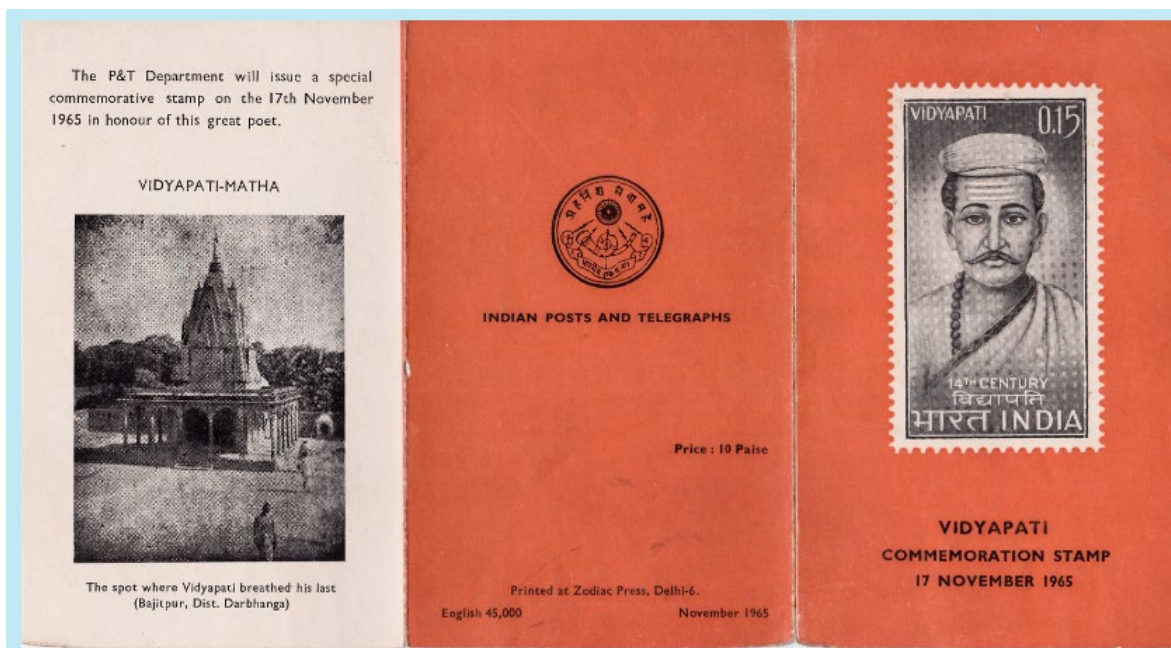
We know today the heart of soil and land everywhere because of you.

These songs are sung by the farmers when they gather during the evening, in groups at a community place (Sharma, 2021).

Places of Interest

Vidyapatidham

The Vidyapati Dham is considered to be the *Nirvan Bhumi* of the renowned Maithilipoet, Vidyapati.²²Vidyapati is regarded as one of the greatest poets in the history of Eastern India. His influence on Maithili, Bengali and Odia literature is significant and continues to this day. He is revered as *Maithil Kavi Kokil*(lit. the poet cuckoo of Maithili). He was a devotee of Shiva, Parvati and Ganga but also wrote devotional and love songs in the Vaishnava tradition. According to one version of his legend, Vidyapati achieved *samadhi*, the Hindu final stage of attaining union with God,with Shiva at this spot. Impressed with Vidyapati's devotion, Shiva appeared before him in his "Ugna" *roop*and began to spend time with him. One day, Ugna Mahadev left Vidyapati and in his search, Vidyapati decided to travel back to his home village, Bisfi, in Madhubani. On the way, Vidyapati stopped 4 km away from the bank of the river Ganga to pray to her and Ugna Mahadev. Listening to his call, Ganga came and swept him away with her water. It is said in his final moments Mahadev appeared before him and assumed the form of *BalesvarShivling*. In another telling of the story, Vidyapati became quite ill after becoming old and wanted to assume *samadhi*. He called upon his sons to carry him in a palanquin to the river Ganga before his final moments. About 2 *kos* far from Ganga in Samastipur, Vidyapati asked to stop the palanquin believing that "Mother Ganga would come to collect her son." Accordingly, Ganga is said to have come



<https://istampgallery.com/vidyapati/>

and swept him away. 23

²² "Historical Places." Samastipur. Accessed April 1, 2022. <https://samastipur.nic.in/historical-places/>.



Vidyapatidham

(Source: <https://samastipur.nic.in/historical-places/>)

Mohiuddinagar Fort

Mohiuddinagar holds much of the Mughal past. In the ruins of historic structures here, the stories of Babur, Ruhale, and Afghani are told. Ruhale and Afghani expanded to Bengal and Tirhut after Babar took control of Delhi in 1526. When they reached Bihar, Alivardi Khan, the Nawab of Bengal, provided him sanctuary. Shamsheer Khan, the chief of Ruhale, became Alivardi Khan's principal soldier, but was assassinated by opponents. As a result, Alivardi Khan fulfilled her obligation and married her daughter Ayesha to Shah Mohammed Asaak, giving him the dominion of 20 villages as a parting gift. The Ayesha Biwi fort was built on the same ground that is now in ruins and conveys history.

Shah Mohammed Munowwaruddin's tomb is located to the north of the Ayesha Biwi fort. In honour of Ayesha's spouse, he was given the name 'Mohiuddinagar.' Apart from that, the Lodhi lineage may be traced back to Hazrat Sarwar Shah's Khankah and an Iranian-style mosque established in 1497. The fort of Ayesha Biwi, whose remnants may be seen there, has a house for hanging purposes. The offenders are reported to have been punished in this same mansion. 'Government' was the name given to the fort region to the north of Mohiuddinagar Bazar. Previously, the successors of Ruhla Afghan Sardar Shamsheer Khan's daughter were known as government.

A big chunk of the area is surrounded by a 10-foot high *lakhori* brick long wall. These fortifications are now considered ruins. The fort's entrance is likewise in bad shape. Initially, elephants and horses were allowed to enter the fort through this entryway, but residents eventually built a tiny gate to defend the fort's interior. After Ayesha Biwi's death, her grandson Shah Mohammed Hussain built a tomb on her grave, however, the roof of the tomb collapsed during the rainy season only a few months later. When Sah Mohammed Hussain attempted to fix the roof again, he dreamed that someone was preventing him from doing so. As a result, the roof collapsed and is now laying on the ground.

Shah Mohammad Wajid Hussain reigned once again. He restored the tomb roof, but it collapsed again the next day. No one has attempted to replace the tomb roof since then. Such ancient relics have now devolved into ruins.²³

Chandrabhawan

Chandrabhawan is located in Patori, which has a rich history of the struggle for Independence. As soon as you enter the building, Sardar Bhagat Singh, Chandrasekhar Azad, BatkeshwarDutt and his comrade T. Paramanand, and revolutionaries like Pandit Satya Narayan Prasad Tiwari, Baleshwar Singh, and Baldev Chaudhary come to mind. The memoirs written about them in Chandrabhawan have now become legends. People in the region also tell their experiences to the next generation and consider themselves fortunate. Chandrabhawan is a historical spot in this region where long-serving liberation fighters like Bhagat Singh and Chandrasekhar Azad were kept concealed amid the country's freedom struggle.

Even now, the tunnel in its walls tells the story of their hiding place. Pandit Satyanarayan Tiwari was a supporter of the non-cooperation movement, while T. Parmanand of Chandra Bhawan was affiliated with the revolutionary movement. The warrants issued against Chandrasekhar Azad, Bhagat Singh, BatukeshwarDutt, and T. Parmanand were maintained by the English administration, according to context and memoirs. The police learned that these four people were hiding in the chandrabhawan building. The English police encircled the whole Chandrabhawan after receiving this information, and when the family's Ram Khelavan Tiwari learned of it, he told the British that ladies should be allowed to leave the home before being searched. Bhagat Singh, Chandrasekhar Azad, and others are seen wearing saris and fleeing the scene.

Azad and Satyanarayan Tiwari, led by T. Parmanand, looted T. Paramananda's uncle's residence to collect firearms. Because Bhagat Singh disliked rice, T. Parmanand's mother used to make roti three times a day, and at the time, her mother only knew that Sardarjee was his son's friend. When T. Parmanand and Bhagat Singh were imprisoned in Lahore,

²³ "Places of Interest." Samastipur. Accessed April 1, 2022. <https://samastipur.nic.in/places-of-interest/>.

Paramand's mother travelled to the city to greet him. When the picture of Bhagat Singh was published in the newspapers after the hanging, Paramanand's mother learned that he was Sardar Bhagat Singh. During their time in Patori, these brave men practised firearms on the A.N.D. College field. Baldev Chaudhari of Jappura, who had been sentenced to death, and Baleshwar Singh of Malpur, who had been convicted of Kalapani, also stayed with them.²⁴



Chandrabhavan- 1.

(Source: User Nature&me05 on Facebook.

<https://www.facebook.com/313994996087329/posts/chandrabhawan-is-situated-in-patori-where-the-history-of-freedom-is-hidden-as-yo/335987020554793/>)

²⁴ "Places of Interest." <https://samastipur.nic.in/places-of-interest/>.



Chandrabhavan- 2.

(Source: User Nature&me05 on Facebook.

<https://www.facebook.com/313994996087329/posts/chandrabhawan-is-situated-in-patori-where-the-history-of-freedom-is-hidden-as-yo/335987020554793/>)

PandavBanam- Pandavgarh

PandavBanam- Pandavgarh is a renowned and historical archaeological site located 10 kilometres southwest of Dalasinhasarai railway station on the Samastipur-Barauni train. From now to twenty-five years ago, statues of monks were discovered here (truth of Pandav place, Aryavarta, Patna). The walls of this location's mounds are composed of old Kushan bricks (2'x1'x3'). Kashi Prasad Jaiswal Research Institute, Patna, has been extracting antiquities from archaeological excavations for many years. The majority of the antiquities

are from the Kushanakera. This location is more likely to be a commercial centre than a royal fort, based on the artefacts found here.

Despite the fact that many people associate this location with the Pandavas and the Laakchhagrih setting. The excavation report is now being prepared at the research institute. Archaeological excavations were undertaken in a 750 x 400-metre area, and it was discovered via excavation that this location was built across six cultural eras, from the Navpasaan era to the Gupta era. Copper coins, nail-thorns, beads, communal chulhas, and other Kushan period artefacts have been discovered here. The Kumar Museum at Hasanpur, Begusarai, and Patna has all of the artefacts discovered here.



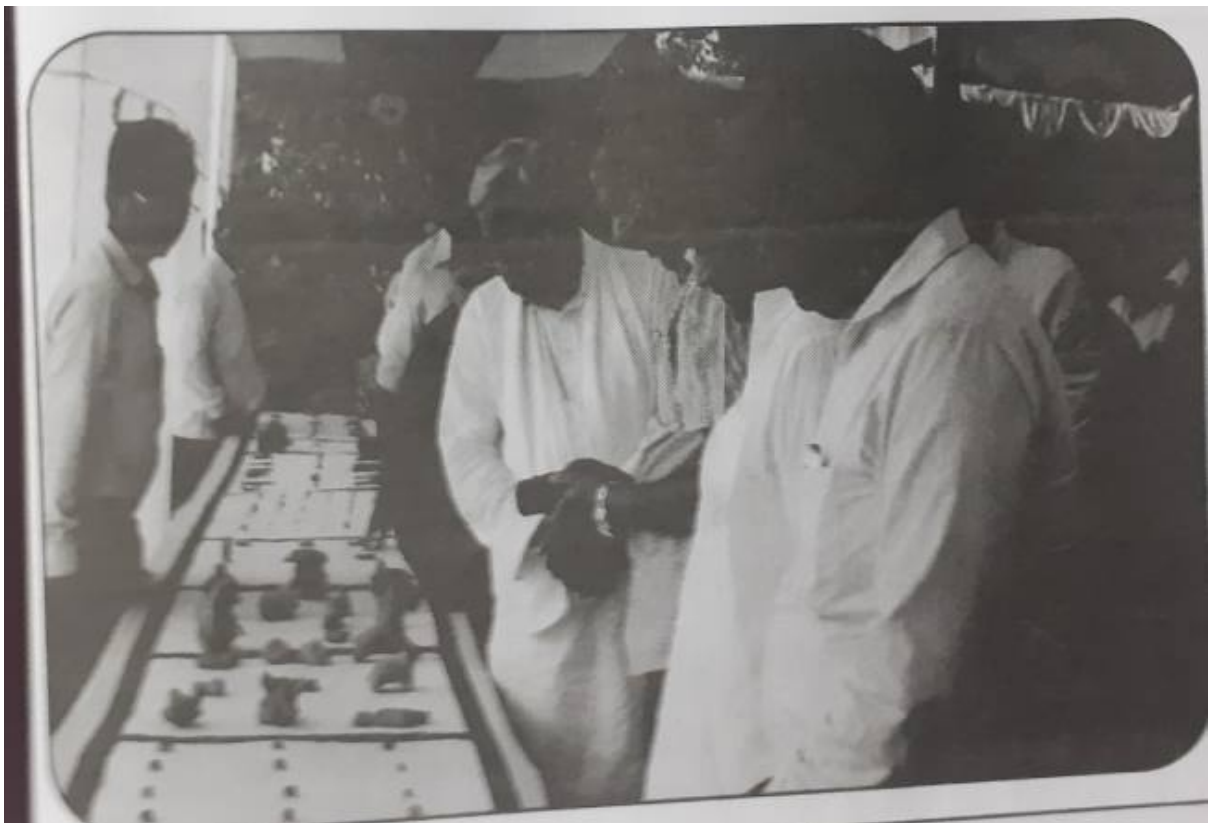
The PandavSthan

(Source: <https://www.samastipuratown.com/samastipur/2020/07/samastipur-dalsinghsarai-paar-pachpaika-pandav-deeh-mahabharata-ips-vikash-vaibhav/>)



Excavation Site

(Source: <https://www.samastipur town.com/samastipur/2020/07/samastipur-dalsingsarai-paar-pachpaika-pandav-deeh-mahabharata-ips-vikash-vaibhav/>)



Visit by the Chief Minister of Bihar in 2012 to observe the artefacts from the excavation.

(Source: <https://www.samastipur town.com/samastipur/2020/07/samastipur-dalsinghsarai-paar-pachpaika-pandav-deeh-mahabharata-ips-vikash-vaibhav/>)

Famous Personalities

Surendra Jha 'Suman'



Surendra Jha. -1

(Source: <https://archive.org/details/SurendraJhaSumanMaithili>)



Surendra Jha. -2

(Source: <https://archive.org/details/SurendraJhaSuman/Surendra%20Jha%20Suman.jpg>)

Surendra Jha 'Suman,' also known as 'Suman Ji' or Acharya Surendra Jha 'Suman,' was a Maithili poet, writer, publisher, editor, and elected member of the legislative assembly and parliament who lived from 10 October 1910 to 5 March 2002. He's also recognized for his work as a publisher, editor, writer, social and cultural reformer, and Mithila culture booster. He was the editor of several magazines and books in Maithili, Sanskrit, and Hindi, and produced over forty volumes in Maithili. In his state, he served on the boards of many

literary and intellectual institutions in various roles. In 1971, he received the Sahitya Akademy Award for Payaswini, and in 1995, he received the Sahitya Akademy Award for Translation Rabindra Natakavali Vol. I. He was born in a village known as Ballipur in the Samastipur district of Bihar.²⁵ The following is an excerpt from his poems:

The jungles on all sides are thick with the smell of Bakul flower;

the Ketaki flower has filled the wind and made it dense.

In every home the she-peacock is dancing;

Everybody's eyes feast upon the dark clouds (meaning also Lord Krishna),

but it is in my home alone where the flame of love remains unquenched.

Bharti Dayal

Bharti Dayal is a Madhubaniartist. Dayal learned Madhubani painting from her mother and grandmother when she was a child, and she has been doing it professionally since 1984, following her official education in science. She has worked to introduce innovation to Mithila's traditional art and maintains an art studio in New Delhi. She has made it her mission to assist other female artists in her community, advising them on how to improve their work.

By employing modern media such as acrylic and canvas, Dayal has given traditional Madhubani art a contemporary spin. She uses natural, vegetable-based colours in her paintings. Krishna and Radha are depicted in her paintings with undercurrents of "love, longing, and peace." Dayal has had numerous national and international exhibitions of her work. In 1995, a documentary on her Madhubani painting aired on French television. The Museum of Sacred Art (MOSA) held a show of her acrylic on canvas works produced between June 2015 and June 2016.

The book *The New Bihar* includes seven Madhubani paintings by Dayal, which combine traditional art with contemporary modern issues. A girl riding a bicycle on the book's cover represents the "empowerment of women and the thirst for knowledge," while a fish represents the idea of "rainbow agriculture," or the merging of agricultural endeavours to increase rural income.²⁶ "Bharti's use of the traditional style on contemporary themes can contribute to the revival of Madhubani art," comments book authors N.K. Singh and Nicholas Stern.²⁷

²⁵ "Surendra Jha" Members Bioprofile. Accessed April 1, 2022.

http://loksabhaph.nic.in/writereaddata/biodata_1_12/2406.htm.

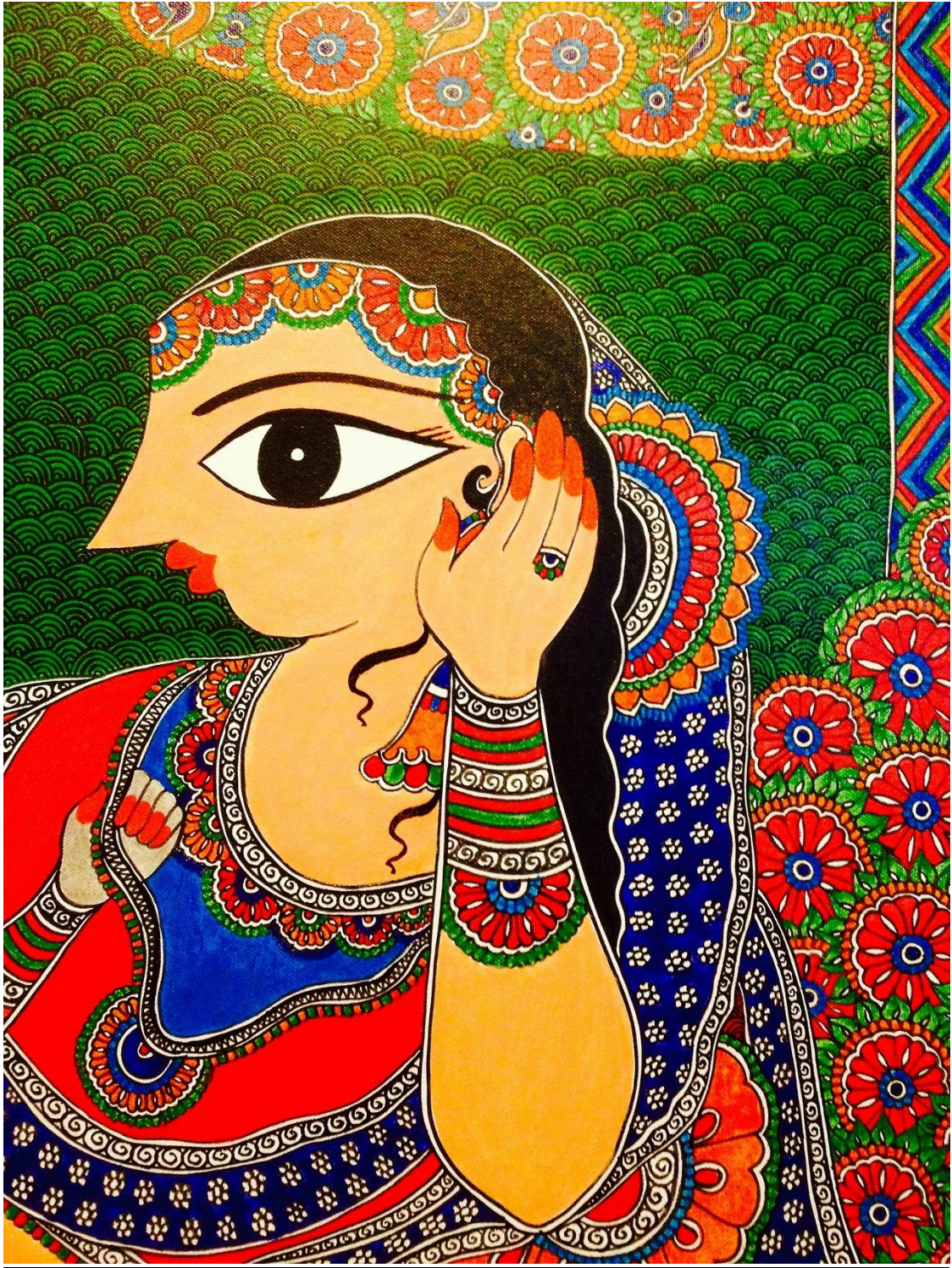
²⁶ "Bharti Dayal: Profile." Bhartidayal. Accessed April 1, 2022. <https://www.bhartidayal.com/profile>.

²⁷ Singh, N. K., and N. H. Stern. *The New Bihar: Rekindling Governance and Development*. Noida: HarperCollins Publishers India, 2013.



Bharti Dayal creating artwork.

(Source: <https://www.bhartidayal.com/>)



Womanhood by Bharti Dayal

(Source: <https://bhartidayal.tumblr.com/post/161476314176/womanhoodbharti-dayal-madhubani-painting-mithila>)



A painting of Radha and Krishna by Bharti Dayal.

(Source: <https://twitter.com/womensart1/status/982519026537631744>)

Karpoori Thakur

Karpoori Thakur was an Indian politician from the state of Bihar who served from January 24, 1971, until February 17, 1988. Jan Nayak (Hindi for "people's hero") is a popular nickname given by the common people. From December 1970 to June 1971 (Socialist Party/Bharatiya Kranti Dal) and December 1977 to April 1979 (Socialist Party/Bharatiya Kranti Dal), he was the Chief Minister of Bihar (Janata Party). As a student, he was motivated by nationalistic beliefs and became a member of the All India Students Federation. He dropped out of graduate school to join the Quit India Movement as a student activist. He served 26 months in prison for his role in the Indian independence struggle.²⁸



Karpoori Thakur

(Source: <https://aroundodisha.com/2021/01/25/tejashwi-yadav-demands-bharat-ratna-for-jannayak-karpoori-thakur/>)

Sharda Sinha

‘Swar Kokila’ Sharda Sinha (born October 1, 1952) is a Maithili folk singer from India. She also sings in the languages of Hindi, Bangla, Nagpuri, Magahi, and Bhojpuri. Her Maithili

²⁸ Singh, Jagpal. "Karpoori Thakur: A Socialist Leader in the Hindi Belt." Forward Press. Forward Press, September 3, 2016. <https://www.forwardpress.in/2016/08/karpoori-thakur-a-socialist-leader-in-the-hindi-belt/?amp>.

rendition of the Chhath Puja hymn "Ho Dinanath" is well-known. On the eve of Republic Day in 2018, Sinha received the Padma Bhushan, India's third-highest civilian honour. Her devotion to music earned her the Padma Shri award in 1991. She is the Head of the Music Department of Women's College in Samastipur, Bihar (L.N.M.U. Darbhanga).²⁹OragKe Baer, Sama KheleGailah, Mehenga Manghir, and KelvaKePaat Par are among her popular Chhath Puja devotional songs, while DulhaSindur, Dulhin, and Baba DihaleTikwa are among her wedding folk songs.

Sharda Sinha became very famous in the 80s for traditional songs in Maithili, Magahi and Bhojpuri. Apart from folk songs, an album called *Shraddhanjali* (cassette) became very popular. In this, he gave voice to the songs of Maithili poet Vidyapati.³⁰ The following are some of her lyrics:

सोना सट कुनिया हो दीनानाथ

हे घूमइछा संसार

हे घूमइछा संसार

सोना सट कुनिया हो दीनानाथ

हे घूमइछा संसार

हे घूमइछा संसार

²⁹ Information provided by respondent, Pranav Kumar.

³⁰Yuva Digest Staff. "शारदासिन्हाकाजीवनपरिचय - Sharda Sinha Biography in Hindi." Yuva Digest, September 28, 2020. <https://yuvadigest.com/sharda-sinha-biography-in-hindi/>.



Sharda Sinha performing live.

(Source: <http://www.bhojpurifilmiduniya.com/2015/10/list-of-top-popular-bhojpur-female.html>)



Sharda Sinha performing at the Banaras Hindu University.

(Source: <https://www.amarujala.com/photo-gallery/uttar-pradesh/varanasi/sharda-sinha-performance-in-bhu-music-festival>)

Cuisine

Like much of North Bihar, Samastipur enjoys a variety of foods and spices. While the cuisine is majorly vegetarian, the presence of Ganga and its tributaries contribute to the inclusion of fish in the diet of some communities.

Panch Phoron

Panch Phoron is a combination of five whole spices commonly used in Eastern Indian, Northeastern Indian and Bangladeshi cuisine to add flavour to savoury dishes such as curries and dals. 'Panch' means five and 'phoron' refers to the Indian cooking method of tempering in which whole spices, onions and garlic are fried in oil or ghee to release their essential oils. The five spices include fenugreek seed, nigella seed, cumin seed, black mustard seed and fennel seed in equal parts.³¹ In Maithili cuisine, it is often used during the tempering process to enhance the flavour of dals.



Panch Phoron in whole-spice form.

(Source: <https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Panch-phoron.jpg>)

³¹ Amit, Dassana. "Panch Phoron (Bengali 5 Spice Mix)." Dassana's Veg Recipes, June 25, 2021. <https://www.vegrecipesofindia.com/panch-phoran-bengali-recipe/>.



PanchPhoronis used for the Indian cooking method of Tadka (tempering).

(Source:<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Pancha-Phutana.jpg>)

Thekua

Thekua is fennel and green cardamom flavoured deep-fried cookies from Bihar.³² It is usually enjoyed during tea-time in households, but the central occasion to enjoy them is during Chhath Puja. Its main ingredients include wheat flour, fennel, cardamom and jaggery. It is traditional to add floral or geometric patterns on the thekua to decorate it.

³² Information provided by respondent, Pranav Kumar.



A plate of thekua with various floral and geometric patterns.

(Source: <https://www.vegrecipesofindia.com/thekua-recipe/>)

Dal BhaatChokha

Geographically, Bihar lies on the Indo-Gangetic plain which makes it suitable for intensive agriculture. It is one of the major producers of rice in India. More than 60 varieties of rice are cultivated here. It is both the commercial and the staple crop, and dal-bhaat (dal and rice) is the most commonly eaten food in Bihar.³³ The combination of dal and bhaat is especially enjoyed with chokha, a dish usually made out of brinjals. This dish is part of the day-to-day diet of the people of Samastipur.³⁴ To create the chokha, brinjal is fire-roasted till very soft and the outer layer has charred. The peel is then removed and the inside is chopped and mashed. The final dish is served by mixing the mashed brinjal with flavouring ingredients such as mild spices, onion, garlic and coriander.³⁵



Baingan ka chokha

(Source: <https://www.vegrecipesofindia.com/baingan-chokha-recipe/>)

Pirikiya

³³ Indian Culture- Government of India. "The Land of Bihar and Its Wholesome Food." INDIAN CULTURE. Accessed April 1, 2022. <https://indianculture.gov.in/food-and-culture/east/land-bihar-and-its-wholesome-food>.

³⁴ Information provided by respondent, Pranav Kumar.

³⁵ Amit, Dassana. "Baingan Ka Chokha." Dassana's Veg Recipes, December 8, 2019. <https://www.vegrecipesofindia.com/baingan-chokha-recipe/>.

Pirikiya, as known in Bihar and also known as gujiya, is a deep fried sweet dish served in North and East India. Sweetened milk khoya and dry fruits are stuffed in a dough made out of suji (semolina) and maida (all-purpose wheat) flour. The dumplings are then deep fried in ghee. The sweet is usually served as a holy *prasad* during Hindu festivities and pujans like Holi, Chhath and Teej.³⁶ here are two types of pedakiya made in Bihar: one with *suji/rawa* and another with khoa. In *suji pedakiya*, suji is roasted in ghee with sugar, almonds, cardamom, raisins and other nuts and then deep fried in ghee. In *khoa pedakiya*, pure khoa is mixed with nuts and sugar and then deep fried.



A plate full of prikiya.

(Source: <https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Gujhia.JPG>)

³⁶ Information provided by respondent, Pranav Kumar.

Calendar of Events

The calendar of events formally followed by Samastipuris posted by the Government of Bihar every year to be uniformly followed across the state. The following was officially posted for 2022.

क्षेत्रीय कार्यालयों (प्रमण्डलीय आयुक्तों के कार्यालय, मुख्य अभियंताओं के कार्यालय आदि)

बिहार

राज्यपाल
श्री फागु चौहान

सरकार

2022

दिन-पत्री

2022

	जनवरी					फरवरी					मार्च					अप्रैल							
रविवार	30	2	9	16	23	6	13	20	27	6	13	20	27	6	13	20	27	3	10	17	24		
सोमवार	31	3	10	17	24	7	14	21	28	7	14	21	28	7	14	21	28	4	11	18	25		
मंगलवार		4	11	18	25	1	8	15	22	1	8	15	22	1	8	15	22	5	12	19	26		
बुधवार		5	12	19	26	2	9	16	23	2	9	16	23	2	9	16	23	6	13	20	27		
गुरुवार		6	13	20	27	3	10	17	24	3	10	17	24	3	10	17	24	7	14	21	28		
शुक्रवार		7	14	21	28	4	11	18	25	4	11	18	25	4	11	18	25	8	15	22	29		
शनिवार	1	8	15	22	29	5	12	19	26	5	12	19	26	5	12	19	26	9	16	23	30		
		मई					जून					जुलाई					अगस्त						
रविवार	1	8	15	22	29	5	12	19	26	31	3	10	17	24	1	7	14	21	28				
सोमवार	2	9	16	23	30	6	13	20	27		4	11	18	25	1	8	15	22	29				
मंगलवार	3	10	17	24	31	7	14	21	28		5	12	19	26	2	9	16	23	30				
बुधवार	4	11	18	25		1	8	15	22	29	6	13	20	27	3	10	17	24	31				
गुरुवार	5	12	19	26		2	9	16	23	30	7	14	21	28	4	11	18	25					
शुक्रवार	6	13	20	27		3	10	17	24		1	8	15	22	5	12	19	26					
शनिवार	7	14	21	28		4	11	18	25		2	9	16	23	6	13	20	27					
		सितम्बर					अक्टूबर					नवम्बर					दिसम्बर						
रविवार		4	11	18	25	30	2	9	16	23		6	13	20	27	4	11	18	25				
सोमवार		5	12	19	26	31	3	10	17	24		7	14	21	28	5	12	19	26				
मंगलवार		6	13	20	27		4	11	18	25	1	8	15	22	29	6	13	20	27				
बुधवार		7	14	21	28		5	12	19	26	2	9	16	23	30	7	14	21	28				
गुरुवार	1	8	15	22	29		6	13	20	27	3	10	17	24		1	8	15	22	29			
शुक्रवार	2	9	16	23	30		7	14	21	28	4	11	18	25		2	9	16	23	30			
शनिवार	3	10	17	24		1	8	15	22	29	5	12	19	26		3	10	17	24	31			

बिहार सरकार के अधीन सभी कार्यालयों और सभी राजस्व सहायिका न्यायालयों के लिए वर्ष 2022 में घोषित सामान्य अवकाश

गुरु गोविन्द सिंह जन्म दिवस	09 जनवरी	भीमराव आम्बेदकर जयन्ती	14 अप्रैल	श्री कृष्ण जन्माष्टमी	11 अगस्त
गणतंत्र दिवस	26 जनवरी	गुड फ्राइडे	15 अप्रैल	चेहल्लुम	17 सितम्बर
वसंत पंचमी	05 फरवरी	वीर कुँवर सिंह जयन्ती	23 अप्रैल	महात्मा गांधी जयन्ती	02 अक्टूबर
संत रविदास जयन्ती	16 फरवरी	मई दिवस (श्रम दिवस)	01 मई	दुर्गा पूजा (सप्तमी, महाअष्टमी)	02 एवं 03 अक्टूबर
महाशिवरात्रि	1 मार्च	जानकी नवमी	10 मई	दुर्गा पूजा (महानवमी, विजयादशमी)	4 एवं 5 अक्टूबर
होली	18 एवं 19 मार्च	बुद्ध पूर्णिमा	16 मई	हजरत मो. साहब का जन्म दिवस	09 अक्टूबर
बिहार दिवस	22 मार्च	इंदुल-फितर (ईद)	03 मई	दीपावली	24 अक्टूबर
सम्राट अशोक अष्टमी	09 अप्रैल	कबीर जयन्ती	14 जून	छठ पूजा	30 एवं 31 अक्टूबर
राम नवमी	10 अप्रैल	इंदुल-जोहा (बकरीद)	10 जुलाई	चित्रगुप्त पूजा/भाई दूज	27 नवम्बर
महावीर जयन्ती	14 अप्रैल	मोहर्रम	09 अगस्त	क्रिसमस डे	25 दिसम्बर
शब-ए-बरात	19 मार्च	स्वतंत्रता दिवस	15 अगस्त		

राज्य सरकार के कर्मियों के लिए प्रतिबंधित (ऐच्छिक) अवकाशों की सूची, वर्ष 2022

नव वर्ष-1 जनवरी, मकर संक्रान्ति-15 जनवरी, कर्पूरी ठाकुर जयन्ती-24 जनवरी, होली-17 मार्च, रमजान का अंतिम जुमा-29 अप्रैल, इंदुल फितर (ईद)-04 मई, अनुग्रह नारायण सिन्हा जयन्ती-18 जून, इंदुल-जोहा (बकरीद)-11 जुलाई, अंतिम श्रावणी सोमवार-08 अगस्त, मुहर्रम-10 अगस्त, रक्षा बन्धन-12 अगस्त, अनन्त चतुर्दशी-09 सितम्बर, विप्रवकर्मा पूजा-17 सितम्बर, दुर्गा पूजा कलश स्थापना-26 सितम्बर, दुर्गा पूजा-06 अक्टूबर, जय प्रकाश नारायण जयन्ती-11 अक्टूबर, श्री कृष्ण सिंह जयन्ती-21 अक्टूबर, छठ पूजा (खरना)-29 अक्टूबर, डॉ० राजेन्द्र प्रसाद जयन्ती-03 दिसम्बर, क्रिसमस ईव-24 दिसम्बर।

उपर्युक्त वर्णित अवकाशों में से पूरे वर्ष में किन्हीं तीन अवकाशों (अधिकतम तीन) का उपयोग किया जा सकेगा। इस हेतु कर्मियों को पूर्वानुमोदन लेना होगा और ऐसा अनुमोदन सामान्यतः आकस्मिक अवकाश को स्वीकृत के लिए सक्षम प्राधिकार द्वारा दिया जा सकेगा। सरकारी काम-काज को आवश्यकता को ध्यान में रखकर ऐसे अवकाश को मंजूरी दी जा सकेगी।

बैंक खाता की वार्षिक बंदी-1 अप्रैल। यह आदेश सरकारी कार्यालयों (नन कोषागार बैंकिंग सहित) पर लागू नहीं होगा।

टिप्पणी : 1) चाँद के दुर्घटनों पर होने के अनुसार मुस्लिम त्योहारों के अवकाश की तिथि में परिवर्तन हो सकता है। 2) राज्य सरकार के अधीन सचिवालय विभागों एवं निदेशालयों में पाँच दिवसीय कार्य सप्ताह प्रणाली पूर्ववत् लागू रहेगी। 3) क्षेत्रीय कार्यालयों (प्रमण्डलीय आयुक्तों के कार्यालय, मुख्य अभियंताओं के कार्यालय आदि सहित) में 6 (छह) दिवसीय कार्य सप्ताह प्रणाली पूर्ववत् लागू रहेगी।

लाल अंक रविवार तथा सरकारी छुट्टियों के द्योतक हैं।

बिहार सरकार, सामान्य प्रशासन विभाग की अधिमूचना सं०-3/एच०-01/2021-सा०प्र०-11265, पटना दिनांक 24.09.2021 के अनुसार प्रकाशित। मूल्य : 5 ₹०

(Source: Awareness Box. <http://www.awarenessbox.in/2019/12/bihar-govt-holiday-2020.html>)

NOTE: Exact dates may vary according to the Hindu Lunar Calendar/Panchang. Information from old gazetteers and panchang calendars is available online.

MONTH	EVENT AND DATE	DESCRIPTION
January	Republic Day 26 th January, 2022	Republic Day is a public holiday celebrated every year on the anniversary of the date on which the Indian Constitution came into effect. It marks the status of India being a Republican democracy.
March	Holi Also known as Phagu Poornima or Phagwa 18 th to 19 th March 2022	The name PhaguPoorninma derives from the sacred red colour. Phagu, and the full moon. Bonfires are lit on the eve of Phagu Poornima to signify the legend of HolikaDahan. In certain places of Bihar, it is also known as Phagwa as it is celebrated in the latter parts of the Phalgun month and the early part of the Chaitra month of the Hindu Calendar
March	Bihar Divas 22 nd March 2022	Bihar Divas is celebrated to mark the anniversary of the formation of the state of Bihar separate from Bengal by the British in 1912. It marks the culmination of a fervent political struggle and is critical for the identity formation of Bihar.
April	Ram Navami 10 th April 2022	Ram Navmi is a Hindu festival celebrated in the spring to mark the birth of the Hindu god, Ram, the central figure of Ramayana. The day takes place on the ninth and last day of Chaitra Navratri (Vasanth). Devotional folk songs and household worship are common. The celebrations also include <i>rath-yatras</i> , or chariot processions featuring <i>jhankiyan</i> , or specialised idols for the procession.
April	Bhimrao Ambedkar Jayanti 14 th April, 2022	The day marks the anniversary of the birth of the visionary Indian activist, lawyer and the Father of the Constitution of India, Dr Bhimrao Ambedkar. Addressed with the honorific, Babasaheb, he aided the anti-caste and women's movement of early India.
April	Good Friday 15 th April 2022	Good Friday is a Christian holiday which commemorates the crucifixion of Jesus Christ. It is variously known as Holy Friday and Black Friday as well.
May	May Day 1 st May 2022	May Day refers to International Worker's Day, also known as Labour Day. It marks a celebration of worker rights, labourers and workers. It is a public holiday observed in Bihar at the discretion of the State Government. It is also known as Shram Divas (Work Day) in Bihar.
May	Eid-ul-Fitar 3 rd May 2022	Eid-ul-Fitar is a holiday celebrated in Islam to mark the end of fasting in the holy month of Ramzan. It is also called Meethi Eid (Sweet Eid). In Bihar, specific delicacies such as Bihari mutton biryani, sheermal, Bihari kebabs, mutton taashetc are

		eaten. For deserts, sevaiyyan is eaten pan India. Celebrations include a special Eid <i>salat</i> , which consists of two <i>rakats</i> and is usually held from 7:45 am to 9 am. Younger children are given Eidi, a special gift reserved for Meethi Eid.
July	Bakrid 10 th July 2022	Also known as Eid-al-Adha, or Badhi Eid (Grand Eid), the Muslim festival honours the sacrifice of Ibrahim's son, Ismail, in obedience of Allah. Badhi Eid falls on the 10 th day of Dhu al-Hijjah, the 12 th and last month of the Islamic calendar. The rituals include re-enacting the sacrifice and obedience by the sacrifice of a ram, in India. Giving charity, such as donation of food, clothing or money, is a critical part of the celebration.
August	Muharram 9 th August, 2022	The mourning of Muharram is a set of commemoration rituals observed primarily by Shia and Sufi Muslims. The solemn day is marked by grieving the martyrdom of Hussain Ibn Ali. The grieving process includes wearing black, mourning processions, storytelling, etc.
August	Independence Day 15 th August, 2022	Independence Day is a public holiday observed nationwide in India to mark the anniversary of freedom from the British crown on 15 th August 1947. The celebrations include parades, flag hoisting as well as specialised assemblies in schools. The day is critical for India as it is a signifier of many lives lost and two hundred years of domination.
August	Janmashtami 18 th August, 2022	Janmashtami is an annual Hindu festival celebrating the birth anniversary of the Hindu God, Krishna. It is observed on the eighth tithi (Ashtami, or day of the new moon) of the Krishna Paksha (dark fortnight) in Bhadrapada Masa. Celebrations include immersion of an earthen Krishna idol. Such immersion is an important part of celebrations in context of the Gandaka river. Household rituals include special worship as well as re-enactment of the birth of Krishna through various means such as from a cucumber, signifying the womb of his foster-mother, Yashoda. Special Bihari sweets eaten include, singhare ka halwa made out of water chestnut flour, panjiri, panchamrit, tilgurkeladdoo (sesame-jaggery laddoo), and makhanmisri.
October	Gandhi Jayanti 2 nd October, 2022	Gandhi Jayanti marks the birth anniversary of the Father of the Nation, Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi. He was a freedom fighter and lawyer critical to the Indian movement for independence from the British.
October	Durga Puja 3 rd to 5 th October. 2022	Durga Puja is a 10-day long Hindu festival celebrated in honour of the Hindu Goddess Durga. The event celebrates the goddess's victory over Mahishasura. Other deities such as

	(official holiday) 25 th September to 5 th September (full-length of celebration)	goddess Lakshmi, god Ganesha, god Kartikeya and goddess Saraswati are also often included in the celebrations. The festival is celebrated in the Hindu month of Ashwin. While all days are considered holy, primary celebrations begin from the sixth day (shashthi) and go on till Vijay Dashami (the victorious tenth day). Specialised temporary <i>pandals</i> are constructed all over Bihar with earthen idols of the gods and goddesses. On the tenth day, the idols are immersed in a river, in Khagaria and Katihar, that being the tributaries of Ganga.
October	Chhath Puja 30 th to 31 st October, 2022	Chhath is a Hindu festival dedicated to the celebration of sun god Surya. Prayers done in gratitude to the life provided by the son. His sister, the goddess, ChhathiMaiyya (Chhathi Mother) is worshiped alongside him as the goddess of the festival. It is conducted on the sixth day of the lunar month Karthika of the Hindu calendar, six days after Diwali. The rituals are observed for four more days. Celebrations of Chhath Puja are especially popular in Bihar, Jharkhan and southern parts of Nepal, coinciding with the New Eastern Indo-Aryan languages. Rituals include holy bathing, usually in tributaries of Ganga, fasting, offering prayer and special holy food (<i>prasad</i>) and <i>arghyato</i> the sunset and sunrise.
December	Christmas Day 25 th December, 2022	Christmas is an annual Christian festival to celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ. Christianity is practiced by 0.12% of Bihar's population.

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Back Cover: The intricate designs of Sikki Grass Craft.
Image Source: Talent Zone (<https://talentzone.home.blog/2019/11/27/sikki-grass-craft/>).

