



livelihoods

today and tomorrow

February 2018

‘Kshetram’

Magadha

One of the sixteen Mahajanapadas “great countries or regions” is Magadha! Magadha is home to two of India’s greatest empires; Maurya and Gupta empire. These two empires originated in Magadha. In the present day context, Magadh region comprises of 11 districts falling in state of Bihar. Districts under Magadh region are Gaya, Jehanabad, Arwal, Lakhisarai, Aurangabad, Nawada, Nalanda, Patna, Jamui, Munger and Begusarai. Beginning with Gaya district, it is the second largest city in Bihar state, having significance both historically and mythologically. It is an ancient city.



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Arwal district too falls under this region, which was earlier part of Jehanabad district, later it was carved out as separate district. Arwal is the third least populous district of Bihar, after Sheohar and Sheikhpura. Lakhisarai district falls under Munger division. Aurangabad district is located on the north eastern part of Bihar on National Highway (NH) 98. Nawada district is located in western most part and falls under Magadh division. Patna is the capital and largest city in Bihar and it is the 19th largest city of India. Jamui district was carved out of Munger district and was formed on 21 February 1991. Located on the southern bank of river Ganges is Munger district and is situated 60 km, west of Bhagalpur and 180 km east of capital city Patna.

Begusarai district lies on northern bank of river Ganga. It was established in 1870 as a subdivision of Munger district in 1972. Nalanda district, an acclaimed Mahavira, located 95 kilometers, southeast of Patna. The district is recognized as a UNESCO world heritage site. Districts of the region, fall in Ganges plain. Gaya district is located 100 km, south of Patna, on banks of Phalgu river, while Jehanabad is 45 km away from Patna & 43 km from Gaya district. Jehanabad is located on the confluence of two small rivers named Dardha and Yamunaiya. The district is heartland of Magadh. District Aurangabad rests on alluvial plain, on bank of river Adri, located 140 km from Patna. District nearest town is Bodh Gaya; 70 km.

Patna is the oldest continuously inhabited places in the world, while Munger is fifth largest city of Bihar and second largest city in Eastern Bihar. Lakhisarai district was carved out from Munger district in 1994. Begusarai district lies in middle of the mid-ganga plain and generally has low laying terrain with South to South Easterly slope. Districts in the region occupies area ranging from 638 sq. km; Arwal district, Lakhisarai district occupies 1,228 sq. km, Aurangabad district occupies 3,389 sq.km., Nawada district occupies 2494 sq. km., Patna 100 km², Patna urban; 135.79 km², Patna Metro; 1,167.04 km² Jamui district; 3122 sq. km. Munger 1,419.7 km², Begusarai; 1918 km² & Nalanda district occupies 2,367 km².

On the demographic front, districts in the region have varying population size and population density. As per 2011 census, Lakhisarai district had population of 1,000,717, with population density of 815 inhabitants per square kilometer, having population growth rate of 24.74% between 2001-2011. Arwal district had population of 700,843 (2011: Census), with population density of 1,099 inhabitants per square kilometer and its population growth rate was 19.01% (2001-2011). Aurangabad district had population of 2,511,243, 47.3 % constituting of females. The population under 6 years of age in this district is 17.44%. Nawada district had population of 2,216,653, with population density of 889 inhabitants per square kilometer, having population growth rate of 22.49%.

Nalanda district has population of 2,872,523 as per 2011 census, having population density of 1,220 inhabitants per square kilometer and its population growth rate over decade 2001-2011 was 21.18%. Patna, is the 19th populous city, with over 2 million people, with an estimated population of 1.68 million. It has urban agglomeration, which is the 18th largest in India. According to 2011 census Jamui district had population of 1,756,078. The district has a population density of 567 inhabitants per square kilometre (1,470/sq mi) . Its population growth rate over decade 2001-2011 was 25.54%. Munger district had a population of 1,359,054, having population density of 958 inhabitants per square kilometer and its population growth rate for decade 2001-2011 was 19.45%.

Begusarai district has population of 251,136 out of which 133,931 were males and 117,205 were females with sex ratio at 875. The population younger than 5 years of age was 37,966. Population densities are higher in all the

districts and only Arwal district is the least populous district, among other districts. Sex ratio in Arwal district is 928, Nawada 939, Patna 882, Jamui 921, Begusarai 875, Lakhisarai 900, Aurangabad 878, Nalanda 921, Munger 879 per 1000 males. Languages spoken in the region are Magahi, Bhojpuri, Hindi and Urdu.

On the literacy front, Aurangabad district has an average literacy rate of 62.77 percent, which is lower than the national average of 74.04 %. The percentage of women literacy stands at 62.5% & while for men, it is 82.52 %. Arwal district has literacy rate of 69.54%, while Lakhisarai it is 64.95%. Nawada district has literacy rate of 61.63%. Jamui has literacy rate of 62.6%, Patna overall literacy rate is 83.37%, male literacy rate is 87.35%, female literacy rate 79.89%, while Nalanda it is 66.41%, Munger of 73.3% and Begusarai district has literacy rate of 79.35%. Among all the districts, Aurangabad district has poor literacy rate.

Climate in the region is seasonable; winters are too cold and summers are hot. Climate is characterized by relatively high temperatures and evenly distributed precipitation throughout the year. Summers begin from late March to early June. Monsoon season commences from June to late September. The region experiences chilly winter nights and foggy or sunny days from November to February. The region has many rivers flowing through and they are Ganga, Punpun, Son, Phalgu, Khuri, Harohar, Kiul, Holane, Sakri, Khuri, Panchane, Bhusri & many other. From hydrological point of view Arwal district has its uniqueness in terms of sense of quality of water and also its availability in abundance. The water in the district is found to be free of impurities.

Flora and Fauna of the region comprises of variety of species. The various flora found in the region are Shisham, Babul, Neem, Guava, Lemon, Gamahar, Pipal, Bamboo and Shirish. Begusarai district does not have any forests and wild animals are scarcely found. District is home to a large number of birds, in bird sanctuary of Kaver Lake. The lake is Asia largest fresh water lake. The fauna found are Neelgai, Hyna, Sloth Bear, Jackal, Hare, Monkeys and Pythons. The region is also home to various medicinal varieties and NTFPs; Bamboo is found in abundance, Kendu leaves and Sal trees. Varieties of common birds are found, they are Pea Fowl, Jungle Fowl, Partridge, Black Quill, Grey Quill, Hornbill, Parrot, Dove and reptile Python. In the region, earlier tigers and leopards were found, but due to intensive cultivation, through irrigated facilities, their number has dwindled.

The region is home to wildlife sanctuary located in Munger district, Bhimbandh, situated south of Ganges River and it is surrounded on all sides by densely inhabited non-forestry areas. The sanctuary constitutes the best area for exploration of geothermal energy potential. On mineral resources front, district Jamui has untapped reserves of resources and they are mica, coal, gold and iron ore. Jamui is situated along the Bihar-Jharkand Border. Munger district has minor minerals and stone boulders are found in abundance. Gaya district is home to Gautam Budha Wildlife Sanctuary, covering an area of 260 km². Nalanda district has Rajgir Wildlife Sanctuary, covering an area of 36 km², the sanctuary is also known as Pant Wildlife Sanctuary, is home to wild animals, 34 species of Butterflies, Birds, Reptiles are found.

Economy of the region is agriculture based. Agriculture wise, key crops grown in the region are paddy, wheat, pulses and vegetables. District wise there are variations in crops grown, but wheat, paddy, pulses are common. The other crops grown based on the climate are oilseeds, tobacco, jute, potato, red chillies, tomato and rape-seed. In Begusarai, cultivation of fruits has become a phenomenon; the fruits grown are litchi, mango guavava and banana. The region is also home to various large scale industries and various enterprises.

Livelihoods of people are centered on agriculture and its allied activities. Key crops grown in the region are paddy, wheat, pulses and vegetables. Local population mainly works as cultivators all through the year. Apart from the above crops grown, the other crops grown are based on climate; oilseeds, tobacco, jute, potato, red chillies, tomato and rapeseed. In Begusarai, cultivation of fruits has become a phenomenon; the fruits grown are litchi, mango, guavava and banana. Landless populations work as agriculture labour, as main livelihood activity for less than six months. The region is also home to various large scale industries and various enterprises; agro, metal, wooden,

readymade, repairing services. These industries provide employment to local populations.

In case of Arwal district, the economy is agriculture based. The district does not have any industries, as the district is very well irrigated. Paddy, wheat and pulses are grown and recently agro-based industries in this district have been initiated. Lakhisarai district too is agriculture based, wheat, paddy and lentils are grown. Nawada district, along with agriculture have various industrial facilities that include Beedi factories, silk handlooms, silk small scale industries too, local populations are engaged in agriculture and in cottage industries too. NTFP collection is another important livelihood activity for many landless families; collection of NTFPs is a seasonal activity. Livestock rearing and animal husbandry are other important livelihood activities in the region.

The region is also known to suffer from vagaries of weather. Both droughts and floods are recurrent. It has devastating effects on people’s livelihoods and village economy. Due to high population density, incidence of migration has been rising in search for employment opportunities outside agriculture. Incidence of migration varies widely across villages. In the present context, cultivation, construction and work in industry are the three main occupations, that migrants are engaged in. The region is primarily agrarian based and there is a need for a suitable strategy to ensure crop and livelihood diversification. Region being primarily agrarian, small towns and villages should be developed as important centers with storage facilities and establish processing units of agriculture products and services. ❖