

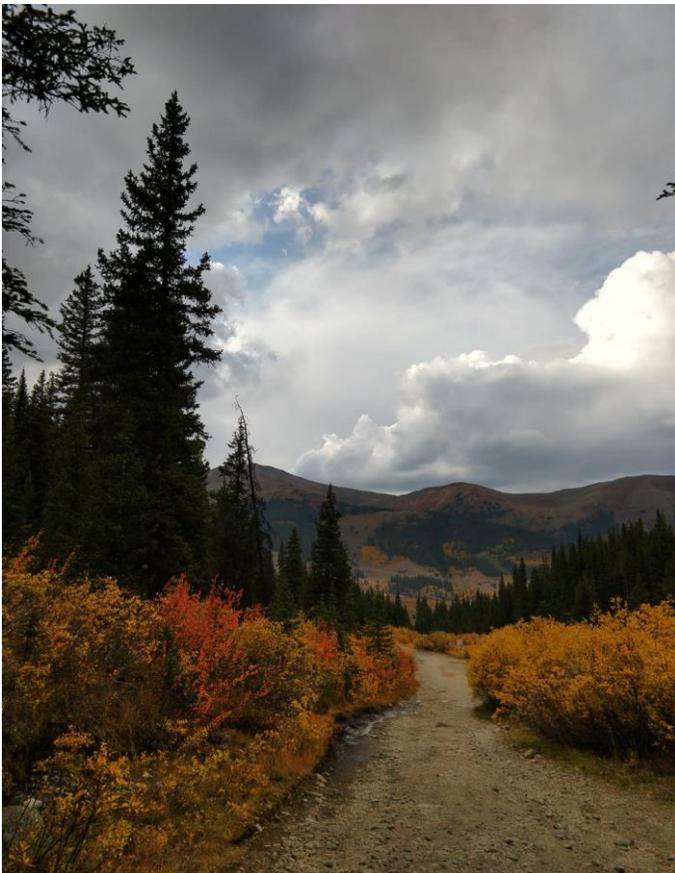


Centre for Promotion of  
Arts and Sciences

# Hum Sub

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A picturesque view of Colorado National Park, USA

## In This Issue

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## Quotable Quotes

"To be yourself in a world that is constantly trying to make you something else is the greatest accomplishment".

*R. W. Emerson*

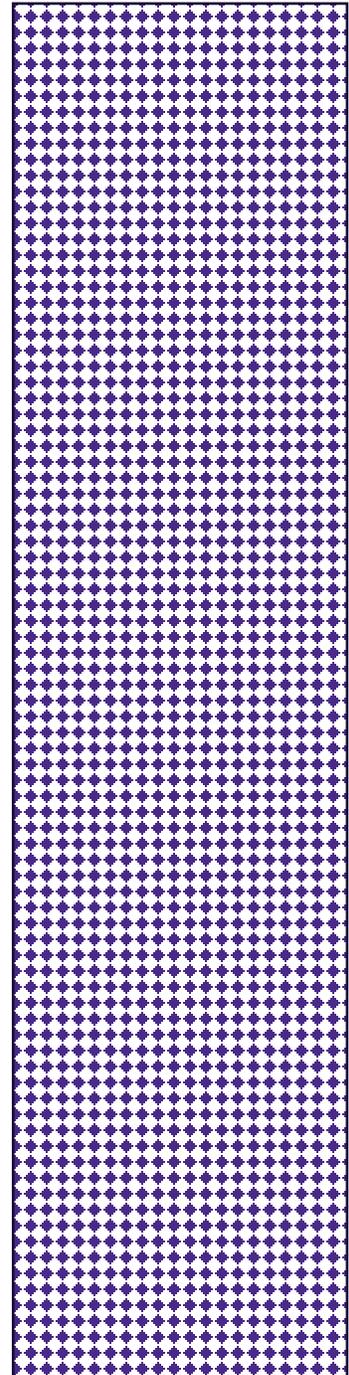
### From Editor's Desk

Our aim through our Quarterly Nesletters is to introduce a very distinguished person in each issue who lived in our midst, but is generally unknown to the genaral public. In this issue of the Newsletter, we cover **Dr K. P. Jayaswal** highlighting his pioneering works in the areas of 'archeology' and 'numismatics'. The K.P.Jayaswal Research Institute named after him has been doing commendable work on ancient Indian history and on the history of Bihar and Jharkhand.

The 'Special Article', in this issue, is a continued article on the topic of '**Economic Resurgence of Bihar**'. This article is spread over several issues as it involves covering a large area. The article on '**Down the Memory Lanes**' is a blast from the past and reminiscences the life in a rural village nearly a hundred years ago. In the last section on '**Poem**', we have once again a poetry written by Manoj Ranjan Sinha.

I look forward to helpful suggestions from readers to make the Newsltter more popular. As usual, I request you to send us short aticles appropriate for the Quarterly Newsletter.

Sharat Kumar



## KASHI PRASAD JAISWAL



(1881-1937)

K.P. Jayaswal was born in Mirzapur district of Uttar Pradesh. He graduated from Allahabad University and subsequently went to Oxford University where he did his M.A. in Ancient Indian History in 1909. As he also acquired a degree in law, he set up his law practice at the Calcutta High Court in 1911 on his return to India. Later in 1916, he moved to Patna and stayed there until his death in 1937.

His interests in Ancient Indian History, however, pulled him to historical research. He played a pioneering role in the excavations of ancient ruins in Bihar, including the site of the (ancient) Nalanda university. As an expert in 'numismatics', he was elected twice as the president of the Numismatics Society of India. He was also able to throw much light on the little understood period in Indian history between the Mauryan period (3rd century BC) and the Gupta period (4th century CE).

In his well-known book '**Hindu Polity**' published in 1918, he made it known that democratic tradition was very much ingrained in the Indian soil and it was not an unknown concept for India. His writings thus inspired many revolutionaries in the country. Jawaharlal Nehru mentions him in his 'Discovery of India' as the most knowledgeable historian on ancient India. He was quite a mentor to the national poet Ramdhari Singh Dinkar and encouraged him to write poems related to Indian history.

In the year 1950, the government of Bihar set up the K.P. Jayaswal Research Institute at Patna. The institute is on the premises of the Patna Museum. In the past several years, the Institute has brought out several significant research publications. The institute maintains a well-equipped library with approximately 15,000 books and journals in the discipline of history and Indology. In addition, it has also 1185 manuscripts in Sanskrit, Persian and Hindi. It also brings out its research journal 'Prajñā Bhārī' regularly. The Archaeological Survey of India, Government of India selected KP Jaiswal Research Institute as a major Resource Centre in the year 2010.

On the birth centenary celebration of the eminent scholar Dr K.P. Jaiswal in 1981, the then Vice-president of India Mr M. Hidayatullah released a postage stamp in his honour (see above).

## Special Article

### Economic Resurgence of Bihar

(Part – 2)

*by Sharat Kumar*

In his book titled '**Broken Promises: Caste, Crime and Politics in Bihar**' (2024), the author Mrityunjay Sharma laments of this period of Lalu regime in the following words, "The 10th March 1990, that is, the day Lalu took oath was one of hope for millions in the state battered by poverty, caste atrocities and inequality. The political triumph of **a vociferous champion** of the marginalised, a reaction to centuries of oppression, ushered in the hope of upliftment and inclusion. Ironically, the Lalu Yadav years worsened the socio-economic disparities".

Very much a detailed account of this period may be had from reading of the working paper titled '**State Incapacity by Design: Understanding the Bihar Story**' by Santosh Mathew and Mick More (May 2011). Santosh Mathew belongs to the Indian Administrative Service (IAS) and was very much part of the Government of Bihar during this period. Regarding the management of the State finances, he focusses on points such as a) Record Keeping, b) Centralization and c) Unspent Spending and d) Vacancies in government against sanctioned positions. In regard to record keeping in the government, the authors observe:

**'The routine conduct of government business in India is often parodied for being excessive bureaucratic and overly shaped by an inheritance of colonial concerns to maintain control by high level officials and limit discretion at middle and lower levels of public service. Whatever the validity of those charges, it is clear that good record-keeping is important. This matters for, among other things, the employment histories of public servants, whose pension claims are dependent on records going back decades.**

**In the period after 1990, the standard of record keeping in the Bihar state government deteriorated noticeably. This particularly affected the public service: one important target against which the ruling coalition continually mobilized its electoral base. Finding records relating to public sector employment, provident fund contributions and insurance accounts became a major challenge. No systemic efforts were made to computerize this information. In 2005 the state government faced over 5,500 contempt applications in the High Court'.**

Regarding "Centralization" in the functioning of the government, it was observed:

**'In India, any new public spending scheme undergoes departmental scrutiny and has to receive the approval of the minister concerned. In Bihar under Lalu Prasad Yadav, new proposals had additionally to be screened by a committee of civil servants and then sent for the approval of the Chief Minister in his capacity as Planning Minister.**

**Most central grants to states are released in two or more instalments.... All money received by the state government is credited to the consolidated fund of the state. There are prescribed procedures for spending money from the consolidated fund. In Bihar under Lalu Prasad Yadav, unlike in other states, the state cabinet**

**had to sanction all expenditures from the consolidated fund of more than 2.5 million rupees (US\$55,000), even for schemes that it had already approved. Consequently, actual spending of the first instalment from Delhi could not even begin until well into the financial year’.**

As high as seventy per cent of the revenue receipt of the State government comprises fiscal transfers from the Centre to the state. Additionally, the Plan assistance for development projects and plan expenditures on Centrally Sponsored Schemes (CSS) for welfare programmes are also provided to the state in the form of grant and loan from the Government of India. Since all the State plans were finalized earlier in the Planning Commission, the meeting in the Planning Commission provided an opportunity to review the expenditures on planned development in each state.

If it was found that the State government had been unable to spend the allocated amount, the amount so allocated was diverted to other competing uses. The next year's allocation of plan expenditure also got reduced in the light of the inability of the government to spend the allocated amount. Table 1 below shows that the approved plan expenditure for Bihar declined continuously from 1998-99 (Rs. 3.7 billion) to 2003-04 (Rs. 3.3 billion). Even the lower plan expenditure in those years remained unspent, due to mismanagement of state finances during this period (Table 1, column 4).

**Table 1. Plan Expenditure (in billion rupees), 1997-98 to 2004-05**

Year	Approved plan expenditure	Actual expenditure	Column (3) as % of column (2)
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
1997-98	2.3	1.7	73
1998-99	3.7	2.6	69
1999-00	3.6	2.7	74
2000-01	3.2	1.6	52
2001-02	2.6	1.5	56
2002-03	3.0	2.2	74
2003-04	3.3	2.6	79
2004-05	4.0	3.2	80

Source: Finance Department, government of Bihar.

In the matter of understaffing in the government, the authors observe the following:

**‘Block Development Officers and Circle Officers are senior officers in charge of development and land/revenue administration respectively at the sub-district level. They work at the frontline of government, touching the lives of citizens on a day-to-day basis. If a District Magistrate is the government representative at the district level, the Block Development Officers and Circle Officers are the equivalent at lower level. Yet over a third of these positions did not have a full-time incumbent.**

**There has been an acute shortage of technical personnel at all levels in the Road Construction Department and Rural Engineering Organization. There has not been any significant recruitment at entry levels and promotions have not materialized. The Quality Control Organization in the Road Construction Department is non-functional for want of equipment, chemicals and personnel. Advance Planning Wing is also nonfunctional. There has been a total collapse of technical administration. This is a serious constraint not**

**only for implementation of works but also for preparing project proposals for getting more funds from the Central Government or other sources'.**

No less do the authors lament about the failure of 'law and order' in the state. As they observe:

**'The state remained relatively lawless. The business of kidnapping for ransom thrived. It was inevitably aimed mainly at the higher castes and was believed to receive high level political support and protection, if not direct sponsorship. The state government did not generally exercise discipline over the police, but retained sufficient control that the service could be used for politically crucial tasks'.**

Respectable people of the state such as Ranchor Prasad, through letters and various other means, tried reminding the Chief Minister that since he enjoyed his position to the Constitution of India, he should protect the Constitution rather than undermine it. Such sane voices went unheard, and things did not happen that way during this period of 1990 to 2005. The assembly elections of October November 2005 in Bihar led to the defeat of the RJD alliance. Nitish Kumar became the new Chief minister (CM), and he successfully reversed the trend into which the state had been pushed.

#### *Law and Order*

One might assume that the state finances were gradually fixed, and budgets began to be presented at regular intervals under the new government in Patna. The new CMs first initiative was to restore law and order. This was done with a well thought out strategy articulated by the senior bureaucracy who were backed by the new CM, It was decided, at first, to focus on the illegal possession of firearms under the Arms Act (1959) and conduct speedy trials of those in illegal possession of arms. The form of 'the charge sheet' for investigating a criminal case was simplified and the target period of four months set for speedy trials for convicting the criminals.

Amongst other measures, the State Auxiliary Police (SAP) force was raised from amongst the retirees from the lower ranks of the armed forces, that is, those army men who had retired at the age of 45, were able bodied and were willing to join their police force at a monthly remuneration of Rs. 10,000/-. As such, a force of 25,000 SAP force was raised in a short period of two years. With arrests, speedy trials and convictions by the Judiciary, the Bihar police was successful in restoring "law and order" in the state.

#### *Roads and Bridges*

The second initiative taken by the new CM was in the direction of building roads and highways in the state. Once again distinguished officers were given charge for the development of building infrastructure development in the state. The existing rules for registration of contracts and contractors were simplified, and registration was required only after the award of the contract. The standard bidding document now included both 'incentives' and 'fines. Consequently, 'the

length of roads built had increased almost tenfold in Bihar. In 2004-05, 385 kilometres of roads were built and in 2009-10, the length was 3,474 km' (Chakrabarti, 2013).

Similar achievements are made in the area of building bridges across the state. The new CM gave a target of building 500 bridges on the different rivers and rivulets in the state to his officers within the next five years. The Bihar State Bridge Building Corporation (BRPNN), a state PSU that was running into losses soon became profitable. The PSU introduced a charge called "Centage" on the model of the UP-Bridge Construction Corporation. BRPNN thus charged 13.5% "Centage" for a project completed below the value of ₹100 crores (from the State Government?) and at 12.5% "Centage" above the value of ₹100 crores. Such earnings enabled the PSU to make timely payments to its staff, and they were, therefore, motivated to give their best to the company (Chakrabarti, 2013).

#### *Rural Health Mission*

The launch of the National Rural Health Mission by the Government of India in November 2005 coincided with the change of government in Bihar. As high as 85 per cent of the expenditure under this mission was met by the Central Government.

'The NRHM focused on the Community Health Centres (CHC) serving of population of 80,000 to 1,20,000 people at the block level below. Below each CHC, there were about four Primary Health Centres (PHC) catering to a population about 30,000. The next level would be the sub centres (SCS) - about 6 per PHC serving a population of 5000 each.... Beyond SCS, there would be the village level touch points in the form of health workers with specialised training - the Asha (accredited Social Health Activists Workers) and the AWW (Anganwadi Workers)' (Chakravarti, 2013).

The State government, furthermore, introduced "free provision" of standard medicines. This invigorated the confidence of the rural population and "the foot falls" at these health centres for seeking health services substantially increased.

#### *Universal Child Education*

The Government of India had earlier introduced the *Serva Shiksha Abhiyan* in 2001. 'The programme sought to open new schools in habitations with no schooling facilities and provide existing schools with additional classrooms, toilets, drinking water, maintenance grants and school improvement grants' (Chakravarti, 2013). Bulk of the expenditure allocated and sanctioned to the State by the Government on the programme had, however, remained mostly unspent until 2005. The new government of Bihar was successful in fully implementing the programme. It, furthermore, expanded the same with "free provision of textbooks" to all the students.

*Gender Justice*

In the realm of 'women emancipation', the new CM was perhaps "ahead of the curve". He was instrumental in introducing '35% reservation for women in government jobs and 50% reservation in the Panchayats' (Ranjan et al 2020). In the matter of girl education, it was noticed that the dropout rate of girl students substantially increased in class IX. The State government, therefore, introduced the 'Mukhyamantri Balika Cycle Yojana' providing cash to every girl child who enrolled in class IX.

With a view to check female feticide, the government, furthermore, introduced the Mukhyamantri Kanya Suraksha Yojana in 2007 under which ₹2000 is paid to every girl child born on or after 22nd November 2007. 'Under the Kanya Uttam Yojana, introduced by the government, a life cycle approach is used to encourage girls' education and delay the age of marriage by providing enhanced incentives for birth registration. Further every unmarried girl who completes her intermediate course receives ₹10,000 and any girl and married or married who completes her graduation receives ₹25,000 (Rajan et al, 2000).

In his third term as CM, Nitish Kumar brought the controversial Bihar Excise Amendment Act 2016, which prohibits manufacturing bottling distribution transportation accumulation, possession, purchase, sale or consumption of any type of liquor, intoxicating substance including bhang and medicines with alcoholic substance. 'A study conducted by the Asian Development Research Institute Patna found that the liquor ban has had a significant impact on the household economy' (Rajan et al, 2020).

'The study... found a substantial increase in the purchase of milk products and various other items such as expensive sarees, processed food, furniture and vehicles in the first six months after prohibition... In an interview with women from Samastipur district, these women of affirmed that the law has brought tranquility and improved their quality of living' (Rajan at all, 2020).

*Population and Family Planning*

The decadal population growth in Bihar between 2001 to 2011 was 25.4%. In comparison, the growth rate for All India for the same period was 17.7%. It was merely 4.9% for the best performing state of Kerala. On a population figure of around 10 crore people in Bihar in 2011, a 25% increase meant an addition of 2.5 crore people in the next 10 years. Broadly, **this amounts to adding one Australia every ten years in terms of population in the state**. The strain of this big increase of population on the limited natural resources and on public services is easily understandable. The Union Government has been running the Family Planning programme since 1951. It did succeed in reducing the decadal growth of population in the country, which came down further,

for all-India, from 21.5% in 1991-2001 to 17.7% in 2001-11. In the case of Bihar, the growth rate declined from 28.6% to 25.4% for the same period; the big difference between the all-India figure and for Bihar is very revealing. The growth rate of population in Bihar continues to remain higher than the neighboring state of West Bengal (and even Bangladesh).

Higher decadal growth rate in population is also explained in terms of fertility rate per woman, that is, the number of children born per woman. The Total Fertility Rate (TFR) has been the highest for Bihar amongst all the states. While the average TFR for all-India stood at 2.7 in 2005-06, it was 4.0 for Bihar. The TFR declined to 3.4 in 2015-16 and further declined to 3.0 in 2019-20, coinciding with the tenure of Nitish Kumar as CM.

Significantly, there is a big difference between the TFR in urban and in rural areas of Bihar. While the TFR in urban areas stood at 2.4 in 2019-20, it was 3.1 for rural areas. Furthermore, there is a big disparity in the TFR of different districts; the TFR in the border districts of West Champaran, East Champaran, Kishanganj, Purnia and Araria are much higher than the other districts.

The main factors responsible for higher TFR in the state are stated to be: a) early marriages, b) illiteracy, c) lack of awareness and d) low coverage of methods of family planning. **'Bihar has the highest rate of child marriages in India at 60 per cent as opposed to the national average of 47 per cent. The high TFR highlights the perils of early marriages as seen in early pregnancies and lack of spacing between births'** (Rajan et al, 2020). That the incidence of maternal mortality is highest in this age group cannot be ruled out. This is very much a sociological problem and needs urgent attention to be paid by all in the interest of the girl child.

The family planning programme faces a huge challenge because of illiteracy in the state. The overall illiteracy for women in Bihar in 2019-20 stood at around 40 per cent, according to National Health family Survey (NHFS, 2019-20). Similar figures for men stood at around 20 per cent. It is this cohort of men and women that lacks awareness of adopting family planning methods. Once again, there is a big disparity between the urban and rural areas, with their respective shares in literacy being 48 per cent and 25 per cent. Literacy level in rural areas is almost half of the urban areas.

The use of modern methods of family planning amongst currently married women aged 15-49 years, which was 24.1 per cent in 2015-16 has gone up to 44.4 per cent in 2019-20. It was 47 per cent in urban areas and 43.9 per cent in rural areas. One of the laudable initiatives taken by the State government in this connection has been home delivery of contraceptives using the services of ASHA volunteers/workers.

Consequent to the Islamic Revolution in Iran in 1979, the family planning programme was dismantled, and early marriages were encouraged. This resulted in skyrocketing population

growth rate. This policy was reversed officially in 1989, and the Family Planning Bill was ratified by the Iranian Parliament in 1993. As it has been observed, 'With a contraceptive prevalence rate of 74 per cent and a TFR of 2.1 per woman, the efforts made by the Iranian government in promoting family planning after the Islamic revolution is considered the most commendable' (Karim, 2010).

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## Down The Memory Lane

(Transcript of the interview dated 26.4.2022)

*Manorma Sinha*

It is like going back in time - some seven to eight decades in the past or you may say a century ago, as I have much to tell about my father who was born in 1874. I grew up in a joint family of agriculturists. Our elders took care of farms which were in the different revenue villages of the Khagaria district. The district of Khagaria, in north Bihar, is situated on the northern bank of the holy Ganges. It is traversed by several other rivers such Kosi, Kali Kosi, Kareh, Kamla Balan and Burhi Gandak that originate in the Himalayan Mountain ranges in Tibet and Nepal.

The whole district is flood prone. Since flood waters reached our home as well in Sanhauli, the family had boats besides bullock carts and horses for transporting agricultural products. It was much later that floods stopped reaching our home due to creation of river embankments. Since the farmlands were located at great distance from each other and required crossing of several rivulets, supervision of farming was very demanding.

My father

My father, Late Sri Bisheshwar Prasad (1874-1961) was a hardworking person. His busy schedule was divided into his visits to different farms and back home, from home to the Khagaria market and from the Khagaria market back to home. We had a large storage (badar') for storing food grains (wheat and rice). After the rabi and kharif harvests, the traders came to our house to buy wheat and rice. Father maintained his accounts meticulously, which were kept in a safe iron box ('sandook'). He also took special care of his servants. If they fell sick, he would see that they were given milk, desired food and medicines well in time.

He was the family patriarch of the joint family; a very well-meaning person and he took care of every member equally. He was helped in his responsibilities by his younger nephew late Sri Saryu Prasad (1899-1957), who was his right hand. His elder nephew Late Shri Parmeshwar Prasad (1892 -1985) was a lawyer and practiced from Monghyr, which is situated across the river Ganges in south Bihar. My father was also a well-educated person. He was well convergent in Kaithy, Persian and English languages and was therefore a very respected person of the village.

He ensured that all his sons went to universities. As girls, however, we did not go to school as there was no good school worth the name of in our village and there were all kinds of social prohibitions during those days. My father had two marriages. From his first wife he had two daughters and two sons. When his first wife passed away leaving behind an infant, he had to get married again. From his second wife he had three sons and four daughters. It was indeed a big family, but it was common in those days to have larger families.

As children, we were in awe of him, and quite afraid of him. He had the demeanor of a landlord, was quite strict in his manners and was a very disciplined person. He sometimes used to get very angry if things were not done as he desired. Our eldest brother Late Shri Ranchor Prasad (1911-1996) spoke very little. our brother next to him namely late Sri Parmanand Prasad (1921-1967) was not like the other elders, and we could speak to him more freely.

### My mother

Our mother Late Shrimati Meetmaya Devi ( -- to 1968) was a very kind-hearted person. She looked after all the members of the joint family equally. Her treatment of the servants in the house was no less exemplary. Those were difficult times and extreme poverty prevailed amongst most people in the village. She would, therefore, go extra mile to feed servants if they turned up hungry, including their children. On one occasion, when she was going to visit the house of one of the daughters away from our village, her servant started crying! My sister-in-law, wife of Saryu Prasad stepped in assuring him not to cry telling him that she is there and she would take care of him.

### Our usual food

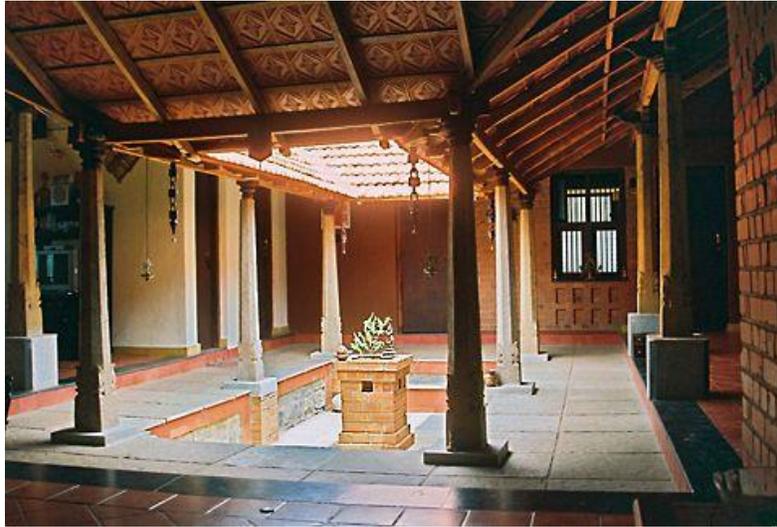
Since agricultural operations included dairy as well, there was always plenty of milk and curd in the house. This found expression in our food consumption pattern as well. The breakfast, for instance, comprised "Dahi Chura" (curd and pressed rice) or "Doodh- Roti" (bread with milk) particularly so for the children. The elders had "Roti-Tarkari" (bread with vegetables). On special occasions, people had "Puri-Bhujia" (kind of a pancake and fried potato) and "Kheer" (sweet rice pudding) as a special dish. Lunch comprised "Rice and Dal" (cooked rice and pulses) and cooked vegetables which varied from one day to another as variety of vegetables grew on our farms. Since we were mainly vegetarians, there was no preparation of non-vegetarian items at our house. For our dinner, we had mainly roti (bread) with cooked vegetables.

During the summer seasons, we had mangoes all day that were brought from our orchards, at the breakfast, after lunch and after dinner. Since maize was also grown in plenty in the region, it was a popular snack during winter evenings in the form of roasted 'bhutta'. Jaggery was also integral to the food consumption pattern as plenty of sugarcane was grown on our farms. Different kinds of sweets such as "lie-ka-Ladoo" (sweet balls made up puffed rice and jaggery) were popular items of consumption.

'Chyvanpras', a dietary supplement was also prepared at home Since 'awla' (gooseberry) is the main ingredient of 'Chyvanpras', it was dried in our courtyard. Later, the other essential ingredients like honey, ghee and other herbs were added under the guidance of an Aryurvedic master. 'Tulsi' (holy basil) was a revered plant, and it adored our inner courtyard or 'the angan'. The construction of the house was built following the principles of 'Vastu'. 'The angan' was a constant meeting place of family members as all the rooms in the house including the kitchen were on the four sides of 'the angan'. (Our house resembled in a big way with the south Indian house shown below).

### My marriage

I got married in the year 1959. It was an arranged marriage; my husband Late Sri C.P. Sinha was a textile engineer and was working with Mafatlal industries Limited in Surat. He came from a distinguished family of Patna. My father-in-law was a well-known doctor of Patna. Everyone in the family was highly educated. Unlike my father's family in Sanhauli, however, I noticed that everyone in my father-in-law's family was concerned about his share in the ancestral property. The kind of bonhomie that I saw in my village home in Sanhauli was simply missing in my new home ('sasural') in Patna.





### POEM

जिंदगी के चार दशकों से अधिक, पठन पाठन से जुड़ा रहा मैं,  
महाविद्यालय और विश्व विद्यालय में सेवा दे,  
अकूत सुख पाया, शिष्य के रूप में, एक से बढ़कर एक बच्चों को पाया  
अत्यधिक संतोष मिला उच्च शिक्षा से जुड़े रहने में,  
जीवन को सफल बनाया मैंने,  
अब सेवानिवृत्ति के बाद तो, और भी सुखी हूँ मैं,  
उत्तरदायित्व से मुक्त, स्वच्छंद जीवन, अपने मन का मालिक,  
निःसंदेह जीवन का सबसे अच्छा समय जी रहा हूँ मैं,  
जीवन के सारे सुखों को आगोश में लिये, ईश्वर का लाख लाख धन्यवाद,  
नित्य प्रति दिन किये जा रहा हूँ मैं, नित्य प्रति दिन किये जा रहा हूँ.

Manoj Ranjan Sinha