

Bihar's Education System in Shambles: Building History with the Rubbles of My Fading Memory

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Abstract

The entire education system of Bihar, starting from primary to higher education is plagued by corruption and disregard for quality. Education in Bihar has fallen into the toxic triangle of destructive leaders, susceptible followers and conducive environment. The socio-political system characterizes a soft state and there are formidable countervailing forces to resist any positive change. Populism and opportunism among the political leaders deny all positive changes. Criminality is all pervasive. One wonders whether this night will ever be followed by a dawn!

Keywords: Education system, Bihar, Examinations, Toxic triangle, Destructive leadership.

I do not exactly remember who said it and where, but, perhaps, Bertrand Russell or Mark Twain wrote somewhere that 'work' and 'recreation' do not differ in matters of input of energy to rearrange the matter in form, space and time. The only difference is that when energy is directed to engagement at somebody else's will or pleasure, it is 'work'; when energy is directed to engagement at one's own will and pleasure, it is 'recreation'. In all likelihood, this discrimination applies to thought as well. In this sense, this writing of mine, which is an attempt based on my memory, to sketch the history of downfall of the education system in Bihar is an engagement in 'recreation'. It should be read accordingly.

I do not consider it would be all futile to sketch my own educational upbringing. I was not sent to any school in my childhood, but had been educated by my father at home, mainly in Sanskrit thesaurus, grammar and literature, until I entered into my 'teens', whereupon I was admitted to class X directly in my village high school. I passed Bihar Secondary School

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Examination briefly after two years (in 1965). In what followed, I passed my BA and MA (1972) from Bhagalpur university; did my second Master's degree and PhD from IIT, Kharagpur; joined IIT, Kharagpur as lecturer, migrated to North-Eastern Hill University, Meghalaya as Reader in Economics; worked as Professor of Economics for about 24 years there and finally retired to 'live the rest of my life as I please'. I must add that for over thirty three years while I was in 'job', I had too little of 'work' to do. Therefore, my 'recreation' was research without any goal; wandering or perhaps groping in the darkness which I saw all around (not sure whether there was no light or I have had no eyesight); pursuing my unqualified inquisitiveness; writing 'papers' of 'dubious academic relevance'; 'teaching' my students because I felt speaking was necessary to keep me going on and so on. If this experience makes me fit to write on the education system in Bihar, one may lend one's attention to this essay. Otherwise, I am so used to crying in wilderness that I have become accustomed to being 'unheard'. I cry to vent out my emotions; not to attract anybody's attention or sympathy.

My First and Vague Memory of Corruption in Bihar's School Education System: It was, perhaps, sometime in the early months of 1962. An acquaintance and the company of the would-be father in law of my elder brother visited us at our village. They knew that the answer script (English paper) of their ward had been sent for examination to one of the teachers at the high school in our village. They wanted my father to help them by influencing the examiner (the teacher concerned) and raising the marks. My father and the teacher concerned obliged them and they returned satisfied. At that time I was barely twelve years old, ignorant of any implication of what happened; more so because I was not attending any school then and was completely unaware of examinations, etc. Everyone around there felt fulfilled and I do not remember anyone, including my father, having felt any moral scratch on his action. It was help, generosity, the job of a Good Samaritan.

If I analyze this episode now, some interesting points emerge: (i) it was possible even those days to crack open the confidentiality of Bihar School Examination Board (BSEB) and locate exactly where and to whom an answer script had been sent for examination. It may also imply the possibility of bribing the officials of BSEB or alternatively to influence the officials to reveal the secrets. (ii) even in those days people indulged in the said type of corruption, although the frequency or spread of such indulgence may not be determinable, (iii) people, like my father, who directly helped in

such instances to materialize, had more of a sense of 'help to a needy' than 'indulgence in corruption for vested interests', giving such acts a moral support and thus a social justification, (iv) a social network was operative to help materialize such acts and perhaps every node nurtured a sense of 'help to a needy'. In a nutshell, corruption in the BSEB system existed even in 1962 and it was considered okay rather than objectionable. I hope, I am not reading too much into this.

The Period of 1964-1973: In the last quarter of 1964 I appeared at the BSEB examination for the secondary school examinations (then Class XI). The center of examination was there at the Sabour High School, some 16 kilometers away from my village. Either due to the strictness of the school administration or due to lack of prevalence of any indulgence of the surrounding people in corrupting the examinations, I noticed no incidence that causes me to feel that the examinations were conducted in any unfair manner. I did hear people comment that the staff of Sabour high school was very strict. If I read between the lines I may guess that elsewhere, in other centers of examination, indulgence of the surrounding people (may be parents or relatives of the examinees in coalition with the school staff) in corrupting the examinations was noticeable.

Having passed matriculation (in 1965) I was admitted (in the Arts stream) to Marwari College at Bhagalpur. The college was well known for education in the commerce stream; it was considered so-so for the Arts stream; the education in the science stream had just started. In 1970 I passed BA (with Economics Hons.) from that college. Teachers in subjects such as English, Hindi, Logic, Statistics and Political Science who taught me were regularly taking classes and they were good. This comment I am making not because I am among those who, out of courtesy or having uncritically accepted traditional values regarding reverence to one's teachers, shy away from calling a spade a spade. Those teachers were good, indeed. However, in economics, which was my Honours subject, the picture was not good enough. The head of the department, I was told, was a very good economist. But he never shared his goodness with us students by delivering lectures. I wondered he took more than ten classes during two years' period. Another teacher, who had lost his vision, took classes regularly, lectured on Indian economics and remembered all data related to his lectures on different topics. Since he could not watch the students quitting the class room after the roll call, the real attendance in his classes was never impressive. Also, since he could not use the blackboard, his lectures, full of statistical information but

devoid of theoretical underpinnings, were not that effective. Yet another teacher, who was apparently good in his subject, showed little sympathy to those students who were not desirous of taking private tuition from him, or liked to prepare for examinations in English (rather than Hindi) medium. He was an avowed supporter of Hindi medium, spoke highly Sanskritized Hindi himself, and perhaps confused between good language and good economics. He undermined the fact that a person's lacking in facility in English language makes him incapable of reading the rich literature in economics. The classics are inaccessible to him. Moreover, when he goes in for higher studies after graduation, lack of proficiency in English would keep him maimed for several years when he would be in a formative stage. Hindi in Bihar is an emotional issue devoid of any rationality geared to development of her own people. All said, performance of Marwari College in Economics Honours was never good, although two of us secured honours in economics in 1970.

I must add here the description of an interesting episode. When in 1970 I was admitted to MA program in the Post-Graduate Department of economics, Bhagalpur University, the introductory class was conducted by Professor Narmadeshwar Jha, who then headed the PG Department of Economics. We all were asked to introduce ourselves and the college that we passed from. When my turn came, I reported that I passed from Marwari College, upon which Professor Jha was surprised at my doing BA Honours in economics. But, in a moment, he realized that admission to MA programme in his Department was feasible only if one had secured Honours and he murmured, "Oh! You have been admitted here and hence you must have secured Honours". By the way I should add here that Professor Jha was a serious teacher and Head of the Department. His uncompromising stand on English as a medium of education, reading of classics by the students, insistence on theoretical underpinning in studying economics, regularity of students' attendance and teachers' conducting classes, taking up examination matters strictly and so on paid us a long run dividend, although all these merits of Professor Jha went against his own personal interests to make him suffer later in his life (Mishra, 2008). I completed my MA in the opening month of 1973.

The autobiographical description provided above points to a malaise in the educational system. Above all, a note on the language issue must be made. I am pretty sure that the people of Bihar have no genuine love for Hindi. It may be empirically verified. Have a sampling experiment on

dictating some average graduates (or even post graduates) a paragraph of a narration (in Hindi) and asking them to write it down. The spelling mistakes will reveal their sincerity to the language. Have another sampling experiment on making some average graduates (or even post graduates) write an essay of three pages (in Hindi) on some common topic such as 'a summer noon in the locality'. The quality of essays will reveal their sincerity to imagination, composition, grammar and everything of the like. And if one has to do these things in English, then, *la haula wa la quwwata illa billah* (no force on earth unless God wishes), an average Bihari graduate can't write such an essay at all.

It is interesting to inquire as to what sort of nexus has led to this situation. It begins from the myopia of students and their guardians. They want quick results without much effort to secure them. This widespread desire prepares a ground for their liability to exploitation by the teachers. Private tuition is a gateway to such exploitation. The institution of private tuition is self reinforcing, simply by destroying the readiness of an average teacher to teach in the class room and thereby inducing the students to make a beeline for private tuition. The governance (administration) at the educational institutions is partly perfunctory and partly blocked by the collective practice of negligence of duties by the teachers. Thus, the readiness of the teachers has been caught in a low level equilibrium trap and such a low level equilibrium is attractive to the teachers as well as the students and their guardians. Hindi as a medium comes very handy in the smooth running of this degenerate system. Such a system, in due course, supplies an army of degree-holders, thought and skill wise maimed, adding to the pool of so-called educated unemployed (but indeed they are unemployable) which make a fodder for the political leaders. So, the political system, by preaching *prema* (love) for Hindi, nurtures populism and vested interests. The myopic people make fodder for the intelligentsia (if the teachers really belong to that class) and the political leaders (if they are really leaders of the society).

Lack of proficiency in English also limits the job market of Bihari students and forces them to suffocate and yet accommodate within their state boundaries whiling away their youth. As an episode, I would like to narrate one of the many instances. I was on an interview board to select candidates for teaching positions in a university department of economics where the medium of instruction was English. A candidate, hailing from Bihar and having PhD backed by good results in BA and MA, requested the board that he might be asked questions in Hindi and also be permitted to

answer in the same. As I was the only person (acting as an expert) on the board who knew Hindi, the board members asked me whether I would like to accede to his request. I agreed, but to my surprise, the candidate was quite innocent even subject wise. Thus, the candidate was found doubly unsuitable to the job and I had no option than to reject him. I have several such instances to narrate that would tell anyone how the so-called educated youths of Bihar have been maimed by the educational system prevalent there.

Ideological breakdown in 1970's: When India became independent, the Indian leaders preferred to formulate the concept of a mixed economy than to join either of the blocs that clearly emerged after the World War II. Nevertheless, the Russian model was more closely followed with state ownership of basic industries producing capital goods and infrastructure, but private ownership of non-basic industries which would produce consumer goods. The private sector had to work under so many regulations and restrictions, and on the top of it had to serve the interests of those who were in a position to sell favours. The management of basic industries turned out to be bureaucratic and inefficient, mainly functioning as a vehicle to tacitly transfer national resources to the private sector as a compensation for their contribution to the rent-seeking regulatory mechanism. This roundabout way to founding capitalism (Jha, 1963) resulted into shortage economy (Kornai, 1980) especially with regard to manufactured consumption goods and utilities on the one hand and, perhaps by implication, the corrupt economy on the other. This development stressed the psyche of the people at the national level.

The generation that had seen India winning freedom started gradually quitting the scene or fading away, dismayed, dissatisfied and disillusioned. Yet they have had some sort of satisfaction from their sacrifice to building the nation that acquired freedom before their eyes. However, the generation that took over the scene had very little of that patriotic feeling and interest in building the nation. They were largely opportunistic and wanted to be better off. Pecuniary and power relations started dominating over other social relationships. Whatever means to power and money became acceptable to them. The system was already corrupt and rent-seeking. The compromised system together with the lust for power and money started eroding the base of almost all institutions. This whirlwind was very powerful and any individual going against it felt that his feet had lost the ground. The education system was only one of them.

Bihar Movement and Jayaprakash Narayan's Total Revolution: The said whirlwind brought the youths, filled with arrogance to accomplish everything either by hooliganism or by exerting influence on the system acquired by being close to power or hovering around the nodes of power, at the verge of being torn apart from the ongoing framework. The youth-supported thunderous call of Jayaprakash Narayan (JP) for total revolution was only a step to concretize the same, which brought a quake and kept everything tumbling on the ground for about three years. Finally, when it settled, a new system had already emerged. In line with Padilla et al. (2007), Bihar had fallen into the toxic triangle.

The toxic triangle into which Bihar mightily fell after the movement had an almost ready 'conductive environment' characterizing instability, perceived threat, cultural values, and absence of checks and balances and institutionalization (Padilla et al., 2007). The people of Bihar were largely uneducated and divided into castes and religious groups for centuries and their cultural values easily tended to emphasize intra-group cooperation and group loyalty, as well as in-group/out-group distinctions. Severe economic and social as well as power distance (Hofstede, 1991) was already there and it was increasing over time. Dependency and apathy were inherent to this culture. People in general had an attitude of disobedience to any authority which was inherited from the nationalist politics that led to independence. This attitude persisted after independence, too. After freedom, the governance was lax and the country as a whole was a soft state (Myrdal, 1970). Emergence of Indira Gandhi as a powerful and perhaps dictatorial leader rang the bells of instability and perceived threat, which were intensified by the call of Total Revolution by a charismatic leader like JP. Under the umbrella of JP's leadership the colluders as well as conformers came up from the different sections of the society in which the youths were prominent. The colluders were mostly the youths prone to support destructive leaders to pursue and promote themselves. I have myself seen how the colluders extorted money (in the name of support for revolution) from people, buses and trucks on road and spent the sum for their personal enjoyment. JP was fully aware of it, but did not (or may be, could not) act to stop it. The conformers to the movement passively allowed the emerging leaders to come up and take the seat of political prominence. As a matter of fact, JP himself became the patron conformer. The followers (mostly colluding ones) characterized poverty, poor educational attainments and low maturity, low self-esteem, youthful ambition, unsocialized values such as greed and

selfishness and so on. Together, the environment and readily available followers were permissive to the emergence of destructive leaders, who were zealously accommodated by the ailing, desperate, old and politically misfit messiah (JP) himself. This bunch of destructive leaders had appropriate vision, self-presentational skills, and personal energy (which, leaders such as Mr. Lalu Prasad Yadav have retained till now). They have had personalized need for power, negative life themes, ideology of hate and the capability to convince their followers that theirs is the only leadership that would fulfill the aspiration of all who follow them. Thus, all the nodes and links of the toxic triangle emerged by fits and starts and Bihar slipped into this triangle.

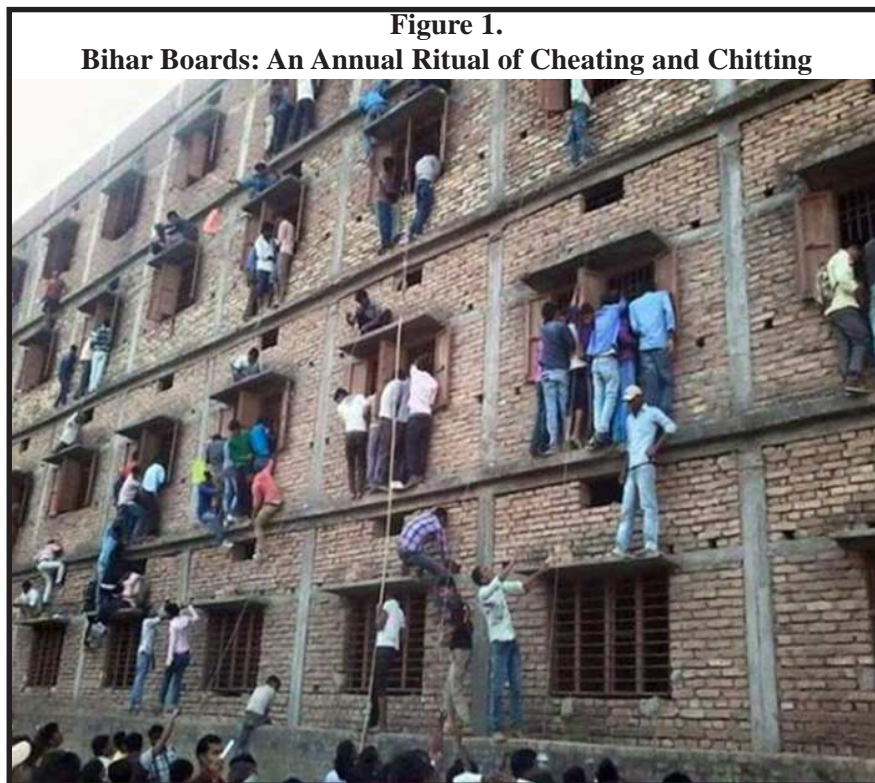
Whether the upheaval due to movement brought any total revolution or not is a moot question, but it surely brought sociopolitical instability in Bihar. The instability nurtured a mighty caste-based, multifocal, self-seeking and opportunistic regime that tore the society apart, that lost sight of discipline, development, morals, ideals and foresight, ultimately crystallizing into a jungle *raj*. Caste and religion are the two deeply rooted institutions in Bihar that cut across every other principle of organization. In the pre-total revolution years, they were there, but not so extremely dominant. They were somewhat shy and prone to take a back seat. But in the post-total revolution years everything else became subservient to caste and religion, unabashed and unapologetic. In the pre-total revolution years the vicious circle of underdevelopment was a hard nut to crack; but in the post-total revolution years it became a harder nut to crack. Bihar movement and destruction caused by the call to total revolution was an antithesis that could not forge a synthesis. The antithetical forces completely destroyed the education system of Bihar.

Aimless and Shameless Welfare Programs: A few years ago I visited one of my relatives in Bihar, a primary school teacher (in a govt.-run school). On the following day of my visit he took me to his school so that I might not spend the entire day being bored. We reached the school at about 10 am. I saw the class rooms vacant and some teachers and some two dozen of students busy at something. On enquiry, my relative explained to me that they were busy planning the mid-day meal. He also informed me that by 11 am or so many students and almost all teachers would be there at the school, all busy in the mid-day meal preparation. Almost no classes would be conducted but the students would be marked present as they were very much present in the school. By 1 or 1.30 pm the meal would be ready and the students would be fed, whereupon they would return to their respective homes by 3.30 pm. He

saw the surprise on my face. To keep me at ease he further explained that it was everyday affair. Teaching classes were seldom conducted. The entire day, week after week and month after month, would be invested in preparation and serving of the mid-day meal. This manner of imparting primary education along with the welfare programme was all-satisficing; the teachers, the students, the leaders, the policy makers and so on were *kritakritya* (the state of having done what one ought to do). Dismayed, I wanted to know if the parents knew this state of affairs. He explained that the parents who were not happy with the state of affairs in the govt.-run primary schools and who also could afford, sent their wards to private schools. That was how and why the private schools were running. When asked as to the justification of engagement of all teachers (including the headmaster) in preparing the mid-day meal, my relative explained the need of careful inspection since many incidents had taken place in which carelessness resulted into the death of students for which the headmaster and the teachers were held responsible. Hence, running the mid-day meal programme had a priority over teaching programme, for the safety of students as well as teachers. In a stoic mood he said that since they (teachers) were government servants, serving the government for their livelihood, they must do what the government wanted them to do, and the government's priority was mid-day meal and not teaching the students in the class rooms. Since all the teachers had to be busy in serving the meals to the students, they cannot take classes. Moreover, when students came to the school for a meal, why should they attend classes even if some teachers wanted (and could afford) to teach in classrooms.

And the state of affairs as narrated in the episode above is more or less similar for all state-run primary schools in Bihar. But if this is the state of affairs in the primary schools, the results follow. One cannot keep up education standard in the secondary schools, too. While the primary schools bear congenitally differently-abled children, the secondary schools must provide for an alternative to them. It is noteworthy that congenitally differently-abled persons tend to have a sense of themselves as 'whole' (Betcher, 2001, p. 51) and hence do not have a tendency to take to prostheses. This sense of wholeness fully justifies their natural right to pass the secondary examinations, too, in the same manner that they have had in their primary school days.

Right to cheat in the secondary school board examinations: The said sense of wholeness among the congenitally differently-abled primary school pass-outs makes them completely unscrupulous to assert their rights to pass the secondary school examinations, too. The photograph (Bhatt, 2015; see fig.1) is only a reflection of that justification, fully supported by the parents, relatives and the school/college authorities.



Bhatt, explaining the photograph reproduced in fig.1, writes: “The photographs of parents climbing the examination hall walls like experts ... come to school to pass them chits from the windows.” When the picture reproduced in fig.1 went viral, Mr. Lalu Prasad Yadav gave his unique advice to the students (as reported by Pandey, 2016): “The current government says it can’t control cheating... (during my time as Chief Minister) I used to hand out books to everyone and said ‘fine, write from the books.’ Do you think they managed? They kept on writing and three hours passed by and most of them failed anyway.”

Mr. Yadav is right. He knows the fact that the Bihari youths in educational institutions cannot even copy from the chits and pass the examinations. The students and their parents know it very well and the teachers in the schools, too, are fully aware of this fact. So, they invented new and more dependable methods. One of those dependable methods is to make the student do the examinations by proxy. Somebody else, in the place of the student would appear at the examinations and do a better work of chits. However, in a society where the majority of students are differently-abled, it is difficult to get as many proxies (in the age/sex group) as needed. Another possible way to get rid of the problem is to bring out the answer scripts from the examination hall, write the answers and submit the scripts in time. This method also is not very handy because the school authorities may not take so much of risk of handing over the scripts to the students, and the parents or well wishers. Moreover, it is difficult to get someone outside the examination hall that would do the questions well. Yet another method has worked quite well in some schools. The school authorities arrange for special rooms where the select (which means bribe-paying) examinees would be seated. Along with the invigilators, a teacher would take the charge of dictating (or writing on board) the answers, which the examinees would copy in their answer scripts. But this arrangement is bold and costly. Many examination centers cannot arrange for such facilities and many examinees cannot afford it. So, for many examinees the right to pass the secondary school board examinations remains as unfulfilled as his fundamental rights.

Ambitions to Touch the Sky: Success in the class XII examinations is a gateway to the future career of a student. Therefore, some ambitious parents in Bihar began to search for a sure and grand success in the class XII examinations conducted by the Bihar School Examination Board. They, in connivance with some unscrupulous teachers, principals and School Board officials in Patna could find out an easy way to make their wards/students rank-holders in the School Board examinations. The Vishun Rai College episode (Singh, 2016) is only the tip of the iceberg because its spectacular success in producing rank-holders in class XII examinations in bulk and that, too, for years brought it to the limelight and scrutiny of the media and the governance. The political connections of the principal of Vishun Rai College are well known and that hints at the deep as well as widespread corruption in the Bihar school examination. There could be many other colleges that are engaged in selling good results to the undeserving students and minting money. Money power and political connections are avowedly

supporting the sky-high ambitions of students who are differently-abled (ability wise worthless but money or connection wise capable). Education business is extremely profitable and that is why the educational institutions are mushrooming in Bihar.

Degeneration in the Institutions of Higher Education: The abysmally fallen education system at primary, secondary and under-graduate/college levels cannot provide good students to the post-graduate educational institutions or the universities. I do not assert that in the midst of the galaxy of fake or degree-distributing schools and colleges, there are no worthy institutions that turn out good students. But examination results and marks-sheets are no longer a testimony to the quality of students. Admission to post-graduate departments can separate the wheat from the chaff by sincerely conducted admission tests. But this is not always possible since there are many costs associated with the process of such screening. “Don’t you trust the degree and the marks-sheet issued by your own university? Then why a test, why not merit basis?” is a difficult question to answer. Then, conducting an admission test requires setting test papers and evaluating the answer scripts. Any adverse selection is hay to those fiery forces that blaze in the name of protection to the so-called interests of different sections of students who are pre-supposedly and decisively discriminated by a universal design of which the teachers are the main architects. There are countervailing powers for all types of improvements. Then, ‘merit-basis’ is the safest root to admission and inaction is the safest action. Quality of education is a public good; everybody wants to benefit from it but nobody wants to share the cost of preserving and toning it up.

Nor is the quality of teachers in the institutions of higher learning satisfactory in any manner. I would like to describe an episode that I encountered a few years ago. A relative of mine (who is a professor of economics in some university in Bihar) and his family visited us and stayed for a number of days. After visiting all the tourist spots around, I found him idling at home and hence requested him to deliver a few lectures, just for fun or recreation, to the students in the department (of economics) where I was working. He was not agreeable, saying “*Mishra ji, vo to thik hai. Lekin hum padhayenge kya? Hum to bis baras se ekko go klass nahin liye hain. Upar se angareji main hum kya bolenge?*” (that is alright. But what would I teach? I have not taken any class for the last twenty years. On the top of that, what would I speak in English?).

I personally know a number of young people who hold PhD degrees, for which they purchased, right from choosing the thesis topic and synopsis writing to the viva voce conducted for the award of degree. The rates varied from Rs. fifty thousand to rupees one lakh, often depending on the subject. Concessions are also available to economically or socially weak candidates and those who bring with them some positive recommendations. All rules and ideals apart, the supervisor of a research student gives a list of names of experts for adjudicating the PhD dissertation. If all named experts are friends of the supervisor, the vice chancellor has no choice other than choosing one of the friends of the supervisor as an expert. Then, most of the officials in the examination department are so benevolent that in no time the supervisor and the student know the name of the expert. Sometimes the expert himself communicates to the supervisor that the thesis has reached him. The rest is settled by telephonic conversation and a favorable report with a recommendation of viva voce follows. The examiner visiting for viva voce is an honorable guest and the student has a great regard for our custom and values that recommend: "*Atithi devo bhava*". The candidate is recommended for the award of the doctorate degree. So smooth, so nice, so heartening, so positive, so pleasant!

Vice Chancellor – Vicious or Virtuous: Fifteen years ago, the vice chancellors of a few universities in Bihar were arrested for promoting fake colleges issuing BEd degrees (Mitra, 2000). In 2013, the appointments of nine Vice-Chancellors and two pro-Vice Chancellors made by the then Governor were quashed by the Supreme Court. The reason cited by the court was that the appointments made by the Governor were illegal since the aid and advice of the council of ministers were not taken in consideration and thus the appointments violated the University Grants Commission Rule (News18, 2013). In 2014, Bihar University vice-chancellor was 'unceremoniously sacked on charges of corruption, misuse of official machinery and funds, irregular appointments and mismanagement' (Ahmed, 2014). Ahmed also reported that the sacked vice chancellor had faced enquiries twice during his six-years tenure as chief of the Bihar School Examination Board and was found guilty on a number of counts. The enquiry report was, however, shelved. In the ending month of 2015, the Governor of Bihar asked the vice-chancellor of JP University, Chhapra to resign since he was allegedly involved in corruption regarding purchase of question paper/ answer sheets worth Rs. 1.5 crore without following the due norms (*The Telegraph*, 2015). Such instances abound and indicate that the post of vice

chancellor is highly profitable and corruptible. If the head of an institution of higher learning is corrupt, one cannot expect the other organs of the institution to be honest. Of course, corruption cases against vice chancellors are not unique to Bihar. It is prevalent in every state of the nation.

Conclusion: We have noted how the entire education system of Bihar, starting from primary education to higher learning is plagued by corruption, inefficiency and disregard for quality. I know for sure that the Bihari youths have wonderful brains and amazing power of perseverance and tenacity to pursue and achieve their goals. Yet, Bihar is known for supplying manual or unskilled laborers to the entire nation as well as the land of poverty, ignorance, corruption and political buffoonery. This is because her youths are maimed and nurtured to be differently abled so as to make a reserve army of followers serving the interests of destructive leaders. Bihar has fallen into the toxic triangle of destructive leaders, susceptible followers and conducive environment. The people are suffering from the problem of conceit and perhaps self-adulation has entered into the collective subconscious of the people in general. The socio-political system characterizes a soft state and there are formidable countervailing forces to resist any positive change in the system. Populism and opportunism among the political leaders are so strong that they would deny all positive changes. Hunger for power and money is supporting and supported by criminal forces. I really do not know *ki is raat kee koi subah hogee yaa naheen* (whether this night will ever be followed by a dawn)!

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