



# Kirti Narayan Mandal: His Life And Vision For Educational Transformation In The Kosi Region

**Anil Kumar**

Assistant Professor

University Department of History

B. N. Mandal University, Madhepura

Bihar, India

## Abstract

Kirti Narayan Mandal, often honored as Mahamana, is a towering figure in the educational history of Bihar, particularly the Kosi region. His unparalleled dedication to advancing higher education transformed one of India's most backward regions into a vibrant center of learning. Unlike many contemporaries, Kirti Narayan Mandal donated his personal land and wealth, establishing over three dozen educational institutions across seven districts. This research article explores his life, philosophical evolution, and monumental contribution to higher education. His legacy, comparable to national figures like Pandit Madan Mohan Malviya, remains foundational for contemporary educational discourse in rural India.

**Keywords:** Kirti Narayan Mandal, Kosi region, higher education, philanthropy, rural development, Bihar, Thakur Prasad College, educational reform, Indian philanthropists.

## 1. Introduction

The history of higher education in India often highlights urban reformers and national leaders. However, the story of **Kirti Narayan Mandal**, a visionary from Bihar's Kosi region, offers an alternative narrative: one where a rural philanthropist's dedication catalyzed socio-educational transformation. Mandal's efforts to democratize higher education in flood-prone, socio-economically backward regions represent an unparalleled legacy in modern Indian history.

## 2. Early Life and Spiritual Inclination

Born in **Manhara village of Madhepura district**, Kirti Narayan Mandal belonged to a prosperous agrarian family. His father, **Thakur Prasad Mandal**, and mother, **Parvati Devi**, raised him amidst religious influences and traditional farming values. His initial education took place at the village middle school, followed by enrollment at the **Series Institute, Madhepura**. However, dissatisfaction with formal schooling led him to abandon his studies prematurely.

Mandal's spiritual inclination was shaped by family members like his uncle **Awadh Bihari Mandal**, a religious ascetic, and the periodic visits of saints to the **Sinheshwar Temple** near his village. A saint from Siwan left a profound impact on the young Mandal, steering him toward a life of introspection and solitude.

Despite familial efforts to anchor him through marriage to **Rama Devi**, daughter of an affluent family from Bijalpur-Panchgachia, Mandal's aversion to worldly attachments deepened. He embarked on spiritual

pilgrimages to **Banaras, Prayag**, and other centers but eventually became disillusioned with ritualism. His discontent with spiritual retreats brought him back to Madhepura, seeking purpose in public life.

### 3. From Political Awakening to Educational Mission

The post-independence years saw an ideological surge in the Kosi region, driven by socialist leaders like **Dr. Ram Manohar Lohia**. In the **1952 Lok Sabha elections**, **Bhupendra Narayan Mandal**, representing the **Samajwadi Party**, suffered defeat. Party leaders identified a critical reason for their failure: widespread illiteracy and lack of higher education among the rural masses prevented understanding of socialist ideals.

At this critical juncture, leaders like **Shivanandan Prasad Mandal** (Bihar's first Law Minister), **Kamleshwari Prasad Yadav**, and **Raghunandan Mandal** recognized the urgent need for higher educational institutions. However, the realization of this vision required not just ideological commitment but material sacrifice—a role Kirti Narayan Mandal stepped forward to fulfill.

Realizing that educational deprivation underpinned societal backwardness, Mandal resolved to act. His decision to donate **fifty-one bighas of personal land** and **₹25,000 as a security amount** marked a historic shift from his contemplative past to public philanthropy.

### 4. Establishment of Thakur Prasad College: The Turning Point

Kirti Narayan Mandal's commitment culminated in the establishment of **Thakur Prasad College (T.P. College) in 1953**, named after his father. The college's foundation was not merely a financial gesture but an act of resistance: to fulfill his pledge, Mandal staged a sit-in and even undertook a hunger strike before his father agreed to release the promised land.

This landmark institution became a beacon of learning for the region's rural youth, curbing educational migration and sowing seeds of socio-economic upliftment.

### 5. A Legacy Beyond Comparison

Kirti Narayan Mandal's contribution surpasses even that of **Pandit Madan Mohan Malviya**, the founder of Banaras Hindu University. While Malviya mobilized public donations, Mandal sacrificed his entire estate for public education.

Kirti Narayan Mandal's role was instrumental in establishing:

- **T.P. College**, Madhepura
- **Parvati Science College**, Madhepura.
- **T.P. Collegiate High School**, Madhepura.
- **Baba Singheshwar College**, Madhepura.
- **Devraha Baba College**, Forbesganj, Araria
- **Hansi Mandal College**, Bihariganj, Madhepura
- **Ambika Upendra Mahavidyalaya**, Murliganj, Madhepura
- **Sant Avadh Bihari Dev Krishna Inter College**, Madhepura.
- **Sant Avadh Bihari Dev Krishna Degree College**, Madhepura
- **Baba Vishu Raut College**, Chausa, Madhepura.
- **K.N. Inter College**, Raghapur, Supaul
- **K.N. Degree College**, Raghapur, Supaul
- **Balaram Shrikrishna College**, Purnia
- **Sur-Tulsi College**, Katihar
- **Banwari Shankar College**, Saharsa
- **Lalji Dayawati College**, Baijnathpur, Saharsa
- **Mrityunjay Mishra College (now Dinesh Chandra Yadav College)**, Bakhtiyarpur, Saharsa

In total, **Kirti Narayan Mandal** contributed to the establishment of nearly **three dozen colleges** across **seven districts** of the **Kosi and Purnia divisions**, significantly altering the educational map of northeastern Bihar.

## 6. Kirti Narayan Mandal's Vision

Mandal envisioned education as:

- A **catalyst for social change**, capable of uplifting backward communities.
- A **weapon against ignorance**, superstition, and political manipulation.
- A **right, not a privilege**, insisting that every village should have educational access.

He advocated **inclusive education**, rejecting caste or class barriers, and inspired community participation in institution management.

## 7. Conclusion

Kirti Narayan Mandal's life is a testament to selflessness, vision, and transformative action. From a reticent youth inclined toward asceticism, he emerged as the **architect of educational revolution** in the Kosi region. His donations of land and wealth for educational infrastructure remain unparalleled in modern India.

By establishing nearly three dozen educational institutions, Mandal catalyzed a socio-educational renaissance in one of the nation's most marginalized regions. His legacy transcends Bihar, positioning him among India's greatest educationists and philanthropists.

In remembering Kirti Narayan Mandal, the nation honors not just a benefactor but a visionary who understood that **education is the true foundation of democracy and development**.

## References

1. Kirti Narayan Mandal Death Anniversary, Smarika, Dated: 7 March, 2013, Parwati Science College, Madhepura.
2. Chaudhary, Vinay Kumar, Dadhichi ki Haddi, Samwad Publication, New Delhi, 2016
3. Chaudhary, Vinay Kumar, Koshi Putra, Sandarbh Prakashan, Madhepura, 2019
4. Sinha, R. (2010). *Kosi Mein Shiksha Ki Dastan*. Saharsa: Shilpi Publications.
5. Jha, Ramesh. (1998). *Kosi Ka Shiksha Andolan*. Bihar Research Society.
6. Prasad, Umesh. (1999). *Siksha ke Nayak: Kirti Narayan Mandal*. Madhepura: Kosi Prakashan.
7. Madhepuri, Bhupendra (2014). Itihaspurush Sheonandan Prasad Mandal, Vrindavan Prakashan, Madhepura