

CHAPTER XI

LOCAL SELF-GOVERNMENT

Outside municipal areas, the administration of local affairs is vested in District Board and in Local Boards subordinate to the District Board which has been constituted for the subdivision of Banka.

The District Board is responsible for maintenance of District Board roads including bridges and culverts, dak and inspection bungalows, rest houses and roadside lands and properties, maintenance and superintendence of public schools up to a certain standard, public health and sanitation including water supply, charitable dispensaries, veterinary hospitals and dispensaries, etc. The Local Board under the general supervision of the District Board is responsible for these items within its jurisdiction.

The provision of the Bengal Local Self-Government Act III of 1885 had been extended to the different districts of Bihar. Prior to the extension of the Act there was a Road Cess Committee which used to look after some of the functions which a District Board normally discharges. The District Magistrate or the Collector, more or less, was the main authority to run the Road Cess Committee although he had others to help him. With the enactment of Bengal Local Self-Government Act III, ideas of Local Self-Government were carried to the public at large.

As will be shown later, a portion of the duty of the District Board has now been taken away by the State Government particularly for education and public health. It is unfortunate that for various reasons indicated later, the District Board had to be taken over by the State Government and now there is a Special Officer who is running the District Board in place of the elected Executives of the Board. The rapid extension of the Gram Panchayats has also considerably encroached upon duties and obligations of the District and Local Boards.

Municipalities are meant for the urban areas and the different municipalities in the district of Bhagalpur were created in different years. At the moment (1961) the municipality of Bhagalpur is also under the administration of a member of the Bihar Civil Service under the control of the District Magistrate as Bhagalpur Municipality had to be superseded for various reasons indicated later on. Thus it will be seen that the history of Local Self-Government in this important district of Bhagalpur has had a chequered career.

MUNICIPALITIES

There are two municipalities in the district, viz., Bhagalpur and Colgong.

Bhagalpur Municipality

The Bhagalpur Municipality was established in 1864 under the Bengal Municipal Act with a population of about 50,000. The District Magistrate used to be the *Ex-officio* Chairman of the Municipality and remained as such till 1865. In 1866 there was unanimous election of a Non-official Chairman and the status of the Chairman continued as such till 1889. The first contested election of a Non-official Chairman was held in 1890.

Mr. Byrne in the last Gazetteer of this district (11) mentions....“The population of the municipal area is about 76,000. This includes several truly rural villages, the area which presents unmistakably urban characteristics being very small and practically restricted to the centre of the town. There are 22 members of the Municipal Committee of whom one is an *ex-officio* member, seven are nominated and 14 are elected. Out of the total number of members 19 are non-officials, 18 are natives only four being Europeans.”*

There has since been a tremendous change in the jurisdiction and function of Bhagalpur Municipality. In 1960 the area of the municipality was 11.09 square miles. The population of the municipality according to 1951 Census was 1,14,530 whereas according to the provisional figure of 1961 Census the population is 1,43,944.

In the last District Gazetteer of Bhagalpur (1911) it is mentioned that there were six wards within the municipality with 25 municipal commissioners. In 1955 there were nine wards with forty municipal commissioners out of which thirty-two were elected and eight were nominated. The municipal office was located in a rented house near the Sandy's compound. In 1907, the municipal office building was constructed in the Court compound.

The number of tax-payers in 1959-60 was 21,037 representing 18.1 per cent of the population residing in the municipal area.

Before introduction of electric lights there were 517 kerosene oil lamps in the town. In 1930, electric lights were introduced only on some main roads and about 230 electric lights were provided. In 1942 at the time of black-out all kerosene oil lamps were removed. Prior to 1955 there were 720 electric lights and 50 kerosene oil lamps. In 1961 there are 52 kerosene oil lamps and 1,493 electric lights in the municipal area.

As mentioned in the Old District Gazetteer this municipality took up the primary education of the children of Bhagalpur town and started a few U. P. and L. P. schools in different parts of the

*Extract from Old District Gazetteer, Bhagalpur (Chapter—Local Self-Government), Page—151.

town. The number of schools were few at the beginning and there was practically no arrangement for girl's education. The number of schools gradually increased every year and they reached the number of about 50 at the end of 1938.

Free and compulsory primary education was introduced in this municipality on 2nd October 1939 and the number of students taking their education in schools were about 2,000 only and the number of existing staff were about 150. There were a few girl students in a few of the schools but there were no female teachers in any school.

After 1939, there has been a considerable increase in the number of schools both for boys and girls, and in 1961 the number of students, boys and girls has come to more than five thousand and the number of teachers has increased to about 400 out of which the number of female teachers is about 100.

The Board maintains 58 Upper Primary and 64 Lower Primary schools and meets an expenditure of about Rs. 2½ lakhs over these schools annually out of which Rs. 2,07,447 have been given as annual grant from State Government during 1959-60.

The population of Bhagalpur town has been increasing. According to 1941 Census the population of Bhagalpur municipal area was 93,000 and the whole area was divided into six wards under three Sanitary Inspectors for purpose of administration with six ward *munshis* and six *jamadars*. The Health Officer was the head of Public Health Administration and remained as such till 1951. When the post of Health Officer was provincialised in 1951 with gradual increase of population and development of area, three more wards were formed in that year. As the population according to 1951 Census was 1,14,530 the work of Public Health Department increased to a great extent and due to enormous duties and development of areas of working of Public Health Department conservancy work and for better control, one post of Chief Sanitary Inspector was created in April, 1960.

The municipality was superseded in 1955, the details of which have been discussed later on. Prior to supersession i.e., before 1955 the work of conservancy and sanitation was conducted mostly by bullock carts but in 1955 they were replaced by mechanised vehicles. Some bullock carts were maintained in 1960 for lanes and bye-lanes where the mechanised vehicles cannot reach for removal of rubbish and garbage.

Disposal of night-soil is cent per cent done by mechanised vehicles.

The compost work was started in 1953. There is a Special Sanitary Inspector incharge of compost. Some quantities of night-soil and rubbish are consumed in compost making at Kolakoli

Compost ground. The compost is disposed of at the rate of Rs. 3 per ton.

The head of the Public Health Department is a Government Health Officer to assist and advise the Executive of the Municipal Board and has direct control of Public Health Department of the Municipality. He has a staff under him. There is a conservancy workshop at Tatarpur to look to the Municipal vehicles. A staff of 614 persons is maintained for the sanitation work of the town (1961).

Collection of refuse and garbage from small lanes and byelanes is done by means of wheel barrows and they are deposited at the main roads to be removed by mechanised vehicles for final disposal to a dumping ground in the low-lying areas. Two hundred and seventy-nine night-soil cleaners clean 11,605 private and public latrines daily.

The night-soil lorries carry the night-soil to Dattbat trenching ground and at Kolakoli compost ground. These are the only two places where night-soil is disposed of.

There are 11 mechanised vehicles for collection and disposal of night-soil and refuse, 2 lorries and 9 tractors but most of them are in a breakdown condition and efforts are being made to replace them.

Since the last few years, mass inoculation is done from April to October every year in the Municipal area as a precautionary measure against the outbreak of cholera. When epidemic actually breaks out, services of all the Inspectors and Vaccinators are utilised in mass inoculation work and extra disinfectors are employed for disinfection of wells and affected houses always to the extent and nature of the epidemic. In November, 1955 there was an outbreak of cholera epidemic. Since then no epidemic has occurred up-till-now. During 1960 in October and November a few cases of diarrhoea and vomiting took place, but intensive measures were taken and the situation was brought under control quickly.

There has been no major epidemic of small-pox in municipal area for the last 5 years. Every year from December to March, i. e. for 4 months, 19 vaccinators are appointed by Government for mass vaccination and efforts are made to vaccinate as many persons as possible. Not a single case of plague has been reported in the municipal area since the last 30 years.

In 1959 a few cases of jaundice broke out in an epidemic form. Measures were taken and the situation was brought under control within a short period.

There is one permanent midwife to attend to the delivery cases at the residence of rate-payers.

Case of birth is reported by the *Munshis* and the permanent vaccinators. Reports of deaths are registered at Barari Burning *Ghat* and at Telhakothi burning *ghat* in rainy season.

Qualified Sanitary Inspectors and Health Inspectors are authorised to take food samples from the vendors of food stuff and send them for examination to the Government Analyst at Patna. After receiving report from the Analyst, cases are filed against those whose samples are found adulterated. The figures for 1959-60 are given below:—

Total no. of sample drawn.	No. of sample sent to Government Analyst.	No. of sample found adulterated.	No. of prose- cution launched.	No. of per- sons convicted.	No. of cases pending.
536	549	102	86	45	28

The house construction plans are submitted to the municipality by the rate-payers after obtaining approval of the Town Planning Officer. The municipal staff verifies the plan on the proposed site and approval is given when the building bye-laws of the municipality are fulfilled. Four qualified Sanitary Inspectors are empowered to verify the plans from the sanitary point of view.

Before 1930 there were few stone metalled roads which were generally in a very bad condition, full of ditches and cuts due to the bullock-cart traffic which was very heavy in this town. In 1936 the municipality was superseded for two years. During the period all the then existing 10.8 miles *pucca* roads were thoroughly repaired and painted with coal tar and $\frac{1}{2}$ " sand over it. It was the first occasion that the roads were painted with road tar in this town due to which the condition of roads improved. The total mileage of roads maintained by the Board is 105 miles out of which 35 miles are metalled, 33 miles unmetalled, 4 miles roads paved with cement concrete, 3 miles of stone sets, 22 miles of black topped roads and 8 miles of other qualities.

STATEMENT SHOWING THE RECEIPTS AND EXPENDITURE OF BHAGALPUR MUNICIPALITY FROM 1961-62 TO 1960-61
IS GIVEN BELOW.

INCOME.

Year.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
1961-62.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.
1962-63.	5,12,919	5,36,831	6,38,362	5,65,600	6,36,532	7,07,924	7,18,116	6,58,435	8,00,079	8,12,870	
1. Rates and Taxes	..										
2. Realisation under special Acts.	60,672	55,268	54,036	53,031	59,699	63,916	59,952	77,802	62,831	55,957	
3. Revenue derived from municipal property and powers apart from taxation.	1,00,661	1,12,103	1,17,915	1,20,418	1,24,695	1,28,138	98,348	2,68,272	1,22,071	1,21,300	
4. Grants and contribution	2,09,887	1,80,401	2,95,957	1,34,888	2,01,800	10,73,772	1,95,198	2,77,456	4,52,217	2,88,110	
5. Miscellaneous	..	42,928	16,057	16,00,267	1,04,449	14,676	19,725	40,239	13,965	31,368	14,177
6. Extraordinary and Debt	4,31,303	5,56,654	10,61,057	6,43,610	4,76,541	12,30,549	2,44,015	4,94,177	6,67,542	4,43,111	
Total	..	13,48,370	14,57,324	21,82,596	16,21,916	15,43,943	32,24,024	13,55,868	16,90,108	21,36,821	17,35,525

Waterworks of Bhagalpur Municipality

The origin and its past development.—Supply of the piped water, for Bhagalpur town, has been in existence since 1887 and is known as the oldest waterworks under a municipality in this province. Its source of supply was tapped from river Ganga having its intake at Barari (the north-eastern end of the town) where the flow has been found perennial and its firm bank is on the highest elevation of the town.

Since then it is rendering a continuous service in spite of many difficulties.

Its original daily supply was 3,30,000 gallons for a population of about 66,000 persons with a capital cost of Rs. 3,05,000 and the cost was obtained through contributions by leading and generous Zamindar families of those days of Bihar and Bengal including a substantial Government grant. The waterworks may be described as a personal achievement of Raja Shib Chandra Banerjee (the then Vice-Chairman of the municipality).

It started with a masonry for drawing raw water from the river into a deep collecting well below the pump house where *steam* engine (James Watt) and pump, boiler, etc., were installed for both pumpings (unfiltered and filtered) and water treatment through settling tanks and 4 slow sand filters. The pumping operations were then done alternatively first collecting river water and then pumping into distribution of the town by the same pump.

There was also a service reservoir on high ground level outside waterworks compound having a capacity of over one lac gallons for balancing the town supply on distribution. The said old installation is still in existence for the jail water-supply service with certain modifications.

In 1896 further extension of water-supply was made for Champagnagar and Nathnagar at an additional cost of Rs. 35,600 and the total supply was thus enhanced to over five lac gallons per day.

But shortly afterwards serious trouble was also experienced in meeting this increased demand of water during summer months due to the prevalence of intake trouble at Barari Head Works caused by the sudden change of the course of the river Ganga and the situation thus became more acute in 1904. A small committee was then appointed by the Government to examine this problem and a recommendation was made for further increase in the raw water-supply arrangement by new installation of 3 nos. diesel sets and construction of one 24 feet collecting well just on river bank close to the aforesaid pump house and two units Patersons Mech. Filters at head works to raise the daily output to one million gallons of filtered water for the town.

From 1918 to 1922 the question of improving the intake supply was examined by many experts but nothing could be done to bring about a permanent remedy.

Sir Henry Wheeler, the then Governor of Bihar, had visited Bhagalpur in 1923 and suggested for the formation of a committee of officials to examine the problem facing the water-supply and to submit recommendation for its further improvement. In compliance with the recommendation of the said committee Mr. Plomer, the then Superintending Engineer, Public Health Engineering Department, submitted alternative schemes for obtaining a two million gallons daily supply from a number of deep tube-wells and a trial boring on southern part of Bhagalpur town was found to be fairly satisfactory.

But, in 1926, Mr. S. E. Platt who was then Superintending Engineer, on further examination of the above suggestion considered it unsafe to rely on a group of tube-wells in one area for the whole supply and suggested an alternative scheme of four groups of tube-wells in four different areas of the town. But the result of the experimental boring was again found disappointing.

In view of the impossibility of obtaining the whole of the requisite supply of one million gallons per day from tube-wells, a modified scheme was again prepared by Public Health Engineering Department, Bihar for obtaining 80 per cent of supply from river and the remaining from two fairly successful tube-wells of Mirjanhat with an estimated cost of Rs. 5,11,600 which was approved by the municipality and sanctioned by Government during the year 1930. The old diesel engine of 1908 was replaced by two electric-driven vertical spindle pumps and the same were again shifted into new dry well with certain modifications in 1938.

The work of the sanctioned reorganisation scheme was taken up from the year 1930 but speedy progress was made actually from 1936 and completed in 1938.

With the rapid expansion of the town from the year 1945 the reorganisation of waterworks as completed in 1938 was found inadequate in maintaining a fair supply to the town. A forecast estimate as short-term scheme was then drawn up by the late B.R. Bose, the then Engineer and Superintendent, Waterworks in 1948 who had actually dedicated his whole career for the improvement of water-supply in the town of Bhagalpur. This was further modified by Sri K.R. Bhide, the then Chief Engineer, Public Health Engineering Department, Bihar, and money was sanctioned by Government. The work was taken up from 1951 and was completed in 1956 and there was an addition of one million gallons of increased supply from 3 tube-wells of different areas of the town and the arrangement has fairly met the water scarcity to the western and southern-eastern parts of the town.

But the water scarcity on the central part and *bazar* areas remained still to be improved and under the direction of

Sri Bhide, a fresh water-supply scheme was again prepared at a total cost of Rs. 24,67,200 which finally received Government sanction and approval during early 1957 and the said scheme is now being carried out as supplementary re-organisation scheme for putting the Bhagalpur water supply on a sound footing.

The present distribution of water-supply.—The present water-supply for distribution to Bhagalpur town is arranged into 3 different zones.

Eastern and central zones.—For ward no. 1, part of 2, 3 and part of 4 and 5—The major source of supply to the aforesaid area is from head works Barari (having river source) and partly supplemented by a tube-well from Lajpat Park particularly for improving the supply toward Sujaganj Bazar area.

Total quantity of supply as now maintained is nearly two million gallons daily including supply for two jails for over 3 lac gallons per day.

The supply of this zone is to be further augmented with a R.C.C. water tower at Teachers' Training College compound (Central point) of one lac gallons capacity and finally to a quantity of 4 million gallons per day to town.

Western zone.—It consists of part of wards nos. 5, 6 and 7. Main supply is from 3 tube-wells of Nathnagar and Champanagar with one R.C.C. water tower of one lac gallons at Karnagarh for balancing the daily supply of the area. The water-supply to Constable Training School, T.N.B. College and other big educational areas is maintained from this zone having its total supply of nearly 5 million gallons daily.

Southern zone.—It consists of wards 8 and 9, part of wards 2 and 4. The supplying source is from two tube-wells of Ishakchak and two of the Mirjanhat area.

The total supply of this area is also nearly 5 million gallons while further improvement of water-supply of this area is under augmentation through additional tube-well (Ishakchak tube-well no. 3) which is not successful.

It is known that the central and eastern zones are under fast development due to addition of new private holdings and many new Government office buildings and residences. It has within this area two central jails, police buildings, many education buildings including one big Engineering institution besides the congested area of Sujaganj.

Reasons for supersession.—The administration of the municipality had become slack. The inspection note of the District Magistrate, Bhagalpur of September, 1953 revealed a precarious financial position of the municipality due to various commissions, omissions and irregularities. The inspection note disclosed that

most of the municipal commissioners were irregular in attendance, the rules regarding advances were followed more in breach than observance, provident fund accounts were in a muddle and collection of taxes was far from satisfactory. The inspection note suggested to the executives of the municipality to retrench the superfluous staff and reduce the scales of pay and allowances of the employees of the municipality. This suggestion was not implemented by the municipality.

The inspection notes of the junior Inspector of Local Bodies, Bihar of March, 1955 had also disclosed manifold irregularities. The financial position of the Board was found very alarming. The total assets of the municipality on 1st January 1955 were Rs. 6,39,308 against the liabilities of Rs. 6,19,064. The assets included outstanding taxes amounting to Rs. 5,72,466. It had no free cash balance. It had encroached upon Government grants and loans to the extent of Rs. 1,98,851. The total receipt of the municipality excluding Government grants and loans during 1954-55 was about Rs. 7,42,000 against the total expenditure to the tune of Rs. 8,40,000 over the establishment, petrol, electric charges bills and miscellaneous expenditure excluding the expenditure over drains, roads, etc. Thus the municipality had a net deficit of Rs. one lac during 1954-55. The inspection note of the Junior Inspector of Local Bodies further revealed that a total sum of Rs. 16,716 on account of interest of loans had not been paid by the Board ever since the receipt of the loans, large sums of money had been advanced to the employees in the face of the bad financial position of the municipality. A total sum of Rs. 52,162 out of the recurring education grants had been spent to meet other expenses of the municipality. A sum of Rs. 96,045 out of the non-recurring grant meant for P.W. development and construction of *Harijan* quarters had been encroached upon by the municipality. A total sum of Rs. 1,03,984 representing deductions and contributions on account of provident fund of employees had not been deposited by the municipality. It had further been mentioned by the Junior Inspector of Local Bodies that the percentage of collection of arrear taxes had deteriorated from year to year. The total arrears which stood on the 31st March, 1954 amounted to Rs. 4,22,683 which included a total sum of Rs. 5,379 due from the municipal commissioners themselves.

The position with regard to the arrears of the Bhagalpur Electric Supply Co., Ltd., had also drawn the attention to Government. The total unpaid debt of the municipality to the Company up to the end of the 30th April, 1955, on account of electric charges was Rs. 87,720. The Electric Supply Co. had more than once threatened the municipality to discontinue supply of the energy if their arrear bills are not paid up. The Municipality was superseded in 1955 and a Special Officer from the rank of the Bihar Civil Service was appointed to hold charge of the municipality. This arrangement is still continuing.

Colgong Municipality

Colgong is a small town on the bank of the river Ganga 19 miles east of Bhagalpur town. The Colgong Municipality was established in 1869 under Bihar and Orissa Municipal Act (Act VII of 1922). Regarding Colgong Municipality Byrne in the last Gazetteer of Bhagalpur mentioned that the population of the town was 5,860 in 1901. The Municipal Committee consisted of 11 members, one of whom was an official. All of them were natives of India and were nominated by Government as the elective system had not been introduced in this municipality. The population of the town is 9,879 according to the provisional figure of 1961 Census and its area $\frac{3}{4}$ th sq. mile.

The municipality is divided into 8 wards and there are 10 Commissioners out of whom 8 are elected and 2 nominated. The wards have been divided for collection as well as for election purposes. A few years back there were 8 wards for collection and only four wards for election. But in 1946, the plural-seated wards have been converted into single-seated wards under the Government of Bihar, Local Self-Government Department notification no. 1128-L. S.-G., dated the 18th February 1946. The number of taxpayers in 1959-60 was 1,351 representing 13.6 per cent of the population residing in the municipal area.

The main sources of income are from holding and latrine taxes. The average annual income during seven years ending 1959-60 was Rs. 85,855 and the expenditure was Rs. 83,529 as against Rs. 3,751 and Rs. 2,622 in the quinquennium ending March, 1908. The main sources of income and expenditure of this municipality are the same as in Bhagalpur Municipality.

The statement showing the receipts and expenditure from 1955-56 to 1959-60 is given below:—

Income (In rupees).

Items.	1955-56.	1956-57.	1957-58.	1958-59.	1959-60.	1960-61.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Municipal Taxes ..	19,449	20,983	18,883	26,119	25,063	22,654
2. Municipal Registration and other fees.	6,116	5,914	5,571	7,422	6,458	6,791
3. Revenue derived from municipal property & powers apart from taxes.	1,508	1,731	2,206	15,055	2,005	1,353
4. Grants and contribution	18,177	20,266	15,792	24,516	1,36,557	1,34,462
5. Miscellaneous	497	1,193	2,008	1,599	2,206	2,042
6. Extraordinary debts ..	10,464	10,805	4,555	9,428	1,26,227	1,11,629
Total ..	56,211	60,892	49,015	84,139	2,98,536	2,78,931

Expenditure (In rupees).

Items.	1955-56.	1956-57.	1957-58.	1958-59.	1959-60.	1960-61.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. General Administration.	6,242	5,074	5,712	6,835	6,910	8,563
2. Public safety ..	2,463	2,969	3,633	3,045	3,253	3,700
3. Public Health ..	14,242	14,355	16,114	17,905	2,18,362	2,30,876
4. Medical ..	1,873	460	110	395	183	..
5. Public convenience	14,816	9,123	7,875	7,905	5,525	3,360
6. Miscellaneous ..	2,950	3,538	4,280	3,912	4,833	4,501
7. Extraordinary and Debt.	5,868	9,440	4,265	16,261	9,868	16,282
8. Public Instruction	7,996	9,141	11,309	13,407	14,057	16,460
TOTAL ..	56,449	54,106	53,298	69,715	2,62,982	2,83,742

This municipality maintains eight upper primary and eleven lower primary schools and spends Rs. 14,059 annually over them.

The annual expenditure over sanitation is nearly Rs. 19,571. The Board used to maintain one Assistant Health Officer but due to provincialisation of the Colgong Dispensary, this post has been abolished and the Health Officer of Bhagalpur Municipality supervises the work of Public Health of Colgong too. At present the municipality maintains a fully equipped conservancy gang with a conservancy *Jamadar* under a qualified Health Inspector. The service of a vaccinator is also maintained for six months during the year in the rainy season. The roads maintained by the Board extend over 12 miles and are maintained at an average annual cost of Rs. 3,253. Most of these roads are metalled and black topped roads. The roads have been provided with 91 kerosene lamps. The condition of most of the roads is not too good.

As regards water-supply it may be mentioned that the Board maintains one tube-well and 3 hydrants with the help of railway branch in Colgong.

The Municipality for adequate supply of piped drinking water has undertaken a scheme during the Second Five-Year Plan at the estimated cost of Rs. 4,10,000, being half grant from Government and half interest bearing loan. The water tank having the capacity of 100,000 gallons is constructed on the Sahkumari hill, situated in the vicinity of the town. The work is nearing completion and the supply of water is in trial stage.

TOWN PLANNING.

The District has five towns viz., Bhagalpur, Colgong, Banka, Sultanganj and Naugachia. The population of these towns according

to the Census figures of 1951 and the provisional census figure of 1961 are given below :—

			1961.	1951.
Bhagalpur town	..	..	1,43,944	1,14,530
Colgong	..	..	9,879	7,515
Banka	..	..	12,514	Treated as town for the first time in 1961 Census.
Sultanganj	..	..	11,823	
Naugachhia	..	..	8,707	

From the figures of the population, as well as the importance of Bhagalpur as the headquarters of an administrative division and a University, this town has to be given a high priority in the matter of improvement and development. A Divisional Town Planning Office has been functioning at Bhagalpur since July, 1958, and the establishment of an Improvement Trust is under the consideration of the State Government. The problem of town planning in the other towns of the district has not yet become acute. However, the Municipality or the Notified Area Committee of the other towns have to control their oblique growth. Unless the incidence of town planning is kept in view from now, the problem after some decades will become acute.

The topographical and historical importance of Bhagalpur have been indicated elsewhere. In the early British period while the river provided the principal line of communication, Bhagalpur was administratively more important. Darjeeling and Tirhut at that time also came under the jurisdiction of the Commissioner of Bhagalpur Division. When Darjeeling went to Bengal, Bhagalpur Division shrank in area and the opening of railway routes put the town in the railway map of India and the importance of the water route declined. Bhagalpur is also an important centre of regional trade and commerce notably in foodgrains, cloth and other manufactured goods including silk and fruits. The recent establishment of a University (1961) indicates an expansion of educational institutions. An industrial estate is likely to be set up soon and there is bound to be more of industrialisation in the near future.

Regarding internal communication it may be mentioned that in the absence of a road-cum-railway bridge on Ganga connecting Bhagalpur, no lines of regional communication enter the town from the north of the Ganga river. A meter gauge from Bararighat section of the N.E. Railway along with a steamer ferry connects the town with the northern parts of Bhagalpur Division. Although quite archaic in condition, this *ghat* line is a very important link with North Bihar as the nearest Ganga bridge with railway facility at Mokamah is about 80 miles away. A Public Works Department road running along the bank of this river and the Eastern Railway connects the town with Patna. This road passes through the

busiest parts of Bhagalpur town, viz., the main market, railway area and Nathnagar. The traffic problem becomes particularly acute and reaches a dangerous level near the main railway station due to a very large volume of pedestrians and different types of vehicular traffic including a large flow of cycle rickshaws driven by *mufassil* villagers with very little knowledge of traffic rules and a large number of buses. It is also due to the junction of a number of market roads and the Public Works Department road from Dumka near Bhagalpur Railway Station. The road from Dumka enters the town through the business centres in the town from the south and crosses the railway lines by means of an overbridge. Due to lack of space, the overbridge road joins the main Public Works Department road through two main curved approaches. Apart from the loop line of the Eastern Railway a broad gauge railway line of the Eastern Railway links Bhagalpur with Mandar hill about forty miles to the south. About the same distance to the south-west of the Mandar hill lies Deoghar, a subdivisional town of Santhal Parganas district and one of the most important seats of *Shiva* worship in India attracting hundreds of visitors everyday. The daily bus services to Deoghar from Bhagalpur are usually congested.

Within the town itself, the grid of principal roads is formed by the Cleveland road and the main Public Works Department road, both running east and west intersected by a number of roads running north and south. The Public Works Department road to Dumka and the Mirjanhat road and Amarpur road intersected by the Ghoradih road and other minor roads constitute the links of the town area lying between the loop line and the Mandar hill line with the main town area lying between the Ganga river and the loop line.

There is huge passenger traffic, both incoming and outgoing by rail and road. Bhagalpur has got a very good position in goods traffic through railways. The goods from Bhagalpur are served to its vast hinterland and the grains from these places are transported to Bhagalpur by road traffic. The majority of vehicles engaged are motor and trucks. Bullock carts are largely engaged for the transport of goods on *kutchra* roads and in the neighbourhood of the town.

Bhagalpur is the junction of the N.E. Railway and the Eastern Railway and there is a branch railway line to Mandar hill. A very large floating population is brought to the town by railways as well. Besides (a very heavy goods traffic) Nathnagar and Bhagalpur have got railway goods sheds serving the entire town. Hence much of the traffic swing around the railway station, courts, educational institutions, hospital, markets, etc., within the town.

The railway divides the township into two parts. The road towards south takes off from the station-road at Sujaganj Chowk

and crosses the railway line by an overbridge and runs towards the south. This road connects Bhagalpur with several important places right up to Calcutta.

As regards road traffic it may be mentioned that road from west enters Bhagalpur town at Champanagar after crossing the *Jamunia Dhar* by a narrow road bridge. Then it bifurcates into two routes near Champanagar Police Outpost. The road running to east runs parallel to the railway line and passes through the busy area of Nathnagar market producing a bottleneck to the traffic. After that, it touches the T.N.B. and other colleges and finally enters the main market area near the main railway station. Beyond the station area, the road again divides into two, one turning towards south and the other running towards east. Then, it passes through the main town, touches the shopping centre, cinema halls, hospital area, court area, Police line and then finally meets the Cleveland road at Tilkamanjhi *Chowk*. From there one road runs to the Bararighat and the other runs straight. It touches the Central and Camp Jails, landing ground and M.M.P. Barracks.

Within the town there are three main parallel roads that carry the bulk of the traffic of the southern part of the town. The small width of these roads and the road towards Nathnagar does not allow a free flow of traffic, wheeled or pedestrian. There is lack of parking places and cars and bullock carts are allowed to be parked almost anywhere. There are no separate tracks for the pedestrians or the cyclists. Cycle-rickshaws are allowed to overtake one another and often two or three rows of cycle-rickshaws move parallel at the same time.

As regards Mirjanhat area it may be mentioned that it forms the main grain centre of the whole of Bhagalpur town. Big warehouses are located in this area which naturally attracts the bullock cart traffic. Mirjanhat road is very narrow and bottlenecks are frequent due to bullock carts, waiting for loading and unloading. There is no service lane for loading and unloading purpose. The bullock carts after unloading do not clear up immediately the road but wait for the next trip and the road itself creates another problem. The empty *rickshaws* move about for custom adding to the traffic particularly because there are very few *rickshaw* stands in the town.

The table below shows the average number of vehicles on the heavily trafficked roads during the peak hours :—

	Vehicles.
1. Patal Babu road (from Railway station to Towerclock) from 5-30 A.M. to 6-30 P.M.	1,002
2. Church road (from Tower clock to Kachehari) from 10-00 A.M. to 11-00 A.M.	889
3. D.N. Singh road (from Sujaganj <i>chowk</i> to Mansoorganj <i>chowk</i>) from 5-30 P.M. to 6-30 P.M.	759
4. Lower Nathnagar road (from Tatarpur <i>chowk</i> to T.N.B. College) from 5-00 P.M. to 6-00 P.M.	753
5. Dr. Rajendra Prasad road (from Kotwali to Tower clock) from 5-30 P.M. to 6-30 P.M.	658
6. M. P. Dwivedi road (from Station to Nayabazar <i>chowk</i>) from 5-30 P.M. to 6-30 P.M.	548

The area to the north of Bhagalpur Railway Station comprising of the main market, residential and recreational areas is the heaviest traffic zone. In the case of Nathnagar Station and Sujaganj crossing the majority of the traffic runs towards east to west with a left hand turning at the overbridge. At Khalifabagh *chowk* the majority of the traffic from the south and west take a turn to the east on Dr. Rajendra Prasad road to catch the Church road and Patal Babu road at the Tower clock crossing. The road intersections are unfortunately so badly designed and laid that in any Town Planning Scheme they have hardly any scope of development and may have to be replaced with proper road junctions.

In absence of a planned development, defined residential areas on the principles of neighbourhood planning do not exist in the town. More than 75 per cent of the buildings in the western and southern parts of the town come under the accepted definition of huts and sub-standard buildings. Leaving aside some local pockets like the T.N.B. College these areas also accommodate the slum areas of the town. There are slum areas in Mundichak, Ishakchak, Mirjanhat, Tatarpur and south part of Nathnagar.

Parks, open spaces, playgrounds and stands for private and public vehicles are necessary in every town. At present, Bhagalpur cannot be said to have adequate facilities of this type. There is no promenade on the bank of the Ganga. The Sandy's compound to the east of criminal courts and Lajpat Park at Mashakchak are the two open spaces with no gardens. Some of the tanks like Rani *Talao* and Shakhund tank could be renovated and their banks be utilised for small gardens. A number of old and dried up trees have been felled in Sandy's compound which is a *khas mahal* area without much of replenishment. A portion of the Sandy's compound is utilised for football fields.

Some of the educational institutions like T.N.B. College, Sundarbati Mahila College, T.N.B. Collegiate School, Zila School, Marwari *Pathshala*, C.M.S. School and the Police Training School at Nathnagar have playgrounds. There are some open spaces on Wace road and Tilkamanjhi which may be taken over for this purpose. It may also be possible to find some open space near the bank of the Ganga by acquisition.

Any town planner will have to think of this problem as well as for space which will be needed soon for the expansion of the District's Sadar Hospital, Head Post and Telegraph Office and the Court Buildings.

It will also be necessary to sponsor other fish and vegetable markets and shopping centres and reorientation of the existing ones. The present fish and vegetable market near the main railway station is extremely cramped and shockingly filthy.

The industrial areas of Bhagalpur town also need a complete re-planning because they are located at different places. All industries, cotton mills, oil mills may have to be brought under a particular place so that they would cease to be a great menace to the health and cleanliness of the town. The cotton mills, flour mills, oil mills and the engineering works situated in the heart of the town have become a great nuisance to the residents. The Town Planning Department of Bhagalpur will have to select a new industrial area at least for the siting of the new industrial units and cinema houses.

It is observed that because of uncontrolled growth of population and spatial expansion in a most haphazard manner, Bhagalpur has become too large to have any real community life. There is almost planned physical segregation of various income groups, where the residents of one house do not have any interest in the welfare of the next household. This is not desirable for a community which already suffers from caste segregation. The new planning will have to be so designed as to embody the vital concepts of neighbourhood by making it possible for face to face contacts. As regards new developed areas, a mention may be made of Nayatola and Tilkamanjhi where mostly lawyers and middle class people reside. There has been addition of new houses in Khanjarpur, Adampur and Nathnagar areas. But here also houses have been allowed to be built without much of forethought.

Another important problem which the planner will have to solve is the problem of housing for the small-scale producers who contribute a major portion of the production in the city. These industries are now being carried on in old houses, verandahs and at every available space. The small-scale producers will have to be provided with small industrial estates at the outskirts with their residences nearby. For instance, bakeries, dry cleaning units, radio repairing workshops will have to be housed in shopping centres. Motor garages and workshops, trunk manufacture, etc., should be grouped together in another part of the shopping centre. There should not be any future growth of industries without proper residential quarters of the workers within a reasonable distance.

The above suggestions for the improvement of the town in respect of any elaborate planning by the Town Planning Department will involve Government in heavy expenditure. However, the Town Planning Department has proposed some improvements for Bhagalpur town.

A Master Plan for the town of Bhagalpur is nearing completion and aims at ameliorating the effects of past haphazard development, eradicating slum areas, recreational and cultural facilities and the future development of the town in accordance with the modern town planning principles of zoning and residential neighbourhoods. The Plan divides the town in five major parts, viz., the western

area comprising of Champanagar and Nathnagar including the T.N.B. College and the University area, the central area lying to the east of it and bounded more or less by the river Ganga on the north.

The Master Plan also provides for the improvement of slum areas in Mundichak, Ishakchak, Mirjanhat, Tatarpur, Champanagar and other areas of the town. Housing schemes are also proposed to be taken up in the western and south-eastern areas of the town. Provision has also been made for general improvement and beautification of areas around the Jain temples, the Burhanath temple, the Mansadevi temple, the Shahkund mound and the Rani Talao, etc. A botanical garden is sought to be developed in conjunction with the Sundarban garden and also a zoological garden in the southern part of the town. A cattle colony would also be established and apart from the central area containing the Sadar hospital each of the four remaining areas proposed in the plan would be provided with adequate health centres. A number of open spaces including children and other parks are proposed in the plan as far as possible in 'waste lands (ditches, etc.) which would be improved and utilised for this purpose.

Apart from the above schemes another important proposal in the field of expansion of educational facilities at all levels concerns the establishment of a college for boys for general education in the eastern part of the town and similar girls' college within the university area in the western area of the town.

Other important aspects of the town deal with the alignment of the existing Bararighat railway line within the town, the provision of adequate water-supply, sewerage and provision for certain important schemes from the Central Government, such as, the establishment of All-India Radio, etc.

Development of umland both as a green belt for the supply of vegetables and the site of satellite towns will also have to be tackled. The umlands of Bhagalpur are now mainly agricultural lands or mango orchards. The location of an aerodrome to the east of the main town at a distance of three miles is a bar to urbanisation in that area but a couple of miles beyond the aerodrome lies Sabour. There are, however, useful sites where satellite towns or townships could be sited besides the development of Sabour as a much bigger town. At present Sabour is mainly a Government colony consisting of agricultural college, research institute and other ancillary sections. There is an excellent but a small botanical garden. The villages round-about Sabour will have to provide the main site for development of Sabour as a feeder town to Bhagalpur. The other areas for the development of a satellite town or an extension of Bhagalpur city will be in continuation of Nathnagar to the west of Bhagalpur. The implementation of any Master Plan

for Bhagalpur would, however, not be possible in its major aspects without the creation of any Improvement Trust to take up the development schemes in a co-ordinated manner and to control the so far oblique growth of the town in general.

DISTRICT BOARD.

It was planned by the British Government that through the working of the District Board the people will learn their first lesson of Local Self-Government. In pursuance of this policy the Bengal Local Self-Government Act was passed in 1885 and its provisions were extended to the district of Bhagalpur. The earliest history of the Board follows the same pattern as in the District Boards of the other districts in Bihar. A prominent feature of the earlier Board was the importance of the road cess which was the main source of income. Prior to the formation of the District Board under the Act there was a Road Cess Committee and it was the obligation of the District Magistrate to see to the maintenance of the roads, culverts, bridges, public sanitation, etc.

The District Board of Bhagalpur was constituted in April, 1887 under the Bengal Local Self-Government Act of 1885. The Board formerly covered the then existing four subdivisions, viz., Sadar, Banka, Madhipura and Supaul. The District Magistrate was the first Chairman of the District Board. The District Officer's care at that early stage of the institution had its good points. With the growth of ideas and experience it was felt necessary to remove unnecessary restrictions regarding taxation, the budget and the sanction of work, to bring the franchise as wide as possible and to replace the nominated Chairman by an elected non-official Chairman. There has been a healthy gradual expansion of the ideas regarding Local Self-Government.

The Board originally consisted of thirty-one members of whom six were *ex-officio* members, in addition ten were nominated by Government and fifteen were elected.

The District Magistrate used to be *ex-officio* Chairman while the Vice-Chairman used to be elected from amongst the nominated members. The franchise was at first restricted to property and other special qualifications. The institution at that stage could not be described as broad based.

In 1919, the Board got the right of electing a non-official Chairman from amongst the nominated members. The late Shri Surya Prasad was the first non-official Chairman (1919—22).

In 1922, the Bengal Local Self-Government Act was amended. In accordance with the amended Act the Board was reconstituted in 1924 with twenty-seven elected and nine nominated members.

The number of elected members from each subdivision was eight from Sadar, six from Supaul, seven from Madhipura and six from Banka subdivision. Supaul and Madhipura subdivisions have now gone to Saharsa district.

The Board elected its Chairman for the first time in 1924 from amongst the elected members. Shri Kailash Behari Lall was the first elected Chairman. In the thirties the Bhagalpur district branch of the Indian National Congress came into prominence as a political body and the Congress people started taking keen interest in district politics. A number of Congressmen contested the election and were elected to the Board and had a somewhat predominating influence for quite a long time. The executives of the Board (the Chairman and the Vice-Chairman) had tendered their resignation from their respective offices and also from their membership on 30th October 1941 in pursuance of the Congress mandate. The other twenty-seven members had also tendered their resignation. A Chairman was appointed by the Government in 1941. The Chairman remained in the office from 3rd December 1941 to 17th August 1948. The last election of the Board was held in 1948 when it was captured by Congressmen. There were no general elections after 1948 and the same Board as constituted in 1948 had continued till the Board was vested in Government in 1958. This long rule of one and the same Board had its repercussions on the administration.

It is unfortunate that the level of efficiency of the administration of the District Board slowly deteriorated. It was almost on the same pattern as in the other District Boards in Bihar. The Board did not function well and there was allegations of maladministration on various counts.

The State Government had to take note of the trends of the maladministration of the District Boards. An Ordinance No. VI of 1958 was promulgated by the Governor of Bihar. This Ordinance was passed under Clause I of Article 213 of the Constitution of India. By notification no. 8001-L.S.-G., dated the 12th September 1958, it was proclaimed that "In exercise of the powers conferred by sub-section (i) of section 2 of Bihar District Boards and Local Boards (Control and Management) Ordinance, 1958 (Bihar Ordinance no. VI of 1958), the Governor of Bihar is pleased to direct that all the members of the District Boards and Local Boards including the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of such Boards constituted under the Bihar and Orissa Local Self-Government Act of 1885 (Bengal Act III of 1885) shall vacate their respective offices with effect from the 15th September 1958." In pursuance of this Ordinance all the District Boards of the State including Bhagalpur District Board was taken over by the Government. The reasons for this step are

given in the Bihar District Boards and Local Boards (Control and Management) Bill, 1958, as follows :—

“The District Board and Local Boards constituted under the provisions of the Bihar and Orissa Local Self-Government Act of 1885 have outlived their utility under the completely changed circumstances. On attainment of independence, there have been developments on a very large scale in the various fields of activities, viz., Agriculture, Industry, Co-operatives, Gram Panchayats, etc. These developments call for a complete reorientation in the conception and constitution of District Boards and Local Boards so that these Bodies could fulfil their role effectively in the changed circumstances. This is not possible unless the existing law is carefully examined in the light of these developments and amended suitably to meet the present needs of society.

“The Balvantrai Mehta Committee on the community development and National Extension Service have made a number of recommendations specially with regard to future set up of District Boards. These recommendations require detailed examination and careful consideration before the State Government could come to a definite decision in the matter which will obviously take some considerable time. Besides, some of the sister States in India are considering legislation regarding the constitution and powers of these Local Bodies and it is necessary to examine the provisions of these laws and their actual working for sometime before we embark on a comprehensive amendment of the Bihar and Orissa Local Self-Government Act.

“It is, therefore, clear that the new set up of District Boards undoubtedly require comprehensive amendment of the Bihar and Orissa Local Self-Government Act, 1885. It was accordingly decided by the State Government to take over temporarily for three years, the control and management of District Boards and Local Boards, pending consideration of their future set up. The Bihar District Boards and Local Boards (Control and Management) Ordinance, 1958, has been promulgated to give effect to this decision.

“The Bill seeks to convert an Ordinance into an Act of the State Legislature as the ordinance will cease to have effect after six weeks from the commencement of the present session of the State Legislature.”

The District Magistrate of Bhagalpur took over the charge of the District Board on 15th September, 1958. On the 15th September, 1959 the District Magistrate handed over the Board to the Special Officer belonging to the State Civil Service, deputed by the Government to carry out the administration of the District Board on behalf of the Government.

With the assumption of the office by the Special Officer, all powers vested in the District Magistrate were transferred to the former. The District Board under the new system continues to have the same powers and functions and the Special Officer inherits them from the previous Board. He functions both under the Local Self-Government Department of the Government and the District Magistrate of Bhagalpur.

Finance.

The main source of income of the District Board is the road cess, originally payable by the landlords under the Cess Act at the rate of annas two for every rupee of the land revenue by the tenant and the equal amount by the Government. The road cess used to be paid along with the land revenue and then the road cess was transferred to the Board's funds in the Government Treasury after the deduction of the cost of realisation. After passing the Bihar Land Reforms Act, 1950, the Government stepped into the shoes of the ex-landlords and the road cess is now paid by the Government. The average annual income from the cess comes to about Rs. 4,23,468. The other sources of income of the Board are pounds and ferries. It maintains 42 pounds and 4 *ghats*. The average income from ferries in the quinquennium 1952-53 to 1958-59 was Rs. 38,375.

The annual average revenue from cart taxes (1952-53 to 1959-60) comes to Rs. 13,967 and that from Board's property and other miscellaneous items amounts to Rs. 1,88,409. The Government grants on average amount to Rs. 16,58,621 per annum. The total income of the Board in 1959-60 was Rs. 14,75,337 as against Rs. 24,43,840. Government grants under different heads particularly towards education, medical, miscellaneous and civil works have increased tremendously.

Expenditure.

The main items of expenditure are education, medical and public health, veterinary and civil works. The average annual expenditure from District Fund under these heads (on the basis of 1959-60) is Rs. 1,54,613. The expenditure under General Establishment, Provident Fund and printing comes to Rs. 57,938. Miscellaneous Expenditure amounts to Rs. 24,546 making a total overall expenditure of Rs. 82,484. The deficit is usually met from loan from deposits under other heads and debt heads.

Education.

The expenditure over education by Board has now come down because the State Government are now financing the scheme including

the normal education schemes of the Boards. Contribution for education is only Rs. 24,43,340 in 1959-60 out of the annual expenditure of Rs. 1,01,905. This branch is now administered by an officer of Government designated as District Superintendent of Education. There was a Planning Committee consisting of nine members with District Magistrate as the *ex-officio* Chairman but at present the Planning Committee has been dissolved.

At present the Board has 81 Middle Schools out of which 53 are aided Middle Schools and 28 unaided Middle Schools, 174 Upper Primary Schools and 665 Lower Primary Schools. In 1953-54 the District Education Fund was separated and was placed in the hands of the District Superintendent of Education, consequently the Board ceased to have any control over the educational matters.

Public Health.

To prevent and combat epidemics the District Board maintains a staff headed by the District Medical Officer of Health. There are also two Assistant Health Officers, one at each subdivisional headquarters, 7 Sanitary Inspectors, one for every three *thanas*, 19 Health Inspectors and 46 Vaccinators. Sanitation and other arrangements for the convenience of the pilgrims at the *mekas* are also made by the Board. This Board also maintains 105 wells to provide drinking water in the rural areas. The Board maintains 11 allopathic dispensaries, 4 *ayurvedic*, one homeopathic and four veterinary dispensaries.

Civil Works.

The District Board maintains 11 miles of metalled roads, 9 miles of *kutchha* roads and 120 miles of village roads. The details of the road may be seen in the chapter "Communications". It also maintains 19 inspection bungalows, 4 rest houses and one dak bungalow.

Incidence of taxation.

Byrne in the last Gazetteer of Bhagalpur (1911) mentions that the incidence of taxation per head of population was 1 anna 2 pies and the incidence of income per head of population for the year was 2 annas 4 pies. The incidence of taxation in 1958-59 per head of population was 0.45 nP. only and the incidence of income per head of population for the year was 0.62 nP. only while in 1959-60 the taxation was 0.41 nP. only and the income was 0.81 nP. only.

The statement below shows the income and expenditure of Board from the year 1949-50 to 1959-60.

STATEMENT OF RECEIPTS AND EXPENDITURE OF
INCOME

1949-50. 1950-51. 1951-52. 1952-53. 1953-54. 1954-55.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.
1. Provincial rate	5,08,280	5,42,001	4,41,546	3,79,522	4,09,051	3,92,955
2. Interest	14,622	13,074	10,156	6,962	11,402	6,296
3. Police	20	..	364	..	64	..
4. Education	6,77,869	6,40,067	5,49,433	6,38,881	7,17,254	..
5. Medical	59,381	46,747	63,847	87,594	1,11,203	1,12,925
6. Scientific and other minor departments.	1,130	991	3,058	597	37	2,679
7. Miscellaneous	2,66,813	2,00,071	2,46,770	4,07,333	3,78,842	1,04,549
8. Civil Works	5,11,800	10,85,243	3,56,910	33,510	84,821	88,097
9. Total income..	20,39,915	25,28,194	16,72,084	15,54,399	17,12,674	7,07,501
10. Deposits and Advances.	1,89,894	90,804	1,71,068	1,46,132	2,37,637	2,58,387
11. Loan from Government.	..	2,00,000	..	..	1,00,000	2,00,000
12. Opening balance	2,46,068	8,12,812	18,59,799	12,96,253	8,02,462	7,05,956

LOCAL SELF-GOVERNMENT

BHAGALPUR DISTRICT BOARD FROM 1949-50 TO 1960-61.

SCHEDULE.

1955-56.	1956-57.	1957-58.	1958-59 up to 15th September 1958.	1958-59 from 16th September to 31st March 1959.	1959-60.	1960-61.
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.
2,91,101	5,70,307	5,06,421	1,29,021	3,87,063	5,24,330	3,21,688
1,431	1,279	..	..	..	..	..
..	..	..	..	..	..	..
..	..	..	..	..	..	..
1,11,541	1,07,408	73,998	16,181	58,221	74,987	79,659
69	16	5,352	..	31	13	68
60,658	61,766	60,770	22,396	67,287	54,526	1,20,324
31,181	1,25,125	1,02,395	23,005	91,588	3,83,716	2,04,413
4,95,981	8,65,901	7,48,936	1,90,603	6,04,190	10,37,573	7,26,153
59,672	8,23,908	1,56,746	16,963	55,489	1,00,090	76,668
..	..	..	..	1,905	12,544	42,713
2,23,951	1,04,643	3,36,968	..	3,09,071	3,25,131	6,58,202

STATEMENT OF RECEIPTS AND EXPENDITURE OF BHAGALPUR
EXPENDITURE

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1949-50. 1950-51. 1951-52. 1952-53. 1953-54. 1954-55.							
1. General Administration.	Rs. 64,319	Rs. 67,376	Rs. 74,987	Rs. 84,637	Rs. 83,120	Rs. 84,479	
2. Police pound charges.	9	652	1,768	2,137	1,255	855	
3. Education ..	8,00,834	5,86,292	10,35,075	8,51,988	10,19,853	2,136	
4. (a) Public Health sanitation	55,635	68,571	95,300	1,07,755	1,31,683	1,39,163	
(b) Water-supply. charges.	31,702	13,642	29,728	79,025	9,067	3,056	
5. Medical and other charges.	97,111	1,03,662	1,30,866	1,17,125	1,48,042	1,50,364	
6. Veterinary charges.	20,520	19,787	49,873	21,126	22,175	17,455	
7. Provident fund	10,686	10,256	25,395	20,343	13,559	18,670	
8. Stationery and printing.	3,118	7,444	4,073	5,122	3,483	2,613	
9. Miscellaneous unfounded charges.	7,669	5,143	85,998	78,746	2,779	13,153	
10. Civil Works ..	4,35,925	6,27,562	7,67,534	7,28,688	5,53,866	2,52,417	
11. Total ..	15,27,428	15,10,387	23,00,597	20,96,592	19,88,882	6,84,361	
12. Deposits and Advances.	1,35,637	2,61,624	1,06,101	97,730	1,57,935	9,63,532	
13. Total expenditure.	16,63,065	17,72,011	24,06,698	21,94,322	21,46,817	16,47,893	
14. Closing balance	8,12,812	18,59,799	12,96,253	8,02,462	7,05,956	2,23,951	

LOCAL SELF-GOVERNMENT

465

DISTRICT BOARD FROM 1949-50 TO 1960-61. SCHEDULE.

1955-56.	1956-57.	1957-58.	1958-59 up to 15th September 1958.	1958-59 from 16th September to 31st March 1959.	1959-60.	1960-61.
----------	----------	----------	---	--	----------	----------

8	9	10	11	12	13	14
Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.
78,513	91,713	86,934	50,524	25,107	46,568	51,274
292	246	..	..	59	390	..
..	7,91,532	5,948	..	1,02,041	1,01,905	30,576
1,34,476	1,19,659	1,38,579	54,172	71,004	1,42,518	1,48,831
1,006	2,202	1,328	50	980	..	1,000
1,71,150	1,44,226	1,56,078	63,784	79,558	1,34,515	98,208
17,035	18,366	18,898	3,616	15,874	19,849	15,152
13,933	15,596	16,138	6,808	11,704	9,140	11,173
2,710	3,735	4,425	164	2,143	2,230	2,498
6,586	2,450	65,868	1,312	30,535	24,546	23,277
1,86,088	1,56,456	2,83,692	1,05,017	1,78,212	2,39,523	2,58,620
6,11,789	13,46,181	7,77,888	2,85,447	5,17,217	7,21,184	6,27,609
63,172	1,11,303	1,55,691	31,203	19,223	95,874	35,286
6,74,961	14,57,484	9,33,579	3,16,650	5,36,440	7,21,260	6,62,895
1,04,643	3,36,968	3,09,071	..	3,25,131	6,58,202	8,40,841

LOCAL BOARDS.

The Local Boards were constituted at Sadar and Banka subdivisions under the control of the District Board.

In pursuance of Government notification no. 8001-L.S.-G., dated 12th September 1958, all the District Board's executives and members ceased to function. Accordingly the Bhagalpur District Board and Local Boards at Sadar and Banka have been taken over by the District Magistrate, Bhagalpur, with effect from September, 1958 and the arrangement continues.

The Local Boards get allotment of funds from the District Board and have in their charge maintenance of village roads, upkeep of pounds, water-supply and village sanitation. The powers of the Local Boards have been much reduced due to the creation of the District Education Fund under the Superintendent of Education.

UNION COMMITTEE.

A few years back there were eight Union Committees at Banka, Sultanganj, Ratanpur, Datt-Batt, Gangamir, Tilakpur, Chickram and Naugachhia in the District Board. Three of them, namely, Banka, Sultanganj and Naugachhia have been converted into Notified Area Committee under the Municipal Act and the rest Union Committees have been abolished. With the expansion of Gram Panchayats the Union Committees were found outdated.

NOTIFIED AREA COMMITTEES.

The function and responsibilities of the Notified Area Committees are mostly the same as that of the Municipalities. These Committees have recently been constituted and do not appear to have made much headway. Their finances are poor and they have not yet been able to tackle their problems squarely so far particularly because the townships are growing very fast. The Notified Area Committee of Naugachhia was constituted in October, 1956. The Subdivisional Officer, Sadar, is the *ex-officio* Chairman of the Committee. Its area is five square miles only.

The Sultanganj Notified Area Committee was constituted in September, 1957. It has also got a committee with fourteen members and the Subdivisional Officer, Sadar, is the *ex-officio* Chairman. Its area is four square miles.

The Banka Notified Area Committee was established in September, 1957. It has got a committee with fourteen members. The Subdivisional Officer, Banka, is the *ex-officio* Chairman of the Committee. Its area is 7.5 square miles.

GRAM PANCHAYAT.

Gram Panchayat has been recognised as a vital institution for the ever-widening activities of a welfare State towards rural reconstruction.

The institution of the Local Self-Government in the shape of a village assembly, where the local problems and the needs for the sanitation, communication, judiciary, and the police were discussed and served, was an old institution of India. Village administration was once more or less entrusted to the village headmen (commonly known as *Gopa* in the Hindu period and *Muquaddam* in the Muslim period). But this rural institution fell into abeyance amidst disorder and confusion that followed in the wake of the early British rule in the country.

A highly centralised Government at the top was brought in by the British administrators. The decentralisation went up to the district level and the hands of the District Magistrate were far too strengthened. The District Magistrate with the help of the Police ran the administration and there was no vestige of rule left in the village as an active working unit save and except, the village *chaukidar* who was the link and the symbol of the highly centralised Police State at the top.

It had been realized early that this set-up of the administration was not conducive to the good of the country and should be changed. In his Presidential address at the Session of the Indian National Congress in 1899 Mr. R. C. Dutt, the great economist, scholar and administrator had extolled the Panchayat system and indicated what was needed to be introduced in our administration. Mr. R. C. Dutt had observed—

“VILLAGE UNIONS—

I will begin with villages—because, as I have already said, in India the villager represents the nation. In village administration there is no touch between the rulers and the people, the only link between the administrators and the people in civil administration is the hated link of the Police. It is a misfortune and an administrative mistake that our District Officers should have so little direct touch with the villagers and their natural leaders and should work so entirely through the Police. If there is distress in the land the Police makes enquiries, if there is cholera epidemic in the land the Police distributes cholera pills; if a village tank has given way or the village water-supply dried up the Police reports and organises help; if a tree has been blown down and obstructs a village path (I have seen instances of this myself), the villagers

are powerless to help themselves until the Police comes and removes the obstruction. It seems to be a mockery that the very country which was the first to organise village communities, village Panchayats, and village Self-Government, and cherished these institutions for 3,000 years, should be rendered so absolutely helpless and should be ruled through the undesirable agency of the Police. The mistake has been discovered and Village Unions have been formed or are in the course of formation in most provinces in India. Make these Village Unions real centres of village administration in so far as is consistent with good Government. Parcel out each subdivision into twenty or thirty Village Unions, entrust the Union Committees with the charge of village roads, village tanks, village drainage, village education, and village hospitals, and send over to them all petty civil and criminal cases, not for judicial disposal, but for amicable settlement. A great deal of expensive litigation and bad feeling in villages can thus be stopped, a great deal of useful work can thus be done, and what is more, the natural leaders of the village population will thus come in touch with the Subdivisional and District Administrators, and will form the agents of village administration in so far as they are fit to take that position. An unsympathetic system of rule through the Police will thus be replaced by a rule with the co-operation of the people themselves."

But the words of the seasoned administrators like late Mr. R.C. Dutt, I.C.S., were held to be a vision and the British bureaucracy took a long time to realise the necessity of decentralisation of the administrative machinery.

In 1920, the Village Administrative Act was passed to revive the old institution of the village assembly but it had not made much headway.

Gram Panchayats are very old institutions in this country and there was a time when disputes regarding land, domestic life and even complicated civil and criminal disputes used to be referred to the Gram Panchayats. The Panchayat meant a sort of committee of five or more of the village elders who would sit in an open place and both the parties would give their versions before the *Panch* and the *Panch* would take necessary evidence and come to a quick decision. With the spread of the litigation and the availability of the courts the villagers took their more important criminal and civil disputes to the courts and the *Panches* were pushed to the position of occasionally meeting for domestic or social differences.

Hence with the advent of the independence in 1947, however, a very important step was taken to extend the benefits of the Local Self-Government right to the village under the Bihar Panchayat Raj Act, 1947. The Act was put into operation in Bhagalpur from 1949. Under this Act Village Panchayats were established for a village or a group of villages. Generally a Panchayat is formed in an area which has a total population of 2,000 persons. Normally the members of villages falling within the radius of two miles are grouped together under one Panchayat.

While the Panchayats today need little introduction their concepts have largely changed from what they were when the Gram Panchayat Raj Scheme was launched in 1947. To start with, it was imagined that a Village Panchayat will look to the needs of a village and amicably settle petty disputes with the help of a small band of honorary selfless workers devoting a part of their time to the society for such an objective.

Section 77 of the Bihar Panchayat Raj Act, 1947, provides that for every Gram Panchayat the Government may appoint a *Gram Sewak* who shall be in charge of the office of the Gram Panchayat and be responsible for drawing out the plans and schemes and the work to be executed. For this the *Gram Sewaks* get a short training for a period of six months.

Section 26 of the Bihar Panchayat Raj Act provides for the organisation of the Village Volunteer Forces in each village under the command of the Chief Officer. A number of Chief Officers have been trained in the different training centres. The training period is of three months only. All able-bodied males of the village between the age-group of 18 to 30 become the members of the forces. In any emergency the Village Volunteer Forces are to protect the villagers from dacoits, fire, epidemics, etc. Till 1960, 833 members of the force have been trained.

The Gram Panchayat is headed by a *Mukhiya* who is assisted by an executive committee consisting of 13 to 15 members elected on the basis of adult franchise. The executive committee controls the annual budget and acts as a check on the *Mukhiya*. The *Mukhiya's* post has become a coveted one in the village and it seldom goes uncontested.

There is a panel of 15 *panches* or members which has a head known as the *Sarpanch*. The chief job of the *Sarpanch* is to preside over the Gram *Cutchery* meetings and to try cases with the help of two *panches* who are selected by parties. Thus the *Sarpanch* is the judiciary head and *Mukhiya* executive head of the Gram Panchayat.

The statement below shows the number of Gram Panchayats scattered all through the district in 1959-60:—

1. Villages covered	..	..	..	..	1,123
2. Population covered	..	..	..	..	7,46,789
3. Number of unofficial Panchayat formed	..	..	..	..	Nil
4. Number of Panchayats recommended for notification..	..	..	..	..	2
5. Number of Notified Gram Panchayats	..	..	..	..	373

FINANCIAL RESOURCES.

The Gram Panchayats have been empowered to raise taxes such as property tax and professional tax. The professional tax is levied on any kind of business conducted within the jurisdiction of the Gram Panchayat. There is compulsory labour-tax payable by all able-bodied males between the age-group of 18—50. The minimum tax payable by every tax-payer is 12 units for 48 hours of manual labour per annum. Cash payment in lieu of labour-tax is permissible in case of invalids or for those who are incapable for manual labour. The proceeds of the tax are mainly utilised for the village uplift.

The other source of income of the Gram Panchayat is the grant sanctioned by the Government. An initial grant of Rs. 50 to each Gram Panchayat has been sanctioned by the Government. A sum of Rs. 18,650 has been distributed to 373 Gram Panchayats till 1959-60. Forty-nine Gram Panchayats have been empowered to collect rent on commission basis.

SANITATION AND PUBLIC HEALTH.

Sanitation, Public Health and First-aid are the obligatory duties of Gram Panchayats. In Bhagalpur, there has been little work done by the Panchayats in this direction although it is reported that cleaning of village paths, lanes and public places has been made regular feature once a week on every Sunday. About 1,008 bore-holes, 2,399 trenches and other latrines as well as 2,694 soakage pits are reported to have been constructed up to 1959-60. Besides disinfection of 2,14,215 wells, 2,816 new surface wells were reported to have been sunk and 241 old surface wells repaired in 1959-60. About 2,76,023 persons were vaccinated. These vaccinations and inoculations are done by *Gram Sewaks* of the respective localities. Blind Relief Camps out of money sanctioned by Gram Panchayat Department, Bihar, have been held in 1959-60, two at Sadar subdivision and seven at Banka subdivision. Almost 275 patients suffering from various diseases were treated in that year.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT WORK.

The Gram Panchayats have been engaged in constructing and repairing embankments and *bundhs*, sinking wells and the

construction and repair of the village roads. A number of such schemes have been executed by the Gram Panchayats. Half of the expenses in all such matters is met by the State Government.

Year.			Number of works sanctioned and executed.	Total estimated cost in rupees including 50 per cent contributed by Panchayats.	Government grant sanctioned in rupees.
1954-55	..	..	77	1,66,703	83,351
1955-56	..	..	51	1,23,530	61,775
1956-57	..	..	14	96,830	48,415
1957-58	..	..	60	4,881.62	22,500
1958-59	..	..	63	8,055	81,281
1959-60	..	..	47	27,817.37	27,077.66
1960-61	..	..	53	..	29,104.80

EDUCATION.

Night schools have been organised in villages by the Panchayats to drive out mass illiteracy. The Gram Panchayats have formed adult education centres where mostly old people come and attend classes. A teacher in each centre has been appointed to teach these villagers in the evenings. Books of general knowledge, agriculture, sanitation and village improvement have been provided in some libraries. The details showing the number of persons benefited, night schools opened and number of schools of which management have been transferred to the Panchayats have been shown in the statement below:—

Year.	Adult education centres.	Education centre (for children).	No. of per- sons bene- fited.	Basic schools.	Other schools H.E./M.E./ U.P./L.P.	No. of libraries run by Gram Panchayats.	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
1954-55	..	72	Nil	1,883	N.A.	164	52
1955-56	..	274	Nil	17,409	25	159	170
1956-57	..	337	Nil	15,367	31	315	176
1957-58	..	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.
1958-59	..	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.
1959-60	..	175	N.A.	7,934	19	97	63

IMPROVEMENT OF COMMUNICATION.

For improvement of village life, communication plays a vital role. In the past, the villages were isolated and village people were insular in outlook due to lack of intercourse with urban life. Gram Panchayats have addressed themselves to the problem by constructing 83 miles of new roads, and repairing 73.7 miles of old roads in 1959-60. Besides, 29 new bridges and culverts were constructed and 21 old bridges and culverts were repaired.

The construction of new roads and repair of old roads were done mainly through voluntary and taxed labour. The Panchayats in Bhagalpur continued to levy labour-tax and the people gave it mostly by offering manual labour for local development works like construction and repair of roads in their villages. Voluntary labour (*Shramdan*) has also been offered in some cases.

ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE.

Administration of justice is an assignment of the *Gram Cutchery*. The first duty of the Gram Panchayat is to bring about a compromise in a case. Failing, the *Gram Cutchery* takes up the trial and is expected to be a forum for dispensing justice in a cheap, quick and efficient manner. But the *Gram Cutcheries* do not appear to have made much headway in this respect and have yet to qualify themselves for dignity and integrity.

The following statement shows the number of cases tried by Panchayats:—

CRIMINAL.

Year.	Cases filed.	Cases pending from the previous year.	Total.	Compromised.	Acquitted.	Convicted.	Dismissed.	Pending.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1956-57	4,335	824	5,159	2,825	187	275	883	989
1957-58	3,567	614	4,181	1,974	393	252	780	782
1958-59	2,193	398	2,591	1,194	124	153	484	636
1959-60	2,600	489	3,089	1,570	81	151	667	620
1960-61	2,053	..	2,053	1,234	..	158	292	369

CIVIL.

Year.	Filed.	Compromised.	Decree.	Dismissed.	Pending.	
1	2	3	4	5	6.	
1956-57	..	1,069	393	307	159	210
1957-58	..	898	269	314	102	213
1958-59	..	551	164	209	48	130
1959-60	..	621	229	165	57	170
1960-61	..	339	94	70	27	148

The institution of Gram Panchayat is still in an early stage. When the larger institution of the District Board has recently failed and has to be taken over by the Government, the task of the Gram Panchayat is certainly difficult. But the human material available in smaller units under proper guidance is expected to yield better results. One essential feature is that the Gram Panchayats are to work in smaller units, among their own people and any pitfalls will be more quickly detected and rectified. A fundamental idea of vesting the Gram Panchayats with the judicial powers was that the parties and their witnesses would have a greater urge to come out with the truth, as they were aware that the villagers are in the know of the matter and any incorrect deposition would bring a certain amount of social disapproval. That is why, the Gram Panchayat Courts have better facilities to bring about amicable settlements. They are expected to have a more intense feeling to see that their own money is well spent for their own purposes. The system of paying tax in the shape of voluntary labour is nothing new as decades before through voluntary labour, institutions like grain *golas*, schools and libraries had been built. Unfortunately the urge to render voluntary labour is not so keen now.

An investigation indicates that the Gram Panchayats in many cases are the sole cause of creating faction in the village. Though as a matter of policy and principle the introduction of adult franchise and establishment of Panchayats, Village Councils, Rural Courts add new issues and change the emphasis of older ones but in practice it is not totally so. The kinship rivalries for familiar supremacy and status that take the form of factions along caste lines have been tearing the rural communities. A disturbing feature of the alliance is that on the one hand the villagers tend to promote caste tension and casteism and on the other enable the upper Hindu castes to dominate over the intermediate and lower castes, in spite of their numerical weakness and irrespective of the land reforms, establishment of Village Councils and adult suffrage. Even when apparently the lower Hindu castes control the Village Councils and the Village Courts the upper Hindu castes still want to dominate.

However, these features may be the teething troubles of a great institution. The experiment has just started and there must be such pulls at the first phase due to age-long bad legacy and tradition. The future of the Gram Panchayats should not be dispaired of because of these pulls which are bound to go away.