

CHAPTER III

PEOPLE

GROWTH OF POPULATION

"Owing to the frequent and extensive changes which have taken place in the district boundary prior to 1874 it is impossible to ascertain what was the population before that date of the area which is now included in the district.

"Dr. Buchanan Hamilton in 1811 estimated the population per square mile of thana Painti, corresponding to the present thana Colgong, to be 148, and that of Lokmanpur, corresponding to Bihpur, to be 204 to the square mile.

"Either this was an under-estimate or the population of these thanas must have doubled between 1811 and 1872 when the first regular Census was effected. Dr. Buchanan Hamilton estimated the density of population in the Sadar thana (*Kotwali*) as 1,076 per square mile. This, if correct, shows that the population has remained nearly stationary since 1811, but it is improbable that this is the case.

"In 1853 the Revenue Surveyor, Mr. Pemberton, made an estimate of the population of the four parganas which then constituted North Bhagalpur, viz., Naredigar, Malhanigopal, Nisankhpur, Kurha and Chhai. He estimated the number of houses in these parganas covering an area of 1,699 square miles at 90,460. Allowing five persons to each house this brought the total population to 452,300 or 266 per square mile. As at that time pargana Chhai was at least as thickly populated as at present and possibly more, so this was certainly an under-estimate."*

Regular decennial census operations were *sponsored in 1872. Before that, however, there were some Experimental Census Operations which were neither comprehensive nor very accurate. Nevertheless, they indicate certain trends. In 1869 Experimental Census Operations were undertaken in the Lower Provinces of Bengal and the report on the Experimental Census Operations of 1869 was written by H. Beverley and published in 1870 from Calcutta.

The report of the Commissioner, portions of which have been embodied in the report, shows that in the Sadar Subdivision of

**Final Report on the Survey and Settlement Operations in Bhagalpur District, 1902—1910; P. 8.*

Bhagalpur the superintendence of the work was entrusted to the Excise Deputy Collector, Babu Purna Chandra Neogee. The enumeration of Bhagalpur and Colgong was conducted by their respective Municipalities and supervised by the Supervisor specially appointed under the Government sanction. It was mentioned in the report "in the Banka Subdivision, the census of Banka and four other villages was completed by the Supervisor and the Deputy Collector's Amlah, aided by the Zamindari Patwaris and Chaukidars, under the personal supervision of the Deputy Collector". It was further mentioned that "proceedings appear to have been conducted in much the same method as elsewhere, except that in this Division a paid Supervisor was attached to each subdivision. The people are reported to have regarded the operations with suspicion, and the District Officers were only partially successful in their endeavours to disabuse the public mind of an uneasy fear of increased taxation".

As mentioned, the Census Operations were not comprehensive and were confined to selected tracts. It will be, however, of interest to note that in the statistics according to caste and nationality were mentioned Hindus, Muhammadans, Christians, Santhals, Dhangars and some other communities who had not returned any one. Among Hindus, the sections were Brahmins, Khettri, Baidya, Kayastha, Satgop, Tanti, Napit, Mali, Mayra, Barui, Kumar, Kamhar, Banik and other castes. Christians were subdivided into Europeans, Eurasians and Natives. Bhagalpur Municipality returned the grand total of 30,154 distributed as follows :—

Brahmins (1,011), Khettri (431), Kayastha (761), Tanti (741), Napit (260), Teli (895), Mali (149), Mayra (194), Kamhar (256), Kamar (53), Banik (292), other castes (9,762). Total Hindus 14,805, Muhammadans (5,203), European Christians (31), Eurasian Christians (14), Native Christians (61), Santhals (31), Dhangars (5), Jew (4). In 1869, the total population of Sabour which is now a town was 511, Jagdishpur, a very large village now near Bhagalpur, had the population of 230. Baunsi, a township now in Banka Subdivision, had 441 population. Banka which is the Subdivisional headquarters had the population of 414 while the Colgong Municipality had 1,567 souls.

In the statement of ages of the male population we find that the percentage of adults able to read in Bhagalpur Municipality was 20.58, at Banka 16.42, at Colgong Municipality 16.54, at Baunsi 18.14, at Sabour 7.63 and at Jagdishpur 21.3.

The census operations from 1872 to 1901 give the population of the district :—

Years.				Total population.	Percentage of increase.
1872	..	..	..	1,824,738	..
1881	..	..	..	1,966,158	7.7
1891	..	..	..	2,032,696	3.3
1901	..	..	..	2,088,953	2.8

The census of 1872 recorded a total population of 1,824,738. During the next decade there was an increase of 7.7 per cent and it recorded a total population of 1,966,158 in 1881. There was a further increase of 3.3 per cent in the next decade and the total population in 1891 was 2,032,696. The marked decline in the rate of increase between 1881 and 1891 as compared with that in the period between 1872 to 1881 must be attributed largely to the less accurate nature of the enumeration made in 1872. The increase for 1891 to 1901 appears due to natural growth.

It has to be mentioned here that before the creation of Saharsa district, Bhagalpur included the subdivisions of Supaul, Madhipura, Sadar and Banka. As stated above the figures of growth of population from 1872 to 1901 include the entire previous Bhagalpur district. The subdivisions of Madhipura and Supaul were taken out and Saharsa was created as a separate district in 1954 with an area of 2,143 square miles and a total population of 1,308,198. The headquarters of Saharsa district was located at Saharsa which had to be developed. At first there was an Additional District Magistrate at Saharsa with a nominal subordination to the District Magistrate of Bhagalpur for revenue matters. Later the status was changed into that of a District Magistrate. Now Bhagalpur includes only two subdivisions, i. e., Bhagalpur Sadar and Banka. For the convenience of the readers, the re-adjusted figures of the growth of population of Bhagalpur district from 1901 to 1961 are given below in the following statement taken from page 3 of District Census Handbook of Bhagalpur, 1951, published in 1956.

Census year.	Persons.	Variation.	Net variation, 1901—1951.	Males.	Variation.	Females.	Variation.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1901	1,018,743	..	..	495,198	..	523,545	..
1911	1,036,037	+17,294	..	507,911	+12,713	528,126	+4,581
1921	966,645	-69,392	..	476,559	-31,352	490,086	-38,040
1931	1,113,964	+147,319	..	560,505	+83,946	553,459	+63,373
1941	1,273,061	+159,097	..	646,986	+86,481	626,075	+72,616
1951	1,429,069	+156,008	+410,326	728,681	+81,695	700,388	+74,313
1961	1,715,128	+286,059	..	878,166	+149,485	836,962	+136,574

CENSUS OF 1901

Regarding the statistics of the growth of population in 1901, the last District Gazetteer of Bhagalpur (1911) mentions as follows:—

“The increase in population between 1891 and 1901 was far from being uniform throughout the district the increase was greatest in the Sadar subdivision, in which it amounted to 6 per cent. The greater part of this increase was in Bhagalpur and Colgong thanas, and it has been attributed to increased commercial activity in the two municipalities, which attracted more inhabitants into them.” “In Banka subdivision the increase was 2.4 per cent.....”

Regarding the growth of population between 1891—1901 the census of India (Report), 1951 mentions as follows:—

“The next decade (1891—1900) was more satisfactory. Scarcity prevailed in the years 1891 and 1896-97, but it did not in either year amount to famine. There was an excessive prevalence of fever and also a severe outbreak of cholera in 1894, but otherwise the decade was fairly healthy. The 1901 census recorded an increase of 4.4 per cent.”

CENSUS OF 1911

Regarding the growth of population shown by the census in 1911, L. S. S.O' Malley observes in the Census Report of 1911 as follows:—

“Bhagalpur is divided in two by the Ganges, and conditions differ considerably in the north and south. The north consists of alluvium as far as the limits of the Kosi floods, after which sandy flats appear. Till 40 years ago the country in the extreme north was covered with jungle or sal forest, which has now been cleared away. The land is mainly under rice cultivation and, being traversed by a number of rivers with numerous cross-channels, needs little irrigation. The highest density (641 to the square mile) is found in the Bhagalpur subdivision, which extends along both sides of the Ganges, and has a rich alluvial soil annually renewed by the fertilizing overflow of that river. Further south the surface gradually rises till a hilly tract is reached, in which artificial irrigation is necessary for the cultivation of rice. This broken country corresponds to the Banka subdivision in which there are only 370 persons to the square mile.

According to the readjusted figure of the growth of population in 1911, there was a total population of 1,036,037 which had increased by 17,294. The decade, 1901—1911 was prosperous and in spite of natural calamities, the natural increase was marked by 1.70 per cent. The Banka subdivision remained stationary. The Sadar subdivision in the centre had a small increase.

CENSUS OF 1921

Regarding the census of 1921, P. C. Tallents mentions in Census Report, as follows:—

“By 1911 the rate of increase had declined still further to 2.4 per cent. A large increase in Bihpur thana, also ascribed to extension of cultivation, saved the Sadar subdivision from decline. Banka in the south was stationary.

“The last decade started badly. In 1911 there was abundant rain and the crops were good but outbreaks of cholera and fever raised the death-rate. The following two years were fairly healthy and so was 1914, when in spite of floods in the Kosi and Ganges the number of deaths from fever was unusually low.....; cholera indeed continued to take heavy toll in this district till the year 1919. The rains of 1916 and 1917 had been good and so had the crops. In 1918 the rains continued good down till the middle of September when there was a complete cessation. In the south of the district the rice crop was a failure and famine had to be declared in parts from June to December in the following year. Prices rose in sympathy and meanwhile the distress of the people was increased by the influenza epidemic which raised the death-rate of 1918 to 52.2 per mille, against an average of 32.9 for the preceding five years, and that of 1919 to 41.3; meanwhile the birth-rate of 1919 fell to 28.9 per mille or nearly 10 per mille less than the average of the previous five years. The excess of reported deaths over births was 36,000 in 1918 and 26,000 in 1919. It was not till 1920 that the balance between births and deaths readjusted itself in favour of the former. During these ten years there were in all 805,000 births and 728,000 deaths, the net natural increase recorded being 77,000 against 103,000 in the previous decade.”

The re-adjusted figures of population of 1921 show a fall of 69,392 or 6.70 per cent and record a total population of 966,645 persons.

CENSUS OF 1931

In the Census report of 1931 W.G. Lacey had mentioned that the average density per square mile of the population was 529. According to the re-adjusted figure, the total population of the district was 1,113,964 and it had increased by 147,319 or 15.24 per cent as compared with figures in 1921.

Regarding the incidence of population W.G. Lacey further mentions in Census Report of 1931, as follows:—

“The last decade opened well for Bhagalpur district. The rice crop of 1921 was below the average in the Sadar and Banka subdivisions, but good harvests were obtained in the north of the district and the year was quite a healthy one. The birth-rate (38.3 per mille) was higher than in any subsequent year of the decade. In 1927 the Kosi floods were more persistent and widespread than usual, and the crops in the north of the district (particularly in the Supaul subdivision) suffered in consequence*, while the Banka subdivision in the south was subjected to a similar experience in 1929. In 1924 and 1928 the rainfall was either inadequate or badly distributed in the south of the district, with the result that the harvests in those years were disappointing. Otherwise climatic conditions were generally favourable throughout the decade. There was a marked improvement in the general standard of public health. Malaria and bowel complaints are very prevalent in the Kosi-affected localities, and the normal incidence of deaths from cholera is high in this district. During the decade under review there was no severe outbreak of cholera until 1928, but in the last three years this disease accounted for altogether 25,000 deaths. The only occasion on which small-pox broke out with any severity was in 1927, when the number of deaths was not much short of 3,000. It is note worthy that plague did not make its appearance at all in Bhagalpur district during this period. The years during which the population increased most rapidly were 1925 to 1927, in each of which the rate of survival was more than 15 per mille. This rate fell to its lowest point (4 per mille) during the last year of the decade—not so much because of the unhealthiness of that year as because the number of births was much less than on any previous occasion..... In South Bhagalpur the Mandar Hill branch railway line, which had been closed during the Great War, was re-opened in the year 1924.

*The flood of Kosi in 1927 had affected mainly those areas which now fall in the separate district of Saharsa (P. C. R. Co.).

"The net rate of increase in Bhagalpur's population during the last decade was 9.88. The distribution of this substantial surplus between the subdivisions and revenue thanas of the district was very unequal. Generally speaking, it was those localities which had suffered most heavily during the previous ten years that now recorded the most rapid growth. Thus, in the extreme south of the district, Banka subdivision converted a loss of 10.30 into a gain of 20.38. The advent of a period of comparative prosperity after some years of disaster is wont to cause the pendulum to swing in this abrupt way. Moreover, it has already been seen that many persons had migrated from this subdivision at about the time when the 1921 census was taken, and the majority of these doubtless returned to their homes later on. In any case it was high time that this subdivision, where the pressure on the soil is not over-great, began to bestir itself. During the forty years immediately preceding the census of 1921 it had not only failed to make any progress, but its population was less by about 28,000 than it had been at the beginning. The next largest increase is shown by the Sadar Subdivision. Here also the rate of progress had previously been very slow, the net increase between 1881 to 1921 being only about 28,500 or little more than 5 per cent. The surplus in this subdivision is most marked in the headquarters thana, and this is largely attributable to the rapid growth of Bhagalpur City. North of the river, where the population had been multiplying much more quickly in previous decades, the progress recorded on this occasion is not nearly so marked as in the south. Here we find, for the first time, two revenue thanas in which the population has actually fallen away in the last ten years.

"In the case of Pratapganj the loss is substantial (7.81 per cent), but it may be attributed almost entirely to the action of the Kosi river.....The actual loss incurred by Kishanganj thana is slight, being only 0.92 per cent. Here again the Kosi is primarily responsibleIt will be observed that in the previous decade Kishanganj was the only thana to record a substantial increase, due mainly to migration from the neighbouring thana of Madhipura. It is probable that some of these immigrants have since been scared away by signs of the return of the river to its old channels. Bangaon is for the present the only thana in North Bhagalpur which is more or less secure against inundation from the Kosi, and this is why the rate of increase in Bangaon is higher than anywhere else."*

*Pratapganj, Madhipura, etc., now fall within the newly created district of Saharsa (P. C. R. C.).

The re-adjusted figures of 1931 census record a total population of 1,113,964 show an increase by 147,319 or 15.24 per cent over the 1921 total.

CENSUS OF 1941

Regarding the census of 1941, the Census Report of India, 1951 (Volume V., P. 39), mentions that "In the 1931—40 decade, public health remained satisfactory throughout, though there were mild epidemics of cholera in 1931, 1934 and 1935. Crops were satisfactory or better than average practically every year except in 1934 and 1939 when they were damaged in some areas by floods. The 1941 census disclosed an increase of 159,097 of 14.3 per cent over the 1931 total." The census operations were considerably cut down due to the Second World War and the detailed report of 1941 census was not published.

CENSUS OF 1951

The Census Report of India, 1951 (Vol. V., P. 39), mentions that "Public health continued to be satisfactory during the last decade. Harvests were generally normal in all years except 1950 when, as in other districts, all principal crops were seriously deficient. The population has increased by 156,008 or 12.3 per cent".

CENSUS OF 1961

From the provisional statistics of the 1961 census it appears that there has been a remarkable increase in the growth of population. The decade 1951—61 was comparatively free from epidemics. It appears that increase in population was more due to natural increase and because there has been a great expansion of development activities throughout the district. Trade and Commerce have increased and there has been some development of industries. The overall increase in 1961 was 20.2 per cent from the previous census. The total population of the district according to 1961 census is 1,715,128 or the population has increased by 286,059 souls.

POPULATION ACCORDING TO SUBDIVISIONS AND REVENUE THANAS

The district has two subdivisions, viz., Sadar and Banka. The Sadar subdivision has four revenue thanas while the Banka subdivision has three, each revenue thana has been divided into several Police-stations. The following table will show the sub-

division-wise and revenue thana-wise population of 1951 and 1961 censuses:—

POPULATION.*						
Subdivision Revenue Thana.	1951.			1961.		
	Persons.	Males.	Females.	Persons.	Males.	Females.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
SADAR SUBDIVISION	841,309	432,846	408,463	1,026,352	531,126	495,226
Sultanganj revenue thana	122,557	61,419	61,138	..	..	..
Bhagalpur revenue thana	275,351	144,015	131,336	..	..	..
Colgong revenue thana	287,883	146,897	140,986	..	..	..
Bihpur revenue thana	155,518	80,515	75,003	..	..	..
BANKA SUBDIVISION	587,760	295,835	291,925	688,776	347,040	341,736
Amarpur revenue thana	198,789	100,741	98,048	..	..	..
Katoria revenue thana	163,374	81,420	81,954	..	..	..
Banka revenue thana ..	225,597	113,674	111,923	..	..	..

*(District Census Handbook, Bhagalpur, 1951, P. 108).

EMIGRATION AND IMMIGRATION

Regarding the incidence of emigration and immigration, the matter has been dealt in text on 'Economic Trends'.

URBAN AND RURAL AREAS

Distribution between rural and urban areas has been dealt in 'Economic Trends' chapter.

DENSITY OF POPULATION

Regarding the density of population, the last District Gazetteer of Bhagalpur, 1911, by J. Byrne, mentions as follows:—

"The pressure of the population on the soil has gone on increasing steadily since 1872. In that year there were 432 persons per square mile in the district. In 1881 there were 465 persons. In 1891, there were 481 and in 1901,

there were 494. This figure is considerably below that for the adjacent districts of Monghyr and Darbhanga with 527 and 873 persons per square mile, respectively; but it is considerably in excess of Purnea, which has only 375 per square mile."

The density of population from 1911 to 1941 has been mentioned earlier.

The above description includes both Bhagalpur and Saharsa districts. But as already mentioned Saharsa is now a separate district. For the convenience of the readers the description given below shows the density of population only for Bhagalpur district according to the census of 1951.

The Census of India, 1951, Volume V, Bihar, mentions that Bhagalpur which includes Bihpur revenue thana, a fertile and densely populated strip of 208 square miles lying north of the Ganga, has an average density of 748 persons per square mile. In the Sadar subdivision, the average density is as high as 906 persons per square mile and it rises to 1,610 in the Bhagalpur revenue thana (171 square miles). The average density of the Banka subdivision which is hilly comes to 492 only and in some police-stations, such as Katoria it falls to 240. According to the census of 1961 (provisional figures), Bhagalpur district has an area of 2,179 square miles and the density of population is 787 per square mile.

DISPLACED PERSONS

The partition of the country in 1947, constrained the Hindus of East Pakistan and West Pakistan to leave their hearth and home and come to all the States of India including the State of Bihar. The influx of displaced persons was very rapid which was caused due to communal tension kept aflame in Eastern and Western Pakistan. The magnitude of the problem which the Government of India had to bear was unprecedented in human history. The Government of India tried to solve this unprecedented problem and made a request to all the States of the Indian Union to share the responsibility to rehabilitate the displaced persons. Like other districts, displaced persons both from East and West Pakistan started coming to Bhagalpur district even just before the partition owing to the communal riots in 1946-47.

The total number of displaced persons in this district according to the Census of 1951 was 677 from West Pakistan and 544 from East Pakistan. This figure seems an under-estimate.

In 1950 a refugee camp was established at Bhagalpur in different Dharmashalas for the displaced persons from East Pakistan which, however, has long been wound up.

Further, in 1953-54, eighty tenements were constructed on evacuee land at Khanjarpur (a mahalla in Bhagalpur town) for the purpose of rehabilitating the displaced persons of Bhagalpur town who were living in rented houses. These displaced persons did not occupy the said eighty tenements. So the tenements were utilised for accommodating displaced persons of Permanent Liability Category who number 130 at present. These 130 persons came from various camps in the State, i.e., Ranchi, Gaya, Hathwa, etc.

In the same financial year 1953-54, 27 houses were constructed at Colgong for 27 displaced families in order to rehabilitate them. They were sent to occupy these tenements. Twenty-two families have already deserted the camp at Colgong.

Five families of these 27 are still there. A portion of these tenements is being utilised for accommodating 20 persons of Permanent Liability Category since 1954. Five families more have been brought from Bettiah Refugee Camp for rehabilitation in the year 1959.

Again in November, 1959, one hundred families which included 94 fishermen families and 6 other small trader families of East Pakistan, were sent from Bettiah Refugee Camp for rehabilitation at Colgong. These fishermen were particularly rehabilitated at Colgong by the side of the river Ganga so that they would get more facility in following their old profession of fishery. These 100 families consisted of 438 members. Out of these 100 families, 36 families have already deserted the camp in the year 1960-61, without informing the authorities.

In the month of November, 1959 a Refugee Colony was established at Pirpainty. Government had sent 59 families of East Pakistan to be rehabilitated at this camp from Bettiah Camp. These 59 families consisted of 289 members. Out of these 59, one family has already deserted the camp without informing the authorities and the rest of them are still there.

Another Refugee Colony was started at Barari a part of Bhagalpur town in January, 1960. Government again sent 125 families of East Pakistan from Bettiah Relief Camp. Later on 19 families were again sent in the same year for rehabilitation. These families consist of 122 fishermen. The rest are grocer and other small trader families. The total number of persons covered by these 144 families comes to 558 persons.

Mention has to be made about the loans and discretionary grants which were given to the displaced persons.

27 families of West Pakistan and 163 families of East Pakistan were given necessary advances of loans of Rs. 26,183 and Rs. 1,12,189 respectively upto 1958-59. Again 5 families who came to Colgong colony in April, 1959 were given a loan of Rs. 7,000, in 1959-60 financial year.

The table given below shows the amount of loan advanced to the families of Barari, Pirpainty and Colgong in the two financial years, i.e., 1959-60 and 1960-61:—

Families.	Years—	
	1959-60.	1960-61.
	Rs.	Rs.
Barari families	51,000.00	1,26,963.30
Pirpainty families	44,350.00	19,917.36
Colgong families	75,300.00	28,926.00
Total Rs.	1,70,650.00	1,75,811.66

The total amount which was advanced as loan in 1959-60 and 1960-61 comes to Rs. 3,46,461.66 only. A total sum of Rs. 39,884.90 was paid to these families as grant.

The total amount spent over the camp inmates for their food, cashdole, clothes, medical and sanitation, etc., up to, 1960-61 is Rs. 2,27,735.00 They have been paid Rs. 4 003.00 as discretionary grant.

LANGUAGE

So far as the language is concerned, the last District Gazetteer of Bhagalpur, 1911, by J. Byrne, mentions as follows:—

"The language prevalent in the district is the Maithili dialect of Bihari Hindi. Mithila, also called Tirhutia, was the country bounded on the north by the Himalayas, on the south by the Ganges, on the east by the Kosi and on the west by the Gandak, and it is famous as being the home of the Tirhutia Brahmans. For a long time those of them who lived south of the Ganges were considered socially inferior to those who remained within the confines of Mithila, but this distinction seems to have passed away.

"In the south of district there is a dialect prevalent called '*chhikka-chhikki boli*', the most striking peculiarity of which is that those who speak it add a vowel sound (like 'O' in 'not') at the end of words. The Magahi dialect of Bihari Hindi has had some influence on the grammar and vocabulary of that part of the district lying south of the Ganges, but it has not ousted the Maithili dialect. The '*chhikka-chhikki boli*' is so called from its frequent use of the syllable '*Chhik*' in the conjugation of the verb substantive.*"

*Over 900,000 persons speak this dialect: see Grierson's Linguistic Survey, Vol. V., P. 95.

"Educated Muhammadans of course prefer to speak Urdu with more or less of a Persian admixture.

"The character in most common use is the cursive Kaithi, an invention of the Kayasths who derived it obviously from the Devanagari character. In 1871 Sir George Campbell made the use of this character optional in all Court transactions, in addition to the Persian character. In 1880 the further use of the Persian character was prohibited, and the exclusive use of Kaithi was prescribed. The use of this character has had the effect of gradually assimilating the language used in school books, petitions, etc., to that in common everyday use. Formerly a quite excessive number of Arabic and Persian words were used in the Court languages current in Bihar.

"The non-Aryan people in the south of the district speak their own languages, such as Sonthali, Uraon and Mundari. Most of those who speak these languages are found in Banka subdivision. There were 26,632 Sontals, 4,804 Uraons and 1,190 Mundas in the district at the time of the 1901 Census."

Since Dr. Grierson's time there has been no linguistic survey and so it is difficult to stress with authority as what had been changed in the sphere of language since then. From the above statement of Mr. Byrne it appears that the Bengali language was conspicuously absent which seems to be improbable. Bhagalpur has been the seat of large section of Bengali speaking population since long past.

The table given below shows the number of persons—males and females in the District speaking different languages as mother tongue as mentioned in 1951 census*:

Languages.	District		
	Persons	Males	Females
Total population	1,429,069	728,681	700,388
Indo-Aryan Languages*—			
Hindi	1,360,342	699,959	660,383
Bengali	29,588	15,272	14,316
Marwari	1,226	774	452
Gujrati	5	5	..
Punjabi	2	..	2
Other Indo-Aryan Languages—			
Munda Languages	10	7	3
Santali	37,896	12,664	25,232

* District Census Handbook, Bhagalpur, 1951, p. 82.

Like the previous Censuses Urdu had not been enumerated separately and had been clubbed together with Hindi. Though Urdu has a separate entity but for the facilities of the interested persons in the language, the census in 1951 had given the number of Urdu speaking people as 109,006.*

Hindi is the principal language of the district. According to census of 1951, Hindi speaking people were about 93 per cent of the total population, which shows the popularity of this language. Hindi has now been adopted as the National Language of the country and because of this, it is becoming popular even among the non-Hindi speakers and, therefore, it has become essential for every gazetted and non-gazetted staff of the Government to pass the departmental examination in Hindi.

According to the above table the Bengali speaking population is about 2.3 per cent of the total population and Santhali by 2.6 per cent. Due to commercial importance of Bhagalpur the number of Marwari speaking people seems to be fairly large. Marwari language is confined only among the Marwaris who are mainly engaged in business. The other Indo-Aryan languages had not made any impact in the district which will be evident from the above table. The Punjabis are mostly displaced persons and their number in the district is still small. Similar is the case with the Gujarati speaking people so far as the number is concerned.

"Chhikka-chhikki boli" is the popular local dialect and has a large mixture of Hindi. The Bengali inhabitants of the district who have been here for generations use this dialect in their houses and this dialect is well understood by Hindi-speaking people. A large number of Hindi speaking local inhabitants speak fluently the Bengali language. As already mentioned, people of Shahabad and Ballia districts who migrated to this district during the movement of 1857, have adopted the local dialect in place of their own "*Bhojpur*". Another peculiar feature of the district is that there are a few Jew families who speak the same local dialect in a fluent manner. /

BILINGUALISM

The table given below shows the bilingualism in the district, i. e., it gives the number of persons who commonly use another

**Ibid.*

Indian languages in their every day life in addition to (and sometimes largely in supersession of) their mother tongue*:-

Mother tongue.			Total speakers.	Total persons returned as speaking a Language subsidiary to that shown in column 1.			Subsidiary languages.
1			2	3			4
Hindi	..	..	1,360,342	22,657	Bengali	..	11,441
					Santali	..	9,627
					Malto (Paharia)	..	958
					Marwari	..	631
Santali	..	..	37,896	8,677	Hindi ..	..	7,637
					Bengali	..	10,040
Bengali	..	..	29,588	3,817	Hindi ..	..	3,762
					Santali	..	44
					Marwari	..	11
Marwari	..	..	1,226	466	Hindi ..	..	462
					Bengali	..	4

The most popular language of the district is Hindi, Bengali and Urdu. Bhagalpur district is proud to have several good Hindi, Bengali and Urdu Writers and Poets. The rich contribution to Hindi, Bengali and Urdu literature by men of Bhagalpur has been covered in the text on Education and Culture.

USE OF SLANG

In all the languages and dialects common in the Bhagalpur district, the use of slang is a prominent feature. It is rather interesting to note that the slang used by one group of people may not be understood by another group following a different vocation of life. Some of the slangs are absolutely indigenous to the culture-complex of the people and the occupation they follow. Natural environments also have an influence on the development of the slangs.

An elephant driver has his peculiar slangs which another elephant driver (*Mahout*) and the elephant he rides on will understand. The slang orders used by a *Mahout* will not be intelligible to the palan-

*District Census Handbook of Bhagalpur, 1951, p. 83.

quin-carrier or to the common agriculturists. Some of the slangs used by the elephant drivers are mentioned with their implications:—

Chai (drink water), *mal* (get up), *Chhat* (stand erect), *Shyam* (sit down), *Tir* (move aside), *Somir* (eat down), *Bri Bri* (water is dirty).

The indigenous slangs used by palanquin-bearer are also very interesting and picturesque. There are two bearers on either side of the shaft on the palanquin in front and two bearers to the shaft at the rear. It is the duty of the bearers in front to give the warning to the bearers at the rear. The bearers have to change their shoulders occasionally and have to indicate that the pair would like to take some rest and the road is good and they could go at a greater speed or that there is any pit or thorn on the path or so on. While in motion they cannot shout long sentences and hence the evolution of slangs in one or two words. Some of their slangs are as follows:—

Bara Moskaba Bharkila Rasta Hai (the path is good and smooth), *Hari Bhari Hai—Rasta Par Gobar Hai* (a fresh cowdung on the path), *Chaharwa* (there is a mud on the path), *Jaria Lagalba* (there is a tree with its root on the path—beware.), *Bariya* (a thorn, has made its way into my leg-stop), *Chhitawa* (the path is full of thorns), *Barabar* (put down the palanquin on the path), *Jahwa Anchari* (the frontman warns that he is entering into water), *Bhari* (let us change shoulders), *Dakini Dhakka* (there is a tree on the right side), *Bainye Dhakka* (a tree on the left side), *Asmani Hara* (branches of a tree above—just bend down), *Tappa* (we are to cross a ridge or an elevated ground), *Jamotia Lagalba* (pieces of stone on the road—slacken speed), *Jieu* (start as a caution when lifting the palanquin), *Banalwa* (the road is very good—let us move with speed now), *Komar Katka* (let us now take a turn from this direction to another), *Daine Andhari* (there is a deep pit on the right side), *Baine Andhari* (a deep pit on the left side), *Sanmukh Sirwa* (in the front we have to pass over an elevated ground), *Bhala Mutarwa* (the road is now tapering from high level to a lower level), *Dhamak* (go slow—the occupants are heavy), *Lotan* (the path is running high and low to a great distance), *Chhipke* (standstill).

Equally picturesque is the use of the slangs of a goldsmith. As a class the goldsmiths are taken to be very shrewd and they must have a code word among themselves to warn the other workers as to the value of the metal that has been brought. If a man in need of money takes some gold to the goldsmith for sale and the goldsmith finds that the gold is of very superior quality and does not want that the seller should know about it, he will mutter *Gandhan* which means that the gold should be taken as it

is of very good quality. Peculiarly enough the goldsmith has different terms for the ordinary metals like silver, copper, brass, etc.

Regarding the fixing of price the man at the shop who tests has to indicate to the proprietor in code word and there is a regular code of slang terms, some of which are mentioned below:—

Rupchha sona (a piece of defective gold), *Chand Khad* (gold with a yellowish colour), *Gini khad ya subra sona* (gold mixed with copper), *Subra rupchha* (Gold mixed with one anna copper and $\frac{1}{2}$ anna silver), *Sawai khadki Lati* (silver in which two annas *rangta* or *tanba* are mixed), *Parik* (Bad silver having a good deal of *rangta* or *tanba*), *Talha* or *Korba* (silver having very much *rangta* or *tanba*.)

The goldsmiths have also their code word in slangs for the seller when he makes out that the article brought for sale is stolen or if the seller appears to be a fool and could easily be hoodwinked. A goldsmith's slangs are usually kept secret.

In a similar manner the shopkeepers and the traders have their slang words for figures. Some traders use the following slang words for the numerals:—

San (1), *Sohaban* (2), *Singhara* (3), *Phonk* (4), *Budh* (5), *Dahak* (6), *Paint* (7), *Kothi* (8), *Kon* (9), *Salai* (10), *Eklai* (11), *Barahathi* (12).

The washerman has also his code word of instructions for ironing a cloth, fixing a mark, etc. The ploughman has his code word intelligible only to his bullocks or to the other members of his occupation. If he wants a bullock to turn to the right or to the left, he will use a particular code word. The various agricultural operations have given rise to indigenous slangs.

Although *thugs* have disappeared, there was a time when Bhagalpur district along with other parts of Bihar had quite a number of *thugs*. These *thugs* were cut-throat cheats who would spot out their victims and indicate to the colleagues in slangs that a particular man is a suitable victim and he should be fraternised with. It is commonly said that the *thugs* accompanying the man marked out as a victim would seek a suitable lonely spot for pouncing upon him and when such a spot is found the leader mutters *Narayan* or *Hara Hara* and the *thugs* fall upon the victims.

RELIGION AND CASTE

According to the table in District Census Handbook of Bhagalpur, 1951 (pp. 84-85) the total population of the district is 1,429,069 (males 728,681 ; females 700, 388). Out of this population Hindus count 1,263,728 (males 643,615 ; females 620,113). The Muslim count 163,483 (males 84,083 ; females 79,400), Sikhs 1,019 (males 526, females 493), Christians 421 (males 212, females 209), Jains 383 (males 224, females 159), Jews 31 (males 19, females 12) and Zoroastrians 4 (males 2, females 2).

The total population of the Hindus in the district comes to 88.3 per cent; Mohammadans account for 11.4 per cent the rest are the other communities who form only the fringe of the total population.

According to the Census of 1951, the number of Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and Backward classes was as follows:*

		Males	Females	Total	Percentage of the total population
	1	2	3	4	5
1. Scheduled castes	..	86,236	85,860	172,096	12.02
2. Scheduled Tribes	..	48,384	47,742	96,126	6.7
3. Backward Classes	..	276,110	259,021	535,144	37.5

The religion of the bulk of the members of the Scheduled Castes, Tribes and Backward Classes is Hinduism.

The Muslims who form the next largest group after the Hindus are scattered all over the district. There is, however, a good sprinkling of Muslims in Bhagalpur town (29,701 according to 1951 Census) and this partially due to the fact that Bhagalpur was the headquarters of the Muslim rule in that area for decades. A number of important *mahallas* in Bhagalpur town have distinctive Muslim place names such as Maulanachak, Shahjangi, Kutubganj, Tatarpur, Sujaganj, etc. Their representation is strong in Colgong Revenue Thana while it is very thin in Katoria Revenue Thana. This shows that the Muslims settled more round about Bhagalpur town.

*District Census Handbook of Bhagalpur, 1951, pp. 88-90.

MARWARIES

The number of 383 Jains as mentioned in 1951 Census is a clearly an under-estimate. It is understood that after Calcutta, Kanpur has the largest colony of Marwaris and Bhagalpur comes next to them. On local enquiry it was gathered that Bhagalpur district has a population of about 10,000 Marwaris. Even in Bhagalpur town the population of Marwaris is at least about 5,000 and the Marwari community plays an important role in the civic and cultural life of the district. They hold much of the trade and commerce in their hand.

Most of them, i. e., about 70 per cent of the total population are employed in Marwari firms, about 10% are business magnets controlling various trades like cloth and rice, oil, and flour mills; about 10 per cent are in different businesses like *Kirana*, iron, grain, hotels, press, stationery, etc., about 4 per cent priests, about 3 per cent have adopted different professions like lawyers, doctors, professors, etc., and about 3 per cent are owners of tea-stalls, betel-shops, etc.

There are various Marwari institutions but the main institution is Bihar *Prantiya* Marwari *Sammelan* established in the year 1938, having four sub-branches, namely, *Shiksha Samiti*, *Vivah Sampark Samiti*, *Bekari Nivarak Vibhag* and Bihar *Prantiya* Marwari *Sammelan* Reserve Fund. This *Sammelan* is the head office of all Marwari activities throughout the State of Bihar.

Shiksha Samiti.—This Samiti provides scholarships to Marwari College students and girl students of both schools and colleges. The scholarship is also given to those students who desire to go to foreign countries for higher studies in various subjects. The scholarship which they provide to the male students is refundable when they return after completing their studies but not before they are employed. They are allowed to refund the money either by instalment or at a time. Even the local students after getting their employment have to refund the money on the same condition. But this condition does not apply to the girl students. They are not to refund the scholarships. Under the education development programme several hostels and messes are running at various places like Patna, Muzaffarpur, Ranchi, etc., for the students of the said community. Several other educational institutions are running at Bhagalpur. The institutions are Marwari College, Marwari Pathshala, Marwari Kanya Pathshala, Bal-Subodhini Pathshala, Bhajanashram Vidyalaya, etc. Except Marwari Pathshala in all the schools, students even beyond the community are given free education. The teachers are paid by the donation fund. There is one Saraswati Library which is a Marwari institution and is quite popular in the town.

Vivah Sampark Samiti.—This *Samiti* looks after the matrimonial relation of the community. This *Samiti* is dead against the dowry system but it is not possible to check the underhand dowry system.

Bekari Nivarak Vibhag.—This branch tries to seek employment for the unemployed members of the community. Only a few members have been benefited by this branch.

Bihar Prantiya Marwari Sammelan Reserve Fund.—This Reserve fund is a Government registered concern. It was registered in the year 1952. Its main aim is to control the finance of the whole *Sammelan* and also to spend money where it is proper.

There is one other independent institution of the community known as *Marwari Sudhar Samiti*, which was established in 1923. It has a managing committee consisting of fifteen members including the President, Vice-President, Secretary, etc. The contribution for membership is Rs. 3 annually. This *Samiti* is financed by a timber-depot at Bararighat, Bhagalpur.

Its main aim is to raise the social standard of the community and to help the general mass beyond the community.

It has three sub-branches, namely, *Seva Vibhag*, *Siksha Vibhag* and charity fund.

Seva Vibhag.—This branch arranges volunteers during some *mela* or fair. The members of this *Vibhag* take proper care of the stray dead bodies even beyond the community.

Shiksha Vibhag.—Its only function is to provide free books to the boy and girl students of the community up to school standard.

Charity fund.—This charity fund is not like the Reserve fund of the *Sammelan*. It simply runs a small library and provides several magazines and periodicals to make the general mass habituated and also for the members of the said community.

There is one another independent institution of the community known as *Vyayamshala*. This *Vyayamshala* receives Government grants annually but the grants vary from year to year. This institution has a great importance.

Recently in *Sharirik Vyayam Sammelan* which was organised at Lucknow this *Vyayamshala* got the first prize.

There is one more Marwari institution which is known as *Marwari Sadavart Panchayat*. The main aim of this institution is to provide food to the poor or *Kangals* on Sundays, *Purnimas* and *Amavas*.

There are some highly connected and well-placed Marwari families like the Dhandhanias, Himatsingkas, Singhanias, Kothriwalas, Churiwalas, etc., who have taken a prominent part in founding charitable institutions for the general people like colleges, schools, libraries etc. They have now started taking part in civil politics as well.

SIKHS

The Census of 1951 records only 1,019 Sikhs although the number may have multiplied by now as this small community has the capacity of extending their occupation and usually invite their brethren from other parts. The Sikhs are located only in Bhagalpur town and they are mostly engaged in various types of trade and commerce.

CASTES

There has been no castewise enumeration in the Census of 1951. Probably this was done with a view to discourage caste consciousness but the hold of the caste on Indian life is so deep that for various academic purposes castewise figures would have been quite interesting particularly because of the impact on the rigours of the caste system. Castes have not become extinct from the district by any means. The traditional division of occupations according to caste, has, however, been in the melting pot and untouchability is loosening its hold more by social education than by law.

The last castewise enumeration was done in 1931 Census. In 1941 Census owing to war exigency this along with many other tables were omitted. As mentioned before castewise enumeration was deliberately dropped in 1951 Census. The castewise figures in 1931 Census are not quoted as they also contain the figures for Madhipura and Supaul Subdivisions which are not in Bhagalpur district now.

A brief discussion on the principal castes will be of interest to show the particular occupational role some of these castes play. Most of the castes follow particular professions. The trend is now on the decline.

The following are the principal castes and communities in the district—Brahmans, Bhumihars, Kayasthas, Rajputs, Koeris and Kurmis, Ahirs or Gwalas, Baniyas, Banpars, Chamars, Dhanuks and Kahars, Dhobis, Doms, Dosadhs, Hajam, Kewats, Mysahars, Paharias, Santhals, Tantis, Muslim, etc.

**Brahmans*.—The hereditary occupation of Brahmans is priesthood but owing to the changes in the economic trends many of

them have now taken to cultivation and service as a means of livelihood. The main sections among the Brahmans are Kancujia, Maithil, Gour and Sakaldwipi. There are other subdivisions. The previous caste rigidity and exclusiveness among the Brahmans have now liquidated.

Bhumihars.—Among the Bhumihars of the district, there are a few families who formerly had zamindaries and they had an aristocratic bearing. They are hard-working, clever and polished in talk and behaviour. Many of them have taken up professions like law, medical etc., besides cultivation or business.

Kayasthas.—At one time most of the service-holders were recruited from this community. Kayasthas normally go in for schooling and for generations they have been in the forefront in leading professions. There are only a few Kayasthas who actually till the field by themselves. Most of them would normally employ ploughmen.

Among Kayasthas there are sub-sects also and formerly there could be no inter-marriage among them. But now marriage between the inter-caste of Kayasthas is taking place.

Rarhy Kayasthas and Rarhy Community.—This Community is peculiar to this district and needs special mention. In Bengal there are two types of Kayasthas—Uttar Rarhy Kayastha and Dakshina Rarhy Kayastha. There was restriction of marriages between the two of them but this rigidity is now disappearing.

In the 12th century during the rule of Raja Lakshmi Sen the present districts of Birbhum, Burdwan, Murshidabad, Bankura, Hooghly—now in West Bengal—and Santhal Parganas in Bihar form Rarh. The inhabitants on its northern portion were called Uttar Rarhys.

The first flow of migration of the Uttar Rarhy Community in Bihar commenced in the twelfth century when Raja Bat Mitra, a Uttar Rarhy Kayastha, was deputed as Governor of Bihar by Ballal Sen, the then King of Bengal. He made Patherghatta, about three miles north of Colgong railway station as his capital. There he installed an image of Lord Shiva on the hillock on the bank of the river Ganga. This deity is called Bateshwarnath Mahadeva. It is claimed that this place was the seat of Vikram-shila University.

The second flow of migration was in the 14th century during the reign period of Raja Ganesh Dutta, a Uttar Rarhy Kayastha with his headquarters at Dinajpur. Many Uttar Rarhys were deputed by him as State Officials who settled in some parts of the

Bhagalpur division. But the first and second flows of migration were not substantial.

But in the 15th century there was a third flow of migration and this time many families came and settled in Bhagalpur district. An illustrious Uttar Rarhy Kayastha, Thak Dutta, was appointed as a Kanungo (Collector Surveyor) by the Emperor of Delhi. He made his headquarters at Bandhara near Amarpur Police-Station in the district of Bhagalpur which is still known as the Takht Bandhara. He settled at a place near his headquarters which was named "Duttabati". He was succeeded in his office by his son-in-law, Shri Ram Ghosh, by a *Firman* in 1604 during the reign period of Akbar and since thereafter the office of the Kanungo became hereditary. He settled near Duttabati and this place was renamed "Ghoshpar". Thereafter he shifted to the present village Dummera, a mile off to the north. The emperor of Delhi, Jalaluddin Akbar in 1604, confirmed the hereditary title of "Mahashay" on Sri Ram Ghosh, the founder of the Mahashay family of Bhagalpur.

In those days there was no easy means of communication except by the river Ganga. Many of the Uttar Rarhy Kayasthas who were appointed officials had to come to Bhagalpur district, and settle in the interior villages mostly in the Banka Subdivision. They acquired large properties in the shape of zamindaris and *Jote* lands. Gradually there was expansion, but owing to the social and religious considerations these immigrants brought Rarhy Brahmins whose number also increased gradually. They also acquired landed properties. Thus the Uttar Rarhy Kayasthas and Rarhy Brahmins came to form a somewhat separate community.

At present this community resides in about 130 villages of the various districts in the Bhagalpur Division. Being more or less out of touch of town life and having lost practically all connections from Bengal, the Rarhy community began to speak a local dialect "*Chhikka-Chhikki*" which is a mixture of Bengali and Hindi languages and became absorbed in the local population.

During the British Rule in the early parts of the nineteenth century there was another flow of migration from Bengal of Uttar Rarhy Kayasthas and other castes to Bhagalpur and other principal towns of Bihar. These families mostly settled in the town areas. They generally became known as domiciled Bengalis. Many top ranking lawyers and doctors in addition to Government servants, professors and teachers from this class of new-settlers made Bhagalpur and other towns in Bihar their permanent abode and gradually lost their active connection with Bengal.

The "*Chhikka-Chhikki*" speaking Uttar Rarhy Kayasthas and Rarhy Brahmans whose ancestors had migrated to Bhagalpur and to the other districts of Bhagalpur Division several centuries ago, had completely identified themselves and have been absorbed in the local population. But they were also regarded as "Domiciled Bengalis" simply because they hold the surnames of "Ghosh", "Dutt", "Das" etc. like the new flow of Bengalis.

The Domicile rules were enforced by the State Government on them also and there was a great "Bengali-Bihari" controversy which created some bitterness in 1937-38. This community had to struggle hard for being called the natives of Bihar. The matter was taken to the Congress Working Committee which nominated Dr. Rajendra Prasad as the sole arbitrator of the Bengali-Bihari question. Shri Manindra Chandra Ghose, a lawyer of Bhagalpur town, was invited by Dr. Prasad to attend the conference at Wardha as the representative of the Rarhy Community. Bihar Government and other Associations were also invited to participate in it.

The award of Dr. Rajendra Prasad met with general approval and was adopted by the Congress Working Committee. There was some delay in implementing the award but ultimately the Bihar Government, in the Appointment Department, issued a circular in their Memo. no. 2312 A., dated 22nd March, 1949, declaring the members of the Rarhy Community as "Natives of the State."

Rajputs.—This community is found scattered practically all over the district. Among the Rajputs the sub-sects are very large such as Udayvanshi, Rajvanshi, Suryavanshi, etc. Some sub-sects consider themselves to be higher than other sub-sects. This barrier is now on liquidation and marriages between the sub-sects are taking place. Rajputs have cultivation, zamindari and services for their livelihood. After abolition of zamindari some of them have taken to business also. They are very conscious of their origin and affiliations with the Rajputs of other parts of Bihar and beyond the State.

The Banias.—Banias of different sects are to be found in Bhagalpur district, viz., Kasera, Kasodan, Suri, Teli, Kesarbani, Thathera, Sonar and Lohar. It is said that the sects like Kasera, Kasodan, Suri and Teli migrated to Bhagalpur from Shahabad district during the movement of 1857. There are large pockets of them at Colgong, Banka, and in Bhagalpur towns besides a scattered population in the rural areas.

All the said sects are businessmen carrying different kinds of trade. Kaseras sell utensils of different kinds either by holding a shop in the town or village or by hawking. They are cultivators and some of them are ex-zamindars. A few of them have adopted other professions like law, medical, etc. Kasodans deal in spices

and hardwares. Some of them are cultivators and also ex-zamindars; Suris, Telis and Kesarbani mostly deal in grains and a few of them are cultivators and ex-zamindars.

They follow the orthodox Hindu religion but some of them are followers of the Arya Samaj. All of them, except Arya Samajis worship different deities. Most of them worship their family deity known as *Ghar Gosain*. Besides they worship goddess Durga, Sati, etc. God Vishwakarma is worshipped by Sonars and Lohars, etc.

The inter-caste relation is cordial. There is marriage restriction in the sub-sects. Exogamous marriage within the sub-caste is strictly prohibited. There is, however, laxity in this taboo so far as widow marriage is concerned. Polygamy is also prevalent in their society which is allowed only when a wife happens to be barren or suffering from a contagious disease, etc. The incidence of literacy among Banias of Bhagalpur appears to be very low.

Koeris and Kurmis.—The Koeris and Kurmis are essentially cultivators and as a class are industrious and peaceful. Near big towns they act as market gardeners and show considerable enterprise. No doubt, Kurmis are also good cultivators of the district and both form the backbone of the agricultural economy of the district but Kurmis are more educated and several of them have taken up various types of professions like law, medical, business, etc. They are extremely hardworking and persevering in their avocations. Generally they possess a good physique.

Ahirs.—They are known as Gopes or Gwalas also. From the point of numerical strength they outnumber all other castes and are practically found all over the district. They are mostly to be found on the banks of the river Ganga probably because the excellent grazing lands near the river had attracted the Ahirs to settle down as at one time their principal occupation was rearing of cattle. The number of Ahir or Gwala cultivators is quite large and a good percentage are substantial cultivators. They are divided into four different sub-castes—Majraut, Kishnaut, Goria and Kanaujia. The Kishnauts prefer a claim of precedence over others on the tradition that Lord Krishna was born in their sub-caste. Kanaujia Gwalas are not much in the district. They are invaluable for agricultural economy of the district. The incidence of literacy among them is not so high but some of them who are educated have taken up other professions also. The Ahirs are now getting politically conscious and have been organising themselves for their rights.

Banpar.—The last District Gazetteer (1911) has not mentioned about this caste but their number is not insignificant in the

district. They belong to the class of fishermen, such as, Mallah, Kaibrata, Kewat and has been enlisted as members of the Backward class. They trace their origin from a man who after killing his mother in rash got refuge in a forest. They mostly marry among themselves but efforts are being made by them to assimilate with other classes of fishermen. They were formerly engaged mainly in fishing and sailing boats but with the scarcity of proper facilities for taking *ghats* on lease, they have come to adopt different professions. They are mostly found in the Colgong area and they work hard on the *ghats* and carry heavy loads. They are of strong physique. Their women are quite active and labour hard in the fields. Banpars of rural areas are agriculturists and agricultural labourers. Incidence of literacy is very poor.

Barhi.—This community is evenly distributed all over the district. The Barhis are by profession artisans and they generally make agricultural implements for the villagers and are paid in the villages both in cash and kind. The Barhis in the towns have a busy time in making furniture, doors, windows, etc. for new constructions.

Dhanuk and Kahar.—Dhanuks and Kahars both belong to Backward Classes and are largely recruited as servants in households. Dhanuks and Kahars used to be employed as palanquin bearers but palanquins have become rare now. There are also some cultivators among them. Quite a large number of these communities have gone to Calcutta and other places for their livelihood. They are now getting allergic to domestic chores and taking to other kinds of professions.

Dhobi.—Dhobis are found in almost all the villages and their number in the town is on the increase. In the towns they have opened laundries. In the rural areas Dhobis are mostly paid in kind during the time of harvest. They also earn good income from the customary allowances (*Britis*) during the time of funeral, marriage and other social ceremonies. But in the towns they are paid in cash. Besides wage earners, they are also agriculturists. Both males and females are wage earners. The washermen in the urban areas are now forming unions or a strong caste-panchayat and will not wash or iron clothes on particular days. Their caste-panchayats have a great hold on the members and would often inflict punishment for breaches of their conventions. Drinking is their curse.

Dom.—There are two types of Doms in the district known as Supa and Domsī. They breed pigs, make bamboo wares and also work as labourers. They used to be much addicted to liquor but the incidence is going down. Some of them have started

studying in schools. With education there can be no doubt that they will be an asset with the robust figures and strong common-sense. The Doms are getting class conscious now.

Dosadh.—The last District Gazetteer (1911) by J. Byrne, regarding this caste mentions as follows:—

“The Dosadhs are very low caste—swineherds by traditional occupation. They also supply large numbers of labourers, and the post of village Chowkidar is almost invariably held by a Dosadh. They were largely professional thieves and dacoits, but are reported to be giving up their predatory habits.”

These remarks are quoted to bring out the fact that they do not apply now even if they were correct before. They are now classified as a Scheduled Caste. They are still being employed as village chowkidars but there is no stigma of habitual theft. Some are also cultivators and the rest labourers. They also rear cattle. Keeping of pigs is going out. Their women supplement the income of the family by working as labourers. In the towns many Dosadhs get employment as cooks or bearers. They are now a progressive section and with proper schooling, they will be as good as any other educated community.

Hajams.—The Hajams are now included in the Constitution under Backward Classes and are also known as *Nai* and *Thakur*. They have earned the reputation of being clever. Their chief profession is shaving but some are also good cultivators and rear cattle. They used to play a much more important role for bringing about marriages among Hindus and at the actual marriages. Their role during the death of man was important. But with modern ideas their previous role is on the wane. In some of the villages Hajams practise a rude form of unscientific surgery. Several of them now work in hair-cutting saloons and some of them even own such saloons. The incidence of literacy among them is poor.

Kewats.—Kewats belong to the Backward Classes under the Constitution. They are traditionally fishermen and ply boats. They are mostly found on the both sides of the river Ganga. Many of them have left their traditional profession and have taken up agriculture or other professions.

Musahars.—The Musahars are notified Scheduled Castes and their number in the district is not insignificant. Essentially most of them are within lands and lead a precarious existence. They tame pigs, hens and cocks. They are very eclectic in their food and relish rats and snails. Attempts are being made to educate them.

Drinking and gambling are their common recreation. Child marriage, widow marriage, and divorce are common among them.

Rai Bhuiya Ghatwals.—The actual number of Rai Bhuiya Ghatwals as an important class of agriculturist labourers in this district is not known and they claim that they are one lakh strong. They are distributed over different parts of Sadar and Banka Subdivisions. They do not live in pockets close to one another and are scattered in small numbers. An investigation was made at villages Pithamba, Khemasar, Shasan, Dudhiari, Baijratapur and Rega in Banka Subdivision in connection with a claim that they may be enumerated in the list as Scheduled Tribes. The method of participant observation was applied and the conclusion arrived at was that they cannot be classed as a tribal.

As regards physical appearance they resemble the Mushahars with a dark, well formed body and physiognomy. The name of the class indicates that they probably worked as Ghatwals to guard the hill passes. Their social customs are the ordinary customs of the Hindus like the *Chattis*, *Mundan*, *Sataisa*. The Rai Bhuiya Ghatwals speak *Chhikka-Chhikki* dialect which is a mixture of Hindi, Bengali and Maithili. Their ornaments, food habits, household are like those of an ordinary Hindu of the village of moderate means. Regarding marriage they observe Hindu customs and their marriages are solemnised by the Brahmins. The Rai Bhuiya Ghatwals observe all the Hindu festivals like Basant Panchami, Holi, Durga Puja, Lakshmi Puja, Dewali. They do not have the totems and taboos of the tribals nor do they have the dormitory system for the young and married boys and girls. Their funeral rites are performed by Brahmins.

As regards the economic condition almost all of them are financially handicapped. They are either small agriculturists with land or sell their labour. They may be described as a Backward Class but they cannot be treated as a Scheduled* Tribe.

Paharias.—The Paharias belong to the Scheduled Tribes under the Constitution. There are Paharias at Kashra about two and half miles east of Colgong-Atre, Muni Baba Pahar and at Gangal Dar (Colgong P.-S.) and some other villages. It is said that their forefathers were the disciples of the great Atre Muni. They construct beautiful huts painted with coloured earth or soft coloured stone. They reside on hill tops and keep cows and dogs. They live on jungle fruits and roots such as jack, *mahua*, mango and meat of deer, cat, snake, wild boars, jackals, porcupines and birds. They collect bones and sell them in nearby markets. They do not take beef. They are good cultivators.

They are healthy, bold and comparatively immune to diseases. They still lead nomadic life and would normally change their

place of residence after some time when food has become scarce in the area.

Rabidas.—Usually called Chamars they are by occupation makers of footwear, cultivators or labourers. They are a notified Scheduled Caste. In the villages they are entitled by custom to the hides of all cattle that die. In the past they were often suspected of poisoning cattle. They make and supply shoes, whipthongs, drum-heads, etc. The services of the women-folk *Chamain*, are frequently requisitioned as midwife although they are untrained and follow crude methods. Hardworking and simple minded, they are now quite progressive in spite of poor incidence of literacy and if given opportunity they could equal any other community.

Santhals.—The Santhals have been notified as Scheduled Tribes under the Constitution. Santhals are mostly to be found in Katoria, Pirpainty, Banka, Belhar, Shyambazar, Visura Baunsi and other villages in Bhagalpur district. They have been much influenced by the Christian missions and many of them have been converted. Due to impact of modern times, their culture is changing.

They differ from Paharias in respect of dress, food, religion, etc. Santhals wear *dhoti*, *sari*, *blouse*, *shirt*, *ganji*, etc., but Paharia males mostly wear a loin-cloth. They live on the bottom of the hill whereas Paharias live on the top of hills.

Tantis.—The tantis are in the list of the Backward Classes and they are to be found throughout the district. Essentially, weavers, some of them have cultivation also. There has been a great demand for handloom cloth and the Tantis are quite busy. They are now organising themselves into professional guilds. The State Government have taken steps to market their excellent produce both interior and outside the country.

Muslims.—Among the Muslims also there are sects and sub-sects. The predominant percentage is of Sunnis. The number of Shia Muslims in this district is not inconsiderable. There are a large number of Ansaris who are by profession weavers. There are Ahmadyya Muslims also in this district. There are some villages which have a pocket of strong Muslim community.

The Ahmadyyas.—The Ahmadyya is a spiritual and moral movement of peace and goodwill in Islam. This movement was sponsored by Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad of Quadian, a village in district Gurudaspur, East Punjab. To the Ahmadyyas he was a prophet of this age. The Ahmadyyas believe in the truth of all religions.

Quadian is the headquarters of the Ahmadyyas. Sady Anjuman Ahmadyya, Quadian, is registered administrative body governing the Ahmady Muslims of India in their moral, social and religious activities.

The Ahmadyya movement in Bihar was launched by Hazarat Hussain Ali Saheb of Bhagalpur who was a companion of Hazarat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, and was taken as a saint by the Ahmadyyas. The Ahmadyyas of Bihar are mostly located in Monghyr and Bhagalpur districts and a few scattered in other districts of Bihar. In Bhagalpur district there are Ahmadyyas in mohallas Barehpura, Ramsar, Tatarpur and in some villages like Khampur Milki, Chutia Belari etc. Their total population in the Bhagalpur district is approximately 500 to 700.

So far the manners and customs of the Ahmadyyas are concerned there is nothing exclusive to them. *Parda* system among the Ahmadyyas is not as rigid as it was some time before. Their relationship with other Muslims and Hindus is cordial.

So far as marriage and morals are concerned, monogamy is prevalent except on grounds of ill health and a person suffering from a contagious disease. No doubt polygamy is allowed in particular circumstances such as if the woman has proved herself barren.

The pronouncement of the marriage ceremony in the community appears to be peculiar. It is pronounced in the absence of both the parties (bride and bridegroom) with the help of a written consent before the Quazi. The pronouncement takes place in the presence of the witnesses. The marriage is performed without any pomp and grandeur.

The Ahmadyya Muslims are peace-loving and law-abiding. They believe in loyalty to the Government they live under. They believe in social justice with self and community discipline and non-violence.

Missionary work is done by them. The mission work is not emphatic about conversions. They believe in spreading piety and love of mankind. The Ahmadyya Muslims are generally literate. They carry on much literary work silently. The cultural standard of Ahmadyya Muslims is high.

Christians

The Christians have been recorded at a small figure of 421 in the census of 1951*. An investigation made in July, 1961

*District Census Handbook, Bhagalpur, 1951, pp 84-85.

disclosed that the total population of Christians both Catholic and Protestant is at least 958, i.e., 398 Protestants and 560 Catholics. The Christians though a small community numerically have had an interesting story and have influenced the educational and cultural standard in the district.

The origin of what is now the Diocese of Bhagalpur can be traced back to the days of the East India Company, which in June 1878 appointed the Rev. John Evans as Chaplain to its employees in 'the Bay'. The main duties of the Chaplains and the other pastors was to minister to the workers in the factories in Bihar and elsewhere. As journeys to Patna were then made more by the river and Bhagalpur was an excellent halting place, the Church here flourished. The employees of the East India Company, indigo planters, Government employees and strong Anglo-Indian and Indian Railway community supplied a continuous flock. The Churches were built and Chaplains maintained by the Indian Ecclesiastical Establishment, the Military, the railway administration or through funds raised within the Church itself.

When the Diocese of Bhagalpur was founded in 1843 there was an Indian Ecclesiastical Establishment (I. E. E.) Chaplain stationed at Patna, a military Chaplain at Dinapur, a railway Chaplain at Jamalpur and a diocesan Chaplain at Muzaffarpur, and Chaplains and missionaries alike were ministering to small English-speaking congregations in a large number of other centres. In 1823, Bishop Heber was consecrated as the Bishop of Calcutta. In the following year he toured northern India, touching at Rajmahal, where he met some Paharias from the neighbouring hills and Bhagalpur. At his instance, the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in 1826 sent the Rev. T. Christian to Bhagalpur to commence work among the Paharias; but after only twelve months he and his wife both died of jungle fever within a few weeks of each other, and the work lapsed—indeed it was not until 1860 that the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel founded in England in 1701, sent another missionary to the area in the person of the Rev. Gerwin Jones, who is now stationed at the large railway centre of Jamalpur.

Christ Church, Bhagalpur.—G. F. Brown, Officiating Commissioner of Revenue, Bhagalpur (1837) and Commissioner of Revenue, Bhagalpur, 1846, had purchased in 1843 a parcel of land measuring 13 *bighas* and 6 *biswas* and built a church on the land. The *jama* of the land Rs. 9-2-5 pies per annum was remitted by the Governor of Bengal on 27th January 1848. Before leaving India, G. F. Brown sold all his right, title and interest by a deed, dated 8th January, 1857, in presence of R. B. Ferquhasan of Bengal Civil Service and Catherine J. Brown to the venerable the Arch-deacon of Calcutta.

This Church known as the Christ Church at Bhagalpur is opposite the Sadar Hospital. It used to be maintained by the Ecclesiastical Department of the Government at State expense along with other such churches from funds provided under "32-Ecclesiastical". This Anglican Church along with other churches according to the Circular no. Eccl—472/D.-2(b), Government of India, Ministry of Defence, dated the 23rd March, 1948 was taken off the Schedule of Churches to be maintained at State expenditure. It was decided that all Anglican Churches included in the list of maintained Churches which form the Second Schedule to the Indian Church Act, 1927 will be removed from the list from 1st April, 1948 and will not be maintained after the 31st March, 1948. A Gazette notification no. 541-A, dated March 27, 1948 followed. The Bhagalpur Church was handed over and is now maintained by the Indian Church Trustees. The Diocese of Bhagalpur has the Right Reverend Bishop of Bhagalpur as the Chairman and governs the parsonages of Samastipur, Muzaffarpur, Bankipur, etc. It was under the Diocese of Calcutta before.

Christ Church, Bhagalpur now the pro-Cathedral of the Diocese, was dedicated in 1845, by one of the leading lay members of the congregation being the Commissioner, Mr. Brown, a son of the Rev. D. Brown who was Chaplain of the Old Mission Church, Calcutta from 1787 to 1812. In 1848 the Chaplain of Bhagalpur, the Rev. Mr. Vaux wrote to the Secretary of the Church Missionary Society in Calcutta, pleading the need of Bihar, and especially for the Paharias and Santhals, asking for a missionary to be sent there, and promising that the local congregation would provide a house and a school building, and pay for the expenses of a school. The response of the Church Missionary Society (C.M.S.) in England was to send to Bhagalpur the Rev. E. Droese, a German Missionary who had been working in India since 1842 with the Berlin Mission, and had recently been ordained by Bishop Wilson of Calcutta. But the Society made it clear that they were opening this work in Bhagalpur purely on an experimental basis, and that they were not accepting financial responsibility for anything other than the missionary's salary. In April 1850 Mr. Droese and his wife landed from the river Ganga at Narga, where the Bishop of Bhagalpur's compound is now situated; and so well the experiment succeeded that he remained in Bhagalpur for 36 years before retiring to take up fresh work in Mussoorie, while as early as 1856 the C. M. S. accepted full responsibility for his work, as the local congregation—which to begin with, has raised over Rs. 200 per month for this purpose—was no longer able to carry it, the original sponsors of the scheme having by that time all moved from Bhagalpur.

Mr. Droese leased some land at Champanagar, on the outskirts of Bhagalpur, which now forms part of the Bishop's compound,

and by the end of 1853 had built a bungalow which still exists. In the following year, St. Saviour's Church, Champanagar, was dedicated and he founded a primary school (the first privately managed school in Bhagalpur) and an orphanage. The school had indeed to be built up from nothing, for the first masters employed knew little except how to keep ordinary *bazar* accounts and to write a note in *Kaithi*, and they had to be taught to read the printed characters themselves before they could teach them to children. This novelty met with a protest and more than half of the pupils left the school, though many of them returned within a few weeks. Further opposition was encountered when Geography and Bible teachings were added to the syllabus, but the school lived it down. A girl's school started by Mrs. Droese met with difficulties and some pupils of other castes left when Paharia girls started to attend. These girls came from the families of Paharia soldiers belonging to the corps of Hill Rangers (founded by Augustus Cleveland, Collector, Bhagalpur from 1780 to 1784), who were stationed on the fort at Nathnagar.

Before Mr. Droese arrived in Bhagalpur, a Sunday School had been started for the children of these Paharia soldiers, and he soon found that the Paharias were more responsive than the people of other races whom he met. He devoted much of his time in cold weather every year to itinerating in the hills where the Paharias lived. He also opened a few schools and by 1859, there were twelve of these schools in existence, with 400 boys reading in them, staff and students alike being all non-Christians but by this time Mr. Droese himself was fully occupied by his work at Bhagalpur. Droese was one of the early pioneers of education in this district.

In 1897, a disastrous fire destroyed the bungalow in Champaganagar compound in which all Mr. Droese's records and other Mission papers were kept, and on the place of which the Bishop's House, built a few years later, now stands. The year 1890 saw the arrival of another stalwart of the Mission, the Rev. J. A. Cullen; and during his first ten years of service he founded the Leper Home in Bhagalpur (which is administered by the Mission to Lepers, although the spiritual side of its activities remains under the supervision of the Diocese). This leper asylum is in the town of Bhagalpur, opposite T. N. B. College, Nathnagar. It is still running and recently in 1960 one female outdoor ward has been started within the premises of the hospital. A St. Luke's Church was established in 1910 within the compound of the hospital.

Further, in 1904, the Fraser Hostel at Jamalpur was founded for the benefit of boys from the Champanagar Orphanage employed in the East Indian Railway (now Eastern Railway) workshops

there. Mr Cullen went home on leave in 1914 but could not return to India because of the War and by 1918 he was adjudged too old to return, so his place was taken by the Rev. (later Canon) H. Perfect, who had been serving in the Mission since 1903. Among Mr. Perfect's other responsibilities was the post of Chaplain of Purnea; and when the Baptist Missionary Society relinquished its work in Purnea district in 1935, the C.M.S., Bihar Mission accepted responsibility for it. Within a few months, however, the C.M.S. decided that during the next few years it would withdraw all its support to the Bihar Mission, except of the Mission for its educational work. This decision brought to an end the evangelistic work of the Mission at many places, but the Indian Church itself has been able to maintain a tolerably adequate amount of pastoral work.

It is in any case, for its educational work that the C.M.S. at Bhagalpur has always been most widely known, and mention must be made of its two schools in the town of Bhagalpur.

(1) *The C. M. S. Boy's High School* is its most famous institution and the name of the late Bishop (later Canon) S. K. Tarafdar who was its Principal from 1909 to 1936, will for ever be associated with it. This school traces its origin back to the primary school which was opened at Champanagar in 1854 by Rev. E. Droese and which was raised to high standard and affiliated to Calcutta University in 1887. Owing to certain difficulties the High School classes were suspended for a time, but the school was re-affiliated in 1892. But there were still difficulties to be faced, largely due to the shortage of funds and the unsuitable location of the school, and at the turn of the century it seemed that it might be necessary to close it as a High School and reduce it to lower grade. However, it was decided to move the school nearer to the centre of the city, and in 1903 it was transferred under its new Principal the Rev. H. M. Moore, to a rented house in Adampur (a mahalla in the town of Bhagalpur) belonging to the Srinagar Raj, in a water-logged compound flanked by broken *jungly* land and with practically no road frontage. At that time, there were only 41 students on the roll, although the orphanage also had been transferred with the school from Champanagar; but despite its old and inadequate premises and the existence of more imposing schools in the neighbourhood, the school flourished, and despite the fact that the orphanage was moved back to Champaganagar within a year, the number of pupils at the school rose by 1908 to 172. In 1905, Mr. Moore opened Commercial Classes in Shorthand, Typewriting and Book-keeping—a novel venture in those days—for the benefit of those students who were unable to go on to higher studies; and, although to begin with there were only 5 students, the number increased within four months to 26, and had risen further to 110 by the time Mr. Moore went on furlough in 1909.

It was not to be expected that the Missionaries alone take full and complete responsibility for steering the educational work by "imported" Principals. At this juncture the Mission did not hesitate handing over the responsibility to an Indian leader and so in 1909, the Principalship of the school was for the first time held by the Rev. S. K. Tarafdar, who remained incharge of the school until after his consecration as Assistant Bishop of Calcutta in 1935. It was during his 27 years as Principal that the school became one of the best schools in the State for discipline, standard of education and general bearing of the students.

When Mr. Tarafdar took charge, the school-property still consisted of the original house and its out-houses, which Mr. Moore had adapted for a hostel. During the following year, these buildings and the compound of 20 *bighas* of land in which they stood were bought by the C. M. S. from the Srinagar Kumars for little more than one-half of their actual value, most of the cost being provided by Mr. Moore from a fund which he had at his disposal. In 1911, the Bakhtiarpur Estate presented to the school as a coronation gift a plot of about nine *kathas* of land lying to the south of the present Principal's house, and an adjoining plot was purchased from Dr. Mukherjee of Barari, thus giving the school its imposing street frontage along Cleveland Road. The Government of the newly separated Province of Bihar not only sanctioned a greatly increased grant-in-aid to the school but also gave it large grants for building with the help of which, by 1914, *pucca* hostels for Hindu and Christian boys (now named after Bishop Tarafdar and Bishop Lenman respectively), and the Principal's house were built. A little later Babu Raghunandan Lal, a public-spirited Zamindar of Gola-ghat, Bhagalpur, donated a sum of Rs. 13,000 to the school, and with this and other donations, including another substantial grant from the Government, there was built in 1917 the spacious Raghunandan Hall, with its imposing clock tower and eight adjoining classrooms. Then in 1928 a two-storied building, and the other eight first-floor classrooms were constructed. Meanwhile in 1921¹ Headmaster's quarters was built; in 1923, the school sick-room was constructed; in 1930, the School Chapel, accommodating about 200 persons was built; in 1936, a new quadrangle of ten earthquake-proof classrooms was constructed. This school has now been converted into a Higher Secondary School. The school has extra-curricular activities including National Cadet Corps, a school magazine, Boy Scouts, a museum etc.

(2) *The C. M. S. Boy's Middle School, Champanagar.*—After the return of the orphanage to Champanagar (already mentioned), Mrs. Perfect opened a small school there with seven little children as pupils. Two years later, the number of boys had risen to 42. In the following year (1909) it was raised to Upper Primary Standard, and in 1912 to Middle Vernacular. By that time, the

children were too crowded, and it was thought good to separate the girls from the boys; and the C. M. S. took over the Christian Mission's Orphanage at Deoghar, and the staff and the girls from Champanagar were transferred there and the present girls' boarding school founded. The Foley Hostel was built in 1927, and the school building completed two years later. The number of orphans was by then decreasing, though a number of Christian boys from poor houses, many of them from the Santhal Parganas, were being supported by the Mission in the Foley Hostel and reading in the school. But the shortage of funds, and the rise in prices during and after the second World War, led to a gradual reduction in the number of boys thus helped, and the hostel had to be closed. The school continues to draw a large number of students from the neighbourhood.

There are two cemetery grounds in the town of Bhagalpur—one at Tatarpur and the other at Champanagar.

The branch of the Church of England Zenana Missionary Society is located in the town of Bhagalpur. It runs a C. E. Z. Mission Girls' High School located at Masakchak (Dr. Amulya Ghosh Road), two C. E. Z. M. Primary Schools located at Khalifabagh and Modinagar near Mirzan Hat in the town of Bhagalpur.

The Roman Catholic Community appears to have been in Bhagalpur much earlier than 1779. According to one record the first Church constructed in 1779 was built by Father Marco Della Tomba who came to India in 1756 and who later became prefect Apostolic of the Tibetan Mission. In 1806 there were in Bhagalpur only 30 Roman Catholic Christians and they were looked after by a visiting Missionary from Patna. The earliest extant registers back to 1829.

The first Church at Bhagalpur built in 1779 was destroyed by the great earthquake of 1897 and it was rebuilt by Father Cesary who was in charge of Bhagalpur from 1885 to 1901. In 1898 Bhagalpur was given its first resident priest in the person of Father John of Anzola. Father John at once set about collecting funds for a new chapel, the cost of which was estimated at Rs. 8,000 and in December, 1902 Bhagalpur's third and the present Church was blessed and dedicated to the immaculate conception by Dr. Charles Gentili. Eleven years later the present Mission Bungalow was also erected.

In 1911, Father John secured for his station services of three sisters of St. Joseph, chiefly for the Bhagalpur Sadar Hospital and for dispensary work out in the nearby villages. As there was no house, Father John built one for them.

Unfortunately later information is not at hand, but for the first two months of their work they cared for 1,479 patients, visited 64 villages and spent themselves for all who came to them. Three years later their Supervisoress, Mother Monica was presented with the Kaiser-i-Hind medal of the Second Class for "excellent work in the General Hospital.

In the year 1958 the Apostolic Carmelite Sisters of Mangalore came to Bhagalpur to open a school. The school teaches for the Cambridge standard and the present strength of the institution is 240.

In the year 1926 two schools, one for girls and the other for boys were established at Sahebganj (Bhagalpur). The schools were shortlived due to the earthquake of 1934 and were found unsafe for further use. The schools were transferred to Gokhla about 38 miles east of Bhagalpur in the district of Bhagalpur and is 3 miles from Mirza Chowki railway station. The two schools at Gokhla have reached the Middle School standard. The strength of the girls school at Gokhla is 200 and that of the boys is 400.

Besides the two schools at Gokhla there is also a small hospital of about 20 beds with a qualified Lady Doctor in charge. Many cases are attended to irrespective of caste or creed.

At Basmata (Belhar thana) a Mission was established in the year 1957. In that area there are two L. P. Schools functioning for boys and girls.

Harimohra (near Rajapokhar bungalow) is a Mission which was established in the year 1930 with a small L. P. School for boys and girls. This station has been rebuilt in the year 1956 with a Convent School of Middle Class standard. The school is under the efficient care and supervision of the Carmelite Sisters. The girl's school is a recognised institution with an enrolment of 220 girls. There is a dispensary which caters to all those who go there.

There is also a Church at Jaypur in the south of the district. Originally it was founded by the brethren of Christ Mission. Later it was handed over to the local Christians in the year 1947. Later the Church was transferred to the Roman Catholic Mission on 4th December, 1958 and it is used a villa. The number of the Catholics there is about 15. There is no resident Father.

There are Roman Catholic cemeteries at Bhagalpur near the Church at Sahebganj, Gokhla and Harimohra.

Brahmo Samaj.

Bhagalpur Brahmo Samaj was established on the 22nd February, 1864 by late Braja Kishore Basu, Naba Kumar Roy and Madhusudhan Sarkar. Later on, the late Dr. K.D. Ghosh, father of the great Aurobindo Ghosh and his brother late Sri, Bama Charan Ghosh joined. In 1868 late Nibaran Chandra Mukherjee* came and joined and was followed by others. In 1879-80 late Rev. Dinanath Mazumdar one of the Preachers settled here. In 1880 the Samaj building was constructed at the expense of late Raja Shib Chandra Banerjee.** In 1881, on the 11th *Phalgun*, the anniversary day of the Samaj, late Brahmanand Keshub Chandra Sen came for the dedication and opening ceremony. In 1886 the late Hari Sundar Basu joined the Samaj. Since then almost all the leaders and preachers of the Brahmo Samaj had on occasions come to Bhagalpur. They include Rev. Pratap Chandra Mazumdar, Gour Govind Ray, Sivanath Sastri, Rabindranath, Satish Chakravarti, Kshiti Mohan Sen, Prakas Chandra Roy, father of Dr. B.C. Roy, etc. The Bhagalpur Brahmo Samaj was, at one time, a main centre of the Brahmo Samaj activities in the country and helped considerably the cultural advancement of the district.

The starting of the Mokshada Girls, now Higher Secondary School, was one of the first activities of the Brahmos at Bhagalpur. It was started by Dr. K.D. Ghosh in 1868 as a primary school, known as the Bhagalpur Girls' Institution.

It may be said that the Brahmos were in a way pioneer in sponsoring female education, a caste class society and night schools for removing adult illiteracy.

On the 12th day of October 1916 late Nibaran Chandra Mukerjee, Secretary of the Bhagalpur Brahmo Samaj, executed and registered a trust deed of Bhagalpur Brahmo Samaj.

In the earthquake of 1934, the front portion of the *Mandir* was badly damaged, since then this was rebuilt and additions and alterations have been made to allow more space and on the two sides two covered verandahs have been added.

At one time there were quite a number of Brahmo families in Bhagalpur. At present their number is reduced to a few. But

*Nibaran Chandra Mukherjee was Headmaster of Bhagalpur Zillah School. His is a distinguished family. One of his grandsons was the late P.C. Mukherjee, Chairman, Railway Board and another the late Air Marshal Subrato Mukherjee.

**Raja Shiba Chandra Banerji's other charities are to day seen in Mokshada Girls' School, Shivatarini Female Ward, Bhagalpur Water Works, etc.

the impact of Brahmoism in broad-basing the society, removal of caste system and propagation of theism on the society has been considerable. Several Bihari families had been converted to Brahmoism, such as those of Brahamdeo Narayan, Hazari Lall, Baldeva Narayan, Ram lall, Bechu Narayan, etc. There were at least two Muslim families headed by Dr. Abdul Ghaffar and Azim Sahab had been converted to Brahmoism.

RELIGIOUS BELIEFS

Religious beliefs of the Hindus.—The Hindu religious faith is a mixture of animism, polytheism and monism. The followers of Dayanand Saraswati or Arya Samaj are believers of monism. The Brahmo Samajis believe in monotheism of Upanishada and discard image worship. Polytheism and animism are followed by the common mass. The Hindu religion is still pre-eminently ritualistic and the worship of gods is looked upon as the first duty of man. Oblation, prayer and recitation of the sacred hymns are part of the worship. The Hindus worship a legion of gods and goddesses but the primary gods and goddesses are Vishnu and his consort Lakshmi, Shiva and his consort Parvati, Saraswati, Ganesh, Durga and Mahavira. There are a large number of Hindu temples scattered throughout the district. Saivism seems to have had a great hold as is seen by the temple of Ajgaibi Nath Mahadeva at Sultanganj, Bateshwar Nath Mahadeva near Colgong and Burha Nath temple at Bhagalpur. These temples attract a huge number of devout Hindus during the months of *Srawan*, *Kartika Purnima*, *Shivaratri*, etc.

Besides these temples there are a number of sacred sites (*sthans*)—*Anupsthan*, *Ganoo Baba Sthan* etc., where *pujas* are offered, *Anupsthan* is 5 miles away from Bihpur. The *puja* is offered mainly by Brahmans but others also join. It is performed on every Monday and Friday. The popular belief is that evil spirits can be avoided by this worship. *Ganoo Baba Sthan* is situated at Tadhi near Baijani (Fulbaria) about 5½ miles south of Bhagalpur. There is one *Pipal Mahadeva Sthan* at Sujaganj in Bhagalpur town. The *Pipal* tree of this *Sthan* was cut down a few years back but yet it is known with the same name. This Mahadeva *Sthan* is visited by a lot of persons daily specially ladies of Marwari families.

Loke Puja is a particular feature of the district. This *Loke Puja* is a kind of community worship (*Sammilit Puja*) which is held in different villages by turn every year and the popular belief is that this will check epidemics at least for a year.* This *Loke Puja* is celebrated in 8 or 9 different ways, each has separate hymns. The devotees of each group assemble together and sing.

Among nature gods *Agni* (Fire God), *Suryya* (Sun), *Sesa-nag* (Serpent God) and *Indra* (Rain God) are worshipped. There is

one more god *Hanumanji* or *Mahabiraji*, who is commonly worshipped. *Mahaviri Jhanda* or flag tied in a long bamboo is hoisted in the courtyard of the Hindus who worship *Mahavira* or *Hanuman*. On every Tuesday and Saturday this god is worshipped in local temples. The *Mahaviri Jhanda* is hoisted on Ramanavmi day. *Mahaviri Jhanda* processions can be taken out in any part of the year.

There are Jain temples also in Bhagalpur and other places for the followers of Jainism. Recently a Sikh Gurudwara has been established in Bhagalpur. There are also one branch of Ramkrishna Mission, one Arya Samaj *Mandir* and one ninety years old Brahmo Samaj *Mandir* in the town of Bhagalpur. The Brahmo Samaj people were the pioneers for the abolition of casteism and for the spread of female education.

Apart from these *pujas* and worships different types of *pujas* are prevalent in different tribes, castes, etc. The Santhals worship Jogini Goddess, Lila Mahadev, Burha-Burhi, etc. The offerings are generally rice, sweets, betal and betel nuts, etc. The Paharias worship *Kalimai*, *Durgamai* and their *Guru*. Their *Guru* is known as Rangadhari Gosain in a thatched house or on a raised platform with vermilion smeared on it. The offerings are rice, liquor, sweets, fowl, etc. Among Chamars, Rabidas, Lal Maharaj, Namdeb Bhagat and Bisahari are generally worshipped. *Sitalamai* (goddess of small-pox) is worshipped by Chamars, Dosadhs, Dhanuks and even Dhunias and sometimes Brahmans also join it. Musahars observe one Puja known as *Nathpuja*.

Bhagalpur is famous for *Behula puja*. There is a place at Champaniagar known as *Behula Sthan* where snakes are worshipped on Bisahari Day or *Mansha Puja*. This *Puja* takes place in the month of July every year attended by thousands of persons.

Tree worship.—Certain trees usually big sized like *pipal*, banyan, *amla*, *Neem*, etc., are worshipped by the villagers and mostly by women. The *pipal* tree is considered to be holy by the orthodox Hindus. Spirits are believed to live on *pipal* trees and they are worshipped if they happen to be in the village or outside it near a temple, *Devishthan*, etc. There are some people who regularly pour water at the root of *pipal* trees. *Bahir Puja* is performed under a mango tree. People believe that this worship would drive away any malady from the village. Particular trees are taken to be the abode of deities or evil spirits and hence they are worshipped. Women offer *puja* under such trees at the time of marriage and birth in the family. Some trees are worshipped for getting a child. This is an erotic idea.

Religious beliefs of the Muslims.—Monism is the cardinal principle of Islam and a devout Musalman has no other God but *Allah* and his *Rasul* or Messenger, the Prophet Mohammad. But a sort

of saint worship or *Pir* worship has become a common feature. A *pir's* tomb often becomes a place of pilgrimage. In Bhagalpur district there are several *Pir Dargahs*—Gaus Khan *Pir Dargah* near Bhagalpur Central Jail, Damarla *Pir* in Sujaganj, Neknam Saheb *Pir*, Bhikhanpur, Sajangi Malangi *Pir*, Asnanpur near T.N.B. College, Ghuran *Pir*, Sandy's Compound and the old *Pir Khanjar Saheb*, Khanjarpur in Bhagalpur town. There are few other *Pir Dargahs* also which are out of the Bhagalpur town such as Shah Kumari *Dargah* at Colgong, etc. These *Pir dargahs* are locally visited on the occasion of *Urs* ceremony. The devout Muslims keep awake for the whole night and after the recital of the *maulood*, the *chadar* or the sheet by which the tomb of the *Pir* is covered is changed.

The town of Bhagalpur and its suburbs contain a number of old and new mosques such as Shahjangi *Masjid*, Khalifabagh *Masjid*, Tatarpur *Masjid*, Maulanachak *Masjid*, etc.

INTER-CASTE RELATIONS.

According to the *Census of India, 1931* (Volume II, pp. 136 to 157, Bihar and Orissa, Part II Tables), Bhagalpur district has different castes like Babhan (Bhumihar), Bania, Chamar, Dhanuk, Dhobi, Dom (Hindu and Muslim), Dusadh, Gowala, Hajam, Hari, Jolaha (Muslim), Kahar, Kandua, Kayastha, Kewat, Koeri, Kumhar, Mali, Mallah, Musahar, Pasi, Rajput, Tanti, Teli, Kamar, Bhuiya, Munda, Oraon and Santhal (Hindu, Christian and Tribal religion). Caste-wise population figures are available in 1931 census but at that time Bhagalpur district included the present Saharsa district also. The details of caste-wise figures of 1931 are given below* :—

Castes	Persons	Males	Females	Community
Gowala	374,677	191,310	183,367	Hindu.
Brahman	109,722	57,130	52,592	Ditto.
Chamar	107,534	52,852	54,682	Ditto.
Musahar	99,592	50,197	49,395	Ditto.
Dhanuk	97,315	47,986	49,329	Ditto.
Koeri	90,238	45,635	44,603	Ditto.
Tanti (Tatwa)	88,745	43,472	45,273	Ditto.
Rajput	69,052	39,895	29,157	Ditto.
Kewat	52,693	25,938	26,755	Ditto.
Hajam (Nai, Napit, Nai Brahman).	38,597	20,028	18,567	Ditto.
Santhal (Sadar and Banka sub-divisions).	28,551	14,643	13,908	Ditto.
Bania	23,912	12,568	11,344	Ditto.
Kayastha	21,893	11,704	10,189	Ditto.
Babhan	16,857	9,585	7,272	Ditto.

*Only numerically strong castewise figures are given (P.C.R.C.).

According to 1931 census Gowalas and the Brahmans are numerically strong in the district. Owing to war exigency caste-wise figures were not taken in 1941 census. From 1951 castewise figures have been eliminated as a matter of India Government policy. Hence, it is difficult to give the exact present population figure of the different castes. But according to the census of 1951 more than 55 per cent of the population is made of the Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and Backward Classes. On investigations and local enquiries it was learnt that now Gowalas, Kurmis, and Koeris preponderate followed by the Brahmans. The number of Bhumihars, Rajputs and Kayasthas taken separately will be smaller than the population of the Brahmans. At present also all the castes given in 1931 census are found in the district. Among all these castes Brahmans, Bhumihars, Kayasthas, and Rajputs are treated as higher castes and the rest as lower castes according to the commonly accepted tradition about the myth of caste.

In Bhagalpur the people (of both rural and urban areas) in the lower rung of the ladder of caste system appear to have developed a certain sense of antagonism which comes to the force on the slightest provocation. This feeling breaks into caste tension when a person of a higher caste misbehaves with one of lower castes and the situation may even turn into riots or acrimonious quarrels with lasting effects between the members of the two castes. This becomes more evident at the time of elections.

Almost each community especially in lower caste such as Mallahs, Jolahas, Tantis, Barbers, Dhobis etc., have organisations (Caste *Panchayats*) of their own. It may be presumed that economic exploitations mostly drove them to form caste unions for caste-professions but not always. There are several domestic problems like adultery or social boycott, etc., which they do not want to discuss with others. The unions of Dhobis are very prominent in the towns of Bhagalpur, Colgong, Sultanganj, etc. In the recent decades some of these organisations have even advocated the taking of sacred thread.

Amongst the Muslims also the members of some sections like Jolahas, Dhudnias, Kasais, etc., have adopted surnames of "higher caste" Muslims and call themselves "Sheikhs", "Ansaris", "Mansuris or Rayeens", "Quarishis", etc. Village Puraini, P.-S. Bhagalpur Muffasil is an example of such trends. The use of the surname like "Sheikh", etc., is deprecated by Muslims who consider themselves superior.

The zamindari system was indirectly one of the main reasons for the spread of caste feeling in the district. The zamindars who

usually belonged to higher castes did not treat the lower caste people in the same manner as the higher caste tenants. The so-called lower caste tenants like Musahars, Doms, Dhobis, Chamars, Dosadhs, etc., were being treated differently and at times they had even to quit their respective villages. The lower caste men along with the so-called untouchables like Doms, Chamars, Dhobis, etc., were not allowed to enter the temples and other sacred places. Even in a community religious congregation like *Durga Puja*, etc., they were not allowed to sit with others. Economically also they were backward and almost forced to remain so. The zamindari system utilised them as labourers with or without land. The bulk of the agricultural labourer class came from such castes. The impact of the zamindari abolition has been to some extent a realignment and reassessment of the social value of the different strata of the population and particularly the so-called lower castes have been theoretically put at the same level along with others thus giving rise to a spirit of class and caste consciousness.

Previously franchise for the local bodies, State Assembly or Council or the Central Assembly was based on the restrictions of property tax, educational qualifications or communal representation, etc., and all this accounted for a low percentage of voters. Adult franchise, the great feature of 1952 election provided equal opportunities for men and women, Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and Backward Classes to exercise their right of votes both for local legislatures and the Parliament. It has been a great experiment. Now the so-called lower classes have been given a power which is apt to be misused if caste consciousness is the ruling factor. The introduction of adult franchise has, unfortunately, led to a strong caste consciousness especially in the rural areas. Caste-feeling in rural areas almost decides the fate of candidates in the elections. For instance it may be mentioned here that in the last General Election of 1957, in Bihpur-Naugachia, there were three contestants belonging to the three different parties i.e., the Congress, Jan-Sangh and Communist for the State Legislature. The Communist candidate won the election because of the friction amongst the Congress members, between the Brahmans and Bhumihar members. In this constituency the Brahman population is stronger than the Bhumihar. The Congress candidate was a Bhumihar and the Communist candidate was a Brahman. This shows that the election although contested on party basis was decided on caste basis. For Parliament Election in the same area there were three candidates belonging to the Congress, Socialist and Jan Sangh parties. Here, the Congress candidate was a Brahman who bagged full support of his own caste men and his own caste-men of the other parties. If his own caste-men would not have supported it was difficult for the Congress candidate to win the election.

A recent investigation made at village Narayanpur, P.-S. Bihpur, in the north of the district, shows the same picture.

Numerically the Yadavas, Rayeens (Muslim) and Banias are strong at this village. There are other backward and Harijan Hindu caste like Dhobi, Dom, Chamar, Musahar, etc. They are looked down upon by the Yadavas and Banias. Rayeen Muslims do not have any bad feeling for the Harijans or low caste Hindus. In recent *Panchayat* election there had been a keen contest between two candidates belonging to the Jan Sangh and Congress parties for the post of *Gram Panchayat Mukhiya* and *Sarpanch*.

In *Mukhiya* election at Narayanpur both the candidates belonged to the same caste, Yadavas, but their candidature differed on party basis. So there was a contest on party basis but "sub-caste feelings" among the Yadavas came in. The Congress candidate belonged to the Manjraut sub-caste having the full support of the entire Muslim community who are the members of the Congress Party. He had also the support of almost the 40 per cent members of his own sub-caste. The Jan Sangh candidate belonged to the Goria sub-caste. The Jan Sangh candidate was defeated by 147 votes. This defeat led almost to a Hindu-Muslim riot but because of the local police, magistracy and a few influential persons the mischief was averted.

In *Sarpanch* election also there was contest between two candidates belonging to the Congress and Jan Sangh parties. The Congress candidate was a Rayeen Muslim but because of the support of the 40 per cent of the Yadavas and few others and men of his own community he came out successful.

At village Ghogha, P.-S. Colgong, district Bhagalpur, the Brahmans are in the majority. Recently in *Gram Panchayat Mukhiya* election there were two candidates, one Brahman and the other a Muslim. The Brahman candidate won the election because of the support of his own castemen and a few other Hindus. But at village Lakhpura in Banka subdivision in spite of the stronger Brahman population, Rajput candidates for both *Sarpanch* and *Mukhiya* came out successful because of the support of the members of Backward Classes. Here there was a bid to get the votes of the Backward Classes to tilt the balance.

The special educational and other facilities granted to Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes and reservation of appointments to them in Government services have created a certain amount of bad blood between the people of higher castes and those of the lower castes. The higher caste people consider these facilities and reservations as an undue encroachment on their rights and opportunities. An example may be cited. During an investigation made at village Lakhpura, in Banka subdivision, it was observed that the Brahmans are more thickly populated than the Rajputs and Backward Classes. Their complaint was that even the poorest

Brahman had no facility for education to their children while the children of the well-to-do Harijans were receiving the facilities of free education, book-grants and scholarships. Similar views were expressed by the people of upper castes of villages, Jagdishpur and Ghogha, in Sadar subdivision. This sort of feeling in people of higher castes and a spirit of elation somewhat in the people of lower castes is fanning the tension which is almost a problem, almost like the communal problem of the British days.

This caste feeling is apparent in religious field also. There is a *Krishnasthan* at village Narayanpur on which members of Bania and Yadava castes have good hold. Harijans or untouchables are not allowed to enter the room where the image of Lord Krishna is placed on the occasion of *Janmastmi*. Harijans have a theoretical access due to the statute but they do not, as a rule, want to exercise the right to avoid troubles.

In social functions Banias, Yadavas and others do visit a Harijan's place, particularly if he is rich but they would not inter-dine. The Muslims who do not have any such restriction are more popular with the Harijans.

Caste-consciousness was found prominent at villages Chakrami, Mojama, Ganaul, etc. Even occupations which are mostly carried out by the Harijans like basket-making, shoe-making or rope-making are looked down upon and would not be resorted to by other castemen.

Casteism in its bad sense cannot be said to be a new social trend. Previously also, casteism did play a very important role in social, religious and economic life of the district. A higher caste man whether he is educated, cultured or rich, would have expected natural leadership in the village. A lower caste man, however, educated or rich he may be, would have to be a back bencher in any social assembly.

But now there is a realignment of social values to some extent in urban areas or towns or in some of the villages of the district. The higher or upper caste people have now no large majority and hold in the mufassil townships or in the villages. But the changes do not follow one and the same pattern. Somewhere they are on the right lines.

At village Pirpainty, in Sadar subdivision, there are mainly two communities—Hindu and Muslim. Among the Hindus there are various castes like Brahman, Rajput, Bhumihar, Baria, Chamar, Dom, Dhobi, etc. In spite of so many castes, Hindus maintain a good relation and a Harijan sits on the same *chaukie* with the member of a higher caste. Amongst Muslims there are Jolahas,

Kasais and Saiyads only. They also maintain a mutual good relationship. At village Puraini, P.-S. Bhagalpur Muffasil, there are both Hindus and Muslims. In spite of the fact that Muslims are numerically stronger than the Hindus, the inter-community relations are cordial. But such cordial social contacts are not normal yet in the majority of the villages.

In urban areas caste feeling is not so acute and may be said to be, somewhat, on the decline. There are only five towns in the district, namely, Bhagalpur, Banka, Sultanganj, Colgong and Naugachia. So far these towns are concerned, inter-caste tension appears to be liquidating. People of different castes do not hesitate to take food on a common table in the restaurants and hotels and no one worries about the caste of the cook. The rush and bid for livelihood do not leave much scope normally for caste-feelings. Some inter-caste marriages are also taking place in the towns. Civil marriages under registration between educated parties of different castes are coming into vogue. The facilities of communication and the presence of different types of people in villages or towns, labour and industrial problems have all helped liquidation of caste-tension. The labour and industrial population have no time to indulge in caste-tensions and through them the villages are also being broad-based. When they go to the villages they carry their ideas to the villagers.

A picture of inter-caste relations in a district could also be had by analysing the relations of a few "dominant" castes with some other "non-dominant" castes. As mentioned before in Bhagalpur district, Gowalas are numerically strong and Bhumihars are educationally forward. A discussion of the relationship of Gowalas and Bhumihars with other castes would be relevant.

Gowala and Kurmi

There is some difference of opinion regarding the respective social and caste position of the Gowala and Kurmi on caste hierarchy. Each of these castes regards itself higher than the other. At some places in the district a Kurmi is regarded higher and other places a Gowala is given a higher status because of their numerical majority. They participate in each other's social functions. They take cooked food at each other's place but they would not normally sit together at a feast in the same *panti* (same line).

Gowala and Chamar

The Chamars in the past, have been forced to be considered much lower than the Gowalas in caste status, and hence active participation of one caste in the social functions of the other to the extent of inter-dining is not seen.

In spite of the difference in their status, the Chamars and the Gowalas are usually friendly. This cordial relationship shows that even given a bad background the men of two castes of different status could be friendly.

Gowala and Hajam or Nai

The relationship of these two castes rests on their respective occupations. In the case of a child's birth in a Gowala family, the Hajam woman's services are required. In *Mundan* or head-shaving of the child the Nai shaves the head of the child for which he receives money and a *dhoti*.

At the marriage of a Gowala also the Nai has various functions still considered obligatory.

The Nais refuse to take cooked food from the Gowalas but they accept water from them and share their smoking, by using the same *chilam*.

Gowala and Brahman

There is apparently no basic ill-feeling among these two castes. In the case of a birth in a Gowala family a Brahman is called to note the time of birth and prepare the *Janmapatri* (horoscope) of the child; he also decides the most auspicious date and time for *Chhatthi*, the ceremony on the sixth day after the birth. In return the Brahman receives a *dakshina* (payment). He accepts only *pakka* invitation (where *puri*, *kachauri*, sweets prepared in *ghee* are served but not cooked rices, *dal*, or vegetables). A Brahman will accept rations (*sidha*) and would cook himself.

In *Mundan* ceremony of a Gowala boy, the Brahman decides the auspicious day and he also performs certain *pujas* at the time of *Mundan*. For this also he receives a *dakshina* and a *dhoti*. Both for the marriages and deaths a Brahman's services are necessary.

A Brahman goes for a *katha-path* or Satya Narain *Puja* at a Gowala's place. The Brahman accepts the *prashad* distributed by a Gowala. For this *katha-path* he accepts a *dakshina*.

A Gowala would normally be invited to a Brahman's place in a social function and would participate cooked food given there.

Bhumihar and Gowala

The smaller Bhumihar population think themselves to be of a superior status to the Gowalas. The incidence of education and

local influence are higher in the Bhumihars. The investigation shows that there is a thin screen of misunderstanding between them often erupting into a tension. This is so in spite of sharing each other's social functions. This tension has been very prominent whenever any political issues are involved.

Bhumihar and Kayastha

Kayasthas had been educationally and culturally advanced since long and commanded leadership because of their superior educational incidence.

Now that the Bhumihars are coming up educationally and had come to acquire sizeable holdings and zamindaris, they have developed a sort of allergy to the Kayasthas. This is mostly due to economic reasons and for the bid to get jobs and catch the leadership in the society and in the political field.

Kayasthas and Bhumihars freely mix socially and take food or water from each other's hand. In spite of this free social contact, a sense of jealousy has developed among the two castes. The Bhumihars have been able to oust the Kayasthas to some extent from the political field in the last one decade. They have also come in larger number in the local bodies.

Bhumihar and Brahman

Bhumihars now claim the same status in cast hierarchy with the Brahmans. This is due to the fact that the Bhumihars have now come up in education and have been able to get large landed properties. The hereditary occupation of Brahmans is priesthood but owing to the changes in the economic trends many of them have taken to cultivation as a means of livelihood while the number of service-holders among the Brahmans is also not negligible. The Bhumihars are mostly engaged in cultivation and the characteristic occupation of the caste is that of settled agriculturists. But due to spread of education and changes in economic trends they have now taken to intellectual professions such as law, medicine, etc., and now they possess high position in society.

Inter-dinning is common. Each caste participates in each other's social, religious and other ceremonies. It may be said that normally on the social plane the two castes do not display an allergy to each other and mix freely but in the political plane or where economic questions are involved their relationship is fluid and will quickly align itself with any other caste to oust the other.

Bhumihars and Rajputs

Bhumihars and Rajputs are on somewhat equal footing and they participate in each other's social functions. Inter-dinning is

common among them. But on political issues they differ from each other and they make quick alliances with some other caste to oust the other.

General

The hangover of the spirit of the conqueror and the conquered may have been responsible for the difference in status of the different castes and other differences in society, but it is a fact that till western education started, ignorance was somewhat a bliss—and there was something of a loosely knit but not a conglomerated society. It was not a casteless democracy and the spirit infused by western education worked as a great fissiparous tendency and started liquidating the ignorant bliss of the loosely knit society and highlighted the sufferings of the lower castes. By that time in order to bring about a practical solution to the social demands, every caste had developed a number of sub-castes differing in status and also imposing taboos against each other. The society was no longer knit by a common workable bond and in no time the influence of western education revealed the weakness of the Indian society and casteism received a new interpretation.

But western education had been preceded or supported by religious and social reformers like Guru Nanak, Kabir, Ramanand, Shri Chaitanya, Tulsi Das, Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar, Sita Ram Saran Bhagawan Prasad, etc. The cult of Vaisnavism had struck roots in Bihar and particularly in Bhagalpur district through the efforts of Sita Ram Saran Bhagawan Prasad who was a Deputy Inspector of Schools in Bhagalpur in the last decade of the 19th century. The Muslim dervishes and saints had not only been able to consolidate the spirit of qoranic equality among the Muslims without any difference in economic status but they had also been able to touch the fringe of the solidarity of Hindu casteism and break it to some extent in the periphery of the intellectual and religious thinking. There grew up *Kadam Rasuls* and *Dargahs* where both Hindus and Muslims offered oblations. Quite a number of graves of Muslim *Pirs* came to be held in high esteem by the Hindus throughout the country. Bhagalpur was at one time distinctly under great Muslim influence. The Muslim names of a number of important mahallas in Bhagalpur town are suggestive. Urdu and Persian were commonly learnt by the Hindus four decades back and *unani* system of medicine was resorted to by the Hindus also.

But unfortunately there was also a wave of aggressive propaganda for Hinduism by Swami Shradhanand and others in our own times and Bhagalpur with other districts in Bihar had the impact. Hinduism was sought to be made into an almost a militant creed. The result was the two creeds parted their ways—the beautiful

and noble Muharrum *tajias* were no longer carried by Hindus, the *akharas* of the Muslims in Muharrum were deserted by the Hindus and *Gorakshani Sabhas*, *Gopashtami* processions, *Mahabiri Jhandahs* and *Bir Hanuman Puja* received a greater encouragement. Much of the efforts of the earlier Hindu and Muslim social and religious reformers were set at naught.

But there have been other sources of immense good. The Christian Missionaries pioneered western education and their institutions in Bhagalpur district are land-marks to be proud of. Their schools and the T. N. J. College, the second college to be started in Bihar State were somewhat of antidotes to caste virus. The early pioneers of the Brahmo Samaj in Bhagalpur district were also quite successful in removing caste barriers. There were even some Muslim families of Bhagalpur who were converted into Brahmoism. Religious teaching at the primary schools to both Hindus and Muslims was done as a matter of routine earlier and thereby a great religious toleration was inculcated. The boys and girls of the two communities and of all castes who came to primary schools were taught a consciousness that one has the liberty to follow one's religion without super-imposing on others and that the same liberty must be allowed to the other co-religious or castemen. The Hindus and Muslims of this district did live in peace and harmony and formed one people before when they did not have to surrender any inviolable rights or customs. Religious differences and casteism were there but did not have any tension.

Bhagalpur district is unique in one respect : there is a confluence of religious trends here. Different phases of Hinduism along with Vaisnavism have offered a common platform to the Hindus. *Ram Charitra Manas* is a great binding factor. The caste-men of different status all used to congregate to hear *Ram Charitra Manas* or for *Satyanarain Puja*. The Muslims are also culturally advanced bearing a rich heritage. The Ahmadyyas with the rich tradition have flourished in this district in spite of their many differences with other Muslims. Language is a great binding factor. The Bengalis who have made Bhagalpur district their home for centuries have adopted a dialect known as *Chhikka-chhikhi* which is a mixture of Hindi, Bengali or Maithili. Some of the noble men of Bhagalpur district whether Bengalis or Biharis or Marwaris have made endowments worth lacs for the advancement of the district. The munificence of Raja Shiva Chandra Banerji, the great Tarak Nath Mahashay, Tej Narain Singh, the Banaili Raj family and others have contributed to Bhagalpur's present. They never thought of differences of caste and never wanted their own caste-men only to prosper on their charities. The contribution of Hindi or Bengali literary men of Bhagalpur district has been unique and is still continuing.

The analysis of caste-relations given before luckily does not show a common or rigid pattern. If casteism has received the stage of tension somewhere due to political issues or elections, it has melted into harmony at other places. The present inter-caste relations are definitely on the melting point. The social laws and the set up of the Welfare Government are bound to accelerate the liquidation of the worst effects of casteism. The analysis is meant not for highlighting the differences but to show the trends so that one may have an introspection. With the great cultural heritage behind, Bhagalpur district is expected to grow out of the present picture quite soon.

INTER-COMMUNAL RELATIONS

The two major communities, Hindus and Muslims have generally lived in peace and amity. They share the festivities of many of their religious ceremonies. There was, however, a bad instance of communal tension in Bhagalpur district in 1946. A coverage of this incidence is necessary as a warning for the future. The general communal tension which was common to the entire province in that year received pointedness because of the events that followed the Direct Action Day in Calcutta marked by the killing of a large number of men including some Hindu Biharis. The exodus from Calcutta spread exaggerated stories. The great Calcutta killing was immediately followed by the carnage in Noakhali now in East Pakistan. The feelings of the entire Hindu community of the district was very much affected and there was a move for the non-observance of Diwali as a mark of frustration, resentment and sympathy. The feelings of the Hindus were made sore by the cold reception of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru in his tours in the frontal tribal areas, an attempt to shoot Rajagopalachari in Delhi, circulation of manuscript copies of a document said to be the programme of Direct Action of the Muslim League Council and the Vernacular Press.

A few local factors unfortunately occurred. The local Muslim League held a black flag demonstration on 2nd September 1946 when the Interim Government assumed office. The Arya Samajists held a meeting strongly resenting the marriage of a Hindu woman to a Mohammadan at Mojahidpur. On 26th October 1946 some Muslims of Jogsar objected to a Kali procession by a certain route. This delicate situation was however settled. On the same day (26th October 1946) a communal riot broke out at village English Chichraam, P.-S. Sultanganj in which a Kali procession was attacked by a Muslim mob in broad day light and in presence of the Subdivisional Officer, Sadar at the village. The Kali image was damaged and was left in the field to be a continuing sore point with the Hindus. No arrests were made at that time which might have had a good administrative effect. This incident was the immediate factor that acted as an explosive.

A Hindu Mahasabha meeting was held at the Marwari Pathasala on 27th October 1946.

It may be mentioned that from August, 1946 to 28th October 1946 when the communal disturbances actually broke out at Bhagalpur, several festivals had peacefully passed such as *Dahi Kado*, *Bakri-Id*, *Charuk-Chanda*, *Dasehra*, *Lakshmi Puja* and *Kali puja* in the town. It is, therefore, possible to draw the conclusion that if the Kali image had not been desecrated at English Chichraum near Akbarpur there would not have been the burst up on 28th October 1946 in the town.

At about 11 A.M. on 28th October 1946 suddenly a Hindu, Bishwanath Jhunjhunwala was attacked near Mojahidpur bridge. He was picked up by a Sub-Inspector of Police who was out on mobile patrol with armed force. Within half an hour communal tension broke out in different quarters and sniping of men started. A brutal attack on the shop and dispensary of Dr. Rahim in Sujaganj Bazar resulting in the ultimate death of the doctor and his compounder was the worst case both from the point of view of a status of the person involved as well as from the type of frenzied attack that was made. There was no case of widespread rioting but isolated cases of arson, looting and murder. In spite of immediate action in mobilising the police and magistracy the number of casualty till the midnight of 28th October 1946 was 21 deaths and 15 injured. Considering the topography of a big and spread out city like Bhagalpur with a large number of lanes and by-lanes, fields and gardens the number of casualty should be taken as moderate and due to the patrol of the police and the magistracy with the help of some non-official as well.

The contagion spread to the mufassil areas and both thana mufassil and Nathnagar Police-station were affected. There were very few cases of murder on 29th October 1946 and 30th October 1946 but on 31st October 1946 there was a riot at Badarpur, in Nathnagar Police-station where guns were used on the Hindus. The Badarpur incident ignited the situation in Sultanganj and Shahakund thanas in Sadar subdivision and Belhar, Rajaun, Banka, Dhoraiya and Amarpur thanas in Banka subdivision.

The entire force of the magistracy and the police was fully utilised round the clock. The Anti-Communal riot schemes were put into operations and armed mobile patrols moved day and night. The Police forces had to be reinforced from Dumka, Purnea, Bihar Military Police and Railway Protection Police. One troop of the Mounted Military Police was deployed. Contact was made by the authority with the Sub-area Commanding, Dinapur and a Company of the North Staffordshire Regiment arrived on the 31st October 1946 and was given the more difficult areas for

patrolling. Although the military were not of much use so far as the combing of the interior, their patrolling on the high roads had a good administrative effect. On 7th November 1946 a company of Dogra Regiment arrived and the North Staffordshire Regiment was withdrawn. The Dogras were deployed in both the subdivisions and did a lot of useful work.

The usual precautionary measures were taken as soon as communal disturbances broke out. Curfew was imposed, goondas were rounded up, many firearms were seized, special Police Officers were enlisted and many arrests were made under section 151/107 and under section 54, Cr. Procedure Code. A sizeable number of non-officials actually co-operated and there were many cases of protection given by the Hindus to the panicky Muslim families both in the urban areas and in the mufassil. A pre-planned attack by Hindu mob from the *diara* and the neighbouring village of the Muslims from Fatehpur near Sabour was nipped by a Magistrate and some Congress workers of the area. This clash would have been very serious particularly because a number of Fatehpur Mohammadans had guns.

The communal frenzy had its worst in Lakhanpur village on Sultanganj—Tarapur road. A part of Lakhanpur is in Bhagalpur district while the major part falls in Monghyr district. There was a very unfortunate carnage at Lakhanpur and a Magistrate from Bhagalpur was deputed by the Commissioner of Bhagalpur Division who cleared up the remnants of the carnage at that portion of Lakhanpur which is in Monghyr district*. The village of Lakhanpur remained deserted for a few weeks and the villagers stayed in the mango groves near Gangania and Sultanganj. Relief camps have had to be started.

The subsidence of the communal disturbances took a little time and it may be said that the worst was quickly over quite soon and* was mainly due to co-operation of the non-officials with the authorities. The two communities early realised the great folly of communal tension. With the partition and the set up of the Welfare State since 1947 there has not been any other revival of communal troubles of this type.

THE MAHASHAY FAMILY

As far as known there are only two families who were given the honorific title of Mahashay in Mughal days. One family is that of Bansberia Raj in West Bengal and the other of Bhagalpur district.

*This unenviable task was entrusted to the Editor of this Gazetteer.

The Mahashay family is one of the most important families in Bhagalpur district which traces its descent from Sri Ram Ghosh, who was appointed Kanungo-i-Sadar in 1604 (48 jalus) by the Mughal Emperor Akbar, in place of his aged father-in-law Thak Dutta *alias* Laskar Dutta. Emperor Akbar also conferred upon him, the title of "Mahashay", which became hereditary. The family of Thak Dutta used to serve as Kanungos and the old record mention that Thak Dutta himself served as Kanungo-i-Sadar of Bhagalpur.

From Sri Ram Ghosh down to Paresh Nath Ghosh, all the Mahashayas served as Kanungo during different Mughal Emperors, namely, Akbar, Jahangir, Shah Jehan, Aurangzeb, Muhammad Shah, and Shah Alam. Originally Sri Ram Ghosh's family settled down in the village Dumrama, P.-S. Amarpur, Banka (Bhagalpur).

The old historical records mention that the Rajas of Kharagpur (Monghyr) always quarrelled for their illegal claim of 13 *gandas* share of collection of Bihar. Rajas of Kharagpur (Monghyr) also took the advantage of the unstable condition of the country, looted Kanungos' house and carried away large number of official records and documents, more than once. Sri Ram Ghosh was the first victim to Raja Sangram Sahu (Sangram Singh) of Kharagpur. The dispute again arose during Bhagwati Charan Ghosh's time when he was obstructed in performing his duties by Raja Jagat Narain of Kharagpur and Bir Narain, his brother. Ultimately Shah Suja, Subadar of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa, got Bhagwati Charan Ghosh, formally appointed as Kanungo-i-Sadar in 1640 A. D., and a *firman* was issued to him accordingly by the then Mughal Emperor. Again for the third time, the Raja of Kharagpur, tried to assert his right of collection and attached the *kutchery*, of Mahashay Dayanath Ghosh, at Kharagpur and looted away records and documents. After this Mahashay Maya Nath Ghosh shifted his *kutchery* to the eastern bank of the river Ganga of Bhagalpur town. The Mahalla where he shifted his *kutchery* is contiguous to the present Mahalla, Mayaganj. Here too, the Raja of Kharagpur did not spare him and attacked the Mayaganj *kutchery* damaging numerous *Sanads*, grant records and papers. It appears that Kripanath Ghosh was addressed as Mahashay by Emperor Aurangzeb in 1108 F.S. in a *perwana* in which Mauza Lilatar (at present Rajoun P.-S., Banka subdivision, Bhagalpur) was granted to him in consideration of his faithful and valuable services to the throne. During Mahashay Paresh Nath Ghosh, the last *Kanungo*, Permanent Settlement was completed. He also rendered much valuable service to the East India Company in connection with Santhal Insurrection. Beside the other *perwanas* in which Paresh Nath Ghosh has been addressed as "Mahashay", three bear special mention, *viz.*,—

- (1) In 1170 F.S. addressed by Emperor Shah Alam;
- (2) In 1774 F.S. addressed by Emperor Shah Alam; and
- (3) In 1803 A.D. addressed by Collector of Bhagalpur.

It would be very interesting to note that the stone image of Sri Sri Bhairab Nathjee (now the family deity of Mahashays) was dug out during Paresch Nath Ghosh's time from a site to the south of the present "Tilha Kothi", then owned by the Mahashays, which is quite evident from *perwana* of 7th Magh, 1170 F.S., corresponding to 1783 A.D. The *perwana* of 1783 A.D. also mentions that the lands at Chawki Niamatpur (at present Mohalla Champaganagar, P.-S. Nathnagar, Bhagalpur) was made over to Paresch Nath Ghosh. The said idol was later installed in the newly constructed temple at Chowki Niamatpur (Champanagar).

The post of the Kanungo was abolished during the time of Cleveland, Collector of Bhagalpur. The old records mention that during the life time of Paresch Nath, his son Shambhu Nath Ghosh was appointed "*Diwan*" of the Collector of Bhagalpur in 1801 by the East India Company. During the life time of his father (Paresch Nath), Shambhu Nath was known as *Diwan* but after Paresch Nath's death, Shambhu Nath enjoyed the title of Mahashay which is evident from the *perwana* of 17th October 1821 of the Collector of Bhagalpur. Mahashay Shambhu Nath proved himself of much help and use to Lt. Col. Franklin in connection with the demarcation of boundaries of ancient Palibothra (Pataliputra) in 1818. Mahashay Shambhunath Ghosh's most outstanding achievement was the excavation of "Raj Danr" or "Mahashay Danr", for facilitating irrigation in Tuppa Sujanagar (Banka subdivision) within his Zamindari. Then Mahashay Uma Nath Ghosh succeeded his father (Shambhunath Ghosh) and emulated the noble example of his father by excavating another channel "Naya Danr".* Uma Nath's son Dwarika Nath was also addressed as Mahashay which is evident from one of the *perwanas* of 23rd January 1862.

The next Mahashay was Tarak Nath, whose fame is borne out by the Final Report of the Settlement Officer, Mr. Murphy (vide page 71):—.

"132. Mahashay Tarak Nath Ghosh has the reputation of being one of the best landlords in the district. He spends considerable amount of money in the upkeep of his irrigational channels which are maintained in good condition and his relations with his "rayats" are generally satisfactory."

Further, a reference to Bengal District Gazetteer, Bhagalpur, P. 80, may also be made, "Mahashay Tarak Nath Ghosh is a brilliant example to other zamindars and he has acquired proverbial fame for the special interest he takes in the proper irrigation of the lands lying in his estate. *Danrs* owned by him are always kept in excellent repair."

*See Bengal District Gazetteer (1911), Bhagalpur, P. 80.

Institutions like Sanatan Dharam Sabha (still existing at Karnagarh), Bhagalpur Water Works, Bhagalpur Institute, Benaras Hindu University etc., to name a few, were the recipient of generous donations from Mahashay Tarak Nath Ghosh. He was succeeded by Mahashay Amar Nath Ghosh, his son in 1939. Amar Nath maintained the tradition and donated Rs. 10,000 to T.N.B. College and gave in gift valuable pieces of land for starting schools at Dumrama, Amarpur etc.*

SOCIAL LIFE

Property and inheritance.

For the Hindus, the law of inheritance is governed by the Hindu Law and in the case of the Mohammadans by the Mohammadan Law. A Hindu's property is never held in abeyance. It is the general principle of the Hindu Law that property devolves on the sons on the death of the father. According to Manu, the great law giver, "to the nearest *sapinda* the inheritance next belongs". A Hindu accrues his right in the ancestral property as soon as he is conceived but such right cannot be accrued in the separate property of his father. There are two schools of Hindu Law—*Dayabhag* and *Mitakshara* which govern different sections of the Hindus.

The position of women in this district along with the women elsewhere has substantially changed since the passing of the Hindu Succession Act, 1956, the daughters get a share in her father's property just as the son, provided her father does not debar her by a law. Widow marriage and divorce are slowly coming into vogue though not common. Monogamy is the rule now.

So far as Mohammadans are concerned the father has the absolute right in the property and can debar any of the sons from inheritance. Among Mohammadans the daughter has as good a claim in her father's property as the son and there is a fixed ratio of the rights of son and daughter and the other relatives.

Family life, marriage and morals.

The old idea of joint family system among the Hindus is rapidly liquidating even in the villages. The shift of the more intelligent and educated section from the rural areas to the towns is a contributory factor. Family life is becoming more and more individualistic. Usually the branch of the family which earns more money slowly separates from the poorer branch. Family life in the villages is disintegrating. This is also due to the fact

*The main sources of information regarding the Mahashay family are Sri R.N. Ghosh and Sri M.N. Ghosh, Pleaders of Bhagalpur (P.C.R.C.).

that the chances of employment in the villages are small and the educated persons have got to shift to the urban areas. With the development of communications, expansion of Block Projects, cottage rural industries there may, however, be some change in the near future. The abolition of the zamindari accelerated the shift to the urban areas. |

The previous idea of a Hindu marriage being more sacramental than contractual is on the wane. The orthodox restrictions of marriage alliance between particular relatives are, however, still basically followed. Contract marriages under Act III of 1874 are not unpopular. The number of civil marriages, intercaste marriages and interprovincial marriages is very small in the district but the parties so married are accepted in the society. Dowry system is still prevalent in some shape or the other. In middle class families the marriage of a daughter has become a problem due to the demand of dowry. Widow re-marriage is not held to be abnormal now although cases of widow marriage are not large. Working girls have no more difficulties to get married than other. But it has got to be admitted that although theoretically women are held in high esteem, they are not given their proper position yet either in the rural or the urban areas. Still economically women are dependent on their husbands, fathers or sons or others due to the peculiar structure of the society and conventions. Independent earning by women is not common. It is a fact that the women of the lower castes or the working girls are economically better off owing to their earning status. It is unfortunate that the backwardness of women as a class is holding back a broad-based social upgrading. There are, however, distinct signs of a break and the Indian National Congress, Bharat Sewak Samaj, All-India Women's Council, Social Service Board and various other voluntary social services organisation are actively engaged in broad-basing the social structure where women will have their full share.

Prostitution and traffic in women

It is unfortunate that prostitutes should be accepted as a common element in the social structure of Bhagalpur town till very recently. A large number of prostitutes lived permanently and many of them own *pucca* houses in Jogsar a prominent area. In the vicinity of this area there are houses of other respectable people, shops, etc. This feature is not particularly exclusively to Bhagalpur town only. Some of the other important towns in Bihar like Gaya, Monghyr and Muzaffarpur had also *mohallas* of prostitutes in the heart of the town.

This feature has a background. In the olden days it was nothing uncommon for a *rais* or a rich Zamindar openly maintaining public women and also going out in *phaetons* or cars for evening

jaunts. Songstresses were in great demand and were a common feature in social ceremonies like *Tilaks*, marriages, etc. There were also talented singers and dancers among them and it has to be remembered that it is this class of women who were both patronised and despised in the same breath had kept up the institution of classical dancing and music when they were not cultivated at all in domestic families. Three decades back it was unthinkable that an educated school or college girl would openly dance or sing in the public and earn merited appreciation. There has been a tremendous advance in social thoughts regarding music, dance, etc., and in the light of the present trend the contribution of the public women in the past should not be derided. If there was a large section of fallen women the responsibility was really not theirs but to the society in which they were allowed to remain. The very fact that they were allowed to live in the heart of the town, built or owned houses, and carry on the profession shows that there was an encouragement to them by the society.

With the spread of education and advance thought, there has also been a simultaneous upgrading among the women of this class. It is a common feature now that many of the fallen women are bringing up their daughters or younger sisters in a different atmosphere and are keen to give them a proper schooling for their future.

In this district prostitutes were not confined to Bhagalpur town only. Some of the other townships and large villages also had number of prostitutes.

An investigation was made in early 1961 and it was ascertained that there were about 100 families of prostitutes in the town of Bhagalpur. As usual their places had to be carefully watched by the Police as various types of anti-social elements used to collect there.

In 1956 Suppression of Immoral Traffic in Girls and Women Act was passed by the Central Government. It was enforced in the district of Bhagalpur on the 26th day of November 1960. Since the enactment of this Act these areas have been declared as Red Light Area. About sixty or seventy families of prostitutes from Jogsar *mahalla* have left and now there are only about 20 *tawaiifs* (songstresses) who are maintaining their livelihood as dancing girls and singers. There are still about 14 *khandgiz* (prostitutes of lower status) who did not yet go and they have been prosecuted and are undergoing trial in the Court. One thing more should be discussed here. This Act was not simultaneously enforced throughout the State. This has affected in other way also. Several *tawaiifs* have migrated to this place. From Kotwali it was learnt that there were only four local prostitutes but many of them have migrated from the States of Delhi, Uttar Pradesh, etc.

An enquiry disclosed that the prostitutes have their own code of conduct and specially the Gandharva sect who trace their origin from mythological Gandharva feel irritated if they were called professionals. Beside Gandharva sect there are two more other sects, i.e., Ramjani and Musalmani. The professionals belonging to the Gandharva sect are all Hindus. Those belonging to Ramjani may be either Hindus or Muslims. Musalmani prostitutes are Muslims. The inter-marriage is strictly prohibited from one sect to another.

The abolition of zamindari and the deterioration of the economic condition of the common mass have affected these professionals very adversely. The welcome changes in social ideas do not encourage the singing and the dancing of such women at the social functions. Without a leisured class of men with long purse the financial condition of such women is bound to deteriorate. This is what has happened and many of the girls of such families are now getting themselves educated. This is a good field for reclaiming these women and utilising them for handicrafts or other skilled professions.

As mentioned above, the abolition of zamindari and the economic deterioration of hitherto moneyed class had affected the influx of such women in the town. But their professions have been banned which is a fitting step taken by the Welfare State.

Yet it cannot be denied that there is a certain amount of underground traffic in women. Bhagalpur was famous for prostitution in pre-partition days. The enquiry also disclosed that a few of them had to adopt this profession because of the hardships or because they were led astray at a very young age and society would not take them back.

Since the Immoral Traffic Act was enforced in the district in 1960, the financial condition of the prostitutes has declined. Social consciousness had to be aroused and a proper rehabilitation in the practical field is necessary.

Drinking and Gambling

Bhagalpur district is not a prohibited area. The revenue of the Excise Department is increasing year by year. Both country and foreign liquor are sold in huge quantity.

Drinking for the common men has been a feature of the past as well and is largely due to *tal* and *khajur* trees.

The innumerable *tal* and *khajur* trees in the district have led to a craze for *tari*. The beverage of this unfermented juice is said to have medicinal value. Fermented *tal* juice or *tari* is almost the poor man's beer and any prohibition of the drinking of *tari* will deprive them of a source of joy. But it could be controlled.

In the summer season wayside *tari* shops crop up and the many a passerby usually drop in for a drink. This is the season when the servant class mostly has a good time to the detriment of their work. Sale of *tari* is controlled by the Excise Department but illegal tapping of *tal* trees for *tari* is difficult to check. There has been no proper census of *tal* trees in this district but the number must be many thousands. There are licensed shops both in the towns as well as in the rural areas where country liquor of different grades is sold. There is a ban for the consumption of country liquor within the premises of the shop. This is not strictly followed as investigation shows. The idea is that if there is a ban on consumption of country liquor within the shop premises there will be a decline in the consumption of the liquor. It was thought that the people will hesitate to buy country liquor and take them home for drinking the beverage. But this is counteracted by allowing the people to drinking just outside the shop. Sale of foreign liquor is also controlled. The enormous rise in the price of foreign liquor stands as a check to its promiscuous consumption. The use of *nira* or unfermented *tari* has yet to become popular. *Bhang* or a hemp is also common in the district. *Ganja* is cultivated in portions of the district under strict supervision. For *Chandu* there is said to be a den at *mahallah* Maulanachak in Bhagalpur. Only a few persons are addicted to this type of intoxicant. Other intoxicants like opium, *charas*, etc., are also in use. *Charas* is prepared by mixing Babul and Guava leaves in opium. The sale of the foreign liquors has increased now than the past.

Certain types of criminal offences are usually associated with promiscuous drinking. Crime figures of sexual offences commonly associated with heavy drinking will be found in the relevant chapters but it is difficult to say what percentage of such figures could be said to be due to drinking. Another common offence associated with drinking is gambling.

Gambling is not, however, a dangerous problem in the district. It is, however, understood that gambling is not confined to the lower strata of the society or the criminal class. It is said that the respectable Marwaris, well-placed officials and non-officials also indulge in some form of gambling, etc., within closed doors. It may be mentioned here that during *Diwali*, gambling is very common. There are various modes of play which could be described as gambling. The most favourite mode is the play with dices and gambling with cards. Card games are popular in modern society. Such games are bridge, rummy, flush and *tin tasia*. Of course, the games of rummy, flush and *tin tasia*, *mangpata* are common in lower society too.

In the past there was a gambling den which used to be run in *mahallas* Kutubganj and Mandroja of Bhagalpur town by some

important criminals, from various parts of the State, such as Monghyr, Sahabganj, Naugachhia, Dumka and other places used to participate. This has since been stopped out of the efforts of the local officers but local criminals still indulge in gambling quietly, where no criminal from outside take part. Prosecutions under this category of crime are few and cannot be said to have a detrimental effect.

Another offence which is said to be common in this district is the smuggling of non-duty-paid *Ganja*. The proximity of Nepal border has encouraged this offence.

Home Life

There has been a somewhat exhaustive treatment of the types of dwelling, furniture, decoration, dress and ornaments, food, amusement and festivities in the re-written District Gazetteer of Saran. The observations there have their bearing on this district as well. The villages in this district are usually clustered together within a space of the village and apart from the cultivation land. There is usually a small homestead land adjoining the houses. The individual houses are not sited within the cultivation land of the tenants which is the common feature in some other parts of India. Villages have not grown as haphazardly as towns have. Most of the houses in rural area are *kutchas* being built of mud and plaster with thatched roof and usually well-to-do men have a small *angan* attached to the house. The *diara* villages are particularly liable to be inundated by floods and burnt down by fire and a very austere type of hutments are the usual dwellings in the *diara* areas. There is no sewerage system within the village and there is a general lack of a sense of sanitation which is also quite noticeable in the urban areas. In the rural areas, lavatory does not exist excepting in the houses of well-to-do people and the problem of cleaning the lavatory is becoming rather acute. But the open spaces in the outskirts of the villages and the nearby fields are commonly used by the villagers to make up the lack of proper privies in their individual houses.

The growth of the towns in this district has been treated separately. It may be mentioned that excepting Bhagalpur none of the present towns in Bhagalpur district has had any planned programme behind its growth. The towns have common pattern along with the towns elsewhere in Bihar.

The Bazar portion is usually crowded. Slums are not segregated and there is a clear weightage from the municipalities for the better upkeep of the areas where the officials and richer folks live, although the main municipal income comes from the bazar portion. The houses in the towns are usually brick built with mortar and cement. Housing condition in the towns is already an acute problem and portions of a house are being let out on

rent without proper facilities for separate bath-room or lavatory. The housing problem can only be solved after a large number of houses have been made available for the people of lower and smaller income groups. As they are, there is not much of privacy or comfort in the houses of the common men. Consumption of electricity even where power is available is mostly confined to people with fairly good income.

Furniture and Decoration

Possession of furniture is a sign of money and taste and the index of furniture in a household naturally varies. Urban influence has recently been responsible for the richer villagers slowly come in for proper drawing room, bedroom and dining room furniture along with better type of houses. The average middle class families have not only a number of sleeping cots but also some chairs, tables and a few wooden benches. Interior decoration is more of a casualty in most of the houses because of more lack of money than of taste. Gardening as a hobby has yet to percolate. It is a pity that even middle class people who can afford not to speak of the richer folks have not taken to gardening as a matter of course.

In the urban areas usually there is more of furniture in the household. With the small sized rooms that are coming in vogue, the furniture have to be simple and not too heavy or ornate. The slant is towards following the pattern of the utility type of furniture. Interior decoration in the house of a rich man of taste in a town has slowly been coming in. Books are hardly possessed with pride.

Dress and Ornaments

There is nothing particularly different in dress and ornaments among the people in this district from those in Saran district which has had an exhaustive treatment in the re-written Saran Gazetteer. The old costumes like *kurta*, *dhoti*, *paijama*, coarse *sari*, *jhula*, etc., are still there in the villages but are being replaced with better type of *dhoti*, coat, shirt, trousers, bush-shirt, *salwar*, *chaddar*, *dopatta*, etc. The use of shoes and chappals is normal for the town dwellers. Villagers are also taking more to the use of better type of shoes and *chamarua* shoes made of untanned hide are slowly disappearing. The use of cosmetics and other articles of toilet particularly for the ladies has come to stay and the degree of their consumption depends on money and availability. Regarding ornaments, significant changes have come in their use for both men and women. A few decades back males used to have more ornaments for the finger, ear and the neck. But now male's ornaments are practically reduced to rings only.

Of course in Marwari, Bania families gold chain is worn by male members. Women have given up many of the old type ornaments which were very heavy and ornate. The slant is towards ornaments of simpler design, lighter weight and there is more use of stone instead of gold and other expensive metal. The neck is the most favourite part of the body for the wearing of ornaments. Ornaments are used by the ladies for the neck, arms, wrist, fingers, waist and feet. As a rule no gold is worn on the feet. Gold, silver and precious stones are the chief ingredients. Glass beads etc., are also commonly used. Glass bangles and imitation jewels are very popular.

Food and Drinks

The diet of the common man is very unbalanced and deficient in protein. This is partially due to habits and economic status. Rice, Wheat, barley, maize, pulses, vegetables, fish and meat are the common food of the district. The people of lower income group live on barley, maize, other cereals, pulses, *sattu* (a flour prepared from one or other of the various grains), *chura* or fried rice and curd and some cheap vegetables. The middle class families take more of vegetables and pulses with their main diet of rice and wheat. Consumption of fish, meat, egg and milk depends on the economic condition of the family as the prices of these commodities are going up. Fruits like water melon, mango and *lichhi* are taken during the season provided they are cheap. Watermelon and different varieties of mango are abundantly grown. *Zardalu* species of mangoes is highly prized. Cheaper fruits like banana and guava are for the common man. Milk and its various preparations such as curd, ghee, butter and *chhena* are more for the rich. Milk of both cow and buffalo are in use. Milk-made sweets of Bhagalpur have a good market.

Among the vegetables potato, *palwal*, lady's finger, pumpkin, brinjal, cauliflower, cabbage, bean, radish, various kinds of cucurbita and spinach are usually taken. Various kinds of pickles are commonly taken. The majority of the population is vegetarian.

The culinary condiments generally used are turmeric, cuminseeds, pepper, ginger, cardamoms, cloves, coriander seeds, cinnamons, nutmeg, mac, cassia, cubes, mustard, saffron, asafoetida, onion and garlic. The cooking medium is usually some kind of oil like mustard, hydrogenated oil (vegetable *ghee*) and *ghee*. Unfortunately pure *ghee* is a rarity now. Bhagalpur was once noted for pure *ghee*.

There are various kinds of meat and fish preparations current in the district. Muslim influence is seen in dishes of *Moghalai* types like *biriani*, *polao*, *kalia*, *korma*, *kofta*, *kabab*, *raziala*, *murg-moshallam*, etc. Bengali influence is seen in fish preparations like

jhowl, fried fish, *murighanto*, etc. The restaurants are popularising meat and fish preparations like cutlet, chop and roast. Eggs have become very popular. Tea and snack shops are found in every town and big villages. Tea drinking is becoming a common habit in the middle class families and in the group of people belonging to the class of the heavy workers like mechanics, drivers, and hard manual labourers. Tea shops are fast becoming the clearing house for gossips and rumours. Coffee has not yet become popular. Cold drink in the summer season and specially on ceremonial occasions is common. Drink of curd (*lussi*) is also a popular drink in the summer season. Various kinds of aerated water more attractive for the colour have penetrated even into the villages. Smoking is also becoming quite common in spite of the increasing price of tobacco. Smoking among women is very common. *Biris* and cigarettes are slowly replacing *hukka* smoking. Smoking of cigar is not common. The chewing of *pan* with areca nut is very common and the expenditure on it is not inconsiderable.

Amusements

Songs and music have a great fascination for the rural people. *Bhajans* and *Kirtans*, devotional songs with music have not lost their popularity. Apart from them there is a craze for particular types of songs in particular seasons like *Holi*, etc. The *melas* and fairs have a great impact on the rural population. Usually, the *melas* and fairs provide a number of amusement centres such as *nautanki*, theatre parties, *jatras*, circus, cinema shows, etc. Football matches and wrestling have a great hold on a rural public. In big villages as in towns there are theatrical and *jatra* parties during particular festivals like *Durga Puja* or *Deepawali*, card games are very popular in all strata of society.

The towns in the district have more centres for amusement and recreation. Bhagalpur has a number of cinema houses, recreation clubs, and some sort of exhibition or amusement centres practically remain there for at least three to four months in a year. The student population has very little contact with their teachers during the hours beyond the college study. The bulk of student population congregate in tea stalls or restaurants or cinema in the afternoons. Very few are found in the libraries which are very few in number. Their interest could be canalised to sports, cultural meetings, etc. The towns save and except Bhagalpur do not have adequate playing grounds, parks or centre of cheap amusement and recreation.

Festivals

Festivals form part of the daily life of the Hindus and Muslims both in rural and urban areas. Bhagalpur wears a gala appearance

during particular festivals. *Behula Puja*, *Janmashtami*, *Shivaratri*, *Ramnavami*, *Tij*, *Durga Puja*, *Deepawali* and *Holi* are some of the festivals for the Hindus. *Sabebarat*, *Ramjan*, *Id*, *Bakrid* and *Fatiha-dua-dahum*, *Muharram* are important for the Muslims.

Besides, Bhagalpur has an annual *Ramlila* festival where friends and relatives from far and near meet together. "*Purnima Sammelan*" celebrates the "*Buddha Purnima*" day with a popular function every year. Bhagalpur has a special kite flying competition festival. There is a big Jain temple and Dharamshala at Nathnagar where Jains congregate on the birth day of Lord Mahabir.

The Mohammadan population here have a special festival of lights when one night paper boats, lamps etc., decorated with lights are floated in the river during the rainy season. They have another festival—the sacrifice of fowls at a place nearby Milki village, thana Bihpur (*Alangan Saheb ka Dargah*).

ECONOMIC AND PROFESSIONAL GROUPS AND CLASSES IN RELATION TO SOCIAL LIFE.

The foremost economic group is of the agriculturists of various grades—big and small. During the period of war the prices of food-grains became very high and the agriculturists took advantage of it and economic condition of some of them became very sound. This also happened in the case of those zamindars who beside the cash income from rent had also large or small agricultural holdings commonly known as *Bakast* or *Kamat* lands. It is the agricultural economy which permeates the social life in the district and we may, in a way, say that the social life of the district is rooted in the villages. It is the rural pattern of life which largely rules the district and the present Welfare State has put the necessary accent on it by agriculturists of our villages. To give an example, the political leaders five decades back were more or less urban with urbane manners and their political meetings were mostly held in the towns. They gave the leadership that was suited to the times. But with the change in the political set up and with the gradual evolution of self-government and the ushering in of democracy, it was clearly appreciated that the leadership may remain in the hands of the urban people but they must win the support of the villagers. This is one great change that Mahatma Gandhi had brought to the country and Bhagalpur district along with the other districts in Bihar had the fullest impact of that teaching. The district branch of the Indian National Congress gained popularity because the leaders toured throughout the villages at the critical period of organising the Congress movement in the bullock carts, *ekkas*, boats, and on foot. They lived with

the people, they ate their food and they fully demonstrated that they were one with them as they were really so. The artificial gap which had been brought in by the Western education between an English educated man and the villager was quickly obliterated. The average common man in the village of Bhagalpur realised that he also be counted and probably with the realisation there has come in a certain amount of avoidable evil. At the moment with the widening of franchise based on adult franchise, it is the agriculturists of the district that form the bulk of the electorate. No democratic set-up of State administration could alienate the agriculturists now. That is the reason why the Congress Ministry have been trying their utmost to bring in a welfare measure and land reforms so that the condition of the agriculturists is improved. A series of reforms that have been brought are calculated to improve the economic condition of the cultivators, *bataidars*, agricultural labourers and landless labourers. It is a different thing if some of the reforms have not achieved their target. But nevertheless, the objective is there. The village has again been put on the map and the trend is to improve the villages.

There are other classes in consideration of the economic status and also several professional groups. Formerly before the abolition of zamindari system the big landlords were economically more sound and commanded highest place in the society. They mostly led princely life and brought up their children in accordance with their status. They were the aristocrats of the society. Persons having zamindari income of even a sum of Rs. 2,500 or more led an aristocratic life though in their zeal for maintaining pomp and grandeur of their class, they used to become indebted and economically shattered. Next came the lawyers and other professionals who formed the brain trust in the district. The zamindars as a class cannot be run down because many of them in Bhagalpur district tried to discharge a part of their social obligations by starting schools, colleges, libraries and other cultural institutions. Many of them have endowed temples, mosques, trusts and other charitable institutions. But at the same time it must be said that it is the zamindars who had encouraged the various *abwabs* that raiyats had to pay over and above their rent. The number of rent suits in any year was many times larger than the other types of civil suits. This alone shows that the zamindari as an institution was not popular.

The abolition of zamindari came in the chain of a series of agrarian reforms. The impact of the abolition of zamindari system has been very great. The condition of some of the ex-zamindars specially those whose main source of maintenance was the income from zamindari has rather become pitiable.

As already mentioned these zamindars maintained and contributed to the maintenance of hospitals, schools, *Ashrams* for widows, temples and mosques. There was a sense of charity in most of them and majority of them contributed lavishly even for national causes. During the struggle for independence most of them, though stealthily were pillars of strength for the economic soundness of the struggle. One result of the abolition of the zamindari is that all these charitable institutions are either gradually vanishing or have so greatly deteriorated that they are almost non-existent. Those who were the charity givers are now virtually beggars. After the abolition of the zamindari, the old zamindars are taking to other vocations and professions. There is a danger in the society that some of these who have been forced by the abolition of the zamindari to lead a life of poverty from the life of ease and comfort may swell the ranks of persons not desirable for the society. Most of the old zamindars use to maintain irrigational facilities in their respective zamindaris and these irrigational facilities are gradually deteriorating. Now for everything charitable people have to look to the Government for assistance.

THE BANGIYA SAHITYA PARISHAD

As an association aiming solely at literary and social improvement, a branch of the parent Bangiya Sahitya Parishad of Calcutta (which came into being in about 1892), the Bhagalpur Bangiya Sahitya Parishad, was established in 1905. Its nucleus was a literary society called "*Sahitya Sabha*" founded by the then literary persons including the famous Bengali novelist Sarat Chandra Chatterji. The meetings of the *Sabha* was held at the residence of the Gangulis of Bengali tola (Sarat Chandra's maternal uncle's house where he was brought up and the reminiscences of which have found place in his famous book *Srikanta*) by a few youngmen of literary pursuits, the only *pardah* lady member being the budding talent Nirupama Debi who did not appear personally but listened to the discussions from the adjacent room and had her writings read through a proxy.

The third All-India Bengali Literary Conference was held at Bhagalpur in February, 1910, under the auspices of the Bhagalpur Bangiya Sahitya Parishad under the presidentship of Mr. Justice Sarada Charan Mitra and Rabindranath spoke very highly of the residents of all communities of Bhagalpur and of the working of the local *Sahitya Parishad* which was then only five years old. It was started with a museum but it is now defunct for dearth of its separate building meantime.

Mainly owing to the efforts of Shri Ranjit Sinha, a leading advocate, a separate building and hall (named Chandra Shekhar

Hall) was constructed in 1937 at the munificence of a few magnanimous citizens, the children of the late Chandra Shekhar Sarkar, Mrs. Deep Narayan Singh (daughter of Sir Taraknath Palit) and others and the Golden Jubilee of the *Parishad* was celebrated in 1957. The library of the *Parishad* contains over 3,000 books.

THE BHAGALPUR INSTITUTE

The Bhagalpur Institute and Public Library which celebrated its centenary in 1934 and the 125th year of its existence in 1959 was established in 1834. In order to dispel the doubt which some people may feel as to the possibility of such an institution being established at such an early period of the British rule the old history of the town has to be remembered. In the early days the civil town was built near the old city (consisting of Nathnagar, Champanagar and Karnagarh including a fort and these facts prove the existence of an old town around them) and the Cleveland House (Tilla Kothi) and other well built houses bear testimony to this. The old civil town was inhabited by Europeans and the area is still called Sahibganj. Besides, Bhagalpur played an important role in the early days of the British Rule and was considered as a sanatorium. The house of Rai Bahadur Surya Narayan Sinha was the official residence of the Lieutenant Governors who used to spend some part of the year here before Darjeeling was discovered and when Darjeeling was first opened up the road lay through Bhagalpur. Gradually the civil station was extended eastward with the exodus of officers and assistants in the Government offices while others came in service under the various indigo concerns situated in or around the town. The different communities at the time felt the necessity of a common meeting place and joined together to start this Public Library. Eminent persons like Raja Ram Mohan Ray and Dr. K. D. Ghosh (father of Shri Aurobindo) stayed here and with the help and enthusiasm of the prominent citizens of all communities (Muslims, Biharis, Marwaris and Bengalis) the present building was built, the land being a free gift from Mr. Kedar Nath Chakrabarti. In 1892 Rai Bahadur Surya Narayan Sinha presented a billiard table which enhanced the attraction of the institute and on which have played players of international reputation (e. g., Mr. Y. C. Ariff). The recent landmarks in the history of the Institute are the construction of the upper storey, electrification of the premises and throwing open the membership to the ladies as well. The library contains about 5,000 books and all in English.

The name of the institute is "The Bhagalpur Literary and Scientific Institute" and consists of a public library and a recreation club including a billiard room and a *pucca* tennis court. The object is to promote social intercourse among all communities and the pursuit of the study of literature and science, provided

that no political meeting or demonstration or agitation is held by or under the auspices of the institute. No spirituous liquors or intoxicating drugs are allowed to be consumed within the premises of the institute.

MINOR GAMES

In the play activities of infancy and early childhood, toys predominate over games. Babies are fascinated by multi-coloured rattles (*jhunjhunna*) and toys that make a variety of sounds—all kinds of pipes, whistles, drums, etc. These are followed by their keen rival, the doll and then come the 'toys on wheels'. It is not an uncommon sight to see a child tripping about the house with a *kharkharwa gadiwala* or running about dragging behind him a toy-vehicle attached to a short string.

Children of four to five years of age play a few games taking part by turns. *Lukka chori* or hide and seek is a simple chase and tag game in which one of the children chases while others hide. The seeker stands facing a wall with his eyes closed. After all the players have found a hiding place they call out, "ready". On this the 'seeker' unfolds his eyes and starts searching the hidden players who rush to the spot and touch an object previously agreed on before the 'seeker' touches them. Children love swimming. Then there are games of the 'imitative' or 'make believe' type. In these types of games there are various roles like that of a cartman, horse-driver, engine-driver, palanquin bearer, etc., enacted with fidelity to real life. They are games of the sort played with no set rules but with a good team spirit, every player having a part to perform. A game known as *Ghoda-ghoda* (horse) is played in several ways. Generally two children stand, one (driver) behind the child is the horse. Sometimes, a rope is passed from the back of the neck of the 'horse' and the 'driver' holds in one of his hands the two ends of the rope and carries a whip in the other. Another variety of this game consists of the 'horse' moving on all fours with a 'rider' on his back. Horse and rider is also played by only one child, the child (rider) holding a long stick (horse) between the two legs, one of the legs resting on the ground behind and the other held on the hand. *Palaki* (palanquin) is usually played by three. The two stand facing each other, each gripping with his right hand his left elbow and with his left hand the right elbow of his friend opposite. In the arm square so formed they carry the third who sits with his arms resting on the shoulders of the two. While carrying the third the other two utter slogans one of which is quoted below :—

‘*Jai Kanhaiya Lal ki,
Madam Gopal ki,
Larkan ke hathi-ghoda,
Budhawan ke Palaki.*’

Another game is the children form a queue, each holding the garment of the one in front of him and play a train on the move. The engine-driver is at the head, at the tail is the guard, and in between are the 'wagons'. The guard whistles and gives the signal, the 'wagons' get ready to move and the 'engine' speeds up. At intervals on way to destination the 'engine' has to whistle : '*Koo-chhik-chhik-chhik*.'

Doll-dressing and doll-marriage are favourite pastime among girls. The game of house-keeping is often played enthusiastically by girls with secondary roles given to boys. Doll's marriage may form a part of house-keeping or be played as a game by itself when planned on a grand scale.

A number of 'chase and tag' games are played by children between the ages of five and nine. *Chance* is a simple game which is played between two parties. Usually there are five to six players in each party. One party hides in suitable places and when the hiding party calls 'ready', the other party makes a search of the hiding persons. One person of the search party watches the object previously agreed on before one of the 'seekers' touches them and calls out "*chance*", "*chance*". This leads to the hiding of the same party unless and until all 'seekers' are traced by the search party. . This game is played in more than one way.

In all 'chase and tag' games the player who is tagged becomes the chaser and the game starts afresh.

Games of *goli* (marble), *lattu* (top), and *guddi* (kite) have great attraction for boys between the ages of six and sixteen and are played with competitive zest. For hitting a marble usually the spring action of the drawn up middle finger is used. There are various types of marble games such as *parro*, *ghuchpillo*, *tisso*, etc. Each instance of correct aiming adds to the delight of the player and gives an impetus to the other to compete. Spinning the top follows the same method in all parts of the country. Once a mastery over the 'spin' is acquired more skilful top-games like *gunjmar*, *bellaphar*, *lattu jitto*, etc., are contested.

During winters kite-flying is very common. Kite-flying starts after *Dasahra* and ends generally on *Sankranti* day or on *Shivaratri* day. Hoisting up a kite is as good as a challenge to anybody to have a 'kite-fight'. Each boy so handles his kite as to cut off the thread of his opponent. The thread treated with powdered glass and gum is used. Kite-flying fascinates older people also. At one time Zamindars and *Rais* people used to fly kites of various shapes and dimensions and there used to be regular *mahalla* teams for kite-flying.

A number of team-games are played in later childhood and adolescence. Some of them are described below :—

Rumal chor.—Players sit in circle facing in and one of them runs outside the circle with a *rumal* (handkerchief) in his hand which he quietly and swiftly puts behind one of the players. If the player is alert he immediately picks up the *rumal* and chases the player who dropped it behind him. The latter to avoid being hit by the chaser must reach the vacant place quickly.

If the seated player fails to detect the *rumal* put behind him, the chaser completing the round picks up the *rumal* and then beats and chases the 'dullard' till he takes one round and resumes his seat.

Dole Patta.—This hardy game is popularly played by cowherds. From a circle drawn on the ground under a tree a player throws away a stick as distant as he can. By the time the 'thief' runs for the stick and restores it in the circle all climb the tree. The game lies in the players from the tree jumping from or climbing down the tree and touching the stick before they are tagged by the thief. The one who is tagged becomes the next 'thief'.

There are other games like *goolli danda*, *andhi chapat*, etc., which are popularly played by young boys.

Girls generally prefer games like doll-dressing, doll-marriage and are greatly interested in dancing, skipping and singing. Boys on the other hand love to play strenuous games involving muscular exercise and skill. Following are some of the games played by girls :

Panch gotiya is a sedentary game played by girls. Big round pebbles or shreds of pottery serve as ready material. Generally five pieces of pebbles are thrown on the floor and one player picks up one of them and throws it into the air and picks up another from the floor and catches both the thrown pebbles in the air and a pebble from the ground. In this way the game is played—first *ek-ek*, then *do-do*, *tin-tin*, *char-char*, then *kainchiya* and then last one *jhapta*.

There are other games known as *ek-hat—do-hat*, *denga pani* (boat and water), *uttha baithi*, *ghagho rani*, etc. They all are light games but very amusing and can be played by a group of any number of girls.

There are various popular games of the adults. Of the Indian games, the well-known are :—(1) *Kabaddi*, (2) *Raja Kabaddi*, (3) *Circle Kho-kho* and a number of other games.

The other most popular out door games in the district are foot-ball, hockey, cricket, volley-ball, basket-ball, tennis, badminton, etc., and the indoor games are carrom, table-tennis, billiards, playing cards, chess, etc.

Then there are other recreational activities like Drama, Dance, Music, *Kirtan*, *Bhajan*, *Ramayan path*, etc. Dance, drama and music are generally organised during *Dasahra*, *Vaishakhi* day, *Diwali* and on other occasions. During Muharram, Muslims also entertain themselves with displaying of *lathis*, *bhala*, etc.

There are a few *Akharas* and *Gymnasium* in which wrestling, *lathis*, *lezims*, *bana*, spears, etc., are taught. Heavy stone-bells and stone-wheels and sometimes dumb-bells and modern weight-lifting apparatus are available in gymnasium centres.

There are several recreational clubs in the town of Bhagalpur where games of table-tennis, billiards, playing cards, etc., are available.

CUSTOMS AMONG MUSLIMS

The Muslim women during pregnancy observe like the Hindus, a number of restrictions. After the birth of a child the father or any male member present recites *Azan*, the prayer called in Arabic into the ears of the child. For forty days the mother abstains from regular prayer. Circumcision is observed usually before the male child reaches the age of seven or eight. They also perform the *maktab* ceremony of the child at the age of five by reciting the verses of the holy *Kuran*. This ceremony is supposed to mark the beginning of the educational career of the child. On the occasion of this ceremony sweets are distributed to friends and relations.

Marriage

Courtship before marriage is slow in coming up because of the *pardah* system among Muslims. Two male witnesses bear testimony to the celebration of the marriage after taking consent of the bride. After her consent they declare her intentions to the public and then the sermon of the *Khutba-e-nikah* is recited. The bride's father normally gives away the bride in marriage to the bridegroom. On the eve of departure of the bride to the house of the bridegroom the *jahva* ceremony is performed. They are made to see each other's face in a mirror and to read the *Kuran* together.

These customs are general among the Muslims but in their sub-sects, certain customs differ. In a Jolaha's marriage no band or music is played. The marriage customs among Ahmadyya Muslims are somewhat different and have been discussed elsewhere.

Death

Verses from the holy *Kuran* are recited in low voice in the ears of the dying man. The dead body covered with a white cloth (*kafan*) is placed in a bier (*janaza*) and is carried by men to the graveyard. A mat prepared of palm leaves and pitcher filled with water are placed by the side of the dead body into the grave. The last prayers are offered near the graveyard. The dead body is kept in the graveyard, the head being kept towards the west to face Mecca. After the grave is closed the *imam* recites verses of the *Kuran* and prayers are offered for the peace of soul. On the fortieth day *Kuran* verses are recited, alms are distributed and a dinner is given to friends and relatives.

MULLACHAK MASJID

This *masjid* (mosque) is in the town of Bhagalpur, close to the railway. This is the oldest mosque in the town.

The earliest document to establishment of this mosque goes to show that one Hazarat Maulana Shahbaz Mohammad, who was born in *zila* Bihar came to Bhagalpur during the reign of Jahangir with his family. He died in 1050 *Hizri* during the reign of Shahjahan.

The said old document further describes that certain *mauzas* were given in grant for the maintenance of the students of the Madrasa and the mosque. The tomb of Maulana Shahbaz with four minarets was constructed by the Royal Officer Mirza Mohammad Moquim and after that mosque was given *pucca* construction by Emperor Shahshuja. Later on, in 1170 *Hizri*, a confirmatory grant was issued by Mir Mohammad Jafar Khan Bahadur, Officer-in-charge of the district during the reign of Emperor Alamgir.

Then other houses and a small *hauj* (tank) were constructed by Mirza Ibrahim Hussain Khan, who was the Revenue Collector during that period.

The tomb of Hazrat Maulana Shahbaz Mohammad is now a holy place for the Muslims. Many Hindus also visit the tomb and give offerings. During the time of *urs*, the *chadar* is changed and this *urs* is one of the most sacred ceremonies for the Muslims.

The Madrasa constructed by Mirza Ghulam Hussain Khan is now extinct. Later on a *khankah* was constructed by the Brahman Raja of Kharagpur, district Monghyr. The present condition of the *khankah* is not so good as it had been in the past.

ASHRAMS AT COLGONG

There are three small hills held sacred in the river bed at Colgong. Each hill is separate and the distance between these hills is about one furlong. During rainy season these hills become islands. They are well worth a visit. The *ashrams* on these hills have a religious impact on the Hindus.

Nanakshahi Ashram.—On the first hill on the extreme northern side there is an *Ashram* of Guru Nanak.

This *Nanakshahi Ashram* was established about 150 years ago when a disciple of Burdwan Sikh *Gurudwara* settled here. At first this *Ashram* was established in a small hut and some eighty years back a *pucca* building was constructed for its permanent abode. This was constructed with the help of public donation. At present there is a Sadhu Babā Shanti Das at this *Ashram*.

Tapash Ashram Pahar.—The next hill which is just to the south of the *Nanakshahi Pahar* is known as *Manjhola Pahar* (second or middle hill) or *Tapash Ashram Pahar*.

There is a very interesting story about this hill. Before the establishment of this *Tapash Ashram*, some thirty years back there used to live a *sadhu* (saint) on the top of this hill who was popularly known as Hanuman Baba. There used to live a *Hanuman* (black faced monkey) with him. This *Hanuman* always accompanied him wherever he visited. People still speak very high of this Hanuman Baba. It is said that once this *Hanuman* or monkey went to all those places where he had visited with the *Sadhu* and showed great excitement. A few of his disciples suspected something and went to see Hanuman Baba and found him dead. The monkey also died a few days later. Another view is that the *Hanuman* died first and then the *Sadhu* died.

There is now an *Ashram* on this hill also which is known as *Tapash Ashram*. This *Ashram* was established between the years 1946—48. It is run by Naresb Brahmachari who devotes his time between this place and his *Ashram* in Benares.

A *Pathshala* of a few boys with free teaching is run by this *Ashram*. The expenditure of the *Ashram* is met by public subscription or monthly subscription sent by the disciples of Shri Naresb Brahmachari.

Buddhist Pahar.—The third hill which is on the extreme southern side is known as *Buddhist Pahar* or *Barka Pahar*. There are a number of caves on this hill.

Owing to a dispute between the Hindus and the Muslims who claim the area as their religious place, both the parties have been restrained from going over there for apprehension of breach of the peace. The Hindus claim that Shiva temple and *Shiva Lingas* are there while Muslims claim that one of their *Pirs* died on that hill.

JATRA PARTIES

An amateur *Jatra Party* was started near about 1880 by Rajnarayan Banerji, Shib Chandra Khan, Baidyanath Chakravarty, Chandranath Banerji and others but due to financial difficulties, and death of some of its promoters it ceased to exist. Later, *Bhagalpur Arya Theatre* came into existence under the sponsorship of Nemai Neogi, Tinkauri Ghosh, Chandra Ghosh and others. Raja Taresh Pandey of Pakur presented this theatre with a stage which was kept up in the garden house of Rai Bahadur Tej Narayan Singh, but was set fire to in 1886. There was another party *Meatre-o-Hoollore* in which songs and tunes were furnished by Surendra Nath Majumdar who held a very high position in the Income-Tax Department. In 1896 the *Bengali Tola Theatre* was founded by Pran Kumar Das, P. A. to Divisional Commissioner and Ugra Mohan Thakur of Barari as President and Vice-President respectively and it purchased for about Rs. 125 the stage and scenes of Bankipur (Sabjibagh) Theatre Party. Simultaneously the *Adampur Theatre Club* was founded by Kumar Satish Chandra Banerjee (son of Raja Shibchandra Banerjee) and another theatre party was formed at Champannagar by Mahashay Amarnath Ghosh and Jogi Singh. Krishna Acharya who had the good name as a singer created a Hindi Kirtan Party, some members of which after the death of Krishna Acharya, formed a Hindi Jatra Party.

At the suggestion of Upendra Nath Bagchi who witnessed the performance of D. L. Roy's "Durga Das" by young lawyers and educated persons, the *Sangit Samaj* was started and its first performance was Bankim Chandra's "Ananda Math", in which Charu Chandra Chaudhury, a Police Inspector, took a leading part and was discharged from Government service for this. After 1909 the *P. W. D. Theatre Club* was formed by the employees of the P. W. D. Office of the Executive Engineer and its stage was later handed over to the *Sangit Samaj* through the influence of Lalit Mohan Roy which is now flourishing in its own building on Patal Babu Road. The *Miloni Club* and other *Bhagalpur Art Players' Association* were founded by Ardhendu Mukherji, a reputed film director of Calcutta and Swarna Kamal Roy respectively but with the former's departure from Bhagalpur and the latter's death both became eventually defunct.

Bhagalpur has a very high standard of culture of music and arts and the *Jatra Parties* and theatricals of Bhagalpur both in

Hindi and Bengali have always attracted a large crowd. Bhagalpur has produced several cinema stars.

The ex-Zamindars like the Raj Banaili family have also helped in the maintenance of ancient culture and religion. The abolition of Zamindari has no doubt removed the intermediaries between the State and the tenants but there is a feeling among the people that the present *karamcharies* are no less oppressive than the *Amlas* of the old Zamindars. Since Zamindari abolition is a very recent event and there has not yet been a full implementation of post-abolition policy such as payment of compensation money to the Zamindars, etc., it is difficult to say how far such feeling is correct.

The contribution of the middle classes and professional groups of Bhagalpur district to the development of the district in the social and cultural field has been quite substantial. Bhagalpur in the last one century has had the benefit of brilliant lawyers, doctors and teachers some of whom are still remembered with gratitude. Many of the lawyers and doctors had earned lakhs during the lifetime but had given portions of the earnings for the building up of a better Bhagalpur district.

It has, however, to be noted that the Zamindars and the other moneyed classes did not take much interest in trade, commerce or industry. Their investments were mostly in Zamindaries, cultivation lands, houses, buying ornaments or deposits in the banks. There has been very little of direct investment of their money for trade and commerce. As their income was not available as capital for business the Marwaris from beyond the district had an excellent field for business in this district. There are stories current how some Marwaris actually came with very little resources but remained to amass a fortune through business. At the moment the business market of Bhagalpur and Bhagalpur is one of the most important trade centres in the State is almost completely in the hands of the Marwaris, Gujratis and people who are not indigenous to Bhagalpur district. It is said that Kanpur has the largest colony of Marwaris and the next largest colony of Marwaris is in Bhagalpur. It is only in the recent decades that some of the indigenous families of the district and from other districts in the State have started taking interest in business in this district. They, however, have invested more in lines which were not taken up by the Marwaris such as starting of cinema houses, running transport vehicles, taking out licences under Price Control Measures, etc. The Zamindars as a class in this district as in some other districts of Bihar unfortunately saw to the locking up of capital which was not utilised for industrial or business purposes. Most of the capital remained in their hands and the other middle classes were not keen to enter into speculations or business deals. The abolition of Zamindari is expected to bring about a change.

It may also be mentioned here that as the after effects of Second Great War essential commodities were in a short supply and Price Control Measures had to be imposed. The implementation of the Government policy so far as the Price Control Measures are concerned brought into existence a new class of businessmen who did not have any training or acumen of business but mostly depended on their social affiliations for getting business deals through Price Control Measures. It is unfortunate that a good percentage of this class of Neo-business men should be commonly taken to be profiteers at the cost of the people. This may or may not be correct as a rule but the fact remains that suddenly a new rich class of people came into existence through War Economy and Price Control Measures. This class of people who have made themselves rich in the last one decade or fifteen years does not appear to have made much contribution to the development of the district and their savings have gone almost entirely to their personal coffers.

IMPACT OF ZAMINDARI ABOLITION ON THE SOCIAL LIFE OF THE PEOPLE

The impact of the Zamindari abolition on the social life of the district is not inconsiderable. A fair percentage of the people of large income group forming a minority of the population belonged to the class of Zamindars. Many of such Zamindars had other income as well either from professions or business or otherwise. The large Zamindars used to let out their lands to small cultivators for the purpose of mutual benefit. It is true that they had the cushion of a certain amount of unearned income and some of them were oppressive or absentee landlords. At the same time it has to be mentioned that the contribution of some of the families of the Zamindars like Raja Shib Chandra Banerjee, Jhaui Kothi, Banaili, Dip Narayan Singh, the Thakur of Barani has been very considerable. Bhagalpur district has a number of educational, religious, social and cultural institutions owing to the liberal help received from rich Zamindar families. Dhandhanias family has also given their contribution for various institutions.

The Zamindars had a sort of tacitly assumed leadership even if they did not deserve it. This was particularly noticeable in the rural areas. This was due more to the working of the system of Zamindari which had been set up by the British administrators with the double purpose of securing an assured revenue and maintaining law and order. The abolition of Zamindari has snatched away this tacit leadership from them and then sections which were not prominent before like large cultivators, labourers in industrial zones, landless labourers, career politicians, etc., have come into prominence. There has been a realignment of social values as a direct result of abolition of Zamindari. Many of the

Zamindars, big or small, after the abolition of Zamindari have been quite hard hit as for various reasons, the compensation could not be paid very quickly, and they lost the incidence of unearned income completely. Many of them have shifted to the urban areas and have taken to various types of business. The small income group or middle income group Zamindars have naturally been more hard hit financially apart from a loss of their social values. But they have more quickly adapted themselves to the changed circumstances.

In the rural areas, the cultivators, large and small, have been differently affected by the abolition of Zamindari. It is true the Zamindars have gone but in their place the *Karamcharis* of Land Reforms Section are busy in realising the rentals and for various reasons the *Karamcharis* have not been popular. It is not necessary to enter into the question whether the *Karamcharis* are being more sinned against than sinning but it is true that the period of adjustment is being prolonged and has not been very harmonious. Study in various villages somewhat brought out the same type of answer from the common villagers, whether big or small cultivators or labourers that they were not as happy as they had expected to be. In the urban areas the professional people like the lawyers or doctors have also been partially affected as the financial condition of the Zamindars and people connected with them has declined. The number of contested cases in the civil courts have definitely gone down and the scale of fees of the lawyers and doctors has had a proportionate decline.

The Zamindari abolition, however, did not create an unemployment so far as the domestic servants and the *Amlas* of the Zamindars were concerned. There has been a larger number of various services thrown open for employment in the Plan schemes and the domestic servants and the *Amlas* of the previous Zamindars have been quickly absorbed.

Charity has, however, definitely declined. The social, religious and educational institutions and the hospitals that have been sponsored by the Zamindars or other rich people have now to depend on State aid for their maintenance. If the State would not finance, many schools and colleges, libraries and art centres would close down.

It is doubtful if the businessmen have been visibly affected by the abolition of Zamindari. This is somewhat strange but probably the answer is in the fact that money has flowed into other unexpected quarters who are not allergic to use it. The common man has been definitely upgraded. There has been a liberal patronage of a large number of *Pan Biri* shops at the street corners and the large number of hotels and restaurants of indifferent kinds have been estab-

lished Throughout Bhagalpur. The rush to the cinema houses has gone up unabated. If the purchasing capacity of the people has been lowered there is definitely more of turnover helped by export. The silk goods of Bhagalpur have now a tremendous sale outside India, and the prices have also gone up considerably. It is, however, true that certain types of business have had a setback.

The service holders on fixed pay have not been much affected by the abolition of Zamindari but they are suffering from the indirect result of the abolition of a certain incidence of loss of employment and other incidental advantages of being associated with the Zamindars. But the service holders have been definitely affected otherwise by the spiral rise in the prices of commodities and keener competition for getting services.

The people belonging to the non-agricultural classes have not been affected vitally. On the other hand, they are now better off as their chances of employment are much more.

The most important impact of abolition of Zamindari has been in setting up forces in society that have contributed to the emergence of a better equipped common man which is much more conscious of his rights but unfortunately less conscious of his obligations. A whirlpool has been created by the abolition of Zamindari and social values are rapidly changing and we find that the importance of career politicians has tremendously gone up irrespective of their educational and cultural equipments while there has been somewhat of a setback of the social values of the professionals like teachers, doctors, lawyers and the educated common men who form the backbone of the middle classes. The impact of the abolition of Zamindari on the middle classes is indirect as the larger percentage of Zamindars were middle-class men and Zamindari was one of the avenues of income. It is the middle classes who had been the real leaders in spite of the heavy load of the rich Zamindars. The middle-class families of Bhagalpur district brought lustre to the professions of teachers, doctors, lawyers, etc., and they fought the freedom's battle in the front rank. It will be tragedy if the decline of the middle classes is not stopped immediately.