

CHAPTER XVI.

OTHER SOCIAL SERVICES.

LABOUR WELFARE.

The labourers in the district, as in other districts in Bihar, may be classified into agricultural and non-agricultural categories. There is not much of statutory obligation for the agricultural labour. They are mobile and free to offer their services at the best market. The relationship between the agriculturist and the agricultural labour depends on convention and reasonable wages for the labour. The workers in the factories, trade and commerce enterprises and business concerns are, on the contrary, covered by certain statutory Acts. The labourers in this sector do not appear to be reconciled to their obligations. There seems to be a greater anxiety for asserting rights than for discharging their obligations. An accurate data regarding the number of agricultural labourers in comparison to the non-agricultural labourers are not possible. The same labourer working in a Sugar Factory may be described as a factory hand but when working in the field after the season of the factory he will be taken as an agricultural one. Out of the total population of the district, namely, 25,15,343, the agricultural classes number 23,60,635 and the non-agricultural classes 1,54,708, the latter accounting for all those engaged in production other than cultivation, commerce, transport and other services and miscellaneous occupations. It will be seen that on this basis nearly 94 per cent of the population come under the category of agricultural classes and only about 6 per cent under non-agricultural classes.

The agricultural labourers may be landless or owners of land. Agricultural labour is mostly derived from the families of the agriculturists and there is still a reciprocity among them in the villages. It is quite usual for one agriculturist family to work on another's field without any wages on the understanding that there will be a reciprocal exchange of labour. But the unit of the agriculturist family is not always sufficient for the agricultural operations and has to be supplemented by casual labourers.

There was a time when the custom of tied or bonded labour was quite common. Each large agriculturist family used to have

one or more of bonded labourers commonly known as the *kamia*. For a petty advance of money the *kamia* would be practically the bond slave of the agriculturist and go on toiling on his field just for a mere feed and the labour will be accounted towards the interest. There have even been cases where two generations have worked for a petty advance of Rs. 25. Occasionally a small patch of land would be given to the *kamia* as a gesture of good-will but really to tighten the shackle more.

Kamiauti system has now completely disappeared. The landed agriculturist families are now in tremendous difficulties for finding proper labour for their fields unless competitive wages are offered. There is no statutory law to stop the movement of agriculturist labour and at the moment it is the labour who can almost indicate his terms.

On the average the daily wages of a casual labourer are not less than Rs. 1.50 nP. Occasionally he is also given a midday meal. Wages are also paid in kind or in both. The daily wages of a woman and a child labourer work out usually at half the wages of an adult male labourer.

As regards the non-agricultural classes which cover only 6 per cent of the whole population the table below from the Census Table, 1951 will show the number of workers in different classes of industries.

The table relates only to economically active persons whose principal means of livelihood is non-agricultural and who derive their income from productive activities.

Employers, Employees and Independent workers in Industries and Services.

Occupations.	Total.		Employers.		Employees.		Independent workers.	
	Males.	Females.	Males.	Females.	Males.	Females.	Males.	Females.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1. Primary industries, like stock raising rearing of small animals and insects, plantation, forestry and wood-cutting, etc.	642	273	6	18	46	30	590	225
2. Mining and quarrying	115	92	2	8	77	79	36	5
3. Processing and manufacture—Food Stuffs, Textiles, leather and products thereof.	4,541	975	130	56	1,936	250	2,475	669
4. Processing and manufacturing—Metals, che- micals and products thereof.	1,242	277	18	15	270	84	954	178
5. Processing and manufacturing, viz., produ- cts of petroleum and coal, bricks and tiles and other clay products, etc.	2,796	594	96	8	380	54	2,320	532
6. Construction and utilities—construction of buildings, roads and bridges, etc.	1,358	111	16	4	517	72	825	35
7. Commerce	10,438	2,996	1,588	351	1,141	614	7,709	2,031
8. Transport, storage and communication ..	1,781	235	78	9	786	71	917	155
9. Health, administration and Public education	2,552	202	17	..	2,057	148	478	548
10. Services not elsewhere specified, e.g., domestic servants, barbers and beauty shops, etc.	10,244	2,430	343	38	4,738	1,403	5,263	969
ALL INDUSTRIES AND SERVICES ..	35,709	8,185	2,194	507	11,948	2,805	21,567	4,873

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For some particular details the following table from the Census Statistics of 1951 may be useful :—

Establishments.			Number of workers (approximate).
(i)	Sugar Mills	..	7,811
(ii)	Rice and Oil Mills	..	1,480
(iii)	Button Factories	..	448
(iv)	Flour Mills	..	86
(v)	Printing Presses	..	100
(vi)	Miscellaneous	..	223

It will be seen that out of the 10 divisions of persons in all the industries and services, the proportion of independent workers is dominant, that is, certainly at least more than half in seven of them excepting only nos. 2, 9 and 10. This explains the inadequate labour welfare measures that have been so far introduced in the district. Statutory labour welfare measures have been introduced in only 9 Sugar Factories employing about 7,811 workers. It is at these centres that production is concentrated and labour force is somewhat organised.

One gazetted District Labour Officer with headquarters at Motihari has been appointed only since the last few years. He is the Conciliation Officer for the district under the Industrial Disputes Act of 1947, in which capacity he tries to bring about an amicable settlement of any dispute between the employer and employees of industrial establishments. He is also the Inspecting Officer under the Bihar Shops and Establishment Act, 1953. He is responsible for the registration of all the shops, covered by the Act, which is a very comprehensive one and on the lines of Factories Act, 1948. He has to administer and enforce the provisions of the Act which are mainly as regards the hours of work of the employees (eight hours), weekly rest, annual leave with wages (one day for 20 days), payment of wages in time according to the terms of employment, protection of the employees against illegal fines and deductions, discharge or dismissal, etc. The employers have to maintain some prescribed registers and submit reports regarding the working of their concern with reference to wages, over-time, holidays, leave, etc. The Act imposes certain restrictions on the opening and closing hours of the shops, although this system is in force now only within the municipal limits of Motihari town.

The District Labour Officer is also Inspector under the Minimum Wages Act, 1948 and is responsible for the enforcement of the minimum wages as fixed by the Government from time to time, in respect of both the schedules, which cover industrial as well as agricultural sectors of employers and employees. But in this district

only part I of the schedule, covering only industrial sectors' employers and employees, is in force. And lastly the District Labour Officer is the Inspector under Weekly Holidays Act, 1942, which has been put in force only in the areas of Bettiah Municipality and Lautaha Notified Area Committee, Motihari. There is a proposal to extend the Act to Raxaul, Barachakia, Narkatiaganj, Ramnagar, etc.

Nearly 178 factories of different types have been registered which imply that all these factories have to fulfil statutory requirements that have been or are being promulgated from time to time.

WAGES.

The Minimum Wages Act has been enforced in Rice, Flour, and Oil Mills. The wages of the labourers in Sugar Factories have been standardised by the awards, agreements, and decisions of the Tripartite conferences. The minimum wage in sugar industries is now Rs. 55 *plus annas* 12 per month as per *ad hoc* increment granted according to the recent decisions of the Standing Committee for sugar. So far as Rice, Flour and Oil Mills are concerned the minimum wage is Rs. 44 per month or Rs. 1-6-0 per day. The workers in Sugar Factories get a bonus every year and there are certain other amenities and privileges which they enjoy. The workers employed in Rice Mills, Oil Mills, etc., have also their monthly wages now fixed at the same rate as that of the Sugar Mills. Owing to these innovations there is now a sense of some security among the workers.

The Provident Fund Scheme has also been very beneficial to the workers and has encouraged thrift among them. According to this scheme both the employer and the employees contribute towards the fund for the individual worker and the interest is paid by the employer. Some of the Sugar Mills have got the Provident Fund Scheme which is leviable only for industries employing 500 or more workers. Other welfare facilities for the heavy workers include facilities for housing, medical aid, canteen, creches, educational and recreational ones. There is a statutory obligation on the Sugar Factories and other concerns employing more than 500 persons to extend these amenities to the workers. It may be generally said that the Sugar Factories have provided quarters to a substantial number of their workers. During the season, hutments are erected for seasonal workers. Although there has been a great increase in the number of quarters in different Sugar Factories the housing facilities do not yet cover the bulk of the workers. As a large percentage of the workers, however, come from adjoining villages the problem has not become so very acute. Free basic medical aid is provided by the Sugar Factories who have their dispensaries with permanent and part-time doctors and compounders. The other concerns provide a very elementary type of basic medical aid. Canteens have now been provided by the Sugar

Factories but the facilities offered in these canteens are rather nominal. The educational amenities given cannot, however, be said to be adequate. Harinagar Sugar Mills, Harinagar (Ramnagar) has arranged for an Upper Primary School and one High English School. The North Bihar Sugar Mills, Bagaha runs one Upper Primary School and a proposed Middle School. Shri Hanuman Sugar Mills, Ltd., Motihari runs one Upper Primary School and one Middle School. M. P. Sugar Works, Ltd., Majhaulia and S. K. G. Sugar Mills, Ltd., Lauriya run one H. E. School each. The Champaran Sugar Company, Ltd., Barachakia runs two schools up to class V, one each for boys and girls. The New Swadeshi Sugar Mills, Ltd., Narkatiaganj runs only one Primary School. These schools attract children from the neighbouring villages. There is a vast scope for improvement in the status and standard of teaching.

The Sugar Factories have got clubs in which there are some arrangements for games and music. Free electricity has been given to the better type quarters by the Sugar Factories. The tenements of the labourers have no electricity. There are arrangements for supply of water by installation of water taps or hand pipes. It cannot be said that an adequate number of lavatories have been provided. The sanitary arrangements in the areas where the workers live cannot be said to be quite up to the standard.

The Labour Department has been striving to start Voluntary Labour Welfare Fund even at the Sugar Factories. The scheme envisages contributions both from the management and the workers in the industries employing 500 or more workers. The Sugar Factories at Barachakia and Chanpatia have been given each Rs. 12,000 annually towards the welfare and recreational activities of the workers. The Voluntary Labour Welfare Centres subsidised by the Government is also another welfare scheme. According to this scheme Rs. 4,000 would be granted by the Government, Rs. 2,000 by the Labour Union and Rs. 1,000 by the Management for the purposes of equipment. The Management is to donate a plot of land and the building for the welfare centre as per Labour Department Plan. This subsidy has been granted to M. P. Sugar Works, Ltd., Majhaulia, Sugauli Sugar Works, Ltd., Sugauli, North Bihar Sugar Mills, Ltd., Bagaha, and Harinagar Sugar Mills, Ltd., Harinagar, during 1957-58.

An attempt has been made to put the employes of shops and establishments on a similar footing with factory workers by the promulgation of the Bihar Shops and Establishment Act which was enforced in the municipal limit of Motihari town from the 1st April 1957. It has to be administered by the District Labour Officer who is also the Inspecting Officer under the Act. The Act provides for the security of workers in Shops and Establishment and regulates the hours of work, leave with wages, weekly holidays, payment of wages, etc. The Act, further, gives statutory rights to the employees to

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appeal against dismissal. The statistics below will give an idea as to how this Act has been enforced till the 19th December, 1957 :—

(a) Total number of shops in the municipal area.	935 (approx.).
(b) Total number of applications for registration received.	800
(c) Total registered	675
(d) Total revenue in the shape of registration fee.	Rs. 1,419.
(e) Total number of employees ..	950 (approx.).

PROHIBITION.

Prohibition has not been enforced in any part of the State of Bihar. During the First Congress Ministry certain areas were brought within the ambit of prohibition by legislation. But Champaran district was not within the prohibited area.

Although prohibition has not yet been promulgated the policy of the State Government is to control the consumption of intoxicants with a certain amount of strictness and to raise the prices. There has been a gradual increase in the prices of most of the intoxicants. The excise shops are also under close supervision. The premises of any country liquor shop cannot be used for drinking bouts. The idea is that if people will have to take their liquor home for drinking, there will be lesser consumption. Since 1st April, 1959 the sale of opium for oral consumption is strictly regulated. Opium could only be procured under medical certificate. It is to be remembered that this district produced a very big output of opium in the last century.

ADVANCEMENT OF BACKWARD CLASSES AND TRIBES.

Castes which at first worked like professional or occupational guilds crystallised into sections in the society with fixed status. This tendency became hardened and the so-called upper or higher castes raised barriers and taboos around them to consolidate their position and the aloofness created conventions to which the castes became prisoners. A great portion of the society remained backward and they were the so-called lower castes, backward classes and tribes. Occasional attempts had been made in the past by individual thinkers and preachers to tear down the barriers. The State had also tried to ameliorate the condition of the backward classes and tribes from time to time.

However, since the first quarter of the twentieth century, the advancement of backward classes and tribes, has been taken up by social and political leaders. Untouchability which formed the root cause of so many evils was sought to be removed first by education and then by law. All the educational institutions and temples have

now been thrown open to them. The scheduled class students have been given special facilities for education. Education for their children has been made free, handsome stipends are given to prosecute further studies and they are also treated more favourably for Government employment. They are also given agricultural subsidies and other special relief measures. The State has also taken interest among them. The Bhoodan movement sponsored by Shri Vinoba Bhave aims at this.

It has been mentioned elsewhere that Gandhiji's first struggle for independence in India took place in the district of Champaran. Gandhiji did not fight only for the political rights of the *raiya*s for not growing indigo forcibly but he tried to improve their social condition also. As soon as in 1916 he realised that lack of education facilities and social backwardness of particularly the women folk had helped the planters considerably, he took upon himself a scheme of social work for the advancement of the backward classes. He opened a number of schools in the interior of the Bettiah subdivision and put them under teachers who were some of his selfless followers. These men and women made the schools not merely a teaching centre but they taught self help by cooking their own food, washing their own clothes and cleaning their own lavatories. The schools unfortunately were allowed to die out when Gandhiji left the district.

This district has a large number of Tharus, Dhangars, Oraons, Doms and other sections which go under the caption of backward classes and tribes. The European planters had imported a large number of Oraons and Dhangars from Chotanagpur as they solved the problem of labour very cheaply. Simple and improvident, these Dhangars and Oraons had worked as serfs for generations and they had till late, very little of food or cloth beyond the mere subsistence. The Tharus were allowed to decline through their habits of improvidence and spirit of abandon in life. As soon as the crops of the Tharus would be ready the mahajans and the itinerant tradesmen would visit the Tharu villages and offer loans and cheap trinkets, cloth and other wares. The result was that the Tharus became grossly indebted.

Champaran district till very late had a number of European planters, and a few families of landed aristocracy headed by the Bettiah Raj. These leisured classes had the long purse at their back and they encouraged the development of a large community of servile classes like domestic servants, serfs, labourers, etc. In a way they encouraged the backwardness of certain so-called lower castes and tribes. Very little thought was given to their social amelioration or to give them something more than a meal and a piece of cloth. These vested interests kept up a climate of mediævalism where aristocracy of caste, community and power thrived at the cost of poverty or the backwardness of a particular section.

The work that had been started by Gandhiji had declined but was not completely forgotten. After the attainment of Independence the State took up the amelioration of the backward classes and tribes as a matter of policy. A separate department at Government level known as the Welfare Department was created. This department works through a District Welfare Office at the district level. The District Welfare Officer with his headquarters at Motihari works under the administrative control of the District Magistrate. The Welfare Officer has his own staff for the field and the office.

The following castes or groups were notified as Scheduled Castes under the Constitution (Scheduled Castes) Order, 1950 :—

- (1) Bauri, (2) Bontar, (3) Chamar, (4) Bhogta, (5) Chauoal, (6) Dhobi, (7) Dom, (8) Dusadh (including Dhari and Dharhi), (9) Ghasi, (10) Halalkhor, (11) Hari (including Mehtar), (12) Kanjar, (13) Kurariar, (14) Lalbegi, (15) Mochi, (16) Mushahar, (17) Nat, (18) Pan, (19) Pasi, (20) Rajwar, (21) Turi, (22) Bhumij.

The following castes or groups of the Champaran district were notified as Scheduled Tribes under the Constitution (Scheduled Tribes) Order, 1950 :—

- (1) Asur, (2) Baiga, (3) Bathudi, (4) Bedia, (5) Binjhia, (6) Birhor, (7) Birjia, (8) Chero, (9) Chik Baraik, (10) Gond, (11) Gorait, (12) Ho, (13) Karmali, (14) Kharia, (15) Kharwar, (16) Khond, (17) Kisan, (18) Kora, (19) Korea, (20) Lohara, (21) Mahli, (22) Mal Paharia, (23) Munda, (24) Oraon, (25) Pahariya, (26) Santal, (27) Sauria Paharia, (28) Savar.

The following castes or groups of the Champaran district have been classified as Backward Classes. All others are included in the non-Backward category :—

- (1) Bari, (2) Banpar, (3) Beldar, (4) Bhathiara (Muslims), (5) Bherihar, (6) Bhuiya, (7) Bind, (8) Chik (Muslim), (9) Dafali (Muslims), (10) Dhanuk, (11) Dhunia (Muslims), (12) Gorhi (including Chhabbi), (13) Hajjam, (14) Kahar, (15) Kasab (Kasai-Muslims), (16) Kewat (Keut), (16A) Khatik, (17) Mali (Malakar), (18) Mallah (including Surahiya), (19) Madari (Muslims), (20) Miriasin (Muslims), (21) Nat (Muslims), (22) Noniya, (23) Pamaria (Muslims), (24) Sheikhra, (25) Tantis (Tatwas), (26) Turha, (27) Aghori, (28) Chain, (29) Dhamin, (30) Gandharb, (31) Khatwe, (32) Mangar (Magari), (33) Tharu, (34) Dhobi (Muslims), (35) Halalkhor (Muslims), (36) Lalbegi (Muslims), (37) Mehtar (Muslims).

The list above is general for the State. Many of these castes and groups are not found in Champaran district. As per census of 1951 the total population of the Scheduled Castes and Tribes and Backward Classes was as follows :—

		Males.	Females.	Total.
Scheduled Castes	..	1,84,593	1,89,537	3,74,130
Scheduled Tribes	..	11,422	9,576	20,998
Backward Classes	..	1,77,367	1,67,547	3,44,914

In 1951 census there was no castewise enumeration and hence we cannot get their respective strength. But the figures of some of the Scheduled Class and Backward Class people as per 1931 census will show that they form a quite sizeable population of this district. The strength according to 1931 census is as follows :—

Barahi	..	..	..	9,231
Dhanuk	..	..	..	12,663
Hajjam	..	..	..	26,105
Jolaha	..	..	..	97,598
Kahar	..	..	..	10,523
Kewat	..	..	..	2,725
Koiri	..	..	..	1,16,546
Mali	..	..	..	5,516
Mallah	..	..	..	75,327
Kurmi	..	..	..	1,00,981
Kumhar	..	..	..	21,914
Tanti	..	..	..	33,576
Teli	..	..	..	69,548
Kamar	..	..	..	32,446
Pasi	..	..	..	3,147
Musahar	..	..	..	46,630
Kandu	..	..	..	76,199
Dosadh	..	..	..	94,242
Dom	..	..	..	7,186
Dhobi	..	..	..	23,301
Chamar	..	..	..	1,55,474
Halalkhor	..	..	..	3,309

The District Welfare Officer has multifarious functions. His duties cover the removal of disabilities of the backward classes and

tribes, development of education by opening schools and arrangement of stipends to scheduled castes, scheduled tribes, backward classes and backward Muslim communities, provision of hostels for students of those communities, arrangement for loans and subsidies, medical aid, grain-golas, sinking of wells, etc.

It will be seen that the programme is quite comprehensive but no proper work can be done unless there is a reciprocity among the classes outside the backward classes and tribes and a certain amount of self-help among the backward communities and tribes. The Welfare section at Champaran has been able to open 30 and 16 primary schools for the Harijans and the Tharus, respectively. There are hostels for scheduled tribes and castes at Ramnagar, Motihari, Bettiah, Adapur and Bhairoganj respectively. There are 30 grain-golas for the benefit of the Tharus and 12 for the scheduled castes. These grain-golas help the Harijans and aboriginals with loan of seeds and collect back the quantities loaned out when the crops are ready. These are run by individual stockists or by the department. An interest of 25 per cent in kind is levied. If 1 maund seed is loaned a maund and 10 seers is realised. On the average a mahajan's loan would work out at 50 per cent of the seed loaned out.

The Welfare Section has made a few houses for members of the scheduled castes and for ex-criminal tribes. These houses are scattered at the places where there are settlements of members of scheduled classes and tribes. A few wells have also been sunk.

The major part of the Tharuhat area has been covered by the Community Development Project and the National Extension Service Block. The Tharus have been treated elsewhere.

CHARITABLE ENDOWMENTS.

Trusts and charitable endowments are very few and their scope is very limited. They have very little influence on the social, cultural and material well being of the people. Most of these trusts are petty ones and meant for some temples or primary schools or a mosque. Some of the trusts are given below :—

- (1) Shri Satya Narayan Temple—Shikarpur Trust, Bettiah.
- (2) Thakurji Mahadeoji Temple at Pucca Ghat on the river Chandrabati, Bettiah.
- (3) Dargah—Bettiah Trust, Bettiah.
- (4) The Bishweshwar Nath Hindu Anathalaya and the Madan Lal Technical Vidyalaya, Bettiah.

The Bishweshwar Nath Hindu Anathalaya, a small orphanage, was started in 1947. Madan Lal Technical Vidyalaya was started in February, 1959. The idea originally was to give protection and education to the Hindu orphans but now educational facilities are given to the general public.

At the Madan Lal Technical Vidyalaya training is given in weaving, spinning, *dari*-making, *newar*-making, tailoring, curtain-making, etc. Besides these, teaching of Hindi, English and Sanskrit is also provided for.

The managements of the institution are under the Board of Trustees.

SOURCES OF INCOME.

So far no Government grant, Central or State, has been received except some discretionary grants of the Ministers and other Government Officers from time to time. The main source of income is the produce of the land gifted and certain cash donations received from the well-to-do persons.