

CHAPTER XI.

LAW, ORDER AND JUSTICE.

INCIDENCE OF CRIME.

The district of Champaran, in close vicinity of Nepal, has received close attention of the authorities since centuries back. India under the British rule and Nepal under its independent king, had frequent border disputes, most of which were on the eastern frontier of the district of Champaran. Old Correspondence Volumes kept in the Record Room of the Champaran Collectorate, show frequent correspondence from the officers of both the countries in the nineteenth century about a criminal absconding in one of the countries beyond the reach of the police.

Other types of border disputes also used to occur. A letter no. 130, dated the 27th April, 1840 from G. D. Wilkins, Joint Magistrate, Champaran, to Mr. B. H. Hodgson, Resident of Nepal mentions about the exercise of force by the Nepalese soldiers in their collection of *sayer* rents about Purrunda and Dodhourd. It was reported that one Foujdar Jushur Rai with a large body of followers overstepped his boundary not only to collect a few *bunkar* rents but also to make arrangements for the forcible transfer of several villages to Nepal territory. The borders were ill-defined at one time and often the rivers would change their course, upsetting the limits, if the rivers formed them. At times the boundary pillars used to disappear for some reason or other. Apart from Nepal, criminals from Uttar Pradesh borders used to commit crimes within Saran district and run away.

The last *District Gazetteer of Champaran* (1938) mentions :—

“The commonest forms of serious crime are burglary, theft, rioting and dacoity. In 1931 the totals of cases reported were as follows : Theft 414, burglary 772, receiving stolen property 62, robbery 14, dacoity 74, riots and unlawful assemblies 124 (separate figures are not available), hurt with aggravation 83, murders 12 and culpable homicide 10. These figures show an increase on the figures of 1929, which may be taken as a normal year, when the totals of cases reported were theft 343, burglary 572, receiving stolen property 51, robbery 20, dacoity 15, riots and unlawful assemblies 70, hurt with aggravation 82, murder 9, culpable homicide 6. The large increase in the more serious forms of crime is to be attributed mainly to the spirit of irresponsible lawlessness which is the inevitable result of the campaign of civil disobedience, which spread throughout the district in 1930. The economic depression did not apparently contribute much to the increase, as crime did not appreciably increase when the depression was at its

worst and there was no large increase in the less serious forms of crime against property as might be expected.

"Champan has always been subject to the raids of dacoits from Nepal and from Gorakhpur and Saran districts as from its shape and geographical position it is easy for criminals to commit dacoities in the district and then slip across the borders. For many years a border patrol of *chaukidars* had been organised along the Nepal frontier, as a check against these raids. Gangs recently formed in the district have, however, been mainly responsible for the increase of this form of crime.

"The riots have usually, as previously, been the result of land disputes, but often have been of a more serious type. Recently, for instance, a dispute over a small plot of land led to a riot in which five men were killed."

As against the figures of crime quoted from the last Gazetteer by R. E. Swanzy, the statistics of crime for some years past, show a somewhat higher incidence. There appears to be a general rise in the crime figures as shown in the chart below taking the year 1929, as the normal year, which Mr. R. E. Swanzy had taken likewise :—

	Murder.	Dacoity.	Robbery.	Burglary.	Theft.	Riot.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1929 (Normal year)	9	15	20	572	343	70*
1931	12	74	14	772	414	124*
1942	19	118	33	1,032	735	134
1943	19	92	38	1,211	884	105
1944	11	48	26	1,042	691	97
1945	10	51	18	961	623	84
1946	13	68	13	973	740	56
1947	22	48	12	861	573	64
1948	23	45	15	860	533	79
1949	19	30	18	807	663	97
1950	23	64	26	863	639	107
1951	23	93	29	916	736	113
1952	26	75	16	803	645	101
1953	30	56	28	809	530	91
1954	31	57	25	803	568	106
1955	22	38	20	677	563	123
1956	29	29	29	723	578	95
1957	40	52	13	899	602	120
1958	23	42	15	637	593	132

* (together with unlawful assemblies).

The table quoted shows that as compared to the figures of the normal year 1929, cases of murder had increased by about three times with occasional shooting up by about four times, of dacoity by about three times, of theft and riot by about twice in 1958. Cases of robbery and burglary show a somewhat static trend, and within a very short range of variation. All these point to some of the following generalisations about the nature of crime getting predominant. Murders are more frequent since 1947. Thefts have however diminished.

Cases of dacoity show a considerable increase. In 1931 there is a tremendous increase of about seven times; 15 cases recorded in the year 1929 and 74 in the year 1931, which may have association with the economic depression of 1929. Also in 1942, the figures shoot up abnormally, which may be due to the incidents of 1942 national movement for the freedom of the country being recorded as such criminal acts. This movement certainly explains the sharp rise in the cases of riots. It is also possible that anti-social elements took advantage of the unsettled times and committed crimes.

Criminal Tribes.—"Champan" as mentioned in the last *District Gazetteer* is the home of a criminal tribe known as Magahiya Doms, who are described in a monograph entitled the "Outcasts" by Geoffrey R. Clarke, I.C.S., in 1903 from which I quote "The Magahiya Dom has made little or no advance since we first knew him. He is still a nomad and a thief. In the words of Mr. J. Kennedy, late Collector of Gorakhpur, 'He is born in a *arhar* field and schooled to theft from his infancy. He wanders as an outcast from the beginning. He lives without shelter and without food for the morrow perpetually moving from encampment to encampment chased by the police and execrated by the village. His greatest pride is a successful burglary and a prolonged drinking bout his most coveted reward. Hinduism has failed to reach him, its great gods are unknown to him, even the local divinities are seldom the object of his reverence'. Jail offers no terror to the Dom..... Despite the fact that Government has provided agricultural settlements for him in Gorakhpur and Bihar, the Dom is still a nomad. The settlements serve as houses for the women and children but men are seldom found in them.

"Since 1903 the life of the Dom has changed and is changing materially. The first systematic attempt to reclaim the Magahiya Doms in the district was made by Mr. (Late Sir E.) Henry, the District Magistrate, in 1882, who established settlements at Chauterwa in the village of Bargaon and at Fatehpur, where they were given land to cultivate, huts to live in and agricultural implements and farm stock. Later settlements were established at Ramnagar and Chauterwa and at the present time there is one large settlement at Chauterwa, in which all the members of the tribe are concentrated

except those whose names have been struck off the register or to whom permanent or temporary leave has been given to live outside the settlement.

"The Doms live now under strict discipline and unless leave of absence is given, they are locked up at night. They are registered under the Criminal Tribes Act under which absconding is a criminal offence. The settlement was managed by special police officers until August 22nd, 1913, on which date it was taken over by the Salvation Army and is now known as the Salvation Army Agricultural and Industrial Settlement. Last year (1931) there were 323 adults and 141 children, i.e., total 464 in the settlement. There were 38 cases of absconding during the year but 21 of these were caught or returned. The increase of women and children absconders was due to a story circulated amongst the settlers that their children would be taken from them and sent to school."

These remarks have no force now. The Doms are certainly now not a criminal tribe although there are black sheep among them just as in other sections. Their position and economic condition has not improved satisfactorily. They still remain more or less casual wage earners and always depend upon the *mahajans* for occasional needs of marriage and other ceremonies. Although they did not take to Christianity, a considerable number of them observe Christian festivals. The Bihar State Government had requested the Harijan Sewak Sangh to take charge of the Chauterwa Dom Settlement and the Sangh accordingly took over its charge on 1st April, 1947.

The Sangh has taken interest in their welfare. A full-fledged basic school has been started. The Criminal Tribes Act has been made inoperative by the executive orders of the District Magistrate, who released 153 Doms on 30th October, 1950 and made them free.

Lands have been distributed to them at the rate of 10 *kathas* per adult and 5 *kathas* per child. The State Government have sanctioned some pairs of bullocks for their cultivation. A grain *gola* has been started for their benefit and a co-operative society has been established. The Sangh has built houses for some families in the village Pakargaon.

The relationship of the Dom with the other local people has also improved. The previous idea of suspicion and hatred among the local public about these Doms is melting.

ORGANISATION OF POLICE FORCE.

The *District Gazetteer* published in 1907 by L. S. S. O'Malley mentions the organisational set up of that time as follows: "The police of each subdivision are in charge of an Inspector, under the general control of the Superintendent of Police. The police force in 1905 consisted of a District Superintendent of Police, 3 Inspectors, 36 Sub-Inspectors, 1 Sergeant, 27 Head Constables and 328 Constables.

The total strength of the regular police was therefore 396 men, representing one policeman to every 8.9 square miles and to every 4,521 persons. There is also a small body of town police; and the rural force for the watch and ward of villages in the interior consists of 138 *dafadars* and 2,405 *chaukidars*. The *chaukidari* union system was for the first time introduced in the headquarters subdivision and in two outposts of the Bettiah subdivision in 1902-03 and was extended to the rest of the district in the following year".

The chart below shows the different thanas and police outposts in Champaran at that time :—

<i>Motihari Subdivision.</i>				
Thana.				Outpost.
Motihari	..	..	..	Sugauli.
Kessariya	..	..	..	Pipra.
Gobindganj.				
Dhaka	..	..	..	Ghorasahan.
Adapur	..	..	..	Raxaul.
				Chauradano.
				Madhuban.

<i>Bettiah Subdivision.</i>				
Thana.				Outpost.
Bettiah	..	..	..	Majhaulia.
			..	Bhaura.
				Jogapatti.
Shikarpur	..	..		Ramnagar.
			..	Lauria.
				Mainatanr.
Bagaha	..	..		Dhanaha.

As mentioned in the last *District Gazetteer*, by R. E. Swanzy, published in 1932, the district was divided for police purposes into three Inspectors' circles. Sadar A consisting of Motihari, Dhaka, Ghorasahan, Adapur and Raxaul thanas and Sadar B consisting of Gobindganj, Kessariya, Madhuban, Sugauli and Pipra thanas while the Bettiah subdivision formed the third. A fourth Inspector was employed in the Court at Motihari. His duty was to prosecute cases before the Court. The force included also one Deputy Superintendent stationed at Motihari, one Sergeant Major, 39 Sub-Inspectors of whom four are employed in the Court (two at Motihari and two at Bettiah), 35 Writer Head Constables, 16 Havildars and 374 Constables. These figures were those of the sanctioned cadre on 31st December, 1931. There was one policeman to every 4,575 persons. With the exigencies of administration the police organisation had to be expanded. Not only the expansion covered the regular police force but also such wings as Home Guards, Railway Protection Police, Armed constables, etc. There are now (1958) one Superintendent of Police and two Deputy Superintendents of

Police, stationed one each at Motihari and Bettiah. The district is divided into four circles with a number of police-stations under their fold. The list of police-stations given below is circlewise, as well as subdivisionwise :—

Sadar Subdivision.

- | | | |
|---------------|----|--|
| Inspector 'A' | .. | Motihari Town Police-station.
Motihari Mofussil Police-station.
Dhaka.
Patahi.
Ghorasahan.
Adapur.
Raxaul.
Motihari Town Outpost I.
Motihari Town Outpost II.
Motihari Town Outpost III.
Motihari Town Outpost IV. |
| Inspector 'B' | .. | Gobindganj Police-station.
Harsidih Police-station.
Sugauli Police-station.
Kessariya Police-station.
Pipra Police-station.
Madhuban Police-station.
Kotwa Outpost.
Mehsi Outpost.
Chakia Outpost. |

Bettiah Subdivision.

- | | | |
|---------------------|----|---|
| Inspector 'Bettiah' | .. | Bettiah Police-station.
Chanpatia Police-station.
Nautan Police-station.
Jogapatti Police-station.
Majhauria Police-station.
Sikta Police-station.
Lauria Police-station.
Bettiah Town Outpost I.
Bettiah Town Outpost II.
Bettiah Town Outpost III.
Bettiah Town Outpost IV. |
| Inspector 'Bagaha' | .. | Bagaha Police-station.
Dhanaha Police-station.
Shikarpur Police-station.
Ramnagar Police-station.
Mainatanr Police-station.
Chauterwa Police-station.
Semra Police-station.
Thakraha Police-station.
Piprahi Police-station. |

As regards the current (1958) strength of the police, there are in Inspectorate 'A'—one Inspector, 9 Sub-Inspectors, 12 Assistant Sub-Inspectors, 101 constables and 4 havildars; in Inspectorate 'B'—1 Inspector, 7 Sub-Inspectors, 13 Assistant Sub-Inspectors and 66 constables; in Inspectorate 'Bettiah'—1 Inspector, 9 Sub-Inspectors, 11 Assistant Sub-Inspectors, 114 constables and 4 havildars; and in Inspectorate 'Bagaha'—1 Inspector, 7 Sub-Inspectors, 13 Assistant Sub-Inspectors and 66 constables. Besides these, there are some 12 Inspectors and 6 D. A. Ps. for the courts at Motihari and Bettiah. The total strength of the police, together with that of *chaukidars*, is given in the table below :—

Statement showing the strength of the police and village watch in the district in the year 1955.

Number of police-stations		26
Number of outposts		10
Total strength of police (Inspector to constables).		776
Number of police who can read and write (excluding officers).		717
Proportion of police to population	..	1 : 3,241
Total strength of <i>chaukidars</i>		

The present strength of the police force as against the accounts given in the last two *District Gazetteers* gives an impression of the importance of this organisation. It is stated in the *Gazetteer* (1907), that the "total strength of the regular police was 396 men, representing one policeman to every 8.9 square miles and to every 4,521 persons". The last *Gazetteer* (1932) calculates that "there is one policeman to every 4,575 persons in the district". And now (1958) as per table quoted above from the *Bihar Statistical Hand-Book*, 1955, there is one policeman for every 3,241 persons.

HOME GUARDS.

The Bihar Home Guard Force was organised in 1948. The idea behind this organisation was to supplement the police force if necessary by already trained persons drawn from the public. There are set Home Guard Rules, on the basis of which enrolment, training and execution of work are arranged.

The Home Guards have been enrolled from every part of the district and they have been imparted training in the use of rifles, *lathi*, archery, fire-fighting, first-aid, drill, traffic control, field craft, musketry, etc., at the Central Training Camp at Bihta. As per quota fixed by the Commandant, the final head of the Home Guard Unit on the State level, the District Magistrate recruits the persons for the Home Guard Force and through the District Headquarters of this Unit at Motihari, send them to be trained at the Central Training Camp.

With the Commandant as the final authority on State level at Patna and Battalion Commander at Muzaffarpur, the administration of the Home Guard organisation is run by four Company Commanders, stationed at Motihari, Dhaka, Gobindganj and Bettiah, who are all paid staff.

There are 279 Home Guard Volunteers in this district. They are volunteers and whenever they are at home, they render service on no cost basis. They are utilised in organising village resistance groups. On occasional clashes or breach of peace, or in any emergency, they are utilised by the Government in maintaining law and order and for that period they get allowances, etc., according to the scheduled rate as fixed by the Government. They are guided by the Company Commanders who are directly under the Superintendent of Police.

JAILS AND LOCK-UPS.

There is a district jail at Motihari and a subsidiary jail at Bettiah. There is a wholetime Superintendent in the District Jail at Motihari and the Civil Surgeon is the Medical Officer of the jail. The Superintendent has the assistance of a Jailor, two Assistant Jailors, a staff of warders and a doctor incharge of the Jail Hospital under whom there are also a compounder and one dresser.

Constructed in the year 1936, the District Jail contains 16 cells, 1 general kitchen and 2 worksheds. There are 3 wards in the general side and 3 wards consisting of jail hospital, segregation and T. B. Wards, besides dispensary and operation rooms and hospital kitchen in the hospital side inside the jail.

There is a self-contained civil ward also attached to the District Jail outside and also a separate female enclosure, consisting of 3 wards, 1 cell, and 1 workshed inside the jail.

The capacity of the Motihari District Jail is as follows :—

Convicts	..	..	197	
Cells	..	..	18	(including 2 European wards).
Female Ward	..	..	32	(including one cell).
Civil	..	..	6	
Hospital	..	..	38	
Undertrials	..	..	76	
Total			367	

The capacity of the jail shown in the table, indicates a rather static trend since some decades back. The *District Gazetteer* published in 1907 mentions that "the Jail at Motihari has accommodation for 349 (318 males and 31 females) prisoners distributed as follows and barracks without separate sleeping accommodation are

provided for 256 convicts, 20 female convicts, 6 under-trial prisoners and 6 civil prisoners; the hospital holds 43 prisoners; and there are separate cells for 13 males, 3 juveniles and 2 European convicts". On this point the *District Gazetteer* published in the year 1932, notes that "the capacity of the jail at Motihari at the present time is convicts 258, under-trials 32, civil 6, females 31 and hospitals 38, total 365". Against these figures when the total current capacity (1958) is taken into consideration, the conclusion rather becomes apparent that the capacity of the jails has remained static.

The average population of the Sadar Jail during 1947-1951 is shown below :—

Year.				Male.	Female.
1947	..	..	..	419.69	.54
1948	..	..	..	533.88	3.79
1949	..	..	..	413.65	6.45
1950	..	..	..	371.48	7.99
1951	..	..	..	526.49	10.65

The average population of the Sadar Jail was 383.32 males and 8.23 females in the year 1931. In 1951 this average shot up to 526.49 males and 10.65 females.

The sub-jail at Bettiah is under the charge of Civil Assistant Surgeon, Bettiah, who is assisted by an Assistant Jailor and a staff of warders. Its capacity is 95 (90 for males and 5 for females) prisoners. Like the District Jail at Motihari this jail usually remains overcrowded.

*Vocational training, educational and other facilities
provided in the Jail.*

In both the jails of the district, arrangements for training crafts such as cloth weaving, tape weaving, tailoring, spinning, *duree*-making, oil pressing, manufacture of file board and flat files making, etc., exist.

For general education of the inmates of the jail, provision has been made for a teacher, who is selected from amongst the prisoners themselves. There is also an arrangement for holding meetings of the prisoners to discuss the problems. The jail authorities give due considerations to the requirements of the inmates. The reforms recently introduced are—

- (i) For **good** work and conduct in jail, one-third remission of sentence is awarded. It was for one-fourth period in the past.
- (ii) All classes of prisoners have been allowed to supplement their food with dry fruits from outside.

- (iii) Iron plates and cups have been replaced by aluminium or brass *thalis* or tumblers.
- (iv) Tobacco and its products (*biri*) have been allowed to be used by the prisoners in jail at their own cost or through their friends and relatives, while it was strictly prohibited before for the jail inmates.
- (v) Ordinary convicted prisoners are allowed interviews once in a month and under-trials once in a fortnight while it was once within three months and once in one month respectively earlier. Similar facility has been granted for writing and receiving letters at Government cost.
- (vi) Prisoners have been allowed to read newspapers at Government cost.

It may be said that the whole outlook of the prison organisation has undergone a radical change. Now-a-days efforts are made to impress the inmates psychologically to abstain from committing crimes and to lead a civilized and peaceful life. The approach to the problem is psychological and sympathetic and the prisoners are treated in a way that they could go back to the society as better men. Prisoners are classified by the Courts concerned according to the records of the convicts into 'A' and 'B' classes. 'A' denotes the casual prisoners and 'B' the habitual prisoners. Prisoners belonging to higher standard of living may be classified as Class I and Class II division prisoners and in which case they receive better fooding and facilities than others. All prisoners are treated alike and there is no distinction of caste and creed. Juvenile prisoners receive special care and it is seen that they get proper facilities to improve their educational and mental make-up. Probation system is also introduced.

CRIMINAL AND CIVIL COURTS.

Criminal justice in the district was administered up to May, 1945 by the District and Sessions Judge of Muzaffarpur who used to hold court of sessions at Motihari for the trial of the more serious cases committed from Champaran by the Assistant Sessions Judge, stationed at Motihari who had powers to pass sentences of transportation and imprisonment up to seven years and by the District Magistrate and Magistrates subordinate to him. Benches of Honorary Magistrates with single sitting powers were also appointed.

A separate Judgeship at Motihari was created in the year 1945 and the first District and Sessions Judge of Champaran took his seat on the 1st June, 1945. It removed a long-felt want of the people of the district.

The separation of the Judiciary from the Executive was a constant demand of the Indian public, as the combination of the two functions during the British period was an anachronism leading to suspicion regarding the type of justice that was administered.

Following the recommendation of the Meredith Committee, the judiciary was separated from the Executive in this district with effect from 1st July, 1957. With this separation, the Judicial Magistrates, the Munsif-Magistrates and the Judicial Honorary Magistrates have been placed under the control of the District and Sessions Judge. They are employed in the trial of all criminal cases under the Indian Penal Code. Offences under minor Acts, preventive proceedings under Criminal Procedure Code and cases under Special and Local Laws still continue to be dealt with by the Magistrates on the executive side.

The remarkable feature of this separation was that it was given effect to by an executive instruction of Government and not by any Act of Legislature. That way, it was felt, the change-over can be brought about with the least possible delay and interference with the existing administrative set-up. The effect of the separation in making justice speedier, has already been noticed.

The present strength of judicial officers consists of two Munsif-Magistrates and three judicial Magistrates at Motihari and one Munsif-Magistrate and two judicial Magistrates at Bettiah. Besides there is one Honorary Magistrate both at Motihari and Bettiah. On the executive side, the cases not transferred to Magistrates on the judicial side continue to be dealt with by the Executive Magistrates in addition to revenue, development and other work arising out of the responsibility for general administration and the maintenance of law and order. The permanent strength of the Magistracy sanctioned to help the District Magistrate consists of Deputy Magistrates and Sub-Deputy Magistrates, viz., five or six Deputy Magistrates and two Sub-Deputy Magistrates for the district headquarters and two Deputy Magistrates and one Sub-Deputy Magistrate for Bettiah. The strength is frequently supplemented and is likely to expand more.

Another innovation in the administration of criminal justice was brought by the establishment of Gram Kutcheries under the Bihar Panchayat Raj Act. The Gram Kutcheries are intended primarily to render quick justice at a cheap cost. By providing a court at the villages, the public are saved from the necessity of running to the Subdivisional and District Courts for petty offences. It was felt that a better climate for a speedy disposal of the cases exists in the villages where the facts of the case are better known and the witnesses from the same village or from the neighbourhood will depose more truthfully. That is why Gram Kutcheries are expected to be quicker in disposal of cases or bring about compromises.

Lawyers are not so far allowed to appear in the Gram Kutcheries. An attempt is made to help the litigants from prolonged litigation and heavy expenditure. The Gram Kutcheries have the power of a Magistrate of the third class (inflicting a jail sentence of one month

and a fine of fifty rupees) and are empowered to try certain petty offences under the Indian Penal Code, the Bengal Public Gambling Act, and the Cattle Trespass Act. The table below shows the number of disposal of cases in Gram Kutcheries :—

Year.			Number of cases lying with the Gram Kutcheries.	Number of cases disposed of.
1951-52	..	..	4,072	3,053
1952-53	..	..	1,883	1,458
1953-54	..	..	5,609	4,540
1954-55	..	..	8,152	7,090
1955-56	..	..	9,106	7,707
1956-57	..	..	11,172	9,374

There is an increasing tendency to rely on these rural courts for cheap and quick justice, but the Panchayats have been advised to settle disputes more by compromise than by trial and decision. Panchayats are acting more and more on these lines.

CIVIL JUSTICE.

The administration of Civil Justice was, as in the case of Criminal Justice, under the jurisdiction of the District and Sessions Judge of Muzaffarpur till May, 1945. A separate judgeship for the district started functioning from the 1st June, 1945. Prior to this, Civil courts in the district consisted of a Subordinate Judge at Motihari and a few Munsifs stationed at Motihari and Bettiah. Now there is a court of Subordinate Judge who is vested with unlimited Civil pecuniary jurisdiction. He is also vested with the powers of an Assistant Sessions Judge and is empowered to pass sentences up to 10 years besides powers to hear appeals from the decisions of the second and third class Magistrates. He is also vested with small cause court and civil appellate powers and hears appeals preferred against the decisions of the Munsif. Such appeals are, however, transferred to his file by the District Judge. There are also one permanent Munsif stationed at Motihari and one at Bettiah to try cases up to the value of Rs. 4,000. They are also vested with small cause court powers up to Rs. 250. Besides the permanent courts, additional courts are posted when there is congestion of civil suits and cases. At present two Additional Sub-Judges and four Additional Munsifs are holding courts at Motihari and one Additional Munsif at Bettiah.

There has been a steady increase in civil litigation. In the year 1956, there were 124 title suits, 724 money suits, 651 small cause court suits and 1,427 rent suits instituted in the courts of the

Munsifs at Motihari and Bettiah, as against 30 title suits, 23 money suits, 72 small cause court suits and 2 rent suits in 1931. The institution of rent suits has decreased to a great extent after the abolition of the zamindari system in the State.

As in the administration of Criminal Justice so in the administration of Civil Justice there has been an additional agency with the constitution of Gram Panchayats under the Bihar Panchayat Raj Act, 1947. The Act provides jurisdiction of a bench of the Gram Kutchery to hear and determine certain classes of suits when the value does not exceed one hundred rupees. A table is given below to show the number of such suits lying at Gram Kutcheries and their disposal either by compromise or by dismissal or by decree :—

Year.		Number of suits lying with the Gram Kutcheries.	Number of suits disposed of.
1951-52		732	562
1952-53		458	388
1953-54		1,501	1,037
1954-55		2,121	1,778
1955-56		2,307	1,901
1956-57		2,588	1,933

Here we also find an increasing tendency of suits being instituted before the Gram Kutcheries. The number of suits disposed of by way of compromise has been very large.

BAR ASSOCIATION, BETTIAH.

In Bettiah subdivision of Champaran district, there was no Civil Court prior to 21st October, 1918. Within a few days of the opening of the Civil Court all the pleaders formed an Association and nominated their office bearers and received sanction and approval of the Civil and Criminal Court authorities. The Bar Association, Bettiah did not have its own building till the Civil Court was shifted to its new building in 1926. The Bar Association built its own building with public subscriptions. The original strength of the Bar was only nine but gradually it reached the strength of 55 in 1958. The Bar Association has a library.

MOKHTEARS' ASSOCIATION, BETTIAH.

After the establishment of Subdivisional Officer's Court at Bettiah one *Mokhtarkhana* used to be held in a building of the Bettiah estate and there were about 10 members in the Association. In 1904 the present building was constructed with the help of subscriptions. Till 1920 the Subdivisional Officers were the nominated

Presidents of the Association. In 1927 the first election for the post of President and Secretary of the Association was held. Now the election is held annually.

CIVIL COURT BAR ASSOCIATION, MOTIHARI.

The building of this Association was built after the new building of the Civil Court was built in 1936. The original strength of the Bar Association was 14 but it has reached the figure of 122 members in 1958. The Bar Association has got a good library.

The relationship of the Bench and the Bar has been cordial. The Bar has taken a prominent lead in matters political and social. Prominent members of the Bar have been liberal in their patronage of clubs and athletic societies.