CHAPTER XVII

LAND REVENUE ADMINISTRATION

HISTORY OF LAND REVENUE ADMINISTRATION AND SETTLEMENT

The history of Land Revenue Administration and Settlement in the District of Bhagalpur may be divided into the following periods :—

(1) The Muhammadan Period—1582—1765.

(2) The Early British Period—1765—1790.

(3) The years of the Decennial Settlement.

(4) The Permanent Settlement and its effects.

(5) The Resumption Period.

(6) The Revenue Survey—1842—1847.

(7) The Modern Period.

The Muhammadan Period—1582—1765

In the beginning of the 13th century, Bhagalpur formed a part of *Sarkar* Monghyr, the later forming one of the 7 administrative units in which Subah Bihar was divided. In the third quarter of the next century Bihar was included in Bengal and it formed an independent kingdom under Fakhruddin and his descendants with some interruption till 1576, when it was annexed by the Mughals. From the time of this conquest till 1605, the seat of the Mughal Governor of Bengal was at Tanda (in North Bengal) and later at Rajmahal. During the period 1605—1707, Bengal, Bihar and Orissa formed a single governorship; there was a Deputy (Naib) to control Bihar. The seat of the Governor was transferred from Rajmahal to Dacca, but later re-transferred to Rajmahal by Shuja (1639—1660); after 1703 the seat of the Naib was taken to Patna.

Under the Mughals, the Governor of a province was styled *Sipah Salar*, subsequently called Subedar and commonly known as Naib Nazim or Great Deputy Governor. Up to 1697, there was one Nawab for Bihar and one each for Bengal and Orissa. In 1576 the Office of the Diwan was created and placed in charge of revenue matter. Up to 1703 the Nazim controlled the general administration and the Diwan, financial affairs, but in 1704 Murshid Quli Khan was appointed Naib-i-Nazim of Bengal and Orissa in addition to his post to Diwan of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa, while Syed Hussain Ali was appointed Naib-i-Nazim of Bihar. Murshid

Quli Khan transferred the seat of Governor from Dacca to Murshidabad. The place bears its name from him. Murshid Quli Khan was succeeded one after another by Sujauddin, Sarfaraz Khan, Alivardi Khan, Siraj-ud-Doulah, Mir Zafar and Mir Quasim. The British supremacy over Bengal was established after the battle of Buxar in 1764. On August 12, 1765, the Mughal Emperor appointed the Company the Diwan of the Province of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa and it was from that date the actual British revenue administration originated.

First Mughal Settlement

In 1582 Raja Todarmal made the revenue settlement in *Subah* Bihar. The Raja's assessment was generally based on the principles and methods adopted by Sher Shah (1540—1545), the Afghan ruler of Bihar. The settlement was made for a period of 10 years (though it continued for 76 years), the share of the estate was fixed, and a uniform standard of measurement was introduced. The *Subas* were divided into administrative divisions, called *Sarkars* and the latter divided into fiscal Units, called *Parganas* and left under the care of Choudharys or *Zamindars*, who were entrusted with administrative duties and the collection of revenue.

The Ain-i-Akbari compiled during the reign of the Emperor Akbar, records the amount of assessment in *Sarkar* Monghyr at Rs. 7,41,000 and in *Pargana* Bhagalpur at 46,96,110 *dams* or Rs. 1,17,403. Bhagalpur was one of the 22 *Parganas* into which *Sarkar* Monghyr was divided, and it bore the largest proportion of the total revenue of the *Sarkar* on account of its being in a more prosperous and settled state.

Second and subsequent Mughal Settlements

Revisions in revenue assessment were made in 1658 by Prince Shuja, in 1685 (under the reign of Aurangzeb), in 1722 by Murshid Quli Khan, and in 1750 under orders of Alivardi Khan. The subsequent revisions were made in 1760-61 and in 1765. In the former year it was done under the orders of Mir Quasim, the puppet set up by Clive after Plassey (according to Shore's Minute of 18th June 1789, Quasim's assessment was never collected), and in the latter year by Md. Reja Khan, who was appointed Deputy Nazim under Najam-Ud-Din, the Nawab Nazim of Bengal, by the Company, and later made Naib Diwan under them.

The Settlement of 1658 made by Prince Shuja resulted in the increase of the previous revenue by about 25 per cent and Murshid Quli's settlement not only led to a further increase but also to the creation of a new administrative division called *Chakla* in place of *Sarkar*, which remained as an administrative unit till the comremencement of British rule and formed the basis of subsequent redistribution into districts. The details of the revenue revisions of 1685 and 1750, are not known. But the principles of Reja Khan's assessment is known. The gross receipts of the *Zamindars* were first determined, then the deduction was made for the expenses of the management, and the balance was declared to be the revenue payable to the State by *Zamindars*.

The Early British Period—1765—1790

The grant of the Diwani to the Company may be said to be the starting point of British revenue administration. For more than a quarter of a century (1765—1793) the revenue administration was in a "nebulous stage". The period from 1765—1773 has been aptly called "the period of hesitation", which produced unsatisfactory and irregular state of collection, and that from 1773 to 1781 a "period of centralisation".

The revenue collection which was entirely in the hands of Md. Reja Khan was controlled by Supervisors appointed in 1769 and acting under the control of 2 Councils of Revenue established at Patna and Murshidabad since 1770. The year 1770 was the last year of Indian management. In 1772 the quinquennial settlement was made, the post of the Naib Diwan was abolished and European revenue collector was appointed. But a year later the post of collector was abolished and the Controlling Committee and the Provincial Council of Revenue created. The Register of Hoshiyar Jang for the year 1773 contains an account of revenue demand made for 1765. The period from 1773—1781, called a "period of centralisation", was marked by the reappointment of collectors and the dissolution of the Controlling Committee and the Provincial Council of Revenue. In the years 1778, 1779 and 1780 annual settlements were made.

The "centralisation" which began with 1773 was completed by year 1786, and then began decentralisation which continued till 1798. In 1789 and 1790 regulations were issued for making a decennial settlement in Bihar and Bengal respectively. The Permanent Settlement began in March, 1793.

Condition of Pargana Bhagalpur from 1765—1772

At the time of the conferment of the Diwani on the Company, Bhagalpur consisted of eight *parganas*, besides the estate known as Mahalat Kharagpur composed of 20 *parganas* and belonging to the Raja of Kharagpur. From 1765—1772, the names of *parganas* Bhagalpur, Colgong and Chhai do not find mention in the rent roll of *Subah* Bihar. They had been transferred to *Subah* Bengal under the false claim that they constituted a Jagir in favour of Nizam-Ud-Dulah, son of Mir Jafar. William Harwood, the first Supervisor with headquarters at Rajmahal, held charge of the area, that was divided into two parts, Bengal and Bihar. Bihar included Pargana Bhagalpur. From old records maintained in the revenue office at Murshidabad it appears that, the original crown rent of 40 estates included in the jurisdiction of the first

English Collector, Bhagalpur was Rs. 8,98,950. The collection of revenue was made through the zamindars whose operations were supervised by Kanungoes.

The Kanungo System

The Kanungo played an important role in the development of early British revenue administration. The Chief *Kanungos* were those of Bhagalpur, Colgong and Kharagpur. The *Kanungoship* of Bhagalpur and of a portion of Colgong was conferred by Hussain Shah, the king of Bengal, upon Sri Ram Ghosh, and it remained in hereditary succession for about 200 years in the family of Sri Ram. Sri Ram came from Murshidabad and settled in Bhagalpur in the reign of Shah Jahan. The *Kanungoship* of Colgong was conferred upon a Hindu renegade on the third year of the reign of Alamgir. The first Muhammadan Raja of Kharagpur, Todar Mall, who took the name of Raja Afjun, obtained his title from Emperor Jahangir, in 1615. He was also appointed Kanungo of *Mahalat* Kharagpur by the Mughal Emperor. When the *Kanungoship* was abolished in 1787, special pensions were granted to the incumbents.

Ghatwali tenures

Some land in *pargaans* Bhagalpur and Kharagpur was held by *Ghatwals* whose duty was to protect the district from the incursions of the hill tribes of Ramgarh and the western portion of the Santal country. The prominent *Ghatwals* were those of Lachhmipur, Kakwara and Kharwar all subordinate to the Raja of Kharagpur; they paid the Raja a *resum* of two annas per bigha on the area of cultivated lands included in their tenures. But, after all, this system failed to produce the desired object. The *Ghatwals* asserted their independence, assumed leadership of marauding hill tribes and created disorder. At length, the refractory *Ghatwals* were brought under subjection and the *Ghatwali* of Lachhmipur was separated from Kharagpur and formed into a distinct estate. In 1836, the Government resumed the land of the *Ghatwals*. This institution has been dealt with in details later.

Grant of Jagir to invalid soldiers

The *Ghatwals* proving themselves inefficient in keeping down the hill tribals, Cleveland, who assumed the Collectorship of Bhagalpur in 1779, adopted several measures for the pacification of the hill tribals, the chief being that of settling down the invalid soldiers of the company on the waste lands between the hill country and Bhagalpur. Under orders of the Governor-General and Council of Revenue, the *Jagir* system (i.e., grant of land free of a revenue or the assignment of revenue of lands for the maintenance of some particular person or establishment) was introduced, for which lands were taken away from the *zamindars* without giving them any compensation and given to invalid soldiers.

In 1782 instructions were issued to the Collector of Bhagalpur to distribute lands to the native officers and sepoys each according to their rank. Thus, a Commandant was to receive 300 *bighas*, a Subedar 200, a Jamadar 100 and so on. On the death of the original grantee his family was permitted a perpetual grant of the lands at a moderate fixed rent. At first, such lands were granted on the south of the Ganga, but later they were granted on the north of the river as well, and this system was, in course of time, extended along the Ganga to the other districts. This *jagir* system was, after all, and for various reasons, put a stop to by Regulation 2 of 1821.

The Decennial Settlement

At the time of the Decennial Settlement information regarding the assessment of each estate was secured through *Kanungos* of the district. The Collector of Bhagalpur, however, faced difficulties in making proper assessment of revenue, on account of the insecure state of the country and the *zamindars* refusing to accept the responsibility of paying the revenue that was much lower than the previous revenue, with the result that, there had been a great disproportion between the assessment of revenue in Bhagalpur and those of other districts. For instance the revenue that was realised in 1765 from the forty estates of Bhagalpur figured Rs. 8,98,950. In 1772, the revenue assessed from Bhagalpur and 2 other parganas was Rs. 5,28,580 but in 1799, the revenue was as low as Rs. 3,09,730.

Permanent Settlement, 1793

In 1793, Permanent Settlement was made with the principal *zamindars* of each *pargana*. At that time there were only 40 estates in the district and 10 per cent of the asset of each estate after deducting the cost of collections was left to the *zamindars*. But the majority of the estates were permanently settled long after 1793. This institution has been referred to later.

The Resumption proceedings

The word "Resumption" is a technical term that was being used in revenue administration to denote either the assessment to revenue of lands, etc., which hitherto had been exempted from the payment of revenue, or the transfer of revenue devoted to the same special object to the general exchequer. Enquiries were instituted after 1793 and it continued till 1850, to see how far the claims made at time of the Permanent Settlement to hold lands without payment of revenue were valid. As a result, up to 1840 about 181 estates were resumed, resulting in the increase of revenue from Rs. 3,10,000 in 1800 to Rs. 5,80,000 in 1860 and Rs. 7,21,600 in 1872.

The Revenue Survey

The revenue survey of Bhagalpur district took place between 1846 and 1850. Maps were prepared showing geographical details and village boundaries. Sherwill and Pemberton were incharge of the operations in north and south Bhagalpur respectively. At the time of this survey the area of the district was 7,801 square miles and it contained 20 *parganas* of which 4 were in the north and the rest were in the south. Soon afterwards the number of *parganas* increased to 23 of which 10 and 13 were situated in north and south respectively.

The Modern Period

The aforesaid surveys were followed by the Ganges Diara survey that took place in 1865-66 and led to assessments of lands which had been added by alluvion to the permanently settled estates touching on the river under Act IX of 1847. Again, the Survey and Settlement (Traverse Survey) of north Bhagalpur began in 1901-02, and the Cadastral Survey and the Khanapuri Survey of south Bhagalpur took place in the season of 1905-06 and 1906-07. The total area of the district in 1901 was 4,158 square miles.

Other Surveys and Settlements were made in 1910-11, 1920-21, 1930-31, 1940-41 and 1950-51.

Classification of Estates

Till the *zamindari* abolition in 1950 the estates fell under 3 heads, namely, permanent settled estates, temporary settled estates and estates held by Government. The following table gives the number of these estates and their annual revenue collections as per years noted against each :—

Years.	Total number of estates.	Amount of collection.	Permanent estates.	Collection.
1	2	3	4	5
		Rs.		Rs.
1911-12	4,800	6,03,411	4,780	5,68,416
1920-21	4,947	6,17,022	4,924	5,68,840
1930-31	5,060	6,09,694	5,040	5,67,186
1940-41	5,186	6,06,131	5,163	5,68,149
1950-51	5,247	6,00,180	5,225	5,73,738

Years.	Temporary estates.	Collection.	Estates held by Government.	Collection.
1	6	7	8	9
		Rs.		Rs.
1911-12	6	1,573	14	33,422
1920-21	6	2,511	17	45,671
1930-31	10	4,286	10	38,222
1940-41	9	1,166	13	36,816
1950-51	8	92	14	26,350

Land Revenue Structure

The history of Bhagalpur has been dealt with elsewhere. In ancient period *Anga,* one of the sixteen *Janapadas* of the country included the modern districts of Bhagalpur and Monghyr. During this period the *bhaga* or land revenue was fixed at 1/6th part of the total produce and went to the ruling chief or administration. Bhagalpur grant of the Pala period gives some ideas of the prevailing land revenue system in this part of the country during ninth and tenth centuries of the Christian era. *Udranga* was the chief tax on land, viz., 1/6th of its produce, and *Uparikara* was a minor tax. *Bhaga* was often substituted for *Udranga* and *Hiranaya* means probably taxes paid in cash and levied on profits of trade, etc., at 1/50th. The above mentioned grant mentioned the *inam* villages which were free from taxation and were not to be entered into by police-men and soldiers.*

When the Muhammadans were ruling the same area, the land revenue taken was 1/4th or even 1/3rd of the total produce besides *abwabs* or illegal exaction above the fixed rental. At this time Bhagalpur formed part of *Sarkar* Monghyr one of the seven *Sarkars* into which Bihar was divided during the time of Akbar.**

The area of *Sarkar* Monghyr of which Bhagalpur formed a component part did undergo changes on a number of occasions and the area of the unit that was known as Bhagalpur also underwent changes. That is why it is now almost impossible to ascertain exactly what was the assessment by the way of land revenue on the particular unit of Bhagalpur at the time of Todar Mall's settlement of 1582. *Sarkar* Monghyr in Suba Bihar is shown in the *Ain-i-Akbari* as assessed at about Rs. 7,41,000. Some information as to the revenue paid for certain areas at various times is, however, available. The *Ain-i-Akbari* mentions the following parganas and the revenue assessed on them by Akbar in the last Settlement Report.†

---

*C.V. Vaidya, *History of Mediaeval Hindu India,* Volume II, p. 234.

**The Final Report on the Survey and Settlement Operations in the Bhagalpur District (1902—1910) at page 12 had mentioned that "Originally Bhagalpur formed part of *Sarkar* Monghyr, one of the seven *Sarkars* into which Bihar was divided at the time of Muhammadan conquest in 1202 A. D." This appears to be confusing and probably wrong. The unit of *Sarkar* is a much later creation and did not exist when the Muslims overran the area. The term '*Sarkar*' as a unit in the administration appears to have been used in the time of Sher Shah (1540—45 A. D.).

†*Survey and Settlement Reports of the District* (1902—1910), p. 13.

Pargana	Revenue in dams
Molhani Gopal	151
Dharampur	40,00,000
Kabkhand	2,43,677
Uttarkhand	1,28,412
Chhai	9,28,000
Nisankhpur Kurha	9,728
Bhagalpur	46,96,110
Colgong	28,00,000
Stahiari	58,730
Jahangira	..
Lakhanpur	6,33,280
Kherhi	6,89,044
Sahroi	17,73,000
Danra Sakhwara	1,36,000
Hazar Taki	9,182
Chandwe	3,60,000
Wasila	89,760
Chandan Katoria	
Dhapahar	
Nathpur	..
Harawat	
Naredigar	

From the above it appears that the *parganas* Jahangira, Chandan Katoria, Dhapahar, Nathpur, Harawat and Naredigar had been then left unassessed. The reasons are not clear. It may be that some portions like Katoria were full of jungles and more or less uninhabitated and hence the tract was not assessed. But this cannot be the case with Jahangira Pargana which is close to the Ganga river and must have been inhabited and fertile.

Since *dam* was then equivalent to one-fortieth of a rupee the total revenue of *parganas* comprising the old Bhagalpur district comes to about 4 lakh rupees. The *parganawise* figure indicates that some *parganas* like Malhani Gopal and Nisanakpur Kurha were very lightly assessed as very little of areas of them had been brought under cultivation in Akbar's time. Bhagalpur, Colgong and Chhai seem to be very extensively cultivated and supplied a large proportion of the total revenue of the district. They seemed to have been more settled and prosperous than the other *parganas*.

In subsequent assessments their revenue seems to have been increased, for in 1765 they paid five and quarter lakhs of rupees as revenue, or more than twice the amount of Akbar's assessment. But for seven years, i.e., from 1765 to 1772 their revenue had been embezzled due to fraud.* Similar embezzlement had also been made by the *zamindars* in the hilly parts of the Banka subdivision who enjoyed semi-independence and seldom paid any revenue at all. It appears that on the eve of the establishment of the British supremacy chaotic condition prevailed in the revenue matter of the district. In consequence of the embezzlements which followed the Permanent Settlement, the land revenue in 1799 amounted to only 3.10 lakhs; and owing to the backward condition of the district at the time of settlement and to the imperfect assessments originally made, the incidence of land revenue was extraordinarily low, amounting for the whole district to Re. 0-4-6 per cultivated acre and to less than 11 per cent of the rental.**

About 1722 Murshid Quli Khan, revised the whole assessment of Bengal, but it is impossible to find out the exact proportion of the enhancement that was levied in Bhagalpur district. However, from old records of the Murshidabad Diwani office it appears that the as *asljama tumari* or original crown rent of the forty estates, included in the area which formed the jurisdiction of the first English Collector at Bhagalpur, was Rs. 8,98,950. In 1765, when the Company assumed the administration, this constituted the re-organized assessment of which Rs. 90,950 had been alienated in grants of rent-free lands, *nankar* estates, and other charges connected with the collection. The system of collection followed was then, as now, carried out through the *zamindars*; but as they had not then been recognized as actual proprietors, their operations were supervised by Government officers called *kanungos*, one of whom was attached to each large estate, or to two or three minor ones.†

Ghatwali tenures.—This system was widely prevalent in Chotanagpur but had to be enforced in Bhagalpur district to protect the tract from the incursions of the Santhal tribes. *Ghatwal* or *Ghatwar* meant the guard who watches the *ghats* or mountain passes and assures unmolested travel through them. The *ghatwali* lands were granted for the maintenance of the *ghatwals* who were given the

---

**Survey and Settlement Reports* (1902—1910), p. 13.

***Imperial Gazetteer of India, Provincial Series, Bengal*, Volume II, Calcutta, 1909, p. 172.

†*District Gazetteer of Bhagalpur* (1911), p. 135.

status of police for protecting the low country from incursions and depredations which in former days were a common feature. The tenures almost became hereditary. But in the course of the time when regular police was introduced the post of *ghatwals* became almost sinecure. In 1780 in consequence of conciliatory offers held out to them by Captain Brown and Mr. Cleveland, the Collector of the district, the several *ghatwals* and their establishment were prevailed upon to return to their *jagir* and resume their former duties. By this settlement the *ghatwals* were removed from the control of the *zamindars*, and having *sanads* granted on the part of Government, they became subordinate to Government only. The conditions of these *sanads* were that the *ghatwals* were to hold the lands at a consolidated *jama*, in consideration of which they were required to maintain the police as detailed by Government and that on failure of this service, or if any disturbance should occur in their jurisdiction they were made liable to forfeit the tenure.*

The *ghatwali* system proved totally a failure. The system failed altogether to provide the militia which Captain Brown expected would keep the country safe from the attack of the hillmen. The system fell into disuse after the enforcement of the Decennial Settlement and Permanent Settlement. In 1836 Government finding that the services of the *ghatwals* were no longer required attempted to resume their lands under Regulation I of 1793.

Decennial and Permanent Settlement.—"Considerable difficulty seems to have been experienced by the Collector when making the Decennial Settlement. This was probably due to the unsettled state of the district at the time, which made the *zamindars* disinclined to accept responsibility for the payment of the revenue fixed. The amount of revenue assessed was extraordinarily low in comparison with that assessed in previous settlements, and at the present day the disproportion between the assets of the estates and the revenue is greater in Bhagalpur than in any other district in Bihar. The revenue in 1799, a few years after the Permanent Settlement, was Rs. 3,09,730, whereas the revenue of three *parganas* alone, Chhai, Colgong and Bhagalpur, had in 1772 amounted to Rs. 5,28,580. The contrast with earlier settlements is even greater, for in 1765 the *asal jama* of the district which then contained forty estates was Rs. 8,98,950.

"In making the Decennial Settlement the Collector appears to have relied chiefly on the *Kanungos* of the district for information as to the assets of the different estates, and this no doubt accounts to some extent for the above result. The chief *Kanungos* were the *Kanungos* of Bhagalpur, Colgong and of Kharagpur. The first Muhammadan Raja of Kharagpur, Todal Mall, who took the

Survey and Settlement Report (1902—1910), p. 14.

name of Raja Afjun, received his title from the Emperor Jahangir in 1615. He was at the same time made ***Kanungo*** of ***Mahlat*** Kharagpur and given the right of collecting ***rasum*** in that property. At various intervals the Rajas of Kharagpur asserted and tried to enforce by arms a claim to the ***Kanungoship*** of Bhagalpur, which was held by the descendants of one Shri Ram Ghosh, who came from Murshidabad and settled in Bhagalpur in the reign of Shah-Jehan. Shri Ram's father-in-law was ***Kanungo,*** and the post became hereditary and remained in the family down to the time of the Permanent Settlement."*

The Permanent Settlement of 1793 did not affect the majority of the estates in the district. The great majority of the estates were, as the list shows, permanently settled long after 1793.**

Year of Settlement.	Number of estates.		Revenue.
	Original.	Batwara.	Rs.
Up to 1793	29	65	38,129
1794 to 1799	83	83	74,912
1800 to 1808	159	248	1,14,557
1809 to 1820	129	25	1,36,480
1821 to 1830	13	..	4,689
1831 to 1853	196	195	41,534
Total ..	609	616	4,10,301

The Revenue Survey of 1846 to 1850 and the subsequent legal proceedings for resumption and assessment to revenue of lands which had so far escaped assessment or were not validly exempted from assessment resulted in an increase of revenue to Rs. 5,80,000 in 1860. In 1872 the revenue demand was Rs. 7,21,600.

Settlement Operations (1902—1910).—During the last Survey and Settlement Operations (1902—1910) the Government revenue payable at Bhagalpur was Rs. 6,06,778. The changes in revenue jurisdiction brought in the changes in the revenue demand. This included the areas of ***Mahalat*** Kharagpur, the large portion of which is situated in Monghyr and the area of Lachhmipur estate which lies in Santhal Parganas; the revenue of the former was Rs. 46,020 and of the latter Rs. 5,916. This reduces the revenue to Rs. 5,54,842 which was payable for practically the whole area of the district except the portion apperataining to *pargana* Dharampur.

**Survey and Settlement Report* (1902—1910), p. 18.

***Settlement Report* (1902—1910), p. 19.

According to the last Survey and Settlement Report the total area of the district was 4,158 square miles, of which *pargana* Dharampur covered 53. The incidence of Government revenue was therefore, Rs. 135 per square mile, or three annas four pies per acre.* The last *District Gazetteer of Bhagalpur* (1911), however, mentions at page 138 as follows :—

> "At present the total land revenue demand is Rs. 6,05,746. On an area of 4,426 square miles, this gives an incidence of revenue per acre of only 3.5 annas, which is abnormally low." Taken together the difference between the figures given in the last Survey and Settlement Report (1902—1910) and the last District Gazetteer (1911) is small and can be ignored.

The incidence of land revenue appears to be excessively low in Bhagalpur district which will be apparent from the figures of the other districts of Bihar in which the Settlement Operations had also been completed.

District.	Area in square miles.	Revenue.	Incidence† per acre.
		Rs.	Rs. a. p.
Darbhanga	3,348	7,88,301	0 5 10
Muzaffarpur	3,033	9,65,128	0 7 11
Saran	2,674	12,63,128	0 11 9
Champaran	3,531	5,15,553	0 3 7
North Monghyr	1,451	3,74,060	0 6 5
South Monghyr	2,318	4,02,716	0 4 4
Purnea	4,994	11,79,591	0 6 2
Bhagalpur	4,659	5,54,842	0 3 4

At the time of Permanent Settlement ten per cent of the assets of each estate, after deducting the cost of collections, were left to the *zamindars*.

History of Land Revenue Assessment and Management.

The history of land revenue assessment and management of Bhagalpur district follows the same pattern as in other districts. There is a continuity in the core of it from the ancient period

**Final Survey and Settlement Report in the District of Bhagalpur* (1902—1910), p. 24.
†*Last Survey and Settlement Report* (1902—1910), p. 24.

to the end of the Mughal and then in the British period. There had been changes and modifications from time to time, but the fundamental features appear to have remained unaltered. In revenue history of the early Muslim and Mughal period we find some striking features which have their parallel in the earlier period in regard to the method of land revenue assessment and collection and forms of payment of land revenue. The Muslims or even the Britishers who came here in the wake of their conquest did not outright impose entirely a new system. On the other hand they adopted mainly, certainly with some modifications what the time required. According to the sacred law of the Hindus the kings and peasants were in a bilateral relation in regard to right, the duty of the peasant was to raise the produce and pay a share of it to the State in return for the protection afforded to him. Of course it is duty rather than the right of acceptance that finds mention in the old sacred books. The Muslim sovereign not unlike some Hindu kings considered himself as a proprietor of the soil, so he was entitled to get the whole produce. As such in theory there was no fixity of State demand. But in practice 1/3rd or even ½ md. of the total produce was taken as a king share during Muslim period.

The assessment of the land revenue was ascertained by the reference of the area and quality of the land. The assessment of Todarmall was based on the four-fold classification of lands such as (*i*) *Polaj* (lands continuously cultivated and never allowed to lie fallow), (*ii*) *Parauti* (land left fallow for a time that may be sufficient to recover its fertility), (*iii*) *Chachar* (land that has been left fallow for three or four years) and (*iv*) *banjar* (land which remained uncultivated for five years or more). Each of the first two classes were subdivided into three grades good, middling and bad, and the average produce was calculated from the mean of the three grades. The classification was determined not by the examination of the soil but on the basis of continuity of cultivation. The revenue fixed in kind was commuted for money payment on the basis of revenue price for the previous ten years. But payment in kind was the general rule.

The Britishers who inherited the prevailing system of assessment adopted it with slight modification. Mr. Murphy the Settlement Officer of Bhagalpur (1902—10) had mentioned the procedure generally adopted in fixing cash rents as follows:—

> "The lands were classified, and where possible, the average rates paid for similar classes of land in the vicinity were ascertained. In many cases this was not possible, as the rates paid bore little or no reference to the class of the land. In such cases the average cash rate paid in the village for all lands was taken. The average annual value of the produce rent realised by the landlord in the previous ten years was also calculated, and the

mean between this and the rental calculated at the average rate or rates was taken as a fair rent. As a rule the average annual value of the produce rents was greater than the rent calculated at the prevailing cash rates, and hence the landlord generally stood to loose by the commutation. In many of the villages belonging to the Baneli estate, however, the opposite was the case. In these the result of the coummutation proceedings was to increase the landlord's income by about 20 per cent. Strange to say the only objection was raised by the landlords themselves, who were not satisfied and asked for more. The raiyats were quite willing to pay the enhanced rents. This is instructive, as it indicates that the persons chiefly interested in the maintenance of the produce rent system are the landlords' servants who find in it unlimited opportunities for blackmail. The manager of this estate is clearly aware of this, for in recent years he has himself commuted the rents of large numbers of holdings. The only objection to commutation through the settlement courts appears to be that the landlord does not get the *salami*, which is usually paid when the commutation is done by private agreement."*

The average cash rates of rent per acre paid by different classes of raiyats in Bhagalpur district was Re. 1/4/- for raiyats at fixed rates, Rs. 2-10-6 for occupancy raiyats and Rs. 2-15-3 for non-occupancy raiyats. Thus the incidence of average rent per acre fixed during last survey and settlement operations (1902—10) was Rs. 2-10-5.**

Besides the cash rent the other form of prevailing rent was produce rent. This was the chief source of the bone of contention between the landlords and the tenants. The total area under produce rent during the last Survey and Settlement Operations was 157,073 and the incidence of assessment of this sort of land was calculated at Rs. 8 per acre which was higher than in Darbhanga and Monghyr districts. The produce rent paying land in Bhagalpur was mostly irrigated land in the south of the district. The total rental under different heads was as follows:—

	Rs.
Cash rental	40,44,595
Produce rental of areas at Rs. 8 per acre ..	12,56,584
Annual value of lands in the direct possession of proprietors and tenure holders—157,531 at Rs. 6.	9,45,186
Total	62,46,365

* Final report on the *Survey and Settlement operations* in the Bhagalpur District (1902—1910), p. 96.

** *Ibid*, p. 123.

The appraisal is given in the last Survey and Settlement Report and is partially given as follows:—

"This shows the average assets to be Rs. 1,662 per square mile or Rs. 2-9-6 per acre. The incidence of Government revenue has been calculated in paragraph 349 to be Rs. 135 per square mile or annas 3 pies 4 per acre.

"The zamindars therefore enjoy over 91 per cent of the total assets instead of the 10 per cent which was reserved to them by the permanent settlement. In no other Bihar district is the disproportion between the assets and the revenue so noticeable as in Bhagalpur. The fact that the settlement was made at a time when the greater part of the district was covered with jungle, account for this result."*

Later land revenue history.

The period which followed the last Survey and Settlement Operations (1902—10) and the publication of the last District Gazetteer of Bhagalpur (1911) till the passing of the Bihar Land Reforms Act, 1950 witnessed practically no change in the history of the land revenue administration. The land revenue demand of the district practically remained static. The total land revenue demand according to Mr. Byrne in 1911 was Rs. 6,05,746 as against Rs. 6,17,071 in 1954 on the eve of the separation of Saharsa district. It was so because the majority of the estates of Bhagalpur district were permanently settled. This will be evident from the recital of the facts mentioned in the last District Gazetteer of Bhagalpur (1911) regarding the estates:—

"At the time of the permanent settlement, there were only forty estates in the district. Since that time the number has increased rapidly and at present there are 4,643 permanently settled estates in the district. In addition there are 18 temporarily settled estates and 63 estates held direct by Government.

"The majority of the estates in this district pay less than 100 rupees revenue. According to an analysis made in 1901, there were 3,954 estates held by proprietors who paid less than Rs. 100 for each estate as land revenue. The average area of each estate was 84 acres and the average assessment of each estate was only Rs. 19. In all, these small estates covered an area of 332,312 acres.

"At the same time there were 699 estates that paid each between Rs. 100 and Rs. 5,000 as land revenue. These covered 813,239 acres. Eleven estates covering 624,119 acres paid between Rs. 5,000 and Rs. 50,000 each and only one estate paid more than that amount. It covers 1,113,500 acres and is assessed at Rs. 72,498.

**Survey and Settlement Report* (1902—1910), p. 125.

"The number of revenue-free estates is 1,320 covering 49,990 acres, the average area of each estate being 38 acres.

"The modern tendency is obviously to increase the number of estates and to reduce correspondingly the average assessment of each. This is the result of the importation of Western notions of individual ownership, and the operation of the law for the partition of estates. Bhagalpur is still, fortunately for those entrusted with its revenue administration, far behind several other Bihar districts as regards the number of estates borne on its revenue-roll.

"The total demand for the 18 estates that are temporarily settled is at present about Rs. 1,950 per annum; and for the 63 estates held direct by Government it is about Rs. 38,700 per annum. The areas affected are mainly riparian and as they are not of very great importance no detailed account of them is given".*

The interregnum figures of revenue for the temporarily settled estates were not available in the Collectorate office of Bhagalpur. But from the figures available in the Collectorate from 1947-48 it appears that the number of temporary settled estates and the estates held direct by Government decreased appreciably; the number of former being 6 and of the latter 4 in Bhagalpur district excluding Saharsa. The corresponding figures of temporary settled estates and the estates held direct by Government were 3 and 4 respectively in 1947-48 in Saharsa district. The number of permanent settled estates on the eve of vesting of estates to State in Bhagalpur was 6,453.

The total demand of land revenue in 1954 on the eve of separation of Saharsa district was Rs. 6,17,071 and cess demand Rs. 9,90,528. In 1955 after the separation of Saharsa the land revenue demand of the district was Rs. 3,59,694 and cess demand Rs. 5,37,906.

All the temporary settled estates were in Sadar subdivision, one in Bihpur, three in Colgong and two in Kotwali police-station. The total revenue demand was Rs. 1,393. The Khasmahal estates were at Tintanga, Jagatpur, Mohanpur and Ramnagar; Rs. 20,090 for the first three which were in one *tauji* and Rs. 1,917 of the last in 1954-55.

Present System of Survey

The first Cadastral Survey and Settlement Operations were conducted in the district during 1902—10 by Mr. P. W. Murphy, I.C.S. Since then no survey had been conducted. In the Cadastral Survey the *diara* villages were excluded from the Bengal Tenancy Act operations, but were topographically surveyed on the 16"

* *District Gazetteer of Bhagalpur* (1911), pp. 138-139.

scale under the Survey Act. After 1902 the Kosi and Ganga *diara* areas in Bhagalpur and Purnea was surveyed with 4" scale by the revenue survey village; boundaries were made and were not decided according to possession. This change was made because it was found that maps of boundaries by possession at the time of their preparation were of little assistance to the courts as possession in *diara* changes rapidly. The creation of Saharsa, a separate district in 1954 marked an important phase in the old Bhagalpur district. The vesting of all the intermediaries of the district in the State in 1956 marked another important epoch in history of the land revenue administration of the district. The abolition of Zamindaris brought direct relation between the Government and the tillers of the soil. Since the State Government stepped into the shoe of the ex-intermediaries the assets and liabilities of the land revenue now vested in Government. This has necessitated to bring the record-of-rights each of the tenants up to date. This object cannot be achieved without a fresh Survey and Settlement. Even during the last Survey and Settlement (1902—10) the areas forming the Gangetic belt were outside the orbit of the operations. The earliest survey of the Gangetic *diara* area was done in 1847. This was followed by a professional *diara* survey during 1865-68 with a view to the re-adjustment of revenue rendered necessary by change in the riparian area. Since then no Survey was conducted in the Gangetic belt. In 1956-57 theodolite traverse survey was done in the *diara* areas which was followed by Cadastral Survey in 1958. The Cadastral Survey is still in progress.

In this survey village boundaries are being fixed on the basis of the last revenue survey of 1847 with minor adjustment due to inevitable changes which took place in more than hundred years. Possession is often taken as one of the vital criteria of occupancy rights. But other relevant factors are not ignored. In course of Survey a large number of cases have come to light in which tenants were not paying any rent to ex-landlords and they are being assessed now.

The system of assessment marked practically little change from the last Survey and Settlement Operations. The rent of the unassessed land as stated before is assessed after the classification of lands, the average rates paid for similar classes of land in the vicinity are generally taken into consideration. In some cases where it is not possible the average rent of all sorts of lands of the thana is taken, and according to new formulae two annas *ijafa* (or increase) per rupee is added.

The collection of revenue, after the abolition of zamindaris, had been entrusted to Karamchari, one for each *halka*. There are 210 *halkas* in the district. There is a scheme to entrust the rent collection work to Gram Panchayats and as a preliminary measure some Gram Panchayats have been entrusted for collection work. The details will be given later.

INCOME FROM LAND REVENUE

Land revenue is the chief source of State income. According to tenancy law rent is the first charge on the land. After the abolition of the *zamindari* system its importance has increased considerably. The average rent per acre during the last Survey and Settlement Operations (1902—10) was calculated at Rs. 2-9-6. Since then no Cadastral Survey has been conducted in the district. In absence of a detailed survey it would be hazardous to come to any conclusion. The *bujharat* operations are still under completion. But from the figures of current demand of land revenue it appears that there had been progressive increase in the land revenue of the district. The hitherto *Kabililangan* and *Khas* lands of the ex-landlords which had not been assessed previously are now being assessed.

Cess is assessed and realised in accordance with the provisions of the Bengal Cess Act, 1880, as subsequently modified by the rules framed thereunder. Prior to abolition of *zamindaris*, the ex-landlords used to pay cess at the rate of two annas per rupee on the annual value of land. The annual value of some of the estates was, however, considerably reduced as a result of rent commutation operations and Government have, therefore, amended section 37 of the Cess Act by the insertion of section 37-A giving powers to the Collectors to effect reduction in the cess liability of the estate from the date of rent commutation. After abolition, the State Government, in whom the *zamindaris* vested under the Bihar Land Reforms Act, 1950, have to pay cess to the District Board at the same rate. In view, however, of the fact that up till now it has not been possible to complete the reduction of cess under section 37-A of the Cess Act and make an accurate estimate of the total annual value of land due to absence of up-to-date land records the total amount of cess payable to the District Boards annually has not yet been correctly determined. The State Government are, therefore, making advances to the District Boards against State liability for payment of cess since 1952-53 on the basis of figures prior to abolition. The statement of amount of advances made to the Bhagalpur District Board from Government from 1952-53 to 1956-57 is as follows*:—

1952-53.	1953-54.	1954-55.	1955-56.	1956-57.	1957-58.	1958-59.	1959-60.	1960-61.
Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.
1,00,000	1,42,342	2,00,000	2,38,000	5,31,579	5,06,421	5,16,084	5,24,330	3,21,688

* Appendix VII of the consolidated *Report on the L.R.A. of the State of Bihar* for the years 1952—57 published in 1961 and the later figures were taken from the Bhagalpur Collectorate office.

From 1959-60 the State Government have imposed Education Cess at the rate of one anna per rupee on the annual value of land to meet the rising expenditure on education. This cess has been enforced for the expansion of education.

The statement of land revenue demand and collection along with cess is appended below.

Year.		Annual Demand.							
		Rent.		Cess.		Education Cess.		Miscellaneous Cess.	
		Arrear.	Current.	Arrear.	Current.	Arrear.	Current.	Arrear.	Current.
1		2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
		Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.
1957-58	..	15,76,472.94	21,95,410.41	1,21,643.44	1,47,306.31	..	..	70,009.74	1,18,464.62
1958-59	..	22,72,343.00	20,64,500.00	2,09,688.00	1,52,386.00	..	..	1,00,618.57	1,79,617.00
1959-60	..	22,85,380.00	23,00,514.00	2,18,297.00	1,78,795.00	..	41,726.60	1,19,842.48	2,46,083.47
1960-61	..	23,59,762.16	23,90,691.29	2,31,570.24	2,11,548.02	1,57,014.98	1,54,392.72	1,75,215.29	2,36,248.50
1961-62 up to February, 1962.	..	29,01,769.20	24,59,723.78	3,01,361.19	2,19,119.10	2,00,760.15	1,59,459.86	2,17,932.90	2,25,105.30

TOTAL COLLECTION UP TO DATE.

Year.	Rent.		Cess.		Education Cess.		Miscellaneous Cess.	
	Arrear.	Current.	Arrear.	Current.	Arrear.	Current.	Arrear.	Current.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.
1957-58 ..	3,21,331.90	4,32,905.94	23,630.22	38,513.44	..	..	13,575.62	1,03,455.62
1958-59 ..	17,44,728.12	10,99,477.18	1,29,002.86	81,095.93	..	..	22,206.69	1,22,588.06
1959-60 ..	16,17,963.05	10,15,331.11	1,18,823.61	74,477.25	..	4,395.50	38,934.93	1,53,156.43
1960-61 ..	18,91,853.33	9,65,355.51	1,35,948.26	70,058.60	60,015.93	59,884.19	22,853.51	165,201.79
1961-62 .. up to February, 1962.	3,13,249.50	1,85,368.18	21,907.47	13,093.98	14,621.27	12,117.10	15,576.69	1,31,377.39

STATEMENT SHOWING DEMAND AND COLLECTION OF SADAR SUBDIVISION FOR 1961-62 (IN RUPEES).

Serial no.	Name of Anchals.	Demand for the year. Arrear.	Demand for the year. Current.	Collection up to date. Arear.	Collection up to date. Current.	Remarks.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1	Jagdishpur ..	1,96,138.89	1,56,369.25	21,440.64	35,133.67	
2	Town Area ..	28,090.97	29,288.18	6,366.52	3,398.91	
3	Nathnagar ..	58,581.09	70,438.70	2,135.20	3,365.47	
4	Sultanganj ..	2,17,170.49	1,71,722.10	5,756.04	10,426.25	
5	Sahkund ..	2,51,550.60	1,76,749.50	15,077.81	9,343.00	
6	Sabour ..	2,08,140.77	1,50,604.38	14,839.72	16,800.10	
7	Colgong ..	4,05,595.53	2,41,247.19	26,367.23	14,310.38	
8	Pirpainty ..	2,49,902.87	2,03,865.09	7,296.39	15,764.03	
9	Sauhaula ..	2,58,610.98	1,52,240.54	13,204.28	7,408.62	
10	Bihpur ..	1,27,740.98	1,06,192.19	18,020.23	16,732.32	
11	Naugachia ..	94,358.05	1,05,422.45	23,982.38	17,271.76	
12	Gopalpur ..	1,58,477.42	1,33,211.14	12,208.83	7,136.01	
	TOTAL ..	22,54,358.54	16,97,350.71	1,66,693.37	1,57,090.52	

STATEMENT SHOWING ANCHALWISE DEMAND AND COLLECTION OF BANKA SUBDIVISION 1961-62 (IN RUPEES).

Serial no.	Name of Anchals.	Demand for the year. Arrear.	Demand for the year. Current.	Collection up to date. Arrear.	Collection up to date. Current.	Remarks.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1	Amarpur ..	4,22,291.72	2,12,808.15	10,987.69	23,634.00	
2	Banka ..	50,812.89	1,15,351.03	20,359.77	21,449.00	
3	Barahat ..	95,105.36	1,10,085.59	13,500.03	9,948.94	
4	Bounsi ..	52,357.55	1,16,892.24	6,626.21	21,444.05	
5	Chandan ..	52,880.29	66,078.03	15,829.64	10,399.51	
6	Dhoraiya ..	1,20,593.62	1,69,797.32	37,252.80	18,100.80	
7	Katoria ..	1,29,954.49	98,575.16	14,119.73	16,926.02	
8	Rajoun ..	1,26,853.28	1,73,909.30	29,754.97	29,413.43	
9	Shambhuganj ..	1,68,880.68	1,55,000.24	25,950.09	7,889.15	
10	Belhar ..	1,47,734.82	1,57,560.27	24,280.63	25.671.23	
	TOTAL ..	13,67,464.90	13,66,057.33	1,98,661.56	1,84,866.13	

LAND REFORMS

Relation between landlords and tenants

Zamindari system was the creation of the Permanent Settlement of 1793. It was not formed on the basis of mutual contract of the two parties. Peculiarly enough the contract was executed by the alien British Government and the few vested privileged people. Since the tenants were not party to this contract they poignantly considered it as an imposition by the third party. As such it was but natural that the relations between the ex-landlords and their tenants remained throughout the whole *zamindari* regime strained and unsatisfactory. The *zamindar* as a class was considered parasitical. Their interest was never common.

The relationship between the landlords and the tenants had been viewed in a rather lurid light in the last District Gazetteer in the chapter 'Rent, Wages and Prices''. Long extracts from the reports of the District Magistrate, Mr. F.F.Lyall for the years 1907-08 and 1908-09 have been given there indicting the landlords as a class. He has quoted the instance of *zamindars* like Rash Bihari Mandal and Maharaja of Sonbarsa (Sonbarsa is now in Saharsa district) as realising much more than what was due as a rent. The *zamindars* have been described as forgerers, robbers and oppressors. The view of Mr. Lyall may be taken to be one-sided and too severe on the landlords. In the text on History it has been mentioned that in his enthusiasm Lyall even criticised the Judges. The quotations in the last District Gazetteer from Lyall's reports from 1908-09 also show his veiled contempt for the procedure under which justice was administered either in Civil Courts or in the Criminal Courts. The evils pointed out by Lyall are not peculiar to Bhagalpur district alone. In a way it may be said that the Permanent Settlement brought in a sort of benevolent despotism between the landlords who had the rights very well protected by law and the tenants who had the poverty as a common lot. It is correct that whenever absentee landlordism predominated the troubles of the raiyats increased. But the *zamindars* also to a great extent discharged their social obligations. It will be shown later that their contribution to the cultural advancement of the district had not been inconsiderable.

The administration had tried to keep the balance as far as possible till the *zamindari* abolition was undertaken in 1950 as an aid to bring about a socialistic pattern of society which has been taken up as a policy of the State after independence in 1947. The various agrarian laws that had been put under statute book either as amendments to the existing tenancy legislation or as new Acts were meant for giving the much needed relief to the tenants. Such actions had been referred to elsewhere. The spread of education, the extension of ideas of Local Self-Government and communications, spread of journalism, conclusion of settlement proceedings, etc., were also so many aids to bring about a better relationship. The growth of a cultured and independent Bar in Bhagalpur and Bhagalpur Bar had set a standard in the State was also a help to the tenantry. Even when the big planters had their *zamindaris* like the Grant's estate, etc., there were no dearth of lawyers to take up the cases of the oppressed tenantry. The extension of the police system by the setting up of more police thanas in the interior also helped the maintenance of better relationship with tenantry. Both the big Planters' estates and the powerful Indian *zamindars* required equal attention.

It could not be expected that with the spread of education and the district had a considerable spurt in the first two decades of the present century that the tenants would any longer be meekly submitting to the whims and oppressions of the landlords. There was a considerable friction between the tenants and the management of the Grant's estate and between the Banaili *zamindars* and the tenants. In the third decade the relationship had become very acute. It may be recalled that the Champaran *Satyagraha* of Gandhiji had by then been concluded with success for the *raiyats* who were suffering in the hands of the European Indigo Planters. This event gave a great jolt to the administration, the big *zamindars* and the poor tenants. The tenants were first taught the lesson of unity and there was also a certain spirit of unrest and lawlessness throughout the country. The agitation in connection with Rowlatt Act, the disturbances in the Punjab, the great stir by the adoption of the Non-Co-operation Movement by the Indian National Congress brought a climate that encouraged the *raiyats* to unite and even to take an aggressive attitude. The *diara* disputes, the commutation proceedings and the large number of cases under sections 144 and 145 of the Criminal Procedure Code that took place in the first few years after 1928 are suggestive. The Non-Co-operation Movement made the situation more acute and there were riots attended with murder in Mr. Grant's *zamindari*. A Survey and preparation of the record-of-rights in the *diara* areas was ordered with a view to the settlement of the dispute. Any Settlement proceedings are bound to raise disputes and make the situation tense for sometime at least.

In 1922-23 with the advent of the Kisan Sabha agitation a new phase began in the relation between the two classes. The Kisan Sabha became vocal throughout Bihar and the grievances of the tenants and the exploitation of their landlords got widespread publication. The Kisan Movement spread in Bhagalpur district.

In 1923-24 there was considerable bitterness in the Banka Subdivision against the landlords for their neglect of irrigation for which the commutation of produce rent was largely responsible. The settlement of Alamnagar was completed during the year. In

Sonbarsa and the neighbouring villages belonging to Mr. Grant there was no trouble between the *zamindar* and tenants but between one set of tenants and another. In Supaul which is now in Saharsa district it was significant that the *zamindar* candidates for the council were defeated by candidates who professed to represent the *raiyats*."

The changes in course of the Ganga after rains in 1924-25 led to several land disputes in Gopalpur, Pirpainti, Colgong and Nathnagar *thanas*. The dispute over the *diara* area of 1,600 *bighas* between Babu Hemendra Nath Ghosal and his tenants in Gopalpur assumed a dangerous aspect and prompt measures had to be taken to avert an outburst. The feelings of latent hostility marked the succeeding year, i. e., in 1925-26. Gopalpur area was still a troublesome spot.

There was considerable friction in Bhagalpur in 1926-27 owing to the attempts of landlords to obtain enhancement of rent. Conditions in some part of north Bhagalpur became alarming where a record-of-rights had not yet been prepared. In succeeding years enhancement proceedings vis-a-vis cheap price of agricultural goods produced great commotion. In 1929-30 agrarian disputes centred round newly accreted *diara* lands in the Sadar subdivision which formed subject of litigation both in the Civil and Criminal Courts.

Complaints were often heard of the dishonest practice of some landlords of double receipts and double settlement of lands. In 1931-32 trouble was anticipated in the Sonbarsa *diara* in the Sadar subdivision, but the posting of additional police force eased the situation. In the Banka subdivision most of the big *zamindars* allowed some remissions in rent and afforded facilities for payment. Some discontent prevailed among the Santhals in Katoria and Belhar police-stations who wanted the introduction of Santhal Parganas system of land laws. The interests of Santhals had to be secured.

Alarming fall in price of agricultural produce and the high rate of rent prevailing caused widespread commotion in the Banka subdivision in 1933-34. The landlords refused to grant any concession by way of remissions of rent or interest and took all possible steps to realise their dues. In 1934-35 also there was a good deal of recrimination between the landlords and tenants in the Banka subdivision. The tenants withheld payment of rent and charged the landlords responsible for difficulties of the tenants owing to their negligence of irrigation facilities. In the *zamindari* of Rai Bahadur Sukhraj Rai in the Sadar subdivision disputes arose with his tenants over the possession of lands.

In 1935-36 the relation between the landlords and tenants entered upon a new phase owing to continued attempts made by the Kisan Sabha to ventilate the grievances of the tenants and the high-handedness of the landlords. In Banka subdivision the relation continued to be unsatisfactory. In the Khasmahals and in some of the *zamindaris* steps were taken to grant remission in rent. In 1936-37 the Kisan Sabha agitation continued to exercise great influence on tenants, encouraging them to resist illegal exactions. The frequent visits of the Kisan Sabha leaders kept the agitation alive.

In 1937 the Congress Party formed its Ministry in view of the Provincial Autonomy of 1935. The Congress Government took some statutory measures to ameliorate the condition of the peasants. During the first Ministry of the Congress it became clear that the abolition of the *zamindari* was imminent. The amendments of the Bihar Tenancy Act, 1885, in 1934, 1935 and 1937 were preliminary measures to substantiate the occupancy rights of the *raiyats*.

In 1937-38 the cultivation of Bakast lands by the landlords which were hitherto usually cultivated by the tenants led to agrarian disputes in some estates of the district. The Bihar Restoration of Bakasht Lands and Reduction of Arrear of Rent Act, 1938 was passed and the aggravated situation averted. In 1938-39 the *raiyats* made wholesale claim over the Bakasht lands and withheld the payment of rent. Commutation Proceedings also received a fillip. The situation remained strained during the whole year, though kept under control by constant vigilance. The policy of double settlement in several cases by the Sonbarsa estate made the situation aggravated in 1939-40.

In Bhagalpur relations became all the more strained after the rent reduction operations. During 1940-41 the activities of the Kisan Sabha further aggravated the situation. The reappearance of *diara* lands in certain areas revived the old fight between the rival landlords. The *zamindars'* attitude towards their peasants was now largely one of hostility owing to the reduction of rents and restoration of Bakast lands. Some of the *zamindars* began to deliberately neglect the maintenance of irrigation facilities as they were assured of their rent even if the facilities were not maintained. The healthy and friendly relationship of the landlords and the tenants had brought about the system under which the landlords had the social obligation of maintaining the irrigational facilities. Now because that spirit had faded, they refused to look to the irrigation facilities. The Commutation proceedings under which rent in kind was reduced to cash rent also gave the *zamindars* the idea that they need not maintain such facilities. There was also no effective law by which the *zamindars* could be forced to do so.

Instances of high-handedness on the part of the landlords were reported from Banka subdivision in 1945-46. In this subdivision

Darbhanga Raj realised money as *salami* by settling some *gairmazrua* lands which were already in the cultivating possession of the local Santhals. The Subdivisional Officer, Banka asked the Darbhanga Raj to return the *salami* realised and to settle the lands with the cultivating tenants but the Raj disregarded the instructions.

The formation of the Second Congress Ministry in Bihar in 1946 is an event of great historical importance. During the tenure of the First Congress Ministry the abolition of *zamindaris* was mooted and during the Second Congress Ministry it became a State policy. The peasants aspired to release themselves from the yoke of feudal servitude, and it became evident by the fact that once their grievances were redressed the strained relation between the landlords and tenants itself rapidly collapsed. Besides economic factors the psychological factors were not less important because of the growing bitterness between the *zamindars* and their tenants. The expansion of education and the free flow of western democratic ideas through press slowly brought in an intellectual stimulus. The later history of the relationship between the landlords and the tenants has been given in the succeeding section.

The *zamindari* system with a Permanent Settlement was a potent source of the strained relation between the tenants and the landlords. The landlords were encouraged to live a life of case and with little interest in the tenantry and as such it was the system and not the individuals that really counted as a source of trouble. There are records to show that some of the *zamindars* of the district discharged their social obligations well. The construction of *ahars* and *pynes*, the chief indigenous source of irrigation in the south of the district was a move for mutual benefit of the *zamindars* and the *raiyats*. *Ahars* and *pynes* received praise from every quarter and proved the main stay of irrigation. They often remitted a portion of the rentals due and if the tenants were in any difficulties gave them financial help. Some of the *zamindars* had brilliant records of patriotic zeal and had founded schools, colleges and libraries. The late Deep Narain Singh of Bhagalpur and the Banaili *zamindar* have their great contribution to the district in various ways. Singh was one of the earliest Congressmen in Bihar and his sacrifices and patriotic fervour were striking.

Tej Narain Singh, father of the celebrated Deep Narain Singh, did pioneer work in opening a college at Bhagalpur in 1887 which came to be known as Tej Narain Jubilee College, Bhagalpur. The other *zamindars* also made liberal donation for upkeep of this college. The college is now called Tej Narain Banaili College because of the substantial donation made by the Banaili Raj.

Some of the *zamindars* had to incur recurring expenditure for the upkeep of the schools and dispensaries they had opened in their *zamindari* areas. After the abolition of the *zamindaris* the maintenance of such institution is the responsibility of the State Government. The munificence of Raja Shib Chandra Banerji founded a large number of schools, hospitals, waterworks, etc., The following statement shows the names of some of the institutions which were opened by the ex-*zamixdars* and the maintenance is now done by Government :—

Serial no.	Name of institution.	Name of the Ex-intermediary.	Amount paid by the State.
1	2	3	4
			Rs.
1	Shri Sardhari Lal Charitable Dispensary, Mohaddinagar, Bhagalpur.	Shri K. Lal and others of Deorhi Mahaddinagar, Bhagalpur.	249 per month.
2	Rai H. M. T. Bahadur Hospital and Debi Ganga Bati Thakurain Charitable Dispensary, Barari, Bhagalpur.	Shri Naresh Mohan Thakur and others of Barari, Bhagalpur.	3,000 per year.
3	C. and D. H. E. School, Baunsi	Lachmipur estate ..	1,219.50 per year.
4	P. N. S. College, Baunsi ..	Ditto ..	3,000 per year.
5	Rai H. M. T. Bahadur H. E. School, Barari, Bhagalpur.	Shri Naresh Mohan Thakur and others of Barari, Bhagalpur.	3,000 per year.
6	Bindheshwari Vidayalay, Burhanath, Bhagalpur.	Shri Naresh Mohan Thakur and others and Raj Banaili, etc.	390 per year.
7	Sahu H. E. School, Parbatta, P.-S. Naugachia.	Sahu estate, Parbatta ..	6,095 per year.

Tenants and Tenancy Law

A picture of the tenants as they were and the history of some of the tenancy laws will be useful.

The tenants of this district may be classified as tenure holders, *raiyats* and under-*raiyats*. The *raiyats* hold lands on cash rent and many cultivate lands as *Bhaulidars* paying rent in kind. The rights and liabilities of the tenure-holders, *raiyats* and under-*raiuats* have been given in detail in the Bihar Tenancy Act. Before 1934, there was difficulty of transferability of *raiyati* lands. A purchaser of land either by registered sale deed or through court in execution of money decrees was at the mercy of the landlord and their *amlas* who used to recognize the transfer or refuse the same at their sweet will. Exorbitant *salami* used to be charged from the transferees by the landlords for recording recognition to the purchase and for mutating their names. Even after the payment of *salami*, the purchaser had to execute a deed of surrender with respect of the purchased land and then to take a fresh settlement of the same from the landlord at an enhanced rent. It was not unusual for a *salami* of Rs. 25 per cent to be charged over the consideration money. In many cases, the purchaser had to lose their lands because of their inability to meet the demands of heavy *salami*.

The *raiyats* also had no right to manufacture bricks or tiles or to excavate tanks or dig wells even for drinking purpose on *raiyati* lands; nor could they erect any building without the consent of the landlord. Consent of the landlord could only be obtained by heavy *salami*, which the *raiyats* could hardly afford.

The lands held by the cultivators were to be found under the following categories :—

(*a*) The *zamindars'* land either Bakasta or Zerat,

(*b*) Tenants holding lands under the landlords either on their own account or on behalf of the landlords, and

(*c*) Thirdly sub-tenants holding lands under the tenants.

In this district it was often the case that in a village a major portion of the lands was held by the landlords or some big tenants and which lands form the bulk of "A" class lands available in the village.

Such big landlords who could not cultivate their land all by themselves and they had to depend on the system of letting out their lands on *bhawli* or *batai*. While doing so they took care not to settle it permanently or not to allow evidence to be created in favour of the *bhawlidars* so that they can claim an occupancy right in the lands. *Bhawlidars* were thus mostly at the mercy of the people from whom they held their lands. These landlords or the cultivators were in the habit of acquiring more lands and they did not seem to be satiated and the proceduer adopted by them was to take recourse to rent suits and money-suits. Money-lenders also formed an important section in the above processes. On a comparison of the actual possession of the landlords land as it existed at the time of the last record-of-rights and the position as regards possession obtaining before *zomindari* abolition will disclose that those who were the owners of lands in small holdings in the past had fallen in the categories of landless labourers or at best *bhawlidars*. Such cases were common, especially where there had been alluvian and diluvian of the area, several stretches of drought, etc., when rents and other liabilities of the lands fell into arrears. There were villages where for thousands of acres of lands the original tillers of soil had not an inch of land to be claimed as their own which in the past were in their possession but some how or the other these fell into the hands of the new-comers.

Coming to the question of agricultural occupation, cultivation of lands and private land economy, the big owners of the lands depended much on their employees or *bataidars* for agricultural cultivation whereas the smaller tenants cultivated their lands all within their family strength and it was only when their holding was big enough for their family members to manage, they took recourse to outside help. This, however, had got exception amongst certain classes of caste Hindus and well to do people who did not till their lands by themselves. Such classes of caste Hindus were mostly the Rajputs, Bhumihars, etc. The supervision was their but the manual labour was acquired from outside the family limits, mostly from other local people.

The Bihar Tenancy Amendment Act (8) of 1934 put the first check to the whims and caprices of the landlords. It recognised all transfers made before 1923 by sale or gift without a transfer fee and for the succeeding period a fee of Rs. 4 per cent over the consideration money was fixed as "Landlords" fee. This legislation gave a much needed relief to the *raiyats* by giving them a statutory right in respect of the use of their lands. The Bihar Tenancy Act was further amended in the year 1938 (Bihar Act II of 1938) during the first Congress Ministry in Bihar. The *raiyats* were given full rights in their lands and henceforward they could use their lands for all legitimate purposes and to dispose of the same in a manner they liked without the consent of the landlord. Only a nominal fee or "Landlords" registration fee had to be deposited at the time of the registration of the deed of transfer. A further improvement in the position of the *raiyats* has been brought about by a subsequent insertion of section 23 (*a*) in the Bihar Tenancy Act in 1947. This confers on the occupancy *raiyats*, a right in all trees over their holdings. They can now plant trees and bamboos, cut and appropriate the same. They can now also appropriate the flowers and fruits and other products in trees and bamboos. They can also get the rent of trees of any Bhauli holding converted into cash rent. Any realisation of *Tahrir* (illegal gratification or Abwab) by the landlords or his Agents has been made penal. Provision has been made for payment of rent by postal money order and this has practically destroyed the power of the Amlas of the landlords to harass the *raiyats*. All these improvements in the status and the rights of *raiyats* have been brought about by amendment of the Bihar Tenancy Act from time to time.

A large number of proceedings for commutation of produce-rent into cash under section 40, Bihar Tenancy Act has conferred great blessings on the *raiyats* as the prices of foodgrains in recent years have gone up several times and it is highly profitable for the *raiyats* to pay rent in cash.

The lot of the under-*raiyats* under the old Tenancy Act was pitiable indeed. They could be driven out from their lands according to the sweet will of the *raiyats* as they enjoyed no statutory rights in the lands cultivated by them. By the amendment in the Bihar Tenancy Act in 1938, the under-*raiyats* were granted some statutory rights under section 48A of the Act which enabled them to acquire occupancy rights in the lands cultivated by them for 12 years or more continuously. They were subsequently granted the same rights with respect to the trees and bamboos and the use of and succession to and eviction from the lands as an occupancy *raiyat*. The under-*raiyats*, however, now do not have the right to transfer their lands without the consent of their immediate landlords. There is a move, however, to get a bill passed in the Bihar Legislative Assembly to confer this right on the under-*raiyats*.

The *Bhawlidars*, who cultivate the lands of landlords or tenure-holders enjoy certain rights but the position of *Bhawlidars* who cultivate the lands of *raiyats* is very unsafe. They have no statutory rights but there is a proposal to give such *Bhawlidars* also the right of occupancy in the lands cultivated by them. Now that Lands Reforms Act has been brought in force and the *zamindaris* have been taken over by the State, one by one, both the *zamindars* and the tenure-holders have disappeared and there is left only one class of tenants who will cultivate the lands directly under the State.

Aboriginals

Special provisions have been made in the Tenancy Act for the protection of the rights of the Aboriginals. Before 1935, the Aboriginals, who were mostly poor and illiterate cultivators were at the mercy of unscrupulous money-lenders. Most of their holdings were encumbered either in simple or 'Usufructuary mortgages'. The right of interest was both compound and exorbitant with the result that even small loans obtained by the Aboriginals used to pile up in a few years to a very huge amount, to pay off which the Aboriginals had to part with their lands either by private sale or by court-sale. The Aboriginals were thus losing their lands and turning into a class of landless labourers. The matter received the earnest consideration of the Government and a special loan was sanctioned for the Santhals of this subdivision to pay off their debts through the Subdivisional Officer due to whose intervention the unscrupulous money-lenders could get only the amounts which were considered just and fair. This happened in the year 1936. Most of the interest on this special loan to Santhals were subsequently remitted by the State Government. A special Chapter VII-A was included in the Bihar Tenancy Act in 1955 imposing restriction on alienation of lands by Aboriginals. Under these provisions now there can be no transfer of the holding of any Aboriginal without the permission of the Collector whose power is exercised by the Subdivisional Officer.

Another special provision made in the interest of the Aboriginals is that the Subdivisional Officer has been vested with the powers of a Munsif to try Civil Suits against Aboriginals either for money suits or rent. *The District Gazetteer of Bhagalpur*, 1911 has a well reasoned plea for such a procedure and the passing of this measure has gone a long way to protect the Aboriginals from unscrupulous money-lenders.

Changes in jurisdiction

The jurisdiction of the district of Bhagalpur has undergone various changes. Additions and subtractions in the areas have been made in the years of 1855, 1864, 1874 and 1954. Since 1954, the district of Bhagalpur includes Bhagalpur Sadar and Banka having a total area of 2,123 square miles (Bhagalpur Sadar, 929 square miles and Banka 1,194 square miles). A new district Saharsa has been formed which is composed of Supaul (area 1,869 square miles) and Madhipura (area 2,352 square miles) both of which formerly belonged to Bhagalpur.

Special Tenures

There are remarkable types of tenures at Colgong (described in the Gazetteer of Bhagalpur) that formed a pargana under the district of Bhagalpur. They constituted parts of the *zamindari* rights of the landlords of that pargana. The tenures are known as *Mahal boro ajawan* and *mahal bhaisunda* and are held direct from the Government as ordinary estate in perpetuity, the Government revenue assessed being payable in instalments corresponding with those of the land revenue. Of the two tenures, the former, that is, the *baro ajawan* (*baro* meaning a species of paddy and *ajawan* meaning the coriander seed and a species of mustard or *rai*) is right of sowing rice called *barodhan* and coriander seed on newly formed land on the bank of the Ganga, when the soil is too soft to permit ploughing. This right ceases as soon as the land hardens and permits the use of plough, and the landholder, who according to the law is the owner of the land, gets back his right of cultivation and lets it to tenants. The second tenure known as *bhaisunda* (derived from *bhaisa* or buffalo) means the right of levying a tax on each head of the cattle grazing on all lands included in pargana Colgong.

Tenures and Tenancies.

The Bengal Tenancy Act of 1885 has led to the introduction of sub-infeudation, the tenants being composed of different gradations, varying from proprietors and the actual cultivators, the *raiyats* and the under-*raiyats*. Tenancy has been divided into the 'permanent tenancy' and 'non-permanent tenancy'. The rent of the 'permanent tenancy-holders' may or may not be fixed. The 'non-permanent tenures' granted for a short-term of years are called *mustajiri* leases.

Raiyati *Holdings*

Most of the *raiyats* of the district possess occupancy right over the soil and such occupancy holdings represents 90 per cent of the total number of the holdings. Such holdings bear an average size of 3 acres and their rents are liable to enhancement. The same *raiyat* may be the tenant of more than one holding. The occupancy rights may be transferred by sale or purchase.

There are tenants holding under the *raiyats* and they are mostly farm servants and field labourers. They work for the tenant farmer and get a piece of land from him for building their own cottages.

Like the revenue free properties but distinct from them, there are rent free-holders such rent free lands had been granted as religious offerings and are commonly known as *birt, sheopujai, mafi* and *barhmottar.*

Zamindari *Abolition*

When the *zamindari* abolition was introduced from June, 1952, the revenue administration of the district entered into a new phase. The lands permanently or temporarily settled were gradually taken over by Government. 2,406 estates were taken over.

Bihar Land Reforms Act, 1950

The Congress Government, after assuming office in this State, took up the question of the abolition of the intermediary interest and wanted to bring the State and the tenants closer. The Permanent Settlement of Lord Cornwallis (1793) had created a class of privileged feudal chiefs and the institution had become worn-out and was almost a dead-weight against the creation of a socialistic State. The agitation launched by the Kisan Sabha with the active co-operation of the Congress during the twenties and thirties of the present century had led an acuteness to the problem and had exposed the evils of the *zamindari* system. The abolition of *zamindari* became one of the burning topics of discussion in the press, platform and in the legislature. The *zamindari* system had created a wide hiatus between the tillers of the soil and the landlords and it was found difficult to bridge the gulf. Some of the ameliorative tenancy legislation, *viz.*, commutation of produce rent into cash rent, Bihar Restoration of Bakast Lands and Reduction of Arrear of Rent Act, 1938 passed previously had already curtailed the despotic powers of the landlords and upheld the rights of the tenants, but they were only palliatives. The *zamindari* system had outlived its utility and so its abolition became essential.

There was no precedent to go by and decision had to be taken to decide the conditions under which the various interests of the landlords in their estates and tenures would vest in the State. On the basis of the decision so reached, the Bihar State Acquisition of Zamindaries Bill, 1947 was drafted and introduced in the Legislature. The nomenclature of the Bill was subsequently changed to the Bihar Abolition of Zamindaries Bill and was passed by Legislature in 1948. The Bill was reserved for the consideration of the Governor-General of India under the provisions of Government of India Act, 1935. After a series of discussions between the Bihar Ministry and the Central Cabinet, the Bill was referred back for amending certain provisions dealing with mineral rights and the amending Bill was accordingly introduced and was passed by the Bihar Legislature in 1949 and thereafter the Bill was again reserved for the consideration of the Governor-General which was obtained in due course and the Bill was published as an Act.

The validity of the Bihar Abolitionof Zamindaries Act was challenged by certain landlords and the courts began granting injunctions. Meanwhile, it was felt that the Act did not have sufficient provisions for land reforms and hence it was decided to repeal this legislation and to introduce a more comprehensive one and the Bihar Land Reforms Bill was accordingly introduced in which provision was made for making over management of estates to Gram Panchayats, if the State Government so decided, and for formation of a Land Commission, consisting of both officials and non-officials to advise Government regarding the agrarian policy to be followed. After the Bill was passed by both Houses of Legislature, it was reserved for the assent of the President of India under Article 31(4) of the Constitution. It received duly the assent of the President and was published as an Act.

The validity of the Bihar Land Reforms Act, 1950 was also challenged in the Patna High Court, which declared that the Act contravened Article 14 of the Constitution and was, therefore, invalid. The State Government considered the matter afresh in consultation with the Government of India and it was decided that land reform, being such an important social measure, could not be further delayed on account of fruitless legislations and that the Constitution should make a more specific provision so that such legislations could not be challenged. The Bill called the Constitution (First Amendment) Bill, 1951 was accordingly introduced in Parliament by the Prime Minister of India, which *inter alia* provided for certain amendment to Article 31 of the Constitution. The Bill was ultimately passed by Parliament and was enacted with assent of the President. The Act provided *inter alia* that Bihar Land Reforms Act nor any of the provisions thereof would be deemed or even to have become void on the ground that it took away or abridged any of the rights conferred by any provisions of Part III, and not with standing any judgment, decree or order of any Court or tribunal contrary, the Act would continue enforced.

Some of the landlords challenged the competence of Parliament to amend the Constitution and the Supreme Court issued injunction against taking over the estates under the Bihar Land Reforms Act, 1950 till the validity of the constitutional amendment had been decided. The Supreme Court ultimately rejected the application of the landlords and unanimously held that the constitutional amendment was valid.

Some of the landlords took the matter again to the Supreme Court but subsequently the Supreme Court upheld the provision of the Bihar Land Reforms Act, 1950.

The Bihar Land Reforms Act, 1950 came into force on the 25th September 1950. Steps for taking over the *zamindaris* started from November, 1951, and proceeded according to a phased programme. In the first phase large intermediary interests with a gross annual income exceeding Rs. 50,000 each vested in the State by the issue of individual notifications. According to this notification 107 intermediary interests with gross annual asset of Rs. 50,000 and more of Bhagalpur district vested in the State. The statement of these estates were as follows :—

Sl. no.	Name of estate.	Number of intermediaries in the State.	Year of vesting.
1	Kumar Shyamanand Sinha and others 8 annas Patti, Banaili Raj.	19	1952
2	Kumar Krishnanand Sinha and others 0-3-6 Patti, Banaili Raj.	5	1952
3	Pandit Bhimnath Mishra and others 3 annas Patti, Banaili Raj.	12	1952
4	Rani Ramabati and others 0-1-6 Patti, Banaili Raj.	2	1952
5	Mahashay Amar Nath Ghosh ..	1	1952
6	Abhoy Kumar Sinha and others ..	9	1952

Sl. no.	Name of estate.	Number of intermediaries in the State.	Year of vesting.
7	Rai Kumar Sinha and others	6	1951
8	Surendra Mohan Sinha and others ..	7	1952
9	Sudhindranarain Sinha and others	14	1952
10	Ardhendra Narain Sinha and others ..	5	1952
11	K. Lal, S. Lall and others	12	1951
12	Bhagwat Saran Das	1	1953
13	Surja Mohan Thakur and others	3	1951
14	Naresh Mohan Thakur and others ..	6	1952
15	Keshab Mohan Thakur and others ..	3	1951
16	Raghunandan Lal Trust Estate	1	1952
17	Thakur Chandra Narayan Deo (Laksmipur) ..	1	1952
		107	

In the second and third phases a good number of estates were vested in the State by individual notifications but immense difficulty was experienced in acquiring, by process of individual notifications. The number of smaller intermediary interests in the State was considerably large, and provision was accordingly made in the Bihar Land Reforms (Amendment) Act, 1953 (Bihar Act XX of 1954), for taking over all the estates and tenures within a particular area by issue of a single notification. Accordingly all the remaining estates in Bhagalpur district were taken over by the State in 1956. There were as many as 10,203 big and small *zamindars* in the district on the eve of *zamindari* abolition.

The Land Reforms Act is the fore-runner of other reforms which are on the anvil in connection with the problem of land distribution, regulation of rent, co-operative farming, etc. After the complete abolition of intermediaries, it will naturally be necessary to enact tenancy reforms in order to give full security of tenure to the tenants and to stop the various types of evictions and evictments which may have been perpetrated by the ex-landlords. Some statutory measures as stated before have been taken to stop such evictions. Personal cultivation has also to be regulated. A ceiling on agricultural holdings is likely to be fixed sometime or other as a necessary corollary to the land reforms movement. The movement of co-operative farming has to be popularised.

There should be a proper and efficient administration for implementing the land laws so that the difficulties and harassment to those who are the beneficiaries are reduced to the minimum. There has to be a clean administration particularly at the village level.

Agency and Mode of Management

As a result of the abolition of the *zamindari*, collection of land revenue has assumed great importance. Prior to the abolition of *zamindaris* in this State except a few Khasmahals owned by Government there was no revenue establishment of field staff below the subdivisional level. In the Government Khasmahals, however, the revenue administration used to be carried on by the Collector with the assistance of a small band of revenue officials, viz., the Khasmahal Officer, Khasmahal Tahsildar, Patwari and Gorait, etc. Since the number of Khasmahals in Bhagalpur district as stated elsewhere was negligible, the number of revenue staff in the district was meagre to cope with the revenue collection. The outgoing intermediaries used to employ their own field agency for the management of their estates. On the abolition of *zamindaris*, however, it became imperative on the part of Government to set up an adequate revenue establishment of field staff to cope with the vast increase of work-load in connection with the management of the vested estates and tenures.

For realisation of rent and other revenue purposes the district has been divided into 210 *halkas*. A *karamchari* has been placed in charge of a *halka*. *Halka* is a unit of ten villages or more. The main duties of the *karamcharis* are collection of rent, maintenance of registers and accounts, submission of reports and returns, maintenance of agricultural statistics, execution of improvement works of vested estates and enquiries relating to mutations, *ad-interim* payment and allied work. Several *halkas* make a circle or *anchal*. Above the rank of the *karamchari* is the Circle Inspector, one for each Circle or *Anchal* who makes detailed supervision over the work of the *karamcharis*. Both *karamcharis* and Circle Inspectors are non-gazetted Government servants.

Next in the rank is the Block Development Officer, Anchal Adhikari and Circle Officer, one for each block or anchal or circle respectively. They are of gazetted rank. In Bhagalpur district there are 15 blocks and 6 anchals. They are entrusted with the revenue work. They supervise the work of the Circle Inspector and the *karamchari*. A Deputy Collector Incharge Land Reforms and Development is in charge of land reforms and other allied work in the subdivision, i.e., one each in the Sadar and Banka subdivisions. He is under the supervision and control of the Subdivisional Officer. An Additional Collector with his headquarters at Bhagalpur exercises an over-all supervision over the detailed work of revenue administration in the district, subject to the general control of the Collector of the district and the Commissioner of the Division. At the State level there is the Land Reforms Commissioner who is the administrative head and supervises the work in respect of vested estates and tenures. Thus from the *halka* to the State level there is a net-work of revenue officers doing the revenue work in his respective jurisdiction under the supervision of the immediate superior officer.

There is one Additional Collector, two Deputy Collectors Incharge of Land Reforms and Development, 23 Circle Inspectors (two leave reserve) and 231 (21 leave reserve) *Karamcharis* in the district.

Under the proviso to the section 13 of the Bihar Land Reforms Act, 1950 Gram Panchayats may by general or special order, be entrusted with the management of vested estates and tenures on suitable terms and conditions.

The fundamental idea behind it is to revive the age-old institution to its ancient glory and make decentralisation in true sense of the term. By this the village assembly is to become the full-fledged administrative unit.

The Gram Panchayats have been formed recently and have not yet covered the whole area. Gram Panchayats are still in the process of evolution and development and as such it was considered proper to start with the entrustment of rent collection work only to selected Gram Panchayats at the first instance. For this purpose, the Gram Sevaks are trained in rent collection work. The following statement will show the number of Gram Panchayats entrusted with rent collection work :—

	1955-56.	1956-57.	1957-58.	1958-59.	1959-60.	1960-61.	1961-62.
Sadar Subdivision ..	..	2	7	10	20	25	122
Banka Subdivision ..	1	4	11	14	23	32	132
Total in the district ..	1	6	18	24	43	57	254

Field Bujharat Operations

The *zamindari* abolition brought in its wake a great volume of revenue work the most important of which is the field *bujharat*. The field *bujharat* operations were undertaken in 1954 with the object of (1) preparing a reliable rent-roll, and (*ii*) collecting information—(*a*) for assessment of final compensation, (*b*) for fixation of rent on the *khas* lands of the ex-intermediaries, and (*c*) for settlement of available waste lands with Harijans, Scheduled Tribes and Backward Classes. This task became all the more necessary as the *zamindars* did not make over all their *zamindari* papers like rent-rolls, etc. On the eve of *zamindari* abolition a large number of settlements and sales had taken place which were left unaccounted for. The local officials have been instructed that as soon as the field *bujharat* of a village is completed, the present total village area and rental should be compared with the last settlement records, and the difference between the two should be accounted for, that the *khas* lands of the ex-intermediaries as well as other *kabil-lagan* land should be assessed to rent and that the continuous *khatian* and the tenant's ledger should be re-written on the basis of the field *bujharat*. The whole object of the field *bujharat* is thus two-fold, firstly, the aim is to see that every plot of land in each village is accounted for and the rents due in respect of the plots, for which rents are payable, are collected from those who are in possession; the second purpose is to collect the relevant data for assessment of compensation under the Bihar Land Reforms Act, 1950.

According to the prescribed procedure the field *bujharat* work is done villagewise and each *karamchari* is in charge of the operation in his *Halka* under the direct control of the Circle Officer or Anchal Adhikari. The *bujharat* of the *khatians* in a village is conducted in a serial order, beginning with the first tenants' *khata* having the largest holding. The work covers on examination of— (*i*) the Tenants' *Khatian*, (*ii*) the *Bakasat Khatian*, (*iii*) the *Gairmazrua Malik Khatian*, and (*iv*) *Gairmazrua Am Khatian*. The overall progress in respect of *bujharat* operations in Bhagalpur district up to 31st December, 1957 is as follows* :—

Total no. of villages in the district.	Total no. of villages in which field *bujharat* had been completed by the *karamcharis*.	No. of villages in which verification was completed by—		
		Circle Inspector.	Circle Officer or Anchal Adhikari.	Deputy Collector I/c Land Reforms and Development.
2,896	2,718 (98.8%)	882	609	327

The veracity of the *bujharat* conducted by the *karamcharis* had been challenged by various sections of the public. Supplementary *bujharat* operations were started to supplement the instructions given originally for field and *khewat bujharats*. The following statement will show the progress made as per

* Vide Appendix III of Consolidated Report on the Land Reforms Act of the State of Bihar for 1952-53 to 1956-57 published in 1961.

supplementary *bujharat* instructions up to March, 1962:—

Total no of villages in the district (minus Sabour and Jagdishpur Anchals).	No. of villages in which *Bujharat* had been conducted by the *karamcharis*.	Verification completed by— Circle Inspector.	Verification completed by— Anchal Adhikari.
2,521	2,231	1,718	1,245

Compensation

The Land Reforms Act had provision for payment of compensation to the landlords. *Ad interim* payments for the period from the date of vesting to the date of payment of compensation are to be made to the outgoing intermediaries under section 33 of the Bihar Land Reforms Act at 3 per cent per annum of the approximate amount of compensation not exceeding Rs. 50,000 and at 2½ per cent per annum exceeding Rs. 50,000 subject to a maximum of Rs. 62,000 per annum. The following statement will show the progress of *ad-interim* payments made under section 33 of the Bihar Land Reforms Act, 1950, along with the cost of management and cost of improvement of the vested estates from 1955-56 to 1960-61:—

Year.	*Ad-interim* compensation.	Cost of management.	Cost of improvement.
	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.
1955-56	1,52,896	3,77,258	1,52,000
1956-57	5,10,561	5,79,565	1,20,473
1957-58	9,00,134	6,52,463	2,29,993
1958-59	8,63,686	6,65,192	1,01,679
1959-60	10,20,000	6,97,977	65,967
1960-61	11,17,549	9,93,700	44,666

The progress of the payment of compensation has been rather poor as the administration has been much handicapped by want of papers.

Consolidation of holdings

Fragmentation of holdings is a great impediment to the development of agriculture. An average size of cultivated plot is too small which obstructs the advanced operational purposes in agriculture.

A scheme of consolidation of holdings based on a spot study of the Punjab scheme was, therefore, considered as *sine qua non* for promotion of agriculture in Bihar. Accordingly the Bihar Consolidation of Holdings and Prevention of Fragmentation Act, 1956 was passed which came into force in Bhagalpur district from the 15th September, 1957.

Two blocks, viz., Sabour and Jagdishpur in Sadar Subdivision have been hitherto notified for consolidation purposes. The total number of villages in which the notification has been promulgated is 360. On the issue of such notification, no transfer of land can be registered without the permission of the Consolidation Officer. This restriction has been imposed to prevent any further fragmentation of holdings.

After a village is notified, a Village Advisory Committee is constituted, which consists of, amongst others, members of the Executive Committee of the Gram Kutchery and representatives of *raiyats*, under-*raiyats* and landless labourers of the village. The Consolidation Officer consults the Committee in the matter of fixing the market value of land, etc., preparing the draft scheme of consolidation and fixing the compensation, etc.

The actual work of consolidation of holdings starts with the preparation of up-to-date records-of-rights and maps in accordance with the procedure prescribed for survey and settlement operations.

The progress so far (April, 1962) achieved on the various stages of consolidation scheme is as follows ;—

(A) *Revision of maps and records of rights.*—(1) Kistwar Khanapuri have been completed in 249 villages and in 18 villages the work is in progress.

(2) Attestation has been completed in 234 villages and in 8 villages the work is in progress.

(3) Draft publication u/s. 103-A of Bihar Tenancy Act has been completed in respect to 221 villages and in 5 villages he work is in progress.

(B) *Preparation of consolidation scheme.*—(1) Preparation of Register of Land—The registers of land of 168 villages have been completed, in 18 villages the work in progress.

(2) *Preparation of Draft scheme and Re-partition.*—The scheme of consolidation has been completed in 124 villages where as scheme of outlay in 94 villages was finally completed up to January, 1961. whose delivery of possession according to new check has been given to the tenants. Further in 14 villages the scheme of consolidation is in progress.

Measures to prevent subdivision and fragmentation of holdings

It has been laid down u/s 27 and 31 of the Bihar Consolidation of Holdings Act, that no person to whom a holding has been allotted under scheme of consolidation shall transfer or deal with such holding or any part thereof so as to create a fragment. For these restrictions the tenants are feeling hardship as they cannot sell any area according to their wish and the market value of their land is also lowered due to these restrictions. There might be some alternative arrangement for financing them on behalf of Government in form of loan readily available and separately kept for their demand.

RECENT AGRARIAN MOVEMENT

Bhoodan

The present *Bhoodan* movement which has been launched by Shri Acharya Vinoba Bhave, a disciple of Mahatma Gandhi is not purely an agrarian movement but a synthesis of social, economic and mental revolution. It aims to solve the agrarian, social and economic disparity of the nation by peaceful means. *Yagna* is a Sanskrit word which means sacrifice. Violence or compulsion is antithesis of sacrifice. Vinobaji wants to bring parity between "haves" and "haves not" by peaceful method. The lands donated in *Bhoodan* is settled with the landless agricultural labourers.

To facilitate the work of the *bhoodanis* the Government had passed the Bihar Bhoodan Yagna Act, 1954 which provides for donation of lands in connection with the *Bhoodan Yagna* initiated by Shri Acharya Vinoba Bhave and settlement of such lands with landless persons. A statutory committee, known as the Bihar Bhoodan Yagna Committee, has been established under section 3 of the Act to administer all lands vested in the Committee for the purpose of *Bhoodan Yagna*.

The progress so far achieved cannot be said to be phenomenal. The following statistics will show the progress made so far in the district up to 1961-62 :—

Area of land donated to Bhoodan Yagna Samiti.	Number of families to whom land was given.	Area of land distributed.
1,89,00.88 acres.	4,053	6,697.94 acres.

With a view to safeguard the right, title and interest of the Bhoodan Yagna Committee in the donated lands, suitable instructions were issued to the District Officers stressing the need for early disposal by the Revenue Officers of the *Danpatras*, by confirmation or supersession, as the case may be. The following statement will show the progress made up to 1962 :—

Danpatras filed by the Committee.	Danpatras confirmed.	Danpatras rejected.	Danpatras pending.
6,406	3,485	2,694	227

Pecuniary help in form of subsidy and loan had been given to holders of *Bhoodan* land for purchase of agricultural implements, oxen and seed, etc., for the cultivation of land. The Government so far (1961-62) have given a sum of Rs. 75,170 as subsidy grant and Rs. 24,220 as loan.