

CHAPTER VIII

ECONOMIC TRENDS

A discussion on the economic trends of a people inhabiting a particular region must necessarily include an account of (i) the changes in area and jurisdiction of that region, (ii) changes in human factor, (iii) changes in the development and better utilization of resources and (iv) changes in the structure and organisation of economic life. Hence, a discussion of the economic trends of Bhagalpur district has to be preceded by a brief account of the area and jurisdiction of the district.

EARLY HISTORY

The limits of the present District of Bhagalpur have been fixed more for administrative convenience rather than for giving a habitat to a particular racial group; in fact, the area of the district has changed from time to time. At one time Bhagalpur formed part of Sarkar Monghyr, one of the seven sarkars into which Bihar was subdivided at the time of the Mohammedan conquest in 1202 A.D. From 1765, the year in which the Diwani or Revenue Administration of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa was granted to the East India Company, to 1874, Bhagalpur had jurisdiction over a vast territory now falling within the districts of Malda, Purnea, Santhal Parganas and Monghyr. It may be mentioned that Mr. Augustus Cleveland, who won over the landless and wild inhabitants of Rajmahal in 1777-78 was the first Collector of Bhagalpur and Rajmahal. Since 1874, the year in which the area of the district was further diminished by transferring an area of about 114 sq. miles to Monghyr, there has not been any major transfer of area and jurisdiction of the district till 1954 when Madhipura and Supaul subdivisions were created into a separate district as Saharsa (vide Pol. Deptt. notification no. 517-P.G., dated 29th March 1954). This has been mentioned separately.

A detailed account of the early history of the district may be had from the *Final Report of the Survey and Settlement Operations* in the district by Mr. Murphy, I.C.S., Settlement Officer, Bihar, published in 1912 and from the text earlier.

BOUNDARY AND AREA

Bhagalpur district has an area of 2,123 sq. miles according to Census of 1951 though the Surveyor-General of India has reported the area to be 2,184 sq. miles. The difference being small, may

be ignored (vide *District Census Hand Book of Bhagalpur* 1951). The district is divided by the river Ganga, its area having changed as a result of more accurate surveys and transfer of certain units. It consists of a long irregularly shaped strip about 55 miles in length from north to south, varying in width from 14 miles at its centre, where it is narrowest, to about 45 miles at its widest part. It is bounded on the north by Saharsa, on the east by Purnea and Santhal Parganas, on the west by Monghyr and on the south by Santhal Parganas.

ADMINISTRATIVE DIVISION

For administrative purposes, it was divided into four subdivisions Bhagalpur, Banka, Madhipura and Supaul. The whole of the previous Madhipura and Supaul subdivisions lie on the north of the Ganga and the whole of the Banka subdivision on the south. Of the four revenue thanas into which Bhagalpur subdivision is split up, Bihpur lies to the north of the river, Sultanganj and Bhagalpur on the south and Colgong partly on the north and partly on the south. In 1954, the subdivisions of Madhipura and Supaul were made into a separate district called Saharsa with headquarters at Saharsa, having an area of 2,092 square miles and population of 1,308,198. The account that follows pertains to the entire district of Bhagalpur as it stood before the creation of Saharsa as a separate district for a better appreciation of the features and facts.

Till March, 1912, the district of Bhagalpur was one of the districts of the Province of Bengal and it became a constituent district of the newly created province of Bihar and Orissa from April, 1912 and continued so till March, 1937. With the creation of a separate province for Orissa in 1937, Bhagalpur now forms part of the State of Bihar which is a Part A State according to the Indian Constitution.

PHYSICAL FEATURES

The two portions into which the Ganga divides the district differ widely in their physical characteristics the difference between them being similar to that which exists between north and south Monghyr. The two portions have widely different physical, fiscal and agrarian characteristics which materially affect the economic condition of the respective regions. The north has been the playground of rivers like the Kosi, the Tiljuga and the Dhimra which descend from the Nepal Hills and make their way, frequently changing their channels, to the Ganga. The formation of this part is new alluvium and the face of the country is liable to constant flood and fluctuation. The south is much more stable; its soil is old alluvium rising through the laterite uplands of Banka

and Katoria to the hilly country on the borders of the Santhal Parganas and south Monghyr. It is not subject to flood except in the north-eastern corner where the lower levels are sometimes inundated by the surplus water of the two hill-streams the Chandan and the Chir which pass through south Bhagalpur on their meandering course from Santhal Parganas. South Bhagalpur is healthier than North Bhagalpur and Saharsa district. Malarial fever is still common in some of the flooded thanas of the north. In contrast to the south, the north had been more or less free from the scourage of plague and other diseases.

CHANGES IN HUMAN FACTOR

Changes in population

Owing to the frequent and extensive changes which took place in the boundary lines of the district prior to 1874, it is not possible to ascertain what was the size of the population before that date. Though estimates of the population of a few parganas of the district were made as far back as 1811 by Buchanan Hamilton and later in 1853 by Mr. Pemberton, they do not appear to be based on very scientific lines as there had been no systematic census on approved lines at that time. There was a preliminary census in 1869 but the first census on somewhat scientific principles was done in 1872. The first proper census of the district taken in 1872 recorded the total population to be 1,824,738 and the total number of houses to be 329,372. The total area of the district was 4,327 sq. miles with an average density of population of 422 per sq. mile. Subsequent census operations of the district took place in 1881, 1891, 1901, 1911, 1931, 1941 and 1951. The total population, percentage, variation and human density are given below in a tabular statement:—

Year.			Total population.	Percentage variation (increase or decrease).	Mean density per sq. mile.
1872	..	..	1,824,738	..	422
1881	..	..	1,966,158	+7.8	466
1891	..	..	2,032,696	+3.3	481
1901	..	..	2,088,953	+2.8	494
1911	..	..	2,139,318	+2.4	506
1921	..	..	2,033,770	-4.9	481
1931	..	..	2,234,632	+9.88	529
1941	..	..	2,408,879	+7.8	562
1951	..	..	2,737,267	+13.6	641.5

Doubts are cast as to the accuracy of the figures of population as given by the first census operations in 1872, inasmuch as percentage increase of population in 1881 as compared to that of 1872 appears to be excessive when compared with the average increase in the whole of Bengal. It is probable that many people who inhabited the inaccessible areas of the district escaped enumeration in 1872 and hence the decennial increase of population was 7.8 per cent. Comparing the average density of population of Tirhut Division which works out at 1,033 per sq. mile, Bhagalpur with a mean density of 641.5 per sq. mile is not thickly populated. Judging by the statistics of population given above, the population of Bhagalpur appears to have been more or less stationary during 1891—1921. The percentage increase of 3.3 per cent in 1891 was turned into a decrease of 4.9 per cent in 1921. Omitting from consideration of the statistics of population for 1872, as the same appears to be inaccurate, one finds that the population of the district has recorded an increase during each decennial period except the period from 1911—21. But the increase registered at each decennial period is only half that of the average increase of the whole province and even less than that of the other districts of North Bihar except Saran. An explanation to this peculiar feature of the growth of population of the district is to be found in the vagaries of the Kosi which passes through North Bhagalpur and the series of epidemic diseases like cholera, plague and influenza which have taken a heavy toll of population in every decade. Mr. W. G. Lacey, the Census Superintendent for Bihar and Orissa in 1931, mentions in the Census Report "The history of North Bhagalpur during the last 50 years is intimately bound up with the vagaries of the Kosi river. Formerly, the channels of this stream were all contained in the neighbouring district of Purnea, but ever since it invaded Bhagalpur district, it has kept the residents of that area in a constant state of uncertainty as to what it will do next. For many years it shifted more and more to the west, forming new channels as it went but never leaving the old ones completely dry. Practically, the whole, of North Bhagalpur is now a net work of river beds, running parallel with one another from north to south; when monsoon comes, it is sometimes one channel and sometimes another which carries the main stream of this incalculable river." (pp. 26).

1881—1891.—During the first ten years of 1881—1911 the rate of increase of population was about 3.3 per cent almost entirely due to an increase of population in Supaul subdivision where population rose by 9.5 per cent. Part of the increase may be due to the improved methods of enumeration. This decade was particularly unhealthy for the district, many deaths having occurred from fever and cholera. Of the remaining three subdivisions the population of the sadar subdivision was almost stationary, escaping a decline because of the growth of Bhagalpur town. In

the south, population in Banka subdivision was also stationary. In the north, in Madhipura it was falling chiefly owing to the westward movement of the Kosi which threw large areas in Kishanganj thana out of cultivation.

1891—1901.—During 1891—1901, the rate of increase had declined to 2.8 per cent. The district was visited by two famines during this period one in 1892 and the other in 1896-97. According to Mr. J. Byrne, I.C.S. as mentioned in the old District Gazetteer, the first one was a period of scarcity in which a large part of Supaul and Madhipura subdivisions suffered. The second famine also affected the western portion of Supaul subdivision. Peculiarly enough, the two thanas mostly affected by famines showed an increase at the Census of 1901. Kishanganj thana again showed a decline partly owing to the unhealthiness of this area and partly to the action of the Kosi but Partapganj thana in Supaul subdivision, another very unhealthy area, showed a phenomenal increase of population owing to the construction of a railway line from Nirmali to Partapganj.

1901—1911.—During the decade of 1901—1911, the rate of increase of population further declined to 2.4 per cent. The thanas south of the river Ganges remained stationary, while the increase in Madhipura subdivision was marked. Kishanganj thana in the same subdivision had become temporarily free from the ravages of the Kosi and had been able to bring a large area under the plough which was previously swamp and jungle. There was a sharp unaccountable rise of 39.85 per cent in the population of that thana. On the other hand, Supaul subdivision which had hitherto been progressively registering an increase all these years showed a decline to the extent of 3.4 per cent in this decade. During the period under review natural calamities like famines and floods affected portion of the district which vitally affected the material condition of the people and encouraged emigration. On account of scanty rainfall in 1902, there was scarcity in Supaul subdivision; large areas round Supaul and Madhipura were devastated by the high floods of 1906 and the abnormally low rainfall of 1908-09 led to scarcity as a result of which some 70,000 persons emigrated to the eastern portion of Supaul, Madhipura and western portion of Purnea district.

Influenza, 1918.—The census operations of 1921 indicated that Bhagalpur had fared worse than most other districts during the unhappy years that were just over. Cholera had been persistently active from 1915 to 1919. Then came the disastrous influenza epidemic of 1918 which raised the death rate of 1918 to 52.2 per mille against an average of 32.9 for the preceding five years and that of 1919 to 41.3 per mille. The birth rate of 1919 fell to 28.9 per mille or nearly 10 per mille less than the average for the previous five years. Commenting on the influenza epidemic of

1918, Mr. P.C. Tallents, I.C.S., Superintendent, Census Operations of the province observed: "The first sign of the trouble in 1918 was an acute outbreak of cholera in the hot weather in that year. 200,000 deaths occurred in the province from that disease alone. In July influenza was noticed in the headquarters station of the district in a not particularly acute form. Then after a lull of a few weeks, it began in September along the routes of communication. It was frequently combined with pneumonia and this in the majority of cases proved fatal." (Vide *Census of India*, 1921, Vol. VII, Part I, Bihar and Orissa, pages 13-14.) In this district alone, the excess of reported deaths over births was 36,000 in 1918 and 26,000 in 1919. It was not till 1920 that the balance between births and deaths readjusted itself in favour of the former. During the decade ending in 1921, the net natural increase recorded was 77,000 against 103,000 in the previous decade and it is no wonder that the population of the district actually declined by 4.9 per cent over that of the previous decade.

Famine of 1918-19.—The decade ending in 1921 was also very unsatisfactory from the point of view of agricultural production; famines and scarcities were rampant over the entire decade. In this decade, crops were good only in 1911, 1916 and 1917 while the other years had scarcity and famine. After the good crops of 1916 and 1917, there was the bad year of 1918. This year began well and the rains were abundant till September of that year but as a result of the failure of the Hathia rains, there was a complete failure of crop in South Bhagalpur with the consequence that famine had to be declared from June to December of 1919. Prices rose in sympathy and the distress of the people immensely increased due to the combined effect of the famine and influenza. There was a big decline of population of the district in all the thanas except Sultanganj in Sadar subdivision and Kishanganj in Madhipura subdivision. The decline was most marked in Banka subdivision where famine was declared and there was large scale migration from this area.

Migration.—According to the *Census Report of 1921*, as many as 20,000 persons were said to have emigrated from Banka subdivision alone between the preliminary and final enumeration. In the north, the decrease was heaviest in Madhipura thana where the decrease was to the extent of 11.67 per cent but this was largely due to inter-district distribution of the population, people having gone to Kishanganj thana to escape the Kosi floods. In other thanas, the decrease was general and was ascribed principally to the loss of life owing to disease and scarcity and the consequential fall in birth rate. The effect of migration on the actual population of the district had been different from what it was in the case of other districts of Tirhut Division. Emigration of both sexes increased slightly while immigration had fallen off to the

extent of 52,000; the combined effect of emigration and immigration leaving the district a loser to the extent of 56,000. More than half of the decrease in population of the district during the decade may be accounted for by the decrease in migration and the rest must be put down to the epidemics and scarcity of the decade.

The Great War (1914—18).—The Great War did not produce any significant influence on the population of the district. The attempt at recruitment for the army and allied services did not have a good response. The economic effects of this international event have been considered in these pages at appropriate place.

1921—31.—During the decade ending in 1931, the population of the district recorded an increase of 9.88 per cent over that of the previous census. The distribution of this substantial surplus between different subdivisions and different thanas was very unequal. According to the *Census Report of 1931*, generally those localities which had suffered most during the previous decade now recorded a rapid growth. Thus, in the south, the Banka subdivision converted a loss of 10.30 per cent into a gain of 20.38 per cent. The advent of comparative prosperity after some years of disaster caused the pendulum to swing in this abrupt manner. An explanation as to the unprecedented increase in population of this region might be the return of the majority of 20,000 persons who had migrated between the preliminary and final enumeration of the census in 1921. It might have been also due to the increased agricultural activity of the people of the subdivision where pressure on soil was the least. The next largest increase is to be found in the case of the Sadar subdivision which had recorded a slow progress during 1881—1921, the net increase being only 5 per cent. The surplus in this subdivision was mostly due to the increase in the population of the headquarters thana because of the growth of the Bhagalpur city. The area north of the Ganga did not record the same rate of increase as it had been doing in the previous decades and the progress of population of this area is not so marked as in the south. Two revenue thanas of this area showed a decline of population; thana Partapganj in Supaul subdivision recorded a substantial decrease of 7.81 per cent while Kishanganj thana in Madhipura subdivision recorded a slight decrease of .92 per cent. This decline of population was primarily attributable to the shifting of the river Kosi towards the west which necessitated the closing of the Bhaptiahi-Partapganj section of the Bengal North Western Railway, now called the North Eastern Railway. It may be observed that the population of Kishanganj thana recorded an increase in the previous decade due mainly to immigration from the Madhipura thana which was being ravaged by the Kosi. The record increase of population of Bongaon (13.20 per cent) in Madhipura subdivision might be attributed to the security of that thana against the inroads of the Kosi.

Population during 1931—41.—During this period, the area of the district was found to be 4,283 sq. miles as against 4,158 sq. miles shown in the previous census. This slight increase was due to more accurate surveys of the district carried on by the Survey of India since 1931. The population of the district also recorded an increase from 2,234,632 in 1931 to 2,408,879 in 1941, the rate of variation of population being 7.8 per cent and the density per sq. mile being 562 as against 529 in the previous census. This increase in population was due to the increase recorded in the three out of four subdivisions of the district. Of the four subdivisions into which the district was subdivided, Supaul recorded a decline of population to the extent of 12.31 per cent as compared to the population of 1931. Heaviest decrease in population was noticed in Supaul thana of that subdivision and Bangaon thana of Madhipura subdivision, the rate of variation being 22.05 per cent and 19.15 per cent respectively. These two thanas are situated in the western most part of North Bhagalpur and the shifting of the course of the Kosi further to the west might have been the most important cause of the decrease in population of the area. Apart from this, the floods in the Kosi bring in its wake the deposit of silt, sand, water logging and spread of diseases like malaria and Kalazar. Curiously enough, the thanas of Partapganj in Supaul subdivision and of Madhipura and Kishanganj thanas in Madhipura subdivision registered an increase of 17.8 per cent, 22.05 per cent and 28.24 per cent respectively over those of 1931. This increase was possibly due to immigration of population from the adjoining flood-affected areas to these thanas which had become immune from the ravages of the Kosi.

The great decrease of population in Supaul thana, caused by heavy floods in Kosi is mentioned in the Land Revenue Administration Reports of the district for 1939-40 and 1940-41. Heavy floods in the Kosi caused considerable damage in Supaul subdivision; nearly 570 houses being affected, (*Land Revenue Administration Report of Bhagalpur for 1939-40*, p. 17). In the report for the next year. "Floods caused damages to reservoirs and roads in parts of Gaya, but there was no widespread flood during the year under report except in Supaul and Madhipura subdivisions the western parts of which were seriously affected by the Kosi floods"—(*Land Revenue Administration Report of Bhagalpur for 1940-41*, p. 17).

Population during 1941—51.—During the period ending in 1951 the combined area and population of Bhagalpur district and Saharsa sub-district were 4,266 sq. miles and 2,737,267 respectively as against 4,248 sq. miles of area and 2,408,879 population in the decade ending 1941. Taking a mean of the average densities of the two districts as given in the *Census Report of 1951*, the average density of the combined district comes up to 641.5 per

sq. mile as against 562 for the previous decade. In the same way, the mean percentage variation of population of the combined area as compared to the population for 1941 comes to 13.7. All the thanas of Sadar subdivision and Banka subdivision recorded an increase of population over the previous period ranging from 17 per cent in Bihpur thana of Sadar subdivision to 6.1 per cent of Banka subdivision. In Saharsa sub-district, all the thanas except Supaul recorded an increase ranging from 47.4 per cent in Partapganj thana of Supaul to 23.3 per cent in the case of Bangaon thana of Madhepura, the corresponding variation of the two thanas for 1941 being 17.9 per cent and 19.1 per cent. The other two thanas of Madhepura subdivision also recorded an increase, the percentage variation of population since 1941 being 30.6 per cent for Madhepura and 24.3 per cent for Kishanganj. This 13.7 per cent increase in the population of the district was a part of the general increase of population which has been taking place in India as a whole since the beginning of the present century with the exception of the decade ending in 1921 when the population actually recorded a decline. Since 1931, the rate of variation is becoming higher due to the increase in survival rate in view of the improved public health and medical facilities. Till then there was no question of family planning. As has been pointed out by the author of the *Census Report of 1951*, the population may increase by 30 per cent if no steps are taken to reduce the population.

URBAN-RURAL RATIO IN THE POPULATION

The urban-rural ratio in the population of a region throws some light on the economic pattern of that area. If the urban ratio is predominant, the economic activity of that region will be different from what it will be if the majority of the people are rural in character. Predominance of urban population presupposes relative density of dwelling houses; trading and industrial activities on the part of the people and a different mode of life of its inhabitants; its problems are quite distinct from those predominating rural areas. It has also an important effect on the standard of life of the people.

Taking an urban area to mean a municipality or cantonment and areas having urban characteristics like continuity of dwelling houses, some kind of trading or industrial activity as a distinct character amongst its inhabitants and a minimum population of 5,000, 1,22,045 persons out of the total of 27,37,267 persons were said to reside in the urban areas of this district according to the *Census Report of 1951*. Expressed as percentage of the total, nearly 4.5 per cent were living in urban areas while 95.5 were residing in the rural areas. In the context of the State percentage of the urban population which is 7.1 per cent, Bhagalpur must be said to be more rural than urban in the nature of composition of

its population. According to the same report the total population of Bhagalpur resided in 3,561 towns and villages of varying sizes. 189,511 persons were residing in 29 towns and villages having a population between 5,000 to 10,000, more 25,705 persons residing in two towns and villages and 114,530 persons in one town while the rest were residing in areas having population up to 5,000. The corresponding figures according to the Census of 1941 was 143,393 persons residing in 24 towns and villages having population ranging between 5,000 to 10,000, 10,721 persons residing in one town having population ranging between 10,000—20,000, none in areas having population between 20,000—50,000, while 93,254 persons residing at one place having population ranging from 50,000—100,000. According to the same source, 99,777 persons resided in urban areas while 2,309,102 resided in rural areas, the ratio between the two being 1:24 against 1:18 of the whole province. Whereas in the province as a whole 55 persons out of every one thousand resided in towns, in this district only 41 persons resided in towns while the rest resided in rural areas.

These facts explain the comparative rural character of the district, when the main occupation of the population is agriculture. According to the *Census Report of 1961* there are only two towns in this district as against eleven in the district of Monghyr and seven in Santhal Parganas. These two towns have been in existence since 1901 and it is curious to note that during the last fifty years, no rural area of the district has achieved the distinction of a town. A number of townships, however, has sprung up in the district during these years. At the outset there were the three headquarters of the three subdivisions like Supaul, Madhepura and Banka which had urban characteristics though they were listed in the categories of village. Supaul and Madhipura in North Bhagalpur and Saharsa the headquarters of the newly created district of that name, have now come to possess urban characteristics. Madhipura and Saharsa possess urban amenities like schools, college, hospital and cinemas. In the same manner there are two important trade centres, Murliganj and Behariganj where brisk trade in jute, maize, tobacco and oilseeds is carried on. In the Sadar subdivision also, new townships have grown up in recent years. Naugachia is an important market on the main line of North Eastern Railway between Barauni and Katihar with its oil mills, banks and godowns and *arhats* of the merchants. Narainpur has now a college which means an influx of students. Sultanganj and Sabour on the Sahebgang loop section of the Eastern Railway have developed into townships, the former possessing distillery for manufacture of wine, several mills and grain *arhats* or godowns and a college and the latter being the seat of the Government Agricultural College and cold storage for storing potato. In Banka subdivision, Banka has also developed urban characteristics such as Government offices, High schools and a college ; it is situated 29 miles south of

Bhagalpur and is accessible by bus. Bhagalpur-Mandar Hill branch Railway line passes at a distance of five miles to the east of Banka. Bounsi, a township on this section may be developed into a sanatorium if tourism is developed. Nathnagar is a satellite town of Bhagalpur.

According to the Census authorities, Bhagalpur district possesses only two towns, Bhagalpur (114,530) and Colgong (7,515), the former being the fourth city in the State, after Patna, Jamshedpur and Gaya.* The population of this town has increased from 75,760 in 1901 to 114,530 in 1951. It suffered heavily during the period 1911—21 due to plague and other epidemics so that its population decreased by 5,471. Since 1921, there has been a phenomenal increase in its population due to increased commercial and industrial activity. Its population increased by 22 per cent during 1921—31 and by 9,407 or 11 per cent during 1931—41. During the last decade ending in 1951, its population has gone up by 21,276 or 22.9 per cent. Much of this increase in population is due to improvements effected in public health, development of road transport, increased commercial and industrial activity, opening of new colleges for boys and girls and the introduction of electricity since 1929. Five colleges and over a dozen High schools are responsible for about 12,000 student population. In the last three decades, many small-scale industries like spinning, weaving, dyeing, oil-pressing, trunk making, etc., worked with electric power, have been set up. There is an extensive cloth trade and a concentration of Marwari traders in this town. Bhagalpur, being the divisional headquarters, new Government offices have been started since the commencement of the Second World War and the same has led to the increase in its population. The grain market at Mirjanhat, a mahalla of the town, has also contributed to the growth of the urban population where business worth more than a crore of rupees is transacted in the course of the year. The war time cheap money led to the starting of a few mushroom industries and branches of banks, some of which collapsed after the cessation of the World War. The partition of the country in 1947 has brought in a few number of refugees both from East Pakistan and West Pakistan, the former carrying on petty business in hawking and cloth manufacture and the latter doing business in stationery, cycles, building business, etc. The abolition of zamindari has led to migration of many rich families from the villages to the town which has, however, been allowed to grow in an oblique manner. Lately, the condition of the municipal roads, public health and water-supply has considerably deteriorated on account of the inability of the municipality to cope with the increased demand on its services. The growth of the town since the last war has given rise to acute housing problem, the construction of a few quarters by the State Government, for its ministerial staff is an extremely inadequate measure. In spite of

*A different criteria has been adopted for determination of a town in 1961 Census discussed elsewhere.

hundreds of houses being built every year since the last one decade the housing problem has not been solved. The middle classes have been hard hit and small houses have been converted into flats or tenements with almost slum condition, there being very little of privacy or sanitary arrangements. Bhagalpur has been given in 1960 a splendid railway station.

Colgong (7,575) another town of the district is situated on the Sahebganj loop section of the Eastern Railway ; it has a municipality of its own. Its population has increased from 5,738 in 1901 to 7,575 in 1951. During 1911—21, its population decreased by 1,441 due mostly to the epidemic diseases. The increase in population of this town in recent years is due to greater commercial activity of the place and opening of High school and Government offices and local reasons. It carries on trade in grains and commodities like cloth and kerosene oil with the adjoining area situated on both sides of the Ganga river. Steamers and boats carry the merchandise north of the Ganga while bullock cart is the only conveyance for goods to the south of the river. It is an emporium for parts of Purnea and Santhal Parganas districts. During war-time a few industries like *gur* making, glass-blowing, etc., were started but they are in a bad way now. The municipality is a very old one and was started mostly with a view to satisfy the Anglo-Indian indigo planters who had their factory known as the Colgong concern in the vicinity. Roads are still very bad and there is no arrangement for water-supply, the only important service rendered by the municipality is scavenging and lighting of streets. Colgong has the possibility of being converted into a place of tourist importance.

BIRTH RATE, DEATH RATE AND INFANTILE MORTALITY

Though data regarding births and deaths are not very reliable, they give some idea of the variation of population from year to year. According to the *Bihar Statistical Handbook for 1951*, the total number of births and deaths registered in the district, were 34,365 and 22,461 respectively out of which 2,092 accounted for infant deaths calculating on the basis of the population of the district for 1931, the birth rate, death rate and infantile mortality rate work out at 14.2, 9.26 and 93.1 per mille respectively, as against 19.7, 12.7 and 124.3 per mille for the State. According to the *Census Report of Bihar for 1941* the total number of births and deaths registered in the district during 1931-41 were 694,451 and 530,106 respectively.

It may reasonably be stated that the rapid rise in the population of the district since 1921 is due to the fall in the death rate as a result of improvements in public health and medical services since the transference of power into the hands of the popular ministers though the birth rate has practically remained

the same. The district was free from any severe epidemic during the period 1921-51 and the mortality from diseases was reduced. This is also corroborated by the fact that there has not been any marked change in migration. According to the Census Reports since 1921 the proportion of females to every 1,000 male population has been declining from 977 in 1931 to 965 in 1941 in contrast to the ratio in the census years. According to the *Census Report for 1951* the total male population of the district was 1,401,358 while the female was 1,335,909. This disparity between the male and female population is more pronounced in the case of urban population. In Bhagalpur city alone males were in excess of females to the extent of 10,568 in a total population of 1,14,530 in 1951. Similarly, in Colgong, the only other town, the total population of 7,515 was distributed between 3,967 males and 3,548 females. This disparity between the male and female population of towns is quite natural as large number of immigrants come to towns without their wives. They come to the towns either to pursue their profession or to receive education.

AGE STRUCTURE AND EXPECTATION OF LIFE

Economic condition of a region is very much dependent on the structure of age and expectation of life of its inhabitants. If in a particular region the proportion of infants and children, boys and girls and old persons is predominant, economy of that region will be a backward one. Similarly, if the average expectation of life of the inhabitants of a region below, it is expected that the economic activity of that place will be in a depressed condition. The author of the *Census Report for 1951*, has divided the population of the country in the following five categories viz., age 0—4—infants and young children, age 5—14—boys and girls, age 15—34—young men and women, age 35—54—middle aged men and women and age 55 and above—elderly persons.

Taking the first two categories together, it is found that in India as a whole 38.3 per cent of the total population is under the age of 15, 53.4 per cent between 15—54, while 8.3 per cent are over 55 years of age with a slight variation in different zones into which India is divided. According to the sample survey carried out in Bhagalpur district by the Superintendent of Census Operations in Bihar in 1951 comprising 518 households with a population of 2,084 persons, 70 persons or 3.4 per cent were infants below one year of age, 810 or 38.8 per cent between the age 1—20 (non-adults) and 1,204 or 57.8 per cent above 21 years of age (adults). After deducting the percentage of the elderly persons of the Eastern Zone in which the area of Bhagalpur is included, it is found that in this district only 48.9 per cent of the total population are found in the age group 15—54. The percentage of the population in this age group rises in the case of the urban population of this district.

LIVELIHOOD PATTERN OF THE DISTRICT

A discussion of the economic condition of a people cannot be complete without an account of the livelihood pattern of the district. The occupational distribution of population of a region determines, to a great extent, the nature of economic activity, if the majority of its people depend upon agriculture, the production of and trade in food-stuffs and rawmaterials will be the dominant feature of economic life. Till 1951 the statistics about livelihood and production were not very accurate and no uniform basis of classification of population was adopted by the different census authorities, with the result that it is not possible to attempt a comparative study of the livelihood pattern of the district. According to the *Census Report of 1951*, out of 2,737,263, the entire population of this district as much as 2,382,167 or 87.6 per cent of the total population was engaged in agriculture and 355,104 or 12.4 per cent was engaged in occupations other than agriculture. The agricultural population was further subdivided into four classes such as (a) cultivators of land mainly owned by them and their dependents, (b) cultivators who mainly cultivate unowned lands and their dependents, (c) cultivating labourers and their dependents and (d) non-cultivating owners of land, agricultural rent receivers and their dependents. According to the same sources, 1,112,062 or 46.6 per cent of those who followed agriculture as their livelihood fell into the first category, 504,562 or 21.4 per cent fell into the second category, 644,992 or 27.7 per cent into the third category and 20,347 or .9 per cent fell into the fourth category. Out of 355,104 persons who formed the non-agricultural section of the population of the district 81,082 or 22.8 per cent were in the category of producers other than cultivators, 97,758 or 27.5 per cent were engaged in commerce, 14,378 or 4.5 per cent were engaged in transport and 162,886 or 45.5 per cent were engaged in other services and miscellaneous occupations.

IMMIGRATION AND EMIGRATION

According to the *Census Report of 1951*, the total number of immigrants in this district numbered 82,228, viz., persons enumerated in this district but born elsewhere. Out of this total number of immigrants in this district as much as 47,334 had come from the adjoining districts of Monghyr, Purnea and Santhal Parganas, while a total of 5,684 persons had immigrated from the adjoining States of West Bengal, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh and Orissa. There was some immigration also from the neighbouring countries in Asia beyond India such as Nepal and Pakistan ; the two contributing 922 and 1,340 persons respectively. The number of emigrants from this district is not mentioned in the latest census report. But the growth in the actual population of the district when scrutinised in conjunction with the vital statistics for the

decade and the variation in the number of immigrants, gives indication as to the variation in the number of emigrants from the previous census.

According to the *Census Report of 1931*, the number of emigrants from this district stood at 122,000 for 1931 against 171,165 for 1921. *The Bihar Census Report 1951* states that 28,25,856 persons were born in this district of whom only 26,55,856 were enumerated within the district leaving a balance of 170,817 who were enumerated outside the borders of the district. The same sources reveal that a total of 58,472 persons born in the district were enumerated in Purnea alone, whereas 36,557 and 22,461 were enumerated in the adjoining districts of Monghyr and Santhal Parganas. Much of this emigration is casual in character, i. e., the people migrate to these districts during agricultural season and come back again when the operations are over. A large number of persons from Madhepura and Supaul subdivisions of Saharsa district migrate to Purnea during the sowing season as that district is particularly short of labour, while a substantial number from the south of the district migrate to the adjoining districts of Santhal Parganas and Monghyr.

As regards immigration to towns and cities, nearly 12.4 per cent of the total population of the City of Bhagalpur were immigrants of whom 5.1 per cent came from the contiguous districts or State-groups and 3.8 per cent from other parts of India according to the Census of 1931. The *Census Report of 1951* shows that as a result of the partition of the country in 1947, 1,935 persons had migrated to Bhagalpur from West Pakistan and East Pakistan during 1946—51. Most of the immigration has taken place to the town of Bhagalpur where they are engaged in petty trades. There is no doubt that there have been more of them since 1951.

CHANGES IN THE UTILISATION OF RESOURCES—ECONOMIC CONDITION

(a) A discussion of the changes in the utilisation of resources of a region is essential in order to have a clear picture of the economic condition of that area. This discussion should include the changes both in the human and material resources of the area. Changes in human resources having been described in the foregoing pages under the heading of population, it is necessary to give a picture of the changes in the material resources like land and capital which is the product of land and labour. The topography and physical features of the district an account of which is given elsewhere suggest that agriculture is the main occupation of the people of the district and it is also corroborated by the statistics of the livelihood pattern furnished by the *Census Report of 1951*. This report shows that as much as 87.6 per cent of the total

population of the district is dependent on agriculture and the rest on non-agricultural pursuits. Hence the material condition of the people is very much dependent on agriculture.

Any study of the incidence of agriculture, of the district may conveniently be made under different periods—each period being marked out from other period by some important event in the economic history of the district. Since the area and the present boundaries have been fixed in 1874, the incidence of agriculture may be studied under (1) period prior to 1874, i. e., 1765—1873, (2) 1874—1900, (3) 1900—1918, (4) 1919—1929, (5) 1929—1937, (6) 1938—1945 and (7) 1946—1954.

1765—1873.—No very systematic account of the economic condition of the people of the district is easily available as the area and jurisdiction of the district underwent a number of changes and the materials probably lie scattered in the archives of the different collectorates with which Bhagalpur was attached from time to time. However, certain important events of this period deserve mention which will throw some light on the state of agriculture. In 1765, when the *Diwani* or Revenue Administration of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa was granted to the East India Company, Bhagalpur as then constituted consisted of a few parganas, lying in adjoining districts and formed part of Sarkar Monghyr.* In 1769, British Supervisors were appointed to superintend local collection of revenue on behalf of the East India Company with his headquarters at Rajmahal, now in Santhal Parganas, his jurisdiction lying over a portion of Bengal and the eastern portion of Bihar which included Bhagalpur. The condition of agriculture was very unsatisfactory from 1765—1800 due to the occurrence of a number of severe famines and droughts as a result of which agriculture was in a very depressed condition. The first great famine regarding which some material is available was the famine of 1770. As Bhagalpur was attached to Rajmahal which was further subordinate to the Provincial Council at Murshidabad, no records of the famine are available in the Bhagalpur Collectorate but the proceedings of the Provincial Council throw some light on the economic condition of the period. Referring to Bhagalpur, Mr. Harwood, the Supervisor reported “that the zamindars are ruined, the lands not having yielded half produce for the last 12 months”. In November of the same year Mr. Harwood, while forwarding the abstract revenue settlement of the current year, attributes the deficit to the “impoverished, ruined and miserable state” of the district. Agricultural condition somewhat improved in the next year due to early rainfall but occasional droughts continued till the next

* A Pargana is the territorial unit for fiscal administration. Bhagalpur district now consists of 27 parganas. [*Report of Survey and Settlement Operations of Bhagalpur* (1902—1910) p. 12.]

15 years. In 1775, there was severe drought as a result of which the stock of grains available, which was quite inadequate in normal years became still more inadequate in that year.

In May, 1779, another severe drought is mentioned which speaks of the bad condition of agriculture. On account of the drought conditions, the Bhadai crop was totally destroyed while there were bleak chances for the *Aghani* crop which is the main crop of the district. The then Collector, while pleading for a reduced revenue *jama* of the district, alluded to the bad economic position of the cultivators in these words, "the severe drought which we have experienced in this part of the country for some-time past, has alarmed the land-holders in general to so great degree that they absolutely refuse to make themselves responsible for the current year's revenue without a considerable remission.... The country being in this situation, I have in vain used my endeavours with the jamadars to prevail upon them to renew their leases agreeably to your orders. They absolutely refused, except on terms, which will reduce the revenue about one eighth or from Rs. 1,71,771 to 1,50,300." (Quoted in *Bengal District Gazetteer for Bhagalpur*, page 94).

In 1795 again a similar difficulty arose for which 50,000 maunds of rice were stored at different places on the road from Rajmahal to Monghyr. The next period from 1796 to 1865 may be said to be fairly prosperous for agriculturists in Bhagalpur inasmuch as there was no serious drought. The people of the district had taken to cultivation in a rather peaceful manner and the permanent settlement of land revenue of the district was effected during this period. Some of the landlords with whom settlement of land revenue was made, failed to discharge their obligations of paying the land revenue demand in time with the consequence that many of the original settlees had their estate sold away for arrears of land revenue. The new settlees in order to pay the land revenue *jama* began to enhance rent of tenants on various pleas with the consequence that the Government had to intervene and a new Act known as the Bengal Rent Act was passed in 1859 which granted security of tenure and of rent to certain classes of tenants.

The district passed through an ordeal of scarcity in 1865, the year of the Orissa famine but it was not so severe as in the south and the west. Mr. R. F. Cockerel was deputed in 1866 to enquire into the famine conditions in Bihar. He reported that the northern portion of the district bordering on Nepal suffered from pressure of want due to the failure of rice crop which was the main crop of that region. In other parts of Bhagalpur, there was a general distress caused by high prices of food-stuffs and fall in the demand for labour. In the north distress was enhanced by the failure of

the Marua crop due to the heavy rainfall of 1865 which provides the main food of the poorer section of the people. In order to relieve the distress of the people, Government granted temporary relief to the cultivators but it was quite inadequate. Relief was also organised by non-official agencies at the instance of the Commissioner of the Division. On the northern side of the Ganga, relief depots were stored with grains imported from other districts. The highest average number of persons receiving gratuitous relief in the district did not exceed 1,108 persons and the largest number of persons employed as labour for relief did not exceed 700. It was generally believed that unlike most other districts of Bihar, mortality was not great. On the south of the Ganga the high prices of grain were mostly due to export of grains to the western provinces by the *mahajans* who purchased the entire stock of the locality. According to the report of the Deputy Collector of Banka, 46,185 cwt. of grains was exported in September and October alone of that year to the western provinces through the East Indian Railway as against 13,783 cwt. during the same period of the previous year. The average price of rice rose to 13 seers per rupee as against 25 seers per rupee in the previous year, that of maize to 18 seers as against 31 seers and that of pulses to 11 seers as against 24 seers. In consequence there were deaths due to starvation and deficiency diseases. Relief, both official and non-official, was administered but the amount of relief in cash did not exceed Rs. 17,416.

The second period of the economic history of the district lasting from 1874—1900 is also marked by scarcities, famines, floods and epidemics like plague which appeared in India towards the close of the century. This period also saw the beginnings of a sound policy of famine relief mainly as a result of recommendations of the successive Famine Commissions appointed by the Government. The period also saw the initiation of policy of public works like extension of railways and irrigation with a view to provide security against famine and scarcities. This period also saw the enactments of the measures like the Bengal Tenancy Act 1885, Land Improvement Loans Act, 1873 and Agriculturists Loans Act, 1884 with a view to safeguard the interests of raiyats and to enable them to tide over financial difficulty for which they were forced to go to the money-lenders. The first famine of this period took place in 1874 and mostly affected the thanas of Supaul, Bangaon and Pratapganj in Supaul subdivision and Madhipura thana in Madhipura subdivision (Saharsa district now). The distress caused was acute and was due to the failure of the rice crop on account of insufficient rainfall of that year. Some of the parts now of Bhagalpur district were also affected. In order to meet the situation, Mr. Barlow, the Commissioner of the Division urged upon the Government to arrange supply of 730,000 maunds of foodgrains to meet the requirements of the people for the next five months. The requisite supply of grains was promptly made

by the Government and some 20,000 persons were engaged in local public works. As a result of all these measures and the good *Bhadai* crops of maize and of rice the distress was liquidated.

The years 1875—1888 were fairly good for cultivators of the district, no famine or scarcity having been noticed all these years. The agriculturists of the district appeared to have been enjoying the fruits of security of rent and tenancy guaranteed to them by the Bengal Tenancy Act, 1885. Improved means of transport and communication together with the maintenance of peace after years of disturbance was reflected in the improved condition of the peasantry. The general rise in the price of foodgrains benefited a large number of big cultivators. This spell of prosperity in the district was broken by two scarcities of 1889 and 1892 which affected Supaul and Madhipura subdivisions in North Bhagalpur. Loans under the Agricultural Loans Act were liberally advanced and public works for relief of the people were also commenced. Government and private relief alleviated the distress of the people.

The closing years of the 19th century were also marked by famines over a considerable part of India from which this district also did not escape. The area particularly affected was again Supaul subdivision now in Saharsha district. But the other parts were also touched. This was mainly due to the general rise in prices consequent upon the widespread failure of crops in Upper India which raised the prices in the locality in sympathy. The local supply of grains fell short on account of the unrestricted export of grains from this area. It is estimated that between October, 1896 and September, 1897 there was an excess of exports from the district to the extent of 83,000 tons. Relief from private sources was liberally given and more than Rs. 26,000 were distributed in grain or money doles from the Famine Insurance Fund. The total expenditure incurred was about Rs. 1,64,500 of which Government contributed 56,400 and the rest by the District Board.

In September, 1899, the eastern part of South Bhagalpur near about Colgong suffered severely from the effects of a heavy flood in the river Chandan. Owing to the bursting of rain and storm, the Chandan breached its embankments and flooded all areas near about Ghogha washing away the railway bridge near that place. It is estimated that nearly 1,800 lives were lost and more than 25,000 houses collapsed. Loss of cattle was appalling and as a consequence agriculture suffered badly. In order to meet this calamity and to enable the cultivators to start life afresh, loans were advanced liberally.

1900—1918.—The period 1900—1918 may on the whole be called prosperous for the cultivators of the district except a few minor

scarcities. During the first five years of this period, agriculture was in a thriving condition, the rainfall was sufficient and well distributed and crops were good. Besides these favourable factors, the district was generally immune from any severe epidemic. It seemed that the peace and stability in the country was leading to better agricultural conditions. The Survey and Settlement operations in the district were over during this period; these operations determined the rights and obligations of a large number of tenants who were previously rack rented by their landlords. *The Census Report*, 1911 (Vol. V, Bengal, Bihar and Orissa and Sikkim) mentions at page 130 : "In the first part of the decade, good harvests were reaped and a fair degree of prosperity prevailed except in 1902 when there was scanty and ill-distributed rainfall." The overall picture of the material condition of the people of Bihar and Orissa at this time was good as was observed in the same report : "In Bihar and Orissa, the first four years of the decade witnessed a period of fair agricultural prosperity, the number of births increased, while mortality gradually fell."

The most prominent feature of the economic history of the first ten years of this period (1900—1918) in so far as this district was concerned was the rise in prices which took place in 1906 and continued during the two succeeding years. While the average price of foodgrains varies little from the normal during the first half of the decade (1901—1905), it suddenly rose in 1906, in a marked degree—this rise becoming accentuated in 1907. In August of that year, the average price of rice became 58 per cent and that of maize 70 per cent above the previous normal. An important cause of the high prices of foodgrains was the poor harvest of foodgrains in general and of rice in particular during 1904—1907. Apart from the low outturn of foodgrains another contributory factor was the surplus funds which became available to the cultivators mainly as a result of extension of cultivation of crops like oilseeds, jute, etc., in place of rice. The increased facilities of communications and the malpractice of the dealers and merchants were also responsible for the rise in price of foodgrains; large firms at the chief commercial centres purchased the entire stock in the village before the local dealer had any chance of offering his bid. During the first 10 years of this period, there were a few spurts of scarcities and floods which marred to some extent the even tenor of prosperity that was noticed in the district at the commencement of the present century. There was an apprehension of scarcity in Supaul subdivision in 1902 due to low rainfall and want of proper distribution. Due to the timely action taken by the Collector of the district, the distress was mitigated. Again towards the closing years of the first decade, the district suffered from one of the worst scarcities. Rainfall over the entire district was really half of the normal and the

result was that *Bhadai* crops failed entirely and the winter crop was also a complete failure in many places. Fortunately for the Kosi floods there were bumper crops of *Bhadai* and *Aghani* in the eastern portion of Madhipura and Supaul subdivision. This saved the district from one of the worst famines yet known. There was a large migration of landless labourers from the south of the district to the eastern portions of Madhipura and Supaul, and to rice lands of Bengal proper. According to the old Bhagalpur Gazetteer about 70,000 people had crossed the Ganga from the south to the north in search of work. As regards other sections of people, strain of this scarcity was met by the good crops of the previous years. Agriculture in Supaul and Madhipura was adversely affected by the high floods of 1906 and as a result the distress was severe so long as the floods lasted but when the flood water receded there was a considerable deposit of silt over the lands which gave a bumper *rabi* crop in the following year.

The period of good years for agriculture continued till 1917; crops were generally good from 1911—1917. But this period of prosperity was marred by occasional outbreaks of epidemic diseases like cholera and fever which raised the death-rate above the normal. Cholera was rampant in the northern portion of the district from 1915 and continued till 1916. An important event of this period which affected the material condition of the people of the district was the outbreak of the Great War between the Allied Powers and Germany in autumn of 1914 whose effect was felt after two years. At the beginning, there was not much effect of this war on the condition of agriculture but from 1917 onwards, prices of imported articles like cloth, salt and kerosene oil began to increase. All sections of population, particularly the poorer section comprising of the landless labourers and small artisans suffered as a result of the rise in the price of imported commodities.

An important effect of the rise in the price of foodgrains on agriculture during this period was the extension of agriculture in the district. Area under cultivation increased both in the south of the Ganga as also in the North in Kishanganj thana of Madhipura subdivision.

Writing on the movement of population of Bhagalpur district the Census Report of 1911 mentions that Kishanganj thana borders on the water-logged area but owing to the fact that the river Kosi has for some years past not shown any marked tendency to shift its channels, there has been a rapid expansion of cultivation in its south-eastern portion, which was till recently a desolate tract of swamp and jungle. The authority states that at

the time of the enumeration Kishanganj thana in 1911, there was an influx of non-resident cultivators who came with labourers to cut their crops. Similarly there was extension of cultivation in Bihpur and Colgong thanas of Sadar subdivision and to some extent in Banka subdivision, vide Census Report, 1911, Vol. V, page 131. This extension of cultivation was partially helped by the opening of railway line from Mathahi to Madhipura in Madhipura subdivision and the Bhagalpur-Mandar hill branch railway line connecting Bhagalpur with South Bhagalpur.

The closing year of this period (1900—1918) was very disastrous for the agriculturists of this district specially those inhabiting the areas south of the Ganga. In 1918, the rains were good till the middle of September when there was a complete cessation. In the south of the district, the rice crop was a failure and famine had to be declared in parts from June to December in the following year. Prices rose in sympathy and the people of the district were very much hard hit. To add to the misery of the people, the influenza epidemic took a heavy toll of the population which raised the death rate of 1918 to 52.2 per mille against an average of 32.9 per mille. As a consequence of these calamities, agriculture of the district suffered a great set-back and the progress made during the previous years was checked. The Government started relief works and made liberal advances to the people to tide over the period of difficulty. The large emigration from the district coupled with the check to immigration from other districts relieved to some extent the problem of scarcity. Large quantities of rice had to be imported from Burma and other eastern provinces, though normally the district used to export large quantities of rice every year to other provinces. The paucity of the rolling stock during the closing years of the Great War (1914—1918) aggravated the situation by raising the price of food-grains and imported articles.

1919—1929.—The decade started with a famine whose effect was most acutely felt in South Bhagalpur and ended with the commencement of a world wide depression which affected agriculture very badly. The failure of the crops in the previous years combined with unprecedented high prices of all indispensable commodities produced acute distress in the beginning of the year among the poor cultivators and the landless classes. The situation was at its worst about June and began to improve after the Bhadai harvest in September and October. The winter crop in December and January of that year brought great relief. The severity of the famine can be judged from the fact that the price of rice shot up to 3½ seers per rupee in some places during July and August against 6 seers in April. Famine was declared in the south of the district. Loans were liberally advanced during the year specially under the Agriculturists' Loans Act to

enable the people to tide over the period of distress. A sum of Rs. 10,33,327 alone was distributed among the famine stricken people of the district (vide Land Revenue Administration Report for 1919-20, page 16).

During the rest of the period from 1920—1929, the condition of agriculture in the district was on the whole satisfactory. According to the Census Report of 1931 in six years out of ten, the rice crop with which the economic prosperity of province is largely bound up was at least up to normal and the year 1922 was memorable for a bumper harvest estimated at 20 per cent above the normal. What was true of the province as a whole was also true of this district as well except the slight damage caused by flood to Madhipura and Supaul subdivision in 1921. Agriculture in Supaul and Banka suffered to some extent by floods of 1927 and 1929 respectively. 1924 and 1928 were rather disappointing for South Bhagalpur inasmuch as the crops were below normal either due to inadequate or ill-distributed rainfall. Otherwise the climatic conditions were generally favourable throughout the period (1921—1931). There was also a marked improvement in the general health of the people, the incidence of deaths from Cholera and Small-pox having declined substantially. There was no visitation of plague during this period. Prices of foodgrains which were ruling pretty high in the beginning of this period (1919—1929) were lowered to some extent due to the favourable condition of the harvests. Agriculture in this district was also favourably affected by the opening of two branch railway lines one in north and the other in the south. Murliganj was a centre of trade in Jute, Maize and Rice. Madhipura subdivision with a good turn over of pulses and other grains was connected with Bihariganj an important trade centre in Purnea district. It is to be noted that owing to breach in the railway lines between Mathahi and Madhipura and between Baptiahi and Partapganj, the branch lines connecting these places were closed. In the south, the branch line between Bhagalpur and Mandar hill which was closed during the Great War re-opened in 1924 which enabled the agricultural produce of South Bhagalpur and Santhal Parganas to be marketed in better markets.

1929—1939.—During this period, agriculture of the district was very badly affected due mainly to the agricultural depression which commenced from 1929. Though the prices of industrial goods, all over the world had been falling since 1924, the prices of foodgrains more particularly rice ruled high. But this disparity between the price of foodgrains and other commodities could not continue long and the falling cost of living had begun affecting agriculture. This agriculture depression was the part of the great depression which ruled practically over the entire world and was due to deeper international causes. It continued unabated till 1934 and the prices of agricultural produce came stumbling

down till it reached its lowest level in 1935. The result of this fall in prices of foodgrains was disastrous for cultivators. The district being primarily agricultural suffered terribly as a result of the agricultural depression. It affected both the landlords and the tenants because none of them could meet their obligations with lesser income from sale of produce. Arrears of rent began to accumulate and the landlords filed rent-suits in thousands in order to escape from the laws of limitation. An important effect of this depression was that lands at first began to pass under the possession of the landlords and money-lenders till the landlords and Mahajans refused to file suits. The net result was that the demand for lands declined.

An important effect of this abnormal fall in the price of foodgrains was the extension of the cultivation of sugarcane in place of rice in a number of places in Colgong, Amarapur and Banka Thanas. A number of cane-crushing factories were also started in the district but they could not consume the entire output of sugarcane. An important event of this period was the Bihar Earthquake of 1934 in which mostly the residents of the towns and cities were badly affected. The earthquake materially affected the agriculture of a few places in North Bhagalpur when some of the river beds were raised and some new channels were revived in their places. Lands in some thanas deteriorated as a result of sand oozing out of the surface of the earth. The Government enacted the Natural Calamities Act, 1934 under which liberal amounts were given as loans and as gratuitous relief to persons whose houses or lands had been damaged by the earthquake. Both official and non-officials were organised for mitigating the sufferings of the earthquake sufferers. But it was the towns people who mostly benefited out of these measures. The fall in prices not only affected the producers but also consumers of foodgrains; the former could not make profits out of their production and the latter suffered on account of the fall in the demand for their labour. It was a fact that as consumers they could get their requisite food at less cost but a fall in the demand for labour led to acute unemployment among the agricultural labourers and the artisans of the villagers who are connected with the village economy. The effect of this depression was simply disastrous for the cultivators of the district and the whole country-side appeared to be stagnating from 1929—1937.

Period from 1938—45.—As the result of the economic depression and the heavy fall in the prices of foodgrains not only did the burden of rural debt increase but also the relation between landlords and tenants, became embittered. Inability of the tenant to pay the landlord's and Mahajan's dues led to large-scale transference of lands to the possession of non-cultivators like landlords and Mahajans. The birth of the Kisan movement and the new

consciousness among the tenantry gave rise to agrarian disputes. These disputes related mostly to the demand by the tenants for possession over *Bakast* lands, to the tenant's opposition to payment at an enhanced rate and the refusal of the tenants to pay rent on the ground of failure of landlords to maintain irrigation works. The Land Revenue Administration Report of Bihar and Orissa for 1934-35 mentions that in Bhagalpur the relationship was satisfactory on the whole though such disputes between Sri Sukhraj Rai and his tenants in Sadar subdivision regarding possession of land continued. In the Banka subdivision, there was a good deal of recrimination between landlords and tenants about the failure to pay the rent, the tenants charging the landlords as responsible for the difficulties of the tenants owing to their disregard for irrigation. The cultivators had great grievance about their lot to meet the situation. The State Government amended the Bengal Tenancy Act in 1934 with a view to confer certain rights on tenants and thus remove the causes of friction between landlords and tenants. The problem of scaling down the rent and restoration of *Bakast* lands was met by a further amendment of the B.T. Act in 1938 and enactment of a special law known as the Bihar Restoration of *Bakast* lands and Reduction of Arrears of Rent Act, 1938, the former scaling down the rent of the tenants' holding in proportion to the fall in the price of agricultural produce, wiping away all enhancements of rents between a certain period and granting remission of rent of lands which had deteriorated on account of floods and failure of irrigation works. The latter Act was meant to restore the *Bakast* lands acquired through sale by landlords during certain period to the former tenants on reduced consideration and reducing arrears of rent of the tenants under certain conditions. In South Bhagalpur, it was found that the Santhals' lands were being transferred to landlords and money-lenders for the failure of the Santhals to pay their dues on account of fall in the price of agricultural produce and the State made suitable changes in law on the lines of the Santhal Parganas Regulation to prevent alienation of the lands of the Santhals to non-Santhals.

The popular ministry was anxious to run a Welfare State. The agriculturist debtors were sought to be given relief by passing the Bihar Money Lenders' Act, 1938 by which business of money-lending was controlled and conditions of loan and their repayments were laid down in favour of the debtors. Similarly, greater immunity was conferred on the agriculturists in the matter of attachment of their property for their debts to the money-lenders.

The cultivators of this district like those of other districts in the State were benefited to a great extent as a result of these ameliorative steps taken by the Government. The benefit was however, not uniform and fell far short of the requirements. The laws passed were mostly short-termed measures which were en-

forced in a mechanical manner. The hiatus between the ruler and the ruled and the woodenness of the bureaucracy that partially stood in the way could only be liquidated through process of time and more democratisation of the bases of administration. But still it has to be admitted that they provided better incentives to the cultivators and the result was beneficial for agriculture of the district. The gradual rise in the price of foodgrains noticeable since 1938 and the World War heralded a period of boon for the agriculturists.

The condition of agriculture was on the whole better during 1938—45 as compared to that of 1929—1937. This was more due to the rise in prices of foodgrains coming in the wake of the commencement of the second World War rather than to the increase in the outturn of agriculture produce. The high price of foodgrains increased the profits from agriculture and the landlords and money-lenders were economically worse off in comparison to their previous condition.

Heavy floods on the north and drought in the south affected the yield of agricultural produce. In 1938-39, the failure of the Hathiya rains affected the winter crop and rains in the winter affected the rabi crops. Due to high floods and heavy rainfall in the north there was considerable damage to properties. Government organised relief and house building advances were given. Under the stress of high prices, there was extension of agriculture both in the south and also in the north. By applying the Private Irrigation Act, the State could construct many irrigation works in the zamindari of big landlords. Though the condition of agriculturists was better, their relation with the landlords was not good. The causes of conflict were mostly due to the distribution of produce of lands held on produce rent (*batai*), and the landlords, failure to repair irrigation works (*gilandazi*). The growing consciousness among the kisans was also responsible for this tendency. There was grave dissatisfaction among the tenants of the Darbhanga Raj and Sonbarsa Raj inasmuch as they had settled lands reclaimed by tenants with other parties. Applications for commutation of produce rent into money rent increased because a large number of tenants wanted to be free from uncertainties of distribution of produce by the landlord's *Amlas*. The landlords had, as a class, neglected their share of obligation of maintaining the irrigation facilities as they were sure of their rent in kind. A sum of Rs. 58,650 was distributed in 1939-40 under the Land Improvement Loans Act mostly for reclamation of lands in Kosi area which had become covered with *Kans* and other types of grass. There were heavy floods in the Kosi in 1939-40 which did considerable damage in Supaul subdivision and parts of Sadar subdivision. Some 570 houses were affected in Supaul alone. Relief in cash and kind was administered. Due to heavy floods in North Bhagalpur during this period the Railway communication

between Mansi and Koparia on the Manshi-Saharsa section of the N. E. Railway was suspended during the rainy season of 1938-39 and this unsatisfactory condition continued till 1954. Unfavourable circumstances continued in 1940-41, the north suffering from heavy floods and the south from inadequate rains. Increase of price of foodgrains and the reduction of rent helped the improvement of the condition of the agriculturists, though production was not adequate. The impact of this increase in prices was not uniform on all sections of the people; the bigger cultivators were comparatively better off than small producers and landless labourers. The latter did not produce enough for their further requirements and hence they had to buy at higher prices. Other necessities of life such as cloth, kerosene oil, sugar, etc., were also registering an increase in prices since 1940-41 which adversely affected the material condition of the small cultivators and landless labourers. The State introduced measures for effecting control over the necessities of life but they were not very successful. An important fact to be noticed in this period was the reluctance on the part of many landlords to recover rent through court because changes in the B.T. Act were working to their disadvantage.

Civil Disturbances.—Material condition of the people of this district was also vitally affected by the civil disturbances of 1942 and abnormal rise in prices of foodgrains mainly of rice in 1943 in sympathy with the Bengal Famine of 1943. The civil disturbances interrupted the railway and telegraph communication which hampered the trade of the district. The transport bottleneck due to the great war made most of the essentials of life immobile with the consequence that the price which was itself high became still higher though the producing classes like the agriculturists gained as a result of the high prices of foodgrains, the small cultivators were in a disadvantageous position as they had to purchase many articles for their requirement in the black market. The inflationary tendency noticed during the war led to greater profiteering and the consequential steep rise of prices in 1943. To crown all, the uncertainties coming in the wake of the Bengal Famine of 1943 led to large scale hoarding on the part of the bigger cultivators and in spite of the Government steps to control the prices of foodgrains, prices continued rising steeply. Due to this unprecedented rise in the prices of foodgrains and other necessities of life, the agriculturists, middle-men and other businessmen prospered. The price of agricultural land increased three-fold and a sort of speculation in agricultural land was distinctly noticeable. Waste lands of the district for which there were no purchasers in the past, were also settled with the cultivators. Such lands were settled in Banka, Supaul and Madhipura subdivisions for which the State advanced loans under the Land Improvement Loans Act and the Waste Lands Reclamation Act. Wages of agricultural labourers also increased in the wake of the

rise in prices, though somewhat late. The urban dwellers and people with fixed income were the hardest hit due to this rise in the prices of foodgrains. Government measures for fixing the maximum prices of foodgrains, licensing of dealers in grains, procurement, monopoly-purchase, rationing of foodgrains in the urban area and opening of fair prices shops in selected areas failed to remove the suffering of the people in low-income groups.

Apart from the measures for better distribution of foodgrains and the fixing of their maximum price, the State undertook a number of measures with a view to increase the production of foodgrains. Government advanced vast sums of money to the cultivators to enable them to construct wells under the Grow More Food-Campaign started by the Central Government. Though the amount advanced under this heading in this district was considerable, the number of wells constructed were few in number. In a large number of cases, persons receiving the advances diverted the amount to other personal uses such as constructing their buildings or marrying off their children. In subsequent years, the Grow More Food Department began to advance loans not in cash but in kind in the form of coal, cement and ironbars, etc., but, unfortunately for the district, the advantage to the agriculturist was not appreciable.

Measures taken for increase in the supply of food.—Under the spurt of high prices, the area under cultivation increased as a large number of persons borrowed huge sums of money under the Waste Lands Reclamation Act and the Land Improvement Loans Act. In this way some lands in Katoria and Banka thanas of Banka subdivision and waste lands of Madhipura subdivision were brought under the plough. With a view to destroy hogs, deer and other wild animals which caused damage to the standing crops in the north fire-arms were supplied liberally to the cultivators. During this period, the State Agriculture Department also introduced many improved tools and implements for better farming and for better irrigation. Big cultivators were supplied *Rahats*, pumping sets, tractors, etc., on suitable terms but these benefits did not reach the small and medium cultivators. Yield per acre was also sought to be increased by the distribution of chemical manures through the Co-operative and Agriculture Department. In spite of all these measures, the total production of food-grains in this district was not keeping pace with the requirements of the increasing population and the result was abnormal rise in the price of foodgrains. The Government measures for better distribution of foodgrains such as price control, procurement, monopoly purchase, etc., led to black-marketing and profiteering on the part of producers and merchants who turned into hoarders and the corruption and inefficiency in the Supply and Price Control Departments added to the suffering of the people, more particularly of the landless labourers, artisans and small cultivators. The

bigger cultivators of the district were very much benefited by the continued rise in prices of foodgrains and more prudent amongst them invested their surplus profits in improved cultivations and in wiping out their debts. It can be stated that this unusual rise in the price of foodgrains over so many years had led to the reduction of the rural debts in many cases.

1945—54.—The war came to a close in August, 1945 and steps were taken by the Government to convert the war-economy of this district to a peace-economy. The establishment of the national Government at the centre in 1946 and the return of the Congress party to power in Bihar had a far-reaching effect upon agriculture of the district. Measures for improvement of agriculture adopted by the bureaucratic regime of the previous years were accelerated and the working of the various departments was liberalised. Large sums of money were provided for agriculture and allied departments by the popular ministers and the average cultivator of the district like his compatriot in the whole of India was expecting a millennium for himself in the years to come but his expectations were not fully realised.

The grant of Dominion Status on August 15, 1947 and the establishment of popular Government both in the Centre as also in the State has brought about great development in the agriculture of the district. The acute shortage of foodgrains and their continued high prices led to an all-out effort on the part of the Government; larger sums were placed at the disposal of the different departments so as to bring more lands under food crops and to increase the yield per acre of each crop. In 6 out of 8 years during 1945—53, rainfall of the district was less than normal, i.e., 48.65" per year. Apart from this South Bhagalpur suffered from insufficiency of rainfall, while North Bhagalpur suffered on account of floods in the Kosi (vide Bihar Statistical Hand Book, 1951, page 7). In spite of unfavourable rainfall over so many years, the condition of agriculture was favourable during all these years. But this prosperity was not shared by all sections of the people. Landless labourers, small cultivators and people having fixed income suffered terribly as a result of the shortage of food-stuffs and the unprecedented rise in the price of foodgrains. The statement in the Land Revenue Administration Reports for these years to the effect that "the material condition of the people during these years was on the whole satisfactory and the unprecedented rise in the price of agriculture products benefited the agriculturists" should be taken with some reservation. Though as a result of high prices, the wages of the agricultural labourers and the profits of the small cultivators increased, their increased earnings were quite insufficient for meeting the enhanced price of other necessities of life. Prices of land increased three fold and the transfer of lands became very rare in this district. The

State Government opened its purse-strings and huge amount was advanced by way of land improvement and agriculturists' loans in the district. A major portion of the district allotment of Rs. 25,000 for land improvement loans was advanced to people of Madhipura and Supaul police stations for reclamation of waste-lands while another sum of Rs. 28,000 was sanctioned for food relief (Land Revenue Administration Report for 1944-45, page 4, Art. 10). In order to increase the outturn of foodgrains, area under cultivation was extended by reclaiming waste-lands, both in North Bhagalpur and in South Bhagalpur. For increasing the yield per acre of lands irrigation works were undertaken both by the Revenue Department and by the Agricultural Department of the State Government. In Bhagalpur, repairs to *bandhs*, channels, tanks, etc., were effected at a cost of Rs. 21,836 mentions the Land Revenue Administration Report for 1944-45. Minor Irrigation projects under the Grow More Food Campaign were also undertaken during this period. According to Land Revenue Administration Report for 1950-51, 574 schemes of irrigation were completed in Banka and Sadar subdivisions. In Madhipura 54 minor irrigation schemes were completed. In Supaul, a *bandh* and a canal were constructed. The entire allotment of Rs. 8,60,000 for the district was spent on these works. There was deterioration in the material condition of the people during the year 1950-51 due to drought and excessive rainfall. Heavy rainfall in the beginning damaged the *Bhadai* crops and drought thereafter damaged the Aghani crops. Hathia rains failed completely. Prices of agriculture produce, consumer-goods, staple food-crops and other essential commodities continued to be high. Middle class families and all those with fixed incomes found it hard to make both ends meet. In order to relieve shortage of foodgrains, Government opened fair-price shops in order to enable the people to purchase grains at reasonable prices but there was little relief to the people due to insufficient supplies, poor qualities of grains and defective methods of distribution. Relief work on a liberal scale was undertaken. Minor irrigation works were extended and Taccavi and L.I. Loans were given liberally (L.R.A. Report for 1950-51, Art. 12). A few enterprising cultivators, acting under the spurt of high prices of agricultural produce purchased tractors and pumping sets for improved agriculture and better irrigation. In South Bhagalpur, the Agriculture Department intensified its effort in construction of wells, *Bandhs*, pynes, Ahars, etc., under its Grow More Food Scheme. The same department has been trying to increase the yield per acre by distribution of better seeds and chemical manure, bone-meal and compost. It is said that a total of more than 125 irrigation schemes valued at more than 3-4 lakhs of rupees have been undertaken in Banka subdivision alone.

Though production was not quite satisfactory till 1953, the favourable rainfall of this year and the combined effect of these

measure resulted in a bumper Aghani and Rabi crops in 1953-54 though *Bhadai* crop was below normal. It had a favourable effect on lowering the price of rice and wheat which benefited the people with fixed incomes, though it diminished the profits from agriculture; the price of rice and wheat touching the lowest level of this period at Rs. 16 per maund for rice and Rs. 12 per maund of wheat. As a result of the execution of the First Five-Year Plan since 1950-51 the agriculture of the district has received very great fillip, there has been a vigorous drive for irrigation and better farming in the district. Improved methods like Japanese methods of cultivation of paddy have been popularised at a number of places and their results are expected. Liberal financial assistance in the form of Land Improvement Loans, Agriculturist's loans and waste-lands reclamation loans are being given to the cultivators, free chemical manures for demonstration purposes and better seeds are being provided to the cultivators so that agricultural production might be increased. Irrigation in South Bhagalpur has been extended by the combined efforts of the Agriculture and Revenue Department. In order to bring about the all round improvement of the village people, Community Development Block has been created in Banka and Sadar subdivisions and National Extension Service Projects started at a number of places. All these measures have helped agriculture and with the completion of these schemes, the condition of the peasantry will improve substantially. In order to protect North Bhagalpur from the recurrent floods in the Kosi, work in the Kosi Multi-purpose project providing flood-control, better irrigation, better navigation and cheap electricity to the people has been started in the beginning of 1955. The effect of the completion of this multi-purpose project on the life of the people will have to be watched in the future.

INDUSTRY

A discussion of the Economic Trends in the district must also give a brief account of the state of the industry. It has been mentioned that out of the total population of the district, 3,505,104 persons were depending upon occupations other than agriculture according to the Census of 1951. Of these 81,072 or 22.8 per cent of the total non-agriculture population were engaged in production other than cultivation which expressed as a ratio of the total population comes to only 5 per cent. Judging from this, it can be seen that the condition of industry has very little effect upon the economic condition of this district. This leads to an inference that like other North Bihar districts Bhagalpur is mostly rural in character.

All the same a brief account of the state of industry is essential for getting a picture of the economic life of the people of this

district. There is no large-scale industry in the district, a large-scale industry being one which uses large producing units, employs much capital per worker, adopts mass production techniques and scientific management and research. All the industries of the district belong to the category of small-scale and cottage industry, the former employing wholly or partly hired labour exceeding ten in number, working with the aid of some power but not employing much capital per worker, while the latter employing wholly or partially the members of the family using simplest of tools worked with hand of some sort of power. A more detailed account of Industries has been given in a separate chapter. As mentioned in the foregoing pages, the national Government established in 1947 took the first opportunity of bringing a rapid all round development of the country. Accordingly, Government of India formulated the First Five-Year Plan (1951—56) and the Second Five Year-Plan (1956—61).

The impact of the two plans on the economic life of the district can be better visualised against the background of the outlay and its achievements in the State as a whole. A total sum of Rs. 73.28 crores was spent over the different sectors of the State economy during the First Plan period. In the Second Five-Year Plan the total financial outlay for the whole State was fixed at Rs. 190.22 crores which was later on reduced to Rs. 175.22 crores after making necessary adjustment for territories transferred as a result of the State Reorganisation and for meeting the 'stress and strain' in the economy.

So far as the development of this district is concerned a C. D. block was opened at Sabour in April, 1955 covering 147 villages with an area of 80 square miles and 71,000 population. Similarly, N. E. S. blocks were formed in Naugachhia, Banka and Amarpur in 1955 covering 263 villages with a total area of 329 square miles and population of 235,000. In 1956, blocks were opened in Gopalpur P.-S. within Sadar subdivision and in Katoria P.-S. in Banka subdivision covering a total of 452 villages with an area of 384 square miles and population of 129,000. In 1957, Bihpur and Shahkund blocks in Sadar subdivision and Rajaun block in Banka subdivision were brought under development programme, Bihpur and Rajaun comprising of 267 villages with an area of 267 square miles and a total population of 155,000.

Since then other blocks have been constituted in Colgong P.-S. and the remaining *thanas* are likely to be brought under development programme by 1963. It has been estimated that by the end of the Second Five-Year Plan nearly half the area of the district has been covered by blocks where intensive development works are being undertaken. It was not possible to make an independent appraisal of the impact of any C. D. Block but it may be generally,

mentioned that there has been a lot of improvement in the economy of the rural people because of the blocks. It is, however, still a common idea among the rural people that the blocks are still run, more or less by the officials and that they will wait to be spoon-fed.

So far as the district of Saharsa, which formed part of Bhagalpur till 1955, is concerned, till October 1957 a total of 537 villages with an area of 967 square miles and population of 757,000 were brought under development programme of the State. Developmental work under the two plans was undertaken over the following heads in order of priorities:—

- (a) Agriculture and community development.
- (b) Irrigation.
- (c) Power.
- (d) Industry.
- (e) Transport and communication.
- (f) Social Services.
- (g) Miscellaneous.

A sum of Rs. 4,69,000 was spent over Agriculture, Animal Husbandry, Irrigation and Reclamation of waste-lands in Bhagalpur district out of a total developmental expenditure of Rs. 19,56,000. But nearly 40 per cent of this expenditure was incurred over State and Project Headquarters leaving a balance of 11 lakhs or 60 per cent to be spent over the different items of development work in the district. Similarly, in Saharsa district, out of total developmental expenditure of a million and a half incurred till October, 1957, Rs. 5,28,000 or roughly 33 per cent of the total was spent on State and Project Headquarters alone leaving a balance of Rs. 10,00,000 to be spent over the different items of the economy.

It has to be pointed out that much of the expenditure incurred over State and Project Headquarters comprised of expenditure incurred for construction of buildings and for appointment of extra staff at the district, subdivisional and village-level which formed the nucleus organisation. Much of the expenditure incurred during the plan periods was over Revenue account leaving a small margin for Capital account. Taking the State as a whole, revenue and capital expenditure were in the ratio of 52 to 48 in the First Plan period, while it was 56 to 44 per cent during the Second Plan Period.*

ACHIEVEMENTS IN TERMS OF PHYSICAL TARGETS

Achievements of the two plans in this district in the background of the achievement in the State as a whole were far from satisfactory. What is true of the State as a whole is also true of this

*Third Draft Five-Year Plan for Bihar.

district with minor adjustments. Performance of the State in the more important sectors was somewhat disappointing. In the field of agriculture, the State produced foodgrains to the extent of 5 million tons as against a target of 7 millions tons during 1955-56. Similarly, in the sphere of irrigation as against a target of 6.3 million acres of land to be brought under irrigation, the maximum area irrigated in Bihar never exceeded 4.9 acres during the plan period.

During the Second Plan period, the target for additional food production was fixed at 1.5 million tons. It is highly improbable to say that the State has achieved its target of producing 1.5 million additional tons of foodgrains. So far as the districts of Bhagalpur and Saharsa are concerned it can be assumed that agricultural production was short of the target fixed. During the last decade bad monsoon and bad investment in this sector did not bring the anticipated results. For increasing food production, stress was laid on application of fertilisers both chemical, compost and green manure. Thus, till 1958, chemical fertilisers and improved seeds to the tune of nearly 30,000 maunds and 26,000 maunds respectively were distributed among the block areas. There is still a great complaint that the fertilisers are not easily available. The importance of compost pits and green manures, easily available has to be brought home to the villagers. An investigation made as to the concrete utilisation of Waste Land Reclamation loans did not yield any encouraging result. Loans have been distributed and reclamation figures have been added more as paper work and the officers concerned hardly made a spot enquiry if the money was actually invested for land reclamation and if so, what has been the increased yield. The same observation could also be made partially for the other loans for land improvement.

As a measure for increased agricultural production minor irrigation works were undertaken during the last ten years. The scheme of minor irrigation work was executed through the Revenue and Agriculture Departments of the State. Loans and subsidies were given for construction of wells, *Ahars* and *pynes* but barring few cultivators, others utilised the loans for other purposes. There has been, no doubt, a big leakage of this money not being fully utilised for the ear-marked purpose. As regards the medium and major irrigation schemes in the district, mention may be made of Tarar—Sonoula Scheme completed under the First Plan period and Hanuman Dam Reservoir project in Belhar P.-S. of Banka subdivision. The former scheme enables the water of river Gohira to irrigate about 10,000 acres of land in Sonoula thana and the latter when completed at a cost of more than 3 crores will irrigate about 30,000 acres of land in Monghyr and Bhagalpur districts. Kajhia Irrigation Scheme in Banka subdivision has been completed which will provide the surplus water of the Chandan for

the contiguous villages. In spite of the above steps taken by the State, there is much scope for development of minor irrigation works in the district which will ensure water for cultivation.

No progress was made in having Seed Multiplication Farms in the district during the period though the existing farms for demonstration were strengthened. Improved methods of cultivation such as deep ploughing and Japanese method of cultivation have been popularised in a few areas specially in the development blocks but the general mass of the cultivators has not yet taken to this reformed practice. With a view to step up production, credit to the cultivators has been made available through loans given by Government and the Co-operative Societies. Government loans under Land Improvement Loans Act and the Agriculturists Loans Act have been liberally given but it has benefited only a few enterprising cultivators who have easy access to the officers and clerks. The poor cultivators who have no contact with the Government offices have not derived any benefit.

Co-operative Movement in the district has received a great fillip during the period of the plans if the growing number has a significance. Till 1957-58, 309 new co-operative Societies with a membership of 16,997 were registered which advanced loans to the tune of Rs. 4,69,000. Two Central Banks at Banka and Bhagalpur have been reorganised and reconstituted. As a measure of economy, the two banks have been amalgamated. Big godowns have been constructed at the premises of these banks to serve as a warehouse for grains. In some blocks, such as Sabour a warehouse for storing the produce of the members has been constructed. It is yet to be seen how many cultivators join the Co-operative Societies and agree to store and sell grains through the sale societies. From enquiry conducted under the auspices of the Planning Forum T. N. B. College, Bhagalpur, it was found that large members of people have kept themselves aloof from the Co-operative Societies at Sabour under Sabour Block. Bahadurpur Co-operative Society provided good promise inasmuch as its members received sufficient rent from licensees of Ganja cultivation as also from owners of the brick kilns. The village is situated within a radius of two miles from Bhagalpur and is peopled mostly by *Koeris*, who are hardy cultivators. Figures for repayment of loan are not available. There is still an idea that Co-operative Societies and banks are meant to be drawn upon without much obligation of repayment. In spite of the numerical increase of the societies it is difficult to say if the movement has struck deep roots. The members were candid enough to confess that some members have formed a Co-operative Farming Society in the village, but no work is being done as tube-well construction is held up due to departmental delay.

A beginning has been made in the matter of consolidation of holdings in this district. A pilot project for consolidation of holdings was started in Sabour Block during the First Five-Year Plan and the scattered holdings have been consolidated, areas demarcated and the rights of the different interest safeguarded in Records of Rights. Ideas about consolidation of holdings are still fluid and without statutory obligation, it will probably take years to win over the tenants with their traditional orthodox ideas to consolidation of holdings.

In the sphere of development of industry, not much has been achieved during the plan period. There is no large scale industry yet in this district and in Saharsa which formed a part of this district before in spite of potentiality. The only industries are small-scale and village industries. Among the small-scale industries of the district mention may be made of the rice-milling, oil-crushing, flour-milling, small sugar factories, textile mills, engineering works and printing.

Sugar factories at Amarapur and Colgong have been in existence for the last few years. These factories are in the private-sector and there has been very little impact of the two plans on them except an increase in production due to general increase in prices. A few of them have taken advantage of the loans under the State-Aid to Industries Act for expansion and meeting the depreciation charges. The loans under the State-Aid to Industry Act are not very popular with the industrialist as great delay takes place in sanctioning of loans. Rice mills at Mirjanhat and at Barahat in Bhagalpur and a few in Saharsa district have been carrying on their existence. No progress has been registered in this direction because the State policy is to encourage hand-pounding of rice and oil-pressing through industrial co-operatives. During the period of low agricultural production, the rice-mills and oil-mills suspended their work for want of raw materials. It is only recently that they have commenced operation. It cannot be definitely stated as to what has been the effect of the two plans on these industries, though it looks, the effect has been rather depressing. Some have been registered mainly as a result of the new awareness on the part of the people, in the matter of setting up of small power driven hullers for paddy husking and of flour mills both in the urban and rural areas. The effect has been unemployment to workers in these fields. Nothing very particular has been done in the matter of organising industrial co-operatives the only exception being the Oil Men's Co-operative Society at Mirjanhat and Sultanganj. The Wardha ghani, much advertised by the Village-Industries Board proved a failure according to the testimony of the Mukhia of the Bahadurpur Panchayat because the cost of oil produced was much higher than the mill-produced oil.

Bhagalpur district has enjoyed reputation for the products of its cottage industries such as silk weaving, cotton-weaving, metal wares, etc. But like all other cottage industries their condition was not satisfactory due to want of raw-material, credit and marketing facilities. As a part of the development programme, attempt to organise the weavers and other industrial groups into some sort of industrial co-operative is being made during these years but it is very much doubtful if any marked success has been achieved, in spite of the fact that some silk goods from Bhagalpur are marketed abroad. Our artisans are reluctant to join these industrial co-operatives because they will have to conform to certain rules and regulations. They would much rather borrow credit from private Mahajans and sell their products through them than borrow from some Co-operative Society. The cause of this apathy, to our mind, is the more direct and personal approach in case of Mahajans and the ease with which the advances are received. Though some progress in organising industrial co-operatives of oil-men and weavers has been shown during the plan period but it appears, the progress is on paper only. Moreover it is alleged that mal-practices have crept in with a view to take advantage of the rebate given to the co-operatives on production. It is reported that oil produced in mill and cloth produced with power looms are allowed to pass as being the products of the co-operatives.

In the sphere of small-scale industry, the State has proposed to set up a spun silk mill at Bhagalpur in the public sector, but nothing has been heard about the step taken in this direction. If the proposal materialises, it will help silk-rearing and will enable all the wastes to be utilised. Not much has been done in the matter of substituting power looms in place of handlooms nor have the weavers taken to improved looms. Some of the silk mills in the private sector have availed of the financial assistance given under the State Aid to Industries Act. They have increased their output in recent years but it is due to increase in demand. Silk rearing is not practised on a wide scale and the weavers have to import cocoons and yarns from outside. Erri and Mulberry products are made from imported yarns. The indigenous Tassar silk and Bafta industry of the region have not made much progress though in the past their products were in great demand. There is a great scope for increasing the production of Tassar, Mulberry and Erri Silk yarns. In Banka subdivision, there is a scope for rearing of silk cocoons and spinning yarns out of them but not much has been done in this direction. Government Silk Institute established at Bhagalpur has been expanded during the plan period and there has been an increase in the number of trainees. The Institute provides training in reeling, weaving and dyeing and demonstrates the use of improved appliances and new designs.

But the trainees coming out have mostly been absorbed in service, hardly any of them has taken to independent production. Bihar State Khadi and Village Industries Board has started a production centre in Bhagalpur town but it is not very popular. Not much has been done in the matter of starting small workshops though production centre for manufacture of buckets has been started. There is scope for engineering workshop inasmuch as the demand for spare parts of automobiles and cycles have increased in recent years. There is some scope for establishment of ceramic industry both in the town and in rural areas for which china clay is available in Patherghata in Colgong P.-S. and Samukhia in Banka P.-S. Supply of cheap power and better communication may induce investors in this direction.

There is some scope for developing co-operatives in brick burning and biri-making in selected areas of this district during the plan period. Building industry has received a great fillip both on private and on Government account. Demand for bricks and other materials has increased. Main problem of these industries is the problem of finance, raw-material and marketing which can be effectively tackled by industrial co-operatives.

As a part of the programme of technical education, Leela Deep Narayan Technical School has been started out of the generosity of the Trust and grant from Government. Training in certain trades such as mechanics, fitters, tracers, electricians is imparted. Besides this the State Government have also started an Engineering School providing for a diploma course in Civil Engineering. An Engineering College providing a Four Years' degree course in Civil Mechanical and Electrical Engineering has been started. In the matter of power very little has been done during the last ten years to increase its supply both for domestic and industrial purposes. Greater urbanisation and start of new small industries have led to an increase in the demand for electric power. As far back as 1931, an Electric Supply Company under private management was started in the headquarters of the district but its machinery and equipments have highly depreciated. In spite of increase in the installed capacity in recent years, it is unable to cope with the increased demand. The State Government have advanced loans to the Company to expand its production. In view of the new industrial policy of Government there is a proposal to take over this concern and manage it as a Government concern, but nothing has been done in this direction. Very slow progress has been made in the distribution of electric power generated by the D. V. C. and distributed by the State Electricity Board. Power generated has been brought upto Sultanganj and installations have been made in a number of places. Among the places electrified from the D. V. C. are the towns of Banka and Sultanganj as against the great progress made in this direction in the other districts.

The State Electricity Board has set up small generating plants at Saharsa and at Birpur, the former electrifying the towns of Saharsa, Madhipura and Supaul while the latter supplying electricity to the Government colony at Kosi headquarters. With the extension of electricity to Colgong, Pirpainty, Bihpur and Naugachia as a consequence of the Kosi Project tube-well irrigation and small industries can be started. But the progress in this direction has been very slow. The development of communications and transport are vital to the development of this district. By 1956, the total mileage of roads under the P. W. D. was 3,703 miles besides the local roads maintained by the local authorities. Some progress has been recorded in the matter of construction and improvement of roads in this district during the plan period.

It is expected that by 1961, road mileage under P. W. D. would increase to 5,100 miles besides 1,730 miles under katcha road*. During the period under review a number of important routes have been provincialised and tar macadamised. Roads connecting Bhagalpur with Colgong and Sonoula *via* Ghogha, with Shahkund, Belhar Amarpur, Banka and Katoria in the South have been tar macadamised. If bridges and culverts are made over some of the streams which lie in their way, through communication will be established with the Police Stations of South Bhagalpur.

In North Bhagalpur, some notable progress has been made in road improvement, for example roads connecting Bihpur with Alam Nagar, Madhipura, Saharsa, Supaul and Birpur in Saharsa districts have been constructed in recent years. Some of these roads are made of gravel, while the rest have been tar macadamised. In spite of this spectacular achievement, vast areas both in North and South Bhagalpur are as yet not connected with good roads. Some of these areas are quite inaccessible during the rainy season. For the development of this area, it is essential that katcha roads be made pucca. Very slight improvement has been effected in road development in the urban areas where traffic has tremendously increased in recent years. Some of the State roads have been widened but the municipal roads are more or less in the same condition. In North Bhagalpur and Saharsa districts, the road construction programme was hampered by the non-availability of materials. With the construction of the Ganga bridge at Mokamah, building materials will be transported quickly which will fulfil Government's road-construction programme. During the plan period, development of transport and communication was not given the importance which it deserved. Rs. 21.66 crores provided for development of State Highways and district roads was quite meagre in view of the development which is to be effected. So far as this district is concerned, construction of bridges at Ghogha,

*Third Draft Five-Year Plan for Bihar, pp. 21

Trimohan and Koa on the Bhagalpur-Colgong road will provide direct communication with Sahebganj in Santhal Parganas.

During the period under review there has been great increase in the number of motor vehicles and trucks plying in this district. Bus services have been introduced between almost all the important area which has fed the railways and brought prosperity to the people. Trucks have helped the movement of foodgrains and other materials which the railways could not cope with. So far it is a good tendency but the number of buses and trucks are quite inadequate to cope with the increased trade. Withdrawal of private buses as a result of the programme of road nationalisation in this district since 1956 has not improved the situation. Though there has been greater regularity in service and more amenities, number of buses plying on the roads are quite inadequate. According to the quarterly journal of Statistics published by Government of Bihar 819 miles of roads covered by 28 routes were brought under the Rajya Transport Corporation till 1956 with an average of 62 vehicles on roads. It may be mentioned here that some of the routes had vehicles for passengers run in private sector. State Transport service has spread at the cost of trade in the private sector. Since then a few more routes have been taken over, for example Banka, Dumka, Deoghar and Godda have been covered by the Corporation buses, though a few buses under private ownership are still continuing. It is highly essential that the number of buses be increased in the near future. Heavy diesel propelled trucks have been plying between Calcutta, Delhi, Patna, Ranchi, Dhanbad, Jharia and other towns of Bihar and West Bengal which has enabled the handling of a substantial portion of the inland trade of the district. These companies have their offices at each of the towns and they carry on the business of loading and unloading quite satisfactorily. In some cases, they are in a position to render service at a cheaper rate than the Railways. Their only difficulty is the problem of transshipment over the Ganga at Barari Ghat. The construction of the Farraka Barrage in West Bengal may enable direct movements of goods from eastern parts of Bihar to North Bengal easier.

In conclusion it may be stated that as a result of the two plans, there has been some improvement in the economic condition of the people, though it is not equally shared by all sections. Moreover, it has to be added that the benefits could have been derived at a cheaper cost and more expeditiously had peoples' co-operation been more forthcoming.