CHAPTER XII.

LOCAL SELF-GOVERNMENT.

MUNICIPALITIES.

There are six municipalities, viz., Arrah, Bhabua, Buxar, Dumraon, Jagdishpur and Sasaram. The details of each municipality are given below:—

Arrah Municipality.

The Arrah Municipality was constituted in 1865 under the Bengal Municipal Act. The District Magistrate used to be the *ex-officio* Chairman of the Municipality and remained as such till the 22nd March 1922 and after the enforcement of the Bihar Municipal Act, 1922, a non-official Chairman was elected and the first elected Chairman was Shri Bhagwat Prasad, an Advocate of Arrah.

The Municipal office was first located in a thatched house at the present site. In 1928 the construction of a house was taken up and for one year the office was shifted to Chorbaddi House, east of the Dean's tank in Arrah town. It was shifted to the present building in 1929.

In 1865 the Municipal Board consisted of seven members. Since then there have been changes in the number of Municipal Commissioners. *The District Gazetteer of Shahabad* (1924)* mentions that the Arrah Municipality consisted of thirty members of whom 24 were elected by the rate payers. In 1963 the number of Municipal Commissioners is 40 of whom 32 were elected by the rate payers and eight were nominated.

The population of the municipal area according to 1961 Census is 76,766†. A detailed discussion on the growth of the population since 1869 to 1961 has been given separately. From the old records of the municipality it appears that originally the municipal area was divided into four wards but subsequently the number of wards had increased. In 1924 the number of wards was 12 and in 1931-32 there were 24 wards which still continue.

There has been an expansion in the municipal area and the number of rate payers has also considerably increased. The *Shahabad District Gazetteer* (1906)‡, mentioned that the area of the

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* *Shahabad District Gazetteer* (1924) p. 139.

† *Census of India* 1961, *volume IV*, Bihar, Part II-A, General Population Tables, page 29.

‡ *Shahabad District Gazetteer* (1906) p. 120.

municipality was 6 sq. miles and the number of rate payers was 5,677 or only 12.2 of the total population. The number of rate payers as mentioned in the *Shahabad District Gazetteer* (1924)* was 7,797. The present number of rate payers in 1961-62 is 10,562 which is 13.7 per cent of the population. The area within the municipal limits is now 11.09 sq. miles.

Functions.

Street-lighting.—Prior to 1936 the municipality used to provide only kerosene lamps on the streets. In 1936 electric light was introduced in the town and the municipality provided 300 bulbs. In September, 1963 there were 819 bulbs and 80 kerosene lamps.

Primary Education.—Free and compulsory primary education was introduced in this municipality on the 2nd October 1939 and the number of students receiving education in schools was about 1,500 and the number of the teaching staff was about 30. After 1939 there has been an increase in the number of schools. In 1962-63 there are 80 primary schools with 155 teachers (126 male and 29 female teachers). The number of students attending these schools is 5,600. The average annual expenditure, as calculated on the basis of actual expenditure incurred in 1959-60, 1960-61 and 1961-62 on public instruction comes to Rs. 1,30,804.

Sanitation and Conservancy.

Prior to 1956 only bullock carts were used for the disposal of garbage. In 1956 some mechanised vehicles were introduced for this work. At present (1964) there are 10 such vehicles along with some bullock carts. The garbage from the narrow lanes are collected by wheel barrows. There are two dumping grounds, one at Singhi Balihar and the other at Shital tola, about a furlong from the T. B. Hospital. The preparation of compost was started in 1953. The compost is disposed of at the rate of Rs. 3 per ton. There are 6,440 private latrines and 440 public seats. There are 161 sweepers to attend the latrines and 11 sweepers for cleansing roads, etc. It cannot be said that the conservancy arrangements are very satisfactory.

There is a Public Health Section under the charge of a Government Health Officer to look after the sanitary work. The Health Officer has a staff of one Sanitary Inspector, five Health Inspectors, two Disinfectors; one Inoculator, one Vaccinator, etc. In all a staff consisting of 425 persons is functioning for the proper management of the sanitation and conservancy work. There is a workshop at Jagjivan market for repairing the municipal vehicles. Mass inoculation is done every year from April to October as a precautionary measure against the outbreak of cholera and when it actually breaks

* *Shahabad District Gazetteer* (1924), p. 139.

out some more vaccinators and disinfectors are employed. There is one permanent midwife to attend the delivery cases. Qualified Sanitary Inspectors and Health Inspectors are authorised to take samples from the vendors of foodstuff and send them for examination to the Government Analyst at Patna. After receiving report from the Analyst, cases are filed against those whose samples are found adulterated. The figures of food adulteration for 1962-63 are as follows:—

Total no. of sample drawn.	No. of samples sent to Government Analyst.	No. of sample found adulterated.	No. of prosecutions launched.	No. of persons convicted.	No. of cases pending.
1	2	3	4	5	6
300	310	90	72	43	20

Roads.—The municipality maintains the following kinds of roads:—

(1) Bituminous and tarred roads, 5 miles, (2) concrete road, 1 furlong; (3) road having water bound macadam and pavement with bricks and stones, 8 miles; (4) *Kankar* road, $\frac{3}{8}$ mile; (5) stone slab road, $\frac{3}{4}$ mile; (6) stone sets paving road $\frac{3}{8}$ mile and (7) *Katcha* road, 7 miles. The condition of the road is generally good.

House-construction.—The plans for building houses are submitted to the municipality. The municipal staff verifies the plan and after the fulfilment of all the conditions as laid down in the bye-laws of the municipality, the approval is accorded. Unauthorised constructions are not uncommon. There are also a number of very old dilapidated houses.

Park.—The Lal Park is partly maintained by the Government and partly by the municipality.

Water-Supply.—Regarding the water works of the Arrah Municipality, the *District Gazetteer of Shahabad* (1906)* mentions the following:—

"Arrah is the only municipality in the Patna Division which is provided with a supply of filtered water. When the Lieutenant-Governor visited the town in 1891 he was struck with its insanitary condition and particularly with the want of a supply of pure drinking water. The town depended at that time for its water-supply on six wells and most of them were condemned by

* *District Gazetteer of Shahabad* (1906), pp. 120-21.

medical authorities as unfit for drinking purposes. Year after year, as the rainy season came round, cholera broke out in epidemic form, and in each succeeding year with increased virulence. To remedy this state of affairs, it was decided to supply the town with filtered water from the Son; and nearly 4 lakhs was contributed for the construction of water-works. Of this amount the District Board and Municipality each contributed one lakh; and the late Raja Rajeswari Prasad Singh of Surajpura gave a generous donation of 1½ lakh, the balance being raised by local subscriptions. The works were begun in 1893, and were opened a year afterwards. During the year 1904-05 nearly 28,326,000 gallons of filtered water were supplied to the town, giving a daily average of 77,605 gallons or about 1¾ gallons per head daily. The water-works is managed by a Joint Committee of the Municipal Commissioners and District Board members, and the municipality contributes Rs. 4,500 annually towards the cost of maintenance. The income received from the water-rate has hitherto been insufficient for their upkeep and the loss on their working has only been made good by the District Board paying a large contribution (Rs. 4,000) every year. Recently, however, there has been a revision of the assessment, which has resulted in an increase of Rs. 6,450; and in 1903-04 the receipts from the water rate for the first time exceeded the maintenance charges."*

Since the publication of the *Shahabad District Gazetteer* (1906) there have been many changes. The water-work at Bahiara has now been completely abandoned since February, 1957. It was found that the river Sone had changed its course from the side of water-works steam plant. Every year from February to November the town suffered from short supply of water. To avoid this difficulty the municipal authorities had sunk one tube-well of 20 horse power near Dharhara reservoir (in addition to the then existing water-works plant) in 1946. Again in 1950 another tube-well of 27 horse power was sunk at Bahiara near the compound of the then existing water-works. These tube-wells were sunk to meet the water-supply to the town people during the period the water-works could not function for want of water in the river Sone. Both the tube-wells mentioned above were sunk out of the amount received from the Government and also from municipal resources. But even they were not sufficient.

The State Government deemed it fit to sink tube-wells in the town. Under the reorganisation scheme of water-supply in Arrah town a scheme was formulated by which the Government sanctioned

* *District Gazetteer of Shahabad* (1906), pp. 120-21.

a sum of Rs. 14,88,000 on the basis of half grant and half loan to Arrah Municipality. Out of this amount the Public Health Engineering Department of the State Government, on behalf of the Municipality, sunk two wells of 60 horse power each, with three reservoirs—one at Mohalla Nawadah, the other in the court area and the third at Mirganj. Each well has a capacity to contain one lakh gallons of water. The work was taken up in 1954-55 and completed in 1957-58. The municipality started supplying water from these reservoirs from July, 1957.

These tube-wells are supplying sufficient water for drinking purposes. As the town is developing fast, it is felt that sufficient water will not be available even from these existing tube-wells. Now the water works of Arrah is being managed by the Public Health Engineering Department and the Municipality simply gives the annual contribution in shape of money.

There are 1,780 house connections and about 550 public hydrants.

Financial Condition.

The *Shahabad District Gazetteer* (1906)* mentions that the average annual income for the decade ending 1901-02 was Rs. 52,000 and the expenditure Rs. 47,000. In 1904-05 they were Rs. 58,050 and Rs. 53,130 respectively; besides this direct expenditure, Rs. 8,330 was paid in advance and the repayment of the loans. The incidence of taxation per head of the population was annas 12-7; it was formerly annas 11-5. The increase was due to a revision of assessment which was conducted in 1903. The main heads of income were a tax on persons according to their circumstances and property at 1½ per cent of their income, which yielded Rs. 16,260 in 1904-05; a water rate (Rs. 10,470), a tax on animals and vehicles (Rs. 4,850) and a latrine rate (Rs. 10,470). The principal items of expenditure are conservancy, medical relief, and public works, which accounted respectively for 16.6, 21.5 and 19.4 per cent of the expenditure. It was further mentioned in the *Gazetteer* that owing to the burden imposed on the municipality by the water-works, Arrah, was one of the few municipalities in the Patna Division financially embarrassed. In order to provide for the construction of water-works, it borrowed a loan of one lakh from Government and Rs. 3,173 went towards repaying the interest and Rs. 2,580 towards the principal. The resources of the income were also affected by the annual occurrence of plague. The financial condition remained poor in the later years too. In 1917-18, 1918-19, 1919-20, 1920-21 and 1921-22 the total income of the municipality was Rs. 72,281, Rs. 67,870, Rs. 78,137, Rs. 97,122 and Rs. 90,505 respectively while its total expenditure was Rs. 58,292, Rs. 73,936, Rs. 70,395, Rs. 81,655 and Rs. 87,165 respectively.†

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* *Shahabad District Gazetteer* (1906), pp. 120-21.

† *Shahabad District Gazetteer* (1924), pp. 139-40.

The main sources of the present income of the municipality are holding, water and latrine and professional taxes and license fees for vehicles, etc. and municipal properties which have been rented. The main items of expenditure are water-supply and water-works, public convenience and public works, conservancy, public instruction, drainage and sewerage works. The rate of the holding, water, and latrine taxes are 10 per cent, 12 per cent and 7½ per cent of the annual value of the holdings. The rate of cycle license and cart licence fees is Rs. 3 per annum per cycle and Rs. 4.56 per cart half yearly. Professional tax has been levied and the rate varies according to the income of the rate payers. The incidence of taxation and income per head of the population in 1961-62 was Rs. 4 and Rs. 12, respectively.

The statements below show the Receipts and Expenditure from 1956-57 to 1961-62:—

RECEIPTS.

Heads.	Year.					
	1956-57.	1957-58.	1958-59.	1959-60.	1960-61.	1961-62.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.
1. Balance in hand.	814,820	61,994	45,120	94,787	1,46,670	2,24,324
2. Rates and Taxes	2,97,559	2,88,190	2,56,147	2,68,707	3,02,208	3,31,177
3. Municipal Registration licence and other fees.	42,084	39,165	42,693	38,306	42,757	43,295
4. Realisation under special Acts.	892	764	450	672	460	1,644
5. Revenue derived from Municipal property and powers apart from taxation.	37,418	47,026	48,124	35,713	34,072	1,29,726
6. Grants and contribution.	97,591	4,76,411	4,36,925	2,05,783	3,87,984	4,17,050
7. Miscellaneous	1,03,004	17,990	26,788	30,673	45,523	57,370
8. Extraordinary debt.	25,182	32,493	21,313	13,323	26,673	16,623
9. Total receipts excluding opening balance.	6,03,730	9,02,039	8,32,440	5,93,177	8,39,677	9,96,885
10. Total receipts including opening balance.	14,18,550	9,64,033	8,77,560	6,87,964	9,86,347	12,21,209

EXPENDITURE.

Heads.	Year. 1956-57.	1957-58.	1958-59.	1959-60.	1960-61.	1961-62.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.
1. General administration and collection charges.	15,414	24,614	27,452	24,780	22,099	22,167
2. Public Safety	12,210	14,557	13,518	16,318	17,546	17,723
3. Establishment charges.	33,210	N.A.	N.A.	12,924	13,122	4,045
4. Vaccination	532	587	682	689	689	935
5. Drainage and sewerage works.	20,343	25,503	24,941	27,888	43,617	38,849
6. Water-supply and water works.	7,88,112	3,50,025	2,35,251	25,249	1,53,025	1,98,269
7. Conservancy	1,28,394	1,89,652	1,31,952	1,35,685	1,40,276	1,66,188
8. Registration of births and deaths, markets, slaughter houses, Medical, etc.	6,710	5,933	9,764	5,635	4,084	4,076
9. Public convenience and public works.	1,35,109	75,623	34,248	34,643	57,464	39,388
10. Public Instruction.	48,004	1,08,792	1,21,861	1,19,853	1,30,310	1,42,250
11. Contribution	4,129	N.A.	N.A.	500	1,22,348	1,35,939
12. Miscellaenous	1,17,694	96,701	1,63,269	1,20,285	36,337	13,422
13. Extraordinary and debt.	44,592	26,926	19,835	15,555	19,603	21,710

SASARAM MUNICIPALITY.

The *District Gazetteer of Shahabad* (1924), page 141, mentions that Sasaram Municipality had 2,959 rate payers and the municipal board consisted of 20 elected and 5 nominated members. The municipality was constituted in 1869.*

Since then there have been some changes. The number of tax payers has increased from 2,959 to 7,760, i.e., 20.5 per cent of the total population of 37,782 according to 1961 census. This municipality was superseded with effect from the 21st July, 1961 vide

* *Shahabad District Gazetteer* (1906), p. 122.

notification no. 6636-L. S.-G., dated the 20th July 1961. Since then the Second Officer of Sasaram subdivision is the incharge of the municipality.

The incidence of taxation per head population during 1957-58 was Rs. 3 as. 11 and 2 pies and in 1961-62 it increased to Rs. 6.96. The incidence of income per head population during 1961-62 was Rs. 1.69.

The municipal board now consists of 23 elected and 4 nominated members. The municipality is divided into 23 wards for election purposes. The total area of the municipality is 2 square miles. At present (1964) the municipality is under supersession and a Special Officer has been posted for its administration by the State Government.

The following taxes are in force within the municipal area:—

Holding tax.—(*i*) 5 per cent on the annual value of the private holdings; and (*ii*) 10 per cent on the annual value of the Government holdings.

Water tax.—(*i*) 12½ per cent on the annual value of the private holdings and (*ii*) 7½ per cent on the annual value of the Government holdings.

Latrine Tax.—4 per cent of the annual value of the holdings. This tax was assessed from the year 1962-63.

Educational cess.—6¼ per cent on the annual value of the holdings. The cess has been imposed from 1962-63.

In addition to the above taxes professional tax has also been imposed. The total current demand of the above taxes in 1961-62 was as follows:—

Tax.	Demand. (in rupees).
Holding tax	54,285.64
Water tax	1,12,780.77
Professional tax	5,675.00
Latrine tax	..
Educational cess	..

As both the Latrine tax and Educational cess were imposed from 1961-62, no demand has been shown against them.

The statement shows the total income and expenditure of the Municipality from 1959-60 to 1961-62 is given below:—

Year.	Income. Rs.	Expenditure. Rs.
1959-60 ..	1,87,034.00	1,84,417.00
1960-61 ..	2,41,280.00	2,37,187.00
1961-62 ..	2,55,878.00	1,95,034.00

This statement suggests that the expenditure is within the income and leaves a margin of savings. But due to previous liabilities the municipality is not financially sound. The net assets of the municipality on the 31st March 1962 was Rs. 6,88,110.00 as against the total liabilities of Rs. 12,68,107. Thus the excess of liabilities over the assets was up to the tune of Rs. 5,79,997.

The collection of taxes and fees seems to be very poor and a very large sum of money has fallen in arrears as will be evident from the table given below:—

Tax.	Arrear on 31st March 1962. Rs.
(1) Holding tax	1,85,900.00
(2) Water tax	4,88,124.00
(3) Fixed demand	38,100.00
(4) Dangerous trades	4,576.00
(5) Platform fees	672.00
(6) Professional tax	26,127.00
(7) Private vehicles	152.00
(8) Ekka licence	20.00
(9) Ekka drivers' fees	16.00
(10) Town cart	282.00
(11) Food licence	95.00

The arrear under holding and water taxes alone account for Rs. 6,74,024. The reasons for the supersession of the municipality are not far to seek.

Functions.

Road.—The municipality maintains seven miles of *pucca* and six miles of *kachcha* roads. Prior to the supersession of the municipality the condition of the roads was very poor. However, after the supersession about 1,765 ft. of roads was improved and 3,425 ft. of roads was coal tarred. The improvement of the roads, namely, Sher Shah tank to Tilothu road, Raja Bahadur Road to Sher Shah tomb road, Sher Mohiuddin Ahmad road, Grand Trunk Road to Raj Bahadur road, Laskariganj road, Rani Bazar to Taksal Sanghat road, Raja Bahadur road to Chaukhandi road, Karansarai to Sherganj road, Nooranganj road, Lalji Sahai road, Takia H. E. School road and a portion of Raja Bahadur road is essential. The municipality has moved the Government for a grant of Rs. 63,398 for the improvement of these roads.

Drains.—The drains are also in bad condition. They have been constructed long ago and for paucity of fund they are not being repaired.

Water-supply.—The municipality started supplying water from May, 1954. But some parts of the town still do not get tap water.

Buxar Municipality.

The Buxar municipality was constituted in 1869. The *District Gazetteer of Shahabad* (1906) mentions, "The municipal board consists of 13 members of whom eight are elected and five nominated. The area in municipal limits is nearly 2½ square miles, and there are 2,679 tax payers or 19.2 per cent of the population".* The number of rate payers increased from 2,679 to 2,782 but the number of the members of municipal board was reduced from 13 to 10 out of whom eight were elected and two nominated as mentioned in the *Shahabad District Gazetteer* (1924)†. At present (1964) the municipal board consists of 12 members. The area of the municipality is 3.09 square miles which is divided into 12 wards and the number of rate payers is 2,851, i.e., 12.3 per cent of the total population of 23,068 persons according to 1961 census.

The holding and latrine taxes have been imposed at the rate of 8 per cent and 7½ per cent respectively of the annual value of the holdings. In the early twentieth century the main source of income was property tax. The *Shahabad District Gazetteer* (1906) mentions. "A tax on persons is levied, the assessment being made according to circumstances and property; this tax brought in Rs. 6,530 in 1904-05 out of the total income of Rs. 12,710."‡ But now this tax is not in vogue and in lieu of this, holding tax constitutes the main source of income. The total demand of the holding and latrine taxes on 1st April 1962 was Rs. 55,468.42 and Rs. 38,470 respectively.

The statement shows the total income and expenditure of the municipality from 1959-60 to 1961-62:—

Year.		Income.	Expenditure.
		Rs.	Rs.
1959-60	..	1,10,710.00	1,12,486
1960-61	..	1,22,105.00	1,24,837
1961-62	..	1,53,634.00	1,41,174

The financial position of the municipality seems good. The total assets and liabilities on 1st April, 1962 were Rs. 1,37,380.00 and Rs. 82,816 respectively.

Functions.

The municipality maintains 7.25 miles of *pucca* and 1.82 miles of *kutcha* roads, but the condition of the roads is not good. The drains are of old type which have no proper level.

* *Shahabad District Gazetteer* (1906), p. 121.

† *Shahabad District Gazetteer* (1924), p. 142.

‡ *Shahabad District Gazetteer* (1906), p. 121.

The municipality has seven upper primary schools, six lower primary schools for boys and two primary schools for girls.

The scheme for piped water-supply was sanctioned by the Government but it was not taken up till 1961-62.

Dumraon Municipality.

The municipality of Dumraon was constituted in 1869. The *District Gazetteer of Shahabad* (1924)* mentions that the municipality had 2,689 rate payers and the municipal board consisted of ten members of whom eight were elected. It further mentions that the area within municipal limits were only two square miles.

The municipality has now (1961-62) a total population of 19,662 persons† out of whom 3,269 (or 16.6) are rate-payers. The number of the members has remained static. There are two upper primary girls schools under the management of the municipality.

The municipality has imposed holding and professional taxes. The holding tax has been fixed at the rate of 5 per cent of the annual value of the holdings. The total current demand under taxes and fees in 1961-62 was Rs. 21,465 out of which the largest demand was under holding tax amounting to Rs. 13,747. The statement below shows the total income and expenditure of the municipality from 1959-60 to 1961-62:—

Year.	Total income.	Total expenditure.
	Rs.	Rs.
1959-60	52,414.28	56,866.93
1960-61	61,753.86	55,303.46
1961-62	72,350.74	86,625.04

The total assets and liabilities of the municipality on 1st April, 1962 were Rs. 72,772.02 and Rs. 39,041.36 respectively.

The municipality maintains six miles of *pucca* and six miles of *kutcha* roads. The condition of some of the roads is not good and they require repairing. The municipality has also six miles of *pucca* and 6 miles of *kutcha* drains. But the *kutcha* drains do not serve the purpose during rains.

The municipality has provided 13 tube-wells for water-supply. There are a large number of wells in the town which supply drinking water.

**District Gazetteer of Shahabad* (1924), pp. 142-143.

† *Census of India*, 1961, *Vol. IV, Bihar*, Pt. IIA, General Population Table, page 31.

Jagdishpur Municipality.

Jagdishpur village had figured very prominently in 1857 when Kuer Singh, a Rajput zamindar raised the standard of the revolt against the British Government. Kuer Singh, as mentioned elsewhere after leading several encounters in different parts of Bihar and Uttar Pradesh returned to this village. Jagdishpur faced a severe military attack on the British and Kuer Singh died here. The fact that Jagdishpur was given a municipality as early as in 1869 shows that the administration was keen to stabilise Jagdishpur.

In the *Shahabad District Gazetteer* (1906) it was mentioned that the municipal board then consisted of nine members, of whom six were elected and three nominated. The area within the municipal limits was one square mile and there were 1,663 rate-payers or 14.5 per cent of the population. Regarding the receipts and the expenditure the Gazetteer of 1906 mentions, "In 1904-05 the total income was Rs. 5,280 of which the tax on persons (or property tax) accounted for Rs. 3,900 and a tax on animals and vehicles for Rs. 1,100, the incidence of taxation being as low as annas 7-1 per head of the population. The principal items of expenditure were roads (Rs. 1,300), conservancy (Rs. 775) and medical relief (Rs. 700)"*.

The Shahabad District Gazetteer published in 1924 mentions that the municipal board consisted of 10 members, of whom eight were elected and two were nominated. The number of rate-payers had fallen to 1,534. The decrease is apparently due to the decline in the population of the town. In 1901 the population was 11,451 which came down to 8,924 in 1911 and 8,564 in 1921.

The composition of the board in 1963 continues to be the same as mentioned in the Gazetteer of 1924. The area of the municipality has been extended and now covers five square miles. There are 2,495 rate-payers who constitute 21.07 per cent of the total population of 11,840 persons according to 1961 Census.†

The main sources of receipts of the municipality are holding tax, latrine tax, taxes on platform and offensive and dangerous trades. The rate of holding and latrine tax is 6½ and 3¼ per cent respectively of the annual value of the holding.

The income and expenditure from 1959-60 to 1961-62 are as follows:—

Year.			Income.	Expenditure.
			Rs.	Rs.
1959-60	..	..	48,059	38,166
1960-61	..	..	66,650	41,989
1961-62	..	..	84,871	55,180

* *Shahabad District Gazetteer* (1906), page 122.

† *Census of India*, 1961, *Vol. IV*, *Bihar*, Pt. IIA, General Population Tables, page 81.

Though the expenditure during the above three years is less than the income, the financial condition of the municipality is not good owing to previous liabilities. The total assets and liabilities as they stood on the 30th June, 1962 were Rs. 50,347 and Rs. 56,488 respectively and thus the excess of liabilities over assets amounted to Rs. 6,141. This unsatisfactory financial condition is also partly due to poor collection which is evident from the statement given below:—

	1959-60.		1960-61.		1961-62.	
	Holding Tax.	Latrine Tax.	Holding Tax.	Latrine Tax.	Holding Tax.	Latrine Tax.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.
Total demand	8,504	3,164	10,609	4,862	11,594	5,321
Total collection	3,696	1,326	3,975	1,847	4,373	2,151
Percentage of collection ..	22.2	18.8	44.6	47.3	41.6	43.7

The municipality maintains 2 miles of *pucca* and 2½ miles of *kutcha* roads. The condition of the roads is poor. The municipality has also 1,245 ft. of *pucca* and 15,020 ft. of *kutcha* drains.

The municipality has sunk 52 wells for water-supply. Besides, there are 99 private drinking wells and seven tube-wells within the municipal area. The municipality has also provided electric light on some of the streets. The number of electric bulbs on the municipal streets and lanes in 1959-60, 1960-61 and 1961-62 was 60, 80 and 96 respectively.

There are 650 private latrines and one public latrine. For sanitary purposes the municipality has employed 14 mehtars, 11 sweepers, two jamadars, four carters and one driver. Sanitary services are reported to be poor.

There are six upper primary and two lower primary schools under the management of the municipality. Besides, the municipality gives aid to four upper primary and three lower primary schools for boys and one lower primary school for girls.

There is no municipal market. There are two slaughter houses. The municipality has not got its own trenching ground and the night soil is deposited in a *parti* land. Civic amenities catered by the municipality are poor. It is understood that the municipal board did not often work as a composite team for the good of the town.

Bhabua Municipality.

The Bhabua Municipality was constituted in 1869. The *Shahabad District Gazetteer* (1906) mentions, "There are ten members on the municipal board, of whom one is an *ex-officio* member, six are elected and three are nominated. The area within municipal limits is a little over one square mile. There are in all 1,002 tax-payers of 17.7 per cent of the population, who pay a tax assessed according to their circumstances and property at one per cent of their income. In 1904-05 this tax realised Rs. 2,140, the incidence of taxation being annas 7-3 per head of the population in the municipal area. The total income was Rs. 5,360 and no less than Rs. 2,020 or 41.6 per cent of the direct expenditure, was spent on medical relief, and Rs. 630 on conservancy."* The *Shahabad District Gazetteer* published in 1924 mentioned† that the municipal board consisted of ten members, of whom eight were elected. The number of rate-payers had fallen to 940. The decrease is apparently due to decline in the population of the town. In 1901 the population was 5,660 which came down to 5,452 in 1911 and 5,435 in 1921.

The present area of the municipality is 1.4 square mile and this shows that there has been practically no expansion. The population of the municipal area is 9,890 according to the Census of 1961. The municipal board consists of 11 members of whom nine are elected.

The municipality has imposed holding tax at the rate of 6¼ of the annual value of the holdings. Besides, licence fees for offensive and dangerous trades and platform fees constitute the sources of income. The total demand in 1961-62 under holding tax, licence fees for offensive and dangerous trades and platform fees was Rs. 18,212, Rs. 354 and Rs. 162 respectively.

The statement shows the total income and expenditure of the municipality from 1959-60 to 1961-62:—

Year.	Income.	Expenditure.
	Rs.	Rs.
1959-60	36,934	38,165
1960-61	75,037	49,058
1961-62	54,351	48,649

The total assets and liabilities on 1st April 1962 were up to the tune of Rs. 56,729 and Rs. 53,128 respectively. This indicates the satisfactory financial condition of the municipality.

The municipality maintains 1½ miles of *pucca* and ½ mile of *kutcha* road. The condition of the road and drain is not good. Water-supply is done through wells and tube-wells.

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* *Shahabad District Gazetteer* (1906), page 121.

† *Shahabad District Gazetteer* (1924), page 144.

DEHRI-DALMIANAGAR NOTIFIED AREA COMMITTEE.

Dehri was enlisted as a town for the first time in 1941 Census. It came into prominence because of its industrial potentiality which led to the establishment of a number of industrial units. This factor has also been mainly responsible for the rapid urbanisation. In 1941 Census the population of the town was 8,281 persons while in 1961 it was 38,092 (about four times more).* In view of the growing importance of the town it was necessary to constitute a Notified Area Committee. Under Government notification nos. 207 and 208, dated the 23rd May 1941, a Notified Area Committee was constituted replacing the then existing Union Committee.

The Committee has 13 members and it functions under the administrative control of the S. D. O. who is the *ex-officio* Chairman. The area extends over 3¼ square miles. There are 3,613 holdings.

The Committee maintains 7.73 miles of *pucca* roads in addition to a few *kutcha* roads. The length of the *pucca* and *kutcha* drains is 40,810 feet and 10,322 feet respectively. Some of the roads and drains are in bad condition.

A sum of Rs. 2,50,000 was sanctioned as loan by the Government in 1957 for executing the schemes of water-works but the work has not started till 1963. The Committee has provided some wells and tube-wells for water-supply.

The main sources of income are holding and professional taxes, fees for offensive and dangerous trades, and registration fees for carts and other vehicles. The rate of holding tax is 7½ per cent of the annual value of the holdings. The main items of expenditure are public convenience, conservancy, water-supply and public health.

The statements show the receipts and expenditure of the Notified Area Committee from 1960-61 to 1962-63:—

Heads.	Receipts.		
	1960-61.	1961-62.	1962-63.
	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.
1. Municipal taxes	92,245	88,158	1,37,613
2. Registration and licence fees ..	25,044	26,410	27,212
3. Realisation under Special Acts ..	..	193	957
4. Grants and contribution for general and Special purposes.	54,823	1,57,193	62,668
5. Miscellaneous	3,845	6,221	11,711
6. Extraordinary and debts	45,891	60,949	1,97,873
7. Opening balance	1,35,784	1,89,875	1,83,292
8. Total	3,57,632	5,28,999	6,21,326

* *District Census Hand-Book, Shahabad* (1954), p. 8 and *Census of India*, 1961, *Vol. VI, Bihar*, Pt. IIA, General Population Tables, page 31.

Heads.	Expenditure.		
	1960-61.	1961-62.	1962-63.
	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.
1. General administration and collection charges.	11,613	13,410	17,167
2. Public safety	13,747	21,914	10,446
3. Public health	78,611	1,16,862	59,374
4. Medical	1,184	1,562	1,154
5. Public convenience	8,156	69,536	28,467
6. Public instruction	15,788	37,048	11,414
7. Miscellaneous	3,267	5,856	17,808
8. Extraordinary and debts	35,042	78,775	1,74,613
9. Closing balance	1,89,895	1,83,292	2,78,383
10. Grand Total	3,57,303	5,28,255	5,98,826

The total assets and liabilities as they stood on 31st March 1963 were Rs. 6,40,165 and Rs. 1,36,802 and thus the excess of assets over liabilities is up to the tune of Rs. 5,03,363. This indicates the good financial position of the Notified Area Committee.

District Board.

Introduction.

Local Self-Government was sought to be decentralised and made over to the people by the British Government. For this the District Boards were created. In pursuance of this policy the Bengal Local Self-Government Act was passed in 1885. Shahabad District Board was constituted at Arrah in 1887 under this Act. The earliest history of the Board follows the same pattern as in the other District Boards of Bihar discussed in the other District Gazetteers. As in the other Boards in the earlier days road cess was the main source of income. Prior to the formation of the District Board, there was a Road Cess Committee and it was the function of the District Magistrate to see to the maintenance of the roads, culverts, bridges, public sanitation, etc. The *Minute Books from 30th September* 1872 *to* 16*th August* 1886, give the details of the meetings held during this period and give the names of the Chairmen and the members of the District Board. It also mentions the sanction of money for the repairing of roads, culverts, bridges, etc.

With the growth of the ideas and experience it was felt necessary to remove the incidence of bureaucratic control regarding the taxation budget and the sanction of works. It was also felt necessary to widen the franchise and to replace the nominated Chairman by the elected non-official Chairman.

The Board originally consisted of 25 members. The District Magistrate was an *ex-officio* member and the Chairman of the District Board. Out of the other 24 members, five were *ex-officio* members, seven were nominated by the Government and 12 were elected. The Vice-Chairman used to be elected from amongst the nominated members. The franchise was at first restricted to property and other special qualifications. The institution at that stage could not be described as broad-based.

In 1919 the Board got the right of electing a non-official Chairman from amongst the nominated members. Shri Raja Radhika Raman Prasad Singh of Surajpura was the first non-official Chairman (1921-1923).

The constitution of the Board underwent a change. Under the Local Self-Government Act of 1923, the Board came to be consisted of 40 members of whom 30 were to be elected and ten nominated.

The Board elected its Chairman for the first time in 1924 from amongst the elected members and again Raja Radhika Raman Prasad was elected Chairman who remained as such till 1927. In the thirties the branch of the Indian National Congress in Shahabad district came into prominence as a political body and the Congress people started taking keen interest in the District Board politics. A number of congressmen had been elected to the Board who had a somewhat predominating influence for quite a long time. In 1941, the members of the District Board including the Chairman and the Vice-Chairman being the members of the Congress had tendered their resignation from their respective offices in pursuance of the Congress mandate to resign from all such bodies. From 1941 to 1948 the Board had a Chairman nominated by the Government. The last election of the members of the Board was held in 1948. The Board as constituted in 1948 continued till it was taken over by the Government on 15th September 1958.

It was held by the Government that the efficiency of the administration of the District Board went on deteriorating and so it became imperative for the State Government to take steps for overhauling the administrative set up. Accordingly, the constitution of the District Board received a set-back by the Ordinance no. VI of 1958 promulgated by the Governor of Bihar. The Ordinance was made under clause (*i*) of Article 213 of the Constitution of India. By notification no. 8001|L. S.-G., dated the 12th September 1958, it was proclaimed that all the members of the District Board and Local Boards including the Chairman and Vice-Chairman shall vacate their respective offices with effect from the 15th September 1958. In pursuance of this Ordinance all the District Boards including the Shahabad District Board were taken over by the State Government.

The District Magistrate of Shahabad took over the charge of the District Board on the 15th September 1958. He handed over the charge to the Special Officer, belonging to the State Civil Service on the 19th March 1959. The post of the Special Officer was redesignated as Administrator, vide Government letter no. 8067-L.S.-G., dated the 1st September 1961. The Shahabad District Board yet functions under the Administrator who works under the State Government in the Local Self-Government Department. He is under the administrative control of the District Magistrate. There has been a considerable improvement in the administration of the District Board which has been mentioned later. The Administrative officer has been able to make improvements in the Dak and Inspection Bungalows throughout the district (1964) as was found by tours and comparison with the prior conditions.

Finance.

The main source of income of the District Board is the road cess, originally payable by the landlords under the Cess Act at the rate of annas two or twelve Naye Paise for every rupee of the land revenue paid by the tenant and an equal amount by the Government. The road cess used to be paid along with the land revenue and then the road cess was transferred to the Board's funds in the Government Treasury after the deduction of the cost of realisation. After the passing of the Bihar Land Reforms Act, 1950, the Government stepped into the shoes of the landlords and the road cess is now payable by the Government. The average annual income from the cess comes to Rs. 9,66,095. The other sources of income of the Board are the receipts from the pounds, ferries and other properties. The District Board maintains 49 pounds and 12 ferries.

The annual income from the cart tax in 1960-61 and 1961-62 was Rs. 51,876 and Rs. 43,704 respectively. The total income of the Board in 1962-63 was Rs. 23,84,645 as against Rs. 27,88,909 in 1961-62. The decrease in the total income in 1962-63 was due to the fact that the two quarterly *ad hoc* grants were not paid by the Government.

Expenditure.

The main items of expenditure are education, medical, public health, civil works, etc.

The statements showing the receipts and expenditure are given here:—

RECEIPTS

Serial no.	Heads.	Years. 1956-57.	1957-58.	1958-59.	1959-60.	1960-61.	1961-62.	1962-63.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
		Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.
1	Provincial rates (Cess)	9,52,301	8,60,121	9,25,740	9,40,390	8,79,708	10,78,186	4,53,444
2	Police	180	208	36	32	435	294	45
3	Education	2,000	2,100	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil.
4	Medical	2,66,633	1,92,627	1,12,480	1,80,109	2,54,442	1,61,094	2,09,241
5	Scientific and other minor departments	1,352	1,315	4,872	2,249	10,478	135	Nil.
6	Miscellaneous	2,41,094	1,26,953	2,57,638	1,42,072	2,05,386	1,98,222	87,005
7	Railways	41,936	1,10,963	1,59,078	39,962	19,988	39,973	19,988
8	Civil works	3,98,495	1,51,002	2,09,942	5,39,070	4,37,858	3,32,966	2,88,997
9	Debt, Deposits, advances and loan from the Government.	1,81,019	3,01,780	1,36,212	2,38,774	2,08,456	2,17,716	3,33,115
	TOTAL INCOME ..	20,85,010	17,47,069	18,05,998	20,82,658	20,16,751	20,28,586	13,91,835

EXPENDITURE.

Serial no.	Heads.	Years. 1956-57.	1957-58.	1958-59.	1959-60.	1960-61.	1961-62.	1962-63.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
		Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.
1	Refund and drawbacks (Local rates) ..	78	101	..	..	..	..	..
2	General Administration	1,16,382	1,12,897	1,02,753	76,333	76,461	78,701	83,946
3	Police	3,278	1,113	579	758	4,704	5,901	8,299
4	Education	2,052	1,05,988	2,492	2,02,011	1,58,733	15,741	17,009
5	Medical	4,14,409	2,46,868	3,19,608	3,41,181	3,01,288	2,58,741	2,99,957
6	Public Health	2,26,020	2,25,129	2,70,288	2,31,832	2,39,981	2,54,081	2,75,248
7	Scientific and other minor departments	43,255	27,454	43,126	45,969	26,411	852	Nil
8	Superannuation allowances and pensions	32,264	30,946	37,298	46,448	32,939	35,428	34,305
9	Stationery and Printing	29,625	13,740	27,474	23,607	22,575	35,198	29,558
10	Miscellaneous	9,990	6,422	9,452	5,977	9,328	27,208	7,612
11	Finance Relief (Flood relief) ..	2,082	557	674	344	644	3,242	3,239
12	Civil Works	10,97,419	6,93,695	6,55,647	6,14,436	7,32,124	8,40,338	11,77,560
13	Debt, Deposits and advances including repayment of loans from Government.	80,349	2,72,026	1,31,632	1,52,770	2,44,099	2,40,668	3,15,099
	TOTAL	20,57,203	17,36,936	16,01,023	17,41,616	18,49,288	17,96,099	22,51,832

Education.

The District Board used to construct and maintain school buildings and impart education up to middle standard, but from 1st May 1954 the management of education was taken over by the Government under the Bihar Act VII of 1954 (The Bihar Local Self-Government Amending and Validating Act, 1954). The District Education Fund was created and placed under a Government Officer designated as the District Superintendent of Education. He is responsible for day to day administration but in case of appointment, transfer, dismissal and finance, approval has to be obtained from the Administrator of the District Board. If the Administrator differs, the matter has to be referred to the District Magistrate whose decision is final and binding. There is a Planning Committee consisting of nine members with the District Magistrate as the *ex-officio* Chairman for looking into the matters of education.

The District Board contributes Rs. 4,34,450 annually to the District Education Fund. The amount was fixed on the average of the three years' actual expenditure of the District Board over education prior to 1954 when the management of education was taken over by the Government.

Public Health and Sanitation.

Public Health and Sanitation in the rural areas have been the important obligations of the District Board from the very beginning. There is a health staff for preventing and combating epidemics. The old pattern of health organisation underwent a change in August, 1952 when the Rural and Urban Public Health Reorganisation Scheme was introduced in the district. Under this scheme the health organisation is headed by the District Medical Officer of Health. There are four Assistant Health Officers, one at each subdivisional headquarters, 31 Health Inspectors, one for each thana, 88 paid Vaccinators, one for every 33,000 population and 63 Disinfectors, two for each thana. Sanitary arrangements are made when *melas* are held particularly at Brahmpur and Bhaluni (P.-S. Dinara), Noan, Kulharia, Tilouthu, Sinha and Sabhalpur.

The Prevention of Food Adulteration Act, 1954 was enforced in the district in 1960-61. Under this Act licence fees at various rates are realised from the dealers of foodstuff in the rural areas and the Board has substantial income from this source. For proper implementation of this Act all the Health Inspectors, Sanitary Inspectors, Assistant Health Officers and the District Medical Officer of Health have been appointed as Food Inspectors. The samples of foodstuff are taken from the shop-keepers and are sent to the Chemical Analyst and if the foodstuff is found adulterated, the shop-keepers are prosecuted and tried under this Act. In 1961-62, 919 cases were tried. The total expenditure over Public Health was Rs. 2,37,955, Rs. 1,45,948 and Rs. 2,18,238 in 1959, 1960 and 1961 respectively.

Medical.

The Board maintains 22 Allopathic, 24 *Ayurvedic*, six *Tibbi* and seven Homoeopathic dispensaries.

The expenditure over medical in 1958-59, 1959-60, 1960-61 and 1961-62 was Rs. 3,19,608.00, Rs. 3,41,131.00, Rs. 3,01,288.00 and Rs. 2,58,741.00 respectively.

Veterinary.

All the veterinary dispensaries under the Board were provincialised by the middle of 1960-61. Hence, now (1963) the Board does not maintain any veterinary staff.

Civil Works.

The execution of the civil works of the District Board is done under the control of the District Engineer. The District Board maintains 113 miles metalled, 541 miles unmetalled and 914 miles village roads. It also maintains a press. It has three Dak Bungalows, 17 Inspection Bungalows and four Rest Houses. The names of the places where they located are given:—

Dak Bungalows.—Arrah, Buxar and Sasaram.

Inspection Bungalows.—Dumraon, Bhabua, Mohania, Akbarpur, Nasriganj, Barahpur, Bikramganj, Kochas, Kawai, Chenari, Chand, Tilouthu, Saraiya, Garhani, Parsathua Karar and Adhaura.

Rest Houses.—Khaira, Nokha, Bihea and Piro.

The Government took over the administration of the Shahabad District Board in pursuance of Government Notification nos. 800-L.S.-G. and 8002-L.S.-G., dated 12th September, 1958 and the District Magistrate was placed incharge of the affairs of the Board and held charge up to 18th March, 1959. Thereafter officers of the Bihar Civil Service were placed incharge of the administration of the Board.

Shri S. S. Ali Nazir, has been the Administrator since 2nd March 1962. The administration of the Board has been run by the Administrator with the co-operation of the District Engineer, District Medical Officer of Health and the District Education Superintendent. From a review of the working of the Board from 15th September 1958 to 31st March 1962 it appears that there has been considerable improvement.

Finance.—The outgoing Board had left a cash balance of Rs. 5,640.63 only at the credit of the District Fund and a huge amount of liabilities as detailed below:—

	Rs.
(*i*) Accumulated dues of staff due to non-payment of salary and T. A., etc.	82,526.04
(*ii*) Contractor's dues	2,40,632.78
(*iii*) Subsidy and aid to dispensaries, dues of suppliers, Commission of Assessors and Contribution payable to Union Boards.	97,202.99
(*iv*) Arrear contribution payable to District Education Fund.	11,28,539.12

The financial position of the Board, therefore, was very unsatisfactory.

The new administration had to tackle the finance of the Board to clear up the aforesaid liabilities as also to run the future administration of the Board. The liabilities have been cleared up during the period under report and the financial position has improved although it can not be said to be yet quite satisfactory. The present Board unlike the outgoing Board has at the end of every month sufficient cash balance even after providing for one month's expenditure as establishment to meet expenses of emergent nature.

The income and the expenditure from 1956-57 to 1962-63 have been given elsewhere. The previous Executives of the Board consisted of the Chairman, Vice-Chairman of the Board and Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen of the four Local Boards. The expenditure by way of emoluments as Travelling allowances, etc. for these ten incumbents was a considerable drain. There is only one Administrator now in the place of the ten members of the Executive and naturally there is a large saving.

During the period under report the new administration tried hard to improve the financial position of the Board. It is understood that the Government have not yet cleared up the arrear of cess which has accumulated to the tune of Rs. 20,90,414.00 due to which financial position is not improving. Besides, cess there are certain revenues which are collected by the Board itself, in which due to special efforts by the new administration, there has been marked improvement as will be shown by the comparative statement below:—

	1956-57.	1957-58.	1958-59.	1959-60.	1960-61.	1961-62.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Ferries ..	17,318	24,122	14,607	15,034	33,851	38,432
Pounds ..	3,692	3,597	3,017	5,215	5,706	5,225
Bullock cart ..	42,232	45,631	40,267	50,641	51,876	43,704
Rent of buildings and land.	8,866	12,416	11,138	22,533	13,963	13,304
Sales of trees and grass.	2,694	2,001	3,886	4,244	5,001	3,787
Misc. receipt ..	26,176	14,840	21,768	18,666	25,840	32,280
Staging Bungalows	1,641	2,387	3,253	4,448	5,611	6,272
Food licence ..	..	..	..	..	11,015	6,155

The system of licencing foodstuff under the provisions of the Food Adulteration Act has been introduced during the period under review and this has also added the revenue of the Board.

Considerable improvement has been effected by the Board in communication system as also in Dak and Inspection Bungalows during the period under report. Some of the undernoted roads have been improved and some are in course of improvement out of the sanctioned allotment of Rs. 7,97,280 from the Government and District Board contribution amounting to Rs. 3,98,640 for improvement of roads under the Second Five-Year Plan. The roads are as follows:—

(1) Dumraon-Nasriganj road.
(2) Sakaddi-Akhgaon road.
(3) Piparapati-Bahera road.
(4) Teghra-Sinha road.
(5) Jitaura-Jamuaon road.
(6) Sasaram-Mulhipore road.
(7) Jahanabad Bazar road.
(8) Dhansuin Bazar road.
(9) Mohania Bazar road.
(10) Koilwar Bazar road.

Improvement of Dak and Inspection Bungalows.

During this period the Dak Bungalows at Arrah, Sasaram, Buxar and the Inspection Bungalows at Adhaura, Dumraon, Bhabua and Bikramganj were greatly improved by fixation of sanitary fittings, installation of electricity, replacement of furniture, etc.

The District Board Bungalows at Karar, Chenari, Garhani, Kawai, Parsathua, Brahmpur, Chand, Kochas, Nasriganj, Saraya, Mohania and Akbarpur were partially improved.

The figures will show the improvement to the school buildings:—

Year.	Total amount paid.	No. of School buildings taken up.	No. of buildings completed.	No. of buildings under construction.
1	2	3	4	5
	Rs.			
1958-59 ..	13,230	10	..	10
1959-60 ..	1,16,579	106	2	104
1960-61 ..	3,54,336	227	17	210
1961-62 ..	1,63,355	57	6	51

Education.—In the field of education special attention was paid by the District Superintendent of Education for the supervision of primary schools. Formerly only one Sub-Inspector of School was posted for one *Anchal* irrespective of the number of schools in the area. But after taking over the charge of the District Board in 1958, one Sub-Inspector of Schools has been posted for every 40 primary schools, and in 1961-62 there were 50 Sub-Inspectors of Schools. In 1958 the number of schools in the district was 4,386 which rose to 5,086 in 1961-62. In 1963 there were 41 middle, 259 upper primary and 173 lower primary schools managed by the District Board and 198 middle, 233 upper primary and 787 lower primary schools which received aid from the Board. In addition to them there were 24 middle schools, 525 upper primary and 887 lower primary schools running under Extension and Improvement Programme (E. I. P. Scheme) and placed under the management of the District Board.

It is unfortunate that owing to mal-administration the powers and functions of the District Board have been recently much curtailed. The creation of the District Education Fund in 1954 under the Superintendent of Education has relieved the District Board from the management of the schools. The provincialisation of Allopathic and Veterinary dispensaries has reduced the work of the District Board relating to its medical activities. The Public Health Engineering Department has taken the work of rural water-supply which was previously entrusted to the District Board. Similarly, the Public Works Department has also taken a few roads from the District Board.

Now the District Board is going to be replaced by the Zila Parishad. The Bihar Panchayat Samities and Zila Parishads Act, 1961 was given effect first in the four districts, Patna, Bhagalpur, Muzaffarpur and Ranchi and thereafter it will be implemented in other districts including Shahabad. A few salient features of the Act may be mentioned here:—

Under the Act every Zila Parishad will consist of the following members: all *Pramukhs* of the *Panchayat* Samities in the district, all members of the Legislative Assembly of the State and all the members of the House of the people whose constituencies lie wholly or partly in the district, all the members of the Legislative Council of the State and of the Council of States who are residents of the district, one person from the Scheduled Castes and one from the Scheduled Tribes, if the population of such castes or tribes exceeds five per cent of the total population of the district and such persons are not otherwise members, three persons to be elected by an electoral college consisting of the Commissioners of the municipalities and the members of the Notified Area Committees in the district, two persons to be elected by an electoral college consisting of the members of the managing committees of all the Central Co-operative Banks in the district, three women to be co-opted if they are not otherwise members and one person to be nominated by the Bihar State Panchayat Parishad.

The member either elected or co-opted is to hold office for a period of three years. An *Adhyaksha* and an *Upadhyaksha* for each Zila Parishad are to be elected by the members of the Zila Parishad from amongst themselves and their term of office is three years from the date of their election.

The important powers and functions of the *Adhyaksha* are to convene and preside over the meetings of the Zila Parishad, to have full access to the records of the Zila Parishad, and to exercise administrative control over the Secretary of the Zila Parishad for the purpose of implementing the resolutions and decisions of the Parishad.

Under the Act the District Development Officer is to be the Secretary of the Zila Parishad and his powers and functions are defined in Section 21 of the Act. He will be responsible for day to day administration of the Zila Parishad.

UNION COMMITTEE.

Previously in this district there were seven Union Committees at Nasriganj, Koath, Dehri, Chainpur, Mohania, Shahpur and Jahanabad who dealt with local roads and sanitation. The Dehri Union Committee, was replaced by a Notified Area Committee as mentioned elsewhere. The Koath Union Committee was also replaced by Union Board in 1949. Thus now (1964) there is only one Union Committee at Nasriganj which is still functioning.

Nasriganj Union Committee.—This Union Committee was constituted in 1920 with seven members. There has been no change in the number of the members. The Union Committee functions under the administrative control of a non-official Chairman. The jurisdiction of the committee extends over an area of 4½ square miles. The area is divided into seven wards.

Nasriganj has been developing as an urban area and it was first treated as town in the 1941 Census and continues as such. The population of the town in 1941 Census was 7,817 persons as against 8,741 persons in 1951 and 8,920 persons in 1961 Census.*

The Union Committee maintains some *kutcha* roads. It has also provided electric light on the streets. There are about 60 bulbs. The committee also looks after the sanitation of the town. It has employed seven sweepers and one Jamadar for cleansing roads, etc. The Committee has no dumping ground and the garbage is deposited outside the town or they are sometimes utilised in filling up ditches. Civil amenities are of very poor standard.

The statements show the total receipts and expenditure of the Union Committee for 1961-62 and 1962-63:—

Receipts.

Heads.	1961-62.	1962-63.
	Rs.	Rs.
1. Contribution by the District Board	500	2,000
2. Receipts under section 118 of the Act.	2,972	6,209
3. All other receipts	2,443	4,893
TOTAL ..	5,915	13,102

* *District Census Hand-Book, Shahabad* (1954), p. 9 and *Census of India* 1961, *Vol. IV, Bihar,* Part IIA, General Population Tables, page 81.

Expenditure.

Heads.	1961-62.	1962-63.
	Rs.	Rs.
1. Establishment	1,250	4,708
2. Village roads	1,777	..
3. Water-Supply	..	3,303
4. Conservancy and drainage ..	2,563	4,229
5. Miscellaneous	4,526	1,367
TOTAL ..	10,116	13,607

Koath Union Board.

An Union was constituted at Koath in March, 1915. It was styled as the Koath Union Board in 1949 vide Government notification no. 14909-L.S.-G., dated the 3rd September, 1949. The Union consists of five members. The area of the Union Board comprises the villages, Koath, Nawabganj, Fatehganj and Jogiree Dillia. Civil amenities given by the Union Board are of very poor type.

GRAM PANCHAYAT.

Development of Panchayat.

The *gram panchayats* are not a novel institution. Both in the Hindu period and in the later Muslim period there was a certain incidence of local democracy and a lot of local village administration used to be carried out by the village headmen who had a certain amount of privilege and a good deal of contact with the local administrators. With the establishment of British rule in India, the village communities began to disintegrate for various reasons. The system of administration became more centralised. The set-up of judicial and executive administration did not leave much in the hands of the village headmen whose influence and prestige also disintegrated with the spread of education and encouragement of the zamindari system.

It may also be noted here that there were also quite active caste-*panchayats* which looked into certain forms of crimes and social injustices. The caste-*panchayats* also disintegrated with the spread of education, development of the executive and judiciary system and also because the castes gave up their traditional occupations to a very great extent. Caste-*Panchayats* are still active only in such castes which have stuck to their traditional occupations. In Shahabad district there are still active caste-*panchayats* among the *Telis* (oilmen), *Dhobis* (washermen) and *Gonds* (stone workers), etc. It will be noticed that the men belonging to these castes have, by and large, still stuck to their traditional occupations. Even the

Dhobis of Shahabad district who are working in Calcutta as laundry-men are amenable to the orders of their caste-*panchayats* in Shahabad. Usually a caste-*panchayat* has a limited jurisdiction and normally decides complaints against the society. They also give orders which are calculated to maintain the solidarity of the castes. For example, the caste-*panchayats* of the *Dhobis* has decided that the *Dhobis* must not work on a particular day or they should only iron clothes on a particular day.

The Village Chaukidari Act, 1870 (Bengal Act VI of 1870) is a great landmark in the history of the institution of *gram panchayat.* This Act received the assent of the Lieutenant Governor of Bengal and the Governor-General on the 16th June and the 28th September, 1870, respectively. Through this Act an attempt was made to associate the *panchayat* to run the Chaukidari system. Under section 3 of the Act it was provided that the Magistrate of the district would appoint not less than three and more than five persons to be the members of a *panchayat* in any village containing more than sixty houses. The condition of having more than sixty houses for the formation of a *panchayat* was further relaxed vide section 5 of the Act which laid down that on receiving an application from the majority of the adult male residents of a village, it would be lawful for the Magistrate to appoint a *panchayat* in that village without regard to the number of houses contained therein.

The *panchayat* was empowered to determine the number of Chaukidars to be appointed provided that there should be at least two Chaukidars in every village in which there are one hundred and fifty houses and one additional Chaukidar for every complete number of every additional 100 houses. It was also empowered to fix the monthly salaries of the Chaukidars provided that such salaries should not be less than 3 rupees and more than six rupees per month. Later on, the Bengal Act I of 1892 took away the powers of the *Panchayat* and the District Magistrate was empowered to determine the number of the Chaukidars and to fix their monthly salaries. Section XIII of the Act empowered the *panchayat* to impose an assessment yearly for the amount required for the pay of the Chaukidars, together with fifteen per cent above such amount in order to provide for payment of the expense of collection and losses from the non-realisation of the rate from defaulters. All owners or occupiers of houses and any zamindar who had *cutchery* for collecting rents were made liable to assessment. The assessment was to be made according to the circumstances and property of the persons under the limitation that the amount to be assessed should not be more than one rupee per mensem and the persons too poor to pay half an anna per month should be exempted. Under section XXXV the *panchayat* was empowered to appoint chaukidars and also to dismiss him with the sanction of the Magistrate. The Chaukidars had to obey the orders of the *panchayat* in regard to keeping watch in the village and other matters connected with his duties as Chaukidar. The duties of the Chaukidars were defined in section XXXIV of the Act.

Under Act VI of 1870 the *panchayats* were mere agencies for the assessment and collection of chaukidari tax and to exercise control and administration over the Chaukidars. The *panchayats* did not have any direct participation in the running of the local administration. To be a member of the *panchayat* carried a prestige value but the member *Panch* was more of his own enemy because of the excesses he committed and there would be frequent complaints against him. The Magistracy and the Police acted as a curb. The member *panch* highly appreciated the enquiries referred to them under the Criminal Procedure Code. For all practical purposes excepting the realisation of the chaukidari tax, the Chaukidars were placed under the officer of the police thanas and the Magistrate. The *panchayat* also did not always work very satisfactorily and their assessment of chaukidari tax was found very defective. It would often be found that the assessment was made very lightly on rich people because of their mischief value or otherwise. The *panchayat* was hardly the link between the administration and the people and the time-old link of the police still continued.

A major pronouncement in favour of the village institution was made by the Famine Commission in 1880. It recommended that village institutions should be used for village relief work. In pursuance of this recommendation the village agencies were called upon to control famine. But this attempt moved only the village headman and the watchman, who had by that time, been completely identified with the Government machinery. In 1880-81 during Lord Ripon's rule a resolution on Provincial Finance was made in which it was expressed that Local Self-Government should commence at levels lower than those of the District Boards but no reference to the village was made.

The other milestone in the history of *gram panchayats* is the enactment of the Bengal Local Self-Government Act, 1885 (Bengal Act III of 1885). The Act provided for the constitution of District Board, Local Board and Union Committee. Under section 38 the Lieutenant Governor was empowered to constitute any village or group of villages into a Union. The Union Committee was to consist of not less than five and more than nine members. The members were to be elected from amongst the residents of the Union and in case the Union failed to elect the full number of the members, the Commissioner was authorised to appoint the remaining. The Union Committee was to function as the agent of and subject to the control of the District Board. The main duties of the Union Committee were to repair and maintain village roads and bridges and if the fund permits, to make new village roads, to maintain the District Board road falling within its jurisdiction if its management was delegated to it by the District Board and also to manage pounds. It was also entrusted with the management of primary education, dispensary, sanitation, conservancy and water-supply, subject to the control of the District Board. To meet the expenses, under section 56 of the Act an Union Fund for every Union Committee was provided in which all sums realised under section 31 of the Cattle Trespass Act, 1871, all sums assigned by the Lieutenant Governor or District Board as contribution and other sums received by the Union Committee were to be credited. If the income of the Committee was found insufficient to meet the expenses of sanitation, drainage and conservancy, the Committee might impose on the owners of the buildings, tanks, wells or the occupiers of buildings such assessment as may be required approximately to meet the deficiency together with ten per cent above such sum to meet the expenses of collection and losses due to non-realisation from defaulters.

This Act conferred wider powers and provided more duties in comparison with Act VI of 1870. But as mostly the Union Committees consisted of the nominated members and the headmen of the village who were also Government agents, this effort received poor response. It is why in 1902-03 the number of Union Committees was only 57 in the entire Bengal Presidency.

In 1896 and 1897 the Government of India adopted resolutions on Local Self-Government, but these resolutions completely ignored the village. In the session of Indian National Congress held in Lucknow in 1899 Mr. R. C. Dutt, the great economist and administrator from the presidential chair had advocated that the Village Union should be made the real centre of the village administration and the link between the police and the administrator should be done away with. But the suggestion was not implemented then.

The report of the Royal Commission on Decentralisation in 1909 observed, "The foundation of any stable edifice which shall associate the people with the administration, must be the village as being an area of much greater antiquity than the new administrative creations and one in which people are known to one another and have interests which converge on well recognised objects. And it is most desirable alike in the interest of decentralisation and in order to associate the people with the task of the administration that an attempt should be made to constitute and develop village *panchayats* for the administration of local affairs."* The Commission suggested a certain allocation of funds out of land cess and receipts from the village cattle pounds to the village *panchayat* and recommended the re-constitution of the village *panchayat* with powers to try petty civil suits and criminal cases, look after minor village works, control primary schools and to manage fuel and fodder reserves.

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* As quoted in Rattan Lal Khanna's book '*Panchayat Raj in India*', p. 8.

It is understood that so far 40 mutation cases had been filed and 38 cases were disposed of.

From a very look at the village Sasaram where the *panchayat* headquarters is located the work of the *panchayat* so far as public sanitation is concerned may rightly be questioned. The village is extremely dirty and there is hardly any arrangement for the outlet of wash water. The Harijan area has a well without a proper parapet and it is understood from the *Mukhiya* that his move to get a parapet made with the money from block has failed. The Harijan colony needs improvement.

It was further understood that there are two tube-wells in the village and one of them is out of order since three months. One tube-well was set up by a villager which cannot be worked due to the absence of electric connection. He was asked to set up an *atta chakki* before he could get power and that has also been done. Electric poles have been set up but the power connection has not been given.

The accused is to be taken to the jail by the village chaukidar and such members of the village volunteer force as the *Mukhiya* may direct and the *Panchayat* has to meet the cost of transfer and escort of a prisoner to the nearest sub-jail. Whenever an offender is sentenced to pay a fine the *Sarpanch* may take action for the recovery of the fine by issuing a warrant for the levy of the amount by attachment and sale of any movable property belonging to the offender.

A STUDY OF THE SASARAM GRAM PANCHAYAT.

An attempt was made to study the working of Sasaram *gram panchayat* now commonly known as Chhoti Sasaram *panchayat.* This *panchayat* is located within Udwantnagar block and has its headquarters at Sasaram village a couple of miles from Gajrajganj accessible by a *katcha* road. The *Mukhiya* is a Rajput and claims to have got 80 per cent of the votes in the last election defeating a Brahman rival. The *gram panchayat* was set up in 1960 and the *gram kutchery* is functioning since 1962.

There is no *panchayat ghar* and the work is being carried out from the residence of the *Mukhiya.* One great initial difficulty is the distance of about 18 miles from the village to Udwantnagar the headquarters of the block. Udwantnagar is a sprawling block and the two arms of metalled road connecting the area through Arrah are at right angles.

The *panchayat* seems to be functioning well so far as the judicial side and the collection of rent were concerned. The statistics of the cases are as follows:—

Year.	Instituted.	Disposed of.	Compromised.	Convicted.	Acquitted.
1	2	3	4	5	6
1962	6	6	5	Nil	1
1963	4	3 (pending 1).	3	Nil	Nil.
1964 up to August	1	1	1	..	..

The collection of the revenue of the *panchayat* is as follows:—

Year.	Demand.		Collection.		Total collection.	Percentage.
	Arrear.	Current.	Arrear.	Current.		
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1962-63	9,977·96	15,331·68	15,179·87	1,501·63	27,680·90	85
1963-64	6,503·74	*12,954·31	5,928·86	1,19,756·20	17,680·06	92

* The demand fell down due to remission.

Out of the 805 functioning *gram panchayats,* 599 *panchayats* have been entrusted with the work of rent collection. In 1961-62 the total demand of rent to be collected by the *gram panchayats* was Rs. 1,22,09,712.45. Out of this sum Rs. 65,15,355.01 was realised. The *gram panchayats* received Rs. 59,325.25 as commission for rent collection.

The total income and expenditure of the *gram panchayats* from 1951-52 to 1961-62 comes to Rs. 10,50,686.01 and Rs. 9,46,584.12 respectively.

Administration of Justice.

The administration of justice is carried by the *gram kutchery* whose first duty is to bring about a compromise, failing which it takes up the trial. The *kutchery* is expected to be a forum for dispensing justice in a cheap, quick and efficient manner. It is expected that the witness deposing before their own kith and kin who are more aware of the facts of the cases would rather give true evidence. But in the administration of justice the *gram kutcheries* have not made much progress. People still prefer to file cases before the magistracy and do not appear to have much faith in the *gram kutchery.* The *gram kutcheries* have not been able to encourage compromise to any substantial degree. Those who want to file cases more to harass the other party would take their cases to magistracy. In the district of Shahabad from 1951-52 to 1961-62, 4,637 suits and 8,294 cases were filed in the *gram kutcheries* out of which 2,037 suits and 5,191 cases only were compromised.

Under section 62 of the Bihar Panchayat Raj Act, 1947, the *gram kutchery* has been empowered to try certain offences as well as abetment of and attempts to commit any such offence under the Indian Panel Code if committed within the local jurisdiction of the *Gram Panchayat.* These sections are 140, 143, 145, 147, 151, 160, 172, 174, 179, 269, 277, 283, 285, 286, 290, 294, 323, 334, 336, 341, 352, 356, 357, 358, 374, 379, 380, 381, 403, 411, 426, 428, 430, 447, 448, 461, 504, 506 and 510. The bench is not empowered to take cognizance of any offence under sections 379, 380, 381 or 411 in which the value of the property alleged to be stolen exceeds one hundred rupees or in which the accused has been previously convicted of an offence punishable under chapter XVII of the Indian Penal Code with imprisonment for a term of three years or more.

A bench of the *gram kutchery* of the *Pradhan of Dwitiya Varga Gram Panchayat* may pass simple imprisonment for a term not exceeding one month or fine not exceeding one hundred rupees and in default of payment of fine, simple imprisonment for a term not exceeding 15 days. The *gram kutchery* of the *Tritiya Varga Gram Panchayat* is empowered to impose fine not exceeding fifty rupees and in default of payment of fine, simple imprisonment for a term not exceeding seven days.

There are 805 *Mukhiyas,* 805 *Sarpanches,* 6,861 members of the Executive Committees and 7,122 *panches.* 559 *Mukhiyas* and 547 *Sarpanches* have so far received training. 778 *Panchayat Sewaks,* out of whom 700 are trained have been posted in the *gram panchayats* of this district. The District Panchayat Officer posted at Arrah looks after the functioning of the *gram panchayats.* He has a supervisory staff to help him. He works under the District Magistrate, Shahabad, Arrah.

The functions of the *gram panchayats* are of two categories, viz., obligatory and discretionary. Under the obligatory functions come sanitation and conservancy, medical relief and first aid, supply of water, cleansing and disinfection of sources of water, maintenance and construction of public streets, protection of village roads and paths, extinguishing fire, taking steps against famine, burglary and dacoity, execution of such schemes in regard to rural development as the Government may direct and the protection and improvement of irrigation works in the village. The discretionary functions comprise of the lighting of public streets, primary education, the registration of births, deaths and marriages, construction of wells, ponds, tanks, etc.

In order to enable the *panchayats* to discharge their obligatory and discretionary duties satisfactorily the Bihar Panchayat Raj Act provides that the *panchayats* shall raise a fund, known as *panchayat* fund, by levy of a compulsory tax on persons owning immovable property within their areas. There are other discretionary taxes which the *panchayats* are empowered to levy within their areas, such as licence fee on professional buyer's, brokers, tax on vehicle, etc. Unfortunately, the *panchayats* have not been able to raise the required resource through the levy and collection of the aforesaid taxes with the result that the *panchayats* have not been able to make much headway towards the discharge of their obligatory or discretionary duties out of their own funds. They have, however, tried to give some contribution towards the construction of such schemes as culverts, wells, etc., have been executed in their areas through block and other Government departments on matching grant basis. Till 1963, 956 such development schemes are reported to have been executed through the *panchayats.*

Village Volunteer Force.

A special feature of the Bihar Panchayat Raj Act, 1947, is a provision for the enrolment of all the able-bodied males of the village, between the age of 18 to 30 years as members of the Village Volunteer Force under the command of a Chief Officer for general watch and ward and for meeting cases of emergency like fire, breach of an embankment or dam, outbreak of epidemics, burglary and dacoity. In this district 77,636 members of the Village Volunteer Force have been recruited (1963). Some of them known as *Dalpatis* give training to the members.

suggested much earlier by the Royal Commission on Decentralisation in 1909 and also by the Bengal District Administration Committee in 1915.

Generally a *panchayat* under the Bihar Panchayat Raj Act, 1947, is formed in an area which has a total population of 4,000 persons. Normally a number of villages falling within the radius of 2 miles are grouped together under one *gram panchayat*. The *gram panchayat* is headed by a *Mukhiya* who is assisted by an Executive Committee consisting of eight members. Out of eight members, four are elected and four are nominated by the *Mukhiya*. While appointing the members of the Executive Committee, the *Mukhiya* is required to take into consideration the claim of the members of the Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and females. The term of the office of the *Mukhiya* or a member of the Executive Committee in the case of *Pratham Varga Gram Panchayat, Dwitiya Varga Gram Panchayat* and *Tritiya Varga Gram Panchayat* is for five years, four years and three years respectively.

There is a panel of nine *panches* or members which has a head known as the *Sarpanch*. Four *panches* are elected and four are nominated by a joint meeting of the *Sarpanch*, elected *panches* and all the elected members of the Executive Committee excluding the *Mukhiya*.

A person is considered disqualified for election, nomination or appointment as *Mukhiya*, member of the Executive Committee, *Sarpanch* or *Panch* if such person is under twenty-five years of age, or does not reside in the *gram panchayat* area for at least one hundred and eighty days in a calendar year or is in the service of the Central or State Government or any local authority. A person suffering from leprosy or tuberculosis is also debarred from election. In case a person has been adjudged by a competent court to be of unsound mind, or has been convicted by a court or is in the arrears of any tax, toll, fee or rate due from him to the *gram panchayat*, is also disqualified for such election or appointment.

The Government may remove the *Mukhiya* or any other member of the Executive Committee for misconduct, incapacity or neglect of duty on the recommendation of the prescribed authority.

Gram Panchayats in Shahabad district.

In this district in 1963 there are 815 notified *gram panchayats* out of which 805 *gram panchayats* are functioning. Out of 6,096 villages*, 6,075 villages have been covered by the *gram panchayats*.

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* *The Shahabad District Gazetteer* (1924) mentions that there are 6,078 villages (p. 40). It appears that the figure of 4,729 villages mentioned in the *District Census Hand Book* Shahabad (1954); p. 2 is wrong. *The District Statistical Hand Book* compiled in 1959 gives the break-up as follows:—Arrah Sadar—1,189, Buxar—1,104, Sasaram—2,088 and Bhabua—1,715 villages.

disputes and caste-factions were often at the background for such petitions. Some of the *panchayats* worked as handimen of the police and that also right or wrong, would often be pleaded for not entrusting the *panchayat* with the trial of such offences. As a result, the *panchayats* were, more or less, utilised by the magistracy to make an enquiry into complaints preferred or for other miscellaneous matters. This gave them a certain amount of prestige and the members of the *panchayat* were quite satisfied with that. As a matter of fact, the very system of a concurrent jurisdiction with the over-riding powers elsewhere worked against the *panchayat* system. It is also fact that the very limited judicial power of the *panchayat* without power of other types could not have made the institution powerful.

The Indian Statutory (Simon) Commission in its report (1930) appreciated the importance of the village *panchayats* and observed that the *panchayat* movement had not made any marked progress. It further mentioned that the village *panchayat* was of special interest and importance as being an attempt to recreate the village as an essential unit of Self-Government. However, during the British regime the village *panchayats* wherever formed could not be efficient and effective instruments for Local Self-Government.

The adult franchise that had been given had underlined the importance of village and had released a force of mighty political consciousness in the common men. The success of the Congress Party was mainly due to a well ramified organisation covering the thanas and the villages and the enlistment of villagers as a member of the Congress on the payment of nominal fee of four annas. The character of the State and the Central Government also changed and were more attuned to the welfare of the people and the development of the country. It was only natural that with the attainment of independence in 1947 it was felt that the villages can no longer be left to themselves and the question of revising *gram panchayats* was taken up again. The organisation of village *panchayats* was made one of the directive principles of the State Policy in the Constitution of India. Article 40 of the Constitution lays down, "The State shall take steps to organise village *panchayats* and endow them with such powers and authority as may be necessary to enable them to function as unit of Self-Government. This directive principle gives the Constitution of India a national character inasmuch as the Panchayats, the most valuable of the surviving democratic institutions of ancient India, have found a place in the country's Constitution."*

The Bihar Panchayat Raj Act, 1947, received the assent of the Governor-General on the 12th January 1948. It may be mentioned that this Act is not an entirely new piece of legislation and its provisions do not confer wider powers and duties than what were

* Rattan Lal Khanna: *Panchayat Raj in India*, pages 5-6.

and Orissa Village Administration Act, 1922 (Bihar and Orissa Act 3 of 1922) constitutes the most important step towards the development of *panchayat* institution. The main features of the Act are as follows:—

The *panchayat* was empowered to take cognizance of and to try the offences as well as abetment of and attempts to commit any such offence under the sections:—160, 178, 179, 277, 289, 290, 294, 323, 341, 352, 379, 411, 426, 504, 509 and 510 of the Indian Penal Code. It was also empowered to try cases under sections 24, 26 and 27 of the Cattle Trespass Act, 1871 and section 34 of the Police Act, 1862. The *panchayat* was not authorised to take cognizance of any offence under section 379 (theft) or 411 (receiving of stolen property) of the Indian Penal Code in which the accused has been previously convicted of an offence punishable under Chapter XVII with imprisonment of either description for a term of three years or upwards or has been previously fined for theft by a *panchayat* or is a registered member of a criminal tribe or has been bound over to be of good behaviour in proceedings instituted under section 109 or 110 of Criminal Procedure Code. It was further provided in the Act that the magistrate before whom a complaint of any offence cognizable by a *panchayat* was brought, may transfer the complaint to the *panchayat*. The *panchayat* was empowered to impose fine not exceeding fifty rupees or double the value of the damage or loss, whichever is greater, or in default to sentence to imprisonment not exceeding 14 days. In case of *panchayats* specially empowered to take cognizance of and to try cases under sections 379, 411 and 426 of Indian Penal Code, they were empowered to fine not exceeding one hundred rupees or double the damage or loss, whichever is greater or in default to sentence to imprisonment not exceeding one month. The *panchayat* was also empowered to try civil suits (only suits for money due on contracts, suits for the recovery of movable property or the value of such property and suits for compensation for wrongfully taking or injuring movable property) if the value of such suits do not exceed twenty-five rupees. Specially empowered *panchayats* might try suits, the value of which was more than 25 rupees but in this case the value of property should not exceed one hundred rupees.

The institution of *panchayat*, however, could not progress much. The main stumbling block was the want of confidence of the villagers themselves in their *panchayats*. It would be only in a rare case that a villager would move the *panchayat* for taking cognizance of an offence he was empowered to take. This was done mostly, if at all, for partisan reasons, i.e., where the complaint was almost sure that he would be able to harass the other party through the *panchayat*. It was almost an axiom that if a magistrate taking cognizance of an offence would proceed to transfer the case to the *panchayat* there would have been a protest petition that the *panchayat* was prejudiced for some reason and the other. Village

The Commission laid down that the village headman should be the *ex-officio* Chairman of the *panchayat* as being *ex-hypothesi* the most influential person in village. The Commission also recommended that the members should be elected by the villagers under the supervision of Government officials. The procedure in the *panchayat* courts was recommended to be very simple and the parties should appear in person and not through the lawyer. The appeals should not be allowed, though the regular courts might be given special revisional jurisdiction in cases where it appears to have been failure of justice.

The recommendation of the Commission that the *panchayats* should be completely under the control of the district authorities spoiled the virtue of all what it recommended. Dr. Annie Besant in her presidential address at the Calcutta Congress in 1917 criticised the Commission's report in the following words: "Tie up a baby's arms and legs and then leave it to teach iteself to walk. If it does not succeed, blame the baby. The free baby will learn equilibrium through tumbles; the tied up baby will become paralysed and will never walk."*

The manner in which the village officials were made dependent upon the higher Government officials was described by her as "the killing of the old village system."

Further, in 1915 the Report on the Bengal District Administration Committee also recommended that the *panchayats* should be invested with the powers to supervise and control the Chaukidars functioning within their local jurisdiction and made suggestions to reform the local bodies on the principle of indirect elections beginning from the village. It was also suggested to entrust local defence to the village *panchayats* with powers of taxation to meet local needs.

This policy of the British Government was implemented in a most half-hearted manner. For example, the recommendations of the Royal Commission were kept in cold storage for six years and very little was done till 1915 when the Government of India left the matter of implementing the recommendations to the Local Governments.

In the background of the halting policy and in view of the resurgence of Indian nationalism following the World War I, the British scheme of *panchayats* could not be implemented successfully.

Following the Montague-Chelmsford Reforms after the World War I, a few nationalists saw in these *panchayat* schemes a great prospect for developing rural India. The enactment of the Bihar

* As quoted in H. D. Malaviya's book '*Village Panchayats in India*'. pages 223-24.