

ENCLOSURE III.

Extract from the chapter on 'the People' from the Gazetteer of the Muzaffarpur District (1907).

GROWTH OF POPULATION.

"Until the year 1875 Muzaffarpur formed part of the old district of Tirhut, and no separate enumeration of its inhabitants took place. A rough census of Tirhut was, however, carried out in 1802 by the Collector, who estimated the population to be 2,000,000 persons; and seventy years afterwards when the first regular census was taken, it was reported to be 4,384,706, though in all probability the real total was nearer 4,500,000, as this first enumeration was wanting in accuracy. In other words, the increase of the population during these 70 years was no less than 125 per cent or 1.78 per cent per annum. According to the statistics which have been prepared, it appears that in 1872 the population of Muzaffarpur alone was 2,246,752, and when the next census was taken it had increased to 2,583,404. The growth of the population in these nine years was therefore, nearly 15 per cent or 1.66 per cent per annum; and though, as already indicated, some of the increase is due to the defects of the census of 1872, it is noticeable that this rate of progress closely corresponding to that observed in the seventy years after 1802, especially as the estimate of 2,000,000 then made was probably under the mark, as almost all early estimates of the population were.* The Collector accordingly pointed out that, if the people continued to increase at the same rate, they would double their numbers in sixty years; but it is a matter of some satisfaction that the already overcrowded population of the district has not continued to increase with the rapidity then predicted. During the next ten years there was a further increase of only 129,543, or 5.01 per cent, the total number aggregating 2,712,857; and the census of 1901 disclosed only a slight increase of 41,933 or 1.5 per cent, the whole population amounting to 2,754,790* persons.

CENSUS OF 1901.

During the preceding ten years the district had been severely tried both by flood, famine and disease. There were crop failures in 1891-92, when relief operations on a small scale had to be undertaken, and in 1896-97 the whole of the district except the southern part of Hajipur was visited by famine. There were heavy floods in 1898, which caused considerable damage, and there were epidemics of cholera in 1892, 1894, 1896 and 1900, which carried off more than 76,000 persons. In other respects, however, the public health was fairly good; the floods caused no permanent injury; and, thanks to a succession of good harvests, the effects of the famine were not long felt. By the end of the decade the people had entirely recovered their normal condition; and

*This figure according to the District Census Hand Book, 1951 should be 2,756,130.

it is a notable fact that Muzaffarpur and Darbhanga, which suffered most in the famine year, showed the greatest growth of population.

In Muzaffarpur every thana in the great rice-growing tract north of the Baghmata, where the stress of famine was greatest, showed a marked increase, while every thana south of that river lost population. This is at first sight the more remarkable, as the country to the north of the Baghmata is more marshy than to the south, and its climate is reputed to be less salubrious than the rest of the district; but the explanation appears to be that the increase is largely due to immigration. The population of the former tract has been growing steadily since the time of the first census of 1872; it attracts settlers both from Nepal and the southern part of the district, and the progress is greatest in the Sitamarhi and Sheohar thanas which march with the Nepal frontier. The Sitamarhi subdivision accordingly showed an increase of 6.73 per cent, while the Hajipur subdivision, which sustained a slight loss of population in the decade preceding the census of 1891, was practically stationary, in spite of the fact that it is the most fertile part of the district. The headquarters subdivision, where there was a falling off of 2.3 per cent, was the only decadent portion, the decrease of population in the Muzaffarpur thana being as high as 5.6 per cent, but here the decrease is due to the fact that it suffered most severely from cholera, and that it is this tract which supplies most of the persons who emigrate to Lower Bengal in search of work. There is a complete railway system within and to the south of this area, which greatly facilitates emigration, and the loss of population is largely due to the exodus of its inhabitants.

GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS.

Density of population.—Although exceeded by the figures for a few individual districts, such as Howrah and Dacca, the portion of North Bihar which comprises the three districts of Saran, Muzaffarpur and Darbhanga has a more teeming population than any other tract of equal size in Bengal or Eastern Bengal; and of these three districts the most populous is Muzaffarpur. Here there is the enormous number of 908 persons to the square mile, but the inhabitants are very evenly distributed; only in a small tract to the west does the average number per square mile fall below 900, while in no part of the district does it exceed 1,000. The density is least in the Paro thana with 731 persons to the square mile, and greatest in the Pupri and Sitamarhi thanas, where it rises as high as 982 and 966 to the square mile. The mean density of the latter thana has increased by 142 per square mile since 1881, when the pressure of the population, though high, was the lowest in the district. This great growth of population is apparently due almost entirely to immigration both from Nepal and from other parts of the district.

MIGRATION.

From the fact that the proportion of emigrants from Muzaffarpur enumerated during the census of 1901 was 557 and of immigrants 318

per 10,000 of the population, it will be apparent that migration is unusually active, especially as the figures do not include the persons who migrated across the Nepal frontier, where land is plentiful and rents are low. Altogether 87,700 immigrants and 153,500 emigrants were enumerated, the number of emigrants being thus nearly double that of immigrants. Of the former over 71,000 were born in the contiguous districts, and of the latter 80,700 migrated to those districts, large numbers being attracted by the unoccupied land in the north of Champaran. Muzaffarpur therefore loses slightly by this movement of the population. The immigrants from a distance are fewer in proportion to its population than in any other district of North Bihar, but on the other hand the number of emigrants to distant parts of the Province, or outside it, is exceeded only by those from Saran, though they are barely one-third as numerous as those from that district. The emigrants go to the metropolitan districts and to Bhagalpur, Purnea and North Bengal, the general trend of the people being eastward.

Towns and villages.

Muzaffarpur is distinctively an agricultural district, and of the total population only 3 per cent live in urban areas, the remainder of the inhabitants congregating in 4,120 villages, the average population per village being 647. There are only 4 towns—Muzaffarpur with a population of 45,617, Hajipur (21,398), Lalganj (11,502), and Sitamarhi (9,538); but there are twenty-two places with a population of between 5,000 and 10,000 of which the most important are Sursand (9,356), Bariarpur (9,121), Charaut (8,947), Manikchak (7,739), Akhta (7,234), Fagwana (6,836), Anudan Kallan (6,479), Sukchandi (6,176), and Kanti (5,217). The majority of the people, however, live in villages with a population of 500 to 1,000 or of 1,000 to 2,000 inhabitants. These villages vary greatly in size, ranging from a few acres to 3 square miles, and even to 19 square miles in the *diara*, but the average area is 431 acres. Generally speaking, the largest are found in the north and the smallest in the south of the district, the average size ranging from 681 acres in Pupri to 296 acres in the Hajipur thana.

The rural population is far more progressive than the urban, the mean density per square mile increasing from 736 in 1872 to 847 in 1881; to 888 in 1891, and finally to 903 in 1901, or by 167 in the last 30 years. In the same period the urban population has increased only by 12,128. During the last decade Sitamarhi was the only progressive town, and Muzaffarpur lost no less than 9 per cent of its population, though it still contained 3,000 more inhabitants than in 1881. The decrease is, however, to a great extent, more apparent than real, as it was due to the exclusion of one of the old wards from municipal limits and the temporary absence of a large number of people in connection with marriage ceremonies. But for this, it would probably have returned at least as many inhabitants as in 1891.

Sex.

In common with other Bihar districts, Muzaffarpur has a marked excess of females over males, there being 1,089 females to every 1,000 males—a ratio higher than in any other North Bihar district except Saran.

*Language.**

The vernacular current in the district is the dialect of Bihari Hindi called Maithili, i.e., the language of Mithila or the country bounded on the north by the Himalayas, on the south by the Ganges, on the west by the Gandak, and on the east by the river Kosi. The Maithili spoken in Muzaffarpur is, however, strongly infected by the Bhojpuri spoken in various forms in the adjacent district of Saran and in the greater part of Champaran. So much is this the case that, as spoken by some people, it is difficult to say whether the dialect is Maithili or Bhojpuri. This form of Maithili is classed by Dr. Grierson as Western Maithili. The language spoken in the north of the district differs somewhat from that spoken in central and south Muzaffarpur, as the latter is still more strongly infected with Bhojpuri. Even in the north, however, the dialect might with equal propriety be classed as a form of Bhojpuri, though the Brahmans speak a purer form of Maithili than other castes, and still use the Maithili alphabets. The language is in a transition stage, and has been classed by Dr. Grierson in the *Linguistic Survey of India* as a dialect of Maithili, because the country where it is spoken belongs historically to the ancient kingdom of Mithila.†

The low caste Musálmans of Muzaffarpur speak a form of the Awadhi dialect of Eastern Hindi (literally the language of Oudh) which is locally known as the *Jolaha Boli*, as the majority of these Muhammadans belong to the Jolaha or weaver caste. This dialect is excellent Awadhi with a slight infusion of the local Maithili and of Hindustani, and it is estimated that in Muzaffarpur it is used by 204,954 persons. When speaking to Europeans, this dialect is commonly used as a sort of language of politeness by the rustics, who have picked it up from their Musalman neighbours and imagine it to be the Hindustani of polite society.**

Written character.

No less than three different alphabets are in use in the tract in which Maithili is spoken. The Maithili character proper, which is closely akin to the Bengali, is that used by Maithil Brahmans, and the character which is used by all the other castes is the Kaithi. The

*This sketch of the language of Muzaffarpur is taken from Dr. Grierson's *Linguistic Survey of India*, Vols. IV and V.

†There has been further research in the subject but we need not go into that line (P. C. R. C.).

**The conclusions mentioned as in the case of the spoken dialect for the Hindus are open to question (P. C. R. C.).

Devanagari character is used by a few of the educated classes, and is understood and read by all persons who pretend to a liberal education; besides this, the Urdu character is employed by the better educated Muhammadans.

Literature.

Maithili is the only one of the Bihari dialects which has a literary history.* For centuries the Pandits of Mithila have been famous for their learning, and more than one Sanskrit work of authority has been written by them. One of the few learned women of India whose name has come down to us, was Lakhima Thakurani, who according to tradition, lived in the middle of the 15th Century A. D. Nor was the field of vernacular literature neglected. The earliest vernacular writer of whom we have any record was the celebrated Vidyapati Thakkura, who graced the court of Maharaja Siva Singh of Sugaon, and flourished about the same time. As a writer of Sanskrit works, he was an author of considerable repute, but it is upon his dainty songs in the vernacular that his fame chiefly rests. He was the first of the old master-singers, whose short religious poems, dealing principally with Radha and Krishna, exercised such an important influence on the religious history of Eastern India. His songs were adopted and enthusiastically recited by the celebrated Hindu reformer Chaitanya, who flourished at the beginning of the 16th century; and through him, they became the house-poetry of the Lower Provinces. Vidyapati Thakkura or, as he is called in the vernacular, Bidyapat Thakur, had many imitators in Mithila itself, of whom we know nothing except the names of the most popular and a few stray verses.

Amongst other writers in Maithili may be mentioned Manbodh Jha, who died about the year 1788 A. D. He composed a Haribansa, or poetical life of Krishna, of which ten cantos are still extant, and enjoy great popularity. The drama has had several authors in Mithila, where the local custom has been to write the body of a play in Sanskrit, but the songs in the vernacular. There has been a remarkable revival of Maithili literature during the past few years, and at least one author deserving of special note has come to the front, Chandra Jha, who has shown remarkable literary powers. He has written a *Mithila-bhasha Ramayana*, and a translation, with an edition of the original Sanskrit text, of the *Purusha pariksha* of Vidyapati Thakkura, both of which will well repay the student by their perusal.

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RELIGIONS.

Hindus and Muhammadans.

Muzaffarpur occupies a somewhat uncommon position in being a district practically free from any religious sect except Hindus, Muhammadans and Christians; the members of all other religions only

*There has been further research in the other dialects since (P. C. R. C.)

numbered 15 at the last census. The great bulk of the inhabitants are Hindus, who with a total of 2,416,415 persons account for 87.71 per cent of the population, and practically all the remainder are Muhammadans (337,641).

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Christians.

There are only 719 Christians, of whom 341 are natives. Four Christian missions are at work in the district, all of which have their headquarters in Muzaffarpur town, viz., the German Evangelical Lutheran Mission, founded in 1840, which maintains a primary school for destitute orphans; the American Methodist Episcopal Missionary Society, which possesses two schools; a branch of the Bettiah Roman Catholic Mission; and an independent lady missionary engaged in zanaana work.

PRINCIPAL CASTES.

The most numerous Hindu castes are the Goalas, Babhans, Dosadhs, Rajputs, Koiris, Chamars, and Kurmis, which all number over 100,000 and account between them for nearly a half of the total population; while Brahmans, Dhanuks, Kandus, Mallahs, Nunias, Tantis and Telis each number between 50,000 and 100,000. Of the Muhammadans, 127,254 are Sheikhs and 85,217 are Jolahas, while Dhunias (35,651) and Kunjras (26,406) are also numerous."

This text on the People by O'Malley in the last District Gazetteer of Muzaffarpur published in 1907 needs supplementing on some of the facts.

GROWTH OF POPULATION.

The growth of population of Muzaffarpur district since 1901 has been as follows:—

Year.	Souls.	Variation.	Males.	Females.
1901 ..	2,756,130	..	1,319,110	1,437,020
1911 ..	2,845,514	+ 89,384	1,360,200	1,485,314
1921 ..	2,754,945	— 90,569	1,324,991	1,429,954
1931 ..	2,941,025	+186,080	1,443,847	1,497,178
1941 ..	3,244,651	+303,626	1,584,279	1,660,372
1951 ..	3,520,739	+276,088	1,730,750	1,789,989

The variation in the population from 1901 figure as compared in 1951 figure shows an addition of 764,609. The figures quoted above will show that there was a decline in 1921 which recorded a minus variation of 90,569 souls. Since 1921 there was a rise in the population but the incidence of variation has fluctuated. In 1931 the variation was plus 186,080 while the variation in 1941 was plus 303,626. The 1951 figure as compared with 1941 figure shows a variation of plus 276,088.

The details of the population according to 1951 census, in the different subdivisions are as follows :—

Subdivisions.	Area in square mile.	Number of—		Population.
		Towns.	Villages.	
Sitamarhi ..	1,007	2	1,005	1,201,086
Sadar ..	1,222	1	1,737	1,377,181
Hajipur ..	786	3	1,429	942,472

The urban population of the district is 135,696; and the urban-rural ratio is 1:25.

The causes for the fluctuation in the incidence of population would be apparent if the facts mentioned in the Chapters on 'Natural Calamities', 'Public Health' and 'Economic Condition' are taken into consideration. Unfortunately the district of Muzaffarpur has been subject to a number of floods and droughts. Some of them were of severe type. Any economic deterioration in the district leads to factors affecting the population, such as emigration, casualties due to epidemics, etc. The remarkable decline in the population of 90,569 souls in 1921 census was apparently due to a high prevalence of epidemics particularly of malaria. For a few years the district of Muzaffarpur was ravaged by malaria particularly in portions of Sadar and Sitamarhi subdivisions. There was also a wide influenza epidemic which took away many lives. It is also to be remembered that the two census years 1941 and 1951 almost immediately followed a war or a period of scarcity.

Urban population.

Another remarkable change since O'Malley's description has been the growth of towns. There has been an appreciable trend of the section belonging to the higher income group and educated section coming over to the towns from villages. The towns provide more chances for employment to the educated and more of amenities to the moneyed classes. Abolition of zamindaries and a wave of lawlessness

and crime in the rural areas have also encouraged a movement of population from rural to the urban areas. This trend is not likely to go down till the conditions of the villages are upgraded or there are more avenues for employment. This will need the location of some industries in the villages. The recent trend of decentralisation of administration and the assignment of the Block Development Offices and National Extension Service Centres in the villages is a move in the right direction to upgrade the condition of the villages.

The growth of population in Muzaffarpur town has been as follows :—

1901	...	...	...	...	45,617
1911	...	...	...	...	43,668
1921	...	...	...	...	32,755
1931	...	...	...	...	43,049
1941	...	...	...	...	54,139
1951	...	...	...	...	73,594

Since 1901 the net variation of the population in Muzaffarpur town as compared with 1951 figure is of plus 27,977.

The town of Hajipur had a population of 21,398 in 1901. There was a drop in the population in 1911 census which recorded 19,223. The 1921 census recorded a further decline of the population which dropped to 16,760. But from 1931 there has been an upward movement of population and in 1951 the recorded figure was 25,149.

Sitamarhi has recorded an even but a small accretion in the population since 1901. The population in 1951 stood at 13,267 as against 9,538 in 1901.

Lalganj in Hajipur subdivision stands on a somewhat different footing. It may be recalled that Lalganj was at one time an important commercial centre, particularly for river-borne trade. But there has been a trend of decline so far as the river trade is concerned. That is why Lalganj recorded a decline in population in 1911 and 1921. In 1921 the population had dropped to 7,148 as against the 1901 figure of 11,502. In 1951 the population was recorded as 12,394. The two other towns Mahnar Bazar and Dumra are of recent origin. The population figures in 1951 for Mahnar Bazar and Dumra were 9,214 and 2,078, respectively.

Rural population.

There are now 4,171 villages and 6 towns as against 4,120 villages and 4 towns mentioned before. The present urban population of 135,696 as compared to 3,385,043 of rural population works out a ratio of 1:25. It could well be said that in spite of the growth of the urban areas Muzaffarpur district lives and is destined to live in the villages.

The variation of population will show that there has been a preponderance of female population over the male population. The figures

of the male and female population in the different census years has been as follows :—

		Male.	Female.
1901	...	1,319,110	1,437,020
1911	...	1,360,200	1,485,314
1921	...	1,324,991	1,429,954
1931	...	1,443,847	1,497,178
1941	...	1,584,279	1,660,372
1951	...	1,730,750	1,789,989

Emigration and Immigration.

The incidence of emigration from Muzaffarpur district is not recorded as high although there is a good deal of seasonal emigration. The Tea districts of Assam do not attract the labour from Muzaffarpur as the Tea districts encourage migration at least for a few years. But it is a fact that Muzaffarpur labourers migrate to other districts of Bihar and West Bengal in the reaping season and they usually come back after harvesting crops in those districts.

The table below will show the birth places of the population enumerated in the census of 1951 :—

Patna Division	...	...	3,394
Tirhut Division (excluding Muzaffarpur)	...	...	43,940
Bhagalpur Division	...	...	2,667
Chotanagpur Division	...	...	403
States in India beyond the State	...	...	3,444
Countries in Asia beyond India	...	...	6,805
Countries in America	...	...	1
Countries in Australia	...	...	1
Total			60,655

Density.

Regarding the density of population it may be said that for decades Muzaffarpur had the highest incidence of density in the State of Bihar but there has been a slight fall in the density of population in Muzaffarpur district in 1951 census which stands at 1,168 persons per square mile as against 1,178 persons in Saran district. O'Malley had mentioned that there were 908 persons to a square mile. At the moment the district of Saran has the highest incidence of density in the State of Bihar but Muzaffarpur comes close second. It may be mentioned that there is hardly any appreciable quantity of culturable waste land in either of the districts of Muzaffarpur or Saran. Generally cultivated lands are hardly left fallow for even a fortnight to re-coup. It shows the fertility of the soil for particular crops.

Hajipur is the most densely populated thana, supporting 1,567 persons to the square mile. Excepting Raghapur with a density of

636 and Baruraj with 887 per square mile, all the remaining thanas of the district have recorded more than 900 souls. A further saturation of the population without any industrialisation may not be to the economic benefit of the district.

Sex and Civil Conditions.

Regarding Sex and Civil Conditions the following figures will be of interest.

In common with the other districts of North Bihar, Muzaffarpur has an excess of 59,239 females over males according to the census of 1951. The trend of increase of the female population over males is somewhat fairly steady there being 1,089 females to every 1,000 males in 1901, 1,092 females to every 1,000 males in 1911, 1,079 to every 1,000 in 1921, 1,037 to every 1,000 in 1931, 1,048 to every 1,000 in 1941 and 1,034 females to 1,000 males in 1951.

The civil condition by age periods as enumerated in 1951 census is given below :—

Age periods.	Total population.		Married.		Unmarried.		Widowed and divorced.	
	Male.	Female.	Male.	Female.	Male.	Female.	Male.	Female.
5—14 ...	43,640	39,947	5,368	5,418	38,243	34,468	29	61
15—24 ...	26,227	27,226	15,982	22,574	9,967	4,216	278	436
25—34 ...	24,643	26,700	21,753	24,239	2,224	824	666	1,637
35—44 ...	22,097	22,311	20,102	19,213	1,001	94	994	3,004
45—54 ...	16,220	17,116	14,344	12,365	430	64	1,443	4,687
55—64 ..	10,071	11,322	8,258	6,715	189	30	1,624	4,577
65—74 ...	5,150	6,326	3,717	2,899	82	29	1,351	3,398
75 and over age not stated.	2,182	2,764	1,297	880	40	8	825	1,876
	206	397	99	230	75	52	32	115

From the above table it can be deduced that the major marriageable age in the district is between 15—24 and 24—34 and the percentage of child marriage is negligible.

Religion.

Population by religion as enumerated in 1951 census is given in the following table :—

	Male.	Female.
Hindus ...	1,552,432	1,590,003
Sikhs ...	431	63
Jains ...	10	4

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		Male.	Female.
Buddhists	...	15	6
Muslims	...	207,731	199,854
Christians	...	131	59

Thus from the above table it is seen that the great bulk of the inhabitants are Hindus, who with a total of 3,142,435 persons account for 89.2 per cent of the population and next to the Hindus are Muhammadans (407,585).

Language and literature.

Dr. Grierson's views quoted by O'Malley and reproduced earlier probably cannot be accepted in toto in view of the recent research and the growth of literature in the regional language in Muzaffarpur district. But it does not appear to be necessary to enter into a scholastic discussion regarding the views of Dr. Grierson in this book. Vernacular literature has had a tremendous progress and there have been quite a number of Hindi writers of prominence in this district.

Principal castes.

In the section 'Principal Castes' O'Malley's observations regarding the castes have been omitted deliberately. Some of the observations are far too sweeping and do not appear to have been justifiable even when O'Malley wrote. It will be preposterous to agree that any particular caste should have a bias for litigation or a propensity for unsocial activities.

The main castes remain as they were mentioned by O'Malley. It may be mentioned that in 1951 census there has been no enumeration on caste basis and hence the present strength of the population of the different castes cannot be given.

The addition of the displaced persons from Pakistan either from the East or from the West is another change in the population of the district. According to the census of 1951, the number of displaced persons was 735. Since 1951 there may have been some additions to this population of the displaced persons.