

Bihar District Gazetteers

SHAHABAD

By

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सत्यमेव जयते

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PREFACE

The first *District Gazetteer of Shahabad* in the new series was edited by L. S. S. O'Malley, I.C.S., and published in 1906. O'Malley had largely drawn from Sir W. W. Hunter's Statistical Account of Bengal, Vol. XII published in 1877 and from various other official sources for the later period. Shahabad District Gazetteer was re-edited by J. F. W. James, I.C.S., and was published in 1924. This book runs to 200 pages.

The earlier series of the District Gazetteers although replete with facts and brilliantly written were meant more to be an Administrator's Handbook and suffered from a very limited objective. In the last few decades there had been very many basic changes in the district and the country. With the achievement of Independence we have now a Welfare State in place of a Police State. The previous District Gazetteers are not easily available and would not have served much purpose either for giving a picture of the present times. They have, however, their great use as a landmark.

In 1952, the Gazetteer Revision Branch in the Revenue Department was created by the initiative of Sri Krishna Ballabh Sahay as Revenue Minister. Sri Krishna Ballabh Sahay is now the Chief Minister of Bihar. This Branch is engaged in entirely re-writing and publishing the District Gazetteers. From the very inception of this Branch I have been in sole charge of the work. The re-written District Gazetteer of Shahabad is my 15th book published in the new series. The re-written District Gazetteers of Hazaribagh, Muzaffarpur, Gaya, Singhbhum, Saran, Champaran, Palamau, Monghyr, Purnea, Darbhanga, Bhagalpur, Dhanbad, Santal Parganas and Saharsa districts have already been published.

Since 1955 the Central Government was seized with the need of re-writing the District Gazetteers in all the States of India on an uniform pattern as far as possible. The Ministry of Scientific and Cultural Affairs, New Delhi, later took up the work of co-ordinating the new District Gazetteers in all the States of India and publishing four volumes of Central Gazetteers for India to replace the old Imperial Gazetteers. The State Government of Bihar had agreed to work in collaboration with the Ministry of Scientific Research and Cultural Affairs as far as possible. This Ministry has now merged with the Ministry of Education (Science) with whom we continue our collaboration. After the Central Government came into the picture, the

Headings and Contents were realigned. Our re-written District Gazetteers for Hazaribagh, Muzaffarpur, Gaya and Singhbhum are according to a different pattern. All the later District Gazetteers have followed the pattern laid down by the Central Ministry as far as possible.

The work of re-writing the District Gazetteer for Shahabad had its own problems. The present day Officers in the key positions have hardly any time for this type of work which requires a certain amount of sustained labour, study and research. There has been no continuity of keeping an account of all the events within the district and even important records and reports are not always available. There is unfortunately a lamentable lack of reliable statistics in the District offices and very often unreliable statistics supplied from the District Offices have to be rejected. The Shahabad District Welfare Office or the Welfare Department in the Secretariat could not give us reliable statistics of the break-up figures of the tribals and their whereabouts. Bewildering contradictory agricultural statistics had often to be rejected. The march of events since 1947 has been extremely rapid and the enormous expansion of administrative offices at district and lower level has the tendency of catching the officers in a whirlpool unless they are very alert. Even the academicians are now mostly reluctant to help in this type of work. Those who have helped me from the district or outside are mostly my personal friends like the late Sri Satrunjay Prasad Singh who printed a brochure regarding Shahabad at my instance, Sri Kamar Ali Khan, a septuagenarian Advocate of Sasaram, Sri Adris Banerjee of the Archaeological Department of India, Prof. Radha Krishna Choudhury of G. D. College, Begusarai, Shri S. Roy, Deputy Director of National Archives of India, etc. I am much indebted to them.

While help from the district level was very meagre, I was, however, fortunate in receiving help from other sources and in some cases they were unexpected. I am happy to mention that the National Archives, New Delhi, National Library, Calcutta, and the Asiatic Society of Bengal had continued giving me valuable help as before by loaning old records and reply to my queries very frequently. Some of the old records available in the District Record Room in Arrah and Patna were looked into. For the later events I have had considerable help from various books, Census reports, manuscripts and had collected information from collaborators and personal investigations. A certain amount of field work was done by my Research

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Assistants under my guidance to appraise some of the development projects in the interior of the district. This was necessary to find out the actual role the district plays in the implementation of the Government policies regarding national planning and community development. The conclusions are personal and not to be taken at State level.

My thanks are due to the Editor, Gazetteers in the Ministry of Education (Science) who had looked into the drafts and offered some suggestions. For some of the photos I am indebted to Shri P. C. Singh of Bihar Civil Service. My gratitude is also due to many known and comparatively unknown people from whom I had always tried to draw information in the course of my tours. I am grateful for valuable suggestions from Shri S. K. Chakravarty, Revenue Secretary and Shri B. C. Patel, Revenue Minister. They have both taken a great interest in this work and have helped but never fettered me.

A book of this type could only be produced by the pooling of resources, extensive tours, personal contacts, investigations and research. I was twice posted to Shahabad district and I have had close association with the district since 1935. I have tried to produce a book for a very wide range of readers. As it is known that seldom any one takes up a book of this type to read from the first page to the last, there has to be a certain amount of repetition to make the chapters self-sufficient. I appreciate the privilege that I have had in continuing uninterrupted to do this work the value of which will increase with the passage of time. It is a pleasure to record that Bihar leads in re-writing and publishing the District Gazetteers with the minimum of staff throughout India. I have enjoyed doing this work and that is my reward.

PATNA :

P. C. ROY CHOUDHURY.

The 22nd July 1965.