

## CHAPTER XIV.

### LAND REVENUE ADMINISTRATION.

#### EARLY HISTORY.

In 1765 Emperor Shah Alam granted to the East India Company the *Diwani* or fiscal administration of the three provinces of Bihar, Bengal and Orissa. According to this, the Company was authorised to realise the revenue and undertook to maintain the army but the criminal jurisdiction of the *Nizam* remained with the Nawab. The East India Company had no experience of the intricacies of the revenue system and the arrangement proved a chaos. In 1769 a native *Naib* or Deputy *Diwan* was entrusted with the collection of revenue under the nominal control of the European chief at Patna. To supervise the work of the native officers in the collection of revenue and administration of justice some supervisors were appointed. Neither the supervisors nor the subordinate staff were above corruption. In 1770 a Revenue Council of Control was established at Patna. In 1771 the Court of Directors issued orders that the Company's servants should take upon themselves the entire management of the revenue. The incumbency of the *Naib Diwan* at Patna was abolished and the supervisors were now designated Collectors and the native officer called *Diwan* was appointed with each of the Collectors. This system also did not work well. Many of the earliest Collectors were carrying on personal trade and harassed the tenants. An experiment was made by the Company to make a five years' settlement of Bihar. The zamindars refused to accept the settlement and the Company then settled the estates with the outsiders, whom they called renters, with the arrangement that the zamindars should receive an annuity (*malikana*) of 10 per cent of their collections. This system also proved a failure. The main reason was that the renters wanted to make as much profit as possible over and above the stipulated sum they had to pay. On the expiry of the five years' settlement the system of annual settlement was introduced. The self-same set of renters started exacting money as they did not know if they would continue beyond one year.

Raja Kalyan Singh, *Diwan* of the Company, was given arbitrary powers over the zamindars. He was allowed to confine the zamindars and even to forfeit their estates. Raja Mitrajit Singh of Tekari was placed on arrest by Raja Khewali Ram Singh, *Naib Diwan*. Raja Narain Singh, a zamindar of Siris and Kutumba, was imprisoned and ousted from his zamindari. Raja Akbar Ali Khan of Narhat and Samai was confined in Patna. The zamindars as a class became extremely dissatisfied with the administration. The revolt of Raja Chait Singh in 1781 was not an isolated case. Akbar Ali Khan escaped from Patna and at Nawada he collected a force and started plundering the country. Narain Singh also rose in revolt. Narain Singh was apprehended and

sent as a State prisoner to Dacca. In the meantime, the whole of Bihar had been settled with Kalyan Singh who divided the settlement with Khewali Ram Singh. They depended on the *amils* or sub-renters some of whom were from the line of the old zamindars while others were mostly speculators. Collection of rent was made with the help of sepoys. This system also brought in its wake extortion, harassment and dissatisfaction.

On the 18th June, 1789 Sir John Shore issued his famous minute regarding the permanent settlement of the lands in Bihar, Bengal and Orissa, holding the settlement to be made for a period of five years certain, but with a view to permanency. On the 22nd March, 1793, a proclamation was issued declaring the decennial settlement of Bihar and Bengal concluded earlier in 1790 to be permanent.

From 1781 the Revenue Chief in Patna had been appointed Collector under the orders of the Revenue Committee in Calcutta. His jurisdiction was over Tirhut, Shahabad and Bihar, i.e., the modern district of Patna and northern portion of Gaya. For judicial purposes Bihar was formed into a district with a covenanted judge incharge of the civil and criminal jurisdiction. In 1793 the offices of Judge and Collector were separated and the district of Bihar had one civilian as Civil Judge and Magistrate and a second as Collector under the Board of Revenue. At the same time, native Munsifs were appointed to decide suits relating to personal properties not exceeding the value of Rs. 100. Appeals from their decisions had to go to the Civil Judge.

#### FORMATION OF THE DISTRICT.

In the early English administration the district of Gaya was not a separate unit and its boundaries varied from time to time. In 1784 Thomas Law was appointed Collector of Rohtas with his headquarters at Gaya. This may be described as the first stage of the formation of the district of Gaya as a separate unit. The district of Rohtas consisted of the southern portion of the present district of Shahabad (*parganas* Sasaram, Chainpur and Rohtas), two *parganas* now in Palamau (Japla and Belaunja) and a portion of Gaya district. In 1787 there was a re-arrangement and Thomas Law was made the Collector of Bihar district (commonly described as Bahar also). Bihar district then comprised the districts of Patna and Gaya with a portion of Monghyr lying west of the Kiul river. Gaya was the headquarters although the Collector used to move to Bihar (modern Biharsharif) and Patna occasionally. Hawkins, the Collector of Bihar district, moved his headquarters to Patna in 1797. This change was approved by the Board of Revenue but the Governor-General ordered a return to Gaya. There were more of social amenities in Patna where a number of factories and godowns under European management had grown up and it appears that there was a request from the people of Patna to Hawkins to change the headquarters. In 1805 Ricketts, the Collector sent up proposals for

building offices at Gaya but it does not appear that his request was implemented. The unwieldy size of the district and the bad communications made the administration in the remote parts rather difficult. To obviate the difficulty a proposal was sanctioned in 1814 for stationing a special Joint Magistrate at Sherghati with jurisdiction over the southern portion of Gaya. An officer as Magistrate and Assistant Collector was posted at Gaya in 1820. The headquarters returned to Gaya when Patna district was separated from Bihar in 1825.

Additions and alterations in the district boundary had been going on side by side. In 1800 the Bihar *mahals* of Ramgarh, namely, Chakai, Kendi, Nagpur, Palamau and Ramgarh were handed over to Bihar. In 1801 the Governor-General proposed a division of the whole of Bihar into two districts, one north and the other south of the Ganges. This proposal was, however, dropped as it was held that the *jama* of the South Bihar district of Rs. 26,98,336 would be impossible for one man to be responsible for. The *parganas* of Siris, Kutumba, Charkawan and Sherghati were made over to Ramgarh while the revenue administration remained with Bihar. At the same time the administration of *parganas* Anchha, Goh and Arwal with the eastern *parganas* of the district of Patna were made over to Shahabad. In 1809, however, the *parganas*, transferred to Ramgarh except those between Sherghati and Son, were placed under the Magistrate and Collector of Bihar who was stationed at Ramgarh. This Assistant Collector used to be both at Chatra and Sherghati for administrative purposes. In 1812 the *parganas* transferred to Sherghati were re-transferred. In 1819 Ramgarh was made a separate Collectorship consisting of Sherghati *pargana* but there continued an Assistant Collector of Chatra. *Pargana* Sherghati was re-transferred to Bihar in 1835. By 1865 the formation of the present district of Gaya was completed and comprised the parts of the old districts of Bihar and Ramgarh. The subdivision of Bihar with an area of about 800 square miles was transferred to the Patna district. Six years later, i.e., in 1871, the *parganas* of Japla and Belaunja, covering 650 square miles, were amalgamated with Lohardagga (now Palamau) and in 1875 an area of 6 square miles was transferred to Hazaribagh. The present area of the district of Gaya stands almost intact since 1875. Since the last District Gazetteer of Gaya was published there has been no change regarding its boundaries.

It may, however, be mentioned that since a long time and before the last District Gazetteer of Gaya was compiled cess for certain *tauzies* of Monghyr district is realised in Monghyr and transferred to Gaya while Gaya collects some annual cess and remits the amount to Patna district for some *tauzies*. This system of collection of annual cess and transfer to the districts concerned is due to the fact that certain villages are lying in the executive jurisdiction and management of one district as regards the maintenance of roads and civil and criminal justice, although they comprise in the *tauzi* of another district.

The functions of the Collector had also been changing. The Collector was at first subordinate to the Board of Commissioners in Bihar and Banaras for revenue purposes. But for judicial purposes there were native Munsifs under a Judge-Magistrate from whom again an appeal lay to the Provincial Civil Court in Patna. This Court and also the Board were abolished in 1829 and their powers vested in the Commissioner at Patna acting under the order of the Board at Calcutta. In 1825 Bihar was constituted a separate Collectorate and in 1831 the Judge Magistrate of Gaya was given increased power as Sessions Judge and his magisterial power was made over to the Collector. This is how the long standing unit of administration Magistrate-Collector was created at district level. In 1845 the offices of Magistrate and Collector were separated but reunited in 1859 by the orders of the Secretary of State.

#### PARGANAS OF THE DISTRICT.

A brief mention will be made of the earlier history of some of the *parganas*.

*Pargana Sherghati*.—In 1762 it was the property of Gulam Hussain Khan. The survey and settlement in 1783 had fixed the revenue at Rs. 53,001. In 1784 Thomas Law had complained to the Board that Gulam Hussain Khan was not agreeable to pay revenue without coercive measure and recommended that his estate should be farmed. Gulam Haider, the *Sajawal* of Charkawan, took the farming settlement of this *pargana* from 1787 to 1791 on a *jama* annually from Rs. 49,000 to Rs. 53,000. The estate was brought under the Court of Wards after the death of Gulam Hussain Khan. After release the estate fell in arrears of revenue and was purchased by Raja Mitrajit Singh of Tekari in the auction. Some parts of this *pargana* descended to other successor-interests to Gulam Hussain Khan. The revenue of whole *pargana* in 1819 was Rs. 68,002.

*Parganas Siris and Kutumba*.—In 1763 these two *parganas* were in the possession of Narain Singh. The assessed revenue in 1778 was Rs. 1,75,000. The revenue was fixed at the decennial settlement for the whole of the *parganas* of Siris and Kutumba at Rs. 1,60,450. This estate was partitioned in 1801 in three shares, Mali, Pawai and the third share being joint.

*Pargana Charkawan*.—In 1792 this *pargana* consisted of four parts, viz., (i) Haveli Charkawan. (ii) Dugul, (iii) Deo and (iv) Umga. Deo and Umga were the properties of Rajput zamindars. Raja Chhatrapati Singh and his son Fateh Narain Singh helped the English in putting down Chait Singh and obtained a remission of Rs. 10,461 in revenue and 11 non-*kar* (no-revenue) villages. Haveli Charkawan and Dugul belonged to Pathan families. In 1819 the revenue of the *pargana* was Rs. 57,693.

*Pargana Arwal*.—The revenue of *pargana* Arwal in 1819 was Rs. 51,288.

*Parganas Manaura, Anchha and Goh.*—The original holders of *pargana* Manaura according to Boddam were Choudhury Dal Singh and Tej Singh who also had lands in Anchha and Goh. Revenue in 1819 for Manaura *pargana* was Rs. 22,492, for Anchha *pargana* Rs. 22,493 and for Goh *pargana* was Rs. 21,357.

*Parganas Dadar and Kaber.*—The revenue in 1819 for these *parganas* which were the *jagir* of Nawab Mozaffar Jang was Rs. 14,385 and Rs. 45,745, respectively. Ain-i-Akbari mentions Kaber *pargana*.

*Parganas Narhat and Samai.*—The name Narhat-Samai was loosely applied for a number of other *parganas* as a whole, namely, Roh, Pachrukhi, Jarrah and half of Maher. A number of the important zamindars of Gaya district, namely, Tekari, Mahanths of Budhauri and Bodh Gaya, Bengali estate, and Maksudpur Raja estate had their villages in these *parganas*. Of course, with the abolition of zamindari their zamindari interests have now lapsed.

In 1819 the revenue for Narhat and Samai alone was Rs. 1,09,076 and that for Narhat, Samai, Pachrukhi, Roh, Jarrah and Maher together was Rs. 2,01,116.

*Pargana Sanaut.*—*Pargana* Sanaut includes the whole of the zamindari of Raja Mitrajit Singh of Tekari and the denomination of Sanaut also covers the *parganas* of Atri, Pahara and Dakhner and half of Okri, Ekil and Bhelawar. The history of these *parganas* is practically the history of the famous Tekari estate. In 1819 the revenue of the *parganas* was as follows :—

				Rs.
Atri	...	...	...	4,371
Sanaut	...	...	...	11,004
Pahara	...	...	...	26,995
Dakhner	...	...	...	5,726
Okri	...	...	...	57,117
Ekil	...	...	...	74,440
Bhelawar	...	...	...	47,248
			Total	2,26,901

The largest estate in these *parganas* are the 9 annas and 7 annas Tekari estates, Maksudpur estate and that of Pandui *Baboos*. The division of the Tekari estate took place on the death of Raja Mitrajit Singh. Hit Narain Singh got 9 annas share while Mod Narain Singh got 7 annas share.

*Pargana Gaya.*—This *pargana* is small and practically coincides with the town of Gaya. In 1802 the Collector, Mr. Graham, settled the village Murarpur along with the village Pahsi, which contains Ramshila Hills, at a *jama* of Rs. 151. In 1808 the villages Sahibganj and Alamgirpur were settled with one Sher Chand on permanent basis.

Sipahi lane containing the present Collector's bungalow and the Police Line was not permanently settled till 1860. The main source of income was the taxes realised from the pilgrims.

*Kauwakol Mahal*.—This was a resume to Ghatwali tenure and consisted of 52 villages and the first settlement was made by Mr. Reade.

*Wairani and Taufir villages*.—At the time of decennial settlement certain villages were waste and omitted and they subsequently became fit for settlement by cultivation. Such villages are called *wairani* villages. *Taufir* villages are those that had been annexed by landlords to their estates subsequent to settlement without paying any revenue. Mr. Reade took up in 1819 the question of ascertaining the value and the rent payable by the *raiyyats* for such *wairani* and *taufir* villages. Mr. Reade's attempt was, however, unsuccessful. Although in 1837 he was able to prepare a list of *wairani* and *taufir* villages, the enquiry was finally completed in 1850.

#### GROWTH OF LAND REVENUE.

In 1789 the demand of land revenue for the district of Bihar was Rs. 10,41,700 payable by 744 estates with 1,160 proprietors; but the area of the district did not correspond with that of the present district of Gaya, and of the 41 *parganas* which were included in it, 16 have since been transferred to Patna, two (Japla and Belaunja) to Palamau, and one (Amarthu) to Monghyr. In 1870-71, when the district was practically the same as at present, the total demand of land revenue was Rs. 13,80,320, payable by 4,411 estates owned by 20,453 proprietors. Since that time the demand has increased but little, but on the other hand, the number of estates and proprietors, has grown very largely, owing to the extraordinary rapidity with which proprietary rights have been subdivided under the operation of the law of succession, and of modern legislation regarding partition and land registration which causes such minute subdivisions to be recorded. In 1881-82 the current demand had risen to Rs. 14,36,900, payable by 5,614 estates and 59,172 proprietors, and in 1900-01 to Rs. 14,80,700 due from 7,514 estates owned by 72,404 proprietors. The average payment from each estate has thus fallen during the three decades ending in that year from Rs. 313 to Rs. 256 and Rs. 197, and the payment from each proprietor from Rs. 67-8-0 to Rs. 24-4-0 and finally to Rs. 20-8-0. In 1904-05 the demand amounted to Rs. 14,85,309 payable by 8,044 estates, of which 7,996 with a demand of Rs. 13,39,700 were permanently settled, 14 with a demand of Rs. 41,200 were temporarily settled, the remainder being held direct by Government.

Roughly speaking, the land-owners of Gaya paid a land revenue of 8 annas and received from their *raiyyats* Rs. 3 an acre. Thus the land revenue demand was 16 per cent of the total rent demand, or over 80 per cent was profit. The amount of profit even in 1812 attracted Buchanan Hamilton's attention, and we find him writing: "Although the people

of this district are very cautious in speaking of their affairs, it is very generally admitted, even by themselves, that the owners of the assessed lands have very considerable profits; nor do they scruple to admit that it far exceeds the estimate of the one-tenth of the revenue, which was supposed to be the profit that they were to have by the settlement."

#### GOVERNMENT ESTATES.

The Government estates, as they were known before the abolition of the zamindari by the passing of the Land Reforms Act and the taking over of the zamindaries by the Government, comprised 118 villages extending over an area of 102 square miles. They fall under three groups, viz., (i) those escheated from Mostt. Barati Begum, the Shia mistress of Raja Mod Narain Singh of Tekari, (ii) Sarwa Mahal, and (iii) the Nawada group. The first group of Khas Mahal villages were escheated by the Government in 1879 after the death of Ekbal Bahadur, the son of the Muslim mistress of Raja Mod Narain Singh of Tekari, to the extent of 7 annas. This group is composed of 28 villages called the Dakhner Mahal in which Government have  $8\frac{1}{2}$  annas interest; of a group of six villages of which five are near Tekari and one is in the Bela thana; of nine villages constituting the Ghenjan Mahal, situated 7 miles west of Makhdumpur; and of three villages some 5 miles west of Jahanabad.

These villages previously belonged to Mostt. Barati Begum, a mistress of Raja Mod Narain Singh of Tekari. It is said that she first came to Tekari in the company of a Mogal vendor of *shawl*. Subsequently, she became a mistress of Raja Mod Narain Singh over whom she wielded considerable influence. She had four children, named, (1) Sarfunnisa Begum, (2) Himat Bahadur, (3) Bismilla Begum and (4) Ekbal Bahadur. The first child died in his mother's life time and Ekbal Bahadur died several years after Mostt. Barati Begum's death. The other two, Himat Bahadur and Bismilla Begum, survived. The children were all brought up as members of Mohammadan Shia sect. Raja Mod Narain Singh had granted to Mostt. Barati Begum many *mokarari* leases of important villages out of his Raj at a low rent. He further gave a large estate named Taluka Belkhara to his mistress. On the death of Barati Begum in 1860 there was a dispute among the surviving children. But as under the Shia law the illegitimate children were held ineligible to inherit property of Barati Begum, the villages along with other properties came under the possession of Government in 1879. An interesting account of these escheat cases was published by the then Collector of Gaya a copy of which is available in the Khas Mahal office of the Gaya Collectorate.

The second group known as Sarwa Mahal comprises 47 villages with an area of 31,284 acres, to the south of Gaya; most of them are at a distance of 11 miles from the town, but a few are situated on the southern border of the district. These villages came into the possession

of Government about the year 1842, owing to the refusal of the former proprietors to take settlement of them.

The third group contains 25 villages in the Nawada subdivision, comprising an area of 16,282 acres. The history of 15 of them only is traceable; three were escheated to Government in 1820 on the death of the proprietor, a descendant of Kamgar Khan, a military adventurer of the eighteenth century, to whom they once belonged; and twelve were confiscated in 1841, on account of the part taken in a daring dacoity by their former proprietor, a zamindar of Hazaribagh. The latter villages, which are known as the Dubaur *Mahal*, are situated in the extreme south of the Nawada subdivision. They are mostly jungles and hills, but contain valuable mica mines.

The Khas Mahal villages or these Government estates fall under 23 *tauzies* in Sadar subdivision having a rental demand of Rs. 77,510 and cess Rs. 5,477; under seven *tauzies* in Nawada subdivision with a rental demand of Rs. 23,164 and cess Rs. 1,724 and under sixteen *tauzies* with a rental demand of Rs. 19,397 and cess Rs. 17,812 in Jahanabad subdivision. There are four villages, Saida, Madanpore, Panti and Kurkuri of Rafiganj police-station in Aurangabad subdivision but they are controlled from Sadar subdivision.

Since the Government have already taken over all the zamindari-estates of the district by area-wise notifications under the provisions of the Bihar Land Reforms (Amendment) Act, 1953 the Government estates are now managed from the Land Reforms Department.

#### SURVEYS AND SETTLEMENTS.

Though the estates were permanently settled at the time of the Permanent Settlement of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa in 1793 on fixed land revenue it was felt necessary that the lands be demarcated and the records-of-rights should be prepared. In 1838, a demarcation survey of the district was carried out, in which the boundaries of villages and estates were defined and a compass and chain survey was made.

This was followed by the professional village survey of 1838—1844 which Government undertook with the object of making a scientific survey of the boundaries and preparing a map showing the geographical and topographical features of the district. This resulted in the preparation of the first record-of-rights in 1843 under the supervision of Lieut. W. A. Sherwail when *mahal*-wise registers were prepared. These registers bear the area of each village of the *mahal* and the total land revenue fixed for the whole *mahal*. The area commanded by the Son canals in the north-west of the district was cadastrally surveyed in connexion with the survey made for irrigational purposes in 1876-77. During the year 1893—1898 the villages under 9 annas share of Tekari Raj were brought under survey and settlement operations. During these years 758 villages extending over an area of 852 square miles were surveyed. The cost of the operation was Rs. 2,50,000. In the years

1900—1903 the survey and settlement operations were extended to Deo and Maksudpur estates. The Deo estate covering an area of 92 square miles mostly in the Aurangabad subdivision was settled. The Maksudpur estate was found to include 160 villages covering 130 square miles, of which 50 square miles are under Atri police-station forming a fairly compact block and another 60 square miles to be found in and around Rajauli. In this estate the proceedings commenced in the year 1900 and were concluded in the year 1904 at a net expenditure of Rs. 75,000 or Rs. 577 per square mile. Complete surveys and settlements in the district were, however, carried out during 1911—1918 in course of which complete records-of-rights were prepared.

For purposes of the survey and settlement operations from 1911 to 1918 the district was divided into 14 revenue thanas, namely, (1) Gaya town, (2) Gaya Mofassil, (3) Sherghati, (4) Barachatti, (5) Tekari, (6) Atri—all these six constituting Sadar subdivision, (7) Nawada, (8) Pakri Barawan, (9) Rajauli—the three comprising Nawada subdivision, (10) Jahanabad, (11) Arwal—the two covering the Jahanabad subdivision, (12) Aurangabad, (13) Nabinagar and (14) Daudnagar—the three comprising Aurangabad subdivision. The revenue thana does not coincide with the police-station jurisdiction. Revenue thana has a larger jurisdiction covering one or more police-stations. The following statement will show the areas :—

Revenue Thana.	Number of villages	Police-Station.
(1) Gaya town	... 11	Kotwali and Civil Lines.
(2) Gaya Mofassil	... 676	Gaya Mofassil, Bodh Gaya, Paraiya and Wazirganj.
(3) Sherghati	... 865	Sherghati, Gurua, Imamganj and Dumaria.
(4) Barachatti	... 666	Barachatti and Fatehpur.
(5) Tekari	... 435	Tekari, Konch and Bela.
(6) Atri	... 272	Atri and Khizirsarai.
(7) Nawada	... 663	Hisua, Warsaliganj and Govindpur.
(8) Pakri Barawan	... 141	Pakri Barawan and Kauwakol
(9) Rajauli	... 295	Rajauli.
(10) Jahanabad	... 698	Jahanabad, Kurtha, Ghosi and Makdumpore.
(11) Arwal	... 249	Arwal.
(12) Aurangabad	... 991	Obra, Madanpur, Barun and Rafiganj.
(13) Nabinagar	... 580	Nabinagar and Kutumba.
(14) Daudnagar	... 313	Daudnagar and Goh.
Total number of villages	<u>6,855</u>	

In course of survey and settlement operations the villages were arranged in serial number and for identification each village was numbered in each revenue thana. According to the settlement operations the total area of the district came to 3,03,592 acres or 4,735 square miles for which records-of-rights were prepared consisting of 8,43,392 holdings and 57,54,580 plots. The village *khatians* are kept in the Record Room of Gaya Collectorate. It is to be remembered that in the settlement operations even unoccupied villages (*bechiragi*) were surveyed and numbered and hence there may be a slight difference between the number of villages according to the settlement operations and according to the census tables.

The village *khatian* consists of village maps, index of record-of-rights comprised in the village *khatian*, *khewat* bearing the nature and extent of rights of each landlord or each set of landlords holding in jointness in the village with the amount of revenue or rent and cess payable to Government or superior landlord with the area of the land, etc., continuous *khatian* which gives the details of all plots of land in the possession of tenants and landlords under different headings of *raiyyati*, *gairmazarua malik*, *bakast*, *gairmazarua am*, *sikmi raiyyati*, Government land, service tenures, *chaukidari chakran*, etc., abstract of *khatian*, plot index, *fard-e-abpashi*, *fard-e-rewazi*, etc. The customary rights of the villagers to the forests, irrigational facilities, etc., are carefully recorded. Village notes are also prepared at the time of the operations in which all peculiar or particular features of the villages are mentioned.

The total cost of operation came to Rs. 18,38,356 or Rs. 388 per square mile which was fairly low compared to the other districts and to the operations in 1900—1904. The total amount received was Rs. 3,18,110 or Rs. 67 per square mile and hence the net cost after deducting the receipts came to Rs. 15,20,246.

#### LAND TENURES.

In the district of Gaya there were a number of intermediate tenures between the proprietors who held the estates from Government under the Permanent Settlement and paid land revenue direct to the Government treasury and the actual cultivators. At one end of the chain stood the proprietor or the *malik* who held the estate from the Government and at the other end the actual cultivator called the *jotdar* or *kastkar*. There were a number of intermediate tenures granted by the zamindar in consideration of a money advance or mortgage on loan, e.g., *mukarari* which is a lease from the *malik* at a fixed rental after the payment of an installation fee called *nazrana*. This lease could be permanent in which case it is called *istimrari* or *barfarzandan* (from generation to generation) or it is only granted for the life time to the lease-holder in which case it is called *hinkhiyati*. In addition to the *nazarana*, the lease-holder has sometimes to pay an advance (*zar-i-peshqi*) as security for the payment of the rent. *Dar mukarari* is an exactly

similar lease to the above granted by the *mukararidar* to a third party. The holder of any of the preceding permanent tenures may either cultivate the land with his own labour, in which case the holding is called *nij-jot*; or with hired labour, in which case it is called *sir*; or he may make over the land to another for a fixed term, which gives rise to a number of subordinate tenures. *Thika* or *ijara* is the common term for a sub-lease for a definite term. The holder of a *thika* obtains the estate either from the *malik* or *mukararidar* and has to pay an advance, on getting possession, and afterwards a fixed rent till the expiration of the term for which the lease has been taken. The *thikadar* or *ijaradar* takes the place of the proprietor, who can only interfere on the ground that his ultimate rights are being prejudiced, or on the lease-holder failing to pay the fixed rent. The sub-lessee holding a lease from the *thikadar* is called a *katkanadar*, and the tenure held by him a *katkana*; and lower down still in the chain of subinfeudation is the *darkatkanadar* who has a subordinate tenure under the *katkanadar*.

#### THIKADARI SYSTEM.

The *thikadari* system which was an important feature in the system of land revenue prevalent in Gaya was mostly based on *bhaoli* tenures which were more profitable to landlords. In many cases cash rent was subsequently fixed for the good of the tenants. The only other tenures calling for special mention are the rent-free or *lakhrāj* tenures. These were once very numerous, and Buchanan Hamilton estimated that over one-third of the tenures in Bihar were free of revenue. Most of these have been resumed, but some still exist of a special nature, such as *altamgha grants* (from *al*, red, and *tamgha*, a seal) or lands given in perpetuity as a reward for conspicuous military service, *madadmash grants* (from *madad*, assistance, and *mash*, livelihood) or lands given for some rendered service and *digwar* (i.e., warder) lands assigned for the maintenance of guard and patrol on roads and passes. In the Collectorate parallel to Register 'D' in which the names of proprietors who pay a revenue to Government are recorded there is another register for revenue-free estates.

#### RENTS.

Various kinds of rents are prevalent in the district of Gaya, viz., *nakdi*, i.e., rent in cash, *bhaoli*, i.e., rent in kind, *chakath*, i.e., temporarily commuted rent in cash from kind, and *motarfa*, i.e., ground rent of non-agricultural inhabitants of the village. As far as *shikami* rent is concerned the 9-anna Tekari estate admitted at the time of the last settlement (1911—1918) that it meant fixed rent so that the holdings on this rent were put into separate *khatians* with status of *sharah-muayin*, i.e., fixed rents. Among other kinds of rents mention may be made of *paran*, i.e., rent in kind for certain kinds of crops and in cash for certain other kinds of crops for the same land, *sonbarahna*, i.e., gradually increasing rent reaching the maximum usually in five years, *tangito*, i.e., charges for taking wood

from the forests and *kharchari*, i.e., fixed for cattle grazing. Certain kinds of *abwabs* which are illegal exactions were abolished while the local and authorised ones were included in the rent.

*Raiyati* lands may be divided into three classes so far as kind of rent is concerned, viz., cash rent, produce rent and *chakath* rent. Before the last survey and settlement operations produce-rented area was much greater than cash-rented area or *chakath*-rented area, that is, in the ratio of 9 : 5 : 3 approximately.

The total area of the district is about 4,735 square miles covering 30,38,645 acres approximately distributed over 57,54,580 plots. The average size of the holding is 3.6 acres and of the plot 0.5 acres. This figure also includes the *zirat* and *bakast* holdings of the landlords. According to the last survey and settlement the *raiyyats* including the rent-free-holder possessed an area of 17,39,387 acres occupied by 7,57,612 holdings which gives an average area of 2.3 acres per holding. The area of *raiyyati* lands has increased after the survey on account of subsequent settlements with the tenants. At the previous settlement in 1893—1898 of the Tekari Wards estate and Government estates the average holding was found to be between four and five acres.

In the last settlement about 34 per cent of the land was found unoccupied and this comprised the uncultivated lands excepting those which formed part of a *raiyyat's* holdings including roads and railways. The percentage of occupied areas held by (i) proprietors and tenure-holders, (ii) *raiyyats* at fixed rent and rent-free *raiyyats*, (iii) settled occupancy *raiyyats* and (iv) non-occupancy *raiyyats*, were 13, 2.9, 83.2 and 0.7, respectively. Since the last survey there has been more of land utilisation and the percentage of occupied area has certainly increased. Without another survey and settlement operation the present figures of such areas cannot be given.

In the survey and settlement operations of 1911—1918 proprietors' *zirat* came to 723 acres; 1,50,328 acres or 7.2 per cent of occupied area was in the cultivated possession of proprietors which was not true *zirat*; 1,12,821 acres or 5.6 per cent of the occupied area was found to be held by tenure-holders and 17,598 acres was found held by *raiyyats* at fixed rent.

The cash rent of settled occupancy *raiyyats* works out at Rs. 6 per acre which is higher than in other districts of Bihar except Patna. The incidence of *chakath* rent is Rs. 5-9-0 per acre and is everywhere lower than the incidence of ordinary cash rent except in thanas Arwal, Aurangabad, Pakri Barwan and Rajauli. The difference is most marked in the last two thanas. The average rent of lands held by the non-occupancy *raiyyats* came to Rs. 4-2-8 per acre. In Daudnagar thana, however, the non-occupancy *raiyyats* pay on the average higher than the occupancy *raiyyats*. In the Government and temporarily settled

estates the average rent of the non-occupancy *raiyats* at the previous settlement in 1893—1898 was Rs. 1-12-0 per acre. The average rent of an under-*raiyat* is Rs. 6-4-0 an acre which is a little higher than that of a settled *raiyat*.

There have been changes in the law which have altered the system of rent payment. In the last District Gazetteer of Gaya, Mr. O'Malley had observed that about 70 to 75 per cent of the cultivation is held under the system of payment of rent in kind. This was necessary due to the physical configuration of the country which made an extensive system of irrigation necessary and it is only the landlords that could maintain the irrigation channels. In the last survey and settlement operations it was found that about 60 per cent of the cultivation was held under the system of payment of rent in kind. But there was a clamour from the side of the cultivators against the system of *bhaoli* rent. There is no doubt that this system proved harsh to the cultivators. The commutation of cash rent was permissible under section 40 of the Bihar Tenancy Act. A rent commutation drive was launched by Government and a large number of Rent Commutation Officers with powers under section 40 of the Bihar Tenancy Act were appointed in 1946. The drive considerably reduced the percentage of produce rent. The produce rents were also commuted into cash rent by agreement between the parties during the same period.

The rent commutation drive commenced on the 5th September, 1946 and continued till the 31st May, 1948. In all 45 camps were opened and the total number of cases dealt with in the district by the Rent Commutation Officers was 1,93,687. Out of these only 1,82,197 cases could be disposed of till the end of May, 1948 when the operations came to an abrupt close. The remaining cases were disposed of by the Circle Officers employed in the Zamindari Abolition Department duly vested with powers under section 40 of the Bihar Tenancy Act. In all 29,241 cases including the old pending ones after the rent commutation drive were disposed of by the Circle Officers till the 13th June, 1953. There is no doubt that the rent commutation drive had hard hit the zamindars and was a distinct relief to the tenants.

The large-scale prevalence of produce rent in Gaya district may be attributed to the fact that the landlords generally maintained the irrigation works. Their construction required a large expenditure and also an annual maintenance charge. The landlords were the only persons who could supply the capital for the construction and repairs and so they fully utilised their initial outlay and insisted on *bhaoli* rent. The liability of the maintenance of the irrigation works rested on the landlords according to the *fard-e-abpashi* prepared at the time of the last survey and settlement operations. Landlords were the only persons who could help the tenants to convert *bhith* lands into paddy lands. The landlords previously used to give seed, grains, etc., in loan to the

poorer tenantry. For all these reasons the average tenants could not very well insist on the commutation of rent.

To create a psychological background and to induce the tenants to file applications for commutation of rent amendments under section 40 of the Bihar Tenancy Act were promulgated and rent commutation camps were opened in the mufassil. The Irrigation Act also was made elaborate and the Collectors were empowered to take up irrigation schemes for repairs and additions even without the consent of the landlords in cases of emergency and advance loans to the tenants. A liberal drive for providing the tenants with money was made and they were encouraged to file loan applications under the Land Improvement Act, Waste Land Reclamation Act and Agriculturists' Loans Act. As a fitting sequel to the State's anxiety to evolve a Welfare State and to give relief to the tenants the Bihar State Management Act was passed but had to be repealed shortly in 1950. This Act intended to do away with the zamindari system. Subsequently the Bihar Land Reforms Act was passed according to which all intermediary interests passed to the State Government.

Although *bhaoli* system of rent would become archaic very soon it may be mentioned that the landlord's share in the produce was determined either by *batai*, i.e., actual division of yield on the thrashing floor or by *danabandi*, i.e., appraisement of the crops before they are reaped. The *batai* system was also called *agore-batai* system because the landlords' men had to watch (*agora*) the crop carefully to prevent their being robbed till the crops were harvested and taken to the thrashing floor for division. Under the *danabandi* system the produce of each field was appraised before the harvest and the tenant was allowed to take away the whole quantity. When the crops were reaped the landlords or their agents and the cultivators would go to the field accompanied by the *patwari* (village accountant) and *amin* (assessee) with a *jarib* (measuring rod), a *salis* (arbitrator), a *nabisanda* (writer) and the village headman. The field would be measured by the *amin* and the *salis* after a consultation with the *amin* and the village officials would estimate the quantity of grains and the crops. If the tenants would accept the estimate the quantity was entered in the field book (*khasra*) by the *patwari* and the tenant had to give landlord's share in the produce accordingly. In case of objection by tenants or difference of opinion between the *amin* and the *salis* the fellow-tenants were called in as mediators. If, however, they would also fail to convince either party a crop-cutting test would take place, the landlord selecting the best part of the field and the tenant an equal area of the worst part. The crops of both the parties were reaped, thrashed and the grain having been weighed the total produce was calculated and was entered in the *khasra*. The tenant was then at liberty to reap the crop. There was also a system of estimate of the produce according to the market value of the grain and the tenant might pay the rent in cash being the value of the landlord's share in the produce, otherwise the rent was to be paid in kind.

*Batai* system was more prevalent than the *danabandi*. In the Survey Record-of-Rights *batai* was entered as a system of rent in column 8 and after describing this incidence in the special incidence column as *jard-e-rewaj bhaoli*. The fact was noted that the *danabandi* was done when the tenants agreed and its incidence was also recorded. The *jard-e-rewaj bhaoli* was written up for the whole village or for each *patti* or *tauzi* if the details differed. In the *danabandi batai* system a number of customary allowances had to be made out of the grains before the produce was divided between the landlord and the tenant. The first deduction made was that of *mazduri* or labourer's share. After labourer's share had been deducted the blacksmith, carpenter, washerman, etc. got their share from each tenant. The village cobbler, barber, washerman and even the village bard (*bhant*) and the beggars were not forgotten. After these deductions the remaining sheaves were thrashed and the grain would be collected into one heap and weighed. The village officials were to be allowed their shares commonly known as *rashams*. The *patwari* (accountant), *gorait* (watchman), *barahil* (*tehsil* peon), *tahlu* (office servant of the *tahsil*) also got their shares.

Some concessions to tenants were also allowed. The 'higher' caste tenants got *mafi* (concession) of 4 seers to a maund while 'lower' caste tenants got a corresponding quantity of 2 seers only. There was also a custom of giving allowance to *jeth raiyats* (the principal *raiayats*).

The custom of the above concessions is survival of the primitive village organisation. The *patwari* had a great role of a village writer at one time and his services were always being utilised by the villagers for writing different deeds and other letters. The *gomasta* had also the responsibility of proper irrigation to the crops besides collection of rent and to protect the rights of tenants if there was a litigation. The *barahils* and *goraits* were expected to watch the crops and to prevent grazing. The carpenter, the blacksmith and the other professionals had to render their services to the village-folk throughout the year without any separate fees for individual services. Naturally there was provision for their remuneration when the crops were gathered.

Another interesting institution which will become archaic very soon could be described as the *abwabs*. *Abwabs* could loosely be described as unauthorised collections ancillary to the payment of rent. In the last survey and settlement operations these *abwabs* were scrutinised. Usually the total of the *abwabs* did not go beyond annas 4 to the rupee. But there were exceptions. In the last settlement operations the largest amount of *abwabs* noticed was in village Deodha no. 37, thana Pakri Barawan where rent roll on Rs. 1,800 was found with Rs. 1,000 as rent and Rs. 800 as *abwabs*.

There were various types of *abwabs* known as *batta-campain*, *batta-nauzarib*, *batta-kalidar*, *batta-saraf*, which all mean compensation for loss of exchange on Company's rupees for *shikka* rupees. *Batta-saraf*

meant compensation for the bad coins occasionally paid as rent. In the last survey operations such *battas* that were shown to have been realised prior to 1836 were allowed to be held as *prima facie* legal.

Similarly, there was a separate set of *abwabs* ancillary to produce rent. Some of them were *mangan*, *nocha*, *dahik*, *amin kharcha*, *patwari's fee*, *salami*, *sidha-butat*, and *dera*. *Mangan* and *nocha* usually meant a quantity of  $2\frac{1}{2}$  seers per maund on the total produce taken away for the village servant. The other kinds mentioned also went to the landlords' subordinates mainly, *Sidha-butat* was meant as diet expenses of village officials or landlord when on tour. *Dera* also meant a realisation for the occasion of the landlord on tour.

Besides the above, a large number of peculiar *abwabs* were noticed in the last survey and settlement operations such as *digwar*, *dak behari*, *kagaj basta* and *pujari chanda*. They were meant for the *chaukidars* or the peons carrying *dak* or carrying bundles of papers or for the village priest. In village Khalispur, thana Jahanabad no. 468, some curious *abwabs* were noticed and they reminded one of the harassing *abwabs* that were once prevalent in North Bihar. *Baithki salami* was an *abwab* for being allowed to sit in the landlord's *kachehry* when paying rent. *Uthki salami* was another fee for being permitted to get up and go away after paying rent. *Tangi salami* was realised on the *tangi* day when the new account books were opened. *Goitha salami* was meant for meeting the fuel expenditure of the *kachehry*. Even the expenditure for the provision of bedding for the subordinates (*amlas*) had to be realised from the tenants by realising the *abwab khatia salami*. These varied from one rupee per plough to 4 annas per plough.

There are interesting cases for the realisation of the *abwabs*. In the reported case of Umeshchandra Mitra *vs.* Baroda Das Mitra, A.I.R. 28 Calcutta 17, all the above *abwabs* were held illegal.

#### RENT REDUCTION.

The low price of agricultural food-stuffs from 1931 onwards for several years made the cash rent rather inequitable. There was an agitation for rent reduction and ultimately provision had to be made under section 112 of the Tenancy Act for the reduction of rent. The operations started from 1938 and continued till 1941 when it stopped abruptly due to the outbreak of war which brought about a rise in the price of essential commodities. The object of the proceedings under section 112 of the Tenancy Act was to reduce the amount of rent payable by occupancy *raiyats* of 5 specific classes of the holdings in certain specified areas of the province.

The five classes of holding under reduction were—

- (1) produce rent commuted into cash rent by courts under section 40 of the Bihar Tenancy Act during the period from the 1st January, 1915 to the 31st December, 1933.

- (2) produce rent commuted into cash rent by agreement between the parties during the same period.
- (3) rents enhanced by the courts on the ground of increase in prices under section 30(b) of the Bihar Tenancy Act during the same period.
- (4) rents enhanced by contract between the parties or illegally enhanced during the period.
- (5) rents fixed for holdings created during the same period at excessively high levels, that is to say, new settlements.

The areas notified were Gaya Sadar, Jahanabad, and Aurangabad subdivisions of Gaya district. According to the Final Rent Reduction Operations (1937—1941) the aggregate of cases filed were 50,888, and the total number of holdings in which rents were settled under section 112 were 36,853. The final publication of Rent Roll was completed in August to December, 1939.

The tenants as a whole were not satisfied with the various measures of relief made available to them through rent reduction and rent commutation proceedings, etc., and wanted further relief. The large number of zamindars who had *bakast* lands used to get some of them cultivated by tenants on produce rent permanently or by year to year settlement but did not grant rent receipts for the same with a view to prevent accrual of occupancy rights to them and proving titles as occupancy *rai-yats* through documentary evidence. The proceedings under section 145, Criminal Procedure Code usually take a long time to decide possession. For speedy disposal and giving opportunities to the tenants to nominate members to the Arbitration Board and thus give better opportunities to place the evidence, Bihar Bakast Disputes Settlement Act was passed. This gave a considerable relief. According to this Act when the Collector was satisfied on enquiry that there was dispute between landlord and tenant over *bakast* lands and there was likelihood of a breach of peace, he referred the dispute to Arbitration Board, the Chairman of which was to be appointed by the Collector and members to be nominated by the parties if they liked. The number of cases filed by the 31st July 1953 was 5,488 and the number of cases disposed of 5,168. To impart further relief to the tenant, the Bihar Management of Estates and Tenures Act was enacted but after some-time it was repealed. Subsequently the Bihar Land Reforms Act, 1950 was passed. After the decision of Supreme Court in May, 1952, this Act came into operation. Under the provisions of this Act, intermediary interests were notified and taken over by Government. Under the amendments of the Bihar Land Reforms Act the State Government of Bihar had notified the whole of the district of Gaya as area and all the intermediary interests vested in the State from the 26th January, 1955. This abolished the long existing zamindari system and the *rai-yats* would henceforth pay rent and cess direct to Government.

A brief note on the background for the passing of the Bihar Land Reforms Act may be given. The problems relating to the Land Revenue system had engaged the attention of the Government and the public men in Bihar and Bengal where the Permanent Settlement of 1793 prevailed. Towards the end of 1938 the Government of Bengal had appointed a Land Revenue Commission to examine generally the existing Land Revenue System of Bengal in its various aspects, with special reference to the Permanent Settlement. After examining the question in all its aspects and recording evidence, the Commission gave its report in 1940. The serious defects in the zamindari system were pointed out and the Commission came to the conclusion that the Permanent Settlement and the zamindari system should be replaced by a *raiyyatwari* system for improving the economic condition of the cultivators and that Government should be brought into direct relationship with the actual cultivators by the acquisition of all the superior interests in agricultural lands.

With the Congress Ministry in Bihar this question was actively taken up. The Bihar Legislative Assembly had adopted a resolution, namely, "That this Assembly recommends to Government that immediate steps be taken for the abolition of the zamindari system." As the vital interest of the State required immediate steps to be taken for improving the agricultural production and the lot of the cultivators, the Legislature enacted various laws towards that end. As already mentioned some of these measures were the amendments to the Bihar Tenancy Act, the Chotanagpur Tenancy Act, promulgation of the Bihar Bakast Disputes Settlement Act, 1947, Rent Reduction Operations, etc. Two other measures were conceived with a view to establish direct relations between the State and the tiller of the soil, viz., the Bihar State Management of Estates Bill, 1947, and the Bihar State Acquisition of Zamindaris Bill, 1947. Two years later the Bihar State Management of Estates and Tenures Act, 1949 (Bihar Act XXI of 1949) was passed. The validity of some of these Acts was challenged in court. The Bihar Abolition of Zamindaris Act, 1948, received the assent of the Governor-General on the 6th July, 1949. The validity of this Act was challenged and while petitions were pending in the High Court the State Act was repealed by the Bihar Legislature and another measure called the Bihar Land Reforms Bill, 1949, was introduced in the month of December, 1949. The above Bill was passed and became later as the Bihar Land Reforms Act, 1950, on the 25th September, 1950, and was published in the *Bihar Gazette Extraordinary* of that date.

The Land Reforms Act was also challenged by some of the landlords of the State. Parts of this Act were declared *ultra vires* by the Patna High Court. The Constitution was amended by the Constitution 182 Amendment Act, 1952. Even after the amendment of the Constitution the Act was challenged but the Supreme Court declared the Act to be *intra vires* except for some minor sections. Government

decided at first to take over the big estates and tenures having gross annual income exceeding Rs. 50,000. In pursuance of this decision of Government several estates of this category were notified. The State Government later decided to take over the entire zamindari and intermediaries. Under the provisions of section 3 (b) of the Bihar Land Reforms Act all the estates and all the tenures had passed to and become vested in the State with effect from the 26th January, 1955, as mentioned before.

#### ABOLITION OF ZAMINDARI.

The implementation of the provisions of the Land Reforms Act involved a lot of difficulties at the initial stage for the local administration. There were speculative transactions on the part of many of the landlords and the tenants for whose benefit the Act was passed were also not always responsive.

As in a few decades the big estates would be reduced to matter for local history some of the names of big zamindar families may be mentioned here. There were 13 estates in the district of Gaya whose income was Rs. 50,000 and above. They were—

- (1) Sri Sant Saran Lal of Hisua.
- (2) Mahanth Ramdhan Puri of Budhauri.
- (3) Sri Captain M. K. Gopal Saran Singh of Tekari.
- (4) Srimati Rani Brij Raj Kumari of Deo.
- (5) Srimati Rani Bhuwaneshwari Kuer of Tekari.
- (6) Sri Lalbihari Saran Singh of Mahadipore.
- (7) Sri Rameshwar Prasad Singh of Sambey.
- (8) Sri Krishna Ballava Prasad Narain Singh of Ramibigha.
- (9) Sri Kumar Jagat Kishore Prasad Narain Singh of Maksudpur.
- (10) Sri Mahanth Harihar Gir of Bodh Gaya.
- (11) Sri Rai Anath Nath Bose, Aurangabad.
- (12) Sri Man Matho Nath Bose, Aurangabad.
- (13) Srimati Maharaj Kumari Umeshwari Devi, Belkhara Trust Estate.

Such estates in Gaya district whose headquarters, however, lie in other districts were :—

- (1) Maharajdhiraj Sir Kameshwar Singh of Darbhanga.
- (2) Sri Kishori Raman and Sri Radha Raman of Banaras Kothi.
- (3) Sri Raghubar Narain Singh of Monghyr.
- (4) Maharaj Kumar Ran Vijai Prasad Singh of Dumraon.
- (5) Tamkuhi Raj Estate.
- (6) Manjha Estate.
- (7) Sri Raghvendra Prasad Narain Singh and others of Amawan.
- (8) Sri Satyendra Narain Singh of Monghyr.
- (9) Raja Sir Raghunandan Prasad Narain Singh of Monghyr.

- (10) Kumar Rajballav Nath Singh of Kunda.
- (11) Syed Ali Sajjad and others, Waqf Estate of Mostt. Imam Bandi Begam, resident of Katra Akhtear, P.-S. Alamganj.
- (12) Mahanth Goswami Kapildeo Ramji of Rajipur Manth.
- (13) Sri Mihir Ganguli and others, Tagore Estate.
- (14) Edward Kothi Estate.
- (15) Sri Shyam Nandan Prasad Narain Singh and others of Lalganj Sehra.

There were 58 estates whose income was between Rs. 5,000 and Rs. 50,000.

The collection by the Collector at the beginning has been somewhat poor due to various reasons. The outgoing landlords had in most cases realised rents for the period subsequent to the date of the vesting of their estates in Government. Tenants also had readily paid rents to the outgoing landlords as the latter had allowed a handsome remission ranging from 4 annas to 8 annas per rupee. Out of the Government share of rent it was found that the outgoing landlords had realised a very big percentage from the tenants. The Land Reforms Section had to take necessary steps for the realisation of this amount from the outgoing landlords. The outgoing landlords also did not file the village papers of all the villages and the tenants too were not agreeable to produce rent receipts as a result of which the collection work was very much handicapped.

The fact that there have been no recent survey and settlement operations was an impediment. The Land Reforms Section in the Collectorate had immediately to take up field *bujharat* for the purpose of bringing up to date the record-of-rights. The Tauzi and Cess Department was converted into Rent and Cess Department. The Registration Department had to fade away. The Land Reforms Section of the district was further entrusted with the agricultural statistics, execution of minor irrigation and improvement schemes, local development work, besides collection of rent and cess, etc. The total annual demand of rent and cess in the district of Gaya is estimated at over two crores of rupees. For the sake of revenue administration each police-station is formed a revenue jurisdiction called *anchal* under an officer to be called *Anchal Adhikari* except in case of police-stations which are big ones consisting of two *anchals*. There are 46 *anchals* in the district. In each *anchal* there is a Circle Inspector under the *Anchal Adhikari*. Each *anchal* is divided into *halkas* and each *halka* is placed under the jurisdiction of a revenue subordinate called *Karamchari*. It is expected that the number of *Gram Panchayat Halkas* will be near about one thousand, each *halka* comprising a *Gram Panchayat*. The *halka* has been formed on the basis of population roughly on a unit of 3,000 persons and an area of 5 square miles.

The implementation of the Land Reforms Act in abolishing the zamindari has not had a sufficient experiment to make a correct

appraisal of the impact on the economic condition of the people. We are far too close to the great experiment which has been taken up with the sole idea of bringing more relief to the tenantry. At the initial stage there are bound to be a certain amount of opposition, possible mistakes owing to the inexperience of the staff and the possibility of some corruption at the lower level particularly cannot be eschewed. But there cannot be two opinions regarding the broad-based policy which has brought in the land reforms. Gaya district is probably one of the most important districts in the State from the point of a large number of big estates operating in the district for decades. In the foregoing paragraphs an attempt has been made to give a picture of how the district has suffered in the past from the incidence of payment of *bhaoli* rent, high cash rent, exaction of a large number of *abwabs*, etc. In the report of the last survey and settlement operations many of the evils of the revenue system had been mentioned. An attempt was made to give a certain amount of relief to the tenants in the disposal of the disputes. But the hands of the settlement authorities were fettered to a great extent. That is why many of their observations were followed up by changes in revenue law. The abolition of zamindari has only been a fitting sequel to the series of attempts made to ameliorate the condition of the tenantry.

The abolition of the zamindari system which has taken place by the passing of an Act is only one of the items of the land policy which has been adopted by the Planning Commission and there will be changes in other spheres as well. It may be briefly said that the main constituents of the land policy in India are :—(1) the abolition of intermediaries, (2) tenancy reforms to give the tenants permanent rights to resume a minimum holding, to scale down rents, and also to enable tenants to acquire ownership of the lands on payment of some compensation to the landlords, (3) fixation of ceiling on holdings and (4) reorganization of agriculture with a view to increase the agricultural output and to bring about a diversified rural economy. The abolition of zamindaris has been accomplished but the other items of the land policy have yet to be implemented and so it can be said that within the next decade or so there are bound to be further land reforms in Gaya district along with the other districts in the State of Bihar. The Second Five-Year Plan has laid down a still more progressive programme of land reforms and land management. Rents have to be reduced, ceilings on existing holdings have to be fixed in the districts of Bihar and the rights of the tenants are to be firmly secured. It has been said that the ultimate objective of land reforms is the co-operative village management. It is difficult to make any prophecy but there is no doubt that we are passing through quickly changing phases indicating an economic revolution.