

P R E F A C E

The last District Gazetteer of Darbhanga by L. S. S. O' Malley, I. C. S., was published in 1907. This book ran to 166 pages. The book is absolutely scarce now and with difficulty a copy with crumbling pages was available for the Editor.

O'Malley's book is the first Gazetteer of Darbhanga district. When the Statistical Account of Bengal by Sir W. W. Hunter was published, the district of Darbhanga had only recently been constituted and it was treated as a part of the old district of Tirhut in which it was comprised until 1875.

The State Government in the Revenue Department have undertaken the work of rewriting and publishing the entire series of Bihar District Gazetteers. Although replete with facts and brilliantly written the old District Gazetteers cannot serve much purpose now. They were written with a particular slant and were more of an administrator's handbook. In the last 55 years there have been very many basic changes in the district and in the country. Even the face of the district has been materially changed by the ravages of floods, spread of communications and industries, etc. The Indigo Industry which was discussed in a chapter in the last Gazetteer has completely disappeared.

The Ministry of Scientific Research and Cultural Affairs, New Delhi, have taken up the work of co-ordinating the new District Gazetteers in the States and publishing four volumes of Central Gazetteers for India. In consultation with the State Editors, the Ministry has drawn up a general plan to be followed as far as possible by the States for their District Gazetteers. This plan is somewhat different from what O'Malley had followed. The State Government of Bihar have agreed to work in collaboration with the Ministry of Scientific Research and Cultural Affairs.

The rewritten District Gazetteer of Darbhanga is my eleventh publication in the new series. The rewritten District Gazetteers for Hazaribagh, Muzaffarpur, Gaya, Singhbhum, Saran, Champaran, Monghyr, Palamau, Purnea and Bhagalpur have already been published. The last five District Gazetteers are according to India's pattern.

The work of rewriting the District Gazetteer of Darbhanga has its own problems. Since 1904 there have been no Survey and Settlement Operations in the district. No comprehensive socio-economic survey of the district appears to have been undertaken. The march of events since 1947 has been extremely rapid. Officers in key position have their own problems and even if interested in this type of work have very little leisure to give any active collaboration.

I desire to acknowledge the great assistance I have derived from institutions like National Archives, New Delhi, National Library, Calcutta, Asiatic Society of Bengal, Calcutta and Raj Darbhanga Library, Darbhanga. The Deputy Director General of Observatories (Climatology and Geophysics), Poona, has supplied the climatological data. It was extremely unfortunate that Mr. C. M. Inglis, an old planter who was an authority on Ornithology of this district passed away just after I had entered into correspondence with him. I have, however, derived much help from his published books. For the later events, I have consulted published literature, census reports, blue books and other data collected from collaborators and investigators. My official contact with Darbhanga district since 1944 was also a help.

My thanks are particularly due to Prof. R. K. Chaudhury, Head of the Department of History, G. D. College, Begusarai, Pandit Girindramohan Mishra, General Manager, Raj Darbhanga, Prof. Ramanath Jha of C. M. College, Darbhanga, Prof. A. B. Chakravarty of P. K. Roy Memorial College, Dhanbad and the Central Gazetteers Unit for their collaboration.

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I have enjoyed working on this project and I shall be happy if the book proves useful to the wide range of readers for whom it is meant.

PATNA :

P. C. ROY CHOUDHURY.

TR, 5th December, 1962.