

CHAPTER VIII

ECONOMIC TRENDS

Many of the factors indicating the economic trends of the district have been indicated in different texts on People, Agriculture and Irrigation, Industries, etc. In this text there will be some repetitions.

The district carved out of the old district of Tirhut in 1875 is one flat low-lying plain of alluvial formation. There are no hills or eminence and there is gentle slope from the north to the south broken by a depression at the centre. The district occupies an area of 3,345 square miles and has a population of 4,413,027 according to 1961 census as against 3,769,534 souls according to 1951 census. From the area point of view the district has continued to occupy the eleventh rank as in 1951 census. From the population point of view the district now ranks first in the State as it was in 1951 census. The district has a percentage of 14.67 population of Scheduled Castes. There is practically no population of Scheduled Tribes. The density is 1,314 persons per square mile and from this point of view she ranks fourth in the State, Patna, Muzaffarpur and Saran district having the density of 1,386, 1,364 and 1,337 persons respectively. There are 1,059 females in Darbhanga district per thousand males. The percentage of literates (including educated persons) is 16.8. The break up figure for literates for males and females are 28.4 and 5.8 respectively. Darbhanga has only six towns according to the new conception of an urban area in 1961 census. The economy is predominantly agricultural as over 89 per cent of the total population are dependent on agriculture for their livelihood. The district is devoid of mineral resources except saltpetre which occurs as natural efflorescence which may be ignored as an economic factor.

Growth of Population.—The growth of population has been indicated in the text on People. The correct total figure for 1961 census which has now been available has been mentioned earlier. As detailed break up figures of 1961 census are not yet available, the discussions based on the provisional figures of 1961 census supplied by the Census Department in the text on People and other texts cannot be altered and may be generally accepted.

The pace of urbanisation in this district has been extremely slow. According to 1951 census the percentage of urban population was 4.25 which has only increased to 4.32 in 1961 census. The district continues to occupy the fifteenth rank out of the 17 districts from the point of view of incidence or urbanisation.

Livelihood Pattern.—The following table prepared on the basis of data given in *District Census Handbook of Darbhanga, 1955*, shows the distribution of population into different livelihood

pattern. (Total percentage shown within bracket under each of the categories of column 1.)

Principal livelihood classes.	Self-supporting persons.	Non-earning dependents.	Earning dependents.
(A) <i>Agricultural Classes</i> (39.11 per cent) ..	1,013,912	2,276,367	68,660
(1) Cultivators of land wholly or mainly owned and their dependents (39.73 per cent).	451,407	1,012,890	33,210
(2) Cultivators of land wholly or mainly un-owned and their dependents (10.19 per cent).	114,869	260,314	8,815
(3) Cultivating labourers and their dependents (38.81 per cent).	442,554	994,139	26,233
(4) Non-cultivating owners of land, agricultural rent receivers and their dependents (0.38 per cent.).	5,082	9,024	402
(B) <i>Non-Agricultural Classes</i> (10.89 per cent) ..	118,549	281,492	10,554
(5) Production (other than cultivation) (2.08 per cent).	25,990	49,525	2,956
(6) Commerce (2.69 per cent)	29,296	68,589	3,575
(7) Transport (0.46 per cent)	5,516	11,351	304
(8) Other services and miscellaneous services	57,747	152,027	3,719
(9) Percentage of total population ..	30	67.9	2.1

From the perusal of foregoing table it becomes clear that more than one million persons are self-supporting, i.e., who are in receipt of some income in cash or kind which is sufficient at least for their own maintenance. This constitutes roughly 30 per cent of the total population. The balance of 70 per cent of the total population are dependents consisting of earning and non-earning dependents. The proportion of earning dependents (0.79 lakh) constitute roughly 2.1 per cent of total population and they are able to supplement the income of their families by their own independent income. As many as 2.56 millions or 67.9 per cent are entirely dependent for their maintenance, on the earnings of others. Thus 100 bread winners have to feed, clothe and generally support roughly 226 other persons who do not have any independent earning of their own. This large portion of wholly dependents is composed of not only of children and old and infirm persons but also of women folk who in the absence of suitable handicrafts and other village industries are unable to supplement the earnings of the householders. They do, no doubt, look after their domestic duties and a large number of women of agriculturist families work

on the fields during sowing and harvesting but most of them are economically dependent on the males for their livelihood.

Due to heavy pressure of population, the burden of dependence on economically active population is more or less the same both in agricultural and non-agricultural occupations. This can be seen by looking into the figures given below showing the distribution of 100 persons, general, self-supporting and dependents into different livelihood categories :—

	Agri- cultural.	Non-Agri- cultural.
General	89.11%	10.89%
Self-supporting	30	23
Dependents	70	72
Total	100	100

Again, the following figures give the distribution of 100 persons of the general, agricultural and non-agricultural classes by their economic status :—

	Self- supporting.	Dependents (earning and non- earning).
General	30%	70%
Agricultural	90	88
Non-agricultural	10	12
Total	100	100

From the above table it becomes clear that 30 per cent of the total population is economically active and of this economically active population 90 per cent derive their livelihood from agriculture and only 10 per cent from non-agricultural occupations. 70 per cent of the total population who are dependents have bulk of their weight on agriculture, i.e., 88 per cent; and only 12 per cent of dependents have weight on non-agricultural occupations. On the whole, the pressure of burden is the same both on agricultural and non-agricultural occupations. It is rather peculiar that relative weight of dependence is slightly higher in non-agricultural occupations.

Agriculture.—Details regarding agriculture in this district, the soils, the crops, etc., have been indicated in the text on Agriculture and Irrigation. A few facts may, however, be mentioned here. The total land area including house sites, tanks, roads, etc., is 2.14 million acres and works out to 57 cents *per capita* (1951). The average net area cultivated based on yearly average for the quinquennium ending 1949-50 is 1.57 million acres or roughly

73.1 per cent of the total land area. The *per capita* net area cultivated amounts to 42 cents only (1951). As much as 4.65 lakh acres or roughly 12.4 per cent of the total land area are not available for cultivation being under homesteads, rivers, tanks, roads, unculturable jungles, etc. Culturable wastes including area under orchards account for roughly 6.9 per cent and current fallows 7.6 per cent of the total land area.

Rice is the principal crop while the other important crops including maize, sugarcane, chillies, jute, tobacco, etc. The percentage of gross cultivated area under rice, maize and other cereals and pulses has increased a lot. The trend is to put more land under food crops. Production of foodgrains has also recorded a rising trend. During 1950-51 production of foodgrains in this district was estimated at 458,787 tons. During the First Five-Year Plan the aim was to produce an additional 45,878 tons of foodgrains but at the end of First Five-Year Plan an additional quantity of 57,348 tons of foodgrains were produced. The principal crop acreage and production of crops in Darbhanga district in the year 1955-56 is given below :—

Item.	Acreage (in mds. of acres).			Outturn (in tons.)
Rice	857			1,79,964 Winter. 9,927 Autumn.
Wheat	122			25,964
Gram	35			6,527
Barley	70			10,133
Maize	35			3,045
Masoor	8			893
Arhar	13			3,231
Khesari	N.A.			15,609
Marua	26			N.A.
Peas	5			493
Sugarcane	25			160,125
Tobacco	4			N.A.
Potato	7			N.A.
Jute	5			N.A.
Chillies	10			N.A.

N.A.—Not available.

SOURCE.—*Bihar Statistical Handbook.*

Besides the produce of crops, food and cash, this district has very large mango orchards and a number of other fruits mentioned elsewhere.

Thus Darbhanga has a traditional agricultural base with a slender industrial structure and on account of growth of population the pressure on land has been increasing continuously. Economic stagnation is much greater due to higher agrarian content and a larger density of population. Population has increased steadily after 1921 but the net area cultivated has actually decreased during that period. Increased population, however, could have enjoyed a higher *per capita* income had there been significant industrial base in the district. Agricultural base has not been compensated by the industries and minerals and the burden of dependents on self-supporting persons have terribly increased. Absorptive capacity in agriculture is limited and with diminished opportunities for migration, 'unemployment' and under-employment have considerably increased. As much as 38 per cent of the total population constitutes the mass of cultivating labourer who are landless and a major portion of this class is redundant to the requirement of rural economy. Further the seasonal character of activity in agriculture makes the situation worse in off seasons and with little opportunities avoidable elsewhere they remain economically inactive for a greater part of the year.

Industry.—Details of the current industries and the industrial potential have been discussed in the text on Industry. According to 1951 census industry is another source of livelihood but it supports only 2 per cent of the total population. Self-supporting persons engaged in industries number 26 thousands or roughly 0.8 per cent of the total population. The percentage of earning dependents is negligible and the total number of dependents on self-supporting persons is 49.5 thousand or 1.5 per cent of the total population.

Commerce supports 1.01 lakh persons which constitutes 2.69 per cent of total population. In commerce also, the proportion of dependents to self-supporting persons is the same as in industries. Trade consists of foodstuffs, fuel, textile and leather goods, spices, etc.

Transport and communication supports 17 thousand persons in all which constitutes 0.46 per cent of total population. Other services and miscellaneous occupations which include health, education, public administration, domestic services, personnel services, hotels, restaurants and eating houses, legal and business services, art, journalism, religion and other welfare services, etc., support 2.13 lakh persons or 5.66 per cent of total population. Taken as a whole, 11.8 lakh persons constitute self-supporting

(persons in non-agricultural occupations which is 3.3 per cent earning and non-earning) is 2.9 lakhs or roughly 7.5 per cent of total population.

Level of Prices.—Level of prices indicates the economic trends of the area. It affects the purchasing power and economic condition of the people and has a bearing on the real income and on the standard of living of people.

From the records available in old correspondence files of Tirhut, we come to know that prices of grains were very cheap during the closing decades of 18th century. The average rates at which some grains were sold in 1792, 1793 and 1794 are given below :—

Item.	1792.		1793.		1794.	
	Mds. sr.		Mds. sr.		Mds. sr.	
Wheat	0 38	per rupee	1 15	per rupee	2 0	per rupee.
Barley - ..	1 27½	„	2 12	„	3 20	„
Gram	1 27½	„	1 18½	„	1 35	„
Kalai (Pulses)	1 4½	„	1 27½	„	1 32½	„

As is evident prices of foodgrains and pulses were very cheap, increasing in the years of scarcity and decreasing in the years of abundance and good harvest.

During the first decade of the 19th century prices were comparatively higher than that of the last decade of the 18th century. This can be seen from the figures below :—

In the year 1810 in the month of October, prices of grains in Tirhut Division were as follows :—

	Mds. sr. ch.		
Fine rice	0 19	0	per rupee.
Rice second sort	0 20	0	„
Rice third sort	0 27	8	„
Rice 4th sort	0 28	12	„
Rice 5th sort	0 31	4	„
Rice 6th sort	0 32	4	„
Rice 7th sort	0 35	0	„
Wheat 1st sort	1 5	0	„
Wheat 2nd sort	1 7	0	„
Paddy	1 15	0	„
Barley	1 30	0	„
Arhar Dal	0 37	8	„
Ortd Dal	0 37	8	„
Boot (Gram)	1 5	0	„

Sources—A report of Mr. D. Burges, Acting Collector, dated 8th November 1810.

From the tour diaries of Mr. Greer, a Subdivisional Officer of Madhubani, we know the level of prices prevailing in Darbhanga in the year 1889. This gives us a rough idea of the ruling prices during the closing decades of the 19th century. The report says, "The comparative prices then prevalent at different markets were as follows:—

	Harlakhi.	Umgaon.	Sakri.	Ladania.
1	2	3	4	5
	Srs.	Srs.	Srs.	Srs.
Rice	.. 13 9/10 per rupee	12 9/10 per rupee	..	18 to 20 per rupee
Dhan	.. 23 7/8 ..	19 9/10 ..	24 1/2 Per rupee	..
Bahar	.. 15 37/40 ..	19 9/10 ..	4 Pasari	4 pasari.
Marua	.. 16 4/5 ..	15 3/4 ..	4 1/2 ..	..
Urid	.. 13 37/40 ..	..	..	..
Ohana	.. 8 23/40 ..	..	..	..
Potato for seed	13 37/40 ..	..	..	..
Makai	.. ..	11 15/16 ..	..	..
Salt	.. ..	..	..	14 per rupee
Oil	.. ..	..	..	4 ..

It may be mentioned that the year 1889 like most of the years of two closing decades, was a year of scarcity and as is evident prices were very high from the point of view of the then consumer. From the *Darbhanga District Gazetteer Statistics, 1915*, we get data relating to the ruling level of prices during the first decade of the 20th century. The level of prices did not fluctuate much during this decade. In the years of scarcity in 1908 and 1909, prices increased slightly. In 1903 and 1904 prices were comparatively cheaper. Otherwise prices were more or less stable throughout. The average prices of wheat, rice (common) and grain were 11 seers per rupee, 12 seers per rupee and 15 seers per rupee respectively. The average price of salt was 14 seers per rupee. A table showing the details of price level during 1901—1912 is given below:—

PRICES IN SEERS PER RUPEE 1901—1912.

(Prices relate to headquarters only.)

Years.	Wheat.	Rice (common).	Gram.	Salt.
	Srs. ch.	Srs. ch.	Srs. ch.	Srs. ch.
1901 ..	.. 11 0	15 6	14 4	11 0
1902 ..	.. 12 0	12 0	19 12	11 0

Years.	Wheat.	Rice (common).		Gram.	Salt.
		Srs. Ch.	Srs. Ch.		
1903 ..	.. 14 4	15 6	17 9	12 9
1904 ..	.. 15 6	16 8	18 11	13 4
1905 ..	.. 13 13	15 15	15 6	12 1
1906 ..	.. 11 0	11 8	11 0	14 4
1907 ..	.. 11 8	8 12	14 4	15 6
1908 ..	.. 7 1	7 11	9 14	19 12
1909 ..	.. 7 11	7 11	11 0	19 12
1910 ..	.. 9 14	14 5	14 4	19 12
1911 ..	.. 11 9	13 3	19 12	19 12
1912 ..	.. 11 0	11 8	17 9	17 9

The year 1913-14 saw an abnormal rise in the prices of foodgrains which affected the middle classes severely. 1914-15 outturn of crops was low due to bad weather and the prices continued to soar high affecting the landless and the middle class. In 1917-18 the prices of cloth abnormally increased due to war and the speculation of traders caused much hardship to the poorer and middle classes. In 1920-21 prices of staple foodgrains were lower and some satisfaction and relief was observed. In the decade starting with 1920 prices were more or less stable. The year 1930-31 was the year when the great depression was setting in and there was a general slump in trade and industry. Prices of foodgrains decreased markedly and prices of cloth, etc., also came down which gave some relief to middle and poorer class people and particularly the salaried classes. But businessmen and producers were hard hit. The agriculturists were also hard hit as they found it difficult to dispose of their produce at profit. In the years that followed, prices continued to be comparatively lower in spite of scarcity or other troubles. In 1935-36 prices of chillies fell desastrously which however, improved in the year 1936-37 and provided much relief to growers. With the start of World War I, prices of essential commodities took an upward turn. But the rising prices were soon brought down by the price control measures. Prices of sugarcane fell in 1940-41. Thereafter prices went on increasing with downward swings occasionally. During August, 1943, prices of foodgrains were 6 times higher than those in January, 1941. But after the 1943 prices declined and in December, 1944 prices were considerably lower. Price control was largely responsible in halting the upward swing in prices. Inflation was of "suppressed type" and blackmarketing was rampant.

The partially 'suppressed' inflation of the war period made a jerky outburst in the immediate post-war period under the impact of pent up demand. The voluntary abstinence during war period ended and people were eager to consume more goods without sizeable increase in the volume of goods supplied, because of heavy war time depreciation of plants, machinery and labour unrest. The level of prices went on increasing till 1952. Cost of living increased too. The level of prices during the decade 1941—50 in the district of Darbhanga is indicated below :—

RULING WHOLESALE PRICES DURING SOME SELECTED MONTHS IN THE DECADE 1941—50

(Price per maund.)

Year.	Month.	Rice (medium).	Wheat (red).	Gram.
1	2	3	4	5
		Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.
1941	.. January ..	4 12 0	..	3 4 0
	April ..	4 15 0	..	3 4 0
	July ..	5 10 0	..	2 14 0
	November ..	6 2 0	..	3 12 0
	December ..	6 6 0	..	4 0 0
1942	.. January ..	5 12 0	..	3 10 0
	April ..	5 9 0	..	3 12 0
	July ..	6 7 0	..	4 14 0
	November ..	6 14 0	..	6 8 0
	December ..	7 10 0	..	8 0 0
1943	.. January ..	7 4 0	..	5 0 0
	April ..	9 10 0	9 12 0	5 0 0
	July ..	25 0 0	20 0 0	13 0 0
	November ..	16 8 0	16 8 0	11 8 0
	December ..	13 0 0	13 0 0	9 8 0
1944	.. January ..	12 8 0	15 8 0	11 8 0
	April ..	17 0 0	14 0 0	11 8 0
	July ..	15 0 0	12 8 0	9 8 0
	November ..	11 0 0	9 0 0	8 0 0
	December ..	11 0 0	9 0 0	8 0 0

Year	Month	Rice (medium)	Wheat (red)	Grams
1945	January	13 0 0	9 0 0	7 0 0
	April	13 4 0	12 8 0	7 0 0
	July	14 8 0	12 8 0	7 0 0
	November	18 0 0	13 0 0	9 0 0
1946	December	16 0 0	13 0 0	9 0 0
	January	15 8 0	13 0 0	9 0 0
	April	19 8 0	13 0 0	9 0 0
	July	19 0 0	13 0 0	12 0 0
1947	November	19 0 0	14 0 0	12 0 0
	December	19 0 0	14 0 0	12 0 0
	January	19 0 0	14 0 0	12 0 0
	April	26 0 0	11 12 0	11 8 0
1948	July	13 5 0	12 1 0	9 12 0
	November	13 5 0	12 12 0	9 12 0
	December	13 5 0	12 1 0	9 12 0
	January	23 0 0	26 0 0	16 0 0
1949	April	18 0 0	26 0 0	16 0 0
	July	26 0 0	25 0 0	18 0 0
	November	24 0 0	25 0 0	16 0 0
	December	28 0 0	25 0 0	18 0 0
1950	January	22 0 0	25 0 0	18 0 0
	April	24 0 0	26 0 0	17 0 0
	July	28 0 0	24 0 0	15 0 0
	November	24 0 0	25 0 0	15 8 0
1950	December	25 0 0	25 0 0	15 8 0
	January	23 0 0	24 0 0	15 0 0
	April	26 0 0	26 0 0	16 0 0
	July	30 0 0	25 0 0	20 0 0
1950	November	28 0 0	29 0 0	23 0 0
	December	31 0 0	30 0 0	24 0 0

In the year 1953-54 floods affected the eastern part of the district but the outturn of paddy crop was good in the areas not affected by floods. Prices of all essential commodities showed a fall during the year 1953-54. Sugarcane prices also declined and the cultivators suffered a lot.

From 1957-58, the general price level increased mainly as a consequence of deficit financing which made deep cuts in the standard of living of the people. Government did not feel comfortable over this and started fair price shops to arrest any further increase in price level. The prices, however, had not fallen much.

Level of Wages.—Level of wages may be studied under two heads—agricultural wages and industrial wages.

Agricultural Wages.—Statistics of agricultural wages are very unsatisfactory in our country and till recently no such data were collected on any uniform and scientific basis. However, some information regarding the agricultural wages in the past can be had from the Land Revenue Administration Reports, Tour Diaries of different officials and other published papers.

In past agricultural wages were very cheap and mostly paid in kind. W. W. Hunter in his *Statistical Account of Tirhut* (1877), mentions :—“Wages compared with those of Lower Bengal are undoubtedly low. A coolie earns from 1 1/2 to 3 annas per day. Agricultural labourers do not receive their wages entirely in cash. A common wage is 1 anna together with one meal a day, consisting of 1 1/2 seers of rice and a little *satu*. In harvest time a coolie is remunerated by a share of the crop varying from 5 to 6 per cent. During the rice harvest it is hardly possible to get coolies to work for ordinary cash wages, so much more advantageous is it for them to be paid in grain. Carpenters and smiths get from 1 1/2 to 3 annas per day in the country and from 2 to 4 annas in the towns. It appears from early records that wages have risen very slightly. In 1794 coolies were paid about 1 anna 2 pies per day; carpenters about 2 annas.”

From the tour diaries of Mr. Greer, the Subdivisional Officer, Madhubani in 1889 which were luckily salvaged from Madhubani office, we find that the wages of unskilled workers engaged in repairing roads was at the rate of 2 annas per 100 cubic feet for earthwork. One man told the S. D. O. that he could earn 4 annas a day at that rate, but others told him that 200 cubic feet was an excessive quantity except for an unusually strong man.

In 1911 in the month of April, a wage census was taken and the data collected are available in the *Statistical Bulletin of Darbhanga District Gazetteer*, 1915. Though in most of the cases, wages were paid in kind, for the purpose of convenience those were calculated in rupees and annas. A ploughman was generally paid

2 or 2 1/2 annas per day and Rs. 4 only per month. Agricultural labourers were hardly appointed on permanent basis as agricultural operation is mostly seasonal in nature. Unskilled workers were paid 2 1/2 seers of grains per day as wage value of which comes to 2 annas to 2 1/2 annas. They were sometimes paid in cash but the cash wages were equal to value of cash as paid in kind. A blacksmith was paid 3 1/2 annas to 4 annas per day. A carpenter was paid 3 1/2 annas to 4 annas per day and a *gharami* was generally paid 3 annas to 3 1/2 annas per day. It appears that wages had slightly increased during the early years of the 20th century as compared to the wages nearabout 1870. In 1914-15 wages were rising and the labourer class was well off in face of the rising prices. In 1917-18 prices were high but wages of unskilled workers had increased and they got relief.

During 1920 decade wages were comparatively stationary. In 1929-30 also wages were stable while prices were falling. The labourer class was better off but in 1932-33 wages started falling and the condition of labourers deteriorated. In 1944-45 prices were high but wages of unskilled labourers had increased considerably. They were much better off as compared to middle class people who had fixed income.

Current level of wages in agriculture are available from the data collected in 1959 by the Statistical Bureau of Bihar. Quarterly Bulletin of Statistics, July, 1959 gives data showing current daily rate of agricultural wages in a selected village in the district of Darbhanga for three months in 1959. They are as follow :—

			April, 1959	May, 1959	June, 1959
			Rs.	Rs.	Rs.
Carpenter	..	..	2.25	2.25	2.25
Blacksmith	..	..	2.25	2.25	2.50
<i>Mochies</i>	..	..	1.31	1.31	1.31
Field labour	Men	..	1.05	1.02	1.02
	Women	..	1.05	1.02	1.02
	Children	..	0.79	0.76	0.76
Herdsman	Men	..	0.75	0.75	0.76
	Women	..	0.75	0.75	..
	Children	..	0.75	0.75	..

In 50 years of this century wages of unskilled agricultural labour have increased 6 to 8 fold, that of carpenter and smith have increased 9 fold. Just before the sowing season, demand of the labour of blacksmith increases greatly and at that time wages of smiths increase even more. It is also interesting to note that the level of wages has increased as commensurate with the rising prices during the First and Second World Wars and with rising cost of living.

Industrial Wages.—The economic condition of industrial labour of this district depends upon the rate of their wages and the period of employment. In case of sugar industries workers are employed on seasonal basis for a period of four to five months in a year while for the rest period they remain out of factory. The skilled workers get 50 per cent retaining allowance during the off season while the semi-skilled workers get 25 per cent. This condition of employment of workers of sugar industries affects their economic condition. The workers of the rice mills also are seasonal but they do not get any retaining allowance for the off season. In case of other industries workers remain in employment practically for the whole year.

Most of the industries of this district come under the scope of Minimum Wages Act, 1948. In almost all these industries 'sweated labour' is prevalent and in the past wages used to fluctuate in favour of employers in absence of any institution of collective bargaining. The Minimum Wages Act, 1948 has safeguarded the interests of the wage earners and has also been successful in ameliorating the conditions of industrial labour.

Under the Minimum Wages Act, 1948, the State Government has fixed minimum rates of wages for different categories of employees engaged in different scheduled employments like sugar, jute, rice mills, flour mills, oil mills, public motor transport, automobile engineering shops, printing presses, *biri* making, brick laying, etc.

Following is the trend of consolidated minimum wages of unskilled workmen in sugar industries in the district of Darbhanga from 1947—61 :—

Year	Consolidated wages (per month)		
	Rs.	a.	p.
1947	--	--	--
1948	--	--	--
1949	--	--	--
1950	--	--	--
1951	--	--	--
1952	--	--	--
1953	--	--	--
1954	--	--	--
1955	--	--	--
1956	--	--	--

Year					Consolidated wages (per month) Rs.
1957	..	..	..	..	55.75
1958	..	..	..	..	56.25
1959	..	..	..	..	58.00
1960	..	..	..	..	58.00
1961	..	..	..	..	76.00

As is evident the wages have increased more than two fold in between 1947—61. In 1947 the wage was Rs. 36 per month (consolidated) but in 1948 with the enactment of Minimum Wages Act, 1948, it was fixed at Rs. 45 per month. In 1949 it was enhanced to Rs. 55.00 per month and this wage continued up to 1956. In 1957 it was enhanced to Rs. 55.75 and then in 1958 it was fixed at Rs. 56.25. In 1959 it was again enhanced to Rs. 58.00 per month. In 1961 as per recommendation of the Central Wage Board for Sugar Industries, minimum rates of wages of unskilled labour have been fixed at Rs. 76.00 per month. The Board has recommended different scales of pay for different categories of employees like unskilled, semi-skilled, skilled, highly skilled, clerical and supervisory staff.

The Wage Board has also framed a scheme for the workmen employed in a sugar industry whereby the scale of gratuity would be one half of a month's pay to permanent and one fourth of a month's pay to seasonal workmen for every continuous year or season of service, as the case may be, subject to a maximum of fifteen month's pay.

The trend of minimum wages (consolidated) of the unskilled workmen in jute industry in Darbhanga district from 1955—61 has been as follows per month :—

Year					Rs.
1955	..	..	..	..	54.80
1956	..	..	..	..	54.80
1957	..	..	..	..	56.32
1958	..	..	..	..	62.00
1959	..	..	..	..	62.00
1960	..	..	..	..	62.00
1961	..	..	..	..	73.44

From the perusal of above figures we find that wages have been increasing in jute industry also. Within a period of 6 years, increase in the rates of wages is considerable. The present rates of wage of unskilled workers have improved the economic condition of labourers in jute industry to a considerable extent.

At present in jute industry the workers are getting their wages as per Third Bengal Awards. However, the Central Wage Board for jute industries has been set up by the Government of India by the Resolution no. W.B.-5 (i) /60, dated the 26th August, 1960, for fixing the different scales of pay for different categories of employees engaged in a jute industry. The main recommendation of the Wage Board is still awaited (1962). The Wage Board has recommended an interim relief for all types of workers engaged in jute industry Rs. 2.85 N p. per month from 1st October, 1960 to 31st December 1960 and at the rate of Rs. 3.42 N p. from 1st January, 1961. But this is only an interim relief.

Under the Minimum Wages Act, 1948, the State Government has fixed minimum rates of wages for different categories of employees engaged in different scheduled employments like rice mills, flour mills, oil mills, public motor transport, automobile engineering shops, printing presses, *biri* making, brick laying, etc. The wage rates fixed by the Government under the Minimum Wages Act, 1948, for the employees engaged in different industries are embodied in different Gazette notifications and it may be said that the rates are more or less followed.

Standard of living, Articles of consumption and Family Budgets

Standard of living indicates economic trends. Standard of living is allied to material condition of the people which in its turn depends on level of income, propensity to consume, consumption pattern, number of dependents and level of prices. Livelihood pattern also influences the standard of living.

"The Administration Report for Bengal, 1872-73 (pp. 138) mentioned that as a general rule the people in Bihar were badly off. The fact is, that while the prices of food has everywhere risen the rate of wage, in Tirhut has been kept stationary by the heavy and increasing pressure of the population. There can be no doubt that money wages at present are cruelly low. A labour generally receives one and a half anna or 2½ annas per day and for this he will work willingly, except in the harvest and planting seasons. Grain wages are also common. Thus at the harvest time reapers are paid a percentage on the outturn which sometimes amounts to as much as 5 to 6 per cent and so much is it to their advantage to be remunerated in grain that it is hardly possible to get coolies in any numbers to work for cash payments during rice harvest. Another common custom is for the employer to pay one anna or 1½ d. and to give one meal." W.W. Hunter, the then Director General of Statistics, Government of India remarked: "I do not find that in Tirhut wages have risen in any appreciable degree. If wages have risen at all, it is only in the neighbourhood of large towns. On the other hand prices of foodgrains have undoubtedly risen." This shows that in 19th century the level of income

of labourers was very low with no signs of increase while prices were rising only to affect the standard of living of these poorer class adversely.

Mr. Hunter observed: "In the south and south-west of the district, the people are better off, in as much as they are not so dependent on one crop as in Darbhanga and Madhubani, they are better acquainted with irrigation and its benefits and the land is more fertile." Emigration is said to be unknown in Darbhanga in those days.

Small proprietors in Darbhanga district were not as well off as *zamindars* but they wanted to become so by squeezing the peasants. Nominal rents were not excessive but the *abwabs* pressed heavily on *rayats*. The pressure of population on land enabled the proprietor class to levy higher total rental on land. Particular classes, again, such as *Trikutya* Brahmins on account of their habits and customs will not take to other occupations.

On the whole, wages were low, prices were rising, rents were high and the food, dress and houses of the common man was inferior in the past. Compared to the standard of living of a common man, a well-to-do man was in a far superior position. High level of income, balanced diet, possession of cattle, good dress and brick built houses were the features of standard of living of a well-to-do man. People of low income-group used to eat *marwa*, *kodo*, *satu* whereas the food of a well-to-do consisted of rice or wheat, fish, milk, fruits, curd, *chura* (parched rice), sweetmeats and *nimkis*. *Satu* was rarely taken by them. The dress of a commoner consisted of the coarsest materials whereas that of a well-to-do consisted of *topi*, *dhoti* of manchester cloth, *chadar*, *mirzai* (short coat) and shoes of country make.

At present, 95 per cent of the total population lives in villages and 89 per cent of total population is dependent on agriculture. Agriculture is an overcrowded occupation. *Per capita* area of cultivation has decreased from 59 cents in 1921 to 42 cents in 1951. In the same period, area sown more than once has not increased; average net area sown has declined. 77 per cent of the total agricultural holdings fall below 2 acres and only 8 per cent of the holdings are above 5 acres. Only 40 per cent of the total population are owners of land. Thus the general condition of standard of living is deplorable. Owners of land are slightly better off than the landless.

Well-to-do class of people in urban areas have very high standard of living. This class includes doctors, lawyers, engineers, business magnates, public officials, etc. Middle class people both in urban and rural areas are hard pressed and their standard of living is mediocre. Perhaps they are the most oppressed class since they

have high hopes but poor resources. Low income-group people with fixed salary are better off than the lower middle classes. Their standard of living is poor and they are well-looked after.

The new trends in standard of living are (i) increased construction of *pucca* houses even in rural areas ; (ii) rise in wages and slight increase in standard of living of poorer class of people in face of rising prices; (iii) expense on education on the increase. In rural areas expenses are great for the display of social status. Huge expenses are incurred on social ceremonies like marriage, *sradh*, etc. Use of *pan*, *biri* and cigarette has also become common. *Dhoti* of *khadi* and *kurta* made of *kokti* cloth are coming into fashion these days.

The economy of Darbhanga is essentially an agricultural economy and fluctuation in agricultural condition due to floods, famines greatly affects the standard of living of the people. Most affected are generally middle class and low-income-group people in rural and urban areas with no fixed salary. The main affecting factors are income and prices. The economic history of Darbhanga in 20th century bears a testimony to this fact.

During the early years of the 20th century famines affected the middle class and low-income-group people greatly and their standard of living was affected. After 1909 their material condition improved slightly but again with the outburst of First World War and scarcity conditions and floods the standard of living of the people was affected. High prices also affected the standard of living of fixed income and this condition prevailed up to 1920-21. Thereafter the material condition of the people was better due to lower prices and better opportunities of employment. The sugar industries had prosperous years and a jute industry was opened in Muktapur in 1920-21. In the middle of twenties a new trend was marked. 'It was witnessed that *biris* and cigarettes are also on the increase among the all classes of people. Consumption of tea was also on increase.' On the whole, it was noticed that the standard of living was rising gradually. In the year 1930-31 great depression was setting in and there was a general slump in trade and industry. But decreasing prices of essential commodities and particularly that of foodgrains provided much relief to the labourers, and middle class people. Producers and businessmen were hard hit. This condition continued for sometime and in 1933 wages declined and unemployment increased which made deep cuts in the standard of living of the people. In 1937-38, it was found that there was a shortage of purchasing power though prices were low, and indebtedness of the people increased on account of increased expenses in social institutions, such as, marriage, funeral, etc. Standard of living of the people was adversely affected.

In the wake of Second World War, middle class and fixed income-group people in urban areas were greatly affected due to

rising prices. The labour class was well off on account of increased demand for labour in employment market of the district. At this period the problem of educated unemployment was slightly solved as many of them joined the army. In 1943-44 prices were soaring up and agriculturists were better off as they were able to get high prices for their produce and they liquidated some of their old debts. Price of agricultural lands increased three-fold and that of bullocks four-fold. Trading class was well off with profiteering, hoarding and blackmarketing. Only middle class and fixed income-group were hard hit. In some cases even an increase in dearness allowance could not improve the situation. The following years up to 1952 were period of high prices and the economic lot of the middle class people was worse. There was acute shortage of cloth in this period.

During the last decade some changes have been noticed in the material condition of the people, but it would be hazardous to draw any definite conclusion at this stage. It can, however, be said that, a definite change in the mental outlook of the people towards standard of living has occurred. "Demonstration effect" is largely responsible for this. People in rural areas are more conscious now to adopt a higher standard of living as income increases. Increased transport and communication have paved the way for such a change of wider significance.

Articles of consumption and family budgets.

Since detailed and comprehensive survey on the pattern of consumption and family budgets are lacking, it would be hazardous to draw any definite conclusion on the recent pattern of consumption. Social obligations play a big role in determining the family expenditure. Marriage and other ceremonies take away a major portion of family income. Expenses are great in matters of litigation and court cases. Almost seventy per cent of family income goes for food items. This percentage declines to 55 or 60 per cent for well to-do classes. The margin left for saving is negligible and there is lack of propensity to save in rural areas. A portion of income of lower income-group goes for servicing debts and there is very little left for the improvement of agriculture. (Some information regarding the articles of consumption have already been given in the section under the heading "standard of living".)

W.W. Hunter in his *Statistical Account of Trihut* provided a rough picture of family budgets in the seventies of the 19th century. "The average monthly expenses of a household in fair circumstances, consisting of 5 persons; 3 adults and 2 children may be estimated as below:—

Item	Quantity	Cost
1. Rice	148½ lbs.	9 s. 1¼ d.
2. Pulses	45 lbs.	5 s. 2 d.
3. Salt	..	8 d.

Item	Quantity	Cost
4. Oil	2 s. 6 d.
5. Sugar	3 d.
6. Fish	2 s.
7. Vegetables	1 s.
8. Turmeric	3 d.
9. Chillies	3 d.
10. Milk	2 s.
11. Spices	3 d.
12. Fuel	4 s.
13. Tobacco	11 d.
14. Ghee	1 s. 6 d.
15. Cloth	2 s. 6 d.
16. Fruit	1 s.
17. House Repairs	1 s. 6d.
18. Extras	6 d.

Total average monthly expenses £ 1, 15 s. 4½ d. or=Rs. 19.00.

He remarked "It is not very easy to estimate the expenses of an ordinary husbandry man, as he raises himself a great portion of the articles necessary for his own consumption. Rice, pulses, and vegetables are all home productions. Fish he catches when he has time. Following figures, therefore, only show the amount which he would require to spend were he to buy all his requisites in the market. They refer to same size of household as given above (year 1870).

Item	Quantity	Cost
1. <i>Satu</i>	123 lbs.	7 s. 10½ d.
2. Rice	92 lbs.	5 s. 3½ d.
3. Pulses	—	1 s.
4. Salt	4½ d.
5. Fuel	10½ d.
6. Oil	10½ d.
7. Tobacco	9 d.
8. Vegetables	10½ d.
9. Turmeric	3 d.
10. Chillies	3 d.
11. Cloth	2 s.
12. Fish	6 d.
13. Fruits	3 d.
14. Repairs of Houses	6 d.
15. Extras	6 d.

Total average monthly expenses £ 1.2s. 2d=Rs. 11 anna 1.

The proper husbandmen have to reduce these expenses to halt."

General level of employment in different occupations

According to *District Census Handbook of Darbhanga, 1955*, 10,13,912 persons are gainfully employed in agriculture. This constitutes roughly 25 per cent of total population. The number of self-supporting persons who derive their livelihood from non-agricultural occupations was 118,549 in 1951. Out of this 25,990 persons are employed in production other than cultivation, i.e., in industries; 29,296 are engaged in commerce; 5,516 persons are employed in transport and communications and 57,747 persons are employed in other services and miscellaneous occupations. Only about 4 per cent of the total population of this district is employed in non-agricultural occupations. Other services and miscellaneous occupations include Health, Education, Public Administration, Domestic Services, Personal Services, Hotels, Restaurants and Eating-houses, Legal and Business Services, Art, Journalism, Religious and other Welfare Services.

In the Census Report 1951, details regarding the level of employment in non-agricultural occupations are available. According to the Census of India, Volume V, Part II B, the level of employment in different non-agricultural occupations is as follows :—

Level of employment by classification in Darbhanga (1951)

Employment	Level of Employment
Industry and Services (Total)	1,12,961
(1) Primary Industries	3,718
(a) Animal Husbandry	1,304
(b) Plantations	22
(c) Forest and Wood cutting	337
(d) Fishing and Hunting	2,055
(2) Mining and Quarrying	218
(a) Coal Mining	Nil
(b) Iron-ore	3
(c) Metal Mining	215
(d) Mica Mining	Nil

Employment	Level of Employment
(3) Agricultural Products	5,946
(a) Grains and Pulses	1,126
(b) Sugar and beverages	1,803
(c) Tobacco	1,284
(d) Others	1,733
(4) Commerce	29,296
(a) Wholesale Trade	1,096
(b) Retail Trade	28,007
(c) Real Estate, Insurance and Banking	193
(5) Transport, Storage and Communications	6,255
(6) Health, Education and Public Administration	6,942
(7) Domestic Services	6,512
(8) Personal Services	8,764
(9) Hotels, Restaurants and Eating-houses	317
(10) Legal and Business Services	1,873
(11) Arts, Journalism, Religion and Welfare Services	2,036
(12) Recreation and Unclassified Services	21,502
(13) Manufacturing Industries	..
(a) Textile Industries	7,540
(b) Leather Industries	631
(c) Ferrous and non-ferrous, metals and machinery	323
(d) Chemical and Chemical products	48
(e) Non-metal Industries	2,836
(f) Other Industries	2,192
(g) Wood and Paper-Products	2,538
(14) Construction, utilities and maintenance	34,738

These figures relate to the level of employment a decade back and the present level of employment would be definitely higher than this. During the two Five-Year Plans there have been some expansions of old industries and many a new factories have been opened. Trade and commerce have expanded accordingly. It can be presumed that level of employment in trade and commerce has gone up along with increase in employment in other occupations particularly in Transport and Communication, Health, Education and Public Administration, Domestic Services, Hotels, Restaurants and Eating-houses, Legal and Business Services, Welfare Services, Agricultural products and in Construction utilities and maintenance. From the list of registered factories in the State of Bihar, 1960, it can be known that employment in registered factories has gone up from 8,797 in 1951 to 9,434 in 1959.

Statistics of level of employment in different non-agricultural occupations as shown above include employment in cottage and small-scale industries, both textile and non-textile. According to District Census Handbook of Darbhanga (1955), employment in the year 1951, in small-scale cottage units not registered under the Factories Act, 1948, is as follows :—

A. Textile establishments	(number	7,671)
(i) Whole-time workers	..	22,727 persons.
(ii) Part-time workers	..	708 ..
B. Non-textile establishments	(number	3,146)
(i) Whole-time workers	..	8,435 persons
(ii) Part-time workers	..	157 ..

Employment in textile establishments is mostly in areas under Khajauli, Madhubani, Madhepur, Darbhanga and Jhanjharpur police-stations. Non-textile establishments occur in almost all parts of the district and within this group, level of employment is comparatively higher in Carpentry, Blacksmithy, Pottery, Goldsmithy, Oil-processing, Sweetmeat making, Butter-making and Cycle-repairing. The district is poor so far as large scale industries are concerned. The district has five units of super-industries which employ 3,264 persons, one unit of jute industry employing 2,796 persons, 3 units of general engineering employing 46 persons, 3 electricity generating units employing 61 persons, one biscuit-making factory employing 40 persons, and there are about 200 units of rice, dal, oil, flour and wheat-crushing mills employing about 1,200 persons.*

In trade, foodstuff including beverages and narcotics, fuel, textile and leather goods constitutes main items.

These figures have since changed. See "Industries Chapter".

Level of employment in trade is of the following pattern :—

	Retail Trade		Wholesale Trade	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
1	2	3	4	5
(i) Trade otherwise unclassified ..	9,650	2,356	..	..
(ii) Foodstuff (including beverages and and narcotics).	10,172	2,829	470	53
(iii) Fuel	551	352 in commodities other than foodstuff.		
(iv) Textile and Leather goods ..	1,829	268	559	14
(v) Real Estate	Total		30	10
(vi) Money-lending, Banking and other financial business.	Total ..		122	31

In Transport Storage and Communication, level of the employment has the following pattern :—

	Male	Female
(1) Transport and Communications, other unclassified and incidental services.	32	1
(2) Transport by road	2,306	461
(3) Transport by water	264	25
(4) Transport by air	9	..
(5) Railway transport	2,412	6
(6) Postal services	678	..
(7) Telegraph services	49	..
(8) Telephone services	10	..
(9) Wireless services	2	..

(Source : *District Census Handbook 1954*)

The figures given above relate to the year 1951 and it should be presumed that level of employment has increased in all these occupations.

Miscellaneous occupations

Public Administration including local and municipal Services.—
According to *District Census Handbook, 1951.*

Level of employment in the above occupations is of the following pattern :—

(1) Police services	--	--	--	490	persons.
(2) Village officers and servants including village watchman				585	"
(3) Municipal and Local services	..	--	..	232	"
(4) Employees of State Governments		..	..	532	"
(5) Employees of Union Government		--	--	510	"

Level of employment in Public Administration has increased during the period of First and Second Five-Year Plans. Details regarding the quantitative information are not forthcoming, but it can be reasonably expected that, with expansions of activities of the Union and the State Governments and of various local bodies there, level of employment has gone up.

Learned professions like Teachers, Doctors, Lawyers, Engineers, etc., 1951*				Males.	Females.
1. Educational Services and Research	--	..	..	2,127	275
2. Medical and Health Services	..	..	..	1,765	361
3. Legal and Business Services	..	..	..	1,829	44
4. Arts, Letters and Journalism	..	..	..	36	Nil
5. Religious Charitable and Welfare Services	..	..	..	1,615	385
Domestic and Personal Services—					
1. Domestic Services	..	..	..	4,773	1,739
2. Barbers and Beauty Shops	..	..	..	3,462	894
3. Laundries and Laundry Services	..	..	..	2,833	1,575
4. Hotels, Restaurants and Eating-houses	..	..	..	311	6
5. Recreation Services	..	..	..	596	136*

Community Development Projects

For an all-round development of rural economy the work on Community Development Projects was started after the independence of the country. These projects try to give effect to intensive and comprehensive programmes of economic development covering all aspects of rural life, e.g., agriculture, rural industries, education, housing, health, and sanitation and recreation, etc., and aim at utilising under a democratic set up, the surplus labour force available in the rural areas for developmental purposes.

1961 Census figures not available yet (December, 1962).

In Darbhanga district, the work on Community Development Projects was started on 2nd October 1952 when four Community Development Blocks were opened in Samastipur subdivision. Subsequently 26 other blocks were opened all over the district, till 1st April 1961. In October 1960, 2 other pre-extension blocks were opened in Samastipur subdivision and 3 other blocks are to be started of which two will be in Madhubani subdivision and one in Sadar subdivision. Subdivision wise, Samastipur has 10 Community Development Blocks and two pre-extension blocks and of these three Community Development Blocks have been upgraded to stage II Blocks; Madhubani subdivision has 12 stage I Community Development Blocks and 2 pre-extension blocks; Darbhanga Sadar has eight stage I blocks and one pre-extension block. In total the district has 30 Community Development Blocks and 5 pre-extension blocks.

A decade has elapsed since the work on Community Development Projects was started in this district and some achievements have been noticed in the field of rural welfare. It is seen that too much emphasis on welfare activities has led to lesser attention on agro-economic ones, but at the same time the welfare activities undertaken so far have aroused rural consciousness of economic and to a smaller extent of political sense. In the field of rural education progress has been marked and the number of Primary Schools, Middle Schools and Higher Secondary Schools, Agricultural institutes, etc., have increased. New school buildings have been constructed and old ones have been repaired or improved. Hostels have been constructed for the education of the backward.

In the field of health and sanitation marked improvement has been noticed. One hospital and two health centres in each Community Development Block has been opened and qualified Doctors have been provided in each block hospital. Ten hospitals belonging to *zamindars* have been taken over by the State Government. Twenty-four District Board Hospitals have also been taken over. To improve sanitation and health, tube-wells have been constructed in each village for provision of clean water to villagers.

Authorities have been trying to infuse the spirit of co-operation among the rural people. Co-operative Credit Societies have been formed to provide credit to agriculturists. Particular attention is being paid to sugarcane, weaving, housing, and co-operative societies have been started for each of these. Consumers' co-operatives have also come into existence.

In the field of agriculture, considerable improvement has been brought about by various schemes of irrigation, flood control, distribution of good seeds, manures and improved implements. Output of crops has been on the increase in last decade. For improvement in Animal Husbandry 27 veterinary hospitals have been opened all over the district during two plan period.

To improve and develop rural industries loans were liberally granted and the effect has been encouraging. Rice, oil and *dal* mills, carpentry, weaving, tailoring, calico printing, button making, leather industry, smithy and *khandesari* industries have been granted loan for development. To speed up the process of development, power loom schemes were started and about 150 power-looms were distributed in this district.

Main difficulties in the working of Community Development Projects are :—

(1) Apathy of the people and passivity of popular mind have hindered the progress in initial stages of the programme.

(2) The assistance given by the *panchayats* and *ad hoc* popular organisations specially set up for this purpose have been inadequate.

(3) Lack of proper planning has to a considerable extent been responsible for slow progress.

(4) The shortage of trained personnel and staff was to a considerable extent responsible for the slow progress and for various mistakes which were made.

Details of Blocks in Darbhanga district.

Name of C. D. stage I & II Block	Name of Block Headquarters.	Subdivision.	Date of starting
1	2	3	4
1. Samastipur (Stage II)	.. Samastipur	Samastipur	2nd October 1952.
2. Pusa (Stage II)	.. Pusa ..	Ditto ..	Ditto.
3. Warisnagar (I)	.. Warisnagar	Ditto ..	Ditto.
4. Sarairanjan (C.D.) (II)	.. Sairaranjan	Ditto ..	Ditto.
5. Kalyanpur (Stage I)	.. Kalyanpur	Ditto ..	14th October 1955.
6. Tajpur (Stage I)	.. Tajpur (Marwa)	Ditto ..	Ditto.
7. Laukhaha (Stage I)	.. Khunta ..	Madhubani	Ditto.
8. Baheri (Stage I)	.. Baheri ..	Darbhanga	19th May 1956.
9. Laukaha (Stage I)	.. Laukaha ..	Madhubani	14th October 1955.
10. Hayaghat (Stage I)	.. Hayaghat ..	Sadar ..	19th May 1956.
11. Ladania (I)	.. Ladania ..	Madhubani	1st October 1956.
12. Jainagar (I)	.. Jainagar ..	Ditto ..	Ditto.
13. Basopatti (I)	.. Basopatti ..	Ditto ..	Ditto.

Name of C. D. stage I & II Block.	Name of Block Headquarters.	Subdivision.	Date of starting.
1	2	3	4
14. Biraal (I)	.. Biraal(Supaul)	Sadar ..	26th January 1957.
15. Singhwara (I)	.. Singhwara	Sadar ..	1st April 1957.
16. Harlakhi (I)	.. Ungaon	Madhubani	Ditto.
17. Benipatti (I)	.. Benipatti	.. Ditto ..	2nd October 1957.
18. Madhwapur (I)	.. Madhwapur	Ditto ..	Ditto.
19. Manigachi (I)	.. Manigachi	.. Sadar ..	1st April 1958.
20. Babu Barhi (I)	.. Babu Barhi	Madhubani	Ditto.
21. Keotinaway (I)	.. Keotinaway	Sadar ..	Ditto.
22. Rusera (I)	.. Rusera	.. Samastipur	1st October 1958.
23. Hasanpur (I)	.. Hasanpur	Ditto ..	1st April 1959.
24. Bisfi (I)	.. Bisfi	.. Madhubani ..	Ditto.
25. Singhia (I)	.. Singhia	.. Samastipur	1st October 1958.
26. Ujiarpur (I)	.. Ujiarpur	.. Ditto ..	26th October 1959.
27. Jalley (I)	.. Jalley	.. Sadar ..	1st October 1960.
28. Andhrathari (I)	.. Andhrathari	Madhubani	Ditto.
29. Bahera (I)	.. Benipur	.. Sadar ..	1st April 1961.
30. Phulparas (I)	.. Phulparas	.. Madhubani	Ditto.
PRE-EXTENSION BLOCKS OPENED IN OCTOBER, 1960.			
31. Bibhutpur (Nahan)	.. Bibhutpur	Samastipur	October, 1960.
32. Mohiuddinagar	.. Mohiuddinagar	Ditto ..	Ditto.
PRE-EXTENSION BLOCKS TO BE STARTED FROM APRIL, 1961.			
33. Madhepur	.. Madhepur	.. Madhubani	
34. Rajnagar	.. Rajnagar	.. Ditto.	
35. Ghansyampur	.. Ghansyampur	Sadar.	

Role of this district in implementing Government policies.

The district of Darbhanga with a population of 4,413,027 souls, occupying an area of 3,345 sq. miles, consisting of 3,010 villages, 6 towns and one city, plays a vital role in the agricultural economy of Bihar. The fact that the district is agricultural and rural and at the same time most populous, poses big problems before the development authorities of the State and the district. Over decades demographic pressure has increased, urbanisation has been slow, non-agricultural employment scarce, small-scale and cottage industries have declined and the cumulative effect of these have been a

stagnant agriculture with widespread rural unemployment and under-employment. But the Government have been conscious of this economic stagnation since the achievement of independence and in the twelve years of planned efforts, improvements have been noticed in some sectors of the economy. Agricultural base and its supplement, i.e., cottage and small-scale industries have been the main sectors of development, the progress being in the right direction. In fact, even today, what the district needs more is the development of agriculture and cottage and small-scale industries. When there are possibilities of small-scale industries and agricultural development by utilising the internal resources of the economy, policies directed to achieve the same is of great importance in the wake of economic development of the country. Large-scale industries are not many in this district. But at the same time the district provides the nation with two important industries : Jute and Sugar which are of national importance. The former is a dollar earner, and occupies an important position in the export trade of the nation. Expansion of these industries are going on along with the schemes for establishment of new ones of paper, nails and wires, bucket manufacturing, wire drawing and many others. Among the cottage and small-scale industries, weaving and textile industry has a venerable antiquity ; other important industries are rice, *dal* and oil milling, leather, *gur*, handicrafts, *mat* industry, for which plans for development are being drawn, tried and implemented gradually.

In matters of education the district has been playing a very crucial role in implementing the policies of the Government. Spread of general education has started laying foundation for changed social behaviour, while progress in medical and agricultural education has been noticed. The Darbhanga Medical College provides the nation with doctors, while Agricultural Institutes have gone a long way to meet the requirements of growing agricultural economy. A Sanskrit University has also been established to revive the learning of our parent language.

Apart from these, developments in the field of co-operation, welfare activities, small savings have been of great importance. Co-operative movement has not met with grand success due to passivity of the popular mind but changed attitudes towards it is being noticed. In imparting help to the less privileged sections of the society the District Welfare Department is doing considerable constructive work. Small Savings Department is trying to mop up the low purchasing power in the wake of economic development of the country.

Thus, achievements have been many ; but more is needed. Agricultural base is to be strengthened more to plant a self-growing economy. Along with it a planned development of economic and social investment in transport, power, public works, rural housing would go a long way for an integrated development of the economy.