

CHAPTER V.

INDUSTRIES.

The physiographical features and particularly the river system, communications, marketing facilities and other allied features have been described elsewhere. Industrially this district is extremely backward and at the moment there are no large-scale industries at all. There is no mention of Saharsa anywhere in the *Techno-Economic Survey Report of Bihar* (1960) excepting that the percentage of looms in this district is 0.60 in comparison to the total looms of Bihar State.

The table below gives the details of the major livelihood sources of the population according to the 1951 census*:-

Livelihood class.	Persons who derive their principal means of livelihood.	Percentage of the total population.
	1951	1951
1. Agricultural classes	1,223,460	93.5%
2. Non-Agricultural classes—		
(a) Production other than cultivation	14,594	1.1%
(b) Commerce	33,684	2.6%
(c) Transport	1,375	0.1%
(d) Other services and miscellaneous sources.	35,085	2.7%

Most of the persons engaged in production other than cultivation like village artisans, blacksmiths, carpenters, potters, etc., are scattered all over the rural area. They work mostly with primitive tools. They form only 1 per cent of the total population and there is an acute shortage of skilled and semi-skilled persons. The detailed break-up of employers, employees and independent workers in industries and services in 1951 census is given below†:-

District.	Total.	Employers.	Employees.	Independent workers.
1	2	3	4	5
Saharsa	21,052	1,994	7,461	11,597

* *District Census Handbook of Saharsa* (pp. 7—9). Break-up figures for 1961 census are not yet available.

† *District Census Handbook of Saharsa* (pp. 26—34).

Serial no.	Name of industries.	Total.	Employers.	Employees.	Independent workers.
1	2	3	4	5	6
1	Primary industries not elsewhere specified.	2,179	231	511	1,437
2	Stock raising	1,341	157	309	875
3	Rearing of small animals and insects	280	39	145	96
4	Plantation industries ..	10	Nil	2	8
5	Forestry and wood cuttings ..	233	5	20	208
6	Hunting	2	Nil	Nil	2
7	Fishing	313	30	35	248
8	Mining and quarrying ..	16	Nil	1	15
9	Stone quarrying, clay and sand pits	16	Nil	1	15
10	Processing and manufacture—food-stuffs, textiles, leather and products thereof.	1,172	193	335	644
11	Food industries, otherwise unclassified	34	Nil	Nil	34
12	Vegetable oil and dairy products ..	335	95	88	172
13	Tobacco	154	6	80	68
14	Cotton textiles	4	Nil	Nil	4
15	Wearing apparel	554	88	Nil	313
16	Textile industries	3	Nil	3	Nil.
17	Leather, leather products and footwear	68	4	11	53
18	Processing and manufacture of metals, chemicals and products thereof.	471	55	139	277
19	Manufacture of metal products otherwise unclassified.	471	55	139	277
20	Processing and manufacturing not elsewhere specified.	503	64	116	323
21	Manufacturing industries otherwise unclassified.	74	5	33	36
22	Bricks, tiles and other clay products	272	34	43	195
23	Wood and wood products other than furniture.	157	25	40	92
24	Construction and utilities ..	3,485	257	2,063	895
25	Construction and maintenance of work otherwise unclassified.	189	11	9	169
26	Construction and maintenance of buildings.	1,716	104	1,222	390
27	Construction and maintenance of roads, bridges and other transport works.	1,567	142	1,099	326
28	Sanitary works and services (including scavengers).	13	Nil	3	10

The statistics of the table indicate the nature of the primary industries like stock raising, processing of foodstuffs, leather work, etc. They are all to be grouped as cottage industries. As the district has been given its present status recently, a large number of

construction works have been taken up and engage a few thousands of men. The Kosi barrage, the Government buildings, scattered throughout the district, etc., are some of the main units employing the masons, labourers, carpenters, etc.

It has been mentioned that the district suffers from bad communications. Both the railways and roadways give poor amenities and it takes more than 12 hours to reach Bhagalpur, the divisional headquarters from Saharsa. The time taken to reach Katihar is also about 8 to 10 hours. The raw materials have to be brought from these stations and there are poor transport facilities. The district has no provision for the supply of hydro-electric power. The two power supply units at Saharsa and Birpur have got very limited capacity. Birpur Power House is only meant for Kosi Project. The Saharsa Power House supplies electricity to Saharsa, Madhipura, Singheshwarasthan and Murliganj. The electricity tariff is considered quite high both for domestic and industrial consumption. There is a proposal for procuring power from Barauni Thermal Station when it is ready. The transmission line has already been laid from Barauni to Mansi. It is expected that after power is available from Barauni Thermal Station, there will be more power available in Saharsa district.

The financial resources of the people are also very limited. An enquiry was conducted by the Economic Investigation Branch of the Small Industries Service Institute, New Delhi, in 1961 and it was held that there were only about 200 people who could invest funds to the extent of Rs. 20,000 to Rs. 50,000 each in starting industries. This shows a poor incidence of financial resources within the district. The institutional sources which provided funds to the district have not yet had much development. The Central Co-operative Bank, the Khadi and Village Industrial Board and the Industries Department have given some loans for starting or improving cottage industries. The Industries Department has advanced till 1963 Rs. 1,78,801 to 169 units under State Aid to Industries Act. The discussions in the text on Banking, Trade and Commerce in this connection may be looked into. Marketing facilities are also poor owing to bad communications and other factors.

CURRENT INDUSTRIES.

There are no mining and heavy industries nor any large-scale industries in this district. The few industries are on a small scale and as mentioned, usually of cottage type.

Amongst small industries a Bone Mill at Saharsa, units for blacksmithy, manufacture for sheet metal work, ordinary agricultural implements, domestic utensils and carpentry may be mentioned.

There is a Bone Mill in Saharsa established in 1957 and the unit has received a loan of Rs. 20,000 from the State Government during 1961-62. The mill has not yet gone into any tangible production. It is estimated that about 70,000 maunds of bones are annually available within the district, the bulk of which is exported to Calcutta. There is the possibility of the mill flourishing if properly managed. Blacksmithy is scattered throughout the district. It is estimated that during 1962-63 there were 2,000 blacksmithy units employing about 4,000 workers. Non-availability of coal and scarcity of proper raw materials are the handicaps. There are a few very small sheet metal works units at Saharsa, Murliganj and Uda-Kishanganj. Quarterly quota of G. I. sheets and black sheets are made available to these units which are registered. Some of the units have got loans from the Industries Department under the State Aid to Industries Act. There is a great scope for expansion of these industries provided the raw materials are available.

There is one Khandsari Sugar Manufacturing unit at Uda-Kishanganj. In 1962-63 about 235 persons were employed. The unit has the capacity to crush about 2.5 lakh maunds of sugarcane and produce 10,000 maunds of sugar. There is a growing demand for Khandsari sugar and this industry has got a future.

No particular mention need be made of scattered small units in connection with *biri* industries, carpentry, making of lac bangles and leather work. They are all more or less in a primitive state.

There are three rice mills located at Nirmali, Saharsa and Supaul. The number of labourers employed during seasons is much less 100 persons. Oil crushing section is attached to these rice mills. Due to shortage of paddy the rice mills remain idle for a considerable part of the year.

INDUSTRIAL POTENTIAL AND PLANS FOR FUTURE DEVELOPMENT.

As mentioned earlier, the district has very meagre resources which can form basis for industrial development. Communication facilities are also poor. The district has no railway in the northern and north-western part and the mileage of all-weather road is also very poor. Flood inundation had become a nightmare.

With the completion of the Kosi Canal System more supply of foodgrains are expected to be secured. More power is expected to be available from Barauni Thermal Station from 1965. There is some scope for setting up a number of new industries on a moderate scale if proper facilities are available. Some of these industrial ventures would cover the manufacture of agricultural implements and handtools, builders' hardware, manufacture of rickshaws, etc. In a similar manner the possibility of canning mangoes which are

available in plenty may be examined. Units for cremary, jute twine and bakery are also expected to thrive. There is no ice factory now in the district.

The only large-scale industry, the possibility of which may be examined is for the manufacture of paper. Bamboo is widely grown and according to the estimate about 50,000 acres of land is under bamboo. Titagarh Paper Mills of Calcutta procure some of the supply from this district. There is no dearth of water. More power will be available from Barauni Thermal Station. Jute sticks are also available for making pulp for the manufacture of paper. Apart from bamboo, the suitability of *pater* growing abundantly in the district for the manufacture of paper may be examined.