

CHAPTER XVI.

SOCIAL SERVICES AND PUBLIC LIFE.

LABOUR WELFARE.

The labourers of the district may broadly be divided into three categories, namely, agricultural, industrial and commercial. The majority is of the agricultural labourers. There is a great mobility among the agricultural labourers. Thus an agricultural labourer may become a cartman or he may sell his labour to a rice-mill.

Agricultural labourer.—Agricultural labourers are usually drawn from the family of the agriculturists and other landless labourers. They are mobile and have no obligation to work for a particular wage unless they are of the category of tied labourers because of some land gifts or cash advances. Females and children also help in agricultural operations. Their wages are usually paid in cash. Their working hours are not fixed and their employment also is not assured. They are usually employed for particular agricultural operations and on the average they get employment only for six to eight months in the year. The wages are much less than that of the wages earned by the industrial labour. Their economic condition and standard of life are poor unless they have some lands of their own. Of late, however, the agricultural labourers have started occasionally dictating their terms if the supply of labour is short.

In Bihar, in August, 1951 the wages of field workers were between Rs. 1-2-6 and Rs. 1-10-0 in case of men and between Re. 0-12-0 and Rs. 1-8-4 in case of women.* This rate has somewhat gone up now and at harvesting time the wages depend on the supply of labour.

THE MINIMUM WAGES ACT OF 1948.

The aim of the Act is to fix minimum wages in certain employments wherein sweated labour is most prevalent or where there is big chance of the exploitation of labour. Part II to Schedule of the Act covers agricultural workers and it was enforced in Saharsa district in 1958. The Labour Officer posted at Saharsa has been appointed Inspector under this Act for the proper implementation of the Act in the agriculture sector. There are also five Labour Inspectors for helping the Labour Officer. The Government of Bihar in its notification published in the Gazette of 7th July 1958 have fixed the

* R. C. Saxena: *Labour Problems and Social Welfare* (Sixth Edition), page 688.

following minimum rates of wages for agricultural labourers engaged in different agricultural operations for Saharsa district:—

Name of the agricultural operations.	Minimum rates of wages.
(1) Double ploughing per 5 <i>kathas</i> (locally known as sanwar).	2 seers 12 chattaks of paddy including perquisites.
(2) Harrowing	2 seers 12 chattaks of paddy including perquisites per day.
(3) Transplanting (including up-rooting) 2 <i>kathas</i> in <i>Asarh</i> and <i>Savan</i> , 1 <i>katha</i> in second part of <i>Bhado</i> and first part of <i>Aswin</i> .	3 seers 4 chattaks of paddy with breakfast and mid-day meal.
(4) Harvesting per 10 bundles	One bundle.
(5) All other operations such as embanking, manuring, weeding, sowing, threshing, winnowing, irrigating, etc.	3 seers 4 chattaks of paddy with mid-day meal per day.

During the years 1961 and 1962, 147 and 236 complaints respectively were filed and disposed of by the Labour Officer.

* The agricultural labourers are not organised and do not even know the provisions of law. They cannot hold out nor can they normally afford to complain. The Act has not been any boon to the agricultural labourers and it has been difficult to implement most of the provisions of the Act.

The industries of the district have been described elsewhere. The average wages of a mill worker are from Rs. 1-12-0 to Rs. 3 per day. They are mostly seasonal labourers and their services are discontinued but the services of some of these workers are retained by paying them varying amount of retaining allowance in different mills during the off-season.

The commercial labourers are engaged in commercial sector such as grain *gola*, *pan*, *biri*, cloth shops, hotels, tea and sweetmeat and other shops that sell consumers' goods, etc. According to the Bihar Shops and Establishment Act, 1953, the shops have to be registered. The commercial sector labourers are mostly located at Saharsa Sadar, Supaul, Murliganj, Nirmali, Bihariganj, Madhepura and Birpur and their number is roughly calculated to be 1,600 only. The Bihar Shops and Establishment Act has been enforced in Saharsa, Supaul and Murliganj and the workers have a weekly holiday and they work for a fixed period of time. Till the end of

December, 1962, 1,089 shops and establishments were registered under the Bihar Shops and Establishment Act in Saharsa, Supaul and Murliganj. 55 complaints were received in 1962-63 against the employers for illegal deduction of wages and illegal discharge from service. Most of the cases were compromised. Secondly three prosecution cases have been filed by the Government (Labour Department) against those employers who did not close their shops on weekly closure days. Two prosecution cases have been filed under the Weekly Holidays Act against the employers.

Under the Shops and Establishment Act, 1953, the employers are required to maintain registers prescribed under the Act and submit annual reports and returns in respect of wages, employment and other matters to the Chief Inspecting Officer, Bihar. The Act provides for working hours, weekly rest, annual leave with wages, protection of employees against illegal fines and deduction, discharge and dismissal, etc.

TRADE UNIONS.

There is no strong Trade Union in the district except two at Bhimnagar, viz., Kosi Project Workers' Association, Bhimnagar and *Rastriya Nav Nirman Mazdoor Sabha*, Bhimnagar. These associations were registered on 13th September 1959 and 20th October 1960 respectively and are affiliated to the *Hind Mazdoor Sangh* and the Indian National Trade Union Congress. There are some un-registered trade unions, viz., *Chhapakhana Mazdoor Panchait*, Saharsa. *Rickshaw Mazdoor Union*, Saharsa, *Safai Mazdoor Union*, Saharsa and Supaul, *Bidi Mazdoor Union*, Saharsa, *Dukan Karamchhari Sangh*, Bihariganj and Bariahi, *Rickshaw*, *Tamtam Mazdoor Union*, Bariahi. These associations have not yet got any foothold and are of very recent origin.

PROHIBITION.

Prohibition as a State policy has not yet been enforced in Saharsa district. The present policy of the State Government is to control the consumption of intoxicants by raising their prices and imposing restrictions regarding places of consumption, etc. There has been a gradual increase in the prices of most of the intoxicants.

The prices of the country liquor in 1954 and thereafter are as follows:—

	Price (per gallon) from 1st April 1954.	Present rate from 1st December 1962.
	Rs.	Rs.
50 U. P. (Upper proof)	11.00	13.00
* 72.5 U. P. (Upper proof)	6.50	7.68

The raising of the price, however, does not appear to have any effect. The statement below supplied by the State Excise Office, Saharsa, shows the increase in revenue and consumption of distillery liquor in the district in spite of the rise of the prices:—

	1960-61.	1961-62.
Revenue from distillery liquor in rupees.	2,27,102	2,78,453
Consumption of distillery liquor per gallon.	10,484.06	12,583.04

Ganja.

The price of *ganja* has been increased from one rupee and four annas to one rupee and sixty P. per *tola* with effect from 1st April 1960. There has been no rise in the price of *bhanga* and opium since 1952. The price of *bhanga* and opium per *tola* is 3 annas and Rs. 8 respectively.

The statement given below supplied by the State Excise Office, Saharsa, indicates the consumption of *ganja*, *bhanga* and opium in the district of Saharsa:—

Year.	Ganja.		Bhang.		Opium.	
	Mds.	seers.	Mds.	seers.	Mds.	seers.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1959-60	19	14	11	00	2	20
1960-61	17	38	10	00	3	00
1961-62	13	21	10	11	3	8

The above statement indicates a decrease in the consumption of *ganja*. In case of *bhanga* it appears that it is almost constant.

As regards opium, restriction has been imposed upon its consumption. The Bihar and Orissa Opium Smoking Act, 1928, which came into force with effect from 1st January 1929 requires that only those persons who are twenty-five or above and are habitual opium-smokers have to get their names registered in the prescribed manner under the Act for getting a fixed quantity of opium. Since 1st April 1959 opium can be only procured under medical certificate and for health purposes.

In this district two voluntary social service organisations, namely, *Harijan Sewak Sangh* and *Bharat Sewak Samaj* are interested in stopping consumption of intoxicants.

HARIJAN WELFARE.

The population of the Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and other Backward Classes in the district of Saharsa based on the reports of 1951 census (pages 65-66 of the *District Census Handbook*,

Saharsa, published in 1956) and *Census of India, 1961, Vol. IV, Pt. IIA* are as follows:—

	Population.	
	1951.	1961.
Scheduled Castes	2,04,802	2,96,130
Scheduled Tribes	28,366	7,605*
Other Backward Classes ..	2,85,664	Not available.

They are distributed all over the district. The distribution revenue thanawise according to the *Census Report of 1951* was as follows:—

	Scheduled Castes.	Scheduled Tribes.	Other Backward Classes.
(1) Supaul, Nirmali and Tribeniganj police-stations.	38,296	8,899	48,104
(2) Prataganj revenue thana and Kishanganj police-stations.	26,842	9,647	52,753
(3) Bangaon revenue thana ..	15,909	598	27,072
(4) Madhepura, Singheshwar and Sourbazar police-stations.	46,204	2,752	39,584
(5) Murliganj police-station ..	23,366	4,496	25,782
(6) Kishanganj revenue thana ..	54,185	1,974	92,369

The total number of persons belonging to the Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and Backward Classes taken together comes to 5,18,832 as against the total population of 13,08,198 persons according to 1951 census and thus they form about 40 per cent of the whole population of the district. The number of persons belonging to the Scheduled Tribes as indicated above is small in this district in comparison to the population of the Scheduled Castes and other Backward Classes. The break-up figures are not available.

The following castes or groups of Saharsa district were notified as Scheduled Castes under the Indian Constitution (Scheduled Castes) Order, 1950:—

- (1) Bauri, (2) Bantar, (3) Bhogta, (4) Chamar, (5) Chaupal, (6) Dhobi, (7) Dom, (8) Dusadh (including Dhari or Dharhi), (9) Ghari, (10) Halalkhor, (11) Hari (including Mehtar), (12) Kanjar, (13) Kurariar, (14) Lalbegi, (15) Mochi, (16) Musahar, (17) Nat, (18) Pan, (19) Pasi, (20) Rajwar, (21) Turi, (22) Bhumij.

* This great drop in the figure is not understandable. The local authorities could not satisfactorily explain. This small figure cannot be accepted as even approximately correct.

The following castes or groups of the Saharsa district were notified as Scheduled Tribes under the Constitution (Scheduled Tribes) Order, 1950:—

- (1) Asur, (2) Baiga, (3) Bahudi, (4) Bedia, (5) Binjhia, (6) Birhor, (7) Birjia, (8) Chero, (9) Chik Baraik, (10) Gond, (11) Gorait, (12) Ho, (13) Karmali, (14) Kharia, (15) Kherwar, (16) Khond, (17) Kisan, (18) Kora, (19) Korwa, (20) Lohara, (21) Mahili, (22) Mal Paharia, (23) Munda, (24) Oraon, (25) Parhaiya, (26) Santal, (27) Sauria Paharia, (28) Savar.

The following castes or groups of the Saharsa district have been classified as Backward Classes. All others are included in the non-Backward category:—

- (1) Bari, (2) Banpar, (3) Beldar, (4) Bhathara (Muslim), (5) Bherihar, (6) Bhuiya, (7) Bind, (8) Chik (Muslim), (9) Dafali (Muslim), (10) Dhanuk, (11) Dhunia (Muslim), (12) Gorhi (including Chabbi), (13) Hajam, (14) Kahar, (15) Kassab (Kassai Muslim), (16) Kewat (Kent), (17) Khatik, (18) Mali, (19) Mallah, (20) Madari (Muslim), (21) Miriasee (Muslim), (22) Nat (Muslim), (23) Noriya, (24) Pamaria (Muslim), (25) Sheikhara, (26) Tantis, (27) Turha, (28) Bedia, (29) Chaim, (30) Gandharb, (31) Ganganta, (32) Kadar, (33) Naiya, (34) Tiar, (35) Dhobi (Muslim), (36) Halalkhor, (37) Lalbegi, (38) Mehatar (Muslim).*

* A separate department at Government level known as the Welfare Department looks after the interests of these men. This department works through a District Welfare Officer at the district level. The District Welfare Officer has his own staff consisting of one Assistant Welfare Officer, 16 Welfare Inspectors and 10 *Kalyan Grain Gola Sewaks*. He has no break-up figures of the communities for whom he is expected to work.

The main functions of the District Welfare Officer relate to the removal of disabilities of Backward Classes, Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, spread of literacy and education among them, arrangement for loan and subsidies, medical aid, grain golas and sinking wells, etc. He has also to see that the Bihar Harijan Act, 1949, is implemented. The Act provides that no Harijan can be denied access (i) to any river, pool, pond, stream, bathing *ghat*, well, tank, water tap, etc., (ii) to any public conveyance plying for hire, (iii) to or using any building, place or institution used for charitable or public purposes maintained wholly or partially by Bihar Government or local authority, (iv) to or using a place of public amusement, entertainment, (v) to join any institution, fair, meeting, (vi) religious institution, including a temple, *math*, shrine or *dharmashala*,

* Extract from *District Census Handbook*, Saharsa, page 65.

(vii) to a shop to which the members of all other castes are admitted, etc. The punishment under the Act is simple imprisonment which may extend to six months or with fine which may extend to five hundred rupees or with both. The Act defines Harijan as a person belonging to the Scheduled Caste as defined in clause (24) of Article 366 of the Constitution.

Grain golas.

Twelve grain *golas* have been established in this district till March, 1963 to give seed on credit and also grain for food in times of scarcity. These grain *golas* supply seeds at 25 per cent rate of interest for the first year and thereafter $6\frac{1}{4}$ per cent compound interest for each succeeding year. Previously, this facility was for the persons belonging to the Scheduled Tribes only but due to subsequent amendments in the rules Scheduled Castes and other Backward Classes of Annexure I may also get the benefit of these *golas*.

The statement below has been supplied by the District Welfare Officer regarding the working of the grain *golas*:-

Serial no.	Name of the places where grain <i>gola</i> is situated.	Name of the concerning police-station.	Year of opening.	Persons benefited during 1961-62.
				Rs.
1	Sonbarsa ..	Sonbarsa ..	1957-58 ..	154
2	Kamp ..	Sourbazar ..	1958-59 ..	187
3	Madhepura ..	Madhepura ..	1956-57 ..	210
4	Tribeniganj ..	Tribeniganj ..	1957-58 ..	312
5	Singheshwar ..	Singheshwar ..	1957-58 ..	214
6	Raghopur ..	Pratapganj ..	1956-57 ..	189
7	Mahisi ..	Dharhara ..	1961-62 ..	193
8	Murliganj ..	Murliganj ..	1956-57 ..	145
9	Gamharia ..	Murliganj ..	1961-62 ..	324
10	Gwalpara ..	Uda Kishanganj ..	1958-59 ..	314
11	Giridharpatti ..	Chattapur ..	1959-60 ..	221
12	Mahuabazar ..	Sonbarsa ..	1961-62 ..	178

The figures show that very few persons were benefited.

Agricultural Subsidy.

The agricultural subsidy granted to the agriculturists belonging to the Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and Backward Classes for the last six years is given below. It may be mentioned that since only 1960-61 the Scheduled Tribes were given agricultural subsidy. Since 1961-62 the State Government has stopped to give agricultural subsidy to the Backward Classes people:—

Year.	Scheduled Castes.	Backward Classes.	Scheduled Tribes.
	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.
1957-58	4,320	Not available.	} Not started.
1958-59	11,000	5,793	
1959-60	14,000	9,100	
1960-61	10,000	4,500	4,000
1961-62	4,000	} Closed	4,000
1962-63	4,200		4,000

The agricultural subsidy is meant for the purchase of bullocks, manure and seed.

Housing Scheme.

In order to provide houses for the homeless Harijans the housing scheme was introduced. The construction is sanctioned at an estimated cost of Rs. 1,250 per house, out of which the Government's contribution is Rs. 937.50 per house. Generally, the beneficiary contributes the remaining in form of labour, raw materials, etc.

Regarding the housing scheme it has been observed that even 25 per cent of the public contribution does not come forward and as such there is great difficulty in completion of housing schemes in the district.

The chart below supplied by the District Welfare Office, Saharsa, shows the location of the schemes which have been completed up to March, 1963. It shows a very poor contribution.

TABLE.
Under the State-sponsored Scheme for Scheduled Castes.

Serial no.	Name of schemes.	Name of Block.	Name of place where the schemes were taken up.	Year of sanction.	Total amount spent.	Number of houses completed.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
					Rs.	
1	Housing Scheme for Scheduled Castes..	(1) Kahra .. (2) Mahisi .. (3) Chousa .. (4) Murliganj ..	Sunindabad .. Gangjole .. Mahisi .. Chousayar .. Belo ..	11 1 1 1 5	1953-54 ..	6,403 19
2	Ditto ditto	(1) Sourbazar .. (2) Supaul .. (3) Madhepura .. (4) Singheshwar .. (5) Uda Kishanganj .. (6) Kahra ..	Barsam .. Kajuri .. Supaul .. Barauni .. Ekma .. Madhepura .. Singheshwar .. Kusthan .. Dumrail ..	13 1 1 6 6 3 1 11 6	1955-56 .. 1957-58 ..	18,710 4,950 6
3	Ditto ditto	(1) Kahra .. (2) Kishanganj .. (3) Tribeniganj ..	Manha .. Mohampur .. Babhangama ..	8 12 8	1959-60 ..	26,250 10
4	Centrally-sponsored Scheme for Scheduled Castes.	(1) Kahra .. (2) Supaul ..	Dumrail .. Manha .. Melhad ..	3 10 13	1957-58 ..	21,450 26

1	2	3*	4	5	6	7		
					Rs.			
5	Centrally-sponsored Scheme for Scheduled Castes.	(1) Sonbarsa	.. Deohat	.. 6	} 1958-59 ..	17,812.50	13	
		(2) Madhepura	.. Madhepura	.. 9				
		(3) Chousa	.. Lawalagaon	.. 4				
6	Ditto	ditto	.. (1) Sourbazar	.. Kamp	.. 7	} 1959-60 ..	21,562.50	13
		(2) Singheshwar	.. Singheshwar	.. 8				
		(3) Supaul	.. Chaughara	.. 6				
		(4) Tribeniganj	.. Babhangama	.. 2				
7	Ditto	ditto	.. (1) Kahra	.. Kahra	.. 9	} 1960-61 ..	18,756	10
		(2) Murliganj	.. Ratanpalli	.. 14				
8	Ditto	ditto	.. Singheshwar	.. Singheshwar	.. 7	1961-62 ..	6,562.50	7
			<i>Centrally-sponsored Scheme for Scheduled Tribes.</i>					
1	Ditto	ditto	.. Murliganj	.. Damgaria	.. 10	1960-61 ..	9,375	No houses have been completed.
2	Ditto	ditto	.. Saharsa	.. (1) Bihaso	.. 12	} 1960-61 ..	28,125	No houses have been completed.
				.. (2) Agwanpur	.. 18			

These houses are occupied by the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes but these are not adequate for the population of about three lakhs.

Educational Welfare.

Arrangements have been made to encourage education among the boys of the Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and other Backward Classes by giving them stipends, granting exemption from school fees and book-grants. Free hostel accommodation has been provided to some extent. The details regarding educational welfare have been discussed in the chapter "Education and Culture".

Hostels.

Special hostels the expenditure of which is borne by the Government have been provided for the Harijans. There are such hostels at Saharsa and Madhepura with 25 and 50 seats respectively. Each of the boarders gets a grant of Rs. 20 per month.

Drinking Water Facilities.

During the First Five-Year Plan no tube-well or well was sunk by the Welfare Department. During the Second Five-Year Plan 1,339 tube-wells and 45 wells were sunk from the fund of the Welfare Department in the district. The Government contributes 75 per cent of the estimated cost and the villagers are required to contribute the remaining in the form of labour, etc. The district needs more wells and tube-wells to meet the necessity of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes and people in general. Although these wells are specially sunk in Harijan *bustees*, there is no restriction on the Harijans to use other wells.

Medical Facilities.

The Welfare Department gives grants to the needy among the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes for medical facilities. The statement below gives the figures for four years:—

Year.	Scheduled	
	Castes.	Tribes.
	Rs.	Rs.
1959-60	1,174	400
1960-61	1,275	700
1961-62	1,700	1,000
1962-63	1,700	1,000

Legal Aid.

The Welfare Department provides legal aid to the indigent Backward Class individuals who may be involved in cases relating to ejection from land, house-site or a house and in money-suits and the like.

The table given below shows the amount paid to the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes as legal aid:—

Year.			Scheduled Castes.	Scheduled Tribes.
			Rs.	Rs.
1959-60	..	..	1,400	800
1960-61	..	..	1,700	1,000
1961-62	..	..	1,700	200
1962-63	..	..	1,700	200

It has to be observed that while the State is not responsible for the usual range of services covering subsistence for the needy, education and health services for all, housing, employment or maintenance, the care of the aged or handicapped persons, the care of children and mothers, sickness, maternity, retirement pensions, etc., as the state is in Great Britain, both the State and the Central Government have tried to discharge their implicit obligations to some extent. It is unfortunate that voluntary organisations are so few and the few that exist also depend more or less on Government subsidy to work in the sphere of social welfare. The paucity of voluntary social services supplementing the State services is painful. They hardly merge into each other and the two types are neither complementary nor competitive. Some of the *zamindars* and other non-officials did pioneer social services but the contribution was meagre and the source has now dried up.

PUBLIC LIFE AND VOLUNTARY SOCIAL SERVICE ORGANISATION.

First General Election of 1952.

After the attainment of independence in 1947 the First General Election was held in 1952 in Saharsa sub-district. This election was a unique feature as it was held for the first time on the basis of adult franchise.

Legislative Assembly.—In the 1952 General Election there were nine constituencies for Bihar *Vidhan Sabha* out of which two were plural (double) and seven were single constituencies in the sub-district of Saharsa. At that time Saharsa was a part of Bhagalpur district. During the election, 5,52,384 persons or about 43 per cent of the total population of Saharsa sub-district were eligible for exercising their right to franchise.

The political parties that participated in the election for the 11 seats were of all-India character. The parties were, namely, Congress, Socialist, Communist, Praja Socialist Party and Jan Sangh. Besides, 13 Independent candidates contested the 10 Assembly seats with no success. The results of the 1952 General Election with regard to the Assembly seats have been given at the end of the chapter (statement marked A).*

*The figures relating to results of General Election, 1952, have been taken from the *Report on General Election, 1952* (Government publication), pages 56-57.

Parliament seats.—In the General Election of 1952 there was no separate constituency for Parliamentary seat. However, some portions of this sub-district were included in the Darbhanga-cum-Bhagalpur constituency for Parliamentary seat. From this constituency a Congress candidate was elected.

General Election of 1957.

The General Election of 1957 was another landmark in the history of Parliamentary democracy in India. The Second Election in comparison with the First Election of 1952 was better planned and more systematically organised. Seats were reserved for the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes on the basis of their population as determined by the Census Commissioner. The *status quo* was maintained in respect of the number of seats assigned to the Legislative Assembly of the State. In the Second General Election the poll was completed within a fortnight while in the First General Election it took three weeks to complete the poll. Saharsa was created a district in 1954.

Legislative Assembly.—The Second General Election was held in 1957 on the basis of the electoral rolls made in 1952 and in the subsequent years. For keeping an up-to-date record of the electorates, there is one District Election Office at the district headquarters with its subordinate subdivisional election offices. The Parliamentary and Assembly constituencies were delimited afresh on the basis of the census figures of 1951 under the provisions in Articles 82 and 170 (3) of the Indian Constitution.

There were nine constituencies out of which two were double member constituencies and seven were single-member constituencies for Legislative Assembly for the 1957 General Election in Saharsa district. The parties that participated in this election were the Congress, Praja Socialist Party, Communist, Janata and Jan Sangh. Besides, 24 Independent candidates also contested 11 seats and obtained two seats. The results of the 1957 General Election in respect of Assembly seats have been given at the end of the chapter (statement marked B).*

Parliamentary Election of 1957.

In the General Election of 1952 for the House of People, there was no separate constituency for Saharsa district. But in the 1957 Election there was one separate constituency for Saharsa district, namely, Saharsa constituency. The Congress, Praja Socialist Party and Independent candidates were the contestants and the seat was won by the Congress candidate. The details of this election have been furnished in a tabular form in Statement 'B'.

* The figures of the results of General Election, 1957, have been taken from the *Report on General Election in Bihar, 1957*, pages 158-154.

General Election of 1962.

With a view to avoid the chances of adopting unfair means, a new technique in casting vote was adopted during the 1962 Election. Previously, there were as many ballot boxes, as there were candidates to contest the election and the voter was required to cast the ballot paper in the ballot box of the candidate of his choice. But this time, there was only one ballot box for all the contesting candidates and the voter was required to tick mark against the symbol of the party or the persons on the ballot paper. Moreover, this time the poll was completed within a week.

Legislative Assembly.—In Saharsa district there were 11 single-member constituencies for Legislative Assembly, out of which two constituencies, namely, Raghapur and Sonbarsa, were reserved for Scheduled Castes. The contesting parties that participated in the General Election of 1962 were the Congress, Praja Socialist Party, Jan Sangh, Swatantra and Socialist. This time only nine Independent candidates contested the election with no success. The details about the results of the Third General Election in respect of Assembly seats of Saharsa district have been given at the end of the chapter (statement marked C).*

Parliamentary Election of 1962.

In the General Election of 1962 for the House of People, there were three Parliamentary constituencies, namely, Saharsa, Bhagalpur-cum-Saharsa and Darbhanga-cum-Saharsa. Out of these three seats, two were won by the Congress Party and one by the Swatantra Party. The contesting parties were the Praja Socialist Party, Congress, Swatantra, Socialist and Communist. No Independent candidate contested the election. The results of the election have been given at the end of the chapter (statement marked C).

The position of the political parties at the different General Elections is evident from the following chart:—

Table 1 (Legislative Assembly).

Year in which the General Election was held.	Cons- tituency.	Total no. of seats.	Number of seats won by the parties.
1952 ..	9	11	Congress .. 8 Socialist .. 3
1957 ..	9	11	Congress .. 8 P. S. P. .. 1 Independent .. 2
1962 ..	11	11	Congress .. 7 P. S. P. .. 2 Socialist .. 2

* The figures of the results of 1962 General Election are based on the reports of the Returning Officer, Saharsa.

Table 2 (Parliament).

Year in which the General Election was held.	Constituency.	Total no. of seats.	No. of seats won by the parties.
1952	1	1 Congress.
1957	1	1 Congress.
1962	3	3 Congress .. 2 Swatantra .. 1

The above figures show that the number of seats won by the Congress party in the 1962 General Election in the district has come down from 8 in the 1957 General Election to 7, whereas the number of seats won by the Praja Socialist Party has increased from 1 to 2 in 1962 General Election. During 1957, no Socialist candidates won any seat in the Election but in 1962, two seats were won by Socialist. The Independent candidates had won two seats in 1957. But the Independent candidates lost all the seats in 1962 General Election. Moreover, not a single candidate of the Communist party was elected in the Legislative Assembly in 1952, 1957 and 1962 Elections.

On an analysis of the trends in the three General Elections, it is found that in this district there are five main political parties, namely, the Congress, Praja Socialist, Swatantra, Communist and Socialist.

The Congress Party has lost some seats in the last General Election in comparison with the General Elections of 1952 and 1957. Nevertheless, the Party won 7 seats out of 11 in the 1962 General Election. The Praja Socialist Party and Socialist Party seem to have improved their position and they could capture more seats in 1962 General Election. The trends show that an active and strong party machinery to fight the elections has a better advantage than individuals seeking election as Independent candidates. It is a fact that a large percentage of voters do not exercise their franchise.

It is clear that a political party has to nurse the constituency from before the elections. From this point of view, the Congress Party has got the best advantage being the Party that has formed the Government. The oppositionists, however, could mobilise public opinion against the ruling Party. Much depends on the strength of the organisation and the stature of the leaders.

Caste considerations have been found to be a major factor controlling the votes. The voters are led to believe that if they vote for a candidate of their own caste their economic interests will be served better. In some cases local causes have played a more important role than the broad policies of the parties participating in the General Elections. It is doubtful, if most of the voters voting for a particular party candidate knew and believed in the basic

policies of that party. But there is no doubt that political consciousness is growing definitely. In 1952 Elections the Congress Party ticket meant more than half of the victory at the polls. This is not the case now.

NEWSPAPERS.

No daily newspapers are published in the district but several English dailies published from elsewhere have a fair circulation. They are the *Indian Nation* and the *Searchlight* published from Patna and the *Statesman*, the *Hindustan Standard* and the *Amrita Bazar Patrika* published from Calcutta. The three Hindi dailies published from Patna, namely, the *Aryavarta*, the *Pradeep* and the *Navarastra* have also fair circulation in the district. The Bengali dailies *Ananda Bazar Patrika* and *Yugantar* and the Urdu dailies *Seyasat-e-jadid* of Kanpur, *Pratap* of Delhi and *Sada-e-Am* of Patna have some circulation. Among the English weeklies and periodicals published from elsewhere that have some circulation, mention may be made of *Blitz* and the *Illustrated Weekly*. Some weekly periodicals published from elsewhere, namely, *Dharmyug*, *Hindustan*, *Maya*, *Manohar*, *Manorma* in Hindi have fair circulation. Two monthly journals with short articles, namely, *Kalakar* in Hindi and *Avibyanjana* in Maithili published in the district have a very limited circulation.

The readership is painfully small. The number of libraries is poor. Correct figures of circulation of the language papers are not available. For this purpose it may be taken that each copy of the paper that is sold is read by about ten persons on the average in the villages. The newspapers in the few libraries are read on the average by 100 to 150 persons everyday. The language papers are making a better headway.

VOLUNTARY SOCIAL SERVICE ORGANISATIONS.

Bharat Sewak Samaj.

A branch of the *Bharat Sewak Samaj* was formed in Saharsa district in 1955. There are several committees consisting of officials and non-officials to implement the various items in the programme of the organisation.

It has an office at Saharsa and operates through its following wings:—

- (i) Information Centre, (ii) Anti-corruption Centre,
- (iii) Mahila Section, and (iv) Youth and Camp Section.

The *Bharat Sewak Samaj* is functioning in sixteen Blocks or *anchals* in the district. With the help of public co-operation about 20 tanks, 30 community halls and 15 *Panchayat* houses have been constructed till March, 1963. The *Samaj* was associated at one stage with the construction of the Kosi barrage.

The branch of the *Samaj* runs a library and a few night schools. It tries to work out a social uplift programme in the villages with voluntary collaboration of the members and the villagers. The *Samaj* receives liberal Government patronage.

Bhoodan Movement.—The Bhoodan Movement was started in the district of Saharsa in 1951 when Shri Vinoba Bhave came to this district. His mission is to get lands from the landowners and to distribute them to the landless. The main objective is to propagate the right thought by which social and economic maladjustments could be corrected and a moiety of the owned land is prayed for distribution to those people in the village who have no lands. It is difficult to say that the idea has caught the imagination of the people. The response has been very poor.

In the district there were about 5,427 donors from 943 villages till 1962. They have donated an area of 15,432 acres to the organisation. It is not known what percentage of the area donated is good cultivable land.

Apart from the collection and donation of land, the district organisation running the Bhoodan Movement has several other organisations to look after. They are, *Ambar Vidyalyaya* and *Vinogram* at Supaul, which impart training in *Charkha*.

The organisation also looks after the management of the donated villages in the district as well as *Khadi* work.

HARIJAN SEWAK SANGH.

For the welfare of the Harijans two institutions have been started, *viz.*: *Harijan Sewak Sangh* and *Dalit Varg Sangh* in 1953 and 1951 respectively. They are exclusively associated with the work of ameliorating the condition of the *Harijans*. This body depends on Government patronage for existence.

SAHARSA FOOTBALL AND ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION.

This Association was organised in 1954 and is affiliated to the Bihar State Sports Association. It has a Working Committee with about twelve members with the District Magistrate, Saharsa, as the President. It receives some Government aid from the Youth Welfare Fund and also from the discretionary fund of the Commissioner, Bhagalpur Division. The main work of this Association is to give affiliation to sports, clubs and teams of the district. Besides, it runs one tournament in football, *viz.*, "Nathan Shield". The Association has done a lot of useful work and has made the evening in some seasons lively in Saharsa which has very little of social amenities.

STATEMENT A.

Number of candidates.	Number of	Name of constituencies.	seats.	Total. Contes- ting.	Number of								
					Total	number of votes	Total	number of votes	Party	attributions.	Number of votes obtained by each candidate.		
					1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	

1952 Assembly General Election.

1. Niruali ..	1	4	4	45,441	19,949	(1) Congress	13,733 (elected).	4,586	1,106	484	(2) Socialist	(3) Jan Sangh	(4) Praja Socia- list Party.			
2. Pratapnui ..	1	3	3	47,374	24,442	(1) Congress	16,437 (elected).	6,893	912	(2) Socialist	(3) Independent					
3. Supaul ..	1	2	2	51,018	25,502	(1) Congress	16,676 (elected).	8,826		(2) Socialist						
4. Tribeniganj-cum- Madhupura.	2	5	5	1,18,016	38,659	(1) Congress	17,838 (elected).	17,083 (elected to reserv- ed seat).	17,172	17,114	(3) Socialist	(4) Socialist	(5) Independent			
5. Dighura ..	1	4	4	52,260	24,266	(1) Socialist	10,884 (elected).	10,418	1,600	1,367	(2) Congress	(3) Independent	(4) Ditto ..			
6. Sour Bazar-cum- Sonbarsa.	2	8	8	89,168	32,971	(1) Congress	15,572 (elected).	14,109 (elected to reserv- ed seat).	11,116	10,848	(3) Congress	(4) Socialist	(5) Independent	(6) Ditto ..	(7) Ditto ..	(8) Praja Socia- list Party.
7. Murliganj ..	1	3	3	54,868	26,484	(1) Congress	14,636 (elected).	9,872	1,976	8,160 (elected).	4,407	(2) Socialist	(3) Independent	(4) Ditto ..		
8. Kishanganj ..	1	4	4	39,618	17,985	(1) Congress	8,160 (elected).	3,658	1,760	8,549 (elected).	3,276	(2) Socialist	(3) Independent	(4) Ditto ..		
9. Alamnagar ..	1	5	5	54,622	23,943	(1) Socialist	8,549 (elected).	8,153	2,004	1,961	(2) Congress	(3) Independent	(4) Ditto ..	(5) Ditto ..		

STATEMENT 'B'-*concl.*

Number of candidates.

Number of candidates.

Name of constituencies, seats.

Total number of votes

Total number of voters, polled.

Total, Contesting.

Number of votes obtained by each candidate.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
6. Madhepura ..	1	3	3	60,862	24,350	(1) Praja Socia- list Party.	1,986	
						(2) Congress list Party.	9,670	
						(3) Independent	12,694 (elected).	
7. Saharsa ..	1	7	7	62,227	31,443	(1) Praja Socia- list Party.	10,544	
						(2) Independent list Party.	4,327	
						(3) Ditto ..	1,844	
						(4) Ditto ..	1,442	
						(5) Congress	10,923 (elected).	
						(6) Janata ..	496	
						(7) Independent	1,887	
8. Sonbarsa ..	2	7	7	1,04,101	43,828	(1) Praja Socia- list Party.	4,691	
						(2) Independent list Party.	13,440	
						(3) Ditto ..	17,067	
						(4) Congress	20,868 (elected).	
						(5) Independent	5,844	
						(6) Praja Socia- list Party.	9,596	
						(7) Congress	16,149 (elected to reserv- ed seat).	
9. Alamnagar ..	1	6	6	59,802	26,072	(1) Independent	7,937 (elected).	
						(2) Ditto ..	3,663	
						(3) Ditto ..	3,781	
						(4) Communist	6,208	
						(5) Praja Socia- list Party.	1,457	
						(6) Independent	3,026	
1957 Parliament Election.								
1. Saharsa ..	2	9	9	7,14,197	3,17,710	(1) Independent	20,697	
						(2) Praja Socia- list Party.	43,605	
						(3) Congress	1,52,647 (elected).	
						(4) Independent	53,115	
						(5) Communist	54,537	
						(6) Ditto ..	53,573	
						(7) Congress	1,32,658 (elected to reserv- ed seat).	
						(8) Praja Socia- list Party.	45,368	
						(9) Independent	79,320	

STATEMENT 'C'.

Name of constituencies.	Number of seats.	Number of candidates.		Total number of voters.	Total number of electors.	Total number of votes polled.	Party affiliations.	Number of votes obtained by each candidate.
		Number of candidates.	Total number of voters.					
1. Supaul ..	1	1	5	1,01,212	59,292	23,845	(1) Praja Socia- list Party. (2) Congress (3) Socialist (4) Independent (5) Swatantra	25,404 (elected). 23,845 3,610 712 2,707
2. Singheshwar ..	1	3	3	58,047	21,129	10,280	(1) Socialist (2) Congress (3) Swatantra	10,280 (elected). 8,039 1,664
3. Kishanganj ..	1	7	7	61,891	21,123	2,132	(1) Communist (2) Independent (3) Swatantra (4) Congress (5) Praja Socia- list Party. (6) Socialist (7) Independent	4,435 864 2,132 (elected). 1,080 1,149 371
4. Kishanpur ..	1	4	4	1,05,196	49,861	6,162	(1) Praja Socia- list Party. (2) Swatantra (3) Congress (4) Socialist	19,215 (elected). 17,270 4,122
5. Tribeniganj ..	1	4	4	52,941	22,698	9,603	(1) Independent (2) Congress (3) Socialist (4) Swatantra	1,144 (elected). 8,392 2,442
6. Raghopur ..	1	4	4	57,837	29,578	2,664	(1) Swatantra (2) Socialist (3) Independent (4) Congress	11,880 682 13,519 (elected). 12,267
7. Murliganj ..	1	4	4	66,475	38,791	2,586	(1) Congress (2) Swatantra (3) Communist (4) Socialist	2,586 1,400 15,664 (elected). 10,796 (elected). 5,708 1,101
8. Alamnagar ..	1	7	7	68,735	31,081	1,983	(1) Congress (2) Swatantra (3) Praja Socia- list Party. (4) Socialist (5) Independent (6) Communist	1,983 1,253 1,232

1962 Assembly General Election.

STATEMENT 'C'-*concl.*

Name of constituencies.	Number of seats.	Number of candidates.	Total number of voters polled.		Total number of votes.	Party affiliations.	Number of votes obtained by each candidate.		
			Total	of					
1	1	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9. Madhepura ..	1	1	2	2	75,115	35,716 (1) Socialist	9,507		
10. Saharsa ..	1	1	5	5	85,640	46,757 (1) Swatantra	5,194		
						(2) Praja Socia- list Party.	26,810 (elected).		
						(3) Independent	4,141		
						(4) Congress	7,286		
						(5) Independent	606		
11. Sonbarsa ..	1	1	Not available.	..	..	..	..	..	..
1. Saharsa ..	1	1	3	3	4,26,757	2,06,752 (1) Socialist	97,038 (elected).		
						(2) Swatantra	18,218		
						(3) Congress	81,905		
2. Sonbarsa (Bhagalpur-cum-Sonbarsa).	1	5	5	5	61,891	21,122 (1) Communist	34,399		
						(2) Socialist	29,032		
						(3) Congress	92,622 (elected).		
						(4) Praja Socia- list Party.	8,832		
						(5) Swatantra	21,466		
3. Rosera ..	1	2	2	2	1,01,212	59,264 (1) Socialist	55,076		
						(2) Congress	1,22,921 (elected).		

1962 Parliament Election.