

PREFACE.

The first District Gazetteer of Saran edited by Mr. L. S. S. O'Malley, I.C.S. was published in 1908. The book was revised by Mr. A. P. Middleton, I.C.S. and reprinted in 1930. In his preface, Mr. Middleton mentioned that the second edition had been prepared on the same lines as the first. It was a book of 186 pages.

Since 1930 there had been very many basic changes in the district and the country. The old District Gazetteers with a limited objective do not satisfy the present requirements. They were more or less meant to be an administrator's hand-book and were written from a particular angle. With independence in the country, the very character of the State Government has changed. Although brilliantly written and replete with facts, the previous series of Gazetteers have to be entirely re-written from a different angle and the phenomenal changes recorded. There is also scope for the reappraisal of many features in the light of data now made available. The State Government in the Revenue Department have undertaken this work of re-writing and publishing the District Gazetteers.

This re-written District Gazetteer of Saran is the fifth publication in the new series. The District Gazetteers for Hazaribagh, Muzaffarpur, Gaya and Singhbhum have already been published. The pattern for the present Gazetteer of Saran is somewhat changed although the main objective is the same as in the four re-written Gazetteers of Bihar published in the last three years. The Ministry of Scientific Research and Cultural Affairs, New Delhi, has now taken up the work of publishing four Central Volumes of Gazetteers for India and in consultation with the State Editors has drawn up a general plan to be followed with necessary variations by the States for their District Gazetteers. The idea is that there should be a uniform series of Gazetteers for all the districts in India with a common purpose and pattern as far as possible. India's scheme has been followed in the re-writing of the District Gazetteer of Saran as far as possible. As a matter of fact, the Saran District Gazetteer would have been published much earlier as a lot of work done had to be re-aligned in order to follow India's pattern drawn up only in 1958.

The task of re-writing the District Gazetteer of Saran has its own difficulties. There have been no Survey and Settlement

Operations recently nor any Economic Survey. The march of events since 1947 has been extremely rapid, changes fundamental and the face of the district is being changed.

In this task the old records, published and unpublished documents in the National Archives, New Delhi, West Bengal Historical Archives and the Record Rooms at Chapra and Muzaffarpur have been utilised. The study of the Old English Correspondence Volumes from 1785 to 1866 in Saran Record Room was taken up a few years before and from these dust-laden and crumbling unindexed volumes, a lot of data had been collected and utilised for publishing "Sarkar Saran" in 1956. "Sarkar Saran" may be treated as a sister volume to this book. A similar book, "Muzaffarpur Old Records", has been published in 1959 on a study of the Old Correspondence Volumes in Muzaffarpur Record Room (1769-1857). The data available by this research also has been utilised in compiling this Gazetteer. For the later events, I have had help from various published books, Government reports, and data supplied by institutions and kind collaborators. My previous official assignments in Tirhut Division were helpful. Extensive tours had to be undertaken.

An attempt has been made to provide an objective book of reference for a wider range of readers including politicians, researchers, writers, journalists, teachers, students, and, by no means, least, the interested man in the street.

A book of this type can only be compiled by the pooling of resources, personal contact, observation and study. I am particularly grateful to Dr. Rajendra Prasad, the first President of Indian Republic. Dr. Rajendra Prasad comes from Saran district and the text on History was sent to him. He was gracious enough to spare me time for a detailed discussion and gave me many valuable information regarding the district. His encouraging words were a great inspiration. Shri Binodanand Jha, Revenue Minister, and Shri Radha Govind Prasad, Deputy Minister, have always helped me with their thoughtful suggestions. The authorities of the National Archives, New Delhi, National Library, Calcutta, Historical Archives, West Bengal Government, Calcutta, and Asiatic Society of Bengal, Calcutta have ungrudgingly loaned me their rare books and documents.

The entire set of texts of this Gazetteer had been sent to Shri Chandrika Ram, M.A., B.L., Deputy Minister, Agriculture, who comes from Saran district. He went through the texts and offered valuable suggestions. Among other collaborators who

have kindly helped me particular mention has to be made of Shri Adrish Banerji, M.A., Assistant Superintendent of Archæological Department, Government of India, for the text on History, Shri S. A. Shere, Curator, Patna Museum, the Public Relations Department, Bihar, for some of the photos, the District Magistrate of Saran and the Central Gazetteers Unit for many suggestions on the texts.

The Superintendent of the Secretariat Press, Gulzarbagh and his staff have taken personal interest in the printing of the book. I am much indebted to all my helpers and offer my thanks to them.

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