

CHAPTER VIII.

ECONOMIC TRENDS.

LIVELIHOOD PATTERN.

A separate chapter on economic trends will naturally mean a certain amount of repetition of the coverage in some other chapters. But this cannot be helped. As mentioned before, agriculture is the main occupation of the district. From the perusal of the different Census Reports from 1891 to 1951, *Survey and Settlement Operations* of 1893 to 1901 and 1915 to 1921 and the *Statistical Account of Bengal*, Volume XI, it appears that the livelihood pattern of the district has, more or less, remained at a point where it was about half a century before. In 1891 about 85 per cent of the population were found to be engaged in agriculture and pastoral occupations as against 81 per cent in 1901. The *Survey and Settlement Operations* of 1893 to 1901 mentions that "84 per cent of the total population of Saran or just over two million souls are entirely dependent on agriculture as a means of livelihood. A quarter of a million of these have no land at all or only minute plots and are practically dependent on the wages of labour. Another quarter of a million have small holdings not exceeding two acres on the average of each family. There are pure cultivators who only work in their own fields."

In the census of 1911, 86 per cent of the population were enumerated as dependent on agriculture as against 90.1 per cent in 1921. The Census Report of 1931 does not classify the figures of non-working dependents of each and every group, nevertheless it gives light on the occupational trends of the district. According to the census report, out of the total population, 10,00,424 were working persons (including working dependents and persons having subsidiary occupations) of which 399 were engaged in agriculture. The census of 1941 does not mention the figures for occupations.

According to 1951 census, out of the total population of 31,55,144, 90 per cent of the population or 28,62,950 souls were found to be dependent on agriculture. In 1951 census the livelihood classes have been distributed into eight classes and further each livelihood class into three sub-classes.

The agricultural livelihood classes were distributed as follows :—

Agricultural classes.	Male.	Female.
(1) Self-supporting persons ..	5,99,282	2,46,096
(2) Non-earning dependents ..	7,18,613	12,32,718
(3) Earning dependents ..	37,204	31,037
Total (28,64,950) ..	13,55,099	15,09,851

Further the agricultural classes have been divided into four categories. They are as follows :—

(1) Cultivators of land wholly or mainly owned and their dependents—

	Male.	Female.
Self-supporting persons ..	4,84,467	1,89,315
Non-earning dependents ..	5,67,340	9,71,309
Earning dependents ..	28,188	25,202

(2) Cultivators of land wholly or mainly unowned and their dependents—

	Male.	Female.
Self-supporting persons ..	32,967	14,494
Non-earning dependents ..	39,246	66,842
Earning dependents ..	2,832	2,574

(3) Cultivating labourers and their dependents—

	Male.	Female.
Self-supporting persons ..	77,000	41,247
Non-earning dependents ..	1,09,810	1,90,109
Earning dependents ..	5,986	3,112

(4) Non-cultivating owners of land, agricultural rent-receivers and their dependents—

	Male.	Female.
Self-supporting persons ..	2,848	1,040
Non-earning dependents ..	2,217	4,458
Earning dependents ..	203	149

Non-agricultural classes have been divided into four categories. They are as follows :—

	Male.	Female.
(1) Self-supporting persons ..	60,290	17,526
(2) Non-earning dependents ..	84,279	1,21,455
(3) Earning dependents ..	3,585	5,059

Total (2,92,194) ..	1,48,154	1,44,040
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(1) Production (other than cultivation)—

	Male.	Female.
Self-supporting persons ..	13,217	3,935
Non-earning dependents ..	20,890	30,964
Earning dependents ..	911	1,365

(2) Commerce—

	Male.	Female.
Self-supporting persons ..	19,208	5,539
Non-earning dependents ..	25,116	35,378
Earning dependents ..	668	1,714

(3) Transport—

	Male.	Female.
Self-earning persons ..	3,018	392
Non-earning dependents ..	3,660	5,015
Earning dependents ..	84	254

(4) Other services and miscellaneous sources—

	Male.	Female.
Self-supporting persons ..	24,847	7,660
Non-earning dependents ..	34,613	50,098
Earning dependents ..	1,922	1,726

Thus from the perusal of the abovementioned figures, it is apparent that the number of economically active persons is not considerable. Out of the total population, only 9,23,194 persons are self-supporting and 17,288 earning dependents or number of such persons comes to about 30 per cent. The rest 70 per cent population are entirely dependent on the economically active persons. But the statement seems to be partially true since in the figures the house-wives whose roles are not insignificant have not been included in the category of the economically active persons.

The district being predominantly agricultural, the pressure on the soil is enormous. So far as industries are concerned the census of 1951 mentions that there were 50 rice, flour, oil and *dal* mills, 3 distilleries and breweries, 8 sugar and *gur* mills, and 3 ice-cream, candy and cold storages which had been registered under the Factories Act. The total number of persons employed in these industries were 3,820. The other big factories which were registered under the Factories Act were one brick, lime, tile and *surkhi* industry, 2 soap factories, 5 general engineering, 1 electrical generation and transmission factory and in 1951 their total strength of employees in them was only 585. Apart from the factories registered under the Factory Act there were 3,591 textile establishments and the people employed in these small-scale industries were 8,778 as whole-timers and 253 as part-timers. The total strength of non-textile establishments was 1,540 and they afforded engagement of 3,575 persons. All these industries gave employment to 17,011 persons.

From the analysis of the foregoing statement it can be safely said that the existing industries of the district are far too few and could never absorb the surplus of such people who could be utilised in heavy industries. Under the present condition, agriculture is incapable of supporting any considerable increase of the population without a considerable material reduction in the standard of living which is already not high. There is a heavy weightage for agricultural economy but even that does not make this district self-supporting. As discussed elsewhere the district produces barely sufficient food for its own requirements and has to depend on the import of cereals from the neighbouring districts. The picture thus drawn is far

from satisfactory. Apart from the landless labourers, whose condition at present is not very sound, the rest of the agricultural community normally enjoy a level slightly above subsistence and are capable to withstand a season of scarcity for a short time. Unscientific fragmentation of holdings, dependence of agriculture on the freak of nature and unscientific indigenous method of cultivation stand on the way. Some improvements, no doubt, have been made by the State Government but any phenomenal change in the incidence of agriculture cannot be expected quickly.

The total number of persons dependent on commerce in 1951 was 87,623 out of which 27,129 persons were economically active and 60,494 were non-earning dependents. Thus on the whole about 3 per cent of the population are dependent on commerce. The chief commodities for import are rice, salt, cloth, coal and kerosene oil while chief commodities for export are potatoes, sugar and mustard-seed. Saltpetre which formed one of the chief commodities for export in the third quarter of the nineteenth century has received a great set back due to foreign substitutes.

The number of persons dependent on transport was 12,423 out of which 3,478 were economically active and 8,675 were non-earning dependent members. Thus about 4 per cent of the population were dependent on transport. In other services and miscellaneous sources 36,155 persons were economically active while 87,711 were non-earning dependents; thus on the whole about 4 per cent were dependent on other services and miscellaneous sources. Taken as a whole 2,92,194 persons were non-agricultural classes out of which 86,460 were economically active and 2,05,734 were non-earning dependents or only 29.5 per cent were economically active and 69.5 per cent were non-earning dependents.

Thus both in agriculture and non-agriculture pursuits, the picture drawn above is far from satisfactory. In both the sectors the number of non-earning dependents is about 3.3 times greater than the economically active persons. It is strange that the housewives have not been considered economically active population. Their contribution in the family life in terms of money means a lot.

It would not be out of place to mention here that the people of Saran are adventurous and enterprising. Emigration affords a partial relief to the pressure on soil. Much of the emigration is seasonal, occurring about the end of November and lasting for three or four months. The people of Saran are found almost in all parts of India. The average annual money-orders paid in Saran comes to more than Rs. 5 crores, the greater part of which comes outside the district.

LEVEL OF PRICES AND WAGES.

There has been an enormous increase in the level of price. Some of the Old English Correspondence Volumes kept in the

District Archives, Chapra, indicate the level of prices and wages. In 1790* the commonest sort of the rice sold at $74\frac{1}{4}$ seers, wheat at $85\frac{1}{4}$ seers and Janira at 135 seers per Company's rupee. In 1868 the average price of rice was $22\frac{1}{4}$ seers; in 1869, 15 seers 5 *chhatacks*, in 1870, 20 seers 1 *chhatack*, in 1871-72, 19 seers 8 *chhatacks*; and in 1872-73, 16 seers 6 *chhatacks*, per rupee. Similarly wheat in 1867 was at $19\frac{5}{12}$ seers, in 1869 at $19\frac{5}{12}$ seers, in 1871 at 20 seers 5 *chhatacks* and in 1872, at 15 seers 5 *chhatacks*, per rupee. Barley was sold at 27 seers 5 *chhatacks* per rupee in 1871, and at 27 seers 7 *chhatacks* in 1872.

The Collector in his Administration Report for 1873 selects two marts, Chapra and Siwan, and gives the average prices of the principal grains for the years 1871-72 and 1872-73 as follows :—

Common rice—

In 1871-72 at Chapra 20.3 seers per rupee; at Siwan 19.4.
In 1872-73 at Chapra 17.5 seers per rupee; at Siwan 15.8.

Pulses—

In 1871-72 at Chapra 19.3 seers per rupee; at Siwan 18.3.
In 1872-73 at Chapra 15 seers per rupee; at Siwan 14.0.

Wheat—

In 1871-72 at Chapra 20.1 seers per rupee; at Siwan 20.9.
In 1872-73 at Chapra 14.7 seers per rupee; at Siwan 15.3.
In 1872-73 at Chapra 11.3 seers per rupee; at Siwan 12.1.

Barley—

In 1871-72 at Chapra 28.5 seers per rupee; at Siwan 26.5.
In 1872-73 at Chapra 28.1 seers per rupee; at Siwan 23.3.

Indian corn—

In 1871-72 at Chapra 24.8 seers per rupee; at Siwan 23.5.
In 1872-73 at Chapra 28.6 seers per rupee; at Siwan 26.2.

These figures could well be compared with later figures.

The last *District Gazetteer of Saran*, published in 1930, mentions that in 1928 rice sold at an average of $5\frac{1}{2}$ seers to the rupee at Chapra, 6 seers 15 *chhatacks* at Mirganj and 4 seers 14 *chhatacks* at Siwan; at the same places *makai* (maize) sold at 9 seers 9 *chhatacks*, 10 seers 6 *chhatacks* and $8\frac{1}{2}$ seers, respectively. In 1927 rice averaged 6 seers at Chapra, 6 seers 7 *chhatacks* at Mirganj and $4\frac{3}{4}$ seers at Siwan, while *makai* sold on an average at $9\frac{1}{2}$ seer, 10 seers 11 *chhatacks* and $8\frac{1}{4}$ seers, respectively, at the same centres. Maize and rice are the staple food crops of the district.

The *District Census Hand-Book*, 1952, gives the ruling prices during the decade 1941 to 1950. The figures of prices are given

* The figures have been taken from the *Hunters' Statistical Account of Bengal* (Saran District), page 270, published in 1877.

monthlywise. The average yearly price of rice, wheat and gram is given below :—

(Price per maund.)

Year.	Rice. (Medium.)	Wheat. (Red.)	Gram.
Year.	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.
1941	.. 5 8 0	..	3 4 8
1942	.. 6 4 9½	..	4 9 9
1943	.. 16 3 6½	16 8 3¾	10 4 3½
1944	.. 12 13 10¾	13 10 10	10 1 3
1945	.. 13 9 4	11 6 0	8 7 8
1946	.. 15 12 0	13 13 4	11 9 8
1947	.. 15 8 5	12 1 5¼	15 12 3
1948	.. 21 10 0	26 12 0	14 8 8
1949	.. 23 15 4	23 6 8	14 10 0
1950	.. 29 12 0	25 7 8	18 3 4

From the figures mentioned above it is apparent that the price of foodgrains had increased tremendously. In 1950 during the crucial period of October rice was even sold at 44 rupees per maund. After 1950 the same trend was noticeable in the prices of foodgrains. There had been failures of crops in 1956-57 and 1957-58 and in order to arrest the rising prices of foodgrains the Government had no other alternative but to open fair price shops where wheat was sold at Rs. 14-8-0 per maund. In July, 1958, there were 1,303 fair price shops and 13,64,138 maunds of wheat and wheat seeds were distributed.

In the past, agricultural wages were mostly paid in kind. There are frequent references of agricultural wages in the Old Correspondence Volume which throw a good deal of light on the condition of labourers. Regarding the wages of day labourers it appears from a letter, dated the 11th April 1834, that the *Nuniyas* were employed at Rs. 2-4-0 per cubic feet on contract: Daily coolies were available and the daily wages were 5 pice, 4 pice and 3 pice per man, woman and boy, respectively. From a letter, dated the 12th September 1820, from the Officer Incharge of the Champaran Light Infantry, to the Judge and Magistrate, it appears that the wages were comparatively cheaper at that time than 1834.

The *Survey and Settlement Operations* of 1893-1901 mentions that wages were actually paid in kind though for the purpose of convenience they had been calculated in rupees and annas. The

ordinary wages for *tamni* (digging) was three local seers of grain and one seer of *sattu* per day. The money value of them was about two annas. Ploughmen and ordinary male labourers got about three annas per day. For transplanting, necessary in case of paddy and *marua*, the rates were slightly higher than those for ordinary agricultural labourer, but their money value hardly exceeded two annas per *diem*. The wages for weeding and for carting manures were one and a half anna per labourer employed. For harvesting operations, payment was made by giving the labourer a share of the produce; the share varied from one-sixteenth to one-twentieth. The average earning for irrigation was one and half annas per day. The wages of the watchman, the blacksmith and others indirectly interested in the crop came to about one-fortieth of the produce. They were always paid in kind.

Regarding the current wages the last District Gazetteer published in 1930 mentions that "Skilled carpenters earn rupee one a day and the less skilled about 14 annas. Masons get 12 annas and blacksmiths from 10 annas to 14 annas. Ploughmen and ordinary male labourers generally get 12 annas a day and women and children half that amount. A cart is hired for Rs. 2 a day. Domestic servants are usually paid about Rs. 4 a month with food and clothings besides. *Syas* (grooms) get Rs. 10 or Rs. 12 a month and sweepers Rs. 7, *dhobies* (washermen) are paid 8 annas for 20 articles, and a barber gets one anna a shave".

The above figures are considerably higher than those ascertained at the wage-census in 1924; and the latter again were from 95 per cent (in the case of blacksmiths and carpenters) to 38 per cent (in the case of unskilled daily labour paid in cash) higher than the figures recorded at the wage census of 1916. The statement showing daily rural wages taken during the wage-census of 1916 and 1924 was as follows :—

In 1916 unskilled labourer when paid in cash earned daily annas $3\frac{1}{4}$ as against annas $4\frac{1}{2}$ in 1924 and in kind $1\frac{1}{2}$ seers and 3 seers respectively. The skilled blacksmiths earned 4 annas and 6 pies in 1916 as against 8 annas and 9 pies in 1924, carpenters 4 annas and 6 pies in 1916 as against 10 annas and 3 pies in 1924, *gharmia* 5 annas in 1916 as against 8 annas and 6 pies in 1924, and ploughmen get 2 annas and 9 pies in 1916 as against 4 annas and 6 pies in 1924.

From 1930 to 1945 that is up to the close of the Second World War the level of wages practically remained stationary though the level of price after 1942 as mentioned before showed an upward tendency. The soaring prices of food crops after 1945 did not affect the agricultural labourers adversely as they were generally paid in kind. After 1945 the wages of both skilled and unskilled labourers began to rise

and practically doubled. The figures of wages as mentioned in the *Bihar Statistical Hand-book, 1954*, are given below :—

Skilled Labourers.

				Rs.	a.	p.
Carpenters—						
1953	..	..	..	2	8	0
1954	..	..	..	2	7	8
1955	..	..	..	2	3	8
Blacksmiths—						
1953	..	..	..	2	8	0
1954	..	..	..	2	0	9
1955	..	..	..	1	15	8

Field Labourers.

Men—						
1953	..	..	..	1	7	7
1954	..	..	..	1	4	0
1955	..	..	..	1	1	8
Women—						
1953	..	..	..	0	14	11
1954	..	..	..	0	11	1
1955	..	..	..	0	9	2
Children—						
1953	..	..	..	0	13	4
1954	..	..	..	0	11	1
1955	..	..	..	0	9	0

Supply of labour.—The cultivation of the *bhadai*, *aghani* and *rabi* crops affords almost continuous work to labourers from about the end of May when *tamni* or the preparation of the land for *bhadai* crops begins, until the end of October. From the beginning of November and December labourers subsist on the produce of their own *bhadai* fields and on earnings by working on others' farm. During the next $2\frac{1}{4}$ months they earn by cutting paddy. At this time there is an exodus of labourers in search of employment and returning for the agricultural operations which commence with the break of the monsoon. Running into debts at a high interest is common at this time. The *mahajan* deducts 5 per cent of the principal at the time of making loan towards the first interest or makes a short payment which the borrower has got to accept.

• The District Gazetteer, published in 1930 mentions that "In 1906 an enquiry was held into the labour supply of Bengal and it was then ascertained that Saran was the first district in the then province of Bengal to reach the point when it could not maintain its population. The people of Saran appeared to be well aware of the benefits to be derived from employment in industrial centres and

then, as now, a longer number than from most of other districts sought employment in those centres spontaneously". The seasonal migration still affords some relief to the labourers of the district.

The wages of village artisans and of field labourers are, however, generally paid in kind and at the time of harvesting and threshing, the labourers are given one bundle out of 21 bundles cut and one *passeri* (5 seers) out of every 21 *passeries* threshed. For threshing, as also often for ploughing, the cultivators adopt mutual aid, one man lending his bullocks one day and getting his neighbour's the next. So far as the village washermen and barbers and potters are concerned they are also paid in kind during the period of harvesting. So far as the washermen are concerned they usually receive standing crops of 5 *dhurs* of land at the period of harvesting with a long *laggi* of 12 *haths* (cubits) which is equivalent to one *katha* per adult female member of the family. The village barbers also get the same amount of land per adult male member of the family. The wages of the potters underwent a great change as they generally get cash for their earthenware. During ceremonial occasions like the sacred thread ceremony or *sradh* they generally get 20 seers grains along with fooding and clothing.

AGRICULTURAL LABOURERS.

There is no doubt that the agricultural labourer has received very small attention in comparison to the industrial labourer in Bihar. This district is no exception. But this is not peculiar to the State of Bihar alone but is general for the different States in the Indian Union.

An Agricultural Labour Enquiry was undertaken in 1949 by the Ministry of Labour, Government of India. The enquiry was conducted in 806 villages of the Indian Union selected on a stratified random sampling basis, leaving out only the villages with a population of less than 100 persons. Eighty of the villages selected were from Bihar. It will be of interest to note that the enquiry was conducted in two stages. In the first stage, each sampled village was surveyed with respect to population, number and classification of families, land utilisation, yield of crops, livestock, etc. In the second stage, about 50 per cent of the agricultural families randomly selected in each sampled village was subjected to scrutiny in respect of certain characters, such as, income, employment, consumption, expenditure, indebtedness, etc. An agricultural labour family was taken to be one where either the head of the family or 50 per cent or more of the earners reported wage paid or hired agricultural labourer as their main occupation, that is, the occupation in which they were engaged for 50 per cent or more of the total number of days worked by them during the previous year. The data collected in the intensive family survey related to the year from March, 1950 to February, 1951. The population census of 1951, it may be mentioned here, roughly synchronised with the Agricultural Labour Enquiry.

Some tentative conclusions could be drawn as to how the agricultural labour in Bihar fares from the data thrown up by the survey of the 80 villages in Bihar. The area of the 80 villages was 49,120 acres (of which 7,171 acres were not taken note of as they belonged to persons residing outside the sampled villages) and a population of 52,471 persons comprised in 9,556 families, of which 1,228 families of agricultural labourer were intensively surveyed.

These conclusions could apply to the villages in this district generally. From the data collected in the enquiry the village area comes to 614 acres, the village population is 656 persons, the village density of population per square mile is 684 and the average number of persons per family is 5.5. These features are almost at par with the data thrown out by the village population census of 1951. According to the population census the village area per village is 626 acres, the village population 526 persons, the village density of population 537 persons and the average number of persons per family is 5.2. Excepting for Chotanagpur area the data could almost be said to be of one pattern for the normal villages in North and South Bihar.

According to the population census agriculturists with their dependents constitute in the rural area 90.6 per cent of the population as against 81.1 per cent shown by the Agricultural Labour Enquiry in 1949. Non-cultivating owners and non-cultivating tenants together constitute 1.5 per cent of the families according to the A. L. Enquiry but only 0.55 per cent according to the population census. The most remarkable difference is however in respect of the proportion of cultivators of owned and unowned lands. Thus while cultivators of owned lands constitute 3.7 per cent and the cultivators of un-owned lands formed 31.1 per cent of the total families according to the A. L. Enquiry of 1949, they with their dependents constitute 58.5 and 8.9 per cent respectively of the total population according to the population census in 1951. The reasons for this difference in the two sets of figures are to be found mainly in the differences in the definition of ownership of land adopted for the purposes of the census and the sample survey. According to the A. L. Enquiry, owners were those who held land directly from Government and who had either proprietary right in the land or who were crown tenants or guarantees or who were mortgagers with possession of proprietary rights while the census definition of owners covered all those who held lands on any tenure which carried with it the right of permanent occupancy for purposes of cultivation.

Families of agricultural labourers form 37.8 per cent of the total families according to the A. L. Enquiry while according to the population census they form only 22.9 per cent of the total rural population of Bihar. A. L. Enquiry data make out that about 61 per cent of the agricultural labourers cultivate some lands on their own account. The non-agricultural families according to A. L. Enquiry

form 18.9 per cent of the total rural population, to whom traders cover 3.9 per cent; according to the census figures the non-agriculturists with their dependents form 9.4 per cent of the rural population, of whom persons engaged in commerce form with their dependents 2.3 per cent.

The A. L. Enquiry also indicate that the size of the family depends roughly on its economic status. The average size of the family among land-owners was found to be 6.8—it was 6.2 among tenants, 5.4 among agricultural labourers with land and 4.3 per cent among agricultural labourers without lands. This, however, militates against the popular idea that the more destitute a person is, the more children he has.

The A. L. Enquiry showed that the average size of holdings for Bihar was 4.1 acres as against 7.5 acres for all-India, 13.9 acres in Madhya Pradesh and 29.6 acres in Saurashtra. While the average overall size of the holdings in Bihar worked out at 4.1 acres, it was 12.0 acres for land-owners' holdings, 5.6 acres for tenants' holdings, 1.6 acres for the holdings of agricultural labourers with land and 2.1 acres for the holdings of non-agricultural families. The percentage distribution of the holdings in Bihar according to their size worked out as follows :—

Size of the holdings.	No.	Acre.
	Percentage.	
One acre and less	31.0	3.6
Above one acre but not above 2.5 acres	25.5	10.3
Above 2.5 acres but not above 5.0 acres	20.5	17.9
Above 5.0 acres but not above 10.0 acres	14.3	24.2
Above 10.0 acres but not above 25*acres	7.1	24.9
Above 25 acres but not above 50 acres	1.1	8.6
Above 50 acres	0.5	10.5

Information on employment and unemployment among agricultural labourers was also collected by the A. L. Enquiry. Of the total hired agricultural labour force in India, men formed 55 per cent, women 40 per cent and child labour (under 15) 5 per cent. The child labour was drawn from the age-group of 10–15 years. The quantum of employment varied greatly between attached and casual labourers. While the attached labourers form 15 per cent and casual labourers 85 per cent of the total all-India labour force, in Bihar their proportions were 22.4 per cent and 77.6 per cent respectively. In Bihar adult male agricultural labourers found paid employment on an average for 200 days in the year while the adult woman agricultural labour found employment on wages for only 110 days in the year.

Non-agricultural work consisted mainly of odd jobs. A small part of the employment of the agricultural labourers was for non-agricultural work. Non-agricultural work consisted mainly of casual engagements like carrying loads, repairing and building of houses, driving carts or rickshaws and employment on public works, etc. The scope of employment in non-agricultural work was rather limited. For a portion of the year the agricultural labourers were either unemployed or self-employed. It has also to be noted that the employment available to the agricultural labourers showed considerable variation from year to year depending on weather conditions and other natural phenomena. If it is a particularly bad year for agricultural purposes there will be much lesser chance of employment in the fields. That is why it is necessary for the State to employ the unemployed agricultural labourers in works of public utility, for example, making roads, excavating tanks, reclaiming lands, cutting jungles, putting embankments to avoid the prospect of a large unemployed population in times of scarcity.

As mentioned before an average agricultural labourer's family consists of 4.5 persons out of which about 50 per cent are earners. Earning daily wages is the normal rule for both the casual and attached workers. Payment in kind is slightly predominating over cash payment. 53.2 per cent of the man-days of employment of agricultural labour was paid for in kind, 41.0 per cent in cash and 3.3 per cent in cash and kind. Regarding the actual wages the average daily wage of a man in agricultural operations worked out roughly at Rs. 2.02 nP. and of woman at Rs. 1.75 nP. On the average it may be said, that the normal rate now (1959) is Rs. 1.50 nP. to Rs. 2 for an adult male and Re. 1 to Rs. 1.25 nP. for an adult female. The wages for harvesting are higher than the wages for broadcasting or sowing of seeds or for weeding operations. The wages are obviously determined by demand and supply and the urgency for reaping the crops.

The average annual family income of an agricultural labour family in Bihar in 1950-51 was found to be Rs. 534. The average annual consumption expenditure was estimated at Rs. 574. There was a 7.5 per cent expenditure in excess of the income. An analysis of the expenditure of the average agricultural labour family indicates that food consumed was 89.9 per cent of the total expenditure as against 63.6 per cent of the total expenditure in an urban industrial family. Clothing and foot-wear meant only 4.5 per cent of the expenditure for an agricultural labour family as against 13.0 of an urban industrial family. For the items (1) fuel and lighting, (2) house rent, repairs, and (3) miscellaneous, the agricultural labour family spends 0.9, 0.9 and 3.8 per cent of the expenditure as against 4.1, 3.5 and 15.8 per cent, respectively in an urban industrial family. This picture shows the much poorer condition of the agricultural labourer in comparison to the urban industrial labourer. As much as 90 per cent of the total expenditure of the agricultural labour was on food alone.

and he had practically very little to spend on other basic necessities like clothing, housing, lighting, etc. For 4.5 persons in an agricultural family an allowance of only Rs. 20 per year for clothing is indeed a very poor compensation. His miscellaneous expenditure consists of items like ceremonials, tobacco, *pan* and liquor. An agricultural labourer spends practically nothing on housing or fuel and that shows the poverty of the agricultural labourer. His house in 55 per cent cases consists of one room and in 25 per cent of two rooms and the condition of the room is extremely poor with practically no amenities.

An analysis of the food consumption in an agricultural labour family shows that their dietary was extremely deficient in the caloric intake to the extent of 25 per cent of the normal daily requirement of 3,000 calories.

Regarding indebtedness, the A. L. Enquiry indicated that 41.8 per cent of the agricultural labour families in Bihar were in debt. The total indebtedness among all the agricultural labour families in Bihar could be estimated at Rs. 10.6 crores as against Rs. 80 crores for the Indian Union. The Enquiry also revealed that although fewer families of agricultural labourers who had some land were indebted than the families who had no lands at all yet the average size of debt per indebted family was considerably higher in the former class than among the latter. By far the major part of the debt was incurred for consumption and ceremonial expenditure. The biggest single source of borrowing was the village money-lenders, the share of co-operative society being only about one per cent.

STANDARD OF LIVING.

Regarding material condition of the people the last District Gazetteer (1930) mentions that "At the time of the Cadastral Survey elaborate enquiries were made into the condition of the people and the profits of agriculture. It was estimated that the average family consisted of five persons whom it cost in all Rs. 75 a year to maintain in moderate comfort, and that a holding of $2\frac{1}{2}$ acres was the minimum that would suffice for this maintenance. It was also found that the average size of the holding of the family of pure cultivators was 3.8 acres. Cultivators with less than this and the landless labourers were always struggling and probably unable even to save. But this was also noted that even in the great famine of 1896-97 this class displayed more staying power than might have been expected and though they formed 20 per cent of the population, the largest number of persons relieved in any one day during that famine was only 6 per cent of the population of the affected areas".

The abovementioned findings of the cadastral survey in course of more than five decades had more or less become obsolete. The estimate of family expenditure given there has increased tremendously in the present fast-changing world. The average size of holding

of the family of pure cultivator shown in the cadastral survey was 3.8 acres but due to unscientific fragmentation of the land the size of holding has much reduced which will be evident from the statistics given below :—

• *Distribution of 1,000 agricultural holdings by size of holdings.*

(Based on sample survey of size of holdings, 1952.)

Up to 0.5 acre	411
Exceeding 0.5 acre and up to one acre	176
Exceeding 2 acres and up to 3 acres	93
Exceeding 3 acres and up to 4 acres	52
Exceeding 4 acres and up to 5 acres	25
Exceeding 5 acres and up to 10 acres	43
Exceeding 10 acres and up to 15 acres	1
Exceeding 15 acres and up to 30 acres	5
Exceeding 30 acres and up to 50 acres	1
Exceeding 50 acres	Nil.

According to this sample survey the average size of the majority holdings is only 0.5 acre and only about 10 per cent and 5.2 per cent holdings constitute exceeding 2 and up to 3 acres and exceeding 3 and up to 4 acres, respectively. Though the figures of the sample survey cannot be fully relied upon, they have their value. According to the estimation of the cadastral survey 84 per cent of the population were dependent on agriculture, out of which 64 per cent of the population were pure cultivators and 20 per cent labourers. The total number of cultivators was 15,41,694 and labourers 4,81,779. The total area held by *raiyats* (including rent-free tenants) was 12,32,545 acres out of which 11,84,545 acres were with the pure cultivators and according to the average size of holding of a family of five persons of the pure cultivators group was 3.8 acres. There cannot be any firm conclusion on these figures nor can the figures particularly those of the Sample Survey be taken too seriously.

Regarding material condition of the cultivators the last District Gazetteer of 1930 mentions as follows :—

“The estimate of family expenditure given here can no longer be regarded as accurate but it is probable that the pure cultivator is better off now. He gets at least twice as much money for his surplus produce if he sells it; the general cost of living has, no doubt, increased but there has not been a proportionate increase in wages paid in kind and most of the services which a cultivator has to purchase are paid.”

This observation still holds good to some extent. But it has to be borne in mind that there are various factors which contribute towards standard of living. The standard of living mainly depends on the economic status of the person concerned. The standard of living of the zamindars and big agriculturists is comparatively fairly

high. By the abolition of zamindari the class of zamindars are now reduced to the status of the big cultivators. The zamindars who did not have large quantities of *bakast* land have come to the category of the middle class people. The petty zamindars are distinctly worse off.

After deduction of the number of the big cultivators there remains more than 20 lakhs of population under cultivators of land, wholly or mainly owned and their dependents. These people constitute the middle class and they are the backbone of the district. Agriculture which is the main source of livelihood is unable to cope with the rise in the population and that is why the standard of living of middle class agriculturists is low. From the study of some family budgets it was found that 65 per cent or more of the income is spent on food and even then the food is neither sufficient nor balanced for the average family unit.

The lot of the landless labourers is rather depressing. The number of cultivating labourers and their dependents in the census of 1951 was 4,27,264. As stated before the landless labourers are always struggling for existence and probably unable ever to save. In the normal season agriculture affords employment to them for eight to nine months and for the rest of the year they are in search of employment. The wages of these agricultural labourers as mentioned before have increased from two annas in 1901 to Rs. 1-7-0 in 1953. But the value of money, in course of the last five decades has fallen tremendously. The landless labourers are now partially engaged in pulling rickshaw, taking up jobs as *chaukidars* or peons and such other jobs.

The standard of living of upper class people with higher income in the urban area is high. But their number in the district is negligible. The standard of living of the middle class and the lower middle class men in the urban areas could be described to be worse than that of those in the rural areas. Housing difficulties, high rent and increased cost of living make their condition difficult. The rental that the average middle class and the lower middle class men have to pay in a month takes about one-fifth of their income or even more. After spending money on other necessities of life such as education, medicine, conveyance charge, etc., they are left with a very small margin to fall back on at the time of adversity.

The service-holder with an average income of about Rs. 100 per month with an average family of four to five persons can only with considerable self-denial reach a balance between the income and expenditure. The result is that in case of prolonged illness or due to social commitments like marriage or *sradha* there is always the need for a loan to be contracted. It is only in case of regulated life, family planning and a subsidiary income by any other member of the family that there could be a certain amount of balance to fall back on. This is also one of the basic reasons for the incidence of corruption among service-holders.

It is interesting to mention that the lot of the class IV officers of the Government and their counterparts in business concerns are not as badly off in the urban area as they are expected to be. With the recent increase in the house allowance they earn about Rs. 50 per month. They usually supplement their income by doing some work in the morning and evening. Their demand for the necessities of life is less than the ministerial officers. So also the artisans, mechanics and labourers in the urban areas are much better off than the lower-paid clerks and other assistants in the Government or business offices if an overall picture of the two groups is compared.

ARTICLES OF CONSUMPTION AND FAMILY BUDGETS.

Regarding the articles of consumption and family budgets of the well-to-do, the middle and lower classes, both in urban and rural areas, it has to be observed that without a detailed economic survey any definite conclusions would be hazardous. Observations in a general way about the budget of the family unit of different types have already been made. Briefly it may be said that expenditure on the bare necessities for animal existence, food and cloth consumption takes away the bulk of the family budget of the lower and the middle classes both in urban and rural areas. It is only the well-to-do persons who can maintain a certain level of comfort. The middle class family of higher income-group may be said to be living in some comfort. The modern standard of comfortable living with a well-spaced house with amenities, adequate and well-balanced diet, a certain amount of recreational comforts, ample or just necessary monetary balance to fall back on at times of illness or distress cannot be applied to the middle or the lower classes in the district. Possession of a conveyance, amenities like consumption of electricity, etc., which are no longer computed to be as luxury items according to western standard could only apply to the well-to-do. But the well-to-do class also stands at a cross-road now. The various impositions of new taxes which are necessary for building up a Welfare State cannot leave the well-to-do at their present vantage point much longer. The State is naturally anxious to bring in a socialistic pattern and to plug the leakages in the taxation structure. As mentioned before the abolition of zamindari has done away with a comfortable and probably slightly pampered class that had been outgrowing their utility. The erst-while zamindars and their children will now have to rough out their existence along with the other classes. This has led to a slight population shift from agriculture to industry. Saran is bound to continue her main agricultural economy for a pretty long time but the trends are that if industrial opportunities are created there will be no allergy in the people to shift to industry. Till now the population shift from agriculture to industry or from one industry to another is rather feeble. It is difficult to foresee a reasonable quick radical change in the set-up of the present family budget of the well-to-do, the middle and lower classes, either in urban and rural areas. With the slashing down of the value of

money and more availability of consumer goods, the tendency will be towards a certain amount of upgrading in the level of life but the old idea of leaving a sizable balance for the progeny will have to go. There is a vast field for utilising the unemployed and under-employed human resources in the rural areas. There is, no doubt, a very sizable population, either idle or semi-idle in the towns and the villages and they require to be better employed. A mere food production programme cannot possibly, as mentioned before, absorb this untapped surplus human population. In the rural areas the farmers have not got an ensured market within bullock carts' distance. They are also denied a guaranteed price for their produce of the field and there are very small immediate provision of suitable local storage facilities. So there could be very little of upgrading of their own consumption level. In the urban areas also the same high incidence of unemployment is seen. The vast surplus of educated or semi-educated in the towns are competing for white-collared jobs which can hardly make them live with family in bare comforts. A mixed economy and a slant towards industrialisation may bring in better results.

This is unfortunately the position in spite of the fact that a large scale emigration is a general feature of the district. The total amount of money-orders paid within the district in 1955-56 was Rs. 3,00,29,231 as against Rs. 5,26,64,774 in 1956-57.

EMPLOYMENT EXCHANGE.

The statistics of registration and employment through the Employment Exchange is a good index of the economic trends. The Employment Exchange at the headquarters of Chapra could not be said to be as popular as it might have been. Help of the Employment Exchange is not invariably sought while filling up vacancies in private and public sector. Set-up as an Employment Information Bureau in 1945 at the instance of Government of India, the section was raised to the status of a District Employment Exchange in 1949. In 1956 it was transferred to the State Government. The following are the statistics supplied by the Employment Exchange for the years 1953 to 1957 :—

Year.	Registra- tion.	Vacancies notified.				Vacancies filled.			
		C. G.	S. G.	Other.	Total.	C. G.	S. G.	Other.	Total.
1953	6520	1,002	113	166	1,281	849	16	128	993
1954	7255	744	330	50	1,124	607	99	12	718
1955	4490	514	150	96	760	506	68	10	584
1956	4626	409	300	39	748	279	145	9	433
1957	5140	290	188	52	530	154	68	5	227

The figures do not show that the Employment Exchange has been able to fill up the vacuum to any great extent.

MISCELLANEOUS OCCUPATIONS.

In a discussion on the economic trends it is necessary to make a brief mention of the employment of the people of the district in professions which could be lumped under "Miscellaneous Occupations". From percentage basis such employed persons form a very small quota. They, however, with their background of education, technical skill or special role that they fill up in the economic structure play an important role.

PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION.

The total number of persons engaged in health, education and public administration according to the census of 1951 comes to 7,260 males and 361 females. The break-up figures are as follows:—

Occupations.	Males.	Females.
(1) Medical and other Health Services—		
• Employers	6	4
Employees	304	178
Independent workers	676	104
Total ..	986	286
(2) Educational Services and Research—		
Employers .. .. .	..	..
Employees	1,380	63
Independent workers	8	12
Total ..	1,388	75
(3) Army, Navy and Air Force—		
Employers .. .. .	..	..
Employees	160	..
Independent workers .. .. .	..	..
Total ..	160	..
(4) Police (other than village watchmen)—		
Employers .. .. .	..	..
Employees	953	..
Independent workers .. .. .	..	..
Total ..	953	..

Occupations.	Males.	Females.
(5) Village officers and servants including village watchmen—		
Employers .. .. .	..	..
Employees	240	..
Independent workers .. .. .	..	..
Total ..	240	..
(6) Employees of Municipalities and Local Boards—		
Employers .. .. .	..	..
Employees	450	..
Independent workers .. .. .	..	..
Total ..	450	..
(7) Employees of the State Government—		
Employers .. .. .	..	..
Employees	3,003	..
Independent workers .. .. .	..	..
Total ..	3,003	..
(8) Employees of the Union Government—		
Employers .. .. .	..	..
Employees	18	..
Independent workers .. .. .	..	..
Total ..	18	..
(9) Employees of non-Indian Government—		
Employers .. .. .	..	..
Employees	12	..
Independent workers .. .. .	..	..
Total ..	12	..

The statistics as they stand show a very small number of women in such employments. The number of the employees of the Union Government in Saran is shown only as 18. It is not known where these 18 persons are employed. The number of the postal and railway employees have been indicated in the Chapter on Communication.

The persons employed in public administration get some amenities, such as free medical facilities and in some cases living quarters. The percentage of Government employees with allotment

of houses is extremely small. Housing is a great problem and many have to spend almost one-fifth to one-fourth of their emoluments for house rent. The public employees and particularly non-gazetted, ministerial officers and Class IV Government employees have their separate associations for ventilation of their grievances. The associations do not comprise the different services but are for particular services only.

LEARNED PROFESSIONS.

Persons included in this group belong to various smaller groups which are quite distinct from one another. There are authors, journalists, sculptors, architects, photographers, musicians, actors, dancers, lawyers, doctors, teachers, engineers and priests, etc. The *District Census Hand-Book, Saran*, published in 1956 has included them under the services not elsewhere specified. According to the *District Census Hand-Book, Saran*, the number of person engaged in the services not elsewhere specified was 14,350 males and 6,008 females. It also includes domestic services. The break-up figures of persons engaged in the learned professions were as follows :—

Occupations.	Males.	Females.
(1) Recreation services—		
Employers	7	..
Employees	65	..
Independent workers	209	108
Total ..	281	108
(2) Legal and business service—		
Employers	11	..
Employees	1,276	..
Independent workers	513	..
Total ..	1,800	..
(3) Arts, letters and journalism—		
Employers	2	..
Employees	5	..
Independent workers	26	7
Total ..	33	7
(4) Religious, charitable and welfare services—		
Employers	5	..
Employees	98	..
Independent workers	766	97
Total ..	869	97

Law.—An increasing number of persons has been following the profession of law. The profession includes practising lawyers, their clerks, petition writers, etc. The census of 1951 has given the number under legal and business services as 1,800. There are no women in this class. In 1958 the number of advocates and pleaders was 186 and of Mukhtears 40. The influence of the progressive members of this class on the society is very considerable. The lawyers are usually in the forefront of the political and social fields. The Bar has always led public life in Saran and the relationship between the Bench and the Bar has been dignified and helpful to each other.

Arts, letters and journalism.—The number of persons engaged in arts, letters and journalism in 1951 was only 40 out of which 33 were males and 7 females. These professions have not made much headway in recruitment to their folds. The journals are of local importance and have a small circulation.

Religion.—Religion was previously a full time occupation for some and the priests and ministers of religion and religious mendicant, such as *sadhus* and *fakirs* were held in great esteem. This profession has now lost its attraction and is not lucrative. Fewer persons are now exclusively engaged in temples and for acting as a priest during *sradh* and marriage ceremonies. The total number of persons engaged in religious, charitable and welfare services in the census of 1951 was 966 out of which 869 were males and 97 females. This class has lost much of their hold on the society. Many of them are lacking of real knowledge of the *shastras* and lead a mercenary life under the garb of spiritualism.

DOMESTIC AND PERSONAL SERVICES.

Persons engaged in the domestic and personal services according to the census of 1951 were as follows :—

Occupations.		Males.	Females.
(1) Services otherwise unclassified—			
Employers .. .. .	.. .. .	..	1
Employees .. .. .	.. .. .	5,651	2,122
Independent workers .. .. .	.. .. .	..	..
	Total ..	5,651	2,123
(2) Domestic services (but not including services rendered by members of family households to one another)—			
Employers .. .. .	.. .. .	..	..
Employees .. .. .	.. .. .	1,318	924
Independent workers .. .. .	.. .. .	227	284
	Total ..	1,545	1,208

Occupations.			Males.	Females.
(3) Barbers and beauty shops—				
Employers .. .. .	..	..	..	..
Employees .. .. .	..	..	44	10
Independent workers .. .. .	..	..	10	1,684
		Total ..	54	1,694
(4) Laundries and laundry services—				
Employers .. .. .	..	..	25	2
Employees .. .. .	..	..	50	..
Independent workers .. .. .	..	..	2,136	2,085
		Total ..	2,211	2,087
(5) Hotels, restaurants and eating houses—				
Employers .. .. .	..	..	11	..
Employees .. .. .	..	..	108	11
Independent workers .. .. .	..	..	113	40
		Total ..	232	51

The persons engaged in the domestic services include cook, indoor servant, water carrier, groom, coachman, motor driver and cleaner. From the statistics, it is apparent that a good number of females have also found employment. Out of the total of 2,753 souls 1,208 were found to be women. The abolition of zamindari has affected this class adversely as the zamindars used to maintain a large number of domestic servants in their houses. Regarding domestic servants the old *District Gazetteer, Saran*, published in 1930 has mentioned that "Domestic servants are usually paid about Rs. 4 a month with food and clothing besides". The wages of the domestic servants are now Rs. 10 to Rs. 12 a month or even more with fooding and clothing. A part-time *dai* or *ayah* is engaged even in the family of low-income group to do odd household work or look after the children. This is normally prevalent in the high caste families. In the rural area the *dais* or maid-servants are paid mostly in kind but in the urban areas they are paid in cash.

Barbers found all over the district used to play a significant role in settling marriage and thereby earned a fair commission. In Hindu families the services of the barbers are required during ceremonial occasions, like marriage, sacred thread, first hair cutting (*mundan*) and funeral rites. In the rural areas they are paid in kind usually half a maund per adult member of the family. In the urban area a barber gets one anna for a shave and four annas for a hair crop. A small number of barbers' saloons are found in Chapra, Siwan,

Gopalganj, Maharajganj, Revelganj, Sonepur and Marhowrah. In most cases the owners are self-workers. The charge of a saloon is two annas per shave and six to eight annas for a hair crop. The barbers are usually Hindus but some Muslims are also engaged in this profession.

Like barbers, washermen are also found all over the district. In the rural areas they are usually paid in kind. Some washermen have opened laundries of somewhat low standard in the towns. Regarding the wages of the washermen A. P. Middleton had mentioned in the last District Gazetteer that "*dhobies* (washermen) are paid 8 annas for 20 articles". But now they charge two rupees or more per 20 pieces for adult's cloth and one rupee for 20 pieces for children.

The hotels and restaurants seen in the towns are of a low standard and in 1951 employed only 232 males and 51 females. They are mostly concentrated in and around the courts. The quality of food service and lodging is very poor. Hygiene is more of casualty in the concerns.

The persons employed consist of owners, paid managers, cooks and unskilled workers like waiters and boys. The owners usually serve the work of managers also. The cooks receive a monthly salary of Rs. 20 to Rs. 25 a month with fooding. The salary of the other servants varies from Rs. 6 to Rs. 15 with fooding. The scale of salary or emoluments is going up.

The hotels and restaurants have their importance as the meeting ground of a large number of men everyday and work as the clearing house for gossips and rumours. Their role in society is not inconsiderable but unfortunately their contribution is more of the negative type being superficial.

The number of tailors is not given in the census of 1951. Their number is fairly large in Chapra and Siwan. All the towns and the thana headquarters have some tailoring shops. The number of tailors is on the increase. This profession is exclusively confined to the males. In Saran the tailors are usually Muslims. The number of skilled tailors does not seem to be very large. The tailoring charge for an ordinary shirt varies from Re. 1 to Rs. 2, while of silken and woollen shirt or bushshirt is from Rs. 3 to Rs. 4. The tailoring charge of a suit is much higher. The tailoring of an ordinary suit costs Rs. 7 to Rs. 10 and that of warm suit from Rs. 20 to Rs. 30 or more.

GENERAL ECONOMIC CONDITION.

The economic condition of the persons engaged in domestic and personal services vary from group to group. On the whole it may be said the over-all economic condition of a domestic servant, a tailor, a washerman or a barber has very considerably improved in the last two decades. Their wages or earnings have gone up several times. It is to be noted that several members of one family of this class

earn money. Thus a young son of a washerman or a tailor will also be working and earning some money in his father's establishment. Boys as domestic servants are in great demand. Itinerant maid-servants who work at several establishments never go without jobs. Even a sweeper's family consisting of three earning members will be earning more than Rs. 100 a month. Their standard of life has not been upgraded as much as that of an educated or a semi-educated family. All this has created peculiar economic currents in the society. A boy of a cultivator family after some education sticks to the town for a white-collared job which cannot make him live comfortably with his family unless he supplements his income from the field produce. The chance of employment for such men in the urban areas is growing less when compared to the chance of employment open for the professionals, like tailors, barbers, hotel-keepers or sweepers. The rapidly growing index of urbanisation has a very favourable opening for employment for them than to the educated or semi-educated youth. The domestic services personnel have also an elasticity for changing their professions for better employment. For example, any day they can take to the work of rickshaw-puller or driver, motor-driver, cleaner, mason, painter or a manual labourer. Any initiation of industrialisation will at once affect the personnel of these classes.

The statistics discussed in this chapter were thrown out by the Census Operations of 1951. It is expected that there will be considerable changes in employment statistics under public administration in 1961 census. The field of public administration in a Welfare State is much wider. Various economic plans have been undertaken as Development Projects. In order to make the Second Five-Year Plan a success the countryside is being covered by the Community Development Projects and National Extension Service Blocks. These centres will require a great army of both technical and non-technical personnel.

Briefly speaking the National Extension Service and Community Development Administration conceived at the end of 1952 has been the most remarkable feature in the rural development administration since Independence in 1947. The future of the countryside is linked up with the implementation of this programme. The administration has been given a new outlook and the village has been definitely put on the administrative map. On the organisational side, the great achievement of the National Extension Service was that it took the development programme and its administration right to the village. The *raiyat* at his village is expected to get the services of a trained animal husbandry man and experts on medicine, agriculture, co-operation and industry. The idea is to create an integrated development administration at the block level.

The whole of Saran district is being covered gradually by the blocks. Simultaneously the Village Panchayats are being organised to function as units of self-Government. The rejuvenation of village

administration through these channels can only be possible if there are suitable Block Development Officers, Agricultural Extension Officers, Animal Husbandry Extension Officers, Industrial Extension Officers, Co-operation Extension Officers, Male and Female Social-Education Organisers, Progress Assistants, Village Level Workers, *Gram Sevikas*, Medical Officers, Compounders, Sanitary Inspectors, Lady Health Visitors, Midwives and Overseers. Overnight the large array of officers required cannot be found. Necessarily for training this army of workers, a large number of Extension Training Centres, etc., Basic Training Centres and Integrated Course Training Centres have been started in the State and beyond.

The changed set up of the Revenue Administration will also require a large number of *Karamcharis* and other personnel. The scheme of land reforms in India is closely associated with the promotion of co-operative farming. The extension of co-operative farming will also need a trained personnel.

This enormous expansion in the scope of State activities since 1951 census has naturally brought in a much larger number of people in employment or directly associated with the public administration. They have not yet been properly enumerated. Their number is growing rapidly and the next census in 1961 will give us an idea of their number. Apart from the percentage of these men in the public administrative sector their impact on society will be very considerable. Besides, the employees in public administration under the State Government, the number of employees in public administration under the Centre is also going up considerably. More Post and Telegraph Offices are being opened and there may be schemes for extension of railway transport, trade, banking and insurance in the public sector. All this will add considerably to the number of persons in public administration, either under the Centre or the State.