

Gazetteer of India : Bihar

DHANBAD

P R E F A C E.

This is the first Gazetteer for Dhanbad district . Dhanbad was a part of Manbhum district which was first in Bengal and then came over to Bihar when Bihar was separated from Bengal. when H.Coupland, I.C.S., published the first District Gazetteer for Manbhum in 1911,Dhanbad was only a subdivision of Manbhum district in Bengal. The headquarters town was then known as Dhanbaid. Later when Manbhum was a district in Bihar, Dhanbad subdivision was raised to the status of a sub district and the letter 'i' in the name of the headquarters station was dropped. As a result of the recommendation of the states Reorganisation Commission, the district of Dhanbad was carved out in 1956 and remained in Bihar while the other portion of Manbhum district went over to West Bengal. Coupland's District Gazetteer of Manbhum was mainly based on the statistical Account of Bengal, Vol. XVII by Sir W.W .Hunter and other materials gathered from local records and published treatises. The coalfields of Manbhum had already attained some importance and a separate chapter was given to the subject.

In the course of the last few decades, the district of Dhanbad has had phenomenal changes in all spheres. Bagsuma, the first headquarters of Dhanbad subdivision is a forgotten village now although Govindpur, the second headquarters of the subdivision has a some importance because of its situation on the Grand Trunk Road. The headquarters of the subdivision had to be shifted to Dhanbad due to the growing importance of the coalfields . Dhanbad has become one of the industrialised districts in India and is known all over the world because of the rich coalfields and other natuarls resources. The story of the Development of this district from when a Deputy Magistrate worked as the solitary Postmaster and sowars with swords escorted the bullock cart trains on the Grand Trunk Road is highly interesting. On the one hand, the coalfields, railways and roadways have developed enormously, industrialization, trade and commerce have gone ahead rapidly, educational and technical institutions have multiplied and the principal towns have become cosmopolitan while, on the other hand , the Adivasis and the other indigenious elements of the culture-complex which aspect offers a rich field for investigation.

Dhanbad district is now of great interest to the historian, sociologist, politician, industrialist, capitalist and the administration Coupland's Gazetteer has little value now although it was excellent compilation.

The State Government of Bihar in the Revenue Department have undertaken the work of re-writing and publishing the entire series of the District Gazetteers of Bihar. The general pattern laid down by the Ministry of Scientific Research Cultural Affairs (now merged in the Ministry of Education) has been generally followed. The Gazetteer for Dhanbad district is the twelfth in this new series. The re-written District Gazetteers of Hazaribagh, Muzaffarpur, Gaya, Singhbhum, Saran, Champaran, Monghyr, Palamau, Bhagalpur, Purnea and Darbhanga have already been published.

I was posted to Manbhum district 23 years back and had toured extensively throughout the district. In the course of collecting materials for the re-written District Gazetteer of Manbhum I had renewed my contacts in Manbhum district and some of my friends in Purulia had helped me considerably. Before the district was separated I had made it a point to study, some of the old English correspondence volumes and other local records now in Purulia Record Room. My continuous contacts with Dhanbad district for the last 23 years when the district rapidly changed has been very useful in the present assignment. It is needless to mention that a book of this type can only be possible by team work, the pooling of resources, extensive tours, study and collaboration.

The work has its own difficulties. While there is a plethora of recent reports of various institutions and departments, there have been no Survey and Settlement Operations nor any comprehensive socio-economic survey. The impact of the changes on the tribals and the other indigenous population had not been studied. Difficulties were also felt in obtaining reliable statistics from various sectors. Some of the corporate bodies and institutions could not even supply detailed information of their own departments. The District Gazetteers of the border districts of Bengal have not yet been published. At the same time I was fortunate in receiving ungrudging collaboration from the National Archives, New Delhi, National Library, Calcutta and the Asiatic Society of Bengal, Calcutta. These institutions had placed their old and rare books at my disposal and had gone out of their way to trace references to help my work. This was in great contrast to the type of collaboration that I got within the province where most of the officers in key

positions probably due to their own problems have very little leisure to give any active help. I am indebted to the successive Deputy Commissioners who have tried to help me in various ways, Shri K.K.Basu of the Bihar Judicial Service, Prof. N.L. Sharma, the Coal Board, the Indian Mining Federation and Shri S.N. Chatterjee, Superintendent of the Government Printing Press at Gulzarbagh.

I have received great encouragement and guidance from Pandit Binodanand Jha when he was the Chief Minister and Shri K.B. Sahay who is the present Chief Minister. The work of re-writing of the District Gazetteers was sponsored by Shri K.B. Sahay in 1952 when he was the Revenue Minister and this was a few years before the Central Government took up the work. Shri M.P. Sinha and Shri B.C. Patel, the past and the present Revenue Ministers and Shri S.J. Mazumdar, I.C.S., Chief Secretary, have always taken a very keen interest in the work from the very beginning. The Central Gazetteer Unit gave me some useful suggestions which were used.

The outlook is to provide an objective book for a wide range of readers. It is realised that seldom any one takes up a comprehensive book of this type to read from the first page to the last and there has to be a certain amount of repetition in order to make each chapter useful. I have tried to present an up to date picture of the district knowing well that the district will undergo further rapid changes quickly. Today the urgency of the need of a book like this which is an investigation of the man and the district he lives in is unprecedented. I have enjoyed the work and it will be a great privilege if the book is of some help to the present and the coming generation.

PANTA :

The 28th December, 1963. } P.C.ROY CHOUDARY.

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