

CHAPTER IX

ECONOMIC TRENDS

130. Introductory

The district of Balangir which extends over an area of 3,411.6 sq. miles is ranked eleventh among the thirteen districts of the State in area. The density of population of the district is 313 persons per square mile while the State average is 292. Its *per capita* income was Rs. 169 in 1956-57 as compared to the State and all-India averages of Rs. 186 and Rs. 294, respectively. Structurally, its economy is predominantly dependent on agriculture. Manufacturing industry is of much less importance. Agricultural productivity both in relation to land and working force is very low because of relatively poor crop yields and the low harvest price of paddy, the principal crop which covers over 4.4 per cent of the district's cultivated area. The average yield rate of paddy is about 12 maunds per acre in the district. The low yield rate in the district is due to lack of improved agricultural techniques and absence of other facilities such as irrigation. The district is very rarely affected by flood but in some years drought poses a very big problem for the people due to insufficient or uneven distribution of rains.

About 78 per cent of the population derive their means of livelihood from agriculture whereas about 60 per cent of the total income is derived from agriculture. The best cultivation of the district is found in Sonapur subdivision and in the northern part of the district, particularly on both sides of the Balangir-Sambalpur Road. From Balangir-southwards the land is strewn with undulating patches of forests generally unsuitable for cultivation. Yet here and there considerable areas of fertile lands and prosperous villages are met with. The lands in Dunglepali and Binka Blocks are fed by the Hirakud Canal System and the remaining areas mainly depend on rainfall.

There are few small industries existing in the district but mostly the disorganised cottage industries like handloom weaving have survived, though miserably, from the last few centuries till today.

The district is not endowed with rich minerals like iron and coal. Few deposits of inferior manganese and graphite of Patnagarh subdivision have been utilised in recent years. But these mineral resources are too inadequate to provide a base for the development of large-scale industries. However, the district provides ample scope for developing agriculture based industries such as food processing industries, sugar industries, live-stock and forest-based industries. In recent years a few State sponsored industries like carpentry, tile making and oil and rice mills have been set up on co-operative basis at the Panchayat level

The great famine of 1899-1900 caused considerable loss of population in the district. After 1901 the district quickly recovered from the effects of the famine and the persons who had left their homes returned and took part in the revival of agricultural prosperity which continued on extensive scale throughout the decade. Development of road communication was also one of the causes of the prosperous material condition of the people. The disastrous decade of 1911—20 which ruined the prosperity of many of the districts of Orissa, spared this district almost entirely. In the following decade from 1921—30 agricultural conditions were very encouraging both from the point of view of good harvests and expansion of cultivation and there was no scarcity of food, no flood, no smallpox or other epidemics. Cottage industry, particularly the textile products in Sonepur attracted attention of the outside world. The period from 1931—40 was one of general progress and prosperity. The harvest was good throughout and public health, except for localized outbreaks of cholera and smallpox, was excellent. During the forties, however, the prosperity of the district was somewhat affected by special circumstances, such as, the war conditions and the merger of the States with Orissa. Agricultural conditions were as favourable as in the previous decade but there was general rise in the prices of commodities which brought distress to the poorer section of the people. Public health seemed to be deteriorating and there were frequent outbreaks of epidemics. During the last decade of 1951—60, which was comparatively free from natural calamities there was a marked revival of agricultural prosperity and general standard of public health. The benefits of Hirakud Canal System were extended to Dungripali and Binka police-stations of Sonepur subdivision. The major part of the district was covered with Community Development Blocks. A good number of minor irrigation projects were completed in every subdivision. Besides the development of road communications a railway line connecting Titilagarh with Sambalpur was completed. Several miles of all-weather motorable road and rail road serve now as life line for carrying surplus rice, groundnut, pulses and other agricultural produces to neighbouring States and bring all that is required for the people of the district starting from salt and kerosene oil to cosmetics.

The southern and western parts of the district, though originally famous for the rich forests, now present a bleak and barren landscape owing to large-scale destruction of the forests by unscrupulous coupe contractors and the illiterate mass of people. One can traverse miles and miles over the narrow winding roads rarely coming across a shady growth of vegetation, though here and there can be spotted a tree, leafless and decaying, that has been hacked down for its bark. But in this part of the district there has been heavy concentration of population

and this brings to an unmistakable conclusion that once upon a time the area was rich and prosperous. In these regions a traveller also comes across a hill stream here and there flowing all the year round over a circuitous path with cool and crystal water which unfortunately has never been harnessed to the advantage of the cultivators. Suddenly one meets a deep gorge or a terrifying terrain which goes on widening from time to time because of denudation of the soil. It is gratifying that in recent years, intensive schemes of soil conservation and afforestation have been launched, irrigation sources have been surveyed and above all, there is an awareness by the authorities of the magnitude of the problem which left to itself might shatter the economy of the district beyond recognition.

It is an interesting study that though rich in agriculture especially after the construction of the net work of the Hirakud Canal System, Sonepur presents a picture of general decline in prosperity. This phenomenon is significant as it reveals a paradox in the developing economy of the State. As a subdivision, Sonepur is situated at an extreme corner of the district. It is not a railhead, nor is there any good system of road communication. Even the physical contiguity of the subdivision has been marred by a natural barrier, i.e., the river Mahanadi which separates a major portion of the subdivision and makes it inaccessible for months together during rains. The headquarters town of Sonepur because of its peripheral location does not serve as a fit centre for marketing even the agricultural produce, and the farmers of Binka and Durgripali police-stations would rather prefer Balargir because of nearness, facilities of transport and communication and above all, the prospect of a bigger market. Sonepur does not possess mineral deposits which could be extracted. As a matter of fact, extraction and processing of minerals seem to be the only industrial venture of the district. But Sonepur unfortunately lacks it. Hence agriculturally and industrially Sonepur is in a disadvantageous position. Really the Sonepur town appears to be a big village with some Government offices. There is also a steady decline in the population of Sonepur town from year to year. The band of officials and courtiers who depended on Durbar Administration before States' merger have long left the town in quest of other pursuits. The families of weavers who could produce Tusser textiles so rich in texture and super in design have migrated to other commercially important centres like Barpal or Sambalpur, because their handicrafts did not find an adequate market in Sonepur whose population was on the decrease and where, too, the synthetic fabrics because of their texture, glamour and cheaper cost replaced the handwoven textiles. The value of land, rural and even urban, has also remained steady although in other parts of the district it has almost doubled during the last ten years. This is perhaps due to a sense of apprehension in the minds of the people that the whole

of the subdivision might come under water after the construction of the Tikkerpara Dam Project. Although the scheme has almost been shelved, a hazy fear still lingers around. Sonapur has an ideal situation as it borders the district of Sambalpur and Baugh-Phulbani, it has rich paddy fields and a cultural history as revealed from the multitude of temples and ancient relics. In spite of the temporary decline in prosperity, it is a land of promise which needs revival.

Although the former citadel of the ex-State of Patna, the present subdivision of Patnagarh is the smallest in the district in area and population. The area is predominantly mountainous inhabited by illiterate mass of aborigines who are easily contented with a modest living. The Adibasi has no big ambition and all that he wants is a morsel of food and a rag of cloth. Life crawls with an indolent ease. There are about half a dozen hillstreams which are perennial or semi-perennial in nature, but the volume of crystal water flows on languidly only to meet the bigger rivers. But the people still look heaven-wards for the monsoon to break. If nature fails as in 1965, the population is in the grip of a famine and starvation. But still the streams flow. It is disheartening that neither the people nor the Government take any effective steps to harness the volume of water which so wastefully flows on to the rivers. The subdivision has the poorest irrigational facilities, although its economy is predominantly agricultural. Hence the agricultural outturn in the subdivision is poor and most uncertain.

The subdivision is also industrially most backward, although there is rich deposit of minerals on the Gandhamardan range. Because of inaccessibility of the area, difficult transport and high cost of extraction, no private entrepreneur is encouraged to explore the hidden treasures of the land. The Government have likewise not taken any move in this direction. Thus the area, rich in natural resources, remain unexplored and poor.

The subdivision has an undulating surface interspersed with hill streams and 'Nallas' thus rendering it impassable for about four months in a year during the rains. It has an all-weather metalled road for about twenty miles, and the only railhead of the subdivision, namely, Hari-sankar Road is situated at a distance of about thirty miles, totally unfit for vehicular traffic. The only means of communication is the traditional bullock-cart which moves haltingly—the symbol of the life of the people. Marketing of agricultural produce thus becomes a costly problem, and the Marwari businessman exploit the situation by local purchase of the foodgrains from the farmers who, unable to make their own arrangement for marketing, are forced to part with their produce for a nominal price.

Patnagarh is the vicious centre of the Bhulia money-lenders who practically fleece the unsophisticated rural folks who, because of extreme poverty, mass illiteracy and drunken habits, become an easy prey to the 'Bhulias'. It is unfortunate that the co-operative institutions in the district have hardly been successful in tackling the problem of rural indebtedness in the area.

The problems discussed above are eternal for the subdivision and its economy has remained almost stagnant. The impact of development has been rarely perceptible, and though there is no deterioration in the ever unfortunate situation and life has remained static, the subdivision has not moved in the paths of progress keeping in harmony with the general prosperity of the subdivisions of Titilagarh and Balangir.

131. Livelihood Pattern

It appears from Cobden Ramsay's Orissa Feudatory States, 1910 that "The occupation of the people of the State is mostly agriculture, 57 per cent of the total population being agriculturists and 13 per cent field labourers. A small number of people live on the income derived by smelting iron and making iron instruments. There is no manufacture in the State worth notice, weaving of dhurris, newar, etc., with the fly shuttle loom is largely carried on in the State Jail. Bhulias, Gaudas and Mahajas or Kulees, who are the principal weaving class in the State supply the ordinary cloth used by the people of the State. Iron weapons such as axes, daggers, etc., of good quality are manufactured in Bangomunda Zamindari of this State. The principal exported articles are rashi (sesamum seed). Traders from Ganjam and Raipur come to the State to barter salt, dry fish, cocoanuts, tobacco, nabat (raw sugar) and iron bar mainly for oil-seeds and rice. The other imported articles are spices, mill clothes, thread and kerosene oil".

The Settlement Report of 1937 of Patna State reveals that 90 per cent of the total population were concerned with agriculture. Permission granted by the State authorities to export rice and other food crops and opening of the Raipur-Vizianagram Railway line increased the volume of trade and attracted quite a large number of merchants from outside the State. This improved the material condition of the agriculturists also. The principal cottage industries of the State were weaving of cotton, bell-metal, gold and silver smithy, wood working, bamboo working, tanning and leather works, pottery, oil milling and rope twisting. Of the cottage industries, weaving was the most important industry of the State. About one-tenth of the total population of the State belonged to the weaver class. The Bhulias of Patnagarh and other places used to produce good quality textiles in cotton such as 'lungis' of variegated colour and napkins with ornamental borders. The Ganda weavers also prepared bed-sheets and other clothes from a coarse yarn.

According to 1951 Census, the total population of this district was 917,875 of which 759,020 (82.70 per cent) were agriculturists along with their dependents, 158,855 (6.81 per cent) were engaged in production other than cultivation, 15,680 (1.71 per cent) in Commerce, 7,340 (56 per cent) in transport, 75,461 (8.22 per cent) in other services and miscellaneous occupations. Among the agriculturists, 562,643 persons (61.30 per cent) were cultivators of land wholly or mainly owned by them and by their dependants 29,876 persons (3.26 per cent) were cultivators of land wholly or mainly unowned by them and by their dependants, 22,020 (28 per cent) persons were non-cultivating owner and 163,894 persons (17.86 per cent) were agricultural labourers with their dependants.

The Census of 1961 classified the total population of 1,068,686 into two categories of workers and non-workers. In the category of workers there are 5,148,842 (48.2 per cent) persons and in the category of non-workers 553,844 (51.8 per cent) persons. Further the persons in the category of workers are divided into 9 broad categories which have been dealt elaborately in Chapter VIII. The Census data reveal that cultivators and agricultural labourers have the highest concentrations in rural areas, a fact which indicates great dependence of the people of the district on agricultural operations. The district has more females than males and the proportion of females engaged in household works as well as in trade and commerce is the highest in the State. In hats and bazars, mostly women are found selling vegetables, rice and other merchandise. There are instances of several house-holds, where male members look after the up-keep of the house, tend the cattle and take care of the children, whereas the women go out in economic pursuit, such as hawking of fruits and vegetables, or eatables made at home, such as 'Chura', 'Murhi', etc. or plucking of kendu leaves from forest areas for sale to contractors. In recent years the way of living and the sources of earning have undergone slow changes. The isolated economy of the district is gradually breaking up, through the opening of the Raipur-Vizianagram Railway line in 1932 and the Sambalpur-Titlagarh line in 1964. People get an opportunity to despatch their goods to distant markets and earn a better livelihood.

Consequent on abolition of Zamindari and Ticcadari systems the tillers of the soil have been given absolute right over the land and this has saved them from the pernicious effects of *bethi*, *rasad*, *Magar*, *ticca bethi* and other abuses. This too has given them an impetus to acquire, possess and develop the land and strive more towards commercial than a mere subsistence farming.

132. Prices

Grain is cheap for a month or so after harvest throughout the district when the producer is obliged to sell in order to procure the means to pay the rent and to liquidate his debt. Generally, coarse rice is deare

at Titilagarh and Patnagarh than at Balangir, Titilagarh being a railhead and an exporting centre, price is necessarily higher and Patnagarh being nearer the railhead has also higher prices. There is, however, not much difference in the price of wheat which is an imported commodity. 'Mung' is cheaper at Titilagarh than at Balangir, probably because of the wide extent of area under mung cultivation in Titilagarh subdivision. Harad, molasses and gram have standardised prices throughout the district. Conditions have now changed after the opening of the Sambalpur-Titilagarh Railway line which runs through the main agricultural centres of the district. It will have the effect of standardisation and stabilization of prices throughout the district. During the later part of the thirties, as a result of general economic depression in the country the prices of all commodities in this district evinced a steep downward trend. In the year 1939, however, the prices were more or less steady. The yield of paddy crop, sugarcane and all other Rabi crops was also satisfactory.

At Balangir price of rice in the pre-war years, ranged between 24 to 13 seers a rupee, where as at Titilagarh it varied from 19 to 12 seers a rupee. In Patnagarh, rice could be obtained between 20 to 12 seers a rupee. The price of wheat during this period did not show any marked fluctuations. It was available at 9 to 10 seers a rupee. This was also the case with other cereals like mung, gram, kulthi, harad and molasses.

In the post-war period the price of all essential commodities shot up very high. After 1942, price of rice ranged between 6 to 8 seers at Balangir and at Titilagarh between $5\frac{1}{2}$ to 7 seers a rupee. In Patnagarh, rice could be obtained between 6 to 8 seers a rupee, while in Sonapur the price rose as high as 4 seers.

This upward trend is also marked in other cereals like wheat, gram kulthi, mung and molasses. In view of the dislocation of trade due to abnormal conditions, the ex-Patna State Government set up a Price Control Committee in 1942 for equitable distribution of food-stuffs. The Government also implemented the Foodgrains Control Order which provided for licensing of wholesale transactions. Distribution of sugar was controlled and the wholesale and retail prices were fixed for the benefit of the consumers. In the year 1943, a Food Control Order was promulgated to ensure a free flow of rice and paddy to the weekly markets for the general consumption of the people and also to achieve equitable distribution of stocks both in the urban and rural areas and to maintain a reasonable price level.

It was expected that with the end of the War, conditions would improve, but it was found otherwise and the war-time increase in the price level accelerated. During the fifties, the prices of all commodities rose high and rice, the principal food, was available only at 3 seers to

3½ seers a rupee. During recent years, the prices of all commodities have increased abnormally and the consumers have been hard-hit. This is due to the recent drought conditions, low yield rates of the land, devaluation of money, speculative hoarding and the overall inflationary pressures from which the country is suffering. A detailed list indicating the trend of change of the purchasing power of rupee in terms of rice, wheat, biri, mung, arhar, kulthi, channa, gram, ragi as prevailed in the market of Balangir during the years from 1896 to 1966 is given in the Appendix.

133. Wages

The Census of 1961 reveals that there are 93,925 agricultural labourers among the working population. The non-workers include their family members not earning any income and on the same basis taking at least an equal number of dependants the number of agricultural labourers along with their family members comes to 187,850. Many of the labourers engage themselves in farm work and non-farm work at different times of the year, because agriculture, being seasonal in character, cannot provide yearlong employment. Besides domestic works, construction of houses, digging of tanks and various types of work of similar character have to be attended to in the villages. It is very often alleged that employment of rural labour is uncertain and precarious in character. A daily labourer may not know where and what kind of work he would get on the morrow. In busy seasons of farm operations labourers are in great demand and during those few months they get ample work. But during the rest of the year employment facilities are very much irregular and uncertain.

The table given below indicates the distribution of rural labourer according to their mode of employment. These figures consist of labourers who depend for their subsistence primarily on wages.

		Per cent
Male labourer	Casual	54.17
Female labourer	Casual	8.33
Male labourer	Weekly	2.50
Male labourer	Monthly	5.00
Male labourer	Annual	30.00

It can be seen from the above figures that the majority of labourers, consisting of 62.50 per cent of the total labour population are employed on casual basis. It may be that some labourers work under a particular employer day after day during certain season but they have no

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claim to such work and there is no agreement or understanding of any kind for any employment beyond the particular period of employment for which they have been engaged. The next important mode of employment is on the basis of annual contract. Such labourers are usually farm labourers who are commonly known as *Gutis* or *Halias*. A few of them may be domestic servants or in some other work assigned to them by their employer. The conditions of the agricultural farm labourers more than a half century ago are given below.

1907

“The field labourers are here called *Guti* or *Halia* and are generally hired for the year. They get for food two to three khandis of paddy (1 to $1\frac{1}{2}$ Mds.) per mensem. At the end of the year they receive 3 to 6 Mds. of paddy with two clothes worth 12 annas, where sugarcane is cultivated, the sugarcane grown on the patti is allowed to every *Guti* and the value of this is about Rs. 2. Likewise 20 seers (one Khandi) of paddy and 1 seer 4 Ch. (one Tambi) of pulse and til (sesamum) are sown for each *Guti*, who is also given grain at the time of harvest for the work of threshing at the following rates. For paddy one tambis (one seer) for each one maund of paddy threshed. For pulse and other crops only as much as required for the days’ food. The more skillful labourers or head *Guti* (Khamari) gets 16 Khandi (8 maunds) instead of 12 in a lump at the end of a year and enjoys other privileges. Stipulation is often made that the *Guti* is to be lent from Rs. 4 to Rs. 20 a year without interest, provided he does not throw up his situation until he repays the money. This loan is termed in the State as Bahabandha.

The lads employed for grazing cattle or other cultivating business are called Kuthia. They are supplied with food and clothes, and at the end of the year paddy 2 to 4 maunds.

Besides daily labourers are often hired in gangs to work in the fields for weeding, sowing and ploughing at two tambis (2 seers) and for transplanting (3 seers) 3 tambis of paddy per day per head. These labourers are called Bhitia. In Khondan tracts Khonds hire labourers at a lower rate giving them requisite food in their houses and paying them lump sum of Rs. 4 in cash in the year and three pieces of clothes. During late years the average rate of daily wages of ordinary unskilled labourers was 2 annas per male and 1 anna 3 pies for females, superior mason 14 annas ordinary mason 8 annas, carpenter superior 1 rupee, common carpenter 10 anna, blacksmith 10 to 6 annas.”

The condition of the Halias has now improved. He is being engaged on annual basis and paid wages in kind, i.e., paddy which he takes for food every month at the rate of 3 Khandis to 5 Khandis ($1\frac{1}{2}$ to $2\frac{1}{2}$ Mds.)

1. Feudatory States of Orissa-Cobden-Ramsay, P. 293

and at the close of the year in lump 5 to 8 Puduga (20 Mds. to 32 Mds.) as Bartan. He is also given two to three pieces of clothes. He also takes some grain from the threshing floor on the closing day of the threshing which is variously known as Bharamuthi or Kulapari. There are also Kuthias who usually look after the cattle herd of the agriculturist. They are engaged on annual contract basis getting daily food and three pieces of clothes and about 3 to 4 Pudugas (12 Mds. to 16 Mds.) of paddy in lump at the close of the year. Usually young boys who are not fit enough to do hard work like ploughing take up this work. But bulk of the labour for transplanting, Beusan and deweeding operation and harvesting are engaged on daily wage basis and are paid 2 to 3 tambis (2 to 3 seers) of paddy per day in kind or Re. 1 to Rs. 1.50 in cash. At the time of transplantation, weeding operations and harvesting slightly higher wages are paid to attract large number of workers. But most of the able-bodied people choose to go to forests to bring firewood for sale in the markets or work under P. W. D., Forest and Kendu leaf contractors to earn higher wages. Only labourers having below the average strength choose to come to agricultural operation. In Balangir and Sonepur subdivisions where there are more intensive agricultural operations Halias are paid about $1\frac{1}{2}$ maunds to $2\frac{1}{2}$ maunds of paddy per month and about 20 to 32 maunds of paddy at the close of the year. But in Kandhan and Binjhalti areas of Patnagarh and Titilagarh where there are more than high lands with low yield, the Halias are paid at the rate of 2 maunds per month for their food and at the close of the year 6 to 8 maunds of paddy in lump as Bartan. He also gets about one maund of paddy as Bharamuthi and two pieces of cloth known as Angchhi and Kodakari. The male daily labourers in Kandhan and Binjhalti areas get about 4 seers of paddy or Rs. 1.75 P. in cash. The female daily labourers get 3 seers 4 chhataks of paddy per day or Rs. 1.37P. in cash. In order to keep the Halia engaged in work continuously he is given usually a sum of money which varies from Rs. 20 to Rs. 80 or Rs. 100 depending upon the good relationship between the employer and Halia. This is known as Bahabandha. The amount is paid only in principal or with a very low rate of interest. This money is given as an advance on execution of a Handnote. In case of sugarcane cultivation the labourers engaged on annual basis are paid $1\frac{1}{2}$ to 2 maunds of paddy per month for food, 20 to 32 maunds as Bartan and at the end of the year the yield of gur, from one Patti of land from which nearly 2 pots of gur can be produced. Usually 32 seers of gur are received from one Patti

Thus in Binjhal and Kandhan areas the Halia gets wages in paddy 33 maunds and in Balangir and Sonepur areas they get 39 maunds. Usually tribals from whom water can be accepted for drinking by the caste Hindus are engaged as Halias. The wages of Halia and daily labourers will be just adequate as subsistence wage and nothing more

The working time is 8 hours a day usually from morning 7 A. M. to 12 noon and in the afternoon from 3 P. M. to 6 P. M. No sickness leave or allowance is given to the Halia. But considerate employers give some paddy during period of sickness if it does not exceed a few days. But most of the employers insist on a substitute usually a son or wife of the Halia to work in place of the ailing Halia. Women do not get engaged as Halias but come as daily labourers at the time of transplanting, weeding and harvesting. Piece-rate wages are also paid at the time of transplanting or Busan operation and this is bargained at the spot after examination of the volume of work to be done. The labourers engaged by Public Works Department, Forest Department and private contractors are mostly on piece-rate basis.

It is a well-known fact that agricultural labourer constitutes the lowest income group in the community. Moreover, for a considerable part of the year the rural labourer does not find any employment. As such, the daily wage which he earns is not a proper indication of his total earnings. In the district not only wage rate is low but the system of payment of wages is also primitive in character. In many places wages are paid in kind. Since the Second World War, with the rise in prices wage rates in kind have undergone frequent change. The percentage of income earned by rural labour in cash and kind are 32'31 and 67'69 respectively.

A review of the wage rates since 1937 shows that unskilled labourers used to get from 10 to 20 paise as their daily wages and skilled labourers such as carpenters, blacksmiths, tailors and masons, etc., between 37 paise to one rupee. This low rate was maintained up to the year 1941. In the year 1942 the scope of employment of both skilled and unskilled labour increased due to mining operations, works in Public Works Department, forest operations, works in Rice Mills, Graphite Factory and other private concerns. There was slight rise in the wages of skilled artisans due mainly to the rise in the prices of foodgrains. The rate of cart hire per day ranged between 50 paise to Rs. 1'50 P. A section of the labouring class particularly from among those residing on the border areas preferred to go outside in quest of employment with higher wages. Wages shot up abnormally in 1945. The wages of skilled labour varied from Re. 0'37P. to Rs. 2 and that of unskilled labour from Re. 0'19 P. to Re. 0'50 P. The rate of cart hire per day ranged from Re. 1 to Rs. 3. Since 1960, there has been a further rise in the wages of labourers due mainly to the rise in the price of foodgrains. The wages of skilled labourers like carpenters, masons and blacksmiths varied from Rs.3 to Rs. 5 and sometimes Rs. 7 for specially good quality of work. Now a field worker gets about Rs. 1'50 P. and other agricultural labourers Re. 1. Certain village servant receive a part of their wages in the shape of paddy. For instance, the village barber and the village

washerman receive their wages in shape of paddy from every farmer at the time of harvest. As a matter of fact agricultural wages continued unchanged for a fairly long period till rise in prices was acute and persistent. The wages received in kind by male and female labourers are considerably different but when payment is received in cash the difference is very much narrowed down. Besides, there is wide difference between maximum and minimum wage in respect of both farm work and non-farm work. While the maximum wage received in agricultural work is Rs. 1.75 P. and the minimum wage is a rupee one, in non-farm work the maximum wage is as high as Rs. 5 and Rs. 7 and the minimum is Rs. 3.50P. This rate of wages clearly shows that a large percentage of the rural population depending on labour for subsistence is obliged to remain underpaid and poor.

134. Standard of Living

The district of Balangir is mainly a land of agriculture and the prosperity of the people depends mostly on rainfall which is uncertain. In spite of this unstable condition it can be said that the standard of living of the people of this district is improving due to adoption of improved agricultural techniques, execution of irrigation projects, use of improved seeds and manures and above all, general consciousness created through the agency of Community Development Blocks. In markets consumer goods and fancy articles find ready customers. Utensils of brass and bell-metal, lanterns, buckets, ready-made dresses, cycles, soap, books, umbrellas, gold and silver ornaments, shirting and suiting cloth, handloom and millmade dhotis, sarees, lungis, vests, chaddars, plastic wares and hard-ware products are in common use among the rural folks. The majority of houses have mud walls, particularly in rural areas. The next largest group of houses in villages is with walls made of grass, leaves, reeds or bamboos. But in urban areas brick walled houses or those with corrugated iron and other metal sheets, cement concrete, etc., form the second largest number. Against this preponderance of brick walled houses in the towns, the villages have such walls only in about 15.4 per cent of the houses. Similarly, roofs made of corrugated iron, zinc or other metal sheets, asbestos sheets, bricks, concrete, etc., are a rare sight in the rural areas. In rural areas, the largest number of houses have thatched roofs of grass, leaves, reeds, wood or bamboo.

Trade and Commerce have increased owing to an influx of traders from outside. The people are also developing a commercial outlook. On account of the high prices prevailing in the market the surplus agricultural produce fetches quite a handsome income to the common farmers. With this income the cultivator is able to pay rent, clear outstanding loans and also invest some funds in improving his

agriculture. He now spends on luxuries too. But it is a pity that on account of gross illiteracy, a great share of this income is squandered away by drinking country liquor which is abundantly available almost in every village. As a result, the farmer continues to be as wretched and miserable as ever.

Pulses, maize, and oil-seeds are grown in the district in plenty. Different kinds of vegetables such as brinjals, pumpkins, radish, potatoes and tomatoes are raised more or less throughout the district. Cauliflowers, cabbages and other winter vegetables are also grown and cultivation of these crops is becoming increasingly popular. Sonapur is famous for its betel leaf and handspun cloth. The weavers of the district are very skilful. Dhotis, sarees, bed-sheets, napkins, shirting, table-cloth, purdahs, dusters and other cotton articles of daily use and tussar articles are manufactured. The products are in demand in foreign countries and in the past also received certificates of merit in several exhibitions held in India. The silver ornaments of Tarbha cater to the taste and fashions of at least six districts of Orissa and the bordering districts of Bihar and Madhya Pradesh.

Since 1952-53 the consumers are being hard hit due to rise in prices of all essential commodities. Particularly the low income-group and those with fixed salaries suffer the most. To meet the enhanced cost of living, dearness and other allowances are paid to the Government servants. In recent years, the influence of urban life through the modern means of communication have been noticed to some extent on the food habits and luxuries even in the remotest corners of the district. Beverages like tea and coffee are becoming quite common in villages along with cycle and tailoring shop, sweet-meat stalls, stationery and ready-made cloth shops and medicine stores.

A specimen account of the food habits and necessaries of the rural as well as urban population according to expenditure groups is given in the Appendix. The pattern of consumption as has been indicated in the Appendix is one of stratified systematic sampling obtained as a result of survey of a few house-holds in rural as well as urban areas. From Table I, we can see that cereals claim 59 per cent of the total consumption in the rural area as against 38 per cent in the urban area. Milk and milk-products claim 12 per cent in rural as well as in urban areas. As regards other non-food items of consumption, the urban people spend a greater proportion of their total income than the rural people in general. From Table IV we can see that fuel, light and intoxicants claim 13 per cent of total consumption in the rural area as against 16 per cent in urban areas. Amusements, toilets and sundry goods claim only 6 per cent in rural areas as against

11 per cent in the urban area. This is spectacularly different in respect of miscellaneous goods and services and durable and semi-durable goods where urban people spend a lot more than their counterparts in the villages. Table VI shows that miscellaneous goods and services claim 10 per cent of total consumption in the rural areas as against 23 per cent in urban areas.

As one would expect, cereal consumption in the rural area is primarily in non-cash terms while in the urban area it is in cash terms. This clearly shows that urban people buy most of their cereal requirements while rural people depend on farm-grown stock or that obtained in exchange of goods and services. As regards milk and milk-products, more or less, the same trend is marked. For fuel, light and intoxicants, a somewhat even distribution is prevalent between cash and non-cash consumption in the rural area, while in the urban areas cash consumption is a certainty. This trend as regards cash and non-cash consumption of other food items is in the same direction for both rural and urban areas. In respect of amusements, toilets, and sundry goods non-cash consumption is very insignificant. For miscellaneous goods and services cash consumption in both rural and urban areas is of overwhelming proportion. So a conclusion can be drawn to the effect that in respect of food-items rural people depend more on home-grown stock than their counterparts in the urban area while for the non-food items dependance on market is quite large for all. In other words urban people in the district depend on the market for almost everything they consume while rural people purchase a few items only.

135. Employment Exchange

The District Employment Exchange was established in the month of March 1960 with its headquarters at Balangir to cater to the needs of the unemployed people. The following statement indicates the number of registration, the number of vacancies notified and the number of placements made during the recent years.

Year	Number of registration	Number of vacancies notified	Number of placements
1960 ..	2,025	810	163
1961 ..	3,603	1,587	1,007
1962 ..	4,848	1,783	881
1963 ..	5,552	1,803	1,500
1964 ..	5,213	1,647	770
1965 ..	5,948	2,301	432
1966 up to July ..	4,399	741	348

From the above table it appears that the number of employment seekers is almost always on the increase. Out of the total of 5,213 registered employment seekers of 1964 there were 175 Matriculates, 9 Intermediates, 11 Graduates, 4 Commerce Graduates, 4 Science Graduates, 567 Under-Matriculates and 1,388 having education up to M. E. There were 6 female Matriculates, 9 female Under-Matriculates and 18 female educated up to M. E. standard. For different trades among the applicants registered in 1964 there were 50 for Amin's job, 17 for Peons, 17 for Forest Guards, 68 for Drivers, 16 for Bus Conductors, 12 for Police Constables, 12 for Sweepers, 16 for Watchmen, 6 for Teachers, 3 for Vaccinators, 5 for Clerks, 2 each for Typists, Social workers, Foresters, Telephone Operator, 3 for Postmen, 8 for Blacksmiths, 4 for Work Sarkars, 5 for Carpentry jobs and one each for Draftsman, Manager, Daftry, Cane Cutter, Fitter, Assembler, Pump mechanic, Operator, Sanitary Operator, Plumber and Cleaner.

Similarly, in 1965 out of the total employment seekers of 5,948 registered there were 49 Matriculates, 1 Intermediate, 2 Graduates, 2 Commerce Graduates, 446 Under-Matriculates, and 1,436 having read up to M. E. The total number of female employment seekers were 88 out of which 1 was Matriculate, 4 Under-Matriculate and 12 having read up to M. E. standard. Among the applicants registered in 1965 there were 86 for Amin's job, 24 for Driver, 13 for Conductor, 7 for Tailoring Teacher, 13 for Sweepers, 10 for Carpentry, 9 for Peon, 4 for Overseers, 2 for Kaviraj, 2 for Vaccinator, 1 for Sanitary Inspector, 8 for Teachership and Instructorship and one each for Stenographer, Supervisor, Record Clerk, Copyist, Weaver, Pattern Maker, Blacksmith, Fitter, Helper, Galvaniser, Printer, Helper, Compositor, Machine Operator, Compressor, 2 for Helper, 2 for Watchman, 3 for Lineman, 5 for Dai, 3 for female Teacher and 8 for Female Sweeper. Compared to other districts of the State, Balangir does not have so many employment seekers mainly due to the fact that there is not much scope for both general and technical education in the district. Besides the Government Offices and institutions, there are a few private industries like the Graphite Factory at Tililagarh and Patnagarh which too employ quite a good number of persons.

TABLE I

Monthly consumption of cereals per household in Rural/Urban areas of Balangir classified by expenditure groups

	Rural			Urban		
	Cash Rs. P.	Non- Cash Rs. P.	Total Rs. P.	Cash Rs. P.	Non- Cash Rs. P.	Total Rs. P.
1—50 ..	6·96	12·66	19·62	12·58	0·08	12·66
51—100 ..	7·52	26·85	34·37	29·68	..	29·68
101—150 ..	11·92	40·90	52·82	38·32	..	38·32
151—300 ..	4·79	68·08	72·87	42·49	4·72	47·21
301—500 ..	4·48	83·91	88·39	69·44	16·66	86·10
501—1,000 ..	..	91·18	91·18	66·23	25·00	91·23
1,001 and above ..	..	..	..	..	..	..
All expenditure groups.	7·56	36·63	44·19	7·18	33·29	40·47

TABLE II

Monthly consumption of milk and milk products per household in Rural/
Urban areas of Balangir classified by expenditure groups

	Rural			Urban		
	Cash Rs. P.	Non- Cash Rs. P.	Total Rs. P.	Cash Rs. P.	Non- Cash Rs. P.	Total Rs. P.
1—50 ..	0·92	..	0·92	1·12	..	1·12
51—100 ..	1·92	1·41	3·33	2·98	0·52	3·50
101—150 ..	3·05	1·59	4·64	9·23	..	9·23
151—300 ..	4·30	10·12	14·42	13·38	..	13·38
301—500 ..	4·71	23·39	28·10	24·29	..	24·29
501—1,000 ..	..	51·00	51·00	67·50	..	67·50
1,001 and above ..	..	..	..	..	..	..
All expenditure groups.	2·84	6·37	9·21	12·86	0·15	13·01

TABLE III

Monthly consumption of other food items per household in Rural/Urban areas of Balangir classified by expenditure groups

	Rural			Urban		
	Cash Rs. P.	Non- Cash Rs. P.	Total Rs. P.	Cash Rs. P.	Non- Cash Rs. P.	Total Rs. P.
1- 50 ..	7·22	1·81	9·03	10·73	0·11	10·84
51- 100 ..	12·60	6·05	18·65	22·55	0·03	22·5
101- 150 ..	27·65	10·19	37·84	34·46	..	34·46
151- 300 ..	36·44	27·25	63·69	53·95	0·04	53·99
301- 500 ..	72·79	41·43	114·22	97·30	..	97·30
501- 1,000 ..	101·09	35·87	136·96	180·46	..	180·46
1,001 and above	22·85	11·34	34·19	43·70	0·03	43·73
All expenditure groups.	..	..	..	..	..	..

TABLE IV

Monthly consumption of fuel, light and intoxicants per household in Rural/
Urban areas of Balangir classified by expenditure groups

	Rural			Urban		
	Cash Rs. P.	Non- Cash Rs. P.	Total Rs. P.	Cash Rs. P.	Non- Cash Rs. P.	Total Rs. P.
1- 50 ..	2.43	2.83	5.26	7.24	..	7.24
51- 100 ..	3.02	4.42	7.44	9.36	..	9.36
101- 150 ..	5.07	4.06	9.13	12.99	..	12.99
151- 300 ..	12.73	4.84	17.57	22.04	..	22.04
301- 500 ..	14.67	11.47	26.14	40.24	..	40.24
501-1,000 ..	23.74	15.00	38.74	53.95	0.50	54.45
1,001 and above	..	..	..	..	..	..
All expenditure groups.	5.62	4.61	10.23	17.01	0.02	17.03

TABLE V

Monthly consumption of amusements, toilets and sundry goods per household in Rural/Urban areas of Balangir classified by expenditure groups

	Rural			Urban		
	Cash Rs. P.	Non- Cash Rs. P.	Total Rs. P.	Cash Rs. P.	Non- Cash Rs. P.	Total Rs. P.
1— 50 ..	0·89	0·02	0·91	0·93	..	0·93
51— 100 ..	2·79	0·18	2·97	2·68	..	2·68
101— 150 ..	4·08	0·13	4·21	6·06	..	0·06
151— 300 ..	7·99	0·08	8·07	13·92	0·06	13·98
301— 500 ..	9·74	0·86	10·60	34·02	..	34·02
501— 1,000 ..	23·61	4·00	27·61	70·98	..	70·98
1001 and above ..	..	..	..	..	..	..
All expenditure groups.	4·08	0·22	4·30	11·15	0·02	11·17

TABLE VI

Monthly consumption of miscellaneous goods and services per household in Rural/Urban areas of Balangir classified by expenditure groups

	Rural			Urban		
	Cash Rs. P.	Non- Cash Rs. P.	Total Rs. P.	Cash Rs. P.	Non- Cash Rs. P.	Total Rs. P.
1—50 ..	1·10	0·63	1·73	2·52	..	252
51—100 ..	2·20	0·41	2·61	5·45	0·01	5·46
101—150 ..	2·99	1·82	4·81	10·44	..	10·44
151—300 ..	10·50	1·47	11·97	18·02	..	18·02
301—500 ..	25·45	8·92	34·37	101·96	0·07	102·03
501—1,000 ..	72·07	24·50	96·57	184·77	0·07	184·84
1,001 and above ..	..	..	..	..	..	..
All expenditure groups.	5·77	1·82	7·59	24·56	0·05	24·61

APPENDIX I

The statement below indicates the trend of change of the purchasing power of rupee in terms of rice, wheat, biri, mung, arhar, kulthi, channa, gram, ragi as it prevailed in the market at Balangir during certain years from 1896 to 1966. The quantity available per rupee is expressed in seers and chataks.

Average price (seers per rupee)

Year	Rice		Wheat		Biri		Mung		Arhar		Kulthi		Badaclana		Gram		Ragi	
	Srs.	Ch.	Srs.	Ch.	Srs.	Ch.	Srs.	Ch.	Srs.	Ch.	Srs.	Ch.	Srs.	Ch.	Srs.	Ch.	Srs.	Ch.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10									
1896	24	7	14	8	14	8	14	8	14	8	14	8	14	8	14	8	14	8
1907	16	12	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
1919-20	16	2	10	0	10	7	10	7	10	7	10	4	19	8½	..	..	..	..
1937-38	24	0	9	0	11	0	11	0	16	0	22	0	0	0	15	0	0	0
1938-39	21	0	9	8	12	0	16	8	16	8	22	0	0	0	15	8	0	6
1939-40	17	0	10	0	10	0	17	8	17	8	20	0	0	12	0	0	0	0
1940-41	13	0	9	0	0	15	0	21	0	21	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
1941-42	9	0	8	4	7	0	7	0	10	0	16	0	0	0	7	0	0	0
1943-44	7	0	3	0	3	0	3	0	5	0	0	0	0	0	4	0	0	0
1944-45	8	0	3	0	4	0	4	0	9	0	9	0	0	0	5	0	0	0
1945-46	6	0	2	8	3	0	5	0	5	0	8	0	0	0	5	0	0	0
1953-54	3	5	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	10	0	0
1954-55	3	5	2	8	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	10	0	0
1955-56	2	14	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
1956-57	2	8	2	3½	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
1957-58	2	8	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
1958-59	2	10	2	14	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
1959-60	2	8	2	3½	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	8	0	5
1960-61	2	8	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	8	0	0
1961-62	..	..	2	2	2	1	2	1	6	1	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
1962-63	..	..	1	8	1	8	1	4	1	4	1	0	0	2	1	4	0	1
1966-67	..	..	0	14½	0	14	0	13	0	13	0	11	0	0	1	0	0	4