



# CENSUS OF INDIA 1951

VOLUME VI

WEST BENGAL, SIKKIM  
& CHANDERNAGORE

PART IA—REPORT

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1953.

FEW PEOPLE OUTSIDE realise that census is an administrative operation of great dimensions and, in addition, it is a scientific process. Indian census, in particular, covers the largest population in the world and it is also one of the most economical administrative operations. Census as an institution goes back to the remote past, but it is no longer a mere counting of heads; it involves extraction of information which plays a vital role in the determination of many of our administrative policies. The facts elicited during the course of this operation yield valuable scientific data of sociological importance. In many matters it provides a useful guide for the effectiveness or otherwise of our economic policies. The theory of population is in itself an interesting part of economics. The census helps us to test and adapt that theory to facts. There is also another significant advantage which I should like to stress: Census affords an opportunity for Government to reach every home throughout the length and breadth of this country; little hamlets in far off jungles or perched on mountain tops alike feel with prosperous and easily accessible townships the beat and throb of a pulsating administration. It is also one of the greatest achievements of honorary endeavour; for instance, the process of enumeration would involve visits by over a million honorary enumerators to about 64 million homes inhabiting 350 million citizens.

The forthcoming census is the first census of a Free Republican India. It is also the first census of partitioned India. The enumerators will, therefore, visit homes of India's millions of citizens as representatives of a new institution and we shall have to adapt ourselves to a new basis of comparison and tabulation. The Constitution, for the first time, recognises the important role of census. It has been specifically provided that the data collected at successive censuses should form the basis for the delimitation of territorial constituencies. There is also another departure from past practice. Formerly there used to be elaborate caste tables which were required in India partly to satisfy the theory that it was a caste-ridden country and partly to meet the needs of administrative measures dependent on caste divisions. In the forthcoming census this will no longer be a prominent feature and we can devote our energies and attention to the collection and formulation of basic economic data relating to the means of livelihood of the people and other economic activities of the individual and the State.

Hitherto, the census used to be looked upon as a decennial operation for which haphazard temporary arrangements used to be made. I have already stated that there is now a permanent Census Act on the Statute Book and Government have already a permanent office of the Registrar General and Census Commissioner. It is our intention through this unified organisation to effect continuous improvement over the whole field of population data including the census and vital statistics and to conduct experiments in sampling which would reduce not only the elaboration of these operations but also the cost. I hope, in your deliberations, you will take note of the changes which have now taken place in the character of the census operations and you will go back to your States fully familiar with the trends of ideas here in order to implement them on the actual field. I wish your deliberations all success.

*From the speech of SARDAR VALLABHBHAI PATEL, Deputy Prime Minister of India, inaugurating the first conference of Census Superintendents in February 1950.*

## THE SCOPE AND PURPOSE OF THIS REPORT

AT THE OUTSET it requires to be stated that the statements made and conclusions drawn in this Report are wholly the responsibility of the author alone in his personal capacity and do not necessarily represent the views of Government.

The following are the Registrar General's instructions on the scope and purpose of the Report.

I propose to define and limit the scope and purpose of the 1951 Census Report to the provision of the following, viz:—

- (i) a narrative review of data relating to the numbers, life and livelihood of the people; (such data will be deemed to consist of (a) replies to questions 1, 3, 4, 5, 9, 10, 11 and 14 at the 1951 Census; (b) corresponding data of past censuses; and (c) authoritative non-census data, if any, which may be readily available and related to such census data).
- (ii) narrative exposition of significant changes from census to census or between different territorial units brought to light by the foregoing review—(For purposes of such exposition, the natural divisions and districts will be the territorial units in the State reports; and the States and natural divisions will be the territorial units in the All-India Report) and
- (iii) a narrative explanation of the significant changes referred to above, in so far as such explanation can be readily furnished on the basis of local knowledge and experience of the writers of the Reports, or of District Officers and heads of departments who may be consulted by them.

[NOTE.—This limitation involves the consequence that the "Reports" will exclude detailed treatment of the data relating to a number of subjects, e.g., "Displaced Persons", "Backward Classes", "Language", "Religion", "Literary and Education", etc. Where the Ministries concerned so desire, a separate series of publications called "1951 Census Brochures" will be prepared—one for each subject.]

*Six Chapters.*—Apart from an introduction and (if necessary) some appendices, the subject matter of the 1951 Census Report will be arranged in six chapters as below:—

- Chapter I—General Population
- Chapter II—Rural Population
- Chapter III—Urban Population
- Chapter IV—Agricultural Classes
- Chapter V—Non-Agricultural Classes
- Chapter VI—Families, Sexes and Principal Age Groups

*Sections and Subsidiary Tables.*—Each chapter will be divided into a number of sections, and at the end of each chapter there will be a set of Subsidiary Tables which will form the statistical basis of the narrative review and exposition contained in the Chapter.

*Comments on first sections.*—The first section of each chapter is headed "Preliminary Remarks". This section should contain explanatory comments on all the statistical data reviewed in the chapter, to the extent necessary for proper understanding of their meaning, degree of reliability and comparability with corresponding data of prior censuses. Further, comments of an introductory character relevant to the subject matter of the whole chapter, and not conveniently assigned to any subsequent section should be indicated in this section.

*Comments on other sections (except the last).*—The subject matter of each section is indicated by the section-heading as well as form-heading of related Subsidiary Tables. The figures in each of the relevant Subsidiary Tables should be reviewed, both horizontally and vertically. Significant similarities and dissimilarities will emerge from this review.

All features which are apparently significant should be referred to in the narrative exposition. It is not necessary that detailed research should be undertaken in order to explain all of them. But as much explanation as possible should be furnished of significant trends regarding growth of population. Every effort should be made to analyse such trends into two parts *viz.*, the part accountable by movement of population and the part accountable by natural increase (excess of births over deaths); and the fullest possible information (based on local knowledge of movement of population into tracts presenting unusually rapid growth and out of tracts presenting unusually slow growth) should be obtained from District Officers and made use of in appropriate sections. Whenever any feature of apparent significance is commented upon, the corresponding chapter of the 1931 Census Report should be consulted for prior comments, if any, on the same feature.

*Comments on last Sections.*—The last section of each chapter is headed "Concluding Remarks". It is intended to contain a very concise summary of the main conclusions reached in earlier sections about significant features brought to light by the review of statistical data, and their explanation, if any.

Further, the last sections of all the six chapters should be organically linked to one another successively in the following manner. The last section of the first chapter should contain, on the basis of all the material contained in that chapter, a *preliminary forecast of the probable growth of general population during the decade (1951-60)—in each of the natural divisions of the territory dealt with in the Report.*

The last sections of the second and third chapters should contain a similar preliminary forecast in respect of the rural population and urban population separately.

The last section of the fourth chapter should draw attention to the extent to which *increase of livelihood derived from cultivation has (in the past) outstripped, kept pace with, or fallen short of the increase of population in each of the natural divisions of the area dealt with; and indicate the likely prospect for the decade (1951-60).*

The last section of the fifth chapter should draw attention to the extent to which *increase of employment in industries and services has (in the past) outstripped, kept pace with, or fallen short of the increase of population. Considering this result together with that recorded at the end of the fourth chapter, has the aggregate livelihood of the people kept pace with the growth of population? This should be indicated as also the prospect for the decade (1951-60).*

The last section of the sixth chapter should end with a statement of opinion on whether the facts relating to family size and component,

Sex ratios and Age structure afford *any indication regarding probable trend of population changes beyond the decade (1951-60).*]

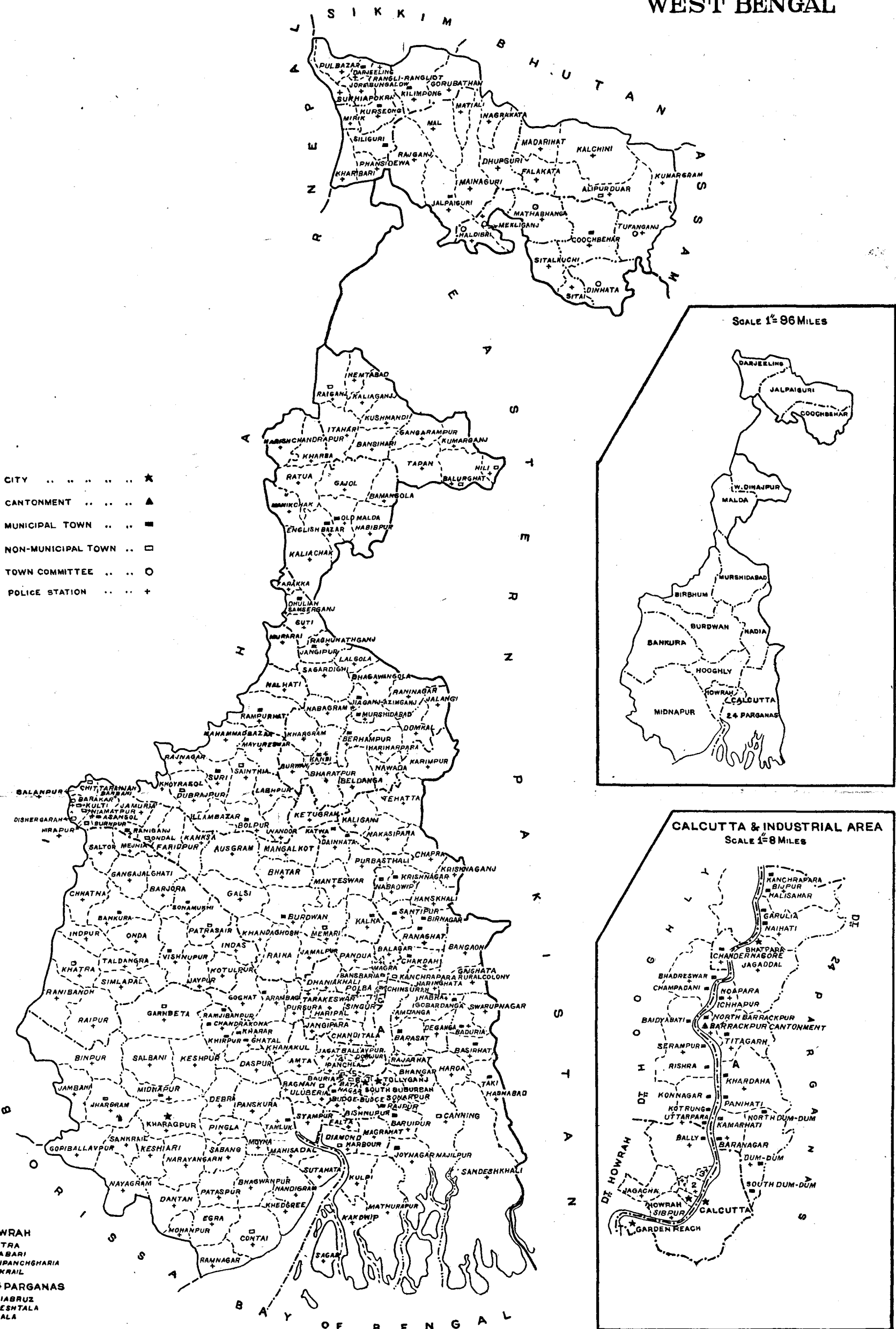
*General Comments.*—It does not matter if available material does not permit of analysis sufficiently definite for reaching conclusions on the lines described above. It does not also matter if the time available to reporting officers is insufficient for carrying out even such analysis as may be permitted by the material. What is essential is that the prescribed Subsidiary Tables should be correctly prepared and the reporting officers should apply their mind to these tables and attempt a review on the lines indicated. It is unnecessary to spend time on the perfection of phrase and style. The quality of the Report will depend on its lucidity, precision and (consistently with these requirements) conciseness. The reports thus prepared will be of value mainly as the starting point of more detailed studies, (to be undertaken subsequently) of the *inter-relationship of population changes and economic changes* in the country as a whole, as well as in the different States and natural divisions of the country. If this purpose is served, Reporting Officers will have discharged their duty.

## THE CENSUS PUBLICATIONS

The Census Publications for West Bengal, Sikkim and Chandernagore will consist of the following volumes. All volumes will be of uniform size, demy quarto  $8\frac{1}{2} \times 11\frac{1}{4}$ ":

- Part IA—General Report by A. Mitra (the present volume).
- Part IB—Vital Statistics, West Bengal, 1941—50 by A. Mitra and P. G. Choudhury, containing a Preface, 60 tables, and several appendices. 75 pages. Published in December 1952.
- Part IC—General Report by A. Mitra, containing the Subsidiary Tables of 1951 and the sixth chapter of the Report and a note on a Fertility Inquiry conducted in 1950. Several Appendices. A report on the natural resources, trades and industries of the State with two bibliographies by Chanchal Kumar Chatterjee and Kamal Majumdar. About 450 pages. Ready in May 1953.
- Part II—Union and State Census Tables of West Bengal, Sikkim and Chandernagore by A. Mitra. 540 pages. Published in February 1953.
- Parts III & IV—Report with Census Tables on Calcutta City and Calcutta Industrial area by A. Mitra. About 250 pages. Ready in May 1953.
- Part V—Administrative Report of the Census Operations of West Bengal, Sikkim, Chandernagore and Calcutta City: Enumeration: by A. Mitra. 96 pages. Published in November 1952.
- The Castes and Tribes of West Bengal—edited by A. Mitra, containing 1951 tables of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in West Bengal. A monograph on the Origin of Caste by Sailendranath Sengupta, a monograph on several artisan castes and tribes by Sudhangsu Kumar Roy; articles by Professor Kshitishprasad Chattopadhyay, and Sri Sailendranath Sengupta on the racial composition of Bengalees, with anthropometric tables; an article on Dharmapuja by Sri Asutosh Bhattacharyya. Selections from old authorities like Sherring, Dalton, Risley, Gait and O'Malley. An introduction. 18 plates. About 400 pages. Published in May 1953.
- An Account of Land Management in West Bengal, 1872-1952 by A. Mitra, containing extracts, accounts and statistics over 80-year period and agricultural statistics compiled at the Census of 1951, with an introduction. About 250 pages. Ready in June 1953.
- Fairs and Festivals in West Bengal by A. Mitra, containing an account of fairs and festivals classified by villages, unions, thanas and districts. With a foreward and extracts from the laws on the regulation of fairs and festivals. About 45 pages. Published in April 1953.
- District Handbooks for each West Bengal District by A. Mitra. Each volume contains an Introductory essay, several important appendices, and about 82 tables, together with a list of ancient monuments in each district. Contains also a village directory where the J. L. No. of every village, its name, area, total population, number of houses, number of literates, and the population of the village classified into eight livelihood classes are tabulated. The Handbooks for Hooghly and Burdwan were published in May 1952 and March 1953 respectively. The Handbooks for Malda, Howrah, West Dinajpur and Murshidabad are in the Press. The whole series is expected to be completed by 1954. Each volume will contain about 300 pages.
- A catalogue of the better known ancient monuments of West Bengal by A. Mitra. Will contain brief descriptions of extant ancient monuments in each district of the State, dating up to 1800, with exact location and present state. With many plates. About 600 pages.

# CITIES, TOWNS, CANTONMENT & POLICE STATIONS WEST BENGAL



- CITY .. . . . ★
- CANTONMENT .. . . . ▲
- MUNICIPAL TOWN .. . . . ■
- NON-MUNICIPAL TOWN .. . . . □
- TOWN COMMITTEE .. . . . ○
- POLICE STATION .. . . . +

SCALE 1"=96 MILES

CALCUTTA & INDUSTRIAL AREA  
SCALE 1"=8 MILES

- DI HOWRAH
- 1 BANTRA
- 2 GOLABARI
- 3 MALIPANCHGHARIA
- 4 SANKRAIL
- DI 24 PARGANAS
- 5 METIABRUZ
- 6 MANESHTALA
- 7 BENALA

## CONTENTS

(The figures within brackets indicate the number of the paragraphs of the Chapter in which the subject has been treated)

PREFACE . . . . . pp. 1-12

### INTRODUCTION

General Description (2-3); Area (4-5); The River Systems (6-21); Geographical Divisions (22); Changes in the course of Big Rivers (23-24); Geology (25-40); Soils (41-57); Climate, Temperature and Rainfall (58); Sikkim (59-60); Himalayan West Bengal Division (61-65); West Bengal Plain Division (66-70); Forests (71-75); Vegetation (76); Timber (77-78); Forest Products (79); Wild life (80-84); Fishes (85-88); Castes and Tribes (89-105); Irrigation (106-110); Crops (111); Pasture (112); Distribution of Industry (113-116); World War II (117-123); Midnapur Cyclone, 1942 (124-128); The Famine of 1943 (129-146); The Damodar Flood of 1943 (147); The Grow More Food Campaign (148); Rationing and Controls (149-150); The Great Calcutta Killing, August 1946 (151-156); The Partition of Bengal, August 1947 (157-158); Minor Natural Events (159-160); Material Condition of the People, 1931-50 (161-282); Condition of Livelihood Class I (166-178); Condition of Livelihood Class II (179-186); Condition of Livelihood Class III (187-206); Condition of Livelihood Class IV (207-230); Condition of Livelihood Class V (231-252); Condition of Livelihood Class VI (253-254); Condition of Livelihood Class VII (255-258); Condition of Livelihood Class VIII (259-282) . . . . . pp. 13-130

### CHAPTER I

#### GENERAL POPULATION

- SECTION 1—Preliminary Remarks—General comparison with other areas (1-16) . . . pp. 131-136
- SECTION 2—General distribution and density—General distribution—Size of districts in West Bengal and other states (17-18); Size of districts in West Bengal (19-25); Definition of the Census House (26-35); Persons per census house and houses per square mile (36-46); Census houses per square mile (47-48); Definition of the village (49-54); Definition of town and city (55-64); Density—Changes in density—Area classified according to density—Variations in density (65-74); Density and character of Police stations—Police stations with densities over 1,050 per sq. mile—Industrial Police Stations—Twentysix rural thanas with densities over 1,050 per sq. mile (75-87); Non-Industrial thanas containing high density (88); The plantation thanas (89); The Industrial Police stations—The Asansol-Raniganj Zone (90-91); Hooghly-Howrah and Barrackpur-Calcutta-Budge Budge Zone (92-99); Police stations containing small towns (100-111); Density of purely agricultural thanas (112-114) . . . . . pp. 137-197
- SECTION 3—Growth and movement of population—Early accounts of population (115-144); Burdwan (145-151); Birbhum (152-159); Bankura (160-167); Midnapur (168-177); Hooghly (178-183); Howrah (184-190); 24-Parganas (191-205); Calcutta (206-240); Nadia (241-252); Murshidabad (253-260); Malda (261-264); West Dinajpur (265-269); Jalpaiguri (270-276); Darjeeling (277-285); Cooch Behar (286-289); Sikkim (290-293); Chandernagore (294) . . . . . pp. 198-293
- SECTION 4—Migration (295-305); Migration within the State between Districts and Natural Divisions (306-318); Migration between the State and other parts of India (319-357); Migration between the State and other parts of the world outside India (includes Displaced Population, etc.) (358-367) . . . . . pp. 294-328
- SECTION 5—Births, Deaths and Survival Rates (368-380); Famine Mortality, 1943-44 (381-385) . . . . . pp. 329-332
- SECTION 6—Livelihood Pattern (386-395); Census questions 9, 10, 11 and related instructions (396); The Indian Census Economic Classification (I. C. E. C.) Scheme (397);—The dualistic economy of the State—Rural and Urban economies—Distribution of economic status (398-409); Census Economic questions (410-414); The Agricultural Classes (415-424); Rural Density and Agricultural Population (425-429); Livelihood patterns of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (430-436); Distribution of general population under eight

## CONTENTS

- main livelihood classes (437-439); Age groups and employment (440); Earners and employment (441-442); Unemployment (443-448) . . . . . pp. 333—362
- SECTION 7—Concluding Remarks—Natural population of West Bengal, 1891-1951 (449-461); Growth of population in West Bengal compared to growth in other countries (462-467); Growth since 1920 (468-470); Probable reasons of growth since 1920 (471-481); Concluding Remarks (482-495) . . . . . pp. 363—386

### CHAPTER II

#### RURAL POPULATION

- SECTION 1—Preliminary Remarks (1-23) . . . . . pp. 387—399
- SECTION 2—General distribution and distribution among villages classified by size of rural population (24-30) . . . . . pp. 400—402
- SECTION 3—Concluding Remarks (31) . . . . . p. 403

### CHAPTER III

#### URBAN POPULATION

- SECTION 1—Preliminary Remarks (1); The illusion of a high urban ratio (2); Population of Calcutta Industrial Area (3-4); Classification of towns—Types of towns (5-6); Towns classified by population (7); Growth of towns—Decadence of towns—Reasons for decay—The historical reason—Old centres of trade and industry (8-19); Natives of the State in towns—Employment in towns of Natives of the State—The female ratio in towns (20-27); The working class—Character of the industrial labour—Age and population classification of towns—Progress of towns since 1872 (28-35); Distribution of urban population among towns of different categories (36-37) . . . . . pp. 405—431
- SECTION 2—Concluding Remarks (38-42) . . . . . pp. 432—434

### CHAPTER IV

#### AGRICULTURAL CLASSES

- SECTION 1—Preliminary Remarks (1-35) . . . . . pp. 435—454
- SECTION 2—Agricultural Population Ratios—Self-supporting persons and dependants—Secondary means of livelihood of Agricultural Classes—Self-supporting sharecroppers and labourers—Two inquiries—Landless agricultural labourers—Sharecroppers—Self-supporting population—Dependency—Regional characteristics—Dependency Characteristics in Livelihoods—Extent of mobility in occupations—Comparison between 1951 and 1921—Comparison with 1911—Increasing dependence on land—Comparison between 1951 and 1921 (36-61) . . . . . pp. 455—468
- SECTION 3—Relative proportions of different Agricultural Classes; Correlated to distribution of land in Agricultural holdings of different sizes (62-65); The incidence of revenue and rent under Permanent Settlement (66-70); The state of subinfeudation of rent-receiving interests and tenancies (71-72); Present nature of cultivation (73); Fragmentation of land (74-76); Size of holding—Raiyati and Under-raiyati interests—Barga cultivation—Agricultural labourers—Agricultural labour inquiry (77-94) . . . . . pp. 469—483
- SECTION 4—Progress of cultivation correlated to growth of general population (95-103) . . . . . pp. 484—489
- SECTION 5—Concluding Remarks—Irrigation and soil erosion—Production of more food—Jute—Average cultivated area of land that can go round for the present agricultural population—The Permanent Settlement—Consolidation of holdings—Changing the land-man ratio—Industries in rural areas of West Bengal, 1951 (104-123) . . . . . pp. 490—501

### CHAPTER V

#### NON-AGRICULTURAL CLASSES.

- SECTION 1—Preliminary Remarks (1-2) . . . . . pp. 502—503
- SECTION 2—The Economic Classification (3-8) . . . . . pp. 504—506
- SECTION 3—The Statistics (9-12); Livelihood Classes, Divisions or Subdivisions which show stagnation or deterioration in providing employment to the State's population (13-48)
- Livelihood Class V—Production other than cultivation (13-30)



## CONTENTS

<b>DIVISION 0—Primary Industries not elsewhere specified (15)</b>	
0.1 Stock Raising (16)	
0.2 Rearing of small animals and insects (17)	
0.3 Plantation Industries (18)	
0.6 Fishing (19)	
<b>DIVISION 1—Mining and Quarrying (20)</b>	
<b>DIVISION 2—Processing and Manufacture—Foodstuffs, Textiles, Leather and Products thereof (21)</b>	
2.0 Food Industries otherwise unclassified (21)	
2.1 Processing of grains and pulses (21-22)	
2.2 Vegetable oil and dairy products (23)	
2.6 Cotton textiles (24)	
2.8 Textile Industries otherwise unclassified (25)	
2.9 Leather, leather products and footwear (26)	
<b>DIVISION 4—Processing and Manufacture—Not elsewhere specified (27-28)</b>	
4.4 Non-metallic mineral products (29)	
4.6 Wood and wood products other than furniture and fixtures (30)	
<b>LIVELIHOOD CLASS VI—Commerce (31-35)</b>	
<b>DIVISION 6—Commerce (31)</b>	
6.1 Retail trade in foodstuffs (including beverages and narcotics) (32)	
6.2 Retail trade in fuel (including petrol) (33)	
6.3 Retail trade in textiles and leather goods (34)	
6.4 Wholesale trade in foodstuffs (35)	
<b>LIVELIHOOD CLASS VII—Transport (36)</b>	
<b>LIVELIHOOD CLASS VIII—Other services and miscellaneous sources (37-48)</b>	
<b>DIVISION 9—Services not elsewhere specified (42)</b>	
9.0 Services otherwise unclassified (43)	
9.1 Domestic services (44)	
9.2 Barbers and beauty shops (45)	
9.3 Laundries and Laundry services (46)	
9.6 Legal and business services (47)	
9.8 Religious, Charitable and Welfare Services (48)	
<b>LIVELIHOOD CLASSES, Divisions and Subdivisions which show continuous improvement in providing employment to the State's population (49-62)</b>	
<b>LIVELIHOOD CLASS V—Production other than cultivation (50-53)</b>	
<b>DIVISION 3—Processing and Manufacture—Metals, Chemicals and Products thereof (50)</b>	
<b>DIVISION 4—Processing and Manufacture—Not elsewhere specified (51)</b>	
4.8 Paper and paper products (52)	
4.9 Printing and Allied Industries (53)	
<b>LIVELIHOOD CLASS VI—Commerce (54-55)</b>	
<b>DIVISION 6—Commerce (54)</b>	
6.0 Retail trade otherwise unclassified (55)	
<b>LIVELIHOOD CLASS VII—Transport (56-57)</b>	
<b>DIVISION 7—Transport, Storage and Communications (56)</b>	
7.3 Transport by Air (56-57)	
7.4 Railway transport (56-57)	
<b>LIVELIHOOD CLASS VIII—Other services and miscellaneous sources (58-62)</b>	
<b>DIVISION 5—Construction and Utilities (59)</b>	
5.5 Works and Services—Electric Power and Gas supply (59)	
<b>DIVISION 8—Health, Education and Public Administration (60)</b>	
<b>DIVISION 9—Services not elsewhere specified (61)</b>	
9.4 Hotels, restaurants and eating houses (61-62)	
9.5 Recreation services (61-62)	pp. 507—530
<b>SECTION 4—Concluding Remarks—Decreasing employment of women—Increasing employment of women—Proportion of employment—summing up (63-68)</b>	pp. 531—545
<b>BIBLIOGRAPHY</b>	pp. 547—565
<b>INDEX</b>	pp. 567—587

## STATEMENTS

(Prepared by SRI BIMAL KUMAR MITRA AND SRI SACHINDRANATH MUKHERJEE)

### INTRODUCTION

		PAGE
STATEMENT 0.1	Areas of districts 1901-51 . . . . .	15
0.2	Vernacular names of principal soils in West Bengal . . . . .	34
0.3	Meteorological table between 1894 and 1920 Station Gangtok . . . . .	35
0.4	Meteorological table between 1910 and 1920 Station Gnatong . . . . .	36
0.5	Average rainfall in Lachung, Sikkim . . . . .	37
0.6	Average rainfall in Himalayan West Bengal . . . . .	38
0.7	Climatological table of Jalpaiguri . . . . .	39
0.8	Climatological table of Darjeeling . . . . .	42
0.9	Average rainfall in West Bengal Plains . . . . .	46
0.10	Climatological table for Calcutta . . . . .	47
0.11	Climatological table for Asansol . . . . .	50
0.12	Climatological table for Malda . . . . .	54
0.13	Statement showing reserved, protected, unclassed state and khas forest, etc. . . . .	60
0.14	Religions in West Bengal, 1951 . . . . .	68
0.15	Statement of persons immigrating from East Bengal and Sylhet to West Bengal, etc., between 1946 and 1951 . . . . .	87
0.16	Income and expenditure of typical agricultural families, 1933 . . . . .	90
0.17	Sales and mortgages under the Bengal Tenancy Act, 1940-49 . . . . .	91
0.18	Sources of loan of farmers and owner cultivators, 1946-47 . . . . .	92
0.19	Objects of loan of farmers and owner cultivators, 1946-47 . . . . .	92
0.20	Survey of dispossession of aboriginals in Malda district, 1948 . . . . .	93
0.21	Sources of loan of sharecroppers, 1946-47 . . . . .	94
0.22	Objects of loan of sharecroppers, 1946-47 . . . . .	95
0.23	Sources of loan of agricultural labourers, 1946-47 . . . . .	95
0.24	Objects of loan of agricultural labourers, 1946-47 . . . . .	95
0.25	Average rate of daily agricultural wages in annas, 1908, 1911, 1916 and 1925 . . . . .	96
0.26	Index of wages and price of foodgrains, 1939-45 . . . . .	96
0.27 (a)	Agricultural labour wages, 1947-50 . . . . .	97
0.27 (b)	Percentage of days employed among agricultural labourers, 1946-47 . . . . .	97
0.27(c)	Percentage of employed days by type of work for agricultural labour, 1946-47 . . . . .	98
0.28	Percentage of unemployed days by type of work for agricultural labour, 1946-47 . . . . .	98
0.29	Seasonal variation in employment of agricultural labour, 1946-47 . . . . .	98
0.30	Average daily agricultural wage rate, 1946-47 . . . . .	99
0.31	Average daily wage rate in rupees, 1946-47 . . . . .	99
0.32	Employment of 'kishan' labour by employers, 1946-47 . . . . .	100
0.33	Terms of employment of 'kishan' labour, 1946-47 . . . . .	100
0.34	Average annual income by sources for families of different income levels, 1946-47 . . . . .	100
0.35	Per capita annual expenditure on items by income levels, 1946-47 . . . . .	101
0.36	Income and expenditure of agricultural labourer families, 1946-47 . . . . .	101
0.37	Percentage expenditures by items of agricultural and industrial labour, 1946-47 . . . . .	102
0.38	Sources of loan of proprietors, 1946-47 . . . . .	102
0.39	Objects of loan of proprietors, 1946-47 . . . . .	102

## STATEMENTS

STATEMENT		PAGE
0.40	Percentage of families in debt and average debt per family by district, 1946-47 . . . . .	103
0.41	Distribution of families according to the size of debt . . . . .	104
0.42	Indebtedness by size of land owned, 1946-47 . . . . .	104
0.43	Percentage of total debt borne by income levels . . . . .	105
0.44	Percentage of total income shared and total debt borne by occupational groups . . . . .	105
0.45	Quantities of common rice per rupee in standard seers of 80 tolas in the first fortnight of January . . . . .	106
0.46	Price of jute per maund and pucca bales 1930-50 . . . . .	107
0.47	Imports of raw jute into Calcutta and mill stations, 1934-48 . . . . .	108
0.48	Exports of raw jute (all India), 1934-49 . . . . .	108
0.49	Exports of gunnies (all India), 1934-49 . . . . .	108
0.50	Stock and production of gunnies (in thousand tons), 1934-50 . . . . .	108
0.51	Average number of persons employed daily in and about the mines, 1931-49 . . . . .	110
0.52	Average daily earnings in coal mines, 1931-49 . . . . .	110
0.53	Daily and monthly wages of industrial blacksmiths, 1938-50 . . . . .	111
0.54	Daily and monthly wages of fitters, 1938-50 . . . . .	111
0.55	Daily and monthly wages of unskilled labour, 1938-50 . . . . .	112
0.56	Number of trade unions and their membership, 1936-49 . . . . .	113
0.57	Wages of manual workers in tea plantations (in rupees and annas), September 1951 . . . . .	114
0.58	Monthly salaries of clerical employees in tea plantations (in rupees), September 1951 . . . . .	114
0.59	Classification of trade unions, 1949 . . . . .	114
0.60	Sources of income of trade unions, 1949-50 . . . . .	114
0.61	Items of expenditure of trade unions, 1949-50 . . . . .	115
0.62	Number of disputes classified by industry 1941-50 . . . . .	115
0.63	Strikes classified by number of man-days and men involved, 1941-50 . . . . .	116
0.64	Causes and results of strikes, 1941-50 . . . . .	116
0.65	Number of strikes in jute spinning and weaving mills in 1941-50, with men involved and loss of working days, 1941-50 . . . . .	117
0.66	Number of strikes in coal mines and iron and steel and foundry industries, 1941-50, with men involved and loss of working days, 1941-50 . . . . .	117
0.67	Compensations to workmen, 1946, 1948, and 1949 . . . . .	118
0.68	Percentage distribution of families by monthly income, 1946 . . . . .	121
0.69	Percentage distribution of families by monthly expenditure, 1946 . . . . .	122
0.70	Surplus and deficit budgets by income groups, 1946 . . . . .	123
0.71	Expenditure by items of expenditure and income groups, 1946 . . . . .	123
0.72	Expenditure on items of food by income groups, 1946 . . . . .	124
0.73	Expenditure on items of food, 1946 . . . . .	124
0.74	Distribution of families by number of persons per room, 1946 . . . . .	124
0.75	Distribution of families by number of adult male equivalent per room, 1946 . . . . .	124
0.76	Middle class cost of living index number for Calcutta, August 1939—May 1952 . . . . .	125
0.77	Progress of the cooperative movement, 1946-49 . . . . .	128
0.78	Criminal justice—Number of criminal cases tried in West Bengal, 1941-50 . . . . .	129
0.79	Civil cases, 1941-50 . . . . .	130

# STATEMENTS

## CHAPTER I

STATEMENT		PAGE
I.1	Density, area and population of the principal states of India, 1951 . . . . .	131
I.2	Mean decennial growth rate 1941-51, and females per 1,000 males in the principal states of India, 1951 . . . . .	132
I.3	Average number of persons per house-hold, and percentage of institutional inmates and houseless population to total population, 1951 . . . . .	133
I.4	Number per 1,000 of total population, and the number of females per 1,000 males in cities and towns, 1951 . . . . .	133
I.5	Percentage of population dependent on non-agricultural livelihoods to total population, of urban population to total population, and percentage distribution of non-agricultural livelihoods among urban population, 1951 . . . . .	134
I.6	Percentage of literates to total population, 1951 . . . . .	135
I.7	Total population, Displaced population, and percentage of Displaced population to the Non-displaced population of the principal states, 1951 . . . . .	136
I.8	Most populous, least populous districts and average population of districts in each of the main states of India, 1951 . . . . .	137
I.9	The largest, smallest districts and average size of districts in each of the main states of India, 1951 . . . . .	137
I.10	Population of districts in West Bengal, 1901-51 . . . . .	138
I.11	Size of districts and percentage of growth of population in each decade between 1901 and 1951 . . . . .	138
I.12	Distribution of families by number of persons per room . . . . .	146
I.13	Distribution of families by number of adult male equivalents per room . . . . .	146
I.14	Average number of persons per inhabited census house, 1881-1951 . . . . .	149
I.15	Number of married women of age 15 and over per 100 census houses, 1891-1951 . . . . .	151
I.16	Number of married females of all ages per census house in a Sample Survey in December, 1950 . . . . .	151
I.17 (a)	Total, household, institutional and houseless population classified by rural and urban males and females, 1951 . . . . .	152
I.17 (b)	Number of occupied houses, households and institutional houses, 1951 . . . . .	153
I.18	Family households and Institutional census houses expressed as percentages of total occupied houses, 1951 . . . . .	154
I.19	Household population as percentage to total population, 1951 . . . . .	154
I.20	Institutional and houseless population as percentage of household population, 1951 . . . . .	155
I.21	Average number of inhabited census houses per square mile, 1881-1951 . . . . .	156
I.22	Number of inhabited villages, 1901-51 . . . . .	158
I.23	Villages and towns in the State, 1951 . . . . .	159
I.24	Changes in the list of towns, 1901-51 . . . . .	160
I.25	Number of towns of each class, 1901-51 . . . . .	161
I.26	Progress in the number of towns, 1901-51 . . . . .	162
I.27	Changes in Density (persons per square mile) 1872-1951 . . . . .	163
I.28	Density (persons per square mile) of districts, 1951 . . . . .	164
I.29	Decrease in density per square mile between 1911 and 1921 in certain districts of West Bengal . . . . .	165
I.30	Areas of police stations classified according to density (persons per square mile) in the State, 1872-1951 . . . . .	166

## STATEMENTS

STATEMENT		PAGE
I.31	Populations of police stations classified according to density (persons per square mile) showing percentage of each density class to total area of State, 1872-1951	167
I.32	Variations in density (persons per square mile) of administrative divisions, 1872-1951	169
I.33	Density and character of police stations in West Bengal, 1951	176
I.34	Police stations with densities over 1,050 per square mile, arranged by character, population, area and actual density, 1951	177
I.35	Area and population, actual and percentage, by density of police stations having densities over 750 persons per square mile, 1951	180
I.36	Police stations containing non-industrial towns with densities below 1,050 per square mile, 1951	191
I.37	Variations in population of West Bengal, Chandernagore and Sikkim expressed as percentages of population of a previous period, 1872-1951	201
I.38	Percentages of age groups to population, 1901-51	275
I.39	Percentage variation of Population, 1901-51,—Total, Rural and Urban	209
I.40	Percentage variations in population of Burdwan by police station, 1872-1951	279
I.41	Percentage of age groups and of married women (15-40) to total population and of children (0-5) to married women (15-40) in Burdwan, 1901-51	214
I.42	Immigration and emigration in Burdwan from and outside the State, 1891-1951	214
I.43	Migration between Burdwan and other districts of Bengal in 1891-1921 and West Bengal in 1951	215
I.44	Percentage variations in population of Birbhum by police station, 1872-1951	279
I.45	Percentage of age groups and of married women (15-40) to total population and of children (0-5) to married women (15-40) in Birbhum, 1901-51	217
I.46	Immigration and Emigration in Birbhum from and outside the State, 1891-1951	218
I.47	Migration between Birbhum and other districts of Bengal in 1891-1921 and West Bengal in 1951	218
I.48	Percentage variations in population of Bankura by police station, 1872-1951	279
I.49	Percentage of age groups and of married women (15-40) to total population and of children (0-5) to married women (15-40) in Bankura, 1901-51	221
I.50	Immigration and Emigration in Bankura from and outside the State, 1891-1951	222
I.51	Migration between Bankura and other districts of Bengal in 1891-1921 and West Bengal in 1951	222
I.52	Percentage variations in population of Midnapur by police station, 1872-1951	280
I.53	Percentage of age groups and of married women (15-40) to total population and of children (0-5) to married women (15-40) in Midnapur, 1901-51	225
I.54	Immigration and Emigration in Midnapur from and outside the State, 1891-1951	226
I.55	Migration between Midnapur and other districts of Bengal in 1891-1921 and West Bengal in 1951	226

STATEMENTS

STATEMENT		PAGE
I.56	Percentage variations in population of Hooghly by police station, 1872-1951 . . . . .	280
I.57	Percentage of age groups and of married women (15-40) to total population and of children (0-5) to married women (15-40) in Hooghly, 1901-51 . . . . .	229
I.58	Immigration and Emigration in Hooghly from and outside the State, 1891-1951 . . . . .	229
I.59	Migration between Hooghly and other districts of Bengal in 1891-1921 and West Bengal in 1951 . . . . .	230
I.60	Percentage variations in population of Howrah by police station, 1872-1951 . . . . .	281
I.61	Percentage of age groups and of married women (15-40) to total population and of children (0-5) to married women (15-40) in Howrah, 1901-51 . . . . .	231
I.62	Immigration and Emigration in Howrah from and outside the State, 1891-1951 . . . . .	232
I.63	Migration between Howrah and other districts of Bengal in 1891-1921 and West Bengal in 1951 . . . . .	232
I.64	Percentage variations in population of 24-Parganas by police station, 1872-1951 . . . . .	281
I.65	Percentage of age groups and of married women (15-40) to total population and of children (0-5) to married women (15-40) in 24-Parganas, 1901-51 . . . . .	235
I.66	Immigration and Emigration in 24-Parganas from and outside the State, 1891-1951 . . . . .	236
I.67	Migration between 24-Parganas and other districts of Bengal in 1891-1921 and West Bengal in 1951 . . . . .	236
I.68	Houselist and Final Populations in the Wards of Calcutta, 1951 . . . . .	241
I.69	Percentage of age groups and of married women (15-40) to total population and children (0-5) to married women (15-40) in Calcutta, 1901-51 . . . . .	246
I.70	Immigration and Emigration in Calcutta from and outside the State, 1891-1951 . . . . .	247
I.71	Migration between Calcutta and other districts of Bengal in 1891-1921 and West Bengal in 1951 . . . . .	247
I.72	Percentage variations in Population of Nadia by police station, 1872-1951 . . . . .	282
I.73	Percentage of age groups and of married women (15-40) to total population and of children (0-5) to married women (15-40) in Nadia, 1901-51 . . . . .	252
I.74	Immigration and Emigration in Nadia from and outside the State, 1891-1951 . . . . .	253
I.75	Migration between Nadia and other districts of Bengal in 1891-1921 and West Bengal in 1951 . . . . .	253
I.76	Percentage variations in population of Murshidabad by police station, 1872-1951 . . . . .	282
I.77	Percentage of age groups and of married women (15-40) to total population and of children (0-5) to married women (15-40) in Murshidabad, 1901-51 . . . . .	256
I.78	Immigration and Emigration in Murshidabad from and outside the State, 1891-1951 . . . . .	256
I.79	Migration between Murshidabad and other districts of Bengal, in 1891-1921 and West Bengal in 1951 . . . . .	257
I.80	Percentage variations in population of Malda by police station, 1872-1951 . . . . .	282
I.81	Percentage of age groups and of married women (15-40) to total population and of children (0-5) to married women (15-40) in Malda, 1901-51 . . . . .	258
I.82	Immigration and Emigration in Malda from and outside the State, 1891-1951 . . . . .	259
I.83	Migration between Malda and other districts of Bengal in 1891-1921 and West Bengal in 1951 . . . . .	259

## STATEMENTS

	PAGE
STATEMENT I.84 Percentage variations in population of West Dinajpur by police station, 1872-1951	283
I.85 Percentage of age groups and of married women (15-40) to total population and of children (0-5) to married women (15-40) in West Dinajpur, 1901-51	260
I.86 Immigration and Emigration in West Dinajpur from and outside the State, 1891-1951	261
I.87 Migration between West Dinajpur and other districts of Bengal in 1891-1921 and West Bengal in 1951	261
I.88 Percentage variations in population of Jalpaiguri by police station, 1872-1951	283
I.89 Statistics of tea in Jalpaiguri, 1874-1951	263
I.90 Percentage of age groups and of married women (15-40) to total population and of children (0-5) to married women (15-40) in Jalpaiguri, 1901-51	264
I.91 Immigration and Emigration in Jalpaiguri from and outside the State, 1891-1951	264
I.92 Migration between Jalpaiguri and other districts of Bengal in 1891-1921 and West Bengal in 1951	265
I.93 Statistics of tea in Darjeeling, 1861-1951	266
I.94 Percentage variations in population of Darjeeling by police station, 1872-1951	283
I.95 Percentage of age groups and of married women (15-40) to total population and of children (0-5) to married women (15-40) in Darjeeling, 1901-51	268
I.96 Immigration and Emigration in Darjeeling from and outside the State, 1891-1951	268
I.97 Migration between Darjeeling and other districts of Bengal in 1891-1921 and West Bengal in 1951	269
I.98 Percentage variations in population of Cooch Behar by police station, 1872-1951	283
I.99 Percentage of age groups and of married women (15-40) to total population and of children (0-5) to married women (15-40) in Cooch Behar, 1901-51	270
I.100 Immigration and Emigration in Cooch Behar from and outside the State, 1891-1951	271
I.101 Migration between Cooch Behar and other districts of Bengal in 1891-1921 and West Bengal in 1951	271
I.102 Percentage variations in population of Sikkim, 1891-1951	283
I.103 Percentage of age groups and of married women (15-40) to total population and of children (0-5) to married women (15-40) in Sikkim, 1901-51	273
I.104 Immigration and Emigration in Sikkim from and outside the State, 1901-51	273
I.105 Percentage variations in population of Chandernagore, 1901-51	283
I.106 Immigration and Emigration in Chandernagore from and outside the territory, 1901-51	274
I.107 Population of Administrative divisions of West Bengal with variation, 1872-1951	284
I.108 Interdistrict migration in West Bengal, 1921 and 1951	297
I.109 Migration in 1951 between Burdwan Division and districts in Presidency Division (a) South of the Ganges (b) North of the Ganges	299
I.110 Details of immigration from Burdwan Division to Presidency Division, south of the Ganges, 1951	301
I.111 Balance of migration from Midnapur to districts on the Hooghly side, 1891 to 1921 and 1951	301
I.112 Balance of migration from other districts of West Bengal to Burdwan, Hooghly, Howrah, 24-Parganas and Calcutta, 1951	302
I.113 Polygonal migration in Burdwan, Hooghly, Howrah, 24-Parganas and Calcutta, 1951	302

## STATEMENTS

STATEMENT		PAGE
I.114	Inward and outward bookings in selected stations around Calcutta, 1949-50	303
I.115	Balance of migration from Murshidabad to Malda, 1891-1921 and 1951	304
I.116	Migration between West Bengal and other states of India and immigration from Pakistan, 1951	305
I.117	Percentage of migration between West Bengal and other states of India and immigration of Displaced persons, 1951	306
I.118	Percentage of all immigrants from outside West Bengal to its total population in each decade, 1881-1951	307
I.119	Females per 1,000 males in rural and urban areas of West Bengal, 1951	308
I.120	Migrants between West Bengal and other states and population in other states speaking Bengali as their mother tongue, 1951	309
I.121	Immigration in rural areas of West Bengal from other states of India classified by sex (thousands), 1951	310
I.122	Immigration in urban areas of West Bengal from other states of India classified by sex (thousands), 1951	311
I.123	Immigration from other states of India into West Bengal, classified by sex expressed as percentages of total, rural and urban population of the State, 1951	311
I.124	Migration between zones of West Bengal and other states of India, 1951	312
I.125	Distribution of immigrants from other states of India in the eight main livelihood classes in four zones of West Bengal, 1951	313
I.126	Distribution of immigrants from other states of India in the eight main livelihood classes expressed as percentages of total population under each class in four zones of West Bengal, 1951	314
I.127	Livelihood pattern of general population and immigrants from other states of India, 1951 (thousands)	314
I.128	Migration between West Bengal and other states of India, 1951 and 1921 (thousands)	315
I.129	Immigration into West Bengal from outside India, 1951 and 1921	321
I.130	Immigrants from beyond India and their nationalities, 1951	322
I.131	Emigrants from West Bengal to other states of India classified by livelihood and sex, 1951	323
I.132	Agricultural and Non-agricultural emigrants from West Bengal classified for five states of India, 1951	324
I.133	Livelihood pattern of general population, Immigrants from other states of India and Displaced population from Pakistan, 1951	324
I.134	Livelihood pattern of Immigrants from other states of India per 10,000 immigrant population (T. R. U.) belonging to all livelihood classes, 1951	327
I.135	Livelihood pattern of Displaced population in 1951	328
I.136	Distribution of 1,000 persons as self-supporting persons, non-earning dependants and earning dependants in the agricultural and non-agricultural classes in the principal states of India, 1951	344
I.137	Percentage of self-supporting persons, non-earning dependants and earning dependants in each of the eight main livelihood classes in the total, rural and urban population of West Bengal, 1951	344
I.138	Number per 10,000 self-supporting persons of all non-agricultural classes in several states of India, 1951	346
I.139	Rural density per square mile and proportion of population supported by agriculture per 1,000 of general population, 1901-21 and 1951	351



## STATEMENTS

STATEMENT		PAGE
I.140	Population and percentages of scheduled castes and tribes in agricultural classes to population in agricultural classes, 1951 (thousand)	353
I.141	Distribution of the general population and schedule castes and scheduled tribes in all agricultural classes in West Bengal, 1951	354
I.142	Livelihood pattern of 10,000 persons in the general, scheduled caste and scheduled tribe populations among the eight main livelihood classes in West Bengal, 1951	355
I.143	Livelihood pattern of 10,000 persons among scheduled castes in the districts of West Bengal, 1951	355
I.144	Livelihood pattern of 10,000 persons among scheduled tribes in the districts of West Bengal, 1951	356
I.145	Comparative statement showing the interests in land of certain castes in police stations Suri, Khayrasol and Durbajpur of district Birbhum, 1932	356
I.146	Population in each livelihood class in each district expressed as a percentage of the total population of West Bengal, 1951	357
I.147	Distribution of population in livelihood classes in several states of India, 1951 (Expressed as percentage of total population)	357
I.148	Percentage of age groups to total population of West Bengal, 1901-51	358
I.149	Proportion of earners in agricultural and non-agricultural livelihoods to total population and proportion of general, male and female population of employable age (15-55) to total, male and female population, 1901-51 (except 1941)	359
I.150	Registrations in the Employment Exchanges of West Bengal during 1945-52 representing position in December of each year	360
I.151	Placements by the Employment Exchanges of West Bengal during 1945-52 representing position in December of each year	361
I.152	Matriculates and Graduates on the live Register of Employment Exchanges as on 26 May 1952 in West Bengal	362
I.153	Preliminary estimate of population in West Bengal in December 1940 and officially published final estimates on the conclusion of the Census of 1941	364
I.154	Estimate of net or 'natural' population of West Bengal, 1891-1951	365
I.155	Estimate of net or 'natural' population of West Bengal, 1891-1951 (the population of 1941 having been corrected)	366
I.156	Estimated net or 'natural' population of West Bengal, 1931-51	366
I.157	Population of Great Britain at various dates, 1801-1941	368
I.158	Population of the World by continents, 1750 and 1900	368
I.159	Population in millions of Great Britain, India and West Bengal at various dates, 1801-1941	370
I.160	Infantile mortality rates of infants under 12 months old per 1,000 live births at various dates (undivided Bengal and West Bengal)	372

## CHAPTER II

II.1	Occupied villages in districts of West Bengal unaffected by the 1947 Partition, 1901-51	389
II.2	Proportion of 10,000 persons residing in villages classified according to population, 1891	390
II.3	Number of square miles of territory served by each linear mile of road, 1949	391
II.4	Abstract of roads under maintenance of Works and Buildings Department (corrected up to 1949)	391
II.5	Road mileage in India and West Bengal compared with advanced countries in the West	392

## STATEMENTS

STATEMENT		PAGE
II.6	Mileage of surfaced and unsurfaced roads in several states of India, 1943 (excluding municipal roads)	392
II.7	Length of road communications maintained by public authorities in West Bengal as on 31st December 1948	393
II.8	Road expenditure from provisional revenues in different provinces in India in 1945-46 (million rupees)	394
II.9	Number per 1,000 of rural population living in villages with population of four categories, 1901-51	400
II.10	Percentages of mauzas of certain population classes to total number of mauzas, 1911-51	401
II.11	Percentage of population living in villages and towns of various population sizes with reference to the total population in each district, 1951	402
II.12	Percentage of rural population in each district of West Bengal in the eight main livelihood classes, 1951	402

## CHAPTER III

III.1	Distribution of population between towns with populations over 20,000, in 1951	405
III.2	Population in cities and towns in the Calcutta industrial area, 1951	407
III.3	List of towns under six classifications with number of females per 1,000 males in each of them, West Bengal, 1951	408
III.4	Classification of cities and towns according to their population in 1951	409
III.5	Progress of population in cities and towns classified according to character, in West Bengal, Chandernagore and Sikkim, 1872-1951	411
III.6(a)	Progress of residential towns which are less populous in 1951 than in 1872	412
III.6(b)	Residential towns which declined in population until recently, 1872-1951	412
III.6(c)	Three industrial towns whose population fluctuated between 1872 and 1951	413
III.7(a)	Urban populations of districts expressed as percentages of their general populations, 1901-51	419
III.7(b)	Urban population in West Bengal in 1951 classified by persons born in the State and without Displaced population	419
III.8	Number of females per 1,000 males in 25 residential towns of West Bengal, 1872-1951	420
III.9	Percentage of local born among towns people and females per 1,000 males in local born of urban population, 1951	421
III.10	Cities and towns classified according to their female ratios in 1951	422
III.11	Females per 1,000 males in residential, industrial and railway towns in West Bengal, 1881-1951	422
III.12	Age composition of males and females expressed as percentage of male and female population in (i) the Calcutta area (Calcutta, South Suburbs, Tollyganj, Garden Reach, Dum Dum group of municipalities, Barnagar, Howrah and Bally), (ii) other industrial towns, (iii) residential towns and (iv) railway towns, 1951	424
III.13	Age composition of males and females expressed as percentage of male and female population (excluding Displaced males and females) in six industrial cities in West Bengal, 1951	425
III.14	Showing to which population class a city or town belonged in any particular census, 1872-1951	425
III.15	Towns classified by population, 1872-1951	429
III.16	Number per thousand of urban population residing in towns with population of four categories, 1901-51	429
III.17	Number per one thousand persons of same religion who live in towns, 1911-51	431

STATEMENTS

	CHAPTER IV	PAGE
STATEMENT IV.1	Percentage of all agricultural self-supporting person in Livelihood Classes I and III to total population, 1901-51	455
IV.2	A rough estimate of the percentage of self-supporting persons among Bargadars (Livelihood Class II) in 1931	456
IV.3	Comparison between the Census figures and those of the Agricultural Labour Inquiry in respect of agricultural and non-agricultural rural population in West Bengal, 1951	457
IV.4	Agricultural classes in the Indian Census and Agricultural Labour Inquiry in West Bengal, 1951	457
IV.5	Distribution of families living as bargadars and agricultural labourers in 1939-40	459
IV.6	Actual and estimated percentages of population in each agricultural livelihood class in West Bengal, 1951	460
IV.7	Percentage of self-supporting persons, earning and non-earning dependants among the agricultural classes in several states, 1951	460
IV.8	Number per 1,000 of each agricultural class who are self-supporting persons, earning or non-earning dependants in West Bengal, 1951	462
IV.9	Non-agricultural secondary means of livelihood for four agricultural classes, 1951	465
IV.10	Number per 10,000 of self-supporting persons in agricultural classes who had non-agricultural secondary means of occupation in 1921	465
IV.11	Number per 10,000 of self-supporting persons in agricultural classes who had non-agricultural secondary means of occupation in 1911	466
IV.12	Secondary means of livelihood in agriculture for four non-agricultural classes, 1951	467
IV.13	Secondary means of occupation in agriculture for non-agricultural classes in 1921	468
IV.14	Value of produce and incidence of raiyati rent in West Bengal, 1901 and 1939	473
IV.15	Incidence of revenue in the different provinces, 1940	473
IV.16	Number, demand and collection of permanently settled and temporarily settled estates and estates held directly by Government in West Bengal, 1950-51	474
IV.17	Number of permanently settled estates and estates held directly by Government, 1941-50	474
IV.18	Percentage of raiyati interests and area to total interests and area in settlement reports of West Bengal, 1915-40	476
IV.19	Percentage number of families in debt classes A and B holding different classes of land in 1935	477
IV.20	Average size of raiyati and under-raiyati interests in acres and incidence of cash rent per acre in West Bengal from settlement reports	477
IV.21	Distribution of areas held by an agricultural family, 1940	478
IV.22	Distribution of areas held by an agricultural family, 1951	479
IV.23	Number of raiyati and under-raiyati interests held by cultivating families, 1940	480
IV.24	The manner in which raiyati land transferred during 1928-40 was cultivated in 1940	480
IV.25	The manner in which lands were cultivated in 1940 and 1951	481
IV.26	Percentage of land cultivated in barga in each class of holding by size in 1951	481
IV.27	Percentage of agricultural labourers in families classified according to amount of land owned, 1946-47	482
IV.28	Yield per acre of aman paddy and rice, 1915-51	485
IV.29	Yield per acre aus paddy and rice, 1915-51	485
IV.30	Production and consumption of paddy in 1931	488
IV.31	Production and requirement of rice in West Bengal, 1950-52	489

## STATEMENTS

	PAGE
STATEMENT IV.32 Gains through Grow More Food Campaign and net gains or losses through exceptionally good and adverse weather conditions during 1948-52 . . . . .	492
IV.33 Production and procurement of food in West Bengal, 1947-52 . . . . .	492
IV.34 Estimated average cultivated land, 1951 . . . . .	494
Industries in rural area of West Bengal, 1951 . . . . .	498

### CHAPTER V

V.1 Comparative Statement of the Economic Classification Schemes in successive Census in West Bengal, 1872-1951 . . . . .	536
V.2 Non-agricultural self-supporting persons, classified by sex, in each non-agricultural economic division and subdivision, 1901-51 . . . . .	508
V.3 Number of self-supporting persons in each non-agricultural economic division and subdivision per 10,000 of total population, 1901-51 . . . . .	514
V.4 Number of self-supporting persons of both sexes per 10,000 of total population and number of self-supporting females in West Bengal, 1901-51 . . . . .	531
V.5 Important non-agricultural livelihood subdivisions in which employment of women has declined in West Bengal in 1951 from previous decades . . . . .	532
V.6 Important non-agricultural livelihood subdivisions in which employment of women has increased in West Bengal in 1951 from previous decades . . . . .	533
V.7 Proportion of self-supporting persons and earning dependents to total population and of the population of the age group (15-54) to total population in each main livelihood class in West Bengal, 1951 . . . . .	534
V.8 Number of self-supporting persons per 10,000 of total, male and female population in the aggregate, agricultural and non-agricultural livelihoods, 1901-51 . . . . .	535

## ILLUSTRATIONS

(Prepared by SRI UPENDRACHANDRA DEY)

1	Map showing cities, towns, cantonment and police stations in West Bengal		frontispiece
2	Pie chart showing area and population of West Bengal, 1951	facing page	16
3	Geological map of West Bengal and Sikkim	" "	24
4	Middle class cost of living index for Calcutta	" "	120
5	Density map of West Bengal (coloured plate)	" "	168
6	The Hooghly Basin	" "	184
7	The Hooghly Industrial Region	" "	192
8	Population and Houses in Calcutta, 1901-1951	" "	240
9	Migration between West Bengal and other parts of India, 1951	" "	304
10	Livelihood map of West Bengal (coloured plate)	" "	344
11	Age pyramids for West Bengal, 1901-1951	" "	360
12	Pyramids of ages 0-20 in West Bengal, 1901-1951	" "	360
13	Economically productive and unproductive age groups, 1901-1951	" "	360
14	Industrial Calcutta and Howrah	" "	408
15	Number of self-supporting persons per 10,000 of total population, Livelihood Class V	" "	520
16	Number of self-supporting persons per 10,000 of total population, Livelihood Classes VI & VII	" "	520
17	Number of self-supporting persons per 10,000 of total population, Livelihood Class, VIII	" "	520

### MAP

Map of a portion of Eastern India containing West Bengal, Sikkim and Chandernagore	end of book
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## P R E F A C E

The ninth census of West Bengal was taken between the 9th February and 3rd March of 1951 with sunrise of the 1st March as the Reference Day.

Before proceeding to an account of

how the census was taken and tabulated, it may be interesting to note how the Census Superintendent's area of operation has changed since 1872. The following statement provides the outline.

Year	Provinces	Number of Administrative Divisions	Area in square miles	No. of towns & villages	Persons	Males	Females
1872	West Bengal, East Bengal, Bihar, Orissa, Chhota Nagpur, Assam.	11	248,231	201,096	66,856,859	*33,398,605	*33,274,074
1881	West Bengal, East Bengal, Bihar, Orissa, Chhota Nagpur, Feudatory States of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa.	13	187,222	264,765	69,536,861	34,625,591	34,911,270
1891	West Bengal, East Bengal, Bihar, Orissa, Chhota Nagpur, Tributary States, Santal Parganas.	13	187,336	244,472	74,643,366	37,236,485	37,406,881
1901	West Bengal, East Bengal, Bihar, Orissa, Chhota Nagpur, Feudatory States of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa, Tippera, Sikkim.	14	189,837	222,855	78,493,410	39,278,186	39,215,224
1911	West Bengal, East Bengal, Cocch Behar, Tippera, Sikkim.	8	84,092	123,369	46,305,642	23,803,593	22,502,049
1921	Same as 1911 . . . . .	8	82,277	89,660	47,592,462	24,628,365	22,964,097
1931	Same as 1911 . . . . .	8	82,955	91,343	51,087,338	26,557,860	24,529,478
1941	Same as 1911 . . . . .	8	82,876	90,156	61,460,377	32,360,401	29,099,976
1951	West Bengal, Chandernagore, Sikkim.	4	33,524	35,278	24,997,942	13,445,871	11,552,071

\* Excludes 148,918 Garos and Nagas of Assam and 35,262 persons in respect of Hill Tippera.

The reduced area of operation in 1881 contributed to improvement in the census organisation, and the better control thus secured was turned to good use in 1891 and 1901. A further reduction in area in 1911 must have brought about a greater measure of control and supervision maintained and improved up to 1941. Census Superintendents were henceforth enabled to pay at least one visit to all district headquarters and some subdivisional headquarters and not obliged to leave their work entirely to that overworked incumbent, the District Magistrate. In 1950-51 the Superintendent was able to pay two visits to each district headquarters before the enumeration was undertaken in February 1951. The census in India

is pre-eminently an administrative undertaking, and like all other work of this nature, its success and accuracy depend largely on the amount of personal and local supervision a regional superintendent is able to bestow on the ground staff. Thus although the area has progressively shrunk from decade to decade reducing his area of survey, the smaller area has given the Superintendent at least the satisfaction of closer supervision, more necessary now than ever before when District Magistrates can no longer be expected to trouble themselves with the minutiae of this work, for even as long ago as in 1901 Gait had observed that "fully occupied, as they already were, with their ordinary duties, the

census must have been a heavy additional burden, and cannot well have been regarded otherwise than as an unmitigated nuisance!"

The arrangements for the census followed generally the lines laid down in 1941 but made important departures. Three important innovations had been introduced in 1941. Instead of a synchronous census on one night, the taking of the census was spread over a full week, followed by a revisionary period of three days, with the night of the seventh day as the reference night against which all entries were to be checked for the final record. Secondly, the family schedule for recording census information was abandoned in favour of the individual slip, which, apart from dispensing with slip copying in the tabulation stage, brought about almost a revolution in procedure. The enumerator was now fairly and squarely saddled with the responsibility of producing a correct record himself, the literate head of a household being no longer expected to fill in the schedule for his own family. Attention settled finally on the individual and not the family, and the mere act of making out a slip for every person probably ensured a greater measure of accuracy, the enumerator no longer needing to remain content with the household as a unit. Finally, the enumerator was required to fill in enumeration slips with the use of contractions, numerals and symbols which were expected to lessen his burden and facilitate tabulation. In 1951 all these innovations were retained and improved upon. The individual slip and the use of contractions, numerals and symbols came to stay, while the period of enumeration was increased to twentythree days: twenty days from the 9th February to midnight of the 28th being devoted to the count; the sunrise of the 1st of March being regarded as the reference date against which all entries and omissions were to be finally checked; to be followed by three days, from the 1st to the 3rd

March, for the revisionary round. Along with the recording of the count on slips, the National Register of Citizens was required to be filled up by every enumerator in respect of his area. This National Register was devised as a register or schedule for the village; and instead of the family schedule used up to 1931 the enumerator was to transcribe a schedule for the village, entering the households in the order in which they were numbered, and under each household all its inmates. For each inmate almost all the items of information recorded on the census slip were to be copied, and a careful tally made for births, deaths, arrivals and final tallies before the Register was handed over to Authority on the 4th of March. The enumerator was thus expected to perform two separate and distinct functions: the function of slip copying which, up to 1931, had been done by paid employees in central tabulation offices after the count had been taken; and the making of the village schedules, which were slightly more complicated than the family schedules and more onerous because the enumerator was expected to do all of it himself without the head of the household doing part of the writing for him.

The operations were initiated in December 1949, before the Superintendent joined in January 1950, by circulars of a general nature from the Census Commissioner. The Indian Census Act of 1948 (XXXVII of 1948) created for the first time a permanent Census Department at the Centre and provided the legal basis. Preliminary arrangements were initiated as early as the 28th March, 1950, with a summary of census operations and orders under which a "census mauza register" was prepared to account for the whole area in each district and a preliminary estimate was made of the number of houses in each mauza with names of the individuals likely to constitute a satisfactory census agency. The first step was thus to obtain an accurate and

up-to-date record of all inhabited and uninhabited areas, i.e., to prepare a register in which every village was entered with suitable remarks. This was to ensure first, that no village or hamlet was overlooked or entered more than once; secondly, that no house in a village or hamlet escaped enumeration; and thirdly, which came later, that every person living in a house was accounted for.

This is not altogether an easy task as it involves collation and correction of one inch, and, in not a few cases, of 16"=1 mile maps of the entire State to account for all notified changes of jurisdiction, uninhabited mauzas, and water areas. The mauza register having been compiled for all rural and urban areas, and all differences over area and jurisdiction having been reconciled, each district was parcelled out into census divisions. Up to 1941 the primary census unit was the enumerator's block, or a group of about 40 houses for which an enumerator was responsible. But the main plank in the tabulation programme of 1951 was the preparation of a primary census abstract for every village or mauza, or an account of the population of every ultimate geographical unit in terms of its number of houses, households, literates, males and females, divided into General, Sample and Displaced Persons, each category in its turn classified into eight main census livelihood classes. The preparation of a Village Directory, or a full occupational account of the population of every mauza, was a unique and quite the most important feature of this census and it was necessary to provide for its compilation from the very beginning. It was therefore imperative to keep the mauza as the ultimate unit which was thus identified with the enumerator's block. An enumerator's area was enlarged, in the expectation that he would be paid an honorarium for his labours, and except in large and populous mauzas, it became conterminous with the mauza. When a large and

populous mauza had to be parcelled out to more than one enumerator, each portion was called a sub-block, the idea being that all returns were to be submitted for the mauza as a whole by combining the sub-blocks. The mauza was thus held together and the enumerator's area enlarged to an average of 146 census houses. The blocks or mauzas were grouped together by circles, or fractions of unions, each of which was under a supervisor, the average circle in the State containing about 42 inhabited mauzas and 635.6 houses. The circles again were grouped together by charges, which, as a rule, correspond to self-governing unions, and were under superintendents. The enumerator was ordinarily the village primary school teacher, the supervisor a member of the Union Board, and the superintendent, the President or Vice-President of the Union Board. The Charge Superintendents, who were responsible for the operations throughout each charge, were themselves subordinate to the Circle Officers, who were gazetted officers of the Government in charge of several police stations each, and the latter to the Subdivisional Officers and to the District Census Officers, who were appointed for each district.

The actual enumeration was conducted by an improvised agency of superintendents, supervisors, and enumerators, all unpaid, except for the rate of Rs. 2 per one hundred persons counted given to enumerators in outlying districts and of Rs. 3-2-0 per one hundred persons counted in Calcutta (enumerators from the ranks of the Calcutta Police declining to accept it out of sentiments of national service, and the Municipal authorities of Howrah paying the difference of Rs. 3-2-0, the Calcutta rate, and Rs. 2 allowed by the Government). Enumeration was therefore in the main honorary and in West Bengal, Chandernagore and Sikkim as many as 37,004 enumerators, 8,463 circle supervisors and 2,458 charge



superintendents were employed with a liberal reserve for each category. In many localities, especially in Birbhum, Bankura, Malda, West Dinajpur, Jalpaiguri and Sikkim it was no easy matter to obtain a sufficient supply of literate and intelligent enumerators, and a long training was necessary before they could understand the duties required of them. Even where suitable men were available, their natural reluctance to serve without pay had to be overcome, and the lesson brought home to them that the census was conducted by, through, and for the people, and that, perhaps for the first time in their lives, they would be actively discharging a public duty. It was fortunate that the Press and the general popular mood were helpful and sympathetic, and the name National Register of Citizens caught the fancy of the general public. The appreciation that a sober, unbiassed census was at the root of all public plans and aspirations generated a friendly disposition in its favour, absent in 1941 and 1931, and facilitated the operations.

The vast majority of the population of the State does not live in towns, and in rural areas the type of village generally found in other parts of India hardly exists. Still less does the aspect of the countryside resemble that met with in Europe. Instead of orderly rows of fairly substantial houses ranged along some well laid thoroughfare, one finds straggling homesteads over the whole countryside, each consisting of mud or matwalled huts ranged round a courtyard and buried under a thick growth of shady trees. At first glance it would seem fairly impossible to account for every homestead, much less to complete a census of all the inhabitants. The task is, however, not as impossible as it appears, and the solution of the difficulty lies in the employment of local men, to whom the task of dealing with circumscribed areas, familiar to them from their childhood, is a problem unlike that to a stranger.

The first work of the supervisors and enumerators was to number every house or part of a house, that was inhabited or likely to be inhabited by a family, using tar or some other suitable material for marking it, and to write up for each mauza complete lists of houses with descriptions of their structure and use and the number of persons in each. Each mauza had to have one serial throughout its boundary as a safeguard against being mixed up with the next. A house was defined as the residence of a commensal family but the application of this definition gave rise to numerous knotty questions, especially in Calcutta and surrounding areas and in those settlements where Displaced Persons from Pakistan had foregathered. How, for instance, was an enumerator to mark a house which contained nine living rooms, two kitchens, one bathhouse, and eight families, two of whom possessed two living rooms each, three had one living room each, and four shared the remaining two living rooms? Again, how were the numbers to be affixed? The Toto huts in the Bhutan border of Jalpaiguri, for instance, are mere bamboo shacks on raised platforms, and no number could be painted on them. So, the number had to be painted on slabs of wood, which were either stuck on the walls or hung from the eaves. The Totos did not leave them there, but carefully wrapped them up in rags and leaves and put them away in bamboo baskets which form their strong boxes.

Between October and December, after they had completed the numbering of houses, and furnished a close preliminary estimate of the State's population, enumerators were methodically trained and persuaded to take a sample training census to test for themselves and for the satisfaction of the supervisory agency the knowledge and skill they had acquired in recording slips. The record thus prepared was systematically discussed and checked in

training classes, while; in the meantime, they were provided with pads of enumeration slips and forms of the National Register of Citizens. The final census commenced on the morning of the 9th February 1951, the enumerators beginning their count with the lowest serial in their lists. The first round of enumeration was completed on the evening of the 28th February; the night of the 28th and the morning of the 1st March were devoted to the counting of the homeless population on the streets and open spaces. The first three days of March were employed in a revisionary round when each enumerator went round his area, checked the entries in his preliminary record, made careful tallies of all entries, and added details of those who had subsequently arrived or been born. Preliminary totals were begun on the 4th March in each district, and were telephoned from Calcutta as early as 8-45 P.M. on the 5th March. Birbhum and Cooch Behar telegraphed their totals on the 8th and figures for the State, except West Dinajpur, where an assembly bye-election drew off all officers till the 30th March and cramped their style, were ready on the 16th of March. Figures for the State were published on the 31st March and the difference between these totals (24,786,683) and the figures on final counting (24,810,308) amounted for the whole State to 23,625 or 1 per thousand of population. In some districts, however, the approach to the final figures was very close. In Calcutta, for instance, figures for which were communicated within 2 days of the final census by Sri Khagendranath Mitra, the discrepancy was only .4 per thousand; Darjeeling, for which figures were telegraphed within 7 days by Sri S. C. Roy, was out by .2 per thousand; and Bankura, for which figures were telegraphed by Sri Harisadhan Mukherjee within 7 days, was out by only .1 per thousand. To one conversant with the condition of village roads in the State,

the efficiency of the telegraph system, the inaccessibility and snowbound tracks of certain parts of Darjeeling and Sikkim, this promptness will provide no little wonder.

The final results were obtained by sorting, compilation and tabulation, of which there were, as the terms imply, three stages.

Quite some time before the census count, arrangements were completed for the reception of the census records at four regional offices in the State. To the central office at Calcutta were allotted the districts of Hooghly, Howrah, 24-Parganas, Calcutta and Nadia; to the central office at Midnapur the districts of Burdwan, Bankura and Midnapur; to the central office at Berhampur the districts of Birbhum, Murshidabad, Malda, West Dinajpur, Jalpaiguri and Cooch Behar; and to the central office at Darjeeling the district of Darjeeling and the State of Sikkim. Work started in Calcutta in the middle of March 1951; in Midnapur and Berhampur towards the end of that month, after the core of the staff of those offices had fully trained and acquired an amount of skill in the Calcutta Office; and in May in Darjeeling. In the last week of the month of July 1951, the records of West Dinajpur, Jalpaiguri and Cooch Behar were transferred from Berhampur to be sorted and compiled in Calcutta. The Midnapur and Berhampur offices were wound up in the first week of September and the third week of October of 1951 respectively, on the conclusion of sorting and compilation, while the Darjeeling office was wound up on the 29th of August 1951. Thereafter, the records of all the three outlying offices were brought over to Calcutta, together with their best, residual staff to complete the final stage of the operations: tabulation of the results and the publication of the final tables.

Sorting is the process of arranging the slips of individuals under the heads required for the various final tables,

counting the slips thus arranged, and entering the number on forms provided for the purpose, which are called sorter's tickets. It was performed manually with the help of pigeonholes, similar to those for sorting mail in post offices, no punching or sorting machine having been employed. Each sorter dealt with some 30,000 slips. As soon as information for the Village Directory was extracted from the slips of each village and town, the records were grouped by larger units of roughly 180,000 slips each by combining in some cases two or more police stations. But nowhere did this grouping transgress the bounds of an administrative district, whereas the main population tables for police stations had already been built up from the Village Directories. While sorting was in progress, inquiry was made of district officers into doubtful entries, and various nice points of classification were settled by discussion with colleagues in other States and the Registrar General.

When sorting had advanced a little the central offices undertook compilation of the results entered in sorter's tickets. Compilation is the intermediate stage between the final table form and the raw material of the sorter's tickets, in which matter is rearranged, reconciled and put into shape for police stations, towns and districts for transcription on to the final table forms. The process started almost simultaneously with sorting, but as compilers were also expected to supervise the work of sorters, there was an inevitable time lag, which was perhaps all for the best, because it gave them time so necessary to allow complicated operations to settle well into their minds.

Compilation was carried out in the central offices,—here again without the help of machines, except for a comptometer at each office to help verify the final totals,—as far as to obtain the district totals, and the compilation registers with the sorter's tickets, together with all other records, slips, and

the National Register, were then forwarded to the Deputy Superintendent of the Central Office in Calcutta, where the compilations were finally checked and the final tables prepared. This final stage of tabulation was the lengthiest and most harrassing stage, where every little doubt or discrepancy had to be verified again with compilation registers, sorter's tickets, and in several cases, by a fresh sorting of the slips of the population in doubt. Each final table was sent to the office of the Registrar General in New Delhi for a final check before publication.

It is a matter of regret that, apart from a number of information on the Census slip which were never extracted or tabulated for reasons of economy, certain other information, which were extracted, compiled or even finalised in the Central Tabulation Offices are not going to be published, again for reasons of public economy and policy. Neither the Report nor the Tables render an adequate account of the labours performed by the Census Department, an approximate idea of which it will, however, be possible to form when all the twenty and odd reports, including special reports and District Handbooks, which are expected to replace the District Gazetteers, are published in the course of 1953. Nevertheless, the necessity for stringent economy has made it impossible to make use of some part of the information recorded in the slips.

It is difficult to make with confidence an estimate of the accuracy of the results. At every stage error can be introduced by inadvertence or ignorance and a band of about 1,400 inexperienced persons, temporarily employed between three and five months on a consolidated average pay of about Rs. 85/- per month, certainly do not create ideal conditions for patient statistical work or guarantee absolute accuracy. All census reports so far published carry, in varying degrees, traces of hurried work and improbable

data, and it is not pretended that the present report has been rid of obvious and bad blemishes. They are spots which an Indian census cannot change. The superintendents, supervisors and enumerators numbering 47,925 in all were a voluntary agency, and, if as long ago as 1872 the first census superintendent had occasion to regret that 'it is also true that some officers have pointed out the unpopularity of the work, and the dissatisfaction of those whose gratuitous services were employed', it requires no great imagination to appreciate the extent of reluctance met with in 1950. Happily, a number of circumstances were in favour of gratuitous service: a genuine desire to discharge a public duty honourably and well in the inviting air of independence; a realisation which, it should be gratefully acknowledged, all sections of the Press did their best to publicise and encourage, that a good and correct census, not secured since 1921 owing to communal rivalry, is essential in 1951 to provide the country the basic human data so necessary for all planning and development; the end of communal rivalry and a general willingness to wish the census a complete success; and, finally, the popularity of the idea of a National Register of Citizens, although ideas were vague about its possible uses consistent with the secrecy of a personal census document. It was the abundance of this good will, which replaced communal rivalry of recent censuses and apathy of earlier ones, which made it possible to take a census in 1951 on a voluntary and gratuitous basis, and ensure a high degree of accuracy. After the conclusion of the census in March 1951, many State Governments, at the request of the Registrar General, arranged for a sample check through their officers of the quality of the census, West Bengal being one of the very few or perhaps alone in declining to do it. Those States which took a sample verification of the results of the census

reported that the difference between the results of the verification and the census count was a small under-enumeration, 0.9 per cent in Bombay and a little over 1 per cent in Mysore. It should be borne in mind that West Bengal paid small honoraria to enumerators which might have put them in a better humour than their opposite numbers in other States. In 1941 the Superintendent observed that a census was as good or as bad as the moral attitude of the people towards it, and both in 1921 and 1931 the Superintendents reported that they had had to experience difficulties born of communal rivalry and civil disobedience movements. Conditions in 1951, however, were more favourable to the taking of a correct census than ever before in the history of this country, and experience of past censuses, the advantages of a diminished area rendering closer personal supervision possible, the correct measure of enlightened enthusiasm free from communal bias and rivalry, a favourable Press, must all have contributed a great deal to the thoroughness and accuracy of the count. The paucity, in fact, absence of complaints against having been left out of the count, in spite of repeated notices in the Press inviting them, is a testimony to the thoroughness with which the task may be believed to have been completed, and if in 1921 and 1931 the Superintendents, in spite of unfavourable circumstances, had thought it fit to claim an accuracy of as much as within one per thousand (although the basis of this assertion is nowhere discussed in the reports) for their counts, it may not be unreasonable to claim a greater, if not like, accuracy for this count also. A provisional count taken during the house-numbering stage in November-December 1950 put the estimate for the State at 25,512,714. The final count turned out to be 24,810,308, revealing a deficit of 2.8 per cent from the house-list population. The deficits were most marked in the following districts for

which plausible explanations can be readily offered, without laying oneself open to the charge of sophistry: which is, that of these districts Birbhum, Bankura, Midnapur and Murshidabad import large numbers of harvesters, men, women and children, from Bihar and Orissa States in the harvesting season of November-December, who return to their homes in February-March; while in the industrial districts of Howrah and 24-Parganas February and March are the slack months for Jute Mills when the latter declare a holiday to enable Bihar and up-country labour to return to their home in time for the *rabi* harvest. About November-December 1950 Nadia had the largest concentration of Displaced Persons from East Bengal, many of whom, owing to an easing of tension as a result of the Delhi Pact of 1950, the necessity of gathering in the harvest in their villages in East Bengal, and also out of a desire to be counted in Pakistan because a rumour was afoot that anyone who was left out of the census count in Pakistan would be dispossessed of his property, had left

Nadia in February-March 1951, still others having been dispersed during January and February 1951 from its large Transit Camps to all parts of the State and even outside the State. Besides, the houselist population was computed with much less care than the final count, there was a tendency on the part of the enumerator to make a liberal estimate at the former stage so that he might not be found wanting in sending his requisition for enumeration slips which was based on that count, and there was a greater tendency on the part of the householder, where modified rationing prevailed, during the houselist count to declare the same strength for his household as he held ration cards for. This last tendency was combated and eliminated by three months of incessant publicity that the census record was a confidential document which could not be made use of by the Rationing Department. To return from the digression, the following were the districts where the discrepancies between the houselist population and the final estimate were the widest as the statement will show :

District	Houselist Estimate	Final Estimate	Variation Increase+ Decrease—
Burdwan . . . . .	2,228,467	2,191,667	— 36,800
Birbhum . . . . .	1,102,735	1,066,889	— 35,846
Bankura . . . . .	1,370,732	1,319,259	— 51,473
Midnapur . . . . .	3,452,154	3,359,022	— 93,132
Howrah . . . . .	1,688,641	1,611,373	— 77,268
24 Parganas . . . . .	4,848,497	4,609,309	— 239,188
Nadia . . . . .	1,232,718	1,144,924	— 87,794
Murshidabad . . . . .	1,770,674	1,715,759	— 54,915
Total . . . . .	17,694,618	17,018,202	— 676,416

It is significant that all the above districts record a decrease in the final count. Calcutta recorded a slight increase from 2,540,357 of the houselist population to 2,548,677, explained partly by the fact that the houselist population did not include that which sleep on Calcutta pavements, open spaces, and markets counted on the reference night of the 28th February 1951. Hooghly records a small increase

from 1,551,798 to 1,554,320 perhaps on account of the influx of Displaced Persons; Malda and West Dinajpur a negligible decrease from 955,520 and 738,227 to 937,580 and 720,573 respectively perhaps due to the return of harvesters to Pakistan and Bihar; Jalpaiguri an increase from 898,731 to 914,538 perhaps owing to influx of more Displaced Persons; Darjeeling a decrease from 459,024 to 445,260 per-

haps due to people moving to the plains and Nepal in the winter months of February and March; and Cooch Behar records a small decrease from 674,439 to 671,158 perhaps due to too generous an estimate of the population of *Chhitmahals* or the district's enclaves in Pakistan during the houselist stage. It may be mentioned in passing that enumeration of the *Chhitmahals* was the least satisfactory performance of this census, not only because of the inaccessibility of these enclaves and the difficulties put by the Pakistan border police in the way of our enumerators, but also because many residents of these enclaves considered it a safer course to be counted in the Pakistan census which was being simultaneously held at this time. If we leave out of account the differences in the districts of Burdwan, Birbhum, Bankura, Midnapur, Howrah, 24-Parganas and Hooghly, the difference between the houselist population so adjusted and the final count narrows down to only 25,990 (702,406—676,416) or a deficit of only one per thousand of the final population. This is a good enough tally obtained from two independent counts taken three months apart in which the estimated natural increase during the period can just fit in. This looks like a casual treatment of such a weighty subject as population statistics, but, indeed, it is no part of the author's intention to make light of figures which about 50,000 persons have sacrificed their leisure and business gratuitously and ungrudgingly to collect conscientiously and patiently, willingly submitting themselves to months of irksome discipline. But the point which the writer wishes to make out is that the census being a phoenix, rising out of its ashes every ten years, and a person who is primarily an administrator and not a statistician being called upon to conduct a census with the help of a department which he starts from scratch with no preterite tradition to help and guide him except

what is left in the administrative reports of his predecessors, such a census is not expected to satisfy all the tests of a scientific inquiry. In making this admission he is claiming no more nor less than what his predecessors claimed for their performances, mindful of the happy possibility that each successive census is by an accumulation of experience and improvement in administrative machinery better and more correct than the preceding one; even as the census of 1961 may be expected to be better than this one. But while this is so, it is well to remember the many shortcomings of the census organisation and its chronic impecuniosity, which prevents a great many improvements from being given effect to. For instance, it is sad to reflect that a superintendent still has to be a geographer, cartographer, administrator, co-ordinator of co-ordinators, a theoretician and a master interpreter all rolled in one, or, for that matter, that we still have to be content with manual tabulation with the help of pigeonholes, squatting cross-legged on the floor seven hours a day, the physical exhaustion of which must ultimately affect the quality of the day's work. And this is a reason why complicated correlations or polynomials have been discarded. In spite of the great improvements introduced from time to time since the first census was undertaken in 1872, the following remarks of the first Census Superintendent in 1872 largely hold good even to this day:

"A census, to be strictly accurate, should be an enumeration of every person in the country at a particular moment of time. If the enumeration is not simultaneous, or, in other words, if the returns do not have reference to some particular period, an element of error is introduced in the possible omission or double entry of persons who have moved from one part of the country to another. The longer the period over which the enumeration

extends, the greater of course is the chance of error. Human beings are born and die every moment and therefore from a scientific point of view an enumeration which extends over two or three weeks, or even two or three days, is so far imperfect. For practical purposes, however, such an enumeration is probably quite as useful as any other. In any examination therefore into the results of the late census, it must be understood that no claim is made to scientific accuracy for the work as a whole. If it fairly represents the total number of persons in any particular part of the country at the time that part of the country was censused, the object aimed at may be considered to have been achieved. Where the returns do err, the population no doubt is understated" (Report on the Census of Bengal, 1872, pp. 62-68).

It is only fair that the writer himself should take the opportunity of presenting the worst features of his case, before others happen to pick holes in the fabric. From the experience of other States, and from what has been explained above it seems possible that the population is slightly understated. The outermost limit of this underestimate is stated with great accuracy but is likely to be one per thousand of the final count, and from all internal evidence it is unlikely that the deficit, if any, indeed, should have exceeded it. The innermost limit cannot be stated either beyond the general remark that the population may be slightly understated.

This Report is being presented with no little feeling of hesitancy. In the very nature of his assignment it is difficult for a Census Superintendent to impart that roundedness or finality to his effort which can defy scrutiny. As the arrangement of the Census Reports and publications set out in an earlier page will show, the present incumbent has had on his hands the building up, editing, printing and publishing of more

than two dozen volumes, of an average of 300 closely printed pages of uniform size each, with no 'background' of previous experience, of office, or even trained assistants, officers or scholars to help him. His hour-glass was only three years, the first of which was spent largely in training, holding together, and putting into work, a band of about 50,000 *honorary* workers; the second, spent on working five offices manned by about 1,500 very poorly paid extra-temporary assistants who had to be trained from scratch before being put in charge of work; and the latter eight months of the third under the burden of part-time, and sometimes full time, work in the Development Department of the State Government. Throughout this tenure there was much administrative work to discharge, touring and local investigation to do, the boredom, waste of time, and inconvenience in travelling close on fifty thousand miles in three years being enlivened only by the hobby of making up a catalogue and a fat album of photographs of ancient monuments in the State. Every employee in the several offices was a novice and had to be trained patiently first to be able to undertake his task. The luxury of the assistance or services of scholars was severely denied. Here must be mentioned a circumstance in explanation, if not in extenuation, of the meagre fare provided in many places; for example, in the sections dealing with the natural resources of the State in the Introductory chapter of the present volume. The State having been badly cut up by the Partition of 1947, I felt, soon after assuming charge, that I could not make much of the classic subject of a census report: the rate of change of population and the rate of the rate of change. As alternative fare I thought to give an account of various aspects of the State and accordingly addressed as early as September and October 1950 personal letters to the Directors of the Meteorological Survey of India, the Zoological Survey of India, the Geological Survey

of India, the Botanical Survey of India, the Anthropological Survey of India and to several renowned scholars inviting them to contribute short surveys covering West Bengal on the subjects of which they were authorities. The requests were graciously accepted with promises of help. But I regret to have to record that although I did not fail in my duty to send periodic reminders which were acknowledged with assurances of prompt compliance I did not have the good fortune of eliciting any survey from any of these institutions and scholars, except from the Meteorological Survey of India through the Registrar General. Under the circumstances, a layman had to make shift as best as he could.

I cannot acknowledge too fully the services of the great body of private individuals and Government officials who conducted the census and brought it to a satisfactory conclusion. I wish to pay grateful tributes to all voluntary and honorary workers who worked ungrudgingly for a number of months to the detriment of their own convenience and profit. I wish to express my obligations to the Governor for his messages and radio broadcasts, to the Chief Minister, Dr. B. C. Roy, and other Ministers who made references to the necessity of a correct census during their tours, issued messages and gave radio talks, to Sri S. N. Ray, Chief Secretary, whom I bothered in and out of time, to Sri M. M. Basu, Joint Secretary, Home (Constitution and Election) Department, without whose constant advice I do not see how the operations could have gone on so smoothly, to the Divisional Commissioners who obliged me by keeping every request, to the Refugee Rehabilitation, Food, Labour and Development Commissioners, to all Secretaries and Directors of Departments, to their Deputy and Assistant Secretaries, and offices. I wish to thank various non-official organisations like the Chambers

of Commerce and editors of journals for having so kindly supplied information always at short notice, to Companies like the Calcutta Electric Supply Corporation and the Tramways Company. I feel that I have omitted to mention a large number of names, both individual and otherwise, to whom I am indebted for assistance and information. The amount of ungrudging help that has been received is overwhelming. Among officers who worked with me, I wish to thank Sri Gaur Chandra Mallik, sometime my Assistant Superintendent, and my Personal Assistant, Sri Binay Bhushan Sengupta, who largely relieved me of routine work towards the concluding stages. I am under a special obligation to Sri Khagendranath Mitra, first Special Officer of Calcutta and later Deputy Superintendent in charge of compilation in the Calcutta Office and all tabulation work, to Sri Pravash Kumar Bose in charge of the Tabulation Office in Midnapur, Sri Sushil Chandra Neyogi, Assistant Superintendent of Census Operations in the Calcutta Office, and Sri Sukman Singh Gajameer in charge of the Tabulation Office in Darjeeling. To them and to all District Census Officers the census owes a great deal of the efficiency and smoothness with which it went, and it is a matter of no small satisfaction that four of them were promoted to the West Bengal Civil Service on the conclusion of the census: Srijuts Bhabatosh Chakravorti of Nadia, Samartosh Banerji of Hooghly, Pravash Kumar Bose of Calcutta, and Kandarpamohan Roy of Chandernagore. I must also express my obligations to all District and Subdivisional Officers who answered my queries patiently for over two years, and, when I was on tour, looked after me in every way. These acknowledgements fail to include a large number of private individuals, institutions and officials as well as members of the Census Department to whom I



am indebted in many ways for information and advice, particularly to Srijuts Prabirchandra Sengupta, Bhudebchandra Banerjee, Bimal Kumar Mitra, Sachindranath Mukherjee and Himangshu Sekhar Sen; the text of the Report acknowledges only those whom I have quoted, but I would be failing in my duty if I did not mention my debt to my colleagues in other States, to Sri Sailendranath Sengupta of the West Bengal Judicial Service the opportunity of constant discussion with whom has been one of the privileges of my assignment and whose versatility and probity have rescued this Report from many obvious shortcomings. I wish to express my obligations also to Sri R. A. Gopalaśwami, Registrar General for India, to Sri S. K. Dey, Development Commissioner, West Bengal, to Sri Bimal Chandra Sinha of Paikpara, Calcutta and to Professor Sudhangshu Kumar Mukherji for having kindly gone through the draft and suggested amendments. In the end my thanks are due to Sri Ananta

Kumar Chakravorti, Librarian of the West Bengal Secretariat Library, whose interest, promptness, and resourcefulness enabled me to consult a large number of books, which could hardly otherwise have been located, and who was good enough to prepare a bibliography of books actually used in the preparation of the Report, the Special publications, and District Handbooks.

To the Manager of the Government of India Press in Calcutta, Sri B. K. Roy, I must offer my sincerest thanks for the consideration, courtesy, and utmost despatch with which he has treated all census script. During the Enumeration period his promptness had made it unnecessary to go to other presses for supplementary work and his advice was always available as to the best, most attractive, and cheapest way of printing a book bristling with long and apparently intractable tables. But for him the publication of the Report would indeed have been a very distressing proposition.

## INTRODUCTION

The most important event that has occurred since the last census of 1941 is the partition in August 1947 of what history has so long known as Banga or Bangla or Bengal into two portions, roughly in the proportion of three to five, and the apportionment of the two parts to two entirely separate sovereign States, India and Pakistan. A country which since the beginning of recorded history was regarded as one geographical unit with a peculiar ethnic and cultural homogeneity,—a man from Bengal was a man from Bengal and not from any particular region or district in it, in contrast with a man from Lucknow or a man from Jaunpur or a man from Allahabad, who seldom called himself a man from the Uttar Pradesh—was severed in two in the course of a day. The circumstances that led to the severance and the wounds that are yet unhealed and still bleed from time to time fall in the historic period covered by the late census, and this report will necessarily return again and again to the movement of population preceding and following the Partition. The Partition has changed the face of the State on the map and it is necessary to precede an account of the State's population with brief notes on the shape of the new State, its geographical and geological features, its climate, the ethnic texture of its population, its distribution of agriculture and industry, and the material condition of the people.

### General Description

2. The State of West Bengal now comprises two administrative Commissioners' Divisions and fifteen administrative districts. The Burdwan Division consists of the districts of Burdwan, Birbhum, Bankura, Midnapur, Hooghly and Howrah, all of which lie west of the Bhagirathi or Hooghly river. The

Presidency Division consists of the districts of 24-Parganas (including the Sundarbans), Calcutta, Nadia, Murshidabad, all of which lie south of the river Ganges or Padma and east of the Bhagirathi or Hooghly except the western half of Murshidabad; the districts of Malda and West Dinajpur, north of the Ganges; and, farther north, the districts of Cooch Behar, Jalpaiguri and Darjeeling. To the district of 24-Parganas has been added an area of 319.8 sq. miles comprising the police stations of Bangaon and Gaighata, formerly of Jessore. From the old district of Nadia have gone to East Bengal the police stations of Gangani, Meherpur, Damurhuda, Alamdanga, Jibannagar, Chuadanga, Kumarkhali, Mirpur, Daulatpur, Bhairamara, Kushtia and Khoksa. This has reduced the area of the district from 2,879 sq. miles before the Partition to 1,527 sq. miles. Although Murshidabad has not lost to East Bengal any entire police station, yet several mauzas of a number of bordering police stations are either in dispute or in *de facto* possession of East Bengal. Five police stations of the old Malda district have gone to East Bengal: they are Sibganj, Nawabganj, Gomastapur, Nachol and Bholahat, which have reduced the area of the district from 2,004 sq. miles before Partition to 1,408 sq. miles of the present day. The old district of Jalpaiguri has been deprived of five thanas which have gone in favour of East Bengal: Tetulia, Pachagar, Boda, Debiganj and Pathgram: the area of the district having been reduced from 3,050 sq. miles to 2,378 sq. miles. In January 1950 the State of Cooch Behar merged into the State of West Bengal and became one of its administrative districts but several of its enclaves, numbering fiftysix, are so locked inside East Bengal territory that it was not possible to take a proper

## GENERAL DESCRIPTION: AREA OF DISTRICTS

census of them. The principal of these tracts are—

(1) The *Baishchala tracts*, comprised within three Taluks named Magurmari, Gosaihat, and Gadong, in Pargana Maraghat of the Jalpaiguri District, lying at a distance varying from six to eight miles from the northern frontier near Moranga and Ksheti ;

(2) *Teldhar*, formerly known as Gerd Teldhar, forming twelve Taluks, and the *Kotbhajni chhits*, comprising six taluks, within Chakla Boda, in the district of Jalpaiguri, lying west and south-west of Pargana Mekliganj, at a distance varying from five to twelve miles from the western frontier near Haldibari ;

(3) The *Patgram chhits*, belonging to Pargana Mekliganj, situated in Pargana Patgram in the Jalpaiguri district ;

(4) *Banshkata chhits*, within Pargana Patgram lying very close to the south-west borders of Pargana Mathabhanga ;

(5) The *chhits* in Pargana Purvabhag in the district of Rangpur, very close to the south-east borders of Dinhat, the chief of which are Bashpechai, Dakurhat and Dasiarchhara ;

(6) The *chhits* in Pargana Bhitband in the same district, lying near the eastern borders of Dinhat, and comprising the taluks Maidam, Gaochulka, and Baghbunder ; and

(7) *Chhit Bara Laukuthi*, a Cooch Behar Taluk, lying within the Guma Duars in the district of Goalpara in Assam, within two miles from the Baxigunj Bunder near the eastern frontier.

Their administration is still a matter of contention between India and Pakistan, into the substance of which it is no

call of this Report to enter, but suffice it to say that if anywhere the late Census was at all unsatisfactory it was in these *Chhitmahals* or enclaves involving a population of several thousands. A census of the town of Chandernagore and the enclave of Ghiretty or Gaurhati, formerly French possessions on the river Hooghly within the district of Hooghly, was taken for the first time by the Government of India and is included in this Report because Chandernagore was transferred to India in 1949-50.

3. To the north of the State lies the State of Sikkim with an area of 2,745 sq. miles, the census of which has been taken along with that of Bengal ever since 1891.

### Area

4. The area of the State has not been conclusively ascertained. A detailed discussion on the subject will be found in the title pages of Union Table A I of the Tables Volume and it is unnecessary to reproduce all of it here. It is doubtful that areas given since 1872 will bear close examination even when they are carefully reduced to the present boundaries of the State. For the census of 1951 the Registrar General laid down that the area figures were to be supplied by the Surveyor General of India. The decision, a great step taken in the direction of uniformity and reconciliation of differences, has brought out clearly the anomalies that have so far existed and for which no detailed explanation is yet forthcoming. The point will best be illustrated by a statement of areas of West Bengal districts given for 1951 by the Surveyor General of India and the Director of Land Records and Surveys, West Bengal, and in successive census reports from 1901 to 1941. It so happens that districts with great rivers, wide stretches of water and arms of the sea have mostly gone to East Bengal and cases of wide differences are therefore lost to this comparison.

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# INDEX

[Prepared by—SRI BHUDEB CHANDRA BANERJI]

*References are to pages*

D means District, P. S.—Police Station, C—City, T—Town.

- Abwabs, theory of, 436; imposed by Nawabs, 444; Permanent Settlement and abwab, 444-5; declared illegal, 445
- Accuracy, 6-10, 140-3; factors against, 6; circumstances favourable for, 7, 142-3; sample verification, 7; absence of complaints, 7; tally with houselist estimate, 7-9; no scientific accuracy claimed, 9-10; limit of underestimation, 7, 10; of Calcutta census, 237-46; of 1941 census tested, 363-7
- Age Composition in cities and towns, 424; in six cities, 425; age groups and their percentage, 358
- Agricultural Classes, 348-51, 435; indebtedness, 103-05; figures of census and Labour Inquiry, 457-9; of Land Revenue Commission, 459; percentages of scheduled castes and tribes in, 353-4; self-supporting persons, earning and non-earning dependants, 460-61; reasons for wide differences among States, 461; regional characteristics, 462-4; distribution in secondary employment, 449-50, 464-66
- Agricultural labourers, 482, 97; attached agricultural labourers, 482-3; percentage of self-supporting agricultural labourers to total population, 456; employment and unemployment, 97; type of work and reasons for unemployment, 9; seasonal variation in employment, 98; secondary means of livelihood, 465
- Agricultural products, 373, 69, 73, 74; lost variety, 383-4; Yield declining, 382-3, 485, 490; in a worse plight than 150 years ago, 381; dependent on rainfall, 382; reasons for agricultural unprofitableness, 382-83, 471-2, 476
- Alipur Duar (T), increment fantastic before 1921 and very impressive after that, 262; population, 410; sprung into sudden importance, 263; railway outpost, 195
- Alipur Duars Subdivision and Police Station, population, 292-3; percentage variation, 283; variation in density, 175
- Alluvium, extent, 18, 29 ff; depth, 23, 29
- Amdanga Police Station, population, 288-9; percentage variation in, 281; variation in density, 172
- Amta, entirely rural Police Station, area, population and density, 177; percentage variation in, 281; variation in density, 172
- Arambag Subdivision and Police Station, 286-7; population, 286-7; percentage variation, 283; variation in density, 171
- Arambag (T), 195; population, 410; density, 191; had indigo factories, 417
- Area of West Bengal, 14-15; districts, 15, 138
- Sikkim, 14; 104 P. S. with densities over, 1,050, 177-8.
- Asansol Subdivision contains Raniganj coal field, 20; large reserves of iron ore, 21; good quality fire-clay, 21; Chittaranjan and other centres of industry, 178, 185-6; population, 284-5; large colonies of koras, 65; percentage variation, 279; variation in density, 169; phenomenal increase, 213
- Asansol, industrial P. S., 178; area, population and density, percentage variation, 279; variation in density, 169; a great proportion of the industrial population live in the villages, 176; maximum growth, 213
- Asansol (T), important railway junction, 186; population, 410; female ratio, 422; climatological table, 50-53
- Ausgram P. S., population, 284-5; variation, 279; variation in density, 169; density much below rural average, 175
- Baduria P. S., non-industrial P. S., 177; area, population and density, 177; percentage variation in, 281; variation in density, 172
- Baduria, non-industrial town, 177; population, 410; Bagdi, 65-7
- Bagnan P. S., entirely rural P. S., 177; area, population and density, 177; percentage variation in, 281; variation in density, 172; Bagri, 32
- Baidyabati (T), industrial town, 409; population, 407
- Balagarh P. S., population, 286-7; percentage variation, 280; variation in density, 171
- Bally industrial P. S., 178; area, population and density, 178; percentage variation, 281; variation in density, 172; a great proportion of the industrial population live in the surrounding villages, 176
- Bally (T), industrial town, 178, 309; population, 407
- Balurghat Subdivision and Police Station, population, 292-3; percentage variation, 283; variation in density, 175

## INDEX

- Balurghat (T), 195; population, 410
- Bamangola P. S., population, 290-91; percentage variation in, 282; variation in density, 174
- Bangaon Subdivision and Police Station, population, 288-9; percentage variation, 281; variation in density, 172
- Bangaon (T), 195; population, 410; female ratio in, 422.
- Bankura (D), 218-23; area, 15; shape and river system, 17; geology, 21; soil, 30; number of mauzas, villages and towns, 158-9, 389; village roads, 391; population, 138; growth of, 138-9; variation, 201; variation in density, 170; progress of population, 218-23; percentage variation, 279; population with variation since 1872, 284-5; percentage of age groups, 275; percentage of age groups and married women, 221; distribution of rural population by L. C., 402; more than 80 per cent. depend on agriculture, 352; agricultural self-supporting persons, 455-6; migration, 222-3; sends out more than receives, 222; number in towns, 405; castes and tribes, 65; percentage of families in debt, 103; religion, 68-69; crops, 73; pressure on land, 222; results of deforestation, 219; natural calamities, 220-21; industries in rural areas, 499-501
- Bankura P. S., population, 284-5; percentage variation, 279; variation in density, 170
- Bankura (T), a great agricultural centre, 194; a health resort, 219; population, 410; density, 191
- Bankura (Sadar) Subdivision, 284-5; population, 284-5; percentage variation, 279; variation in density, 170
- Bansihari P. S., population, 292-3; percentage variation in, 283; immigration, 260; variation in density, 175; below rural average, 168
- Bansberia (T), 409; population, 407
- Barabani, industrial P. S., 169, 176, 178; population, 284-5; percentage variation in, 279; variation in density, 169
- Barakar (T), industrial town, 178, 409; population, 410
- Baranagar P. S., industrial police station, 178; area, population and density, 178; percentage variation, 281; variation in density, 172
- Baranagar (T), industrial town, 178, 409; population, 407
- Barasat P. S., non-industrial police station, 177; area, population and density, 177; percentage variation, 281; variation in density, 172
- Barasat Subdivision, population, 288-9; percentage variation, 281; variation in density, 172
- Barasat (T), non-industrial town, 177; population, 410; formerly 'the Sandhurst of Bengal', 417
- Barbers and beauty shops, 526
- Barga system, 448-9, 472, 481-2; area under *barga* system, 93; percentage of population in L. C. II, 461; percentage of dependency, 462; percentage of self-supporting persons among *bargadars*, 456; who are *bargadars*, 93-4; evils of *barga* system, 94; distribution of families living as *bargadars*, 459; number per 1,000 of L. C. II as self-supporting, earning or non-earning dependents, 462
- Barind, 25, 32-33, 316; opening out by Santals, 257
- Barjora, P. S., population, 284-5; percentage variation, 279; variation in density, 170 density much below rural average, 165
- Barrackpur Cantonment, industrial town, 178; population, 407
- Barrackpur Subdivision, population, 288-9; percentage variation, 281; variation in density, 172
- Barrackpur P. S., industrial police station, 178; area, population and density, 178; percentage variation, 281; variation in density, 172
- Barrackpur (T), industrial town, 178, 409; population, 407
- Baruipur P. S., non-industrial police station, 177; area, population and density, 177; percentage variation, 281; variation in density, 172
- Baruipur (T), non-industrial town, 177; population, 410
- Basirhat Subdivision, population, 288-9; percentage variation, 281; variation in density, 172
- Basirhat (T), non-industrial town, 177; population, 410
- Batanagar (T), industrial town, 178, 409; population, 407
- Bauria P. S., industrial, 178; area, population and density, 178; percentage variation in, 281; variation in density, 172
- Bauria (T), industrial town, 178, 409; population, 410
- Behala P. S., industrial police station, 178; area, population and density, 178; percentage variation in, 281; variation in density, 172
- Beldanga P. S., 162, 256; entirely rural 177; area, population and density, 177; percentage variation, 282; variation in density, 174
- Bengal, origin of the name, 73



## INDEX

- Bengali as mother tongue in other States, 309
- Bengali, his plight, 432-4
- Berhampur Town, non-industrial P. S., 177 ; area, population and density, 177 ; percentage variation in, 282 ; variation in density, 174
- Berhampur (T), non-industrial town, 177 ; population, 410
- Bhadreswar, P. S., industrial police station, 178 ; area, population and density, 178 ; percentage variation in, 280 ; variation in density, 171
- Bhadreswar (T), industrial town, 178, 409 ; population, 407
- Bhagwangola P. S., population, 290-91 ; percentage variation, 282 ; variation in density, 174 ; density above rural average, 168
- Bhagwanpur P. S., population, 286-7 ; percentage variation, 280 ; variation in density, 171
- Bhangar P. S., population, 288-9 ; percentage variation, 281 ; variation in density, 172 ; density much above rural average, 168
- Bharatpur P. S., population, 290-91 ; percentage variation in, 282 ; variation in density, 174 ; density above rural average, 165
- Bhatar P. S., population, 284-5 ; percentage variation in, 279 ; variation in density, 169 ; density below rural average, 165
- Bhatpara (C), industrial city, 178, 409 ; population, 407
- Bijpur, industrial police station, 178 ; area, population and density, 178 ; percentage variation in, 281 ; variation in density, 172 ; contains the towns of Kanchrapara and Halisahar, 178
- Binpur P. S., prospective small industrial area, 191 ; population, 286-7 ; percentage variation in, 280 ; variation in density, 171 ; density much below rural average, 168
- Birbhum (D), 215-18 ; area, 15 ; mauzas, villages and towns, 158-9, 389 ; village roads, 391 ; shape and river system, 16-17 ; geology, 19-20 ; soil, 29-30 ; population, 138 ; growth of population, 138-9 ; growth before and after 1921, 215-18 ; variation in population, 201 ; percentage variation in population, 279 ; variation in density, 170 ; population with variation since 1872, 284-5 ; more than 80 per cent. in agriculture, 352 ; distribution of rural population by L. C., 402 ; number of inhabited villages, 158 ; number of towns, 159 ; number in towns, 405 ; agricultural self-supporting persons by L. C., 455-6 ; castes and tribes, 65 ; religion, 68-69 ; percentage of age groups, 275 ; percentage of age groups and of married women, 217 ; migration, 218 ; effects of epidemics, 215 ; crops, 73 ; price of rives, 106 ; maximum supportable density, 216 ; percentage of families in debt, 103 ; industries in rural areas, 499-501 ; radioactive sulphurous springs, hot and cold, 20 ; little Jack Horner, 218
- Birnagar (T), population, 411 ; formerly a prosperous large towns, 418 ; female ratio, 422
- Birth place, method of recording, 296
- Birth rate, 329, 371 ; fall due to famine, 18-2 ; poverty and lack of standard keep the birth rate high, 381
- Bishnupur, entirely rural police station, 177 ; area, population and density, 177 ; percentage variation, 281 ; variation in density, 172
- Bolpur P. S., population, 284-5 ; percentage variation, 279 ; variation in density, 170 ; density just below rural average, 168
- Bolpur (T), seat of the rural University of Santiniketan, 194 ; population, 410 ; density, 191
- Budge-Budge, industrial police station, 178 ; area, population and density, 178 ; percentage variation in, 281 ; variation in density, 172
- Budge-Budge (T), industrial town, 178, 409 ; population, 407
- Burdwan (D), 211-15 ; area, 15 ; shape and river system, 17 ; geology, 20 ; mauzas, villages and towns, 159, 158, 389 ; roads, 391 ; population, 138 ; growth of population, 138-9 ; variation in population, 201 ; percentage variation in population, 279 ; variation in density, 169 ; population before and after 1921, 211-14 ; steady increase since, 1921, 213 ; natural calamities caused decreased, 211-13 ; population with variation since 1872, 284-5 ; percentage of age groups, 275 ; age groups and married women, 214 ; distribution of rural population in L. C., 402 ; number in towns, 405 ; self-supporting persons in agricultural classes, 455-6 ; more than 63 per cent. depend on agriculture, 352 ; castes and tribes, 65 ; largest substratum Bagdis and Bauris, 65 ; religion, 68-9 ; crops, 73 ; price of rice, 106 ; families in debt, 103 ; migration, 214-5 ; industries in rural areas, 499-501
- Burdwan P. S., population, 284-5 ; percentage variation, 279 ; variation in density, 169 ; density much above rural average, 168
- Burdwan (T), famous for cutlery and confectionery, 193 ; non-industrial town, 193-4 ; population, 410 ; density, 191

## INDEX

- Burdwan Division, districts, 13; towns, 159, 408; villages classified according to population, 390; roads, 391; area of police stations by density, 166; population with variation since 1872, 284-5; variation in density, 169; variation in population, 201; percentage variation in population, 279; distribution of population in villages and towns, 402; population in towns, 405; number of displaced persons, 399; self-supporting persons in agricultural classes, 455-6; industries in rural areas, 499-501; death from child birth, 372
- Burdwan Fever, cause and nature, 212; effects of, 220, 223, 224-5, 227, 248, 254-9
- Burnpur (T), industrial town, 178; population, 410
- Burwan P. S., population, 290-91; percentage variation in, 282; variation in density 174; density much above rural average, 168
- Busteas, living conditions, 146-8; number in Calcutta, 148
- Calcutta, 236-48; area, 15; Census units, living rooms, 148; number of person to a living room, 145; floor space per person, 146; living conditions in Bustees, 146; population with variation, 288-91; percentage of growth, 211; growth of population, 138-9; density, 137; peculiarities of the population, 246-7; displaced persons, 247; migration, 247-8; percentage of age groups, 246; age groups and married women, 246; size of family, 145; distribution of families, 146; non-family population, 155-6; religion, 68-9; accuracy of Calcutta count, 237-46; infantile mortality, 372-3; agricultural self-supporting persons, 455-6; climatological table, 47-50
- Canning (T), non-industrial town, 192, 409; population, 410
- Canning P. S., non-industrial police station, 192; population, 288-9; percentage variation, 281; variation in density, 172; cash crops, 105; index of financial condition of agricultural classes, 106; prices, 106-7; fetched high price, 109
- Cast and tribes, 65-8
- Census, 1-5; synchronous and non-synchronous, 194; innovations in 1941, 2; departures in 1951, 2; period, 1, 2, 5, 142, 294; divisions, 3; agency, 3; house numbering, 144-5; house, 4; records, 5-6; National Register of Citizens, 2; mauza register, 2; sample training census, 4; publications, 6; accuracy of, 6-10, 140-43; drawbacks, 9, 142; panic in 1872, 267
- Census house, 143-5; per square mile, 156; number in Calcutta, 148; persons per census house, 149; married women per census house, 151
- Central Pay Commission, 89; recommendations, 112, 120
- Chakdah (T), 195; non-industrial town, 191; population, 410; increase due to large Displaced population, 195-7; female ratio, 421; formerly a trade centre, 418
- Chakdah P. S., population, 290-91; variation in density, 174; percentage variation, 282; contains Kanchrapara Development Area Rural Colony, 192
- Champdani (T), industrial town, 178, 409; population, 407
- Chandernagore, 274; description, 14; population, 68, 153, 407; population with variation, 292-3; variations in density, 175; percentage variation in population, 201; percentage of household population, 154; percentage of non-household population, number of occupied houses, 153; reasons for phenomenal growth, 274; religion, 155; non-household population, 153; 68
- Chanditala P. S., entirely rural police station, 177; area, population and density, 177; percentage variation, 280; variation in density, 171
- Chandrakona (T), 194-5, 409; population, 411; a flourishing industrial centre in the 17th century, 417, 195; female ratio, 421
- Chandrakona P. S., 194; population, 286-7; percentage variation in, 280; variation in density, 171; spectacular decline, 194
- Change in the course of big rivers, 18-19
- Chapra P. S., population, 290-91; percentage variation in, 282; variation in density, 174; density below rural average, 165
- Chhatna P. S., population, 284-5; percentage variation in, 279; variation in density, 170; density below rural average, 165
- Chhitmahals, 9, 13-14; enumeration of, 9, 14
- Chinsurah P. S., 169; industrial police station, 178, area, population and density, 178; percentage variation, 280; variation in density, 171
- Chittaranjan, locomotive town, 178, 169, 409; population, 410; density, 178
- Cities and towns, 159-62; definition, 159-60; classified according to female ratio, 422; population class, 425; age composition of males and females, 424; progress in number, 425-8; percentage of population in different classes of, 429-30; religious communities in towns, 431; decay of, 417-8; explanations of the speed of growth of towns, 433-4; role of small residential towns, 192-3

## INDEX

- Civil cases instituted, 1941-50, 130
- Climatic factors and human energy, 386
- Coal, index of industry, 109; mines, 19, 20-3, 25-6, 27; immigrants to coalfields, 65; persons employed in and around mines, 110; average daily earnings of coal miners, 110; disputes of workers, 116; strikes in mines, 116
- Commerce, 522-4, 529; boom, 119; percentage employed vary low, 522; reasons for low percentage, 523-4; retail trade otherwise unclassified improved considerably, 529; employees in commercial establishments, 119
- Community Development Project, 213, 216
- Comparison with principal states of India density, area and population, 131-2; mean decennial growth, 132; persons per household and percentage of non-household population, 133; total and females in cities and towns, 133-4; non-agricultural livelihoods, 134-5; literacy, 135; Displaced persons, 135-6; least and most populous districts and average size of them, 137; self-supporting persons, earning and non-earning dependents, 344; livelihood classes in different states, 357; growth of population in different continents, 368; population in Great Britain, India and West Bengal, 370
- Compensation to workmen, 118
- Compilation, 6
- Contai subdivision and P. S., congenial to growth, 223; more malarious than before, 224; population, 286-7; percentage variation, 280; variation in density, 171; large population speak a corrupt form of Oriya, 65
- Contai (T), non-industrial town, 194; population, 410
- Control of population, 380
- Copper Ores, 27, 28
- Count, houselist, 7, 8; provisional, 5; final, 5, 7, 8; explanation of the differences, 8-9
- Cooch Behar (D), 269-271; area, 15; merging of, 13; Chhitmahals, 13-14; river system, 16; geology, 25; soil, 33-4; castes and tribes, 67; population, 138-9; population with variation, 292-3; variation in density, 175; percentage variation, 283; percentage of age groups, 278; religions, 158-9; villages, mauzas and towns, 68, 389; villages classified, 390; agriculture, 352; more than 80 per cent. depend on distribution of rural population in L. C., 402; agricultural self-supporting persons, 455-6; number of towns, 405
- Cooch Behar P. S., 195; population, 292-3; percentage variation, 283; variation in density, 175
- Cooch Behar (T), population, 410
- Co-operative movement, progress of, 128
- Cotton textiles, 521
- Criminal cases tried during the decade, 129
- Crops, 73-4; paddy, 29-33; jute, 31, 32, 34, 73-4; sugarcane, 29, 31-2, 39; paddy, 73-4; sugarcane, 29, 31-2, 39; tobacco, 32, 33-4; mulbessy, 32-73; maize, 30, 33; bajra, 30; wheat, barley, 29-30; gram, kalai, peas, linseed, 30
- Cultivation, yield per acre, 485, 490; seed requirements per acre, 486; storage loss, 486; milling outturned, 486; producers of paddy and surplus consumption paddy, 488; production and consumption of paddy, 488; production and requirement of rice in West Bengal, 489; population under rationing, 489; growth of population and extension of cultivation, 440, 446-8, 472
- Cultivated land, 1951, 494; suggestions for improvements of, 495-7
- Cyclone of Midnapur of 1942, 77-9; brief surveys of, 77-8; effects of, 78
- Dainhat (T), population, 410
- Damodar, 17; flood of 1943, 83; floods, 212; navigability destroyed, 219
- Damodar Valley Project, 70, 73, 379-80
- Dantan P. S., population, 286-7; percentage variation, 280; variation in density, 170; depopulation, 225
- Darjeeling (D), 265-9; area, 15; position, 16; river system, 16; geology, 26-7; minerals, 27; soil, 33; climatology, 42-5; mauzas, villages and towns, 158-9, 389; roads, 391; population with variation, 292-3; growth of population, 138-9; room limited for an increase, 267; percentage variation in population, 283; variation in density, 175; number in towns, 405; villages classified by population, 390; distribution of rural population in L. C., 402; agricultural self-supporting persons, 255; percentage of age groups, 278; castes and tribes, 67; religions, 68-9; crops, 74; tea, 265-6; panic at the first census, 267
- Darjeeling P. S., non-industrial, 177; population, 292-3; percentage variation, 283; variation in density, 175
- Darjeeling (T), grown vicariously on Nepal and Sikkim, 184; population, 410
- Daspur P. S., 224; centre of trade with a rich agricultural hinterland, area, population and density, 177; percentage variation in, 280; variation in density, 171

## INDEX

- Date of initiation of operations, 2; joining of the Superintendent, 2; preliminary arrangements, 2; commencement of census, 5; beginning of preliminary totals, 5; publication of preliminary totals, 5; Commencement of sorting, 5; the Great Calcutta Killing, 84; partition, 86; Chandernagore's transfer to India, 14; merger of Cooch Behar with West Bengal, 13; first tea garden in Jalpaiguri, 262; first trial of tea plant in Darjeeling, 265
- Death rate, 330; increase due to famine and epidemics, 81-3
- Debra P. S., population, 286-7; percentage variation in, 280; variation in density, 170; susceptible to decrease of population, 225
- Debt of agricultural families, 92, 94-5, 102-5; smaller debt no sign of prosperity, 105; contraction of credit, 105
- Declining livelihoods, 516-27
- Definition of census village, 157, 387-8; census house, 4, 143-5; immigrant, 295; displaced person, literacy, town and city, 159-160
- Deforestation, 58; evil effects of, 59, 319, 224
- Deganga P. S., population, 288-9; percentage variation, 281; variation in density, 172; density much higher than rural average, 168
- Density, 162-197; of the principal states of India, 131-2; general over-all average, 168; of Calcutta, 137; of rural areas, 196, 298, 351; of districts, 164; density and character of police stations, 176; changes in density, 163-4; variation, 169-75; decrease in density between 1911-1921, 165; evidence of increase of rural density, 400-401; average rural density, 165, 175; increase in urban density, 164; density grows in select small areas, 165, 179; progress of density in industrial zones, 190-91; growth of density in 26 rural thans, 180-4; reasons for high density of 4 P. S. of Midnapur, 180-81; high density areas in Hooghly, 181; of Howrah, 181-2; of 24-Parganas, 182; police stations with high densities, 177-8; densities of non-industrial police stations, 177; reasons for the low density of police stations of Jalpaiguri, and Darjeeling, 184-5; uneven distribution of, 179; disproportion between area and population, 180; area and population by density of police stations, 180; police stations containing non-industrial towns with densities, 191-2; rural density directly varies with the fertility of the soil, 196-7; density ceiling, 196, 298, 357
- Dhaniakhali P. S., 227, 228; Santal congregate here, 66; population, 286-7; percentage variation, 280; variation in density, 171
- Dhulian (T), a trading and manufacturing town, 184; population, 410; female ratio, 422
- Dhugguri P. S., population, 292-3; percentage variation in, 283; variation in density, 175; density below rural average, 168
- Diamond Harbour (T), population, 410
- Diamond Harbour Subdivision, population, 288-9; percentage variation, 281; variation in density, 173
- Diamond Harbour P. S., non-industrial police station, 177; area, population and density, 177; percentage variation, 281; variation in density, 173
- Dinhata Subdivision and P. S., population, 292-3; percentage variation, 283; variation in density, 175
- Dinhata (T), population, 411
- Disergarh (T), industrial town, 178; population, 410
- Displaced persons separated in sorting, 3; concentration in Nadia, 8; Calcutta, 148; 24-Parganas, 236; West Dinajpur, 260; Burdwan, 214; Hooghly, 229; Jalpaiguri, 265; number of, 87; in principal States, 136; distribution of, 399; density increased by, 136; liability on agricultural resources, 76; a source of strength and a major problem, 135; livelihood pattern of, 324-6; livelihood pattern by districts, 328; difficulty in rehabilitating agriculture families, 196
- Districts, number and area of, 15; arranged in order of size, 138; average size of, 137; most and least populous, 137; average population of, 137; population of, 138; growth of population of, 138
- Dolomite, 26-7
- Domjur P. S., entirely rural police station, 177; area, population and density, 177; percentage variation in, 280; variation in density, 172
- Domkal P. S., malarious, 254; population, 290-91; percentage variation, 282; variation in density, 174
- Dualistic economy, 342-3, 433-4
- Dubrajpur P. S., contains small coal mines, ores and quarries, 191; population, 284-5; percentage variation in, 279; variation in density, 170; density below rural average, 191
- Dubrajpur (T), mining and quarrying centre, 194; population, 410; female ratio, 422
- Dum Dum (Ordnance), 409; population, 407
- Earners declining, 359

## INDEX

- Earning dependants, 334, 337, 344-5
- East India Company; influence on industry, 432, 439, 376, 415; settlement and collection of land revenue, 437; tyranny and plunder, 437; Bengal grossly overassessed, 438; Permanent settlement mortgaged the future, 439; establishment of squirearchy, 441; ryots in the train of annihilation, 443
- Economic classification schemes comparison between 1931 and 1951, 504-6; departures, 333-4, 342; difficulties in working, 334-47; results subjective, 343, 347; inferences drawn, 348; ISIC and ICEC schemes, 335-36
- Egra, P. S., population, 286-7; percentage variation, 280; variation in density, 171; depopulation, 225.
- Embankments, evil effects of, 70, 212, 279, 223, 224, 227, 254
- Emigrants, 322-4; determinant of, 363; exclusion of migrants to East Bengal, 257; estimate of, 364
- Employment Exchanges Registration, 359-60; placements, 361; Matriculates and Graduates on the register, 361; contraction in employment, 535
- Employer, 384-5, 387, 345-6
- Enemies of standing crops, 63
- Englishbazar (T), 195; flourishing and growing district headquarters town, 195; population, 410
- Englishbazar, P. S.; non-industrial police station, 192; area, population and density, 192; variation in density, 174; percentage variation in, 282; bad out-break of cholera, 257
- Enumeration, 5; period or, 2; reference date, 2; first round, 5; slips, 2; contractions and symbols, 2; of homeless population, 5; how begun, 5; circumstances favourable for, 7, 142; accuracy of, 6-10, 140-43; over-enumeration in 1941 and 1931, 140-41
- Enumerators, 3-5; number of, 3; honorarium, 3, 7; village school-masters as, 3; dearth of, 4; reluctance overcome, 4; gratuitous service or, 7; training of, 4; area of, 3; functions, of, 2; filling in slips and National Register of Citizens, 2; duties during revisionary round, 5.
- Events of the decade, 75-87; World War II, 75-7, 109; Midnapur cyclone, 77-9; Famine, 79-83; Damodar Flood, 83; Grow More Food Campaign, 83-4; Rationing and Controls, 84; Great Calcutta killing, 84-6; Independence, 7; partition, 86-7.
- Falakata, P. S.; population, 292-3; percentage variation in, 283; variation in density, 175.
- Falta, P. S., 182; entirely rural police station, 177; area, population, and density, 177; percentage variation in, 281; variation in density, 173.
- Family, 143-4; commensal, 144; composition of, 144; distribution of Calcutta families, 145-6; families in debt, 103-4; distribution of families by size or debt, 104
- Famine, 1770-72, 200; results of, 375; 1876-78, 1881-1891, 1891-1901; local famines, 1871, 1920, 374; 1943, 79-83, 200; causes of, 79-80; extent of the area involved, 82-3; mortality of, 80, 331-33; age and sex affected by, 80-81, 208; mortality sex proportion; reversed in Calcutta, 81; fallen birth rate, 81; course of mortality, 82; epidemics in the wake of, 82-3; greater ability to control, 374
- Famine (1943) Inquiry Commission, findings about causes or, 79; mortality of, 80; sex ratio of mortality, 81, 226; extent of the area involved, 82-3; observations on the economic level of the State,, 108-9
- Farakka P. S., 184; population, 290-91; percentage variation in, 282; variation in density, 174
- Faridpur P.S., population, 284-5; percentage variation in, 279; variation in density, 169.
- Females, index of stability of urban population, 422; ratio in cities and towns, 422; ratio in residential, industrial and railway towns, 422-3; percentage of immigrant females, 307-11; its significance, 307-8, 295; percentage in rural and urban areas, 310-11; percentage in L. C. V., 320; earners diminished, 384; employment of, 520-21, 525-6, 531, 532-4; effects of famine upon, 81-226; concealment of females in 1872, 267
- Fertility, beauty and wealth of Bengal; Bernier's account, 376-77; Colebrooke's account, 376; decline of, 376
- Fish, principal protein food of the Bengalees scarcity of, 518-19
- Flood, causes of, 382, 70; devastating flood in the Tista, 1950, 263, 58; Damodar Flood, 70, 83; minor floods, 87
- Fragmentation of land, 476-79, 449-50
- Gaighata P. S., population, 288-9; percentage variation in, 281; variation in density, 172
- Gajol P. S., population, 290-91; percentage variation in, 282; variation in density, 174
- Gajol P. S., population, 290-91; percentage variation in, 279; variation in density, 169
- Gangajalghati P. S., population, 284-5; percentage variation, 279; variation in density, 170; decrease due to famine and epidemics, 221

## INDEX

- Gangarampur P. S., population, 292-3; percentage variation in, 283; immigration into, 260; variation in density, 175
- Gangtok P. S., population, 292-3; percentage variation, 283
- Gangtok (T), description, 35; meteorology, 35-6; population, 411
- Garden Reach (C), industrial, 178, 409; population, 407
- Garhbeta P. S., population, 286-7; percentage variation, 280; variation in density, 170; density much below rural average, 191
- Garhbeta (T), 194; population, 411
- Garubathan P. S., population, 292-3; percentage variation in, 283; variation in density, 175
- Garulia (T), industrial town, 178, 409; population, 407
- Geonkhali, 65
- Ghatal P. S., 191, 194, 224; population, 286-7; percentage variation in, 280; variation in density, 171, spectacular decline, 194
- Ghatal subdivision, 224; population, 286-7; percentage variation in, 280; variation in density, 171
- Ghatal (T), 194-5; population, 410; density of, 191; once a famous manufacturing town and port, 417
- Gnatong, 35; meteorology, 36-7
- Goanese, 65
- Gobardanga (T), 195; population, 410; density, 192; had sugar factories, 417-8
- Goghat P. S., population, 284-5; percentage variation in, 280; variation in density, 171
- Gopiballávpur P. S., population, 286-7; percentage variation in, 280; variation in density, 171
- Graphite, 27
- Great Calcutta Killing, 84-6
- Great Divide, 201, 373
- Great Economic Crisis, 109
- Grow more food campaign, 83-4; deforestation resulting from, 58; gains through, 492
- Growth of population, 139, 198-210; growth and movement, 198; variation, 201; factors favourable to growth, 207-8; zones of growth, 208-11; percentages of rural and urban growth, 210; rural natural growth, 211; growth of Calcutta, 211; reasons for steady growth since 1921, 370-72; checks on growth, 379-80
- Habibpur P. S., population, 290-91; percentage variation in, 282; variation in density, 174
- Habra P. S., 192; population, 288-9; percentage variation in, 281; variation in density, 172
- Haldibari P. S., 192; population, 292-3; percentage variation in, 283; variation in density, 175
- Haldibari (T), population, 411
- Halisahar (T), industrial town, 178; 409; population, 407
- Hanskhali P. S., population, 290-91; percentage variation in, 282; variation in density, 174
- Hariharpara P. S., population, 290-91; percentage variation in, 282; variation in density, 174
- Haringhata P. S., population 290-91; percentage variation, 282; variation in density, 174
- Haripal P. S., entirely rural police station, 177, 181; population, 284-5; Santals congregate here, 66; percentage variation in, 280; variation in density, 171
- Harishchandrapur P. S., population, 290-91; variation in density, 174; percentage variation, 282; Bihari settlers, 258
- Haroa P. S., population, 288-9; percentage variation, 281; variation in density, 172
- Hasnabad P. S., population, 288-9; percentage variation, 281; variation in density, 172
- Hemtabad P. S., population, 292-3; percentage variation, 283; depopulation, 260; immigration, 260; variation in density, 175
- Hijal bil, 58
- Hili P. S., non-industrial police station, 177; population, 292-3; percentage variation, 283; variation in density, 175
- Hili (T), population, 410
- Hirapur P. S., industrial police station, 178, 185; population, 284-5; percentage variation, 279; variation in density, 169
- Himalayan West Bengal, 18, 37-8; districts, 37; varying topography, and climate, 38; temperature and rainfall, 38-44
- Hooghly (D), 227-30; area, 15; river system, 17; geology, 23; soil, 30-31; mauzas, villages and towns, 158-9, 389; roads, 391; castes and tribes, 66; crops, 74; population, 138; growth of population, 138-9; variation in population, 201; variation in density, 171; percentage variation in population, 280; population with variation, 286-7; growth and movement of population, 227-30; migration, 229-30; percentage of age groups, 276; percentage of age groups and married women, 229; number in towns, 405; distribution of rural population in L. C., 402; agricultural self-supporting persons, 455-6; industries in rural areas, 499-501; religions, 68-9; displaced persons, 229

## INDEX

- Hooghly-Chinsurah (T), population, 407; once an important port, 417
- Hot springs, 20, 28
- House, defined, 4, 143-5; numbering, 4, 7, 144-5; time of, 4, 7; difficulties of, 4; house list and final estimate, 7-8; number of occupied houses, household and institutional houses, 153
- Howrah City, 409; population, 407
- Howrah (D), 230-33; area, 15; river system, 17; geology, 23-4; mauzas, villages and towns, 158-9, 389; roads, 391; crops, 74; price of rice, 106; population, 138; percentage growth of population, 138-9; growth of population, 230-31; variation in population, 201; variation in density, 171; percentage variation in population, 281; population with variation, 286-7; percentage of age groups, 276; age groups and married women, 231; migration, 232; distribution of rural population in L. C., 402; agricultural self-supporting persons, 455-6; number in towns, 405; living conditions in the city, 146; industries in rural areas, 499-501; castes and tribes, 66; religion, 68-9
- Ichhapur Defence Estate, industrial town, 178, 409; population, 407
- Illambazar P. S., population, 284-5; percentage variation in, 279; variation in density, 170
- Immigrants, determinant of, 296, 363; explanation of, 214; districts of origin of, 318-20; migration between West Bengal districts and other States of India, 315; immigration from outside India, 322; unsteady and impermanent character of immigration, 307; immigration into rural areas, 310; immigration into urban areas, 311, 418-19; zones of concentration of, 312-3; immigrants by sex and rural urban break-up, 311, 317; ages of, 317-8; occupations of, 318-20; livelihood classes of, 313-4, 324-25, 327-8; immigrants and land, 317; their contribution to industry, 318, 308; nationalities of non-Indian immigrants, 322
- Immobility of, agricultural classes, 385; Little Jack Horner of a district, 218
- Indas P. S., population, 284-5; Muslims found in great strength, 65; percentage variation, 279; variation in density, 170
- Independent worker, 334-5; difficulties of Independent workers with small capital, 383
- Indpur P. S., population, 284-5; percentage variation, 279; variation in density, 170
- Industry, wartime expansion, 109; distribution of, 74-75; industrial zones, 185-6; 191; industrial police stations, 178; in and near Asansol in Calcutta, 24-Parganas, Howrah and Hooghly, 75; in rural areas, 498-501; dependence on outsiders, 423; nature of workers, 423; effects of workers upon, 423; changes in, 432; capital in, 432-433; decay of indigenous, 432; jute, 107; tea, 262, 265-6; coal, 19-23, 25-7
- Industrial worker, 110-18, 423-33; nature of, 423; temporary and uncertain, 424; compared with English workers, 424; effects upon industry, 423; evil effects of non-family life, 308; reasons for the paucity of the Bengali in the labour force, 433
- Industrial disputes, classified by industry, 115-6
- Influenza, 1918-19, 366, 207-8
- Irrigation, 69-72; river the smallest source of 69; ill-planned interference with rivers, 70-71; flood irrigation, 72; less in permanently settled area, 381-2, 390-91
- Itahar P. S., population, 292-3; percentage variation in, 283; immigration into, 260; variation in density, 175
- Jagacha P. S., entirely rural police station, 177; area, population and density, 177; percentage variation in, 280; variation in density, 172
- Jagaddal P. S., industrial police station, 178; area, population and density, 178; percentage variation in, 281; variation in density, 172
- Jagatballavpur P. S., entirely rural police station, 177; area, population and density, 177; percentage variation in, 280; variation in density, 172
- Jalangi P. S., malarious, 25; population, 290-91; percentage variation in, 282; variation in density, 174
- Jalpaiguri (D), 262-5; area, 15; loss in area by partition, 13; river system, 16; geology, 25-6; soil, 33; climatology, 39-42; crops, 74; price of rice, 106; occupied villages, 389; roads, 391; population, 138; population with variation, 292-3; percentage variation in population, 283; variation in density, 175; growth of population, 138-9; high increase, 262; age groups, 278; number in towns, 305; distribution of rural population in L. C., 402; agricultural self-supporting persons, 455; villages classified according to population, 390; castes and tribes, 67; religion, 68-9; polyglot character of the population, 262; mortality from fever, 262; tea gardens, 262; industries in rural areas, 499-501
- Jalpaiguri P. S., 192; population, 292-3; percentage variation in, 283; variation in density, 175
- Jalpaiguri (T), 195; population, 410
- Jamalpur P. S., 212; population, 284-5; percentage variation in, 279; variation in density, 171

## INDEX

- Jambani P. S., prospective, small industrial area, 191; population, 286-7; percentage variation in, 280; variation in density, 171
- Jamuria P. S., 169; industrial police station, 178; area, population and density, 178; percentage variation in, 279; variation in density, 169
- Jangipara P. S., entirely rural police station, 177; area, population and density, 17; percentage variation, 280; variation in density, 171
- Jangipur Subdivision, population, 290-91; percentage variation, 282; variation in density, 174
- Jangipur (T), non-industrial town, 177; population, 410; former glory, 418; female ratio, 422
- Jaynagar-Majilpur (T), 195; suburban town, 195; area population, 410; density, 192; female ratio in, 422
- Jaynagar P. S., 192; population, 288-9; percentage variation in, 281; variation in density, 172
- Jaypur P. S., population, 284-5; percentage variation in, 279; decrease due to famine and epidemic, 221; variation in density, 170
- Jhargram P. S., population, 286-7; percentage variation in 280; variation in density, 171
- Jhargram Subdivision, population, 286-7; percentage variation in, 280; variation in density, 171
- Jhargram (T), non-industrial town, 191; population, 410; jhils or bills, 24, 32, 70
- Jiaganj-Azimganj (T), area, population, 410; displaced population, cause of decline, 418; female ratio in, 422
- Jiaganj P. S., malarious, 254; population, 290-91; percentage variation in, 282; variation in density, 174
- Jore Bungalow P. S., population, 292-3; percentage variation in, 283; variation in density, 175
- Jute, grown in West Bengal districts, 31-2, 34, 73-4; encouraging self-sufficiency, 107; total yield and acreage in Indian sub-continent, 106; Indian, 107; control over sowing and lifting of it, 109; price, 107; export of raw jute dwindling, 107-8; requirements of Indian mills, 107; import of raw jute, 108; exports of gunnies, 108, 493-4; disputes in jute mills and presses, 115; strikes, 117; basic wage rate of workers, 113; welfare facilities for workers, 117-8; importance of jute industry, 107
- Kakdwip P. S., population, 288-9; percentage variation in, 281; variation in density, 173
- Kalantar, 32, 24, 254-5, 58
- Kalchini P. S., population, 292-3; percentage variation, 283; fantastic increase, 262; variation in density, 175; fantastic increase before 1921 and impressive between 1901-51, 262
- Kaliachak P. S., entirely rural police station, 177; area, population and density, 1; percentage variation in, 282; variation in density, 174; population transplanted from Murshidabad, 182-3, 257
- Kaliaganj P. S., population, 292-3; percentage variation in, 283; variation in density, 175
- Kaliganj P. S., population, 290-91; percentage variation, 282; immigration, 260; variation in density, 174
- Kalimpong (T), 195; gateway to sikkim and Tibet, 195; climate, 38; population, 410
- Kalimpong Subdivision, population, 292-3; percentage variation in, 283; variation in density, 175; phenomenal growth before 1921, 267
- Kalimpong P. S., 192; population, 292-3; percentage variation in, 283; variation in density, 175
- Kalna (T), 194; non-industrial town, 191; population, 410; density, 191; once a flourishing port, 416
- Kalna Subdivision, 211-2, 213; population, 284-5; percentage variation in, 279; variation in density, 169; suffered heavily before 1921, 211
- Kalna P. S., 191; population, 284-5; percentage variation in, 279; variation in density, 169
- Kamarhati (T), industrial town, 178, 409; population, 407
- Kanchrapara Development Area Rural Colony (T), population, 410
- Kanchrapara (T), industrial town, 178, 409; population, 407; female ratio, 422
- Kandi Subdivision, population, 290-91; percentage variation, in 282; variation in density, 174
- Kandi P. S., 192; slowly improved in agricultural prosperity, 195; population, 290-91; percentage variation in, 282; variation in density, 174
- Kandi (T), 195; population, 410; female ratio in, 422
- Kanksa P. S., large Muslim settlement, 65; population, 284-5; percentage variation in, 279; variation in density, 169
- Karimpur P. S., population, 290-91; percentage variation in, 282; variation in density, 174
- Katwa (T), 194; population, 410; once a flourishing port, 416



## INDEX

- Katwa P. S., 191; population, 284-5; percentage variation in, 279; variation in density, 169
- Katwa Subdivision, 211, 212; population, 284-5; percentage variation in, 279; variation in density, 169
- Keshiari P. S., population, 284-5; percentage variation in, 280; variation in density, 170
- Keshpur P. S., population, 284-5; percentage variation in, 280; variation in density, 170
- Ketugram P. S., population, 284-5; percentage variation in, 279; variation in density, 169
- Khanakul P. S., free from diseases, 229; entirely rural police station, 177; area, population and density, 177; percentage variation in, 280; variation in density 171
- Khandaghosh P. S., population, 284-5; percentage variation, 279; variation in density, 169
- Kharar (T), population, 411; once a flourishing manufacturing place, 417; female ratio, 422
- Kharba P. S., population, 290-91; percentage variation in, 282; variation in density, 174
- Khardah (T), 409; population, 407
- Khardah P. S., industrial police station, 178; area, population and density, 177; percentage variation in, 281; variation in density, 172
- Khargpur (C), industrial town, 178; Indian Institute of Technology premises to give it residential character, 191; population, 409; a conglomerate population, 65; female ratio in, 422; variation in density, 170
- Khargpur (local) P. S., population, 286-7; percentage variation in, 280; variation in density, 170
- Kharagpur (town) P. S., population, 286-7; percentage variation in, 280; variation in density, 170
- Khargram P. S., population, 290-91; percentage variation in, 282; variation in density, 174
- Kharibari P. S., population, 292-3; percentage variation in, 283; variation in density, 175
- Khatra P. S., 191; population, 284-5; percentage variation, 279; variation in density, 170
- Khatra (T), 194; population, 411; density, 191; female ratio in, 422
- Khirpai (T), 194-5; population, 411; had English, French and Dutch factories, 417, 195; female ratio, 422
- Khedgree P. S., population, 286-7; percentage variation in, 280; variation in density, 171
- Khayrasol P. S., has coal mines, ores and quarries, 191; population, 284-5; reached saturation point, 191; percentage variation in, 279; variation in density, 170
- Kishan, 97, 99-100
- Konnagar (T), industrial town, 178, 409; population, 407
- Kotrung (T), industrial town, 178, 409; population, 407
- Kotulpur P. S., Muslims ground in great strength, 65; population, 284-5; percentage variation in, 279; variation in density, 170
- Krishans, 255
- Krishnaganj P. S., population, 290-91; percentage variation in, 282; variation in density, 174
- Krishnagar (T), population, 410; causes of decline, 418
- Krishnagar P. S., non-industrial police station, 177; area, population and density, 177; percentage variation in, 282; variation in density, 173
- Kulpi P. S., entirely rural police station, 177; area, population and density, 177; percentage variation in, 281; variation in density, 173
- Kulti P. S., population, 284-5; percentage variation in, 279; variation in density, 169
- Kulti (T), population, 410
- Kumarganj P. S., population, 292-3; percentage variation in, 283; immigration into, 260; variation in density, 174; are of specially rapid growth, 267
- Kumargram P. S., population, 292-3; percentage variation in, 283; fantastic increase in, 262; variation in density, 175; increment fantastic before 1921 and very impressive after that, 262
- Kurseong subdivision and P. S., first tea garden in the district, 266; population, 292-3; percentage variation in, 283; variation in density, 175; area of rapid growth, 267
- Kurseong (T); railway and residential town, 267; population, 410
- Kushmandi P. S., population, 292-3; percentage variation, 283; variation in density, 175
- Labhpur P. S., population, 284-5; percentage variation, 279; variation in density, 170
- Labours of: Census Department, 6
- Lachung, 35; rainfall in, 37
- Lalbagh Subdivision, population, 290-91; percentage variation, 282; variation in density, 174

## INDEX

- Lalgola P. S., population, 290-91; percentage variation, 282; variation in density, 174
- Land and interest of: certain castes, 355-6
- Land tenure, 469-72
- Leather and leather products, 521
- Legal and business services, 527
- Livelihood lagging behind population, 531-2
- Livelihood classes, 332-3; pattern of general population and immigrants from other states of India, 314, 324-5; pattern of displaced population, 324-5, 328; patterns of scheduled castes and tribes, 355-6; ratio of immigrants from other states of India to total immigrants, 327
- Livelihood class I material condition of, 89; income and expenditure of; 90; sales and mortgages of, 91; sources of loan of, 92; objects of loan of, 92
- Livelihood class II; material condition of, 93; dispossession of aboriginals in Malda, 93; sources of loans of, 94; objects of loans of, 95
- Livelihood Class III; material condition, 95; sources of loan, 95; objects of loan, 95; rate of wages (1908-40), 96; wages (1947-50), 97; daily agricultural wage rate of, 99; non-agricultural work; wage rate, 99; days of employment of, 97; types of work of, 98; reasons for unemployment of, 98; seasonal variation in employment of, 98; employment of 'Kishan', 100; terms of employment of 'Kishan', 100; annual income of, 100; annual expenditure of, 101; income and expenditure of, 101; expenditure of agricultural and industrial labour, 102
- Livelihood Class IV, 347-8; material condition, 102-3; sources of loan and objects of loan, 102
- Livelihood Class V, 522-8; material condition, 109-18; number of persons employed in and about coal mines, 110; average daily earnings, 110; wages of industrial blacksmith, 111; fitters, 111; firemen, 112; unskilled labour, 112-3
- Livelihood Class VI, material condition, 118-9; trade boom, 119; compulsory weekly holiday to shop assistants, 119; attractive salaries, 119
- Livelihood class VII, material condition, 119-20
- Livelihood Class VIII, 524-7, 529-30; material condition, 120-27; percentage distribution of families by monthly income, 121; percentage distribution of families by monthly expenditure, 122; size of the family, 122; number of earners and dependants per family, 122; average monthly income per consumption unit, 122; surplus and deficit budget by income group, 123; items of expenditure, 123; expenditure on items of food, 124; number of persons per room, 124; number of adult male per room, 124; middle class cost of living index, 125-7
- Livelihood pattern, 333-62; comparison of the questionnaires, 333-4; departures, 334-5; ISIC and ICEC Schemes, 335-62; Registrar General's instructions, 336-41; dualistic economy, 342-3; difficulties in writing, 334-50; results subjective, 343; distribution of economic status in different states, 344; secondary economic status, 345; non-agricultural self-supporting persons in different states, 346
- Living conditions in Calcutta and Howrah, 146-8
- Literacy; percentage of literates, in different States, 135
- Madarihat P. S., population, 292-3; percentage variation in, 283; variation in density, 175
- Magra P. S., 228, 229, 169; industrial police station, 178; area, population and density, 178; percentage variation in, 280; variation in density, 171
- Magrahat P. S., entirely rural police station, 177; area, population and density, 177; percentage variation in, 281 variation in density, 173
- Mahammadbazar P. S., 216; selected for community development, 216; population, 284-5; percentage variation in, 279; variation in density, 170
- Maheshtala P. S., industrial police station, 178; area, population and density, 178; percentage variation in, 281; variation in density, 172
- Mahisadal P. S., 180-81; especially fertile-rice producing area, 180; population, 286-7; percentage variation in, 280; variation in density, 171; Mahisyas, 65-7
- Mainaguri P. S., population, 292-3; percentage variation in, 283; variation in density, 175
- Mal P. S., population, 292-3; percentage variation in, 283; variation density, 175
- Malaria, 378-9
- Malda, 257-9; area, 15; loss by partition, 13; river system, 16; geology, 25; soil, 32; climatology, 54-7; crops, 74; price of rice, 106; mauzas, villages and towns, 158-9, 389; roads, 391; population, 138; population with variation, 290-91; percentage variation in population, 282; variation in density, 174; growth of population, 138-9; percentage of age groups, 277; age groups and married women, 258; number in towns, 405; distribution of rural population in L. C., 402; nearly 70 per cents. depend on agri-

## INDEX

- culture, 252; agricultural self-supporting persons, 455-6; castes and tribes 67; religion, 68-9; dispossession of aborigines, 93; land employed to capacity and its low productivity, 259; industries in rural areas, 499-501; families in debt, 104
- Malda P. S., 192; population, 290-91; percentage variation in, 282; variation in density, 174
- Malthusian dilemma, 384; Malthusian checks acting on the population of India, 369; West Bengal, 380
- Mangalkot P. S., 211; large Muslim settlement, 65; population, 284-5; percentage variation in, 279; variation in density, 169
- Manikchak P. S., population, 290-91; percentage variation in, 282; immigrants from Murshidabad, 257; Bihar, 258; variation in density, 174
- Manteswar P. S., population, 284-5; percentage variation in, 279; variation in density, 169
- Material condition of the people, 1931-50, 88-128; sources of the data of, 88-9
- Mathabhanga Subdivision and police station, 192; population, 292-3; percentage variation in, 283; variation in density, 175
- Mathaghanga (T), non-industrial town, 192; population, 411
- Mathurapur P. S., population, 288-9; percentage variation in, 281; variation in density, 173
- Matiali P. S., population, 292-3; percentage variation in, 283; variation in density, 175
- Mauza, 3; mauza register, 2-3; total number of, 159; mauza and village, 387
- Mayurakshi Project, 70, 73, 379-80, 216-7
- Mayureswar P. S., population, 284-5; percentage variation in, 279; variation in density, 170
- Mejhia P. S., 221; extension of industrial zone, 191, population, 284-5; percentage variation in, 279; decrease due to famine and epidemic, 221; variation in density, 170
- Mekliganj Subdivision and police station, population, 292-3; percentage variation in, 283; variation in density, 175
- Mekliganj (T), non-industrial town, 192; population, 411
- Memari (T), 193; conspicuous for rice and oil mills, 193; population, 411
- Memari P. S., 191-3; a prosperous agricultural police station, 193; population, 284-5; percentage variation in, 279; variation in density, 169
- Meteorological table of Gangtok, 35-6; Gangtong, 36-7; Jalpaiguri, 39-42; Darjeeling, 42-3; Calcutta, 47; Asansol, 50-3; Malda, 54-7
- Metiabruz P. S., industrial police station, 178; area, population and density, 178; percentage variation in, 281; variation in density, 172
- Middle class, 432; growth of, 442, 450; relation with the tiller, 450-51; non-productive, 451; material condition of, 121-7; distribution of families by incomes, 121; distribution by expenditures, 122; by number of persons per room, 124; by number of adult male per room, 124; largest expenditure on food, 123; chronic protein and fat hunger, 123; expenditure on items of food, 124; on housing 124; cost of living index, 125-7; slowest to match incomes with rising cost of living, 127; tardy in bargaining, 127; composition and size of family, 122; earners per family, 122
- Midnapur (D), 223-27; area, 15; shape, boundary and river system, 17-8; geology, 22; soil, 30; crops, 73; price of rice, 106; mauzas, villages and towns, 158-9, 389; roads, 391; heavy pressure on soil, 302; embankments and their baneful effects, 223-4; population, 138; a large conglomeration of castes and tribes, 65; variation in population, 201; percentage variation in population, 280; percentage growth of population, 138-9; growth of population, 223-6; variation in density, 170; different patterns in different subdivisions, 223; percentage of age groups, 275; age groups and married women, 225; migration, 226-7; heavy suffering between 1942-45, 225; number in towns, 405; more than 80 per cent. depend on agriculture, 352; distribution of rural population in L. C., 402; agricultural self-supporting persons, 455-6; rural indebtedness, 103; families in debt, 103; rural industries, 499-501
- Midnapur P. S., 191; population, 286-7; percentage variation in, 280; variation in density, 170
- Midnapur (T), 194; once famed as a sanatorium, 224; population, 410
- Migrants, 307-28; proportion to total population, 307; low female ratio, 308; migration between West Bengal and other States, 309; in rural areas, 310; in towns, 311; in zones, 312; livelihood of, 313-4; in districts, 315-6; interest in land, 317; sex ratio in Agricultural

## INDEX

- classes, 317; ages of, 317-8; Concentration in non-agricultural occupations, 318; districts of origin, 318-9; as industrial labour, 319-20; streams of immigration from other states, 329; from outside India, 321-2; livelihood pattern of general population immigrants and displaced persons, 324-6; livelihood pattern by districts, 327; livelihood pattern of displaced persons, 328
- Migration, 294-322; ways of recording, 294-5; determination and types of, 295; inter district, 297-305;- classification of, 300-1; inter-Division, 299-301; from Midnapur to industrial districts, 301-302; from other districts to industrial ones, 302; among industrial districts, 302; traffic around Calcutta, 303; from Murshidabad to Malda, 304; interstate, 304-6; proportion to total of each district, 307; trends of internal migrations, 300-1; causes of growing immobility of the people, 304-5; interstate migration from Pakistan, 305; percentage of inter-district, interstate migration and of immigration from Pakistan, percentage of immigrants from other states of India and Pakistan also of males and females, 306-7; migration between West Bengal and other states, 309-10**
- Milk and milk products, 520-21**
- Minerals; coal, 19-20, 21, 22; copper ores, 26, 27, 28; iron ores, 21, 26, 27; fire-clay, 21; pottery clay, 21; brick clay, 21; wolfram, 22; mica-schists, 21, 22; quartzites, 22; soapstone, 23; common salt, 23; dolomite, 25, 26; graphite, 27**
- Mineral springs, 20, 26, 28**
- Mirik P. S., population, 292-3; percentage variation in, 283; variation in density, 175**
- Mohanpur P. S., population, 286-7; percentage variation in, 280; variation in density, 170**
- Moplah Rebellion, 432**
- Mortality, 371; infantile, 371; maternal, 372; famine, 331, 80-81, 226**
- Moyna P. S., 180-1; entirely rural, 177; area, population, and density, 177; percentage variation in, 280; variation in density, 171**
- Muhammadbazar, same as Mahammadbazar**
- Murari P. S., 216; population, 284-5; percentage variation in, 279; variation in density, 170**
- Murshidabad (D), 253-7; area, 15; loss by partition, 13; shape and river system, 16; nature enterfered with, 254-5; decay of distributory river system, 257; geology, 24-5; soil, 32; deterioration of soil, 256; mauzas, villages and towns, 158-9, 389; roads, 391; population, 138; growth of population, 138-9, 255-6; two zones, 253-4; population with variation, 290-91; percentage variation in population, 282; variation in density, 174; percentage of age groups, 277; age groups and married women, 256; immigration, emigration and sending out brides, 256; number in towns, 405; nearly 70 per cent. depend on agriculture, 352; distribution of rural population in L. C., 402; rural industries, 499-501; agricultural self-supporting persons, 456; castes and tribes, 66-7; religion, 68-9**
- Murshidabad P. S., 192; population, 290-91; percentage variation in, 282; variation in density, 174**
- Murshidabad (T), 195; population, 410; density, 192; female ratio in, 422**
- Mutiney, 432**
- Nabadwip (T), population, 410; density, 169, female ratio, 422**
- Nabadwip P. S., 168-9; highest density among non-industrial police stations, 169, 177; area, population and density, 177; percentage variation in, 282; variation in density, 174**
- Nabagram P. S., population, 290-91; percentage variation in, 282; variation in density, 174**
- Nadia (D), 248-53; area, 15; loss by partition, 13; shape and river system, 17; geology, 24; soil, 31-2; price of rice, 106; mauzas, villages and towns, 158-9, 389; roads, 391; population, 138; growth of population, 138-9, 248-52; depopulation, 248-55; variation in density, 173; population with variation, 290-91; percentage variation in population, 282; percentage of age groups, 277; age groups and married women, 252; migration, 253; number in towns, 405; distribution of rural population in L. C., 402; agricultural self-supporting persons, 455-7; rural industries, 499-501; castes and tribes, 66; religion, 68-9**
- Nagrakata P. S., population, 292-3; percentage variation, 283; variation in density, 175**
- Naihati (T), 409; population, 407**
- Naihati P. S., industrial police station, 178; area, population and density, 288-9; percentage variation, 281; variation in density, 172**
- Nakasipara P. S., population, 290-91; percentage variation, 282; variation in density, 174**

## INDEX

- Nalhati P. S., 215-6 ; population, 284-5 ; percentage variation, 279 ; variation in density, 170
- Nandigram P. S., 225 ; population, 286-7 ; percentage variation in, 280 ; variation in density, 171
- Nanoor P. S., population, 284-5 ; percentage variation, 279 ; variation in density, 170
- Narayangarh P. S., population, 286-7 ; percentage variation, 280 ; variation in density, 170
- Nasya, 67
- National Register of Citizens, 2, 4, 7, 142
- Natural population, 362-6 ; explanation of, 214 ; increase in 1941 fantastic, 362 ; 1941 figures examined, 363-4 ; estimate of, 1891-1951, 364-5 ; estimate of, 1931-1951, 365 ; Causes responsible for deficit, 365
- Nawada P. S., population, 290-91, percentage variation in, 282 ; variation in density, 174
- Nayagram P. S., population, 286-7 ; percentage variation in, 280 ; variation in density, 171
- Neamatput (T), 409 ; population, 410
- Noapara P. S., industrial police station, 178 ; area, population and density, 178 ; percentage variation in, 281 ; variation in density, 172
- Non-agricultural self-supporting persons, classified, 508-13 ; Self-supporting persons in each non-agricultural economic division and subdivision, 514-6 ; Livelihood class V shows decline, 517 ; Non-agricultural livelihoods have not kept pace with the growth of population, 384
- North Barrackpur (T), 178, 409 ; population, 407
- North Dum Dum (T), 409 ; population, 407
- Old Malda (T), 195, population, 411
- Onda P. S., 219, 220, 221 ; population, 284-5 ; percentage variation, 279 ; decrease due to famine and epidemics, 221 ; variation in density, 170
- Ondal (T), 178 ; population, 411
- Ondal P. S., 213 ; industrial police station, 178 ; area, population and density, 178 ; percentage variation, 279 ; variation in density, 169
- Overcrowded and uneconomic agriculture, 357
- Panchla P. S., 230 ; entirely rural police station, 177 ; area, population and density, 177 ; percentage variation in 281 ; variation in density, 172
- Pandua P. S., 229 ; population, 286-7 ; percentage variation in, 280 ; variation in density, 171
- Panihati (T), industrial town, 178, 409 ; population, 407
- Pansidewa P. S., population, 292-3 ; percentage variation, 283 ; variation in density, 175
- Panskura P. S., entirely rural police station, 177 ; area, population and density, 177 ; percentage variation, 280 ; variation in density, 171
- Partition, 13 ; effects of, 13-4 ; movement of population due to, 86-7
- Pasture, 74 ; pasturage dwindling, 517
- Pataspur P. S., population, 286-7 ; percentage variation in, 280 ; variation in density, 171
- Patrasair (T), 194 ; population, 411 ; once noted for its manufacture, 417 ; female ratio in, 422
- Patrasair P. S., 191 ; population, 284-5 ; percentage variation in, 279 ; variation in density, 170 ; decrease due to famine, and epidemic, 221
- Permanent Settlement, 435-54 ; history leading to, 436-8 ; revenue demands based on company's needs not on ryot's assets, 438-9 ; changes brought about by, 441-3 ; extension of cultivation, 439, 472 ; consequences of, 469-70, 449-51
- Pingla P. S., population, 286-7 ; percentage variation, 280 ; variation in density, 170
- Polba P. S., 227, 228 ; population, 286-7 ; percentage variation, 280 ; variation in density, 171
- Police stations, total, density and character, 176 ; classification of, 104 ; high density police station with area population and density, 177-8 ; number in Calcutta and Howrah, 168
- Population, general, 131-53 ; density, area and population of principal States of India, 131 ; mean decennial growth and sex ratio, 132 ; persons per household and non-household population, 133 ; sex ratio in urban area, 133 ; non-agricultural urban population, 134 ; population of districts, 138 ; growth of population, 138-9 ; course of growth, 139 ; distribution of population, 139-40 ; household and non-household population, 152-3 ; percentage of household population, 154 ; percentage of non-household population, 155 ; non-family population in industrial area, 155-6 ; Rural, 387-403 ; percentage in different livelihood classes, 402 ; percentage in different classes of towns, 429-30 ; crisis of rural population, 403 ;

## INDEX

- Urban, 405; distribution of urban population, 405; uneven distribution, 407-8; livelihood of urban population, 433-4; growth and movement of population, 198-211; erratic up to 1921, 201-2; reason for retarded growth, 207-8; reasons for continuous and uniform growth since, 1921, 203-7, 369-74; zones of growth, 209; percentage variation of population, 1901-1951, 209-10; disparity in rural and urban growth, 210-211; growth in India, West Bengal and other countries, 367-9; tardy growth in undeveloped continents, 368; characteristics of India's growth, 369; slow and fluctuating, 368-9; India's growth rate, 368, 370; causes affecting India's growth, 370ff; reasons for recently accelerated growth, 369, 373, 377; problem of population and its urgency, 384; points of study, 384-5; uneven distribution, 384; yield per acre smallest in the world, 384; livelihoods lagging far behind the growth of population, 52-3
- Presidency division, districts, 13; police stations, 166; towns, 408; population with variation, 288-9; percentage variation in population, 281; variation in population, 201; percentage of population in villages and towns of various population sizes, 402; number in towns, 405; number of displaced persons, 399
- Pressure on the soil, 38; reduction by natural calamity, 298; by emigration, 298; by check on growth, 299
- Primary census abstract or village Directory, 3, 6; Census unit, 3; economic status of total, rural and urban population, 343-5, 337
- Production and procurement of food in West Bengal, 492-3
- Purbasthali P. S., population, 284-5; percentage variation, 279; variation in density, 169
- Pulbazar P. S., population, 292-3; percentage variation, 283; variation in density, 175
- Pursura P. S., 229; entirely rural police station, 177; area, population and density, 177; percentage variation, 280; variation in density, 171
- Raghunathganj P. S., 254; non-industrial police station, 177; population, 290-91; percentage variation, 282; variation in density, 174
- Raiganj Subdivision population, 292-3; percentage variation, 283; variation in density, 175
- Raiganj P. S., 192; population, 292-3; percentage variation, 283; depopulation, 260; heavy influx of Displaced persons, 260; variation in density, 175
- Raiganj (T), 195; population, 410
- Raina P. S., population, 284-5; percentage variation, 279; variation in density, 169
- Rainfall in Gangtok, 36; Gnatong, 37; Lachung, 37; Himálayan West Bengal 38; Jalpaiguri, 40; Darjeeling, 43; West Bengal Plains, 46; Calcutta, 48; Asansol, 51; Malda, 55
- Raipur P. S., population, 284-5; percentage variation, 279; variation in density, 170
- Rajarhat P. S., entirely rural police station, 177; area, population and density, 177; percentage variation in, 282; variation in density, 172;
- Rajbansis, 67
- Rajganj P. S., population, 292-3; percentage variation in, 283; variation in density, 175
- Rajnagar P. S., population, 284-5; percentage variation in, 279; variation in density, 170; Large Muslim settlement, 65
- Rajpur (T), population, 410; female ratio in, 422
- Ramjibanpur (T), 194-5; population, 411; once a manufacturing market town, 417; female ratio in, 422
- Ramnagar P. S., population, 286-7; percentage variation in, 280; variation in density, 171
- Rampurhat Subdivision, 215-6; population, 284-5; percentage variation in, 279; variation in density, 170
- Rampurhat P. S., population, 284-5; percentage variation in, 279; variation in density, 170
- Rampurhat (T), 191; railway centre, 194, 216; population, 410
- Rangli Rangliot P. S., population, 292-3; percentage variation, 283; variation in density, 175
- Ranaghat Subdivision, population, 290-91; percentage variation, 282; variation in density, 174
- Ranaghat P. S., 192; population, 290-91; percentage variation, 282; variation in density, 174
- Ranaghat (T), 195; population, 410; density, 192
- Ranibandh P. S., population, 284-5; percentage variation, 279; variation in density, 170
- Raniganj P. S., 169; industrial police station, 178; area, population and density, 178; percentage variation, 279; variation in density, 169
- Raniganj (T), 178; population, 410
- Raninagar P. S., population, 290-91; percentage variation, 282; variation in density, 171

## INDEX

- Ratna P. S., population, 290-91 ; percentage variation, 282 ; immigrants from Murshidabad, 257 ; from Bihar, 258 ; variation in density, 174
- Regional offices for sorting and compilation, 5
- Religions and their percentage to population, 68-9
- Religions, charitable and welfare services, 527
- Revenue and rent, 377, 442, 469, 472-74 ; two systems of land settlement in Murshidabad, 255 ; *bhag* rent, 220, 448-49 ; *fasli jama*, 255 ; *jama*, 251 ; *Krishani*, 255 ; *sanja* rent, 220 ; *utbandi* 250-51, 255
- Rice price of, 106
- Rishra (T), 409 ; population, 407
- River systems, 15-18 ; rivers the smallest source of irrigation, 69 ; rivers are more curse than a boon, 70 ; ill-planned interference with rivers, 70-1 ; Nadia rivers receiving the drainage of the country, 249-50
- Roads, 390-99 ; development plan 395 ; effect on the distribution of industry and population, 396-99
- Rural density and proportion of population supported by agriculture, 350-52
- Ryot, as slave, 440 ; rights of, 441-2 ; treatment of, 442-3 ; degradation and loss of rights, 443 ; three F's to, 443 ; distress of, 444-5 ; money squeezed out of, 445 ; at the mercy of zemindar, 452 ; *begal* for reclamation, 445 ; rent doubted, 446 ; regulations and Act for protection of, 449, 452 ; causes of the economic difficulties of, 470
- Sabang P. S., population, 286-7 ; percentage variation, 280 ; variation in density, 170
- Sadar subdivision, Birbhum and police station, population, 284-5 ; percentage variation in, 279
- Sadar subdivision, Burdwan, and police station, population, 284-5 ; percentage variation in, 279
- Sadar subdivision, Cooch Behar and police station, population, 292-3 ; percentage variation in, 283
- Sadar subdivision, Darjeeling, and police station, population, 292-3 ; percentage variation in, 283
- Sadar subdivision, Hooghly, and police station, population, 286-7 ; percentage variation in, 280
- Sadar subdivision, Howrah, and police station, population with variation, 286-7 ; percentage variation in, 281
- Sadar subdivision, Jalpaiguri, and police station, population, 292-3 ; percentage variation in, 283
- Sadar subdivision, Malda, and police station, population, 290-91 ; percentage variation in, 282
- Sadar subdivision, Midnapur and police station, population, 286-7 ; percentage variation in, 280
- Sadar subdivision, Murshidabad, and police stations, population, 290-91 ; percentage variation in, 282
- Sadar subdivision, Nadia, and police station, population, 290-91 ; percentage variation in, 282
- Sadar subdivision, 24-Parganas, and police station, population, 288-9 ; percentage variation in, 281
- Sagar P. S., population, 288-9 ; percentage variation in, 281 ; variation in density, 173
- Sagardighi P. S., population, 290-91 ; percentage variation in, 282 ; variation in density, 174
- Sainthia P. S., 191 ; population, 284-5 ; percentage variation in, 279 ; variation in density, 170
- Sainthia (T), 194, 216 ; population, 410
- Salbani, population, 286-7 ; percentage variation in, 280 ; variation in density, 170
- Saltora P. S., extension of industrial zone, 191 ; population, 284-5 ; percentage variation in, 279 ; variation in density, 170
- Salanpur P. S., 169, 176, 178 ; Contains Chittaranjan, 178 ; population, 284-5, 178 ; percentage variation in, 279 ; variation in density, 169
- Sample, 3 ; sample training census, 4 ; sample check, 7
- Samsorganj P. S., non-industrial police station, 177 ; area, population and density, 177 ; percentage variation in, 282 ; variation in density, 174
- Sanja rents, 220
- Sandeshkhali P. S., population, 288-9 ; percentage variation in, 281 ; variation in density, 172
- Sankrail—(Howrah) P. S., 179 ; entirely rural police station, 177 ; area, population and density, 177 ; percentage variation in, 281 ; variation in density, 172
- Sankrail (Midnapur) P. S., population, 286-7 ; percentage variation in, 280 ; variation in density, 171
- Santals, 65-7
- Santipur P. S., non-industrial police station, 177 ; area, population and density, 177 ; percentage variation in, 282 ; variation in density, 174

## INDEX

- Santipur (T), 195; population, 410; density, 192; past glory, 418; female ratio in, 422
- Scheduled castes and tribes low standard of living, 354-5; in four agricultural classes, 353-4
- Secondary economic status in 5 states, 346
- Self-supporting persons diminished, 381
- Serampur subdivision, population, 286-7; percentage variation, 280 variation in density, 171
- Serampur P. S., industrial police station, 178; area, population and density, 178; percentage variation, 280; variation in density, 171
- Serampur (T), population, 407
- Shershabad, 199
- Shershabadia Muslims, 66, 182, 258
- Short comings of census, organisation, 9, 142
- Shyampur P. S., entirely rural police station, 177; area, population and density, 177; percentage variation in, 281; variation in density, 172
- Sibpur (outside Howrah city) P. S., population 286-7; percentage variation in, 280; variation in density, 172
- Sikkim, 272-4; boundary, 34-5; area, 14; position, 14, 15; river system, 15-6; snowline, 28; attitude, 35; castes and tribes, 68; population and religion, 68-9; crops of, 74; total household, institutional and houseless population, 152-3; number of occupied houses, households and institutional houses, 153; family households and institutional census houses expressed as percentages of total occupied houses, 154; variation in density, 175; variations in population, 201; history of, 272; percentage of age groups to population, 1901-1951, 278; percentage variation in population, 1872-1951, 283; population with variation, 292; occupied villages, 389; distribution of rural population in different livelihood classes, 402; number in towns per 1,000 of general population, 405
- Siliguri subdivision, population, 292-3; percentage variation in, 283
- Siliguri P. S., 192; population, 292-3; percentage variation in, 283; variation in density, 175
- Siliguri (T), 409; population, 410
- Simplal P. S., population, 284-5; percentage variation in, 279; variation in density, 170
- Singur P. S., entirely rural police station, 177; area, population and density, 177; percentage variation in, 280; variation in density, 171
- Sitai P. S., population, 292-3; percentage variation in, 283; variation in density, 175
- Sitalkuchi P. S., population, 292-3; percentage variation in, 283; variation in density, 175
- Siyalgirs, 65
- Size of holdings, 474-6, 478-9
- Small scale industries, 464ff, 499-501
- Sonamukhi P. S., 191; population, 284-5; percentage variation in, 279; variation in density, 170
- Sonamukhi (T), 194; population, 410; density, 191; once a manufacturing town, 416-7; female ratio in, 422
- Sonarpur P. S., non-industrial police station, 177; area, population and density, 177; percentage variation in, 281; variation in density, 172
- Sorting, 5-6, 9
- Sorters pay and number of, 6; conditions for work of, 6, 9
- South Dum Dum (T), population, 407
- South suburbs (C), industrial town, 178; population, 407
- Standard of living, 204-6; abjectly low standard obstruct to improvement of agriculture, 354-5
- Sukhiapokri P. S., population, 292-3; percentage variation in, 283; variation in density, 175
- Sundarbans, 13; area, 192; geology, 24; rivers, 69; effects of embankments, 70; deforestation, 58; soil, 31, 24; reclamation, 233-5, 66; percentage variation in population, 281; population with variation, 288-9; animals, 63
- Suri P. S., 191; population, 284-5; percentage variation in, 279; variation in density, 170
- Suri (T), 194; population, 410; once an industrial town, 416
- Suti P. S., population, 290-91; percentage variation in, 282; variation in density, 174
- Standard of living, 127; not improved, 370-71; still falling, 373
- Strikes, classified by man-days and men involved, 116; causes and results of, 116; in jute mills, 117; in coal mines, iron and steel and foundry industries, 117
- Superintendent of Census Operations, 1; area of operations, 1; joining date, 2; preliminary arrangements initiated, 2; closer supervision, 1; difficulties, 9, 10; multiple functionary, 9, 10; hour-glass,



## INDEX

- 10; received no survey of West Bengal through asked for except one, 11; acknowledgements, 11
- Sutahata P. S., population, 286-7; percentage variation, 280; variation in density, 171
- Swarupnagar P. S., population, 288-9; percentage variation, 281; variation in density, 172
- Tabulation, 6
- Taki (T), 195; population, 410; female ratio, 422
- Taldangra P. S., population, 284-5; percentage variation in, 279; variation in density, 170
- Tamluk P. S., non-industrial police station, 177; area, population and density, 177; percentage variation in, 280; variation in density, 171
- Tamluk subdivision, 197, 225; population, 286-7; percentage variation in, 280; variation in density, 171
- Tamluk (T), 177; population, 410
- Tapan P. S., population, 292-3; percentage variation in, 283; variation in density, 175
- Tarakeswar P. S., population, 286-7; percentage variation, 280; variation in density, 171
- Tea plantations, 113, 518; wages of workers, 114; salaries of clerks, 114; in jalpaiguri, 262-4; in Darjeeling, 265-7
- Tehatta P. S., population, 290-91; percentage variation in, 282; variation in density, 174
- Titagarh (T), industrial town, 178, 409; population, 407
- Titagarh (T), industrial town, 178, 409; population, 407
- Titagarh P. S., industrial police station, 178; area, population and density, 178; percentage variation in population, 281; variation in density, 172
- Tollyganj P. S., industrial police station, 178; area, population and density, 178; percentage variation in population, 281; variation in density, 172
- Tollyganj (D), industrial town, 178; population, 407
- Total, maujas, inhabited villages and towns, 159; villages and towns with variation since 1872, 1; police stations, 168; towns in each class with variations, 161; new census towns of 1951, 162; areas of West Bengal and districts, 15; number of occupied houses, households and institutional houses, 153; census units, living rooms, persons leading family life and not leading family life and number of families in Calcutta bustees and huts in Calcutta, 148; living rooms in bustees, persons and displaced persons living in bustees, 148; houselist population, 7; provisional population, 5; final population, 5, 7, 8; municipalities, 161; police stations having densities over 1,050, 176
- Town and City, definition of, 159-60; classification of, 160; changes in the list of towns, 160-161; number of towns of each class, 161; list of towns having of population below 5,000, 161; number of municipal and non-municipal towns, 161; progress in the number of towns, 161; list of new towns, 162; importance of sparsely peopled semi-rural towns, 192-5
- Transport, 524, 529
- Trade unions, number and membership of, 113; classifications of, 114; income of, 114; expenditure of, 115; Federations of, 114
- Tuberculosis, on the increase, 378
- Tufanganj subdivision, population, 292-3; percentage variation in, 283
- Tufanganj P. S., 192; population, 292-3; percentage variation in, 283; variation in density, 175
- Tufanganj (T), 192; population, 411
- 24-Parganas (D), 233-6; area, 15; gain in area by partition, 13; river system, 18; geology, 24; castes and tribes, 66; religion 68-9; crops, 74; population, 138; growth of population in, 138-9; variation in population, 201; three population zones, 233; roads, rivers, railways, 233; growth of population, 235; age groups and married women, 235; inter-state and inter-district migration, 236; percentage of age groups to population, 276; percentage variation in population, 281; population with variation, 288-9; mauzas, villages and towns, 158-9, 389; village roads, 391; distribution of rural population in different livelihood classes, 402; number in towns, 405; number of towns, 408; cities and towns classified, 408-11; reasons for decay of towns, 413-8; industries in rural areas of, 499-501; agricultural self-supporting persons by classes, 455-6; variation in density, 172
- Uluberia (T), non-industrial town, 177; population, 410; female ratio in, 422
- Uluberia Subdivision and P. S., 228-9; non-industrial police station, 177; area, population and density, 177; percentage variation in, 281; variation in density, 172
- Underestimation, 7, 10; unit of, 7, 10
- Unemployment, 358-62
- Utbandi tenure, 250-51, 255
- Uttarpara P. S., 227, 229; industrial police station, 178; area, population and density, 178; percentage variation, 280; variation in density, 171

## INDEX

- Uttarpara (T), 178, 409; a residential suburb of Calcutta, 229; population, 407
- Vernacular names of principal soils in West Bengal, 34
- Village, 387-410; definition, 157; number, 158; occupied villages by districts, 389; classified by population, 1891, 390; roads, 390; classified by size of population, 400-01
- Vishnupur Subdivision, population, 284-5; percentage variation, 279; variation in density, 170; water-logged, 223; malaria stricken, 219; Muslims found in greatest strength, 65
- Vishnupur P. S., 191; population, 284-5; percentage variation in, 279; variation in density, 170
- Vishnupur (T), 194; population, 410; female ratio, 422; has lost industry and density, 194
- Vital statistics, reason for bad registration, 525
- Wages of agricultural labourers, 96-7; daily rate, 99; phenomenal increase, 96; factors governing wages, 97; wages of 'Kishans', 100; of workers in mines, 110; of industrial balcksmiths, 111; fitters, 111; firemen, 112; of unskilled labour, 112; Minimum wages Act, 112; recommendations of the Central Pay Commission, 112; minimum wages fixed by tribunals, 113; wages of workers in tea plantation, 114; wages of transport workers, 120
- Welfare facilities for industrial labour, 117-8
- West Bengal, area, 15; compared with principal states of India, 131; natural divisions, 18; topography, 18, 37-8; river systems, 15-9; rivers more a curse than a boon, 69-70; destructive floods, 58, 70, 83, 212, 215-6, 267-8, 263; floods may bring sand or spill saline water, 69; low bed rivers in the dry season drain the water from the surrounding country, 69; rivers the smallest source of irrigation, 69; many dwindle into trickling streams in hot months, 69; of little use as water ways, 219, 250; minerals, 23, 27, 19, 191; greater part of the soil new alluvium, 18, 29; trickness of alluvium, 23-4; former fertility, beauty and wealth, 376-7, 384; temperature, 38, 45; monsoon, 38, 46; region of summer rain, 38, 46; rainfall, 38, 45-6; mean annual rainfall, 38; cyclones, 45-6; forests, 57-61; marshes, 57-8; timber, 61-2; rich in medicinal plants, 62; forest products, 62-3; three sanctuaries for wild animals, 63-4; deforestation, 58; fishes, 64; administrative divisions and districts, 13; cultivated land, 494; crops, 73-4; cash crops, 105; industry jute, 107; tea, 262, 265-6; coal, 19-23, 25-7; industrial zones, 185-6; 191; villages and towns, 159-62; number of municipalities, 261; *Nature's scourges*; cyclones, 77-9; floods, 70, 83, 87, 263, 267-8; epidemics, 80, 83, 207, 269; famines, 200, 374; droughts and severe earth-quakes, 200; *man-made miseries*: deforestation and its evils,; 58-9, 219, 224; embankments and evils thereof, 70, 212, 219, 223-4, 227, 254; famine of 1943, 79-80, 203; tyranny and plunder by East India Company, 437; over-assessment, 438; ruin of industry, 432; 439; after-maths of war: unemployment, inflation and raising the cost of living, withdrawal of industries, deterioration in agriculture, 76; the Great Calcutta Killing, 84-6; partition: heavy influx of Displaced persons, burden an agricultural resources, chronic shortage of food-grains, problem of rehabilitation, 76; in area smallest of A class states, in population 5th among principal states, 131; densest of A class, states, density higher than in England and Wales, smallest female ratio, decennial growth scarcely more than a fraction of one per cent., 132; highest percentage dependent on non-agricultural livelihoods, 134; much more than half is overwhelming by rural, 352; Literacy 2nd in India, highest among A class states, 135; in bearing the burden of Displaced persons-this state is second, 136; immigrants from other States of India, 315; unsteady and impermanent character of immigration, 307; from outside India, 322; Growth erratic before 1921, steady after 1921, 201; birth and death rates, 329-30; decennial growth rate artificial, 132; uneven distribution of density, 179-91; disproportion between area and population, 17; zones of growth, 209-11; percentages of age groups, 358; illusion of high urban ratio, 405-6; low economic level, 108-9; road milage lowest for any state in India, 392; industry concentrated in small area, 393, 74-75; livelihood lagging behind population, 531-2; land available for cultivation not sufficient to give employment to a great multitude and there is scarcity of alternative employment, 196
- West Dinajpur, 259-62; area, 15; shape and density, 16; castes and tribes, 68; religion, 68-9; crops, 74; population, 138; growth, 138-9, 159; very high concentration of Displaced person, 260; percentage variation in population, 283; population with variation, 292-3; variation in density, 175; percentage of age groups, 277; birth and death rate high, 261; migration, 261; reached saturation point,

## INDEX

- 265; villages, 158-9, 389; roads, 391; number in towns, 405; distribution of rural population in different L. C., 402; devastating flood, 263; more than 80 per cent. depend on agriculture, 352; agricultural self-supporting persons, 455-6; industries in rural areas, 499-501
- West Bengal Plain Division, 18; districts of, 45; rain recording stations and observatories, 45; general description of climate, 45
- Woman, without family, 156
- World War II, 75-77; attitude of Indian political parties, 109; improvement of internal communication, 75-6; anti-malarial work, 76; after-war unemployment, restricted industry and commerce, disturbed agriculture and inflation, 76; chronic shortage of food-grains, 76; change in moral sphere, 76-7; urbanisation without industrialisation, 77
- Yield per acre, 485, 490; yield and acreage of jute, 106-7
- Zemindars, 441; their plight, 442; duties of, 443; ill-treatment of ryots by, 443; reclamation of land by forced labour and other means, 445-6; role of, 446-7
- Zones of industry, 185-6; growth, 209-11; small extensions of industrial zones, 191; migration, 312-13

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