

## CHAPTER III.

## BAMRA STATE.

THE State of Bāmra lies between  $21^{\circ} 9'$  and  $22^{\circ} 12' N.$ , and between  $84^{\circ} 8'$  and  $85^{\circ} 13' E.$  Its formation is extremely irregular the northern part running up to a point into the Bonai and Gāngpur States; and two points also extend considerably to the westward, the one into the Lairā zamīndāri of Sambalpur district and the other into Tālcher State. It is bounded on the north by Bonai and Gāngpur States; on the south by the State of Rairākhol; on the east by Tālcher State and the State of Pāl Laharā, where it links up with the hill tracts inhabited by the Bhuiyās; and on the west by the Sambalpur *khāsa* and the zamīndāri of Jaipur or Kolābirā in Sambalpur. The extreme length north and south is about seventy-five miles, while the extreme breadth is about sixty-four miles. The total area is 1,988 square miles. The soil is light and sandy except in the immediate neighbourhood of the hills where it is loamy. There are some fine *sāl* (*Shorea robusta*) forests in this State; the hill ranges are well covered. Iron ore is to be found in abundance. The jungles produce a considerable quantity of lac, silk, cocoons, resin, bees-wax, and honey. The only river of note is the Brāhmanī. But for certain rocky obstructions that occur at one or two places timber might be floated down this river to the coast. On the southern border of the State, there is a fine range of hills with extensive plateau land rising in parts to an elevation of 2,000 feet. The descent from this plateau is sudden and very precipitous, the range of hills abutting close upon the Sambalpur border, near Gourpali.

The climate is malarious owing to the large forest areas, but the cultivated tracts are salubrious. The average rainfall for the six years from 1902-03 to 1907-08 was 65.46 inches.

The headquarters of the State are at Deogarh and there are two *tahsils* (subdivisions) with headquarters at Kuchindā and Bārkat.

The Bāmra State originally formed one of the Sambalpur and Patnā or Garhjat groups, the Chiefs of which were at first independent; but were subsequently held in subordination to the

PHYSICAL  
ASPECTS.

HISTORY.

Mahārājā of Patnā, the most powerful of their number. In 1865 the Chief received from the British Government an adoption *sanad*, and in 1867 a *sanad* defining his status as a Feudatory Chief was granted. The State was transferred to Bengal from the Central Provinces in October 1905.

The family is Gangabansi Rājput ; it does not appear to be in possession of any authentic traditions antecedent to *Sambat* 1602 (A.D. 1545) : according to tradition the first Rājā of Bāmra belonged to the Rāj family of the Patnā State, and was stolen from his home and made Chief of the Bāmra State by the Bhuiyās and Khonds.

The present Chief succeeded to the *gadi* in 1903 : his father, Sir Bāsudeo Sudhal Deva, obtained the title of K. C. I. E. The emblem of the State is a *sankh* (conch shell).

THE  
PEOPLE.

According to the census of 1901 the population of the State amounted to 123,378 against 22,456 in 1866, and an increase of 18 per cent. since 1891. The population is classified as follows:—Hindus—males, 62,030, females, 58,962, total, 120,992 or 98·07 per cent. of the total population : proportion of males in total Hindus, 51·3 per cent. Musalmāns—males, 229, females, 118, total 347 or 0·28 of the total population : proportion of males in total Musalmāns, 65·99. Animists—males, 994, females, 1,031, total 2,025 or 1·6 per cent. of the total population. Christians—14.

In 1901 the number of villages in the State was 931, and there was one town, Deogarh, with a population of 5,702. The 931 villages are classified as follows: 907 with less than five hundred inhabitants, 21 with from five hundred to a thousand, and 3 with from one to two thousand. Averages—villages per square mile, 0·41 ; persons per village, 126 ; houses per village, 23·8 ; persons per house, 5 ; houses per square mile, 11·5.

The principal non-agricultural castes are Brāhmins, Rājputs, and Mahāntis, while agriculture is carried on by Chasās, Gonds, Khonds, Agariās, Kaltuyās, Sudhas, and Dumals. About 77 per cent. of the population speak Oriyā and 18 per cent. the Oraon and Mundāri dialects. In 1901, 4·06 per cent. of the population were returned as able to read and write. The principal castes and tribes are Chasās, Kisāns, Gauras and Gaudās : the Gonds and Bhuiyās are also numerous. The people are well-to-do for the most part, especially the regular cultivating classes : the wilder tribes who practise *dāhi* cultivation (clearing and burning forest tracts) and live to a great extent on jungle products are naturally not so well off.

PUBLIC  
HEALTH.

The State possesses three dispensaries, viz., at Deogarh, Kuchindā, and Bārkut each with accommodation for indoor patients.

The dispensaries are in charge of Civil Hospital Assistants and an officer with the qualifications of an Assistant Surgeon is the Medical Officer of the State. In 1907-08 the number of patients treated was 21,188: vaccination work is in charge of a special Inspector: the State pays the vaccinators and itself collects a small charge for every case of successful vaccination: in 1907-08 the number of primary vaccinations was 2,931 and of revaccinations 580. Fever is the usual complaint; cholera and small-pox epidemics occur from time to time.

As elsewhere in these parts, rice is the staple produce; oil-seeds, pulses, cotton, and sugarcane are also cultivated. At Balam, about 10 miles east of Deogarh, the headquarters of the State, the Chief has started an excellent home-farm: here are to be seen threshing machines, rotatory saws and sugar-mills, driven by steam power: on the farm various varieties of crops are grown and experiments made: there is a large vegetable market garden attached: at Sirgirā close to Balam a large irrigation reservoir has been built irrigating a considerable tract of country. The villages are well cultivated and there are 974 irrigation tanks in the State. In the open areas of the State large and prosperous villages with good tanks for irrigation are commonly met with. Famine occurred in 1900 after a very widespread failure of the crops: the State, however, is not, unless under very exceptional circumstances, liable to severe famine.

The average rates per *mān* (about  $\frac{2}{3}$  of an acre) for 1st, 2nd and 3rd class rice lands in Deogarh *tahsil* are Rs. 2-15-1, Rs. 2-6-9 and Re. 1-11-4, respectively, and in Kuchindā *tahsil*, Re. 1-14-2, Re. 1-7-11, and As. 10-5, respectively. The average rate per *mān* for *gorā* or uplands is Re. 0-12-6 in Deogarh *tahsil* and As. 9-8 in Kuchindā *tahsil*. A regular assessment of the land based on a soil classification has been made. In late years the average daily wage for a mason, carpenter, blacksmith and ordinary cooly has been As. 2-9, As. 3, As. 2-3 and As. 2, respectively. In late years the average rate for rice, *māya*, *birhī*, wheat and salt per rupee has been 18 seers, 16 seers, 20 seers, 8 seers and  $17\frac{1}{2}$  seers, respectively. The opening up of the country by the advent of the Bengal-Nagpur Railway has enabled the farmers to dispose of surplus stocks at handsome profits with a consequent general rise in prices.

Nearly  $74\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. of the total population are agriculturists:  $12\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. of the population follow industries: 5 per cent. follow various professions: only 1 per cent. are engaged in commerce: and others serve as field labourers and personal servants, etc. Keoline pottery, sugar and weaving are the

AGRICUL-  
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WAGES  
AND  
PRICES.OCCUPA-  
TIONS,  
MANU-  
FACTURES  
AND  
TRADE.

principal manufactures. At Sirid, a village on the main road between Bāmra and Deogarh, there are saw-mills for cutting logs into railway sleepers : these mills give employment to many workmen and the timber business of the State employs a large number of hands as sawyers and carters. Principal exports are rice, pulses, oil-seeds, iron, timber, forest produce and catechu : and principal imports are mill-spun piece-goods, salt, sugar, spices and brass utensils.

MEANS OF  
COMMUNI-  
CATION.

There is a good road from the Bāmra railway station on the Bengal-Nāgpur line to Deogarh, the headquarters, about 58 miles in length. This road carries a considerable amount of the large sleeper traffic of the State, especially from Sirid. The road continues from Deogarh as a fair surface road to the Tāleher border: from Deogarh to Balam there is a good road 11 miles in length, on which there is one steel girder bridge. The old Sambalpur-Midnapore road traverses the State : this road is no longer of the importance it formerly was as the direct means of communication with the State: it is, however, bridged throughout the State over the small streams by rough, but strong, timber trestle bridges. The village roads are fair surface roads, and there is a road from Deogarh to the border of the Rairākhol State running on to Rāmpur, the headquarters of that State. The Bengal-Nāgpur Railway passes through the north-eastern corner of the State with two stations, Garpos and Bāmra, within its borders. The Brāhmanī river forms a means of communication for small open boats, but the presence of rocks and rapids renders the transport of goods on any large scale impossible. There are rest-houses at Bāmra station, Kuchindā and Sirid. A telephone line runs from Bāmra railway station to Deogarh, and from Deogarh to Bārkut, the headquarters of the *tahsīl* (subdivision) of that name and to Sirgirā. The Imperial post plies in the State, with sub-post offices at Bāmra, and Deogarh and branch post offices at Kuchindā and Bārkut, and letter boxes in the school houses at the principal villages. There is a telegraph office at Bāmra.

LAND  
REVENUE  
ADMINIS-  
TRATION.

For the purposes of land revenue administration the State is divided into three *tahsīls*, or subdivisions with a *Tahsīldār* in charge of each. The *tahsīls* are Kuchindā, the most highly cultivated area of the State, in the north-west, the Sadar or Deogarh *tahsīl*, and the Bārkut *tahsīl* to the south-east. The land revenue demand is about Rs. 65,500 and settlement operations are in progress : the land revenue system is very similar to that prevailing in the neighbouring States of Rairākhol, Sonpur and Patnā. The land revenue demand is divided into fixed and fluctuating collections: the fluctuating collections are derived from new

villages opened up and waste lands brought to cultivation. The rule is that new lands are generally allowed to be held five years free of rent. This collection also includes the assessment on *dāhi* cultivation. The area under *dāhi* is measured by the Forest Department and the rate charged is Re. 1-9 per *mān* (about  $\frac{2}{3}$  of an acre). The Pauriās or hillmen as in Bonai, are the people who practise this form of cultivation; the Chief is trying to localise and keep within prescribed limits this reckless and wasteful form of cultivation by compelling the Pauriās to apply for sanction for any area they burn and this is then checked by the Forest Department. There is a famine fund amounting now to Rs. 30,000: the people receive advances at moderate interest for improvements.

A land cess is levied only from the people who live in Deogarh town, as they all hold their lands there rent-free. It is levied at a rate varying from one anna six pies to four annas per rupee according to the character of the *māfi* or free grant. The money is spent on the repairs of the town roads. The school cess is assessed at a quarter of an anna per rupee of rent according to the old settlement of 1877; it was not increased by assessing it on the rental obtained in the last settlement. The *gaontīās* pay Re. 1 on the occasion of the *sunīyā* (Oriyā new year in Bhādraba (August-September) and the Paush Pūrṇimā (December-January).

There are the usual grants to members of the family of the Chief for their maintenance, also *paik* (feudal militia) and other service lands, and religious grants. The villages in the State are held by (1) *gaontīās*, (2) *pradhāns*, (3) *garhatīās*. No distinction is made between the first two classes. In the Deogarh *tahsil* the headmen of the villages are called *gaontīās* or *sarbarāhkārs*, and in the Kuchindā *tahsil*, *pradhāns* or *sarbarāhkārs*. The conditions of forfeiture are bad behaviour, failure to pay the rents, leasing or mortgaging the village or the *bhogrā* (village service lands enjoyed by the headman) lands. The *bhogrā* lands vary from 12 to 20 $\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. of the cultivated lands of the village. *Rasad* or rations to State officers on tour are supplied on regular payment: in the village leases or *pattās* are entered a minute account of all heads of payments, *māfis* (exemptions) and duties. When a son succeeds his father as head of a village, he has to pay for mutation; only a son or an adopted son can inherit.

The *garhatīās* are the headmen of the *paik* (militia) villages of the State; these villages have to render watch and guard on the palace when the Chief is away; they also have to assist in

suppressing riots if called upon. In consequence they render no *bethā begāri* (free labour). Mr. Chapman, Political Agent, wrote of the feudal tenures in the Bāmra State as follows:—Though the necessity for military service has passed away, the whole system of the feudal tenure by which it used to be maintained still exists. Round the sites of the ancient *garhs* or forts which are mostly situated at vulnerable points on the border, such as Tārang on the boundary between the Bāmra and Rairākhōl States and Garpos on the boundary between the Bāmra and Gāngpur States, are clustered colonies of men-at-arms called *paiks*. From ten to thirty *paiks* are located in a village. The head of the *paiks* in each village is called the *garhatiā* or *garh-naik*. He is also generally the *gaontiā* of the village. Besides his *bhogrā* land he receives a drawback of Rs. 6 per annum from his *jamā* for each *paik* for whom he is responsible. The *paik* is entitled to enjoy this amount of land rent-free in the village. The *garh-naik* also enjoys some Rs. 10 to Rs. 13 worth of land rent-free as such. He has an officer under him called the *dalbeherā* or captain who also enjoys *māfi* land. Over each group of 100 *paiks* is the *sardār* who generally enjoys one or more villages rent-free and receives a monthly pay of Rs. 5. In return for these remunerations the *sardār* and *garh-naiks* are bound to produce their *paiks* whenever called on by the Rājā. There is a great assembling of the *naiks* and *paiks* at Dasharā time when they compete for prizes in shooting and running before the Rājā. Their offices are hereditary. There seems to be no recognized head of the men-at-arms for the whole State corresponding to the *senāpati* in Kālāhandi. The duties of the *naiks* and *paiks* are now restricted to forming the Rājā's body-guard when he moves about the State, to carrying out certain police duties and conveying the *dāk*. Villages where *paiks* are located are known as *paiki* villages. The *paiks* and all the tenants of such villages are excused from all payments in kind. They pay all their rent in cash. The *sardār* is not responsible for the land revenue of the villages in his charge. His sole duty is to exercise supervision over the *garh-naiks* and *paiks*. The Gond community is presided over by headmen called *barihā* who in some cases hold several villages as their *jāgirs*. They are the intermediaries between the Rājā and the Gonds in all caste matters. There are other *jāgirdārs* holding groups of 4 or 5 villages scattered over the State.

**Rakumāt.** *Rakumāt* or payment in kind is levied from all villages, except from *garhati*, *lākhirāj* and *brahmottar* villages. It has been regularly assessed and is entered up in detail in the *kistibandi* (demand register). The payment is made into the State granary

(*bhandār*). It consists of paddy (unhusked rice), *chāul* (rice), *mūga*, *tīl* (sesamum), *ghī* (clarified butter) and *birhi*.

The relations between the State and the British Government are regulated by the *sanad* of 1867 and the State pays a tribute of Rs. 7,500 which is liable to revision and was last assessed in 1909 for a period of thirty years. The Chief administers the State, with the assistance of three *Tahsildārs* as already noted, and there is also a *Naib* (Assistant) *Tahsildār* at Kuchindā; these officers also exercise criminal and civil powers, and there are Honorary Magistrates who render assistance in the disposal of criminal cases. The Chief exercises full criminal powers, but sentences of death require confirmation by the Commissioner of the Orissa Division. For the disposal of criminal and civil business regular courts are maintained. The total income of the State in 1907-08 was returned at Rs. 1,68,481. A regular budget system is followed in the State and the finances are carefully administered.

GENERAL  
ADMINIS-  
TRATION.

Power.

Finances.

In 1907-08 the forest revenue amounted to Rs. 32,637, excluding the revenue from sleeper operations. The State forests have been separated from the village or *khasrā* jungle. There are ten protected trees in this State, viz., *sāl* (*Shorea robusta*), *bijā* (*Pterocarpus marsupium*), *khair* (*Acacia Catechu*), *bandhan* (*Ougeinia dalbergioides*), *harar* (*Terminalia Chebula*), *mahuā* (*Bassia latifolia*), *karum* (*Adina cordifolia*), *kendu* (*Diospyros melanoxylon*), *kasun* (*Schleicheria trijuga*) and *sisū* (*Dalbergia Sissoo*). As regards the *khasrā* jungle, the villagers are allowed to use it, but are not allowed to destroy it uselessly and the prohibited class of trees cannot be cut from it without informing the Forest Department. The cultivators pay a commutation fee or *halpanchā* to cut and remove any kind of timber, except the prohibited class: non-agriculturists pay half an anna per head-load. The rate charged for dry timber of the prohibited class is two annas per cubic foot in Deogarh *tahsil* and four annas in Kuchindā *tahsil*; except under special permission no green timber of the prohibited kind may be cut. As regards destruction of the forests by the people the measures adopted are effective, and it is but rarely that instances are seen of the clearing of patches of forest with trees ringed and boles burnt for raising catch-crops on *gorā* or uplands. All persons, whether foreigners or people of the State, pay a grazing tax if they keep milch-cattle; the rate is one anna per cow and two annas per cow-buffalo to people of the State and four annas and eight annas respectively to outsiders. The people of the State get their fuel and also their supply of *chhan* (thatching) grass and *panāsi* (*sabai*) grass included in the commutation fee. If, however,

Forests.

fuel or grass is exported, a tax is charged. There is a considerable quantity of *panāsi* or *sabai* grass in the State, but there is no export of it on any scale.

Regular licenses are issued for felling and removing timber of the reserved classes. The forests are in charge of a trained forest student from Dehra Dun, assisted by two subordinates trained in the neighbouring Government forest reserves in Singhbhūm : demarcation of the reserved forests has been undertaken and the cutting of fire lines is progressing and the forest blocks are being divided up into coupés for regular felling. The State of recent years has entered upon a more scientific and regulated system of dealing with the forests.

Excise.

The State obtains its supply of opium through the Sambalpur treasury and Khandwā *gānju* is obtained from Nimār. The State charges the licensed vendors with the cost of transit; *gānju* is sold at Rs. 5 per seer. There is no regular excise staff, but the State officers and the police watch the sale of exciseable articles.

Market monopoly.

The markets are leased out only in the Kuchindā *tahsil*; elsewhere in order to encourage trading in the less developed tracts no assessment is imposed. Every tenant who attends the bazar or market for sale purposes pays  $1\frac{1}{2}$  pies, but fish and meat sellers are exempted. Local shopkeepers who expose goods for sale in the market pay 3 pies per market day. Foreign traders who visit the market for sale pay 1 pie per rupee if their sale is under Rs. 20 and 3 pies per rupee if it exceeds Rs. 20.

*Pātki*.

A tax or *pātki* is imposed on industrial classes; the rate is higher than in the Bonai State, but the people are much better off. The rates per annum are, Pāns and Gandās (who weave) Rs. 2-2, Bhandāris (barbers) Re. 1-4, Kewats (dealing in parched rice) annas 12, Khātis (blacksmiths) annas 8, Kharurās (brass workers) annas 8, Lakharās (who make bracelets of lac) annas 8, Guriās (sweatmeat-sellers) annas 12, Khairās (preparers of catechu) Re. 1, Ghantrās (bell-makers) annas 8, Kāmārs (iron smelters) Re. 1-4, Jhorās (fishermen and gold-washers) Re. 1-4, Telis - one seer of oil for each pressing machine worked by them.

Civil Justice  
Crime.  
Police.

In the year 1907-08 the total number of civil suits for disposal was 378, out of which only 11·4 per cent. were for sums exceeding Rs. 100. During the year 1907-08 869 cases were reported to the police. The police force is in charge of a Superintendent, with two Inspectors under him and a regular staff of officers and men : the system followed is similar to that in force in the Central Provinces, but the system of surveillance of bad characters and criminals has recently been remodelled on the lines followed in Bengal.



There is a good masonry jail at headquarters where regular Jails. labour is imposed and discipline enforced. There is a large workshop where weaving on improved methods is taught to the prisoners under a trained expert; excellent cloth of various patterns and good *darīs* are manufactured: the flyshuttle loom and English made handlooms are in use: pottery work is also taught to the prisoners: other kinds of labour are lime-burning, brick-making and the oil-mill. There is also a small sub-jail at Kuchindā. The average daily jail population in 1907-08 was 92. The State possesses some good public buildings; the best being the jail and High school at the headquarters. The total expenditure incurred on account of public works in 1907-08 was Rs. 27,855.

Public  
Works  
Depart-  
ment.

The number of schools regularly maintained by the State in 1907-08 was 33, and besides a large number of aided private schools (*pāthsālās*) impart simple instruction in the villages. There is a High English school at Deogarh. There is a girls' school at the headquarters. The number of pupils in 1907-08 in all the schools was 4,536. There is a special school for the education of Gandās at the headquarters. In 1907-08 the State spent Rs. 7,162 on education.

EDUCA-  
TION.