

PREFACE

We are happy to present the third volume of the Gazetteer of India whose theme is the economic structure of India and all activity pertaining to the economic sphere. This volume, like the previous volumes in the series, follows an entirely new scheme of treatment which is more systematic and more informative than the relevant volume of the Imperial Gazetteer of India. There were only 10 chapters in the volume "Economic" of this series and a chapter each had been devoted to such subjects as posts and telegraphs, railways and roads, famines and forests. All these subjects have now been dealt with in a more systematic manner under appropriate chapter headings. The present volume consists of 19 chapters which cover almost all important aspects of our economic life. Besides a survey of the country's natural resources, this volume deals with such important topics as community development, banking and money market, external resources, consumption and welfare, plans and prospects, etc. In the preceding volume on 'History and Culture' we have dealt with some aspects of economic life up to 1947. In the present work we take note of manifold developments in different spheres of economy after independence.

In view of the importance of this volume for a developing country like India, the Central Advisory Board for Revision of Gazetteers appointed a sub-committee of eminent economists to prepare the draft plan. Prof. V. K. R. V. Rao was the Chairman of this committee. The other members were Shri Asok Mitra, Dr. Bhabatosh Datta and Prof. B. D. Bhargava with Editor (Gazetteers) as Member-Secretary. The plan drawn up by the Sub-Committee was submitted to the Advisory Board which accepted it with minor modifications. Eminent scholars in different fields were appointed as contributors to the various chapters of this volume. We are grateful to them for sparing time in spite of their pre-occupations for contributing to the volume. The pace of economic development was so rapid that the facts recorded in the chapters became outdated in a very short period. The chapters, therefore, had to be revised and brought up-to-date as far as possible. At the suggestion of Prof. S. Nurul Hasan, Chairman, Advisory Committee for Revision of Gazetteers, a chapter was added at the end to take note of the latest developments in our economy. Shri E. P. W. da Costa has kindly gone through the volume updating the contents at several places.

The economy of India in 1947 was in poor shape. While production, particularly in the agricultural field, had suffered a decline, the rate at which the population had grown in the three decades prior to independence was noticeably rapid. No attempt had been made to tap and

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mobilize land resources and as village industry had decayed, artisans switched over to agricultural labour in large numbers. The country's agricultural economy received a severe jolt following partition, as productive areas were transferred to Pakistan. The situation was aggravated further by the inflow of millions of displaced persons from Pakistan into the country. All around, there were shortages of foodgrains, cotton and jute, to cite a few instances. Thus, Indian economy, to quote Prime Minister, Smt. Indira Gandhi, sought "to bridge, in a matter of decades, the gap created by a century and more of stagnation". The national economy had to be rebuilt from scratch through a series of Five-Year Plans.

Planning for over two decades between 1950-51 to 1972-73 has yielded dividends. This can be seen in the doubling of the net domestic production. The infra-structure for economic development — through water and power, transport and science and technology — has been strengthened. Foreign exchange reserves, which were as low as Rs. 298 crores in mid-sixties, showed an encouraging rise, touching the figure Rs. 1,056 crores in July, 1974. There has been a great rise and a noticeable diversification in industrial production, of products ranging from simple consumer goods to a variety of sophisticated machinery manufactured indigenously. The public sector plays a dominant role with increasing investment in Central Government undertakings. The 1970-71 record in the output of foodgrains, 108 million tonnes, was almost double that of the output in 1950-51, which was 56 million tonnes. In spite of the food deficits in 1973, due to the failure of monsoons, the per capita availability of foodgrains has been more than maintained. The following pages unfold the story of the struggle of an emerging nation in a state of transition from the traditional to modern economy.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Prof. S. Nurul Hasar Minister of Education, Social Welfare and Culture, Shri K. N. Channa Education Secretary, and Shri Mohan Mukerji, Additional Secretary Department of Culture, who have been taking keen interest in this work.

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