

## Chapter - I

### LOCATION AND BACKGROUND OF THE BIRBHUM DISTRICT

#### Background :

The District of Birbhum is situated in the North-west part of West Bengal and it occupies an important place in the State due to its natural resources, cultural heritage and popular pilgrimage. The district is associated with the great poet Rabindranath Tagore whose attachment with the District, and nourishment of culture have opened a new era in the history of Bengal as well as of the District.

Different theories contradict each other on the origin of the name of Birbhum. However, majority of historical records support the idea that the District included in "Rarh" was mainly under several Hindu rulers and Chiefs called 'Bir Rajas' and the title 'Bir' was borne by them to rule 'Bhum' the land. So it is believed that the District was named as 'Birbhum' to justify the territory of Bir 'Rajas'.

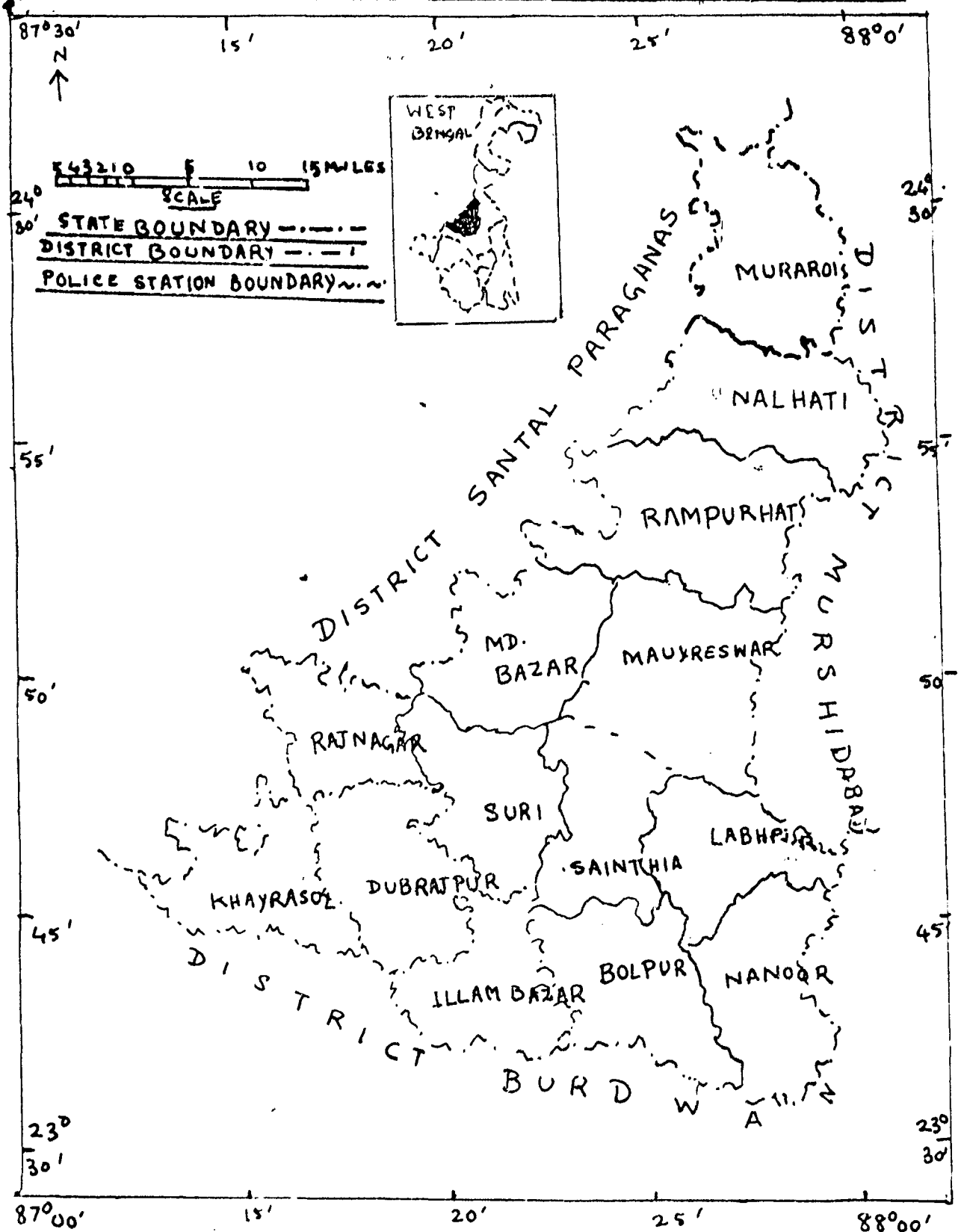
The modern period of Birbhum started with the reign of Asad-Ul-zaman the last of the independent Nawabs of Birbhum who was involved in the Anglo-French rivalry in Bengal and took the side of the British immediately after the Battle of Plassey. This hastened the gradual process of decline of the Birbhum-Raj. Subsequently, the District passed through many ups and downs and the most interesting event was the Santal rebellion of 1855, which broke out in the Santal Parganas and spread to this District.

The District :

The situation of Birbhum is favourable having almost all prerequisites for its development. Its proximity to the industrial belt of Durgapur and Asansol, mineral belt of Bihar and agricultural belt of Burdwan over and above its own, has further increased the importance. Though the advantage of Birbhum in different fields has long been felt, proper diagnosis could not be made systematically to direct better economic growth of the District. While visualising the status of the District by comparing the average State figure to that of the District it is evident that the District is behind the State in respect of percentage growth of population (27.20% to 23.01%) literacy (33.1% to 26.39%), workers in manufacturing industries (11.39% to 2.87%), trade and commerce (7.53% to 3.50%) and so on, but its pre-eminence in the material wealth has surpassed all drawbacks and the favourable position has been further supplemented with the creation of new dimension in the tourist field (Fig. 1).

The character of the soil of Birbhum is almost similar to the 'Rarh' area of adjacent Districts. Khoirasole, Rajnagar, Dubrajpur, Suri, Md. Bazar and Rampurhat Police Stations comprising the Western portion of Birbhum from the anatomised plateau of Santal Parganas having inclination towards South-southeast. Throughout almost the entire area of the District the surface is broken by a succession of wavy

# BASE MAP OF BIRBHUM DISTRICT



motion and it extends from North-west to South-west. They rise into high ridges, sometimes separated by valleys, bear the western bounday. These ridges along with their branches gradually tend to fade out in the south-east turning the Valleys into a shallow one, which afterwards merged into the broad alluvial plains of the gangetic delta.

Extending over an area of 4551 sq. km.the District is inhabited by 17.80 lakhs of people (1971 census) of which 9.03 were males and 8.77 females. Again, out of 17.80 lakhs population 1.25 lakhs were urban dwellers. Though the urban population was only 7.04% its growth rate 24.28% was slightly higher than that of the rural population which was 22.98% during the decade of 1961-71. The size of rural and urban population along with the growth rate as percentage of total population is given below as per 1971 Census.

Table 1.1. Population Profile of Birbhum District

Status	Size	Percentage
1. Total Population (1971)	17,75,909	-
Rural	16,51,137	92.42
Urban	1,24,772	7.58
2. Growth of Population % (1961-71)		
Rural	-	22.98
Urban	-	24.28

( Source : Population Census 1971)

The above table shows that there is sizeable increase in population both in the rural and urban sectors claiming the unusual superiority of urban over rural. If the same rate of growth is foreseen for 1981 census the projected population in the rural and urban sectors may be to the tune of 20.35 lakhs and 1.55 lakhs respectively.

#### Location :

Birbhum is situated between  $23^{\circ}32'$  and  $24^{\circ}36'00''$  north latitude and  $88^{\circ}01'40''$  and  $87^{\circ}05'25''$  east longitude. In the early days the district composed of a complete natural region. Now the outward appearance of the District looks like a triangle having foundation formed by the river Ajoy and stretching the two arms equally towards east and west moving the summit to the northern extremity to touch the Santal Parganas of Bihar. It is bounded on the North and the West by Santal Parganas of Bihar, on the east by Murshidabad and Burdwan District and on the South by Burdwan District from which it is separated by Ajoy River.

#### Climate and Rainfall :

Climate is characterised by an oppressive hot summer, high humidity and well distributed rainfall during the monsoon. A short comparative table of annual rainfall and temperature is given below :

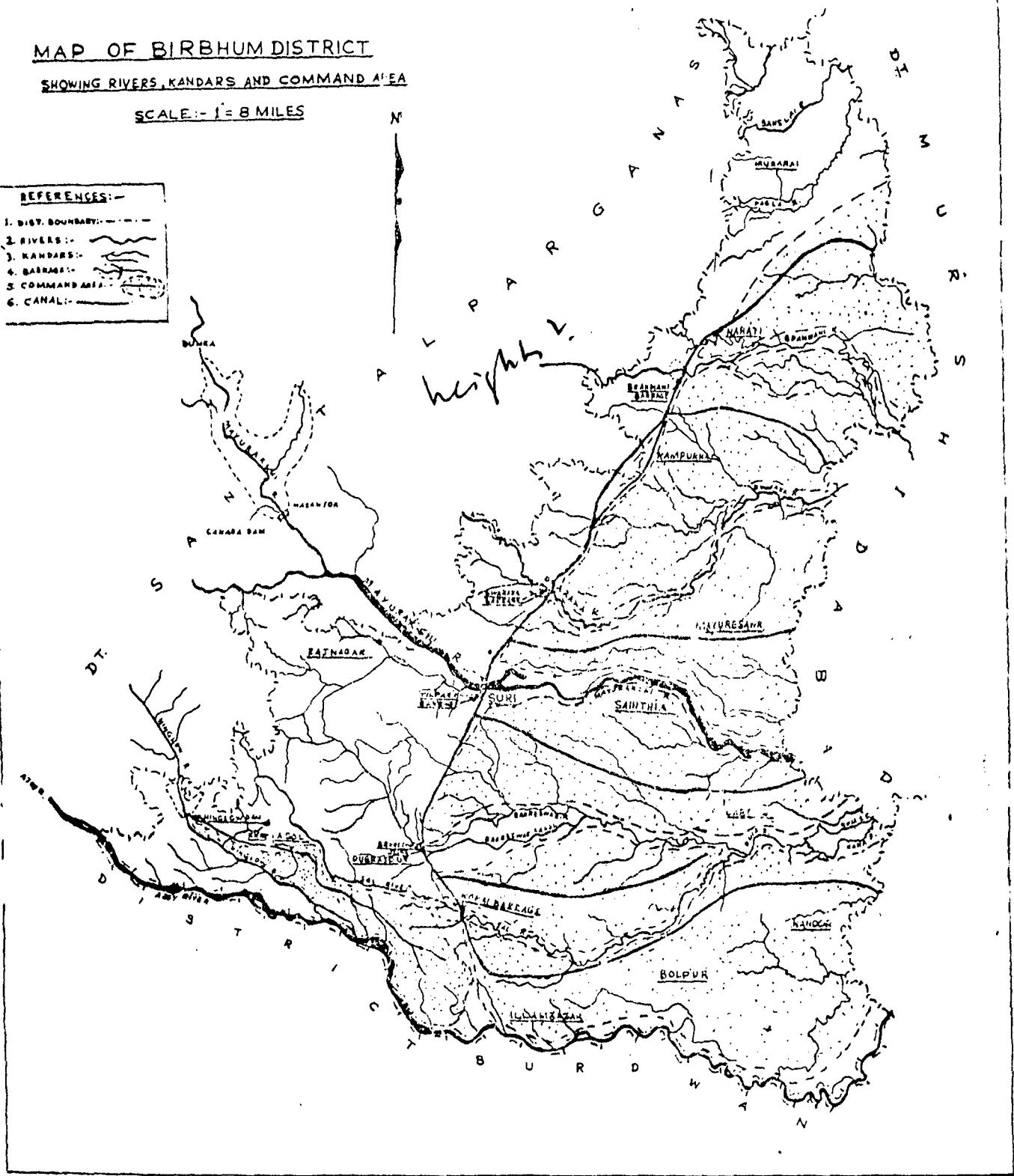
# MAP OF BIRBHUM DISTRICT

SHOWING RIVERS, KANDARS AND COMMAND AREA

SCALE: - 1" = 8 MILES

**REFERENCES:-**

- 1. DIST. BOUNDARY: - - - - -
- 2. RIVERS: - - - - -
- 3. KANDARS: - - - - -
- 4. BARRAGES: - - - - -
- 5. COMMAND AREA: - - - - -
- 6. CANALS: - - - - -





*with monthly!*

Table 1.2 : Annual Rainfall & Temperature of Birbhum District.

	1973	1974	1975	1976	1977	1978
Annual Rainfall in mm	1612	1628	1541	1100.8	1605.8	2030.2
Temperature in °C						
Maximum	43.7	44.5	44.5	42.5	44.0	42.5
Minimum	8.0	6.5	7.0	8.0	8.7	7.7

(Source : Meteorological Observatory)

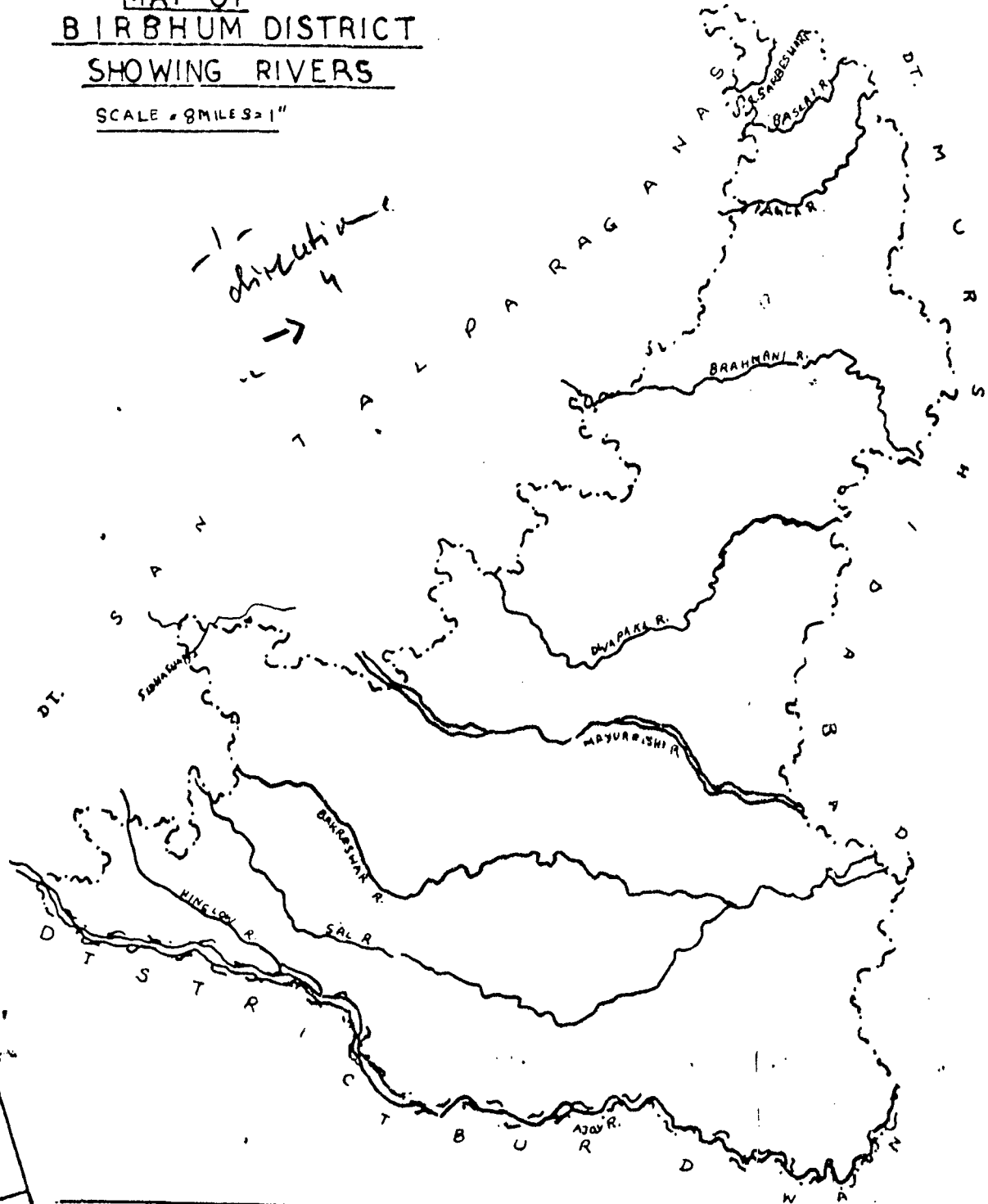
#### Rivers :

Birbhum is endowed with a number of rivers, streams and ponds. In most of the cases the rivers and streams run from west to east with slight south-eastern inclination in the Suri Sub-division and leaning with easternly in the eastern half of the Rampurhat Sub-division. Mayurakshi flows from west to east in the District, whereas Ajoy marks the southern boundary. The other rivers and streams are Kananala, Kandar Khal in Bolpur and Nanoor P.S. respectively. The River Hingla enters Khoirasole P.S. from Santal Parganas, the Chapla in Dubrajpur P.S., the Bakreshwar and Kopai meet at Ladhpur, the Brahmani enters the district at Narayanpur and Tripita Nala flows east and joins Brahmani and so on and they play



MAP OF  
BIRBHUM DISTRICT  
SHOWING RIVERS

SCALE = 8 MILES = 1"



vital role in the socio-economic upliftment of Birbhum  
(Fig. 2).

Occupational Pattern :

The 1971 Census reports that about ninety-two per cent of the total population of the District live in the rural sector and mainly depend on agriculture as their livelihood. The total working force forms about 26.44 per cent of the total population of the District, out of which agricultural labour accounts for 42.26 per cent and the next position is claimed by the cultivators obtained 37.03 per cent. In the manufacturing and household industry sector, the share is only 5.20 per cent. The mining, livestock, fishing, construction services, trade and commerce, transport and communication together form only 15.57 per cent. A detailed break-up of the occupational pattern of workers is given in the table below :

Table 1.3 : Occupational Distribution of Workers

Occupation	Number	Percentage
1. Cultivator	1,75,257	37.03
2. Agril. Labour	2,00,002	42.26
3. Livestock, Forestry, Fishing, Plantation and allied activities	4,323	0.92
4. Mining & quarrying	1,570	0.33
5. Household Industry	11,908	2.52
6. Other than Household (Industry)	12,937	2.74
7. Construction	1,753	0.38
8. Trade and Commerce	16,315	3.44
9. Transport & Communication	6,925	1.46
10. Other services	42,241	8.92
	4,73,231	100.00

Agriculture  
Culture  
Fig. 3

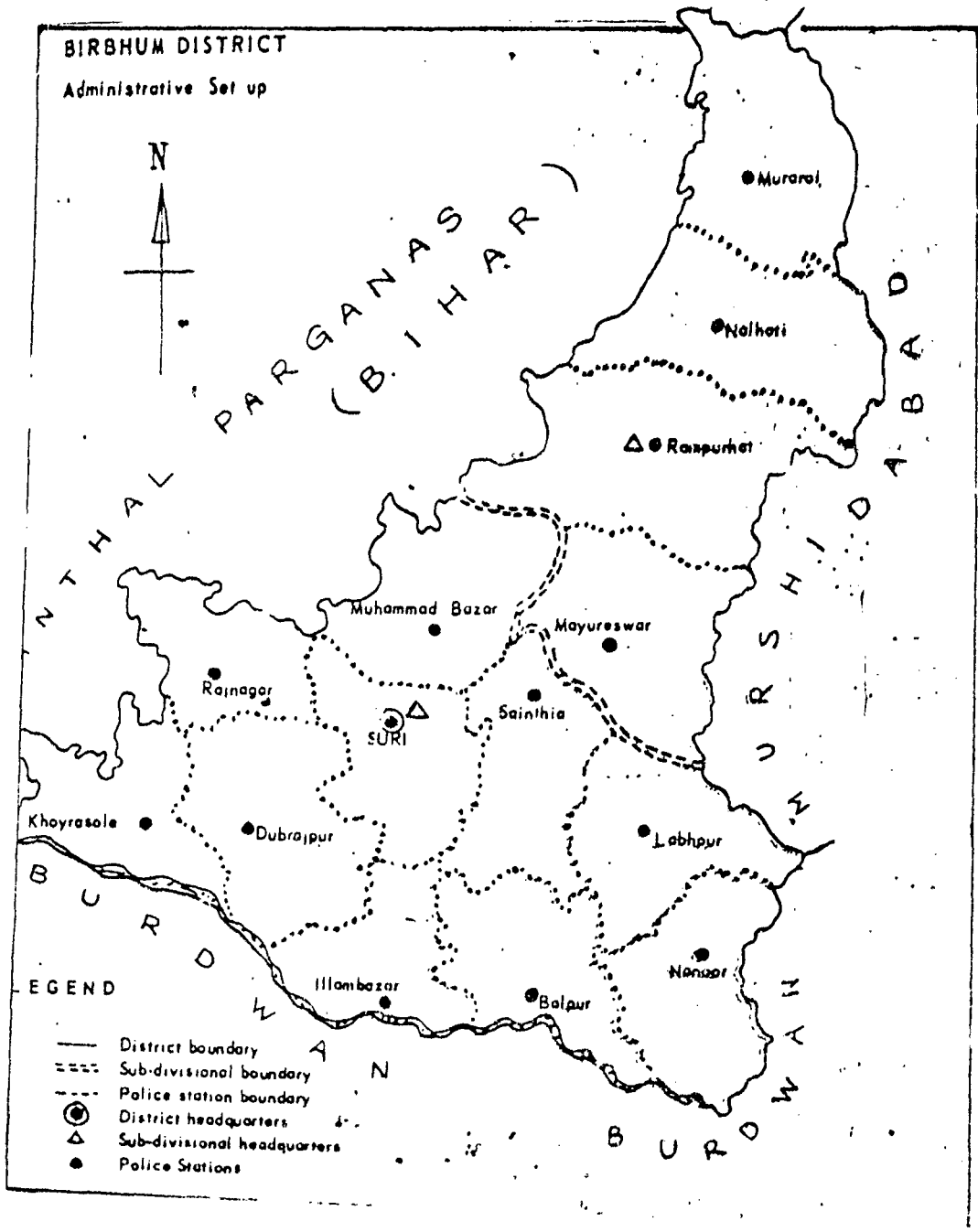
Source : Superintendent of Census Operation, West Bengal, 1971)

Administrative Set-up :

The District consists of two administrative Sub-Divisions, Sadar and Rampurhat, while the third one at Bolpur is under proposal stage. The Headquarters of Sadar Sub-division is at Suri which is also the Headquarters of the only outlying

**BIRBHUM DISTRICT**

Administrative Set up



**LEGEND**

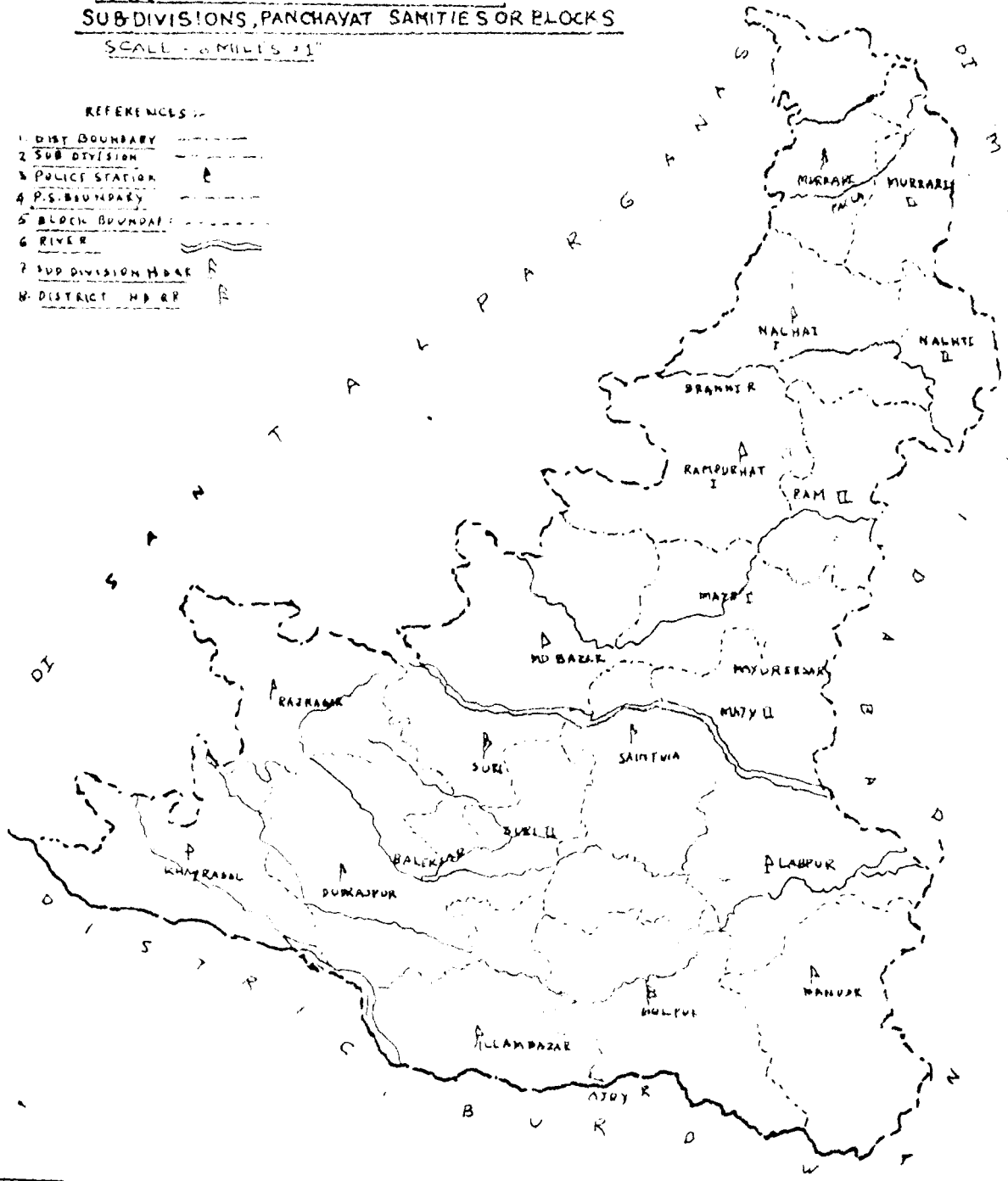
- District boundary
- - - Sub-divisional boundary
- ..... Police station boundary
- ⊙ District headquarters
- ⊠ Sub-divisional headquarters
- Police Stations



MAP OF BIRBHUM DISTRICT  
SUB-DIVISIONS, PANCHAYAT SAMITIS OR BLOCKS  
 SCALE - 6 MILES = 1"

REFERENCES :-

- 1. DIST. BOUNDARY —
- 2. SUB-DIVISION - - - - -
- 3. POLICE STATION ▲
- 4. P.S. BOUNDARY - - - - -
- 5. BLOCK BOUNDARY - - - - -
- 6. RIVER ~~~~~
- 7. SUB-DIVISION H.Q. A
- 8. DISTRICT H.Q. B



Sub-division. The Sadar Sub-division is constituted by 10 Police Stations, namely, Suri, Rajnagar, Malbazar, Sainthia, Dubrajpur, Khairasole, Ilambazar, Bolpur, Labhpur and Nanoor, Rampurhat, Nalhati and Muraroi (Fig. 3).

The District has 6 Towns of which 3 are Municipal Towns and the remaining 3 non-Municipal Towns. Two Municipal towns come under Sadar Sub-division, namely, Suri and Bolpur and the other Municipal town Rampurhat falls under the same sub-division. Out of the 3 non-Municipal Towns of the District, 2 come under the Sadar Sub-division, namely, Sainthia and Dubrajpur, Nalhati is a non-Municipal Town under the Rampurhat Sub-division.

In the District the total number of mouza is 2486 of which 239 are uninhabited. The total number of inhabited mouzas is 2234 and a number of 13 mouzas are included fully in the urban areas of the district.

The District has 19 Panchayet Samities, namely,  
 (i) Nalhati-I, ii) Nalhati-II, iii) Muraroi-I,  
 iv) Murorai-II, v) Mayureswar-I, vi) Mayureswar-II,  
 vii) Rampurhat-I, viii) Rampurhat-II, ix) Md.Bazar,  
 x) Sainthia, xi) Bolpur-Sriniketan, xii) Labpur, xiii) Labpur,  
 xiiii) Nanoor, xv) Dubrajpur, xvi) Illambazar,  
 xvii) Rajnagar, xviii) Suri-I, xix) Suri-II and xx) Khoiraso-  
 sole.

There are 169 Gram Panchayets in the District.

The are -

- i) Md. Bazar - 12 nos,
- ii) Sainthia - 12 nos,
- iii) Bolpur-Sriniketan - 9 nos.,
- iv) Labour - 11 nos.
- v) Nanoor - 11 nos,
- vi) Rajnagar - 5 nos.,
- vii) Suri-I - 7 nos.,
- viii) Suri - II - 6 nos.,
- ix) Khorasole - 10 nos.,
- x) Nalhati -I - 11 nos.,
- xi) Nalhati-II - 6 nos.,
- xii) Muraroi-I - 7 nos.
- xiii) Murorai-II - 9 nos.,
- xiv ) Mayureswar-I - 7 nos.,
- xv) Mayureswar-II - 7 nos.,
- xvi) Rampurhat -I - 9 nos.,
- xvii) Rampurhat-II - 9 nos.

The Zilla Parisad functions at the District Head-  
quarters.



FOOTNOTES

CHAPTER - I

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