POPULATION OF SAURASHTRA (1901 TO 1951)
WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO TRENDS
IN GROWTH AND ECONOMIC CONDITIONS
GENERAL INTRODUCTION

With the establishment of democratic rule in India in 1947 the problems of the people, their needs and aspirations and their general welfare have assumed an importance which formerly were generally put in the back ground. There is activity on all sides for bettering the lot of the common man by increasing opportunities of employment in agriculture, industries and commerce. Government of India also has decided to lift the people from poverty to prosperity by planned economy. Various state governments are also launching their plans to bring about an all sided development of their States. This is all good and in the right direction. But if the amelioration of the condition of the people and creation of a 'welfare state' are objectives it would be very instructive to enquire into the trends in growth and economic condition of the people of India in order to realize the above objectives. India, however, is too vast a country with variations from region to region and so a regional approach would be very very natural. Though there are some common features in the growth of the population of India as a whole there are also local peculiarities about marriage habits, way of living, peculiar political conditions and different economic opportunities and aptitudes of the people. In order to better the lot of the people,
it would be very useful if we know their previous condition and the causes of their poverty. The study of the trends in the growth of population of a particular region will reveal under what circumstances population grows rapidly, when and how its growth is checked and whether on comparison with other countries it presents any specialities. The means by which people get their living are also equally important. We must also know the relative importance of agriculture, industry and trade in the economic life of the people so that we can take the right steps for improving their economic well being. Hence a study of the trends in growth of population as also the economic conditions of a particular region in India will be helpful in the reconstruction of India of tomorrow where all the parts are prosperous. We have to widen the physical, moral and intellectual horizon of man in India and so an all sided development is necessary. But for such a development we must also base our policies on a scientific and unbiased approach. Both production and population must be constantly watched and studied as an undue emphasis on the one and a complete neglect of the other may not enable us to reach our ideal of creating a prosperous and happy India.

The idea of studying the trends in population growth and economic condition of the people in Saurashtra was conceived when Saurashtra was politically united in 1946.
Saurashtra long remained backward due to its almost innumerable political divisions. The economic development of the peninsula could not take place on healthy lines due to fragmented sovereignties. Saurashtra came into existence in 1948 as a result of the integration of the many small States in former Kathiawar. Autocracy and medievalism prevailed in Kathiawar right up to the integration of the small states into one unit called Saurashtra. The Bapus - as the Rajas in Kathiawar were commonly called by the people - being all in all were in the lime light while the real interests of the people were generally neglected. In democratic India we want to create a 'welfare state' and so the people and their problems must be studied.

Along with the technical progress in agriculture and industries if trends in the growth of population of different regions are taken into account the problem of ameliorating the condition of the masses may perhaps be easily solved. In the following lines an humble effort is made in reviewing the trends in growth of the population of Saurashtra during the last fifty years. This investigation has made certain things crystal clear. The growth of population in Saurashtra is at the mercy of nature. As the first period from 1891 to 1921 was full of natural calamities like famines and epidemics, population did not grow rapidly but after 1921 began the period of real population increase. Saurashtra has a very high birth rate and an equally high
death rate. The figures given by the Administrative Reports of some of the states in Saurashtra are something like astounding. In 1901 Saurashtra was a thinly populated area, but it may no longer remain a sparsely populated area considering the increase in population during the last two decades. Marriage habits have remained almost unchanged and fertility is used to its maximum. The age structure of the population has also remained constant. Saurashtra has the heaviest load of dependency to maintain in comparison with India, United States and England.

Saurashtra is comparatively more urbanised than any other part of India and non-agricultural means of living are relatively more important in Saurashtra than agricultural means of livelihood. This does not unfortunately mean that Saurashtra is industrially more advanced than other parts of India. Saurashtra's agriculture is backward and is characterised by low yields, obsolete methods and declining productivity. In the past industrial progress was hampered because of the existence of many political divisions. The potential industrial possibilities still remain dormant and have to be exploited if the ridiculously low standard of living of the people is to be raised. The causes of the relative importance of non-agricultural means of livelihood as also greater urbanisation are political and administrative rather than economic.

The Economic Survey of Saurashtra as also the Bhav-
(v)

-nagar Enquiry into the budgets of the working classes leave no doubt about the miserably low level of existence of the people in Saurashtra. People not only do not get a 'standard diet' - which is a far off thing but they also do not get a 'sufficient diet'. The majority are really born poor, live in poverty and also die in poverty. There was nothing like public health administration attending the preventive side of public health in the former States. There was also no municipal organization to give ordinary civic amenities like water supply, drainage, lighting, good roads, etc. to the people in towns and villages. The Saurashtra Government have done some valuable contribution in this respect, but still much remains to be done. Government are trying to help the people by increasing both industrial and agricultural production, but the problem of increasing population and declining productivity can not be solved by Government alone. People and the Government must co-operate and take scientific steps for ushering in a new era of prosperity.