

THE FIFTY-FOURTH ANNUAL REPORT OF THE
SANITARY COMMISSIONER,

THE TWENTY-EIGHTH ANNUAL REPORT OF THE
SANITARY ENGINEER

AND

THE TWENTY-SECOND ANNUAL REPORT OF THE
SANITARY BOARD,

MADRAS.

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THE
FIFTY-FOURTH ANNUAL REPORT
OF THE
SANITARY COMMISSIONER WITH THE GOVERNMENT
OF MADRAS,
1917.

SECTION V.

GENERAL POPULATION.

RAINFALL.

The total registered rainfall of the Presidency during 1917 was 1,246.03 inches against 1,238.71 in 1916 giving a district average of 49.84 inches. This was greater than the district average of the preceding year by only 0.29 inch. The distribution of the district average between the several monsoons during the year was as follows:—

	INCHES.
Inter-monsoon period (January to May)	6.0
South-west monsoon (June to September)	28.69
North-east monsoon (October to December)	15.15
Total	49.84

2. The average district rainfall in all the monsoons was greater than the district average for forty years ending 1909 by 6.23 inches. Compared with 1916, fourteen districts showed an increased and eleven a decreased rainfall, the increase being highest in Nellore (+ 14.80) and the decrease in Kurnool (— 16.83). As compared with the average, all the districts excepting Malabar, North Arcot, South Arcot, Tanjore and Tinnevely showed an excess rainfall, Gōdāvari (+ 22.14) heading the list followed by Kistna (+ 20.39) and Nellore (+ 15.82). In five other districts (Anantapur, Bellary, Ganjām, Guntūr and South Kanara), the excess was over 10 inches each. The decreased rainfall was marked in South Arcot (— 10.44).

3. Considered with reference to the monsoons, the inter-monsoon period was favourable throughout the Presidency as a whole, the total rainfall of the season being 149.93 inches against 80.35 inches in 1916 and 134.86, the average of forty years. The increase was shared by all the districts excepting three—Malabar, Salem and South Kanara—where the short-falls amounted to 1.65, 1.0 and 0.38 inches, respectively. The district which had the greatest rainfall during the period was the Nilgiris with 14.56 inches against 8.07 in 1916, 12.82 being the average. During the south-west monsoon, the total rainfall of the year, although in excess of the average by 125.31 inches, was lower than that of the previous year by 10.26 inches. In Malabar there was a short-fall of 15.73 inches as compared with 1916 and of 10.49 inches as compared with the average. It is peculiar to find that South Kanara which is subject to almost the same meteorological conditions as Malabar had an excess rainfall over both that of last year (+ 3.18) and of the average (+ 8.27). The fluctuations on the West Coast appear to be very irregular

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and follow no logical method. Another district which fared worse in this monsoon was Kurnool with a fall of 18.41 inches against 28.75 in 1916. In both these districts, the total rainfall of the year was less than that of the previous year, the deficiency being 12.73 and 16.83 inches, respectively. The south-west monsoon was favourable in 16 districts, Madras (+ 6.36) and Ganjām (+ 4.97) recording the highest increases over the figures of 1916. The north-east monsoon proved almost a failure throughout the Presidency. Only nine districts had an excess rainfall during this season, prominent among them being Nellore showing an increase of 7.61 inches over the previous year's figure and of 6.7 inches over the average. Of the districts which had a low rainfall, South Arcot (— 11.68) headed the list followed by North Arcot (— 10.65). The districts which fared worse in both the north-east and south-west monsoons were Anantapur, Guntūr, Kurnool, North Arcot and Vizagapatam.

PRICES OF FOOD-GRAINS.

4. The failure of both the monsoons combined with the high market rates on account of war was the chief cause for a rise in prices of the staple food-grains of the Presidency. Rice was sold during 1917 at 7.8 imperial seers of 80 tolas per rupee, ragi 14.0, cholam 12.6, and cumbu 12.9 against the previous year's figures of 7.9, 14.8, 14.6 and 13.6, respectively and against the average prices of 9.2, 16.3, 16.2 and 15.2, respectively. These figures represent a corresponding rise in prices by 1.3, 5.7, 15.9 and 5.4 per cent, respectively, above that of the previous year and by 17.9, 14.4, 28.6 and 17.8 per cent, respectively, above that of the average.

GENERAL POPULATION.

5. Exclusive of Europeans and Eurasians who numbered 40,928, the population of the Presidency according to the census of 1911 was 41,829,232. The population for which vital statistics were furnished for the year under report continued to be 40,005,735. The excluded number (1,823,497) consisted of the hill tribes of the Ganjām district (341,622) and of the Vizagapatam district (1,020,077) and the inhabitants of the Laccadive Islands (10,600), of the Banganapalle State (39,343) and of the Pudukkōttai State (411,855). The estimated population of the year 1917 was 44,169,672 and its natural growth as ascertained by adding to the census figure of 1911 the excess births over deaths during the succeeding period up to the end of December 1917 was 44,200,836. The difference between these two figures is slight.

6. Emigration during the year was confined to British Guiana, the Straits Settlements, Burma and Ceylon, the total number emigrating being 253,158 against 354,401 in the previous year. The latter figure excludes the number (2,117) emigrated during 1916 to Trinidad, Jamaica and Fiji, emigration to which was prohibited during 1917. Immigrants (excluding indentured emigrants) totalled 227,180 against 270,398 in 1916 and were less than the number emigrating by 25,973.

however, to be abandoned on account of the dearth of medical subordinates (G.O. No. 1730, Revenue, dated 4th May 1918). There is no doubt that medical men are the proper persons to register births and deaths generally but when our registration staff will consist of such men, it is impossible to say. Time and money only will bring about this much needed reform. Even in municipalities where registration of births and deaths is compulsory, the vital statistics supplied cannot be considered as quite reliable. Registrars of births and deaths in these areas being non-medical men cannot possess that knowledge of diseases and their symptoms required to correctly classify the death statistics and the figures furnished by such an agency must be accepted with caution. In at least municipalities where Health Officers have been appointed, the example of the Madras City may be followed in employing Sub-Assistant Surgeons as registering officers. It is for municipal councils concerned to take action in this direction.

8. Prosecutions for failure to report domestic occurrences in municipal towns numbered 794 and the fines imposed by the magistracy amounted to Rs. 475.

BIRTHS IN DISTRICTS.

9. The total number of births registered in the Presidency during the year 1917 was 1,295,078 against 1,301,597 in the previous year, showing a decrease of 6,519 births. These figures give a birth-rate of 32.4 per mille for 1917 and of 32.5 for 1916 on the census population of 1911. Compared with the decennial average for 10 years ending 1916, the recorded birth-rate of the year showed a slight increase of 0.3 per mille. Excluding Madras district which had a birth-rate of 45.4 per mille, the largest birth-rates were recorded in the districts of Chingleput (40.9), Malabar (40.2), South Kanara (38.4), Guntūr (37.2), North Arcot (35.8) and Vizagapatam (35.1). The lowest rates were returned by Ganjām (22.9), Nellore (23.5), Cuddapah (24.5), Kurnool (26.5), Rāmnād (26.6) and Tanjore (27.5). In the other districts the rates varied from 30.0 in Trichinopoly to 34.2 in Gōdāvari. As compared with the previous year, increased birth-rates occurred in 14 districts, prominent among them being Malabar (+ 4.4). In only two other districts Kistna (+ 3.6) and Madras (+ 3.3) the rates exceeded 3 per mille. Births fell off by more than 3 per mille in six districts, the highest decrease occurring in Cuddapah (- 5.8). Compared with the decennial average, there was an increase in 14 districts and a decrease in 11, Madras showing the largest increase (+ 7.2) and Ganjām the largest decrease (- 6.3).

10. Considered with reference to sex, there were 104.4 male births for every 100 female births as in the previous year. Muhammadans, as usual, returned the highest birth-rate of 36.8 against 36.2 per mille in 1916. The birth-rate among Hindus was 32.1 and among Indian Christians 30.1, corresponding rates for the previous year being 32.4 and 30.2, respectively.

11. The total population of the rural areas where Act III of 1899 was in operation was 6,009,523 and that of the areas where it was not, 31,274,091. These populations yielded birth-rates of 33.3 and 31.6 per mille, respectively. Of the 21 districts where the Act was in force in selected tracts, only 13 returned rates in excess of those registered in the non-compulsory areas. Increases were marked in Nellore (+ 22.4) and Rāmnād (+ 15.6) while Kurnool showed the largest deficit of 17.5 per mille.

