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[Despatch Abstract.]

Recording for Recd
dept-keeping order
on the Census report
for the Madras Pre-
sidence, 1891.

GOVERNMENT OF MADRAS.
REVENUE DEPARTMENT.

READ—Census of India, 1891, Vol. XIII.

ORDER—dated 24th July 1893, No. 670, Revenue.

Census, No. 1.

The Government has read with interest Mr. H. A. Stuart's excellent report on the Madras Census of 1891. A detailed

review of the report would serve no useful purpose, and the Government will therefore only touch briefly on the principal points calling for notice.

2. The total population of the Madras Presidency in 1891, excluding feudatory states, was 35,630,440, having increased since the Census of 1881 by 4,803,327 or about 15½ per cent. The decade, 1881—91, was marked by no serious famines nor epidemics of pestilence, and its conditions were therefore favorable to an increase in population; it is not therefore surprising to find that the effects of the severe famine of 1877—78 have almost entirely disappeared and that the population has multiplied rapidly. It is interesting to observe the effects of the great famine on the age character of the population. The mortality, during the famine, was naturally greater among the young and old than among those in the prime of life and consequently the majority of the survivors were at the reproduction age at the commencement of the decade, 1881—91; the result has been that the rate of increase of the population in the districts affected by the famine has been much higher than in the non-famine districts. The population of Cuddapah, Kurnool, Bellary and Anantapur is still, however, below what it was in 1871.

3. In the 85th paragraph of the Report, Mr. Stuart draws attention to the extreme inaccuracy of the birth and death statistics as they are now recorded in the Madras Presidency. The figures quoted by him show that the vital statistics for the 10 years, 1881—91, exhibit an excess of births over deaths of 2,423,133, or only about one-half of the increase in population during the same period ascertained by the Census. The difference between the figures is enormous, and, as there can be no doubt as to the approximate correctness of the Census returns, it is obvious that the registration of vital statistics is extremely imperfect, especially in rural tracts, where the work is entirely in the hands of the low-paid village accountant. The subject merits the serious attention of Collectors and their subordinates, for, though a perfect system of registration cannot be expected in the present circumstances of the country, the Government is disposed to think that if more supervision were exercised over the work of village accountants in this matter, a far greater degree of accuracy would be secured in the statistics recorded.

4. According to the Census, Hindus, in the Madras Presidency, numbered 32,471,053, Muhammadans 2,247,172 and Christians 865,528. A comparison with the Census figures of 1881 shows that Muhammadans and Christians have increased more rapidly than Hindus. In the case of Muhammadans, the comparatively high rate of increase is ascribed by Mr. Stuart partly to conversions from Hinduism to Islamism and partly to a greater natural fertility amongst Muhammadans which is evidenced by the high proportion of Muhammadan children under five years of age. The high increase amongst Christians is attributed entirely to conversions. It is a curious fact that in the Tinnevely district, which is one of the chief centres of Protestant Mission work, the number of Protestant Christians has decreased since 1881 by 8 per cent.

Mr. Stuart's explanation of the decrease is that large numbers of those converted during the famine have since returned to the Hindu faith. Another theory which suggests itself is that many of the famine converts have become Roman Catholics, and some colour is lent to this by the fact that the Roman Catholic community in Tinnevely has increased since 1881 by 22 per cent.

5. The most interesting feature of the fourth chapter of the report, which treats of age and sex, is a life-table for the city of Madras compiled by Mr. G. H. Stuart, M.A., Principal of the Presidency College, Madras. The table has been prepared at a considerable sacrifice of time and labour, and the Government is much indebted to Mr. Stuart for this valuable addition to the Census report. Four hundred and twelve persons were entered in the Census schedules as centenarians, but inquiries subsequently instituted have demonstrated that the returns are in hardly any cases reliable. The Census figures show an excess of 391,650 females over males in the total population. Mr. Stuart discusses at some length the theory that a preponderance of the female sex in a population is a measure of the accuracy with which a Census has been conducted. The figures of the recent Census throw considerable doubt on the correctness of this theory, and Mr. Stuart's conclusion, that there is naturally an excess of males in several districts of the Presidency, seems to be fully justified. The fifth chapter of the report deals with the civil or conjugal condition of the people. From the statistics regarding the age at which females of the different castes are ordinarily married, it is calculated that the custom of infant marriage is observed by about 40 per cent. of the native population.

6. Mr. Stuart infers from a comparison of the Census figures of 1871, 1881 and 1891 that the disease of insanity has been steadily diminishing in the Madras Presidency during the last 20 years. This inference is doubtless justified by the statistics which show a decrease in the number of insane persons from 14,017 in 1871 to 7,687 in 1891. The number of lepers has also decreased during the same period, though not to so marked an extent. The Government has some hesitation in believing, in the absence of any known causes which have tended to diminish insanity and leprosy, that these two diseases are really less common than they were 20 years ago, and the returns under these heads are probably not trustworthy. There is more foundation for Mr. Stuart's conclusion that blindness is really diminishing among the population, for, in this case, there are, as he observes, causes at work which would contribute to such a result, namely, a decrease in the number of cases of small-pox, which is a frequent cause of blindness and an increasing tendency on the part of blind persons to resort to skilled medical practitioners for treatment.

7. The statistics of education show that 92 per cent. of the people of this Presidency are unable to read and write, while among females, the proportion of illiterates is as high as 99 per cent. Education has advanced steadily though slowly since 1871, and so far there is ground for satisfaction, but Mr. Stuart very justly observes that it will have to be extended on a much greater scale than in past years before any real impression can be made on the prevailing ignorance of the masses. The Brahmans are far in advance of all other castes in the matter of education, a fact which explains the large proportion of Brahmans holding appointments in the public service. The attention of the Director of Public Instruction will be drawn in the Educational Department to the remarks in paragraphs 256—258 of the report, with reference to the discrepancies between the Census returns and the statistics of the Educational Department relating to the number of pupils attending schools and colleges.

8. Chapters 10 and 11 of the report, the first of which deals with castes, tribes and races, and the second with occupations, are full of interest. Mr. Stuart has here collected a quantity of information regarding subdivisions of castes, and popular manners and customs, much of which is new and will repay perusal. The subject is, as he observes, one of extreme ethnological interest and its investigation is still far from complete. The statistics of occupations show that 62 per cent. of the total population may be classed as wholly or partly agricultural and that 18½ per cent. are engaged in the preparation and supply of material substances. The proportion of the population classed under the remaining occupations is comparatively small; only 2½ per cent. are employed in Government service.

9. The net cost of the Census, including the expenditure from Municipal revenues, was Rs. 4,72,022 or Rs. 13-4-0 per 1,000 of the population. The figure compares favorably with that of the Census of 1881 and every effort appears to have been made to minimise expenditure. Mr. Stuart has been unable to obtain complete statistics of the expenditure incurred in other provinces of India, but he anticipates that the cost of the Census in Madras will be found to be higher than in other large provinces. This seems probable from the length of time which has been taken in the completion of the Madras report, necessitating the prolonged retention of a special establishment. The concluding chapter of the report and its appendices, which contain a detailed description of the way in which the census was carried out and certain suggestions for the future, suggested by the experience of the past, will prove a useful record for reference when the next census takes place.

10. In conclusion, His Excellency the Governor in Council desires to thank Mr. H. A. Stuart for the able manner in which he has carried out the Census of the Madras Presidency. The thanks of the Government are also due to M.R.Ry. Rai Bahadur C. Kalyanasundram Chettiar Avergal and to the other officers whose services are acknowledged by Mr. Stuart in the preface to his report.

(True Extract.)

Immaneto
for Secretary to Government.

To the Director of Public Instruction, through the Educational Department.
,, the Board of Revenue (Land Revenue).
,, the Public Department (Settlement).
,, H. A. Stuart, Esq., I.C.S.

No. 670A.

Copy to the Government of India, Home Department (Census).

(Signed) C. A. GAILTON,
Secretary to Government.

Exd. S. J. Pereira.

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Govt of (1893) Madras.
REVENUE.

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Note for the Madras Office.

One copy to be given for the General
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JULY.

Census Report.

Passing orders on the — for the Madras
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