

REPORT OF THE SOCIO - ECONOMIC SURVEY  
OF RURAL SOUTH-GUJARAT PARSEES.

By

CASHMERA PERCY BHAYA

Sponsored by

THE WORLD ZOROASTRIAN ORGANISATION,  
LONDON.

AND

SURAT PARSEE PANCHAYAT, SURAT.

REPORT OF THE SOCIO - ECONOMIC SURVEY  
OF RURAL SOUTH-GUJARAT PARSEES.

By

CASHMERA PERCY BHAYA

Sponsored by

THE WORLD ZOROASTRIAN ORGANISATION,  
LONDON.

AND

SURAT PARSEE PANCHAYAT, SURAT.

---

**1988**

3-14

## F O R E W O R D

Though the Parsee community is highly urbanised, a significant number are yet to be found in rural areas. Looking at the large number of Parsee families in the villages of South Gujarat we find that most of them derive their livelihood from the toil of tilling, with the state of nature deciding their welfare or otherwise from year to year.

Our brethren in the South Gujarat villages usually own marginal areas of land and are largely in unfavourable pecuniary circumstances. They have now been under the burden of three consecutive years of insufficient rainfall (in some places none at all); and for those agrarian families that have no access to canal facilities the suffering is quite untenable.

These Parsee families constantly need and seek financial assistance from charity trusts. The trustees of the Bombay and Surat Parsee Panchayats have done and are doing as much as they can to alleviate the suffering. However, a more permanent cure needs to be found. But before any schemes can be worked out for the amelioration of our fellow Parsees in these South Gujarat villages, it is essential to gather and tabulate the latest authentic demographic details and hardships faced by them.

The first step has now been taken and the necessary information is presented in the following pages as the "Report of The Socio-Economic Survey of Rural South Gujarat Parsees." The gathering of this information was organised by the Surat Parsee Panchayat and enthusiastically financed by the World Zoroastrian Organisation, London and Bombay Parsee Panchayat.

In Cashmera Marzban Bharucha (now Mrs. Cashmera Percy Bhaya) then a lecturer in Maharaja Sayaji Rao University of Bardoa, the Surat Parsee Panchayat found a qualified and competent person to take on the challenge of organising, authenticating and suitably tabulating the necessary data. She has accorded this project the seriousness it deserved. The devotion to the cause of our village brethren has been her driving force, and she now eagerly looks forward to seeing tangible efforts and results from those who have the means of helping their fellow Parsees. To quote her, "There is no reason for any further delay in helping our dear brothers and sisters in need. They have already been suffering for a long time and any further delay would be tantamount to total denial".

The community and especially we have the pleasure to thank Mrs.Cashmera Bhaya who steered the present study to its fruition.

Maneck J.R. Gheyara

Honorary Advisor

Sam S.Bhacca

President

Bahadur R.H.Patel

Davar Kavasji T.Modi

Minocher K.Contractractor

Faramroze N. Lakdawala

Khushroo S.Lashkari

Shavaksha J.Hiloowala

Dhunjisha D.Dumasia

Sam J. Kapadia

)  
)  
)  
)  
)  
)  
)  
)

Members

Parsi Panchayat Office  
Shahpore, Surat 395003

The community and especially we have the pleasure to thank Mrs.Cashmera Bhaya who steered the present study to its fruition.

Maneck J.R. Gheyara

Honorary Advisor

Sam S. Bhacca

President . .

Bahadur R.H.Patel

Davar Kavasji T.Modi

Minocher K. Contractor

Faramroze N. Lakdawala

Khushroo S. Lashkari

Shavaksha J.Hiloowala

Dhunjisha D.Dumasia

Sam J. Kapadia

## Members

Parsi Panchayat Office  
Shahpore, Surat 395003

## Preface

I have great pleasure in submitting this Report of the Socio-Economic Survey of Rural South Gujarat Parsees to its sponsors - the World Zoroastrian Organisation, London and the Surat Parsee Panchayat, Surat and to the Parsee community in general.

The condition of Parsees living in the villages of Gujarat has been a source of constant concern after Independence. Before Independence, a large number of Parsee families in Gujarat, particularly in the rural areas had lucrative toddy or liquor trade. However, the introduction of prohibition in 1947, tenancy laws and other legislations related to the agriculturists was a great blow to the families of these regions. The educated among them migrated to cities; but of the larger uneducated populace which remained behind most took to agriculture. Unfortunately, success evaded a majority of these agriculturists. Thus, through the years a steady economic decline of these families has taken place.

The members of the World Zoroastrian Organisation realized the depth of the deplorable condition of their counterparts in these villages and expressed their desire to ameliorate the condition and promote the welfare of the Parsee families of these regions. However, it was their considered opinion that a random distribution of money was haphazard as it might unwittingly leave out the really needy persons. Thus, a need to rationalize the charity and have a well-planned scheme which would rehabilitate the affected residents was felt. Hence, the work to conduct an inquiry into the socio-economic conditions of the rural Parsee community in South-Gujarat and to make a report on the overall picture of the deplorable condition in which these poor families live, was entrusted to me. We now have a record giving full and detailed particulars about every family which was interviewed and I hope the Parsee Panchayats and the W.Z.O. will in a joint effort help the genuinely poor in a planned and supervised way as soon as possible.

Due to time and financial constraints, the Survey was limited to 3 districts of South Gujarat where Parsees are found in a majority viz. Bharuch, Surat and Valsad. In the absence of any data available in the District Handbooks or Census Reports on the names of villages where Parsees reside, the selection of the villages which were investigated was done on the basis of the Socio-Economic Survey of Gujarat Parsees made by Late Maneck Mistry in 1967. Of the 337 villages which were covered, only 209 villages now have Parsee population. A total of 687 families were visited. Out of these 687 families, we have information of only 684 families as three families were not willing to give their details.

The data was obtained on the basis of the information collected from a detailed questionnaire printed in Gujarati, observations and interviews with each and every family reported in this study. Though efforts were made not to miss any village, it is possible that a few villages having negligible Parsee families in every District might have been overlooked due to lack of any recorded data on them. It took about a year and a half to collect the data from all the villages i.e. these villages were visited between June 1984 to December 1985.

I would like to express my sincere thanks to the Surat Parsee Panchayat especially Mr. Maneck J.R. Gheyara, ex-President of the Surat Parsee Panchayat and the World Zoroastrian Organisation [W.Z.O] especially Mr. Shapur F. Captain, Vice-President of the W.Z.O., London, who jointly sponsored the present Survey and gave me their utmost cooperation and assistance at every stage of the work.

I am also grateful to Professor Noshir F. Kaikobad, President of the Maharashtra Council of Social Welfare, for his constant advice and guidance in conducting the Survey.

My thanks are also due to Dr. Ratan R. Marshall, special officer of Surat Parsee Panchayat, for his constant help in the operation of the Survey.

I am also thankful to Professor Harish Doshi, Head, Department of Sociology, South-Gujarat University, Surat, and Dr. Pravin J. Patel, Professor, Department of Sociology, Maharaja Sayajirao University, Baroda, who were Consultants to the Survey and gave their expert advice and guidance at different stages of the Survey.

Among others who have assisted me in their varying capacities and to whom I am thankful are Mr. Adil Navdar and Mrs. Lily Kapadia of Datamatics, Mr. Niki Contractor, Mr. Subha Rao and Mr. Bomi Mistry.

Last, but not the least, I am completely beholden to my husband and parents for their constant inspiration to complete the Survey work.

Cashmera P. Bhaya

Muscat,

March 21, 1988.

## THE REPORT

The Report on the Socio-Economic Survey of Rural South-Gujarat Parsees has been divided into three sections based on its objectives, namely,

- Objective 1 : Census of the Parsee population residing in the villages of the Districts of Bharuch, Surat and Valsad,
- Objective 2 : To determine the socio-economic status of Parsee families of these villages, and,
- Objective 3 : Suggestions to render economic aid to poor Parsee families of these villages on the basis of the Survey findings.

### OBJECTIVE 1 : CENSUS

There is no up-to-date information available on the number of Parsee families residing in the villages of South-Gujarat. Therefore, one of the major objectives of the study was to conduct a regular census of Parsee families of rural Gujarat. Due to financial and time constraints, the study concentrated on the villages of 3 Districts of South Gujarat where Parsee families are found in a majority viz. Bharuch, Surat and Valsad.

#### a) Overall coverage:

A total of 687 families have been visited in 209 villages of 24 talukas of the 3 Districts of Bharuch, Surat and Valsad. In Bharuch District, there are 4 talukas having 12 villages in which 56 Parsee families reside; in Surat District, 10 talukas have been found to be having some 400 Parsee families spread out in 129 villages; and, finally, in Valsad District, 231 Parsee families are living in 68 villages of 10 talukas [Table No.1]

#### b) Sects:

The Parsee community has 2 main sects - the Athornans and the Behdins, i.e. the priestly class and the common people.

In Bharuch District, there are a total of 5 Athornan and 51 Behdin families; in Surat District, we have 22 Athornan and 374 Behdin families and in Valsad District, there are 36 families of the former sect and 196 of the latter sect respectively.

#### c) Sex-Ratio:

The sex-ratio of the entire population of 687 families is illustrated in Table No.2. In the district of Bharuch, there are a total of 186 persons out of which 93 are males and 93 are females. This means that both males and females constitute 50% each of the total population, the male-female ratio being 1:1.

In Surat district, the total number of persons are 1526 - from which 780 are males and 745 are females. This means that males constitute 51% of the total population whereas females constitute 49% of the total population in Surat district. The male-female ratio in the district is 1.05 : 1.00



Finally, in Valsad district, 765 persons are residing, of which 396 are males and 367 are females. In other words, 52% are males and 48% are females of the total population in the 68 villages of Valsad district. The male-female ratio in this case is 1.08 : 1.00

At no time in the history of the community since 1871, there has been an excess of females over males and the present village population of South-Gujarat is no exception with a sex-ratio of almost 50 : 50

As compared to the 1967 study of Late Mistry, for the same number of villages and districts, the population shows a distinct decline in the rural population of the Parsees. Whereas in 1967, the total number of males in these areas were 1941, in the present study they are only 1269. For the females, the previous figures were 1940 and at present they are 1205 - a decline by 34.62% in the case of males and 37.88% in the case of females. This decline is in coherence with a general decline of the Parsee population in India.

Our study shows that among the important factors which have contributed to this decline of the village population are a low fertility rate, the deteriorating economic condition of the families and migration.

As will be seen later, during the period from 1964 to 1985, male births in these villages have declined by 40.5% and female births have reduced by 47%; this fall in the percentage of births through the years have had a negative impact on population growth.

179 families have stated that their present economic status has declined considerably as compared to the past. The economic factor has, therefore, also played an important role in restricting the Parsee couples to have a larger family.

Finally, migration of a large number of youths has also contributed to the decline of the village Parsee population. Most of the families who were interviewed had their grown-up children settled in cities; who had initially gone for educational purposes but eventually got employed there and never returned to their villages.

#### d) Age-groupings:

Another important factor in the biological composition of any social group is the age of its members. Table No.3 gives us a clear picture about the age composition of the Parsee population in these villages. We may divide the table into 3 groups:

- i) children from 0-14 years, which comprise of 17% of the total Parsee village population.
- ii) the reproductive group from 15 to 49 years which are 45% of the population and,
- iii) the aged, from 50 to 100 years, which are 38% of the population.

In Bharuch district, in the first age-group of 0-14 years, there are 21 persons; in the age-group of 15 to 49 years there are 84 persons and in the age-group of 50 to 100 years there are 81 persons [11%, 45% and 44% for each group respectively].

In Surat district, in the age-group of 0-14 years, there are 287 persons; in the age-group of 15 to 49 years there are 695 persons and in the age-group of 50 to 100 years, there are 543 persons [19%, 45% and 36% for each group respectively].

In Valsad district, in the age-group of 0-14 years, there are 110 persons; in the age-group of 15 to 49 years, there are 329 persons and in the age-group from 50 to 100 years, there are 324 persons [15%, 43% and 42% for each group respectively].

The above figures confirm the general trend of the Parsees through the years, that it is a biologically declining community. The alarming factor is that the reproductive group consists of just 45% of the population. Normally this group should be between 50 and 55 per 100 of the population as it is this group which determines the future growth of the population and also has to bear the economic burden of maintaining the other 2 unproductive groups, viz. the children and the aged.

An unfavorable age distribution with a small number of children and growing number of old persons also lays a heavy burden on the population in 2 ways. The children are prone to certain diseases and old persons to others. Mortality among these groups is therefore always higher than in the rest of the population. The death of one child means sweeping off at a stroke a potential parent and the amount spent on rearing goes to waste. When it falls on an old person, it involves much expense on death ceremonies - an economic burden which the community cannot do without due to tradition and sentiments.

#### e) Births and Deaths:

The small percentage of children as seen above also highlights another prominent feature of the Parsee community viz. the low birth rate in the community. In our study, we have recorded births in every Parsee family in the last 21 years. A total of 736 births have been recorded in the villages of the 3 districts from the years 1964 to 1985. Table No.4 reveals the successive decline of births in the 2 decades from 1964 to 1985. During the period 1964 to 1969, 116 males and 117 females were born in all the villages combined. From 1970 to 1975, the figures for males are 105 and for females they are 121. The years from 1976 to 1980 saw a further decline in the birth numbers - 80 males and 66 females were born. Finally, during the five year period from 1981 to 1985, only 69 births of males and 62 births of females have been recorded. The above table demonstrates that the percentage decline in males from the period 1964-1969 to 1981-1985 is 40.5% and 47% for females. The alarming rate at which the Parsee population is declining due to low number of births calls for a further indepth study and immediate remedial action before it is too late.

Table No.5 presents the recorded deaths during the period from 1964 to 1985. The figures on deaths also shows a distinct pattern. From 1964 to 1969, a total of 84 deaths, in all the 3 districts combined, have taken place. For the period 1970 to 1975, the highest number of deaths for both males and females together have taken place during the 21 year period - the figure amounting to 124. 115 deaths were recorded during the years from 1976 to 1980 - i.e. 9 less than the previous 5 year period. However, during the last period from 1981 to 1985, it again came up to 118.

Thus, Table No.4 and Table No.5 show that while births have recorded a steep decline, the deaths have increased from period to period which has resulted in the decrease of the number of Parsees in these villages.

#### Marital Status:

As far as the marital status of the population is concerned, in all the 3 districts combined, there are 623 unmarried males, 484 unmarried females and 565 married Parsee couples. This means the ratio of married Parsees to non-married Parsees is almost 1:1 - which is a very disturbing trend as it reflects that for each married person there is one unmarried person. This is another significant factor which has contributed to the decline in the rural Parsee population figures.

13 Parsee males had non-Parsee spouses and one Parsee female had a non-Parsee husband staying with her family. 58 Parsee males were widowers and 140 were Parsee widows. There was only one Parsee male who was a widower by a non-Parsee wife and one Parsee widow whose husband was a non-Parsee. There were a total of 23 Parsee divorcees among the families; in 9 cases males gave divorce to their spouses whereas in 14 cases females gave divorce to their husbands. There were no divorcees with non-Parsee spouses. [Table No.6]

#### g) Education:

The rural Parsee population is fairly well-educated. As can be observed from Table No.7, only 68 adults have no formal education, of which 17 are males and 51 are females.

Out of 186 persons residing in the villages of Bharuch district, 2 persons have no formal education, 1 person is a medical doctor, 5 people hold post-graduate degrees and 1 holds diploma from I.T.I. [Indian Technical Institute]. 17 people have studied or are studying in colleges and 154 have studied or are studying at various levels in school.

In Surat district, from a population of 1526, 2 persons are Medical Doctors, 9 are post-graduates, 13 have a diploma in Engineering, 12 hold a diploma mainly in Textiles, 95 have studied or are attending colleges while 1357 have studied or are studying at various levels in school. Only 39 adults have had no formal education.

Finally, in the villages of Valsad district, there are 27 adults who have never attended school, 2 are Medical Doctors, 11 hold diploma in Engineering, 6 have diploma mainly in Textiles, 16 are post-graduates, 87 have attended or are attending colleges and 594 persons have gone to or are going to schools.

### **OBJECTIVE 2 : TO DETERMINE THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS OF PARSEE FAMILIES OF THESE VILLAGES**

The second aim of the Survey was to determine the socio-economic status of Parsee families of rural South-Gujarat. This section therefore mainly deals with the major occupations, annual income, liabilities, housing conditions and the problem of unemployment among the Parsee families

a) Occupation:

Table No.8 gives us an idea about the occupation of the people under study. A total of 914 people are gainfully employed in all the villages of the 3 districts, which excludes the category of housewives, students, minors, unemployed, those surviving on charity, rent, bank-interest and pension, retired and the physically handicapped.

In the district of Bharuch, out of 68 people who are gainfully employed, 35 are engaged in agriculture, which constitutes 52% of the total people effectively employed, 26 are in service [38%], 2 people are doing business [3%], there is 1 mobed [1%] and 4 people are driving their own rickshaws [6%].

As for the district of Surat, out of 544 people who are gainfully employed, 327 persons are involved in the occupation of agriculture [60%], 135 in service [24%], 58 in business [10%], 14 in mobedi [3%] and 10 are in rickshaw-driving [3%].

In Valsad district, out of a total of 302 people gainfully employed, 145 people are in agriculture [48%], 72 are in service [24%], 71 in business [24%], 11 in mobedi [3%], and 3 in driving rickshaws [1%].

The study therefore, highlights that majority of the people i.e. 56% of the total effectively employed, are dependent upon agriculture for their livelihood.

Out of a total of 684 families, 421 families are owning land of their own, whereas 263 families have no land. As seen from Table No.9, in Bharuch district, 35 families are owning land and 21 families have no land. From the 35 families who own land, 30 families possess land in the range of 1 to 50 acres, 1 family from 51 to 100 acres and 4 families are owning land above 100 acres.

In the district of Surat, 127 families are having no land while 269 families have land. From the 269 land-owning families, 266 hold land between 1 and 50 acres, 3 between 51 and 100 acres whereas no family holds land above 100 acres.

In the district of Valsad, 115 families have no land, while 117 families own land. Of the 117 families, 106 own land between 1 and 50 acres, 3 between 51 and 100 acres and 8 families own land between 101 and 227 acres.

From the above we may say that from a total of 684 families, 62% of the families own land and 38% do not have any land. This again means that the rural Parsee populace has an agrarian economy.

b) Annual Income:

Table No.10 and Table No.11 gives us a break-up of the annual earnings from primary and secondary sources of income respectively. As already observed from Table No.8 on occupation, the primary sources of income for most families are agriculture, service and business.

From a total of 684 families surveyed, 209 families also have secondary sources of income whereas 475 families have no secondary source of income. Out of the 209 families who supplement their primary income by secondary sources, 44 families have their children sending them money every month, 40 families engage in kusti-weaving to supplement their primary earnings, 35 families get additional income from either rent or interest on fixed deposits in banks, 30 families have their relatives sending money every month or occasionally, 23 families have agricultural income, 22 families earn secondary income from business and finally 15 families earn additional income by selling milk or dairy products [Table No.12].

The estimate of the annual income earned by the families can be made from Table No.10. 629 families have income from primary source of income whereas 55 families have no income, either from primary or secondary source and are surviving on charity. Of the 629 families who have income from primary sources, 179 families have an annual income which ranges between Rs.2,000/- and Rs.6,000/- [i.e.Rs.167/- to Rs.500/- p.m.], 98 families earn between Rs.6,001 to Rs.9,600/- [i.e.Rs.500/- to Rs.800/- p.m.], 90 earn between Rs.9,601/- and Rs.12,000/- [i.e.Rs.800/- to Rs.1,000/- p.m.], 77 earn between Rs.12,001/- and Rs.18,000/- [i.e.Rs.1,000/- to Rs.1,500/- p.m.], 56 families earn between Rs.18,001/- and Rs.24,000/- [i.e.Rs.1,500/- to Rs.2,000/- p.m.], 63 families earn between Rs.24,001/- and Rs.36,000/- [i.e.Rs.2,000/- to Rs.3,000/- p.m.] and 66 families have an annual earning between Rs.36,001/- and Rs.50,000/- [i.e.Rs.3,000/- to Rs.4,167/- p.m.]

As for the number of families having secondary sources of income, they total 209, and those who have no secondary source of income total to 420 families, excluding 55 families who have no income from any source. Of the 209 families with secondary sources of income, 104 families earn annually between Rs.180/- and Rs.2,400/- [i.e.Rs.15/- to Rs.200/- p.m.], 49 families earn between Rs.2,401/- and Rs.6,000/- [i.e.Rs.200/- to Rs.500/- p.m.], 28 families earn between Rs.6,001/- and Rs.12,000/- [i.e.Rs.501/- to Rs.1,000/- p.m.], 12 families earn between Rs.12,001/- and Rs.24,000/- [i.e.Rs.1,000/- to Rs.2,000/- p.m.] and finally 16 families have an annual earning from secondary sources between Rs.24,001/- and Rs.6,00,000/- [i.e.Rs.2,000 to Rs.50,000/- pm]

#### c) Liabilities:

The factor which is of great concern to us is the liabilities of the families of these regions i.e.how many families have taken loans, what are the reasons for which they have taken these loans, are they in a position to repay this borrowed money and to what extent? How many families have asked for help to repay these loans and what is the amount?

Table No.13 and 13[a] highlight that 245 families are in debts of one kind or the other. 180 families have taken loans for agricultural purposes whereas 65 for non-agricultural purposes such as education, food, marriage, house-repairs, medicine and death-ceremonies. The total borrowings for promoting agriculture amounts to Rs.57,35,384/- and for non-agricultural purposes the debt amount is Rs.8,96,100/-. This means that a total of Rs.66,31,484/- have been borrowed by 245 families for both agricultural and non-agricultural purposes. Hence, the average debt per family works out to Rs.27,067/-.

In the district of Bharuch, 17 families have taken loans for agriculture and 5 for other purposes like education, food and marriage. In Surat district, 119 families are indebted for the first reason and 38 for the latter. And finally, in Valsad district, 44 families have borrowed money for agriculture and 22 for non-agricultural purposes.

From the 245 families who are in debts, 151 families have specified they are not in a financial position to repay these debts and have asked for monetary assistance from the Panchayats while 94 families do not require any aid. As can be seen from Table No.14, 14 families require aid in Bharuch district, 97 in Surat district and 40 in Valsad district. The break-up of the total amount asked for repayment of debts is specified in the same Table No.14. The final figure of assistance required by this category of people amounts to Rs.22,75,718. That is, the average amount required per family is Rs.15,070/-.

d). Housing Conditions:

The houses one lives in is one of the main indicators of his socio-economic status. As far as the housing conditions of these families is concerned, they are in a depleted state. Majority of the houses are above 90 years old and leak during the monsoons and badly need repairs. The Table No.15 on "Type of House" shows that 478 families live in "Pucca" houses [70%], 172 in "Kutchha" ones [25%] and 34 in huts [5%] respectively. Of the 684 families, 76 are without any facility of electricity, water, or flush-toilets which are the basic necessities in today's modern age.

Table No.16 gives us the estimate of the amount required for house-repairs.

370 families have requested for monetary help for the purpose of house repairs while 314 need no help. Of the 370 families, who have asked for aid, 236 families require money between Rs.500/- to Rs.10,000/-, 101 families require between Rs.10,001/- to Rs.25,000; and 33 families have asked for an amount ranging between Rs.25,001/- to Rs.60,000/-. The total amount required by 370 families in all the villages of the 3 districts for house-repairs sums up to Rs.46,36,500/-.

e) Unemployment:

The problem of unemployment is not very acute in these villages. Only 55 persons in all the 3 districts combined have sought employment of some sort [Table No.17]. Of the 55 unemployed people, 36 are in the 15 to 25 year age-group while 19 belong to the 26 to 52 year age - group; of them, 34 are S.S.C. and 21 are graduates. When asked as to what type of job they require and the salary they expect per month, 11 desire to be in business, 34 in service, and for the rest of the 10, any type of job is acceptable. 19 persons expect salary between Rs.250/- to Rs.500/- per month, 27 between Rs.501/- to Rs.990/- and for 9 persons any amount is acceptable.

The low number of unemployed people is mainly due to the fact that a large percentage of the population is aged [38%] and retired and do not want to be employed as they are living on bank interest, pension, rent or charity. Secondly, the main occupation of these rural Parsees is agriculture where generally all the members of a family are absorbed into helping the family head to manage his land. This is also applicable for business where all the family members may be involved in the same business for their livelihood.

The above findings also draw our attention to the fact that many people, though employed, are effectively under-employed; thus, if 5 people are required to till a plot of land, there are 10 to 12 to till the same plot of land due to a lack of alternative employment opportunities in the villages. This in turn has resulted in the present state of poverty among the Parsee families.

### OBJECTIVE 3 : SUGGESTIONS TO RENDER AID TO THE POOR

The third and the final objective of the Survey was to ascertain the genuinely poor and needy Parsee families and determine how they could be helped by the W.Z.O. and the Parsee Panchayats. For this particular objective to be achieved the following questions were included in the questionnaire:

- i) How many Parsee families were already availing financial help from the Panchayats ?
- ii) Was the amount received by these families sufficient to meet their requirements ? If not, how many families desired extra help and how much ?
- iii) How many families have asked for financial help from the Panchayats for the first time and what is the total amount ?

a) Families Aided by the Panchayats at present:

Tables No.18, 18[a] and 19 respectively answer the above questions. As can be seen from Table No.18 on financial help already received by families, 135 families out of a total of 684 are already being assisted by the Panchayats i.e. at present 19.73% of the populace are availing aid from charitable institutions. From the 135 families being helped, 125 families are receiving monetary help whereas 10 families are being supported in material form by being given free books for their children's education, grains and clothes.

The break-up of the amount received by 125 families is as follows:

- i) 65 families are receiving money in the range from Rs.50/- to Rs.600/- per annum [i.e.between Rs.4.16 p. to Rs.50 p.m.]
- ii) 29 families between Rs.601/- to Rs.1,200/- per annum [i.e.between Rs.51/- to Rs.100/- p.m.]
- iii) 19 families between Rs.1,201/- to Rs.2,000/- per annum [i.e. between Rs.101/- to Rs.167/- p.m.] and,
- iv) 12 families are receiving an annual amount between Rs.2,001/- to Rs.4,155/- [i.e.between Rs.167/- to Rs.346.25 p.per month]

Thus, the average amount being received by these families is Rs.800/- per annum or Rs.66.66 p.per month. At this juncture, it may be noted that 44 families are also receiving money from their children residing in cities and 30 families are receiving monetary help from relatives in or outside their village.

b) Families requiring extra aid:

From the above mentioned 135 families, 17 families have specified they are satisfied with the amount they are receiving while 118 families have sought for extra financial help. The details of the amount required by these families per annum is clarified in Table No.18[a]. As is observed from this table, 51 families have asked for money between Rs.350/- to Rs.1,800/- per annum [i.e.between Rs.29.16 p. to Rs.150/- per month]; 48 families desire money between Rs.1,801/- to Rs.3,600/- per annum [i.e.between Rs.151/- to Rs.300/- per month]; 13 families want money between Rs.3,601/- to Rs.6,000/- per annum [i.e. between Rs.301/- to Rs.500/- per month; and 6 families need extra help between Rs.6,001/- to Rs.12,400/- per year [i.e.between Rs.501/- to Rs.1,033.33 p. per month].

The total additional amount required to help the above 118 families who are already availing the Panchayat's aid is Rs.3,10,019/-. The average amount per family is Rs.2,627/- per annum.

c) Families seeking help for the first time:

Table No.19 shows that 125 families have sought for the Panchayat's help for the first time i.e.at present 18.27% of the respondents desire to be assisted financially by Charities.

Of these 125 families --

- i) 60 families want money between Rs.100/- to Rs.2,400/- per annum [i.e. between Rs.8.33 p. to Rs.200/- per month]
- ii) 35 families need money between Rs.2,401/- to Rs.6,000/- per annum [i.e. between Rs.201/- to Rs.500/- per month] and,
- iii) 30 families desire to be helped between Rs.6,001/- to Rs.99,900/- per annum [i.e.between Rs.501/- to Rs.8,325/- per month].



The sum total required by these 125 families who have sought charity-aid for the first time is Rs.12,02,352/-. The average per family is Rs.9,619/- per annum. The desired amount is mainly required for the purpose of food, medicine, education, Navjote and marriage.

Thus, if we sum up the additional amount required by 118 families who are already availing the Panchayat's help and the 125 families who need help for the first time, the total funds needed to help them are Rs.15,12,371/- [i.e. Rs.3,10,019/- + 12,02,352/-].

d) Total funds required:

To summarize, the Panchayat would have to provide for the following funds:

	Rs.	P.
i) Amount required for repayment of debts	22,75,718.00	
ii) Amount required for house repairs	46,36,500.00	
iii) Additional amount required to help 118 out of 135 families already availing Panchayat's help	3,10,019.00	
iv) Amount required to help 125 families who have sought Panchayat's aid for the first time	12,02,352.00	
Total funds required for different purposes	84,24,589.00	=====

CONCLUSION :

Assuming that the resources of the Panchayats are limited and these limited resources must be most fruitfully allocated, the questions which arise at this stage and are of prime importance regarding charity are:

- i) charity to whom,
- ii) how much charity and,
- iii) charity in what form.

At present, much of the help rendered to the various families is in the form of monetary doles. However, continuation of this form of help would gradually lead to the creation of a class of idle families dependent upon communal charities, ultimately turning them into parasites. Though the system of doles cannot be abolished completely, it could be restricted to the aged, the physically and mentally disabled and the widows/widowers with no source of income. But only giving them a few rupees per month would not help much to ameliorate their condition completely nor ensure that the donated money is being utilized in its proper way. It would be better if the Panchayats supplemented the monthly monetary aid with grains and clothes at least three times in a year because the amount given per month at present is too meagre for the poor families to survive even at a subsistence level. Also, when many of the houses were visited at dusk, the menfolk were found to be lying in a corner of their rooms high with the alcohol. Perhaps, some inquiries could be made into such houses and the money given to a responsible family member who would not waste the aid received in alcohol. As an alternative, such families could be helped in the form of kind.

55 persons have asked for employment of some sort. Therefore, efforts could be made to ensure some sort of a placement for these people who are fairly educated.

370 families require the Panchayats help for house-repairs. Most of these houses are in a bad shape and prompt aid should be given to these families before they become homeless and create a far acute burden on the Panchayat. 76 families are without any facility of electricity, water or flush toilets. It is not that there is no electricity in these villages, but it is a question of affording these facilities in their homes. Therefore, the Panchayats could provide for electrical fittings in these houses.

223 families are in debts of some kind. Of them, 124 families have mortgaged their lands. The Panchayat could help to save these lands being completely lost from Parsee hands. 180 families are in debts for agricultural purposes whereas 65 are for non-agricultural purposes such as education, food, marriage, buying/building a house, house-repairs, medicine, and death-ceremonies. 125 families have sought the Panchayats help for food, medicine, education, Navjote, marriage, agriculture and business. Since there are only 2 cases in which assistance is sought for Navjote and 10 cases for marriage, the Panchayat could ensure help in this direction to the respective families. Many families have stated that their economic condition is deteriorating as the agricultural yield on an average is very poor. Hence, the Panchayat could help such farmers to promote agriculture by providing aid in the form of manure, fertilizers, agricultural equipment etc. To ensure better health conditions among the rural Parsee population, free medicines for fever, malaria, cholera and such diseases could be distributed particularly during the monsoon season.

55 families are living entirely on doles and have no income of their own. 10 belong to the villages in Bharuch district, 27 to Surat district and 18 to Valsad district. These 55 families can be categorised into 3 sections:

- i) Males - who are either bachelors or widowers staying alone and are mostly aged. They total 15.
- ii) Females - who are either spinsters or widows staying alone and are mostly aged. They are about 32 of them and,
- iii) Families - mostly old couples, totalling about 8.

Though the above 55 families are receiving charity, yet their economic condition is in a very apathetic state and call for our immediate attention.

The problem of the priestly class i.e. the Athornans, also needs to be tackled. The present study shows that the mobeds are very few in numbers and are not sufficient to cater to the needs of the commoners. The mobeds in the community are very poorly paid and the village priests are no exception. Therefore, steps could be taken to ensure them a decent standard of living so that the later generations would continue to take up the occupation of their forefathers and not bifurcate themselves to a new means of livelihood.

To conclude, it is obvious from the Survey findings that the task which lies before the Panchayat is by no means small. Though, it is possible that the families may have, to a certain extent, magnified their problems, it is a fact beyond doubt that their socio-economic position is in a state of severe crisis and they do require a helping hand of the Panchayats and from the more fortunate of their community members. Therefore, it would be essential to channelize the charities from different sources in a way which would rehabilitate the Parsee families of these regions. Efforts could be made in a way in which the burden on the charitable institutions is lessened in the longer run and these families reach a stage wherein they can maintain themselves.

TABLE No.1

NUMBER OF DISTRICTS, TALUKAS AND VILLAGES WITH THE NUMBER OF FAMILIES

<u>District</u>	<u>Number of talukas</u>	<u>Number of villages</u>	<u>Number of families</u>
Bharuch	4	12	56
Surat	10	129	400
Valsad	10	68	231
Total	24 =====	209 =====	687 =====

TABLE No.2

SEX RATIO OF THE PARSEE POPULATION

<u>District</u>	<u>Taluka</u>	<u>Males</u>	<u>Females</u>	<u>Total</u>
1. Bharuch	1. Ankleshwar	52	58	110
	2. Hansod	26	28	054
	3. Valia	04	01	005
	4. Zagadia	<u>11</u>	<u>06</u>	<u>017</u>
	Total	93	93	186
		=====	=====	=====
2. Surat	1. Bardoli	038	042	080
	2. Choriyasi	229	226	455
	3. Kamrej	034	023	057
	4. Mahuwa	101	090	191
	5. Mandvi	124	127	251
	6. Mangrol	099	077	176
	7. Olpad	044	043	087
	8. Palsana	003	004	007
	9. Songarh	038	038	076
	10. Vyara	<u>070</u>	<u>075</u>	<u>145</u>
	Total	780	745	1,526
		=====	=====	=====

Contd..2/-

Contd..

TABLE No.2

SEX RATIO OF THE PARSEE POPULATION

District	Taluka	Males	Females	Total
3. Valsad	1. Bansda	076	072	148
	2. Bhilad	003	003	006
	3. Bulsar	024	021	045
	4. Chikli	057	040	098
	5. Dharampore	002	001	004
	6. Gandevi	030	037	067
	7. Kilapardi	026	029	055
	8. Navsari	003	002	005
	9. Pardi	097	093	191
	10. Umbergaon	<u>078</u>	<u>069</u>	<u>145</u>
Total		396	367	* 765
		=====	=====	=====

\* - Valsad includes 3 cases in which complete information is not available.

TABLE No. 3

### AGE GROUPS OF THE PARSEE POPULATION

District	0 - 4		5 - 9		10-14		15-19		20-24		25-29		30-34		35-39		40-44		45-49		50-54		55-60		61-75		76-98		Total	
																													Males	Females
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	in each district	in each district
Bharuch	4	4	2	2	4	5	4	8	7	7	8	5	9	4	3	2	6	6	7	8	4	9	8	5	18	18	9	10	93	93
Surat	45	41	51	45	54	51	53	60	57	61	51	55	56	45	46	43	46	46	38	38	52	60	71	65	129	104	31	31	780	745
Valsad	12	10	26	23	23	16	23	31	31	21	21	23	28	18	23	16	23	25	23	23	29	23	35	42	70	75	29	21	396	367
Total	61	55	79	70	81	72	80	99	95	89	80	83	93	67	72	61	75	77	68	69	85	92	114	112	217	197	69	62	1,269	1,205

TABLE No.4

## NUMBER OF BIRTHS OF MALES AND FEMALES FROM 1964 TO 1985.

District	Number of births from 1964 to 1969			Number of births from 1970 to 1975			Number of births from 1976 to 1980			Number of births from 1981 to 1985			T o t a l		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Males	Females	Grand total
Bharuch	13	14	27	7	15	22	5	8	13	7	10	17	32	47	79
Surat	68	71	139	65	72	137	43	31	74	40	39	79	216	213	429
Valsad	35	32	67	33	34	67	32	27	59	22	13	35	122	106	228
Total	116	117	233	105	121	226	80	66	146	69	62	131	370	366	736



TABLE No. 5

NUMBER OF DEATHS OF MALES AND FEMALES FROM 1964 TO 1985

District	NUMBER OF DEATHS FROM 1964 to 1969			NUMBER OF DEATHS FROM 1970 to 1975			NUMBER OF DEATHS FROM 1976 to 1980			NUMBER OF DEATHS FROM 1981 to 1985			TOTAL			GRAND
	Males	Females	Total	Males	Females	Total	Males	Females	Total	Males	Females	Total	Males	Females	Total	
Bharuch	1	1	2	9	8	17	1	2	3	6	3	9	17	14	31	
Surat	25	19	44	33	23	56	30	28	58	28	34	62	116	104	220	
Valsad	22	16	38	31	20	51	26	28	54	24	23	47	103	87	190	
	48	36	84	73	51	124	57	58	115	58	60	118	236	205	441	

TABLE No.6

MARITAL STATUS OF THE PARSEE POPULATION.

District	Unmarried			Married to Parsee			Married to non-parsee			Widow by parsee			Widow by non-parsee			Divorcee by parsee			Divorcee by non-parsee			T o t a l		
	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T	Males	Females	Total
Bharuch	51	46	97	36	36	72	1	0	1	4	11	15	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	93	93	186
Surat	373	298	671	352	352	704	12	1	13	36	83	119	1	1	2	6	10	16	0	0	0	780	745	1525
Valsad	199	140	339	177	177	354	0	0	0	18	46	64	0	0	0	2	4	6	0	0	0	396	367	763
Total	623	484	1107	565	565	1130	13	1	14	58	140	198	1	1	2	9	14	23	0	0	0	1269	1205	2474

TABLE No. 7

EDUCATION OF THE PARSEE POPULATION.

District	Number of children not going to school			Number of adults with no formal education			Primary school (Stds.1 to 3)			Middle School (Stds.4 to 8)			High School			College			Post-graduates			Medical Doctor			S.S.C. + Diploma			Diploma in Engineering			Grand Total of Population
	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T	
Bharuch	4	3	7	0	2	2	5	18	23	31	29	60	38	33	71	12	5	17	2	3	5	1	0	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	187
Surat	37	30	67	11	28	39	104	127	231	270	289	559	274	226	500	59	36	95	4	5	9	2	0	2	8	4	12	13	0	13	1527
Valsad	9	11	20	6	21	27	34	34	68	104	124	228	162	136	298	55	32	87	8	8	16	1	1	2	6	0	6	11	0	11	763
TOTAL	50	44	94	17	51	68	143	179	322	405	442	847	474	395	869	126	73	199	14	16	30	4	1	5	15	4	19	24	0	24	2477

M - Males

F - Females

T - Total

TABLE No.8

OCCUPATION OF THE PARSEE POPULATION

District	Agriculture	Service	Business	Mobedi	Rickshaw driving	Total number of people gainfully employed	Others(housewives minors, students, pensioners, physically handicapped.)	Total population
Bharuch	35	26	2	1	4	68	118	186
Surat	327	135	58	14	10	544	982	1,526
Valsad	145	72	71	11	3	302	463	765
Total	507	233	131	26	17	914	1,563	2,477

TABLE No.9

ACRES OF LAND OWNED BY PARSEE FAMILIES

District	Number of families with 1-50 acres	Number of families with 51-100 acres	Number of families with 101-227 acres	Total number of families owning land	Total number of families with out any land	Total
Bharuch	30	1	4	35	21	56
Surat	266	3	0	269	127	396
Valsad	106	3	8	117	115	232
Total	402	7	12	421	263	684

ANNUAL INCOME FROM PRIMARY SOURCES OF FAMILIES.

TABLE No.10

District	Families with income bet- ween Rs.2000 to 6000	Families with income bet- ween Rs.6001 to 9600	Families with income bet- ween Rs.9601 to 12000	Families with income bet- ween Rs.12001 to 18000	Families with income between Rs.18001 to 24000	Families with income between Rs.24001 to 36000	Families with income between Rs.36001 to 50000	Total number of families having income from primary sources	Total number of families having no income	Total
Bharuch	21	5	3	4	5	5	8	51	5	56
Surat	102	69	64	42	28	35	24	364	32	396
Valsad	56	24	23	31	23	23	34	214	18	232
Total	179	98	90	77	56	63	66	629	55	684

TABLE No. 11

ANNUAL INCOME FROM SECONDARY SOURCES OF FAMILIES

District	Number of families with income between Rs.180 to 2400	Number of families with income between Rs.2401 to 6000	Number of families with income between Rs.6001 to 12000	Number of families with income between Rs.12000 to 24000	Number of families with income between Rs.24001 to 6,00,000	Total number of families with secondary sources of income	Total number of families with no secondary income	Total
Bharuch	3	0	2	1	5	11	45	56
Surat	75	28	12	7	5	127	269	396
Valsad	26	21	14	4	6	71	161	232
Total	104	49	28	12	16	209	475	684

TABLE No.12

SOURCES OF SECONDARY INCOME OF FAMILIES.

District	Agriculture	Business	Rent Fixed deposits	Kusti- Weaving	Children send money	Milk products	Relatives send money	Total number of families with secon- dary source of income	Total number of families with no secon- dary source of income	Total
Bharuch	2	1	3	0	1	0	7	11	45	56
Surat	16	13	14	33	22	15	14	127	269	396
Valsad	5	8	18	7	21	0	12	71	161	232
Total	23	22	35	40	44	15	30	209	475	684



TABLE No.13

PARSEE FAMILIES WITH LOANS FOR AGRICULTURAL PURPOSES.

District	Rs.500- 10,000	Rs.10,001- 20,000	Rs.20,001- 50,000	Rs.50,001 3,00,000	Total number of families who have taken loans for agricultural purposes.	Total number of families with no loans for agri- culture	Total
Bharuch	6	1	7	3	17	39	56
Surat	64	27	21	7	119	277	396
Valsad	18	6	6	14	44	188	232
Total	88	34	34	24	180	504	684

TABLE No.13-A

PARSEE FAMILIES WITH LOANS FOR NON AGRICULTURAL PURPOSES.

District	Rs.700 - Rs.5,000	Rs.5,001- Rs.10,000	Rs.10,001- Rs.65,000	Total number of families with loans for non- agricultural purposes	Total number of families with no loans for non- agricultural purposes	Total
Bharuch	2	2	1	5	51	56
Surat	14	15	9	38	358	396
Valsad	4	9	9	22	210	232
Total	20	26	19	65	619	684

TABLE No. 14

AMOUNT REQUIRED TO REPAY LOANS BY PARSEE FAMILIES.

District	Rs.200 - Rs.2,000	Rs.2,001- Rs.10,000	Rs.10,001- Rs.20,000	Rs.20,001 - Rs.2,00,000	Any amount is acceptable	Total number of families asking for help to repay debts	Total number of families desiring no help	Total
Bharuch	0	7	0	5	2	14	42	56
Surat	9	45	25	14	4	97	299	396
Valsad	2	18	10	6	4	40	192	232
Total	11	70	35	25	10	151	533	684

TABLE No.15

"TYPE OF HOUSE" OF PARSEE FAMILIES.

District	Number of families with Pucca Houses	Number of families with Kutcha Houses	Number of families staying in hutment	Total
Bharuch	39	7	10	56
Surat	258	121	17	396
Valsad	181	44	7	232
Total	478	172	34	684

TABLE No.16

AMOUNT REQUIRED BY PARSEE FAMILIES FOR HOUSE - REPAIRS.

District	Rs.500 - Rs.10,000	Rs.10,001- Rs.25,000	Rs.25,001- Rs.60,000	Total number of families requiring help.	Total number of families not requiring help	Total
Bharuch	25	6	2	33	23	56
Surat	167	67	16	250	146	396
Valsad	44	28	15	87	145	232
Total	236	101	33	370	314	684

TABLE No.17

AGE - GROUPING OF UNEMPLOYED PARSEES.

District	Number of people between 15 to 25 years	Number of people between 26 to 52 years	Total Unemployed
Bharuch	2	3	5
Surat	21	8	29
Valsad	13	8	21
Total number of unemployed persons	36	19	55

TABLE No.18

AMOUNT RECEIVED AS FINANCIAL HELP PER ANNUM BY 135 PARSEE FAMILIES.

District	Rs.50 - Rs.600	Rs.601- Rs.1,200	Rs.1,201- Rs.2,000	Rs.2,001- Rs.4,155	Total number of families receiving monetary help	Total number of families receiving material help	Total number of families recei- ving no help	Total
Bharuch	3	5	2	3	13	1	42	56
Surat	36	19	10	7	72	6	318	396
Valsad	26	5	7	2	40	3	189	232
Total	65	29	19	12	125	10	549	684

TABLE No.18-A

EXTRA AMOUNT REQUIRED AS FINANCIAL HELP PER ANNUM FROM TRUSTS BY PARSEE FAMILIES.

District	Rs.350 - Rs.1,800	Rs.1,801- Rs.3,600	Rs.3,601- Rs.6,000	Rs.6,001- Rs.12,400	Total number of families who have sought extra help.	Total number of families who do not need extra help	Total number of families who have not asked for any help.	Total number of families
Bharuch	8	6	0	0	14	0	42	56
Surat	23	29	10	5	67	11	318	396
Valsad	20	13	3	1	37	6	189	232
Total	51	48	13	6	118	17	549	684