

CHAPTER VI

GENERAL

In a short study of this nature, it is very difficult to make any weighty conclusion and recommendation, and the writer lacks the deep experience of research to do so. But there are some general remarks which can be made arising out of the analysis of the small shops in Beserah.

The first point is that, despite the relatively small size of the three Kamungs - Pantai, Rumbia and Cho' Lot, a useful system of small shops, of eight main types namely, sundry coffee, goldsmith, barber, tailor, bicycle-repairer, rubber dealer and tinsmith, did arise to serve the needs of the villagers for goods and services. The prices charged for the latter were high but not higher than those ruling in Kuantan, five miles away.

Secondly, a relatively cheap type of credit system, in which no interest was charged directly but via the prices of the goods bought, operated within the framework of the distributive trade in Beserah. In the writer's opinion such a system, though useful as serving the needs of the villagers and shopkeepers for credit, tends on the whole to promote indebtedness.

Thirdly, it is observed that in the case of some shopkeepers, shopkeeping was not the only source of income. Some shopkeepers and families found work outside their shops in order to supplement the family income. Others mostly the well-to-do shopkeepers, derived

income from their other capital investments. Finally as regards competition among shopkeepers, the one of price was gradually giving way to competition for the custom of the villagers. This is so because more and more of the goods which are branded and whose prices are fixed, entered into the purchase baskets of the villagers.

In the way of recommendation, the writer suggest the establishment of a Consumer's Co-operative society in the Mukim of Boserah for the following purposes:-

(a) To render competitions more perfect and thus lessen the opportunities for exploitation and dishonest practices on the part of shopkeepers.

(b) To enable the villagers to share with the society the profits derived from shopkeeping which hitherto flowed into the pockets of the shopkeepers.

(c) To serve as a training ground for some of the villagers from among whom should be selected the necessary staff for the management of the society.

Step in this direction should be taken by the Government, since only the latter possessed the necessary resources and experience indispensable for the successful launching of such an undertaking.