

CHAPTER XII

LAW AND ORDER AND JUSTICE

INCIDENCE OF CRIME

During the 19th century cattle lifting raids on a large scale were common occurrences in the district. Bands of armed robbers on horses and camels made attacks on villages and carried off their cattle and other movables. The man who was most successful in lifting the cattle of his enemies, either by force or fraud, was honoured most among his fellows. The villages were often surrounded with a thick hedge of thorns or a deep ditch and had only one gateway which was closed at night. It was guarded by the village watchman so that no suspicious character could come in and that no cattle could get out. Many cases of house-breaking and theft were committed by professional thieves living in the adjacent areas. These crimes were most prevalent in July, August and September when the people were busy in the fields.¹

In the beginning of the 20th century, cattle theft remained the commonest form of the crime. Crimes of violence were comparatively of rare occurrence. Dacoities were not common and were chiefly confined to wandering gangs.²

An estimate of the crime position obtaining in the district from the year 1910 onwards may be had from the data given below about the cases of cognizable offences :—

Year	No. of Cases Reported	Convicted	Acquitted	Percentage of Convic- tion	Percent- age of Conviction to Cases Tried
1	2	3	4	5	6
1910	297	82	51	27.6	61.7
1920	326	79	43	24.2	64.7
1930	605	148	98	24.4	60.0
1940	334	87	67	26.0	56.4
1950	421	122	109	29.0	60.0
1960	295	116	78	39.6	44.5
1970	448	146	182	32.2	43.1
1971	399	125	165	31.3	56.7
1972	448	230	175	51.3	64.4
1973	394	236	130	59.8	..

1. J. Wilson, *Final Report on the Revision of Settlement of the Sirsa District, in the Punjab, 1879—83*, pp. 207-208.

2. *Hisar District Gazetteer, 1915*, pp. 193-94.

1	2	3	4	5	6
1974	459	247	172	37.4	58.9
1975	396	189	118	29.7	53.5
1976	333	186	109	55.9	63.1
1977	462	94	36	20.4	72.3
1978	586	149	163	25.4	47.8
1979	738	188	238	25.5	44.1
1980	728	154	212	21.0	42.1
1981	690	97	187	14.1	34.1

It is apparent that crime situation has been changing since the beginning of this century and it is difficult to assign any specific reason. In recent years, however, the change in social values and increase in population may be regarded among major contributory factors. The disturbed conditions prevailing on the eve of the Partition in 1947 caused great havoc and the law and order situation at the time became virtually unmanageable. It took a few years for conditions to become normal and the downward trend in the incidence of crime started after 1952. With the increase in communication and transport facilities, education, and change in values, etc. a rising trend in criminal tendencies is again noticeable, and unless curbed, will create serious law and order problems.

Some anti-social elements seem to be very active near the bed of the Ghaggar river in the jurisdiction of Rania and Ellanabad police stations. They are in the habit of making country liquor and sell the same in the district. The bordering area of Rajasthan, known as Talwara Jheel, is known for the manufacturing of unauthorised arms. Since these activities are carried on the border of the state, the culprits many times manage to escape to Rajasthan. Nevertheless, police always remain active to thwart their activities. Many people living under the jurisdiction of Dabwali, Kalanwali and Bada Gudha police stations are opium addicts, which encourages smuggling of opium from the nearby Rajasthan border into this district.

Murder.—Murder figures fluctuate depending upon sudden outburst of violence. Some of the motives in the offence of murder in this district, as elsewhere, include land disputes, illicit relations, domestic quarrels, blood feuds

and the lure of property. The incidence of this type of crime is mainly confined to rural areas. The incidence of murder in the district since 1910 to 1981 has been as follows —

Year	Cases Reported	Cases Convicted	Cases Acquitted
1910	7	5	2
1920	8	6	—
1930	17	11	4
1940	11	6	4
1950	26	6	18
1960	13	8	3
1970	21	10	9
1971	20	14	6
1972	18	8	4
1973	13	7	4
1974	29	13	16
1975	11	3	1
1976	9	17	19
1977	11	4	2
1978	16	4	7
1979	20	11	10
1980	24	12	7
1981	29	1	18

The highest number of murders was reported in 1974 and 1981. The increase is noticeable since 1930 with a sudden decrease in 1976.

Culpable homicide not amounting to murder.—The motive for this type of crime are identical as in the case of murder, however, this crime is not premeditated and is committed in a state of rage. It lacks the intention to kill a person.

The following figures show the incidence of this crime from 1910 to 1981 :—

Year	Cases Reported	Cases Convicted	Cases Acquitted
1910	3	—	—
1920	6	2	2
1930	4	4	—
1940	8	—	3
1950	1	—	1
1960	8	7	1
1970	3	1	—
1971	3	2	—
1972	2	—	1
1973	—	—	—
1974	2	—	2
1975	5	1	—
1976	—	5	5
1977	1	5	1
1978	5	3	3
1979	7	6	8
1980	8	3	2
1981	4	—	2

Dacoity.—Dacoity has become rare in the district. However, this form of crime was never high since 1910. In 1920, only one case of dacoity was reported, while in 1940 five cases were reported, out of these five cases three culprits were convicted. In 1950, only two dacoities were reported and in 1974, there was a single case of dacoity which was reported and the culprit was acquitted. The following table shows the incidence of this crime since 1975:—

Year	Cases Reported	Cases Convicted	Cases Acquitted
1975	—	—	—
1976	—	—	—
1977	1	—	—
1978	—	—	—
1979	1	—	—
1980	—	—	1
1981	1	—	—

Robbery.—Robbery has been either non-existent or quite negligible in the district, except for the years 1930, 1940 and 1950. Patrolling and other preventive measures adopted by the district police have almost eliminated it. The following table shows the incidence of this crime since 1910:—

Year	Cases Reported	Cases Convicted	Cases Acquit- ted
1910	3	1	—
1920	9	1	1
1930	27	10	2
1940	25	7	3
1950	11	1	2
1960	—	—	—
1970	—	—	—
1971	—	—	—
1972	—	—	—
1973	—	—	—
1974	—	—	—
1975	1	—	—
1976	1	—	—
1977	—	1	1
1978	1	—	—
1979	4	—	—
1980	—	—	1
1981	6	—	—

Burglary.—The following table shows the incidence of burglary in the district since 1910:—

Year	Cases Reported	Cases Convicted	Cases Acqui- tted
1910	62	10	8
1920	106	22	16
1930	227	29	27
1940	102	22	12
1950	121	22	6
1960	49	10	3
1970	73	21	3
1971	49	11	7
1972	58	13	19
1973	51	4	18
1974	55	9	7
1975	51	11	4
1976	42	28	14
1977	76	13	2
1978	83	33	23
1979	127	28	4
1980	123	25	6
1981	84	22	6

There was sudden increase in the incidence of this crime during 1930—40 and 1950. The number of cases during 1930 was the highest. Further in the year 1950 i.e after the Partition, the number of cases under this head comes at second place. The Partition and consequent immigration of people from the West Punjab (Pakistan) presented unprecedented problems. The deteriorated economic situation and un-settled conditions then prevailing adversely affected the morale of the people. Burglary was committed by some of the people who had exhausted the resources and had no means of livelihood. The criminal elements took

full advantage of unsettled conditions. Despite handicaps, considerable improvement was brought about by the effective working of the district police. The incidence of burglary which showed an abnormal increase during the period from 1930 to 1950 started showing downward trend thereafter. But it was on the high side again in 1970 after which the downward trend started again.

Burglars are usually active during the summer nights when people sleep outside in the open. The proportion of conviction, it is no doubt low and this is due to the fact that circumstantial evidence and other possible clues left by the criminal at the time of the commission of crime are destroyed unwittingly by the parties concerned through ignorance.

Theft.—The following table gives the incidence of theft in the district since 1910:—

Year	Cases Reported	Cases Convicted	Cases Acquitted
1910	109	25	17
1920	78	19	3
1930	113	31	17
1940	66	20	11
1950	74	25	9
1960	46	15	2
1970	51	20	7
1971	60	18	20
1972	77	26	19
1973	70	16	26
1974	86	14	40
1975	87	14	4
1976	51	27	5
1977	83	11	6
1978	133	30	15
1979	153	58	31
1980	144	46	18
1981	149	14	12

The incidence of crime under this head though fluctuating, shows an increasing trend during the year 1930 and thereafter downward trend is noticeable. From the year 1971 again there is increase in the crime under this head. The free registration of cases is also one of the factors in the increase of reported cases of theft. A large number of theft cases are usually of minor nature involving small amounts of stolen property.

Cattle Theft.—The following table shows the incidence of cattle theft in the district since 1910:—

Year	Cases Reported	Cases Convicted	Cases Acquitted
1910	12	5	1
1920	9	3	1
1930	29	8	4
1940	8	3	1
1950	11	3	2
1960	7	2	1
1970	10	4	2
1971	12	4	4
1972	16	5	6
1973	14	3	5
1974	5	2	3
1975	8	2	—
1976	7	6	2
1977	12	1	1
1978	7	5	4
1979	8	5	3
1980	19	6	2
1981	11	5	4

Like other forms of crimes, cattle theft was also increased during the year 1930. It again increased in the year 1970. The cattle lifted from this district are usually passed on to the adjoining districts of Rajasthan and Punjab where they fetch attractive prices.

Cheating.—The following table shows the incidence of crime during the past 70 years:—

Year	Cases Reported	Cases Convicted	Cases Acquitted
1910	4	1	2
1920	2	—	—
1930	8	2	3
1940	5	—	1
1950	11	4	3
1960	4	1	2
1970	8	—	4
1971	5	1	4
1972	3	1	1
1973	6	1	3
1974	8	3	3
1975	13	1	—
1976	6	5	3
1977	13	2	1
1978	8	1	3
1979	13	3	4
1980	9	—	1
1981	3	—	2

The offence is not common. The highest number of cases reported under this head was during the years 1975, 1977 and 1979.

Rioting.—Personal enmities and family dispute about possession of land, flare up for momentary provocations take the shape of riots usually among the rural people. The incidence of this crime since 1910, is given in the following table:—

Year	Cases Reported	Cases Convicted	Cases Acquitted
1910	9	5	2
1920	10	—	4
1930	16	4	6
1940	12	2	1
1950	11	2	7
1960	3	2	2
1970	3	—	3
1971	4	—	3
1972	1	—	—
1973	3	—	3
1974	5	2	2
1975	1	—	—
1976	—	—	—
1977	2	—	—
1978	4	—	—
1979	6	—	2
1980	7	—	1
1981	1	—	3

The number of rioting cases was comparatively higher during 1920, 1930, 1940 and 1950. It was negligible in 1972, 1975, 1976 and 1981.

Abduction and Kidnapping.—The incidence of this crime, since 1910, is shown in the table below:—

Year	Cases Reported	Cases Convicted	Cases Acquitted
1910	3	1	1
1920	6	3	—
1930	22	6	2
1940	10	—	3
1950	12	—	6
1960	3	1	1
1970	7	3	3
1971	—	—	—
1972	3	—	3
1973	9	1	5
1974	3	—	1
1975	5	—	—
1976	8	1	1
1977	19	1	1
1978	24	2	4
1979	13	2	15
1980	14	1	3
1981	10	1	1

The incidence of crime under this head registered an increase during 1930, 1940 and 1950. The reported cases were isolated in character and not the work of any organised gang. Generally, these cases were the result of love affairs, abducted women often being consenting parties. Lack of education and persecution of women among some classes are other factors responsible for it.

Sex Crime (Rape).—The following table shows the incidence of sex crime since 1910:—

Year	Cases Reported	Cases Convicted	Cases Acquitted
1910	1	—	—
1920	—	1	—
1930	4	2	2
1940	4	—	2
1950	7	4	2
1960	6	2	2
1970	4	2	2
1971	3	1	1
1972	4	2	2
1973	5	2	3
1974	3	1	1
1975	5	—	—
1976	2	1	3
1977	4	—	1
1978	2	3	5
1979	4	—	5
1980	13	5	4
1981	6	1	7

Juvenile delinquency.—During 1974, only 10 juveniles were involved in different offences. Out of these, 3 were between the age group of 10 to 14 years and the remaining 7 between 14 to 21 years. In 1975, 14 juveniles were reported to be involved in various offences out of which 5 were between 12 to 16 years and the remaining were in the age group of 16 to 20 years. In the offences against property, the juveniles were responsible for petty thefts.

The crime position among juveniles during 1976 to 1981 is given below :

Year	Cases Reported	Juveniles arrested			Convicted	Acquit- ted
		Age group				
		12—16 years	16—21 years	Total		
1976	8	—	13	13	8	—
1977	12	—	16	16	10	—
1978	102	10	102	112	—	—
1979	112	13	110	123	—	—
1980	110	10	105	115	2	2
1981	98	5	117	122	9	11

With a sudden increase of juveniles offences in 1978, there was steep rise in juvenile delinquency during 1979, 1980 and 1981.

Criminal tendencies in juvenile offenders may be traced to the loose control of parents and economic stress. The high index of prices has also been a factor for crime against property. Juveniles who are of immature mind find an easy solution for their needs in resorting to thefts and commit offences under the Excise Act. Illiteracy is another cause. The police officers on their part were given special instructions to handle the juvenile offenders with particular care and not to mal-treat them during interrogation. They were advised to treat young offenders leniently, not to mix them up, while in custody, with the hardened criminals and adult suspects, and to strictly abide by the provision of section 160 Cr. P. C. and interrogate them at their houses wherever possible.

Traffic Offences.—Apart from the Indian Motor Vehicles Act, 1914, road traffic is regulated by various other Acts. During 1974, 845 cases were challaned and Rs. 34,520 were realised as fine. During 1981, 594 cases were challaned and Rs. 13,370 were realized as fine. The following table shows the number of cases challaned and fine realised :—

Year	Cases Challaned	Fine Realised (Rs.)
1975	1,491	48,350
1976	1,965	41,882
1977	993	29,050
1978	430	6,725
1979	401	7,240
1980	570	12,680
1981	594	13,370

The increase in the cases during 1975 and 1976 is due to the large number of motor vehicles and other means of transport plying on the roads in the district. Another consequence is the increase in the number of motor vehicles accidents. The failure to observe traffic rules is responsible for most of the road accidents. The following table shows the number of cases of accidents registered since 1910 :

Year	Cases Reported	Cases Convicted	Cases Acquitted
1910	1	—	—
1920	—	—	—
1930	2	2	—
1940	1	—	—
1950	6	1	1
1960	13	2	8
1970	16	9	6
1971	19	9	7
1972	16	5	7
1973	27	11	13
1974	39	11	20
1975	51	18	1
1976	57	34	18
1977	26	21	8
1978	72	13	21
1979	83	18	15
1980	56	24	17
1981	54	18	22

Offences against local and special laws .—These offences comprise cases of public nuisance and those covered under the Indian Arms Act, 1878, the Punjab Excise Act, 1914 (including illicit distillation), the Essential Commodities Act, 1955, the Indian Railways Act, 1890, the Prevention of Corruption Act, 1955 and the Defence of India Rules. However, special mention needs to be made about the cases under the Police Act, Excise Act, Arms Act, Gambling Act and smuggling under the Essential Commodities Act.

Under the Police Act, which deals with smaller offences relating to peace, regulation of traffic, etc. 162 cases were challaned and fine of Rs. 415 was realised from the offenders in 1975 and 177 cases were challaned and Rs. 2,710 was realised as fine in 1981.

The following table shows number of cases detected under Excise Act and Opium Act since 1910 :—

Year	Cases Reported under		Cases Convicted under		Cases Acquitted under	
	Excise Act	Opium Act	Excise Act	Opium Act	Excise Act	Opium Act
1910	—	1	—	1	—	—
1920	4	—	3	—	1	—
1930	9	17	6	10	1	2
1940	17	8	13	8	2	—
1950	225	32	94	28	29	3
1960	157	51	125	47	30	4
1970	313	149	253	128	99	21
1971	373	172	286	136	74	36
1972	402	165	246	123	154	62
1973	399	222	247	134	151	88
1974	535	257	279	120	254	137
1975	746	293	286	98	30	25
1976	939	540	377	154	57	38
1977	415	320	268	264	208	95
1978	497	336	327	294	212	99
1979	622	335	444	412	194	168
1980	606	329	336	230	178	91
1981	676	278	164	91	125	40

The table above shows a gradual increase. The considerable increase may be attributed to increase in population and sustained efforts of the police to detect and curb this social evil. Increase in the number of liquor vends also contributes to the growing incidence of this crime.

Likewise, there has been steep increase in the cases detected under Arms Act after Independence. The year-wise statistics relating to this Act are given in the following table :—

Year	Cases Reported	Cases Convicted	Cases Acquitted
1910	19	14	3
1920	19	12	3
1930	28	16	4
1940	29	19	7
1950	173	146	23
1960	76	61	11
1970	147	85	54
1971	145	74	60
1972	164	97	62
1973	229	123	98
1974	217	81	33
1975	308	46	22
1976	428	89	26
1977	102	57	106
1978	118	103	167
1979	160	129	122
1980	270	75	64
1981	255	35	54

Gambling.—The table given below shows the incidence of gambling since 1910 :—

Year	Cases Reported	Cases Convicted	Cases Acquitted
1910	—	—	—
1920	—	—	—
1930	—	—	—
1940	6	6	—
1950	8	6	2
1960	24	6	8
1970	29	28	1
1971	43	28	15
1972	65	47	25
1973	74	47	27
1974	73	44	29
1975	65	27	3
1976	112	71	36
1977	65	42	35
1978	99	60	36
1979	106	43	14
1980	124	83	48
1981	132	80	45

Gambling was not known to the people of the district till 1940. The gradually increasing trend towards gambling may be attributed to the ever increasing population.

Smuggling.—(in foodgrains)—The incidence of this offence is given under the following table since 1960 :—

Year	Cases Reported	Cases Convicted	Cases Acquitted
1960	11	6	3
1970	2	1	1
1971	1	1	—
1972	3	—	2
1973	24	8	13
1974	35	4	7
1975	49	4	6
1976	6	23	14
1977	1	18	8
1978	4	7	5
1979	9	6	4
1980	28	7	1
1981	10	5	2

Statistics under this head mostly include figures of cases detected for smuggling of various kinds of foodgrains punishable under Section 7 of the Essential Commodities Act, 1955. The traders smuggle wheat into the adjoining state of Rajasthan as it fetches higher prices.

POLICE

In Sirsa, the police force employed was controlled by the District Superintendent of Police, Hisar who was immediately under the District Magistrate. There were thanas at Sirsa, Dabwali, Rori and Rania, outposts at Jamal, Chutala, Ellanabad and Road post at Odhan.¹

In the beginning of the present century, the position of police set up remained more or less the same except that the police outpost at Chutala ceased to function. Besides, there was a railway police station at Sirsa for investigation of crimes committed on railways in the district.

1. *Hisar District Gazetteer*, 1892, p. 221.

With the formation of Sirsa as a separate district, a Superintendent of Police was posted at Sirsa in 1975. At present (1981), the police in the district is under the overall charge of the Superintendent of Police, who next to the Deputy Commissioner, is responsible for the maintenance of law and order. The Superintendent of Police is assisted by two Deputy Superintendents of Police, posted at Sirsa and Dabwali respectively. He, however, functions under the administrative control of the Deputy Inspector General of Police Hisar Range, Hisar.

On March 31, 1981, the police force in the district was as follows :—

	Senior Superin- tendent of Police	Deputy Superin- tendant of Police	Inspec- tors	Sub- Inspec- tors	Assis- tant Sub-In- spectors	Head Consta- bles	Consta- bles
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1.1. Executive Police							
(a) Supervisory Staff ..	1	2	2	—	—	—	—
(b) For Investigation at Police Post and C.I.A. Staff ..	—	—	—	12	22	22	183
(c) Watch & Ward Staff at Sirsa and Dabwali	—	—	—	—	2	7	78
(d) Offices establishment and Communication room ..	—	—	—	1	7	18	17
(e) Police Lines establish- ment, Sirsa including reserves	—	—	—	2	4	14	81
(f) Treasury Guard, Judicial Lock ups Court duties and other miscellaneous duties and Contingencies reserves ..	—	—	1	2	5	34	129
2. Anti Smuggling Staff ..	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
3. Prohibition Staff ..	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Total	1	2	3	17	40	95	488

There are nine police stations and eight police posts as under :

Sr.No.	Name of Police Stations	Name of Police Posts
1	City Sirsa	—
2	Sadar Sirsa	1 Jamal
		2 Ding
3	Bada Gudha	1 Rori
4	Dabwali City	—
5	Dabwali Sadar	1 Chutala
6	Rania	1 Kariwali
7	Ellanabad	—
8	Kalanwali	1 Odhan
9	Nathusari (Chopta)	1 Jamal

The civil police is detailed for duty at the police stations and police outposts. Each of the police station is under the charge of a police officer known as Station House Officer, generally in the rank of a Sub-Inspector. He is assisted by one or more second officers, a Head Constable, a Moharrir or clerk constable and a number of constables, depending upon the load of work. The Station House Officer maintains law and order and investigates offences occurring within his jurisdiction. Wireless sets have been provided in all police stations and outposts. Mobile sets have been provided in the vehicles of police officers.

The district armed reserves are kept in the Police Line, Sirsa for utilisation during exigency that may arise in connection with the maintenance of law and order. However, the Haryana Armed Police contingents are also deployed for the protection of vulnerable points in the district.

The railway police is not allotted to any district in particular but it is a part of a separate state organisation functioning under the Assistant Inspector General, Railway Police, Haryana, Ambala Cantonment. The circle of the railway police are formed according to sections of the railway lines and they are concerned with the prevention, detention and control of crime committed in railway trains and on railway tracks within the railway premises.

There is a railway police post located at Sirsa which functions under the railway police station, Hisar. Its jurisdiction extends to the railway premises in the Sirsa district. The staff consists of one Head Constable and 4 Constables. They perform routine duties of maintaining law and order and investigation of cases of minor nature. The major crimes are, however, handled by the personnel of railway police station, Hisar.

Village Police.—For over a century some of the police functions at village level in the district which was then a part of the Hisar district, were performed by Zaildars, Sufaidposhes, Chowkidars and Inamkhores. All other institutions were abolished in 1948 but for the institution of Chowkidars. The Chowkidars

report births and deaths in the police station fortnightly, give information of crime, keep surveillance over the bad-characters residing in the village and report their movements. Besides attending to watch and ward duties, they generally assist the public officer on tour.

In the remote past, the village Chowkidar used to receive, as his remuneration, as a share from each cultivator's produce which was reckoned according to the number of hearths. Now the Chowkidars are paid by the government.

Previously, Thikar Chowkidars were selected by lot from among the residents of a village, those unwilling to serve were obliged to pay the cost of a substitute. These Chowkidars were provided only during epidemic outbreak of crime and emergencies. With passage of time the Thikar Chowkidari system became weak and is not of much help in the field of watch and ward. People generally are averse to Thikri Pahra but the Punjab Gram Panchayat Act, 1952, has authorised panchayat to raise their own voluntary force for the purpose.

HOME GUARDS

Home Guards was formed in the district in 1960. It is governed by the Haryana Home Guards Act, 1974. It boosts up of the morale of the people by infusing in them a spirit of self-confidence and self-reliance to overcome emergencies. The training to the Home Guards personnel is designed to tone up the self-discipline, engender self-sacrifice, national pride and promote a feeling of dignity of labour among members. The overall charge of the Home Guards in the district is with the District Commander, Sirsa. In 1981, there were 4 rural blocks and 3 urban companies with strength of 400 and 303 respectively.

JAILS

There is only one sub-jail¹ at Sirsa. It was established in 1957 and is located in the heart of the city. The Sub Divisional Officer (Civil) holds part-time charge as Superintendent of the Jail. He is assisted by 1 Deputy Superintendent, 1 Assistant Superintendent, 1 Head Warder, 12 Warders, 1 part-time Doctor² and two Sweepers.

The authorised accommodation of the jail is for 86³ prisoners who are generally under trial. However, there is a provision to keep convicts for a period of three months in this sub jail and they are generally sent to the District Jail Hisar within three months of conviction.

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1. The Sub-Jail at Sirsa has been upgraded as District Jail.
 2. One full time pharmacist is also working here.
 3. The authorised accommodation has increased to 100 prisoners.

The sub-jail is located in a spacious two storeyed building. The prisoners are provided the facility of books, newspapers and a radio. Occasional cinema shows and dramas are arranged for the recreation of prisoners. A small canteen is also run by the prisoners under the supervision of jail authorities.

Besides, there are police lock ups in the police stations and revenue lock ups at Sirsa and Dabwali tahsil headquarters.

JUSTICE

Civil and Criminal Justice.—Sirsa was a separate district before 1884 and comprised the tahsils of Sirsa, Dabwali and Fazilka. The Deputy Commissioner who was the Chief Magistrate, was responsible for the criminal, civil and revenue justice in the district. The district was abolished in 1884 and Sirsa sub-division including Sirsa and Dabwali was merged in the Hisar district. The Deputy Commissioner of Hisar assisted by 4 Extra Assistant Commissioners was responsible for the judicial administration in the district. One of the Extra Assistant Commissioners was invested with powers of a Subordinate Judge for the purpose of civil business and another was entirely employed on revenue work. The Deputy Commissioner was also a District Judge. There was also a Munsif at the district headquarters. The Sirsa sub-division was under the charge of an Assistant Commissioner stationed at Sirsa.

In the beginning of the 20th century, the Deputy Commissioner, Hisar exercised the powers of magistrate of the 1st class and was empowered under section 30 of the Criminal Procedure Code to try all offences not punishable with death. He also heard appeals from the orders of magistrates of 2nd and 3rd class. The Extra Assistant Commissioner incharge of the Sirsa sub-division was a sub-divisional magistrate with first class powers. There was a Sub-Judge at Hisar for civil judicial work. There were also two Munsifs at Hisar who exercised civil powers of the petty suits. The District and Sessions Judge, Firozpur tried criminal cases committed to the sessions courts and appeals from the lower criminal and civil courts. For this work he used to visit Hisar, three or four times a year. Later a District and Sessions Judge was appointed at Hisar and looked after this work. There was a Tahsildar at Sirsa who was invested with powers of a 2nd class Magistrate. Besides, there were two Naib-tahsildars, one each at Sirsa and Dabwali who were Magistrates of the 3rd class. For revenue judicial work, the Deputy Commissioner was the collector and the principal revenue officer of the district.

After the Independence in 1947, the District Magistrate and other Executive Officers continued to function as judicial officers till the Punjab Separation of Judicial and Executive Function Act, 1964, was enforced in October, 1964. After the passage of this Act, the criminal judicial powers which were exercised by the Magistrates under the control of the District Magistrate, Hisar were shifted to Judicial Magistrates under the District

and Sessions Judge, Hisar. The Judicial Magistrates were also invested with the civil judicial powers and were designated as Judicial Magistrates-cum-Sub-Judges or Sub-Judge-cum-Judicial Magistrates. A Senior Sub-Judge and a Chief Judicial Magistrate assisted the District and Sessions Judge for civil and criminal work, respectively.

After the formation of Sirsa as a separate district, in 1975, a Senior Sub-Judge-cum-Chief Judicial Magistrate was posted at Sirsa, with appellate powers to hear appeals from the orders passed by the subordinate courts in the district. In 1981, there was an Additional District and Sessions Judge, Sirsa, a Senior Sub-Judge-cum-Chief Judicial Magistrate, Sirsa, Chief Judicial Magistrate-cum-Sub-Judge, Sirsa, a Sub Judge-cum-Judicial Magistrate at Sirsa and a Sub-Judge-cum-Judicial Magistrate, Dabwali. These courts jointly disposed of the civil and criminal cases. The presiding officer of the court while acting on civil side is called Sub-Judge and on the criminal side he is known as Judicial Magistrate. The Additional District and Sessions Judge, Sirsa hears appeals against the civil and criminal judgements passed by the subordinate courts in the district. The over all administrative control over these courts was of the District and Session Judge, Hisar because the Sirsa district was included in the Hisar Sessions Division. The jurisdiction, functions and powers of these courts in the district are detailed below :—

Name and place of the court,	Jurisdiction	Functions	Powers
Additional District and Sessions Judge, Sirsa	Sirsa District	To decide civil and criminal appeals arising out of the judgments passed by the lower courts in Sirsa district	On appellate side full powers of a District and Sessions Judge
Senior Subordinate Judge-cum-Chief Judicial Magistrate, Sirsa	Sirsa District	Distribution of work relating to civil suits and administration of class III and IV Officials belonging to the process serving agency	Enhanced appellate powers to decide small cause cases of Rs. 1,000, unclassified cases of Rs. 500 and land suits of Rs. 250. Powers of 1st Class Magistrate and summary powers under section 260 of Cr. P. C.
Chief Judicial Magistrate-cum-Sub Judge 1st Class Sirsa	Sirsa District	Distribution of work relating to criminal cases and Police Stations to all courts dealing with criminal cases. He also assigns duty work to the Judicial Magistrates on holidays	Full powers on civil side and can award sentence upto 7 years on Criminal side. Summary powers under-section 260 of Cr.P.C.
Subordinate Judge 1st Class-cum-Judicial Magistrate 1st Class, Sirsa	Sirsa District	To dispose of civil and criminal cases of I, II and III classes.	Full powers on civil side and can award sentence upto 3 years and a fine upto Rs. 5,000 in criminal cases.
Subordinate Judge 1st Class-cum-Judicial Magistrate 1st Class, Dabwali	Sirsa District	ditto	ditto

The information regarding pending and disposed civil and criminal cases are given below for the years 1975 to 1981 :

Year	No. of Old Cases		No. of New Cases Instituted.		No. of Cases Disposed		No. of Cases Left Pending	
	Civil	Criminal	Civil	Criminal	Civil	Criminal	Civil	Criminal
1975-76	243	547	233	615	324	443	152	719
1976-77	152	719	1,657	1,463	1,447	1,077	362	1,105
1977-78	533	1,105	2,093	1,514	1,578	1,014	1,048	1,605
1978-79	1,048	1,605	1,952	1,412	1,998	1,678	1,002	1,339
1979-80	1,199	1,379	3,520	2,817	2,847	2,204	1,872	1,992
1980-81	2,163	2,128	2,954	1,280	2,441	1,172	2,576	2,236

After the passing of the Punjab Gram Panchayat Act, 1952, some of the functions of the civil, criminal and revenue courts were made over to the panchayats. Where cases lie in the exclusive jurisdiction of the panchayats, their cognizance by other courts is barred. The Chief Judicial Magistrate is empowered to revise their decisions and he in turn can delegate these powers to the Illaqa Magistrate. The panchayats being elected bodies, however, do not generally consist of persons with an adequate knowledge of law. The usual formalities and procedure are thus conspicuously absent in the trial of cases by a panchayat.

REVENUE COURTS

The collector is the highest revenue judicial authority in the district and an appeal or revision against his orders lies to the Divisional Commissioner and Financial Commissioner. The Tahsildars and Naib Tahsildars are Assistant Collectors 2nd grade but in partition cases Tahsildar assumes the powers of Assistant Collector 1st grade. The General Assistant to Deputy Commissioner and Sub-Divisional Officers (Civil) are Assistant Collector 1st grade but Sub-Divisional Officers (Civil) have been delegated the powers of collectors under certain Acts.

DISTRICT ATTORNEY

The District Attorney, conducts civil and criminal cases in the courts of the district. For civil cases, he is controlled by the Legal Remembrancer, Haryana and for criminal cases by the Director of Prosecution, Haryana. The latter is the administrative head of the District Attorney. In 1981, the District Attorney, Sirsa was assisted by five Assistant District Attorneys.