

## CHAPTER VI

### BANKING, TRADE AND COMMERCE

#### INDEBTEDNESS AND MONEY-LENDING

The village money-lender played a part of a cardinal importance in the village economy. The money-lender in the Sirsa district during the 19th century, did not, however, had such a hold on the peasantry as in most parts of the region because many of the proprietors and cultivators were sufficiently prosperous and provident to be quite independent of the money-lender.<sup>1</sup> The capital in the Sirsa district was somewhat scarce, 24 per cent per annum was a high rate of interest; commoner rates were 18½ to 18 per cent per annum. The interest on lending with good security was 12 per cent per annum and it increased to 36 or 37½ per cent per annum in cases where it was difficult to exact repayment of a debt. When the grain-dealer made an advance in grain to be paid in kind, the usual stipulation was that 1½ times the amount advanced was to be repaid at harvest, whether that be one month or six months off, but such bargains were comparatively rare and few peasants were deeply in debt to their bankers or had to mortgage their lands.<sup>2</sup>

The peasants generally were unusually free from debt and independent of the money-lender and sales and mortgages of land by cultivating proprietors were few.<sup>3</sup> But with the end of 1894-95, the position changed. Thereafter, up to 1901-02, there was almost continuous record of famine and failure with only occasional gleams of prosperity. These seven years had swallowed up the fat years which preceded. A large number of persons, including even the thrifty Jats, had to migrate to other districts temporarily to obtain food and work. In many cases such persons mortgaged their lands, before going to provide the wherewithal for their journey. There was a glut of land in the market and consequently a fall in value which necessitated still further mortgages to enable owners to get the sum necessary for their maintenance.<sup>4</sup>

Apart from the secured debt there was a vast amount of unsecured debt due from agriculturists to the village money lenders. The incidence of unsecured debt was somewhat more serious. Later in 1920, an enquiry was conducted from village to village to know the extent of unsecured debt in the

1. J. Wilson, *Final Report on the Revision of Settlement of the Sirsa District in the Punjab*, 1879-83, p. 102.

2. Ibid p. 191.

3. Ibid p. 210.

4. *Hisar District Gazetteer*, 1915, pp. 167-68.

then Sirsa tahsil. It revealed that the total debt was Rs. 24 lakh and the incidence of debt was calculated at Rs. 13 per head of population.<sup>1</sup> Miscellaneous debt was generally accountable to expenses of weddings and funerals, replacement of agricultural stock and successive bad harvests. Instances were found where the interest charged on old debt was so excessive that repayment of the principal appeared improbable. But for the large sums of unspent pay brought back from the World War-I by a host of demobilized soldiers, the district would have been in the worst possible condition. Here many ex-soldiers paid their way for a time by pawning or selling the jewellery bought on their return home before the drought began, and it is said that, when it was at its worst, Rs. 20,000 worth of necklaces, bangles and the like came daily into Sirsa bazaars for pawn or sale. Harvest after harvest failed and there came a time in 1921 when there was nothing left to advance. Money lending came to partial stand still because money as well as credit was exhausted.<sup>2</sup>

An effort to tackle the problem of agricultural debt was commenced in the beginning of the present century by the opening of Sirsa Central Co-operative Bank in 1915. Despite the fact that local agricultural conditions and the economic habits of the people were not conducive for the spread of co-operative banking, village societies were formed and were financed through the Sirsa Central Co-operative Bank which dealt with 142 societies and the Madho Singhana Rural Union which dealt with 52 societies. Their capital was Rs. 2.93 lakh and Rs. 1.83 lakh respectively.<sup>3</sup>

Apart from setting up co-operative agencies, the government regulated indigenous financing through various legislative measures, such as the Usurious Loans Act, 1918 ; Punjab Regulation of Accounts Act, 1930 ; Punjab Relief of Indebtedness Act, 1934 ; Punjab Debtors' Protection Act, 1936 and Punjab Registration of Money-Lenders' Act, 1938. Despite various laws, the money-lenders continued to by-pass the provisions of these laws. They indulged in various mal-practices. Most transactions were either oral or against ornaments, promissory notes were obtained for a higher amount than what was actually advanced even duplicate accounts were kept. All money-lenders did not obtain licences by getting themselves registered. They did not maintain regular accounts. Though in 1980-81, there was no licensed money-lender in the district, the money-lending work was done by a large number of persons. Money-lending, particularly in rural areas of the district continues to be a significant source of credit.

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1. *Final Report of the Sirsa Tahsil*, 1923, p. 7.

2. M.L. Darling, *The Punjab Peasant in Prosperity and Debt*, 1925, pp. 99—101.

3. *Final Report of the Sirsa Tahsil* 1923 p. 8.

In addition to co-operative agencies, institutions like the Khadi and Village Industries Commission and various commercial banks provide credit facilities in rural areas. The government also advance *taccavi* loans under the Land Improvement Act XIX of 1883 and the Agriculturists Loans Act XII of 1884. The following table shows the *taccavi* loans advanced and the number of persons benefited since the formation of the district :—

Year	Taccavi Loans Advanced	Persons Benefited
	Rs.	Number
1975-76	1,11,000	18
1976-77	1,75,000	39
1977-78	1,00,000	15
1978-79	12,37,517	4,742
1979-80	70,25,546	1,068
1980-81	58,671	16

#### CO-OPERATIVE CREDIT

The progress made by co-operative institutions in the district has been impressive, they compete with the commercial banks in mobilising savings and also providing credit facilities especially to the agricultural sector. On June 30, 1981 there were 184 primary agricultural credit societies and 28 non-agricultural credit societies. These societies provide facilities for short and medium term credit under crop loan scheme for fertilizers, improved seeds, agricultural implements, marketing, storage and the extension of advanced agricultural techniques. The non-agricultural credit societies comprise mostly employees credit societies catering to the credit requirements of persons outside agriculture. The following statement gives an idea of the dimensions of co-operatives :—

(Rs. in lakh)					
Year ending June	Societies (Number)	Membership (Number)	Working Capital	Deposits	Loans advanced
1	2	3	4	5	6
<b>Agricultural Credit/Service Societies</b>					
1975	528	81,211	521.59	8.23	448.34
1976	191	56,420	439.76	8.61	650.96
1977	187	56,783	626.24	10.18	672.17
1978	184	68,542	672.16	10.60	699.48
1979	184	72,560	907.30	12.21	1,060.39
1980	184	74,847	1,121.25	13.63	996.26
1981	184	78,032	1,298.66	14.66	1,304.60

1	2	3	4	5	6
<b>Non-Agricultural Credit Societies :</b>					
1975	33	1,824	5.26	0.09	0.29
1976	33	1,907	6.73	0.08	1.39
1977	30	1,776	6.59	0.08	0.23
1978	28	1,771	6.18	0.04	0.30
1979	28	1,771	6.55	0.04	0.05
1980	28	1,771	6.61	0.03	—
1981	28	1,771	6.44	0.03	—
<b>CENTRAL CO-OPERATIVE BANK</b>					

The Sirsa Central Co-operative Bank Limited, Sirsa was started in 1915. In 1981, it had 12 branches, 2 at Sirsa and one each at Ludesar, Nathusari (Chopta), Ding, Suchan, Odhan, Mandi Dabwali, Damdama Majra-Jiwan Nagar Rania, Kalanwali and Ellanabad. The share capital of the bank was Rs. 102.79 lakh and working capital was Rs. 1,447.59 lakh and deposits were Rs. 319.47 lakh. The bank advances short and medium term loan to individual members through its affiliated co-operative societies for seasonal agricultural purposes and the marketing of the crops. Relevant information pertaining to this bank is given below :—

(Position as on June 30)

	(Rs. in lakh)						
	1975	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981
1. Share Capital	89.69	61.58	67.60	75.43	78.38	85.84	102.79
2. Working Capital	556.69	498.28	611.50	650.18	968.83	1,205.51	1,447.59
3. Deposits	154.22	165.50	172.25	231.02	384.42	325.81	319.47
4. Loans advanced—							
(i) Short term	441.10	476.12	666.59	801.67	1,161.92	950.79	1,440.45
(ii) Medium term	59.23	11.93	58.15	9.40	49.63	224.74	64.23
(iii) Industrial	12.16	8.39	6.74	..	4.74	5.10	4.00
(iv) Marketing	234.08	207.82	258.89	..	..	0.64	1.67
(v) Milk Supply Societies	0.50	..	..	..	..	..	..
(vi) Non-Agricultural purposes	3.24	9.64	11.90	6.63	18.94	8.44	11.70

Co-operative banking is organised as a federal structure. The primary co-operative societies constitute the foundation of the system. The working capital of the bank is derived mostly from the share capital contributed by the co-operative societies and their deposits. The co-operative bank in turn arranges finances to meet the requirements of the members of the co-operative societies. The management of the bank consists of the elected representatives of the co-operative societies.

#### PRIMARY LAND DEVELOPMENT BANK

There are two primary land development banks in the district, one each at Sirsa and Mandi Dabwali. These were established in 1966 and 1980 respectively. These banks provide long term credit facilities for the purchase of tractors, installation of tubewells, improvement of land, levelling of land and payment of old debts. The security for these loans is immovable property. Such facilities are not provided to farmers by other co-operative credit institutions. The following statement shows the working of these banks from 1975 to 1981 :—

(Year ending June)

	1975	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981
1. Membership (Number)	4,819	5,116	8,013	9,145	10,755	12,027	15,257
2. Share Capital (Rs. in lakh)	21.77	25.21	31.35	41.21	51.35	60.77	76.07
3. Loans advanced (Rs. in lakh)	103.62	118.89	109.15	171.00	242.61	226.04	368.63
4. Loans outstanding (Rs. in lakh)	285.91	320.04	377.62	472.68	580.77	719.93	959.95

#### JOINT STOCK BANKS

Prior to Independence (1947), there were three joint stock banks in the district. The Central Bank of India established its branch at Sirsa in 1936. The State Bank of Bikaner and Jaipur opened its branch at Mandi Dabwali in 1945 and Punjab National Bank at Sirsa in 1946. Till bank nationalisation in 1969, there was nominal expansion in the banking facilities. In 1969, there were only 9 branches of various commercial banks in the district. As a result of rapid expansion in the banking facilities after 1969, the number of branches rose to 23 in 1975. Banking expanded rapidly after the formation of Sirsa as a district in 1975 and the number of branches rose to 39 in 1981.

These banks carry on normal banking activities including deposits, remittances and advances against government securities and other goods. The total deposits of Scheduled Commercial Banks in December, 1983 stood at 4059 lakh resulting in per capita deposit as Rs. 538. The credit-deposit ratio in the district remained 97.86 per cent during 1983. All government transactions are handled by the State Bank of India as the local agent of the Reserve Bank of India. The joint stock banks, location of their branches and year of their opening in the district are given in the table VIII of Appendix.

#### RURAL ORIENTATION OF COMMERCIAL BANKING

Sirsa has done a remarkable progress in the agricultural production and still it has ample potential to develop further. Credit is an important input in the production, be it agriculture or industrial sector. It must be said to the credit of banks that during the period since their nationalisation in July, 1969 their performance in penetrating deep in to the rural areas for extending their branch net work has been quite impressive. There were 20 urban and 16 rural bank branches in December 1976 in the district which increased to 24 and 28 respectively in December 1980.

In qualitative and quantitative terms, commercial banks credit to agricultural sector has undergone significant changes in terms of approach and *modus operandi* over the last decade or so. In order to carry out lending operations in rural areas on sound and systematic lines, a few major strategic decisions have been taken by commercial banks. These include Village Adoption Scheme, Specialised Agricultural Branch, Regional Rural Bank, Farmers' Service Society etc. After introduction of social control and nationalisation of banks, the Government/Reserve Bank of India have formulated several schemes such as Integrated Rural Development (I.R.D.P.), Twenty Point Programme, National Rural Employment Programme (N.R.E.P.), Rural Landless Employment Guarantee Programme (R.L.E.G.P.), Self-Employment Scheme for Educated Unemployed Youth (S.E.E.U.Y.) etc. All these schemes have a definite target group to ensure that sufficient credit is flowed by the banks. Besides, launching these schemes, the government have also given credit targets for banks such as 60 per cent credit-deposit ratio in rural and semi-urban areas, 40 per cent lending to priority sectors, 16 per cent of advances direct to agriculture, one per cent of advances under differential rate of interest scheme etc.

In the beginning of eighties, number of bank offices per thousand sq. kilometres rural area was 15 and the rural population per bank branch covered was 20,913.

According to Reserve Bank of India, branch licensing policy, new bank offices may be set up in rural and semi-urban areas of deficit districts i.e. districts in which the average population per bank office is more than national average—at present 20,000. There are 58 villages each having

population over 2000 as per 1981 census. These villages are the potential service centres for the rural population. To encourage the scope of financial assistance and exploit the rural saving for resource mobilisation, more rural bank branches serving a cluster of villages need to be opened in the district.

### INSURANCE

With the nationalisation of life insurance business in 1956, the Life Insurance Corporation of India became the sole agency for life insurance. The Life Insurance Corporation of India entered the field of general insurance in 1964. The general insurance too was nationalised in 1971. Subsequently in 1973, general insurance business was separated from Life Insurance and General Insurance Corporation was formed.

The Life Insurance Corporation of India opened its sub-office at Sirsa in May, 1961. It was upgraded as branch office in April, 1974. In 1980-81, there were 7 development officers and 140 agents in the district. Business secured by Corporation in the district during 1971-72 to 1980-81 is given below :

Year	Number of Policies	Sum Assured	Development Officers	Agents on Roll
		Rs.		
1971-72	856	1,18,47,000	8	128
1972-73	1,195	1,28,81,000	7	147
1973-74	1,138	1,29,53,000	7	106
1974-75	1,032	1,14,92,000	9	141
1975-76	1,418	1,55,44,000	9	134
1976-77	1,527	1,87,09,000	8	126
1977-78	1,377	1,73,48,000	8	108
1978-79	1,329	1,68,08,000	8	116
1979-80	1,450	2,23,20,000	7	125
1980-81	1,622	2,97,66,000	7	140

### GENERAL INSURANCE

Prior to nationalisation of general insurance in 1971, there were different companies doing general insurance business in the district. In 1964, Life Insurance Corporation also entered the field of general insurance. In 1973, general insurance business was separated from life insurance and General Insurance Corporation of India was formed. The corporation functions

in the district through its four subsidiary companies, viz., Oriental Fire and General Insurance Co. Ltd., The New India Assurance Co. Ltd., The National Insurance Co. Ltd., and the United India Fire and General Insurance Co. Ltd.

### SMALL SAVINGS

The net work of post offices in the district mobilize small savings in rural as well as urban areas. Post office savings banks extend banking facilities virtually at everybody's door-step. In March 1981, there were 25 sub-post offices and 120 branch post offices in the district. The following table gives the gross and net collection of small savings from 1978-79 to 1980-81.

Year	(Rupees in thousands)	
	Gross Collections	Net Collections
1978-79	26,626	835
1979-80	48,282	25,011
1980-81	72,488	29,603

A special award of Rs. 50,000 was awarded by the state government to this district for its performance in field of small savings collections during 1979-80.

A Postal Co-ordination Committee has been constituted under the chairmanship of the Superintendent Post Offices, Hisar Division, Hisar to hold meetings with the representatives of the Deputy Commissioner and the District Savings Officer to discuss the postal savings. The committee examines cases of delay in post offices and solves difficulties in regard to intensification of small savings. complaints of depositors and agents. It also suggests remedial measures for acceptance of deposits in small savings securities.

The promotion of small savings in the district is looked after by the District Savings Officer, Sirsa. Details about some of the small savings schemes are given below :—

**School Savings Bank (Sanchayika) Scheme.**—To promote savings habits among students, this scheme was introduced initially in 2 high schools in the



district. In 1975-76, the scheme was functioning in 5 schools with a membership of 3,226 and collections amounting to Rs. 35,465. By March 1981, the number of schools covered under the scheme was 43 with a membership of 14,230 and collections amounting to Rs. 2,35,093.

**Pay Roll Savings Groups.**—In order to popularise the habit of thrift among the lower income groups and to make the act of savings as far as possible easy and automatic, the District Savings Officer persuades employees and employers in the public and private sectors to start Pay Roll Savings Groups in their establishments. Under this scheme an employee gives an authorisation in favour of his employer for deduction of savings regularly from his salary/wages for being credited to C.T.D. (Cumulative Time Deposit)/R.D. (Recurring Deposit) accounts in post offices.

In 1980-81, there were 116 Pay Roll Savings Groups in the offices, schools and industrial units in the Sirsa district with a membership of 4,901 who deposited Rs. 15,20,610 in C.T.D./R.D. accounts in post offices.

**Mahila Pradhan Kshetriya Bachat Yojana.**—A new scheme called the Mahila Pradhan Kshetriya Bachat Yojana was introduced on April 1, 1972. Women workers and the representatives of the trade unions and associations are assigned specific areas for explaining the small savings schemes and to secure deposits in C.T.D. and R.D. accounts. The workers earn 4 per cent commission on all deposits made through them. In March 1981, there were 7 agents working in the district.

**Agency System.**—Individuals and registered organisations are appointed as authorised agents for National Savings Certificates and Time Deposit Accounts. In March 1981, 39 agents were working in the district under the standardised agency system. Their total collections during 1980-81 were Rs. 20,72,640.

#### CURRENCY AND COINAGE

Before the introduction of decimal coinage in 1957, the silver coinage consisted of the rupee, the eight anna and four anna pieces and the nickel coins consisted of the two anna and one anna pieces, besides the copper pice. A rupee converted into 16 annas or 64 pice. The anna was equivalent to 4 pice.

The decimal coinage introduced in the country from April 1, 1957 took time to become current. The government preceded the change by an extensive public education programme to make it smooth. The conversion tables were displayed at all prominent places of money transaction. The public took some time to get accustomed to the change and the new coinage became readily acceptable. Naya paisa, came to be called paisa and the prefix *naya* was dropped from June 1, 1964.

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## TRADE AND COMMERCE

Before the construction of the Rewari-Ferozepur railway line, trade between west and the districts round Delhi went along the Delhi-Sirsa Road, which passed through the towns of Hansi, Hisar, Fatehabad and Sirsa. Being located on this road, Sirsa was an important trading centre during the middle of the 19th century. Most of the trade of Bikaner and the then Rajputana states used to pass through the district. Wheat, flour, sugar and cotton goods were largely exported to these states.<sup>1</sup> Annual trade of Sirsa town in 1860 was estimated at Rs. 8 lakh.<sup>2</sup> Some of the commercial houses in Sirsa were very wealthy and had their branches in many other large cities. The construction of Rewari-Ferozepur railway line in 1883 greatly affected the position of Sirsa as a leading trade centre. Earlier, Sirsa had a considerable through trade with Lahore, Karachi and Ferozepur, but with the opening of railway line, most of this went directly through railway.<sup>3</sup>

The construction of Bikaner-Jodhpur railway line further affected the position of Sirsa as a trade centre. Its place as a collecting centre was taken by Dabwali on the Bikaner-Jodhpur-Bathinda railway,<sup>4</sup> and new grain market was constructed at Dabwali. Thus, in the beginning of the present century, Dabwali also became an important trading centre of the district.

In the beginning of the present century Rania, Rori and Ellanabad were other principal markets though only of local importance.<sup>5</sup> Rania and Rori had commercial importance even before British occupation. By 1923, the chief markets in the district were Sirsa, Dabwali Mandi, Kalanwali Mandi and Suchan Mandi.<sup>6</sup>

After Independence, the towns of Sirsa and Dabwali continued to be important trading centres. Kalanwali and Ellanabad also acquired commercial importance.

Sirsa, Dabwali, Kalanwali and Ellanabad have number of cotton ginning and pressing factories and *dal* mills. In addition, there are number of rice mills at Sirsa.

1. *Hisar District Gazetteer*, 1892, pp. 211-12.

2. *Correspondence relating to the Settlement of the Sirsa District* 1860, p. 64.

3. *Hisar District Gazetteer*, 1892, p. 210.

4. *Hisar District Gazetteer*, 1904, p. 188.

5. *Final Report of Second Revision of the Regular Settlement of the Sirsa and Fazilka Tahsils*, 1900—1904, p. 4.

6. *Final Report of the Sirsa Tahsil*, 1923, p. 2.

Sirsa, Mandi Dabwali and Kalanwali are big wholesale markets for agricultural produce. Sirsa is a big *mandi* for wheat, cotton and paddy, Dabwali, for wheat and *gur*, and Kalanwali for cotton and wheat. Other wholesale and retail markets in the district are at Ellanabad, Rania, Rori and Ding.

### REGULATED MARKETS

The usual course of trade in agricultural produce from producer to consumer is through middlemen who are whole-salers, retailers and commission agents or *arhtias*. To save the cultivators from the evils of unhealthy market practices and ensure fair price to the cultivator for his produce, the government has regulated the markets under the Punjab Agricultural produce Markets Act, 1961. Market committees representing growers, dealers, co-operative societies and the government are set up for these markets. The market committees regulate and help the sale and purchase of agricultural produce. In March 1981, there were 12 regulated markets (5 principal yards and 7 sub-market yards) in the district. Some important details about these regulated markets are given below :

Sr. No.	Regulated Market and the year of Regulation	Principal Market Yard	Sub-Market Yard	Number of Villages	Main Arrivals
1	Sirsa (1941)	New grain market with extension	1. Rania	115	Cotton, gram, wheat, paddy, <i>gowara</i> , <i>bajra</i> pulses, <i>gur</i> , <i>khand</i> , onions and potatoes
2	Dabwali (1947)	New Grain Market	1. Chutala 2. Old Mandi Dabwali	71	Cotton, gram, wheat, <i>bajra</i> , <i>gowara</i> , <i>moong</i> , <i>gur</i> , <i>khand</i> , onions and potatoes
3	Kalanwali (1959)	New Grain Market	1. Rori 2. Odhan	55	Cotton, gram, pulses, wheat <i>bajra</i> , <i>gowara</i> , <i>gur</i> , <i>khand</i> , onions and potatoes
	Ellanabad (1964)	New Grain Market	Jiwan Nagar	54	Cotton, gram, wheat, paddy, <i>bajra</i> , <i>gowara</i> , <i>gur</i> , <i>khand</i> , onions and potatoes
	Ding (1962)	Boundaries of old Mandi	Suchan Kotli	26	Cotton, gram, <i>bajra</i> , <i>gowara</i> and pulses

The details of the arrival of different commodities in the regulated markets during the period 1971-72 to 1980-81 are given in Table IX of Appendix. The produce is handled in large quantities and specialised operators perform services. These *mandis* provide a system of competitive buying, eradicate mal-practices, ensure the use of standardised weights and measures and provide storage facilities.

The market-committees derive their income from the market fee which is levied and collected at the rate of two percent of the price of the produce bought and sold in the *mandi*. The income is also derived from licence fee, composition fee and penalties.

#### CATTLE FAIRS

Fairs in the districts are chiefly religious and of these few have commercial importance except the cattle fairs. The account of the religious fairs has been given in the chapter on 'People'. Five cattle fairs are held in the district. Three of these fairs are held at Sirsa on *Phalgun Badi Chhatt* (February-March), *Sravan Sudi Ashtmi* (July-August) and *Asadh Badi Ashtmi* (June-July). Another two fairs are held at Rania on *Magh Badi Ashtami* (January-February) and *Baisakh Badi Ashtami* (April-May). The dates of these fairs are determined according to the Vikrami Samvat and, therefore, do not fall on the same date every year.

Camels, buffaloes, bullocks and calves are brought to these fairs for sale. Traders and farmers from the neighbouring states of Punjab and Rajasthan come to buy cattle in these fairs.

The cattle fairs were organised by the municipalities earlier. Their control and management was taken over by the government (in the Development and Panchayat Department) on November 24, 1970,—*vide* Haryana Cattle Fairs Act, 1970. A cess is charged at the rate of 4 per cent on the sale price of the cattle and is paid by the purchaser and rupee one per head of cattle is charged from the seller.

Under the provisions of the Haryana Cattle Fairs Act, 1970, after deducting all expenses on cattle fairs and establishment charges, 20 per cent share of net income is reserved at state level for the development of cattle and animal husbandry schemes. Remaining 80 per cent share of income is allocated in equal proportion to all the Panchayat Samitis in the district for the development of cattle and animal husbandry schemes or other related purposes, as the state government may specify. The following data show the income accrued and expenditure incurred at these fairs during

1975-76 to 1980-81 :—

Year	Income	Expenditure
	Rs.	Rs.
1975-76	56,622	3,065
1976-77	64,111	4,453
1977-78	76,142	4,775
1978-79	76,087	6,461
1979-80	75,372	7,511
1980-81	79,498	8,690

## CO-OPERATION AND TRADE

There are six co-operative marketing societies in the district which conduct wholesale business in the supply of agricultural seeds, fertilizers, insecticides and agricultural implements. These societies are located at Sirsa, Ding, Kalanwali, Mandi Dabwali, Rania and Ellanabad. The membership of the cooperative marketing societies comprises primary societies and individuals. The societies help operations of the affiliated cooperative societies. They arrange for the marketing and processing of agricultural produce and maintain godowns for storage. The membership, share capital and working capital of these societies from June 30, 1975 to June 30, 1981 are given below :—

(Position as on June 30)

Particulars	1975	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981
1. Number	8	6	6	6	6	6	6
2. Membership	3,619	2,811	2,972	3,245	3,347	3,377	3,400
3. Share Capital (Rs. in lakh)	6.40	6.68	7.67	7.80	8.46	8.87	8.87
4. Working Capital (Rs. in lakh)	60.26	66.99	70.12	49.02	58.49	46.00	64.87
5. Value of Stocks Supplied (Rs. in lakh)	40.36	41.16	442.79	308.71	385.75	328.33	312.69

**Consumers' Co-operative Store.**—The Sirsa Central Co-operative Consumers' Store came into existence in December, 1975. Another consumers' co-operative store was opened at Mandi Dabwali in 1979. The membership, share capital and working capital of these stores from June, 1976 to June,

1981 are given below :—

(Position as on June 30)

Particulars	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981
1. Membership (Number)	655	1,040	1,210	1,481	2,844	2,978
2. Share Capital (Rs. in lakh)	1.07	2.23	2.27	3.05	7.30	8.98
3. Working Capital (Rs. in lakh)	1.69	3.41	4.26	9.04	14.87	13.51
4. Goods Supplied (Rs. in lakh)	6.07	29.65	27.89	22.40	49.76	64.61

#### STATE TRADING

Major fluctuations in the prices of foodgrains and the difficulties experienced by consumers have led to state trading. For the distribution of foodgrains and other essential commodities, initially the government started a net-work of fair price shops in urban and rural areas. With a view to ensure availability of wheat, rice and sugar in the open market for consumption by the general public, the government promulgated various orders from time to time. The Haryana Foodgrains Dealers Licensing and Price Control Order, 1978 required dealers to obtain licence for storage and sale of these commodities. Under the provisions of this order, no person can store for sale more than 25 quintals of wheat, *bajra*, and barley, 10 quintals of maize and 4 quintals of rice, without a valid licence. The storage limit for a wholesale dealer is 200 quintals of wheat whereas for *Chaki* (flour mill) owners, this limit is 100 quintals. Similarly under the Haryana Sugar, *Gur/Khandsari* Dealers Licensing Order, 1978, no person can store for sale more than 10 quintals of sugar and 100 quintals of *gud/khandsari*. Presently the sugar is being supplied to the depot holders by the cooperative marketing societies/co-operative consumers' stores for distribution to the card holders.

The number of fair price shops opened in different areas of the district for distribution of sugar, wheat, wheat *atta*, and rice to card holders was as follows :—

Year	Urban	Rural	Total
1973-74	32	188	220
1974-75	27	208	235
1975-76	29	185	214
1976-77	30	245	275
1977-78	34	237	271
1978-79	31	242	273
1979-80	42	245	287
1980-81	57	280	337

The issue rates of various commodities at fair price shops during different years were fixed as under:

(Rate per kilogram in rupees)

Commodity	1975	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981
1. Wheat <i>atta</i>	1.49 to 1.52	—	—	—	—	1.47 to 1.55	1.45 to 1.56
2. Wheat	—	1.32	1.32	1.32	1.37	1.37	1.57
3. Rice Basmati (Superior)	2.54	2.54	2.54	—	—	—	—
4. Rice Begmi	1.74	1.74	1.74	1.74	—	—	—
5. Rice Basmati	2.10	2.10	2.10	2.10	2.10	2.18	2.18
6. Sugar	2.15	2.15	2.15	2.15	—	2.85 to 3.50	3.65

By March 31, 1981, 1,27,565 ration cards were issued in urban/rural areas of the district. These card-holders obtain their supplies of wheat, *atta*, sugar, rice, kerosene oil and ghee through fair price shops functioning in the district.

As regards coarse grains, there is no control over the distribution of gram, *bajra*, maize and barley and consumers purchase requirements from the open market by bidding system or through a licensed foodgrains dealer. There were 1,850 foodgrains dealers (licencees) on March 31, 1981 in various markets of the district.

Thus while a battery of legal provision exists to regulate the purchase, storage and distribution of essential articles, mostly food, and distribution arrangements have been organised to physically ensure that supplies get to consumers, in practice, a mixed system of a free and regulated distribution system exists. It is tightened when there are shortages and allowed to work itself more freely when supply-demand position is stable.

#### WEIGHTS AND MEASURES

There was no uniform standard of weights and measures prior to 1941 so much so that it sometimes varied from village to village and a *seer* ranged from 40 to 102 *tolas* in weight at different places according to usage. With



increased commercial and industrial activity in the country, this chaotic situation created a sense of uncertainty. It was accentuated often by fraudulent practices. One of these practices was to use weighing apparatus by hand thereby cheating the producer of his produce by unscrupulous traders. It was to remedy these evils that the Punjab Weights and Measures Act, 1941 which was itself a corollary to the Central Standards of Weights Act, 1939, was enacted.

To bring uniformity and standardise weights and measures and to facilitate international trade, the metric system of weights and measures was introduced in 1958. However, to avoid hardship to the public, a transitory period of two years was allowed permitting use of weights and measures in vogue immediately before the enforcement of the Act. Thereafter, the public has become well acquainted with the new weights and measures and now experiences no difficulty.

The Inspector, Weights and Measures, Sirsa, supervises enforcement work to ensure accuracy in the use of weights and measures, through frequent inspections and periodical stampings.

#### STORAGE AND WAREHOUSING

In villages, people store agricultural produce in houses, *kothas* (bins) or in bags. In markets, the commission agents and co-operative marketing societies maintain godowns. Mills and factories maintain godowns at their premises to stock the raw material.

The godowns maintained by private dealers vary greatly and are generally not of desired specifications. To organise better warehousing, the Agricultural Produce (Development and Warehousing Corporations) Act, 1956, was passed and was later repealed by the Warehousing Corporation Act, 1962. The Haryana Warehousing Corporation was established under the latter Act on November 1, 1967. The Corporation was authorised to acquire and build godowns and run warehouses for the storage of agricultural produce and other notified commodities. The rate of storage charges varies from commodity to commodity. However, for major foodgrains such as wheat, rice, barley, maize etc. it is 37 paise per bag up to 100 kg. per month.

In 1980-81, the Corporation was running 7 warehouses, four in its own godowns at Sirsa, Mandi Dabwali, Ellanabad and Kalanwali and three in hired godowns at Rania, Ding and Sirsa. The total storage capacity of all the warehouses was 61,219 metric tonnes.