

**GAZETTEER OF INDIA**

**HARYANA**

**AMBALA**

# HARYANA DISTRICT GAZETTEERS



## AMBALA

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## FOREWORD

A district gazetteer is a repository of authentic information. It not only deals with geographical data but contains valuable narration of socio-economic changes which take place in the district. The book is in fact a mirror of society which reflects a picture of life in the district as it is lived by the people. It will be of immense importance to administrators, research workers and general readers.

The Ambala district is the northern-most district of the State. Its transitional location between outer Himalayas and the Ghagghar and Yamuna upland plain have enriched it with topographic variety not found elsewhere in the State. It is land of the legendary and sacred Saraswati and has rich cultural heritage. The recent archaeological excavations and historical research have thrown new light on hitherto unknown facts about the history of the district. I hope that this gazetteer will be of great interest to the general reader.

I am thankful to Dr. K.C. Khanna, who revised the volume before its publication. I am also thankful to the Chief Minister and the Minister for Revenue for the support given by them to the gazetteers staff.

Chandigarh,  
8th August, 1984

L. C. GUPTA, I.A.S.,  
Financial Commissioner, Revenue,  
Haryana.

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## PREFACE

The present volume of the district gazetteer for the district of Ambala is the fifth in the series of Haryana District Gazetteers. The gazetteer of Ambala was first published in 1883-84, then in 1892-93 and the last edition was out in 1923-24. The present volume, however, is not just revision of the previous district gazetteer though much reliance had to be placed on the old gazetteers which were of immense help. Momentous changes have occurred in all spheres of socio-economic activities since the publication of the last gazetteer in 1923-24, particularly after the Independence in 1947 and formation of Haryana in 1966. Many changes took place in the boundaries of the district and it was reduced much in size after 1966 when it lost Nalagarh tahsil to Himachal Pradesh, Ropar and major portion of Kharar tahsil to Punjab, 36 villages and Manimajra town to the Union Territory of Chandigarh.

Basic infrastructure facilities like roads, communications, electricity and irrigation, etc. have been extended widely resulting in socio-economic transformation of the district. All these changes have been brought out vividly in this gazetteer, hence it is not a geographical and historical record only. Its reference year is 1978.

The preparation and publication of this gazetteer has been rendered possible with the assistance of numerous departments of the State and Central Governments and various branches of the district administration who supplied information and data incorporated in this volume. Various publications both of the Government and the private bodies have been consulted frequently. It may not be possible to acknowledge each of their contributions individually but special mention must be made of those who were primarily responsible. My thanks are due to Sudarshan Kumar Gupta, Jt. State Editor and his team of Editor S. P. Dheer and Research Officers A. K. Jain and Krishna Chakarvarti who saw through the compilation and printing of the gazetteer. Dr. H. A. Phadke and Dr. K.C. Yadav of Kurukshetra University, Kurukshetra wrote ancient and medieval and modern sections of chapter on History respectively. Dr. K.C. Khanna was kind enough to go through the entire manuscript and make several valuable suggestions.

The gazetteer is written on the pattern prescribed by the Government of India and I hope, it would be of much use to the researchers and general readers alike.

Chandigarh,  
8th August, 1984.

K. S. BHORIA,  
I.A.S.,  
State Editor (Gazetteers) and  
Joint Secretary to Government, Haryana,  
Revenue Department

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## CHAPTER I

### GENERAL

#### ORIGIN OF THE NAME OF THE DISTRICT

The district takes its name after its headquarters town, Ambala the origin of which itself is attributed to various reasons. The town is said to have been founded during the 14th century by one Amba Rajput, from whom it derived its name. Another version is that the name is a corruption of 'Amb-wala' or the mango-village, judging from the mango groves that existed in its immediate neighbourhood. Still another version is that the town has taken its name after goddess 'Bhawani Amba', whose temple still exists in the town.

#### LOCATION, BOUNDARIES, AREA AND POPULATION

**Location.**—The district lies on the north-eastern edge of Haryana between 30° 02' 35" and 30° 55' 45" north latitude and 76° 32' 45" and 77° 36' 20" east longitude. It is bounded by the river Yamuna and across it by Saharanpur district of Uttar Pradesh to the south-east. To its south lies Kurukshetra district while in its west is situated Patiala and Ropar districts of Punjab and the Union Territory of Chandigarh. The Shiwalik range of Solan and Sirmaur districts of Himachal Pradesh bound the Ambala district in the north and north-east.

**Area.**—With an area of 3,832.26 sq. kms Ambala district ranks fifth amongst all the districts in the state. It comprises four tahsils covering the area as mentioned below :

Tahsil	Area (sq. kms.)
Ambala	1,027.56
Jagadhri	1,301.68
Narayangarh	1,138.41
Kalka	364.61
Total :	3,832.26

**Population.**—The total population of the district according to 1971 Census was 10,98,405 of which the rural population accounted for 7,53,670 (68.61 per cent) and urban for 3,44,735 (31.39 per cent). The population of this district forms 10.95 per cent of the total population of the Haryana State. In population, it is fourth among the districts of the state.

## HISTORY OF THE DISTRICT AS AN ADMINISTRATIVE UNIT

The first record of the administrative division of the district is found in *Ain-i-Akbari*.<sup>1</sup> Much of the area lying in the present Ambala district was covered by the *mahals* of Ambala, Khizrabad, Sadhaura and Mustafabad which formed part of Sirhind *Sirkar* of the Delhi *Subah*.

After the decline of the Mughal empire, the Sikhs began to extend south-eastwards beyond the river Satluj. In 1763, the whole country between the Satluj and the Yamuna including the area comprising the present Ambala district was over run by the Sikhs who divided it among themselves. They ruled as they pleased till 1809 when the Cis-Satluj chiefs came under British protection which included the British right to the escheats of their estates on failure of heirs among the independent chiefs. The Ambala district was constituted in 1847 after certain chiefs were deprived of their sovereignty and their villages noted below were acquired. Brief details of the lapsed estates in the present Ambala district may not be out of place here.

Name of Estate	Date of lapse	Number of Villages
<b>Ambala Tahsil</b>		
1. <i>Patti</i> Ambala	.. 1823	63
2. Pargana Sulhar	.. 1843	46
3. Pargana Adhoya	.. 1850	39
<b>Jagadhri Tahsil</b>		
1. Bilaspur	.. 1819	16
2. Jagadhri	.. 1829	36
3. Buria (Megh Singh)	.. 1836	28
4. Milak	.. 1841	15
5. Dialgarh	.. 1851	16
<b>Narayangarh Tahsil</b>		
1. Majra	.. 1833	20
2. Gadauli	.. 1840	5
3. Lalpur Nagla	.. 1846	12
4. Narayangarh and Bharog	.. 1847	89

1. Abul Fazl, *Ain-i-Akbari* (English Translation, Col. H.S. Jarrett) corrected and further annotated by Sir Jadunath Sarkar, Calcutta, 1978, Vol. II, pp. 300-301.



The then district of Ambala had 5 tahsils of Ambala, Kharar, Jagadhri, Narayangarh and Ropar with enclaves which were part of the princely states. The changes involving inclusion or exclusion of certain areas after 1862 reflect the immediate administrative requirements. In 1862, Tharcesar district was broken up and parganas of Shaheed, Ledwa and a part of Tharcesar came to Ambala and were constituted into Pipli tahsil. In 1866, Tehewa pargana from Karnal was transferred to Pipli tahsil of Ambala but in 1876, 14 villages and in 1889, the remaining 89 villages were retransferred from Pipli to the Kaithal tahsil of Karnal district. Again in 1897, Pipli tahsil was transferred to Karnal district. In 1899, Kalka-cum-Kurari estates and Kasauli and later in 1916, Sanawar were transferred from Simla district to Ambala district.

Further changes were effected after Independence in the interest of consolidation of other districts in the area. Under the Provinces and States (Absorption of Enclaves) Order, 1950, the Ambala district lost Kasauli and Sanawar to Kohistan district of PEPSU and 17 villages to Fatehgarh Sahib district of PEPSU and gained 6 villages from Patiala district and 115 villages and some forest area from erstwhile Kalsia State.

In 1959, Nalagarh tahsil and Pinjore Kanungo circle of Kandaghat tahsil of the Patiala district were transferred to the Ambala district. The Pinjore Kanungo circle was added to the Kharar tahsil. In 1960, 7 villages from the Kaithal tahsil of the Karnal district were transferred to the Ambala district.

The state of Haryana was formed on November 1, 1966 under the Punjab Re-organisation Act, 1966 and the Ambala district was very much reduced in size by the re-organisation. Of its six tahsils, the district lost Nalagarh tahsil to Simla district of Himachal Pradesh, Ropar tahsil and major portion of Kharar tahsil (282 villages and Kharar and Kurari towns) to the newly constituted Ropar district in the Punjab State and 36 villages and Chandigarh and Manimajra towns to the newly formed Union Territory of Chandigarh. Thus the Ambala district after the re-organisation comprised only three tahsils of Ambala, Jagadhri and Narayangarh. The Narayangarh tahsil included 153 villages and Kalka town transferred from the Kharar tahsil. In 1967, these 153 villages and Kalka town were taken out of the Narayangarh tahsil and formed into Kalka tahsil. In 1977-78, the district had following tal sils:—

Tahsil	Number of Estates
Ambala	325
Jagadhri	493
Narayangarh	334
Kalka	154
Total :	1,306

The sub-divisions have been constituted at Ambala, Jagadhri and Narayangarh. Kalka tahsil is in the jurisdiction of the Sub-Divisional Officer (Civil) Ambala. In 1978, there were 16 *thanas* (police stations) and 27 police posts.<sup>1</sup>

### PHYSIOGRAPHY

The transitional location of the district between the outer Himalayas and the Ghagghar-Yamuna upland plain and its wide east-west extent have enriched it with a topographic variety not found in the plain areas of Haryana. On the basis of similarities in local relief, slope, texture, surficial material and arrangement of land form features, the district can be divided into six distinct physiographic units :

1. The Outer Himalayan Hill Tract
2. The Shiwalik Hill Tracts
3. The Pinjore Doon
4. The Foothill Rolling Plain
5. The Flood Plains
6. The Ghagghar-Yamuna Upland Plain

**The Outer Himalayan Hill Tract.**—Kalka, the northern most tahsil of the Ambala district, is divided into three distinct physiographic units forming parallel strips running in north-west, south-east directions. The central strip, which is a structural valley, is flanked on either side by narrow strips of hilly tracts : the outer Himalayan tract on the north, and the Shiwalik range tract on the south. The outer Himalayan tract is only 2-3 kilometres wide and stretches along the northern boundary of the district from river Ghagghar in the south-east to across Nanakpur *nadi* in the north-west, a distance of about 20 kilometres. The narrow valley of the river Ghagghar separates the tract from the Morni hill tract in the south. Since the district boundary in this section mostly follows the ridge crests, the tract comprises generally of southern slopes of the outer-most Himalayan ridges and spurs, which overlook the Pinjore Doon. The highest point in the area lies in the north-eastern corner of the tract, this point is a few metres below the summit of a 1,655 metre high peak, which lies only a little away from the district boundary. The height of the ridge which runs towards the south from this point goes on decreasing. The highest point in the extreme south on this ridge is only 884 metres above mean sea level. The height of the ridges and spurs

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1. For more details, the Chapters on 'General Administration' and 'Law and Order and Justice' may be seen.

to the north-west of the highest point also decreases. It is lowest in the mid section, where the continuity of the ridges and spurs is broken by the deep valleys of *Koshallia nadi* and *Jhajra nadi*. However, it again gains some height west of *Jhajra nadi*. The highest point in the extreme north-west section is 1,194 metre above mean sea level. Slopes in this tract are very steep. Numerous seasonal streams descend from these slopes on to the valley below. These streams bring down with them enormous amount of material every year and a major part of this material is deposited in the form of alluvial fans at the foot of the ridges and spurs.

**The Shiwalik Hill Tracts.**—The Shiwalik hills, which have a north-west, south-east disposition, flank the northern boundary of the district. At places the district boundary penetrates deep into the hills and encloses pockets of hilly tract. The Chandigarh Shiwalik range tract, Morni hill tract and Kalesar hill tract are the three main pockets of Shiwalik range tracts within the district. These tracts are not only physically separated from each other but also differ from each other in many aspects.

**The Chandigarh Shiwalik Hill Tract.**—This tract is a narrow strip in the Shiwalik hills north of Chandigarh and flanks the southern side of the Pinjore Doon in the Kalka tahsil. The strip, which is only 2 to 5 kilometres wide encloses the northern slopes, the main water dividing line and some parts of the southern slopes of the Shiwalik range. It stretches from river Ghagghar in the south-east to a point opposite Balad *nadi* in the north-west, a distance of about 20 kilometres. The Shiwalik range north of Chandigarh presents a typical Shiwalik hill topography. There are hogback ridges formed on gently dipping alternating beds of clay, silt, loam and gravel. The tract is badly dissected and gives the appearance of bad land topography. Numerous rills, gullies and *choes* are continuously transforming the face of the area at a very fast rate. Because of unconsolidated nature of the bed rocks, the rate of landslides and mass wasting is high. The northern slope of Shiwalik range is steep and less extensive. Streams descending from the northern slope join either *Sirsa nadi* or *Jhajra nadi*, flowing beyond in opposite directions. The main ridge in this section of the Shiwalik range is almost missing. There is only a water dividing line, which is pushed upward very close to the northern limits. The crest of this water dividing line, which separates the northward flowing streams from southward flowing streams, is at many places lower than the crest of the transverse ridges in the area. The highest point in this ridge is Kala Tiba which is 625 metre above mean sea level. The southern slopes of the Shiwalik range are much more extensive. Transverse *choes*, which cut across almost the entire width of the Shiwalik range, have pushed back the main water dividing line to almost the northern fringes of the hills. These *choes* have transformed the southern slopes of the Shiwalik hills into alternating ridge and valley topography. They

have carved out series of transverse parallel ridges, which run in a direction perpendicular to the grain of the area. The crests of these ridges are like razor's edge and are broken at many places. Slopes of the transverse ridges are steep and unstable, thus unsuitable for human occupation. However, only a small part of the southern slope falls within the district.

**The Morni Hill Tract.**—The continuity of the Shiwalik range further east is broken by a trans current fault north of Panchkula township. Due to this fault, a narrow water-gap has been created through which river Ghagghar debouches on to the Punjab plains. This narrow water-gap, which has wall-like vertical eastern bank and terraced western bank, separates the Chandigarh Shiwalik range tract in the west from the Morni hill tract in the east. From this water-gap the Morni hill tract extends up to the tributaries of *Begna nadi* and *Run cho*, in the east, a distance of about 30 kilometres. The northern limit of the tract is marked by the crest of the ridge north of the river Ghagghar. The tract is the largest pocket hilly area within the district and comprises two north-west, south-east running parallel ridges separated by the deep and narrow valley of the river Ghagghar. Of the two ridges, the southern one is more massive and extensive, but the highest peak Dharot Kahlung, 1,499 metre above mean sea level lies on the northern ridge. The highest peak on the southern ridge is only 1,246 metre high. The crest of the southern ridges supports a number of small settlements including that of Morni from which the tract derives its name. The tract is badly dissected by numerous streams forming deep narrow valleys. With the exception of *Begna nadi*, there is hardly any other stream which forms a broad open valley like the one formed by the major *choes* in the Chandigarh Shiwalik hill tract. However, with the exception of the southern fringes and the western part of the tract, the degree of dissection is much less as compared to the Chandigarh Shiwalik hills tract. This is because of the thick vegetation cover and the comparatively consolidated nature of bed rocks which belong to *Dagshai* and *Nahan* for the northern and southern ridges respectively. Slopes are moderate to steep but stable. However, there are steep escarpments at many places formed by landslides and faults. To the south of Morni there is also a small patch of flat land with two tiny lakes. The genesis of this flat land seems to be structural in nature but needs proper investigation.

**The Kalesar Hill Tract.**—Another important pocket of hilly tract within Shiwalik range lies in the north-eastern corner of the district. The tract comprises two parallel ridges separated by a broad and open valley of a seasonal stream *Sukh rao* which flows from north-west to south-east and joins the Yamuna river in the extreme north-eastern corner of the district. Numerous torrents originating from the slopes of ridges flanking the *Sukh rao* valley drain into the *Sukh rao*. The sharp crest of the northern ridge forms the common boundary of the district with Himachal Pradesh. The crest of the southern ridge is also

sharp and broken giving the appearance of saw teeth. The highest peak on the northern ridge is 650 metre high and Kalesar peak on the southern ridge is 659 metre above mean sea level. Topographically the tract is not much different from other parts of the Shiwalik hills. The southern slope of the southern ridge is comparatively more dissected and extensive than its counterpart in the northern ridge as well as the northern slope of the same ridge.

In addition to these main hilly tracts, there are three minor tracts of hilly areas, not much different from those discussed above. Of these tracts, the one to the north of Sadhaura town is a small winding ridge, extending in east-west direction. The highest point on this ridge is 711 metre above mean sea level. Another minor hilly tract is at the mouth of Somb *nadi* and its tributaries. The tract encloses slopes of jutting out spurs. Rampur peak with a height of 662 metre is the highest point in the area. The third and the last tract is a narrow valley of Boli *nadi* which is flanked on either side by transverse ridges and extends up to the main ridge in the north, a distance of about 7 kilometres. The average width of the valley is about 1.5 kilometres. The transverse ridge slopes down steeply to the stream banks. The relative height of these ridges from the valley to bottom varies from 200 to 250 metre. The highest point in the tract with a height of 701 metre lies in the extreme north on the crest of the main ridge.

**The Pinjore Doon.**—Pinjore Doon is a structural valley, about 5-8 kilometres wide, sandwiched between the outer Himalayas in the north and the Shiwalik range in the south. It extends from the river Ghagghar in the south-east to the river Satluj outside the limits of the district, in the north-west. However, within the district its extent is limited between the river Ghagghar and Balad *nadi*, a distance of about 25 kilometres. The Doon is flanked in the north by alluvial fans at its contact zone with the Himalayas and the seasonal streams in the south along the Shiwalik hills. The major slope of the area is from north-east to south-west, and it is steeper in the north and gentler in the south. The average gradient of the area which is about 40-50 metre per kilometre is a bit misleading as it is broken into various terrace levels, separated by 5-13 metre high terrace scarps. The underlying alternating beds of loam and gravel are almost horizontal as the dip angle is less than  $3^{\circ}$ . The minor slope of the area, which is perpendicular to the major slope, divides the area into three different segments. The two segments east and west of Koshallia *nadi* which flows from north to south, dips inward towards the river. The third segment west of an imaginary line joining village Khera at the foot of the Shiwalik range with Tagra Kaliram in the north-east near Kalka railway station, dips outward towards north-west. The minor slope of the area is also responsible for dividing the Sirsa drainage system from Ghagghar-Jhajra drainage system.

The drainage density in the area is very high as a number of seasonal streams descend from the ridges and spurs, flanking to northern side of the valley. In addition to these, a number of streams originate in the Doon itself. The drainage lines form a very closely spaced sub-parallel drainage pattern. The streams flow from north-east to south-west direction across the entire width of the valley and then join the major streams like the Sirsa *nadi*, the Jhajra *nadi* or the river Ghagghar which flow at the foot of the Shiwalik range in a direction perpendicular to these streams. Jhajra *nadi* and Koshallia *nadi* join the Ghagghar river at the mouth of Ghagghar water-gap in the Shiwalik range, through which it escapes into the Punjab plains. The Sirsa *nadi* along with its tributaries drains into the river Satluj in the north-west. The streams are generally entrenched and have wall like vertical banks. At places these banks are as high as 25 metre. The average spacing between the streams is about 500 metre. Almost all the streams are seasonal and carry water only during the rains. Stream beds are strewn with gravel and boulders. Gravel beds are also exposed at some terrace levels.

**The Foothill Rolling Plain.**—This is a long belt of undulating, fairly sloping plain with elevation between 300-400 metre, adjoining the Shiwalik range stretching from the river Ghagghar in the north-west to the river Yamuna in the south-east. Its width varying from 10 to 25 kilometres, is maximum in Narayangarh tahsil. Collateral coalescence of alluvial fans at the foot of the Shiwalik range has created a continuous belt of steeply sloping undulating land all along the hills. These alluvial fans have been formed by the deposit of material brought down by the seasonal streams from the Shiwalik range near the hills, the deposited material is very coarse like sand and gravel but as one move away from the hills, the material gets finer and finer. Gully formation on the alluvial fans and its extension onto the adjoining clay uplands has extended and accentuated the undulations in the area. Gully formation on the two major clay uplands, one between Dangri *nadi* (Tangri stream) and Begna *nadi* and the other between the Markanda river and Somb *nadi* is most intense. Here, the flat land has been devoured extensively by the gullies. Generally these gullies are entrenched 2-5 metre deep but at places these are as deep as 10 metre, maximum erosion in this tract has been done by the gullies and streams which originate in the tract itself and not by those which come down from the Shiwalik range. It is only in small tracts like the one between the river Yamuna and Somb *nadi* that erosion is largely due to streams descending from the Shiwalik range. Drainage density in the tract is very high and the streams are fairly closely spaced.

**The Flood Plains.**—The flood plain along the western bank of the Yamuna river stretches along the district boundary from the foot of the Shiwalik hills in the north to the extreme south-eastern tip of the district.

Its width goes on increasing from a few hundred metres in the north to about 5 kilometres in the south. The flood plain is clearly separated from the upland plain by 3 to 4 metre high scarps. Near Buria town this scarp is 8 to 11 metre high. Within the flood plain, there are various terrace levels separated from each other by one to two metre high scarps. Near the river channel, the terrace level is low and it is annually flooded. Away from the river channel, the terrace level is high and generally free from annual flooding. This part of the flood plain is submerged under water only when there is unusually large amount of discharge in the river. Every year a thick layer of alluvium is deposited on the active flood plain. The common flood plain features such as meandering channels, back swamps, meander scars, etc. are also present in the Yamuna flood plain. In addition to the Yamuna river, Ghagghar, Markanda river and Boli *nadi* also have their own flood plains. The flood plain of the river Ghagghar, though quite extensive, lies largely outside the district limits. It is only at one or two places, that the district boundary encloses some part of the Ghagghar flood plain. The flood plain of the Markanda river is narrow and not so well defined. It is only after the river crosses the district boundary, that its flood plain becomes extensive. The flood plain of Somb *nadi* is also narrow but very well defined, especially along its western margin. A six to eight metre high river bluff badly dissected by the gullies, flanks 1 to 2 kilometres wide narrow strip of flood plain to its west. This stretch of the flood plain merges into the Yamuna flood plain near Buria town. The flood plain on the other side of Somb *nadi* is also narrow but not well defined. It also merges into the Yamuna flood plain.

**The Ghagghar-Yamuna Upland Plain.**—Immediately south of the undulating foothill rolling plain lies an extensive stretch of gently sloping flat land, extending between the Ghagghar and the Yamuna rivers. Within the district, the tract covers almost the entire Ambala tahsil and the southern half of the Jagadhri tahsil. With an elevation ranging from 250 to 300 metre, the tract slopes very gently from north to south. With the decrease in gradient, the number of streams also decreases and the spacing between the streams increases. In the stretch south-west of Ambala city, the gradient is extremely gentle and the drainage is very poor. During the rainy season, the streams are unable to hold the increased discharge, which is spilled out to the adjoining areas. That is why, the entire stretch of land here is covered by a continuous sheet of water during the rainy season. After the rains, the water recedes slowly leaving behind a thick layer of fine silt. Thus the soil in the area is renewed every year by the silt deposited by the flood water. In other parts of the tract, though the drainage is poor but the problem is not that acute. Spilling out is limited and the deposit of silt is also limited. The surface material in the tract goes on changing from loam in the north to silt in the south.