

[**Shakti or Devi.**—Closely connected with the worship of Shiva and far more widely spread is the worship of his consort, Devi or Shakti. This goddess goes by many names ; Durga, Kalika, Chandi, Naina, Mansa, Sharda, Ambika, Kali, Bhawani, and numberless others.

Devi is worshipped all over the state but her worship is most in vogue and most diversified in the Ambala district. Many celebrated shrines of Devi are located in the district and the whole of the Shiwalik hills and the foothills are studded with temples dedicated to Devi. The celebrated and famous temples of Devi which are visited by a large number of devotees from all over the state and neighbouring states of Punjab, Himachal Pradesh and Chandigarh, U.T., are located at Balaspur (Mansa Devi), Chandimandir (Chandi Devi) and Talokpur (Sharda Devi). Other important temples of Devi are located at Kalka (Kalika Devi), Orian (Naina Devi), Charnian (Kalika Devi) in Kalka tahsil ; Bhoj Mataur (Durga), Raipur Rani (Durga) in Narayangarh tahsil ; Ambala City (Ambika Devi), Ambala Cantonment (Kali Devi), Babyal (Gyasi Devi), Mullana (Durga), Phokra (Durga) and Kalawar (Durga) in Ambala tahsil and Sitla Devi temple at Jagadhri in Jagadhri tahsil. The devotees worship in these temples on saturday but *Ashtami Chet sudi* (March-April) and *Ashtami Asoj sudi* (September-October) are special days when large number of devotees visit these temples. The devotees worship the deity and make offerings of sweets, eatables, cash, clothes and ornaments. Sitla Mata is worshipped for protection against small pox. She is known to be most virulent among Devis. *Siti satam*, i.e. seventh of *Chaitra* (March-April) and all Mondays are considered favourable for worship of Sitla.

**Vishnu.**—The district has been closely associated with the Vishnu cult. According to a legend Vishnu was pleased with Brahma and asked him for any favour. Brahma asked that Vishnu would, continue to dwell in the sacred spot of Ad Badri (Kathgarh) as long as he lived.

People worship Vishnu but he is hardly recognised by them under that name though under the common names of Rama, Krishna and Narayana, he is the great god of the country. Vamna, the incarnation of Vishnu is held in great reverence and his procession is taken from all temples at Ambala, Jagadhri and Yamunanagar on the occasion of *bawan dwadshi* (*Bhadon sudi dwadshi*, August-September). Rama and Krishna are worshipped as incarnations of Vishnu and there are many temples dedicated to them. Ram Lila or the story of Ramayana and Krishna Lila, the story of Krishna are staged in various parts of the district. Rama is worshipped on Dussehra and Diwali, and the birthday of Rama is celebrated on Ram Naumi, i.e., *Chet sudi naumi* (March-April) and fairs are held at Jagadhri, Chhachhrauli, and Khizrabad. The birthday of Krishna is observed on Janam Ashthmi, i.e., *Bhadon Sudi Ashthami* (August-September) and fairs are held at Sadhaura, Babyal, Ambala and Yamunanagar. Although there are temples in almost all villages and towns yet special mention may be made of Sanatan Dharma temple, Ambala Cantonment and Raghunath temple, Narayangarh.

**Hanumana.**—The followers of Vishnu are specially devoted to this deity and images of Hanumana, the monkey god, can be seen in most of the temples. The deity is worshipped on tuesday. There is a Panchmukhi Hanuman temple at Bastianwala in Jagadhri tahsil. There is a gigantic idol of Hanuman with a face representing five different images. The temple is known to be one of three of its kind in India.

**Minor Deities.**—The Hindus believe that it is good to worship their deities. If they were malevolent, it was well to propitiate them to avert, if benevolent some benefits could be derived from their worship. An assorted group containing rishis and muslim saints, rivers like the Yamuna, Saraswati and the Markanda, deities like Gugga Pir and Bhumia and holy personages like guru Ravidas are entitled to special reverence by different groups of worshippers.

**Rishis.**—The district is known to be connected with many legendary rishis.

Maharshi Ved Vyas, the legendary author of *Mahabharata* and *Puranas*, is said to have lived near Bilaspur (Jagadhri tahsil). A tank known as Vyas Kund is there where people pay their obeisance.

At village Rampur, four miles north of Kapal Mochan, Rishi Pulastya is said to have meditated for a long period. The place of his meditation is known as Plaanch Tirath and is worshipped by people of the surrounding villages.

Rishi Agastya is said to have meditated on the bank of the Saraswati about two kilometres north of Kapal Mochan. There is an ancient tank which is locally known as Giasion Tirath. A fair is held here in the month of April-May.

**Muslim Saints.** Some Muslim *pirs* are worshipped in shrines dedicated to them like that of Lakhi Shah Darvesh at Ambala, of Shah Qumais at Sadhaura and of Sakhi Sarwar at Khizri.

**The Yamuna, The Saraswati and the Markanda.**—The Yamuna or Jamna Ji and the Saraswati although not always distinguished from Saraswati, the goddess of learning are worshipped in the district and the people living near the banks bathe in the rivers particularly on the occasion of *san-kranti*. There are, however, no shrines dedicated to them. The Markanda is linked with the rishi of that name and a temple of Markanda exists at Haryoli (Ambala tahsil). People from the adjoining villages take bath in the river on the *puranmashi* of *Asoj* (September-October).

**Gugga Pir.**—Gugga or Jahar Pir is supposed to be the greatest of the snake kings. Gugga is worshipped throughout the district on *Naumi* every month and on Mondays, but 9th of *Bhadon* (August-September) is observed as his special day, Gugga Naumi. His shrine usually consists of a small one room building with a minaret at each corner and a grave inside. It is called *mar*i and is marked by *chhari* or a switch consisting of a long bamboo surmounted by peacock feathers, a cocount, some fans and a blue flag. On Gugga Naumi, Jogis take the *chhari* round the village to the sound of *deroos* and devotees salute it and make offerings. The *maris* of Gugga may be seen in almost every large village of the district but well-known *maris* are located at Shahpur (Narayangarh tahsil), Bara (Ambala tahsil) and Chaharwala (Jagadhri tahsil). The Gugga *maris* where annual fairs are held on Gugga Naumi are located at Kalka (Kalka tahsil); Bagwali, Kakrali, Barog and Narayangarh (Narayangarh tahsil); Bhari, Bahyal, Bhudian, Harra, Kesri, Baknaur, Sanbalkha and Ambala (Ambala tahsil); and Kalawar, Bhatauli, Damla, Khadri, Rampur Khadar, Begumpur and Chhachhrauli (Jagadhri tahsil).

**Bhumia or the God of the Homestead.**—Bhumia, also called *khera* is a most important local deity. People light a lamp and offer some *catables* at the shrine and feed the Brahmins. This is done twice a year after the harvests are gathered in, and also on some other occasions. Bhumia is also worshipped at marriages, before the bridegroom proceeds to the bride's house and again

before he enters his house along with his bride. When a woman has a son, she goes to **Bhumia** shrine with her son. The first milk of the cow or buffalo is always offered to **Bhumia**.

**Guru Ravidas.**—Chamars of the district worship **Guru Ravidas**, a great saint. He was against the caste system. Temples for his worship have been erected in towns. The birth anniversary of the **Guru** is celebrated on the *puṇima* of *Magh* (January-February). On the occasion, tableaux from the life of the **Guru** are taken out in procession to the accompaniment of *bhajan mandlis* singing devotional songs. The fairs in honour of **Guru Ravidas** are held at **Tepla** (Ambala tahsil) and **Balawali**, **Jagadhri** and **Yamunanagar** (Jagadhri tahsil).

**Maharishi Balmiki.**—Balmiki community reveres **Maharishi Balmiki**, the composer of the *Ramayana*. His birth anniversary is celebrated with enthusiasm in the month of September-October. A fair is held at **Yamunanagar** in September-October to celebrate the birthday of **Maharishi Balmiki**.

**Arya Samaj.**—Towards the close of the 19th century, **Arya Samaj** began to flourish in the district, first in the urban areas from where its influence percolated to rural areas. The dawn of the 20th century witnessed the widespread influence of **Arya Samaj** which also made a remarkable contribution to the progress of education, particularly of depressed classes. The uplift of **Harijans**, widow re-marriage, eradication of illogical and superstitious beliefs, protection of cows and propagation of **Hindi** are some of the activities of the **Arya Samaj**.

**Dev Samaj.**—**Dev Samaj**, founded in 1887, had found ready acceptance in the district and **Raipur Rani** and **Ambala City** became important centres of **Dev Samaj** in the beginning of the 20th century. The **Dev Samaj** rejected all caste distinctions and believed in scientific principles. It aims at equality of status, uplift and education of the depressed classes and education of the women. The **Dev Samaj** runs a few educational institutions for women at **Ambala**.

### Sikhs

The **Sikhs** believe in monotheism and the teaching of the ten **Gurus** and the *Granth Sahib*. The **Sikhs** attach great importance to the recitation of the *Granth Sahib* and visit **gurdwaras** where verses from the *Granth Sahib* are recited. Besides observing some **Hindu** festivals, the **Sikhs** celebrate *gurparbs* (birthdays and martyrdom days of **Sikh Gurus**) and **Baisakhi**. *Akhand Path* is organised either in thanks giving or on special occasions like birth, marriage or death.

Among the important gurdwaras in Ambala district, mention may be made of Manji Sahib Gurdwara, Ambala City; Sisganj Gurdwara, Ambala City; Padshahi Bagh Gurdwara, Ambala City; Panjokhra Sahib Gurdwara, Panjokhra; Lakhnaur Sahib Gurdwara, Lakhnaur Sahib (Ambala tahsil); Nada Sahib Gurdwara, Nada (Kalka tahsil) and Kapal Mochan Gurdwara, Bilaspur (Jagadhri tahsil).

### Muslims

The Muslims of the district believe in one god and their religion enjoins five duties upon them. These are recitation of *kalma* (an expression of faith in god and the Prophet Mohammad), the offering of *namaz* five times a day preferably in a mosque, *roza*, *hajj* to Mecca and contributions in cash and kind for charitable purposes.

Many Muslims in the district have faith in a number of saints and hold annual *urs* at their tombs and some of the important places in this respect are the shrines of Shah Kumaish at Sadhaura, Lakhi Shah Darvesh and Tawakkul Shah at Ambala. It is noteworthy that these commemorative gatherings are also attended by Hindus in large number.

### Jains

The Jains are mostly Aggarwals who have adopted the Jain faith. They worship Mahavira and the Tirathankras. They celebrate Mahavir Jayanti, the birth anniversary of Lord Mahavira. The celebration of Mahavir Jayanti at Sadhaura and Ambala is well known.

### Christians

The Christians consider the Bible as their holy book. They observe Easter, Christmas and New Year's Day. The place of their worship is church. The important churches in the district are located at Ambala Cantonment and Jagadhri.

### FESTIVALS AND FAIRS

The common festivals celebrated by the Hindus are Dussehra, Diwali, Holi and Janam Ashtami. The minor festivals are Shivratri, Gugga Naumi, Raksha Bandhan, Durga Asthami, Lohri and Sankranti. A few festivals like Karwa Chauth, Nirjala Ekadshi and Hooce are celebrated by women. The principal festivals are celebrated as in other parts of the country. In the Morni Hills, the celebration of Diwali is somewhat different. A bonfire called the *balraj* is lighted on the tops of the hills. The villagers assemble there and dance and sing throughout the night. The lamps in homes are lit up from the flames of *balraj*. A special dish called *kanjan* is cooked on that day.

*Kanjan* is prepared from rice cooked in *lassi* and the solid mixture forming a substance is cut into pieces to be eaten with sugar or honey. *Muklawā* is held on Diwali and it is called *nai* Diwali. The married men visit their in-laws and celebrate Diwali there.

After Dussehra, a festival known as Garbara Garahari is celebrated by the females and it continues for five days. The festival is popular in the district but celebrated with more gaiety in Kalka and Narayangarh tahsils. It is a festival of unmarried girls but married women can also take part. The lamps are put in baked covers of earth with holes in them and the girls sing and dance with these lamps in their hands. The girls finish the celebration on the fifth day after Dussehra by throwing the lamps into the tanks.

Bawan Dwadshi is another important religious festival celebrated in the district. Fairs dedicated to Vamana, an incarnation of Vishnu are held at Ambala and Jagadhri on *Bhadon Sudi Dwadshi* (August-September). The images of deities from different temples are taken out in a procession. The devotees observe fast and take bath in a nearby sacred river or tank. Besides, festivals of different religious groups like Guru Nanak Gurparb, Mahavir Jayanti, Id-ul-fitr, Id-ul-Zuha, Muharram, Guru Ravidas Jayanti, Balmiki Jayanti, Christmas and Easter are celebrated with great enthusiasm.

A list of fairs held in the district is given in Table VI of Appendix. The important fairs are described below :

**Mansa Devi Fair.**—A fair is held twice a year in March-April and September-October at Bilaspur (near Manimajra-Chandigarh, U.T.) in Kalka tahsil. It is a religious fair dedicated to the goddess Mansa Devi whose temple exists there. It is believed that all the wishes of a devotee are granted on having a *darshan* of the goddess. The first hair-cutting ceremony of children is performed here. The devotees sing songs in praise of the goddess and make many kinds of offerings in the shape of cash, clothes and ornaments. People from Haryana, Punjab and Himachal Pradesh also visit the fair.

**Kapal Mochan Fair.**—Kapal Mochan fair is held annually on *Kartik Purnmashi* (October-November). The holy tank of Kapal Mochan, the venue of this fair, is located about a kilometre north of Bilaspur, in the Jagadhri tahsil. It is the biggest fair in the district and attracts pilgrims from all over India. The pilgrims take bath in Kapal Mochan tank and pay obeisance to the statues of a cow and a calf standing on its banks. The devotees also take bath in Rin Mochan tank and Suraj Kund.

**Talokpur Fair.**—A fair dedicated to goddess Sharda Devi is held at Talokpur on *Chet Sudi Ashtami* (March-April). The pilgrims from the

district and adjoining areas of Himachal Pradesh attend this fair. The devotees worship the deity and offer *parshad*.

**Shah Kumaish Fair.**—A religious fair in honour of Shah Kumaish is held at Sadhaura in February. The fair was started by Bairam Khan in A. D. 1556. The visitors worship the tomb of Shah Kumaish. The devotional singing, drum beating and wrestling are other attractions of this fair.

**Mela Markandya.**—A fair dedicated to Rishi Markandya is held at Haryoli, Ambala tahsil on *Asoj Purnamashi* (September-October). The devotees worship in the temple dedicated to Rishi Markandya and take bath in the river Markanda.

**Urs Hazrat Lakhi Shah or Mela Pankha.**—A religious fair in the memory of Taj-ud-din-Chishti who later on came to be known as Hazrat Lakhi Shah is held at Ambala in the month of June at the tomb of Hazrat. A procession is taken out and the devotees recite verses from the Koran, make offerings of sweets, fruits, *chaddar* (sheet of cloth) and fans. The *qawalis* are sung in praise of the saint.

#### SOCIAL LIFE

##### Social groups

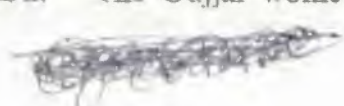
The important social groups in the district are Rajputs, Jats, Sainis, Gujjars, Kanets, Kolis, Brahmans, Aroras, Khattris, Aggarwals, Chamars and Balmikis.

**Rajputs.**—The Rajputs, one of the important agricultural community, are scattered all over the district. Their concentration, however, is mostly in Narayangarh and Ambala tahsils. Their women do not work in the fields. A large percentage of Rajputs are Chauhans.

**Jats.**—The Jats are predominantly an agricultural community of the district. A small percentage of Jats are Sikhs. They are on the whole sturdy and hard working and have maintained their reputation for industry, thrift and agricultural efficiency.

**Sainis.**—The Sainis are widely scattered all over the district but their concentration is in Narayangarh tahsil. The Sainis are sturdy cultivators and manage to thrive on their small land holdings.

**Gujjars.**—The Gujjars occupy small villages in the tract lying immediately underneath the Shiwaliks in Narayangarh and Jagadhri tahsils. They are good cultivators and also rear goats, sheep and cattle on the grazing land in the hills. The houses of the Gujjars are distinguished by their typical setting. One can distinguish a Gujar settlement which has a central yard and every individual house opens in the yard. The Gujar women and men can also be spotted from their dress.



**Kanets.**—Kanets are an agricultural community of the Morni hills. They follow the Rajput customs and habits.

**Kolis.**—Kolis are another community of the Morni hills. They trace their origin to the Rajputs and mostly follow the customs of Kanets, another hill community. By profession, they are agriculturists and sometimes work as cobblers.

**Brahmans.**—The Brahmans are agriculturist in Morni hills and also in a few villages of Ambala and Narayangarh tahsils. They cultivate their land themselves and are prosperous. Some Brahmans versed in astrology, however, earn their livelihood by practising astrology and priesthood.

**Khatris and Aroras.**—The Khatris and Aroras migrated from Pakistan and most of them are shopkeepers and traders.

**Aggarwals.**—They are a business community of the district. They are mainly concentrated in urban areas but a few of them also function in rural areas as money-lenders. A few of the Aggarwals own land in Jagadhri tahsil and employ agricultural labour for farming.

**Chamars.**—The term Chamar is an occupational term. They are politically and socially conscious and have made much progress after Independence.

**Balmikis.**—Balmikis were the scavengers and even now follow this profession in urban areas. In rural area, they are agricultural labourers and do not work as sweepers. They also rear pigs, goats and sheep. They are now conscious of their social and political rights.

### **Inter-Caste Relations**

Though the caste system is losing its rigidity under the pressure of economic and social forces, aided by liberal laws, it persists in the rural areas of the district. The Jats and Aroras are more liberal in inter-caste relations and this attitude is bound to influence the social behaviour of other people. However, inter-dinning is only occasional and inter-caste marriages are not common.

### **Joint Family System**

The joint family system which has been a distinguishing feature of Hindu society since time immemorial, is breaking up under the stress of the changed economic and social conditions. While it is more marked in urban areas, the bond of the joint family system is weakening even in the villages. The people there depend almost entirely on agriculture, the average holding gets smaller and smaller to support a joint family. It is, therefore, inevitable that some members of the family should move out in search of service to the towns or elsewhere to supplement the family income. In this way the migration of rural population to the towns in search of a living whether in business, industry, service

or some form of labour-has vitally affected the structure of the joint family. Those who migrate to the towns get allured to modern amenities and try to settle down there with their families. They leave the farm to those members of the family who stay behind in the village.

### **Inheritance**

According to the Hindu Succession Act, 1956, sons and daughters, the mother and the widow along with other heirs<sup>1</sup> of the deceased, inherit the intestate property simultaneously. A daughter has as good a claim to her father's property as a son, provided the father does not debar her by law (in case of his self acquired property only). However, inspite of the right conferred by law, it appears to have become a general practice for the girls not to claim any part of the intestate property. In the absence of a brother, a girl may some time give her land to her near relatives, though in such cases she usually retains her right to property.

### **Marriage Customs and Morals**

The Vedic system of marriage prevails among the Hindus. It is treated as sacred and is governed by traditional customs. As elsewhere, the marriage dates are mostly determined by astrological considerations. Marriage is an important event of one's life, it is preceded by betrothal and a number of preliminaries and elaborate preparations.

**Betrothal.**—The initiation is taken by the close relatives, brother or father of the girls (previously village barbar or Brahman used to perform such functions). If the offer is accepted and the result of the detailed discussion is satisfactory, the *nata* is settled. After this a monetary gift is given to the boy by the girl's people. This is called *rokna*.

After *rokna* the next ceremony to be performed is betrothal (*sagai*), when presents of money and gifts are given by the girl's parents to the boy and his relatives. The nature of this ceremony differs from caste to caste. For example among Kanets of Morni area one or two kilos of *gur* is sent through the go-between to girl's house and the ceremony of *sagai* is completed.

**Marriage preliminaries.**—Generally the date of marriage is fixed by consulting the horoscope of the boy and the girl. The bride's father sends a letter written on paper stained yellow, to the boy's father, which announces to him the date or *lagan* fixed for the wedding.

**Mandha** ceremony is performed by the maternal uncle one day before the date fixed for the departure of the wedding party in case of the bridegroom and the day on which the wedding party reaches in case of bride. Seven reeds put together are tied with seven knot of *munj* rope. A piece of red string then taken and seven *thuthis* alternating with *sohalis* or *suparis* are strung thereon.

1. Specified in clause I of the Schedule vide Section 8 of the Hindu Succession Act, 1956.

This string is tied to the middle of the reeds which are then fastened to a door or lintel. The maternal uncle in each case performs this ceremony and also brings the *bhat*, which consists of presents and necessarily includes the wedding suit for the bride or bridegroom.

**Wedding.**—On the day when the *baraat* is to start, the boy is dressed in his wedding suit brought by his maternal uncle. The *kangna* or seven-knotted sacred thread is tied on his right wrist on the first day of the *ban* ceremony. His head-dress consists of a crown or a crest over the turban and a *selva* covering the face.

The ceremony of *ghurchari* is then performed. The barbar leads the decorated mare with the bridegroom on its back, while women follow along singing customary songs befitting the occasion and the mother or aunt or an elderly woman with a utensil containing water. His sister puts her wrap over her right hand, and on it places rice which she flings at his crown as the bridegroom goes along. He goes and worships god of the homestead (*Khera*) and other deities. Thereafter, the *baraat*, usually comprising the relatives and friends, starts with music. In case the *baraat* is to go out-station then the *ghurchari* is performed a day earlier.

If both the parties reside in the same place which frequently happens in a town, no managements for the residence of the *baraat* are necessary. If, on the other hand, the *baraat* comes from an out-station, it is received by the bride's side usually at the pre-fixed venue, in the case of a town or on the outskirts of the village from where the party is taken, sometimes in procession, to a *dharamsala*, or *chopal* or any other place where arrangements have been made for the *baraat* to stay and to be entertained. In the evening, the *baraat* goes in procession, the boy on a mare, to the bride's house where the *baraat* is received by the people on the bride's side. The first ceremony to be performed is called *dhukao* or *milni* when the boy's father and the girl's father embrace each other and the later gives a monetary gift to the former. The womenfolk alongwith bride wait at the door and *jaimala* is put by the bride around the neck of the bridegroom and *vice versa*. The *baraatis* and the bridegroom are then entertained to a sumptuous dinner with merriment and festivity.

Thereafter, the key function starts. Sacred texts are recited in Sanskrit by the priest. The sacred fire is lighted, the Brahman ties a corner of the girls wrap to a piece of cloth called *patka* and the couple takes rounds of the fire and this is called *phera* ceremony and constitutes the core of marriage. *Phera* is now recognised as one of the essential ceremonies under the Hindu Marriage Act. After this the Brahman formally asks each whether he or she accepts the other, and is ready to perform duties towards each other, which are set forth in time honoured traditions and put forth in very impressive

language full of similes and metaphors. The bridegroom and the bride then exchange places. Now follows the *kanyadan*—the so-called formal bride-giving ceremony. The parents thus give away their daughter in marriage and usher her into the new world of *grihastha*.

The ceremony is highly colourful, picturesque, and at times interesting also. There may, however, be noticed minor variations among certain castes in the performance and observance of these ceremonies.

Social mores and folk ways change like fashions. There was time when dancing girls were invited at the weddings, their songs and dances provided fun and frolic to the people, especially in the rural areas which had no other source of entertainment. The cinema has changed all this. The practice of inviting dancing parties has virtually gone out of fashion. In villages, gramophones fitted with loudspeakers have taken their place. A marriage in a village is a gala occasion and the entire community is regaled to popular tunes and song-hits of the film-music. In cities, marriage celebrations have virtually become standardised with the assistance of specialised contractors. It is of interest to note the social change.

Previously, the *baraat* used to stay at the bride's place for 3 days but things have changed under the stress of economic forces. Now the *baraat* returns the same or the next day.

*Anand Karaj* prevails among the Sikhs. The distinction between *Anand Karaj* and the Vedic marriage is that in the former the bride and bridegroom instead of going round the fire, go round the holy *Granth*. Some extracts from the sacred book are read and though they are originally meant to describe in a figurative way the union of human soul with the Supreme Being, they are made to seem the purpose of sanctifying the union of the bride and the bridegroom.

Marriage among Muslims is contracted with the usual *Nikah* ceremony performed by a Maulvi. Muslims in the district prefer marriage among their own castes.

**Civil Marriages.**—These are performed under the Special Marriage Act, 1954 and the Deputy Commissioner is the officer for solemnisation of civil marriages. People from urban areas only are found interested in this type of marriage and even their number is negligible. Only 17 civil marriages were performed in the district during the period 1966 to 1977.

Amongst the Hindus, there were certain restrictions on marriages, the most common being that no marriage could take place between families of the same village or where the *gotra* tallies either on the paternal or the

maternal side. The Hindu Marriage Act has now removed the restrictions as far as marriages among families of the same *gotra* are concerned, but marriage among *spindas* are still prohibited.

Among Rajputs, Brahmans and Kolis, only the parental *gotra* is left while the rest observe restriction of 3 to 4 *gotra* of paternal and maternal side. Inter-caste marriages are not socially approved although a few stray cases can be reported in the district.

**Dowry System.**—The dowry system is prevalent everywhere. It is not much prevalent in the hilly areas of the district. It is a social evil and the dowry legislation of 1961 has not succeeded in achieving its object. The people follow the old custom, and if necessary, by-pass the law.

**Widow Re-marriage.**—*Karewa* is a simple sort of marriage for widows. It is effected by the man throwing a red wrap over the women's head and putting wristlets (*chura* or *churi*) on her arm in presence of male and female members of the brotherhood. Such a marriage generally does not take place within a year of the husband's death.

Widows who may not wish to re-marry, live on the property left by their husbands. In urban areas, however, the educated women take up some employment or engage themselves in some kind of paid or honorary social work.

**Reet.**—*Reet* type of marriage, though on decline, is still in vogue in the Morni Hill area of Narayangarh tahsil. *Reet* literally means custom and a *reet* marriage is recognised by custom. It is never the first marriage in the case of a woman, though it can be so in the case of a man. It is, however, only after her first regular marriage that *reet* may take place. The people who practise *reet* consider it a form of marriage, which can be contracted by payment of a lumpsum of money to the former husband. No ceremonies of a Hindu marriage are observed in it. The payment of a certain sum of money to her husband or her husband's heirs if widowed, is all that is required for its purposes. When this is done, the effected purchase becomes the better half and the legal partner in life of the buyer. Thus it is a divorce and marriage both rolled in one, as it is a divorce to the first husband and marriage to the second in a single transaction.

**Divorce.**—Divorce is not much prevalent. There is a general tendency to suffer hardship resulting from ill-matched marriages. This is particularly true of uneducated and conservative people. They prefer to lead a miserable life rather than to dissolve the marriage. Another practice has been to leave the girl with her parents and never recall her. However,

with the coming into force of the Hindu Marriage Act, 1955, a few cases of divorce are being instituted in the law courts. The details of the divorce cases during 1966 to 1977 are given below :

Year	Cases Instituted			Divorce Granted	Petitions Dismiss- ed	Cases Compro- mised	Cases Pending
	Pending	New Cases	Total				
1966	12	45	57	10	15	—	32
1967	32	39	71	15	12	—	44
1968	44	50	94	18	17	—	59
1969	59	30	89	13	24	—	52
1970	52	47	99	28	12	—	59
1971	59	12	71	13	16	—	42
1972	42	12	54	17	12	—	35
1973	35	33	68	11	15	—	42
1974	42	26	68	30	11	—	27
1975	27	20	47	11	9	—	27
1976	27	70	97	21	16	—	69
1977	60	104	164	43	21	1	100

#### Other Rituals and Customs

Traditional customs are observed by the people at different stages of life. The old Hindu way of living was fraught with many traditional *sanskaras* and rituals. In the course of time, these got worn out and were no longer in keeping with the changing times. Under the influence of modern education and new ideas their hold is loosening. Of a multitude of these customs, however, a few are still observed though not with so much zeal and fervour. When a child is born the woman is segregated at once from the rest of the family. The room in which confinement takes place is marked among Hindus by the hanging of a net of ropes in which a *neem* or mango twig is suspended. The woman is kept to herself for 11 days and she is attended by the midwife or some elderly lady of the family. On the 11th day the room is cleaned. Feast is given if the infant is boy. This

is called the *dasuthan* ceremony. Name giving ceremony is also performed on this day. The Brahman performs *havana* and sprinkles the whole of the house with Ganga water. After this, the Brahman consults his *patra* (book concerning astronomy) and announces four names beginning with same letter. Of these, only one name is to be adopted. But the latest trend is not to adopt any of the names announced by the Brahman if it does not meet the liking of the parents. In such a case, the first letter of the names announced by the Brahman is made a basis for adopting another name for the child. The Brahman receives presents for performing *havana* and naming the child.

Among the Aroras, the *Chola* is an important ceremony, which is celebrated on the 15th or 17th day of the newly-born son when new clothes, consecrated by their Brahman, are worn. A feast is provided for friends and relatives.

Among the Sikhs, on the 10th day, the child and the mother are bathed and they are presented before the holy *Granth*. *Path* of the *Granth* is performed on that day. The family assembles and *karah parshad* (*halwa* or preparation of flour, ghi and sugar) is distributed. The child is named on that day. The *Granth* is opened at random and the first letter of the *bani* at which the *Granth* opens gives the first letter of the child's name.

Almost all Hindus perform the *mundan* ceremony when the boy is a few years old. This ceremony is mostly performed at some religious place. If the ceremony is performed at home, his hair is cut and head shaved for the first time and friends and relatives are entertained to a feast.

#### HOME LIFE

**Villages.**—The villages of Ambala are generally built on mounds or higher grounds which were selected probably for safety or they may possibly be existing on the ruins of older *abadis* which through centuries were submerged as a result of some natural upheavals. In the Shiwalik hills, the villages are located in parallel belts extending from the *choe* re-entrants up to the headwaters slopes where the terraces disappear.

At the outskirts of the villages are *goharas*, the pyramid like structures in which dung-cakes are stored. They form a conspicuous feature of the rural landscape. Of late, the provision of *pucca* lanes with surface drains, schools, dispensaries, culverts, link roads, etc., have changed the social and economic life of the people in villages.

**Dwellings, Furniture and Utensils.**—Previously, most of the houses in villages were *kacha*. The walls of these houses were of mud or clods of dry earth, taken out of the ponds when they were dried up, or from the dried up

and cracked rice fields. The roof of the house (*kotha*) was also of mud ; the beams which supported it and which were principally made of sal wood rested partly on the mud walls and partly on upright supporting beams about six feet high. Across these lay smaller beams, and over these grass; lastly, upon the grass three inches of earth was laid. These kacha houses are now being rapidly replaced by pucca houses with a provision of hand-pump in the courtyard. These new houses have separate kitchens and bath-rooms.

With the spread of education and a growing outlook for better sanitation and health facilities, the villagers are changing the pattern of their houses. They now have a separate cattle shed and also care for proper lighting and ventilation.

In the Morni hills, the houses are made with stone walls. In the Shiwalik foothills, the Gujjar houses open to a common yard which comprises the social space. There is no existence of the individual house independent of the yard. The yard has a few openings to the cultivated fields and is generally insulated from outside.

The houses in a village consist of one to four rooms. The outer room or *dahliz* or *baithak* is used as a drawing room for the family and male members of the family sit there. It is often partly occupied by cattle in winter. Beyond this, is the yard (*chauk*) separated from the streets by a wall, and in which the cattle are tied up and this space is used by women and children. Round this are the rooms occupied by various members of the family. The kitchen is in the corner where *chulla* and *hara* are placed for cooking food.

The furniture in the villages consists of bedsteads, *moorahs*, *peerhas* (small stools) and chairs. A few houses in villages, of late, can also be seen furnished with sofa sets and other modern furniture.

In urban areas chairs and tables are placed in the drawing room. The homes of well-to-do persons are tastefully furnished and decorated in a modern style. Sofa sets, wardrobes, beds, tables and chairs of different description and other miscellaneous items of furniture decorate the houses. Possession of furniture is considered to be a sign of social status and taste. The paucity of furniture in an average home is partly offset by ordinary framed pictures and calenders which are readily available. Urban influence has led villagers to go in for chairs, tables and better types of cots though on a modest scale.

The utensils used in kitchen for cooking and eating purposes are large narrow-mouthed cauldrons (*tokna* or *tokni*) for storing water and cooking at feasts ; smaller vessels of similar shape (*baltoi*) for ordinary cooking and carrying water to the fields ; (*degchi* or *patila* for cooking vegetables, still smaller ones (*lota*, *gadwa*, *buggi*) for keeping milk and water, some cups

(*katora*, *katori*, *chhamna*) without handles ; some tumbler-shaped drinking vessels ; a large tray (*thali*) ; a larger tray for kneading dough (*parat*) ; a brass ladle (*karchhi*) ; a spatula for turning bread (*palta*) ; a thin iron plate (*tawa*) for baking cakes, and some pairs of iron tongues (*chimta*), a fry-pan (*karahi*) and a sieve (*chhalni*), both of iron ; iron bucket (*balti*) for drawing water from the well. The utensils are generally made of brass. Some earthen pots are also used for boiling milk and for churning curd. Lately, the use of stainless steel and aluminium utensils is gaining popularity.

The use of kerosene oil stoves of various kinds for cooking are popular in the towns. The dearth of firewood consequent upon the reckless cutting of forests in the recent past has also helped in popularising the use of kerosene oil stoves. The cooking gas stoves are also used in Ambala, Jagadhri and Yamunanagar.

**Dress and Ornaments.**—The dress of the people in the district is simple. In rural areas men wear a shirt or *kurta*, *chadra*, *tamha* or *dhoti* and a pair of shoes. *Pagri* (turban) which was a part of the dress is now very rarely used and is worn by older generation or by the bridegroom on the wedding day. A *chaddar*, *khes* or blanket in cold weather is used as a wrap. An *angochha* (long handkerchief) is used occasionally. In urban areas people wear shirt, pants or payjamas. People both in urban and rural areas wear woollen sweaters and coats in winter. A complete suit of male clothes is called *jora*.

Although in the recent past, men used to wear jewellery,<sup>1</sup> it is not in vogue now. However, a gold ring and gold chain is worn by many people in urban areas.

The women in rural areas wear a shirt (*jumper*), *salwar* and *chunni* or *chona* i.e., headwear. The women prefer coloured clothes, cotton or silken. A Gujjar women can be known from her blue dress, adorned generally by circular bits of looking glass. The women in urban areas wear (*salwar-kameez* and *chunni*) but they are shifting their choice towards sari and blouse. In winter they wear sweaters and shawls. *Chappals* both in urban and rural areas are common footwear. High heel sandals are also used in urban areas. One also finds college and school-going girls and working women wearing what they call mod dresses consisting of bell-bottom trousers with blouses.

Women here as elsewhere are fond of jewellery. In villages they wear the following ornaments as the occasion requires. They wear *chak*, *phul*, *kanda*, *bindi*, *tika*, *chand* for head, *balian*, *jhumke*, *bujlian* and *karanphul* for ear,

1. Previously the ornaments worn by men included small ear-rings generally golden, a necklace of gold called *kantha* or *mala*, bracelets (*kara* or *kangan*), gold chains of several strings (*tora*) finger ring of gold and silver and *tagri* (waist band of silver).

*nath*, *laung*, *tilt* for the nose, *tandira* or *hansli*, *mala*, *hamel*, *kandhi*, *tigarda*, *chandan har* or *har* for neck, *taadan*, *bajuband* for arms; *churian*, *pachhelian*, *kangan* or *kare*, *pohnchi*, *mathiau*, *arsi* for hands; *angoothi* or *chhalla* for fingers and *panjeb*, *jhanjran*, *chhare* for feet. These are usually made of silver and some times of gold.

**Food.**—The simple food of the people has little variety. The number of meals varies according to seasons and the nature of work done by the people. The morning and evening meal of a farmer consists of three or four loaves of *makki* or *bajra* in winter and of wheat or wheat and gram mixed in summer. It is taken with *saag*, pulses, *karhi*, other vegetables and *lassi* (butter milk). Rice is eaten frequently. Salt, chillies and other spices are used commonly.

On festive occasions *khir*, *halwa* and other sweet dishes are prepared. In Morni area special dishes like *patande*, *uskalian* and *kanzan* are prepared on festive occasions. To make *patande*, ghi is applied to grease the hot iron pan and then the flour, diluted with water so as to make a thin paste, is carefully spread with the hands over the entire pan making a fine thin layer. This requires a fair amount of dexterity and, therefore, woman with good practice alone can produce good *patanda* without burning her hand. When fried, the *patanda* is ready to eat. It is more or less the same as the *mande* or *pura* of the plains but contains no sugar or salt. Another standard local dish is *uskalian*, made of rice flour, mixed with water and poured on small holes carved on a stone, heated to a high degree. *Patanda* is eaten with milk and *khir* (rice boiled in milk) and *uskalian* with pulses or ghi and raw sugar. Sometimes rice is cooked in *lassi* and the mixture forming a frozen substance is cut into pieces to be eaten with sugar or honey. The preparation is called *kanjan*.

In urban areas, the food consists of articles like wheat flour, pulses, vegetables and *karhi*. The dishes are prepared in vegetable ghi which is now also used in the villages.

People in villages and towns are generally vegetarians but meat eating has started finding favour with the new generation. Tobacco smoking is quite common in the district, and hookah is still prevalent in villages.

So far as drink is concerned, tea as a stimulating drink has become popular with both urban and rural folk. Tea stalls are found in every town and all the big villages and even on the wayside. In summer months some people prefer to drink a glass of *sherbat* or *lassi*. Soft drinks are becoming popular with younger people and are often served to guests at social ceremonies. Local country-made liquor is consumed in villages. While whisky and other liquors are consumed in the urban areas. People mostly take strong drinks on festivals or ceremonies and not as general habit.

## COMMUNITY LIFE

As elsewhere, the community life is somewhat more effectively organised in villages than in towns. The limited amenities and amusement of village life are equally shared by all of them and require their combined attention. The community development programmes have given a fillip to community activities of various kinds and the panchayats have also become a nucleus of community activities.

### Folk Culture

Folk culture is reflected in folk songs, dances and theatre. With fast changing conditions, urban life is slowly but surely making an inroad into rural life taking away some of its inherent beauty and cultural wealth. The recorded film songs is an onslaught on the song of the village *ragi* and the radio seeks to replace the group festivals of folk-songs and dances. However, folk culture still continues to enliven the countryside which hums with songs and dances on festivals and other numerous occasions.

**Folk-songs.**—Folk songs represent the culture of an area. These song with their burden of love and labour have a peculiar charm of their own. These express hopes, aspirations, love-longings, joys and sorrows of the rural people. We also hear about the changing seasons, the tinkling of bells of the cattle returning home at sun-set and the emotional outbursts of married couples on their union and separation.

There is a variety of folk-songs, each connected with a particular occasion. Some of these are connected with nature, sung in different seasons. The month of *Sravana* (July-August) brings ecstasy in its wake. Teej or Haryali Teej is the main festival of *Sravana*. It is observed throughout the district but it is not as popular as in other districts of Haryana. A specimen of Teej song sung in a part of Ambala district are distinctly different from those sung in other parts of Haryana.

*"Tusi to chale raja naukri,*

*ham bhi chalenge tumhare saath.*

*Sawan rut aa utri.*

*Mathe ka teeku bech ke,*

*gari ka bhara kar doon pura.*

*Kana ke kante bech ke,*

*bhar diyungi railan ka bhara.*

*Tusi to....."*

The Garbara Garbari festival is celebrated with more gusto in the district and folk songs are sung on the occasion. The songs are normally accompanied by dances.

*Mera garbara nache aik ghari do ghari*  
*Dayeen nee telan tel pali*  
*Mera garbara nache aik ghari do ghari*  
*Dayeen nee gujjari dudh dahi*  
*Mera garbara nache aik ghari do ghari*

.....

A married woman's feelings finds expression in the following song when she wants to accompany her husband, while he is going to his duty. The specimen is of Morni hills and represents influence of Pahari folk songs.

*Minjo bhi le chal kanvo mere banke diye chajuve*  
*aaun galan diya sach o mere banke diyo chajuve*  
*Appu to janda mua naukri te chakri*  
*Minjo nu deye janda khurpa ro datri*  
*Minjo bari tanghat o, Mere banke deya chajuve*  
*O mere banke deya chajuve Minjo bari taghat*

.....

The folk-songs are essentially lyrics giving a glimpse into the women's heart. These describe a girl's longing for love and marriage, her initial inhibitions, her usual apprehensions, her emotional recreation to the dreary lot in a stranger's house, complaints from the young wife regarding the monotony of domestic life and the various types of odd work which she is compelled to do, pangs of child birth, etc. Love songs are the most common since love in its varied forms provides numerous themes. The socio-economic aspects too sometimes find expression. Indeed, it is the village women who has preserved the tradition of folklore.

**Folk Dances.**—Folk dancing, is an outburst of singing emotions. The celebration of Garbara-Garbari in Narayangarh and Kalka tahsils of the district is a significant festival and its celebration continues for five days after Dussehra. The girls congregate in the village in an open space and sing and dance. Their melodious sound spreads through the village and resounds in its gaiety.

#### Games and Recreations

Wrestling, kabaddi, gindo tora or gindo khuli and gulli danda (tip cat) are popular indigenous games in the district, the last two being usually played by children. Gindo tora or gindo khuli is the indigenous version of the game of hockey and is played with a stick and a ball made of rags and twigs. Gulli

*danda* is played in the streets or in an open ground outside the village. Wrestling and *kabaddi* are, however, popular sports among the young and the middle-aged men. *Kabaddi* is often played in the moonlit nights during the months of *Phalguna* and *Chaitra* (February-March). *Kabaddi* matches are enthusiastically arranged during festivals. Two teams take part in this game. Of a number of varieties in which the game is played, the two types popular in this district are Haryana style and National style. Haryana style *kabaddi* is played in a circular field with a periphery of 75 feet (23 metre) with 10 players on each side while the field for National style *kabaddi* is marked as a rectangle of 13 metre by 10 metre. In Haryana style, a player of one team goes to the court of the other team repeating *kabaddi kabaddi* or *kaudi kaudi* in one breath. If the player after touching and encountering any player of the opposite team returns to the boundary dividing the two courts still uttering *kaudi kaudi* in the same breath, the opposite team loses one point. In case the player does not return to the boundary in one breath, his team loses one point. In the National style, the player going to the court of the opposite team may be encountered by any number of players of the other team. If he does not return to the boundary line dividing the court, he is considered to be out and his team loses one point but if he reaches the boundary line in one breath the other team loses points corresponding to the number of players who encountered him and they are considered to be out. The playing time for the game in both the types is the same, viz. 45 minutes including an interval of 5 minutes. The team securing more points wins.

Modern games like hockey, cricket, football, volleyball and basketball are popular among students of urban areas where there are facilities of playgrounds while games like *kho kho*, netball, skipping, etc., are popular among girls.

There are a number of sports associations functioning in the district. These associations organise tournaments at district level and select the teams to compete in the tournaments at state level. This also helps in discovering promising talent for national and international events.

Chess, cards and *chopar* are some of the indoor games which are played in urban as well as rural areas. The villagers enjoy these games in panchayat ghars, chopals or wherever convenient along with a puff of hookah or while smoking *bidi*. Having no other engagement, the *baraatis* accompanying the *baraat* to the bride's village eagerly indulge in these games to while away time.

The State Public Relations Department has provided radio sets to panchayats, co-operatives and schools under the 'Community Listening Scheme'. In addition to the occasional drama shows, this Department frequently exhibits films, mostly documentaries, with the help of a mobile cinema unit both

in the urban and rural areas. Gossiping and listening to the radio are common pastimes. The portable transistor has become a fashion of the day with everybody without distinction. Many well to do people, particularly in urban areas of the district, have installed television sets in their homes.

The universal media of mass entertainment, particularly in the towns, is the cinema. It suits the pocket of the rich and the poor alike and by and large is the only place of public entertainment. The district has number of cinema houses in urban areas. Recorded film songs and music are freely played by the lottery ticket sellers.

#### REHABILITATION

The large-scale communal disturbances at the time of Partition of the country in 1947 inflicted vast sufferings on millions of people who were forced to migrate from Pakistan to India and vice-versa. Lakhs of homeless Hindus and Sikhs from Pakistan entered what was then called the East Punjab (India). This immigration created innumerable problems which the government faced and overcame with great courage. The areas now in Haryana took a leading share in the re-settlement of these immigrants.

No accurate statistics are available about the number of Muslims who migrated from the Ambala district to Pakistan. They consisted of Sheikhs, Qureshis, Rajputs and Gujjars. On the other hand we know that 1,88,892 (1,00,535 males and 88,357 females) displaced persons coming from the other side of new border (Pakistan) were settled in the rural and urban areas of the then Ambala district. The immigrants were mainly Khattris, Aroras, Labanas, Jats and Brahmans from Rawalpindi, Gujranwala, Sargodha, Jhelum, Sheikhupura and Gujrat districts of Pakistan. According to the 1951 Census, they constituted 20.01 per cent of the total population of the then Ambala district. The tahsil-wise break-up of the displaced persons settled in the then district was as under :—

Tahsil	Number of Displaced Persons
Ambala	95,055
Jagadhri	40,178
Narayangarh	13,818
Kharar <sup>1</sup>	19,146
Ropar <sup>1</sup>	20,695

1. These two tahsils (except Kalka sub tahsil of Kharar tahsil) are now part of Ropar district of Punjab.

### Refugee Camps

Initially a number of relief camps were organised in East Punjab to provide shelter to the refugees. Two of these were set up in the Ambala district, one at Ambala City and the other at Yamunanagar. The educational institutions remained closed upto February, 1948 and provided some of the accommodation. At the same time services of the staff and students were utilised in the management of the camps. Students who rendered three months' social service in these camps were considered for the award of certificate/degree of the newly established East Punjab University, without taking any examination.

Apart from free foodgrains ration, additional nutrition was provided in these camps in the form of fruits and multi-vitamin tablets. Some special items of diet were also issued to people in these camps on medical advice. Thus these well organised camps not only provided much needed immediate relief to the displaced persons but also gave them breathing time to plan their measures of permanent settlement.

On its part the government also began to think of taking the next step to enable the displaced persons to find independent means of existence. To begin with the issue of free ration was limited to those families which had no adult male member and could not, therefore, maintain themselves. The able-bodied male adults, between the ages of 16 and 60 years, who began to do some work and those who refused to do work, when it was available, were de-rationed along with their dependents. But they were allowed to continue to live in camps. Those entitled to allotment of land were obliged to leave soon after temporary allotment of the evacuee land had been made to them.

### Rural Rehabilitation

It was necessary to hasten the resettlement of rural displaced persons living in camps to facilitate the sowing of rabi crop of 1947-48. In the beginning temporary allotment was made on a group basis. Each group consisted of persons who were near relatives or were bound by ties of friendship. All displaced persons who owned or held land and were cultivating it in Pakistan, were considered eligible for such allotments which were later converted into quasi-permanent allotments in April, 1948. The intention was to encourage cultivators to improve the lands allotted to them. After this preliminary step, claims were invited from them and orally verified at tahsil headquarters. It transpired that several displaced persons had obtained excessive allotments by making exaggerated claims. To put matters right by verifying claims, original revenue records were obtained from Pakistan. These also showed that the total area of land left behind in West Punjab (Pakistan) by the incoming displaced persons was smaller than that abandoned by Muslims in East Punjab (Punjab). To overcome this problem the available land was converted into

standard acres, and graded cuts were applied in making allotments to displaced claimants, the claims of the bigger holders being subjected to the largest slab of cuts.

The work of conferring final proprietary rights on allottees on the basis of their verified claims was taken in hand in September, 1955. It took many years. Out of 21,376 allottees, permanent proprietary rights were conferred on 13,351 persons by March 31, 1978.

Lands in the Ambala district were allotted to displaced persons mainly from Jhelum, Rawalpindi, Gujrat, Sheikhupura and Sargodha districts and the colonists originally belonging to the Ambala district. Every effort was made to allot land of the similar quality as that left by the claimant in Pakistan. Sub-urban land was allotted to claimants of similar land or to other claimants on a valuation basis.

**Agricultural Loans.**—Allottees of land were given assistance by way of agricultural loans for purchasing bullocks, implements, fodder, seed and for the repair of wells and houses. In order to minimise misuse, loans were advanced in kind instead of cash. The following figures show the loans advanced in the district during 1947-48 to 1953-54 :—

Year	Loan Advanced (Rs.)
1947-48	2,49,037
1948-49	6,39,622
1949-50	3,41,266
1950-51	2,24,982
1951-52	1,86,478
1952-53	1,24,970
1953-54	1,32,137

The disbursement of the loan was stopped after 1953-54.

**Rural Housing.**—Heavy rains and floods in 1947-48 had damaged a large number of houses. According to the statistics available ; there were 15,000 undamaged evacuee houses, 4,000 repairable evacuee houses and 5,000 evacuee houses beyond repair in the district. Further, these houses were unevenly distributed as an unfortunate consequence of the destruction caused at the time of Partition. In some villages the number of houses was in excess of the needs of the allottees while in others, almost the entire *abadi* had crumbled and not a

single house was available. While houses were allotted on a temporary basis in the first instance, action was taken to frame rules for allotment of these houses thereafter. Records were prepared containing details including information about evacuee houses in the villages, the number of rooms, the dimensions, the general condition and the approximate value of each house. Lists of the allottees showing the value of houses left by them in Pakistan were also made. The *Hulqa* Revenue Officer, generally a Naib Tahsildar, did the allotment work. A list giving the order of precedence was prepared. After setting aside a few houses for common purposes, allottees were given a chance of selection according to their place on the merit list.

### Urban Rehabilitation

The problem of providing residential accommodation became more acute with the tendency of immigrants to settle largely in urban areas. Consequently, a number of schemes to utilize the available properties left by Muslims and to develop more housing were devised. All the Muslim abandoned properties were taken over under the Punjab Evacuee Ordinance IV of 1947, later replaced by the Administration of Evacuee Property Act, 1950. Such properties comprising houses, shops, vacant sites, *kholas* (dilapidated houses) and industrial establishments were temporarily allotted to displaced persons on rental basis. Their permanent disposal started in 1953-54. The properties valuing below Rs. 10,000 (below Rs. 50,000 for industrial establishments) were declared allotable, while those assessed above these figures were to be sold by open auction. This applied also to properties lying vacant or those which were in unauthorized possession.

In the urban areas of Ambala City, Ambala Cantonment, Jagadhri, Sadhaura, Buria, Chhachhrauli and Kalka, the evacuee properties were managed by the District Rent and Managing Officer. These became a part of the evacuee pool for compensating displaced persons with verified claims. Allotable properties were given permanently as compensation to claimants against their claims. If the value of a property was in excess of his due compensation, the claimant was allowed to deposit the difference by instalments. Properties occupied by non-claimants were offered to them on annual instalments. Of a total of 9,500 evacuee properties in the urban areas of the district 7,800 properties were disposed of by 1978.

**Housing Schemes.**—As stated in the foregoing paragraphs, the urban housing problem was acute because most of the urban Muslim evacuees were manual labourers and artisans and, therefore, their houses were unpretentious, whereas the incoming urban displaced persons mostly businessmen and shop keepers, were used to better dwellings. To meet this grave situation and to

provide shelter to the incoming population according to their income groups, the government established new townships, in addition to 8-marla (cheap) housing colonies and 4-marla (cheap) tenements. The new townships accommodated the rich and upper middle class displaced persons; the 8-marla (cheap) housing colonies provided houses to the lower middle class and the 4-marla (cheap) tenements to the poorer sections. The statement below gives details of houses, sites, shops constructed and plots laid out under various schemes :

	Houses	Shops	Plots
New Township, Ambala City ..	26	12	404
New Township, Yamunanagar ..	402	26	688
8-Marla (Cheap) Housing Colony, Ambala City ..	300	18	157
8-Marla (Cheap) Housing Colony, Yamunanagar ..	350	17	233
		<u>Tenements</u>	<u>Shops</u>
4-Marla (Cheap) Housing Colony, Ambala City		101	—
4-Marla (Cheap) Housing Colony, Yamunanagar		398	10

The houses and plots in new townships and 8-marla (cheap) housing colonies were disposed of at the reserve sale price, under the East Punjab Refugees Rehabilitation (Buildings and Building Sites) Act, 1948. The cost of houses and plots sold, was treated as loan to be recovered in 30 half-yearly instalments. Subsequently with the implementation of the compensation scheme in 1954-55, the benefit of adjustment of public dues against the verified claims was extended to the purchasers of houses and plots in all these rehabilitation colonies. The allotment of 4-marla (cheap) tenements was made under the executive instructions issued with the approval of the Government of India.

In all these colonies, satisfactory arrangements for underground drainage, water-supply and electricity were made and provision existed for amenities such as school buildings, public parks, hospitals, shopping centres and clubs.

**Mud-hut colonies.**—Besides the new townships and 8-marla and 4-marla (cheap) housing colonies, mud-hut colonies were constructed in 1950 for providing accommodation to the residual population in refugee camps. These were constructed on the respective sites of the camps in Ambala and Yamunanagar with 1,862 and 500 mud-huts, respectively and each mud-hut covered an area of 210 square feet (19.5 square metres). These were immediately offered to the occupants of refugees camps who belonged to Scheduled Castes and other Backward Classes and to persons who were resourceless and landless.

In 1953, it was decided to transfer proprietary rights of mud-huts to the inmates. Occupants with claims were required to pay the cost of land and super-structure from their claims and others were charged only the cost of land recoverable in 3 annual instalments, the cost of super-structure having been treated as grant. It was also decided that nothing should be charged from destitute widows and disabled persons.

#### Small Urban and House Building Loans

The refugees were encouraged to restart their business, trade or other profession. A scheme for providing loans and grants was introduced in February, 1948, under the East Punjab Refugees Rehabilitation (Loans and Grants) Act, 1948. The loan was limited to Rs. 5,000 to an individual, Rs. 20,000 to a group of four or more displaced persons and Rs. 25,000 to a cooperative society. The grants were restricted to unattached women, widows and others who were unable to repay loans, but at the same time required monetary help for resettlement. The maximum amount of such grant was limited to Rs. 500.

**Small urban loans.**—These loans were advanced to displaced persons to enable them to establish themselves in different vocations. All classes of displaced persons comprising traders, artisans, industrialists, students, lawyers and medical practitioners were helped. These loans carried an interest of 3 per cent per annum and the recovery of the loan was to be started after 3 years of disbursement. The loans together with interest were repayable in equal instalments spread over a period of 6 years. The loans and grants were strictly to be utilized for the purpose for which they were asked for by the applicants or sanctioned by the government. The following figures show the amount of such loans advanced to displaced persons during 1948-49 to 1956-57 :—

Year	Amount
	(Rs)
1948-49 ..	12,05,000
1949-50 ..	5,67,057
1950-51 ..	2,49,883
1951-52 ..	60,000
1952-53 ..	41,300
1953-54 ..	—
1954-55 ..	65,100
1955-56 ..	55,300
1956-57 ..	39,000
Total :	22,82,640

The scheme to advance small urban loans was discontinued after 1956-57.

**House building loans.**—House building loans were advanced to purchasers of plots sold out by the state government in new townships. These loans enabled displaced persons to build their own houses on easy terms of repayment. The following amounts were advanced to 294 displaced persons for the construction of houses, during 1949-50 to 1955-56 :—

Year	Amount (Rs)
1949-50	4,98,500
1950-51	43,000
1951-52	1,65,500
1952-53	2,85,675
1953-54	94,250
1954-55	1,46,870
1955-56	10,65,283
Total :	22,99,078

These loans, too, were discontinued from 1956-57 onwards.

#### Payment of Compensation

Compensation was paid to displaced persons who had abandoned immovable property in Pakistan, after verifying their claims, under the Displaced Persons (Claims) Act, 1950. Interim compensation was sanctioned for certain categories of displaced persons who were in urgent need of relief. The interim scheme was later replaced by the Displaced Persons (Compensation and Rehabilitation) Act, 1954. Under it, scaled compensation was prescribed. It gave proportionally more to smaller claimants, and less to the bigger claimants. This compensation was paid out of the compensation pool to which the central government had contributed.

Thus the rehabilitation of displaced persons had been completed though a few residuary problems are still attended by the Rehabilitation Department. The Tahsildar (Sales) Ambala, looks after the residuary work of rehabilitation in the district. He disposes of evacuee properties located in the district. The properties available with the department were purchased from the central

government. These were auctioned to Harijans. On March 31, 1978, 805 standard acres of cultivated land, 497 acres of *banjar* land, 1,683 acres of *ghair mumkin* land, 17 houses and 45 sites in rural areas, and 147 acres of agricultural land and 107 properties in urban areas were available for disposal.

### **The Impact of Displaced Persons on the Local Population**

The rehabilitation of displaced persons in the district had a long term beneficial effect in a variety of ways. It, not only influenced the economic life but has also changed the pattern of social life of the people of the district.

Khatris and Aroras from the districts of Rawalpindi, Sargodha and Gujrat were sharp witted and resourceful shopkeepers and businessmen. As compared with the local business community, they were more energetic and their presence in the urban areas of the district quickened processes of change. They successfully set themselves up as shopkeepers and traders and completely changed the appearance of the bazaars and to some extent brightened rural life by providing modern paraphernalia like soap, powder, mirrors, hair clips and celluloid toys. The mixing of displaced persons with local persons also influenced the latter's way of living including food habits. Dresses and fashions also changed. Bush-shirts, trousers and *pyjamas* made co-existence with the old types of shirts and *dhotis*.

The settlement of the displaced persons in new townships at Ambala and Yamunanagar led to increase of population in these urban areas. The availability of manpower led to manifold increase and expansion of industries. The rehabilitation of many educational institutions from Lahore to Ambala brought the Ambala district to a prominent place in the educational map of the state.