

CHAPTER X
GENERAL ADMINISTRATION

ADMINISTRATIVE DIVISION

The Sirsa district, as a basic administrative unit, consists of two tahsils, Sirsa and Dabwali. In March, 1981, the number of villages in each tahsil was as follows:

Tahsil	Villages		
	Inhabited	Uninhabited	Total
Sirsa	233	6	239
Dabwali	84	—	84
Total	317	6	323

On the principle of decentralisation of authority in the administrative set-up, the district is divided into two sub-divisions, Sirsa and Dabwali, each being co-terminus with the tahsil area. Sirsa sub-division was created in 1903 while Dabwali sub-division came into being in 1976. The object of a sub-division is to promote efficiency in the administration and to ensure better supervision over public affairs through decentralisation. The Sub-Divisional Officer has power to deal with many matters expeditiously on the spot.

The strength of sub-division and tahsil officers in 1981 was as follows :—

Sub-Division/Tahsil	Officers	Strength
Sirsa	Sub-Divisional Officer (Civil)	1
	Tahsildar	1
	Naib-Tahsildar	2
	Naib-Tahsildar (Account)	1
	Naib-Tahsildar (Agrarian) for whole of the district	2
Dabwali	Sub-Divisional Officer (Civil)	1
	Tahsildar	1
	Naib-Tahsildar	1

DISTRICT AUTHORITIES

Deputy Commissioner.—The general administration of the district is vested in the Deputy Commissioner. For administrative purposes, he is under the Commissioner, Hisar Division, Hisar. In other words, the state government's general authority descends through the Divisional Commissioner to the Deputy Commissioner. With the advent of democratic set up and increased tempo of developmental activities, the duties and responsibilities of the Deputy Commissioner have increased enormously. He still performs the triple functions of British times being at once the Deputy Commissioner, the District Magistrate and the Collector, but his responsibilities, particularly as Deputy Commissioner, the executive head on the spot, have greatly increased.

As Deputy Commissioner, he is the executive head of the district with multifarious responsibilities. There is hardly any aspect of district administration with which he is not concerned in one way or the other. He has a special role to play in the Panchayati Raj. In addition to keeping an eye on the working of Panchayati Raj institutions, he guides the panchayats, panchayat samitis, municipal committees, market committees and improvement trusts and helps them to overcome difficulties and problems. As the senior most officer of the district he is expected to maintain contact with the elected representatives of the people.

As District Magistrate, he is entrusted with the maintenance of law and order. In the discharge of this responsibility, he is assisted by the Superintendent of Police. After the separation of the judiciary from the executive in 1964, he is only principal executive magistrate for the enforcement of security measures and exercises judicial powers under certain sections of preventive chapters of the Code of Criminal Procedure. Here he is assisted by one Executive Magistrate.

As Collector, he is the highest revenue judicial authority in the district and is responsible for collection of land holdings tax and all dues recoverable as arrears of land revenue. If a party does not pay a tax in time, the tax collecting authority sends a certificate of tax arrears to the Deputy Commissioner, who has powers to recover the amount in the same way as he does in respect of land revenue. He supervises the maintenance of land records and agricultural statistics besides the management of government lands and estates. He is also entrusted with the implementation of land reforms and distribution of *taccavi* and other loans to agriculturists. The supervision of acquisition and requisition of land and administering relief measures in case of drought, flood and other natural calamities are some of his other duties. He acts as the District Elections Officer and the Registrar for registration work. He also functions as Marriage Officer under the Special Marriage Act.

The miscellaneous duties include civil defence, jails, liaison with military authorities and welfare of the members of the armed forces ; collection of loans ; donations and subscriptions; and collection and supply of all sorts of information about the district. The coordination work of the Deputy Commissioner to which a brief reference has been made, forms a very important part of his overall responsibilities. While co-ordinating the activities of various departments in the district, whenever necessary, he takes care not to interfere in their internal administration, and the procedures, methods and policies of their parent departments. He holds periodical meetings of all the district level officers with a view to reviewing the progress of work done by the several departments and co-ordinating and intensifying their efforts. He has to possess a clear picture of the objectives of all the departments so as to evolve an integrated approach to various developmental activities. The Deputy Commissioner has been authorised to inspect the offices of all the departments in the district and he may call for any report and other information regarding those offices and their working. He is, in short, the head of the district administration, a co-ordination officer among various departments and a connecting link between the public and the government in so far as he executes the policies, administers the rules and regulations framed by the government from time to time and also looks after the welfare needs and requirements of the people. In fact, he has become an essential instrument in the building of a welfare state.

An Additional Deputy Commissioner has been appointed to relieve the Deputy Commissioner in work relating to rural development.

Sub-Divisional Officer.—The Sub-Divisional Officer is the chief civil officer of a sub-division. In fact, he is a miniature Deputy Commissioner of the sub-division. He exercises direct control over the Tahsildars and their staff. He has to perform executive, magisterial and revenue duties in the sub-division. An appeal from the orders of the Sub-Divisional Magistrate in judicial cases pertaining to preventive chapter of Code of Criminal Procedure lies with the District and Sessions Judge. In revenue matters, he is Assistant Collector Grade-I, but under certain acts, the powers of Collector have been delegated to him.

Tahsildar/Naib Tahsildar.—The Tahsildar and Naib Tahsildar are the key officers in the revenue administration and exercise the powers of the Assistant Collector Grade-II and sub-registrars and joint sub-registrars for registration work. While deciding partition cases, the Tahsildar assumes powers of Assistant Collector Grade-I.

Their main task being revenue collection and supervision, the Tahsildar and the Naib Tahsildar have to tour extensively in their areas. They are

principally responsible for maintenance of revenue records and crop statistics. In the discharge of their miscellaneous duties, they assist the development staff in their various activities in the execution of development plans, construction of roads, drains, embankments, soil conservation and reclamation, pavement of streets, filling of depressions and disposing of work connected with rural re-construction. They also help the Block Development and Panchayat Officers in enlisting the maximum co-operation of the people in rural areas in making the Panchayati Raj a success. They are assisted by Kanungos and Patwaris.

Since the actual preparation of village records and revenue statistics rests with the Patwaris the district is divided into 227 *patwar* circles, each circle being looked after by a Patwari who works under the immediate supervision of the Kanungo concerned.

The Lambardar (a non-official) is quite an important functionary in the administration. He collects and deposits the land revenue. These deposits were previously made in the government treasury under the charge of the tahsil officers. The deposits are now made in the branches of State Bank of India. In addition to his duties of land revenue collection, he looks after the law and order in his area and any breach thereof is reported by him to the nearest police station and to the Deputy Commissioner's agency. He is assisted in his work by the village chowkidar.

GENERAL ARRANGEMENT FOR DISPOSAL OF BUSINESS

In addition to sub-division and tahsil staff the Deputy Commissioner is assisted by the General Assistant and the Additional General Assistant. Assistant Commissioner/Extra Assistant Commissioners are also some times temporarily appointed in the district with varying degrees of powers. These officers relieve the Deputy Commissioner of the detailed and routine activities of his office. The General Assistant is responsible for functions and works relating to establishment, revenue, and defence etc. whereas the Additional General Assistant looks after the work relating to panchayats, panchayat samitis, five year plans and of local development works.

Various district committees have been constituted in the district. These committees help to redress the grievances of the people; to review the progress of agricultural development, to work out the ways and means to improve health and sanitation conditions; to take suitable steps for the welfare of ex-servicemen and their dependents; to work out integrated development of towns and watch the progress of revenue collection and disposal of surplus land.

DEVELOPMENT ORGANISATION

To administer schemes of development, the Sirsa district has been divided into 4 blocks, viz., Sirsa, Bada Gudha, Rania and Dabwali. A block was previously under the charge of a Block Development Officer but with the merger of the Panchayat Department with the Development Department on October 31, 1959, the Block Development Officer has been re-designated as the Block Development and Panchayat Officer and has been vested with powers of District Panchayat Officer under the Punjab Gram Panchayat Act, 1952. After the introduction of the Panchayati Raj in 1961, the development of the block is looked after by an elected body known as Panchayat Samiti. The Block Development and Panchayat Officer functions under the administrative control of the Panchayat Samiti and also functions its *ex officio* Executive Officer.

Each block has been provided with Extension Officers from the Development, Industries, Agriculture, Co-operative and Panchayat Departments, who function under the control of Block Development and Panchayat Officer. This procedure helps in the co-ordination of several developmental activities in the block.

For the implementation of programmes relating to the uplift of rural women in the blocks, the Block Development and Panchayat Officer is assisted by Mukhya Sevikas and Gram Sevikas who are under the administrative control of the Lady Circle Supervisor, Hisar.¹ The various programmes undertaken by them include kitchen gardens, arts and crafts centres, *Balwadis*, home decoration, poultry farming, etc.

Panchayats have been constituted at the village level to look after the development works.

POLICE

The police administration in the district is under the Superintendent of Police, who, next to the Deputy Commissioner is responsible for the maintenance of law and order. The Superintendent of Police is assisted by two Deputy Superintendents; one at Sirsa and the other at Dabwali. He functions under the administrative control of the Deputy Inspector General of Police, Hisar Range, Hisar.

In 1981, there were 9 police stations and 8 police posts in the district.²

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1. The Lady Circle Supervisor functions under the overall control of the Director Women Programme, Development Department, Haryana, Chandigarh.
 2. For details about the functioning of police, the Chapter XII on 'Law and Order and Justice' may be seen.

JUDICIARY

The organisation of civil and criminal justice in the district is headed by the District and Sessions Judge, Hisar assisted by two Additional Session Judges posted at Sirsa. The civil justice is administered by the Senior Sub-Judge, Sirsa and the criminal justice by the Chief Judicial Magistrate, Sirsa. They have under them four Sub-Judge-cum-Judicial Magistrates, three at Sirsa and one at Dabwali. The District and Sessions Judge functions under the direct control of the Punjab and Haryana High Court, Chandigarh.

DISTRICT ATTORNEY

Previously criminal and civil business on behalf of the government in the district was done by the Public Prosecutor and the Government Advocate respectively. In 1960, a regular service known as the Punjab District Attorney service was constituted. The work of litigation on behalf of the government is done in the district by a District Attorney. He conducts cases in civil and criminal courts. He functions under the general control of the Legal Rememberancer and is not allowed any private practice. He is assisted by 6 Assistant District Attorneys, 4 of which are posted at Sirsa and 2 at Dabwali.

OATH COMMISSIONER

There are 5 Oath Commissioners, out of which three are functioning at Sirsa and two at Dabwali. They charge Re. 1 as attestation fee for each affidavit attested.

NOTARY PUBLIC

There is one Notary Public in the district. The main functions of the Notary Public are preparation and attestation of affidavit, administration of oath, etc. The fee for an attestation of affidavit is Rs. 2.50 and for certifying or authenticating a document as original is Rs. 5.