

Chapter III

PEOPLE

POPULATION

Before the decennial enumeration system was adopted in 1881, the district population had been enumerated twice; once in 1853 and thereafter in 1868.¹ The following table shows the population position at various enumerations :—

Census year	Population	Variation	Percentage increase(+) or decrease(—)
1	2	3	4
1853	6,62,486 ²	—	—
1868	6,89,573 ³	(*)	—
1881	6,41,848 ³	(—) 47,725	(—) 6.92
1891	6,88,929 ³	(+) 47,081	(+) 7.33
1901	8,77,728 ⁴	(+) 1,88,799	(+) 31.21
1911	7,65,384	(—) 1,12,344	(—) 12.80
1921	7,12,946 ⁵	(—) 52,438	(—) 6.85

1. A. Fraser reported in the *Statistical Report of Zilah Gurgaon*, 1846, that there were 4,60,326 persons in the district. No definite reliance can be placed on this figure since his estimates were based on the returns of the Tahsildars.

2. *Gurgaon District Gazetteer*, 1883-84, p.32.

3. *Gurgaon District Gazetteer*, 1910, p. 33.

(*) The district boundaries underwent considerable changes since the enumeration in 1853 and as such no comparison can be drawn between the enumeration of 1853 and 1868. (Ibid.)

4. *Census of India*, 1971, Series 6—Haryana, Part II-A, *General Population Tables*, p.37.

5. The population of Ballabgarh tahsil prior to its merger with the district in 1912 was recorded as follows :—

1881	1,38,878
1891	1,19,652
1901	1,26,693
1911	1,16,302

(*Delhi District Gazetteer*, 1912, p.51.)

1	2	3	4
1931	7,79,325	(+) 66,379	(+) 9.31
1941	8,95,940	(+) 1,16,615	(+) 14.96
1951	9,67,664	(+) 71,724	(+) 8.01
1961	12,40,706	(+) 2,73,042	(+) 28.22
1971	17,07,369 ¹	(+) 4,66,663	(+) 37.61

The above figures show that the population decreased during the 13-year period 1868—81 by 47,725 persons (6.92 per cent). The cause of this decrease was higher mortality due to an epidemic of fever which in 1878-79 had followed the scarcity of 1877-78. Though the epidemic was widespread in the whole of the province, the Gurgaon district suffered more than any other district. One seventh of the total population was wiped out in two years, viz. 1878 and 1879. Abnormal infecundity and emigration also accounted for the loss in population.²

1. The total population of the re-organised district is 13,72,197 on the basis of the 1971 Census figures (11,06,627 rural and 2,65,570 urban.)

(*Statistical Abstract of Haryana 1974-75*, pp. 5 and 8.)

2. "And not only has the death-rate been abnormally high during this period, but the birth-rate has, probably owing to the scarcity of food, the prevalence of fever and the consequent debility, been abnormally low,—fewer children have been born to take the place of the people who have died. The census returns of 1881 show that while of every ten thousand males of all ages then alive in the district, 1,360 were between the age of five and ten, only 936 were below the age of five; and while a fifth of the number still surviving between the ages of five and ten could give 272, the number of each year as below the age of five was as follows (per 10,000) :—

Born in 1876 and still surviving	226
Born in 1877 and still surviving	170
Born in 1878 and still surviving	101
Born in 1879 and still surviving	131
Born in 1880 and still surviving	308

"As the normal birth-rate is certainly over 308 per ten thousand per annum, the rate given by the survivors of 1880, these figures show that the number of births in 1877, 1878 and 1879 must have been abnormally small, and the mortality among young children in those years abnormally high; the result being that there were surviving in 1881 less than half the number of those ages that the other figures would lead us to expect.

"In 1877-78 and the years of trouble that followed, large numbers of the people left their homes and wandered in all directions in search of food. The Meos especially emigrated in great numbers, many wandering south to Malwa, which bears, the reputation of being always

free from famine, others going across the Jamuna or northwards to Delhi in search of work on the canals or in the towns. Many of these wanderers returned when the worst of the distress was over ; but according to the Census Returns of 1881, while there were in the Gurgaon district 1,17,242 persons born in other districts of the Punjab, 1,31,897 persons born in the Gurgaon (district) were then in other districts, a net loss by emigration of 14,655 which would, no doubt be swelled if similar figures were available for exchange of population between Gurgaon district and the North-Western Province and Rajputana. It seems then certain that the loss of population between 1876 and 1881, due to excessive mortality, abnormal infecundity and unusual emigration, must have been at least 70,000 or 10 per cent of the population, probably considerably greater.

"The decrease of population is not an unmixed evil. There are many villages, especially perhaps among the strong Jat Communities in the east of the district, which have been decidedly weakened by the loss of a large proportion of their labourers, and have had to contract their cultivation and reduce the standard of excellence which abundance of skilled hands had enabled them to attain ; but in many villages, especially in the Meo country, the population seemed almost too much for the land to support, and increase in the number of the proprietors had led to such extreme sub-division of the land that many peasant owners had great difficulty in supporting themselves and their families on their small holdings even in ordinary time. In such villages decrease of population means fewer consumers without much diminution of the total produce—means a larger share to each of the survivors, who are thus individually better off than they were before, the average size of a holding being increased as there are fewer families to own the land, and the average family having fewer mouths to feed from the produce of its enlarged holding. Thus such a community actually benefits, as a body, from the decrease of its population so long as it keeps possession of its land and the net profits of its cultivation."

(Gurgaon District Gazetteer, 1910, pp. 35-6.)

During the following decade, i.e. 1881—91, the reduction of assessment combined with good seasons resulted in an increase of 7.33 per cent in the population. It is significant to note that during the decade, the Gurgaon and Firozpur Jhirka tahsils did not record any increase in population because these had always been the most backward tahsils and took longer to recover from the adverse conditions than the others.¹

The Gurgaon District Gazetteer, 1910, recorded the population of the district in 1901 as 7,46,208 persons,² which means an increase of 76,948 persons (11.50 per cent) over 1891. But this figure has been adjusted to 8,77,728 persons according to the territorial jurisdiction of the district prevailing on April 1, 1971.³ Therefore the latter figure has been adopted here. As a result of this adoption, the district recorded an increase of 2,08,799 persons (31.21 per cent) during the decade 1891—1901. In any case, the increase in population is attributable to exceptionally favourable seasons between 1891 and 1895. Although the harvests between 1895 and 1901 were poor, population still showed a steady increase. As regards migrations, the following account given in the *Gurgaon District Gazetteer*, 1910 on pages 37-8 should be of some interest :—

“The normal conditions may have been somewhat disturbed by the famine of 1899-1900, but even so the very large preponderance of females over males clearly marks the type of migration as reciprocal. The migrations of the East Punjab as to which I quote the following remarks from the Census Report of 1891, (page 273) ‘There is of course reciprocal migration of an ordinary kind always going on between any two adjoining tracts, but the turn has been especially applied to that migration of women which is occasioned by the marriage customs obtaining in the east or most Hinduized part of the province. According to these customs the man must, of course, marry within his own caste, but he is forbidden to marry girls from any sub-division of the caste with which he is already through his father or mother closely connected, and as he generally is living in the midst of villages inhabited by the clan or tribe to which his father belongs, he must go further afield for his bride. Custom too forbids a marriage with a village which is in actual or close proximity to his own, so the bride may not come from any of them. And the idea has so far developed that the respectability of the marriage is gauged more

1. *Gurgaon District Gazetteer*, 1910, p.36.

2. *Ibid*, p.33.

3. *Census of India*, 1971, Series 6—Haryana, Part II-A, *General Population Tables*, p.33 (Paras 1—4).

or less by the distance from which the bride is brought. The result of these regulations and feelings is that the brides are generally sought from a reasonable distance. And, speaking very roughly, for the purely administrative boundaries of districts have no appreciable effect on the custom, the brides may be said to be sought not within but beyond the borders of the district in which the intruding bridegroom lives.'

"Another type of migration which affects the Gurgaon District is that which is termed "one-sided" in the Census Report of 1901 (Page 73) :—"There is a rule, and apparently a stringent rule, among the Rajputs in Gurgaon that a daughter must always be given in marriage to the west, and a wife taken from the east. Thus the Rajputs of Rewari get wives from Ujina, Sangel and Hathin on the eastern side of the district, but do not give daughters to those in the eastern tracts. This custom is said to be in imitation of that followed in the portion of Rajputana which lies west of the Gurgaon district, and it appears to have been followed for many generations.' The percentages of immigrants and emigrants to the total population are as follows :—

	Total	males	Females
Immigrants	17.9	5.3	12.6
Emigrants	15.8	5.3	10.5 "

The decade 1911—21 witnessed *inter alia* the visitation of influenza epidemic in 1918-19 which took a heavy toll of 22,660.¹ According to the 1921 Census Report,² mortality had been the heaviest in the south-east of the province (the then Punjab), but there was some doubt as to the figures of Gurgaon, as in that district there had been an epidemic of relapsing fever going on concurrently with influenza and it had been impossible to separate the figures of mortality resulting from the two. Thus the district would have actually shown a decrease of 1,33,399 persons (17.42 per cent) but for the transfer of the Ballabgarh tahsil from Delhi district in 1912, which reduced the decrease to 52,438 persons (6.85 per cent).³

The following two decades, i.e. 1921—31 and 1931—41, recorded a gradual increase in population except that during 1921—31, this increase had been somewhat checked by mortality caused by cholera, smallpox and fever. Malaria had also spread in an epidemic form in the Ballabgarh tahsil.

1. Gurgaon District Gazetteer, Part B, Statistical Tables, 1935, Table 11.

2. Ibid, Volume I, p.61.

3. Population of the Ballabgarh tahsil was 87,027 persons in 1911 and 80,961 in 1921.

The lower rate of growth (8 per cent) during the decade 1941—51 was in consequence of shifting of the population following the Partition in 1947. The outgoing Muslims were more numerous than the incoming displaced persons. The Hindus, Sikhs and other immigrants to this district numbered 84,587 as against 1,22,329 Muslims who left for Pakistan.¹ Thus there had been an unbridged gap of 37,742 persons.

During the decade 1951—61, the population increased by 28.2 per cent as against 25.9 per cent in the then Punjab State as a whole. The population of the district, during the decade 1961—71, shot up by 38 per cent. This growth rate was much higher than the State rate of 31 per cent and the all-India rate of 24 per cent for the same decade. The probable causes of this faster increase, which are equally applicable to the rapid increase during the previous decade 1951—61, include *inter alia* the development of industries and consequent immigration, particularly in the Ballabgarh and Gurgaon tahsils; the higher fertility rate and decline in death rate due to the expansion of medical and public health facilities. The comparatively low growth rate in respect of the Rewari tahsil² compared favourably with the all-India growth rate during the decade 1961—71. The following table shows tahsil wise increase in population during the decade 1961—71:—

Tahsil	Population		Increase during the decade 1961—71	
	in 1961	in 1971	Number	Percentage
Gurgaon	2,19,203	2,96,149	76,946	35.12
Ballabgarh	1,79,834	3,23,376	1,43,542	79.81
Firozpur Jhirka	1,42,027	1,87,730	45,703	32.17
Nuh	1,74,971	2,30,663	55,692	31.82
Palwal	2,16,139	2,84,387	68,248	31.57
Rewari	3,08,532	3,85,064	76,532	24.83

As a result of the re-organisation of the district, most of the Rewari tahsil with a population of 3,35,655 has been made part of the Mahendragarh

1. The Muslim population numbered 2,85,992 in 1941 and 1,63,663 in 1951.

2. In the Mahendragarh district since December 22, 1972.

district. The Gurgaon tahsil, consequently has a population of 3,45,558.¹

Density .—Standing fourth in point of population among the seven districts in the State according to the 1971 Census, the Gurgaon district ranked third in density, the number of persons per square kilometre being 278. Density had gone down during the first two decades of the present century, viz. 1901—21, but went up rapidly in the subsequent decades on account of the increase in population as is evident from the following figures :—

Census year	Area (square kilometres)	Density (population per square kilometre)
1901	5,139	144
1911	5,139	126 (Density in the Ballabgarh tahsil was 305 per square mile, i.e. 117 per square kilometre) ²
1921	5,861	117
1931	5,861	128
1941	5,786	147
1951	6,107	158
1961	6,131	202
1971	6,146	278 (281 for the re-organised district) ³

Of the six tahsils then constituting the district, the highest density, according to the 1961 Census, was in the Ballabgarh tahsil averaging 241 persons per square kilometre. Faridabad Township was mainly responsible for the higher density. The sparsest tahsils were Nuh and Firozpur Jhirka supporting 168 and 176 persons per square kilometre respectively. These tahsils are subject to serious inundation during the monsoons. There has also been no urban development in these tahsils.

Houses and households .—Additional housing is essential to relieve the inconvenience of increased density as conditions of living and working are determined by it.

1. *Statistical Abstract of Haryana*, 1973-74, p.3.
2. *Delhi District Gazetteer*, 1912, p.49.
3. *Statistical Abstract of Haryana*, 1973-74, p.7.

In 1961, 3,35,118 houses of all types (2,78,115 rural and 57,003 urban) in the district¹ were occupied by 12,38,587 persons. The number of dwellings was 2,07,546 (1,68,928 rural and 38,618 urban) as compared to 1,48,852 (1,26,342 rural and 2,510 urban) in 1951. The number of houseless persons comprising wandering tribes, tramps, *sadhus*, and pavement dwellers was limited to 2,119. Normally a single house was used by one household² which on an average consisted of 5.9 persons.³ As many as 41 per cent of the households consisted of 4 to 6 persons. One out of every 16 households consisted of a lone man, while one out of 9 had ten persons or more. The overburdened households reflected the shortage of houses in the district.

In 1971, the number of occupied residential houses (dwellings) increased to 2,56,538⁴ and each household consisted of 7 persons. The houseless persons numbered 4,419.⁵

Sex-wise and area-wise distribution of Population.—In the re-organised district, the percentage of rural and urban population is 80.64 and 19.16 respectively. The population of the pre-organised district, which was 12,40,706 persons (6,59,432 males and 5,81,274 females) according to the 1961 Census, rose to 17,07,369 persons (9,17,766 males and 7,89,603 females) in 1971 and thus registered an increase of 37.61 per cent during the decade 1961—1971. In 1961, 83.4 per cent of the population lived in rural areas and 16.8 per cent in urban areas while similar figures in 1971 were 81.5 per cent and 18.5 per cent respectively. The sex-wise and area-wise distribution of rural and urban population according to the census figures of 1961 and 1971 is given in Table III of Appendix.

1. *Census of India, 1961, Gurgaon District Census Handbook, 1965, pp.266-67.* The term "house" included dwellings; shop-cum-dwellings; workshop-cum-dwellings; hotels, sarais, dharmshalas, tourist houses and inspection house; shops excluding eating places; business houses and offices; factories, workshops and work sheds, schools etc., restaurants etc., places of entertainment, etc., hospitals etc., and others.

2. The term "household" in the 1961 Census, was taken to mean a group of persons who commonly lived together and took their meals from a common kitchen unless exigencies of work prevented any one of them from doing so.

3. *Census of India, 1961, Volume XIII, Punjab, Part-IV-A, Report on Housing and Establishments, p.15.* [The number of persons per occupied house was 8.5 in 1881, 9.1 in 1891, 3.8 in 1901, 3 in 1911, 4 in 1921 and 5 in 1931 in the towns and 9.8, 9.1, 10.3, 4, 4, 5 respectively in the villages. (*Gurgaon District Statistical Tables, 1935, Table 6.*)]

4. The number of occupied residential houses in the reorganised district, on the basis of 1971 Census, comes to 2,09,724 and this again leads to the same result, i.e. 7 persons per household.

5. *Statistical Abstract of Haryana, 1973-74, p.9.*

Villages .—In 1951, the Gurgaon district had 1,445 inhabited villages. In 1961, there were 1,580 villages, 1,452 inhabited and 128 uninhabited¹, in the district. In the Ballabgarh and Palwal tahsils, there were 42 uninhabited villages mostly in the *bet* area affected by the river. In the Nuh and Firozpur Jhirka tahsils, there were 47 uninhabited villages. The Rewa i and Gurgaon tahsils had only 39 uninhabited villages.

Before Independence, the average population per village ranged from 450 to 550. In 1961, the number of persons per inhabited village was 713. The villages in the Palwal tahsil were big units with 950 persons per village and the corresponding figures for the Gurgaon, Ballabgarh, Nuh and Rewari² were 811, 706, 671 and 647 respectively. The villages in the Firozpur Jhirka tahsil are smaller, with an average population of 595 persons. The Nuh and Firozpur Jhirka tahsils had the lowest density in the district. For this very reason, 116 out of 251 villages in the district with population less than 200 were located in these two tahsils.

There were six big villages in the district with population ranging between 5,000 and 9,999, 4 in the Gurgaon tahsil, 1 in the Ballabgarh tahsil and 1 in the Firozpur Jhirka tahsil. Among these, Gurgaon village had the highest population (8,127 persons). It had started showing signs of urbanisation because of its contiguity to Gurgaon town.

The 1971 Census, however, recorded 1,586 villages, 1,471 inhabited and 115 uninhabited in the pre-organised district. Their tahsil-wise distribution has been given in the Chapter on 'General Administration'. The average population per village came to 952. (In the re-organised district, it is 757.) The comparative figures of villages classified by population according to the Censuses of 1961 and 1971 are as follows³ :—

	Pre-organised district		New district
	1961 1	1971 2	1971 3
Less than 200	251	173	142
200—499	497	390	300

1. These villages are without any population but for the assessment of the revenue, these have been recognised as separate revenue estates, given Hadbast numbers and are called un-inhabited.

2. In the Mahendergarh district since December 22, 1972.

3. *Census of India, 1961, Gurgaon District Census Handbook, 1965, p.168.*
Statistical Abstract of Haryana, 1973-74, p.11.

	1	2	3
500—999	412	466	323
1000—1999	210	303	240
2000—4999	76	118	99
5000—9999	6	21	21

The general increase in population is fairly well reflected in the rising population of the villages.

Towns :—The number of towns in the district continued to be 14 all through the three censuses since 1951. These were :

Gurgaon
 Faridabad Township
 Rewari
 Palwal
 Faridabad (Old)
 Ballabgarh
 Hodal
 Sohna
 Firozpur Jhirka
 Bawal
 Pataudi
 Farrukhnagar
 Nuh
 Hailey Mandi

Since the re-organisation of the district, Rewari and Bawal towns have gone over to the Mahendragarh district. In 1961, there was no class I town (population 1,00,000 and above) and no individual town in class II either (population ranging between 50,000 and 99,999). The combined population of Faridabad Township and Faridabad (Old), however was 50,709. During 1951—61, this town group had shown a remarkable growth of 61.15 per cent which was primarily due to the growth of industry.

Gurgaon, Rewari¹ and Palwal had population ranging between 20,000 and 49,999 (class III). The population of Gurgaon had risen fast from 18,613

persons in 1951 to 37,868 in 1961. This increase was mainly due to the growth of industry in and around Gurgaon and its nearness to Delhi. Its importance was also due to the district administrative offices having been located here. The population of Rewari remained almost static registering an increase of only about three thousand (from 34,082 in 1951 to 36,994 in 1961). The population of Palwal increased from 13,915 in 1951 to 27,863 in 1961. Hodal was the only one town in class IV (10,000 to 19,999) which made fairly fast progress from 8,303 to 10,558 because of its location on the border of the Uttar Pradesh and its being a progressive business centre. Bawal² (5,392 to 5,924), Ballabgarh (5,927 to 8,330) Sohna (5,138 to 6,889) and Firozpur Jhirka (4,444 to 5,775) were class V towns (5,000 to 9,999). Except Bawal, the other towns in this class also showed remarkable growth of population during 1951—1961. The remaining four towns, viz. Farrukhnagar, Pataudi, Nuh and Hailey Mandi were in class VI (below 5,000). They were found to be more or less stagnant towns. The towns in the Gurgaon district were generally not much congested, there being 3,218 persons per square kilometre.

None of the towns was de-classified during the inter census period 1961—71; nor was any new town added to the list of towns at the time of 1961 Census. The classification of towns according to the 1971 Census, their population growth during the decade 1961—71 and sex ratio are given in Table IV of Appendix.

Sex ratio and age composition :—According to 1961 Census, there were 5,81,274 females and 6,59,432 males, i.e. a proportion of 46.9 : 53.1, in the district. Sex ratio decennial figures from 1901 onwards are given below :

Year	Females per thousand males		
	Rural	Urban	For the district
1901	900	947	905
1911	875	909	878
1921	858	859	858
1931	862	838	859
1941	880	881	880
1951	886	893	887
1961	884	870	881
1971	868.5	825.3	860.3 (846 in the reorganised district) ³

1. In the Mahendragarh district since December 22, 1972.

2. Ibid.

3. *Statistical Abstract of Haryana*, 1973-74, p.7.

The age pyramid of the district, according to the 1961 Census, had a broad base and tapered rather obliquely : 331 persons per 1,000 of the population were below the age of 10 and only 76 per thousand of age 55 years and above. Roughly speaking, 4 out of every 10 persons were below the age of 15, 5 in the groups 15 years to below 55 and only 1 past the age of 55.¹

It was found that the females had a shorter span of life than the males. In 1961, for ages 45 years and above, there were 137 per thousand among females and 163 per thousand among males. Again, the males below the age of 15 years were 445 per thousand males ; the corresponding figure for females was 449. The number of males per thousand between the age of 15 and 55 years was 470 and that of females 485. In the age group 55 years and above, the males were 85 and the females 66.

It is a common observation that a large number of persons shift from villages to towns for study and livelihood. The low paid among them leave their families in their village homes and live in the towns by themselves. When past the age of useful work, some among them return to their villages. The effect of this type of movement was reflected in the statistics of rural and urban age composition in the 1961 Census. For age groups below 15, 15 to below 55, and 55 and above, the distribution among males is 451, 462 and 87 per thousand males in the rural area and 412, 508 and 80 in the urban area. The corresponding figures for females in the rural area are 452, 483 and 65 and in the urban area 431, 495 and 74.

As far the marital status, according to the 1961 Census, there were 55 per cent of males and 45 per cent of females who had been recorded as unmarried. The higher proportion of unmarried males was due to less number of females.² Correspondingly, there was higher proportion of the married among females (47 per cent) than among males (40 per cent). Further, the proportion of married males was higher in towns than in villages, but the proportion of married females was higher in villages (48 per cent) than in towns (44 per cent). Although marriage in this country is an accepted feature of life, the Census of 1961 recorded 26 unmarried males per 1,000 males in the district, who were past the age of 34 years and only 2 spinsters per 1,000 females who were past the age of 19 years in the rural areas. The corresponding figures for the urban areas were 15 and 14 respectively.

1. Comparative figures of 1971 Census are not available.

2. Sociological and economic reasons are also responsible for this state of affairs.

Literacy.—According to 1901 Census, the percentage of literacy in the Gurgaon district was 2.6 (4.9 and 0.1 per cent for males and females respectively). The difference in literacy between the Hindus and Muslims was most striking and the Meos who predominated among the Muslims of the district were marked out as one of the most illiterate community in the whole of the then Punjab Province.¹

The percentage of literacy decreased to 2.3 (4.2 for males and 0.3 for females) in 1911.² At the same time, it was 3 per cent in the Ballabgarh tahsil³ It was 3.0 (5.3 for males and 0.4 for females) and 3.3 (5.7 for males and 0.1 for females) respectively in 1921 and 1931.⁴ This would show that prior to Independence, literacy was negligible among the males and practically non-existent among the females.

By 1961, 375 males and 102 females per thousand population were classified as literates. The literacy percentage was 19.2 (28.9 for males and 8.2 for females). Roughly speaking, one male out of three and one female out of ten could read and write. About half this number had had schooling and only one male in 24 and one female in 143 had crossed the Matriculation level. In the towns, there were 658 per thousand males and 362 per thousand females who were literate, but in the villages they were as few as 317 and 50 respectively. It was observed that the rural people had a considerable leeway to make up in order to reach the stage reached by the urban people. According to the 1971 Census figures,⁵ in the re-organised district, 382 males and 142 females per thousand have been classified as literate. The literacy percentage stands at 27.18 ; for the re-organised district being 27.2 (38.2 for males and 14.1 for females). The comparative low literacy among females is associated with the conservative outlook of the people as well as their social and economic backwardness, especially of those living in the rural areas.

Emigration and immigration.—Normal movement of population to the neighbouring districts and vice versa is mainly due to marriages. The mass migration in 1947 was the result of the partition of the country. This led to a decrease of 1,22,329 in Muslim population of 1951 over that of 1941 Census. Against this mass migration of Muslims to Pakistan, only 84,587 displaced persons settled in the district. Thus there was short replacement of Muslims by displaced persons, most of whom came from the Dera Ghazi Khan, Mianwali,

1. *Gurgaon District Gazetteer*, 1910, pp.231-32.

2. *Gurgaon District Statistical Tables*, 1912, Table 50.

3. *Delhi District Gazetteer*, 1912, p.203.

4. *Gurgaon District Statistical Tables*, 1935, Table 50.

5. *Statistical Abstract of Haryana*, 1973-74, pp.21 and 473.

Bannu, Dera Ismail Khan and Muzaffargarh districts. Their number according to the district of origin is given in Table V of Appendix.

Language

The following account is taken from the *Gurgaon District Gazetteer*, 1910¹ :—

"The language of the Meos is Mewati, a sub-dialect of north-eastern Rajasthani. The language of the north and west of the district in which the Ahirs predominate is Ahirwati, another sub-dialect of the north-eastern Rajasthani, while the language in the east of the district in which the Jats predominate, is the Braj Bhasha dialect of western Hindi.

"**Mewati.**—Is a border dialect.² It represents Rajasthani fading off into Braj Bhasha, and the form of Mewati in Gurgaon is, as might be expected, much mixed with Braj. The peculiarities of the dialect are given in the Linguistic Survey and it is unnecessary to detail them here. One curious form of the past participle active may be noted, namely, *karhanni* for the usual Urdu *kar*, e.g. *lekarhaani* for Urdu *lekar*, having taken.

"**Ahirwati.**—It represents the connecting link between Mewati and three other dialects, Bangaru, Bagri and Shekhawati. In its grammar it differs little from Mewati. It is the stepping stone between that dialect and Bangaru, and the principal point of connection between it and Bangaru is the use of the word *su* instead of the Mewati *hun* to mean "I am". Thus *hir sai*—he is an Ahir. The nominative of strong masculine nouns of the *a* base ends in *o* and the same rule is followed in adjectives and in the suffixes of the genitive. Short 'a' often becomes long a e.g. *kaankar* for *kankar*—nodula limestone, *maakhi* for *makhi*—a fly.

"**Braj Bhasha.**—One of the noticeable differences between Braj and the other to dialects is the use of the cerebral 'r' for 'l' e.g. *baadar* for *baadal*—cloud; *bijri* for *bijli*—lightning; and *chaupar* for *chaupal*—the village club or guest house. Long *a* is pronounced very broad and sounds more like *au*. Long *i* denoting the famine generally becomes *ia*, e.g. a cat is *billia* in Braj and *billi* in Mewati and Ahirwati; a female jackal is *gadria* instead of *gaadri*; and a female monkey *bandria* instead of *bandri*.

"One or other of these dialects is almost without exception the language of the villagers and lower classes. The better educated, especially in the towns

1. Ibid, pp.58-9.

2. Mewati is written both in Devnagari and Persian scripts.

and among the Muhammadans who claim a foreign origin such as the Sayads and Pathans,¹ speak the Urdu of Delhi, but they form a very small fraction of the population.

"One of the most striking features of these dialects is that while the grammar is on the whole similar in all, the vocabulary is often quite different. Thus in many cases each dialect has a different word for the same thing. For instance, in Mewati "wind" is *baao*, in Ahirwati it is *baun*, and in Braj it is *biyar*. A white-ant in Braj is *uksa*, in Mewati *dimak* ; and in Ahirwati *diwal*. These instances might be multiplied, and they show how puzzling the language of the villagers is until the main differences between the three dialects have been mastered."

After the Partition in 1947, most of the displaced persons who settled here, had come from the districts of Dera Ghazi Khan, Mianwali, Bannu, Dera Ismail Khan and Muzaffargarh. They spoke different dialects of western Panjabi; but with the lapse of time they picked up local dialects also, though their own dialects have not influenced the local dialects to any appreciable degree.

Forty-nine spoken languages or dialects were recorded as their mother tongue in the district during the 1961 Census.² Hindi was given as mother tongue by the largest number of persons, viz. 82.7 per cent, while 13.8 per cent gave Urdu as their mother tongue. Mewati and Panjabi languages had 1.6 per cent each. The rest of the languages were insignificant as the following figures show :—

Mother tongue	Distribution per 1,000
Hindi	827
Urdu	138
Mewati	16
Panjabi	16
Pahari-unspecified	1
Other languages	2
	1,000

1. With the migration of these sections of Muslim population to Pakistan in 1947, this statement no longer holds good now.

2. *Census of India, 1961, Gurgaon District Census Handbook, 1965, pp.260-61.*

RELIGIOUS LIFE

RELIGIOUS GROUPS

The religion-wise break-up of the population in the pre-Independence period was as follows :—

	1901	1911	1921	1931
Hindus	4,99,373	4,21,885	4,60,134	4,93,174
Sikhs	99	342	924	500
Jains	3,909	2,921	2,762	2,605
Parsis	1	2	6	—
Muslims	2,42,548	2,17,237	2,16,860	2,42,357
Christians	221	443	1,316	1,463
Others and not specified	57	66	—	4

The reasons for decline in population in the decades 1901—11 and 1911—21 have already been explained. The effect of the 1947 upheaval on the population has also been observed. The population as per 1961 Census is shown below :

1	2	Number			Percentage
		Males	Females	Total	
		3	4	5	6
Hindus	Urban	1,02,975	90,102	1,93,077	
	Rural	4,35,882	3,82,903	8,18,785	
	Total	5,38,857	4,73,005	10,11,862	81.5
Muslims	Urban	1,441	1,052	2,493	
	Rural	1,12,541	1,01,733	2,14,274	
	Total	1,13,982	1,02,785	2,16,767	17.5
Sikhs	Urban	4,114	3,167	7,281	
	Rural	605	476	1,081	
	Total	4,719	3,643	8,362	0.7
Jains	Urban	1,036	1,015	2,051	
	Rural	439	440	879	
	Total	1,475	1,455	2,930	0.2
Christians	Urban	339	339	678	
	Rural	34	18	52	
	Total	373	357	730	0.1
Buddhists	Urban	12	3	15	
	Rural	2	24	26	
	Total	14	27	41	N

PEOPLE

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1	2	3	4	5	6
Other					
religions	Urban	2	—	2	
	Rural	5	2	7	
	Total	7	2	9	N
Religion not	Urban	4	—	4	
stated	Rural	1	—	1	
	Total	5	—	5	N
Total	Urban	1,09,923	95,678	2,05,601	
	Rural	5,49,509	4,85,596	10,35,105	
	Total	6,59,432	5,81,274	12,40,706	100

(‘N’ stands for negligible)

Hindus.—The majority of the population of the district thus consist of Hindus. They predominate both in the rural and urban areas except in the Nuh and Firozpur Jhirka tahsils where the Muslims are in majority. An idea about the tahsil-wise distribution of the Hindu population according to the 1971 Census¹ can be had from the following statement :—

Tahsil	Male	Female	Total
1. Gurgaon	1,52,609	1,35,321	2,87,930
2. Ballabgarh	1,65,210	1,26,019	2,91,229
3. Firozpur Jhirka	23,645	19,996	43,641
4. Nuh	61,516	51,996	1,13,512
5. Palwal	1,46,519	1,23,566	2,70,085
6. Rewari ²	1,98,419	1,82,286	3,80,705

The Hindus mostly follow traditional Hindu beliefs. The performance of *yajna* has been generally replaced in Hindu ritual by worship (*pūja*) of Vishnu, Shiva, Rama, Krishana, Hanuman and various other minor deities, whose images are mostly found in the same temple. Flowers and fruits and other offerings are laid before the gods. Their images are bathed and dressed every day and *pūja* is performed both in the morning and evening. The ruralites are, however, indifferent observers of religion and it is their women-folk only who care more for rituals and ceremonies. They have their family priests, or *purohits* on whom they depend for traditional observance of various auspicious

1. Source : Director of Census Operations, Haryana.

2. Most of the Rewari tahsil has been transferred to the Mahendragarh district since December 22, 1972.

days and ceremonies connected not only with important domestic occurrences but also with other matters like building a house, undertaking a journey or pilgrimage or starting ploughing of land.

The spiral of a pucca temple is noticeable in most towns and villages. Hinduism, however, also attaches a sacred character to certain wells, tanks, rivers, trees, etc. Thus on sacred days, pilgrimage to river Yamuna or to a canal or tank nearby may be undertaken for bathing in it. Pipal tree (*Ficus religiosa*) is looked upon with reverence in pursuance of an ancient tradition. Water is offered to it every day and sometimes, cotton threads may be wrapped around it. The cow is sacred to all Hindus and Nandi (Lord Shiva's bull) invariably appears in Shiva's temples in the form of a picture or a statue.

Practical religion often assumes the form of rituals elaborate or simple, according to personal capabilities. Thus fasts are kept on holy days in a year or on particular days in a week accompanied sometimes, by performance of *havanas*, or recitation of devotional songs (*kirtan*) or reading from the religious texts (*katha*). Fasts may be observed either on pure devotional grounds or with a view to achieving some long cherished desire. Rituals are also practised in an effort to produce rain or to stop it when it is excessive, to protect oneself against the evil eye, to propitiate the deities, etc. There is, in fact, an endless multiplicity of purposes and practices. To this may be added worship of the various symbols, the *shalagram* stone and *tulsi* plant. Small statues of Radha, Krishna, Sita, Rama, etc., are also kept in homes and worshipped.

In villages, they also pray to Bhumia, the god of the homestead often called *khera* (a village). Under some shade giving tree on a small masonry platform stands the round shrine of Bhumia. It is dedicated to one of the founders of the village who is also sometimes attached to the name of Bhumia. The special day for making offerings is *chaudash* or the fourteenth day of the lunar month. The temple of Bhumia faces the east. The first few drops of milk are sprinkled on earth in dedication to Bhumia while milking cattle. The bridegroom before proceeding to the bride's house takes a round of his own village and worships Bhumia. The worship is repeated with his bride on return. Bhumia is also worshipped on the birth of a male child. Women often take their children to the shrine on Sundays, and the first milk of a cow or buffalo is always offered there.

A somewhat similar local deity who does not seem to be always clearly distinguished from Bhumia, but whose shrine is often found in addition to that of Bhumia in the same village, is the Chauwand or Khera Deota. Some say that it is the wife of Bhumia, others seem to put it in the place of Bhumia, but it is worshipped on Sunday.

Some of the Jats in the Gurgaon tahsil also have faith in Sayyids, one of such is known as Jugan Peer, and is located in village Islampur. A big fair is held in this village on the ninth day of Bhadra.

Sitla Mata is worshipped by the people of villages and towns alike and there is a temple of Sitla Mata in almost every village or town. The most important among the Sitla Mata temples is the one located at village Gurgaon, a suburb of Gurgaon town. It is named after Masani, the goddess of smallpox.

Muslims.—The Muslims constituted 17.5 per cent of the total population of the district and formed the second largest religious group as per 1961 Census figures. They are largely composed of Meos who predominate in the Firozpur Jhirka and Nuh tahsils. Their tahsil-wise distribution¹ is given below:

Name of tahsil	Male	Female	Total
1. Gurgaon	2,437	1,930	4,367
2. Ballabgarh	10,719	8,794	19,513
3. Firozpur Jhirka	75,274	68,085	1,33,359
4. Nuh	61,842	54,785	1,16,627
5. Palwal	6,649	5,987	12,636
6. Rewari ²	1,055	942	1,997

Their religious beliefs are discussed in the section on 'Social Life' of this Chapter.

Jains.—The Jains mostly belong to Digambar sect and they worship idols of 24 Tirthankars, the last of whom was Lord Mahavira and the last but one Parasnath or Parasva. Some of them belong to Sthanakvasi sect. They do not believe in idol worship but congregate at Sthanakas visited by Jain Munis. Five vows enjoined on men are: truth, *ahimsa*, celibacy, restraint of passions and non-stealing. The Jain priests are required to observe these vows strictly.

Sikhs.—The Sikhs live mostly in urban areas. They visit *gurdwaras* where verses from the holy *Granth Sahib* are recited. Besides observing some Hindu festivals, the Sikhs celebrate Gurupurbs (birthdays and martyrdom days of the Sikh Gurus) and Baisakhi which marks the birth of the *Khalsa*. *Akhand Path* is sometimes organised either in thanksgiving for the fulfilment of a desire or on the occasion of birth, marriage and death. No one is expected to appear bare-headed before the *Granth Sahib*.

Christians.—The Christians are an insignificant minority (0.1 per cent) in the district. They hold religious services in churches. Quite a few of

1. Source : Director of Census Operations, Haryana.

2. Most of the Rewari tahsil has been transferred to the Mahendragarh district since December 22, 1972.

them exist in the district. The Church of Epiphany (adjacent to the District Courts), Gurgaon, which was built in 1863, is the oldest one.

Superstitions.—Superstitions have come to mankind from the past as a part of cultural heritage. We bind our minds with shackles of unreason and illogic and look upon simple material things as magical signs of the success or failure of the undertakings, or of the approach of good fortune or of calamity. These are known as omens. In fact, omens are merely signs not causes. These themselves exert no power, but show that there is some power at work which will produce good or bad result.

Although scientific investigation today has proved beyond doubt that material phenomena cannot have non-material origins, such is the hold of superstitions on Man's mind that it continues to remain an inherent part of our nature. The numerous superstitions beliefs of this district are mostly the same as found in other districts of the State. While starting on a journey, people avoid ill omens. The sight of a person carrying cow-dung cakes or wood, a snake, or a pig, on exit from the house on some business, is considered inauspicious. Lighting a fire at such a moment is also considered as a bad omen. Alighting of an owl or a crow on a house is considered bad and scare-crows are placed on house tops to frighten such birds of ill omen. The farmers do not work their cattle till midday on Amavas even in an emergency. It is believed that there are lucky and unlucky days for undertaking a journey, sowing and harvesting. Saturday and Sunday are considered unlucky days for travelling and harvesting and Wednesday is regarded as inauspicious for sowing. Tuesday and Saturday are not proper for sale of cattle or even a haircut. The peg for tethering cattle is generally not inserted on a Tuesday.

Among the good omens are a buck or a dove crossing one's path from left to right : *dholi chiri* (grey shrike) crossing on one's left; meeting a woman carrying two pots of water on her head, and someone coming from an other village with grain or sweetmeat, or coming across a cow or a deer. Peacocks and pigeons are considered to be sacred. *Pipal*, *barh* and *ber* trees are regarded good and auspicious. If people meet with good omens, they feel happy and interpret these omens in their favour. Besides, at the start of a new enterprise, they take every care to avoid ill omens, and wait for good omens or even create them so.

It has been observed that young people believe in omens much less than the older generation, men much less than women and literate people much less than illiterate. People whose earning is uncertain believe more in omens compared to those whose income is more or less certain.

The worst thing that superstition does is that it damages self-confidence and blunts the edge of dynamic thinking. This evil needs to be eradicated. But the traditional superstitions will disappear only with the spread of education and cultivation of scientific attitude of questioning to find the truth.

FESTIVALS AND FAIRS

Festivals and fairs are an integral part of religious life. The common festivals celebrated by the Hindus are Holi, Janam Ashtami, Dussehra and Diwali. The minor festivals are Shivratri, Gugga Naumi, Solono (Raksha Bandhan) and Bhaiya Duj. Mela Masani Mata or Sitla Mata ka Mela and Mela Chhat Bhadon or Baldev Chhat are the more important fairs held in the district. Mela Pir, Mela Burha Baba or Mela Vankhandeshwar, Mela Suraj Kund, Mela of Ravan of Meos and Mela Jhirka are of local importance.

The important festivals and fairs are celebrated by the Hindus here as in other parts of the State and country. It is, therefore, not necessary to give a detailed account of their observance except when there is something distinctive or peculiar to this district in the celebrations of any of them. For example, Holi is celebrated as Mela Phooldol at village Bhiduki (tahsil Palwal) with great gusto. People commemorate Lord Krishna's playing Holi with Gopikas by sprinkling of coloured water on one another. Full of ecstasy, they dance and sing to the beating of drums. The number of visitors on such occasions is estimated at ten thousand.

Gugga Naumi.—It is a religious festival connected with snake worship observed on Bhadra 9 (August-September). A number of legends have clustered around Gugga. He is also called Gugga Pir, Zahir Pir (the Saint Apparent). Some refer to him as Baggarwala (He of the Bagar) because of his grave near Dadrewa (Ganganagar district of Rajasthan) in the Bagar tract which he is said to have ruled over. He is believed to have flourished about the middle of the 12th century. He was a Hindu and his proper name was Gugga Bir (Gugga, the Hero). The Muslims also flock to his shrine and his name has been altered to Gugga Pir (Gugga Saint), while in the opinion of many, he himself became a Muslim. Gugga had a peculiar power of curing snake bite. Monday is his day, the 9th is his date and Bhadra 9th the date on which Gugga descended into earth. To commemorate this event, fairs are held at his shrine every year on this date. Those who do not attend the fair go out in search of holes that might contain some snake and pour on it *kachchi lassi* (diluted milk) and *sewian* (cooked vermicelli).

Gugga Pir's shrine is distinguished by its square shape with minarets and domed roof and is always known as a *mari*. Some of the places where the festival is celebrated in the Gurgaon district are Islampur, Gurgaon, Farrukhnagar, Nanu Kalan, Guraora, Pataudi, (tahsil Gurgaon), Nai (tahsil Firozpur Jhirka), Bissar Akbarpur, Rethaura and Hathin (tahsil Nuh).

Mela Masani Mata or Sitla Mata ka Mela.—Chief among the fairs of the district is that of the goddess of smallpox, Masani. Popularly known as Sitla Mata ka Mela, it is held at the temple of Sitla Mata. There is a belief that she is believed to help her devotees to ward off smallpox. There is a tale of another goddess in the village. She is called Choganan Mata on account of her temple being located near the main crossing (*chogan*) of the village. It is believed by some people that she is the younger sister of the goddess Masani. This temple is stated to have been built by the sweepers of the village when they were not allowed access to the temple of Masani Mata. It is, however, now visited by all shades of visitors without any distinction of caste or sub-caste.

Tradition has it that Kirpai or Lalita, the wife of Dronacharya used to live in Keshopur, a village in the Union Territory of Delhi. He visited the village daily to see his wife, where she busied herself in attending to the children, especially the diseased ones. People called her Mata (mother) out of affection and respect. Once Dronacharya, detained by circumstances, could not go to see her for some time. The ideal wife, unable to bear the separation, burnt herself to death in the spirit of a true *sati*. A temple was built in her honour by the villagers and she began to be remembered as Mata Sitla or Mata Masani, i.e. the goddess of smallpox.

It is said that more than three centuries ago, Masani Mother appeared in a dream to Chaudhri Singh Ram *alias* Singha, a fief holder of village Gurgaon. She expressed her desire to leave Keshopur and come to Gurgaon. She bade him build a place for her and authorised him to appropriate all the offerings made to her.

To the south of the village, lies a pond near the temple of Dronacharya. It is said that Singha selected this spot as the site for installing the statue of goddess Masani but the goddess urged him in one way or the other not to trespass on the territory belonging to the Guru. Therefore, Singha built the shrine to the north of the village. The village was divided into two portions known as 8 *biswas* and 12 *biswas*. Singha lived in the portion of 8 *biswas* whereas the shrine was set up in the portion falling under 12 *biswas*.

The legend goes that even after Singha had brought and installed the goddess Masani, after her own heart's desire, at village Gurgaon, the residents of Keshopur continued to dispute the claims of Gurgaon folks. This controversy was put at rest during the time of Begum Samru, the Governor of Jharsa under the Mughals. Her child who had contracted smallpox was cured after being consecrated in the prescribed manner before the goddess Masani at Gurgaon. It was thence finally established that the goddess had begun to live at village Gurgaon.

The present temple building is said to have been built by Jawahar Singh the chieftain of Bharatpur, in memory of his victory over Delhi for which he invoked the blessings of the goddess. A pond is attached to the temple now. A few people cite the name of Suraj Mal of Bharatpur in place of Jawahar Singh.

The image of the goddess is of mixed metal with gold polish and weighs about 4 kilograms. It is kept in a wooden casket which is placed on a small marble platform in the temple. The statue remains in the possession of the *pujari* (priest) who moves it to the shrine only when it is needed. The main purpose for which the devotees come to pay homage and make offerings is to entreat the goddess to help them ward off smallpox. This purpose is achieved by requiring the people to visit the temple for the performance of important ceremonies. This is done by a ceremony known as *jal dena*; the devotees spend a sleepless night at the temple chanting hymns and songs in honour of the goddess. A section of the visitors come for the *mundan* ceremony (the first hair-cutting ceremony) of their children and offer the crop of hair at the altar of the goddess. Among other visitors married couples also come to invoke the blessings of the goddess for a happy married life.

The fair is held on two days in a week, i.e. Monday and Tuesday. The fame of the shrine has spread to distant places. The pilgrims now come from all over India. Men and women are almost equal in number. The attendance is at its peak during the month of Chaitra (March-April) when all the roads leading to the village and the village site are found full of bustling humanity. More than one lakh people are estimated to visit the fair on this occasion. It bespeaks of the faith that people, especially the simple country folk, still repose in traditional fairs and miraculous cures. The railways and the Haryana Roadways authorities provide special trains and buses from Delhi to Gutgaon and back for the convenience of the pilgrims. The attendance is considerable during the three succeeding months, and then again in the *Asuj navratras*. However, in the month of Srawana ((July-August), members of the Scheduled Castes like

Saperas and Sansis alone come to attend the fair, other castes generally do not attend in that month.

In addition to this fair being celebrated in village Gurgaon, it is also held for one day at Tihara in the Gurgaon tahsil and at Tigaon (as Sitla Devi Fair) in the Ballabgarh tahsil. Known as Budho Mata ka Mela or Mela Budho Mata, it is held for one day at two other villages of the same name, i.e. Mubarikpur, one in the Gurgaon tahsil and the other in the Pataudi sub-tahsil.

Mela Chhat Bhadon or Baldev Chhat.—This is another important religious fair of the district which is held to celebrate the birth anniversary of Balrama or Baldeva, elder brother of Lord Krishna and to commemorate the killing by him (Baldeva) of the demon Pralambasur whereupon he founded Palwal town. The legend goes that near about 1857, the Maharaja of Bharatpur was bringing an image of Baldeva from Delhi. The wheels of the chariot got jammed at Palwal and would not move despite the chariot being dragged by a hundred horses tied to it. The Maharaja then declared that if it be the will of the Lord that the image should remain there, then let it be so; but the chariot should move with the usual complement of two horses only. The remaining horses were unfastened and only two horses drove away the chariot. So a temple was erected at the place and the image was installed in it. It is estimated that about one lakh visitors attend this fair which is held for three days in the month of Bhadon (August-September). People worship Baldeva in the temple. *Jhankis* are taken out in a procession and the effigy of Kansa, the demon king, is burnt.

This fair is also held for four days in Hodal town and for three days in Ballabgarh town and is attended by about 15,000 and 70,000 people respectively. The fair is also held at villages Chhapraula and Bhandari (for two days) in the Palwal tahsil and at villages Pali, Dhauj and Fatehpur Tigga (for one day) in the Ballabgarh tahsil.

Mela Pir.—This religious fair, is held on Baisakh Purnamashi (full moon of April-May) for two days at village Kaushak in the Palwal tahsil. According to the legend, the *ilqa* was once ruled by Raja Rod. He wanted to relieve the Gujars, one of his subject tribes, of their cows and buffaloes. They went to a Sidh Mahatma living near the bank of the Yamuna. He gave them a bow and an arrow and asked them to shoot the arrow at the Raja's army. They did likewise; and the result was that the soldiers of the Raja's army began to fight among themselves and perished. After this, the Sidh Mahatma threw a rod and said "*Jahan parega katak, vahan basega Kushak*" (Kushak would be inhabited

at the place where the rod would fall). Kushak village came up at the place where the rod fell. The Gujars brought the Sidh to Kushak: but after a few days, he left his mortal frame while in samadhi (meditation). Both Hindus and Muslims became his followers and the Muslims called him a Pir. The fair is held in his honour. It is attended by about 5,000 people. People celebrate the occasion by taking a holy dip in the Yamuna.

Mela Burha Baba or Mela Vankhadeshwar.—This religious fair is held in Palwal town for one day in the month of Magha (January-February). It is attended by about 2,000 persons mostly women and children. They worship at the temple which is without an image. According to legend, Palwal as formerly surrounded by deep woods, and people, before passing through the woods, used to worship a statue of Lord Shiva, The Vankhadeshwar, Lord of Jungles and seek his protection. Later, the Muslims destroyed the image and converted the priests to Islam and they are still Muslims. The general belief is that the ashes of the place cure skin disease. Another story is that a trader of this place got huge profits and constructed the temple and the tank.

Mela Suraj Kund.—A religious fair, it is held on every Sunday in the month of Sravana (July-August) at village Lakarpur in the Ballabgarh tahsil. About 2,000 visitors are estimated to attend the fair which is celebrated by taking a holy dip in the tank. According to one legend, Suraj, Commander of Raja Anang Pal, ruling over a small state became a victim of leprosy. Following the instructions of a Sadhu, he took bath in the rainy water standing here and was cured. He constructed a tank at the spot and the fair began to be held. Another legend is that Raja Anang Pal had no male issue. He arranged a big *yajna* at which all deities (gods) were invoked. Suraj, the Sun god, also came but he had to be requested to return because nobody could stand his heat. The tank, Suraj Kund, was used as Havan Kund for that *yajna*.

Mahadev ka Mela.—This religious fair is held for one day once in the month of Phalgun (February-March) and again in the month of Sravana (July-August) at village Inchhapuri in the Gurgaon tahsil. It is attended by about 5,000 people. People worship god Shiva and goddess Parvati and make offerings of milk, flowers and Ganga water. It is said that over a hundred years ago, while digging the earth people came across idols of Shiva and Parvati which they failed to remove. Then they built a temple over them considering them as spontaneous appearance of Shiva and Parvati.

Mela of Ravan of Meos.—Religious and recreational in character, this

fair is held for three days in the month of Chaitra (March-April) at Firozpur Jhirka. It is associated with Ravana of Meos. It is attended by about 8,000 persons among whom the Meos predominate. Wrestling, feats by *bazigars*, dramatic performances and puppet shows are some of the attractions at the fair.

Mela Jhirka.—This religious fair, which is dedicated to god Shiva, is held for three days in the months of Sravana (July-August) and Phalguna (February-March) at Firozpur Jhirka. It is attended by several thousand persons. People take bath at the *jhar* (spring) and offer prayers and offerings in Lord Shiva's temple where *bhajans* (religious songs) are sung and *kirtans* held.

Muslims (Meos), till recently, used to celebrate Hindu festivals and fairs. Although they have now turned to orthodox Islam it has been noticed that they still enjoy a particular group dancing on the occasion of the Holi festival—a festivity shared in common with the Hindu communities of the region. In this performance the village boys and girls married to them form into two separate parties, one facing the other with a large drum known as the Naqqara in the centre. The male party advances towards the drum while keeping the tune with the Holi songs sung in unison. Meanwhile the female group recedes in the same manner until the boys have struck the Naqqara and begin to recede. Then the girls advance while the tune continues and they beat the Naqqara in turn. This ebb and flow goes on being repeated long into moon-lit night and on rare occasions light drinks are also served. "Such activities had ceased altogether after the Partition (1947) and particularly so in the Nuh region but reports indicate that they are coming into their own again."

It is, however, significant that the women-folk among the Meos, or the Meonies as they are called, participate in equal proportion to their men in the fairs held at places associated with Sheikh Musa, Shah Chokha, Bhartri Hari and Lal Das. Even near Nuh, a large fair assembles on the occasion of the Teej festival. The majority of the participants consist of the Meos in their best clothing and with their traditional turbans and *lathis*. The Meo women also participate freely in this fair and come from far off villages in beavies of lightly coloured femininity and singing songs reverberating through the hills of Mewat.

However, the celebration of Muslim festivals like Id-ul-Fitr, Id-ul-Zuha and Shab-i-Barat, is gaining more popularity among the Meos. Sweet dishes and boiled rice are prepared in Muslim homes on the occasion of Id-ul-Fitr and people wear new clothes. On the occasion of Id-ul-Zuha they sacrifice goats and distribute their raw or cooked meat among friends and relatives. Feasts are held on this day and daughters and sisters are presented with

1. Hashim Amir Ali, *The Meos of Mewat*, 1970, p.73.

gifts and new clothes. Besides, Muharram is celebrated on the 10th of Muharram month of Hijri era to commemorate the martyrdom of Ali and his two sons. Processions of Tazias are taken out in villages Chahlka, Guarka, Jai Singhpur, Tain, Guraksar, Ransika (tahsil Nuh), Nagina, Sakras, Doha, Biwan, Lohinga Kalan, Kherla Punahana, Khori Shah Chokhi, Bisru, Punahana and Bishhor (tahsil Firozpur Jhirka).

Besides these, other fairs are also held in this district at some places of worship or of tourist interest. These have been mentioned in the Chapter on 'Places of Interest'.

SOCIAL LIFE

SOCIAL GROUPS

The population of the district as stated earlier is predominantly Hindu and its important traditional social groups are Ahirs, Jats, Rajputs, Gujars, Brahmans, Banias and the members of the Scheduled caste. The Kambos, Khattris and Aroras have come to the district after the Independence. The only Muslims are Meos. Ahirs, Jats, Gujars, Brahmans, Kambos and Meos being the chief agricultural communities of the district preponderate in the rural area.

Ahirs are chiefly found in the northern part of the Gurgaon tahsil. Though various other folk etymologies are current,¹ the name Ahir, according to H.A. Rose, is derived from the Sanskrit *abhira*, a milkman. As to their origin, a number of traditions are current. The Ahirs' own tradition, mentioned by Rose, is that a Brahman once took a Vaisya girl to wife and her offspring were pronounced *amat-sangya* or outcaste; that again a daughter of the *amat-sangyas* married a Brahman, and her offspring were called *abhirs* (i.e. Gopas or herdsmen), a word corrupted into Ahir. According to the *Delhi District Gazetteer*, 1883-84,² "Their (Ahirs) tradition claims for them a Rajput origin, and the story goes that, when the incarnation of Krishan (Krishna) took place in Bindraban (Vrindavan) some demon carried off the cattle of an ancestor of the tribe and also the man himself who was tending them. Krishna by his omnipotence, created a man for the purpose of tending the cattle, and brought back the cattle for him to take care of, and his descendants were henceforth to be called Ahirs. This is curiously *Irish* story, and does not deal well with the original herdsman;

1. One of these is *ahi-ar*, "snake-killer", due to the fact that Lord Krishna had once killed a snake. But according to the *Shrimad-Bhagwat*, Skand 10, Adhyaya 17, Lord Krishna did not kill the snake, but brought it out of the Yamuna.

2. Ibid, p. 75.

but another tradition steps in to add that the defeated and disappointed demon, when he saw his evil intentions thwarted, brought back the abducted cattle-driver, so that he and Krishna's man have between them to account for the tribe."

The Ahirs are divided into three *khanps* or sub-castes, viz. Nandbansi, Jadubansi and Gualbansi. The Jadubansi Ahirs, who claim to be descendents of the Yadu, a nomadic race, have 55 *gots*.¹ They were probably by origin a pastoral caste, but in Haryana they are now exclusively agricultural, and stand in quite the first rank as husbandmen. They are also supposed to have given their name to the Ahirwati dialect.²

The Jats are stout hard-working cultivators. They predominate in the Palwal tahsil.

The Rajputs, who are found all over the district, largely depend on service in the army.

The Gujars are chiefly in the villages of the Gurgaon and Ballabgarh tahsils adjoining the hills and are mostly a pastoral rather than an agricultural tribe. Lately, they have, however, settled down in agriculture in the Ballabgarh and Palwal tahsils.

The Brahmans are chiefly of the Gaur clan and are scattered in the Palwal, Ballabgarh and Gurgaon tahsils. They generally live on agriculture but are indifferent cultivators. The displaced agricultural people have settled mostly in Bahora Kalan, Dhankot, Chumuba and Badshahpur (Gurgaon tahsil); Taoru, Hathin, Ujina, Malab and Ghasiara (Nuh tahsil); Nagina, Mandi Khera and Punahana (Firozpur Jhirka tahsil); Pingor, Rasulpur, Seoli, Gudhraha, Likhi and Hasanpur (Palwal tahsil); and Gaunchhi, Fatehpur Biloch and Mehena (Ballabgarh tahsil).

The Kambohs are an agricultural tribe unmatched for their hard work.

1. H.A. Rose, *A Glossary Of The Tribes And Castes Of The Punjab and North-West Frontier Province*, Volume II, 1883, pp. 4—7. For a detailed account of the Jadubansi Ahirs, refer to (i) Rao Man Singh, *Yadav Ahir Kuldeepake* (or '*Tarikh Qaum Ahir Hindostan*'), pp. 104—216 (Delhi, 1889).

(ii) Elliot, *Races of North-West Provinces*.

2. Although Ahirwati has been described in the preceding pages, for its full account and that of its local varieties, refer to : Grierson, *The Linguistic Survey of India*, Volume IX, pp. 49—51, 233—41.

Due to their tenacity and persistence, they have succeeded in getting the best land in the district allotted to them.

The Vaish community, which is concentrated in urban areas, is mostly engaged in business.

The Khattris and Aroras settled here after the Partition of India, have brought new life to villages. They are excellent traders and shop-keepers.

The district has also a large number of people in the artisan classes. Because all of them cannot find work, a good number of them have taken to cultivation and are working as tenants and agricultural labourers. Kumhars, simple folks, belong to the caste of potters. Some of them work at the wheel and others wander with donkeys in search of work. They are mostly led by a Jamadar who is the leader of the group working outside the village. He deals with the contractors on behalf of his people. The income of Kumhars has shrunk during recent years. Most of the Kumhars worked in the salt mines now in Pakistan; but after the Partition this avenue of employment was lost to them. Extension in communications has taken away another part-time occupation of this community. When communication was difficult, a Kumhar could buy a few maunds of grain, transport this on his donkey's back and earn a few rupees. Since a large family is common to a Kumhar, the men get married at the age of 16 or even earlier, a widow is common. They have a *karewa* marriage or if her parents can afford it, she may have a marriage ceremony conducted by Brahman priests, which is equal in status to the first marriage. They, however, do not marry outside their community.

Muslims by religion, the Meos claim to be Rajputs by descent although this claim cannot be considered to have been definitely established. Many Meos believe that they are descended from the Chandravanshi, the Suryavanshi and Agnikula Rajput nobility of old times. As such they connect themselves with one or the other clan, the Tomaras, the Yadavas, the Chauhans (Chahamanas) and the Rathors.¹ It has been suggested that they might be descendants of some primitive Indian tribes who also became Rajputs. In any case, in spite of being converted to Islam they have followed the customs and cultural practices

1. "In spite of living a pastoral life and burdened with poverty, they (the Meo people) still regard themselves as highborn and descended from the most renowned among the earliest inhabitants of the country. Pride is expensive to maintain in poverty and the Meos pay the price for hugging on to one and unable to discard the others." (Hashim Amir Ali, *The Meos of Mewat*, 1970, p. 109.)

of both Hinduism and Islam.¹ Many Meos were "Muslims by name only" and they followed "about 50 per cent of their old Hindu customs."² Several Meos had "Hindu names such as Dhan Singh, Chand Singh, Sammu Singh."³ But in recent years the Meos have turned to orthodox Islam.⁴ Hindu festivals and fairs, are not celebrated any more by them. Hindu gods and goddesses are now losing attraction for them. They have also changed their names from 'Singh' to 'Khan'. Most of them now offer their daily prayers (*nimaz*) five times a day in the mosque or at home. Women say *nimaz* in their houses. The Mullah is respected and is given customary offerings on various occasions like births, deaths and festivals. *Jumma Nimaz* is held on every Friday and the Muslims assemble in *Idgahs*, mosques or some other scheduled places.

Any Meo will say that the tribe is divided into twelve *pals* and fifty-two *gots*; but no two enumerations of the *pals* precisely correspond; and the fifty-two *gots* include the *pals* and are not, as would at first appear, in addition to them. The Meos claim descent chiefly from three branches or Bans of the Rajputs and twelve sub-branches or *pals* enumerated below :—

Bans 1	Pal 2	Gotra 3
Yadav	1. Chiklot	
	2. Demrout	
	3. Dulout	At least 18 Gotras
	4. Nai	
	5. Pundlot	

1. "Although the Meos were converted from Hinduism to Islam about four centuries back, their adoption of Islamic cultural practices, even the religious injunctions prescribed in the Koran, remained until 1947 at best nominal and did not advance beyond male circumcision and burial of the dead." Partap C. Aggarwal: *Caste, Religion and Power*, 1971, p.1.

2. "The Customs of the Meos were predominantly Hindu. Their religious rituals were Hindu and were performed under the guidance of Brahman priests. There were Mewati versions of the *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata*, the two great epics of the Hindus. The Meos regarded the Hindu mythological heroes as their ancestors." Ibid, p. 42.

3. *An Economic Survey of Bhadas*, 1936, p. 18.

4. "...the Meos began abandoning Hindu customs with a vengeance and by 1964.....they had adopted a good many of the Muslim practices." Partap C. Aggarwal: *Caste, Religion and Power*, 1971, p.1.

1	2	3
Tomar	6. Lundawat	
	7. Dewal	
	8. Bagoria	At least 15 Gotras
	9. Ratawat	
	10. Balot	
	11. Gaurwal	
Kachuwaha	12. Ghaseria	Most of the other Gotras

"In addition to the above more or less accepted applications some references to Meo lineal classification actually enumerate the names of all the 52 Gotras in which the 12 Pals are next divided.

"The fact to be noted however is that in many cases whole villages often consist of Meos who belong to a single Pal and in most of the larger villages the Meos belonging to particular Pals constitute separate and distinct localities designated by the names of the respective Pals. The same holds good for the Gotras—the Meos belonging to each Gotra live by themselves slightly apart from those belonging to other Gotras.

"Each Meo is thus aware of the Pal or the Gotra to which he belongs as also the Pals and the Gotras to which most of his acquaintances belong. This geographical segregation of the people of one Pal or Gotra from those of another, even if nominal and indistinct, is sufficient to give the inhabitants of each Meo Kheda, village, or each Pada, section in a village, a distinct identification. Each Meo recognises every other Meo to belong to his own community, but each Meo also knows the Pal and Gotra distinctions which separate him from or attach him to, other Meos.

"The Meos living in each such geographical units—whether it be a village or only a section of a village—thus constitute a single family the boys and girls of which are taught to regard themselves as brothers and sisters. Marriage between a boy and a girl belonging to the same Gotra—which has thus become both a lineal and geographical unit—comes to be regarded as incest."¹

1. Hashim Amir Ali, *The Meos of Mewat*, 1970, pp. 53-4.

Socially, the Meos are a well-knit community, capable of united action in an emergency. Being a poor, backward and unsophisticated people, they can be easily led. They are able to eke out their living by sheer dint of hard-work in the inhospitable rain-fed areas of the Nuh and Firozpur Jhirka tahsils. But they have neglected to develop their land.

The poverty of the Moes is accentuated by their unthrifty habits. They are so lavish in expenditure that the failure of one harvest plunges them irretrievably into debt.

Early marriage is another bane of the Meos. This is considered as a safeguard against sexual laxity. Before a girl has reached her prime, she is already a mother to be classed among the matrons rather than among the young women. Further, the strong community feeling leads to much waste on ceremonies ; the whole sub-tribe may have to be invited to a wedding or a funeral feast. Known as *kaj* this feast is an expensive affair as its size denotes the prosperity of the host. The custom fortunately is on the decline under the inexorable pressure of economic circumstances.

The Meo women do not observe *purdah*. It is said that the Meos owe, more than any other tribe of the district , a great deal to the energy of their women. They do most of the field-work except ploughing and clod-crushing and they would do these also if there were no social stigma signifying widowhood attached to this work.

FAMILY LIFE

3.
The size of family living together depends largely on custom and circumstances. Some families are very large and include under one roof, more in rural than in urban areas, grandmother and grandfather, sons with their wives, and sometimes even daughters with their husbands, and many grand children. Broadly speaking, this joint-family system though traditionally prevalent, is slowly breaking up under the stress of social and economic circumstances. Transfer of property, acquired by individuals, by making a will, is becoming common. Townsfolk belonging to rural areas, often partition and neglect their properties in the villages ; they hardly ever go back to rural areas. Thus the tendency to shift from rural to urban areas is helping to liquidate the joint family system in the villages. Family life is becoming more and more individualistic.

INHERITANCE

The traditional type of inheritance among Hindus prevailed before the enforcement of the Hindu Succession Act, 1956, when sons used to inherit

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the intestate property after the death of the father, and if there was no son, the widow of the deceased inherited it. The widow had, however, only life interest in the property and she was not legally entitled to dispose it of as she liked. Except *stridhana*, a woman was not supposed to be the last owner of property; nor could a married daughter claim share in her father's property.

Now according to the Hindu Succession Act, 1956, sons and daughters, the mother and the widow along other heirs¹ 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, in spite 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 relations, though in such cases she usually retains her right to property.

MARRIAGE CUSTOMS AND MORALS

There are two predominant forms of marriage, viz., *Vivah* (Hindu marriage) and *Nikah* (Muslim marriage). *Anand Karaj* is the system of marriage which prevails among the Sikhs. *Karewa*, another form of widow-marriage, is also prevalent. Early marriage was the rule in the district in the past and there was no age limit at which the marriage could take place; but with the enforcement of the Child Marriage Restraint Act, 1930, there is a marked tendency to defer the age of marriage beyond the age specified in the Act.² However, early marriage is prevalent among the Meos.

Marriage is negotiated by the parents of the boy and the girl but sometimes the help of a *nai* (barber) is traditionally sought to arrange things between the parties. After the settlement, the parents of the girl offer *teeka* (saffron powder) to the boy and the ceremony marks the settlement of marriage which is announced. Betrothal follows the *teeka* ceremony. In the case of Meos, no *teeka* or betrothal ceremony takes place but either a *mai* or the family *nai* if he still exists, goes to boy's house with a small earthen pot containing *sarson* oil, a piece of turmeric and a coin and the wedding date is fixed finally. Among Hindus, *peeli chitthi* (a letter smeared over with turmeric) is sent from the girl's side proposing the date of marriage, which is confirmed by the boy's side. Negotiations in respect of the time of the *lagan* (auspicious moment), number of guests in the marriage party and other details regarding marriage are settled

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

2. The Child Marriage Restraint (Amendment) Act, 1978, has now provided 21 and 18 years as marriage age for boys and girls respectively.

directly or through a *nai* or some common friends or relatives. Prior to the marriage party proceeding to the bride's house, the ceremony of *ghurchari* takes place. The bridegroom rides a mare and takes a round of his locality and worships Bhumia or other gods in a temple. The marriage party arrives with the bridegroom and is accorded a reception by the bride's parents and taken in a procession to a *dharmsala* where arrangements for the stay of the marriage party are made. According to the Hindu marriage ritual, the wedding couple goes round four to seven times around the sacred fire ; in the first three rounds of the fire the bride leads and in the next the bridegroom. During the course of the wedding, the tenets of married life are read out to the wedding couple, the main principles being chastity, sincerity, faithfulness to each other and promises to stick together through thick and thin. In the case of *anand karaj*, the wedding couple goes round the holy Guru Granth Sahib instead of the sacred fire. Besides, some extracts from the holy Granth are read which sanctify the union.

A Meo marries early. The wedding is a prolonged affair. It is preceded by year-long preparations. Although polygamy is permissible, a Meo usually has one wife. As widow marriage is allowed in Islam, a young widow is generally married to the brother of the deceased husband. This is done so that the family property is not divided or does not go out of the family. "In spite of rigid rules of sanguinity—customs defining who can marry who, elopements are not rare. But they are not taken lightly either."¹

Earlier, a bride-price was charged. According to the tribal custom anything between Rs. 200 and Rs. 5,000 was demanded and paid for a girl. The price depended on the age. This was due to the economic importance of women who work in the fields. The custom is mostly extinct now and, instead, parents now give a dowry and entertain big marriage parties.

Meo marriages are generally held in the month of May and June after the crops have been harvested. The ceremonies begin with *lagan*., followed by *chak nauta*, and *ban nauta*. Dinners are served to the groom and his people by relatives and the residents of the village. Mustard oil is sent to the bride's people a week before the marriage. During *bendi-ka-nag* four days before the marriage, *laddus* are distributed in the village by the groom's family. *Batna* and *banvara* involve giving an oil bath to the groom two days before the wedding. The *baraat* is received by the bride's people on the outskirts of the village. Money is distributed by the bride's people among the *baraat*.

The *nikah* is performed in the village mosque according to the Islamic

1. Hashim Amir Ali, *The Meos of Mewat*, 1970, p. 61.

custom. The Maulvi recites some verses from the Koran and asks for the consent of the girl. As soon as the girl's consent is received the Maulvi asks the boy's consent, and the *nikah-nama* is signed. The legal ceremony does not take more than ten minutes. After this, dried dates (*chhoharas*) are distributed among the guests.

The *baraat* is served rice in earthen ware with sugar and pure ghee sprinkled on it. After the feast, the guests carry a spare dish called *kotal* and present it to any householder of the village who provides them the necessary facilities for the stay. The *kotal* signifies that the person is a *baraati*. Satisfactory arrangements for the stay of the *baraat* is a matter of respect and dignity for the whole village. The *baraat* leaves after two days. The bride's relatives go to the groom's village and bring her back after a couple of days. Or the girl remains in her parent's home for a year or two till she attains maturity. Her departure to her husband's house is called *gauna*.

Every year a colossal amount of money is poured into weddings. The ruinous expenditure on weddings today appears inevitable because hosts vie with one another in holding pompous receptions. The surprising thing is that people spend lavishly though not all of them have money. Some take a loan from rapacious money-lenders at exorbitant rates of interest and then spend a lifetime in paying back the money. They indulge in this showy and wasteful overspending lest their relatives should snigger and gossip.

Rich and poor both take marriage parties in taxies and tractor trollies. Private cars which are used as taxies charge exorbitantly. The social status of bride-groom is judged from the number of taxies hired for taking the marriage party. The bride is given various gifts by her parents and relatives so as to set up a new home. Besides jewellery and money too, a bride often brings her trousseau and articles of utility, e.g. furniture, mattresses, cooking utensils, etc. The dowry is presented according to the status of the family. Among Meos, dowry is known as *dan* which includes a lot of money, cattle and carts. The dowry system has become a tyranny for poor parents who cannot afford it. Radical changes in the marriage customs have, therefore, become vitally necessary. It is a happy sign that the Meos are awakening to all this avoidable and wasteful expenditure and there is an under-current to simplify the ceremonies, lessen the duration of the stay of *baraats* and reduce the dowry.

Restrictions on marriage alliance.—Every clan in the district is exogamous, i.e. while every man must marry into his own tribe, no man can marry into his own clan. The restrictions on the marriage alliance are described in the

Gurgaon District Gazetteer, 1910,¹ as follows :—

“Among the Ahir, Brahman, Taga, Jat (Hindu and Musalman), Hindu Gaurwa, Agri, and probably the Mallah tribes, as well as among some Musalman Gaurwas, a man may not marry a woman belonging to any of the following *gots* :—

1. his own *got* ;
2. his mother's *got* ;
3. his father's/mother's *got* ;
4. mother's mother's *got*.

And the same prohibition applies to women.

“Among the Gujars and Kaisths only the three *gots* first enumerated are forbidden. A man may marry in his mother's mother's *got*. Among the Rajputs, both Hindu and Musalman, a man may not marry a woman—

1. of his own *got* ;
2. of his mother's *thamba*;
3. of his father's mother's family, or grandfather's mother's family, so far as the relationship is traceable ;
4. descended from his father's sister or father's father's sister, &c., so far as the relationship is traceable.

“Among the Meos a man may not marry—

1. a woman of his own *got* or *pal* ;
2. a woman of the village his mother belonged to, even though of a different *got* ;
3. a woman of the village his father's mother belonged to ;
4. any woman whose relationship with him is close enough to be traceable ;
5. the daughter or descendant through males for two generations only of a woman of his own *got*.

“Among the Agarwal Banias a man may marry in any *got* except his own, even in his mother's *got* and even in his mother's family,

1. Ibid, p. 51.

provided the relationship be not very close. There is no distinct limit fixed."

These restrictions are now giving way to some extent and the suitability of a match becomes sometimes the criterion for the marriage alliance. This tendency is visible more among the educated and advanced families though the rural population is still in the grip of caste rigidity. The Meos do not marry with non-Muslims because they do not want to lose their distinctiveness as a religious and cultural group. The Hindus also follow the caste hierarchy and a person of higher caste will not marry a person of lower caste.

The marriage within the *gotra* or with cousins or inter-caste are also not approved by society and hence are rare. There has been occasional relaxation among the Hindu displaced persons migrated from Pakistan who may marry the daughters of maternal uncle and aunt probably due to the earlier Muslim influence. Though endogamy is permitted in Islam, Meos do not marry women of their mother or father's *gotras*.

With regard to widow marriage, Jats, Ahirs, Meos, Gujars and Harijans are more advanced as compared with the other castes. A woman of marriageable age seldom remains a widow and she is readily accepted as a wife by one of the brothers of the deceased husband. This type of marriage is called *Karewa*. *Karewa* is not accompanied by any ceremony. The woman merely resumes her jewels, bracelets and coloured clothes which she ceased to wear on her husband's death. A widow cannot be compelled to marry but the influence of the family is strong enough to make her yield to their wishes.

In case the husband dies shortly after the marriage and the girl has not lived with him or has no issue, she is re-married with all the ceremonies of the usual marriage. This is called *punar vivah*.

Sometimes widows do not marry but adopt some profession. In urban areas, they usually engage themselves in teaching, nursing, social work or doing some Government or private service but in rural areas they live only on the property left behind by their husbands or under the protection of their families.

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, cases of divorce are being instituted now and then in law courts. The following table gives year-wise details of divorce cases in the Gurgaon district since the creation of Haryana on November 1, 1966 :—

Year	Cases instituted			Divorce Petitions granted (Allowance allowed)	Dismissed	Cases compromised	Cases pending
	Pending cases	New cases	Total				
1966	—	14	14	1	8	—	5
1967	5	29	34	3	17	2	12
1968	12	27	39	9	23	2	5
1969	5	27	32	5	11	6	10
1970	10	26	36	6	16	4	10
1971	10	16	26	8	8	1	9
1972	9	32	41	9	21	4	7
1973	7	38	45	10	20	4	11
1974	11	43	54	7	16	3	28
1975	28	14	42	4	7	2	29
1976	29	16	45	8	8	2	27
1977	27	14	41	3	2	2	34

Birth and death customs.—Ritual impurity continues for 13 days in the case of a child birth in the family. The mother and the child are bathed on 3rd, 5th, 7th and 13th day. For 40 days, the mother is considered to be impure and is not allowed to cook meals. People welcome the birth of a male child and distribute sweets to celebrate the occasion. The parents of the mother send *chhoochak* which comprises some ornaments and clothes for the mother and the child. Feasts are held and sisters and daughters of the family are offered gifts.

Among the Meos the *soonat* (circumcision) ceremony takes place in the case of a male child when he attains the age of about 5 years. This is considered to be one of the religious ceremonies and is a must according to Islam. On the occasion, friends and relatives are invited and feasted.

Among the Hindus, the *mundan* ceremony is performed and relatives

and friends are invited and feasts are held. The ceremony is performed when either the child is one year old or when he is of three years. The child is shorn of all his hair and this is the first hair-cut in his life. Some orthodox families take the child to a temple in or outside the district to perform the ceremony.

In case of death, the dead body is bathed and wrapped in a piece of new unwashed cloth. The Hindus cremate the dead body. They collect ashes of the deceased on the fourth day and immerse these in the Ganga. The family mourning continues for 13 or 17 days. In the end, the family priest is served with meals in the name of the deceased. Among the Meos, the corpse is buried in a graveyard and the Mullah recites verses from the Koran for about 3 days in the name of the departed soul.¹

POSITION OF WOMEN

The women folk of the district are mostly engaged in outdoor and indoor activities of agriculture which is the mainstay of the people of this area. Since independence, the condition of women has undergone a vital change. Education of women has received a new impetus and numerous agricultural and technical institutions have been set up. The spread of education has jerked the social barriers against their employment. Women are now serving as Lady Health Visitors, Auxiliary Nurses, Midwives, Staff Nurses, Trained Dais, Teachers, Craft Mistresses, Gram Sewikas, Social Education Organisers, Physical Instructors, Sewing Mistresses, etc. Women have not yet ventured in the fields of engineering, transport and the like. On the other hand, they are replacing men in many other fields such as social education, child welfare and community work, arts and crafts and social work. This is more true of the urban areas.

In rural areas the division of work between man and woman is, however, still very rigid. The woman puts in more work than the man who may while away most of his time in smoking a hookah or gossiping with friends. The Jat women participate in nearly all agricultural operations except ploughing. They take care of cattle and assist men even in sowing operations. Their work in the fields is in addition to what they have to do within the households. Darling, therefore, rightly remarked that the Jatni was an economic treasure.² This equally applied to the Meoni. The life of the

1. The celebration of *kaj* is vanishing among Meos. It is a feast which is held sometime between the third and the fourth day after the death of a person. The most ordinary *kaj* involves inviting relatives and friends and entertaining them for three days. In a few cases, a whole circle of villages constituting *pal* was invited and thousands of rupees were spent on entertainment.

2. Malcolm Lyall Darling, *The Punjab Peasant in Prosperity and Debt*, 1925, p. 38.

housewife is, on the whole, a hard one. She goes to the village well with *gharas* (earthen water pots) on her head, draws water twice a day, cooks the morning meal and when the men are at work in the fields, carries the food to them. On return home, she has to cook the evening meal. In addition to this, she spins cotton and collect cowdung from the fields for making *oplas*. The list of odd jobs attended to by the women is inexhaustible. No wonder they age prematurely. Women who are no more than 25 or 30 look as if they were 40 or 50.

Women have not attained equality with men despite the best efforts of the Arya Samaj and other reformist organisations. One reason is that, in rural areas in particular, they have remained illiterate, largely on account of the attitude of their parents. Even at places where girls schools exist, people are not usually as keen to send their girls to school as they send the boys. Being conservative by nature, they are afraid of modernising influences. Some feel that they cannot allow their daughters to do other outdoor jobs since the daughters help them in field work all day long. Thus women, by and large, are neither educated nor economically independent. They command a lower status in society and cannot be independent.

HOME LIFE

Although it may appear to a casual observer that the home life of villagers is patterned on traditional lines, yet a closer view at once indicates the directions in which changes in this pattern are percolating from the more modernised urban localities.

Dwellings (Rural and Urban).—The usual types of dwellings in rural consist of a few rooms which are constructed around a courtyard. One room near the courtyard is meant for tethering of cattle. In poor families, the cattle and members of the family share the room. The number of rooms depends upon the status of the family. Generally, the farmers have houses which consist of two to three rooms; Harijans and other poor communities possess houses which have only one or two rooms. Many of the houses in the villages have roofs thatched with straw and grass. In recent years, some villagers have constructed houses with pakka roofs. But houses are generally constructed without any plan. There is hardly any provision for ventilation and proper lighting. The walls and floors are plastered with mud. Provision for bathrooms and latrines hardly exist in the houses and members of the family go out in the fields to answer the call of nature. The men take their bath in temples or mosques or at the well whereas females take their bath in the corner of a room where an outlet for water is provided. With the rise in

the standard of living, rural people are also realising the need of bathrooms, latrines and proper sanitary arrangements.

The business community in urban areas have constructed pakka houses and these houses are generally double-storeyed. Where such houses are located in the market, the shops are constructed on the ground floor and living quarters are placed behind the shops or on the first floor. They have also arrangements for the latrines and bath rooms and their roofs are pakka and the walls and floors are made of burnt bricks and something plastered with cement.

With the construction of model towns and new colonies in various urban areas of the district, modern houses with a courtyard and lawns are also coming up. In such localities, there are arrangements for piped water-supply and proper drainage. Shamaspur, Ajrounda and Daulatbad are the three properly planned model villages having good houses.

According to 1961 Census, there were 2,10,557 households in the district. Of these, 0.2 per cent did not have any regular room ; 40.8 per cent had one room ; 31.0 per cent 2 rooms ; 14.4 per cent 3 rooms ; 6.6 per cent 4 rooms ; and 7.0 per cent 5 or more rooms.

A household in urban as well as rural areas consisted of 5.9 persons on an average. The size of the household increased with the number of rooms in the dwelling. It was 4.78 persons in the case of household living in one room unit and 9.33 persons in the case of those living in the dwelling of 5 or more rooms. The rate of increase in the size of household was, however, not so steep and consequently the number of persons per room declined in large dwellings. Against the district percentage of 40.8 in the case of one room dwellings, the Firozpur Jhirka tahsil had 55.7 per cent of such dwellings in which an average 5.06 persons resided in one room.

Furniture and decorations.—The villagers generally possess articles of utility and not of beauty and these generally include *charpoys*, *peeras* and *moorahs*. Few houses have chairs or tables. Well-to-do landowners have, however, big *niwar* or fine string beds.

The houses in the towns are provided with chairs and tables. Houses of well-to-do persons are furnished with sofas, wardrobes and dinning tables.

In towns, pictures, curtains and some other curio articles form interior decoration of the houses; but interior decoration as such is hardly known in the villages. They decorate their houses with some calendars or pictures of some national leaders or prophets.

Handi, degchi, katora and metal tumbler are common utensils used by the people in rural areas. The Hindus use utensils made of brass or bronze, and the Meos usually make do with a *degchi* of copper, *katora* of brass, and aluminium tumblers. Petromax lamps, torches and sewing machines are becoming common in rural areas. In towns, the brass and bronze utensils are getting replaced by porcelain crockery; however, the cooking utensils are still of brass and bronze. Utensils of stainless steel are used rarely being more expensive. Kerosene stoves, radio sets, transistor radios and sewing machines are generally found not only in urban houses but are a common sight in rural areas also. Bicycles are now ubiquitous both in towns and villages.

Dress and ornaments.—The common dress worn by men of the district is a shirt, a *dhoti* round the waist and turban or a cap on the head. The Meos wear a loose *kurta*, a wrap *tahmat* and a turban. The turban is usually made of coarse cloth and is called *phainta* among the Meos and *safa, dupatta* and *patka* among others. In eastern parts of the district, quilted trousers are also used in winter. The most common type of shoes is the village made *panta*, which has a design common throughout the rural areas in north India.

Women usually wear *ghagra* (a loose skirt or petticoat), a full sleeved shirt, and *orhna*. On festive and ceremonial occasions, they wear multi-coloured new clothes. Ahir women generally put on blue petticoat and red *orhna* worked on the *hem* in white and usually studded with circular pieces of tiny mirrors. These too are frequently decorated with bosses and fringes. The common dress of a Muslim woman is a *churidar* pyjama, a full sleeved shirt, and an *orhna* (known as *lagra* among Meos) to cover the shoulders and the head. Invariably these are of different colours—red, green, yellow and black being most common. These colours are fast and deep.¹

1. "Above the thick triangular scarf, with two of its corners framing the face and falling on the shoulders the Meo women, when going out of their houses, are often found to carry rectangular wicker baskets on their heads. Being seen outside their homes without these encumbrances appears to be looked upon almost as *brazon* impropriety: Custom makes them always carry a little grain in these baskets and this no doubt is a remnant of the days when barter was the mode of exchange and these baskets served the same purpose as the purpose of the women do in the cities of our own day.

"But the Meo eve has inculcated charm and picture sequences even to these encumbrances. Beneath these baskets is generally kept a soft ring, with coloured strings falling from it on the shoulders and reaching up to the waists. The ends of these strings are adorned with shells or beads and a sudden movement of the head makes soft music."

(Hashim Amir Ali, *The Meos of Mewat*, 1970, pp. 51-52.)

Married women whose husbands are alive, display a number of ornaments, the commonest among these are the silver rings, 5 to 6 for each ear, *pachheli* (silver bangles) round the wrists, *baankara*, *haansli*, and *kara* and *naivri* about the ankles. Glass bangles are also worn by younger women, never by widows. *Bali bunda* and chained buttons to shirts are common among Meo girls. Poor women cannot afford many ornaments and they wear silver *kara* on the wrist and *naivri* about the ankles. Men do not generally wear ornaments. *Baankara* and *murki* are used by bridegrooms among Meos on the occasion of marriage.

After 1947, Hindu displaced persons from Pakistan brought with them their own traditions. The last three decades have witnessed a significant cultural fusion between the life style of the old residents and the new. Thus *salwar* and *kamiz* are being increasingly adopted by young girls studying in schools, and even some of the grown-up women have started discarding the old graceful *ghagri* in favour of the *salwar*. They have also almost given up the use of their heavy silver ornaments. The tall and well-built Jat women appear very graceful in their *ghagris* and their bright clothes lend charm and colour to the countryside. The gradual disappearance of the *ghagri* with its bright colours is perhaps not altogether a welcome feature.

The western style of dress in some form or other is gaining favour in urban areas. People belonging to the learned professions, officials, college students in particular irrespective of their origin (whether rural or urban), caste and creed have generally adopted this style of dress.

Food.—Food of the people is simple and there is little variety except slight seasonal variations that depend upon the nature and kind of harvest they get. The number of daily meals is according to the season of the year and the work to be done. The staple food is *bajra* mixed with wheat, gram and barley. *Bajra* is taken during the winter whereas barley, gram and wheat constitute staple food during the summer. Rice is taken only on ceremonial occasions. The people also consume vegetables which are available and pulses like *moong* and *mash*. The people generally do not take meat and eggs; even Meos take these occasionally. Curd milk is consumed in great quantities.

There are no fixed meal times but generally the first meal is taken in the fields before 10 A.M. Lunch consists of loaves besmeared with purified butter and pulses or vegetables. In the evening, tea is taken. In recent years

tea has become quite popular in towns as well as in villages. The dinner consists of *chapatis*, some vegetable, onion and chillies. During winter, large quantities of milk, butter-milk are consumed daily. *Kheer*, *halwa* and sweet rice puddings are common. Normally, they are prepared once a week; but are also prepared on festive occasions and for entertainment of guests.

In urban areas during the past few years the use of vegetable oils has become common. The consumption of vegetables and fruits has increased. Since the Partition, the habit of meat eating has been on the increase and meat shops are seen in a number of towns. Some people from the rural areas have also acquired a taste for meat eating and they enjoy their meals in a *dhaba* on their visit to the town.

So far as drink is concerned, tea as a stimulating drink has become very popular with both urban and rural people. Tea stalls are found in every town and big villages. In summer months, some people prefer to drink a glass of *sharbet* or *lassi*. The aerated soft drinks are becoming popular with younger people. The country-made liquor is consumed practically in every village. Drinking liquor is unfortunately becoming more common everywhere.

Men are much addicted to the use of tobacco—cigarette and bidi smoking in towns and hookah in villages. As a rule women do not indulge in smoking.

COMMUNITY LIFE

As everywhere else, community life is somewhat more effectively organised in villages than in towns. A growing town cannot claim to be the nucleus of a single community. Its various social and economic groups are more exclusive even when scattered. They do not come into such frequent contact with one another. Civic responsibilities no doubt are applicable to all, but these are not cohesive in their nature. And this is more true of an expanding town which is sprawled over a large area. There is a growing tendency for voluntary social agencies to establish themselves in local areas or small towns and organise community life in some form or other. They also organise mass celebration of important festivals in their respective areas.

The social situation in villages is different. Big and small landowners, agricultural labourers and other workers are not far apart from each other. The limited amenities and amusements of village life are equally shared by all of them and require their combined attention. The Community Develop-

ment Programmes have given a fillip to community activities of various kinds and the panchayats have also become a nucleus of community activities.

FOLK CULTURE

The folk culture of the district is expressed in folk-songs, dances and theatre. With fast changing conditions urban culture is slowly but surely making an inroad into folk life. The gramophone-record is an onslaught on the songs of the village *ragi* and the radio seeks to replace the group festivals of folk-songs and dances. Despite all this, folk culture continues to enliven the countryside which hums with dances, folk-songs sung on various occasions and festivals. Of late, All India Radio is giving good attention to the revival of folk culture and broadcasts 'Lok Manas' featuring programmes on Haryana culture, besides the special programmes telecast by the Delhi Television Centre.

The renowned Hindi poet, Surdas, of Bhakti Movement (Krishna Shakha), who composed his verses in *Braj Bhasha*, is said to have been born at Sihigram (near Ballabgarh) in this district. Although the Mewati dialect has no script or written literature, some Mewati poets, like Saadullah Khan, Nurullah Shah, Bhikji Baded, Lal Das and Munshi Ahmed Khan are well known. Among other familiar Meo names may be counted Ehakkay, Ewaz Daddo, Nabi Khan, Ahmed Chander Bhan and Raja. *Mahabharata* translated into Mewati by Saadullah Khan is still extant. The literary contribution of most of these not having acquired the status of written literature, and being passed down from generation to generation by word of mouth and recital, has assumed the form of folk-songs.

The *dohas* of one of the famous Hindi poets, Abdur Rahim Khan-e-Khanan, popularly known as 'Rahiman', are very much current particularly in the Mewat area.¹ He has beautifully depicted the tenderness of love in the following *doha* saying that it is very difficult to have the same feeling of unity and grace as before if the thread of love is once broken:—

*Rahiman dhaaga prem ka,
mat toro chatkaye;
Tute se phir na mile,
mile gaanth par jaye.*

1. "The most famous of names associated with Meo poetry is that of Abdur Rahim Khan-Khanan, whose tomb now dominates the bridge separating Nizamudin from Bhogal on the Mathura Road in South Delhi. His father is said to have been a Turk and his mother was a daughter of the Mewat area. Both apparently shared some literary talents and the mother wrote in both Persian and Mewati. Rahiman is said to have been born and brought up in Alwar."

(Hashim Amir Ali, *The Meos of Mewat*, 1970, p. 70.)

Folk-songs.—With their burden of love and labour, folk-songs have a peculiar charm of their own. In these songs, the heart-beats of the rural people vibrate with their hopes, aspirations, love longings, joys and sorrow. We also hear about the changing season, tinkling of bells of the cattle returning home at sunset, waving of fields of green wheat speckled with yellow *sarson* and the emotional outbursts of married couples at the time of their union and separation.

There is a variety of folk-songs, connected with particular occasions. A good number of these are nature songs in particular months. The month of Sravana (July-August) brings ecstasy in its wake. The impact of the season on the emotional life is obvious. With the onset of black clouds of the monsoon and the raging torrential rains, love longings are evoked. When the sky is overcast with the hanging clouds young women come out of their homes and get lost in the raptures and ecstasies of nature. Their hearts echo in songs and they sing while they swing :

O Mother ! torrential rains have come,
All the tanks and ponds are full of water,

O Mother ! the month of Sravana has come,
Swings are seen on every tree,

O Mother ! *bajra* and *jowar* have sprouted,
The landscape has turned green,

O Mother ! plants are growing speedily
Like a newly-wedded girl.

Teej or Haryali Teej is the main festival of Sravana, falling on Sudi 3 (third of the lunar month). It is observed throughout Haryana. By this time the rainy season starts gathering momentum replacing the scorching summer. To celebrate this change, young girls of the countryside yearn for the approach of Teej. It is an occasion for the newly-married girls to go back to their parents. The mother-in-law is approached for permission. The following lines beautifully depict a dialogue between the *bahu* (daughter-in-law) and her *sasar* (mother-in-law):—

There comes, O mother-in-law ! the month of Sravana,
Let us to our father's home proceed !

O my bride ! who the accompaniers 've come ?
With whose permission will you proceed ?
To your father's home indeed !

O mother-in-law ! brother, the accompaniers 've come,
 With your permission I'll proceed,
 To my father's home indeed !

The mother-in-law would not object to her going but what about the field and domestic affairs ? Who would attend to these jobs in her absence ?

Who will do the hoeing ?
 Who will grind the allotted grain ?
 Who, O my bride ! will wash my head ?
 And who will fry the *kasar* ?

The intelligent daughter-in-law works out the problem very ably :

Elder *jeth*, O mother-in-law ! will do the hoeing,
 Elder *jethi*, O mother-in-law ! will grind the allotted grain,
 Barber's wife, O mother-in-law ! will wash your head,
 The brother's wife will fry the *kasar*.

The month of Phalguna (February-March) is a pleasant period which inspires women to sing and dance. It announces the advent of spring; the wintry fog and mist is lifted from the face of the earth and the whisper of spring is in the air. In moonlit nights after they are free from daily chores, the women congregate and sing songs :

Two daughters-in-law in a house,
 Both go for water,
 O dear ! colourful Phalguna has come,
 The scorpoid ring slipped from a daughter-in-law's foot finger,
 And the daughter-in-law behind picked it up,
 O dear ! colourful Phalguna has come.....

The villagers sing *russia* on Holi in Phalguna. The song is in conversation form and is accompanied by the beats of cattle-drums, harmonium, *chimta*, etc. :

Who is one in this universe and who are two ?
 Who is awake and who is asleep ?
 God is one and the sun and the moon are two ;
 The sin, in the universe, is awake and the goodness asleep.

Ceremonial songs, marriage songs and songs on married life are essentially lyrics sung by women. Indispensable to the various rituals and

ceremonies cover a wide range of subjects. The following lines, reminiscent of the forgotten social past, are from a marriage song sung by women :—

O beloved daughter ! don't go to the pond,
Your husband's party is coming,

They are riding the horses,
armed with shields and swords,
Covering their heads with round caps
and dressed in pendant waist-
clothes.

O beloved daughter ! don't go to the garden,
.....

A woman sing lullabies and cradle songs when she swings the cradle. Invariably these abound in soft and tender feelings natural to the theme :

Your grandfather gets a rattle for you,
And your grandmother dandles you,
rejoice, Oh dear boy !

Your uncle gets a gold rattle for you,
And your aunt dandles you,
rejoice, Oh darling boy !

The folk-songs are essentially lyrics giving a glimpse into the woman's heart. These describe a girl's longing for love and marriage, her initial inhibitions, her usual apprehensions, her emotional reaction to the dreary lot in a strange house, complaints from the young wife regarding the monotony of domestic life and various types of odd work which she is compelled to do, pangs of childbirth, 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 woman who has preserved the tradition of folk lore.

Folk-dances.—Folk-dancing, an outburst of surging emotions, at times accompanies folk-singing. The celebration of Phag is a significant festival and its celebration continues for a month. Locally, it is also called Dhuhl-aindi because it is celebrated in a season when dust storms blow. In March, after their daily chores, women congregate in the village in an open space and sing and dance till late at night. Their melodious sound spreads through the village and resounds in gaiety. The dance usually starts with the lines,

which have a distinct poetic flavour :

O dyer's son ! beat the *daph* rhythmically,
 Beat it so beautifully that
 The Yamuna water may hear
 And turn more charming.

The women sit in a circle and sing to the sound of drumbeats or pitcher-beats. Two women, or sometimes four, dance in a circle to the tune of the song. Though the congregation is only of women, they sometimes dance with their faces covered. The style of the dance on this occasion resembles *gidda* of Punjab.

Folk-tales.—Folk-tales are enchanting and it is a pleasure to hear them at leisure. The characters of folk-tales form the motifs of the facades of houses and *chaupals*. Sorath, Hira Mal Jaisi, Nautanki, Bhartri Hari, Gopi Chand and Nihal Dey are popular subjects among such characters.

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 and in a 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 Phalgun and Chaitra (February-March). *Kabaddi* matches are enthusiastically arranged during the festivals, particularly Teej and Raksha Bandhan. 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 about 23 metres with 10 players on each side while the field for National style *kabaddi* is marked as a rectangle of 13 metres by 10 metres. In Haryana type, a player of one team goes to the court of the other team repeating the words *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 the words *kaudi kaudi* in the same breath, the particular player of opposite team is considered to be out and that team loses one point. In case the player is not able to return to his side by crossing the boundary line in one breath, he is considered to be out and 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, 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. 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.

To encourage sports in the rural areas, the State Government gives grant for the construction of playgrounds and also provides coaching facilities. The State Government awards scholarships to promising young players from schools and colleges. 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.¹

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 inhaling *bidi*. Having no other engagement, the *baraatis* accompanying the *baraat* to the bride's village eagerly indulge in these games to while away their time.

The State Public Relations Department has provided radio sets to panchayats, cooperatives 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. The contiguity of Delhi has bestowed a great boon on the areas of the Gurgaon district which come within the range (60 kilometres) of the Delhi Television Centre. People, both in urban and rural areas, are taking full advantage of this fortunate situation. While many in urban areas, particularly in Faridabad old, Faridabad, Ballabgarh and Gurgaon own their own television sets, the Government and other agencies have installed television sets at various places in the district.² The items shown on the television include agricultural and animal husbandry development programmes, rural programmes, educational programmes, films, dramas, folk-songs, news bulletins, etc. *Krishi Darshan* programme relayed on Monday, Wednesday and Friday is very popular among the farmers. Gossiping and listening to the radio are common pastimes. The portable transistor has become a fashion of the day with everybody without distinction.

1. For details about sports activities in the district, see Chapter on 'Education and Culture'.

2. For list of the places, see Chapter on 'Other Departments'.

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. There are 12 cinema houses and 2 touring talkies¹ in the district. The cinema houses are located at Faridabad (4), Gurgaon (4), Palwal (1), Hodal (1), Sohna (1) and Ballabgarh (1). Recorded film songs and music are freely played on marriages and other festive occasions.

REHABILITATION²

Following the Independence of the country on August 15, 1947, the Punjab Province was bifurcated into the East Punjab,³ and the West Punjab. The former formed a part of India and the latter of Pakistan.

The Partition triggered off communal disturbances of great magnitude. Members of the minority communities on either side had to flee for their life in large numbers leaving everything behind; their lands, houses, cattle, household goods and even valuables. Political expediency had suddenly transformed the refugees fleeing from their own land and making for a border that was yet to be officially demarcated.

Lakhs of Hindus and Sikhs moved from Pakistan to the East Punjab, and almost the same number of Muslims travelled from the East Punjab, Delhi and Uttar Pradesh to Pakistan. This tragic movement was one of the most massive in history involving inevitable hardships and miseries. Mostly, the refugees wended their weary way in long caravans on foot and in bullock carts. Others came crammed in trucks or clinging at great risk to the sides and roofs of trains. A few fortunate ones managed to come by air. The movement of all of them was regulated under the protection of the Military Evacuation Organisation. Despite official efforts to protect the migrating population, lawless elements on both sides played havoc with many convoys. Communal feelings running high in those days made human beings behave barbarously towards their victims. The Government of India and the East Punjab Government rose equal to the needs of the time. They took all possible steps

1. The two touring talkies were given licences after March 1975, viz. Parbhat at Faridabad Old on May 5, 1975, and Raj at Anangpur on February 2, 1976.

2. All the data and information included in this section relate to the Gurgaon district prior to its re-organisation on December 22, 1972.

3. The East Punjab then comprised the Ambala Division, (Hisar, Rohtak, Gurgaon, Karnal, Ambala and Simla districts), the Jullundur Division (Kangra, Hoshiarpur, Jullundur, Ludhiana and Firozpur districts) and a part of the Lahore Division (Amritsar district, Gurdaspur district except Shakargarh tahsil and Patti sub-tahsil of Lahore district),

to alleviate the sufferings of these distressed people. It was a tremendous task requiring a heroic effort. The fact that this challenge was met so successfully within a decade speaks volumes in favour of the administration. The following pages will show how the Government proceeded comprehensively on all fronts.

Refugee camps.—Transit camps were established at Amritsar, Gurdaspur, Jullundur, Ludhiana, Ambala and particularly large one at Kurukshetra with a capacity of five lakh. The rush of displaced people obliged the Government to establish refugee camps in other districts as well. Accordingly, six such camps were set up in the Gurgaon district; three at Gurgaon and one each at Palwal, Rewari and Faridabad and approximately 35,000 people were accommodated in these camps. All available buildings, including educational institutions, were utilised for sheltering refugees and even tented camps had to be set up. The services of teachers and students were utilised in the management of these relief camps. In lieu of the recognised service, students were given certificates/degrees by the newly set-up Panjab University, entitling them to have qualified in their respective examinations (without actually undergoing examination).

Camp life was made reasonably agreeable by the provision of a number of facilities. Free ration was distributed in these camps. Fruits, multi-vitamin tablets and other special items of diet were issued to refugees on medical advice. Blankets, quilts and clothes were supplied during the winter. Dispensaries were opened in tents for immediate medical relief. These camps provided much needed relief to the displaced persons and gave breathing time to all concerned to plan their future.

Though by the summer of 1948 the routine of camp life and administration of relief was well organised, the stage had arrived for the Government to take the next step of enabling displaced persons to find independent means of existence. To achieve this the grant of free rations was limited to those families who had no adult male member and could not, therefore, maintain themselves. All able-bodied male adults between ages of 16 and 60 years, who began to work or who refused to work when they got the opportunity, were de-rationed along with their dependents although they were allowed to live in the camps. Those entitled to allotment of land were obliged to leave soon after temporary allotment of the evacuee land had been made to them.

The population in the camps started decreasing gradually as a result of the steps taken for the speedy re-settlement of the displaced persons. Displaced persons from rural areas moved into villages evacuated by Muslims.

while those from urban areas were sent to towns where they took to various avocations to earn their livelihood. For the destitutes, two infirmaries were set up, one at Palwal in 1951 and another at Rewari¹ in 1954. The former was closed in 1961 and its inmates were transferred to the later. Subsequently, the Rewari Infirmary was shifted to Rohtak in 1964 and merged with the Mahila Ashram, Rohtak, which was re-named Infirmary, Rohtak.² During the period 1954—64, the maximum number of inmates in the Rewari Infirmary was 2,060. Of this number, 1,152 were rehabilitated.³ Besides free accommodation, electricity, water, medical treatment and education for their children, the inmates were provided with cash doles and clothing allowance as detailed below :

Unit of family	Cash dole per ensem	Clothing allowance per ensem
	(Rs.)	(Rs.)
One member	35	2
Two members	50	4
Three members	65	6
Four members	78	8
Five members	90	10
Six members	100	10
Seven members	110	10

Other facilities included three training-cum-production centres (for tailoring, hand embroidery and weaving craft) and a hostel for bed-ridden inmates where arrangements existed for cooked meals. As soon as a family started earning more than Rs. 150 a month, it was given one year cash dole in advance and discharged from the Infirmary.

Emigration and immigration.—The Muslim population of the district consisted of Meos, Afghans, Baluches, Muslim Rajputs and Sheikhs. No accurate figures are available to show the precise number of Muslim evacuees, but the diminution of about 86,000 in the Muslim population in the Census

1. In the Mahendragarh district since December 22, 1972.

2. For details about Infirmary, Rohtak, refer to the *Rohtak District Gazetteer, 1970*, pp. 315-16 and 335-36.

3. Of the remaining 908 inmates who were transferred to the Rohtak Infirmary, 628 have further been rehabilitated and there are now only 280 inmates.

figures of 1941 and 1951 indicates roughly the extent of their migration to Pakistan.¹

The displaced persons from Dera Ghazi Khan, Mianwali, Muzaffargarh and other parts of Pakistan were settled in the then district. Table V of Appendix gives their number according to the district of origin, while the following table shows the displaced persons settled in the urban and rural areas of the district as per 1951 Census:—

District of origin	Number of persons settled in rural areas							Number of persons settled in urban areas	Grand total
	Gurgaon tahsil	Balalgarh tahsil	Firozpur Jhirka tahsil	Nuh tahsil	Palwal tahsil	Rewari tahsil	Total		
Dera Ghazi Khan	1,137	340	5,813	160	1,782	5,706	14,938	14,676	29,614
Mianwali	221	1,252	9	1,661	9	720	3,872	10,044	13,916
Muzaffargarh	81	418	14	37	30	1,789	2,369	1,739	4,108
Others	677	226	3,534	345	184	1,583	6,549	30,400	36,949
Total :	2,116	22,36	9,370	2,203	2,005	9,798	27,728	56,859	84,587

RURAL REHABILITATION

The aim of the Government at that time was to ensure quick distribution of land with the object of giving employment to all displaced farmers who could start cultivation immediately. Possession was not to be delayed as the *kharif* crop was standing and *rabi* of 1948 was to be sown. All agricultural refugees who had either owned land or held land by virtue of grant and were cultivating it in Pakistan were declared eligible for temporary allotments. Allotments of lands abandoned by Muslims were accordingly made, preference being given to groups of cultivators who were bound by ties of kinship or friendship. This was done to maintain the social homogeneity of such settlements. Under this scheme, each family was given a plough unit (about 10 acres or 4 hectares) of land regardless of its holding in the West Punjab (Pakistan) and financial assistance in the form of food and *taccavi* loans. This measure not only provided work and the means of livelihood to a very large number of displaced persons but also had a very salutary effect on agricultural production in the State. That is why, despite its shattered economy during the post partition years, agricultural production in the State did not remain low for very long.

1. The total number of Muslims according to 1941 Census was about 2,50,000 whereas 1951 Census shows the number as 1,63,663.

Allocations.—The bulk of the population from the Dera Ghazi Khan and Mianwali districts, including colonists, was settled in the Gurgaon district. In addition, provision was made for those displaced persons from Muzaffargarh who had already settled in the district and did not wish to be settled elsewhere.

Allocations to the displaced persons from Dera Ghazi Khan.—The grade I area left behind in the Dera Ghazi Khan district was much more than the areas classed as grade I and even as grade II available in the Gurgaon district. The lands of the Palwal and Ballabgarh tahsils were relatively more fertile. It was, therefore, decided that the entire area available in the Ballabgarh tahsil and 7,500 standard acres¹ in the Palwal tahsil be allotted to displaced persons from Chahi Nehri circle of the Dera Ghazi Khan tahsil.

For Chak Qutab and Chak Qadra of the Rajanpur tahsil, 2,814 standard acres were provided in the Palwal tahsil. For Chak Sind of the Jampur tahsil, 5,000 standard acres were provided in the Palwal tahsil. The claimants of Chahi Nehri circle of the Sanghar tahsil were to be allotted land in Bangar circle of the Firozpur Jhirka tahsil.

The remaining claimants from the grade I assessment circles of the Dera Ghazi Khan district were to be settled in the Firozpur Jhirka tahsil in Bangar, Deher and Chiknot circles and in the grade III villages of Budher circle.

The claimants from Sailab circle of the Rajanpur tahsil and Sind circle of the Sanghar tahsil were to receive allotment in the Sohna and Sahibi circles of the Gurgaon tahsil and, if necessary, in the grade III villages of Bahora and Bhud circles.

The claimants from Pachhad circle of the Dera Ghazi Khan tahsil, Kalapani circle of the Jampur tahsil, a group of villages (which was specified) near Dajal in the Jampur tahsil and Pachhad of the Rajanpur tahsil were to receive allotment in the grade IV villages of Bahora and Bhud circles of the Gurgaon tahsil and the grade IV villages of Budher circle of the Firozpur Jhirka tahsil. The claimants from Pachhad circle of the Sanghar tahsil and the remaining Pachhad claimants of the Jampur tahsil were to be settled in the Narnaul tahsil of the Mahendragarh district.²

1. It is a measure of area convertible into ordinary acres of any class of land according to the prescribed scale with reference to the quantity of yield and quality of soil.

2. For the purpose of settlement of displaced persons from Dera Ghazi Khan, tahsil Narnaul of the Mahendragarh district (then in Pepsu) and Gurgaon were treated as a single area of allocation.

In the parts of the Gurgaon district, earmarked for the Dera Ghazi Khan or Mianwali districts or where Muzaffargarh refugees were already settled, displaced persons to whom allotment had already been made and whose settlement was consistent with the rules of grading, were allowed to remain there. Thus, a displaced person from Pucka circle of the Bhakkar tahsil could remain in Palwal or Ballabgarh if he was already settled temporarily and wished to remain there.

Allocations to the displaced persons from Mianwali.—Bawal sub-tahsil of the then Gurgaon district was earmarked for the resettlement of displaced persons from the Mianwali district. The provision in this area was in addition to 4,000 standard acres provided in the Ambala district for those already settled there and others from Pucka circle of the Mianwali tahsil, and 1,000 standard acres provided in the Karnal district for displaced weavers from the Bhakkar tahsil who had been settled at Panipat.

Displaced persons from Pucka circle of the Bhakkar tahsil, Pucka circle of the Mianwali tahsil and Saadat Miani circle were to be settled in Gurgaon and Sahibi circles of the Gurgaon tahsil and Bangar and Dehar circles of the Nuh tahsil.

Displaced persons from Pucka and Nehri circles of the Isa Khel tahsil, Kacha and Khudri of the Mianwali tahsil, Kacha of the Bhakkar tahsil and Kacha circle of the Isa Khel tahsil were to be settled in the grade III villages of Dehar and Taoru circles of the Nuh tahsil, the Pataudi sub-tahsil and grade II and grade III villages of Sahibi circle of the Rewari tahsil.

Displaced persons from Thal Kalan and Daggarr circles of the Bhakkar tahsil were made entitled for allotment in the Chahat Kheri circle of the Rewari tahsil, Bawal sub-tahsil and the available area in Sahibi circle of the Rewari tahsil.

In the area proposed for the settlement of Mianwali claimants, it was open for the eligible (under the rules of grading) displaced persons from Dera Ghazi Khan and Muzaffargarh who already held temporary allotments in that area, to continue there.

Sub-allocation adjustments.—As a result of a decision of the erstwhile Patiala State to permit certain refugees from Kashmir who had been given ad hoc allotments in the Narnaul tahsil to continue there, an additional area of 1,400 standard acres was made available in villages Akanwali and Jamalpur Sheikhhan near Tohana in tahsil Hisar of the Hisar district for displaced persons from the Dera Ghazi Khan district.

Quasi-permanent allotment.—The scheme of temporary allotments no doubt provided some relief but no development could take place until uncertainty was dispelled and the allottees were assured of their proprietary right to the land which they were cultivating. In the absence of such assurances, all financial help in the shape of *taccavi* loans, etc., instead of being properly utilised was being squandered away by the recipients. To meet the situation, the State Government evolved a scheme of converting temporary allotments into quasi-permanent. The allottees were thus encouraged to improve the lands allotted to them.

This was a preliminary step towards the resettlement of displaced persons. Claims were invited from them and orally verified at tahsil headquarters. Unfortunately, in spite of their sufferings, many unscrupulous displaced persons made exaggerated claims, and obtained excessive allotments. To defeat these tactics, the Government obtained original revenue records from Pakistan and verified the claims of the displaced persons. These also showed that there was substantial difference between the land left behind in Pakistan by the incoming displaced persons and that abandoned by Muslims in the East Punjab. The latter was less. To overcome this problem the available land was converted into standard acres, and graded cuts were applied in making allotments to displaced claimants. The cuts were in proportion to the size of the claim. Bigger claimants lost more in comparison with the smaller claimants.

In the then Gurgaon district, the Muslim evacuees left behind 1,59,945 acres (67,773 standard acres) of land. The net area, excluding urban area and deductions and reservation, available for quasi-permanent allotment was 64,684 standard acres. The tahsil-wise distribution of this land was as follows :—

Tahsil	Area available (Standard acres)
Gurgaon	9,101
Ballabgarh	5,717
Firozpur Jhirka	13,598
Nuh	13,981
Palwal	15,314
Rewari	6,973
Total :	64,684

The land was allotted to the displaced persons without any share in *Shamlat deh*. Area to the extent of 244 standard acres as on March 31, 1977, is still available for disposal.

Agricultural loans.—Allotment of land on a quasi-permanent basis would not, by itself, be sufficient for the rehabilitation of displaced persons. They were, therefore, given assistance by way of agricultural loans for purchasing bullocks, agricultural implements, fodder, seeds, and for digging wells and houses. To minimise chances of misuse, a general pool was devised to advance these loans in kind. The amount of loan, as shown below, was advanced from 1947-48 to 1953-54 :

<u>Year</u>	<u>Loan advanced</u>
	(Rs.)
1947-48	1,02,066
1948-49	3,75,480
1949-50	1,75,172
1950-51	1,82,920
1951-52	12,900
1952-53	7,050
1953-54	65,320
Total :	9,20,908

The disbursement of such loans was terminated after 1953-54.

Conferment of proprietary rights.—The quasi-permanent allotments were followed by the conferment of proprietary rights. This was taken up in 1955 after the enforcement of Displaced Persons (Compensation and Rehabilitation) Act, 1954. Bogus and excessive allotments were cancelled. Only the genuine claims of displaced persons, verified from the revenue record received from Pakistan, were admitted. This resulted in the return to the evacuee pool of lakhs of acres of evacuee lands usurped by unscrupulous displaced persons. The following table gives tahsil-wise data about the conferment of proprietary rights in the Gurgaon district :—

<u>Name of tahsil</u>	<u>Number of allottees on whom proprietary rights had been conferred</u>	<u>Area</u>
	2	3
1		(Standard acres)
Gurgaon	3,005	7,633 — 11½ 3 — 3½

1	2	3
Ballabgarh	1,777	6,439 — 7½
Firozpur Jhirka	17,112	12,737 — 10
Nuh	6,560	12,676 — 9½
Palwal	3,570	0 — 14½
Rewari	12,197	14,502 — 9½
		3 — 15½
Total :	44,221	6,532 — 9½
		60,530 — 11½

Rural housing.—Rains and floods had damaged a large number of houses abandoned by Muslims in Gurgaon. Of the total number of evacuee rural houses in the then district, 6,940 were available for allotment; 3,187 were allotted and 670 were on rent with local or displaced persons. The remaining had been damaged by rain and rendered unfit for habitation. Another aspect of the rural housing problem was that the houses were unevenly distributed. In some villages they were in excess of the requirements of the allottees while in others they were inadequate or non-existent, for entire *abadis* had crumbled and not a single house remained intact. The houses in excess of the needs of the allottees in certain villages could not be used for making up the deficiency of accommodation in other villages.

Like allotment of land, houses were allotted on a temporary basis in the first instance and later quasi-permanently and finally *sanads* of proprietary rights were issued. After reserving some houses for common purposes, the allottees were given a choice according to their seniority on the merit list, which was based on the size of their holding. The bigger allottee was given a better house and the smaller one a less favoured one. Those who could not get a house were given cash compensation instead.

URBAN REHABILITATION

The rehabilitation of displaced persons coming from urban areas had three aims: (1) to provide residential accommodation, (2) to offer financial assistance by way of loans and grants and (3) to create opportunities for gainful employment. These were stupendous tasks in themselves but the general trend of shift towards urban areas after Independence made them more formidable. The gloomy situation was indeed a challenge which called for various well-considered schemes of urban re-settlement.

Utilisation of evacuee properties .—All Muslim abandoned properties were taken over as evacuee properties and were governed by the Punjab Evacuee Ordinance IV of 1947. This Ordinance was superseded by the East Punjab Evacuee (Administration of Property) Act XIV of 1947 which came into force on December 12, 1947. This Act was further amended and repealed in part from time to time. All previous Acts and Ordinances were repealed by the Administration of Evacuee Ordinance XXVII of 1949. This Ordinance was replaced by the Administration of Evacuee Property Act, 1950 which came into force on April 17, 1950. This Act was amended by the Amending Acts LXVI of 1950, XXII of 1951, XI of 1953, XLII of 1954, XCI of 1956 and I of 1960. Such properties comprising houses, shops, vacant sites, *Kholas* (dilapidated houses) and industrial establishments were temporarily allotted to displaced persons on a rental basis. Their permanent disposal started in 1953-54. All evacuee properties were acquired by the Central Government under Section 12 of the Displaced Persons (Compensation and Rehabilitation) Act, 1954. Properties valued below Rs. 10,000 (below Rs. 50,000 for industrial establishment) were declared allottable while those assessed above these properties were sold by open auction. Subsequently the limit of allottable properties was raised to Rs. 15,000. Properties lying vacant or in unauthorised possession were similarly auctioned.

In the urban areas of the then district, there were 6,320 evacuee properties : 2,818 valued above Rs. 10,000 and 3,502 valued below Rs. 10,000. These became a part of the evacuee pool for compensating displaced persons with verified claims. Allottable properties were given away as compensation against verified claims while those occupied by non-claimants were leased out to them. The claimants were allowed to make up any deficiency in their claims for allotted properties by instalments. Many of the properties valued above Rs. 10,000 were sold by 1966 or allotted to Government departments or public institutions at a negotiated reserved price. All these details may be seen at a glance from the following table :—

Town	Total number of properties			
	Available	Sold by auction	Disposed of by way of allotment/transfer	Sold by negotiation
1	2	3	4	5
1. Rewari	2,426	1,332	798	2
2. Gurgaon	549	426	119	—
3. Nuh	308	114	192	—
4. Firozpur Jhirka	277	47	201	—

1	2	3	4	5
5. Palwal	597	342	208	—
6. Ballabgarh	241	168	61	—
7. Bawal	445	270	169	—
8. Pataudi	176	54	102	—
9. Hodal	298	91	188	—
10. Sohna	353	213	124	—
11. Farrukhnagar	303	85	193	—
12. Faridabad	347	72	257	—
Total :	6,320	3,214	2,612	2

Housing schemes.—The properties abandoned by the Muslim emigrants were not sufficient to provide shelter to all the displaced persons settled in the district. While the former were generally labourers or artisans with a comparatively low standard of living, the latter were businessmen and shopkeepers, used to a relatively higher standard of living. To cope with the shortage of residential accommodation, the Government formulated three housing schemes, viz. New Townships, 8-Marla (Cheap) Housing Colonies and 4-Marla (Cheap) Tenements to cater to the requirements of various groups of displaced population. The New Townships accommodated the rich and upper-middle classes whereas the housing colonies and tenements helped the lower-middle and poorer sections. The houses and plots in the New Townships and 8-Marla (Cheap) Housing Colonies were sold at a reserved price under the East Punjab Refugees Rehabilitation (Buildings and Building Sites) Act, 1948. The price was recovered as loan in 30 half-yearly instalments. Later they were allowed to adjust these loans against their verified claims. The disposal of 4-Marla (Cheap) Tenements was made under executive instructions in consultation with the Government of India. Details of the houses and shops constructed and plots laid out under these schemes in the then Gurgaon district are given below :

Name of the Scheme	Houses constructed	Shops constructed	Shop sites	Plots
1	2	3	4	5
New Township, Gurgaon	200	10	12	202
New Township, Palwal	200	—	—	121
New Township, Rewari	298	4	—	92

1	2	3	4	5
8-Marla (Cheap) Housing Colony, Palwal	96	—	—	34
8-Marla (Cheap) Housing Colony, Gurgaon	200	—	—	—
4-Marla (Cheap) Tenements, Gurgaon	434	tenements		
4-Marla (Cheap) Tenements, Faridabad	80	tenements		
4-Marla (Cheap) Tenements, Palwal	86	tenements		

In all these colonies satisfactory arrangements were made for drainage, water-supply and electricity. Provision was also made for school buildings, public parks, hospitals, clubs, libraries and places of worship. Most of the plots earmarked for such special purposes were sold to private registered bodies at half the reserved sale price, on the condition that the plots sold would be utilised for the purpose for which they were earmarked.

Mud-hut colonies .—Mud-hut colonies were constructed in 1950 at Gurgaon (Shamshan Bhoomi Camp and Railway Road), Palwal and Rewari to provide accommodation to the residual population in refugee camps comprising members of the Scheduled Castes and Backward Classes and landless and destitute persons. A total of 3,950 mud-huts were constructed; 2,350 at Gurgaon, 1,450 at Palwal and 150 at Rewari. The claimants were required to pay the cost of the land and the super-structure. The non-claimants were charged only the cost of the land and the cost of the super-structure was treated as a grant. Nothing was charged from the destitute widows and disabled persons.

Small urban and house building loans .—The scheme of advancing loans and grants to help the poor and middle class displaced persons to re-start their business, trade or other vocations 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 4 or more displaced persons and Rs. 25,000 to a cooperative society. Grants were also given to unattached women, widows and others for their re-settlement. The maximum grant to an individual 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 (traders, shopkeepers, artisans, industrialists, students, lawyers and medical practitioners) were helped under the scheme. The loans carried an interest of 3 per cent per annum. Their recovery was to start after two years

of disbursement and they were repayable together with interest in equal yearly instalments spread over a period of six years. The amounts advanced as loans to displaced persons during 1948-49 to 1956-57 were as below :

<u>Year</u>	<u>Loan advanced</u> (Rs.)
1947-48	41,600
1948-49	3,50,300
1949-50	2,99,050
1950-51	2,20,665
1951-52	500
1952-53	25,000
1953-54	37,000
1954-55	10,000
1955-56	44,700
1956-57	19,000
Total :	<u>10,47,815</u>

The scheme of small urban loans was discontinued after 1956-57 onwards.

House-building loans .—House building loans were advanced to purchasers of plots sold out by the State Government in model towns and new colonies set up after the Partition. These loans enabled displaced persons to build their own houses on easy terms of repayment. The following house building loans were advanced during 1949-50 to 1955-56 :—

<u>Year</u> 1	<u>Loan advanced</u> 2 (Rs.)
1949-50	2,71,250
1950-51	50,000
1951-52	2,50,000
1952-53	1,75,000

1	2
	(Rs.)
1953-54	—
1954-55	2,400
1955-56 ¹	1,54,800
Total :	9,03,450

No loans were given after 1955-56.

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE TO DISPLACED STUDENTS AND TRAINEES

Displaced students had suffered greatly owing to the weakening of the financial position of their parents and guardians. The student community constitutes a valuable national asset. Their education was upset by the partition of the country. In order to enable them to pursue their studies, a scheme to give grants and loans to students was sanctioned by the Government in January 1948. Under this scheme, relief to the students of colleges and technical institutions took the form of loans. Relief to school students was in the form of grants for the purchase of books, apparatus, stationery and exemption from school and examination fees. The loans carried a nominal interest of 2 per cent per annum and were repayable within four years (in deserving cases up to six years) of the date of the payment of the last instalment. However, these were later treated as grants.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR GAINFUL EMPLOYMENT

The next important step toward effecting rehabilitation was the provision of business premises where the displaced persons could pursue their avocations, industry or other professional work. The Government decided that evacuee shops, factories and industrial establishments would be allotted only to the displaced persons. An essential condition of eligibility, however, was that a displaced person who claimed allotment of a shop or a factory should have been carrying on similar business or industry in the West Punjab (Pakistan).

The number of evacuee shops, factories and industrial establishments in the East Punjab were far too inadequate to meet the requirements of the displaced persons who were to be rehabilitated. This disparity was beset with

1. In 1955-56, loans were advanced free of interest to the displaced persons having verified claims to the extent of Rs. 8,000 of immoveable property left in Pakistan.

the danger of the capital and industrial talent flowing out of the State. In order to meet this situation and to create additional employment at important refugee centres, the Government formed a scheme of developing industrial townships in areas having substantial industrial potential or areas which were expected to gain this potential once industries were established. In this district, such a township was established at Faridabad which has now emerged as an industrial hub of North India.

Shopping centres were provided at Gurgaon, Palwal and Rewari for displaced persons who were doing business in temporarily installed wooden structures on pavements. An amount of Rs. 500 was advanced as loan for the construction of this type of shop. This facility served as an incentive and consequently 14 shops in Sabzi Mandi, Gurgaon, 45 shops in Mud-hut Colony, Palwal and 48 shops in Punjabi Market, Rewari, were constructed.

VOCATIONAL TRAINING

To adjust the displaced persons in the economy of the State and to make up for the acute shortage of skilled labour, a number of vocational training centres were opened by the Government. Three such centres, one each at Gurgaon, Palwal and Rewari were opened in 1948-49. The aim was to impart technical training so that the displaced persons could be able to secure suitable employment after getting such training. Tools, equipment and machinery were provided mostly by the Government of India. Expenses for contingencies and establishment were met by the State Government. In fact, these were training-cum-production centres. The articles of general utility, as shown below, were produced and sold in the market:

Centre	Trade	Training imparted/articles produced and sold
Vocational Training Centre, Gurgaon	Carpentry	Chairs, stools, tables, almirahs, etc.
	Radio Mechanic	Training imparted
	Electrician	Do
Vocational Training Centre, Palwal	Tailoring	Pyjamas, shirts and bushirts
	Niwar and durries	Niwar and durries
	Hosiery	Socks, gloves, under-garments, etc.
Vocational Training Centre, Rewari	Leather and footwear	Shoes, attache cases, etc.

The centres were closed in 1963. The staff was adjusted in the industrial training institutes and the equipment and machinery were auctioned.

PAYMENT OF COMPENSATION

Compensation was paid to displaced persons who had abandoned immoveable property in Pakistan, after their claims had been verified 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 which a scale of compensation was prescribed. It gave 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.

Residual work .—The rehabilitation of refugees was completed by 1958 and only minor residuary problems remained, e.g. correction of clerical mistakes in allotments or rectification of deficiencies, if any. The State Government entered into an administrative and financial agreement with the Government of India from March 1, 1970, whereby all the available urban evacuee lands and properties have been transferred to the State Government. These are now being sold by the Tahsildar (Sales). This process also helps in the detection of usurped properties. The Tahsildar (Sales) has also been authorised by the Government to conduct sale of surplus land available in the various rehabilitation colonies of the district. Prices of land in the rehabilitation colonies have gone up. All this has become an additional source of revenue to the Government.

IMPACT OF DISPLACED PERSONS ON THE LOCAL POPULATION

The communal outburst of 1947-48 was followed by a period of re-adjustment. The mass migration of thousands of the Meos of the Gurgaon district to Pakistan was checked by the efforts of Indian leaders. A large number of those who had already gone to Pakistan returned in the months and years that followed. Simultaneously, there was the problem of settling the influx of Hindus and Sikhs who had streamed over from across the new political border. To begin with, their bitter experience of the Partition made them understandably resentful towards the indigenous inhabitants of the district. Only with the passage of time they learned to live together in amity and gradually came closer to the older inhabitants who were complete strangers to them at first. It is noteworthy that even in the days of anger on one side and frustration on the other,

no communal clashes between the refugees and the Meos are reported to have taken place.¹

It is an interesting feature of the displaced persons coming to this district that a majority of them have settled in urban areas. Even the allottees of agricultural land had shown a preference to come to urban areas. However, the displaced persons have integrated themselves culturally with the new environment. They have greatly helped in the development of industries and trades. In fact, it was they who initiated the industrial economy of the district. To begin with, they took a leading share in the industrial units at Faridabad, Ballabgarh and Gurgaon.

It is generally acknowledged that both the urban and rural sections, formerly inhabiting West Punjab (Pakistan), were more advanced and more prosperous than their counterparts on this side of the border. The displaced persons had, therefore, brought with them new practices in agriculture, new modes of dress and food, less orthodox values of living and an urge to work hard for the achievement of a better lifestyle. Although their life had been soured by bitterness of hardships that had cropped up in the wake of the Partition, they showed a tenacity of purpose and capacity for hard work. Their presence had a catalytic effect on the activity of the local population. Farming techniques tended to improve; cattle and sheep began to be given a little more attention; handicrafts were introduced here and there. In fact, a new competitive spirit sprang up. The more liberal attitude of the displaced persons towards education and social life tended to soften the rigidity of the local people and weakened their resistance which had seemed unsurmountable. In many ways hard work replaced lethargy and smartness replaced sloppiness in all walks of life. With the passage of time drab bazaars were transformed into better establishments with a variety of wares, e.g. cosmetics, soaps, face powders, mirrors, hair oil, sophisticated toys, etc. Dresses and fashions also changed. The impact of displaced persons on the life and work of local population has thus been both interesting and beneficial in a number of ways.

1. Hashim Amir Ali, *The Meos of Mewat*, 1970, p. 32.