

CHAPTER XVII

PUBLIC LIFE AND VOLUNTARY SOCIAL SERVICE ORGANISATIONS

REPRESENTATION OF THE DISTRICT IN THE UNION AND STATE LEGISLATURES

All the six general elections to the Lok Sabha and Vidhan Sabha including Vidhan Sabha mid-term election held in 1968 have been conducted smoothly in the Sirsa district. A brief account of the elections since 1952 is given below :

Lok Sabha

The areas comprising the present Sirsa district formed part of Fazilka-Sirsa parliamentary constituency in the general elections held in 1952. During the general elections held in 1957 and 1962, it formed part of Hisar parliamentary constituency. In the general elections of 1967, 1971 and 1977, the said areas were included in the Sirsa (S.C.) parliamentary constituency. The following description shows the trend of the general elections held from time to time in these constituencies :—

First General Elections, 1952

Fazilka-Sirsa Parliamentary Constituency.—The areas presently comprising the Sirsa district formed part of this constituency. A candidate of the Indian National Congress was returned. However, due to his death, a bye-election was conducted in May 1954, when again the Indian National Congress captured the seat.

Second General Elections, 1957

Hisar Parliamentary Constituency.—During these elections, the areas now comprising the Sirsa district formed part of the Hisar parliamentary constituency. A candidate of the Indian National Congress captured this seat defeating four opponents. The number of contestants, valid votes polled and percentage of votes polled by each party were as shown below :

Party/Independents	Contes- tants	Seat Won	Valid Votes Polled	
			Number	Percentage
Indian National Congress	1	1	1,27,059	54.37
Praja Socialist Party	1	—	20,818	8.91
Socialist	1	—	41,815	17.89
Independents	2	—	44,007	18.83
Total	5	1	2,33,699	100.00

Third General Elections, 1962

Hisar Parliamentary Constituency.—There was no change in its previous limits and the present Sirsa district remained a part of Hisar constituency. The seat was won by a Socialist candidate. The number of contestants, valid votes polled and the percentage of votes polled by each party were as shown below :

Party/Independents	Contestants	Seat Won	Valid Votes Polled	
			Number	Percentage
Indian National Congress	1	—	1,25,136	36.43
Socialist	1	1	1,52,369	44.36
Jan Sangh	1	—	24,397	7.07
Independents	3	—	41,649	12.14
Total	6	1	3,43,551	100.00

Fourth General Elections, 1967

Sirsa(S.C.)Parliamentary Constituency.—As a result of re-delimitation of parliamentary and assembly constituencies necessitated by the reorganisation of Punjab and creation of a separate Haryana State in 1966, the areas of the present Sirsa district (having four Assembly constituencies, viz., Sirsa, Dabwali, Ellanabad and Rori) were included in the newly created Sirsa(S.C.) parliamentary constituency. The seat was won by a candidate of the Indian National Congress. The number of contestants, valid votes polled and percentage of votes polled by each party were as shown below :

Party/Independents	Contestants	Seat Won	Valid Votes Polled	
			Number	Percentage
Indian National Congress	1	1	1,93,919	55.34
Samyukta Socialist Party	1	—	23,653	6.75
Swatantra	1	—	17,191	4.87
Communist Party of India	1	—	12,015	3.43
Praja Socialist Party	1	—	10,905	3.11
Independents	7	—	92,712	26.50
Total	12	1	3,50,395	100.00

Fifth General Elections, 1971

Sirsa(S.C.) Parliamentary Constituency.—There was no change in the limits of this constituency and the areas of the Sirsa district remained a part of Sirsa (S.C.) parliamentary constituency. This time again the seat was won by a candidate of the Indian National Congress (R). The number of contestants, valid votes polled and percentage of votes polled by each party were as follows :—

Party/Independents	Contestants	Seat Won	Valid Votes Polled	
			Number	Percentage
Indian National Congress	1	1	2,13,610	67.26
Vishal Haryana Party	1	—	91,987	28.96
Praja Socialist Party	1	—	2,642	0.83
Republican Party of India	1	—	4,878	1.54
Independents	1	—	4,485	1.41
Total	5	1	3,17,602	100.00

Sixth General Elections, 1977

Sirsa(S.C.) Parliamentary Constituency.—The Sirsa (S.C.) parliamentary constituency covered the Sirsa district and a part of Hisar district comprising five Assembly constituencies viz., Sirsa, Dabwali, Ellanabad, Reri and Darta Kalan. The seat was won by a candidate of the Bhartiya Lok Dal. The number of contestants, valid votes polled and percentage of votes polled by each party were as follows :—

Party/Independents	Contestants	Seat Won	Valid Votes Polled	
			Number	Percentage
Bhartiya Lok Dal	1	1	2,70,861	68.43
Indian National Congress	1	—	1,17,693	29.74
Independents	2	—	7,234	1.83
Total	4	1	3,95,788	100.00

Seventh General Elections, 1980

Sirsa (S.C.) Parliamentary Constituency.—There was no change in the limits of this constituency. The seat was won by a candidate of the Indian National Congress(I). The number of contestants, valid votes polled and percentage of votes polled by each party were as follows .—

Party/Independents	Contes- tants	Seat Won	Valid Votes Polled	
			Number	Percen- tage
Indian National Congress (I)	1	1	1,53,233	37.04
Janata (S)	1	—	1,31,732	31.84
Janata Party	1	—	96,996	23.44
Akhil Bhartiya Ram Rajya Parishad	1	—	1,802	0.44
Independents	8	—	29,950	7.24
Total	12	1	4,13,713	100.00

Vidhan Sabha (Legislative Assembly)**First General Elections, 1952**

During First General Elections, 1952, the areas comprising the Sirsa district had only two assembly seats, viz., Dabwali and Sirsa. The seat of the Sirsa assembly constituency was won by a candidate of the Indian National Congress while the Dabwali assembly constituency returned an Akali candidate. The Akali candidate was, however, unseated and disqualified in an election petition. Bye-election to this seat was held in September 1953, in which the Congress candidate was declared elected.

Second General Elections, 1957

During the Second General Elections, 1957, the delimitation of the constituencies was affected. A part of areas of the Sirsa district, namely, *zail* Darba Kalan was included in Fatehabad Assembly Constituency from where a candidate of the Indian National Congress was declared elected. The remaining areas of the Sirsa district constituted a two-member constituency i.e. Sirsa (general) and Sirsa (S.C.). A candidate of the Indian National Congress was declared elected from the reserved seat while an Independent was returned from the general

seat. The party-wise number of contestants, seats won, valid votes polled and their percentage were as follows :—

Party/Independents	Contes- tants	Seats Won	Valid Votes Polled	
			Number	Perce- tage
Indian National Congress	2	1	58,688	39.98
Praja Socialist Party	2	—	8,533	5.81
Communist Party of India	2	—	10,275	7.00
Independents	10	1	69,331	47.21
Total	16	2	1,46,827	100.00

An election petition was filed against the independent member from Sirsa (general) constituency and his election was declared null and void. In the bye-election held in March, 1959 a candidate of the Indian National Congress was returned.

Third General Elections, 1962

A part of the present Sirsa district, namely, Darba Kalan remained in the Fatchabad Assembly Constituency which returned an independent candidate. The Sirsa two-member constituency was bifurcated into Sirsa and Dabwali (S.C.) constituencies. Both the seats were captured by the Indian National Congress. The party-wise number of contestants, seats won, valid votes polled and their percentage were as shown below :—

Party/Independents	Contes- tants	Seats Won	Valid Votes Polled	
			Number	Perce- tage
Indian National Congress	2	2	42,743	44.87
Jan Sangh	2	—	11,667	12.25
Praja Socialist Party	1	—	9,910	10.40
Swatantra	1	—	2,215	2.33
Independents	10	—	28,727	30.15
Total	16	2	95,262	100.00

Fourth General Elections, 1967

After the formation of Haryana in 1966, the Fourth General Elections, 1967 were held to the Haryana Vidhan Sabha instead of the Punjab Vidhan Sabha. The number of seats for the areas of the Sirsa district was increased from 2 to 4, namely, Sirsa, Ellanabad, Rori and Dabwali (S.C.). In these elections, three seats (Ellanabad, Rori and Dabwali) were won by the candidates of the Indian National Congress while the fourth seat (Sirsa) was captured by a Jan Sangh candidate. The party-wise number of contestants, seats won, valid votes polled and their percentage were as shown below :

Party/Independents	Contes- tants	Seats Won	Valid Votes Polled	
			Number	Peren- tage
Indian National Congress	4	3	67,599	44.67
Jan Sangh	2	1	19,553	12.92
Samyukta Socialist Party	1	—	2,539	1.68
Praja Socialist Party	1	—	1,502	0.99
Independents	9	—	60,148	39.74
Total	17	4	1,51,341	100.00

Mid-Term Elections, 1968

Haryana Vidhan Sabha was dissolved and President's rule was enforced on November 21, 1967. The mid-term elections were held in May, 1968. No change was made in the limits of the assembly constituencies. Out of the four seats, the Indian National Congress captured two seats, viz., Sirsa and Rori. The third seat of Ellanabad was won by a candidate of the newly created Vishal Haryana Party while the fourth seat of Dabwali was captured by an Independent candidate. The party-wise contestants, seats won, valid votes polled and their percentage were as follows :—

Party/Independents	Contes- tants	Seats Won	Valid Votes Polled	
			Number	Peren- tage
Indian National Congress	4	2	59,480	40.29
Samyukta Socialist Party	1	—	1,456	0.99
Praja Socialist Party	1	—	1,434	0.97
Vishal Haryana Party	1	1	20,816	14.10
Jan Sangh	2	—	6,966	4.72
Akali Dal	1	—	15,055	10.20
Independents	9	1	42,405	28.73
Total	19	4	1,47,612	100.00

In an election petition, the election of Vishal Haryana Party candidate from Ellanabad constituency was declared null and void. In the bye-election held in May, 1970, the Indian National Congress captured this seat.

Fifth General Elections, 1972

Haryana Vidhan Sabha was again dissolved in January, 1972 and the elections were held in March, 1972. No change was made in the limits of the constituencies and the number of assembly constituencies in the district remained four. All the seats were captured by the Indian National Congress (R). The party-wise number of contestants, seats won, valid votes polled and their percentage were as given below :

Party/Independents	Contes- tants	Seats Won	Valid Votes Polled	
			Number	Perce- tage
Indian National Congress	4	4	1,03,138	57.78
Socialist	1	—	630	0.35
Communist Party of India	1	—	4,939	2.77
Independents	11	—	69,782	39.10
Total	17	4	1,78,489	100.00

The Congress member of the Vidhan Sabha elected from the Rori constituency expired and a bye-election was held in February 1975, when an independent candidate was declared elected.

Sixth General Elections, 1977

As a result of delimitation of assembly constituencies in 1974, the number of assembly constituencies in the district rose from four to five. Darba Kalan was a newly created assembly constituency. The Janata Party captured four seats while the fifth seat returned an Independent candidate. The party-wise number of contestants, seats won, valid votes polled and their percentage were as given below :

Party/Independents	Contest- ants	Seats Won	Valid Votes Polled	
			Number	Percentage
Congress	5	—	49,506	22.34
Janata	5	4	83,306	37.59
Communist Party of India	2	—	5,048	2.28
Socialist Unity Centre of India	1	—	772	0.34
Independents	19	1	83,008	37.45
Total	32	5	2,21,640	100.00

Seventh General Elections, 1982

Seventh General Elections to the Haryana Vidhan Sabha were held in May, 1982. There was no change in the limits of assembly constituencies. Three constituencies, viz. Darba Kalan, Rori and Dabwali returned candidates of the Indian National Congress (I) while the fourth seat of Ellanabad constituency was captured by a candidate of Lok Dal. The fifth seat, viz., Sirsa was won by an Independent candidate. The number of contestants, valid votes polled and percentage of votes polled by each party were as follows:—

Party/Independent	Contestants	Seats Won	Valid Vote Polled	
			Number	Percentage
Indian National Congress (I)	5	3	1,33,727	44.67
Lok Dal	4	1	1,08,119	36.14
Janata Party	3	—	4,963	1.65
Bhartiya Janata Party	1	—	16,678	5.57
Door Darshi Party	4	—	788	0.26
Communist Party of India	2	—	4,487	1.50
Independents	35	1	30,579	10.21
Total	54	5	2,99,341	100.00

POLITICAL PARTIES AND ORGANISATIONS

There is no political party of significance in the district which may be regarded as purely local in character. The major ones are units of all-India parties. The Indian National Congress has been the most important party in the district in the years under review. It may be noted that independents have been steadily fighting with varying degrees of success in all the elections to the Lok Sabha and Vidhan Sabha. As the name indicates the independents do not belong to any party nor do they have any programme completely in common. Some candidates who are not serious from the beginning realising their slender chances of success at once withdraw from the elections at the slightest persuasion rather than face the prospects of forfeiting their securities. Their existence and success reflect two features. Some defect from their previous political parties on account of personal difference or differences relating to their political programmes. Others are more like free lancers in the political field, who after their success, either continue to remain independent or give their

support to another party. The data given below show at a glance the degree of their popularity which is reflected in the percentage of votes secured by them at different elections:

Percentage of Votes Secured by Independents

Years of Elections	Percentage of Votes Secured by Independents			
	Vidhan Sabha All Consti- tuencies Collectively	Lok Sabha		
		Fazilka Sirsa	Hisar	Sirsa (S.C.)
1	2	3	4	5
1952	—	—	—	—
1957	47.21	—	18.83	—
1962	30.15	—	12.14	—
1967	39.74	—	—	26.50
1968 (mid-term Vidhan Sabha)	28.73	—	—	—
1971	—	—	—	1.41
1972	39.10	—	—	—
1977	37.45	—	—	1.83
1980	—	—	—	7.24
1982	10.21	—	—	—

The position of different political parties represented in the legislative bodies can be seen at a glance from the table given below :

Year of Elections	Name of Political Party	Number of Members Elected	Number of Valid Votes Polled	Percent- age
1	2	3	4	5
LOK SABHA				
1952	Congress	1	75,412	31.00
1957	Congress	1	1,27,059	54.37
1962	Socialist	1	1,52,369	44.36
1967	Congress	1	1,93,919	55.34
1971	Congress	1	2,13,610	67.26
1977	Bhartiya Lok Dal	1	2,70,861	68.43
1980	Congress	1	1,53,233	37.04

1	2	3	4	5
VIDHAN SABHA				
1952	Congress	1	18,572	56.00
	Akali	1	11,364	31.00
1957	Congress	1	58,688	39.98
	Independent	1	69,331	47.21
1962	Congress	2	42,743	44.87
1967	Congress	3	67,599	44.67
	Jan Sangh	1	19,553	12.92
1968 (Mid-Term)	Congress	2	59,480	40.29
	Vishal Haryana Party	1	20,816	14.10
	Independent	1	42,405	28.73
1972	Congress	4	1,03,138	57.78
1977	Janata	4	83,306	37.59
	Independent	1	83,008	37.45
1982	Congress	3	1,33,727	44.67
	Lok Dal	1	1,08,119	36.14
	Independent	1	30,579	10.21

NEWSPAPERS AND PERIODICALS

No daily newspaper is published from the Sirsa district. The periodicals¹ being published are detailed below :

Sr. No.	Name	Year of Establishment	Place of Publication	Circulation	Classification
1	Vir Haqiqat (Hindi/Urdu)	1956	Sirsa	1000	News and current affairs
2	Shubh Smachar (Hindi)	1962	do	do	do
3	Sita Kund (Hindi)	1979	do	do	do

1. (i) District Public Relations Officer, Sirsa.

(ii) Jang Jari Hai (Weekly), Sirsa Tribune, Sewa Bhav, Sanghrash ki Rah Par (Fortnightlies) started circulation from 24th December, 1981, 1st November, 1981, 11th December, 1981 and 10th March, 1982, respectively.

A peculiar feature of the periodicals is that their publication is irregular; they do not seem to serve any real cause of journalism and do not follow any set principle or policy. Many a periodical voicing a local party or a group objectives has a short lived existence.

There is no local paper which provides a sort of public forum for the free and unbiased expression of views or which undertakes to impart political education to its readers by discussing local current socio-economic and political issues facing them. The intelligentsia have, therefore, to depend upon papers and periodicals published outside the district. The educated class favours the English dailies. Most older people depend for news on Urdu dailies though the younger generation, not knowing Urdu, depend on Hindi dailies. The periodicals also feed their readers with political reviews and comments in addition to general reading matter like short stories, biographies and poems.

VOLUNTARY SOCIAL SERVICE ORGANISATIONS

District Red Cross Society, Sirsa.—Unity, humanity, impartiality, neutrality, universality, independence and voluntary service are the seven principles that serve as guide lines to the Red Cross Societies all over the world and it is worth repeating these principles. Its activities are directed mainly towards the improvement of health, prevention of diseases and mitigation of sufferings. These include an extended sphere of social service like hospital welfare, community health sanitation, relief to defence personnel, maternity and child welfare, emergency relief of all kinds, training of doctors, lady health visitors, midwives, nurses, *dais*, etc. It also assists St. John. Ambulance Association and other charitable institutions.

The District Red Cross Society at Sirsa started functioning from October 16, 1975. It is affiliated to the Haryana branch of the Indian Red Cross Society. Its executive committee consists of 16 members (10 officials and 6 non-officials) with the Deputy Commissioner as President. In 1980, the Society had 26,449 members which included 50 life associates, 130 institutional members and 26,269 annual members.

The figures of income and expenditure from 1976 to 1980 were as under :

<u>Year</u>	<u>Income</u>	<u>Expenditure</u>
1976	(Rs.) 3,61,383	(Rs.) 2,66,634
1977	1,12,106	1,34,349
1978	1,36,976	95,290
1979	2,44,288	2,02,536
1980	2,99,755	2,75,229

The society runs 2 family welfare planning clinics one each at Kalanwali and Dabwali, 8 trained *dai* centres at Nezađela, Nillanwali, Kharekan, Mirpur, Panniwala Ruldu, Teja Khera, Jogewala and Ahmad Pur and one materintiy and child welfare centre at Sirsa. It supplies free medicines to the deserving poor patients in different hospitals. It also renders assistance to the needy during calamities like floods, fire and epidemics. It organises seminars and camps to publicise its aims and objects for mobilising public support. The society also provides financial assistance to the institutions engaged in the work of ameliorating human suffering. During 1980, the society provided financial assistance amounting to Rs. 66,900 to various institutions in the Sirsa district.

Hospital Welfare Section, Sirsa.—The Hospital Welfare Section was established in January, 1976 as an institution affiliated to the District Red Cross Society, Sirsa. Its membership is open to both men and women. In 1981, the section has 462 members. It undertakes hospital welfare work which includes supply of medicines, food, clothing, etc., to the needy patients in hospitals and health centres. It distributes fruits, and sweets to indoor patients on Independence Day and Republic Day. Besides, it arranges artificial limbs for handicapped persons. It also arranges blood donors for the blood bank of the Civil Hospital, Sirsa. The section re-imburses the cost of medicines to the deserving patients. It arranges ambulance conveyance for the poor and needy patients on the recommendations of the Senior Medical Officer.

The sources of income of the section are membership fee, assistance from the District Red Cross Society, grant from the Sirsa municipality and income from variety shows, etc.

The year-wise figures of income and expenditure during 1976 to 1980 were as under:

<u>Year</u>	<u>Income</u>	<u>Expenditure</u>
	(Rs.)	(Rs.)
1976	10,084	1,296
1977	8,970	2,882
1978	6,922	1,309
1979	3,321	1,347
1980	8,432	12,605

St. John Ambulance Association, Sirsa.—The Association was formed in September, 1975. It is a branch of the All-India St. John Ambulance Association with its headquarters at Delhi. The association has provided an ambulance car to the Civil Hospital, Sirsa for carrying serious patients to the hospital and from one hospital to another. It also arranges classes for training in first-aid and child welfare. During 1980, 1913 persons were trained. These included conductors and factory workers.

The sources of income of the association are collections from the members, income from the ambulance car and fee from first-aid training besides the financial assistance given by the District Red Cross Society and the All India St. John Ambulance Association. The following figures show income and expenditure from 1976 to 1980:

<u>Year</u>	<u>Income</u>	<u>Expenditure</u>
	(Rs.)	(Rs.)
1976	24,529	29,089
1977	16,295	24,437
1978	37,004	26,790
1979	53,249	39,230
1980	56,962	40,445

District Council of Child Welfare, Sirsa.—A branch of the Haryana State Council for Child Welfare, the District Council for Child Welfare Sirsa, was established in 1975. As its name stands, the council aims to promote the welfare of children and focus public attention on Child Welfare Work. The council functions under the supervision of Child Welfare Officer, Sirsa.

The Council runs two *balwadis* at Moriwala and Bahuuddin (tahsil Sirsa). Children of 3 to 6 years of age are admitted to these *balwadis*. Each *balwadi* accommodates 40 children and is looked after by a Balsevika and a helper. These children are provided supplementary feeding at the rate of 20 paise per child, per day. These *balwadis* give pre-school education to the children of the rural areas and to those who are economically poor and backward. The children are guided on cleanliness, environmental knowledge, colour recognition etc.

Besides, the council runs 23 creches in the district where children upto the age of 5 years are admitted. Each creche is looked after by a Balsevika and a helper. The council is also organising 7 supervised home work classes at Moriwala, Bhuratwala, Handi Khara, Bharokhan, Malekan, Jandwala Jatan and Burj Bhangu.

The Community Week, Children's Day and Teachers Day, etc., are celebrated by the council. The activities of the District Council for Child Welfare, Sirsa are gaining popularities and there is an all round demand for opening new *balwadis*, nursery schools and creche centres throughout the district.

The main sources of income of the council are membership subscription, donations and grant from Haryana State Council for Child Welfare,

Chandigarh. The figures of income and expenditure of the council from 1976-77 to 1980-81 were as under :

<u>Year</u>	<u>Income</u> (Rs.)	<u>Expenditure</u> (Rs.)
1976-77	25,655	32,462
1977-78	36,575	42,475
1978-79	1,16,976	55,463
1979-80	87,701	80,911
1980-81	75,018	1,03,420

District Olympic Association, Sirsa.—It was established on November 21, 1976, under the Chairmanship of the Deputy Commissioner. The aims and objects of the association are to organise, promote, control, popularise and standardise sports according to the norms of the olympic games. It coordinates sports activities of various sports associations in the district and arranges district championship tournament and exhibition matches for games directly managed by it.

The sources of income of the association include subscriptions from different sports associations, *dangals*, film festivals, grants from the government and donations.

The like voluntary organisations functioning, mention may also be made of District Family Welfare Association, District T.B. Association, etc.

Zila Sainik Board, Sirsa.—There were 236 in service defence personnel and 1,291 ex-servicemen in the district in March, 1981. To look after the interests and welfare of soldiers, ex-servicemen and their families (5,699 in March, 1981) the Sainik Board earlier known as District Soldiers, Sailors, and Airmen Board, was constituted in 1979. For resettlement of ex-servicemen under various schemes of self-employment, ample assistance and guidance is provided and for some trainings are sponsored. The board is also actively engaged in different welfare activities and spent about Rs. 10,540 for the benefit of *sainik pariwar* of the district during 1980-81.

Besides, the above described voluntary social service organisations, the names of other instituton rendering social service to the people in Sirsa in various spheres are: Lions Club, Rotary Club, Sirsa Club, Shri Sanatan Dharam Mahavir Dal, Welfare Society for the poor, Haryana Tarun Sangh, Tarun Kalyan Nidhi, Sewa Samiti, Shri Sarv Hitakari Sabha, Shri Mahabir Dal, Sewa Samiti, Yuvak Samiti and Bal Samiti. These organisations basically run on the donations but play an important role for the service of the community.