

CHAPTER III

PEOPLE

POPULATION

The total population of the present Hisar district worked out on the basis of 1971 Census is 11,27,525 comprising 6,05,677 males and 5,21,848 females. The proportion of Scheduled Castes accounted for 21.6 per cent of the total population as against 18.89 per cent for the state. The occupied residential houses were 1,66,002, the average number of persons per occupied residential house was equal to state average, i.e. 7.

Hisar has the largest population among all the twelve districts of the state and has 11.5 per cent of the state population. The data derived from 1961 Census for the district revealed that the population of the district at that time was 8,11,830. The growth in the decade 1961-71 comes to 38.89 per cent for Hisar district against 32.23 per cent for the state as a whole. After Faridabad and Sirsa, the district registered a highest growth rate during 1961-71. Out of the total population, 9,47,661 persons lived in rural areas and only 1,79,864 persons in urban areas as per 1971 Census. The tahsil-wise population as derived from 1971 Census is given below :

Classification	Tahsil				District Total
	Hisar	Hansi	Fatehabad	Tohana	
(a) Urban					
(1) Number of towns	2	1	1	2	6
(2) Population	95,418	41,108	22,630	20,708	1,79,864
(b) Rural					
(1) Number of villages	114	119	182	71	486
(2) Population	2,68,491	3,15,306	2,77,068	86,796	9,47,661
Total :	3,63,909	3,56,414	2,99,698	1,07,504	11,27,525
Percentage of the district population	32.2	31.6	26.6	9.6	100.0

The district, said to be once traversed by the legendary Saraswati river, has been under human occupation since long. The frequently recurring famines and political strifes prevented the stabilization of any definite pattern of population.¹ The famine of A.D. 1783, locally known as *Chalisa Kal* depopulated the whole area except some irrigated villages in Hansi tahsil. As a result, most of the villages of the district started fresh after this great calamity.² Gradually, the tract became populated again by both the pre-famine inhabitants as well as new migrants. When in 1803, the district came under the British control, a large part of it was uninhabited waste.³ There was demographic stagnation in the district until recent years. The rate of population growth in the then district was 3.35 per cent and 1.58 per cent during the first and second decade of the 20th century. The district entered a period of increasing rate of population growth after 1921. It was 9.97 per cent and 11.93 per cent in 1921-31 and 1931-41 respectively. The decade 1941-51 registered only 3.58 per cent growth as the Muslims migrating to Pakistan were larger in number than the immigrating non-Muslims. The population of the district recorded unprecedented growth rate of 47.33 per cent during 1951-61 decade basically through a heavy dose of net immigration, simultaneous with the extension of irrigation facilities.⁴ During 1961-71 decade, the present district recorded an increase of 38.89 per cent. These decennial growth rates of 1951-61 and 1961-71 were much above the corresponding figures for India (21.7 and 24.5 per cent), Punjab (21.6 and 21.7 per cent) and Haryana (33.8 and 32.2 per cent).

The distributional pattern of population in the district is mainly hydrographic in character. Not only has the availability of fresh water for irrigation and drinking purposes brought unequal population numbers in different areas, it has also been mainly responsible for locating many of the settlements at places where they are now located.

Rural and Urban Population.—According to 1971 Census, the rural population of the district was 9,47,661. There were 486 villages, of which 475 were inhabited and the remaining 11 were uninhabited. The number of persons per inhabited village worked out to 1,995 in the district as compared to 1,228 in Haryana. The villages in Hansi tahsil were big units with an average population of 2,672 whereas the villages

1. Mehar Singh Gill, *Demographic Dynamism of Hissar District, 1951-71, A Spatial Analysis*, Ph. D. Thesis, MSS, 1979 (Panjab University, Chandigarh).

2. *Hissar District Gazetteer*, 1883-84, pp. 13-14.

3. *Ibid*, 1892, p. 40.

4. Mehar Singh Gill, *Demographic Dynamism of Hissar District, 1951-71, A Spatial Analysis*, Ph. D. Thesis, MSS, 1979 (Panjab University, Chandigarh).

in Fatehabad, Hisar and Tohana tahsils were comparatively small units with an average population of 2,355, 1,526 and 1,222 persons respectively. There were two villages with population of 10,000 and above and 28 villages with population between 5,000 and 9,999. These villages have developed urban like characteristics and accounted for a total population of 2,06,593. Out of the remaining villages, 143 had population between 2,000 and 4,999 and 161 between 1,000 and 1,999. More than 60 per cent of the rural population, thus concentrated in villages with a population varying between 1,000-4,999. There were 125 villages in the population range of 200-900, 16 villages having less than 200 persons and 11 were uninhabited. Of the 16 villages, 7 were located in Hisar tahsil, 6 in Fatehabad and 3 in Hansi. The village Malaheri (Hisar tahsil) had only one person as enumerated in 1971 Census. Barwala¹ of the same tahsil had the highest population (16,917) followed by Pabra (Fatehabad tahsil) 14,405. The characteristics of the district is that many new settlements known as *dhanis* have come up, particularly after the availability of Bhakra Canal water, though these have not been recognised as separate revenue estates so far.

There was no class I town (population one lakh and above) in the district according to 1971 Census. Hisar was only class II town (population ranging between 50,000 and 99,999) whereas Hansi was only class II town (between 20,000 and 49,999). Fatehabad and Tohana were classified as class IV towns (between 10,000 and 19,999). Uklana Mandi fell in the category of Class V town (between 5,000 and 9,999) and Jakhal Mandi was categorised as class VI town (population less than 5,000).

The population in major towns, viz. Hisar, Hansi, Fatehabad and Tohana continued to increase since the beginning of the present century. The towns of Hisar (17,647) and Hansi (16,523) had almost equal population in 1901, while Fatehabad and Tohana were villages having population of 2,786 persons and 5,931 respectively. The following table gives the population of these towns since 1951 :—

Town	Population			Per cent increase in 1961 over 1951	Per cent increase in 1971 over 1961
	1951	1961	1971		
Hisar	35,297	60,222	89,437	70.0	48.4
Hansi	25,837	33,712	41,108	30.4	21.9
Fatehabad	2,968	12,461	22,630	323.2	81.6
Tohana	7,955	12,394	16,789	55.9	35.4

1. Barwala has been made municipality in 1979.

Uklana Mandi got the town status in 1951 while Jakhal Mandi in 1961. The population of Uklana Mandi increased from 3,588 in 1961 to 5,981 in 1971 showing a growth rate of 38.8 per cent. The population of Jakhal Mandi rose from 3,138 in 1961 to 3,919 in 1971, i.e., an increase of 24.8 per cent in a decade.

The population of Hisar town went to over five-fold between 1901-1971 while during the same period the population of Hansi could not go even three times. The population increase in the towns of Hisar, Fatehabad and Tohana was steep between the period 1951-71. The population of Fatehabad was hardly three thousand in 1951 while it rose to 22.6 thousand in 1971, i.e., more than seven times that of 1951. The population of Tohana doubled during the last two decades. In 1951, the population of Fatehabad was 2,968 and that of Tohana 7,955 but in 1971 the population of Fatehabad surpassed the population of Tohana by about six thousand.

The urban population of the district registered only a slow increase during 1901-21 resulting from prevalent high mortality arising from frequent epidemics and famines. In the next three decades, 1921-51, the notable fall in mortality as well as emergence of new towns accounted for the growth in urban population. By contrast, the post-1951 period stands out as one of rapid urbanization and it was strip shaped mainly along the main roads.

Density.—The density of population in the district makes a gentle gradient from high to low varying directly with the availability of irrigation water. The area of relatively high density consists of the upland plain locally known as Hariana. The second important tract is the old dry bed of the Ghagghar and its fringe areas and a long narrow strip extending from Tohana-Jakhalmandi axis westward to the Sirsa district. The sand dune infested areas have the lowest density. According to 1971 Census, the density of the district was 178 persons per square kilometre against 227 for the state. Though Hisar had the highest population yet Hansi was most thickly populated town of the district. Hansi had the density of 4,531 followed by Tohana (5,706), Hisar (2,854) and Fatehabad (2,188).

Sex Ratio.—According to 1971 Census the sex ratio was 862 females per 1,000 males, 867 for rural areas and 832 for urban areas. The district has been a female deficit area throughout the period from 1901 to 1971. The urban sex ratio has always been lower than its rural counterpart.

Literacy .—The percentage of literate population was 22.8 per cent in 1971 against 17.2 per cent in 1961. The growth rate is slightly slow compared to the state average which rose from 19.9 to 26.9. The literacy among male was 32.3 per cent while it was 11.7 per cent among females. Except Jind and Sirsa districts, the Hisar district had the lowest literacy in the state in 1971.

LANGUAGE

Hindi is spoken by the largest number of people in the district. Haryanvi is the main dialect. In the west of Fatehabad and Hisar tahsils, Haryanvi is slightly dominated by Bagri. In the *Nali* tract of Tohana and Fatehabad tahsil, the dialect is affected by Panjabi.

The various scripts used are Devnagri for Hindi, Gurmukhi for Panjabi, Persian for Urdu, Roman for English and *lande* for book keeping. The use of Urdu is limited to the older generation. The younger generation mostly use Hindi both in speech and writing.

RELIGIOUS LIFE

Hindus constitute the bulk of population representing roughly 90 per cent followed by the Sikhs, Muslims, Jains and Christians.

It is not easy to define Hinduism as religion. It is a collection of diverse beliefs and practices. Hindus worship a pantheon of gods in its various aspects, the chief being the Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva (Mahesh). Rama and Krishna are incarnations of Vishnu. Shakti in her different forms and names and Hanuman are also worshipped. Spirits of streams, trees and other lesser deities are objects of worship, particularly of the people in the rural areas.

The Hindus of the Hisar district are in no sense orthodox although they follow traditional Hindu beliefs. Worship in temples is not strictly necessary but people visit temples either daily or on special occasions. Some people install images and idols of their chosen deity in their homes and go through the ritual of worship.

Shiva worship is very common and Shiva temples or *shivalas* are found in the district in large numbers as compared to other temples. People visit *shivalas* generally on Mondays and worship the deity by pouring milk and water on the *linga* (symbol of the god) enshrined in it. Fairs are also held at many *shivalas* on Shivratri day in the month of February-March. A few important *shivalas* are located at Jagan, Mohabatpur, Harita, Talwandi Rukka, Talanwali, Kalirawan,