

## CHAPTER III

### PEOPLE

The population of the district, as per 1981 Census, was 8,46,765 (4,53,873 males and 3,92,892 females<sup>1</sup>). On the basis of the 1971 Census, its population was 6,86,986. In the decade (1971—81) there was an increase of (1,59,779 persons) 23.26 per cent. The district ranks eleventh among the 12 districts of the State in respect of the population according to 1981 Census.

Due to considerable territorial changes, the comparative population figures before 1971 are not available. However, decadal (1971—1981) variation in population of two tahsils (Gohana and Sonipat) is given below<sup>2</sup> :—

Tahsil	Census year	Population (Total)	Rural	Urban	Percentage decadal (1971—81) Variation		
					Total	Rural	Urban
Gohana	(1971)	2,31,946	2,15,192	16,754	16.12	12.99	56.31
Gohana	(1981)	2,69,339	2,43,151	26,188			
Sonipat	(1971)	4,55,040	3,84,248	70,792	26.90	17.52	77.59
Sonipat	(1981)	5,77,426	4,51,568	1,25,858			

The variation is more pronounced in urban areas than in rural areas. In Sonipat tahsil, the percentage of decadal variation in respect of towns is the highest (77.59) which seems to be due to steep rise in the population of Sonipat town.

The population of Gohana tahsil, as per Census 1981, was 2,69,339 (1,43,066 males and 1,26,273 females) while the total number of persons in Sonipat tahsil during the same Census period was 5,77,426 (3,10,807 males and 2,66,619 females). The total number of ruralites in Gohana tahsil was 2,43,151 (1,29,073 males and 1,14,078 females); Sonipat tahsil had 4,51,568 rural persons (2,42,639 males and 2,08,929 females). The urbanites of Gohana tahsil recorded in the 1981 Census were 26,188 (13,993 males and 12,195 females); while there were 1,25,858 urbanites (68,168 males and 57,690 females) in the Sonipat tahsil<sup>3</sup>.

1. The population figures are based on the *Statistical Abstract of Haryana*, 1983-84. However two villages-chulkana (7,574 persons and Cihadya Yusafpur 546 persons) were transferred to Panipat tahsil of Karnal district on 30-12-1982.
2. Though the district had 2 tahsils (Gohana and Sonipat) during the time of Census 1981, tahsil Ganaur and sub-tahsil-Kharkhoda were formed after Census period. Hence, the population figures for Gohana and Sonipat tahsils are available only.
3. The analysis is based on the population recorded in the 1981 Census. The population of Ganaur tahsil and Kharkhoda sub-tahsil has been adjusted in the above analysis.

The Sonipat district as constituted at present had 3,35,521 persons (178,332 males and 1,57,189 females) in 1901. During the span of eighty years (1901—81), the population increased by 152.4 per cent. The population variation since 1901 is as follows :—

Year	Persons	Decade variation	Percentage decade variation	Males	Females
1901 ..	3,35,521	..	..	1,78,332	1,57,189
1911 ..	2,89,440	—46,081	—13.73	1,55,913	1,33,527
1921 ..	3,12,032	+22,592	+7.81	1,68,474	1,43,558
1931 ..	3,26,002	+13,970	+4.48	1,74,915	1,51,087
1941 ..	3,85,909	+59,907	+8.38	2,01,491	1,84,418
1951 ..	4,38,682	+52,773	+13.67	2,32,691	2,05,991
1961 ..	5,54,271	+1,15,589	+26.35	2,94,262	2,60,009
1971 ..	6,86,986	+1,32,715	+23.94	3,68,449	3,18,537
1981 ..	8,46,765	+1,59,779	+23.26	4,53,873	3,92,892

The population during the decade (1901—1911), decreased by 13.73 per cent. In the next decade the population increased by 22,592 persons from 289,440 to 312,032. The population rose enormously during the period of 20 years (1961—1981). The general factors which influence the trend of population growth are : severe attack of malaria and plague during 1901—11, mass migration of people in the wake of Partition during 1941—51 ; and health measures adopted by the Government. The Sonipat district because of the proximity to Delhi had a good scope for gainful employment, attracted a large number of refugees. Besides, there is general trend of population rise in the country.

The population variation since 1901 in three towns (Sonipat, Gohana and Ganaur) is shown below :

Town and Census year	Persons	Decade variation	Percentage decade variation	Males	Females
<b>Sonipat :</b>					
1901 ..	12,990	..	..	6,389	6,601
1911 ..	12,014	—976	—7.51	6,192	5,822
1921 ..	12,981	+967	+8.05	7,002	5,979
1931 ..	15,050	+2,069	+15.94	8,274	6,776
1941 ..	17,781	+2,731	+18.15	9,641	8,140

1	2	3	4	5	6
1951 ..	30,189	+12,408	+69.78	16,072	14,117
1961 ..	45,882	+15,693	+51.98	25,119	20,763
1971 ..	62,393	+16,511	+35.99	33,750	28,643
1981 ..	1,09,369	+46,976	+75.29	59,300	50,069
<b>Gohana :</b>					
1901 ..	6,567	..	..	3,257	3,310
1911 ..	5,438	-1,129	-17.19	2,752	2,686
1921 ..	5,107	-331	-6.09	2,665	2,442
1931 ..	5,045	-62	-1.21	2,699	2,346
1941 ..	6,818	+1,773	+35.14	3,792	3,026
1951 ..	8,796	+1,978	+29.01	4,754	4,042
1961 ..	11,076	+2,280	+25.92	5,859	5,217
1971 ..	16,754	+5,678	+51.26	8,923	7,831
1981 ..	26,188	+9,434	+56.31	13,993	12,195
<b>Ganaur<sup>1</sup> :</b>					
1971 ..	8,399	..	..	4,542	3,857
1981 ..	16,489	+8,090	+96.32	8,868	7,621

During the decade (1901—11), there was a great ravage of disease and drought which took a toll of the population by death. Consequently, the population of major towns (Sonipat and Gohana) decreased. An increase in population of Sonipat town during two decades (1921—41) was nominal. During the post-Independence period (1951—1981), there was a steep rise in population. This may be attributed to the health measures adopted by the Government. Due to the health schemes, death rate was reduced in whole of the country. In the case of Gohana town population decreased by 17.19 per cent during 1901—11, 6.09 per cent during 1911—21 and 1.21 per cent during the decade (1921—31). There was a continuous rise in the percentage of population since 1941 to 1981. Ganaur town recorded an increase of population of 96.32 per cent during the period (1971—81). In Gohana, Sonipat and Ganaur, the percentage increase in population during the decade (1971—81) was 56.31, 75.29 and 96.32 respectively. This shows that a desire for living in a city or a town

1. Ganaur was included in the list of towns at the time of 1971 Census.

is being developed in the society. Many people do not find such facilities in the villages. It has been observed that a large number of persons shift from villages to towns for studies and livelihood. The major increase in rural and urban population may be due to more lands having been brought under cultivation and of greater medical facilities and hygienic conditions brought about by the development programmes under the Five-Year Plans.

### Distribution of Population

As per 1981 Census, the district had 335 inhabited and 13 uninhabited villages. Total rural population of the district was 6,94,719 (3,71,712 males and 3,23,007 females). The villages<sup>1</sup> classified by population are given below:—

Range of population	No. of villages in each range	Percentage of villages in each range
—200	9	2.72
200—499	24	7.25
500—1,999	158	47.73
2,000—4,999	122	36.86
5,000—9,999	18	5.44
10,000+	..	..
Total	331	100.00

The above table shows that 47.73 per cent of the villages in the district are medium sized having population in the range 500—1,999 whereas 36.86 per cent of the villages fall in the population range of 2,000—4,999. Only 18 villages or 5.44 per cent come in the range of 5,000—9,999.

There were 18 villages (8 of Gohana tahsil and 10 of Sonipat tahsil) with a population of 5,000 and above. The details are as follows:—

District	Tahsil	Villages with a population of 5,000 and above		
		Number	Population	Percentage of total rural population of the State
Sonipat	..	18	1,17,538	1.16
	Gohana	8	48,995	0.48
	Sonipat	10	68,543	0.68

<sup>1</sup>The number of villages shown in the 1981 Census is 348 (331 inhabited and 13 uninhabited). Four villages [Kalupur, Jamalpur Khurd, Garhi and Ganaur (rural)] have been partly merged in the towns.

**Distribution of villages by density.**—In 45.02 per cent villages the density of population per square kilometre falls in the range 301—500 whereas in 27.49 per cent of the villages, it falls in the range 201—300. In 14.20 per cent of villages the density is above 500. The distribution of villages by density is shown in the table below :—

Range of density (per sq. kilometre)	Total number of villages in each density range	Percentage of villages in each density range
—10	2	0.60
11—20	2	0.60
21—50	4	1.21
51—100	8	2.42
101—200	28	8.46
201—300	91	27.49
301—500	149	45.02
501+	47	14.20
<b>Total :</b>	<b>331</b>	<b>100.00</b>

**Density of Population.**—As per 1981 Census, density of population in the district was 384 persons per square kilometre. According to 1981 Census, the density of population for Haryana State as a whole was 292 persons per square kilometre. Among the districts, the density of population was 466 in Faridabad, 384 in Sonapat, 368 in Ambala, 356 in Karnal, 349 in Rohtak, 319 in Mahendragarh, 313 in Gurgaon, 302 in Kurukshetra, 284 in Jind, 237 in Hisar, 180 in Bhiwani and 165 in Sirsa. In the rural areas of the State, the density was 232 persons per square kilometre whereas in urban areas it was 3,702 persons per square kilometre as per the 1981 Census. Among the districts, highest density in rural areas was found in Sonapat (320) and lowest in Sirsa (133). In urban areas the highest density among the districts was recorded in Rohtak (5,452) and the lowest in Faridabad (2,163). Density of population in urban areas of Sonapat district was 4,109 per kilometre. Density of Sonapat tahsil (446 persons per km.) is higher than that of Gohana tahsil (299). Sonapat is in the close proximity of Delhi, hence there is more concentration of population.

**Household.**—The number of occupied residential houses in the district according to 1981 Census was 1,29,992 (1,03,585 in the rural areas and 26,407 in the urban areas. Persons per occupied Census house were 7 (Rural 7 and

urban 6). Institutional and houseless population was 6,258. The total number of households was 1,31,937 (1,04,719 in rural areas and 27,218 in urban areas<sup>1</sup>. The number of persons per household was 6 ; in rural areas 7 and in urban areas 6.

The break-up of houseless and institutional population of the district has been detailed in the following table :

#### Houseless population

	No. of households	Persons	Males	Females
<i>Total</i>	404	1,568	972	596
<i>Rural</i> ..	341	1,265	794	471
<i>Urban</i> ..	63	303	178	125

#### Institutional Population

	No. of households	Persons	Males	Females
<i>Total</i> ..	239	4,690	3,285	1,405
<i>Rural</i> ..	166	2,544	1,662	882
<i>Urban</i> ..	73	2,146	1,623	523

There were 304 houseless persons<sup>2</sup> in Gohana tahsil as compared to Sonipat tahsil (1,264 houseless persons). The institutional population in Gohana tahsil consisted of 1717 (767 males and 950 females) whereas in Sonipat tahsil, there were 2,973 institutional persons (2,518 males and 455 females).

**Sex Ratio.**—According to 1981 Census, the sex-ratio for the district as a whole was 866. For rural areas, it was 869 and for urban areas, it was 851. The changes in the sex-ratio (females per 1,000 males) during the decades 1901—1981 have been shown below :—

Year	Rural	Urban	Total
1901 ..	873	1,027	881
1911 ..	851	951	856
1921 ..	851	871	852
1931 ..	866	831	864
1941 ..	921	931	915
1951 ..	887	872	885
1961 ..	889	839	884
1971 ..	866	854	865
1981 ..	869	851	866

1. *Statistical Abstract of Haryana*, 1983-84, p. 54.

2. Census of India series-6, Haryana, General population Tables and Primary Census Abstract 1981, page 48.

As already stated that sex-ratio of the district was 866 against 870 of the State as a whole. The sex-ratio in rural areas was 869 which was relatively high in comparison to urban areas (851). It rejects male selective migration to urban areas, low sex ratio at birth and higher rate of mortality among the females. The sex ratio (915) was recorded during the decade from 1931—41.

**Population of Scheduled Castes.**—As per 1981 Census, the total population of Scheduled Castes in the district was 1,42,172 (76,458 males and 65,714 females). The district ranked eighth in the percentage of Scheduled Castes population which accounted for 16.79 per cent of the total population in the district as against the corresponding figure of 19.07 for the state. In the rural areas, the district had 17.95 per cent of population of Scheduled Castes to the total rural population.

In 29.91 per cent of villages, percentage of Scheduled Castes population to total population is above 20 per cent. In 2.72 per cent of villages there is no Scheduled Castes population at all.

In the towns the Scheduled Castes population constituted 11.50 per cent of the urban total population in the district.

The proportion of Scheduled Castes population to total population in each town is as follows:—

Name of the town	Total population (including institutional and houseless population)	Total Scheduled Castes population	Percentage of Scheduled castes population to total population
Ganaur ..	16,489	1,902	11.53
Gohana ..	26,188	3,495	13.35
Sonipat ..	1,09,369	12,092	11.06
All towns ..	1,52,046	17,489	11.50

**Displaced persons.**—As a result of the partition of the country in 1947, many Muslim families migrated to Pakistan and 61,585 persons mainly Hindus from Jhang, Multan, Muzafargarh, Lyallpur and other parts of Pakistan migrated to India and settled in the district. The Government extended various facilities to rehabilitate them by giving financial and other facilities which included technical and vocational training, special priorities in recruitment to public services and loans to settle down in petty business or trade.

The detailed account about their rehabilitation may be seen under the caption of 'Rehabilitation' at the end of this chapter.

**Literacy.**—The literacy rates are 40.85 per cent for the district as a whole; 36.76 per cent for rural areas and 59.54 per cent for urban areas. The literacy rate is 54.28 per cent for males as against 25.34 per cent for females. In rural areas, the literacy rate is 51.25 per cent for males and 20.09 per cent for females. In urban areas, the literacy rate is 67.97 per cent and 49.63 per cent for males and females, respectively. As shown above, the literacy rates are higher among the males and females in urban areas.

The literacy rates for the towns in the district are as follows:—

Name of the town	Literacy rate (per cent)
Ganaur	58.89
Gohana	53.07
Sonipat	61.19
All Towns	59.54

The table above indicates that Sonipat town has a literacy rate higher than the district literacy rate. Gohana town has the lowest literacy rate.

By 1981, 543 males and 253 females per thousand population were classified as literates. The comparative low literacy among females is associated with the conservative outlook of the people as well as their social and economic backwardness.

#### LANGUAGE

Sonipat district is a Hindi speaking area. It falls in the region of Bangru dialect. Bangru represents the western group of dialects of Hindi. Its phonology and grammar are similar to a great extent to that of standard Hindi but dissimilarities are also conspicuous. Standard Hindi dental *n* and *i* are changed (though not always) to cerebral *n* and *i*, i.e. 'Ja'na' for *Ja'na* to mean 'to go' and 'Sa'la for *sala* to mean brother-in-law. In Bangru there is no short vowel in the final position of words, i.e. *sa'dhu* or *sadh* to mean saint and 'Kavi' for *Ka'vi* to mean poet. Consonant clusters are rarely used in this dialect, i.e. *dharam* for *dharam* to mean religion. A few other peculiarities of the Bangru dialect are: *sai* for *hai* to mean 'is', *karda* for *karta* to mean doing and *kad* for *kab* to mean 'when'.

The other specimens are as follows :—

*Eh bhart mata bhalā kariyo rizak dijiyi.*

“mother earth, be good-give us our daily bread”.

*Eh mere parmashwar, khairsalah rakhiyo bhalā kariyo.*

“God keep me safe and do well by me”.

The displaced persons who settled in this district speak Panjabi. Both the locals and displaced persons have adopted many words from one another's language in urban areas. In the rural areas, the people speak pure or *theth* ‘Haryanvi’.

After the migration of Muslims in 1947, the use of Urdu is now limited to the older generation. The various scripts used are : Devnagari for Hindi, Gurmukhi for Panjabi, Persian for Urdu, Roman for English and lande.

#### RELIGIOUS LIFE

By 1981, Hindus constituted the bulk of population while Muslims, Sikhs, Jains, Christians and Buddhists were in minorities. Muslims are found in the villages of Sonipat tahsil. The religion-wise break-up of population (rural only) as per 1961 *Census of Rohtak District* is shown below :—

Religion	Gohana tahsil		Sonipat tahsil	
	Males	Females	Males	Females
Hindus	.. 1,40,947	1,25,564	1,44,602	1,27,604
Muslims	.. 527	431	2,587	2,176
Jains	... 456	441	473	629
Sikhs	.. 245	151	210	138
Buddhists	.. 218	183	..	..
Christians	.. ..	..	10	13
Religion not stated	.. 19	..	2	..

The population figures show that the Hindus in 1961 were in majority in both the tahsils. The Muslims were in large number in Sonipat tahsil whereas the Sikhs were found in Sonipat and Gohana tahsils. The Buddhists were in Gohana tahsil and the Christians were found only in urban areas of Sonipat tahsil. Christianity was introduced in the district about a century ago under the patronage of the British. By the beginning of 20th century, there were churches at Sonipat and Kharkhoda in the district. The Methodists Church of Southern Asia is running a school at Sonipat and a clinic at Ganaur,

Townwise population by religion as per 1971 Census is given below :—

Town	Religion							
	Hindu		Jain		Muslim		Sikh	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
Ganaur ..	4,148	3,497	330	309	11	9	53	42
Gohana ..	8,398	7,366	344	325	32	25	148	115
Sonipat ..	31,738	26,950	870	786	419	310	565	518

In 1971, there were 40 Buddhists (15 Males and 25 females) and 195 Christians (142 males and 53 females) in Sonipat town.

The following statement shows the percentage of major religions to total population in 1981 :—

Religion	Percentage to total population 1981
Hindus	97.60
Sikhs	0.37
Muslims	1.46
Christians	0.03
Buddhists	Nil
Jains	0.54

## RELIGIOUS BELIEFS AND PRACTICES

### HINDUS

Hinduism is practised and followed by Hindus only. It is a collection of diverse beliefs and practices. Hindus worship gods in its various aspects, the chief being Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva. Principle of pantheism during the worship is followed by the Hindus. Lord Ram and Lord Krishna are incarnations of Vishnu. Hanuman is also worshipped by all sections of Hindus. Spirits of streams, trees and other minor deities are also objects of worship. It has been observed that Hindus follow traditional Hindu beliefs and are

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generally orthodox in their religious practices. People go to temples either daily or on special occasions. Some people install images and idols of their chosen deity in their homes and shops and perform the ritual of daily worship in the morning and evening. The other deities revered by the people are : the Sun, the Yamuna, Bhumi, Khwaja Khizr, Small pox sisters, Gugga and Sayyads.

The religious practices of the Hindus all over Haryana are almost identical. The varieties, if at all, are due to peculiar customs of each caste and family. On the occasion of *greh pravesh*, child birth, marriage, etc., the priest is invited for performing ritual worship.

The practice of observing *shraddhas* in commemoration of the dead ancestors is also common. These are performed for 15 days before the beginning of *Nauratras*. During these days, professional Brahmans are invited by a few families and are offered delicious food either on the important *tithi* (date) or the last day of the *shraddhas*, i.e. *Amavasia*. Some portion of the delicious food is offered to cows and birds. The members of the family take meals after the traditional performance of *shraddhas*.

The popular deities and the way of worship by the people are as follows :—

**Shiva.**—The worship of Lord Shiva is very popular in the urban areas than rural areas. People visit Shivalya generally on Mondays and worship the deity by pouring milk and water on the Shiva *linga* enshrined in it. The important Shiva temples are at Sonipat, Gohana, Ganaur, Kundal, Kamaspur and Barwasni. Shiva temple at village Kundal deserves special mention. It is said that an idol was discovered and when all attempts to dig it out had failed, a temple was constructed over it and the idol began to be worshipped as Shiva. The followers of lord Shiva generally have fast on Mondays.

**Rama.**—Lord Rama is worshipped by the Hindus as the incarnation of lord Vishnu. Every temple has the idols of Rama, Lakshmana and Sita which are known as *Thakurdvaras*. Rama is specially worshipped on the occasion of the Dusshera when *Ramlila* is staged in various parts of the district.

**Hanuman.**—Hanuman, generally known as monkey-god, is also the object of special veneration. He is worshipped by the Hindus and other sections of the society all over India. There is a custom of constructing of Hanuman temple before digging a well to avert an accident, as Hanuman is considered god of strength. Any difficult work started after saying 'Jai Bajrang-Bali'. The deity is worshipped on Tuesday. The followers offer sweetmeats as *prashad* to the images of Hanuman installed in the temples on Tuesdays. They observe fast on that day to appease the deity. At Chulkana village, a big temple is situated and a big statue of Hanuman stands installed in the precincts of the temple.

**Krishana.**—Lord Krishana is also worshipped throughout the district by all Hindus as the incarnation of Bhagwan Vishnu. The name of Krishana is very dear to every Hindu of the district as elsewhere in the country and temples dedicated to Him are found at Sonipat, Gohana, Kharkhoda and Ganaur.

**Minor deities.**—Many malevolent deities are worshipped by women and children. Some Muslim Pirs are also revered by all sections of society. It is felt if they are not propitiated, they may be troublesome.

The local gods and saints worshipped by the people since time immemorial have lost much of their former importance though they have not disappeared altogether. For example, mention may be made of a Ghahibi Pir (hidden Pir) who is also known as Bala Sayyad. People visit his shrine, built squarely in the form of a tomb on the top of Behrampur hill, on every Sunday. In fact there is no hill. It is only a small raised place situated near Garhi Rajlu, about 2 kilometres from Sandhal Kalan.

Masses in rural areas in particular worship Sitala Mata (goddess of smallpox) or Devi. Mata is usually worshipped on Tuesday in the month of Chaitra. Kandi Mata is worshipped on the second day after the recovery from an attack of smallpox. Masani is also worshipped and propitiated in the hope that children may not be inflicted with a *masan*, a disease of emaciation or atrophy.

**Bhumia or the god of the homestead.**—Bhumia is often called *khera* which is worshipped on Sunday. People light up an earthen lamp and offer a cake of bread at the shrine. Brahmans (Professional) are also served with delicious food. The *Khera* is often worshipped on marriage occasions. The bridegroom before proceeding to the bride's house takes a round of the deity. There are certain other occasions on which women worship the Bhumia.

**Khawaja Khizr.**—The worship of the local god of water, though the name is Muslim, is prevalent more in *khadar* areas. Twice a year after the harvest, he is worshipped at the well, diyas are lighted and Brahman and faquirs are offered food.

**The Yamuna.**—The people refer to the river Yamuna as *Jamna Ji*. There are no shrines to the Yamuna but people go and bathe in the river on several occasions. Two important fairs are held at village Bega and Bakhtawarpur. People take a dip in the Yamuna river on Kartik *Puranmashi*. It is also believed that a dip in the Yamuna river on Sundays at the time of waxing moon purges from all sins.

**Guru Ravidas.**—Harijans, particularly Chamars, worship Guru Ravidas who preached against the caste-system. The birth anniversary of the Guru is celebrated on the *purnima* of *Magh*. On the occasion, tableaux from the life

of Ravidas are taken out in procession to the accompaniment of *bhajan mandlis* singing devotional songs.

**Rishi Balmiki.**—The Harijans, particularly Balmiki community, revere Maharishi. His birth anniversary is celebrated with enthusiasm in the month of October. The devotional songs are also sung on this occasion.

#### SIKHS

The Sikhs believe in the teachings of ten Gurus and the *Granth Sahib*. They attach great importance to the recitation of the *Granth Sahib* and visit *gurdwaras*. Besides observing some Hindu festivals, they celebrate *gurparbs* (birth days and martyrdom days of Sikh Gurus) and Baisakhi. They organise *akhand path* on the special occasion of birth, marriage and death. Important *gurdwaras* are at Sonipat and Gohana.

#### MUSLIMS

The Muslims believe in one God (Prophet Mohammad) and their religion enjoins five duties upon them. They observe *namaz* five times in a day, preferably in a mosque. During the performance of *namaz*, they cover their heads with caps. Recitation of *Kalma* and *roza* is also done by the Muslims.

A tomb at Rajlu Garhi, maqbra of a Pegamber, at Nathupura, and tomb of Sayyad at Kharkhoda are important monuments where the Muslims visit on special occasions or on the day of Id.

#### JAINS

The members of Jain community worship Lord Mahavira and the Tira-thankras. They celebrate Mahavir Jayanti and the birth anniversary of Lord Mahavira.

#### • CHRISTIANS

The Christians consider the Bible as their holy book. They observe Easter, Good Friday, Christmas and New Year's Day. There is a Church at Sonipat.

#### SUPERSTITIONS

Despite the teachings of Arya Samaj, the masses generally cling to many traditional superstitions in the ordinary acts of daily life. Some of the commonly practised superstitions are given below:—

If a black cat crosses one's path, it is treated as a bad omen. If someone sneezes at the beginning of a job or at the time of going out, it is taken as sign of failure. Similarly, a woman with an empty pitcher, coming from an opposite direction and crossing one's path, is considered inauspicious. If the pot

or a pitcher is full of water, it is regarded a lucky sign. The people of all the communities believe in fate and luck. The astrologer is invariably consulted on every important occasion.

A clear picture about superstitions is given below:

"The people are not very superstitious as a rule, and it is not easy to say how far they really believe what they profess to, except when it suits their convenience. Certain lucky and unlucky days and omen are noted for the commencement of sowings and reaping ; no one must start for a journey or sell cattle on Wednesday, and buffaloes must not change hands on Saturday. When a human being is ill, a rupee and four annas are wrapped in a cloth with some rice and placed in a corner of the room in the name of some deceased relation of the sick man; on his recovery, this is given to some Brahman, and on the same day the dogs and holymen of the village are fed, and perhaps some excavation is done on a tank when disease attacks animals, the best course is believed to have charms read over them, and to suspend others across the entrance of the village. The people often call their sons by mean names, such as *Molar* (bought), *Mangtu* (borrowed), and the like, to deprecate the wrath and envy of gods. Ghosts are feared at the burning grounds (*chahani*), though not elsewhere apparently; but they are firmly believed to possess people sometimes, and ravings of these sufferers are carefully noted. The cure for affliction is said to be the application of red pepper<sup>1</sup>".

A few of the above quoted superstitions prevailing during 1878-79 have been liberalised, but the others have a grip over the people even today.

#### FESTIVALS AND FAIRS

Festivals are an important feature in the life of the people. These provide a change in their routine life and are sources of joy and gaiety to all. The common festivals observed by the Hindus are Holi, Diwali, Janmasthami, Dussehra, Teej, Karva Chauth, Basant Panchami, Shivratri, Bhai-duj, Ram-naumi, etc.

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1. Report (on the revised) Land Revenue Settlement of the Rohtak District, 1878-79, pp.66-67

*Teej*, which falls in *Sawan* (July-August) is mainly the festival of women. Swings are hung on the trees the previous day. On the day of festival, women and children attired in their best clothes, proceed to the swings. Along with the swinging, they sing songs of *Teej* and return late in the evening to eat the festive meals prepared earlier in the day.

The other important festival of *Karva Chauth* falls in the month of *Kartik* (October-November) and is observed by married women only. They keep fast on the day in order that their husbands may live long. The puja is performed by the women sitting together in the afternoon, the fast is, however, broken after looking at and offering water to the moon at night.

On the occasion of *Janmashtmi*, people take out Lord Krishna's image in *dalass* and decorated palanquins in a festival locally called *Jal Jholni*. A *Jal Jholni mela* is held at Gohana in the month of *Bhadon*, when the idol of *Krishana* is taken out in procession and is immersed in the water in the evening.

*Janmashtmi* is celebrated at Sonipat with religious fervour. Special *Poojas* in the temples, distribution of *Prashad* and sweets and colourful procession re-enacting the life of Lord *Krishana* are the highlights of usual celebrations.

Devotees in large number throng the specially decorated temples at Sonipat. Many temples, including the Lord Rama temple, *Gita Bhavan* (city), *Shri Ram Mandir* in Kot Mohalla and *Mandir Radhey Shyam* in *Kalan Mohalla* attract thousand devotees throughout the day, where special discourses and lectures on the *Gita* and Lord Krishna's life are organised.

The burning of effigies of *Ravana* at the end of *Dussehra* is not customary in rural areas; the village girls observe *Sanjhi* for a period of 10 days. They move out at night with earthen pots on their heads. These pots have holes all around and are lighted with *diyas* (earthen lamps) placed in them. It presents a lovely sight. The boys try to break the earthen pots which the girls protect. On the *Dussehra* evening these earthen pots with lighted *diyas* inside are floated in ponds. The lighted *diya* symbolises *Sita* (Purity) while the boys represent *Rakshasas* (evil powers) from whose custody *Sita* is released. On this occasion while the Brahmins offer tender barley shoots to their patrons, the sisters do the same to their brothers and both receive monetary gifts in return.

*Gugga Naumi* is religious festival connected with snake worship observed on *Bhadon 9* (August-September). A number of legends have clustered around *Gugga* who is also called *Gugga Pir* or *Zahir Pir*. His shrine usually consists of a small one-room building with a minaret at each corner and a grave inside. It is called *mari* and is marked by a long bamboo with

a peacock plumes, a coconut, some coloured threads and some hand *pankhas* with a blue flag on the top. On the day of *naumi*, the devotees offer delicious food at the shrine and dance. Beating of *deroos* is the privilege of either Balmiki community or Dhanak community. They are offered some *charhawa*. It is believed that the spirit of *Gugga* temporarily takes abode in the devotee dancer who proves this fact beating himself occasionally with a bunch of iron chains called *chabuk*. *Gugga Pir* is also the subject of folk-songs in the northern India. The festival is particularly celebrated at Khanpur Kalan.

The festival of *Holi* is celebrated in rural areas in a different manner. At the time of festival married women play Holi with men by throwing coloured water on them, On *Dhulendi* (*Phag*) the men with a degree of relationship throw water on women who beat them with sticks or *Koraras* (twisted cloth of strips). The men act as if they are powerless, and their inability to defend themselves leads to much fun and frolic.

The festival of *Basora* falls in the month of *chait* (March-April) and literally means festival of stale bread. On the eve of festival, all households in the villages prepare *dalia* or sweet rice and set it aside uneaten. Next morning, women rise early and after ablution they perform puja at *Chabutras* dedicated to the *matas*. Then the stale food (*Poondgi*) is offered to all the members of family.

The *Devuthani Giras*, celebrated in the month of *Kartik*, is mainly a festival of women. This is observed in order to awaken the gods who are supposed to be asleep from the ninth day in *Asadh* (June-July). The women keep fast on the day and in the evening they assemble at a selected place and beat upon brass utensils to wake up the gods. After this, they break the fast and special dishes made at this occasion are eaten.

The principal festivals are celebrated in the same way as those are celebrated in the other parts of northern India. It is, therefore, not necessary to give a detailed account of their modes of observance.

Besides the celebration of Hindu festivals, the Sikhs celebrate the *Gurpurabs* (The birth days and martyrdom days of Gurus). On the occasions of these *Gurpurabs* processions are taken out and congregational prayers and recitations from the *Granth Sahib* are held.

The Jains celebrate the birth and nirvan anniversaries of Parsvanath and Mahavira. The principal festivals of Buddhists is Buddha Purnima, the day on which Buddha is believed to have been born and to have attained enlightenment as well as *nirana*.

Christmas and Easter are two principal festivals of the Christians; the former is celebrated in honour of the birth of Jesus Christ, while the latter commemorates his resurrection. The Christians go to churches, exchange presents and hold festivities.

The Muslim festivals are *Id-ul-Fitar* and *Ramzan*. During the month of *Ramzan*, the devout keep fast during the day time throughout the month. *Id-ul-Zuha* commonly called *bakr-id* as goats are butchered in the name of Allah. *Shab-a-Barat* is celebrated with fire works and presents of sweetmeats.

## FAIRS

The *Sat Khumb* fair carries special significance in the area. It is celebrated at Kheri Gujar twice a year, on the last day of *Sravana* (July-August) and *Kartik* full moon day (October-November). The important fairs with their modes of observance, significance and duration are detailed in the Table II of Appendix.

## SOCIAL LIFE

### CASTES AND SOCIAL GROUPS

**Caste.**—The caste system with all its ramifications is observed among the Hindus but its social influence is diminishing.

**Social groups.**—The important social groups are Jats, Brahmans, Rajputs, Sainis, Gujars, Harijans, Aggarwals, Khatris and Aroras. All these groups are scattered throughout the district. The profession and pattern of life style of every social group are detailed below:—

**Jats.**—The Jat is a major community in the district. The major clans of the community in the district are Dahiya and Malik. Besides agriculture, government service and service in the army are the important professions of the Jats.

**Brahmans.**—There are many Brahman families who have agricultural lands and are habitually and traditionally agriculturists. They also join army and government service. The other professional *Pandits* perform religious ceremonies of all types.

**Aggarwals.**—In the past, a few families followed the profession of money-lending. Now besides business and trade, they have switched over to industry and civil service from their traditional family pursuits.

**Sainis.**—They are in small number and do agricultural operations. They own small holdings of land. They are also expert in cultivation of vegetables. Like others, they also adopt other professions.

**Gujars.**—They are good cultivators. They join army and other professions. They have their peculiar customs.

**Tyagis.**—They were originally Brahmans. They refused to accept the offerings and alms and preferred to involve themselves in farming. Consequently the Brahmans made them outcasts (Tyagis). Hence they are called Tyagis. They are mostly concentrated in Ganaur tahsil along the G.T. Road.

Now they are turning towards other occupations besides agriculture.

**Khatri and Aroras.**—They came as displaced persons after partition and settled in the district as trading communities. The Aroras in particular, who came in large number after the partition are noted for their capacity for hard work. They engage freely in banking, Shop-keeping, trade and government service.

**Harijans.**—Among Harijans, the Chamars and Balmikis are in large number. A list of Scheduled Castes and Backward Classes is given in the chapter 'Other Social Services'. Before Independence, their avocations were restricted to their hereditary family pursuits. Things, however, changed after Independence.

The Chamar community has made much progress after Independence. They are now politically and socially conscious. Their position is better than those of other such classes.

Balmikis even now follow their old profession of scavenging in urban areas. Now they are more conscious of their social and political rights. The younger generation, especially those who are educated generally prefer government service to other professions.

**Backward Classes.**—The Kumhars, Lohars, Sunars, Khatis, Barbers, etc. are included in the list of Backward Classes. Besides their hereditary professions, they join government service. Other pursuits followed by them are business, trade and industry.

#### JOINT FAMILY SYSTEM

The joint family system which has been an important feature of the society since time immemorial, is breaking up under the stress of the changed economic and social conditions. It is more marked in urban areas than rural areas. Now the bond of joint family system is weakening even in villages, where people depend almost entirely on farming. The average holding is too small to support a joint family which continues growing in size. It is, therefore, inevitable that some members of the family should move out in search of service to the town or elsewhere to supplement the family income. In

this way, the migration of rural population to the towns in search of a living whether in business, industry, service or some form of labour has vitally affected the structure of the joint family. Family life is becoming more and more individualistic.

### **Inheritance**

Inheritance of property was regulated by uncodified Hindu law which was based on both customs and precedents set by various courts of law in the whole of the northern India. The family being patrilineal in this region, after the father's death all his sons got an equal share in the property. In case sons were minors, the property went to the widow who became a trustee till the sons attained maturity when the property was divided equally amongst them. In the absence of any male issue, the property was inherited by the widow who could enjoy it till her death or till she re-married, but she had no right to it. In case the wife was already dead and there was no male issue either, the brothers of the deceased inherited the property. In the absence of all the above mentioned relations, the property was inherited by the nearest male relative. Daughters, whether married or un-married had no share in the property, though in case of an unmarried daughter, the person inheriting the property was bound both morally and legally to bear the expenses of her marriage.

Today, the Hindu Succession Act, 1956, provides for a uniform system for all Hindus with respect to intestate succession. The Act removes the inequality between men and women; as now the son, widow and mother, inherit equally. A daughter has as good a claim to her father's property as a son, provided the father does not debar her by law (in case of his self acquired property only.) However, inspite of the right confessed by law, it appears to have become a general practice for the girls not to claim any part of the intestate property.

Regarding the Muslims, they are governed by their personal law of succession and inheritance. The Christians on the other hand, are governed by the Indian Christians Succession Act, of 1925.

### **Marriage Customs**

The marriage among Hindus is monogamous; according to the Hindu Marriage Act of 1935, Polygamy is illegal. On the other hand, a Muslim may, according to the personal law, take four wives at a time. Due to economic factors, however, this practice is very much in decline. A Christian is invariably monogamous. Now a government employee is liable to be dismissed from service if he marries second time without the permission of the Government.

Marriage among the Hindus is sacrament; its rites being prescribed in the scriptures and to some extent by custom and tradition. Some variations in the performance of different rites by the different castes, or even different families within a caste may, however, occur. Certain rules and restrictions are observed before contracting a matrimonial alliance. The general rule is that marriage should take place within one's own caste, but not in the same *gotra*, the same *gotra* implies *gotra* of father, mother and grandmother. Besides the above, marriage with maternal uncle's son or daughter is also prohibited among the Hindus of northern India. However, some Arora families (Refugees) may cross over this tradition. Another restriction observed is that marriages should take place not only outside one's own village, but also outside the village or villages where people of the same *gotra* reside.

Marriage is an important event of one's life, it is preceded by betrothal and a number of preliminaries and elaborate preparations.

**Betrothal.**—Mostly, it is the parents of the girl who have to find a suitable match for their daughter. In this, they are generally helped by their relations and friends who reside in different villages and towns. After a suitable boy has been found, negotiations are started either by the parents directly or through a matchmaker. Sometimes, the horoscopes of the boy and girl are examined to ensure that they are mentally compatible. This practice has been generally prevalent among the trading communities, but now it is dying out. Earlier the boy and girl were generally seen and approved by their respective parents or near relatives. But, now the practice of the boy approving the girl himself, especially in the urban areas, is gaining ground. When both the parties agree, the date for *sagai* or betrothal ceremony is fixed. On the day so fixed, the father of the girl accompanied by his male relatives goes to boy's place with sweets and in a simple ceremony applies *tilak* on the forehead of the boy. He gives some money to the boy and also his near relatives, the amount depending upon his economic and social status.

**Marriage preliminaries.**—The parents of the girl consult *Purohit* regarding *mahurat* or the date for wedding ceremony. The proposed date or day is written by the professional Brahman in a letter, to which a turmeric mark and few grains of rice are affixed, called *Pili chithi* or *lagan*. In the letter the *bana* or number of oil baths to be taken by the boy and girl, are also mentioned.

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

to a door. The maternal uncle in each case performs this ceremony and also brings *bhat* which consists of presents and wedding suits for bridegroom or bride.

**Wedding.**—On the day of marriage, the boy is dressed in his wedding clothes brought by his maternal uncle. The seven knotted sacred thread is tied on his right wrist on the first day of the *ban* ceremony. His head-dress consists of a crown or a crest over the turban and a *sehra* covering the face; the *sehra* being tied by his sister's husband. The groom's brother's wife applies some *surma* to his eyes. He then gets on the back of a mare to perform the ceremony of *ghurchari*. Some one leads the decorated mare with the bridegroom to a temple or god of homestead for worship. The boy's sisters follow him throwing rice accompanied by other women singing songs. After this ceremony is over, the wedding procession called *baraat* accompanied by a band party, sets off for bride's place. The *baraat* in rural areas is solely composed of the male relatives and friends of the groom, but in urban areas the inclusion of women is not uncommon.

If the marriage party comes from any outstation, it is received by the bride's side at the pre-fixed venue, from where the *baraat* is taken to a *dharmshala* or chopal or any other place where the arrangements for the stay of *baraat* have been made. In the evening, the *baraat* goes in procession, the bridegroom on mare, to the bride's house where the *baraat* is received by her relatives and others. The first ceremony to be performed is called *dhukao* when the boy's father and girl's father embrace each other and the latter gives a monetary gift to the former. Then the bride is brought out of the house where the *Jaimala* ceremony on the boy and the girl is performed. At this time the groom touches the *barauthi* with the iron cane. This ceremony is known as *barauthi*.

Thereafter, the marriage party is feasted and the main function starts. For this ceremony, a pavilion called *bedi* is generally set up in the courtyard of the bride's place. During the ceremony, sacred fire is lighted. The Brahman ties a corner of the girl's wrap to a piece of cloth called *Patka* and the boy and girl go round the holy fire seven times amidst chanting of *mantras* and take vows of faithfulness towards each other. This is called *phera* ceremony. Then follows the *kanyadan*—the so called formal bride-giving ceremony. The parents thus give away their daughter in marriage and bless her into the worldly life.

At this time dowry is given; it generally consists of cash, ornaments, dresses, household utensils, furniture, etc. The farewell ceremony is called *vida* after which the *baraat* returns taking the bride with them.

On reaching the bridegroom's house, his mother performs the *bahu ka utarna* ceremony. She sprinkles some water from the vessel and drinks a

few drops from it also. Oil is put on the two ends of the frame of the entrance door. Thereafter, *kangna kholna* ceremony takes place. In the *munh dikhai* ceremony, the bride is offered some gifts, usually cash, on showing her face to the female relatives and friends. After staying for a day or two; the couple visits the bride's house.

Marriage among the Sikhs has many similarities with those of the Hindus. Selection of the boy is done in the same manner and the engagement ceremony is called *mangani*. As the actual marriage ceremony called *anand Karaj* is performed always in the afternoon, the *baraat* is taken out in some cases in the evening, while in others in the morning. Like the Hindus, the ceremony of *ghurcharhi* is also performed, the boy being taken to gurdwara to pay respects. Women also accompany the *barat* and sometimes even join the menfolk in dancing *bhangra*. The *barat* is received by the girl's father and other relatives. Then the ceremony of *milni* takes place in which the fathers of the boy and girl embrace each other and the latter makes a small monetary gift to the former. Before serving the *barat* with delicious food, *jaimala* ceremony is performed. This is followed by the actual ceremony which is presided over by the *granthi*. After a brief *shabad kirtan*, the *granthi* reads the four *lanwas* and the couple walk around the *Granth Sahab* four times. *Karah Parshad* is distributed to the assembled guests at the conclusion of *Anand Karaj*. The farewell ceremony is called *doli* after which the *baraat* returns with the bride.

Marriage among Muslims is a contract. Unlike the Hindus, the initiative among the Muslims is always taken by the boy's side. The request for the hand of the girl is conveyed to her parents through a letter, called *ruqqa*, written on golden paper and wrapped in a red handkerchief.

Thereafter, the date for engagement called *mangani* is fixed. For this ceremony, mostly female relations of the boy accompanied by a few men go to the girl's place taking presents of sweets, ornaments, betel, etc. with them. After certain ceremonies, a golden ring and a silver band is put on the third finger of the girl's right hand. Later the same day, a few relatives of the girl's go to the boy's house with similar gifts. The females relatives of the boy go to the girl's house again after some time for settling the date of marriage. This is called *biah mangna*.

On the day of the marriage, the bridegroom is dressed in the wedding clothes and a *sehra* made of flowers. He rides a mare and leads the marriage party. The *harrat* is received by the bride's relatives and the bridegroom is seated on a dais. The ceremony of *nikah* then starts. The *qazi* sits opposite him along with *vakil* and two witnesses. After *Khutba* is read, the consent of bride to the marriage is formally attested by the witnesses,

though in practice the consent has been prearranged. The bridegroom's consent is also formally asked. After *nikah*, *sherbat*, *misri* and *chuharas* are distributed.

The *Qazi* enters the *nikah* in his register and prepares the *kabin name* (marriage papers) on which the names of the bride and bridegroom, the *mehr* fixed, the date of marriage, etc. are written. This paper is signed by the bridegroom alongwith a couple of his relations who sign as witnesses. The *Qazi* also signs it and hands it over to the bride's parents. After *sehra* has been recited, the assembled guests are served with food. The bridegroom is taken inside the house for performing certain ceremonies. The concluding ceremony is called *rukhsat* when the bride is carried to the *Palki* and the *baraat* returns.

Marriage among Christians is solemnised in the church by the priest. Before the marriage ceremony, he baptises the bride and bridegroom. After the ceremony, the friends and relatives are served with a feast. There is not much difference in rituals among the Roman catholics and the Protestants.

The Jains have the same system of marriage as the Hindus.

**Dowry System.**—The practice of giving, taking and demanding dowry has been declared illegal with the passing of the Dowry Prohibition Act in 1961. Any person who violates the law can be sentenced to imprisonment upto six months or to a fine upto Rs. 5,000, or both.

On June, 12, 1960, a big social conference of all castes was held at Sisana village to effect reforms in marriage and other customs. The conference, which was attended by over one lakh persons, expressed views against the evil of the dowry system. But people in general were not inclined to accept reforms in this matter.

The dowry system is very much prevalent among all the communities of the district. The amount spent on dowry generally varies with the economic and social status of the person concerned. In dowry, all sorts of articles, such as ornaments, clothes, utensils and other household goods, besides cash, are given. The amount of dowry to be given by the girl's parents is decided before the marriage. Large sum of money has to be spent if the girl is to be married in a well-placed family. Besides, in case the father of the girl fails to give sufficient dowry, sometimes it may result in quarrels and even ill-treatment of the bride by her husband as well as the in-laws.

The dowry legislation as already referred has not fully succeeded in achieving this object.

### **Inter-Caste Marriages<sup>1</sup>**

The caste endogamy is rigid and inter-communal marriages do not take place. In the rural areas inter-caste marriages are strictly tabooed. Any violation would lead to an expulsion from the caste.

### **Civil Marriages.**

Civil marriages in India are regulated by the special Marriage Act, of 1954. It provides a secular code of marriage irrespective of caste, religion or race. The only condition stipulated by the Act is that a man should be over 21 years, a woman over 18, and that neither should have a spouse living at the time of marriage. A marriage Registrar, normally a Deputy Commissioner, is appointed under this Act, who registers such marriages and issues certificates. The solemnisation does not include any religious ceremony. The procedure for a civil marriage is very simple, either of the two parties to the marriage can give notice to the Registrar of their intention to marry. The notice must be given 15 days before the date of proposed marriage. The notice is then exhibited on the notice board in the office of Deputy Commissioner for any objections. If no objection is raised within 15 days, the marriage is performed; the parties sign the register and a marriage certificate duly signed by the Registrar is issued.

### **Widow Marriage**

The form of widow marriage is being practised in both urban and rural areas. It is permitted by all castes except the Brahmans and Baniyas, though among them also under the influence of social reformers orthodox restrictions to it are losing ground. No compulsion is exercised on the widow for remarriage. If she wishes to remain in the same family and there is a

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1. To diminish caste considerations, the state government has introduced a scheme under which a scheduled caste boy/girl marrying a non-scheduled caste girl/boy would be given Rs. 5,000 as an incentive. Of this, Rs. 2,000 would be given in cash and Rs. 3,000 in the form of fixed deposit for a minimum period of six years.

younger brother of the deceased husband, she is given liberty to marry him if he is willing to accept her. In such a case, no regular caremony takes place. the widow is simply covered by the man with a sheet of cloth in the presence of near relations.

*Karewa* or a widow marrying the younger brother of her deceased husband is common among the Jats, Ahirs, Gujars and Harijans.

In case the husband dies shortly after marriage and the girl has not lived with him or if she has no issue, she is remarried with all the usual caremonies performed at the marriage. This is called *puner vivah* which is mostly adopted by the Aggarwals and the Brahmans among whom a brother-in-law does not generally accept his sister-in-law as his wife.

When a woman enters into intimacy with any person without any social formalities and they begin to live together as husband and wife, it is called *kara*, like *krepa*, it is also not attended with any caremony.

The *Karewa* wife is in all respects a legitimate wife and her sons inherit with those of the wife married by *Shadi*.

The Muhammadans, of course, are free to marry again. The *Karewa* of a woman of Islam is called *nikah sani* (a second marriage).

The system of widow marriage is also prevalent among Sikhs and Christians.

### Divorce

Hindu marriages performed under Vedic rites were indissoluble till the Hindu Code Bill of 1955. Despite the fact that no legal provision for divorce existed among the Hindus prior to 1955. The cases of such nature were decided by the village or caste panchayats. Now for the first time in the history of the Hindus, the sanctions of the customary laws were done away with and a uniform law was made applicable to all Hindus. The Act permits divorce either by husband or wife.

There is a general tendency to prefer a miserable life rather than to dissolve the marriage. In case of hardship, the parents of the girl recall their daughter. However, 138 cases for seeking divorce were reported in the district during 1988-89, the details of which may be seen in the Table III of Appendix.

Islam was perhaps the only religion of the time to treat marriage a purely social and contractual obligation. A Muslim husband in India divorces his wife by simply pronouncing the word *talak* three times. A divorced Muslim woman cannot get any maintenance from her husband as, in theory, she has been provided for at the time of her marriage by fixation of *mehar*. In order to miti-

gate the unequal position of the Muslim wife, the Government enacted the Dissolution of Muslim Marriages Act, 1939, under which the wife could claim a divorce from her husband under certain conditions enumerated in the Act. But unlike the husband, she is required to establish her case in the court before she can obtain a divorce.

The divorce among the Christians is governed by the Indian Divorce Act of 1869. A Christian can obtain a divorce from his wife only if he can prove that she has committed adultery. A wife, on the other hand, has to show that the husband's conduct is not merely adulterous but also cruel, or that he has committed incestuous adultery, or bigamy with adultery, or adultery with desertion for two years or more. Grounds for judicial separation are desertion, cruelty, adultery, impotency and lunacy.

#### PLACE OF WOMEN IN THE SOCIETY

Since Independence, efforts have been made to remove legal disabilities of Indian Women by passing several Acts. The Hindu Code Bill and Hindu Marriage Acts not only prohibited polygamy but granted the right to divorce to women as well. With regard to inheritance rights, the Hindu Succession Act of 1956 puts women on equal footing with men. Now women are given absolute control over their property. In the matter of adoption too women had no choice before 1956, but according to the Hindu Adoption and Maintenance Act, 1955, a married woman can adopt a child under certain circumstances. The legal rights of maintenance for women are also recognised by the Act, under which a wife has a right to maintenance even when she is separated from her husband. The suppression of Immoral Traffic Act, 1956 and the Dowry Prohibition Act, 1961 provide some status and equal footing with men to the women.

The vast majority of women in rural areas are not economically self-supporting. They take their proper share in work. They bring water from the public stand post or well, cook morning and evening meals and even carry food to men at work in the fields. In addition to numerous household jobs, they participate nearly in all agricultural operations like hoeing, weeding and harvesting except ploughing.

In rural areas purdah system is still in vogue. The maidens cover their heads while the daughters-in-law cover their faces when moving among the elderly persons in the house or in the village.

The Arya Samaj movement in Haryana did create an impact, but only regarding certain other issues. As far as the liberation of women from their veiled condition and subdued identity was concerned, the Arya Samaj teachings could not percolate down and change their conditions much.

The Haryanvi woman is still the bread-earner. What is remarkable indeed is her equi-pose and self-possession, despite growing concern about the future of her family. She withstands all hardships only for the satisfaction that she has been able to discharge, to the best of her capacity, the combined role of mother and father to her children.

The position is different in urban areas. Due to education, social barriers against the employment of women are collapsing rapidly. Though a section of women are engaged in employment yet they occupy a subordinate position compared to men in the social life.

### Prostitution

Trafficking in women for immoral purpose does not exist in the district, nor is there any organised gang of traffickers of women. Earning a living by sex or flesh trade is punishable under the Suppression of Immoral Traffic Act, 1956.

### OTHER RITUAL AND CUSTOMS

**Birth Ceremonies among Hindus.**—The birth of a child, particularly that of a son, is an occasion of celebration. To announce the birth of an infant, a brass-plate (*thali*) is rung in the room where the delivery takes place. *Ghuti* is given to the infant. Then *chuchi dhuai* ceremony is generally performed by the sister-in-law of the woman. She washes her nipples with warm water and receives monetary gifts or some golden ornaments, only after the ceremony the breast-feeding starts. The room in which confinement takes place is marked (in the rural areas) by hanging of a net of ropes in which a *neem* twig is suspended.

On the sixth day, *chhati* ceremony is performed. All the members of family keep awake throughout the night. The friends and relatives enjoy delicious food and play cards. It is generally believed that on the night of *Chhati*, *Behmata* (the goddess of fate) writes the fate of the baby. On the tenth day, the whole house is cleaned and *havan* ceremony is also performed. The sacred water of the Ganga is sprinkled in the house. If it is not available, the cow urine is sprinkled. On the tenth day, the parents of *Jacha* (mother) bring some clothes and ornaments for the infant and its mother. The ladies sing the traditional songs at night. In the rural areas, there are many families in which *kumnan dokn* ceremony (well-worship) is performed.

After a few days of the birth of a boy, the father or grandfather goes to a Brahman and asks him to select a name. The Brahman opens his *patra*, and having regard to the time of birth, selects the initial letter for the child's name. There are certain castes which invite the Brahman to perform the birth ceremonies on the tenth day. On the very day Brahman is consulted about the naming ceremony of the baby. On the 10th day after birth one of the elder men of the

family chooses a name beginning with the letter suggested by the Brahman, avoiding any name already given to any elder (geneologically) member of the family, whether still alive or dead. Within these limits the selection of a name is arbitrary. The child may be named after a god or goddess as *Suraj* (the Sun), *Kanhaya* (Krishna), *Shoeji* (after Shiv), *Ram Chander* (Ram Chander or Ram), *Devi Sahahi* (Protected by Devi) or after a holy place as Mathura or a holy object as *Tulsi Ram* (basil). Sometimes the names are selected with the object of averting the jealousy of an evil spirit. This is the explanation of such names as *Molar* (purchased), *Mangtu* (borrowed), *Ghasita* (dragged), *Budhu* (Stupid), and *Badhu* (exchanged—for rice given by the mother in charity). *Kurriya* means heavy heap, the child of a mother who has lost several children in infancy will be laid after birth by a heap of refuse and so named.

The girls from birth are less appreciated than boys and for their names no Brahman is consulted, but some elderly woman in the family names the baby.

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

Almost all Hindus perform the *mundan* ceremony when a boy is few years old. This ceremony is performed at some religious place. At this occasion, some friends and relatives are also invited.

Among Sikhs, on the 10th day, the child and mother are bathed and they presented before the holy *Granth Sahib*. The *path* of the *Granth Sahib* is performed on the day. The *karah prashad* is distributed among the assembled friends and relatives. The child is named on that day. The *Granth* is opened at random and the first letter of the *bani* at which the *Granth* opens, gives the first letter of the child's name.

Some of the Sikhs perform *kesh dahi* ceremony by putting the curd in the hair of the boy—ceremony corresponding to *mundan* among the Hindus.

**Birth Ceremonies among Muhammadans.**—At the time of birth, a *Qazi* is sent for and he recites the *bang* in the child's right ear and the *takbir* in its left ear. The infant's aunt washes the mother's nipple with warm water and receives some money. On the sixth day, the mother is bathed and her clothes changed. The mother is kept inside the room for 10 days and sleeps in the same room for 40 days. A light *chirag* and a piece of iron are kept in the room at night and are supposed to avert the bad influence of evil spirits. Circumcision (*sunat*) is an important ceremony. It is performed at any time before the age of 12 in the presence of *biradari*.

**Birth Ceremony among Christians.**— A child born in a Christian family is christened by the church priest. This ceremony is called baptism. The Christians also rejoice at the birth of a son but the birth of a daughter is not disliked by them. The mother observes no period of impurity.

**Death Ceremonies.**—The Hindus cremate the dead body as a rule; the only exception being *kanphara jogis* who bury their dead like Muslims and Christians. The post-cremation rites include 12-day mourning in case of females and 13-day mourning in case of males. The last ceremony is called *tehrammee*. The *phul* (bones) are immersed into the Ganges at Haridwar in the presence of a priest. The woman breaks her bangles at the time of death of her husband.

The similar customs prevail among the Sikhs with the difference that ceremonies are performed by a Granthi. The Sikhs end the mourning with bhog ceremony.

The Muhammadans, after bathing the dead body and wrapping it into white cloth, take the bier to the mosque. The Mullah reads the Kalma and then the dead body is buried in the grave yard.

The Christians bury their dead in a coffin. An epitaph is sometimes fixed on the grave indicating particulars about the dead.

#### HOME LIFE

**Dwellings, Furniture and Household Utensils.**—The housing pattern in the district is largely conditioned by the economic resources of the individual householder and availability of building material in and around the village. In the same village, one may find beautiful double storeyed houses as also poorly built mud houses with thatched roofs. On the basis of the purpose for which the structures are used, they can be classified into the following three categories:—

1. *Ghar*—house
2. *Baithak*—Sitting or drawing room
3. *Gher*—cattleshed

The house serves as the residential structure for all members of the family. Here food is cooked and all household articles are kept. It is mainly meant for the females, and except for the male members of the family, no outsider is allowed to it. The *baithak* is meant for the exclusive use of the male members of family. Mostly elderly male members of the family sleep there at night. It serves as a sort of guest house and in case any visitor wishes to stay overnight, he is put up there. Generally, the *baithak* is constructed away from residential house, though it can be adjacent to the latter also.

The cattleshed is constructed in the open yard of the residential house or the *gher*. It is provided with the pegs to tether the animals and mangers to feed them. In the rural areas, the people have to live in the company of animals, because they do farming with the help of such animals. It may, however, be added that a particular structure need be exclusive, it can be used for more than one purpose; a *ghar* may also include a cattleshed, a *baithak*, or both.

The houses in the rural areas are generally constructed without any plan. There is hardly any provision for latrines, the members of the family go out in the fields to answer the call of nature. The provision of bathroom exists in the houses.

With the spread of education the rural people are engaged in services. The town of Sonipat is very near to the national capital and it has been included in the National Capital Region. Most of the people go to Delhi daily to their places of work and return after the duty is over. They now realise a sense of standard of living. Many people like city life and they construct their houses in the towns/cities.

With the establishment of model towns and new colonies in various urban areas of the district, modern houses with a courtyard and lawns are also coming up. The business community in the urban areas have constructed pucca houses which are generally double-storeyed. Such houses are located in the market; the shops are constructed on the ground floor and living quarters are made behind the shops or on the 1st floor. They have also arrangements for the latrines and bathrooms.

The villagers generally have the articles of utility and not of beauty or show and particularly include *charpoy*, *pihras* and *moorahs*. A few houses have chairs or tables. Wealthy persons make arrangements for sofas, iron almirahs, tables and chairs. There are many families which maintain televisions.

In the urban areas chairs and tables are placed in the drawing room. The homes of wealthy persons of middle class or upper middle class are tastefully furnished and decorated in a modern style. Sofa-sets, wardrobes, beds and other miscellaneous items of furniture decorate the houses. Those who can afford, have curtains on doors and windows as well as carpets and *durrees*. On the walls, colourful calenders, pictures of deities or scenery are also found. In the Christian houses, the pictures of the Christ, Virgin Mary, etc. are hung on the walls; whereas the Sikhs have the portraits of their Gurus. The Muslims have the sacred number 786 and sketches of Mecca and Madina.

The general name for household vessels is *bartan*; the earthen ones being collectively known as *basan* and the metal ones *kasan*. An old Gazetteer listed the following items:—

- (1) *Bartan* (called *degchi* by Muslims) a small pan of brass for cooking *dal*, etc.;
- (2) *Tokni* (called *degcha* by Muslims) a large pan of brass for cooking rice, etc.;
- (3) *Tokna* (called *deg* by Muslims), the same but large;
- (4) *Thali* (called *rikabi* by Muslims), a metal plate;
- (5) *Bela* or *Katora* (called *Pyala* by Muslims), a big cup of brass or *kansi* for drinking milk and butter-milk, etc. It is called *Katori* when of a smaller size.;
- (6) *Lota* or *Banta* (called *badna* by Muslims), a small pot of brass for drinking water, taking bath, etc.;
- (7) A *bakhora*, a small tumbler of brass;
- (8) *Chamcha*, a spoon of brass;
- (9) *Parat* (called *tubuk* by Muslims), a tray of brass for kneading flour;
- (10) *Bilomini*, a churn pot;
- (11) *Tawa*, an iron girdle for cooking bread; and
- (12) *Chimta*, the iron-tongs.

Almost all the utensils listed above are still being used by the people of all communities. A few more items, such as *karchhi*—big spoon, *gilas*—metal tumbler, *Chakla* and *belan*—wooden plate and roller, *karahi*—an iron and brass pan used for frying, *tokni*—a brass pitcher to store water, *balti*—bucket, *chhalni*—sieve, *handi*—an earthen vessel used for boiling milk and storing *ghee* are now commonly used in the district. Now there is a fashion to use stainless steel vessels in every household. Another item in the towns/cities in great demand is the pressure cooker. The use of crockery is very common in the urban areas.

**Dress.**—The clothes worn by the people in rural areas are generally simple. The men usually or traditionally wear *dhoti*, *kurta* and turban, generally called *safa* and *Pagri*. The farmers/agriculturists particularly prefer to wear turban as it provides greater protection against sun in summer and

cold winds in winter. During the winter season, they wrap themselves with a *chadar* or *khes* made of thick coarse yarn. The younger generation, especially employees and students wear shirts, pantaloons, woollen suits etc. The employees and students in urban areas also use pants, trousers and bush-shirts. In winter season, those who can afford, also use woollen coats and trousers, sweaters, etc.

The usual dress of the woman is *kamiz*, *lehanga* or *ghagra*, *duppata* or *orhna* and *salwar*. A *ghagra* is made with 6-35 yards of coarse printed cloth, and the more the cloth used, the better it is considered. It was also considered a sign of affluence. But, today only elderly women like to wear *ghagra*. The young girls prefer to use *salwar* and *kamiz*. The use of *sari* is also adopted by the married women. Their clothes are gaudily coloured, with blue, red and yellow dominating. They never wear anything pure white as that is considered inauspicious; wearing white dress by a woman signifies that she is a widow. In winter, women cover themselves with thick coarse *chaddar* or *shawl*. Sweaters and jerseys are in common use.

Regarding footwear, the males mostly wear the local made laceless shoes known as *jutis*, *chappals* and laced shoes are also used especially by those who are in service. The children, especially students in rural areas, sometimes wear cheap canvas shoes, though for most part they remain bare-footed. The women wear *jutis* whose front is embroidered either with coloured thread or sometimes with tilla-silver thread, forming a variety of pattern. While slippers and chappals are gaining popularity with the women in the villages because of their lightness, sandals are generally worn by the married women. The latest use of rubber chappals/plastic footwear is being adopted by the people.

The girl-students of wealthy persons wear bush-shirts and trousers instead of *salwar* and *kamiz*. Thus social change is reflected in the dress which contrasts with the traditional wear.

**Ornaments.**—The ornaments worn by women are usually made of gold and silver. They include *jaumala*, *kanthmala*, *kanthi* and *galsari* made of gold; *haar* (necklace) and *hansli* made of silver, and *jhalra* (long hanging string of gold *mohar* or silver rupees); these are worn around the neck. *Karan phul* and *bujani* of gold, and *dande* of silver are for the ears while there is a variety of finger-rings, plain and ornamented with different names for each. The large nose-ring is called *nath*. It is worn only after marriage; till then the hole in the nose is kept open by a plain ring or a *dandi* (wad). Several ornaments like *kari* (anklet), *chhalkara* and *neori* and *pati* are worn on the legs. *Tops* and *balian* for ears, *churis* for the wrists and *pandels* for the neck are some of the ornaments of daily use. The other ornaments already referred are used on the special occasions.

The men do not wear ornaments. However a gold ring on the finger is worn by the people. The urbanites, many males and females, are in the habit of

using the rings embedded with stones suggested by the professional *pandits* and astrologers. There is another class of persons who use garlands of beads or rosary in the name of their *gurus*.

**Food.**—The diet of the people is very simple. It consists of three meals. The morning meal consists of *lassi* (butter-milk) and *chapatis*, made from wheat flour. (The lunch meal includes *chapatis* and one dish of vegetables or pulses or *kari* (prepared with gramflour). The evening meal varies according to the seasons. Milk and *rotis* (made of wheat, maize or bajra) alongwith *rabri* are taken in the summer. *Rabri* is a special dish of the area prepared by fomenting flour in the butter-milk before cooking it. *Dalia* (porridge of broken wheat) is eaten in the rainy season and *khichri* (porridge of bajra and *moong*) in winter. In winter, *sag*, prepared from green mustard leaves (*sarson*) is eaten almost everyday by the villagers. The poor section also take food with *chatni*, prepared from crushed onion, mint, chillies and salt. The well-to-do families use pure *ghee*, while the middle class families use vegetable oils.

Thus, practically, the food of the villagers is without any variety; common delicacies such as *halwa*, *poori*, *khir* and *churma* are prepared only on festive occasions or on the visit of a guest. Occasionally meat is also used.

In the towns the food habits are somewhat different. The urbanites prefer wheat flour to other kinds of flour. In the morning, they take breakfast which include egg with milk, modern bread with omelet of eggs and *parathas* with curd. The lunch menu include *chapatis* of wheat flour and dishes of vegetables and pulses. The dinner consists of *chapatis*, vegetables and pulses.

Those who can afford relish meat and chicken. Pickles and *chatni* are also taken with meals.

Tea as a stimulating drink is very popular with both urban and rural folk. Tea stalls are found in every town/village and on way side of G.T. road. In the summer months, some people take a glass of *lassi* and *sherbat*. Whisky and other types of liquor are consumed by villagers and urbanites.

Tobacco smoking is quite common in the district. The villagers still prefer *hookah* to *bidi*.

**Games and Recreations.**—Wrestling, *kabaddi*, *gind khuli*, *gulli ganda* (tip cat) and *lukkam lukka* are popular indigenous games in the district, the last three being usually played by children. *Gind khuli* is the indigenous version of the game of hockey. It is played with a stick and a ball made of rags and twigs. *Guli danda* is played in a ground outside the village in many forms. *Lukkam lukka* is played by children. Wrestling and *kabaddi* are very

popular sports among young and middle aged persons. Usually every village has an *akhara* (arena) where the young men and children go regularly for wrestling exercises. During the fairs held from time to time on the occasion of festivals, or in the memory of pir, sadhu and saint, wrestlings form an important part of the social fairs. *Kabaddi* is played by two teams. The dimension of the field, the number of players on a side and the duration of the game are undefined. Regular tournaments are held to discover promising talents in national events.

Chess, cards and *chopar* are some of indoor games which are played in urban as well as rural areas. Modern games like hockey, cricket, football, volleyball and basket-ball are popular among students. Panchayats and private associations also organize these games to inculcate a sense of sportsmanship among the younger generation. Government subsidizes the construction of playgrounds and stadiums and gives grants towards coaching centres and tournaments.

Gossiping and listening to the songs, particularly with advent of television sets/transistors, are common pastimes. The T.V. sets are commonly seen in the cities but a few families have also arranged the T.V. sets in the villages. In towns, cinemas are the most popular centres of mass recreation suiting the pocket of the rich and the poor alike and by and large, are the only places of public entertainments. The villagers also enjoy cinema by visiting towns, as no village has cinema hall.

Recorded film songs and music are freely played on marriages and other festive occasions.

#### COMMUNITY LIFE

The community life is more effectively organised in villages than in towns. The social situation is different; big and small land-owners, agricultural labourers and 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 development programmes give an incentive or stimulus to community activities of various kinds and the panchayats have become a nucleus of community activities.

Community life is expressed through folk songs sung at the time of marriages and festivals. Folk culture preserved by village women is reflected through traditional folk songs and folk dances.

**Folk Songs.**—The culture of the area is expressed through folk songs. There is a variety of folk songs. Some of these are connected with nature, sung in different seasons. These express hopes, aspirations, love-longings,

joys, and sorrow of the people. The emotional outbursts of married couples on their union and separation could be heard through songs in the rural area. Particularly, the songs are connected with marriage, birth of a son and other festival occasions. Besides religious songs, there are songs that describe the heroic deeds of the past heroes; Alha Udai, Fatta Jaimal, Bhura Baddal and Vir Jawahar Mal.

*Ragnis* of Lakhmi Chand are sung by the people of this area. Pt. Lakhmi Chand was resident of this district.

As rainy season commences, in every village swings are hung from the branches of trees of *neem*, *kikar* and *pipal*. The young girls and brides gather together to enjoy swingings. They sing songs on this occasion. The climax is reached on the *Teej* when the whole atmosphere resounds with sweet melodies. Some typical songs are given below :—

*Jhulan Jangi hai ma mare baag maan re,  
Aye re Koi sang-saheli chaar ;  
Jhulan Jangi hai ma mare baag maan re,  
Koi pandra ki ma mare, koi bees ki re ;  
Aye koi sang-saheli, char, jhula,  
koi gori hai ma mare, koi sanwari;  
Aye re koi.....*

(English version.—My own mother, I am going to swing in the garden. A few of my companions are also coming. Some of my friends are fifteen, while others may be twenty; some are of fair-complexion while others may be wheat-coloured.)

2. *Teeja ka teuhar rity sa saman ki,  
Khari Jhool pe matka chhori Lahman ki ;  
Kuan tun ouchni peeng chadawe,  
Kaun par ke naar turawe ;  
Yah large dali Neem ki ,  
Teeja ka .....*

(English version.—It is festival of *Teej* and the season of *Sawan*. The Lahman girl is playing pranks, standing on the swing. Why do you swing so high? If you fall, it will break your neck. The branches of Neem tree are trembling.)

The following English version of song depicts a young girl, parted from her husband; *phalgun* becomes a season of poignant pain :

When my dear husband is away, O you mad month o. *phalgun*,  
Why have you come? What is the use of your coming?

O, my husband, when the whole of *phalgun* has passed away ?

Other young couples are dancing and making merry,

While I am sitting alone, deep in sorrow.

There had been very important *swangis* in the area. People sing their *ragnis*. Two *ragnis* are given below :

*Bharti holai ra tare bahar khara rangrut,  
Yahan rakhta madhham bana ;  
Milta ha phatta purrana,  
Vahan milta hai full boot,  
Bharti ho lai ra.....*

(English version.—Come and join the army; the recruits are waiting outside your door; you have only old worn out clothes to wear here, but there in the army you will get full boots.)

A *bhajni* begins his play or *swang* with the following lines in praise of the goddess of knowledge.

(*Bhawani*) :

*Ay re bhawani baas kar,  
maira ghat ka parda khol ;  
Rasna par basa karo,  
bhai shudh shabd mukh bol.  
(Oh, Goddess Bhawani, give me enlightenment.)*

**Folk dances.**—Folk dancing is an outburst of singing occasion. There are occasions on which women perform this type of dance.

*Swang* is one of the main feature of cultural life of the people of this area. It is form of open-air theatre and the stage is in the midst of the audience. The formalities of the drama like costumes, curtains and make-up are hardly observed. The audience sit on all the four sides whereas orchestra takes its seat in the middle of the stage. Generally the leader of the *swang* party plays the role of hero and other actors play different roles including that of females. In summer, it is played late at night and continues till early hours of the morning ; while it is performed at noon in winter. The mythological stories and folk tales generally provide the themes.

There are historical and semi-historical themes based on epics, such as *Draupadi Chir Haran*, *Amar Singh Rathore*, *Sarwar Neer*, *Jaswant Singh*, etc.

## REHABILITATION

The large-scale communal disturbances that followed the partition of the country in 1947 inflicted vast sufferings and lakhs of people were forced to migrate from Pakistan to India and *vice-versa*. Millions of uprooted Hindus and Sikhs from Pakistan entered what was then called the East Punjab (India). In order to settle the refugees, camps were established in Sonipat district also. Free ration was distributed in refugee camps. Fruits, multivitamin tablets and other special items of diet were also issued for refugees on medical advice, dispensaries were opened for providing immediate medical aid. These camps were of great help to the immigrants who after residing there for some time tried to find out work to rehabilitate themselves. Most of the rural population moved into the villages where they were given temporary possession of land of Muslims migrated to Pakistan. The refugees in urban areas took to miscellaneous occupations in towns. A number of immigrants from Pakistan who settled in the areas of the Sonipat district were from Jhang, Multan, Muzafargarh and Lyallpur and other parts of Pakistan, as is evident from the statement below :—

District of origin (in Pakistan)	Number of displaced persons settled in the district		
	Rural area	Urban area	Total
1. Jhang ..	11,200	11,015	22,215
2. Multan ..	1,434	4,483	5,917
3. Muzafargarh ..	11,546	10,433	21,979
4. Lyallpur ..	485	1,501	1,986
5. Other parts of Pakistan ..	2,839	5,649	8,488
..	27,504	33,081	60,585

## Rural Rehabilitation

**Allotment of land.**—In the beginning, the allotment of land was made on temporary basis to groups of cultivators who wished to live together. Subsequently the Government invited claims on the prescribed forms from the displaced persons and after verification from the revenue records obtained from the Government of Pakistan, land was allotted to them on quasi permanent basis. Likewise, the houses/plots in urban and rural areas were also allotted to the displaced persons. The Table IV of Appendix shows the total evacuee agricultural land (urban and rural) available in the district and their disposal as on March 31, 1989.

**Agricultural Loans.**—Allottees of land were given financial assistance by way of agricultural loan for purchasing bullocks, implements, fodder, seed and for repair of wells and houses. In order to minimise misuse of loans, these were advanced in kind instead of cash. A sum of Rs. 5,47,047 was advanced in the district as agricultural loan.

### Urban Rehabilitation

**Urban Loans.**—In urban areas loans were advanced to displaced persons to enable them to establish themselves in different locations. All classes of such persons comprising traders, artisans, industrialists, lawyers and medical practitioners were helped with loans. These loans carried an interest @ 3 per cent per annum and the recovery of the loans was to be started after three years of disbursement. The loans together with interest thereon were repayable in equal instalments spread over a period of 6 years. The loans were strictly to be utilised for the purpose for which these were given. The following figures show the year-wise amount of such loans advanced to displaced persons during the period from 1949-50 to 1956-57 :—

Year	Loans Advanced (Rs.)
1949-50	3,66,615
1950-51	1,96,087
1951-52	1,03,023
1952-53	8,483
1953-54	1,917
1954-55	5,805
1955-56	10,800
1956-57	9,000

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

**Rehabilitation Colonies.**—In order to provide roofed accommodation to the refugees, a mud hut colony at Sonipat was set up in March, 1951. As many as 730 huts were constructed and the cost of one mud hut was fixed at Rs. 255 (Rs. 75 as cost of land and Rs. 180 as cost of developing super-structure). In the first instance, the inhabitants of the camp were allotted these mud huts on rental basis. In May, 1953 these mud huts were offered to the occupants for purchase on reserved price. Some of the occupants had got verified their claims in lieu of the property abandoned by them in Pakistan and some were non-claimants. In the case of claimants, the cost of

mud hut was adjusted through settlement authorities with whom they had filed compensation applications in lieu of their verified claims. Only the cost of land was recovered from the non-claimants while the rest of the cost of mud hut was recoverable in three annual instalments. However, in the case of destitute widows, these huts were offered free of cost.

**Shopping Centre.**—A shopping centre known as Punjabi Market was also set up at Ganaur. Shops numbering 82 were constructed by the displaced persons who were advanced loans at the rate of Rs. 500 each by the Rehabilitation Department.

**Other Housing Schemes.**—The housing problem remained acute because most of the Muslim emigrants were labourers and artisans and therefore, their houses were modest whereas the incoming persons were businessmen and shopkeepers, used to better dwellings. Keeping the above situation in view, the Government established a new township, 8-marla (cheap) housing colony and 4-marla (cheap) tenement. The details of houses constructed and plots laid out under various schemes are given below :—

New Township, Sonipat	200 houses	10 shops	..	288 plots
8-Marla (cheap) Housing Colony, 200 houses Sonipat			..	17 plots
4-Marla (cheap) Tenement, 108 Tenements Sonipat			..	..

Houses and sites were also sold at reserved price, under the East Punjab Refugees Rehabilitation, Building and building sites) Act, 1948. In the beginning, only 46 houses and 50 plots were sold. Later, it was decided by the Government on June 11, 1963 that the houses and plots in the rehabilitation colonies should be disposed of in accordance with the provision contained in rule 28 and 90 of the Displaced persons (Compensation and Rehabilitation) Rules, 1955. In case of sale of these properties to displaced persons, 20 per cent of the sale price was to be recovered in cash and the balance in 7 equal instalments together with interest at the rate of  $4\frac{1}{2}$  per cent per annum. In case of their sale to non-displaced persons, the sale price was to be recovered in accordance with the provision of rule 90 *ibid*.