

CHAP. I. D.**Population.**

List of British
District Officers
since 1867.

Name of District Officer.	From	To
Mr. C. M. King	19-8-04	20-11-04
Mr. C. A. H. Townsend	21-11-04	25-6-05
Mr. A. Latifi	26-6-05	16-7-05
Mr. C. A. H. Townsend	17-7-05	25-4-06
Mr. G. C. L. Howell	26-4-06	27-11-06
Major A. C. Elliott	28-11-06	17-6-08
Mr. J. A. Ferguson	18-6-08	17-11-08
Major A. C. Elliott	18-11-08	7-4-09
Mr. J. A. Ferguson	8-4-09	19-4-09
Mr. A. A. McC. Mitchell	20-4-09	19-7-09
Mr. H. W. Emerson	20-7-09	26-10-09
Mr. H. D. Watson	27-10-09	1-7-10
S. Ali Hussain Khan	2-7-10	14-8-10
Mr. H. D. Watson	15-8-10	1-6-11
S. Sultan Asad Jan	2-6-11	19-6-11
Mr. M. V. Bhide	20-6-11	17-11-11
Mr. C. A. H. Townsend	18-11-11	20-4-13
Mr. C. F. Osborne	20-4-13	To date.

D.—Population.

Increase in, and
pressure of, popula-
tion.

Table 10 of Part B shows that the district had a total population in 1911 of 804,889 persons, compared with 672,569 in 1881, 776,006 in 1891, and 781,717 in 1901. Each succeeding census shows thus an increase in population. How far the increase is due to immigration is discussed in the next paragraph. As is shown later the increase is found altogether in the Sirsa and Fatehabad Tahsils: the three eastern tahsils all had smaller populations in 1911 than in 1901.

The same table shows that the district has a density of total population on total area of 154·4 persons to the square mile. The pressure of rural population on the cultivated area is 170·5. This figure is of course very low compared with that of the average Punjab district. Looked at however from the point of view of productive

capacity, the district has as dense a population as it can support. Any further increase in population must be viewed with anxiety, unless it is the result of a large increase in the area irrigated.

It was immigrants from Rajputana who flocked into this district in the years before 1868 and swelled so greatly the census figures of that year. That factor is no longer as powerful as it used to be. But immigration into the district exceeded emigration from it by some 20,000 souls according to the figures of the last census. See table 12 of Part B, and subsidiary Table III, on page 92 of the Provincial Census Report for 1911, Part I. The immigration was principally from Rajputana, Patiala, Jind and Rohtak: the emigration to Patiala, Ferozepore, Rohtak, and Central Punjab districts. The movement is obviously one towards the richer irrigated lands.

Temporary migrations to the Canal Colonies from the poorer parts frequently take place when the rains fail. These movements are all to the good. They relieve the local pressure, and provide labour where it is most wanted. But such emigrants nearly always return to their homes as soon as good rains fall in them.

The proportion of women migrating is higher than that of men. This is doubtless due to the Hindu custom of marrying outside the exogamous group and the native village.

The following statement shows the age distribution per 10,000 persons of both sexes. Details are given in table 14 of Part B :—

Age of period.				Males.	Females.	Persons.
Under 5	..	..	..	759	744	1,503
5 and under 10	..	..	..	646	557	1,203
10 „ „ 15	..	..	..	568	438	1,006
15 „ „ 20	..	..	..	601	423	1,024
20 „ „ 40	..	..	..	1,735	1,454	3,189
40 „ „ 60	..	..	..	873	706	1,579
60 and over	..	..	..	267	229	496

It will be seen that males outnumber females at all ages. In the whole district the excess amounts to no

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Agea.

Density by tahsils.

less than 72,000. More male children are born than females : and another contributory cause is the hard lives the women lead, and the early age at which child-bearing commences.

The population, both total and rural, and density of each tahsil, is shown in the accompanying table, the density being that of the rural population on the total area. The figures are those of 1911—

Tahsil.	Total population.	Rural population.	Pressure of rural population on square mile of total area.
Bhiwani	119,081	87,981	117
Hansi	167,963	153,387	192
Hissar	126,808	109,646	135
Fatehabad	199,934	199,934	169
Sirsa	191,103	176,474	107

Hansi, which is the richest, most irrigated, and most developed tahsil, has far the largest rural density. The comparatively high figure in Fatehabad, though it contains some very backward tracts, is due partly to the fact that the total population of the tahsil is rural : it contains no town of any sort and partly to the fact that there are some rich and populous Sikh villages in the north-western portion of the tahsil. In Hissar the comparatively low density is to be accounted for by the Hissar Cattle Farm, or Bir, as it is commonly called : it consists of some 67 square miles of land almost all uncultivated. If its area be deducted the density of rural population in this tahsil is 147 per square mile. The Bhiwani Tahsil with its light soil can support but a small population, and the same remark applies to Sirsa.

The 1911 census showed that the Bhiwani Tahsil had decreased in population in the preceding decade by over 5,000 persons. This decrease was in the main due to the poor crops of that period : to a less extent to plague.

In Hansi the decrease was over 10,000 souls, due almost entirely to plague which wrought special havoc in this rich tahsil. In Hissar the decrease was some 2,000 persons, for the same reason. Fatehabad showed an increase

of 10,000 : here plague has done but little harm. The increase however in Sirsa of over 32,000 souls is remarkable. To some extent it is not true, as the Sirsa cattle fair coincided with the census, and many residents of other districts, who had come to buy or sell cattle at the fair were consequently enumerated as inhabitants of Sirsa. But most of the increase is undoubtedly real. Plague has done less harm in Sirsa than in any of the other tahsils : the rainfall, and consequently the crops, have been better there than in the rest of the district : and consequently many of the peasants who left their homes in this tahsil during the bad years preceding 1901 for the newly irrigated lands of Fazilka and Ferozepore returned to their villages.

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Density by tahsils.

The quinquennial average of births is 46·1 *per mille* of the population. Details are given in Table 2 of Part B. The figures are steadily rising, due to the greater prosperity of recent years, and the spread of canal irrigation. Musalmans appear to be considerably more prolific than Hindus. These figures compare favourably with those of the province as a whole in which the corresponding figure is 40·8 : this is probably due, partly at any rate, to the fact that though plague has often caused much damage in the district, it has not committed the ravages for which it was responsible in the Central Punjab. Most of the people plague kills are at reproductive ages. The point is referred to again.

Birth statistics.

The quinquennial average of deaths is 41·0 *per mille* of the population—considerably less than the birth-rate. This figure compares favourably with a provincial average of 43·6. Here again plague is probably the determining factor. Female infantile mortality does not noticeably exceed the rate of similar mortality among males.

Death statistics.

These birth and death figures show the district justifies its reputation as a healthy one.

Fevers, generally speaking, cause the greatest mortality in the district, see Table III of Part B. It shows clearly the severe mortality caused by fever in 1908. Since then however the deaths from fevers seem to be decreasing.

Principal diseases.

Plague first appeared in the district in 1903. Since then it has shown itself with greater or less severity every year.

Between October 1904 and May 1905 the epidemic was particularly violent, and carried off no less than 16,762

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Principal diseases.

persons. It was in 1905 alone that the number of deaths from plague exceeded those due to fever. In 1910 another severe epidemic visited the district, killing 11,018 persons.

As pointed out earlier, plague does not commit the ravages here for which it is responsible in the Central Punjab : this may be attributed to the sparseness of the population and the dryness of the climate.

Cholera is occasionally imported from outside the district : and small-pox is always present to a greater or less extent. The greatest number of persons it has killed of late years was 1,379 in 1912. In some years however, as in 1909, when the number of small-pox deaths was only 47, the mortality from this disease is very slight.

The principal measures taken to cope with these diseases are the free issue of quinine to combat fever. The use of this drug as a cure for that malady is gradually becoming more understood by the people, though they do not yet properly appreciate its prophylactic qualities.

As for plague the measures adopted are the evacuation of infected houses, the trapping and destruction of rats, and inoculation. These measures however as yet are only accepted by the people to an inconsiderable extent. The evacuation of one house is of very little use if the inhabitants of those immediately adjoining it, which are also infected, decline to leave their homes. No decline in plague mortality can be expected until the people show themselves more active in combating that disease.

Civil condition.

The statistics as to civil condition are contained in Table 14 of Part B. Two important facts are proved, first that infant marriage is uncommon, and secondly, that the number of widows is very small compared with the number of persons married. The latter fact leads to the conclusion that widow re-marriage is very common in the district. This conclusion is confirmed by independent inquiries. The fact that women are less numerous than men has encouraged the practice of taking money for girls given in marriage. There are now very few classes of the community among which this practice is considered derogatory. In most cases the woman is a mere chattel. When yet a child she is betrothed and a fixed sum is paid to her father when this ceremony takes place. Later on she is married, and more money passes. When she attains the age of puberty the *mukhlawa* ceremony takes place, and she cohabits with her

husband. If her husband dies, the husband's nearest agnate has the right to marry her by the *karewa* form, and if he refrains from exercising this right, either because he is married himself or for any other reason, he sells the girl to some other person. The woman herself has absolutely no voice in any of these transactions. Wherever, she is she is treated as little better than a slave.

In her father's house she may have some love and affection bestowed on her, but in her husband's house she becomes the unpaid servant of all her husband's relatives. The most surprising thing about this system is the wonderful patience with which the women bear their lot. Now and again a wife will run away to her father's house if her husband beats her too frequently or makes her work too hard, but as the father, if he is an honest man, invariably returns his daughter to the husband, who does not hesitate to punish her for her escapade, this expedient is not often resorted to. It more frequently happens that a woman will run away with another man. This is not because she is immoral, but because the other man has promised her less work and fewer beatings than her husband gives her. Whenever such a case arises the injured husband always tries to get back the girl, but failing this he is quite content if he is paid the sum he gave for her; if he cannot get even this, he usually goes to law. He does not appear to be moved by any motives of honour or jealousy. He is merely annoyed because his chattel has been stolen, he would probably be equally vexed if a thief had raided his plough-oxen.

This peculiar relation between the sexes has produced the criminal known as the *barda-frosh*. This man usually entices away wives from their husbands by promising them jewels or a comfortable home, and when he has obtained possession of a woman, he does not scruple to sell her for what he can get. Sometimes he stipulates for jewels to be given to the girl, but as a rule, all he cares about is the money payment to himself. The profession of *barda-farosh* is a lucrative one, but it is not without its dangers, as there is always the risk of a prosecution, for kidnapping or abduction, and it is never certain what evidence the woman, whose evidence is usually all-important, will give in the case. If her new home is more comfortable than her husband's, and if she does not wish to return to her husband, her evidence will probably result in the

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triumphant discharge of the accused. If, however, she finds that in leaving her husband she has jumped from the frying-pan into the fire, she is just as capable of giving evidence which will cause the accused to be imprisoned for a long term.

These remarks apply in their entirety only to Jats and castes of like or lower standing. Among Rajputs women are, of course, very strictly secluded, and they do not work in the fields, though they have to look after all the internal household management.

Still even among the highest castes and among the most educated classes woman is looked on as a being far inferior to man, and little better than the absolute property of her husband.

Table 14 also shows (a) that Mohammadans are married at a later age than Hindus : but that (b) practically all of them marry. The same cannot be said of Hindus so far as males are concerned. Practically all women marry, of whatever religion.

There is a tendency among all religions for the age of marriage to rise.

Polygamy and
Polyandry.

The figures given in the same table show that polygamy is far from prevalent, either among Hindus or Musalmans : and, as a matter of fact, polygamy is almost non-existent among the higher classes of Hindus, such as Brahmans and Baniyas, Kayasths and Khattris : among the lower tribes, such as Jats, Malis and Gujars, who practise *karewa* marriage, a plurality of wives is not uncommon.

Among Musalmans polygamy is slightly more prevalent, but it is not probable that the legal limit of four wives is often reached. Indeed most Musalman males are content with one wife.

Polyandry is practised very little in the district. But it is not uncommon among Jats and lower castes for a woman to be shared in common by several brothers, though she is recognised as the wife of only the eldest of them.

Urban population.

Table 10 of Part B shows that over 90 per cent. of the total population of the district live in villages. There are in the district only four towns containing over 10,000 inhabitants each : Bhiwani, Hissar, Sirsa and Hansi. Details as to their population are given in Table II. Nor are these towns progressing : the census of 1911 showed a smaller population in each of them than was found in 1901. The