

GAZETTEER OF INDIA

HARYANA

KARNAL

HARYANA DISTRICT GAZETTEERS



KARNAL

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HARYANA GAZETTEERS ORGANISATION
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FOREWORD

A District Gazetteer is the many-faceted compendium of information pertaining to a district. It is a multipurpose hand book dealing not merely with geographical data; it is essentially a narration of the socio-economic changes which take place in the district. The book, therefore, concerns itself with the people and their environs viewed in the context of historical change.

Since the formation of Haryana, eight years back, progress in this new State has been rapid. The entire socio-economic pattern has been completely transformed and it can be said that within this period the State has achieved a break-through vitally affecting the welfare and prosperity of the people. The present book is an attempt to portray the all round progress made by the district since the last publication.

I am thankful to Dr K.C. Khanna who revised the volume before its publication and, in particular, to the Chief Minister and the Revenue Minister for the support given by them to the Gazetteers staff.

Chandigarh,
March 17, 1976.

S. D. Bhambri
Chief Secretary
and
Financial Commissioner, Revenue,
Haryana.

PREFACE

The Gazetteer of Karnal is the second in the series of District Gazetteers which are being brought out by the Government of Haryana in collaboration with the Central Gazetteers Unit of the Government of India. The Gazetteer of the Karnal district was first published in 1883-84, then in 1892 and the last edition was out in 1918. Since then, momentous changes have occurred following the independence of the country and the resettlement of thousands of people from West Punjab in this area. In particular, development has been phenomenal, after the formation of Haryana, in all spheres of socio-economic activity. The economy of the State has been transformed and spectacular results have been achieved in the matter of rural electrification, road building programme, agricultural production, etc.

The Gazetteer of Karnal gives an eloquent commentary on the political, social and economic reforms introduced after Independence and in particular after the formation of Haryana. As such, this Gazetteer is not only a geographical lexicon but reflects the multiplicity of changes affecting the lives of the people. In January 1973, a separate district of Kurukshetra was carved out but the present volume gives an integrated picture of the erstwhile district of Karnal including the part which now forms Kurukshetra district.

The Gazetteer has been modelled on the pattern laid down by the District Gazetteers Unit of the Government of India.

The production of this book has been a co-operative endeavour. The material was collected by the State Gazetteers Unit with the help of field staff from various departments.

(ii)

The Chapter on 'History' was scrutinized by the late Dr Buddha Prakash of Kurukshetra University. Dr K. C. Khanna examined the entire manuscript with a view to editing and improving it. Dr P. N. Chopra, Editor, District Gazetteers Unit, Government of India, gave us several useful suggestions to improve the quality of the publication. After the transfer of Shri Sudarshan Kumar, Editor during the middle of project, Shri B. Raj Bajaj, Editor, handled the assignment with competence. My thanks are due to all these esteemed collaborators.

Chandigarh,
March 17, 1976.

V. P. Dhir, IAS,
State Editor Gazetteers and Deputy
Secretary to Government, Haryana,
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Chapter I

GENERAL

ORIGIN OF THE NAME OF THE DISTRICT

The district is named after the town of Karnal, which according to legends owes its foundation to Raja Karna¹, the mythical champion of Kauravas in the epic war of Mahabharata. The fact of its having been the camping station of Karna during the war is supported by the existence of a tank called Karna Talab and a town gate after his name.

LOCATION, BOUNDARIES, AREA AND POPULATION

Location.—The district² lies on the eastern edge of the Haryana between 29° 09' 50" and 30° 15' 15" north latitude, and 76° 10' 10" and 77° 17' 05" east longitude.

Boundaries.—The district is bounded on the east by river Yamuna which separates it from the Saharanpur, Muzaffarnagar and Meerut districts of the Uttar Pradesh; on the north by the Ambala district, and the Patiala district of the Punjab; on the west by the Jind district, and the Patiala district of the Punjab; and on the south by the Rohtak district.

Area.—At the time of the 1904-09 Settlement, the area of the district was

1. "Karna was the son of Pritha or Kunti by Surya, the sun, before her marriage to Pandu. Karna was thus half-brother of the Pandavas, but his relationship was not known to them till after his death. Kunti on one occasion paid such attention to the sage Durvasa, that he gave her a charm by virtue of which she might have a child by any god she preferred to invoke. She chose the sun, and the result was Karna, who was born equipped with arms and armour."

(John Dowson, *A Classical Dictionary of Hindu Mythology and Religion, Geography, History and Literature*, 1913, p. 150.)

2. The Karnal district has been bifurcated on January 23, 1973, and the new district of Kurukshetra comprising the tahsils of Thanesar, Gula (Guhla) and Kaithal, has been carved out of it. In this adjustment, 77 villages, formerly in the Kaithal tahsil, have been shifted to the adjoining areas, viz. 22 to the Karnal tahsil of the Karnal district; 44 to the Jind tahsil, 5 to the Saffidon tahsil and 6 to the Narwana tahsil of the Jind district.

3,124 square miles (8,091.1 square kilometres). Minor changes due to riverain action of the Yamuna continued to occur in the area of the district till 1949. Under the Provinces and States (Absorption of Enclaves) Order, 1950, 32 villages of this district were transferred to erstwhile Patiala and East Punjab States Union. In 1951, another 6 villages of *Khadar* area of the Karnal tahsil were transferred to Uttar Pradesh due to a major change in the course of the Yamuna. The area of 38 villages so transferred was 48 square miles (124.3 square kilometres). In 1960, 7 villages of the Gula (Guhla) sub-tahsil (now tahsil) comprising an area of about 11 square miles (28.5 square kilometres) were transferred to the Ambala district. Eight villages of Uttar Pradesh were added to this district due to river action, viz. 3 having an area of 14 square miles (36.3 square kilometres) were added to the Panipat tahsil in 1961 while 5 (4 in 1965 and 1 in 1969) comprising an area of 4 square miles (10.4 square kilometres) to the Karnal tahsil.

The area of the district at present (1972), as reported by the Deputy Commissioner, Karnal, is 3,101 square miles (8,031.6 square kilometres). However, the Central Statistical Organisation, Department of Statistics, Government of India, put the area of the district at 7,932 square kilometres. In size, the district ranks second among the seven districts of the State. Its maximum breadth from east to west is 68 miles (109.43 kilometres) while its maximum north-south extension is 84 miles (135.18 kilometres).

Population.—The total population of the district according to the 1951 Census was 10,79,379 persons, of which the rural population accounted for 8,76,067 and the urban for 2,03,312 persons.¹ The population according to 1961 Census was 14,90,430 persons (12,34,838 rural and 2,55,592 urban). It showed an increase of 38.34 per cent over the last decade.

HISTORY OF THE DISTRICT AS AN ADMINISTRATIVE UNIT

Karnal is a land of hoary antiquity and legendary traditions. It has been a battle-field of India from the time of Mahabharata.

The first record of the administrative division of the district is found in *Ain-i-Akbari*. Akbar divided his kingdom into subas which were sub-divided into sirkars, *dasturs* and parganas. The whole of what is now Karnal district was included in suba Delhi. Most of it was in sirkar Delhi but some portion of it also lay in sirkar Saharanpur, sirkar Ilisar (Hissar) and sirkar Sirhind. Thus parts of the district, as we know it today, were originally included in the

1. This figure of total population for 1951 was adjusted to 10,77,381 persons at the 1961 Census according to the territorial jurisdiction of the district prevailing in 1961.

neighbouring administrative units and it was only gradually that the district emerged in its present form.

To get a clearer idea, we may further study the district as consisting of two portions with a distinct administrative history up to 1862. When the British took over the area after the Treaty of Surji Arjungaon in 1803, the portion comprising the present Panipat tahsil and a part of the Karnal tahsil became a part of the Delhi territory. This area was expressly excluded from the purview of the Bengal Regulations. In 1819, the Delhi territory was reorganised into four parts which were the beginnings of the districts of Delhi, Rohtak, Gurgaon and Hisar (Hissar). The Panipat district, including the area of Panipat, Karnal and Sonapat, was formed as the fifth district in the reorganisation of 1824. In 1832, these five districts were included in the North-Western Provinces.

In 1851, the Panipat district was divided into Panipat and Karnal tahsils with tahsil headquarters at Panipat and Gharaunda¹ respectively. About three years later, the headquarters of the district were shifted to Karnal. In 1858, the Karnal district, along with the other portion of the Delhi territory, lying north of the Yamuna, was transferred from the North-Western Provinces to the Punjab. This is the background of one part of the administrative history of the district.

The other portion of the district was parcelled out among various Sikh chiefs and confederacies who had risen to power on the decline of the Mughal empire and had established independent principalities. Kaithal lapsed to the British Government in 1849, a part of Thanesar (held by Bhag Singh) in 1832 and the rest of it (held by Bhanga Singh) in 1850, and Ladwa in 1846. The British Government organised these lapsed territories into the Thanesar district in 1849. This district was broken up in 1862 and the area distributed between the districts of Karnal and Ambala. The parganas of Gula (Guhla), Pehowa, Kaithal, Indri and a part of Thanesar were included in the Karnal district and the remainder was allotted to Ambala. In 1866, Pehowa pargana was transferred from Karnal to the Ambala district. It was transferred back to the Karnal district (14 villages in 1875 and the remaining 89 in 1888) and included in the Kaithal tahsil. The Pipli tahsil, which had been transferred to the Ambala district in 1862, came back to the district in 1897, and the headquarters of the tahsil were shifted to Thanesar the same year. A sub-tahsil at Gula (Guhla) was created in 1890 and the Kaithal tahsil was formed into a sub-division under the charge of a Sub-Divisional Officer in 1896.

1. The tahsil was moved from Gharaunda to Karnal in 1868.

The subsequent changes in the composition of the district, which occurred during the following seven decades, though of a minor nature, are described below :

1901 to 1911.—The district lost one village to the Muzaffarnagar district (Uttar Pradesh) and gained one village from the Saharanpur district (Uttar Pradesh).

1911 to 1921.—Some small transfers took place between this district and Uttar Pradesh due to river action, but no village as a whole was lost or gained.

1921 to 1931.—No change took place during this decade.

1931 to 1941.—The deep stream of the Yamuna was declared to be the boundary between the Karnal district on the one side and the Muzaffarnagar and Meerut districts of Uttar Pradesh on the other *vide* Government of India, Home Department, notification No. F.350/33, dated December 14, 1933. The boundary between the Karnal district and the Saharanpur district of Uttar Pradesh was, however, to be the village boundaries. There were some very minor changes between this district and Uttar Pradesh.

1941 to 1951.—Under the Provinces and States (Absorption and Enclaves) Order, 1950, the district lost 32 villages to erstwhile PEPSU. In 1951, another 6 villages of *Khadar* area of the Karnal tahsil were transferred to Uttar Pradesh due to river action.

1951 to 1961.—In 1960, seven villages of the Gula (Guhla) tashil (then a sub-tashil of the Kaithal tahsil) were excluded from the district and added to the Ambala district.

1961 to 1969.—The district gained 8 villages of Uttar Pradesh due to river action, *viz.* 3 in 1961 were added to the Panipat tahsil while 4 in 1965 and 1 in 1969 to the Karnal tahsil.

Gula (Guhla), a sub-tahsil of the Kaithal tahsil, was raised to the status of a tahsil on August 13, 1968.

SUB-DIVISIONS, TAHSILS AND THANAS

The district comprises five tahsils namely, Karnal, Panipat, Thanesar, Kaithal and Gula (Guhla). The sub-divisions have been created at Karnal, Kaithal, Panipat and Thanesar. Gula (Guhla) tahsil is under the Sub-Divisional Officer, Kaithal. Kaithal sub-division was formed in 1896 while

the remaining three sub-divisions were created in the post-Independence period, viz. Panipat in 1955, Thanesar in 1960 and Karnal in 1964.

There are 22 thanas and 8 police posts for police administration. Their details may be seen in the Chapter on 'General Administration'.

TOPOGRAPHY

The entire district is a part of the Punjab plain and appears monotonously flat to a layman, but intensive studies on a large scale reveal significant variations in the configuration of surface. On the basis of these variations it is possible to divide the district into several localities which are distinct from one another in their relief features.

The district may be divided into two regions demarcated by a watershed running north-south at a distance varying between 6 and 12 miles (10 and 20 kilometres) from the Yamuna, hardly perceptible to the eye, which determines the drainage of the area. The inland Chautang stream and the Saraswati which drains into the Ghagghar river lie to the west of this watershed. The waters of the area to the east of the watershed drain into the Yamuna. Their flow passes near Karnal and then follows the line of the eastern canal distributary. To the east of this watershed the land is inclined towards the Yamuna; to the west the inclination is both westward and southward. The westward fall in altitude is from about 850 feet (259 metres) in the northern parts of the watershed to about 760 feet (232 metres) along the western boundary of the district, showing an average fall of about 2 feet per mile (0.38 metre per kilometre). The southward decrease in altitude going below 750 feet (229 metres) also gives a 2 feet-a-mile fall in slope. The area west of the watershed is divisible into two distinct physiographic parts, thus splitting the district into three portions: the *Khadar*, the upland plain, and the low-lying areas.

The Khadar.—The excursions of the Yamuna extend within one mile (1.6 kilometres) of the watershed and this area is known as the *Khadar*. It is a low-lying riverain tract extending up to the broad sandy bed of the river with light soils and water close to the surface. The Yamuna has swept over the whole of it with incomparatively recent times. The *Khadar* is a flood plain formed by the Yamuna along its course. After the rainy season the receding floods leave a lot of fine silt which is easy to cultivate and which remains wet for most part of the year. For this reason the soils of this tract seldom suffer from really dry conditions. In fact, quite often too much water in the soil is the main problem. These conditions are most suitable for rice and sugarcane cultivation. In parts, vegetables are also grown.

Because of the vulnerability of this tract to flooding, the villages, generally small and sparsely spread, are situated on higher ground. The *Khadar* is generally about 20 feet (6 metres) lower than the upland plain, and within the *Khadar* tract the altitude gradually decreases to the south, the average fall being 2 feet per mile (0.38 metre per kilometre). Because the land is easy to cultivate and water is abundant, there is still considerable scope for extension of cultivation in this tract. The vegetation cover consists mainly of grass and scrub with only scattered trees here and there.

The Upland Plain.—The upland plain is not a uniformly level area. Instead, it is inclined to the south and south-west. East-west sections drawn on the topographical sheets indicate that immediately west of the *Khadar* is a sort of hump in the configuration of surface of the district covering Thanesar *Bangar*, Indri *Bangar*, Karnal *Bangar* and Panipat *Bangar* assessment circles. The *Bangar* zone is 5 to 10 miles (8 to 16 kilometres) in width. Within this zone the land is relatively flat. It is to the west of this zone that inclination to the south and south-west starts. *Bangar* is irrigated by wells and canals and is a prosperous agricultural area.

West of the *Bangar* tract is the *Nardak* where water-table has been deep till recently. It was an open plain covered with various grasses and *dhak* trees until a large part of this area was reclaimed and brought under the plough. About two-thirds of the district is covered by *Bangar* and *Nardak*. This is made of old alluvium.

The Low-Lying Areas.—It includes the areas of Markanda *Bet* and Naili circle. The conditions of soil and surface here are very much like those of the Yamuna *Khadar*. The *Bet* along the Markanda stream is a low-lying flood plain. It has clayey loam soil. In dry season this soil is hard and cracking, whereas during the rainy season it is wet and sticky. Till irrigation was introduced in recent years, the land had been lying waste. Then a quick process of reclamation began. Naili circle is a low-lying area along the Saraswati stream. It suffers from poor drainage during the rainy months. In this area rice has emerged as a main cash crop. The new settlers in the area have brought significant changes in the use of the land.

NATURAL DRAINAGE

Much of the natural drainage of the northern parts of the Karnal district sloping towards the south-west is determined by streams emerging from the foot of the lower Shiwalik hills which bring down heavy floods during the

monsoon months. This has necessitated vast schemes of drainage system.¹ Waters of the entire northern part of the district collect in the Naili circle during the rainy season through several seasonal streams like Umla, a tributary of the Ghagghar, the Markanda, the Choya, the Linda and the Chautang flooding the low-lying areas.

RIVER SYSTEM

The district is bordered on the east by the Yamuna and on the north-west by the Ghagghar. The Yamuna receives drainage from a narrow zone on its western side whereas the Ghagghar receives drainage of a large part of the Thanesar tahsil and the northern part of the Kaithal tahsil. In between the two rivers, there is a third but small stream, the Chautang (inland), which runs independently only to lose itself near Asandh.

The Yamuna.—The Yamuna pierces the Shiwaliks 95 miles (153 kilometres) from its source at Khara, and separates the Ambala and Karnal districts in Haryana from Saharanpur and Muzaffarnagar in the Uttar Pradesh. The river enters the Karnal district 2 kilometres north of village Nakom and $1\frac{1}{2}$ kilometres east of village Ramgarh. It leaves the district about $\frac{1}{2}$ kilometre south-west from village Kakor Khurd and 2 kilometres east of village Garhi Jat. Its length in the Karnal district is 142 kilometres (approximately) and average breadth (distance between two high banks) 146 metres (approximately).

River Yamuna has a great history mostly shrouded in mystery. The name Yamuna is mentioned in connection with Dasarjana, the battle of the Ten Kings mentioned in the *Rigveda*. According to some scholars, the Yamuna in early times used to flow into the course of the Saraswati² and like the Satluj, was a tributary, of the Ghagghar which was an independent river system running in the Hakra Bed and draining into the Rann of Kutch. For reasons yet to be fully investigated, the Yamuna-Satluj Plain is said to have experienced an uplift which dismembered the then river system, the Satluj shifting to the west and the Yamuna to the east, leaving the Ghagghar a truncated independent stream with utterly inadequate water-supply for maintaining its flow up to the Rann of Kutch.

The Yamuna gradually drifted eastward to the present line of flow. Not long ago it used to flow in the bed of the Burhi Nadi which at present runs

1. Refer to Chapter on 'Agriculture and Irrigation' for a detailed description of the drainage schemes executed as measures of flood protection.

2. There are both physical and historical grounds for this belief. (R. C. Majumdar, *The History and Culture of the Indian People*, Volume I, *The Vedic Age*, 1965, p. 87.)

along the western margin of the *Khadar*. The presence of ox-bow lakes in the *Khadar* is indicative of this eastward drift of the river, and the available records also support the view that about four hundred years ago, Karnal and Panipat were situated on the bank of this river. Burhi Nadi has been known in the recent past to flow regularly in flood times, the floods passing from the river above village Dhansauli (tahsil Panipat) and running down the old bed as far as Delhi in some parts, the last occasion being in 1864. Later, the river suddenly changed its course in some parts while in others it gradually retreated. Now the Yamuna seems to have stabilised its course and there have been no significant changes in it during recent decades.

The Ghagghar.—The river which only touches the north-western border of the Karnal district receives drainage of a large part of it. It enters the Karnal district $1\frac{1}{2}$ kilometres north-east of village Phaphrala and $\frac{1}{2}$ kilometre south-west of village Jawalapur. It leaves the district one kilometre south-east of village Ratanheri and 2 kilometres west of village Ratta Khera Luqman. It again enters the district one kilometre north of village Uplana and one kilometre south-west of village Arnetu and leaves the district $2\frac{1}{2}$ kilometres north of village Chicharwala and 2 kilometres south-west of village Uplana. The length of river Ghagghar in the district is 38 kilometres (approximately) and average breadth 50 metres (approximately).

The Ghagghar is said to have been a mighty river system in the past. Although in itself a small stream coming down the lower sections of the hills, its two major tributaries, the Satluj on the west and the Yamuna on the east, were perennial streams fed by snow-clad ranges of the Himalayas. It is said that at one time an advanced civilization had developed along its lower course, mainly because of abundant water-supply available from the river for irrigation. With the dismemberment of the river, this civilization also declined. The present bed of the river is much too wide for the small volume of water seen in it during the year. With this volume of water the river could never have carved out such a wide valley, and also could not maintain its flow through the arid areas of the subcontinent reaching the Rann of Kutch. Precisely what caused the desiccation and when, is a question which deserves a thorough scientific investigation. However, the two important streams now draining the northern part of the Karnal district and flowing into the Ghagghar are the Markanda and the Saraswati.

The Markanda.—It is a seasonal stream and takes its origin in the lower Shiwalik hills. When in spate during the rainy season, it poses a serious threat to villages situated along its banks and causes considerable damage to the standing crops. It enters the district near Damli village (tahsil Thanesar) and passes

near Shahabad (Shahbad). After flowing in the south-westerly direction for about 48 kilometres it joins Ghagghar river.]

The Saraswati.—The Saraswati enters the Karnal district one kilometre south of village Mustafabad R.S. and $\frac{1}{2}$ kilometre north-east of village Gondhni. It leaves the district $\frac{1}{2}$ kilometre north-east of village Baharjachh and $\frac{1}{2}$ kilometre west of village Andhali. Its length in the district is 160 kilometres approximately and its breadth varies from 15 to 40 metres.

✓River Saraswati has been referred to as the river par excellence and occurs most frequently in the *Rigveda*. It seems to have been the holy stream of the Vedic age. It is possible that it was as large as the Satluj in the Vedic age, and actually reached the sea, as the *Rigveda* describes it as going down to the ocean. It was the first of the Vedic rivers and its banks witnessed the development of the Vedic sacrifices. It is believed that before the dismemberment of the Ghagghar river system, the Yamuna used to flow into the bed of the Saraswati. At present the Saraswati is an insignificant stream beginning in a large depression at Kutawar in the north of Mustafabad (Ambala district) and carrying waters of the Kundla and the Chautang. Through most of its course it has no defined bed. The Saraswati and its numerous small tributaries drain a large part of the Thanesar tahsil and overspill their waters in the low-lying Naili circle though their floods rarely extend to any distance. It outfalls into Bibipur lake, wherefrom through Saraswati drain it joins Para, a tributary of the Ghagghar.

The Chautang.—Apart from a small Chautang Nadi which rises in the Shiwalik hills, enters the Karnal district and joins the Saraswati at Bhaini (Thanesar tahsil), there is an independent inland but seasonal Chautang Nallah. It starts a few kilometres north of Chhachhrauli (Ambala district) and flows on to the south-west and loses itself near Asandh.

GEOLOGY

The Karnal district offers nothing of geological interest. It is entirely covered by alluvial deposits of quaternary to recent age, which consist of clay and sand with *kankar* (calcareous concentrations). Beds of gravel and cemented sand are occasionally present with the unconsolidated sand. The thickness of the alluvium is not known even approximately, but it is reasonably certain that it is a few hundred metres thick throughout.

Economic minerals.—The district is well known for the several occurrences of saltpetre which is of economic importance. The ordinary potter's clay which is a common feature in the alluvial plains is used for the manufacture of earthen wares and bricks.

The depth of water in general has been found to vary from 6 to 7 metres below land surface. The water-table elevation declines from north-east to south-east and is a roughly sub-parallel to the regional slope of the country. The ground water in Shahabad (Shahbad), Pipli and Ladwa areas occurs in a thick zone of saturation from or within a few metres of land surface to a depth as yet unknown. The water in general is low in chloride but high in bicarbonate and total hardness. The water is potable and is considered suitable for irrigation. Its total hardness being high, the water is considered unsuitable for laundering purposes because of comparatively high consumption of soap. Otherwise with only a few exceptions, it can be used for all normal purposes.

FLORA

The flora of the Karnal district is very little known. As in the adjoining district, Karnal also has a rich alluvial soil and consequently the vegetation is fairly rich both in density and in the number of species. Due to extensive cultivation very little of the natural forests is left over. These forests, wherever present, are of the open dry deciduous scrub consisting of the following shrubs and trees :—*Butes monosperma* (Dhak), *Balanites aegyptiaca* (Hingot), *Salvadora Oleoides* (Jal), *Diospyros cordifolia* (Kaindu), *Prosopis cineraria* (Jand), *Zizyphus nummularia* (Jhar), *Z. jujuba*, *Z. oenoplia*, *Kirganelia reticulata*, *Clerodendrum phlomidis* (Arni), *Alhagi pseudalhagi* (Jawasa), *Acacia nilotica* (Kikar, Babul), *A. leucophloea*, *A. modesta*, *Capparis decidua* (Kair), *Adhatoda vasica* and species of *Indigofera* (Neel), *Euphorbia*, *Ipomaea* (Kaladana), *Opuntia* (Nagphani), etc. Associated with these trees and shrubs are found shrubby climbers such as *Pergularia daemia* (Karial, Siali, Trotu), *Capparis sepiaria* (Hins), *Oxystelma esculentum* (Dhutlata, Gani), *Cocculus pendulus* (Vallur, Parwatti), *Maerua ovalifolia*, *Coccinia cordifolia* (Kanhuri, Jangli parval), etc. During the monsoon a number of herbaceous plants appear as undergrowth in the jungles. These include *Commelina benghalensis* (Kanna, Kanshura), *Digera muricata*, *Tephrosia hamiltonii*, *Tribulus terrestris* (Gokhru, lotak), *Trianthema portulacastrum* (Bishkapra), *Achyranthes aspera* (Latjora, Chichra), etc. *Acacia nilotica* (Kikar) and *Phoenix sylvestris* (Khajur) are very common in swampy or marshy localities and in low lying areas. *Tamarix articulata* (Farash) is common in saline areas where hardly any other tree can grow. *Salsola foetida* (Lana) and *Suaeda fruticosa* (Moti lana) are the common herbs in saline areas. *Dalbergia sissoo* (Shisam) is extensively planted along canal banks and road-sides. Some of the other planted species along canal banks and road-sides include *Millingtonia hortensis* (Akas Nim), *Ailanthus excelsa*

(*Aruna*, *Maharakha*), *Prosopis juliflora* (*Jand Kanda*), *Inga dulcis* (*Vilayati Imli*), *Acacia leucophloea* (*Nimbar*), *Albizia lebbbeck* (*Sirish*), *Azadirachta indica* (*Nim*), *Cassia fistula* (*Amaltas*), *Morus alba* (*Tut*) and species of *Eucalyptus*, etc. *Ficus religiosa* (*Peepal*) and *Ficus henghalensis* (*Badh*) are often planted near villages and the people look upon these trees with religious fervour. *Ziziphus mauritiana* (*Baer*), *Mangifera indica* (*Am*) and *Syzgium jambolanum* (*Jamun*) are the chief fruit trees. Other common trees which are either planted or self sown include *Salmalia malabarica* (*Seemul*), *Moringa oleifera* (*Sainjna*), *Delonix regia* (*Poinciana regia*, *Golmur*) *Putranjiva roxburghii*, *Terminalia arjuna* (*Arjun*), *Cordia dichotoma* (*C. myxa*, *Lasora*), *Bauhinia variegata* (*Kachnar*), etc. Irrigated forest plantations have been taken up recently in the district to meet the demand for fuel wood and timber for furniture, sports goods industry, paper pulp, electric poles, etc. The main plantation block is the Saraswati Plantation near Pehowa in Gula (*Guhla*) tahsil, raised with species of *Eucalyptus*, *Dalbergia sissoo*, *Acacia nilotica*, and *Morus alba*. In waste lands are found *Calotropis procera* (*Ak*), *Xanthium strumarium* (*Chota dhatura*), *Datura metel* (*Dhatura*), *Argemone mexicana* (*Satyanashi*), etc.

There are several medicinal plants of local repute in the district which include *Boerhaavia diffusa* (*Punarnva*), *Sida cordifolia* (*Bala*), *Withania somnifera* (*Aswagandh*), *Vitex negundo* (*Nigundi*, *Simbhalu*), *Physalis minima* (*Tulati-pati*, *Kaknaji*), *Artemisia scoparia* (*Pilajan*, *Danti*), *Crotalaria medicaginea* (*Gulabi*), *Chenopodium ambrosioides*, *Malothria maderaspatana* (*Gwala Kakri*), *Oxystelma esculentum* (*Dhutlata*, *gani*), *Phyllanthus niruri* (*Jara amla*), *Tribulus terrestris* (*Gokru*, *lotak*), *Adhatoda vasica* (*Adulasa*), etc.

The aquatic flowering plants are poorly represented. In ponds, lakes and canals are found *Vallisneria spiralis* (*Sawala*, *syala*), *Hydrilla verticillata* (*Janjh*, *jala*), *Potamogeton* sp., *Ceratophyllum demersum*, *Utricularia* sp., etc. *Azolla pinnata* is a floating aquatic fern which sometimes covers ponds and pools. *Marsilea*, another aquatic fern, is generally found on water margins.

In the cultivated fields *Aeschynomene indica*, *Convolvulus arvensis*, *Crotalaria medicaginea* (*Gulabi*), *Euphorbia hirta* (*Dhuti*), *Euphorbia dracunculoides* (*Kangi*) and *Asphodelus tenuifolius* (*Piazi*) among others are found as weeds.

Orobanche indica (*Sarsum banda*) is a common root parasite on mustard plants and it does considerable harm to the crop. *Cistanche*

tubulosa is also a root parasite commonly found on *Calotropis procera* during February-March. Other parasitic angiosperms include *Cuscuta reflexa* (Nilathari, Zarbuti), and *Cuscuta hyalina*.

Saccharum spontaneum (Sarkara) *Erianthus munja* (Munj) and *Desmostachya bipinnata* (Dab) are three important grasses of the area. The leaves of these are used for thatching huts. Baskets, chairs, screens, etc., are made from the stem of *sarkara*. *Munj* fibre is strong and is used in making ropes, strings and mattings. The fibre of *dab* is inferior to that of *munj*. *Vetiveria zizanioides* (Khus-Khus) and *Typha elephantina* are often found in water-logged areas and along canal banks. *Trapa bispinosa* (Singhara) is cultivated in water ponds. The common fodder grasses include *Cynodon dactylon* (Dublu), *Cymbopogon jvarancusa* (Anjan), *Dichanthium annulatum* (Palwa), *Heteropogon contortus* (Sarala), *Echinochloa colomum* (Sanwak), *Cenchrus* species and species of *Sporobolus*. Other grasses found are species of *Dactyloctenium*, *Aristida*, etc.

FAUNA

There was a time when dense jungles of Karnal harboured various kinds of wild birds and animals. But with the growth of communications, clearance of jungles, increase in irrigation facilities and extension of cultivation, the rich stocks have considerably dwindled; nonetheless the district still holds a good position as regards the stock of wild-life. In the Kaithal tahsil and the area bordering Jind territory, black buck, *nilgai* and chinkara are still available, though not in plenty. Hog deer which was once quite abundant in swampy parts and along the banks of the Yamuna, is now available in traces only. Grey partridges are sufficiently available throughout except in *Khadar*. Black partridges are found along the banks of canal irrigated and riverain areas. Hare are commonly available. Peafowl is abundantly available in the cultivated fields in grooves and orchards. Blue rock pigeons are also commonly noticed. Common quail comes with the ripening of wheat crop, as usual. The *jheels* abound in ducks and geese. The pintail, mallard, pochard shoveller, teals, comb duck, spotbil and goose are the common species of ducks available. The grey leg goose is to be found on the large marshes and the black barred-goose is to be seen on riverside. The common and jack snipe are also available in rice fields. The pelicans, cranes, herons, bitterns and many sorts of waders cover *jheels*; *saras* and *kunj* are particularly conspicuous.

In old times, lions and tigers were not uncommon in this district. The *Nardak* area was once a favourite spot of the Mughal emperors for hunting

lions and tigers. Francois Bernier states that lions which were scarce in India except in Kathiawar were still found in this area and that lion hunting as a sport was the privilege of the Emperors.¹ As late as 1827, Archer² says that lions were sometimes seen within a 20-mile (32-kilometre) radius of Karnal while tigers were exceedingly numerous in its immediate vicinity³. These have completely disappeared now. Jackals, of course, abound and are responsible for much damage in the fields.

Three sanctuaries providing complete protection and rest to partridge, peafowl, hog deer, wild boar, blue bull and black buck have been established at Theh Mujibullah, Bir Baraswan and Bir Kohli Khera to ensure adequate reproduction.

CLIMATE

The climate of the district is characterised by extreme dryness of the air with an intensely hot summer and a cold winter. It is only during the three monsoon months of July, August and September that the moist air of oceanic origin penetrates into the district. The year may be divided into four seasons. The cold season is from mid-November to about mid-March. It is followed by hot season which continues to about the end of June. The period from July to about mid-September is the south-west monsoon season, after which a period of one month constitutes the transition period from the monsoon to winter conditions.

Rainfall.—Records of rainfall in the district are available for six stations for periods ranging from 77 to 99 years. The details of the rainfall at these stations and for the district as a whole are given in Table I of Appendix. The average annual rainfall in the district is 568.7 mm and generally increases from south-west to north-east. About 81 per cent of the normal annual rainfall in the district is received during June to September, July being the rainiest month. Some rain is also received during the cold season in association with passing western disturbances.

The variation in the annual rainfall from year to year is large. In the fifty year period from 1901 to 1950, the highest annual rainfall amounting

1. Francois Bernier, *Travels in the Mogul Empire*, 1891, pp. 378-79.

2. Archer's *Tours in Upper India and in parts of the Himalayan Mountains*, 1833.

3. In a pictorial scroll, depicting the features of Western Jumna (Yamuna) Canal from Karnal to Delhi and believed to have been prepared in the reign of Shah Jahan (1627-1657), the deer are being hunted by a tiger in the vicinity of Karnal. See illustration.

to 171 per cent of the normal occurred in 1942 while the lowest rainfall which was only 46 per cent of the normal, occurred in 1938. In the same period, the annual rainfall in the district was less than 80 per cent of the normal in 10 years. Consecutive two and three years of rainfall less than 80 per cent of the normal have occurred once each. Two consecutive years of such low rainfall occurred 5 times at Rajaund during these 50 years. Even 4 consecutive years of such low rainfall occurred once each at Karnal, Gula (Guhla) and Thanesar. It will be seen from Table II of Appendix that the annual rainfall in the district was between 400 and 700 mm in 36 years out of 50.

On an average there are 30 rainy days (days with rainfall of 2.5 mm or more) in a year. This number varies from 18 at Rajaund to 35 at Karnal.

The heaviest recorded rainfall in 24 hours was 269.70 mm at Karnal on August 21, 1952.

Temperature.—There is a meteorological observatory at Karnal. For the purpose of the following description, records of this observatory as well as the data of the neighbouring stations outside the district may be taken as representative of the meteorological conditions in the district in general. The cold season generally starts by about mid-November when temperatures begin to decrease rapidly. January is generally the coldest month with the mean daily maximum temperature at 20.2°C and the mean daily minimum at 7.0°C . In association with eastward passage of western disturbances in the cold season, cold waves affect the district and the minimum temperature sometimes goes down to about a degree or so below the freezing point of water. From about the middle of March temperatures begin to rise rapidly. May and June are the hottest months with the mean daily maximum temperature at about 40°C . From about April, hot westerly winds, locally known as *luh* begin to blow and the weather progressively becomes hot and trying. In May and June the maximum temperature may sometimes go above 45°C . With the advance of the south-west monsoon into the district towards the end of June, there is an appreciable drop in the day temperatures while night temperatures continue to be nearly as high as in the summer. Even during the brief south-west monsoon season, the weather is sultry and unpleasant due to the increased moisture in the monsoon air. After the withdrawal of the monsoon by about mid-September there is an increase in the day temperatures but night temperature drops down rapidly with the progress of the season.

The highest maximum temperature recorded at Karnal was 46.0°C on

May 28, 1962. The lowest minimum was 0.0°C on January 31, 1964.

Humidity.—The air is generally dry during the greater part of the year. Humidity is generally high, ranging between 60 and 85 per cent during the monsoon season and decreases thereafter. April and May are usually the driest months with relative humidities being about 20 per cent or less in the afternoons.

Cloudiness.— During the south-west monsoon season and particularly during July and August the skies are heavily clouded. In the rest of the year the skies are clear or lightly clouded generally. During January to early March, however, the skies are often cloudy and overcast in association with the passage of western disturbances.

Winds.—In general, winds are light except during the summer season when they strengthen in force. During the monsoon season, winds are mostly easterly or south-easterly. In the rest of the year winds are predominantly westerly or north-westerly.

Special weather phenomena.—April to September is the period with the highest incidence of thunder-storms. Dust-storms mostly occur during April to June. Violent squalls may accompany such storms. Some of the thunder-storms are accompanied with heavy rain and occasional hail. Thunder-storms also occur in winter months in association with passing western disturbances. Fog, sometimes dense, occurs in the cold season.

Tables III, IV and V of Appendix give the temperature and relative humidity, mean wind speed and special weather phenomena respectively for Karnal.

Chapter II

HISTORY

THE ANCIENT PERIOD

The history of the area in which the Karnal district lies, can be traced back, howsoever dimly at times, to the ancient Aryan past. Of the five traditional divisions of India, the region comprising Karnal district lay mostly in the Madhyadesha.¹ From time immemorial, this region has been regarded as extremely sacred. It was on the banks of the Saraswati the Drishadwati and the Apaya rivers in this region that the *Rigvedic* Aryans kindled the sacred fire and chanted the Vedic hymns. The Saraswati² can, with little hesitation, be identified with the modern Sarsuti or Saraswati, a stream midway between the Satluj and the Yamuna. In the period of the *Rigveda*, the river was of greater importance than it was in the following period when it was known to have buried itself in the sands in its flow to the Indus.

This region was the home of the Bharatas, a famous *Rigvedic* tribe of the Aryans. In the later Vedic period, it appears that the Bharatas and the Purus were merged into the Kurus who commanded the strategic plain between

1. It comprised the central part of Northern India lying between the Himalayas and the Vindhyas and between Allahabad or Varanasi in the east and some locality like Prithudaka (Pehowa in Karnal district) in the eastern Punjab (Haryana) in the west. (R.C. Majumdar, *The History and Culture of the Indian People*, Volume II, *The Age of Imperial Unity*, 1960, p. 101 fn.)

2. The difficulty in precise identification of the Saraswati and Drishadwati is due to the extensive changes in the course of the rivers of Northern India which are known to have occurred. Modern maps are utterly misleading, and it is impossible to construct maps of the ancient river system for any time preceding the Muslim invasion. "It is, however, a reasonable conjecture that within the period of history the Sutlej (Satluj) united with the Sarasyati (Saraswati) and Ghaggar (Ghagghar) to form the great river (Hakra) which once flowed into the Indus through Bahawalpur, and that then Brahmavarta was a Doab (space between rivers) which might be compared with that of the Ganges (Ganga) and Jumna (Yamuna)." (*Alexander, Porus, and the Panjab* by C. Pearson, appearing in *The Indian Antiquary*, Volume XXXIV, 1905, p. 254.)

3. E. J. Rapson, *The Cambridge History of India*, Volume I, *Ancient India*, 1955, p. 72.

the Saraswati and the Yamuna near the north-eastern edge of the desert of Rajputana, giving it their name Kurukshetra or the land of the Kurus.¹

This area, which according to the Mahabharata was divided into a number of *vanas* or forests, had urban settlements like Kaithal, Rajaund and Panipat. Kaithal is said to have been founded by the mythical hero Yudhishtira, its sanskrit name being 'Kapisthala' abode of monkeys. Rajaund has been derived from 'Rajahand' the prison of rajahs. Panipat is said to have been one of the *prasthas* which Yudhishtira demanded from Duryodhana as the price of peace. The region of Kurukshetra was the scene of the Mahabharata War between the Kauravas and the Pandavas. The scenes of many incidents connected with the war are traditionally pointed out by the people, and the whole area is full of *tirthas* considered sacred.

The district lay beyond the reach of the Macedonian conqueror and is indiscernible in the faint light of the history of that period. In the Mauryan times it formed part of the Magadhan empire as the discovery of Asoka's stupa at Thanesar indicates. After the dismemberment of the Mauryan empire, the Indo Bactrian Greeks invaded and occupied the Punjab in the 2nd century B.C.

In the first two centuries of the Christian era, the tract was included in the Kushana empire as is indicated by the discovery of Indo-Scythian coins from Theh Polar, an ancient mound about 11 miles (18 kilometres) from Kaithal² and two inscribed red-stone rectangular pillars of Kushana times from Amin, a village in the Karnal tahsil. In the 3rd century, Kushana power declined and the Yaudheyas, representing an ancient Indo-Iranian clan, rose to power and held sway over the region between the Satluj and the Yamuna. Their coins and other relics have been found all over Haryana including Theh Polar, Panipat and Karnal.

In the first half of the 4th century the Karnal area along with Hariyana³ seems to have been annexed by the Gupta monarchs. The empire was shattered by the attack of the Huns in about 510 A.D., and probably during this period and up to the end of the 6th century there was no settled

1. R. S. Tripathi, *History of Ancient India*, 1960, p. 42; Buddha Prakash, *Political and Social Movements in Ancient Panjab*, 1964, p. 80.

2. The information about the distance of Theh Polar from Kaithal given in *Census of India*, 1961, *Punjab District Census Handbook No. 4, Karnal District* (Published in 1966), is not correct.

3. It is different from present Haryana State. It comprised the whole tract of land bounded by Shiwaliks in the north, the Rajasthan desert and the Aravallis in the south, the Ganga basin in the east and the Satluj basin in the west.

rule in these parts. At the end of the 6th century A.D., Thanesar became the capital of Raja Prabhakara-var dhana of Thanesar, who tightened his grip over the Indus region. Actually, Yasodharman Vishnu-var dhana of Mandasor had driven the Huns to the north-west before his time.

Under Prabhakara-var dhana and his younger son, Harsha, Thanesar attained a paramount place among the powers of Northern India. Under Vardhana rulers the region around Thanesar was known as Srikantha. The remains of stone temples and palaces found in some old villages along the banks of the Saraswati and the Ghagghar are a living evidence of the times in which Harsha ruled over a large kingdom. The account of Yuan Chwang (Hiuen Tsang), the Chinese pilgrim, who remained in India from A.D. 629 to 645 throws much valuable light on the history of this period. The court poet, Bana, also provides very useful information about the economic, social and cultural life of the area in his book *Harsha-charita*.¹ Recently, a seal of Harsha of Thanesar has been found in the village Daulatpur near Pipli.

The 7th century was a period of eclecticism in religion. Buddhism was a declining force, Hinduism was again coming into its own, and religious traditions played a considerable part in raising Thanesar to a foremost position in Northern India.²

The glory of Thanesar was dimmed to some extent with the transfer of the seat of Government to Kanauj in the very life time of Harsha-var dhana. It is known from the Khalimpur copper-plate of Dharmapala, the pala emperor of Bengal, (c. A.D. 770—810) that he held a *darbar* at Kanauj and installed Chakrayudha, his nominee on the throne of Kanauj. The *darbar* was attended by a number of vassal chiefs including the ruler of Kuru country. It may be deduced from this contemporary record that the influence, if not the power, of Dharmapala extended as far as Haryana.

The authority of Mihira Bhoja (c.A.D. 836—85), the Pratihara ruler of Kanauj penetrated as far as Pehowa and even beyond it in the Punjab. The Pehowa inscription records certain transactions at the local fair by certain horse dealers 'in the victorious reign of Bhojadeva'.³ Another Pehowa inscription throws considerable light on the history of the region in the time

1. Buddha Prakash, *Glimpses of Haryana*, 1967, p. 16.

2. *Karnal District Gazetteer*, 1918, pp. 13-14.

3. *Epigraphia Indica And Record of the Archaeological of Survey of India*, Part IV, 1889 (Calcutta), pp. 184-90.

of the Pratihara emperor, Mahendrapala (c. A.D. 885—910). It seems that he lost some territory in the Punjab to Sankaravarman, king of Kashmir. In spite of the loss, if any, it is certain from this inscription that the district of Karnal continued to remain under him.¹ At that time the Tomara Rajputs, descending from Raja Jaula, established themselves as rulers of this region in the middle of the 9th century. About this time, they must have acknowledged the suzerainty of the Pratihara emperor Bhoja. The Tomara Gogga and his two step brothers Purnaraja and Devaraja took service under the Pratiharas. They built at Prithudaka (Pehowa), on the banks of the Saraswati, three temples of Vishnu during the reign of Mahendrapala I. Kielhorn remarks that these three Tomara princes were probably connected with Delhi, and they might not have any political connection with Pehowa, a place of pilgrimage, where they, like many others from different parts of India, founded religious establishments. According to Firishta, Thanesar, about 20 miles (32 kilometres) east of Pehowa, was within the kingdom of Delhi in the early part of the 11th century.² About the beginning of the 10th century, as the Pratihara power began to decline, the Tomaras assumed independence. One of the Tomara rulers, Anangapala, founded the city of Delhi and made it his Capital. His successors, Tejapala, Madanapala, Kritpala, Lakhana-pala and Prithvipala, were rulers of note. The Tomaras came into conflict with the Chahamanas of Sakambhari, but continued to rule the Hariyana country till the middle of the 12th century when they were overthrown by the Chahamanas Vigraharaja IV, also known as Visaladeva.

THE MEDIEVAL PERIOD

Our knowledge of the history of this area becomes more definite and detailed with the coming of Muslims. With Muslim invasions, the fortunes of the tract became identified with those of Delhi. This area became a battle-ground for the empire of Delhi. Three of the most decisive battles of medieval India were fought at different times at Panipat.

On receipt of the news of Mahmud of Ghazni's advance in A.D. 1011,³ Bijayapal,⁴ the Tomara Raja of Delhi, in whose kingdom Thanesar was

1. *Epigraphia Indica And Record of the Archaeological Survey of India*, Part IV, 1839 (Calcutta), pp. 242-50.

2. R. C. Majumdar, *The History and Culture of the Indian People*, Volume IV, *The Age of Imperial Kanauj*, 1964, pp. 111-12.

3. Ibid. Volume V, *The Struggle For Empire*, 1966, p. 23 fn. 7. However, *The Advanced History of India* by Majumdar, Raychaudhuri and Datta, published in 1956, p. 183, gives 1014 as the year of the conquest of Thanesar.

4. Wolseley Haig, *The Cambridge History of India*, Volume III, 1958, p. 18.

situated, sent messengers to other chiefs requesting them to join him in defence of the sacred city. It was emphasised that if the invader was not checked at Thanesar, the whole of India would be overwhelmed by the Muslims. But before the Hindus could rally their forces, Mahmud reached Thanesar, plundered the city, and broke a large number of idols, sparing the principal one, which was carried to Ghazni and placed in a public square for defilement.¹ Soon he sacked Mathura, Kanauj and annexed the Punjab which was eventually placed under a Governor at Sonapat. Within thirteen years of Sultan Mahmud's death in A.D. 1030, the Hindu chiefs formed a confedracy under the leadership of the Raja of Delhi to put an end to the Muslim rule in the Punjab. They wrested Hansi, Thanesar and other places from Governors who were posted there by Maudud, the grandson of Mahmud of Ghazni. The country between the Satluj and the Yamuna experienced relative peace for a century and a half until the Ghuris appeared on the scene towards the end of the 12th century.

In A.D. 1190-91 Muhammad Ghuri invaded India but was defeated by Prithviraja Chahamana (Chauhan) of Sakambhari in the battlefield of Tirawari (Taraori)², situated between Thanesar and Karnal. In order to avenge himself of the defeat, the Sultan again attacked India in 1192 and defeated Prithviraja at Tirawari (Taraori) and the latter was taken a prisoner or killed in the neighbourhood of the river Saraswati.³

After the Second Battle of Tirawari (Taraori) in 1192, the Karnal area was more or less firmly attached to Delhi till the close of the 14th century.

1. R. C. Majumdar, *The History and Culture of the Indian People*, Volume V, *The Struggle for Empire*, 1966, p. 11.

2. The name of the village where the battle was fought was not Narain or Naraina but Tarain, called Taraori cf. *History of India* by Ishwari Prasad, published in 1952, p. 133, fn. 6.

The location of this site is the subject of some controversy. Minhaj calls it Tarain xxx Nizamuddin xxx and Firishta xxx follow Minhaj, but some later historians call it Narain. This later reading is obviously due to an inadvertant orthographical mistake in which the two dots of 't' have been reduced into one. Firishta, however, makes a further statement and says that it was also known as 'Tarawari' cf.

(*A Comprehensive History of India*, Volume Five—*The Delhi Sultanate* (A.D. 1206-1526) published in 1970 under the auspices of The Indian History Congress, p. 159, fn. 14.)

3. R. C. Majumdar, *The History and Culture of the Indian People*, Volume V, *The Struggle for Empire*, 1966, p. 112.

We learn that in A.D. 1215¹, Iltutmish captured Taj-ud-din Yildiz in open battle on the old battlefield of Tirawari (Taraori) when the latter challenged the Sultanate.² Later on, Raziyya, the Slave Queen, flying before the pursuing troops, halted at Kaithal, where her mercenaries deserted, and she was murdered on October 13, 1240, by robbers while resting under a tree.³

In the early forties of the 14th century, during the reign of Muhammad bin Tughluq (A.D. 1325—1351), there occurred a severe famine in the Kaithal territory and the surrounding areas. The Sultan tried to alleviate the sufferings, but with no success. He was soon faced with popular outbreaks in Sunam, Samana, Kaithal and Guhram. The Jat and Rajput tribes in this region formed mandals (strongholds), withheld the tribute, and created disturbances.⁴

Firuz Shah Tughluq (A.D. 1351—1388) had five canals excavated, two of which passed right across Karnal. The Rajorwah, excavated from the Yamuna, was made to pass through Karnal, Uncha Samana and then joining with other branches of Chittang (Choutang) river was conducted to Hisar (Hissar) through Dhatrut.⁵ The Ulughkhani Canal, taken out from the Sutlej (Satluj), passed through Karnal and Girnir on its way to Jajhar (Jhajjar).⁶ The Western Jumna (Yamuna) Canal is possibly the improved restoration of the canal excavated by Firuz Shah from the Yamuna to Hissar Firuza.

Historical episodes in the subsequent history of the Tughluq dynasty are connected with the Karnal district. In A.D. 1390, during the civil war which followed the death of Firuz Shah, Prince Humayun, grandson of Firuz Shah (afterwards Sultan Ala-ud-din Sikandar Shah), advanced from Samana and assembled a considerable force at Panipat in support of the cause of his father Nasir-ud-Din Muhammad Shah. He plundered the country almost up to the walls of Delhi, which was then held by Abu Bakr

1. According to *Advanced History of India*, p. 283, this happened in 1216.

2. Minhaj-ud-din bin Siraj, *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri*, p. 135. (Text edited by W. Nassau Lees, Calcutta, 1864.)

3. R. C. Majumdar, *The History and Culture of the Indian People*, Volume V, *The Struggle for Empire*, 1966, p. 139. It is also believed that she was murdered in or near Delhi.

4. M. Husain, *Life and Times of Muhammad bin Tughluq*, 1938, p. 164.

Ishwari Prasad, *History of the Qaraunah Turks in India*, 1936, p. 173.

5. Col. Colvin, J.A.S.B., 1833, No. 15, pp. 106-7.

6. J. M. Bannerjee, *History of Firoz Shah Tughluq*, published by Munshiram Manoharlal, p. 119.

son of Zafar Khan, the third son of Firuz. The latter sent a force against Prince Humayun who was defeated at Passina Khurd, seven miles (11 kilometres) south of Panipat.

During the first three years of the nominal reign (A.D. 1394—1412) of Nasir-ud-din Mahmud Shah (younger son of Nasir-ud-din Muhammad Shah), his cousin Nusrat Shah contested his supremacy, and thus there were two Sultans in Delhi. The result was a protracted civil war in which the *amir* of Panipat supported Nusrat Shah. Mallu Iqbal Khan, a chief, deserted Sultan Mahmud Shah and joined the party of Nusrat Shah. But a few days later he formed a conspiracy against Nusrat Shah who fled to Panipat and joined his *wazir* Tatar Khan. Mallu brought under his control Sultan Mahmud who became a mere tool in his hands. He marched along with the pageant King from Delhi to Panipat, the headquarters of Nusrat Khan and Tatar Khan. Tatar Khan evaded him, arrived at Delhi and besieged it. In the meantime, Mallu Iqbal Khan captured Panipat and took possession of the baggage and elephants left there by Tatar Khan, and reached Delhi in October 1398. Meanwhile, there occurred the invasion of Timur which swept away the Tughluq dynasty, and put an end to the Turkish rule in India.

Timur marched through the Karnal district on his way to Delhi. As described in his autobiography¹ and also in the *Zafar-Nama*², it is easy to trace his route throughout, except between Munak (Akalgarh) and Kaithal. It is almost certain that he crossed the Ghagghar and the Saraswati by bridges at Gula (Guhla) and Polar. From Kaithal, Timur marched and passed through Asandh to Tughlakpur, probably Salwan. The whole of this region had become desolate as the inhabitants had fled to Delhi. Thence he marched to Panipat, which he reached on December 3, 1398.³ The people had deserted the town in obedience to the orders from Delhi, but he found there 1,60,000 maunds of wheat, which he seized. He then marched six *kos* and encamped on the banks of "the river of Panipat which was on the road." It probably refers to a branch of the Yamuna flowing in the channel of the 'Buddhi Nadi'.

1. *Malfuzat-i-Timuri or Tuzak-i-Timuri*, translated in *The History of India As Told By Its Own Historians*, by H.M. Elliot and J. Dowson, Volume III, 1871 (London), pp. 389-477.

2. *Zafar-Nama* of Sharf-ud-din Ali Yazadi, (English translation of extracts in *The History of India As Told By Its Own Historians*, translated by H.M. Elliot and J. Dowson, Volume III, 1871 (London), pp. 478-522.)

3. *Karnal District Gazetteer*, 1918, p. 16.

In the anarchy that followed the departure of Timur, and in the subsequent struggle between the Saiyads and the Lodis, the tract was entirely separated from Delhi, and belonged, first to the ruler of Samana, and eventually to the Lodi rulers of the Punjab.

During the reign of Bahlul Lodi (A. D. 1451—1489), his son Prince Nizam Khan, afterwards Sikandar Lodi, seized Panipat and held it as Jagir without permission.¹ He made it his headquarters, and his force there included 1,500 cavalry. Sikandar, as a king (A.D. 1489—1517), however, frequently razed temples to the ground and erected mosques and public utility buildings in their place. It is, therefore, no wonder that Thanesar was invaded and badly sacked in his time.²

Karnal and Panipat were on the high road from Sirhind and Ferozpur (Ferozepur) to Delhi; and from the time of Timur to that of Akbar, or for 150 years, this tract witnessed important and decision making battles fought between the ruling powers of Delhi and those coming from the north-west with the intention of supplanting their authority.

First Battle of Panipat.—In A.D. 1525, Ala-ud-din Alim Khan, an uncle of the Sultans was sent by Babar with a Mughal army against his nephew Sultan Ibrahim Lodi, and was joined with additional forces at Indri by Mian Suliman, a *Pirzada* of Panipat. Being defeated near Delhi, he retreated to Panipat, where he tricked his friend Suliman out of three or four lakhs and went back. He shortly afterwards rejoined Babar; and next year the Mughal army marched on Delhi.

Leaving Ambala, Babar marched *via* Shahabad (Shahbad) to Yamuna near Alahar (tahsil Jagadhri), and thence followed the river bank to Karnal. There he heard that Ala-ud-din, whom he had sent on towards Delhi, had, this time, been defeated by Ibrahim, and that the latter had advanced to Ganaur. Mounting his horse at the Gharaunda Sarai, Babar led his army to Panipat, which he selected for the battle field, as the town would cover one of his flanks. He arrayed his army about two *kos* to the east of the town, with his right flank resting on the walls. Ibrahim Lodi took up a position at the same distance to the south-west of the town. On April 12, 1526 A.D.,³ Babar was

1. Even before his accession to the throne on April 19, 1451, the entire area covering Dipalpur, Lahore, Panipat and Sirhind was under the control of Bahlul.

2. *The History of India As Told By Its Own Historians* translated by H. M. Elliot and J. Dowson, Volume IV, 1872 (London), pp. 439-40.

3. Wolseley Haig, *The Cambridge History of India*, Volume IV, *The Mughal Period*, 1963, p. 13.

ready to receive Ibrahim's attack but for a week nothing more than skirmishes occurred. At length, on April 21, 1526 A.D., Ibrahim Lodi's forces advanced to the attack, were utterly routed, and were pursued by Babar's army to Delhi. Babar himself remained encamped for a week to the west of Panipat before proceeding to Delhi. He treated the people well and made Sultan Muhammad Angluli, who had assisted him with troops, Governor of Panipat. Babar's victory over Ibrahim who had been defeated and slain in spite of overwhelming superiority in numbers, destroyed the power of the Lodi dynasty and transferred the empire of Hindustan from the Afghans to the Mughal dynasty, otherwise known as the Gurgani Chagatai dynasty.

District under the Mughals.—This area continued to be restive during the early years of the Mughal rule. After the battle, Babar laid out a garden and built a mosque and a tank at Panipat. The name of the garden is Kabil, Kabul or Kabuli Bagh.¹ Some years later when Humayun defeated Salim Shah about 4 miles (6.4 kilometres) north of Panipat, he added a masonry platform and called it Chabutra Fateh Mubarak. In 1529, the Mandhar Rajputs of the Nardak tract rebelled under their chief, Mohan, and defeated the Mughal troops. Babar then burnt the rebel villages. Later, during the struggle which led to the expulsion of Humayun, Fateh Khan, Jat, rebelled and laid the country waste as far south as Panipat.²

Second Battle of Panipat.—When Humayun died at Delhi in A.D. 1556, the young Akbar, who was then in the Punjab, marched at once under the guardianship of Bairam Khan to meet the Afghan Army under Himu (a Dhusar of Rewari)³, the Hindu General of Adil Shah. Himu, after inflicting a severe defeat on the Mughal forces, occupied Delhi. Bairam Khan and Akbar after passing through Thanesar, arrayed their army 10 miles (16 kilometres) north of Karnal, and then marched to Panipat. Himu, whose army was far superior in numbers, was encamped more or less at the same site, previously occupied by Ibrahim Lodi, that is two *kos* to the west of Panipat. After a week's skirmishing, Akbar sent a detachment round the town to take Himu in the rear, and he himself advanced to the attack. Himu fought heroically but was killed and the result was the total rout of the

1. Some say that when Babar saw this plain ground he said that the spot was Kabil-i-Bagh (fit for a garden); others, that he planned the garden on the pattern customary in Kabul. According to Colebrooke, Babar gave the name to the garden after the name of his favourite queen Kabuli Begam. (*Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, Volume XIII, p. 279.)

2. *Karnal District Gazetteer*, 1918, pp. 17-8.

3. *Gurgaon District Gazetteer*, 1910, p. 64.

Afghans. Immediately after the victory, Iskandar Khan, the Uzbek, was sent in pursuit of the fleeing enemy. He followed them, with great slaughter, to the gates of the capital, which he entered and secured for the emperor.¹

During the reigns of Akbar and his successors the Mughal empire was so firmly established at Delhi that the Karnal district can hardly be said to have possessed a separate history. However, a few events are connected with the district.

In 1567, while Akbar was encamped at Thanesar, an extraordinary incident is said to have occurred, which throws a rather unpleasant light on the ferocious aspect of his character. The *sanyasis*, or *fakirs*, who assembled at the holy tank were divided into two parties, which Abu-l-Fazl calls Kurs and Puris. The leader of the latter complained to the king that the Kurs had unjustly occupied the accustomed sitting-place of the Puris, who were thus debarred from collecting the pilgrims' alms. Neither party would listen to friendly counsel. Both factions begged permission that the dispute might be decided by fighting. The desired leave having been granted, the hostile crowds drew up in line, and the fight began with swords, one man on each side advancing in braggart fashion and starting the fray. Swords were discarded for bows and arrows, and these again for stones. Akbar, seeing that the Puris were outnumbered, gave the signal to some of his more savage followers to help the weaker party. The reinforcement enabled the Puris to drive the Kurs into headlong flight. The vanquished were pursued and a number of 'the wretches sent to annihilation'. The author of *Tabaqat-i-Akbari* agrees with Abu-l-Fazl that 'the Emperor greatly enjoyed the sight'.²

In A.D. 1573, the rebel Ibrahim Husain Mirza, defeated by Akbar in Gujarat, moved northwards with the object of creating disturbances in Upper India, and the surrounding country. He passed through the district and plundered Panipat and Karnal.

In 1606, prince Khusrav, escaped from his semi-confinement at Agra and made his way to the Punjab gathering troops on the way. He passed through the district, plundering and pillaging as he went. When he reached Panipat he was joined by one Abdul Rahim. Dilawar Ali Khan, who was at Panipat with an Imperial force, retreated before them to Lahore. Jahangir (A.D. 1605—1627) himself shortly followed in pursuit to capture the rebel

1. Wolseley Haig, *The Cambridge History of India*, Volume IV, *The Mughal Period*, 1973, pp. 72-73.

2. V. A. Smith, *Akbar The Great Moghul*, 1966, pp. 56-70.

prince. He used to moralise on the success which Panipat had always brought to his family. The Friday prayers were always held in the mosque of Kabul Bagh which Babar had built. This custom was continued till the Marathas occupied the mosque in the Third Battle of Panipat (A.D. 1761).

For about two centuries the tract enjoyed peace under the Mughals. Civil order obtained as the normal rule of life. The Shah Nahar (Royal Canal) was made from the Yamuna; *kos minars* were erected at short distances and serais and wells were constructed for the use of travellers along the route of the Grand Trunk Road passing through this area. The *minars* (brick pillars, 6—9 metres high) and wells still exist in the district; the serais of Samalkha and Gharaunda are in ruins while that of Karnal has disappeared. With the decline of the Mughal empire, the growth of Maratha power in North India and the rise of the Sikhs in Punjab, this area lost its former stability and remained very disturbed for about a century. In 1709-10, Banda Bairagi, the disciple of Guru Gobind Singh, in an effort to continue the fight against oppression, collected an army of Sikhs and occupied the whole of the country west of the Yamuna. He laid the whole neighbourhood waste and especially the neighbourhood of Karnal, where he killed the Faujdar and massacred the inhabitants. He was repulsed by Bahadur Shah about twelve miles (19 kilometres) north-east of Sadhaura (Ambala district) in December 1710.¹

Towards the close of 1738, Nadir Shah invaded India. Emperor Muhammad Shah (A.D. 1719-1748) with an enormous army occupied a strongly fortified camp at Karnal. Nadir Shah marched to Tirawari (Taraori) which surrendered to him after a very brief bombardment in February 1739. Nadir Shah, now finding that dense jungle would impede a direct advance from the north of Karnal, inclined slightly to his right and encamped in the open plain to the west of the town.² He sent Prince Nasr-ullah Mirza, his youngest son, with a considerable force to a spot north of the Shah Nahar close to Karnal. All this time Muhammad Shah was not aware that Nadir Shah was in such close neighbourhood. Just at this time a detachment sent by Nadir Shah, instead of opposing Burhan-ul-Mulk (Saadat Khan of Oudh), came to close quarters with Muhammad Shah's camp. Nadir Shah and his son marched to the support of this detachment and cut off Muhammad Shah's supplies from the open country in the rear. Muhammad Shah was

1. Wolseley Haig, *The Cambridge History of India*, Volume IV, *The Mughal Period*, 1963, p. 323.

2. Ibid, p. 359.

starved into submission, and yielded to the invader who led him in his train to Delhi.

A decade later, in 1748 when Ahmad Shah Durrani invaded the Punjab, the Mughal forces sent against him under Prince Ahmad, passed through Panipat and Karnal, and advanced to Machiwara on the Satluj. On the way back to Delhi, Prince Ahmad was crowned as Emperor in the camp at Panipat as Emperor Muhammad Shah had died at Delhi.

When Alamgir II (A.D. 1754—59) was raised to the throne in 1754 by Wazir Ghazi-ud-din, anarchy prevailed throughout the Punjab. In 1756, the Wazir, taking with him his puppet emperor, marched from Delhi to regain this lost province. The expedition proved a failure largely on account of a mutiny on the part of the officers of a highly paid corps, who clamoured for their arrears of pay. As he tried to quell the tumult the excited soldiery got hold of him and dragged him through the streets. His life was spared at the intercession of the Emperor. After this the corps was attacked and taught a severe lesson.

Henceforward, for more than half a century, a time of horror followed in this area which was fittingly ushered in by the greatest of all the battles of Panipat,¹ known as the Third Battle of Panipat.

Third Battle of Panipat.—At the close of the rainy season of 1760, the Marathas under Sadashiv Rao Bhau marched upon Kunjpura. The fort of Kunjpura was well-stocked with money and provisions, of which the Marathas were in sore need. It was held by Nijabat Khan with 10,000 picked Rohillas. It was seized by the Marathas after a fierce bombardment. The garrison was put to the sword on the pretext that Nijabat Khan had been responsible for the death of Dattaji Sindhia at Badaun Ghat. The Yamuna being in flood, Ahmad Shah who was in the Doab, was unable to cross the river in time to prevent this disaster while the Marathas proceeded unchecked to encamp at the village of Panina Kalan (Panipat tahsil). At length Ahmad Shah forded the river near Baghpat and advanced against the Marathas who retreated to Panipat. There the Marathas strongly fortified themselves. The Durrani encamped close in front of them on the plain north of Risalu and Ujah. For five months while the two armies, numbering more than 4,00,000, remained engaged in fruitless negotiations and constant skirmishes, the whole country around was devastated by the opposing hordes. The inhabitants of the countryside fled; besides Panipat, only three villages, Phurlak,

1. *Karnal District Gazetteer*, 1918, p. 20.

Daha, and Bala (Karnal tahsil) were inhabited at the time of the actual battle. At length supplies wholly failed; and on January 14, 1761 the Bhau advanced to action. The Marathas were utterly routed and many of them were driven into the town of Panipat, whence next morning the conqueror brought them out, distributed the women and children among his troops and massacred the men in cold blood. The fugitives were followed all over the country, and killed wherever they were overtaken. It is said that 1,00,000 Marathas were slain in this battle. The people still point out the site of an old mango tree where the Bhau stood to watch the fight.

The appearance of Sikhs in the district.—On the retirement of Ahmad Shah Durrani from the Punjab in December 1762, the Sikhs appeared on the scene. On January 14, 1764, they defeated and killed Zain Khan, the Durrani Governor of Sirhind, and took possession of the whole of Sirhind province as far south as Panipat.¹ The noted Sikh chiefs who commanded sub-contingents of troops under the Misdars at once dispersed in various directions and according to their strength seized what fell in the way of each. Raja Gajpat Singh seized Jind, Salidon, Panipat, Karnal, Bazidpur and Rohtak. Mehar Singh Nirmala seized the *parganah* of Shahabad (Shahabad) and Ismailabad situated on the Grand Trunk Road, 16 miles (about 26 kilometres) south of Ambala. Sahib Singh and Gurdit Singh, the two brothers seized Ladwa, Indri, Babain and Shamgarh territories consisting of 117 villages. Bhai Mit Singh together with his two nephews Bhanga Singh and Bhag Singh, seized the territories of Pehowa and the suburbs of Thanesar. Dulcha Singh Karorsinghia occupied Radaur and Damli. The Afghan Nawab of Kunjpura managed with difficulty to retain the total revenue of a number of estates (53 villages, worth half a lakh a year); in the case of others he was forced to give a share to the Shamgarh Chief and the Sikhs of Churni.²

During his seventh campaign (December 1764—March 1765), Ahmad Shah Durrani, after the battle of Jullundur Doab with the Sikhs, reached Kunjpura by the end of February 1765. There he halted for some days and discussed plans of the action to be adopted in order to crush the Sikhs, but weather conditions being unfavourable, he decided to return to Afghanistan.

Amir-ul-Umara Najib-ud-daulah, the Mir Bakshi of the Mughal Empire, then held the charge of Hariyana. Soon after the Diwali celebrations

1. Hari Ram Gupta, *A History of the Sikhs*, Volume I, 1952, pp. 197-213. [But *Karnal District Gazetteer*, 1918 (p.21) placed the fall of Sirhind in 1763.]

2. *Karnal District Gazetteer*, 1918, p. 21.

(October 14) of 1765 at Amritsar, the Sikhs made for Hariyana and commenced plundering Najib's villages. Najib-ud-daulah, who had anticipated this irruption and had been making preparations, marched to oppose their advance, and met them near Shamli, 12 miles (19 kilometres) east of Karnal. After having fought for two days furiously, the Sikhs crossed the Yamuna with all their baggage and camp in the darkness. In the morning not one horseman of them was left.¹

The off and on plundering by the Sikhs in the parganas of Karnal and Panipat continued in the following few years. Najib-ud-daulah fought many battles with them but was defeated in 1768.² Later on, taking advantage of the illness of Najib-ud-daulah, the Sikhs launched their raids and arrived near Panipat on the 4th January, 1770, plundering and ravaging the country as they went. Najib's eldest son, Zabita Khan, tried to oppose them, but he could not carry out his plans properly. The Sikhs plundered every village between Panipat and Delhi.³

On the death of Najib-ud-daulah on October 31, 1770, Zabita Khan succeeded to his estates including the district of Panipat. No sooner was the news of the removal of the strong hand of Najib-ud-daulah known to the Sikhs, than they carried several plundering raids into the Panipat area.⁴ Complete anarchy prevailed in the tract in which were situated the towns of Sonipat (Sonepat), Panipat and Karnal. It formed a sort of no-man's land between the Sikh and Maratha powers, coveted by both but protected by neither. It fell a victim to every freebooter who happened to come that way.⁵

Mughal Ali Khan, the Governor-designate of Sirhind helped by Daler Khan, son of Nijabat Khan of Kunjpura, with a body of 500 horse was attacked near Kunjpura by Sahib Singh, Dyal Singh, Dana Singh and Laja Singh with a body of 6,000 horse. Severe fighting took place and continued the whole day in which about 500 men were killed on both sides. In the darkness of the night Mughal Ali Khan and Daler Khan repaired to the fort. The Sikhs immediately besieged it. Hostilities continued for thirteen days. On the 14th day, the Mughal soldiers were defeated and on the advice of Daler Khan, Mughal Ali retired to Delhi.⁶

1. Buddha Prakasha, *Glimpses of Hariyana*, 1967, p. 60.

2. Ibid. p. 62.

3. Ibid. p. 63.

4. Ibid. p. 64.

5. *Imperial Gazetteer of India, Provincial Series, Punjab*, Volume I, 1908, p. 303.

6. Hari Ram Gupta, *History of the Sikhs*, Volume II, 1944, pp. 46-7.

Mughal Ali's defeat was a great shock to the Mughal Emperor, but the pleasure-seeking court of Delhi swallowed the bitter pill without showing any sign of their displeasure. The success of the Sikhs, however, alarmed Janko Rao, the Maratha chief, stationed at the capital. At the head of a strong force he marched from Delhi into Panipat and Karnal districts.¹ His movements caused consternation among the Sikh chiefs of the Cis-Satluj, who believed that the Maratha chief was coming to punish them. The Maratha General, however, showed no signs of hostility, and did not advance farther than Pehowa.² The purpose of his visit was partly to take a religious bath in the holy stream and partly to find out if the Sikhs were up to any other mischief. On his return after a short while, the Sikh chiefs of the neighbourhood heaved a sigh of relief.

In 1774, Gajpat Singh seized Karnal. Shortly afterwards Najaf Khan, the Imperial Wazir, marched in person to restore his authority, and by a treaty then concluded between the Rajas and the Emperor, the Sikhs relinquished their conquests in Karnal and its neighbourhood, excepting seven villages which Gajpat Singh was allowed to keep, and which probably included Shera, Majra Jatan, Dharmgarh, Bal Jatan and Bala.³

Samru, the deputy of Faujdar of Sirhind, was assigned the districts of Sonipat (Sonepat) and Panipat, and was authorised to possess himself of whatever territory he could wrest from the Sikhs, in particular from Gajpat Singh of Jind, whose territory lay quite adjacent to the area under his charge.

Samru took charge of his post early in July 1774 at the head of nearly 2,000 soldiers, some of whom were Europeans, with five pieces of cannon, a considerable quantity of ammunition and six elephants. He garrisoned Gharaunda which had been evacuated by the Sikhs who assembled at Karnal. Samru finding that his position was not tenable, resigned his job. Just about this time, on a request from Warren Hastings, Governor of Bengal (1772—1785), Samru was dismissed from the service by the Emperor.⁴

Accompanied by Prince Mirza Jakan Shah Farkhunda Bakht, Nawab Abdul Ahad Khan left Delhi for Patiala to deal with the Sikh menace in June 1779, with 50,000 horse and foot and 200 pieces of cannon, and marched along the western bank of the Yamuna. In July they were encamped at a distance of two *kos* from Panipat. At Karnal many Sikh chiefs including

1. Hari Ram Gupta, *History of the Sikhs*, Volume II, 1944, pp. 47-8.

2. L. H. Griffin, *The Rajas of the Punjab*, 1870, p. 38.

3. *Karnal District Gazetteer*, 1918, p. 22.

4. Hari Ram Gupta, *History of the Sikhs*, Volume II, 1944, pp. 52-3.

Sahib Singh Khondah, Diwan Singh, Baghel Singh and Karam Singh Nirmala waited upon the Nawab; but the Prince was not happy to have the Sikhs in his army as he did not trust them. Gajpat Singh, a *zamindar* of Karnal, the most loyal Sikh *sardar* of the Emperor, on paying homage to the Mughal Prince, was made to pay a tribute of two lakhs of rupees. Abdul Ahad Khan received three lakhs of rupees as tribute from another Sikh chief, Desu Singh of Kaithal and took his son, Lal Singh as a hostage for the payment of one lakh more. Bhanga Singh and Bhag Singh also joined the Imperial camp at Thanesar on the 12th September.

Abdul Ahad moved his camp towards Patiala on the 22nd September, and crossed the Saraswati stream near Pehowa. He encamped at Siyana Sayadan (about 6 kilometres north of Pehowa). On the 27th, the camp moved forward and on the 28th Abdul Ahad marched on to Ghuram (about 24 kilometres south of Patiala), which became the base of operations of the Imperial forces. At this stage, the Karnal contingent deserted him and the Nawab was forced to fall back to Panipat. The Sikhs plundered everything they could lay their hands on during his retreat.

Thereafter, complete anarchy prevailed in the Cis-Satluj country which was accentuated by internecine warfare among the Sikh chiefs themselves. Sahib Singh Khondah, Dulcha Singh, Bhag Singh and other Sikhs attacked Thanesar to oust Bhanga Singh. They also asked Zabita Khan, the Mir Bakshi of Delhi, to help them in expelling Desu Singh's sons from Kaithal and to acknowledge their rule over Thanesar.

Mirza Shafi, assisted by Zabita Khan, was appointed in charge of a regular campaign against the Sikhs. Shafi maintained his ground at Kunjpura for two months. When the Sikhs entered the Ganga Doab, he chased them back into the Cis-Satluj territory. Husanpur was plundered, and Baghel Singh's military post was expelled from Indri. The guerilla tactics of the Sikhs gave him no peace, and his temporary successes achieved no lasting results.¹ The *Amils* (Mughal officers in charge) of Buriya, Sadhaura and Shahabad (Shahbad) were given no rest by the Sikhs. They continued harassing the *Amil* of Shahabad (Shahbad), who in spite of his precarious condition and repeated appeals received no reinforcements. Ultimately he surrendered. This fact greatly disheartened Shafi who made a pathetic appeal to Delhi for reinforcement. In June 1781, Shafi sent Jai Singh Rai to Diwan Singh, Baghel Singh and Gurdit Singh to settle terms of peace. He offered them Radaur, Babain and Shamgarh in return for the

1. Hari Ram Gupta, *History of the Sikhs*, Volume II, 1944, pp. 94, 102, 104-05, 106-24.

booty of Shahabad (Shahbad) but the Sikhs did not agree. He was then compelled to make peace with the Sikhs, generally on their own terms. Gajpat Singh was recognised as the ruler of Jind area with the title of Maharaja (July 12, 1781), and his tribute was fixed at rupees six lakhs. Zabita Khan and Gajpat Singh interviewed the other Sikh chiefs and persuaded them to come to an agreement with the Delhi Government. Thus the Mughal Emperor of India formally accepted the sovereignty of the Sikhs over the country situated to the west of the Yamuna, and admitted their right of blackmail in the Upper Ganga Doab.¹ This peace was, however, short lived. In 1782, Emperor Shah Alam was forced by circumstances to seek the protection of Mahadaji Sindhia and to appoint him Vakil-i-Mutliq (Regent Plenipotentiary) combining the office of the Wazir and the Commander-in-Chief.

Sindhia dominated the politics of northern India for a decade to come. The presence of the Sikhs in the Ganga Doab greatly alarmed him. He took various steps to counteract this danger. He won over the celebrated Begam Samru of Sardhana, a woman of masculine intrepidity and correct judgment, added several parganas to her jagir, some to the west of the Yamuna in order to keep a check upon the Sikhs. Ambaji Ingle was appointed Faujdar of the districts north of Delhi with the main object of protecting the capital from the Sikhs. At the same time he made a treaty with the Sikhs in 1785 which provided for the safety of crown-lands situated between Delhi and Panipat. Not content with this, Sindhia despatched his officers to various parts of the district to overawe the Sikhs into submission. The Marathas received submission from the Sardars of Thanesar and Kaithal and also received rupees five lakhs from Dewan Nanu Mall of Patiala. In 1787, Ambaji Ingle, under orders from Mahadaji, led an expedition into the Sikh territory with the object of exacting tribute from the Sikh chiefs. After taking some action he appointed Bakshi Shyam Rao as his deputy at Karnal and returned to join Sindhia. Bakshi Shyam Rao, not being able to maintain his position at Karnal, handed it over to Bhag Singh of Jind and escorted by Diwan Singh proceeded to Delhi ceding Panipat to Begum Samru on the way.

When the Sikhs offended the Marathas by offering asylum to the mother of Ghulam Kadir, the Rohilla chief who had captured Delhi in 1727, an expedition was launched against them. Rane Khan, Ali Bahadur, and others, entrusted with this operation, crossed the Yamuna, reached Kunj-pura and threatened to invade Patiala. But the expedition failed to achieve

1. Hari Ram Gupta, *History of the Sikhs*, Volume II, 1944, pp. 123, 134-35.

Bhag Singh quitted Thanesar and at the request of the Brahmans of Thanesar, Nana Rao spared the city and appointed one infantry regiment and five hundred horse to protect the town.

The Sikhs being disappointed at the loss of Thanesar tried to excite Lal Singh of Kaithal to claim it as it originally belonged to his family. On his refusal to do so they turned against him and as he was proclaimed to be very rich, incited Nana Rao to demand a heavy tribute from him. They also advised Nana Rao to secure a large sum from Patiala.¹ These demands of Nana Rao united Lal Singh and Bibi Sahib Kaur of Patiala, who was a woman of remarkable generalship and diplomacy. At the same time, Nana Rao was being pursued by Bhanga Singh of Thanesar who made night attacks on the Marathas. As his supplies were also running short, Nana Rao made up his mind to retreat. He failed to collect any tribute from Patiala. He only received Rs. 5,000 from Karam Singh Nirmala in exchange for the fort of Gumthala (Thanesar tahsil) which belonged to Bhanga Singh. The latter, however, crept back into Thanesar as the Marathas left.

We must now turn our attention to George Thomas, an Irish adventurer whom Sindhia had appointed in 1795 to the charge of the Sonapat (Panipat), and Karnal districts with 2,000 infantry, 200 cavalry and 16 pieces of field artillery. Finding that Thomas would be a helpful hand, Bapuji Malhar, Governor of Saharanpur, took him into his service in 1797. As the Sikhs interfered with the affairs of the Maratha Governor of Saharanpur, Thomas marched to Karnal in 1798 where a body of Sikhs had gathered in rebellion against the Maratha rule. Here four successive actions were fought, in which both sides sustained heavy losses. Thomas's artillery always proved superior to the tactics of the Sikhs who did not possess this arm. In this fight Thomas lost 500 men and the Sikhs nearly twice as much. Peace was then concluded, and, in accordance with its terms, the Sikhs evacuated the place.² Soon after differences arose between George Thomas and his master Bapuji, who dismissed him. Thereafter, Thomas reverted to the profession of freebooter. His growing power filled his mind with ambition and he thought of carving out an independent principality for himself in the tract known as Hariyana. He established himself at Hansi and commanded a circle of 800 villages including Maham.

Sindhia was determined to quell the Sikh chiefs in the Cis-Sutlej territory. In 1799, he despatched his largest regular force for this purpose

1. Hari Ram Gupta, *History of the Sikhs*, Volume II, 1944, pp. 256-60.

2. Ibid. pp. 260-62, 271-72.

under Parron, who reached Karnal and summoned Raja Sahib Singh of Patiala, Raja Bhag Singh of Jind, Bhanga Singh of Thanesar, Gurdatt Singh of Ladwa, Bhai Lal Singh of Kaithal, and several other petty *sardars*. Equally determined to resist, the Sikh chiefs opposed him. In order to strengthen his position, Parron began to employ local Muslims against the Sikhs. The first to join was Gulsher Khan of Kunjpura, who shortly collected as many as 10,000 horsemen. Parron then marched to Thanesar, but Bhanga Singh escaped to Patiala. The Sikhs, however, came to terms and a peace treaty was signed on the 10th March, 1799. Parron stayed at Thanesar long enough for all the Sikh chiefs between the Yamuna and the Satluj to visit him. Leaving Thanesar, he made for Panipat where he was joined by Begam Samru with four battalions.¹

In 1801, George Thomas, who had established himself in Hansi made an effort to harass Karnal and Panipat. The Sikhs asked the Marathas for help against him. Daulat Rao Sindhia who became jealous of Thomas's progress, agreed to do so on the Sikhs promising to become his subsidiaries and pay him five lakhs of rupees. Sindhia sent the French General Parron against him. In the battle that followed Thomas lost all his conquests, retired to British territory and shortly afterwards died on his way to Calcutta. Safidon and Dhatrat were then made over again to Jind by the Marathas.²

In 1803, the power of the Marathas in North India was completely broken, and the Karnal district with Daulat Rao Sindhia's other possessions west of the Yamuna, passed on to the British by the Treaty of Surji Arjungaon, signed on December 30, 1803. The chiefs of Ladwa and Thanesar, with five thousand Sikhs, had fought against the British at the battle of Delhi. Immediately after the battle, Begam Samru made her submission to General Lake; and Bhag Singh of Jind and Lal Singh of Kaithal were hardly less prompt. Their advances were favourably received, and in January 1805, they joined their forces with the British. The Sikh chiefs, who had actually fought against the British at Delhi, continued to display active hostility, till they were finally routed by Col. Burn at the end of 1804. In March 1805, an amnesty was proclaimed to all the Sikhs on condition of peaceable behaviour; but Gurdatt Singh of Ladwa was expressly excluded from this amnesty, and in April of the same year the English forces marched upon his fort of Karnal and captured it.³

1. Hari Ram Gupta, *History of the Sikhs*, Volume II, 1944, pp. 276-77.

2. *Karnal District Gazetteer*, 1918, p. 23.

3. *Ibid.* pp. 23-24.

THE MODERN PERIOD

This area had experienced varying political disturbances in the eighteenth century. These were identified with the terms *Singhashahi ka Ram Raula* or *Bhaogardi*, the 'Sikh hurly-burly' or the 'Maratha anarchy'. The Mughal authority had lost its grip over this region. The Sikhs never really established their grasp over the country south of Panipat; and they held, what they did possess, only as feudatories of the Marathas. But the whole period was a constant contest between these three powers; and the tract formed a sort of no-man's land, coveted by all but protected by none. It was practically the prey of the strongest and most audacious freebooter of the day whether hailing from the Punjab or the Deccan, for nobody cared to spare for to-morrow what he might only possess for to-day. Even as early as 1760, Ahmad Shah Abdali had to approach Delhi by way of the Ganga Doab, as owing to the constant passage to and fro of the Maratha troops, the country was so desolated that supplies were unprocurable; and in 1803, when the British took over the district, it was estimated that more than four-fifths was overrun by forest, and its inhabitants either removed or exterminated. The royal canal had long dried up, and thick forest had taken the place of cultivation, and afforded shelter to thieves, vagabonds and beasts of prey.¹

The East India Company at that time being not in favour of acquiring territory west of the Yamuna, parcelled out this area between petty chiefs. The sovereign powers of the Rajas of Jind, Kaithal, Ladwa, Thanesar and Shamgarh and of the Nawab of Kunjpura were confirmed and they were continued in the lands held by them under treaty from the Marathas, except that Ladwa was deprived of Karnal. The pargana of Karnal was bestowed on the Mandals² in exchange for their lands in the Yamuna Doab. Besides, other minor adjustments were also made.

The policy, which bade the British abstain from interference west of the Yamuna, changed with the altered political circumstances in Europe. When in 1806, Ranjit Singh crossed the Satluj with his army and marched to Thanesar, it was realized that the Satluj must become the north-western boundary of the British territorial influence. Negotiations followed and finally a treaty was signed in 1809 by which Ranjit Singh was prevented from making any encroachments south of the Satluj. At the same time all the chiefs between the Satluj and the Yamuna were taken under British protection.

1. *Karnal District Gazetteer*, 1918, p. 24.

2. The Mandals are said to have come from Samana, Patiala district (Punjab). That section of the Mandals whose head was the titular Nawab of Karnal, was found by Lord Lake in 1804, established on the eastern bank of the Yamuna.

As the records of the Ambala Agency testify, from 1809 to 1847 persistent efforts were made in vain to enforce good government through the political agency at Ambala among the endless semi-independent Chiefs in this area. The British Government sought to remedy this situation by enforcing its claims to lapse by escheat on the death without lineal heirs of the possessors of 1809 or their descendants. It was thus that the British districts of Ambala and Thanesar gradually grew up, each successive lapse being made the occasion for regular settlements of the village revenues and the introduction of direct British rule. However, each remaining chief, great and small alike, had within his own territory absolute civil, criminal and fiscal jurisdiction, subject only to the general authority of the Agent to the Governor-General. No tribute was taken from them, and though they were required, in the case of war, to aid the Government, yet no special contingent was fixed. The Cis-Satluj chiefs enjoyed a complete immunity from invasion, and retained their rights of sovereignty. The right to escheats was the sole right which the Government demanded in return for its protection. In fact, with the exception of a few territories which had lapsed from failure of heirs, each chief still found himself the ruler of the territory which he or his forefathers had held at the time when they passed under the British protection.

In 1846-47, a fresh step was taken by the British Government after experiencing the passive obstruction or open reluctance on the part of the chiefs when called upon to assist with supplies and men during the First Sikh War against the Lahore Durbar in 1845. Only a few chiefs abstained from open rebellion. In any case with its expansion of territory and political influences across the Satluj after the First Sikh War, the British Government could hardly afford the Cis-Satluj chiefs to exercise almost unlimited power. Consequently, sweeping measures were introduced to reduce their privileges. The police jurisdiction of most of the chiefs as well as all transit and custom duties were abolished and a commutation was accepted for the personal service of the chief and his contingent. The only States exempted were Patiala, Jind, Nabha, Faridkot, Malerkotla, Chhachhrauli (Kalsia), Raikot, Buriya and Mamdot.¹ The police jurisdiction was made over to European officers in the territories of the remaining chiefs. However, it soon became apparent that the chiefs, deprived of their police jurisdiction, were unable to collect their revenue. A proposal was, therefore, made for a regular settlement of the land revenue. But before final orders were passed on this point, the second Sikh campaign

1. Nabha was exceptionally treated, one-quarter of its territory having been confiscated.

had commenced. It ended in the annexation of the Panjab in 1849. In the same year, it was declared that, with the exception of the States already mentioned, all the chiefs should "cease to hold sovereign powers, should lose all criminal, civil and fiscal jurisdiction, and should be considered as no more than ordinary subjects of the British Government in the possession of certain exceptional privileges". The chiefs of Kunjpura, Thanesar and Shamgarh were treated in this manner. The revenues were still to be theirs, but were to be assessed by British officers and under British rules. The final step was taken in 1852 when the revenue settlement begun for British villages was extended to the villages of the chiefs. Thereafter, the chiefs ceased to retain any relics of their former power except that they were still permitted to collect direct from their villages the cash assessment of revenue as fixed at the time of settlement. They sank to the position of *jagirdars*, who retained a right to the revenue assigned to them in perpetuity subject only to lapse on failure of heirs.

HISTORY OF PRINCIPALITIES¹

The detailed history of the Kaithal, Ladwa, Thanesar and Kunjpura States which are now part of the district cannot be given here. We can only stop to mention the principal features relating to their origin and administration.

KAITHAL²

Kaithal in the time of Muhammad Shah (A.D. 1719—48) was a pargana consisting of 13 *tappas*. In A.D. 1733, it was held from the Delhi Government in jagir by one Qamr-ud-din Khan, a Baluch by tribe. This man was slain in the massacre of Delhi by Nadir Shah in A.D. 1739. Azimullah Khan, his successor, seeing the declining state of the empire, endeavoured to shake off his allegiance and assume independence. Ikhtiar Khan, an Afghan, was one of the principal *zamindars* whom he engaged. The latter sometimes paid but frequently resisted and appropriated the revenues. In A.D. 1751, Inayat Khan Afghan, an influential *zamindar*, persuaded the people to join him in resisting the demands of the Baluchis, raised a considerable force for the purpose, and enjoyed the revenues himself. Matters continued in this state till 1755.

In A.D. 1756, Tahawwur Khan, brother of Qamr-ud-din, made an unsuccessful attempt to recover the Kaithal jagir from Inayat Khan.

1. For an account of the chiefs and families of note in the Karnal district, refer to L.H. Griffin, *Chiefs and Families of Note in the Panjab*, Volume I, 1909, pp. 9-48.

2. *Karnal District Gazetteer*, 1918, pp. 30-31.

Thus ended the Baluch possession. The family of Inayat Khan continued in possession of Kaithal till A.D. 1767, when Bhai Desu Singh marched against Kaithal, which succumbed after a weak resistance, and thus commenced the Sikh rule. Bhai Budha Singh, his eldest brother, seized Thanesar and Pehowa. Bhai Desu Singh built the original fort of Kaithal and several small forts around Kaithal, numerous *kachcha* dams along the Saraswati and brought a water-course from Mangna to Kaithal.

Of the three sons of Desu Singh, Khushhal Singh died in childhood. Bahal Singh succeeded to the rule as his elder brother, Lal Singh, was under restraint at Delhi. Lal Singh's mother obtained his release on payment of Rs. 40,000. He shortly returned and assumed the Government, driving his brother, who strongly opposed him, to Kularan. Bahal Singh acquired Budhlada, but was soon put to death by hired assassins.

Lal Singh proved the greatest chief of his dynasty. He was regarded as the most powerful of the Cis-Satluj *Sardars* after the Raja of Patiala. He is described as having been a very able man, though he was utterly untrustworthy, unscrupulous and of a violent disposition. He was held in some respect by the lesser chiefs who frequently submitted to his arbitration. He acquired large tracts of land by plundering his neighbours on all sides. He succeeded in regaining possession of the much coveted Thanesar which originally belonged to the Bhai of Kaithal, but which had been captured by their old rivals Bhangra Singh and Bhag Singh of the Dallewala Misl from Manjha. He did good service to Parron in defeating George Thomas, and was rewarded in consequence by the gift of pargana Sular on payment of a *nazarana* of Rs. 60,000, little better than one year's revenue. His services were acknowledged by Lord Lake by the grant of Gohana (Rohtak district) for life. He joined the British forces in the pursuit of Jaswant Rao Holkar up to the Satluj. He rendered good service to General Ochterlony in the Gorkha War, and was liberally treated. He had been a firm ally of Raja Bhag Singh of Jind all his life, and on more than one occasion had come to his assistance in repelling the attacks of George Thomas.

Lal Singh resided chiefly at Kaithal. He added to the fort of Kaithal, and, in fact, may almost be said to have re-built it, for it was nothing but a mud building before. He ruled for 33 years and died in A.D. 1818.

On Lal Singh's death, his sons, Partab Singh and Udai Singh, being 4 and 3 years old respectively, the Government was carried on in the name of Partab Singh, under the regency of his mother (Sahib Kaur); but the boy only lived to the age of 12 years, and died of smallpox.

Udai Singh, still a boy, succeeded under the regency of his mother, who continued to exercise very great influence in public affairs even when he came of age. Udai Singh was a weak-minded youth, without ambition and without energy to keep what his father had acquired. During his chiefship the disorder and affrays on the Kaithal frontier became so serious, stopping all trade and disturbing the peace of the whole country, that a strong remonstrance was addressed by the British authorities to him and the neighbouring *Sardars*, who were jointly responsible for the good government of the area.

Udai Singh resided chiefly at Kaithal but frequently at Pehowa, and both places bear witness of his taste for architecture. He enlarged and beautified the fort of Kaithal, built a palace there, after the model of Ochterlony's house at Karnal, only on a more imposing scale, and near it a bridge over the Bidkiyar lake. At Pehowa, the garden house is a credit to his architectural taste, but was left incomplete on his death. A masonry dam that he erected across the Saraswati, which threw water down a cut irrigating numerous villages for 16 miles (about 26 kilometres) towards Kaithal, was destroyed by the British authorities after the escheat. In private life Udai Singh was a debauch, in public a tyrant. He was bedridden for some years of his later life, and died at Kaithal on March 14, 1843, when the greater part of the estate lapsed to the British. Only that territory which was acquired by Gurbakhsh Singh, the original founder of the family, was conferred upon Bhai Gulab Singh and Bhai Sangat Singh of Arnoli, collaterals of Udai Singh in the third generation. They also ceased to exercise administrative functions in 1849.¹

This lapse was highly distasteful to the Phulkian chiefs of Patiala, Jind and Nabha, who, as relatives of the deceased, were desirous of retaining the possession in the family. But nothing came of their efforts to influence the British Government nor did the insurrection of the people who had been excited at the prospect of loss of Kaithal produce any result in spite of the fight they gave and Kaithal was finally taken over in 1843.

LADWA²

The founders of the Ladwa estate were Sahib Singh and Gurdit Singh who mastered Babain and Ladwa, Shamgarh, Saga, Karnal and some villages of Panipat. They had come from the Manjha³, and established

1. *Karnal District Gazetteer*, 1918, p. 34.

2. *Ibid.*

3. The Manjha Sikhs inhabited the country in the Upper Bari Doab; later the country also came to be known as Manjha.

themselves at Babain and Ladwa. After the defeat of the Afghans at Sirhind in 1764 A.D., these *Sardars* lost Panipat and Karnal. Sahib Singh, who was afterwards killed in action near Karnal, bestowed Shamgarh on his brother-in-law, Kirpal Singh, who accompanied the confederacy in the conquest.

Gurdit Singh was succeeded by his son, Ajit Singh, who obtained the title of Raja from Lord Auckland for building a bridge over the Saraswati at Thanesar. He sided with the Sikhs during the First Anglo-Sikh War (1845-46) and was imprisoned at Allahabad. The estate lapsed in 1846.

KUNJPURA¹

The founder of the Kunjpura family was a Pathan named Nijabat Khan who flourished in the early part of the eighteenth century. He built a strong tower in the Yamuna marshes and named it Kunjpura, 'The Heron's Nest'.² The Chakladar of Saharanpur, Izzat Khan, advanced against the freebooter but was killed by one of Nijabat Khan's relations. The Emperor of Delhi, hearing the death of his Chakladar, enticed Nijabat Khan through the intercession of Mulraj, Governor of Panipat and kept him there as a prisoner for one year. Eventually he was released; and his estate Nijabat Nagar, and other villages were granted to him in jagir on condition of his restraining the restless Jats and Rajputs from causing disturbances.

Nijabat Khan submitted to Nadir Shah in A.D. 1739 and supplied him with provisions. He became a Risaldar of 1,000 *swars* and was recognised as rightful owner of Kunjpura by the new power. The Maratha army under Sada Shiv Bhau plundered Kunjpura in 1760 when Nijabat Khan was killed. Nijabat's eldest son, Daler Khan succeeded in escaping across the Yamuna, and had his revenge in the following year by taking part in the battle of Panipat, when the Marathas suffered a crushing defeat at the hands of the Durranis.

Daler Khan's assistance to the Durranis was evidently of considerable value, and he was confirmed in the rule and revenues of Kunjpura, Indri and Azimabad. The grant extended over 150 villages in Karnal, Indri, Thanesar, Shahabad (Shahbad) and Badauli. The mahals of Karnal and Safidon were afterwards bestowed in lieu of certain other villages resumed. Daler Khan and his successor Gulsher Khan had to struggle hard to maintain their

1. L.H. Griffin, *Chiefs and Families of Note in the Punjab*, Volume I, 1909, pp. 13-23.

2. His sons renamed the fort and called it Nijabat Nagar.

position against the encroachments of the Sikhs. Some family possessions had to be surrendered, in other cases part of an estate was kept while the remainder was given.

The head of the Kunjpura house enjoyed the title of Nawab, and his jurisdiction as a semi-independent chief was only lost to him under the operations of Lord Hardinge's order in 1846. Thereafter the Nawabs of Kunjpura were mere Jagirdars, occasionally exercising judicial powers specially conferred. The Nawabs of Kunjpura migrated to Pakistan after the Partition and the estate was acquired as an evacuee property.

THANESAR¹

The founder of the Thanesar chiefship was Mith Singh. He belonged to Manjha and came to this region with the *Dallewalia mist* in company with his nephews Bhag Singh and Bhanga Singh. The royal fort at Thanesar was held by the troops of the Bhaïs of Kaithal under the command of Desu Singh. Bhag Singh and Bhanga Singh waited their opportunity in the neighbourhood, while Mith Singh advanced with the conquering Sikhs, and was killed at Meerut. Bhanga Singh and Bhag Singh, with the assistance of the Ladwa *Sardars* and Karam Singh Nirmala of Shahabad (Shahbad), after one failure, made a successful night attack and possessed themselves of the fort of Thanesar. After the death of Bhai Desu Singh of Kaithal, a large part of his possessions in Indri, and some estates near Pehowa fell into the hands of the two Thanesar *Sardars* and of the Ladwa Chief. The territory conquered by Bhanga Singh and Bhag Singh comprised a number of estates in the present Indri pargana, some villages in Pehowa, and a large tract in the Thanesar tahsil. A partition was made, Bhanga Singh taking 3/5 and Bhag Singh 2/5. Bhanga Singh was a savage and determined ruler, and was the only Cis-Satluj chief whom Ranjit Singh feared. He died in 1815, leaving a son, Fateh Singh and a daughter by his wedded wife, and a son, Sahib Singh, by a concubine. The daughter, Karam Kaur, married Karm Singh, the Raja of Patiala, and six villages of Indri were given as her dowry. Sahib Singh had a jagir of 9½ villages in Indri, and was succeeded by his son, Bishan Singh, who died without a male issue. The remainder of Bhanga Singh's estate descended to his son, Fateh Singh, who died in 1819 leaving his mother Mai Jian and two young widows. Mai Jian managed the estate till 1830, and died in 1836. Ratan Kaur, one of the widows, died in 1844, leaving the other widow Chand Kaur, in possession of the estate, which lapsed on her death in 1850.

1. *Karnal District Gazetteer*, 1918, pp. 36-37.

Bhag Singh, the brother of Bhanga Singh, died in 1791 leaving four sons, three of whom died childless. The estate descended to Jamiat Singh, the son of the youngest brother, Baj Singh, who also died childless in 1832, when the estate lapsed.

UPRISING OF 1857

The Uprising of 1857 clearly showed that the people in many areas of this district rose in opposition to British authority. To have a clear view of the happenings of the Uprising of 1857, it seems essential to keep in mind the then administrative set-up of the areas now forming the Karnal district. The Panipat and Karnal tahsils comprised the then Panipat district while the remaining portion, viz. Thanesar, Kaithal and Gula (Guhla) tahsils, formed a part of the then Thanesar district.

The British authorities felt that it was of the utmost importance to keep open the road between Ambala and Meerut to facilitate the junction of the forces from these two points. Both on account of its proximity to Delhi and its location on the highroad from Ambala, it was in the interest of the British to put down all opposition in this area.

The district of Panipat on account of its location was under the heel of the British. It was a frequent sight for the civil population to see British forces marching to and from Delhi and the Punjab.¹ Besides, all the important towns of the district were heavily guarded by the forces of the Patiala and Jind chiefs, who, to protect their own interests, were aligned to the cause of the British.

As soon as the news of the happenings of 1857 reached Jind, the Raja collected his troops and, reaching Karnal on the 18th of May, he prevented the local opposition from gathering strength. He then marched down the Grand Trunk Road in advance of the British columns and after recovering Panipat and Samalkha from the opposing forces of freedom fighters, kept the road open for the British forces between Karnal and Delhi. The Maharaja of Patiala too helped the British by holding Karnal, Thanesar and Ambala and keeping the road open from Karnal to Phillaur. In spite of such arrangements, the company of the 5th Native Infantry posted at Thanesar went into action but it was disarmed on July 14.

The civil population rose in almost every big village. Consequently, the civil administration was thrown out of gear, the revenue and police

1. *Kaye's and Malletson's History of the Indian Mutiny of 1857-8*, edited by colonel Malletson, 1914, Volume VI, p. 140.

officers ceased to function and even many zamindars and important villagers were in no mood to help the British.

In the Panipat Bangar, 16 of the largest Jat villages in the Naultha *zail* refused to pay their revenue, and joined action in the Rohtak district. Another 19 large villages, mostly in the Bhalsi and Kuran *zails* rose in opposition, burnt some Government buildings and refused to pay revenue. The Gujars also rose and joined hands. These freedom fighters had to pay heavily for their courage. The British were merciless in their atrocities after the Uprising was suppressed. All these villages, besides being fined, were punished in various other ways; and *Lambardars'* allowances to the amount of Rs. 7,317, representing a revenue of Rs. 1,46,340 were confiscated.¹

In the town of Panipat, those up in arms against the Government collected in the shrine of Buali Shah Qalandar. They would have attacked the Collector's office but the Jind troops prevented them from doing so. The British behaved mercilessly; hostages were seized, people were hanged and the pension of the shrine was reduced considerably. The Tahsildar of Gharaunda, a Panipat man, was removed on charges of disaffection.

The Nardak area did not lag behind the Bangar. Some of the large villages notably Siwan, Asandh, Jalmana, Bala, Dachar, Gandar and Salwan refused to pay revenue and defied the British authority. A force of about 250 troops was sent from Karnal under Captain Hughes on July 13. This force was checked at village Bala, about 40 kilometres from Karnal, by a force of the Jats comprising 900 match-lockmen and many mounted sowars. After a fierce fight that lasted a short while, the Jats compelled the enemy to flee away. Captain Hughes dispatched a messenger to Karnal for reinforcements and he himself encamped in the jungle near by. But during the night the Ranghars flocked in from the neighbouring villages. They numbered about 3,000; under shelter of a small jungle and the banks of a canal, they kept up a harassing fire. Captain Hughes could not withstand this pressure and at the day-break of July 14, effected his retreat. Meanwhile, the reinforcements comprising two guns of the Nawab of Karnal (Ahmad Ali Khan) and 50 Sikhs (Patiala men), with 20 of the Nawab's troopers, arrived. Coming up un-noticed, they suddenly opened fire. After much loss, the Ranghars had to leave the ground.²

1. *Karnal District Gazetteer*, 1918, p. 40.

2. Cave-Browne, Rev. J., *The Punjab and Delhi in 1857, Volume II*, pp. 143-44. (Reprinted by the Languages Department, Punjab, 1970.)

The village of Bala was re-attacked. The Jats took up the defensive in a strong building, the double barricades of which could defy any enemy without artillery. When the fire of guns of the British force caused considerable damage to the building, its inmates, coming out in the open, launched an attack on the enemy. The British cavalry, by a flank manoeuvre, got between the rebels and the towns-people with speed and completely encircled them. In the grim battle that ensued, nearly 100 Jats fell and the day was lost. The losses of the British side were limited to two Indian officers and three troopers, fifteen wounded and several horses killed. Captain Hughes' own horse received three wounds.¹

The villages around Bala were sacked and made to pay heavy fines in addition to the arrears of revenue. But this in no way dispirited the people. Hardly had the British force left Karnal, when they again started their activities. A huge force assembled at the village of Jalmana and gave fight to Lieutenant Pearson who had attacked them. The opposition grew so strong that he failed to register a victory over them. He asked for reinforcement but not getting any owing to the precarious British position at Panipat and Ambala, he retired from the field.

The Deputy Commissioner of Panipat learnt on June 8 that a hostile force of the freedom fighters was on its way from Jullundur to Delhi. He thought that this force might march upon Ambala and Patiala but in any case Thanesar was certain to be attacked. The Maharaja of Patiala took an alarm at it and withdrew his forces from Thanesar to protect his own capital. Under these circumstances, Lieutenant Pearson was called back leaving Jalmana as it was. In fact, the Jullundur force proceeded to Delhi and did not attack any of these places.

With the danger over, Lieutenant Pearson on June 15, re-directed his attention to settling the Kaithal region and brought it under control. Similarly, the Ladwa villages which had successfully risen in opposition were attacked and destroyed by the Deputy Commissioner of Thanesar.

Towards the western side of the district, the opposition to the British was still brewing. The Ranghars living in the area, collected in great numbers, attacked and captured the Asandh police station. On hearing this, Pearson advanced towards Asandh with a strong force. But so strong was the opposition of the Ranghars that he could not dare to attack them; on the contrary he was attacked and pushed back by them.

1. Buddha Prakash, *Glimpses of Haryana*, 1967, p. 97.

While these events were happening, the position of the British had become more favourable for them in the districts of Hisar (Hissar) and Rohtak. Similarly, the work of suppressing the opposition in Asandh, Jalmana and other villages was taken in hand with the help of the Patiala force. The village of Asandh was bombarded and reduced to ashes.¹ The British also cruelly burnt the village of Jalmana. All other villages met a similar fate. Heavy fines were realized from all these villages at the point of the bayonet.

GROWTH OF POLITICAL STRUGGLE

Like other districts of the south-east Punjab, roughly comprising Haryana, Karnal was tagged with the Punjab after the Uprising of 1857. As a measure of punishment, the district was not included for any of the development programmes. Moreover, there was an advantage in keeping it economically and educationally backward, in order to use it as a recruiting area for the British army.

India began to change in the 19th century, and the pace of change quickened as the years went by. The introduction of English education opened the door to western influence by exposing the educated classes to western ideas. This change affected the whole country in varying degrees and the Karnal district was no exception, though its pace was slow. While it affected other aspects of life, it was particularly noticeable in the political outlook which engendered discontent. Signs of popular awakening in the district were not lacking. The Arya Samaj played an important part in this awakening. It was founded in the Holi Mohalla, Karnal, in the beginning of the present century.

The World War I broke out in 1914 and the district contributed its share in the supply of manpower. It also contributed substantially to the Aeroplane Fund, the Imperial Indian Relief Fund, Comforts Funds and the War Loans.

During the World War I, people had hoped that the defeat of Germany would usher in an era of peace. This hope did not come true. "After the Armistice was concluded in November 1918, the prevailing abnormal conditions, instead of vanishing, became aggravated, particularly in relation to high prices. The ordinary people naturally became discontented with their lot. There was widespread famine in the country owing to the failure of the monsoon of 1918, and the prevalence of influenza and

1. *Karnal District Gazetteer*, 1918, p. 41.

other epidemics had resulted in a very heavy mortality."¹ In Punjab, the Government under Michael O' Dwyer came to be regarded by the educated and politically-minded classes as opposed to their aspirations. The passage of Rowlatt Acts aggravated the situation and demonstrations of various kinds were made to secure the repeal of the measure. Mahatma Gandhi joined the agitation and advised passive resistance against these obnoxious Acts. In response to his call partial hartal was observed at Panipat on the 30th March, 1919, and a meeting was held in the town. An Urdu handwritten notice advocating mourning and prayers for passive resistance was found stuck in the bazaar at Karnal. To arrange for the hartal on the 6th April, mass meetings were held at Karnal on the 4th and the 5th April. The hartal on the 6th April was observed successfully at Karnal but it failed at Panipat. On the 9th April, Ram Naumi was celebrated at Panipat and at *Rath Yatra* Hindus and Muhammadans fraternized and organised demonstrations in honour of Mahatma Gandhi. On the 11th April, a complete hartal was observed at Panipat in connection with the arrest of Gandhiji at Palwal. A Delhi freedom fighter, Bhagwanji delivered strong speeches and a warrant under Defence of India Act was subsequently issued for his arrest.

On the 12th April, a general Railway, Post and Telegraph strike was threatened at Karnal. The same day, a meeting was held at Shahabad (Shahbad) to arrange for observance of hartal on the following day. In the evening Hindus and Sikhs congregated in the Imambara and fraternized with Muhammadans. At Panipat, a contribution was levied on a shopkeeper who had not observed hartal on the 11th April. A complete hartal was observed at Shahabad (Shahbad) on the 13th April. Efforts were also made at Thanesar to form a Hindu-Muslim *panchayat* to settle cases.

The massacre of Jallianwala Bagh became the focal point of the national movement of resistance all over the country. There were demonstrations throughout the district against this horrible massacre of April 13, 1919. A public meeting was held at Karnal. A procession followed by a public meeting was observed at Panipat.

On the 18th April, considerable excitement prevailed at Panipat owing to pressure from some Delhi freedom fighters. The same day, a meeting was held at Fatehpur (Pundri). An unsuccessful attempt at hartal was also made at Pundri. Hartal was observed at Kaithal, during which about 100 Hindu and Muslim boys visited the railway station and tried to induce the railway staff to strike. Ladwa was visited by an unknown bare-footed and bare-headed

1. *Disorders Inquiry Committee Report*, 1920, p. 107.

Muhammadan, who convened a meeting of Hindus and Muslims, whom he informed that the Muslims of Delhi had given up cow-killing and urged them to follow Delhi's example and promote Hindu-Muslim unity. He also told them that the Delhi people had vowed to remain bare-headed and bare-footed till Gandhiji was set at liberty. On the 19th April, the people damaged Kaithal Railway Station. The Government suppressed their movements with a strong hand.

In 1920, Gandhiji in alliance with the Khilafat leaders launched a Non-violent Non-Cooperation Campaign throughout India to bring the British administration to a standstill. Henceforward, the course of events in the district was in line with what happened elsewhere. The Congress movement was started in the district that year and Congress Committees were formed at various places. The Khilafat movement was also started and Khilafat Day was observed at Panipat on March 3, 1920, and non-cooperation resolutions were passed. A District Political Conference was organised at Karnal with Lala Lajpat Rai as its chairman. The participation of the people in Non-Cooperation Movement led to several arrests at Panipat, Kaithal, Shahabad (Shahbad), Salwan and Gagsina.

Thereafter, the district followed the line of action laid down by the Congress for the whole country. In compliance with Gandhiji's appeal for funds, Lala Lajpat Rai toured the district. The people responded enthusiastically and a good sum was collected. To suppress the movement, the Government arrested many of the leaders which resulted in slackness of political activity.

In 1930, the Indian National Congress decided on complete independence to be the goal of India. It authorised the All-India Congress Committee to launch a Civil Disobedience Movement. Many villages in the district showed signs of dis-affection. On his visits to Salwan, the Commissioner, Ambala Division, was greeted with black flags. A police party was posted there by way of punishment. Many arrests were made throughout the district. The Civil Disobedience Movement was suspended in 1931 in consequence of the Gandhi-Irwin Pact. On its renewal in 1932, the Civil Disobedience work was organised by the volunteers throughout the district. On request, three parties of four volunteers each from villages Gagsina and Salwan proceeded to Lahore and courted arrests there. Besides, many other persons from Karnal, Kaithal, Shahabad (Shahbad), Panipat, Salwan and Urlana Kalan were arrested. The movement continued unabated till May 1934, when it languished.

After the suspension of Civil Disobedience Movement, the Congress decided to participate in the elections of 1937 to the legislatures and local bodies. Hectic electioneering activity followed and many meetings were organised.

Political activity was kept alive on the basis of local and national issues after the elections of 1937. Protests were organised against *begar* and the high-handedness of local officers. A Chamar Sabha was organised to voice the grievances of their community.

The leading persons of the district unanimously approved the 'Quit India' resolution adopted by the Congress in 1942. The Congress Committees were declared unlawful by the Government. This led to a sharp reaction. There were explosions in the Karnal Post Office aimed at setting fire to the dak. The distillery was set on fire and at several places, Government buildings were damaged. The national flag was installed and unfurled on the Municipal Committee Building, Karnal in spite of the strict watch kept there by the police guards. The police lathi-charged the gathering in front of the building. Many of them along with their leader, Man Singh Rahi, were arrested and sent to Central Jail, Multan.¹ The Government took stern action and curbed the movement by putting the political leaders behind the bars.

When many of the political workers in urban areas had been arrested or had gone underground, workers started pouring in from rural areas. A batch of workers came from Gagsina to unfurl the national flag on the tahsil building at Karnal. A severe lathi-charge was made which resulted in serious injuries to several persons. The authorities became more stern and caused suffering to many political workers.

The youth of the district serving in the British Indian army in South East Asia joined the Indian National Army in large numbers and fought bravely under the leadership of Subhash Chandra Bose. Subsequent events like the death of Subhash Chandra Bose and the trial of I.N.A. personnel who were regarded as heroes, caused a great stir in the public mind here as elsewhere.

When Independence came, the district celebrated the Independence Day on August 15, 1947, with great enthusiasm. The migration of large numbers of people from West Punjab (Pakistan) created numerous problems of settlement and social re-adjustment. The last two decades have witnessed change in many directions. The subsequent Chapters will throw light on what developments have been made in different spheres of activity during this period.

1. Man Singh Rahi became seriously ill and died in jail in 1944.

However, one of the most significant developments has been that the district passed on to Haryana on November 1, 1966, when this new State was created. Since then the following ministries have existed under the leadership of the Chief Ministers whose names are given below :

Name	From	To
Bhagwat Dayal Sharma	November 1, 1966	March 24, 1967 (Forenoon)
Birender Singh	March 24, 1967	November 21, 1967 (Forenoon)
Bansi Lal	May 21, 1968	Continuing

During the period between November 21, 1967 and May 21, 1968, the State remained under the President's rule.

We are too near the present to view the historical importance of these changes.

Chapter III

PEOPLE

POPULATION

Of the seven districts of the State, Karnal according to 1961 Census, ranked second in respect of population. It was inhabited by 14,90,430 persons (8,04,769 males and 6,85,661 females). The first population assessment in the district was made in 1853. As the boundaries of the district underwent considerable changes afterwards, a comparison of earlier population figures with later figures is not possible. The district as constituted at present had 8,70,823 persons in 1901. During the subsequent 60 years (1901—61) this number increased by 71.15 per cent. The population variation since 1901 has been as below :

Census year	Population	Variation	Percentage increase (+) or decrease(—)
1901	8,70,823		
1911	7,88,236	(—)82,587	(—)9.48
1921	8,15,967	(+)27,731	(+)3.52
1931	8,38,700	(+)22,733	(+)2.79
1941	9,78,868	(+)1,40,168	(+)16.71
1951	10,77,381 ¹	(+)98,513	(+)10.06
1961	14,90,430	(+)4,13,049	(+)38.34
1901—61		(+)6,19,607	(+)71.15

1. Actually the total population recorded at the 1951 Census was 10,79,379 persons. This figure was adjusted to 10,77,381 persons at the 1961 Census according to the territorial jurisdiction of the district prevailing in 1961.

The major portion of the increase in population occurred during the years 1931—61. The decade 1901—11 was marked by severe ravages of plague and malaria which took a heavy toll of the population. During 1911—21 occurred the great influenza epidemic. The decade 1921—31 was generally healthy but the population was almost static. It expanded faster during 1931—41. The decade 1941—51 showed an increase of 10 per cent in the population. The local population actually increased by 22 per cent but this increase was reduced by shifting of the Muslim population in large numbers in the wake of the Partition. The number of non-Muslim immigrants who came in was less than the number of outgoing Muslims by 53,875.¹ The years 1951—61 were free from disease, and the public health measures taken by the Government reduced the death rate while the birth rate went up. The rapid extension in agriculture and industrialisation, particularly during the post-Partition period under the Five-Year Plans has also contributed to this high rate (38.34 per cent) of growth in population which was the highest in this period of 60 years.

Place of birth.—Of the total persons enumerated in the district in 1961 about 60.45 per cent were born at the place of enumeration. This percentage was composed of 64.08 rural and 42.92 urban population, denoting a higher degree of mobility in towns. Similar percentage in respect of males and females was 72.39 and 46.44 respectively. The low figure for females results from their leaving the ancestral place after marriage. Out of the remaining 39.55 per cent of population recorded as having come from other places, 13.40 per cent were born at another place within the district. Persons born outside the district but within the State (pre-organised Punjab) formed 8.65 per cent of the population. Of the remaining 17.50 per cent coming from outside, 2.95 per cent had come from other States in India, mainly from Uttar Pradesh (34,645), Delhi (3,577), Rajasthan (3,078) and Jammu and Kashmir (1,179). Persons from Uttar Pradesh and Rajasthan were mainly found in rural areas and those from Delhi and Jammu and Kashmir in urban areas. The balance of 14.55 per cent mostly represented the population who had migrated to the district from other districts of the Punjab (Pakistan) after the Partition.

Density.—According to the 1961 Census the number of persons per square kilometre in the district works out to 187 (156 rural and 4,698 urban). The density remained almost unchanged during the first half of the

1. Against 3,04,346 Muslims of 1941 Census, almost all of whom migrated to Pakistan at the time of the Partition, 2,50,471 displaced persons were enumerated at 1951 Census as having settled in this district.

demographic divide (1901—31), but it shot up high in the subsequent decades on account of the increase in population and by 1961 it nearly doubled as is obvious from the following table :—

Census year	Area (Square kilometres)	Density (Population per square kilometre)
1901	8,166*	107
1911	8,166*	97
1921	8,094*	101
1931	8,094*	104
1941	8,096*	121
1951	8,228*	131
1961	8,190*	182
	7,964**	187

Standing second in point of population in the State, the district ranks fourth in density. The reason for lower density is sparse population in areas affected by floods and water-logging. The proportion between the rural and the urban population according to 1961 Census is 82.8 : 17.2 as compared to 81.2 : 18.8 in 1951. There has been relatively more increase in rural areas ; the average population per inhabited village increased from 664 in 1951 to 915 in 1961. Density in the four tahsils in 1951 and 1961, as shown below, brings out the big rise during the 1951—61 decade :

Tahsil	Density (Population per square kilometre)	
	1951	1961
Kaithal	108	158
Thanesar	129	187
Karnal	146	200
Panipat	190	235

*This is according to the Surveyor General of India. (*Census of India, 1961, Volume XIII, Punjab, Part II-A, General Population Tables, p. 12.*)

***Census of India, 1961, Punjab, District Census Handbook, No. 4, Karnal District (published in 1966), p. 160.*

The towns in the district are generally more congested. The urban density of the district is 4,698 persons per square kilometre. Ladwa has the highest density of 12,706. Then come Gharaunda (11,286) and Shahabad (Shahbad) (10,781). Thanesar is the least congested town with 1,083 persons per square kilometre.

Houses and households.—Additional housing is essential to relieve the inconvenience of increased density as conditions of living and working are determined by it. During the period 1951—61, the rural dwellings increased by 26.7 per cent as against an increase of 41.3 per cent in population and the urban dwellings increased by 18.8 per cent as against an increase of 25.7 per cent in population. The district recorded an overall increase of 25.1 per cent in housing as against an overall increase of 38.3 per cent in population. As the population advanced more than the dwellings, both in towns and villages, the problem of shortage of rural dwellings was rendered more acute.

The total of 3,87,155 houses (3,19,717 rural and 67,438 urban) in the district were occupied by 14,88,631 persons. The number of houseless persons comprising wandering tribes, tramps, *sadhus* and pavement dwellers was limited to 1,799.

Normally, a single house was used by one household¹ which on an average consisted of 5.7 persons.² The over-burdened households reflect the shortage of houses in the district.

Distribution of population.—There were 1,415 villages, 1,350 inhabited and 65 uninhabited according to the Census figures of 1961.³ The inhabited villages contained 82.8 per cent of the population. The remaining 17.2 per

1. The term household is taken to mean a group of persons who commonly live together and take their meals from a common kitchen unless exigencies of work prevent any one of them from doing so.

2. *Census of India, 1961, Volume XIII, Punjab, Part IV-A, Report on Housing and Establishments*, p. 15.

3. In fact, in 1961, according to the information supplied by the Deputy Commissioner, Karnal, there were 1,421 villages in all. Of these, 1,354 were inhabited and 67 uninhabited (*be-charag*). Most of these uninhabited villages were in areas subject to river action: 24 in the Karnal tahsil, 17 in the Thanesar tahsil, 14 in the Panipat tahsil and 12 in the Kaithal tahsil. In 1969 this number increased to 1,429 (1,357 inhabited and 72 uninhabited) as detailed in the Chapter on 'General Administration'.

The detailed analysis of the villages in the text is based on the Census figures given above.

cent of the population lived in 11 towns. The tahsil-wise distribution is exhibited in Table VI of Appendix.

The average number of persons per inhabited village in the district was 915. Among the tahsils, Panipat with an average of 1,279 and Kaithal with 1,192 were far above this average. Karnal with 885 and Thanesar with 538 were far below. The rural population could be grouped village-wise in different units as follows :—

Unit of population	Number of villages	Total population
Less than 200	172	21,103
Between 200 and 499	423	1,43,259
Between 500 and 999	377	2,64,952
Between 1,000 and 1,999	229	3,24,127
Between 2,000 and 4,999	131	3,66,025
Between 5,000 and 9,999	18	1,15,372
	1,350	12,34,838

The number of villages with population less than 200 was the maximum in the Karnal tahsil (64) and the Thanesar tahsil (61) because of the area being subject to river action and floods. The eastern region had been a scene of battles and warfare till about the time when the British took over. This could never be conducive to the growth of big villages, and we find that out of the 18 villages in the district of which the population exceeded 5,000, four were situated in the Karnal tahsil, one in the Panipat tahsil, eleven in the Kaithal tahsil, two in the Gula (Guhla) tahsil and none in the Thanesar tahsil.¹ The same reason may account for the preponderance of villages with smaller population ranging between 200 and 999 in the Thanesar tahsil (307) and the Karnal tahsil (228).

Of the 11 towns in the district, there was no Class I town (technically called city with a population of 1,00,000 and above). Karnal and Panipat were

1. Tirawari (Taraori), Gondar, Jundla and Bala Khalsa (tahsil Karnal), Samalkha (tahsil Panipat), Keorak, Kaul, Habri, Pai, Karora, Rajaund, Chhattar, Asandh, Salwan, Moana and Alewah (tahsil Kaithal), and Siwan and Gumthala Garhu (tahsil Gula).

Class II towns (50,000 to 99,999). Kaithal came in the category of Class III towns (20,000 to 49,999), while Shahabad (Shahbad), Thanesar and Gharaunda were Class IV towns (10,000 to 19,999). The remaining towns, viz. Ladwa, Nilu Kheri (Nilo Kheri), Pundri, Pehowa and Radaur belonged to the category of Class V towns (5,000 to 9,999).

In 1951, the towns in the district numbered 12. Nilu Kheri (Nilo Kheri) and Radaur were declared towns for the first time in that year. During the decade 1951—61, two towns namely, Karnal Civil Lines and Kaithal Mandi lost their entity because of their merger with the adjoining towns, viz. Karnal and Kaithal respectively. Pehowa was declared a town for the first time in 1961. The variation of population in the towns during the decade is given in Table VII of Appendix.

Sex ratio.—According to 1961 Census there were 852 females per 1,000 males. Sex ratio figures for different years are given below :

Year	Females per thousand males		
	Rural	Urban	For the district
1911	820	901	828
1921	827	839	828
1931	818	796	815
1941	838	800	833
1951	853	881	858
1961	849	866	852

The above figures show a shift in favour of females. During 1951—61 there has, however, been a slight recession indicating male oriented immigration into the district during this period.¹

The females have a shorter span of life than the males. Males below the age of 15 years are 448 per thousand males; the corresponding figure for females is 465. The number of males per thousand between the age of 15 and 55 years was 470 and that of females 474. In the age group 55 years and above, the males were 82 and the females 60.

1. *Census of India, 1961, Volume XIII, Punjab, Part II-A, General Population Tables, p. 60.*

It is a common observation that a number of persons shift from villages to towns for study and livelihood. The low paid among them leave their families in their village homes and live in the towns by themselves. When past the age of useful work, some among them return to their villages. The effect of this type of movement is reflected in the statistics of rural and urban age composition. For age groups below 15, 15 to below 55, and 55 and above, the distribution among males is 454, 463 and 82 per thousand males in the rural area and 416, 500 and 83 in the urban area. The corresponding figures for females in the rural area are 472, 469 and 58 and in the urban area 432, 498 and 70.

Literacy.—In 1961, roughly speaking, one male out of three and one female out of nine could read and write. A little over half this number had had schooling and only one male in 26 and one female in 125 had crossed the Matriculation level. In the towns there were 634 per thousand males and 401 per thousand females who were literate but in the villages they were as few as 239 and 56 respectively. The rural people have a considerable leeway to make up in order to come up to the stage reached by the urban people. The comparative low literacy among females is associated with the social and economic backwardness of the people, especially those living in the rural areas.

LANGUAGE

Twenty spoken languages or dialects were recorded as mother-tongue in the district during the Census of 1961. Hindi was spoken by the largest number of persons as the following figures show :—

<u>Mother-tongue</u>	<u>Distribution per 1,000</u>
Hindi	863
Panjabi	133
Urdu	4

The composite character of the district is exemplified by the various dialects spoken within its boundaries. As we travel from north to south, we observe dialectic variations. Hindi with small admixture of Panjabi words is spoken, especially in the northern portion of the district. In the Panipat and Kaithal tahsils the Jats use many words which are not used in the rest of the district and their pronunciation and accent are quite peculiar to them. The quality of their speech closely resembles that of Rohtak Jats. The language

of the Thanesar tahsil and Indri Pargana of the Karnal tahsil is a curious admixture of dialects because of the mixture of Panjabi words with the local dialect. To the north of Kaithal the proximity of Panjabi speaking zone introduces a Panjabi element. The displaced persons who settled in this district speak Panjabi. Both the locals and the displaced persons have adopted many words from each other's language.

The various scripts used are : Devnagari for Hindi, Gurmukhi for Panjabi, Persian for Urdu, Roman for English, and Lande¹. After the emigration of Muslims in 1947, the use of Urdu has gradually given place to Hindi. Its use is now limited to the older generation. The younger generation mostly uses Hindi both in speech and writing in preference to Urdu. Some shopkeepers still maintain their account books in Lande.

RELIGIOUS LIFE

RELIGIOUS GROUPS

The religion-wise break-up of the population as per 1961 Census is shown below :

Religion	Number			Percentage
	Males	Females	Total	
Hindus	6,99,792	5,93,562	12,93,354	86.8
Sikhs	93,969	83,633	1,77,602	11.9
Muslims	8,369	5,790	14,159	0.1
Jains	1,555	1,652	3,207	0.2
Christians	1,071	1,023	2,094	0.1
Religion not stated	13	1	14	—
Total :	8,04,769	6,85,661	14,90,430	

Hindus.—The majority of the population of the district consists of Hindus. They form 86.8 per cent of the total population and predominate both in the rural and urban areas. An idea about their distribution can be

1. A script used by traders for book-keeping.

had from the following table :—

District/Tahsil		Number		
		Males	Females	Total
Karnal district	Urban	1,22,209	1,06,382	1,28,591
	Rural	5,77,583	4,87,180	10,64,763
	Total :	6,99,792	5,93,562	12,93,354
Karnal tahsil	Rural	1,65,412	1,40,272	3,05,684
Panipat tahsil	Rural	1,11,165	94,575	2,05,740
Thanesar tahsil	Rural	96,042	80,789	1,76,831
Kaithal tahsil (including Gula)	Rural	2,04,964	1,71,544	3,76,508

Most of the Hindus follow traditional Hindu beliefs and practise Sanatan Dharma.¹ They believe in Shiva, Vishnu, Hanumana, Rama and Krishana. It is true that all men know of Shiva and of Vishnu; that the peasant utters the name of Narayana even when he yawns; that Bhagwan is made responsible for everything that happens. They recognise the supremacy of the higher power; their daily concerns in their work-a-day world are, however, with a host of deities. These deities may be broadly divided into four classes; benevolent deities, such as the Sun, the Yamuna, Bhumia, Khwaja Khizr, and the like; the malevolent deities mostly females, such as the Smallpox Sisters, the Fairies, etc; the sainted deities such as Gugga; and the malevolent dead such as Sayyads (Shahids).

The religious practices of the Hindus all over Haryana are almost identical. The variations, if at all, are due to customs peculiar to each caste and family. Most of the temples are built to Vishnu and Shiva; some temples are, however, built to local deities. Very few people go to temples for worship while most go for *darshans* or for asking boons. The educated people mostly worship at home some of whom keep the image of their favourite deity. On occasions of *grih pravesh*, child birth, marriage, etc., the *purohit* is invited for worship. The Kurukshetra *tirthas* are imbued with a religious aura. The myths connected with Kurukshetra have so engrooved their minds that the Hindus

1. Sanatan Dharma Sabhas have been formed at various places to propagate the Sanatan Dharma.

spontaneously pay homage to its very name. Kurukshetra had been the scene of Mahabharata where *Gita*, the Song Celestial, was sung. For a Hindu, a visit to Kurukshetra is a very pious act. A bath in the holy tanks and visits to temples are considered as equal to the merit of performing a thousand *ashvamedha yajnas*. Pehowa is sanctified by the existence of the Saraswati, *par excellence*, and Hindus seek the salvation of their elders by visiting this place and offering *pindas*.

Charhawa (offerings), made mostly by women, generally takes the form of gram or milk or cooked food or a few sweetmeats offered in front of the deity, the priest putting a part on the platform where the deity is placed, and the remainder of the offering being given to the appropriate receiver. In many cases, the Brahmans are fed in the name of the Lord.

The practice of observing *shraddhas* in commemoration of the dead ancestors is also common. These are performed for 15 days before the commencement of *navratras*. Brahmans are fed on the *tithi* (date) on which the ancestor died. *Khiṛ*, *halwa*, etc., are prepared and fed to the Brahmans. No member of the family takes meals before the performance of *shraddha*.

Shiva.—The district has been closely associated with Shiva worship from ancient times. According to the Puranic literature and the *Mahabharata*, the famous Sthanu Tirtha existed there and the place was so called after Sthanu (Shiva). A terra-cotta seal with a bull and a *kharoshthi* legend on it discovered from the mound known as Karan Ka Kila in Thanesar may also be corroborative of this view. Besides, a stone slab depicting four-armed Ganpati with Shiva and Parvati was discovered from Amin, five miles (8 kilometres) from Thanesar. The Chinese traveller Yuan Chwang also records the existence of some 100 Deva temples and people in great number belonging to different sects.

Shiva temples or *Shivalas* are found in larger number than other temples in the villages. The priests are Jogis, generally of the Kanphara or pierced-ear clan and they take the offerings. The worship of Shiva in the temples at Kurukshetra and Pehowa¹ is very popular.

Vishnu.—The district has also been closely associated with Vishnu cult and the *Mahabharata* refers to the various *tirthas* named after Vishnu. The famous idol of Jagson (Vishnu) in the temple of Chakrasvamin

1. The Panchmukhi Murti of Shiva at Pehowa is the only one of its type in the whole of India.

at Kurukshetra was removed to Ghazni by the Muslim invaders.¹ The Pehowa inscriptions also bear testimony to the practice of Vishnu worship and the existence of Vishnu temples.

The people still worship Vishnu but he is hardly recognised by them under that name though under the commoner names of Rama and Narayana he is the great god of the country. Temples dedicated to him exist in several big villages of the district. Vishnu worship in Kashipuri temple² at Kaithal is very popular.

Hanumana.—The followers of Vishnu are specially devoted to this deity and the images of Hanumana, the monkey god, are to be seen in most of the temples. Kaithal town is connected by traditions with Hanumana. It was named as Kapisthala, a Sanskrit word meaning an abode of monkeys. The deity is worshipped on Tuesdays in a temple situated in the heart of the town. Besides, in the east of the town, there is a mound said to be the birth place of Hanumana and as such it is known as 'Anjani Ka Tila', Anjani (Anjana) being the name of Hanumana's mother.

Rama.—Lord Rama is also worshipped by the people as the incarnation of Vishnu. Rama is worshipped on the occasion of Dussehra when Ram Lila or the story of the *Ramayana* is staged in various parts of the district. Truly speaking, Ram Lila has kept the folk-theatre alive.

Krishna.—The Kurukshetra tract is intimately connected with the life of Krishna. It was here that he acted as Arjuna's charioteer in the epic battle and sang the song Celestial, the *Gita*. Like Ram Lila, Krishna Lila also provides a favourite theme to the folk-theatre.

Minor deities.—Curiously enough most of the malevolent deities are worshipped by women and by children while at their mother's apron. Some Muslim *pirs* are also worshipped, particularly those that are the malevolent type, for it can do no harm to worship them, while they may be troublesome if not propitiated.

Sun God.—This is the god whom the people chiefly delight to honour. No shrine is ever built to this god, but Sunday is the day sacred to him. On Sunday the devotees do not eat salt; nor do they set milk for ghee, but

1. Elliot and Dowson, *The History of India As Told By Its Own Historians*, Volume II, 1869 (London), p. 454.

2. The image of Trivikrama Vishnu in this temple was recovered from Siwan. (R.C. Majumdar, *The History and Culture of the Indian People*, Volume IV, *The Age of Imperial Kanauj*, 1964, p. 336). See also Chapter on 'Places of Interest'.

make it into rice-milk, of which a part is given to the Brahmans in honour of the Sun; and a lamp is always lighted for him on Sunday. Water is thrown towards the Sun (*argh*)¹; and with first steps out of doors in the morning, the devotee salutes the Sun, and says *dharm ko sahai rakhya suraj maharaj* (Keep me in the faith O' Lord, the Sun!). The Brahmans take the offerings.

The *Mahabharata* refers to the popularity of Sun cult in the Kurukshetra tract. It is believed that Aditi had given birth to Surya at Suraj Kund situated at Amin, about five miles (eight kilometres) from Thanesar. There still exists a temple of Aditi and a Suraj Kund near by. During the eclipse of the sun, millions of people assemble at Kurukshetra in order to bathe in the holy Kurukshetra Tank.

The Yamuna.—The people refer to river Yamuna as Jamna Ji. There are no shrines to the Yamuna; but people go and bathe in the river on the occasion of *Sankrants* in the months of Chaitra and Kartika and on 15th of Kartika or every day in that month. Likewise, the other rivers are also held sacred.

Bhumia or the god of the homestead.—Bhumia or the god of the homestead or the village itself, often called Khera is the most important. Bhumia is worshipped on Sunday. People light up a lamp and offer a cake of bread at the shrine, and feed the Brahmans. This is always done twice a year, after the harvests are gathered in, and also on other occasions. Bhumia is also worshipped at marriages. The bridegroom before proceeding to the bride's house, takes a round of his own village and worships the Bhumia and he again worships the god before he can enter his house along with his bride. When a woman has had a son, she lights lamps, and affixes with cowdung five culms of the *panni* grass called *bearn* to the shrine. So too the first milk of a cow or buffalo is always offered to Bhumia. Women commonly take their children to worship Bhumia on Sunday. The Brahmans take the offerings.

Khwaja Khizr.—The worship of the local god of water, though the name is Muslim, is prevalent more in the *Khadar* than in the *Bangar*, and especially on Sundays. Twice a year after the harvests, he is worshipped at the well, lamps being lighted and Brahmans fed. And on the festivals of Holi and Diwali, a raft called *langri* is made of the *bearn* just mentioned, and a lighted lamp is put on it and set afloat on the tank in his honour. The Brahmans take the offerings to Khwaja Khizr, though they are occasionally given to the water-carrier or *jhinwar*.

1. This is done to the new moon too on the evening of her appearance.

In addition to the worship of these deities the benevolent deities such as Pitr and Satis are also worshipped in various forms.

Smallpox Sisters.—The pustular group of diseases is supposed to be caused by a band of seven sisters of whom Sitala or Mata, the goddess of smallpox, is the greatest and most virulent. There are important shrines to these deities at Pathri, Kabri, Baholi (tahsil Panipat) and Siwan (tahsil Gula). These are never worshipped by men but only by women and children of both sexes up to the age of 10 or 12. Enormous crowds collect at these shrines on the 7th of Chaitra which is called *Sili Saten*. Besides this, Phag, the day after the Holi festival, and any Monday, especially in Chaitra or Asadha, are favourable days.

During an attack of the smallpox no offerings are made; and if the epidemic has once seized upon a village, all offerings are discontinued till the disease has disappeared, otherwise the evil influence would spread. But, so long as Mata keeps her hands off, nothing is too good for the goddess, for she is one of the great dreads of Indian mothers. The dread is based upon the high incidence of deaths caused by the disease, but with increased facilities with regard to vaccination, a material reduction in the annual mortality has been brought about. The disease has not so far been completely eradicated and people still have undiminished faith in the smallpox goddess.

The fairies are a somewhat vaguely defined class of malevolent spirits and with the spread of education, the fairies are considered nothing but the product of superstitions.

Gugga Pir.—Gugga or Jahar Pir, though a Muslim, is supposed to be the greatest of the snake-kings. Gugga is worshipped throughout. The 9th and 15th of Bhadra, especially the former, considered as Gugga Naumi, are dedicated to this Pir, and generally the 9th of any month and all Mondays are his days. His shrine usually consists of a small one-room building with a minaret on each corner and a grave inside. It is called a *mari* and is marked by a long bamboo with peacock plumes, a coconut, some coloured threads, and some hand-*pankhas* and a blue flag on the top. On the 9th of Bhadra the Jogis take this fly-flap known as *chhari* round the village to the sound of *deroos* and the devotees salute it and offer *churmas*. The Balmikis sing devotional songs known as '*Pir Ke Solle*' in honour of the Pir to the accompaniment of *deroos*. Beating of *deroos* is the exclusive privilege of the Balmiki community; others may partake in singing, dancing or simply offer *charhawa*. It is believed that the spirit of Gugga temporarily takes abode in the devotee dancer who proves this fact by beating himself

occasionally with a bunch of iron chains called *chabuk*. The important *maris* of Gugga are at Pundri (tahsil Karnal), Ladwa (tahsil Thanesar), Asan Kalan and Mandi (tahsil Panipat).

Gugga Pir is also the subject of folk-songs. Songs to him are sung on the occasion of child-birth and marriage.

Sayyads.—In villages, there are many old shrines built in honour of mythical Sayyads. According to the Karnal District Gazetteer of 1918, even the names of the Sayyads were not sometimes known. People used to worship at these shrines, but this habit has weakened over the years and particularly with the migration of Muslims and the incoming of people from Pakistan for whom such traditional shrines had little meaning.

Minor saints.—There are innumerable local saints; many villages having shrines to names never heard of elsewhere. A few of the most celebrated are Miran Sahib, Lakhdatta or Sakhi Sarwar, Bawa Farid Shakarganj and Bauli Shah Qalander. Among these, the last named, a contemporary of Bawa Farid,¹ is a very celebrated local saint. He is supposed to have been born in A.D. 1190. The saint died at the age of 122 years in A.D. 1312. He used to ride about on a wall at Budha Khera, a village about three miles (five kilometres) from Karnal, but eventually settled at Panipat. Besides two shrines, one each at Panipat and Karnal, there is a shrine to him at Budha Khera built over the wall on which he used to ride.²

Arya Samaj.—It was founded in the district in 1885. It attacked the worn out and old established religious practices, the meaningless rites and ceremonies of the Hindus. The movement spread rapidly to the rural areas. But the Arya Samaj has begun to lose its former hold for want of vigour and enthusiasm in its preachers. It has, however, done a wonderful job in spreading education, specially among the women, by opening a number of schools and colleges. Uplift of Harijans, widow marriage, eradication of illogical and orthodox beliefs, protection of cows and propagation of Hindi are some of the other activities of the Arya Samaj.

1. There is a shrine of Bawa Farid at Goripur (tahsil Thanesar).

2. Tradition has it that he died at Budha Khera and there was a good deal of trouble about burying him. He was buried at Karnal but the Panipat people opened his grave upon which he sat up and looked at them till they felt ashamed. They then took away some bricks from the grave for the foundation of the shrine; but when they got to Panipat and opened the box, they found his body in it; so he now lies buried both at Panipat and Karnal.

Sikhs .—The Sikhs constitute 11.9 per cent of the total population of the district and form the second largest religious group. They are composed of mostly Jat Sikhs and Mazhabi Sikhs. The majority among Jat Sikhs comprise Virks while others include Sandhus, Chattas, Cheemas, Bhatias and Gills. The Sikhs are generally scattered in rural areas as is evident from the table given below :

District/Tahsil		Number		
		Males	Females	Total
Karnal district	Urban	13,062	11,265	24,327
	Rural	80,907	72,368	1,53,275
	Total :	93,969	83,633	1,77,602
Karnal tahsil	Rural	21,023	18,236	39,259
Panipat tahsil	Rural	2,131	1,860	3,991
Thanesar tahsil	Rural	20,175	19,780	39,955
Kaithal tahsil (including Gula)	Rural	37,578	32,492	70,070

The Sikh Gurus enjoined the worship of one supreme God. The devotees visit *gurdwaras* where verses from the holy scripture (the *Granth Sahib*) are recited. Besides observing some Hindu festivals, the Sikhs celebrate *Gurpurbs* (birthdays and martyrdom days of the Sikh Gurus) and Baisakhi which marks the birth of the *Khalsa*. *Akhand path* is sometimes organised either in thanksgiving for the fulfilment of a desire or on the occasion of birth, marriage and death. None must appear bare-headed before the *Granth Sahib*. *Gurdwara Mastgarh* at Shahabad (Shahbad), *Gurdwara Thanesar* and *Gurdwara Tirawari* (Taraori) are held in high esteem.

Muslims.—The Muslims are now very few in number. At the time of 1941 Census they counted 3,04,346 forming 30.6 per cent of the population. In the wake of the Partition almost all of them migrated to Pakistan and in their place 2,50,471¹ non-Muslims migrating from Pakistan settled in this district. Although accurate statistics are not available, it is estimated that 3,00,688 Muslims comprising Afghans, Baluches, Muslim Rajputs, Sayyids, Gujars

1. *Karnal District Census Handbook*, 1951, p. 12. This number decreased to 2,14,116 according to the 1961 Census apparently because some displaced persons shifted to other places outside the district during this decade.

and Sheikhs, migrated from this district to Pakistan. According to the 1961 Census, the Muslims numbered 14,159 being only 1 per cent of the total population of the district. Their distribution is exhibited below :

District/Tahsil		Number		
		Males	Females	Total
Karnal district	Urban	862	160	1,022
	Rural	7,507	5,630	13,137
	Total :	8,369	5,790	14,159
Karnal tahsil	Rural	2,548	1,914	4,462
Panipat tahsil	Rural	2,230	1,690	3,920
Thanesar tahsil	Rural	1,621	1,122	2,743
Kaithal tahsil (including Gula)	Rural	1,108	904	2,012

Evidently, the majority of the Muslim population live in rural areas. There are hardly any Shias amongst them. They are mostly farmers or cultivators depending on agriculture. A few engage themselves as petty shopkeepers or as padlars who roam from village to village selling their merchandise, cloth or utensils. Some are job workers in towns.

As elsewhere in the country, there is no religious restriction of any kind on the Muslims. Two schools, one in Jama Masjid, Karnal and the other at Panipat, impart Muslim religious instruction. The festivals of Id and Baqrid are celebrated with enthusiasm. The Muslims from rural areas flock to Karnal, Panipat and Kaithal on these occasions for offering mass prayers. The Muslims from other parts of the country come to Panipat, the birth place of the Muslim poet, Hali, to celebrate the Urs.

Marriage among the Muslims is contracted with the usual Nikah ceremony performed by a Maulvi. The Muslim Rajputs may marry their sons and daughters among the Muslim Rajputs residing in the adjoining State of Uttar Pradesh. The others, e.g. carpenters and blacksmiths, prefer their own *biradari* within the district.

A Muslim's dress comprises a *lungi* or *tehmat*, shirt, jacket and turban or Gandhi cap or round cap. A woman generally wears a *salwar*, shirt and *dupatta*. *Burkah* is rarely seen.

Jains and Christians.—The Jains and the Christians form a small minority. The Jains practice the teaching propounded by Lord Mahavira. They worship the images of *Tirthankaras*.

The appearance of Christianity in the district dates back to the time of Akbar when he allowed the Roman Catholic missionaries to preach their religion in his empire. Anyhow, it was only during the British period that some tangible effort was made to build churches at Karnal and Kaithal. A church, called the St. James' Church, was erected at Karnal in 1806, but with the removal of the cantonment to Ambala the building was dismantled and the material removed to Ambala in 1843. A church at Karnal, which was completed in 1905, serves the protestant Christian community of the district. It functions under the management of the Churches of India, Burma, Pakistan and Ceylon with its headquarters at Calcutta. In 1960, the Catholic Mission was re-organised, two Churches, one each at Habri and Panipat, were built and the Mission also started a convent school at Karnal.

SUPERSTITIONS

Some superstitions and omens commonly observed in other parts of India are also observed by the masses of the Karnal district. A few are, however, peculiar to this district. Odd numbers are usually regarded as lucky but 3 and 13 are unlucky. To sneeze is considered auspicious, as it is an omen for a long life. So, when a man sneezes his friends become great enthusiastic and congratulate him saying *satan jib* (live a hundred years). A villager will not eat when a black sesame is formally offered to him by anyone for, if he does, he will have to serve him in the next life. Thus, if one asks any other to do something for him, the latter will reply : '*Kya main ne tere kale til chabe hain ?* (Have I eaten your black sesame ?)

The present day common superstitions relate to the ill effect of an evil eye. No new activity is started if someone sneezes before it is due to be started. While going out on an auspicious work, it is generally considered inauspicious to come across a Brahman, a bundle of firewood or a black cat going across the path. Coming across a low caste is, however, considered auspicious. People still believe in the cure of leprosy by bathing regularly in the holy tank at Pehowa. The delivery is considered easier when village Amin's (tahsil Karnal) old-brick wash is administered to an expectant mother. It is believed by the people living in villages on the bank of the Markanda stream that if an old and respected villager worships the stream bare-footed and offers a rupee, the flood would recede.

FESTIVALS AND FAIRS

The common festivals celebrated by the Hindus are Holi, Janam Ashtami, Dussehra and Diwali. The minor festivals are Shivratri, Gugga Naumi, Solono (Raksha Bandhan) and Bhaiya Duj. Among the many fairs held in the district, the more important which are attended by lakhs of persons from all over India are Kurukshetra, Pehowa and Phalgu fairs. Baisakhi, Mela Bhagwati Bala Sundri and Bawan Dwadashi are of local importance.

The principal festivals are celebrated by the Hindus here as in other parts of the country. It is, therefore, not necessary to give a detailed account of their observance except when there is something distinctive or peculiar to this district in the celebration of any of them. For example, people of Naultha (tahsil Panipat) celebrate Holi somewhat differently. Half naked groups of men drenched with coloured water start from different lanes and meet one another. Each group tries to push the other group with naked chests, keeping their hands up, till one of the groups is overpowered. This contest is called *dat*. All the groups, then, come to *chopal*, dancing, jumping and skipping. Coloured water is thrown over them from the roofs of the houses. Another feature is that one of the youngmen jumps from the house top on the marching groups below. He is caught in arms by the revellers and is not allowed to fall down on the ground. In village Agaundh (tahsil Gula), Holi is celebrated as Mela Mandir Baba Lalpuri.

Shivratri.—It literally means the night consecrated to Shiva who is one of the three gods of the Hindu Trinity. Shivratri is a special occasion for the worship of Shiva; a fast on the fourteenth day of the dark fortnight of the lunar month of Phalguna, and worshipping Shiva at night, either in the house or in a temple. The women worship by pouring water containing a few rice grains on *Shivalinga*; the men celebrate by holding wrestling matches. Celebrations are held at Baraut¹, Asandh (tahsil Kaithal), Bhor (tahsil Gula), Ram Saran Mazra, Patti Kankra Shahabad, Urnai, Bapa, Khairi, Pipli, Umri, Shahabad (Shahbad) (tahsil Thanesar), Barauta, Dadupur Khalsa, Karnal (tahsil Karnal) and Bhadaur (tahsil Panipat).

1. There is a legend behind the celebration of Mela Shivji (Shivratri) at Baraut. It is said that a Muslim was once digging a grave to bury a corpse. His spade struck against a stone and blood and milk gushed out of it. When the news of this strange happening went round the village, the Hindus claimed the stone to be an idol of Shiva. A compromise was arrived at between the Hindus and Muslims and the place was entrusted to the Hindus. The idol of Shiva was taken out and installed in a temple constructed there. It is worshipped and a fair is held. Cuts caused by the spade can still be seen on the idol.

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

Gugga Pir's shrine is distinguished by its square shape with minarets and domed roof and is always known as a *marī*. Some of the places where this festival is celebrated in the Karnal district are Pehowa (tahsil Gula), Pundri, Kaithal (tahsil Kaithal), Jathlana, Badarpur, Buhawi, Bhartauli, Shahabad (Shahbad), Ladwa, Radaur (tahsil Thanesar), Santhri, Zainpur Sadhan, Gadhi Jatan, Amunpur Khalsa, Pundri Taraori Jagir, Padbana (tahsil Karnal), Asan Khurd, Asan Kalan, Kurana and Mandi (tahsil Panipat).

Kurukshetra fair.—Kurukshetra is an important place of pilgrimage for the Hindus all over India. Whenever the solar eclipse occurs, there is a congregation of about five lakh devotees from all over the country. Similarly, at the time of lunar eclipse, there is a gathering of about one lakh people. The mode of observance of this religious fair includes a dip in the holy tanks, viz. Brahmasar or Kurukshetra tank and Sannihati tank at the time of eclipse,¹ giving alms and charities, visiting various shrines and temples and

1. It is believed that on the *amavas* (moonless night) and during the period of eclipse, all *tirthas* assemble at Sannihati tank and by performing *shraddhas* and taking a dip in the tank at the time of solar eclipse one acquires the fruits of *ashvamedha yajna* and is absolved of all previous sins. According to another legend, one of the fingers of an ancestor of Kauravas and Pandavas was deformed. As chance would have it, it got smeared with the soil of this place and became all right. Keeping in view this purifying and healing effect of the soil, the Kauravas and Pandavas constructed a tank which is regarded sacred. A dip in the tank is believed to relieve one of all diseases.

doing obeisance to the deities. Religious books are recited, *bhajans* are sung, *kirtans* are held and *shraddhas* of ancestors are performed. In more recent times cinema and circus shows, and wrestling and *kabaddi* matches have been added.

Phalgu fair.—Kurukshetra fair, described earlier, and Phalgu fair, held in honour of a *rishi* of this name mentioned in the *Mahabharata*, are two of the biggest fairs. Both of these attract very large crowds.

The fair is held at Pharal, ten kilometres from Pundri town in the Kaithal tahsil. Like the Kurukshetra fair it is celebrated at a place which does not normally have the usual town facilities. Another point of similarity between the two fairs is that they are not annual features : Kurukshetra fair is held on the solar eclipse and Phalgu fair is held when the *amavas* (moonless night) during the *shraddhas* occurs on a Monday. The last Kurukshetra fair was held in 1961 and the next will take place after 12 years.

The number of visitors from all over the country including a sizeable proportion of women approximates over three lakhs. They are mostly Hindus and some are Sikhs. The fair which lasts for fifteen days is held whenever a *somavati amavas* falls during the dark half of Asuj. The site of the fair is the holy tank adjoining the Phalgu village. It is considered sacred to perform here the *shraddhas* of ancestors on such *somavati amavas*. The Pandavas also performed the *shraddhas* of their ancestors at this place. The mode of observance of this religious fair includes a bath in the tank and offering of *pindas* and *shraddhas* in the name of ancestors. Cinema and circus shows, dramatic performances, etc., provide entertainment.

Pehowa fair.—Known as mela Chet Chaudash, it is a fair of great religious significance for the Hindus. It is celebrated in Pehowa town which is at a distance of 27 kilometres from Kurukshetra. The fair is celebrated for three days on Chaitra Badi 13 to 15 (March-April) but the main sanctity is attached to the night between the 14th and 15th of the dark half of the lunar month. It is held annually but gets added significance if the Chaitra *amavas* (moonless night) recurs on a Monday which is regarded as very auspicious. People from far-off places come here to take bath in the holy Saraswati, regarded as the river of knowledge. The last rites of those persons who die an abnormal death resulting from an accident, and of those who breathe their last in their beds and not over the ground are performed here. It is believed that the departed ones whose spirits are not at peace get *mukti* (salvation) if the necessary religious ceremonies are performed at this place. A Hindu therefore

considers it his sacred duty to visit Pehowa to perform the last rites of those of his ancestors and relatives who die under abnormal circumstances.

The fair is attended by more than one lakh pilgrims including a fair proportion of women. Hindus and Sikhs are the principal participants though visitors from other communities are also there. All age-groups are represented. The visitors observe this fair by having a sacred bath in the pond constructed at the confluence of Saraswati and Markanda and by offering of *pindus* in the name of ancestors and giving charities. As elsewhere, *bhajans* and *kirtans* are organised, wrestling and kabaddi matches are played, circus and cinema shows and exhibitions are held for the entertainment of visitors.

Baisakhi.—It is a seasonal and religious fair celebrated on Vaisakha 1 (April 13) every year by both Hindus and Sikhs at Panipat Tarf Ansar (tahsil Panipat), Mangna (tahsil Kaithal), Karnal and Pujam (tahsil Karnal). At Garhi Nazir (tahsil Gula) it is also called mela Guru Teg Bahadur in whose honour there also stands a *gurdwara*. Baisakhi celebrated at village Diyalpur (tahsil Thanesar) has a different significance. The legend goes that it was here on this day that Arjuna shot an arrow into the earth and the water of the Ganga gushed forth. Thus, Bhishma took water and quenched his thirst.

Mela Bhagwati Bala Sundri.—It is a religious fair held on Chaitra Sudi 7 (March-April) at Dehrah and Shahabad (Shahbad) (tahsil Thanesar). At Dehrah it is called Mela Devi Bala Sundri or Devi Bhawani. The devotees worship the deity and make many kinds of offerings in the shape of cash, clothes and ornaments. It is attended by both Hindus and Sikhs.

Bawan Dwadashi.—A religious festival, it is dedicated to Bawana, an incarnation of Vishnu. The festival falls on Bhadra Sudi 12 (August-September). At Thanesar, palanquins carrying the images of deities are taken out in the form of a procession. The people bathe in the sacred tank. At Ladwa, however, the palanquin carrying the image of Bawana after having been taken through the city in the form of a procession is carried across Rama Kundi tank in a boat. At both the places the festival is attended by several thousand people. Village Jatana is another place in the Thanesar tahsil where this festival is celebrated. At Kaithal, a fair is held at the temple of Saru Dev.

A few relevant details of other fairs and festivals celebrated in the district are given in Table VIII of Appendix.

SOCIAL LIFE

SOCIAL GROUPS

The important social groups are Jats, Rors, Rajputs, Gujars, Tagas, Marathas, Virks, Khatris, Aroras and Brahmans. The latter four comprise the displaced population from Pakistan, who settled in the district as a consequence of the Partition in 1947. Jats, Rors, Rajputs, Khatris and Virks form the agricultural backbone of the district.

Jats.—Jats who are pre-eminently the agricultural caste of the tract, are very good cultivators. A Jat, when asked his caste, will as often answer 'Zamindar' as 'Jat'. They are a fine stalwart race. They seem to have held parts of the country about Samana in very early days as part of an early Indo-Scythian kingdom.¹ The principal clans of the Jats are Jaglan, Ghamghas, Gatwal or Malak, Deswal, Katkhar or Gahlaur, Sandhu and Halawat. Although scattered all over the district, they are predominantly found in the rural areas of the Kaithal tahsil followed by the Karnal and Panipat tahsils. They are all Hindus. Those who had become Muslims were called Mule Jats. They were found in two or three villages and migrated to Pakistan at the time of the Partition.

Rors.—Rors, a stalwart people, are mostly inhabited in the rural areas of the Karnal tahsil followed by the Kaithal and Panipat tahsils. They are almost as good cultivators as the Jats, and are assisted by their women in the same way yet are much more peaceful and less grasping in their habits.

Rajputs.—They are fine brave men, and still retain the feudal instinct. As agriculturists they maintain the integrity of their communal property in the village land and pursue cattle rearing in addition to agriculture as a profession. In rural areas they are concentrated in the Karnal tahsil followed by the Kaithal tahsil. Rajputs from Nardak area join the armed forces in large numbers.

Muslim Rajputs, who left for Pakistan following the Partition, were called Ranghars by other castes, and Chotikats² by their Hindu brethren.

1. "The Jats of the district seem to have come partly from the Bagar, where they were in force 700 years ago. In no case have Jats settled from across the Jumna (Yamuna). The Jats are not mentioned as a prominent caste of the tract in Akbar's time, and probably gained a footing during the breaking up of the Mughal dynasty, when they became an important element in the politics of the time." (*Karnal District Gazetteer*, 1918, p. 92.)

2. From *choti*, the Hindu scalp-lock which the converts to Islam were not required to keep.

Gujars.—The principal clans of Gujars are Rawal, Chokar, Chamain and Kalsan and are mostly concentrated in the rural areas of the Panipat and Kaithal tahsils. Generally of good physique they devote most of their energies to cattle keeping, but are known to be indifferent cultivators.

Tagas.—Tagas are a Brahman caste which has abandoned the priestly profession and adopted agriculture. This community is mostly found in the rural areas of the Kaithal tahsil. They are all Gaurs. They are the oldest inhabitants and are good cultivators. Their women are strictly secluded.

Marathas.—Rose in his glossary speaks of Marathas in the Punjab as a group of Brahmans, a relic of the Maratha supremacy.¹ After the Third Battle of Panipat, the Maratha settlers spread over the whole of the Punjab, and in the Karnal district they settled at Kaithal, Karnal, Shahabad (Shahbad) and Panipat.

Virks.—Virk Jats who with their farming skill have greatly strengthened the agricultural economy of the district, are displaced persons from Pakistan and have mostly settled in the rural areas of the Karnal, Kaithal and Thanesar tahsils. They held large contiguous blocks of villages in Shekhupura and Gujranwala² districts (Pakistan). Virks among the Sikhs are the best cultivators. They have put in hard labour to bring the jungles and virgin lands under plough, obviously to achieve the standard of living enjoyed by them in their homeland. They have almost modernised their farms. The local zamindars have been influenced by the superior skill and cultivation techniques of these immigrant cultivators and have considerably gained from their experience.

Khatris, Aroras and Brahmans.—These main castes of non-cultivators migrated into the district from Gujranwala, Multan and Muzaffargarh districts of West Punjab (Pakistan). The Khatris and Aroras have mostly settled

1. H.A. Rose, *A Glossary Of The Tribes And Castes Of The Punjab And North-West Frontier Province*, Volume III, 1914 (Lahore), p. 48.

2. *Gujranwala District Gazetteer*, 1893-94, (pages 58-9), describes thus their qualities as men and as cultivators: "They are mainly Sikhs, in the *Bar** nearly always so, and physically are a fine athletic manly race far surpassing in energy and industry any of their Muhammadan neighbours. They are first-rate cultivators, though in the *Bar** they have taken to agriculture only under our (British) rule, their hereditary profession being arms or theft. Their villages are prosperous, well developed and usually free from debt. Like most Jat Sikhs, they combine the love of adventure with the love of gain, and are generally to the fore where money is to be made or where hard knocks are going."

(*Sand-dunes with low elevation, of local importance)

in the urban areas. However, they are also found in large numbers in the rural areas of the Thanesar and Karnal tahsils; Khatris predominate in the Thanesar tahsil while Aroras in the Karnal tahsil. These communities are known for their intelligence, enterprise and good looks. They have regular features, a straight Aryan nose, and a light complexion. Their women are known for beauty and grace. They are very sharp business-men, worldly-wise and money-minded. Wherever they have gone, they have made a mark and carved a comfortable place for themselves in the local economy. Even in other States they have flourished and invariably outshone their rivals. Whenever they apply themselves to agriculture, they prove themselves to be a force for progress and modernisation of farming methods.

Khatris and Aroras functioned as traders, shopkeepers and bankers in West Punjab (Pakistan). For a successful prosecution of these professions and for reasons of security, they lived in towns or large villages. Their work did not involve any manual labour but, deprived of their easy way of making money due to the Partition, they have now changed their economy and have increasingly drifted into the rank of workers. Their resettlement in the stagnant towns of Punjab and Haryana has quickened the pulse of social life. Drab bazaars, with ill-kept shops, have completely changed, and instead we find well-stocked orderly shops with a large variety of goods. The townsmen here were socially backward, and their women purdah-ridden. The displaced shopkeepers have penetrated isolated villages where bananas and oranges can now be had. They have greatly increased the circulation of goods even in villages inhabited by the parsimonious country folk. The local residents have adopted fruits in their diet. Fruit shops are found in much larger number in all the towns and meat as an article of diet is finding increasing popularity with the erstwhile altogether vegetarian population. The culture of West Punjab had a liberalising influence on the local women, who emulating the example of their sisters from the Pakistan, have discarded purdah and escaped from the prisons of their homes, and now *bahujis* (wives) can also be seen elegantly dressed promenading the streets.¹

The majority of the population living in villages, continue to be conservative, in the matter of inter-religious groups marriages. In towns, however, inter-caste marriages do occur although rarely. Speaking generally, the social relations among the different communities are not coloured by religious differences.

1. M.S. Randhawa, *Out of the Ashes*, 1954, pp. 218-19.

JOINT FAMILY SYSTEM

The family is locally known as *kunba*. A group of families having common ancestors is called *thula*. Two or more *thulas* are jointly called *pana* or *patti*. It is common for several brothers, and occasionally for cousins to live together and farm the land jointly. More often the land is managed jointly while the owners live separately. The most important characteristic of the joint family system is that the income of all its members is pooled and spent for the benefit of all the members, whether or not they have actually earned any part of it. The basis for the system is to insure maintenance of all descended from a common ancestor, father or grandfather or great-grandfather. The widows or orphans, the children, young boys and girls and elderly or decrepit or physically incapacitated members of the family, all receive the attention of the head of family and are supported and maintained out of the joint family funds.

The joint family system which has been a distinguishing feature of Hindu society since time immemorial, is breaking up under the stress of the changed economic and social conditions. Various factors are responsible for this change. The competition for earning a living, the tax-structure, the increased cost of living, the mobility resulting from the requirements of service and, above all, the growing spirit of individualism, all these features spell the doom of this ancient institution. It is no longer possible for one earning member of a family to feed and support a host of relations and dependents. Even in the family where every member is an earning hand, it seems difficult to make both ends meet. Another factor which has assisted in the dissolution of the system is the growing tendency of late marriages both for boys and girls. When boys and girls marry at a comparatively advanced age, they prefer to live independently. A new pattern, with an individualistic bias, is steadily emerging. Usually the branch of the family which earns more money separates from the poorer branch. Those who enter service, have naturally to go wherever they are posted and they can hardly uproot the headquarters of the joint family and move it with them from place to place according to the exigencies of service.

While the position is more marked in urban areas, the joint family system is disappearing even in the villages, where people depend almost entirely on agriculture. The average holding is too small to support a joint family which continues growing in size with the birth of each new baby in the family. It is therefore inevitable that some members of the family should move out in search of service to the towns or elsewhere to supplement the meagre family income. In this way the migration of rural population to the

cities in search of a living — whether in business, industry, service or some form of labour—has vitally affected the structure of the joint family. Those who migrate to the towns get allured to modern amenities of life and try to settle down there with their families, and leave the farm to those members of the family who stay behind in the village. A village youth moving to town, after a while gets so attuned to urban way of living that he dislikes the thought of going back. Even the trend of latest legislation on inheritance has hardly been conducive to the continuance of the joint family system.

INHERITANCE

The law of inheritance prevailing in the past, as given on pages 135—37 of the *Karnal District Gazetteer*, 1892, was as follows :—

“The land owned in severalty by individual families is not only inherited, but is also invariably divided on the occasion of separation of property in strict accordance with ancestral shares. The members of the family often divide the land among themselves for convenience of cultivation more in accordance with the appliances at the disposal of each than with the proprietary shares, just as the common land is allotted to the various families on a similar scale. But this division is not a division of property, and the right of the members to a re-distribution according to shares, with due regard to the preferential right of each to the land he has cultivated, so long as it does not exceed his share, is always recognised by the people, though sometimes (not often) contested by the individuals concerned.

“The rules of inheritance are as follows :—No practical distinction whatever is made between divided and undivided families; in fact, the terms are hardly ever used.¹ First the sons and sons’ sons by stirpes how low soever succeed, sons representing their dead fathers. In the absence of them, the widow takes an interest strictly limited to a life tenancy. If there is no widow, or after her death, the brothers and brothers’ sons how low soever inherit by stirpes with representation. In their absence the mother

1. Ibbetson writes : “I need hardly say that all my remarks refer solely to the land-owning castes, and not to Banias and the like. They also do not apply to the original Musalmans, who usually follow the Muhammadan Law. Moreover, in these matters I only give the general customs. Particular exceptions, though far less numerous than might be expected, will be found recorded in the record of common customs.”

I have added some notes. See also the volume relating to *pargana* Indri and *tahsil* Kaithal in the series devoted to the Customary Law of the Punjab.—J.M. Douie.

takes a life interest.¹ After these the inheritance goes to the nearest branch in the male line, the division at each stage being by stirpes. Daughters, if unmarried, have a claim to maintenance only.² If property is separately acquired by a son in a divided family during his father's life, the father inherits before the brother; but separation of interest before the father's death is not allowed, and no separate property can be acquired by the individuals of an undivided family. The father may divide the land for convenience of cultivation; but on his death, or the birth of another son, it will be open to re-distribution.

"In attesting the record of common customs the whole countryside has declared that, where there are three sons by one wife and one by another, all four share equally (*pagvand*). But there have undoubtedly occurred instances in certain families, especially among the Rajputs of the Nardak, where the division has been by wives (*chundavand*). Where *chundavand* is the rule of division, the full brothers and their representatives succeed to the exclusion of the half-blood; otherwise there is no distinction between the two.³ All sons, whether by original marriage or re-marriage (*karewa*), are on an equal footing; no priority is attachable to the sons of any particular wife. But if a Rajput Musalman should marry a woman of another caste, as they sometimes do, especially in the cities, the sons do not inherit at all, the property going strictly in the tribe.

"A son born less than seven months after the marriage is consummated, even though begotten by the husband, and one born more than ten months after death or departure of the husband, is illegitimate. An illegitimate son cannot be legitimised, nor can he inherit.⁴ A son by a former husband

1. There is some disposition among certain tribes to say that the mother should succeed along with the son's widow or even along with the widow. It is founded on the feeling that the older woman would be less likely to mismanage, and finally attempt to part with, the land.—J.M. Douie.

2. It may be taken as a rule that the spindle side is debarred from inheritance under all circumstances, at least as long as there is any male collateral however distant.—J.M. Douie.

3. I think there is evidence to show that *chundavand* was more common formerly than it is now. It is found to some extent among Jat Sikhs, who came originally from the Punjab.—J.M. Douie.

4. The answer you are likely to get in questions about illegitimacy is that no case of an illegitimate son being born in the tribe was ever heard of, and illicit relations between men and unmarried women of the same tribe and *got*, being regarded as incest, are probably very rare.—J.M. Douie.

brought with her by a woman on her re-marriage, who is called *gelar*¹ (*gel* together with) if born, and *karewa* if unborn at the time of the re-marriage, inherits as the son of his begetter. A member of the family who becomes a monk (*sadhu*) loses his inheritance; but does not do so merely by becoming a beggar (*fakir*).² But the disciples of monks inherit from them as their sons. The life interest of widows subsist so long as one is alive, and is shared by all equally. But a Musalman widow of another caste has no interest; and a widow who re-marries loses all rights even if she marries the husband's brother. Pregnancy also destroys their rights; but not mere reputed unchastity. Their rights are not contingent upon their living in the husband's village. Woman's separate property (*stridhan*) is unknown. It is remarkable how wholly, in the minds of the people, the family is represented by its head. At the Regular Settlement the name of the head only was recorded as a rule; and the people still think that it is quite sufficient to send their heads to represent them in court or elsewhere. This feeling, however, is weaker among the Jats than among other tribes; and they have become notorious in consequence."

Now, according to the Hindu Succession Act, 1956, sons and daughters, the mother and the widow along with other heirs³ of the deceased, if any, inherit the intestate property simultaneously. A daughter has as good a claim to her father's property as a son, provided the father does not debar her by law. However, in spite of the right conferred by law, it appears to have become a general practice for the girls not to claim any part of the intestate property. In the absence of a brother, a girl may some time give her land to her near relatives, though in such cases she usually retains her right to property. In a few cases suits have been instituted by daughters who have been denied their share in the intestate property. But the sentiments of society did neither welcome nor encourage such cases. Rather there is resentment against this particular portion of the new legislation.

MARRIAGE CUSTOMS AND MORALS

The Vedic system of marriage in essence prevails among the Hindus. It is treated as sacred and is governed by traditional customs. As elsewhere, the marriage dates are mostly determined by astrological considerations.

1. Or *Gadhelra*.—J.M. Douie.

2. There is no doubt that a man who becomes a Hindu ascetic loses his rights of property. The rule is less positive as regards Musalman *fakirs*.—J.M. Douie.

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

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

Betrothal.—Betrothal is called *nata*, the ceremony *sagai*. The brother of the girl or one of the close relatives (previously village barber or Brahman used to perform such functions) goes to the boy's place. If the offer is accepted and the result of the detailed discussion is satisfactory, the *nata* is settled. After this, he puts some money into the boy's hand. This is called *rokna* or *tikka*. This, however, is not a necessary preliminary.

After *rokna* the next ceremony to be performed is betrothal (*sagai*), when presents of money and gifts are given by the girl's parents to the boy and his relatives. In the years gone by no relation of the girl would take any part in the betrothal ceremony, but now the girl's father and near relations do take part in it. In most cases now *rokna* and *sagai* are performed at one and the same time.

Marriage preliminaries.—A day before the marriage, the maternal uncle of the boy or girl brings the *bhat*. This consists of presents and necessarily includes the wedding suit for the bride or bridegroom. The people on the boy's side then get together and *neota* is collected.

Wedding.—On the day when the *baraat* is to start, the boy is dressed in his wedding suit brought by his maternal uncle. The *kangna* or seven-knotted sacred thread is tied on his right wrist. His head-dress consists of a crown or crest over the turban, and a *sehra* covering the face.

The ceremony of *ghurchari* is then performed. The barber leads the decorated mare with the bridegroom on its back, while women follow along singing songs peculiar to the occasion and the mother or aunt or an elderly woman with a utensil containing water. His sister puts her wrap over her right hand, and on it places rice which she flings at his crown as the bridegroom goes along. He goes and worships the god of the homestead. Thereafter the *baraat*, usually comprising the relatives and friends, starts with music of sorts. In some castes, *ghurchari* is performed a day earlier.

If both the parties reside in the same place which frequently happens in a town, no managements for the residence of the *baraat* are necessary. If, on the other hand, the *baraat* comes from an out-station, it is received by the bride's side usually at the railway station in the case of a town or on the outskirts of the village from where the party is taken, sometimes in procession, to *jandalwasa*, *dharmasala*, or *chopal* or any other place where arrangements have been made for the *baraat* to stay and to be entertained. In the evening, the *baraat*

goes in procession, the boy on a mare, to the bride's house where the *baraat* is received by the people on the bride's side. The first ceremony to be performed is called *barothi* or *milni* when the boy's father and the girl's father embrace each other and the latter gives some money to the boy's father who also pays something to the barber and the Brahman on the girl's side. At the door stand women singing and *jai mala* is put by the bride around the neck of the bridegroom and *vice versa*. After this colourful ceremony the bridegroom is taken into the house and the *baraatis* are then entertained to a delicious and sumptuous dinner with merriment galore.

Thereafter the key function starts. Sacred texts are recited in Sanskrit mostly by Vedic *riti* or otherwise. The sacred fire is lighted, the Brahman ties the *palla* (hem) of the girl's wrap to a piece of cloth called the *patka* and the boy takes the latter over his shoulder and leads her round the fire anti-clockwise four times, and then she leads him round three times. This is called *phera* ceremony and constitutes the core of marriage. *Phera* is now recognised as one of the essential ceremonies under the Hindu Marriage Act. After this the Brahman formally asks each whether he or she accepts the other, and is ready to perform duties towards each other, which are set forth in time-honoured traditions and put forth in very impressive language full of appropriate similes and metaphors. The bridegroom and the bride then exchange places. Now follows the *kanyadan*—the so-called formal bride-giving. The parents thus give away their daughter in marriage and usher her into the new world of *grihastha*. The ceremony normally takes between two to four hours—primarily depending upon the ingenuity, skill and knowledge content of the priest. If he is content with reciting the holy *mantras* and contends himself with the bare rituals, the ceremony is just over in two hours—especially when he is unostentatious and believes in the economy of words. If, however, he is in a mood to parade himself and make a show of his learning, then he will go into the how and why of each ritual and will wax eloquently on the duties of the husband and wife—quoting copiously both from mythology and scriptures. The ideals of Sita, Savitri, Damayanti and Mandodri are extolled and there is sometimes a sermon administered to the young man over his multifarious prospective duties.

The ceremony is highly colourful, picturesque, and at times interesting also. There may, however, be noticed minor variations among certain castes in the performance and observance of these ceremonies.

Social mores and folkways change like fashions. There was a time when dancing girls were invited at the weddings, their songs and dances provided

fun and frolic to the people, especially in the rural areas, which had no other source of entertainment. The cinema has changed all this. The practice of inviting dancing parties has virtually gone out of fashion. In villages, gramophones fitted with loudspeakers have taken their place. A marriage in a village is a gala occasion and the entire community is regaled to popular tunes and song-hits of the film-land. In cities, marriage celebrations have virtually become standardised with the assistance of specialised contractors. It is of interest to note the social change. The house of the bride is lit up with multicoloured fairy lights, *shamianas* are put up and the passage is adorned with paper flower decorations. Film songs are played through loudspeakers. The *baraat* approaches at the fixed time heralded by incandescent lights and a band playing hot music to which the young boys and girls do twist-dancing. The feeding of the *baraat* is usually undertaken by a separate contractor. All these elaborate and expensive arrangements are made just for one night. This standardised system is gaining currency in Karnal and other important towns of the district and shows how things are changing under the impact of modernization.

Previously, the *baraat* used to stay at the bride's place for 3 days but things have changed under the stress of economic forces. Now the *baraat* returns the same or the next day. The bride's maternal uncle escorts the girl, followed by women singing, to the *rath* (bullock cart) or bus or car in which she is to travel. The bride follows the bridegroom during this short walk. A few small coins are thrown over the heads of the couple as a mark of good wishes and the procession starts back for home.

A peculiar custom of *santa* prevails in the Ror community. A *nata* of a girl from one side in exchange for a *nata* of a girl from the other side is insisted upon. If the prospective bridegroom does not have a sister to offer in marriage to the brother or some other near relation of the prospective bride, he must come forward with an offer from amongst one of his cousins or other relations. If he cannot find one such relation to offer, the boy has to wed celibacy in place of the girl.

Muklawa (consummation of marriage) follows the marriage ceremony. After marriage proper, the bride returns to her parents and remains there till *muklawa*. This ceremony is significant in so far as it mitigates the evil effects of early marriage to some extent. Accordingly, the period between marriage and *muklawa* is so spaced as to allow the young couple to attain puberty before any opportunity is provided to them for consummation. But here again there is one peculiarity. *Muklawa* must be solemnised during the odd years, i.e. first, third, fifth, etc., after the marriage and in no case during the even

years, *i.e.* second, fourth, sixth, etc. Now mostly that the boy and girl are married at a fairly mature age, this ceremony exists in name only and may be formalised on the same day immediately after marriage or on the following day. In that case, it is termed as *putra-pher*.

Anand Karaj prevails among the Sikhs. The distinction between *Anand Karaj* and the Vedic marriage is that in the former the bride and bridegroom instead of going round the fire, go round the holy *Granth*. Some extracts from the sacred book are read and though they are originally meant to describe in a figurative way the union of human soul with the Supreme Being, they are made to serve the purpose of sanctifying the union of bride and bridegroom.

Civil marriages can be performed by the Marriage Officer of the district who is the Deputy Commissioner, but such marriages are rare. Only 22 civil marriages were solemnised in the district during the years 1956—70. Marriages under the Hindu Marriage Act are also performed by registration in the office of the Tahsildar who is Registrar for Marriages under this Act. Such marriages are also rare as the registration certificates of marriages are obtained only by the persons who usually go abroad or require such certificates for income tax and other purposes.

Generally speaking, marriages within the *gotra* or with cousins are not approved by society though there are stray instances among some displaced persons from Pakistan, of marriage with the daughter of a maternal uncle or aunt which may be ascribed to Muslim influence. Inter-caste marriages are not approved either.

Dowry system.—Although a rotten social evil, the dowry system prevails everywhere. Even the dowry legislation of 1961 has not succeeded in achieving its object. Their ideas not having been reformed, people follow the old custom, and if necessary, by-pass the law.

Marital age.—Early marriages were a usual feature in the district in the past. But the position seems to have changed considerably during the last two to three decades. The Child Marriage Restraint Act enforced from April 1, 1930, provides penalties for the celebration of marriages of male children under 18 and female children under 14 years of age. Consequently there has been a tendency for postponing marriages beyond the age specified in the Act. The general marital age at present is 18 to 20 years in case of boys and 14 to 16 years in case of girls. Of the age group 10—14 years, according to 1961 Census, there were 4,672 married males and 15,119 married females while the number of widowed males and females of the same age group was 16

and 26 respectively. It is thus evident that the institution of child marriage, like that of dowry, still prevails to some extent despite the civil law prohibiting it.

Widow marriage.—*Karewa* or *karao* is a simple sort of marriage for widows. It is in essence, the Jewish Levirate; that is to say, on the death of a man his younger brother has first claim to the widow, then his elder brother, and after them other relations in the same degree; though *karewa* cannot be performed while the girl is a minor, as her consent is necessary. But it has been extended so that a man may marry a widow whom he could not have married as a virgin, the only restriction being that she is not of his own clan. Thus, a Gujar may marry a Jat or Ror widow of any clan but his own. Neither marriage nor adoption, nor any other ceremony, can change the clan of a man or woman; that being, under all circumstances, the clan of the original father. *Karewa* is effected by the man throwing a red wrap over the woman's head and putting wristlets (*chura*) on her arm in presence of male and female members of the brotherhood. Such a marriage generally does not take place within a year of the husband's death. Among Rajputs, Brahmans and Tagas, a woman usually does not re-marry.

Under no circumstances can a woman perform the *phas* twice in her life. But in case the husband dies shortly after marriage and the girl has not lived with him or if she has no issue, she is re-married with all the ceremonies usual at the marriage. This is called *punar vivah* which is mostly adopted by the Banias. Recently *karewa* has been introduced among Brahmans as well.

Widows who may not wish to re-marry, live on the property left by their husbands. In urban areas, however, the educated ones take up some employment or engage themselves in some kind of paid or honorary social work.

Divorce.—Divorce is not much prevalent. There is a general tendency to suffer hardship resulting from ill-matched marriages. This is particularly true of uneducated and conservative people. They prefer to lead a miserable life rather than to dissolve the marriage. Another practice has been to leave the girl with her parents and never recall her. However, with the coming into force of the Hindu Marriage Act, 1955, a few cases of divorce are being

instituted in the law courts :

Year	Cases instituted			Divorce granted (Allowance allowed)	Petitions dismissed	Cases compromised	Cases pending
	Pending cases	New cases	Total				
1956	—	66	66	14 (4)	46	—	6
1957	6	56	62	10 (3)	35	—	17
1958	17	14	31	15 (6)	13	—	3
1959	3	31	34	12 (2)	15	—	7
1960	7	42	49	19 (9)	25	—	5
1961	5	26	31	10 (3)	18	1	2
1962	2	25	27	10 (2)	14	1	2
1963	2	24	26	5 (1)	9	—	12
1964	12	45	57	7 (2)	39	—	11
1965	11	10	21	3 (—)	16	—	2
1966	2	38	40	15 (5)	15	—	10
1967	10	23	33	6 (2)	11	—	16
1968	16	52	68	11 (3)	37	2	18
1969	18	99	117	22 (7)	42	4	49

Other rituals and customs.—Different social groups have their own traditional customs which they observe at different stages of life. The old Hindu way of living was fraught with many traditional *samskaras* and rituals. In the course of time these got worn out and were no longer in keeping with the changing times. Under the influence of modern education and new ideas their hold is loosening. Of a multitude of these customs, a few are still traditionally observed though not with so much zeal and fervour. The very birth of a child is an occasion to celebrate and particularly the birth of a son is considered as an event of rejoicing. To announce the birth of a male infant an iron plate is rung in the room where delivery takes place. The anxious relatives waiting outside consider it auspicious and congratulate each other. Superstitious

ceremonies accompany the birth of a child. The mother and the infant are kept in a separate room for 40 days. The door and the windows, if any, are always kept closed even in hot and sultry weather conditions. A small dung cake fire is kept smouldering outside the room as a protection against all evils. A branch of the margosa tree is hung on each side of the room as an auspicious sign. The clothes of the mother are not changed for 40 days ignoring the dirtiness, stinking and unhealthy conditions and the discomfort thus caused to her. The waste water of the child-wash is diverted to a specially dug out pit within the house which, however, is covered and closed later on. *Mundan* ceremony is performed when the boy is a few years old. On this occasion, his hair is cut and head shaved for the first time and friends and relatives are entertained to a feast.

While the Muslims and Christians bury their dead, Hindus and Sikhs cremate their dead. If the cremation was performed on the bank of the Yamuna, water is thrown on the ashes, if in the Kurukshetra, the bones are thrown into one of the sacred tanks, and all is over. Otherwise on the third day the knuckle-bones and other small fragments of bone (*phul*) are collected.¹ If they can be taken to be imersed in the Ganga at once, well and good; if not they are buried in the jungle. But they must not be brought into the village in any case; and when once ready to be taken to the Ganga, they must not be put down anywhere, but must always be hung up till finally thrown by a Brahman into the stream. Other post-cremation rites include 12-day (*bahra*) or 13-day (*tehrani*) mourning locally called *angaari*. Children under 8 years of age are buried without ceremony.

POSITION OF WOMEN

Every region has its own traditions and prejudices. So has Haryana and the Karnal district is no exception. People in the rural areas are mostly conservative. Some of them are even averse to sending their daughters to co-educational schools. The education of women has lagged behind as compared with that of the boys. And this factor has been responsible for their general backwardness. Still, there exists some awareness of the education of women. The old thinking that the social structure would crumble if women were educated, is disappearing. Greater opportunities for them have however brought forth distinguished ladies who are able to serve their State in an increasing measure.

The parents in urban areas, however, try to give their daughters higher education so as to make them economically independent. Some educated urban girls

1. This rite is locally called *taitya*. The pall-bearers are fed with *khichri* on that day.

take up jobs before their marriage and a few continue to work even after their marriage. But generally speaking, the village girl does not like to follow any career; she prefers to sit at home and look after her children and household affairs rather than to adopt a career to supplement her husband's income.

The lot of the rural housewife on the whole, is a hard one. She goes to the village well with *ghara* (pitcher) on her head and draws water twice in the day, cooks the morning meals and, when the men are at work in the fields, carries it out to them. At the seasons for weeding and harvesting she does a considerable share of this work, and after going home has to cook the evening meal. In addition she has to collect the dung from the fields and make it into *gosas* (dung cakes). She also attends to spinning.

Early in the morning and in the evening women can be seen carrying two to three empty pitchers on their heads from the village to the well near the pond-side, and returning from the well to the village with pitchers full of water. It is a remarkable feat of balance, and gives them that graceful gait and poise which the poets compare with that of the swan. When they go to the well they put on their best clothes, for the well is also the village club where gossip is exchanged. The married women observe *purdah* or veil and only the maidens go about with uncovered faces. Quite a few of them are good looking in their teens, but the drudgery of life tells upon them in a few years. Socially the Jats are more advanced than other castes and their women do not have to live out their lives in perpetual widowhood on the death of their husbands. A young Jat widow seldom remains such for long, and she is readily accepted as a wife by one of the brothers of the deceased husband.

The position is a bit different in urban areas where the condition of women is in the process of a vital change. Their education has got new impetus with the opening of numerous academic and various technical institutions. With the spread of education, social barriers against their employment are collapsing by and by. They are increasingly replacing men or participating with them in parallel fields, such as social work of various kinds including education, child welfare, community work, arts and crafts. Working women though economically active, still occupy a subordinate position in social life but they do not observe *purdah* any more.

Prostitution.—Trafficking in women for immoral purpose does not exist, nor is there any organised gang of traffickers of women in the district.¹

1. See also Chapter on 'Law and Order and Justice'.

HOME LIFE

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

Villages.—The villages of Karnal are usually built on mounds which were selected probably for safety or they may possibly be existing on the ruins of older *abadis* which through the centuries were submerged as a result of some natural upheavals. A group of villages is called *tapa*. At the outskirts of the villages are the *goharas*, the pyramid like structures, in which dung-cakes are stored. They form a conspicuous feature of the rural landscape. In the houses are circular bins of clay in which grain is stored. Surrounding the village *abadi* is a narrow belt of cultivated land irrigated with the aid of persian wheels or *charsas*.

With the reclamation of forest land during the last few years, the situation has greatly changed. In place of trackless forest of *dhak*, one finds well laid out farms around the roadside. This is mainly the contribution of the colonist farmers from Jullundur and Amritsar as well as the Virk settlers from Shekhupura (Pakistan) who are hardworking farmers and can meet the challenge of hard life in these areas.

Dwellings, furniture and utensils.—The houses in rural areas are mostly built with mud bricks. But in the Kaithal tahsil, these are pakka and partially double-storeyed with a *chaubara* or two-three rooms. However, elsewhere too, the latest trend is to build pakka houses. For their brick requirements the villagers do not have to go to the brickkilns but themselves manufacture the bricks and construct their own houses. The home-made clay bricks of unstandard size are arranged in a circle outside the village and then burnt. The fuel consists of *bhurli* (waste stalk of gram), litters and *gosas* (dung-cakes). This activity which is a common sight in the months of Chaitra-Baisakh (March-April), creates so much smoky atmosphere that it becomes difficult for the residents of the village to breathe freely.

Entering the street door of a private village house, you pass into the outer room or *dahliz*, beyond which you must not go without permission, and where your friend will come and talk. It is often partly occupied by some calves. Beyond this is the yard (*chauk*) separated from the streets by a wall, and in which the cattle are tied up in cattle-sheds (*bara*), and the women sit and spin. Round this are the houses occupied by the various households of

the family. In front of each is a room with the side towards the yard open (*dalan* or *tamsal*) which is the family living room. On either side of this will be a *sidri* or store room and a *chatra* or cook-room with its *chulha* or hearth; and there is often an inner room beyond called *obri* or *dobari* if with two doors, and *kota* or *kotri* if with one only. Upstairs is the *chaubara* where the husband and wife sleep; while the girls and children sleep downstairs, and the boys in the *chopal* or *dahliz*.

There are some receptacles for grain (*kuthla*) made of rings of adobe built up into a cylinder. This has a small hole in the bottom, out of which the grain runs and keeps always full a small receptacle open in front, from which it is taken as wanted. Another form is *kothi* which is usually built in one of the rooms. It is rectangular in shape and besides foodgrains, other articles are also stored in it. This has a *taki* (small window) for placing in or taking out the articles. The face of the *kothi* is decorated with colourful drawings in indigenous style. *Basnaut* is another practice. Three or four big earthen containers called *maat*, *ghara* and *jhakri* (big, medium and small in size respectively) are placed one over the other in an artistic manner. In addition to its utility for the storage of foodgrains, it is considered as an item of interior decoration. There are some ovens (*bharala*, *hara*) for warming milk and some recesses in the wall to act as shelves (*pendi*); one or two swinging trays or rope rings for water vessels.

With the spread of education and growing outlook for better sanitary and health facilities, the villagers are changing the pattern of their houses. They now have a separate cattle-shed and also care for proper lighting and ventilation. The availability of electricity in the villages has also changed the look of the houses. But it is not customary to provide bathrooms.

The dwellings in old urban areas are almost pakka. Facilities of bathrooms, usually dry latrines, etc., are mostly available. The houses in new townships are provided with all the modern amenities, they are generally electrified. Piped water-supply is available at Karnal, Kaithal, Panipat, Nilu Kheri (Nilo Kheri), Thanesar, Shahabad (Shahbad) and the rural areas of Deoban, Kheri Sharaf Ali and Kheri Sheru. Sewerage schemes have also been undertaken at Karnal, Panipat, Kaithal and the rural area of Samalkha.

The furniture of the villagers generally consists of a few bedstead (*manja*, *khat*) made of wooden frames covered with netted string; a few small stools (*pira*, *pida*, *khatola*) of identical construction; a few small low wooden tables