

FOREWORD

A district gazetteer is a compendium of historical, cultural and socio-economic features of a district that touches upon various aspects of life of the people inhabiting it. It unfolds the story of the district and its people from the earliest times to the present.

This is the maiden gazetteer of the district and the twelfth in the revised series of Haryana Gazetteers and depicts all important aspects of Kurukshetra district; physical, cultural, social and economic.

Kurukshetra is rich in history right from ancient to modern period including that of *Mahabharata* war which was fought here between the Kaurvas and Pandvas. It is the cradle of Indian civilization and culture. It is a city with a legendary past, religious predominance and is the blessed land where Lord Krishna gave the world the timeless teachings of *karma*.

Lakhs of people come to take holy bath at Braham Sarovar on the occasion of *Somavati Amavasya* and Solar Eclipse. It is said in the *Puranas* that those who visit this area or reside here even for a while, go straight to heaven after death. The district is dotted with pilgrimages. Holy men clad in saffron and hymns filling the air complete the picture of Kurukshetra.

I am sure, this Gazetteer will serve as an important reference book not only for administrators, research scholars, tourists, journalists but general public as well.

CHANDIGARH
January, 2009

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PREFACE

From times immemorial, Kurukshetra has enjoyed the proud privilege and honour of the foremost holy place of India. It was the religious and cultural capital of ancient India. The history of Kurukshetra is the history of Bharat in a nut-shell. Here, King Kuru selected his land on the banks of the sacred river Saraswati for spiritual culture and ploughed his fields with a golden plough. According to Manu, it lays between the old sacred rivers Saraswati and Drishadwati and was known as *Bhahmavarta*. This holy land of Kurukshetra is described in the *Yajurveda* as the place of sacrifices of *Devas* like Indra, Vishnu and Shiva. It is the seat of Indian civilization, culture and has religious importance where Lord Krishna delivered his sermons of *Karma*. Kurukshetra witnessed *Mahabharta* war between the Kaurvas and the Pandavas.

This volume is the twelfth in the series of the revised district gazetteers of Haryana which has been attempted on the pattern laid down by the Government of India. During British regime and after independence (upto 1973), Kurukshetra was a part of Karnal district. A brief description about Kurukshetra which came into existence on January 23, 1973 is available in the Karnal District Gazetteers, 1883-84, 1892 and 1915 published by the then Punjab Government. After the formation of Haryana in 1966, the compilation work of Karnal District Gazetteer was taken up and before it could be finalized, Kurukshetra was formed as a separate district in 1973 which was carved out from Karnal district. The Gazetteer of Karnal thus gives an eloquent commentary on the political, social and economic reforms introduced after independence. Since then, far reaching changes have taken place during the period of over 32 years including that of Kaithal which was carved out of Kurukshetra as a separate district in November, 1989.

This first Gazetteer of Kurukshetra district, therefore, depicts all important aspects of physical, cultural, social and economic life of the people and makes mention about all the developments which took place while implementing various schemes both of the Central and the State Government.

Before drafting a number of sections of various draft chapters, information was called from the Deputy Commissioner and other District Officers and Heads of the concerned Departments. Census Reports of the Government of India, Statistical Abstracts published by the Planning Department of Haryana, various reference books on the ancient, medieval and modern period history of Kurukshetra were also consulted. Suggestions from eminent historians were also obtained.

I would like to thank the Director, NW Circle, Survey of India, the Botanical Survey of India, the Meteorological Survey of India, the Geological Survey of India and all other voluntary organisations for providing information.

My special and sincere thanks are due to Dr. R.S.Sangwan, Chairman of the History Department of Kurukshetra University who has spared his valuable time in vetting and finalising the History Chapter of this Gazetteer. I am also grateful for the valuable contributions made by the outgoing Editors S/Shri Suraj Bhan Dahiya and Padam Ahlawat during whose incumbency, a major portion of the draft was prepared.

The officers and the staff of the Gazetteers Unit e.g. Mrs. Veena Rani, Raj Kumar and D.M. Bhardwaj, Assistant Editors have put in strenuous efforts in collecting and compiling the information from various sources. The untiring efforts of Shri Sardul Singh and Mrs. Kamlesh, Senior Scale Stenographers deserve special appreciations in typing such a voluminous manuscript of the Gazetteer.

Needless to add, my special thanks are due to Shri A.P. Sharma, Assistant Editor in making handsome contribution in suggesting improvements, in editing and resetting the whole draft of the Gazetteer and ensuring its mistakeless proof-reading.

Last, but not the least, I would like to acknowledge my sincere thanks to Shri Ram Kishan Bishnoi, Editor Gazetteers for finalising the draft of this gazetteer in an efficient manner by putting in excellent and strenuous efforts.

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CONTENTS

	Pages
Foreword	i
Preface	ii-iv
CHAPTER I - GENERAL	1-28
Origin and name of the district; Location, boundaries; Area and population; History of the district as an Administrative unit; Sub Divisions and Tehsils; Topography; Drainage and river system; Geology and mineral resources;	
Seismicity; Flora and Fauna; Table I, II and III.	
CHAPTER II - HISTORY	29-64
Ancient period; Medieval Period and Modern Period.	
CHAPTER III - PEOPLE	65-114
Population; Language; Religion and Religious Groups; Festival and Fairs; Social life and Rehabilitation.	
CHAPTER IV –AGRICULTURE AND IRRIGATION	115-158
Land Utilization; Crops; Horticulture ; Agricultural implements; Seeds; Manures & Fertilizers; Crop Rotation; Pests and Diseases; Activities of the Department of Agriculture; Animal Husbandry; Poultry Farming; Piggery; Sheep Farming; Livestock Diseases; Dairy Farming; Fisheries; Forestry; Natural Calamities; Irrigation and Table.	
CHAPTER V - INDUSTRIES	159-184
Old Time Industries; Industrial Progress since the formation of Haryana; Government Assistance to Industries; Industrial Policy; Technical Education and Industrial Training; Source of Power; Industrial Co-operatives; Industrial Labour; Table I and II.	

CHAPTER VI—BANKING, TRADE AND COMMERCE	185-214
Indebtedness and Money Lending; Insurance; Small Savings; Currency and Coinage; Trade and Commerce; Fairs; Co-operation in Trade; State Trading; Weights and Measures; Storage and Warehousing; Table I and II.	
CHAPTER VII—COMMUNICATIONS	215-240
Introduction; National Highways; State Highways; Roads and Road Transport; Railways; Tourists Facilities; Posts, Telegraphs and Telephones; All India Radio, Kurukshetra; and Table I, II, III and IV.	
CHAPTER VIII—MISCELLANEOUS OCCUPATIONS	241-252
Public Services; Private Sector Services; Defence Services; Teaching Profession; Medical Profession; Engineering Services; Legal Profession; Transport Services and Personal Services.	
CHAPTER IX—ECONOMIC TRENDS	253-268
Livelihood Pattern; Urbanization; Immigration; Rural Development; Employment Situation; Price of Agricultural Produce; Wages and Level of Economy.	
CHAPTER X- GENERAL ADMINISTRATION	269-278
Administrative Division; District Authorities; Development Organizations; Police; Other State and Central Government Offices and Justice.	
CHAPTER XI- REVENUE ADMINISTRATION	279-304
History of Revenue Administration; Revenue Administration and Land Records; Land Reforms; Other Sources of State and Central Revenue.	
CHAPTER XII- LAW AND ORDER AND JUSTICE	305-326
Incidence of Crime; Police; Justice; Revenue Courts; and District Attorneys.	

CHAPTER XIII-OTHER DEPARTMENTS	327-332
Public Works Department; Irrigation; Electricity Corporations/Nigams; Co-operation Department; Finance Department; Planning Department; Food and Supply Department; and Public Relations Department.	
CHAPTER XIV-LOCAL GOVERNMENT	333-348
Urban Local Government; Town Planning; Panchayati Raj; Zila Parishad; Panchayats; Panchayat Samities and Table 1.	
CHAPTER XV-EDUCATION AND CULTURE	349-392
Historical Background; District Education Set-up; Education of Women; Literacy Ratio; Industrial Training; Medical Education; Gurukul Education; Kalpana Chawla Memorial Planetarium; National Cadet Corps; National Service Scheme; Sports; Libraries; Culture; Literature; Architecture and Music.	
CHAPTER XVI-MEDICAL AND PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICES	393-416
Historical Background; Medical and Health Services; Diseases Common to the District; Preventive Measures to Promote Public Health; Sanitation; Water Supply and Table.	
CHAPTER XVII- OTHER SOCIAL SERVICES	417-438
Labour Welfare; Social Welfare; Working Women Hostel, Kurukshetra; Prohibition and Table 1 and II.	
CHAPTER XVIII- PUBLIC LIFE AND VOLUNTARY SOCIAL SERVICE ORGANIZATIONS	439-468
Representation of the District in the Union and State Legislatures; Political Parties; Voluntary Social Service Organizations and Newspaper and Periodicals.	
CHAPTER XIX-PLACES OF INTEREST	469-490
Kurukshetra (Thanesar); Amin; Ladwa; Pehowa; Shahabad; Ancient Forts and Mounds and Places of Archaeological Interest and Fairs and Festivals.	

BIBLIOGRAPHY	491-494
TIRTHAS OF KURUKSHETRA	495-500
ILLUSTRATIONS	501-524
MAP	