

CHAPTER XVIII

PUBLIC LIFE AND VOLUNTARY SOCIAL SERVICE ORGANISATIONS.

Representation of the district in the State and the Union Legislatures.

COORG had a Legislative Council consisting of fifteen elected and five nominated members, when it was first constituted as a Chief Commissioner's Province in the year 1919. A new Legislative Assembly was constituted in March 1952 with 24 members, when it became a Part 'C' State in the year 1951. After the reorganisation of the States, Coorg district was allotted two seats in the Mysore Legislative Assembly in accordance with the Delimitation of Parliamentary and Assembly Constituencies Order 1956, and elections were held in 1957 to fill up these two seats.

Coorg district forms part of two single member Parliamentary constituencies, namely Mangalore and Mysore. The entire district, excluding Ammathi Nad in Virajpet taluk and Kushalnagar Nad in Somwarpet taluk, is included in the Mangalore constituency, while Ammathi Nad and Kushalnagar Nad are included in the Mysore constituency.

The district excluding Ammathi and Kushalnagar Nads has been allotted two seats in the Legislative Assembly, the latter areas being included in the Periyapatna Assembly constituency of Mysore district.

The following table indicates the names of the Assembly constituencies in the district and their extent.

<i>Name of Constituency.</i>	<i>Extent</i>
Virajpet	Virajpet taluk (excluding Ammathi Nad) and Napoklu Nad in Mercara taluk.
Mercara	Mercara taluk (excluding Napoklu Nad) and Somwarpet taluk (excluding Kushalnagar Nad).

The following are a few of the important changes made in the procedure relating to the conduct of the elections and matters connected therewith :—

Important changes made in the procedure relating to the conduct of the elections.

(1) Every person who is not less than twenty-one years of age on the qualifying date and is ordinarily resident in the constituency is now entitled to be registered as a voter in that constituency.

(2) The whole process of elections has now been amended to enable completion of the elections in any constituency within a period of twenty days.

(3) The method of voting has been very much simplified by the introduction of the marking system of voting in all elections.

(4) The security deposit which every petitioner has to make in connection with the filing of an election petition to the Election Commission has now been increased from one thousand rupees to two thousand rupees so as to reduce the number of petitions based on flimsy and inadequate grounds.

The main political parties which participated in the second general elections held in the district in the year 1957, were the Indian National Congress, the Praja Socialist Party and the Communist Party of India. In addition to these three parties, the Bharatiya Jan Sangh and the Swatantra parties also contested the third general elections held in the year 1962. All these political parties have their affiliations with the all-India bodies. There is no party in the district which is of local origin.

Political Parties.

Of these organised political parties, the Indian National Congress has a considerable hold on the people in the district. The party secured both the seats in the general elections held in the year 1957 as well as in 1962. Barring the Indian National Congress, the Swatantra Party and the Communist Party of India are the other parties having some hold in the district, although they failed to secure a seat in the Assembly in either of the two general elections held in the district.

Apart from these political parties, independent candidates unsuccessfully contested the seats in both the general elections of 1957 and 1962.

The following tables indicate the party affiliations of the contesting candidates, the number of valid votes polled by them and percentage, in the general elections held in 1957 and 1962 :—

<i>Name of Constituency</i>	<i>Party affiliations of contesting candidates</i>	<i>Number of valid votes polled</i>	<i>Percentage of total</i>
GENERAL ELECTIONS, 1957			
Virajpet ..	(1) Congress ..	18,223	54.85
	(2) P. S. P. ..	15,002	45.15
Mercara ..	(1) Congress ..	20,039	51.69
	(2) Communist ..	14,947	38.56
	(3) Independent ..	3,772	9.75

GENERAL ELECTIONS, 1962

Virajpet ..	(1) Congress ..	15,292	50.54
	(2) Independent ..	6,973	23.04
	(3) Communist ..	3,658	12.09
	(4) Swatantra ..	3,496	11.59
	(5) Jan Sangh ..	832	2.74
Mercara ..	(1) Congress ..	19,914	49.14
	(2) Swatantra ..	9,969	24.60
	(3) Communist ..	8,062	19.90
	(4) Jan Sangh ..	1,886	4.66
	(5) P. S. P. ..	686	1.70

**Voting Statistics—
General Elections, 1957.**

There were 1,03,780 voters for the Assembly elections in the year 1957. The total number of valid votes polled was 71,983 and the average percentage of votes polled was 71.14.

General Elections, 1962.

There were 1,15,910 voters for the general elections held in the year 1962. The total number of valid votes polled was 70,768 and the average percentage of votes polled was 64.47.

The following table indicates the total number of voters, the total number of valid votes polled and percentage, in respect of the general elections held in the district in the years 1957 and 1962.

<i>Name of Constituency</i>	<i>Number of electors</i>	<i>Total Number of valid votes polled</i>	<i>Percentage of column 3 to column 2</i>
1	2	3	4
GENERAL ELECTIONS, 1957			
Virajpet ..	46,602	33,225	74.49
Mercara ..	57,178	38,758	67.79

GENERAL ELECTIONS, 1962

1	2	3	4
Virajpet ..	53,859	30,251	59.80
Mercara ..	62,051	40,517	69.15

During the general elections held in 1957, there were **Polling Stations.** 132 polling stations located at convenient centres in the district— 58 in Virajpet constituency and 74 in Mercara constituency. Five more stations were added in Virajpet constituency for the general elections of 1962, while the number in the other constituency remained the same as before.

The total cost incurred on the conduct of the general elections in the district during 1962, was Rs. 22,000. **Cost of elections in the district.**

As on the 1st May 1964, two Kannada daily news-papers and a weekly were being published in the district, particulars of which are given below :— **Newspapers and periodicals.**

Shakti (Daily).—The first Kannada daily to make a real head-way in the district was “Shakti”, edited by Sri B. S. Gopalakrishna, in Mercara. It started publication in the year 1957 and gave considerable information on a variety of topics. The paper is stated to be having a circulation of about 4,000 copies throughout the district. It has a press of its own.

Hithavani (Daily).—This paper is being edited and published by Sri K. Govinda Rao in Virajpet. It started publication in the year 1960 and is reported to be having a circulation of about 4,000 copies at present.

Kodagu (Weekly).—This is one of the oldest Kannada weeklies in the district, having started its publication in the year 1921. Its present editor is Sri P. I. Belliappa, Mercara. The paper is very popular in the district and has an estimated circulation of about 5,000 copies. It has a press of its own.

Kannada and English newspapers and periodicals published in Bangalore, Mangalore, Hubli, Madras and Bombay also have a wide circulation among the reading public of the district. As there is a large labour population from Kerala, Malayam newspapers are also in circulation.

Apart from these papers, film magazines published in Bombay and Madras have also a good circulation in the district.

There are several voluntary social service organisations in the district doing good work, catering for the social needs of the **Voluntary social service organisations.**

citizens in a variety of ways. Many of these organisations have been recognised by the Government and are getting assistance for their maintenance.

The social service organisations in the district can be broadly classified under two categories, namely, (1) welfare institutions and (2) institutions for community development like mahila samajas, youth organisations and the like.

The following is a brief review of the more important social service organisations in the district. It has not been possible to obtain details of all the institutions functioning in the district, but an attempt has been made to include as many institutions as possible details about whose working are available.

**Mahadeopet
Mahila
Co-operative
Samaja,
Mercara.**

This institution was started in the year 1955. Its main objects are to help the poor women of the locality by imparting free instruction in crafts like tailoring, embroidery, and knitting, and the establishment of a shishu vihar for the benefit of the children. The institution was managed during the year 1962-63 by a committee consisting of a president, a secretary and six other members. The samaja is getting an annual grant of Rs. 500 both from the Government as well as from the Central Social Welfare Board, New Delhi. It is also getting a teaching grant of Rs. 220 per month from the Education Department. There were 170 members on the rolls of the institution as on the 1st February 1964. It has been awarded a number of certificates and prizes for participation in exhibitions and other competitions.

Among the distinguished visitors to the Samaja, mention may be made of General Cariappa, Mrs. Brook of Darjen, Smt. Kamaladevi Chattopadhyaya and Smt. Tara Bai, President of the Child Care Committee, Delhi.

**Kodagu Mahila
Sahakara
Samaja,
Virajpet.**

One among the older service organisations in the district, this institution was started in the year 1941 by some of the leading women of Virajpet. It was registered under section 10 of the Coorg Co-operative Societies Act of 1936, on the 23rd September 1941. The main object of the institution is to cater for the needs of women and children and to work for their uplift. It was managed during the year 1962-63 by a committee consisting of a president, a vice-president, treasurer, secretary and five other members. There were 566 share-holders, inclusive of 83 local members paying monthly subscription, as on the 1st March 1964. The Samaja is also getting grants from the Government for the maintenance of the nursery school and craft class, from the Municipality for the general maintenance and the Central Social Welfare Board, New Delhi, for carrying out special programmes of welfare work.

The institution is running a nursery school for children below five years and also a tailoring class for the benefit of the women of the town. There were 30 boys and 19 girls in the nursery school as on the 1st March 1964. It conducted a condensed course of training for women of the age group of 20—35, sponsored by the Central Social Welfare Board, together with an attached hostel for the trainees from 1st April, 1960 to 4th April, 1962.

The financial position of the Samaja is quite sound. It has a programme to expand its activities by making provision for running a permanent hostel for the benefit of girl students and working women, and to develop the fruit and vegetable preservation and canning centre under its control, on a commercial basis.

This institution was started in the year 1939 to spread the teachings of Vedantha, to cultivate devotion to God and to impress upon the people the necessity to lead a pure and simple life. The structure of the governing body of the Sangha consists of a president, a vice-president, a secretary and nine other committee members. There were 420 members in the Sangha during the year 1963-64 paying an annual subscription of three rupees each. The institution is also running a boarding house in which about 35 boys and girls are maintained. An orphanage is also being run for the benefit of poor orphans of the locality.

**Sri Kaveri
Bhakta Jana
Sangha,
Virajpet.**

Eminent men and women are invited to deliver lectures during important religious festivals and other occasions. The Sangha has close contact with other religious institutions like Ramakrishna Sharadashrama, Mysore, Anantha Ashrama, Bangalore, and Narayana Nivas of the Himalayas.

This institution was started in November 1956 by some enterprising ladies of the locality with a keen interest in social service. The objects of the institution are mainly the improvement of the social, physical, cultural and educational well-being of women and children. The women members are trained to lead a useful life by being taught singing, dancing, sewing and knitting and other crafts so as to enable them to become good house-wives. The managing committee consists of nine members including a president and a secretary. It has a building of its own constructed at a cost of Rs. 10,000.

**Mahila
Sahakara
Samaja,
Pollibetta.**

The Block Development Office is giving an annual grant of Rs. 240, besides providing toys for the shishuvihar. The Mysore State Social Welfare Board is giving an annual grant of Rs. 500. The Samaja is getting a good income by way of commission, by selling National Savings Certificates.

There were 86 members in the Samaja during the year 1964-65. A cutting and tailoring class has been started and the institution is maintaining a well-equipped library. Dancing classes are also being held and the children have won prizes for their performance in this art.

The financial position of the institution is sound.

**Badagarakeri
Mahila
Samaja,
Birunani.**

This Samaja was established in the year 1955 by the Registrar of Co-operative Societies of the ex-State of Coorg. The main objects of the institution are to improve the social and moral welfare of women and to provide training to them in arts and crafts. The Samaja was managed during the year 1963-64 by a committee consisting of a president, a secretary and five other members. The institution is getting grants from the Central Social Welfare Board and the Block Development Office, and members of the public are also helping it by means of donations.

The Samaja is conducting classes in tailoring and embroidery. There were 100 members in the Samaja, which had to its credit a bank balance of about Rs. 5,000 as on the 1st March 1964.

**Mahila
Co-operative
Samaja,
Ponnampet.**

This women's welfare institution was started in the year 1952 in a building donated by Sri C. P. Kushalappa, the then president of the Ponnampet Notified Area Committee. There were 80 members on the rolls of the institution during the year 1963-64, each paying a subscription of two rupees per year. It is managed by a committee of five members including a president and a vice-president. The institution was running a nursery class with 38 boys and 46 girls on its rolls, as on the 1st March 1964. There is a small library available for the use of the public. The Samaja is also running a sewing class in which 12 students are being trained. The institution is getting an annual grant from the Education Department.

The members of the Samaja went on a study tour excursion of all the important places in the State in the year 1960, thereby gaining good experience and knowledge.

**Mahila
Co-operative
Samaja,
Somwarpet.**

This institution was started in the year 1944 and it was registered under the Coorg Co-operative Societies Act, 1936. The main object of the institution is to cater for the needs of women and children and to work for their improvement in all spheres. The Samaja is getting grants from the Government and the Municipality for its maintenance. It is running a nursery school for children below six years of age. There were 44 boys and 35 girls, as on the 1st March 1964, under the charge of two trained teachers. The Education Department is giving an annual equipment grant of Rs. 500 and a teaching grant of Rs. 215 per month, to the school. A tailoring class is also being run for the benefit of

the women of the town. A condensed course for women appearing for the S.S.L.C. Examination, 1965 conducted by the Samaja was financed by the Central Social Welfare Board, New Delhi. A fruit preservation unit is also run by the Samaja from 1st September, 1963.

This Samaja was established in the year 1954 and registered under the Co-operative Societies Act. Its main objects are to help the poor women of the locality by arranging free instruction in crafts like tailoring, embroidery and knitting, and the establishment of a sishu vihara for children. The institution was managed during the year 1963-64, by a committee of nine members, which included a president and a secretary. It was getting an annual equipment grant of Rs. 500 and a teaching grant of Rs. 210 and a contingent grant of Rs. 5 per month from the Education Department towards maintenance of the nursery school.

**Mahila
Co-operative
Samaja,
Kushalnagar.**

There were 45 boys and 26 girls in the school as on the 1st March 1964, under the charge of two teachers. Regular classes in tailoring, embroidery and knitting were being held, and women were taking advantage of these classes in large numbers.

The Ramakrishna Sharadashrama situated in calm and picturesque rural surroundings was founded by Srimath Swami Nirmalanandaji Maharaj in 1927. The discourses and lectures by eminent scholars arranged under the auspices of the Ashrama have been a source of inspiration and guidance to many, not only in Ponnampet but also in different parts of Coorg. The annual celebrations attract a large number of people from the surrounding villages. These thirty six years and more, the Ashrama is doing its best to lead people to a higher stage of moral and spiritual life. The rural uplift work undertaken by the institution and the introduction of scientific bee-keeping by Swami Shambhavanandaji of the Ashrama, are well-known.

**Sri Rama-
krishna
Sharada
Ashrama and
allied institu-
tions,
Ponnampet.**

Poojas and bhajans are conducted daily, in which the students and other members of the public take part. The calm and peaceful atmosphere of the Ashrama has been attracting sadhus from other centres for tapasya. Several distinguished visitors have visited the Ashrama and its allied institutions and recorded their appreciation of the good work done by the Ashrama.

The Shri Ramakrishna Library and Reading Room was opened in the year 1958 for the public, by Swami Madhavanandaji Maharaj, General Secretary of the Ramakrishna Math and Mission. The Swamijee also laid the foundation stone of a lecture hall on the occasion. It is proposed to expand the activities of the Ashrama by making provision for starting physical culture and yoga-asan classes, and also recreational facilities for the public.

The Library.

There are more than 2,000 books on different subjects in Kannada, Hindi, English, Sanskrit and Malayalam. The Reading Room is provided with daily papers, weeklies and monthlies. The Government of India and the Central Social Welfare Board have given grants of Rs. 3,600 and Rs. 300, respectively, for the purchase of books for the library.

**The Sri Rama-
krishna
Sevashrama
(Hospital).**

Seeing the suffering of the people of Ponnampet and the surrounding villages, due to the existence of a virulent type of malaria, Swami Pranaveshanandaji, the then President of the Ashrama, started a temporary homoeopathic dispensary in 1942. To make it more useful, a building was put up and an up-to-date allopathic dispensary was started in 1947. The dispensary has been serving about twenty-five villages with a population of more than 30,000.

The hospital has eight wards, and an X-ray plant has been installed with the help of a generous grant of Rs. 25,000 by the Government of India. During the year 1963-64, about 25,000 people were treated as out-patients, and 85 maternity cases were attended to by the Maternity Assistant. About 4,000 people were treated as in-patients during the same period. Poor patients are treated free of all charges both in the out-door and in-door sections.

The authorities of the Ashrama have launched on an ambitious programme to improve and enlarge the facilities now obtaining in the hospital, with the co-operation of the State and Central Governments.

**Mahila
Mandals.**

Twenty Mahila Mandals were functioning in the district during the year 1963-64 at the following centres :—

- (1) Margod
- (2) Murnad
- (3) Galibeedu
- (4) Doddabandara
- (5) Hatchinad
- (6) Bembloor
- (7) B. Shettigeri
- (8) Kirgur
- (9) Birunani
- (10) Cheyyendane
- (11) Naladi
- (12) Kavadi
- (13) Kumbaragadige
- (14) Athur-Nallur
- (15) Thorenoor
- (16) Kadiathur
- (17) Gonikoppal

- (18) Kanur-Kothur
 (19) Chembebelur
 (20) Kunjalgeri.

Most of these mahila mandals have started the preprimary "balawadi" classes for the benefit of the children. The villagers are so interested in these classes that their ready co-operation with the various other activities of the mandals can be secured only after the opening of such classes in the village. Second in the order of priority come the maternity health services. Though the responsibility for the maintenance of such services lay with the Public Health Department, owing to the non-availability of trained personnel of that department, the mandals continued to render these services also.

The craft programme is next in the order of priority. A general directive has been issued to the mandals and other voluntary organisations to open production units.

As per the directive of the Central Social Welfare Board, the State Board decided to conduct training camps in various districts for the benefit of the office-bearers of mahila mandals formed out of the old Welfare Extension Project Centres. The training courses were organised to impart training in the (i) maintenance of accounts, (ii) implementation of welfare services, and (iii) maintenance of minimum standards in the services.

**Mahila Mandal
 Training
 Camps.**

Training camps were accordingly held quite successfully in the district. The discussions in these camps were very interesting and illuminative and proved that rural women, apart from being anxious to retain welfare services started by the projects, were particular about running them according to specified standards.

The following statement indicates the number of children attending the Balawadi course, the number of women benefited, the grant sanctioned by the Central Social Welfare Board and the local contribution, in respect of each of the mahila mandals functioning in the district, as on the 1st October 1963.

Sl. No.	Location of Mahila Mandal	Number of children attending the Balawadi	Number of women benefited	Grant by the Central Social Welfare Board	Local Contribution
1	2	3	4	5	6
				Rs.	Rs.
(1)	Margod	.. 40	60	2,500	568
(2)	Murnad	.. 16	11	1,500	..

1	2	3	4	5	6
(3) Galibeedu	..	20	16	2,500	..
(4) Hatchinad	..	21	27	1,500	..
(5) Bembloor	..	40	15	2,500	..
(6) B. Shettigeri	..	26	12	2,500	..
(7) Doddabandara	..	27	..	2,500	..
(8) Kirgur	..	20	6	1,500	725
(9) Birunani	..	34	35	2,500	416
(10) Cheyyandane	..	27	57	2,500	390
(11) Naladi	..	29	28	1,500	580
(12) Kavadi	..	23	12	2,500	648
(13) Kumbaragadige	..	31	29	2,500	..
(14) Athur-Nallur	..	29	47	2,500	740
(15) Thorenoor	..	38	24	2,500	225
(16) Kadiathur	..	20	150	2,500	776
(17) Gonikoppal	..	19	25	2,500	600
(18) Kanur-Kothur	..	40	15	2,500	750
(19) Chembebelur	..	25	54	2,500	242
(20) Kunjalgeri	..	26	8	1,500	400

The Rotary Club, Mercara.

This institution was started in the year 1950 sponsored by the Rotary Club, Mysore. From its inception, the club has been very active in carrying out the Rotary ideal of service and promotion of international understanding. It is essentially a service organisation covering four avenues of service, namely, service to members, vocational service, community service and international service. It was managed during the year 1963-64 by a board of seven directors which included a president, a vice-president and a secretary. There were nineteen members on the rolls during that year, each paying a monthly subscription of five rupees. The club has been responsible for implementing the urban pilot projects sponsored by the Central Social Welfare Board, New Delhi.

The club is awarding two annual scholarships of Rs. 400 and Rs. 250 to two of the best students studying in the Medical and Engineering colleges, respectively. It gave a donation of Rs. 5,500 to the T.B. Clinic, Mercara, a sum of Rs. 3,000 for the establishment of a Book Bank in the Polytechnic at Kushalnagar, and a sum of Rs. 300 for the maintenance of a bed in the Ramakrishna Mission hospital at Ponnampet. One of its outstanding achievements in community service is the construction of a children's ward in the Women's and Children's Hospital, Mercara. The club is financing the entire cost of blood transfusions to poor patients in the hospitals at Mercara.

The club secured the first prize for its achievements in international service in the year 1963, and was adjudged as the second best Rotary International for three consecutive years, during the period 1959-1962.

In 1954, while celebrating the U.N.O. day, a desire to promote peace through international understanding and friendship prompted the people of Darien to have some friendly connection with an Indian city, and Mercara was chosen for that purpose. **Darien-Mercara Association**

Darien is a prosperous town about forty miles from New York. It is mainly a commuters' city, most of its people going to work in New York. Its people overwhelm their guests with their gracious hospitality. Mercara is indeed fortunate in having this connection with them. This relationship, encouraged by the exchanges of gifts, correspondence and of visits has grown so close that they can be called sister cities. Mercara has given a present of a baby elephant and Darien has donated a ward for the local Women's and Children's Hospital. Numerous too have been the exchanges of gifts and letters between school children of the two cities. The Brookes, the Glicks and the Greggs of Darien spent a few days in Mercara, and many people of Coorg and other Indian cities have been welcomed in Darien.

Out of this contact has grown a larger and more important tie. Darien now observes an annual "India Day". Our countrymen in the United States are welcomed to visit and stay with the families of Darien on that day and are made to feel the warmth of their hospitality. On the same day, Mercara observes an "America Day" and a few American families are welcomed and shown round this lovely land of Coorg. From a city-to-city contact has grown a country-to-country understanding and friendship.

Under the Darien teacher exchange programme financed by the citizens of Darien, Professor R. Muthuswamy of the Government Arts and Science College, Mercara, was deputed to Darien, where, in addition to teaching in selected institutions, he also took his master's degree. An English teacher from the Darien High School, Mr. Leon E. Clark, came to Mercara under the exchange programme.

The Coorg Branch of the Indian Red Cross Society was established in Mercara in the year 1922. Its main objects are.— **The Indian Red Cross Society, Mercara.**

- (1) promotion of health,
- (2) prevention of diseases,
- (3) supply of comforts to patients,
- (4) provision of better facilities to patients in smaller hospitals, and
- (5) maintenance of friendly relations with national and international Red Cross organisations.

The general object of the organisation is to give succour to suffering humanity during war, famine and other calamities, irrespective of religion or nationality.

The society had 108 members on its rolls during the year 1962-63, each member paying either an annual subscription or a donation in lump. The Deputy Commissioner of the district is the chairman, and the District Surgeon is the honorary secretary of the organisation, which has also one vice-chairman, one joint secretary and eight other members.

Besides the supply of necessities to patients in hospitals, the society is distributing milk powder to weak and deserving children. It is also managing maternity centres in two interior villages, namely, Parane and Ammathi. The society is doing meritorious service in arranging for the supply of woollen garments to the armed forces stationed in the northern borders of the country.

**Bharat Sevak
Samaj,
Mercara.**

Another important and active voluntary social service organisation in the district is the branch of the All India Bharat Sevak Samaj which was inaugurated in October 1952 by Sri Jawaharlal Nehru. The various activities of the Samaj are guided and directed by a convenor with the help of a committee of eleven members. One of the major activities of the organisation is the holding of social service camps in villages. The programmes envisaged during these camps comprised activities which catered to all the age groups of both the sexes. Among the important items of work turned out during these camps were.—

- (1) construction of approach roads,
- (2) preparation of play grounds near schools,
- (3) repairs and white-washing of school buildings,
- (4) construction and repairs of wells,
- (5) repairs and desilting of tanks,
- (6) running adult education centres, and
- (7) educating the Harijans in civic problems.

The camps are conducted on a matching basis, 50 per cent of the cost being met by the villagers concerned, and the balance being borne by the central organisation of the Samaj.

There were about 400 members in the Samaj, during the year 1962-63, each paying an annual subscription of one rupee. Funds are also collected for the Samaj through voluntary contributions. Membership is available only to those who subscribe to the creed of non-violence and the ideal of dignity of manual labour.
