Summary and Conclusion
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Education helps in breaking the vicious circle of ignorance and exploitation. It empowers the masses to improve their lives. Education plays an important role in bringing about social progress and economic growth. It is crucial for building up human capabilities and for opening opportunities. In the absence of widespread literacy, development can neither be broad-based nor sustainable. In terms of human development, education is an end in itself, not just a means to an end. That is why receiving education is progressively being made as part of basic human rights.

Elementary education lays foundation for the basic personality of the individual and development of society and nation at large. During the present age of science and information technology, when man has reached the highest level of success in almost all fields of life, illiteracy is a major hurdle in the progress of certain countries. It hinders human development. It stands in the way of social progress and economic growth. In India, the importance of education was realized while framing Directive Principles of the State Policy in the Constitution. The Article- 45 of the Constitution guarantees provision of free and compulsory education to all children up to the age of 14 years or eight years of schooling. However, this aim of covering all the children has not been achieved despite postponing the target from time to time right from the inception of the Constitution. There is still a vast difference in the literacy rate and educational achievement between rural-urban, male-female, and among different castes. Equality of opportunities and equality of benefits have not been achieved so far.

The inequality in educational opportunities has drawn considerable attention of the educational researchers all over the world. The Constitutional provision of promoting education among the weaker sections of India has attracted attention of the social scientists in particular. It has been observed that even though considerable expansion of education has taken place in the country, the disparities and inequities have not diminished during the last more than five decades of Independent Republic of India. Studies in the past have tried to understand the nature and the extent of inequality from different viewpoints. Very often, such studies confine to analysis of background characteristics of the students studying at different levels. In some cases, efforts have
been made to map out the regional and interpersonal differences of literacy, schooling, etc. The purpose of this study is to examine the inequalities found between different social groups in Haryana by taking the case of three villages.

The review of literature clearly demonstrates the factors that lead to unsatisfactory performance of the schools, and variation in the outcome of schooling across socio-cultural and economic categories of society. As a result, disparities among castes, urban-rural, male-female dichotomies have been extensively studied. But such studies have not looked into the distribution of education as a phenomenon of structural intervention between education system and masses. The vast disparities that exist within the broad social categories like rural population, female population, etc. have not been analysed systematically. Therefore, the literature showed a need to study the relationship between the elements of social structure and the educational system. The study, which acts as a link between social structure and educational participation, would help to loosen the structural hold on the distribution of educational facilities and their social use.

In the above background, the present study focused on the influence of the elements of social structure such as caste, class, culture and gender on distribution and utilisation of educational facilities in the rural areas. The study has also examined how different groups have benefited from education. In the process, an attempt was made to understand the nature and extent of inequality in human capital formation arising out of an unfavourable distribution of educational facilities affecting certain sections of the population leading to competitive disadvantages for them in the labour market.

**Objectives of the Study**

1) To review the progress of elementary education in rural areas using aggregate data collected from several published and unpublished records.

2) To analyse the nature and extent of educational opportunity for the children in rural area.

3) To understand the gender disparity with respect to educational achievement within the hierarchical society.

4) To investigate the relation between economic status of the parents and the educational participation of their children.

5) To study the caste/cultural influences on the performance of the children.
with specific reference to the difference in the rate of enrollment and dropout.

6) To find out the differences in attitude and perception of parents towards the education of their male and female wards.

The study is premised on the fundamental understanding that the differential access to and achievement in school education in the region is a function of the complex interplay of socio-cultural, economic, and developmental variables. Therefore, for each and every stage of educational progress, there is a need to understand and explore a package of interacting variables compatible with the existing social, economic and political environment of the region. In other words, the premise is that a particular mix of historic, geographic, socio-economic and related conditions created a specific environment in the region for the educational development.

The study is confined to rural area of Haryana. The study has made use of macro data as well as differentiated specificities at the grass root level. Macro data was collected from various published and unpublished sources, whereas primary data was collected with the help of Household Interview Schedule and Focussed Group Discussion. Three villages namely, Sultanpuria from Sirsa district and, Marora and Udaka from Gurgaon district were purposively selected. The choice of the villages was based on number of considerations such as caste heterogeneity, level of development in terms of infrastructural facilities, and distance from the urban centers. Further, with the help of systematic proportionate sampling method, 200 households from Sultanpuria, 100 households from Marora and 110 households from Udaka were selected for the present study. In each of the selected villages, a complete information from the sampled households was collected on their socio-economic characteristics and educational status of the members, especially of the children in the school going age, their educational participation in the villages, reasons for non-enrollment and dropout. Questions were also asked from the parents to ascertain their attitude and perception with regard to education of their children. The educational differences in accordance with their socio-cultural and economic correlates have been discussed strata-wise that covers male and female, different castes and religious groups.
Major Findings of the Study

Development of education system and its achievement by the population is closely associated with the policy, planning and efforts of the state intertwined with the social structure of the society.

The indigenous system of education in India was influenced by the historical framework of the caste structure. Brahmins and other upper castes or trading communities were the major beneficiaries of the education. However, it would not be incorrect to say that while indigenous education flourished over time, in many significant ways it did not have the characteristics of a ‘modern’ education system. Modern education is the legacy of the commercial-cum-political domination of the British in India. Britishers in India promoted Western education. The indigenous type of schooling was slowly weakened to make space for the Western education. However, Western type of education emerged on the academic scene outside of and in isolation from the historically evolved social structure of the Indian society. Johari and Pathak, (1963) also mentioned that British system of education was largely based on the ideals of spreading western science and literature among a small minority of the population and of training persons for services under the Government. It was academic and book centered and failed to promote social, cultural, economic or political development. British India offered little or no formal education for the masses. Thus, the traditional caste system, in which education was prerogative of the upper castes, and British Policy of providing education to the elite, reinforced each other to produce a high non-egalitarian educational system in India.

After independence, the education system was reorganised to suit the changing demands of the country. Within such a framework, education was conceived of as being intertwined with the development process as one of its important components. With the advent of India as welfare state, the importance of primary education and equality of opportunities received due consideration. This factor perhaps became a prime mover for the Constituent Assembly to reflect and incorporate the provision to provide free and compulsory education for all children until they complete the age of 14 years. This Constitutional provision was to be translated into reality within ten years period from the commencement of the Constitution. However, the achievement of this objective after more than fifty years of Constitutional rule is nowhere near the target laid down. India
holds the World record for the number of illiterate persons. India has the largest illiterate population of 424 million in the World. According to Census, 2001, the literacy rate of 7+ population in India has risen from 52 per cent in 1991 to 65.4 per cent (75.9 per cent male and 54.2 per cent female). However, there is a wide variation in literacy across region, states, castes, classes and sexes.

There is a huge gap between children who enrolled in schools, or who have ever attended, and those who actually complete schooling. In 1992-93, drop-out rate in India was 45 per cent (43.81 per cent boys and 46.7 per cent girls) for class I-V, 61.1 per cent (58.2 per cent boys and 65.2 per cent girls) for classes I-VIII, and 72.9 per cent (70 per cent boys and 77.35 per cent girls) for classes I-X (G.O.I, 1998:9-10). Therefore, average achievement in terms of years of schooling is very low as a result of the short duration of schooling and the large proportion of persons who never enrolled in schools. In fact, expansion of education remains the low priority of all the governments. School infrastructure and quality of education provided in government schools is very poor in addition to the shortage of teachers. Public expenditure on education in general and elementary education in particular is very low. Unfortunately, the founding fathers’ dream to achieve universal literacy and elementary education remain unrealised. In spite of various commissions, committees and panels appointed by the Central and State Governments from time to time, Indian education is still at the crossroad. This failure may be attributed to lack of the political will to the inept bureaucracy for any socio-cultural change, the overriding vested interests of the feudal landlords, highly retrograde and reactionary industrial bourgeoisie, and above all, the lack of any people’s protest to fulfill the Constitutional demand for providing free elementary education. These factors have pushed the elementary education into oblivion.

In Haryana, like India has, the picture of elementary education is not a rosy one. The following findings emerged from the analysis of secondary data. The Education Policy of Haryana is focussed on quantitative expansion as well as the qualitative improvement in education. Notably, enormous efforts have been made in the last three decades to promote education in general and primary/elementary education in particular. These efforts gradually resulted in the fast growth of educational institutions, rapid increase in enrollment rate and continuous upgradation in the literacy level. The number
of primary schools has increased from 4207 in 1970-71 to 11040 in 2000-01 and secondary school from 1735 to 6025 during the same period. It comes out to 5.4 per cent annual rate of growth of primary schools and 8.2 per cent for middle schools. However, during the same period the enrollment increased by 4.5 and 6.1 per cent annually at primary and middle level, respectively. It is clear, therefore, that the rate of increase in number of schools has kept pace with the increase in enrollment at both the stages of school. It is encouraging to note that Haryana is on the verge of achieving its target of providing primary school within one kilometer and upper primary school within three kilometer radius of rural habitation with population of 300 and above. Further, it is a point to note that, about 95 per cent of total rural population is being served by primary schools, however, the population served by upper primary school within the habitation is 65 per cent. But the problem arises due to the unequal distribution of the provision of schooling facilities, and poor quality of infrastructure and teaching-learning environment provided in these schools. The availability of schools to Dalits within their own habitation is relatively poor in comparison to general rural habitations. The data indicated that accessibility for predominantly Scheduled Castes habitation is poorer than for all other habitations. It is evident that only 41.25 per cent of habitation predominantly populated by Scheduled Castes are covered by upper primary schools within the habitation, while the figure for other habitation is 65 per cent. But such disparities are less sharp if we look at the availability of school within a kilometer of rural habitation. In quantitative terms, distance norms regarding school availability may be met for majority of S.Cs habitations. However, the fact that S.C habitations are poorly provided when compared to general habitations implies that schools are mainly located in higher caste habitation within a larger village. Given the fact that norms of purity and pollution still govern relation in rural areas, it becomes essential to understand whether schools are socially accessible to Scheduled Caste children even when they are located at normatively prescribed distance. The overall analysis showed that there is a shortage of upper primary schools in habitation of predominantly populated by Scheduled Castes. The students in these habitations have to walk longer distance to reach upper primary schools. The situation will improve if schools effectively cover these habitations.
On the basis of preceding analysis, it can be concluded that despite Haryana’s official claims of reducing average distance of schools from the habitations, the task of providing schools within a walkable distance in all the habitations is still not complete. The analysis also revealed that the habitations predominantly populated by S.Cs are at disadvantage in comparison with the general habitations in terms of availability of school within its periphery. It is a complex problem and much work is needed to make schools accessible to the S.Cs population not only within a walkable distance, but to be located in their own habitations.

The literacy rate in Haryana increased from 43.88 per cent in 1981 to 68.59 percent in 2001. Literacy gap still persists by rural-urban, male-female, and by caste variations. Despite the faster rate of growth of female literacy, much is left to be done to put them at par with their male counterpart. According to Census 2001, in rural Haryana, literacy rate of males is 76.13 per cent and that of females is 49.77 per cent. Literacy rate in rural area is lower than the urban one. The rate of literacy in rural area is 63.82 per cent and in the urban area is 79.89 per cent. Literacy rate of Scheduled Castes for both the sexes is lower than the state average of Haryana in all the Census years from 1971 to 1991 (as discussed in Table, 3.1). If we gauge on the literacy rate of two extreme polar groups that is rural S.C female and urban males (of total population) the disparity is glaring. According to 1991 Census, only 22.48 per cent of rural S.C females are literate, as compared to 81.96 per cent of urban males. A large disparity of about 60-percentage point’s reveals the lowest position accorded to the S.C females in the rural area. Similarly, Literacy rate in Haryana shows considerable inter-district variations. It varies from 89 per cent in Panchkula to 55 per cent in Fatehabad. The districts having large proportion of deprived communities like S.Cs and Meos, engaged predominantly in dry area agriculture, have lower rate of literacy.

The enrollment of children in government schools has increased from 59 per cent in 1966-67 to 93 per cent in 1995-96. But after 1995-96 onwards, the rate of enrollment in government schools showed the decreasing trend. This decreasing trend of enrollment in government schools is more pronounced among the male children. This trend of decreasing enrollment in government schools is owing to the increasing privatisation of education in Haryana. Due to the demand of quality education for their children, parents
preferred to send their male children in the private schools. The girls’ children are to be kept in the government schools. Therefore, the rate of enrollment of girls in government schools is continuously on the rise. At the primary level share of girls’ enrollment increased from 28.9 per cent in 1970-71 to 47.2 per cent in 2000-01, and corresponding figures at middle level are 21.8 and 44.0 per cent. Despite the phenomenal increase in the rate of literacy and enrollment, the State is still far behind its set target. Haryana ranks 20th in literacy at all India level. Inspite of the expansion in enrollment, since 1960s, State has not attained 100 percent enrollment in elementary education. Further, boys and girls do not equally share the rising enrollment; a substantial gender gap still remains. Disparity still persists among various groups in terms of caste, class and region.

The two main causes for the failure of achieving universal elementary education are the unchecked dropout and inadequate enrollment coverage due to poor schooling facilities. The additional factors arising out of different social, economic and cultural origins also effect the educational participation and level of attainment. Among the children who get enrolled, all of them do not continue their schooling. A large number (more than one fifth) of children dropout before completing the elementary education. A higher proportion of dropout is at primary level. In 2001-02, more than one-third of S.Cs enrolled children dropped out from school as compared to one-fifth of total enrolled children before completing their primary education. The figures for dropout at upper primary level were 19.04 per cent of S.Cs and 4.23 per cent for total in the same year. That is, dropout among S.Cs is four times higher than the total population. Scheduled Castes are deprived of even the physical accessibility to middle schools within the habitation. Dropping out and repeating in the same class is a common phenomena among the wards of S.Cs. Inspite of various measures of positive discrimination for lower castes, especially with regard to education, the S.Cs continue to suffer from inequality of educational opportunities as compared to the rest of the population. Cultural prejudices, lack of political will, lower socio-economic background and historical subjugation of Dalits have variously contributed to the educational backwardness of the Scheduled Castes in Haryana. Therefore, in addition to increasing the enrollment of the S.Cs in schools, attention need to be focussed on the retention and academic performance of the S.C. children in the school. The disadvantageous position of the S.Cs in general and
further lower strata among the S.Cs in particular needs to be recognised. The programme should be instituted to cater the educational need of the lower social strata among the S.Cs on a priority basis, which will play a significant role in reducing the caste disparity.

Inspite of the fact that girls are better in achievement in the class in terms of promotion to the next higher class, the phenomena of dropout is more prominent among girls. It is due to traditional conservative views of the parents and limited number of exclusive girl’s schools. Although there is an increase in the number of exclusive girls’ schools, still there is a need to open more girls’ schools, particularly in the rural areas. Therefore, efforts should be made to encourage and motivate the guardians, as well as girls, to take up the necessary education. Because of high rate of dropout, the problem of wastage and stagnation occur in the field of education that inversely affects its growth. It may be postulated that wastage and stagnation is the basic cause of educational backwardness of the country. It represents not only the wastage of resources invested in the education of dropout but also enhances illiteracy due to unlearning in the later phases of life and causes inadequate effective coverage of the age-specific population. Therefore, it is a high time to ensure continued participation and successful completion of elementary education by the children from each section of the society.

To achieve the goal of universalisation of elementary education, strategies should be evolved to reduce disparities in access to schools so that the level of achievement among different segments of population, particularly among the disadvantaged communities, could be improved. Alternative system of education is suggested to promote elementary education among working and other children who could not be brought into the fold of formal system of education.

Availability of schools, infrastructural development, and quality of education are major supply side input variables that have bearing upon the demand for education. Although till the 1993, the government failed to meet the supply of schools to accommodate the increasing number of children, after 1993 there was a rapid growth of schools. However, the poor quality of infrastructure of schools, in terms of number of rooms in a school and teaching aids, is defeating the very purpose of teaching and learning. The study shows that 2.94 per cent of primary schools in rural area and 4.88 per cent primary schools in urban area do not have even single room. Further, 351 (7.5 per
(9.12 per cent) primary schools from rural areas and 48 (9.12 per cent) from urban areas have only one classroom. There is a requirement of 7224 rooms for rural and 993 in urban areas of Haryana for the proper functioning of the schools. The corresponding figures at upper primary level are 2754 and 335 rooms. The situation further becomes deplorable for 15.89 per cent of primary schools and 5.69 per cent of upper primary schools in rural areas where there is not a single blackboard in the classrooms. Even chalks are not supplied to 35 per cent of primary and 17 per cent of upper primary schools. Further, condition of schools becomes more deplorable with regard to ancillary facilities such as drinking water, urinals, toilets and lavatory facilities. The young children at the primary school level are suffering more in the absence of these ancillary facilities. There are 25 per cent of primary and 10 per cent of upper primary schools functioning without any facility of drinking water; 46 per cent of primary schools and 14 per cent of upper primary schools without urinal facility; and 87 and 36 per cent of primary and upper primary schools respectively are functioning without lavatory facilities. The condition of girls’ schools is still worst. Even in co-educational schools girls are in disadvantageous position regarding the use of separate toilets, urinals and lavatory facilities. These conditions negatively influence the continuity of schooling by children in general and girls in particular.

Another important indicator of the provision of quality of education is the availability of qualified teacher. Out of total 4680 primary schools in rural areas of Haryana, 2.8 per cent schools are without any teacher, and 17 per cent schools have only one teacher. However, the urban area of Haryana is placed better in terms of the availability of teacher in the schools, where out of total 526 schools, only 1 (0.2 per cent) schools is functioning without any teacher and 18 schools (3.4 per cent) with single teacher present. However, the goal of Operation Blackboard (1986-87) was to ensure that all primary schools in the country have at least two teachers in a school. Therefore, regarding the availability of teacher in a school, we have to still achieve the target set about 20 years ago. Pupil-teacher ratio is about 48.93 and 41.88 for primary and upper primary schools respectively in rural area of Haryana. Pupil-teacher ratio for girls’ schools in rural Haryana is much worse. The primary and upper primary girls’ schools of rural Haryana have pupil-teacher ratio of 50.34 and 43.38. In a school with a single
teacher and crowded classes, lack of teaching activity is almost inevitable. Inadequacy of the required number of teachers in a school affects the teaching. Many a time, on the one hand, the schools remain nonfunctional when there is only one teacher in available. On the other hand, it becomes difficult to teach when pupils of more than one class sit together to receive the attention of one teacher. In this situation, the aim of teacher changes from pedagogy of pupils to maintain discipline in the class. The study also revealed that a significant proportion of teachers do not reside in the village and commute long distance to school everyday, thereby affecting their quality of teaching. Our field investigation shows that many children from General Caste families dropped just because of lack of teaching in the school. The representation of female and S.Cs teachers is very low, that negatively influences the enrollment and retention of girls and children belonging to S.Cs population in the schools.

Privatisation of schooling is an emerging trend in Haryana. During the 1990s a mushroom growth of private schools has taken place. These schools are making a beginning in response to local demand for ‘good’ schooling. However, these schools are often unrecognised and are not in a position to offer good quality education. It is the dissatisfaction with government schools that prompts, in the first instance, recourse to private education. This phenomenon indicates the changing role of public and private sectors in education. However, the enrollment in private schools is more concentrated among the male children and among those who belong to economically well to do families and upper castes of the urban area. Contrary to this, the enrollment of girls belonging to Scheduled Castes and Muslim groups in the private schools is negligible. It is, therefore, emphasised that teaching must be made effective and accountable in government schools, so that poor and vulnerable communities, who can not bear the costs of private education gets quality education.

Therefore, it can be concluded form the above discussion on the status of elementary education in Haryana, that despite the fulfillment of the target of providing primary and upper primary schools for almost all the villages and within the habitation to some extent, the infrastructure backing and availability of teacher remain poor. Number of required teachers and infrastructural facilities like number of rooms, ancillary facilities, teaching aids are far from adequate. Such a situation has deteriorated the
efficiency and quality of education provided to the masses, and rural areas are more affected as compared to urban ones. Therefore, there is an urgent need to ensure adequate physical inputs for schooling particularly in rural area. A school building preferably with a separate classroom for each of the grades, proper ancillary facilities, number of trained teachers possessing minimum prescribed qualification preferably one per grade, proper sitting arrangement, blackboard in usable conditions with chalk and duster in each classroom, and reading and writing materials for all the children in the classrooms should be provided on priority basis.

Without quantitative expansion in education, social and other disparities cannot be done away with. At the same time in the absence of qualitative achievement, socio-cultural and economic equality cannot be sustained on a permanent basis for the expansion of education. The impact of school’s quality on educational attainment is an issue that needs attention.

Coming to the empirical findings on elementary education in rural areas, there is a need to highlight the social, cultural, demographic and economic background of the population in the selected villages as they play an important role in determining the level of literacy, education and human development in general. Village Sultanpuria is predominantly inhabited by Hindu population, whereas that of Marora and Udaka are by Muslim population. Sultanpuria has 88 per cent households of Hindus and 12 per cent of Sikhs. In Marora, the respective percentage of Hindu and Muslims households is 24 and 76 per cent. In Udaka, there are 47.3 per cent Hindus and 52.7 per cent Muslims. The Hindu, Muslim and Sikhs households are further represented by twenty different castes. Each caste in the hierarchy has a corresponding status that prevails irrespective of occupation a caste follows. That is, originally the status of a caste might have come from the type of occupation, but over the period it has been attached to the endogamous groups, who inherit caste status by birth. Further these castes are grouped into six categories of General, B.C(A), B.C(B), Meos, S.Cs and ‘other Muslims’ in such a way that each category automatically represents the exclusive socio-cultural aspect of the village. The demographic, social, economic and educational analysis is done by using these caste categories.
In 410 sampled households, there are 2878 persons, out of which 53.9 per cent are males and 46.1 per cent females. The study indicates the preponderance of males over females in each village irrespective of their caste, class and religious composition. Patrilineal and patriarchal system of kinship, exposure to medical technologies and sex determination tests, lower socio-economic status of women, cultural belief that girls are ‘paraya dhan’ (other’s property), expenses on dowry, atrocities on women are some socio-cultural factors responsible for this trend.

The average family size of the 410 households is 7.0. Muslims have largest family size of 8.0 followed by Sikhs (7.0) and Hindus (6.5). Sultanpuria has a smallest family size of 6.6 persons. Marora and Udaka have average family size of 7.7 and 7.6 persons, respectively. The data shows that Hindu and Sikh population have more exposure to family planning and norms of small family as compared to their Muslim counterpart. At the same time, it can not be ruled out that the economic status too has bearing upon the size of household. Though nuclearisation of joint family system is an emerging trend in the villages, collective land owning being economical has been discovered as the binding factor to have joint family system.

Age structure of the population shows that 43 per cent of the population is less than 14 years and 4.1 per cent is of more than 60 years. The distribution of population according to age clearly indicates that dependency ratio is much higher in Marora followed by Udaka and Sultanpuria.

Educational attainment by age group shows that level of ever enrolled persons and its attainment is higher in the younger age group than among the older people in all the three villages. It can be concluded that nowadays demand of education is increasing and slowly education is taking its roots in the younger generation.

The economy of the selected villages is primarily based on the agriculture and allied activities. The village Marora is found to be much backward in terms of agriculture than the other two villages, that is, Sultanpuria and Udaka. On the basis of empirical findings it can be concluded that caste still has great impact on the lives of the members of the respective community in all walks of life. There exists a significant relationship between caste and class in terms of land ownership. It is found that higher the caste of the family, higher is the income and size of land holding. This relationship can also be seen
on the basis of different variables used such as house type, household amenities, pattern of land lease, type and number of assets, etc. that depicts the quality of life. Lower the position in the caste and class hierarchy, smaller is the number of households owning these assets and amenities. Although, General Castes still occupy a dominant position in the class hierarchy, in the class hierarchy, land is also owned by some backward castes, particularly by Yadavs and Gujjars in Udaka, and Khatis in Sultanpuria. But Scheduled Castes and some Muslim groups are more or less landless or are marginal land holders. As far as occupation is concerned, though the strict binding between caste and occupation has been loosened; some castes such as Nai, Khati, Miyan, Kasai and Jogi are following their respective traditional occupation. Low status occupations accruing lower income are still performed by the lower caste groups such as S.Cs and ‘other Muslims’. Therefore, it may be concluded that the traditional social structure of the villages in terms of caste hierarchy and gender relations is still maintained.

The above socio-cultural and economic background of the households, directly or indirectly, influences the participation in educational institutions and level of achievement of their wards. Access to education and achievement level is closely linked with the complex web of social, economic and cultural factors. Overall development of the village, caste, occupation, and extent of land holding in the households are found to be significantly influencing the utilization of schooling, educational attainment and literacy. This is also reflected in the literacy and educational indicators of the three villages. Inter-village variation shows that Sultanpuria due to developed agriculture in terms of good irrigation facilities, diversified cropping pattern, high yield per acre land and involvement of community/panchayat in developmental activities including education, exhibit higher rate of literacy, enrollment and retention. It is also observed that predominance of non-agricultural occupations also have positive bearing on schooling, due to which Udaka village is in advantageous position as compared to Marora in terms of educational participation.

Caste related barriers to education are strong in rural Haryana. The analysis of the data pertaining to enrollment and retention of children by caste groups shows that, despite high overall enrollment rate, the level of enrollment among ‘other Muslims’, Meos and S.Cs is still limited. Scheduled Castes and both the groups of Muslims encounter
numerous constraints in educating their children. Cultural prejudices in terms of institutionalized caste inequality, social practices, historical and political factors have contributed to the educational backwardness of the S.C.s and Muslims in Haryana. Not only the non-enrollment, even the rate of dropout is highest among both the Muslim groups. It is also observed that, among those who are enrolled, a large number of Muslim students are not attending schools regularly, which reflects that the concept of modern secular education has not taken its roots among them. There are many socio-cultural and economic factors of educational backwardness among the Muslims. Religious orthodoxy and cultural ethos against the modern secular education, orientation towards religious education in Madrasa, lack of the provision of religious instructions, fear of imposition of Hindu culture, lack of ‘Urdu’ as a medium of instructions and above all their poverty are some factors that inhibit them to attain even the minimum level of education in schools. There have been concerted efforts by the State and social welfare agencies to improve the situation of the S.C.s and Muslims over the years. These efforts have produced notable results in raising the educational status of these groups, but when compared to the general population, these groups continue to be at disadvantageous position in terms of access to educational opportunities and educational attainment. The children who belong to socio-economically-disadvantaged families have poor educational outcomes as they are admitted to poorly equipped schools. In case of educationally backward communities, schools must intervene to provide necessary academic support to the children and conducive environment for learning.

Economic status of the household is an important factor in determining whether or not the children are to be sent to school. Economy also determines whether to complete the elementary education or dropout half the way. The present study shows that the rate of enrollment increases with the increase in the size of landowning. However, contrary to our expectation dropout rate does not decrease consistently with the increase in size of land holding (as discussed in Table 5.7). The pattern of relationship between dropout and land holding appears far more complex than the general assumption that rise in economic status leads to greater demand for schooling and hence lower dropout rate. Therefore, it seems that the interplay of gender, caste and associated socio-cultural norms, along with the economic status, decides the rate of retention and educational attainment of children.
in school. Low quality of education is another reason for dropping out of the children from well to do families.

Similarly, some occupations that require some level of education, such as, business or services, have positively influenced the educational participation of children. Those children, whose parents are in service are more likely to be enrolled, followed by those parents who are engaged in agriculture. Children belonging to the labour class family are least likely to be enrolled. It may be due to the nature of farm activities that are no way related to the world of education. Therefore, children belonging to the labour class and agricultural families are laggards in educational achievement.

The reasons for the non-enrollment or dropout of the child from the school are also collected from the parents or guardians. The reasons for dropout or non-enrollment of children are related to home, their socio-cultural environment and school environment. Poor economic status at home (42.6 per cent) and poor educational environment in the school (39 per cent) are reported as the two main reasons for the dropout of the children. Poverty of the family forces parents to involve their children in some productive activity resulting in inability to afford even the free education. The need to depend on child labour for supplementary income by the parents is reflected in the lower aspirations to educate their children. Poor educational environment such as lack of teaching-learning activity in the schools, undue emphasis on non-vocational education, corporal punishment and poor infrastructure, etc. results in disinterest of the students to study. Long distance of school (9.0 Per cent), socio-cultural bias (6.6 Per cent) and poor health of children (2.2 Per cent) are some other reasons to be cited by the guardian/parents for the non-enrollment and dropout.

Further, there exists a large gap between the males and females in terms of literacy, enrollment and dropout. Girls are at the rock bottom of all the educational indicators in all the age groups, across caste, class and occupation. Socio-economic status and gender bias mutually reinforces, as far as female education is concerned. The only exception here are the Gujjars among B.C(B) caste group who, inspite of being economically well-to-do, have heavy gender bias in the rate of enrollment. The highest gender bias is found among the Muslim groups where the gender gap is 24 percentage points. It is due to the conservative tradition of early marriage of girls, prevalence of the
custom of ‘Ganna’ among the Gujjars, purdah system (veil system) and non-availability of exclusive girls' schools. Due to poverty, Muslims prefer the schooling of boys over the girls, even though the overall tendency to educate children is rather weak. Besides this, Muslim girls go for the religious education in Mosque and that too for a few years.

In addition to the socio-economic status, the motivation, aspirations and attitudes of the parents/guardians towards the education of their wards deserve special attention. It is observed that parental motivation and aspiration are highly gender-specific across caste, class and occupation. A substantial number (30 per cent) of parents/guardians are not in favour of gender equality in terms of educational participation and grade attainment. However, the major groups who prefer male education over female are Meos (65 per cent), ‘other Muslims’ (50 per cent) and S.Cs (33 per cent). Poor landowning households also disfavour equal education for male and female. Socio-cultural bias and poor economic conditions have extremely detrimental effect on the decision making of the parents about education of their children. Sexual division of labour that destined women to household works, differential market returns, patrilineal and patrilocal kinship system, considerations of girls as liability are the major socio-cultural factors that shape the disfavourable attitude towards the education of the girls. Further, due to poor economic condition education of males becomes the priority over females.

Parents’ differ in motives behind educating their daughter or son. An overall analysis shows that economic empowerment (54 per cent), good awareness and communications (15 per cent) are the most important motivational factors for the education of their male wards. In the context of female education, socio-cultural norms and restrictions effect the issue of motivation. In the case of girls, social reasons predominate over economic reasons in making the decision for their education. Greater prospects of marriage, make better housewife, and caring mother are the main motivational factors cited for the education of their girls. However, some parents consider education as investment in their daughter’s future, not for immediate employment but to get job in case of emergency. The patrilocal and exogamous kinship system lowers the economic value of female education for her parents. In their perception her affinal relatives and not the natal home, enjoy any economic benefit that might accrue from a daughter’s education. On the other hand, household responsibility and economic
security in the old age is considered as the male prerogative. Hence, in recognition of the greater earning potential that results from education, parental motivation for educating the male child is widely acknowledged.

There are strong aspirations of parents to educate their sons rather than daughters. The parents of as many as 62 per cent of boys and only 29 per cent of girls stated that they would like to educate them up to the level as they wish to. Majority of the households of General Castes and B.Cs of higher economic categories are relatively more inclined to educate their children. Most of the parents are of the view that girls should not be highly educated as their role is limited to household only. Some parents however, consider a highly educated girl as a serious liability, as they face lot of problems in finding equally qualified matrimonial match. Parents of more educated girls will have to put in extra efforts and money to arrange for their marriage.

As far as time spent on learning at home is concerned, it depends on the kind of learning environment available at home on the one hand and the amount of seriousness displayed by the teachers at school on the other. Most of the children from S.Cs, Meos ‘other Muslims’, and landless families don’t spent any time on the study at home. In these households, illiterate guardian, lack of space and lack of necessary amenities including light, etc. are the major deterents to children’s study at home. Therefore, for the children belonging to lower social strata, studying in the school is the only way to receive education. The facilities provided in school and inputs provided by the teachers are only learning opportunities for most of these children. However, It is observed that school system in the rural area is not functioning well due to poor teaching-learning environment, scanty infrastructure, lack of teaching and non-teaching staff, absenteeism of teachers, poor pupil-teacher ratio, engagement of teachers in non-academic duties etc. Therefore, there is a need to equip schools with better facilities and make school environment conducive and learning oriented. Accountability of teachers towards their duties must be ensured. While changing the home environment is not within the purview of the school and teachers, it definitely influences the learners’ activities by giving guided home assignments. In fact, regularity of homework may increase the time spent by the children at home on learning activities.
To sum up, it can be concluded that despite the efforts of the State to attain universal elementary education, it is still a distant cry. The children who do join school fail to retain education up to desirable level. Differences in access to education and attainment depend upon the family characteristics and educational environment provided by the schools. Among the family characteristics that influence education of children, are parents’ social class, nature of occupation, parental motivation, attitude and aspirations, and overall family environment. Economic conditions clearly affect the decision of the parents to send children to the school. Children of parents who are in service are more likely to be enrolled, followed by those who hail from cultivating families. Children of labour class are least likely to be enrolled and retained in school. But children hailing from higher landholding categories of households receive more education than those who own lesser land. Caste and associated socio-cultural norms are other household attributes that have a significant influence on school enrollment and dropout. There are marked differences in the extent to which children of different caste groups participate in the educational process. In general, participation in education and position in the traditional caste hierarchy are interrelated. Muslims and S.Cs fare the worst due to their socio-economic deprivation and institutionalization of caste inequality. In addition to these, religious orthodoxy among Muslims against secular education leaves them even behind the S.Cs. There is, moreover, a universal tendency of low priority to female education and females of lower social strata like Muslims and S.Cs are in doubly disadvantaged position. Socio-cultural inhibitions and attitudinal differences of gender role force the parents to prefer sons over daughters. Therefore, efforts should be made to do away with inequalities in educational sphere based on caste, class and occupation, and to spread awareness among the parents about the vital position of educated women in the household as well as in the society as a whole.

As far as school related factors are concerned lower social accessibility of school to all the sections of the society, poor quality of school building and infrastructure, poor teaching-learning environment, teachers’ irregularity and absenteeism, irregular monitoring and supervision by the officials and lack of interaction between schools and community are adversely affecting the participation and achievement level of the children.
in the schools. Therefore, improvement in the overall functioning of the schools has to be ensured to achieve the target of universal elementary education.