Chapter 1. Introduction

- Meaning of Education
- Elementary Education
- Statement of the Problem
- Development of Education System in India
- State of Education in Haryana
- Notes
1. Introduction

Education is the key to breaking the vicious circle of ignorance and exploitation and empowering the masses to improve their lives. Education is a critical input for economic and social development. 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.¹

Education has acquired all the more significance in the context of rapidly globalising World economy. Only societies that have acquired the relevant knowledge and skills can compete successfully in global markets. This has been the experience of Japan, East Asian industrializing economies (South Korea, Hong Kong, Singapore, Malaysia, Thailand, Indonesia) and China. By combining their low wages with relevant education and skills, they converted their poverty into an asset and took over the global markets through rising labour productivity. According to Schultz (1988) and Becker’s (1993) theories, education provides people such skills that allow them to be more productive in their work, thereby creating the opportunity to earn higher wages in the labour market.²

Education also has emulating effect on workers. Education not only increases the productivity of the educated worker, it may also raise the productivity of neighbouring labourers by providing an important role model. In India, for instance, a study found that over a five-year period, the profits of farmers with no schooling were 4 per cent higher if their neighbour also adopted new seeds earlier (Foster and Rosenwig, 1995). However, there will be low attribution of education to economic development with lack of appropriate socio-economic policy as in the case of Kerala (India), Cuba, Nicaragua, Sri Lanka, etc. It is necessary for education to be supplemented with appropriate socio-economic policies that become a part of wider human development strategy.

Education is a means not merely for better income and employment opportunities for individuals, but also for higher economic growth potential for their nation. The social
benefits of education in the long run have been proved in many countries. "Education leads to better health care, smaller family norms, greater community and political participation, less income inequality, and a greater reduction of absolute poverty”, says report on Human Development in South Asia (1998: 28).

There is a close link between education and better healthcare, parental education and infant mortality (Cochrane et al 1980 and 1988; Colelough, 1993 and 1995, Caldwell et al., 1983; Murthi et al., 1995; World Bank, 1997, Goodburn et al, 1990). The role of education also proved by now in bringing down the rate of population growth, fertility and mortality (GOI, 1993; Cleland and Jejeebhoy,1996; Subbarao and Ranney, 1993; Schultz, 1988; Cochrane, 1979). Education also delays the marriage of women by empowering them to decide their future. Educated women become more willing to use modern contraceptives and persuade their husbands to opt for smaller family norms writes World Bank (1993). University Education Commission (1948) stated that, “there can not be educated people without educated women. If general education has to be limited to men or to women, that opportunities should be given to women, for than, it would most surely be passed to the next generation”. This quotation very aptly describes the importance of women’s education which holds the key to the future progress of a nation. It is truly said that by educating a man, we educate an individual and by educating a woman we educate the whole family. This shows the extent of influence a woman exerts in the society to bring about a change. Various research studies have shown that progressive and greater exposure of women to education has generally resulted in increased productivity, development of skills, more continuous employment in professional and technical occupations, increased quality of life, increased awareness about and participation in social, political and developmental processes, better perceptions of their own potentialities and aspirations, and a more rational demographic behaviour in terms of age at marriage, spacing between children and number of children (Smock, 1981; Simon,1974; Boudon, 1974, Kapur, 1974, Becker, 1960). Therefore, extension of educational opportunities to women will lead to women’s assumption of a range of social roles demanded by the modern society. Equality of status and opportunity for men and women occupy an important place in the Constitution of independent India as per Articles 15 and 16. Therefore, in this study, girls’ education or disparity among
girls and boys among all social groups in educational participation have got special attention.

Education plays a very decisive role in reducing absolute poverty (Psacharopoulos and Wood Hall, 1985; Fields 1980; Tilak, 1989). However, the evidences available regarding the role of education in reducing income inequality are conflicting because of the inegalitarian pre-existing socio-economic structure causing skewed distribution of the benefits of education. Perhaps, the most important social benefit relates to the impact of education on reducing gender inequality (Bhatty, 1998; Caldwell et al, 1983; Basu, 1992; Borne and Walker, 1991; Chanana, 1990). It seems obvious that education with its exposure to the wider world of knowledge and experience would broaden the horizons of women by increasing their confidence and change their perceptions of themselves. However, Das Gupta (1987) has found a negative link between education and a greater degree of equality in the treatment of children of different sexes. Her research in rural Punjab shows that literate mothers actually use their skills selectively in favour of sons. Murthi et al (1995) also draws the similar conclusion regarding education and gender inequality.

It is these broader influences of education, beyond merely the economic rate of return, which makes investment in education such a critical decision for every society. In fact, there is no other decision that requires greater attention from policy makers.

**Meaning of education**

The word ‘education’ is derived from ‘Educare’ which means bringing up of children physically and mentally. However, the word has been used in different ways. In the narrow sense, education is confined to schooling and university instruction. Education starts when a child enters in educational institutions and ends when he complete his studies or leaves the educational institutions. The schools and colleges are responsible for the physical, mental, moral and intellectual development of children and training them for specialised trades and professions. (Bhatnagar, 1972: 3; Ottaway, 1953; Parsons, 1959).

In the broader sense, education begins at birth and continues throughout life. Education includes experiences gained through a number of agencies like home, school, church, club, cinema, press, friends, play ground, travel, physical environment, etc. Education in its widest sense is the integral process of transmission of culture and a
In recent years, the concept of education is beginning to be equated with learning irrespective of where, when and how often it occurs. On this learning-centered view, education can be grouped into three identifiable categories namely formal, informal and non-formal. Schooling and formal education refer to what is taught in schools and school related institutions, informal education refers to socialization of an individual into the customary norms of society, and non-formal education refers to organised educational activity, which occurs outside the school (Coombs, 1973: 12-13; Simmons, 1980: 22).

Reimer (1971:33) defines School as an institution, which requires full time attendance of specific age groups in teacher supervised classrooms for the study of graded curricula. The learning process that goes on in schools is only a small part of an individual's education. The primary function of school is formal teaching leading to the acquisition of certain basic skills and knowledge, but it does not cover the entire educational process. The family, physical surroundings and socio-economic and cultural environment are also fundamental to this process (Bramled, 1957:3). The content and experience included in the school programme are selected from total range of possibilities, which exist in the culture. Educational problems are not born in an academic vacuum. They arise in response to the existing social, political, economic, and moral needs of the culture. Therefore, we can say that education is a part of culture. In fact education as a part of culture has twin functions of conservation and modifications or renewal of culture (Ratna, 1958: 12).

Education is a learning process through schools, colleges, university and other institutions by which a society maintains and renews its culture and helps the individual to become effective members of society.

**Elementary Education**

The demand for any kind or level of education is derived from the uses to which the resulting skills presumably can be put. Conventionally, elementary education is expected to instill ‘basic’ skills. These skills are basic because i. they can be used in many situations or activities, ii. they remain usable (with minimal practices) for a lifetime, and iii. they are a foundation on which more specialised and complex
capabilities can be built. Elementary education being the first educational level plays a vital role in all-round development of a nation because the effect of the elementary education is the second only after the family. It influences children’s mind and sensibility when they are particularly at impressionable time of their lives, it reflects the nation’s common faith in the efficiency of education, and it is part of the community which it serves. The central objective of all elementary education is fixed in the teaching and learning of reading, writing and number work. It also prepare the pupils for the higher education and through that the realisation of other objectives which may range from development of citizenship and character, environmental response - potential, basic skills of social and emotional integration, attitude development, etc. Psacharopoulos (1994:1326) provides update evidence on rates of returns to education on a global scale. He reports that ‘Elementary education continues to exhibit the highest social profitability in all World regions, and also that investment in women’s education is generally more profitable than that in men’s. These objectives may weigh well in importance in the minds of educational planners, administrators, teachers, educators and the other educational elite.

Statement of the Problem

Modern society views education as an important resource and a means of achieving the goal of egalitarianism. Education is looked upon as a means of raising the social status of an individual in various ways. It is seen to provide the knowledge, skills, values and attitudes necessary for an individual to lead a really human life in his socio-economic and political environment. In other words, education is accepted as a basic human need, education especially vocational, technical and professional is considered to be necessary for job placement. In terms of Human Capital theory, education is not consumption of goods but an investment that has returns. Getting into an occupation or a higher occupation means acquiring social status of various levels. Thus education becomes a channel of social mobility and, to that extent, a means of pursuing egalitarianism. In this sense, education is often spoken of as an ‘equaliser’.

Education can be expected to function as an equaliser in the context of equality of opportunities. Equality of educational opportunities means that an individual has equal access to education. To put it in a more practical way, no individual is denied access to
any level or type of education, or is handicapped in educational achievement solely on account of his personal attributes or primordial identities. Equality of educational opportunities is one of the goals of the ideology of egalitarianism. However, inequality of educational opportunities exists throughout the World and there are concerted efforts to deal with the situation. The case of India in terms of castes and its accessibility to different economic resources and education is an example, which leads to the inequality of educational opportunities.

The inequality of educational opportunity has drawn considerable attention of educational researchers in context of the Constitutional provisions for educational development of the masses. It has been observed that even though considerable expansion of education has takes place in India, the disparities and inequalities have not diminished significantly during the decades of Constitutional rule. The most common forms of disparities in the Indian society are between males and females; backward and non-backward castes; high and low socio-economic groups; rural and urban areas; and developed and backward regions. It is interesting to note that all these forms do not operate separately, but are intrinsically inter-twined in the thick rope of the socio-economic fabrics. The purpose of this study is to examine all these forms of disparities in education in India by taking the case of Haryana.

Before going into detail of state of education in Haryana, an attempt has been made to study the development of education system in India.

**Development of Education System in India**

There were two parallel systems of education in pre-colonial India, organised and managed by the Hindus and Muslims. Religious and secular education was imparted in them. It is widely known that the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes were denied access to this system. Girls were also not enrolled in formal secular schools except the Muslim girls, who went to Koran or religious schools which were generally located in the Mosques (Minault, 1982; Chanana, 1990). Thus, caste, tribe and gender have been crucial parameters in defining access to education.

The indigenous systems of education ‘Hindu and Muslim’ as they prevailed in India before the advent of the Europeans did not influence the modern system of Indian education to any great extent. By some accounts (Shukla, 1957; Bara, 1998) education
was available to a fair number of people in pre-colonial India (though it was nowhere near universal) and was a reasonably dynamic process, but within the hierarchical framework of the caste system. Elementary schools, or rather, places of learning where young children learned to read, write, do accounts, obtain knowledge of religious texts, existed in Bombay, Gujarat, Karnataka, Bengal, UP and Punjab. It was an education adequate for supporting existing agriculture, village administration, rural and urban trade, and for satisfying religious and social needs of the people (Shukla:1957). The teacher received fees from students in cash, kind, or in the form of privileges. Temporary institutions were springing up and closing down as per the need and were run in homes, temples, masjids and chaupals (Sharma, 2000).

Indigenous educational system was mainly confined to the top stratum of Hindu society- the Brahmins. Since education was religious, it was privilege of the Brahmins to study and interpret the sacred texts and scriptures. The trading castes and warrior castes did acquire some education, but it was mainly limited to acquiring the skills of trading and fighting. The opportunities for education, whatever they were in pre-British India, were not open to the lower castes. The Brahmins, thus, became not only the guardian of religion, but also the interpreter of social relations, customs and local laws.

Most accounts referring to caste and education in pre-British India have noted the highly privileged position of the Brahmins. Cunningham (1941), Director of Public Instruction in British India, noted that “throughout the centuries, the Brahmins, were the repositories of learning and the directors of the Hindu life”. Beteille (1969) in his study of Sripuram, found that in the pre-British traditional system of Sanskritic learning, education was monopolised by Brahmins.

In comparison to Hinduism, where traditionally (and scripturally) only Brahmins and the upper castes were expected to have education, Islamic approach is egalitarian. It insists that every person (both male and female) should acquire knowledge. According to the Prophet, ‘Learning is a duty for every Muslim- male and female’. The Islamic percepts/ideals of universalisation of education and the prevailing practices among Muslims all over the world in general and Indian Muslims in particular reveals that there is a yawning gap between theory and practice. In India, however, Muslims were educationally and socially much backward.
However, it would not be incorrect to say that while indigenous education existed, grew and developed over time, in many significant ways it did not have the characteristics of ‘modern’ education system. Firstly, it was almost completely market based, or ‘demand driven’ in an agrarian context, where communities and parents bore the financial costs of providing skills that children needed. Not surprisingly, a majority of children from deprived sections of society remained outside this process altogether. Secondly, it had a vocational character, rather than that of facilitating children’s intellectual, emotional and ethical growth. Finally, it lacked the character of mass schooling as a ‘system’, sponsored and organized by state, with well-defined goals and a sense of direction such as that of universalising elementary education. It was, consequently, free from bureaucratic procedures, but also deprived of sound organization and financial resources to develop, to keep up with the best school system in the world, and to reach out to poorest children. These constraints are important to remember in the present context, when decentralization and community ownership are often seen as solutions to the problems of elementary education, and pre-colonial education is sometimes idealized.

The Colonial Legacy

Modern education is the legacy of the commercial-cum-political domination of the British in India. British rule in India promoted western education. The real pioneers of western education in India were the Christian Missionaries. They started a new type of schooling in various parts of the country. The indigenous type of schooling slowly disappeared from the scene, yielding to western type of education. A wider curriculum was introduced in schools, including subjects, such as, history and geography. Secular subjects occupied a dominant position in the schools. Textbooks other than religious scriptures were written and printed for the first time. The missionaries aimed at introducing a foreign language in India, with emphasis on English. Hence, contact with the west introduced new elements into the system of education in India.

According to the Charter Act of 1813 the missionaries were permitted to enter India and work in the Indian territories of the Company for the education and proselytization of the Indians. The company accepted its duty and responsibility for the education of Indians on the doctrines of secularism and conservatism. It was the first
acknowledgement by the British Parliament that education of the Indian people was one of the duties of the state. The Charter of 1813 laid the foundation of the modern system of education as existing in India today. Macaulay had his own role to play. He intended to instill western values and wanted to create a class of persons, Indian in blood and colour, but English in taste, in opinion, in morals and intellect (Ghosh, 1995: 32-33).

The colonial education system was not a modernised version of the traditional system of Indian education with its great chronological depth. It emerged on the academic scene outside of and in isolation from the historically evolved structure. Colonial education system was not required to become input in productivity and provide the scientific technological base as well as trained manpower for economic development. It was, instead, expected to produce graduates who acted as cogs and wheels for the administrative machinery. Socio-economic base of education in colonial India was extremely narrow. Its gates were closed to the vast majority of the toiling people. The rural area, inhabited by the vast majority of the Indian people, was almost completely devoid of educational facilities. The level of female education was particularly low. Besides this, education in colonial India was essentially teaching and not learning oriented. The teacher-student relationship was based on the assumption that knowledge is essentially received and an uncritical acceptance of the gospel truth was, therefore, the most efficient method of learning. The products of such a system of education could be evaluated with the help of an examination which put the marks of differing qualities of educational products, produced in the teaching shops for the employment market, primarily in the so-called service sector. Johari and Pathak (1963: 312) described the nature of education in India before independence in these words: "The existing system of education was largely based in 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 on proper lines". It is pointed out that illiteracy in India increased only after the imposition of the British Educational System and especially thrusting of English language on our society as the functional language of education, administration, judiciary, business, and commerce. As a result, Sanskrit Pathshalas and Arabic Madrasas, run by Hindus and Muslims to educate their children, were made
dysfunctional by the British Education Policy. It is argued that the traditional, fundamentalists, both Hindus and Muslims, distanced from the new English system of education for more political and less religious reasons, the masses regressed to illiteracy and ignorance (Ageira, 1996:7). Simultaneously, a progressive deterioration in indigenous education was witnessed as a result of numerous wars and disorders, resumption by the state of many of the land grants in support of schools, and the impoverishment of the trading classes and the peasantry. On the other hand, the Company’s action in favour of elementary education for the masses emerged only slowly, as it needed for filling up the lower grade jobs for the growing administration needs. Slowly a realisation came that an absolutely illiterate peasantry could not carry out productive agriculture that would support either the state’s demand for revenues, or the growing demand for British industry’s raw materials. These developments, that is, private education in English for the urban elite, extremely limited government resources for elementary education in rural areas, and the neglect of indigenous education, in a sense, along with Auckland’s belief in the ‘filtration theory of education’ could be said to be the first incipient modern Indian education ‘policy’ (Sharma, 2000).

The Education Commission (1964-66) shows that education under British rule failed to promote national consciousness. Under the British Administration, the scholars were expected to teach loyalty to the British rule rather than instill love for the motherland. Raza (1990: 399) describes the colonial education system in these words: “This was the system which India inherited at the time of Independence- a system which was iniquitous, distorted, dysfunctional and enclavized. The contemporary syndrome of inequity is the outcome of such a gifted system.

The historical connection between caste and education was largely maintained even during the British days, when education was formalised and relatively secularised through the school system, it was mainly Brahmans and other high castes, who took advantage of the new opportunities, while untouchables continued to be forbidden from the school. Social and economic situation was such that low and middle castes found it difficult to send their children to school. Poverty and need to employ children on farms and other family occupations discouraged low and middle castes from sending their children to school. Even when some low caste children went to school, the atmosphere
was not conducive as the teachers gave discriminatory treatment. There were many examples where teachers as a rule belonging to high castes ridiculed and harassed the low caste children who attempted to go to school. Briggs (1920) observed that “both teachers and pupils make it most difficult for low caste boys to sit in the classrooms. The higher-status castes, on whom the lives of most of the agricultural and servant castes depended, thwarted any attempt on the part of lower castes to educate their children. Over and above all this, the belief that it was only the higher-ups who needed education, was widespread even among middle and lower rungs of the caste hierarchy. As Briggs (1920) wrote, “the feeling is widespread that an ignorant Chamar is the only useful Chamar”.

The British Policy during mid-nineteenth century, even when it had decided to spread education, only benefited the higher castes. The objective of the 1835 resolution of the education committee was, “the promotion of European literature and science among the natives of India through the English medium, and funds for education were employed for English education alone (Cunningham, 1941). At the turn of the century, when educational facilities comparatively increased, the overall educational level of Indian society continued to be low. Few people acquired schooling and most did not stay long enough in schools to become permanently literate. As the educational system became secularized to some extent, the non-Brahmins high castes began to take to education in greater numbers. In many areas where Brahmins did not enjoy a very high social position of prestige and privilege, the non-Brahmin high castes began to overtake them in education. However, the caste-education relationship still remained very high. Referring to caste and education, the 1901 Census report of India noted, “the most notable feature of the returns to education is that everywhere the professional and trading castes take the lead. The proportion varies in different tracts and the high castes in one area may be more backward from the point of view of literacy than castes of far lower rank elsewhere. For example, the Brahmins and Rajputs of Bihar are outstripped in the race for education by Chasi Kaibrattas of Bengal proper. But in any given area, the general rule is that if the divisions are not too minute, the degree of education varied directly with the social position of the castes. The Brahmins did not always stand first. In Madras, they did so, but in Bengal proper they were headed by Baidya, in Bombay by
Towards the end of British period educational facilities expanded and the overall development level of Indian society steadily increased. This created a more conducive environment for middle and lower castes, particularly in the urban areas. Some middle level castes like Patidars of Gujarat also made education a caste activity.4 Moreover, educational facilities became comparatively open. All castes, including the untouchables, were allowed in public schools though social conditions were not always encouraging for them. The connection between low caste status, on the one hand, and landlessness, labouring, and being subject to exploitation, on the other, was largely maintained in education. The poor material circumstances of underclass render it practically impossible for them to avail of formal education, which aggravates their disadvantaged position.

During the British period, India offered little or no formal education to the masses. The village schools were inadequate, the country was too poor to provide a free public school system, and the villagers were rarely able to pay fee, although some times produce or goods were accepted as payment. The literacy rate in the country, where the concept of zero and the decimal system were evolved, was abysmally low. In 1951, after about two centuries of the 'civilizing role of the British, literacy rate was 16.67 per cent and enrollment per lakh of population for elementary schools was 4500 and for secondary schools 418 (Raza, 1990:13). Secondary schools served primarily a few pupils who went on to more advanced education. Both secondary and higher education were generally imparted in English, in contrast to the use of local language in primary schools.

Critics of the educational system of British India pointed out that it served only the social elite. The education provided was not in keeping with the real needs of India, and that a diploma was often simply a means to a government position rather than a sign of good education. In a nutshell, education given in schools before independence was not according to our socio-economic and cultural needs. Thus, the traditional caste system in which education was prerogative of the upper castes and the British policy of providing education to the elite reinforced each other to produce a highly inegalitarian educational system in India. Majority of the population was devoid of educational facilities. Quality of education was so poor that it only became the means to produce ‘clerks’. There was a
need to re-organize the education system suited to the changing demands of the country. The task before independent India was to remove the infirmities of inherited structure of the educational system and transform it into a social force geared to the socio-economic transformation of the Indian polity from colonial under-development to self-reliant development.

**Education System in Independent India**

At the time of independence, India inherited the type of educational system that was to the advantages of the upper sections of the society and virtually neglected to the lower sections. After Independence, the education system was reorganized to suit the changing demands of the country. Within such a conceptual framework, education was conceived of as being intertwined with the development process as one of its important components. It took quite some time to clearly outline the following multifaceted tasks of education as summarised by Kuldip Kaur (1985:3-4): The purpose of education was to expand quality and quantity of education and link it with economic needs. In order to achieve this purpose, it was considered necessary to universalize primary education, to vocationalize secondary education and to diversify higher education. Special attention was given to reduce regional disparities in the spread of education as also to widen the socio-economic base of the educational system through programmes of protective discriminations meant to eliminate the difference between Scheduled and non-Scheduled Castes, rural and urban, as well as male and female population. A need was felt to shift emphasis from teacher and teaching-oriented education to learning and learner-oriented education, whereby the creativity of the learner rather than the assimilation of "received" truth was emphasised. An element of patriotism and humanism was also made integral part of education.

With the advent of India as welfare state, the importance of primary education and equality of educational opportunity received its due consideration. In the development paradigm, the function of education in promoting equality and social mobility has been of pre-eminence. This was recognised by the Constitution makers of India and enshrined as an objective in the Indian Constitution. Therefore, several Constitutional provisions have been made to protect the rights of deprived groups such as the S.Cs and S.Ts. Women have only been provided equality under Article-15 which states that there shall be no
discrimination on the basis of caste, tribe, sex, race, religion, etc. 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 within ten years period from the commencement of the Constitution. In this direction, the National Policy on Education, 1968 was a further milestone, which stressed the need for strenuous efforts for early fulfillment of the goal laid down in the Constitution. In 1966, the Kothari Commission proposed achieving the goal no later than 1986. This target too was superseded, when the 1986 National Policy on Education articulated a goal of ensuring that by 1990, all children of 11 years age would have completed five years of formal or non-formal education (Mehta, 1994). The Constitutional amendment of 1976 includes education in the concurrent list (the official list of subjects for which the center and state assume joint responsibility). This was an important step that called for a new sharing of responsibility between the Union Government and the States in this vital area of national importance. The National Policy on Education, 1986 emphasised that new thrust in elementary education will focus on (i) universal access and enrollment (ii) universal retention of children up to fourteen years, and (iii) a substantial improvement in the quality of education to enable all children to achieve essential level of learning. Further, the Indian government has made a commitment to the goals of the 1990 World Conference on Education for All held in Jomtien, Thailand. It sets a goal of providing good quality education to all primary school children. And it also committed to ensure the necessary resources, indicating that the allocation to education would increase from less than 4 per cent of gross domestic product (GDP) to 6 per cent by the end of the ninth five-year plan in 2002.

However, the achievement of above objective after fifty years of independence, is nowhere near the target laid down. India holds the World record for the number of illiterate persons. There were 321 million illiterate people in the country (125 million males and 196 million females) in 1991. According to UNFPA (1997) India has the largest illiterate population of 424 million in the World. The UNICEF in its report on ‘State of World Children, 1999 (The Hindu, 1998) stated that India would be most
illiterate country in the World by 2000 A.D, a disgraceful distinction. Every third illiterate in the World is an Indian.

According to 1991 Census India achieved 52 per cent literacy with 64 per cent male and 39 per cent female literate. Newly available data from the fifty-third round of National Sample Survey (NSS) indicate that the overall rate of literacy had risen to 62 per cent (73 per cent for males and 50 per cent for females) by 1997. According to Census 2001, the literacy rate of 7+ population has risen up to 65.4 per cent (75.9 per cent male, 54.2 per cent female). However, there is a wide variation in literacy across regions, states, castes, classes and sexes.

The problem of illiteracy is not confined to adult population alone. Among the children too, there are large number who do not attend schools, particularly in the rural areas. According to NSS data of 1993-94, in rural areas 30 per cent boys and 45 per cent girls in the age group of 5-14 were not attending school, which were twice the number in urban areas. Further, dropout rate is quite high in India. In other words, there is a huge gap between children who enroll in school, or who have ever attended, and the number who actually complete schooling. In 1992-93 Dropout rate in India was 45 per cent (43.81 boys, 46.7 per cent girls) for class I-V, 61.1 per cent (58.2 per cent boys, 65.2 per cent girls) for class I-VIII and 72.9 per cent (70 per cent boys, 77.3 per cent girls) for class I-X (G.O.I, 1998:9-10).

A cursory look at the number of schools in India suffices to convey the point that if all children enrolled in primary schools proceeded to complete eight years of elementary education as the writers of the Constitution had desired, the middle schools would have a serious problem in accommodating them. Compared to 590421 primary schools India has, there are only a little more than 171000 middle schools. The ratio between middle and high school is somewhat better, which means that those who survive eight years of schooling have a higher chance to stay longer, at least till they meet the first public examination (GOI, 1995-96).

The 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. For example, for the population above 25, the average years of schooling was 2.4 in India as compared to 5 in China, 7.2 in Sri Lanka, and 9.3 in South Korea (Dreze...
and Sen, 1995). India has the dubious distinction of having the largest number of child workers of any country in the World. Estimates of child workers vary from 17 to 44 million. While most child workers do not attend school regularly, there are also children who are neither at school nor working. According to NSS data for 1993-94, for instance, of rural boys in the 10 to 14 age group, 76 per cent attended schools, 11.7 per cent were workers, and 10.6 per cent were neither at school nor at work. A substantial number of children, therefore, were not attending schools but this was not on account of participation in work.

Teachers are perhaps the most important resource in school. In absolute terms, the number of teachers has expanded greatly over the last fifty years. In real terms, however, the growth in number of teachers has fallen steadily over time, from 5.6 per cent in the 1950's, to 4.5 per cent in the 1960s and 2.7 per cent in the 1970's. Between 1984-85 and 1989-90 the growth rate dropped to 1.6 per cent and there was an absolute decline in the number of primary school teachers between 1991-92 and 1992-93 (Dreze and Sen, 1995). The fall in expenditure on education after 1991 was clearly reflected in the recruitment of teachers. The Fifth All India Educational Survey conducted in 1986 found that 28 per cent of all Primary schools were single teacher school and another 32 per cent had two teachers each (NCERT, 1992). The Sixth All India Education Survey (1998) shows that in 1993 about 20 per cent of primary schools were single teacher and 0.8 per cent had no teachers at all. Again, there is great variation across states. In Kerala, 99 per cent of schools had three or more teachers. By contrast, 30 per cent of the Primary schools in Madhya Pradesh had only one teacher. In Haryana, 2.5 per cent of primary schools had no teachers.

The shortage of teachers is reflected in the rising pupil-teacher ratio. On an average, there were 41 pupils per teacher in primary schools in 1978, the ratio went up to 44 in 1986. UNESCO (1994) portrays much more dismal picture of teacher-pupil ratio. The current student-teacher ratio in India is far behind from those observed in other countries. In China, a country that has been successful in implementing universal education, the pupil-teacher ratio was 22 in 1994. This ratio was 19.8 in Thailand, 20 in Malaysia, 36 in the Philippines and 39 in Nepal. By contrast, the figure for India for 1994 was 63.5.
The quality of school infrastructure in the country is deplorable. The Fifth All India Educational Survey conducted in 1986 found that 40 per cent of schools did not have a pucca building and 9 per cent had no building at all (NCERT, 1992). Availability of other basic facilities was also limited: 60 per cent of schools had no drinking water and 89 per cent no toilets. In terms of educational materials, 40 per cent of schools had no black boards and 70 per cent no library facilities. Six years later we find very little change (NCERT, 1997).

The expenditure on education though has increased since independence but it is not enough to meet the needs of the masses. In terms of share of GNP, expenditure on education increased steadily from 0.65 per cent in 1950s to 3.55 per cent in 1992-93 (Parikh, 1999:78). Human Development Report (1998) clearly shows that, India spent much less on education than East Asian countries, such as, Korea, Thailand and Malaysia. These countries also allocated higher share of budgetary resources to education than that of India, and the share of primary and secondary education in total spending on education was also higher. From 1968 onwards, successive versions of the National Policy on Education have resolved to raise this proportion to 6 per cent, but this target has not been approached to this day (Dreze and Sen, 1995).

If public expenditure on education in India remains low by international standards, recent trends have at least been in the right direction. After stagnating for 25 years, the proportion of public expenditure on education to GNP started increasing noticeably around the mid eighties, and there has also been some improvement in the share of elementary education (Tilak, 1993) together with some reduction of inter-state disparities (Tyagi, 1993:122). But this extra money is going to salaries. In 1983-84 recurring expenditure on elementary education accounted for 98 per cent of total government expenditure on elementary education, which goes mainly in the payment of the salaries to the teachers (Tilak, 1993: 60).

Unfortunately, the father’s dream remains 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. Had there been sincere efforts on the part of the state to materialize the Constitutional provision of free and compulsory education up to the age of 14 years, the situation with regard to literacy and primary
education would have been much better and enduring one. Unfortunately this dream remains unrealized. This failure may be attributed, besides the weak 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 obligation of providing free elementary education. Together they have pushed the primary education into oblivion (Ruhela, 1996:15). Consequently, basic education always retained a low profile, while higher education became extensively popular among elite.

It can be concluded from the forgoing discussion that inequality of the educational opportunities is a reality that has been existing in India for generations. In a traditional caste system, education was the prerogative of the upper castes. The British Policy of providing education, and that too of English education, to the elite resulted in direct neglect of mass education. The Colonial Policy on Education, therefore, accentuated the inequality of educational opportunities imposed by the traditional caste system. Thus, at the time of independence, India inherited an educational system that institutionalised inequality of educational opportunities. Constitution makers of independent India recognised the importance of education and made a provision to provide free and compulsory education for all children up to the age of fourteen years within the ten years of the commencement of the Constitution. Many a times the target of universal education for all children up to 14 years have been postponed. But, even after the 57 years of independence, Indian education is still at the crossroad.

**State of Education in Haryana**

Haryana, the 17th State of the Indian Union, came into existence on November 1, 1966, as a result of division of the former state of Punjab. After getting statehood in 1966, Haryana began to move onto the path of progress in the sphere of education in terms of schools, budget expenditure, Enrollment, number of teachers, etc. There were 5779 schools in Haryana in 1966, which went up to 15296 by 1997-98. According to the Sixth All India Education Survey (NCERT, 1998), in Haryana, there were 31,19,669 students (57.48 per cent boys, 42.52 per cent girls) enrolled in different type of schools from class I to XII. Out of total number of students enrolled in Haryana, 74.43 per cent were from the rural areas. In rural Haryana, among the total students 58 per cent were
boys and 42 per cent girls. According to Directorate of Education, Haryana government spent Rs. 115201.08 lakh during 1999-2000 on primary, secondary and higher education as compared to Rs. 277.25 lakh in 1966-67. Out of total layout, expenditure on primary education was Rs. 31537.91 lakh (27.3 per cent of total budget for education) as compared to Rs 86.97 lakh (31.3 per cent) in 1966-67, and on secondary education, Haryana state expenditure was Rs. 67564.31 lakh (58.6 per cent) which was Rs. 168.03 lakh (60.6 per cent) in 1966-67.

Table 1.1. Increase in Budget Expenditure on education in Haryana.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Primary</th>
<th>Secondary</th>
<th>Higher</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1966-67</td>
<td>86.97</td>
<td>168.03</td>
<td>22.25</td>
<td>277.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1997-98</td>
<td>218.64</td>
<td>45337.26</td>
<td>12634.67</td>
<td>79836.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999-00</td>
<td>31537.91</td>
<td>67564.31</td>
<td>16098.86</td>
<td>115201.08</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Directorate of Education, Haryana.

Number of teachers in recognised schools in Haryana has been increasing. In the year 1970-71 there were 40417 teachers (29690 male and 10727 female) in all schools. In the year 1996-97, their number increased to 96546 (52256 male and 44290 female), which further increase to 109242 (57731 male and 51511 female) in 1997-98 (Gupta: 1999).

Haryana is amongst those fourteen states, where compulsory education is enforced in the age group of 6-14 years. Primary school facilities are accessible to almost all the school going children in the age group of 6-14 years. According to revised Education Policy (1992), Government of Haryana had provided a primary school, a middle school, and a high school within 1.0 km., 1.80 km and 2.33 km. respectively in 1992. Efforts have been afoot to expand the accessibility of education to the extent that walking distance for a child to reach the school is reduced to the minimum. In Haryana, District Primary Education Officer is empowered to open branch of primary school at a place where 30 or more children are available for schooling. Hundred government primary schools for girls are opened every year to cater to the needs of the increasing population of the state. All these efforts have affected the literacy rate in the state. The overall literacy rate which was only 19.6 per cent in 1966-67 had risen to 56 per cent (69 per cent males, 41 per cent females) in 1991 and further progressed to 65 per cent (76 per cent male, 52 per cent female) by 1997. According to National Sample Survey Organization, (49th round to 53rd round) during 1997-98 rural literacy rate in Haryana was 59 per cent (71 per cent male, 45 per cent female) and urban literacy rate was 79 per cent.
(88 per cent male; 69 per cent female) which shows a wide gulf between the rural and urban areas.

Haryana seems to have realized the importance of female education and its overall impact on the welfare of children and the community. Hence, Haryana's main concern has been to tackle the high level of illiteracy among its female population. With the increasing number of schools and colleges for girls, girls’ education has been made free up to the graduate level. Besides this, provision is made for free uniforms, monthly attendance scholarship, free text-books and stationery in order to attract non-attending children, especially girls belonging to S.C. and S.T. and other weaker sections of society. Similarly, there is a provision of Rupee one per day for the school going children of nomadic tribes.

Despite above-mentioned incentives, there is still a need and scope for further expansion of school education, especially in the rural areas of Haryana. According to NCERT Survey (1997), Haryana ranked 22nd among Indian Union of 25 states and 7 U.Ts. with respect to rural literacy rate. Out of total number of 6728 villages, 819 (12.17 per cent) villages did not have primary school facility, 4067 villages (60.45 per cent) did not have schools with upper primary stage, 5050 villages (75.06 per cent) did not have schools up to secondary stage and 6488 villages (96.43 per cent) did not have school up to higher secondary stage.

According to Sixth All India Educational Survey (1997), in rural Haryana pupil-teacher ratio for primary, upper primary and secondary schools was 48.93, 41.88 and 34.37 respectively. For rural India as a whole, pupil-teacher ratio for primary, upper primary and secondary schools was 40.94, 35.84, 29.33 respectively. On the index of pupil teacher ratio, Haryana ranked 30th, 28th, and 28th in primary, upper primary and secondary schools respectively. Hence, it is a point to note that pupil-teacher ratio in Haryana is worse than many other parts of the country.

According to Government of India (1998), in 1992-93, out of total 18.76 lakh students enrolled in classes I-V, 7.69 lakh in VI-VIII and 30.14 lakh from pre-primary to metric, there were 12.38 per cent repeater children for class I-V, 12.63 per cent for class VI to VIII and 10 per cent for class I-X. These figures for India as whole were 3.68 per
cent, 4.65 per cent, 4.07 per cent respectively, which only proves that the state of education in Haryana is appalling.

However, dropout rate in Haryana in the year 1992-93 was quite low as compared to all Indian average. Dropout rate for primary, middle and the secondary level in Haryana was 17.95 per cent (16.63 per cent boy, 19.56 per cent girl), 35.56 per cent (30.4 boy, 42.58 girls) and 50.05 per cent (44.81 boys, 57.62 per cent girls) respectively. However in India as a whole, for the same class and period, the respective figures were 45.01 per cent (43.83 per cent boys, 46.67 per cent girls), 61.10 per cent (58.23 per cent boy, 65.21 per cent girl) and 72.93 per cent (70.00 per cent boy 77.32 per cent girl) respectively (G.O.I, 1998).

The availability of infrastructural facilities is another indicator of the state of education. Nearly 95 per cent of school in rural Haryana have pucca building. But there were still 111 (1.41 per cent) schools, which were running without any building as revealed by NCERT Survey (1998). The survey further revealed that in rural areas of Haryana, 6592 (83.99 per cent) schools have drinking water facility, 5510 (70.22 per cent) schools have urinal facility, 3788 (48.26 per cent) have separate urinal for girls, 2327 (29.65 per cent) have lavatory facility and 1468 (18.70 per cent) have separate lavatory for girls.

The above discussion reveals that the state of education in Haryana is dissatisfactory as compared to many other parts of the country. The condition of school education in rural areas of Haryana is still worse; the outcome of which may lower enrollment and higher dropout rate failing the objective of universal education, which requires scientific investigation.

Lack of educational facilities in rural areas is only one aspect of the problem of achieving UEE. The differential social response to education is also an important factor in achieving universal literacy. It seems all the more true to that of Haryana. Different social groups and different components of the same social groups respond differentially to the development stimuli. Different Castes, Classes and Cultures have different attitude towards education that have direct bearing upon the achievement motivation of the wards. This leads to inequalities, for example, between Scheduled Castes and Non-Scheduled Castes, between males and females, between rural and urban, between poor
and rich. Therefore, the present study responds to the need for critically assessing educational development at the elementary school level in conjunction and intertwined with different socio-cultural and economic group characteristics. The study is an attempt to find out the internal (school related) and external factors such as caste, class and socio-cultural attitude, that directly or indirectly influences the development of elementary education in the state. The proposed study has been specifically entitled as:

“Elementary Education in Rural Haryana: Effects of Caste, Class and Culture”.

The second chapter in this regard deals with the concepts used in the study and will present the detailed information of the existing literature on the subject, objectives and methodology employed for the present study.

The chapter three deals with the assessment of literacy and educational development in Haryana. It critically looks at the causes of educational backwardness in the state. In this chapter progress and variation in the rate of literacy, enrollment and dropout between rural-urban, between male-female, and between castes is analysed. It also deals with the provision of accessibility, availability and quality of education in terms of infrastructural facility and teaching aids in the schools. Attention is also focussed on the increasing involvement of the private sector in school education.

The fourth chapter on ‘Social Structure of Rural Haryana’ presents the various social, demographic, economic and cultural aspects of three selected villages.

The fifth chapter on ‘Caste, Class, Culture and Education’ explores in detail the comparative influences of these variables such as caste, culture, class and occupation exert on the differential access to and demand for elementary education. In addition to this, attitudinal and perceptive differences of parents regarding the educational development of their wards- male and female is also taken into consideration.

Last, that is, sixth chapter on ‘Summary and Conclusion’ is based on the discussion presented in the above chapters.
Notes


2 Also see World Bank, 1993; Jamison and Lau, 1982; Rosengrant and Evenson, 1993.

3 See Karabel and Halsey (1977) and Tilak, 1994.