Chapter 2. Review of Literature, Objectives, and Methodology

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2. Review of Literature, Objectives, and Methodology

In the previous chapter, the development of education system in India shows the continuation of institutional inequality in educational participation between different social groups that exist in India for generations. Subsequently, the present research problem in the context of Haryana was stated. In the present chapter, an attempt is made to elaborate the concepts used in the study and review the existing literature on the theme. On the basis of the review of related studies, objectives of the study have been formulated followed by the details of methodology to collect data for the study.

Concepts and related literature

Before proceeding further, it is important to clarify three important concepts used in the title itself, viz. class, caste and culture.

Class

Class-structure is of pervasive importance in contemporary social life. The control over society’s productive assets determines the fundamental material interests of actors and heavily shapes the capacities of both individuals and collectivities to pursue their interests. In the case of defining the concept of class, there is hardly a consensus among different social thinkers (Wright, 1987). The term class is used by sociologists to refer to the hierarchical division of population on the basis of the economic life of society. Therefore, class designates differences based on wealth, income, and occupation, level of consumption, family background or some combination of these. Warner (1941), an American sociologist, defined classes as “two or more orders of people who are believed to be, and are accordingly ranked by the members of the community, in socially superior and inferior positions.” Class can be defined in a number of ways and social scientists themselves differed widely in their definition of class. It can be defined in terms of hierarchy, dependence or conflict, in terms of ownership or the control of property, in terms of interest or of consciousness, in static or in dynamic terms. Among these factors property and conflict are of particular importance in definition of class. The Marxian concept of class was developed in relation to a particular theory of social change. Marx defined classes in terms of their relation to the means of production, which include land, mines, factories, machinery, raw materials and finance capital in an industrialized
society. He distinguished two broad categories, the owners of the means of production or ‘capitalists’, and the proletariats, who work for wage and who possess only their labour power. The entire institutional structure of a society is seen from the perspective of this relation of production. Marx (1977:20-21) said: “The totality of these relations of production constitute the economic structure of society, the real foundation on which arises a legal and political superstructure and to which correspond definite forms of social consciousness. The mode of production of material life conditions the general process of social, political, and intellectual life. It is not the consciousness of men that determine their existence but their social existence that determines their consciousness”. Therefore, in Marxist view, the concept of class is a relational concept. The position outside the basic class relations does not constitute class but strata. As Wright (1987:42) said the positions which do not seem to fit into the Capitalist-Proletarian dichotomy are simply labeled as ‘middle strata’. Calling them middle strata rather than middle classes because they are outside of the basic class relation; they are middle strata, rather than some other kind of social category, because in the class struggle they are forced to take sides with either the Bourgeoisie or the Proletariat. Wright (1987:283) suggests multi-dimensional view of classes. He said, classes in capitalist society are the complex intersection of three form of exploitation: exploitation based on the ownership of capital assets, the control of organisation assets, and the possession skill or credential assets.

Max Weber was influenced by Marx’s analysis of social structure particularly through the concept of class and class conflict. “... the term class refer to any group of people that is found in the same class situation”(Weber; 1947). Weber writes that we may speak of a class when a number of people have common life chances, and these chances represent economic interests in terms of the possession of goods and opportunities for income and under the conditions of the commodity or labour markets. These three points, according to Weber, refer to ‘class situation’. He makes a distinction between power, class and status, and explain that class may not determine necessarily status and power, and vice versa, whereas Marx observes that class structure is the real foundation and other relations (social, political and cultural, etc) are by products of class, what he called as super structure.
While Marx placed almost exclusive emphasis on economic factors as determinants of social class, Weber suggested a multidimensional model. He acknowledged the importance of economic factors in any system of stratification, but claimed that ‘political power’ and ‘social prestige’ are also important determinants of social class. The concept of class in Marx’s writings is intimately linked with class-consciousness and class struggle and, thus, is a historical category- an instrument of radical social change. The analysis of society in terms of class for Weber and Marx serves two different purposes; in case of Weber it ends up with the identification of some economic strata, while for Marx it is a motive force in History.

Dahrendorf observes that ‘a theory of class based on the division of society into owners and non-owners of means of production loses its analytical value as soon as its legal ownership and factual control are separated’ (Dahrendorf,1959:136). According to Dahrendorf, the structural determinant of class formation and class conflict is the authority structure of entire society as well as particular institutional orders within a society (such as industry). Therefore, classes are social conflict groups determined by exercise or non-exercise of authority within any imperatively coordinated association.

Like Marx and Weber, most modern Sociologists use economic factors as the basic criteria for differentiating social classes. Thus, the British Sociologist Giddens (1973) identifies three major classes in advanced capitalist society. They are an upper class based on the ‘ownership of property in the means of production, a middle class based on the possession of educational or technical qualifications’ and a lower or working class based on the ‘possession of manual labour power’. These classes are distinguished by their relationship to the forces of production and by their particular strategies for obtaining economic reward in a capitalist economy.

Most contemporary approaches to social class take their inspiration from either Marx’s or Weber’s writings on class. The work of neo-Marxist theorists Wright (1978, 1989) and a leading neo-Weberian, Goldthorpe (1967) represents the best-known attempts to update the work of Marx and Weber on class by applying it to contemporary societies. Marxists approaches emphasise that classes are antagonistic groups with different interests and that they are differentiated by their role in production. Wright uses the concept of ‘contradictory class location’ as the solution to this problem. Wright
(1978) distinguishes three classes: Bourgeoisie, petty Bourgeoisie, and proletariat. The Bourgeoisie has control over the means of production, control over labour power and control over investments and accumulation. The proletariat has none of these type of control. The third class, the petty Bourgeoisie, is involved in different mode of production, simple commodity production. The petty Bourgeoisie has control over the means of production and some control over investments and the accumulation process, but no control over labour power, as its members employ no worker. This leaves some workers who are in contradictory locations within class relations, because they have some characteristics in common with two classes, rather than being pure members of one. Managers, supervisors, technocrats and ‘foreman’ are in a contradictory location between bourgeoisie and the proletariat. They have some degree of control but not as much as the bourgeoisie nor as little as the proletariat. Further Wright talked about two more classes, that is, small employers situated between petty Bourgeoisie, and semi-autonomous wage earners situated between the proletariat and the petty Bourgeoisie (see Wright, 1987).

While Wright (1987) has concentrated on the theoretical development of a Marxist approach, Goldthorpe (1980, 1987) has been more concerned with the practical application of Weberian ideas. Goldthorpe’s class structure is based on the distinction between market and work situations. To determine the market and work situations, he used two types of information: a job title and information about whether the person was self-employed, an employer or an employee. Each individual is then given an employment status (for example large proprietor or self-employed without employees) and placed in an occupational group according to the type of work he or she does. The former information is held to be a measure of work situation, the later of market situation. Individuals are then allocated to predetermined class categories according to a combination of their work and market situations. This procedure led to Goldthorpe identifying seven classes. These seven classes are sometimes condensed into three.1

Runciman (1990) uses both Marxists concepts such as ‘the means of production’ and Weberian ones such as ‘marketability’ to define the class. Runciman argued that class structure consists of sets of roles. He defined classes as: ‘sets of roles whose common location in social space is a function of the nature and degree of economic power (or lack of it) attaching to them through their relation to the institutional processes

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1 See Goldthorpe (1984) for details on the procedure used to allocate individuals to class categories.
of production, distribution and exchange. The class an individual belongs to is determined by examining a combination of ownership, control and marketability- three types of economic power. People can end up in a higher class by having ownership, control or marketability, or indeed any combination of three. Runciman identifies seven classes based upon the possession of different amount of ownership, control and marketability.²

Ossowski (1963:), who reviewed literature extensively on Class, gave his own notion of gradation in place of class that involves both subjectively and objectively measured rank.³ Braverman (1974) examine the changing nature of class in the USA over the past 100 years. He argued that classes are ‘not fixed entities rather ongoing processes, rich in change, transition, variation’. From this point of view, classes in capitalist society are constantly developing and it therefore makes little sense to attempt to place the population into neatly defined strata at one point in time. Instead the process of class formation must be examined. Braverman (1974) argued that this process is largely directed by changes in the nature of work in capitalist society. Capitalism involves the maximization of profit that results in the accumulation of capital. In pursuit of this end, the labour process has been transformed over the past 100 years. This transformation has important consequences for the formation of classes.

The definition of class given by Betellie (1969) is also a curious mixture of Weberian and Marxian notions of class. Betellie’s observation that ‘classes are categories rather than groups refer to Weberian definition of class. The statement that ‘by class we mean a category of persons occupying a specific position in the system of production’ refers to Marxian overtones. Further as he said ‘Class system’ is a system of social relations. The economy of the village is based primarily upon agriculture, and hence the relation of production consists essentially of relation between categories of persons contributing in different ways to the process of agriculture.

The conceptual categories when put to practice in empirical situation yield different results. Since our study is focussed on the rural area of Haryana, it is important to review relevant literature where the analytical use of the concept of class has been made to understand the agrarian structure. Agrarian class structure means the arrangement of groups (or classes) determined by access, or denial of access, to land, the
principal means of production. The differential access to land, which governs how one class relates to another— is the basis of relation of productions. Agrarian class relations are embedded in caste, because whether a person control land or not are conditioned by that person’s caste status (Chakarvarti, 2001:1449). Though much of the sociological literature on the peasants mentions the role of various classes and the importance of class analysis, little is said about the proper ways of classifying the peasantry and its methodological assumptions and implications. In some studies, the tendency is to apply mechanically a Marxian model of any variety, without specifically bearing in mind the differences in culture, customs and traditions. Although there are broad similarities in sociological characteristics between different societies, yet it is always necessary to examine the relations between structural and cultural variables that have a bearing not only on class positions, but on class-consciousness as well.

As far as Marxist approach to class analysis of peasants is concerned, it is well known that Marx had written very little on the peasantry and more specifically on class differentiation among the peasantry. It was Engels, who wrote more on this subject, and later, both Lenin and Mao Tse Tung independently developed their schemes of analysis on the basis of their experience in Russia and China, respectively.

Engels divided peasantry into three classes, the small peasants, the middle peasants and the big peasants. By small peasants he meant “the owner or tenant, particularly the former of a patch of land no bigger, as a rule, than he and his family can till, and no smaller than can sustain the family”. By middle and big peasants he meant generally those who own more land than small peasants and where operation of “farm requires, generally, the help of male and female servants.” That is, by small peasants Engels refers to the self-sufficient peasant class.

Lenin (1920) and Mao (1930s) divided rural society into five classes: landlords, rich peasants, middle peasants, poor peasants, and the rural proletariat. Lenin(ibid) and Mao(ibid) both identified three indices in identifying class status: possession of the means of production, the type of use of labour (whether the household primarily exploit others, is primarily self employed, or is itself primarily exploited), and the position regarding the satisfaction of subsistence needs and the production of investible surplus.4
Following Mao-tse-tung’s analysis of peasantry, Gough (1968) divided the rural population of Kerala (India) into five classes. The classes are: (1) Landlord (2) Rich Peasants (3) Middle Peasant (4) Poor Peasants and (5) Landless Labourers. Since peasants also lease-in land from landlords and employ workers at peak seasons, the classes tend to be arranged in terms of production relations, as well as wealth and social status.

Thorner (1976) has suggested three-fold division of the agricultural population into malik or proprietors, kisan or working peasants and mazdoors or agricultural labourers. The analysis of agrarian class structure, both by Gough (1968) and Thorner (1976), is based on the economic exploitation criterion. That is why two crucial elements in the analysis acquire central significance, namely, ownership of land and the hiring/selling of labour power. In this perspective, division of peasantry into five classes by Gough is nothing but the elaboration of three basic classes put forward by Thorner (1976).

Tariq Ali (1970) also identified five classes in relation to erstwhile Pakistan (now Bangladesh) namely Big land lords (owned >100 acres land), Rich peasants or kulaks (25-100 acres) Middle peasants (5-25 acres), Poor peasants(owned < 5 acres), and lastly tenant, sharecroppers, and rural proletariat who own no land of their own. The basic difficulty in this method of analysis is that the definition remains arbitrary without any analytical or structural significance whatsoever. Division into classes without incorporating any notion of relations of production is vague and analytically of little value.

Shah (1969) has defined five classes on the basis of land-ownership: Owners, owner-cum-tenants, tenants, bhagias (share-croppers), annual labourers, and casual labourers. Shah (ibid), unlike Gough and Thorner, has not clearly used the criterion of social relations that is crucial for class demarcation. For instance, tenant and sharecroppers do not belong to two different classes but are distinguished simply on the basis of mode of payment of rent. Similarly, the differences between attached annual labourers and casual labourers is not of category but simply quantitative. Thus, this agrarian class analysis has little analytical value. Five-fold classification of Saith and Tanakha (1972) is better than the above-mentioned classification by Shah (1969).
Similarly, Census survey provides material, which allows a classification of the agricultural population. The basic categories used in the Census are landlords, owner cultivators, tenant cultivators and agricultural labourers. But the distribution of classes, one get on this basis, corresponds more often to the needs of statistical convenience than to those of sociological relevance. But for Sociologists, “classes are not merely statistical aggregates, they are units in a system of relationships.”

In short, though the division of peasants into classes, in terms of income or landholding, to a certain extent reflects their respective class status, the homogeneity of quality of land and its utilization pattern is taken for granted. In this type of division, the relationship of each class with different types of means of production is not ascertained. Sociologically, this refers to a simple hierarchical system, without any perception of composite hierarchy of socio-cultural, political and economic differences.

The most important material base of inequality in the South Asian societies is the distribution of land. The land holding have been classified on the basis of area covered, in terms of gross product, gross and net worth, and extent of wage labour (Vyas, 1968; Rudra et al, 1969; Patnaik, 1975). Yet the predominant form of classification has been on the basis of acreas. This is due to the reason that in India villages, control over land and control and authority over local level institutions usually go together. Access to other factors of production is largely determined by the size of land holding (Vyas, 1976). As Myrdal (1968) has also written, “ Particularly in the South Asian rural setting, inequality is in fact mainly a question of land ownership with which are associated leisure, enjoyment of status, and authority. Income differences are considered less significant”. Therefore in the present study, the ownership of land is the main base of classification of rural households into classes. However, income to the family from non-agricultural sources also has taken care off. Since the agriculture of Haryana is part of the heartland of green revolution in North-West India, we assume that the agriculture of the state has been fully subsumed by the capitalist market relations. Even the character of the tenancy is more of the nature of capitalist base than the traditional sense of tenancy (Singh, 2000). Therefore amount of land and total gross income are taken as the important criteria for the classification of rural households into classes (see Appendix A, Table -1 and 2).
Caste
The basis of social structure of Indian society is built on the hierarchy of castes. It is pervasive and all embracing and is known for controlling and defining all social, economic, and political relationships for the individual; as it ascriptively defines the social life of an individual, it is, at least in conception, immutable. It is, therefore, considered as the extreme opposite of an egalitarian democratic social order. Hence, the 1950 Constitution of Republic of India which adopted secular, egalitarian, and democratic ideals for social and political relations, de-legalized the caste system and abolished untouchability- a major bane of the system (Bhatt, 1975:1-2)

Caste has different connotations to different people. English word: ‘caste’ is commonly used to refer to both the Varna (order, class or kind) and the Jati (birth group). The concept of Varna involves a scheme with only four divisions. Hindu society is conceived of as being divisible into four very large stratas, which transcend specific regional associations.9

In contrast to four Varna scheme, the term ‘jati’ has most often been used for the units of thousands or sometimes millions of people with whom one may identify for such purpose as marriage. There are thousands of titles associated with specific jatis in different parts of the country. A few such titles- most notably Rajput, Chamar and Jat – have come to be quite widely recognized, most will be unfamiliar to people outside a limited geographical area (Bayle, 1999)

Anthropologists, Sociologists and other social scientists from their own standpoint have used the term caste. In the words of the anthropologist Khare (1983:85), “the concept of jati refers to the experience of caste in the ‘concrete and factual’ domain of every day social life, as opposed to the ‘ideal and symbolic archetypes’ which are embodied in the concept of Varna.” Once caste or caste like norms have come to be widely shared in a given region, a reference to jati can therefore identify people in a very minute and precise way; the designation of Varna evoke vast and sweeping generalities, while one would expect to find at least a rough match between the two. There has often been much dispute about the precise order of merit among the various jati population of a given region. Furthermore, people of different doctrinal traditions and social
circumstances have attached differing degrees of importance to these schemes of caste. Indeed all these conceptual principles, and the way, in which people have acted on them, have been far more diverse and flexible than has often been thought, both by academics and by would be reformers of castes.

Bougie (1958:9) has explained castes as “hereditarily specialized and hierarchically arranged groups.” He has given three characteristics of the caste system - hierarchy, hereditary specialization, and repulsion. Explaining the last characteristic, he claims that different castes repel rather than attract each other. Repulsion is manifested in the endogamy, commensal restriction, and contact. This is, however, not true. We can not and do not find repulsion among castes because they need each other.

Kroeber (1939:254) defines caste as “an endogamous and hereditary sub-division of an ethnic unit occupying a position of superior or inferior rank or social esteem in comparison with other such sub-divisions”. According to him castes are special forms of social classes, which, in tendency at least, are present in every society. Kroeber’s notion of caste, thus, can be related to the functional theory of stratification prevailing in sociology.

Bailey (1960) and Srinivas (1962) have avoided the problem of definition of caste. They view caste as a structure. Ketkar, Dutt, and Opler also, instead of defining caste, have given the inductive characteristics of the caste system. According to Ketkar (1909:15), caste is a social group having two characteristics of hereditary membership and endogamy. Dutt (1931:3-4) has referred to the restrictions on marriage, eating and drinking, occupation, change in hereditary membership, and the hierarchical gradation of castes. Ghurye (1957:2-19) has also given similar features of the caste system. Besides referring to hereditary membership, caste councils, hierarchy, and endogamy as the important features of the caste system, he also refers to the restriction on feeding and social intercourse, lack of unrestricted choice of occupation, and civil and religious disabilities.

Beteille (1969:46) takes into consideration three main characteristics of caste namely endogamy, hereditary membership, and specific style of life in defining this term. “…caste may be defined as a small and named group of persons characterized by endogamy, hereditary membership, and a specific style of life which sometime includes
the pursuit by tradition of a particular occupation and is usually associated with a more or less distinct ritual status in a hierarchical system”.

All these scholars, thus, view caste system as composed of solidarity. Their perception is influenced either by the philosophical theories of civilization (as in the case of Ketkar and Dutt), or by the anthropological theories of culture (as in the case of Kroeber and Risley), or by the sociological theories of society (as in case of Bougie and Ghurye).

Castes not only provide building blocks of Indian social system, they also have cultural, religious, economic, and political dimensions intimately linked with each respective castes in the hierarchy. In other words, the whole Worldview is divided and placed in a hierarchical order in a caste dominated Indian society. The centrality of caste in Indian society was perceived as being essentially a religious phenomenon, emanating somehow from the very nature of Hinduism. Senart (1930), Maine (1931), and Weber (1958) have highlighted the religious aspects of castes. The assumption about Hinduism in much of the early sociological writing is that in it religion and social structure are inseparable so that Hinduism stands not only for a particular religion but also for a particular social structure, that structure being caste (Betellie, 2001:156). Senart (1930:91) wrote, ‘Hindu society is regulated by religious percept’. Henry Maine (1931:14-17) writing in the second half of the nineteenth century found it difficult to detach Hindu law from Hindu religion.

Weber (1958:29) too found intimate links between the social aspects of caste and its religious functions. ‘Caste, that is, the ritual rights and duties it gives and imposes, and the position of Brahmans, is the fundamental institution of Hinduism. Before anything else, without caste there is no Hindu’. Like Weber, Bougle (1971:65) also drew attention repeatedly to the inseparability of caste and Hinduism.

The sociological perspective views the caste system in terms of social stratification in a society, and as a phenomenon of social inequality. According to it, society has certain structural aspects and it distributes its members in social positions. The interaction is the basis of social structures, and types of interaction along with associated norms categorize social structure (Ahuja, 1993:229).
For Bailey, caste is not a unique moral or religious system. It is merely a more elaborate form of social stratification to be found in many other societies. The true basis of the distinction between those of low and high caste is in differential access to political and economic resources. Bailey (1963) therefore, provides a structural definition of the caste system.

Dumont (1972), a French Structural Sociologist, found the Indian caste system around 'core values' of 'purity and pollution'. According to him, the caste system is said to be founded on the concept of purity and pollution associated with human beings, objects and activities, and determine the form that social relations between any two persons may take. The concept of purity and pollution provides the basis for hierarchization so that, ideally, each caste group occupies a particular position in the hierarchy of castes.

There has been a dispute among the authors as to whether the concept ‘caste’ is peculiar to Hindus or it is also applicable to other religious categories. Some social scientists have argued that caste norms are based on ideals, which are unique to Hinduism, and that ‘true’ castes are to be found only among those who profess the Hindu faith. Yet this pre-supposes much firmer boundaries between ethno-religious ‘communities’ that was often the case in the past centuries. Certainly, caste like forms of rank and corporate allegiance have been very prominent in the lives of most people who would now a days is thought of as non-Hindus. The difficulty here is that so many studies of the supposedly casteless minority faiths have played down those elements of religious and social life which adherents of these faiths have shared with the wider society. Yet if one looks at the millions who subscribe to India’s minority faiths- Islam, Sikhism, Christianity, Jainism, and in the past and today a high level of sensitivity to the nuances of caste, especially in matters of marriage and ritual pollution (Bayle, Susan; 1999:18) Srinivas (1980:1) also said that caste is found among the Muslims, Christians, Sikhs, Jainism, and Jews. Caste is ubiquitous, and this has resulted in an ideology tolerant of diversity (see Appendix B for discussion).

The term Caste has been widely used to describe ranked groups within rigid systems of social stratification and especially those, which constitute the society of Hindu India. The caste system of India is unique that has religious connotations which explains
it in its complexity, and in the degree to which the constituent groups are cohesive and self-regulating. We find that the caste system in the typical Indian way of life is to be found in almost all communities in varying degrees and proportions. Caste in these communities has also been playing its role in the differential accessibility of various development indicators to its members. Indeed, there are significant differences in castes as it is exhibited within Hindu India from place to place and even from caste to caste within same locale.

Caste and Class
The sociologists and anthropologists in general have treated caste and class either as two mutually exclusive categories or as two identical categories, (Bose, 1967; and Mukherjee, 1924). Culturally caste has been conceived in terms of pollution-purity, ritual hierarchy and a feature associated with Hinduism and it is considered to be different from class (Dumont, 1972; Srinivas, 1952; Dube, 1955; Mayer, 1960). Structurally caste has been considered an extreme form of class rigidity of status groups (Lenski, 1966). But the areas of overlap between these two categories have not been looked into properly. Caste in India, for example, has an element of class in it. Especially, the exploitative aspect of class; but it is wrong to hypothesize that caste is another form of class. As Mencher (1974:469-70) has pointed out, “from the point of view of people at the lowest end of scale, caste has functioned (and continue to function) as a very effective system of economic exploitation.” In India, our concern with the cultural aspect of caste has resulted in the neglect of delineating the class elements present in the caste system, and some of common features of these two categories.

Castes in Haryana
Caste is quite a predominant factor in the state in spite of significant economic development. In day-to-day living and in all social functions, caste plays an important role. The caste system continues to determine marriages, preference in occupations and value pattern in Haryana. Therefore it would be worthwhile to look into the effects of caste on other development stimuli like education

Hindu, who constitute the majority of Haryana’s population is divided into a number of castes. Hindu Jats occupy a prominent place in Haryana. Changes in the economic life of the jats have not been as fast as in their political life. The Jats are not
only the single largest group in the state, but also dominant in the state politics. They are better represented in the agriculture and are branching out in other directions, including trade and cottage industries in rural areas in a small way and in services, particularly in army and police in a big way.

The Rajputs, less in number than Jats, still occupy a respectable position in the social structure of agrarian Haryana. Earlier, they had been part of the feudal class in Haryana. New social legislations, particularly land reforms, which drastically cut down their landholdings, have placed them at a disadvantage. A section among them still eulogizes the earlier status of Rajputs but then has to accept the changed environment.

The Brahmins, who had earlier dominated the social and religious life, are now joining services where their educational achievements help them to enter into. A section of Brahmins, who gave up the priestly profession and went in for agriculture, came to be known as Tyagis. The Brahmins are the most orthodox religious group in the state. With the changing environment even they are taking to other professions, such as trade, industry and landownership, etc. Gaur Brahmins, like the Jats, used to be enrolled in the army in large numbers during the Unionist regime before partition.

Ahirs, another very important and significant caste, concentrated in Mahendergarh and parts of neighboring Gurgaon and Rohtak districts, are mostly skilled agriculturists. They have also come to acquire political importance in Haryana. Other important castes among Hindus in the state are Rors, Baniyas, etc.

Among Muslims the Meos and Minas are very significant. They are concentrated in Mewat, which consists of Ferozepur Jhirka, and Nuh tehsils of Gurgaon district. Their manners and customs have much in common with other agriculturist castes of the area, such as Jats, Rajputs, Ahirs, etc. Some Meo families had migrated to Pakistan after partition, but most of them have returned to Mewat as they could not adjust to the change.

Scheduled Castes constitute about one fifth of the total population of the state. There has been a significant change in their occupation. Earlier the Chamars had been shoe-makers, Churas scavengers, Dhanik and Jullahs weavers. But later, they had taken to agricultural occupation as labourers. Since then, there have been more changes in their occupation. Some among them have secured good government jobs, entered trade and industry, and are going in for modern education.
Culture

Culture is not entirely independent of social structure. Culture as a set of norms, values, rules, etc. lays ground for the production of knowledge and its material transformation. While culture provides ground for the material and non-material social reproduction of life, in turn, the latter too influence the former. It is, therefore, important to pay due attention to what Marx called as super-structure.

Culture (or civilization), taken in its wide ethnographic sense, is that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society (Tylor: [1871] 1958, vol. I.). Malinowski (1931) placed emphasis on culture as a functioning, active, efficient well organized unity, which must be analysed into component institutions in relation to one another, in relation to the needs of the human organism, and in relation to the environment, man-made as well as natural.

Radcliffe-Brown (1952:195) used culture in terms of social structure, which is a patterned arrangement of relationship between different parts of a whole and these parts are interdependent on each other. Each structural system is a functional unity in which all the component parts contribute in a harmonious way to its existence and continuity. Therefore, all kinds of social phenomena morals, law, etiquette, religion, government, economic, education, language need to be studied “not in abstraction or isolation, but in their direct and indirect relations to social structure, i.e., with reference to the way in which they depend upon, or affect the social relations between persons and groups of persons”.

In the same manner, White (1947) also observed that: “Human beings have to be related to each other in an effective manner in order to carry on the business of life successfully. Social, political, ethical, artistic, ecclesiastical, and educational systems operate to accomplish this purpose. They are means of co-ordinating, integrating, regulating, and directing human endeavor toward the goal of all life: a secure and agreeable existence.”

Castes as a Distinctive Cultural Groups

In a fundamental sense, culture rests on an ecological foundation, since the basic requirements of all social life are survival and the satisfaction of individual and collective needs within a demanding and often limited environment (Olsen, 1991). However, there
is a culture within the culture. The single term ‘culture’ refers to the dominant, encompassing culture of an entire society. A societal culture normally shapes or influences the cultural ideas held by all other organizations and most individuals within its borders. The specific cultures associated with particular organizational units or sets of people within a society are referred to as sub cultures. Sub-cultures usually include many ideas derived from the encompassing societal culture, but they also contain ideas that differ from that culture and identify them as distinct sub-culture. Despite the distinctive features of any subculture, it will usually be heavily influenced by the encompassing societal culture (Olsen, 1991).

Lewis (1962:2) explains about the culture of the poor in its own modalities and distinctive social and psychological consequences for its members “the culture of poverty cuts across regional, rural-urban, and even national boundaries. By describing the culture of poverty in Mexico, Lewis hopes to throw light on the cultures of poverty –stricken peoples in general. Harrington (1962:158-174) describes and analyses the ‘culture of poverty’ in the United States. By implications, there are cultures of affluence and privilege associated with those of poverty. In fact, culture of poverty exist only with reference to culture of affluence; they are symbiotic or complementary parts of the same system and derive their characteristics partly from one another. Analogously, there is possible to describe ‘cultures of caste organisations’ as there are characteristic features of life in caste system.

A culture is characterised not by unique elements so much as by a unique pattern of elements. Thus, we would expect that caste cultures would be characterised not by unique features, but by a distinctive congeries of elements. Many of these elements are doubtless characteristics of any sharply stratified society; others may be characteristics of any plural society; still others, of any society with important inherited statuses. Caste cultures may be expected to exhibit a common and distinctive combination of elements from these three sources. Some of their manifestations might be termed cultures of super ordination and sub-ordination within a society; a culture of honour, power and privilege verses those of denigration, subjection, and deprivation.10

Berreman (1979) define a caste system as distinct cultural groups. He stated “caste system occurs where a society made up of birth-ascribed groups which are
hierarchically ordered and culturally distinct. The hierarchy entails differential
evaluation, rewards, and association. It is in the cultural distinctiveness of castes, and in
the lack of consensus among castes on many key values and attitudes, that caste system
resembles plural societies. In this sense, caste resembles the plural societies, with the
dominant caste(s) exercising the power which maintains ‘status quo’, just as does the
dominant group in a plural societies. Castes in India are culturally distinct groups that
resembles the plural societies. It is a ‘special form of differentiation based on institutional
divergences’ (Smith, 1965). Castes in India share much by way of cultural traditions,
values, attitudes and goals. But in each of these spheres they are culturally distinct as a
result of History and differential association. The nature of their shared culture is
different from and its extent considerably less than in societies which are culturally and
socially continuous- which lack plural features. “Caste share some institutions with other
castes, but each has important distinctive institutions as well – a fact recognised by
Weber in his distinction between caste as corporate groups and classes as not” (cited in
Berreman, 1979:78).

Thus, caste system combines the principles of stratification and pluralism. A caste
system resembles a plural society whose discrete sections are ranked vertically. A plural
society resembles a caste system where in the groups (except the dominant one) are
unranked relative to one another. In both instances, there is a dominant group whose
sanctions assure persistence of the system by articulating its component parts (Berreman,
1979:79-80).

On the basis of foregoing discussion, we would take into account that how
ecology and history have thrown up culture and sub-cultures simultaneously. Haryana as
linguistic state has its own culture and history but even this Haryanavi culture
encompasses sub-cultures, such as, Meos, Bagri jat, Haryanavi jat, etc. For the present
study, caste will be taken as a part of social structure on the one hand and as a relatively
autonomous unit of subculture on the other. Caste is fossilised class, which has lost its
dynamism due to religious legitimacy super imposed over it. Nevertheless class and caste
are two different concepts though praxis always tended to merge them together. For our
analytical purpose we would keep them separate.
Existing Studies on the Theme

A plethora of studies have been conducted to understand the quality and quantity of school education with reference to social structure of Indian society. Sociologists, educationists, and other state/ national agencies have studied the process and degree of relation between education and other social sub-system. Generally, the studies are on themes, such as, access to primary education, infrastructure and educational facilities; causes of non-enrollment, non-attendance and dropout, school management and administration; and socio-economic and cultural background of the students. Here, an attempt is made to review some of these studies to enhance our understanding of the field.


Govinda and Verghese (1991) studied the primary schooling in Madhya Pradesh and derived the conclusion that the level of infra-structural facilities provided in the schools played an important role in improving the teaching-learning environment and, consequently, the learner achievement level as well as overall quality of education. Packkiam (1990), Gupta and Gupta(1992), Sarma(1992), Sarma et al (1991) and Panda (1995) reported that lack of infra-structural facilities, teaching aid and trained teachers were some of the causes of bad performance of school education system.

Packkian (1990) investigated the implementation of OBS (Operation Blackboard Scheme) in Sakkottai Panchayat, Tamilnadu and concluded that 83 per cent of government primary schools did not have adequate physical facilities. Private school teachers were utilising the teaching material like primary science kit, library books and classroom equipment to a greater extent than their counterparts in the government schools. Sarma (1992) studied the problem of the children of the tea garden labour community. She concluded that 80 per cent schools had a single hall with no partition between the classes, 90 per cent had no urinals or latrines and 60 per cent had no provision of drinking water and only a few schools had an adequate number of desks and benches.
Sarma et al. (1991) studied primary education problem in Jorhat district of Assam. They found that no teaching aids were available in 81 per cent of schools. The same team of researchers undertook a similar study to identify the problem of upper primary stage, i.e., classes VI to VIII. They found that these schools were much better off than the primary schools with respect to physical facilities and teaching aids. Panda (1995) studied the schools in the Koraput district of Orissa. Besides lack of infrastructural facility and teaching aids, he found that funds were not available for the schools to make minor repairs. It was found that many of the teachers did not attend any in-service teacher training after joining the schools. Acharya (2001) studied the access to primary education in rural Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh. He found that the physical availability and accessibility to schools are less than satisfactory. He further pointed out that in any geographical area, historical and social forces have influenced the determination of access to schooling. Pande (2001) also found that availability of certain civic amenities like roads, tap water, primary health care center, post office and electricity are positively correlated with participation in education of 5-14 years old children. Both dropout and non-enrollment rate are lower in villages where such facilities are available and utilized.

Birdi (1992), Mohanty (1991), Sharma (1992) and Gandhi (1995) conducted studies on management, administration and supervision. In the study of Punjab State, Birdi (1992) found that since independence the methods and procedures of supervision and inspection had not undergone much change. The work of the inspecting officer had increased without any corresponding increase in the strength of staff; and the state plan did not make adequate provision of the funds for improvement of administration and inspection, and when the funds were allocated, they became the first victims of reduction. Mohanty (1991) conducted an investigation into the efficiency of the system of supervision of the UEE (Universalisation of Elementary Education) programme in Orissa. He found that the supervisions did more para and non-academic work and their number was insufficient. Though the government required the superintendents to do extension work, it neither made the provision for their normal TA nor for necessary facilities. The D.I. (District Inspector) of schools had less control over the supervisors. Political interference in the administration of elementary education was another important
reason. A similar study by Sharma (1992) found that the provision for the supervision of NFE centers at the regional and district level was supportive in 56 per cent cases, indifferent in 36.67 per cent cases and even obstructive in 7.33 per cent cases. Gandhi (1995) explored the influence of management system of school on the organizational conflicts and the school results. It was observed that school result was significantly greater in schools where participative or co-operative system is used and lower in schools where exploitative authority system is used.

Thomus (2001) stated that school education is not costless. In government and in private aided schools, tuition is free and ‘special fee’ is nominal. However, there are other costs that households have to incur. They may be, in general, categorized as the non-fee components and comprise cost of books, dress, travel etc. The category is fairly large and it is this component that makes school education ‘unfree’. No difference is observed in per pupil cost on the basis of sex or caste except that it is lower among S.Cs due to indigence. On the qualitative aspects also Thomus (2001) observed that the teaching-learning process in schools is lethargic. No effective system of monitoring of this process exists. Thus, in the process of widening of the educational net, the system has become inefficient and has paved the way for entry of commercial interests, particularly high cost unaided schools.

Studies are also conducted on comparison of government and private schools. Singh (1998) in his study on comparative analysis of government and private schools in Gorakhpur and Saharanpur districts in Uttar Pradesh, found that government schools were old and had poorly maintained school buildings. Teachers in government schools were found to be well trained, being paid according to pay scales of the state government, whereas private school teachers were untrained and low paid. The study also found that the enrollment rate was higher in government (class I) than in private schools. However, performance (measured by pass rate) was found to be better in private schools. The study attributed this to the regular homework given to students in private schools, which is found to be absent in government schools. Similarly Singh and Kumar (1999) in their study in Bihar found that most of the private schools had poor quality physical infrastructure, but better pre-primary teaching facilities that were nearly absent in government schools. Government schools were found to have fewer, but well trained
teachers, although learning-achievement was found to be higher in private than in government schools. Private school teachers worked harder and refrained from going on leave, which was not the case with government school teachers. A comparison of the profile of parents showed that preference for private schools was linked to their educational status and aspirations.

Studies are also available to identify some of the important determinants of schooling for the children. Two types of factors, that is, household or community related factors, and school related factors, are pointed out by various studies. Among household related factors, it was found that parental education (Behrman and Wolfe, 1983; Jamison and Lockheed, 1987; Burney and Irfan, 1991; Deolalikar, 1994; Llyod and Blanc, 1996; Tansel, 1997; Pandey, 1990; Sarma, 1992; Nayar, 1995; Acharya, 1995; Vishvanath, 1997; NFHS, 1999) had an extremely strong positive influence on the children’s particularly girls’ school participation. On the whole, for girls’ participation, the impact of mothers’ education was considerably stronger than that of the father’s (Murarn, 1981; Behrman and Wolfe, 1983; Behrman and Wolfe, 1987; King and Lilard, 1987; Nossain, 1990; Hill and O’Neill, 1994; Sather and Llyod, 1994; and Alderman et al, 1996). Household income was also a significant determinant, that is, higher levels of income being associated with higher demand for schooling (Wolfe and Behrman, 1984; King and Lilard, 1987; Hossain, 1990; Ghosh, 1991; Burney and Irfan, 1991; Premi, 1991; Hill and O’Neill, 1994; Parish and Willis, 1994; Sather and Llyod, 1994; Acharya, 1994; Guha Roy et al, 1995; Llyod and Blanc, 1996; Tansel, 1997; Alderman et al, 1997, Chattopadhyay, 2001; Srivastava, 2001; Krishan ji, 2001). Some researchers found an association between schooling opportunities (and attainment) and household or primary occupation. The opportunities cost of schooling was high for children from the agricultural sector (Chernichovsky, 1985; Knodel and Wonsith, 1990; Pandey,1990; Burney and Irfan,1991; Carvajal et al,1993), and so they typically had low enrollment rates, high dropout rates, and performed poorly in school. Children from white-collar families (Behrman and Taubman,1989; Hamid,1993; Parish and Willis,1994) had consistently better schooling outcomes. Belonging to a larger families (Knodel and Wonsith,1990), and being an older girl child in a family with many younger siblings (Cherinochovsky,1985; Pandey,1990; Ghosh,1991; Singh;1991; Parrish and Willis,1994;
Choudhry, 1994; Mukhopadhyay, 1994; Lloyd and Blanc, 1996) were both factors that exerted a strong negative influence on girls’ schooling. This was particularly true if there were younger male children in the family (Parish and Willis, 1994; Jejeebhoy, 1993). Generally, mother’s labour force participation had a depressing effect on children’s schooling because daughters often have to shoulder the responsibilities of household chores and sibling care (Cherinochovsky, 1985; Pandey, 1990; Ghosh, 1991; Singh, 1991; Parrish and Willis, 1994; Choudhry, 1994; Mukhopadhyay, 1994; Lloyd and Blanc, 1996), and because the lack of maternal attention and supervision discourages children particularly girl’s schooling (Hill and O’Neill, 1994; Tansel, 1997). However, some studies also found that the positive effect of the addition to resources from mother’s earnings overshadowed the negative impact of the mother’s absence from home (Psachropoulos and Arriagada, 1989; Haveman et al., 1991; Tansel, 1997). A child’s own labour participation substantially reduced his/her chances of schooling (Psachropoulos and Arriagada, 1989; Pandey, 1990; Ghosh, 1991; Premi, 1991; Mukhopadhyay, 1994; Weiner, 1996). Non-congenial home environment (Sharma, 1992; Reddy, 1995), socialisation of children in the family (Davindra, 1996), academic motivation and inferiority complex among children (mainly belonging to lower socio-economic strata), lack of control of parents over children, harsh behaviour of the parents (Mishra, 1992) were some other social-psychological factors responsible for students’ dropout. Ramkrishnaiah (1997) studied the patterns such as historical, social, cultural, etc. of education among the tribes. He found that the traditional belief and customs discouraged any change in educational patterns. The traditional life styles were not contributing to the cause of education. Cultural patterns were coming in the way of education and they were not contributing to education. Also lack of vernacular medium of instruction was obstacle for education. Pande (2001) in her study on Education of Rural Children in U.P Himalya shows that there is a distinct relationship between the scarcity of natural resources base and educational status of the younger children especially girls. The environmental crisis in the hills in terms of land degradation, that is, deforestation, deterioration of grassland and soil erosion has affected the lives of women and children. The shrinking resources base has lengthened working hours of women to 11-12 hours a day. When mothers go to the forests to collect fuel wood, fodder, children especially girls are often pulled out of
school to help in domestic activities to look after younger siblings or to take care of animals.

Krishan ji (2001) in the study of two districts of Andhra Pradesh on Poverty, Gender and Schooling explained that mere provision of schools may not be sufficient to promote literacy. Conditions at the household level are still of paramount importance in determining whether a child goes to school or not. Poverty is undoubtedly the most relevant factor in this respect. But Thomus (2001), in his study reveals some other factors. According to him, on the determinants of educational choices- to enroll, to continue or to dropout, none of the parental background variables (namely, caste, parental education, land holding, and general asset status) that reflects inequality was found significant. Rather, there seems to exist ‘factors beyond home’ that influence educational decisions. Despite similar political, social and economic conditions in the region, what made Areacode lead in the field of education was the initiative that had come as a response from within the community to challenges posed by religious orthodoxy.

Regarding school related factors, studies indicated that, lack of teachers commitment to their duties (Sachchidananda,1989; Bihari,1987; Masavi;1987; Yadav,1991; Vyas,1992; Mishra,1992), paucity of women teachers, highly politicized teaching community and less representation of S.C and S.T teachers (Sachchidananda,1989), lack of teachers or multiple class teaching (Barua,1991; Hussain,1991; Yadav,1991; Mishra,1992), lack of interest of pupil in study (yadav,1991; Sarma,1992; NFHS,1998-99), heavy syllabi or the absence of the reference to local culture and life tradition in the text books causing disinterest among pupils (Ambasht and Rath,1995; Yadav,1991; Mishra,1992; Nayar,1994), lack of effective supervision and rampant corruption in the supervisory cadre (Mohanty,1991; Sachchidananda,1989), lack of resources or funds (Sarma,1992; Saxena, Singh and Gupta,1995), Non-availability of adequate library and reading room facility (Asthana,1993), lack of physical access and infra-structural facilities of schools, teaching aids and trained teachers (Govinda and Verghese,1991; Pakkiam,1990; Gupta and Gupta,1992; Sarma,1992; Sarma et al,1991; Panda,1995; Acharya,2001; Mishra,1992; Nayar,1994; Pande,2001), teaching practices (Yadav,1991; Saxena, Singh and Gupta,1995; Nayar,1994), and lack of healthy school community relationship and lack of use of vernacular language as the medium of
instruction, were some of the causes of bad performance of school education system in India. Based on a study of schools in Allahabad district in Utter Pradesh, it was found that (Malhotra, 1998) while enrollment in schools giving incentives to students was higher than those that were not giving incentives, attendance in schools without incentives was higher than those with incentives. In addition to these studies, Pandey (2001) also found that availability of certain civic amenities like roads, tap water, primary health care, post office and electricity are positively correlated with participation in education of 5-14 year old children. Both dropout and non-enrollment rate are lower in villages where such facilities are available and utilised. Acharya (2001) also pointed out that in any geographical area, historical and social forces have influenced the determination of access to schooling. Duraiswamy (2001) observed in his study on demand for and access to schooling in Tamilnadu, that the enrollment and dropout rate, and educational attainment of children shows considerable intra and inter village variations. Parents’ education and household’s prosperity emerge as important factors behind schooling differentials. Differences in educational access on the basis of gender and, to a lesser extent, in terms of caste are observed. Villages where the average adult literacy rate is high and which are better placed in terms of availability of schools show better schooling outcomes.

Various studies have been conducted on school education with relation to socio-economic and cultural environment. The pupils coming from different socio-economic classes have average IQ varying in degrees. From the study made by Terman and Merril, it is learnt that children hailing from professional families have average IQ of 116 while those from clerical and some retail business families have average IQ of 107. But the children from among the labour class have only 96 as average IQ. Understanding these differences the teachers have to emphatically take care of the children with low IQ in order that the latter may reach the standards of other advanced children (quoted from Sridharan, 1999).

Upendernath (1993) found that literacy rates are significantly lower in the lowest income quintile than that in the highest, in both rural and urban areas. Effects of income on schooling were more pronounced for females than for males. And individuals in the lowest quintile complete significantly fewer years of schooling than those in the highest
quintile. Further, children of poor families are less likely to be enrolled in school than children of better-off families. In 15 states surveyed by the NCAER (1994), the poverty gap in enrollment is 25 percentage points. That is, the enrollment rate for children in the poorest households is on average 25 percentage points lower than it is for children in the wealthiest households. In six states (Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Orissa, and Rajasthan) more than 20 per cent of children in the poorest households are not enrolled in schools, whereas in 10 of the 15 surveyed states fewer than 1 per cent of children in the wealthiest households are not enrolled. In the five other states, the non-enrollment rate for the wealthiest is less than 5 per cent in all the states. The poverty gap in enrollment is larger in rural than in urban areas.

Borbora (1998) studied the rate of academic achievement of the first generation learners irrespective of the caste and class to which they belong and it was found that the academic achievement of the children in three income levels were significantly different.

In Haryana, study of dropout among socially and economically deprived elementary students by Yadav (1991) listed the following causes as put forward by the teachers: non-detention policy of the state government in class I-III, engagement of children in the fields during the sowing and the harvesting seasons, heavy syllabi causing disinterest among pupils, illiteracy of parents, punishment at school, overcrowded classes, large family size and poor teacher-pupil relationship. According to students, punishment by teachers, use of help-books instead of text books in teaching, parental ignorance of the value of education and priority of household work for girls are the important reasons for poor performance of school. According to parents, co-educational schools, lack of interest of teachers and non-receipts of progress reports, are the prime culprits. As a whole, the findings strongly indicate that the scenario being unfolded in the states, especially at the micro levels in pockets of the deprived section of the population is undoubtedly disheartening, if altogether not depressing.

Nayar and Nuna (1994) reported that the principal reasons given by household member for girls’ not enrolling in Haryana were the girls’ responsibility for domestic work (75 per cent), and parents inability to pay for school expenses (57 per cent), uniform (54 per cent), and books (53 per cent), 87 per cent of girls who were not enrolled cited domestic work as the main reason.
Nayar (1995) identified the factors affecting the dropout and non-enrollment of girls at primary level in Haryana. Her findings were - household related factors, such as, domestic work, sibling care, parent illiteracy and apathy and community factors like early marriage appeared to be major constraints against girls’ education. N.F.H.S survey (1998-99) in Haryana also reported ‘required for households works’ as the main reason for not currently attending schools. The need for children to remain out of school in order to work (including households work, work on family farm or business, working out side for payments in cash or kind, and taking care of siblings) is mentioned as the main reason for never attending schools for 11 per cent of boys and for 18 per cent of girls, and as the main reason for not currently attending schools for 18 per cent of boys and 29 per cent of girls.

School related characteristics are also contributing for non-enrollment of the children. N.F.H.S (1998-99) in Haryana also found the reason for children never attending schools or not currently attending school. For boys, ‘no interest in studies’, and ‘cost too much’ stand out as prominent reasons for never attending schools or not currently attending schools. 64 per cent of boys and 42 per cent of girls who are not currently attending schools mention that they are ‘not interested in studies’. This indicates that there is a need to make education more interesting for children. A major reason for girls never attending school is given as ‘education not considered necessary (24 per cent) whereas this reason is mentioned for only 8 per cent of boys never attending schools. This shows the poor attitudes of some parents towards the education of their daughters. Pande (2001) stated that dropout rate are higher for girls than for boys in almost all the villages. Lack of physical access to schools appears as a major reason for increase in female dropout, particularly after primary schooling.

Some studies noticed that the rural-urban factor is crucial in determining the extent of participation of children in education. Urban households are more likely to send their children to school, and keep them there longer as compared to rural households (Tilak,1984; Jamison,1986; Behrman and Wolfe,1987; King and Lillard,1987; Psacharopoulos and arriagada,1989; Hossain,1990; Parish and Willis,1994; Deolalikar,1994; and Tansel,1997; Vishvanath,1997). Studies reveal that the causes for the rural-urban differences are home background, poor school facilities and absence of
educated parents. This contribute to low achievement in education of rural masses (Devi, 1991). According to the findings of the study conducted in six gram panchayats, successful students generally belonged to the upper castes and upper income groups of rural hierarchy. On the other hand, the dropouts and underachievers were ordinarily from the lower castes and lower income groups of rural society. There may be no doubt, ‘educational backwardness is largely a symptom of economic backwardness’ (Eswaraprasad and Sharma, 1987; Acharya, 1994; Kaul, 2001). It is no wonder that all the schools identified as effective are from economically advanced villages (Acharya, 1996:41-44).

Studies on equalisation of educational opportunities reveal that the participation of Scheduled Castes and Tribes is lower than that of the non-Scheduled Castes children at all levels (Aikara, 1991; Rao, 1991; Census, 1991; NCAER, 1994). Often both physically and socially isolated from majority communities, S.Cs and S.Ts have lower enrollment and achievement rates, and higher dropout rates, than the general population (Aggarwal and Sibou, 1992). Caste differences also exist in terms of participation of girls in the school. Girls from Muslims (Sarkar, 1986; Sharma, 1987; Kareem, 1989; Engineer, 1994; and Shariff, 1995) and Scheduled Caste/Tribe (Sarkar, 1986; Jamison and Lockheed, 1987; Pande, 1990; Raju, 1991; Acharya, 1995; Vishwanath, 1997) families had a lower probability of entering school, higher chances of dropout, and lower grade completion levels, compared to those from among Hindu General Caste families. Parents in rural areas were negligent and against the female education. There was greater liberal attitude towards female education among upper caste Hindus and Buddhist. Scheduled Castes and Tribes, as compared to other Backward Classes and Muslims, held traditional views (Vishwanath, 1997).

The reasons for the low participation are the poor socio-economic status (Chinnappan, 1987; Dhongrade, 1991; Aggarwal and Sibou, 1992), poor academic background, absence of literate parents, negligence of parents (Devi, 1991), and frequent migration (Barua, 1991). Past traditions of discrimination also help to explain the caste differences in education. Overt discrimination against Scheduled Castes still occurs in primary schools. In a study of the Scheduled Caste students of Bihar and Madhya Pradesh conducted by Radhakrishanan and Kumari (1989:47), 22 per cent of the students
complained that the school teachers had been discriminative and unhelpful towards them. The same study reported that nearly half (44 per cent) of the students experienced discriminations from their classmates (ibid: 55). At times derogatory remarks, which hurt one’s self-respect, are made against the Scheduled Caste students. One study mentioned that some Scheduled Caste students were insulted by the clerical staff when they went to collect their scholarships. The staff reportedly called them ‘son-in-law’ of the government (Yadav, 1991:46). Henriques and Wankhede (1985:220-222) in their study of sixty rural schools from three districts of Maharashtra, one of the educationally advanced state of India, confirmed the existence of discriminatory practices against the Scheduled Caste students in schools. In addition, the Scheduled Caste students themselves experience the feeling of inferiority complexes and emotional instability (Yadav, 1991:69). These are consequences of the lack of what some call the cultural capital. In some schools in Madhya Pradesh Jalluddin (1991) observed S.Cs children being required to sit separately in one corner of the classroom or at the door out side the classrooms. Nambissan (1995) note that, the distinct message of social inferiority is often quite clearly conveyed to S.C students by teachers and peers. Personal narratives of (members of S.Cs) educated just three decades ago offer glimpses of untouchability blatantly practiced in school. S.Cs students being asked to sit separately from their classmates, refused drinking water or served in broken cups, made to dine separately.

Acharya (2001) also concludes that children of S.C and S.T categories in Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh are deprived in education, while the latter are deprived more. A similar study by Thomas (2001) shows that the villages of the population with high concentration of Backward Castes and S.Cs Hindu population, enrollment ratios were lower and dropout rate were higher.

However, Sharma (1991) and Srivastava (2001) found that despite the fact that S.Cs are still poorest, their educational performance is not always the poorest. It may be the case that educational incentives in the form of freeships (books, uniform, and mid day meal), scholarships and the positive discrimination in the job market have partially helped them to overcome opportunity cost, on the one hand, and to raise expected returns from education, on the other. But this is not, however, the case with the Muslims and depressed Backward Castes.
These studies also point to the educational inequalities that exist within the Scheduled Castes. The difference in the socio-economic background is an important factor. It is the caste and regional differentiation that determine their chances of benefiting from the positive discrimination policies of the government (D’Souza, 1987). There are inter-sex, inter-caste and inter-state disparities in terms of educational advancement among the Scheduled Castes. The policies and programmes for their welfare have been useful, but they are nevertheless grossly inadequate.

Many studies have been conducted on gender gap in the participation in education and its achievement. Gender has been, and is, a major discriminating factor in literacy. In India, gender gap shows in literacy and all educational indicators, compared with boys, fewer girls enroll in school, fewer stay in school and those who do stay learn less, with lower learning-achievement in language and Mathematics in some states. The gender gap in education is significantly larger in S.Cs and S.Ts than in the population as a whole. And it is greater in rural than in urban areas. The most significant gap is in retention, attendance and dropout rates (World Bank: 1997). Pande (2001) found that in the U.P Himalayas, the problem of non-enrollment and dropout among 5-14 years old children are more critical for females. There is a considerable variation among blocks on gender constraints to access to education. Malhi (1993) concludes that gender differences in schooling often derive from differences in household investment decisions. In India, families often prefer to invest in the education of sons, since the returns to this investment will remain with the family, while the returns to investment in a daughter’s education will typically flow to her husband’s family. For the same reason, families often prefer to have more sons than daughters. Vishvanath (1997) pointed out that parents in rural areas were negligent and against the female education. Contrary to this, Thomus (2001) found that discrimination of the girl child is no longer in evidence in the Muslim dominated villages. Enrollment ratios and grade attainment rates were higher for girls and dropout rates of girls also lower.

The above review of literature clearly demonstrates that there are varied factors contributing to the unsatisfactory performance of the schools. These factors start with the socio-cultural, such as, poverty, ignorance, caste, etc., and goes on to the environment in the school where either there is insufficient infra-structure or there is lack of aptitude in
teaching on the part of teachers. Old syllabus and alien medium of instruction is another important bottleneck in communication. Perhaps, the effect of all these factors could have been diluted to efficient administration. The regular vigilance/inspection to remind the teachers their accountability, perhaps, could have partly countered the ill effect of other constraints. In a nutshell, the picture in those area and social spaces, where the need for school education is seriously felt, is not a rosy one. The present study would try to go deeper into the causes in an attempt to suggest some remedial measures to improve the educational scenario.

**Objectives of the Study**

In order to test the above hypotheses two sets of objectives have been delineated for the present study. The first set pertains to the intrinsic factor responsible for the present state of the school education as a system. The second set is related to the external factors such as, socio-economic and cultural influences, which is facilitating or inhibiting the provision and utilisation of equal educational opportunity and achieving universal elementary education. The first set will generate information on the actual performance of the schools as a part of the system and will suggest remedial measures for the lacunae, if any. For the second set of objectives, school education as a system is taken as constant and the effects of caste, class and culture on school education would be studied. Keeping in view the purpose of the study, the following objectives have been formulated:

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 differences 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.
Methodology
Selection of Districts

Except for some low hills of the Shivalik range in the north and the Aravali range in the south, Haryana is a plain region. Haryana can be divided into two main natural regions: the sub-Himalyan tarai and the indo-gangetic plain, which was formed by deposition of alluvial sediments, brought by the Himalyan rivers. The plain can be subdivided into three parts on the basis of physiography and drainage: the Eastern Haryana plain, the Western Haryana plain, and the Southern Haryana plain (Director of Census operation, Haryana, 1988).

The Eastern Haryana plain covers the districts of Ambala, Yamunanagar, Panchkula, Kurukshetra, Jind, Karnal, Kaithal, Panipat, Sonepat, Rohtak and Jhajjar. It is bordered by low hills of Shivalik range in the northeast. The slope is generally from the northeast to southwest from which direction most of rivers flow. A large number of rainfed torrents flow down the outer slopes of the Shivalik and spread much gravies and pebbles in their beds of these stream, the Ghaggar, the Markanda, the Chautang and the Saraswati are the important ones. The state is devoid of any perennial river except for the Yamuna which provides irrigation facilities and flows along the extreme eastern side of the state.

The Western Haryana plain covers the districts of Sirsa, Hisar, Fatehabad and Bhiwani. It differs from the Eastern Haryana plain because of the presence of a number of sand dunes of varying heights and magnitudes. Wind erosion is active and the water table is deep. This part of the state is also known as Banger.

The Southern Haryana plain covers the districts of Mohindergarh, Rewari, Gurgaon and Faridabad. It differs from the Western Haryana plain because of the presence of Aravalli offshoots and its slope towards the north and undulating character. This area is generally unfavourable to agriculture due to its rocky nature. The range contains some minerals.

The division is important because the natural ecology has a direct bearing upon the social and cultural ecology. Due to the paucity of time and resources on the one hand and the limitation of the sample size imposed by statistical analysis on the other, the study has been limited to two zones namely Southern and Western zones. Further, two districts have been purposively selected from among these two zones on the basis of...
cultural and ethnic diversity. The district of Sirsa has been selected from the Western zone (Bangar area) and Gurgaon district has been selected from Southern zone. The Sirsa district has been selected due to its location in the Banger region, which is economically dominant and politically active. The purpose of selecting Gurgaon district was to study Meos community from Mewat region, which is unique in terms of social and cultural practices. Also, Mewat region named after its inhabitants Meos has exclusively different culture than the rest of Haryana.

Since the criterion of selection of these two districts from among two different ecological zones is culture/ethnicity, three different C.D blocks were selected— one from district Sirsa and two from district Gurgaon (from the region of Mewat) on the basis of concentration of respective communities, that is Meos in the C.D block of Gurgaon and Bagri jat in the C.D block of Sirsa. Rania block was selected from district Sirsa and Nuh and Nagina C.D blocks were selected from the district of Gurgaon.

**Village Selection**

Further, within these three selected blocks, on the basis of personal visits to the area of investigation (block), three villages were selected with respect to the above cultural communities. The size of villages, caste composition, distance from the urban centers, level of development in terms of irrigation and infrastructural facilities available, were taken care of while selecting the villages. On the basis of these sets of criteria, finally the villages selected were: Sultanpuria from Rania block, Marora from Nagina block and Udaka from Nuh block respectively.

**Household Selection**

The task of household selection was difficult because the households were not properly numbered. Therefore, for the information, we relied on the electoral list of the villages under study, supplemented by the information from the respective village panchayats. Detailed household information was collected regarding the head of the household, his caste and subcaste (gotra). Total number of households was 350 in Sultanpuria, 300 in Marora, and 340 in Udaka. The need to include all social and economic segments was taken as a guide to make systematic proportionate sampling of the households. Thus, 200 households from Sultanpuria, 100 households from Marora
and 110 households from Udaka were selected for the present study (see Appendix A, Table, 3-6).

**Data Collection**

For the purpose of the present study, two types of data have been used, that is, secondary and primary. Secondary data were collected from various published and unpublished sources, while primary data were collected with the help of Household Interview Schedule (see Appendix-C) and focussed group discussion. In the light of the objectives of the study, an interview schedule was prepared and pre-tested in the field. After pre-testing of the interview schedule, it was revised and finalized so that the data required could be obtained. Besides Household Schedule, another small interview guide was prepared separately for group discussion with the teachers and community members to understand the problem of school education in rural Haryana.

Data for the study was collected from 10th October to 30th December 2000 from all the three villages. In all cases, the researcher collected the data personally from the selected households. Efforts were made to interview the head of household, but in case of his/her absence any person more than eighteen years of age was interviewed. Data collected was finally coded and analysed on the computer using SPSS programme and other statistical aids.

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Goldthorpe’s class structure:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Classes</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I. Service class</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Higher professionals, higher grade administrators, managers in large industrial concerns and large proprietors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>lower professional, higher grade technicians, lower grade administrators, managers in small business and supervisors of non-manual employees.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II. Intermediate class</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Routine non-manual – mainly clerical and sales personal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Small proprietors and self-employed artisans.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Lower grade technicians and supervisors of manual workers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III. Working class</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Skilled manual workers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Semi-skilled and unskilled manual workers.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


1 The Runciman classes are upper class, upper middle class, middle middle class, lower middle class, skilled working class, unskilled working class, and underclass. See Runciman, 1990.

2 According to Ossowski (1963) the classes constitute a relatively permanent system of the most comprehensive groups in the social structure with a system of privileges and discrimination.

3 For debate between Lenin and Mao, see Patnaik, Utsa (1987).

4 Even before Gouff, Mukherjee (1957) gave another detailed classification of peasantry. He divided nine occupational groups into three classes, where class one comprises landholders and supervisory farmers, class two comprises self-sufficient peasantry (artisans, traders are also included in this class), and class three includes sharecroppers, agricultural labourers and service holders.

5 Saith and Tanakha (1972), distinguishes five classes on the basis of ownership of assets, tenancy, utilization of loans, repayment capacity, etc. The classes are (1) owners cultivators (2) largely owner-cultivators (3) largely tenant cultivators (4v) tenant cultivators and (5) poor peasants. In India there is little difference between a largely tenant cultivator, a tenant cultivator and a poor peasant, as all of them hire out their labour, - may be in different forms. A person can hire out his labour either directly as a wage labourer or indirectly through payment in cash or kind for land leased-in.

6 Battielle, Andre (1974)

8 We are aware of the quality of land and type of labour use ( hired or family) influencing the productivity, but in our study the size of land holding resulted the proportionate income of the households.

9 Most commonly four Varnas are understood as: the Varna of Brahmans, commonly identified with those fulfilling the callings of priests and spiritual preceptors; the Varna of kshtrias, usually associated with rulers and warriors, but also including seigniorial landed groups; the Varna of vaishyas, often identified with commercial livelihoods, though associated with other producers and wealth-creators as well; the Varna of shudras or servile toilers so-called untouchables occupy an ambivalent place below, out side or parallel to this Varna scheme.

10 See Berreman (1979) for Psychological and socio-cultural characteristics of 'cultures of castes'.
Cultural plurality obtains when two or more different cultural traditions characterise the population of a given society. See Smith, M.G, 1965.; and Karve, 1961. Karve (1961:28) made the point that castes in India are culturally distinct. She finds that “the groups which practise endogamy are different from each other as regards their habits, cultural traits, and, in many cases, ethnic and racial origins. Leach (1960) has also described castes as functional entities with “a special distinguishing set of cultural characteristics.”

For the purpose of the present study, the NSSO and Census definition of co-residence and common kitchen as the main feature of household were used. If two families (whether it may be nuclear or joint) lived separately and have different kitchen but owning land commonly and distribute its share proportionately than also it is considered the different household for the present study.