Preface

Haryana – one of the smallest states of the Indian union, came into existence as an independent political entity in 1966, as a result of bifurcation of erstwhile Punjab state. Though small in size, the region now forming Haryana state, historically, had been in focus all through the ages due to its geo-political strategic location and cultural importance. Historical evidences would bear testimony to the fact that the people of Haryana met the challenges of invaders heroically. The region remained a rendezvous of diverse races, cultures and faiths and contributed immensely to the Indian civilization. The region has passed through several vicissitudes and has been a witness to the rise and fall of republics and dynasties. But, unfortunately, region’s history remained blurred. This was chiefly because of the fact that in all historical writings, the region was always treated as a sub-region or a sub-tract of Punjab or other larger region.

The present research work is designed to relate in a dispassionate and systematic manner the dynamics of socio-economic and other aspects of the life of the people of Haryana region during later Mughal period (1707-1857). This period which serves as a sub-period of Mughal history is chosen for the purpose of our study on account of several factors. This period remained an eventful period full of chaos, confusion and turbulence. This is the period when people of this region were in vortex of hostilities and suffered immensely, faced hardship, anarchy and agony at the hands of rulers and foreign invaders like Nadir Shah and Ahmad Shah Abdali. The period also saw the twilight of the crumbling of Mughal Empire and emergence and domination of British rule in the region of Haryana. Local powers of Jats, Ahirs, Sikhs, Rohillas and Marathas were also engaged in mutual rivalry and conflict in the region for supremacy turning the situation quite unstable during this period. Several feudal chiefs, nawabs, rajas and feudatories tried to set up independent and autonomous authority and principality for themselves in different parts of Haryana region. Social structure and culture during the period under study although not entirely new or radically different from the preceding period were constantly under great strain and pressure due to unsettled conditions and disequilibrium in the society. Whereas economic policies pursued by later Mughals had been imprudent,
British policies were exploitative based on colonial/commercial mode of production. All these events had far reaching influence on the socio-economic texture of the region.

The historians, however, did not focus much attention on this fascinating and variegated phase of Haryana history. The present study, therefore, attempts to fill up this gap. The study has been carried out on the basis of marshaling meticulously both published and unpublished records to provide a comprehensive and balanced picture of the issues concerning the society, rulers and the people. To present a cohesive look, the entire study has been divided into well-kint and well-integrated six chapters.

Chapter one is introductory in nature giving a brief account of the state of Haryana. It then spells out, through separate section, the important steps employed in the process of this research work. Chapter two provides critically a detailed political history of the region covering the entire period of study. Chapter three portrays vividly the social condition of the people under different heads. Chapter four is devoted to the discussion of economic conditions covering agriculture, industries, trade and commerce. Chapter five attempts to discuss the emergent religious realm, religious sects and movements that prevailed in the region. It also deals with architectural and artistic activities. Chapter sixth the last one presents a brief resume of the research work and details out more significant conclusions emerging from the study. At the end, an appendix and a selected bibliography have been added.

It is hoped that the present study would provide a perspective and a new outlook in viewing and understanding Haryana’s history of this critical period, in full. This would also meet the ever growing demand and also the need of writing and reconstructing the regional history of the state of Haryana. The study is expected to be beneficial for the researchers, academicians and all others who are interested to know and understand Haryana’s history of this long period of one hundred and fifty years which remained more or less obscure.