Preface

The study "Socio-Economic Condition in Haryana During the Early Medieval Period" (c.800 to 1200 A.D.) is an humble attempt to examine the socio-economic realm of the region, presently known as Haryana state. This region occupies a crucial position in the history of Northern India. Due to its geo-political significance Haryana is the gateway of the prosperous Gangetic valley. As a matter of the strategic significance of the region, notable Northern Indian rulers invariably made their security arrangements in Haryana to protect their fertile and prosperous Northern plains. Important historical battles were fought in the region at places like Kurukshetra, Traory, Kunjpura, Karnal, Panipat, etc. Numerous military events associated with these places are not only the part of India's history but have played a very significant and crucial role in shaping the future history of India. The region has also witnessed the rise and fall of various republics and dynastic rules like the Yaudheyas, the Puṣhpabhūtīs etc.

Since the rise of the Puṣhpabhūtīs, Haryana has always played an important role in shaping the social, economic and political history of Northern India. The region continued to retain its close contact with the seat of Kanauj even under the Pratīharās and the Gahadwālas. Any incident or movement
that took place in this part of the country had repercussions for the whole of Northern India specially the seat of Kanauj. Infact, Haryana, being the border area of the Pratîhāras and the Chauhānas, it assumed a central place for various political, social and cultural activities.

The increasing emphasis on regional studies has shed valuable light on the many hitherto hidden aspects of India's past. The choice of topic under study is made in view of the significant socio-economic conditions during the period which played a vital role in giving birth to the new social formation. The central hypothesis of this study is developed on this circumstantiality as has been elaborated in the section dealing with the proposed methodology. The nature of the socio-economic conditions of the early medieval period demonstrates the fact that their synthesis produced a distinct and abiding impact on the society for a long time to come. The design of the present study is based on this central hypothesis. According to R.S. Sharma, the period 700 to 1000 A.D. was the prime period of Indian feudalism. In this study an effort has also been made mainly to find whether the process of feudalisation struck any roots in Haryana or not.

The main body of the study is divided into six chapters. A brief description of the contents of each chapter is as follows:-
The introductory chapter includes a cursory and brief account of geographical and geo-political conditions of Haryana region and its vital role in the shaping of India's history by virtue of its strategic location. These details were deemed necessary in order to conceptualize and comprehend the socio-economic realm of the period under study.

Chapter II entitled "Social Condition" deals with various aspects of social life of the people during the period such as institution of marriage and Sāṃskāras, caste system, dresses and ornaments of the people and their pleasures and pastimes, etc.

Chapter III is devoted to the description of notable features of agrarian structure, the impact of technological changes on agricultural production and the economic conditions of the society. Other aspects investigated as a part of this chapter include the prevalence of inter local trade and commerce besides industrial activities.

Chapter IV makes an attempt to discuss the emergent religious realm of the region. Here an effort has been made to trace the origin and evolution of gamut of invoking spiritual and metaphysical dimensions including various sects, legends and images. It is from this chapter that the question pertaining to aesthetical aspects are formulated.
In Chapter V, an attempt has been made to discuss the artistic and architectural pieces produced during the period with special reference to their relevance to socio-economic conditions of the region.

The sixth and the last chapter of the study summarises the concluding observation of this investigation.

Methodological Note

In carrying out this research the researcher could realize the immense problems a researcher or a student of history has to face. His work becomes all the more difficult when he finds a physical gap between the requirements of research design and availability of source material of all kinds. It becomes particularly so in the case of a region like Maryana where literary traditions remained rather low.

The direct procedure of inquiry and research in historiography becomes less than sufficient where intrinsic source material such as literary works is poor, and archaeology is yet to establish an extensive and reliable value. Yet other sources i.e., the written records are also almost non-existent even about the kings and dynasties - what to talk about the records pertaining to social and economic life of the masses. In such a situation the research effort addressed to such a crucial period remains less satisfactory in output.
Still in this study a sincere effort has been made to evolve a compact research procedure. This procedure is composed of several tools and techniques integrated with and co-related to another. The archaeological works and findings are used in correlative manner. It served a particularly meaningful purpose in studying the art and architecture. Most of the images, figures, legends and temple style were studied in this way. Similarly, iconographic and epigraphic findings proved helpful in providing interesting explanations and insights into their technical aspects which helped the researcher to make scientific study about the economic conditions of the people during the period under study. The folklores and traditions were also utilized with caution.

The research procedure facilitated the collaboration of the written records with archaeology and utilization of the folklores to find the nature of social conditions including the religious make-up.

Generally the existence of literate section of the society is implied by the existence of classical literature, that of priesthood by temples, and the division of society into different producing groups by the urban life. But difficulty in the present case is that the evidence of existence of priesthood and temple is dim. Even the existence of urban life and classical literature is bleak.
This is also the reason of paucity of sources for the present study. The research method adopted in the present work cannot be claimed comprehensive but it was designed to delineate a wider framework within which detailed explanations may be expected.

Notwithstanding these limitations, it may be mentioned that this piece of research does not represent a study of a region in isolation but it has drawn its evidences, wherever necessary, from all relevant sources available at macro level. Thus the researcher moved from micro to macro levels and vice-versa in order to present a complete and comprehensive picture of the socio-economic conditions of the period under review.