Chapter -1

Introduction

1.1. The Indian Society

India, the second most populous and most popular democracy in the world is the abode of rich heritage, holy but hoary traditions with strong embedded faithful valuable cultural diversity. The Indian constitution declared India as sovereign, socialist, secular, democratic republic on 26th January 1949 ensuring the justice, liberty and fraternity of its citizens. India is one of the world’s fastest growing economy (Nayak et al. 2010). It is declared that Indian economy is the world’s tenth largest by nominal Gross Domestic Productive (GDP) and third largest by Purchasing Power Parity (PPP) with fastest growing economy (International Monetary Fund 2011). According to the census 2011 statistics, the population of India is 1,21,01,93422 of that 51.54 percent (62,37,24,248) are males and 48.46 percent (58,64,69,174) are females. The national literacy rate is 74.04 percent; of that the male literacy rate is 82.14 wherever the female literacy rate is 65.46 percent which is considerably and significantly lower than the male literacy rate. India is the abode of diverse culture, thousands of spoken languages and their dialects, diverse traditions, different family values, complex society with diverse climatic and physical environment.

All across the Indian territory, religious differences can be confronted significantly; especially between the Hindu majority and the large Muslim minority with clearly co-existence of other religious groups such as- Buddhism, Christianity, Jainism, Jews, Parsi, Sikhs and indigenous tribal religion. India is growing fast yet there are stories about the differential socioeconomic conditions of people and it is evident with its coexistence of caste system, which is a fundamental factor of unequal distribution of wealth and social status. With first encounter with the Indian culture one can sniff that the people of India belong to thousands of castes and caste like groups- hierarchically ordered named groups, into which members are born. Caste members are supposed to marry within the caste and fallow caste rules pertaining to diet, avoidance of ritual pollution and many other aspects of life. It is also noteworthy that in Indian society there is a vast difference between the urban-rural people. Nearly 74 percent of India’s
The current scenario of politics at National level to ‘Gram-Panchayat’ level depends on the dynamics of caste. M. N. Srinivas (1962) has rightly said that Indian politics is caste politics and not party politics and ‘caste’ plays as ‘vote bank’. No political party is an exception to this reality.

In order to abolish the long apartheid of caste system, the inter-caste marriages were assumed to be the effective and the only panacea to break it down but on the contrary; every newspaper daily in its matrimonial column contains the rigid restriction of inter-caste marriage and displayed promotional advertising for the intra-caste marriage. In addition to it, the online matrimonial sites are also having separate option for the ‘caste match’ and huge list of castes are enlisted there, which tells the vivid reality of Indian society till date and vicious impact of caste system existing in the contemporary modern era. Thus, it is a fact that even after six decades of social and political democracy, the caste system remains in the exception and putting challenges as well as potential questions to cater it out from the psyche of Indian mass. The caste continues to exist even in the religion that fought against caste discrimination; for example Sikhism, Islam and Christianity.

Education system is an integral part of Indian society and nowadays it is generally assumed that educated people in India do not believe in caste and casteism. Unfortunately, it is not true. The Indian educated class is mistaken for being secular due to westernised education process and practices of western life styles. At the micro level they continue with their caste customs. Nowadays educational centres are more prone to caste and casteism and thus vulnerable to become the centres of castes, language and religion association that receive special minority status and own community people get benefited. Education and intellectual power continues to be carried forward by the some upper castes. It may be noted that caste system and castiesm are not legally barred unlike untouchability.

1.3. Who are SC, ST and OBC?

The constitution of India (1950) made a provision that President of India may, with respect to any state or union territory, after consultation with the Governor, specify the castes, races or tribe or parts of group within the castes / races or tribes which shall for the purpose of the constitution be deemed to be scheduled castes in relation to the State or Union territory (Article 34). The criteria adopted for the inclusion in
the Schedule Castes list are social, educational and economic backwardness arising out of the stigma of untouchability.

The constitution of India prepared a schedule of ‘castes and tribes’ due to their social and educational backwardness for various compensatory policies to uplift their social and educational status so that they can participate in the mainstream development of nation. This scheduling of caste emerges from the state devised categories of various caste groups discarded and deprived in the society. Among these caste groups, the prominent and uniform of them are called the Schedule Castes and Scheduled Tribes respectively. Schedule castes are the erstwhile untouchables and scheduled tribes residing in physically isolated areas of wide and dense forests and followed a culturally distinct and rudimentary way of life. Both SCs and STs were not a part of varna hierarchy that is why they were on the margin of the Indian society both socially and physically. So these communities have been considered for special support by the constitution.

To effectively implement the various safeguards built into the constitution and other legislations, the constitution, under Articles 338 and 338-A provide for two statutory commissions- The National Commission for Scheduled Castes and National Commission for the Scheduled Tribes.

The term Other Backward Classes (OBCs) is roughly used for the category created artificially by the states and refers to educationally and socially backward group of castes. In pre-independence period for the provision of privileges the more inclusive term ‘Backward Classes’ and sometimes called ‘Depressed Classes’ was used which refers to more inclusive group of all SCs,(Scheduled Castes) STs (Scheduled Tribes) and OBCs. In the articles 15(4), 16 (4) and 340(1) of Indian Constitution the term socially and educationally backward classes is used which suggests that they are referring to communities or castes and not economic class.

Other Backward Classes (OBCs) are considered as the ‘socially and educationally backward classes’ in the constitution of India. On the other hand it could be defined as the castes which were not treated as untouchables but yet held a low rank and lowly status within the caste hierarchy. They are largest in number because Backward Classes Commission (known as Mandal Commission 1979) estimated their share as
54 percent of the total population. They come under the Sudra category of varna categorization.

So in the constitutional provisions, it is defined that the OBCs are those educationally and socially backward people, who do not come under SCs and STs Communities and they are excluded from the schedule of caste and tribes which has been prepared by the government. The reservation policies pertaining to SCs & STs have been less disputed and controversial but for the reservation policies for OBCs created lot of social and political upheaval and also took a very long time to come into existence. There are two bodies for the safeguard legal problems of OBCs that are - National Commission for Backward Classes (NCBC) and National Backward Classes Finance and Development Corporation (NBCFDC).

General category (also known as upper caste, forward caste, forward class and forward community) is term used in India to denote groups of people who are socially, politically and educationally forward. These are the people who do not qualify for any positive discrimination schemes operated by the government of India.

1.4. Caste and Social Discrimination

Untouchability is one of the basic features of the caste system along with several kinds of disparities and disabilities. It is seen by many as one of the strongest racist phenomena in the world. The caste system demarcation in Indian society is that the people who practice ignominious, polluting and unclean occupations were treated as polluting people and were, therefore considered as untouchables. The untouchables had almost no right in the society. Therefore the base of inequality is the core and heart of the caste system, supported by philosophical discourse, which construct the moral, social and legal foundations of Indian society.

Social discrimination refers to the physical and social segregation of a group or individuals from the rest of the groups or the society because of caste or race they belong to (Khan, S. 2009). Social discrimination may vary from extreme to least degree in nature and it might be open or latent. For example the practice of untouchability in India and practice of slavery in western countries are the extreme forms of social discrimination. Needless to say, social discrimination exists because of caste, race and ethnicity of the group. The other form of social discrimination might be the inaccessibility to shops, public restaurants, hotels and places of public
entertainment or the prevention of use of wells, tanks, bathing *ghats*, road and places of public resorts. Psychologically social discrimination is expressed in terms of holding prejudice, derogatory and meanest attitude towards a particular group, caste or race. It is painful and creating havoc on well-being of person (Macdonald & Leary 2005).

1.5. Ambedkar’s views on Caste

Several efforts have been made by Dr. B.R. Ambedkar to abolish the caste system in India and to provide justice, equality and human dignity to untouchables in particular and to those who had been the victims of this caste system since long, in general. Born into poor Mahar so called ‘Untouchable’ family, he spent his whole life fighting against social discrimination and the system of Chaturvarna. Since schooling to college he faced segregation and discrimination which disturbed him a lot. But being an excellent in his studies, he overcame numerous social and financial obstacles and became one of the first so called ‘Untouchables’ to obtain a college education in India. He earned law degrees and multiple doctorates for his study and research in law, economics and political science from Columbia University and the London School of Economics and Political Science.

After completion of study, he returned to India where he found the same practice of untouchability, caste based discrimination, and the pathetic social conditions of his community people. Thus in order to abolish this social evils, he in 1919 at the Southborough Committee, which was preparing the Government of India Act 1919, argued for creating separate electorates and reservation for untouchables and other religious communities. In 1920 he began the publication of the weekly Mooknayak (Leader of Silent) in Mumbai and used this journal to criticize orthodox Hindu politicians and perceived reluctance of the Indian political community to fight caste discrimination.

He organized the ‘Bahishkrit Hitkarini Sabha’ (Committee for Welfare of Depriived) to promote education and socio-economic uplifting of depressed classes. In 1927 he launched active movement against untouchability and struggle for the right to enter Hindu Temples. He led a Satyagraha in Mahad to fight for the right of the Untouchable community to draw water from the public water tank of the town. He demanded political identity for untouchables separate from both the then Congress
Ambedkar outlined his political vision, insisting that the safety of the Depressed Classes hinged on their being independent of the Government and the Congress.

He wrote several books tackling the evils of untouchability and caste based discrimination. Of them; the book ‘Annihilation of Caste’ is panacea for the caste based discrimination (Ambedkar 1989). Further he lays emphasis on ‘inter-dining’, ‘inter-caste marriage’ and others dictated the hardcore solution such as the ‘destruction of Shastra’ and ‘Hindu religion’ as a whole. He was of the views that “The slave status carried no stigma on the man in the society. He was touchable and even respectable. Untouchability is worse than slavery because a slave have personality in the society, while the untouchable has no personality. Untouchability is worse than slavery because it carries no such security as to livelihood as the latter does. No one is responsible for the feeding, housing and clothing of untouchables. From this point of view, untouchability is not only worse than slavery but is positively cruel as compared to slavery. The second or rather the third difference between slavery and untouchability was that slavery was never obligatory but untouchability was obliged” (Ambedkar 1989). In 1946 Ambedkar had represented the case of the untouchables to the U.N. under the banner of slavery. In a letter to WEB DuBois in early 1946 Ambedkar wrote –“There is so much similarity between the positions of the untouchables in India and of the positions of the blacks in America and that the study of the latter is not only natural but necessary”. He also added that ‘I was very much interested to read that the blacks of America filed a petition to the UNO. The untouchables of India are thinking of following suit’. Ambedkar made another important effort to raise the status of those people. He laid emphasis on the horizontal mobilisation of the SCs and made them a political force to reckon with. He emphasised secular avenues of politics, education and administration for social mobility of the SCs. He held the strong view that political power was the key to all progress and that the SCs could achieve political salvation if they capture power by organising themselves into a separate party.

With his surmountable efforts, Ambedkar provided constitutional guarantees and protections for a wide range of civil liberties for individual citizens, including freedom of religion, the abolition of untouchability and the outlawing of all forms of discrimination. Ambedkar argued for extensive economic and social rights for
women, and also won the Assembly's support for introducing a system of reservations of jobs in the civil services, schools and colleges for members of scheduled castes and scheduled tribes, a system akin to affirmative action.

Acting as a reformist in his later phase of life, he thought that caste and caste system is based on all kinds of atrocities and inhuman practices to lower castes. That is why lastly he decided to go for conversion from Hinduism to other religion to get rid of all these ill-treatments and inhuman practices, undignified status, injustice and discrimination of lower castes.

1.6. Discrimination: Definition and Related Construct
Discrimination is the behaviour which is predominantly determined by the prejudice one holds about other person based on social, personal and emotional distinction. Discrimination is defined as the distinction made (social, economic, political, or legal) between individuals or groups such that one has the power to treat the other unfavourably. In this context it would not be exaggeration to say that ‘discrimination is unfavourable treatment based on prejudice, especially regarding race, age or sex: good taste or judgment in artistic matters; the power to discriminate or observe differences; a distinction made in mind or action (Wankhede 2003). Baron & Byrne (2000) defined that discrimination refers to harmful actions directed towards the persons or groups who are the target of prejudice. Because overt discrimination is now illegal in many countries and such behaviour now frequently takes place more in subtle forms. As characteristics, discrimination can be latent, manifest, open or subtle. It is in the mind and conscience. It is a mind-set that operates within a given situations. It is felt and experienced and has manifold implications (Wankhede 2003).

1.7. Caste based Discrimination:
Caste based discrimination implies holding prejudiced behaviour against any particular individual because of his / her caste location through upholding the regressive, unequal and undemocratic characteristic of caste. This kind of behaviour of upper caste against lower caste is upheld in order to maintain the status-quo in their favour (Wankhede 2003).
**Operational Definition:**

Discrimination is the subjective perception of unfair treatment’ based on their caste, class and racial group membership. The feeling and experience of prejudiced behaviour because of caste is the caste based discrimination. In this research, the felt and experienced discrimination on the basis of caste among the graduate students is proposed to be probed and analyzed. Therefore, ‘reported perceived discrimination assessed by the perceived discrimination scale for students while pursuing higher education is the degree of discrimination.

Basically the discrimination is categorized in two types- **Negative Discrimination**- often based on stereotype, includes anti-semitism, caste, racism, sexism, and slavery, and **Positive Discrimination**- or The Affirmative Action sometimes practiced in attempt to counteract the impact of previous long term negative discrimination. Positive/ Protective discrimination are ameliorative, measures and strategies (policies, programmes, laws and rules) for removing the cumulative disadvantage of socially, educationally, economically disadvantaged groups of population and bringing them at par with the rest of the population.

1.8. **Perceptions and Experiences of Discrimination - A debate**

Experience of discrimination and perception of discrimination could be the two aspects of the same issue but the probability to come across experiences of discrimination in general might be lower than the probability of perception of discrimination. Experiences are more personal based on happenings in a specific time, place and situation whereas the perceptions are purely cognitive process to realize the happenings in a specific situation. In the case of discrimination; both experiences as well as perception lead to psychological upheaval and mental health problems. The research based on the experiences of discrimination revealed that racial stressors have been found in studies (Collins, Wall, David & Andes, 2004; Mustillo et al. 2004) that produce physical ailments such as high blood pressure, risk for heart disease and increased vulnerability to a variety of negative health outcomes that can contribute to greater psychological and emotional distress. Biasco et al (2001) investigated that even while denying the experiences of racism, both white and students of colour acknowledge the subtle and hidden form of racism. Blacks were thought to be most frequent target of racial hostility. Landrine and Klonoff (1996) found that ninety-eight
percent of the participants in their study experienced racial discrimination that was stressful in many places (Work, Schools and Public places) during the past year. Benner and Kim (2009) reported that contemporaneous experiences of discrimination affecting socio-emotional adjustment of students. Rosenbloom and Way (2004) reported that experiences of discrimination lead to distress from both adult and peer sources. Further Gee and Takeuchi (2007) identified a consistent link between experiences of discrimination and depressive symptoms and distress among Asians in North America. Experiencing discriminatory treatment can make the target feel isolated both physically and emotionally (Crooker, Major and Steele 1998).

In the international context there are several studies which reveal that perceived discrimination is associated with several psychological factors such as depression, anxiety, mood disorder and mental disturbance (William et al -1997; Taylor & Turner 2002). Perception of racial/ethnic discrimination is associated with various indictors of poorer physical and especially mental health status (Brown et al. 2003; Amy et al. 2006; David R. et al, 2008). Study by Gee G. C. et al, (2006, 2007) based on the Asian American population reported that everyday discrimination were associated with many chronic health conditions, after controlling age, gender, region, per capita income, education, employment, and social desirability biases. Discrimination was also associated with indicators of heart disease, pain, and respiratory illnesses. A meta-analysis is done by Pascoe Elizabeth A. and Richman Laura Smart (2009) to examine potential mechanisms by which perceiving discrimination may affect mental as well as physical health, including through psychological and physiological stress responses and health behaviours which induces significantly heightened stress responses with participation in unhealthy and nonparticipation in healthy behaviours. Kessler, Mickelson and Williams (1999) through multi-item instrument assessed both chronic and acute (lifetime) discriminatory experiences and found that perceived discrimination is common in the total population, with 33.5 percent of respondents reporting exposure to major lifetime discrimination and 60.9 percent reporting exposure to day to day discrimination. By analysis numerous significant interactions were evident among socio-demographical background issues (age, gender, marital status, education, income, and race/ethnicity) with the patterns for educational status being particularly clear. The association between perceived discrimination and mental health problems
(depression and anxiety) were significantly stronger among respondents with low level of educational attainments.

Thus from the discourse of experiences versus perceptions of discrimination, by witnessing several research findings it is concluded that the majority of the population may not have experienced discrimination in particular but in general everybody would have come across the perception of discrimination based on religion, denomination, caste, community, tribe, sex, race and ethnicity. The perception of discrimination is sufficient enough to induce psychological upheaval and related mental health problems, which had also been proclaimed by several international researches.

1.9. Stress: Definition and Operational Definition

The term stress has many definitions (Lazarus & Folkman 1984). Stress could be defined that when an individual’s well being is threatened one undergoes certain psychological and physiological changes which prepare one to handle the threat through sustained activity. Hans Selye (1976) defined stress as the nonspecific response of the body to any demand made on it. Stress acts as a motive force to overcome obstacles and to solve problems. It is only when it becomes persistent or intense in magnitude that it has harmful consequences. In another words stress is an internal state which can be caused by physical demands on the body (disease condition, exercise, extreme of temperature and the like) or by environmental and social situations which are evaluated as potentially harmful, uncontrollable or exceeding our resources of coping (Morgan et al, 1993).

Stress is normal physical response to the events that make one feel threatened or upset one’s balance in some way. When one senses danger – whether it’s real or imagined – the body's defences kick into high gear in a rapid, automatic process known as the “fight-or-flight” reaction, or the stress response. The stress response is the body’s way of protecting living being. When working properly, it helps to stay focused, energetic, and alert. The physical, environmental and social causes of the stress are termed ‘stressors’.

For the research purpose, operationally, stress is defined as the degree of experienced physical, psychological and behaviour health problems during the last one month measured by the checklist of stress appraisal for students’.
Stress is a drastic response to a drastic situation which involves physiological preparation and it is a generalise response to all type of threats and demands. Psychological response such as anxiety, hopelessness, depression, irritability and a general feeling of not being able to cope with the world will be defined as stress. Stress is made up of many feelings like- challenged, stimulated, excited, and even happy when one perceive the source of stress somehow under the control of one’s capacity. On the other hand when reaction of stress is more in negative tone, one is apt to feel anxious, frightened, helpless and depressed and one’s feeling and thoughts are inextricably intertwined.

1.10. Mental Health: The Source of Well-Being

Mental health is a central determinant of quality of life and is an expression of our emotions and signifies a successful adaptation to a range of demands. Mental health can be seen as a continuum, where an individual's mental health may have many different possible values (Keyes 2002). Mental wellness is generally viewed as a positive attribute, such that a person can reach enhanced levels of mental health, even if they do not have any diagnosable health problem. This definition of mental health highlights emotional well-being, the capacity to live a full and creative life, and the flexibility to deal with life's inevitable challenges. Mental health describes either a level of cognitive or emotional well-being or an absence of a mental disorder. In other words, mental health is an integral part of health; indeed, there is no health without mental health and it is more than the absence of mental disorders. The World Health Organization defines mental health as "a state of well-being in which the individual realizes his or her own abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to his or her community" (WHO 2005). Quite simply, mental health refers to a person’s health of the mind (Barbara 2008). Therefore the impact of social, cultural, physical environment and education can all affect someone's mental health (Kitchener & Jorm 2002). Mental health is the main content of discourse in positive psychology.

Poor mental health is also associated with rapid social change, stressful work conditions, gender discrimination, social exclusion, and unhealthy lifestyle, risks of violence and physical ill-health and human rights violations. There are also specific psychological and personality factors that make people vulnerable to mental disorders.
Lastly, there are some biological causes of mental disorders including genetic factors (Insel and Collins 2003) and imbalances in biochemicals/hormones in the brain (Hindmarch 2002).

The well-being of a person is being decided by the wellness level of that person. Wellness means doing what one can do to maximize one’s personal potential for optimal well-being and to construct a meaningful and rewarding life. Wellness implies a state beyond the simple absence of sickness and it is a process rather than a product, a means rather than an end. Wellness simply means doing the best with the hand one has been dealt with.

Wellness is the aggregate and cumulative end results of its components which encompasses our social, emotional, intellectual, spiritual and physical arena of our life. The intellectual component of wellness for the determination of well being includes the perfection on creativity, education, arts, sciences, humanities and social sciences. Emotional components include communication, connections, intimacy, feeling, care of emotional crises and Social components contains the essence of friendship, family, kinship, communication and political participation for the realisation of one full potential and strengthen of wellness. Spiritual components brings joy, love, peace, altruism, finding meaning, fulfilment and transcendence whereas physical component of wellness requires the fitness, nutrition, health promotions, disease prevention, safety and control of substance abuse. Apart from these components there are core components like self responsibility, self love and stress management which contribute a lot to the establishment of optimal level of wellness.

1.11. Anxiety: Definition and Operation Definition

In simple words the anxiety could be defined as a state of uneasiness and apprehension as about future uncertainties. Anxiety is a state of apprehension, uncertainty and fear resulting from the anticipation of a realistic or fantasized threatening event or situations often impairing physical and psychological functioning. The related terms to anxiety are worry, care, concern and solicitude.

The oxford dictionary of psychology defines that anxiety is a state of uneasiness, accompanied by dysphoria and somatic signs and symptoms of tension, focused on
apprehension of possible failure, misfortune or danger. In another view it could also be coined like – anxiety is a multisystem response to a perceived threat or danger. It reflects a combination of biochemical changes in the body, the patient personal history and memory and the social situations. Anxiety is a uniquely human experience.

Anxiety is a psychological and physiological state characterised by somatic, emotional, cognitive and behavioural components (Selingman et al. 1984). It is the displeasing feeling of fear and concern which creates feelings of fear, worry, uneasiness and dread (Bauras and Halt 2007). Anxiety is a state of psychic distress characterised by fear, apprehension and physiological arousal. When anxiety becomes excessive it may fall under the classification of anxiety disorders which are characterised by feelings of vulnerability, apprehension or fear.

Operational definition for research purpose is that the level of anxiety assessed by the Beck Anxiety Inventory is the degree of anxiety among students which has been experienced while pursuing higher education last few weeks.

1.12. Depression: Definition and Operational Definition

Depression means feeling low and it is a state of low mood as well as aversion to activity that can affect a person’s thoughts behaviour, feelings and physical well being (Sandra 1997). Depressive signs and symptoms are characterised not only by negative thoughts, moods and behaviour but also by specific changes in bodily functions such as crying, spells body ache, low energy or libido as well as problems with eating, weight or sleeping.

It is argued that the people who feel sad and depressed for weeks or months an end accompanied by feelings of hopelessness, lack of energy and taking little or no pleasure in the things that gave joy in the past and no longer providing the same joy, that person is called depressed and seized to be crippled with the depressive disorder. Though, feeling down from time to time is a normal part of life.

Oxford dictionary of psychology defines depression as ‘a mood state of sadness, gloom, and pessimistic ideation, with loss of interest of pleasure in normally enjoyable activities, accompanied by severe cases by anorexia and consequent weight
loss, insomnia or hyper-insomnia, asthenia, feelings of worthlessness or guilt, diminished ability to think or concentrate or recurrent thoughts of death or suicide. It appears as symptoms of many mental disorders. Therefore, depression is a mood disorder in which individual experiences extreme unhappiness, lack of energy, and several related symptoms.

‘The assessed degree of depression by Beck Depression Inventory is the level of depression among students of higher education’.

1.13. Higher Education: The Contemporary Perspective

Higher education forms the stage after matriculation and/or higher secondary including (both technical and non-technical) general and professional under-graduation including post-graduation. Education is necessary for the uplift as well as development of a nation along with constructive improvement of social status of poor, deprived and marginalised people. Through proper education insurance of vertical social mobility is assured especially of those who have been downtrodden in the social structure of any particular society. Therefore education is important tool for achieving equality in any society.

Higher education in India has evolved in distinct and divergent streams with each monitored by an aped body, indirectly controlled by the ‘Ministry of Human Resource Development’. India’s higher education system is the second largest in the world after the ‘United States’. The main governing body at the ‘tertiary level’ (higher education) is the ‘University Grant Commission (UGC) India, which enforces the standards, advise the government, and helps coordinate between the centre and state. Accreditation for higher learning is overseen by twelve autonomous institutions established by the UGC.

Year 2011, India has 42 Central Universities, 275 State Universities, 130 Deemed Universities, 90 Private Universities, 5 institutions established and functioning under the ‘state act’ and 33 institute of National Importance’. Distance learning and open education is also a feature of the Indian higher education system.

Education in India is seen as one of the ways to upward social mobility. Good education is seen as a stepping stone to high flying career. However there are several
factors responsible for the accessibility of higher education, of that gender disparity, economic deprivation, and rural / urban disparities are significant and altogether all of them are known to play an important role in defining access to and attainment in higher education. Particularly in Indian context the relationship between caste and higher education is mediated through a number of social, cultural, psychological and economic factors and these are called for very detailed multivariate analysis.

Therefore, the purpose of this research is to explore and understand the nexus between the social determinants responsible for discrimination and their consequential effect on the psychological well being of students. The attempt is also made to establish the degree of associations between socio-demographic factors and their influence on predicting mental health related problems among students while pursuing higher education. It would be highly significant to dissect the degree of discrimination which has impact on psychological well being among the students of different category and different social background when the higher education system is highly competitive, less affordable and inaccessible to poor and marginalised and affected with the globalisation and modernisation.

1.14. Summary:
This chapter provided the information about the discrimination, caste, caste system, caste based discrimination and insights on the origin of caste which has been discussed by many scholars. In addition, this chapter provided definitions of important variables which are highly significant to be defined operationally in order to grab the exact meaning of those concepts so that further analysis could be done easily. The chapter also threw light on the relevance of constitutional provisions on SCs, STs and OBCs with their mutual social differences of categorisation. The description of Ambedkar’s views on abolition of caste are discussed in detail and got central positions in the chapter. The crux of mental health is given in short which provides relevant association with stress, anxiety and depression caused due to discrimination. This chapter also contains the precise but conspicuous introductory notes of stress, anxiety and depression which are responsible factors for determining overall mental health among human being. This chapter also discussed constitutional provisions in India as well as of international context which protect from all forms of discrimination and assured for the social equality and justice. The impact of caste
based discrimination on physical and mental health; especially in the context of higher education also got the central attention in this chapter.

1.15. Schemes of Chapters:
This thesis based on the stress and mental health related problems among students due to discrimination while pursuing higher education in general courses at the universities situated in Uttar Pradesh, is divided into seven chapters. The first chapter deals with the introduction of relevant variables and concepts which are foundation of entire research. These concepts are Indian society, caste and caste system, discrimination and social categories based on caste. In addition, introduction of concepts like mental health, stress, anxiety and depression is provided insightfully. The second chapter contains relevant reviewed literature concerning and contextualising discrimination with its impact on mental health in the international as well as national contexts. In this chapter the linkages of association between discrimination and mental health have been identified which have been researched in the context of race. However, these identified associations have given the insight to focus on the literature to sniff out the existing gaps which is relevant and contextual in Indian social settings. The reviewed researches are highly compatible and congruent in conceptualising the stress and mental health related problems among students due to discrimination during higher education. The third chapter focused on the methodology of research with more emphasis on the selection of sample, strategy of selecting sample, research designs, data collections and experiences during data collection. This chapter is highly significant because it provides techniques for data collection and plan for data analysis.

Fourth chapter focuses on the socio-demographic and educational background of the respondents. This chapter tells us about the educational, social and income status of the families to whom respondents belong. It reveals that lower caste students are from poor socio-economic background and they are the first generation learner. Also, it emphasize that academic performance of lower caste students is lower than that of upper caste students. Chapter fifth is the major analysis chapter. This chapter includes the statistical analysis, especially the descriptive statistics and the regression. This chapter reveals that caste is the responsible factor for the perception as well as experiences of discrimination which is generally augmented by the socio-economic status of the family. The chapter provides the perspective of significant differences on
appraisal of discrimination, stress, anxiety and depression among the students of lower castes and upper castes. Lower caste students have more discrimination and mental health related problems than that of upper caste students. In this chapter, it is also revealed that mental health problems are determined by the perception and experiences of discrimination. Chapter sixth contains the narratives of experiences of discrimination reported by the students and detail accounts of responsible academic situations as well as academic stockholders; inflicting discriminatory experiences among students. There are differential experiences of discrimination because of castes differences. These narratives indicate the consequential impact on mental health and poor well being among students, who have confronted these discriminatory practices during higher education. The seventh chapter is conclusion of entire thesis. Here the entire thesis is summed up where the major trend and patterns of discrimination and mental health related problems at educational setting have been discussed.