CHAPTER-III
LAND AND PEOPLE

Conducting any anthropological research entails direct contact with people. These are not mere population groups ‘under consideration’ for the study. The information gathered from people in form of data, whether in quantitative or qualitative terms, is embedded in socio-cultural realities of the people. Their everyday life experiences in a social world get embodied in their physical and biological experiences. This section provides a brief of the life of people who contributed to this study. It provides a glimpse into their existence as members with shared culture.

The present study was conducted among males and females of Doaba region of Punjab. Punjab is federal state situated in the Northern part of India (Figure 3.1). Punjab is further divided into three major regions: Malwa, Doaba and Majha. These divisions though based upon geographies of rivers of Punjab, have social and cultural implications. The focus of present study is on the Doaba region. This region of Punjab is surrounded by the rivers Sutlej in the south and Beas in the north (http://punjabijanta.com/lok-virsa/regionofpunjab). There are four districts in the region: Jalandhar, Nawanshahar, Kapurthala and Hoshiarpur (http://www.whereincity.com/india/punjab/map.php). With an area of 8,915 square kilometres, Doaba has 24 towns and 5,580 villages. The estimated population of Doaba region is 4 million. (http://www.thesikhencyclopedia.com/punjab/doiaba-region).
Doaba is one of the most fertile regions of the world and was the centre of the Green Revolution in India (http://famouspunjabindia.blogspot.in/2011/05/regions-and-districts.html).

It is also known as *Bist* Doabor Jalandhar Doab (after the name of its principal town). It derives this nomenclature from bist, an abbreviation for the
twin rivers Beas and Sutlej and Doab is a Persian term meaning a land mass lying between two rivers.

Doaba region of the Punjab lies between 30° 57′ to 32° 7′ North latitudes and 75° 4′ to 76° 30′ East longitudes and is bound by the Himalayas on the east, and by river Beas in the north and the west and the Sutlej river in the south, embracing the districts of Jalandhar. The upland plain in the region covers about two thirds of the total area and ranging in elevation from 270 to 300 metres above sea level is by virtue of its alluvial soil the most fertile and thickly populated area.

The foothill plain ranging in elevation from 300 to 470 metres and lying along the Shivalik foothills is dissected by numerous seasonal streams called chos. This zone lies between the upland plain in the west and the economically backward and sparsely populated hilly tract known as Kandi in the east. It has therefore been the focus of main historical events, political activities and economic development. The low lying flood plains along the two rivers, locally called bet, with profusion of wild grasses and scrubs are not suitable for regular and intensive cultivation and are therefore sparsely populated.

Broadly speaking, the Doaba region is characterized by a continental sub-humid climate, with sharply varying winter and summer temperatures. Like the rest of the northwest India, it receives 80 per cent of its rainfall from the monsoons during July-September and the balance from cyclones during December-January. Natural vegetation of the region is of a dry deciduous type. However, intensive cultivation necessitated by population pressure and
paucity of arable land has resulted in clearance of entire upland plain for agriculture.

Still kikkar (*Acacia arabica*), ben (*Zizyphus jujuba*), shisham (*Dabergia*), dhak (*Butea trondosa*) and mango trees are found scattered or in small groves. Grasses and scrubs like sar (*Saccharum*) and kans (*Saccharum spontaneum*) abound in wet areas. Commercial planting of eucalyptus is a recent development. The region hardly produces any minerals. Doaba with its sturdy, hardworking population holds a place of pride in Sikh history. Guru Nanak`s connection with one of its ancient towns, Sultanpur Lodhi, the founding of Kartarpur by Guru Arjan and the travels of the fifth, sixth, seventh and the ninth Gurus through the length and breadth of the region resulted in the early spread of Sikhism in the area.

Being on the old route from the northwest to Delhi, it had to bear the brunt of successive invasions. At the same time it, along with the districts of the central Punjab collectively known as Majha, was a recruiting and training ground for the Sikh warriors during the eighteenth century. At the close of the nineteenth century and at the beginning of the twentieth, Sikhs of the Doaba were among the first to migrate to Canada and the United States of America, where they were in the forefront of the Ghadar movement. The Babar Akali movement of the 1920`s was almost exclusively sustained by Doaba Sikhs. Land holdings being very small, emigration to countries of the western world still remains an attraction for the people of this region.

Jalandhar is one of the most famous and major city of Doaba. This city has highest density of hospitals in Asia. DAV's first engineering college and
highest production of sports material is also located in Jalandhar. Similar to all geographical and cultural regions, this region also maintains heterogeneity in terms of its population characteristics on the basis of caste, class, religion, etc. This study is based upon inputs and information gathered from the Ad-Dharmi population of the region. Major caste in the Doaba region is Schedule Caste contributing total of the 27% of population of Punjab. Out of which 11% are Ad-Dharmi on which this study mainly focuses (http://ravidasschamar.webs.com/). Doaba consists of the largest population of Chamar, name is being derived after their profession because they used to deal with the skin of animals (cham). Ad-Dharmis are also known as Ramdasia, Ramdara, Ravidasia and Chamar (Baghel, 2007). Purposive sampling was followed and the data were collected by house to house survey and from colleges of the region.

The Ad-Dharmi living in Doaba region of Punjab speak Punjabi and use Gurumukhi script for communication within their community as well as other castes. The traditional dress of males of this population is Kurta and Pyjama and turban. The females wear salwar, kameez and dupatta. Basically their diet was dal and roti and sarson saag and mustard oil was used for cooking but nowadays their food habits have been changing. They have started eating variety of other food items. Ad-Dhamri is an endogamous caste and observes Gotra and village exogamy. The marriage is celebrated according to Sikh ritual of anandkaraj, by performing four lavaan (circumambulation) in the Gurdwara at bride’s place. Dowry as gift giving is practiced at the time of marriage. Both nuclear and joint family structure is found among the caste (Singh 2003).
They worship Guru Ravidas and all the gods and goddesses are prevalent among them. Ravidas jyanti (birthday of Guru Ravidas ji) is an important and a major festival for them. Percentage of literacy has increased over the years among them (Singh 2003). Historicity of the region, culture of the people, caste endogamy, socio-economic specificity and absence of any previous study conducted among them on similar lines were main contributing factors for selection of the study area and the study population. This section was an attempt to provide a basic brief and introduction of the region and the people selected for the study.