CHAPTER II

METHODOLOGY
Agrarian societies in India and in many other parts of the world are believed to be 'change resisting'. In India the rural societies have exhibited an enormous capacity to absorb, and rebound external shocks. They are perpetuating themselves without much change even after a series of reforms and technological changes attempted by the government. Green revolution facilitated the rural economy to speed-up and the land reform measures gave some jerks to the oligarchic agrarian structure in Haryana and Punjab. The rural societies in Haryana and Punjab accumulated these effects and spontaneously adapted to them showing a very marginal difference in the total structure.

On a broad plane, a society reveals itself in terms of three major elements; Economic relations, Social stratification and Political articulations. Any authentic study would, therefore, demand a coherent collaboration of these elements. Rural masses, on the whole, have become socially more conscious and politically more articulate. In this environment, caste differentiation in rural society is gradually losing its hold and economic relations are gaining precedence over traditional social relations (Chadha, 1986).

Following Joshi's (1975) suggestion, I found a scope of contributing to the literature in agrarian social structure. He found that sociologists and social anthropologists can study the agrarian structure at both macro and micro levels. Macro- sociological studies can provide a dynamic, synthetic and comparative view of the modernization process in Asian societies as reflected at the level of the transformation of the agrarian structure. Social anthropological
studies at the micro-level can contribute a wealth of insights into the 
variety and complexity of the changing agrarian social structure in the 
different regions of the country (Joshi, 1975, p 83; cf. Beteille, 1974).

A sociological scrutiny in the realm of 'Status Change' is 
desirable and is further confirmed by Beteille (1974, p 68). He asserts 
that the most conspicuous distinctions in rural social structure, 
particularly in India and also in other agrarian societies, are those 
relating to 'styles of life'. It is here that agrarian societies differ so 
much from industrial societies for it is not that differences of property 
and income do not exist or are unimportant in the latter but that such 
differences are partly concealed by the tendency for styles of life to 
become standardized. In agrarian societies by contrast, even minor 
differences of property and income are reflected in sharply 
differentiated styles of life. Further, such differences exist even 
between groups having a similar material position.

A deeper insight into the status hierarchy of the rural masses 
thus becomes desirable. As discussed at lengths in the introductory 
chapter, our government had attempted numerous reform measures to 
check the imbalanced landholding structure in the agrarian society. 
These measures at least disturbed the agrarian structure even when 
they were met with stiff resistance by the rich landowning class. The 
resistance is understandable because in an agrarian society, land is the 
sole or principal form of wealth and social relations are based largely 
on rights in land. The structure of this society reflects the way in which 
numerous interests are accommodated on a scale which reaches from 
the tiller of the soil to the highest authorities of state (Nair, 1991 quotes Rothermund, 1969, p 38).

Nair (1991) further stresses that land constitutes a factor of 
production, a status symbol and a source of security and influence.
The land tenure structure is the product of a large variety of inter-related social and economic forces acting jointly.

Thimmaiah and Aziz extended the argument further by saying that the land reform policy in India has all three dimensions—Economic, Social and Political (In Rajapurohit, ed.; 1984, p 18).

**SCOPE OF THE STUDY:**
The present study has attempted to explore the interrelationship between ceilings on agricultural land and social mobility. This interrelationship could be studied from above and from below. From above - Has the targetted class which lost the land gone down on the social ladder?; and from below - in the sense that whether the beneficiaries or allottees have improved their status or not in the process.

The principal objective of the present study is that how the ceilings on agricultural land have affected the status and prestige (alongwith economic and political facets) of the rich landowning class in the state of Haryana. It also examines, how the class managed to evade the 'Acts' or to what extent it lost the land. Here are the questions that the study attempts to answer: Did they lose land considerably which could lower their standing? Did they diversify their occupations to maintain their status? Have some of them sold land and moved to urban centres in search of better status? How do they perceive the Acts and in what ways are they relevant to their social standing?

Evidently, this is a simple investigation within the field and problematics of "Rural Sociology" in so far as it studies the manifest and latent consequences of the Land Ceiling Acts in relation to the social standing of the rich landowners.
RATIONALE FOR THE CHOICE OF THE STUDY

We have ample literature that shows that by virtue of the Ceiling legislations there is an improvement in the status of the beneficiaries, though very marginal. In view of uncultivable nature of land allotted and vagaries of nature, the allottees mostly depend upon wage labour. The allottees have improved their bargaining power, that too not due to land redistribution but because of rapid industrialisation which led to scarce labour left in villages (cf. Land Reforms Unit, 1990; Bardhan, 1984). On one hand when we have enough literature available on the socio-economic position of the beneficiaries, on the other we do not have even a single compilation which can give the information on the change in status of the big landlords who lost land as a result of Ceiling legislations. This is the gap which the present study has attempted to fill. Moreover, I found that implementation and consequences of Ceiling regulations are relatively untouched in comparison to the first two objectives of land reforms viz., Abolition of intermediaries and tenancy regulation.

Furthermore, most of the studies are done by economists, therefore, a sociological scrutiny is missing in their studies.

Another question that will be taken up is - whether the data available in tahsil (Office dealing with land and revenue records) and revenue records matches the ground reality or not. In this context our worthy Prime Minister, Mr. P.V. Narsimha Rao, in 'National Conference on Land Reforms and Rural Development' remarked, "What is important to know is that what happened to that land, has he sold it back to the owner or he is still taking advantages of it" (The Tribune, Oct. 10, 1992). Therefore, not only the progress of the various Acts passed by the Government should be studied from time to time but the study of the manifest and latent functions of these legislations is also of equal importance.
MAJOR CONCEPTS USED IN THE STUDY:

It is worthwhile to explain the major concepts used in the study. It is attempted to explain these concepts as clearly as is possible.

Social Mobility: For Sorokin (1959), ‘Social mobility’ is understood as any transition of an individual or social object or value - anything that has been created by human activity - from one social position to another. There are two principle types of social mobility, horizontal and vertical. By horizontal mobility or shifting, is meant the transition of an individual or social object from one social group to another situated on the same level. Whereas, vertical mobility means the relations involved in a transition of an individual (or a social object) from one social stratum to another. According to the transition there are two types of vertical social mobility: ascending and descending or social climbing and social sinking or upward and downward social mobility.

According to the nature of the stratification there are ascending and descending currents of economic, political and occupational mobility, not to mention other less important types. The ascending currents exist in two principle forms; as an infiltration of the individuals of a lower stratum into an existing higher one; and as a creation of a new group by such fundamentals, and the insertion of such a group into a higher stratum instead of or side by side with the existing groups of this stratum. Correspondingly, the descending current also has two principle forms: The first consists in a dropping of individuals from a higher social position into an existing lower one, without a degradation or disintegration of the higher group to which they belonged. The second is manifested in a degradation of a social group as a whole, in an abasement of its rank among other groups or in its disintegration as a social unit.
Education, occupation and income are the three dimensions of socio-economic status. Social mobility is measured in terms of movement or change in these dimensions. Other related concepts are: intensiveness or velocity and generality of vertical social mobility (Sorokin, 1959, pp 102-133).

**Small, Big and Very Big Farmers**: These concepts are strictly contextual. In this study the farmers owning land from 20 acres to 100 acres are taken up as big farmers, others who own above 100 acres are considered as very big farmers. And the farmers who own land below 20 acres (which is approximately the Ceiling limit) are classified as small farmers for the purpose of this study.

**Acquired Land**: The land secured from the farmers (or households) for the purpose of resettlement (or redistribution) of the landless/semi-landless agricultural tenants or labourers and that too vis-a-vis the 'Ceiling Acts' passed by the state governments in the two phases will be considered as "Acquired Land".

**HARYANA AT A GLANCE:**
Haryana is a small state in the Indian context, with an area of 44,212 sq.kms. It is divided into 4 divisions, 16 districts, 39 subdivisions, 55 tahsils, 34 sub-tahsils and 108 blocks. (As on 31.3.93).

The number of inhabited villages in the state are 6,759, the number of towns being only 94. There are 10 Parliamentary and 90 Vidhan Sabha seats for a total population of 16.46 millions (1991 census). The sex ratio in the state is 865 females per thousand males. The rural population of the state is 75.37% of the total population. The net sown area of the state is 35.75 lakh hectares out of which the net irrigated area is only 26 lakh hectares. The state is adjacent to Delhi and is considered as one of the top developing states of the country (Statistical Abstract of Haryana, 1991-92).
Haryana is characterised by wide regional contrasts in rainfall and terrain, stretching from the relatively high rainfall (110 cms.) eroded hill and "Cho" region in Ambala district next to Himachal Pradesh on the north east, through the fertile plains of Karnal and Kurukshetra districts to the increasingly drier areas to the south, and ending in the south west semi-desert strip of Mahendragarh district bordering Rajasthan where annual rainfall is an uncertain 25 cms. Thus, Haryana is also a state of marked regional contrasts in land productivity, farm and farm labour incomes, and rural standards of living, may be, also because of the regional imbalances in the agricultural infrastructure. But, gradually the disparities are narrowing down (cf. Bhalla, Shiela 1981).

SAMPLING PROCEDURE:
The state of Haryana has been divided into 4 divisions namely:

i) Ambala division.

ii) Rohtak division.

iii) Gurgaon division and

iv) Hisar division.

Each division comprises of four districts i.e.

i) Ambala, Yamunanagar, Kurukshetra and Kaithal in the Ambala division.

ii) Rohtak, Karnal, Panipat and Sonepat in the Rohtak division.

iii) Gurgaon, Faridabad, Rewari and Mahendragarh in the Gurgaon division.

iv) Hisar, Sirsa, Jind and Bhiwani in the Hisar division.

For purposes of this study, two districts (one of which is industrially forward and the other which is industrially backward) from each division are taken at the first step. The districts included in the study are:

1. Ambala and Kurukshetra from the Ambala division.
2. Rohtak and Karnal from the Rohtak division.
3. Faridabad and Mahendragarh from the Gurgaon division.
4. Hisar and Jind from the Hisar division.

The other eight districts are not included in the study for the reasons that four of these eight districts are newly formed and the land records in their offices are not well kept, and all these eight districts had much in common (e.g., land use pattern, living styles, etc.) with the other eight districts which were included in the study making the sample of districts as representative of the state of Haryana.

**PROFILE OF THE SAMPLE DISTRICTS:**

The relevant information of the districts taken as our sample has been tabulated as under:

Table 2.1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>Area in sq. kms.</th>
<th>Population in 000's (1991)</th>
<th>Population in 000's (Rural) in 1991</th>
<th>No. of villages (Total)</th>
<th>Total no. of operational holdings (20 hectares &amp; above)</th>
<th>Total food grains irrigated production area (ooo tonnes)</th>
<th>Net irrigated area (in %)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ambala</td>
<td>2,385</td>
<td>1,116</td>
<td>719</td>
<td>738</td>
<td>376</td>
<td>461.0</td>
<td>56.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kurukshetra</td>
<td>1,217</td>
<td>641</td>
<td>487</td>
<td>396</td>
<td>713</td>
<td>705.4</td>
<td>95.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Karnal</td>
<td>1,967</td>
<td>885</td>
<td>642</td>
<td>394</td>
<td>472</td>
<td>814.7</td>
<td>98.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rohtak</td>
<td>4,411</td>
<td>1,808</td>
<td>1,423</td>
<td>492</td>
<td>619</td>
<td>720.1</td>
<td>69.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faridabad</td>
<td>2,105</td>
<td>1,477</td>
<td>759</td>
<td>439</td>
<td>142</td>
<td>405.1</td>
<td>50.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mahendragarh</td>
<td>1,683</td>
<td>681</td>
<td>597</td>
<td>371</td>
<td>473</td>
<td>214.1</td>
<td>48.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jind</td>
<td>2,736</td>
<td>963</td>
<td>797</td>
<td>305</td>
<td>957</td>
<td>711.5</td>
<td>95.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hisar</td>
<td>6,279</td>
<td>1,844</td>
<td>1,455</td>
<td>510</td>
<td>1,675</td>
<td>1,323.0</td>
<td>80.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Haryana   | 44,212          | 16,463                      | 12,408                               | 6,988                   | 8,760 (0.65%)                                           | 9,558.7                                              | 72.7                   |

| India     | 3,287,263       | 846,302                     | 628,691                              | -                       | -                                                        | -                                                   | -                      |

Source:

1) Director Land Records, Haryana.
In addition to the above information, we have the percentage of rural to total population as highest in Mahendragarh and lowest in Faridabad district. The state percentage is 75.37% and the national percentage is 74.29%. Hence, more than three fourths of the population is rural even when the state is adequately industrialized.

Further stratifying our sample, four villages from each of these districts were taken in which at least one person has lost land due to the Ceiling legislations passed in 1953 and 1972. These villages were not taken on the basis of definite random sampling technique. This was because of non-availability of the list of all the villages in which the land was acquired as surplus. The data and information provided by the revenue officials was also not always in order. The officials gave the list of as many villages as was possible from their records and memory. This becomes the major limitation of the study. The sample needed in the study was purposive in a sense that the households/individuals who lost relatively more land were required so that a notable effect of land acquisition could be studied, although partial losers and law evaders are also taken up for rigorous study in subsequent chapters.

The sampling procedure is congruent to network sampling, a variant on the snowball method, as it involved some degree of multiplicity and stress was on studying the scope of the phenomenon (cf. Denzin, 1989, refers Sudman and Kalton, 1986, pp 411-13).

Willer (1967) is of the view that if a theory model is to be validated in natural cases, these cases must be selected according to the scope of the phenomenon. Such a selection is termed as 'Scope sample' by him. He defines Scope sample as a number of natural cases fitting the conditions appropriate to the theory model, which are
ranged along the major dimensions of the formal system (Willer, 1967, refers Camilleri, 1962, pp.172ff., and Zetterberg, 1954, pp 55ff.).

Hence, instead of the positivist 'cause-effect' model, the phenomenological 'reasons-action' model of explanation is used, i.e. what did the 'Act' meant to the landowner? and what are the reasons and consequences perceived by him for his/her landloss? Following which a universal sample of all the households/individuals in these 32 villages who lost land in the revenue records was taken as the final sample to be studied. The final sample comprised of 42 cases in the total of 32 villages in these eight districts of the state. The 42 cases were studied in detail using the case study method.

RESEARCH DESIGN AND OBJECTIVES:
The present study is exploratory in nature as this was an area in which hypotheses have not yet been formulated; the task then is to review the available material with sensitivity to the hypotheses that may be derived from it (cf. Selltiz, et. al., 1959).

The main thrust of the study is on social implications, however, the political and economic facets are also dealt with seriously making the study considerably wide in scope.

The objectives of this study are three-fold:

i) How effective were the Land Ceilings Acts of 1953 and 1972 in actually taking over land from the big landowners?

ii) What were the strategies employed by the individuals and families in this category to evade these Acts and how far were they successful?

iii) Have the Acts lowered the social position or standing of this category of landowners in the long run?

Other questions that run parallel to the above ones and are taken up in the study are:
i) Has the surplus land been taken over from the landowners practically or they still operate on the land by other means?

ii) Which social categories fall among the Losers?

iii) Have the landowners acquired more land after legislations?

iv) Have they diversified or changed their occupations to maintain their status?

v) Have they lost social prestige in the sense that they are not as powerful as they used to be? (cf. Beteille, 1969).

vi) What is the average land lost per landowner in the sample?

vii) What about their place of living? Have they migrated out or settled down more firmly?

viii) Have they resorted to politics to keep their prestige and power intact?

DATA COLLECTION:
The data collection procedure begins at the macro or objective level (estimating surplus land by tapping various secondary sources) and then narrows down to micro level with the help of case studies, informants (e.g., Agricultural labourers, tenants, social activists and voluntary organisations, etc.). To see the actual position of landholdings within the family, geneological approach is used. The landowner at the time of land acquisition or his/her next successor is the sampling unit and, therefore, he was sought after for a detailed and long interview in one or more sittings.

In this context, it is appropriate to quote Allport:

"If we want to know how people feel, What they experience and what they remember, What their emotions and motives are like, and the reasons for acting as they do - Why not ask them?" (Selltiz,(1959) quotes Allport, p 236). Therefore, an "Interview Schedule" with structured and open ended questions was administered to the landowners. The information was supplemented by confirmation from the fellow villagers, Sarpanch, tenants and others.
The answers and other information (if any) were then developed into case studies of all the sampling units.

A general survey of the area was also made and information was gathered from senior Block Development Officers, Tahsildars and Gram sevaks in the state. Secondly, a pretest survey was conducted with the pretest interview schedule to make sure that we get responses to every item. All precautions were taken as the issue was delicate and provocative for the losers.

As the research goals were limited the number of cases taken was considered sufficient (cf. Goode & Hatt, 1952, p 339).

In addition to the primary data, secondary data from revenue and tahsil records, reports of the government and other published materials were also used.

**ITEM SELECTION:**

The ‘Interview Schedule’ administered to the landowners/households consisted of forty five items which were to be answered vis-a-vis the Punjab security of land tenures Act, 1953 and the Haryana Ceiling on landholdings Act, 1972 (Henceforth mentioned as First and Second Ceiling Acts or simply First and Second Acts, whereas, the revenue officials term these Acts as old and new Acts respectively) and the present position. A few items were not answerable with respect to different dates (e.g., Caste/Religion, position of village, etc.) and a few others were answerable with respect to only first two dates, i.e. 1953 and 1972 (e.g., Land lost due to Ceiling Act, what happened to that land etc.). Some other items were further subdivided which needed answers in terms of - Males/females, Irrigated/unirrigated, Inside village area/outside village area and farm work/domestic work (refer Appendix).
The answers to all the items were to be given by the respondents (barring some rare occasions) and if they were unable to do so, the respondents were allowed to take help of others (if they had some difficulty in auditory or any other sense) and also some other means (like confirming from others) were used.

FIELD STUDY:

The field study was done in six phases namely:

i) Preliminary planning.

ii) General survey of the area.

iii) Formulation of research design.

iv) The pretesting of interview schedule and other research procedures.

v) The full scale field operation.


After an initial planning about the broad area of research, a general survey of three districts was done to make sure that some relation exists between the variables i.e. The landowners/households who lost land in the Ceiling legislation had its bearing on the social prestige or economic or political positions. Thereafter, a research design was formulated and an interview schedule was constructed using all possible variables within the scope of our knowledge which had a relevance to the study at hand. This interview schedule as being the main tool of our research was then tested and retested so that its language is made understandable and less provoking. Some more questions were added and the unimportant ones were deleted after the pretest survey.

When the research tools were adequately sharpened and made understandable to the lay rural folk, I went to the field for the detailed study of my sample. In the field, I did not face many problems as any outsider might have faced. This was because of my
working knowledge in all the dialects spoken in the state (e.g., Brij, Mix of Haryanvi and Punjabi, Haryanvi and Bagdi). Secondly, I come from a remote village in Haryana and basically from a prevalent agricultural caste. Finally, I had my own conveyance and staying in the field for me was not a problem because the respondents took me as an insider and moreover I had my friends and relatives almost in every corner of the state.

The only problem I faced was due to mobilization done by opposition parties against 'GATT' accord in the state. Some of the villagers took me as a representative of the government doing something for the acceptance of the treaty. At a few places in Ambala district, I was not readily welcomed. A few others were afraid that the government might be planning to take away the land again like before. Some of them were found concealing the true information about the land held but it was taken care of with the help of 'Patwari' and other informants.

The macro level information was collected from the office of Finance Commissioner (Land Revenue), District Revenue Officers in the concerned districts, Naib Tahsildars (surplus) and the 'Patwaris' of the villages taken in the study.

The data and information thus available was analysed and arranged so that some conclusions can be drawn and further hypotheses can be formulated.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY:
The major limitations of the present study are mainly due to the inadequate and un-updated records and that too not arranged in some order that can suit a scholar. The records kept with officials are to their own convenience. The language used in these records is not a common language (it is some form of Persian). The government servants in the various departments were quite nice to talk to but were
reluctant to spare sufficient time. They only provided me with the information that was readily available to them. The frequent transfers of the government officials also adds to the problem, as it becomes difficult for them to give their own reliable experiences in the region.

The first major limitation of the study is that sample size is too small. It was because of the limited time and resources at hand. The second valid reason being a small universe that is scattered widely throughout the state.

The second limitation was non-availability of proper sampling frame because of the reasons discussed before hand. Moreover, the purpose of the study was to see the effects of land acquisition on the social status of the targeted landowning households, therefore, the villages in which the land lost was undesirably less were deliberately avoided, as the effect would be negligible on them. Consequently, a randomized sample was neither possible nor desired. The sampling was more or less purposive in nature.

These two main limitations rendered the scope of the study very limited. Further, I will not be in a position to generalize for the whole population. Therefore, any statements made in this study are strictly valid for the sample only and not for the population.

Lastly, a methodological clarification which needs mention is regarding the case-studies. The names of the respondents in the descriptions are fictitious while the names of villages are not mentioned at all. This was done to ensure the confidentiality of the respondents. The remaining information is correct.
Having discussed the research procedure, I will proceed to the next chapter in which the social and demographic profile of the respondents is discussed.