SUMMARY
The province of Isfahan, including its capital city of Isfahan, is situated in the centre plateau of Iran. It is irrigated by the famous river named "Zayandeh-rud", which rises from eastern slope of the Zagrose mountain and disappears in the marshes of Gave Khaneh. The province is situated at about 1500 meters above sea level. The climate of the province varies from place to place. In western districts the average amount of rainfall is rather high and the region is usually buried under heavy snow in winter. The eastern districts with a vast plain have almost no rainfall and have rather hot summers and cold winters. The land area of this province is some 104,700 sq.kilometers. It has land frontiers in the North with Provinces of Semnan and Markazi (Arake); in the South with the provinces of Yazad and Fars; in the East with the province of Khora San and in the West with the provinces of Lorastan and Bakhteary.

Education, in this province, as in other provinces of Iran from primary up to higher secondary is nationalized and centralized. It has uniformity of syllabi in the whole of the
country and runs under direction and supervision of the Ministry of Education in the capital city of Iran, Tehran. Primary education begins at the age of 6 plus and lasts for five years which is followed by a guidance cycle grade 6,7 and 8. Upto grade 8 education is considered elementary level and is unconditionally free but has not been made compulsory, so far.

Proper education has been accepted as a process which "broadens a person's horizon; makes him socially more active; extends his opportunities of participating in management and administration; helps him to choose the right career; and develops a creative attitude to work." It is also a process of full realization of human potential; a process of proper modification of human behaviour, and a process of character-building and international understanding. To achieve the harmonious development of an individual proper elementary education is the first step.

Article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights approved by the General Assembly of United Nations on December 10, 1948 deals with education. It has considered education as a birth right of every individual. It has asserted the right of free and compulsory education for every one, at least at the elementary and fundamental stage.
Statement of the Problem:

The proposed study has been specifically entitled as, "Factors Impeding Compulsory Elementary Education in the Province of Isfahan, Iran".

Justification of the Problem:

The present study is justified because during the present age of space, science and technology when man has reached the highest level of success in most aspects of life, illiteracy is a major challenge and is the main source of so many social evils. It hinders human development. It checks the spread of social progress and economic growth. At present, slow progressing nations face the highest challenge from illiteracy. To face this challenge they have to find the quickest short-cut to close the gap between themselves and the industrially developed nations. It has been true at all times and in all countries that education can play an important role in removing social evils and bringing about social progress and economic growth. In the words of S. Gopinathan (1977), "Studies in Washington show that even more important than investment, the major factor for expansion in the United States since 1925 has been the education and training of men and women". It is in this regard that children come to the scene. Children occupy a prominent role in shaping the destiny of their nations and
of the world as a whole. So, proper attention and care to be bestowed upon the development of the children through proper education is the official and moral duty of their States. In Iran, the importance of education especially for the children has been realized particularly during the last two decades. According to the last official report published by the government of Iran in a book in English "Iran Today", 1977, page 94, the total allocation to education in the budget 1976-77 amounted to $2.5 billion which means 8.5 per cent of the total budget and 37 per cent higher than the previous year's figures. The bulk of Iran's educational expenditure was devoted to primary level which absorbed over a quarter of the total funds. But it is a fact that in spite of such heavy budgetary allocation, adequate measures have not been taken by the Iranian authorities so far although Iran is economically a rich state with population of about 36 million. According to many studies and official reports, illiteracy is still a major challenge in Iran. It is estimated that at present about 60 per cent of the total population of Iran is still completely illiterate including children eligible for schooling. The latest official report published by the Ministry of Education of Iran in the Persian Newspaper "KAYHAN" on July 9, 1980 on number 11040, page 6, showed that there were about one million eligible children in the whole of Iran including the province of Isfahan, who did not attend the school so far. Isfahan stands
fifth in population among 24 provinces of Iran with about 2,178,678 as its population. In this province thousands of eligible children are not going to the school and like many other provinces here also the rate of drop-outs from schools is high. Above all although, education upto grade 8 (elementary) has been made free in the whole of Iran, yet compulsory elementary education has not been made officially compulsory so far in any part of Iran including this province for reasons unknown. The word 'compulsory' does not include any legal obligation for the parents to send their children to school. That is why the investigator has selected this important topic to find out factors which stand in the way of Compulsory Elementary Education in the province of Isfahan, Iran, which may also open a guideline to other provinces of Iran.

**Purpose of the Study:**

The study is undertaken with the following objectives:

1. To examine the defects in the present system of elementary education in Iran.

2. To study the problems coming in the way of compulsory elementary education in the province of Isfahan, Iran.

3. To find out, if the problems standing in the way of compulsory elementary education in this province can be reduced.
4. To clarify how compulsory elementary education can be made practicable in this province.

5. To examine what reforms are needed to attain this goal in this province.

Procedure:

The investigation is a descriptive survey research conducted in the province of Isfahan, situated in the central plateau of Iran. The sample of the study included three main groups namely, the completely illiterate and the drop-out children from the school between the age group of 6-14 years, the parents of the same children and the experts. The expert group consisted of three sub-groups: the teachers from elementary schools, men and women both from rural and urban areas; the principals and administrators both from rural and urban areas, and the educationists and planners from the capital city of Iran, Tehran, Office of Elementary Education. The sample of the study covered 520 subjects which included 200 children; 200 parents of the same children; eighty teachers; ten principals; ten administrators; ten educationists and ten planners.

There were two tools used for the present investigation: (1) questionnaire for the experts and (ii) the structured interview for the children and their parents. After consulting the related literature, the questionnaire and the structured interview were prepared and finalized with the advice of
researcher's supervisor and twenty experts in India. The questionnaire as the tool consisted of two parts. The first part was in the close ended form (Yes or No). It consisted of 29 statements related with the impeding factors concerning educational planning, budgeting and financing, educational policy, supervision and direction in education, corruption in administrative organization of education, mobilization of national resources, curriculum, system of examination and teaching technology, shortage of trained teachers, shortage of schools and shortage of equipment, illiteracy of the parents, poverty of the parents, superstitions among illiterate families, undesirable distribution of means of production, centralization of education, lack of scientific research and lack of scientific census, isolation of professional teachers and planners, isolation of local community from educational authorities and isolation of parents and school authorities, lack of healthy re-creation in the schools and lack of hygienic condition in the rural areas, geographical and climatic factors, poor transportation and communication in the rural areas and migration of the villagers to the cities. The second part of the questionnaire was for the experts. They were given an open choice to comment and to mention other causes which may stand in the way of compulsory elementary education in this province. The second tool was the structured interview: two sets of structured interview were developed
by the investigator after consulting the related literature and twenty experts in India and researcher's supervisor. One set of structured interview was for collecting information from the illiterate and drop-out children between 6 to 14 years of age. The second one was for collecting information from the parents of the same children. The first set of structured interview which was developed for the children constituted of three parts. Part (a) and part (b) were in close-ended type (Yes or No). Part (a) consisted of 35 statements related with impeding factors concerning availability of the school in the locality of the child, distance of the school to the residence of the child, complete elementary school, conveyance facilities to the school, handicapped, emotionally disturbed and mentally deformed children situation, child's intelligence, income and financial position of the family of the child, child's help needed at home or for father's job, with education, curriculum, text books, home exercises and examination, teachers and teaching methods, male teachers in girl's schools, scolding of the child by the teachers, the environment of the school, over-crowded classes, recreation and hygienic facilities in the school. Part (b) of the second tool contained 5 statements which were concerned with child's position, for example, whether the child was an orphan or had ste-mother or step-father. In part (c) of the second tool the children were given an open choice to comment and/or mention other causes which may stand in
their way for not going to the school.

The second set of structured interview which was for the parents of the same children was developed as the same structured interview for the children but with different wording. Only part (b) which contained 5 statements for the children were omitted here. So the structured interview for the parents constituted of two parts. Part (a) consisted of 35 statements, just like the childrens' structured interview and part (b) was in the form of open-choice in which the parents were asked to comment and/or mention other causes which may stand in the way of the parents for not sending their children to the school. In order to collect proper data from respondents and to avoid some difficulties, misunderstanding and to enhance feasibility of the procedure, the investigator collected an official introductory letter from the Central Ministry of Education in the capital city of Iran - Tehran for the central office of Education in the capital city of Isfahan for their full cooperation with the investigator. This letter was taken by the investigator personally and was submitted to the educational authorities in Isfahan city. Later, the investigator was also introduced through five official introductory letters to the administrators of five main cities where data had to be collected through central office of Education in Isfahan city. These five letters were personally submitted by the investigator to each
administrator separately in their cities. Besides this, one representative from the office of education and one representative from school were with the investigator to guide and introduce the investigator to the respondents. Representative of the office of education helped and guided the investigator in his city and representative of the school helped and guided the investigator in his village. The copies of questionnaire for planners and educationists were presented to them personally by the investigator in their office in Tehran. They were also collected by the investigator in their office in Tehran. The questionnaires for administrators, principals and teachers were also presented personally by the investigator to them in their offices, schools or residence in different cities and villages and were collected personally by the investigator in different places under study. The interviews with the children and parents were conducted in different places wherever they were available like their places of residence, workshops, shops and farms. Thorough instructions and explanations were given to all of them by the investigator before conducting interviews. The whole procedure including distribution of the questionnaire, collection of the filled in questionnaire proforma and the conducting interview schedules took about six months of the research period. The investigator received full cooperation from all respondents in all places where data was collected.
The findings of the present study have emerged on the basis of four hypotheses:

First hypothesis was, "there are some defects within the educational system of Iran which hinder compulsory elementary education in the country". It was found that the following defects exist within the educational system of Iran and therefore are hindering compulsory elementary education in this province: wrong implementation of educational policy; wrong supervision and direction in educational system and defect in the system of examination. The second hypothesis was, "In the Province of Isfahan there are societal and environmental factors also which impede compulsory elementary education". The results of this study as a whole revealed that in the province of Isfahan the following societal and environmental factors are standing in the way of compulsory elementary education. These are: poverty of the parents of illiterate and drop-out children; illiteracy of the parents of illiterate and drop-out children; superstitions among illiterate families which is the outcome of their illiteracy; isolation of parents of the children from school authorities; uncongenial geographical configuration like geographical and climatic factors leading to poor transportation in the rural areas as well as lack of hygienic conditions in the rural areas; poor communication in the rural areas and finally the migration of the villagers to the cities. The third hypothesis was,
"problems standing in the way of compulsory elementary education can be reduced".

The information collected from three main groups namely children, their parents and the experts as a whole, indicates that the following impediments are hindering the attempt of reducing the problems standing in the way of compulsory elementary education in this province. In order to reduce the problems the following hinderances have to be considered and removed by the educational authorities and the State: (1) scolding of the children by their teachers wherever it is practised, (2) lack of interest among some teachers where it is observed, (3) shortage of schools in the shortage areas, (4) shortage of trained teachers, (5) shortage of equipment in the schools and lack of healthy recreation.

The fourth hypothesis was, "compulsory elementary education can be enforced on compulsion basis by implementing radical reforms". The outcome of relevant data collected from all the three groups namely children, their parents and experts reveal that if the government of Iran with the cooperation of Ministry of Education and other authorities concerned with the present problem implement seriously the following radical reforms, compulsory elementary education can be enforced in the province of Isfahan. The radical reforms which are
essential are (1) sound distribution of means of production through sound planning and supervision to narrow the gap between the rich and the poor to its maximum possibility. (2) Correct and proper mobilization of the national resources including human resource through careful planning and directing and supervising. (3) Filling the gap between backward rural areas and urban areas in all respects such as modernization of agriculture in the rural areas; medical care for the rural people; electricity for the rural people; proper cemented roads and traffic facilities from the rural areas to the cities; construction of modern houses and proper educational facilities such as schools, and providing enough teachers for needed places in the rural areas. In order to achieve all these essential needs in the rural areas, enough budget, sound planning, directing, and supervision are the foundation of the goal. (4) Creation of permanent jobs for jobless people through sound economic and developing plans is essential. (5) Promotion of scientific research and census has to be conducted by the government through university of Isfahan. (6) Decentralization of education to its maximum possibility in which local educational authorities may be given more authority to discharge their responsibility and the educational authorities in the centre may play the role of advisors and directors in this respect. (7) Participation of professional teachers of the province in educational planning for the province (8) Sound and proper management in the schools of the
province by selecting and appointing capable; qualified; creative; dynamic; well behaved experts; impartial and experienced teachers as headmasters; headmistresses and principals and finally the interference of unauthorized persons who are not aware of teaching-learning process and are interfering in all aspects of educational process must be completely stopped by the order of the government through Central Ministry of Education in Tehran to the educational authorities in the province for its implementation.

In the end the researcher is able to suggest the following recommendations for further studies:

1. A similar study may be conducted in other parts of this province. This may help to validate the present findings and provide a base for more generalized conclusions.

2. A similar study may be conducted in the rest of 23 provinces of Iran, especially in the provinces of Bluchistan; Kordastan; Lorastan; Kohkiloya and Boearahmad; Charmahal Bakhteary; Khorasan and the provinces of East and West Azarbujan. This can help to find out whether the other provinces of Iran are facing similar problems and if so, then a correct and proper way for practicability of compulsory elementary education in Iran as a whole can be taken up by the central government of Iran.
3. Many countries of the Third World face the same problems as analysed in the present research. This topic may be studied in the other developing countries for a comparative look and for learning lessons from each other.