SUMMARY

The concept of the Gurukula system of education for women was a huge step initiated by the Arya Samaj under the visionary guidance of Swami Dayanand Saraswati. Dayanand was among the first to draw attention to how the British rule had impacted India’s social and cultural fabric by ignoring a value based educational system that could also guide the youth in combating social evils and degenerate traditions that were eating into the core of Indian society.

Due to historical factors the Haryana region had remained backward educationally, particularly in the context of women. As Haryana adopted the Arya Samaj way of life in a big way, it was natural that it became an important area for the growth of the Gurukula system of education.

This study examines in an exhaustive manner the origin of the concept of women Gurukulas. Why was the need felt. What were the early problems. How these problems were confronted.

The study examines the role and contribution of key players, their ideological stand and differences. It draws attention to how differences arose between the two wings of the Arya Samaj – the D.A.V. and the Gurukulas. Both
walked different paths in terms of the content of their course contents. While the D.A.V. adopted a modern and scientific future the Gurukulas continued to emphasize on traditional methods. This approach led to a situation where the D.A.V. raced ahead in terms of popularity and enrolment. Only much later did the Gurukulas realize that they too would have to adopt the modern way of education. This experiment of mixing the imparting of traditional knowledge and vedic values along with modern education has succeeded in several good Gurukulas of the Haryana region.

The most important role and contribution of the women Gurukulas in the Haryana region however remains in the fact that in their own manner, however small, these institutions have been playing a critical role in empowering women in the context of a tradition that has been greatly biased against women. For a patriarchal society such as Haryana the women Gurukulas were a radical step in the direction of women’s empowerment. They were a challenge to age-old evil practices such as, child marriages, the Sati system, caste, ban on widow remarriage, ignorance and superstitions.

The study also examines the challenges faced by the women’s Gurukulas particularly the question of course content. Another important challenge was the issue of
financial resources. It is important to note that most of these Gurukulas were attended by girls from rural areas and from families of middle and lower middle classes. The education and all expenses were and remain highly subsidized. The resources for running the Gurukulas are met by donations from neighbouring villages.

One of the major reasons for the growth and popularity of these Gurukulas was that rural families felt assured and comfortable, knowing that the girls would be safe. Most of these Gurukulas are run on very strict rules and regulations. They are all strictly residential.

The study briefly traces the history of each Kanya Gurukula in the Haryana region. The growth of most of these Gurukulas has been mainly because of the support it has received from the rural peasantry.

Perhaps the single most important contribution of the Kanya Gurukulas is that they are open to all women irrespective of caste and community. In this sense, they have proved as the most important step towards attacking Haryana’s rigid caste traditions.

The Gurukula system as we know was also historically a breeding ground for freedom fighters in India’s struggle for independence. The British were greatly apprehensive of the Gurukulas and distrusted them completely. All put together the Gurukulas have played
and continue to play a very important and multidimensional role in the growth and progress of Haryana in terms of its educational, social and cultural progress, perhaps even economic and political progress.

The study is spread into six chapters and also includes a detailed bibliography and a questionnaire. It may also be pointed out that the study is based mostly on sources that have been tapped for the first time. These include a large number of very old and rare documents and publications of the various Gurukulas. Every women Gurukulas of the Haryana region and neighbouring areas was visited several times to conduct interviews and seek sources.

Chapter – I 'Historical Perspective'

The first chapter Historical Perspective' discusses the introduction of Gurukulas, review of literature, hypothesis and the scope of the study. Educationally Haryana was well placed in the ancient times but unfortunately owing to its typical geographical location, it could not retain the tradition. When the British took control of Haryana in 1803 the position of education was far from satisfactory even in the towns. The Gurukulas were introduced at a very difficult time in Haryana’s history.
Chapter-2 Rise of Arya Samaj and Educational Movement in Haryana

The second chapter discusses how several socio-religious reform movements took place in the 19th century in India but Haryana remained almost unaffected by them. However, Arya Samaj took this area into its fold. It made untiring efforts to raise the socio-religious status of the region's agricultural communities, spread of education, removal of untouchability and to raise the social status of women. It also launched a crusade against social evils like child marriage and female infanticide. With the beginning of the 20th century the Arya Samaj, emerged as a vital force in Haryana for educational development.

Chapter – 3 Foundation of Gurukulas: Early Reasons

This chapter examines how the movement for Gurukulas was launched and sponsored by Lala Munshi Ram and many other leaders how it was supported by the region’s peasantry.

Chapter – 4 Gurukulas and Women Education: Working and Content

In this chapter we have discussed the ideas of Swami Dayanand Saraswati on Women education and differences on the issue of Women education between the College party and the Gurukul party.

Swami Dayanand greatly emphasized the importance
of education for women. He was of the view that the regeneration of India was possible only through proper education of women. To drive out ignorance and to spread knowledge had been the main objectives of Dayanand. He propounded that proper and equal education should be given to women and men. The Arya Samaj opened a number of educational institutions for imparting education to women. The concept of Gurukula education was a major step to empower women and rid society of its socio-religious evils.

Chapter- 5 Contribution of Bhagat Phool Singh for Women Education in the Haryana Region.

This chapter deals with the contribution of Bhagat Phool Singh for women education in Haryana and examines all the Kanya Gurukulas in Haryana. He believed that educated women would be better equipped to dedicate themselves to society. Bhagat Phool Singh’s role in social reform and upliftment of women in rural areas in Haryana has been extremely important.

Chapter -6 Impact of Kanya Gurukulas on Society in Haryana

This chapter examines the significant role played by the Gurukuls in the field of education in Haryana. Gurukula education affected all areas of society, such as political, social, economic and religious. By breaking the
barriers of caste and encouraging women to take to the path of education and attempting to free the society of ills like child marriage, superstitions, ignorance and illiteracy the Kanya Gurukulas have greatly contributed to the progress of rural society in Haryana.
Fig. 1: Swami Sharrdhanand in Gurukula Kangri (1904)

Fig. 2: Bhagat Phool Singh in Gurukula Khanpur (1928)
Fig. 3: Kanya Gurukula, Khanpur (1956)

Fig. 4: Arya Kanya Gurukula, Lova Kalan, Jhajjar (1980)
Fig. 5: Kanya Gurukula, Mor Majra, Karnal, (1981)

Fig. 6: Kanya Gurukula, Gendakhera, Jind (1985)
Fig. 7: Kanya Gurukula, Kharal, Jind (1978-79)