CHAPTER – 2
LITERATURE REVIEW

In this chapter an attempt has been made to review earlier studies on the status of women. From the previous chapter, it is clear that the study on status of women revolves around three aspects of women’s status viz. social, economic and political. The idea behind this concept is to analyze and review studies related to all aspects of women’s status. Therefore, in this chapter we have reviewed of those studies which are related to these three aspects. This chapter comprises studies related to sex ratio, education, women health, violence against women, role of women in economy and studies related to political participation in local bodies of women with reference to dalit and non dalit women.

Attention of scholars, social reformers and political thinkers was being drawn to problem and position of Indian women right form the beginning of the 20th century. The study of the socio economic position of Indian woman was studied with the publication of the book “Position of Women in Indian Life” by Mitra (1981), the primary objective of it was to bring to light the position of Indian women as compared to its western counterparts. Though needs for the independent studies for underlining various problems of women in the Indian set up and their emancipation form the bondages of the middle ages and giving them their rightful place were shown in this study, yet it could not become a launching pad for the feminist movement in this country.

The freedom struggle with the participation of women got an impetus. Consequently, many articles and write-ups started appearing in journals and newspapers. Scholars and eminent writer and national leaders like Mahatma Gandhi on this subject undertook serious studies. Research papers were presented to various social and political seminars and conferences that were organized by various institutions and organizations. A paper which needs special mention here is “Status of Women in India” (1941) presented to the Indian Council of World affairs by Chattopadhyaya, an eminent freedom fighter and leading personality on women’s movement in India. This was the first attempt based on empirical data to present
position of the Indian women with regard to her social status, contribution in the freedom struggle and occupational and administrative capabilities. It perforated a brief account of the socio-political contribution of women, yet it was a trend setter for the study of multi-dimensional problems of the Indian women.

HISTORICAL FOCUS ON WOMEN STUDY

The most comprehensive work in this field appeared under the title “The Position of Women in Indian Civilization” (from pre-historic times to present day) by Altekar (1956). The study of socio-economic position of women presented detailed authentic information regarding the position of women in the Indian society right from the earliest period of civilization to the middle of the 20th century. It has taken into account the problems of women such as life in childhood, right of education, choice of selecting her partner, rights as a wife, position in society after the death of her husband, her property right, her place in public life, her participation in decision-making process and general attitude of society towards them at different epoch of Indian history.

In this the author has examined the Indian literature right from the Rigvedic times to the modern age. She has studied not only the Vedas, Smrities, Puranas and other Sanskrit classical works, but also the Buddhist, Jain scriptural, inscriptional and numismatic sources and records of foreign travelers, Merchants and Christian missionary of different periods. Desai (1957) in her work on “Women in Modern India”, studied the changing status of women in a more descriptive fashion concerning the entire life of women during a particular period, viz. those immediately preceding and succeeding the British Rule.

The phenomenon of women studies was furthered by Baig (1958) her works, viz. “Women in Ancient India” an edited work on “Indian Women Power”. Both the works are important contribution. It was the first time that through these works, the position of Indian women was extensively assessed in respect to matriarchal and patriarchal social setups in different parts of the country and their socio-economic effect on position of women.

Hate (1969) in her work on “The changing status of women in post independence India” throws light on the status of women in India and the hardship
faced by them in the past three decades along with the changes occurred in their position after India achieved its independence. She applied a kind of synthetic approach in her work in the changing status of Indian women in a more general manner through a multipurpose survey. She conducted a study and collected data on 150 women of middle class families in the Bombay city. Her findings show that educated women were no more contented in carrying out the traditional female duties of a wife and a mother. Now they have begun to realize that the role of a woman was not only limited to parents and husbands, child bearing rearing, becoming a good mother and carrying on domestic tasks. They were realizing that they have personalities of their own as human being. They had obligations towards community and society also. They do want a change from traditionally recognized female roles and felt that employment gives a sense of satisfaction, security and pleasure in life.

Chowdhry (1994) conducted a study on women in Haryana titled, “The Veiled Women”. The major sources used in her study for collection of data and information’s were based on oral history. According to her the oral traditions and sources are among the basic ingredients for the understanding of cultural history. The oral sources used by Chowdhry in her work have enriched the available historical sources, official and unofficial, published and unpublished and provided a holistic picture of this region. Folk tales, myths, folk songs, proverbs, popular sayings, and nonsense rhymes, all of which enjoy a common currency of social interaction among a wide range of social groups were also included with extensive interview with people: These all sources reflect the social system of particular society by which women behaviour are controlled. She used many folk tales, popular sayings and proverbs which is normally found affecting Haryanvi culture.

She found tremendous progress in every field of development in Haryana after its emergence as an independent state on 1st November 1966. But women who are the partakers of this change, suffered greater inequalities. She found Haryanvi women as full working partners of men, but only in a ghunghat (i.e. under veil). Here, the ghunghat act as a symbol of an ideological thrust towards control of rural women, despite drastic socio-economic changes which have catapulted this region from a backward subsistence level economy to be the state with the second highest per capita
income in India. Together with equally drastic socio political changes which include wide reaching enabling legislation. It is perhaps noteworthy that Haryana has not experienced any significant democratizing movement which may have had a positive impact on gender relations.

The cumulative effect of this kind of rural transformation combined with the legal sanctioning of the inheritance and other rights of women by the independent state, has been the tightening of a variety of cultural controls over women successfully negating any intended liberalization. Central to these controls is the ghunghat as the most potent symbol of rural patriarchy which still shrouds the Haryanvi women.

Thus, although post-colonial modern development changes have transformed the very face of Haryana beyond recognition but according to her this face, at best, can be described as a male one; the face of half of its populace in the rural areas remains enshrouded and enclosed in a ghunghat. This ghunghat, therefore, symbolizes the very different reality of women’s existence than the one propagated and claimed by the second richest state in India. The removal of this ghunghat as a symbol may perhaps constitute the first truly revolutionary step for its women.

STUDIES ON DALITS

Cohn (1955) in his study on the changing status of chamars, found out the significant role of education for improving the status. He demonstrated in his study that secular education is playing a central role in the chamar’s efforts to improve their position. He concludes that while education is an individual achievement, mobility for them, too, must be a group phenomenon.

Bailey (1958) in the work “Caste and the Economic Frontier” has concluded that the Harijans have begun to adjust their social status to their new wealth. They have been prevented from finding a social level appropriate for their new economic status. Saradamani (1980), in her study on the Pulayas of Kerala, found that the backward and low castes in India have tried to raise their status mainly in two ways – one is ‘the internal process of self-improvement’ which Srinivas (1956) has termed “Sanskritization”, the second is ‘external help’, mainly governmental assistance.

Pandya (1959) in his study “Striving for Economic inequality of scheduled castes”, listed inferior social status, general poverty and non availability of adequate
financial assistance along with a number of other factors that have retarded their progress. Sachchidananda (1977) in his work “The Harijan Elite – A study of their status” concluded that Urbanization, improved economic social and political conditions, decreasing influence of caste disabilities and the new government policy of protective discrimination etc. have been considered as effective forces for the changes in their styles of life.

Bose (1972) observed some distinguishing features of social movements among scheduled caste men and women in his work on the “Structure of Hindu Society.” He observed that they have been claiming higher place, and a loftier status, within the caste system itself than has hitherto been accorded to them by the rest of Hindu society.

Kuppuswamy (1975) observed in his work on “Social change in India” that as a result of the constitutional provision and passed laws, the legal disabilities of the Harijans were removed. A big social change has come about among the Harijans on the basis of the temple entry legislation, the reservation of seats in Parliament and the State Legislatures, the provision of educational facilities and employment opportunities. Abbasayulu (1978) in the study on “Scheduled caste Elite” in Andhra Pradesh found that the following are the main contributory factors in the rise of the scheduled caste men and women in the order of priority: (1) Education, (2) Awareness from within and without (3) Constitutional provisions (4) Social service and (5) Family reputation.

Trivedi (1976) has arrived at some important finding from his study on the scheduled caste women of Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, and Uttar Pradesh. Among the Harijan women, change in various aspects of life including values, attitudes, patterns of behaviour, physical and social mobility etc. is generally initiated by the men and not by the women of the community. The status of women in the family is found to be quite sound. Polygamy is being replaced by monogamy among the educated families of Harijans which improves the status of women in a family. Intercaste marriages of scheduled caste women with high caste men are not as numerous as one would like them to be, and so there is little impact of such women whose status improves only in isolation and not in collectivity. These studies found that most of the
women between 15 to 44 years are married away like the men, but the incidence of divorce is more prevalent among women than among men of this age-group.

**Malik (1979)** has made some important observation in his work on “Social Integration of Scheduled Castes.” Her findings suggested close correlation between social status (usually referred to as ritual status of caste groups) and their socio-economic conditions (such as occupations, education, wealth, level of living and so on). She observed that those scheduled caste persons who have improved their occupational and economic status felt that they are unable to acquire a social status commensurate with that status because of their low social origins. Social Status of individual is influenced not only by his individual properties, but also by the social status of the group to which they belong. Thus even if the scheduled caste groups have achieved higher education, they feel that they are not being treated at par with high caste persons with same educational qualification. In general terms, Suneila Malik found that the various efforts made by the Harijans for the improvement in social status are (1) education (2) change in occupation (3) improvement in the economic status and standard of living (4) adoption of the life style of the higher castes.

**STUDIES RELATED TO SEX RATIO**

Although discrimination, against girls by their own families is not a new phenomenon in India, the recent fall in the child sex ratio\(^2\) is a cause of fresh concern both for researcher and policy makers because of its increased intensity and wider spread than ever before (**Kapadia, 2002**). The main factor behind this history of neglect of even infanticide of girls has been due to the strong culture of son-preference in most Indian families. All over India households tend to discriminate in favour of sons in their allocation, especially of those goods and facilities that are considered valuable, i.e., milk, a good medical care and access to education. In families with limited resources, this differential may extend even to basic necessities to the extent that it proves fatal for girls. For example, Leela Visaria’s field work had shown that when a male child was ill, labourers families would willingly sacrifice a day’s wage to take him to a clinic or a doctor, but not so for a girl child (**Visaria, 1988**).
The recent increase in the number of missing girls, however, is of a different character. Besides the practice of neglecting the welfare of little girls, there are signs of a greater degree of deliberation and planning by individual families in determining family composition and the numbers of girls to be found in them. Gupta (1987) had noted that in her fieldwork area the girls who went missing were likely to be of higher birth orders and that this event was more likely to occur in families with educated mother than in others. In other words, middle class families begin to control the size of their families and the birth they set out to avoid are preferably those of girls. The other reason why the recent trends are of special concern relates to the spread of these practices to scheduled caste populations. For the first half of the both the shortfall in the relative numbers of Hindu girls was almost totally confined to a few upper and middle castes. In the northwest part of India, the Sikhs and Muslims also shared these tendencies. Prior to 1950, almost none of the social groups, which later came to be labeled as scheduled castes, had shown any signs of such anti-female bias (Banerjee and Jain, 2001).

In recent years, however, Agnihotri (1996) has shown that the scheduled caste population has contributed more than its proportionate share to the females gone missing in the 1981-1991 decade. All states except Kerala have shared this trend. He has further shown that, in 1981, the anti girls child bias among their social groups was no higher than in the rest of the population in the age group 0-4 years. But in the age group 5-9 years, the scheduled castes were responsible for most of the excess deaths of girls. In other words, not only does the evidence point to the possibility of these social groups having begun to practice female infanticide, it also indicates that scheduled caste girls are now being made to bear a disproportionate part of the poverty and deprivation that their families undergo. The incidence of poverty is not as important and determining a factor in the declining sex ratios as the customs of a predominant culture. High per capita incomes of Punjab and Haryana have not given them higher sex ratio, nor has the incidence of the reduction in poverty levels increased the sex ratio among the Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, and Muslims. It is a contagion which have caught from the predominant culture of the places in which they are located (Kapadia 2002).
Studies on declining sex ratio in Punjab and Haryana were commissioned and conducted by Nayar, (1995) in the Department of Women Studies, National Council of Educational Research and Training. In Punjab the sex ratio study was confined to the 0-6 age group and was done in the districts of Amritsar, Faridkot and Patiala. The study was confined to four villages in each district. In all, 2,338 villagers consisting of 1238 men and 1100 female were interviewed.

According to Census (1991) figures, the sex ratio in the district of Amritsar was 864, in Faridkot District it was 866 and in Patiala district it was 868, while Punjab as a whole showed a sex ratio of 875. In the sample households, the sex ratio came to 882 while in the 0-6 age group it came to 741. The study showed that a higher percentage of 47 percent households live in pucca houses, 45 percent in semi-pucca houses and 33 percent had no land, whereas the rest had an average holding of two acres of land. Close to 63 percent households had an income of 24,000 rupees and 8 percent had an income less than 6,000 rupees per year. The percentage of people living below the poverty line was very low. The death rate among girl infants and children was high-out of 89 deaths which had taken place, 66.37 percent were of girls and 33.7 percent were of boys. While 71 percent female deaths occurred in the first year of their life, for males the corresponding figure was 83 percent. After the first year the percentage of girls dying was more. Most of the deaths occurred due to dysentery, a few due to typhoid and malaria, while 31 percent died due to unspecified causes.

Less medical attention was given to girls as compared to boys. About 18 percent respondents know about amniocentesis while nearly 98 percent knew about using ultrasound for sex determination tests. This knowledge was gained through the ANMs, Lady Health Visitors (LHVs), friends, relatives and hoardings. Around 70 percent abortions were done in government hospitals. There was a strong preference for sons as a means to acquire support during old age. Girls were not wanted because of heavy expense of dowry to be given, lack of positive environment for them to grow up, wanted equal education, food and health care to be given to girls and equal freedom. Only 54 percent respondents stated that they should get an equal share in property.
In Haryana, the study was spread over four districts, namely, Hissar, Jind, Kaithal and Kurukshetra. Detailed survey was conducted in four villages in each district. While the general sex ratio of Haryana was slightly higher than Punjab amounting to 879, the sex ratio in all the selected districts was lower, with Hissar having a sex ratio of 868, Jind, 855; Kaithal, 854; and Kurukshetra a sex ratio of 867. All these districts were also marked by low female literacy rates with Kurukshetra having the highest rate of 47.6 percent, Kaithal the lowest with 27.8 followed by Jind with a rate of 29.7 and Hissar with 32 percent. These households had a sex ratio of 855. There were forty-two children in the age group of 0-6 years, consisting of 240 boys and 172 girls. A substantial percentage of people had clean water and pucca or semi-pucca houses; 66 percent had one acre of land, 45 percent had an income of 24,000 rupees per annum, 30 percent an income of 12,000 rupees and below, and 8 percent had an income less than 6,000 rupees per annum. Infant deaths recorded in the recent past were 131 infants, 23 percent of whom were girls and 27 percent boys. One third of the female deaths occurred in the first week of their lives. Before death, 22.6 percent of the boys were taken to hospital and only 6.25 percent girls received the same treatment. Doctors were called at home for 57.14 percent boys and 8.33 percent for girls. Death due to unspecified causes occurred in 45.83 percent of the cases and in others due to dysentery, typhoid and malaria. In the survey, 98 percent of the respondents were aware of the use of ultrasound for sex determination, through health workers and dais. About 70 percent of abortions were done in government hospitals and the rest in private clinics or by dais.

In focused group discussions all groups admitted that female foeticide is more common among young women going to private doctors. The tests are very expensive but people are attracted by the advertisements. In Haryana, the hoardings proclaim “pay now, save later”. The reference is clearly to the predominant need of saving expenses by not having to bear daughters for whom dowries would have to be paid later.

The reasons given for preference for sons were varied. While 69.83 percent felt that the sons would carry forth the family name, 79.5 percent regarded sons as providers of support to parents and 27.67 percent felt that sons were required to
perform their last rites. The main reasons for not wanting girls were dowry and personal security. Nearly 98 per cent of respondents regarded dowry as the biggest deterrent and 87 percent were skeptical about the personal security aspect for a girl in Indian society. The ill treatment received by mother and women also forced them to abort female foetuses.

In Haryana, the status of women was low and most girls were educated only up to primary school. Only 24 percent of the respondents wanted women to own assets jointly with their partners or have a share in property. Almost all respondents wanted equal education, food and health care for all children; 58 percent wanted equal freedom and 50 percent equal wages.

A 1995 investigation by Adithi, an NGO working in rural Bihar state, revealed that female infanticide, foeticide and excess female child mortality due to selective neglect were widespread in the 8 districts studied. Infanticide was carried out by ‘dais’ (traditional birth attendants) who were coerced by the senior male kin of the women. Poverty and lack of alternative occupation led the ‘dais’ to comply with other medical practitioner such as compounders and doctors. They used to carry out infanticide when approached by the family members of a newly born girl child. There was no difficulty in committing infanticide, because the birth and death followed quickly upon each other, with no certificate required in either of the case.

Adithi report also noted that earlier only upper castes such as Rajputs and Brahmins practiced female infanticide, but it had now spread to all other groups, including scheduled Tribes, Christians and Muslims. The main reasons indicated were the spread of dowry with exorbitant demands; due to marginalization of women from traditional occupations and concentration of income in the hands of men. Women’s seclusion and dependence on men increased and men began to assert their right to emulate upper caste customs including female infanticide. Violence against women is growing within and outside the home Bihar recorded extremely low female literacy of 23.1 percent (Adithi, 1995).

STUDIES RELATED TO SEX RATIO IN HARYANA

Dahiya and George (1996) conducted a study on “Female Foeticide in Rural Haryana”. Their field research indicated rampant female foeticide. The study was
initiated in June 1996 in six villages of Rohtak district in Haryana. In that course of filed work, qualitative information and sociological data related to the practice of female foeticide were obtained. They also throw light on the fact that foeticide is not a isolated phenomenon but one of several way in which patriarchy demeans women; others being violence against women, women-unfriendly inheritance practices, customary marriage conventions which result in significant proportion of women being married before 18 years of age and coercion of widows to undergo levirate marriages facilitated by state administrative directive. Women who were interviewed (94 per cent of the respondents) were mother themselves. Those women, who were being interviewed, had a maximum of five live born sons whilst the maximum number of live born daughters was nine. It was reported that the parents tend to be calculative in choosing the sex of the next child, and the decision is based on the birth order, sex sequence of pervious children and the number of sons. Some families resort to aborting even the first pregnancy if the foetus is female. In the cohort born in the last five years the Sex Ratio at Birth (SRB) of boys to girls for upper caste to be 1.27, suggesting that about 17 percent of female were aborted. The intensity of son preference appeared to be less among the Harijans. Women, in group discussions, accepted that incidence of female foeticide has been on the rise in recent years. The SRB for the Harijans (lower caste) was 1.02 while among upper castes it was 1.27.

The SRB of upper caste children rose from 1.26 to 1.89 as birth order went up from 1 to 5 (above 5 numbers are too small and therefore the ratio is not dependable). A similar rising trend was not seen in Harijans. The SRB kept increasing over the last 5 years among the upper castes. It increased from 1.15 to 1.42 from the first 2.5 years to the next 2.5 years. In fact, during the last year, the SRB was as high as 1.80.

They also presented the results of individual women-interviews at discussions held in the hamlets. There was universal awareness of Sex Determination Test (SDTs) and most knew where to go for the tests and abortions. In upper caste hamlets there was open admission of the widespread practice of female foeticide. At a few places the women blamed doctors who are doing this for money. Some women complained that the first concern of their families following pregnancy is to put pressure on them to determine the sex of the unborn. In Harijan areas where the distortions in sex ratios
were least, there were denials about the practice. They found greater discrimination towards females in the upper castes as compared to the Harijans.

**Bose (2001)** conducted a study on “fighting female foeticide.” He explained that the data, in 1991, the overall sex ratio declined and so also the child sex ratio, while in 2001, the overall sex ratio increased but the child sex ratio declined. In the absence of female foeticide (as extremely difficult proposition in the face of the legal ban on sex determination), one cannot comment with confidence on the magnitude of the problem. In his other articles “Curbing Female Foeticide” he explained that the supreme court’s tough stand on implementation of Pre-Natal Diagnostic Techniques (Regulation and Prevention of Misuse) Act is likely to be effective in dealing with female foeticide given the indifference of governments especially of the states with worst records in this regard and the silence of civil society. He pointed out that the term ‘child sex ratio’ is somewhat misleading. The definition of child is not restricted to six years. Usually, the cut off point is 14 years. Indian census data percentage distribution in five yearly age group like 0-4, 5-9, 10-14 and so on. The sex ratio data for the 0-6 age group is by product of the literacy data. Literacy ratio is calculated in the Indian census since 1991 for the age group seven plus. Therefore the 0-6 age group population is subtracted from the total population. For a proper study of the child sex ratio, one needs data on sex ratio at birth and at ages one, two, three, four and five but single year age data are not very reliable.

The decline in child sex ratio is assuming an alarming proportion in certain districts of Punjab, Haryana and Himachal Pradesh (HP). The decline in majority of districts in other states and union territories across the country (i.e., Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Orissa, Karnataka, Assam, Delhi etc.) is rather intriguing. The social cultural bias against the girl child might have been possibly aggravated by recent medical support in terms of sex determination tests and requires further field investigation. Those familiar with the field situation in Punjab, Haryana, HP and Delhi know that the readily availability of doctors during the ultrasound test and consequent female foeticide, the good-transportation network and the ability to pay for the services of the mobile doctors are factors responsible for the widespread recourse to ultrasound in rural areas also. On the basis of field work he found that son
preference is confined not only in Punjab and Haryana. It is all over India and is also creeping in the enlightened state of Kerala. The readily availability of doctors and the paying capacity that is conspicuous in Punjab and Haryana makes the situations more critical. He argued that “My own understanding of the field situations is that the chief medical officers who are supposed to prosecute the guilty doctors are normally not inclined to go against a fellow doctor. There are ethical aspects of the misuse of ultrasound machines.” He also included that the child sex ratio is very likely to go down further in the years to come. The shortage of women will distort society. The crime against women will increase, polyandry will emerge on the scene and there will be growing conflict and violence. The secretary of family welfare, Nanda (2000) got into trouble for saying that population stabilization can wait; it is more important to correct the sex imbalance. Population stabilization achieved through producing only two sons can not be our goal, unless we opt for demographic imbalance and social disaster.

Drishti Stree Adhyayan Probodhan Kendra an NGO working in Pune (Maharashtra), conducted a study in 2010 on the topic, “Impact of sex ratio on pattern of marriage in Haryana”. Objectives of this study were to include estimation of the proportion of households where bride price is paid at the time of marriage, exploration about the views and perceptions of men and women who have undergone the marriage after paying the bride price, understanding about the financial and social status of the women before and after marriage as well as knowing more about the practice that many men in Haryana are not getting married. Data was collected by field survey and through questionnaire.

This study was carried out in rural areas of Haryana. Five districts were selected on random basis viz. Mahendergarh, Sirsa, Karnal, Sonepat and Mewat of Haryana state. Information was collected from 10,190 selected households.

In this study, 318 women from selected households were interviewed; who were bought for the marriage, meaning its extent was 3.12% in rural Haryana. About three fourths of the marriages were relatively new, that have taken place in past 10 years and remaining 25 percent before 10 years. This indicates the fact that these marriages are increasing in the recent past and becoming a widely prevalent practice.
This study shows about 70 percent of these women reported that other family members behave well with them and they are accepted in the family. Family knows that this lady has come after many efforts. However, acceptance in the village is little less; only 60 percent women are accepted in the village. Regarding their perceptions as to whether they are respected in society, 52 percent felt that they are respected whereas other 48 percent did not feel it so. Status of these women in the society, according to them, is not at par with other women that reflects what she undergoes in her daily routine.

Only 39 percent felt that they get equal treatment like other women. Experience of domestic violence was not so uncommon, even these women experienced it. Among the 318 women, six have reported that they were forced for multi-partner. This is a severe form of violence. These women came from poor families from far off places and have no support system as such. They cannot take any step against the domestic and sexual violence against them. Though the number is small at present, if sex ratio declines further and these kind of marriages increase in future then sexual violence would also increase so there is an urgent need to address this issue. No ceremony, no registration is a safe situation as far as women is concerned. Because of these practices status of women goes further down in the society where she has no sanction of marriage, in spite of all the responsibilities and physical work.

Low sex ratio is the persistent phenomenon here, therefore now getting the wife from outside is accepted as the solution to the problem. An attempt has been made to at least one of the agents, who arrange.

This study concludes that female shortage is felt in Haryana already. It is an observation that number of men turning to crime and violence against women has been increasing. Some men need brides either from other states or even from Bangladesh for the price ranging between Rs. 10,000 and Rs. 20,000. The estimated figure of such women is about 1,50,000. In spite of shortage of females in society, dowry is increasing and people are anxiously looking out for a girl of marriageable age. It is one of the most serious implications of lesser females in the society.
Declining sex ratios would have far reaching social consequences. One of the major consequences of it has been that the Polyandry has become a modern-day reality in Haryana. It is clear now that the misuse of prenatal diagnostic techniques for sex determination, sex selective abortions and infanticides are rapidly resulting into declining child sex ratio. Unless urgent action is taken across all sectors to reverse this trend, to eliminate gender discrimination and restore balance of girls and boys in the population its social repercussions for future generation would be devastating.

**STUDIES RELATED TO WOMEN'S EDUCATION**

*Mishra (1967)* in her book “Women education in India – 1921-66” has tried to analyze the development of education in India during 1921 to 1966. She concluded that today’s women are working both as housewives as well as awakened citizens. Expression of formal education has taken place more rapidly than pre-independence India. She points out that today women education has more importance as they have to take part in modern society. By getting education they can perform their roles effectively in family as well as in society. The author concluded that educational development is taking place among women and the women education can be a good source of development.

*Mani (1980)* in the study regarding causes of dropout reported that a large percentage of dropouts (52 percent) belonged to the larger families (with five or more members). Since child had to adjust and live with a number of other siblings, the problem of maladjustment and money might have led to the problem of dropouts. Parents’ illiteracy and poverty compelled their children to be out of school. Being confined no home they provided additional hand to parents.

*Saraswati and Radhika (1985)* conducted a study to examine the attitudes of rural women of the scheduled castes and tribes in Gujarat state, towards the value of education. Seven of the 30 women interviewed stated that education offered no gain especially through daughters. Women ultimately have to do domestic work only. Some of the women were opinioned that education did more harm than good, especially in the case of girls because educated girls fail to acquire skills in farming and household work and get out of hand with changed attitudes and behaviour.
Education according to them was more important for boys than for girls as boys earn and support parents in old age. Education was found irrelevant for the kind of life girls had to subsequently lead. Educated girls demand autonomy.

Chanana (1988) in her edited book “Socialization, Education and Women – Exploration in Gender Identity” gives an overall idea about women’s education and their socialization. The author gives a thoughtful description about the pitiable condition of women education in pre-independence and post-independence India and the socialization of girls in their families especially the socialization of Hindu girls. This book tries to convey that socialization of a girl is directly related to the lack of education among women. The girls are socialized in such a manner that they are only responsible for carrying on the traditions and customs rather than educating themselves. Even after getting education and joining jobs they face some problems like society’s lack of confidence in a woman’s ability. She has stated that socialization of a girl and lack of education among them are interrelated and responsible for the low status of women in families and society.

A special study was sponsored on Girl Child and the Family (1994) through the university grant commission centres for women’s development studies in the University system in India. This study was conducted by the women studies department in twenty two Universities of the country. The study had interesting revelations about the situation of girls. As far as their education was concerned, according to the sample taken, 61 percent of the girls attended school. Those who dropped out comprised a little over 17 percent, while those who never attended school amounted to 21 percent. It was also noticed that as for as girls who had never attended schools were concerned, only 4 percent were Brahmins, 15 percent came from other forward castes, 41 percent from the scheduled tribes.

The reasons for not attending school were varied. Economic reasons were cited for 8.6 percent, 4 percent did not attend school because the family did not value education and 3 percent because girls were required at home to look after younger siblings or to do household work. The number of girls attending school decreased as the age level increased. The higher level of education of family and higher income groups laid greater emphasis on girls’ education.
The study also indicated that as far as girls’ education was concerned, the higher the caste, the less, the objection to it. The families surveyed in the study, included 1.3 percent were Brahmins, 15.6 percent were forward castes, 13.3 percent scheduled castes and 39.7 percent were backward castes. Social cultural reasons are important among backward and scheduled castes; their girls’ education is not valued.

The study also investigated the question of the employment of girl children. It was found that 87.3 percent of the girls did not perform any economic activity towards supplementing the family income. This percentage did not take into account all girls who contributed to the household occupation.

This comprehensive study, conducted by the UGC, impartially and under the leadership of women professors, has revealed that the girl children across the country are conscious and aware of the fact that they should be educated. A large percentage of the girls have expressed a desire for a career after education. The study also brings out a fact, confirmed by government data, that the caste of the girl, her parents, educational level and economic condition affect her access to health and educational opportunities and also compel her to work.

Kulsreshtha (1992) in her book “Indian Women: Images and Reflections” points out different aspects of women education. The status of women in India and discrimination against them has been discussed very widely. The author says that attitude towards girls can only be changed through education. The problems and strategies of universal primary education for girls have also been discussed. It has also been discussed that we should bring favourable changes in textual material so that the girls may develop better self-images. The author points out that there should be an over-all reform in women’s education which is most important for overall social development.

An article published by Gune (2009) on a “Gender equality as not seen in the text books of various states” reveals important findings about gender equality in literature. Text books of Hindi, English, Sanskrit and Social studies from 6th to 10th standard from Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat, Rajasthan and Jharkhand
were studied. Text books of NCERT and CBSE Board were also chosen for the study. The text books were evaluated on following points:

1. Participation of men and women in writing lessons/text books.
2. Content of lessons from the perspective of women.
3. Role of female character in the family as a member of the society and in the participation of developmental and nation building activities depicted in the content of lesson.
4. Portrayal of female characters that is harmful for social harmony.
5. Percentage of female characterization in the lesson.

She found very low female participation in writing lesson i.e. less than 24 percent. The characterization of women in Hindi, English, Sanskrit, Social Studies etc. was not found derogatory anywhere. But the role of female characters in the family was given more importance. The participation of women in social structure has also been portrayed. But women characters participating in nation building activities has rarely been sketched. Most of the female characters were depicted as ‘mother’. After that comes the portrayal of women as ‘wife’. There was hardly any mention of women as main character. In most of the lessons the female character is being humiliated especially by her mother in law. Female is shown suffering because of her widowhood or due to poverty. Dowry deaths are also portrayed, women suffering due to lack of education etc. Many female characters were also shown exploiting others. She concludes that the gender inequality can be seen in the text books of various states of India.

STUDIES RELATED TO WOMEN’S HEALTH

A study conducted by the Indian Council of Medical Research (1983) on the “Women accessibility to health and family planning” prevalent in Haryana found that percentage of male children receiving treatment was 76.8 percent as against 23.2 percent in the case of female children.

A UNICEF (1984) study also lends supports to this observation. This study observes ‘if female infants die at a faster rate than male infants, despite their biological superior strength, the inference is that social neglect of female health is
deeply entrenched. The study also observed that the last two decades, the maternal mortality rate continues to be as high as 418 per lakh live births.

A study conducted by the department of Social and Preventing Medicines, Medical College, Rohtak (1988) revealed that over 40 percent women are suffering from malnutrition in Haryana. The incidence of anemia among rural women is very high. The study also observed that it is estimated that on an average a rural female in Haryana gets pregnant about six to eight times in her lifetime, spends about sixteen years in pregnancies and lactation and gives birth to more than six children, of whom about four survives.

The study sponsored by the department of Women and Child Development discovered in 1990 that a large percentage of adolescent girls were married. Another survey conducted in 1996 found that 38 percent of all girls in the age group of 15-19 years were married. In some states like Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Bihar and Andhra Pradesh, 50 percent girls in this age group were married. In Uttar Pradesh and Haryana the incidence of adolescent girls marriage was somewhat lower at about 40-44 percent. In the states where women’s status in general was higher, like in Kerala, Punjab, Goa, Manipur, Mizoram and Nagaland, less than 15 percent girls falling under the age group of 15-19 years were married. The fertility rates for adolescent girls were as high as 3.9 percent, although they had declined from a percentage of 4.3 in 1988. Rural urban difference existed in this case with a 3.9 percent fertility rate in rural areas compared to 2.6 percent in urban areas.

Another study was conducted in this field by the Family Planning Association of India in 1993. This is a primary voluntary organization working in the country. The study spread over 16 cities, indicated adolescent sexual activity among 6 percent of girls, compared to 28 percent boys.

A survey conducted by the International Institute of Population Sciences India (IIPS) in 1992-93 found that the use of contraception was reported in the married age group of 13-14 years only 5 percent which rises to 7.1 percent for 15-19 years olds. What is surprising to note in that almost 90 percent were not aware of contraceptive methods other than sterilization. This lack of knowledge about contraceptives leads to
50 percent married girls in this age group getting pregnant and giving birth at an early age. Maternal mortality rates were very high among young girls. Most girls on discovering the pregnancy keep it hidden and often went to quacks inviting high risk abortions, sometimes leading to death or infection.

The **National Family Health Survey** conducted in (1992-93) indicated that around 12 percent spontaneous abortions occurred, among girls in the age group of 13 to 14 years. In the age group of 15 to 19 years, the incidence of spontaneous abortions was 7.3 percent and induced abortions, 1.7 percent.

The **Drugs Country Report (1993)** sponsored by the Government of India and **UNDCP** (The United Nation Drug Control Programme) revealed that 93 percent of girls in rural area of Rajasthan suffered from first to third degree chronic energy deficiencies. The caloric intake of nutrients for girls in the age group of 10-18 years was deficient by 26-36 percent which protein deficiency amounted to 23-32 percent. From deficiency and anemia rates were also higher among girls as compared to boys.

A study conducted by **Ahlawat (1995)** on the topic “Status of Women in Haryana” observed that often in the case of daughters, parents avoided taking medicines for them and visiting dispensaries as they commonly believed that their daughters would recover on their own; if she dies the father would save at least twenty thousand rupees. A doctor poignantly commented, “People neglect their daughter’s treatment for their sons, people take loan, sell land and spend thousands of rupees to save their lives. But for a daughter even fifty rupees becomes too much.” They also observed that nearly one sixth of the total female deaths occur in the age group of one year or less in the rural areas of district Rewari. The incidence of infant mortality is attributed, interalia, to factors like low ratios of female literacy and early marriages.

**National Family Health Survey (NFHS-2)** conducted in 1998-99 revealed that women’s health status is low in Haryana. This survey was conducted on 3,000 women. Survey reports show that in Haryana 47 percent of women have some degree of anemia. Almost two in every five currently married women reports at least one reproductive health problem that could be symptomatic of a more serious
reproductive tract infection, the majority of them bear the problems silently without seeking advice or treatment.

National Family Health Survey (NFHS-3) conducted in 2005-06 revealed that the anaemia is a major health problem in Haryana, especially among women and children. Anaemia can result in maternal mortality, weakness, diminished physical and mental capacity, increased morbidity from infectious diseases, perinatal mortality, premature delivery, low birth weight, and (in children) impaired cognitive performance, motor development, and scholastic achievement. Among children between the age of 6 and 59 months, a large majority – 72 per cent – are anaemic. This includes 26 per cent who are mildly anaemic, 42 per cent who are moderately anaemic, and 4 percent who suffer from severe anaemia. Girls are more likely than boys to have anaemia. Children of mothers who have anaemia are much more likely to be anaemic. Although anaemia levels vary somewhat according to background characteristics, anaemia among children is widespread in every group. More than 6 in 10 children are anaemic even if their mother has 10 or more years of education (65 per cent) or is in the highest wealth quintile (61 per cent). Fifty-six per cent of women in Haryana have anaemia, including 38 per cent with mild anaemia, 17 per cent with moderate anaemia, and 2 per cent with severe anaemia. Anaemia is particularly high for women who are pregnant or breastfeeding and for women in the lowest wealth quintile.

Data provided by Sample Registration System (SRS) of Haryana for 2009 also lends supports to observation of above studies Planning Commission also revealed on the basis or SRS data that the 79 percent children and 56 percent women in Haryana are anaemic. In Haryana, even today 186 out of one lakh women die at delivery time and only 39.4 percent deliveries are reported to be institutional. The national average for institutional deliveries is reported to be 40.8 percent.

**STUDIES RELATED TO WOMEN’S ECONOMIC STATUS**

The study of the economic status of women is a recent phenomenon. It has mainly gained ground after independence except for a few studies done on professions or employment of women in industries during the British period.
Lynch (1968) in his study of “Jatavs of Agra city” provided an example of entrepreneurial skill to break themselves free from the traditional occupation which through Jati fission and political affiliation enabled them to seek status rise and material benefit. Earlier, Jatavs who numbered about one-sixth of the city’s population began as Chamars who performed the traditional lowly tasks of working in hides and leather, occasionally scavenging, mainly doing hired labour. Later they managed to get a foothold as contractors for municipal construction in addition to contraction for hides and scavenging.

Mandelbaum (1970) has pointed out that within a village there exists family relations according to Jati rank, occupation and wealth. Referring to the study conducted by Gough (1956) and Cohn (1961) in Kumbapettai (a village in Tanjore district of Madras) in South India and Senarpur near Banaras in north India, it was pointed out that the members belonging to Dalit caste groups have a tendency to work independently with their siblings rather than to be submissively dependent on their fathers. Even “Adi Dravida women are much more independent economically and socially than are Brahmins. They may divorce easily and frequently; widows can remarry; these women are not so isolated from their natal families as are Brahmin women and they can earn wages as field workers. Adi Dravida women by contrast are quite sufficient economically and can therefore be more independent in family matters. Adi Dravida (women) do not believe that the fate of a woman’s soul depends on life long union with service to one husband” (Mandelbaum, 1970: 47).

Similarly, Cohn’s study on Chamars discussed women’s role and showed that they were more independent economically and therefore, they were not under obligation to contribute to fraternal and filial solidarity. It was remarked, “She earns almost as much as a man does and earns it for a longer period. If she decides to leave her husband’s family and goes back to her father’s house, she is welcomed there because she brings food and money into whatever household she chooses to join. If she does not want to live with her mother-in-law, she does not have to do so” (Madelbaum: 49-50).

Kapoor (1970) worked on women in her work “Marriage & working women in India”. Her work was aimed at discovering and analyzing the factors that
contributed to mal-adjustment or adjustment in marriage of educating working women and seek to find out ways of harmonizing the increasing need of educated Indian women for achievement and self-expression on one hand and their pressing economic needs on the other. She conducted her study in Delhi with a sample of 300 women from doctors, teachers and office workers equally. Interview method was used for data collection. Her finding shows that the economic necessities are the main reason for female employment. They also worked for having an individual status and satisfaction of their intellectual and professional needs, to get reorganization and fame, and to utilize the education. Her findings show that while holding responsible posts they continued to be over conscious of their duties and obligations at home. The role conflict was experienced if they were very keen to play both their roles efficiently. They still felt that their home and children were their primary responsibilities. The tension and conflict were also affected by the ambivalent attitude of the husband and society towards her being employed. Although family members accepted their being employed and took it as an asset, but they were not being able to accept them in the profession which requires extra-tension, mainly because they could not tolerate the negligence of traditional household responsibilities of a women. Most adjusted families are those where wife was able to accept the superiority of her husband they faced role conflict because of contradictory role expectations. On the one hand it was expected from her to be assertive, independent, confident, efficient at work, on the other hand they were expected to be dependent, submissive and obedient.

Rani (1976) focuses on wives employment. In her study of Patna, she found that wives’ employment do not necessarily put a strain on marital harmony and happiness. Most husbands take pride in their wife’s occupational achievement and are not jealous of them. Some of them share the household work and are entirely satisfied that their wives performing their dual roles are in the best interest of the family. Eighty eight percent of the working wives are of the view that their employment has not affected their marital happiness. Both husband and wife are better able to work and have perfect adjustment between them.
Mazumdar (1978) in her book entitled, “Status of Women in India” describes the status of women in India, political and ideological position. In the study “Women and Indian Nationalism”, she discussed the various issues relating to women in the context of British rule, social reform and Indian National Movement and women’s participation in it.

Chaturvedi (1985) in her study, on women administrators of India, concludes that women lag behind men with similar initial performance and the barrier to women’s advancement are the conflict between family responsibilities and careers commitments, systematic gender inequality and the hidden processes.

Muller (1988) in his study pointed out that women cope-up with an extra burden by cutting down on leisure, sleep and rest. She might not have any choice at all given rigid sexual division of labour. So she ends up with her market work, childcare, house work and other unpaid work.

Thakur (1989) in his study on scavengers in Himachal Pradesh found adverse socio-economic conditions for their work. Their nature, pattern of income and expenditure revealed that they suffered form indebtedness. Their paltry income made their economic conditions so precarious that they had no options but to take loan from the money lenders. Karlekar (1982) studied the problems of scavengers mostly belonging to the Balimiki community. The study was conducted on 80 women engaged in the lowest jobs of sweeping. Her study revealed early marriage, four or five hours of work per day of sweeping in other house for a paltry sum of Rs. 100/- per month. As compared to their male counterparts the women folks had not moved out of their traditional work of sweeping. Karlekar also noted Balmiki sweepers complaining their husband’s beating their wives under the influence of alcohol.

In Haryana, however, the status rise due to material prosperity is noticed among the Chamars, the most numerous scheduled caste groups of the state. ‘People of India project’, which was carried out by Singh in late 1990’s in different occupations of SCs suggested the deplorable state of affairs for the member of Dalits belonging to Balmiki caste groups. It was reported that Balmikis earned their livelihood by scavenging, working in the fields and at the construction sites. The community’s traditional primary occupation is scavenging including removal of the
night soil from the houses and offices. They are mostly landless and hence work as labourers in agriculture, plantation and industry. Children below the age of 15 years also do scavenging work. They get their payments in cash and kinds (Singh, 1994: 36-37).

Sharma (1990) conducted a socio-economic study on “Modernization and status of working women in India”. Her study was based on the responses of 200 working women. The working women have been selected randomly from the population of working women of Delhi. In the broad perspective of modernization and changing social order the basic objectives of this study has been to observe the trend in the cognitive structure of a particular section of women population. More specifically, broad objective of her study had been to examine as to what effect urban influence has brought on cognitive map of the working women and to what extent they are conscious about socio-economic status and to what extent the working women have developed the sense of independence in comparison to house wife. She found out that working women have a relatively different attitude towards society in comparison to those who are mainly confined to household. With the increase in earning they try to raise their standard of living by acquiring asset of worldly comforts. This the demonstration effect of the western civilization. The attitude towards upbringing their children is also undergoing drastic change.

The attitude of women and family members towards taking up a job has undergone a change. Now a days many of them even after marriage find it hard to put-up with narrow domestic round and prefer to take some congenial job. On the whole neighbors and relatives had a sense of appreciation for the employment of women. Another finding of her study reveals that the working women have limited their domestic activities to the task of educating the children. Small percentage of women are getting cooperation from their husband and children, yet they continue to take up the role which were prerogative of their male members. It is true that employment has increased her power as now she earns money. It gave her more confidence. In short, her interaction with the outside world has also developed a social skill which was useful in influencing the family members.
Sharma and Agale (1995) focused on women’s employment and decision making power in the family. It showed that women workers perform the bulk household chores and assumes primary responsibilities even after they are employed. Family member do not take the full responsibility of any work, so they spend most of their time i.e. 12 to 15 hours either in domestic or outside work. Many of them get up as early as 4.30 a.m.

Sobha (2001) studied the role of women agricultural labour in the extent of participation of women agriculture labours in decision making at home. Study conducted in Rayalseema region of Andhra Pradesh; 64 percent were wage labourers; women were also operating as supervisors in the farm work – over 80 percent of the respondents husbands were favorably inclined towards the respondents participation in farm work to improve women’s knowledge, upgrade their skill, there by enhancing their decision making capacity and allowing for effective participation at various levels in the agrarian sector.

Mishra (2001) pointed out that women are still found in least paid jobs, long working hours, being fully responsible for home as well by fetching fuel and water, by doing work in family production units without being paid for labour, by upbringing children and looking after the aged. She does lots of unpaid job silently.

Neeta Tapan (2002) in her study, “Need for women empowerment” found that women on the basis of equality in all spheres of society is fundamental to the advancement of human rights, social justice and sustainable development.

Sharma (2003) studied the role of fisher women in marketing fish in Mangalore. Fisherwomen have to travel to large landing centers to purchase fish. An adult woman starts her day at 4 to 5 a.m. and ends at 9 to 10 p.m. Although, mainly responsible for all the tasks, her children particularly daughters help her, the husband helps only in fish processing and nothing else. The women were found to contribute more than 80 percent towards household expenditure. The burden they bear is self-evident.

Sarada and Rayalu (2003) studied 75 working women and 75 non working women form middle class families of Hyderabad and Secundarabad. The data was collected through interview method. It was found that working women had more
powers in taking decisions related to household affairs than non-working women. This might be due to the fact that working women have access to financial resources.

**All India Democratic Women’s Association (AIDWA, 2004)** conducted a study on “Women agricultural works in Haryana”. This study was carried out in two districts of Haryana namely Rohtak and Fatehabad district. The study covered 445 landless manual workers households. The AIDWA research team was headed by Prof. Vikas Rawal of Jawaharlal Nehru University, Delhi. **Rawal** has observed that women manual workers, on an average, found employment for only 40 days in a year. In comparison, an average male worker found employment for about 100 days in a year. The researchers further reported that almost all work done by women was paid in piece rated wages, “women were seldom hired on daily rated work. Even when they were, they were not paid any standard daily wage.”

The research team observed that women’s participation in agricultural labour in Dhamar village was closely linked to their work in “animal husbandry”. A substantial part of women’s labour was paid only in terms of fodder. Women worker typically collected about two bundles of sugarcane after working for about four hours. Various other fodder commodities were also paid as wage goods. Animal husbandry was largely women’s work. Women had to labour on the fields to earn fodder, the study has inferred.

In Dhamar, landless households often obtain cattle through a peculiar kind of lease agreement. Women of such households labour for three years to bring up a buffalo calf belonging to somebody else. When the calf grows up, the owner quotes a price of it. “Although the lessee household had the formal right to buy the calf at half the quoted price, these poor households seldom had enough money to buy it. The contract allows the calf owner, owner to take the buffalo for half the price,” the study points out.

This study shows that the women in agricultural work in Haryana get work only 40 days in the entire year and remain unemployed for the rest of the year. This is the state of rural affairs in two districts in the prosperous sate of Haryana (Nath, 2004).
Prasad (2004) conducted a study on women scavengers in Rohtak district of Haryana. The data was collected from various colonies of Rohtak city from Haryana. The sample of the study included 75 women scavengers who came from diverse age group engaged in low paid job and were all Hindus belonging to the low caste group. He found out that the women engaged in scavenging work (that the human right provisions along with the constitutional provisions) have yet not been in a position to remove the stigma attached with the polluting work. It seems that the ascriptive nature of roles nurtured through the deeply entrenched caste mindset has not ended. Hence, the human right provisions have little relevance for the dalits engaged in scavenging work. It further becomes a source of appalling poverty and powerlessness of dalit women engaged in such low paid work. The dalit’s deprivation stems from both inhuman conditions of material existence, powerlessness and ideological hegemony and unless strategies are worked out to remove those structural conditions, the provisions of human right will have no impact on their precarious existence. The growth of slum dwelling units in urban areas have simply shifted the work place of the scavengers. There has been hardly any change in the attitude of people towards them. The opportunity of work for the members belonging to the Balmiki caste groups remained confined to scavenging and a decent living for them and their families, safe and healthy working conditions, equal opportunities for promotion, periodic holidays with pay as well as remuneration for public holidays etc., remain a distant dream for them. In this respect right provisions are nothing but rhetoric for them.

International Labour Organization (2004) conducted a study on the topic, “The economic security for a better world in 61 countries.” The study has revealed that women all over the world experience more income insecurity than men, their relative position in Asia is more disadvantaged. The study revealed that Asian employers, especially Indian employers, continue to discriminate against women employees while providing benefits and promotion opportunities in comparison to men.

The study points out that the liberalization has also adversely affected the working conditions for women. After the dismantling of the organized sector, it claims, more and more women employees are experiencing irregular payments and
fluctuating incomes. Further, they also have to lose a large part of their earnings to relatives, middlemen and others in the unorganised sector. The study has revealed that Asian women are concentrated in informal economic activities, which is an indication of the various forms of insecurity plaguing them. It also seems that women gain less when moving into more formal jobs as compared to men. This implies that formalization of jobs could widen the inequalities between men and women. Quoting evidence from 61 countries, the study has lamented that Asian women are less likely to occupy senior positions in trade unions than in most other regions of the world. In India, for instance, the representation of women in the trade unions is negligible. “The women have only 10 percent of top union managerial positions in Asia, as compared to European countries”. The study also reveals that girls from developing countries are often asked to earn when their families experience financial crisis. This translates into lifetime disadvantages, in terms of education attained and thus denying them access to better paying jobs in future.

Discriminatory recruitment practices against women are more common among small private enterprises in countries like Brazil, Chile, China, India, Indonesia, Pakistan, the Philippines, Tanzania or Ukraine. A minority of women workers only receives paid maternity leave. It is mostly confined to women with higher income level. Still worse, employers tend to prefer men in a wide range of production jobs, and in some they see social or disability discrimination as more pervasive. Discrimination is often greater in the provision of training opportunities than in recruitment, trapping women in a “glass tunnel”. The study also reveals that the policies on equality of opportunities are often neglected when workers enter firms. The types of contracts women frequently hold impinge on their ability to have child without running the risk of losing their jobs. This risk is higher in countries like, China or Indonesia with women having less than a year of service. Women are more likely to report stress in their jobs, but are less likely to report job dissatisfaction, the study said, adding that in most countries, probability of upward mobility is greater for men than women.
STUDIES RELATED TO WOMEN’S POLITICAL STATUS

In this section the attempt has been made to analyze the studies related to political participation of women especially in the context of 1/3rd representation of women in Panchayati Raj Institution (PRIS).

Rounak (1987) in her article, “Women in South Asian Politics” has pointed out that participation of women is seen maximum in voting rather than political activities such as attending the meetings, public rallies etc. However, the representation of women in local bodies and decision-making is very marginal.

Deshpande (1989) in her article on, “Participation of Women in Political System” observed that ineffective participation of women in political process is due to socio-economic constraints. The author has expressed the optimism that in the wake of their effective participation in PRIs, women may come forward to join and compete with their male counterparts in state and national politics.

Kaushik (1989) in her book, “Women and Panchayat Raj” is of the view that nature of family, lack of education, poor exposure to outside world are some of the reasons which make women powerless. The national perspective plan for women (1988-2000) pointed out that power and access to position of decision-making and authority are critical prerequisite of women’s equality in the process of national building.

“Power Status of Women in India” edited by Ashok and Harish (1991) is a multi-dimensional investigation into various aspects of the pressing socio-economic and political problems facing Indian women. They reviewed in this book, the women’s status, their problems and perspective. It emphasized that inferior status of women starts from the birth. As far as women participation at grass-root level is concerned, they have concluded that it is not upto the mark. They observed that mere reservation would not solve the problem.

Singh and Malik (1993) surveyed ten Panchayats of Kurukshetra district in Haryana. It was found that all women members co-opted directly by elected male Panchayat members and none of them had contested election. Their study concluded
that reservation for women would make their position strong. It was a right step in the direction of decentralization of power at grass root level. The 73rd Amendment Act will help to revitalize Panchayat Raj and motivate women to participate at gram panchayat level.

Rao (1993) in her study entitled, “Role of women in PRI” explained that a kind of action oriented programme should be taken up to increase the level of political awareness among women so that women participation in the rural local bodies could be made effective.

The book on “Women in Civil Service” by Lata (1993) tries to reflect the social structure of Indian societies. It also successfully scaled the problems, predicaments and hopes of women in All India Services. It has also taken into account the factor how women can function smoothly in the current administrative and political set up in India. Again, it has dealt with women belonging to elite class and totally left the rural women who form the ratio of 80% of the total women living in the rural areas how they should be empowered and hoped to get their political rights in a real sense.

Subha (1994) highlights the potentialities and attribute of women who are at the helm of affairs in the urban body. This study mainly focused on the working on Bangalore Municipal Corporation since its inception in 1949. It evaluates the role of women councilors in policy-making, administration and extent to which it has met the requirement of the women, thereby holding the empowerment in proper perspective. It is quite useful study regarding the empowerment of women and has also helped a lot in solving the problems of the women.

Singh (1994) states that so far there has been substantial change in the status of women as a result of 1/3rd reservation conferred on them through the 73rd Amendment. The study suggests that in order to encourage a more active participation of women leaders in PRIs, they should be adequately trained. Further, there should be a provision for legal action against male relatives representing the female leaders in council meetings. In a later study, Singh (1997), however, concludes that reservation has opened the doors of power to weaker and deprived section of the society in
Haryana and has enabled women to participate in decentralized governance and development process. The 73rd Amendment has revived the Gandhian concept of Gram Swaraj through 1/3rd reservation for women.

mathew (1994) states that there is little doubt that despite many constraints, one of the positive impacts of these amendments (73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendment Act.) has been specifically empowered. One indicator is the visibility and numerical strength of women in local institutions. Other indicators are: change in self perception and an evolving self confidence; economic and social empowerment, which has given them space for negotiation within the family, and has led to an enhanced status in the family and community, and a growing socio-political vision. It has also been noted that a large number of women are now playing a greater role in public life. Also, women who did not contest or win in the second term, are still engaged in public affairs e.g. in developmental activities.

Another factor to be noted is that younger women and girls now have non-traditional role models as the elected women representatives. In the second term, younger and more educated rural women came forward to compete and won the reserved seats. Equally significant phenomenon is the participation of formerly elected women contesting from unreserved seats and many of whom are winning.

According to a study conducted by Jain (1996) most of the women are elected to the PRIs because of the status of their husbands, fathers or sons and they often act as proxies for men in the councils. At many places, they have been rendered powerless and the local politicians have gained upper hand. In view of lack of unanimity in this regard, it will be worthwhile to have an overview of various studies to understand the nature and dimensions of the issue at hand.

Chand (1997) states that women were able to get 1/3rd representation in the PRIs but there has been no real change in the pattern of women leadership, as the old social, cultural, economic and political structures have remained unchanged. According to him, the role of women members in Panchayati Raj is controlled by the male members of their families, particularly by their husbands. He attributes the state of affairs to the lack of education, political, and social awareness among women, on
the one had, and to the traditional feudal and male dominated social context of rural Haryana, on the other.

**Gupta (1999)** points out that though the 73rd Amendment was a revolutionary idea, it has failed to live up to the expectations, particularly regarding female participation in the PRIs largely due to incomplete and ineffective implementation. She has suggested measures to bring about changes in the attitude of the government so that rural women could be made conscious about empowerment.

**Shanta (1999)** has carried out a comparative study of women leadership in the PRIs of 3 states, viz. Haryana, Kerala and Tamil Nadu. She says that like other states, almost more than half of the women representatives in the PRIs of Haryana belong to the middle and upper middle age groups. But unlike other states, most of the women leaders in Haryana are from joint families instead of nuclear families. Further, while some women members in Tamil Nadu and Kerala are unmarried, no such instance is found in Haryana. The number of illiterates is also larger in Haryana than in other states and the proportion of members with higher education is insignificant in comparison to other states. The women members of Haryana also lag behind in reading habits, previous experience, participation in social organizations and political activities, and other responsibilities.

Unlike in other states, women members from Haryana contested elections at the instance of their husbands. Similarly, unlike in other states, very few of them contested elections on party basis in Haryana. The author has concluded that the role of women in PRIs of Haryana is far less than in other states. She has ascribed this dismal situation in Haryana to relatively lower level of women education and absence of social reform movements.

**Narabimhan (2000)** in his article entitled: “Empowering Women” has pointed out that a women may live in the widest of material comforts in a luxurious place but she is powerless in term of self-assertion or autonomy over her own life. She also writes that it is a myth that empowerment is necessary only for rural women. This compartmentalization in rural/powerless and urban/empowered presumes that urban women are not in the need of empowerment but this is incorrect because gender
linked imposition are as much as part of metropolitan women’s lives as they are of rural women’s lives. If we look at the positive aspect we find that wage rates and earning have undoubtedly gone up both in rural and urban areas. In spite of the several changes in the uplift of rural women, they are not socially empowered. It is the 73rd Constitution Amendment Act though 1/3rd women are able to participate in the working of the PRIs. But illiteracy, poverty and dominance of the male members are creating hurdles.

National Conference February (2000) held in New Delhi to discuss the issue of women participation in PRI felt that mere reservation would not solve the problem. It was felt that women members should be given enough power to function effectively. Another World Conference on Agrarian and Rural Development (2000) also recommended that government should promote collective action so that rural women could participate on an equal footing with men.

Singh and Bhan (2001) in an article on “Women’s Empowerment for Gender Equality: A Functional analysis” discusses the provisions of Constitution especially 73rd Amendment Act, 1992, which provides reservation to women in PRIs. The authors further highlighted that in Haryana, the women in majority are not participating in the functioning of Panchayat Raj. The major obstacles in women’s full participation in politics are universal social attitude that has valued women principally as mothers and wives. Most of the rural women are illiterate and they are not aware about their rights. Their family members keep them away from the meetings of the PRIs. Thus, many factors have affected their participation.

Singh (2001) states that though women in Haryana have been able to get representation in village Panchayats but it has remained formal on account of proxy system. They are generally represented by the male members of their families. Singh has suggested that the women officials of the department of Development and Panchayat, Women and Child Development and Education should encourage the women representatives to participate in the meetings themselves. The proxy system should be ended; otherwise the very purpose of reservation would be defeated. All-out efforts should be made to involve women in the mainstream of development. The male members should have a positive and respectful attitude towards them. They
should not do anything that discourages them. Praise of the good work done by women would enable them to become effective members of village Panchayats.

**Panwar (2001)** argues that women Sarpanches in Haryana have not played an effective role in the PRIs because of their total absorption in domestic work. Only those who were relatively free from this obligation have been able to function effectively. According to Panwar, it is not education alone that determines the role of women, along with it political awakening is a precondition for their participatory role in democracy. The support of Mahila Mandals and other organizations is important in this context. The women Sarpanches who get the chance of outside exposure could perform better. Most of the women Sarpanches are not aware of their powers, duties and schemes of the government. Therefore, there is a need for imparting the requisite training to them. The N.G.O.’s can also play an important role in this context.

**Singh (2002)** discovered that only women of middle, upper middle and old age groups were allowed to contest elections. The younger women are not permitted to do so because of the conservative culture of Haryana. Perhaps their husbands feel that it is risky for them to participate in public life. He also found out that 2/3rd of the women members belong to joint families. Almost all the women members were married. A few of them were widows. It appears that either unmarried women are not allowed to contest or they get married before attaining the age of twenty-one which is the minimum age of contesting the elections. Most of them were illiterate on account of low level of women literacy in the state. Few of them are educated beyond school level. None of them had previous experience in the PRIs or other organization. Only a few of them contested on party basis. He has concluded that the quality of women leadership is rather poor. The 73rd Amendment has not led to the emergence of women leaders. He has concluded by observing that unless the base is changed, superstructure changes would prove ineffective.

**CONCLUSION**

After analyzing the studies mentioned above, we find that these studies, whether books or articles, are sometimes repetitive and often very general in their approach. A few surveys, the most notable being the “Report of the committee on
status of women in India” have tended to be more vertical in approach and do deal with the position of rural and less fortunate women but their number is negligible. The above mentioned studies and literature reflect the problems faced by women in modern society in the context of patriarchy, education, health, sex ratio, employment or economic and political participation of women in India.

A quantitative analysis of the above studies reveals certain clear trends regarding women’s status. Studies show that there has been a gradual change in the status of women in India. Most of the studies traces the ways in which the sexuality of daughters was controlled and modulated through social and cultural practices. Prem Chowdhry’s work is quite remarkable. She has used many proverbs and folk tales in a very organized manner. Her study indicates that social ties plays very important role in determining the status of women. She found that there is a complete mismatch between ideas and economic development in Haryanavi society.

While examining the literature on economic status of women we found it has mainly gained ground after independence, except for a few studies done on professions or employment of women in industries during the British period. The major part of this literature comes in articles on the various aspects and problems of the Indian economy. The largest number of reported studies is on employment, labour force participation and women in unorganized sector.

The studies regarding political participation of women reveals that the role played by women in political decision making was peripheral, restricted to a few exceptional women with extraordinary capabilities from the ruling elite. The studies on women political participation and decision making have marked an increase after the 73rd Amendment in Constitution. Most of the studies are based on women’s political participation in local bodies. Most of the studies have examined the changes occurred in women’s position after getting the power in local bodies in rural or urban areas.

The above analysis of literature shows a broad spectrum of aspects which have been covered. They portray the diversity of status of women in Indian society from the ancient to the modern period. Surveys and studies which cover the status of
women in India are many and quantitatively extensive but they are very general in their approach. Therefore, there is an essential requirement of holistic approach for examining status of women and their status could be considered on vertical research.

Considering the aforementioned factors, we have decided to study “Status of Women in Haryana”. We have included all the aspects i.e. social, economic and political related to women’s status for intensive field work. In the next chapter an effort has been made to explain the socio-demographic profile of women in Haryana focusing on social, economic and political aspects.
NOTES

1. The rhymes also carry a meaning that seems somewhat innocuous as it is gender insensitive and portrays the victims’ psychology. This is not only the case of Haryanavi Folk culture but it also found reflected in what a great poet Tulsidas wrote in his famous granth ‘Ramcharit Manas’ about women beating them as an object of ridicule and sharing the same fate that of dalits and demon whose beatings are justified normative patterns of sanity.

\[ \text{Dhol, Gamwar, Pashu, Shudra Nari,} \]
\[ \text{Ye sab taraa ke adhikari.} \]

2. \[ \text{Ek ankh ka ke Sulakshana} \]
\[ \text{Ek put ka ke sapoota} \]
   (How can a one eyed man be called lucky?
   “How can man with one son be called a father?)
\[ \text{Meehi aur bettya to koon dhappaya sai} \]
   (Who can have enough of rain and sons)
\[ \text{Duniya mein do garib batae} \]
\[ \text{Ek beti ek bail} \]
   (Two wretched ones of this earth
   A daughter and a daughter ball).
\[ \text{Chhora mare nirbhag ka} \]
\[ \text{Chhori mare bhagwan ki} \]
   (The son of an unfortunate dies
   The daughter of a fortunate dies)

3. As per the preliminary findings of the Census enumeration of 2011, the child sex ratio has reported to have further declined from 927 to 914 at the national level.

4. Levirate marriage refers to the marriage in which the deceased’s brother gets married to his widow. In such marriages groom’s age is not a consideration, in other words the widow gets married to the elder or younger brother of the deceased. This practice is very common in Haryana and it has also been portrayed in some of the Haryanvi movies like Sanjhi.