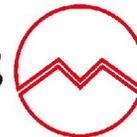


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## Study On Social Characters Of The Mughals During 1707-1857

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**Abstract:** The Mughal society was like a pyramid on the top of which was the emperor and the nobility followed by the middle class whom was a very minute population and the last and most heavily concentrated was the poor class. The emperor though not belonging to the local community enjoyed the power of a despot with an unparalleled status among the others. Followed by the Mughal king was the class of nobility who were the bearers of most important jobs of the state and usually they monopolized the important ranks for themselves. The nobility was the most beneficiary class of the state. They enjoyed privileges and led an extravagant life. Their dresses and food was the most expensive one and not only the officials but their families and the relatives also used to exploit the resources of the state for their mean. The nobility remained in control to some extent by the earlier emperors but with the passage of time as the interest of the rulers tilted towards their personal affairs rather than the state matters then the nobility became more extravagant.

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### Introduction:

The middle class consisted of the professionals and the traders and the merchants. They were the skilful class which was able to lead a successful if not luxurious life. They had good relations with the emperor and nobility and belonged to the indigenous population of the state. The lowest and the most deprived class of the social pyramid was the poor class. This section comprised of the major section of the population and was present in masses. This class was socially marginalised and had very scarce facilities of life. They had inadequate food and clothing. They were assigned with petty jobs which acquired heavy physical work with long work hours and very little wage. They were the peasants and used to remain financially deprived.

The Mughal rulers used to patronise education and many educational institutions were established India though it was merely confined to the royal court but the children of the middle class were also able to acquire knowledge. The educational institutes were also able to educate the girls of royal families and the middle class.

The Indian society under the Mughal rule used to live a moderate life and was not very extravagant as in the context of middle class. As Hindus were in heavy majority so the traditions like *satti* and *jouhar* were in vogue. The culture of child marriage, dowry and prohibition of second marriage was so strong that even

the Muslims living in India were influenced by these trends. Jala-ud-din Akbar did make an attempt to bring social reforms in the society by synthesising good things of all existing religions of that time but the masses were reluctant to follow this reform better known as *din-i-illahi*. Aurangzeb also brought social reform in the state but it was based upon Sunni orthodoxy and targeted masses belonging to other religions.

The Mughals brought with themselves the Persian culture and Persian culture which was not known to the Indians. In the reign of Akbar many works were being done in Persian language such as *Ain-i-akbari* etc. the Persian literature after Akbar continued under Jahangir. The Hindi poetry also flourished during the Mughal rule during the reign of Jahangir and Shah Jehan. However it was discouraged extremely in the rule of Aurangzeb. Music being the important feature of the religion of Hindus was given a lot of patronage by the Mughal rulers.

### Social Institutions

#### (i) Family:

Family, which is the oldest institution in Haryana as elsewhere in India, is an important social institution. Joint family system had been a way of domestic life in the region. Hindu family in Haryana, during the period under study, consisted of three generations with several collaterals,

dwelling together under one roof. The eldest male member conducted all the affairs of the family and his authority and will were held supreme<sup>1</sup>. The head of the family was a kind and affectionate person, but if occasion demanded, he would behave harshly. There was a great deal a mutual understanding among various members of the family, the elders being respected by the youngsters<sup>2</sup>. The individual earnings were pooled into the joint coffers for unchallenged administration by the head<sup>3</sup>. Everyone earned according to his capacity and received according to his needs. In this respect, the joint family system might be regarded as the nearest approach to the ideal of socialistic community. The system did not exist among the Muslims of foreign extraction or descent for the simple reason that according to this the fixed share in property must be divided among the numerous relations of the deceased. But the system, as in vogue among the Kazilabash *Nawabs* of Lahore, whereby one member of the family was appointed as the manager and trustee of the joint property, might be regarded as the nearest approach to the Hindu joint family system. The joint family system was, invariably, in far greater degree among the farmers and trading classes, as the existence of joint business run by the family was a powerful factor aiding the survival of ancient system. The kinship ties were quite strong.

#### **(ii) Marriage:**

Marriage has been the most notable social institution in Haryana as anywhere else in India. Inter-caste marriages and liaisons were regarded as illegal and were broken up by the state. Marriage with a person of unknown caste was not approved. Interaction with the person of a wrong caste was regarded as contaminating. *Nai* (Barber) was called upon to go on formal deputation to arrange the nuptials of the clients. He served as a bearer of message concerning the news of betrothals, weddings and other auspicious events. The responsibility of marrying sons and daughters vested primarily with the parents. Alternatively stated, marriage was a family affair than a personal concern of the marrying couple. The common practice was in favour of an early marriage. It is noteworthy that institution of marriage had a remarkable continuity from early medieval period to the modern period. The sum of money spent on a marriage was usually extravagant and often involved the bride's father into debt. The expenses incurred by the bridegroom's family were also heavy enough. Very often the celebration of marriage caused the utter ruin of both the families<sup>4</sup>.

#### **(iii) The Village:**

Village in Haryana formed a very basic enduring unit of social organization. The number of towns and villages in Haryana was 3875 in year 1855. We do not

know much about the emergence of these villages but it is certain that the villages in this region came into existence thousands of years ago in the chalcolitic age. According to K.C.Yadav<sup>5</sup>, the basis of village was the peasant proprietors, among whom there existed 'perfect equality' though some amongst them had more *bighas* of land and wealth than others'. In fact, they in-habited the village for the first time. Generally, the peasant of a village had a majority of the same caste. Such villages were established historically by one clan or family. The Villages usually divided into an indeterminate number of superior divisions called *Panas*, seldom exceeding four or five, which are again sub-divided into *Tholas*, of no fixed number. The *Panas* and *Tholas* which happened early after the establishment of the village are supposed to have generally maintained undisturbed<sup>6</sup>. Then come other in-habitants, the *brahman*, the carpenter, the potter, the barbar, the cobbler, *mehtar* to perform various functions and activities for the villagers. The village artisans were almost paid for their professional assistance by the proprietors at a stated allowance of grain from each plough. Blacksmith, carpenter, baraber received one maund each per plough whereas potter, washarman, bearer, musician, sweeper received 20 seers each<sup>7</sup>.

Both the groups, the peasant proprietors and other castes, were locked by economic and religious ties into an intimate inter-dependence, and they knew that neither would or could exist without the other, and therefore, both cared the existence and well-being of each other. That was the village community. Strangers were not admitted to the brotherhood. But during the British rule, the feeling of reluctance to admit strangers was subordinated to the need for meeting immediate demand for land revenue claimed by the government and outsiders and in such circumstances, were allowed to share "rights" which had become burdens<sup>8</sup>. But during the early British time, the village republic started crumbling. The Haryana villages were no longer 'little republics' and contrary to Metcalfe claim<sup>9</sup>. At no point of time, sovereignty was vested in the people and they had no say in economic matters, they were not consulted in fixing the revenues, imposing taxes, and other allied subjects. They had nothing to do with the framing of laws; even their tacit opinion and will was not ascertained in legal matters which directly affected their lives. They had no fundamental rights<sup>10</sup>. The villages were not always self-sufficient in various commodities and services, as is usually believed. Even small articles as salt, sugar, metallic vessels, cattle feed, cotton and many other things of daily use were also supplied from towns.

Corruption was prevalent in the administration. The exaction of official perquisites or gratuities from the public by the officials and their subordinates were

universal and admitted practice. Money was given for different kinds of favours. This pressure was passed from the Emperor downwards to the peasant each social grade trying and squeeze out of the class below itself what it had to pay as present to the rank above, the cultivator of the social and trade being the victims in the last report<sup>11</sup>.

**(iv) Thapa:**

*Thapa* is another institution that emerged when a community in a village find it inconvenient for them all to live together. Then a part of the community would find a new village and the process would continue and tract would have cluster of villages springing originally from one parent village. The group of villages so bound together by common descent formed a *thapa*. The original village, however small, is always acknowledged as the head village. Then from *thapa*, another extended institution 'Sarvakhapa' was also in operation.

**(v) Sarvakhapa:**

*Sarvakhapa*, was usually an aggregate of several *thapas* and *Sarvakhapas* of various *Khapas*. They assembled from time to time to decide the matters of common interest to their people. This system is still in practice in certain castes in Haryana especially among the Jats. The social structure of the village was disrupted due to the diminished role of *Panchayat*. The dominant groups of people in the village constituted the village *Panchayat* who managed village affairs and local resources. The power of the village community and its representative council, the *Panchayats* has been increasingly encroached upon and weakened by official administration and judicial authorities particularly under British rule. The status of the village functionaries thus underwent a rapid change. They ceased to be answerable to the village community of which they had once been the representatives as well as servants during Mughal period. By the turn of nineteenth century, the position of this proprietary body as an authority over individual members and other inhabitants had considerably dwindled though it did not altogether succumb to the new powerful forces<sup>12</sup>. The revival of village *Panchayat* in the region was done again through the *Panchayat Act* of 1921. This Act aimed at restoring to the *Panchayat* its old authority, where it still exists, and to revive it in villages where it had died out but where the corporate feeling of the village community still survived<sup>13</sup>.

**Caste System And Its Organisation**

One of the corner stones of the civilization of India, the civilization which is as ancient as that of Egypt, is the institution of caste<sup>14</sup>. The caste holds a prominent place in the economy of Indian life, and has been the distinguishing mark of the civilization of India since the dawn of history. In early times, the

society was divided into four classes, namely, (1) The Brahmans the priestly class, which cultivated learning and spiritual ideas, (2) the Kashtriyas – the fighting or the ruling class (3) the Vaisyas – trading and the agricultural class and (4) Sudras – the common folk who served their superiors and constituted the lowest strata of society. So in its original form, it was a class system rather than a caste system. The whole basis of diversity of caste is diversity of occupation and profession. Castes are also created on the basis of colonies or area denoting their origin like Haryanvi, Punjabi, Kashmiri, Bengali, Purbi etc. The men in Bagar are commonly known as Bagri irrespective of whether they are Jats or Rajputs. Similarly, there are caste classification based on trade and art like Darzis, Lohar, Kumhar, Mallah, Nai, Fakir, Teli, Bania, Sonar<sup>15</sup>. But with the passage of time, castes were created with these classes and now there are nearly three thousand castes and sub-castes in India<sup>16</sup>. For the sake of analysis, we now proceed to give an account of castes within three major religions in Haryana i.e. Hindu castes, Muslim castes and Sikh castes.

**(i) The Hindu Castes:**

There are numerous prominent castes in Hindu religion. *Brahamans* - the priestly castes, occupy an important place in social hierarchy in Haryana as anywhere else. These castes have been divided into five main groups: the Gaurs, Saraswats, Khandelwals, Dhimas and Chaurasias,. According to their belief, *Brahamans* came here originally from Bengal. The Saraswats were, however, the original settlers of the region coming from *Sarasvati* valley. In the earlier age, they were of high rank, but since medieval times, they are being treated apparently below the Gaurs - who until recently neither ate, drank nor intermarried with them. The Kandelwals and Dhimas, who probably immigrated from Rajasthan in the early medieval times, are ranked a little below the Gaurs and Saraswats. Chaurasias were named as they received a gift of *chaurasi* (84) villages for their assisting the Janamejaya's holocaust of snakes. The *Brahmans* of all three groups further have hundreds of gotras such as *Bhardwaj*, *Vashistha*, *Parashar*, *Sandalya*, *Gautam* etc. Brahman in Haryana settled in all villages working as *purohits* and also adopted agriculture and other professions. Brahmans enjoyed high esteem in all socio-religious occasions. There are other castes of Brahmans like *Vyasa*, *Gujrati* and *Dakuts* also<sup>17</sup>. *Dakuts* claim to have come from *Agroha* in *Hisar*. Now their number has dwindled. *Tyagis* are another such castes concentrated in *Karnal* and *Kurukshetra*. According to one view, they are probably the oldest inhabitants of the upper *Yamuna* *Khadar*<sup>18</sup>.

Next to Brahmans, in order of social hierarchy, come the *Banias*. They are divided into three main

divisions: Agarwals, Oswals and Mahesawaris. All the three divisions claim their origin from Rajasthan and perhaps migrated from there in the early medieval times. Like Brahmans, the Baniyas also lived in almost every village and towns in Haryana, controlling business, trade and banking. They are mostly well-off and command respect in the society<sup>19</sup>.

Jats, Rajputs, Chauhans, Ahirs - the peasant castes, had third position in the social hierarchy. Sources reveal that the Jats constituted a sizeable population of Haryana during the period of our study. The question of the origin of Jats<sup>20</sup> is a matter of intense debate among the scholars. According to one view, they are the descendents of Indian Aryans. The Jat tribes' name rounded in the scholarly work of Col. Tod like that of Geeta, yuti and yetha of the *oxur* region<sup>21</sup>. Sir H. Risley declared that the Jats were the true representatives of the Vedic Aryans. He states that they are mostly tall, their complexion fair, eyes dark, hair on face plentiful, head long, more narrow and prominent but not very long and if appearance goes for anything, the Jats could not but be Aryans<sup>22</sup>. They are hospitable and rescue those in distress. In the hour of misfortune, after the fearful wreck of the magnificent Maratha army at Panipat, Jat welcomed the fleeing soldiers and provided medicine, clothes and food for their relief<sup>23</sup>. They concentrated in Sonapat, Rohtak, Jind, Hisar, Sirsa and Bhiwani. According to 1881 census, Jats constituted 33 per cent, 26 per cent and 25.3 per cent of the total population in Rohtak, Sirsa and Hisar districts respectively<sup>24</sup>. They divided themselves in clans, khaps and gotras. Malik, Dahiya, Sangwan, Dalal are the main gotras of Jats. The Jats are a bold peasantry accustomed to handle the ploughshare and wield the sword with equal readiness and success, second to no other race in industry and courage. They were mainly agriculturists and warriors and also tried to establish following the contemporary trend, they tried to establish autonomous zone. In the social hierarchy, they occupied the same position as is claimed by other cultivating castes such as Ahirs, Gujars, Rajputs and Rors<sup>25</sup>. They eat and smoke with all these castes on all occasions without discrimination and reservation.

Ahirs<sup>26</sup>, (Yadavs), the next important caste, were concentrated in the region around Rewari and Narnaul. their number was negligible in rest of Haryana. We can't say for certain when were the Ahirs settled in Haryana. Tall, wiry and smart, the Ahirs make first rate agriculturists. They are all Hindus and chiefly worship Lord Krishna. Their birth, death and marriage ceremonies, resemble those of the Jats, Gujars and Rors. Like Ahirs, Gujars<sup>27</sup> also constituted important segment of population around Aravali hills in the south and the Shivalik in the north. They had been lovers of free living and hence always in revolt against

the rulers of Delhi. Gujars have four main classes - Rawals, Chhokars, Chauhans and Kabsans. They are of the same social standing as the Jat, Ahir, Ror, etc. all eating and drinking in common without any reservation. An old proverb says: 'The Jat, Gujar, Ahir and Golas are all four hail fellows, well met'<sup>28</sup>.

Rajputs were scattered throughout the state. Their popular classes are Tanwars, Chauhans, Mandhars. Rajput occupied important position in Haryana during early and also late Mughal period. They made first soldiers and ruled Haryana in the early medieval times. The other important peasant castes are Rors and Sainis. Rors are settled in Kurukshetra, Karnal and Kaithal, where they now have 84 villages. The Rors are good farmers and stand on the same social footing as the Jats, Ahirs, Rajputs and Gujars<sup>29</sup>. The artisan castes, Sudars, Barhis, Lohars and Kumhars occupied next position in the caste hierarchy forming the lowest ranking among the Hindus. Sudars also came to have a large number of castes in the period of study. The process which led to the multiplication of Sudra caste was the transformation of crafts into castes and the absorption of tribal people in the main stream due to agrarian expansion. This period, to some extent, was, transitional period in terms of population. Anyway, the Sudra was not at all a homogeneous caste but a vast heterogeneous community comprising the majority of agriculture labourers, servants, weavers, menial workers and attendants. Sudras groaned under the pressure of social tyranny and were reduced to the status of untouchables during the period under review.

#### (ii) The Muslim Castes:

Islam does not allow casteism but it was there in actual practice<sup>30</sup>. The Muslim society is, broadly speaking, stratified into divisions<sup>31</sup>: Ashraf (higher castes) and Ajlaf (lower castes). The Ashrafs are the Sayeds, Sheikhs, Mughals, Pathans and Rajputs, the Ajlas comprise rest of castes<sup>32</sup>. As pointed out, Sayeds occupy the highest place in the society. Besides being priests, the Sayeds possessed land and performed farming, although they did not prove expert in the latter profession. Sheikhs in Haryana mostly came from Arabia. Mughals, during the period under review were overwhelmingly, in large number in army and other services and some did take to agriculture also. They made good soldiers and policemen<sup>33</sup>. The Pathans scattered all over the region here during the Sultanate period. Their number, however, was not large in Haryana. Rajputs scattered all over the region but more so in Sirsa and Hisar. They were like Meos of today. They celebrated many Hindu festivals, like Holi, Diwali, Janamashtmi and Dusshera. Ranghars were also an important caste of the region in that period. They were Rajputs, who had embraced Islam during the early medieval times. They lived in large

villages in the districts of Rohtak, Hisar and Karnal. Poor and needy, they took to anti-social activities almost everywhere<sup>34</sup>. Muslim Gujars, were settled in the low lying lands along the Yamuna in Haryana. They took to cattle grazing.

Meos was an important caste, settled in the present districts of Faridabad and Gurgaon. The tract where they lived is known as Mewat. Meos are a happy combination of Hinduism and Islam. Their village deities are the same as those of Hindus. On the day of Amawasya, Meos, Jats, Ahirs, Gujars, etc. desist from labour. Meos are further divided into gotras, which are 52 in number<sup>35</sup>. Their main occupation has been agriculture. Recently, the Haryana Government in order to give due importance to Mewatis, a new district namely Mewat has been carved out in Haryana with Nuh as its headquarters.

### (iii) The Sikh Castes:

Sikhs were next to Muslims who came to Haryana in the beginning of eighteenth century. They settled in Ambala, Kurukshetra, Panipat and Karnal. Sikhism like Islam does not accept caste divisions, but there existed division in practice. A greater population of Sikhs in upper parts, who were involved in agriculture, are termed as Jat Sikhs. There are some Gujars, Kambojs and Sainis, too, who are also peasants like Jats Sikhs in towns and cities were Khatries and Aroras. The artisan castes - the Kumhars, Lohars, Tarkhans, and Darzis were also found in small number. Besides, there were Majhabi Sikhs of lower castes called Chmars, Chhimbas, Julahan, and Ramdasis.

### (iv) The Castes in Other Religions:

Besides the above mentioned castes in different religions, there were Jainis and Buddhists also. Jains were generally well off. In social context, they do not differ much from the Hindu Banias. There are few villages of Jat Jains around Jind who were agriculturists. Buddhists and Christians lived in the region mostly in towns and cities. They were also divided into a number of castes like Hindus. It is clear from above description that Haryanvi society was divided into a number of castes at that time just as in the present.

Besides, the society was also divided into several distinctive classes, cutting across caste affiliations. There were three well defined classes: the upper, middle and lower. A number of *rajās*, feudal, *nawabs* and *jaḡirdars* formed the first class, their professional servants formed the middle class, and the rest fell in lower classes. After some time, especially after the advent of the British in Haryana, (1803), the situation slightly changed. The village people serving in army bettered their financial position through savings and *inams* and they pushed themselves from the lower classes to the middle ones<sup>36</sup>.

### Impact of Caste System:

The positive as well as negative effects of caste system upon the social and economic life in Haryana are too many. Caste had some advantages. It tied together men of the social class; it promoted cleanliness, and was a check in certain directions on moral conduct. The caste system had evil effects as well. In fact, advantages were far more than counterbalanced by its pernicious effects. It had produced division in the society, it made honest manual labour contemptible in the region, it had brought on a physical degeneracy by confirming marriage within narrow circles; it checked internal and external commerce; it was a source of conservatism in everything; it suppressed the development of indivisibility and independence of character<sup>37</sup>. Further, the system helped in breeding other injurious customs, such as early marriage, it allowed opportunity of mental and spiritual culture only to a limited few, it had denied these opportunities to the majority of the lower class, and consequently it had made the country fit for foreign slavery by previously enslaving the people to the most abject Brahmanical tyranny<sup>38</sup>. It was hardly astonishing therefore, that one of the basic principles of all the progressive moments in the region during the period was to fight the caste system.

As we see, the rigid caste system served as a brake on economic development to the extent it hampered horizontal flexibility. But the Mughal administration appeared to be neutral in respect of caste monopolies of occupation. There remained some possibilities of adjustment also within the caste system. Tailors, for example, could take up the profession of dyers. However, the fundamental did not change.

### Women In The Society

There had been definite deterioration in the position of women in the centuries that followed the Vedic age. But in all these periods, there was no seclusion of women. However, the condition of the women in Mughal period in the society was far from satisfactory. They were expected to be subjected to men all their lives, first to fathers and brothers then to their husbands, and lastly to their sons<sup>39</sup>. Woman was distinctly subordinate to the essence of her life consisted of service of the male and dependence upon him. The societal laws and customs stamped her with a sort of mental deficiency. The woman's position was most unpleasant from her birth to her death. As the parents of a girl had to give a large dowry to the bridegroom's family, girl babies were not so welcome as boys and were not so well looked after. If not killed in infancy, girl was given away to a husband in an indissoluble tie. Etiquette demanded of woman that she should first serve the meals to her husband and other elderly members of the household and then eat

herself. She had to follow her husband at a respectable distance while walking. Thus, ideologically woman was considered to be completely inferior species, inferior to the male, having no personality of her own. Socially, she was kept in a state of subjection, denied her rights and suppressed and oppressed. In regard to her moral nature, woman was regarded as a temptress, a being whose sole aim was to divert man from the virtuous path. Women's main objective was considered to minister to men's physical pleasure and wants. Despite that she was excluded from every position of power with its own structure and institution, as a mother in Hindu family, she was marked out for special devotion.

Purdah system had become an established system both among the Hindus and the Muslim women. The general insecurity and lawlessness which prevailed at that time made this system more tight. If for any reason, a Muslim lady of rank discarded, purdah even for a temporary period, the consequences for her were disastrous. Once an Amir, renounced his wife when her purdah was broken when she jumped from the back of an elephant who had run amuck. Purdah was, however, less among Hindu women, whereas Muslim women were required to cover themselves from head to foot, for Hindu, it was enough to have a sheet or *dopatha* to cover their heads. This was less so among the lower stratum of society as they were expected to help their husbands in all external pursuits and internal economy. It would be appropriate to point out three more heinous customs to illustrate the place of woman in society. These are: Infanticide, girl child marriage and *sati* or widow burning.

Killing of the female child was not common in all castes. This practice, perhaps, first came into the Chauhan Rajputs, who killed their daughters lest they fell prey to the Muslim invaders. Another cause was the rise of dowry. Thus, out of pride, in conjunction with the fear of poverty and fear of disgrace, made the killing of the infants extremely barbaric. At many places, the female child was destroyed after birth by filling the mouth with cow dung or by administering opium or by not feeding the female child. This practice, though a crime, was abolished in the nineteenth century. It is another matter that it continued secretly though lesser in Haryana and Punjab. The present adverse sex ratio in Punjab and Haryana is the legacy of this fact. This practice was vogue in Punjab and Haryana among certain castes at few places. The Bedis of Jullundur were so accustomed to it that anybody among them who kept a daughter was excommunicated<sup>40</sup>.

Girl child marriage was in practice in those days. Daughters of the villages do not marry therein<sup>41</sup>. Husbands from other villages used them. Widow remarriage was forbidden among Hindus in Punjab

excepting certain, castes. Jats, however, in Haryana allowed widow remarriage. Brahmans in certain places practiced it and also among lower grade of Khattris. The ceremony employed was a less formal one known under the name of *Karewa*. The custom of non marriage of widows among the Hindus condemned the widows to lifelong misery and also the cause of a great deal of crime. Some young widows, who gave way to their passion and became pregnant, either procured abortion, or killed their children as soon as they were born, to avoid dishonor<sup>42</sup>. The Govt. of India legalized the remarriage of Hindu Act by passing an Act known as Act XV 1856. The marriage of a widow was known as *Kikhah* Sauti among the Muslims<sup>43</sup>.

The treatment of women in India reached its climax in *sati* or widow burning. The sons should roast their mothers alive when they became widow, seems too horrible an idea to enter the mind<sup>44</sup>. *Sati* was practiced not by Hindus alone but by Sikhs too, and when Ranjit Singh died, four of his wives and seven of his female slaves committed themselves to the flames with his body<sup>45</sup>. Before the annexation of Punjab in 1849, Lord William Bantnick had in 1829, after suitable enquiries, passed a regulation declaring the practice of *Sati* illegal and punishable in the criminal courts. Stray cases were still repeated at times, but on the whole, the horrible custom was suppressed. It was construed that it was an insult to the Hindu religion to punish a woman who wished to burn herself alive with her husband in accordance with her husband in accordance with the tenets of her religion<sup>46</sup>.

### Dresses And Ornaments

#### (i) Men's Dress:

The dress of the people was, on the whole, of the simplest kind and it was made entirely of cotton cloth. The wardrobe of men in the rural areas comprised the *dhoti*, *tehmat*, the *pyjamas* or the loin cloth as the lower garment and the shirt as the upper. The *dhoti*, a piece of cotton cloth generally five yards in length, was worn by the Hindus in the region of Haryana. The *tehmat* or *majhla*, usually worn by Muslims, was a sheet of cotton cloth three yards long and one yard and half wide and was wrapped round the lileons, reaching the ankles. In many castes, especially among those who had some or the other official life used *pyjamas*, which were fairly loose upto the knees, but fitted rather tightly below upto ankle where they rested in large number of horizontal<sup>47</sup>. *Angarka*, a kind of coat with a skirt, worn by Muslim of the higher rank. Kamri which was same as an '*angarka*' only half the length, opened down the middle fastned by strings below the breast. It was worn by a caste called "Bajree" in Sirsa. In rural areas, people had an iron pipe, a tobacco pouch with Its flint and also a bowel in the breast of his coat used as a drinking vessel. In the

cold weather, waist coat or lower coat wadded with cotton was worn. Sometimes people used a sheet of double-woven cotton or a woolen blanket. Some also used a light quilt called *dulai* or *razai*. Sometimes the trousers were also padded with cotton<sup>48</sup>. The head dress of men in the region was usually a turban, (*pagri safa*). The size of the turban and also the design depended much on the social position of the wearer. The English hat was popular with the educated classes only. As a rule, Muslims avoided red, while Hindu avoided blue, though this colour was very popular among Akali Sikhs. The Sikhs, particularly, according to Charles Massion, to their honour were very clean in their liner, in which particular they advantageously differ from their Musalman counterparts.

#### (ii) Women's Dress:

Hindu women wore *ghagara* or *lehnga* (skirt) of cotton and a *kurti* or shirt. In the south east of the region, married women usually wore a bodice called *angiya* or *choli* which supported the breast and left the lower portion of the trunk naked<sup>49</sup>. The favourite apparel of the Muslim ladies was *shalwar* and a loose shirt. The dress was also common among the Hindu and Sikh woman. A scarf named variously as *chuni*, *chuneriya*, *dopatta*, *orhni* was only head-gear of the woman. The wrap or *chadar* was universally worn, and the *pardha* system compelled most Muslim, and many Hindu and Sikh ladies of the superior classes, to wear, when compelled to leave the house, an ungainly and uncomfortable veil (*burka*) which covered the whole body<sup>50</sup>. Minor variations in dress worn both by men and women too many to be discussed here.

#### (iii) Ornaments:

Women were very fond of Jewellery. Women were anxious to adorn or even load themselves with a variety of bulky ornaments. Ladies bedecked every limb of their bodies from head to foot with different types of ornaments. A women's social position in the region was greatly determined by her jewels. Such ornaments were made of all sorts of material from the cheapest bangles made of lac pebbles, rough bits of amber, red corol glass or brass, to the most valuable gold necklace, thickly studded with pearls and diamonds. The kind of jewellery wore depended on the economic power of the wearer and the material varied from the cheapest trinkets made of lac, glass or brass to the most valuable gold necklaces studded with pears and diamonds.

Mr Baden Powell gave a list of 99 names for ornaments in 1872, and this list was by no means exhaustive<sup>51</sup>. There were ornaments for the arms, wrists, fingers, feet, ankles, nose, ears, neck and head. Binduli, mang, karnphool, bali, bichwah nath, mukat, besar laung, necklace, bazuband, tad, gajrah, kangan, bracelet, churis, mekhala, Jhanjar, tagri, karula, pajeb, hathful, rings, Jehar, ghunghru, payal. Jhalera, bujni,

dande, newri, pati etc. Some Hindus even had their upper teeth pierced and little spikes of gold inserted so that, when they had died there might be no difficulty in carrying out the custom of putting in the mouth gold, Ganga water, and a spring of Tulsi plant. Churis (bangles) of kanch (glass) were worn by both the Hindu and Muslim women. Among the latter, they were always worn by a bride on marriage<sup>52</sup>.

Men did not show much liking for jewellery. Muslims were usually against ornaments, some of them, however, put on amulets. Hindus on the other hand, adorned themselves with ear and finger rings only. Rajput put on bracelets as well. All the Mughal Emperors except Aurangzeb adorned themselves with rich jewellery on important occasions. However, it was a common practice to bedeck the infants with silver and gold ornaments (*chand*, *tagri*) which often led to child lifting and other ghastly crimes.

#### Diet Pattern:

The diet of Haryanvis during the period of our study was simple. There was a marked sameness about the diet of the people<sup>53</sup>. The usual food of the people consisted of gram wheat, barley bajra, rice and Jawar. Rice and wheat were popular cereals consumed in many forms. In the northern part, wheat and rice, and bajra in the south part of Haryana were the staple food articles. Gram was also eaten either parched or in the form of dal<sup>54</sup>. Rice cooked in milk and mixed with sugar and *ghee* (*Kheer*) was a vary popular dish. Similarly, *halwa* (water sugar and flour ghee mixture) was quite popular, especially on special occasions and festivals. Pulses were produced in abundance in the region. Since the region was full of cattle wealth in the period, so milk, ghee, curd and butter were consumed by the people in plenty. On the delivery of child, women consumed considerable amount of milk, ghee and other ghee made products such as '*goond*'. The saying relating to Haryana diet is quite popular '*Haryana*', *jit dudha dahi ka khana*'. Since the region was also very rich in sugarcane production, the people naturally used various types of products made of sugarcane. People, therefore, consumed lot of gur, shaker, Jaggery and khand all produced locally. In the month of Sawan around Teej, products prepared with mustered oil such as pure, suhali, gulgla, shakarpare, were used. Khichri, dalia, rabri were also popular.

Notably, there was a marked sameness about the diet of the people, and bulk was stressed more than variety and balance. Tea as of now was not a popular drink in rural areas. The Muslim and Sikh took meat when they could afford it, but to the majority of Hindus, animal meet was tabooed. Aerated water and shrbat were the favourite cold drinks of the people in summer.

The village folk were very fond of wines and spirits. Bhang, tobacco and opium were other

intoxicants, where only limited people indulged. The strict prohibition enforced by almost all the Mughal kings was no less a factor in discouraging the use of wine amongst the people. Severe punishments were inflicted for excessive drinking and disorderly conduct. According to M.L. Darling, drunkenness constituted one of the major evils of village life, one of the chief causes of crime and ruin of families<sup>55</sup>. The nobles, however, indulged in heavy drinking and many of them fell victims to alcohol. While all other Mughal emperors took wine several times a day, Aurangzeb totally abstained from it. Opium was in use among a large number of people especially Muhammadans and Rajputs. Tobacco also gained rapid popularity among common people soon after its introduction in India in 1605, by the Portuguese. Hukka was a popular household item. It was the most common mode of smoking especially in the villages<sup>56</sup>. If it was not handy to be taken from place to place and as fire was not easily available, bidi was the poorman's luxury and cigarettes were confined to the official classes. Smoking among women was very rare. Betel chewing was uncommon in Haryana. Smoking was very common among the Hindus and Muslims. The Sikhs were forbidden by the religion to indulge in it.

The utensils used in Hindu kitchen were all made of brass or bronze while those of Muhammadans were earthen or copper wares. The Mughal kings and nobles used gold or silver utensils and were fond of precious China glassware. Aurangzeb, however, used earthen or copper vessels. Hindus paid great attention to cleanliness and a special place called '*Chauka Chuhla or Rasoi*' invariably rubbed over with cowdung was reserved for cooking meals, which none was allowed to enter with shoes on. Bathing was a common practice before meals. Wives did not make it a custom to join their husbands or menfolk while taking food. They took separately. The kitchen and table manners of the Muhammadans were quite simple, though not always as clean as those of Hindus. They were free to cook wherever and whenever they liked and eat everything except the flesh of swine<sup>57</sup>

#### **Fairs And Festivals**

Both the communities, Hindus and Muslims had a large number of fairs and festivals which they celebrated with great fervour and gaiety during later Mughal period in the Haryana region. There was general uniformity in their observance for all the parts of Haryana. Although in some cases there were local variations as well. Decoration, illumination, fire works, splendid processions, abundant display of gold, silver, pearls, diamonds, and jewels, observed by Muslims in the region in the celebration of these festivals were the natural consequence of their contact with the Hindu culture. The enlightened rulers like Akbar and Jahangir adopted some of the Hindu

festivals and gave them a place in their court calendar. Holi, Dasher and Vasant Panchami were associated with court celebration. Although based on different religious affiliations different kinds of festivals were celebrated by the Muslims and non-Muslims population, there is no reason to believe that these two segments of rural population did not participate in each other festivals. But Aurangzeb discontinued the celebration of several festivals and followed a reverse course. He banned most of the Hindu and Persian festivals in the court. There was not a single professional theatre in the entire Punjab including Haryana region<sup>58</sup>.

Periodical fairs were held at several places of Hindu pilgrimage to which Hindu men, women and children thronged in large numbers. Local fairs to perpetuate the memory of some great personality of Hindu, Muslim or Sikh, were also arranged where large local area persons attended. In these fairs, refreshment stall were set up and booths were erected to which housewives, thrifty and gay, came from places to furnish their houses or replenish their cupboards, but they concentrated more on merriment and eating than on buying durable goods. Then there were many sources of their entertainment in these fairs. Rope dancers and acrobats called *nats* who entertained the audience with their wonderful feasts; jugglers, snake charmers and men with performing bears and monkeys to wheedle a few pice out of the pocket of the spectators. Occasionally, touring circus companies from south India visited these fairs and gave shows in huge tents. Circus was indeed a popular event in these fairs where men, women and children thronged to it in large numbers. Wrestling and sports were also organized during fair days.

Some important fairs of Haryana during the period which still continue are; Gopalmochan fair near Bilaspur in the Jagadhari Tehsil, Mela Devi fair at Beri in Jhajjar district, Gugga Nawmi all over Haryana, Masani fair in honour of the goddess of small pox at Gurgaon, Basdoda on the eve of Somwati Amawas fair of Saint Shah Choka in Firozpur-Jhiraka.

It is to be noted that the basis for Hindu festivals had been mostly mythological, historical and astronomical. Some other festivals like Vasant Panchmi and Holi were observed owing to change of the seasons. Of the Hindus, most important festivals were Dussehra, Diwali, Janamashtami and Ram Nawmi. As mentioned, the observance of all these festivals was uniform throughout the region, but slight local variations in their celebration were also discovered. The Sikhs did show some interest in the observance of Hindu festivals but their other great festivals were connected with the life and work of their *Gurus*. They observed every year the martyrdom day of Guru Arjuan Dev, Guru Teg Bahadur and the

sons of Guru Gobind Singh. The celebrations of the birth day of Guru Nanak, the founder of Sikhism, was the greatest of their festivals. Initially, the Hindus participated in the religious festivals of Sikhs, but later their interest in these fairs dwindled.

As to Muslim fairs, their number is small but were celebrated with full pump and show. Most of these festivals were connected with anniversaries of some of the important events in the early history of Islam. Id-ul-Zuha or Bakar Id was considered the most auspicious of the festivals of the Muslims. Annual fairs called U'rs were also held in memory of Muslim saints and attracted large number of devotees to their shrines. The followers of the *Pir* or the saint sang *qawalis* and many of them worked themselves into a state of rapturous ecstasy called *hal*. These festivals although religious in content, offered a lot of fun and frolic to the ordinary people and enthused them with zeal and excitement. Mushairas or poetic symposia frequently arranged as a part of celebration of these festivals, provided recreation and moral lesson to the audience and devotees.

#### Folk Arts And Culture

Folk arts and culture comprise legends, folktales, folksongs, dancing and theatre, paintings etc.

##### (i) Legends:

Haryana has a rich cultural heritage. Its folk culture is known and well acknowledged. Folklore comprises legends, ballades, folktales and folksongs. Folklore tend to cover all aspects of life of the common man. This is a traditional method of presenting culture from one generation to another in a composite manner. Legends are most important form of folk entertainment in Haryana. They are in the shape of ballades, folktales and folksongs. Haryana had hundred of legends based on epic, scripture, Mahabharata and Puran. The legends of love and valour were galore in Haryana. The legends like Draupadi Cheerharan, Nala-Damyanti, Raja Harishchander, Bhartrihari, Raja Bhoj, Gorakhnath, Puran Bhagat, Gopichand, Nihalde etc. Some of the legends have such a great treasure of stories that their singing continues for months together. The singing of these legends remained a very popular media of entertainment in Haryana villages through the ages. The theme of these legends also remained a source of entertainment in the shape of folk musical drama called *Swang*. According to Sir Richard, who compiled legends of Punjab more than one hundred years ago now, seven-tenth legends have their origin in Haryana and only three-tenth in Punjab. This amply proves that folklore is deeply entrenched in the land of Haryana. Besides legends and ballads, Alha singhing also helped to preserve the heroic accounts of Alha Uddal and their clan during early medieval period of

Prithvi Raj Chauhan's time. Alha has a typical expression of patriotism in its form and content.

##### (ii) Folk Tales:

There were countless folk tales prevalent in seventeenth and eighteenth centuries and which still go on. Village old women had their own folk tales for the small grand children. 'Singhasan Battisi' 'Baital Pachchisi' 'Jatak Kathan', 'Panch Tantra', 'Tota Meina' which are not only entertaining but also provide one or other moral lesson to the listeners. Proverbs and slogans depicting life and culture of the people of Haryana are an integral part of folk tales and folk songs depicting human character and their relations with nature, animals, birds, earth, water etc.

##### (iii) Folk Songs:

Folk songs depicting all aspects of life in its manifestation were quite popular. These are songs of all hues and culture. Village women folk are in fact the custodian of these songs. A big number of songs are connected to Phagun, Sawan and Kartik<sup>59</sup>. There are ritual songs, love songs, ceremonial songs, wedding songs, songs of chivalry, patriotic songs etc.

Few examples are given here:

Tej's songs are sung in the month of sawan.

*"Teeja ka teuhar rit sa sawan ki,  
Khari Jhool pe matke chhori bahman ki,  
Kuan tun ouchi peeng chhadawa  
Kaun par ka naar thrao  
Yah laraj laraj ka dali jamun ki"*

(It is a festival of tej and the season of 'sawan'.

The Brahman girl is playing pranks, standing on the swing, why do you swing so high? If you fall, it will break your neck. The branches of the Jamun tree are all trembling).

*"Jhulan jangi hai ma meri bag mein,  
Aye re kao sang saheeli chaar.*

(My own mother, I am going to swing in the garden. A few of my companions have also come)

Phalgun songs are also very powerful

*"Jab sajan hee pradesh gai mastana 'Fagun'  
kaiun aya,*

*Jab fool mere man Ka murjaya lajmana Fagun  
Kaiu aya"*

(Why the month of 'Fagun' has arrived when my husband is in foreign land. The flower of my heart has dried, why the shameless 'Fagun' has arrived?)

*"Kachi ambhi gadrai Saman main,  
Budhi ree lugai mastai 'Fagun' mein,  
Kahiyo ree us sasur mere ne,  
bin ghali leja 'Fagun' mein"*

(Unripe mango is growing in the month of 'saman', old women are in joyous and intoxicant mood in Fagun. Newly married girl through messenger by her father-in-law in the month of Fagun requests to take her to his residence in the month of Fagun as she can't bear the pangs of separation).

On the birth of a girl child:

*“Jis din lado tera janm hoye tha, Hoi aai bajar ki rat,*

*Jis din lala tera janam hoi tha, hoi thee soraan ki rat”.*

(Dear daughter, it was just like a dreadful night when you were born, but it was a golden night when a son was born)

The British motivated Haryanvis to join their army:

*“Bharti ho lo re bhar khare rangroot,  
hare mile na tuti juti, ore mile fullboot.*

(Oh young men join army, here you don't get even a broken shoes but there you will get full-sized new-brand shoes)

At the time of marriage:

*“Kahe ko bahai videsh re babul mere,  
Hum hai re babul mundere ki chirya,  
Kankri mare ur jai re babul mere”.*

(Oh father, why have you married me off to a distant place. We are just like sparrow perching on the parapet of a roof who fly with the throwing of small pebble)

About diet:

*“Desa mein des Haryana,  
Jit dudh dahi ka khana”.*

(Among all the places, Haryana occupies a distinct position, it is a place where diet is full of milk and curd)

#### **(iv) Dancing and Theatre:**

The folk dance flourished in Haryana during this period. The most favourite folk dances of the Haryana are Dhamyal or Dhap, Bhangra. In Dhamyal dance, only males participate and it forms a part of the Holi celebrations<sup>60</sup>. The dancers assume a kneeling pose as if deeply absorbed in meditation and longing for the peace of the soul. The dance is interspersed with folk-songs of some historical, social or romantic significance. It is a big entertainment. Gidha dance proceeds in a circular movement, on the rhythm of clapping, in harmony with the steps. It is an exclusively women's dance though men are sometimes allowed to participate if they happen to be their very near relatives<sup>61</sup>. The songs are indispensable. These songs talk of marriage, love, pangs of separation, the heroes and heroines of the popular Punjabi romance and various other social subjects.

In the villages, crude plays called 'swangs' were performed by professional castes like Bhats, Bhandas and Nats. These strolling actors were always on move from one village to another and gave performances free of admission fee. There are references to such entertaining performances in the Harshacharita of Bana<sup>62</sup>. The Swang in its present form is of very late origin, it was staged around 1700<sup>63</sup>. A local genius

Krishna Lal Bhat was the originator of Swang<sup>64</sup>. Tan Sangi and Baba Haraidas were the composers of Swangs like 'Rukmani Vivah' and 'Sang Raja Rattan Senka' respectively. The swangs had been in practice since old times in Haryana<sup>65</sup>. Ali Bax of Rewari was a notable early pioneer in the art of swang. The play covered a variety of subjects including religious. It was also an occasion for love songs and loose talk. These dramatic parties were supported by the village community or by a wealthy person who wanted to celebrate a wedding, the birth of a child or some other auspicious event in the family. The party's equipments were very simple like, harmonium, dholak, damru, bansri, chimta, khartal and gharwa. There was no drop curtains no painted scenery whatsoever. "These plays do not need a stage, but are performed on the ground (a raised platform); there's no scenery- the actors when not engaged keep their seats, and rise when their turn comes to speak. Naqqals or joker need to play an important role in swang on his amused audience with his rustic joke and wits. Besides swangs, bhajan Mandlis were also popular style of entertainment. The institution has its origin in the Sabd Mandlis of Bhakti Movement. Nath, Jogis and Kabir panthis used tosing Guru Banis on Ek Tara and Khartal.

Besides Swang, Ramlila was also in vogue in this period. Ramlila is about Ramayan which is woven around the life and work of Rama for about 10 days during Dushera. Ramlila is staged by local youths but occasionally professionals from outside the village are also hired and engaged. The male actors play both the male and female role. The dialogues and songs were taken from Balmiki and Tulsidas Ramayana.

#### **(v) Painting:**

The number of paintings belonging to this period is less as painting was the worst sufferer. However, some standard paintings have been discovered. One portrait of a feudal chief – Nawab of Jhajjar of 1840 and some miniatures in a *Bhagavatapurana* are quite impressive. The latter depicts Lord Krishna in different poses and some other details in rhythmical order. Some pictures are still bright, beautiful and bear masterly touches. But it is quite disappointing that names of the artists doing these paintings are not mentioned<sup>66</sup>. But as to murals, some old *havelis* in Pehowa, Pundri, Beri, Dadri, Rewari, Bawl, and Narnaul also give evidence of the presence of a lot of murals there. But it is pathetic that not much attention is provided to preserve the same. For instance, beautiful murals at the Mansa Devi Temple near Panchkula are partly damaged in the process of renovation. Same thing also happened to the paintings in the Rang Mahal at Buria and of the Jain temple at Sonapat. The folk murals depicting various common ritualistic and auspicious scenes, though crude and simple in forms, have a capacity for abstraction<sup>67</sup>. It is

credible that folk arts grew in Haryana region despite the fact that the region passed through times of great trouble. Understandably, peace, tranquility and freedom are the basic requirements for the proper growth and development of folk arts. Unfortunately, Haryana remained worst sufferer in all these aspects. The situation also did not improve much even after the advent of British, for though law and order situation was restored to some extent but the important thing, namely the freedom of expression remained absent. This explains that the fine arts could not develop the way it should have been developed in the region.

### **Education, Literature And Language**

#### **Education:**

The educational system of a nation has considerable influence in moulding its society. In India, in the sphere of education, the old universities or centres of learning of international repute like Taxila, Nalanda and Patliputra, had disappeared in course of time under the influence of several adverse forces. Haryana was no exception. Before the annexation of the Punjab to British India in 1849, there was not a single institution for higher learning<sup>68</sup>. Education at elementary level was arranged in Madrasa and there were very few schools. Not only that, the education imparted in the schools was more religious than secular in character. There was no system of education organized by the State. The first Govt. school in the northern region was opened at Amritsar in 1849<sup>69</sup>, and the Dept. of Public Instruction, was established in 1856 as a result of the recommendations of the Wood's Educational Despatch of 1854<sup>70</sup>. It was only after that both elementary and higher education begin to expand in Haryana. Education during the period remained patronized by some local rulers and members of the aristocracy and supported by contributions of some persons of benevolent disposition in the society.

Primary education in Haryana during the period particularly in rural areas remained a problem as it was feared that this process would make the people unfit for agriculture<sup>71</sup>. Education, according to the peasant, is of no use to him and he, therefore, did not send his child to a school<sup>72</sup>. Due to economic difficulties, it was hardly possible to keep the young boys at school. The farmer wanted his children to help him and looked to them to increase the family income. Naturally, just when it became useful for a boy to spend most of his time at school, he also becomes a useful asset to his parents. Therefore, in the beginning, to overcome this, the schools in rural areas were closed during harvesting times. In schools, elementary reading and writing in the language chosen (Hindi, Urdu, Persian) by the pupil, and arithmetic by the indigenous methods were taught.

Because of the lack of interest that even during the nineteenth century we do not come across any school worth the name in rural Haryana, where the peasants lived in great majority. The schools were founded only in big towns, and there, too the position was far from satisfactory. The schools were attached to mosques and temples. The teachers were mostly Brahmans and Maulavis. They were not trained for teaching. They, despite low salary (Rs. 3/- per month from the king) were respected in the society<sup>73</sup>. The pupils would touch their feet and speak only with permission. A pupil could join school at any time of the year. Academic sessions were flexible to suit the needs, capacities and the abilities of the individual students. There were either no formal examinations and pupils were promoted to the next higher class as and when found fit by the teacher. Methods of instruction were crude. Pupils were subjected to monotonous repetitive drill and loud recitation for hours<sup>74</sup>.

Regarding secondary and higher education, the situation was even worse. There was no college in Haryana, the first college in Haryana was opened much later in 1929 at Rohtak. The students from Haryana who wished to go for higher education beyond matriculation had to either go to Delhi or to Lahore. Delhi College, that was started in 1792 was quite popular among Haryanvi students. In 1826, there were 120 students in this college and the number of students from Haryana was quite considerable<sup>75</sup>. At the time of independence in 1947, there were six colleges and at the time of creation of the state in 1966, the number increased to 40. It may be mentioned that education policy to be followed in India was for the first time enunciated by Sir Charles Wood's Despatch of 1854. As a result, several institutions of higher learning in different fields were started. The first university in the region the 'Punjab University' came into existence on October 14, 1882. A law School was established at Lahore in 1870. Similarly, a Medical College was opened in 1860 at Lahore. Agriculture College and Research Institute were opened in 1909 at Lyallpur. A Veterinary College, was established in Lahore in 1882. There were only two commercial schools in Punjab in 1901. A Teacher Training College, was established in Lahore in 1881. The government wanted to establish at least one government middle school in each Tehsil<sup>76</sup>.

Women education, all through the period, at all levels, remained neglected in Haryana. We can just imagine that even by 1910, only 0.33 per cent of the total female population of school going age was under instruction<sup>78</sup>. There were no middle or high schools for the girls throughout Haryana upto 1900<sup>77</sup>. The custom of early marriage and the conservatism of the people

were the main reasons for the slow growth of education among women.

As noted earlier, some individuals took pains to spread education. As far as Haryana is concerned, such an individual was William Fraser, a British official. He started two schools in 1816 and a third one in 1820 and fourth also in 1823 in the *pargana* of Sonepat on his own for the children of peasants. Fraser then made an appeal to the government to take over these schools. But the government failed to do so and schools had to be closed down eventually for want of resources. It is surprising that even the administrative change in 1834 which made this region a separate division of the newly formed North-Western Province, and the transfer of education from the central to provincial subject in 1840, did not improve matters at all<sup>79</sup>. Fortunately, things started improving when James Thomson (1843-53) became the lieutenant-Governor of new province. He favored and emphasized education to the sons and daughters of *kisans* who formed the big chunk of population. As a result of this, several schools were opened in Delhi, Gurgaon and Rothak in 1856. The medium of instruction was either Hindi or Urdu and in some instances even both<sup>80</sup>. By 1857, schools (known as *tesildari* schools) at various places were opened up in Haryana. But than educational activities suffered serious setback owing to the uprising of 1857. Female education as mentioned earlier, was not only poor but remained neglected during this period under consideration. The village communities did not seem to have played any substantial role in spreading education. As a result, the people of Haryana remained backward in the field of education.

The new education system introduced by British in the beginning of nineteenth century had its impact on the society in the region. It certainly broadened the horizon of knowledge but then the younger generation of the indigenous society began to question the existing traditional values, that were not much emphasized in the new dispensation. Moreover, the English system totally ignored the importance of mass education as in the new education, the emphasis was to educate a selected few. Therefore, the debate arose and there was a clash of opinions. On the whole, the colonial administration was keen to promote an education policy which served its own interest.

#### Literature

It is interesting to note that despite weak education system in the region, literature from Haryana continued to flow depicting different aspects of the society. The region produced several literary figures in Sanskrit, Hindi and Urdu during the period under review.

#### (i) Sanskrit Literature:

The contribution to Sanskrit literature during this period as compared to the olden times was quite less. This was on account of the fact that Sanskrit remained a neglected language in this period. It was only with the advent of *Gurukula* system that Sanskrit got revived later. Nischal Das (1791-1863), a great Sanskrit scholar contributed immensely to Sanskrit literature. Nischal Das was born at Kungad (Hansi Tehsil) in a Jat family. He received his instruction in Sankhya, Nyaya, Vyakarana and Vedanta at Varanasi. He was prolific writer in Sanskrit as well as Hindi. Among his Sanskrit works, mention may be made of *Isopanisad*, *Kathpanisad*, *Mahabharata* (all commentaries), *Vrttavi Varana*, *Vrttidipika* and *Ayurveda*. But unfortunately these have not come to light so far in full. His two other works entitled *Sahityaddesha* and *Sahilyasidhhantasara*, are learned exposition of the subjects concerned<sup>81</sup>. Among other contemporary saint poets who made noteworthy contribution, were Nityananda of Narnaul and Jit Ram, a son of Garib Das. Shridhan of village Dersa (Kurukshetra) Swami Hiradasa of Dadu sect from Bhiwani, Sita Ram Shastri again of Bhiwani, all these learned people did a commendable job during the close of nineteenth century in promoting Sanskrit literature.

#### (ii) Urdu Literature:

Haryana can aptly be called as the birth place of Urdu. There had been several scholars in Urdu who enriched this language by producing wonderful literature during the period under consideration. Mir Mehaddi Majruh (1833-1902) of Panipat was very famous. He was a pupil of Mirja Galib. His letters to his master are invaluable. Altaf Hussain Hali was another highly gifted scholar of the period in Urdu, Persian and Arbaic. Hali produced fine pieces of scholarship. His master piece *Muqaddima-i-sher-o Shairi*, has summed up the essential of good poetry as understood in the East and West<sup>82</sup>. Hali has set an example to others by composing poetry on modern lines discarding the old, stale, and vulgar style hitherto followed by many Urdu poets. And this rightly earned to him the title of 'the father of modern Urdu poetry'<sup>83</sup>. Khawaja Jafar Hasan Ansari was another contemporary of Halis literary Urdu giant again from Panipat. Some of his famous work, like *Diwan-i-Jafar*, *Ramuza Sakun Kilida*, *Hikmar* etc., have been published from Ambala<sup>84</sup>. *Mir Jafar Jatal* (1659-1713) and his brother Abdul Jabil of Narnaul are other literary figures of this period.

#### (iii) Hindi Literature:

Haryana witnessed the development of early Hindi literature which had its origin in Prakrit works. In the early period from 13<sup>th</sup> to 15<sup>th</sup> centuries, Haryana produced substantial authorities such as Chaurangi Nath, a resident of Ashtal Bohar (Rohtak district)

Mastanath, Isardas of Faridabad, Suradasa- one of the most outstanding poets of Hindi of the fifteenth century, have been claimed by some as belonging to Sihi (Faridabad). Thus, the growth of Hindi literature in Haryana was further accelerated by the contributions of scholars of the succeeding generations. *Banarsi Das* of Biholi (a village near Rohtak), Khadga Sena of Narnaul (17<sup>th</sup> century) Garib Dass (1717-1791), Nischal Dass (1791-1863), have brought laurels to Hindu literature. Garib Das is the earliest known Nirguna saint poet of Haryana. He was born in a Jat family at Chhudhayni (Jhajjar) in 1717. His *padas* (religious hymns and songs) numbering about 17,000 to 18,500 give a brilliant exposition of the Nirguna philosophy<sup>85</sup> Like Kabir, he worked for bringing about a healthy synthesis between the progressive elements of Hinduism and Islam and hence he easily found followers both among Hindus and Muslims. He founded his own sect named after him as 'Garibdas' which, in course of time, established its branches at various places in Punjab, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, Delhi state and even in Gujarat. Then Balmukund Gupta of Gudiani (district Rewari) was another great litterateur. Father of Hindi prose, creator of Hindi Journalism, he was also a pioneer who paved the way for *Swarajya*<sup>86</sup>. Madhawa Prasad Mishra of Kungan village in Hisar and Kehri Kripan of Bhiwani, were other great literary giants of Hindi belonging to nineteenth century. It is evident from above that education and literacy conditions in Haryana during this period remained far from satisfactory due to disturbed condition in this period on account of its typical location. But whatever efforts were made in the area of literature had salutary effects on the society in the region.

#### Language:

Various languages and dialects were spoken in Haryana region. A majority of people spoke western Hindi which is the most important dialect spoken over large part of India including Uttar Pradesh, East Rajasthan, part of Madhya Pradesh. The dialects derived from western Hindi are Hindustani, Bangaru, Brajbhasha, Kanauji and Bundeli. As a literary language, it was employed by both the Hindus and Muslims lingua franca. Both Hindi and Urdu are its adaptations. Eastern Hindi comprising of main three dialects viz, Ahirwati, Mewati and Bagri, is also spoken in southern part of Haryana. Thus there were six dialects prevalent which were spoken in Haryana region. Counting one- by-one, Bangru is one which is also called *Jatu*. Its area is bounded by the Ambala in the north, by Gurgaon in the south, by the Yamuna in the east and Bagri speaking belt of Hisar and Sirsa districts in the west. Though its dialect changes its form after every eight *Kosa* but its general structure and context remains unaltered.

Brajbhasha is a form of western Hindi and spoken in limited area of Palwal tehsil in the district of Faridabad. It is influenced by the Rajasthani and Ahirwati which are its neighbouring dialects<sup>87</sup>. Ahirwati is an important dialect which was spoken in the region now comprising the districts of Rewari, Mahendergarh, a part of Gurgaon and Faridabad. It serves as a connecting link between Mewati and three other dialects, Bangru, Bagri and Sekhwati. It gets its name from the Ahira who are predominate in this area. Mewati – a sub dialect of north eastern Rajasthan is a dialect spoken in parts of Gurgaon, Faridabad and Nuh popularly known as Mewat area. It is bounded on the east by the Braja of Bharatpur and Faridabad and on the south by the Dang dialect of Jaipur.

*Bagri* was spoken in these parts of Hisar and Sirsa adjoining Rajasthan and some parts of Loharu and Dadri *parganas* of Bhiwani district. These dialects were introduced here about the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries by Jats who migrated from Rajasthan. The above linguistic survey of Haryana still holds though in terms of percentage, people speaking different dialects may have varied.

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