

Summary

The present research has been conceived and formulated on a wide canvas of Meo girl children in India, in context of their individual as well as collective significant existence. It directly or indirectly relates to their identity, freedom, equality and meaning making in context of their life situations and aspirations. All these issues are intertwined and impinge upon each-other.

The term 'Meo' is used for the Muslim peasant caste residing primarily in the area of Mewat. The cultural area of Mewat, in actuality, is a huge region, which extends from southward of Sohna town, which is located around 65 kilometers south-west of Delhi. The areas cover large parts of Gurgaon and Faridabad districts in the present day Indian state of Haryana, and, the former princely states of Alwar and Bharatpur in Rajasthan. However, reducing it from a region, it was made an independent district by dividing Gurgaon and Faridabad on April 4, 2005. It was carved out as a district almost after three decades of formation of Haryana state i.e. on 1st November, 1966. These areas are a part of the Indo-Gangetic plain and the Aravali zones. The terrain of the area is undulating- sloping from south to North- in reverse to the general direction of flow of the perennial rivers passing through the neighboring plains of Punjab and Uttar Pradesh. Mewat, as a region has two distinct areas: a south- western hilly and undulating tract area; and a sandy area.

The comparative status of education of Meos girls with other girls of the region shows a grim picture. The illiteracy among both, Hindus and Muslims girls of the Mewat region, show that it is much higher as compared to other region of the state and of India. The percentage of literacy rates among Hindu female decreases with the increase in the classes which is 3.34% at middle level, 2.05% at high level and nil at higher secondary level. Whereas, with the Meo girls, it is slightly better as compared to Hindu girls of the area, but, shows a very disheartening picture. In case of Meos girls, it is 2.94% at middle level, 0.50% at high level and 0.47% at higher secondary level. The statistics shows that Meo girls are the most disadvantaged and backward as compared to others. Bhatti (1998) in her study showed that female literacy rates among Meos in Mewat region were 1.76% which is the lowest in the country with the highest dropout rates among the girls in the country. This is why, education among

the Meos has always remained a matter of concern. However, in the preceding decades the perception of the Meos community has changed and many Meos children especially girls are coming forward to take education. As a result, almost 39 Madarsas are running Open Basic Education (OBE) within Mewat. The OBE is an initiative taken by National Institute of Open Schooling, Delhi that run the programme of basic education. The positive perception for education among Meos also reflect from the census reports which shows, that, the literacy rate among Meos girls in Mewat has increased up to 36.60% (census, 2011) which was 23.90% according to 2001 census report.

The need of the present research arose, while the researcher was working on women education during her M. Ed. and M. Phil. course of study. During Masters in education, the researcher worked upon education and life prospects of some sections of Muslim girls in Delhi, whereas, during M. Phil. programme, the researcher took on the case studies upon Muslim women and focused her study upon attitude of women towards education. Both these researches were related to women in context of their education. The proposed area emerged as issue, when the researcher interacted with the some samples belonging to Meo community. This led the researcher to explore some of the available literatures relating to the Meo community and found their typicality. Further, in India, most of the sociological studies focus attention to what happens inside the school, as well as, within the classrooms, in everyday contexts. This helps to understand the nuances relating to prevalent inequalities that prevent the spread of equal opportunities, good quality of education, and so on more minutely, as compared to traditional research, which focuses on standard technique of set of techniques. However, very few studies have been done in context of what goes on within schools and classrooms in everyday life contexts. In larger context of 'providing equal educational opportunities to all' the state has failed in multiple ways as is reflected through prevalence of inequalities- qualitative and quantitative, gender, access and so on. Further, educationists and researchers largely tend to neglect everyday lived experience in the process of schooling- where student engage within themselves with teachers and other school personnel that ultimately shapes their meaning making in the process of education. This is because, understanding the experiences of education, provides broader analysis of the process of educational

systems where access, quality, equity and similar other factors works. This is why, what goes on in the life of students at schools becomes significant. Therefore, the researcher felt it important to understand schools- focusing participants in the process of schooling, i.e., students, teachers, community members and other participants, so as to unravel, how they negotiate with them. The purpose for deciding to do this was to examine the socio-political and cultural contexts of such meaning making and not just to provide description of how meaning is produced by different stakeholders in school. This is why, Giroux and Simon (2000; 1541) emphasize understanding of *'school as sites of struggle'* and *'pedagogy as a form of cultural politics'*. Further, they consider that, school is a place, where, *'meaning is produced through constructions of forms of power, experiences and identities that needs to be analyzed for their wider political and cultural significance'*. Hence, the researcher believed that it was necessary to pay attention to socio-political and cultural forces that shape school experience in varied social contexts. Actually, there are various ways by which the agencies of schooling could be understood. One way to understand it is the assertion of students where they rebel, question and go against the norms of school, challenge authority and so on. The other ways of understanding is to unfold the forms and roles of agencies that remain covered and do not always directly expressed, but, remain embedded in the student culture, and, exert far reaching consequences that reflect through the students' perspectives, attitudes, world-views and so on. At this level, students seek to assert their independence, from ideological and indoctrinated characteristic phenomenon of school processes. With this understanding, the researcher has tried to examine different agencies of schools that discipline, punctualize, constrain and shape their experiences in multiple ways. This is why, the researcher, thought it to be essential to unearth, unpack and unravel the world of Meo girl students' culture in formal school setup. This was also important because students construct their own perception of several factors that contribute to create important aspects of 'life' at school. Gender and religion play a very important and significant role that are often contradicted and contested- this need to be uncovered. The location of the schools especially, in the Mewat region, undoubtedly, shape and provide meaning to perception of students. Hence, the voice of students in the meaning making processes of schooling, was essential to understand. Therefore, it was

important for the researcher, to let the Meo girls speak for themselves and researcher to listen their voices carefully and patiently in order to unravel their aspirations and perspectives so as to reach the analysis correctly. This was because, the ways by which students negotiate and interpret the principles of school, often create a gap, between, schools as imagined by the authorities, and, as perceived by the students. Thus, it was important to understand how are different concerns of Meo girls expressed in the everyday contexts of school? How do they negotiate and contest in different settings viz. a viz. life at school and life at home? How do Meo girls try to realize their goals? How do teacher, parents and other personnel contribute to the complex experience of students? What forms of identities are constructed in different settings?

The work is important because it has tried to uncover fascinated life of Meo girls at schools in contexts of resistance, relationship, identities and ways of being. It has captured the voice of experience, feelings and perception of Meo girls. The narratives provide rich description accounts of what Meo girls think and feel while at school. This is because, the environment of the school is not only created by the official discourse, rather, it is simultaneously constructed by the students, who brings meaning to the situation where they live, study, play and interact. This is why, the study also concerns the ideals that evolve and formulated, negotiated and expressed in everyday life of Meo girls at school. Being a Muslim, Meo girls mark an identity who experience themselves in 'duality' - of being a Muslim girl (in Mewat) and 'other' as a part of larger identity of Indian.

Hence, the present research help to understand the social world of everyday life experiences that often remain uncaptured through the recording and analysis of empirical information. Thus, the research help several other researchers, students, teachers, and all those working in the filed of women's education to understand the embedded issues relating to marginalized in general and Meo girls in particular as it contributes to understand meaning-making in school processes. The researcher thought to unpack and unravel the world of Meo girls as constructed in school life. Actually, different culture, media and other information from the outer world enters the school, and, create a unique culture within school. As a consequence, the students

do not remain isolated and get influenced with them and ultimately construct their own understanding of 'life' in school as they are conscious human being that own dreams and aspirations. Further, the study seeks to provide 'alternative' frame that will help to cater to a particular similar marginalized social groups. Since the exploration is situated around the ground realities, therefore, the policy makers could be benefited to unravel and unearth the basic issues, at intervention level, since, it provides pragmatic and an in-depth understanding relating to education of Meo girls. Further more, the linkages between experiences of Meo girls, and, their schooling has been traced out which will help the readers in multiple ways- howsoever, they want to utilize the research. The factors taken in the research are potentially relevant and constitute the basis, due to which, educational development of Meo girls in India has not kept pace with the time. All the above mentioned concerns raised certain important issues to be explored.

Research Questions:

- How do Meo girls perceive schooling and experience everyday school practices in shaping up of their educational aspirations, world view and meaning-making about self and the others?
- What are the factors that emanate Meo girls' dropout from school in the process of growing up and reaching up for higher classes?
- If the family composition plays any role towards Meo girl's education? Whether the Meo parents find any motivating factors or any structural and cultural barriers in terms of sending their daughter to schools?
- Whether the socio-cultural identity and stereotypes create any barrier for Meo girls that in turn impact their education? if yes; how, and in what ways does it impact?
- If any aspects of security, freedom and equality influence the schooling experience of Meo girls?
- How do teachers negotiate and mitigate the situation, in case, if they identify girls from Meo community who are on the verge of dropping out from schooling?

- Whether any attitudinal change reflects among the Meo girls across generations towards education? If yes; what are the reflections and how does it impact the educational aspirations of Meo girls?
- How do Meo girls negotiate with the changing situation?
- How does social deprivation influence the schooling of Meo girls?
- Whether community members play any role in promoting girls education? How do they perceive the issue of girls' education?

Statement of the problem:

Breaking boundaries and escaping marginality: An enquiry into Meo girls' experiences of resistance, schooling and change

Definition of the key terms:

Breaking boundaries: Meo community has specific and unique cultural boundaries which makes them a distinct community. The researcher has utilized the terms 'breaking boundaries', in the sense of coming out of such socio-cultural traditional faiths, customs, beliefs, values and so on, that are supposed to be carried forward by the female members of the community.

Escaping marginality: Marginalization is that social process, which, pushes a person to the fringes of the society and make them socially excluded. As a consequence a marginalized person becomes unable to avail different benefits. By the terms 'escaping marginality', the researcher believes to break-out of such thwarting situations, that pushes them to periphery, and, make them socially excluded and disadvantaged.

Resistance: Resistance is that force, which acts to stops the progress, and, prospects of a person, and, makes it slower. The researcher has utilized the term 'resistance' in the sense of 'the act of fighting and refusing to accept or comply with something, that affects, a person adversely'.

Schooling: The processes of a school play a significant role in the life of students, as a result of their participation and involvement in different activities. Hence, the researcher has utilized the term in the sense of 'participation of a person in the

instructional and other related processes of an institution under the age of the college, which develops the person in multiple ways.

Change: By the terms ‘change’, the researcher believes socio-cultural, economic and perceptive transformation.

Objectives:

1. To understand how historical, socio-political and economic contexts constitute the identities of Meos
2. To understand the experiences of Meo girls across generations in negotiating everyday challenges in the process of their growing up and education.
3. To understand how everyday lived experiences shape Meo girls’ life aspirations, world-view and meaning-making about the self and the others and consequently influence their perception
4. To understand how the community and other stakeholders play their role towards Meo girls education.

Methodology:

The study is a qualitative research written in a descriptive form. Qualitative research is designed to obtain precise and pertinent information concerning the current status of phenomena in its natural settings so as to draw valid conclusions from the discovered facts (Koul, 2013). On the basis of the collected information, the data has been classified, analyzed and interpreted in consonance with the objectives of the study. Apart from the exploration of related literature and secondary sources such as census report and surveys conducted by voluntary organizations working in the area, extensive interviews were conducted with girl children. Focus group discussions (FGD) with parents, teachers, and other key persons of the community have also been done from various angles so as to explore the qualitative aspect and understand the imbedded issues deeply and comprehensively. Observation, both participant and non-participant was another methodology that helped in gathering data.

Modalities of the problem:

The research consists of two major parts namely (a) theoretical and (b) operative. Theoretical part has been explored by understanding the base through existing

literatures. The operative part has been conducted in three schools located in three sub-division of the Mewat district. In these schools Meo girls' experiences and perception were mapped so as to collect the data.

Structure of the study:

The study has been conducted in different phases, which gave the researcher an opportunity to identify the field on the basis of existing literatures and conducting pilot survey in the district of Mewat. After determining the actual field area of the study, the researcher stayed in the field and conducted extensive exploration so as to gather the data. This was done on the basis of the above mentioned tools and techniques.

Delimitation:

The present study has been delimited to

- Girl children in the age group of 11 years to 14 years
- Parents and teachers of the sample children
- Three schools of Mewat district

Result and Discussion upon Major findings

The following are the major findings emerged out of the study which has been arranged according to the sequence of the objectives of the study. The *first* objective was *to understand how historical, socio-political and economic contexts constitute the identities of Meos*. The result emerged from the findings are as follows:

- ❖ Meo girls are the most marginalized section of the society, as well as, within their own community. This is partly because of their being located in remote and harsh environments.
- ❖ As a girl, Meo are excluded, discriminated against, and do not have the access to services or opportunities as any other girls from any other community other than Mewat region.
- ❖ Meo girls feel a sense of powerlessness because of being a girl in the male dominated region of Mewat.

- ❖ The economic hardship faced by the Meo girl children multiplies to their shattered hope of realizing their educational dream.
- ❖ The lack of cultural capital, in contexts of education and socio-cultural background of the Meos, contributes to the educational plight of Meo girl children students.
- ❖ Lack of better quality schools, located in Mewat areas, aggravates the problem relating to educational demands of the Meo girl children.
- ❖ Higher education facility which could lead the Meo girl children to higher ladder of educational development and opportunity structure are missing in the area. Thus, the path of their upward mobility through education remains blocked.
- ❖ They compare their geographical area of habitat with developed neighbouring areas and feels that the responsibility of their educational wellbeing is hindered due to negligence of the geographical area by the government. As a result it hinders the path of their better livelihood and development.
- ❖ Majority of parents and Meo girl children perceive the existence of such stepmotherly treatment of the region as a result of historico-political reasons of successive governments. This is because the community has been projected as a resisting community for long.
- ❖ Historically as a resisting community, majority of Meo girls through their resistance are getting attracted towards modern education which is reflected from the enrolment and regularity of Meo girl children in schools and achieving much in their educational life journey.
- ❖ Meo girls have become able to break their traditional socio-cultural boundaries and are coming out of their marginality in very limited sense.

The *second* objective was to understand the experiences of Meo girls across generations in negotiating everyday challenges in the process of their growing up and education. The result emerged from the findings are as follows:

- ❖ General environment of habitat is non-conducive for the involvement of Meo girls in educational activities.

- ❖ Meo girls are overburden with household chores which they have to accomplish before heading for school.
- ❖ Daily life engagements and burden of household chores makes Meo girls frustrated as they have paucity of time to focus on their studies, but, besides these hurdles, they keep on trying to focus on their studies. It shows their resistance with their situation and zest for achieving education.
- ❖ Gendered distribution of work between home, and, outside, provides more freedom to boys than girls. At home, Meo girls remain involved in household chores which provide them no time for self study, whereas, the boys often remain free from these household chores, as they have more freedom in male dominated Meo's society
- ❖ There exist dissonance acculturation between the neo-literate Meo girl children and the male members among the community. As a consequence, both- the Meo girl children and their parents develop two different parallels with regard to education as well as, conflict of opinion.
- ❖ Trust deficit, as a consequence of dissonance acculturation, as well as. Male-female attitudinal relations among the family, and, within community, further aggravate to the perception of powerlessness among the Meo girl children, which depresses them towards education.
- ❖ The chances of access of schooling gets reduced as a result of marriage of the Meo girls in their early teens, which prevent them to continue with their studies.
- ❖ Meo girl encounter enumerable problems perpetuated largely by their patriarchal autocrat community and society, which do not provide them time and space to see better educational horizon.
- ❖ The sense of powerlessness and demoralization itself empower and equip Meo girl children to resist the male dominated decisions with regard to education at many occasions.
- ❖ Instances of resistance, with tiny might, show the positive hope of Meo girl children towards education.

- ❖ The resistance of Meo girls reflects in terms of their discarding traditional male dominated decision making.
- ❖ Several Meo girl children resist and defy the command of male members of their family to attend school in a hope of doing something better in their life. Thus, through resistance and defying the male dominated diktat of family members, Meo girls are trying to come out of the processes of their marginalization to do better in their life educationally.
- ❖ Non-accessibility of institution has paved the way for their determination to resist, encounter and negotiate with the situation so as to traverse their marginality.
- ❖ Several Meo girls who have broken their cultural boundaries to keep their hope and determination alive by encountering such tangible and intangible marginalization.
- ❖ Meo girls are living with breathing hope and endeavoring constantly to aspire better from every previous day in spite of several hurdles in life. This shows the ways how they encounter their marginality.
- ❖ The already available senior secondary school does not suffice the number of school going Meo girl children due to high demand, availability of lesser number of schools, and, proximity of the distance.
- ❖ Meo girl children had developed interest in education after much resistance, struggle and pursuance in their home as they believe in the developmental aspect of education.
- ❖ Locating in the harsh environment of their habitat and travelling for a far distance for schooling shows the positive determination of the Meo girl for study in an anticipation of better future.
- ❖ Due to inefficient education system in the patriarchal autocratic environment they look up to their teacher for their proper guidance and emancipation.
- ❖ The realization of teachers that Meo girls are interested in studying, have increased their enrolment with community outreach of the teachers.

- ❖ Missing cultural capital due to socio-cultural background makes the children stubborn who resist for their own educational rights.
- ❖ The failure of school to equip the Meo girl children for higher educational opportunity consequently have made majority of the Meo girl children fail to achieve educational opportunity.
- ❖ Majority of Meo girl children lag behind in the competitive opportune structure as a result of absence of cultural capital, burden of household chores and role model from within the community members who can give positive hope to the community.
- ❖ As a student Meo girl children dutifully and obediently accept ritualistic instructions from the teachers and never get courage to question or challenge any of its activity. This is because, Meo girl children fail to see schooling from critical point of view.
- ❖ Unpleasant incidents with Meo girls have multiple social impacts. As a consequence of the incident, community members withdrew their girl children from school due to the fear of safety and stop their schooling which increases the dropout among Meo girls. Thus, such unpleasant incidents create hindrance in their studies as it increases trust deficit among the girl children and the parents.
- ❖ Essential infrastructural facility among the entire sample schools, such as, proper arrangement for seating of children, appropriate writing board, water, proper sanitation, proper ground and so on are either missing or found to be inappropriate in majority of schools.
- ❖ Most of the schools lacked protective mechanism and therefore, access of any stranger to school is quite easy. Thus, general environment of the schools is poor and unsafe for the students in general and the Meo girl children in particular.
- ❖ Active interactive learning environment which can promote the expression of ideas of Meo girl children is missing in school.
- ❖ The orthodox and non-dynamic behavior of teachers with regard to their teaching style does not let the teachers adopt new methods of teaching for active learning and better outcome.

- ❖ The teachers stick to redundant methods of promoting rote learning and reproducing the written material in the notebook which do not enthuse the Meo girl children.
- ❖ Not having space for any remedial assistance to the students often make Meo girls struggling for comprehending the textbook matters.

The *third* objective was to understand how everyday lived experiences shape Meo girls' life aspirations, world-view and meaning-making about the self and the others and consequently influence their perception. The result emerged from the findings are as follows:

- ❖ The Meo girl children strongly desire to continue their studies beyond their secondary classes, keeping in mind hopeful better life prospects and aspiration as they are well aware of the positive impact of education and dream better life through their educational journey.
- ❖ Meo girl considers and desire employability with handsome earning and better lifestyle through their educational journey.
- ❖ Meo girls strongly feel that teachers' support is essentially needed for their development and upward mobility.
- ❖ Schooling provides space to the Meo girl children to share their feelings with their peers and motivate a number of Meo girls in dreaming better life prospects. However, it fail to nurture the career in the contest mobility, and hence, the Meo girl children fail to compete with other receiving better education.
- ❖ Meo girl children see schooling only in terms of its utilitarian or functional aspects where by they feel that they can develop themselves, cross their narrow boundaries and will get empowered. This is one of the reasons of happily coming to school as the processes of schooling have developed the taste of education among majority of them.
- ❖ As a consequence of schooling, several Meo girls feels themselves empowered to resist and challenge the traditional thoughts of their male dominated community including their male family member.

- ❖ Meo girls fail to see the processes of schooling synthesizing into a unified whole and bringing a positive aspect to their life, because of the fact, that, beyond their secondary classes they do not have opportunity to groom themselves educationally.
- ❖ Schooling has developed rational thinking among girl children. As a consequence, the Meo girl children have developed sense towards their own rights. Thus, they are coming out of their home to receive education with a hope that one day they can change the traditional thought of male members and will bring change.
- ❖ The regularity of the classes in schools has incited interest in the Meo girls towards education. Thus, by breaking their cultural and traditional boundaries, the Meo girls get the chances to come out of their traditional work schedule, which provide them relief from household chores.
- ❖ Regularity of schooling has moulded and shaped the educational desire among Meo girls more positively than negatively. However, such desire completely eroded once they reach in 10th standard due to blockage of their educational path ahead.
- ❖ There exists generation gap in the world of perception of parents and the girl children. As a consequence, constant goading by parents to enquire about the whereabouts of the girl children, curbs the Meo girl children's freedom, shatters their self respect and develop negative attitude of resistance towards their parents as they feel that parents think traditionally and are conservative.
- ❖ There are only few schools available up to senior secondary classes which cannot cater to the school going girl children in the area. This also shatters the Meo girl children's hope and confidence towards life aspiration.
- ❖ The findings suggest that education itself emanates the sense of powerlessness among Meo girl children because they do not see educational prospects beyond secondary schooling. However, they are very keen to take higher education as reflects from their request for upgrading of secondary school upto senior secondary classes.

- ❖ The desire of upward mobility through education are high among the Meo girls, however, opportunity for upward mobility in terms education are lacking, as, institutions beyond secondary classes are rarely available in the Mewat region.
- ❖ The dominance of male students within classrooms further marginalizes the interactivity of Meo girl children and reduces their positive hope towards schooling processes.
- ❖ Several girls also found their school education unattractive, inactive and non-promising due to poor quality, functioning and lack of basic amenities such as proper drinking water, bathroom and sanitation facilities in school.
- ❖ Poor curricular transaction contributes considerably in diminishing the growth and life prospects. It also diminishes the quality of education which spiral other problems in life.
- ❖ Meo girls showed their worry that in the absence of promising and quality education facilities in their schools, they cannot compete with others in the era of contest mobility.
- ❖ The feelings among Meo girl children that only secondary classes will not suffice their world view and development have shaped their experiences in a negative manner. This is also because of the absence of spatial educational growth for the Meo children which diminishes their self-esteem and self-worth and ultimately demotivates them towards their schooling and life journey.
- ❖ The prevalence of gender bias among the community shatters the positive hope among Meo girl children.
- ❖ Majority of the teachers were observed to be caring towards Meo girl children and encourage them towards learning.
- ❖ Not having educational guidance due to higer number of illiterate among their family and community members depresses the Meo girls towards education. However they resolve such hindrance with the help of their teachers.
- ❖ Opportunity structure for the Meo girl children is totally blocked, as they do not have prospect to grow educationally, beyond secondary classes in the Mewat

region due to the absence of educational institutions in the region on the one hand, and, on the other, due to the apathy of the male dominated society, which do not permit them to continue with their studies beyond school. Thus, they find themselves at the cross roads.

- ❖ Perception of shattered hope emanate due to causal factors, such as. trust deficit, lack of access to educational opportunity especially after secondary school
- ❖ Poor education provided by schools in the region also contributes quite considerably for shattering positive hope among Meo girls.
- ❖ The Meo girls do not trust their political leader of the area who was accused by of their own welfare rather than welfare of the people and the region.
- ❖ In such non-supportive environment learning for the Meo girl children become meaningless, although their desire to excel and learn more remains high.

The *fourth* objective was *to understand how the community and other stakeholders play their role towards Meo girls' education.* The result emerged from the findings are as follows:

- ❖ Teachers revealed that the community expects education should provide upward economic mobility and employment which remains missing as a result of absence of quality education.
- ❖ The school has generated positiveness not only among their students, but, also among the Meo parents, who, in majority of the cases, came out of their reluctance towards education of the girl child and have started sending them for schooling.
- ❖ The perception of Meo community is constantly changing towards education of girl children.
- ❖ The community started sending their girl children to school and the enrolment as well as the regularity of Meo girl children increased as a result of such initiatives by the teaching fraternity.
- ❖ Many parents are supporting the study of their girl children by migrating to an area form where they can support the education of their girl children at every step.

- ❖ Those community members who have not generated the positive perception towards education of girl children, reasons out, that, the schools located in the area has not produced role model for children to follow.
- ❖ The new generations of the parent see education of girl children in terms of developmental aspect of education and expect handsome earning and better lifestyle.
- ❖ Majority of the first generation male members within the community has realized the importance of education and have got involved in opening educational institutions in the area.
- ❖ Parent and community members from Taoru sample areas were more exposed to the value of girls' education as compared to other two sample areas.
- ❖ Realizing the importance of education, the Meo community has also changed their perception towards girls' education, but, the unavailability of schools beyond the secondary classes still is a challenge for meeting the desire and demand of the community members, parents and Meo girl children.
- ❖ Parents showed their helplessness, as a result of non-transformation of their poor economic condition which prevents them to provide quality education.
- ❖ Parents feel that due to financial, socio-cultural constraints, as well as, non familial support, several Meo girl children have developed resisting behavior as they feel that their upward mobility is thwarted due to such constraints.
- ❖ Parents feel disheartened that they are unable to provide education to their girl children beyond secondary classes as initiatives of the government is not upto the mark for providing education beyond secondary classes.
- ❖ Parental dissatisfaction towards education has purely causal relations and it is reflects among parents because of the failure of education in shaping the future of Meo girl positively.
- ❖ The demand of upgrading secondary schools to senior secondary schools by the Meo girls, as well as, parents and the community, has not been taken into consideration by the competent authority so far.

- ❖ The weak demand by the community members as well as the Meo girls for better and higher educational facility has not been heard by the educational authority whose intervention is essential to change the educational situation of the Meo girls' population.
- ❖ Social practices of marrying Meo girl children early in their life is seen by majority of Meo parents and community members as pious responsibility.
- ❖ The male parent often tries to get their daughters married in the tender age by dropping them out of the school due to social custom of marrying at younger age. This negatively affects the education of the girl children.
- ❖ However, resistance and rebellion from the girl children are compelling the parents to send them for schooling which is bringing them out of the marginalization.
- ❖ Due to non-achieving capacity of educational prospects in the region, the community often gets demotivated, and as a consequence, they slowly develop feeling of estrangement towards schooling of their girl children. As a result, it discourages them to invest time, money and energy in education.
- ❖ Still there are many parents who do not take education of their girl child seriously due to missing cultural capital in context of education and also due to their socio-cultural background.
- ❖ The experiences of parents pertaining to education of their girl children are also shaped due to unsafe environment and habitat and whether hypothetical or actual, it leads to the belief that their girl children may become target at any point of time.
- ❖ Fear of safety of girl children in the region has a deep impact upon the consciousness of Meo parents. Therefore, they remain deeply wary for the girls coming out in such unsafe environment and habitat. Such fear, either, hypothetical or real, compels many parents to stop sending their girl children, to school as many parents feel that girls would get involved with boys and bring a bad name to the family.
- ❖ Due to familial and reasons related to safety of the Meo girl children are stopped anytime in between their education.

- ❖ Absence of girls' schools and sufficient female teachers reinforces the patriarchal autocratic environment of school as parents often remain reluctant in sending their girl children in male teachers' populated schools.
- ❖ Majority of the community members have failed to come out of traditional male dominated thinking of conservatism and believe that spending on girls' education is sheer waste.
- ❖ The teachers were observed to be teaching in a unilateral negotiating process mode, reduces the student to remain passive listeners.
- ❖ Majority of the community members have realized the developmental aspect of schooling as a result of resistance from Meo girl children who constantly endeavour to acquire education so as to realize their aspiration.

Educational and Policy implications:

No challenge can be more unnerving than that of improving the education of Meo girl children. Laden with the historico-political, socio-economic and socio-cultural situations, the pursuit for better education which could lead the Meo girl children to accomplish their life aspirations, world-view and meaning making remains an elusive dream due to several reasons ranging from socio-cultural, socio-economic to governmental initiatives for development. The Meo girl children find themselves in a spiraled downward lap which have led them lag far behind the others residing in the neighbouring districts of Haryana and other parts of India. The experiences of the Meo girl children suggest that they are locked in the grip of implicit and explicit socio-cultural discrimination and trying hard to come out of their situation by breaking their socio-cultural boundaries.

The implication of this empirical research can be found in keeping the dreams of Meo girl children alive. This is why, the reflective and empirical base of this research, delivers exemplars for efficacy of education for Meo girl children. Therefore, the present research does not provide just a prescription, rather, it offers an insight into developing grounded theory and improving education of the Meo girl children in the entire area of Mewat through a look at the challenging socio-cultural situations pertaining to the Meo girl children and their classrooms. It also offers a combination

of scholarship through ad-verbatim conversation and story of qualitative research and the lived reality of the Meo girl children. Since, the research relied comprehensively on story and insights of the samples as a means of transmitting their experiences. Hence, it will have wider credence in inter-disciplinary area of research. The researcher's personal experiences, as a girl, provided a milieu to understand the experiences of Meo girl children comprehensively, as, the researcher retained vivid memories of her own schooling, which affected the researcher both, positively, as well as, negatively. Those memories helped the researcher understand the current situation prevalent in the classroom of today in the sample areas. Thus, teachers, educationists, policy makers, students, researchers, as well as, all those associated with education of the marginalized, will find this research useful. Pupil-teachers, in-service teachers, as well as, teacher educators will find an opportunity to devise appropriate strategies for addressing classroom effectively, since the study has tried to explore the ground realities pertaining to Meo girl children in a formal education setup. Apart from the researcher's understanding made on the basis of secondary sources, in this research, efforts have been made to comprehend the area of exploration primarily on the basis of the perceptions of Meo girl children studying in formal school, teachers teaching them, parents and community members, and also through observation, so that education can be made more meaningful and de-alienating for Meo girl children. The research contributes in comprehending perceptions and experiences of Meo girl children within and outside the classroom therefore, it will benefit and improve education of the Meo girl children, both at present time and in future.

Limitations and Scope of Study:

The study utilized qualitative research methods for gathering data and its interpretation however I recognize that validity of the findings may be affected by certain limitations.

The *first* limitation of this study is that I did not gather data from the entire region of Mewat, rather, the data was gathered from three schools of three subdivision of Mewat district. Thus, the findings are limited to the data gathered for broader research questions.

The *second* limitation of this study as I recognize is that, I was not able to establish a continuous extended relationship with the samples. Multiple interactions would have been ideal because of the dynamic perception of the human being. However, the initial data gathered provided a strong underpinning for in-depth examination of the concerns chosen for the study.

The *third* limitation as the researcher recognizes is that, the general findings might have limited scope, due to the nature of the participants, as, the findings are based on the perceptions of Meo girl children studying in the school, their teachers, parents and the community members in three subdivisions of Mewat district.

Lastly, the study might also have limited the general findings as the sample teacher groups were chosen only from schools, where sample Meo girl children were studying.

Suggestions for improvement:

The suggestions for improvement emerged out of the research are as follows:

- Developing attitudinal sensitization among concerned professionals such as teachers, administrators and community members is essentially needed towards education of Meo girl children in contexts of its inevitability. It should not be treated as an alternative measure rather, it needs to be cultivated.
- There is a need to upgrade the existing schools from secondary to senior secondary classes. Upgradation of school from secondary to senior secondary schools will reduce the civil work cost upon the government.
- There is essential need to bring higher secondary schools in the area which could cater to the school going Meo girls' population.
- Higher secondary schools specifically catering to Meo girl children should be opened, looking to the socio-cultural aspects of the area. It is essential also because of the high dropout among Meo girls after secondary classes due to unavailability of senior secondary schools in the area.
- It is suggested that linkages of schools to higher educational institution should be done. Looking to the demand of further education, colleges must be opened in Mewat which could cater to Meo girl students passing out of schools.

- Public transportation needs to be improved for better and swift access of school.
- Public policies and budgetary allocations along with supportive legislation should be formulated on the basis of the educational needs of Meo girl children and should not be based on incidence.
- Infrastructural development is essentially needed in schools located in Mewat.
- There is a need to develop safety in schools.
- Vocational information dissemination should be made available to Meo girl children for awareness of the possible areas of growth.
- Guidance services should be provided to Meo girl children for their better future prospects and meeting their requirement of worldview and aspiration.
- Awareness campaign as an administrative measure for the need of girls' education among the community members should be constantly taken up.
- It is suggested that teachers should be oriented towards best classroom practice. Such orientations/workshops are essentially required in the following areas:
 - ⇒ Developing and disseminating different teaching methodologies for different discipline.
 - ⇒ Teaching with the help of modern technological aids in interdisciplinary mode and by involving students actively.
 - ⇒ Developing empathy and sensibility toward Meo girl children and teaching accountability within the available resources and constraints.
 - ⇒ Orientation/workshop for head of the institution and senior teachers, so that they can analyze and suggest measures for solving day to-day problems that they encounter.
 - ⇒ Orientation/workshop of officials from Department of Education so as to analyze, suggest and provide mechanism for institutional improvement.

Suggestions for Further Research:

- The present study is confined one school each of Taoru, Nuh and Punhana subdivisions. Similar studies can be taken up on a larger scale involving the entire subdivisions of Mewat.
- Action research may be taken up on a similar field of research concerning Meo girl children.
- Longitudinal studies upon Meo girl children can be conducted to comprehend the overall development of personality attributes such as attitudes, values, habits etc. towards education.
- Using pre-test and post-test design, controlled experimental studies can be taken up to understand the effect of schooling on the personalities of Meo girl children in their social environment.
- Studies related to social discrimination concerning Meo girl children within and outside of the family can be conducted.
- A comprehensive survey upon education of Meo girl children can be conducted, so as to highlight their exclusive educational problems.
- Study pertaining to support required by the Meo girl children for schooling can be taken in the entire Mewat region.
- Meo parents' perception, in contexts of expectation from schooling and education is required to be taken up.
- Policy and directives studies in context of Meo girl children may be taken up.
- A longitudinal study is essential to understand the reason of dropouts among Meo girl children.
- A separate study upon conflict between Meo parents and children's desires in context of education and life prospects may be taken up.

National Importance of the Study:

The research shows that schools, catering to the need of Meo girl children population, as well as, the level of efficiency of the entire educational system are exceptionally

low in schools located in Mewat, which contribute to the drop out of Meo girl children from further education as a result of dearth of schooling after secondary classes which blocks the educational path of the Meo girl children. As a national importance, the study, thus, contributes in highlighting the area of reform essentially needed for making education accessible to the Meo girl children as it present a valid empirical base, from where educational reforms can begin. The present research directly addresses the issues related to Meo girl children and provides directions to those responsible for evolving a workable policy for the marginalized section of the society in general and Meo girls' education in particular.

The researcher found rare empirical researches conducted in the area that has been taken up keeping the voices of the Meo girl children in focus. Actually, the present study focuses on the experience of the Meo girl children that was considered essential for reforming their education. This is because, despite explicit constitutional provisions and other policy commitments and determinations to address the issues of Meo students, the entire education system lies far behind to achieve the aims of providing meaningful qualitative education to them which could lead them realize their worldview through education. Therefore, the present research contributes in understanding why and how the school going Meo girl children continues to characterize the educational landscape. Hence, the researcher has made a serious effort to address *what* within educational settings is necessary for the success of education of the Meo girl children, *how* presented education in school is working, *why* there exists negative feeling among Meo girl children and *what* they expect from education. Exposure from the ground realities will help nationally to widen the horizon for the education of the marginalized section of the society particularly in case of the Meo girl children so as to develop them and keep pacing with others. It is also expected that the research will contribute in uplifting education of the Meo girl children in the entire area of Mewat and will help researchers, teachers, educationists, teacher educators, educational planners, individuals, community members, NGOs, as well as the government to benefit from the study at the national level.