

**A BASELINE SURVEY OF MINORITY  
CONCENTRATION DISTRICTS OF INDIA**

**SIRSA**

(Haryana)

**Sponsored by**

Ministry of Minority Affairs

Government of India

and

Indian Council of Social Science Research



**INSTITUTE FOR HUMAN DEVELOPMENT**

NIDM Building, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor, IIPA Campus

I.P. Estate, Mahatma Gandhi Marg, New Delhi-110 002

Phones – 2335 8166, 2332 1610 / Fax : 23765410

Email: [ihd@vsnl.com](mailto:ihd@vsnl.com), website: [ihdindia.org](http://ihdindia.org)

**2008**

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Email: [ihd@vsnl.com](mailto:ihd@vsnl.com), website: [ihdindia.org](http://ihdindia.org)

## **RESEARCH TEAM**

### **Principal Researchers**

Alakh N. Sharma  
Ashok K. Pankaj

### **Data Processing and Tabulation**

Balwant Singh Mehta  
Sunil Kumar Mishra  
Abhay Kumar

### **Research Associates/Field Supervisors**

Ramashray Singh  
Ashwani Kumar  
Subodh Kumar  
M. Poornima

### **Research Assistant**

P.K. Mishra

### **Secretarial Assistance**

Shri Prakash Sharma  
Nidhi Sharma  
Sindhu Joshi

# **SIRSA**

## ***Principal Authors of the Report***

**Balwant Singh Mehta**

**Sunil Kumar Mishra**

**Abhay Kumar**

Institute for Human Development

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## **Executive Summary of Sirsa District (Haryana)**

### **DEVELOPMENT GAPS AND PRIORITIES FOR THE MULTI-SECTOR DEVELOPMENT PLAN OF SIRSA DISTRICT OF HARYANA**

#### **Background:**

- The Ministry of Minority Affairs (GOI) has identified 90 minority concentrated backward districts using eight indicators of socio-economic development and amenities based on the 2001 Census data. The purpose is to improve all these indicators and bring it to the all India level through a multi-sector development plan, under the Eleventh Five Year Plan. Since, it is expected that there must be changes in these indicators after 2001; a baseline survey has been conducted to formulate the multi-sectoral development plan with the latest deficits and priorities.
- Sirsa is one of the minority-concentrated districts of India which lags behind in terms of socio-economic indicators (Category B1).

#### **District Profile (2001 census based):**

- The total population of Sirsa district was 823184, of which 68.7 per cent lives in rural areas, which is lower than the State share of rural population. Hindus constitute 68.4 per cent of the population, while Sikhs, the notified minority community, formed 30.8 per cent. The district is characterized by the presence of a substantial number of a minority community, mainly Sikhs (30.8 per cent). SCs constitute 28.2 per cent and STs are virtually not found in the district.
- The literacy rate of the age group above age 6 years in district Sirsa was higher than the national and state average of 65 per cent and 61 per cent respectively and stood at 68 per cent in 2001. The male and female literacy was also higher than the national and state average and stood at 79 per cent and 56 per cent respectively. Gender differentials in literacy are noticeable across the tehsils.
- Work participation rate is modest (46.3 percent), which is slightly higher than the state average, and has improved significantly in the rural areas of the district.

Significant differentials in work participation rate have been noticed across the tehsils of the district.

- Nearly 73.6 per cent of the population was dependent on farming, of whom 45.6 per cent were cultivators and 28.2 per cent agricultural labourers. In the industrial sector, construction (19 per cent) followed by transportation (3 per cent), and hospitality (2 per cent) were the main employment providers. The contribution of the service sector was 8 per cent.
- Nearly 97 percent of the villages have primary schools, but the percentage of villages with middle schools is comparatively low.
- Nearly 30 per cent of the villages have a PHC at a distance of 5 kms. and 13 and 14 per cent of villages had MCW and allopathic hospitals, respectively..
- Rural accessibility and connectivity is relatively inadequate. Nearly three-fourth of the villages have bus stops within a distance of 5 kilometers. According to the Census 2001, 96 percent of the villages in Sirsa had paved roads.
- Nearly 60 per cent of the villages have post offices within a distance of 3.6 kms and 67 per cent of the villages have public telephone facilities. Thus, more attention is needed to provide these facilities in the rural areas of the district.
- Nearly cent per cent of the villages of Sirsa district are electrified. However, the power supply is very erratic and available for only 8 to 12 hours a day. Inadequate electricity is the major hindrance to the industrialization process in the district.
- Nearly 87 percent villages have access to primary agricultural cooperatives (PACs). More than one-half of the villages have access to banking facilities within a distance of 4.8 km. Just 4 per cent of the villages have access to regular markets at an average distance of 14 km. Nearly 27 per cent of the villages have a Mandi at a distance of 11.5 kms.
- All the villages (cent per cent) were reported to have an Anganwadi. However, a comparatively smaller proportion of the households have received benefits from the ICDS centres.
- Overall, the status of infrastructure development in the district is modest and inter-tehsil inequity is sharp, which needs to be bridged through various infrastructural development interventions.



## Survey Findings (2008)

- The present survey is confined to district Sirsa of Haryana state. The survey reveals that the district lagged behind in five out of eight indicators, when compared to the all India average. It has better status in health related indicators compared to the all India level. Table 1 below shows the gap between all India and district figures vis-à-vis ten indicators and prioritises the development interventions vis-à-vis eight indicators. The district figure is based on the survey findings (2008), while the all India figures are of 2004-05 and 2005-06. The distance from the all India figures may be higher, as the all India data are a little old.

**Table 1: Development Gaps and Priorities for the Multi-Sector Development Plan**

Sl. No.	Indicators	Sirsa 2008	All India 2005	Development Gaps Between All India and District	Development Priority of the District
		(1)	(2)	(3=1-2)	(4)
1	Rate of literacy	58.42	67.3	-8.88	2
2	Rate of female literacy	52.65	57.1	-4.45	3
3	Work participation rate	37.61	38.0	-0.39	5
4	Female work participation rate	18.66	21.5	-2.84	4
5	Percentage of households with pucca walls	89.76	59.4	30.36	7
6	Percentage of households with safe drinking water	19.90	87.9	-68.0	1
7	Percentage of households with electricity	83.02	67.9	15.12	6
8	Percentage of households with water closet latrines	85.98	39.2	46.78	8
9	Percentage of fully vaccinated children	90.0	43.5	46.5	-
10	Percentage of child delivery in a health facility	41.0	38.7	2.3	-

Note: (1) Survey data of the district (Col. 1) pertains to the rural areas only, but all-India data (Col. 2) pertain to total.

(2) Data in Col 2 from Sl. Nos. 5 to 8 pertain to year 2005-06 are taken from NFHS-3 and the rest of the data in Col. 2 pertain to the year 2004-05 are taken from NSSO.

## Development Priorities

### Drinking Water Facilities:

Nearly 80 per cent of the households use drinking water from private sources, while 20 per cent of the households are depending upon public source. The dependence on private

sources of drinking water by the rural poor households needs to be rectified by providing tap water facilities by the government, for which necessary allocations must be made on a priority basis.

### **Literacy Rate:**

Overall literacy rate is low and stood at 58.42 per cent, which is lower than the state and national average. Nearly 71 per cent of the children are enrolled in government-run educational institutions. In rural areas, 16 percent of population is educated (with educational levels of high school and above). Nearly 40 percent of the students in the age group of 5-16 years are getting assistance in the form of books. Midday meals are being provided to about 46.45 per cent of the students. Educational assistance in the form of dress and scholarships are being provided to a very small proportion of the students. The target of 'education for all' is still a distant dream and the quality of education being imparted in schools needs to be improved on priority. Thus, the gap in the process of human capital formation of communities as well as gender needs to be bridged immediately, by following community as well as gender sensitive educational programmes and schemes.

### **Female Literacy**

Gender differentials in literacy are noticeable. Female literacy is low and stood at 52.65 per cent. The proportion of males and females with educational levels of high school and above is 18.25 and 13.19, respectively. Male and female population with technical education (both degree and diploma) is just 1.40 per cent and 1.54 per cent respectively. The educational attainments of Sikhs is comparatively better than other communities, but disparities are noticeable across the communities and genders. This needs serious attention by educational planners and decision-makers, besides making the community aware of the advantages of female education, as poor female educational attainment hampers their future labour market prospects. Thus, there is an urgent need to increase the participation of youth, including females, in higher and technical education. To ensure equity in educational attainments, more scholarships need to be given to poor but deserving female students.

## **Improving Work Participation**

Work participation is reportedly a modest (37.61 per cent), which is low among Christian households (2.47 per cent) and high among Muslim households (44.58 per cent). Gender differentials in work participation are noticeable (53.22 per cent for males and 18.66 per cent for females). This is more or less true across religious groups, except Christian households wherein gender inequity in work participation is very sharp. Lower female work participation is a serious issue which calls for appropriate policy interventions to raise their contribution in economic activities, so that they can be empowered to play their role within and outside the family in an effective way.

Self-employment in agriculture and allied activities is the dominant occupation (52 per cent of households), followed by casual labour in non-agriculture (18 per cent of households) and casual labour in agriculture (16.21 per cent of households). However, there are significant variations in occupational status of the sample households across the religious groups and genders. Significantly, more women are self-employed in agriculture and allied activities across communities. None of the Christian women are engaged in casual work, either in agriculture or non-agriculture. However, one-fourth of them are regular salaried workers. In case of Muslim women, none of them is a regular salaried worker. A small proportion household is self-employed in non-agricultural pursuits for deriving livelihoods, except Christians. Overall, the high dependence on self-employment in agriculture and allied activities, casual wage labour in agriculture and non-agriculture, reflects the poor economic conditions of the households. This forces the women to work outside the households in very precarious conditions at very low wages. Casual work in non-agricultural activities is reportedly very low. Thus the government scheme of NREGA needs to be implemented in a big way, so that these poor households may have an opportunity to get assured employment of 100 man-days per household per annum.

Agriculture, forestry and fishing are the dominant activities wherein 68.51 per cent of the households' members are engaged. Given the seasonal nature of employment in agriculture, forestry and fishing, there is need to implement more and more self-employment schemes for the rural poor women so that they could be employed on a sustainable basis, which would not only generate employment and supplement family

earnings, but would also go a long way in empowering the women to play their part within the family and society.

### **Electricity:**

Nearly 83 per cent of the households have electricity connections, which needs to be improved on priority. Electricity should be given due priority in development planning in the district to speed up the process of agriculture and allied activities, including industrial development. The Rajiv Gandhi Rural Electrification Mission (RGREM) targets universalisation of electricity connection to the rural households by the end of 2009. However, since the progress appears nowhere near to the target, the RGREM needs to be strengthened in the district.

### **In-house Toilet Facilities**

Majority of the households (86 per cent) are defecating inside the house. Nearly 14 per cent of households are defecating in the open, which is totally unhygienic. More than one-fifths of Hindu and Muslim households and one-tenth of Sikh households are defecating outside the home in the open. The condition of the drainage is also very unsatisfactory in both Hindu and Sikh households. This needs to be checked by the government providing in-house toilet assistance so as to improve the sanitary and environmental conditions of the villages.

All this makes it clear that schemes like the Total Sanitation Campaign (TSC), a Centre sponsored scheme, aiming at universalisation of sanitation facilities, which has been going on for quite some time with the aim of achieving universalisation of sanitation facilities by the end of 2009, has not made even a modest dent on rural sanitation. The existing situation clearly indicates that the district would completely miss the target, which calls for better implementation of the TSC and also to extend its coverage to uncovered villages through the multi-sector development plan.

### **Houses with Pucca Walls**

Nearly 2.69 per cent and 7.49 per cent of the households are living in thatched and kacha houses respectively and 28 per cent and 62 per cent of them are living in semi-pucca and pucca houses respectively. Comparatively, the housing conditions of Christian, Hindu and Muslim households are not satisfactory, which reflects the poor economic conditions of these households. Nearly 14 per cent of the sample households are living in single room accommodation. A significant proportion, 29.68 per cent and 56.06 per cent of them respectively, have two rooms or more than two roomed accommodation, which ensure privacy.

The number of houses constructed under IAY, which is not a universal programme, has been quite insufficient to fill the gap in the district. Overall, the qualitative and quantitative availability of housing is not satisfactory. This calls for vigorous implementation of the IAY so as to include more and more beneficiaries under its ambit and to extend the area of its coverage to include more and more poverty stricken households under the scheme. IAY can be topped up with the multi-sectoral plan.

### **Improving Employability through Education and Skill Development**

Given the seasonal nature of employment in agriculture and allied activities and the high incidence of unemployment, a well-planned strategy is required to improve the livelihood of the rural population of the district. The level of skill and training of new entrants to the labour market needs to be improved through a need based area specific skill development programmes by promoting vocational and other job oriented courses through Industrial Training Institutes and other technical training institutes. This calls for a comprehensive survey of the skills possessed by the unemployed youth and the training needs in the growing industrial sector, including the self employed sector.

Educational attainments, particularly among youth and especially among females, is low and a cause of worry. Thus, there is an urgent need to increase the participation of population, particularly youth, in higher and technical education. This would require imparting short duration job oriented courses in technical institutions to the rural youth,

besides providing free-ships and scholarships to needy youth from disadvantaged communities and minorities.

### **Additional Areas of Intervention**

- Despite development of public health infrastructure in the recent past, there is a lack of adequate health care facilities for the rural poor population, which is due to heavy pressure of population on these basic services. The situation with regard to availability of medicines, though it has gradually improved during the last few years, is the same. The availability of doctors, especially lady doctors at PHCs / hospitals is a major concern for the rural population. At the same time, the presence of quacks in villages has an adverse impact on the overall healthcare and behaviour of the people. They incur heavy expenditure on health without proper care. This needs to be corrected through awareness campaigns to educate rural poor people about their health care.
- The dependence on untrained dais in child delivery assistance is high (63.38 per cent), which is more in Hindu (70 per cent) and Muslim households (59.26 per cent) than Muslim and Christian households. Nearly 9 per cent of the delivery of children is performed by trained midwife/ASHA, comparatively more in Christian households than other households. Those of the children born in institutional care have also received pre and post natal care, although the proportion of such children is comparatively low. Those children born in institutional care have also received pre and post natal care, although the proportion of such children is comparatively low. Keeping the above in view, there is an urgent need to extend the coverage of institutional deliveries of children so that better pre and post natal care be provided to them.
- The dependence on private sources for medical treatment is significantly high (72.16 per cent) as compared to government hospitals (16.8 per cent). Nearly 4 per cent of the households are in debt to meet medical expenditures, with the proportion of Hindu and Christian households raising debts to meet health treatment expenditure is about 8 and 7, respectively. This is attributed to the fact that medical services available at

government hospitals are inadequate and poor in quality, which compels them to rely on private sources of medical treatment. Keeping this in view, there is an urgent need to strengthen the National Rural Health Mission (NRHM) so that it may be able to meet the health needs of the poor rural households and curtail their dependency on private sources, which are costly in nature and are often beyond the reach of the poor households, forcing them into debt.

- Nearly one-fourth of sample households are indebted. Nearly 45 per cent of Christian households followed by 27 per cent of Sikh, 20 per cent of Hindu and 13 per cent of Muslim households are in debt. Institutional sources of finance dominate the rural areas of the district. As there is need to improve the income levels of rural households, banks and financial institutions can play a major role by providing credit at cheaper rates without any collateral for undertaking productive self-employment to the rural poor.
- Some of the poor households belonging to the BPL category do not have BPL cards, although they are getting BPL rations. A significant proportion of them are without BPL cards and not getting BPL rations. The huge difference in falling under BPL category and holding a BPL ration card and availing benefits from PDS is a matter of very serious concern. These gaps need to be plugged at the earliest, so that the poor get their due share, As this could also supplement the households' nutrition. There is also need to rejuvenate the PDS to improve its working and performance.

## **Chapter I**

### **INTRODUCTION**

#### **BRIEF SOCIO-ECONOMIC PROFILE**

On September 1, 1975, Sirsa and Dabwali tehsils were constituted into a separate Sirsa district of Haryana state. The district is spread over 4277 sq km. It is divided into three subdivisions and four tehsils, seven blocks, 325 villages and 321 village panchayats for administrative purposes. District Sirsa lies at the extreme west corner of Haryana between 29 degree 14 and 30 degree north latitude and 74 degree 29 and 75 degree 18 east longitudes. It is surrounded by the districts of Faridkot and Bathinda of Punjab in the north and north east, Ganga Nagar district of Rajasthan in the west and south and Hisar district in the east. It is a part of the Indo-Gangetic alluvial plain and its terrain can be broadly classified from north to south into three major types i.e. Haryana Plain, alluvial bed of Ghaggar or Nali and Sand dune tract. The Haryana Plain covers over 65 per cent and is a vast surface of flat to rolling terrain and extends southward to the northern boundary of the alluvial bed of the Ghaggar.

The climate of the district is arid which is characterised by its dryness, high temperature and scanty rainfall. The average annual rainfall is 32-53 mm only which is contributed by both the south west monsoon and post-monsoon showers. There is no perennial river in the district. Ghaggar is the only river which has abundant water during the rainy season and sometimes causes water logging in many parts of this flat surface of impervious, thick clay. At places, swamps support a high density of tall grass. Sand dune tracts cover the southern most part of the district. Though, the river normally dries during the winters, it helps to improve the quality and quantity of the ground water deposit in the region. A large number of tube wells operate on both sides of the river. The quality of water in Baraguda and Dabwali blocks is of poor quality and highly saline in nature. The Bhakra Canal is the main source of irrigation in the district.

No important minerals are found in the district, except, shora (crude salt petre). There are about 53 villages where salt petra bearing earth is available. The district is also devoid of



forest resources. Sirsa is a leading producer of wheat, rice sugarcane and cotton. Nearly 90 per cent of the land in Sirsa is cultivable. The district is also known as “the cotton belt of Haryana”. Sirsa is one of the districts with highest per capita income in Haryana and also in the country..

**Map of Sirsa**



### **Population and Its Composition**

More than two-thirds of the population live in the rural areas of Sirsa district. More than one-half of the population live in tehsil Sirsa. The scheduled castes (SCs) constitute 28.2 per cent of the population and scheduled tribes (STs) are virtually not found in the district. The district is characterized by the presence of a substantial number of minorities namely Sikhs, Christians and Muslims..

Hindus constitute 68.4 per cent and Sikhs, the notified minority community, was 30.8 per cent. Hindus also constitute the dominant population group in all the tehsils: highest in Ellenabad (76.5 per cent) and lowest in Dabwali (57.4 per cent). Sikhs are the dominant minority group across the tehsils of district Sirsa: 42.6 per cent in Dabwali and 31.7 per cent in Rania, 28.3 per cent in Sirsa and 23.5 per cent in Ellenabad.

**Table 1.1: Population and Its Composition, 2001**

Tehsil	Total population	Rural %	%SC	% Hindu population	% Sikh Population	% Minority population
Dabwali	181369	77.1	30.6	57.4	42.1	42.6
Sirsa	429918	69.8	27.8	71.6	27.3	28.3
Rania	131490	86.3	28.6	68.2	31.2	31.8
Ellenabad	80407	71.0	24.8	76.5	22.9	23.5
<b>Sirsa District</b>	<b>823184</b>	<b>68.7</b>	<b>28.2</b>	<b>68.4</b>	<b>30.8</b>	<b>31.6</b>
<b>Haryana</b>	<b>15029260</b>	<b>71.1</b>	<b>21.4</b>	<b>87.0</b>	<b>5.9</b>	<b>13.0</b>

Source: Calculated from Village Directory, Census of India, 2001

### Literacy Levels

The literacy rate of the age group above age 6 years in district Sirsa was higher than the national and state average of 65 per cent and 61 per cent respectively, standing at 68 per cent in 2001. The male and female literacy rates were also higher than the national and state average and stood at 79 per cent and 56 per cent respectively.

### Work Participation

According to the 2001 Census, nearly 43 per cent of the population belongs to age group of 15-59 year in Sirsa. Work participation rate is 46.3 per cent: 57 per cent of males and 43 per cent for females, which is higher than the national as well as state average. Nearly 73.6 per cent of the population was dependent on farming: 45.6 per cent cultivators and 28.2 per cent agricultural labourers. In the industrial sector, construction (19 per cent) followed by transportation (3 per cent), and hospitality (2 per cent) were the main employment providers. The contribution of service sector was 8 per cent.

**Table 1.2: Rural Work Force Participation**

Tehsil	Total Rural Population	Total Worker	WPR	% Cultivators	% Agricultural Labourers	% Household industry	% Others
Dabwali	181369	83473	46.0	40.4	29.7	2.2	27.6
Sirsa	429918	188207	43.8	48.8	29.4	2.1	19.8
Rania	131490	64816	49.3	38.8	23.7	1.4	36.1
Ellenabad	80407	45002	56.0	52.1	26.6	0.9	20.4
Sirsa District	823184	381498	46.3	45.6	28.2	1.8	24.4
Haryana	15029260	6451587	42.9	45.9	19.0	2.2	33.0

Source: Calculated from PCA, Census of India, 2001.

## **METHODOLOGY**

The survey was conducted in rural areas and, hence, all the figures and variables used pertain to only rural areas and population. The Census 2001 data have been used for sampling. Since the religion-wise population data are available only up to the Tehsil level the stratification has been confined to that level.

First of all, all the tehsils of the districts were arranged in descending order on the basis of minority population. In other words, they were arranged in such a manner that the Tehsils with the highest concentration of minority population was placed at the top position and Tehsils with the lowest concentration of minority population at the bottom. Thereafter all the Tehsils were stratified into three strata: the first one consists of the upper 20 per cent of Tehsils arranged according to population; the second consists of the middle 50 per cent; and the bottom consists of the last 30 per cent. The selection of villages has been done following the PPS (Probability Proportionate to Size) method. A total of 30 villages (25 villages have been chosen in the districts having rural population of less than 5 lakh) have been selected from all the three strata by the method of PPS. The number of villages selected from each stratum depends on the ratio of the total population of Tehsils to that stratum to the total population of the district. For example, if the total population of all the Tehsils under a stratum constitutes 20 per cent of the total population, then 6 villages have been selected from that stratum. It has also been ensured that at least 6 villages are selected from each stratum.

In villages with less than 1200 population, all the households were listed first. However, in case of villages having more than 1200 population, three or more hamlet-groups were formed as per the practice followed by NSSO and then a sample of two hamlets was selected. The hamlet with maximum concentration of minority population was selected with probability one. From the remaining hamlets another one was selected randomly. The listing and sampling of households were done separately in each hamlet.

In each selected hamlet, the listed households were grouped into strata as per the minority status of the household. In other words, all Muslim households formed one Second-Stage Stratum (SSS); all Buddhist households another SSS; and so on.

About 30 households were selected in all from each sample village for detailed survey. These 30 households were chosen from 2 selected hamlets (if hg's formed) and from among the respective SSS in proportion to the total number of households listed in the

respective frames. A minimum of 2 households were chosen to an ultimate SSS. The required number of sample households from each SSS was selected by stratified random sampling without replacement (SRSWOR). In case of a village having less than 30 households all the households were surveyed.

The rule followed by NSSO for forming hamlet-groups is as per the following:

**Table 1.4: The Criteria for Forming Hamlets**

Approximate present population of the village	No. of hamlet- groups to be formed
1200 to 1799	3
1800 to 2399	4
2400 to 2999	5
3000 to 3599	6
.....and so on	

**Multiplier Procedure**

The district level estimate has been prepared using the technique of multilevel multiplier. At the first stage, multiplier has been applied at the household level to estimate the number of households of different religious communities in the village.

Formula:

$$Y_i = \sum_{i=1}^n R_i$$

Where R= (D/d)\*(d/H)\*(H/h)

D= Total households in the village

d=Total households listed in the village

H=Total selected sample households in the village

h=Total households selected from different religious groups

n= Number of religious group in the village

At the second stage, the village level multiplier has been applied to estimate population data at stratum level (all tehsils in a district have been grouped into three strata for sample selection).

Formula:

$$Y_j = \sum_{i=1}^n \sum_{j=1}^3 Y_i S_j$$

Where S= ((SP)/ (M\*VP))

SP= Total population of the strata

M=Total number of villages selected in the strata

VP=Population of the sample village

j=Number of stratum

n= Number of religious groups in the village

Finally at the third stage, stratum level multiplier has been used to estimate data at the district level.

Formula:

$$Y_k = \sum_{j=1}^n \sum_{k=1}^3 Y_j D_k$$

Where D= (DP/ (M\*TP))

DP= Total population of district

M=Total number of selected Tehsil in the strata

TP=Population of selected Tehsil

k=number of stratum

n= number of religious groups in the village

Thus, district level data are estimate based on the survey.

**Chapters:** The introductory chapter explains some basic profile of the district. This includes Tehsil-wise concentration of minority population and their demographic and other characteristics based on the 2001 Census. Chapter II explains village level gaps in terms of health and educational institutions and basic infrastructure. Chapter III explains findings of the household survey that analyses demographic, educational, health, economic and other deprivations. This part also explains demands and aspirations of the households, their perception about the state and the nature of civic and community life. Chapter IV analyses delivery of public services and some important development programmes. And the last chapter sums up the findings.

## Chapter II

### VILLAGE LEVEL DEFICITS

Infrastructure development and human resource development are equally important in the context of a region, failing which; we will not be able to support overall development initiatives. Infrastructure development at the village level is also an indicator of the level of access to various services and facilities. This chapter analyses the status of the infrastructure availability in Sirsa district, based on the secondary data and information gathered from the village schedules and the primary survey in the selected 30 villages.

#### Education Facilities

Nearly 97 per cent of the villages have a primary school; however, just more than one-half of the villages have a middle school. The number of secondary schools stood at 106 and of them one-half is concentrated in tehsil Sirsa only. The status of technical educational facilities is very poor and two tehsils namely Rania and Ellenabad are deprived of such facilities, due to higher concentration in tehsil Sirsa. Similar is the situation with other training schools. Thus, there is need to open more secondary schools and ITIs in the district, which is necessary to speed up the industrialization process.

**Table 2.1: School Status**

Tehsil	% Village having primary school	% Villages having middle school	No. of Secondary school	Population per Secondary school	Number of industrial school	Population per industrial school	Number of training school	Population per training school
Dabwali	97.1	50.7	22	8244	1	181369	3	60456
Sirsa	96.6	50.0	53	8112	6	71653	6	71653
Rania	100.0	58.7	15	8766	0	-	0	-
Ellenabad	100.0	50.0	16	5025	0	-	1	80407
<b>Sirsa District</b>	<b>97.5</b>	<b>51.4</b>	<b>106</b>	<b>7766</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>117598</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>82318</b>
<b>Haryana</b>	<b>92.6</b>	<b>51.1</b>	<b>2622</b>	<b>5732</b>	<b>166</b>	<b>90538</b>	<b>159</b>	<b>94524</b>

Source: Calculated from Village Directory, Census of India, 2001

Over the period, there has been an improvement in the availability of schools. 97 percent of the villages have primary schools within a distance of one kilometer. Forty four percent of the villages have a primary school for girls. Nearly 84 percent of the villages

have a middle school within a distance 3 kilometers and 30 per cent of villages have access to secondary schools within a distance of 6 kilometers. None of the villages have a polytechnic. Only 4 per cent of the villages have an ITI. Thus, the educational facilities including technical and vocational education, needs to be expanded in the rural areas of the district, so that the youth could be employed in gainful economic activities.

**Table 2.2: Educational Facilities, 2008**

Type of School	Percent of villages having	Mean distance
Primary School (Boys/Co-ed)	97.0	3.0
Primary School (Girls)	44.0	8.1
Middle School (Boys/Co-ed)	84.0	5.4
Middle School (Girls)	30.0	7.7
High/Higher Secondary School (Boys)	60.0	3.7
High/Higher Secondary School (Girls)	40.0	6.9
Inter College	17.0	13.3
ITI	4.0	28.4
Polytechnic	0.0	28.7
Other Training School	14.0	25.8
Religious School	24.0	2.0

\*For villages not having such educational facilities

Nearly three-fourth of the schools had pucca buildings. On an average, 6 rooms and 5 teachers were reported in the schools and punctuality of the teachers is reportedly modest. Proper sitting facilities are available in one-fifth of the schools. More than three-fourths of the schools have provisioning of drinking water and toilet facilities. Thus, educational infrastructural facilities need to be strengthened in the district on priority to reduce the drop outs and improve the quality of education. Mid-day meals scheme is functioning in the district modestly, which needs to be improved on priority so that the goal of improving the nutritional status of rural poor school going children be achieved. The monitoring and supervision of schools need to be strengthened to improve the level of sincerity, punctuality, and discipline of the teachers.

### **Health Infrastructure**

The status of health facilities is not satisfactory in rural areas of district Sirsa. Nearly 30 per cent of the villages have a PHC at a distance of 5 km. and 13 per cent and 14 per cent of villages have MCW and allopathic hospitals, respectively. Comparatively, the health facilities are very poor in Ellenabad. The proportion of population with tapped water

facility is low. A significant proportion of the households depend on tube wells and hand pumps for meeting water requirements. It is ironical to note that quacks are dominating the rural health scenario, which is a serious issue and needs to be curbed through better awareness and campaigns on NRHM.

**Table 2.3: Status of Health Infra-structure**

Tehsil	% Villages having PHCs within 5 km	% Villages having MCW Centre within 5 km	% Villages having Allopathic hospital < 5 km	Allopathic hospital per lakh population
Dabwali	15.9	7.2	27.5	0.6
Sirsa	41.5	15.3	11.4	0.0
Rania	30.4	21.7	13.0	0.0
Ellenabad	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
<b>Sirsa District</b>	30.5	13.1	14.0	0.1
<b>Haryana</b>	38.1	27.7	26.3	0.1

Source: Calculated from Village Directory, Census of India, 2001

**Table 2.4: Access to Health Facility, 2008**

Type	Percent of villages having	Mean distance
PHCs	17.0	7.8
Primary Health Sub Centre	44.0	10.9
CHCs	10.0	13.4
Hospital/Dispensary	17.0	12.4
Private Qualified Allopathic Doctors	24.0	13.2
Maternity Child care Centre	10.0	15.6
Ayurvedic Hospitals	7.0	21.7
Ayurvedic Doctors	7.0	22.4
Homeopathic Hospitals	0.0	20.8
Homeopathic Doctors	0.0	22.3
Quacks	80.0	17.0
Family Planning Clinics	7.0	17.6
Chemists/ Medicine Shops	70.0	13.6

\*For villages not having such facilities

Overall, the rural health scenario in the district is not conducive due to the lack of infrastructure, para-health professionals and poor awareness causing numerous problems such as high incidence of mortality and morbidity, indebtedness to meet health care expenditure, exploitation on the part of quacks etc. All this calls for strengthening and deeper penetration of NRHM in the district with fresh vigour.



## Village Connectivity

Rural accessibility and connectivity is relatively inadequate. Nearly three-fourth of the villages have bus stops within a distance of 5 kilometers. According to Census 2001, 96 percent of the villages in Sirsa had paved roads. However, the existence of roads alone do not ensure rural accessibility, as lack of transport services is also an issue. Ellenabad tehsil has cent per cent road connectivity. Sisra has access to rail accessibility also.

Other infrastructural facilities available are the post office and public telephone connections. Nearly 60 per cent of the villages have post offices within a distance of 3.6 km and 67 per cent of the villages have public telephone facility. Thus, more attention is needed to provide these facilities in the rural areas of the district.

**Table 2.5: Access to Other Facilities, 2008**

Type	Percent of villages having	Mean distance* Km
Block HQ	7.0	14.8
Nearest Town	0.0	14.7
Nearest Bus Stop	74.0	3.1
Nearest Regular Market	4.0	14.2
Nearest Railway Station	0.0	14.8
Nearest Post Office	60.0	3.6
Public Telephone Connection	67.0	5.5
Commercial Bank	27.0	6.8
Rural Bank	10.0	10.7
Cooperative Bank	57.0	4.8
Anganwadi Centre	100.0	0.0
GP Office	97.0	2.0
Fair Price Shop	87.0	8.0
Fertilizer Shop	60.0	8.1
Seed Storage	24.0	11.7
Pesticide Shop	30.0	16.4
Cold Storage	4.0	23.8
Other General Shop	77.0	13.9
Nearest Mandi	27.0	11.6
Milk Mandi	84.0	14.8
Veterinary	87.0	6.3

\*For villages not having such facilities

Source: Primary Survey, 2008

**Table 2.6: Banking and Other Facilities**

Tehsil	% Villages having paved road	% Villages having power supply	% Villages having agricultural co-operative societies within 5 km	% Villages having Co-operative bank within 5 km	Co-operative bank per lakh population	% Villages having commercial bank within 5 km	Commercial bank per lakh population	Post office per lakh population	Percentage irrigated land to total land
Dabwali	98.6	98.6	87.0	29.0	2.8	49.3	6.6	16.5	25.3
Sirsa	94.9	100.0	90.9	26.7	2.6	48.3	5.8	15.8	27.2
Rania	97.8	95.7	69.6	39.1	3.8	50.0	6.1	15.2	23.2
Ellenabad	100.0	100.0	93.3	13.3	0.0	43.3	3.7	13.7	38.0
<b>Sirsa District</b>	96.6	99.1	87.2	27.7	2.6	48.3	5.8	15.7	27.3
<b>Haryana</b>	98.5	99.7	77.7	34.2	1.8	46.9	4.4	16.4	20.5

Nearly cent per cent of the villages of Sirsa district are electrified. However, the power supply is very erratic and available for just 8 to 12 hours a day. Inadequate electricity is the major hindrance to the industrialization process in the district.

### **Banking and financial institutions, Markets and Other Institutions**

The main banking facilities available in the rural areas of Sirsa district are commercial banks, Regional Rural Banks (RRBs), cooperative banks and credit cooperatives. The banking coverage in the district is better than the state average, except for Ellenabad Tehsil. Lack of sufficient banking services have a direct impact on the formal credit availability for agricultural and allied activities. Nearly 87 percent villages have access to primary agricultural cooperatives (PACs). More than one-half of the villages have access to banking facilities within a distance of 4.8 km.

Just 4 per cent of the villages have access to regular markets at an average distance of 14 km. Nearly 27 per cent of the villages have a Mandi at a distance of 11.5 kms. Shops for agricultural inputs are available in a large proportion of the villages. On the whole, marketing infrastructure available is very inadequate, which invite serious government attention to improve the access to markets.

All the villages (cent per cent) were reported to have an Anganwadi. However, comparatively a lesser proportion of the households have received benefits from the

ICDS centres. A majority of those who didn't receive any benefit did not have any eligible members in their households, who can avail the service of the ICDS. The awareness about the ICDS is reportedly high in the sample villages.

Overall, the status of infrastructure development in district Sirsa is modest and inter-tehsil inequity is sharp, which needs to be bridged through various infrastructural development interventions. Besides, other development interventions needed for the district includes education, health care, subsidized housing, employment generation, safe drinking water, power, drainage, irrigation, and credit facilities.

## Chapter III

### SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONDITIONS OF THE POPULATION/HOUSEHOLDS

#### DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS

Sikhs are the dominant population group (59.50 per cent), followed by Hindus (37.88 per cent). Muslims, while the Christian population is negligible. The average household size is 5.39 persons, lowest for Sikhs (5.33) and highest for Christians (6.70). The overall dependency is reportedly high (1.44), which is comparatively highest among Sikhs (1.52) and lowest among Christians (0.85). The average sex ratio is very low 824, which is comparatively high for Muslims (1027) and very low for Christians (603). The high sex ratio in Muslims reflects a comparatively better female status in the community, which may be attributed to better educational status and women empowerment in the community as compared to Christians, Sikhs and Hindus. The low sex ratio of Christians reflects predominance of traditional practices and prejudices against women and preference for sons in the community, which needs to be broken by providing more education to the girls and empowering the women in the community (see table 3.1).

**Table 3.1: Demographic Characteristics of Sample Households Surveyed (%)**

Religion	Sample population (%)	Average HH Size	Sex Ratio	Dependency Ratio
Hindu	37.88	5.43	879	1.35
Muslim	1.54	5.69	1027	1.42
Christian	1.08	6.70	603	0.85
Sikh	59.50	5.33	795	1.52
Total	100.00	5.39	824	1.44

**Table 3.2: Age-Sex Distribution of Population in %**

Age group	Hindu			Muslim			Christian			Sikh			All		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
0-4	9.92	8.65	9.33	5.13	0.00	2.86	24.14	13.04	19.23	8.56	6.33	7.55	9.32	7.43	8.46
5-14	23.47	23.19	23.34	35.90	38.71	37.14	17.24	17.39	17.31	22.76	17.97	20.59	23.23	20.78	22.11
15-24	20.83	21.20	21.00	25.64	19.35	22.86	10.34	30.43	19.23	20.06	20.48	20.25	20.40	20.92	20.64
25-29	7.44	6.46	6.98	0.00	3.23	1.43	20.69	8.70	15.38	6.17	7.91	6.96	6.84	7.16	6.98
30-44	18.60	21.48	19.94	15.38	25.81	20.00	13.79	17.39	15.38	20.22	22.81	21.39	19.31	22.16	20.61
45-59	11.07	9.89	10.52	15.38	12.90	14.29	6.90	4.35	5.77	10.88	12.48	11.60	10.99	11.15	11.06
60+	8.68	9.13	8.89	2.56	0.00	1.43	6.90	8.70	7.69	11.34	12.01	11.65	9.91	10.41	10.14
Total	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00

Nearly 30 percent of the population is in the child age group of 0-14 years. This is more or less the same in Sikh community. Other communities have high concentration in 0-14 years: Muslim (40 per cent), Christian (36.54 per cent) and Hindu (32.67 per cent). No female child of Muslim households is found in the infant age group of 0-4 years, which may be attributed to greater awareness about the small family norm and adoption of family planning practices. Muslims and Hindus have a comparatively high proportion of children in the school going age group compared to other communities. Therefore, educational needs of these communities are higher when compared to Sikhs and Christians. Gender inequity in child sex ratio is sharp across the communities; however, it is sharper in Sikh households in case of school going age group and Muslim households in case of early child age group of 0-4 years than other communities. Thus, while Muslims have more male children than female in 0-4 years, which confirm the recently adopted practice of son preference among the community, as the overall sex ratio is favourable, which has been highlighted above. One-fifth of the population is in the age group of 15-24 years. Christian females have a high (30.43 per cent) representation in this youthful age group compared to low representation of males (10.34 per cent). This implies that other communities supplied more male labour force and likely unemployment is more in these communities, given the higher incidence of general unemployment and current trend of slowdown in the economy. Gender inequity is noticed in subsequent age groups too, but the gaps are not large. Nearly 10 percent of the population is in the age group of more than 60 years. Gender inequity is small in this age group except for Muslims. More Muslim men survive beyond 60 years and none of the women in the sample households survive beyond 60 years. On the whole, a high concentration of population in the child and youthful age groups, calls for rigorous educational and manpower planning and opening of more technical and vocational institutions as well as creation of more self-employment opportunities in agro-based and service sectors, given the stagnant public sector and shrinking private industrial sector.

## QUALITY OF HUMAN RESOURCE

### Literacy Rate

The literacy level of persons aged 7 years and above is higher among males than females across religious groups (see table 3.3). Female literacy is lowest among Christians (nearly half of the male) and highest among the Hindus (with a gap of one-tenth). Overall literacy is highest among Christians followed by Sikhs. Overall, gender differentials in literacy are noticeable, which needs attention by educational planners and decision-makers, besides making the community aware of the advantages of educating girls.

**Table 3.3: Literacy Rates in %**

Sex	Hindu	Muslim	Christian	Sikh	Total
Male	63.02	61.85	82.82	71.48	68.57
Female	50.99	43.77	41.29	58.19	55.20
Person	57.29	52.56	63.89	65.36	62.33

### Enrolment Status of Children

The enrolment status of children and adolescents in the age-group 5-16 years is presented in table 3.4. Nearly 71 per cent of the children are enrolled in government-run educational institutions. Gender equity is noticed in enrolment in government schools. None of the Muslim female children are enrolled in private and informal schools. It seems that SSA is making its presence felt in the rural areas of Sirsa district, which is evident from the fact that a high proportion of children are enrolled in government schools and a very small proportion of them are attending private schools. This also reflects the poor socio-economic conditions of the households, which compels them to depend on government schools for getting knowledge and education. However, the target of 'education for all' is still a distant dream and the quality of education being imparted in schools need to be improved on a priority basis. Thus, the gap in the process of human capital formation, in the case of various communities as well as genders, needs to be bridged on priority by following community as well as gender sensitive educational programmes and schemes.

**Table 3.4: Enrolment Status of 5-16 Years Population in %**

**(a) Enrolled and Attending Schools**

<i>Attending school</i>	<i>Hindu</i>			<i>Muslim</i>			Christian			Sikh			<i>Total</i>		
	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total
Going to govt school	74.68	78.09	76.29	58.37	47.69	52.04	13.60	17.99	15.17	68.41	72.41	69.97	69.72	73.63	71.38
Going to private school	6.77	5.43	6.14	1.90	0.00	0.77	86.40	77.02	83.03	13.69	16.39	14.74	12.11	11.97	12.05
Going to informal institution	0.16	0.15	0.16	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.52	0.00	0.31	0.38	0.06	0.25
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

**(b) Never Enrolled in %**

Never enrolled	Hindu	Muslim	Christian	Sikh	Total
Boys	15.88	37.83	0.00	10.68	12.68
Girls	7.77	41.40	4.99	7.62	8.51
Both	12.04	39.95	1.79	9.48	10.91

**(c) Drop out in %**

Drop out	Hindu	Muslim	Sikh	Total
Boys	2.25	1.27	5.69	4.37
Girls	5.86	10.91	2.57	4.14
Both	3.96	6.98	4.47	4.27

The data on the incidence of non-enrolment as well as drop out rate is given in tables 3.4b and 3.4c. The proportion of children who have never enrolled is low (one-tenth), but this is a cause of concern and calls for a more vigorous campaign for SSA. In the case of Muslims, 41 percent of girls are reportedly never enrolled in the schooling system. The drop out is also comparatively high in Muslim girls (11 per cent). The overall drop out is low (4.27 per cent), which provide a little relief, but still needs to be checked. Thus, government needs to speed up efforts to ensure cent percent enrollment of children in the school going age group with zero drop outs. This would be possible by improving the quality of education and expanding the physical infrastructure.

### ***Reasons for Dropout***

Although the enrollment and retention rates in the sample villages are high, an attempt has also been made to find out the reasons for drop outs, although the percentage is very low. The main reasons cited for dropping out are ‘work at home’ (35.59 per cent) followed by ‘not interested in reading’ (27.82 percent), ‘need to earn’ (14.45 percent) and ‘fee or educational expenditure not affordable’ (9.50 per cent) (see table 3.5). It is significant to note that all the children of Christian households were enrolled in schools and drop outs among them was nil.

**Table 3.5: Reasons for Dropout in (%)**

Reasons	Hindu	Muslim	Sikh	All
Work at home	41.46	0.00	32.49	35.59
Need to Earn	15.50	3.56	14.06	14.45
School Far distance	0.00	0.00	14.29	7.99
Lack of facility in school	0.24	0.00	4.93	2.85
Teacher beating	2.13	0.00	0.00	0.90
Teacher do not teach	0.24	0.00	0.00	0.10
Failed in exam	1.91	0.00	0.00	0.80
Fee or expenditure not afford	7.63	0.00	11.26	9.50
Not interesting in reading	30.90	96.44	22.96	27.82
All	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00

Keeping in view the lack of interest shown by the children in reading, the elementary education should be made interesting for the pupils and teachers should be trained to



motivate and retain them in the school system. Besides, due to high incidence of poverty, child labour is rampant in the sample households. Thus, there is need to create awareness among the parents about the benefits of education and livelihood opportunities need to be provided to the rural poor to eliminate the incidence of child labour.

### **Educational Levels**

The educational status of the sample households is modest. In rural areas of Sirsa district, 16 per cent of population is educated (with educational levels of high school and above). The proportion of males and females with educational levels of high school and above is respectively 18.25 and 13.19. Male and female population with technical education (both degree and diploma) is just 1.40 per cent and 1.54 per cent respectively (Table 3.6). The educational attainments of Sikhs is comparatively better than other communities. It is ironical to note that none of the Muslim male and female households' members are educated up to high school and above. Similarly, none of Christian women are educated up to high school and above, which may be due to the small size of the sample. Comparatively, Sikh males and females have better educational attainments, whereas Hindus have lower educational attainments. Disparities are noticeable across communities and genders in educational attainments at various levels. This needs to be plugged to ensure equity for which scholarships may be given to poor but deserving students from rural areas. Concrete steps need to be taken to increase the enrollment of the population beyond high school in general, and technical institutes, in particular.

**Table 3.6: Educational Levels**

Level of education	Hindu	Christian	Sikh	Total
<b>Male</b>				
Educated (High School and above)	15.09	11.62	20.51	18.25
Degree and above	1.41	0.00	0.64	0.90
Technical degree/ diploma	1.57	0.00	1.37	1.40
<b>Female</b>				
Educated (High School and above)	8.80	0.00	16.47	13.19
Degree and above	0.63	0.00	1.36	1.06
Technical degree/ diploma	0.14	0.00	2.48	1.54
<b>Person</b>				
Educated (High School and above)	12.15	7.25	18.72	15.97
Degree and above	1.05	0.00	0.96	0.97
Technical degree/ diploma	0.90	0.00	1.86	1.46

### **Educational Levels of Youth**

The educational status of youth is presented in table 3.7. The data clearly reveals that 14.35 percent of them are illiterate. Significant differentials in literacy is noticed. The proportion of illiterate youth ranges from 10 per cent to 44 per cent in Sikh and Christian households respectively. A very small proportion of the rural youth are educated below primary or informal level and 18.69 per cent and 21.92 percent of them have education up to primary level and middle level respectively. More than two-thirds, one-third and nearly one-fifth of the Muslim, Christian, and Sikh youth respectively have education up to middle level. One-fourth of the youth have educational attainment up to secondary level. None of the Muslim youth in the age group of 15-25 years is educated up to secondary level. Nearly 9 per cent of the youth have educational attainments up to higher secondary level. The educational attainment up to graduation and post graduation including technical education is very poor and it is virtually nil among Muslim and Christian youth. Muslim and Christian youth have lower educational attainments at various levels compared with youth of other two communities. Due to lower educational attainment, including vocational and technical education, rural youth of Sirsa district have lesser prospects in the labour market.

**Table 3.7: Educational Levels of Youth (15-25 Years) in %**

Educational category	Hindu	Muslim	Christian	Sikhs	Total
Illiterate	20.16	16.77	44.22	10.37	14.35
Below primary or informal education	9.44	3.59	0.00	5.23	6.68
Primary	15.96	67.64	39.56	19.04	18.69
Middle	23.25	12.00	10.83	21.52	21.92
Management or commercial school course (vocational)	0.42	0.00	0.00	0.17	0.26
Secondary	21.18	0.00	5.39	28.51	25.29
Higher Secondary	6.23	0.00	0.00	10.63	8.80
Technical diploma or certificate below degree	1.83	0.00	0.00	2.85	2.42
Graduate degree	1.26	0.00	0.00	1.54	1.40
Post-graduate degree	0.28	0.00	0.00	0.14	0.19
Total	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00

In general, educational attainments, particularly among youth and among females, is low and needs improvement. Poor educational attainment hampers their future labour market

prospects. Thus, there is an urgent need to increase the participation of the youth, in higher and technical education. This would also require imparting short duration job oriented courses in technical institutions to the rural youth, besides providing free-ships and scholarships to needy youth from disadvantaged groups and minorities.

### **Per Capita Expenditure on Education**

The average per capita expenditure on education is low (Rs. 812), however, minor differentials exist among communities. For example, Muslim households are expending comparatively less on education (Rs. 151) than Hindu, Christian and Sikh households. Comparatively Sikh and Hindu households are spending more on education. However, due to poverty the average expenditure on education by sample households is lower compared to their urban counterparts. Thus, the SSA needs to be strengthened in the district and its coverage extended, which may provide some relief to the rural poor in providing basic education.

### **Government Assistance**

The government is providing assistance in the form of books, dress, scholarships, mid-day meal, etc. to students for universal enrolment and retention in the educational system. Scholarships are given to students belonging to minority groups of population under a special scheme in every state. However, this scheme is not effectively implemented in the district. Nearly 40 percent of the students in the age group of 5-16 years are getting assistance in the form of books. Midday meals are being provided to about 46.45 per cent of the students (see table 3.8). Educational assistance in the form of dress and scholarships are being provided to a very small proportion of the students. In order to increase enrolment and retention of students, there is need to enhance the quantum of educational assistance in the district. Poor and deserving students must be provided with scholarships and dress assistance. There is need to operationalise free elementary education among the rural poor of the district to ease the economic burden on the parents.

**Table 3.8: Government Assistance (%)**

Type of assistance	Religion				
	Hindu	Muslim	Christian	Sikh	Total
Books	30.74	97.05	0.00	48.44	40.50
Dress	4.49	0.00	0.00	10.02	7.45
Scholarship	22.06	0.00	100.00	19.39	20.74
Midday meal	52.16	100.00	0.00	41.48	46.45
Others	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.11	0.06
Total	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
% of students receiving assistance	12.17	3.71	1.87	8.61	9.76

**ASSETS BASE OF HOUSEHOLDS****Land**

Landlessness is a common feature among rural households of Sirsa district. Nearly 55 per cent of the sample households are landless. Ironically, landlessness is more among the Muslims (cent per cent) and Christians (96.95 per cent) as compared to Sikhs (42.94 per cent) and Hindus (73.39 per cent). The average size of landholding is comparatively more in Sikh households than Hindu and Christian households. Thus, landlessness and the small size of landholdings possessed by sample households not only reduces their livelihood options, but also makes them vulnerable by working on low wage levels, which traps the landless households into poverty.

**Livestock**

The per capita value of livestock owned by the sample households stood at Rs. 28631, which is comparatively very low in the case of Christians (Rs. 3216) as compared to Muslims (Rs. 20081), Hindus (Rs. 19205) and Sikhs (Rs. 35315). On the whole, the quality of livestock possessed by Christian households also seems to be poor, given the lower value of livestock. Increased possession of livestock by rural households provide them with draught power as well as milch animals, meat and other products, depending upon the types of livestock owned and maintained. Thus, in order to improve their livelihood conditions, including nutritional standards, livestock and dairy development programmes need to be strengthened.

### **Productive Assets**

The mean value of productive assets possessed by the sample households is quite high (see table 3.9). Christian households have a comparatively low value of productive assets per household (Rs. 6578). The productive assets possessed by Sikh households are comparatively higher and stood at Rs. 188244, which is many times higher than productive assets possessed by other households.

**Table 3.9: Mean Value of Assets per Households (Rs.)**

<i>Type of household</i>	<i>Productive other than land</i>	<i>Modern household</i>
Hindu	75,884	119,441
Muslim	98,960	136,833
Christian <sup>1</sup>	6,578	18,959
Sikh	188,244	191,987
Total	142,344	61,787

### **Other Assets**

Sikh households have more modern assets too. Christian households possessed comparatively less modern household assets. The mean value of assets possessed by Christian households stood at Rs. 18959 (see table 3.9). Thus, possession of lower productive and modern household assets reflects the poor socio-economic conditions of the households.

## **EMPLOYMENT AND INCOME**

### **Work Participation**

Work participation is reportedly modest (37.61 per cent), and is lower among Christian households (2.47 per cent) and high among Muslim households (44.58 per cent). Gender differentials in work participation are noticeable (53.22 per cent for males and 18.66 per cent for females). This is more or less true across the religious groups, except Christian households, wherein gender inequity in work participation is very sharp. Nearly 5 per cent of the Christian women participate in work force. Overall, low work participation is reported across communities, which needs to be improved by providing work opportunities through NREGA. Low female work participation is also a serious issue,

which calls for appropriate policy interventions to raise their contribution in economic activities, so that they are empowered and can play their role within and outside the family in an effective way.

### **Nature of Employment**

The occupational status of the members of sample households is presented in table 3.10. A perusal of the table makes it evident that self-employment in agriculture and allied activities is the dominant occupation (52 per cent of households), followed by casual labour in non-agriculture (18 per cent of households) and casual labour in agriculture (16.21 per cent of households). However, there are significant variations in occupational status of the sample households across religious groups and genders. Significantly, more women are self-employed in agriculture and allied activities across communities. None of the Christian women are engaged in casual work in agriculture or non-agriculture, since one-fourth of them are regular salaried workers. In the case of Muslim women, none of them is a regular salaried worker. A small proportion of households are self-employed in non-agricultural pursuits for deriving livelihoods, except for Christians. Overall, the high dependence on self-employment in agriculture and allied activities, casual wage labour in agriculture and non-agriculture reflects the poor economic conditions of the households.

**Table 3.10: Nature of Employment in %**

Employment Status	Hindu			Muslim			Christian			Sikh			Total		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Self employed in agriculture and allied activities	30.31	71.04	38.98	9.82	69.95	30.70	4.10	73.92	9.16	56.47	74.62	60.65	45.90	73.31	52.05
Self-employed in non-agricultural sector	5.03	0.22	4.00	13.33	0.00	8.70	0.00	0.00	0.00	4.24	3.17	3.99	4.58	2.09	4.02
Regular salaried	9.37	4.27	8.29	13.35	0.00	8.71	58.10	26.08	55.78	10.64	4.60	9.25	10.73	4.46	9.33
Casual wage labour in agriculture	24.08	13.86	21.90	53.40	12.27	39.11	5.74	0.00	5.33	13.76	8.78	12.61	17.84	10.55	16.21
Casual wage labour in non-agriculture	31.22	10.61	26.83	10.11	17.78	12.77	32.05	0.00	29.73	14.90	8.83	13.50	20.95	9.59	18.40
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

All this forces poor women to work outside the households in very precarious conditions at very low wages. The participation in casual work in agricultural and non-agricultural activities is reportedly significant (one-third). Thus, the government scheme of NREGA needs to be implemented in a big way so that these poor households may have an opportunity to get assured employment of 100 man-days per household per annum. Besides, the self-employment scheme of SGSY needs to be implemented more in the district, so that the poor households may earn a sustainable living. Besides it may also empower them socially and politically, as the programme is being operationalised through SHGs.

### **Sector of Employment**

The industry-wise distribution of main workers in sample villages across the selected religious groups is given in table 3.11. Agriculture, forestry and fishing are the dominant activities in which 68.51 per cent of the households' members are engaged. About 17.39 percent of them are engaged in construction related activities. A very small proportion of the households are engaged in manufacturing, trade, hotel and restaurants, mining and quarrying, transport and communication, finance, real estate and business, and public administration, education, health and other sectors. Given the seasonal nature of employment in agriculture, forestry and fishing, there is need to implement more self-employment schemes like SGSY for the rural poor so that they could be employed on a sustainable basis, which would not only generate employment and supplement family earnings, but would go a long way in empowering women to play their role within the family and society.

**Table 3.11: Workers by their Sector of Employment in %**

Sector	Hindu	Muslim	Christian	Sikh	Total
Agriculture, Forestry & Fishing	61.03	69.81	14.49	73.59	68.51
Mining & Quarrying	0.10	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.03
Manufacturing	3.52	0.00	0.00	2.50	2.81
Electricity, Gas & Water	0.67	1.90	0.00	0.37	0.49
Construction	25.16	12.60	25.95	12.88	17.39
Trade, Hotels & Restaurants	2.46	0.00	0.00	0.99	1.49
Transport, Storage & Communication	1.55	8.53	50.11	4.54	3.94
Finance, Real Estate & Business	0.38	0.18	0.00	0.34	0.35
Public Administration, Education, Health & Others	5.13	6.99	9.45	4.78	4.98
Total	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00



The low proportion of workers engaged in modern sector of employment is mainly due to lack of infrastructure for industrial development. A large proportion of the population of the district is deriving their livelihoods from agriculture and allied activities, which is responsible for their poverty and deprivation. There is lack of required trained and skilled manpower in the district, which needs to be attended on priority by opening more industrial training institutes and other technical institutes. This would facilitate locally trained and skilled manpower in getting employment in the industrial sector.

### **Unemployment and Search for Additional Employment**

Unemployment and underemployment is quite alarming among the communities, with the search of additional employment for augmenting households' income and status being very high. However, due to lack of training and skills, their employability is comparatively low. Thus, their skill needs to be improved through short term vocational and job-oriented courses.

### **Income and Expenditure**

The per capita income and expenditure reveals that the rural economy of Sirsa is a surplus one, in which there have been significant gaps in income and expenditure. However, the gaps in income and expenditure in Sikh households is more than other households (see table 3.12). Higher income is reported in those households which have more physical and human capital. Significant differentials are noticed in income-expenditure across the communities. On the whole, a high proportion of poor households are deriving their livelihood on a day to day basis by being self-employed in agriculture and allied activities and as casual labour in the agriculture sector. This affords them a mere hand-to-mouth existence.

**Table 3.12 : Average Per Capita Income and Expenditure (Rs.)**

Income/Expenditure	Hindu	Muslim	Christian	Sikh	Total
Expenditure (Rs.)	9769	6799	7218	16879	14050
Income (Rs.)	15907	7744	7337	33249	26250
Income-expenditure ratio	1.62	1.14	1.01	1.96	1.86

The data related to household expenditure by various sources is shown in table 3.13. Food is the dominant source of household expenditure, followed by other items, social ceremonies, education and health. As the per capita income of the majority of the sample households is low, it is not surprising that the per capita expenditure is also low. However, one can notice that even at a very low level of income per capita, there is a tendency on the part of the sample households to save something, which is clear from the difference between the per capita income and expenditure, although the figure is not very significant.

**Table 3.13: Item-wise Per Capita Expenditure (Rs.)**

Item	Hindu	Muslim	Christian	Sikh	Total
Food	4183	4444	4498	5607	5061
Education	570	151	284	980	812
Health	524	222	47	953	776
Social Ceremonies	1017	572	310	2735	2053
Interest payment	552	153	0	810	697
Other	2925	1257	2079	5795	4651
Total	9769	6799	7218	16879	14050

The situation of the households can be mitigated to an extent with the government providing better basic health and educational facilities. This would reduce the poor households' dependence on private services, which took away part of their expenditure, which could be utilized for meeting other basic needs of the households.

## **HOUSING AND OTHER BASIC AMENITIES**

### **Type of Housing**

The housing status of the sample households is presented in table 3.14, which reveals that 2.69 per cent and 7.49 per cent of the households are living in thatched and kacha houses respectively. Nearly 28 per cent and 62 per cent of them are living in semi-pucca and pucca houses respectively. The housing conditions of Christian, Hindu and Muslim households are not satisfactory, which reflects the poor economic conditions of these households.

**Table 3.14: Type of Houses in %**

Type of house	Hindu	Muslim	Christian	Sikh	Total
Thatched	2.78	11.45	0.00	2.54	2.69
Katcha	13.15	11.88	41.32	3.55	7.49
Semi Pucca	36.90	34.28	47.15	22.52	28.04
Pucca	47.08	42.38	11.53	71.33	61.72
Others	0.09	0.00	0.00	0.06	0.07
Total	100	100	100	100	100

Nearly 14 percent of the sample households are living in single room accommodation. A significant proportion, 29.68 per cent and 56.06 per cent of them, respectively, have two room and more than two roomed accommodation (see table 3.15). A high proportion of Sikh households are living in more than two roomed accommodation, which ensures privacy. On the whole, housing conditions of these households is not satisfactory and calls for urgent attention by the government. The IAY needs to be implemented with fresh vigour in the district, in order to improve the housing conditions of poor households.

**Table 3.15: Houses and Community Wise distribution in %**

Number of rooms	Hindu	Muslim	Christian	Sikh	Total
Single Room	24.35	0.00	6.01	8.95	14.26
Two Room	32.96	58.67	49.83	27.00	29.68
More than two room	42.69	41.33	44.15	64.06	56.06
Total	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00

### **Drinking Water**

The condition of the drinking water facilities in the district is not at all satisfactory.. Nearly 80 per cent of the households use drinking water from private sources, while 20 per cent of the households depend upon public sources (see table 3.16). The high dependence on private sources of drinking water by the rural poor households is a serious concern, which needs to be rectified by providing tap water facilities by the government. Necessary allocations for this must be made on a priority basis.

**Table 3.16: Drinking Water in %**

Source	Hindu	Muslim	Christian	Sikh	Total
Public	29.25	35.68	6.01	14.58	19.90
Private	70.56	47.72	93.99	85.31	79.80
Others	0.20	16.60	0.00	0.06	0.27

### **Toilets**

A majority of the households (86 per cent) are defecating inside the house. Nearly 14 per cent of households are defecating in open, which is totally unhygienic. More than one-fifths each of Hindu and Muslim households and one-tenth of Sikh households are defecating outside the home in open. The condition of the drainage is also reportedly very unsatisfactory in Hindu and Sikh households. The practice of open defecating needs to be checked by providing in-house toilet assistance by the government. This would help to improve sanitary and environmental conditions in the villages.

### **HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE**

The data and information on health and family welfare is provided in the following paragraphs, which reveals more or less satisfactory conditions. The utilization of health care facilities by the households depend on the knowledge and awareness about the existence of these facilities, for which field workers needs to be trained to motivate and make the rural poor aware of better health status.

#### **Place of Child Birth**

Two-thirds of the last children born in sample households was at home. However, there are significant variations across the communities. For example, a high proportion of children of Hindu, Sikh and Muslim households were born at home as compared to 25 per cent, 44 per cent and 27 per cent of the births in government and private hospitals respectively. None of the children of Christian households was born in institutional care. Thus, the system of institutional deliveries is very poor (see table 3.17).

### Assistance in Child Birth

The dependence on untrained dais in child delivery assistance is high (63.38 per cent), which is more in Hindu (70 per cent) and Muslim households (59.26 per cent) than Muslim and Christian households. Nearly 9 per cent of the delivery of children is performed by trained midwife/ASHA, comparatively more in Christian households than other households. Those children born in institutional care have also received pre and post natal care, although the proportion of such children is comparatively low. Keeping the above in view, there is an urgent need to extend the coverage of institutional deliveries of children, so that better pre and post natal care be provided to them.

**Table 3.17: Place of Child Birth and Help Received in %**

	Hindu	Muslim	Christian	Sikh	Total
<b>Place</b>					
Govt hospital	2.88	12.78	0.00	12.73	8.27
Private hospital	25.26	44.93	0.00	27.35	26.25
At Home	71.86	42.30	100.00	59.92	65.49
<b>Help in child delivery</b>					
Doctor	19.56	56.71	0.00	34.32	27.60
Trained Dai	9.70	0.99	86.53	6.42	9.02
Untrained Dai	70.73	42.30	13.47	59.26	63.38

### Immunization

The data relating to the status of immunization of children against Polio, DPT and BCG show encouraging results. Almost all children have been given Polio drops. Similarly, almost all children below the age of 5 years have been vaccinated against at least one type of disease. However, the proportion of children fully immunized is comparatively lower (39.70 per cent) (see table 3.18). Thus, NRHM needs to be strengthened in the district for which more allocations must be made on a priority basis, so as to extend the outreach and coverage of the programme.

**Table 3.18: Immunization Status of Children in %**

Immunization	Hindu	Muslim	Christian	Sikh	Total
Any Type of doze	96.72	100.00	100.00	97.20	97.09
Fully Immunized	33.16	11.78	95.19	42.77	39.70

## **Morbidity**

Fever, pain in the stomach, chicken pox, cough and cold, and typhoid are the most common health problems faced by sample households. Nearly 18 per cent and 8 per cent of the sample households respectively, suffered from fever and stomach pain. Similarly, 7.22 per cent, 6.66 percent and 4.65 per cent of them have suffered from typhoid, arthritis, malaria and cough and cold respectively. Christian households have suffered more due to other diseases. Fever and arthritis is more common in Hindu and Sikh households than other communities. Similarly, Muslim households suffered more due to typhoid fever and cough and cold. On an average, Rs. 776 has been incurred per household on meeting health related expenditure, comparatively more by Sikh and Hindu households (Rs. 953 and Rs. 524 respectively) than Muslim (Rs. 222) and Christian households (Rs. 47). Surprisingly, Christian households reported very little expense incurred on meeting health needs than other households.

On the whole, the dependence on private sources for medical treatment is significantly high (72.16 per cent) as compared to government hospitals (16.8 per cent). Nearly 4 per cent of the households are in debt to meet medical expenditures, with the proportion of Hindu and Christian households raising debt to meet health treatment expenditure is about 8 and 7. This is attributed to the fact that medical services available at government hospitals are inadequate and poor in quality, which compels them to rely on private sources of medical treatment. Keeping the above in view, there is an urgent need to strengthen the National Rural Health Mission in a big way, so that it may be able to meet the health needs of the poor rural households. This would curtail their dependency on private sources which are costly in nature and most of the time are beyond the reach of the poor households, thus forcing them into debt.

## **INDEBTEDNESS**

### **Incidence of Indebtedness**

Nearly one-fourth of sample households are indebted. Nearly 45 per cent of Christian households followed by 27 per cent of Sikh, 20 per cent of Hindu and 13 per cent of Muslim households are in debt (see table 3.19). The average amount of loan raised is low

(Rs. 19438). Sikh and Christian households are more indebted (Rs. 24130 and Rs. 22467 respectively) than Hindu (Rs. 12495) and Muslim (Rs. 6790).

**Table 3.19: Incidence of Indebtedness and Average Debt**

Indebtedness	Hindu	Muslim	Christian	Sikh	Total
Average (Rs.)	12495	6790	22467	24130	19438
% Indebted households	20.02	13.36	44.93	27.12	24.41

### Source of Debt

Institutional sources of finance dominate the rural areas of the district. Cooperative banks/societies and commercial and Gramin banks are playing a significant role in providing credit to the rural poor, with their combined share standing at about 62 per cent. The dependence on friends/relatives and landlords/employer is low (13 per cent and 10 per cent respectively) for raising finance to meet productive as well as unproductive needs. Keeping in view the greater prevalence of institutional sources of credit, more branches of rural banks need to be opened in the district, so that more poor people could avail such facilities and their exploitation in the hands of money lenders and sahkars could thus be minimized.

**Table 3.20: Sources of Debt in %**

Source	Hindu	Muslim	Christian	Sikh	Total
Government	14.85	0.00	0.00	10.66	11.59
Commercial Bank	2.32	0.00	0.00	5.88	4.71
Gramin Bank	3.72	0.00	0.00	15.69	11.87
Co-op Bank/Societies	30.07	0.00	0.00	36.74	33.90
Provident fund	0.11	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.03
Insurance	0.46	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.13
SHG/NGO	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.16	0.11
Professional money lender	4.46	0.00	0.00	0.37	1.53
Money lender	0.11	0.00	0.00	2.82	1.96
Landlords/Employer	4.53	5.49	0.00	13.10	10.36
Friends/Relatives	18.96	92.14	100.00	6.78	12.58
Others	20.40	2.38	0.00	7.79	11.21

### Use of Loans

Loans have been raised by the sample households for varied purposes. Capital expenditure in farm business is the most dominant reason (38.63 per cent), followed by purchase of land/house (11.70 per cent), and marriage and other social ceremonies (11

per cent). Nearly 41 percent and 37 per cent of the Sikh and Hindu households respectively, are in debt to meet capital expenditure on farm business. Muslim and Christian households are in debt to the tune of 98 per cent and 93 per cent, respectively, to meet expenses on marriage and social ceremonies, which could be minimized by increasing social awareness among the communities (see table 3.20). The raising of loans for productive purposes such as capital expenditure in non-farm business by one-tenth of Hindu and Sikh households is very encouraging and more and more credit facilities through institutional mechanisms need to be provided to improve rural livelihood opportunities.

**Table 3.20: Purpose of Loans in %**

Purpose	Hindu	Muslim	Christian	Sikh	Total
Capital expenditure in farm business	36.92	0.00	0.00	40.77	38.63
Capital expenditure in non farm business	4.77	0.00	0.00	5.89	5.42
Purchase of land/house	13.38	0.00	0.00	11.43	11.70
Renovation of house	7.94	0.00	0.00	7.19	7.22
Marriage and other social ceremonies	17.47	97.83	92.78	5.17	10.96
Festivals	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.38	0.26
For education	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Medical treatment	7.95	2.17	7.22	2.18	3.92
Repayment of Old debt	4.06	0.00	0.00	4.56	4.30
Other household expenditure	0.11	0.00	0.00	13.15	9.09
Purchase of consumer durables	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.38	0.26
Purchase of animal	5.60	0.00	0.00	3.05	3.70
Financial investment	1.36	0.00	0.00	3.56	2.84
Other	0.44	0.00	0.00	2.29	1.70
Total	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00

The incidence of indebtedness in sample households is largely due to low income levels, which are inadequate to meet their consumption and other social needs. Thus, there is need to improve the income levels of rural households. Moreover, banks and financial institutions can play a major role by providing credit at cheaper rates without any collateral for undertaking productive self-employment to the rural poor. In this connection, the government sponsored micro credit scheme under SGSY needs to be promoted more widely, so that poor villagers may invest in farm and non-farm activities including dairy development to increase their income. This would go a long way in mitigating poverty and empowering them, both economically and socially.



## CHAPTER IV

### DELIVERY OF PUBLIC SERVICES/DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES

#### Public Distribution System

One-third of the sample population is living below the poverty line (BPL). However, one-fourth of sample households had BPL ration cards and 37.74 per cent are availing PDS facility (see table 4.1). This implies that some of the non-BPL HH have BPL cards and some of the non-BPL card holders are also getting BPL rations. It is significant to note that all the Christian households belong to BPL category, have BPL cards and are getting BPL rations also. Besides, 41 per cent of Hindu households are BPL HHs, 35 per cent of them have BPL cards, and 43 percent of them are getting BPL rations. It is the same with other households with minor modifications. Thus, some of the poor households belonging to the BPL category do not have BPL cards, and even those who have BPL cards, not all of them are getting BPL rations.

**Table 4.1: PDS Coverage in %**

	Hindu	Muslim	Christian	Sikh	Total
BPL HHs	40.72	19.85	3.25	29.41	33.26
BPL HH getting ration	43.16	18.44	89.90	33.84	37.74
Having BPL card	34.94	6.79	3.37	18.10	24.15

Nearly three-fourths of the sample population have complained about the non-availability of time, followed by insufficient quantity (60.34 per cent), irregular supply (56 per cent), dishonesty in measurement (46 per cent), and bad quality (22.30 per cent). Significant differentials have been noticed in problems faced by rural households in availing the PDS facility. For example, a majority of them have complained of non-availability of time and irregular supply as the main problems in availing the PDS (see table 4.2).

**Table 4.2 : Problems being faced with the PDS in %**

Problems	Hindu	Muslim	Christian	Sikh	Total
Insufficient quantity	59.04	4.43	100.00	59.33	60.32
Bad quality	31.20	4.43	0.00	16.78	22.30
Dishonesty in measurement	57.84	0.00	0.00	39.78	46.00
Non Availability of time	66.15	95.57	100.00	87.28	78.76
Irregular supply	46.28	95.57	100.00	60.92	56.11
Others	1.98	0.00	0.00	0.65	1.19
Total	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00

Note: Based on multiple responses

The huge difference in falling under BPL category and holding BPL ration card and availing benefits from PDS is a matter of very serious concern and the gaps need to be plugged at earliest, so that the poor must get their due share, which could also supplement households' nutrition. There is also need to rejuvenate the PDS to improve its working and performance as well as coverage and make it corruption free.

#### **Access, Use and Quality of Public Health Service**

The district lacks basic public health infrastructure. There is a lack of adequate health care facilities for the rural poor which is due to the heavy pressure of population on these basic services. The situation with availability of medicines, though it has marginally improved during the last few years, is similar. The availability of doctors specifically lady doctors at PHCs / hospitals is a major concern for the rural population. At the same time, the presence of quacks in villages has an adverse impact on the overall healthcare and behaviour of the people, as they incur heavy expenditure on their health care without proper care. This needs to be corrected through awareness campaigns which educate rural poor people about their health care and the government schemes and programmes which they can avail.

#### **Education**

Like public health services, the availability and accessibility of educational institutions is hampering educational development and attainments. The conditions of schools is far from satisfactory in terms of average number of rooms per school, toilet facility, drinking water, punctuality of teachers, books and above all the teacher-pupil ratio. The mid-day

meal is also in operation in all government schools, although its quality and regularity is not assured. It is ironical to note that just to avail of more assistance under the mid-day scheme, multiple enrolments have been reported in many schools, which should be checked and strictly monitored.

A high proportion of children enrolled in government schools belong to relatively poor households. The better-off households are sending their children to English medium private schools. This kind of dualism has marginalized the government aided schooling system. There is hardly any voice raised for improving the quality and accountability of elementary education, since better-off households tend to remain indifferent since they are hardly affected by such education.

For quality teaching, there is a need to strengthen the training of teachers in new teaching and learning methods and pedagogy. Efforts also need to be made to promote extra curricular activities in schools to make the learning process attractive for children.

### **Awareness**

The level of awareness about various government programmes operational in the rural areas of the district is given in table 4.3. ICDS, old age or widow pension are two schemes, which are known to nearly 96 percent and 94 percent of the households respectively. Nearly 80 percent and 66 percent of the households are aware of IAY and NREGA. However, awareness regarding the schemes of SGSY and maternity benefit scheme is significantly low. Thus, there is need to propagate and increase awareness about the lesser known schemes, so that the rural poor can avail of those services.

**Table 4.3 : Level of Awareness of Government Programmes in %**

	Hindu	Muslim	Christian	Sikh	Total
SGSY	17.7	0.3	83.4	18.6	18.7
NREGA	59.6	42.9	87.0	70.9	66.3
Indira Awas Yojana	77.9	74.1	100.0	81.4	80.2
TSC Swajaldhara	24.7	1.4	3.2	25.2	24.4
ARWSP (Drinking Water)	33.6	19.6	41.7	41.6	38.2
Sarvasikhsa	62.2	69.1	96.4	59.3	60.9
ICDS or Anganwadi	95.9	92.7	100.0	95.8	95.8
Old Age or Widow Pension	94.7	92.3	100.0	93.3	93.9
Maternity Benefit scheme	21.1	8.3	3.2	18.6	19.2

## Aspirations

The need for providing employment opportunities and education facilities ranks at the top of the items of aspirations relating to development. Housing facility is the third important development priority, followed by health. Irrigation is also aspired to as development need by the households. However, different communities have ranked development priorities differently, except for employment and irrigation (see table 4.4).

**Table 4.4: Aspirations of Respondents in Order of Their Ranks**

Facilities	Hindu		Muslims		Christian		Sikh		All	
	%	Rank	%	Rank	%	Rank	%	Rank	%	Rank
Employment	49.23	1	51.00	1	6.49	1	46.04	1	46.76	1
Educational facilities	45.15	2	19.66	2	0.00	3	22.30	2	29.98	2
Housing	19.25	3	0.72	4	3.25	2	8.77	4	12.23	3
Health facilities	10.72	4	3.24	3	0.00	4	12.53	3	11.58	4
Irrigation	4.59	5	0.42	5	0.00	5	6.53	5	5.66	5

The rural population of the district has participated in state assembly and parliamentary elections, which reflects a very high level of political participation on their part. However, an insignificant proportion of them are members of self help groups (SHG). All the households' are members of religious organizations. Thus, the level of social participation is also very high, which may be attributed to the high penetration of religious organizations and the presence of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in the rural areas of the district.

## CHAPTER V

### KEY FINDINGS AND POLICY ISSUES

- The total population of Sirsa district was 11, 16,649 of which 73.6 per cent live in rural areas. The scheduled castes (SCs) constitute 26.65 per cent of the population.
- In the survey, Sikhs are the dominant population group (59.50 per cent), followed by Hindus (37.88 per cent). The Muslim and Christian population is negligible. The average household size is 5.39 persons, lowest for Sikhs (5.33) and highest for Christians (6.70). The overall dependency is reportedly high (1.44), which is comparatively highest among Sikhs (1.52) and lowest among Christians (0.85).
- The average sex ratio is very low at 824, which is comparatively high for Muslims (1027) and very low for Christians (603). The high sex ratio in Muslims reflects a comparatively better female status in the community, which may be attributed to better educational status and womens' empowerment in the community, when compared to Christians, Sikhs and Hindus.
- Nearly 30 percent of the population is in the child age group of 0-14 years. This is more or less the same in the Sikh community. Other communities have a high concentration in the 0-14 years: Muslims (40 per cent), Christians (36.54 per cent) and Hindus (32.67 per cent). Therefore, educational needs of the other communities are higher Gender inequity in the child sex ratio is sharp across the communities.
- One-fifth of the population is in the age group of 15-24 years. Christian females have a high (30.43 per cent) representation in this youthful age group, compared to the low representation of males (10.34 per cent). This implies that other communities supplied more male labour force and likely unemployment is more in these communities, given the higher incidence of general unemployment and the current slowdown in the economy.

- Nearly 10 percent of the population is in the age group of more than 60 years. Gender inequity is small in this age group, except for Muslims. More Muslim men survive beyond 60 years and none of the women in the sample households survived beyond 60 years.
- The literacy levels of persons aged 7 years and above is higher among males than females across all the religious groups. Gender differentials in literacy are noticeable. Nearly 71 per cent of the children are enrolled in government-run educational institutions. The proportion of children who have never enrolled is low (one-tenth), which is a cause of concern. The drop out is very low, which provides a little relief, but still needs to be checked.
- In the rural areas of Sirsa district, 16 percent of the population is educated, with educational levels of high school and above. The proportion of males and females with educational levels of high school and above is respectively 18.25 and 13.19. Male and female population with technical education (both degree and diploma) is just 1.40 per cent and 1.54 per cent respectively. The educational attainments of Sikhs is comparatively better than that of other communities. Disparities in educational attainments are noticeable across communities and genders.
- The average per capita expenditure on education is low (Rs. 812), although minor differentials exist among communities. Nearly 40 percent of the students in the age group of 5-16 years are getting assistance in the form of books. Midday meals are being provided to about 46.45 per cent of the students. Educational assistance in the form of dress and scholarships are being provided to a very small proportion of the students.
- More than one-half of the sample households are landless. Landlessness is more among the Muslims (78.80 per cent) and Buddhists (59.10 per cent), as compared to Hindus (19.24 per cent). Ironically, landlessness is more among the Muslims (cent per cent) and Christians (96.95 per cent) compared to Sikhs (42.94 per cent) and Hindus (73.39 per cent). The average size of landholdings is comparatively more in Sikh households than Hindu and Christian households. Thus, landlessness and the small size of landholdings possessed by sample households not only reduces their livelihood options, but also makes

them vulnerable to working on low wage levels, which traps the landless households into poverty.

- The per capita value of livestock owned by the sample households stood at Rs. 28631, which is comparatively very low in the case of Christians (Rs. 3216) than Muslims (Rs. 20081), Hindus (Rs. 19205) and Sikhs (Rs. 35315). On the whole, the quality of livestock possessed by Christian households also seems to be poor, given the lower value of the livestock.
- The work participation is reportedly modest (37.61 per cent), which is low among Christian households (2.47 per cent) and high among Muslim households (44.58 per cent). Gender differentials in work participation are noticeable (53.22 per cent for males and 18.66 per cent for females). This is more or less true across the religious groups, except Christian households, wherein gender inequity in work participation is very sharp.
- Self-employment in agriculture and allied activities is the dominant occupation (52 per cent of households) followed by casual labour in non-agriculture (18 per cent of households) and casual labour in agriculture (16.21 per cent of households). However, there are significant variations in occupational status of the sample households across the religious groups and genders. Significantly, more women are self-employed in agriculture and allied activities across communities. None of the Christian women are engaged in casual work in agriculture and non-agriculture. However, one-fourth of them are regular salaried workers. In the case of Muslim women, none of them are regular salaried workers. A small proportion of households are self-employed in non-agricultural pursuits for deriving livelihoods, except for Christians. Overall, the high dependence on self-employment in agriculture and allied activities, casual wage labour in agriculture and non-agriculture reflects the poor economic conditions of these households.
- Agriculture, forestry and fishing are the dominant activities wherein 68.51 per cent of the households' members are engaged. About 17.39 percent of them are

engaged in construction related activities. A very small proportion of the households are engaged in manufacturing, trade, hotel and restaurants, mining and quarrying, transport and communication, finance, real estate and business, public administration, education, health and other sectors.

- There have been significant gaps in income and expenditure. However, the gaps in income and expenditure in Sikh households is more than in other households. Higher income is reported in those households which have more physical and human capital. Significant differentials are noticed in income-expenditure across the communities. On the whole, a high proportion of poor households are deriving their livelihood on a day to day basis by working as self-employed in agriculture and allied activities and as casual labour in the agriculture sector and therefore live a hand-to-mouth existence.
- Nearly 2.69 per cent and 7.49 per cent of the households are living in thatched and kacha houses respectively, while 28 per cent and 62 per cent of them are living in semi-pucca and pucca houses, respectively. In general, the housing conditions of Christian, Hindu and Muslim households are not satisfactory, which reflects the poor economic conditions of these households. Nearly 14 per cent of the sample households are living in single room accommodation. A significant proportion, 29.68 per cent and 56.06 per cent of them respectively, have two rooms and more than two rooms accommodation, which ensures privacy.
- Nearly 80 per cent of the households use drinking water from private sources, while 20 per cent of the households are depending upon private sources. A majority of the households (86 per cent) have toilets in the house.. Nearly 14 per cent of households are defecating in the open, which is totally unhygienic. More than one-fifths each of Hindu and Muslim households and one-tenth of Sikh households are defecating outside the home in the open. The condition of the drainage is also reportedly very unsatisfactory in Hindu and Sikh households.
- Two-thirds of the last children born in the sample households was at home. However, there are significant variations across the communities. For example, a high proportion of children of Hindu, Sikh and Muslim households were born at home, as compared to 25 per cent, 44 per cent and 27 per cent of the births in



government and private hospitals, respectively. No child of Christian households was born in institutional care. Thus, the system of institutional deliveries is very poor. The dependence on untrained dais in child delivery assistance is high (63.38 per cent), which is more in Hindu (70 per cent) and Muslim households (59.26 per cent) than Muslim and Christian households. Nearly 9 per cent of the delivery of children is performed by trained midwife/ASHA, comparatively more in Christian households than other households. Those of the children born in institutional care have also received pre and post natal care, although the proportion of such children is comparatively low.

- Immunization of children against Polio, DPT and BCG show encouraging results. Almost all children have been given Polio drops. Similarly, almost all children below the age of 5 years have been vaccinated against at least one type of disease. However, the proportion of children fully immunized is comparatively quite low (39.70 per cent).
- Fever, pain in the stomach, chicken pox, cough and cold, and typhoid are the most common health problems faced by the sample households. Nearly 18 per cent and 8 per cent of the sample households respectively, suffered from fever and stomach ache. Similarly, 7.22 per cent, 6.66 percent and 4.65 per cent of them have suffered from typhoid, arthritis, malaria and cough and cold respectively. On average, Rs. 776 has been incurred per household on meeting health related expenditures, comparatively more by Sikh and Hindu households (Rs. 953 and Rs. 524 respectively) than Muslim (Rs. 222) and Christian households (Rs. 47).
- The dependence on private sources for medical treatment is significantly high (72.16 per cent) as compared to government hospitals (16.8 per cent). Nearly 4 per cent of the households are in debt to meet medical expenditures, with the proportion of Hindu and Christian households raising debts to meet health treatment expenditure is about 8 and 7. This is attributed to the fact that medical services available at government hospitals are inadequate and poor in quality, which compels them to rely on private sources of medical treatment.

- Nearly one-fourth of the sample households are indebted. 45 per cent of Christian households, followed by 27 per cent of Sikh, 20 per cent of Hindu and 13 per cent of Muslim households are in debt. The average amount of loans raised is low (Rs. 19438). Sikh and Christian households are more indebted (Rs. 24130 and Rs. 22467 respectively) than Hindu (Rs. 12495) and Muslim (Rs. 6790). Institutional sources of finance are dominating the rural areas of the district. Capital expenditure in the farm business is the most dominant reason (38.63 per cent), followed by purchase of land/house (11.70 per cent), and marriage and other social ceremonies (11 per cent). Nearly 41 per cent and 37 per cent of the Sikh and Hindu households respectively are in debt to meet capital expenditure on farm business. Muslim and Christian households are in debt to the tune of 98 per cent and 93 per cent respectively to meet expenses on marriage and social ceremonies, which could be minimized by increasing social awareness among the communities.
- One-third of the sample population is living below the poverty line (BPL), however, one-fourth of sample households had BPL ration cards and 37.74 per cent are availing PDS facility. This implies that some of the non-BPL HH have BPL cards and some of the non-BPL card holders are also getting BPL rations.
- Nearly three-fourth of the sample population has complained about non-availability of time followed by insufficient quantity (60.34 per cent), irregular supply (56 per cent), dishonesty in measurement (46 per cent), and bad quality (22.30 per cent). Significant differentials have been noticed in problems faced by rural households in availing the PDS facility.
- ICDS, old age or widow pension are the two schemes, which are known to nearly 96 per cent and 94 per cent of the households respectively. Nearly 80 per cent and 66 per cent of the households are aware of IAY and NREGA. However, the awareness regarding the schemes of SGSY and maternity benefit schemes are significantly low.

- The provisioning of employment opportunities and education facilities ranks at the top in the items of aspirations relating to development. Housing facility is the third important development priority followed by health. Irrigation is also aspired to as a development need by the households. However, different communities have ranked development priorities differently, except for employment and irrigation.
- The rural population of the district has participated in state assembly and parliamentary elections, which reflect very high levels of political participation on their part. However, a very insignificant proportion of them is member of self help groups (SHG). All the households' members are member of religious organizations. Thus, the level of social participation is also very high, which may be attributed to high penetration of religious organizations and the presence of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in the rural areas of the district.

### **Policy Issues**

- High concentration of population in the child and youthful age groups, calls for rigorous educational and manpower planning and opening of more technical and vocational institutions. The creation of more self-employment opportunities in the agro and horticulture-based sector, as well as tourism would help the people, given the stagnant public sector and shrinking private industrial sector due to recession.
- Educational attainment, particularly among youth and among females, is modest and needs improvement. Poor educational attainment hampers their future labour market prospects. Thus, there is an urgent need to increase the participation of the youth, in higher and technical education. This would also require imparting short duration job oriented courses in technical institutions to the rural youth, besides providing free-ships and scholarships to needy youth from disadvantaged groups and minorities.
- Gender differentials in literacy is noticeable in both communities. This needs attention by educational planners and decision-makers, besides making the community aware of the advantages of female education.

- SSA is making its presence in the rural areas of the district though at a slower pace, which is evident from the fact that a significant proportion of the children are still enrolled in private schools. This may also reflect the relatively better socio-economic conditions of the households, which enable them to send their children to private schools for education. However, the target of 'education for all' is still a distant dream. There is need to speed up the efforts of government in ensuring cent per cent enrollment of children in school going age group with zero drop outs, which would be possible through improving the quality of education, besides expanding the school infrastructure. Thus, the gap in the process of human capital formation in the case of both communities as well as genders, needs to be bridged on priority by following community as well as gender sensitive educational programmes and schemes.
- The main reasons cited for drop out are 'not interested in reading' and 'work at home'. Thus, there is need to make the parents aware about the benefits of education and the educational system needs to be improved to make it more interesting for the children. Livelihood opportunities need to be provided to the rural poor, to eliminate the incidence of child labour.
- Educational attainment is lower in both the communities and gender at various levels, which needs to be improved. More scholarships may be given to poor but deserving students from rural areas. Concrete steps also need to be taken to increase the enrollment of the population beyond high school in general, and technical institutes, in particular.
- In order to increase enrolment and retention of students, there is need to enhance the quantum of educational assistance in the district. The poor and deserving students must be provided with scholarships and dress assistance. There is need to operationalised free elementary education among the rural poor of the district to ease the economic burden on the parents.
- The increased possession of livestock by rural households provides them with draught power as well as milch animals, meat and other products depending upon the types of livestock owned and maintained. Thus, in order to improve their livelihood conditions, including nutritional standards, livestock and dairy development programmes need to be strengthened.

- Low female work participation is a serious issue, which calls for appropriate policy interventions to raise their contribution in economic activities, so that they are empowered to play their role within and outside the family in an effective way.
- The government scheme of NREGA needs to be implemented in a big way so that these poor households may have an opportunity to get assured employment of 100 man-days per household per annum. Besides, the self-employment scheme of SGSY needs to be implemented more in the district, so that the poor households may earn a sustainable living. Besides it may also empower them socially and politically, as the programme is being operationalised through SHGs.
- Given the seasonal nature of employment in agriculture, forestry and fishing, there is need to implement more self-employment schemes like SGSY for the rural poor so that they could be employed on a sustainable basis which would not only generate employment and supplement family earnings but would go a long way in empowering the women to play their part within the family and society.
- The low proportion of workers engaged in modern sector of employment is mainly due to lack of infrastructure for industrial development. A large proportion of the population of the district is deriving their livelihood from agriculture and allied activities, which is responsible for their poverty and deprivation. There is lack of required trained and skilled manpower in the district, which needs to be attended to on a priority by opening more industrial training institutes and other technical institutes, which would facilitate local trained and skilled manpower in getting employment in the industrial sector.
- Unemployment and underemployment is quite alarming among the communities. As the search for additional employment for augmenting households' income and status is very high, the lack of training and skills make their employability comparatively low. Thus, their skill needs to be improved through short term vocational and job-oriented courses.
- The economic situation of the households can be improved by provisioning better basic health and educational facilities by the government. This would reduce their dependence

- on private services, which took away a part of their income that could be utilized for meeting other basic needs of the households.
- The dependence on private sources of drinking water by the rural poor households needs to be rectified. The government should provide tap water facilities for which necessary allocations must be made on a priority basis.
  - The practice of defecating in the open, though on a lower scale, needs to be checked by providing in-house toilet assistance by the government. This would help to improve sanitary and environmental conditions in the villages.
  - The system of institutional deliveries is presenting an encouraging picture of rural reproductive and child health care system in the district, which needs to be strengthened further to ensure cent per cent institutional birth and child care.
  - There is need to strengthen the National Rural Health Mission so that it may be able to meet the health needs of the poor rural households and curtail their dependency on private sources, which are both costly in nature and most of the time are beyond the reach of the poor households, forcing them into debt. Thus, more allocations should be made for NRHM on priority to extend the outreach and coverage of the programme.
  - Banks and financial institutions can play a major role by providing credit at cheaper rates without any collateral for undertaking productive self-employment. In this connection, the government sponsored micro credit scheme under SGSY needs to be promoted. This would enable poor villagers to invest in farm and non-farm activities, including dairy development, to increase their income, which would also go a long way in mitigating poverty and empowering them both economically and socially.
  - The huge difference in falling under BPL category and holding BPL ration card and availing benefits from PDS is a matter of very serious concern. The gaps need to be plugged at the earliest, so that the poor get their due share, which could also supplement the households' nutrition. There is a need to rejuvenate the PDS to improve its working and performance.

**List of Sample Selected Villages in Sirsa District**

Block	GP	Vill
Sirsa	Bhangu	Bhangu
Sirsa	Sirsa	Mdho Singhana
Sirsa	Barwali _I	Barwali _I
Sirsa	Madho Singhana	Madho Singhana
Sirsa	Shahpur Begu	Shahpur Begu
Sirsa	Mangala	Mangala
Sirsa	Takhtmal	Takhtmal
Sirsa	Nez-dela-kalan	Nez-Dela-Kalan
Ellenabad	Himaju Khera	Himaju Khera
Ellenabad	Ellanabad	Amritsar Kalan
Ellenabad	Mirzapur	Mirzapur
Ellenabad	Poharaka	Poharaka
Odhan	Naurang	Naurang
Odhan	Kewal	Kewal
Odhan	Rohiran wali	Rohiran Wali
Dabwali	Ahmadapur Darewala	Ahmadpur Darewala
Dabwali	Hebuana	Hebuana
Dabwali	Panniwala Moreka	Panniwala Moreka
Odhan	Odhan	Odhan
Dabwali	Khuiyan Malkana	Khuiyan Malkana
Sirsa	Rania	Maujdin
Rania	Nathoor	Nathoor
Rania	Harni khurd	Harni Khurd
Rania	Sri Jiwan Nagar	Jiwan Nagar
Rania	Kariwala	Kari Wala
Rania	Sade Wala	Sade Wala
Bada Gudha	Thirij	Thiri
Bada Gudha	Gharoor Rohi	Jharoor Rohi
Nathusari Chopta	Mochi Wali	Mochi Wali
Chopta	Ding	