

## CHAPTER XV

### EDUCATION AND CULTURE

#### **Historical Background**

Kurukshetra remained a great seat of learning during ancient period. A major part of Vedic literature, including the *Brahmanas*, the *Aranvakas*, the *Upinshadas* and the *Canoncial Sutras*, was composed on the banks of the sacred river Saraswati where *Rishis* lived with large number of their disciples. A detailed scrutiny of the Mahabharata leaves us in no doubt that a major portion of the great epic was also composed here. Lord Krishna recited Gita in the battlefield of Kurukshetra and Manu wrote his great smriti (Manusmriti) sitting on the banks of the Saraswati at Prithudaka (modern Pehowa).

The *Ashramas* of ancient *Rishis* were the most important centres for study of subjects which formed bed rock of ancient Indian culture, namely, religion, philosophy and ethics. According to *Vaman Purana*, the hermitages of Vishvamitra and Vasistha, the vedic sages, were located in Kurukshetra region. These hermitages used to be the seat of learning where pupils from different parts of the country gathered together for instructions in divine knowledge.<sup>1</sup> Mahabharta also tells about numerous hermitages where pupils from distant and different parts of the country gathered for instructions around far-famed teachers.<sup>2</sup>

The object of ancient Gurukul system of education was three-fold; the acquisition of knowledge, the inculcation of social duties and religious rites and above all, the formation of character. The teacher was the central figure, the very pivot of the educational system. He was the sole incharge of his moral, mental and physical upbringing. The teacher was the most revered person, who was considered by the pupils to be above their parents.

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<sup>1</sup> Datta V.N. and Phadke H.A., History of Kurukshetra, 1984, p.157.

<sup>2</sup> Majumdar R.C., The History and Culture of the Indian People, Vol. II, The Age of Imperial Unity, 1960, p.589.

The then district was a great centre of learning in 7<sup>th</sup> century during the reign of Harsha. Bana Bhat has described Sthaniswara (Thanesar) as a place where students concentrated in their special clubs (Vita Rosthi)<sup>1</sup>. Hiuen Tsiang, the Chinese traveller, has also mentioned of the existence of three monasteries at Thanesar with about 7,000 priests.<sup>2</sup> In the Buddhist system, education was imparted in the monastery, giving scope to a collective life and spirit, brotherhood and democracy among the many monks who came under a common discipline and instruction.

Thus education was widely popular during the age of Harsha. He himself had literary and artistic talent and was a great patron of learning. He took personal interest in the spread and advancement of learning and education. According to Hiuen Tsiang, one fourth of the income from Royal land was reserved to reward high intellectual eminence. Men of learning were held in high esteem by him. From conversation between Bana and his Kinsmen and several other references in the literature, it becomes quite clear that the age of Harsha was remarkably important for the spread and popularization of education and high standard of learning.<sup>3</sup>

Bana has also made mention of many kinds of *gosthis*. There were *Vidvaosthi* where discussions about the knowledge of the Blameless one (i.e. Brahma) were held. Another was *Kavyagosthi* where discussions were held on literary topics. Like these *gosthis*, there were many other *Vayakhan mandala* and *Vidagdha mandalas*, which are mentioned very often in Bana's Harshacharita and Kadambri. These study circles and intellectual discourses provided people with enough food for intellectual and aesthetic nourishment.<sup>4</sup>

From the inscriptions, popular literature, contemporary literary creations and the accounts of Chinese pilgrim, it can be concluded that Sanskrit was the main language of the period. The people, who were highly qualified in the study of Sanskrit grammar and lived in cultural and refined atmosphere, spoke good Sanskrit.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Aggarwal V.S., The Deeds of Harsha, pp.77-78.

<sup>2</sup> Phadke H.A., Hiuen Tsiang on Kurukshetra and Thanesar, Punjab History Conference, Patiala, 1975, Proceedings.

<sup>3</sup> Sharma Brij Nath, Harsha and His Times, 1970, pp. 461-62.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid, pp. 463-64

<sup>5</sup> Ibid, pp. 448-49.

With the onset of foreign invasions, the Hindu cultural and educational pattern described above was thrown into disarray everywhere. During medieval period, the pattern of education underwent a sea change. Schooling, as such, came entirely in the hands of Muslims who, besides teaching the *Quarran* in the mosques gave instruction in the Persian classics, as also in the writing of letter and documents. Gurukuls of the old type in which Brahman boys learnt Sanskrit and received a predominantly religious training were few and far between. Besides, there were Mahajani schools where sons of Hindu shopkeepers were taught to keep accounts and read and write the traders script (*Lande*). During Mughal period, Thanesar remained an important centre of Muslim learning. Dara Shikoh built a *madrassa* at Thanesar near tomb of Sheikh Chehli in 1661 A.D.<sup>1</sup> Besides, there was *madrassa* at Shahabad.<sup>2</sup>

Education of women was particularly neglected during medieval period. No regular separate schools seem to have existed for imparting education to girls who had their early lessons usually from their parents. The rich appointed tutors to teach their daughters at home.

Before the introduction of western education in the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century, the indigenous system of education, as prevalent in other parts of the state, was followed in the district. Wynyard in his settlement report gives a vivid description of such institutions in the then Thanesar and Ambala Districts. According to him, these were of six kinds: *Maktabs*, where Persian and Arabic was taught; *chatsalas*, where Hindi was taught; *pathshalas* where Nagri and Shastri was taught; places in which Gurmukhi was taught and finally modern type of schools in which English was taught.<sup>3</sup> But in 1853, there was no institution in the district teaching English.

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<sup>1</sup> Pran Nath Chopra, *Social Life During the Mughal Age (1526-1707)*, 1963, p. 148.

<sup>2</sup> Yadav K.C., *Haryana Ka Itihas*, Vol. II, 1981, p.191

<sup>3</sup> W. Wynyard, *Report on the Revised Settlement of the Southern Paraganas of the District of Ambala in the Cis-Sutlej States*, 1859, pp. 89-91. The description has been repeated in *Ambala District Gazetteer*, 1883-84.

The following table gives the number of indigenous institutions in the then Thanesar district in 1853:-<sup>1</sup>

| <b>Kind of Institution</b> | <b>No. of Schools</b> | <b>No. of Teachers</b> |
|----------------------------|-----------------------|------------------------|
| Persian                    | 29                    | 29                     |
| Hindi                      | 19                    | 19                     |
| Sanskrit                   | 4                     | 4                      |
| Arabic                     | 12                    | 12                     |
| Gurmukhi                   | 1                     | -                      |

Teaching in the *Maktabas* was entirely in the hands of *Maulvis*, who, besides teaching the *Quarran* in the mosque, gave instructions in Persian classics, as also in the writing of letters and documents. In addition to the *maktabas* and *pathshalas*, there were some Mahajani schools.

In 1883-84, three middle schools in the district were located at Thanesar, Shahabad and Ladwa.<sup>2</sup> Besides, there were some primary schools. The number of middle schools remained the same even upto 1918. In 1918, the vernacular middle schools at Thanesar and Shahabad were maintained by respective Municipal Committees and the one at Ladwa by District Board. There was also a branch school at Shahabad. The middle school at Ladwa had boarding facilities also. There were also some primary schools in the district which were maintained by the District Board.<sup>3</sup>

Education was not particularly popular with the majority of the agricultural classes in the then Kurukshetra district. But efforts were made by the Government to attract the rural boys towards educational system. Even the Government had to grant financial aid to such school for this purpose.

Though the number of educational institutions in the areas now comprising Kurukshetra district increased in the subsequent years, but the real breakthrough took place only after independence. Educational

<sup>1</sup> W. Wynyard, Report on the Revised Settlement of the Southern Paraganas of the District of Ambala in the Cis-Sutlej States, 1859, pp. 89-91. The description has been repeated in Ambala District Gazetteer, 1883-84.

<sup>2</sup> Ambala District Gazetteer, 1883-84, p,62.

<sup>3</sup> Karnal District Gazetteer, 1918, p, 206.

backwardness of the district in pre-independence period can be gauged from the fact that there was no college for higher education before 1947. After independence, the importance of education was realized and special efforts were made for the spread of education among masses.

Under various Five Year Plans, special emphasis was laid on the spread of education among hitherto educationally neglected sections of the society particularly among women and Scheduled Castes. Moreover, with the passage of time, the initial prejudice of people against the western system of education also disappeared. As a result of keen interest taken by the Government and voluntary organizations, a number of new educational institutions were opened in the district. Opening of Kurukshetra University at Kurukshetra in 1956 was really a landmark in the field of education which brought significant changes in the educational scenario of the district. The progress made by the district in the field of school education since its formation in 1973 can be seen in the following table:-

| Year    | High/<br>Higher/<br>Sr. Sec.<br>Schools | Middle<br>Schools | Primary<br>Schools | Number of Students |        |          |
|---------|---|-------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------|----------|
|         |   |                   |                    | Boys               | Girls  | Total    |
| 1973-74 | 81                                      | 56                | 360                | 88,091             | 37,487 | 1,25,578 |
| 1980-81 | 110                                     | 60                | 536                | 1,09,033           | 52,649 | 1,61,681 |
| 1985-86 | 143                                     | 81                | 586                | 1,19,575           | 70,426 | 1,90,001 |
| 1990-91 | 77                                      | 52                | 331                | 64,619             | 48,876 | 1,13,495 |
| 1993-94 | 83                                      | 56                | 489                | 84,082             | 64,930 | 1,49,012 |
| 1998-99 | 132                                     | 87                | 549                | 88,247             | 70,051 | 1,58,298 |
| 2000-01 | 144                                     | 94                | 559                | 85,409             | 69,596 | 1,55,005 |
| 2001-02 | 144                                     | 94                | 560                | 81,913             | 66,941 | 1,48,854 |
| 2002-03 | 144                                     | 94                | 560                | 81,913             | 66,941 | 1,48,854 |
| 2003-04 | 164                                     | 90                | 569                | 89,105             | 72,336 | 1,61,441 |

In 2004-05, there were 879 different types of educational institutions in the district which included a University, 10 degree colleges, National Institute of two Engineering Colleges & Technology Colleges, 157 High/Senior Secondary Schools, 90 Middle Schools, 613 Primary Schools, one Ayurvedic College, 3 Industrial Training Institutes/ Schools and one Pharmacy Institute.

### **District Education Setup**

The District Education Officer, Kurukshetra is responsible for the administration and control of all Middle, High and Secondary Schools. He is directly under the administrative control of the Commissioner & Director General, School Education, Haryana, Chandigarh. The District Education Officer, Kurukshetra is assisted by an Additional District Education Officer-cum-District Elementary Education Officer, Deputy District Education Officers (one each at Thanesar, and Pehowa) and 3 Block Education Officers. The operation of each Block Education Officer is normally co-terminus with the development Block. An Assistant Education Officer looks after the promotion of physical education in Primary and Middle Schools. There are two District Supervisors one for science and another for mathematics for guidance and supervision of these subjects in the schools. The District Primary Education Officer is responsible for administration and control of all Primary Schools in the district. He is directly under the control of Director of Elementary Education, Haryana, Chandigarh.

### **General Education**

The District Board and Municipal Committees also contributed to the spread of education and did pioneer work in the field of elementary education. The number of primary and middle schools maintained by the local bodies prior to the provincialisation of schools on October 1, 1957, is given below:-

| <b>Name of the Local Body</b> | <b>Primary schools</b> |              | <b>Middle Schools</b> |              |
|-------------------------------|------------------------|--------------|-----------------------|--------------|
|                               | <b>Boys</b>            | <b>Girls</b> | <b>Boys</b>           | <b>Girls</b> |
| Municipal Committee Thanesar  | 2                      | 1            | -                     | 1            |
| Municipal Committee Shahabad  | 3                      | 4            | -                     | -            |
| Municipal Committee, Ladwa    | -                      | -            | -                     | 1            |

As a consequence of provincialisation, the local bodies were required to pay their contribution annually to the Government towards the maintenance of the provincialised schools.

The position in respect of different grades of schools as well as colleges imparting higher education is discussed below:-

### **Pre-Primary Education**

Pre-primary education caters to the need of children in the age group of 3-5 years. The system of pre-primary education is in developing stage and is yet to be well organized. Many Nursery Schools have been opened in urban areas by private bodies. There is no pre-primary or nursery school run by the Government. However, Child Welfare Council runs two *Balwaris* at Shahabad and Ladwa.

### **Primary Education**

The course of primary education covers children in the age group of 6-11 years and consists of five classes i.e. from Class I to Class V. Since April, 1961, primary education has been made compulsory. The education at this stage is imparted free and all such schools are co-educational. Teachers are provided at the pupil-teacher ratio of 41:4. Single teacher schools are very few and function only in villages and habitations with a small population because in such schools, the number of students is also small. Most of the teachers are either basic trained or oriented to the basic pattern. In March, 2004, there were 569 Primary Schools in the district.

### **Middle Education**

Education at the middle stage covers children of age group of 11-14 years and consists of classes VI to VIII. The pupil teacher ratio of 32:5 has been adopted for this stage and the education is free in all government schools. In March, 2004, there were 90 Middle Schools in the district including Government and non-Govt. There were 86 Middle Schools for boys and 4 for girls.

### **Secondary Education (10+2 Pattern Of Education)**

The 10+2 pattern of education was introduced in the State from April 1, 1985. The existing Higher Secondary Schools were converted into Senior Secondary Schools. This system has a terminal character for majority of students. It provides a preparatory stage for

those who intend to pursue higher education in colleges. Senior Secondary Schools provide diversified courses in humanities, science, commerce, commercial art and home science. The scheme of SUPW (Socially Useful Productive Work) has also been introduced to meet the requirements of those who wish to earn their livelihood after completing the senior secondary course. In March, 2004, there were 164 High/ Senior Secondary Schools in the district including Government and non-Govt. There were 156 High/ Senior Secondary Schools for boys and 8 for girls.

To provide vocational base and to make education job-oriented, emphasis has been laid on teaching of technical skill at the secondary stage of education. For this purpose 10+2 Vocational Education Institutes have been started by Industries Department at Kurukshetra and Pehowa. Besides imparting office Secretaryship, electrical domestic appliances, banking assistants, two and three wheeler repairer, agriculture mechanics and lineman are provided in the above institutes.

#### **Medium of Instructions**

The medium of instructions in the schools of the district is Hindi. The teaching of Hindi as a medium of instructions and first language starts from class I. English is taught from Class VI as a second language. Sanskrit or Punjabi is taught as a third language in classes VII to VIII. However, a few private schools, which had Punjabi as the medium of instructions prior to the formation of Haryana in 1966, have been allowed to continue instructions through the medium of Punjabi. To provide safeguards to the linguistic minorities, provision has also been made for the teaching of Urdu/ Punjabi as an additional subject from class I provided 10 pupils in a class or 40 in whole of a Primary School or primary section of a Middle, High or Senior Secondary School are desirous of studying this language. But the medium of instructions and the first language even for such schools remains Hindi.

#### **Higher Education**

Higher education remained neglected in the district prior to independence. It was started in 1956 when Kurukshetra University came into being as a Sanskrit University. In March, 2004, there were



9 colleges in the district. Out of these, two were run by Kurukshetra University and the rest by religious and social organizations. Two of these colleges were exclusively for girls. A brief account of the university and the colleges is given below:-

**Kurukshetra University Kurukshetra.-** Established in 1956, Kurukshetra University was originally planned as a seat of oriental Asian thought and learning. It was set up as a residential university and initially, it had only Department of Sanskrit. It became a multi-faculty university in 1961. At present, it has faculties of Arts and Languages, Sciences, Social Science, Indological Studies, Education, Engineering and Technology, Law, Commerce, Management and Ayurvedic Medicines. As on March, 2007, the university had 45 teaching departments.

It remained a residential university till 1974 but became an affiliating university on June 30, 1974 when all colleges of Haryana were affiliated to it. The colleges at Rohtak were withdrawn from this university on May 1, 1976 and affiliated to Maharishi Dayanand University, Rohtak. From March 31, 2007, the Kurukshetra University has had its educational jurisdiction over 11 districts of Ambala, Karnal, Kaithal, Kurukshetra, Panchkula, Panipat, Yamuna Nagar, Fatehabad, Hisar, Jind and Sirsa. There are 215 colleges out of which 44 colleges are exclusively for girls. About 1,56,062 students were receiving education in these colleges, besides 9,048 students of the University Campus in various teaching departments. On the University campus itself, there are two colleges maintained by the university, the University College and University College of Education.

The campus of the university sprawls on 400 acres of land against in idyllic background of rural charm and is situated at a distance of about two kilometers from Thanesar town. With vast open grounds and with its modern buildings and hostels, the campus is practically a healthy place, highly conducive to the promoting quality academic and research work. The site near the sacred BrahmSarover was chosen by the sponsors of the university for its historical and spiritual significance.

The university has been continuously adding new courses and departments. The Departments of Geology, Electronic Sciences, Atmosphere and Oceanographic Science (Meteorology) and Tourism had been distinctive additions in the past few years. Sanction has been obtained for opening the Departments of Bio-chemistry and Microbiology.

During 1990-91, the Government of Haryana sanctioned grants for the Institution of Lord Mahavir Chair of Jain studies and a chair in the name of Dr. Ram Manohar Lohia. These chairs have been allocated to the Institute of Sanskrit and Indological Studies and the Department of Political Science respectively.

The University publishes four Research Journals, namely, Praci-Jyoti, Kurukshetra University Research Journal, Journal of Haryana Studies and Sambhavana. To this a journal at Drama Studies has also been added, it is published under the aegis of Dr. Sarup Singh Chair in the English Department. The University attaches special importance to research and a large number of scholars supported by various funding agencies are engaged in research in different disciplines.

Committed in offering quality education, Kurukshetra University establish the Jawahar Lal Nehru Library having a plinth area of 49,230 Sq. ft. and having the facility of 370 seats in reading areas on different floors of the library and 100 seats in the Rear Reading Hall. The University Library and its extension as Department Libraries are managed by well qualified professional and supporting staff to fulfill the information and library needs of its users. The extension of the centrally air-conditioned library building is in progress.

The library has 3,16,028 documents including 5,074 manuscripts. 5698 more manuscripts have been added during this year under National Mission for Manuscripts Programmes, Department of Culture, Ministry of HRD, Government of India. It subscribes to 450 journals on print media (Foreign and Indian) and 200 journals of gratis. In addition to print media, University has the facility of access to the 6 data based and above 2000 online journals under UGC-Infonet Programme. The library facilities are provided throughout the year (except on 6 National/Gazetted Holidays). During the

examination days, the library remains open round the clock and rest of the days from 9.00 a.m. to 12.00 midnight, whereas Rear Reading Hall is kept open throughout the year.

The centrally air-conditioned computer lab. of ERNET section is equipped with 2 mbps leased line internet connectivity in addition to leased line of 512 kbps and VSAT connectivity of 128 kbps. About 1000 teachers and students are using the facility of internet services daily. The lab. is furnished with modular furniture, structured networking cabling facilities and latest library application software. The lab has the facility of SPSS- a statistical software with a capacity of 25 floating users. This center also provides internet services. The development of KUK Web-portal is under progress and going to be launched shortly. The website of Kurukshetra University, launched on the information superhighway/ INTERNET, can be accessed globally at the [www.kuk.edu.tripod.com](http://www.kuk.edu.tripod.com). This website covers around 200 page and is registered on search engines like [www.infoseek.com](http://www.infoseek.com), [www.netscape.com](http://www.netscape.com), [www.khoj.com](http://www.khoj.com), [www.aol.com](http://www.aol.com), [www.google.com](http://www.google.com), [www.rediff.com](http://www.rediff.com), [www.acu.ac.uk](http://www.acu.ac.uk), [www.aiuwebcom](http://www.aiuwebcom), [www.inflibnet.ac.in](http://www.inflibnet.ac.in) etc.

The website includes the information related to important functionaries, Executive Council, Academic Council, University Court, Academic Calendar, Results, Conferences, PHD thesis, Syllabus, admission to all post graduate courses, etc. It covers the information about all the courses conducted by the Directorate of Distance Education of the University alongwith admission form downloading facilities. The Homepages of the University teaching departments are also updated from time to time. Information regarding results and counselling of various entrance examinations is also made available on the website. The internet facility has been provided by way of Campus-wide Networking and 500 internet nodes have been provided to the departments including 200 internet nodes in the library itself.

The library is fast moving towards its complete computerization by way of adopting and adapting the information technology. Initially, infrastructure for the computerization and automation of the library has been developed with financial assistance of UGC and in collaboration with the INFLIBNET Centre, Ahamedabad. After that,

the whole infrastructure has been created with the financial investment of the University. It is the final phase of complete computerization. Different sections and all the floors of the library are connected with each other by the server placed in the ERNET section. The OPAC (Online Public Access Catalogue) is in operation for the users and it contains collection of around 3,10,954 books including thesis and journals. Presently, the library has 200 computer systems with state of art technology.

All India Services Pre-examination Training Centre was established in 1982 for preparing students belonging to Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes for Central services. The Ministry of Welfare, Government of India, finances the Centre.

Residential facilities exist for boys and girls students. There are 8 hostels for boys and 8 for girls. There is a well-equipped gymnasium, vast sports ground and swimming pool of international standards. Also, there is a modern well-furnished auditorium with 3500 seats. There is a film society which regularly organized film shows in the auditorium. There is a Youth and Cultural Affairs Department which regularly organizes cultural programmes on the campus and also sponsors educational and cultural tours. Adequate medical facilities are available in the University Health Centre and there is a 50 bed public hospital close to the University. The Campus is a full fledged township with its own market, Post & Telegraph Office, Bank and other amenities.

**University College, Kurukshetra.-** Located in the University Campus, this college was established in 1961. Affiliated to Kurukshetra University, it provides courses in humanities, science and commerce upto degree level and Honours courses in English, Hindi, Sanskrit, Punjabi, Economics, Political Science, History, Geography, Psychology, Philosophy and Mathematics. Job-oriented courses are also available in the college including B.Sc with Computer Science and Electronics and a one year Diploma in Secretarial Practices. The college maintains a library with 29,644 books on different subjects and subscribes to 16 journals and periodicals.

In 2003-04, it had 2089 (1373 boys and 716 girls) students on its rolls including 282 belonging to Scheduled Castes and 304 to other

Backward Classes. It had 63 members on its teaching staff. It had one N.C.C. Company and N.S.S. Units. It brings out a magazine named 'Sthaneshwar' annually.

**Arya Kanya Mahavidyala, Shahabad Markanda.**-This College was established in 1968 by local Arya Samaj. It is a girls college and caters to the needs of higher education of Shahabad and surrounding villages. Affiliated to Kurukshetra University, it provides courses in humanities, science and commerce upto post-graduate level and it also offers Post-graduate Diploma in Secretarial Practice and Post-graduate Diploma in Computer Science & Applications.

The college has a magnificent double storied building, well-equipped laboratory, lawns and playgrounds. Hostel facility is also available for a limited number of students. It also maintains a library having 22,523 books and subscribes to 60 periodicals and journals.

In 2003-04, it had 1182 students on its rolls including 34 belonging to Scheduled Castes and 126 to Other Backward Classes and the number of teaching staff was 24. It had one unit of N.S.S.

**Markanda National College, Shahabad Markanda.**- This college was established in 1970 by the Markanda Educational Council. Affiliated to Kurukshetra University, it provided course in humanities and science upto degree level.

This college is situated at a distance of 1.5 Km. from bus stand and railway station. It has a magnificent double storied building surrounding vast open ground. The college library contains 19,267 books and subscribes to 11 journals, 14 magazines and 13 newspapers.

In 2003-04, it had 679 students on its rolls including 80 belonging to Scheduled Castes and 173 to other Backward Classes. It had 30 members on its teaching staff. It had one Company of N.C.C. and one unit of N.S.S. It brings out a magazine named 'Markandeya' annually.

**Indira Gandhi National College Ladwa.**- Situated on Ladwa-Mustfabad road, it was established by Indira Gandhi National Education Society, Ladwa in July 1975. It is affiliated to Kurukshetra University and offers degree courses in science (Medical and Non-

medical), commerce and humanities and also offers post graduation course in English.

The college library contains 30,398 books and subscribes to 31 journals and periodicals.

In 2003-04, the college had 730 students on its rolls including 58 students belonging to Scheduled Castes and 103 students of Other Backward Classes. It had two units of N.S.S. and one Platoon of N.C.C. The college annually brings out a magazine named 'Haryana Rashmi'.

**Daya Nand Mahila Mahavidyala, Kurukshetra.-** This college was established in July, 1982 by Arya Shiksha Samiti, Kurukshetra. Affiliated to Kurukshetra University, Kurukshetra, it offers courses in humanities and commerce upto degree level and post graduate courses in English, Hindi and Economics.

The college is housed in its own building and is situated on Salarpur road. The college library contains 21,552 books and subscribes to 24 journals and also 24 periodicals.

In 2003-04, the college had on its rolls 1198 students including 123 students belonging to Scheduled Castes and 180 to Other Backward Classes. It has 29 teachers and brings out annually a magazine named 'Maharshi-Gaurav'.

**D.A.V. College, Pehowa.-** This college was established in 1981 by D.A.V. College Managing Committee, New Delhi. Affiliated to Kurukshetra University, it provides courses in science, humanities and commerce upto degree level.

The college is situated on Ambala-Hisar road. It has spacious building and playgrounds. The college library contains 17,000 books and subscribes to 45 journals and periodicals and educational C.Ds are available in the library. Science Encyclopedia on C.D. Rom and Encyclopedia of Britannica on paper are also available in the library.

In 2005-06, the college had on its rolls 1,400 students. It had one N.C.C. Company and one N.S.S. Unit.

### **Teachers Training**

**University College Of Education.-** This is the only college providing teacher's training in the district. It is a constituent college of

Kurukshetra University. It was established in July, 1960. In order to prepare quality teachers, a four years integrated course leading to degree of Bachelor of Arts (Education) Bachelor of Science (Education) was started. With a view to attract really brilliant students, only matriculates (1<sup>st</sup> Division) were given admission on merit and incentives in the form of free tuition, stipends for 50 percent students and a guarantee of employment were provided. The course attracted large number of meritorious students for a number of years. In 1967, it was decided to discontinue the integrated scheme in phases and one year B.Ed. course was introduced.

The institution was Government College of Education upto 1974 and since then it has been taken over by the University and renamed as University College of Education, K.U.K.

The college is housed in its own magnificent building, has vast playground and an assembly hall known as R.K. Sadan. The college library contains 20,000 books on various subjects and subscribes to 8 journals and periodicals. The college provides hostel facilities for boys and girls.

Presently, the college has an intake capacity of 250 students for B.Ed. (one year). Concession and scholarships are awarded to the Scheduled Castes, Backward Classes and Physically Handicapped students. It has 18 members on its teaching staff. The college brings out annual college magazine named ' *Jyoti-Kalash*' and newsletter named 'U.C.E.K. NEWS'.

**Scheme of Scholar-In-Residence.**-For the University teaching departments/institutes the five-fold aim of the scheme is to enrich the academic life on the campus, to create quest for quality lectures/discourses, to inspire the faculty and students to excel in academic, to inculcate in students and young teachers reverence for intellectual giants, to promote coherent thinking and organized reasoning through integrated series of lectures by experts and scholars in different specialized areas. The idea is to bring about an active interaction of the students and faculty with scholars of high academic standing and international repute, and thereby enhance their competence.

**Academic Staff College.**- The UGC Academic Staff College was established as one of the pioneer institutions in 1987 and has been

granted extension upto 31.3.2007. This Academic Staff College since its inception has organized 47 Orientation Courses and 132 courses besides 20 Induction Training Programmes for the teachers working in Engineering Colleges, thus covering 6,543 teachers not only from the State of Haryana but also from other States of the country.

**Bharat Ratna Baba Saheb Dr. Bhim Rao Ambedkar Studies Centre.-** The Centre was set up in 1992. The objectives of the Centre are as follows:-

- (i) To study Dr. B.R. Ambedkar's work scientifically and objectively,
- (ii) to understand Dr. Ambedkar's relevance today,
- (iii) to study problems such as untouchability, social injustice etc. in the light of his ideas,
- (iv) to collect and publish writings and speeches on Dr. Ambedkar and to bring out publications and journal devoted to his life and the subjects in which he was interested in,
- (v) to encourage students of M.phil and P.H.D courses and others scholars to work on Dr. Ambedkar and Dalit literature, and
- (vi) to hold seminars, symposia, lectures, round table conferences on Dr. Ambedkar's life, his work and ideology and to provide a common platform in India and abroad to the scholars working on Dr. Ambedkar so that they could share their research and experience with one another.

**Women's Studies Research Centre.-** The Women's Studies Research Centre is actively engaged in women empowerment programme. The Centre has also functioned as a training forum, and in this capacity keeps on organizing a number of orientation courses, workshops, and conferences for the women personnel. It has completed the research projects on "A Study of Women on the Unorganized Sector of Employment", "Family Violence Against the Girl Child" and "Professional and Technical Education in Haryana-A Gender Analysis of Enrollment".



**Computer Centre.-** The University has a well-equipped computer centre with varieties of equipment to cater to various requirements of the faculty members, administrators and research scholars.

**Research, Development Patents Council.-** Research, Development Patents Council has been set up to raise funds for the promotion of research and development activities leading to the goal of excellence. An extensive exercise was undertaken to identify the departments of potential and strength with a view to develop them as a Centre of excellence.

**National Institute of Technology.-** The National Institute of Technology, Kurukshetra is one of the seventeen National Institutes of Technology in the country. The Institute has been conferred the status of Deemed University by the Government of India w.e.f. 26.6.2002. Before the declaration of NIT Kurukshetra with Deemed University status, the Institute was known as Regional Engineering College, Kurukshetra which was established in 1963 as a joint and co-operative enterprise of Govt. of India and the State Government to serve the Haryana region and the rest of the country for imparting technical training to youths and for fostering national integration. Its objective is to provide instructions and research facilities in various disciplines of engineering and technology and the advancement of learning and dissemination of knowledge in each such disciplines. The Government of India is meeting the entire non-recurring Plan expenditure and 50 percent of the recurring expenditure on undergraduate courses. Remaining 50 percent recurring expenditure is borne by the State Government. The entire recurring and non-recurring expenditure on the post-graduate courses is borne by the Central Government. The management of the institute is vested in the duly constituted Board of Governors.

The Institute offers four years B. Tech. undergraduate courses in Civil, Electrical, Electronics & Communication, Mechanical and Computer Engineering. It also offers specialized postgraduate (M. Tech.) courses in the fields of Civil, Electrical, Electronics & Communication, Mechanical Engineering and Instrumentation.

The Institute has six boys and one girls hostels. The boys hostels with a capacity of 250 each are for B.Tech.& B.E. students and one 150 seater post graduate hostel accommodation for M.Tech.

students and research scholars. Three of the five boys hostels for undergraduate students have triple seater rooms whereas the remaining two are single seater. All the rooms in post-graduate hostel are single seaters. A separate hostel with a limited capacity of 125 is available for girl students. The hostel has single, double and triple seated rooms. Those girl students who fail to get accommodation in the hostel are required to make their own arrangements for boarding & lodging. One more hostel for girl students is under construction so that all the girl students may be accommodated in the hostel. Hostels are controlled by Chief Warden who is assisted by Deputy Chief Warden, a team of Wardens and other staff working in the hostels for various jobs.

The Institute maintains library with more than 1,01,248 books and subscribes to more than 140 journals. Besides this, 12 journals were received as Gratis. It also maintains a Book Bank of more than 39,261 books.

The Ministry of Human Resources Development has set up the Indian National Digital Library in Science and Technology (INDEST) Consortium. The consortium provides wide range of e-resources to IITs/ NITs/ IIMs etc. Institutes are getting the following electronic resources through Consortium:-

1. ACM
2. ASCE
3. ASME
4. IEL Online
5. ASTP
6. JGATE

Faculty Members, Students, Research Scholars and other readers can have access to these resources through campus network.

The database of library collection has been prepared using Lib. Sys. Software but code labels will be generated and pasted on all the documents to start the automation of circulation section.

The library has a CD/DVD Room server with 90 GB capacity and six computers. The server is capable to catch 140 to 225 CDs at a time. All the CDs procured and received with books and magazines

are loaded on the server. The information loaded on the server can be viewed/used by students, faculty members and other readers from anywhere in the Institute through campus wide network.

The Institute Library is maintaining Book Bank and SAF collection of books. The books are issued to all the students of all branches out of these for full semester. Library is equipped with two machines. Reproduction from books, periodicals, charts and diagrams are provided to the readers. The library provides bibliographic services on specialized subject to its readers on request. It also provides Current Aware Service to students, research scholars and teachers.

By March 2004, 73 students were selected through campus interview by various reputed companies from different departments of the Institute. Several companies such as TATA Consultancy Services, HCL Technologies. Nagarro Software, L&T Ltd. DRDO, Ashoka Leyland, Grindwell Norton, Blue-star Infotech, HCL Info-systems Hero Honda, Samtel Color Ltd. QUARK Media, Ispat Industries, M/S ALSTOM, M/S WARTSILA, M/S ISGEC, M/S MALCD and M/S L.G.E. visited the campus for the purpose of placement of the students. This year the placement has not been so good because it is dependent on the market demand. It was good a few years ago due to boom. But now, placement has been affected due to global recession in the market. Some of the students were interviewed/ selected by more than one company under Career and Appointment Services controlled by Professor, Training Placement and Students Welfare.

Consequent upon upgradation of Regional Engineering College, Kurukshetra to National Institute of Technology with Deemed University status w.e.f. 26.6.2002, the Institute is independent in every respect relating to academic work such as examinations, evaluation of answer sheets, declaration of results and other allied matters. The Institute conducted all examinations in December, 2002/January, 2003 at its own level as decided by the Board of Governors of the Institute out of funds collected from the students without any liability of the Government. The examinations were conducted smoothly on the pattern of Kurukshetra University, Kurukshetra under which this Institute was earlier affiliated. The results were also computerized and declared within a stipulated

period. The Detailed Marks Card were designed, printed and distributed to the students.

The Institute has been selected as a leading Institute under Technical Education Quality Improvement Programme (TEQIP). This Programme is being implemented by Government of India with World Bank's assistance. The Institute is one of the five NITs selected as a lead institution under this project. It is likely to get a grant of approx. Rs. 50 crore under this project spread over 5 years. The Govt. of India sanctioned a sum of Rs. 7.5 crore towards first instalment under the World Bank assisted TEQIP project in March, 2003 for the purpose of training, equipment and modernization of laboratories, books and learning resources.

### **Education of Women**

Education of women remained utterly neglected in the district in the past. The extent of the neglect of female education can be judged from the fact that according to 1901 census, the female literacy in the then Thanesar tehsil was as low as 0.1 percent.<sup>1</sup> According to 1911 census, the female literacy ratio in Thanesar tehsil showed only marginal increase from 0.1 percent in 1901 to 0.3 percent in 1911.<sup>2</sup> Even according to 1931 census, the female literacy ratio in Thanesar tehsil was as low as 0.4 percent.<sup>3</sup>

The custom of early marriage and the conservative attitude of the people towards them were the main reasons for the slow growth of education among women. Moreover, there was also paucity of women teachers because of general backwardness of female education.

Before independence, the Government offered some incentives to promote female education. Scholarships were given to 20 percent of the pupils in primary and secondary schools. Limited number of scholarships were also provided to deserving students, who were inclined to pursue higher studies. The need for providing a large number of trained teachers was fully realized by the Government and

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<sup>1</sup> Karnal District Gazetteer, Statistical Tables, 1904. Table No.50.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid, 1912, Table No.50.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid, 1935, Table No.50.

it offered stipends to all women undergoing training for the teaching profession. Moreover, the salaries paid to them were considerably higher than those of men with the same qualifications.<sup>1</sup> But due to age-old prejudices and conservative attitude of the society at large, the Government could not achieve the desired results in the domain of girls education.

It was only after independence that concerted efforts were made both by the Government and social and religious organizations like Arya Samaj, Sanatan Dharam Sabha and Singh Sabha for spread of education among women. Number of schools were opened in rural and urban areas exclusively for girls. Government also offered many concessions to female students and free education for all girl students upto graduation. Besides, social awakening for the upliftment of the women, helped in spread of education among them.

By March 2004-05, the district was well advanced in the field of women education and there were 60 Primary, 4 Middle and 8 High/Senior Secondary Schools and 8 colleges exclusively for girls. Moreover, all the Government run Primary Schools have been made co-educational. The Middle Schools, High and Senior Secondary Schools at places having no separate schools for girls have also been made co-educational. Number of girl students has been gradually increasing. In 2004-05, the number rose to 73,039. According to 2001 census, the female literacy in the district was 60.61 percent.

Before independence, very little efforts were made in eradicating illiteracy among the Scheduled Castes and other Backward Classes. Among religious and social organizations, only Arya Samaj made some efforts in this regard during the beginning of 20<sup>th</sup> century. However, these classes remained educationally the most backward section of society till 1947. It was only after independence that the Government vigorously directed its Policy towards raising general level of literacy among them.

The students belonging to these classes are provided with various facilities by way of reservation of seats in professional and

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<sup>1</sup> B.S. Saini, Social and Economic History of the Punjab. (1901-1939) p.156.

technical institutions, exemption from payment of tuition fee, and reimbursement of examination fee and also by giving financial assistance in the form of stipend. School books are supplied to them free of cost from class IX to XII. Free college education is also provided to students belonging to these classes, stipends under the State's Scheduled Castes Welfare Scheme are also awarded.

The girl students belonging to these classes who are studying in primary classes are given scholarship of Rs. 10 per month upto primary level, Rs. 30 from class VI to VIII and Rs. 40 from class IX to XII. Rs. 80 and Rs. 120 per annum are given as stationary charges to students studying in class VI to VIII and class IX to XII respectively. Special coaching classes are also arranged for Scheduled Caste students in science, mathematics and English. Uniforms are provided to SC girl students studying in class VI to VIII @ Rs. 75 per annum. Uniforms are also provided to girl students studying in class IX and XII @ Rs. 100/- per annum. Scheduled Castes students (college stage) are given stipends under the Govt. of India Post-matric Scholarship Scheme. The stipend includes refund of examination fee, tuition fee and other compulsory non-refundable charges. The rate of stipend/maintenance allowance was Rs. 140/- per month for Day Scholar and Rs. 740/- per month for Hoteliers. The income ceiling was Rs. 1,00,000/-per annum.

Students belonging to other Backward classes both block A & B are also given stipends @ Rs. 20/- and Rs. 40/- per month from class IX to XII provided whose parents are not income tax payee. Students of other backward classes (college stage) under the Post-matric Scholarship Scheme were given stipend @ Rs. 75/- per month for day scholar and Rs. 150/- per month for Hoteliers.

Literacy ratio among these sections is still low. This is mainly due to economic reasons as they prefer to employ their children on odd jobs to supplement their meager family income.

The following table shows the enrolment of students belonging to Scheduled Castes in different institutions in the district during 1990-91 to 2003-04:-

| YEAR-WISE NUMBER OF SCHOOLS |          |      |        | SC ENROLLMENT(Only<br>Middle, High& Sr. Sec.<br>Schools) |       |       |
|-----------------------------|----------|------|--------|--|-------|-------|
| Year                        | Sr. Sec. | High | Middle | Boys   | Girls | Total |
| 1991-92                     | 18       | 59   | 52     | 8412   | 5366  | 13778 |
| 1992-93                     | 20       | 63   | 56     | 9518   | 5527  | 15045 |
| 1993-94                     | 20       | 63   | 56     | 9297   | 5515  | 14794 |
| 1994-95                     | 19       | 67   | 54     | 8521   | 5836  | 14357 |
| 1995-96                     | 23       | 68   | 55     | 9716   | 6426  | 16142 |
| 1996-97                     | 35       | 85   | 81     | 10948  | 7332  | 18210 |
| 1997-98                     | 36       | 92   | 84     | 7383   | 4427  | 11810 |
| 1998-99                     | 51       | 81   | 87     | 7412   | 4665  | 12077 |
| 1999-00                     | 55       | 81   | 82     | 7565   | 4835  | 12400 |
| 2000-01                     | 55       | 89   | 94     | 8023   | 5250  | 13273 |
| 2001-02                     | 55       | 88   | 100    | 7783   | 4941  | 12724 |
| 2002-03                     | 68       | 84   | 93     | -  | -     | -     |
| 2003-04                     | 75       | 89   | 90     | 12310  | 9579  | 21889 |

### Literacy Ratio

Backwardness of the district in the field of education in the beginning of the present century can be easily assessed from the fact that according to 1901 census, the percentage of the literate persons in the then Thanesar tehsil, which broadly included the areas comprising the present district, was only 2.5 percent. Literacy among males was just 4.6 percent and was as low as 0.1 percent among females. Literacy ratio remained almost constant till 1911 Census. It was 2.7 percent for the tehsil as a whole and 4.7 percent and 0.3 percent respectively for males and females. In 1931, even after two decades, there was only a marginal increase in the literacy ratio. According to 1931 Census, the literacy ratio in Thanesar Tehsil was 3.3 percent (5.7 percent for males and 0.4 percent for females). An analysis of the above figures clearly indicates that education was practically neglected and the lack of proper facilities for education resulted in low literacy ratio.

The expansion of educational network after independence resulted in higher literacy ratio in the areas now comprising Kurukshetra district. According to 1961 Census, the percentage of total literates in the then Thanesar Tehsil was 14.9 (22.9 percent for males and 5.7 percent for females).

According to 1971 Census, literacy ratio in Thanesar and Pehowa Tehsil put together, was 29.1 percent (39.1 percent for males and 18.7 percent for females). Literacy ratio in these two tehsils rose to 36.1 percent (44.9 percent for males and 25.9 percent for females) in 1981.

According to 2001 census, 69.88 percent of the total population of present Kurukshetra district was literate. Literacy ratio among males and females was 78.06 percent and 60.61 percent respectively.

### **Industrial Training**

Industrial training is imparted to men and women with a view to ensure steady flow of skilled workers in different trades. The aim is to raise the quality and quantity of industrial production by systematic training of workers and to reduce unemployment amongst educated youths by equipping them with suitable industrial employment. Training is provided in engineering and non-engineering trades. Industrial Training Institutes at Kurukshetra and Shahabad Markanda are functioning under the control of Director, Industrial Training, Haryana, Chandigarh. Both these institutes have separate women wing. Training is provided in Industrial Training Institutes in various crafts for the award of diploma certificate from the Director, Industrial Training Haryana, Chandigarh. Incentives are provided by way of award of stipend @ Rs.45 per mensem per student on poverty-cum-merit basis to one-third of the students on rolls in each institute. Trainees belonging to Scheduled Castes are given a stipend of Rs. 75 per mensem, Ex-servicemen and their dependents are also awarded stipends for such training. Besides, technical training, medical aid, workshop clothes and hostel accommodation are provided free of cost to all the trainees. The training period ranges from one to two years.

Vocational Education Institutes at Kurukshetra, Pehowa and Babain at Suneria are under the administrative control of the Department of Industrial Training and Vocational Education,



Haryana, Chandigarh. The aim of these institutes is to make education job-oriented. Under 10+2 system of education, 12<sup>th</sup> class is earmarked for vocational training. This training is provided to the students in engineering and non-engineering trades. The purpose of these institutes is to make the students self-dependent in earning their livelihood and these institutions are under the NCERT (National Council of Educational Research and Training) and DGE&T (Director General of Employment and Training).

The details of the institutions along with the year of establishment, trade of crafts provided and duration of the course is given below:-

| Sr. No. | Name of Institution                    | Year of Establishment | No. of Trainees | Scheduled Castes Trainees | Trade Crafts Provided   | Duration of the Course   |
|---------|--|-----------------------|-----------------|---------------------------|---|--|
| 1.      | Vocational Edu. Institute, Kurukshetra | 1983                  | 365             | 30                        | 1. Visual Arts<br>2. Boiler Attendant.<br>3. Office Secretaryship (Hindi)<br>4. Commercial Garments Designing & Making.<br>5. Electrician (MREDA)<br>6. Linemen<br>7. Office Secretaryship (English)<br>8. Auto Technician (two & three wheeler Repair) | Two Yrs.<br>-do-<br>-do-<br>-do-<br>-do-<br>-do-<br>-do-<br>-do- |
| 2.      | Vocational Edu. Institute, Pehowa      | 1985                  | 126             | 22                        | 1. Lineman<br>2. Electrician (MREDA)<br>3. Banking Asstt.<br>4. Commercial Garments Designing & Making  | -do-<br>-do-<br>-do-<br>-do-                                     |

|    |   |      |     |    |                                   |          |
|----|---|------|-----|----|-----------------------------------|----------|
| 3. | Vocational Edu. Institute, Babain at Sunaria.           | 1987 | 174 | 33 | 1. Two & Three Wheeler Repair     | -do-     |
|    |   |      |     |    | 2. Electrician (MREDA)            | -do-     |
|    |   |      |     |    | 3. Office Secretaryship (English) | -do-     |
|    |   |      |     |    | 4. Office Secretaryship (Hindi)   | -do-     |
| 4. | Vocational Edu. Institute, Budha                        | 1995 | 175 | 32 | 1. Two & Three Wheeler Repair     | -do-     |
|    |   |      |     |    | 2. Banking Assistant.             | -do-     |
|    |   |      |     |    | 3. Electrician (MREDA)            | -do-     |
|    |   |      |     |    | 4. Office Secretaryship (Hindi).  | -do-     |
| 5. | Industrial Training Institute, Kurukshetra              | 1982 | 122 | 24 | 1. Fitter                         | Two year |
|    |   |      |     |    | 2. Wireman                        | -do-     |
|    |   |      |     |    | 3. Carpenter                      | -do-     |
|    |   |      |     |    | 4. Welder                         | -do-     |
|    |   |      |     |    | 5. Mech. Tractor                  | -do-     |
| 6. | Industrial Training Institute (Women Wing) Kurukshetra  | 1982 | 36  | 7  | 1. Cutting & Sewing               | One year |
|    |   |      |     |    | 2. Embroidary                     | -do-     |
| 7. | Industrial Training Institute Shahabad(M)               | 1982 | 32  | 6  | 1. Fitter                         | Two year |
|    |   |      |     |    | 2. Welder                         | One year |
| 8. | Industrial Training Institute Shahabad(M) (Women Wing). | 1982 | 54  | 10 | 1. Cutting & Sewing               | One year |
|    |   |      |     |    | 2. Embroidary                     | -do-     |

### Medical Education

**Shri Krishan Government Ayurvedic College Kurukshetra.-** It was established on May 1, 1972 under the management of Nav Jiwan Sangh, Kurukshetra. The institution was taken over by the Haryana Government on June 5, 1975. Affiliated to Kurukshetra University, it provides 5-year course in Ayurvedic Medicines leading to B.A.M.S. degree.

Situated near Sannihit tank, it is housed in a building with extensive grounds, library and a Ayurvedic Hospital with 20 beds. The college shifted to new building built over an area of 24 acres in August, 1992. It has extensive playgrounds and 20 bed hospital. The college library is stocked with 4,960 books on medical science and subscribes to 102 journals and periodicals relating to allopathic and ayurvedic medicines. The poor and deserving students are given scholarship @ Rs. 100 per month by Pandit Thakur Dutt Dharmarth Trust.

### Oriental Colleges

Kurukshetra remained a great centre of learning during ancient period. Bulk of *vedic* literature was composed in the areas now comprising Kurukshetra district. But during medieval period, due to frequent foreign invasions, it lost much of its glory as a centre of learning. After independence, efforts were made by many religious bodies to revive its ancient glory in the field of studies of Sanskrit. Presently, besides Kurukshetra University, there are three institutions in the district for teaching of Sanskrit. All these institutions are located at Kurukshetra and their brief account is as follows:-

**Shri Jai Ram Vidyapeeth, Kurukshetra.-** It was established near Brahm Sarovar in 1975. It is housed in its own building having hostel and a library. It provides gratis education with boarding and lodging to all students. Affiliated to Kurukshetra University, it offers courses in *Pragya* (Proficiency in Sanskrit), *Vishard* (High Proficiency in Sanskrit) and *Shastri* (Honours in Sanskrit). In 2006-07, 72 students are on its rolls who live in hostel. It has 7 members on its teaching staff. The total strength of the students is 142.

**Shri Sanatan Dharam Sanskrit College, Kurukshetra.-** This institution was initially established on February 28, 1958 by Seth Jugal

Kishore Birla but was taken over by Sanskrit and Ayurvedic Educational Institute, Delhi in 1981. Affiliated to Kurukshetra University, it offers courses in *Pragya* (Proficiency in Sanskrit) *Vishard* (High Proficiency in Sanskrit) and *Shastri* (Honours in Sanskrit). It provides free education and free boarding and lodging facilities to all students.

**Sanskrit Vidya Peeth, Krishan Dharm, Kurukshetra.-** Mahabhartiya Sanskrit Research Trust, Kurukshetra is running a Sanskrit Vidya Peeth within the precincts of the Trust building near Sannihit Sarovar. It was established in 1979. Affiliated to Kurukshetra University, Kurukshetra, it offers courses in *Pragya* (proficiency in Sanskrit), *Vishard* (High Proficiency in Sanskrit) and *Shastri* (Honours in Sanskrit). It provides free education and free boarding and lodging to all students. In 2003-04, the college had 106 students on its rolls. The number of teachers was six.

### **Gurukul Education**

Alongwith modern educational institutions, the ancient Gurukul type of education is still prevalent in the district. Under this system of education special stress is laid on the teaching of Sanskrit and vedic literature and overall physical and mental development of pupils. The main characteristic of this type of education is its residential character and puts emphasis on close personal contact between the teachers and the taughts. A brief account of a Gurukul located at Kurukshetra is given below:-

**Vidhya Vihar Gurukul, Kurukshetra.-** Established on 13<sup>th</sup> April, 1912 by a renowned Arya Samaj leader Swami Shardhanand, it is one of the oldest Gurukul opened by Arya Samaj in Haryana. It is located on Thanesar-Kaithal road adjoining Kurukshetra University. Being run on ancient pattern of education, it lays special stress on character building, inculcating moral values and teaching of Sanskrit and vedic literature. Its main feature is residential character where students are taught according to old *Guru Shishya* tradition. It is managed by Arya Pratinidhi Sabha, Haryana. It imparts higher secondary level education and prepares student for Matriculation/10+2 examination of Central Board of Secondary Education, Delhi. Gurukul is housed in its own magnificent building which has hostels and vast playgrounds for various games. It provides free education to the students and Ashtang

Yoga and games are compulsory for all students. It has a well stocked library with large number of books on various subjects. In March 2003-04, it had 750 students on its rolls hailing from various states of India and it had 30 teachers to teach them.

### **Kalpana Chawla Memorial Planetarium**

A prestigious Kalpana Chawla Memorial Planetarium has been constructed at Kurukshetra with the joint collaboration of Haryana State Council for Science and Technology (Deptt. of Science and Technology) and National Council of Science Museums (NCSM), Ministry of Culture, Govt. of India. This planetarium has been built at a cost of Rs. 6.50 crore which has been shared equally between Govt. of India and Govt. of Haryana. The Planetarium has a 12 metre dome with the seating capacity of 120 persons, having an area of 5 acres of land and is located on Kurukshetra -Pehowa Road near Jyotisar.

The Planetarium, named after a scintillating daughter of Haryana, has been developed for imparting non-formal education in Astronomy among the masses. The excellent programmes and the supporting exhibits placed indoors and outdoors will help the people at large and students in particular in learning this frontier area of science and satisfy their curious minds with wide range of information about the universe.

The work on the project was conducted by the NCSM, Ministry of Culture, Govt. of India. The planetarium is being run by Haryana State Council for Science & Technology. A programme titled "Oasis in Space" (both in Hindi & English) and another programme titled "A Peak into Kalpana's Dream and Beyond" are available to be shown to the visitors. The equipment installed in the planetarium is latest in this region and has been imported from USA.

### **National Cadet Corps**

The National Cadet Corps (NCC) was introduced in 1948-49 as part of educational programme to develop qualities of leadership, unity and discipline. Later in July, 1963 after the Chinese Aggression, it was made compulsory for all able-bodied undergraduate students at college level. In 1969 two other programmes, namely, the NSS (National Services Scheme) and the sports were introduced as an alternative to NCC which is no longer compulsory. NCC training is

imparted regularly during the academic session and through outdoor camps.

N.C.C. is organised in the district through Group Headquarters, Ambala Cantt. It has under its jurisdiction 10 Haryana BN NCC Kurukshetra, 2<sup>nd</sup> Haryana Air Sqn. NCC, Karnal and 1 Haryana Girls BN NCC, Ambala Cantt. These Battalions cover cadets of senior division in colleges and junior division in High/ Senior Sec. Schools.

After the re-organization of the district in 1989, the NCC Training is being imparted to 373 cadets (Boys) Senior Division. 600 Junior Division Air Wing Cadets are also imparted training in NCC through their respective battalions i.e. 1 Haryana Girls BN NCC, Ambala Cantt and 2<sup>nd</sup> MR Air Sqn. NCC, Karnal.

#### **National Service Scheme**

National Service Scheme (N.S.S.) was introduced in the educational programme of the country in 1969. The scheme was adopted in the colleges of Haryana during 1970-71. It aims at educating the students through community service. It enriches the students personality and deepens their understanding of the social environment in which they live. It helps the students to develop an awareness and knowledge of the social reality and to have a concern for the well being of the community.

Under the scheme, the students undertake activities designed to tackle social problems and promote social welfare. Its activities are multifarious and include adult education, tree plantations, family and child care, rural cleanliness, blood donation, etc. N.S.S. volunteers also render valuable help at the time of natural calamities like floods and famines.

N.S.S. training is imparted regularly at camps. The scheme is prevailing almost in all the colleges of the district. In 2003-04, 10,218 students (5,198 boys and 5020 girls) in various colleges of the district had opted for the scheme.

#### **Sports**

Sports activities in the district include school tournaments, panchayat tournaments and open tournaments. The sports activities in the district are organised by the District Sports and Youth Welfare

Officer who is assisted by 22 Coaches-18 of Sports Department, Haryana and 4 of Sport Authority of India.

**Coaching Centres.-** Sports Department runs 21 Coaching Centres in the district for promotion of sports. School and college students and departmental/club players regularly attend these centres for specialised training in sports. To prepare them for competitions, coaching camps for selected teams of the district are held from time to time. Talented young players are sent to centralised state level coaching camps where they get advanced training and camps are held separately for school and college students every year during vacations.

**Tournaments.-** The Coaches co-ordinate the sports activities at the district level and organize school/ college tournaments. To promote sports in rural areas, the District Sports and Youth Welfare Officer organises tournaments at the block level.

District Olympic Association and other Sports Organisations in the district also promote sports. They organise exhibition matches of outside teams with local teams.

**Stadia.-** Named after Guru Dronacharya of Mahabharata, Dron Stadium was built at Kurukshetra in 1985 at a cost of Rs. 10 lacs. Spread over an area of 9 acres, it is located in the Urban Estate. It has sitting capacity for 1,000 spectators and has track for 400 metre athletic and playgrounds for cricket, hockey, basketball, lawn-tennis, kho-kho, *kabaddi*, volleyball and badminton. It has also arrangements for wrestling, boxing and judo. Number of district and state level sports competitions have been organised in this stadium. A Gymnasium Hall has also been built during 1989-90 at a cost of Rs. 15.17 lacs where boxing and badminton players are given training on modern lines.

**Yoga Bhawan.-**A Yoga Bhawan has been built at Kurukshetra during 1990-91 at a cost of Rs. 9.21 lacs where a Yoga Coach imparts training in Yoga.

**Swimming Pool.-**A swimming pool has been constructed at Kurukshetra at a cost of Rs. 35.60 lacs.

**Scholarships.-**To encourage young players who are good at games, the State Government awards sports scholarship in the form of cash and prizes and honours the young players for their excellent

performance under the Bhim, Arjun, Daronacharya and Rajiv Gandhi Award Schemes.

### **Libraries**

Libraries provide ample opportunity to the educated masses to augment their knowledge and keep abreast of the latest developments in various fields. Library movement remained neglected till independence. Only a few educational institutions had libraries which were meant for their students and staff. It was only after independence that importance of libraries in the dissemination of knowledge was felt and libraries were established in towns mainly by Municipal Committees and in villages by Panchayats.

Kurukshetra University and various colleges also maintain their own well stocked libraries. Kurukshetra University library was established in 1956. The library is stocked with more than 3,00,000 books and subscribes to 450 periodicals and journals on various subjects. Library is maintaining manuscripts and rare books besides Haryana Religion Study Cell, providing services to students and teachers. Total members of the library are 8842. A number of schools in the district also maintain libraries. A brief account of District Library, Kurukshetra and various Municipal Libraries in the district is given below:-

**District Library, Kurukshetra.-** Established in January, 1986, the library is located in a rented building in Sector 13, Urban Estate. It contains 16,000 books on various subjects and subscribes to 11 newspapers and 35 periodicals. It has a reading room, a reference section and a children section. The library has 1650 members on its roll. The library has been awarded national level RRRLF award and a special prize of Rs. 25,000/- for North Zone for the year 2001.

**Municipal Library, Thanesar.-** Located in the premises of Municipal Office near Krishna Gate, this library was established in 1956. It contains 8,844 books on various subjects and subscribes to a number of journals and periodicals.

**Municipal Library, Shahabad.-** It was established in 1953 by Municipal Committee, Shahabad and is located on library road. It contains 8,492 books on various subjects and subscribes to 10 journals and periodicals.



**Municipal Library, Ladwa.**-Municipal Committee, Ladwa maintains a library-cum-reading room. It contains 1000 books and subscribes to three newspapers. Gram Panchayats of Umri and Mirjapur have also established libraries in their respective villages.

**Shri Krishna Museum Kurukshetra.**-Krishna, the embodiment of intellectual and spiritual glory has been a subject of adoration ever since the character got deified as a God. His versatile personality made him a Deity. Unfolding the mystery of Krishna is virtually an enchanting experience as every time you untwine the fabric of Krishna you discover a new dimension in it. The divinity and human aspect of Krishna as revealed by his character in the literature is unparalleled in the history of human civilization. He has been a source of perennial inspiration to art and literature. He is the most popular character in Indian myths and legends.

Every museum has its own character and personality. With a view to awaken the people morally and culturally through the ideas and ideals of Krishna and to enlighten the people about the history of the region, Sri Krishna Museum was established in 1987. Subsequently, it was shifted to the present building in 1991 and new block was added in the year 1995.

The artifacts displayed in the museum represent Krishna as Godhead, as incarnation (*avtara*) of Vishnu, a great philosopher, an epic hero, an astute statesman and a supreme lover. The personality and teachings of Krishna have permeated into the national ethos and his exploits and miracles are a source of inspiration for the artistic expressions manifested in all parts of the country in their traditional folk and classical art forms.

The major collections of first gallery pertaining to Krishna theme consists of a variety of art objects such as wood carvings, metal castings and ivory carvings.

Second gallery is chiefly devoted to the archaeological objects. It includes potsherds of ancient Kurukshetra region, antiquities of Dwarka and stone sculptures on Krishna-Vishnu theme. Kurukshetra has a rich heritage of art, architecture and culture as revealed by its artifacts in the forms of stone icons, terracotta, potteries and architectural members. The gallery presents potsherds of the Harappan

period, P.G.W. (*Mahabharata*) period and historical period. Besides, this gallery also displays some exquisite stone sculptures ranging from 1<sup>st</sup> to 10<sup>th</sup> century A.D. recovered from various parts of Haryana and Mathura.

Third gallery contains some exquisite miniature paintings, pals leaf etchings and some illustrated manuscripts. The cynosure of all eyes is on the collection of *Pahari* and *Rajasthani* paintings and the murals on the octagonal parapet wall depicting the episodes of *Mahabharata*.

Fourth gallery houses nine tableaux depicting the episodes of the life and exploits of Krishna. The episodes are: birth of Krishna, Krishna stealing butter, Krishna lifting mount Goverdhana, Krishna subduing serpent Kaliya, *Rasa*- the cosmic dance, Krishna killing Kansa, Krishna with Radha on the occasion of solar eclipse at Kurukshetra and Krishna delivering the eternal message of Gita to Arjuna. The mannequins of these tableaux are made of paper Mache and clay.

Fifth gallery of the museum contains Thanjavur paintings having brilliant colour scheme with an extensive use of gold leaf and semi-precious stones. The theme of child Krishna constitutes the main subject matter of these paintings. In this gallery, there are several representations of Krishna theme in the distinctive Thanjavur style.

Sixth gallery of the museum has a fine collection of *Madhubani* paintings on paper. On the parapet wall, one finds eight such murals with a suitable background of mud wall by using a coat of clay mixed with paper pulp on ply board. These panels show a sequence of major events of Krishna's life from his birth to the episode of Kansa killing (*Vadha*). Opposite to the panels of *Madhubani* painting is another parapet wall that displays *patachitras*, folk painting of Orissa depicting the scenes from the *Mahabharata* and *Harivamsa Purana*.

### **Culture**

Around Kurukshetra region a civilization took shape which is one of the longest in the course of world history. History of ancient India opens on the land of Kurukshetra. Indian tradition regards the

land of Kurukshetra as the seat of creation and the cradle of Indian culture and civilization.. The fabric of Hindu mythology is woven around Gods, most of whom are associated with Kurukshetra in one way or the other. The valleys of the sacred rivers Saraswati and Drishdwati resounded with the first chanting of vedic hymens and witnessed evolution of moral and ethical values. The region was considered as a source of great spiritual benefit because of the divine sacrifices which were performed here.

The *Puranic* tradition mentions the spiritual and material advancement of the region under the Kurus. The *Vamanapurana* describes the courage, intensive devotion and asceticism of Kuru and elaborates on the king's cultivation of the eight-fold ethical conduct of austerity (*tapas*), truth (*Satys*), forgiveness, (*Kshama*), kindness (*daya*), purity (*soucha*) charity (*dana*), *yoga* and continence (*brahmacharaya*). By his emphasis on cultivation of moral conduct, Kuru laid the foundation of that type of culture which was spiritual without being unworldly and material without being avaricious. It was this culture which was considered later on by the Manusamhita as "worthy of emulation by humanity all over the world." In this region were evolved those values, norms and ideas which determined the course of Indian society and culture across the ages.

Mahabharata makes mention about the high moral character of the people of the region. An idea about the cultural advancement of the people of this region can be had from the fact that even during its decline, it was acknowledged as the home of brahminical culture which attracted the people living in other parts of the country. The Brahmins of this area were held in reverential awe for their intellectual and spiritual attainments.

The archeological investigations, carried out in Kurukshetra region have also revealed existence of four proto-historic cultures. Around the middle of the third millennium B.C., the region had a culture ante-dating even the well known Indus civilization and, therefore, is termed as 'pre-Harappan'. Later on, the same millennium B.C. came in the Indus civilization. Early, in the second millennium B.C, another culture, popularly designated as 'Late Harappan', flourished in the region followed by the last proto-historic culture, the Painted Greyware, in the later half of the second millennium B.C. In

addition to the explorations of hundreds of mounds, the excavations conducted at Mirzapur and Bhagwanpura have thrown some welcome light on these cultures.

The Department of Youth and Cultural Affairs, Kurukshetra University organizes various Cultural Programmes. Literary Events, Fine Arts, Music, Dance, Drama etc. for the promotion and upliftment of culture. Various competitions like Youth Festival, Inter Zonal Youth Festival and Haryana Day State Level Youth Festival is being organized by Kurukshetra University. But the year of 1985 proved to be a turning point in the history of Kurukshetra University as its Department of Youth & Cultural Affairs conceived and executed the idea of celebrating the Haryana Day State Level Festival spreading over 3 days preceding immediately the 1<sup>st</sup> November. The Haryana Day festival attracts every year more than 1500 students, artists, teachers and professionals hailing from every nook and corner of the state. This function is the theme Festival of Haryana State and all items are performed in Haryanvi dialect. It is also called the Mahakumbh of Haryanvi culture.

28<sup>th</sup> Feb. 1985 was the turning point in Haryanvi culture when an experiment was made by presenting Haryanvi Orchestra in Tagore Theatre at Chandigarh which was followed by many Workshops and Seminars. This ensemble of Haryanvi folk instrument was later nomenclatured as Haryanvi Orchestra. It was then introduced as a competition in the Haryana Day Festival and also Youth Festival of Kurukshetra University. Later on, the other sister Universities of the State were also requested to start this competition.

Today, this is one of the most popular events of the youth festival of the State. This resulted not only in popularising the Haryanvi folk instrument but also has been able to provide respect and earning for the Folk Instrumentalists of Haryana. From the year 2003, another dimension has been added to the Haryana Day Festival. The Haryanvi pop song competition has been introduced to which there was tremendous response from the students.

### **Sculptures and Terracotta**

Indian mythology, which is still part of living culture, grants the place of prominence to this tract of land and the people inhabiting it. The association of Gods and other celestial being with this region

has found expressions in sculptures, terracotta and inscriptions. The region is full of sacred tanks and temples, some of which are very old like those of Thanesar, Pehowa and Amin. The discovery of sculptures and architectural remains from different ancient sites of the Kurukshetra region suggests that there existed many temples and shrines dedicated to various divinities. The Cakarswamin temple at Thanesar houses a very famous idol of Vishnu which was carried away by Mahmud Gazni in 11<sup>th</sup> century. A stone slab depicting four armed Ganapati with Siva and Parvati seated to his proper left, assigned to the late Gupta period was found at Amin. From Raja Karna-Ka- Qilla near Thanesar was recovered a small terracotta mould for casting figures of Sri, the Goddess of prosperity, and the lower half of a terracotta relief which might have represented Siva and Parvati standing side by side. Among the inscriptions, the one from the Garibnath temple at Pehowa, of Samvat 276, records the construction of temple of Yajna-Varaha. An undated Prasasti of the time of Mahendrapala from the same place mentions the creation of triple temples of Vishnu by three brothers. The sculptural remains of the temples reveal a massive *chakra* and *gada* indicating the size of the figures of Vishnu while its side panels depict Siva-Parvati and Brahma-Saraswati. The sculptures show maturity in form and expression. Among other remains at Pehowa, mention may be made of a door frame now fixed at the nearly mound of Vishvamitra tirtha is a beautiful carving in sandstone depicting the three River Goddesses Ganga, Yamuna and the Saraswati. Some unidentified images were discovered by Rodgers at village Bhor Saidan. Two inscribed red sandstone railing pillars assigned to the Sunga Kushana period have been discovered at Amin. The possibility of the existence of the temples of Sun God at Kurukshetra and its vicinity has been attested by the discovery of many *Kundas*. Two *Kundas* and two temples at Amin are dedicated to Aditi and Surya.

Under the Pratihara-Tomara rule, Thanesar developed into a centre of lithic art. Earlier, the poet Bana has also referred to the sculptors busy chiseling and carrying stone for building purposes. Hinduism was then the most popular form of religion as is attested by the discovery of several pieces of sculptures from the region. A few belonging to this period were discovered near the Faridkot Memorial at Thanesar. This group of sculptures contains the images of Siva-

Parvati, Vishnu Seshasayi, a miniature temple and a *Yoni* surrounded by attending deities. Another four armed Vishnu image seen in the Sthanishwara Mahadev temple at Thanesar is remarkable for its balanced form and symmetrical composition. Other sculptural pieces recovered from Thanesar are *Varaha* (or Boar incarnation of Vishnu) on a small panel, Isana, Surya and Rewata. A temple complex of the Gurjara Pratihara period from the mound of Sakhaji-ka -Tilla and a fine sculpture of Vrishavahana Uma Mahesvara of the same period have been recovered from village Bahari. One image of six headed Kartikeya, assignable to c. 10<sup>th</sup> Century A.D. has been recovered from Thanesar. Of the Sakta images, the sculptures of Parvati, Durga and Chamunda have been recovered from the region. The Mahisarumardini images recovered one each from Pehowa and Thanesar belong to c. 9<sup>th</sup> Century A.D. Pehowa has also yielded a Boar-headed *Simhavahini* assignable to c. 8<sup>th</sup>-9<sup>th</sup> century A.D. A stone slab bearing a four armed seated figure of Ganesha with Siva and Parvati belonging to later Gupta period was found at Amin. Some remains of Jain sculptures have also been recovered from the district.

Some terracotta figurines and plaques recovered from a number of sites furnish valuable information regarding art. These figurines represent deities, human beings and animal forms. The excavations at Raja Karan -Ka -Qilla have brought to light a variety of hand modeled or moulded figurines fashioned in the typical style of the Maurya, Sungha and Kusana periods. The plaques discovered from several sites depict different scenes and figures. The terracotta plaque of the Gupta period from Asthipur site at Thanesar depicts two persons fighting each other. A terracotta plaque from Pehowa shows a royal person in the typical Gupta style. Another terracotta plaque from Pehowa depicts a gate keeper (*Dwarpal*). The plaque belongs to c.4<sup>th</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> Century A.D.

Various other finds such as household objects, ornaments, tools, weapons, pottery etc. and the structural remains usually encountered in the excavations throw valuable light on the material culture of pre-historic period.

### **Literature**

The district has been a great centre of literary activities from the ancient period. The bulk of Vedic literature was composed by

great seers in their *Ashrams* located on the banks of the sacred river Saraswati. *Rig Veda*, the oldest work in the world, was composed in this region. It is very difficult to determine the age of the *Vedas* and the time when these were actually composed, as scholars differ on this issue. While according to Max Muller, *Vedas* were composed before 1000 B.C., Lokmanya Tilak puts the period 6000 B.C. Yet many other scholars are of the view that *Vedas* were composed between 2000 and 2500 B.C. A little later, when Sanskrit language developed in its classical form, a lot of vedic literature by most of the Brahmanas, Aranyakas and Vedangas were composed here. A detailed scrutiny of the Mahabharata leaves us in no doubt that a major portion of the great epic was also composed here. About this time, Lord Krishna recited the Gita at Kurukshetra and Manu wrote his great Smriti (Manusmriti) sitting on the banks of the Saraswati at *Prithudaka* (Pehowa).

A lot of Sanskrit literature was also composed here in the post-Mahabharata period, the time of the Guptas and the Pushpabhusis being especially productive. The bulk of the *Puranas* were composed here in this period. These were followed by three dramas of Harsha the scholar-king of Thanesar i.e. *Ratnawali*, *Priyadarshini* and *Naganandam*. These dramas are rated as the best in Sanskrit literature, those of Kalidasa being an exception. Of course, Bana the court poet of Harsha was also a great scholar like his master; his two works *Harshacharita* and *Kadambari* occupy a prestigious place in contemporary literature.

Continued onslaughts of Muslim invaders from the 11<sup>th</sup> century A.D. onwards, destroyed the age-old socio-cultural fabric of the district and adversely affected its literary traditions. In the area where bulk of Sanskrit literature was composed during ancient period, we hardly find mention of any renowned literary figure of Sanskrit literature during mediaeval period. However, the district became a centre of Persian literature during this period. Some of the renowned figures of Persian literature were either born here or composed their works. In this regard, mention may be made of Ahmad Thanasari, who was a learned man and author of several works in Persian and Arabic. He worked as letter writer in the court of Firuz Shah. Sheikh Abdul Qudis who lived in the reign of Humayun, was a great author and scholar. He wrote a learned treatise in Persian on Muslim

theology which is available in published form under the title *Mystical Saying of Abdul Qudis*. Hazi Sultan of Thanesar was also a man of great literary wisdom. He was a great poet and a scholar. He knew Sanskrit, Arabic and Persian. He was a contemporary of Akbar who appointed him as a Kirori of Thanesar. He is reported to have translated Mahabharata into Persian under the title "Book of Wars". He was a profound and meticulous scholar. His other contemporary was Sheikh Abul Fatah of Thanesar who was profound scholar and authored several works not known to us today. Shah Miran Ji of Thaska village belonging to 17<sup>th</sup> Century was a great *Sufi* poet.

In Kurukshetra and its adjoining area, there was also the development of early Hindi literature which had its origin in prakrit works of the early medieval Jain authors and in the writings of the religious leaders of Siddha and Nath sects. Pehowa was one of the chief centres of Nath order in this region. Rup Chand Pande of village Salempur wrote a number of works (between A.D. 1623 and 1637) on Jain philosophy and religion. Ramkavi of Gharaunda (17<sup>th</sup> century) who later on settled in Thanesar produced a number of works on religious theme.

Kurukshetra has also remained a centre of Nirmala sect of the Sikhs. Bhai Gulab Singh of this sect was an author of reputed and composed nearly 25 works on spiritual theme between Samvat 1834 to 1846. Prominent among his works are *Bhavarsamrata Mokshapantha Prakasha*, *Adhyatma Ramayana*, *Karmavipaka* and *Prabodha Chandrodaya*.

The literary traditions in the district were continued in the succeeding period by a number of scholars and poets. Umadas of Thanesar-one of the scholars employed by Patiala State for the translation of the Mahabharata into Hindi (*five parvas*) and the author of numerous works including the one titled "Kurukshetra Mahatmya" and Jafar Khan of Thanesar whose two works *Tarikh-i-Ajaba* and *Tarikh-i-Ajib* of 1884 deserve mention. Among others who made their contribution to Hindi literature during 19<sup>th</sup> Century were Dharma Singh, Atma Singh, Jai Ram, Ram Singh, Garud Dhvaj and Brahmanand.

The district also made its contribution towards growth of Urdu literature. Sayyad Inayat Ali of Thanesar is said to have written eight



books in Urdu. Among contemporary Urdu writers, Bal Krishan Muztar has his own place. The district has also enriched the Haryanvi folk lore. A Muslim poet Ahmad Baksh of Thanesar wrote Ramayan in Haryanvi dialect. This has been edited by Bal Krishan Muztar and published by Haryana Sahitya Akademi.

In recent times, a Sanskrit scholar from Thanesar Late Pandit Sthanu Dutt Sharma was honored by Haryana Government and the President of India for his services to Sanskrit language and literature.

### **Architecture**

The district has also made its mark in the field of architecture. Architectural development in the district covers a long period. The earliest remains of the builder's are those of the pre-historic settlements. Some excavations carried out in the district testify the fact that there were set patterns of habitats in Harappan and post-Harappan periods.

During ancient period, temples and palaces reflected the architecture of the time. Bana Bhat throws valuable light on the city planning and architecture during 7<sup>th</sup> Century A.D. The description in Harishcharita refers to Prabhakar Vardhana's capital Sthaniswara, where houses appear to have been single or multi-storeyed, white washed or plastered with stucco. There is reference to the polishing of mosaic floors of red lead, apparently in the King's palace, as well as to the painting pictures on the walls. Rest houses, gardens and fresh water tanks were common features of a city. The city streets, apart from the highways, seem to have been narrow and zig zag.

Bana specially mentions about elegant temples and splendid palaces of Sthaniswara (Thanesar). Hieun Tsiang also refers to the existence of three Buddhist monasteries and 100 Deva temples. He testifies the existence of 200 feet high *stupa* to the northwest of Thanesar. The *stupa* was built by Ashoka. One can still see the remnant of a ruined fort measuring one kilometer long and 75 metre wide mound at Thanesar. Tradition assigns the construction of the Thanesar fort to Raja Dalip, a descendant of Kuru. Spooner states that it was most probably founded by Harsha Vardhana. The fort is said to have 52 towers of bastions some of which still exist. Most of the temples were demolished by Muslim invaders from time to time and

other buildings and historic monuments belonging to ancient period could not survive the fury of the time. The remains of some of these can still be seen in and around Kurukshetra.

During medieval period, building activity in the district was deeply influenced by Persian and Mughal architecture. A few inscriptions in Persian found in the district belonging to reigns of Muhammad Tughlaq, Bahlol Lodi, Sikandar Lodhi and Humayun refer to the construction of mosques by the local officers. There was great building activity during this period. But most of the buildings and monuments of this period are almost in ruins. Among notable structures which have survived the fury of the time, mention may be made of Pathariya Masjid, the tombs of Sheikh Jalal-ud-din and Sheikh Chehali, the Madrasa and the Chiniwali Masjid.

It may be concluded that it was in religious architecture that the genius of builders played a significant role in creating, developing and perfecting a number of significant forms. Perhaps the highest achievement of district architecture is seen in the temples and tanks. With their Straight heights and dignified proportions, varied forms and wealth of carvings the temples are most impressive structures.

### **Music**

Music has been an integral part of cultural life of Kurukshetra region. It has always been regarded as a major branch of fine arts. In ancient time, almost all women of higher ranks were trained in music and the people took delight in it. At the Royal palaces, it was the chief source of entertainment and amusement. At the palaces, music was commonly patronised and daily routine of the kings and princes was inaugurated with the sound of musical instruments. Various social and religious celebrations were unthinkable without music.

During the reign of Harsha, Thanesar was known for its *Sangitgriha*. According to Bana Bhat, the city of Thanesar was the music hall for aspirant musicians and a city of Gandharva for singers. People in general too had interest in music. Describing the women of Srikantha *Janapada*, Bana wrote that they were fond of playing on *veena*.

A brief review of the cultural history would show that these activities remained dormant in the last nearly 1000 years due to

successive foreign invasions. It was only after independence that efforts were made to revive ancient glory of this region. Establishment of Kurukshetra University in 1956 was a landmark in the cultural history of the district in post-independence period. University has played a very significant role in creating new cultural-consciousness in the district by laying special emphasis on the promotion of cultural pursuits like literature, fine arts, music, dance, drama, etc. Other educational institutions also gave prominence to cultural activities and partake in cultural competitions and youth festivals organized at regional and University levels. In the past few years, literary and cultural societies have also been formed in urban areas of the district which organize various programmes to promote literary and cultural activities.