

## CHAPTER – 3

### DEMOGRAPHIC AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC PROFILE OF THE MUSLIM SETTLEMENTS OF DARJEELING TOWN UNDER STUDY

#### 3.1: Introduction

The present chapter is the socio-economic and demographic profile of the Muslim communities of Darjeeling where in ten broad subheadings a concise socio-demographic profile of the Muslims are depicted. The composition of population is the internal structure of a community with respect to some demographic traits at a particular point of time helps us in proper understanding of the dynamics of a community or social group. The most popular or particular concerns of a composition of population to an Anthropologists are age sex distribution, marital status, education, economic characteristics, family type, land holding pattern and etc. Muslims in the Darjeeling town are a small minority group not only in religious sense but also in their numerical strength. They constitute approximately less than 4 percent (speculated from 2001 religious census) of the total population of the town (both the permanent and temporary settlers) and concentrated mostly in a locality named butcher *basti*. Prior to the present study, there is no original work on the demographical profile of the Muslims of Darjeeling Himalaya. And hence, the present study is a significant attempt to make a socio-economic and demographic profile of the Muslim communities living in Darjeeling town.

#### 3.2: Profile of the Muslim Settlements under Study

The present study is conducted in Muslim settlements of Darjeeling town which includes Butcher *basti*, *Kakjhora*, *Tungsung basti*, *Darogabazar* and *Lebong*. Out of all these settlements Butcher

*basti* is an oldest settlement where the majority of the Muslims are concentrated. The rest settlements are gradually developed later though the families residing there are very few and majority of them are temporary settlers of the town. During the colonial periods the Muslims were concentrated only in Butcher *basti* which is situated just below the mall road. However, on the basis of the population concentration, the Muslim habitation at the town may be divided into three broad categories. These are - high concentration (more than 50 families) which includes only Butcher *basti*, medium concentration (20-50 families) which includes only *Kakjhora* and low concentration (less than 20 families) which includes the families together living in *Tungung*, *Lebong* and *Darogabazar*.

However, the exact date of the establishment of this *basti* is undiscovered as the old municipality building was burnt along with old records in 20<sup>th</sup> November, 1996. But it is to be believed that the *basti* was populated by the Muslims just after the formation of the town as a good number of Muslim occupational castes were migrated to cater the urban necessity of the Europeans and the other dwellers. It was the Muslim caste group or *jat Kureshi*, who were traditionally engaged in the profession of animal chopping particularly of beef and mutton, came to the town and settled just above the present mall road region. From that time, the settlement of these butchers was termed as butcher *basti*. The *basti* is now in between *Mantulal jhora* and *Jiten jhora* and covers two wards of present Darjeeling Municipality. *Lebong* is also a very old Muslim settlement but the families residing there is very low. Only some Nepali Muslims are residing there. Though the area is under *Panchyat* jurisdiction but the studies areas are under Municipality. *Kakjhora* is situated just below the Darjeeling railway station and it is exclusively resided by some Tibetan Muslim families. *Tungung* is also a very small Muslim settlement of Multi ethnic characters which is situated just below the mall. *Darogabazar* is just above the old taxi stand where the Darjeeling *Jama Masjid* is situated.

Majority of the Muslim families of this area are Bihari Muslims and a good number of them are temporary settlers.

Housing establishes a major part in ensuring the continuity of community life. It constitutes the most universal forms of material culture in human society. More than half of the Muslims of Darjeeling town (58.94%) is found living in Butcher *basti* and the rest are found scattered in various places of the town. It is calculated from the studied households that only 32.45 percent Muslims have their own accommodation or houses or flats and among them 80.76 percent families are belong to Tibetan Muslims, the most well off section of the Muslim community of Darjeeling hills. Where as 67.54 percent of Muslims are living in rented houses from generation after generation. Except the *Kashmiris*, who never buy any property in Darjeeling town as still they consider Kashmir as their homeland, the majority *Nepali* Muslims (73.33%) are living in the rented accommodation.

Table: 3.1

**Distribution of Households Occupying Own or Rented Accommodation in Darjeeling Town**

Category	Nepali Muslim	Bihari Muslim	Tibetan Muslim	Kashmiri Muslim	Total
Own	20 (26.66%)	8 (21.05%)	21 (80.76%)	-	49 (32.45%)
Rented	55 (73.33%)	30 (78.94%)	5 (19.23%)	12 (100%)	102 (67.54%)
Total	75 (100%)	38 (100%)	26 (100%)	12 (100%)	151 (100%)

It is very important to point out here that majority of the rented houses in Butcher *basti* are *wakf* property and the Muslims pay room rent to *Anjuman-E-Islamia*, the controlling authority of Darjeeling *wakf* properties.

Fig: 3.1

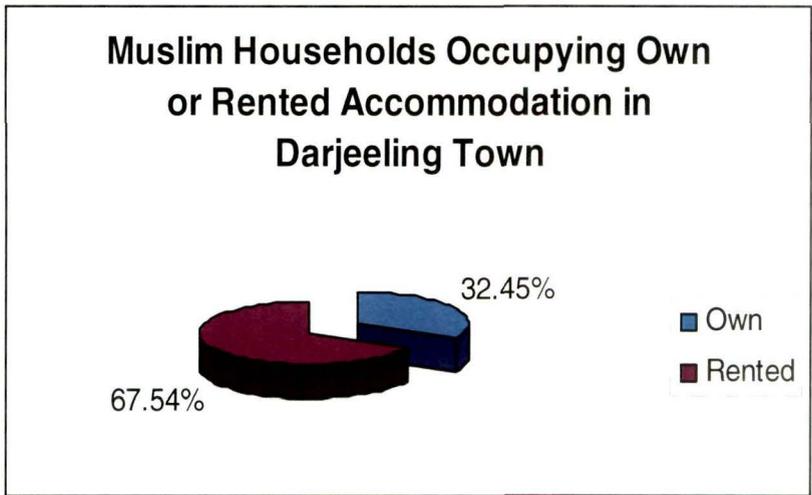
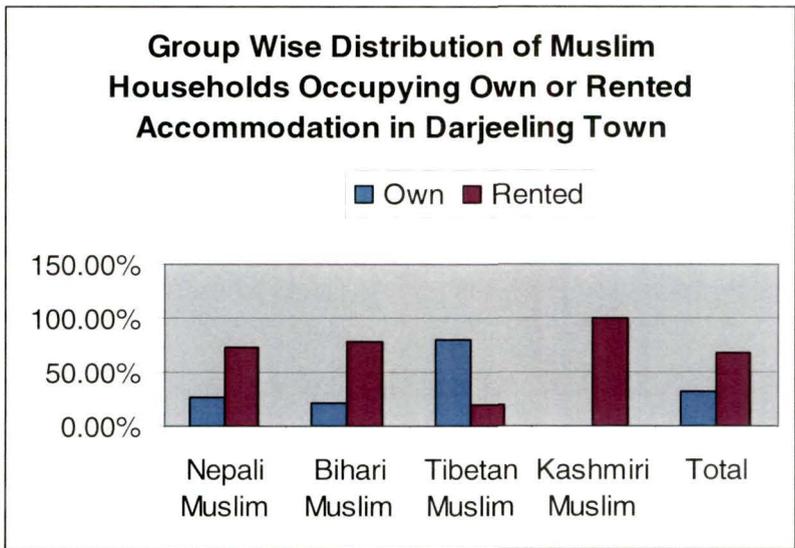


Fig. 3.1 and 3.2 shows the distribution of Muslim households in Darjeeling town on the basis of accommodation.

Fig: 3.2



The rapid population growth in Darjeeling town forced the Muslims to live in almost a slum type environment in their locality or more particularly in the Butcher *basti*. Historically the Muslims are living in Butcher *basti* along with some few low caste Nepali Hindus. But the Nepali speaking migrants gradually increased in numbers and captured a good number of places which can be suitable for the

expansion of Muslim households after the family of procreation. It is very unfortunate for the Muslims that a good number of them are forced to living in one room tenements. It is also observed that the housing construction of both rented and owned houses are not keeping pace with the increase of individuals in their families and the families often broke to live outside of their father's place.

### **3.3: Muslim Population in the Town**

The Muslim population of the town Darjeeling is highly diverse and divided into four broad groups on the basis of their place of migration and ancestry viz. *Nepali* Muslims, *Bihari* Muslims, *Bhote* Muslims or Tibetan Muslims and Kashmiri Muslims. This category is constructed by the Muslim themselves of the town and each one is considered as a separate social group within the frame of the Muslim community living in Darjeeling town. There is no proper record of the Muslim households living permanently generation after generation in Darjeeling town though Muslims are considered one of the major religious minority communities and a large number of them are seasonal migrants or not settled permanently in the town. However, the present study is limited only 151 Muslim families who have been residing permanently at least three generations in the town.

Since the very formation of the town Darjeeling, Muslims were usually come to reside in a locality just above the present day mall road. As initially the Muslim butchers were the habitants of that place, the locality was thus later known as butcher *basti* by all. And the Muslims generally made settlement there as mostly Muslims were then living in a relative isolation from their Hindu counterparts. Exclusively the *basti* was then domiciled by the Muslims but soon it loses its homogeneity as a large number of Nepali speaking caste and tribes migrated to Darjeeling and make settlement there. And after independence the *basti* is converted into a multi ethnic character yet Muslims are the dominant majority there.

Muslims of the town are largely divided into four broad categories. The *Nepali* and *Bihari* Muslims are the decedents of the Muslim migrants migrated from various districts of Bihar and Uttar Pradesh. The Kashmiri Muslims are all from Indian state of Jammu & Kashmir and there are only 12 Kashmiri Muslim families residing permanently in Darjeeling town. The Tibetan Muslim families are all migrated from Tibet after the Chinese occupation there and the numbers of total families are 26. As all the Tibetan and Kashmiri Muslims were migrated from Tibet and Kashmir respectively, table number 3.1 only shows the places of origin or migration of *Nepali* and *Bihari* Muslims exclusively.

**Table: 3.2**  
**Place of Origin of the Nepali and Bihari Muslim Groups (ancestral place)**

Category	UP	Districts of Bihar					Others places	Total
		Sitamari	Chapra	Siwan	Patna	Other districts		
Nepali Muslims	9 (64.28%)	12 (70.58%)	11 (68.75%)	7 (28%)	23 (88.46)	10 (83.33%)	3 (100%)	75 (66.37%)
Bihari Muslims	5 (35.71%)	5 (29.41%)	5 (31.25%)	18 (72%)	3 (11.53)	2 (16.66%)	-	38 (33.62%)
Total	14 (100%)	17 (100%)	16 (100%)	25 (100%)	26 (100%)	12 (100%)	3 (100%)	113 (100%)

There are 14 families whose ancestors were come from Uttar Pradesh and only 3 families have an ancestry from the rest of Colonial Indian states. Besides the rest of the families of *Nepali* and *Bihari* Muslims have an ancestry from various districts of present day Bihar and Uttar Pradesh. There are four major districts of Bihar from where their ancestors were come viz. Sitamari, Chapra and Patna.

However, on the basis of the population concentration, the Muslim habitation at the town may be divided into three broad categories.

These are -

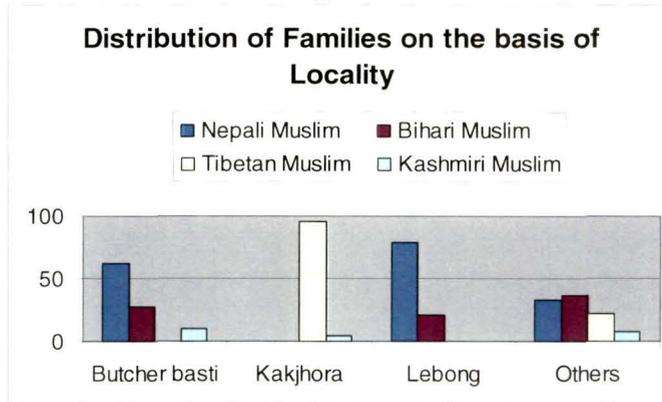
- ◆ High concentration (more than 50 families)
- ◆ Medium concentration (20-50 families)
- ◆ Low concentration (less than 20 families)

**Table: 3.3**  
**Distribution of Muslim Families on the basis of Localities**

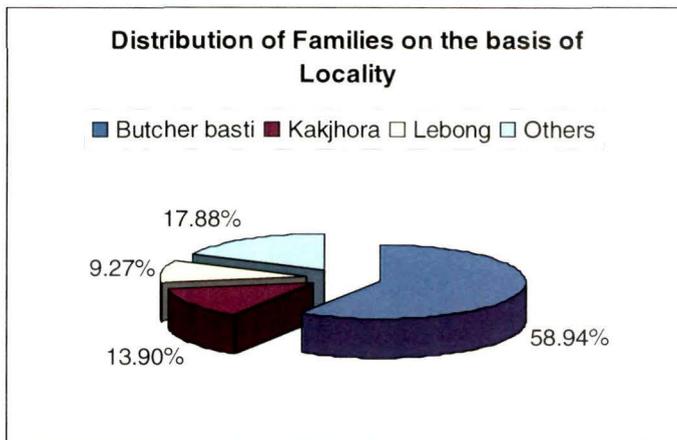
Category	Area of Living				Total
	Butcher Basti	Kakjhora	Lebong	Others*	
Nepali Muslims	55 (61.79%)	-	11 (78.57%)	9 (33.33%)	75 (49.66%)
Bihari Muslims	25 (28.08%)	-	3 (21.42%)	10 (37.03%)	38 (25.16%)
Tibetan Muslims	-	20 (95.23%)	-	6 (22.22%)	26 (17.21%)
Kashmiri Muslims	9 (10.11%)	1 (4.76%)	-	2 (7.40%)	12 (7.94%)
Total	89 (58.94%)	21 (13.90%)	14 (9.27%)	27 (17.88%)	151 (100%)

(\*Others include *Tungung Basti, Darogabazar* and other scattered Muslim habitation)

**Fig: 3.3**



**Fig: 3.4**



There are total 89 families (58.94%) in Butcher *basti* and out of them 61.79 percent are *Nepali* Muslims, 28.08 percent are *Bihari* Muslims and 10.11 percent are Kashmiri Muslims. There is not a single Tibetan family in the *basti*. *Kakjhora* (13.90%) is exclusively the den for *Bhote* or Tibetan Muslim families and considered a prosperous locality for well to do families of Darjeeling town. 95.23 percent Tibetan families are living there along with a single (4.76%) Kashmiri Muslim family. *Lebong* is considered a low concentrated Muslim locality where 9.27 percent Muslim families are found and mostly populated by *Nepali* Muslim and few *Bihari* Muslim families. Out of total families in *Lebong*, 78.57 percent are *Nepali* Muslims and the rest 21.42 percent are *Bihari* Muslims. These are the three min locality of Muslim concentration. The category 'others' include *Tungsung basti*, *Darogabazar* and other scattered Muslim habitation. 17.88 percent families are residing in various places including the above noted places. And among them majority are *Bihari* families (37.03%) then the *Nepali* Muslims (33.33%), the *Bhote* or Tibetan Muslims are 22.22 percent and 7.4 percent are *Kashmiri* families.

### 3.4: Age and Sex Composition

Age and sex is considered the principal variables for almost all the classifications and categorizations related to population characteristics. The age sex structure is the basic demographic determinant of a group or community. There are total 737 individuals under study and 382 are males and 355 are females and the sex ratio of the Muslims of Darjeeling is 929.31 females per 1000 males. From the table 3.4 the age group wise sex distributions of Muslim groups are shown. There are total 362 *Nepali* individuals and out of them 182 are male and 180 are female.

The population is maximum in the age group of 21-25 years (54 in number and 14.91 in percent) and the population is low in the age group of 61-65 years (1.93%). Among the *Nepali* Muslim community

**Table: 3.4**  
**Age Sex Distribution of the Muslim Group**

Age group	Nepali Muslim			Bihari Muslim			Tibetan Muslim			Kashmiri Muslim			Grand Total
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	
0-5	10 5.49%	15 8.33%	25 6.90%	2 1.96%	8 8.69%	10 5.15%	7 9.58%	3 4.68%	10 7.29%	1 4%	-	1 2.27%	46 6.24%
6-10	11 6.04%	14 7.77%	25 6.90%	7 6.86%	8 8.69%	15 7.73%	8 10.95%	5 7.81%	13 9.48%	-	-	-	53 7.19%
11-15	14 7.69%	21 11.66%	35 9.66%	14 13.72%	5 5.43%	19 9.79%	6 8.21%	5 7.81%	11 8.02%	-	1 5.26%	1 2.27%	66 8.95%
16-20	19 10.43%	19 10.55%	38 10.49%	12 11.76%	15 16.30%	27 13.91%	9 12.32%	4 6.25%	13 9.48%	5 20%	5 26.31%	10 22.72%	88 11.94%
21-25	26 14.28%	28 15.55%	54 14.91%	13 12.74%	12 13.04%	25 12.88%	4 5.47%	6 9.37%	10 7.29%	2 8%	2 10.52%	4 9.09%	93 8.54%
26-30	19 10.43%	19 10.55%	38 10.49%	10 9.80%	6 6.52%	16 8.24%	4 5.47%	6 9.37%	10 7.29%	3 12%	1 5.26%	4 9.09%	68 9.22%
31-35	14 7.69%	14 7.77%	28 7.73%	7 6.86%	7 7.60%	14 7.21%	4 5.47%	7 10.93%	11 8.02%	-	1 5.26%	1 2.27%	54 7.32%
36-40	14 7.69%	16 8.88%	30 8.28%	5 4.90%	7 7.60%	12 6.18%	10 13.69%	5 7.81%	15 10.94%	2 8%	1 5.26%	3 6.81%	60 8.14%
41-45	12 6.59%	11 6.11%	23 6.35%	9 8.82%	7 7.60%	16 8.24%	3 4.10%	3 4.68%	6 4.37%	2 8%	3 15.78%	5 11.36%	50 6.78%
46-50	10 5.49%	11 6.11%	21 5.80%	8 7.84%	6 6.52%	14 7.21%	5 6.84%	3 4.68	8 5.83%	3 12%	3 15.78%	6 13.63%	49 6.64%
51-55	13 7.14%	4 2.22%	17 4.69%	5 4.90%	4 4.34%	9 4.63%	1 1.36%	2 3.12%	3 2.18%	3 12%	2 10.52%	5 11.36%	34 4.61%
56-60	10 5.49%	1 0.55%	11 3.03%	6 5.88%	2 2.19%	8 4.12%	3 4.10%	10 15.62%	13 9.48%	2 8%	-	2 4.54%	34 4.61%
61-65	3 1.64%	4 2.22%	7 1.93%	1 0.98%	2 2.19%	3 1.54%	5 6.84%	2 3.12%	7 5.10%	-	-	-	17 2.30%
66 & above	7 3.84%	3 1.66%	10 2.76%	3 2.94%	3 3.26%	6 3.09%	4 5.47%	3 4.68%	7 5.10%	2 8%	-	2 4.54%	25 3.39%
Total	182 100%	180 100%	362 100%	102 100%	92 100%	194 100%	73 100%	64 100%	137 100%	25 100%	19 100%	44 100%	737 100%

out of 362 individuals 85 are below the age of 16 years and 17 are above the age of 60 years. These are considered as dependent population though a considerable number of them are working regularly. However, the working population is 260 according to standard rule. Hence the dependency ration among the Nepali Muslims is 39.23. Commonly dependency ratio is an age population ratio of those typically not in the labor force (the dependent part) and those typically in the labor force (the productive part). It is used to measure the pressure on productive population.

Fig: 3.5

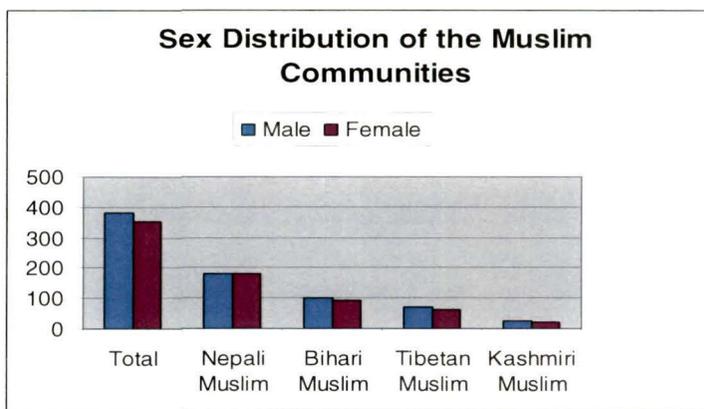
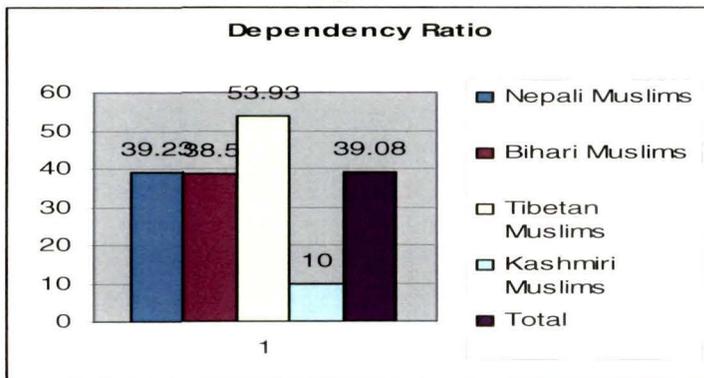


Fig: 3.6



There are 194 *Bihari* Muslims and out of them 102 are male and 92 are female. The sex ration of them is 901.96 female per thousand male. The maximum population is found in the age group of 16-20 years which is 13.91 percent and the lowest is in the age group of 61-65 years which

is 1.54 percent. Data shows that the dependent population among them are 129 and the working or productive part of their population is 335 and their dependency ratio is 38.50. The *Bhote* or Tibetan Muslims are only 137 and there are 73 male and 64 female. The sex ratio among themselves is 876.71 which is alarming in comparison to other Muslim groups in the town. Among the Tibetans the maximum population is in the middle age range of 36-40 years (10.94%). Population below 16 years is 34 and above 60 years is 14. They have a productive population of about 89. Hence their dependency ratio is 53.93. The Kashmiris are a very small but significant Muslim population in Darjeeling town. There are only 12 Kashmiri Muslim families in Darjeeling town and their total population is only 44 where 25 are male and 19 are female. The dependent part of their population is very low which is only 4 and the working or productive part is 40 individuals. Hence the dependency ratio is only 10 among the Kashmiri Muslim groups.

**Table: 3.5**  
**Distribution of Muslim Groups on the Basis of Sex Ratio**

Muslim Groups	Male	Female	Sex Ratio
Nepali Muslim	182	180	989.01
Bihari Muslim	102	92	901.96
Tibetan Muslim	73	64	876.71
Kashmiri Muslim	25	19	760
Total	382	355	929.31

**Fig: 3.7**

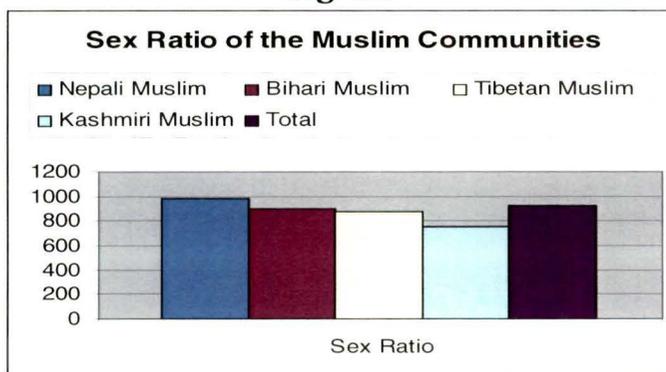


Table 3.5 and Fig. 3.7 shows the group wise sex ration of the Muslims. The total sex ration of the Muslims in Darjeeling is 929.31 which is below the National and state level. In comparison to the social groups within the Muslim community, the sex ration is quite satisfactory or better among the Nepali Muslims which is above both the national and state level. *Bihari* Muslims sex ratio is also below the national and state level. But the situation is alarming among the Tibetan and *Kashmiri* Muslims as it is 876.71 and 760 females per 1000 male respectively. Because of this situation these two communities are now collecting brides from the plains or other parts of the country.

Table: 3.6

#### Sex Ratio of Muslim Population According to Reproductive Status

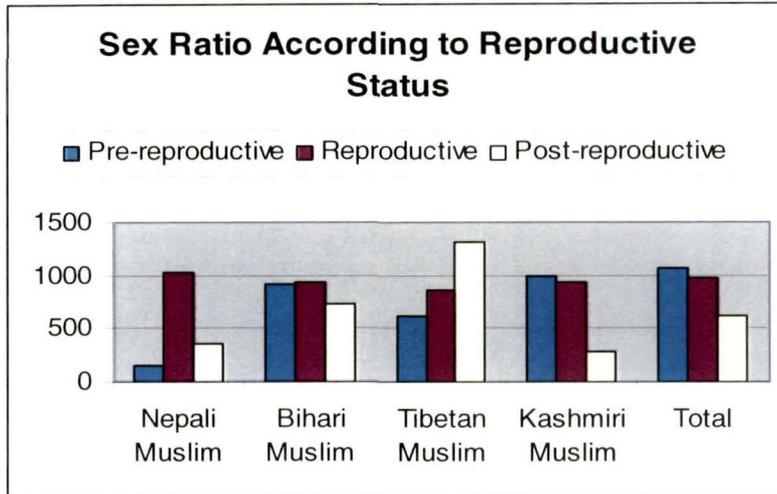
Category	Male	Female	Sex ratio
Pre-reproductive (0-15 years)	80 (20.94%)	85 (23.94%)	1062.5
Reproductive (16-50)	234 (61.25%)	228 (64.22%)	974.35
Post-reproductive (51 & above)	68 (17.80%)	42 (11.83%)	617.64
Total	382 (100%)	355 (100%)	929.31

Table 3.6 shows the total sex ration of the Muslims according to their reproductive status. Age group 0-15 is considered as pre-reproductive category, 16-50 years is considered as reproductive and 51 years and above is considered as post-reproductive category. Among the males 20.94 percent are in the category of pre-reproductive and the females are 23.64 percent. And the sex ration in pre-reproductive category is 1062.5. Where as 61.25 percent male are reproductive and 64.22 percent female are so. And the sex ratio is in this category is 974.35 female per 1000 male. There are 17.80 percent male and 11.83 percent female in the post-reproductive category. And the sex ration in post-reproductive period is only 617.64 female per 1000 male which is very low.

**Table: 3.7**  
**Distribution of Muslim population according to reproductive status (group wise)**

Age group	Nepali Muslim			Bihari Muslim			Tibetan Muslim			Kashmiri Muslim		
	Male	Female	Sex ratio	Male	Female	Sex ratio	Male	Female	Sex ratio	Male	Female	Sex ratio
Pre-reproductive (0-15 years)	35	50	1428.57	23	21	913.04	21	13	619.04	1	1	1000
Reproductive (16-50 years)	114	118	1035.08	64	60	937.5	39	34	871.79	17	16	941.17
Post reproductive (51 & above)	33	12	363.63	15	11	733.33	13	17	1307.69	7	2	285.71
Total	182	180	989.01	102	92	901.96	73	64	876.71	25	19	760

Fig: 3.8



### 3.5: Economic Status

Being the most important centre of trade and commerce of the entire Darjeeling hill region, the town Darjeeling accommodates a large number of Muslim groups specialized in various occupations and considered an important part of the urban complex of the town. The most common occupational pursuits of the Muslims in the town are medium or petty businesses. From the collected data for the present study (excluded students, house wife and not applicable category) reveals that 44.53 percent of the studied populations are in the occupation of businesses like grocer shop, stationary goods shop, cloth vendor, and many other small scale businesses without any permanent roof. The regular and casual wage labour category altogether ranked next in their occupations and almost all of them are from *Nepali* Muslim community. The occupation of animal slaughter or butcher is also a traditional occupation of some people which is 9.76 percent and all belongs to *Nepali* Muslim community. The *Nepali* Muslims are the most degraded or backward in terms of economy and occupation among the Muslim

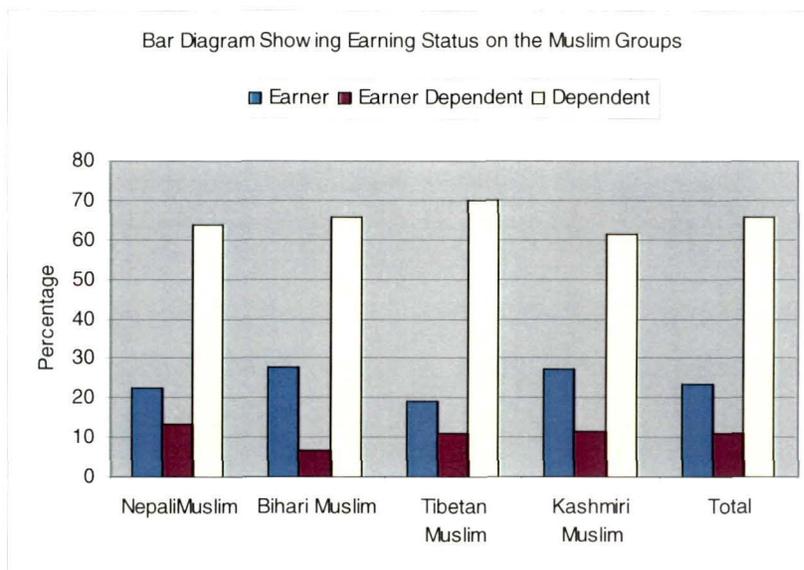
communities of Darjeeling. The *Bihari* Muslims are considered as a trading community and all the small scale business petty trading are done by them. The repairing shops of watch and spectacles near the two sides of cart road at *chack bazaar* are all owned by *Bihari* Muslims. The *Bhote* or Tibetan Muslims are most well off among the Darjeeling Muslim society and they are engaged in hotel and other businesses. The very small Muslim community in the town are the *Kashmiris* though these families residing here since the very inception of the town by the colonials. There are only 12 Kashmiri Muslim families in the town and except the great Habib Mallick's family all are connected with a network of kinship to each other. Their traditional occupation was selling woolen garments and handicrafts and still they are in the same business. All of them are curio shop owners and considered the richest section among the Muslims of the town. However, the details of their economy and occupational status are discussed in the chapter 4.

Muslims in the town is considered a backward community in terms of their earning status. Majority of the population falls under the category of low to medium earning group and again the earning status varies from group to group or community. The situations of *Nepali* Muslims are the worse in comparison to other communities. 44.66 percent families of *Nepali* Muslims have a monthly income of Rs.2000-Rs.5000 which is not sufficient for their survival in a hill station like Darjeeling. And thus the community is considered a low income group. The *Bihari* Muslims considered a medium income group as there is no family whose monthly income is Rs.2000 and it's below. The *Bhote* and *Kashmiri* Muslim groups are considered as a high income group as all of these families monthly income starts from Rs.5000 to Rs.10000 and it's above. However, the detail of their income and expenditures is also written in the chapter 4.

**Table: 3.8**  
**Earning Status of the Muslims of Darjeeling Town**

Community	Earner		Earner Dependent		Dependent		Total
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	
Nepali Muslim	82 (47.12%)	-	40 (57.97%)	9 (69.23%)	60 (43.16%)	171 (50%)	362
Bihari Muslim	54 (31.03%)	-	12 (17.39%)	1 (7.69%)	36 (25.89%)	91 (26.60%)	194
Tibetan Muslim	26 (14.94%)	-	12 (17.39%)	3 (23.07%)	35 (25.17%)	61 (17.83%)	137
Kashmiri Muslim	12 (6.89%)	-	5 (7.24%)	-	8 (5.75%)	19 (5.55%)	44
Total	174 (23.60%)	-	69 (9.36%)	13 (1.76%)	139 (18.86%)	342 (46.40%)	737

**Fig: 3.9**



From the table 3.8 it is clear that out of total 737 studied population 23.60 percent are earner that means they are the principal earning members of total 151 studied families. There is not a single female who considered as the principal earning member in her family.

There are 9.36 percent male and 1.76 percent female who is an earner but dependent to his or her family for his bio-psychic survival. And incase of dependent population they are 18.86 percent male and 46.40 percent. However, the detail is given in the chapter 4.

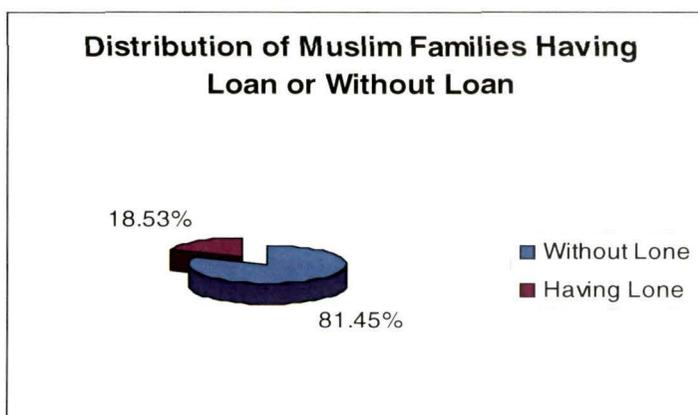
### 3.6: Indebtedness

In case of indebtedness among the Muslim families only 18.53 percent studied families have institutional loan and the main reason was only business. 81.45 percent families do not have any institutional loan.

**Table: 3.9**  
**Distribution of Muslim Families on the Basis of Having Loan or Without Lone (in Percentage)**

Muslim Groups	Without Lone	Having Lone
Nepali Muslim	88%	11.98%
Bihari Muslim	68.42%	31.56
Tibetan Muslim	80.76%	19.23%
Kashmiri Muslim	83.33%	16.66%
Total	81.45%	18.53%

**Fig: 3.10**



Among the *Nepali* Muslims only 11.98 percent families have loan and almost all of these loans are sanctioned by the West Bengal Minority Development and Finance Corporation Ltd. Among the *Bihari* Muslims the percentage of indebtedness is high which is 31.56 percent. And among the Tibetans it is 19.23 percent and in case of *Kashmiri* Muslims it is 16.66 percent. From the table 3.9 it is clear that except the *Nepali* Muslim families the indebtedness is nearly three times high among the *Bihari* Muslim families and the main reason behind this is that the moderate *Bihari* Muslim families have the positive ability of giving return and hence took loans from Bank and Finance Corporation to extend their business. In case of Tibetan and *Kashmiri* Muslim families this is happens.

**Table: 3.10**  
**Institutional Loan from Govt. and semi Govt. organizations**  
**(family wise)**

Category	Nepali Muslim	Bihari Muslim	Tibetan Muslim	Kashmiri Muslim	Total
Without lone	66 (88%)	26 (68.42%)	21 (80.76%)	10 (83.33%)	123 (81.45%)
≤ Rs.20,000/-	2 (2.66%)	5 (13.15%)	-	-	7 (4.63%)
Rs.20,001 - 40,000/-	2 (2.66%)	3 (7.89%)	-	-	5 (3.31%)
Rs.40,001 - 60,000/-	2 (2.66%)	-	-	-	2 (1.32%)
Rs.60,001 and above	3 (4%)	4 (10.52%)	5 (19.23%)	2 (16.66%)	14 (9.27%)
Total	75 (100%)	38 (100%)	26 (100%)	12 (100%)	151 (100%)

From table number 3.10, out of total 75 *Nepali* Muslim families only 9 families have taken loan and only 3 families have taken Rs.60,001 and

above amount. Indebtedness is not a common phenomenon among them as they do not have the power of giving return and economically most of them falls under the range from low to medium income group. Sometimes they take loan for many reasons but not from the institutions and the amount are usually very low. In case of *Bihari* Muslims the percentage of having loan is high. Among the Tibetan Muslim families out of 26 families 5 have loan and the amount is more than sixty thousand rupees. The *Kashmiri* Muslim families also fall in the same category as like as the Tibetans. Out of 12 *Kashmiri* Muslim families only 2 have loan and the amount is more than 60,000 rupees.

### 3.7: Marital Status and Marriage

Marriage among the Muslims is a civil contract and not a religious sacrament like the Hindus. It is a civil contract between two equal parties, between two equal families, not just between two individuals. It is a civil contract that requires the consent of the two parties. The two parties may include outside of the *Shariah* requirements, anything that may lead to their happiness and mutually agreeable to both of them. Once the marriage has taken place and the contract has been signed and agreed upon, witnessed not only by the individual spouses, but also by their guardians and their elders, then it becomes a legal and binding document. In Darjeeling since the historical past there is a practice continuing by the Muslim families in collecting bride from the Nepali speaking groups while a Muslim boy fall in love with a Nepali girl. Only the criterion is the girl has to convert into Islam before marriage. Door to door household survey for the present study reveals the fact that more than half of the Muslim families in the town are in favour of such inter-community marriage and they don't have any obligation against such practice. There are 60.26 percent Muslims who are in favour of inter-religious or inter-community marriage and 39.73 percent are not in favour of inter-religious marriage. Among the total 75 *Nepali* Muslim

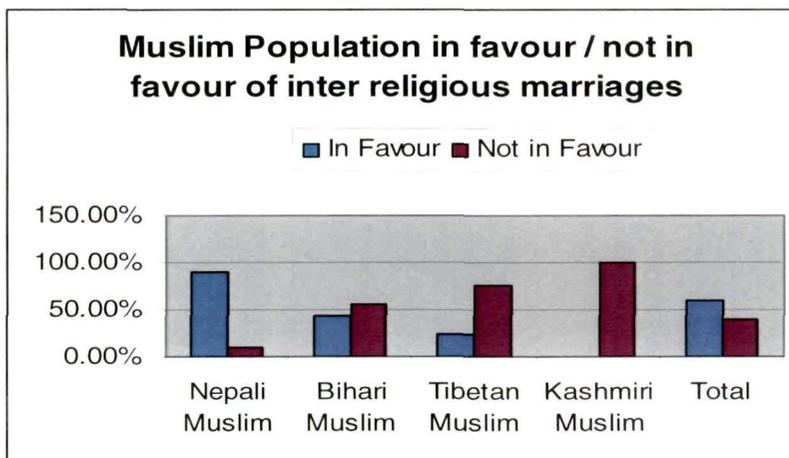
families 90.66 percent are in favour of such marriage while only 9.33 percent are not in favour of inter-religious marriage or marriage with the Nepali Hindus or Buddhists or Christians. Among the *Bihari* Muslim families 55.26 percent are not in favour of such marriage while 44.73 percent are in favour of inter-religious marriage. A lion share of the Tibetan families is not in favour of inter-religious marriage (76.92%) and only 23.07 percent are in favour of such marriage. Kashmiri families are strictly against of such practice. Fig. 3.11 gives a detailed picture of above said matter.

**Table: 3.11**

**Muslim Population in Favour / not in Favour of Inter Religious Marriage**

Category	Nepali Muslim	Bihari Muslim	Tibetan Muslim	Kashmiri Muslim	Total
In Favour	68 (90.66%)	17 (44.73%)	6 (23.07%)	-	91 (60.26%)
Not in Favour	7 (9.33%)	21 (55.26%)	20 (76.92%)	12 (100%)	60 (39.73%)
Total	75 (100%)	38 (100%)	26 (100%)	12 (100%)	151 (100%)

**Fig: 3.11**



Polygamy is a stereotype or monolithic believe among the peoples mind about the types of Muslim marriage. However, present data (Table: 3.12 and Fig.: 3.12) established the fact that monogamy is the usual practice among the Muslim communities of Darjeeling town. 95.74 percent Muslims are practiced monogamy and among the *Nepali* Muslims it is 95.21 percent, 93.75 percent in case of *Bihari* Muslims, 98.52 percent in case of *Bhote* or Tibetan Muslims and 100 percent among the *Kashmiri* Muslims. Only 4.25 percent are found polygamous but all of them got married twice after the death of their first wife or husband.

**Table: 3.12**  
**Types of Marriage**

Category	Nepali Muslim	Bihari Muslim	Tibetan Muslim	Kashmiri Muslim	Total
Monogamy	179 (95.21%)	90 (93.75%)	67 (98.52%)	24 (100%)	360 (95.74%)
Polygamy	9 (4.78%)	6 (6.25%)	1 (1.47%)		16 (4.25%)
Total	188 (100%)	96 (100%)	68 (100%)	24 (100%)	376 (100%)

**Fig: 3.12**

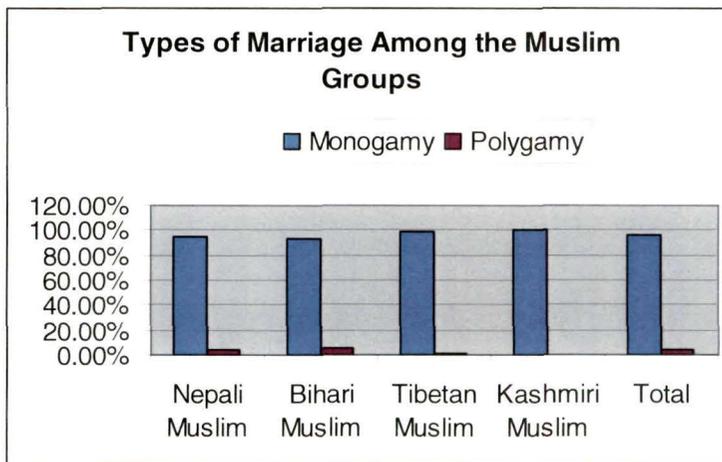


Table 3.13 and Fig. 3.13 shows the forms of marriage among the Muslims of Darjeeling town. Negotiation marriage is the common practice among the Muslims though love marriage is also practiced among them.

86.17 percent are found married by negotiation and only 13.82 percent found married by love. Among the Nepali Muslim families the prevalence of love marriage is better in comparison to other Muslim groups and this is because of their acculturation and marital alliance since historical past with the Nepali Hindus. Among the *Nepali* Muslims 26.59 percent are married by love, where as it is only 2.08 percent among the *Bihari* Muslims. There is no love marriage among the Tibetan and Kashmiri Muslims as these two groups are much more orthodox in terms of their religious matters and try to maintain their life by the principles of religious texts.

**Table: 3.13**  
**Forms of Marriage**

Category	Nepali Muslim	Bihari Muslim	Tibetan Muslim	Kashmiri Muslim	Total
Marriage by Negotiation	138 (73.40%)	94 (97.91%)	68 (100%)	24 (100%)	324 (86.17%)
Marriage by Love	50 (26.59%)	2 (2.08%)			52 (13.82%)
Total	188 (100%)	96 (100%)	68 (100%)	24 (100%)	376 (100%)

**Fig: 3.13**



The data collected for the present give a clear cut picture of the age at marriage of both male and female. It is clear from the data that all the there is no child marriage or prevalence of child marriage among the Muslims living in Darjeeling town. All the marriages take place after puberty.

Table: 3.14

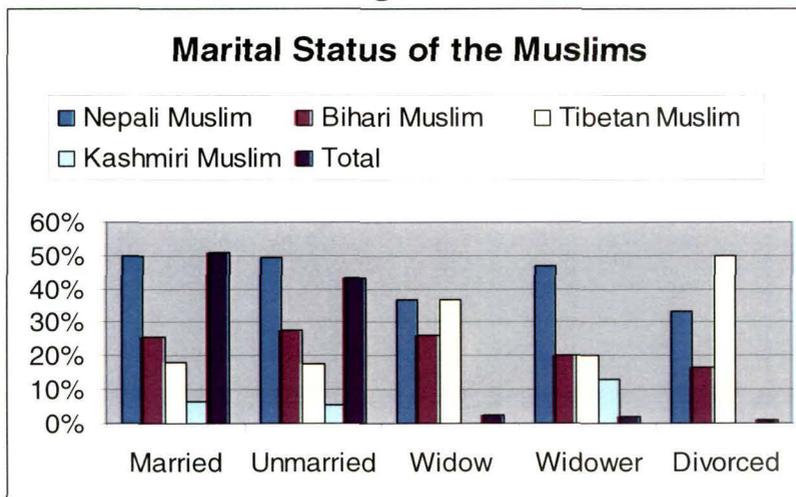
## Age Group Wise Marital Status of the Muslims of Darjeeling Town

Age group	Unmarried		Married		Widower	Widow	Divorced		Total
	Male	Female	Male	Female			Male	Female	
15 & below	80	85	-	-	-	-	-	-	165
	45.19%	59.02%							
16-25	80	53	10	37	-	1	-	-	181
	45.19%	36.80%	5.31%	19.68%		5.26%			
26-35	14	3	47	57	-	-	-	1	122
	7.90%	2.08%	25%	30.31%				25%	
36-45	1	2	54	51	-	-	2	-	110
	0.56%	1.38%	28.72%	27.12%			100%		
46-55	2	1	42	27	4	4	-	3	83
	1.12%	0.69%	22.34%	14.36%	26.66%	21.05%		75%	
56-65	-	-	26	13	4	8	-	-	51
			13.82%	6.91%	26.66%	42.10%			
66 & above	-	-	9	3	7	6	-	-	25
			4.78%	1.59%	46.66%	31.57%			
Total	177	144	188	188	15	19	2	4	737
	24.01%	19.53%	25.50%	25.50%	2.03%	2.57%	0.27%	0.54%	

Out of total 737 individuals 51.01 percent are married, 43.55 percent are unmarried, 2.57 percent are widow, 2.03 percent are widower and only 0.81 percent divorced or separated. Divorce or separation is not a common practice found among the Muslims in Darjeeling. This is again against another stereotype that the frequency of *talak* or separation is high among the Muslims.

**Table: 3.15****Group Wise Marital Status of the Muslims of Darjeeling Town**

Category	Married	Unmarried	Widow	Widower	Divorced	Total
Nepali Muslim	188 (50%)	158 (49.22%)	7 (36.84%)	7 (46.66%)	2 (33.33%)	362
Bihari Muslim	96 (25.53%)	89 (27.72%)	5 (26.31%)	3 (20%)	1 (16.66%)	194
Tibetan Muslim	68 (18.08%)	56 (17.44%)	7 (36.84%)	3 (20%)	3 (50%)	137
Kashmiri Muslim	24 (6.38%)	18 (5.60%)		2 (13.33%)		44
Total	376 (51.01%)	321 (43.55%)	19 (2.57%)	15 (2.03%)	6 (0.81%)	737

**Fig: 3.14**

One interesting and important fact revealed from the present study is that there is a gradual increase of numbers of marital population in the age group between 26-45 years. The female marital status also reveals that the age group is also above 15 which is definitely for education and awareness regarding female reproductive health.

### 3.8: Family

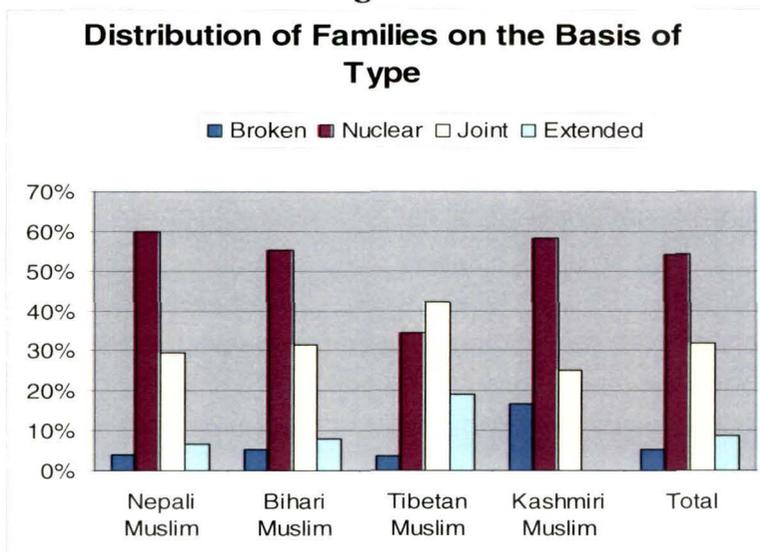
The simplest, smallest and the oldest form of human society is family which is comprised of wife, husband and their children. A number of bonds and ties join the members of a family to each other. Family

arrange proper maintenance, right type of education, and good training of their children so that they grow satisfactorily, develop their potential, express their abilities, become virtuous human being, a good citizen, and an ideal member of the society, and thereby should contribute to the society significantly. A family is the unit which builds up a person's personality. How we behave and what we become in life is very much dependent on our family life. The way family members deal with the neophytes has a life long effect on their personality. Keeping in view all these facts the importance of a family life cannot be denied. Family bonds are a link to our beginning and a guide to our future. Early influences are fundamental to our individual development. A sense of belonging is derived from the strong bond of family. Family is where our roots take hold and from there we grow. We are molded within a unit, which prepares us for what we will experience in the world and how we react to those experiences.

The family forms the basic building block of Muslim society in Darjeeling town. Despite the many pressures it faces, the family institution remains strong there. Traditionally Muslim families in the town were extended, often spanning 3 or more generations and an extended structure offers many advantages, including stability, coherence, and physical and psychological support, particularly in times of need. The future of the extended family, however, is under considerable threat as because of their meager economy and scarcity of places for accommodation to new families after marriage. The family among the Muslims of Darjeeling is a patriarchal family and the patriarch, that is to say, the head of the family, carries the maximum burden of responsibility. There are all total 151 Muslim families under the present study. And if we look into the type of these families we will find that more than half of the families are found to be nuclear in type.

**Table: 3.16****Distribution of Households according to Family type**

Category	Nepali Muslim	Bihari Muslim	Tibetan Muslim	Kashmiri Muslim	Total
Broken	3 (4%)	2 (5.26%)	1 (3.84%)	2 (16.66%)	8 (5.29%)
Nuclear	45 (60%)	21 (55.26%)	9 (34.61%)	7 (58.33%)	82 (54.30%)
Joint	22 (29.33%)	12 (31.57%)	11 (42.30%)	3 (25%)	48 (31.78%)
Extended	5 (6.66%)	3 (7.89%)	5 (19.23%)	-	13 (8.60%)
Total	75 (100%)	38 (100%)	26 (100%)	12 (100%)	151 (100%)

**Fig: 3.15**

The frequency of nuclear type family is high among the Nepali Muslim communities as because this hybrid Muslim group is attracted by the favourable condition of dominant hill communities where nuclear type family is very usual. Among the *Nepali* Muslims 60 percent families are nuclear, 4 percent are broken which means they are living alone or contain two or less than two family members, 29.33 percent are joint type and only 6.66 percent among them are extended type. Hence, it is

clear that the numbers of nuclear type families are increasing gradually. The primary root cause behind this is that Muslims initially resides Butcher *basti* since colonial times but soon the place became overpopulated as because of migration to this place and scarcity of habitation to their home pushed the newly married couples or families to live in relative isolation and thus later developed a new family setup. Among the *Bihari* Muslims the nuclear type family is also high. It is 55.26 percent and the cause behind this is no doubt the scarcity of rooms in their house or places. There are 5.26 percent broken families, 31.57 percent joint families and 7.89 percent extended families. However, among the *Bhote* or Tibetan Muslims the nuclear family is low which is 34.61 percent and joint family is high which is 42.30 percent which indicates that familial joint property keep the family members lived together under the same roof. This is one of the peculiar family types of a trading community. But in case of *Kashmiri* Muslims it is not true. There are 58.33 percent nuclear families and 25 percent joint families. Broken families are also high. The root cause behind this as they still maintain strong connection with they place or origin and all these families have their home in Kashmir where their other family members build separate business setup and only few members stay whole year in Darjeeling for their business purposes.

However, the number of nuclear type families (54.30%) is high among the Muslims of Darjeeling town and a part of economic condition scarcity of newly constructed rooms is no doubt the main reason for this as a sense of ghettoization compelled them to live together in an area exclusively dominated by the Muslims. The number of joint family is ranked next which is 31.78 percent and then extended family (8.60%) as the traditional values behind the Indian family structure still persists among them where elderly persons are considered to be as resources which gripped the ideal Muslim society.

**Table: 3.17**  
**Distribution of Households according to Family Size**

Category	Nepali Muslim	Bihari Muslim	Tibetan Muslim	Kashmiri Muslim	Total
Small (1-3 Members)	22 (29.33%)	9 (23.68%)	7 (26.92%)	5 (41.66%)	43 (28.47%)
Medium (4-6 Members)	40 (53.33%)	21 (55.26)	14 (53.84%)	6 (50%)	81 (53.64%)
Big (7-9 Members)	9 (12%)	5 (13.15%)	3 (11.53%)	1 (8.33%)	18 (11.92%)
Very Big (10 & above)	4 (5.33%)	3 (7.89%)	2 (7.69%)	-	9 (5.96%)
Total	75 (100%)	38 (100%)	26 (100%)	12 (100%)	151 (100%)

There is a popular myth regarding the size of Muslim families in peoples mind that Muslim families are very large in size. But this popular myth is not a reality in Darjeeling Muslim society as only 11.92 percent are big families which comprises 7-9 family members and 5.96 percent very big families where 10 and more that 10 number of members are found. Medium families are highest in number where 4-6 members are found. The reason behind this is the increasing number of awareness regarding family, economy and population. Among the *Nepali* Muslims 29.33 percent are small in size, 53.33 are medium, 12 percent are big and only 5.33 percent are very big families in size. Among the *Bihari* Muslims the percentage of small families are 23.68 percent, 55.26 percent are medium sized, 13.15 percent are big and 7.89 percent are very big in size. Among the *Bhote* or Tibetans, the picture is almost same. Where as among the *Kashmiris* the number of small sized families are high in

comparison to other Muslim groups. It is 41.66 percent in case of small sized and 50 percent in case of medium sized.

Under the influence of colonialism, the Muslim society of Darjeeling blindly following the emerging trend of West where relations between husband and wife, between parents and children, between neighbors, between relatives, in other words between all segments of society were dealt a devastating blow. The process still continues where television and modern media has a dominant role in rapid destruction of what was left of human relations, cutting off even members of the same family from each other. It is probably the most subversive and intrusive tool of our so called postmodern global village.

### 3.9: Educational Status

The role of education in facilitating social progress among the Muslims in the town is a well accepted phenomenon. That Muslims, as a whole, are one of the most deprived communities in Darjeeling hills, but not in terms of education as the percentage of literacy is 90.97 percent which is much higher in comparison to the Muslim literacy rate of National and State level. The Sachar Committee Report reveals that 25% of Muslim children in the 6-14 years age group have either never attended school or have dropped out and at the level of higher education less than 4 % Muslims are graduates or diploma holders and at the postgraduate level, only 1 out of 20 students is a Muslim. And regarding the *madrasa* education there are a lot of debates and controversy inside and out side the community. There is an argument by most of the peoples that the Muslims are themselves responsible for their own educational 'backwardness' as they prefer to send their children to *madrasas* rather than to 'modern' schools. However, the People have to understand that *madrasa* education system is somehow connected with the religious sentiments of the Muslims. It is a very popular mode of giving education

to the Muslim children. However, to provide education to the Muslim children, a junior *madrasa* for the boys and a Girls Primary *Maktab* was established in the year 1909 under the supervision of *Anjuman-E-Islamia*, a religious institute established in 1850. These educational institutes have had an immense role in providing elementary (both formal and religious) education to the Muslims of Darjeeling town and in the past it has catered to all segments of the Muslim society. However, presently only those who cannot afford modern education are opting for this *madrasa* education. But if we look into the last five years enrolment status of the *Anjuman Junior Madrasa* at the town we would found that only a few students are enrolled as a student there which is not satisfactory.

**Table: 3.18**

**Enrolment of total Students of *Anjuman Boys Madrasa* During last five years**

Year	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
Students	10	09	18	20	26

(Source: *Madrasa registrar book, 2008*)

As an institution of learning the *Anjuman junior madrasa* is century old. The *madrasa* was established by the *Anjuman-e-Islamia*, a religious institution established by the Muslims of Darjeeling town, in the year 1909 for the sake of providing elementary and basic religious education among the Muslim inhabitants of Darjeeling town. The *madrasa* provide education only to the male children. During that time the *madrasa* was run by public funding. In the year 1920 the then India government affiliated it. Initially the *madrasa* was religious in character because these types of institution ultimately were intended to prepare future Islamic religious scholar (*ulema*). The education movement which was started in different parts of the country were also motivated the organizers of *Anjuman* to reform their educational programmes in the *madrasa*. The

West Bengal *Madrasa* Board recognized *Anjuman madrasa* as a junior *madrasa*. From the very beginning the students taught here up to class VI. Urdu is the medium of teaching and the books are all in Urdu. Mathematics, physical science, biological science, geography, history and English are all taught as like as other junior schools under West Bengal Board. Arabic as a classical language is also taught. The *madrasa* had a glorious past. At most all the Muslim inhabitants got their elementary education from *Anjuman Junior madrasa*. From the establishment of the *madrasa* in 1909 to 1980, it was in its full development. Mathematics, science, Geography and History are taught here. The state government in 1992 upgrades this junior *madrasa* from class VI to class VIII. But unfortunately *madrasa* committee did not open the classes due to low number of students and also for the low number of teachers. Currently there are only 1 permanent teacher and 3 casual teachers.

Any way, table number 3.19 shows us the literacy rate and the extent of literacy among the Muslim communities living in Darjeeling town. Here 0-5 year's population is ignored as they are too young to educate. It is earlier mentioned that the literacy rate among the Darjeeling Muslims is higher in comparison to our national and state literacy rate of the Muslims. There are only 9.02 percent illiterate found among the Muslims and the illiteracy rate is zero among the *Kashmiri* Muslim families.

The illiteracy rate is very low among the *Nepali* Muslim communities which is 8.06 percent, then the *Bihari* Muslims which is 9.09 percent. The illiteracy is only high among the *Bhote* or Tibetan Muslims which is 14.39 percent and this is because their old population or more particularly their aged women folk don't know modern education and religious orthodoxy within themselves compelled these women not to enter or accept the education easily.

## Extent of Literacy and Levels of Education among the Muslim Groups

Category	Nepali Muslim		Bihari Muslim		Tibetan Muslim		Kashmiri Muslim		Total
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	
Illiterate	5 2.77%	23 13.77%	-	17 20%	1 1.44%	18 28.57%	-	-	64 9.02%
Literate	175 97.22%	144 86.22%	102 100%	68 80%	68 98.55%	45 71.42%	24 100%	19 100%	645 90.97%
Total	180 100%	167 100%	102 100%	85 100%	69 100%	63 100%	24 100%	19 100%	709 100%
Total Literate									
Without Standard	5 2.85%	9 6.25%	1 0.98%	1 1.47%	2 2.94%	-	-	-	18 2.79%
Primary (Class I-IV)	16 9.14%	21 14.58%	3 2.94%	13 19.11%	11 16.17%	4 8.88%	-	-	68 10.54%
Middle (Class V-VIII)	80 45.71%	71 49.30%	46 45.09%	31 45.58%	21 30.88%	19 42.22%	-	6 31.57%	274 42.48%
Madhyamik	24 13.71%	19 13.19%	21 20.58%	9 13.23%	13 19.11%	8 17.77%	6 25%	3 15.78%	103 15.96%
Madrasa (I-IV for Female and I- VI for Male)	23 13.14%	12 8.33%	5 4.90%	-	-	-	4 16.66%	-	44 6.82%
Higher Secondary	19 10.85%	6 4.16%	11 10.78%	10 14.70%	12 17.64%	5 11.11%	9 37.5%	6 31.57%	78 12.09%
Graduate (BA/B.Sc./B.Com)	6 3.42%	5 3.47%	12 11.76%	-	7 10.29%	7 15.55%	5 20.83%	3 15.78%	45 6.97%
Post Graduation (MA/M.Sc./M.Com)	1 0.57%	1 0.69%	1 0.98%	2 2.94%	-	2 4.44%	-	1 5.26%	8 1.24%
Professional Education (MBBS, MCA/BCA, MBA/BBA, Engineering, LLB/LLM etc.)	1 0.57%	-	2 1.96%	2 2.94%	2 2.94%	-	-	-	7 1.08%
Total	175 100%	144 100%	102 100%	68 100%	68 100%	45 100%	24 100%	19 100%	645 100%

(ignored 0-5 years population)

Fig: 3.16

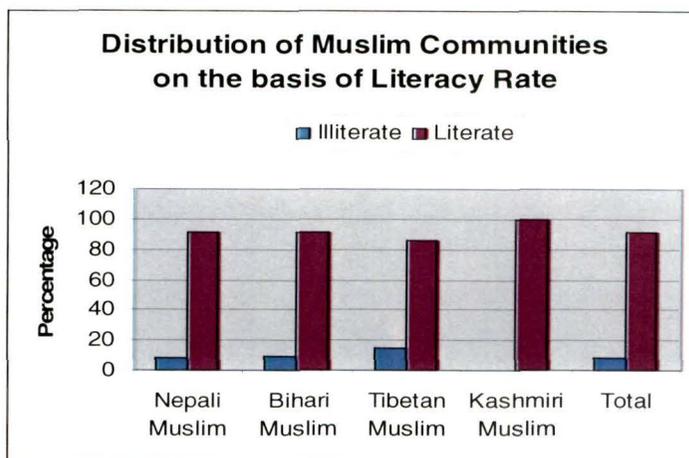


Fig: 3.17

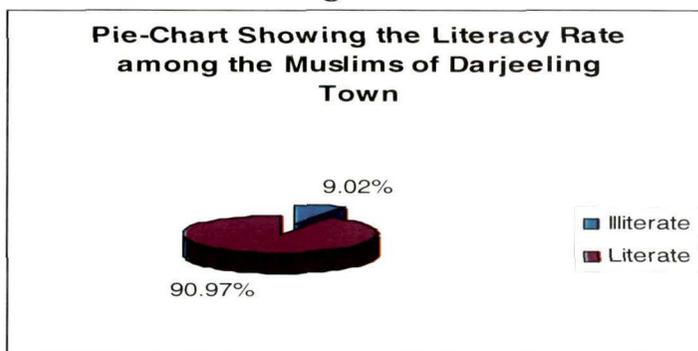


Table: 3.20

**Male Female Literacy Level of the Muslims of Darjeeling**

Category	Male	Female	Total
Without any standard	2.16%	3.62%	2.79%
Primary	8.13%	13.76	10.54%
Middle	39.83%	46.01	42.48%
Madhyamik	17.34%	14.13%	15.96%
Madrassa	8.67%	4.34%	6.82%
Higher secondary	13.82%	9.78%	12.09%
Graduate	8.13%	5.43%	6.97%
Post graduate	0.54%	2.17%	1.24%
Professional Courses	1.35%	0.72%	1.08%

According to table number 3.20 there are altogether 2.79 percent population having without any standard of education that means they

never went to school but know how to read and write and among the total female literates 3.62 percent are falls in this category where as among the males they are only 2.16 percent. 10.54 percent population have primary education (class I-IV) that means they received elementary education from government recognized primary schools or educational institutions and here very significantly the females are much in percent in comparison to the males. There are 13.76 percent females and 8.13 percent males who have primary education. Among the total literates 42.48 percent population have the education of middle standard (class V-VIII) and again very significantly the percentage of females are higher which is 46.01 percent as against the percentage of male which is 39.83 percent. In case of *madrassa* level education, there are two *madrassa* in Darjeeling town. One is for male which is up to class VI and another is girl's *maktab* which is up to class IV. There are only 6.82 percent population having *madrassa* education and among the males they are 8.67 percent and 4.34 percent among the females where most of them are under the age group of old aged. There are 12.09 percent HS passed populations and among the males there are 13.82 percent HS where as it is 9.78 percent in case of females. There are total 6.97 percent graduates and among the males it is 8.13 percent and 5.43 percent among the females. The situation of Post Graduate category is very worse which is only 1.24 percent and very significantly females are forward than the males which is 2.17 percent in against 0.54 percent for the males. There are only 1.08 percent professionals who either passed MBBS, Engineering, MCA/MBA or other professional carrier oriented courses. And among the total literate males only 1.35 percent has professional degrees where as only 0.72 percent females are under this category.

The Muslims of Darjeeling towns are all economically marginalized and are from different occupational backgrounds. Socio-economically they are very poor in comparison to other hill communities of the town.

Initially all the boys used to come the *madrasa* to get their elementary education up to class VI and then took admission to different educational institution for higher education. But now a day the students are only from the low income groups. And the drop out rate is very high. The parents thought that sending a child to school involves a double loss to their family. It involves additional expenditure on the one hand and the family deprived of his contribution toward economic upliftment on the other. Darjeeling town is very much famous for its modern European education system and a majority of middle class Muslim families are now prefer to send their boys to modern English medium schools to think that the *madrasa* education is not worldly. As a result the *madrasa* has experienced the scarcity of students. The controversies regarding the appointment of the teachers are also affecting the *madrasa*. As Darjeeling is under the control of autonomous hill council, there is a controversy between the state government and the Darjeeling *Gurkha* Hill Council (DGHC) regarding the funding and appointing teaching and non-teaching posts. And the *madrasa* is suffering a lot for this. The state government started mead day meal for the *madrasa* students in 2005. But without any notice they stopped the mead day meal in 2007. For these various reasons the *Anjuman* junior *madrasa* are now running like broken cart though it has a glorious past.

As all of the Muslims are of diverse occupational backgrounds, their economic condition is also different. Major portion of the Muslims are of low income group. Most of these families have only one man to earn. And the parents feel that sending a child to school or junior *madrasa* involves a double loss to their family. It involves additional expenditure on the one hand and the family deprived of the boys contribution toward economic upliftment of their family. But this situation cannot be fully blamed on poverty. Inquires for those capable of giving education to their children reveal that they suffer from a sense of

deprivation and frustration. There were a few *madrasa* educated people among them who cannot secure white colour jobs after a successful level of education. So the middle class parents prefer to send their children to modern English medium schools rather than the *madrasa*. The present socio-political situations of the Darjeeling hills are also affecting. The students who have successfully passed from junior *madrasa* could not get any job in Darjeeling hill, as he is not a Nepali speaking people though his family is living here from at least 4-5 generations. So this kind of situation frustrates them and the parents send their children in their hereditary works, as this type of marginalized occupation requires less skill and education.

### 3.10: Disease and Treatment

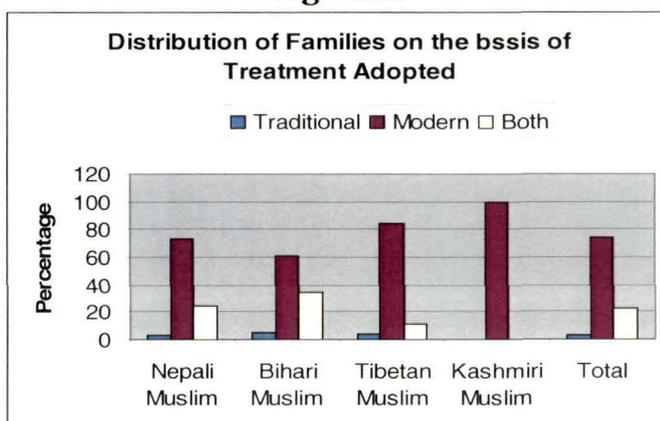
Housing pattern of the Muslim settlements or more particularly in Butcher *basti* becomes a major health concern because they live in overcrowded situations. Two-thirds of households are simple one-room structures, a majority of them with dirt floors and poor ventilation. Such overcrowding can lead to rapid spread of respiratory and skin disease. Access to drinking water in Butcher *basti* and other Muslim areas are another major problem. More than two thirds of the residents lack access to safe drinking water on their premises. The main sources of water are tap water supplied by Darjeeling Municipality, though tap water is available only in some homes. The lack of safe drinking water facilitates the spread of water borne diseases. The presence of stored water further promotes the breeding of mosquitoes and diseases such as malaria. Absence of available latrines is a major health problem as well. It is estimated that over one third of the Muslim households have no access to bathroom facilities, promoting open defecation, which in turn leads to spread of fecal-oral disease and parasitic infestation.

In case of procedure adopted for treatment 74.17 percent families were adopted modern medicine or health care facilities for their ailment and the percentage of the use of modern treatment is very high among the *Kashmiri* Muslim, *Tibetan* Muslim and *Nepali* Muslim families. However, among the *Bihari* families 60.52 percent adopted modern treatment and very significantly 34.21 percent families adopted both the modern and traditional system of treatment it indicates that still some traditional values regarding health care practices is persisting among them.

**Table: 3.21**  
**Distribution of Families on the Basis of Treatment Adopted**

Category	Nepali Muslim	Bihari Muslim	Tibetan Muslim	Kashmiri Muslim	Total
Only Traditional	2 (2.66%)	2 (5.26%)	1 (3.84%)	-	5 (3.31%)
Modern	55 (73.33%)	23 (60.52%)	22 (84.61%)	12 (100%)	112 (74.17%)
Both	18 (24%)	13 (34.21%)	3 (11.53%)	-	34 (22.51%)
Total	75 (100%)	38 (100%)	26 (100%)	12 (100%)	151 (100%)

**Fig: 3.18**



### 3.11: Findings

Muslims of Darjeeling town are a heterogeneous community. The present study is limited only 151 Muslim families who have been residing permanently at least three generations in the town. More than half of the Muslims of Darjeeling town (58.94%) is found living in Butcher *basti* and the rest are found scattered in various places of the town like *Lebong*, *Kakjhora*, *Tungsung basti* and etc. It is calculated from the studied households that only 32.45 percent Muslims have their own accommodation or houses or flats. Where as 67.54 percent of Muslims are living in rented houses from generation after generation. Muslims of the town are largely divided into four broad categories viz. *Nepali* Muslims, *Bihari* Muslims, *Bhote* or Tibetan Muslims and *Kashmiri* Muslims. *Nepali* and *Bihari* Muslims are the decedents of the Muslim migrants migrated from various districts of Bihar and Uttar Pradesh. The Kashmiri Muslims are all from Indian state of Jammu & Kashmir and the Tibrtan Muslims are from Tibet. There are total 737 individuals under study and among them 382 are males and 355 are females and the sex ratio of the Muslims of Darjeeling is 929.31 females per 1000 males.

Out of total 737 individuals 51.01 percent are married, 43.55 percent are unmarried, 2.57 percent are widow, 2.03 percent are widower and only 0.81 percent divorced or separated. Divorce or separation is not a common practice found among the Muslims in Darjeeling. This is again against another stereotype that the frequency of *talak* or separation is high among the Muslims. Monogamy is the usual practice among the Muslim communities of Darjeeling town. 95.74 percent Muslims are practiced monogamy. Only 4.25 percent are found polygamous but all of them got married twice after the death of their first wife or husband. Negotiation marriage is the common practice among the Muslims though love marriage is also practiced among them. 86.17 percent are found married by negotiation and only 13.82 percent found married by love.

Among the Nepali Muslim families the prevalence of love marriage is better in comparison to other Muslim groups and this is because of their acculturation and marital alliance since historical past with the Nepali Hindus.

The number of nuclear type families (54.30%) is high among the Muslims of Darjeeling town. Economic condition and scarcity of space for newly constructed rooms is no doubt the main reason for the increasing number of nuclear families. The popular myth of large sized families is not a reality in Darjeeling Muslim society as only 11.92 percent are big families which comprises 7-9 family members and 5.96 percent very big families where 10 and more that 10 number of members are found.

There are only 9.02 percent illiterate found among the Muslims and the literacy rate is high as against the state and national level which is 90.97 percent. Among the literates 2.79 percent population having without any standard of education. 10.54 percent population have primary education (class I-IV) that means they received elementary education from government recognized primary schools or educational institutions and here very significantly the females are much in percent in comparison to the males. There are 13.76 percent females and 8.13 percent males who have primary education. 42.48 percent population has the education of middle standard (class V-VIII). There are only 6.82 percent population having madrasa education and among the males they are 8.67 percent and 4.34 percent among the females. There are 12.09 percent HS passed populations and among the males there are 13.82 percent HS where as it is 9.78 percent in case of females. There are total 6.97 percent graduates and among the males it is 8.13 percent and 5.43 percent among the females. There are only 1.08 percent professionals who either passed MBBS, Engineering, MCA/MBA or other professional carrier oriented courses.

The most common occupational pursuits of the Muslims in the town are medium or petty businesses. 44.53 percent of the studied populations are in the occupation of businesses like grocer shop, stationary goods shop, cloth vendor, and many other small scale businesses without any permanent roof and all of them are of *Nepali* and *Bihari* Muslims. The *Nepali* Muslims are the most degraded or backward in terms of economy and occupation among the Muslim communities of Darjeeling. The *Bihari* Muslims are considered as a trading community and all the small scale business petty trading are done by them. The repairing shops of watch and spectacles near the two sides of cart road at *chack bazaar* are all owned by *Bihari* Muslims. The Tibetan and *Kashmiri* Muslims are most well off among the Darjeeling Muslim society and they are engaged in hotel and other businesses of curio and handicrafts. The economic conditions of *Nepali* Muslims are the worse in comparison to other communities. 44.66 percent families of *Nepali* Muslims have a monthly income of Rs.2000-Rs.5000 which is not sufficient for their survival in a hill station like Darjeeling. And thus the community is considered a low income group. The *Bihari* Muslims considered a medium income group as there is no family whose monthly income is Rs.2000 and it's below. The Tibetan and *Kashmiri* Muslim groups are considered as a high income group as all of these families monthly income starts from Rs.5000 to Rs.10000 and it's above.

In case of indebtedness among the Muslim families only 18.53 percent studied families have institutional loan and the main reason was only business. Almost all of these loans were sanctioned by the West Bengal Minority Development and Finance Corporation Ltd. In case of procedure adopted for treatment 74.17 percent families were adopted modern medicine or health care facilities for their ailment.