

CHAPTER - 6.0  
REGIONAL VARIATION OF THE SOCIETY

Characteristics of demography, socio-economic and socio-cultural status of representative sample villages.

To get the detail idea about the regional variations in the socio-cultural behaviour and economic status of the community at micro-level, the field study has been made in three villages, one from Lower Brahmaputra Valley, one from Central Brahmaputra Valley and the other village from the Upper Brahmaputra Valley. These three villages represent the average size of a Maria Muslim village. These three villages show the average conditions and the characteristics of the Maria Muslim population. So, the above mentioned three villages have been taken into consideration from different regions of the Brahmaputra Valley to find out the regional variations.

#### 6.11 Hajo

Hajo Islampatti - (A village from Lower Brahmaputra Valley).

Hajo Islampatti is an uniethnic village situated in Kamrup district of the Lower Brahmaputra Valley at a distance of 32 kilometers to the north-west of Guwahati, and at a distance of 1 (one) kilometer of Hajo town, under the jurisdiction of Hajo Police station. This is a medium size village with a population of 783 persons and with an area of about 0.5 square kilometer. This village is surrounded by Bharatola on the north where 30 Malakar families are found, on the west there is Koibarta tola where 250 dom families are found, on the south there is Chapartitola where 75 Malakar families live in, there is Ganesh tola where 50 Baishya families live, and the north-east is bounded by 20 families of Brahmins in Bamuntola. This village is bounded by Hindu

caste groups.

Hajo Islampatti village is well connected by metalled roads with Hajo town. The village is divided by a road which is unmetalled but jeepable. This village is connected with surrounding villages by unmetalled roads. During the rainy season some of the unmetalled roads go under knee deep water. A small stream is flowing on the south of this village. The name of this stream is Barakul river. During the dry (February-March) season it becomes dry.

The settlement pattern of the village is of compact type and the dwellings are found on the two sides of the lone village road. The houses are very close to each other. Most of the dwellings are constructed with roofings of thatch and corrugated tin sheets with mud-baked walls. But the people of better economic condition construct brick built houses and Assam type houses.

According to the survey carried out in 1988, the village contains 783 individuals of which are 410 males and 373 are females.

Population character:

Sex and Age structure -

When the age-groups of the Maria Muslim population of this village is considered it is found that the population in the age-group of 15-59 years (Table 6.1) is significantly higher than those in the other groups. There are 462 (59.00 percent) people in the age group of 15-59 years and the percentage in the age-group of above 60 is 2.81. There are only 299 children upto the age of 14 years. The percentage is 38.19. This shows that more than half of the population in the village is economically dependants.

According to the field investigation in 1988 the sex ratio of the village

Table 6.1

## Population Distribution by Age-Groups, 1988.

Age -Groups	Persons	Males	Females
1	2	3	4
All ages	783	410	373
0-4	127	77	50
5-9	96	48	48
10-14	76	40	36
15-19	96	39	57
20-24	98	46	52
25-29	73	37	36
30-34	54	28	26
35-39	45	30	15
40-44	28	14	14
45-49	34	17	17
50-54	22	13	09
55-59	12	09	03
60-64	12	07	05
65+	10	05	05

Source: From field survey, 1988

is 909 females per 1000 males.

#### Birth and Death rate:

It is found from the village survey that there were 31 cases of births (3.95 percent) and 9 cases of deaths (1.14 percent) in the village during the year 1987. Due to the availability of medical facilities in the nearby town Hajo, the mortality rate is less.

#### Size and composition of Households:

This village consisted of 141 households according to the field investigation in 1988. Different sizes of households are found ranging from '2 to 10 persons' per household and above (Table. 6.2). Households of '4-6 members' are significantly high (342 persons), followed by '7-9 members' (213 persons), '10 numbers and above members' (151 persons) and '2-3 members' (76 persons) respectively.

The number of nuclear families are higher than that of other types (Table 6.3). 70.21 percent of the total number of families is of nuclear type. This is mainly due to the effect of urbanisation and occupational diversifications. Moreover, there is a tendency to be separated after getting married due to shortage of space.

#### Marital status:

From the field survey it has been observed that in Hajo Islampatty 54.02 percent people belong to the unmarried category. It shows that more than half of the people in this village are unmarried. It is mainly due to the effect of urbanisation (Table 6.4). Because in urban area generally the people do not marry at an early age. Divorce cases are very few (0.38 percent). It is mainly due to the economic backwardness and the strong influence of the Hindu society.

Table 6.2

Size of Households in Hajo Islampatti, 1988.

Single Member				2-3 Members				4-6 Members				7-9 Members				10 Members and above			
Households	Persons	Males	Females	Households	Persons	Males	Females	Households	Persons	Males	Females	Households	Persons	Males	Females	Households	Persons	Males	Females
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)	(13)	(14)	(15)	(16)	(17)	(18)	(19)	(20)
1	1	0	1	29	76	36	40	70	342	191	151	29	213	104	109	12	151	79	72

Source: From field survey, 1988

Table 6.3

Types of Family living in the Households, 1988

No. of Households	Types of Households			
	Nuclear	Vertical extended	Horizontal extended	Broken
1	2	3	4	5
141	99 (70.21)	24 (17.02)	05 (3.55)	13 (9.22)

The figures in the parentheses indicate percentage.

Source: From field survey, 1988

Table 6.4

Marital status (in percentage)

Married	Unmarried	Widow	Divorced
1	2	3	4
42.66	54.02	2.94	0.38

Source: Field survey, 1988

## Marriage distance:

In this village 105 marriages (63.25 percent of the total) are performed within the village. It happens because of poor economic condition. Though more than 60 percent people belong to the medium and high income group, but the per capita income is only Rs.134.99 against the total per capita (Rs.137.33) income of the Maria Muslims of the Brahmaputra Valley. So, they cannot afford the expenditure of distant marriages (Table 6.5).

It may also be noted that 84.94 percent of the marriages are performed within their own community, and rest i.e. 15.06 percent of the marriages performed with Garia Muslims - another Muslim group of the Brahmaputra Valley. It has happened due to the occupational diversifications. Because to get jobs the people come to the urban centres where they meet the other people of different communities.

Table -6.5

Marriage distance in kilometer and the number of marriages performed

Inside the village	D I S T A N C E IN KM.					
	1 to 10	11 to 20	21 to 30	31 to 40	41 to 50	Above 50
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
105 (63.25)	03 (1.81)	22 (13.26)	24 (14.46)	09 (5.42)	1 (0.60)	2 (1.20)

Source : Field survey, 1988

The figures in the parentheses indicate the percentage.

### Literacy and Educational Level:

As per field survey of 1988 this village has 56.70 percent literates of which 62.19 percent are males and 50.67 percent are females (Table 6.6).

When the literacy by age groups is considered it is found that the literacy rate is quite high in 10-14 years (85.53 percent), followed by 5-9 years (76.04 percent). But in older age groups the percentage in literacy is 59.09. It shows that the literacy among the Maria Muslims is not a recent phenomenon.

The female literacy is also very stable in this village. The female literacy is 50.67 percent. The female literacy rate is nil in the age group of 55-59 years. But in older age group the female literacy is 10.00 percent. It is mainly due to the effect of urbanisation.

There is one L.P. School in the village where only Maria children read, and there is one Madrassa school. But the High school and the Higher Secondary school are situated one kilometer away from this village. Hajo college is also situated one and a half kilometer away from the village. Of the total literates, about 45.49 percent are educated upto primary level, 28.15 percent upto the class VI to VIII, 12.16 percent upto the class IX to X, 4.73 percent upto Matriculation, 5.18 percent upto Intermediate, 3.38 percent upto Graduation level, and only 0.23 percent are educated upto M.A. and have technical education. In this village 4.71 percent of the literate males and 2.65 percent of the literate females are found upto Graduate level, and 0.39 percent of the literate males are found upto M.A. level where females are not found.

### Work Force:

This village has about 243 workers or 31.03 percent workers out of total male and female population. Of the total number of workers in the village 7.41 percent females and 92.6 percent males. About 540 persons or 68.97 percent

Table - 6.6  
Literacy Percentage by Age-Groups, 1988

Age groups	Literate Persons			Literate Persons as Percentage of Total Population.		
	Persons	Males	Females	Persons	Males	Females
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
0-4	-	-	-	-	-	-
5-9	73	40	33	76.04	83.33	68.75
10-14	65	36	29	85.53	90.00	80.56
15-19	70	29	41	72.92	74.36	71.93
20-24	69	35	34	70.41	76.09	65.38
25-29	53	33	20	72.60	89.19	55.56
30-34	34	21	13	62.96	75.00	50.00
35-39	28	20	08	62.22	66.67	53.33
40-44	14	09	05	50.00	64.29	35.71
45-49	13	10	03	38.24	58.82	17.65
50-54	07	05	02	31.82	38.46	22.22
55-59	05	05	-	41.67	55.56	-
60+	13	12	01	59.09	100.00	10.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>444</b>	<b>255</b>	<b>189</b>	<b>56.70</b>	<b>62.19</b>	<b>50.67</b>

Source : Field survey, 1988.

of the total population of this village are non-workers.

Of the total workers 65.02 percent are engaged in brass industry. 12.76 percent are engaged in service, followed by transport and communication (11.11 percent), trade and commerce (8.64 percent) and daily wage earners (2.47 percent). The female workers are mainly engaged in brass industry and a few of them are engaged in weaving. The practice of cultivation is absent in this village, which shows that the Maria Muslims are not basically cultivators. Their primary occupation was brass industry and still it is maintained in this village.

#### Income and Expenditure Pattern:

It has been mentioned earlier that 31.03 percent of the workers have to feed 68.97 percent of the non-workers.

The survey shows that the average monthly income per household in this village is Rs.742.49 (Table 6.7). The monthly per capita income is found to be Rs.133.78 as against Rs.138.06 for the Maria Muslims of the Brahmaputra Valley. So, it reveals that the people living in this village are very poor.

Table 6.7

#### Monthly per capita income, 1988

Number of households	Total number of persons	Average family members per household	Average income per household (in rupee)	Monthly per capita income (in rupee)
1	2	3	4	5
141	783	5.55	742.49	133.78

Source: Based on field survey, 1988.

Though in the lower income group (below Rs.600.00) the percentage (32.62) is lower (Table 6.8).

Table 6.8

Percentage of Households in Different Income-Group, 1988  
(in rupee)

Unknown	Low upto 600	Medium upto 600 to 1200	High above 1200
1	2	3	4
6 (4.26)	46 (32.62)	74 (52.48)	15 (10.64)

Source: Based on field survey, 1988.

The figures indicate in the parentheses indicate percentage.

In this village, the average monthly expenditure per household is found to be Rs.742.6 (Table 6.9) as against the average monthly income per household Rs.742.49. Further, per capita monthly expenditure of the people is Rs.135.01 while the per capita monthly income is 133.78. It shows the deficit budget.

However, the survey shows that most of the expenditure incurred is on food stuff (63.96 percent) as against 1.41 percent in luxury goods, transport (6.51 percent), recreation (2.77 percent), religious function (3.85 percent) and education (7.38 percent). So, it shows their economic backwardness in all respects.

Other amenities:

One health centre is situated one and half kilometer away from the village.

Table 6.9

Per Household and Per Capita Monthly Expenditure for different consumption items, 1988.

Foodstuff		Cloth		Luxury		Education		Medicine		Religious function		Recreation		Transport		Building material		Total	
H.H	capita	H.H.	capita	H.H.	capita	H.H.	capita	H.H.	capita	H.H.	capita	H.H.	capita	H.H.	capita	H.H.	capita	H.H.	capita
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
475.00	86.36	78.33	14.24	10.50	1.91	40.60	7.38	35.40	6.44	21.20	3.85	15.25	2.77	35.82	6.51	30.50	5.55	742.6	135.01
(63.96)		(10.55)		(1.41)		(5.47)		(4.77)		(2.86)		(2.05)		(4.82)		(4.11)			

Source: Field survey, 1988.

The figures in the parentheses indicate the percentage.

One sub-post office is located at a distance of one and a half kilometer having telegraph facility.

Electricity facility is found in this village. Well-to-do families have taken domestic connection. The people of this village get drinking water from tube-wells.

#### 6.12 Jayantipur

Jyantipur village (A village from central Brahmaputra valley):

Jyantipur village is situated in Koliabar in the Nowgong district of the Central Brahmaputra Valley, in a level plain, at a distance of 20 kilometers to the east of the Nowgong town and at a distance of 3 kilometers to the west of Jakholabandha. This village is situated very near to the National Highway No.37, under the jurisdiction of Kaliabor police station. This is a medium size village with a population of 925 individuals and with an area about one square kilometer. It is surrounded by other villages namely Teliagaon on the north and east where Koch, Kalita and Mahanta families are found, to the west Raidongia gaon is situated where mainly the people of the Kalita and Sharma castes live. On the south river Kalang flows from east to west.

This village is well connected with Nowgong, Tezpur and Jakholabandha town. On the west of this village there is Silghat road (metalled) which connects Silghat with N.H. 37. In the middle of the village there is a P.W.D. road which connects Kworitol Chariali (name of the bus stop) with Kolibar Tengabari. Several rural paths are found in this village. This village is well connected with other villages. Only the P.W.D. road is metalled and motorable, but the other rural paths are unmetalled.

Settlement pattern of this village is of the compact type. The houses are very close to each other. Houses are built of bamboo with thatched roofs and walled with mud. Corrugated tin roofs are also found. But the well to do

families construct brick-built and Assam type houses.

As per the survey carried out in 1988, the village contains 925 individuals of which 482 are males and 443 are females.

Population characteristics:

1) Sex and Age structure

When the age-groups of the population is considered it is found that the population in the age group of 0-14 years (Table 6.1) is significantly higher than those in the other groups. There are 405 children upto the age of 14 years.

Table 6.1

Population Distribution by Age-Groups, 1988

Age-Groups	Persons	Males	Females
1	2	3	4
All ages	925	482	443
0-4	130	66	64
5-9	164	87	77
10-14	111	65	46
15-19	40	17	23
20-24	83	29	54
25-29	90	37	53
30-34	86	50	36
35-39	63	38	25
40-44	37	20	17
45-49	41	23	18
50-54	31	22	09
55-59	17	12	05
60+	32	16	16

Source: Field survey, 1988.

The percentage is 43.78 of the total population of the village. There are 488 people in the age-group of 15-59 years. The percentage is 52.76 of the total population of the village. The percentage in the age-group of 60 and above is 3.46. It shows that less than half of the population in this village is economically dependant.

#### Birth and Death rate:

From the village survey 26 cases of births (2.81 percent) and 11 cases of deaths (1.19 percent) were found during the year 1987. The low mortality rate is due to the availability of medical facility in the village. Low birth rate indicates that they are in favour of family planning.

#### Size and composition of Households and Types of Family:

This village is found to have 146 households according to survey carried out in 1988. Various sizes of households are found with members ranging from 2 to 10 and above (Table 6.2). Households of 4-6 members are numerous (331 persons), followed by 10 members and above (271 persons), and 7-9 members (246 persons) respectively.

The number of nuclear families are significantly higher than that of other types (Table 6.3). Of the total number of families 63.01 percent is the nuclear type. This is mainly due to the effect of urbanisation and occupational diversifications. Moreover due to want of living space the number of nuclear families are increasing.

#### Marital status:

According to field survey it is found that 51.35 percent people belong to the category of unmarried. It is mainly due to the poor economic condition (Table 6.4), for which divorce cases are very few (0.54 percent).

#### Marriage distance:

As per field survey in 1988 it is found that out of 203 marriages 166(81.77

Table 6.2

## Size of Households in Jayantipur village, 1988

Single Member				2-3 Members				4-6 Members				7-9 Members				10 Members & Above			
Households	Persons	Males	Females	Households	Persons	Males	Females	Households	Persons	Males	Females	Households	Persons	Males	Females	Households	Persons	Males	Females
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
1	1	0	1	27	76	33	43	66	331	170	161	32	246	130	116	20	271	149	122

Source: Field survey, 1988

Table 6.3

## Types of Family living in the Households, 1988

Number of Households	Nuclear	Vertical extended	Horizontal extended	Broken
1	2	3	4	5
146	92 (63.01)	23 (15.75)	19 (13.01)	12 8.22

Source :Based on field survey, 1988

The figures in the parentheses indicate percentage.

Table 6.4

## Marital status (in percentage)

Married	Unmarried	Widow	Divorced
1	2	3	4
44.65	51.35	3.46	0.54

Source: Data collected from the field survey, 1988.

percent) marriages are performed within the village. It happens due mainly to the incapability of meeting the distant-marriage expenditure. So, generally they prefer to get married within the village (Table 6.5)

Table 6.5

Marriage distance in kilometer and the number of marriages are performed.

Inside the village	DISTANCE IN KM					
	1 to 10	11 to 20	21 to 30	31 to 40	41 to 50	Above 50
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
166 (81.77)	05 (2.46)	03 (1.48)	06 (2.96)	16 (7.88)	3 (1.48)	4 (1.97)

Source: Data collected from the field survey, 1988

The figures in the parentheses indicate the percentage.

It has also been observed that 99.01 percent of the marriages are performed within their own community. Because of the availability of marriageable girls within the village.

Literacy and Educational level:

The field survey of 1988 shows that this village has 74.70 percent of literates, of which 77.80 percent are males and 71.33 percent are females (Table 6.6).

When the literacy rate by age-group is considered it is found that the literacy rate is quite high in the 45-59 years age-group (95.12 percent), followed by the 10-14 years age-group (94.29 percent),

Table 6.6

Literacy Percentage by Age-groups, 1988

Age-groups	Literate Persons			Literate Persons as Percentage of Total Population.		
	Persons	Males	Females	Persons	Males	Females
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
0-4	-	-	-	-	-	-
5-9	119	68	51	72.56	78.16	66.23
10-14	105	62	43	94.59	95.38	93.48
15-19	32	15	17	80.00	88.24	73.91
20-24	76	25	51	91.57	86.21	94.44
25-29	81	35	46	90.00	94.59	86.79
30-34	78	49	29	90.69	98.00	80.56
35-39	57	36	21	90.48	94.74	84.00
40-44	33	18	15	89.19	90.00	88.24
45-49	39	22	17	95.12	95.65	94.44
50-54	29	21	08	93.55	95.45	88.89
55-59	14	10	04	82.35	83.33	80.00
60+	28	14	14	87.50	87.50	87.50
Total	691	375	316	74.70	77.80	71.33

Source : Data collected from field survey, 1988

The female literacy is also very stable in this village. The female literacy is 71.33 percent. In the older age group the female literacy is 87.50 percent. It is the effect of surrounding societies and nearness of the primary educational centres.

There is one L.P. school in the village. But two High and Higher Secondary schools are located within a distance of one kilometer away from this village. Of the total number of literates about 70.04 percent are educated upto primary level, 21.27 percent upto class VI to VIII, 5.79 percent upto class IX to X, 2.03 percent upto Matriculation, 0.14 percent upto Intermediate and 0.72 percent upto Graduate level. Higher education beyond the Graduation level is not found in this village. In this village, only 2.93 percent of the literate males and 0.95 percent of the literate males and 0.95 percent of literate females are found upto Matric level and 1.07 percent of the literate males and 0.32 percent of the literate females have studied upto Graduation level.

#### Work Force:

This village has 227 workers or 24.54 percent (46.27 percent male workers and 0.90 percent female workers) of its total population. Of the total number of workers 1.76 percent female workers are found in this village. About 698 persons or 75.46 percent of the total population of the village are non-workers.

Of the total number of workers 77.53 percent are engaged in trade and commerce, 14.10 percent are engaged in service, 2.65 percent are engaged in brass industry, 2.20 percent are engaged in agriculture and also 2.20 percent are engaged in transport and communication and 1.32 percent are daily wage earners. In this village the brass industry is in a dying condition because of non-availability of raw materials and proper market for finished products. So, the significant number of workers are engaged in trade and commerce. The female workers are engaged

in weaving. Only 5 families are engaged in agriculture. The size of the agricultural land holdings is found to be very small. The percentage of literacy is more than 70 percent on an average. It shows that the literacy among the people is an old phenomenon.

#### Income and Expenditure Pattern:

It is already mentioned that 24.54 percent of the workers have to feed 75.46 percent of the non-earning dependants.

The survey shows that the monthly average income per household is Rs.1183.00 in this village (Table 6.7). The monthly per capita income is found

Table 6.7

Monthly per capita income, 1988

Number of Households	Total No. of persons	Average family members per household	Average income per household (in rupee)	Monthly per capita income (in rupee)
1	2	3	4	5
146	925	6.34	1183.00	186.59

Source: Based on field survey, 1988.

to be Rs.186.59 in this village as against the Rs.138.06 for the Maria Muslims of the Brahmaputra Valley. On the other hand the percentage of lower income group (below Rs.600.00) is higher (5.68 percent) as compared with percentage (30.82 percent) of people in the upper income group (above Rs.1200.00). It is found that most of the people living in this village are very poor (Table 6.8).

Table 6.8

Percentage of Households in different Income Group (in Rupee), 1988.

Unknown	Low upto 600	Medium upto 600 to 1200	High above 1200
1	2	3	4
4 (2.74)	74 (50.68)	23 (15.76)	45 (30.82)

Source: Based on field survey, 1988

The figures in the parentheses indicate the percentage.

The survey shows that the average monthly expenditure per household is Rs.918.08 (Table 6.9) against an income of Rs.1183.00 in this village. Further per capita monthly expenditure of the people is Rs.144.80 whereas the per capita monthly income is Rs.186.59. Apparently it shows a surplus budget but only 30.82 percent of the people are well-to-do while the vast majority (53.42 percent) are below the minimum income level. So, the average family income and expenditure do not show the general economic condition. So, practically the average budget of the families of this village is always a deficit one. However, the survey shows that most of the expenditure incurred is on foodstuff (64.30 percent) as against cloth (8.76 percent), transport (5.53 percent), building material (7.70 percent) and luxury (1.22 percent). So, it shows that they are economically backward in all respects

Other amenities:

Primary medical facilities are found in this village. One dispensary and one Primary Health Centre are found within the jurisdiction of half-a-kilometer from

Table 6.9

Per Household and Per Capita Monthly Expenditure for different consumption items, 1988.

Foodstuff	Cloth		Luxury		Education		Medicine		Religious function		Recreation		Transport		Building material		Total		
H.H. Capita	H.H. Capita	H.H. Capita	H.H. Capita	H.H. Capita	H.H. Capita	H.H. Capita	H.H. Capita	H.H. Capita											
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
590.	93.11	80.45	12.6	11.20	1.77	50.30	7.93	30.85	4.87	21.20	3.34	12.30	1.94	50.80	8.01	70.65	11.14	918.08	144.80
33	(64.30)	(8.76)		(1.22)		†5.48	(3.36)			(2.31)		(1.34)		(5.53)		(7.70)			

Source: Field survey, 1988

The figures in the parentheses show the percentage

the village.

One sub-post office is found in this area, where only the ordinary postal facilities are available but to get telegraph facility the people of this village go to Nowgong town.

Power facility is available in this village. The well-to-do families have taken domestic connection. The people of this village get drinking water either from taps or from wells.

#### 6.13 Laluka :

Laluka : (A village from Upper Brahmaputra Valley):

Laluka is situated in the Dibrugarh district of the Upper Brahmaputra Valley, in a level plain, at a distance of three kilometers to the south of Dibrugarh town. This village is situated at the two sides of the National Highway No.37, under the jurisdiction of the Dibrugarh police station. This is a medium sized village with a population of 582 souls of which 315 are males and 267 are females and it has an area of about 848 square meter. It is surrounded by other villages namely Japora Gaon on the west where Hindu O.B.C. (Other Backward Class) people live, on the south there is Tekela Gaon where also the Hindu O.B.C. people live. The east is bordered by Chirang Gaon where Brahmin, Kalita and other backward classes people live, on the north there is Ampatty where the Garia (another group of Assamese Muslim) - Muslims, Hindus and other backward classes of people are found. In this village, one Rajkhawa family (having five individuals of which there are two males and three females) and one scheduled caste family (having five souls of which there are two males and three females) are found.

This village is well connected with Dibrugarh town by regular city bus service. The National Highway No.37 divides this village into two parts, viz. the western part and the eastern part. The surrounding villages are connected by unmetalled roads which only carts can use.

Settlement pattern of this village is of the linear and compact type. Houses are close to one another. The dwellings are constructed with corrugated tin roofs i.e., Assam Type and brick-built with R.C.C. construction, but thached roofs and mud walled houses have also been found.

#### Population Characteristics:

##### 1) Sex and Age structure:

Table 6.1 shows the total population of Laluka by age and sex. It is seen that 42.61 percent (248 children) of the total population belong to the lower age-group i.e. 0-14 years, whereas 53.09 percent (309 individuals) belong to the middle age-group i.e., 15-59 years and 4.29 percent (25 souls) to the highest age group i.e. 60+ years. It indicates that more than half of the population in this village is economically dependant.

#### Birth and Death rates:

From the village survey it is found that there are 13 cases of births (2.23 percent) and 6 cases of deaths (1.03 percent) during the year 1987. The low birth rate shows that they are in favour of family planning and low death rate shows that the proper medical care is available to the patients.

#### Size and Composition of Households:

This village comprises 96 households, according to the survey carried out in 1988. Various sizes of households are found with members ranging from 2 to 10 and above (Table 6.2). Households of 4-6 members are high (248 persons), followed by 7-9 members (221 persons), 10 members and above (85 persons) respectively. It indicates that they do not prefer more children and it happens mainly due to the economic backwardness.

The number of nuclear families are significantly higher than that of other

Table 6.1

## Population Distribution by Age-Groups, 1988

Age-Groups	Persons	Males	Females
1	2	3	4
All ages	582	315	267
0-4	62	28	34
5-9	82	45	37
10-14	104	60	44
15-19	74	37	37
20-24	59	40	19
25-29	42	22	20
30-34	30	19	11
35-39	18	9	9
40-44	23	10	13
50-54	19	10	9
55-59	14	7	7
60+	25	11	14

Source: Field survey, 1988.

Table 6.2

Size of Households in Laluka village, 1988.

Single Member				2-3 Members				4-6 Members				7-9 Members				10 Members and above			
Households	Persons	Males	Females	Households	Persons	Males	Females	Households	Persons	Males	Females	Households	Persons	Males	Females	Households	Persons	Males	Females
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
4	4	2	2	9	24	11	13	48	248	133	115	28	221	123	98	7	85	46	39

Source: Data collected from field survey, 1988.

types (Table 6.3). Of the total number of families 69.77 percent are of

Table 6.3

Types of Family living in the Households, 1988

No. of Households	Nuclear	Types of Households		Broken
		Vertical extended	Horizontal extended	
1	2	3	4	5
96	67 (69.77)	6 (6.25)	4 (4.16)	19 (19.79)

Source: Data collected from the field, 1988

The figures in the parentheses indicate percentage.

the nuclear type. It happens due to the occupational diversifications, shortage of living space and the effect of urbanization.

Marital status:

According to field survey it is found that 62.03 percent people are unmarried. It happens due to the effect of contact with urban areas where the people get married late, and also due to economic backwardness. One interesting observation is that the divorce cases are absent in this village. It is due to the influence of the Hindu society and inability of giving of Denmehar to the wife because of poor economic condition (Table 6.4).

Table 6.4  
Marital status (in percentage)

Married	Unmarried	Widow	Divorced
1	2	3	4
34.88	62.03	3.09	0

Source: Data collected from the field 1988.

Marriage distance:

Table 6.5 shows the marriage distance among the Maria Muslims of this

Table 6.5

Marriage distance in kilometer and the number of marriages are performed

Inside the village	DISTANCE IN KM					
	1 to 10	11 to 20	21 to 30	31 to 40	41 to 50	Above 50
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
64 (65.31)	5 (5.10)	3 (3.06)	6 (6.12)	0 0	2 (2.04)	18 (18.37)

Source : Data collected from the field, 1988.

The figures in the parentheses indicate the percentage.

village. Out of the total number of marriages (98 marriage), 64 marriages i.e. 65.31 percent marriages are performed within the same village. It is mainly due to the incapibility of arranging distant marriage expenditure. But

the percentage of distant marriages (above 50 k.m.) is high (18.37 percent) in this village as compared with the other two villages. This is mainly due to the smooth transport facility. Well-to-do families can arrange distant marriages due to the availability of transport facility.

From the field survey it has also been found that 84.69 percent marriages are performed within their own community, and only 15.31 percent marriages are performed with Garia Muslims (another Muslim group of the Brahmaputra valley). In this village the percentage of marriages within the community is less as compared with the other two villages. This is mainly due to the effect of urbanisation. The percentage of marriages with the Garia Muslims is high in this village, because of nearness of Amlapatty - a Garia Muslim village.

#### Literacy and Educational level:

Table 6.6 shows the percentage of literacy by age groups. In this village the total percentage of literacy is 69.42 of which 74.60 percent are males and 63.29 percent are females.

When the percentage of literacy of age-group is considered it is found that it is quite high in 15-59 years age group (95.95 percent), followed by 20-24 years (89.83 percent), in other age groups except 60+ years the percentage of literacy is more than fifty on an average. But in the highest age group (60+ years) the percentage of literacy is only 28.00. It is significantly low as compared with the other age groups. It indicates that, though education among the population is an old phenomenon but in the early days, due to non-availability of primary educational centres and economic backwardness the percentage of literacy is significantly low in the 60+ years age-group.

The position of female literates in this village is quite hopeful. The female literacy is found to be 63.29 percent. The highest female literacy is

Table 6.6

## Literacy Percentage by Age-Groups, 1988

Age groups	Literate persons			Literate Persons as Percentage of Total Population		
	Persons	Males	Females	Persons	Males	Females
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
0-4	-	-	-	-	-	-
5-9	69	36	33	84.15	80.00	89.19
10-14	93	50	43	89.42	83.33	97.73
15-19	71	36	35	95.95	97.29	94.59
20-24	53	38	15	89.83	95.00	78.75
25-29	34	19	15	80.95	86.36	75.00
30-34	20	13	7	66.67	68.42	63.34
35-39	13	8	5	72.22	88.89	55.56
40-44	10	6	4	43.48	60.00	30.77
45-49	15	13	2	50.00	76.47	15.38
50-54	12	8	4	63.16	80.00	44.44
55-59	7	4	3	50.00	57.14	42.86
60 +	7	4	3	28.00	36.36	21.43
Total	404	235	169	69.42	74.60	63.29

Source: Field survey 1988.

found in 10-14 years (97.73 percent) age-group and percentage of literacy is less in older age groups. This is mainly due to the economic backwardness.

There is one L.P. school in the village. But High, Higher Secondary schools and colleges are located in Dibrugarh town - three kilometers away from the village.

Of the total literates about 50.74 percent are educated upto primary level, 27.48 percent are educated upto VI to VIII level, 14.11 percent have read upto IX to Xth standard, 4.70 percent are educated upto Matric level, 1.98 percent and 0.99 percent have read upto Intermediate and Graduation level respectively.

#### Work Force:

This village has about 110 workers or 18.90 percent (32.06 percent males and 3.37 percent females). Female workers consist of 8.18 percent of the total working population. About 472 persons or 81.09 percent of the total population of this village are non-workers.

Of the total workers 42.73 percent workers are engaged in trade and commerce, 28.18 percent of the working people are engaged in service, followed by daily wage earners (16.36 percent), in transport and communication 11.82 percent people are engaged and only 0.91 percent workers are engaged in brass industry. The female workers are engaged in service and as daily wage earners. The practice of the cultivation is absent in this village which indicates that the Maria Muslims are not basically cultivators. But due to nearness of urban centres (Dibrugarh) more than seventy percent of the total number of workers are engaged in trade and commerce and in service. The percentage of daily wage earners is also high as compared with other villages, because the people get jobs on daily wage basis in road construction, building construction etc. under P.W.D. and C.P.W.D.

#### Income and Expenditure Pattern:

It has already been mentioned that 18.90 percent of the workers have

to feed 81.09 percent of the non-workers.

The survey reveals that the average monthly income in this village per household is Rs.861.32 (Table 6.7). The monthly per capita income is found

Table 6.7

Monthly per capita income, 1988

Number of Households	Total No. of persons	Average family members per household	Average income per household (in rupee)	Monthly per capita income (in rupee)
1	2	3	4	5
96	582	6.06	861.32	142.13

Source: Based on field survey, 1988.

to be Rs.142.13 as against Rs.138.06 for the Maria Muslims of the Brahmaputra Valley. From the table 6.8 it has been found that only 45.83 percent of house-

Table 6.8

Percentage of Households in different Income-Group (in rupee), 1988.

Unknown	Low upto 600	Medium upto 600 to 1200	High above 1200
1	2	3	4
0	44 (45.83)	26 (27.08)	26 (27.08)

Source: Based on field survey, 1988

The figures in the parentheses indicate the percentage

holds belong to the lower income group i.e. income upto Rs.600, but the rest of the households belong to either medium (Rs.600 to Rs.1200) or high (above Rs.1200) income group. So, from the above tables it is seen that the people of this village are in a better economic condition than the other two villages.

In this village, average monthly expenditure per household is found to be Rs.876.96 (Table 6.9) as against the average monthly income per household of Rs.861.32 (Table 6.7). Further, per capita monthly expenditure of the people is Rs.143.23, while the per capita monthly income is Rs.142.13 (Table 6.7). It shows a deficit budget.

However, the survey also shows that (Table 6.9) most of the expenditure incurred is on food stuff (64.19 percent) as against 1.49 percent in luxury goods, transport (4.75 percent), recreation (1.98 percent), religious function (3.08 percent), education (4.30 percent) etc. So it indicates that they spend maximum amount for food-stuff, which indicates an economic backwardness.

Other amenities:

Medical facilities are available only in Dibrugarh town - three kilometers away from the village. Within the village medical facility is not available.

One sub-post office is located one km. away from the village where telegraph facility is also available. But the people of this village get better Telegraph and Post Office facilities in Dibrugarh town.

Power facility is available in this village. Almost all the dwellings are electrified. The people of this village get drinking water from tube-well, tap water etc.

The Maria Muslims of this village get almost all the modern facilities due to the nearness of Dibrugarh town.

#### 6.14 Salient features

From the above discussion marked regional variations are noticed among the Marias of Lower, Central and Upper Brahmaputra Valley in population

Table 6.9  
Per Household and Per capita Monthly Expenditure for different consumption Items, 1988

Foodstuff	Cloth	Luxury	Education	Medicine	Religious function	Recreation	Transport	Building material	Total										
H.H. Capita	H.H. Capita	H.H. Capita	H.H. Capita	H.H. Capita															
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
557.10	91.93	99.48	16.42	12.92	2.13	37.28	6.15	40.91	6.75	26.70	4.41	17.22	2.48	41.26	6.81	35.09	5.79	876.96	143.23
(64.19)	(11.46)	(1.49)	(4.30)	(4.71)	(3.08)	(1.98)	(4.75)	(4.01)											

Source: Field survey 1988

The figures in the parentheses show the percentage

characteristics and economic status.

Population characteristics:

Age-sex structure:

Among the above mentioned three villages of three different regions of the Brahmaputra Valley it is found that in Hajo Islampatty of the Lower Brahmaputra Valley 59.00 percent of the population are found in 15-59 years age group, 38.19 percent of the population are found in upto 14 years of age group and the rest are found in 60 years and above age group. But in Jayanti-pur village of Central Brahmaputra Valley 52.96 percent of the population are found in 15-59 years age group, 43.78 percent of the population are found in upto 14 years age group, and only 3.46 percent people are found in 60 years and above age group. In Laluka of Upper Brahmaputra Valley it is calculated that 53.09 percent of the people are in 15-59 years age group, 42.61 percent of the people are found in upto 14 years age group and 4.29 percent people are found in 60 years and above age group.

Birth rates and death rates:

It is found from the village survey that in Hajo Islampatti birth rate is 3.95 percent and the death rate is 1.14 percent. In Jayantipur village the birth rate is 2.81 percent and the death rate is 1.18 percent and in Laluka the birth rate is 2.23 percent and the death rate is 1.03 percent. The low birth rate is observed in all the three regions. It indicates that they are in favour of family planning and it may also be the influence of urban people. The low death rate is due to the availability of medical facilities at the proper time.

Size and composition of Households:

It is found that in all the three villages the households of '4-6 members' are significantly high, and the number of nuclear families are higher than that of other types.

#### Marital status:

In all these three villages the majority of the people are unmarried. It indicates that they prefer late marriage and it is the influence of urban and surrounding communities. Economic backwardness is also responsible for late marriage.

From the survey it is revealed that on an average more than sixty percent marriages are performed within the village. This is mainly due to economic backwardness. It is also observed that more than eighty percent marriages are performed within their own community. This is mainly due to the social distance maintained by the Syads and Garias, the other two groups of the Muslims.

#### Literacy:

As per field survey it is found that Hajo Islampatti has 56.70 percent literates (62.19 percent males and 50.67 percent females). In Jayantipur village the percentage of literacy is 74.7 (77.80 percent males and 71.33 percent females). In Laluka village 69.42 percent literacy is calculated among the villagers of which males are 74.60 percent and females are 63.29 percent. Among all these villages the percentage of literacy is low in Hajo Islampatty of the Lower Brahmaputra Valley and this is mainly due to the economic instability. So the guardians send their children to earn money even before their primary schooling is finished. But in the Jayantipur village of the Central Brahmaputra Valley the high literacy is due to the economic stability.

#### Work Force:

It is calculated that among these three villages, 31.03 percent workers are found in Hajo Islampatti, followed by Jayantipur village (24.54 percent) and Laluka (18.9 percent). That the number of workers are more in Hajo

Islampatti is because of the presence of the brass industry in this village. Because in brass industry a good number of working men are required. The female work force (4.83 percent) is also high in this village due to the presence of the brass industry where a good number of women workers are engaged.

**Income and Expenditure:**

In Hajo Islampatti it is calculated that the monthly per capita income is Rs.133.78 and the monthly per capita expenditure is Rs.135.01 and it shows deficit budget. But in the Jayantipur village per capita monthly income is Rs.186.59 and per capita expenditure is Rs.144.80. In Laluka, the monthly per capita income is Rs.142.13 and per capita monthly expenditure is Rs.143.23, and it also shows a deficit budget. It is observed that among these three villages the per capita monthly income is more in Jayantipur village of the Central Brahmaputra Valley. But the per capita monthly expenditure is almost equal.

**Other amenities:**

The people of these three villages are getting all modern facilities. Medical facilities are available in and around the villages. In all the villages there is at least one primary school for primary education. Post office facility is found in or near the villages. Power facility is also available. The people get the drinking water from tube-well, tap water etc.

**Interaction and Assimilation Pattern:**

In Chapter five it has already been mentioned that there are cultural and social assimilation between the Marias and the Hindus. So their interaction and assimilation pattern within their community and with other religious groups make an useful and interesting study. The intermixing of blood took place between the Marias and the Assamese Hindus in the historic past. So, the offsprings took to Assamese culture. In this way Assamisation\* started through matrimonial relationship with the Hindus. Moreover, all of them now speak

the Assamese language and they have forgotten their own language Duan. This has happened due to the day-to-day living with the Assamese groups of people in their close neighbourhood since the time of the Ahom kings.

#### Food habit

Due to change of their settlement in the Brahmaputra Valley they have adopted the food habit of the Assamese people in this valley. Even they have adopted the method of preparation also from the Assamese Hindu society.

#### Dress:

Modern youths, clean shaved and dressed in pant-shirt cannot be distinguished from others. This is the result of cultural assimilation with the neighbouring Hindus and urban culture. Wearing dhoti is the influence of Assamese Hindu society. Young girls wear churidar with kameez which is the influence of surrounding communities.

#### Household articles:

Besides the use of brass utensils in the kitchen they also use China clay utensils. They use firewood, kerosene and cooking gas as fuel. The use of cooking gas is the influence of urbanisation. They also use cycles and a few of them have Calcutta made car for conveyance.

#### Social assimilation:

The social assimilation with the Hindus started since the historic past through matrimonial relationship with the Assamese Hindus. Since that time i.e. of the Ahom King many social customs have entered in their society.

#### Life cycle:

##### Pre-natal :

During the pre-birth time they observe a ritual at the seventh month of pregnancy. This ritual is locally known as Gopini sewa, which is alike to Hatkhowa in the Assamese society.

**Birth:**

On the third day of the birth they perform chuabichaya, which has been borrowed from the Assamese Hindu society.

**Adolescence period:**

When a girl first attains the puberty period they perform Tulonibiya like the Hindus. They observe all the customs in connection with this ritual like the Assamese Hindus.

**Marriage:**

At the time of marriage they perform Jurandiya before the day of marriage, Murarteldiya (oil on the forehead) like the Assamese Hindus. Even they sing Biyanam (marriage song) like the Assamese Hindus.

**Fairs and Festivals:**

Some of the Hindu fairs and festivals have also entered in their society. Bihu, the main festival of the Assamese Hindus, is observed by them. They also fire crackers at the time of Kalipuja - a Hindu deity. The youths of the Marias also visit the Durga puja pandals and even they contribute subscriptions for puja purposes.

**Superstitions:**

Due to the influence of the Hindu society some Hindu superstitions have been entered in their society. These are as follows :

i) They keep their Bharal (granary) closed for one month from the last day of the month Puh (mid December to mid January) like the Hindus. The Bharal (granary) is opened on the first day of Magh (mid January to mid February). On this day they wash the room and offer seasonal fruits on banana leaf along with incense sticks etc. on the floor of the room only. After performing Hewa (worship) they take out grains and crops from the room. They perform this ritual just like the Assamese Hindus.

(ii) When the pox starts in the village they perform Ai Hewa (Ai=mother and Hewa=worship) like the Assamese Hindus. Even when the cow is attacked

with pox they perform Gohali Hewa (worship to the cow shed). Similarly when the cholera begins in the village they perform Bhat Hewa like the other groups of Hindus.

iii) They believe in Horoscope and the same is prepared from the Hindu Ganak (astrologer). They also believe in black magic.

The interaction takes place either through group associations or at the personal level. The group level interaction takes place at the village market, educational institutions etc. and the individual interactions occurs from personal friendship.

The interaction is made between the Marias and the other religious groups in various ways. It has been mentioned earlier that the Maria youths take part in Hindu religious functions such as - visiting Durga puja pandals, fire crackers during Kalipuja (a Hindu deity). During these functions the Maria youths visit the Hindu households and at the time of Id festival the Hindu youths also visit their households.

Bihu is the national festival of the Assamese people which is observed by the Marias in the same way. The Maria boys and girls take active part in Bihu dance with the Hindu boys and girls.

The interaction takes place in other ways also. The Bez Maria (medicine men) also visits Hindu's house when the help is required. They are expert in black magic. The black magician also visits a Hindu house when the necessary help is required. The orthodox Hindu families who believe in Tabiz (amulet) take the same at the time of illness from the Marias. In the village market the Maria people exchange their views with the Hindus and the other groups of Muslims on various subjects.

During the social functions like marriage ceremony etc. the Hindus and the other groups of Muslims visit the Maria's house and sometimes they take food also. On the same occasion Maria people also visit the Hindu houses and

the Muslim's houses and take food.

The Maria people take loans at the time of necessity either from the Hindus or from the other groups of Muslims. For business purposes the Marias take loans, even the raw materials from the Hindus and other groups of Muslim traders.

In the village schools the Maria children read in Assamese medium schools along with the children of other groups of Muslims and the Hindus.

It is observed from the above discussion that the degree of interaction and assimilation have taken place between the Maria Muslims and the Assamese Hindus and the other groups of Muslims through the various ways.

#### Economic status:

From the period of the Ahom kings they have been engaged in brass industry. But at the present only 6.58 percent workers are engaged in brass industry. This is due to i) use of stainless steel, plastic and mechanised brass industry and ii) high rate of raw materials. So they have shifted to other occupations for their livelihood. From the field survey it is calculated that at present 59.59 percent workers are engaged in trade and commerce. Only 33.83 percent workers are engaged in transport and communication, service, daily labour etc.

Average monthly income and expenditure also have been calculated. It is found that the average monthly income per household is Rs.851.47 and monthly per capita income is Rs.137.33. The average monthly expenditure per household is Rs.781.11 and the per capita monthly expenditure is Rs.126.95. Though it shows a surplus budget but 46.35 percent families have an income of less than Rs.600.00, 34.59 percent and 19.06 percent of families have an income between Rs.600/- to Rs.1200/- and Rs.1200 + respectively. Thus, their general standard of living cannot be measured from the per capita income and the per capita expenditure. So, the average budget of these families is always a deficit one.