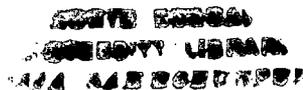


**THE HABITAT, ECONOMY AND SOCIETY :
A CASE STUDY OF MARIA MUSLIMS OF ASSAM**

Thesis Submitted for Ph. D. (Sc.) degree

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TO WHOMSOEVER IT MAY CONCERN

This is to certify that Shri Pradyot Kumar Guha, Research Scholar, Department of Geography and Applied Geography, North Bengal University has completed his research work on, 'The Habitat, Economy and Society: a case study of Maria Muslims of Assam' under my guidance. He is going to submit his thesis for Ph.D (Sc) in Geography in this University. His analyses through various social and economic data that he had collected during his field work are in many respect remarkable for their accuracy and meticulous detail. The importance of this work, specially in relation to national policy and reconstruction, cannot be ignored.

So far I^{am} aware of his work, he has fulfilled the requirements of the regulations relating to the nature and prescribed period of research work. He has not published this thesis or part there of any where.

I hope such efforts on his part will receive proper recognition at the hands of the academicians in the field and will be properly co-ordinated with the prognosis mentioned at the end for social and economic upliftment of the Maria Muslim community of Assam.

Anindya Pal.
(Anindya Pal)
26.8.92

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Siliguri
Dated: 26.8.92.

Pradyot Kumar Guha
Pradyot Kumar Guha

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P R E F A C E

PREFACE

For a long time the geographers were interested in finding out the relationship between man and his environment, but recently they have become interested to know about population and the factors influencing its growth.

Trewartha (1953) proposed in his presidential address to the American geographers of its 49th annual meeting that, geographical studies of population be systematized into a new division, namely population geography. The importance of population geography started after 1953, many eminent geographers like Zelinsky, Clark, Garnier, Melezin and a few other geographers strongly advocated the study of population geography. Different types of definitions have been given by different scholars of population geography. But according to Trewartha (1953), "the geographers goal in any or all analysis of population is an understanding of the regional differences in the earth's covering of people." He further pointed out that, "this involves not only number but also population characteristics, as well as growth and mobility," (Trewartha, 1969).

Another contribution to the Population Geography is the 'Readings in Cultural Geography' (1962) edited by Wegner and Mikesell. This book highlighted the cultural aspects of population through, "five implicit themes - culture, culture area, cultural landscape, culture history and cultural ecology". The Soviet Geographers' idea about the population geography as settlements geography, history of population, ethnography, labour force,

etc. A. Melezin - a Soviet geographer defines the Population Geography as, "the study of population distribution and productive relationship existing within various population groups, the settlement network and its fitness, usefulness, and effectiveness for productive goals of society", (Malezin, 1963).

Garnier (1965) in her book 'Geography of Population' describes the problem of population geographer as - "the demographic facts in their present environmental context, studying also their causes, their original characteristics and possible consequences."

Following Garnier's statement Clarke (1965) mentions that, "population geography is covered with demonstrating how spatial variations in the distribution, composition, migrations and the growth of population are related to spatial variations in the nature of the place". He also mentioned that, "while the demographer is devoted to numbers and depends heavily upon statistical methods, the population geographer relates numbers to area and relies upon maps". According to him the scope of Population Geography includes the treatment of certain specific characteristics, such as the absolute numbers, physical, social and economic characteristics and population dynamics. Zelinsky (1966) an eminent American Geographer defined the discipline as "a science that deals with the extend and ways in which the total unique geographic character of places formed by and, in turn reacts upon a set of population phenomena which vary within it through both space and time as they follow their own behavioural laws and interact with numerous non-demographic phenomena". He also defined that, "the scope of Population Geography, which should include the treatment of all the variables present in the census schedules of the advanced nations." Newman and Matzke explained the population characteristics as, "the three

so-called demographic variables of fertility, mortality and migration constitute a core along with, of course, their outcome, mainly population change. Perhaps an ever more central concern is population distribution. Also the age, sex and marital characteristics of population are usually given high priority, primarily because of their impact on the three demographic variables," (Newman, 1984).

A number of geographical studies on different aspects have been made by different geographers. Among them Cumberland had shown the growth of population in New Zealand, (Cumberland, 1953).

David M. Smith (1977) in his book 'Human Geography - A Welfare Approach', describes, "a new systematic branch of human geography dealing with "welfare", just as economic geography deals with economic phenomena, social geography with social phenomena". In another book on 'Population Geography - A Reader' Demko (1970) had shown that Population Geography unlike other branches is highly sensitive to the time dimension. The stress has been given on the processes behind spatial variations of population attributes.

The statistical method on Population Geography was first introduced by Gregory (1963), followed by Yeates (1968) and King (1969).

Researches in Population Geography in India are so far quite limited. The first systematic research work conducted in Population Geography was initiated by G.S. Gosal in 1956 for his doctoral thesis, 'A Geographical Analysis of India's Population' at the university of Wisconsin under the guidance of Prof. Trewartha. He studied all the significant aspects of population such as distribution, growth, migration, sex-ratio, literacy, occupational structure etc. for the country as a whole. Following his work, at

micro-level Krishan wrote his doctoral thesis in 1968. He studied on the population change in Punjab's border districts of Amritsar and Gurudaspur. Chandana in 1969 worked on Haryana's districts bordering on the Union Territory of Delhi and Mehta (1970) on Bist Doab in Punjab.

The population sheets on the scale 1 : 1,000,000 published by National Atlas Organisation under the guidance of Prof. S.P. Chatteraji (1962) depicts the distribution of rural-urban population in seven macro-regions of India.

Ahmed in 1941 undertook a research work on, how the population distribution is influenced by the physical and cultural environment.

Another significant work has been done by L.S. Bhat in 1961, advocating for population studies in India on macro, meso and micro level, which help in regional planning. In another work Prakash (1970) had shown the population distribution and density of Uttar Pradesh using district and tahsil level data.

The process of population growth has been studied by some geographers. Gosal (1974) studied on population growth in India during 1961-71 decade using district level data. H. Lall (1980) studied on population potential distribution in western Uttar Pradesh. For this study he has used the growth potential model for analysing the population concentration in the region. Sinha in 1958 analysed the population growth in Orissa who later assessed the impact of increase in population on the economy of the state (1963). On this aspect micro level studies have made by Chatterjee and Ganguli (1943) on Nadia and Tirunelveli districts. A similar work done by Krishan (1968) on population change in the border districts of Amritsar and Gurudaspur of Punjab.

A few articles have been written on age and sex composition. Gosal (1961) attempted to analyse the regionalisation of sex composition of India's population as in 1951. He highlighted the regional contrasts in sex ratio, and examined the factors associated with these variations. Another significant work done by Sen (1963) on the sex-ratio in India's population. Among the works on literacy Gosal in 1964 worked on the interpretative study of literacy in India where he had discussed the regional variations in literacy referring the factors with which these variations are related. In another work Gosal (1967) had shown the rural literacy rate in India. Banerjee (1975) analysed the literacy in Singbhum district of Bihar by using block level data. Another significant work was done by Sharma (1968) where he had shown the growth of literacy and various causes of low level of literacy in rural Rajasthan.

In the research work on working force and occupational structure, Mehta in 1967 specially referred to the female participation in rural India. In 1975 Viswanath studied on the occupational structure of women in India by using the statewise data. Gosal in 1958 wrote an article on the occupational structure of India's rural population. He had emphasised on areal variations in the occupational structure of rural population. Krishan (1980) worked on the regional pattern of economic diversification on the basis of non-agricultural workers by using district level data. In another work Krishan and Chandana in 1974 studied on the working force and its occupational structure in Haryana. They emphasised on the low proportion of workers in Haryana. This has happened due to very high proportion of children population and extremely low participation of females in work.

Apart from these works a few standard books have been published on Indian population by different scholars. Among them are the ones of

Bhattacharyya (1978), Bhende and Kanitkar (1978) and Chandana (1986). These books are carrying important informations on the characteristics of Indian population.

It has been observed that the geographic studies on Indian Muslims are very limited. Most of the works have been done by Anthropologists, Sociologists, Historians, Census authorities and other social scientists. The significant work was done by Bose (1951). He observed that "Muslim converts have continued to obey caste rules of occupational monopoly. They continue to observe the hereditary character of their occupation, to believe in the superiority of various economic pursuits and even continued to observe the old rules of endogamy". He also finds that many of the notions of superiority of the occupations continued to be in vogue among the converts. A similar work done by Siddiqui (1978) in his book 'Population Geography of Muslims of India'. He stated that Muslims like other Indians also a lower class in India. It comprises mainly with the converts from non-Islamic Indians. It is difficult to distinguish them from the Hindu masses. Due to conversion little change is found in the social environment or economic pursuits and status of each Muslim in general. He also described that the distribution of Indian Muslims have its own regional framework within the general pattern of the distribution of total population of the country. He also mentioned the growth, composition and population movement, and their impact upon the cultural landscape of the country.

Several historians like Titus (1930), Qureshi (1962), Ahmad (1964) and Mujeeb (1967) have given accounts of the Muslims in the Indian sub-continent are basically about the diversity of their origin. Indian Muslims are composed of foreigners or later immigrants from such divergent regions

as Arabia, Turkey, Iran and Afganistan of different languages and of different culture, and indigenou converts drawn from widely differing back-ground on the other.

A geneological work *Tarikh-e-Hasan* (1912) in Persian by Mir Jawwad Hussain of Gave (Bihar) gives valuable information about the Muslim convents from Hindu castes such as Thakurs, Babhans, Goalas and Kayasthas in Bihar and Uttar Pradesh. An extract from *Tarikh-e-Hasan* rendered from Persian elucidates the point. "The Kshatrias, the Brahmins and the Kayasthas have been among the Hindu gentries. Several (Muslims) groups have sprung up from amongst them and likewise are Mai Pathans who are quite numerous. The Goalas who were converted to Islam assumed the name of Bhatti Pathan. Their women like those of the lower classes participate in agricultural activities. In Allahabad region the goalas accepted Islam and are known as Ghosis but continue to be engaged in milk trade. In the villages of Allahabad there are kayestha Muslims and they are engaged in the occupation of Patwar, their names are Lala such as such Hussain Ali.

This shows that during the rule of the kings many of them accepted Islam and continue to be Muslims. In the district of Jaunpur there are Muslim Thakurs who are Zamindars, Talukdars who take pride in their surname of Thakur. It shows that the Thakurs and Rajas having accepted Islam continue to be identified with their ancient surnames."

At micro-level another notable work has made by Ahmed (1962). His study based on field work, done in two different Muslim villages in Uttar Pradesh. He observed the caste ranking system and other elements of caste among the Muslims. The work of Raja, Ahmed and Siddiqui (1973) is a significant one which traces the historical factors which have contributed

to the pattern of concentration of Muslims in India. In another study Mukherjee (1973) had shown the spatial distribution of Muslims in Uttar Pradesh on the basis of geographic patterning of the historical phenomena.

Besides the articles on the Muslims of India, several monographs also were published by different scholars. Among them Ansari's (1961) monograph based on published census reports relating to Uttar Pradesh where he finds the caste system among the Muslims of the state. Misra's (1963) monograph deals with the social backgrounds historically and their interrelationship among the Muslim group in Gujarat. Recently Siddiqui (1979) made a study on the Muslims of Calcutta in urban Anthropology. In this monograph he has made an attempt to find out the segments of Muslim society in the metropolis. He had also shown the interrelationship between these segments. Relevant studies in North-East India and Assam :

The study of Population Geography is still in its immature stage in North-East India. Recently few doctoral theses and research papers have been appeared on the population of North-East India. The work of Das (1976), Bhuyan (1977), Mathew (1983), Singh (1986), Barooah (1984), Bora (1990), are worth mentioning in this line. Das has studied on the demographic characters and socio-economic aspects of tribal population of Kamrup District of Assam. Bhuyan has attempted to study the spatial consequences of immigrant population in Assam as reflected in rapid population growth, landuse types, and economic development within the geographical framework of the state. Mathew had analysed on the spatio-temporal patterns of demographic, economic and socio-cultural characteristics of the composite population of Meghalaya. Barooah has studied on the evolution of heterogeneous population structure of Dibrugarh district of Assam during the period of

1872-1971 on a historical and racial background. She highlighted on the emerging pattern of variations of growth, distribution and density, occupational and socio-cultural aspects. Singh had studied in detail about the pattern of population characteristics such as growth, distribution and density, migration, occupational structure, literacy, religious, linguistic and social composition of population of Manipur in terms of plain-hill dichotomy. He also had shown the variations in distribution and density, growth, literacy and other socio-economic characteristics between the plains and the hills. He emphasised on the impact of immigration on population growth and resource base of the state. Bora has made a detailed analysis on the spatio-temporal variations of the distribution and density, rapid growth, pattern of age composition, sex-ratio, marital status, man-land relationship, pattern of work participation rate, occupational characteristics and the basis socio-cultural characteristics such as literacy and educational level, religion, language and dialects of the population of Siang region of Arunachal Pradesh. He also synthesised the intra-regional variations of these phenomena in order to divide the region into population zone. Besides these, the works of Taher (1977, 1979, 1987) and Sharma (1985) have done significant works relating to present study. Taher had shown a diagnostic survey of spatial distribution of tribes in North-East India. In another work he had shown a spatial analysis of the scheduled caste population in Assam. Another significant work has been made on the population base of Assam. In this work he analysed the population base of Assam which is characterised by the elements of racial, social, economic and cultural plurality and at times emerge in the guise of social regeneration. He also observes that the geographical location of Assam, as the meeting place of various currents of human migration since prehistoric times, some of which are sustained, coupled with its resources, inherits such condition. Sharma attempted a

comprehensive analysis of spatial pattern of sex disparity in literacy of Assam based on statistics using thana-level data of 1971 census.

Very little work has been done on the Muslim of Assam. Among these works the significant work has been made by Saikia (1978). He found the prevalence of group system among the Muslims and the remarkable impact of Islam on social and cultural life of Assam and traditional culture in the life of the Muslims. In another work Ali (1974) had shown the social relations among the three groups of the Assamese Muslims in rural and urban areas. A few M.Phil dissertations also have made on the Muslims of Assam. Among these, Saifun Nassa's (1984) work on the Assamese Muslim society in Assam, where she had shown the interrelationship between the different groups of the Assamese Muslims from the sociological point of view. The other two M.Phil dissertations are : Saikia (1985) and Jahan (1986). These studies mainly focussed the socio-cultural life of the Muslims of Goalpara and Darrang districts of Assam. They have also thrown light on the demography, by social and economic aspects of the Muslims of these two districts of Assam. Apart from these, a few papers have been published by Irshad Ali (1974, 1979 and 1981). These studies mainly dealt with the occupational structure, socio-cultural life and Hindu-Muslim relationship of the Assamese Muslims of Assam.

There are only a few scholars who have worked and written on the Maria Muslims. Among them Saikia (1978), Irshad Ali (1974) and Saifun Nassa (1984). Saikia mentioned about the Maria Muslims that the Maria word originated from the term Marshiya or Murji'iyah. Murji'iyah is the name of another sect of Muslims which emerged in the Umayyad age (A.H.40.) 667 A.D. Ali writes that Marias have almost abandoned their traditional profession because of the increasing of the popularity of factory made

utensils. Saifun Nessa described the Marias as, "They were looked down upon by the orthodox followers of Islam. Because of their habitat of durnkenness and quarrelsome character, they were regarded as a group of degraded Muslims. They participated in Islamic prctices only nominally". She also mentioned that, "The Marias were looked upon with detestation because of lowly occupation. But their occupation was not related to pollution. Moreover, brass utensils prāducing by them were even used in the Namghar. So it can be assumed that they were treated as a group of degraded Muslims not because of their occupation but because of their habitat."

It may be mentioned that no significant work has been done by any geographer on the Maria Muslims. From the foregoing review of available literatures on the Maria Muslims, it has been observed that almost all the works done from the perspective of other disciplines like Sociology, Anthro-pology and history. So there is a wide scope of doing geographic research work on this community. Keeping this in mind, the present study has been taken on the Maria Muslims within the framework of Population Geography.

CHAPTER - 1.0

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Statement of the study :

The study area is the Brahmaputra Valley ($25^{\circ}44'$ - $27^{\circ}55'N$ and $89^{\circ}41'$ - $96^{\circ}02'$ E) which is well demarcated by Eastern Himalayas, Pat Koi and Naga Hills and the Garo-Khasi-Jaintia and the Mikir Hills. It Extends from the easternmost tip of Upper Brahmaputra Valley near the syntoxial bend of the Eastern Himalayas to the West of Dhubri on the border of Bangladesh. The valley (about 720 Kms. x 80 Kms.) covers an area of about 56,274 Km.². This valley includes the administrative districts of Kokrajhar, Dhubri, Bongaigaon, Goalpara, Barpeta, Nalbari, Kamrup, Darrang, Marigaon, Sonitpur, Nowgong, Golaghat, Jorhat, Lakhimpur, Dhemaji, Tinsukia, Dibrugarh, Sibsagar of the state as Assam (Fig.1).

The study in population geography is assuming great significance. At present all the factors of socio-economic and physical environments are closely related with the population studies which give the population character and geographic significance to a society. Therefore, without studying the character of the people and the socio-economic status no sphere of human life, be its development or anything else could be meaningfully conceived of. It is applicable in the case of socio-economically backward Maria Muslims of the Brahmaputra Valley where socio-economic development has not been taken place. The Marias are a group of indigenous Muslims population living in the Brahmaputra Valley of Assam (fig.2). The word 'Maria' originated from the beating (mara) of hot brass metal for making utensils. Another view is that, the word 'Maria' originated from the term Marshiya or Murjiay. Murjiay was the name of a sect of the Muslim which came to be first known in the Umayyad

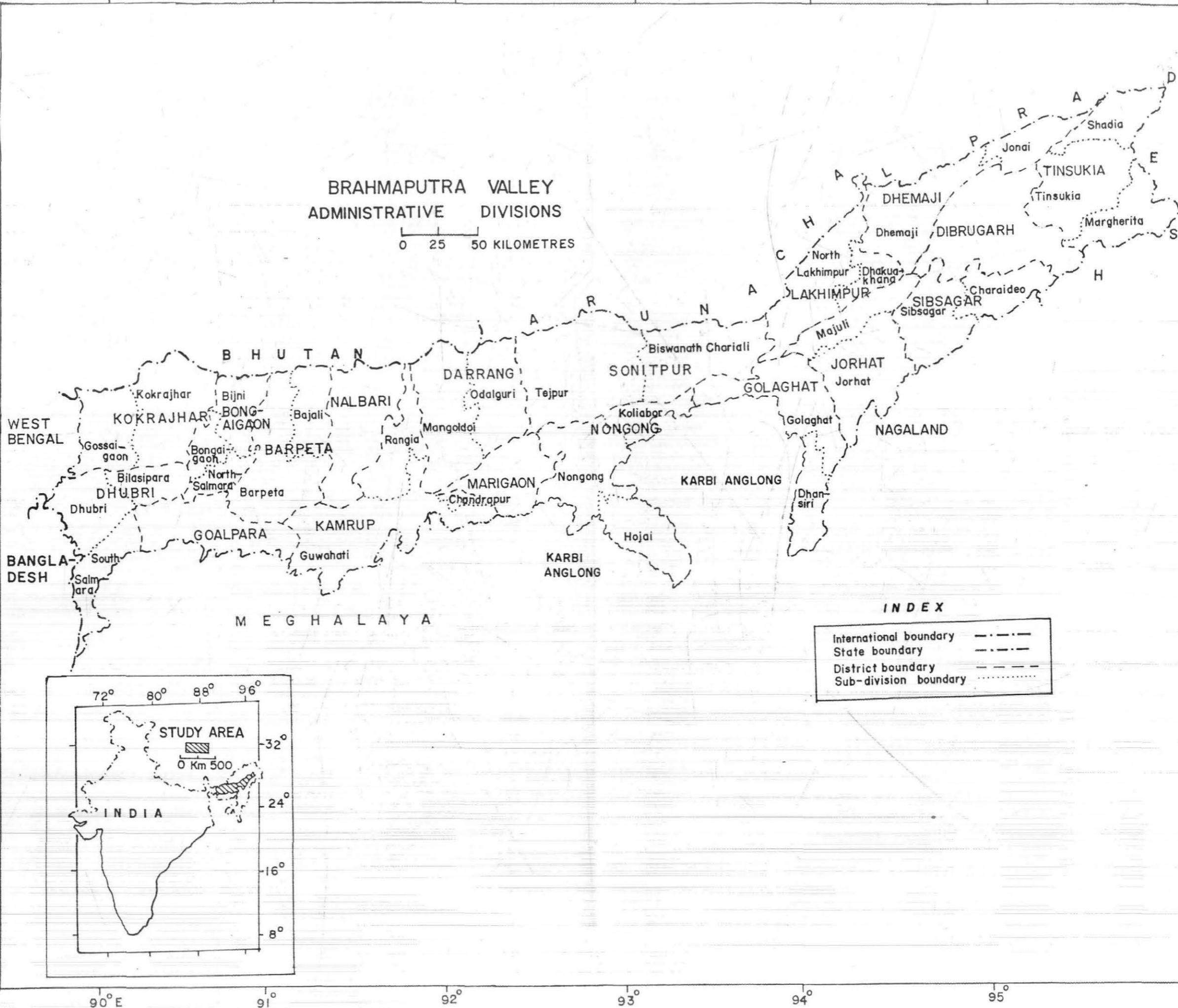


FIG.-1

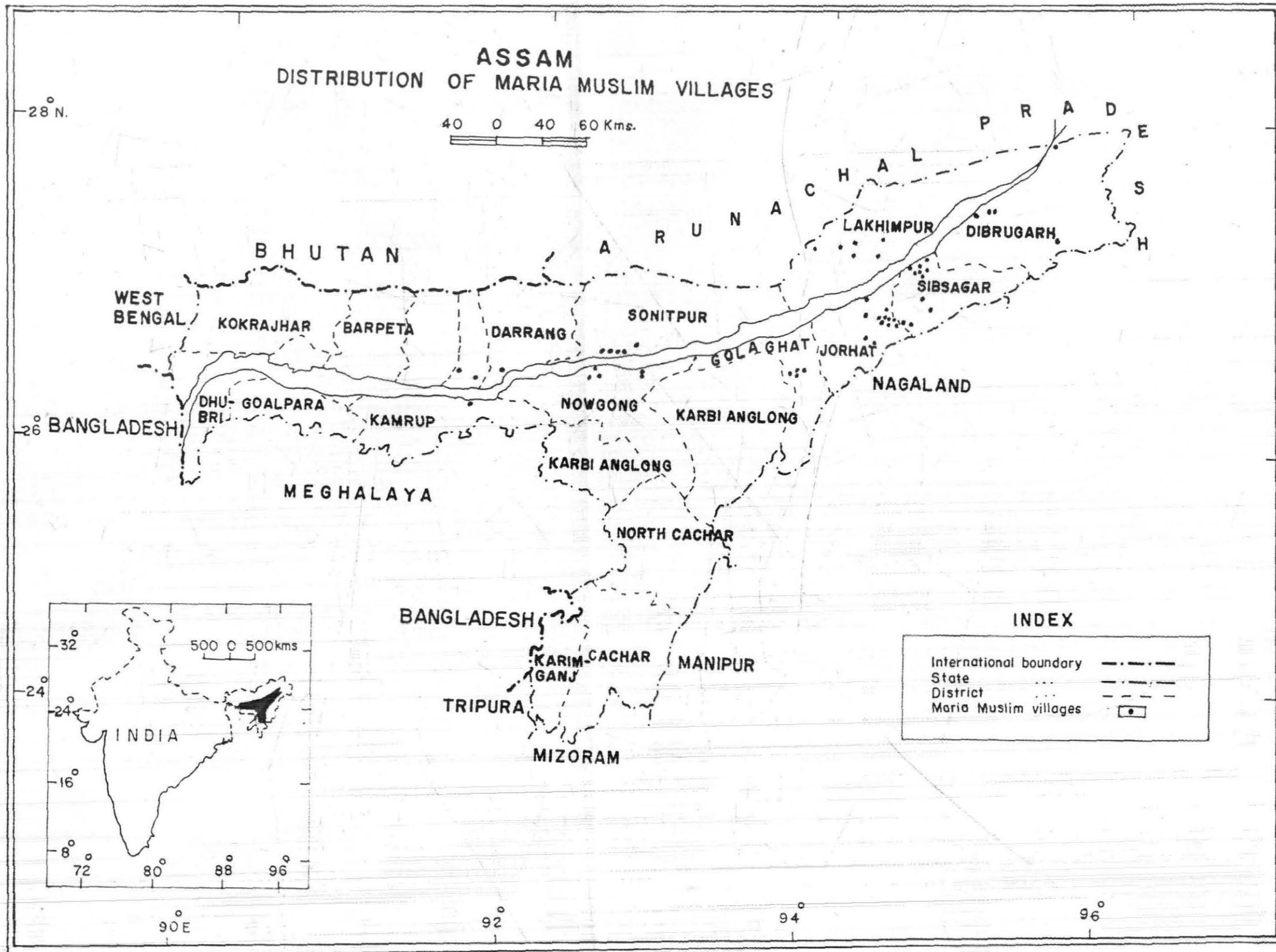


FIG.-2

age (A.H. 40) in 661 A.D. (Saikia, 1978). They came as invaders and started their carrier as braziers. But at present majority of them are engaged in other occupations such as business, services etc. This occupational diversification is the result of the coming of stainless steel, plastic and machine made brass utensils. In this background, a geographic study of the Maria Muslim population of the Brahmaputra Valley has been undertaken for the present work.

Their number according to the field investigation in 1988 is 23686 individuals of which 13677 are males and 10009 are females. They are scatter ly distributed in the nine districts of the valley and the major concentration is found in the Dibrugarh district of the Upper Brahmaputra Valley, where about 16.71 percent of them are live. They are categorised as More Other Backward classes.

The growth and density show the wide spatial variations. Its density is 0.42 per km². The growth (1397.22 percent) over the decades (1911-1988) indicates that the growth rate is quite high.

The characteristics by which the character of a society can be understood are the basic demographic variables such as sex ratio, age, sex, marital status, economic variables as working force, occupational patterns and social traits such as language, religion, education etc. Sex-ratio of the Maria Muslims of the Brahmaputra Valley is 732/1000. The districtwise variation in sex-ratio reveals the real situation of working force. It is found that the highest sex-ratio (902) is found in Kamrup district of the Lower Brahmaputra Valley while the lowest Sex ratio (538) is found in Golghat^a district of the Upper Brahmaputra Valley.

The change in the demographic variables viz. births and deaths bring the change in the growth pattern, age-sex composition, marital status, age and sex working force in different types of occupations. Age and sex pattern determine the condition for the future demographic trends. It also gives the size of the male female working force, size of the dependent population etc.

Further, the occupational characteristics are determined by the nature and a number of socio-cultural factors. The occupational structure of the Maria population is studied on the basis of the survey made during the field work. It is calculated that only 26.09 percent workers are engaged in different activities. It is mainly due to the high number of non-working dependants (73.91 percent) particularly among the females (95.13 percent) in this society.

It may be mentioned that, though they had started their livelihood as braziers but after the Independence their original profession has been given up due to the implementation of stainless steel, plastic etc. At present only 17.59 percent workers are engaged themselves in brass industry and the rest of the workers are engaged in other occupational activities.

A study of the degree of assimilation of the Marias with the Assamese Hindus of the Brahmaputra Valley shows that they are under the strong influence of the Assamese Hindu culture. They have adapted many customs/in their life cycles like pre-natal, birth, adolescence, marriage etc. from the Assamese Hindus. Even they have been influenced by the superstitions of the Assamese Hindus and believe it like the Hindus. The interaction pattern between the Marias and the other groups of Muslims

and the Assamese Hindus is very strong in this valley. These three groups take part in their socio-cultural and religious functions with an open mind. This has been observed both in rural and in urban areas.

The study of the degree of assimilation of the Maria Muslims with the rest of the population of the Brahmaputra Valley shows a similar pattern between the Lower, the Central and the Upper Brahmaputra Valley.

The above are the background factors which have influenced in selection of the present research problem :

THE HABITAT, ECONOMY AND SOCIETY : A CASE STUDY OF MARIA MUSLIMS OF ASSAM.

The population character of such a community can only be understood when a comprehensive analysis of its various demographic variables, economic, and socio-cultural traits such as distribution and density, growth, age-sex composition, occupational pattern, social assimilation etc. is systematically made to this effect.

1.2 Objective of the study :

The main objectives of the present study are :

- i) to examine the present population distribution and density pattern in different parts of the area and to enquire the factors which are responsible for the variations.
- ii) to study the pattern of population growth, its variations in different parts and the causes of its growth trends.

- iii) to analyse the pattern of the population characteristics of this society such as age-structure, sex-ratio, marital status in different areas and to find out the variations in different parts.
- iv) to evaluate the occupational diversifications that have been noticed among the Marias in the post-Independence period. An empirical study of the diversification has been undertaken to measure the degree of changes and their spatial pattern.
- v) to study the basic socio-cultural characteristics viz. literacy and educational level, religion and language and
- vi) to examine the assimilation that has been taken place among the Marias with the Assamese Hindus during the historical past.

1.3 Scope of the study :

The study of population geography, covers a wide ranging aspects of population. Source materials relating to origin of the Maria Muslims and their final settlement in the Brahmaputra Valley are not available. They have no written language of their own, even they did not practice the keeping of their own historical records, which would have helped this researcher in tracing back their past. Under these situations, the researcher had to depend on their beliefs etc. To find out the historical fact, culture and distribution, the researcher had

to go back to the Ahom period. Writings in the Ahom Buranji (History), informations written by the British Government officials have been accepted as genuine. The census figures of the earlier period are not available in a systematic way. In 1872, when the first census was carried out the number of Maria Muslims was recorded excluding those who were ashamed of the name. In 1881 census they have not been recorded as a separate class. Since 1921 census the Maria population have been merged with the Assamese Muslims. Further, during recent decades, there are some orientation in the formation of districts and some new districts with modified boundaries have come up and hence it is very difficult to compare the census figures. It will be wise to mention that, the census records do not give the figures of places smaller than a district. Hence, due to non-availability of census figures, the researcher had to depend on the primary data obtained from the field work carried out in 1988 to study the demographic structure of the Maria Muslim society.

So, to complete this project, the researcher had to undertake extensive field work and spend a long period among the Maria Muslims in the remote villages, to present their socio-cultural picture. The study also has been done in view of its academic and practical significance.

1.4 Working hypothesis :

The study has been undertaken as a research project on Maria Muslims and the main focus will be on the socio-cultural and economic aspects of the people.

While doing field work the author acquired some knowledge

through observation and the following hypotheses have been adopted:

- i) The assimilation among the Marias has become an important social phenomenon due to their marital relations with the Assamese Hindu society in the past.
- ii) Since the Maria community is a professional group of people they are traditionally non-agriculturists and do not possess agricultural land. At present their previous professions have been abandoned, which had traditional good market due to popularity of stainless steel, plastic etc. and as such they are remaining economically backward.
- iii) Due to urbanisation the literacy rate is high among the Marias than those of other population in Assam.
- iv) Economic activities have changed through time and space in the Maria Muslims society since Independence, because of socio-economic changes in their surroundings.
- v) Since this community is not an agricultural one so there is a tendency among them to settle in or near an urban or semi-urban areas to avail of socio-economic opportunities.
- vi) The urban concentration is more prominent in the case of the Maria Muslims than other Muslims in the Brahmaputra Valley.

1.5 Significance of the study :

The significance of the present work lies in unfolding the geographic character of a community living in the Brahmaputra Valley of Assam. Though the works on Indian Muslims have been done by the geographers, cultural anthropologists, sociologists, but little works have been done by the social scientists on this community. It may also be mentioned that, no systematic geographical work has been made on the Marias of this Valley. Although they have kept their identity as a separate class, there are marked differences in the degree of social change including literacy, economic condition etc. among them. Such a variation has been taken place through time and space.

Since they are braziers by profession and do not possess agricultural land, they are economically backward at present, since stainless steel, and plastic have pushed away their traditional produce from the market.

So, a study of the socio-economic problems of the Maria Muslims who are economically backward has a practical significance. Hope that this study will help the future researchers to get more knowledge about the population character of this society. Apart from the academic significance this study will help to formulate the development programme for this society.

1.6 Data base and methodology :

The following steps have been taken into consideration in

completing the research project.

- a) Before doing field work the researcher engaged himself in collecting basic data about the Maria Muslims through library work. At this stage an intensive study of published/unpublished work that concerns the Maria has been made. This has helped in collecting the historical, social and cultural information about the Marias.
- b) Besides library work, the data have collected by personally visiting their habitats, interviewing the people, filling in of questionnaires and schedules and observing their settlement, housetype, food and dress habits, economic activities, educational status, standard of living etc.

Eight sample villages have been taken into consideration from different parts of the Brahmaputra Valley-for filling in the questionnaires. The sample villages which could best represent the common character of a Maria Muslims settlement.

- c) The last part of the work involves laboratory work. In this part, the interpretation and analysis have been made from the empirical data for writing out the thesis. The tables, maps and cartograms are also prepared. To illustrate the significant socio-cultural aspects of the society, photographs taken during field survey have also been attached along with the text of the thesis.

1.7 Organisation of chapters :

The contents of this thesis is divided into three parts :

General, Analysis and Synthesis.

The preface contains some works done related to this work in abroad and in India has been critically reviewed.

In the first chapter the statement of the problem and its objective, its scope, significance, investigated questions and methodology are interpreted.

The first part of the thesis contains two chapters and it starts with second chapter.

The second chapter treats with general geographical set up of the Brahmaputra Valley, such as relief, drainage, climate, soil, vegetation, economy and transport and communication.

The third chapter deals with the historical background of the community.

The second part constitutes the analytical section of the study. It consists of three chapters and starts with the fourth chapter, which contains the distributions, rural, urban composition, density and growth of the Maria Muslims.

The fifth chapter deals with the study of the characteristics of the society. In this chapter, the sample data have been taken into account for the purpose of the analysis of sex-ratio, age-sex composition, literacy, etc. Social, economic structure and cultural characteristics also have been discussed in this chapter.

The last chapter of this part contains the regional variations of the society and the characteristics of demography, socio-economic and socio-cultural status of representative sample villages. In this chapter the study of the degree of assimilation of the Marias with the rest of the people of the valley also has been included.

The last part deals with the synthesis in which facts and findings incorporated and are explained in the form of summary and conclusion.

CHAPTER - 2.0

GEOGRAPHICAL SETTING OF THE AREA

2.0 GEOGRAPHICAL SETTING OF THE AREA

2.1 Physical basis

2.11 Relief and Drainage :

The Brahmaputra Valley is almost a flat level plain built up by alluvium deposit. The average level of the valley ranges from 130m. in the east to 30 m. in the west. This valley has steep slopes in its northern margin from the foothills of Arunachal Pradesh but the slope is gradual in the south from the southern hill ranges. The Brahmaputra Valley is wide in Upper Assam and in Lower Assam but it is narrow at Gauhati because at Gauhati the river flows close to the granite hillocks of Shillong plateau. On the banks of the river a number of isolated hillocks or monadnocks are seen.

In the north, innumerable tributaries run down from Arunachal Pradesh and the Bhutan Himalayas. These tributaries, form the alluvial fans due to the presence of coarse alluvial debris which have given rise to terai or Semi-terai conditions resulting in wet soil and dense forest. But the southern part of the valley is narrow and uneven and the tributaries in the south-east are considerably larger. It may be mentioned that meandering of the tributaries in the eastern part of the southern section of the valley is prominent which forms a number of beels and ox-bow lakes.

The Brahmaputra Valley is highly braided due to its low gradient. As a result innumerable riverine islands have been formed. Majuli is the largest riverine island in the world. (Fig. 3).

2.12 Climate :

The climate of the Brahmaputra Valley is mainly regulated by the following major factors.

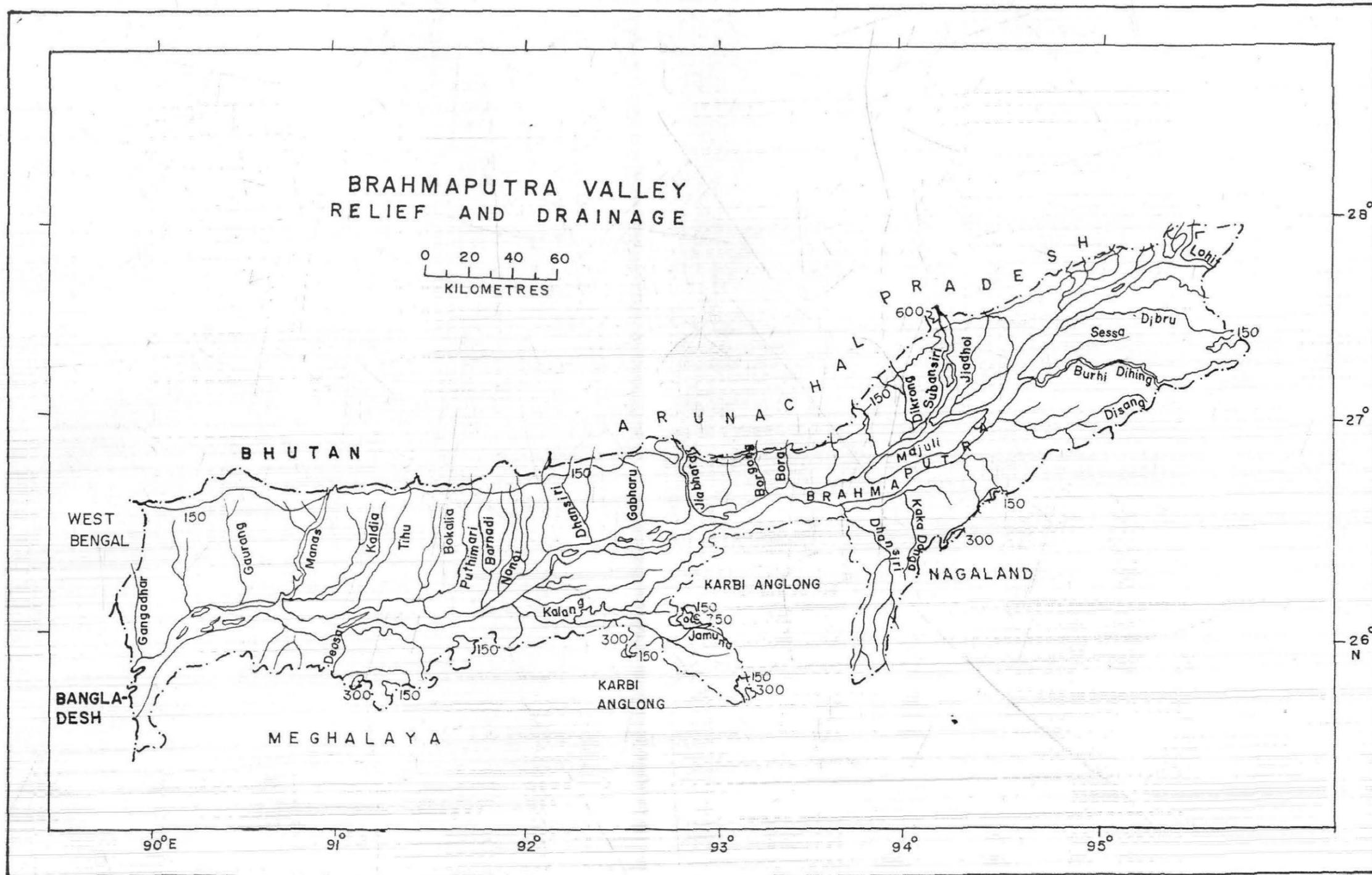


FIG.-3

BRAHMAPUTRA VALLEY CLIMATE

40 0 40 Kms.

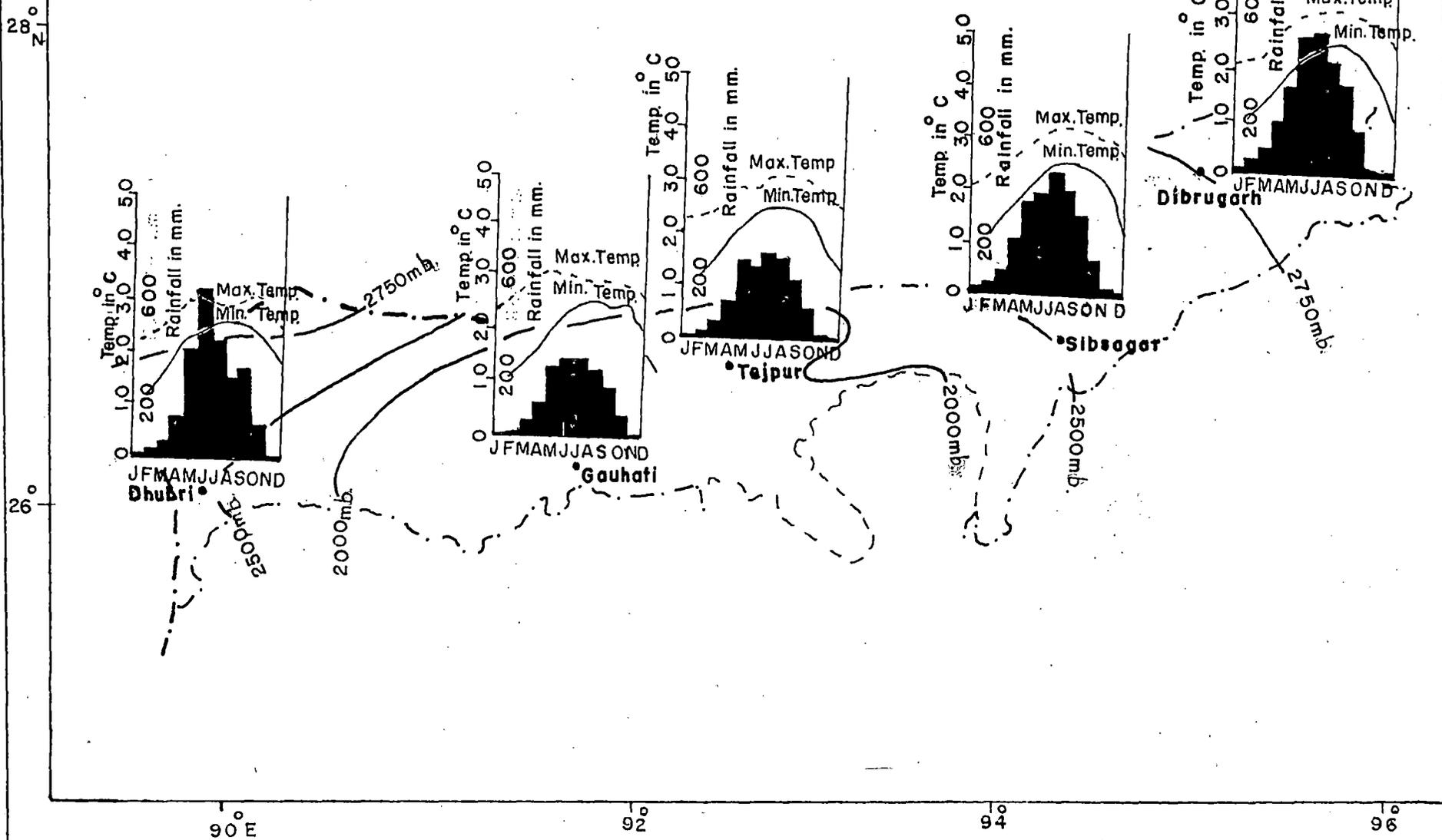


FIG.- 4

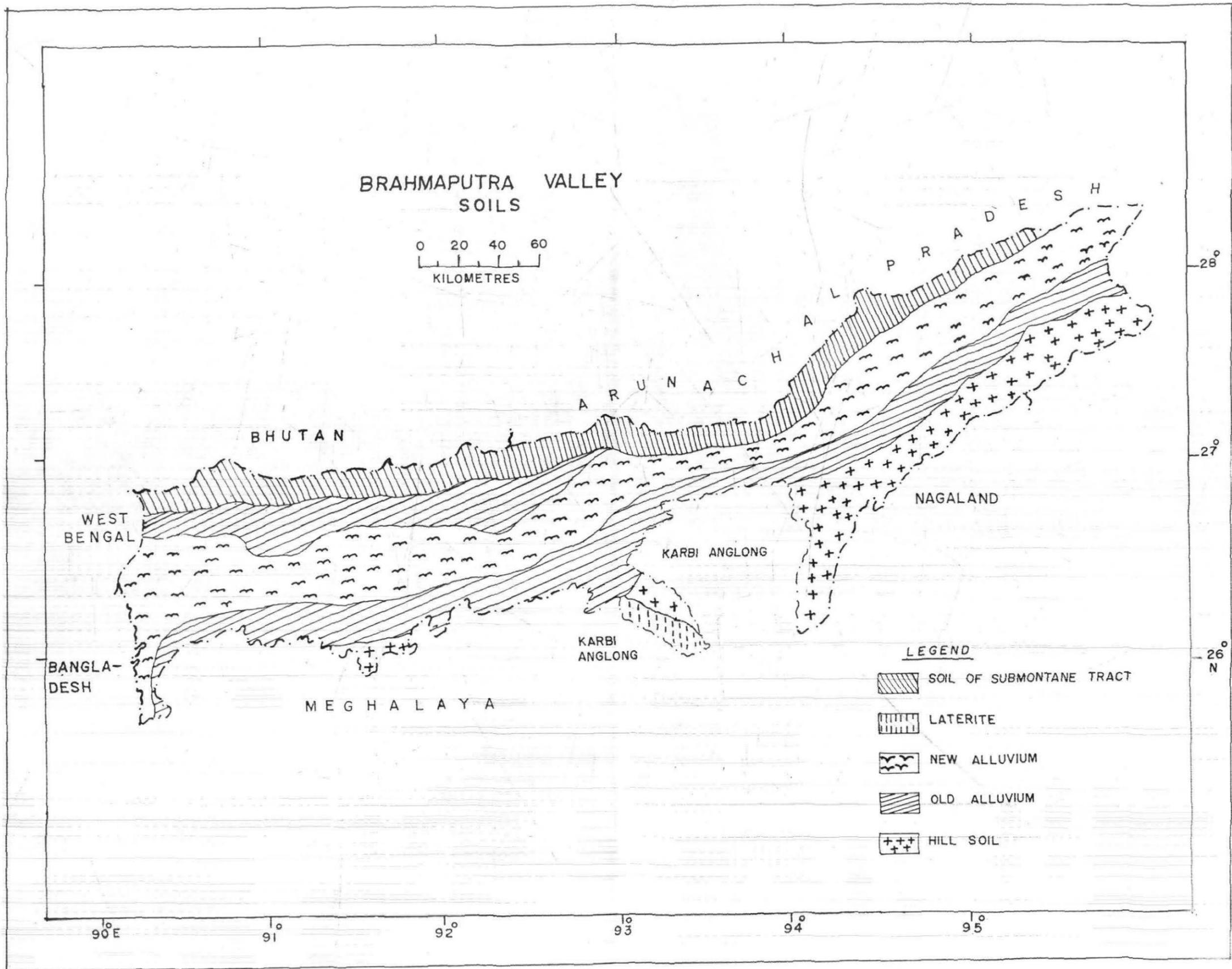


FIG.-5

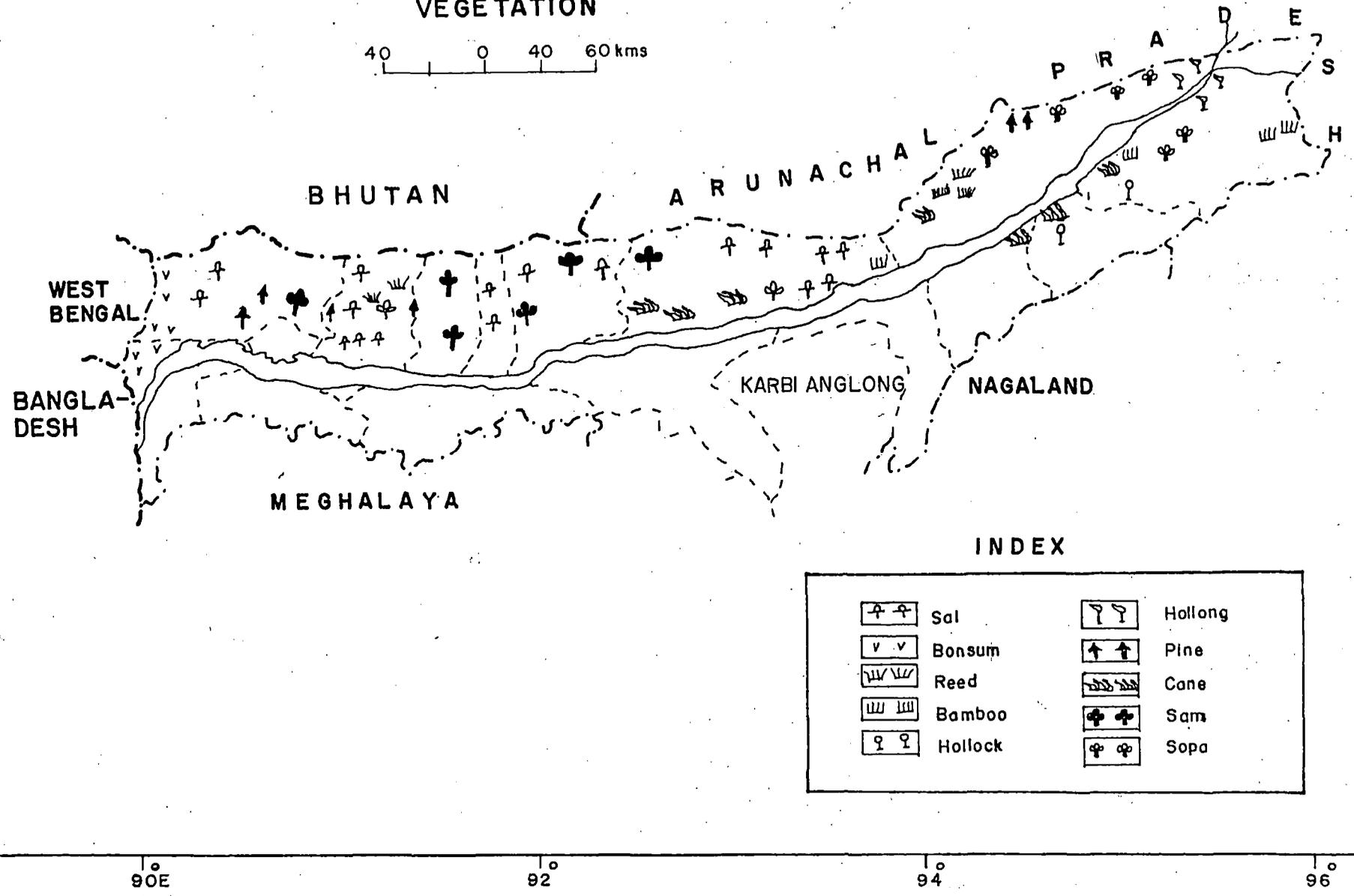
BRAHMAPUTRA VALLEY VEGETATION

40 0 40 60 kms

28° N.

26°

24°



INDEX

	Sal		Hollong
	Bonsum		Pine
	Reed		Cane
	Bamboo		Sam
	Hollock		Sopa

FIG.-6

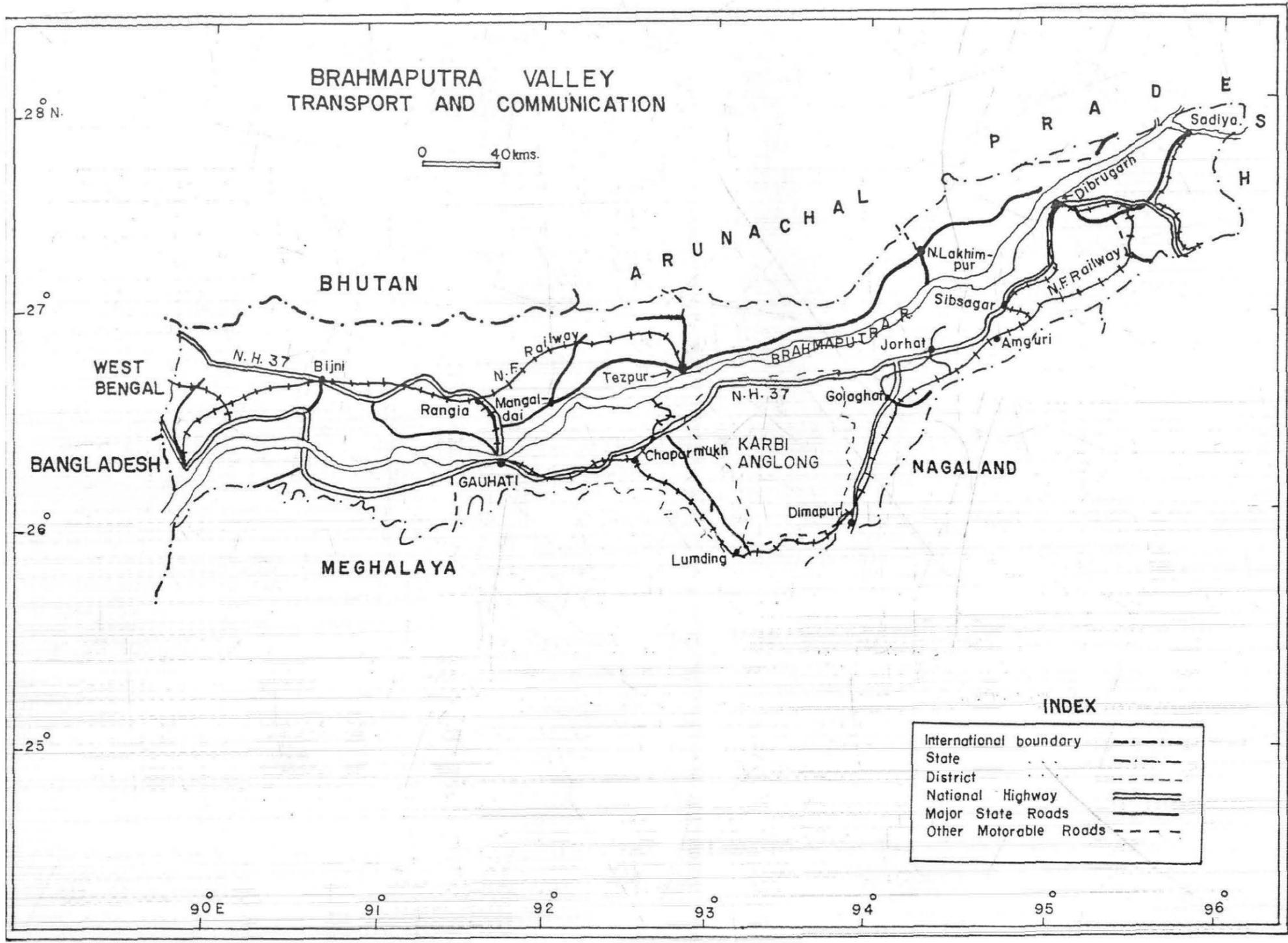


FIG.-7

a) the location, b) the physiography, c) the alternating pressure cells of North-West India, and the Bay of Bengal, their eastern and north-eastern periodic oscillations, d) the predominance of maritime tropical air-mass (mT), e) the periodic western disturbances, f) the local mountain and valley winds.

The sub-tropical location with raised border rim on the north, east and the south and flat open to the west are particularly contributive to its climatic character. The northern mountain protects the Brahmaputra Valley from the cold air masses of Central Asia and Tibetan Plateau in winter.

On the basis of variations of temperature, rainfall and winds this region has been divided into four seasons :

a) Winter b) Pre-monsoon or Summer, c) Monsoon and d) Retreating monsoon.

a) Winter Season (Dec - Feb) :

This season is characterised by cold air and running fog. Fog occur due to the moisture evaporated from the river, swamps and marshes of the valley. During this time the fogs are found almost in all places in the valley for a period of 60 to 70 days. Temperature remains above 12.8°C . January is the coldest month. Average amount of rainfall is 11.4 cm. The eastern regions are cooler than the western region.

b) Pre-monsoon or Summer season (March - May) -

Dust-raising winds are found at the beginning of the pre-monsoon season. As the season advances the rainfall increases with thunder-

showers with hail-storms in the afternoon. These thunder showers are called Nor wester, locally known as Bardoichila.

Total rainfall during this season is 51.87 cm. The average temperature of this season is 23°C .

c) Monsoon season (June - Sept).

This season in the valley is characterised by very high humidity. The average temperature during this season is 27.17°C . August is the hottest month. There are about 18-20 rainy days each in June, July and August, thereafter the rainfall decreases. The average rainfall is 180 cm.

d) Retreating monsoon season (Oct. - Nov).

With the coming of this season the temperature falls and morning mist and fog appear. The winds become northerly in November and are fed by north-westerly winds from the Ganga Valley. The rainfall does not exceed 15.2 cm. The weather clears up and fair, sunny days prevail till the end of November. This is the shortest season but the most pleasant period of the year (Fig.4).

2.13 Soil :

The soil of the Brahmaputra Valley is mostly alluvial in character. The lateritic soil is found in limited areas in Kamrup, Lakhimpur, Nowgong and Sibsagar districts.

The new alluvial soils are found due to annual floods in the riparian tracts of the valley. They are less acidic and rich in phosphate

potash and calcium. This type of soil is suitable for the cultivation of rice, jute, pulses, mustard, potato and vegetables.

The old alluvial soils are found above the annual flood level. The soils are more acidic and suitable for tea plantation, particularly in the Assam Valley. This type of soil is also suitable for sugarcane, fruits, rice and vegetables but not for pulses and mustard.

The lateritic soils are found in the valley are poor in plant nutrients and generally of limited agricultural value (Fig.5).

2.14 Vegetation :

The vegetation of the valley may be classified as follows:

a) Tropical evergreen and semi-evergreen, b) Sal, c) Riverine forests, d) Mixed deciduous, e) Savanah and f) Bamboo and canes and miscellaneous varieties (Fig. 6).

a) Tropical evergreen and semi-evergreen forests are found in the eastern most part of the valley particularly in Lakhimpur and Sibsagar districts. The common trees of evergreen forests are Hollong, Nahor and Mekai.

The semi-evergreen forests are widely spread in this valley but mainly found in Sibsagar and Darrang districts. The name of the species are - Sam, Dhup, Outenga, Guti-jam, Gamari, Hollock, Silikha etc.

b) Sal

Sal trees are grown in Kamrup, Goalpara and western part of the Nowgong district. The important species of Sal is Makri Sal, - an

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important material for making ply wood of Lower Assam.

c) Riverine

This type of forest comprising with Khair, Sisoo, Simul, Karai and Kadam are mainly grown along the river banks in the alluvial tracts which are inundated by flood.

d) Mixed deciduous forest is found in the Lower Brahmaputra Valley. The Main species are Odal, Sidha, Bajau, Gareya arborea, Pariviflora makri-Sal.

e) Savanah type of grass-land occur in the well drained high altitude areas. The species found are Cayera, arborea, wrightia tomomtosa, Zizyphus and Randia. Lowland Savanah growing Saccharum spontanium as the main grass is found on the banks of rivers.

f) Bamboo, canes and miscellaneous varieties :

Bamboo is grown throughout the Valley, but is more concentrated in Upper Assam. The species are Jati, Bhaluka, Makul and Kotoha. Canes occur all over the valley in the swampy areas.

Among the other varieties such as Kher, Ekara and Kahua are found in the riverine and Savanah tracts of the valley (Fig. 6).

2.2 Economic and Social condition

The Brahmaputra Valley is an agricultural area, which provides most of the food requirements and gives employment to an overwhelming proportion of the population. It also produces certain raw materials such as tea and jute which constitute the back-bone of the regional economy in trade and commerce (Das, 1971).

Various efforts are being made in order to increase agricultural out put per hectre and to remove inter regional as well as intra-regional imbalances in agricultural productivity since the inception of the Five year plan in 1951. There still exist significant regional variations in the levels of agricultural productivity in the Brahmaputra Valley. On the basis of productivity three different meso-regions may be identified:

i) The Upper Brahmaputra Valley -

Consisting of seven sub divisions, viz. Tinsukia, Dibrugarh, Sibsagar, Jorhat, Golaghat, North Lakhimpur and Dhemaji has 39 percent of the total area and 32 percent of the total population of the Valley. The region shows medium to very high level of agricultural productivity. The agriculture of the region is dominated by rice cultivation, especially winter rice.

ii) Central Brahmaputra Valley Region -

with 26 percent of the total area, this region supports 27 percent of the valley's total population. This region comprises of Tezpur, Mangaldai, Nowgong and Marigaon sub-divisions. Agricultural productivity here is found to be of low to medium level.

iii) Lower Brahmaputra Valley Region -

This densely populated region accounts for 35 percent of the total

area and 41 percent of the valley's total population. The net sown area in this region shares 44 percent of the total area. Rice, rape and mustard, jute and wheat are the major crops of region (Bhagabati, 1984). Rice is the principal crop throughout the region occupying more than two-thirds (72.8 percent) of the total sown area since it is the staple food crop of the people in the region. Next to rice, comes tea which occupies 6.7 percent of the total cropped area. More than four-fifths of the tea plantation area is concentrated in the districts Lakhimpur, Sibsagar and Darrang while the rest is distributed in the other districts of the region.

2.21 Forestry :

Upper Brahmaputra Valley is rich in forest lands with high timber value including the vaneer species for ply wood and tea-chests and famous 'iron wood' (Nahor) for constructional purposes. The tropical wet-deciduous forests of the Lower Brahmaputra Valley abound in high grade timber including Sal and teak. Ply wood factories and many timber mills have been developed in this region.

2.22 Industrial Economy :

The valley appears to be industrially important in the North-East India with its relative industrial supremacy, which is limited to small pockets around Gauhati in Lower Brahmaputra Valley and around Dibrugarh in Upper Brahmaputra Valley. Only 8 percent of the active workers earn their livelihood from industries with the majority (5.8 percent) engaged in house hold industries and only 2.2 percent in manufacturing industries. In addition, 19.2 percent of the active workers are engaged

in mining, plantation and other occupations. The existing industries of the region may be classified as :

a) Agro-based, b) Mineral-based c) Forest-based, and d) Miscellaneous.

The agro-based industries can be sub-divided into a) Food processing and sugar, b) Tea processing and c) Textiles. The food-processing industries consist of rice and flour mills, fruit canning, oil-crushing mill, bakeries which are mainly concentrated in the urban centres of the valley. Rice mills are largely concentrated in Nowgong and Kamrup districts. The Sugar factory is located at Baruabamungaoñ near Dergaon in Jorhat district.

Tea industry is confined mostly in Dibrugarh, Sibsagar and Darrang districts. There are 636 tea gardens and factories out of which Dibrugarh and Sibsagar alone have 491. This region produces about 45 percent of the total Indian tea.

The textile industry having one jute mill at Silghat and one spun-silk mill at Jagirood, both in the district of Nowgong. A power loom unit has been established at Gauhati.

The spinning and weaving of cotton and silk is, in general a house hold industry in the region where Assamese womenfolk do it as a part time job. There are three varieties - Eri, Muga and Pat. The production of Assamese handloom silk, Eri, Muga and Pat on a commercial basis is rather limited to the Kamrup district.

The mineral-based industries of the valley are limited to the coal-mining and oil and gas production both in Upper Brahmaputra Valley and a fertilizer factory at Namrup in Dibrugarh district. The various mineral-based industries in this region include manufacturing of bee-hives, coke-making, oil refining, filling in and distribution of gas cylinders for industrial and domestic purposes, railway workshops and engineering works. About half of the workers in the metallic mineral-based industry are employed in the railway workshops. The majority of the engineering works are small-sized and mainly for repairing services. But there are two fairly big engineering workshops at Tinsukia and Digboi in the Upper Brahmaputra Valley. There are two plants producing rods and bars one at Gauhati and the other at Dibrugarh with an annual capacity of 18000 tons. One big bicycle manufacturing unit has been established at Gauhati with a licensed capacity of 60,000 units per year. In addition, many small and medium-sized units, manufacturing various products such as aluminium utensils, cycle parts, trunks and buckets etc. are also in operation in the urban centres.

The non-metallic mineral-based industry of the region mainly comprises the oil-refinery at Digboi producing 0.50 million tons of oil per year, the oil refinery at Noonmati (Gauhati) producing 0.75 million tons. Another refinery has been set up at Dhaligaon, New Bongaigaon in Bongaigaon district of the Lower Brahmaputra Valley.

A cement factory has been established at Bokajan in the Upper Brahmaputra Valley which uses the locally available raw materials. The major centres of plywood industry are at Margherita, Mariati and Tinsukia in the Upper Brahmaputra Valley. A paper mill has been set

up at Jagiroad in Nowgong district.

The miscellaneous industries of the region comprise printing presses, ice manufacturing, distilleries, electric light and power. These are distributed in the urban centres (Das, 1971).

2.23 Social condition :

The population of the Brahmaputra Valley is composed of various racial elements. "Many people coming from different regions with different racial and cultural backgrounds and at different points of time (and hence different degrees of socio-economic development), have given rise to a complicated society. The marginal location of the region in the context of Indian society with feeble mainstream characteristics, and the state's geographical conditions with the hills and plains hinder easy communications. This has, however, been reduced to minimum by the catholicity of the Vaishnavism preached by the great social reformer of Assam Sri Sankardeva in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries. Despite this region has now 78 major socio-cultural and religious communities in the form of castes, tribes and religions. The Hindu caste system with the four main divisions of Brahmin, Kshatriya, Vaisya and Sudra hold good for whole of India but the local castes of one region can hardly be equated with those of another region. This has made the complicated social set up of this region. The migrants to this region, since protohistoric days are mainly Hindus and have come from different linguistic and regions like Bengal, Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, Nepal etc. Besides these groups the Brahmaputra Valley itself has a number of indigenous tribes and castes.

According to 1971 census, the indigenous population may be divided into four broad linguistic groups, viz. Assamese (60.88 percent), Bengali (19.70 per cent), tibeto-Burman (10.20 percent) and Siamese-chinese (0.15 percent). Each of them can be sub-divided into six religious groups, viz. Hindu (72.51 percent) Muslim (24.56 percent), Christian (2.61 percent), Sikh (0.08 percent), Buddhist (0.15 percent) and various tribal religions (10 percent). 26 major castes are found among the Assamese Hindus of which eight are regarded as high, twelve as backward and six as Scheduled Castes.

In the Brahmaputra Valley three major social groups are found among the Muslims. They are the Assamese Muslims, the immigrant peasant Muslims from East Bengal and a small group of Urdu speaking Muslims living in the towns and service centres engage in trade and commerce. The Assamese Muslims are divided into the Syads, the Sheikhs and the Marias.

The tribal population of this region account for 10.20 percent of the total population (1971). They belong to fifteen tribes of the Tibeto-Burman linguistic groups, of which nine major plains tribal-groups are found in the Brahmaputra Valley. Of the plains tribals, the Bodo-Kacharis numbering more than six lakhs (1971), is followed by the Mishings (2.6 lakhs), Rabhas (1.4 lakhs), Kachari including Sonowals (1.93 lakhs), Mech (1,77,194), Tiwa (95609), Deori (23080), Barman (13210) and Hojai (2293).

Among the indigeous societies important socio-economic and socio-cultural characteristics have been noticed. This is due to

1) the number of castes is less because division of labour was never enforced rigorously. 2) the number of Scheduled castes among the Assamese Hindus is comparatively less. In 1971 the Scheduled Caste was only 4.6 percent, but due to immigrant Scheduled Caste people it is now over 6 percent. 3) with the introduction of industrial economy, the professional castes had to yield to the factory produced goods and slowly turned to other avenues of livelihood. They are now socially moving to their immediate higher caste" (Taher, 1987).

2.3 Transport and Communication -

The transport and communication system as a whole is not well developed in this region. Within the region the development of roads and railways have been hindered by the existence of numerous rivers and streams (Fig.7). However the region has a much more efficient transport and communication system than the surrounding hilly areas.

The region has about 1718 kilometers of railways with a density of 3 Km. per 100 km.² It includes 269 Km. of the Broad gauge line. The main line from Gauhati to Tinsukia on the south bank of the Brahmaputra Valley does not pass through the main towns like Nowgong, Jorhat, Sibsagar and these towns are connected with minor branch lines. The Broad Gauge railways has been extended from New Bongaigaon to Gauhati, this extension considerably removes the transport problem in the region. The railway line along the northern bank of the Brahmaputra Valley touches almost all the important towns and the section from Rangapara to Murkongselek (about 300 km.) also eases transport and communication to Arunachal Pradesh (Deka, 1986).

There are about 13155 km. of roads including P.W.D., District and Village roads with 1140 km. of National Highways and 714 km. of state Highways accounting for a density of 23 km. per 100 km.² of area. The two Trunk Roads, North Trunk Road and South Trunk Road, run almost parallel to the river bank. The South Trunk Road or National Highway 37 is very important and it passes through Goalpara, Gauhati, Nowgong, Jorhat, Sibsagar and Dibrugarh. There are regular bus services run by Assam Transport Corporation and private organisations over 2934 km. of roads. Gauhati is the main transport centre of the region not only by roads but also by other means as well (Das, 1971).

This region possesses an extension of navigable waterways of 4098 km. which is about 22 percent of India's total navigable waterways. Two public sector organisations viz. The state Directorate of Inland Water Transport and the Central Inland Water Transport Corporation are presently providing navigational facilities on a commercial basis. The Central Inland Water Transport Corporation is extending cargo services between Calcutta and Pandu. In 1983-84 the total volume of cargo and passengers handled by the ferries at different points on the bank of the Brahmaputra were 4.18 lakh quintals of cargo and 25 lakh passengers respectively. During the same period IWT also handled 16 thousand vehicles, 73 thousand motor cycles/bicycles and 25 thousand animals. It shows the necessity of bridging the river Brahmaputra at several points for quick transit of traffic.

The region is regularly served by the Indian Airline services. These services are operated through five civil air ports viz. Borjhar (Gauhati), Saloni (Tezpur), Rowroyah (Jorhat), Lilabari (North Lakhimpur) and Mohanbari (Dibrugarh). There are regular services to Calcutta

and Delhi from Gauhati. Gauhati is served by all three levels of air services viz. Air Bus, Boeing and Vayudoot. The 'Vayadoot' services connect several places of the North-Eastern Region (Deka, 1986).

C H A P T E R - 3.0
HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

3.0 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The early history of Assam is not clearly available. It is available only from the references in the Mahabharat a mythological book, the Puranas, the Tantras, the mythological tales and the travel accounts of Hiuen Tsang. It was only after the coming of the Ahoms in Assam in 1228 A.D. when valuable informations were recorded chronologically about the reigning Kings.

The record shows that the first racial migration took place to this area with the Austroloids or Austro-Asiatic speaking people from the east during the pre-historic time. Before coming to this region perhaps they used to live in the foothill bordering the Brahmaputra Valley and driven to the hills of the Meghalaya subsequently by the later migrants of the Tebeto-Burman stock.

The second group came to Assam from north-east and east who spoke the Tebeto-Burman group of languages, especially Eastern Himalayan, North Assam Bodo and Naga groups of languages. Racially they belong to Mangoloid and migrated from the east across the Patkoi-Arakan Yoma ranges from Burma.

At the same period another groups of people speaking Indo-Aryan languages started migration from the plains of northern India with the help of local kings and chieftains in search of their livelihood into the Brahmaputra Valley. Originally they were of the Caucasoid racial group,

who often mixing with the local other racial stocks formed the Hindu population of the area. They have also built up the Vedic socio-culture in Assam.

While the old Indo-Aryan socio-cultural stream was still trickling in, the migration of a new group of people started with the invasion of Assam by Md. Bin Bakhtiar Khiliji, a Muslim General of Kutubuddin in about A.D.1205. At that time Mahammedans entered Assam through Goalpara district. Khiliji was defeated and some of the captive soldiers settled in Assam, in the area between Hajo and Sipajhar in the Brahmaputra Valley (Taher, 1987). This led to the spread of Islamic influence in Assam. The first Mahammedan invasion took place during Ahom reign in 1527 A.D. In this battle the Ahoms defeated the Mahammedans. The next invasion made by Turbak in 1532 A.D. and the present Maria Muslims in the Brahmaputra Valley are the descendants of the captives during the battle. This battle took place in April 1532 A.D. when a Muslim commander of Bengal named Turbak invaded the Ahom territory with thirty elephants, one thousand horses, many guns and cannon and other fire weapons and large battery of aritillery. They encamped at singri (at present in Sonitpur district) opposite to the Ahom Fort on the bank of the river Brahmaputra. On hearing this Suhungmung, the Ahom King sent his son Suklengmung, with a strong force to Singri and himself advance to Sala. Suklengmung became impatient and without fortifying the rear strongly, crossed the river Brahmaputra and gave a vigorous battle to the enemies. On this occasion fortune forsook the Ahom general. An innumerable number of the Ahom infantry and eight of their commanders were killed. Suklengmung was severely wounded. The Ahoms then moved back to Sala and Senglung was made Commander-in-chief.

As the rain started the Muslim army halted their further advance at Koliabar (Nowgong district) and during this period they captured seven boats of the Ahoms, on the river Brahmaputra. In October, the Muslims advanced to river Ghiladhari (Darrang district) and halted there.

In November, 1533 A.D., Suklengmung recovered from his wound and took the charge of Ahom forces at Sala, on which the Muslim soldiers made an attack. They set fire to the houses outside the fort but are routed on a surprise attack by the Ahoms. Next the invaders attacked with cavalry and artillery, and put the whole Ahom troops into confusion. The elephants in the front line failed to stop the enemy advances and the Ahom troops lost this battle. Later on, in March, a naval engagement near Duimunsila resulted in a great victory for the Ahoms. Two Mahammedan commanders, Bangal and Teju (sic), were slain, together with a large number of mercenaries. Two thousand and five hundred men of the invaders lost their lives along with twenty ships and a number of big guns.

In the mean time, Turbak received reinforcement from Hussain Khan, another Muslim general. Hussain Khan reinforced Turbak with six elephants, one hundred horses and one thousand infantry. He now took up position at the mouth of the river Dikrai, while the Ahoms pitched tents on the opposite bank under the leadership of Senglung. The Ahoms defeated the Muslim invaders in a series of engagements. The final defeat of the Muslims took place in a battle near the river Bharali. Turbak was transfixd by a spear. During the pursuit, Hussain Khan was caught and put to death. The head of Turbak was entombed on the charaideo Hill (Gait 1926, Barua 1966, Acharyya 1966, Bandopadhyaya 1982).

Nine hundred Muslim invaders were taken prisoners by the

Ahom king during this war and he settled them in different parts of the Brahmaputra Valley. According to traditional belief, the Ahom king first ordered them to cut grass for the king's elephants, but were found quite unfit for this work. They were next employed as cultivators but it appeared they were absolutely ignorant about cultivation that once the Ahom King commented, 'Naha Marai Chaha Dhan Pale' (Nine hundred maria had grown only six hundred paddy grains). Next they were ordered to construct houses but they failed to do this work also.

After a year the disgusted Ahom King then released the prisoners so that they could earn their livelihood in whatever way possible for themselves without being a burden on the royal exchequer. Some of the mercenaries had knowledge of welding of brass metal as they had used guns which they repaired themselves. However, after the release some of the Muslim mercenaries had taken to working in brass as an occupation and finally settled down in the Brahmaputra Valley. It may be mentioned that, since the Maria Muslims came as invaders in Assam, so they did not bring any females with them. The Ahom king then decided to offer them low caste Hindu ladies. According to a legend, once the king invited all the young Hindu females in his palace. The king presented them Mekhela-Chaddar and ordered them to go back by wearing the Mekhela-Chaddar presented by him through a marshy path. The king was observing them from behind. He observed that, some of the females crossed the road, pulling the Mekhela-Chaddar upto their knees to save the new clothes from the mud but some of them crossed the path spoiling their new clothes. The king then decided to offer those who crossed the path, pulling their Mekhela-Chaddar upto their knees to the Maria Muslims. Because the king thought that they were born in the low caste and hence were shameless by nature.

So, the king picked them and ordered them to marry the Maria Muslims youth. After getting married with the low caste Hindu ladies, the Maria Muslims finally settled down in the different parts of the Brahmaputra Valley¹.

The above mentioned story indicates that at the beginning of the settlement of the Maria Muslims in this valley they were assimilated with the Assamese Hindu society. However, a new community appeared in the plains of Assam in the 1530's. They started their occupation as braziers but some of them had also taken up rearing of domestic animals like bulls, cows etc. In a zikir (a type of religious song) it is sung that, 'Gariar Garu Marai Bai' means - cows and bulls of the Garia (another group of Muslim) are reared by the Marias.

Slowly their settlements were distributed in different parts of the Brahmaputra Valley, from Sibsagar where they were kept in the jail and released from it.

Very little information can be gathered about the Maria Muslims during the British period. W.W. Hunter mentioned in his book, 'A Statistical Account of Assam' that the braziers formed a distinct and separate community and used to depend entirely upon their trade for their livelihood. The brass workers were paid at the rate of six pence per pound of metal worked up. The Marwari traders used to supply metal to the manufacturer and used to sell the finished utensils to the traders (Hunter 1879).

1. The legend was narrated by Gausal Ali of Jayantipur village, Koliabor, Nowgong district on 24.12.88.

Another view about the Maria Muslims is that,....."they were looked down upon with detestation by the orthodox followers of Islam. Because of their habit of 'drunkenness' contentious character, they were regarded as a group of degraded Muslims. They participated in Islamic rituals only nominally. The Marias were looked down upon with detestation because of their lowly occupation. But their occupation was not related to the notion of pollution. Because brass utensils produced by them were used in the 'Namghars'. So it can be assumed that they were treated as a group of degraded Muslims because of their profession. In social relationship also, the syads and Sheikhs tried to keep away from the Marias. Social relations among these groups are guided by superiority-inferiority attitude among the members. Because of the social distance, maintained by the two 'Elite' groups, the Maria Muslims have become an endogamous group." (Saifun Nessa, 1984).

CHAPTER - 4.0
POPULATION CHARACTERISTICS

4.0 Population characteristics :

In this chapter an attempt has been made to analyse the distribution, density and growth pattern of the Maria population of the Brahmaputra Valley.

4.1 Distribution :

The Maria population is distributed only in nine districts of the valley. They are thus found in north-west and southern part of Dibrugarh district, southern part of Sibsagar district, central and eastern parts of Jorhat district, Golaghat town of Golaghat district, Dhing and Koliabor areas of Nowgong district, Hajo, Malara Islampatti and Uzanbazar of the city of Guwahati of Kamrup district, Mangaldai town of Darrang district, Pithakhowa and Bakula areas of Sonitpur district, Dhakuakhana, Lilabari and North-Lakhimpur town of Lakhimpur district. It is, therefore, observed that the Marias settled in and near the urban areas. This is due to the fact that, they were mainly braziers so, they liked to settle near the urban areas to avail of the market facilities for purchasing the raw materials and to sell out the finished products.

At village level again, there is a variation in the concentration of Maria Muslim population. From the field survey it has been observed that they are distributed only in fifty two villages in the Brahmaputra Valley. The highest concentration is found in Chawlkhowa (10.55 percent of the total Maria population) village in Dibrugarh District of upper Brahmaputra Valley (Table 4.1). This village

Table 4.1

Villagewise total Maria population with percentage(Total population 23686).

Name of the districts.	Name of the villageS.	Total Population	Percentage of population.
Kamrup	Hajo Islampatti	783	3.31
	Malara Islampatti	482	2.04
	Uzanbazar.	635	2.68
Darrang	Vevarghat.	632	2.67
Sonitpur	Pithakhowa	1600	6.76
	Gavorugaon	50	0.21
	Niraiati	150	0.63
	Becheria	1210	5.11
	Bakula	815	3.44
Lakhimpur	Shilabari BaliJan	490	2.07
	BaliJan Tengabari	81	0.34
	Dhekial	384	1.62
	Nawkari	374	1.58
	Lilabari	382	1.61
	Dhokuakhana.	399	1.69

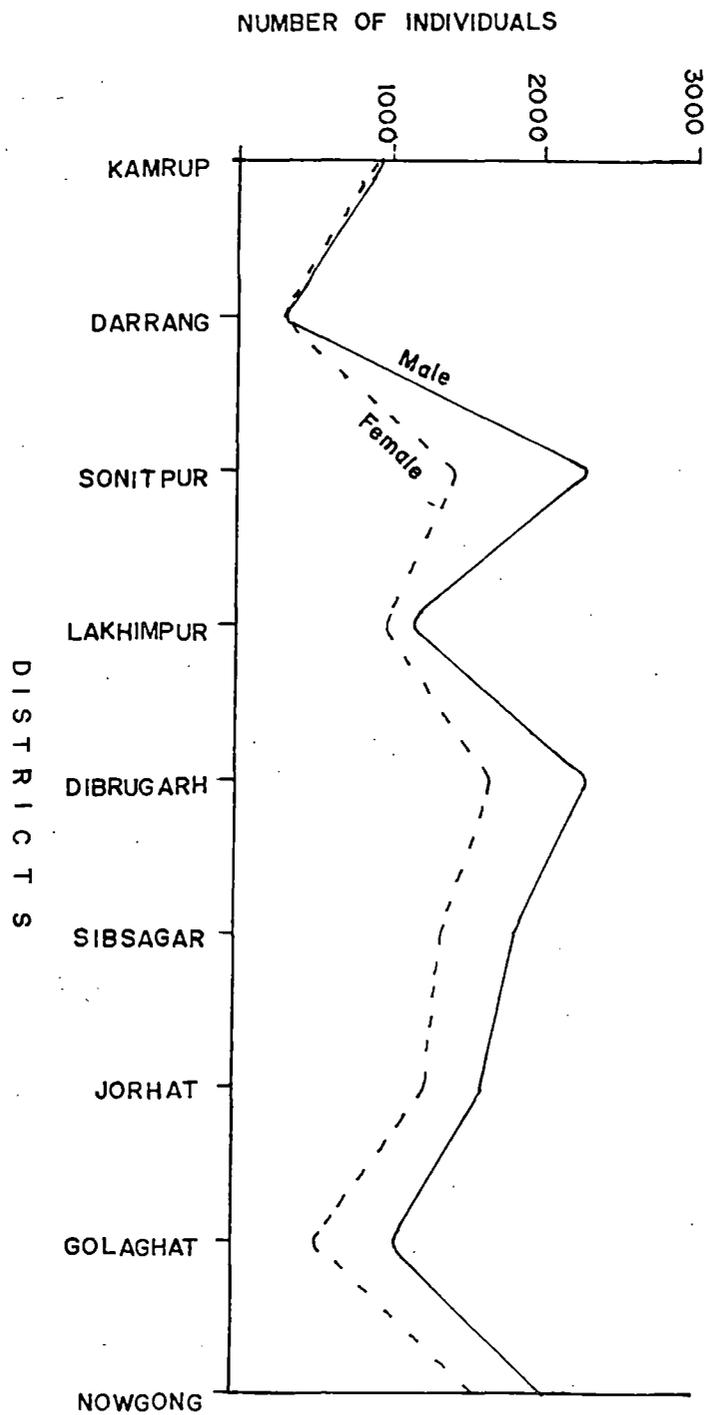
Name of the district.	Name of the village.	Total Population	Percentage of population.
Dibrugarh	Laluka	582	2.46
	Chowkhowa	2500	10.55
	Sadia	446	1.88
	Bakul	320	1.35
	Margherita	110	0.46
Sibsagar	Demoumukh	581	2.45
	Mothadang	341	1.44
	Bagal	382	1.61
	Bambari	20	0.08
	Dopdar	16	0.07
	Panidihing	297	1.25
	Khatopahar	20	0.08
	Amguri	360	1.52
	Gauri Sagar	392	1.66
	Nazira	398	1.68
Geleki	375	1.58	
Jorhat	Veleuguri	80	0.34
	Mudoijan	126	0.53
	Jhanji	94	0.40
	Koliapani	200	0.84
	Badulipukhuri	256	1.08

Name of the district..	Name of the village.	Total Population	Percentage of population.
Jorhat	Neematighat	221	0.93
	Tamulishika	350	1.48
	Fatigasiga	244	1.03
	Naobaisya	286	1.21
Kakojan	Kakojan	753	3.18
	Gakhirkhowa	209	0.88
	Boloma	56	0.24
Golaghata	Kacharihat	500	2.11
	Kamarbandha	180	0.76
	Moinapar	80	0.34
	Islampatti.	800	3.38
Nowgong	Langi	287	1.21
	Jayantipur	925	3.91
	Huntergaon	916	3.87
	Baligaon.	801	3.38
	Bilotia	715	3.02

Source : Based on Field Survey, 1988.

(Marias are considered as Assamese Muslims and included in the Census after 1911).

FIG- 8 : DISTRICTWISE POPULATION



issituated only twelve kilometers east of Dibrugarh town and is well connected by regular bus and railway services. It is to be mentioned that a large proportion of this village population is engaged in trade and commerce and services. Of the total number of working population of this village, 29.08 percent people are engaged in trade and commercial activities and 23.64 percent working people are engaged in service in railway, court, electricity board, school teacher, private farm in Dibrugarh town.

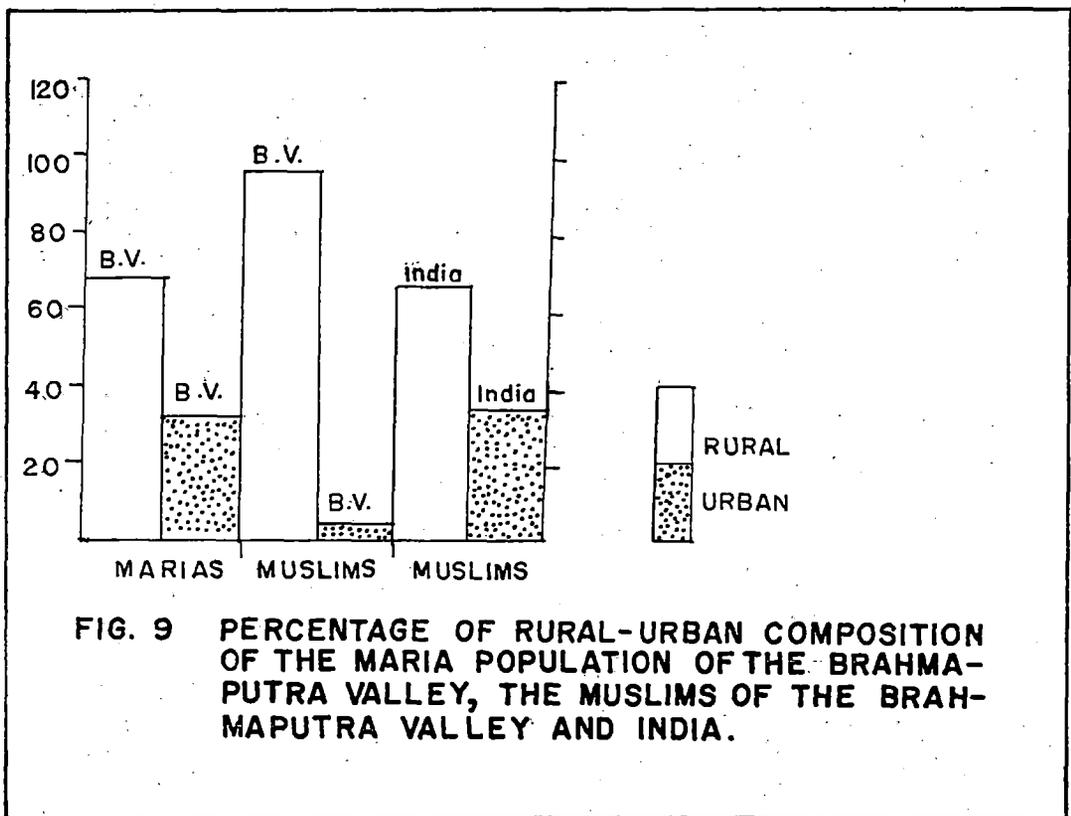
4.2 Rural Urban Composition :

An analysis of the rural-urban composition of the Maria Muslim

Table - 4.2

Percentage of Rural-Urban composition of the Maria Population of the Brahmaputra Valley, the Muslims of the Brahmaputra Valley and India.

Areas		Maria	Muslims
Brahmaputra Valley 1988	T	23686	
	R	16093 (67.94 PC)	
	U	7593 (32.06 P.C.)	
Brahmaputra Valley 1971	T		2903153
	R		2778771 (95.72PC)
	U		124382 (4.28 P.C.)
India 1981	T		75512439
	R		49834389 (65.99 PC)
	U		25678050 (34.01 PC)



Source :

- i) Based on Field Survey, 1988
- ii) Census of India, 1971, Series - 3
Assam Part II-c (i), Social and
Cultural Tables. A.K. Saikia. Pp. 4-5.
- iii) Census of India, 1981.

population gives an idea of the problem.

From the calculation it is revealed that 32.06 percent of the Maria population of the Brahmaputra Valley live in the urban area as against 4.28 percent of the Brahmaputra Valley (according to 1971 census) and India's 34.01 percent of the total Muslim population (according to 1981 census) (Table 4.2). From the analysis it is observed that the Maria population is more urbanised than the other Muslim population of the Brahmaputra Valley. Since the Marias are a professional group of people so they prefer to live in and around the urban areas to get the urban market facilities.

4.3 Density of the Maria population :

The census record of the Maria population is found between 1872 to 1911, which has been very irregular. In the census of 1872 they were counted, doubtless excluding those who were ashamed of the name, so this census does not give the accurate number of people. In the census of 1881 they have not been returned as a separate class which was perhaps due to some measure of the progress they have made towards the orthodox Mohammedans (Census 1881 p.101). Moreover, the separate figures for males and females were not shown in the census.

As 1872 census figure is not accurate the density of their population according to this census is not discussed here. In the 1881 census separate population figures for them are not available. Therefore, we will discuss here the density of Maria population from 1891 to 1911 census in different districts of the valley. After the 1911 census, no separate population figures for this community is available.

By 1891, the density of the Maria population of this Valley became 0.03 per Km.². According to this census the districtwise density stood at Kamrup district 0.01 per Km.,² Nowgong district 0.10 per Km.,² Sibsagar district 0.07 per Km.² Lakhimpur district 0.006 per Km.² and Darrang district 0.03 per Km.² (Table 4.3).

Table 4.3

Density of Maria muslim population.

(1891-1911)

Districts		1891	1901	1911
Goalpara	P D	-	-	-
Kamrup	P D	118 0.01	P 135 D 0.01	P 1 D 0.001
Nowgong	P D	585 0.10	P 13 D 0.002	P 15 D 0.002
Sibsagar	P D	621 0.07	P 611 D 0.07	P 1040 D 0.12
Lakhimpur	P D	88 0.006	P 315 D 0.02	P 71 D 0.005
Darrang	P D	265 0.03	P 161 D 0.02	P 455 D 0.05
Brahmaputra Valley	P D	1677 0.03	P 1235 D 0.02	P 1582 D 0.03

P= Population

Source "

D= Density

i) Census of Assam 1901.

B.C. Allen. Vol.I Delhi-1902

Pp. 29-30.

ii) Census of India 1911 Vol.III

Part-I Report J.M.C.Swiney.

Shillong 1912.

Calculation done on the basis of the area of old district.

In 1901 census the Maria population recorded a fall from the previous census. As a result the density of the population has also been decreased. The population had considerably fallen off, as they were affected by the disease Kala-azar (Census 1901). According to this census the density of the Maria population was 0.02 per km².

The districtwise population figures showed a decrease in population density. The density of Maria population became 0.01 per km² in Kamrup district, 0.002 percent km² in Nowgong district, 0.07 per Km² in Sibsagar district, 0.02 per km² in Lakhimpur district and 0.03 per km² in Darrang district, (Table 4.3).

According to 1911 census the density of Maria population had slightly increased. It became 0.03 per km² in the Brahmaputra Valley. The highest density of population is found in Sibsagar district and it was 0.12 per km² (Table 4.3), followed by Darrang district (0.05 per km²). This increase of population in these two districts was due to migration from Kamrup and Lakhimpur districts, where Kala-azar badly affected the people.

After the 1911 census, the Maria population has been merged with the Assamese Muslim population. It has already been mentioned earlier that the separate figures of Maria Muslim population are not available since 1921.

In 1988 the researcher did detail field survey on Maria population. On the basis of the field work the density of the Maria population in the Brahmaputra Valley increases to 0.42 per km². The highest density is found in Sibsagar district and it is 1.23 per km² followed by Jorhat district (1.01 per km²) (Table 4.4). In the previous census the highest density found in Sibsagar district. This is due to the fact that they first settled in this district in large concentration in the historical time from where they migrated to other districts.

Table - 4.4

Density of Maria Muslim population.

1988

Districts	Area in Sq.Km.	Population	Density
Kamrup	4634.1	1900	0.41
Darrang	3511.1	632	0.18
Sonitpur	5239.7	3825	0.73
Lakhimpur	2318.7	2110	0.91
Dibrugarh	7067.9	3958	0.56
Sibsagar	2587.0	3182	1.23
Jorhat	2846.5	2875	1.01
Golaghat	3545.5	1560	0.44
Nowgong	5693.7	3644	0.64
Brahmaputra Valley	56395.2	23686	0.42



Maria Village in Neematighat.



A typical Maria Village in Jorhat.

Source : Based on field survey, 1988.

Calculation done on the basis of the area of new districts.

4.4 Growth :

The growth of Maria population in any particular place is not regular. It has been mentioned earlier that, in the first census in 1872 they were counted excluding those who were ashamed of the name. So their actual number has not been shown in this census. In the 1881 census they have not been returned as a separate class (census, 1881 p.101) so, the growth of Maria population has been calculated on the basis of census from 1891 to 1911. Moreover, the separate figures for male and female were not shown. So, the growth rate of male and female could not be calculated.

According to the 1891 census, the total Maria population was 1677. But during the time 1891-1901 the variation of population had decreased to 26.36 percent (Table 4.5). This is due to the severe type of Kala-azar and fever (Census 1901, P 19). From the districtwise census it has been observed that in Nowgong district the population had sharply fallen with a decrease of 97.78 percent. This is due to Kala-azar and fever. Record shows that the total death toll rise to 93,824 in Nowgong district due to fever and kala-azar (census 1901). The highest growth is found in the Lakhimpur district. The growth rate increases to 257.95 percent and it is due to migration from other districts as this district was free from disease. During the next decade (1901 - 1911) the population growth increased to 28.09 percent. Districtwise population shows the highest growth rate in Darrang district (182.61 percent). This is due to migration from other districts.

Table 4-5

Growth of Maria Population, 1891-1911

Name of the districts	1891 Total Population	1901 Total Population	Decade Variation	Per-cent of growth	1901 Total Population	1911 Total Population	Decade Variation	P.C. of growth
Goalpara	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Kamrup	118	135	+17	+14.41	135	1	-134	-99.26
Nowgong	585	13	-572	-97.78	13	15	+2	+15.38
Sibsagar	621	611	-10	-1.61	611	1040	+429	+70.21
Lakhimpur	88	315	+227	+257.95	315	71	-244	-77.46
Darrang	265	161	-104	-39.25	161	455	+294	+182.61
1891-1911 Over all growth	1677	1235	-442	-26.36	1235	1582	+347	+28.09

Source :

- i) Census of Assam 1901, B.C. Allen, Pp.29-30.
- ii) Census of India 1911 Vol.III Part-I Report.

After the 1911 census, the complete census on Maria population has been done by the researcher in 1988. During the long period (1911-1988) the population shows a growth rate of 1397.22 percent. It indicates a quite high rate of growth of the Maria population during this period. The highest growth rate has been recorded in Kamrup district (189900.00 percent) (Table 4.6). The highest growth rate is found in this district due to the location of the capital of Assam. Guwahati - the capital of Assam is situated in the Kamrup district. So, the Maria people migrated to Kamrup district to avail the facilities

TREND OF MARIA POPULATION GROWTH(1901-1988)

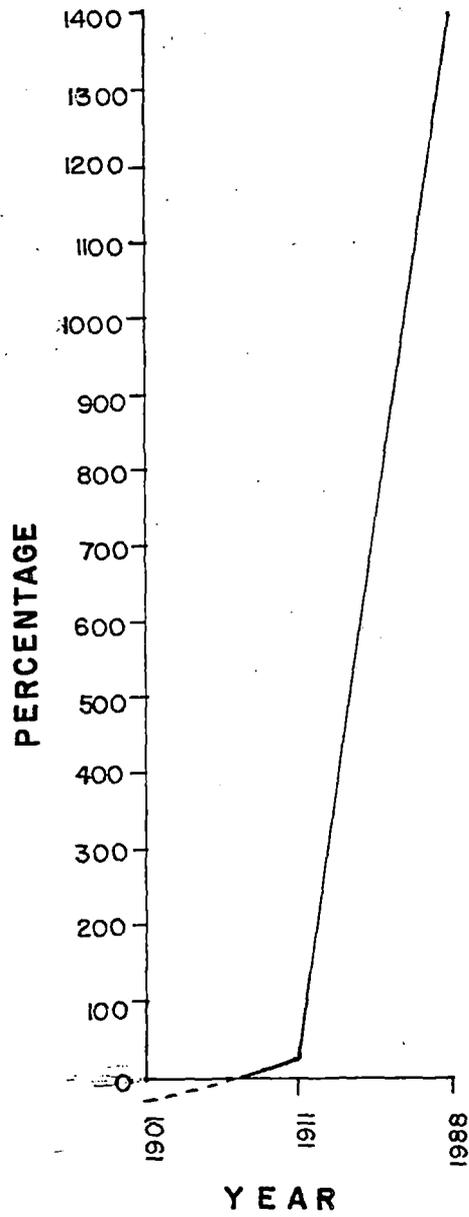


FIG.- 10

Table 4.6 (Contd.)

Growth of Maria Population, 1911-1988

Name of the Districts	1911 Total Population	1988 Total Population	Variation	Percentage of Growth
Kamrup	1	1900	+1899	+189900.00
*Darrang Sonitpur	455	632 3825 =4457	+4002	+879.56
*Sibsagar Jorhat Golaghat	1040	3182 2875 =7617 1560	+ 6577	+632.40
*Lakhimpur Dibrugarh	71	2110 3958 =6068	+5997	+8446.48
Nowgong	15	3644	+3629	+24193.33
1911-1988 overall growth	1582	23686	+22104	+1397.22

Source : i) Census of India 1911, Vol.III.
ii) Based on Field Survey, 1988.

*Sonitpur district was created as a separate district from old Darrang district.
Jorhat, Golaghat districts were created from old Sibsagar district and Dibrugarh.
also created a new district from old Lakhimpur district.



Maria family.

for trade and commercial activities, petty jobs, which are available in Guwahati. Guwahati is the urban nucleus of North-East India. So, the population has increased considerably in this district.

4.5 Size :

It is found from the field survey in the Maria Muslim areas of the Brahmaputra Valley during 1988 that there are 52 inhabited villages in this area which contain 0.82 percent of the total Muslim population of the Brahmaputra Valley (according to 1971 census). About 25 percent of these villages are of hamlet type containing less than 200 persons in each (Table 4.7). Such hamlet type villages, numbering 13, contain only about 4.49 percent of the total Maria population. The number of medium sized villages with a population of 200-499 in each is 23 and this contain 33.25 percent of the total population. Only one village is found having a population of 2500 individuals containing 10.55 percent of the total Maria Muslim population of the Brahmaputra Valley.

It is to be noted that the population concentration is the highest in the group of villages having a population between 500-999.

Table 4.7

Spatial Distribution of villages as classified by Maria Muslim Population in 1988.

Name of the districts	Total No. of villages	Total Population	Less than 200		200-499		500-999		1000-1999		2000-4999	
			Villages	Population	Vill- ages	Popu- lation						
Kamrup	03	1900			01	482	02	1418	-	-	-	-
Darrang	01	632	-	-	-	-	01	632				
Sonitpur	05	3825	02	200	-	-	01	815	02	2810	-	-
Lakhimpur	06	2110	01	81	05	2029	-	-	-	-	-	-
Dibrugarh	05	3958	01	110	02	766	01	582	-	-	01	2500
Sibsagar	11	3182	03	56	07	2545	01	581	-	-	-	-
Jorhat	12	2875	04	356	07	1766	01	753	-	-	-	-
Golaghat	04	1560	02	260	-	-	02	1300	-	-	-	-
Nowgong	05	3644	-	-	01	287	04	3357				
Total	52	23686	13	1063	23	7875	13	9438	02	2810	01	2500

Source : From field survey, 1988.

C H A P T E R - 5.0

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SOCIETY

5.1 Demographic feature :-

In this chapter an attempt has been made to analyse the demographic features of the Maria Muslim population in respect of sex-ratio, age-sex structure, marital status, social and economic structure and cultural characteristics.

5.11 Sex-ratio :-

Sex-ratio has been calculated on the basis of field survey during 1988, because in earlier census separate figures for males and females are not available. The sex ratio of the Maria population in the Brahmaputra Valley is 732 (Table 5.1) which is found to be lower than the Muslims of the Brahmaputra Valley (918, according to 1971 census) and the Muslims of the country (936, according to 1981 census).

When the rural-urban sex-ratio is calculated, it is found that the rural sex-ratio of the Maria population is 739 which is lower than the Muslims of the Brahmaputra Valley and it is calculated to be 926 according to 1971 census and the Muslims of the country which becomes 955 according to 1981 census. (Table 5.2). The lower rural ratio is mainly due to the urban character of the Marias, which they developed for economic considerations as stated earlier.

The districtwise variation in sex-ratio of the Maria Muslim population reveals the real situation. It is found that the Kamrup district has the highest sex-ratio (902), while the same is the lowest in Golaghat district (538), further of all the districts of the Brahmaputra Valley the urban sex-ratio is highest in Darrang district (870), where they inhabit in greater number. Further, it may be mentioned that the rural sex-ratio is higher in the Kamrup districts is due to the fact that they cannot eke out a living by cultivation so some male members have gone

Table 5.1
Rural Urban composition of Maria Muslims
Sex-Ratio, 1988

(Females per 1000 males)

Areas		Maria Muslim Population		Ratio
		M	F	
Kamrup	T	999	901	902
	R	235	247	1051
	U	764	654	856
Darrang	T	338	294	870
	R	338	294	870
	U	-	-	-
Sonitpur	T	2388	1437	602
	R	2388	1437	602
	U	-	-	-
Lakhimpur	T	1138	972	854
	R	887	824	929
	U	251	148	590
Dibrugarh	T	2267	1691	746
	R	273	173	634
	U	1994	1518	761
Sibsagar	T	1834	1348	735
	R	1383	1009	730
	U	451	339	752
Jorhat	T	1622	1253	773
	R	1571	1210	770
	U	51	43	843

areas		Maria	Muslim	Population
		M	F	Ratio
Golaghat	T	1014	546	538
	R	100	80	800
	U	914	466	510
Nowgong	T	2077	1567	754
	R	2077	1567	754
	U	-	-	
Brahmaputra Valley	T	13677	10009	732
	R	9252 (67.65 P.c.)	6841 (68.35 P.c.)	739
	U	4425 (32.35 P.c.)	3168 (31.65 P.c.)	716

Table 5.2

Rural-Urban composition of the Muslims of the Brahmaputra Valley
Sex-Ratio 1971

(Females per 1000 males)

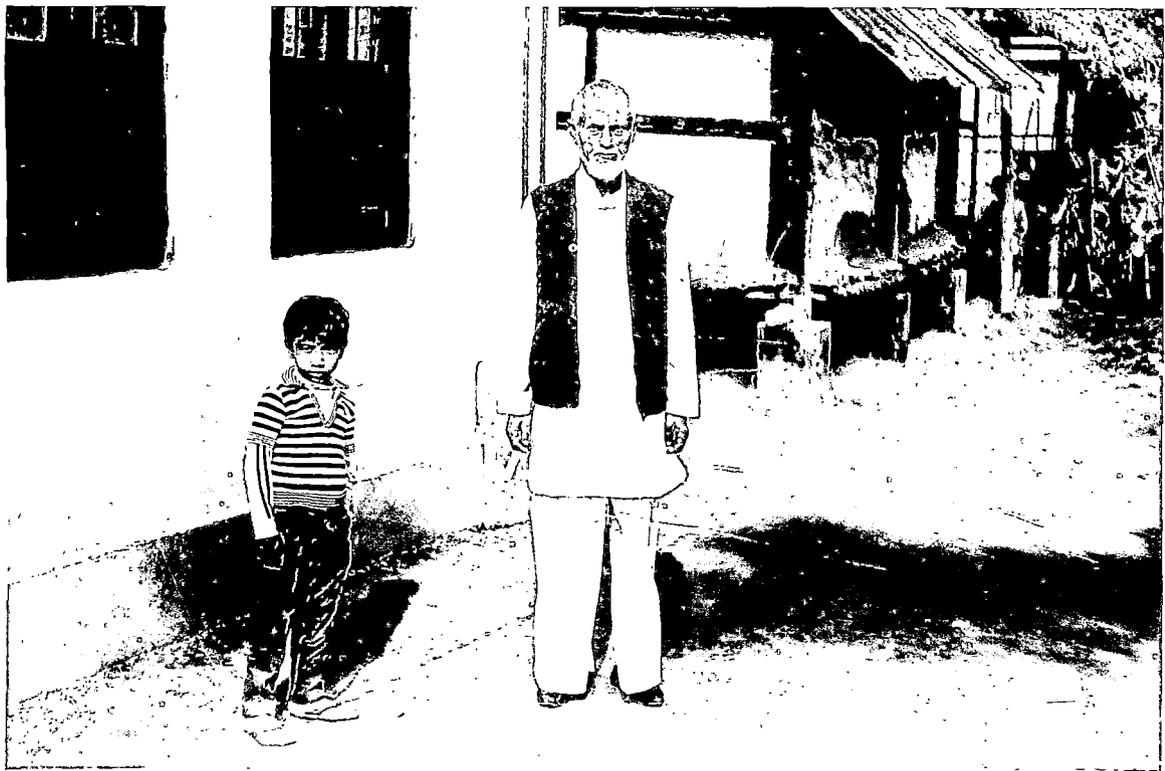
Areas		Total Muslim Population		Ratio
		M	F	
Goalpara	T	483784	456306	943
	R	466630	441890	947
	U	17154	14416	840
Kamrup	T	431482	394175	914
	R	416180	383592	922
	U	15302	10583	692
Darrang	T	147134	133961	910
	R	142275	130379	916
	U	4859	3582	737
Nowgong	T	346159	316022	913
	R	337977	309770	917
	U	8182	6252	764
Sibsagar	T	51873	44928	866
	R	41016	36687	894
	U	10857	8241	759
Lakhimpur	T	53046	44283	835
	R	38456	33919	882
	U	14590	10364	710
Brahmaputra Valley	T	1513478 ^s	1389675	918
	R	1442534 (95.31 P.c.)	1336237 (96.15 P.c.)	926
	U	70944 (4.69 P.c.)	53438 (3.85 P.c.)	753
India	T	38989763	36522676	936
	R	25492486 (63.38 P.c.)	24341903 (66.65 P.c.)	955
	U	13497277 (34.62 P.c.)	12180773 (33.35 P.c.)	902

The figures within parentheses indicate percentages.

Source : (i) Based on field survey, 1988 (ii) Census of India, 1971, Series - 3 (iii) Census of India, 1981.



Old Maria Couple in traditional dress.



Appearance of an old with a child.

out to the urban areas in search of some employment, like service, petty business, daily wage labour, etc.

The village wise variation in sex-ratio gives further insight to the situation. The highest rural sex-ratio is found in Baliyan Tengabari (1076) village which is significantly high. But the highest urban sex-ratio is found in Hajo Islampatti (909) which is lower than the rural sex-ratio. This is because of the movement of the males of the Maria population to the urban areas for better employment facilities which have contributed significantly to the lesser number of females in the urban areas and higher number of males in the urban areas (Table 5.3).

5.12 Age-sex structure:-

In the broad sense population structure implies any division of the population entity into constituents arranged in a definite pattern based on age-sex structure. Thus age-sex structure of a human population is the population structure. The age-sex structure is the Population Pyramid and it is the age composition by sex of a given population. It can be expressed as a ratio of several absolute age classes by sex (the age-sex pyramids). The population pyramid is therefore the geographical representation of age classes (say 4 years interval) by sex.

From the population pyramids the age-sex structure of a community can be identified. When the base of a pyramid is broader gradually tapering towards the peak then the population group may be considered as growing population. But if the pyramid is reverse then the population group may be considered as declining population. From the diagram it is observed that the Marias are of a growing population group.

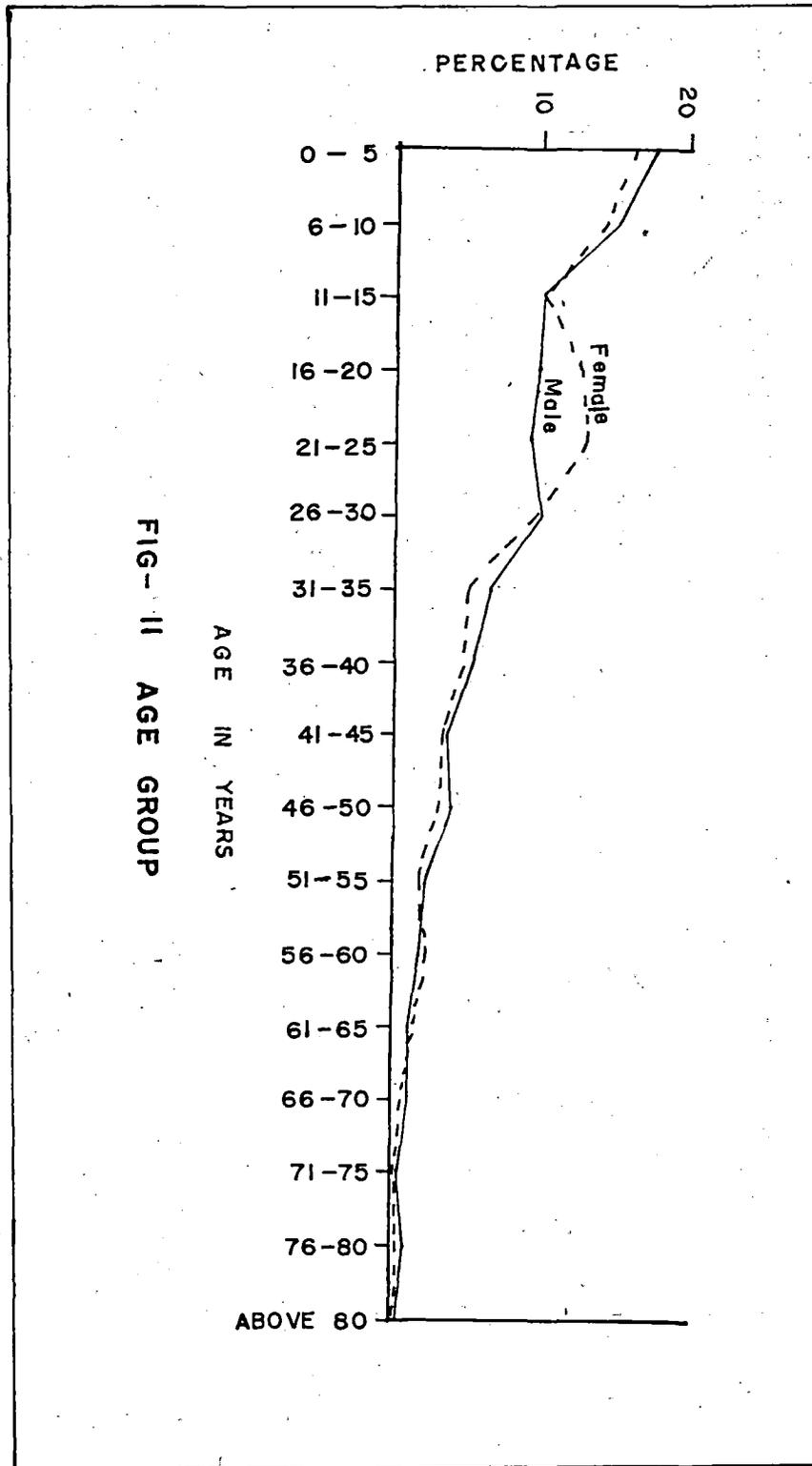


FIG- II AGE GROUP

Table 5.3

Villagewise rural urban composition of the Maria Muslims

Sex-Ratio 1988

(Females per 1000 males)

Name of the Villages		Total	Maria	Muslim	Population
		M	F		Ratio
Hajo Islampatty	T	410	373		
	R	-	-		
	U	410	373		909
Malara Islampatty	T	235	247		
	R	235	247		1051
	U	-	-		
Uzanbazar	T	354	281		793
	R	-	-		
	U	354	281		793
Vevarghat (Islampur)	T	338	294		
	R	338	294		869
	U	-	-		
Pithakhowa	T	952	648		
	R	952	648		680
	U	-	-		
Gavarugaon	T	30	20		
	R	30	20		666
	U	-	-		
Niraiati	T	100	50		
	R	100	50		500
	U	-	-		

Name of the Villages		Total	Maria	Muslim	Population
		M	F		Ratio
Becheria	T	795		415	
	R	795		415	522
	U	-		-	
Bakula	T	511		304	
	R	511		304	594
	U	-		-	
Shilabari Balijan	T	250		240	
	R	250		240	
	U	-		-	960
Dhekial	T	207		177	
	R	207		177	855
	U	-		-	
Nawkari	T	190		184	
	R	190		184	960
	U	-		-	
Lilabari	T	201		181	
	R	201		181	900
	U	-		-	
Dhokuakhana	T	251		148	
	R	-		-	
	U	251		148	589
Laluka	T	315		267	
	R	-		-	
	U	315		267	847

Name of the Villages		Total	Maria	Muslim	Population
		M		F	Ratio
Chawlkhowa	T	1400		1100	
	R	-		-	
	U	1400		1100	785
Sadia	T	273		173	
	R	273		173	633
	U	-		-	
Bakul	T	200		120	
	R	-		-	
	U	200		120	600
Margherita	T	79		31	
	R	-		-	
	U	79		31	392
Demoumukh	T	310		271	
	R	310		271	874
	U	-		-	
Mothadang	T	168		173	
	R	168		173	1029
	U				
Bambari	T	11		09	
	R	11		09	818
	U				
Dopdar	T	11		05	
	R	11		05	454
	U	-		-	

Name of the Villages		Total	Maria	Muslim	Population
		M		F	Ratio
Panidihing	T	177		120	677
	R	177		120	
	U				
Khatopahar	T	12		08	666
	R	12		08	
	U				
Amguri	T	255		105	411
	R	255		105	
	U	-		-	
Gauri Sagar	T	210		182	866
	R	-		-	
	U	210		182	
Nazira	T	241		157	651
	R	-		-	
	U	241		157	
Geleki	T	249		126	506
	R	249		126	
	U	-		-	
Veleuguri	T	50		30	600
	R	50		30	
	U	-		-	
Mudoijan	T	74		52	702
	R	74		52	
	U	-		-	

Name of the Villages		Total	Maria	Muslim	Population
		M	F		Ratio
Jhanji	T	51		43	843
	R	-		-	
	U	51		43	
Koliapani	T	129		71	550
	R	129		71	
	U	-		-	
Badulipukhuri	T	153		103	673
	R	153		103	
	U	-		-	
Neemati Ghat	T	144		107	938
	R	114		107	
	U	-		-	
Tamulishika	T	200		150	750
	R	200		150	
	U	-		-	
Fatigasiga	T	120		124	1033
	R	120		124	
	U	-		-	
Naobaisya	T	161		125	776
	R	161		125	
	U	-		-	
Kakojan	T	405		348	859
	R	405		348	
	U	-		-	

Name of the Villages		Total	Maria	Muslim	Population
		M		F	Ratio
Gakhir Howa	T	130		79	
	R	130		79	607
	U	-		-	
Boloma	T	35		21	
	R	35		21	600
	U	-		-	
Kacharihat	T	300		200	
	R	-		-	
	U	300		200	666
Kamarbandha	T	100		80	
	R	100		80	800
	U	-		-	
Moinapar	T	64		16	
	R	-		-	
	U	64		16	250
Islampatti	T	550		250	
	R	-		-	
	U	550		250	454
Langi	T	148		139	
	R	148		139	939
	U	-		-	-
Jayantipur	T	482		443	
	R	482		443	988
	U	-		-	-

Name of the Villages		Total	Maria	Muslim	Population
		M		F	Ratio
Hutergaon	T	479		437	
	R	479		437	912
	U	-		-	-
Baligaon	T	551		250	
	R	551		250	453
	U	-		-	
Bilotia	T	417		298	
	R	417		298	714
	U	-		-	

Source : Data collected from the field survey, 1988.

According to Sundbarg's (Datta, 1962) age categories of population are:-

Table - 5.4

	Age in years		
	0 - 15	15-50	Over 50
Progressive	400	500	100
Stationary	330	500	170
Regressive	200	500	300

To analyse the population structure the data was collected from sample villages. On the basis of this data Sundbarg's theory has been used to examine the population structure of the Maria population and it is found that, the studied community is of a Progressive type (Table 5.6).

Table - 5.6

Population Structure

	Age in years		
	0-15 years	15-50 years	Over 50 years
Progressive	2005	2399	326
	(42.39 percent)	(50.72 percent)	(6.89 percent)

On the basis of the sampled data the classification of age-sex composition has been done and the different groups have been shown in Table 5.5.

From the sample survey the entire population has been classified

Table 5.5

Maria Muslims
Age-sex structure (Sample Population) 1988

Age group	Population	P.c.	Male P.c.	Female P.c.
0-4	648	13.70	7.29	6.41
5-9	686	14.50	7.57	6.93
10-14	603	12.75	7.15	5.60
15-19	437	9.24	4.42	4.82
20-24	493	10.42	4.92	5.50
25-29	442	9.35	4.40	4.95
30-34	322	6.81	4.08	2.73
35-39	279	5.90	3.36	2.54
40-44	187	3.95	2.11	1.84
45-49	185	3.91	2.24	1.67
50-54	130	2.75	1.48	1.27
55-59	106	2.24	1.37	0.87
60+	212	4.48	2.32	2.16
Total	4730	100.00	52.71	47.29

Source : Based on field survey, 1988

into thirteen age groups for males and females. The age groups are 0-4, 5-9, 10-14, 15-19, 20-24, 25-29, 30-34, 35-39, 40-44, 45-49, 50-54, 55-59, 60 +. The population distribution in each group shows that the females in the age group of 15-29 years, outnumber the males. But in other age groups the position is reverse. The causes of high percentage of females show the high birth rate of female child at least in the surveyed villages. There is a gradual decrease of population beyond the age of 35 years, which shows low mortality among the adult population due to the availability of medical and other amenities. The general longevity of the people is still low and only 4.48 percent of them can hope to survive upto 60 years of age.

5.13 Dependency ratio :-

The dependency ratio has been calculated on the basis of the data collected from the sample survey and the calculated figures have been shown in Table 5.7.

The dependency ratio is found to be 76.89 percent, of which 79.37 percent is found in rural areas and 71.05 percent in urban areas. From the calculation it is revealed that the urban dependency ratio is lower than rural dependency ratio. This is because of their landlessness. In rural areas due to non availability of sufficient agricultural land the children of 0-14 years age group do not get jobs in the agricultural field, moreover, in rural areas there is no scope of getting petty jobs for children. But in urban areas the children of lower age group get jobs in small factories, P.W.D., big shops etc. So, the urban dependency ratio is lower than the dependency ratio of rural areas.

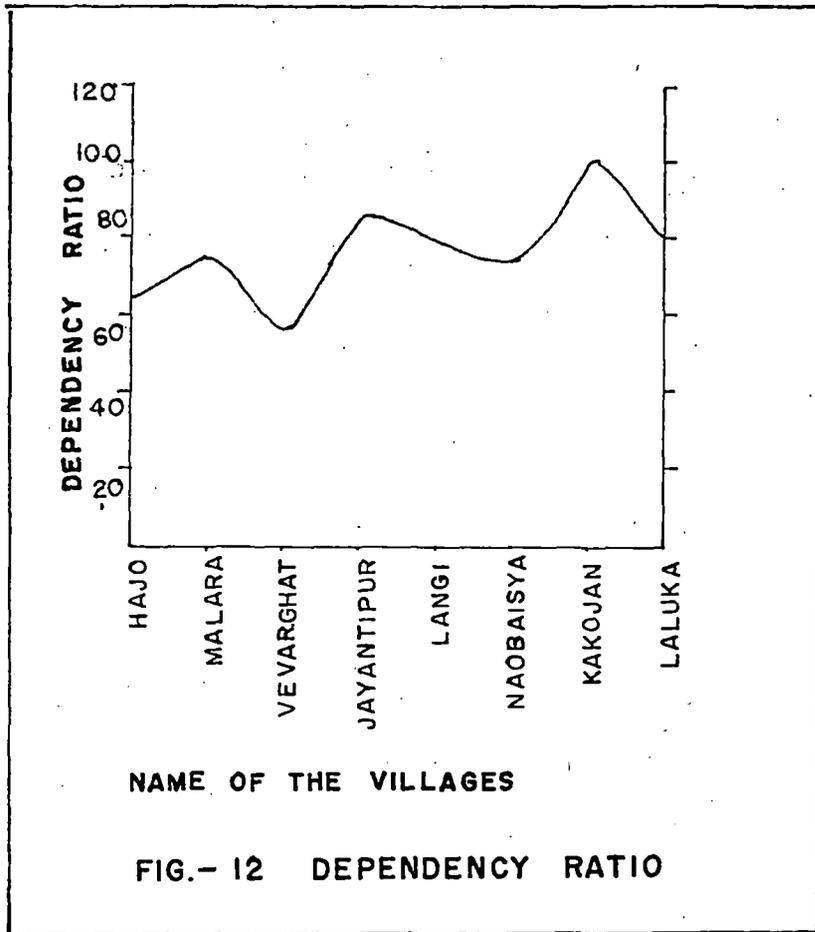


Table - 5.7.

Dependency ratio of the Maria Muslims

(Sample Survey) 1988

Name of the Villages.	Percentage of population			Dependency ratio
	upto 14 years	(15-64) years	65+ years	
Hajo Islampatti	38.19	60.53	1.28	65.19
Malara Islampatti	40.87	56.85	2.28	75.91
(Islampur)				
Vevarghat	29.43	63.61	6.96	57.21
Jayantipur	43.78	54.16	2.06	84.63
Langi	44.25	55.40	0.35	80.50
Naobaisya	39.51	57.34	3.15	74.39
Kakojan	48.07	49.94	1.99	100.27
Laluka	42.61	55.67	1.72	79.63

Total Dependency ratio = 76.89 percent.

Rural dependency ratio = 79.37 percent

Urban dependency ratio = 71.05 percent.

Source : Based on field work, 1988.

Of the eight sampled villages, the highest dependency ratio is found in Kakojan village and it is found to be 100.27 percent. This is due to the fact that 48.07 percent of the total population is found in

the 0-14 years age group and 1.99 percent people are found in the age group of 65+ years. Both these groups are assumed to be non-workers. But 49.94 percent people are found in the age-group of 15-64 years, which is assumed to be workers. So, in this village 49.94 percent people have to feed 50.06 percent non-workers.

5.14 Marital status:-

The marital status has been calculated from the eight sampled village study. Table 5.8 shows that the percentage of married persons is 39.41, of which 37.81 percent of married persons ^{of the total males} are males and 41.49 percent of married persons ^{of the total females.} are females. It shows that they do not prefer early marriage due to their economic backwardness and the influence of Assamese Hindu culture. This may be supported by the fact that the percentage of married males and females under nineteen years are 0.83 and 11.58 respectively. But above twenty years the percentage of married males and females are found to be 99.17 and 88.42 respectively, which shows their disinclination to an early marriage.

The percentage of widows is found to be 3.47 which is very low. It is due to the system of widow marriage among them.

0.27 percent of divorce cases are found in this society of which 0.04 percent of males and 0.54 percent of females. The percentage of divorce is negligible and it is rarely seen. This is also due to the poor economic condition and the influence of Assamese Hindu culture. A case of divorce rarely happens due to the inability of returning the 'Denmehar' by the husband which is fixed at the time of marriage. Moreover, in Assamese Hindu society a divorce case rarely happens, so this might have also influenced their society.

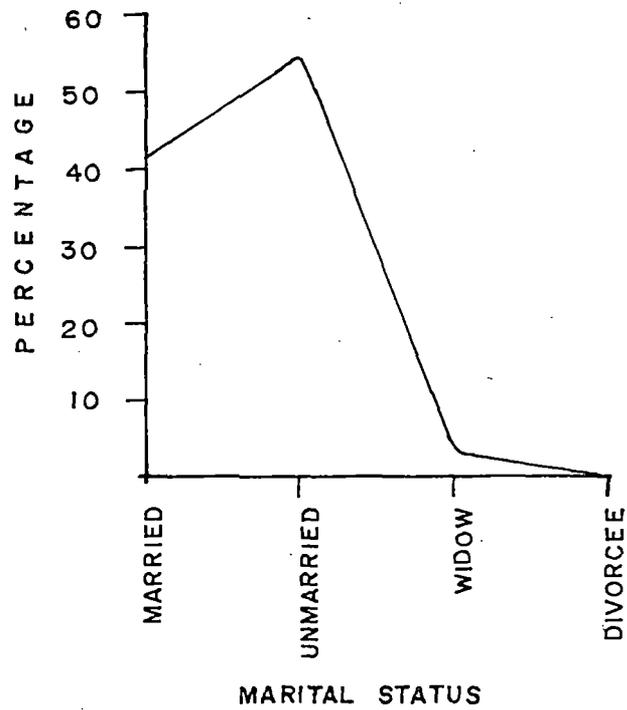


FIG-13 MARITAL STATUS (WOMEN)

Table 5.8
Marital status of the Maria Muslims,
villagewise, 1988 (sample survey)

Name of the villages	Married		Unmarried		Widow	Divorce	
	M	F	M	F		M	F
Hajo Islampatti	168 (40.98)	166 (44.50)	242 (59.02)	181 (46.53)	23 (6.17)	-	03 (0.80)
Kakojan	144 (35.56)	139 (39.94)	260 (64.19)	194 (55.75)	15 (4.31)	01 (0.25)	-
Jayntipur ^a	208 (43.15)	204 (46.05)	274 (56.85)	201 (45.37)	33 (7.45)	-	05 (1.13)
Naobaisya	51 (31.68)	48 (38.40)	110 (68.32)	65 (52.00)	11 (8.8)	-	01 (0.8)
Vevarghat (Islampur)	113 (33.43)	112 (38.10)	225 (66.57)	154 (52.38)	27 (9.18)	-	01 (0.34)
Langi	62 (41.89)	61 (43.88)	86 (58.11)	72 (51.80)	06 (4.32)	-	-
Malara Islampatti	92 (39.15)	94 (38.06)	143 (60.85)	120 (48.58)	31 (12.55)	-	02 (0.81)
Laluka	105 (33.33)	97 (36.33)	210 (66.67)	152 (56.93)	18 (6.74)	-	-
Total	(37.81)	(41.19)	(62.15)	(50.94)	(7.33)	(0.04)	(0.54)
GRAND TOTAL	39.41		56.85		3.47	0.27	

Source : Data collected from the field survey, 1988.

The figures within parentheses indicate percentage.

Villagewise analysis provides more insight into the problem. The percentage of married couples is found to be the highest in Jayantipur village of Nowgong district (Total 22.10 of which 43.15 percent of males and 46.05 percent of females) and the lowest is found in Naobaisya village of Jorhat district (total 5.31 of which 31.58 percent of males and 38.40 percent of females). Here also is found the practice of late marriage.

It was observed at the time of field survey that at present rich boys and girls do not prefer to get married early due to their changed outlook. Guardians are also against early marriage. This is due to the influence of Assamese Hindu society. Polygamy - is allowed by the Mahammedan law, but it is not seen in this society. It may be the influence of Assamese Hindu society.

5.15 Child women ratio :-

To calculate the child women ratio the data have been collected from the eight sampled villages, and have been shown in Table 5.9.

The child women ratio has been found to be 612.48 per thousand, of which rural child women ratio is 612.82 per thousand and urban child women ratio is 611.65 per thousand. The rural and urban child women ratio is almost equal.

The highest child women ratio (797.39 per thousand) is found in Kakojan village. This is due to the higher number of children (18.83 percent) in 0-4 years age group, than the number of mothers. It shows the high birth rate in this village. The lowest child women ratio (307.19 per thousand) is found in Vevarghat village. This is due to the lesser number of children (7.25 per thousand) in the 0-4 years of age group.

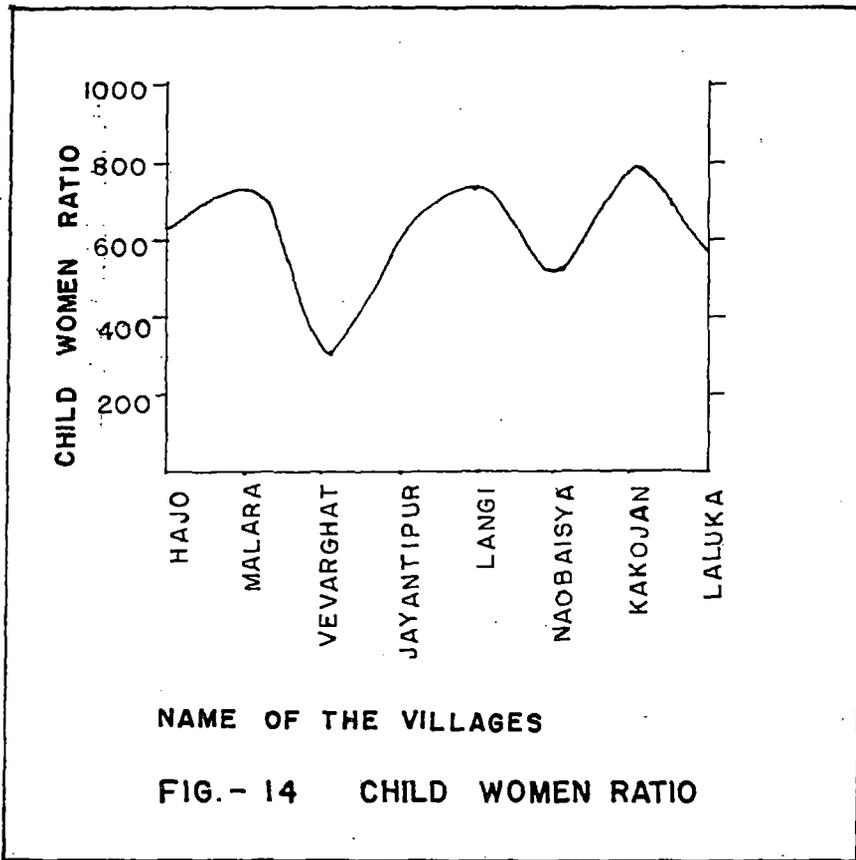


Table - 5.9

Village-wise child women ratio of Maria muslims

1988

Name of the villages	Children aged 0-4 years	Women aged 15-44 years	Child women ratio per 1000
Hajo Islampatti	127 (19.60)	200 (18.90)	635
Malara Islampatti	81 (12.5)	112 (10.59)	723.21
Vevarghat Islampatti	47 (7.25)	153 (14.46)	307.19
Jayntipur ^a	130 (20.06)	208 (19.66)	625
Langi	50 (7.72)	67 (6.33)	746.27
Naobaisya	29 (4.48)	56 (5.29)	517.86
Kakojan	122 (18.83)	153 (14.46)	797.39
Laluka	62 (9.57)	109 (10.30)	568.81
Total	648	1058	612.48

The figures in the parentheses indicate the percentage.

Source : Based ^{on} sample survey, 1988.

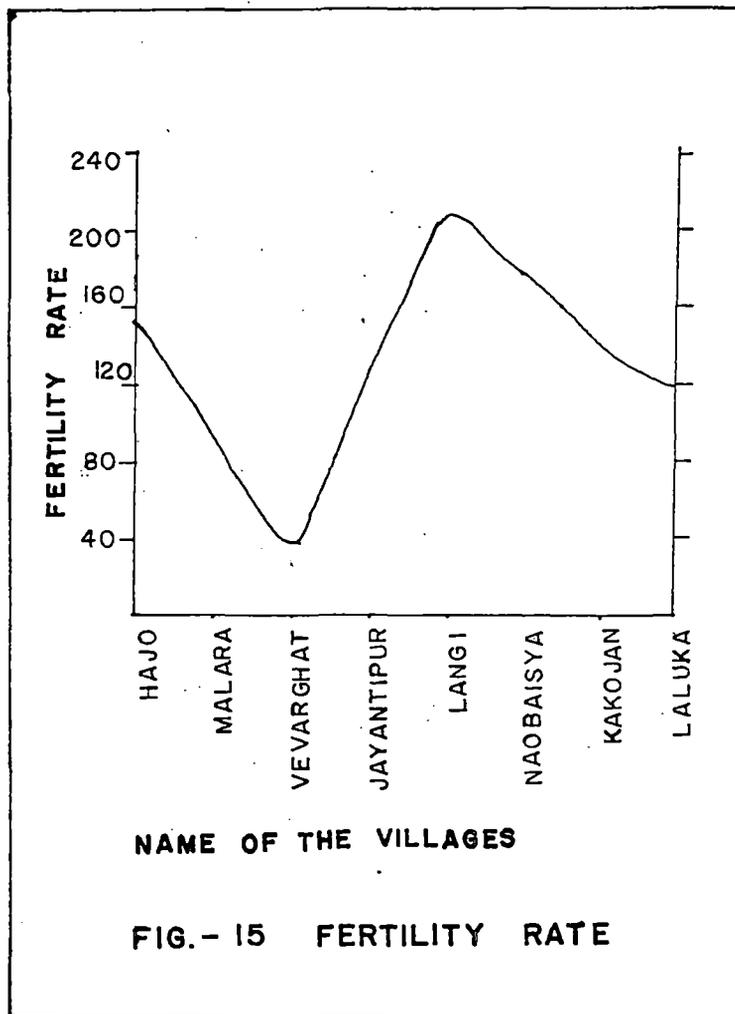
5.16 Fertility rate :

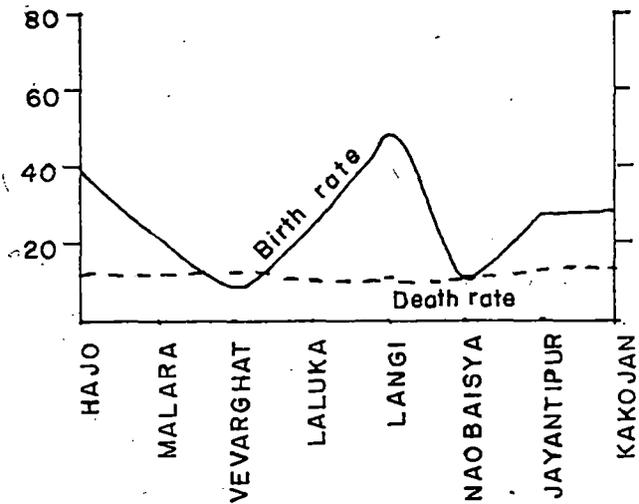
The fertility rate has been calculated from the data collected from sampled villages. The fertility rate of the Maria population is found to be 119.09 per thousand of which 109.48 per thousand in rural areas and 142.39 per thousand in urban areas. From the calculation it seems that the fertility wastage is less in the urban areas than in the rural areas. It is due to the better medical facilities in the urban area. But in rural areas proper medical facilities are not available moreover due to malnutrition, low standard of living, lack of hygienic sense etc. are responsible for high fertility wastage in rural areas.

The village wise general fertility rate provides more insight into the problem. The highest general fertility rate is found in Langi (208.96 per thousand) village of Nowgong district and the lowest is found in Vevarghat (Islampur) village (39.22 per thousand) in Darrang district. The higher rate is found in Langi village due to non-practicing of birth control methods for which they do not prefer to accept the medical facilities offered by the Family Planning Department. Because this village is situated 32 thirty two kilometers away from Nowgong town. So, it is not possible for the villagers to avail themselves of the medical facilities to control the general fertility rate. On the other, Islampur village is situated one kilometer away from Mangaldoi town of Darrang district, from where the people can get the medical facilities very easily. (Table 5.10).

5.17 Birth rate and death rate :-

The birth rate per thousand of Maria Muslim population of the Brahmaputra Valley (26.64) is found to be significantly lower than that





NAME OF THE VILLAGES

FIG. - 16. BIRTH AND DEATH RATE

Table 5.10

Fertility rate of the Maria Muslims.(village wise) 1988.

(Sample Survey)

Name of the villages	No. of birth in a year.	Women aged (15-44) years.	General fertility rate per 1000
Hajo Islampatti	31	200	155.
Malara Islampatti	11	112	98.21
Vevarghat	06	153	39.22
Jayantipur	26	208	125.
Langi	14	67	208.96
Naobaisya	03	56	53.57
Kakojan	22	153	143.79
Laluka	13	109	119.27
Total	126	1058	119.09

Source : Data collected from the field work, 1988:

of the general population for the state (31). It is due to the acceptance of the birth control methods. It happens due to the closer contact with the urban people. Moreover the urban population is (32.06 percent) higher than the Muslim population of the Brahmaputra Valley (4.28 percent).

So they have adequate knowledge of family planning. The rural-urban birth rate per thousand also reveals the true situation. The rural birth rate per thousand is (24.37) is lower than the urban birth rate (32.23) per thousand. It is due to high fertility wastage in the rural area due to the non-availability of proper medical facility at the proper time, malnutrition and lack of hygienic sense. So the birth rate is less in rural areas than that of urban areas (Table 5.11).

The villagewise analysis reveals the characteristics regarding the birth rate. The rate is found to be highest in Langi village (48.78). It is due to the availability of proper medical facilities in and around the village and this village is having good transport facility which connects Nawgong town and Tejpur where the proper medical facilities are available. The birth rate is lowest in Islampur of Mangaldai. It is due to the non-availability of medical facilities and poor economic condition.

Further, the death rate per thousand of Maria Muslim population (11.62) is slightly lower than the state's (12.5) for general population. It is due to the availability of medical facilities due to more urbanisation. The urban death rate is (10.98) found to be lower than the rural death rate (11.89). It is due to proper medical facilities which are available in urban areas. Among the villages, the highest death rate is found in Islampur in Mangaldai (12.65), followed by Malara Islampatti (12.45). It is due to the bad communication system with urban areas, non-availability

Table - 5.11

Birth and death rate of the Maria Muslim Population, 1988

(Sample Survey)

Name of the villages	Total population	Total No. of birth	Birth rate per 1000 of Population	Total No. of death	Death rate per 1000 of population
Hajo Islampatti	783	31	39.59	09	11.49
Malara Islampatti	482	11	22.82	06	12.45
Vevar Ghat	632	06	9.49	08	12.65
Laluka	582	13	22.34	06	10.31
Langi	287	14	48.78	03	10.45
Naobaisya	286	03	10.49	03	10.49
Jayantipur	925	26	28.11	11	11.89
Kakojan	753	22	29.22	09	11.95
TOTAL	4730	126	26.64	55	11.62

Source : Based on field survey, 1988.

Rural birth rate is 24.37 and urban birth rate is 32.23. Rural death rate is 11.89 and urban death rate is 10.98.

of proper medical facilities and poor economic condition (Table 5.11).

5.18 Types of family:-

The types of family have been studied from field based data collected from the sampled villages. The size of the family also has been calculated from the sample villages. The calculation shows the variation from 1 to 20 persons with an average of 6 persons per family. From the table it is revealed that 68.67 percent families are of nuclear type, 13.05 percent families are of vertically extended type, 8.88 percent and 9.4 percent families have been categorised under horizontal and broken type of family respectively. The nuclear type of families consist of parents and children. The joint families have been divided into two - vertical extended families are constituted by parents, sons, daughter-in-laws and grand children and the horizontal extended families are formed by brothers, their wives and children who live in the same house using the same kitchen. The broken families are headed either by a widow or by a widower along with their minor children.

Jayantipur village in Nowgong district is the most populated village among the sample villages with 146 families. It is to be found that 63.01 percent families are of nuclear types. The size of the nuclear families varies between 2 to 8 persons. The joint families are less in number and it is calculated to be only 28.76 percent (15.75 percent of vertically extended, 13.01 percent of horizontally extended). The average size of the family is of 6 persons. The largest size is of 20 persons.

In Hajo Islampatti of Kamrup district there are 141 households having an average family size of 5 persons. It is calculated that in this

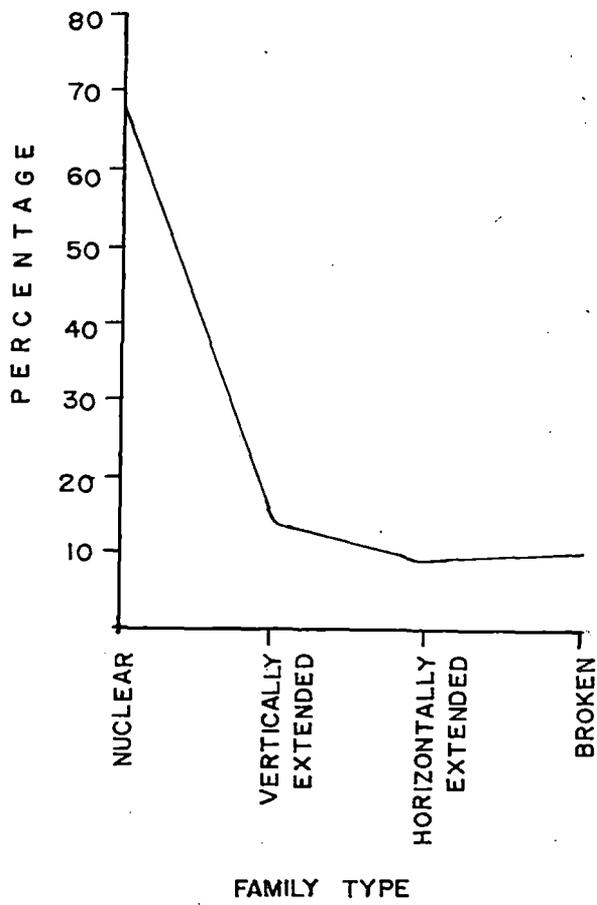


FIG - 17 TYPES OF FAMILY

village 70.21 percent families are of nuclear types. The size varies from 2 to 8 persons per family. Only 20.57 percent joint families are found including both vertically and horizontally extended family. The largest family size is of 18 persons and most of the families fall within the range between 4 to 6 members per family.

In Malara Islampatti there are 93 families having an average of 5 persons in each household. The largest family size of is 11 and the lowest size is of 2 members. In this village 78.49 percent nuclear families are calculated and the percentage of joint families are only 10.76 including both vertical and horizontal types.

In Vevarghat there are only 84 families having an average of 7 members per family. Largest family size is of 20 persons. In this village the nuclear types of family are 50.00 percent and the percentage of the joint families is only 44.05 percent.

Laluka village of Dibrugarh district have a total number of 92 families and average number of members per family is 6 persons. The largest family size is of 17 persons. Most of the families are found within the range between 4-6 members. Here 72.82 percent families are of the nuclear type.

In Langi village there are altogether 59 households having 4 persons per household. The largest family size is of 17 members and the smallest family size is of one member. In this village it is found that 84.75 percent families are of the nuclear type.

Naobaisya has only 54 families having an average of 5 persons per family. The largest family is of 10 persons, and the smallest is of

one member. The dominance of the nuclear type of family is also seen here and it is calculated to be 77.78 percent.

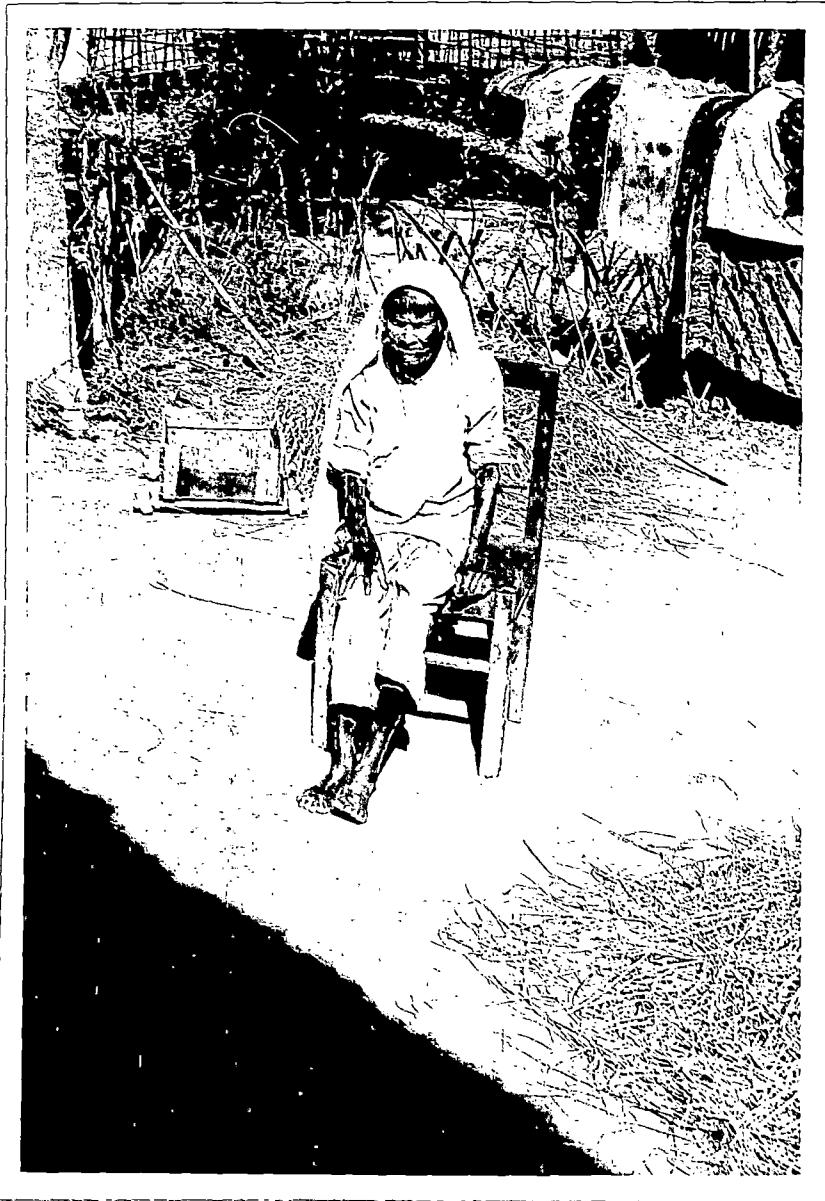
Kakojan village has 97 numbers of families with an average of 7 persons per family. The largest family size is of 26 persons and the smallest is of 3 persons. In this village 60.83 percent families are of the nuclear type (Table 5.12).

Table 5.12

Types of family (in percentage)

Name of the villages	Nuclear family	Vertical extended family	Horizontal extended family	Broken	Total no. of family
Hajo Islam-patti.	70.21	17.02	3.55	9.22	141
Malara Islam-patti.	78.49	7.53	3.23	10.75	93
Vevarghat	50.00	15.48	28.57	5.95	84
Laluka	72.82	4.35	4.35	18.48	92
Langi	84.75	3.39	5.08	6.78	59
Naobaisya	77.78	5.56	1.85	14.81	54
Jayantipur	63.01	15.75	13.01	8.22	146
Kakojan	60.83	24.74	11.34	3.09	97
TOTAL	68.67	13.05	8.88	9.4	766

Source : Field Survey , 1988.



Oldest Maria Woman.

From the above discussion it may be concluded that the joint family system is gradually replaced by the nuclear type of family. It is because the sons are staying separately from their parents after getting married and the married brothers also have separated due to shortage of living space; family dispute over properties and other matters. But the average size of 6 persons per family is higher in the present position of the country.

5.19 Literacy:-

Of all the aspects of population attributes, literacy is the best indication of the people's socio-economic development. The trends of literacy are indicative of the pace at which a particular society is getting transformed (Chandana 1980).

Literacy among the Maria Muslims has been calculated on the basis of the sampled village survey. The data have been collected from eight sampled villages. On the basis of this data it is found that the literacy of the Maria Muslims is quite high (64.48 percent) as against 28.15 percent literacy of Assam in 1971 and 37 percent of the country's literacy for the general population. The high literacy percentage is due to the fact that they are not basically cultivators. So, to get jobs the parents send their children for education. The male literacy percentage is 72.29 percent and female literacy percentage is 55.77 percent (Table 5.13). It is mainly due to the fact that the guardian's consciousness about education. But the percentage of rural literacy (72.20 percent) is higher than the urban literacy (27.80 percent). It is because of easy availability of job in urban area, where guardians send their children for earning money, though in urban areas educational facilities are more. In rural areas the

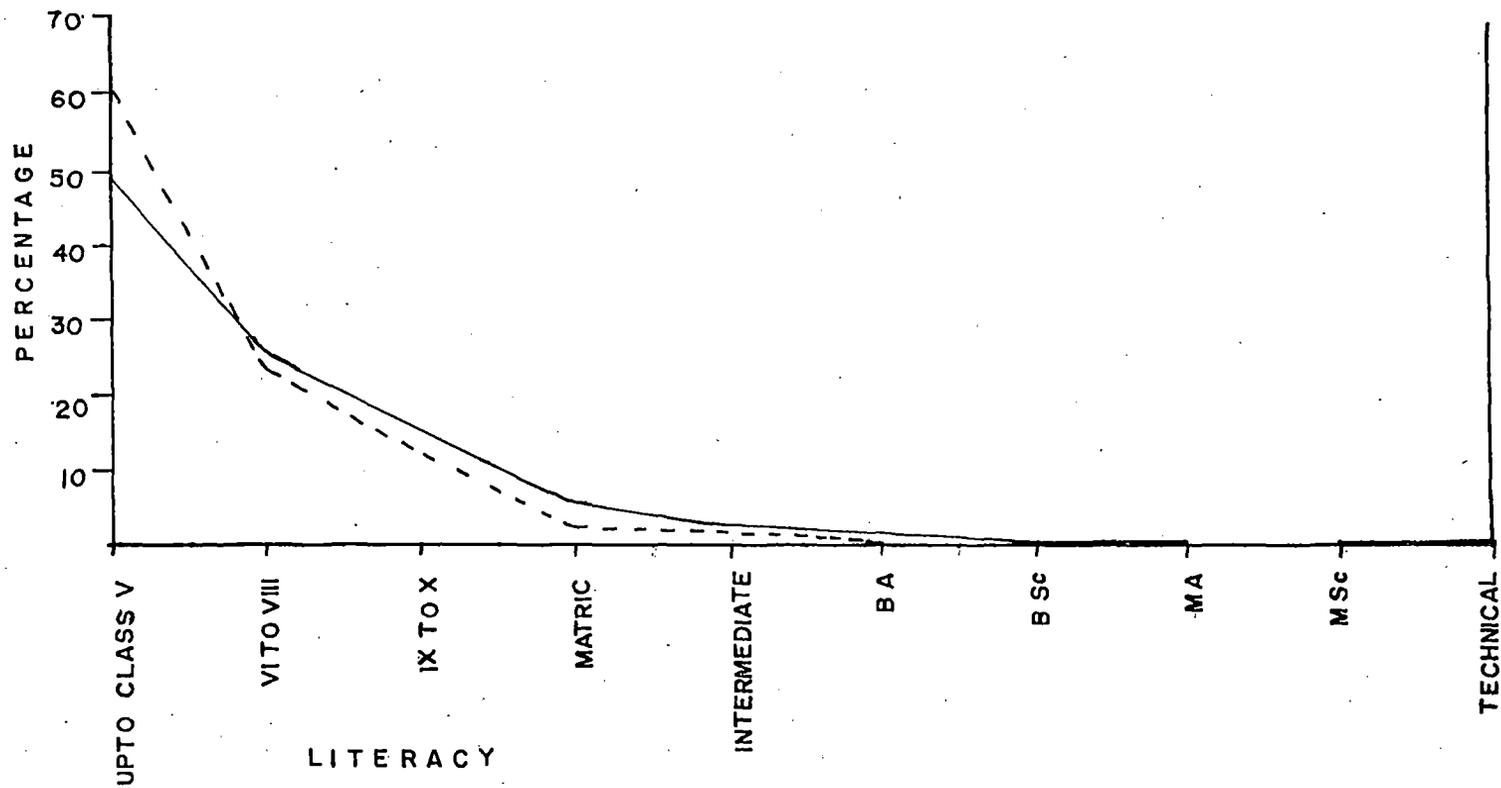


FIG. 18 LITERACY RATE

higher literacy rate is due to the non-availability of jobs and all the villages have at least one primary school where the guardians can send their children for education. The percentage of literacy upto primary level is 53.44 percent of which 47.69 percent are males and 61.75 percent are females. The high female literacy upto primary level is due to the availability of educational facility within the village. The low literacy percentage of males is mainly due to the fact that the male children go to the nearby urban areas to earn. The percentage of literacy upto VI to VIII level is 25.54 percent of which 26.96 percent are males and 23.50 percent are females. Percentage of literacy upto IX to X level is 12.75 percent of which 14.42 percent are males and 10.34 percent are females. Percentage of literacy upto Matric level is 3.96 percent of which 5.27 percent are males and 2.09 percent of females. The percentage upto Inter level is 2.52 percent of which 3.16 percent and 1.52 percent are males and females respectively. Upto the level of B.A. and B.Sc. the percentage of literacy is 1.48 and 0.13 percent respectively, of which 1.94 and 0.80 percent of males and females upto B.A. level respectively and upto B.Sc. level the percentage of males are 0.22 percent and the females are nil. Upto the level of M.A. 0.17 percent are males and the females are absent. Upto technical level 0.09 percent literacy is found of which 0.17 percent are males.

From the above discussion it is observed that the higher education is significantly very low among the Maria Muslims. It is mainly due to the fact that the facility for higher education is not available in nearby area. Moreover due to economic backwardness most of them go for earning a livelihood at an early age. So, the guardians cannot send their children for higher education due to poor economic condition.

Table 5.13

Spatial distribution of Rural and Urban Literacy, 1988.

(Sample Survey)

	T	M	F
Total	3050 (64.48)	1803 (72.29)	1247 (55.77)
Rural	2202 (72.20)	1313 (72.82)	889 (53.45)
Urban	848 (27.80)	490 (27.18)	358 (28.71)

The figure in the parentheses indicate the percentage.

Source : Based on field survey, 1988.

A villagewise analysis of (Table 5.14) literacy reveals that the percentage of literacy among the Maria Muslims is significantly higher, 74.70 percent, of which 78 percent and 71.11 percent are males and females respectively in Jayantipur village in Nowgong district than those of other studied villages. The high literacy percent is due to the availability of Primary school, High school and college in the nearby area. So, the guardians can easily send their children for education. It is the lowest (50.41 percent) in Malara Islampatty in Kamrup district. The percentage of literacy is 68.09 percent of males and 33.60 percent of females. The

Table 5.14
Villagewise literacy percentage (Sample survey)
1988

Name of the village	Upto Class V		Upto Class VI to VIII		Upto Class IX to X		Matric		Inter		B.A.		B.Sc.		M.A.		M.Sc.		Technical		Total literate			
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	T	M	F	
Haji Islampatti	106	96	75	50	31	23	14	07	15	08	10	05	02	00	01	00	00	00	01	00	444	255	189	
	(41.57)	(50.79)	(29.41)	(26.46)	(12.16)	(12.17)	(5.50)	(3.70)	(5.88)	(4.23)	(3.92)	(2.65)	(0.78)	(0.00)	(0.39)	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.39)	(0.00)	(56.70)	(62.19)	(50.67)	
Malara Islampatti	84	58	43	15	16	09	11	01	05	00	00	00	01	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	243	160	83	
	(52.5)	(69.88)	(26.88)	(18.07)	(10.00)	(10.85)	(6.87)	(1.20)	(3.12)	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.63)	(0.00)	(0.00)	(6.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)	(50.41)	(68.09)	(33.60)	
Vevarghat Islampur	112	60	61	43	49	32	14	02	14	02	08	03	01	00	02	00	00	00	01	00	404	262	142	
	(42.75)	(42.25)	(23.30)	(30.28)	(18.70)	(22.54)	(5.34)	(1.41)	(5.34)	(1.41)	(3.05)	(2.11)	(0.38)	(0.00)	(0.76)	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.38)	(0.00)	(63.92)	(77.51)	(48.29)	
Laluka	111	94	66	45	32	25	16	03	06	02	04	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	404	235	169	
	(47.23)	(55.62)	(28.09)	(26.63)	(13.62)	(14.79)	(6.81)	(1.78)	(2.55)	(1.18)	(1.70)	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)	(69.42)	(74.60)	(63.29)	
Langi	68	74	13	04	19	01	01	00	01	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	181	102	79	
	(66.67)	(93.67)	(12.75)	(5.06)	(18.62)	(1.27)	(0.98)	(0.00)	(0.98)	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)	(63.07)	(68.92)	(56.85)	
Naobaisya	37	35	46	27	29	19	08	00	06	02	04	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	01		214	131	83	
	(28.24)	(42.17)	(35.12)	(32.53)	(22.14)	(22.89)	(6.11)	(0.00)	(4.58)	(2.41)	(3.05)	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.76)		(74.83)	(81.37)	(66.4)	
Javantipur	226	258	57	50	38	04	11	03	01	00	04	01	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	691	375	316	
	(60.27)	(81.64)	(25.86)	(15.82)	(9.6)	(1.27)	(2.93)	(0.95)	(0.27)	(0.00)	(1.07)	(0.32)	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)	(74.70)	(78.00)	(71.11)	
Kakojan	116	95	85	59	48	16	20	10	09	05	05	01	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	469	283	186	
	(40.99)	(51.08)	(30.04)	(31.72)	(16.96)	(8.60)	(7.07)	(5.38)	(3.18)	(2.68)	(1.76)	(0.54)	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)	(62.28)	(69.87)	(53.45)	
TOTAL	860	770	486	293	260	129	95	26	57	19	35	10	04	00	03	00	00	00	03	00	3050	1803	1247	
	(47.69)	(61.75)	(26.96)	(23.50)	(14.42)	(10.34)	(5.27)	(2.09)	(3.16)	(1.52)	(1.94)	(0.80)	(0.22)	(0.00)	(0.17)	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.17)	(0.00)	(64.48)	(72.29)	(55.77)	
GRAND TOTAL	1530	779	589	121	77	45	04	03	00	03	00	03	(53.44)	(25.54)	(12.75)	(3.96)	(2.52)	(1.48)	(0.13)	(0.09)	(0.00)	(0.09)	3050	(64.48)

Source : Data collected from the field survey, 1988

The figure in the parentheses indicate the percentage.

lowest literacy rate is mainly due to the bad communication system, economic backwardness and non-availability of educational facilities within the village (Table 5.14).

It is important to note in the conclusion that the literacy among the Marias is quite promising but higher education among them is practically nil. The reason for this is due to :-

1. economic instability, for which the guardians send their children for earning money either after the completion of primary schooling or also before any schooling.
2. non-availability of higher educational centres within a reasonable distance.
3. the defect in the implementation of the government plans for the development in educations. As a result very few of the Maria youths could study upto graduation level.

5.2 Social structure :-

The Maria Muslim villages are both uni-ethnic and multi ethnic. The villages are surrounded by Assamese Hindu caste groups like Brahmin, Kalita, Keot etc. and the tribes like Koch, Mishing etc. The surrounding communities keep harmony with Maria Muslims which is reflected in their behaviour with their fellow villagers.

The existance of different castes and tribes with Maria Muslims in and around the village shows a relationship of reciprocity and co-operation among the communities. It has also been observed that other communities usually invite Maria Muslim at the time of socio-religious rituals and

festivals, which develops a cordial and friendly relation among them. These social and economic relationships have developed between Maria Muslims and other communities through a process of interaction.

The community under study came as soldiers from Gaur. After settling in this region they married the low caste Hindu women, which has been discussed earlier. It is found that they do not follow the strict Muslim customs in relation to their life cycle, such as - Pre-natal, Birth, Adolescence period, Marriage and Death. Here, some of their customs have been discussed which are assimilated with the Assamese Hindu Society by the way of marriage in the historic past.

5.21 Pre-natal and birth ritual :-

On the seventh month of pregnancy a ritual is performed by the married women. This ritual is locally known as Gopinisewa. Any day on the seventh month of pregnancy the married women (number is not fixed) of the society visit the incumbent family and a feast is arranged on this occasion. Rice, pulse, fish etc. are offered to the pregnant women. This ritual is alike to 'Hatkhowa' in the Assamese Hindu Society. The ritual is performed during day time. The pregnant woman can move outside the house also. The other muslim groups do not perform this ritual. Moreover Islamic rule does not permit a pregnant woman to move out of the house.

On the third day after the birth the Napit shaves the head of the newly born baby. The shaving of the head is locally known as 'Murkhurua'. On this day the mother and new born take bath. This ritual is locally known as Chuabichaya. The new born baby is kept inside the

room for about an week to protect it from contamination. It is presumed that they have borrowed all the above mentioned customs from the Assamese Hindu Society.

5.22 Ritual in adolescence period:-

Ritual in connection with the adolescent period is observed by this society. When a girl first attains the adolescent period they perform a ritual like marriage and is locally known as Tulonibiya. During this period the girl is kept in a room for three to four days and she is not allowed to come out of the room. During this time she takes only milk and fruits. The food is offered by the unmarried and married females. In every evening Biya nam is sung by the unmarried girls who come from neighbouring houses. On the last day the girl takes bath and wear new mekhela-chaddar, ornaments etc. and takes blessings from the elderly women. The women sing Biya nam. This ritual which they observe is the influence of Assamese Hindu Society. At present this ritual is not observed in all the villages. This is due to their awareness of the Islamic religion. The villages located near the urban area, either perform this ritual, very secretly, or they have given it up altogether. Since this custom has been borrowed from the Assamese Hindu Society and not approved by the other Muslim groups like Garia, Syad etc. So, they are giving up this ritual very slowly to get recognition in Muslim society.

When the boy attains the age of five years the ritual - chunnat Biya or Hatna Biya is performed. Before the day of Chunnat Biya the guardian throws a party to the villagers. The night before the Chunnat Biya the boy sits inside the Rava. The male invitee sing the Bihu song, Gazal, Hindi songs throughtout the night. On the next morning the boy is



A Scene of primary education.



A Scene of primary education in High Madrassa.



Bridegroom in wedding dress.



Bride in wedding party.

smearred with the paste of Matikalai and Haludhi before taking bath. Chunnat is done after the bath and it is done by the Napit.

In Pithakhowa village of Darrang district it is reported that Chunnat Biya is locally known as Hatna Biya. On the day of Chunnat they hold a procession twice (one in the morning time and the another in the evening time). During this procession the boy is decorated like a bride-groom and an elderly male person takes the boy on his shoulder, the procession moves around the village. This procession is locally known as Gajfura. It is also reported that at the time of Ahom King, the king used to supply them Gaja for this procession. At that time the boy used to sit on the back of the elephant. In Sanskrit language Gaja means elephant. So to travel or move about sitting on the back of an elephant is Gajfura.

5.23 Marriage ceremony:-

Marriage is an important social institution through which the status of a community can be understood as compared with the surrounding communities and which makes relationship with other communities.

In this community the maximum number of marriages are performed within the community itself. This is because the boys and girls are not accepted by other sections of Muslims, because they are considered degraded Muslims by other Muslims. Many customs have been entered their society from the Assamese Hindu culture, which the other Muslims do not like. In marriages also many customs have been entered in their society from the Assamese Hindu society.

After the selection of the mate, Jurandiya is performed. The marriage date is fixed three to six months before the marriage by the astrologer (generally Hindu). On the day of Jurandiya, party from the bridegroom's residence goes to the bride's residence. The party consists of twenty to fifty males and females. They take with them a gold ring, kanphool, mekhela - chaddar, cosmetics, one pair of shoes, sweets, banana, akhoi, gakhir etc. to the bride's residence. All the articles are carried in a bhar. An elderly person (either male or female) gives the ring to the bride.

In the past, on the day of Jurandiya, laru was used to be sent to the bride's residence. Laru was used to be prepared at home for all the villagers at least one piece per head. On the day of Jurandiya the laru was distributed to the villagers.

Murarteldiya is observed on the day before the marriage. On this day seven females (all whose children are alive) first go to bridegroom's residence carrying mustard oil and tamul-pan. The seven females hold the bottle of the mustard oil together and put a phot. They perform the same practice in the bride's residence. The widows are not allowed to attend this ritual. They sing Biya nam at the time of Murarteldiya. The night before the marriage day baithaki is performed. Baithaki is performed in both the bride's and the bridegroom's houses. In the house of the bride the females sing the Biya nam throughout the whole night. But in the house of bridegroom the males sing Hindi film song, Gajal and Bihu song throughout night. They sing with the accompaniment of dhol, harmonium etc. at that time. It is continued through the whole night.

On the day of marriage, early in the morning the female members go to either a river or a pond to fetch water for bathing. This ritual is known as Paniloya. For this they carry eight to ten Kalash made of brass. At this time they sing Biya nam. After filling up the Kalash they bring it to the house and keep in the rooms of the bridegroom and the bride in their respective houses. The water pitcher are kept on the floor in one line. Lota filled with water is kept on each Kalash. Flower (according to availability) is also put on the Lota and the whole thing is then covered with Seleng Kapor of baga rang.

A Beye is prepared in both the houses. The Beye is prepared by putting the seedlings of banana trees in the four corners. The seedlings are connected by the strips of bamboo and is decorated with flowers and leaves. The Baye is rectangular in shape. A Taktoposh is placed in the middle of the Baye where the bathing is performed. Before the bath they move round the Baye either three times or five times or seven times. At this time, mother (in absence of the mother, the nearest female relative) will remain in the front, then either bride or bridegroom and then other females move. At this time the bridegroom has to catch his mother's little finger of the left hand by his right hand and the second woman catches the little finger of the left hand of the bridegroom by her right hand and they move. The same custom is practiced in the bride's residence. After going round the Baye, the bridegroom or the bride sits on the Taktoposh facing towards west. The Imam or a respectable person comes and then co-conut oil is poured from the bottle containing two to three grains of paddy on the head. Then all the persons present give co-conut oil on the head. After this the body is smeared with the paste of Matikalai Halodhi and mustered oil. They take bath with soap. The same

females also go the bride's residence to perform the bath.

The marriage is performed during night time. The bridegroom with his party reach the bride's residence at night. When the bridegroom arrives the females come to receive him at the gate. First, they offer Pan and Tamul and give Gamocha at least, a younger girl kisses his cheek by touching a pair of Pan on his cheek. This custom is known as Mandhara. Then the bridegroom enters the gate but in front of him a lady sprays water from Lota either by any flower leaves or by mango leaves. When the bridegroom comes the females keep an umbrella (black coloured) over his head. After the completion of all these rituals the bridegroom sits in the Rava. The bridegroom wears Sheroany and Pajama and Pagri but pant shirt is also worn in some urban areas. Two Ravas are prepared; one for the bridegroom and the other for the bride facing west. The bride wears Mekhela-Chaddar and ornaments. The face of the bride remains open. In the past after arriving at the bride's house the bridegroom's guardian used to go to the bride (before marriage) with Pan and Tamul, Paise and also cloth to see her. At that time the face of the bride used to remain covered, with a piece of cloth. At present this practice is observed only in Tamulishika village of Jorhat district.

Inside the Rava one seedling of the banana plant is placed in which a pin or Beji is put inside. They keep this Beji because they believe in black magic. It is also believed that this piece of Beji will save the pairs from the black magic. Moulovi keeps the Beji in the banana plant.

The marriage is performed according to Islamic law. Nikah is performed by the Moulovi. Denmehar system is also there. The marriage

is performed on contract basis.

The bridegroom returns to his residence early in the morning. At the time of entry into the bridegroom's house, first the mother of the bride-groom enters then the bridegroom and at least the bride. At that time the bridegroom catches the little finger of the left hand of his mother by the little finger of his right hand cross-wise and the bride catches the little finger of the left hand by her right hand little finger cross-wise. At that time a lady sprays water from the Lota by mango leaves.

On the eighth day the bridegroom goes to the bride's residence. If the distance is long they stay for two to three days and if it is within the short periphery they return on the same day.

In the past Gadhan (bride price) system was there. Before the marriage the parents of the bridegroom had to give a certain amount to the parents of the bride. If any one unable to pay, the marriages would not have solemnised. It seems from this system that in the past a marriage used to be solemnised between families of equal economic status. At present Gadhan system has stopped due to the common economic backwardness of the people (Marias) in general.

The above mentioned system is observed in the society of the Miri and the Mishing tribes, hence it can be concluded that this was the influence of the Miri or the Mishing. As the Miri and the Mishing tribes are seen nearer to the Maria villages located in Upper Assam.

It may also be mentioned that the marriages are not performed on tuesday and saturday and in the month of Saon Bhad and Chat.

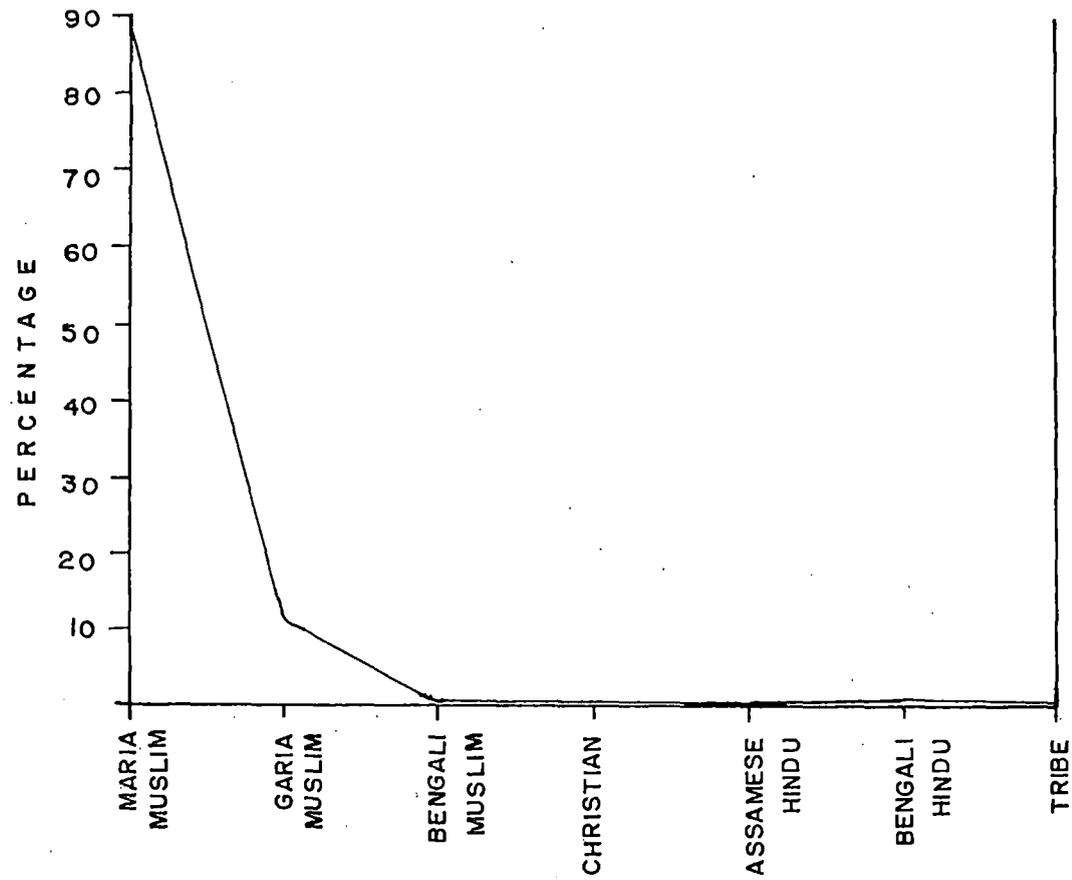
5.24 Marital relationship with other communities :-

Since the upper two groups namely Syad and Garia maintained a distance with the Marias, the Marias have become an endogamous group. They marry among themselves for which Irshad Ali (1974) calls it as Kin-community by using Murdock's (1949) term. But it is not according to Islamic rule. Ali writes that socio-economic background and network of Kinship here helped to create a sense of solidarity among the Marias, so there is a possibility of both hypogamy and hypergamy (1974).

Investigations are made on this aspect of eight sampled villages of the Brahmaputra Valley in different regions. From the table it is observed that 88.18 percent marriages are performed within the community. 10.86 percent marriages are performed with the Garia muslims, 0.21 percent marriages are performed with the Assamese Hindus, 0.11 percent with the Bengali Muslims, 0.21 percent with the Christians, 0.32 percent with the Bengali Hindus and 0.11 percent with the tribes. At present the tendency to establish marital relationships with other communities is very slowly increasing. This is due to the occupational diversification and close linkage with communities (Table 5.15).

5.25 Marriage distance :-

Marriage distance is the vital factor of marital relationship with other villages. Since the economic condition of this community is poor so, the maximum number of marriages are solemnised within the village. This is due to the poor economic condition and due to communication difficulties. Within the region they have good contact but contact is less with the distant villages. It has also been observed that the marriages



MARIA AND OTHER COMMUNITIES

FIG-19 MARITAL RELATIONSHIP WITH OTHER COMMUNITIES

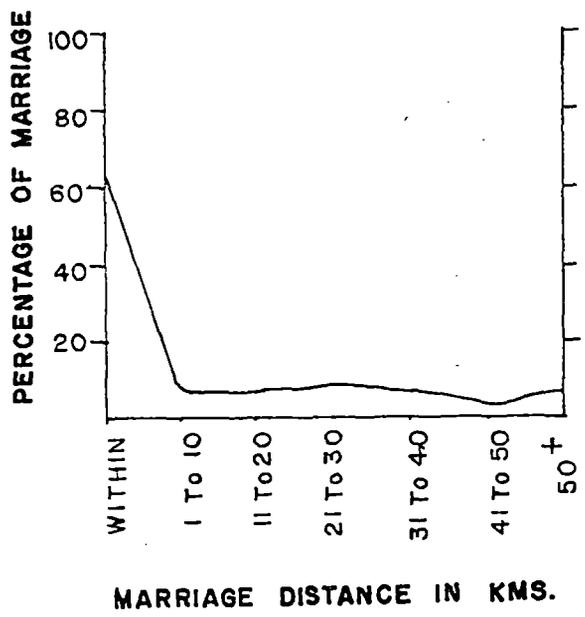


FIG.- 20. MARRIAGE DISTANCE

Table 5.15

Marital relationship with other communities.(in percentage).1988.

Name of the villages.	Maria Muslims	Garia Muslims	Assamese Hindus	Bengali Muslims	Christian.	Bengali Hindus	Tribe.
Hajo Islampatti	84.94	15.06	-	-	-	-	-
Vevarghat	78.07	18.42	-	-	-	2.63	0.88
Malara Islampatti	80.51	16.95	-	0.85	1.69	-	-
Langi	93.44	6.56	-	-	-	-	-
Jayantipur	99.01	0.99	-	-	-	-	-
Naobaisya	87.5	12.5	-	-	-	-	-
Kakojan	91.44	7.14	1.42	-	-	-	-
Laluka	84.69	15.31	-	-	-	-	-
TOTAL	88.18	10.86	0.21	0.11	0.21	0.32	0.11

Source : Based on Sample survey, 1988.

are not performed with the villages of Upper Assam and with the villages of Lower Assam. This is because of their incapability of spending money in transport. Moreover it has also been found that before 1974 they did not have any idea about the number of villages of their own community. The first conference of Maria Muslims was held at Jayantipur village of Nowgong district on 27th January 1974. From this conference Communication started between the districts. Before that the marriages were used to perform within the districts. But at present though marriages between families living in far away villages have increased but the percentage is quite low. Because they have started distant marriages only few years back, but the attitude towards distant-marriages is gradually changing (Table 5.16).

5.26 Death ritual :-

The body is buried according to Muslim religious customs. After that on the third day they perform Tindiniya or Tilani, on this day the Quran is read out by the Moulavi and fruits like banana, sugarcane, apple etc. are distributed. Upto three days they do not cook in the deceased person's house. They take rice and vegetables given by the villagers. On the tenth day they perform Dahdiniya. On this day they take the non-vegetarian items of food. On the fortieth day they perform Challisdiniya or Chouabichaya. On this day the moulavi reads out the Quran. The whole ritual is known as Hakam. But according to muslim religion there is no such rituals in connection with death. Jiyarat may be performed on any day.

5.27 Fairs and festivals:-

The people of Maria Muslims observe the Bihu festivals. Bihu is the main festival of the Assamese people. Three types of Bihu are

Table 5.16

Marriage distance in kilometers and in percentage (including total number of marriage).

Name of the villages.	Inside the village.	D I S T A N C E I N K M.						Total number of marriage.
		1 to 10	11 to 20	21 to 30	31 to 40	41 to 50	50+	
Hajo	105 63.25	03 1.81	22 13.26	24 14.46	09 5.42	01 0.60	02 1.20	166
Malara	71 60.17	10 8.48	06 5.08	20 16.95	04 3.39	03 2.54	04 3.39	118
Vevarghat	62 54.39	08 7.02	09 7.89	06 5.26	22 19.30	01 0.88	06 5.26	114
Langi	29 47.54	22 36.06	03 4.92	03 4.92	02 3.28	0 0	02 3.28	61
Jayantipur	166 81.77	05 2.46	03 1.48	06 2.96	16 7.88	03 1.48	04 1.97	203
Kakojan	61 43.57	12 8.57	20 14.29	18 12.86	06 4.29	08 5.71	15 10.71	140
Naobaisya	18 37.5	02 4.17	09 18.75	05 10.42	01 2.08	06 12.5	07 14.58	48
Laluka	64 65.31	05 5.10	03 3.06	06 6.12	0 0	02 2.04	18 18.37	98
TOTAL	576 60.76	67 7.07	75 7.91	88 9.28	60 6.33	24 2.53	58 6.12	948

Source : Based on sample survey, 1988.

performed in Assam. 1. Rangali Bihu in the month of Bohag. 2. Kati Bihu in the month of Kati and 3. Magh Bihu or Bhogali Bihu in the month of Magh. They perform all these three types of Bihu.

1. Rangali Bihu starts from the last day of the month of Chat and lasts for the first seven days of the month of Bohag. Before that the Assamese people sing Huchuri in front of the dwellings. The children of the Maria Muslims also take part in this song. They sing Huchuri during the Bihu time also.

On the 1st day of the month of Bohag the Assamese people bath their cattle in the river. The people of this community also bath their cattle. The cattle are bathed by both males and females. Before bathing they smear the body of the cow by Matikalai mixed with Halodhi. At the time of bathing they beat the cattle by Diglati mati loti. There after they offer brinjal, gourd cutting both into pieces and at that times they say :-

"Lau kha Bengena kha
Bachar Bachar Badi ja
Mar Haru Baper Haru
Toi Habi Bar Bar Garu"

The meaning of this poem is that "After eating gourd, brinjal etc. Your (cattle) growth will be more, year after year, and you (cattle) will be a big cow". Then the cattles are allowed to move in the field. In the afternoon the cattle is tied with new Pagha and brought to the cattle shed.

In the evening all the members of the family come and keep the cattle inside the cow-shed. This Bihu is locally known as 'Goru Bihu'.

2. Kati Bihu :- This Bihu is observed by the Assamese cultivators and mainly confined to the rural areas. The Maria Muslims also observe this Bihu. On this day, during day time, those who are cultivators go to the paddy field and see the condition of the production like the Assamese cultivators. During the day time they wash their Bharal with water. In the evening they light Saki and offer home made sweets and fruits on banana leaves in the Bharal ghar. They also place Saki in the agricultural field like Assamese cultivators. This is the worship of fire. In Assamese language this custom is known as Jui Puja. Jui puja is performed to kill the insects which is unhealthy for the crops. For this worship, the other Muslim groups do not take part. This Bihu is also known as 'Kangali Bihu.'
3. Magh Bihu :- Magh Bihu is also known as Bhogali Bihu. The Assamese people prepare home made sweets with Til, gur rice powder etc. The Maria Muslims also prepare home made sweets known as Pitha. They also prepare Jondali Pitha like Assamese people with rice powder, molasses, sesame etc.

During day time they tie the trunk of the fruit trees and the main pillar of the Bharal with a straw-rope and they say that,

"Megh Maha Bale Nazabi

Dal Bhari Bhari Lagibi"

which means that, "cloud should not go. If cloud is there, the rain will be there and the trees will grow fast." Particularly they select the trees of Jack fruits, Mangoes, Betel-nuts etc. It is

believed that if it is not done, the growth of quantity of the fruits will be less. The main pillar of the Bharal is also kept tied with straw-rope, it is believed that Lakhimi is kept inside the Bharal.

Besides all these festivals they also visit Rashlila sometimes and they also donate to this festivals.

5*28 Religion :-

They are Islam by religion. But they do not perform fully the Islamic religious rites. Since they are neither Muslims nor Hindus so the other Muslim groups treat them as outcastes. Though they perform all the Islamic religious functions like Id-UI-Fitre, Id-Uj-Zuha, Muhharam, Bakrid-Id etc. But at the same time they also go to the pandal of Durga-puja to see the idol. In some villages (Pithakhowa, Kakojan, Becheria etc.) the executive members of the Durga-puja committee are also taken from this community. They give subscription for the Durga-puja. In Kalipuja also they fire crackers. Since they are tilting towards the Assamese religion so the Tablique party - an Islamic missionary people preaches Islam among the Marias. The Tabliques don't take food in Maria houses. It may be mentioned that among the Marias only a few observe the Namaz. It is also observed that in Garia Jamat (mosque) if the attendance is sixty then at that time five or six persons attend the Maria Jamat. It shows their lack of interest in Islamic religion. But now Moulouis and other groups of Muslims are trying to raise the attendance in Maria Jamat (mosque) at the time of Namaz.

5*29 Superstitions :-

1. At the time of evening when fire Sakis (earthen lamp) are lit. They do not give anything for example they do not give money,

gold, rice etc. to any outsider. At that time they keep the cattle inside the cow-shed.

2. They do not cut bamboo on Tuesday and Saturday.
3. On the day of the parents death they do not give anything to outsiders. Even they do not do any marketing on this day.
4. The Bharal is closed on the last day of the month of Puh i.e., at the time of Magh Bihu for one month. During this period they do not bring grains from the Bharal. Bharal is opened on the 1st day of month of Fagun. On this day the Bharal is cleaned with water, then they light the Saki and fruits like sugarcane, banana etc. are offered on the banana leaves inside the Bharal and then Hewa is performed. After the completion of the custom they bring the grains like paddy etc. from the Bharal.
5. When anybody has an attack of Pox then on the third day Aisewa is performed. Ai Sewa means Ai means mother or Pox and Sewa means respect that is AiSewa means respect to Pox. On this day the room of the patient and other rooms are cleaned out. In the evening the saki is lighted, incense sticks and fruits like sugarcane, banana etc. are kept on the Aglati Kal Pat. These articles may be kept either in the room of the patient or in other rooms. The elderly women come and sing Aigan in Kneeling position. Young ladies are not allowed to take part in this ritual. At the end one lady shouts that "Ajir Para Hakale Bhal Hoke" means "from to-day all the persons remain free from illness", at that time others also shout "Ajir Para Hakale Bhal Hok". Then the

prashad is offered to the patient and his face is washed by touching it with gold, silver, gakhir and flowers.

6. When a person is attacked with Cholera then they perform Bhat Hewa. One night ten to twelve males become naked in a closed room and keep a small alive chicken in a charia. Then they sing different types of religious songs and after some times (time is not mentioned) they open the Charia, if the chicken still alive, it is believed that the patient will survive and if the chicken dies then the patient won't survive.
7. When a cow is attacked with pox then they perform Gohali Payas or Gohali Hewa. One day the Payas is prepared with rice, milk, sugar etc. either in the cleaned cowshed or outside the cowshed. It is prepared during the day by married females. Widows are not allowed to prepare. The Payas is placed on the front portion of the banana leaf and offered in the cow-shed, saki is lighted and incense sticks are also offered. With this they respect the cow shed to make it free from any disease of the cattle. At that time cow is kept outside the shed. After offering respect to the cowshed Payas is divided into three portions. First portion is kept on the tin ali on a banana leaf. The other two portions are given to the cow.
8. After the birth of the calf they suck the first milk from the cow and throw it into the jungle putting it in a Bhar. It is believed that if it is done then the calf won't drink the milk secretly.
9. They believe in horoscope. Locally the horoscope is known as 'Huoroni'. After the birth of a child they go to a Hindu Ganak

and Huoroni is prepared. They believe in Mangolsowa and for this purpose they go to a Hindu Ganak. When a person becomes seriously ill they go to the Bej to whom the horoscope is shown and they take necessary action according to his instructions and suggestions.

10. They believe in black magic. In the past black magic was very popular. The black magic was practiced either by the people of their own community or by other communities like Kaibarta, Ahom, Mishing etc. They have learnt black magic from these communities. A person named Deka Poali from the community of Tamulishika village of Jorhat district, was expert in practicing black magic. In the interior villages like Bagal, Demoumukh, Mothadang of Sibsagar district, this practice is still prevailing. They believe in Tantra and apply at the time of fever and other diseases. Posirat Ali of Bagal is an expert person in black magic. For this practice of black magic by these people, the people of the urban and semi-urban areas are afraid of making marital relationship with these villagers.

5.30 Economic structure :-

5.31 Occupational structure:-

The occupational composition of a group of population is always influenced by economic, demographic and social factors. The size of the labour force, its distribution into various occupations, sexwise participation in different economic activities and the difference in participation rates by age literacy and residence are fair indices of physical resource base, the system of social organisation and the nature of economy prevailing in a region (Chandana 1980).

Table - 5.17

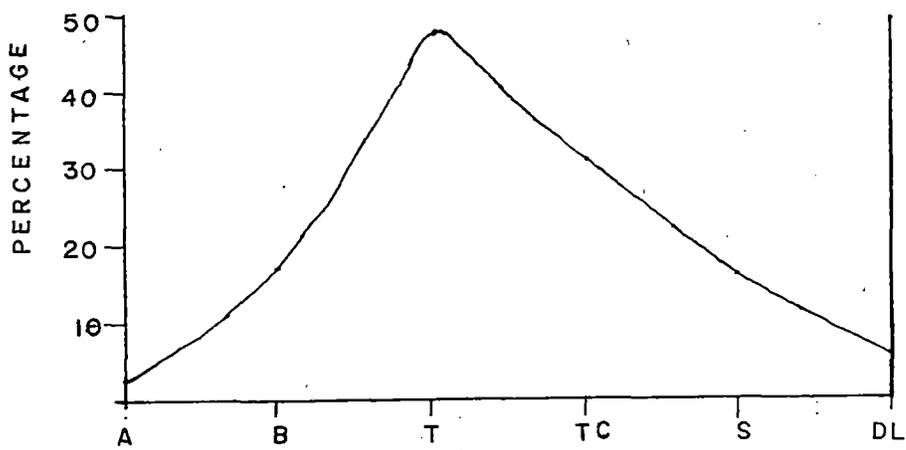
Percentage of the occupational structure of the Maria Muslims.

(Sample Survey), 1988

Name of the villages	Trade and Comm-erce	Brass Indus-try	Service	Workers in								Total	Daily labour	Agri-culture	Total workers
				Pvt. bus driver	Pvt. bus Conductor	Transport A.S.T.C. driver	and Communication A.S.T.C. conduc-tor	Thala-wala	Taxi driver	Truck drivers	Rickshaw puller				
Hajo Islampatti	21 (8.64)	158 (65.02)	31 (12.76)	18 (7.41)	07 (2.88)	01 (0.41)	00 (0.00)	01 (0.41)	00 (0.00)	00 (0.00)	00 (0.00)	27 (11.11)	06 (2.47)	00 (0.00)	243 (31.03)
Malara Islampatti	44 (33.84)	17 (13.08)	19 (14.61)	19 (14.61)	04 (3.08)	02 (1.54)	00 (0.00)	05 (3.85)	00 (0.00)	01 (0.77)	00 (0.00)	31 (23.85)	17 (13.08)	02 (1.54)	130 (26.97)
Islampur (Vevarghat)	102 (58.96)	07 (4.05)	40 (23.12)	01 (0.58)	00 (0.00)	01 (0.58)	01 (0.58)	00 (0.00)	02 (1.15)	04 (2.31)	01 (0.58)	10 (5.78)	08 (4.62)	06 (3.47)	173 (27.37)
Kakojan	101 (50.5)	27 (13.5)	27 (13.5)	15 (7.5)	00 (0.00)	05 (2.5)	00 (0.00)	00 (0.00)	00 (0.00)	00 (0.00)	03 (1.5)	23 (11.5)	09 (4.5)	13 (6.5)	200 (26.56)
Jayantipur	176 (77.53)	06 (2.65)	32 (14.10)	03 (1.32)	00 (0.00)	00 (0.00)	00 (0.00)	00 (0.00)	00 (0.00)	02 (0.88)	00 (0.00)	05 (2.2)	03 (1.32)	05 (2.20)	227 (25.54)
Naobaisya	48 (61.54)	01 (1.28)	08 (10.26)	02 (2.57)	00 (0.00)	01 (1.28)	00 (0.00)	00 (0.00)	05 (6.41)	06 (7.69)	01 (1.28)	15 (19.23)	05 (6.41)	01 (1.28)	78 (27.27)
Langi	54 (73.97)	00 (0.00)	09 (12.33)	00 (0.00)	00 (0.00)	00 (0.00)	00 (0.00)	00 (0.00)	00 (0.00)	00 (0.00)	00 (0.00)	00 (0.00)	05 (6.85)	05 (6.85)	73 (25.44)
Laluka	47 (42.73)	01 (0.91)	31 (28.18)	04 (3.64)	00 (0.00)	00 (0.00)	00 (0.00)	00 (0.00)	05 (4.54)	04 (3.64)	00 (0.00)	13 (11.82)	18 (16.36)	00 (0.00)	110 (18.90)
TOTAL	593 (48.06)	217 (17.59)	197 (15.96)	62 (5.02)	11 (0.89)	10 (0.81)	01 (0.08)	06 (0.49)	12 (0.97)	17 (1.38)	05 (0.41)	124 (10.05)	71 (5.75)	32 (2.59)	1234 (26.09)

The figures in the parentheses indicate the percentage.

Source : Based on sample survey, 1988.

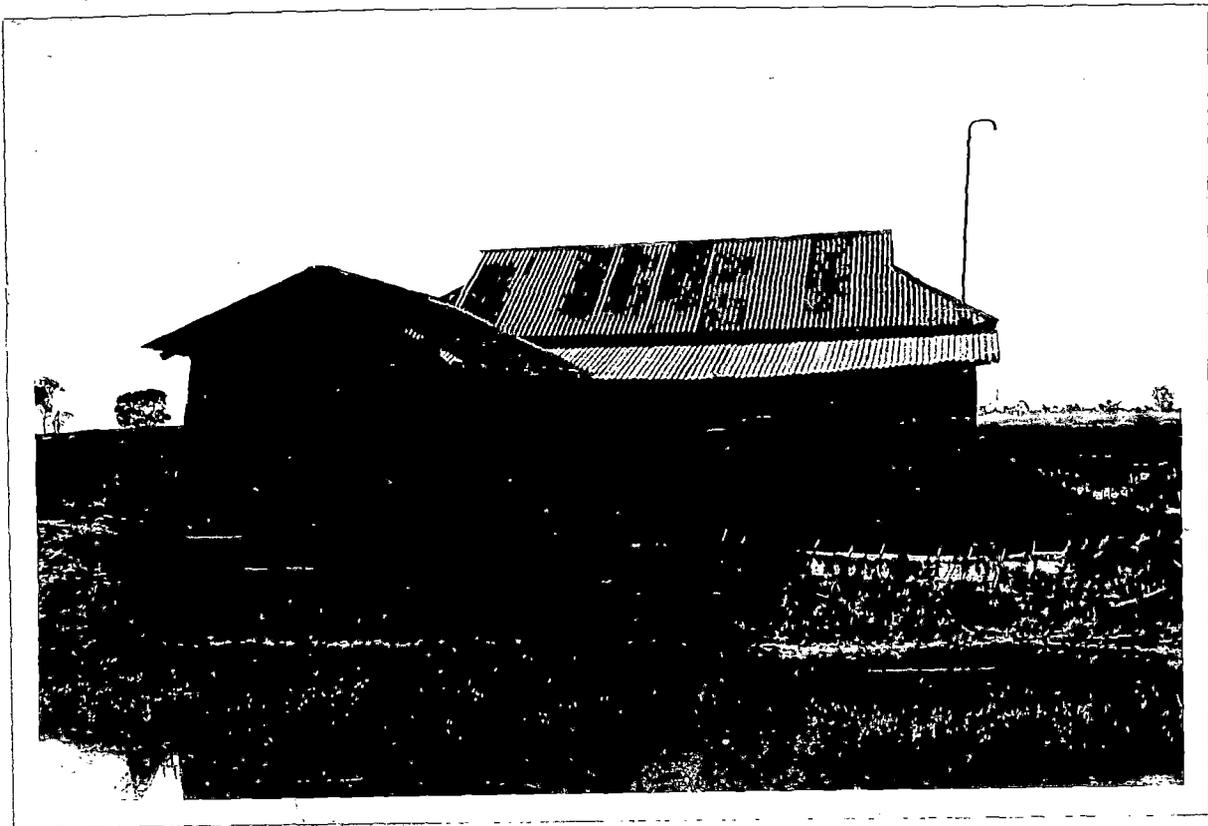


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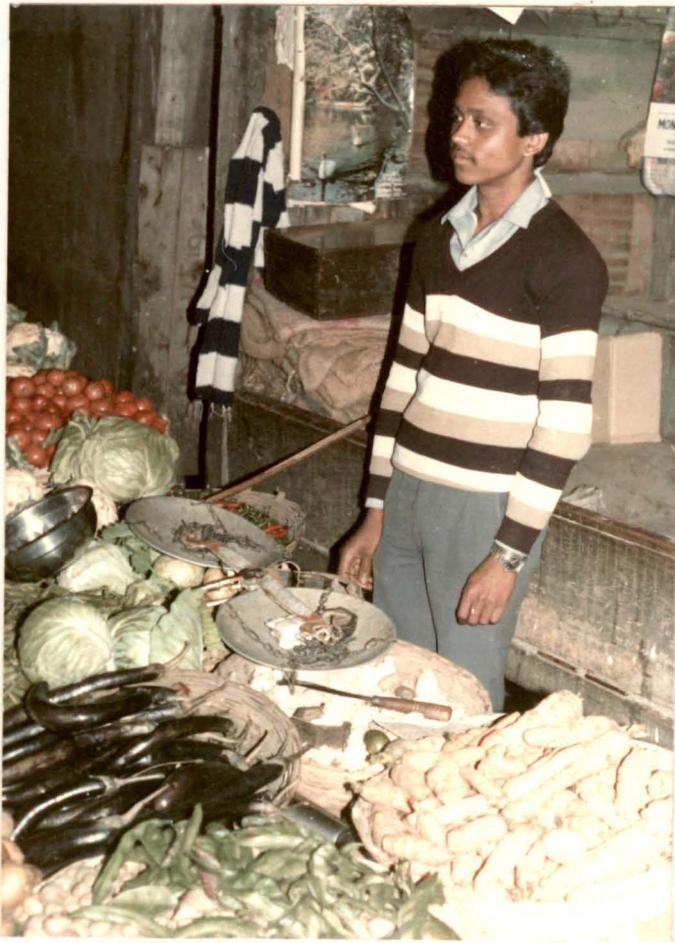
OCCUPATION

- A- Agriculture
- B- Brass industry
- T- Trade and Commerce
- TC- Transport and Communication
- S- Service
- DL- Daily Labour

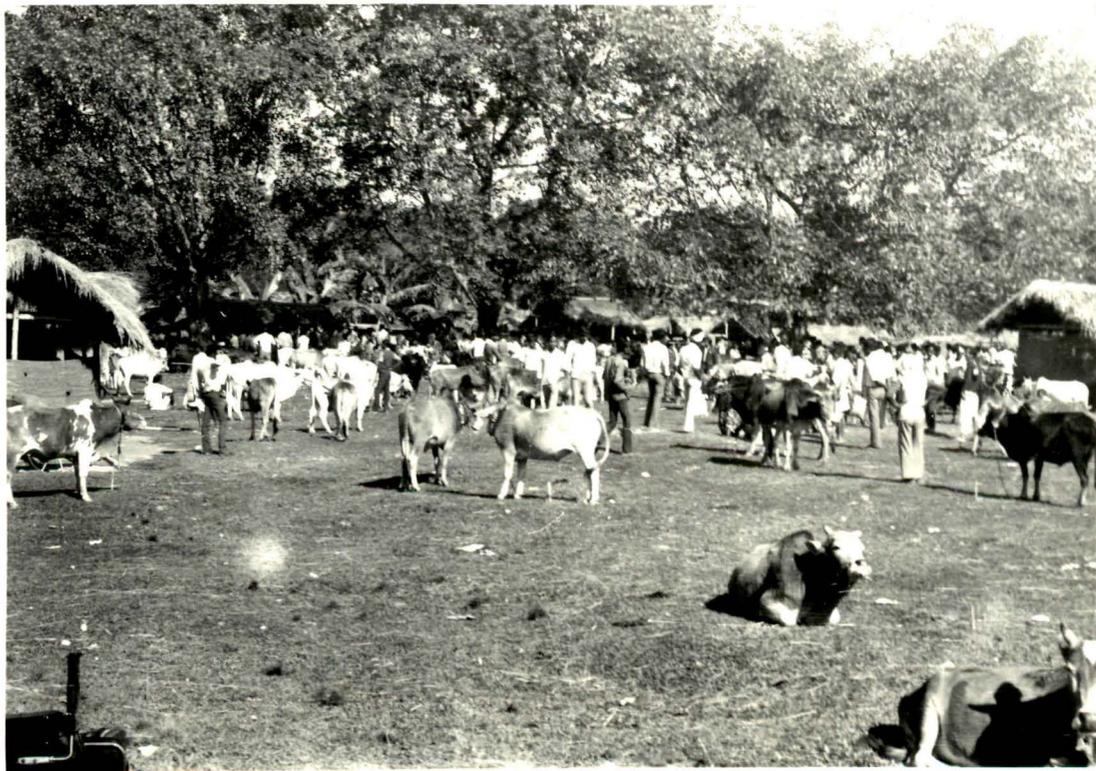
FIG-21 OCCUPATIONAL STRUCTURE



Dilapidated Mosque in Neemati Ghat.



Vegetable Shop.



Rural market.

The occupational structure of the Maria Muslim population has been studied on the basis of the survey made in the study area. It is found that the percentage of the Maria Muslim workers (26.09) is less in comparison with that of the state (28.35) for the total general population (Table 5.17). It is mainly due to the high number of non-working dependants (73.91 percent) particularly females (95.13 percent) among the Maria Muslims. Thus 45.11 percentage of males and 4.87 percentage of females have to feed 54.89 percentage of males and 95.13 percentage of females among them.

The Maria Muslims are the brass utensil makers. From the time of Ahom Kings they took up making brasswares as their primary occupation. But at present it is observed from the table 5*17, that out of the total (26.09 percentage) workers 48.06 percent of population are engaged in Trade and Commerce, followed by Brass Industry (17.59 percent), service (15.96 percent), Transport and Communication (10.05 percent), Daily wage labour (5.75 percent), and Agriculture (2.59 percent) for their livelihood.

5*32 Trade and commerce:-

Village wise analysis gives the inner view of their occupational structure. From the table it has been observed that engagement in trade and commerce is highest in Jayantipur village (77.53 percent) and Langi village (73.97 percent) of Nowgong district. These two villages are well communicated with Nowgong town and Tezpur town of Sonitpur district. Nowgong town is one of the important business centres of the Brahmaputra Valley. These two villages are situated thirty kilometers away from Nowgong town and fourteen kilometers away from Tezpur town - another business centre of the valley. People of these two villages do the business of

bamboo, wood, contract, big and small stationery and grocery shops. They supply wood, and bamboo to Nowgong and Tezpur towns. The purchasers are Marwari, Assamese Hindu caste groups, and Garia Muslims also. They sell out bamboo at the rate of Rs.30.00 to Rs.40.00 per bamboo (Jati variety mainly). Matured trees are sold at the rate of Rs.200.00 to Rs.500.00 per tree according to variety. The trees are sold for making furniture. The costliest trees are Honar and Maz. Other varieties are Himula, Dimuru, Veleu and Chatiang. Some of them are the owners of shops also. Shops are found in their locality in Nowgong and Tezpur towns. Contractors are found mainly in urban areas. They are mainly engaged in house construction, culverts etc. They get the contract either from the private party or from the state Govt.

In Naobaisya and Kakojan the two villages of Jorhat district, their percentage in trade and commerce is 61.54 and 50.5 respectively. Naobaisya is situated twelve kilometers away from Jorhat town. The people who are engaged in business are mainly attached to the Jorhat town. Regular bus service is there. Majority of them are the owners of big and small stationery and grocery shops. Some of them purchase stationery items from Calcutta also. But grocery items like rice, pulses, mustard oil etc. are purchased from the local Marwari business men. A few of them are engaged in contract jobs. They construct small private houses of local people like Assamese Hindu, Garia Muslims etc. and are also engaged in Govt. work.

The people of Kakojan (18 kms. from Jorhat town) village are mainly engaged in cow and buffalo business. They purchase cows and buffalo from Nishi and Nath community of Majuli (largest riverine Island)

island. Majuli is 25 kms. away from this village. They bring the cattle upto Neemati Ghat by Ferry from Majuli island. Majuli island is very fertile for the growing of cattle grass, where local people like Nishi and Nath keep the cattle for business. They bring the cattle from Neemati Ghat to Kakojan on foot. After that they sell them in Nagaland - 30 kms. away from the village. Naga people like the flesh of these cattle. They keep the profit of Rs.500/- to Rs.1000/- per cow or buffalo. They have direct business contact with the people.

(Islampur) Vevarghat - a village of Darrang district where 58.96 percent people are engaged in Trade. This village is three kms. away from Mangaldoi - a district head quarter of the Darrang district. They are mainly shop keepers either grocery or stationery. They purchase stationery articles from Gauhati, from the Marwaris, but some of them purchase from Calcutta also.

Laluka - a village of Dibrugarh district, situated 3 kms. away from Dibrugarh town, and well communicated by road transport. Only 42.73 percent of the people are engaged in trade and commerce. Their main business centre is Dibrugarh. They are engaged as contractors, shop keepers etc. The people who are engaged in contract jobs, do the Govt. as well as private works. They get the order from the Assam Govt. and private parties like the construction of school building, small hotels, private houses etc. from Assamese Hindu caste, Bengali, Marwaris, Behari etc. Their work is mainly concentrated in Dibrugarh town. A few of them are owners of private buses which run between Gauhati and Dibrugarh as night service. Truck owners are also seen among them. The shop keepers

are concentrated in Dibrugarh town and in Dibrugarh University area. They purchase stationery articles from Gauhati, Nowgong and Calcutta. A few of them have automobiles parts shop. They purchase automobiles parts from Calcutta.

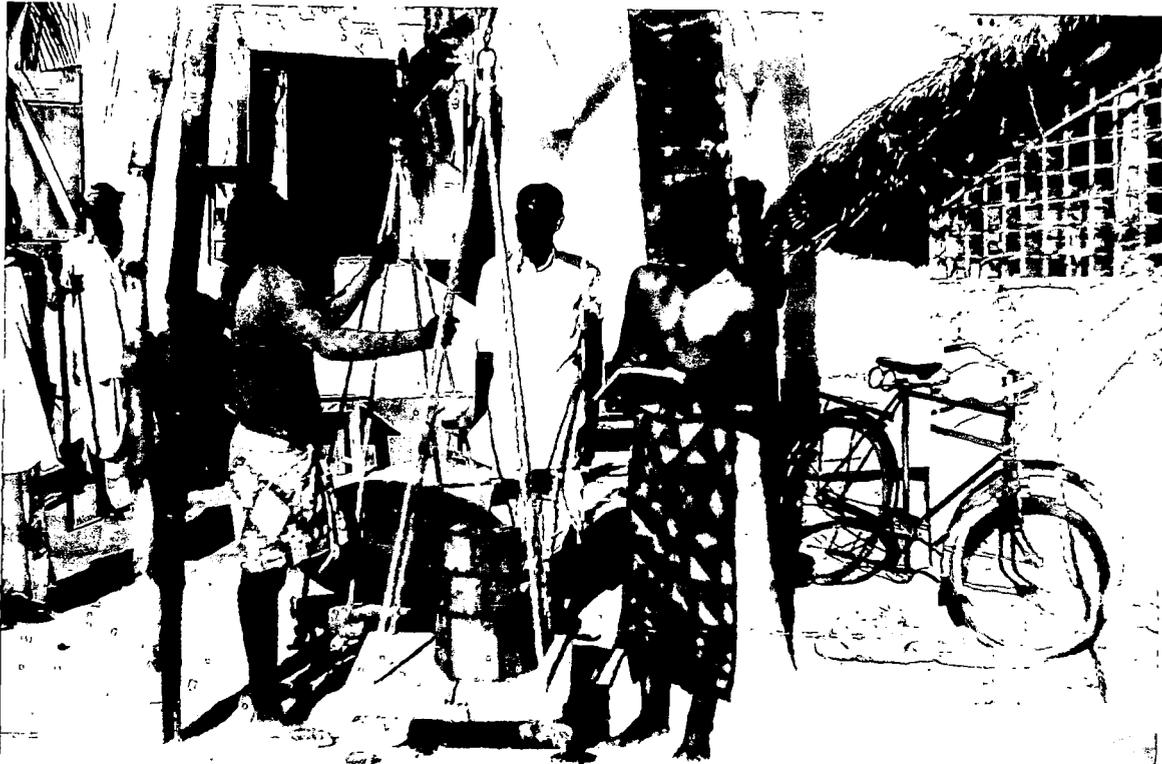
In Malara Islampatty - a village of Kamrup district, situated 30 kms. away from Gauhati, only 33.84 percent of people are engaged in trade. The villagers are very poor. They run petty business. They are mainly engaged in mobile business selling stationery articles in other villages of Kalita, Nath, Garia Muslims etc. A very few of them have their own shop of stationery or grocery. Engagements in Trade and commerce is found lowest (8.64 percent) in Hajo of the Kamrup districts. This is because almost all the families are engaged in brass industry. But only 8.64 percent people are engaged in brass utensils shop within the village or in Hajo town. They sell the machine and hand made brass utensils. They purchase machine-made brass utensils from the factories in Gauhati. Factories are mostly run by the Marawaris. Gauhati is situated 24 kms. away from Hajo and well connected by transport. A few of them are the owners of stationery and grocery shops in Hajo town - half km. away from the village. They purchase stationery and grocery articles from the Marawaris of Gauhati.

5:33 Brass and allied industries :-

Trade and commerce is followed by brass industry and allied business. Only 17.59 percentage of people are engaged in brass industry, blacksmith, goldsmithy etc.



Engaged in Stationery shop.



Engaged in business enterprise.



Rearing buffalo.



Making the cane products.

They are basically braziers. But at present the demand of hand made brass utensils has fallen down due to :- 1) popularity of machine-made brass utensils. 2) high rate of raw materials 3) tendency of the common people to purchase utensils of stainless steel and plastic. Another factor is that, after the partition of Bengal in 1947, the communication with Dacca the capital of Bengal had stopped. As a result the market of Dacca has closed suddenly, where the brass-made articles were used to be exported from this region. As a result the brass industry got a severe set back. Hence after Independence the demand of brass articles has gradually fallen.

1. At present two brass industries are found in Gauhati (a) Chiatiya Metal Industries and (b) Ambari Cheraugi Metal Industries. Where skilled artisans are engaged in the making of brass utensils, with this machine-made products, the hand made products cannot compete in the market. Though the hand made utensils are more heavy and durable than the machine-made products. But since the machine-made products are cheaper the common people purchase them. As a result the public demand is tilting towards the machine-made products. 2) High rate of raw brass metal which they cannot afford. They purchase raw brass metal from Gauhati, Jorhat and Dibrugarh from the Marawaris (merchants) at the rate of Rs.70.00 to Rs.75.00 per kg. But after making the finished product they keep only a marginal profit (Table 5.18). The rate of various products are mentioned below :-

Table 5.18

Name of the articles, weight and sell price.

Name of the articles	Weight	Sell Price(Per Kg.)
1. <u>Kalash</u> (Water pitcher)	1 kg. to 2 1/2kg.	80/- to 85/-
2. <u>Lota</u> (Small water pot)	1/2 kg. to 3/4 kg.	25/- to 30/- per piece.
3. <u>Charia</u> (Name of the utensils).	1 kg. to 2 kg.	80/-
4. <u>Harai</u> (")	1/2 kg. to 5 kg.	120/-
5. <u>Hata</u> (")	250 gm.	40/- to 45/- per piece.
6. <u>Dunari</u> (")	1 and 1/2kg.	300/- to 350/-
7. <u>Doba</u> (")	8 kg. to 10 kg.	100/-

Source : Data collected from field survey , 1988.

So, at present the brass industry business is not profitable. The owner of the industry also keep skilled and unskilled labour.(Table 5.19). The wage rate of the skilled and unskilled labour is mentioned below :-

Table 5.19

Wage rate of workers	
Category of workers	Rate
Skilled	20.00 with lunch.
Unskilled	10.00 with lunch.

Moreover, they are not getting bank-loan for brass industry. Though there is a provision for giving them loan by the bank. The loan rate is Rs.6000/- per head. But in the year 1987 in Hajo only 45 persons got this loan. Rs.3000/- subsidy is also given. The remaining amount is returned along with 11 (eleven) percent interest. But the other villages do not get this type of loan.

3) Common people to-day prefer the utensils of stainless steel and plastic, because these are cheaper than brass utensils.

From the table it is observed that 65.2 percent of people of Hajo Islampatty of Kamrup district are engaged in brass and allied industries followed by Kakojan (13.5 percent) of Jorhat district, Malara Islampatty (13.08 percent) of Kamrup district, Vevarghat (4.05 percent) of Mangaldai district, Jayantipur (2.65 percent) of Nowgong district, Naobaisya (1.28 percent) of Jorhat district, Laluka (0.91 percent) of Dibrugarh district, and none in Langi village of Nowgong district.

5.34 Services:-

Brass and allied industries is followed by service. Of the total workforce 15.96 percent are engaged in service. People of villages adjacent to the urban areas are engaged in service in local factories, Govt. and private farms etc. Since higher education is not seen among this community very few of them are found to be engaged in service in the higher category. From the table it is observed that in Laluka 28.18 percent of people are engaged in service. This village is in close proximity of Dibrugarh town, followed by Islampur (Vevarghat)(23.12) and also in close proximity of the Mangaldai town, followed by Malara Islampatti (14.61), Jayantipur



Brass utensils in the making.



Finished brass utensil.



Finished brass utensils.

(14.10), Kakojan (13.5), Hajo Islampatti (12.76), Langi (12.33) and Naobaisya (10.26).

5.35 Transport and communication :-

Service is followed by Transport and communication. Of the total workforce 10.05 percent people are engaged in Transport and communication. Out of this 10.05 percent, are engaged 5.02 percent as public bus drivers, 0.89 percent are engaged as public bus conductors, 0.81 percent are engaged in Assam State Transport Corporation as drivers, 0.08 percent are engaged as conductors, 0.49 percent are engaged as Thelawala, 0.97 percent are engaged as Taxi drivers, 1.38 percent are engaged as Truck drivers and 0.41 percent are engaged as Rickshaw pullers.

From the table it is observed that, in Transport and communication 23.85 percent people are engaged in Malara Islampatty of Kamrup district, 19.23 percent people are engaged in Naobaisya village of Jorhat district, 11.85 percent people are engaged in Laluka village of Dibrugarh district, 11.5 percent people are engaged in Kakojan village of Jorhat district, 5.78 percent people are engaged in Vevarghat of Darrang district, 2.2 percent people are engaged in Jayantipur village and none in Langi village of Nowgong district.

5.36 Daily labour and Agriculture :-

Transport and communication is followed by daily labour. Of the total number of workers 5.75 percent are earning their livelihood on daily wage basis. The people are engaged in agricultural field at the time of sowing and harvesting of the land of Garia Muslims and Assamese Hindu

caste groups, construction of houses either in the village or in the towns, in brass industry, in road construction etc.

The total number of daily wage earners 16.36 percent labour are from Laluka of Dibrugarh district. This village is in close proximity of the Dibrugarh town. They are absorbed in the town area in various jobs. 13.08 percent people are engaged in Malara Islampatty of Kamrup district. Economically these villages are very backward. Moreover, the village is not well connected with Gauhati. so, majority of them are doing daily labour work in the agricultural fields of Garia Muslims, and Assamese Hindu caste. 6.85 percent people are engaged in Langi village of Nowgong district, 6.41 percent people are engaged in Naobaisya village of Jorhat district, 4.62 percent people are engaged in Vevarghat of Darrang district, 4.5 percent people are engaged in Kakojan village of Jorhat district, 2.47 percent people are engaged in Hajo Islampatty of Kamrup district and 1.32 percent people are engaged in Jayantipur village of Nowgong district.

Of the total number of workers only 2.59 percent people are engaged in agriculture. This community is mainly landless but some of them have agricultural lands which they use either for self consumption or for 'commercial purposes'. But average land holding per family is not encouraging. But some of them do cultivation on Adhi system in the agricultural field of Garia Muslims and Assamese Hindu caste group. 'Adhi' system means after the production in the field the crops are divided into two portions. One portion is for the owner of the land and the other for the cultivator. In this case the expenditure for cultivation is borne by the owner of the land.

From the table (5.17) it is observed that 6.5 percent people of Kakojan village of Jorhat district are engaged in agriculture. The average land holding per family of this village is 3.16 bigha(**measurement of land**). 6.85 percent people of Langi village of Nowgong district are engaged in agriculture, the average land holding per family is 1.17 bigha. 3.47 people are engaged in Vevarghat of Darrang district and the average land holding per family is 1.40 bigha. In Jayantipur village 2.20 percent people are engaged in agriculture and the average land holding per family is 0.47 bigha. In Naobaisya village of Jorhat district only 1.28 percent people are engaged in agriculture and the land holding capacity per family is 1.31 bigha. 1.54 percent people are engaged in Malara Islampatty of Kamrup district and the average land holding per family is 0.58 bigha. ~~Islampatty~~ Cultivators are totally absent in Hajo Islampatty of Kamrup district and Laluka of Dibrugarh district. Average land holding per family is 0.30 bigha and 1.18 bigha respectively. The land of these two villages are cultivated only for self consumption.

On the basis of the sample survey, when the percentage of the occupational structure of the rural areas is compared with the urban areas it shows that the percentage of workers is significantly high (71.39) (Table 5.20) in rural areas as compared with the percentage of workers (28.61) in urban areas. It is mainly due to the high literacy rate (72.20) of the people of the rural areas. From the table it is also observed that, 59.59 percent of rural people are engaged in trade and commerce as compared with the percentage (28.61) of the people of urban area. This is mainly due to the fact that the big business men go to the village and purchase the articles like bamboo, cane, wood etc. from them. They collect it from nearby villages. In some rural areas the people do the

business of cows and buffaloes which they purchase from other villages and sell it to the urban centres. As for example - the people of Kakojan village purchase cows and buffaloes from Nishi and Nath community of Majuli (largest riverine island) island and sell them in Nagaland. It happens due to the good transport facility. Moreover, the villagers who are owners of big and small shops, they keep them in urban centres and live in rural areas. So, the trade and commerce is significantly high in rural areas. On the other hand, 45.04 percent of urban workers are engaged in brass industry which is significantly high when it is compared with the percentage (6.58) of rural workers. It is mainly due to the fact that, the raw materials for brass industry are easily available in the urban area, which they purchase from the Marawaris and the finished products are sold either to the Marawaris or to other shops. So, the percentage of workers in brass industry is significantly high in urban areas. In urban areas the cultivators are practically nil, it is mainly due to the non-availability of cultivable land in urban areas.

Table 5.20

Rural-urban composition of the percentage of the occupational structure of the Maria Muslims. (Sample Survey), 1988.

	Trade and commerce	Brass Industry	Service	Transport and co- mmunication	Daily Labour	Agri- culture	Total Workers.
Total	593 (48.06)	217 (17.59)	197 (15.96)	124 (10.05)	71 (5.75)	32 (2.59)	1234 (26.09)
Rural	525 (59.59)	58 (6.58)	135 (15.32)	84 (9.53)	47 (5.33)	32 (3.63)	881 (71.39)
Urban	68 (19.26)	159 (45.04)	62 (17.56)	40 (11.33)	24 (6.80)	00 (0.00)	353 (28.61)

Source : Based on Sample survey , 1988.

5.37: Occupational distinctiveness :-

To determine the occupational distinctiveness the data of occupations have been collected from eight sampled villages. The workers have been divided into six types viz, Trade and Commerce (T), Brass Industry(B), Services (S), Transport and communication (TC), Daily labour (DL) and Agriculture (A).

According to Betal (1972), the mean (\bar{x}). and standard deviation(σ) for the selected occupations have been calculated to determine the occupational distinctiveness.

Table 5.21

Degree of distinctiveness

Occupations	\bar{x}	σ	$\bar{x} + \sigma$	$\bar{x} - \sigma$	$\bar{x} + 2\sigma$	$\bar{x} - 2\sigma$	$\bar{x} + 3\sigma$	$\bar{x} - 3\sigma$
T	74.13	46.68	120.81	27.45	167.49	-19.23	214.17	-65.91
B	27.13	50.23	77.36	-23.1	127.59	-73.33	177.82	-123.56
S	24.63	10.78	35.41	13.85	46.19	3.07	56.97	-7.71
TC	15.5	10.09	25.59	5.41	35.68	-4.68	45.77	-14.77
DL	8.88	5.28	14.16	3.6	19.44	-1.68	24.72	-6.96
A	4.00	4.06	8.06	-0.06	12.12	-4.12	16.18	-8.18

From the table (5.21) it is revealed that, trade and commerce is predominant in Jayantipur village of Nowgong district followed by Langi village of Nowgong district, followed by Naobaisya village of Jorhat district and Islampur (Vevarghat) of Darrang district.

Brass industry is highly specialised in Hajo, of Kamrup district followed by Kakojan of Jorhat district and Malara of Kamrup.

Service is predominant in Laluka of Dibrugarh district, followed by Islampur of Darrang district.

Workers in Transport and communication are found in Malara Islampatty of Kamrup district, followed by Naobaisya village of Jorhat district, Laluka of Dibrugarh district, Hajo Islampatty of Kamrup district and Kakojan village of Jorhat district. Daily Labour is found in Laluka of Dibrugarh district, followed by Malara Islampatty of Kamrup district, Langi village of Nowgong district and Naobaisya of Jorhat district.

Agricultural workers are found in three villages. Langi village of Nowgong district is followed by Kakojan village of Jorhat district followed by Islampur (Vevarghat) of Darrang district.

It may be mentioned from the above discussion that the diverse occupation is seen among the Maria Muslims in almost all the districts. At present they are not engaged in any fixed occupation. Their occupations depend on the location, ecological settings and the socio-environmental influence.

The test of homogeneity shows χ^2 value = 698.46 which is highly significant at 0.1 percent of probability, thereby suggesting that the villages differ from each other in respect of occupational pattern.

5.38 Income and Expenditure pattern:-

It has been already mentioned that 26.09 percent of Maria Muslim

workers have to feed 73.91 percent of non-earning dependants. It has also been mentioned that though their primary occupation was brass industry since the time of the Ahom kings but at present occupational diversification is seen among the Maria Muslims. In trade and commerce out of the total number of workers 48.06 percentage of people are engaged, the rest (51.94 percent) are engaged in transport and communication, services, daily wage labour, brass industry and in agriculture.

The Sample survey (Table - 5.22) also shows that the monthly average income per Maria Muslim household is Rs.851.47 in the study area. The monthly per capita income is found to be Rs.137.33 for the Maria Muslim population as against Rs.546.00 for general population of the state. The villagewise analysis on the basis of the sample survey, shows that per capita income is the highest (Rs.186.59) in Jayantipur village of Nowgong district and the lowest in Vevarghat (Rs.105.46) of Darrang district. Jayantipur village is situated by the side of Assam Trunk (NH37) Road, where good transport facility is available. This village is situated thirty kilometers away from Nowgong town of the Nowgong district and fourteen kilometers away from Tezpur town of the Sonitpur district, and are well communicated by Govt. bus, mini bus etc. These two towns are important business centres and also have other industries like printing press, ice manufacturing, distilleries, electric light and power, and miscellaneous repair works, where a good number of workers are engaged. On the other hand 77.53 percent of people are engaged in trade and commerce due to the availability of transport facility to the business centres like Nowgong town and Tezpur town. The lowest per capita income in (Islampur) Vevarghat is mainly due to non-availability of transport

Table 5.22

Monthly Per Capita Income of Maria Muslim Population.

(Sample Survey), 1988.

Name of the villages.	Number of households.	Total No. of persons.	Average family members per household.	Average monthly income per household (in rupee).	Monthly Per Capita income(in rupee).
Hajo Islampatti	141	783	5.5	742.49	134.99
(Islampur)	84	632	7.5	790.97	105.46
Vevarghat					
Laluka	96	582	6.06	861.32	142.13
Langi	59	287	4.86	800.71	164.76
Naobaisya	54	286	5.3	623.46	117.63
Jayantipur	146	925	6.34	1183.00	186.59
Kakojan	96	753	7.84	846.91	108.02
Malara-Islampatti.	93	482	5.18	709.98	137.06
TOTAL	769	4730	6.2	851.47	137.33

Source : Based on Sample Survey, 1988.

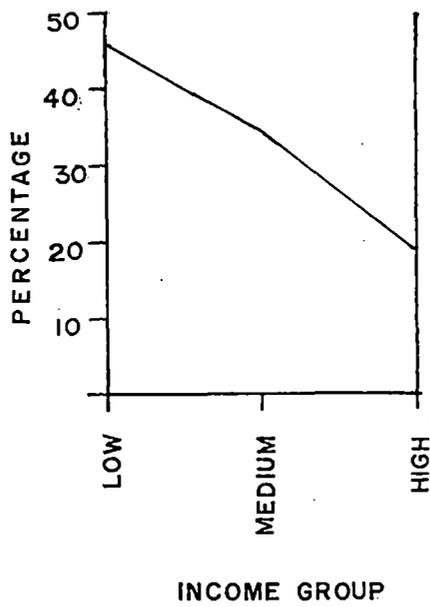


FIG-22: PER MONTH FAMILY INCOME

facility to the nearby urban centre - Mangaldai. Moreover, Mangaldai town of the Darrang district is underdeveloped where ample scope for employment is not available.

On the other hand when the monthly per capita income of the urban areas and the rural areas are compared on the basis of sample survey it shows that, per capita monthly income of the rural area is Rs.138.79 and that of the urban area is Rs.137.26, which is almost equal (Table 5.23). This is mainly due to the availability of transport, metalled road, facility and literacy. The people of the rural areas can very easily reach the urban areas where petty jobs and business facilities are available. It has also been observed at the time of field work that some of the villagers have their own stationery and grocery shops in the nearby urban centre but they live in the village. In the morning they go to the urban centre for trade and at night they return to the village, either by public bus or by cycle, scooter etc.

However, the income pattern of the Maria Muslims varies from one village to another. On the basis of the sample survey their economic status can be classified into four distinct groups. These are as follows

1. High income group upto Rs.1200 per month per household.
2. Medium income group upto Rs.600 ~~per household~~ to Rs.1200 per month per household.
3. Low income group upto Rs.600 per month per household.
4. Unknown income group . Per household income is very low and hence negligible.

Table 5.23

Rural-Urban composition of Monthly Per Capita Income
of Maria Muslim population, 1988. (in rupee)

(Sample Survey)

	Number of households	Total No. of persons.	Average family members per household.	Average monthly income per house- hold (in rupee).	Monthly per Capita income
Total	769	4730	6.2	851.47	137.33
Rural	532	3365	6.33	878.57	138.79
Urban	237	1365	5.76	790.62	137.26

Source : Based on sample survey, 1988.

Table 5.24

Percentage of Maria Muslim Households in Different
Income Group (in Rupees). 1988.

(Sample Survey)

Name of the villages	Unknown	Low upto 600	Medium 600-1200	High 1200+	Total no. of households.
Hajo Islam- patti.	06 (4.26)	46 (32.62)	74 (52.48)	15 (10.64)	141
Malara Islampatti	13 (13.98)	55 (59.14)	20 (21.50)	05 (5.38)	93
Islampur (Vevarghat)	03 (3.57)	42 (50.00)	24 (28.57)	15 (17.86)	84
Jayantipur	04 (2.74)	74 (50.68)	23 (15.76)	45 (30.82)	146
Langi	02 (3.39)	21 (35.60)	25 (42.37)	11 (18.64)	59
Naobaisya	05 (9.26)	25 (46.29)	20 (37.04)	04 (7.41)	54
Kakojan	0 (0.00)	19 (19.59)	53 (54.64)	25 (25.77)	97
Laluka	0 (0.00)	40 (43.48)	26 (28.26)	26 (28.26)	92
Total	33 (4.31)	322 (42.04)	265 (34.59)	146 (19.06)	766

Source : Based on sample survey, 1988. Figures in the parentheses indicate the percentage.

To determine the income per household of the Maria Muslims 766 households have been taken into consideration. The percentage of households (59.14)(Table 5.24) having an income of less than Rs.600.00 and the percentage of households (13.98) having a low income which is not considerable as only 5.38 percent of households are in the higher income group(Rs.1200+) in Malara Islampatti of Kamrup district. The reason behind this is mainly due to the bad transport communication, low literacy (50.41 percent) rate among the intensive studied villages. This village is situated at a distance of thirty kilometers from Gauhati, but bus service is very irregular. The nearby village bus stop is connected by three kilometers of unmetalled road with the village, for all these reasons the percentage of the higher income group is found to be less. On the other hand, higher percentage (30.82) in the higher income group is found in Jayantipur village. It has been discussed previously that this village is having a good communication system and well connected with business centres and a high literacy (74.70 percent) rate. For this reason the percentage of the higher income group is found to be more, compared with other villages.

When the income pattern of the rural areas and urban areas is compared, it shows that in the rural areas the percentage of households (44.28) having an income (Table 5.25) of less than Rs.600 is higher than the percentage of households (36.91) having an income less than Rs.600.00 in urban area. In the higher income group (Rs.1200+) also the percentage of households (19.69) in rural areas is higher than the percentage of households (17.59) in the urban areas. This is mainly due to the high rural literacy (72.20) rate and good communication with the urban areas.

Table 5.25

Rural Urban composition of the percentage of Maria Muslim Households
in Different Income Group (in Rupees), 1988

(Sample Survey)

	Unknown	Low upto 600	Medium upto 600-1200	High 1200 +	Total no. of House holds
Total	33 (4.31)	322 (42.04)	265 (34.59)	146 (19.06)	766
Rural	27 (5.07)	236 (44.28)	165 (30.96)	105 (19.69)	533 (69.58)
Urban	06 (2.58)	86 (36.91)	100 (42.92)	41 (17.59)	233 (30.42)

Source : Based on Sample Survey, 1988

Figures in the parentheses indicate the percentage

Table 5.26

Average Per Household and Per Capita Monthly Expenditure of the Maria Muslims Population
for Different Consumption Items, 1988 (in Rupees)

(Sample Survey)

Village/ Items	Hajo Islampatti		Malara		Islampur (Vevarghat)		Jayantipur		Langi		Naobaisya		Kakojan		Laluka		Total	
	H.H.	Captia	H.H.	Captia	H.H.	Captia	H.H.	Captia	H.H.	Captia	H.H.	Captia	H.H.	Captia	H.H.	Captia	H.H.	Captia
Food Staff	475.00 (63.96)	86.36	483.91 (67.11)	93.42	564.83 (71.08)	75.31	590.33 (64.30)	93.11	570.90 (71.69)	117.47	460.90 (73.16)	86.96	575.60 (69.68)	73.42	557.10 (64.19)	91.93	534.82 (67.95)	86.26
Cloth	78.33 (10.55)	14.24	75.80 (10.51)	14.63	70.00 (8.81)	9.33	80.45 (8.76)	12.69	70.00 (8.79)	14.40	50.75 (8.06)	9.58	85.91 (10.39)	10.96	99.48 (12.46)	16.42	76.34 (9.70)	12.31
Luxury	10.50 (1.41)	1.91	5.00 (0.69)	0.97	4.90 (0.62)	0.65	11.20 (1.22)	1.77	3.60 (0.45)	0.74	3.10 (0.49)	0.58	4.60 (0.55)	0.59	12.92 (1.49)	2.13	6.98 (0.89)	1.13
Education	40.60 (5.47)	7.38	32.43 (4.50)	6.26	31.80 (4.00)	4.24	50.30 (5.48)	7.93	35.45 (4.45)	7.29	20.65 (3.28)	3.90	35.10 (4.25)	4.48	37.28 (4.30)	6.15	35.45 (4.50)	5.72
Medicine	35.40 (4.77)	6.44	28.82 (4.00)	5.56	25.75 (3.24)	3.43	30.85 (3.36)	4.87	24.90 (3.13)	5.12	20.40 (3.24)	3.85	29.30 (3.55)	3.74	40.91 (4.71)	6.75	29.54 (3.75)	4.76
Fairs and Festivals	21.20 (2.86)	3.85	15.90 (2.21)	3.07	16.30 (2.05)	2.17	21.20 (2.31)	3.34	16.40 (2.06)	3.37	10.80 (1.71)	2.04	15.25 (1.85)	1.94	26.70 (3.08)	4.41	17.97 (2.28)	2.90
Recreation	15.25 (2.05)	2.77	8.40 (1.16)	1.62	6.45 (0.81)	0.86	12.30 (1.34)	1.94	5.80 (0.73)	1.19	5.65 (0.90)	1.07	5.80 (0.70)	0.74	17.22 (1.98)	2.84	9.61 (1.22)	1.55
Transport	35.82 (4.82)	6.51	34.83 (4.83)	6.72	41.00 (5.16)	5.47	50.80 (5.53)	8.01	40.20 (5.05)	8.27	30.45 (4.83)	5.74	41.75 (5.05)	5.32	41.26 (4.75)	6.81	39.51 (5.02)	6.37
House- construction	30.50 (4.11)	5.55	35.96 (4.99)	6.94	33.65 (4.23)	4.49	70.65 (7.70)	11.14	29.10 (3.65)	5.99	27.30 (4.33)	5.15	32.85 (3.98)	4.19	35.09 (4.04)	5.79	36.89 (4.69)	5.95
Total Expenditure	742.60	135.01	721.05	139.19	794.68	105.95	918.08	144.80	796.35	163.84	630.00	118.87	826.16	105.38	867.96	143.23	787.11	126.95

Source : Based on sample survey, 1988

The figures in the parentheses indicate the percentage of expenditure of different items
of consumption to total expenditure

Table - 5.27

Rural Urban Average per Household and per capita monthly expenditure of the Maria Muslims Population for different consumption Items, 1988 (Sample Survey)
(in Rupees)

Items	Food stuff		Cloth		Luxury		Education		Medicine		Fairs & Festivals		Rēcreation		Transport		House Construction		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	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
Total	534.82 (67.95)	86.26	76.34 (9.70)	12.31	6.98 (0.89)	1.13	35.45 (4.50)	5.72	29.54 (3.75)	4.76	17.97 (2.28)	2.90	9.61 (1.22)	1.55	39.51 (5.02)	6.37	36.89 (4.69)	5.95	737.11	126.95
Rural	445.15 (64.97)	85.48	72.15 (10.53)	11.39	05.4 (0.79)	0.85	34.29 (5.00)	5.41	26.67 (3.89)	4.21	15.98 (2.33)	2.52	07.4 (1.08)	1.17	39.84 (5.82)	6.29	38.25 (5.58)	6.04	685.13	108.24
Urban	516.05 (64.08)	89.59	88.91 (11.04)	15.44	11.71 (1.45)	2.03	38.94 (4.84)	6.76	38.16 (4.74)	6.62	23.95 (2.97)	4.16	16.24 (2.02)	2.82	38.54 (4.79)	6.69	32.79 (4.07)	5.69	805.29	139.81

The figures in the parentheses indicate the percentage of rural-urban composition of different items of consumption to total expenditure.

Source : Based on sample survey, 1988.

The test of homogeneity shows Chi^2 value = 71.28 which is highly significant at 0.1 percent probability, thereby suggesting that the villages differ from each other in respect of per family income.

From the survey it is revealed that an average monthly expenditure per Maria Muslim household is Rs.781.11 (Table 5.26) as against an income of Rs.851.47. Further per capita monthly expenditure of Maria Muslim is Rs.126.95, while the per capita monthly income is Rs.137.33. Though it shows a small surplus budget but only 19.06 percent of the Maria Muslim people belong to the high income group, 34.59 percent belong to middle income group but the majority (46.35) are below the minimum income level. Thus, the average per capita income and expenditure does not indicate the general level of the standard of living. So, the average budget of these families is always a deficit one.

It is also found from the survey that the common items for consumption of an average family consist of rice and rice products, flour and flour products, vegetables, egg, fish, meat (mutton, chicken, beef), salt, mustard oil, spices, molasses, sugar, tea, milk and milk products, tobacco, betelnut, etc. Clothing such as lungi, dhuti, trousers, shirt, saree, mekhala chaddar, pant are common items for general use. Kerosene, firewood are commonly used as fuel. Rich families use cooking gas as cooking fuel.

However, the survey shows (Table 5.27) that most of the expenditure is incurred on food stuff (67.95 percent) as against 0.89 percent in luxury goods. For that reason they cannot afford to spend enough on recreation (1.22 percent), education (4.50 percent), medicine (3.75 percent), fairs

and festivals (2.28 percent), transport (5.02 percent), house construction (4.69 percent). From this point of view the Maria Muslims are economically backward in all respects.

A villagewise analysis shows that the highest amount of monthly expenditure is incurred by a Maria Muslim family in Jayantipur village (Rs.918.08) , while lowest in Naobaisya village (Rs.630.00). It is only because that a deficit budget is a common affair in a Maria Muslims household.

On the other hand, variation in itemwise expenditure is also noticed among the villages. The expenditure incurred on luxury (1.22 percent) is found to be more in Jayantipur village. The expenditure on other items like education (5.48 percent), fairs and festivals (2.31 percent), are found more in this village. It is observed that due to the availability of urban facility from the two towns of the Brahmaputra Valley like Nowgong and Tezpur and due to good communication the villagers get jobs, do business etc. in these two centres - as a result the people of this village are economically less backward than that of the other villages.

Variation is also observed when the itemwise expenditure is compared between rural and urban areas. The expenditure incurred on foodstuff per household in the rural area (64.97 percent) is almost equal to that of the urban area (64.08 percent). But the expenditure on cloth (rural 10.53 percent and urban 11.04 percent), luxury (rural 0.79 percent and urban 1.45 percent), medicine (rural 3.89 percent and urban 4.74 percent), fairs and festivals (rural 2.33 percent and urban 2.97 percent), recreation (rural 1.08 percent and urban 2.02 percent), are found to be more in urban

area. Because in rural area per capita expenditure is (Rs.108.24) less as compared to the per capita expenditure in urban area (Rs.139.81). This is mainly due to the deficit budget for the Maria Muslim family (Table 5.27) in the rural areas.

5.39 General Economic condition and land tenure system of the Maria Muslims:-

The population of the Maria Muslims may be classified under the following economic groups : 1) Trade and commerce - who are engaged in the own business. ii) Service - who are engaged in different categories of employment. Since the higher education is not found among the Maria Muslims so they are mainly engaged in fourth grade category. iii) Brass Industry - who are engaged in brass industry. iv) Cultivators, who have a hand to mouth existence, are either landless or the owners of small areas of land. The landless category of people do cultivation work in the agricultural field of the Assamese Hindu caste groups and Garia Muslims on Adhi system. The people who have their land do cultivation work for their own consumption. v) Very poor - who have to earn their living by working as wage-earners.

i) Trade and commerce - who run their business dealing in either local product or in some consumer goods which they purchase from outside markets. They are mostly settled near the urban centres. Business in local products are like cane, bamboo and agricultural products like paddy, jute etc. Only 59.59 percent of people are engaged in trade and commerce which is the highest percentage in occupational structure. ii) Service holders are those who are engaged in different Government and Private

offices, industrial concerns, automobile centres, shopping centres etc. Only 30.18 percent people are engaged in Service. iii) People who are engaged in Brass Industry. The Brass Industry was their primary occupation. Even four generations previously, they were completely dependent on brass industry. But at present this industry is in a dying condition and only 6.58 percent of people are engaged themselves in brass industry. This is mainly due to (a) the coming of the mechanised brass industry (b) high price of raw ^{materials} which they cannot afford, (c) use of stainless steel and plastic and lastly, (d) after independence the communication with Dacca has been cut off, where they had a good market. Only in Hajo 65.02 percent of people are engaged in Brass industry. This is mainly due to the nearness (22 kms.) of Guwahati from where they get raw materials from Marawaris on loan. The people of this village get a Government loan of Rs.6000.00 per family for brass industry. Government gives Rs.3000.00 subsidy and for the remaining amount 11 percent interest is to be paid. But sometimes they get Rs.2000.00 in cash and the cost of raw materials of about Rs.4000.00. But in other villages the people are not getting this facility. Moreover, it may be mentioned that the finished products can easily be sent to Guwahati market by transport. Regular transport facility is available from Hajo to Guwahati. iv) Cultivators are only 3.63 percent of the total number of workers including the people working in the field of well to do agriculturists - mainly Assamese Hindu Caste groups and Garia Muslims. The Maria Muslims are mainly landless. Average land holding per family is only 1.19 bigha. They mainly produce paddy of Aizong and Dharia variety. The other varieties are Bora, Joha, Trikhali, Dhuchuri, Apahai, Hoagmani and Jalkachu in small quantities. Besides paddy they also produce jute of Mara and Deo variety, in a small

quantity. Some of them sell jute at the rate of Rs.90.00 to Rs.130.00 per maund, the price depends on the variety. Besides these productions they also produce various types of seasonal green vegetables for their own consumption. v) Very poor people who are below the poverty line have been categorised under 'Unknown' category, they are mainly homeless people exploited by traders, contractors and cannot find any solution of this problem of their indebtedness.

From the above discussion it has been observed that the occupational mobility contributed to the emergence of new dimensions in the field of social and economic relations (Ali, 1974). Ali also writes that the Marias have almost abandoned their original profession because of the popularity of factory made utensils etc. It has also been observed that tendency towards starting a business is high. Because in urban areas jobs are not easily available. So, they have leaned towards trade and commerce.

Land tenure system

Regarding acquiring of land, two systems are commonly found in this community. Firstly, they acquire land on Adhi system (share cropper) from the Assamese Hindu Caste groups who are incapable of cultivating their own land for some reasons. This system provides an opportunity to them to maintain their family by the half of the produce and the remaining half left for the owner of the land. Secondly, the forcible occupation of the Government land or ownerless land.

Besides these systems, distribution and re-distribution of land have

also been made among the members of the family after the death of the head.

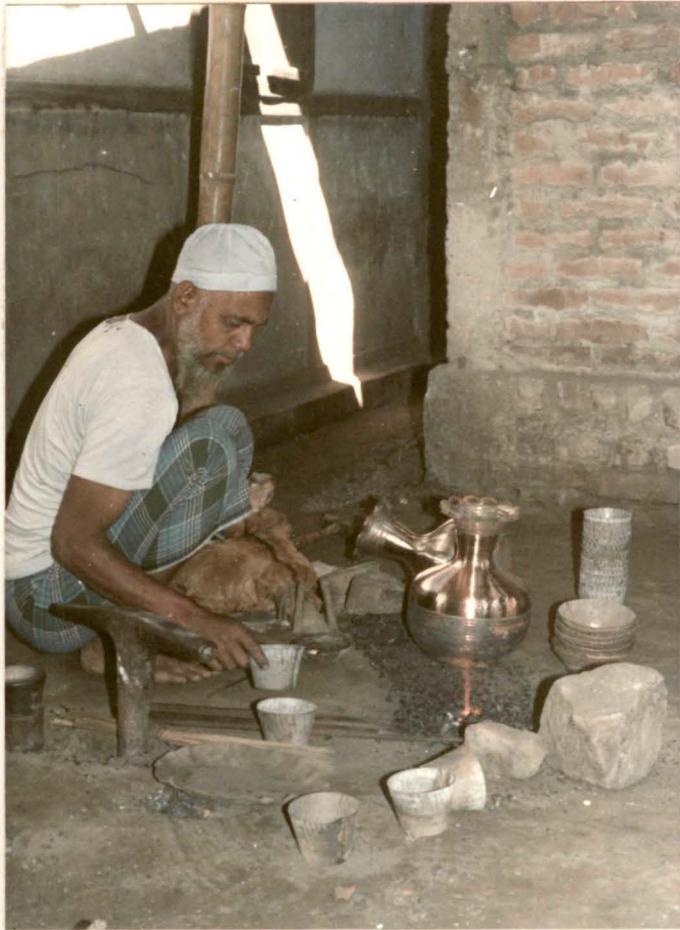
5.4 Cultural characteristics

5.41 Language Pattern :-

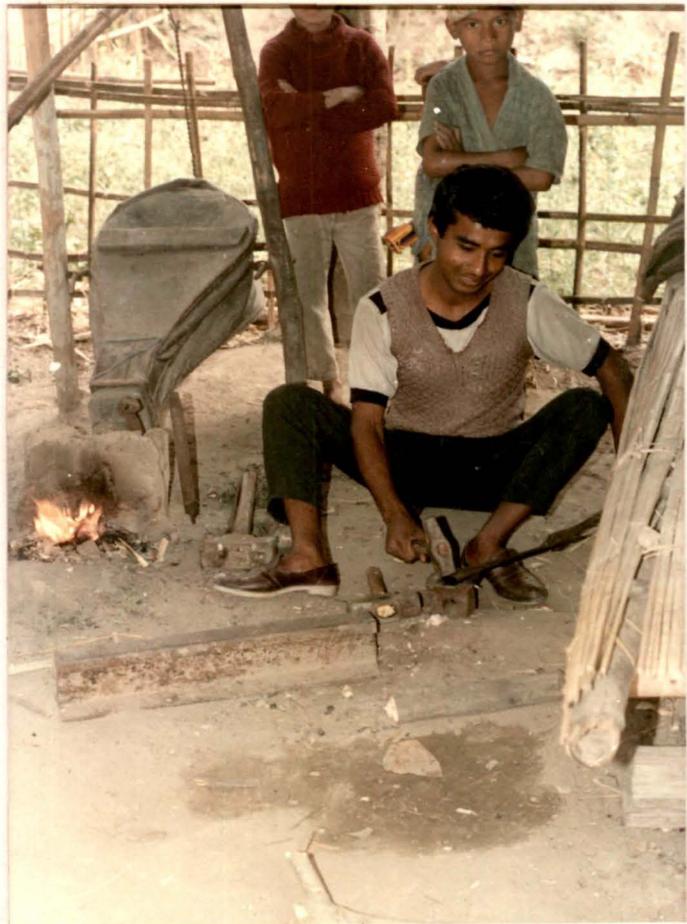
A language is a system of arbitrary vocal symbols by which members of a social group co-operate and interact (Sturtevant, 1947). Without language, the accumulations of knowledge that mark off the human race from other animal aggregates could not have been developed or maintained. Through language man has been able to devise, continue and change the great variety of his material and non-material cultural institutions. If a phenomenon has any cultural relevance, it is because it holds meaning in thought and in behaviour. This turn, is because men have the linguistic equipment to grasp and express its significance (Melville, 1955).

The Maria Muslims are homogenous as a linguistic community. Their common language is Assamese. But the people who are the inhabitants of lower Assam (Kamrup district) use a dialect which is much common with Kamrupi, both phonologically and morphologically, with the admixture of the neighbouring Goalpariya (Datta, 1971). But in Upper Assam (Jorhat, Sibsagar, Dibrugarh, Lakhimpur, Golaghat and even in Nowgong district) the Assamese dialect differ from that of the Lower Assam, both phonologically and morphologically. Besides Assamese, they also know Hindi (to some extent), a few of them can understand English also.

They had their own language known as Duan, in the past and they



Working with the fire oven.



Techniques of making brass utensil.

used to speak in that language. But at present it has become dead. A few of them know this language to some extent.

5.42 Food Habits:-

Natural environment influences the food habit of a society. Paddy is the main crop in the Brahmaputra Valley. So boiled rice continues to be their staple food. They take rice thrice in a day. Wheat products are slowly gaining a place in their menu. In the past, they also used to consume wheat but the rate was not so high as in recent years, this is due to availability of wheat flour at a reasonable price in the local markets.

Irrespective of their economic status, the village women prepare different types of rice products like 'chira', 'muri', 'mudki', 'akhai' (khai), 'laru' (mowa), 'semai' (Sewai) and various types of 'pitha' (home made cake). Among the pulses, they mostly take 'mosuri', 'moog', 'matidal', 'mash kalai', 'khesari', 'arhar' (raher), gram (boot/chana), motor etc. The cooking medium is mustard oil. They also take Tenga Dail.

This community is mainly non-vegetarian. They are fond of fish, meat and eggs alike. Beef is the main item at the time of socio-religious functions. Though pork is prohibited in the Muslim society but at present the young group of Maria Muslims who reside in urban and semi-urban areas take pork secretly. Young boys also consume alcoholic beverage purchasing it either from the market or from the nearby tribal people.

5.43 Ecological control of rural dwellings:-

Rural huts are constructed by the villagers with the materials available abundantly in the region. Soil and climate determine the type

of dwellings.

The rural dwelling houses are constructed with bamboo thatched roof, walls layered with mud. The materials like bamboo are available from the ^anearby forest. The thatch is available from the paddy field. But sometimes they also purchase bamboo from the nearby market. Soil used for layering the walls come from the locality. The dwellings consist of two to three rooms used for sleeping, storing and cooking. One to two windows are found in a room. Sometimes it may be more. Those who are in a better economic condition construct Assam type houses. These types of houses are typical that are found in Assam. This house is roofed with corrugated iron sheets and the walls are constructed either with bamboo, cut into strips, or Ekara (the walling reed) and layered either with mud or with cement. Tin sheets are purchased from the nearby market. Ekara and bamboo are available from the forest. But cement is purchased from the nearby market. Some dwellings sites are surrounded by a kitchen garden. Average area of the dwelling varies from one cottah to one and a half cottah.

5.44 Dress :-

A modern Maria Muslim, clean-shaved and clad in trousers and shirt, is not distinguishable from others. This is the result of cultural assimilation with neighbouring caste groups. The vast majority of poor people feel happy if they can afford a coloured lungi for social functions. Those living slightly above the poverty line put punjabis, pyjamahs, dhoti and caps for social functions and wear flowing beards. Wearing dhoti is the influence of Assamese Hindu Society. At the time of marriage, the males wear sheroany, pajama (trouser) and pagiri (turban). In some urban

centres wearing of shirts and trousers have also been observed, at the time of marriage. The boys wear shirts and the girls frocks and briefs. Churidar with Kameez is gaining popularity among the young girls. The women folk, in the long past used to wear Mekhela like the kachari tribe. The Mekhela was kept tied above the breast. This manner of wearing the Mekhela is known as Methonimara. At that time females did not wear blouse. But at present the previous practice has stopped and they wear Mekhela and Chaddar along with blouse, like an Assamese lady. The Mekhela and Chaddar are made of Pat (Jute) , Silk, Muga etc. Females also wear Sari. But at the time of marriage wearing of Mekhala and Chaddar is compulsory.

5.45 Personal adornments:-

Regarding personal adornments the bamboo made Thuria has lost its vogue now. At present the Thuria is made of gold, silver or brass. It is shaped long, the length is about half an inch to one inch. Besides Thuria the women also use ear ring like Phooli, Dul, etc. made of gold, silver or brass. Females also wear chain, Necklace, Galpatta, Har etc. round the neck. Different types of bangle like Balakharu, Churikharu, Kharu, Muthikharu etc. are seen on the wrist. Gezera and Maduli are seen on the arm. On the finger the females wear Anguthi (finger ring). Kari and Payal increase the beauty of the ankle of the young ladies.

Males wear Anguthi at the time of marriage.

The personal adornments are made of either gold or silver or brass. Those who are above the poverty line use the adornments made of gold

and silver. But the poorer section use the ornaments made of brass.

5.46 Techniques in brass industry :-

The brass utensils are prepared from brass-sheet metals. Pieces of the sheet are at first hammered over a series of different tools and implements to give it the shape of the required article. The different parts are then joined to make the finished utensil. They mainly prepare Kalash because its demand is high in the market in comparison with other articles. Besides pitcher they also prepare Tou, Charia, Harahi, Thali, Lota, Hata, Dunari and Doba. The Doba is prepared only when the order is placed.

Equipments :-

In brass industry the following equipments are in use.

Hammers

In this brasswork they use 8 (eight) types of iron hammers. Out of eight types of hammer, six types are two-headed tools and the rest are one-headed. These hammers are used to beat the brass sheet to give them different shapes like flat, pointed, blunt and round. Each head of the hammer is used to perform different types of work.

Some differences are observed at the time of the work. The hammer is locally known as Haturi.

Chatuli:

This is a long shaped tool made of solid iron. It is pointed at one end and blunt in the other end. This tool is used at the time of



Brass utensils in the making.



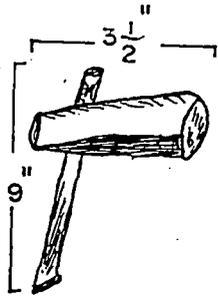
Making of brass products in progress.



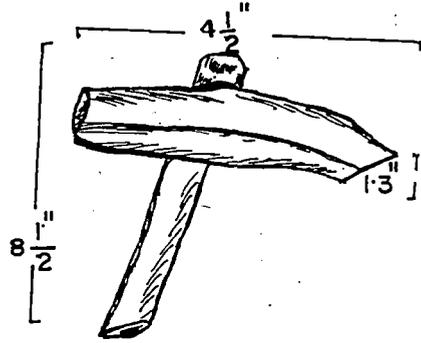
Making of brass utensils in progress.



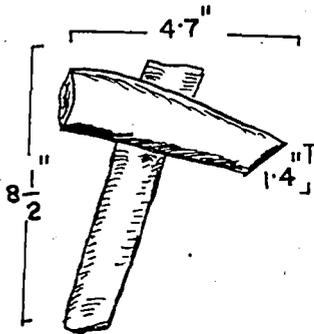
Agricultural practice in Maria village.



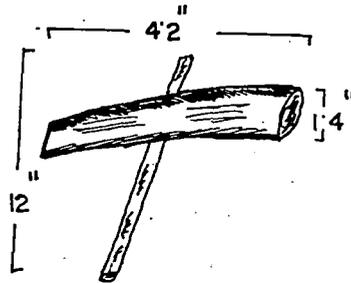
MATHA



TOURKANHECHA



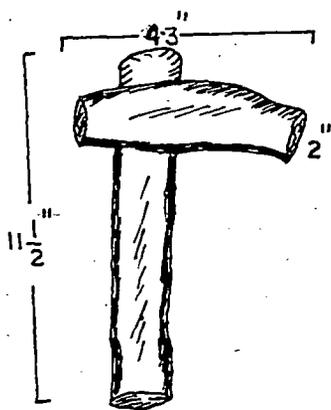
ALOA



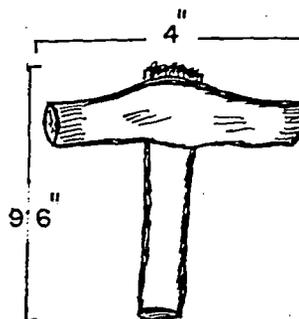
KEOSBHANGA

DIFFERENT TYPES OF HAMMER

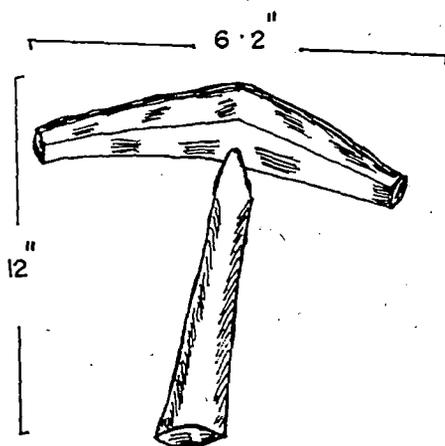
FIG. 23



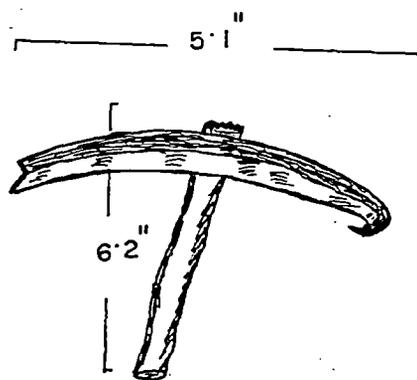
EKI MUKHIA (One mouth)



DUMUKHIA (Two mouths)



GALIMATHA



AKOA

DIFFERENT TYPES OF HAMMER.

FIG-24

beating the pitcher, lota etc. The pointed end is fixed in the soil at the time of work. Its length is 31 and $1/2''$ and the diameter is 2 and $1/2''$ inches.

Belmuri:-

This tool is used to beat the flat brass strips to make the roll. This instrument is made of solid iron. The top is flat and the upper portion is slightly broader than the lower portion. Its length is 6 inches. Lower span (which is fixed on the piece of wood) is 9 and $1/2''$ inches and the upper span is 10 and $1/2''$ inches.

Niari:-

This is an iron-made T-shaped instrument. This tool is used at the time of joining the mouth and neck of the pitcher. At the time of work it is fixed in the earth. Its height is 16" and the upper length is 17" . The diameter of the lower portion is 2 and $1/2''$ and that of the upper portion is 3 and $1/2''$. One end of the upper portion is pointed and the other end is blunt.

Kati :- This is an iron-made scissor and it is used to cut the brass sheet into different pieces. Its length is 12".

Beri Ghura Kath : This is a wooden slab and it is used to give the shape of the bottom of the pitcher, Tou, Charia, Harahi etc. The bottom circle is beaten on the orbicular, on the wooden slab to give it the desired shape and size.

Chepna : This, 14" long, iron made tool, having two arms is used to catch the warm articles.

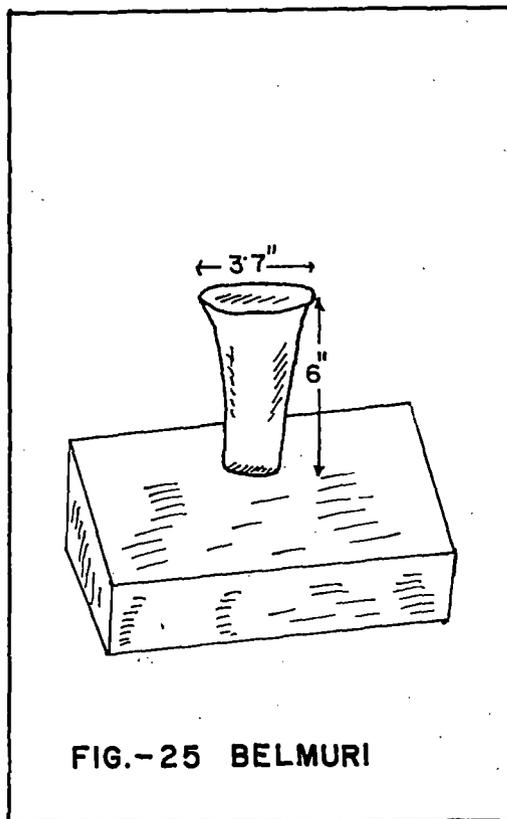


FIG.-25 BELMURI

Kun : This is a wood made equipment and it is used to polish the pitcher and Lota. It is a polished long-shaped piece of wood with line patterns at one end. It is broader at one end and gradually tapers towards the other end. Its length is 37", and the circumference at one end is 12" inches and that of the other end is 6.5" inches. This wooden piece is kept horizontally at a height of 8" inches from the floor. The wooden sticks are fixed in the soil to hold Kun, in the proper position. A nail which is driven into one end of the wooden piece, freely turns and the opposite end bears on a wooden piece. It is turned with a rope at the time of polishing the article.

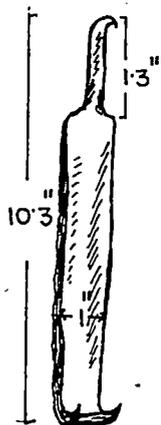
Bagi :- An iron-made tool, shaped long having a bend at the tip, is used to fashion the pitcher, Lota etc. Its length is 10.3" inches and the width is one inch. At one end there is an iron handle for holding at the time of work with the Kun. The length of the handle is usually 1.3" inches.

Furnace :- The furnace is a hole dug in the ground about 5" inches deep. A piece of hollow bamboo having a diameter of 2" inches and length of 11" inches is inserted into the hole. One end of the hollow bamboo piece is connected with handmade bellows made of goat skin, locally known as Bhati, and the other end remains inside the hole. Air is blown through the bamboo channel. Charcoal is used as fuel.

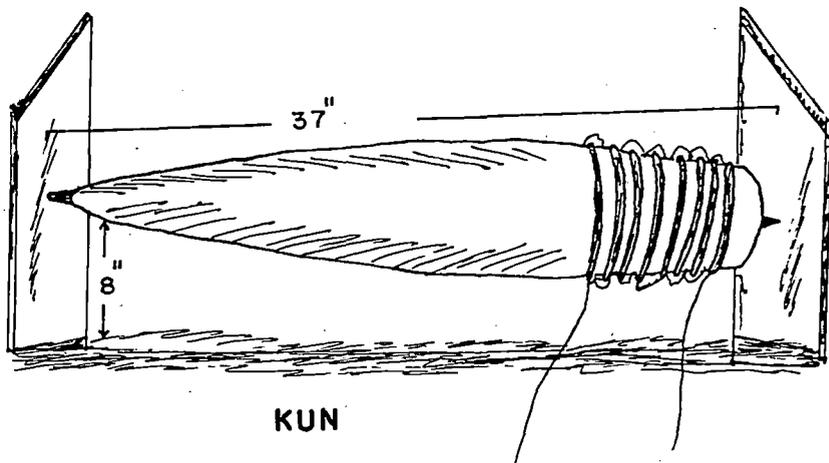
Aphorianabari:-

It is a one and half feet long stick use to clear up the ash at the time of work.

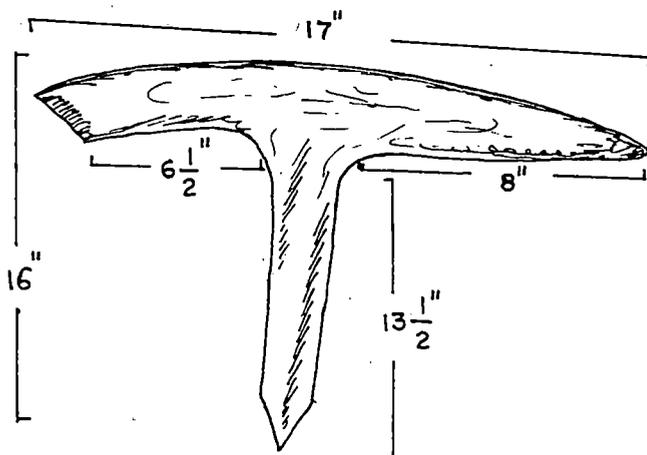
Paenokhati:- This is the local name of a solution which is used to join the different parts of the articles. The solution is prepared by Hethu,



BAGI



KUN



NIARI



PAE NOKATHI

FIG-26

Rang, Silver and Hauga. These things are purchased from the goldsmith-who are mostly Hindus.

Materials :-

Brass-sheet - To make a pitcher weighing one and a half kilogram a sheet of 20" inches length and 20" inches width is required which contains six mouths and six chumohi (necks), 15" inches length and 15" inches breadth brass sheet gives one piece of shoulder. Belly is divided into two parts:- (a) Beri and (b) Hura. A 24" inches length and 16" inches breadth brass sheet provides 5 Beris and 15" inches length and 15" inches width brass sheet makes one Hura. Ten bottoms are obtained from a circular sheet of brass of 2.4" inches diameter. The round brass sheet is purchased from the Marawaris (traders). The round sheet is manufactured in the factory. They purchase the brass-sheets and the round brass sheets ready made from Guwahati, Jorhat, Dibrugarh and Sibsagar towns.

Method:

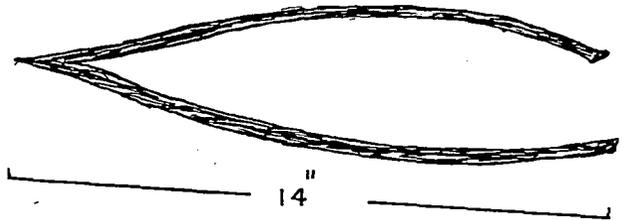
They mainly make Pitchers. So, the method of manufacture of the Kalash (Pitcher) is described below :

The mouth : The mouth is prepared first. One rectangular brass sheet is joined to form a hollow cylinder, this is hammered on Belmuri until it is curved.

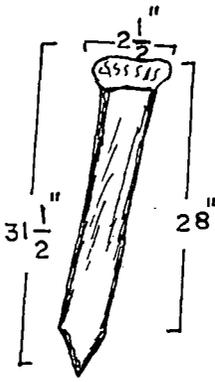
The neck :- The neck is made next, by joining the rectangular brass sheet and it is beaten from inside to give it the desired shape. The neck is locally known as Chumohi.



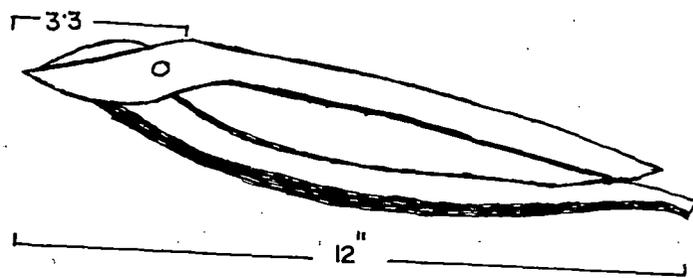
APHORIANABARI



CHEPNA



CHATULI



KATI

FIG. 27

The Shoulder :

The local name of the shoulder is chakori. It is also made from a square brass sheet of 15X15" inches size. The sheet is bend and joined and beaten on the Belmuri. As a result of the beating the shoulder gets the proper shape with a slightly raised collar, to join with the neck of the Pitcher, but the lower edge brodens into a rim to fit with the first portion of the belly.

The Belly :-

The Belly is divided into two parts - (a) Beri and (b) Hura.

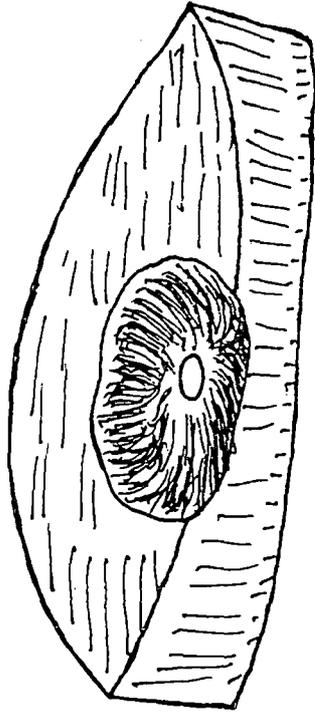
(a) Beri is made from the rectangular brass sheet. Two ends are joined first then it becomes a hollow cylinder and it is beaten from inside and outside for the desired shape. But it remains almost rectangular in shape.

(b) Hura is made of square brass sheet of 15X15" inches size in the same way as the Beri is made. It is beaten and it becomes tapering towards the bottom.

The Bottom :- The bottom is made from the round brass sheet. The sheet is beaten until it fits the bottom of the pitcher.

Soldering:- All these different parts of the Pitcher are now joined by putting a solution - locally known as Paerokhati, applied at the joint between the two parts. The joint is then heated and hammered for increasing the longevity of the joint.

Before joining the bottom the Pitcher is polished and decorated by placing it in the Kun.



BERI GHURUA KATH

FIG. 28

5.47 Household articles :-

The common use of brass utensils are seen in the kitchen of a Maria family. In the urban areas a modern family uses decorated chinaclay utensils besides the brass utensils. Those who are above the poverty line decorate their drawing rooms with sofa-set etc.

In the rural areas, the cooking fuel is either firewood or kerosene. But in the urban areas cooking gas is used in the well-to-do family. In the rural areas the people use Guwahati made cycle for easy conveyance. In the urban areas a very few of them use West Bengal made car.

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
Total	444	255	189	56.70	62.19	50.67

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 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															
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.

SUMMERISED CONCLUSION AND PROGNOSIS

SUMMARISED CONCLUSION AND PROGNOSIS

The present work on Maria Muslims of the Brahmaputra Valley provides an interesting study, primarily from the population geographic point of view. Beginning from the geographical setting and economic and social conditions of the area the study includes the interpretation and analysis of the distribution, density, growth and size of the Marias, their demographic, Socio-economic and Socio-cultural characteristics. An attempt is made to show the distinctive character of this group of population from the rest of the area. The study made on the particular topic is summarised below:

Besides the collecting and reading of various relevant unpublished and published materials on this community, the researcher had to stay for a long time with them to get general information about them. Accordingly, the data were collected for each chapter both from library sources and field investigation to complete this research project. The information thus acquired were systemetised by data analysis, laboratory work and with the help of cartographic and statistical model for the interpretation of the data. A brief relevant works in the line is given in order to have a background knowledge of the problem. Introduction deals with the statement of the problem, objectives of the study, working hypothesis, its significance and methods. Very negligible research work have been done so far by the Historians, Anthropologists and Sociologists.

The geographical setting of the study area, given in chapter 2.0 serves

as a basis towards understanding the topography, climate, vegetation etc. and socio-economic condition and transport and communication of the study area. The Brahmaputra valley ($25^{\circ}44'$ - $27^{\circ}55'$ N and $89^{\circ}41'$ - $96^{\circ}02'$ E) is a well demarcated region by the Eastern Himalayas, Patkoi and Naga Hills and Garo-Khasi-Jaintia and the Mikir Hills covering an area of about $56,274 \text{ km}^2$. The area served by the mighty river Brahmaputra is almost flat level plain built up by alluvium deposits. The average level of the valley ranges from 130 m in the east to 30 m. in the west. This valley has steep slope in the north on the foothills of Arunachal Pradesh but the slope is gradual towards the southern hill ranges. On both the banks of the river a number of isolated hillocks or monadnocks are seen, projecting towards the Brahmaputra from either side of the valley. In the north, there are innumerable tributaries running down from Arunachal Pradesh and Bhutan Himalayas. These tributaries formed the alluvial fans due to the presence of coarse alluvial debris. But the southern part of the valley is highly braided due to its low gradient. As a result innumerable riverine islands are formed. The climate of the area is sub-tropical with seasonal variations. The average rainfall is 180 cm. and the total number of rainy days are 18-20 days during the monsoon season (June to September). The average temperature during this season is 27.17°C ., but the relative humidity is very high. January is the coldest month with an average temperature of 12.8°C . Soil of the area is mostly of alluvial character. The new alluvial soils are less acidic and are suitable for the cultivation of rice, jute, pulse etc. The old alluvial soils are more acidic and suitable for sugarcane, fruits, vegetables etc. The valley is rich in natural vegetation. The tropical vegetation of both semi-evergreen and deciduous varieties of the study area are rich in valuable trees and medicinal plants. The forests are either reserved or unclassified.

The study area is an agricultural area. So, the economy of the people of the area depends on agricultural productivity. The economic activities of the people of the Assam valley are attached to (a) cultivation, (b) tea plantation, (c) forest based industries, (d) mining, (e) manufacturing, (f) communication, (g) trade and commerce and (h) construction. In this area 72.8 percent workers are engaged in cultivation, only 8 percent of the active workers are engaged in different types of industries and 19.2 percent workers are engaged in mining, plantations and other occupations.

The population of the Brahmaputra Valley is composed of various racial groups. People coming from different regions with different racial and cultural backgrounds and at different times have created a complicated society. The indigenous population may be divided into four broad linguistic groups, viz, Assamese (60.88 percent), Bengali (19.70 percent), Tibeto-Burman (10.20 percent) and Siamese-Chinese (0.15 percent). Each of them can be sub-divided into six religious groups viz. Hindu (72.51 percent), Muslim including Maria Muslim (24.56 percent), Christian (2.61 percent), and various tribal religions (10 percent).

The transport and communication system as a whole is not well developed. The developments of roads and railways have been hindered by the presence of innumerable rivers, streams and hilly terrains. But this region is much more developed in transport and communication than the surrounding hilly areas.

In chapter 3.0, a brief account of the historical background of the community is given. Under the above mentioned physical setting, social situation and economic condition, the Marias came to the Brahmaputra Valley as invaders and ultimately settled down permanently about four

hundred and fifty years ago. The coming of this group of people into this region is associated with several invasions made by the Muslims from the west. Assam came in contact with the Mohammedans with the invasion of Md. Bin Bakhtiar Khilji, a Muslim General of Kutabuddin in about 1205 A.D. At that time Mohammedans entered Assam through the Goalpara district. The first contact of Mohammedans with the Ahoms took place in 1527 A.D. The invasion of Turbak took place in 1532 A.D. Turbak - a Muslim commander of Bengal encamped at Singri on the north bank of the river Brahmaputra, at the time of Suhungmung - the Ahom king. A great battle took place between the Mohammedan soldiers and the Ahoms. In this battle the Mohammedans defeated the Ahoms. But in 1553 A.D., another battle took place and after a series of engagements the Ahoms defeated the Muslim invaders, and Turbak was killed.

Nine hundred Muslims invaders were taken as prisoners at Sibsagar by the Ahom King during this war. The Ahom King wanted to use these prisoners as His servants. He engaged them in different kinds of work but due to their ignorance in these jobs, the disgusted king released them so that they could earn their livelihood in whatever ways were possible for them. Some of mercenaries were craftsmen and technicians and had knowledge of welding of brass metal. So, after the release some of them took to working in brass as an occupation and finally settled down in this valley as braziers. Then, they came in contact with the Ahoms and different Assamese Hindu caste groups who influenced them socio-culturally and socio-economically to a great extent. They married the Ahom women and the low caste Assamese Hindu women as they did not bring any females with them. Slowly they scattered throughout the Brahmaputra Valley from Sibsagar, keeping their identity as Maria Muslims. The Marias were looked

down upon by the orthodox followers of Islam. Because of their habit of 'drunkenness' contentious characters, they were regarded as degraded Muslims. Syads and Sheiks, other groups of Muslims, maintain a distance from the Marias. Because of the social distance, maintained by the two orthodox groups, the Maria Muslims have become an endogamous group.

The chapter 4.0 deals with the present population distribution, density, growth pattern and size of the Maria population. The Marias are distributed only in nine districts out of eighteen districts in the valley. It is observed that they generally prefer to settle in or around the urban areas for their profession. But, there is a significant variation in the proportion of Maria population at the village level. The highest concentration is found in Chawlkhowa (10.55 percent of the total Maria population) village in Dibrugarh district. Since this village is situated near Dibrugarh town and is well communicated by regular bus and railway services, so, the people of this village get the urban facilities very easily which have been attracting them to stay. It is to be mentioned that 29.08 percent of the total working population of this village are engaged in trade and commercial activities, and 23.64 percent people are engaged in service etc. in Dibrugarh town. The highest number of villages (12) are found in Jorhat district, which was previously under Sibsagar district, where they settled down first. An analysis of the rural-urban distribution of the Maria Muslim population gives an idea of the problem. The study shows that of the 4.28 percent urban Muslim population of the Brahmaputra Valley and India's 34.01 percent of the total urban Muslim population, 32.06 percent of the Marias live in the urban areas. It is revealed from the analysis that the concentration of the Maria population is significantly high in the urban areas. This is because of the necessity of pursue their profession. They started their occupa-

tion as braziers, so they used to prefer to live in and around the urban areas where they could get raw materials from the market and sell their finished products according to the demand.

The density of the Maria population has been shown very irregularly in the early census. As the 1872 census figure is not accurate, the density of the Maria population as shown in this census could not be discussed. In the 1881 census the population figure of the Marias is not available. The 1891 census shows the density of the Marias to 0.03 per km². In the 1901 census the density of the population of the Marias became 0.02 per km². The population had fallen off, as they were affected by the disease Kala-azar. The 1911 census shows that the density had slightly increased and became 0.03 per km². After this census they have been merged with the Assamese Muslim population. The researcher did detail field work in this connection in 1988. On the basis of the field study the density of the Maria population is found to be 0.42 per km². The highest density is found in the Sibsagar district and it is 1.23 per km². It shows the high natural growth and availability of better medical facilities.

The growth of the Maria population in the previous census years was not regular due to technical defects in census operation. During the time 1891-1901 the variation of population shows a downward trend, it is due to the natural calamities like black fever and fever. By 1988, the Maria population shows a very high rate of growth. It shows their high natural growth.

The chapter 5.0 deals with demographic, socio-economic and socio-cultural characteristics of the Maria population. The demographic structure includes the treatment on sex-ratio, age-sex structure, dependency ratio, marital status, child-women ratio, fertility rate, birth rate, death rate and literacy rate. The study was conducted in the representative sample villages.

The sex-ratio of the Maria population in the Brahmaputra Valley is 732 female^s/1000 of male^s which is found to be lower than the Muslims of the Brahmaputra Valley (918 female^s/1000 of male^s) and the Muslims of the country (936 female/1000 of male). When the sex-ratio for the rural and urban areas is considered, it is found that the rural sex-ratio of the Maria population is 739 female^s/1000 of male^s which is found to be lower than the Muslims of the Brahmaputra Valley (926 female^s/1000 of male^s) and the Muslims of the country (955 female^s/1000 of male^s). The lower rural ratio is mainly due to the urban character of the Marias because of their profession. At the village level, the highest rural sex-ratio is found in Baliyan Tengabari (1076 female^s/1000 of male^s) village, which is significantly high. But the highest urban sex-ratio is found in Hajo Islampatti (909 female^s/1000 of male^s) which is lower than the rural sex-ratio. This is due to the movement of the males to the urban areas for better employment facilities which have contributed significantly to the lesser number of females in the urban areas and higher number of females in the rural areas.

The age-sex structure shows that in the age-group of 25-29 years,

the female population (15.27 percent) outnumber the male population (13.74 percent) which indicates the high rate of female child birth at least in the representative sample villages. The percentage of children in the age-group below 14 years is 40.95, it shows the high rate of child birth.

The dependency ratio is found to be 76.89 percent among the Maria population, out of which 79.37 percent is found in the rural areas and 71.05 percent is found in the urban areas. It shows that the urban dependency ratio is lower than that of the rural dependency ratio and it is mainly due to their landlessness. In the rural areas, due to the non availability of sufficient agricultural field, the children of the lower age group do not get jobs in the agricultural field, moreover, in the rural areas there are no scope for getting petty jobs for them. But in the urban areas the children of the lower age group get jobs in small factories, shops etc. which reduces the urban dependency ratio.

The study on marital status shows that the percentage of married persons is 39.41, out of which 37.81 percent are males ^{of the total male population} and 41.19 percent are females ^{of the total female population}. It shows that they do not prefer to early marriage due to their economic backwardness and the influence of Assamese Hindu culture. This is also supported by the fact that the percentage of married males and females under nineteen years are 0.83 and 11.58 respectively. But in the age group above twenty years the percentage of married males and females are found to be 99.17 percent and 88.42 percent respectively which shows their inclination to late marriage.

The child-women ratio among the Marias is found to be 612.48 per thousand of women of which child-women ratio in the rural areas is 612.82 per thousand and that of the urban areas is 611.65 per thousand. The rural and urban child-women ratio is almost equal.

The fertility rate of the Maria population is found to be 119.09 children per thousand of specific age group of women (15-44) of which 109.48 per thousand are in the rural areas and 142.39 per thousand in the urban areas. From calculation it is seen the fertility wastage is less in the urban areas than in the rural areas, due to the availability of better medical facilities in the urban areas.

The birth rate is 26.64 persons per thousand of women among the Maria Muslims as against 31 persons in the state. The birth rate of the Marias is lower than that of the state and it is due to the adoption of birth control measures. It happens due to greater contact with the urban people when the rural and the urban birth rate is compared, it is found that the rural birth rate per thousand is 24.37 which is lower than the urban birth rate of 32.23 per thousand. As mentioned earlier that it is due to the high fertility wastage in rural areas, due to the non-availability of medical facilities at the proper time and ignorance about hygienic sense. The death rate per thousand of the Marias (11.62) is slightly lower than the state's (12.5) for general population. When the rural urban death rate is compared it is found that the death rate in the urban areas is 10.98 persons per thousand is to be lesser than the death rate in the rural areas (11.89) per thousand. It is mainly due to the proper medical facilities which are available in the urban areas. The average size of the family is of six persons which is rather high. It is observed in the sample data that they are in favour of nuclear type of family, which is increasing.

The literacy rate among the Maria Muslims is found to be quite high (64.48 percent) as against 28.15 percent literacy of Assam and 37 percent of country's literacy for the general population. Since they are a professional group of people and are traditionally non-agriculturist so education is a very old phenomenon among the Marias. The literacy among the males is 72.29 percent and female literacy is 55.77 percent. It is mainly due to the fact that the guardian's consciousness about education to get jobs. But in the rural areas the literacy (72.20 percent) rate is higher than the urban literacy (27.80 percent) rate. It is mainly due to the easy availability of petty jobs in the urban areas where the guardian's send their children to earn money for economic stability. But in the rural areas the higher literacy rate is due to the non-availability of jobs and also because all the villages have at least one primary school where the guardians can send their children for education.

A considerable degree of blood and cultural assimilations have been observed between the Marias and the neighbouring people in their life cycle like pre natal, birth, adolescence, marriage, death, festivals and superstitions. Blood assimilation took place by way of marriage with Assamese Hindus from the very long past. They observe the Bihu festival like the Assamese Hindu caste groups. Even they do not practice the Islamic religion fully. Some of them also take part in Durga puja, they also fire crackers at the time of Kali puja - a Hindu religious festival. They believe in superstitions and black magic. A few generations back Hindu names were also found among the Maria women. It is because of the marriages solemnised with Hindu ladies, which has been discussed earlier.

The percentage of the Maria workers (26.09) is less in comparison with that of the state (28.35) for the total general population. It is mainly

due to the greater number of non-working dependants (73.91 percent), among them. Traditionally they were braziers but after Independence due to the popularity of stainless steel, high rate of raw materials, introduction of machine-made brass utensils in the market and loss of the market in Dacca, capital of Bangladesh, occupational diversifications have been observed among the Marias. At present it is observed that out of a total of 26.09 percent of workers, 48.06 percent people are engaged in Trade and Commerce, followed by Brass industry (17.59 percent), Service (15.96 percent), Transport and Communication (10.05 percent), Daily labour (5.75 percent) and Agriculture (2.59 percent) for their livelihood. When the occupational structure is compared with the rural and the urban areas, it is observed that the workers (71.39 percent) are high in the rural areas than that of (28.61 percent) in the urban areas. It is mainly due to the high literacy rate (72.20 percent) in the rural areas.

The average income per Maria household is Rs.851.47 according to the study made on the representative sample villages. The monthly per capita income is found to be Rs.137.33 as against Rs.546.00 for the general population of the state. The sample survey shows that per capita income is the highest in (Rs.186.59) Jay^antipur village of the Nowgong district and the lowest in Vevarghat (Rs.105.46) of Darrang district. The people of the Jayantipur village get urban market facilities in Tezpur and Nowgong due to the availability of easy and good transport. Both the towns are famous for business. But the people of Vevarghat do not get the market facilities of the nearby urban centre - Mangaldai due to bad communication. When the per capita income pattern is compared with the rural and urban areas, it is observed that the per capita income in the rural areas is Rs.138.79 and in the urban areas it is Rs.137.26 which is almost equal. On the other hand percentage of the lower income group (Rs.600.00) is found to be (42.04),

and the percentage of households having very low income and categorised under unknown, is 4.31, as against only 19.06 percent of households in the higher income group (Rs.1200 +). When the income pattern is compared with the rural areas and urban areas, it is found that in the rural areas, 44.28 percent of households have an income less than Rs.600 which is higher than the urban areas (36.91 percent). In the higher income group (Rs.1200 +) also, the percentage (19.89) of households in the rural areas, is higher than the percentage of households (17.59) in the urban areas. This is due to the high rural literacy (72.20 percent) rate and the availability of good transport.

The average monthly expenditure per household is Rs.781.11 as against an income of Rs.851.47. Further the per capita monthly expenditure is Rs.126.95, while the per capita monthly income is Rs.137.33. Though it shows a small surplus budget but only 19.06 percent of the Maria families belong to the high income group (Rs.1200 +), 34.59 percent of the families belong to the moderate income group (Rs.600.00 to Rs.1200.00) but the vast 46.35 percent families are below the minimum income level (upto Rs.600.00). Thus, the average per capita income and expenditure do not indicate the general level of the standard of living of the people. So, the average budget of these families is always a deficit one. The survey shows that most of the expenditure is incurred on food stuff (67.95 percent). When it is compared with the rural-urban areas it is observed that 64.97 percent and 64.08 percent expenditure are incurred on food stuff in rural and urban areas respectively, which is almost equal.

This group of people acquired land on Adhi system (share cropper) and the forcible occupation of Government land or ownerless land.

A considerable degree of Assamisation has been observed among

the Marias in respect of culture, language, food habit, dress, personal adornments etc. with the neighbouring Assamese Hindu society. The Marias are homogeneous as a linguistic community. Their common language is Assamese. But, the people who are the inhabitants of Lower Assam (Kamrup district) use a dialect which is much common with Kamrupi, both phonologically and morphologically. But in upper Assam the dialect differs from that of Lower Assam both phonologically and morphologically. At present their original language Duan has become dead and a few of them can speak in Duan to some extent.

So far as the food habits are concerned they are the same with the surrounding societies.

The dwellings are constructed with bamboo, thatched roof, walls plastered with mud. But those who are in better economic condition construct houses roofed with corrugated iron sheets and the walls are plastered with cement.

So far as dress is concerned, it is observed that the old males wear coloured lungi, punjabis, pyjamahs, dhoti and caps but the young boys wear pant, shirt etc. But the females wear Mekhela-Chaddar.

Regarding personal adornments it may be mentioned that the females wear different types of ear rings like Thuria, Phooli, Dul etc., different types of necklaces like Galpatta, Har etc. and different types of bangles like Balakharu, Kharu, Muthikharu etc. On the ankle the young ladies wear Kari, and Payal. Anguthi is common for both males and females. This group of people were formed professional braziers on the basis of specialisation but the techniques in brass industry is similar among the groups who are geographically widely separated.

The common use of brass utensils are seen in the kitchen of a Maria family. In the urban areas the use of decorated China clay utensils also have been observed. In the rural areas, the cooking fuel is either firewood or kerosene, but in the urban areas cooking gas is also used.

Chapter 6.0 deals with the regional variations in the characteristic of the society of three Maria Muslim villages in three different parts of the Brahmaputra Valley. It is observed that more than fifty percent of the population are found in the 15-59 years of age group. It shows that the Maria Muslims are of the progressive type. The low birth rate is found in all the regions and it indicates that they are in favour of family planning and it may be the influence of urban people. Due to the availability of medical facilities at the proper time the death rate is also low. The average family size consists of 4-6 persons. The family size is not very large due to the expansion of nuclear families. It is noticed that in all the areas majority of them are unmarried which shows that they prefer late marriage. It is mainly due to economic backwardness and the influence of urban culture and the surrounding communities. It is observed that the maximum number of marriages is performed within the village and within the community. The causes are economic instability and the social distance maintained by other groups of Muslims. The literacy is low in the Lower Brahmaputra Valley and high in the Central Brahmaputra Valley. This high literacy is mainly due to the economic stability in this area than those of the other areas. A considerable amount of spatial variation is found in the work force. The work force is high in Hajo Islampatti of the Lower Brahmaputra Valley. This is due to the presence of brass industry where the children also get jobs on daily wage basis. The female work-force is also high in this village due to the same reason. The study of the economic condition of the Marias shows the spatial variation between all the three

regions. Per capita monthly income is high in Jayantipur village of the Central Brahmaputra Valley but the per capita monthly expenditure is almost equal in all the regions.

In almost all the villages, the Marias get medical, electricity, Post Office and drinking facilities along with atleast the primary education opportunities.

Assamaisation has been noticed among the Marias through matrimonial relationship with the Assamese Hindus since their settlement in this region. From that period blood assimilation has happened with the neighbouring Assamese Hindus. As regards food habit, they have adopted the food habit of the Assamese people along with their method of preparation. This is the case of their dress habit also. At present the Marias are found to be under the strong influence of the Assamese Hindus. They have adopted many customs in their life cycles like pre-natal, birth, adolescence, marriage etc. from the Assamese Hindus. Even they observe Bihu - a national festival of the Assamese people besides their own festivals. They also have been influenced by superstitions of the Assamese Hindus and believe them like the Hindus.

The interaction pattern between the Marias and other groups of Muslims and the Assamese Hindu is very strong in the Brahmaputra Valley. These three groups take part in their socio-cultural and religious functions with an open mind. This is observed both in the rural and the urban areas. The Marias get loans from the Hindus and the other groups of Muslims at the time of economic crisis.

A study of the degree of assimilation of the Marias with the rest

of the population of the Brahmaputra Valley shows a similar pattern of spatial variation between the Lower, Central and Upper Brahmaputra Valley.

Similar pattern of economic activities are observed in different regions among the Marias. They have started their livelihood as braziers but at present it is observed that except a few villages they have left their traditional occupations for their livelihood. They have left their traditional occupations mainly due to the coming of stainless steel, plastic and machine-made brass utensils. They cannot compete with the machine-made brass utensils because of its low price and fine finishing. One of the major causes of the poverty of the majority of them is due to the observances of socio-religious rituals or rites which are very expensive for their economic standard. That there is hardly any development in their economic condition is ^{due} to the lack of higher education among them. The State Government through proper plans and schemes could develop their economic condition. Referring to the hypotheses mentioned earlier the following conclusions can be drawn. The results obtained through analysis of the field based data and interpretation bring the authenticity of all these hypotheses.

The first hypothesis, "the assimilation among the Marias has become an important social phenomenon due to their marital relations with the Assamese Hindu society in the past," is being proved in chapter five through the analysis of their observances of various rites and rituals in their life cycles, festivals and superstitions.

The second hypothesis, "since the Maria community is a professional group of people they are traditionally non-agriculturists and do not possess agricultural land. At present the previous professions have been abandoned, which had a traditional good market, due to the popularity of stainless steel, plastic etc. and as such they are remaining economically backward",

has been proved through the analysis and interpretation in the fifth chapter.

The third hypothesis, "due to urbanisation the literacy rate is high among the Marias than those of other population in Assam", has also been proved through the analysis in the chapter five.

The fourth hypothesis "economic activities have changed through time and space in the Maria Muslim society since Independence, because of socio-economic changes in their surroundings", also has been proved in the fifth and sixth chapters through analysis and interpretation.

The fifth hypothesis, "since this community is not an agricultural one so there is a tendency among them to settle in or near the urban areas to avail of socio-economic opportunities", is being justified through the interpretation put forward in the fifth and sixth chapters.

The sixth hypothesis, "the urban concentration is more prominent in the case of the Maria Muslims than other Muslims of the Brahmaputra Valley" has been proved in the chapter four through the analysis from the rural-urban distribution.

It is found that in spite of restriction including availability of detailed data at the village level, this study has brought to light some significant points regarding the population geographic work on the Maria population of the Brahmaputra Valley. This study gives a comprehensive knowledge about the habitat, economy and society of the hitherto somewhat neglected Maria Muslims of the Brahmaputra Valley. It has also been found that there has developed a great degree of assimilation among the Marias, the Assamese Hindu and other groups of Muslims.

PROGNOSIS : It is urgently required to make systematic plans and policies to improve the economic condition and the spread of higher education among the Marias. Developmental schemes should be based on their present socio-economic situation for their betterment. Emphasis should be given on the development of their economy and education.

The following suggestions can be given for their economic and educational development :

Economy :

Their traditional brass industry should be improved by giving loan and subsidy from the State Government at least to those families who are still interested to keep their traditional identity in this industry. At present only a very few families of Hajo Islampatti get this loan irregularly from Gaonlia (rural) Bank. The loan should be given regularly through the Goanlia (rural) Bank. The youths should be given proper training to complete with the machine-made brass utensils. The training centres should be opened at the selected areas or villages, to cater the need through their familiarity with this work and encultured personal skill. Co-operative societies should be opened among the workers through which they can sell their finished products for their economic enrichment. The price of the finished articles will be fixed according to their quality and craftsmanship and the wages should be determined according to the degree or skillness of the artisan and the quantity of the products. If it is done then the following profound effect may be made :

- (i) Traditional brass industry will survive and revitalize and will be expanded in the villages. Its commercial value also will be increased.

- (ii) The illiterate and semiliterate youths will be engaged in their traditional industry in their own villages.
- (iii) Their standard of living will be improved.
- (iv) Personal interest will grow to develop their own skill.

Besides this industry, the weaving cane industry etc. should be introduced by giving them proper training and financial assistance.

Education :

Primary education is available in almost all the villages. So middle or secondary schools should be established in or near the villages, such that the guardians can send their children for high school education, without incurring any expenditure of trouble in regard to communication. Emphasis should be given to establish colleges in selected areas in their locality where the youths can avail of opportunity in getting higher education.

The study shows their socio-economic development which could be made under the supervision of the State Government. The main focus should be given on their traditional brass industry, other cottage industries and the higher education.

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GLOSSARY

<u>Local Terms</u>	<u>English Equivalent.</u>
Aglati Kal pat	Front portion of a banana leaf.
Aigan	A kind of song in respect of mother.
Aisewa	Respect to mother.
Ajirpara	From to-day.
Akhoi	Corn.
Anguthi	Finger ring.
Aphorianabari	Identifying tool for proper melting the solution.
Baga	White.
Bagi	Scraper/Polishing material.
Baithaki	Sitting.
Bakrid-Id	Islamic religious function.
Balakharu	Name of bangle.
Bale	Say.
Bardoichila	Thunder showers.
Bej	Local physician.
Beji	Needle.
Belmuri	Stake.
Bengena	Brinjal.
Beri	Name of a part of the belly of pitcher.
Beri ghuruakath	Shaping the tool.
Beye	The covered bathing place of the bride or bridegroom.
Bhad	Fifth month of the Assamese calender. (August - September).

Bhalhok	Let one be free from illness.
Bhaluka	Bambusa balcooa.
Bhar	Sling.
Bharal	Granary.
Bhari	Full.
Bhathewa	Name of a ritual related to disease.
Bhogali Bihu	Assamese festival perform in the month of January.
Bigha	Measurement of land.
Bihu	A popular festival of Assam.
Biya nam	Marriage song.
Bohag	First month of the Assamese calender.
Buranji	History.
Chakori	Name of the shoulder of pitcher.
Challisdiniya	Post death ritual perform on the fortieth day.
Charia	A pot made of brass.
Chat	Twelveth month of the Assamese calender. (February - March).
Chatuli	Stake.
Chepna	Pincer/Forcep.
Chira	Pounded rice.
Chuabichaya	A kind of ritual related to birth.
Chumohi	Name of the neck of pitcher.
Chunnat biya	Circumcision marriage.
Churikharu	Name of a bangle.
Dahdiniya	Post-death ritual perform on the tenth day.
Dal	Tree branch.

Digloti mati loti	A kind of small creeking plant.
Doba	Name of the utensil.
Dul	Ear ring.
Dunari	Name of a utensil.
Durga puja	Worship of Goddess.
Ekora	The walling reed.
Eri	Cocoon.
Gadhan	Bride price.
Gaja	Elephant.
Gajfura	Move about sitting on the back of an elephant.
Gakhir	Milk.
Galpatta	Name of the ornament round the neck.
Gamari	Glycyrrhizaarborea.
Gamocha	Hand made towel made of cotton.
Ganak	Astrologer.
Garia	The common term of Mohammedans in the Brahmaputra valley is Garia. The term is related to the invaders who came from Gaur, the then capital of Bengal.
Gezera	Name of a ornament.
Gohali payas	Home made sweet offered for recovery of cows from Pox.
Gopinisewa	A pre-natal ritual performed on seventh month of pregnancy.
Gram	Ciccaarietinum.
Gur	Molasses.
Hakale	All the persons.

Hakam	Name of the ritual in connection with death.
Haludhi	Turmeric.
Har	Name of a ornament round the neck.
Harahi	Name of a utensil.
Harai	Name of a utensil.
Hata	Name of a utensil.
Hatkhowa	Pre-natal ritual.
Haturi	Hammer.
Hewa	An humble salutation.
Hollock	Terminaliamyriocarpa.
Huchuri	A kind of song relat ed to Rangali Bihu.
Hura	Name of a part of the belly of pitcher.
Id-Ud-Zuha	Islamic religious festival.
Id-ul-Fitr	Islamic religious festival.
Jamat	Mosque.
Juipuja	Worship of fire.
Jurandiya	A ritual, associated with marriage.
Kadam	Anogeissus cadamba
Kala-azar	Malerial fever.
Kalash	Water pitcher.
Kalipuja	Worship of Goddess Kali.
Kamrupi	Name of the dialect.
Kanphool	Ear ring.
Kari	Name of a ornament.
Kati	Scissor.

Kati Bihu	Assamese festival perform in the month of October - November.
kati Mah	Seventh month of the Assamese Calender. (October-November).
Khair	<i>Imperata cylindrica</i> .
Kharu	Name of the bangle.
Khesari	<i>Lathyrusstativus</i> .
Kotaha	<i>Bamboosarundinacea</i> .
Kun	Lathe.
Lakhimi	Name of the Hindu Goddess.
Laru	Home made sweet prepared of co-conut.
Lau	Gourd.
Lota	Small water pot.
Maduli	Name of a ornament.
Magh	Tenth month of the Assamese calender. (January - February).
Mandhara	To give respect.
Mangalsowa	To see the good fortune.
Mara	To beat.
Mashkalai	Vigamungo.
Matar	<i>Pista sativum</i> .
Megh maha	cloud.
Mekhela chaddar	A typical attire of Assamese women.
Mosuri	<i>Latipesaphaca</i> .
Muga	Native silk.
Muharram	Islamic religious festival.
Mung	<i>Vignaradiata</i> .
Murarteldiya	Smearing oil on the head.

Muri	Puffed rice.
Murkhurua	The shaving of head.
Muthikharu	Name of a bangle.
Namaz	Islamic prayer.
Napit	Barber.
Nazabi	Do not go.
Niari	Anvil.
Nikah	Marriage.
Odal	Sterculiavillosa.
Outenga	Digitariaindica.
Paddy	Oryzasativa.
Paenokhati	Soldering implement.
Pugri	Turban.
Pagha	Rope.
Paisa	Coin.
Pajama	A loose trouser.
Paniloya	Fetching water.
Pat	Jute.
Payal	Name of an ornament.
Payas	Home made sweet prepared of rice, milk and sugar.
Phool	Ear ring.
Phot	A mark on the forehead.
Pitha	Home made sweet.
Prashad	Edible offerings to divinities.
Puh	Nineth month of the Assamese Calender. (November - December).
Rang	Colour.

Rangali Bihu	Assamese festival perform in the month of Bohag. (April.)
Rashlila	A kind of festival.
Rava	Pandal.
Saki	Earthen lamp.
Sal	Shorerarobusta.
Saleng kapor	A thin cloth.
Sam	Artocarpuschaplasha.
Saon	Fourth month of the Assamese calender. (July - August).
Sayad	The Sayads are the descendants of 'Ali', son-in-law of Hazarat Mahammed. But in Assam, the term includes also those who are not true descendant of 'Ali'.
Sheikh	It is a common title of the Assamese Muslims. According to E. Gait, the title was appropriated by new converts.
Sheroany	A long clock.
Sidha	Lagerstroemiaparviflora.
Simul	Salmaliamalabarica.
Sisoo	Dalbergia sisso.
Tablique party	Islamic missionary.
Taktoposh	Plain wooden bed stead.
Tamul-Pan	Betel nut and betel leaf.
Tenga Dail	Cooked pulse with sour element.
Thali	Plate.
Thuria	Ear ring.
Til	Sesame.

Tin-ali	Junction of three roads.
Tindiniya	Post-death ritual performs on the third day.
Tou	Name of a utensil.
Tulonibiya	A ritual associated with the attaining of adolescence period.

APPENDIX - I

SOCIETY

APPENDIX - I (SOCIETY)

1. Sex-Ratio = $\frac{\text{Total no. of females}}{\text{Total no. of males}} \times 1000$

2. Dependency Ratio = $\frac{\text{Persons aged (0-14)} + \text{Persons 65 yrs.}}{\text{Persons aged (15 - 64)}} \times 100$

3. Child-Women Ratio = $\frac{\text{C Children aged 0-4 years}}{\text{Women (mother) aged 15-44 yrs.}} \times 1000$

4. General fertility rate = $\frac{\text{Number of birth in a year}}{\text{Women (mother) aged (15-44)}} \times 1000$

5. Crude birth rate = $\frac{\text{Number of births in a year}}{\text{Total Population.}} \times 1000$

6. Crude death rate = $\frac{\text{Number of deaths in a year}}{\text{Total Population}} \times 1000$

7. Density of population = $\frac{\text{Area}}{\text{Population.}}$

8. Percentage of md = $\frac{i}{t} \times 100$

Where , t = total no. of marriage.

i = within specified distance.

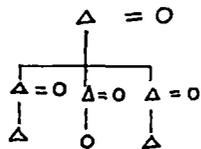
md = marriages within the specified distance.

Family - The family is a social group characterized by common residence, economic co-operation and reproduction.

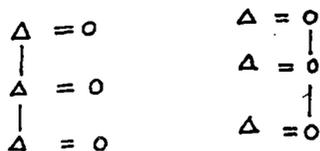
Nuclear Family - The nuclear family, consists typically of a married man and woman with their offspring.

Extended Family - An extended family consists of two or more nuclear families affiliated through an extension of the parent-child relationship rather than of the husband-wife relationship, i.e., by joining the nuclear family of a married adult to that of his parents.

Horizontal Extended Family -



Vertical Extended Family -



APPENDIX - II
ECONOMY

APPENDIX - II (ECONOMY)

$$S = \sqrt{\frac{\sum (x - \bar{x})^2}{n}}$$

Where, x = Total number of workers engaged
in a specific occupation of a village.

n = Number of villages.

\bar{x} = Total number of workers engaged in a specific occupation
Number of villages.

A P P E N D I X - I I I

M A P S

APPENDIX - III (Maps)

<u>Figure no.</u>	<u>Title</u>
I.	Thana Hajo (District Kamrup).
II	Thana Kamalpur (District Kamrup).
III	Thana Gauhati (District Kamrup)
IV	Thana Mangoldoi (District Darrang)
V	Thana Tezpur (District Sonitpur).
VI	Thana Dhekiajuli (District Sonitpur).
VII	Thana Kotiabor (District Nowgong).
VIII	Thana Dhing (District Nowgong).
IX	Thana Nowgong (District Nowgong)
X	Thana Golaghat (District Golaghat).
XI	Thana Teok (District Jorhat).

<u>Figure no.</u>	<u>Title</u>
XII	Thana Jorhat (District Jorhat).
XIII	Thana Nazira (District Sibsagar)
XIV	Thana Amguri (District Sibsagar)
XV	Thana North Lakhimpur. (District Lakhimpur).
XVI	Thana Dibrugarh (District Dibrugarh).
XVII	Thana Sadiya (District Dibrugarh).

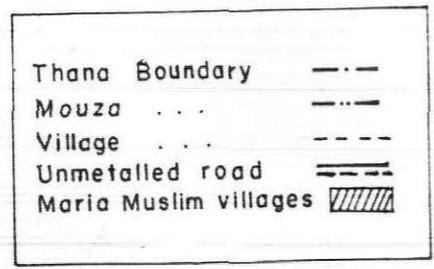
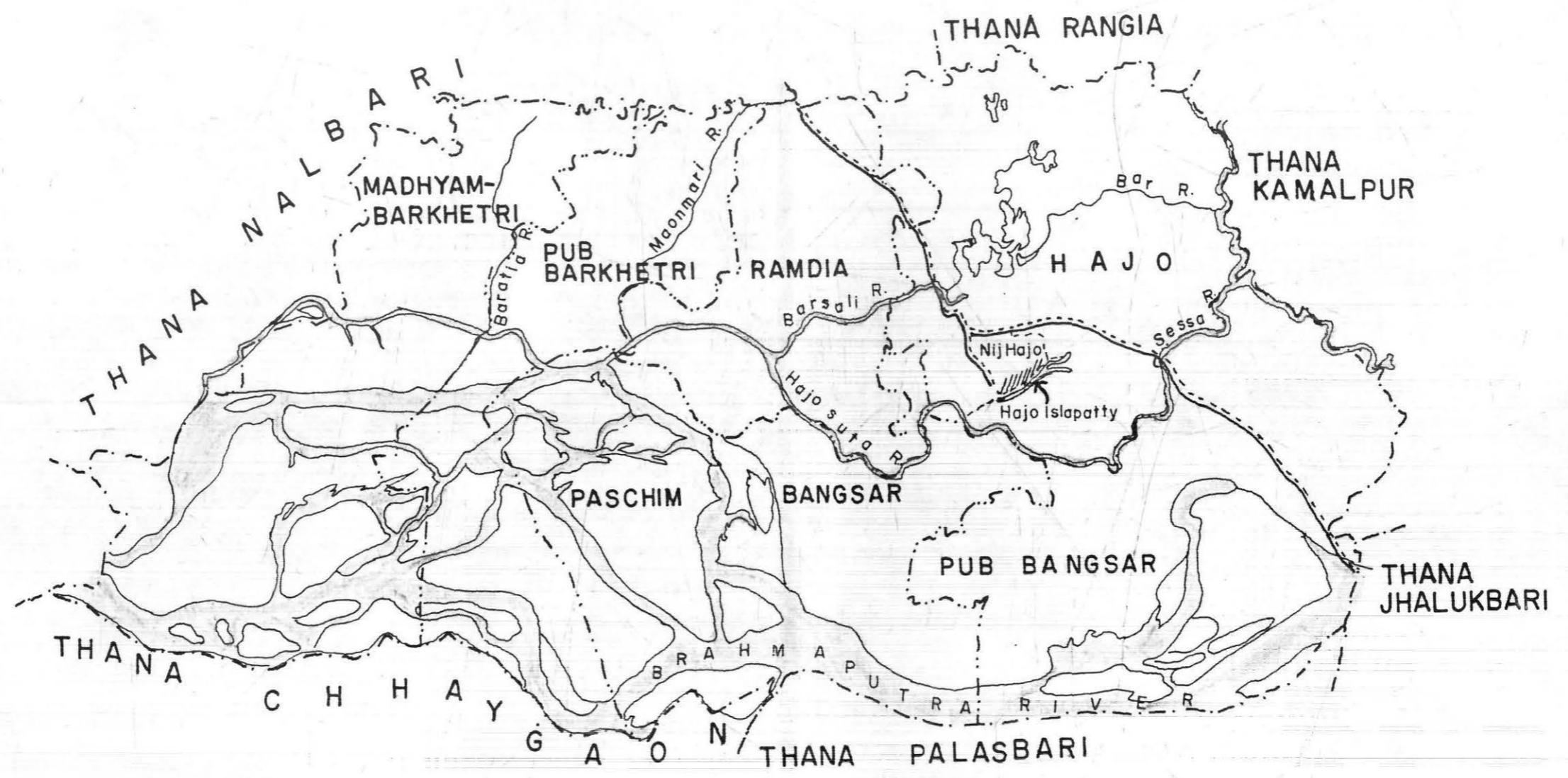
THANA HAJO
DISTRICT KAMRUP



26°
20'
N

15'

10'

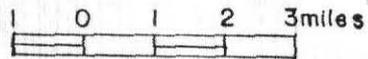


9° 15' E 20' 25' 30' 35' 40'

FIG. I SHOWING THE MARIA MUSLIM VILLAGES

THANA KAMALPUR

DISTRICT KAMRUP



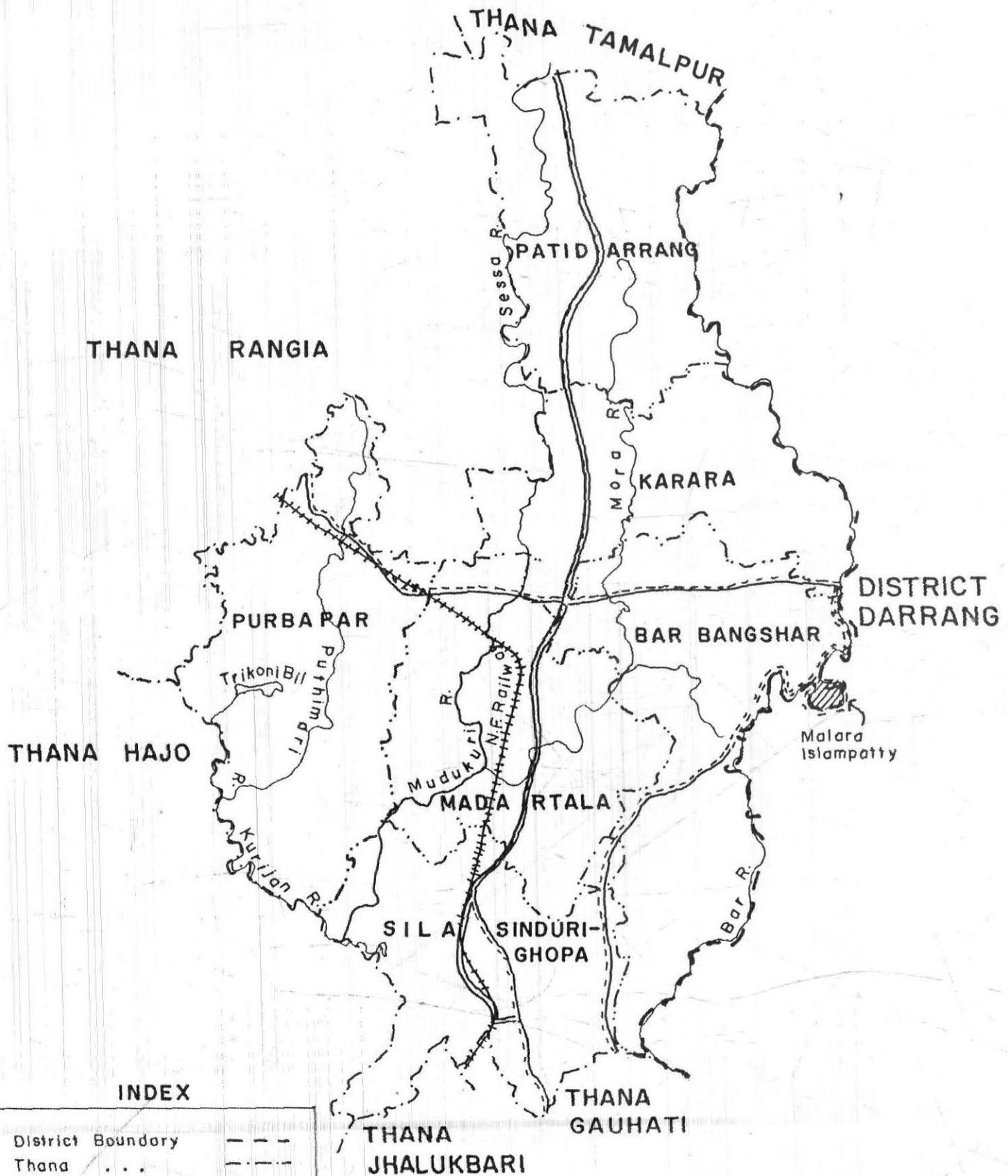
26
30
N

25

20

15

10



INDEX

District Boundary	---
Thana . . .	---
Mouza . . .	---
Village . . .	---
Metalled road	====
Unmetalled . . .	----
Cart track	== ==
Maria Muslim village	▨▨▨

91 35 E

40

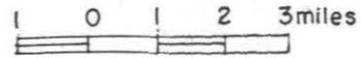
45

50

FIG. II SHOWING THE MARIA MUSLIM VILLAGE.

THANA GAUHATI

DISTRICT KAMRUP



26°
15' N.

10'

5'

26°
0'

THANA KAMALPUR

THANA JHALUKBARI

RAMCHARAMI

THANA PALASBARI

DISTRICT DARRANG

DISTRICT

NOW

Dayang Bil

DIMORIA

SONAPUR

Langso Bhur Bhur R.

Um Pri R.

Umbur R.

Bar Dong R.

Amnai R.

Um Pri R.

ULUBARI

BELTALA

PANBARI

SONAPUR

Digru R.

Tarako R.

Langthu Dong R.

Langkurt Dong R.

Um Pri R.

Kallang R.

Digru R.

Brahmaputra R.

Mura R.

Burat R.

Bar Dong R.

Umbur R.

Naokata R.

Langso Bhur Bhur R.

Um Pri R.

Umbur R.

Bar Dong R.

Amnai R.

Um Pri R.

INDEX

State Boundary	— · — · —
District	- - - - -
Thana	· · · · ·
Mouza	· · · · ·
Metalled road	====
Unmetalled	=====
Cart track	- - - - -
Maria Muslim village	▨

91° 40' E

45'

50'

55'

92° 0'

92° 5'

92° 10'

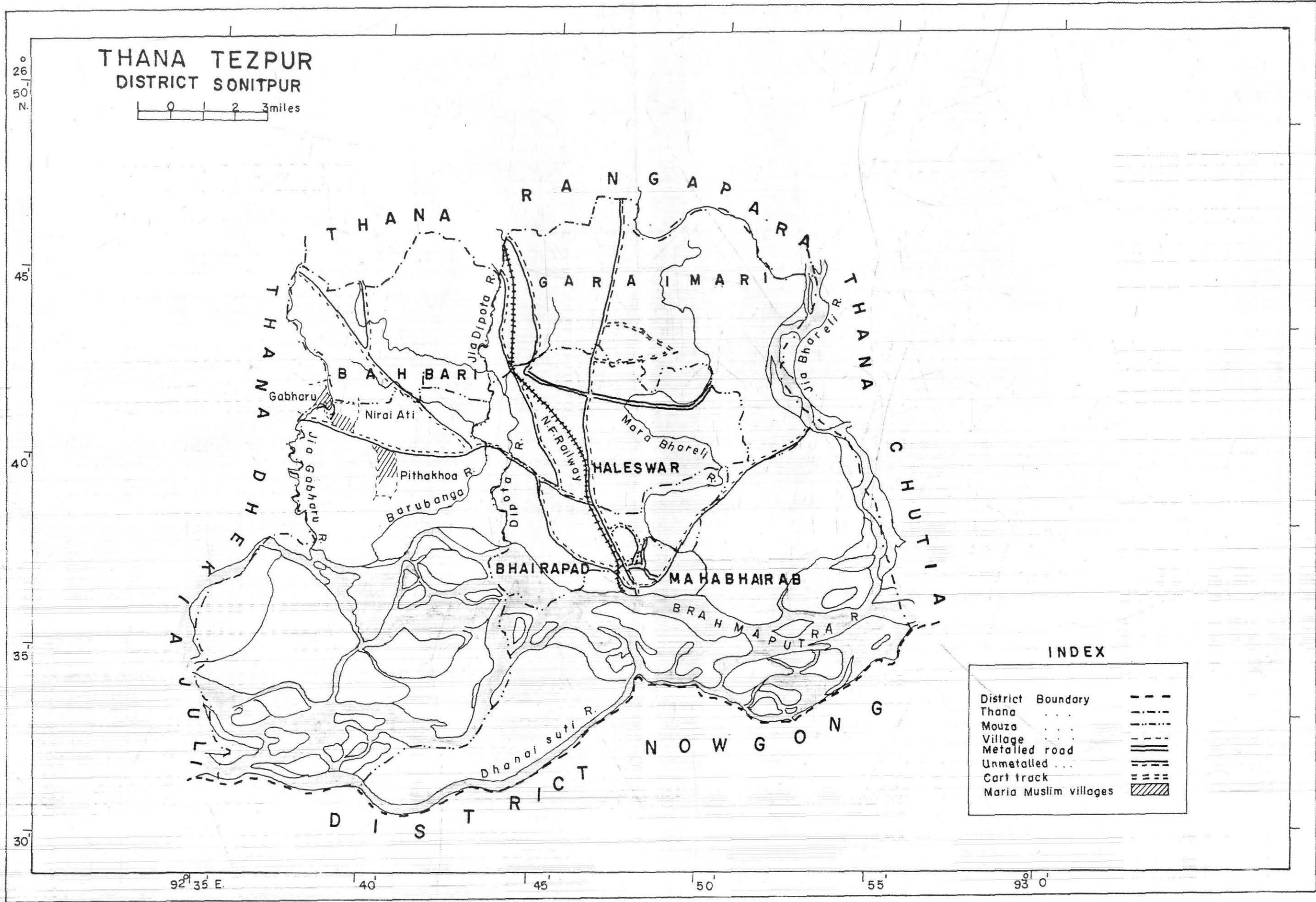


FIG. V SHOWING THE MARIA MUSLIM VILLAGES

THANA DHEKIAJULI
DISTRICT SONITPUR



27°
20'

55'

50'

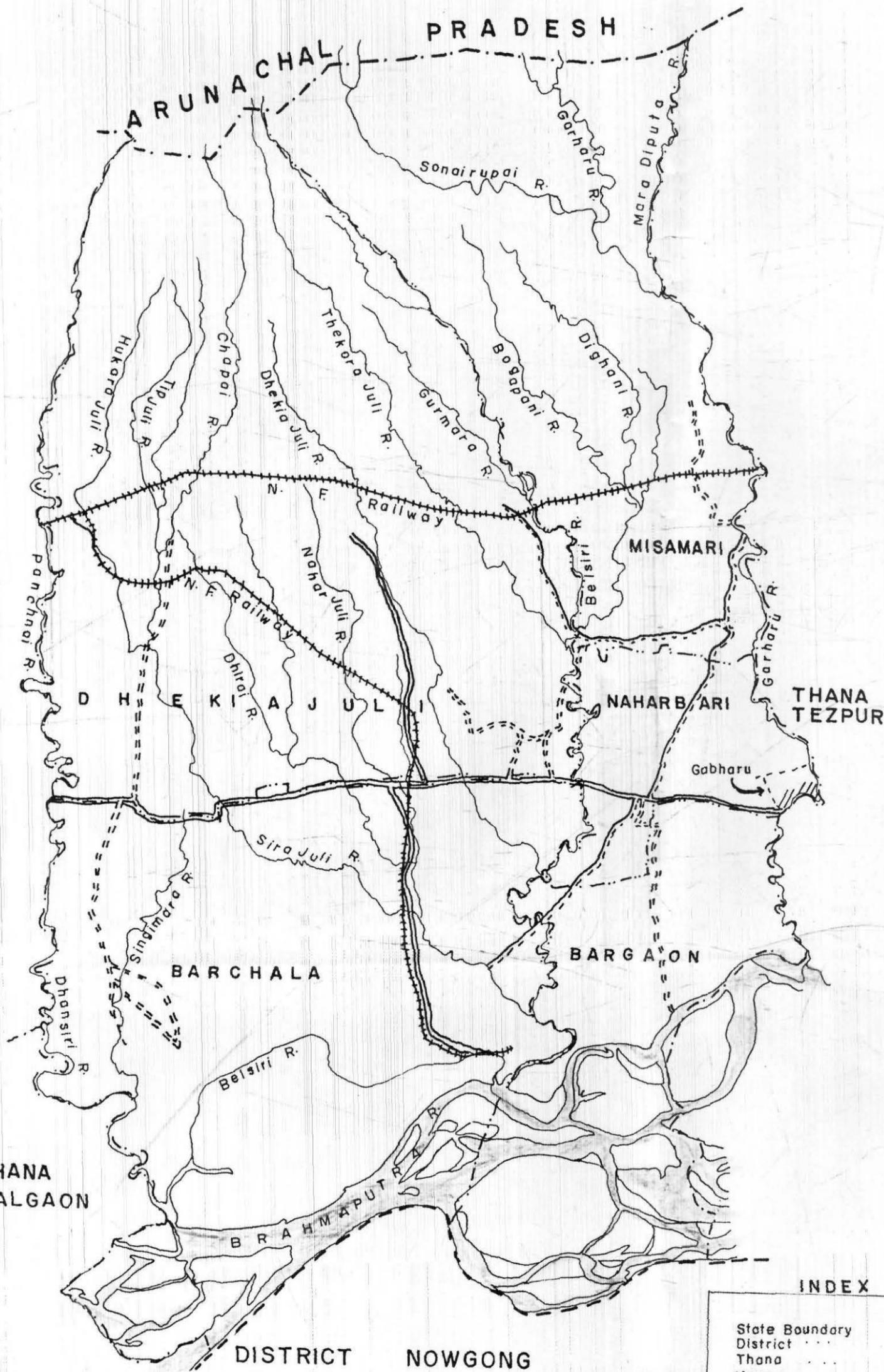
45'

40'

35'

26°

30'



THANA DALGAON

THANA MAJBAT

D H E K I A J U L I

MISAMARI

NAHARBARI

THANA TEZPUR

BARCHALA

BARGAON

DISTRICT NOWGONG

INDEX

State Boundary	-----
District
Thana	-----
Mouza
Village
Metalled road	=====
Unmetalled
Cart track	-----
Maria Muslim village	//////

92° 20' E

25'

30'

35'

40'

FIG. VI SHOWING THE MARIA MUSLIM VILLAGE

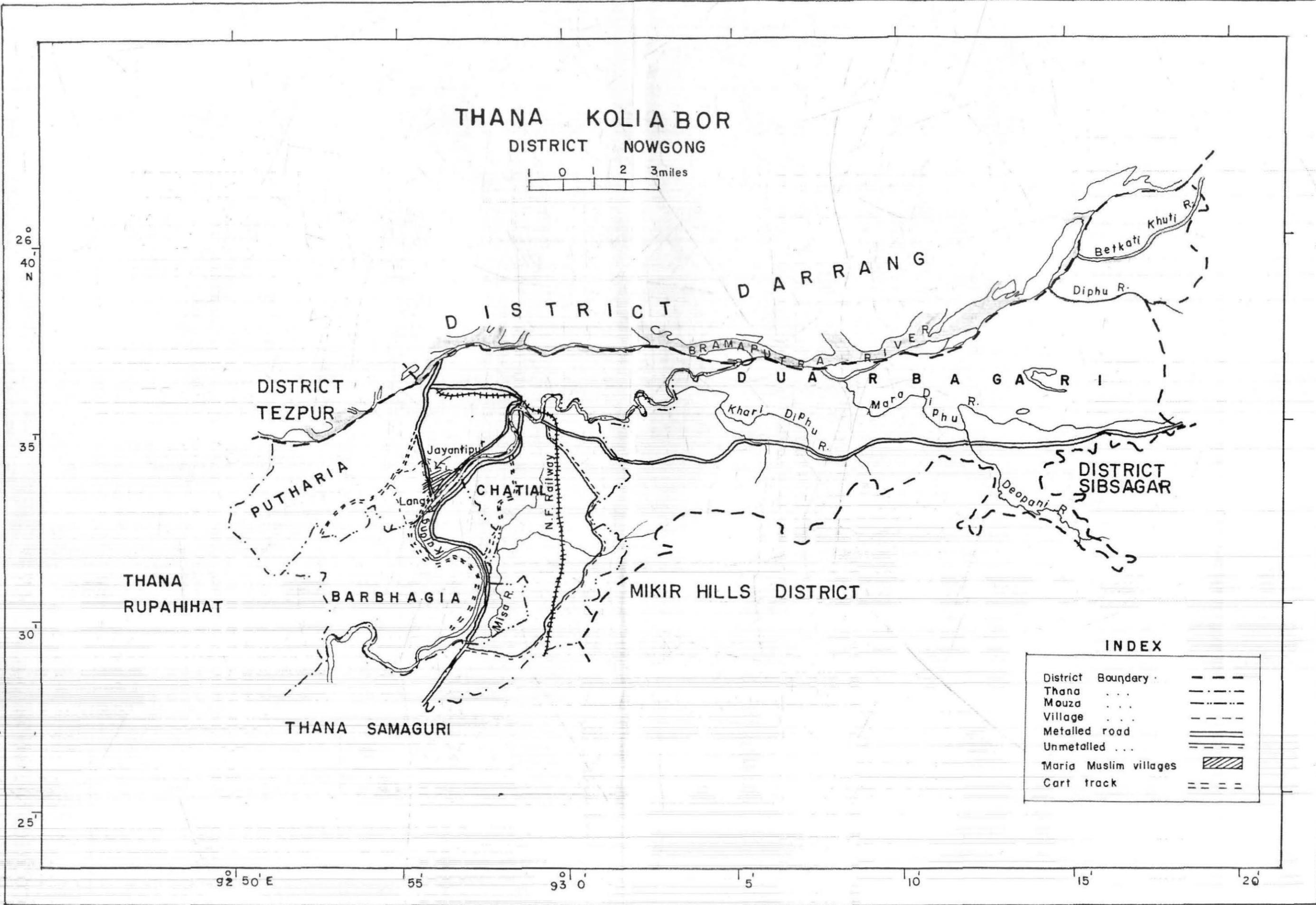


FIG. VII SHOWING THE MARIA MUSLIM VILLAGES

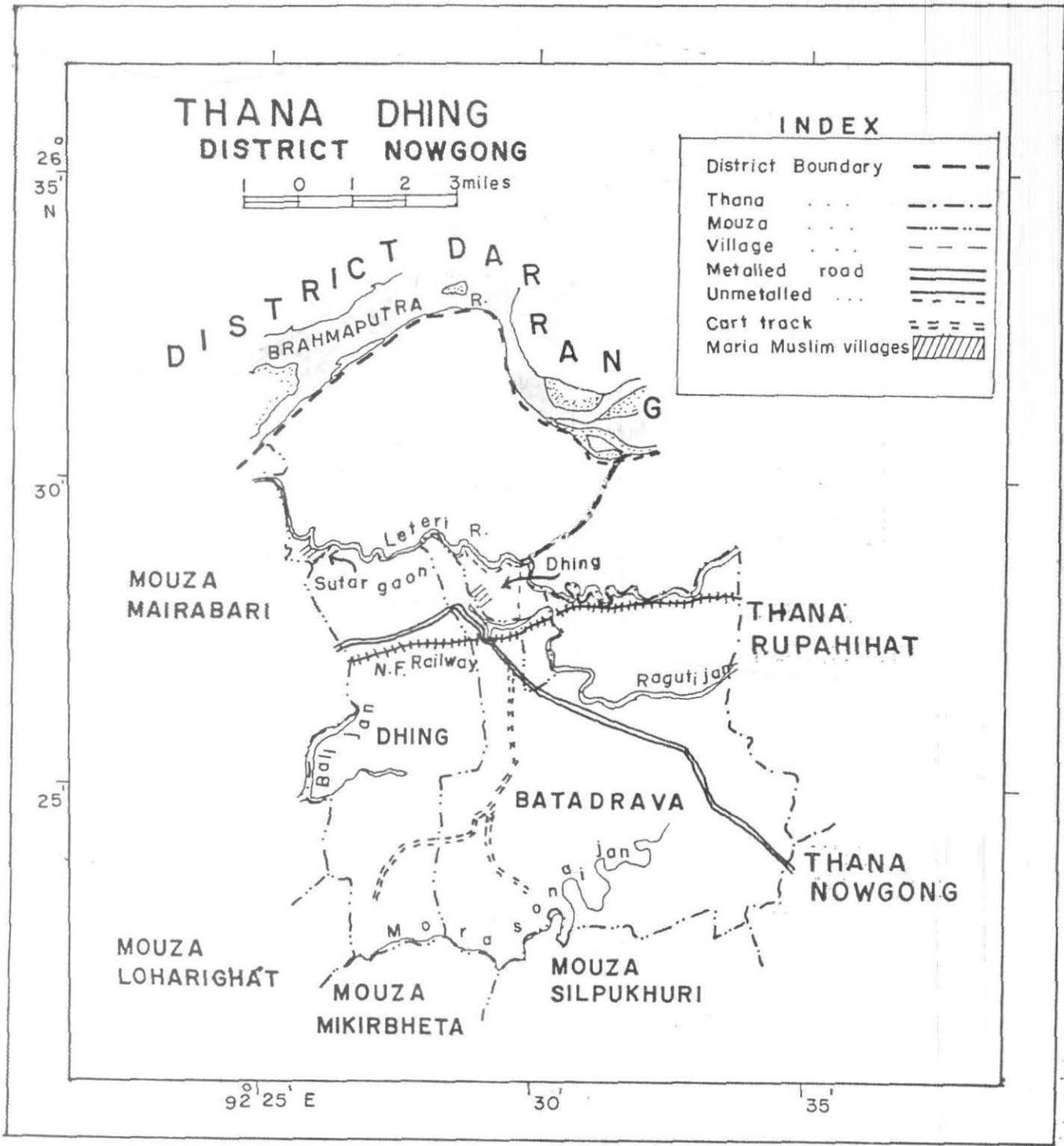


FIG. VIII SHOWING THE MARIA MUSLIM VILLAGES

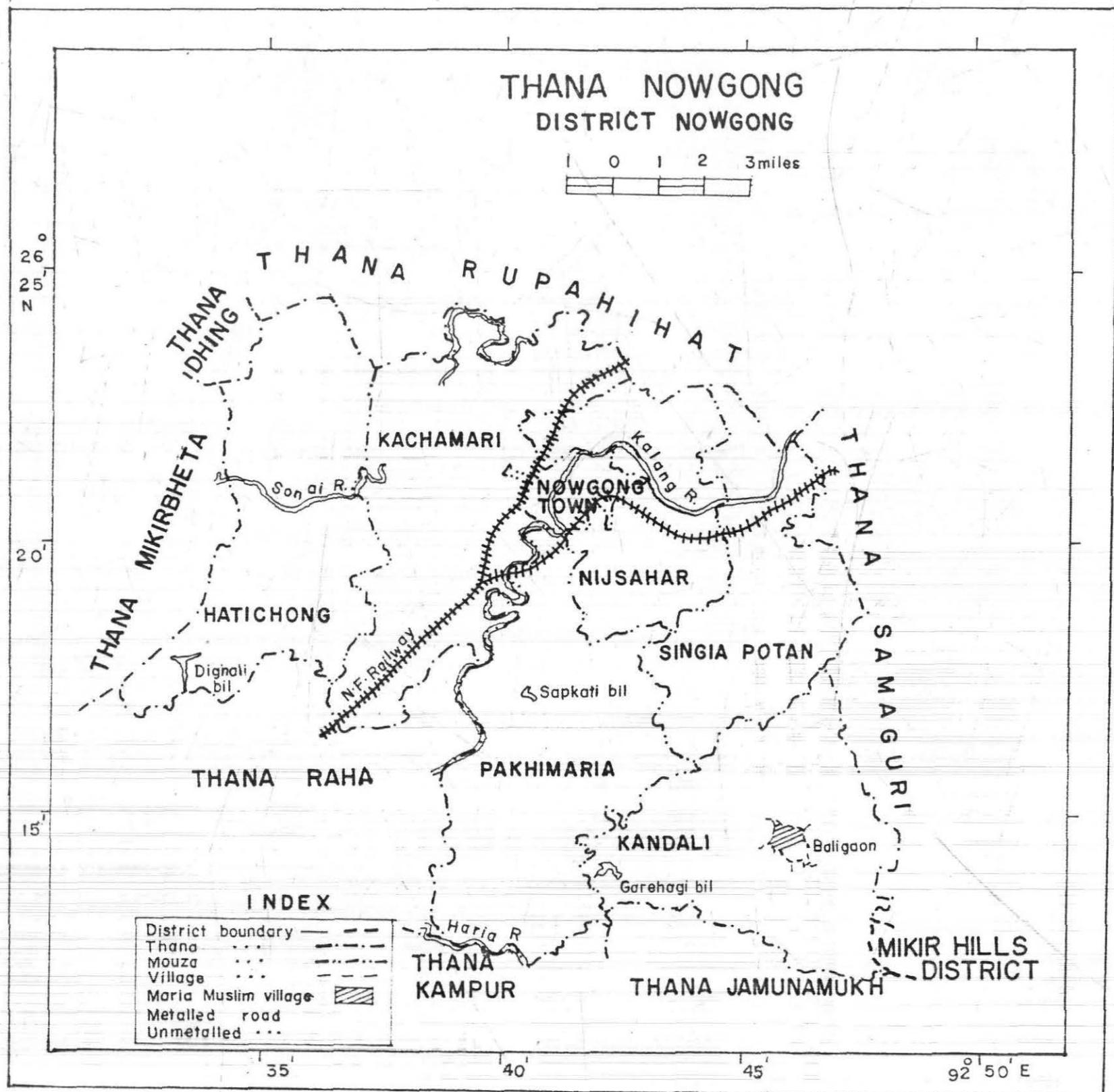
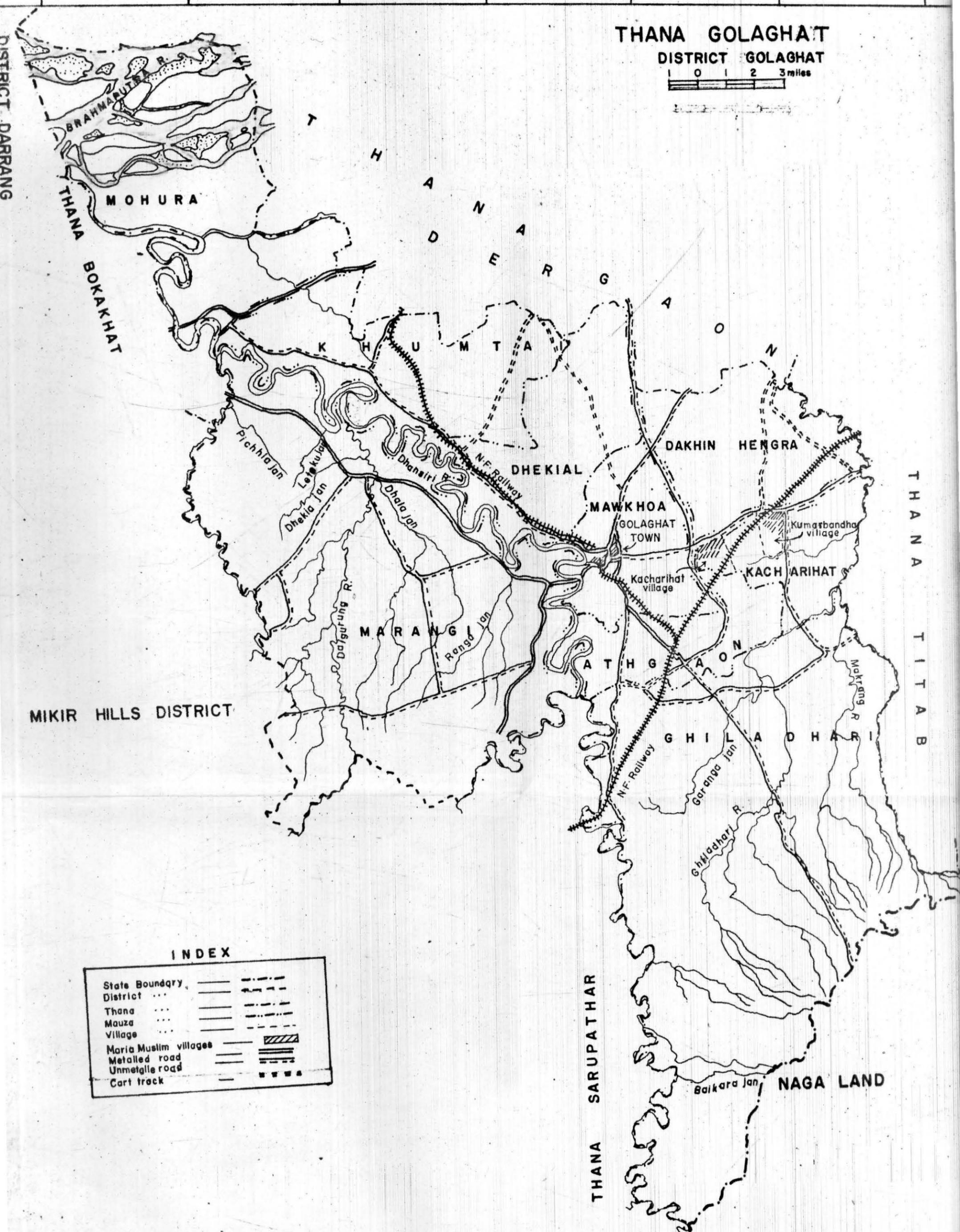


FIG-IX SHOWING THE MARIA MUSLIM VIL LAGE

THANA GOLAGHAT

DISTRICT GOLAGHAT

0 1 2 3 miles



INDEX

State Boundary	— · — · — ·
District	- - - - -
Thana	— — — — —
Mauza	· · · · ·
Village	▨
Maria Muslim villages	▨
Metalled road	— — — — —
Unmetalled road	- - - - -
Cart track	· · · · ·

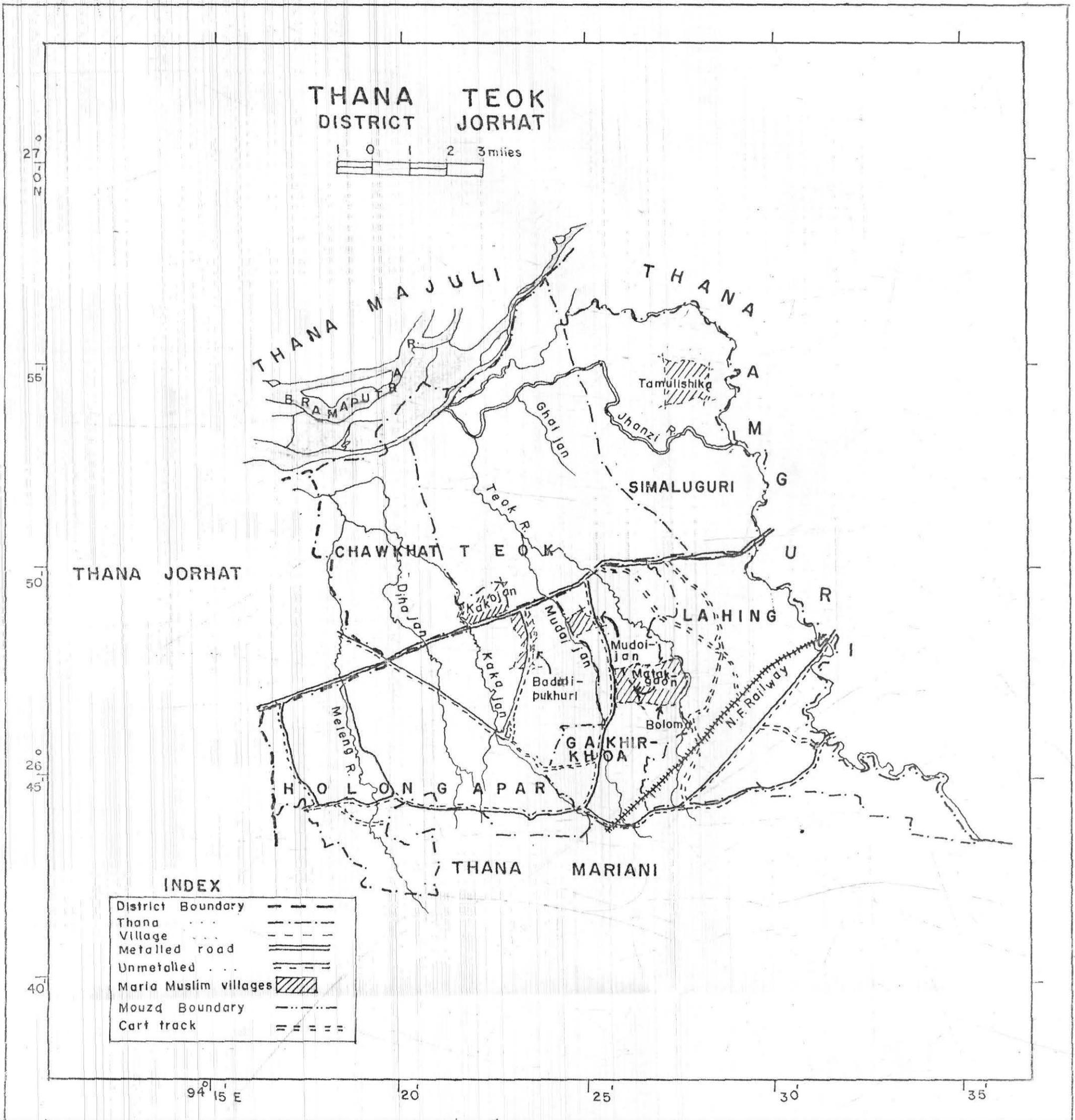


FIG. XI SHOWING THE MARIA MUSLIM VILLAGES

THANA JORHAT

DISTRICT JORHAT

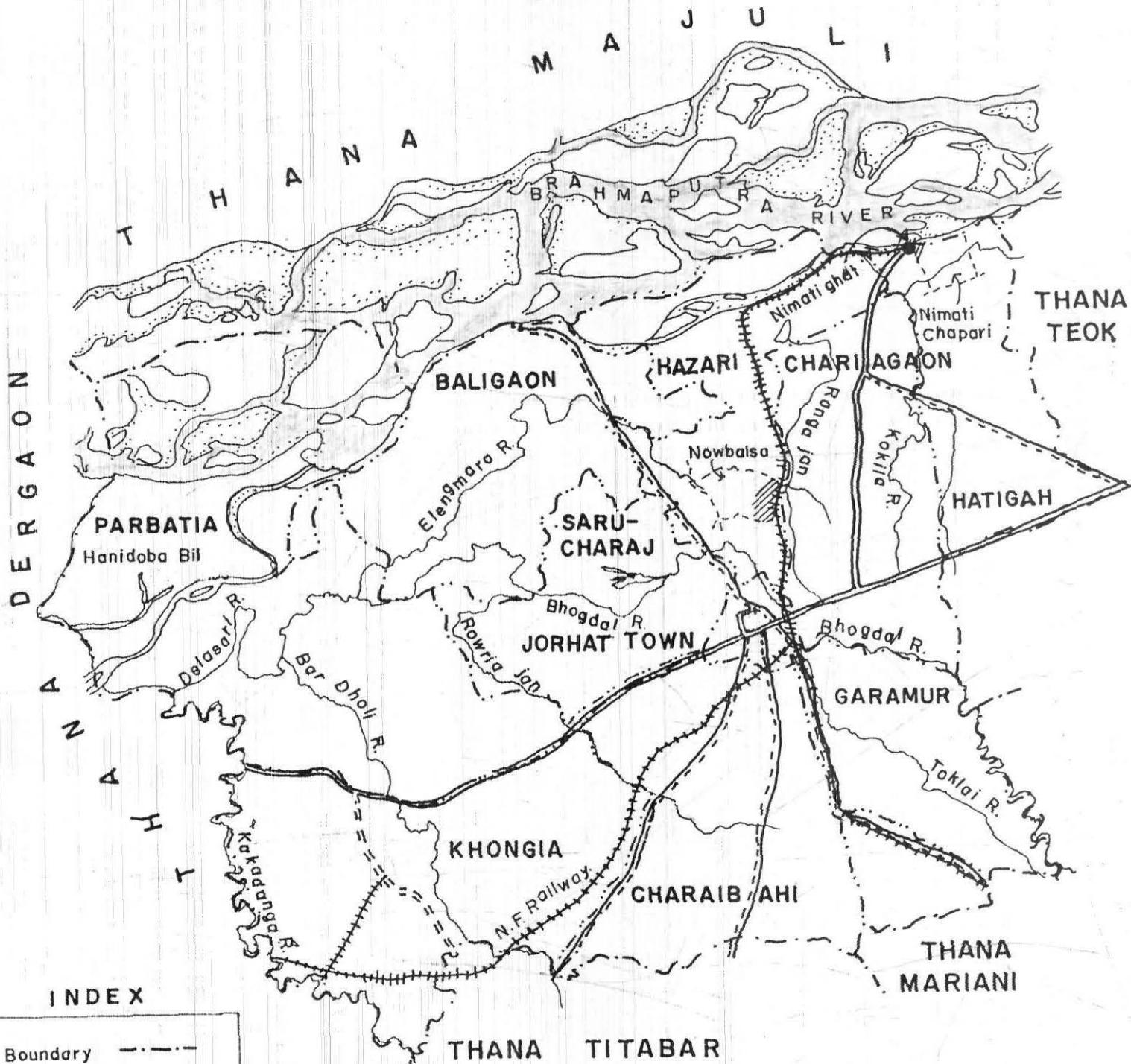


26° 55' N

50'

45'

40'



INDEX

Thana Boundary	— · — · —
Mouza	·····
Village	·····
Metalled road	====
Unmetalled	·····
Cart track	— · — · —
Maria Muslim villages	▨

94° 0' E

5'

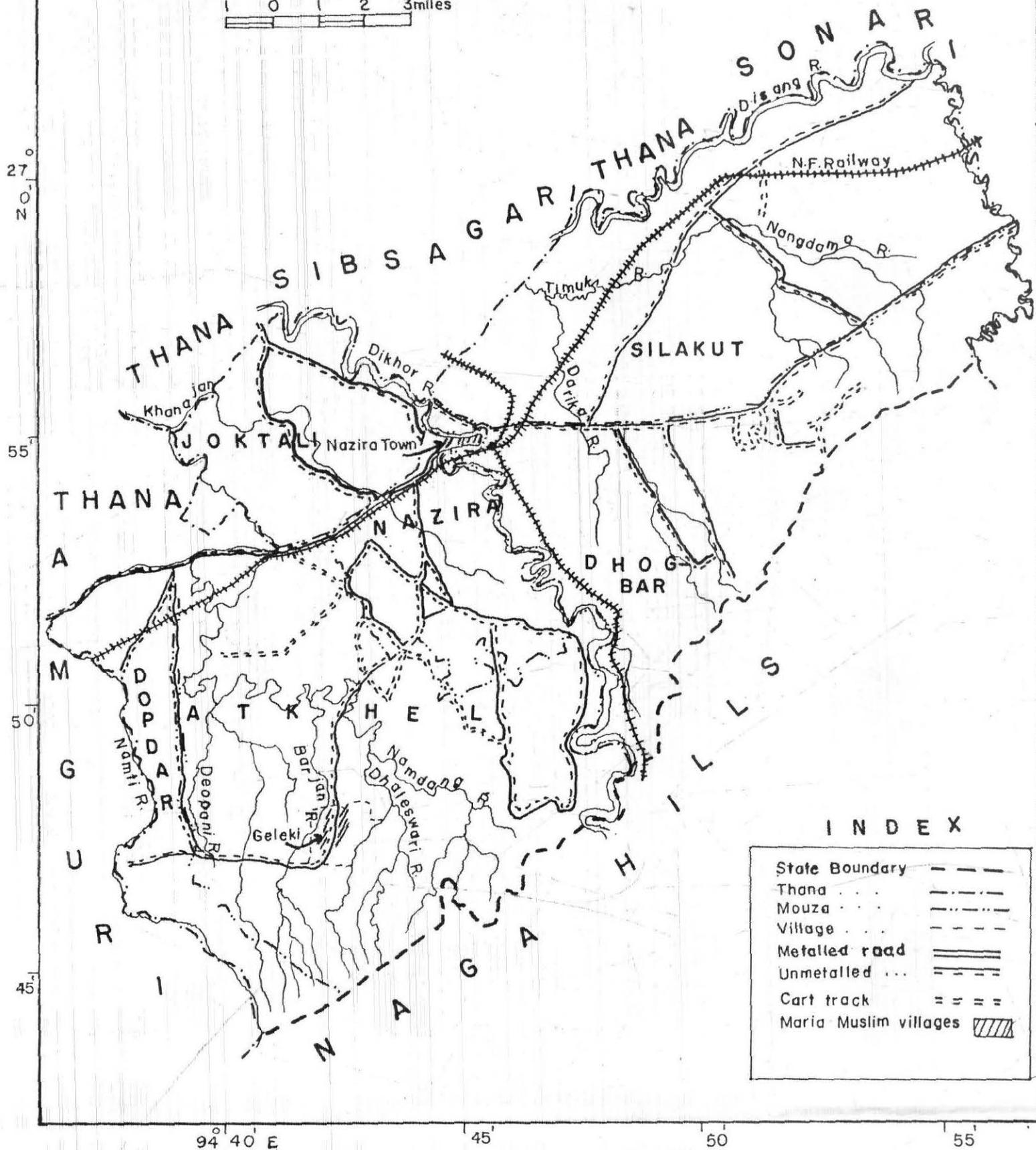
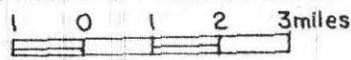
10'

15'

20'

FIG- XII SHOWING THE MARIA MUSLIM VILLAGES

THANA NAZIRA
DISTRICT SIBSAGAR



INDEX

State Boundary	---
Thana
Mouza	-----
Village	-----
Metalled road	====
Unmetalled	----
Cart track	==
Maria Muslim villages	▨

FIG. XIII SHOWING THE MARIA MUSLIM VILLAGES

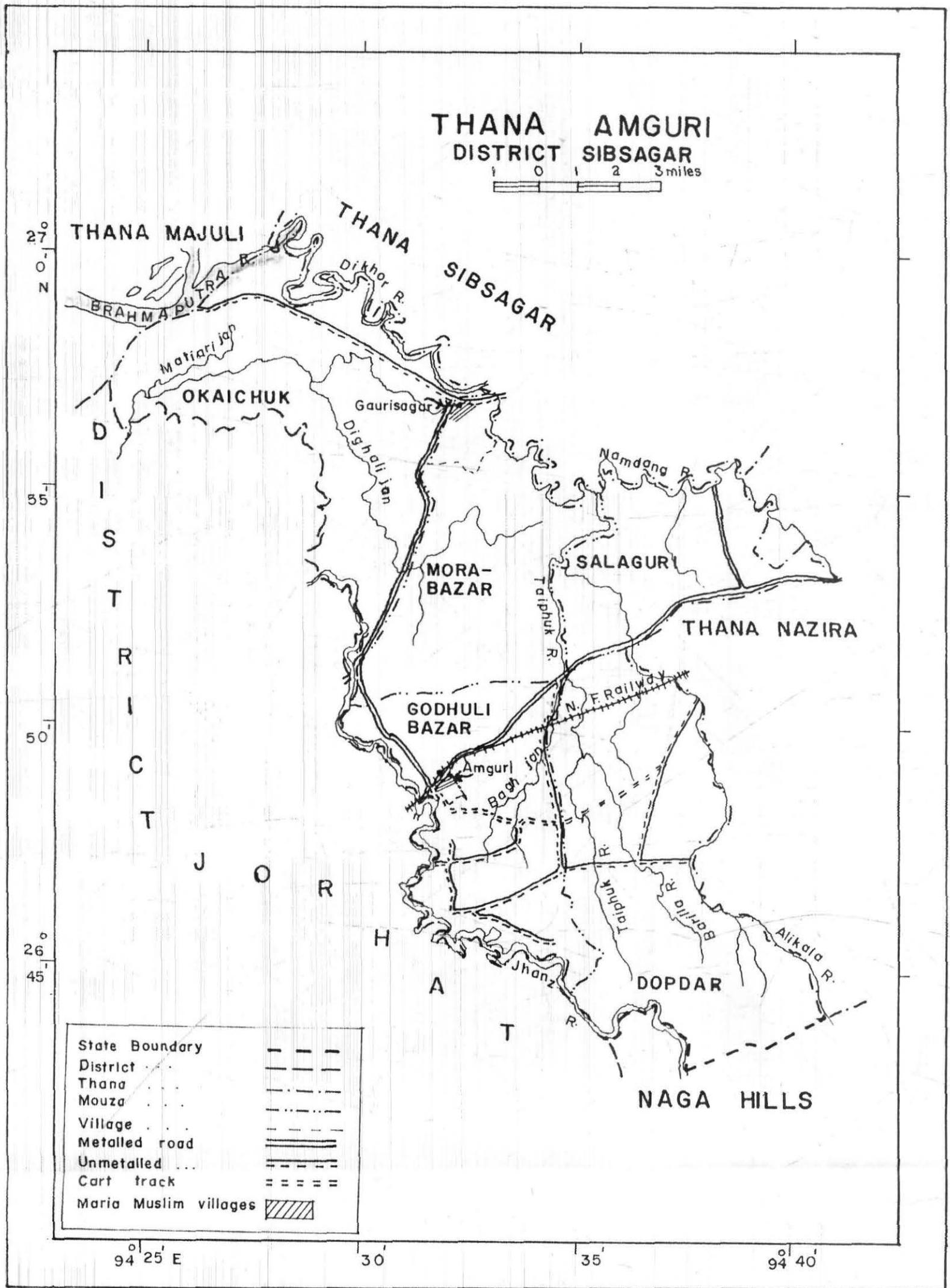


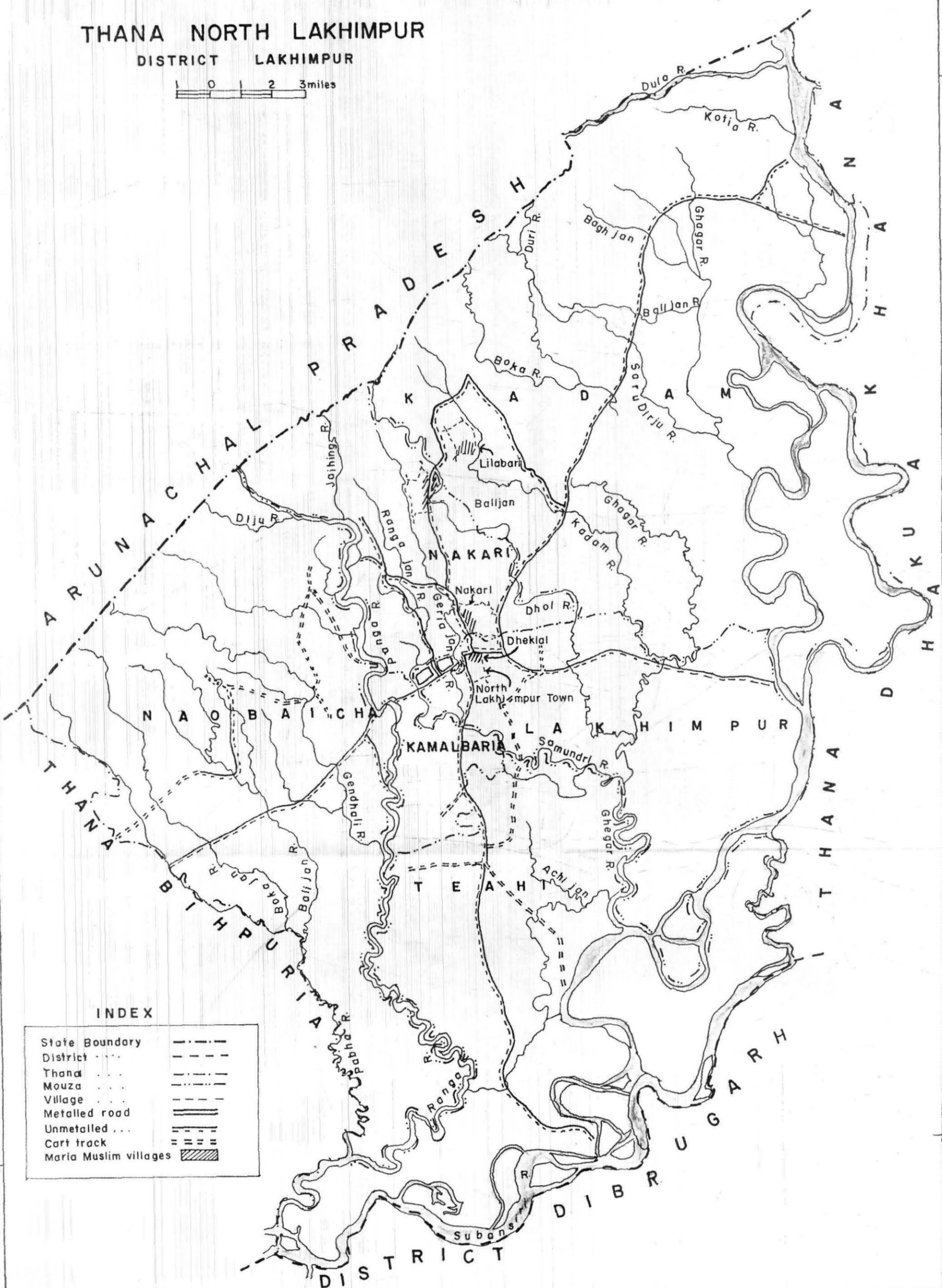
FIG. XIV SHOWING THE MARIA MUSLIM VILLAGES

THANA NORTH LAKHIMPUR

DISTRICT LAKHIMPUR



27° 30' N
25°
20°
15°
10°
5°
27° 0'



INDEX

State Boundary	-----
District	-----
Thana	-----
Mouza	-----
Village	-----
Metalled road	=====
Unmetalled	-----
Cart track	-----
Maria Muslim villages	▨

93° 50' 55 94° 0' 5' 10' 15'

FIG XV SHOWING THE MARIA MUSLIM VILLAGES

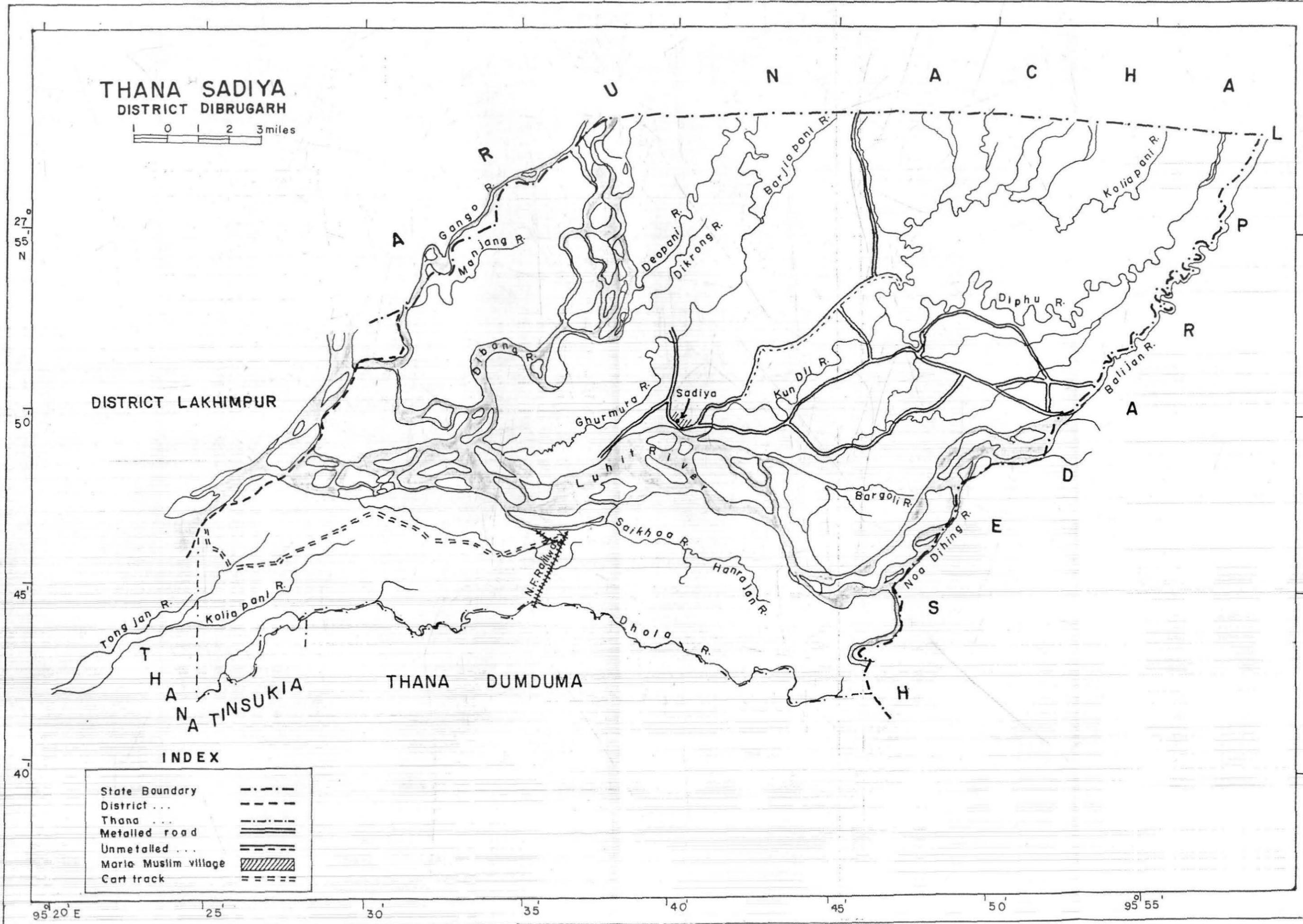


FIG. XVII SHOWING THE MARIA MUSLIM VILLAGE