

MUSLIM WOMEN IN TRIPURA

**(Aspects of their Status,
Roles, Problems and Prospects)**

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With grand reverence, this thesis is dedicated to

My Father

and

Sri Swadesh Ranjan Das, a self-educated scholar,
Freedom-fighter and devoted writer on 'New Humanism'

PREFACE

Women are considered secondary segments of the human society. It appears as universal phenomenon. They are honored as mothers who render invaluable service to the sustenance of human race. In the growth of human intellect and intellectual works of the human society, their contribution is either negated or evaluated in second consideration. And when a few women did wonderful works in any important field of human development, they are regarded as exceptional. Women carry the wheel of production system but they are not duly recognized as the part of production. They also confine themselves within the conventional roles. However society is not a static one. Changes come either through the process of evolution as well as human efforts. Response to the change of situation may vary in different section in different degrees. The late response of the Muslims in India to the western education of Science and Technology might have affected the community women much. Muslim women of India have responded to the changes more lately than their counterparts. In Tripura they are not exception. The historical setback (i.e. Partition of India), the geographical location, non intervention of traditional economy and its political status in the nation's perspective, all these account for backwardness of the state itself. They are regarded backward in all respects of their participation in education, economy, politics and many social activities. They are ^{lagging} behind the current stream of social development. Since the Princely Tripura, Muslims are found as not only contributing to the major revenue source of the state but also politically conscious. A sizeable number of men are found in several modern occupations. The contribution of women remains invisible. The matrimonial status of Muslim women and their low participation in education and social activities are subject of popular debates and discussions. Therefore, a resercher is to explore the reasons behind this high gender gap among the Muslims as well as the gap between Muslim women and other communities' women. It is an wonder that in the socio-religious philosophy of Islam, women are accorded high dignity but in real situation they are found in low status. Hence to study the sociological reality is the driving source of inspiration for the present research work on Muslim women in Tripura.

The basic objective of this study is to examine the status and role of Muslim women of Tripura. Emphasis has also been given here to explore their problems and prospects of development and change.

For completion of this thesis I should express my first gratitude to my Supervisor, Dr. Sekh Rahim Mondal. He liberally agreed to guide and supervise me when I first met him as a Lecturer in a Refresher Course arranged by the Political Science Department in the North Bengal University in 1996. I did my Ph.D. Registration in 1997 under him in the Department of Sociology of North Bengal University. Unfortunately, I could not complete the work within scheduled time. Then I registered again in 2002 to continue my Research work. For his necessary guidance, I have always maintained contact with Dr. Mondal. He is now a Professor in the Department of Anthropology of this University. He has never disappointed me to extend necessary supervision. So I am obliged to him.

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I can't forget the help and support received from the local Party offices of C.P.I.(M) and the Nagar Panchayat Offices at Sonamura, Udaipur and Kailasahar in Tripura. I am thankful to Mr. Sahid Chowdhury (M.L.A., Tripura Bidhan Sabha) for his nice cooperation. It is a good chance to express my deep gratitude to the people of the study areas specially the informants, respondents and others who have expressed their eagerness to know the results of this study. I am grateful to the Directorate of Higher Education, Agartala for granting me permission to do Research work without hampering my normal duty for the institution.

Lastly, I wish to express my feelings to my mother, sisters, brothers, my beloved daughter, son and the students. Ranesh Bhattacharya, my son has done a large part of computer works sacrificing his pleasure works in computer.

I wish to express my sincere hearts to all.

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14.7.06
Signature

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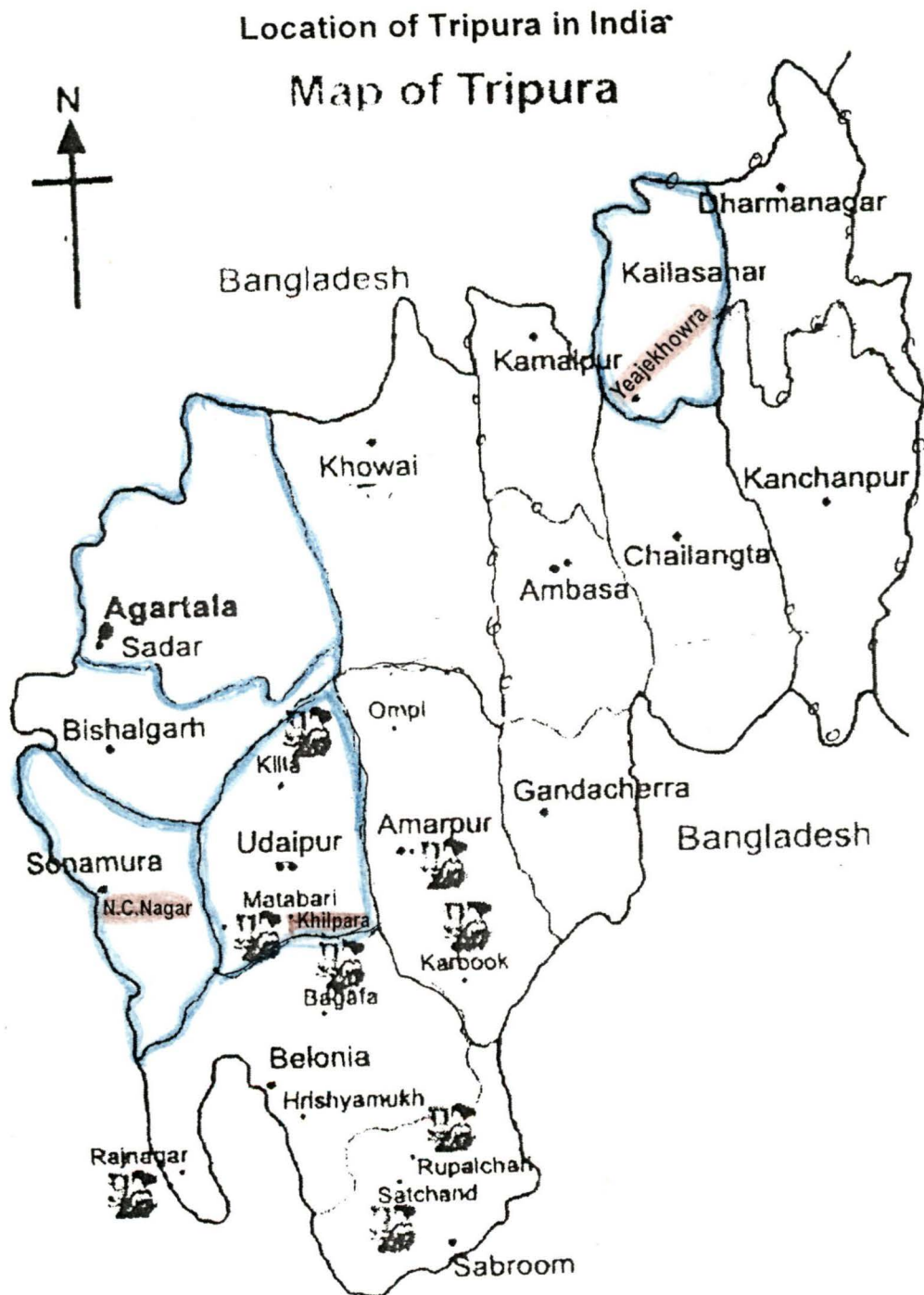
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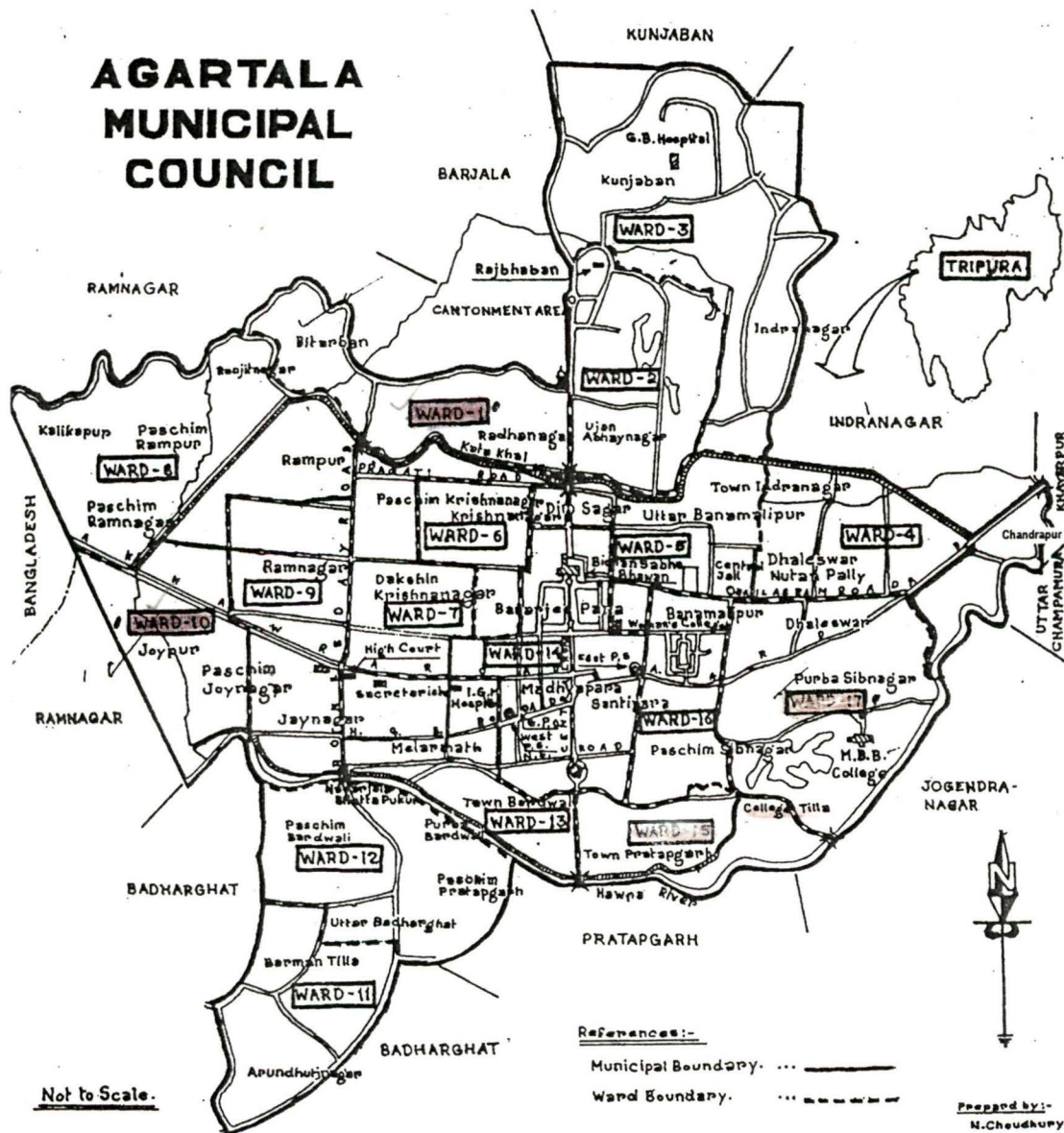
B.A.	: Bachelor of Arts
B.Sc.	: Bachelor of Science
G.P.	: Gram Panchayat
H.S.	: Higher Secondary
I.C.D.S.	: Integrated Child Development Services
I.R.D.P.	: Integrated Rural Development Programme
J.B.	: Junior Basic
J.R.Y.	: Jawahar Rozgar Yojana
M.A.	: Master of Arts
M.Com.	: Master of Commerce
M.Sc.	: Master of Science
M.C.	: Municipal Corporation
N.F.H.S.	: National Family Health Survey.
N.G.O.	: Non Government Organization
N.L.M.	: Notional Literacy Mission
N.P.	: Nagar Panchayat
O.B.Cs.	: Other Backmond clases
P.G.	: Post Graduate
P.S.	: Panchayat Samiti
S.B.	: Senior Basic
S.S.C.	: Secondary School Certificate
S.T.E.P.	: Support to Training cum Employment Programme for Women.

- T.B.S.E : Tripura Board of Secondary Education
- T.E. : Tripura Era, (less than 590 years of Christian Era)
- T.L.C. : Tripura Literacy Campaign
- T.S.R. : Tripura State Rifles
- Z.P. : Zilla Parishad
- F.C.C. : Family Counseling Center
- N.F.H.S. : National Family Health Survey
- S.T.E.P. : Support To Training Cum Employment Programme (for Women)

The present research has covered field work at three villages and three corresponding towns of three districts in Tripura : N.C.Nagar, Khilpara, Yeajekhowra; Agartala, Udaipur and Kailasahar. The following map shows the location of study areas.



AGARTALA MUNICIPAL COUNCIL



Chapter - 1

Introduction

1.1. Background of the Study :

Tripura, is one of the seven sister states of North East region in India. It is a virgin land for scholars to study, specially, on the peoples of the state. Not only Tripura, but the entire north east is very little known to the people of mainland India, mainly because of its isolation in development and communication. The Muslim population of the region is 23.10 percent of total population. In Tripura they constitute 8.00 percent of the total state population and 2.8 percent of the regional Muslim population (Census: 2001). But they have got little attention of the scholars and researchers. Academic works on the economy, society, culture and religion of the people of north eastern states are concentrated mainly on the tribes of the region. Even the works on religion and culture of the northeast India 'have sidelined the Muslims'.

The historical background of the Muslims in Tripura shows that they are not original inhabitants of the land but settled in the early medieval period. One of the earlier kings of Tripura brought a number of Muslim families along with other Bengali castes of Hindu communities from the Muslim Sultan of Bengal and he arranged their permanent settlement in all over Tripura. According to *Rajmala*, the prince, Ratnafa took the military help of Tugral of Lakhnabati to defeat his brothers and conquer the throne of his father. He was the first king to introduce Muslims in Tripura (Singha: 1997). Since then from time to time, the Muslim Bengalis, like the major Hindu Bengali inhabitants, migrated from the adjacent plain lands. The Tripura was regarded as District of Tipperah or State of Hill Tipperah. Only in 1920, the British government agreed to regard the territory as 'Tripura' instead of Hill Tipperah. However, the early Muslim settlers did not come of higher strata of society with ambition of fortune-making; rather, they came from the down strata of society to be perpetuated in the next generation. During the Muslim invasion from Bengal and Delhi, some of them became landlords and zamindars too. History records their non-fanatic, non-aggressive

nature and conscious care for communal harmony. With their ambition-free life, they carried those socio-cultural values which were traditional and habit-oriented. History also records that Muslim men came forward to participate in modern or English education when it was initiated first by the kings of the state. At that time, though girls of other communities were sent to schools, the Muslims maintained reservation about the education of their girls and women. As a result, they have been lagging behind in all respects of participation in comparison to their own men and even S.C. and S.T. women of Tripura. In real situation, they may be called marginal of marginal groups.

Since the statehood of Tripura in 1971, women have been trying to utilize their rights and privileges conferred by the constitution of India. But Muslim women seem to be far away from this. Till 1980s, there was no special attention by the government or non-government organization to these vast womenfolk who belong to the general category in legal position but backward in real situation. Later in the late ninety, government attention is drawn to this womenfolk belonging to the largest religious minority of the state. Tripura is being a remote and border surrounding area, has its own peculiar problem which can not be solved without their conscious cooperation. The progress and development of this tiny north eastern state like Tripura will be stumbled frequently if the women lag behind. But unfortunately, the vast womenfolk of the Muslim community are not aware of their constitutional rights and status. A number of popular myths exist behind their backwardness. Popular impression is not high about them. The main reason behind this is the lack of sociological information about their religious and social institutions. Imtiaz Ahmed opines that there is little sociological information on the social framework within which Muslim groups operate (quoted in **Moinuddin**: 2000). Hence, this is an appropriate field for exploration with utmost importance. In other states of India like Kerala, Uttar Pradesh (Lucknow), Delhi, Rajasthan, Bihar and West Bengal, scholars have taken attempt to account for the realities or constraints of Muslim women. The present study is a modest effort in this direction.

1.2. Theoretical Perspective on Women's Studies :

Theoretical approach to study the women is based on three major perspectives like: i) Structural functional, ii) Marxist and iii) feminist perspectives. The purpose of all these approaches to examine and analyze the status of women in the context of socio-cultural reality and to evaluate the contribution of women in family and society

i) Structural- Functional Perspective :

It is a kind of approach which highlights the inter-relation between women's status and the nature of social system. It views women as a social category and their activities as essentially cultural. Hence, women are to be studied in term of their roles and functions ascribed by the society. It advocates for equal harmonious relation between men and women to continue the social order. This perspective of women's study is mainly influenced by the structural-functional school of the British anthropologists. This theory is not enough to explain the causes of rapid changes in the role and status of women.

ii) Marxist Perspective :

The scholars of Marxian school have analyzed the position of women through the modes of economic production and class-structure of the society (Mondal:2004) According to this school, women's liberation lies in the fight against the capitalistic economic order and bourgeoisie class structure of society. But this perspective to view women as class in the light of class exploitation theory, can not explain sufficiently the reasons for different kinds of injustices against women based on gender relation. Though the issue has been sensitized in the Marxist writings but it could not give the solutions for the oppression of women who belong to all classes of human groups. The abolition of private property and establishment of collective ownership could not solve the problem of women's subordination to men's unilateral authority (Rai: 2004).

Feminist Perspective :

Feminist perspective means the application of gender study to a variety of social phenomena. It considers that men and women are constitutionally equal and potential for same human capability and the appeared differences are the outcome of social institution. Feminism has been divided into some sub orientations like Liberal Feminism, Socialist Feminism, Radical Feminism and Post modern Feminism. It may be mentioned that the Liberal Feminism seeks equality for women adjusting with the men's world in the existing social system. While the Radical Feminism demands independence of women with a total break from the man-made culture and society and views to analyze the Women's issue by the women and for the women. (Young: 1988, Bhadra: 1992, PRIA: 1993, Mondal: 2004, Sharma: 2003).

1.3. Some Conceptual Issues:

To make any research work systematic and meaningful, the important concepts involved with the study needs to be mentioned. The most important concepts used in the study are noted below:

Status and Role: The concept of position, status and role are highly central to any study on women. According to Marvin E. Shaw, 'Position refers to a person's place in the social structure and status refers to the group members' evaluation of that position' (quoted in **Jahangir:** 1991). In the words of MacIver and Page (1967), 'Status is the social position that determines for its possessors; a degree of respect, prestige and influence'. Status refers to the differences between social groups in the social honour and prestige they are given by others. Max Weber (1947) thinks that status divisions often vary independently of class divisions. To Linton (1945), status means the position of an individual—his rights and duties in relation to total society and a role represents the dynamic aspects of a status. When an individual puts the rights and duties which constitute the status into efforts, he is performing a role. Thus the two-status and role are inseparable. Parson (1951) concludes that Status and role are very much interlinked. A particular social status involves not a single associated role but an array of associated roles. Thus, he describes 'role set' and 'status set or

status sequences' for understanding the concepts of status and role meaningfully (quoted in **Bhattacharya: 2002**).

Status of women means, as said by B.N. Mukharjee, a set of expectations regarding the attributes pertaining to the duties and responsibility of women in their role as a daughter, student, wife, mother, worker, head of the household etc. and the actions, rewards or rights which they expect from others in these positions (quoted in **Jahangir:1991**). Women are to face role-conflict more than that of men in the mothering role (or house keeper role) and career- women role.

Gender Role: This refers to a social practice associated with masculinity and femininity - what an earlier generation termed 'sex role'. Gender as a system of social meaning ascribed to physical differences, is distinguished from sex which is only a natural attribute. Gender role is a social construction and useful for challenging discrimination which is not specifically sex-based. When roles are conceived of as static and unchanging then gender role suffers from the same problem that is for all role theory. One can cite an example of incompatible and conflicting statuses of women in our society which provides a 'notorious example' of this e.g. women have equal status with men but they are expected to achieve the status of a 'good house keeper' (**Bhattacharya : 2002**). The study of gender-relation is prerequisite for understanding the situation of women in different society and culture. The concept is linked with ethnic, religious and class identities and dynamic in nature as being always influenced by the change of socio-economic forces. The gender relation among the Muslims is to be treated in the light of historical factors associated with the patriarchal values in south East Asia.

Patriarchy: The concept of patriarchy essentially means the rule of the father or the patriarch, i.e. the male member of the household and society. Women under patriarchy are obviously valued as sub-ordinate to men. Patriarchy is not only a ruling system of society but also a value regulating the ways of thinking and behavior of the people. Since the days of pre-history, patriarchy exists. It is perpetuated through the process of institutionalization and legitimization in the socio political and legal system

of the society. It leads women to internalize the patriarchal values and ways of thinking or behaving in society (Mondal: 2004).

In the Muslim history also, these dominant ideology of patriarchy was operative in society and its practice certainly displayed the feature of inequalities, asymmetry and domination. In this way, the role of Muslim women was definitely influenced by the pervading system of tradition with patriarchal values which ultimately determines the gender meaning in Islam. "As a result, the existence of sexually egalitarian concepts in religious beliefs and practices of Islam does not necessarily signify the existence of sexual inequality in social structure of Muslim society" (Mondal: 2004). Actually the law of the Text or law of the country is not necessarily the measurement of women status. Traditions and customs are more powerful than law or religion to determine the status of women. Hence any study on women status 'must identify the cultural determinants and the processes through which a person becomes a woman in the cultural context of her own community' (Patel and Behera: 1999). In a patriarchy ruled society, the 'Muslim cultures prefer to consider men and women as distinct members of humanity' and 'how could the Islamic intellectual ethos develop without giving clear and responding attention to the female voice' (Wadud:1999).

Empowerment: The concept of empowerment is a recent addition to the Women study. It is a means as well as goal of self development. It is a process of generating the capabilities in a person to exercise command over one's resources. Women's empowerment is a model of gender analysis to trace their increasing equality and access to development with all potentialities. Empowerment of women in the institutional form of structural change is introduced among the women of India in the grassroot levels after the 73rd amendment of the constitution.

Gender Development: This is a process for the balanced development of society on the basis of equitable distribution of national resources between men and women in an integrated partnership of power relations. It consists of two major approaches e.g. i) women in development (WID) — a welfare approach for women emerged, in 1970s. It focuses mainly on women as passive recipients to remove the discrimination

against them and ii) Gender and Development (GAD) — an approach of women's development emerged in 1980s. It views women as active participants in development empowering them against unequal relationship with men and their common sharing (Mondal: 2004).

1.4. Statement of the Problem:

There is very little information exclusively on the women of Tripura belonging to different communities of ethnic and religious groups. For general study or a comparative study between Muslim and Hindu women, tribal and non tribal women, it should have adequate statistical data on various aspects of women life e.g. state of education, drop out problem, legal status of women in family and society, marital status, employment, political participation and above all crimes against women. The dearth of reliable information on women study is not only true for Tripura but also for the whole north east region. This appears to be the cause of impediments towards detailed analysis in the present context and also the cause of backwardness. In this scenario, undoubtedly, the study on Muslim women in Tripura is a very new one and it requires a laborious and careful collection of data, closed scrutiny of those data, identifying the real identity of women community in the multi ethnic religious society. Although there is a little work on the plight of scheduled tribe women, there is no work done on scheduled caste women or any other forward and backward community women. The position of Muslim women by the side of the Bengali Hindu women and tribal women of neighboring communities is an interesting study area not only because of their socio economic backwardness but also religious prejudices inflicted on them.

1.5. Review of Literature:

Although there is existing a vast literature on women status in different societies of India, the theme of social status on Muslim women is a neglected field of study in Indian Sociology. The pertinent issues of their life are still unexplored. A brief analysis of existing literature on the status of women in India shows that such studies have lack of sufficient references to the real situation. Studies conducted so far on the status of Muslim women have not examined thoroughly the socio economic factors

responsible for their social backwardness. The problems which are considered as debating issues are usually avoided for various reasons. So the theme suffers from lack of serious study and dearth of comprehensive sociological knowledge. Most of the scholars choose only one or two aspects on the subject. The scholars of other branches of knowledge have partial or one sided view in scope, or historical and non sociological approach. (Ahmed: 2000) Here exists a research gap. The scope of women study has been widened by all branches of knowledge since 1975. Some studies on Indian Women like biography, auto biography, stories, articles, feature news etc. provides information to understand the situation of women in different aspects. But the empirical studies covering all aspects of Muslim women's life are very scanty. In the context of north east region, much is known about the tribal societies but a little is known about the non tribal societies and their women, specially the Muslim women. Books on this particular study are not easy available. However, literature consulted for present purpose may be classified in the following ways:

- i) Books and articles on Islam with particular reference to women's issues.
- ii) Books and articles on Indian women and women abroad;
- iii) Books, articles and references relating to Muslims and Muslim women of India.

Among the vast literature of Islam and Islamic culture, some selected books and journals were very helpful to understand the Histriology of Quran, the ideals of Quranic Ayats and the Articles of Faith in sociological background, the European views on Islam, the life and mission of the Prophet, different interpretations and misinterpretations of Ayats, difference between theory and practice in varieties and also the constraints of a minority community in the background of historical setback. Besides, an overview of some important studies of recent time, conducted on the Women of India, particularly among the Muslims, by different scholars will help us to high-light the major areas and evaluate the neglected areas for further exploration.

However, the review of some important works on the Islam, the Indian women including the Muslim women and the Muslims of India are noted below:

i). Literature on Islam and Women:

Ahmad (1990) published a book as "*Life of Muhammad*" which is a part of his great book "Introduction to the study of the holy Quran ". On popular demand, it was previously published in different countries for several times. The contents are divided into as many as 220 numbers in precise titles and stanzas. One can choose any of the contents for the time and can go on in this way till the book is finished. Each and every part is important to know the Great man Hazrat Muhammad full of vast human qualities like truthfulness, patience in adversity, frank and straight forward dealing, fond of good company, overlooking the fault of others and treatment of kindness and feeling. The life of Muhammad has been narrated in the historical background of many wars in Arab, Iran, Syria, Egypt and many countries of west Europe. Islam won the countries by its light of knowledge and love added with the sword. As an encounter of the European critics regarding the marriages of Muhammad, the author points out that the devotion and love of the wives to the prophet "which proved that his married life was pure, unselfish and spiritual", and also high mindedness of his character.

Hameed (1980) has edited a book titled '*Islam at a Glance*' which comprises of ten essays contributed by different scholars. The essays titled are General History of Islam, Tauhid- oneness of God; Prophet Muhammad –The Ideal Man, Beliefs and Practices of a Muslim, Islamic Ethics, Family Life in Islam, The Islamic Vision of Inner Life, Islam and Human Rights, Islamic concept of Human Equality and the caste system and Economics in the Islamic Framework. These acquaint us with the basic features of Islam.

Kausar (2001) contributes an article titled "*Debate on the Political Participation of Women and Interpretation of Islamic Text*" in Islam and the Modern Age. She observes that 'many arguments that are put forward by the Muslim Scholars who are against the headship of women seem either debatable or rejectionable'. So she argues in assertion that there is not a single verse in the Quran which states that women is forbidden from the headship position, which means that Quran is silent over the issue. Moreover, the prophetic traditions cited against the participation of woman are weak and not authentic, as reported by other scholars. Kausar presents a comparative

approach to an old but relevant topic like right of Headship of women discussed by two groups of scholars in the community. The arguments of such religious-ethical justification of leadership of women in family as well as in society help to enrich the reasoning view of the readers.

Mustafa (1989), in her Bengali book '*Islam-e-Narir Adhikar*', has presented an illustrated account of women life in the light of the Quran and textual books. She has explained: the real meaning of *pardah* in Islam, mahr as an indispensable part of Muslim marriage and, polygyny in Indian society with a reference to the marriages of Hazrat Muhammad the author has also explained the provision of divorce for both men and women, divorce and provision of Iddat period, and maintenance, Education, Family peace and birth control in the light of Islam. The author criticizes the role of some social leaders of the community who misleads the ignorant people by misinterpreting the Islamic injunctions she asserts that true interpretation of Islam will save the people from so called civilization of the West.

Raj and Sharma (1995) edited a volume '*Islam and women*'—*An Encyclopedia of Women Society and Culture Series*. This book comprises of eight chapters as an attempt to collect information on Islam, Modernization in India and the role of Muslim women in Indian society. In the second chapter — the Life of Muhammad, the authors have high lighted on the prophet's unique conquest over the hearts of the followers and his victorious march as a leader of mankind which cannot be denied. His marriages in the late age has been defended by two standpoints : i) rulers have special privileges supported by many examples from the history of European monarchy and others; ii) all marriages were forced upon him due to different circumstantial reasons, mainly the cause of service to God and for 'the preservation of the morality of his people'. European views on Islam is an important chapter which has extracts and excerpts from European writers including the writing of a most learned Christian author named Dr. Henry Stubbe who died on 12th July, 1676. His manuscript was copied later and published in 1911 under the name of "An account of the Rise and Progress of Mahomedanism with the life of Mahomed" A chapter is there on the details view of

Maulana Abul Kalam Azad on Islam. The chapter- Islamic Modernisation entertains the different approaches of Sir Syed Ali, Iqbal and Azad. The last chapter –Islam and Women in India presents mainly the legal status of Muslim Women in marriage, divorce and pardah along with the cruel stories of Mughal Harem.

Ranganathananda (1940) delivered a lecture on the prophet's birthday in Rangoon, capital of Burma, now Myanmar on April 21, 1940. The content was about the Universal Element of the Prophet's Message. "*The Message of Prophet Muhammad*" is published by Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, 1995, including this lecture in chapter 3, on the occasion of 47th Martyrdom day of Mahatma Gandhi. The book emphasizes on the eternal principles of tolerance and respect for all religious Faiths—Sarva Dharma Samabhava and highlights those verses of the Quran which says that God is one or 'let there be no compulsion in religion'.

Sahay (1996) has contributed an article, titled "Dowry and Dower in Muslim Society" in '*Indian Anthropologist*'. It is a study among the Muslim Telis of Delhi. The author observes that dower being a compulsory part of Muslim marriage is now replaced by dowry. In her another article "Divorce in Muslim Society, Laws and Reality" in *Indian Anthropologist*, 1998, she has focused on the gap between the theoretical aspect of Law and its practice in reality. The truth revealed in this article is not only limited within the Teli community, it has a wide campus to be referred in other sections of the Muslims in India.

Sen (1936) did a Bengali version of the Quran named *Quran Sharif*. For this splendid works, he was regarded as Maulavi Bhai Girish Chandra Sen. Being inspired by Acharya Keshab Chandra Sen, Girish Chandra wrote this book which was published first in 1936 with an introduction of Sri Sati Chandra Chattapadhaya. Many other editions of this version were followed later on. Girish Chandra joined in the group of 'Samannoy Dharma' (union of all religions) in 1874 and started to write the version in 1879. A commenting letter on this full version was sent to the author by Ahmad Ulla and other Arabic teachers, just after the publication, deserves to be mentioned: 'As

we are Mohadans by faith and birth our best and hearty thanks are due to the author for his disinterested and patriotic effort and great troubles he has taken to diffuse the meaning of our Holy and Sacred religious book the Koran, to the public'. This splendid work for its true meaning of the Text is elaborate with notes, interpretations and comments with reference to the historical wars, (wars of Badar and Ohawd etc) and the anti propaganda of opponent groups and many incidents and happenings of the time. The Quran was revealed to the prophet as a result of his twenty three years' devotion to God. The present form is possible through the preservation of many followers since before his death. One meaning of Quran is 'Do Read' and another meaning is 'Message of God.' It has 114 surahs (divisions) and each surah consists of several *Ayats*. Woman is dealt especially by the 4th chapter named *Surah Nesa* and also by *surah Bakra* (2nd chapter), and also in other *ayats*. Each *ayat* has its reference to the contemporary facts, problems, stories and incidents. For example, the ayat 220 of 2nd chapter prohibits a Muslim to marry an idolatress until she is converted to Islam. This has a reference to the love story of Enac (idolatress) and Masvod (converted) as well as the story of Abdulla and his female slave who was a Kafri. Another ayat of this surah, 225, prohibits the man to go to his wife at least four months, as a punishment of his unrestrained talaq to wife and this has a reference to the frequent talaq to the same wife or wives in the pre-Islamic days. These *notes* are very helpful to enrich a researcher of sociological approach.

Subbamma (1987) writes a book '*Atrocities on Women*' which consists of three chapters namely Human Rights: Women's Rights, Personal Laws and Women and Atrocities on Women. The second chapter deals with the position of women in different Personal Laws like Hindu, Muslim, Christian and *Parsi*. No doubt that personal laws pertaining to different religions determine their position in different ways on basic issues of life viz. right of succession, adoption and guardianship and all matrimonial matters. The author has a comparative approach to deal every issue related with woman. According to the author, Prophet Muhammad had contributed a lot toward the betterment of women in a patriarchal society. At that time he counseled men to have

a respectable attitude to women (e.g. Muslim men address their wives as 'ji' with due respect). Undoubtedly he categorized the women as human beings of second order and admitted "men are the guardians of the women", as he sanctioned special rights for husbands and always looked at the issue from the viewpoint of men. Thus Subbamma compares it with Hinduism and says that, women are not entitled to individuality and independence. In the thought process of the Hindu, it is the husband that is entitled to think independently and act on his own, and it is the duty of the wife to follow him without demur. Christianity assigned high place to the superiority of man. The author mentions that a Christian husband treats his wife with compassion and conducts in a charitable manner, but would not give up his supremacy. The Parsi women are accorded some sort of respect in the amended Personal Laws of 1936. In the old Zorastrain life it might have been different. She recommends that personal laws (viz, Islamic Law of 641 A.D., Christian Marriage Law dates back to 1872) which are discriminatory should be changed.

Wadud (1999) calls for a re-reading the sacred Text from a woman's perspective in her book, *Qur'an and Women*. What concerns the author most to write the book is that the traditional interpretation of the Holy Text is always inclusion of male experiences, vision, desires and needs of women either directly or indirectly. While woman's experience, vision, desire are excluded from the area of interpretation. According to her, though there is voiceless ness of women during the critical period of developing Quran- interpretation, it should not be equated with voiceless ness in the Text itself. This assertion of the author's non-traditional interpretation, particularly on the issue of woman helps to understand a distinct approach. Her next concern is the shortcomings of exiting studies. She points out that usually the issue of woman in Islam dealt by the scholars is mainly the reaction to the severe handicaps of woman as an individual member and a member of society but they failed to draw a distinction between the interpretation and the text. So she tries to overcome this shortcoming in her comprehensive analysis of the Quran

ii). Literature on Indian Women and Women Abroad :

Chakraborty (1998) in her Ph.D thesis titled "*Economic Participation of Rural Tribal Women—A Case*" described the socio-economic condition of tribal working women in Tripura ^{engaged} in the traditional and non traditional ^{mode of} production. The study focuses on the economic aspects of tribal women in the change of the community life

Harish (1993) presents a unique collection of twenty four autobiographies entitled *Indian Women's Autobiographies* with a deep analytical approach founded on the theoretical framework of Women Study. It includes successful and unsuccessful women of royal dynasty, upper middle and middle class families of India till 1947. Except a few persons like Durgabai Deshmukh and Kamaladevi Chattapadhaya "whose mothers and grand mothers were earliest feminists and hence backed them in everything" and women like Vijoya Laksmi, Nayantara, Tara Ali Baig and Renuka Roy who hailed from highly educated and advanced families, seventy percent of these autobiographies tells the life of Indian women. They 'were born 'parai' and hence to be discriminated' | 'Only some self conscious women' have noticed the silent sufferings, agonies or forbearance before the husband's power fixation and protested against the torments of daily subservience's, in the hang down look, the lowered eyes or tears before the loud voice of their men (**Muluk Raj Anand** : 1993). Childhood of these women is marked by the marginality of existence with rigorous training to cultivate the so called womanish qualities. They lived under the domination of patriarchal values which are carried on not only by their 'pitha' and 'pathi' but also by the women themselves like Isvani's step mother, grand mother in law, and her sister Lita who could never imagine the 'freedom' so abstract. The story of Isvani being one of the autobiographies is a story of a girl in Bombay, born in 1920 in a famous Shia Khoja family. She was "exceptionally rebellious individual, very different from her mother, sister and other women of her times, and "still she is very much a part of women's tradition." When she was pressurized to give up her religion and to accept the in-laws religion, she felt that her Oxford educated husband, apparently modern, "has same ideas his grandfather and his father have about women.....he would never change —I must divorce him"

Indira and Deepak Kumar Behera (1999) have edited an important work on women study entitled *Gender and Society in India* by two volumes. The first volume concentrates on Theme Papers and Urban Studies while the second on the Rural and Tribal Studies. Vol.1. presents the contents divided into vii sections which enlightens on the Gender and Knowledge system in India, Women and Religion (e.g. 'Women In Religious Cult: the Baul Sadhikas' by R.N.Sarkar), the Status of Widow among the Veerasaivas of Karnataka Pradesh (referring to a pro-women movement of 12th century A.D), Women and Work providing information on the conditions of female workers of unorganized sector, Household Industry (e.g. Jari, Embroidery), marginalized position of casual laborers and entrepreneurs; most of the jari workers are Muslim women; section iv deals with Women and Education in the perspective of gender-biased socialization through the primary school curriculum in Karnataka, sections v and vi devote on Women population, Health, Marriage and Fertility, the Working Mother and Home Management. The last section deals with Women and Oppression—a study in a slum, violence and women in Kerala, Sex workers in Bangalore (a socio-economic profile), the impact of Feminist Ideology and the care of Elderly. *Gender and Society in India* (Vol.II) deals with some articles like Women in Rural Assam, working women in rural Orissa, Crab Fisher women of Sundarban in West Bengal, Goa, women coffee plantation workers of Chikmagalur district of Karnataka ; some articles are on Early Marriage and Reproductive Health Status of Women in Rural Karnataka, Panchayat Raj, Women and the Problematic Empowerment with some case- data from Gujrat and Madhaya Pradesh ; Socio-economic profile of women leaders in Panchayat Raj Institution of Karnataka etc. Section 2 deals with the Tribal Women - the linguist minority groups, their status, role and impact of Development Initiatives. It includes the study of women among selected tribes of Orissa, Madhaya Pradesh, Himaloyans, Karnataka, Kerala and Andhra Pradesh and at last Manipur of north east region. However, this voluminous study shows that women though contributing to the survival and sustenance of their society are not well placed and recognized in proper evaluation; they are vulnerable, subject of harassment and exploitation of different types by their men or society. It can not go un- noticed that

there is no study on religious minority or any tribal groups of Tripura. In other words, study on Muslim women has been bypassed by the scholars.

Mondal (1997) in his Ph.D. Thesis titled "*An Enquiry into Economic and Social Dimension of Divorce: An Empirical Study*", has investigated on the socio-economic reasons behind the break off marital relation among the women of West Bengal and Tripura. Researcher has selected his respondents mainly from the Howra district of west Bengal. For Tripura, he used mostly the census data of both national and state governments. This is a micro level study concentrated on the family disorganization—formal or informal, desertion and divorces and the after effects problems among the Hindu women of lower social strata. This study helps to realize the problem of divorce as it reflects the unexpected pattern of behavior of an individual. Though it is itself not a deviance but it invites some consequent social problems which may bring deviance. The right of divorce of Indian women has been accepted as a part of normal value system but not obtained easily for the complex legal and social system.

Sahu (2000) has authored a book entitled *Women's Liberation and Human Rights*. It is an interesting account of the Women's liberation movement into a chronological sequence of events. The book deals with the History of Human Rights, Women's Rights Today, Women's Rights in Russia and other socialist countries. These help to learn the background of the circumstances that have brought about the women's movement in the world. The other important contents of the book are Women in Government and Politics, Women and Social Progress, Women in Developing Countries (Asia, Africa and Latin America) and in India. It is learnt that in North Africa and many countries in Asia which are predominantly Muslim populated, women remain there outside the public life.

Sogra (1994) has edited a book entitled *Women in Management: Champions of Change*. The book is a documentary evidence of the significant increase in the participation of women in the organized sector of production in India, Nepal, Pakistan, Malaysia and Canada during the two decades of 1970—1990. The book is actually

the record of the papers presented in a workshop of AMDISA (Association of Management and Development Institution in South Asia.) held in Dhakha, Bangladesh, 1994 and divided into two themes: Women as Managers—the attitudinal study, and Women as Entrepreneurs—the study on the transitional period when the women, especially in South Asian context, have dared to break the tradition of one dimensional role of housewife and reached to the multidimensional roles—from the status of burden of the family to the economic productive member of family.

Statkova (1974) presented First-hand information on “*Women under Socialism*” enriched with facts, figures on equal rights in the G D R. There was a great success in work participation among women within a short historical period of time. Behind their success, there was cooperation from all sides e.g. husband’s co-operation to relieve her from the household chores, chairman’s co-operation to help her intellectually so that she can make the work easier and can sharpen the sense of what is essential. The best dowry to them was education and vocation. Taboo-free selection of vocation and further training schemes helped them not to avoid the great responsibility. The book had a Documentation- part which highlighted the socialistic measures for the welfare of the female workers in the country.

iii). Literature on Indian Muslims and Muslim Women in India:

Ahmed (1976) has edited a series of four volumes in the late twentieth century, namely, *Caste and Social Stratification among Muslims in India* (1973), *Family, Kinship and Marriage among Muslims in India* (1976), *Ritual and Religion among Muslims in India* (1981) and *Modernization and Social Change among Muslims in India* (1983). The scholars of the series in their various studies attempt for sociological relocation of the Indian Muslims in the backdrop of partition episode and critical assessment of the empirical validity of the ‘Islamicists’ definition of Indian Muslims. The study repudiates the popular notion that treats the Muslims as monolith. The book—Family, Kinship and Marriage has contained essays on Khojas of Bombay, Meos of Rajasthan



and Haryana, Mopals of South west coast of India, Muslims of Tamil, U.P, Laccadives and Rural West Bengal from which one can learn about the varieties of tradition, culture and ethnicity among the people under same anchor of Islam.

Ahmed (1981) has provided a comprehensive account of the situation of the Muslims in Bengal during the last part of the nineteenth century and beginning of the twentieth century in his book *"The Bengal Muslims (1871-1906) : A Quest for Identity"*. He has brought out the differences between the upper class Muslims of Bengal and those of North India or between the elites and rural of Bengal in the plea of caste distinction. He points out the complexities of social structure of Muslim community in West Bengal and holds the opinion that homogeneity of the Muslims is rather a myth. Another truth is revealed by the author that Muslims were not exploited or deprived in everywhere. Though the Muslims are not a homogeneous group, all the upper class Muslims (Mughal Ashrafs and lesser Ashrafs or mullahs and pirs) were organized only for political reasons. The author points out the impact of Reform Movement on the Muslims of Bengal for establishing identity consciousness. He concludes that the main reason behind the Muslim Separatism lies not in religion or political institution but in the attempt of Islamizing the community. Certain Hindu extremist postures in addition to the policy of colony rulers gave birth of a favourable atmosphere to the growth of a separate Islamic Ideology or separatism. This book helps to understand the Bengali Muslims in a historical perspective.

Ahmed (2002) in an article titled A Demographic Profile of the Muslims in Northeast India in *Islam and the Mordern Age*, has presented a demographic account of the seven sisters like Assam, Manipur, Meghaloya, Nagaland ,Mizoram, Tripura and Arunachal Pradesh which are surrounded by China, Bhutan, Bangladesh and Myanmar. The region is connected to the rest of India by an 18 miles corridor like Siliguri neck and it constitutes 3.5% of the total population of the country. Assam is a most populous state and Tripura is a state where Bengalis outnumber the tribes. The region holds a considerable number of Muslim populations but they have no proportionate representation in the Assembly Houses (e.g. Tripura or Manipur), and also in other fields. Though the Muslims of Assam have contributed their share of

prominent figures to the nation, 'many of them have been forgotten'. Sociological information about the Muslims of the region is very scanty, not only because of the lack of academic works but also because of the Muslim politicians and intellectuals who fail to address the real concern of the community. As a result of all these, the author comments, "Muslim identity is jeopardized through deliberate human manipulation or negligence".

Ahmed (2002) has contributed an article "Status of Women in Manipur" in *Islam and the Modern Age*. The theme reminds the old but yet relevant idea that "Woman's cause is man's," quoted from Alfred Tennyson. The article first serves some demographic and socio-economic information about the Manipuri women in general and the Muslim community in Manipur. Manipuri women participated in political agitation against the British economic policies and atrocities on women. They are very industrious as opposite of their men. They do all the work of buying and selling in public and carrying all the articles to be sold. In the house they are engaged in weaving and spinning and hence the mainstay of the family circles. The Muslim women being focus of this article are found as "having shared a common and unique bond with their non-Muslim sisters of the state" and they play a great role in the economic sphere. Like their non Muslim sisters they possess a good sense of business. They assemble in the market place in morning and evening. They maintain an age-old indigenous economic institution, called 'marup'—a cooperative credit and saving organization. But despite their important economic role, Muslim women have not obtained correction. In the tradition bound Muslim community, they have been denied their meaningful role in family and society. As traditions are often accepted as a matter of religious belief, author rightly points out that the reason behind their disadvantageous position in all respects lies not in Islam but in lack of correct information and knowledge about the injunctions of the Quran. The changes taking place in securing the rights and privileges for the Muslim women in Manipur are regarded by the author as positive development. The article is concluded suggesting a 'need to evolve a mechanism to tap women's resource'. At last, the author hints about some changes in the Manipuri Muslim society of very recent time.

Ahmad (2003) has authored a book titled *Muslim Attitude Towards Family Planning*. This is an enlarged form of his M. Phil thesis — Social Resistance to Family Planning among the Muslims. He has concentrated his study on the dynamics and resistance to family planning in a Muslim cultural setup, with the background of population explosion or over- population growth rate. The fertility behavior of the community people holding largest minority in India is very important for study. Being associated with certain norms and values, fertility behavior shapes the higher or lower fertility rate. The author has pointed out the variables – quantitative or qualitative, related with this behavior (e.g. age of marriage level of educational attainment, urbanization, income religious beliefs etc.) with the purpose of finding out the groups and their ‘differential predisposition’ towards family planning and ‘the role played by different socio-economic variables in the receptivity of each groups’. The objectives of study as the author says, are to: ascertain the extent of knowledge of family planning among Muslim women; their attitude towards family planning; extent of adoption of the means; causes of social resistance to family planning or to reveal the social values that makes for higher fertility among them; and at last, to correlate the variables e.g. better socio-economic achievement and better planned parenthood and awareness of the problem of the country. The study is conducted in Araria district located in North East Bihar, ‘characterized by mainly agricultural economy’ which is the mainstay of the Muslims and 55 percent of the town population is concentrated in a few segregated wards.

The contributors point out the immense diversities existsting among them. They observe that marriages are conducted without signing in the Nikahnama : that arbitrary divorce is not rampant among the Muslims as received beliefs and understandings; that tripple talaq in one sitting is not common and frequent as it is assumed in popular saying. Some papers have contributed to the comparative study between the Hindu and Muslim communities. Ahmad, in the introductory chapter, confined his discussion on the law and then shifted to the social reality i.e. actual status of Muslim women. He advocates not for any side of the debates but for the need to explore the possibilities

within Islamic tradition. It is not denied in the papers of the contributors that there is remarked difference between the theoretical position of Muslim women and the actual status. Ahmad pleads for the efforts to improve the socio-economic and educational conditions of Muslim women and ultimately it will reduce the atrocities on Muslim women in actual life.

Begum (1992) has conducted an empirical study on the Muslim women of two villages in Howra district of west Bengal, entitled '*Women in Muslim Society of West Bengal: A Study in Aspects of Their Status and Role*'. The work including some case study is an attempt to analyze the socio-cultural, religious and economic aspects of women life. Examining the role of Muslim women in different social context, she concludes that the major socio- economic factors are responsible for the backwardness of women and the uplift of their social position through dynamic roles.

Engineer (1987) has edited a volume of book titled '*Status of Women in Islam*'. This is an important issue of the present time, especially after the historic judgment of the Supreme Court in the Shah Bano case in 1986. The volume is a collection of four articles from noted scholars including the editor himself. The articles throw light on the position of women from theological point of view, examine the Muslim Personal Law from historical –political point of view and argue in favor of change for enhanced status of women. Engineer has drawn attention, in his article, to the dynamics of change as well as sociological explanation of the sources of laws of the Quran during the pre-Islamic and post- Islamic days of prophet's time. Engineer holds the view that "the progress is never unilinear as the study of the social dynamics show" and "the Islamic society became feudalized soon after the death of the prophet and end of Caliphate and women came to be subjugated more and more. She gradually lost even that status which she had won through Quran." The purpose of this volume is to reach the first step of broad consensus among the people of the society.

Guha (1992) has studied on Maria Muslims of Assam in his Thesis titled *The Habitat, Economy and Society*. The Marias is one of the ethnic groups of north east India who are Muslims by Faith. Though it is a Socio- geographical study and limited

in application from sociological viewpoint, it has enlightened about the growth and development of a Muslim tribe related with the history of Assam.

Hasan and Menon (2005) edited a volume titled *In a Minority: Essays on Muslim Women in India*. This has emerged out of a project work supported by the Ford foundation of India. A survey namely Muslim Women's Survey (MWS) was conducted to map the diversity of Muslim women in India. The various issues raised by this survey have been discussed by the invited authors of India and abroad in this volume. This volume is a pioneer-work to establish the fact that Muslim women in India is not a separate 'species' rather she has some traits or characteristics and situations like other woman of other communities. The essays have focused on the gap between legal discourse and actual situation. It is pointed out that the Muslim Personal Law (MPL), codified law and case law, acts in favor of male partners in divorce and it holds the paternalistic view.

With the experience and observance, the contributors like to prove that a Muslim woman suffers in the same way as their sisters in other communities because of piratical value system. Though Islam has legal sanction to the property right of women but it is not easy for her to avail as it happens in case of Hindu woman. So the real situation for both is same. A Muslim woman has legal right to have harmonious conjugal life but she has to bear all hardship to maintain marriage or to obtain divorce or to get remarried. As in case of Hindus, Muslim girls of affluent families in western U.P. have got enrolment at increased number in the formal schools. While the rural poor girls have no alternative but to be enrolled only into the Madrasa schools which involves low cost and Islamic education available. The essays in this volume have also dealt with politically un representation of women, the role of media and ineffectiveness of religious laws for women in life. So the volume focuses on the fact that poverty affects women more than religious laws. The main thing of this book is to bring into light that Muslim women are in disadvantaged position from three sides: as member of the minority community, as women and as poor despite the various regional and ethnic diversities among the Muslim and Hindu women, they stand in the same footing of social injustices.

Hussain (1989) has presented an analytical discussion regarding the situation of Indian Muslims in his book titled *The Muslim Question in India*. The various dimensions of the theme e.g. demographic, socio-political etc. have been discussed by the author penetrating into the sensitive issues like secular and non secular articulation. He has pointed out the bankruptcy of the Indian Muslims in different aspects of socio-political life.

Jahangir (1991) in his empirical research work titled '*Muslim Women in West Bengal : Socio-Economic and political Status*' has attempted to find out the problems of Muslim women, the 'most underprivileged group' in the society. Both financial and cultural reasons are found as hindrances to their educational and economic backwardness. Chapter VI deals with Political Orientation of Muslim Women. The author has formulated a status scale to measure political awareness and attitudes to politics among the Muslim women e.g. political participation and its relation with education, employment, marital status, place of residence etc. It is found that the level of political orientation of the women is not encouraging at all. The data is collected from a district of west Bengal, i.e. Murshidabad 'which is unique in composition and background'. The low position of Muslim women is revealed by their negligible role in taking decision of marriage, family relation, family planning, education and employment..

Menon (1974): *Status of Muslim Women in India* by Indu Menon is a study of early seventies, conducted in four districts of Kerala in south India. Her study area is divided into two major comparative set-ups: rural and urban. By a method of simple Random Sampling, she has chosen 450 Muslim women and 150 men as her respondents. The main objective of the study is to examine whether education has any significant role in determining or raising the status of Muslim women in the context of social change in India. Education is chosen as the only important criteria to measure high and low status of women related with other factors also. She attempts to identify some demographic factors influencing the attainment of education like age, income, education of parents, especially mother's education and some socio-religious or

attitudinal factors which hinder the lift of women's status despite their educational attainment. The impact of education is measured on securing job facility, economic rights, independent participation in family administration through budgeting, buying property and taking decision in children's carrier and marriage, maintaining good relation with the husband, controlling the size of family, participating in politics or casting of vote in election, moving freely, coming out of veil, reading newspapers etc.

Some of her important findings are: a) the custom of *pardah* and the traditional role of wife and mother are two main obstacles to the attainment of education and improvement of status; b) Muslim society in general underestimate the education of women as they lack of knowledge about the meaningful role of women; c) education of mother has more impact on children specially girl children ; d) girls can continue education only because of the father's initiative but not of their own.; e) regarding the objective of girls' education, parents are not very clear. Some aims at getting a job, some for improving the family status and some to acquire knowledge. Lastly she proves her hypothesis that education is a determining factor in every sphere of women's life.

Mondal (1997) has in his credit an extensive empirical work titled '*Educational Status of Muslims: Problems, Prospects and Priorities*'. The data is collected from six villages of six districts in west Bengal (covering southern and northern parts of the state) e.g Digholtali-Minaguri village of Coochbihar district, Sihale of Dinajpur, Kastore of Malda, Nagar of Murshidabad, Bansjore of Birbhum and Boersing of 24 parganas. The study is an analysis of both subjective and objective reasons responsible for the backwardness of the Muslim in education. It provides much information on religious or informal education along with the different levels of formal education. A separate chapter deals with the education of Muslim women adding an investigation of Parent's perception towards the education of daughters and also the objectives of Women's education. One of the important findings of the author is that "Higher Education is significantly lacking among the women of six villages under investigation." However, the author is convinced that 'the stigma of educational

backwardness among the Muslim women is a situational emergence aggravated by the behavior of the people.

Mondal (2005) has analysed the traditional role of Muslim women with the forces of change and the effects on their life, in one of his recent publications, namely, '*Rural Muslim Women: Role and Status*'. It is an empirical work conducted in a village of Darjeeling district of north Bengal in west Bengal. The name of village is Kawakhali situated under Matigara Gram Panchayat in Siliguri subdivision of the district of Darjeeling. It is a Muslim dominated village with 358 Muslim populations (4.00%) distributed in scattered way in the Terai plains. The percentage of female population is 47.20 percent and the sex ratio is 894. This is an economically backward village where agriculture is the main occupation. Some important findings of the study are as follows: As regards participation in public life, the representation of Muslim women is almost non-existence. No priority for the education of girls though a few girls of present generation are going for education. Though there is lower age at marriage for girls, it does not affect much their fertility rate. Age at marriage for present generation is changing slowly. Practice of dowry is increasing. Pardah practice is there but not so rigid. They are poor in political awareness though participation in voting is quite popular among them. Social situation is not satisfactory. Economically they are dependent on men. They are hindered by their illiteracy and heavy work load. They do only the inside works. Apparently they seem to be in lower status, but the author finds out the 'concealed power and position of women in the functioning of Muslim society. 'Their invisible role and functions help to sustain the society and heritage of culture'. They enjoy autonomy in the sphere of ascribed roles and they are yet to reach the achieved roles in the society.

Mondal (1997) has added a new contribution to the study on the Muslims of Eastern, particularly North-eastern part of India in his book entitled, *Muslims of Siliguri Aspects of Their Society, Culture and Relationship with the Metropolis*. Siliguri, as a Gateway to North-east India and second most important commercial centre of West Bengal is no doubt a place of study for its cosmopolitan nature contributed by the

multiethnic group of people. Author of the book concentrates his study on the Muslims of Siliguri who belong to one of these ethnic groups constituting four percent of the city's population. The author informs us that the structure of the organizations of the Muslim society in the metropolis of Siliguri is not a monolithic type. The Muslims of Siliguri are combination of various groups and subgroups at both macro and micro levels on the basis of their place of origin ethnic history, nature of occupation etc. Mondal has given information about fifteen distinct ethnic and occupational Muslim groups inhabited in Siliguri. He has evaluated their contribution for the growth of the city through their participation in occupational specialization of diverse categories. Due to their poor educational attainment and poor economic background, they have failed to develop their social position in Siliguri. Majority Muslim habitants are Hindustani or Urdu speaking people, though many of them can speak in Bengali for adapting and functional purposes. In a Bengali dominated area like Siliguri, they live in cultural isolation; language problem is a serious obstacle for their education in lower and higher levels. However, the author has noted the changes in their socio-cultural life due to the impact of dynamic socio-cultural environment of the city.

Moinuddin (2000) has authored a monograph entitled *Divorce and Muslim Women*. This is an empirical research work from sociological approach instead of legal or any ideal viewpoint. The study tries to explore the factors contributing the practice of divorce and separation, the manner in which the stability of marriage is threatened, the causes due to which it persists, what role the kinsmen and social relations play in trying to reconcile between the spouses and lastly, the consequences or after-effects of the spouses, specially the position of these women in the society where negative attitude to women prevails. It attempts to ascertain the empirical situation on the divorce rates examining the provision of triple Talaque, operation of 'Khula' divorce- (a unique right of Muslim women) and the 'gender unjust' Muslim Personal Law. The complications involved with the exercise of the right of Khula for poor women are bypassed by the scholar. However the data collected from two gram panchayats of two districts of West Bengal, suggests for a larger framework to understand the social phenomenon like divorce.

Roy (1989): "*Status of Muslim women in North India*" is an empirical study on women of two big cities like Delhi and Lucknow. The main thrust of this study conducted in seventies is to find out the reasons behind the pardah system in the social structural of the Muslim families and the effects of pardah on education, employment and social participation in understanding the changes occurring in the status of Muslim women in urban social environment. She points that though the prophet himself was in favor of positive changes in the status of woman, the *maulanas* of India do not. By the ideological misinterpretation, they misguide the people. She finds out that the women having very limited rights and roles are the main key of the household administration. In the observance of religious rituals, there is a gap between older and younger generation, mother and daughter and also men and women. Men care very little to the religious rituals it is interesting to note from this study that the respondents of the author belong to two different sects of Islam - Shia and Sunni, but no difference is there in the question of women. The study has focused on several areas of status ambiguity of Muslim women. However only two pockets of urban settlements can not represent the entire Muslim community.

Zakaria (2001) has contributed a thought provoking article entitled 'Wither Indian Muslims?' in *Islam and the Modern Age*. The main thrust of this article is on the future of 'co-religionists' in the perspective of the 'terrible decline' of Muslim population in India at present. In British India, they had one third population and five provinces out of eleven having decisive role at the center. The Muslims of undivided India have been divided into Indian Muslims, Pakistani Muslims and Bangladeshi Muslims having hardly any contact with each other. The plight of the Muslims is worse than they faced in the time of partition. "The Widening Divide" is another book of the author which has recorded his experiences in 1980. He was then appointed a member-secretary of the High Power Panel for Minorities, S.C., S.T. and Weaker sections. The findings of the panel show that Muslims were at the bottom in every department. Their conditions in education or economic were worse than those of the scheduled caste. The Report was not placed in the parliament apprehending the uproar;

it was tabled but hardly noticed due to the disturbances caused by the acceptance of Mondal Commission. This shows, as the author says, the unsympathetic attitude of the Hindus about the fate of the Muslims. Zakaria has mentioned some leading names in India and abroad, who have spoken against the “rise of intolerance among the Hindu Youths and their unapologetic attitude about such inhuman acts in Gujrat” The author has not missed to admit that many Hindus are deeply upset and their hearts bleed, but they are ‘hopeless minority’ as he comments. The author has obviously pointed out the apathetic attitude of the Muslims to come out of the situation. Sir Sayed Ahmed Khan is to be followed as their path-finder for co-existence.

The above review of literatures makes it distinctly clear that there is a gap of study on the Muslims and Muslim women specially in Tripura. There is no such study in state level or local level. The sociological research works in Tripura are primarily concentrated on the tribes of the state.

1.6. Significance of the Study:

In recent times, Muslims of India have drawn the attention of scholars like social anthropologists, sociologists and other social scientists. It is not only because they form the largest minority group of India and not only because they have distinct religion and culture but also because of their position as a balancing factor in Indian polity and development of the country. For various reasons, Muslims have occupied a significant position in society of Indian polity. Unfortunately, this largest minority community is backward in almost all respects of national life. In this background, the suffering of the women in the community can be easily assumed. The sociologists and anthropologists of India agree in one point that one of the reasons of their backwardness lies in the insignificant and low position of women. Hence the study on Muslim women is added to the studies of India with great weight and gravity. In the micro level of study, as regards Tripura, the social scientists are mainly concerned with the research on the tribes and tribal women of the state. They have shown least interest on the study of the situation of the Muslims. The fact is that though the Muslims are not included in the OBC group, they belong to the backward communities of the state.

Although a number of Muslim men are participating in the main stream of socio-economic life of the state, the women are still far behind.

The importance of the present study relates to the issue stated above. Hence, the study on Muslim women has been chosen as it is totally an unexplored area for study especially in Tripura. This is a right venture for a researcher to explore this neglected area of study. Considering its significance, the present study has been conducted through field studies. Thus the study is an empirical one.

1.7. Aims and Objectives of the Present Study :

The basic objectives of the present study are as follows.

- i) To examine the position of women in Islamic scriptures as well as in Muslim society, especially in India and more specifically in Tripura.
- ii) To know the nature and extent of economic participation of Muslim women.
- iii) To examine the marital life of Muslim women and to assess their status.
- iv) To explore the role of women in family and to examine their position therein.
- v) To examine the state of literacy and education among Muslim women and the problems they have been facing to acquire education and knowledge for their empowerment.
- vi) To examine political participation of the Muslim women and assess their position in organizational and administrative bodies.
- vii) Lastly, to find out the social constraints of Muslim women towards modern education, employment, politics and organizational activities.

Thus the main objective of the study is to have a comprehensive knowledge about the status and role of Muslim women of Tripura in different social settings i.e. the rural and urban areas.

1.8. Research Questions:

On the basis of aims and objectives of the present study, some research questions have been formulated. These are as follows:–

1. What is the position of women in the philosophy of Islam? Is it in conformity with the real position of women in Muslim society?
2. Is the notion of Islam as a socio-cultural system congenial to the progress and status up gradation of the Muslim women?
3. How does that notion of Islam interpret and characterize the Muslim society in Tripura?
4. How is the position of Muslim women determining their roles and vice versa?
5. What is the Economic status of women? What is the impact of economic activities of women on their status?
6. What are the social forces behind the low status of women in the Muslim community and what are the specific problems witnessed by the Muslim women of Tripura?
7. What is the response of the Muslim girls and women towards higher education and employment?
8. What is the level of their political participation? How much cooperation they receive from the male counterpart and the other members of the society?
9. What is the response of Muslim women to the welfare activities of the Government? What are the changes going to affect the status and role of Muslim women in Tripura?

1.9. Methodology:

1.9.1. Research Design:

Being an exploratory study with a diagnostic outlook, its purpose is to gain an insight into the social situation of Muslim women. So, the approach is used primarily structure-functional along with the women's perspective to understand the problem

of women in role structure. Both qualitative and quantitative data have been used for the purpose. The facts are presented in descriptive way, but in analytical manner. The comparative method has been adopted in the context of understanding the gap between male and female, Muslim and non-Muslim women, rural and urban as well as past and present situations as far as practicable.

1.9.2. Locales of the Study:

The present empirical study relates to the women in the Muslim community of Tripura. Tripura, one of the north eastern states, consists of mainly three districts viz, west, south and north. In 2001, the north district was divided into Uttar Tripura and Dhalai district. On the basis of census data it was not difficult for the researcher to select the sub divisions where Muslims are living in large number. The census report of 1901 and 1961 helps to determine the places. According to the reports, Muslims are largely concentrated in the sub divisions of Sadar (highest in west), Sonamura (second highest in west), Udaipur (highest in south), Belonia (second highest in south), Kailashahar (highest in north) and Dharmanagar (second highest in north). Secondly, these places are very much related to the history of Tripura for the expansion of Muslim population through the invasion of ruling Muslims from Bengal as well as Delhi. Yet still those villages are memorable for the people of Tripura. Many villages are Muslim dominated. It is not possible to cover all these villages for a single researcher. So, it was decided to select three villages and three corresponding district towns from three districts on the basis of convenience of the research work. In Tripura, communication is not well developed and hence, one place is badly isolated from others. Ignoring all these troubles, three villages and three towns were selected for the study. These are :

- Nabadweep Chandra Nagar (N.C. Nagar) under Sonamura subdivision; the corresponding district town is Agartala in the West;
- Khilpara under Udaipur subdivision; the corresponding district town is Udaipur in the South;

- Yeajekhowra (east) under Kailashahar subdivision; the corresponding district town is Kailashahar in the North.

The two selected villages – N.C. Nagar and Yeajekhowra are Muslim dominated but Khilpara holds fifty percent ratio of both Hindu and Muslim population. N.C. Nagar is proposed to be a ‘model village’; Khilpara is recognized as a ‘village of educated Muslims’ and Yeajekhowra is regarded as ‘typical Muslim village’ in the state. Agartala Municipality is the only municipal town under Sadar Subdivision. Besides, Agartala municipality area covers 46 percent urban Muslim population of Tripura (Census 2001). Other two towns are Nagar Panchayat towns (formerly Notified Area) under Udaipur and Kailashahar sub divisions. The towns are inhabited by a number of Muslims of the state. Each town is divided into several wards viz, Agartala MC into 17 wards, Udaipur into 13 wards and Kailashahar into 11 wards. Out of these, the following wards were selected under the present study: Ward No. 1, 13, 15 of Agartala Municipal Corporation; Ward No. 7, 8, 9 of Udaipur Nagar Panchayat; Ward No. 2, 11 of Kailashahar Nagar Panchayat.

Since the religious breakup of the population is not available, the researcher has to rely on the report of the nagar panchayats, municipality, party office, prominent citizens and above all, the personal visits to the wards. The selection of rural areas was not easy.. Feasibility or practical view point was emphasised within the limited resources. In consideration of the above statements, these villages and towns are ideal places for the kind of research the present study aims at.

1.9.3. Sources of Data and Field Studies:

The relevant data used for the present study are collected from the following sources :

- i) Secondary Sources i.e. materials available from published books, journals, articles, monographs research reports, census and other government documents.

- ii) Household Census and Survey in the prescribed schedule.
- iii) Empirical and in-depth field studies in study areas.

1.9.4. Selection of Informants/ Respondents:

To obtain relevant and correct information, all the household heads, both male and female were considered as informants. In cases where the heads were not found present, then the next persons in rank or the person seeming eligible and reliable were chosen as informants. The senior family members were supplemented by the key informants. The key informants were chosen from the senior males and females of the area for verification of data and also for additional information. Responsible citizens, knowledgeable senior persons like MLA, lawyer, teacher, student, religious leaders and various officials of the locality were also selected for the collection of reliable data for this study.

1.9.5. Tools and Techniques of Data Collection:

The primary data for the present research were collected through field investigation with the help of standard anthropological tools and techniques. Before selection of study areas in three districts of Tripura, a pilot survey was done on the Muslim-inhabited villages and towns and basic information was collected from the local party office, the influential persons of society, as well as from the common people. At the initial stage, a formal application for permission was submitted to the offices of Nagar Panchayat and Gram Panchayat and Municipality of Agartala. After receiving directions of the officers, the office concerned provided the basic information. Sometimes they answered negatively due to their inability and busy schedule of work load for the panchayat election. However, these offices including the party offices helped a lot to have detail information about the wards and localities. With the help of that information, the Muslim concentrated villages and towns were selected for in-depth study.

At the second stage of field study, the house to house survey was made with the help of Census Schedule to obtain the basic demographic and socio economic data.

At this stage, the local persons either spontaneously or sent by the offices accompanied me long hours, sometimes even whole day in door to door survey works. In a remote village, surrounded by forests like Yeajekhowra in the north district, this kind of survey was impossible without the help of those local guides. For data collection, I had to stay for days in the Government Bunglow in Udaipur, Sonamura and Kailashahar, and in the houses of local residents in villages. To collect data in the municipal wards of Agaratala, I went out from my residence at 10 a.m. and came back at 5:30 p.m, sometimes even later. In this large scale data collection from three districts of Tripura, I had to take the help of a few student-assistants of the locality. The in-depth socio cultural data were collected through personal interview, case study, group discussion with both men and women. For conducting interview both open and close ended questions were asked to the informants. The close ended questions were designed to get objective data about social situation of women, while open ended questions were asked to collect their own experiences, observations and views about the role and status of women were also noted. Free dialogue was encouraged to supplement the information collected through census schedule and interviews. Women's voice was recorded with great emphasis. In addition to these, intensive study was conducted in all the six villages and towns with a number of case studies of different categories related very much to the purpose of the study. Sometimes data were collected also through the postal correspondence and over telephone by personal contacts.

This is a micro study but covers an extended area of a good number of populations. For the purpose, the door to door census survey was conducted to the entire Muslim household in villages and towns under study. However, approximate 60 percent of the total households of each study villages and towns were selected for detail study as per objective of the present research. Thus, demographic and socio economic information were collected from 1,235 Muslim households consisting of 6,654 population of Tripura. A number of case studies among the Muslim girls and women were recorded to realize the real situation of women life for drawing a meaningful generalization. Sometimes, for the purpose of verification of the observational experiences, some

study areas like municipal wards of Agartala, Udaipur NP and N.C.Nagar village, were re-visited by the present researcher and thus, current information was also added.. The secondary information was gathered by analyzing the textual materials, all available sorts of published materials like newspapers, magazines, books and journals, articles and election reports, governmental statistics and census reports and unpublished materials like dissertation and thesis papers, etc. In addition to all these, data was also collected from the educational institutions, technical institutions, party offices and NGOs.

1.9.6. Data processing and Analysis:

Data processing and analysis of data was the next step after data collection. This was necessary for checking and editing of the collected data, keeping in mind about their completeness and accuracy. The data schedules were examined and analyzed systematically, quantitatively as well as qualitatively. Tabulation was done manually as well as by computer. Simple statistical method comprising mainly of frequency table with calculation of percentage were used. Diagrams and figure were also used to present data more vividly. Comparative method was followed through cross tabulation. The qualitative data obtained through case study, interview, discussion and observation were presented in systematic, descriptive and analytic manner. Finally, the data were organized and presented in the relevant chapters. The entire course of data processing was done very carefully.

1.9.7. Presentation of Data and Contents:

The materials of this study are presented into ten chapters. Chapter one is the introduction with the background of the study, theoretical perspectives and the concepts used, the statement of problems of the social status of Muslim women and the methodology adapted for the study. Chapter two is on the ideal position of women in Islam and their real position in the Muslim society of some South Asian countries. Chapter three is a discussion with society, culture, and some demographic attributes of the Muslims in Tripura. It is stated from the background of a princely state and its journey towards a demographic state. Chapter four is the Research Setting of the

present empirical work elaborating a profile of the Muslim settlements with their physical and demographic attributes. The economic status of Muslim women, patterns of occupation, economic activities and their contribution to family economy has been stated in the chapter five.. Chapter six is an attempt to a detailed discussion on the marital status of Muslim women i.e. the patterns, types and forms of Muslim marriages in Tripura. The Chapter seven deals with the position of women in family on the background of type, composition and characteristic feature of Muslim family in Tripura. Chapter eight is on the state of Muslim women's education, their poor representation in Higher and Technical education, drop out and stagnation. The political participation of Muslim women in recent times, their position in the local governance and party structure in Tripura has been dealt by the chapter nine. Chapter ten is a brief summary of the findings and analytical discussions and recommendations on the basis of present research experiences. This chapter recapitulates the original research questions and the empirical findings.

1.9.8. Limitations:

Like other sociological and social anthropological studies on Muslim women, the present one has also some limitations. Since the empirical study on Muslim women is under taken for the first time, the benefit of any earlier study is not available. The dearth of women study in Tripura contributes to its limitation. Secondly, there is non-availability of secondary data on the Muslims as there is no office record on the basis of religious break-up. Thirdly, limitation lies in the nature of data collections. At the time of data collection, the present researcher has to face the problem of suspicion of the people who live in the border area of the state. It was seemed to be the outcome of minority fear-psychosis and political violence. They thought the present researcher as a person of Intelligence Department, gathering information about the local Muslims and about their citizenship. Some even asked the researcher that whether the government has any plan to send the Muslims to Bangladesh. Some people showed reluctance and irritation to answer and expressed frustration about the surveys as it was no direct benefit for them. For interview, a few women refused to talk as their

men instructed them so. It was also noticed that women were scolded by the men as they were let loose to talk or ignorant to talk in proper manner with 'Didimani' and thus the men took responsibility of talking. In few cases the researcher has to exercise a kind of influence on the men by refusing them and insisting on to talk with women. Male persons were also found not free. They also hesitated to talk about their communities. Fourthly, though the study covers three villages and three towns which are found not much different with other villages and towns, it has its limitation of micro-level study. It may not be generalized for whole Tripura.

Lastly the field study was initially started in 1997 and completed in 2001. Besides, the field places were revisited for the purpose of verification of field data at the time of writing the thesis. In spite of that, the changes occurred very recently might not be reflected in the present study.

Chapter - 2

Women in Islam and in Muslim Societies of South Asia

2.1. Islam and Women :

The position of women in Islam can be properly understood by taking into account the social situation before the advent of Islam. The social situation of Arab was then in a transitional period of socio-economic and religious changes. When there was certain extent of civilization (i.e. development of commerce and trade and urbanization) the tribal social structure of Arab faced the disintegration process in the social organizations based on kinship structure and complexities in the commercial sphere with clashes and conflicts among various sections or groups of the society and thus existing morality and religious values were degraded. Many scholars agreed that the condition of Arab women in the patriarchal tribal society was comparatively better than their counterpart in the patriarchal feudal set up of Byzantium (Engineer: 1987) The women of Mecca and Medina had right to property, entrepreneurship, to contract marriage, and to divorce. Bibi Khadija, the wife of the prophet was its best example. In early life the prophet was employed under her independent business. Maiya, the daughter of Abzar, was a rich princess of Yemen. It may be due to the reason that some matriarchal characteristics of the tribal society were prevalent among them. But this freedom of women was limited only to the women of higher social status. The condition of common women in different section of the tribal was not such good. They suffered extreme hardship, degradation and complete subservience to survive. Particularly, women among the Beduin-tribe were considered as burden of the groups than supporting hands like agricultural society. The situation in the deprived and exploited people like the slaves, poor, orphan, children and other down trodden classes was deplorable.

To overcome the situational crisis i.e. deprivation, exploitation and all sorts of crude custom and conventions, Islam emerged as a new social philosophy of practical life. It gave birth of a new social cohesion and contribution for the new social reformation movement in the history of the Middle East and then spread all over the

world. In its reformatory character Islam presented itself as a 'gender friendly' religion obviously distinct from the surrounding world. Islam emphasized on the achieving of humane equality, brotherhood, gender-free love and affection between man and woman and peace of family as the base units of harmonious society. Islam is the first religion which recognizes better status, if not equal, of woman in the man-dominated society. But unfortunately Islam is misunderstood most in the women aspect. For proper understanding, one is to go beyond the apparent meaning of the verses of the Quran, many of which were related to the concrete situation of the period. Hence the classical writers of the Quran emphasise on the sociological and historical approaches of study to have an integrated idea about the position of women in Islam. The notion of Islam towards women is primarily based on four major sources :1) *Quran* - the original text ; 2) *Hadith*, the tradition of prophet (or the story of particular occurrences); the *Sunna* which means the rule of law deduced from the practice or model behaviour of the prophet ; 3) *Qiyas* – a body of opinion determined by the jurists (Qazi) basing on analogous elements ; 4) *Ijma*, which means consensus opinion from the community, when all other three sources fail to decide a case.

According to the classical viewpoint, position of women is to be understood by the spirit, intention and purposes of the verses of the Quran. It is undoubtedly true that the purpose of Islam which is the youngest but second largest religion of the world is to improve the status of women by imposing some injunction or restrictions upon the behaviour-pattern or activities of the men and women of the society. One third of the Quran is concerned with women and family implying the importance of women issue. The chapter 4 of the Quran is named *Nisha*. This Arabic word means Woman (**Jahangir**: 1991) It deals completely with women issue. The position of women enshrined in the Quran reflects the interactive result of humanitarian ideal and the prevailing social customs and conventions of the sixth century Arabia.

a) Woman's Place Before the Almighty :

The Quranic pronouncement regarding women's place to the Almighty reveals the equality of sex. Many important verses of the Quran are addressed equally to the men and women. The 'believing men and the believing women', the 'devout men,

and the devout women', the 'chaste men and the chaste women' are equal in the eye of God as they are equal in their place of origin, their abode and their place of return (Jahangir: 1990). So in their religious identity, men and women are entitled to equal rights. Many verses of the Quran put women in high dignity or esteem. They stand on equal footings in relation to the Almighty or in religious obligations. The Quran does not prevent women to come in the mosque and receive religious education. Until the third century of Hizra and even in later period, women used to pray in mosque along with men. Even they interacted with the prophet and his male companion in religious and other matters. The women could exchange their ideas in such gathering. As a result of the freedom of participation, the Islamic history presents some talented women in religious and educational field (Mustafa: 1989).. A woman may go to mosque, attend fair and festivals, participate in the women parts of religious ceremony, visit local shrines and make long pilgrimage. In some Muslim countries, women do participate in congregational worship often but not daily which is mandatory for the men.

b) Woman's Right to Inheritance :

Muslim Women have the right to inherit, possess and dispose of property. This is one of her important economic rights which cannot be denied on ground of sex. The women are generally entitled to 'half' of the share given to men from their fathers and husbands. This provision of 'half of share' does not make her position lower. Justifying this provision, Mustafa argues that a son has the share of two daughters, because a daughter has a privilege of having no financial obligation and responsibility for family members. But it is compulsory for a son who has so many obligations to look after the parents, brothers, sisters and others. In his marriage, he has to give dower money to his wife. A woman is not bound to spend from her *mehr* money or her earning before or after marriage (Mustafa:1989). Thus in Islam, she has exclusive or unqualified rights over her property and earnings. In pre-Islamic Mecca (not in Medina), her right of inheritance was present as a customary law and Islam introduced it as legal rights of woman. She can enjoy this right as daughter, sister, wife, mother, grand mother and

even as son's daughter. "Men have a share in what the parents and relatives leave behind at death; and women have a share in what the parents and relatives leave behind. Be it large or small a legal share is fixed."(quoted in **Moinuddin :2000**) Muslim women had been enjoying absolute right on her property even if it was acquired by succession. The Act of 1939 permits woman to ask divorce if the husband sells away wife's property or prevent her from exercising her legal rights over it. For this unique right of the Muslim women, one can confidently say that Islam stands on better footing in this respect.(**Subbamma:1989**). To protect her right from deprivation, Islamic laws provide some safeguards i.e. limiting the right to 'will'. In Islamic law, no person can make any 'will' of more than one third of one's property. This will work as safeguard for a property holder woman who may be persuaded by the people of bad motive.

c) Her Right to Dower :

Woman has got the right to dower or '*Mehr*' or *Sadaq* before and after the consummation of marriage. Mehr is a sum of money or other property which the wife is entitled to receive and the husband is to pay the amount as stipulated in the marriage contract '*(kabin)*'. The Quran calls it *Fareezah* or compulsory. It emphasized on the prompt mehr though there is permission for deferred dower. If it is deferred, she can claim it at any time after the marriage. If there is death of husband, it is the responsibility of son to pay it first as promised by his father. In case of divorce she is to be paid fully the amount fixed, so that she can maintain herself with honour. She is the total owner of amount she receives. (**Ghouri:1990**)

d) Right to Consent for Marriage :

In Islam, a bride has right to consent her marriage and disapprove the marriage. If she had been married in the minor age, she has also the right to ask husband for divorce. Consent is mandatory in Islam. As Shushtery observes, "to force her to give her consent is not legal (quoted in **Moinuddin:2000**)

e) Right to Employment :

The Quran (Sura 4.34) grants woman to carry on any lawful occupation or to hold any public office (quoted in **Moineuddin: 2000**). It proposes for ideal relation between husband and wife by making themselves depending on each other; for balancing the two sides i.e. inside and outside; it proposes for the division of labour.

f) Position as Wife :

Nisha (chapter 4) deals with the position of woman as wife. Islam prefers men and women marry and their harmonious relationship built with love and mercy. The marriage tie is considered a protection for both the male and female i.e. 'They are raiment for you and you are raiment for them' (Quoted in **Jahangir**:1991). Providing an elaborate list of rights and privileges of women, the Quran (2:228) says that 'men have a status above'. Because he earns and spends property for the support of women and so men have superior position over women. The verse considering the man as superior is not to be taken in its apparent meaning. Because as Engineer thinks that it is the policy of compromise with the order of tribal society where men have complete control over the resources and the chiefs wielded all power glory and the position of women was servile. So a 'good woman' in this perspective is to wait for the gradual change of the society. The Quran has such potentialities for gradual change of society (**Engineer**:1987).

Islam always proposes for cordial relationship between man and woman, but it also cannot deny the fact of strained relationship between husband and wife. On such situation, one of the verses of the Quran has instructed man – "As for those (women) from whom ye fear rebellion, admonish them and banish them to bed apart and scourge them". The provision of scourging or beating seems to establish man's superiority and oppression of woman. But the classical writer like Zamakshari claims that the verse only refers to the social existing superiority of men and it has no relevance to control subjugation or oppression of women. (**Lohandwala**:1987) When the prophet was reported to such incidents of beating wives he first reacted against men and so to take retaliation; but he modified his approach and asked women to have patience. Otherwise the reaction will endanger her struggle to survive. So the prophet adopted a practical attitude and advised women to adjust themselves for the interim period only but not forever. So the scholars think that it was an interian decision, not an eternal one. The prophet did not stop only advising the women. He advised the men also not to beat the wives like slaves and he warns them that if one 'treats a woman to go astray' he is not in His way. Moreover, this verse intends to provide a means for resolving disharmony

between husband and wife and suggests three steps in sequence before. Wadud observes that three steps are suggested in the said verse : i) Verbal solution between husband and wife (4:34) or with the help of arbiter (4:35,128); ii) If open discussion fails, then second solution comes as separation of bed or physical relation; iii) If this second step also fails to regain the relation, then only the 'scourging is permitted as final measure.

As Wadud thinks that the word scourge (*daraba*) does not necessarily mean force or violence. It may mean release from bondage obviously said verse (i.e. 4:34) was only response to a concrete situation. It is not meant as final or irrevocable sense. On the question of 'obedience', Amina Wadud asserts that the Quran never orders a woman to obey her husband; hence obedience to husband is not stated as characteristics of the better women. Many of the instructions of the prophet insisted on the soft dealing with the womenfolk as well as indivisible relationship between man and woman. It is obvious that scourging, though permitted, should not be in a cruel manner with the intention of retaliation but only for regaining the relation(Wadud:2000).

g) Polygyny and Women :

The Quran permits a limited type of polygyny for men under certain circumstances but under no circumstances polyandry is allowed for women. Polyandry goes against the patriarchal structure of the society. In a patriarchal set up, a family can work under polygamy but disintegrates under *polyandry* in the question of inheritance or certainty of paternity of the child. Though *polygyny* is allowed by Islam, but it is never prescribed as a rule (Engineer: 1987). Hence it is only for exception and never imposed as universal practice. The prophet was in favour of monogamy, but he had to allow polygyny under the pressure of prevailing social situations. At that time, to protect the orphan girls and to own their property, the elders of the family, the tribal leaders or the guardians themselves used to marry their wards. Thus they can avoid conflict with others and maintain complete control over their property. From this situational background, polygyny developed abruptly. To correct this social evil, the Quran limited this number to four; on the other hand the economic responsibility of maintaining the wife would counter balance to access to the wealth of the orphaned female through the responsibility of management (Wadud:2000)

h) Right to ask Divorce :

A Muslim woman has right to ask divorce in limited form of two ways: i) divorce for a consideration (*khula*), ii) delegated divorce. In the pre-Islamic days, she enjoyed the right to divorce by custom. The right to divorce the husband existed in the Pre-Islamic days. An Arab woman simply turned the entrance of her tent facing another direction which indicated her repudiation of conjugal relation with a man. The Quran has no reference of retention of such repudiation by women and at the same time there is no indication that all her power of repudiation must be removed from women. If a woman fears ill-treatment from her husband, there is no harm if she asks divorce for a peaceful settlement and 'peace is an excellent thing'. One should have fear of Allah who is cognizant of all (4:128). Another verse of the Quran (4:130) says "If both decide to separate, Allah in his largest will provide for them; for Allah is infinite and all-wise." (Jahangir:1991, Moinuddin:2000). These two verses of the Quran say that a woman can take initiative for divorce when she fears ill treatment from husband, and she can obtain this only by the consent of the man. This kind of divorce is called divorce for Consideration (*Khula & mobara*) (Mondal:2001). The second kind of right to divorce is 'delegated divorce'. She can exercise this kind of divorce if she is delegated this power by agreement in the Kabinama, before marriage or after marriage or at the time of marriage. She can exercise the said two rights of the Quran without going to the court. Besides, a Muslim woman can divorce her husband under the dissolution of Muslim marriage Act, 1939. It is her right of divorce through the court. On this unilateral power of men, the Quran imposes some conditions or responsibilities upon them i.e. women deserve proper human treatment from the men during the proceeding of divorce as well as after divorce. It prevents abandonment and misuse of women who are subject to the whims of husband in marriage and divorce (Wadud: 2000) It reminds as well as warns men about their obligation to the womenfolk. If one violates the law of God, he will be punished by God.

i) Right to Maintenance :

A woman has right to maintenance. Women deserve maintenance not only during the married life but also after the divorce. For divorced women, maintenance would be provided on a reasonable scale. This is duty on the righteous. The Quran (Sura Bakra,2:241) says, 'Making a fair provision for women who are divorced is the duty of those who are Allah fearing or pious' (Sen: 1979, Moinuddin: 2000). Men are instructed to house the divorced women where they live, according to their means; but not to harass them and reduce them to strained circumstances. The Quran is very much specific and sensitive about the women subject to divorce. Men are instructed that if they are pregnant, men should spend on them until they give birth to the child, and if they suckle the child, men should make due payment to them and consult each other appropriately. Iddot period (waiting period) is very much important for the divorced couple in Islam. Thus the *surahs* are very explicit about the welfare of women. Not only as wife, but also as daughter (whether legal or illegal) has right to get maintenance from her father or grandfather. (Sen: 1979, Moinuddin: 2000).

j) Right to be Witness :

Woman has right to be witness in the court. For two witnesses, if two men are not at hand, then a man and two women may be approved as witnesses. If one woman errs, the other can remind her. Here this provision of one man equal to 'two women formula' was intended as 'a safety valve'. This safety valve was required because 'women were unfamiliar with businesses, or they might have 'lack of understanding'. Here the verse, as the scholar argues, refers to the social conditions of the time when women's understanding of financial, commercial and trade relationship was not so sound as that of the men's (Engineer:1987). Both the women are not called as witnesses. In the wording of this verse, Wadud thinks, one woman is designated to remind the other; she acts as corroborator. Although the women are two, they each function differently. (Wadud:2000, p.85).

k) Pardah and Woman :

The Quran (chapter 33) pronounces, "O Prophet, speak to thy wives and to thy daughters and to the wives of the faithful that they let their wrappers fall now. Thus will they move easily be known, and they will not be affronted"(quoted in **Jahangir:1991,p.106**). The call of this verse is intended to safeguard the movement of women from the unwanted incidents and misshapeness. It is intended to save from evil glance so that no harm would come to them. Thus one of the obligations of women prescribed by the Quran is '*Pardah*'. There is no word like '*pardah*' in the Quran as it is understood today. In Arabic language '*Hizab*' is meant both for men and women. In the Quran (24:30 and 24:31), it is first the men who are asked to lower their gaze in the presence of women and be modest. Then the women are asked to do so i.e. to keep their modesty and restrain their behaviour regarding sex organs. *Pardah* is meant 'to dress more modestly' in a civilized society than that of the previous times. It is through the 'casting down one's look, 'guarding' one's private parts, and 'avoiding' display of a women's beauty to any one other than her husband or the near ones. Referring to the two most important *Ayats* (24: 31 and 33:59) Jahangir asserts that there is no explicit reference to seclusion of woman from outside activities in the Quran"(**Jahangir:1991**) The real meaning of *pardah*, as the classical view suggests, is not confinement of women in the four walls of houses or their deprivation from education, job or other kinds of development of life. What Islam recommended was observance of privacy and not seclusion and confinement. The Quran advocates for modesty in physical posturing and outward conduct.

The custom of veiling existed in Arab before the advent of Islam since 1500 – 2000 BC. It was prevalent in the Byzantine Empire. The women were veiled and secluded among the Persian and Roman people in the pre-Islamic days. *Prophet Md.* did not reject this custom but modified it. During his time and up to the time of four Caliphs, only the women of nobility observed limited veiling and it was not observed by the slave girls and common people. The women, as observed by Ibon Batuta, freely interacted with 'their friends and companions amongst men who are not related to

them. Women's participation in religious discussion was encouraged by the prophet himself. Engineer opines that 'The custom of veiling began during the Umayyad period'. Later, when foreign influences, especially of Rome and Persia, appeared on the scene, women came under increasing restrictions" (quoted in **Moinuddin**). According to Levy (1957), The practice of *pardah* was not there until the third century of *Hizra* and even after.

All these things make it clear that *Pardah* is not something inherent to Islamic civilization and it was adopted from the Europeans in a filtered and modified form but it was misunderstood and misinterpreted by the religious leaders in different socio-economic environment. So it is the Ulemas who used the excuse of the Quran and helped to come down the status of women. (**Engineer:1987; Moinuddin:2000**).

2.2. Women in Muslim Societies of South Asian Countries :

In the light of the position of women in the Quran and other Texts, here is an account of an exploration on the position and status of women in some south Asian countries. Among 'Seven sisters' of South Asia, Bangladesh, Pakistan and Maldives Muslims constitute the largest majority of population in India, Nepal, Bhutan, Srilanka whole Muslims are in the minority status of different numerical strength. Very little is known about the Muslim women of last three countries i.e. Srilanka, Bhutan and Nepal. News Bulletins, other sources of information of these countries are very few and controlled by the government; and there are rarely in wide circulation. Although the data problem in these countries seems insurmountable, an attempt has been made to use the available information of women in these countries.

It is well known that most of the south Asian countries are socio-economically backward in comparison to the developed countries of the world. The Muslims of these countries contributes a lot to this fate. The Muslim women being restrained by the community laws, customs and also many other bindings, are doubly backward. Modernization is still not within their grip.

Being constituted by heterogeneous ethno-cultural background. Their response to the change and dynamics of society also varies from country to country and

community to community. The population of the seven regions represents 1.2 billion of the total world population of 5.5 billion and the future of the world lies in the future of the half of the population of these countries i.e., the women about whom very little is being said or written in the world. (Jung:1994). Millions of mother and children of south Asia have no access to nutrition, health care, education and proper job facilities. The Muslim women of these countries are historically more deprived section of the population of any country of this region. They are observed as more vulnerable to many incidents like polygyny, unilateral divorce early marriage, dowry and domestic violence along with their usual poverty and illiteracy. The degree of these incidental sufferings depend on the laws of the country and the social practices of the people. The ideal status of Muslim women enshrined in the same text of Quran is reflected differently according to the diverse nature of their practical life. The following discussion is an attempt to touch the gap between the ideal text and reality i.e., the situation of Muslim women specially in South Asian countries.

India

India is one of the South Asian countries where Muslims constitute 13.4 percent of total population (Census: 2001) and they are more than 15 corers. As a result of the heterogeneous characteristics of the Muslims of India, 'their response to socio-economic, political problems varies according to their group interest (Engineer:1987); they carry different customs and practices. In the light of this empirical truth, the status of Muslim women in India is to be examined. According to available data, they live in a patriarchal social structure and their aspirations of life are restrained by the customs and convention.

During the medieval period of the Muslim rule, the early marriage of below nine, dowry system and polygamy, free exercise of divorce of man, are the common practices in the community, especially among the richer people. Akbar prohibited these by law but the injunctions were ignored. Pardah or secularism was looked upon as a symbol of respectability. In the British period, the impact of western education and social

reformation movements in the Hindu community created wide social awareness in the Indian society. The upper class Muslim responded to this social awakening. Muslim reformers, both men and women came forward to improve the condition of women. They spoke for education of women, widow marriage, and daughter's share to property as Islamic tenet, her right to *mahr* and consent in marriage, to claim divorce, to inherit property as sanctioned by Islam. Obviously, the reformers spoke against seclusion, polygamy, unilateral divorce of man and other social injustices against women. And as a result of all the movements, some positive achievements were found possible. A series of legislation were enacted in favour of women of India e.g. Child Marriage Restraint Act in 1929, the Dissolution of Muslim Marriage Act of 1939. Her right to property in the Quran was highlighted by the reformers. A government college for Muslim women was opened in Madras (at Raya Pettah).

In modern time, Muslim women have been suffering from this historical set backs. "Caught in the vortex of vicious circle of poverty and ignorance and hemmed in by traditional practices, men and women face illiteracy as the single biggest problem (**Women link:** 2000). Muslim women are at the bottom of literacy ladder. It is 19.00 percent, lowest for any community, even compared with 'Dalit women' (**Mondal:** 1997). They have better literacy position in Kerala and Tamilnadu only. Some research study in some villages of West Bengal shows that the enrolment of Muslims girls in Primary level is quite satisfactory, yet in other three levels it is very dismal and negligible. Still among the girls of present generation, there is very negligible number attending higher education. In technological and professional education the number does not deserve counts.

Census: 2001 says that the rate of work participation of the Muslims in India is 31.3 percent. Due to economic pressure, a number of women like their counterpart in other communities, are engaged in economic activities to earn livelihood or to supplement the family income. The working women may be divided into 'Moderate working women' having better secured job and better status in society, and the majority

'Backward working women' are engaged in lower category of works having no job security. In different states of India, the work participation of Muslim women varies according to the socio-cultural values and economic pressures of the people. Among the seven states of the north east region, 36 percent work participation of the Muslims comes mainly from the participation of Manipuri women. In Tripura out of 29.2 percent work participation of the Muslims, women contribute 11.22 percent (**Census:2001**). An empirical study in West Bengal shows that 'more than 70 percent of working women are contributing no less than 50 percent of the total family income...' but in spite of this, they are economically highly dependent on men (**Jahangir:1991**). Even if the women are educated, they are not allowed to take up jobs and their employment does not give them much freedom. A study in the upper Ganga-Yamuna Doab in Uttar Pradesh conducted by **Sahab Fazal** in 1998 reveals that rural Indian women are bound with social values and traditions that restrict them from asking for their rights and better living condition. Traditional practices in the community hinder the freedom of Muslim women as individuals.

Pardah as seclusion starts in her life in the age group of 11-13 years and perpetuates for lifelong enforcing her dependence and denying her opportunities for proper development of personality. Early marriage is a corollary to *pardah* for women. Some empirical study shows that the marriage age of girls has increased both in village and town for many reasons, but still it is below the national standard of 18 years of age. The practice of consanguineous marriage prevails among the Muslims of India.

Among the patri-lineal Muslims of Kerala and Andhra Pradesh, cash money (dowry) is demanded by the bride-grooms side. Harassment for dowry is one of the causes of domestic violence in north India. Dowry is no longer a one-time payment. A series of demands are made and if these are not met, the bride is sent back or ill-treated even to the point of being killed (**Dube:1990**). In the matriarchal society of Laccadives, domestic violence is avoided by easy divorce. A study on the Muslim Telis of Delhi (conducted by **Ragini Sahay** in 2001) reports that though dower (*mehr*) is compulsory

for marriage there is also a growing fear that marriage without dowry will not keep the daughter happy.

Unlike the most Muslim countries of the world, instant talaq persists still in India. There is no certainty of the marital status of a Muslim woman, because at any moment she can be thrown or left with no help by a man whether in anger or in intoxicated under compulsion or threat, conviction or necessity. The empirical studies show that polygyny is negligible in percentage. As regards the types of family, the Muslim culture of joint or extended type of family is found decreasing now-a-days.

A study on the cultural determinants of maternal and infant mortality in Madhya Pradesh conducted by **Sarita Sahay** (2001) shows that infant mortality rate is quite high in M.P i.e.106 in comparison to the national figure i.e.74. (**Mondal:2001**) in his study in a village of West Bengal i.e. Kawakhali, says that in village population, maternal under nutrition is more common and 40 to 60 percent village children are under nourished.

Lakshadweep where Muslim population is 95.5 percent has 1002 sex ratio. The literacy rate of the island is 86.1 percent; female literacy rate is 80.2 percent. The high literacy as well as the system of matrilineal society has contributed to the better sex ratio in the island. The sex ratio among the Muslims of the-sea coast is better in Pandicheery (1097) followed by Kerala (1082), Tamilnadu (1020) and Lakshadweep (1002) than other states of India. Except these few cases the overall situation for Muslim Women in India as very poor. The demographic as well as socio-cultural indicators available at present reveal that Muslim women are in subordinate and disadvantageous position.

The traditional socio-economic life is a hindrance to the political participation of Muslim women. Even when she earns the requisite consciousness in politics, she can not secure the support of the society. So long she is supposed to be unfit for politics and political activism, though she is able to caste her vote in favour of political party dominated by men. However, the situation has been changed with the 73rd and 74th

amendment of the constitution. In many villages of India, they have become able to prove their worth in the political roles in rank and file. Though the number is few, many can earn their inspiration from them. Few empirical studies on Muslim women of India reveals that irrespective of patrilineal and matrilineal, society, high and low rate of literacy and sex ratio, the status of Muslim women in all over India is low in terms of their overall participation.

Bangladesh

The People Republic of Bangladesh came into force in 16th December, 1972. The Muslim constitute 90 percent of total population. The sex ratio is 103.8 in percent per hundred females. The average literacy rate is 36.6 percent. Adult literacy is achieved 37.3 percent in 1993. Only 23.39 percent of total population is urbanized. As regards the family type in Bangladesh, there are 60-70 percent nuclear families and 4.8 is the average size of the households (**Census of Bangladesh**: 2001). Islam is the state religion of Bangladesh and the people are governed by the law based on the *Shariq*. A limited degree of industrialization has taken place in recent time. The position of Bangladesh women depends on this demographic, socio-economic and socio-religious background.

Mere 32 percent urban women are literate and only about 1.27 percent adopted modern occupation. In the village, gender-gap remains high from primary to secondary level of education inspite of the financial incentives offered to them i.e. scholarship for girls students. The low representation of girls at secondary or higher level reflects institutionalized gender discrimination and indicates large number of drop out, early marriage of girls, and custom of *pardah* or seclusion for women. Poverty and dominance of patriarchy in the social organization are two main hindrances for the women in Bangladesh. The working or employed women are deprived from enjoying the fruits of their labour due to dominance and interference of the male members. Poverty has helped to relax *pardah* for a large number of toiler women in Bangladesh. A survey conducted by **Ashan Ulla**:1999 and others on the slums of Dacca city reveals a new kind of struggle for these women living in the slums. In the dominant patriarchal

structure of family, woman has little control over her legal share on the patrimonial property. **Dube** (1990) observed that her right to inherit half a brother's share of patrimonial property is "more formal than real." In family she is accorded a secondary status. Sometimes she is abused in random. In Rangpur district of Bangladesh, wives are used to plough the land instead of oxen and to draw water from a well by making her reined to go around the Persian wheel like an animal. The guardians of the locality choose those brides who are sturdy to do hard tasks for the family's livelihood. Due to this kind of abuse of Human resource, maternal mortality ratio (MMR) in Bangladesh is 850. According to this report, it is the highest number among seven south Asian countries (NFHS:2001). Maternal death in Bangladesh like other neighbor states is seen as an individual misfortune rather than a matter of public concern. The marital status of women is obviously low. Most of the marriages go without registration despite the Law for Registration of Marriage. Desertion is more common by man. Yet there is no machinery to guard against this. It is difficult even to trace the number of marriages men have entered into. Though there is dissolution of Marriage Act of 1939, very few women can avail this legal advantage because of educational and economic backwardness. Despite the Child Marriage Restraint Act, marriage of minor age girl is prevalent among the poor people of the community. The parallel or cross-cousin marriage is not very common practice in Bangladesh. A study by Aziz, 1979, (quoted in **Dube**) shows that out of 1,719 first marriages among the Muslims, (it is 9%). (Cousin marriage is found more among the poor and it acts as deterrent to the prevalent dowry custom). A study of Akanda and Sharmin (1985) on the dominance of dowry systems as (quoted in **Dube**) reveals that since the war of Bangladesh Liberation, the desire to get rich overnight has spread among the people. 'Black money has increased and this unaccounted money has given an impetus to dowry' despite the anti—dowry law.(**Dube**:1990) On the other hand, dower or Mehr which is a religious compulsion for every Muslim has become a mere formal promise. Women are frequently deprived of this right. It is rightly observed by **Dube** that 'with increase in importance of dowry that of mehr is decreased'

According to the statistical report of Bangladesh, widow is more than widowers. Like Hindu women, widow is regarded as unfortunate. If a widow remarries, her children are to be accommodated in their father's family. (Dube:1990) Widow Remarriage remains far away from truth because of the effect of dowry system. So polygamy by men is not uncommon. The dominant nuclear does not ensure women structure of family equality in the conjugal relationship. A man's right to impart physical punishment to the wife is common in Bangladesh particularly at lower level. It is reported that out of 436 deaths of women, 55 were killed for dowry and out of 370 incidents 25 percent are dowry related. The torture and death associated with dowry are more common in villages than in the towns of Bangladesh.

However within thirty years of untired efforts, Bangladesh society is now on the eve of change. In the major areas of property of the human beings i.e. Employment, education and health, the works of the NGOs – local, national and international, have brought some success focusing mainly on women. *Ganashasthaya Kendra* (1971) *Nari Kendra*, The BARC, (Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee), Bangladesh *Gramin Bank* have achieved success in providing many socio-economic benefits for the women of the country. Still, it is a long journey awaiting for them.

Bhutan

The sovereign kingdom of Bhutan lies in the Eastern Himalayas. It is bounded by China and Tibet in the north and in all other sides by India. This mountainous land along with thick forest remains isolated from the countries and its geographical isolation causes its political isolation also. It is a small state of only 21 lakhs population distributed into two major ethnic groups and a few minor ethnic groups. Female population is 49 percent of total population. Bhutan is a Buddhist State and Buddhism is the state-religion. The minority population consists of mainly Hindus of Nepali origin and a small number of Muslims of heterogeneous groups. The minority people of Bhutan are the migrants of neighboring countries like India, Nepal, Tibet and China in different times of history. The Muslims are as estimated, 3.5 percent of the total population (Hadiudjamman 1996, Mondal:2001)

In the settlement pattern, Muslims are scattered in southern districts and central region of the country. The Indian Muslims contribute a sizeable number to the total number of Muslims in Bhutan. Under the uniform legal system, Muslims are in a position to join the mainstream of Bhutanese national life and a process of assimilation and integration is going on. The marital bond between Bhutanese woman and Muslim men has contributed more in this process. As regards the position and status of Muslim women in Bhutan, there is lacking of information.

In socio-cultural status, Bhutanese women are accorded a secondary position. Man is believed to be at the apex of the social hierarchy. Women have never been found in the National Assembly or head of the monastery. Illiteracy among women is 95 percent. 'The gender division is not very clear in Bhutan' (Sharma:2003). They are destined to frequent pregnancies, anemia, and traditional unsanitary child delivery practices; absence of birth attendants is common to all communities. Marriage and divorce are not rigid in Bhutan. There is free liking of marriage and automatic divorce.

'But for the Moslem', as said by Jung, 'marriage and divorce is controlled by Sharia'. Like other scholars Jung has served no further information about the Moslem women in Bhutan. However, from the above discussion, it can be guessed that the participation of Muslim women in education, employment, and politics is worse.

Like other Bhutanese women, they may have some contribution to the agriculture and livestock but not something significant as the economy of the country itself is largely subsistence level. Men and Women are not equipped in religious education because of the want of muktab and madrasa in the country, and on the other hand, due to ignorance of Islamic culture among the people of the community. Though there is no detail information regarding their marital status, it may be assumed that the marital bond is not very stable in the social environment of free liking of marriage and 'automatic divorce'. There is no registration of marriage for majority communities in Bhutan. Muslims are not exception due to the mass unawareness of Islamic culture. In the absence of Kabinnama, the question of dower (mehrana) and maintenance of iddat period remains probably negative. Various discriminations are reported against women

but it is known very little by the outsiders due to the lack of public newspapers. The weekly bulletin is owned by the government and the government has no written constitution or any bill of rights. Some discriminatory Acts are imposed upon them. So the mal treatment, 'the widespread incidents of female abuses and their sexual exploitation remain hidden'. The refugee Bhutanese women have been fighting against the many kinds of humiliation, imprisonment and risk of eviction from the country since the eighties. Recently an NGO namely NWAB, established in 1981, have been carried out social work among them. The BWCO (1990), OXFAM (British NGO) and others are working for the empowerment of the Bhutanese women from the grassroots level.

Maldives

The Republic of Maldives is one of the seven sisters-countries. Maldives consisting of 2000 coral islands is a state of cent percent Muslims. Islam as faith came to Maldives in 1153 via the ocean routs. After its independence in 1965, the constitution of the country is based on the Sharia of Muslim religion. The life expectancy of the people is 66.1 years and infant mortality is 60 out of 1000 (**Monorama Year book: 2001**). Women have constituted 49% of the total three lakhs population of the island. The life expectancy of women in general has increased from 48 years to 72 years between 1978 to 1995. (**Sarma: 2003**) The position and status of women is determined by three important factors of the state viz. its geographical position, the state religion and the prevalent matrilocal system of the society. The geographical isolation of the land has victimized the women more than men. The remote nature of the land dictates their pattern of life – their health, education, and occupations. Women face the disadvantages of an underdeveloped state, its isolated position and late coming of urbanization. Only in recent time modern medical facilities (hospital, health centre) have become reachable to them and infant mortality rate has been reduced now. Still the high rate of pregnancies is affecting the life of women. Many women are out of the means of birth control / family planning. Contraceptives are not easily available; surgical

operation is refused by them on the excuse of religious reasons. Thus, the women remain unaware of their fundamental civil rights. Though education is not compulsory in the state, Maldives has highest literacy rate (93%) in South Asia. The first school for girls established in 1930's as a branch of boy's school. In spite of this, girls can not study beyond seventh class because of the dearth of secondary schools nearby. The only higher secondary school is located at the capital town, Male. It is an expensive transportation. The girls have no facility for Girls' Hostel. Even they cannot avail the training courses because of the troubles of transport facilities. The only easily available education for them is at muktab and madrasa. The girls can recite the Quran and understand the basic rules of faith. Their high literacy is mainly due to their religious education and adult education to some extent. Women are the educators of their children. Religion is not like oppression to them. The common people believe in religious values but in their outward behaviour, there is no visible expression of religiosity. For their religious faith, women are engaged only in traditional occupations which are mainly home-based, But they are not found in the fish-market. They dominate the nursing profession but they are not found as Doctor's or Hakim's (Judge). They never aspire for leadership or presidency of the country. Yet out of 48 members of their Majilis (Parliament), eight women are nominated. This gender prejudice dominating their minds is derived from the patriarchal culture. Islam though originated in a patriarchal society has combined itself nicely with the matriarchal culture in this island of Indian Ocean.

Absence of dowry system, freedom of women in marriage and marital relationship are some features of matrilineal system in Maldives. Women are free to choose the mate as well as to divorce when they need. Children remain with mother who is able to keep them in their homes which they inherited as their property right. The women of Maldives enjoy the full right of inheritance. Remarriage for women is not seen as social disgrace. Sometimes there is premarital sex among the girls. On the other hand, some features of patriarchal system in the name of Islam are present in the society. A well-defined gender division, restriction in the social interaction between the sexes, easy process of divorce for man, early marriage of girls, polygamy and man's adultery

still exist in the society. In most cases, it is the man who gives a divorce. He can get a divorce without going to court as *the Sharia* permits him. If he goes to court, he gets it easily while a girl (if she goes to the court) has to face a lot of questions. To adjust with the situation of natural and social environment, the law of the country shows mild liberal attitude to divorce. So, "divorce is an important psychological outlet" for the people of the land. (Jung:1994). Though there is no evidence of Women's Movement, 'Maldivian women are the most emancipated women in the Islamic world'. (Sharma:2003).

Nepal

Nepal is a Hindu kingdom where 90 percent are Hindus, 5 percent are Buddhists and 3 percent are Muslims and the total population is 2 corers and 36 lakhs. (Census: 1991). Female population is nearly 50 percent. The kingdom is a land-locked Asian country in the Himalayan range. Nepal is one of the least developed countries of the world and its 75 percent people live below the poverty line as reported by the UN Development statistics. The average life expectancy of people is 58.1 years and for women it is lower than that of men mainly because of their over-loaded hard work without taking health protection. They are to do all the domestic hazards, and on the other hand and simultaneously they work in the field all the day and carry burdens. In the non agricultural sector, there is only 3 percent women still in 1994. Women contribute 30 percent of the total work force. Out of traditional agricultural work they are not allowed to go outside for employment except the very poor women. They have no role in household decision making but head the family in the absence of men. The subordinate position of women is due to their low level literacy i.e. only 18 percent in contrast to men's 52 percent, and due to social psychology and attitude.

There is high discrimination between male-female as regards the access to education. Low rate enrolment, high rate drop out, practice of early marriage resulting high risk pregnancies, infant and maternal death—all these are serious problems to the advancement of women. Thus they have very limited presence in managerial positions and positions in power politics. Family planning is very late in this mountainous country

like Nepal. As a result, infant mortality is very high in the country i.e. 75 out of 1000. One in every ten infants dies before the age of five and forty percent of Nepali children are undernourished. (**Monorama Year Book: 1999**)

Muslims of Nepal are not exception of this (**Mondal:1997**). Mondal says that Muslims of Nepal are considered as caste group with a definite degree of impurity. They are treated as impure though not untouchables. Prior to 1940 and before the Rana government, Muslim children were prohibited to admission in the general schools. Separate primary schools for them were opened by the Rana government and later they were allowed to the general centers of learning. They take Islamic education in the local madrasa of primary level and for higher Islamic study, they come to India.

Muslims of Nepal concentrated in the plains. Muslim women have assimilated themselves in the local cultures. In birth, marriage and death, many of them observe the rituals of the locality. Many women adore deities and pay devotional respect to the ancestors of the Hindu community. Though the large scale Muslim settlement in Nepal is since the 17th century, many of them are ignorant of Islamic culture and knowledge. They are carrying a mixed cultural heritage. Though they are of various regional, ethnic and cultural groups like Nepali, Tibetan and Kashmiri but they all belong to Hanafi School and Sunni sect. Muslims live mostly in rural areas.

In this general background of the country said above, Muslim women have remained more backward in education –both in religious and formal education. They had no opportunity to get general education before 1940. The legal status of Muslim woman is same to that of her counterparts due to uniform legal system. The Muslim Law of inheritance or the property right of women is not practicable in Nepal as the law of the country is based on the Hindu Law. No talaq or divorce also can be obtained without the decision of court and polygamy is a crime under Law. But probably the Muslims who belong to the non Aryan communities enjoy great freedom of divorce and remarriage by the existing customary law. (**Sharma:2003**).

Muslim men in rural areas are engaged in agriculture and various craft production; in urban areas, Muslims are primarily engaged in trade and petty business, rickshaw pulling and wage earning at organized and unorganized sector. The works and activities of Muslim women in Nepal are confined in the home. Like other women, they are also the victim of illiteracy, poverty and gender discrimination.

Pakistan

Pakistan is a south Asian country situated on the coast of the Arabian Sea. Iran and Afghanistan border it to the west, China to the north and India is in the west. The Islamic Republic of Pakistan is said as the most conservative of all the Muslim countries. Muslims constitute 97.00 percent of the total population (83.8million). The population of the state is 14 corers and 50 lakhs and the growth rate is 2.8 percent in 2002. The female population is 47.50 percent (1992-93), the percentage of sex ratio is very poor viz. 475 female for 1000 males. (**Monorama Year Book:** 2001). The literacy rate of Pakistan is (45% in 2002) lowest among the seven South Asian Countries. The female literacy was 14 percent in 1983. But the percentage in higher education is hopeful. There are a number of supplemented nuclear families, a number of lineally joint families and joint families of brothers. Women are more victims of poverty and illiteracy than that of man in the State which is an underdeveloped and non-industrial state. As Khawaja (1994) observes that mothers suffering from anemia are 90 percent; infant mortality is 84 out of 1000 and 30 percent children born under weighed. The low sex ratio is very much related with the low standard health care infra structure in Pakistan. The prevailing social customs and conventions and state ordinances come in the way to the independent status of women in Pakistan. The social customs are based on sharp discrimination between the sexes. Some of the discriminatory social customs are: Compulsory Pardah system for girls above than 10 years; Early marriage of girl child; Large dowry system, especially in the rural areas; Custom of man's unilateral talaq and instant pronouncement of talaq three times. As the man pronounces talaq three times the wife is to leave his house instantly often along with her children; Polygamy is indulged by this man-dominate social structure; Women are not allowed to go out for earning

money; men become ashamed of wife's job and hide the fact from the guest; The custom of 'watta-satta' or the exchange of daughter within families for marriage; Various kinds of superstitions against family planning, taking the weight of women/ health care of women and children etc.

Women have been made victim of a conservative ordinance promulgated by the orthodox rules of Pakistan. The *Hudood* Ordinance in 1979 made many women the victim of 'zina' (an offence against the state and punishable by imprisonment). By the ordinance of Pakistan, if a woman even if she is blind, would lodge any complain of rape, but unable to provide any water tight evidence or witness, she will be accused of *zina*. This ordinance also prohibits her from aborting the unwanted pregnancy and she is forced to live, with stigma of bearing an illegitimate child who has no place in the society. By this ordinance, the women are denied their right to choose of their dress, to drive a car or participate in arts and sports. The campaign for Islamic morality in Pakistan was only meant for women (Jung:1994).

Because of strict *pardah* and early marriage, education of girls is very much difficult in Pakistan. Even in non-formal or religious education she is not expected to have it perfectly. Unlike women in Maldives, very few women in Pakistan can read the Quran. So, they are deprived of realizing the meaning of the Surahs of the Quran. The Mullahs take advantage of this. They misinterpret religion and also like to stop women from doing job and having a planned family. Unlike Maldives, "religion has been harnessed as a negative force in Pakistan" (Jung:1994).

The Govt. of Pakistan in 1958-69 took attempt to modernize Pakistan by an ordinance of Family law in 1961. This law put a check on Polygyny, encouraged registration of marriage, wife's right to get maintenance and right to ask divorce under particular circumstances. By this law, pronouncement of *talaq* three times does not mean legal divorce.

The urban population is 20.0 percent of the total population consisting middle class and affluent sections. They remain out of the control of the orthodox rules and their associates. Hence the researcher and activists in Pakistan think that it is the

urbanization rather than religion and socialism will determine the future of Pakistan in the next decades. Various aspects of urbanization have been taken by the governmental planning. The National Development planning of Pakistan has separate financial allocation for the "Development of women" entitled as separate chapter in 1979. Under the urbanization, change has already been started in Pakistan e.g. changed attitude of the people break up traditional structure facially, expression of women resentment against the combined force of religion and customs dominated by men. Women are now found with job education, they have begun to speak boldly against the conservation law/ordinance and underprivileged status of women.

The economic participation of women has improved significantly (Menon:1981) since the sixties. The rate of their participation varies in different province. A large number of women skill worker are found in embroidery work, sewing and cutting, in the business of boutiques, interior decoration, jewelry making. Some women of Beluchistan operates shops , under takes agricultural activities, sells milk and even constructs building and houses. Women of Sind and Punjab do agricultural and related works, women of urban areas of Karachi or Hyderabad, work in offices, firms and factories. Their participation in the paid labour force is 5 percent in 1983-88. Due to steady efforts, some positive results have been achieved during 1960 to 1982. A case study of Pakistan conducted by Faizia Aziz shows the different categories of occupations among the women i.e. professional, administrative, clerical, production, sales and services (Sagra:1994). They have already made a place in the world of entrepreneurship from the three decades. The AMDISA (Association of Management Development in South Asia) recognized this new role of women as "new entrants" in the work place. As result of this wide participation in the last three decades, participation educational participation has also increased. There is marked increased in Higher Education girls since sixties. They attend college and university without burqua.

A number of reforms in Muslim personal laws have directly benefited women (Jahangir:1991). The association of Muslim Marriage Act in Pakistan (with

modifications) gave women the right to divorce on specified grounds. Women in urban areas are 'becoming emancipated from their former subjection, although this may be at the cost of family happiness and stability' (Nazmūl Karim: 1963). Though women are found as Prime Minister, Ministers, Ambassadors and Chairperson Senate, but Political participation in fullest sense is still limited within the elite class of society.

Srilanka

Srilanka is an island in the Indian Ocean and Independent since 1948. The Democratic Socialist Republic of Srilanka is constituted by one corer and ninety one lakhs population distributed into Buddhist, Hindus, Christians and Muslims. All the Singhalese are Buddhist in religion and they are the majority of total population. The minority consists of the Tamils who are Hindus and Christians and the Muslim migrants from Kerala sea-coast. The Muslims constitute 2 .00 percent population of the total. Muslim women in urban areas enjoy more freedom than the women of other south Asian countries, probably because of their Tamil ancestry. The country has high literacy (94%) and low growth rate of population (1.2%). It has solid health infra-structure resulting high percentage of life-expectancy (74%). Women have equal status with men. Women are more than 50.00 percent in Technical colleges and vocational Training. There is no gender-bias and no dowry system. The birth of girl is not considered a threat as it is in neighbour India. Though the new couples are helped by parents to be settled in the beginning, but it is not treated as dowry but gift. The urban people are much developed. The urban women are highly literate and various opportunities or avenues of self expression are open to them. The success story of Srilanka remains in its stabilization of population. Family planning is run by indirect way (Dube:1990).

On the other side of the coin, the people being predominantly rural are concentrated in the west-south and south-east region. About fifty percent people are engaged in agriculture. Majority people live in rural side where poverty is coupled with low education. Majority Muslim women are the migrants from Kerala and they live in the

rural side of the state. They belong to the disadvantaged group. Recently some community leaders have taken initiative to organise educational movement for them. Literacy campaign, schools and colleges for Muslim girls established in various parts of the country and a Muslim women's conference in Srilanka have definitely some impact on the Community people.

Findings

The foregoing discussion on the notion of Islam towards Women has made it clear that women are accorded individuality in Islam. It treats women very softly and liberally. Hence, Islam is called as a gender friendly religion. It has tried to change and modify the man-centric values and practices prevalent in the tribal life of the Arab desert. Islam gives importance to the legal and happy union between man and woman and the peaceful family life maintaining a balanced order in society. Men are warned to fear Allah the Almighty so that they can restrain themselves from unlawful and cruel acts against women or abuse of women. Thus women are conferred so many rights which are very much liberal in nature and are relevant for communities, viz. right to education, property, consent to marriage, dower, employment, divorce, maintenance etc. But live Islam i.e. the Muslim society treats women in somewhat differently as it is based on patriarchal social order and male dominated social practices.

When we go through the social and legal practices prevalent in the Muslim societies of South Asia, the gap between ideal and practice becomes distinct in many ways. Though the degree of gap may vary according to the heterogeneous characteristics of the Muslim society but the women share some common experiences there. Marriage is the destiny for all women in south Asian countries e.g. Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Pakistan and also in Bhutan, Maldives and Srilanka. Everywhere they have lower participation in education and politics than that of the men; their contribution in the growth of economy remains often unrecognized in the statistics of the country. Despite of some privileges conferred by the Quran, they are vulnerable to various disabilities and misfortunes. The misinterpretation and misuse of the Personal Law contributes a lot to the misfortune. The socio-cultural conservative outlook of the society leaders and poverty and illiteracy existing in the society aggravates the situation against the women.. Majority women in Pakistan and Bangladesh live in a life full of strains. India is not very exception. The deviation of people from the Islamic scriptures as well as the socio-economic and political reality existing in the country are responsible for the painful conditions of majority women.

The data of poor literacy, poor health and high rate of maternal death, high rate of dowry, early marriage and gender discrimination. Since the childhood and low marital status for Muslim women in Bangladesh is known to all. Change is coming through the works of NGOs and increased rate of urbanizations in the country. The status of Muslim women is assumed to be different from the status of the majority Bhutanese women constituting a separate ethnic and religious group (e.g., the predominantly Buddhist). Muslim women in Bhutan are assumed to live in the patriarchal social structure of the community in the matrilineal society of Maldives the *shariat* law is moderate to adjust with the order of the society.

In the Hindu kingdom of Nepal, Muslims are to follow the uniform legal civil code. Hence no talaq can be effected without the consent of the court. But it is reported that Muslims being the non-Aryan community enjoys customary rights of their personal law. As the overall situation of Nepal goes not in favour of women's equal position to men, it is assumed that the position of Muslim women is also low in the country.

In Pakistan due to extreme *pardah* custom and some orthodox rules, the status of Muslim women is very low specially in rural areas. Recently, increase of urbanisation, spread of education and government policy in favour of women's entrepreneurship, have contributed to the slow but steady changes in their position in the society. For these the role of NGOs can not be denied. Despite the poorest literacy of women in the low levels the rate of higher education for women is good. In varied employment they are increasing in number. But still, about 80 percent women live in rural areas which lag behind the change of the time.

The women of Srilanka are in better position in respect of marital status, education, employment and also in political participation and there is no dowry custom in society. But Muslim women who live in the rural areas, suffer from illiteracy and poverty as the part of their life. It is reported that the community leaders have come forward taking initiative to organise education movement for the people. Muslim women of urban society in Srilanka are in better status than those in rural areas. In the Hindu state of Nepal, Buddhist state of Bhutan and Srilanka, Muslims are in the process of

the assimilation of culture. Often they remain ignorant about their religious heritage due to the want of Islamic education. Urbanisation, Family planning, health care, modern education are yet to reach the Muslims of South Asian Countries.

The empirical data on the status of Muslim women in India, especially in the north and north east India show that the negative aspect of patriarchy is more dominant than the positive aspects. Patriarchy does not ensure all women a secured home and safety from the hazards of the outer world. Though in literacy rate and sex ratio, the status of women is better among the Muslims of the sea-coasts of India e.g. Lakshadweep, Kerala, Tamilnadu Pondicherry but this does not ensure their marital stability. The high sex ratio might be affected by the fact that men of these areas went abroad for job purpose and settled there. Hence, matrilineal pattern does not necessarily mean high status of women. Among the patriarchal Muslim families of Kerala, dowry-demands and violence against women is not reduced by the humane spirit of Islam.

In comparison to Bhutan, Nepal and Sri Lanka Muslim women in other South Asian countries have better opportunities for both formal and informal education. In spite of this, Muslim women have no significant participation in education and other social activities. The least education they receive, has least effect on their status. At last the gap between ideals and practices in the Muslim societies of South Asian countries can not be denied.

Chapter – 3

Muslims of Tripura : A Profile

This is an investigation into the demographic and socio-cultural profile of the Muslim inhabitants in the old territory like Tripura characterized by monarchy to democracy. In other words, it is a peep into the past and look into the present of the Muslim inhabitants to have a general idea about the overall conditions of the people. Under the demographic heads, investigation is on the inception of their settlement in the territory and the growth of population as scientifically recorded from 1901 to 2001. While under the socio-cultural heads, there is discussion on the society-structure, the economic pursuits, status of education, political awareness and participation from the past to present, their religious identity, groups, welfare activities and the personalities among the community people. All these are relevant to assess their position in the midst of the multi-ethnic society of Tripura during the long time of history. Before going to the main focus of our present study, this is a venture for the first time to have a preliminary knowledge about the community people.

3.1. Tripura - A North-Eastern State in India :

Geologically, the territory of Tripura is as old as forty million years. It has risen from the sea-bed about forty million years ago. The soil of the plain lands of west and south Tripura proves that these were submerged in the ocean in the near past. Tripura, Assam and Bengal, these three lands of the north-east region of India, were submerged in the ocean. Then the rise of the Himalaya gave birth of two rivers—the Ganges and Bramhaputra. In course of time, the poli-soil of these two rivers took the shape of a vast land and a tiny portion of that land was named Tripura. The ocean turned to the south. Tripura falls within the Assam-Arakan geological zone (Ganchaudhury:1985).

Geographically, Tripura lies between two larger provinces of Bengal and Assam. According to Majumdar (1973) ‘The newly formed kingdom was lying between

Chittagong and Sylhet' (quoted in **Roy Chowdhury:1998**) It is a land-locked hilly state of the union of India. The political boundary is bounded by the international boundary of Bangladesh on the north by Sylhet district, on the south by Chittagong and Arakan, on the west by Comilla and on the east by Burma. Only on the north-east border, Tripura meets Assam and Mizoram. Tripura is accessible only through the Cachar district of Assam. In other words, Tripura lies in the west of Assam, west of Mizoram, north-west of Arakan and north-east of the Bay of Bengal. The total area of the territory is 4116 sq. miles with 31, 91,168 populations at present. The climate of Tripura is like that of the north-eastern states and Bangladesh. The land of Tripura consists of mainly two parts, i.e. – Hills in the east, and Plains in the west. There are six major hills, several rivers and many rivulets in Tripura. The greater part of the land is forest which is mainly inhabited by the wild animals, elephants being one of them. Tripura was once famous for its variety of elephants and its abundance.

In respect of communication Tripura is backward for its peculiar geographical location with the international boundary of Bangladesh on its three sides. The Partition of India and the dissection of *Chakla Rosonabad* (the indispensable part of Princely Tripura) are responsible for this. Besides, rugged topography is positively a hindrance to the development of communication. Due to this rugged nature of the territory, the state is not adequately served by railway. The backwardness in communication of Tripura is a legacy of the past. "Tripura had been much bigger than it is now. It had bordered with the China Hill in the north and Burma (modern Myanmar) on the east" and "Between 1781 and 1835 the Kingdom of Ava (Burma) was unquestionably recognized as the Eastern Boundary of the Tippera State" and also, "the Lushai Land, east of Manipur was once considered to belong to Tripura" (**Debbarmann:2002**). Under this extended area of Kingdom, the rulers of the land were indifferent as well as incapable for the development of modern communication system. They had well connection with the main centers of the plain land of Bengal and sometimes they were able to extend their suzerainty over those areas, such as Comilla and Sylhet. In

that time, Comilla was known as 'Tripura'. It was only in the British period, first initiative for the construction of roads and railways had been taken by the native rulers with the collaboration of the British. (Debbarmann compiled, 2002).

The present principal and internal communication of Tripura depends on motor vehicles – bus and auto services. Tripura is connected with Assam and other sister states of north-east by airways, railways and roadways of the national highway no. 44. There is a daily air service (Indian Airlines) between Agartala and Kolkata.

3.2. The Peoples of Tripura : Ethnic groups and Religious communities :

The peoples of Tripura are normally categorised in two major ethnic communities, viz. the Bengalis and the Tribal. The other minority ethnic groups are the Manipuri and Assamese from north-east, the Sikhs, Jain and Gujarati from west, the Oriya (Orissa) and the Bihar-i (Bihar) from east, the Telegue (Andhra), Tamil, Keralian (Malayalam) and the Marathi from south.

The major nineteen Tribes of Tripura are the Scheduled Tribes divided into Indigenous and Non-Indigenous. There are six non-indigenous tribes like *Sānthāl*, *Orāng*, *Mundā*, *Bhutiā*, *Lepchā* and *Bhil* who came in Tripura as tea garden labourers from Bihar, Orissa and Madhya Pradesh. They settled here permanently retaining their own language and culture. Among the thirteen indigenous tribes, the nine are of similar ethnological characteristics and identical culture and social traits, i.e. *Tripuri*, *Reangs*, *Jamatia*, *Noatia*, *Halam*, *Kuki*, *Lushai*, *Mog* and *Chakma*. Kokborak is their mother tongue. The rest four, i.e. the *Garos*, *Uchai*, *Chaimal* and *Khasia* are from north-east. All these tribes also have branches and sub-branches. In the economic pursuits, they are mainly agriculturalist–Jum cultivators as well as plain cultivators. But the traditional self sufficient economy of the tribes has been affected in the changing condition of Tripura. Now, a good number of them are in government services.

There are a good number of Manipuri people in Tripura. They originally came from Manipur during the Lushai and Burmese invasion of Manipur in 1824 A.D.

They emigrated through Cachar and Srihatta (Sylhet). Their matrimonial relationship with the royal family of Tripura is one of the causes of their settlement in Tripura. The Bengalis of Tripura consisting of both Hindu and Muslims came from eastern and southern Bengal and the plain Tripura (the Chakla Rosanabad) since the 16th century. They are found in different occupations and services. Since the monarchical period, the Bengalis have valuable contribution to the development of the state. The record of Administration of Bengal (1888-89) says that the trade of the country was in the hands of the Bengalis. In agriculture, Jum cultivation is replaced by their developed plain cultivation. In all spheres of life, i.e. education, administration and politics, Bengalis are in the dominant role and position.

By religion, the people of Tripura are mainly divided into Hindu, Muslim, Buddhist, Christian, Sikh and Jain. Hinduism is the main religion of Tripura. Majority people are Hindus. They are the Bengali, Manipuri and many tribes of Tripura. The tribes in their religious practices are divided into Hindus, Buddhists and Christians. There is a small number of Baisnab under the fold of Hinduism. No Islamisation is found among the tribals of the state.

Though the Mughals of Bengal ruled at Udaipur for quite some times in 1618 during the reign of the emperor Jahangir at Delhi, Islam could not penetrate among the tribes. One of the reasons may be, as pointed out by a scholar that "frequent Muslim invasion against Tripura from the early 16th century created a bitter antipathy among the tribes towards the Mughal Pathan and their religion" (Bhowmik 2003). Another rational explanation may be noted here. Before the introduction of Islam in the medieval period, the tribes were introduced with Hinduism, Buddhism and Shakta vs. Vaishnavism. The animist tribes have already devoted themselves to the developed religion and culture. Unlike the low strata people of Hindu caste hierarchy which provided the fertile soil for conversion, the tribes had no problem of status i.e. untouched ability or any other grievance. The invader Muslims also did not enter into the Hill sector with any missionary zeal like the Christian Missionaries. "The

Mohamadan never troubled themselves about the hills but they assessed the plains to revenue and the East India Company followed their examples” (**District Gazetteer:** 1975). These may be reasons for why Islam could not break their faith. The people followed Jainism and Sikhism form a very negligible part of the population of Tripura Ref : (Table 3.1). The Jain from Rajasthan has increased during the last four decades because of their growing business in Tripura. While the Sikhs from Punjab have increased during last two decades only due to the oil exploration work undertaken by the ONGC in Tripura.

Table 3.1
Tripura - Population and Proportion by Religious Communities
(1901, 1961, 1981, 2001)

Year	Total Population	Hindu	Muslim	Buddhist	Christian	Jain	Sikh
1901	1,73,325	68.77	26.15	3.46	0.08	0	0
1961	11,42,005	76.00	20.14	2.95	0.88	0.02	0.0042
1981	20,53,058	89.34	6.75	2.67	1.21	0.01	0.013
2001	31,99,203	85.62	7.95	3.09	3.20	0.01	0.04

Source: Census of India (Tripura) 1901 to 2001

The Table no. 3.1 shows that in 1901, Muslims were 26.15 percent of the total population while Hindus were 68.77 percent. But the Census report of 1874-75 distinguishing between Hindu and Manipuri, shows that out of total 74,242 population of Tripura, Muslims were 14,224 while Hindus were only 4,339, the Manipuri Hindus were 7,045 the tribal population was 42,345, and others were 6,173 (**Debbarmar**; 1310 T.E.). It means Muslims were the larger than the Bengali Hindus at that time.

3.3. Historical Backdrop and Growth of Muslim Population :

In Tripura Muslims are called Mosolmans. The earliest statistics on them is available in the census report of 1874 in the British period. But they are the inhabitants of Tripura (formerly Hill Tipperah) for several centuries. As a result, ‘they were found in every part of the District Tipperah’ (ruled by the British) as well as the Hill Tipperah called *Swadhin* Tripura—the Kingdom. The history of Tripura relates to three distinct periods: the ancient period as described in the *Rajmala* (the chronicles of the kings of

Tipperah) and the medieval as well as the modern period supported by the history of India as written by the Mohamadan and British historians as well as the historians of Tripura. The early history of Muslim settlement in Tripura may be inferred from the writings of some historians who followed the record of Rajmala. According to them, it was in 1279 A.D, prince Ratna-fa took the help of Gaur and his forces to conquer the kingdom of Tipperah where his brothers were reigning. After conquering, he brought a good number of Mohamadan families along with a good number of different caste Hindus and arranged them for permanent settlement in different parts of the land. Although from so early date as 1279 A.D, the Muslim rulers seem to have had hankering after the kingdom of Tipperah, the Rajas hold their ground bravely for upwards of three centuries (**Hunter: 1874**). It is said that 'throughout the history, the ancient kingdom gained conquests and possession which carried its armies from the Sundarbans in the west to Burmah in the east and from Kamrup in the north to Burmah in the south'; the military prestige of this kingdom reached at height during the sixteenth century especially when the Hindu Rajahs of the greater Bengal had fallen in weak position due to the victory of the foreign (Muslim) rulers. But in the beginning of seventeenth century, the Mughals obtained their footings in the country. About 1620 A.D, the Mughal force of Emperor Jahangir defeated the king of Tipperah and occupied the capital Udaipur till they were forced to leave the land by the epidemic. The Mughals continued to get upper hands in the kingdom due to intrigue of the discontented royal members.

This short introduction of history makes one thing clear that Muslims are the inhabitants of Tripura for several centuries. Since the historical period, Muslims are found in most of the sub divisions and villages. All the districts of Tripura are inhabited by them e.g. the major sub divisions like Agartala Sadar, Bishalgarh and Sonamura of West district, Udaipur, Amarapur and Belonia of South district, Kailasahar, Dharmanagar, and Kamlapur of North district. A small number of Muslims are found in Khowai, Sabroom and Amarapur sub divisions of the west and south districts respectively.

Table no. 3.2
Growth of Muslim population in Tripura
(1901-2001)

Year	Total Population	Decadal Variation	Muslim Population	Decadal Variation	% of Total Population	% of Total Population of India
1901	173325	-	45323	-	26.15	-
1911	229613	32.48	65953	45.52	28.72	-
1921	304437	32.59	82288	24.77	27.03	-
1931	382450	25.63	103720	26.05	27.12	-
1941	513010	34.14	123570	19.14	24.09	13.34
1951	639029	24.56	136950	10.83	21.43	9.91
1961	1142005	78.71	230002	67.95	20.14	10.69
1971	1556342	36.28	103962	-54.80	6.68	11.21
1981	2053058	31.92	138529	33.25	6.75	11.35
1991	2757205	34.30	196495	41.84	7.13	12.12
2001	3199203	16.03	254442	29.49	7.95	-

Source: Census of India (Tripura) 1991 & 2001

The Table no. 3.2 shows that the total number of population declined 7 percent during 1921 to 1931 and again gone up 9 percent. This fluctuation population was contributed by the movement of Mohomadans i.e. the *Jiratia Praja* who were the subjects of the British in the plains of Tripura, but they had paddy lands in hill Tripura under the special arrangement of patta or 'Adda cheque' by the kings. (*Dutta Bhowmik:1996*).

The study on the population trend in Tripura (Table no. 3.2) points out the abrupt increase of population in Tripura during 1951-1961. The main reason was influx of displaced persons due to communal riot etc. Another interesting reason lies in the legacy of the motivated infiltration of a large number of Muslims to take away Tripura in favour of Pakistan. However the decline of Muslim population in 1961-1971 is affected by the 'Push-Back' operation policy of the government. The abrupt increase of population in the years of 1951 to 1961 exceeds the national average growth of population.

It is reported that in 1981- 91, the growth rate of Muslim population in seventeen states of India was higher than average for the Muslims, (i.e. 34.54%). Tripura is to be included with those states because in the said decades, the growth rate of Muslim

population of Tripura was 41.84 percent. This growth rate of the Muslims is in conformity with that of other north east states like Assam (Dey: 1998).

Table no. 3.3
Sub Division wise Muslim Population of Tripura in 1901

Name of Sub-Division	Total Population	Hindu*	Muslim	Buddhist	Christian	Animist	Brahmma
1. Sadar	65615	45042	20434	2	136	0	1
2. Sonamura (incl. Udaipur)	39229	24640	10011	4250	1	327	-
3. Belonia	27343	20027	5565	1747	0	004	-
4. Kailasahar	20673	12733	5703	0	0	2237	-
5. Dharmanagar	10170	7102	3298	0	0	0	-
6. Khowai	10295	9048	542	0	0	105	-
Total	173325	118592	45553	5999	137	2673	-

Source: Census Report, *Swadhin Tripura* (1901)

* Hindu includes both Bengali Hindu and Tribes who professed Hinduism.

The Table no. 3.3 shows the subdivision wise Muslim population of Tripura in 1901. It shows that the Muslim populations of Tripura were divided into six sub divisions and they were the second largest religious majority. It is estimated that the Bengali Hindus were insignificant in number compared to the Muslims at that time.

Table no. 3.4
Sub Division wise Muslim Population in 1961

District	Sub Division	Total Population	Muslim
West District	Sadar	366076	50306
	Sonamura	77969	48084
	Khowai	129948	9239
North District	Kamalpur	61677	4088
	Kailashahar	104126	15166
	Dharmanagar	127548	28718
South District	Belonia	84827	15665
	Udaipur	90074	45637
	Amarpur	56365	10139
	Sabroom	43397	2960
Total	-	1142007	230002

Source: Census of India (Tripura), 1961

Note: Buddhists were 33,716; Sikhs were 49

Christians were 5,262; Jain were 195

Among the sub divisions, Sadar holds the largest number of Muslims followed by Sonamura (west) and Kailasahar (north). This feature has been continued in 1961 as shown in the Table no 3.4 and onwards. The year 1961 is a significant Census year for the abrupt increase of population. The decadal variation among the Muslim population along with the total population was very high in every district.

Table 3.5
Muslim Population of Tripura (Rural / Urban)
1991-2001

State/ District	Population					
	1991			2001		
Tripura	Rural	Urban	Total	Rural	Urban	Total
	184,647	11,848	1,96,495	2,36,748	17,694	2,54,442
West	87,785	7,870	95,655	1,13,930	13,087	1,27,017
South	31,116	1,274	32,390	37,445	1,554	38,999
Dhalai	-	-	-	6,436	147	6,583
North	65,746	2,704	68,450	78,937	2,906	81,843

Source: Census of India (Tripura) 1991 & 2000

The Table no. 3.5 shows the population distributed into rural and urban. It reveals that huge population of the community lives in the village. The urban population though insignificant in number has an increasing tendency reflected in the last decades of 1991 to 2001. It has increased from 2.81 percent to 3.24 percent.

The Table no. 3.6 presents district wise distribution of urban Muslim population in Tripura. Every district has subdivisional towns and sub-towns. According to the Census : 1991, total Muslim Urban Population is 11,848 (66.42%) distributed into three districts viz. 7,870(22.84%) in West district, 2,704(10.75%) in the North district and 1,274 in South district.

The table 3.6 shows that the largest no. of urban population of West district is in Agartala town . Similarly among four towns of the South district, Uadipur Nagar Panchayat town has the largest urban population; and among four towns of north district, Kailasahar has the largest urban Muslim Population.

Table no. 3.6
District wise Muslim Urban Population in Tripura (1991)

West District			North District			South District		
Town/Sub Towns	Popul- ation No.	%	Town/Sub Towns	Popula- tion No.	%	Town/ Sub Towns	Popul- ation No.	%
Agartala (MC)	3621	46.01	Dharmanagar	953	35.24	Udaipur (N.P)	967	75.90
Badharghat	231	2.94	Kailasahar (N.P)	1323	48.93	Amarpur	271	21.27
Pratapgarh	396	5.03	Kumarghat	365	13.50	Belonia	27	2.12
Barjala	192	2.44	Kamalpur	63	2.33	Sabroom	9	0.71
Singerbil	38	0.48	Total	2704	100.00	Total	1274	100.00
Jogendranagar	922	11.72						
Sonamura	1910	24.27						
Teliamura	456	5.79						
Khowai	104	1.32						
Total	7870	100.00						

Source: Census of India (Tripura part, Religion) 1991

Table no.3.7
Religious Communities of Tripura
(At a glance, 2001)

Tripura	Population	Propor- tion to total	Sex ratio	Sex ratio (0-6)	Proportion of child population (0-6)	Literacy	Female Literacy	Work Participation
Muslim	2,54,442	8.00	945	964	18.6	60.9	51.4	29.2
Hindu	27,39,310	85.6	949	965	13.0	75.3	67.3	36.5
Christian	1,02,489	3.2	941	975	15.7	67.9	57.3	38.7
Buddhist	98,922	3.1	956	988	17.9	49.2	37.4	43.0
Jain	477	0.0	916	1036	11.9	82.9	78.4	41.1
Sikh	1,182	0.0	101	710	4.5	98.4	89.5	86.6
Other religions	1,277	0.0	759	770	12.1	75.4	65.3	55.1

Source: Census of India (Tripura) 2001, *a Compilation*

The Table no. 3.7 shows some demographic features of the Religious Communities in Tripura in 2004. It shows that in sex ratio, female literacy and in work participation, Muslims are lagging behind that of the Hindus. (Census, 2001)

Table no. 3.8
Sex Ratio in Tripura (1901-2001)

State/ District	YEAR										
	1901	1911	1921	1931	1941	1951	1961	1971	1981	1991	2001
India	972	964	955	950	945	946	941	930	935	927	933
Tripura	874	885	885	885	886	904	932	943	946	945	950
West	877	891	893	881	881	908	937	946	954	944	953
North	856	866	868	879	895	894	918	935	934	939	952
South	874	884	881	873	878	909	936	945	945	951	949
Dhalai	-	-	-	-	-	908	932	932	938	931	940

Source: Census of India (Tripura) 2001

Sex ratio is an important demographic indicator. It is defined as number of females per 1000 males. The Table no. 3.8 shows that the number of females per thousand males in India is failing consistently except the years 1951, 1981 and 2001. While in case of Tripura, it is increasing sharply after 1941. Up to 1961, the growth of female population in Tripura was consistent with the growth of all India level but after 1971, it exceeded that level. No Census report of India on the sex ratio among the Muslim of Tripura is available except the census 2001.

3.4. Muslim Inhabitants of Tripura :

The Muslims of Tripura are living under three different kinds of administrative systems of the state, viz. i) Municipal and Nagar Panchayat administration, ii) Gram Panchayat administration, iii) Autonomous District Council administration.

Like all-India pattern they live in both towns and villages. In urban administration, they live under Agartala Municipality of Sadar sub division and the Nagar Panchayats of the sub-divisional towns like Bishalgarh, Sonamura, Udaipur, Amarapur Belonia, Dharmanagar, Kailasahar, and Kamalpur; among total fifteen sub-divisions, Muslims live in almost all sub-divisions except a few i.e. Longtharai Kanchanpur Ambassa

Gandachara. A sub division is divided into few Blocks which are under Panchayat administration. A good number of Muslim settlement is found in the majority blocks except few which are tribes dominated, e.g. Mohanpur, Jampuijala, Salema, Bagafa, Ambassa, Killa Karbuk, Satchand Rupaichari, Dasdah, Pacharthai, Jampui Hill, Manu, Chamanu, Teliamura, Tulasikar, Mungiakami, Khawai, Kalayanpur and Dambur Nagar. They also live in the A.D.C. villages dominated by the tribes.

Half of the Muslim population of the state lives in the west district where they are 127,017. They were lowest number in south district (38,999) before the birth of Dhalai district which has become separated from north district.. Dhali holds the least number of Muslim population i.e. 6,436 only (**Census:2001**). In the period of Muslim suzerainty over the local rulers, Muslims entered into Tripura from the western side and settled in Bishalgarh, Sonamura and a large part of Udaipur of south Tripura.. The route of invading Armies into the areas in different times, gave a scope for conversion to great extent, particularly among the lower strata of the Hindu society. All these account for the major numerical strength of Muslim population in the west district

Sadar sub-division, West district: Muslims are the inhabitants of Agartala Municipality. Agartala, the valley plains of west district is situated on the north bank of Haora River. The urban area of Agartala is bounded by Kunjaban in the north, Arundhutinagar in the south, an embankment in the east and Bangladesh border in the west. Under Agartala municipality, Muslims are concentrated in Bhati Abhoynagar (west), Ramnagar south (Goal Chakkar) adjacent to the Bangladesh border of Akhura), Shibnagar Masjid Patti, Jgaharimura, Kabiraj tilla (Bordowali), Sachindranagar colony, Paschim charipara, Paschim Nandannagar (near the G.B. Hospital) and the rear side of Indranagar. Under Panchayat administration, Muslims live in the following Gram Panchayats : Pashcim Noabari Durganagar, Kobra-Khamar, Bankimnagar, Joynagar of Jirania Block; Charipara.,Gajaria, Pandabpur, Jarulbachai, Indranagar, Nandannagar, Uttar Aralia, Uttar Jogendranagar, Kalikapur, Joypur, Baldakhal, Khayerpur, Champamura, Gabordi, Barjala, Madhya Bhuvan of Dukli Block.

Bishalgarh sub-division, West district: Bishalgarh is situated at the bank of Burima River. In urban area, they live in Kaiyadepa, Noapara and Charilam; they live in the gram panchayats like Durganagar, Chandrangar, Karaimura, Valuachar, Ramchara, Dakshim Charilam, Purathal Rajnagar, Gokulnagar, Bishramganja, Purba Gakulnagar, North Charilam, Bishalgarh, Kasba, Routhkhal, Radhanagar, Ghaniamara, Ramcherra, Barjala, Krishnakishorenagar, Golagati, Pathiala, Gazaria, Arabindanagar, Raghunathpur.

Sonamura sub-division, West district: Sonamura is situated at the right bank of the Gumti River and very much adjacent to Comilla district of Bangladesh. Muslims are inhabitants of Sonamura Nagar Panchayat town; Muslim live in large number in many gram panchayats of three blocks of Sonamura sub division. These are Uttar Kalamchora, Kalshimura, Rahimpur, Kulubari, Boxonagar, Madhya Boxonagar, Anandanagar, Putia, Motinagar, Kamalanagar, Ashabari, Indira nagar, Mainama, Manikya Nagar in the Boxonagar block; Bardwal, Mohanbhog Durganagar, Bejimara, Aralia Chandanmura, Pachim Durlavnarayan, N.C. Nagar, Rangamati, Khadabari, Telkajla, Urmal, Khash Chowmohoni, Srinagar in the Melaghar block ; Muslim dominated gram panchayats in the Kathalia block are Kalikrishnanagar, Rabindranagar, Dhanpur, Sonapur, Bashpukur, Dakshin Paharpur, Uttar Paharpur, Sovapur, and Uttar Maheshpur.

North district of Tripura is bounded by two sister states like Assam and Mizoram on its east and west side respectively and by Bangladesh on its north and south. The three valleys of north district are three sub-divisions like Dharmanagar, Kailasahar and Kamalpur situated on the bank of Juri, Manu and Dhalai respectively. The Muslims of Dharmanagar and Kailasahar are Bengali while a number of Muslims in Kamalpur are Manipuri in the ethnic identity.

Dharmanagar sub-division, North district: Muslims reside in the Nagar Panchayat areas of Dharmanagar town like Nayapara and Durgapur (near the rail

station). The Kadamtala block of Dharmanagar is heavily populated by the Muslim population. The gram panchayats of this block are Tarakpur, Ranibari, Bishnupur, Baghan (53% Muslims), Kurti (90%), Kala-ganger paar (99%), Fulbari (80%) Churaibari, Ichailalcherra, Pratyakroy, Chandrapur, Bhagyapur, South Hurua, North Hurua, East Hurua, Saicherra, Laxminagar, and Govindapur.

Kailasahar sub-division, North district: Under Nagar Panchayat administration, Muslims are concentrated in a few Wards e.g. Town Kubjar, East Durgapur, Daulatpur, Uttar Cacharghat, Baulabasa which are adjacent to the Town masjids. The Gournagar block of Kailasahar sub division which is adjacent to Sylhet of Bangladesh and Cachar of Assam state, holds majority number of Muslim population of the north district. Majority gram panchayats are Muslim dominated. The gram panchayats are Yeazekhowra east and west (99% Muslims), Latipura, Khowrabil, Ichabpur Irani, Jubarajagar, Tillabazar, Noorpur, Laksmipur, Srinathpur, Ranguti, Fullbari (80%), Gournagar, Samrurpar, Sarojini ; most of these are adjacent to border area. In other villages of Kailasahar, they live with the Hindu Bengalis and tribes. In some ADC villages situated at the east of Kailasahar like Irachara, Muslims are 35% under ADC Panchayat like Doorchara situated in the Unakoti Range of Kailasahar; there are three Muslim dominated villages like Deora Bangalee para, Kala cheera and Bagacheera. In the said ADC Panchayat they constitute 19.52 percent of the total population. They are also found at some tribal dominated villages like Chinibagan and Noonchara.

Kamalpur sub-division, North district: Kamalpur is situated at the extreme of north Tripura. There is a large number of Manipuri Muslims called Pangals. Only 15 percent Manipuri Muslims are found in the town area, Manikbhandar under Kamalpur Nagar Panchayat. They are concentrated in some gram panchayats of Salema block viz. Manikbhandar, Mohanpur, Bilashcherra, (about 70%), Halahali (50%), Aabhananga (30%), Moracherra, Kuchainala, Kalachari; They are also found in Santirbazer, Latiabil and Malaya adjacent to the border. There are 115 pangal household in Maloya.

Udaipur sub-division, South district: Udaipur is situated at the bank of the Gomuti and it holds the largest number of Muslim population of the south district. The names of few Muslim inhabited wards under the Nagar panchayat administration are: West bank of Jagannath Dighi and its adjacent locality named Chan-ban, West and South bank of Amar Sagar, Town Sonamura and the rear side of Rajarbag. In the Nagar Panchayat areas, they are very few in number, only 967 (census 1991).

But a large number of Muslims live in the gram panchayats of Matabari block. The gram panchayats are Khilpara, Maharani, Uttar Maharani, Dhajanagar, Purba Gakulpur, Salgara, Kunjaban, Uttar Chandrapur, Chandrapur village Panchayat, Dakshin Bagma, Halakhet, Barabhaiya, Potamati. In Kakraban block, the Muslim populated gram panchayats are: Kushamara, KAKraban Rani, Uttar Tulamura, Amtali, Garjanmura, Hadra, Harijala, Palatana, Shilghari, Jamjuri, and Purba Palatana.

Belonia sub-division, South district: Belonia is situated on the bank of two rivers, Muhari and Fenni. It covers a good number of Muslim populations. They are found scattered and very negligible in the Nagar Panchayat area of Belonia town. A number of Muslims live in few gram panchayats of Rajnagar and Hrishyamukh blocks, e.g. Ekinpur, Rajnagar, Rangamura and Devipur. The village Amzadnagar and Matai deserve to be mentioned.

Amarpur sub-division, South district: Amarpur is situated on the bank of the Gumti. It is mainly a tribal-based locality where Muslims are few in number. They are found in some areas of Amarpur Nagar Panchayat administration, viz, town RangKang, (only 15 Muslim families), Muslim colony, located at the periphery of Sankar pally. In the numerical strength, urban Muslims of Amarpur account for 271 only (census: 1991). They are concentrated in some gram panchayats of Amarpur block, e.g. Mailak, Rankang, Baspadua and Debbari. The villages are: Satchand, Krishnanagar Mailak (45 families), village Rankang, west Malbasa, Dalak, Devbari, Jherjheria, Eakchari, uttar Eakchari, Dlepachari, Lebacherra, Sarbang (Ompi), Paharpur and Taidu bazaar (where only 8-10 families)

Sabroom sub-division, South district: Sabroom, the remote subdivision of South district situated on the bank of Feni, covers only a negligible percentage of Muslim population. Majority inhabitants are Hindu Bengalis. The major portion of the minority community is constituted by some tribes of Tripura who are Buddhist in religious faith. Few Muslim households are found in Srinagar which is adjacent to the Bangladesh border and not far away from the town. A few families are found scattered in the town area. Muslim inhabitation is found only in two gram panchayats of Satchand block, namely, Krishnanagar and Subashnagar.

It is noted that out of fifteen subdivisions^s of Tripura, at present, Muslims live in nine sub divisions and fifteen blocks. Sonamura and Bishalgarh sub division of the west district, Kailasahar and Dharmanagar subdivision of the north district and Udaipur subdivision of south district deserve to be mentioned for Muslim population. Among 513 Gram panchayats of Tripura (2004), twelve gram panchayats in Gournagar block of north Tripura and several gram panchayats of three blocks of Melaghar, Boxonagar, Kathalia in west Tripura are dominated by the Muslims. In some gram Panchayats of south Tripura, Muslims are in the fifty percent ratio.

Like all India pattern, Muslims of Tripura are also in two kinds of habitation pattern i.e. rural and urban. They live both in town and village. The demographic accounts show that they concentrate themselves in distant villages, particularly in the border areas of the state boundary. This is noticed especially after the partition of India. The urban population among the Muslim is numerically insignificant. The number has increased from 11,848 (2.81%) to 17,694 (3.24%) to the total urban population of Tripura (Census: 1991, 2001). Obviously the capital town Agartala holds the highest number of urban Muslim population. The urban Muslim population in the west district is 7,870 and Agartala holds 46.01 percent (Table 3.6). Majority Muslims live in the villages. They constitute 7.9 percent of total rural population (Census : 1991). Like the Hindu Bengali, the density of Muslim population is highest

in the west district but unlike the Hindus, the second highest Muslim population is found in the north district.

3.5. Socio-Economic Profile of the Muslims of Tripura :

3.5.1. Society :

The social structure of the Muslims of Tripura is constituted by three major categories i.e. Theological categories, Ethnic and regional components, Social and occupational groups.

Theological Categories :

Among three theological sects, Muslims of Tripura irrespective of ethnic and occupational identity, belong to the Sunni sect. They follow the *Hanafi* School of Islamic law (named after Hazrat Abu Hanafi). None is found belonging to other three schools of *Maliki*, *Safi* and *Hambali*. No Muslims of *Shia* sect and *Ismali* sect is found in Tripura. Most of the people are not aware of their theological identity. However, no untouchable Muslim (Bhangi) is found in Tripura.

Ethnic and Regional components : Though Muslims are not caste-divided society like Hindus, but there are about 246 Muslim groups in India. They are heterogeneous in character. They differ and vary in their position and status, custom and practice. In Tripura also, the Muslim society is segmented into certain social groups of varied background viz. place of origin, descent-identity, language and socio-cultural attributes. The ethnic and regional components of Muslim social groups are presented in the following discussion. On this basis of Ethnic and regional components, Muslims of Tripura are categorised into eight major social segments viz. a) Bengali Muslim. b) Bihar-e Muslim. c) Manipuri Muslim. d) Assamese Muslim. e) Banaladeshi Muslim. f) Lahore-e Muslim. g) Iran-e Muslim. h) Kuki-Muslim.

a). The Bengali Muslims :

In ethnic identity the Muslims of Tripura under investigation are mainly from the converted Muslims of undivided Bengal. After the partition of India, most of the Muslims of high social status left for Pakistan. In spite of it, the difference between

higher strata people of the community—the *Asraf* and the commoners or *Ajlafs* can not be overlooked. The *Asraf* of Tripura are those who were carrying the so called direct blood of foreign ancestors (e.g. Sayad, Khan etc.) or, converted from the higher caste Hindus “either persuaded by interest or compelled by violence to relinquish their ancient religion” (Hunter:1874). They think themselves distinct from the ‘Ajlafs’ who are originally converted from the down trodden Hindu castes. This distinction exists only in mind not highlighted always in marital and social relationship.

The present study reveals that, in Tripura there is very limited number of Muslim groups; only a microscopic minority belongs to the Asraf group. This little number of people of distinct social status has lost their identity in the present milieu of social life. According to Singha (1403 Bangabda) “the upper class Hindus and Muslims are about nil in Tripura”. He also assumed that ‘Muslim Zamindars of Tripura were converted from the Hindus and so they have been rewarded’. To mention some name of Muslim Zamindars may be relevant here:

- i) Aka Sadeq, the Zamindar of Balda Khal Parganas (located in Agartala, Khayerpur) and Paitkara Parganas (located in Bangladesh). These two Parganas were gift for him from Mir Habib, the Moghols in 1733. When his Zamindari had fallen down, the Paitkara Parganas was sold to ‘Prince’ *Dwarokanath Thakur* (grandfather of Rabindranath Thakur) of Calcutta. After the death of Dwarokanath Thakur, the Ghosal Raj-Family purchased this (Singha: 1403 Bangabda, p.221).
- ii) Nowab Abdul Gani Kha Bahadur, Zamindar of Sarail Parganas (at present in Bangladesh) and Baldakhal Parganas;
- iii) Sayed Basarat Ali Chowdhury, Zamindar of Hasnabad;
- iv) Isha Kha ruled over some extended portion of Baldah Khal and showed allegiance to the independent king of Tripura (Hill sector);
- v) Noor Ulla Khan, the ruler of ‘*Sarkar Udaipur*’—the integrated name of east and south of Sarail, Loagarh and Kailagarh (Kasba) over which the Tripura Kings lost their authority; it was named after him as Noor Nagar Parganas.

The Muslims of Tripura are not only converted Muslims from Bengal but also from local Hindu Bengalis. During the time of Mohamadan supremacy in Tripura, owing to various reasons, large scale conversion took place among the people of Bishalgar, Sonamura and in other localities. Till the rule of Samser Gazi in Tripura (1748-58), a good number of Hindus being low caste in occupations settled in Udaipur sub division (e.g. Chanban, Khilpara etc.) were converted into Islam. In 1866, Mr. Brown wrote that 'the bulk of Mohamadan were originally Hindus and the process of conversion still continues' (Hunter :1874). According to the Report of the Political Agent in 1872, the Muslims were the largest number among the Bengalis.

It is said by some historians that the Bengali Muslims in a number were first introduced in Tripura during the period of King Ratna Fa, the first Manikya ruler who brought thousands of Bengalis, (both Hindu and Muslims) of different castes, occupations and professions from the Sultan of Bengal. In the later period, they also came in Tripura from its adjacent plain lands like Comilla, Noakhali, Chittagong and Sylhet of eastern and southern Bengali. Once these plains were under the Kingdom of Tripura but frequently conquered by the Muslims in the medieval period, and later on by the British ruler of modern period till the Independence of India. Those plain lands were named '*Chakla Rosanabad*' in the Muslim period and 'District Tipperah' in the British period. The poor occupational groups of the community came and settled in Tripura since the Muslim period. In the British period, some people of the peasantry class did not settle in Tripura permanently but remained in the status of *Jiratia* Muslims. There was always Kingsley patronage behind their settlement and participation in the economy of Tripura, as they have contributed to the increased revenue, specially in agricultural sector. The District Gazetteer records that agriculture, till Independence, contributed 60 percent of the state income. The Muslims cultivated the abundant waste land and subsequently settled in the interior of Tripura. The first census in 1874 by the British in Tripura shows that the Bengali Muslims outnumbered the Bengali Hindus (Hunter :1874, Swadhin Tripura, 1901).

The community is usually endogamous in character. They are influenced by the Hindu tradition and culture. Thus they have integrated themselves with the national framework of India by obtaining citizenship but simultaneously preserving their religious and cultural identity. Since the monarchical rule, they have been enjoying the festivals e.g. *Ramjan Id*, *Bakra Id*, and *Maharram*. The days were declared holidays by the kings for the subjects. Unlike the varieties of Hindu Festival Mela, the Muslims enjoy only one Dargahs Mela. In the past, Dargahs mela was used to be held in some selected places like Thakurmura in Sonamura subdivision and Gazaria in Sadar subdivision usually in the month of December to January. At present this mela is held at Indranagar in Agartala and in other places of Tripura every year.

The Bengali persons of worth were patronized by the Kings in various ways. For example, after Durga puja, in the *Vijoy Darbar*, they were awarded title or Upadhi. In this connection, history recorded one name i.e. Maharam Ali Chowdhury who was awarded 'Khaje Kha Bahadur' in the year 1325 Tripura era. History has also recorded that like the Hindu prisoners, Muslim prisoners also were relieved by the king from the jail; many infirm persons were relieved from taxes e.g. tax on 'Adda'. The *Kaziana kar* imposed on the Muslims was removed in 1350 Tripura Era (1940 A.D.) All these described above prove that the Bengali Muslims were happy in Tripura under the rule of Hindu kings. Even after Independence, they have been living peacefully with all the religious and ethnic groups.

The Bengali Muslims are settled in every district of Tripura. Even after the Partition, a number of villages of Tripura are dominated by them and they hold a good number of total populations of a few subdivisions. They are the largest minority group in the state. Though they are from peasantry background, they are found in most of the job pursuits. They are the indispensable part of the state politics. Women of the community were very traditional since a long time but recently they are coming forward in slow but steady steps. Muslims of Tripura are politically conscious since long before the Partition of India. They joined the political National Movements. Muslim women

of undivided Bengal participated in that movement. Jahanara Begum from Tripura (Comilla) was one of them. Three Muslim men from Agartala were in the Anusilan Samiti of Tripura Branch. A number of Muslims participated from many districts of plain Tripura. They have continued their participation in the present State –politics. Despite all these they are regarded socio-economically backward community of the state and now they are the largest beneficiaries of the Religious Minority Development Schemes.

b). Behari Muslim :

The Muslim coming from Bihar called *Bihare Muslim* constitutes a number of populations in Tripura. They have come for job pursuit from the backward villages and districts of Bihar, viz. Chhapra and Simna district. One section of these people is engaged in the monopoly business as bedding-maker, Dhunkar, and cotton-cutter. It is the male persons as the bread-earner of family usually come in a group with their son, brother, nephew or other close relatives as partner of business. The business is seasonal in nature, so they are to stay in Tripura for less than six months (October to February) of the year, the rest months (March to September, they stay in their country village with the family members – the wife and children whom they do not bring with them for financial reasons. As they work in a group (at least more than one), they leave for home in a rotator system meaning that when some one goes, other looks after the business; in this way, they keep their business chamber open for the year. For business purpose, they rent a house of narrow space and use the room as their bedroom also. They earn money and send that to the family through the banking system.

They prefer marketing centers of the towns and the surrounding for business purpose. In Tripura they are found in all districts and in all major towns or marketing centers. With the Bihari Hindus of same occupations, they are found concentrated in some pockets of Agartala town like Post office Chowmohani, Lake Chowmohani, Battala and Math Chowmohani; Lembuchara, Mohanpur, Kashipur, Champaknagar,

Chandrapur, Jirania are the sub – urbans of Agartala where they do their business. They are also found at Halahali of Kamalpur subdivision. Through they belong to the Hindi – speaking group, they can speak in Bengali, the dominant language of Tripura. They have good interaction with the Bihare Hindus of same occupation or other occupations like hawkers or labourers; thus they maintain socio- religious life; they used to go to the nearby masjids; there they get the chance of more social interaction with the Bengali Muslims. A little information is known about the way of life of another section of Muslims from Bihar. They are engaged in the occupation of day labourer in the brickfields and stone – breaker in the construction works. There are a good number of tea- garden labourers who are mainly Hindu in religious faith. The Hindi speaking people in Tripura were 12,804 in 1931, 18,451 in 1961 and 26005 in 1981. At present, there is no religious and linguistic break up of data on population; it can only be assessed that in Tripura the Muslims from Bihar are not very negligible in number.

Many Hindus from Bihar, Rajasthan, Gujarat and Uttar Pradesh have settled permanently in Tripura. It is reported during the study tour that many of the present generation of the Hindi–speaking people do not learn their mother tongue; they are accustomed with Bengali–speaking and Bengali social culture. Marital relation is also found between them. In comparison to other Hindi–speaking people, Muslims from Bihar seems to lead a solitary life in Tripura.

c). Manipuri Muslim :

Locally known as ‘Pangals’, the Manipuri Muslims belong to one of the minority ethnic groups of Tripura - the Manipuri community. A small number of Manipuri Muslims from Manipur are settled mainly in the subdivision of Kamalpur in the north district. They speak in Manipuri language and practice the Manipuri tradition and culture. Their original homeland was in Manipur and their mother tongue is Maithali –Manipuri; their religion is Islam and culture is mixed. In their ancestral origin, they believe that they are the offspring’s of Mughal father and Manipuri mother. It is noted

from the history of the northeast region that King Khagemba (1597—1652) made captive a thousand Sylhet-i Muslim mercenaries engaged by one of his step-brother to seize the throne. ‘They were settled in the valley by allotting land and allowing them to marry local women’(Ahmed:2002) Besides from time to time Muslim immigrants coming from adjacent Sylhet, Tripura and Assam added the population by their permanent settlement there. During the Lushai and Burmese invasion in 1824 A.D. many of them migrated to the north Tripura, Kamalpur. They seem to be segregated from their own linguistic and ethnic group which is dominated by Hindu religious tradition. They have practiced to speak in Bengali and KAKBARAK (Tripura language) to survive in the Bengali and tribes dominated society of Tripura. However they maintain their religious unity and cultural affinity with the Bengali Muslims. In dress, women wear Manipuri ‘*Paschra* and men wear ‘*Lungi*’ and ‘*Pajama*’. Manipuri Muslims are confined mainly in Kamalpur subdivision of north district. They are also found in some villages of Kailasahar sub division of north district, viz. Latiabill and Aabhanga The growth of Manipuri population is very poor. In 1901, they were only 405 in number and 3.15 percent of the total Manipuri population.

The people of the community are very poor in socio-economic condition and educational background. About ninety percent students of the community drop out at the junior basic level. Very recently, young girls and boys are able to get education up to Higher Secondary level. In this community, girls are usually married in early age i.e.16 years old and the difference of age between bride and bridegroom is high or double. The young men with qualification are founding in governmental jobs. Now they are becoming conscious and found in raising their demand to be included in the OBC group to secure the facility of backward classes in the society.

d). Assamese Muslim :

In the ethnic and regional component, there are more two small groups of Muslims viz. the Assamese Muslims and the Muslims originally coming from Lahore. Assamese Muslims constitute an insignificant number in the population of Tripura. In their

mother- tongue as well as in provincial identity, they are Assamese but they maintain double establishment both in Assam and Tripura. They are permanent residents of Assam but occasionally stay in Tripura in connection with marital relation, the kin groups and occupational bindings. They are habituated to speak fluently in Bengali. It is also found that some people, who are Bengali in ethnic identity but permanent resident of Assam, can speak fluently in Assamese language for residential purpose or job pursuits. They are mainly from Silchar, Cachar, and Karimganja. Some people from Assam come to Tripura every season as flying businessmen to sell mainly 'Sital Pattie' (made by cane). A number of Muslims residing in the border region of Tripura and Assam viz. Dharmanagar and Kailasahar, are more connected with Assamese people and Assam for different purposes like their health, education and earning. Being very much distant from the capital town, they are little dependant on Agartala. However, the number of Assamese speaking people in Tripura was – 467 in 1931, 123 in 1961 (**District Gazetteer: 1975**).

e). Lahore-e Muslim ("Portal Majlish") :

It is reported during the study tour in Udaipur and Khilpara village that some people of the locality claim that their forefathers came from Lahore and their mother tongue was Urdu. Though they have lost their original identity as a result of mixture of blood with the local inhabitants but still their title "Sardar" signifies their original identity. A number of Sardar families are found in Bishalgarh subdivision of West Tripura. At Khilpara village, the family of Ambar Ali Sardar is known as of this group. Their traditional occupation was craftsmanship. At the time of Kuki raid in the Kingsley period, they have lost this traditional occupation and taken the changed occupations e.g. cultivation etc. No more substantial information about them is available. Tripura District Gazetteer, 1975 has recorded the Urdu-speaking people in the fold of Hindustani language. The Census:1981 has recorded only 22 Urdu spoken persons in Tripura. Probably the Urdu speaking forefathers had assimilated themselves with the local people and culture. One 'Chowdhury' family at Chandrapur Mauza in Udaipur

is reported as a very old and high Muslim social group who emigrated from Lahore during the reign of Raja Ratna Manikya. They were regarded as '*partal majlish*'. SamsUddin Choudhury and Alabordy Choudhury are their present descendants who have now fallen into low economic status of the peasant class. Their physical built up is different from that of the local people. (Dutta:1972).

f). Iran-e (Baghdadi) Muslims :

A number of people settled in Uttar Chandrapur of Udaipur subdivision claim that their forefathers came from Iran or Baghdad in the medieval period. They use 'Kazi' as their first name and they are known in the locality as "Baghdadi –Kazi". Their physical characteristics were somewhat different from the local groups. This is recorded in a handbook written by a scholar, Brajendra Dutta (Dutta, 1972). He confirmed the statement by his investigation. They are lost in the present milieu. Still the people hold a status and position among the local Muslims owing to their ancestral foreign blood. This group of people is found all over Tripura but in limited number. The traditional occupation of the Kazi was abolished in Tripura in 1864. This group is differentiated from those who use Kazi as their last name and owe their origin in locally converted forefathers having no ethnic or occupational significance.

g). Kuki-Muslim :

Another small Muslim group insignificant in number is known as 'Kuki' Muslims and settled in Uttar Chandrapur under Udaipur sub division. The Kuki is one of the tribes of Tripura, characteristically different from other tribes. Originally the Kuki-Muslim is not converted but the descendant of Kuki (tribal) father and Bengali Muslim mother. They are often looked down upon by the local people in the society (Dutta, 1972). The family of Khired Ali Sardar at Chandrapur *Mausa* and The family of Ali Mia in Sonamura are said of this Kuki-Muslim group.

h). Bangladeshi Muslim :

The immigrant Muslims come mainly from Bangladesh, the neighbour state of Tripura. They are called for as 'Bangladeshi' by the local people here. They come in search of job or in connection with trade and business. They are the citizens of Bangladesh but they stay in India for stipulated period, especially when they are out

of job in their own country. They belong to the lower economic strata of the community viz. the rickshaw puller, day labourer, vendors, and also some lower middle class businessmen who do some export import business of various commodities. The poor rickshaw puller and day labourers are often found in the rented house in different areas. They live for short time with or without family or among the relatives who are permanent resident of Tripura. Sometimes these people hold ration card, voter card etc and also obtains citizenship to avail different facilities. In this chance of interaction with the local Muslims, they indulge marital bindings also and if possible they settle permanently too.

Social and Occupational Groups in the Muslim Society

In terms of social ranking and occupational background, Muslims of Tripura like other parts of India, are further divided into two broad categories, namely the *Sharif* and *Commoners*. In other words, they are regarded as *Khandani* and converted by origin. No social caste hierarchy is found among them but a notion of social differentiation existing on the basis of ancestral identity (either by ethnicity or occupation) cannot be denied.

On the basis of ethnic identity of social groups, the Sharif or Khandani Muslims are segmented into five distinct categories: *Sayyad*, *Sheikh*, *Mughal*, *Pathan*, and *Kazi*. In Tripura, the people belonging to the first and second categories are microscopic in number. According to the Rajmala, as said earlier there was no upper class Muslims in Tripura. However, Sayyad and Sheikh as first name, stand as first and second respectively in the order of social ranking. The people of this social groups claim their ancestral origin from Arab. They are mainly found in Kailasahar of north district. In Tripura there are a substantial number of Mughal and Pathan descendants being accorded third and fourth rank respectively. They are known as Mirza and Khan as their last names. They claim their ancestral origin from the Turkish and Afghan. Khans are everywhere in Tripura but Mirza are found less in number and concentrated in Udaipur of south district. The people using Kazi as the first name claim that their forefathers came from Iran or Baghdad. They are found all over Tripura, though a

Table no. 3.9
Muslim Social Groups in Tripura

Sl. No.	Muslim Groups (Social and Occupational)	Social Status	Traditional Occupation	First and Last Name
1	Sayed	High	No specific occupation, Professional, Service holder, Business owner etc.	First name Sayed and sometimes last name Mir
2	Sheikh	High	No specific occupation, Professional, Service holder, Business owner etc.	First name Sheikh
3	Pathan	High	No specific occupation, Professional, Service holder, Business owner etc.	Last name Khan
4	Mughal	High	No specific occupation, Professional, Service holder, Business owner etc.	Last name Mirza
5	Poddar	Middle	Goldsmith	Last name Poddar
6	Sardar	Middle	Craftsman	First name Sardar
7	Bhuyia/ Majumder/ Chowdhury	Middle	No specific occupation, Professional, Service holder, Business owner etc.	Last name Bhuyia / Majumder / Chowdhury
8	Palowan	Middle	Boxer	Last name Palowan
9	Darzi	Middle	Tailor	Last name Darzi
10	Faqir	Middle	Religious mendicants	Last name Faqir / (Dewan)
11	Julaha	Middle	Weaver	Last name Momin / Answari
12	Khadim	Middle	Care-taker of religious places	Last name Khadim
13	Karati	Low	Wood maker	None
14	Karigarh	Low	Sweet maker	Last name Karigarh
15	Dafali	Low	Drum makers and beaters	None
16	Dhunia	Low	Cotton carder and bedding makers	Last name Mansuni / none

good number is concentrated in the village of Uttar Chandrapur in Udaipur. The function of this group was in the role of conciliator of social problems in the community. Thus they enjoyed a high status among other occupational groups. Some people are found belonging to the commoner group but using Kazi and Shaik as the last name.

There is another ethnic social group in the north Tripura, concentrated at Kamalpur subdivision. They are the Manipuri Muslim belonging to the Manipuri linguistic community and known as *Pangals*. They came from Manipur in the medieval period and speak in Manipuri language but believe in Islam. They claim that in ancestral origin, they belong to Mughal father and Manipuri mother. By this origin of foreign blood, they are not accorded any high rank of social status. Rather, being very poor and minority group, they demand O.B.C. status to secure various government facilities. Some of them, like many Muslims, use Kazi as their last names.

Hence, the people of five distinct social groups of foreign blood in the ancestral origin are regarded as Sharif or Khandani Muslims of Tripura and they are differentiated from the people of converted origin. They claim themselves more 'Islamic' or genuine Muslims than those of the locals in order of ethnic and cultural background. Generally the Sharif Muslims are found in some occupational groups like land owners, business owners, independent professionals, political activist, high officials, service holders, civic and religious leaders who are usually wealthier persons in the community. They are also found among other people of economically weak section and lost in the commoners.

Besides the different section of Sharif Muslims, there are larger sections of people who are known as Commoner Muslims belonging to the lower strata of the society. They never claim any noble ancestry. They are also segmented into various groups determined by their past occupational background. For example they are Poddar (Goldsmith), Khadim (Care -taker of religious places), Paloan (boxer or wrestler), Sardar (the craftsmen), Fakir, Karati (woodsman), Dhunia (bedding maker), Darzi (tailor), Dafali (Drum beater), Jola (weaver), Fisherman/boat-man, Qureshi (butcher), Karigorh (iron beater), Chasi (peasants) and Majur (day labourers). Khadim and

Paloan are few in number and concentrated in the village of Khilpara of Udaipur sub-division; Poddars are also few in numbers in some villages of Sonamura. Dhunias are mainly from Bihar.

In the princely days, Muslims were appointed as *Charibarder*, *Hukkaborder*, *Panka border*, *Peyada*, *Palki-bearer*, *mahoot* (elephant driver) in the royal family of Tripura. But these occupations have lost existence with the end of monarchy. Similarly many ancestral occupations do not continue for the present generations. The people are trying to adapt with the modern situation adopting modern occupations. The commoners, thus, constituting major portion of community, are found in the middle and lower rank jobs. The social groups found in Tripura on the basis of ethnic component and occupational characteristics are shown in the following Table no.3.9.

In between the Sharif and Commoners there is another category of social groups. The people of this group are known as Bhuiya, Talukdar, Majumder and Chowdhury as their last names. The forefathers of this group are supposed to be converted from higher castes of Hindu. Most of them were landlords in the past but at present, they are found mostly in middle rank jobs in all districts of Tripura. Before Independence, there was a Muslim social group who belong to the upper class in the status of Jaigirdari, Talukdari, and Mahaldari etc. The descendants of this class have been carrying their last name as Talukdar, Mahaldar, Chowdhury, Majumdar and Bhuyia. A major percentage of this class, after Independence, has come into legal and political profession, police service and administration. However, with the change of time, there is also change in their ancestral occupations. They are found in various kinds of jobs. Now, the high social groups of the society are no longer distinct from the other occupational groups.

3.5.2. Economic Pursuit :

Once the cost of living in Tripura was low because of its low level prices, abundant forest product and cultivable land, its open communication and business with the neighbouring districts, and above all, small number of population which causes easy living of the inhabitants.

The Muslims migrated to Tripura from Eastern and Southern Bengal. The kings of Tripura often distributed lands free of cost among the subjects both Hindu and Muslim e.g. Hindu Brahmins, Muslim Pir and religious minded worthy persons of different communities. Some historical copper plates (Roy Chowdhury:1983) show that a number of Muslims were provided such free of cost lands as shown in the Table no. 3.10. They were given permission for cultivation of jungles and tilla lands; khajna (tax) was relieved for the unable farmers; Lakheraj or tax free land was given to the Muslims in different names viz. *Piran, Fakiran, Charagi, Aa-ema, Khasbas, Madatmas* (pious and wise personalities in Islam). Later, they were given rent-free land also by the de-facto ruler, Samser Gazi (1748 – 1760). The people came from the peasantry class and on the other hand, the historical factors helped them to be known as the cultivators' community. As Quoted from Brown, (Hunter 1874) "The *Mohammedans* are said to cling closer to the land than the Hindus; they do not follow any trade to supplement the produce of their field, neither do they fish, boat and build houses like the Hindus during the season when the labour in the field is not required". Hunter added that in economic pursuit, they were found "as landholders, cultivators, tailors, messengers and boatmen". Some favorable condition inspired the Mohammedans to be settled and attached more with lands. Thus agriculture became their dominant occupation which was also a major source of revenue of the land.

The Muslim subjects of Tripura enjoyed the right of *raiya*t under the Act of 'Prajā Bhūmy Adhikari Ain' (Law of landlord and tenant), 1886 A.D. (i.e. 1296 T.E.) (Roy Chowdhury : 1998). By the Act, a raiyat desirous of taking *patta* for jungle land cleared by him was granted land, free of rent, for three years and when the land under patta is clear, the raiyat would acquire a right of possession over the land. Besides, during the period of frequent Muslim invasion, a semi feudal class also emerged among the Muslims e.g. Bhuiya, Talukdar, Majumdar, Chowdhury who owned a huge land or taluk. The Muslims like other subjects of Tripura also enjoyed the right of permanent taluk by the Act of 'Rajarswa Sambondhiya Niyomabali' called *Kayemi Taluk* in 1880 AD (1290 TE). They were also under raiyat or *Korfa* system. Many of them worked under the Raiyats as *Barga Chasi* (share cropper) and agricultural

laborers. The contribution of the Muslim cultivators is not properly evaluated in the absence of land settlement record on religious break.

Although there is less social mobility in the agricultural economy, the Muslims underwent diverse occupations for livelihood. In the Princely period, they were appointed as *Charibardar*, *Hukkabardar*, *Pankhabardar*, *Binondia Peyada* ('a special

Table no 3.10
Land Alloted to Musalmans Free of cost by the Kings

Name of the persons who were allotted lands	Name of the Kings
1. Kazi Moomin	Kalyan Manikya
2. Kazi Monsur	
3. Kazi Hussain	
4. Kaziali Ehara	
5. Jan Muhammad	
6. Khandakar Abdul Gani	Govinda Manikya
7. Sukur Muhammad	
8. Kazi Hussain	
9. Ekdil Kazi	
10. Ibraham Kha	
11. Sri Rashid Kha	
12. Olamad Kha	
13. Sri Hismadi Munshi	
14. Durlav olad Badu	
15. Sri Momroz Khan	
16. Sri Tahit Md. Sakin	
17. Sri Chand Gaz Sakhim Joly	

Source : Tripura District Gazetteer, 1975.

type of police who carried the king's order, used to guard the Royal House and had to go to the deep hills and could arrest persons wanted by the king'), *Paloan* (Wrestler in the royal court) and *Palki-bearer* in the royal family. They were also recruited as soldiers in the army as *Senapati* or *Subedar* (chief of the soldiers), Captain e.g. the

Pathan Regiment of Amar Manikya and Rajdhar Manikya; Farid Ahmad Chowdhury was Captain under the last king Bir Bikram Kishore Manikya. These occupations came to an end with the end of the princely rule.

Muslims were efficient goldsmith, craftsmen and tailors. There were a number of goldsmiths in the Sonamura subdivision. Imam Box was the name of such a skilled goldsmith. The skilled craftsmen were mostly found in Udaipur. They worked crafts by the elephant teeth available in Tripura. The forefathers of Hasan Ali Sardar were such eminent craftsmen in Udaipur. The present generations have lost this efficiency of trades. During the period of historical *Kooki raid* (Roy Chowdhury : 1998) and disturbances, this occupational group was highly affected as the Kuki aggressors took away all their tools and machineries. The occupation of 'Mahoot' or elephant driving was a monopoly occupation for the Muslims. Similarly coachman of horse-cart and cow-cart were mostly Muslims. The people appointed as *Hasti-Kheda* (who were engaged in catching elephants from the forest) were exclusively Muslims. At that time, Muslims were, as Hunter observed, found negligible in industry, trade and administrations. There is a record of some Afghan trader but no such record was there for any Bengali trader in Tripura. However after the partition of India, there is an overall situational change, especially change in their economic pursuit.

In the meantime, the discontinued *Kayemi Taluk* system and abolition of Jaigirdir system created an economic dislocation which affected all classes of land owners and cultivators in Tripura as in all India (District Gazetteer : 1975). The wealthy land owners or the middle class section emerged originally from the local rulers, Zamindars and Fauzders in the conquered plain portions of Tripura appointed by the Bengal and Delhi rulers before the end of Muslim rule, left for Pakistan. As the District Gazetteer records, 6,828 families comprising 35073 persons came to Tripura on exchange of properties with the Indian Muslims. It means that about 6,828 Muslims propertied families went for Pakistan. Hence, the remaining few took effort to be qualified for new jobs and professions in a very slow process. In the decade of sixty, there was a significant shift of population from agriculture to industry. A number of new small

scale and cottage industries were developed in that time, viz. the industry of tea, handicraft and handloom etc. People got training at governmental cost and thus an artisan class has been developed in Tripura. But with no wonder, Muslim men and women were rarely found in this arena of occupation in an organized manner. As a result of this legacy, till today, Muslims are lowest in number (1.58 percent) among all other religious communities (**Census 2001**). Only some domestic artisans, both men and women, are found in the unorganized sector of rural economy. The people of 60's in Tripura were classified into some groups of economic standard:

a) members of princely family, b) a small class of very well-to-do businessmen, c) highly paid government officials, d) government officers of not more than Rs.800 salary per month, e) middle class businessmen, lawyers, owners of house and lands etc, f) clerk and teacher, g) some occupational and professional classes and h) Owner cultivators, landless tillers and agricultural labourers. (**District Gazetteer : 1975**)

Undoubtedly, the Muslims were in the lower part of this economic ladder. However, they are now found in different trades as owners of rice mill, garage or workshop, grocery, fishery, trade of cattle, etc. They do the job of mechanical, electrical works, mason work, coloring, cycle repairing, driving of different types of vehicles. In short, a major portion of the community is primarily self-employed. Mullah and Maulavi, as the religious representatives of the community called *Houjur*, work as conciliator of different social problems of the society. But this occupation is not hereditary. The members of these families are engaged in different jobs or modern occupations.

In white collar job, they were 'Munshi', 'Mukhtar' (Lawyer/advocate), 'Collector', contractor, political party worker, minister, MP, Imam and Maulana, journalist, writer, teacher, artist for Royal Court, deed writer or Nakal Nabish/ Serastadar, Member of Privy Council. At present, they are in a substantial number, recruited in the Police and Force department. It is observed that not only in Tripura, but in the region of northeast, the highest representation of Muslims is in the state police force. (**District Gazetteer, 1975**) They are in different office jobs also. They are not rare as doctor, magistrate,

director, chairman, secretary, T.C.S., BDO, school and college teacher, minister etc. But women are found in rare in these occupations. It is reported that, a woman advocate has started practicing in the court.

It deserves to be mentioned that the largest number of day labourers among the Muslims is obviously a recent phenomenon. The historical record of the want of daily wage labour till sixties reveals that Muslims were not frequently found as daily wage labourers at that time. But after the pressure on the cultivable land (there is only 24% cultivable land, **Census:1971**) in Tripura owing to some historical legacy, Muslims are now forced to shift from their traditional occupations.

Work participation rate by religious communities (**Census:2001**) to total population for all religion is 36.25 percent. The Muslims have recorded 29.20 percent, the lowest among all. It is not wonder that for the districts also, the lowest participation rate is in the Muslim community. They are sometimes better than Christians and Buddhists in Dhalai and North district. In case of Muslim females, it is obviously lowest in the state (11.22%) as well as districts. The work participation of men and women in both west and north is lower than that of south. This characteristic is also supported by the present study. It is reported that the latest figure of employment situation as indicated in 2001, there is an acute male-female disparity in the opportunities available. The data given in the Table no. 3.11 reveals the disparity.

At the state level, Muslim cultivators (CL) are in second position (30.30%). But as agricultural laborers (AL), Muslims are highest in number (27.71%) among all religious communities. In the H.H.I., Muslims are only 1.58 percent while all religious communities are 3.04 percent. Lastly in the category of other occupations (which includes all those workers who do not fall under three distinct categories above) also, Muslims are low in participation in south and west district. Recently Indian economic structure is showing a shift towards non-agricultural sector, which includes workers in tertiary sector such as service, manufacturing, trade and commerce and allied activities. In the non-agricultural sectors, Muslims of Tripura are lagging behind. This characteristic is also reflected in the present study on Tripura.

3.5.3. Literacy and Education

The history about the state of Education in Tripura is known only from the quarter of 19th century. The administrative report of 1874-75 says that very little attention was paid by the ruling houses of Tripura to the improvement of education of its subject's. Till 1874-75 there were only 2 schools for 103 pupils, established first during the reign of Birchandra Manikya (1869-96). In 1879, there were 25 schools for 700 pupils divided among the sons of royal family (30), Tipperah (52), Manipuri (232) and Bengalis of both Hindu and Muslim (388). It is also reported that there were 57 girls out of 700; 3 of them were Tipperahs and 54 girls from Manipuri community (**District Gazetteer** : 1975). The report shows that the Manipuri were very conscious and active to get their children educated. According to the report, "Mosalman followed their trail"(**Hunter**, 1874). It means that Muslims were conscious about the education of the children (though only for male child); it is easy to infer that majority of 388 Bengali pupils were Mosolman children as per the ratio of population. Hunter reported that Mosolmans were 14,222 in number i.e. double in numerical strength than the Manipuri 7045 and triple than that of the Bengali Hindus 4339. It indicates that the Mosolmans were not very backward in the early stage of educational scenario in Tripura. But no Muslim girl was sent to school like her counter part in the Manipuri community. It means their reserve ness for girls' education due to pardah custom prevailing in the community. This, obviously, in the later period accounts for one of the causes of educational backwardness of the women-folk in the community as a whole. No information is available whether the girls were sent to muktab and madrasa for religious education but the boys are sent to the muktab as the report of the history. Before their formal education in the 'Vernacular Pathsala', the Muslims of Tripura were already introduced with Madrasa education since the middle of the 18th century, or during the rule of the de-facto ruler Samser Gazi (1748-60). It was Samser Gazi, the first ruler who established a madrasa for the education of the poor children at Udaipur, the royal seat of Tripura. However, when the formal education was started

Table no. 3.11
Work Distribution among the Muslim Workers of Tripura (Male / Female)

STATE / DISTRICT	CATEGORY	ALL RELIGIOUS COMMUNITY	MUSLIMS PERSONS	MUSLIM MALE	MUSLIM FEMALE
Tripura	Total	100.00	100.00	46.21	11.22
	CL	27.01	30.30		
	AL	23.81	27.71		
	HHI	3.04	1.58		
	Others	46.12	40.38		
West	CL	20.04	34.36	45.48	9.89
	AL	20.43	30.24		
	HHI	3.53	1.49		
	Others	56.01	33.91		
South	CL	33.67	29.44	48.72	22.02
	AL	28.94	38.66		
	HHI	1.85	0.89		
	Others	33.55	31.01		
Dhalai	CL	33.20	36.60	52.82	18.44
	AL	31.09	22.56		
	HHI	2.54	3.28		
	Others	33.18	37.56		
North	CL	27.62	23.56	45.60	7.54
	AL	15.98	17.23		
	HHI	4.54	2.00		
	Others	51.86	57.21		

Source: Census of India (Tripura) 2001, Statement 10, (an extraction).

Note: All Religious Communities = (six major communities including religion note stated),
CL-Cultivation .AL-Agricultural Labourer. H.H.I.-Household Industry. other-other workers.

by the initiative of the Manikya rulers, the Muslim boys came forward to have education. One of the government publications recorded (*Rajgi Tripurar Sarkari Bangla*, 1976). a list of names of the Muslim students who obtained scholarship.

They are: Sri Ali Ahmed, Usuf Ali, Badar Uddin, Fazal Ali and Sayad Ali. So, there was clearly an urge among the community people for acquiring general education with other community people in the vernacular *Pathsala* of Tripura.

Through many ups and downs in the state of education of Tripura, it was only at the beginning of the 20th century – during the reign of Radhakishor Mmanikya (1896 to 1909), the history of Formal education took a definite shape. A new primary school, a new high school, a girls school, a ‘Tol’ for sanskrit pandits and a technical school for training a craftsmanship in iron, bronze and handicrafts; there was also training for “fitter” and handloom. The vernacular pathsala was in the mean time, developed as a govt. school in 1878 and named as Umakanta Academy in 1904. To diffuse education, some branches of Umakanta Academy were established in Kailasahar and Belonia.

Like all India pattern, the tradition of denouncing western education by a section of Muslim leaders came in Tripura perhaps during the forties and this attitude was reflected in their forming of some associations oriented to Islamic faith viz. *Rajyak Jamayat Ulema* (est in 1942). It has been running a big residential madrasa named *Darul-ul-um or Rangamatia Madrasa*, adjacent to Sonamura town area. The Jamat-et-ulema Hind was established in 1949 to generate unity among the Muslims and persist on the religious rituals. It is reported that the Munshi and Maulavi from the British Bengal used to come in Tripura to teach the people Islamic education, Arabic and Persian language (Dutta : 1974).

These religious associations and institutions have a considerable influence on the people of the state, specially the rural Tripura. The poor parents send their children to the muktab while they remain reluctant in sending them to the formal schools which requires some minimum expenses. So to meet the demands of the people there are many muktab and madrasa in Tripura. Some madrasa are recognized and financed by the government. According to the District Gazetteer ‘there are some special institutions like muktab and madrasa at different places of territory imparting religious instructions and teaching Arabic to Muslim boys and girls, and most of these institutions

receive monthly maintenance grants from the Education Directorate' (**District Gazetteer, 1975**). At present all these are under the Wakf Board. The Muslims of Kailasahar and Dharmanagar (north) as well as Sonamura (west) seem to be more pious in religious education. A number of boys are sent for Senior Madrasa in the Cachar district e.g. Karimganja and Hailakhandi in Assam but no girls for such purposes.

Recently there is only one Girls' madrasa in Tripura namely Ayesha Girl's Madrasa (Pry.) at Kulubari, Sonamura. Muslim children are sent simultaneously to the Anganwadi and Balwari centers. They are taking general education both in village and town. But very few of them are able to across the Madhyamik and Uchha Madhyamik level. Only a few of the successful boys and girls can avail higher level of education.

At present, the percentage of literacy among the Muslim is 60.9. Their female literacy is 51.4 percent which is lower than that of all other religious communities except the Buddhist (**Census of 2001**). The case of drop out starts from the end of Primary level, middle level and onwards. The first category of drop out (pry) occurs in mostly rural areas and the second and third category of drop out occurs usually among the students of town areas. The gap between male-female literacy gap was 20.93 percent in 1991. The Drop out rate in Primary level for Girls was 56.14 percent and it has increased in 83.61 percent in the Secondary level in 1988—1989. In 1998—99, the drop out rate of Girls is 79.45 percent (**Tripura University : 2000**). Muslim girl students tend to decrease in number at maximum in the middle or senior level of education when they reach at marriageable age as per norms of the community. Even those girls who have successfully passed the H.S. level are not allowed to study further and usually get married at this age. As there is no statistical data it can only be estimated from observation and experience that in the secondary stage, the number of Muslim girls will be below than one hundred among 2085 girl students of Tripura Secondary Board of Examination in 1999. The Female literacy rate among the Muslims

of Tripura, (for 2001 available), is given below in the Table no. 3.12. It serves a comparative approach with the literacy rate among the Hindus—both male and female.

Table no. 3.12
Literacy rate among the Muslims of Tripura, 2001

State/District	Hindu			Muslim		
	Person	Male	Female	Person	Male	Female
Tripura	75.26	82.81	67.28	60.86	69.73	51.43
West	78.76	85.96	71.20	59.07	67.55	49.95
South	72.18	80.89	62.90	57.86	67.66	47.54
Dhalai	62.59	71.48	53.03	67.54	77.89	55.83
North	75.99	82.28	69.35	64.56	73.49	55.26

The gap between Muslim boys and girls in the secondary level is not very wide in Tripura. The general social environment of Tripura is favorable to literacy and education for the children of common people. But it is not so easy for the Muslim poor girls, specially residing in the interior Tripura where distance of schools is great hurdle to them. However with the change of situation girls are now provided enough scope for availing formal education in their own villages and sub-divisions. There are a number of girls school, at least one for each sub-divisions and co-ed higher secondary school and also a number of colleges in Tripura. Muslims students both boys and girls can avail financial assistances from the Wakf Board on the merit basis. In spite of all the facilities very few of them are able to utilize these owing to socio-economic backwardness of the community.

3.5.4. Political Awareness and Participation

The Muslims of Tripura have proved themselves as politically conscious since many years before the merging of Tripura with Independent India. Though they belong to the peasantry background, the upper section of the community involving themselves into the politics and administration of Tripura has proved that they are political activists also. Since the princely period they involved themselves in the decision making functions of the state. They were members of the Privy Council of Maharaja Bikram

Kishore Manikya; they were Collector and Chief Manager of *Chakla Rosanabad* Zamindary (estate); they were Minister, Colonel and Captain of the Army under Maharaja Bir Bikram Manikya. They have been working as Judge, Magistrate and Lawyers. After Independence, they are found as members of Tripura Territorial Council (T.T.C.), Deputy Speaker of the Legislature, Cabinet minister, Member of Parliament (Rajya-Sabha), Chairperson of the Board, Secretary from Panchayat level to District level, Director, S.D.O, B.D.O. T.C.S. officer. They are member- workers of major political parties (e.g. Congress, C.P.I. and C.P.I. (M) and others). They have become Minister, Speaker, M.P., M.L.A., Gram Pradhan, Upa-pradhan, Samiti- Member in the block level, Zilla Parishad Member in the district level, members of party comities, and Cadre workers in the grass root village level, district and divisional level. But no Muslim woman is found in all the dignified posts of politics and administration of Tripura.

In the struggle of Freedom Movement of India, participation of the Muslims is yet to be properly evaluated. Kamal Uddin Ahmad in his book named '*Swadhin Purba Bangla*' (p.80), told that 'the Bengal Revolutionaries had a mental agony about their failure to attract the Muslim Youths in the revolutionary party . However, Muslims of Tripura took part in the national politics. In the '*Anusilan Samiti*' of Tripura Branch, Muslim males were three in numbers. In other branches of undivided Bengal, they were in a number (quoted in Bhatta 1396 E.E.). In the revolutionary party of undivided Bengal, they were total 26 and Muslim women were 17 among them i.e. 65.38 percent. They were accused by the British Government in different cases along with others. Some Asfaq Ulla Kha was one of the *Sahid* out of 59. He was accused for Kakori Conspiracy Case. There is dearth of more information about them. As far as it is available, the Muslims participated in Swadeshi movement which took place in Tripura after the Khilafat movement (1921), and Gandhiji's call for Non-cooperation movement. 'The people of Dharmanagar and Kailashahar joined in the movement against the British Raj. The impact of Khilafat movement and Non Cooperation movement affected the tea garden labourers and railway employees of the Assam Bengal' (Dasgupta : 1998). The participants for collecting the subscription of the

movement had to receive the 'eviction order' from the Tripura King. The people protested and joined in Strike against the tyranny of British Govt. against the coolies (labourers) of Chandpur (East Bengal) and they boycotted bazaar in protest against the collection of food supplied for the British employees from the Moogra Bazaar of Agartala (adjacent to the border area). A *Dharma Sabha* was established in Kailashahar under the leadership of Satish Chandra Chowdhury and Abdul Mujahir Majumder to boycott the judiciary. The Sabha was supposed to conciliate the civil suits as an alternate to the judiciary. However, the activities of the Sabha were stopped forcibly by the order of the government. The people participated in the political movement associating themselves with the *Tripura Rajya Gana Parishad*, *Dharmanagar Hitasadhini Samiti*, etc. Thus it can be assumed that there is a good number of Muslims who constituted a large part of total population in Dharmanagar and Kailashahar, has been moved by the events of Khilafat and Non Cooperation movement in All India level.

After the First World War, princely Tripura was a shelter as well as centre for training of the revolutionary workers. The royal family as well as the employees had a tacit support to help them. During the thirty or early forties Bengal political leaders like Dharoni Goswami of the Communist party and others came in Tripura to organize the youth groups. This was the age of political awareness and patriotic feelings which touched almost all the people of this colonial country. Muslims were not exception. There is no record that whether they joined with Chattra Sangha (1927) and Bhatri Sangha (1928) and Matri Sangha for women. The history recorded that they were united under the "*Rajya Janamangal Samiti*" (formed in 1938) and the Congress committee (1940) which turned as the State Congress in 1949. Tripura Rajya Gana Parishad was formed in 1939 and led by Dr. Abul Rahaman from Sonamura and it merged with Tripura State Congress in 1949, *Tripura Rajya Muslim Praja Majlish* was established in 1945. At the later period, Muslim leaders were found in the congress party as well as in the undivided communist party (C.P.I.)

At the pre-Independence period, they were united under some welfare organizations to organize the community people e.g. Rajyik Jamaet Ulema-1942, Anjuman Islamia, 1945. All these things go in favour of their political awareness and

activities. Though there is dearth of information but a deep observation throughout this contemporary history of Tripura says that the Muslims were not far from national consciousness and national struggle of India. The notable persons of the community were the outcome of that age which continued up to the decade of sixty. Even the common people belonging to the peasantry class who had little time to take active part, were aware of the politics going on around the state. This is reflected in the communal harmony of Tripura between the Hindus and Muslims. There was no record of communal riot when it was a burning issue for the undivided Bengal. *Dharmanagar Hitasadhani Samiti* was established by Maqbul Bhuia and Kala Chand Chowdhury in 1940 apprehending as well as resisting any such incident. The Samiti certainly served a positive role to resist the factors against Hindu-Muslim unity.

The position of Muslim women of Tripura in the national or state politics is consistent with their low social participation and poor social consciousness. In the decade of thirty, some women of other communities (i.e. Bengali Hindu and tribal women) were united for national cause or issue under some organizations of national spirit like *Matri-sangha*. The Tribal women in Tripura fought against unjust collection of Levy on paddy (*Titun*), they were called the base member of Ganatantrik Naree Samiti. An association of Tribal women was formed in 1948. The members joined in the movements for responsible govt. in Tripura against Dewani system, for rehabilitation of the refugees, Jumia rehabilitation, communal harmony and economic rights of the vulnerable section of the society. But the Muslim women in Tripura have no such record in history. In the post Independence period, Muslim women have surely exercised their right of adult suffrage by casting their votes in favour or against some party. And they might be influenced by the male members of family or neighbors whom they think as more concerned in politics. This feature is also common among the women of other communities. A few women in Tripura, Bengali or Tribal, have come into direct politics. Those few counted on finger tips have promoted themselves rarely from lower to higher level of political leader.

At present, Muslim women, in a number, take part in political meeting and processions. Many of them are members of *Naree Samiti* – the women wing of C.P.I. (M) as well as the women wing of the Congress party. In the organizational structure of the communist party, about 200 hundred (estimated) Muslim women are members of the branch comities and local comities but very few are in the upper level of Divisional and State comities. It is reported that there are two Muslim men in the State committee and two women in Divisional committee. Only after the introduction of Three Tier Panchayat Raj System in Tripura 1993-94, on the basis of 73rd amendment of the constitution, the political scenario has been changed to a great extent in the grass root level of society. The rule of 33 percent reservation of seats for women is a great opportunity for those who were traditionally denied the status of political actor. Muslim women have come to avail the chance of exercising the power of public responsibility. In urban administration, the position of Muslim women as well as men is still deplorable. In Agartala municipality, there is only one Muslim man who is a nominated councilor. After 124 years of the age of Agartala Municipality, there are six female councilors including the Vice Chair person, but no female representative from the Muslim community. In the Nagar Panchayats also Muslim representation is very insignificant. Low ratio of Muslim urban population may be a reason behind this.

Though there is no available data, it can be assumed that the Muslims in the minority status are mostly supporters of the ruling party. Most of them shifted their allegiance from the Congress party to C.P.I. (M) mainly due to “push back operation policy” of the central govt. in the decade of sixty. At that time, Nripen Chakraborty, the leader of the Communist party of Tripura gave them the assurance of their settlement in Tripura. As a result, after seventies, stability is noticed in Muslim population. In some Muslim dominated villages of Tripura they are the principal base of support for the party in power. There are a large number of Congress supporters, leaders and workers among the Muslims of Tripura. Besides these two major parties Muslims are found very rare in other parties. No information about the support of Muslim league in Tripura is available.

The Table 3.13 shows that representation of women in general is very poor in the Assembly Election of Tripura. Muslim women are found nil since 1952.

3.5.5. Muslims as Victim of Ethno-politics in Tripura:

After the Mandai massacre of 1980 in Tripura the ethno-political disturbances have been going on till date with some remarkable incidents. In such an incident of 1994-1995, four hundred Muslim families were rooted out from four ADC villages. In 1999, another great incident happened at Raiabari in Udaipur district. During the field work, a few cases were recorded by the method of interview with the suffered persons and the cases are presented in The summary of the cases show that the so

Table -3.13
Women Representation in
State Legislative Assembly (Tripura)
(1952—2003)

Year	Legislative Assembly	Number of Seats	Number of elected women	Percentage to the total
1952	Electoral College	30	1	3.3
1952	Tripura Regional Council	30	-	-
1962	Tripura Regional Council	30	1	3.3
1967	State Legislature	30	-	-
1972	State Legislature	60	2	3.3
1977	State Legislature	60	1	1.6
1983	State Legislature	60	3	5.00
1988	State Legislature	60	2	3.2
1993	State Legislature	60	3	5.00
1998	State Legislature	60	2	3.2
2003	State Legislature	60	1	1.6

Source: State Election Department, Agartala

called extremist group wearing the uniform of Assam Rifles tortured the Muslim peasants in the locality in various ways e.g. they used to become the compulsory guest for the households; they took away the domestic animals; forced them to pay monthly subscription of Rs.200 to 500; kidnapped the youths and forced them to join with the extremist group and to be their agents of information; tortured the male persons in cruel manner and raped the women; threatened them not to take the wounded persons in hospital. The motive of all these tortures is to root out the peasants who have a large quantity of lands and to occupy their land property etc. Ultimately, the purpose became successful in the middle of 1999 year at Raiabari. In the occurrences of random torture in one night, the people were bound to leave Raiabari and their homestead. They took shelter in urban as well as rural areas in all over Tripura. The peasants now become refugee or migrants in their own state. It is reported that the people did not get help or cooperation from the tribal chiefs, neighbors and the police Camp for various reasons. For a short time they were sheltered in the Refugee Camps by the government. In the massacre of 1980, Hindu Bengalis were the main target, so the Muslim Bengalis were partially escaped then. However since the eighties, both Bengali Hindu and Muslim have been fighting a lot to survive in this land of Tripura. The refugee- families have taken shelter at Shilagathi, Amtali, Garjanmura, Shalgara, Gokulpur, Chhatarria, Nidaya, Khilpara, Jagannath Dighi etc.

3.6. Muslim Religious Places and Welfare Organizations in Tripura.

Like any other religions community, Muslims of Tripura also maintain their religions identity establishing religions places, education centers, Wakf Board and Welfare Organization. Since the medieval period, Muslims are the inhabitants of Tripura. So there are a lot of masjids, Dargahs, Idgah, Kabarsthan and Muktab / madrasa. A Wakf Board was established in 1979 by the state government to see the interest of the largest minority community in Tripura.. The government also took initiative for a Students Hostel for the Muslim boys in 1979, a Rest house for minorities in 1994, Tripura Minorities Co-operative Development Corporation Ltd (Agartala) in 1997 and the Scheduled Caste, OBC and Minority Welfare Dept. in 1999. Besides,

the government helps the voluntary organizations for welfare activities among the Muslims. The organizations of such non-governmental efforts are found in Tripura long before Independence and these deserve to be mentioned.

3.6.1. Mosque:

The place of Mosques or masjids is the most important religious place for the Muslims of the world. As the present govt. notification in 2005, Tripura has 303 recognized mosque scattered in all the districts, subdivisions, towns and villages. There are 393 masjids in total at present (in 2005). So the names of rest 90 masjids are placed for registration. Mosque is a place where all the Muslim groups, irrespective of ethnic and regional complex, educational and economic status, interact with each other through a common bond of Islamic brotherhood (Umma). They participate together in the 'Juma' masjids for the week end namaz (i.e. Friday) and observe the Islamic occasion at different times of the year. Every masjid has its own committee to control the religious behaviour of the people. Sometimes, the elder councils act in this role. Some are very old masjids and some are of recent origin. Some old masjids are abandoned for prayer. One of such historical masjids is Mughal Masjid at Udaipur built up at the Mughal period when they overruled the Tripura kingdom. This is situated on the north bank of Gomuti in Udaipur division of south district. The construction was not complete i.e. the roof was yet to be complete. The name of some existing old and new masjids are attached in the Appendix.No. 3.I

The Table no 3.14 presents the total number of masjids of Tripura (393) distributed in 14 subdivisions. The highest number is found in Sonamura followed by Dharmanagar and Kailasahar. The number of masjids is poor in number in the Sadar subdivision in comparison to the proportion of population. The highest number of Madrasa is found in Sonamura sub division i.e. 75 out of 193 (38.86%). Kailasahar has 31 i.e. 16.06 percent and Agartala Sadar sub division has 22 i.e. 11.40 percent.

Table no. 3.14
Number of Mosque and Madrasa in Tripura (Sub-Division wise)

Name of Sub-Division	Mosque	Madrasa
1. Sadar	38*	22
2. Bishalgarh	*	17
3. Sonamura	127	75
4. Udaipur	69	10
5. Longtharai Velley	01	03
6. Gandacherra	01	00
7. Khowai	01	00
8. Sabroom	02	00
9. Belonia	12	04
10. Kamalpur	17	01
11. Kanchanpur	01	01
12. Amarpur	08	04
13. Kailasahar	51	31
14. Dharmanagar	65	27
Total	393	193

Source: Extract from the list of Mosques/Madrasas supplied from
Wakf Board of Tripura, 2004

*Here the masjids of Sadar include that of Bishalgarh.

3.6.2. Idgah:

It is also an important religion place for the Muslim. As Govt. Notification, there are twenty seven (27) Idgahs all over Tripura at present in 2005. Idgah is generally attached with the masjid. It is an open space for collective prayer in the week end or in the occasional observance. The names of four registered and popular Idgahs deserve to be mentioned: i). Purathal Bazar Idgah, Bishalgarh, West district. ii). Debbari Idgah, Amarpur, South district. iii). Amtilla Bazar Idgah, Dharmanagar, North district. iv). Shibnagar Masjid Idgah, Agartala Sadar, West district.

3.6.3. Dargah

Dargah or Pir- Khana (the abode of Pir) is another important religious place for the Muslims. Pir-khana is the abode of pir – the sacred place to the Muslims. Belief in Pir-ism is an important aspect of their socio-religious life. There are 27 Dargahs in

Tripura. Some Dargahs being very old are abandoned or near to abandoned viz. Badar Mokam, Bibber Dargah and Gazi-r Dargah. Badar Mokam is located in the outskirts of Udaipur town.

‘Badar Sahib-er Takia’ is in Matai, Belonia. It is said that Pir Badar Aulia took rest on his journey to different places of Tripura. Both Muslims and Hindus pay their homage to this place. It is learnt from history that Badar Alam Jahidi entered into Chattagram (East Bengal) along with three to four hundred followers for the purpose of propagating Islam. He defeated the Arakans and Mugs. From this historical record it can be assumed that it is Badar Alam Jahidi known as Badar Aulia entered into Belonia, (Matai), very adjacent to Chaittagong and then towards Udaipur. But the exact time and the date is not available. Pir Badar Aulia is very well-known in Chittagong and Sylhet. It is said that two Hindu residents of Khilpara mauza, namely Ataram and Budhiram being charmed by the Pir Badar Aulia converted into Islam and appointed themselves as Khadim (care-taker) of this Dargah of Badar Mokam. Bibir Dargah is located in Kalyanpur of Khowai sub division (Dutta; 1976). The Mosalman ‘kamlas’ (labourers) of Forest Department used to come here to lit the light –*Cherag*. Nothing more is known about this. Gazi-r Dargah is located in a *tilla* of Udaipur, on the bank of Bijoy Sagar adjacent to Dhanya Sagar and Amar Sagar. Probably it was founded by Samser Gazi who was once the De-facto ruler of Tripura. Name of some Dargahs are mentioned below.

i). Mekhlipara Dargah, Khayaerpur, Agartala, West district, ii). Joypur Dargah sharif, South Ramnagar, Agartala, West district, iii). Gazaria Dargah, Bishalgarh, West district. iv). Batarashi Dargah, Dharmanagar, North district. v). Fullbari Dargah, Kailasahar, North district. vi). Rangamati Dargah, Sonamura, West district. vii). Badar sahib-er bare, Udaipur, South district. viii). Gazi sahib-er Dargah.

3.6.4. Kabarsthan (Burial Ground)

Muslims have their private as well as public buried grounds. Due to the pressure of population the number of this is decreasing as the ground has been usurping by the people for various purposes. It is an issue of headache for the Muslim community

especially in the town area. There are 345 graveyards. But only 200 of them are recognized by the Government.

3.6.5. Muktab / Madrasa

Islam recommends for the culture of world knowledge. Muktab and Madrasa are as old as the Islamic civilization to impart knowledge among the believers through some institutional process. As the Govt. Notification of 2001, there are 127 muktab and madrasa ; nineteen of them are aided by the central government as they have adopted the modernization scheme of the central Human Resource Dept.1996 ; forty of these madrasa are aided by the state government through the grants- in- aid programme. In 2005, the office record of the Wakf board has a list of 193 muktab and madrasa including the proposed names for government recognition (shown in Table no.3.15). Usually muktab--the base level of madrasa education are attached with masjids and organized or led by the local masjids committees which are supposed to bear all financial responsibilities under private management.

Muslim boys and girls of tender age i.e. six to twelve, are sent to these muktab to learn some Islamic lesson e.g. to read out the Quran (selected parts) and the practice of namaz and all the techniques of ritual participation before and after prayer. The course of madrasa education in Tripura is of two levels e.g. primary or junior basic and senior basic level. There are six senior madrasa and all these are for boys only. All the madrasa of Tripura are either primary or senior in standard of education except only one private madrasa of secondary level at Rangamatia, Sonamura. There is no uniform course of study and no Madrasa Board to maintain a uniform standard of madrasa education in Tripura.

There are three kinds of madrasa, namely Government madrasa, Non-Government madrasa and Govt. aided madrasa. The Govt. madrasa are fully under the control of Education Directorate of the State Govt. and Modernization scheme of the Central government The *Dao - Dharani Siddiqui Senior Madrasa* in Sonamura and Sonamura

Islamic Madrasa at N. C. Nagar are such examples. Name of some existing Madrasa, old and new, are included in the Appendix no..... The Table no 3.15 presents the name of the all Senior Madrasa in Tripura. The students of these institutions learn all general subjects prescribed for any other government schools and in addition to these they learn more subjects of Islamic orientation. The teachers are qualified and paid a salary as per rule of the govt. One teacher is paid by the central government. The students of these institutions are eligible to get admitted to any general school. These are mainly residential along with some day scholars.

The non-government madrasas are free from governmental rules and regulations. They may be residential or non residential. They do follow their own course of study and do not take any financial aid from government. *Rangamatia-Darul-Ulam Madrasa* in Sonamura is a best example of this. It is a big and residential madrasa financed partially by the Head office at Deoban in Uttar Pradesh. It follows the course of study as instructed from the head office. This madrasa committee also runs a morning session

Table no. 3.15
Senior Madrasa in Tripura

1. Tillabazar Islamic Senior Madrasa, Kailasahar, North Tripura.
2. Kurti Senior Madrasa, Dharmanagar, North Tripura.
3. Kalanagar Par Islamia Senior Madrasa, Dharmanagar, North Tripura.
4. Fulbari Senior Madrasa, Dharmanagar, North Tripura.
5. Sonapur Ahmadia Islamic Govt. aided Senior Madrasa, Sonamura, West Tripura.
6. Daodarani Siddiqui Senior Madrasa, Sonamura, West Tripura.

of muktab where the children (including girl children) come to learn. Although the students of the private madrasa learn general subjects in addition to Quran, Hadish, Feka and languages like Arabic, Farsi and Urdu, they do not get admission in general schools or colleges as equivalent in standard. The boys are sent to Assam and West Bengal for higher study and when they come back, they come with dignity holding certificate of Title and Mufti but not considered eligible for the general school and

thus they become detached or segregated from the larger great society. A list of few madrasa in Tripura, district and subdivision wise is given in the Appendix number.

Most of the madrasa of Tripura, in recent times are under Grants-in-aid Programme of the state government. For example, Sonapur Islamic Govt. aided Senior Madrasa, Sonamura, is such a recognized institution. The govt. aided muktab and madrasa have one or more teachers for general subjects, in addition to one 'Hujur' or the Islamic teacher. The salary of only one teacher is granted by the state government. These are also under the modernization scheme of the Govt. of India.

Although madrasa education in Tripura is very old (since the eighteen century), there is not developed a basic and uniform curriculum; there is no high madrasa and no uniform standard for teachers and students in all over Tripura. Before 1983, there was no system of recognized madrasa. The traditional Islamic teaching through the muktab and madrasa was not satisfactory for long days and still it has not reached up to that level of satisfaction to cope with the demands of modern situation. Still now, these private institutions are criticized as being unable to perform the role of mobilizing the masses for eradication of ignorance. The teachers are also not sufficiently enlightened in Islamic knowledge. They have no proficiency in Arabic language and this foreign language is also a bar for acquiring knowledge in Islamic literature on the part of the students. They learn only some Arabic alphabets, Islamic rituals and how to read out the Quran. Most of the poor Muslim students of the private madrasa in rural areas do not get the chance to be acquainted with the general subjects of formal education and they stop their career in such a state that they are neither educated nor illiterate. Most of the guardians of the Muslim girls even stop their education in the muktab or nursery level. So it can be assumed that in Islamic education also, a large number of Muslims of Tripura are not Properly qualified. The educated section and conscious people of the community are insisting on the establishment of a Madrasa Board for the state, a recognized syllabus of study and government rules and regulations to be applicable all over Tripura.

The funds collected from the local sources i.e. contribution as Jakat and the donations from other places are not regular and also insufficient for betterment of madrasa education. In 1997-98, the proposal for two Girls' Madrasa, namely, Ayesha Madrasa (Pry) at Kulubari of Sonamura sub-division and Begum Asmatun Nessa (Pry) Madrasa at Laxmibil of Bishalgarh sub-division were placed for recognition of the state government. So, this step deserves to be mentioned as a very bold step for girls' education in the Muslim community.

3.6.6. Wakf Board, Agartala

The Wakf Board of Tripura was established in 1979. It is a governmental agency for the welfare of the Muslims in Tripura. Muslim religious places are under the care, verification and supervision of the Wakf Board. It has multi various welfare functions in Tripura as follows:

- i) Financial assistance to the poor patients Rs. 100/- to 500/-.
- ii) Students' Stipend to the promising students who obtain 60% marks per subject in the lower classes and 45% marks in upper classes. The students of govt. and non-government Schools from class II to class VIII are eligible for the stipend. Before 2000, it was extended from primary to P.G. level.
- iii) Providing self-employment scope to the educated unemployed young and women. For example:
 - a) Some occupational Training as Computer training both for boys and girls; it runs a Computer Academy since 1999. In every year sixty students of all communities pass out from this academy.
 - b) Training in A.C. and Refrigerator repairing (for boys only).
 - c) Training in Tailoring, Food processing and Mushroom (only for girls).
 - d) Distribution of Rickshaw (providing a major percentage of value), Pushcart among the poor men as the means of livelihood and Tailoring machine among the women.

- iv) Providing Grants to the rural people for repairing and constructing of dwelling Houses of the poor in the rural areas and constructing the marketing Stalls on the Wakf land and distributing these stalls among the Muslim beneficiaries of both urban and rural areas.
- v) Supervision of a Rest House (for the minorities) namely, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad Pantha Nibash in Agartala.
- vi) Grants for Cultural functions to preserve the cultural tradition of the Muslim community.
- vii) There is a *Haz* committee under the control of the Wakf Board.

The Wakf Board of Tripura has some branch committees in all the sub-divisions of Tripura to reach helps to the poorest people in the village but the administrative network is still poor to serve the purpose. It is experienced from the study tour that many people in the distant villages that can not come frequently in Agartala, have a lot of grievances against the distributing works of the Board.

3.6.7. Maulana Abdul Kalam Azad Pantha Nibash

It is a govt. Rest House for the minorities in Tripura. It was established in 1994, providing forty seats for men and women. The people belonging to the majority community also can avail the advantage. However, the Muslims are the largest beneficiaries of this rest house. Mainly the people of remote rural areas come to Agartala for various purposes like medical treatment and other official and legal works. It provides a great facility for the poor Muslim women to rest in a secured place with a reasonable amount of rent.

3.6.8. Nazrul Chatrabash

For the welfare of the Muslim students, a men's hostel was established in Agartala in 1979. The college and University students of *mufforsal* areas can avail the facility of this government hostel providing sixty seats. Before 1979, the Muslim students of remote villages had to face the difficulties to find out rented houses in the Hindu

localities. The Muslim residents as rent owner are not very common. Hence Nazrul Chatrabash has solved this problem of the Muslim male students to a great extent. There is no such Girls Hostel for Muslim Girls.

3.6.9. Tripura Minorities Co-operative Development Corporation Ltd. :

The Government intervention for the welfare of the minority communities has been continued by the establishment of this Corporation Ltd. in Agartala, 1997. Its main objective is to provide economic support to the unemployed youths belonging to minority community. The Corporation is run by a Board of Directors under the leadership of a Chairman. The Muslims, being the largest minority of the state, avail the chance to be benefited more by this. It has two principal functions: i) Sanction of Loan for all kinds of trade and business to the young men and women; after the duration of five years, the loan is to be refunded by installments. ii) Sanction of Educational loan for technical or professional education by installment system.

3.6.10. Tripura Other Backward Classes Co-operative Development Corporation Ltd. :

It is also established in recent time for the welfare of the Scheduled Caste and Other Backward Classes in the state. The Directorate for Welfare of Religious Minorities is a part of this Development Corporation. It is only for welfare activities among all religious minorities.

3.6.11. Muslim Welfare Organizations :

Since before the partition of India, the political awareness among the Muslims of Tripura has inspired them to form organizations or associations with the purpose of preserving their own religious, cultural and socio—political interest and also peace and harmony in the larger society of the state. Very little is known about the works of the voluntary organizations in the past. As according to the information is available in history, some voluntary organizations were formed by the Muslims which proved their identity consciousness as well as activity of the community people. These are as follows:

1. *Tripura Rajya Gana Parishad*, formerly *Bhatri Sangha* was established in 1936 to 1938. It was a pro-Congress association worked and moved against a) the eviction order of five hundred Muslim families at Ramnagar in 1938 and b) the Ghasuri tax imposed on the people of Tripura by the king, with a representation of four thousand people of Sonamura led by Dr. Abul Rahman along with Rudranath Bhattacharya from Dharmanagar. The Parishad worked in the villages for the awareness of society by establishing Night School etc.

2. *Rajyik Jamaet Ulema* was established in 1942. Head office is in Deoban, U.P. This organization has been running a big residential Madrasa “Darul-U-lum” in Sonamura, Rangamatia. The Madrasa is residential for both teachers and students. Since 1982 the source of income is from the subscription and donation of locality as well as out side Tripura As per the rules of the association (constitution), it does not come under Modernization Scheme of the Govt. Hence, it is not entitled to get any governmental help. By imparting Islamic education, the association takes initiative to reform the society from bad customs and culture which are un-Islamic. By the help of social service, it tries to serve the widows and the helpless people victim by natural calamities or communal riots.

3. *Anjuman Islamia*, established in 1945, had an objective to obtain the rights and facilities for the Muslim community. Abdul Barik alias Gadu Mia founded this organization, Anjuman Islamia in Agartala. It established its branches in all Muslim majority areas of Tripura. One of such branches in Comilla (British Tripura) welcomed the Maharaja of Tripura, Bir Bikram Kishore Manikya in his visit to Comilla. Maharaja contributed financial help to some similar welfare organizations, viz. Saha Suja Masjid, Khadimal Islam in Comilla. The aims and objectives of Anjuman Islamia are to improve the integrity of character in every sphere of life among the Muslims. The organization established the ‘Kamalia Madarasa’ in the village of Kazipur and Birendranagar in Sadar sub division. A weekly newspaper, *Nabajagaran* was published under the editorship of Gulam Navi, Agartala.

4. *Tripura Rajya Muslim Praja Majlish* was a socio-religious organization established in 1945. It was formed with the objective of creating impact upon the Muslim farmers. The notable persons of Agartala like Arman Ali Munshi and Farid Mia of Udaipur were among the founder members. Some Sirajul Islam was its secretary. They published a weekly magazine "Saptahik. It worked as a rival organization of Anjuman Islamia among the Muslim farmers.

5. *Jamaet Ulema Hind* was established in 1949. It worked as a branch-organization of Delhi Jamaet Ulema Hind. The Secretary was an advocate, Ahmad Hussain of Bishalgar. The objective was to create unity among the Muslims of Tripura persisting on the Islamic rituals. The organization was dead on 1962.

6. *Dharmanagar Hita Sadhini Samity* was founded in the 1940s to serve for the unity of Hindu and Muslims. Makbul Bhuia and Kalachandra Chowdhury were two founders. It worked to reduce the Hindu Muslim tension during the pre- Independence and post Independence period.

3.6.12. Voluntary Organizations :

Some voluntary organizations of recent origin are working for the development of the Muslims. For example, Ramnagar Muslim Kalyan Samiti, Agartala (1980s); National Educational Society, Arundhutinagar (1995), Agartala ; Human Development Society (1994), Agartala ; Minority Development organization, South Ramnagar (1995), Agartala; Pushparaj Club at Babubazar, Kailasahar (1970) and others. The Minority Development Organization, South Ramnagar, Agartala, is working on the following schemes:

- The job oriented schemes like Computer training center, Calligraphy centre.
- Some welfare projects: Home for Muslim Distressed women named Melaghar Chhayanir Briddha Ashram, which has accommodation of 125 women.
- 'Sarba Siksha' Activities at Purba Chandigar, Melaghar and Sonamura Aid Aware Campaign in eighteen brick fields.

Pushparaj Club at Babubazar, Kailasahar in North Tripura, is involved in different welfare activities for the locality i.e. Yazekhowra village and other areas. Their activities concentrate on Health, Environment, Social Service and related developmental activities. It has earned good name and fame by its multi-various social service activities.

Tabliqi Jamaet is a different kind of Muslim organization. Tabliqi Jamaet of Tripura is a part of the cross country organization originated at Mawat in Delhi, as a counter organization to resist the “Suddhi” movement of Arya Samaj in the twenties of the last century (i.e. 1922). Tabliqi Jamaet started to resist the conversion of the Muslims into Hindu religion. Similarly it wanted to resist the western civilization. The philosophical idea of this movement was the spiritual freedom from the world which is a prison like (Dutta). The way to freedom is to be devoted to the Islamic rituals and there should be no deviation from the Islamic culture of life for obtaining spiritual and mental peace. Some young educated men of Tripura often go to the Gujrat or U.P. to take training in these ideas and activities. A team of three or four men visit the Muslim houses in a regular course of two days in a month and discuss with the men about the Islamic way of life. This is not a conventional organization but a group of team for works. There are no port folio holders like president, secretary, etc. It is found everywhere in Tripura. The workers try to influence the people for the pursuance of the Islamic way of life.

3.7. Noted Muslim Personalities of Tripura

The Royal family members of Tripura were known as the lover of virtues and they patronized the art, literature, religion and science in India. They were secular in their attitude to their subjects or *praja*— both Hindu and Muslim. They did not differentiate among the people of different faith. As a result of this, a number of Muslim personalities emerged at that time. They were able to come into the lime light of the society with their virtues & activities in different spheres of administration, law and judiciary, politics and literary works. The post Independence Administration of Tripura has carried this tradition. Few names of notable Muslims can be cited here.

1. Munshi Abdul Aziz, Agartala, member of Raj-Sabha (privy council) of Maharaja Birendra Kisore Manikya (1909 A.D. to 1923 A.D)
2. Maulivi Mukhir Majumdar, Kailasahar, member of Privy Council of Maharaja Birendra Kishore Manikya. (1909 A.D. to 1923 A.D)
3. Habibur Rahaman Chowdhury, Collector; appointed as the chief manager of Chakla-Rosonabad i.e. the *zamindari* of Tripura kingdom during the British Rule.
4. Maulavi Tajuddin Ahamad Chowdhury, Minister of Maharaja Bir Bikram Kisore Manikya (1923 to 1947) .
5. Farid Ahmad Chowdhury (Udaipur), Karnel of Tripura Regiment under Maharaja Bir Bikram Kisore Manikya (1923 to 1947).
6. Mir Abdu Hafez , *Subedar* , promoted to the rank of Captain in the year 1306 of Tripura Era..
7. Daulat Ahmad Majumder (Sonamura), born in 1864, was Muktar (lawyer); he was poet, writer editor of Bengali magazine named *Samiksha*. His great contribution is his book namely “A grammar of Kokborok” language of the Tribes of Tripura
8. Monohar Sheik, poet and author of ‘Gazinama (a biography of Samser Gazi who ruled Tripura for years) and ‘Champak Vijoy’
9. Adim Boxo Kha, Sitar- Badak in the Raj Sabha of the kings of Tripura.
10. Chhuti Kha, Sarangi-Badak in the Raj-Sabha.
11. Raja Kamruddin Kha, Sarangi-Badak in the Raj-Sabha.
12. Munshi Ismail was a lawyer in Khowai Subdivision (1909—1911) (Datta, 1976)
13. Kaisar Md. Chowdhury, Law practioner. The first Khowai Division Office was started from his Chamber (Datta, 1976).
14. Alam Karigar , an artist of royal court . His thirteen Art pictures on ‘Krisna Leela’ are found in the old puthis or documents of Tripura. (Rajmala, 1303 BE).
15. Adim Boxo Khan, Sitar Musician in the Royal Court
16. Alam Fakir was also a state artist. A bright piece of colorful illustration of the manuscript of ‘Padakalpataru’ is an example of his art. (Rajmala, 1303 BE).

17. Sri Abdul Khalem, *Nakal Navish* in occupation (13.10.39) (Rajgi Tripurar Sarkari Bangla, 1976).
18. Sri Suraj Mia, constable, appointed as judge of special Fausdari court (23.12.41)(Rajgi Tripurar Sarkari Bangla, 1976).
19. Olliwalla, Udaipur, acted as Hakim (Judge). Later, he became secretary of Tripura Legislative assembly and Chairman of the Tripura Public Service Commission
20. Sayyad S.M. Ali, Kailashar, worked as Justice of the Guwahati High Court Branch. He was a frequent contributor to the local News papers e.g Dainik Sambad.
21. Arman Ali Munshi, Agartala, renowned lawyer (1950 to 1960)
22. Sultan Ahmad, District Magistrate in Agartala Court (in the sixties).
23. Kamal Uddin, Taher Khan (Agartala), Abdul Karim Munshi, Nuruddin Munshi (Kailashahar) were well-known professional in the years of sixties.
24. Gulam Rabbani, eminent teacher of Umakanta Academy, Agartala.
25. Sirajul Islam, Head *Maulavi*, Umakanta Academy.
26. Dr Siraj Ahmad, Agartala. Professor of Tripura University, author of literary books, editor of literary magazine
27. Kala Mia, Melaghar, Sonamura, Congress worker, Member of T.T.C., left for Pakistan.
28. Nurul Huda, B.A & B.L, acted as Director of New Motor Transport Service.
29. Firoz Uddin Chowdhury, S.D.O in Agartala Sadar.
30. Mukta Mia, a popular D.S.P, Agartala.
31. Anwar Ali, Kailashahar, S.D.O in Public works Department.
32. Badsah Mia, Freedom Fighter (East Bengal) and first M.P from Tripura.
33. Arman Ali Munshi, a member of Lok-Sabha (in 1960s); one of the founders of Tripura Rajya Moslem Praja Majlish

34. Arshad Ali, Speaker of the State Assembly.
35. Monsoor Ali (Sonamura), Minister of Tripura.
36. Aftab Uddin, an elected member in the Anchalik Parishad, 1952.
37. Wazid Ali (Dharmanagar), Congress worker, Member of Tripura Territorial Council (T.T.C) in 1956. Later he acted as M.L.A.
38. Aftab Uddin, an elected member in the Anchalik Parishad, 1952.
39. *Maulana* Abdul Latif (Kailasahar), Congress worker; Cabinet Minister of the State before 1978. Later, he worked as M.P from Tripura.
40. Arshad Chowdhury, Udaipur. Member of T.T.C. and acted as Deputy Speaker.
41. Atikul Islam, party member of C.P.I., left for Pakistan in sixties.
42. Para Mia, worker of C.P.I. Later joined in Muslim League and left for Pakistan in sixties.
43. Bariq Mia or Gadu Mia, Agartala. Well- known contractor; worked in favour of Muslim League and Pakistan; he left India. The famous mosque named after him, at Shibnagar, near college road, is his contribution.
44. Jabbar Bhuiya (C.P.I.) and Sundar Ali were two political activists in 1960s.
45. Araber Rahaman, C.P.M. (I), Forest Minister of Tripura (1978 to 1988).
46. Faizur Rahaman (Dharmanagar), Minister of Tripura; he has been elected three electoral terms since 1993.
47. Sahid Chowdhury (Sonamura), M.L.A. since 1993; Chairman of Tripura Small Industry Corporation, Chairman of Minority Development Corporation; Vice Chairman of Haz Committee; Vice Chairman of Wakf Board; Active and first initiator for Nazrul Chhatrabash—a students Hostel for Muslim boys in Tripura and Rest house for the Minorities in Tripura, etc.
48. Billal Mia (Sonamura), Ex. Minister of last Congress Ministry (1978 to 1988); at present he is an M.L.A. and active socio- political worker.
49. Maidar Ali (Udaipur), Awarded *Rastapati Puraskar*, Retired. Head Master; Active social worker; Associated with a lot of socio- political organizations; Acting as a secretary of Wakf Committee in Udaipur up to 2003.

50. Tuku Mia (Bishalgarh), Retired Teacher, Congress party member and socio-political activist.
51. Jafar Sadeq (1971 to 1990, Bishalgarh), was a poet.
52. Farukul Islam, Secretary, Wakf Board since 1980s.

Besides, a number of persons are found now as officer, lawyer, teacher, engineer and doctor e.g. Rafiqul Islam, Agartala, retired D.S.P. (son of Munshi Abdul Aziz Munshi); Badaruzam Chowdhury, retired teacher, nominated chairman of Kailasahar Nagar Panchayat; Kutub Ali (Kailasahar), T.C.S., Deputy Director, Minority Welfare Department, Kailasahar; Md. Basir Ali (Khowai), S.D.M; Muslim Uddin (Sonamura), T.C.S and working as B.D.O; Ayat Ali (Amarpur), T.C.S ; Tayab Ali Khan, Engineer, and many others. Many names are in the dark. The wealthy Muslims of Tripura in the early fifties, contributed land, labour to the establishment of schools in Tripura, e.g. Karaimura H.S school, 1952, established on the land contributed by Rahaman Ali Hazi, and Abdul Jabbar Mahaldar, Ahamad Hussain, Chand Mia, A.M.Samsul Alam ; Jolaibari Class XII school was established in 1951 on the contribution of Md. Afroz Chowdhury; Chand Mia Sardar, Rahim 'Master', Hussain Ali Sardar, Janab Ali Sardar, Raham Ali Hazi, Billal Hussain, Unuch 'Kabi', Chayad Ali (Graduate in 1933), Habibur Rahaman , Lokman and others (Bishalgarh) (Alim; 2002). Muslim woman is not found in this list. A few women are coming forward in the field of politics, law and administration.

Findings

Tripura has occupied her place in the Indian history since the medieval period. It has become integral part of Indian Union Territory since our Independence. A demographic and socio-economic profile of the Muslim inhabitants of Tripura presented in this chapter in the background of an ancient kingdom and its journey from a kingdom to a democratic state.

In its geological identity, once risen from the sea-bed and taken a tiny shape from the vast soil of the river of Bramhaputra, Tripura lies within the Assam-Arakan geological zone. The political boundary has gone through various changes during the ancient and medieval period. Geographically, Tripura lying between Bengal and Assam is in a unique position in the north—east India. Tripura consists of two parts— Hill in the east adjacent to Mizoram and Plains in the west adjacent to Bangladesh. The very backwardness of its communication is the legacy of the Partition of India contributing a land-locked state Tripura. After a history of ups and downs, the population of Tripura, at present contributes about 8 percent of the total population.

The people of the State consist of different ethnic and religious plurality since the long history. The two major ethnic groups are the Tribal and Bengali; the six major religious groups are Hindu, Muslim, Buddhist, Christian, Jain and Sikh. Muslims are the largest religious minority contributing about 8.00 percent population of the all religious communities. They are now 2, 54,442 population in Tripura (**Census: 2001**). Majority Inhabitants live in nine sub divisions out of fifteen and they are in fifteen blocks out of twenty three. The large majority lives in the village. They dominate more than 20 Gram Panchayats (of west and north) among 513 gram Panchayats of Tripura. The total urban Muslim population in Tripura is 17,694 (i.e.3.24%). It has increased from the last decades. Among four districts, largest number of Muslim population is highest in the west followed by north and south. This is a historical trend reflected since the census of 1874. It continues in the succeeding years also.

Table no.3.3 and 3.4 shows the sub division wise Muslim population in 1901 and 1961 and it is estimated that Muslim Bengalis were larger in number than the Bengali Hindus during 1901 to 1931.

The social structure of the Muslim constituted by different ethnic and regional groups, the occupational groups and theological groups has been presented in the light of the history with the post Independence scenario. It is found that there are eight ethno-regional Muslim groups viz. Bengali, Bihar-e (Hindusthani), Manipuri, Assamese, Immigrants from Bangladesh, Lahore-e from Lahore, Iran-e from Baghdad and seventeen kinds of social-occupational groups in Tripura. They have their social rank and status in the society. Interesting to note that men are known by the different social group identities but there is no such identity for women. However it is observed that the conscious women use the group identity before or after their name i.e Sayeda, Khanam, Khadim, Palwan and so on. In addition, it is noted that 'Mia' as last name is used with a sense of respect though it is not equivalent to high social groups in Tripura. It may be due to the fact that their forefathers were wealthy farmers and enjoyed a position in the society. Theologically all these groups belong to Sunni sect and Hanafi school of Islamic faith.

In economic pursuit, Muslims coming from agrarian background are mainly cultivators by occupation and they have contributed a lot to the cleaning of the jungles of Tripura and introducing plain cultivation replacing the Jum cultivation of the primitive people. Besides they were found *Charibardar*, *Hukkabardar*, *Pankhabardar*, *Benondia Peyada* (a special type of police), *Paloan* (boxer) of the royal court, coach man, boat man, *Mahoot* (elephant driver) and so on ; in the medieval period they also joined in the army and police department. They were good craftsman, goldsmith, tailor, weaver etc. In the changing situation they have lost many of their expertise knowledge and occupations.

During the frequent attack of the Kingdom, few *Zamindars* and land lords emerged among the Muslim, especially in the west Tripura which was the entrance-

door of the Bengal rulers. After Partition, many people left in this land joined in various modern occupations. Under the situation of crisis in the agricultural resources, Muslim women also have come forward in the Work Participation. Both Muslim men and women are lagging behind than the other religious communities. Their participation is worst in the Household Industry as far the data suggest.

Though the Kingdom was attacked many times by the Muslim rulers of Bengal and Delhi, Muslim subjects were never discriminated by the Kings of Tripura. The historical documents like the copper plates speak the truth. As the Brahmins were gifted land by the kings, so the persons elevated in Islamic faith were patronized by the kings. The common people, even the British subjects residing in the plain Tripura were provided land during the rein of Kalyan Manikya, Govindo Manikya and others. During the time of field works, the aged Muslims of Tripura told that their fore fathers were very happy in the Princely rule of Tripura.

At present situation when they are to face the competition in job market, they are to feel the need for formal education. But Muslims of Tripura were not behind in accepting the formal education at its beginning in Tripura during the rule of Radha Kishor Manikya (1896 to 1906). The *Rajgi Tripurar Sarkari Bangla* recorded a list of Muslim boys who obtained scholarship for education. Before this Formal and English education, since the middle of 18th century (during the rule of Samser Gazi), the people were introduced with the traditional religious education by institutional manner. With the Sanskrit Tols, Arabic Madrasa also existed. They are very much conscious to maintain their religious identity. A large number of mosques and madrasa in the state prove their efforts. Every year a number of boys are sent to other states to get madrasa education in higher level. But the notable thing is that the community as a whole was reserved about the female education. Only a few exceptional persons and their families allowed the girls to be educated. While the other girls in Manipuri and Hindu communities including the girls of royal family had taken the advantage of modern education. Due to the past legacy, Muslim women are neither advanced in

religious education nor in formal education. No girls' Madrasa has been established so long. This attitude towards women indicates the existence of pardah custom. They are still backward in comparison to their sisters of other communities. The data on literacy among the Muslim women shows that about 50 percent women are still illiterate. Though there is no data on their drop out, it is assumed that it starts in increasing number at the end of primary level and continued in the succeeding levels. Though a number of girls remain in the status of 'Never Enrolled', but this is decreasing among the present generation girls than the aged women. They are now getting education in college and University denying the large scale drop out in Higher education. Though there is non-availability of data on the Muslims, it is observed that drop out begins at the end of the primary level and it continues in the middle, secondary, and higher levels. Even in the Vocational / Technical colleges, they are to drop out due to financial and other reasons. Rural –urban disparity is not significant.

The Muslims of Tripura are politically conscious since the Princely rule. They are found in administrative responsibilities as well as involved in political activities. The List of Muslim Personalities speaks the truth. They, (especially from Dharmanagar and Kailasahar) responded to the Khilafat Movement in India in 1921 and the Swadeshi Movement along with other people of Tripura. In the *Anusilan Samiti* of Tripura Branch, there are three Muslims. In other branches of plain Tripura under the British rule, a substantial number of Muslims joined in the Anusilan Samiti and the Revolutionary party; though there is no record that whether they joined in *Chatra Sangha*, and *Bhatri Sangha* during the twenties but in the thirties, they took active part in the formation of Tripura *Rajya Gana Parishad* at Sonamura and joined in Tripura State Congress during the forties. Muslims also joined in the undivided communist party of Tripura branch. Since the pre-Independence days, they established some welfare organizations for the development of the community people as well as communal harmony in Tripura. The notable persons of the community are the outcome of the time signifying the secular approach of the rulers. In the anti- British Movement,

Muslim women of undivided Bengal in the plain Tripura joined in the Revolutionary party while they have no record in the politics of Tripura. They remained far away from the social-movements in Tripura and thus lagged behind their sisters of other communities eg. Bengali Hindu and tribal women. After Independence, they have enjoyed the right of adult suffrage but not involved themselves in direct politics. Only the introduction of three-tier Panchayat system has given them the scope and guarantee to be successful in the participation they are not only elected as members but selected as head of the offices in the village level. But they are still backward in urban administration of Tripura. In the list of more than 52 notable persons of the community, there is no woman indicating the backwardness of the community. But one can acquire inspiration from the success of women in all India during the pre Independence and post Independence period. There is a number of such women since the history of Muslim rule in India.

Chapter – 4

Research Setting - The Place and The People Under Study

For the present empirical study, three towns and three villages have been selected from three districts of Tripura.. The villages and towns under study are as follows :

Villages

- (1) Nabadweep Chandra Nagar (N.C Nagar) - A village in the west district
- (2) Khilpara - A village in the south district
- (3) Yeajekhowra (East) - A village in the north district;

Towns

1. Agartala Municipal Council (A.M.C.) - Only municipal town of Tripura in the west district
2. Udaipur Nagar Panchayat - One of the Nagar Panchayat towns in the south district
3. Kailasahar Nagar Panchayat - One of the Nagar Panchayat towns in the north district

4.1. Physical Features of the Muslim Settlements

The Muslim settlements under present study consist of three villages and three towns, viz. N.C. Nagar, Khilpara and Yeajekhowra (east) under gram Panchayats; while Agartala Municipal Council (AMC), Udaipur Nagar Panchayat and Kailasahar Nagar Panchayat under the urban administration. A brief physical account of these are noted below.

The Villages

4.1.1. Nabadweep Chandra Nagar (N.C. Nagar).

Nabadweep Chandra Nagar, known as N.C. Nagar is a village located in the sub-division of Sonamura of west district. It belongs to N.C. Nagar Gram Panchayat under the Melaghar block. It comes under Sonamura Police station. From the town of Sonamura, one can reach the village by a cycle or a rickshaw or by walking of thirty

minutes only. The village is near the bank of the Gumti. A dam is there to protect the villagers from the flood of the river. A brick-built road is there over the dam. The village is connected with Agartala by the frequent bus or commando-jeep services between Sonamura and Agartala. There is regular bus service between Sonamura and other sub divisional towns of south Tripura, i.e. Udaipur, Sabroom and Amarapur. The village is three kms away from Sonamura Police Station, five and half kms away from the Melaghar block office and 50 kms away from Agartala.

Once, the village was a big village of multi- ethnic and multi- caste society. It was named after a member of the royal family of Tripura in 1917. This old village of 85 years has gone through changes in its size first in 1978. Some portion of the village was declared as Notified area for administrative reasons. In 1994 for the second time, the village Panchayat was divided into two separate panchayats: Durgapur gram Panchayat and N.C. Nagar gram Panchayat. At present, the village consists of two wards/paras, namely, N.C. Nagar and Karalimura under N.C. Nagar Gram Panchayat. These two wards are divided by a big paddy land, though not separated from each other.

Karalimura is adjacent to the Sonamura--Agartala main road. Both Hindu and Muslims are the inhabitants of Karalimura, while N.C. Nagar is a Muslim populated ward with a few Hindu families in the rear side of the road. Each of the wards is inhabited by the families who are closely related to each other. The village is compact in nature. The house type at N.C.Nagar is better than that of Karalimura. Most of the houses are made of strong materials while some are pucca houses. The houses of Karalimura are mostly made of weak materials as the people are poor in socio-economic condition. The drainage system is satisfactory and it makes the village neat and clean. It possesses sixteen tube wells; two mark II tube wells, twenty-five hydrant points, forty ponds and ten *kachha kuas*. Within the village there are two grocery shops, five masjids, six graveyards and a masjid committee of elder persons in the village.

The village has a *Balwari* school, a Senior Basic school, three *Anganwaris* and a High school of co-education. Two madrasas of primary standard of Islamic education. are recognized by the state Wakf Board. The Muslim boys, specially the poor are admitted into a residential *madrassa* led by the *Jamat-ul-Islamia* which is situated at the side of main road. After completion of S.B level of education, the boys and girls go to the Sonamura N.C. Nagar High School which is in walking distance.

The lifestyle of the village is simple. The village is of agrarian background. Some are middle class farmers; some are owner-cultivators of marginal level; a good number is share-croppers or Barga chasi. Some of them are agricultural-labourers and they don't have cultivable land of their own. A small number of villagers – both male and female are engaged in government services and some are in petty business of different trades. Hindus of this village residing mainly at Karalimura, are engaged in daily labour, rickshaw pulling and border business. The forefathers of the Muslim villagers probably belonged to a particular occupational group, not known to them but carried in their last name 'Maishan'. All the members of the gram Panchayat are Muslims—three of them are women elected in 2004.

4.1.2. Khilpara

Khilpara is a very old village located in the north of Udaipur subdivision. It is a road sided and fringe village of the district town of Udaipur. The village is under Khilpara gram Panchayat and Matabari block. The nearest kotwali thana is R.K. Pur (Radha Kishorepur) police station in the town. Khilpara is only three kms. away from the main town, three and half kms from Rajarbag — new bus stand, 6 kms away from the Block Office and only two kms away from Ramesh Chowmuhuni. The Chowmuhuni is the meeting point of four important roads of Udaipur, i.e. the Central road, the National highway, Udaipur-Agartala road and Udaipur-Kakrabon road. So, it is a very well connected village by auto and bus services. Khilpara is on the way of the Udaipur-Kakrabon road which starts from Ramesh Chowmuhuni and ends at Kakrabon. Kakrabon is a well known village situated at the left bank of Gumti River. The Post Graduate Basic Training College, the Rural Development Block office, Navodaya

Kendriya Vidyalaya are situated at Kakrabon. Kakrabon is 4 kms away from Khilpara. The people of Khilpara have regular contact with this revering trade centre of Kakrabon. On the way to Kakrabon, the neighbour villages are BaishnabirChar, Rajdhan Nagar, Jamjuri, Palatana, Lulunga and Ichachara(Hospital Chowmuhuni). Besides Khilpara, Muslims are found in a good number in the villages of Palatana, Jamjuri and Rajdhan Nagar.

There are eight constituting wards of Khilpara village namely:- i. Bhangar Par, ii. Ashram Para or Aampukur Par, iii. Gumti Par, iv. Madhya Par, v. Aadhi Par, vi. Fakir Bari, vii. Masjid Para on the bank of Joor Dighi, viii. Sitala Para

A pucca by-road just opposite to the main road starts from Khilpara market and goes through the village. Some of the wards, as the name indicate are on the bank of the Dighis (big ponds) i.e. Mahendra Sagar, Ram Sagar (Joor Dighi) and Nanua Dighi are after the names of royal family who had excavated them.

The settlement pattern of the village is complex – somewhere it is linear and somewhere dispersed type. Bhangar Par and Madhya Par are inhabited exclusively by the Muslims, while the other wards are inhabited by the mixed population of Bengali Hindu and Muslims. The ratio among Hindu and Muslims is about 50:50. The dwelling houses are made by strong structural materials. Most of them are mud-wall. Only ten are pucca (building) houses. The drainage system is neat and clean. All the households have spacious courtyards. For drinking water there are a number of ponds and tube wells which are also used for irrigation.

The village is of agrarian background. Some are middle class farmers; some are of marginal and some share-croppers. A large number of villagers are landless labourers. In the past Khilpara was a marshy land and unproductive also. The word 'Khil' means 'Patit' or the unproductive land. The forefathers of the villagers were locally converted during the period of Muslim suzerainty over Tripura. In occupations, their forefathers were Light- man in the temple of the Goddess, 'Tripureshwari Kali-mata', Watchmen in the Dargahs, Palki-bearer of the royal family, wrestlers in the royal court and soldiers

in the royal army. The earlier occupation of the old Hindu villagers was beetle planting. They belonged to the *Baroj* community. Their present descendants use *Neogi* as their surname. It is reported that the Barui community of Khilpara originally came from Khandal i.e. Noakhali in east Bengal. The villagers, both Hindu and Muslim are now in different occupations, i.e. business, service and profession. The village has significant number of Muslim service holders; at least 5 percent as per report of the present survey in the government sector. Besides the village has two advocates and two engineers who are Muslim. Among the women employees, six of them are Muslim women. One of them was a Primary school teacher; one is a H.S. School teacher, three Anganwadi workers and one class IV employee in the public works department.

Khilpara is known for good number of literate Muslims. Educational facilities are easy- available for both boys and girls. There are four Anganwaris, one Balwari, one Primary, one Higher Secondary school (co-ed), four Masjids and four Muktab. The reputed schools like Ramesh School are not far away from the village. Out of four muktabs, one is fully aided by the state Wakf board and the rest receive casual financial assistances. Khilpara also has a primary health center (PHC), a veterinary hospital, an orphan house for boys, a club, a '*Mahila Samiti*', a cultural association for '*Jaree Songs*' (folk song) and a '*Kisan Sabha*' of the farmers. It is reported that *Tabligue Jamaet* works among the villagers for their religious development. In political participation, four members are to represent the Muslim community and two of them are females (2004).

The villagers observe their religious rituals. They go to the *Juma Masjids* regularly. They are now in the crisis of graveyard for public use. There is a piece of land as a gift from the Chowdhury-family of the village for the purpose.. But this is also usurping by the refugees (Hindu) coming from Bangladesh. The cremation 'ghat' of the Hindu at Ashram Para has also been usurping by the refugees. The Khilpara gram Panchayat ventured to reform that ghat but it was in vain.

4.1.3. Yeajekhowra (East)

Yeajekhowra, a 'typical Muslim village' is a remote village and located in the interior rural area of Kailasahar. It belongs to Yeajekhowra gram Panchayat under the Gournagar R.D. block. The village is very big and old. For administrative reasons, it is divided into east and west. The village is about 15 kms away from the block office and six and half kms away from the main town. There is regular bus service once in a day between the town and Babubazar, but frequent auto services in the weekdays. Babubazar is the nerve center of all communications and trade and business for the villagers. Yeajekhowra is far away from Agartala but very near to Assam of the north east region of India and Bangladesh viz. Karimganja, Hylankandi and Patharkandi of Assam State and Sylhet of Bangladesh are very near to Yeajekhowra. The people of the village are far away from the capital of the State. They are in frequent contact with the people of Assam for their social and commercial relationship. Thus, the colloquial dialects of the villagers are highly influenced by that of Sylhet and Assam.

Yazekhowra is one of the twelve Muslim dominated villages in the sub-division of Kailasahar. The Muslim dominated villages are Tillagaon, Noorpur, Laxmipur, Yubarajnagar, Irani, Khowrabil, Srinathpur, Latiapura, Fulbarikandi, Ranguti., Yeajekhowra (east) and Yeajekhowra (west). More than 99 percent people of the east Yeajekhowra are Muslims. Its settlement pattern is thin and dispersed type, i.e. one or few households located in a tilla is quite distant from the neighboring households in another tilla. All of the houses are 'kacha' or 'matir-ghar' except a few 'pucca' houses on the road side. A wide brick-built road starting from Babubazar (the trade and business centre of the area) approaches to the village. The villagers are to come Babubazar for daily need and trade purpose regularly (twice in a day) either by walking or by rickshaw.

A few Hindu households are found scattered along with the Muslim households of this village. They are also poor and they belong to the low strata of the society. The list of names of the villagers in the office record of the Gram Panchayat reveals that east Yeajekhowra has only 10 households who belong to Sharif (or high ranking ethno-social group) divided into 3 Sayed and 7 Khan families. This is interesting to note that

the men of present generation do not bother about their original identity and so the sons do not continue the family or hereditary title in their name. So it is very difficult to identify the distinct social groups among them.

Yeajekhowra is known as a typical Muslim village accounting for its social and economic background. Early marriages of the girls, sharp gender discrimination and stress on madrasa education are some remarkable features of the village. It is a poor village compared to other adjacent Muslim villages like Tillabazar, Nurpur and Laxmipur. Major portion of the village is occupied by the forest and tilla land which are not fit for irrigation and cultivation. So the villagers depend on a very meager portion of cultivable land and thus they remain poor. In west Yeajekhowra, 65 percent of villagers are landless and 20 percent are marginal farmers. It is observed that the economic condition of east Yeajekhowra is still worse than the other Muslim villages. Majority of the work force is engaged as agricultural labourer and daily labourer. A good number of people are below the poverty line. A very negligible number is in government service. A few of them are petty businessman at Babubazar. Though the percentage of female literacy at west Yeajekhowra is 39.85 percent and three of them are graduates, but none of them is found in government job.

The village has four Masjids, four madrasa, one of them is High Madrasa, three Anganwaris, two Balwari, two JB School and two Dargahs. The nearest High School for the village is at Tilla-bazar which is three kms. away from Babubazar. Twelve Mark II tube wells and one ring well are the sources of drinking water for Yeajekhowra. Kailasahar hospital is six kms. away from the village. Only one primary health center was found there. One youth club namely *Pushparaj Club*, (est. in 1970) has been involved with various social service programmes, e.g. Health awareness camp. The people have their community council of elders '*Naduatutami*'. In respect of the social groups, they are mainly of Pathan and Mughal origin, i.e. Khan. There is only one woman organization '*Naree Samiti*'. Participation of Muslim women in the party works like meetings, processions and rallies is very occasional. Only one Muslim woman was found as a member of Yeajekhowra Gram Panchayat in 1999.

The towns

4.1.4. Agartala

Agartala is the capital of the state of Tripura. Muslims are inhabitants of Agartala Municipal Council since its inception period of 1871 during the rule of Maharaja Birchandra Manikya. In 1838, Agartala as a Capital of the Kingdom was founded by Maharaja Krishna Kishor Manikya (1830 to 1849) on the bank of the Haora River adjacent to Eastern Bengal. With various changes and developments of Agartala municipality during the long years, the municipal town has been gradually enlarged and the Muslims have shifted their residence from central areas of Agartala to the distant sides concentrating themselves in a few wards. Agartala is the only municipal town of the state having 3,621 Muslim populations (Census: 1991. Out of seventeen wards, Muslims are found in a good number at Shibnagar Masjid Patti (Ward No. 13), Town Pratapgarh (Ward No. 12), Jagaharimura (Ward No.15), South Ramnagar (Ward No.10) and Bhati Abhoynagar (Ward No.1). Rest of them are found in other areas of Agartala municipality as well as outside the municipal jurisdiction. For relevant information on the population of Agartala, We can mention the report of open NSS (National Service Scheme). According to this Report of Open N.S.S in collaboration with Agartala M.C in 1998, municipal council consists of 1,80,465 population divided into 91,412 males and 89,053 females; the total number of households is 37,715 distributed into General 24,495, O.B.C 5,832, S.C 4,842 and S.T 2,546 families). Agartala (MC) town is extended more in 2005 however this is not reflected in the present study.

From the princely time, Muslims have been residing at Goal Chakkar and around it near the Kalapania Khal. It is presently known as South Ramnagar belonging to Ward No.10. It is an old Muslim settlement. There is a pocket of old Muslim settlement at Jagaharimura adjacent to College tilla near the bank of Howrah River. Bitarban is another Muslim settlement situated at Bhati Abhoynagar (west) on the bank of Katakhal. It is a settlement of not more than forty years. Many Muslim families of this place were original residents of Krishna Nagar of Agartala. These three wards under

municipal jurisdiction have covered the Katakhal of north Agartala, Kalapania Khal of west Agartala and Howrah River of south Agartala. The physical characteristics of three wards have been discussed here with an observational note at the conclusion.

Bitarban, one of the slums of Agartala, is located at Bhati Abhoynagar (west), in the north Agartala under west kotowali police station. It is easily accessible from Durga Chowmohani crossing the pucca bridge of RCC pillar (completed in 2000) and from Radhanagar bus stand via Assam Rifles Cantonment road within 3 kms distance. The airport road which started from Fire Brigade Chowmohani via Ker Chowmuhuni divides Bhati Abhoynagar into east and west. Adjacent to the bridge, there is a police outpost and just opposite to this, at the west of Bhati Abhoynagar, a brick-soiling bi-road starts for Bitarban, Mullapara, Moylakhola and Das Colony under ward No.1. According to the NSS report, Ward No. 1 comprises of 1,567 households distributed into general 967, O.B.C. 186, S.C 376 and S.T only 38. Hence, the number of Muslim households belonging to the category of General is obviously below 967.

The west side of Bhati Abhoynagar is inhabited by a large number of Muslims, which seems to possess the highest number of Muslim population of Agartala municipality covering more than five hundred families. Due to the lack of statistical data, no comparative study regarding the numerical strength of the wards is possible. The east side of Bhati Abhoynagar and the rear side of Bitarban are inhabited by the Hindus, while the interior part of Bitarban is a compact Muslim settlement. Mullapara, joined by a bamboo bridge with Bitarban is an older Muslim settlement. The other two adjacent colonies, namely Moyla-khola and Das-Colony are populated by the lower rank people of the Hindu society - the Harijans and Hrishidas respectively.

The Muslims of Bitarban shifted to this place from their original settlement at Krisnanagar which is only 3 kms away. The dwelling houses are mud-built with *tarja* (bamboo made) or tin-shade. Only one building house and two brick built Muslim houses are found in Bitarban. Before 1998, Bitarban did not enjoy the full status of municipal ward and till 2000, the residents suffered from the crisis of water. Only one deep tube well, which was the source of drinking water as well as for daily use, could not meet the need of the large number of poor people who had no other alternative but

to use the dirty and polluted water of the Katakhal. In 2001-2002 they have been provided with 25 hydrant points. The plantations of these are not properly coordinated for the need of the people. The drainage system is not satisfactory as some portion is pucca and other portion kacha. Irregularity of the clearance system makes the locality a dirty one.

The lifestyle of the people is very simple. As of their occupations, most of the people are day labourers and rickshaw pullers. A considerable number of people are drum-beaters (dhaki) but due to diminishing demand and scant income from this profession, they have to undertake part-time jobs as rickshaw pullers and day labourers. Some of them are engaged in govt. jobs as class IV staff, group-D workers and Daily Rate Workers (DRW). Only one class III staff, retired from govt. office, was found to reside in the rear side of Bitarban. Two police constables are also found there. The Hindus are in different categories of occupations such as petty business, govt. jobs etc. A few poor Muslim women are engaged as domestic maid in the Hindu households of the nearest Durga Chowmuhuni and east Bhati Abhoynagar. Not a single woman was found in govt. service. Recently a few girls and housewives go to the training centers of handicrafts at G.B. Bazaar near G.B. Hospital.

Within Bitarban there are four Anganwaris, one Balwari, one Crash, one ICDS centre and one Homeopathic primary health centre. Bitarban has eight grocery shops and one playground on the bank of the Katakhal inside the locality. There are a party office of CPI (M), a tailoring centre and a centre for small industry (est. in 2002). Bitarban has a junior basic school. The students of this ward also go to the neighbouring schools within walking distance like Rampur Senior Basic, Madhya Bhubwan primary school, Barjala junior basic, Barjala high school, Ramnagar High school, Ramnagar Girls' school, Pragati School. In spite of so many schools available to them, the state of their educational level is very poor. Most of them dropout in between class IX and X. Nobody was found matriculate till 1999. Very few girls are found to continue upper class study in the school. Lack of guidance in the family, non availability of the coaching centre within the reach and above all poverty, are the primary driving factors for their

educational backwardness. For religious education, the children go to the Madrasa attached with Juma Masjid at east Bhati Abhoynagar and also Fulkania Madrasa of the locality. There are two Masjids and two Masjid Committees which perform as elders' council of the people. There is only one graveyard named 'Ramjanmura Kabarsthan' at the bank of Katakhal. On the occasion of religious festival, Muslims of Bitarban go to the neighbouring Masjids like Chandina-mura, Barjala, etc. to avoid the rush in their own local Masjid. There are a drum-beaters association (Baadya Samiti), a Mahila Samiti (est. in 2002) and a NGO named as Bhati Abhoynagar Samaj Unnayan Samiti, a branch of VHAT.

Jagaharimura, a pocket of Muslim settlement, is located at east Agartala under east kotwali police station. It belongs to municipal Ward no. 15 under Agartala Sadar sub division of west Tripura. It is proximate to College tilla and behind the Mahatma Gandhi H.S. School. The Jagaharimura road, on one end joins with the college road and on other end, with the Netaji Chowmuhuni. Jagaharimura is connected to Math Chowmuhuni by the college road which merges with Assam-Agartala road at Math Chowmuhuni and passes through the Central Agartala, i.e. motor stand and Kaman Chowmuhuni. There are regular auto services and rickshaw on the roads. On the one hand, the ward is 2 kms. away from the east P.S. at Motor-stand and 6 kms away from the Fire Brigade Chowmohoni and Bat-tala Bazaar, while on the other end it is approximately 2 kms away from the Maharajganj Bazaar known as Goal Bazaar at Netaji Chowmuhuni. The Jagaharimura road bifurcates forward – the left is Gangile road and the right one reaches to Goal bazaar.

Jagaharimura is ^a Hindu populated residential ward within which there is a pocket of Muslim settlement consisting of 28 families. There is also a cluster of seven Muslim families at the Gangile road. Ramthakur Para, its close neighbour is also a Hindu populated area. In the princely period, Jagaharimura was named as Hati-tilla as because the original Muslim inhabitants were 'mahuts' (elephant drivers) by occupation and they used to keep the elephants tied here. But after partition of India, especially after 1970 the picture has totally changed. Now out of 500 families (approx), there are only

28 Muslim households having the population of 173(as the present study of 2000). The major number of Muslims of Jagaharimura dwells in slums edging both sides of the Jagaharimura road close to a *Dargah*. Their dwelling condition is very poor. A cluster of 21 Muslim families dwell on the left and the rest seven are dispersed among Hindus. Most of the houses are thatched huts of weaker material. There was no sanitary arrangement before 2000. In 2001, the said 21 Families have been provided three latrines, one hydrant point of drinking water and one mark-two deep tube well. They have also been provided with a big wall obstructing the exposure of their living to the local school which is without any surrounding wall. Adjacent to the school, there is a big field which was once the only graveyard for the locality. The rest of the Muslim families have their own arrangement for the basic necessities as their counter Hindu neighbors have. There are pucca drain on both sides of the road, three hydrant points, six grocery shops, a ration shop, a firewood shop, a laundry and a repairing shop of rickshaw and cycle. There is also a local daily bazaar.

There are two Majaars or Dargahs and a Madrasa (esc. in 1995) in Jagahaninura. The ward has two schools – a J.B. and a S.B. school, English medium school and also a coaching center for the drop-out Madhyamik (secondary level) candidates and two clubs. After completion of senior basic level of education, the students of Jagaharimura go to schools within walking distance such as the Mahatma Gandhi H.S. School and Netaji School.

Most of the Muslim families are living below the poverty line. They are engaged in unskilled type of labourers, i.e. hawkers and vendors of old papers, irons, broken utensils etc. The rest of them are petty businessmen, daily labourers, rickshaw pullers and drivers of private vehicles, etc. Among them one class III staff, one driver of government vehicles and one contingent employee of Agartala municipal office were also found as residents. Among the women, some were found to be engaged as maid servants in the Hindu households. There were a widow as a private tutor of the Quran, a milk woman and a beggar. Most of the Hindu neighbors are engaged with business in Goal Bazaar. Few of them are wealthy businessmen. The buildings of the modern

type belong to the well-to-do Hindus who are under government service. The Hindus belong to the different caste of Hindu society and the Muslims belong to the Ajlaf with feed exception of higher social groups. For friday namaz (prayer) people go to the masjids of Shibnagar and Masjid-Patti.

South Ramnagar under Ward no. 10 is known as middle class Muslim residential area for the present time. It is located at Goal Chakkar on the Akhaura road of Agartala which ends to the Check Post of Bangladesh border. Goal Chakkar is the meeting point of Akhaura road extended straight to the Bangladesh border, the Gangile road at the right hand and the Joypur road at the left hand which terminates in the Joypur gram Panchayat under Dukli block. South Ramnagar is at the south of Ramnagar of west Agartala and under the west Kotwali police station situated at Post Office Chowmuhuni. It is 4 kms away from police station and 5 kms away from Agartala Motor-stand and Kaman Chowmuhuni. The Fire brigade Chowmuhuni which is only 1 km from Goal Chakkar has connected the ward with Battala Bazaar and Battala Bus- terminus by the Ronaldsay road and with Durga Chowmuhuni by the T.G. road. The Akhaura road starting from Kashari-patti (former Jackson gate) crosses the Orient Chowmuhuni, V.M. Hospital Chowmuhuni and Fire-brigade Chowmuhuni and connects south Ramnagar with the important places of the capital town viz. the Secretariat, State WAKF Board, Education Directorate, Umakanta Academy and Birchandra State Library. South Ramnagar is neighborly connected with Ramnagar which is one of the oldest and biggest settlements of Agartala inhabited by the Hindu middle class families. While south Ramnagar inhabited by the Muslims of different social strata along with the Hindus of lower social strata. It is a settlement of not more than forty years old. Before Independence, the vast area of this low land was mainly used as brick field and paddy field. The area was then inhabited by some *Ravidas* families belonging to cobbler community and a few Muslim families. After 1970 south Ramnagar has been gradually extended and developed as a multi-caste and multi-religious residential locality. Muslims and Hindus of different castes and social status live side by side. There was no tribal household till 1997. The present Muslim inhabitants of south Ramnagar consists of three categories of people.

- the old inhabitants who did not leave for Pakistan after the partition of India;
- the people shifted from central Agartala, Krishnanagar and Ramnagar and
- the newcomers from other subdivisions, especially of west and south and settled after 1970.

According to a report of N.S.S, the Ward no. 10 has 2,114 Households and 10,816 populations. The number of O.B.C families is 213, S.C families 562, S.T only 7 and the rest majority is general population i.e. 1,332. Muslims belong to the group of General upper caste Hindus. The lifestyle of the Muslims is very simple. A major portion of them belongs to the lower rank of social strata. They are mainly drivers, mechanics, shop assistants, rickshaw pullers, butchers, vegetable sellers, jogale (helper to Raj-mistree), and brick breakers. A considerable portion belongs to the government Service and middle class profession i.e. magistrates, bank officers, clerk, forester, teacher, lawyer, engineer, contractor, tailor and businessman. Only two Muslim women were found as employed in the govt. service i.e. primary teacher and contingent worker in the W.C.K.F board office. The settlement pattern of the Muslims of south Ramnagar is divided into two parts. One is around the Goal Chakkar and both sides of the Joypur road; other part is the extended PEC area crossed by the Kalapania Khal. There is one Hindustani settlement of about sixty households adjacent to the field and a pond at the right hand of the entrance of the PEC area. A small Steel factory is in a side of the field. The dwelling condition of the Muslims residing near the main road and the rear side of PEC bridge (on the Kalapania Khal) is far better than those residing on the other side of bridge and those residing on the sides of Joypur road. A good number of houses are brick built with tin shed or built by strong materials. A few poor households have grown like slums on the narrow space of the bank of the Khal which is very dirty and need immediate reformation. Though it is a municipal ward since 1970, the drainage system is not satisfactory. Only half of the portion is pucca drain. The source of drinking water is from eight hydrant points and one deep tube well. There is also a dighi (tank) named *Mahaprabhur Dighi* on the other side of the bridge adjacent to the neighbouring locality of Ramsundor Nagar. There are two clubs, two ladies and one gents tailoring shops, a number of grocery shops inside the locality. There are one primary health

center, one veterinary hospital, medical pharmacy, doctors' chambers and garment shops available on the main road. Daily bazaar is available at Goal Chakkar. The only BSF camp is on the Joypur road and 1 km away from Goal Chakkar.

There are four schools at south Ramnagar i.e. JB School at '*Ravidas paara*', a Balwari School at PEC and two primary schools at Goal Chakkar. The students are also sent to the neighbouring schools i.e. Upendra Vidyapith at Madhya Paara of Joynagar, Ramnagar Girls and Ramnagar H.S Boys School, Bani Vidyapith (for girls) and Ramnagar 6 no School. All these are within the walking distance. For religious education, the children go to the three Madrasa of the locality i.e. a madrasa attached with Juma masjids at the Gangile road, a masjid at Joypur road and another at PEC. There are one Dargah, one central Kabarsthan and three religious comities e.g. masjid committee and 'Kabarsthan' committee for about 200 Muslim houses. There are two Muslim welfare organizations namely Muslim Samaj Kalyan Samiti (est. in 1976) and Anchalik Jamaet Ulema. There are two N.G.Os namely Minority Development Organization (est. in 1999) and Human Development Society (est. 1999)

4.1.5. Udaipur

Udaipur is the district head quarter of South Tripura. Till 1760, Udaipur was the capital of the kingdom and the residence of the *Rajas*. Its ancient name was '*Rangamati*' situated on the south or left bank of the river Gumti. The present name is after the name of the king Uday Manikya in 1567. As reported by the British political Agent in Tipperah (**Hunter: 1874**), Udaipur had been the headquarter of the subdivision of the same name. Since 1901 to 1949, Udaipur has been developed as a town of Culture and Architecture. The people have been living in an easy going life-style. In February 1861, it was attacked by Kukis from the south, which massacred and plundered the inhabitants and carried off many captives" (**Hunter: 1874, p. 497**). Through many ups and downs of this temple- town, the Muslim inhabitants largely have concentrated themselves in the villages rather than town. In the former Notified Area of Udaipur town, they were only 967 in number as the report of 1991; the census report of 2001 is not available.

Udaipur Nagar Panchayat is under Udaipur sub-division and Matabari block of south district. As a district head quarter, Udaipur is well connected with the capital and other sub-divisions of south district by regular bus, auto and jeep services. Udaipur Nagar Panchayat consists of thirteen distinct wards. Only three of them are inhabited by the Muslims. These are :

- i. Ward no. 9— the west bank of Jagannath Dighi located at the west of Udaipur and its adjacent small locality named *Chhan-ban* behind the Girls' School of the town.
- ii. Ward no. 7 — the west bank of Amar Sagar located at the north of Udaipur.
- iii. Ward no.8 — the south bank of Amar Sagar called Town Sonamura located at north of Udaipur.

All these wards are connected by the central road of Udaipur town under R.K. Pore Police Station. The numerical strength of the Muslims of Nagar Panchayat is only is not significant. The west bank of Jagannath Dighi is inhabited by mixed population i.e. both Hindu and Muslim Bengalese while the east bank is inhabited exclusively by the Hindus. Jagannath Dighi, in the name of Lord Jagannath is famous in history of Tripura. The ruins of Jagannath temple is still found on the south bank of the tank. This is a rare architecture in Tripura built in 1661 as the inscription lay down in the temple. A metal road of the west bank of Jagannath Dighi linked with central road connects it with Ramesh Chowmuhuni where all the four important roads of Udaipur meet together, i.e. the National Highway (Udaipur - Sabroom road), Udaipur - Kakrabon road. Udaipur – Agartala road and the central road. The new bus stand namely Rajarbagh, situated on the 'bandh' of Gumti, is only three kms away. Channban, adjacent to the west bank is situated behind the Girls' High School of Udaipur town. This is a small Muslim settlement of only thirty households (present survey). It looks like a slum pattern and congested. The south bank of Amarsagar or Town Sonamura is only half km away from Ramesh Chowmuhuni. It is adjacent to 'Sukhsagar Jala' and near to the Matabari temple complex. The Chak bazaar, R.K. Pur Thaana, Nagar Panchayat office, Tahasil office, Party office (CPM(I)) – all are very near to the people of Jagannath Dighi and also not far away to the people of Amar Sagar. A new township

is growing at the west side of Chawk bazar which will lessen the distance among these wards. There is a Tripura Sundari Hospital and a 'Dak Bangla' in the east bank whiles the fishery office and the training center is in the west bank of Amar Sagar. The Pachshim Paar (west bank) is a residential area of mixed population of both Hindus and Muslims. The households are in linear type facing the Sagar under a wide open blue sky. The households of Jagannath Dighi are also linear type and decent looking. The dwellings are brick-built but those of Amar Sagar are made of weak materials. There is a good number of tube wells and hydrant points as the source of drinking water.

Under Nagar Panchayat administration, there are eight Balwari centers, sixteen schools (including one English medium co-ed. H.S. School, one H.S. Girls' School), two muktab attached with two Masjids, one Hospital, one Dispensary, one Town Hall, three Rest House, one Circuit House, 620 hydrants, fourteen Mark 11 tube well, fifteen tube well, 2 R.C.C. ring well, one veterinary hospital, 2017 street light point etc (as recorded in a publication from Udaipur N.P office). There is one public graveyard for the Muslims, named Shanti-Palli, three clubs and three NGOs. The NGOs run a library of Islamic books and a coaching center for students. A general degree college named Nazrul Maha Vidyalay located at *Dhajanagar*, in the outskirt of Udaipur town. A student of student of Law college of Agartala is found among the residents of Jagannath Dighi.

The economic condition of the Muslims of the three wards varies according to their social position and educational advancement. The Muslims of Jagannath Dighi are economically well off as the majority numbers are in govt. service while, in comparison, the people of Amar Sagar and Town Sonamura are both economically and educationally backward. The people of Chann-ban belong to the lower strata of economic class. Muslims of Udaipur Nagar Panchayat are found as teacher, clerk, Panchayat secretary, inspector of schools, forester, physical instructor, T.S.R (Tripura State Rifle), class IV employee, Group-D worker, driver, home guard and pump operator. They are also found as tailors, businessmen, grocer, motor mechanics, rickshaw puller, account keeper and betel stockiest. Some poor men of Amar Sagar were found as fishermen, fish-seller and weaver of fish-nets. Some women are in govt. service as

nurse, teacher and clerk. One woman beggar is found in Chann-ban. A few poor women are to work as maid.

There are various organizations like the Madrasa board, Shishu Kalyan Parishad, CITU (labour Organization), Government Employees Association and TMSU.

4.1.6. Kailashahar

The Kailashahar town is the district head quarter of North-Tripura. Kailashahar has been the subdivision of the same name since the British period. Hunter described this place as 'a small unpretending village, prettily situated at the foot of a low range of hills' (Hunter: 1874 p. 497). It is a remoter subdivision of the state i.e. 200 kms away from the capital Agartala. It is connected by bus all over Tripura. There is regular bus service from Agartala to Kailashahar and from Kailashahar to Dharmanagar, Kumarghat, Kamalpur, Fatiqroy and Dhalai. Before the execution of the Panchayat Act, the town was ruled by Notified Area Authority(N.A.A). Kailashahar Nagar Panchayat consisting of eleven wards is under the Gournagar R.D. Block. Out of eleven wards, the density of Muslim population is found mainly in the two wards, i.e. ward no. 2 and ward no. 11. Town Kubjar and east Durgapur are those two wards respectively.

Town Kubjar is located at the north of Kailashahar town and divided into two parts – Village Kubjar under gram Panchayat and Town Kubjar under Nagar Panchayat administration. It is only half km away from the 'Katal Dighir Paar' on the bank of which the govt. offices are situated, i.e. Nagar Panchayat office, Chief Judicial Magistrate Court, SDO Sub-divisional office etc. These are on the Thaana road. 'Katal Digh' is a historical place existing from princely period. Kubjar is under the Kailashahar police station and only half km away from it and 1 km away from the main town surrounding the motor stand. The Thaana road has connected Kubjar with the main town and the *Panichowkibazar* by frequent auto services. The central road of the town stretches from Pitur bazaar and Laxmi Cheera Bridge, the gateway to Kailashahar and has the hospital, Sat-sang Ashram, PWD office, office of Animal Husbandry and the I.T.I. on its way and then it finally terminates at motor stand. As this road also extends

itself to the north finding its way by the side of the police station or *Thaana*, it is also known as Thaana Road. Kubjar is connected with some Muslim dominated villages of Kailasahar i.e. Tilla bazaar, Yazekhowra, etc. At the tri-junction of the Tilla bazaar the main road is bi-furcated – one to the village of *Rangauti* and the other to the Babubazar. There is regular bus service from Kailasahar motor stand to Rangauti (the border area) and Babubazar.

The north of Kailashahar is inhabited mainly by the Muslims while the east is by the Manipuri. The urban Hindus are mainly found around the Panichowki bazaar (both Purba and Paschim bazaar) extended to the dam on the Manu river. Hindus are also found near the bank of Katal Dighi. The Kailasahar Girl's School is adjacent to the Purba bazaar. At the passim bazar, there is Masjid around which a small Muslim settlement was found. The rear side of Kubjar is inhabited by the Hindus and the rest of the part is a compact Muslim settlement. There the houses are mud-built or tarja or bamboo-made with thatched roofs. Some of these are tin-shaded also. A few households have been provided half or full constructed houses by the B.M.S. Scheme of the Nagar Panchayat. One well furnished building house owned by an Asstt. Director of the animal Husbandry was found at Kubjar. Some pucca houses owned by the Muslims were found at *Uttar Cacharghat* and *Daulatpur* under ward no. 2. There were twenty five shallow wells and two Mark-II wells. The drainage system was kaacha. Three grocery shops are inside the locality. Though there is one local bazaar on the side of the main road, the people prefer Panichowki bazar to meet their daily needs.

The lifestyle of the people is very simple. The source of their livelihood is day labour. Majority belongs to this occupation. Some are engaged in cultivation and petty business. A very few are in govt. service. A good number of people are seasonably employed. For the off-season, they are to find out secondary source of income, i.e. to sell green vegetables or to run tea stall etc.

Kubjar has a Balwari school, a junior basic school, three muktab, two masjids, two Dargahs and one burial ground. The students of the ward go to the Netajee Vidyapith (S.B. School) and High School at Cachar ghat. They go to town to read at Radha

Kishore Institute, Balika Vidyalaya, Kailashahar H.S. School and Kailashahar Girls School. There is a old Degree College at Govinda pur which is 3 kms away from town. In spite of this educational facility in Kailashahar, only one Muslim girl was found to be a student of college. The socio-economic condition is responsible for their educational backwardness in higher level. Some qualified men were found unemployed. An aged man, being a graduate of 60's was found without govt. job and so frustrated regarding the political justice of the government. The Muslims of Kubjar belong to *Ajlaf* social group. The Hindus belong to lower strata of the caste hierarchy. Inter-community relationship is maintained by the people of both the communities.

East Durgapur is, another Muslim dominated ward of Kailashahar Nagar Panchayat, located at the north-east of Kailashahar. It belongs to the Nagar Panchayat ward no. 11. Durgapur is divided into east and west under Kailashahar Police Station. East Durgapur is Muslim dominated while west Durgapur is an exclusively Hindu residential area except the four Muslim households. East Durgapur is adjacent to the old airport ground of Kailashahar. It is at the down of dam on the bank of Manu River. The airport road over this dam is joined with the central road of the town at Paitur bazaar. One can approach to this ward either by the central road or by a short-cut way which runs through the airport ground. Before two decades, the locality used to be flooded every year and huge land property and lives were destroyed. So many people shifted elsewhere. At present the dam protects the inhabitants who are small in number. Durgapur is three and half kms away from the main town. The Kailashahar Hospital and the Block office are 3 kms. away from it.

The settlement pattern of the people at *East Durgapur* is a unique one. Few Hindu households are found after some Muslim households but Hindus are very insignificant in number. Out of fifteen pucca houses of east Durgapur, five houses belong to the Muslims. The rest of the Muslims dwell in bamboo-built houses. There are twelve Mark II tube wells and twenty hydrant points as their source of drinking water. Muslims of east Durgapur are mainly commoners or *Ajlaf* social group. Their counterpart – Hindus belong to the middle strata of the Hindu caste order, i.e. *Ghosh*,

Debnath and Barua. Small size families along with some middle size are found among them. For daily bazaar and other requirements, people go to Panichowkibazar at motorstand. Paiturbazar of Vidyanagar has only few grocery shops which cannot meet their local needs.

The children go to the *Laxmi Narayan Nimna Buniadi School* which is only half km away. They go to the Senior Basic School and High school at *Vidyanagar* village at the north of Durgapur. Vidyanagar is a Hindu populated village and only two kms away from Durgapur. For religious education, the children go to the old muktab attached with the masjid. The economic structure of east Durgapur is of agrarian nature. Majority of the working force belong to the agricultural wage labour. The number of people in the government service is insignificant. They are Forester, Computer, Health staff, Police and Jail police and DRW (Daily Rated Worker). Majority of the service holders are Hindus especially in education department. The four Muslim households of west Durgapur are economically well off like their Hindu neighbour. A few Muslim women were found as engaged in *Dhup-Stick* production. They bring work order directly from the factory at Vidyanagar and work in their own home. Some poor women work as domestic maid or agricultural-labourer. Two women were found as beggars. They had no BPL card also. An elder's association of the locality named 'Panchayat' works as an informal council for the Muslim community of east Durgapur.

4.2. Demographic Attributes of the Muslim Settlements

(Village and Towns under study)

4.2.1. Population

The present study has covered a total of 1,235 Muslim households with a total population of 6,654 i.e of 3,477 males and 3,177 females. The distribution of Muslim population in village and towns under study are noted below :

Villages

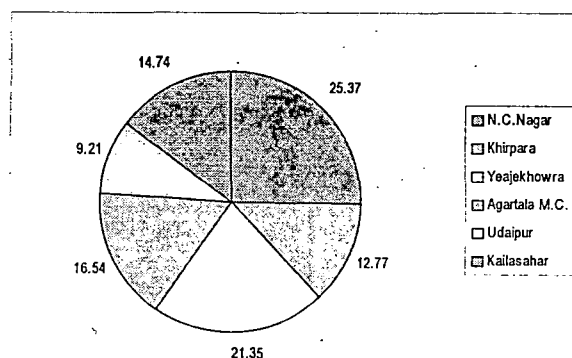
1. N.C Nagar- 1,688 persons i.e. 25.37 percent of total population under study
2. Khilpara- 850 at i.e. 12.77 percent of total population under study
3. Yeajekhowra 1421 at i.e. 21.35 percent of total population under study

Towns

1. Agartala 1101 at i.e. 16.54 percent of total population under study
2. Udaipur 613 at .21 percent of total population under study
3. 981 at Kailasahar i.e.14.74 percent of total population under study

The populat.ion structure is depicted in the following Figure.1.

Figure.3



Source : Field Study

The demographic attributes of the villages and towns are presented in the Tables 4.1, 4.2, 4.3 and 4.4. The major heads of information in this chapter comprised of population structure, the sex ratio and mortality rate among the children and adults. Other demographic information i.e. land holding size, family income, literacy and education, marital status, family types, political participation etc. have been discussed in the relevant chapters.

Table no. 4.1, 4.2, 4.3 and 4.4 show the distribution of Muslim population in three villages and three towns. The total households under study are dristributed into

Table no. 4.1.
Population of Six Villages and Towns under study

Demographic Characteristics	Villages						Towns							
	N.C. Nagar		Khirpara		Yeajekhowra (east)		Agartala Municipality		Udaipur		Kailashahar		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Total Population	1688	25.37	850	12.77	1421	21.35	1101	16.54	613	9.21	981	14.74	6654	100
Male	875	51.84	448	52.71	735	51.72	576	52.32	330	53.83	513	52.29	3477	52.25
Female	813	48.16	402	47.49	686	48.28	525	47.68	283	46.17	468	47.71	3177	47.75
Total no. of Households	289	23.40	172	13.93	256	20.73	212	17.17	121	9.80	185	14.98	1235	100

Source : Field Study

Table 4.2

Distribution of Population according to Age & Sex in the Villages

Age Group	Name of Villages																							
	N.C. Nagar						Khilpara						Yazekhowra						Total Rural					
	Male		Female		Total		Male		Female		Total		Male		Female		Total		Male		Female		Total	
Up to 6 Years	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
	127	14.51	144	17.71	271	16.05	36	8.04	42	10.45	78	9.18	121	16.46	104	15.16	225	15.83	284	13.80	290	15.25	574	14.50
7- 14 Years	225	25.71	219	26.94	444	26.30	96	21.43	86	21.39	182	21.41	216	29.39	206	30.03	422	29.70	537	26.09	511	26.88	48	26.47
15 -45 Years	421	48.11	365	44.89	786	46.56	258	57.59	209	51.99	467	54.94	323	43.94	328	47.81	651	45.81	1002	48.69	902	47.45	1904	48.09
46- 59 Years	55	6.28	51	6.27	106	6.28	33	7.37	32	7.96	65	7.65	41	5.58	16	2.33	57	4.01	129	6.27	99	5.21	228	5.76
60- 90 Years	47	5.37	34	4.18	81	4.80	25	5.58	33	8.21	58	6.82	34	4.62	32	4.66	66	4.64	106	5.15	99	5.21	205	5.18
Total	875	100	813	100	1688	100	448	100	402	100	850	100	735	100	686	100	1421	100	2058	51.98	1901	48.02	3959	59.50

Source : Field Study

Table 4.3

Distribution of Population According to Age & Sex in the Towns

Age Group	Name of Towns																							
	Agartala						Udaipur						Kailasahar						Total					
	Male		Female		Total		Male		Female		Total		Male		Female		Total		Male		Female		Total	
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
Up to 6 Years	73	12.67	58	11.05	131	11.90	36	10.91	29	10.25	65	10.60	78	15.20	69	14.74	147	14.98	187	13.18	156	12.22	343	12.73
7- 14 Years	157	27.25	136	25.90	293	26.61	65	19.17	52	18.37	117	19.09	142	27.68	134	28.63	276	28.13	364	25.65	322	25.24	686	25.45
15-45 Years	283	49.13	286	54.48	569	51.68	187	56.77	164	57.95	351	57.26	238	46.39	216	46.15	454	46.28	708	49.89	666	52.19	1374	50.98
46- 59 Years	34	5.90	26	4.95	60	5.45	25	7.57	18	6.36	43	7.01	23	4.48	25	5.34	48	4.89	822	5.78	69	5.41	151	5.60
60- 90 Years	29	5.03	19	3.62	48	4.36	17	5.15	20	7.07	37	6.03	32	6.23	24	5.13	56	5.71	78	5.50	63	4.94	141	5.24
Total	576	100	525	100	1101	100	330	100	283	100	613	100	513	100	468	100	981	100	1419	100	1276	100	2695	100

Source : Field Study

Table 4.4

Distribution of Population according to Age and Sex in Villages and Towns (Total)

Age Group	Total population in Villages						Total population in Towns						Total population in Village/Town					
	Male		Female		Total		Male		Female		Total		Male		Female		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Upto 6 Yrs.	284	13.80	290	15.25	574	14.50	187	13.18	156	12.22	343	12.73	471	13.55	446	14.03	917	13.78
7-14 Yrs	537	26.09	511	26.88	1048	26.47	364	25.65	322	25.24	686	25.45	901	25.91	833	26.22	1734	26.06
15 - 45 Yrs.	1002	48.69	902	47.45	1904	48.09	708	49.89	666	52.19	1374	50.98	1710	49.18	1568	49.35	3278	49.26
46 – 59 Yrs.	129	6.27	99	5.21	228	5.76	82	5.78	69	5.41	151	5.60	211	6.07	168	5.29	379	5.69
60 – 90 Yrs.	106	5.15	99	5.21	205	5.18	78	5.50	63	4.94	141	5.24	184	5.29	162	5.10	346	5.20
Total	2058	51.98	1901	48.02	3959	100	1419	52.65	1276	47.35	2695	100	3477	100	3177	100	6654	100

Source : Field Study

289 at N.C.Nagar, 172. at Khilpara, 256 at Yeajekhowra; 212 at Agartala, 121 at Udaipur and 185 at Kailasahar. The data shows that the total male population of 3477 are distributed into the 875 at N.C Nagar, 448 at Khilpara and 735 at Yeajekhowra(east); 576 at Agartala, 330 at Udaipur and 513 at Kailasahar . Similarly the total female population of 3,177 are distributed into 813 at N.C.Nagar, 402 at Khilpara, 686 at Yeajekhowra; 525 at Agartala, 283 at Udaipur and 468 at Kailasahar in the said villages and towns respectively. It is clear that the numbers and percentages of population in every village are higher than those of the corresponding towns.

The Table No. 4.1, 4.2, 4.3 and 4.4 show the distribution of Muslim population according to age, sex and residence among the Muslims under study. The population of all villages and towns have been divided into five standard age groups. The age grouping has been made for both sexes. The total population 6,654 is divided into total rural of 3,959 and total urban of 2,695. The data shows that out of the total population of 6654, there are 3,959 are rural population and 2,695 are urban population. Out of total rural population of 3059 the mails are 2058 and femails are 1901 similarly out of total urban population of 2695, the mails are 1419, and femails are 1276.

The Tables said above show that femail population, compared to male population, is higher in the first and second age-groups at N.C Nagar; first, fourth and fifth age-groups at Khilpara; and second, third and fifth groups at Yeajekhowra. On the other hand, in the towns, female population is higher in the third group at Agartala; in the third and fifth group at Udaipur and in the second and fourth group at Kailasahar. Hence, the data on population structure suggests that female population of the villages is higher (48.02%) than that of towns (47.35%).

The data shows that the population of first age group (0 to 6) is 13.78 percent of total population 6,654. The female population is 14.03 percent and male population is 13.55 percent of their respective total population; in the next age group (7 to 14), the population is 26.06 percent of total population. The female population of this group is 26.22 percent while the male population is 25.91 percent in the respective total population; the population of third age group (15 to 45) constitutes the highest number of total population i.e. 49.26 percent.. The female population is 49.35 percent and

male population is 49.18 percent in the respective total population. In the fourth and fifth age groups, the total population are 5.69 percent and 5.20 percent of the total population respectively. The female population constitutes 5.29 percent and 5.10 percent of total female population in the respective two groups; similarly, male population of these two groups are 6.07 percent and 5.29 percent.

Thus it is noted that for each study area, female population is higher than male population in the first three age groups. There is a gradual increasing of population from the first to third age group; in contrast, there is decreasing of population in the next two groups. This demographic feature is found same in both the population of village and town. The population of village (59.50%) is higher than that of the town (40.50%). Female population is lower than male population in most of the age groups in towns. The largest number of female population (49.35%) is found in the third age group, 15 to 45 years – the reproductive age group. While the lowest number of females are found in the last age group of 60 to 90 years and above. However, the Muslim girl child (0 to 14 years) are 40.26 percent of total female population. This is better than the percentage of corresponding male child of this group (39.46%). It shows better than the national level (36.1%).

4.2.2. Sex Ratio among the Muslims in Village and Town

The sex ratio among the Muslims under study is presented in the Table no. 4.5 and 4.6. The ratio has been done as per norms i.e. number of females in per thousand males. The contrast between village and town in sex ratio is shown in the Table no. 4.5 and 4.6. The given data reveals that the sex ratio among the Muslims under study is 913, and this is very much alarming for the status of women in Muslim society. The average sex ratio of villages is found 920 and in towns it is 894.

Given data in table 4.5 reveals that the sex ratio among the Muslim children in 0-6 years is abnormally high at N.C. Nagar (1133) and Khilpara (1166). But in the rest four study areas, it is not hopeful.

Sex ratio varies in all the age groups in all villages. There is no harmonious pattern of sex ratio in different age groups of villages and towns. At N.C Nagar there

Table 4.5
Sex Ratio among the Muslims according to Age groups

Name of Villages and Towns	Age Groups				
	0 to 6	7 to 14	15 to 45	46 to 59	60 to 90
N.C Nagar	1133	973	866	927	723
Khilpara	1166	895	810	969	1320
Yeajekhowra	859	953	1015	390	941
Agartala	794	866	1010	764	655
Udaipur	805	800	877	720	1176
Kailashahar	884	943	907	1086	750
TOTAL	946	924	916	796	880

Source : Field Study;

Table no. 4.6
Sex Ratio among the Muslims in Villages and Towns (Total)

Name of Villages	Ratio	Name of Towns	Ratio
N. C Nagar	929	Agartala	911
Khilpara	897	Udaipur	857
Yeajekhowra	933	Kailasahar	912
TOTAL	920	TOTAL	894

Source : Field Study.

is a decreasing tendency of sex ratio noticed except in one group. The probable reasons of this may lie in the composite results of death of female child, early marriage and their migration to other places. It deserves to be mentioned that like all other border villages, the people of N.C. Nagar are very much related with the neighbours of Bangladesh for matrimonial reasons or for other business

Sex ratio of the first and last age groups is highest at Khilpara among all villages.

In Khilpara also, there is a decreasing tendency of sex ratio except in the last age group. The reasons said above may also explain this decrease and abrupt rise. The

highest number of widows in the village of Khilpara (16.36%), 2.73 percent divorced and 2.52 percent separated women (Ref. Table 5.8) might have affected the sex ratio in the last age group at Khilpara

In Yeajekhowra, an unusual low sex ratio is found in the post-reproductive age group (46 to 56). The highest percentage of child mortality is reflected in its first age group and gradually it has been increased except a sudden fall in the 4th age group. Abrupt fall in the post fertility period for women indicates the tragedy of poverty and social negligence to the health of women of the community. However it has highest sex ratio not only among three villages but also among the six study areas.

In Agartala, sex ratio has no consistency among the five age groups. Though it is very poor in all age groups varying from 655 to 866, it has raised suddenly in the third age-group where it is 1010. The reason lies in the highest number of desertion as well as a good number of widows among the women of Agartala. The poor sex ratio in all other age groups may be affected by the early marriage of the girls and also by the death rate (before five years of the present study) which has not come into the present account.

In Udaipur, there is poor sex ratio in all the age groups varying from 722 to 800. But in the last age group, it raises suddenly high (1176) indicating a significant link with their marital status and the data suggests that the second largest number of widows (13.21%) is found among them.

In Kailashahar, the sex ratio has an increasing tendency in first two age groups but decreased in the third age group indicating many things viz. it may be due to death caused by poverty or negligence of the in-laws; it may be due to their migration to the other states. In the fourth group, the high ratio 1086 means a link with the percentage of widow (10.40%), divorced (1.49%) and separated (2.48%) status.

The analysis of data reveals that sex ratio does not necessarily relate to the socio-economic conditions of the people. This is reflected in the present sample of Udaipur town where sex ratio is found lower in most of the age groups as compared to the other towns and villages though the socio-economic conditions of the people are better in Udaipur. In contrast, the poverty-ridden village – Yeajekhowra has highest sex ratio

revealing the fact that sex ratio depends not only on socio economic factors but also other demographic factors. One demographic reason observed may further go against the low sex ratio in the state viz. some male member of the family remains out of station for job pursuits in Assam, Bangladesh, and even in the distant Arab countries. Under the situation, the sex ratio was expected to be high. However, due to various reasons, the average sex ratio is better in villages (920) than that of the towns (894).

4.2.3. Mortality Rate of Children and Adult population among the Muslim of villages and towns

The mortality rate among the Muslims under study for last five years (1992 to 1996) was investigated to comprehend their population structure. The data of mortality rate on the basis of age, sex and residence are presented in Table no. 4.7. The data reveals some demographic features about the mortality rate related with Muslim male and female, children, village and town etc. These are as follows:

Firstly, among the child population (2651) in ^{the} age group of 0-14 years, mortality rate (MR) is 2.2 percent, while among the adults in the age group of 15 years and above, it is 3.45 percent in respect of total adult population (4003).

Secondly, out of total child population, child MR is higher in the villages (54.24%) than that of towns (45.76%); but adult MR is much higher in towns (65.22) than that of the villages (34.78);

Thirdly, MR of male child is higher (2.26%) than that of female (2.19%) population; mortality of male child is lower (23.73%) than that of female (30.51%) in rural population but higher (28.81%) than female (16.95%) in total urban population. In case of adults, female mortality rate is lower than that of the male in both villages and towns. Adult female MR is higher in towns than in villages.

Health consciousness for girl child is poor in villages in comparison to that of towns but for adult females, it does not differ. Mortality rate of female child as well as women is found highest in Agartala in the towns and it is highest in Yeajekhowra in all villages. The causes of death of female child and adult women are investigated and found mainly from delivery hazards. The causes of death of male child and adult are found as accident, suicide, murder and diseases like diphtheria, malaria etc.

Table 4.7
Mortality Rate among the Muslim Child and Adult Populatin in Villages and Towns (1992-1996)

Name of Towns and Villages	Number of People Died											
	Children						Adult					
	Male		Female		Total		Male		Female		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
N.C. Nagar	3	9.68	7	25.00	10	16.95	12	13.48	3	6.12	15	10.87
Khilpara	0	0.00	2	7.14	2	3.39	13	14.61	4	8.16	17	12.32
Yeajekhowra	11	35.48	9	32.14	20	33.90	9	10.11	7	14.29	16	11.59
Total Rural	14	23.73	18	30.51	32	54.24	34	24.64	14	10.14	48	34.78
Agartala	11	35.48	6	21.43	17	28.81	33	37.08	22	44.90	55	39.86
Udaipur	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	12	13.48	7	14.29	19	13.77
Kailasahar	6	19.35	4	14.29	10	16.95	10	11.24	6	12.24	16	11.59
Total Urban	17	28.81	10	16.95	27	45.76	55	39.86	35	25.36	90	65.22
Total	31	2.26	28	2.19	59	2.22	89	4.23	49	2.58	138	3.45

Note:

Total Children (0 to 14 years) = 2651

Male = 1372

Female = 1279

Total Adults (above 14 years) = 4003

Male = 2105

Female = 1898

Source : Field Study

Findings

The profile of six Muslim settlements of Tripura illuminates some physical as well as demographic characteristics of three villages and three towns. The Muslim settlements in Tripura are very much related with the ancient history of the old Kingdom. Still the senior people of the community are bearing the memory of the past monarchical period. This present research has covered 2.62 percent of the total Muslim population of the State. The study has covered about a good number of Muslim population distributed in villages and towns according to the ratio of ~~1:10~~ ^{one} household.

The three villages under study are medium in size and population. They consist of at least two ^{and at most eight constituting} wards. All these are from agricultural background. But they have differences in the socio-economic status of the people. Khilpara is more advanced than other villages in respect of women's education and employment. But in Political participation, women ^{are} ~~is~~ found better in N.C. Nagar. Yeajekhowra is backward in all the social, economic and political status of women. The Yeajekhowra Gram Panchayat has recorded that about half of the populations of the village are scheduled under B.P.L card despite a few well-to-do families in the village, east Yeajekhowra. Different wards under same village or town differ in socio-economic status.

The largest number of urban Muslims live in the capital of the State, Agartala. But most of them are backward in social status. A number of Muslim men is found under government job but majority of them belong to lower rank and status ~~(only ... status)~~. A considerable number of women earners in Agartala belongs to the occupation of household assistant or maid. Only a small fraction of the community residing in South Ramnagar is in good social position and status. Among three towns, Kailasahar is in the worst position in all respects. The women of Kailasahar and Yeajekhowra of north district belong to a very ~~poor~~ socio-economic status. In towns under Nagar Panchayat jurisdiction, women are found as beggars.

In the demographic part of the present Muslim settlements, we see that the population of each village is larger than the corresponding town. The notable demographic feature is that total number of female population is smaller than the male

population in every village and town. When population is divided into five standard age groups, it is observed that despite the low numerical strength, female population is found larger than the male population in several age groups, particularly in the rural sample. Thus the population structure of six Muslim settlements suggests that female population is better in the villages than the towns despite various factors. Keeping consistency with this, the sex ratio among the Muslims is found better in village than that of town; the average sex ratio in villages is 920 while in towns, it is 894. For total population under study, it is 913 which is far below than that of the state level. The mortality rate among the Muslims in the last five years of this present study has been observed because it is very much linked with sex ratio; It shows that mortality rate of girls as well as adult women is lower than that of men with few exception i.e. mortality rate of girl child is higher in rural areas than in the urbans. It indicates poor awareness of health among the villagers. The main cause of girl child's death or the death of adult women is mainly the delivery death indicating lack of hospital and medical facilities and also lack of awarness of planned family life. It is noted that higher mortality rate is found in the villages like Yeajekhowra, N.C. Nagar where birth rate is also higher.

Chapter - 5

Economic Activities and Women

5.1. Economic Independence as basic Right

Economic independence is one of the basic rights of human beings. This is obviously related with the status of an individual in society. No state law and religion can deny this. In our Indian constitution, right to equality in respect of government employment is guaranteed by the Articles no. 16, 39, 41 and 43. Women's participation in the National Struggle of Indian history, spread of female education among the Hindu which is related with higher age at marriage and prevalent dowry custom are some contributing factors to the emergence of women in India. Srinivas in his enquiry into the changing position of women in India has observed that economic participation of women has intimate link with the factors said above. He observed that one of the reasons behind the powerful motivation for female education was the "awareness of cultural gap between educated men and women and the need to bridge it in the interest of the family solidarity" and also "the cost of urban living has made them realize that two incomes are better than one" (Srinivas:1978, p.25) This observation may not be enough to explain the situation of Muslim girls and women had comparatively less strains and much opportunity for message following the tradition of Islam. Right to exercise the economic participation outside the home has been accepted by them much later in economic crisis and changing situation of society. So the present study on the economic activities of Muslim women in Tripura has been analyzed in the light of Indian history.

5.2. Economic Status of Muslim Women

The economic status of Muslim women in villages and towns under study has been examined in terms of their position as earners and dependents in comparison with that of the male earners and economic activities both inside or outside the home along with the economic background of their family status, possession, in land holding,

live stock, equipments for domestic use, etc. Besides here is an account of their role as passive receipt of some schemes, govt. supports and loan for economic upliftment of the women as well as the community.

5.2.1. Women Earners and Dependents

The status of Muslim women as earners and dependents in the villages and towns under study is shown in Table no. 5.1

Table no. 5.1
Economic Status of the Muslims Under Study (Total)

Status	Male		Female		Total	
	No	%	No	%	No	%
Total Earners	1592	45.79	98	3.08	1690	25.40
Total Dependants	1885	54.21	3079	96.92	4964	74.60
Total	3477	100	3177	100	6654	100

The above table shows that out of 6654 population, the number of total earners is 1690 (25.40%) and it is divided into 1592 (45.79%) male earners and 98 (3.08%) female earners. The total number of dependents 4964 (74.60%) is divided into 1885 (54.21%) male dependents and 3079 (96.92%) female dependents. So it is obvious that a huge bulk of female population of 3079 (96.92%) are in dependent status. The females as earners are insignificant in number and comparison to those male earners.

An investigation was done about the number of households providing women earners and their frequency in villages and towns. The total number of Muslim households is distributed into 289 at N.C.Nagar, 172 at Khilpara, 256 at Yeajekhowra, 212 families at Agartala, 121 at Udaipur and 185 at Kailasahar. It is shown in the following Table no. 5.2.

Women earners are found in every village and towns. In three villages, 38 employed women are distributed into 15, 17 and 6 among the villages of N.C.Nagar,

Table no. 5.2
Distribution of Employed Women in Villages and Towns

Name of Towns / Villages	Total No. of Household	Women Employed	Percentage to the Total Household (%)
NC Nagar	289	15	5.19
Khilpara	172	17	9.88
Yeajekhowra	256	6	2.34
Total (Rural)	717	38	5.30
Agartala	212	34	16.03
Udaipur	121	12	9.91
Kailasahar	185	14	7.56
Total (Urban)	518	60	11.58
Grand Total	1235	98	7.94

Khilpara and Yeajekhowra. Khilpara provides higher percentage of employed women (9.88). In the towns total number of 60 employed women are distributed into 34, 12, 14 among Agartala, Udaipur and Kailasahar respectively. Agartala provides highest number of employed women (16.03) and least number of women participation is found in Yeajekhowra village (2.34). Hence, the total number of 1235 households provides 7.94^{percent} women workers.

Table no 5.3
Women Earners and Dependents in Villages and Towns

Name of Town / village	Total Female Earner		Total Female Dependents		Total Female Population	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
NC Nagar	15	1.85	798	98.15	813	100
Khilpara	17	4.23	385	95.77	402	100
Yeajekhowra	6	0.87	680	99.13	686	100
Total (R)	38	2.00	1863	98	1901	100
Agartala	34	6.48	491	93.52	525	100
Udaipur	12	4.24	271	95.76	283	100
Kailasahar	14	2.99	454	97.01	468	100
Total (U)	60	4.70	1216	95.30	1276	100
Grand Total	98	3.08	3079	96.92	3177	100

Table 5.3 shows the number and percentage of female earners in respect of total female population of each village and town. The residence-wise data presented in the Table no 5.3 shows that largest earners belong to Agartala and the lowest to Yeajikhowra. It means not only the demand for job but also better job facility for women exists in the capital town. The second better position for female earners goes to the sub division of Udaipur for both in town and village. However work participation of women in rural area is lower than that of the urban area..

Table 5.4
Distribution of the Economic Participants (Male/Female) in Villages and Town:

Name of Town / Villages	Male		Female		Total Participants	Percentage of Total population
	No.	%	No.	%		
N.C. Nagar	379	43.31	15	1.85	394	23.34 of 1688
Khilpara	222	49.55	17	4.23	239	28.12 of 850
Yeajekhowra	331	45.03	6	0.87	337	23.72 of 1421
Total (R)	932	45.29	38	2.00	970	24.50 of 970
Agartala	252	43.75	34	6.48	286	25.98 of 1101
Udaipur	159	48.18	12	4.24	171	27.90 of 613
Kailasahar	249	48.54	14	2.99	263	26.8 of 981
Total (U)	660	46.51	60	4.70	720	26.72 of 720
Grand Total	1592	45.79	98	3.08	1690	25.40 of 6654

Note: Total population of each Village and Town (male-female) showed in Table 4.1 in chapter 4.
 Total Urban population : 2675. Total Male (Rural) : 2058 Total Male Population : 3477
 Total Rural population : 3959. Total Female (Rural) : 1901 Total Female Population : 3177
 Total Urban Male : 1419
 Total Urban Female : 1276

The Table no. 5.4 illuminates the comparative position of men and women in all villages and towns. It reveals that the position of women is inferior than their men in economic status. In three villages, the highest percentage of male earners is 49.55. While the percentage of female earners is 4.23. The total female earners of villages together is only 2.00 percent in contrast to that of 45.29 percent male earners. The total female earners of the towns together is only 4.70% in contrast to 46.51% male earners. However both male and female earners in highest number comes from Agartala capital town.

5.2.2. Economic Activities

The economic activities of women are examined here from two angles, viz., (i) Residence wise distribution of occupations in villages and towns, (ii) Occupation wise distribution of male, female, total; the distribution is done under two categories, viz. major and other occupations according to the frequency of occupations of men and women.

The economic structure of the Muslims in Tripura presents varieties of occupations. The nature of occupations is an important factor to determine the economic status of the people of a community. On frequency basis, the occupational patterns among the Muslim men and women of six study areas are distributed mainly in eight categories: i) governmental service, ii) cultivation, iii) business, iv) day labour, v) rickshaw pulling, vi) driving of vehicles, vii) domestic assistance (maid), viii) others. 'Other' means different kinds of occupations which are found less frequent among them. These are treated as secondary occupation though sometimes it is the main source of their income.

Table no. 5.5
Occupational Distribution among the Muslims (Total)

Category	No.	%
1. Service	279	16.51
2. Cultivation	281	16.63
3. Business	233	13.79
4. Day Labour	541	32.01
5. Rickshaw Pulling	78	4.62
6. Domestic Help	40	2.37
7. Driving	73	4.32
8. Others	165	9.76
Total Earners	1690	100.00

The data in the above Table no.5.5 shows the occupational distribution among the total peoples under study. It shows that out of total 1690 earners, the largest number of population is engaged in Day Labour i.e. 32.01 percent. The second largest is found as engaged in Cultivation i.e. 16.63 percent. The cultivators are of two categories:

owner cultivators and share-croppers. The next highest population is found engaged in Government Services (16.51%) of different statuses e.g. permanent, casual, contingency etc. Besides, a good number of Muslims are engaged in petty business (13.79%) of different kinds. Among them, a number of Muslim inhabitants of border areas are engaged in flying or border business. There are 4.62 and 4.32 percent people are engaged in driving of Rickshaw and other vehicles i.e. Tempo (Auto), Commando Jeep, Private Car, Track, respectively.

Table no. 5.6
Distribution of Occupations in Villages

SL No.	Category of Occupation	Name of Villages						Total Rural	
		N.C. Nagar		Khilpara		Yazekhowra			
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
1	Service	35	8.88	69	28.87	30	8.90	134	13.81
2	Cultivation	135	34.26	48	20.08	44	13.06	226	23.30
3	Business	63	15.99	22	9.21	55	16.32	140	14.43
4	Day Labour	98	24.87	71	29.71	165	48.96	334	34.43
5	Rickshaw Pulling	14	3.55	5	2.09	8	2.32	27	2.78
6	Domestic Help	4	1.02	4	1.67	1	0.30	9	0.92
7	Driving	9	2.28	9	3.77	4	1.19	22	2.27
8	Others	36	9.14	11	4.60	30	8.90	78	8.04
	Total	394	100.00	239	100.00	337	100.00	970	100.00

N.C. Nagar

The N.C. Nagar gram Panchayat consists of two wards or Paras, namely N.C. Nagar and Karalimura. The people of this village live in agrarian background. The Table no 5.6 shows that total number of people engaged in different occupations are 394 distributed into 379 male and 15 female workers. They are employed in seven major and few other occupations. Out of 379 male workers of the village, 135 are found in cultivation (35.62%). Eighteen of them are Barga cultivators or share croppers (13.33%). No woman of the village is found in this occupation. Most of the cultivators hold a small size land for cultivation. The next majority number 98 divided into 95 males (25.07%) and 3 females (20%) are found in the occupation of daily labour

(24.87%). Most of them are agricultural labourer but during the off-season, they turn to be non-agricultural labourer. Business is the third choice of occupation for the villagers. The people engaged in business of grocery, stationary, clothes, shoes and flying border business are 63 in number covering 15.99 percent of the total earners and 16.62 percent of male earners of the village. The rest of the workers consist of 8.88 percent government employees, 3.69 percent rickshaw pullers, 2.37 percent drivers and 9.14 percent others.

Khilpara

The occupation structure of Khilpara represents the characteristics of a fringe village of a district town. Table no. 5.6 shows that the total number^{as they are} of workers are 239 distributed into 222 male and 17 female workers. Though it is a village of rural background, cultivation is a third choice for the villagers. They are 48 in number out of 239 (20.08%); 12 of them are share croppers. Forty-five of them are male cultivators out of 222 (20.27%) and three of them are found females out of 17 (17.65%). Majority number of people i.e. 71 out of 239 (29.71%) are in the occupation of day labour. Two of them are female (11.76%) while sixty-nine males (31.08%). Being adjacent to the district town like Udaipur, a larger number of people are employed under government service. In order of choice, service is their second choice. They are 69 of 239 (28.87 %). Only six of them are females (35.29%) and the rest sixty-three are male employees (28.38%). The village has a good number of businessmen also. They are 22 in number (9.21 %) among the total workers. No woman businessman is found at the village. Four women are engaged as domestic maid. Driving is another occupation for the males. They are 9 out of the total 239 (3.77%) covering 4.05 percent of total male workers. In other occupations, they are 11 persons (4.60%), the males are 4.05 percent and females are 11.76 percent of the respective total male and female workers. The female workers at Khilpara village contribute 7.11 percent of the total working force of the village. They constitute 17.35 percent of the total female earners in Tripura under study.

Yeajekhowra

The Yeajekhowra gram Panchayat is a big village divided into two parts viz. east and west. It is reported that the economic condition of the people of west part is worse in comparison to that of the east part i.e. the present study area. The occupational structure of an interior village like yeajikhowra shows that day labour is the first occupation of the villagers. Table no. 5.6 shows that out of total 337, they are (48.96%). They are in a good number *rajmistree*, karat mistree and agric-labour. Two of them are women i.e. brick breaker (33.33%). The second occupation of the men folk is business. They are 55 men out of 331 male workers (16.62%). The business is of wood, medicines, vehicles, stationary goods, tea-stall, sweets and raw materials like green vegetable fruits, Pan (beetle leaf), fish etc. One is found as an owner of rice mill, one is an agent (middle man) of land selling and others in flying business (border business).

About 64.84 percent families have no agricultural land and only 12.11 percent have small and 19.92 percent have marginal land. Hence, cultivation goes to the third choice of the villagers. Forty four men are engaged in cultivation constituting 13.06 percent of the total working force of the village under study. Twenty one of them are owner cultivators (47.73%) and twenty 'barga' cultivators (52.27%). Only one woman is found as owner cultivator of small land. The village is poor in cultivable land. Major portion of land is found as occupied by tilla land. The fields are found in distant places from the residence of the farmers.

So the people with minimum educational qualifications are trying to their level best for securing government job, but only 30 (8.90%) are found to achieve it. They are school teacher, madrasa teacher, and Director of one Co-operative, computer operator, T.S.R., bus conductor, D.R.W. and Group-D workers. Among total male workers there are only eight rickshaw pullers (2.42%) and four auto and jeep drivers (1.21%). In the category of other occupations, they are 30 in number of total 337 (8.90%). Out of 30, nine of them are carpenters, three shop assistants, two tailors, two contractors, one 'muhari', one electrician, three muktab teachers (under private

management), one woman surveyor appointed by the local Club functioning as N.G.O. Besides, two old age beneficiaries, three pension holders, one private tutor cum tea-stall owner, one-woman beggar and one domestic maid are found in the village.

The given data reveals that the Muslims of this remote village are poor in all the main categories of occupations eg. cultivation, business, and service. Women participation is also insignificant.

Table no. 5.7.
Distribution of Occupations in Towns

SL No.	Category of Occupation	Name of the Towns							
		Agartala		Udaipur		Kailasahar		Total Urban	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
1	Service	79	27.62	47	27.49	19	7.22	145	20.14
2	Cultivation	1	0.35	17	9.94	37	14.07	55	7.64
3	Business	34	11.89	21	12.28	38	14.45	93	12.92
4	Day Labour	36	12.59	31	18.13	140	53.23	207	28.75
5	Rickshaw Pulling	37	12.94	5	2.92	9	3.42	51	7.08
6	Domestic Help	25	8.74	3	1.75	3	1.14	31	4.31
7	Driving	29	10.14	18	10.53	4	1.52	51	7.08
8	Others	45	15.73	29	16.96	13	4.94	87	12.08
	Total	286	100.00	171	100.00	263	100.00	720	100

Agartala municipality

The three wards of the municipality are Muslim populated e.g. Bitarban (ward no.1), South Ramnagar (ward no. 10) and Jagaharimura (ward no. 15.) of total earners of 1690, Agartala provides 286 earners (16.92%) and they are distributed into 252 males and 34 female earners contributing 88.11 percent and 11.88 percent respectively. Table 5.7 shows that the largest numbers of Muslims are found in governmental employment. They are 79 in number (27.62%) divided into 76 males (30.16%) and 3

female (8.82%). As regards the nature of job, they are found as District Magistrate (1), Sub Inspector of Police(1), Constable(1), *Peskar*, UD & LD clerk(10), School teacher (3), BSF(5), TSR (2), Physical Instructor(1), Diploma Engineer (1), Forester (1), Panchayat Secretary (1), Store Keeper (1), Muhori (1), *Amin* or Surveyor (1), driver of govt. vehicles (1) ; the rest 48 employees are found as Class IV employees viz. Peon, Pump Operator, Group – D Workers, Contingent and some casual workers on daily rate basis(DRW). So this list indicates that they are employed in the important departments of Tripura Government. viz. Judicial service, Police, Land Settlement, Public Works Dept., Food and Supply, Border Security Force, Tripura Road Transport Corporation (TRTC), Tripura State Rifles (TSR), Jute mill, Industry Training Institute (ITI), Municipality Corporation, WAKF Board, Forest, Education and so on. The second largest occupation for the people of the capital town is rickshaw pulling. There are 37 rickshaw pullers covering 14.68% of the total male earners of Agartala. A large number of them are not the owners of the rickshaw they pull; A number of them obtain the ownership by the financial help of the WAKF Board and the Minority Commission of Tripura. The third choice for the Muslims of Agartala is day labour. They are 36 in number among 26 earners (12.86%). There are 33 male labourers out of 252 (13.10%) and 3 female labour among 34(8.82%). These people work as *Raj-Mistree*, *Jogalee*, Brick Breaker, Lime Washer, and Color Washer. Tube-well worker etc. The next occupation for the men of Agartala is business of small scale. They are 34 in number among 252(13.49%). No women are trade. They do business of mechanical parts, motor workshop, stationery and grocery shops and shops of green vegetables, fruits, meat and fish. In Agaratala, none is found in cultivation except one woman and it is reported that some families have their cultivable land in their own villages. There is a good number of people in the occupation of driving of public. and private vehicles, and private cars. They are about 29 (11.51%).

Besides these occupations, they are also found in some other occupations viz. drum beater, mechanics, tailor, helper in shop, helper in bus, private tutor, contractor etc. They are also found in some white collar occupations like advocate, engineer and doctor. The category of other occupation s accounts for 43 persons (54.43%). The

people of Bitarban reported that the earning from drum beating is not satisfactory to meet the bare needs of the family. It is only a seasonal occupation for the people engaged in drum beating (32.56% out of 43). So many of them are either engaged or in search of alternative occupations discarding this traditional occupation. They have chosen rickshaw pulling as their main source of income. Some boys work as trainees in mechanical workshops; earning from this source is insignificant for their help to the family. Two retired men from the BSF depend on the pension for their livelihood; The rent receiver of house rent is not frequently found among the Muslims in Tripura though some have temporary arrangements for renting their houses.

Udaipur Nagar Panchayat

Under Udaipur Nagar Panchayat town the focus of occupational distribution is on the government service. Table 5.7 shows that out of total 171 workers, 47 persons (27.49%) are employed under the state government. Five of them are women workers. They work as teachers in Primary, Secondary, Higher Secondary and Schools of social education, clerk of both upper and lower division, Inspector of weight and measurement, Panchayat secretary, physical Instructor (P.I.), Agric-Engineer, Coach of Athletics, T.S.R., Field staff under the Fishery dept., Habildar, guard, Class-IV employee, D.R.W., Junior A.C.W., Nurse in district hospital and Anganwadi worker in some important departments of the state government, like government schools, hospitals, veterinary hospitals, Fishery Dept. Forest Dept. Police Dept., Publicity office, P.W.D. and Autonomous District Council (A.D.C.). The eminent govt. employees of Udaipur contribute 16.91% of total government employees of Tripura under study. The second largest number of persons is engaged in the occupation of day-labour. They are 31 (18.13 %) of total workers. Only one of them is woman. They work as agricultural as well as non- agricultural labourers.

The next majority people under Udaipur Nagar Panchayat are engaged in business of grocery, stationary, bakery shops, tea-stall, electronic goods, vehicles like Jeep, garage or workshop of motor parts, whole sale business of rice, jack fruits, fish, business of cattle like goats, cows etc. Most of the business are of seasonal commodities. They

are 21 in number i.e. 13.21 percentage of total male workers. No woman is found in business. Eighteen men are found in the occupation of driving of vehicles like truck, jeep, and Auto and maruti car. They constitute 11.32 percent of total male workers. Seventeen men are found in cultivation. They contribute 9.94 percent to the total working force in Udaipur town under study. Income from cultivation is a secondary source of income for the owners who possess the cultivable land in their own villages: Rickshaw pulling is another main occupation for a small number of people (5.14%). Only three women are found as domestic maid contributing 2.34 percent of total work participants. The rest twenty-nine workers (16.37%) belong to other category of occupations viz. assistants in the route-service (10), mechanics (2), private tutor (3), tailor (one), pensioner and old age beneficiaries (10) and beggars (2).

Kailasahar Nagar Panchayat

The highest number of Muslims under Kailasahar Nagar Panchayat is found in the occupation of day-labour. Table no. 5.7 shows that out of 249 male workers they are 140 (56.22%) covering 53.23 percent of the total working force under the Nagar Panchayat administration. No woman is found as day-labour. Eighteen men are *raj-mistree*, one *rang-mistree* (color painter), one pushcart puller, the rest are brick-breakers and workers in the brickfield. The second choice to them is business. They are 38 (14.45%) among 263 workers. Thirty two of them are men (12.85%) and six of them are women workers (42.86%). The men do the business of grocery, stationery, rice mill, meat shop, seasonal vegetable and fruits and border business. Six women out of fourteen are found in the business of home-based industry viz. binding of 'dhup-stick'. Cultivation is third choice of occupation (14.07%). It has little difference with the occupation of business. Forty eight families among 185 (25.95%) have agricultural land. Only 37 men were found among 249 male workers (14.86%). 14 of them (37.84%) are share croppers and the rest 23 of them (62.16%) are owner cultivators. The poor percentage in cultivation is due to the fact that Durga Nagar was a river-sided village and once the entire village was flooded and a large number of cultivable land had gone in the river. Besides, Kubja is a road-sided and congested ward. The quantity of

cultivable land is meager for the people. There are only 19 persons among total 263 workers (6.84%) in the government job. Two of them are females out of 14 female workers. One from east Durgapur is a peon in the District Magistrate's office in Kailasahar. Among 70 male govt. employees, one is Asstt. Director of Animal Husbandry Department, one clerk, one computer operator, one primary school teacher, one *muktab* teacher, and the rest are found as class IV staff and contingent staff and D.R.W. in the Block Office and Nagar Panchayat office. Out of 249 male workers only 9 men (3.61%) are the rickshaw-puller, and 4 auto rickshaw drivers (1.61%). Out of 14 females, 4 are domestic maid (28.57%) and two beggars. Among the men in other occupations there are two tailors, three private tutor, one deed writer and three pension holders who are retired as Inspector and Guards.

The empirical data on the occupational distribution among the Muslims of Kailasahar Nagar Panchayat reveals that majority of them are very poor and they belong to the occupation of day labourer, they are also not in good position in cultivation as well as in business, and only negligible percentage of them are in government job. The economic position of women is not at all better than the men and they contribute only 5.23% to the total working force under Kailasahar Nagar Panchayat.

The Table no. 5.8 presents occupational distribution among the women in details. Table 5.8 shows that majority women are in the job of domestic help (40.82%). This is the first occupation for the poor women. They are forty in total distributed into 31 urban (77.50%) and 9 rural (22.50%). This job is now easily available in the Hindu households. But few years back, Muslim maid was not preferred by them. In the changed situation, Muslim women work in two or three households per day and earn Rs. 300 to 600 per month. By such a small amount of money they are to bear a lion share of the family expenditure. One woman of Bitarban (Agartala), told that her husband being addicted to smoking and a kind of drugs, can spare a very small amount of money for the daily expenses of family.

The data shows that 19 women are found as government employees distributed into 10 urban (16.66%) and 9 rural (23.68%) participants. They are primary school

Table no. 5.8
Occupations among Muslim Women in Villages and Towns

Sl. No.	Category of occupation	N.C. Nagar		Khilpara		Yazekhowra		Total	
		No	%	No	%	No	%	No.	%
1	Service	3	20.00	6	35.29	0		9	23.68
2	Cultivation	0		3	17.65	1	16.67	4	10.53
3	Daily labour	3	20.00	2	11.76	2	33.33	7	18.42
4	Maid	4	26.67	4	23.53	1	16.67	9	23.68
5	Others	5	33.33	2	11.76	2	33.33	9	23.68
	Total Earner	15	100.00	17	100.00	6	100.00	38	100.00

Sl. No.	Category of occupation	Agartala		Udaipur		Kailasahar		Total	
		No	%	No	%	No	%	No.	%
1	Service	3	8.82	5	41.67	2	14.28	10	16.67
2	Cultivation	1	2.41	0	00	0	00	1	1.67
3	Business	0	00	0	00	6	42.86	6	10.00
4	Daily labour	3	8.82	1	8.33	0	00	4	6.67
5	Maid	25	73.53	3	25.00	3	21.43	31	51.67
6	Others	2	5.89	3	25.00	3	21.43	8	13.33
	Total Earner	34	100.00	12	100.00	14	100.00	60	100.00

Sl No.	Occupational Category	Total	
		No	%
1	Service	19	19.38
2	Cultivation	01	1.02
3	Business	06	6.12
4	Daily Labour	11	11.22
5	Domestic Help	40	40.82
6	Others	17	17.35
	Total	98	100.00

teacher, contingent staff and group-D worker in Agartala town; 5 women of Udaipur are found as primary and secondary school teacher, nurse in hospital, folk artist, class four staff and two women of Kailasahar one school mother and another peon of the District Magistrate court. In the rural sample, 6 women are found at Khilpara as primary and secondary teacher, clerk, Anganwadi worker and class IV staff; 3 at N.C. Nagar as primary teacher, Anganwadi worker and class IV staff. No government employee was found at Yazekhowra. In rural urban comparison the number of government employee is higher in rural group than that of the urban group.

Day labour is another easy accessible job for the people who have no fixed income on monthly salary system. In day labour force, Muslim women contribute 11.22 percent. They are 11 in number distributed into 4 urban (6.67%) and 7 rural (18.42%); They work as agricultural labourer in villages, brick breaker, 'jogale' to the Building contractor etc. in towns. All of them are middle aged women and some of them are widow and deserted.

The contribution of women in business is found in some home-based industry. Only six women were found as engaged in binding the 'dhup-sticks at east Durgapur under Kailasahar Nagar Panchayat. Either they or their men bring order from the local factory and sell the sticks to the factory people. The earning from this is not equal in all months. They work for this in the leisure period only after managing the household works. Some times the elder children also help their mother. Besides these 6, there are many women who do the informal business of selling the chickens and eggs, milk, goats and cows staying in their own house. They told that this business is very casual and not on regular basis. They are sometimes found as assisting the grocery business of their family men at the shop adjacent to their home. This remains invisible in account of their work participation.

As owner cultivators, they are only five (5.10%) in total villages and towns. No woman was found as share-cropper or '*barga-chashee*' Women do employ male labourer to plough their small quantity of land. They are found as widow having no other source of income for family and no adult member except some children. A widow of 30 years, at Yeajikhowra, told that she did not like to beg help from the

relatives or neighbour who are also economically poor. So she has employed herself in many works of cultivation in the field.

The foregoing discussion of occupational distribution among the Muslim women reveals that the largest number of working women is in the occupation of domestic maid; service is for second choice and day labour is the third choice for them in spite of the residential variation. In five major occupations; highest number of domestic maid is found in Agartala, highest number of government employees is in Udaipur, highest number of day labour is at Yeajekhowra according to the ratio of participants in the village and town.

Other Occupations :

In addition to the primary occupations, there are more other six occupations and 17 women are engaged in these occupations. The Table no 5.9 shows that they are 8

Table no 5.9
Other Occupations among Women in Village and Towns

Sl. No.	Category of Occupation	N.C. Nagar	Khilpara	Yeajekhowra	Total Rural
		No.	No.	No.	No.
1	Pvt. Tutor	0	1	1	02
2	Rent Receiver	1	0	0	01
3	Pensioner	1	0	0	01
4	Old age Beneficiary	2	1	0	03
5	Stipend holder	0	0	1	01
6	Surveyor	0	0	1	01
	Total (R)	4	2	3	9

Sl. no.	Category of Occupation	Agartala	Udaipur	Kailasahar	Total Urban
		No.	No.	No.	No.
1	Pvt. Tutor	1	1	1	03
2	Rent Receiver	0	0	1	01
3	Stipend holder	0	1	0	01
4	Milk woman	1	0	0	01
5	Beggar	0	1	1	02
	Total (U)	2	3	3	08
	Grand Total	6	5	6	17

urban and 9 in the rural group. They are distributed into three beggars; five private tutors, one surveyor, one milk woman, one pensioner, and three old-age beneficiaries (provided maintenance by the government).

The two beggars are found as one from Udaipur, and another from Kailasahar. . One graduate Muslim girl from Dharmanagar but married at Yazekhowra is found as surveyor. Two widow women are engaged as the private tutor of teaching the Quran to a few girls at Jagaharimura of Agartala, west district and Yeajikhowra of north district.. Other three private tutors are the young and unemployed educated girls residing in Udaipur, Kailasahar and Khilpara.. One widow woman depends on the drawing of the pension of her deceased husband. Two old women at N.C.Nagar and one at Khilpara are found as provided maintenance by the gram panchayats. The untold poor condition of Muslim women is exposed in their acceptance of the begging occupation. Sometimes the beggar women have dependant member on them, but they are deprived of B.P.L. card. The widow woman at Chanban of Udaipur has two dependants—her deserted daughter and grand daughter. They do not go out for begging as they are young in age. House rent is the only source of income for two women in Kailasahar and N.C Nagar. Two girls are able to obtain student stipend from the *Wakf* Board.

Muslim Men in different Occupations :

However, the total 1592 male participants are distributed into 932 rural (58.54%) and 660 urban (41.46%). The following Table 5.10 shows the position of Muslim men in the major and other occupations on the residential basis i.e. against each village and town. The details have been discussed in the pervious discussion on the distribution of occupations among the rural and urban people under study. Here it is only to be noted that among total male participants: i) largest number of men is found in the occupation of day labour (i.e.33.29%) ; ii) the second largest men are found in cultivation (i.e.17.39%) ; iii) the third largest number of men is found in the government job (i.e. 16.33%) ; iv) a good number of Muslim men are in petty business (14.25%)

Table no. 5.10
Occupations among Muslim Men in Villages and Towns

SL No.	Occupational Category	Name of Villages						Total	
		N.C. Nagar		Khilpara		Yeajekhowra			
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
1	Service	32	25.60	63	50.40	30	24.00	125	100
2	Cultivation	135	60.54	45	20.18	43	19.28	223	100
3	Business	63	45.00	22	15.71	55	39.29	140	100
4	Day Labour	95	29.05	69	21.10	163	49.85	327	100
5	Rickshaw Pulling	14	51.85	5	18.52	8	29.63	27	100
6	Driving	9	40.91	9	40.91	4	18.18	22	100
7	Others	31	45.59	9	13.24	28	41.18	68	100
	Total	379	40.67	222	23.82	331	35.52	932	100

SL No.	Occupational Category	Name of Towns						Total	
		Agartala		Udaipur		Kailasahar			
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
1	Service	76	56.30	42	31.11	17	12.59	135	100
2	Cultivation	0	0.00	17	31.48	37	68.52	54	100
3	Business	34	39.08	21	24.14	32	36.78	87	100
4	Day Labour	33	16.26	30	14.78	140	68.97	203	100
5	Rickshaw Pulling	37	72.55	5	9.80	9	17.65	51	100
6	Driving	29	56.86	18	35.29	4	7.84	51	100
7	Others	43	54.43	26	32.91	10	12.66	79	100
	Total	252	38.18	159	24.09	249	37.73	660	100

TOTAL			
SI No.	Occupational Category	Total (Urban / Rural)	
		No.	%
1	Service	260	16.33166
2	Cultivation	277	17.3995
3	Business	227	14.25879
4	Day Labour	530	33.29146
5	Rickshaw Pulling	78	4.899497
6	Driving	73	4.585427
7	Others	147	9.233668
	Total	1592	100

As regards government service, Agartala is at top position (56.30%) followed by the Khilpara (50.40%) village. In cultivation, Kailasahar is at the top (68.52%) followed by N.C Nagar (60.54%). The majority cultivators of Kailasahar belong to the marginal land holding position while at N.C Nagar they are in the position of

small land holding. The largest number of day labour is supplied from Kailasahar followed by Yeajekhowra.

In villages majority Muslim boys and men are found in the job of helper of different categories e.g. helper in the vehicles or in different shops. They form the largest number in other Occupations (32.35%). Secondly a good number of carpenters are found at Yeajekhowra village (i.e. 32.14%). This occupation is uncommon in other village and town. In towns, drum beating is a unique occupation for the people of Bitarban (32.56%) under Agartala MC. For the urban people, most common job is Mechanics. The mechanics may have their own shop or they are employed in those workshops. The job of Helper is also common in the urban areas (20.25%) also.

5.3. Case Studies on working women

Two case studies of Working Women are presented below :

Case 1. Nazma Khatun is a Graduate school teacher of Madhuban, Kathaltali High School, under Sonamura sub division. She is thirty six years old and has been in the service for last four years. She was married in her teen age when she passed Madhyamik examination. She took her further education, i.e. Higher Secondary and Graduation (B.A.) after her marriage and even after her motherhood. For her study, she stayed in Agartala in a rented house while her husband stayed at his home in Sonamura. Nazma's natal house was in Agartala. So she got help and cooperation from her parents. Her father-in-law was a muktab teacher but modern in outlook. He sold his land only for the education of his sons. He not only encouraged his sons to take general education and modern occupation but also her daughter-in-law. Cooperation from both the houses – her natal and in-laws, she was able to continue her study even along with her two babies. Her husband named Siraj-ul-Islam is a contractor in occupation and he earns a nice income. He is also involved in social service organizing some NGOs. They live in a well built furnished house at south Ramnagar.

In her daily life, Nazma starts for school at 10:15 am and comes back at 4:10 pm. She goes by auto or tempo. The job place is about 20k.m distant from Agartala.

Table no. 5.11

Other Occupations among Men in Villages and Towns.

Sl. No.	Category of occupation	N.C Nagar		Khilpara		Yazekhowra		Total Rural	
		No.	%	No.	%	No	%	No.	%
1	Electrician	0	00	0	0	1	3.57	01	1.47
2	Mechanics	5	16.13	0	0	2	7.14	07	10.29
3	Tailor	0	00	0	0	2	7.14	02	2.94
4	Helper	18	58.06	0	0	4	14.28	22	32.35
5	Pvt. Tuition	1	3.22	2	22.22	2	7.14	05	7.35
6	House rent	3	9.68	1	11.11	0	00	04	5.88
7	Pension	1	3.22	1	11.11	2	7.14	04	5.88
8	Stipend	0	00	1	11.11	0	00	01	1.47
9	Old As Beneficiary	2	6.45	2	22.22	2	7.14	06	8.82
10	Contractor	1	3.22	1	11.11	3	10.71	5	7.35
11	Muktab teacher	0	00	0	00	1	3.57	01	1.47
12	Advocate/ Engineer	0	00	1	11.11	0	00	01	1.47
13	Carpenter	0	00	0	00	9	32.14	09	13.23
	Total	31	100.00	9	100.00	28	100.00	68	100.00

Sl. No.	Category of occupation	Agartala		Udaipur		Kailasahar		Total Urban	
		No.	%	No	%	No.	%	No.	%
1	Drum beater	14	32.56	0	00	0	00	14	100.00
2	Mechanics	13	30.23	2	7.69	2	20.00	17	100.00
3	Tailor	2	4.65	1	3.85	1	10.00	04	100.00
4	Helper	4	9.30	10	38.46	2	20.00	16	100.00
5	Pvt. Tutor	1	2.33	3	11.54	1	10.00	05	100.00
6	House renter	3	6.98	1	3.85	0	00	04	100.00
7	Pension holder	2	4.65	1	3.85	1	10.00	04	100.00
8	Stipend holder	0	00	5	19.23	0	00	05	100.00
9	Old Age Beneficiary	0	00	1	3.85	1	10.00	02	100.00
10	Contractor	1	2.33	0	00	1	10.00	02	100.00
11	Muktab teacher	1	2.33	1	3.85	0	00	02	100.00
12	Advocate/ Engineer	2	4.65	1	3.85	0	00	03	100.00
13	Beggar	0	00	1	3.85	0	00	01	100.00
	Total	43	100.00	26	100.00	10	100.00	79	100.00

She has to take daily 40 km. journey of up and down. Of her three daughters, the eldest one is seventeen years old –studying in 11th standard. The second daughter is in 8th standard followed by the youngest one in a nursery school. Nazma takes care of the children at evening. She enjoys TV serials of “*Aajtak*” and “*Aakhen*”. Being an educated working woman, she has habit of reading the daily local newspaper, “*Daily Desher Kotha*” Agartala and “*Aajkaal*” from West Bengal.

Nazma is very particular in performing the religious rituals – *Namaz* and *Rozza*. She gets full cooperation in household work from her husband and it is entirely his responsibility to manage all the outside works. She goes out casually and occasionally, i.e. Mela or Exhibition etc. When she goes out, she is accompanied by husband. She seems to be a “abiding by” personality. There is no discord between them regarding various familial decisions.

Case 2. Jayeda Bibi is a School *Mother*⁹ of a pre- primary school at East-Durgapur under Kailasahar Nagar Panchayat. The school is built on a piece of land contributed by her family. That is the reason behind her achievement of job under the directorate of Social Education. She draws salary of Rs 3800/ per month. Jayeda has no formal qualification. Her husband is 65 years old. He has talked with the researcher Jayeda has not come out with the excuse of illness inspite of insistence on her meeting. Even her daughter in-law has not come out with the excuse of busy for office going. She is a contingent staff of class IV rank in the sub divisional court at Kailasahar. She draws Rs. 1500 per month. Jayeda is an ill-health woman as it is reported by her husband. She starts her life rising early in the morning and goes to school within walking distance at 6:30 am and comes back by 10 ‘O clock. She cooks everyday after her return from the school. Her son is also engaged as deed writer in the court though his job is not permanent. Being three members employed from one family they are to face the criticism from the neighbour as if they have a hot-line with the authority. It seems that the family is father dominated and not very social with the neighbour.

These two case studies from west and north district reveal one of the important characteristics that Muslim women, in spite of their earning status, are under the full authority of their men.

After the discussion of the women's position as earners and the pattern of their participation in major and other occupations here is an account of their annual family income, land holding position possession of life stock and thus attempt to assess the women's contribution in the family economy as well as economic status.

5.4. Annual Family Income of the Muslims under study:

In the present study, the people drawing monthly salary under. The state government are very small in number; most of the people have no fixed income from monthly salary as such. Besides, the poor section people of the community do not keep any account of their income and expenditure of the families. Some owner cultivators and businessmen have to depend on annual collection of income for their expenditure. So when they were asked about their monthly income, they told an average amount of yearly income. It is seen that some households remain below the poverty level; a few women like beggar has no such cash earning but 'kinds'. Some families hold the B.P.L. card and avail the government help of different type. The daily labour people don't get work available for whole month and the rate of payment varies in different places. Some families are found indifferent about the estimate of their income and expenditures.

In such various conditions, it was difficult to calculate their monthly income and expenditure of the families. However, through the interrogation and observation, the approximate income of the families has been calculated on yearly basis. This income varies from Rs.5001 to Rs.150000 (i.e.Rs.400 to Rs.12, 500 per month). The income range is divided into eight groups. Firstly, the households which remain below the level of Rs.5001 yearly, they are regarded as subsistence level income group. The rest of the groups are : up to Rs.5001, Rs.5001 to.10,000, Rs.10,001 to.15,000, Rs.15,001 to.25,000, Rs.25,000 to.50,000, Rs.50,001 to Rs.1,00,000 and .Rs.1,00,000- to 1

The data presented in Table no 5.12 shows that at N.C Nagar, the largest number of households (40.13%) belong to the third income group i.e. Rs. 5001 to 10,000 per year. Their monthly income is maximum Rs.833. The rest 60 percent households are distributed in other seven groups. Three families are found in the subsistence level.

Only eleven families are found in the highest income group(3.81%). They have income of not less than Rs.8,333 per month. At Khilpara village, like N.C. Nagar, majority families (42.44%) belong to the third income group(Rs.5001--10000 yearly). At

Table no. 5.12
Annual Family Income of the Muslim Household in Villages

Sl No.	Category of Income	Name of the Villages							
		N.C. Nagar		Khilpara		Yazekhowra		Total	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
1	Subsistence Level	3	1.04	1	0.58	1	0.39	5	0.70
2	Up to Rs. 5000	21	7.27	19	11.05	198	77.34	238	33.19
3	Rs. 5001 - 10000	116	40.14	73	42.44	12	4.69	201	28.03
4	Rs. 10001 - 15000	48	16.61	13	7.56	15	5.86	76	10.60
5	Rs. 15001 - 25000	43	14.88	9	5.23	9	3.52	61	8.51
6	Rs. 25001 - 50000	24	8.30	20	11.63	9	3.52	53	7.39
7	Rs. 50001 - 100000	23	7.96	27	15.70	9	3.52	59	8.23
8	Rs.100001-150000 & above	11	3.81	10	5.81	3	1.17	24	3.35
	Total Family	289	100.00	172	100.00	256	100.00	717	100.00

Yeajikhowra, a larger majority (77.34%) belong to the very low income group (Rs 5001 yearly).; middle income families are counted on finger tips. However, 3 families at Yeajikhowra are found having income more than Rs.100, 000 per year from the source of Rubber plantation and pine apple garden.

The Table no 5.13 shows that majority families of Agartala i.e. 28.30 percent belong to 5th income group earning monthly Rs.1250. The highest income group consists of 7 families (3.30%). The economic structure of the Muslims in Agartala indicates the presence of a larger middle income group in Agartala. In Udaipur, majority households (19.83%) belong to the third income group having Rs 416 to 833 per month A good number of family (18.18%) is found in the subsistence leve. There are 8 households (6.61%) in the highest income group in Kailasahor town, a heavy majority

Table no. 5.13
Annual Family Income of the Muslim Households in Towns

Sl No.	Category Of Income	Name of the Towns							
		Agartala		Udaipur		Kailasahar		Total	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
1	Subsistence Level	8	3.77	22	18.18	14	7.57	44	8.49
2	Up to Rs. 5000	12	5.66	2	1.65	33	17.84	47	9.09
3	Rs. 5001 - 10000	12	5.66	24	19.83	90	48.65	126	24.32
4	Rs. 10001 - 15000	20	9.43	9	7.44	30	16.22	59	11.39
5	Rs. 15001 - 25000	60	28.30	18	14.88	4	2.16	82	15.83
6	Rs. 25001 - 50000	46	21.70	16	13.22	12	6.49	74	14.29
7	Rs.50001- 100000	47	22.17	22	18.18	1	0.54	70	13.51
8	Rs.100001-150000 & above	7	3.30	8	6.61	1	0.54	16	3.08
	Total Family:	212	100.00	121	100.00	185	100.00	518	100.00

of 90 families (48.91%) belong to the third income group and the rest are divided into the seven groups. Among them, only one is found in 7th income group and another one is found in the highest group in this sample. Thus it is found that the a larger majority of families of villages are in the second level of income group while majority families of the towns are in the third income group. It indicates the better income of the urban people. It is also to be noted that the people of subsistence level is larger in the urban group. The immediate cause lies in the happening of the ethno political disturbances of recent year.

The foregoing data analysis reveals that the economic status of Muslim women is better in Agartala where 28.30% families belong to the fifth category of income level in comparison to other towns and villages. On the other hand, women live in worst position at the village of Yeajikhowra where 77.73 percent families belong to the income level of up to Rs.5000 per year or below Rs.500/- per month.

The better family income of Agartala is contributed, to some extent by the earning of women earners. In villages and towns women's contribution to family income cannot be denied. It is observed that either by explicit earning or by implicit saving women contribute to family income. Their households source of income e.g., kitchengarden, careing of domestic animals and the art of home managing contributes to the total income.

5.5. Possession of Land :

Table no. 5.14
Land Holding size of the Muslims under Study

Sl. No	Category of Land size	Number of Families	
		No	%
1	Marginal land (up to ½ acre)	162	13.12
2	Small land (up to 2 acres)	178	14.41
3	Medium land (up to 3 acres)	20	1.62
4	Large land (up to 4 acres & above)	42	3.40
5	Family having no land	833	67.45
6	Total no. of Family	1235	100

The field data on the possession of land holding size of the Muslims under study are presented in the Table no 5.14. It shows that out of total 1235, the majority families (67.44%) have no agricultural land. The rest 402 families (distributed into rural 299 and urban 103) hold different categories of land e.g. marginal, small, medium and large; ii) majority families (i.e.14.41%) have small land which is not more than 2 acres. The second majority families (13.12%) have only half acre and they belong to the marginal category. However a good number of families have large sized land and they are 3.40 percent of the total households.

The data presented in table 5.15 shows that in three villages, the number of landless household is 418 (58.30%) and land holding households are 299 (41.70%) Majority of them belong to the category of small land e.g. at N.C. Nagar, they are 65 (22.49%), at Khilpara, they are 33 (19.19%) and at Yeajekhowra 31 (12.11%). The second majority (land holding) families for each of the villages belong to the marginal group. However the highest number of large land holders is found in the village of N.C. Nagar followed by Khilpara and Yeajekhowra. As the data suggest that among

the villages (table 6.4), the people of N.C Nagar are in better position than the people of Khilpara and Yeazekhowra in the land holding possession.

It is observed that women have also some shared in the possession of land holding of Muslim families either by the way of *meher* (dower) from the husband or by the way of dowry from the natal house.

Table no 5.15
Land Holding Size of the Muslims in Villages

Sl No.	Category of Land size	Name of Villages							
		N.C. Nagar		Khilpara		Yazekhowra		Total	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
1	Marginal land (Up to ½ acre)	57	19.72	17	9.88	51	19.92	125	17.43
2	Small Land (Up to 2 acre)	65	22.49	33	19.19	31	12.11	129	17.99
3	Medium Land (Up to 3 acres)	7	2.42	6	3.49	3	1.17	16	2.23
4	Large land (Up to 4 acres and above)	11	3.81	13	7.56	5	1.95	29	4.04
	No. of Family Holding Agricultural Land	140	48.44	69	40.12	90	35.16	299	41.70
	Family Holding no agricultural land	149	51.56	103	59.88	166	64.84	418	58.30
	Total Family:	289	100	172	100	256	100	717	100

The data in the Table no 5.16 shows that the total landholding families 103 (19.88%) are distributed into 13 (6.13%), 42 (34.71%), and 48 (25.95%) among the towns of Agartala, Udaipur and Kailasahar respectively. Majority landholders of Agartala (3.30%) and Kailasahar (11.89%) belong to the marginal category of land while majority people of Udaipur (19.83%) belong to small category of land. As regards the possession of large size of land, Udaipur (8.26%) is found ahead. This means that in the possession of land holding size, Udaipur is in better position in comparison to other two towns.

Majority urban families are engaged in non agricultural pursuits. The main occupation of the people in towns is either government job or day labour. But in the case of village, the reasons behind the position of no agricultural land or small land are different. The expansion of family and distribution of land among the legal heirs,

Table no. 5.16
Land Holding Size of the Muslims in Towns

Category of land Size	Name of Towns							
	Agartala		Udaipur		Kailasahar		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
1. Marginal land (Up to ½ acre)	7	3.30	8	6.61	22	11.89	37	7.14
2. Small Land (Up to 2 acre)	4	1.89	24	19.83	21	11.35	49	9.46
3. Medium Land (Up to 3 acres)	0	0.00	0	0.00	4	2.16	4	0.77
4. Large land (Up to 4 acres and above)	2	0.94	10	8.26	1	0.54	13	2.51
No. of Family having Agricultural Land	13	6.13	42	34.71	48	25.95	103	19.88
Family having no agricultural land	199	93.87	79	65.29	137	74.05	415	80.12
Total Households	212	100	121	100	185	100	518	100

dispose of land due to poverty and ethnic disturbances in the interior areas are the causes for no land or marginal quantity of land. It is observed that dispose of land is not only due to poverty, but also due to the lack of management power in the family, to give hard labour for cultivation of tilla or less-fertile land, *lunga* or *chhera* land ; lack of efforts for pursuing governmental helps, lack of proper planning and distribution of governmental assistances to the cultivators etc. Many people possessing land in the tribal areas are not able to sell their land due to ethnic causes and the law of the state. One cultivator at Yeajekhowra village in north Tripura was found utilizing the large tilla land as pineapple garden by the governmental aid. Another cultivator in the same area utilized his large land as rubber garden by the help of government assistance. The number of such big cultivator are only 4.04 percent in the village and 2.51 percent in towns. A good number of rural families belong to the possession of marginal land i.e. up to ½ acre only, where they do some cultivation (paddy, green vegetables etc.) only for domestic consumption. A very little surplus remains for commercial purpose. The empirical data also reveals that a major portion of women and their families have no land for cultivation. Many of them live in the '*Khas*' lands (owned by government).

5.6. Possession of Livestocks and their effects on the family economy

Table no. 5.17

Possession of Livestock among the Muslims in Villages and Towns

Villages	Bullock/Cow		Goat/Sheep		Hen/Duck		Others		No Domestic Animal/Birds		Total No. of Households	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
N. C. Nagar	130	44.98	36	12.46	26	9.00	6	2.08	91	31.49	289	100
Khilpara	64	37.21	16	9.30	16	9.30	3	1.74	73	42.44	172	100
Yazekhowra	74	28.91	62	24.22	25	9.77	20	7.81	75	29.30	256	100
Total Rural	268	73.02	114	77.56	67	31.31	29	58.00	239	52.30	717	100
Towns												
Agartala	19	8.96	5	2.36	44	20.75	7	3.30	137	64.62	212	100
Udaipur	31	25.62	9	7.44	25	20.66	2	1.65	54	44.63	121	100
Kailasahar	49	26.49	19	10.27	78	42.16	12	6.49	27	14.59	185	100
Total Urban	99	26.98	33	22.43	147	68.69	21	42.00	218	47.70	518	100
Total livestock	367	100.00	147	100.00	214	100.00	50	100.00	457	100.00	1235	100

Like any agricultural community of India, the Muslims of Tripura have possessed a good number of livestock. The possession of cultivable lands is not enough without an enough live stock which is the part and parcel of cultivation and the expenses for these are supplemented by the system of cultivation. The main livestock found in the Muslim families is poultry bird, goat and bullocks, cows or buffaloes. It is seen that almost every household possess a number of poultry bird for the purpose of domestic consumption. The rural families are in better position in respect of domestic animals e.g. cattle are valuable assets for them. Buffaloes are also found in a good number in the remote villages e.g. Yeajikhowra. It is reported that some cattle like goats, cows and even the domestic birds are stolen frequently by the thieves coming from Bangladesh border. These domestic animals suffer from various diseases also; fowls suffer from some poultry diseases; the insufficiency of veterinary hospitals and medicines made the people disheartened about their livestock.

The possession of livestock among the Muslims of Tripura is furnished in the Table no. 5.17. The data shows that 778 families (63%) possess livestock of different types. The rest 457 families (37%) have no domestic animals. Obviously the villagers possess more live stock than that of the urban dwellers. The possession of livestock

has some effect on the economy of the people. Sometimes, it remains invisible, especially when it is consumed by the family and not used for commercial purpose. Here lies the important contribution of the women in the Muslim families. Along with their domestic activities, women are to look after these domestic animals as their essential functions. This is often a source of income for women. They sell milk, eggs and birds; income from these sources goes to the women fund. Man usually does not interfere this, because in the time of crisis, they take loan from this fund instead of taking loan from outside. So the wise housemaster cooperates with this and refunds the money. Recently, as the women respondents of the villages reported that the income from domestic animals has been diminishing because of tribal disturbances and lack of veterinary hospital. During the present study tour in the border area villages, the women articulated their sorrows and grievances on a number of incidents of stealing their domestic animals by the people of neighbour State.

The data shows that in the possession of Bullock or Cow, N.C. Nagar is at the top among the villages while Kailasahar is at the top among the towns. At Yeajekhowra, a good number of bullocks were found as domestic animals. A few people have elephants as domestic animals for the purpose of business in the forest area. Local people reported that many villagers had elephants but due to the poverty people had to sell these. No other subdivision and village had this important resource. Many women told that their livestock are often mortgaged to the neighbors to borrow cash money from them.

5.7. Possession of Equipments

The Table no. 5.18 shows that total 1235 households are divided into two groups i.e. 'have' and 'have not' and the latter constitute a good number (45.18%). This second group people are very poor. Many of them have no electric connection and they are to live without light and fan which constitute a vital part of modern life. They have common use of bicycles which are usually bought from second hand use. Television is found very popular among them but many of these are purchased from second hand use in very cheap or low price. The 'have-group' consists of different strata of economic

Table no. 5.18
Possession of Equipments among the Muslims in Villages and Towns

Villages & Towns	Types of Equipments ¹											
	Motorcycle		Television		Bicycle		Others*		No Equipments		Total No. of Households	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
N.C. Nagar	6	2.08	48	16.61	71	24.57	40	13.84	124	42.91	289	100
Khilpara	9	5.23	53	30.81	42	24.42	19	11.05	49	28.49	172	100
Yeajekhowra	2	0.78	9	3.52	49	19.14	9	3.52	187	73.05	256	100
Total	17	39.53	110	46.22	162	60.22	68	53.54	360	64.52	717	
Agartala	12	5.66	79	37.26	27	12.74	35	16.51	59	27.83	212	100
Udaipur	11	9.09	35	28.93	27	22.31	17	14.05	31	25.62	121	100
Kailasahar	3	1.62	14	7.57	53	28.65	7	3.78	108	58.38	185	100
Total	26	60.47	128	53.78	107	39.78	59	46.46	198	35.48	518	
Grand Total	43	100.00	238	100.00	269	100.00	127	100.00	558	100.00	1235	100

status. The data in Table no.5.18 shows the possession of modern equipments among them. Economic status of the people is often exposed by the type of equipments they use. The query on the point reveals that they are recently habituated the some modern articles like television, motorcycle and Steel-Almirah, Refrigerator, and Gas-oven, wall-clock or any decorative articles. Motor cycles are in maximum cases, gift of dowry. It is highest at Khilpara among the villages and in Udaipur among three towns. Table 5.18 shows that regarding the possession of equipments, the urban dwellers are in better possition than the villagers.

5.8. Government Supports and Women Benificiaries

Many women in Tripura have been experienced of various government schemes and programmes like IRDP,TRYSEM, DRWCA, JRY etc. through some agencies like municipality, Nagar Panchayat, Gram Panchayat, Wakf Board, DRDA etc. The data on Muslim beneficiaries is shown in the following Table no. 5.19.

For the present study, an investigation was on the number of Muslim women and their families who have been benefited by these schemes. Responding to the query,, Udaipur and Kailasahar Nagar panchayats have projected some of their development works in the published manifesto and Work List. The data shows that

Table no: 5.19

Muslims Beneficiaries under Government Supports (IRDP etc.)

Towns and Villages	Govt. Loan Taken		No Loan Taken		Total No. of Households	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
N.C. Nagar	73	25.26	216	74.74	289	100.00
Khilpara	41	23.84	131	76.16	172	100.00
Yeajekhowra	46	17.97	210	82.03	256	100.00
Total Rural	160	71.75	557	55.04	717	
Agartala	10	4.72	202	95.28	212	100.00
Udaipur	26	21.49	95	78.51	121	100.00
Kailasahar	27	14.59	158	85.41	185	100.00
Total Urban	63	28.25	455	44.96	518	
Grand Total	223	100.00	1012	100.00	1235	100.00

Muslim women are gradually participating in the schemes as other people communities. The data on the Muslim beneficiaries of Udaipur NP are presented in the table no. 5.20. The table shows that there were 561 beneficiaries 1998-2000, Among them Muslim beneficiaries were 120 (21.39%) and among them Muslim women beneficiaries were 23 (19.16%). The largest beneficiaries of Udaipur NP were found in ward no. 9. The people of this ward were found more aware and able to obtain this.

An investigation into the Muslim Beneficiaries under Kailasahar N.P was done during the field work in 1999-2K. According to the Work List supplied from the Kailasahar NP office , the total number of 289 Muslim families constituting 1439 population are supposed to enjoy all the benefits of development works done by the NP within its jurisdiction.

Some works of the list deserves to be mentioned here :

i) Construction of Road, drain, RCC culvert, facilities of drinking water through Hydrant point, Mark 11 Tube well, Shallow Tube well; ii) Construction of House under B.M.S scheme at phase by phase : Rs. 30,000 for each house in the 1st phase,

Table no. 5.20
Muslim Beneficiaries under Udaipur Nagar Panchayat
(1998—2000)

Name of Wards	Male	Female	Total no. of Muslims	Total no. of Beneficiaries	% to total Beneficiaries
W-1.	03	1	4	138	2.90
W-7	26	7	33	146	22.60
W-8	24	6	30	138	21.74
W-9	44	9	53	139	38.13
Total	97	23	120	561	21.39

Source: Unnayan-er Path-e Udaipur Nagar Panchayat.2000

Rs. 20,000 in the 2nd phase; **iii)** Supply of G.C.T. sheets and Ridges for change of roofing to poor beneficiaries; **iv)** Supply of filter, mosquito net, Blanket, Rickshaw, Try-cycle, Push-cart, etc to the E.W.S and B.P.L. beneficiaries in Nagar Panchayat area; **v)** Sanction of loan under Self Employment Programme to Female unemployed beneficiaries under SJSRY scheme through Bank unit, the cost of which is maximum Rs. 50,000,00 and 15 percent of the loan paid as subsidy; **vi)** Sanction of loan under State Urban Micro Enterprise (SUME) scheme: Rs. 4000 out of which Rs 1000 as subsidy, to the EWS beneficiaries for small business; **vii)** Some Training Programmes like a) Incense stick, b) Nursing, c) Tailoring, d) Carpenter, e) Wool knitting, f) Computer; **viii)** Construction of low cost latrine and community latrine.

It is observed during the study tour in two Muslim populated areas like Town Kubjar under Ward no. 2 and East Durgapur under Ward no.11, some Muslim families were living in the houses constructed under B.M.S scheme with low cost, latrine facilities. Few poor Muslim men were found with the Push-cart, Try cycle and Rickshaw. They have also obtained the loan under SMUE and some Training. But many of them have remained deprived. Though a good number of people in Town Kubjar were found as beneficiaries, a few aged persons who were educated also, articulated their sorrows and grievances for their deprivation. In East Durgapur, some

people were deprived even from BPL card. The reason for this as they said that though Nagar Panchayat office sanctioned card in their names, but some middle men did the game against their interest. They have no remedy though they have frequently knocked the office and the persons concerned with this. In East Durgapur, a daughter of a deserted mother tried to show the present researcher their living house which has no active roof and they were suffering from the rain water for years. No Muslim woman was found as trainee of Nursing and Computer learning. Only few women were found as the beneficiaries of Incense stick. However there are more to study about the reasons of lagging behind to achieve the facilities for them.

The Table 5.21 and 5.22 shows that the approximate number of Muslim beneficiaries in two Muslim populated blocks of west district through the agency of DRDA. The table 5.21 shows that the largest beneficiaries are on the IRDP schemes and it indicates the presence of large number of peasants families. The Table no. 5.22 shows clearly the distribution of beneficiaries between male and female and their percentage to total beneficiaries of the block. Women are found very few in comparison to men in both two blocks in total. Out of total 257 Muslim beneficiaries they are only 56 (21.79%). They are found better only in Melaghar block.

The Table no 5.23 shows a list of such women beneficiaries. Under 9 Agencies of Development (e.g. Municipality, different R.D Blocks). The total number of beneficiaries are 46 distributed in different blocks. There are 24 beneficiaries of

Table no. 5.21

Muslim Beneficiaries in Two Blocks of West Tripura (1998-1999)

Name of the Blocks	IRDP	TRYSEM	DWCRA	SITRA	Total Beneficiaries
Bishalgar	315	63	05	nil	383
Melaghar	554	92	08	20	674
Total	869	155	13	20	1057

Source: DRDA Office, Gandhighat, Agartala

Table no. 5.22
Women Beneficiaries in two Blocks of West Tripura
(1998-1999)

Name of Blocks	Male	Female	Total	% to Total Beneficiaries
Bishalgar	75	06	81	21.15
Melaghar	126	50	176	26.11
Total	201	56	257	24.31

Source: DRDA Office, Gandhighat, Agartala

Agartala Municipality, the largest number among all. Enterpreneuership on the basis of government support is now a new area of occupational for women in Tripura. All these things show that Muslim women are gradually improving their participation in economic activity, not only independence but also many socio-economic problems can be tackled with this.

Table no. 5.23
Women Entrepreneurs in Minority community under
Government Supports, 2005.

Name of Agencies	Name of scheme	Amount of Loan	No. of Women
1. Agartala Municipality	Meat cow	Rs. 33,250/-	9
..	Vegetable shop	Rs. 33,250/-	2
..	Grocery	Rs. 42,500/-	1
..	Small business	Rs. 33,250/-	4
..	Floor polishing	Rs. 19,000/-	3
..	Vegetable business	Rs. 14,250/-	4
..	Readymade garments	Rs. 33,250/-	1
Total			24
2. Mohanpur R.D. Block	Readymade garments	Rs. 33,250/-	1
Total 01			
3. Jirania Block	Scheme	Amount	No. of women
..	Power tiller	Rs. 99,702/-	1
..	Readymade garments	Rs. 33,250/-	1
Total			02
4. Dukli R. D. Block	Readymade garments	Rs. 33,250/-	2
..	Meat cow	Rs. 33,250/-	1
..	Small business	Rs. 33,250/-	1
..	Grocery	Rs. 33,250/-	1
..	Photography	Rs. 33,250/-	1
Total			06
5. Bishalgarh Block	Small business	Rs. 33,250/-	1
..	Poultry	Rs. 33,250/-	1
..	Meat cow	Rs. 33,250/-	1
..	Power tiller	Rs. 71,702/-	1
Total			04
6. Melaghar Block	Carpentry	Rs. 42,500/-	1
7. Kumarghat	Small business	Rs. 33,250/-	1
8. Matabari R. D. Block	Readymade garments	Rs. 42,500/-	2
9. Salema R. D. Block (2005)	Readymade garments	Rs. 33,250/-	2
..	Meat cow	Rs. 33,250/-	2
..	Fishery	Rs. 33,250/-	1
Total			05
Women Beneficiaries			46

Source: Tripura Minorities Cooperative Development Corporation Ltd.

Findings

The foregoing discussion reveals that the economic status of women is inferior than that of the men both in villages and towns. The economic status of women has been examined in terms of their being wage earners or having any independent source of income. Both in the major and other categories of occupations, the participation of women is lower than that of the men. Women are found in very limited variety of occupations. The dominant occupation for them is the job of domestic maid. It indicates the bare necessities of their life and also their inabilities to compete in the job market for better job. However government service is their second choice. They are found in government job as casual or permanent workers in the fourth class rank and status. Few women are found as day labourers as their third choice. In comparison to women, men are found large in number of occupational varieties. In the ratio of earner, women are in better position in Khilpara and Agartala among all villages and towns. But it is very difficult to measure their contribution to family income associated with the possession of land holding, live stock and domestic equipments. Sometimes Women are found as legal owner of some portion of land property by the way of 'dower' from husband and father-in-law. But the execution of this is in the hands of husband or son, who contribute to its addition or reduction, thus women thinks that men own land as they handle it. The household earning of women remains invisible because there is no such distinct division of contribution. Money-saving economic activities of women inside the household are very much time wasting and monotonous. But there is no time saving equipments for them. Many of them are deprived of minimum means of modern life e.g., protected drinking water, electricity etc. Women and children are found as fond of T.V. but most of the televisions were purchased from second hand used. The new T.V., Motor cycle etc. are found as gift of dowry.

The economic participation of women is limited largely in the lower category of occupations. A number of women are found in government service but in lower or middle rank and status. All these data reveals the low economic status of women in

the Muslim society. This lower rank and position of women is obviously related with their educational qualification. Majority of them are either illiterate or primary educated.

However, many women and men are found as the recipients of government loans, financial aids and beneficiaries of various govt. schemes through the various agencies like Municipality, Nagar Panchayat, DRDA, Wakf board and sub-divisional Block offices. The objective of the government loans is to help the emergence of women entrepreneurship in different types of business and thus to raise economic status of women in the country. These will bring change in the status of Muslim women in near future.

Chapter - 6

Marriage and Women

6.1. Marriage and Status of Muslim Women

Marriage is a stable bondage for the Muslims like all other communities in India. It is an important event in the life of a Muslim girl. The second but vital face of her life starts from this event. So long she was in parental family with elders and youngsters or surrounded by the kin. Now by the way of marriage she gets her own family – her new identity as wife and mother to the beloved husband and children and other in-laws. In a wide net of new relationship, she is to play her role in the way prescribed by the community she belongs. Her positions in marriage is to be understood in the terms and conditions of her getting into marriage i.e. procedures and arrangement of marriage, age at marriage, rules of dower and custom of dowry, types and forms of marriage, provisions of remarriage, rules of marriage, polygyny, divorce and the way of her desertion.

6.2. Marital Status of Muslim Women

Marriage is a mandatory for both man and woman. In Islamic faith it is regarded as “Sunnah” or essential and so on obligation which must be fulfilled by human beings. The marital status of women and men under study is shown in Table no. 6.1 and 6.2 respectively

Table no. 6.1
Marital Status of Women in Villages and Towns Under Study.

Name of Villages and Towns	Unmarried		Married		Widow		Divorced		Separated		Deserted		Total Female Population	
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
N.C. Nagar	383	47.11	375	46.12	33	4.06	14	1.72	0	00	8	0.98	813	100
Khilpara	182	45.27	173	43.03	36	8.95	6	1.49	4	0.99	1	0.95	402	100
Yeajekhowra	383	55.83	256	37.32	28	4.08	2	0.29	2	0.29	15	2.18	686	100
Total Rural	948	49.87	804	42.29	97	5.10	22	1.16	6	0.31	24	1.26	1901	100
Agartala	256	48.76	217	41.33	33	6.28	1	0.19	2	0.38	16	3.05	525	100
Udaipur	124	43.82	133	46.99	21	7.42	0	00	4	1.41	1	0.35	283	100
Kailasahar	266	56.84	173	36.96	21	4.49	3	0.64	5	1.07	0	00	468	100
Total Urban	646	50.63	523	40.98	75	5.88	4	0.31	11	0.86	17	1.33	1276	100
Total	1594	50.17	1327	41.77	172	5.41	26	0.82	17	0.54	41	1.29	3177	100

The data presented in Table 6.1 shows that the total female population of the villages and towns (3177) are distributed into total unmarried 1594 (50.20%), married 1327 (41.77%), widow 172 (5.41%), divorced 26 (0.82%), separated 17 (0.54%) and deserted 41 (1.29%). In three villages together the women are distributed into unmarried (49.87%), married (42.29%), widow (5.10%), separated (0.31%), divorced (1.16%) and deserted (1.26%). In three towns together they are distributed into the percentage of 50.63, 40.98, 5.88, 0.86, 0.31 and 1.33 in the said statuses respectively.

The data suggests that the percentage of married women is higher in villages than that in the towns; There is a good number of widows both in villages and towns and the percentage of widow is higher in towns than that of villages; the percentage of separated women is lower in village but divorced women is higher in villages; there is a good number of deserted women in ^{both} villages and towns. The case of desertion is higher in towns than in villages. Both village and towns have a considerable number of widows and deserted women. Hence the marital status of women is lower in villages than towns though the difference is not very significant.

Table 6.2
Marital Status of Muslim Men in Villages and Towns

Name of Towns and Villages	Unmarried		Married		Widow		Separated		Divorced		Deserted		Total Male Population	
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
N.C. Nagar	503	57.49	363	41.48	6	0.69	0	00	3	0.34	0	0	875	100
Khilpara	272	60.71	172	38.39	3	0.67	0	00	1	0.22	0	0	448	100
Yeajekhowra	484	65.85	250	34.01	1	0.14	0	00	0	00	0	0	735	100
Total Rural	1259	61.18	785	38.14	10	0.48	0	00	4	0.19	0	0	2058	100
Agartala	360	62.50	212	36.80	2	0.35	2	0.35	0	00	0	0	576	100
Udaipur	196	59.39	132	40.00	2	0.60	0	00	0	00	0	0	330	100
Kailasahar	341	66.47	169	32.94	3	0.58	0	00	0	00	0	0	513	100
Total Urbans	897	63.21	513	36.15	7	0.49	2	0.14	0	00	0	0	1419	100
Total	2156	62.01	1298	37.33	17	0.49	2	0.06	4	0.11	0	0	3477	100

The Table no. 6.2 shows marital status of men which helps to understand the gender comparison of men and women. The data shows that the total male population 3477 are distributed into unmarried (62.01%), married (37.33%), widower (0.49%), divorced (0.11%), separated (0.06%). In villages, the total rural male populations 2058

are distributed into unmarried (61.18%), married (38.14%), widow (0.48%), divorced (0.19%) and none found deserted. In towns the total urban male populations 1419 are distributed into unmarried (63.21%), married (36.15%), and separated (0.14%) and none is found deserted.

The data suggests that the number of married men is lower than unmarried in both villages and towns. Married men are found lower in towns than in villages. Similarly the percentage of married women is lower in towns than in villages. The percentage of married women as well as the percentage of widow, separated, divorced and deserted women is obviously higher than that of men. However, before going to the detail of marital status of women let us first discuss the procedure of marriage, terms and conditions, rules of marriage, types and forms of marriage, age at marriage, payment in marriage which are very much linked with the marital status of Muslim women.

6.2.1 Marriage Procedures, Terms and Conditions

Marriage (*Nikah*) is performed by a *maulavi* following the procedures of verbal proposal from one party (groom) and the acceptance by other party (bride) in presence of two males witness^{or} for one male and two female witnesses. The proposal and acceptance (*Qubul*) are done at the same time and it is done either orally or in writing. If the contract is in writing, it is called *Nikahnama*. In Tripura the function of middle man between bride and bridegroom is done by an *Okil*. He is usually *maulavi* or *mulla*(*Kazi*). His role is to read selected *Ayats* from the Quran in the *meelad* between two parties with the purpose of obtaining the blessings of God. Both bride and bridegroom read *namaz* for His blessings. Here lies the sacramental aspect of Muslim marriage. However, within thirty minutes the ceremony is complete. Marriage among the Muslim groups is relatively a simple affair (Rokaiya : 1992).

At the time of marriage a sum of money is to be given to the bride by the bride groom. This is called *Mahr*. The amount of *mahr* is recorded in the *nikahnama* as well as in the marriage register. The *maulavi* is asked to maintain a register of marriage where both bride and bride groom put their signature. In the absence of the register of

marriage, there will be no legal evidence of marriage. It is found that the maintenance of written document depends on socio-economic status of the parties. Muslim marriage is mainly a contract where consent (offer and acceptance) of the parties is the first condition for legal marriage. Most of the marriages are found oral in agreement. It doesn't matter to the validity of marriage. However, the legal status of woman in marriage agreement is equal to man. The next important condition is the presence of two witnesses who hear the contract. Whether it is oral or written in paper, it doesn't matter to the validity of marriage. In the present study, women witness like men are found in marriage ceremony.

Maulavi or kazi is not essential in the marriage for all; Hunter informed us that Muslims of Tripura district (**Hunter: 1874**) belonging to the Farazi group need not always a 'Kazi' provided there are 'offer and acceptance'. Any educated person is qualified for the performance of priestly office and can celebrate a marriage. This situation ~~is~~ ^{is} also persisting still today in Tripura. About ninety percent marriages are oral in nature. During the time of research tour, many women informants told that they did not even heard the name of kabinnama where the amount of dower (*Mahr*) is to be fixed either prompt or deferred. Only a small number of people who are conscious and educated enter into the written marriage called nikahnama and keep the record of kabinnama.

6.2.2. Rules of Marriage

For valid marriage, Muslims of India as well as Tripura are asked to follow some rules prescribed by the Quran: A Muslim man cannot marry an idolatress until she believes. ^{Islam} A Sunni male can marry a Kitabiyya i.e. a non-Muslim (Christian or a Jew girl)) subject to her conversion. But a Muslim female (either Sunni or Shia) cannot marry a non-Muslim (a Kitabiyya). The bride and bridegroom should attain the age of puberty i.e. fifteen years. (**Government of India: 2000**)

Bigamy or Polygamy is allowed for man under some conditions but under no condition a female is allowed bigamy or polygamy. She is also forbidden to marry (for second time) immediately after the death of husband or divorce with him to observe the 'id^dot period'.

The law of the Quran imposed restrictions on the number of wives i.e. a man can't have a fifth wife. He may have four legal wives only when he is able to treat all of them equally in financial as well as emotional spheres..

Islam has forbidden marriage between certain relationships. A good number of relations is forbidden for marriage and identified as incestuous (prohibited relationship) on the basis of blood, fosterage and affinity e.g. between milk brothers and sisters, foster mother or her daughter, ascendants and descendants of one's wife and so on. The violation of this rule makes the marriage void. In Islam, neither a man, nor a woman is allowed pre-marital and extra-marital relationship. Islam prohibits illicit practices for both and emphasizes on the legal relationship between man and woman. Both kin and non-kin marriages are allowed by Islam.

In the present study, there are a few cases of inter-community marriages where Hindu brides are converted to the fold of Islam and only one woman was found in Agartala ^{who is} not converted but still observing her own religious rituals and festivals and the Muslim husband has consent and cooperation with this. No Muslim girl under study was found ~~as~~ married to a non-Muslim boy (i.e. Hindu), though such incident is not uncommon in Tripura. Regarding the restriction on fifth wife, one of the case studies of north Tripura shows that a man was found ~~as~~ married six times and living with all wives without bothering ^{about} religious rules.

6.2.3. Arrangements of Marriage:

Like early days. in the present day also, marriage is arranged by parents and near relatives. Most of the marriages are settled by the guardians both in villages and towns. About twenty percent are settled by the bride and the bride grooms themselves, by love marriage, by elopement or by the help of the friends and the neighbors. It happens both in villages and towns. Arrange marriage or the negotiated marriages are followed by tradition. Endogamy is the usual character of the community life. Free mixing of boys and girls are not allowed by the community. In the choice of mate, the girls are not allowed freedom to take decision. Girls usually find no objection to the choice and

responsibility taken by the guardians and they abide by the authorities structure of the family where male guardians (father, uncle, brother) take the vital role to arrange marriage. It is found that Muslim girls are not very much aware of their right to consent in marriage. Many times this right is not exercised under the domination of 'fundamentalist' elder brother, mother and step-mother. Sometimes paternal and maternal uncle and aunt play roles in pressurizing them to get marry. Their objection goes useless and they do not get support from others. So as regards the Selection of mates, Muslim girls are very traditional depending fully on the guardians. Sometimes their fascination or preference is given due consideration by the liberal guardians. In this respect boys are given more importance in their choice and decision. This number is increasing day by day because of the change of the time.

6.2.4. Types and Forms of Marriage

The two types of marriages, namely monogamy and polygamy are found among the people under study. Monogamy is obviously prevalent among the Muslims of Tripura like other religious communities. It is the widely accepted form of marriage among them. Polygynous marriage is found there but treated not very normal. It is certainly not the usual rules for them. This empirical truth is reflected in the present study which shows that 97.69 percent is monogamous marriage while 2.31 percent is polygynous marriage.

Table 6.3
Types of Marriage among the Muslims in Villages and Towns

Name of Villages and Towns	Monogamy		Polygamy		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
N.C. Nagar	351	96.69	12	3.31	363	100
Khilpara	171	99.42	1	0.58	172	100
Yazekhowra	244	97.6	6	2.4	250	100
Total Rural	766	97.58	19	2.42	785	100
Agartala	207	97.64	5	2.36	212	100
Udaipur	131	99.24	1	0.76	132	100
Kailasahar	164	97.04	5	2.96	169	100
Total Urban	502	97.85	11	2.15	513	100
Grand Total	1268	100	30	100	1298	100

Arranged or negotiated marriage is a dominant form of marriage in the community. Love marriage is found only a few. In the villages and towns under study, love-marriage is found mostly in case of inter-community marriages and polygynous marriages. A married man may be entangled with an unmarried girl, divorcee or a deserted woman who may be Hindu or Muslim by religion. Such love-marriages usually do not get easy social approval in both the communities because marriage is more social than legal. Under the study, some love marriages are found by eloping of the couple. Some inter-community marriages are examples of this type.

Muslims under present study are found both endogamous (i.e., cousin marriage) and exogamous (i.e., inter community marriage). Non cousin marriage are usually the cases of inter community marriage. Both cousin and non cousin marriage are found to characterize the forms of Muslim marriage. Fatima's marriage with her uncle's son is a good precedent for the followers and this tradition is going on. The people in villages and towns prefer marriage between kinsmen in three lines of paternal parallel cousin (father's brother's daughter), paternal cross cousin (father's sister's daughter) and maternal cross cousin (mother's brother's daughter) and so on. It may be mentioned here that prescribed cross cousin marriage in distant relations is not uncommon among the Hindus and other communities of Tripura. In fact this is an age- old practice in the Indian society. But unlike the Hindus, for the Muslims, it is "obligatory to choose a spouse from among their cousins" or 'kin-marriage is considered by them as obligatory' (Roy: 1992, Rokaiya: 1994). The conscious people think that it is a religious part of their life. It has also some sociological meaning. The reasons for consanguineous marriages observed are as follows:

i) it is because of the tradition followed the since Prophet's time; ii) majority parents find it more convenient to treat their own nieces as their daughter-in-laws, iii) due to lack of resources and narrow communication of social life, they accept it as easy method to get their son and daughter married very soon and without risk; iv) socio-economic reasons are also behind the custom e.g. to reduce the pressure of dowry which has infiltrated into the society; v) to resist the 'move away' of the family property in

which the girl has a legal share. Through the marriage among the close kin (who are not prohibited), they try to avoid the tensions and differences in respect of money transaction e.g., (dower, specially dowry) in the marriages. The parents seek the spouse for their son or daughter not only from the kin but also from their own village or nearest places also. The majority ^{of the} parents in the villages and towns do not to prefer to take risk in their selection of daughter-in-law and son-in-law from much unknown people and distant places. As a result in all the districts under study are either from the villages and same subdivision or same district. It was found that the people of border-area select the spouse from the adjacent villages of Bangladesh. However, the number of non-kin marriage is increasing because of education and employment and change of residence.

6.2.5. Age at First Marriage

in the monarchical period of Tripura, Mohamadan boys were generally married between the ages of fifteen to twenty and the brides were often married in infant age; 'the bride's father give her away' (Hunter : 1874). In the present study a number of child marriage are found among the people of old age group. The table 6.4 shows the age at first marriage among the Muslim women in villages

Table no. 6.4
Age at first Marriage among the Muslim Women in Villages

Name of Villages								
Age at first marriage	N.C. Nagar		Khilpara		Yeajekhowra		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Up to 12 Years	20	4.65	17	7.73	10	3.30	47	4.93
13 to 15 Years	139	32.33	73	33.18	72	23.76	284	29.80
16 to 18 Years	161	37.44	66	30.00	132	43.56	359	37.67
19 to 21 Years	93	21.63	45	20.45	69	22.77	207	21.72
22 to 24 Years	11	2.56	14	6.36	18	5.94	43	4.51
25 to 27 Years	6	1.40	3	1.36	2	0.66	11	1.15
28 to 30 Years	0	0.00	2	0.91	0	0.00	2	0.21
31+ Years	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00
Total Married	430	100.00	220	100.00	303	100.00	953	100.00

Table 6.5
Age at first marriage among the Muslim Women in Towns

Age at first marriage	Name of Towns							
	Agartala		Udaipur		Kailasahar		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Up to 12 Years	23	8.55	6	3.77	17	8.42	46	7.30
13 to 15 Years	98	36.43	29	18.24	57	28.22	184	29.21
16 to 18 Years	96	35.69	68	42.77	93	46.04	257	40.79
19 to 21 Years	35	13.01	38	23.90	23	11.39	96	15.24
22 to 24 Years	13	4.83	14	8.81	9	4.46	36	5.71
25 to 27 Years	4	1.49	3	1.89	3	1.49	10	1.59
28 to 30 Years	0	0.00	1	0.63	0	0.00	1	0.16
31+ Years	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00
Total Married	269	100.00	159	100.00	202	100.00	630	100.00

The data presented in the Table no. 6.4 shows that highest frequency in the age group of 16 to 18 for girls both in villages and towns. It is found that no village or town goes without child marriage. The highest number in Agartala followed by Kailasahar and Khilpara. Child marriage (13-15) is higher in urban group (Table 6.5). Obviously it is found more in the older age group. But still young girls are married in between 16 to 18 years. As a result the mean age has not increased much for the Muslim girls.

The highest number of child marriage is found in Agartala (8.55 %) having a little difference with that of Kailasahar town (8.42 %). A small number of women is found married between 25 to 27 years in towns and villages. Only one woman in Udaipur town (0.66 %) and two women at Khilpara village (0.99 %) are found being married at the age of 28-30 years and above. Some observation are to be here : noted that i) Child marriage is higher in urban sample (7.30 %) compared to the rural (4.93%); ii) Girls' marriage in the last three age groups (25 to 27, 28 to 30, and 31 and above) is very less frequent and it has no significant difference between towns and villages; iv) The mean age of their marriage both in towns and villages is sixteen plus. From the male-female view, it is clear that girls are married at earlier age than boys. Most of the Muslim boys (Table no. 6.6 and 6.7) are married between the ages of 25 to 27 years except in Agartala

where majority of them are married in early age of 19 to 21 years. Child marriage (below 15 years) was also found among the aged men of most of the villages and towns.

Table 6.6
Age at First Marriage among the Muslim Men in Villages

Name of Villages								
Age at first marriage	N.C. Nagar		Khilpara		Yeajekhowra		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Up to 12 Years	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00
13 to 15 Years	3	0.81	2	1.14	0	0.00	5	0.63
16 to 18 Years	28	7.53	14	7.95	16	6.37	58	7.26
19 to 21 Years	63	16.94	30	17.05	53	21.12	146	18.27
22 to 24 Years	95	25.54	41	23.30	51	20.32	187	23.40
25 to 27 Years	102	27.42	43	24.43	66	26.29	211	26.41
28 to 30 Years	58	15.59	21	11.93	44	17.53	123	15.39
31+ Years	23	6.18	25	14.20	21	8.37	69	8.64
Total Married	372	100.00	176	100.00	251	100.00	799	100.00

Table no.6.7
Age at First Marriage among the Muslim Men in Towns

Name of Towns								
Age at first Marriage	Agartala		Udaipur		Kailasahar		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Up to 12 Years	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00
13 to 15 Years	4	1.85	0	0.00	1	0.58	5	0.96
16 to 18 Years	35	16.20	0	0.00	23	13.37	58	11.11
19 to 21 Years	52	24.07	27	20.15	36	20.93	115	22.03
22 to 24 Years	46	21.30	24	17.91	42	24.42	112	21.46
25 to 27 Years	39	18.06	48	35.82	41	23.84	128	24.52
28 to 30 Years	30	13.89	22	16.42	21	12.21	73	13.98
31+ Years	10	4.63	13	9.70	8	4.65	31	5.94
Total Married	216	100.00	134	100.00	172	100.00	522	100.00

The data in Table no. 6.6 and Table no. 6.7 shows the age at first marriage of men in villages and towns. It is seen that in villages the frequency of age at first marriage for men is between 25 to 27 years, while in towns the frequency is highest in between 19 to 21 years.

Table 6.8
Mean Age of First Marriage among Muslims in Villages and Towns (Total)

Name of Villages				
Sex	N.C. Nagar	Khilpara	Yazekhowra	Total
Male	24.28	24.64	24.58	24.9
Female	16.73	16.85	17.22	16.93
Name of Towns				
	Agartala	Udaipur	Kailasahar	
Male	22.93	25.33	23.38	23.88
Female	16.29	17.75	16.48	16.84

Among the rural People, the mean age for girls' is 16.93 i.e., below 18 years. For the boys, the mean age is 24.9 years. Similarly among urban people the mean age for girls is 16.84 years, for men 23.88 years. It shows the tendency of early marriage for both women and men in the town. Reasons for early marriage of Muslim girls lies in the fact that Muslim parents like to get their daughter married as early as possible due to their socio-economic disabilities. Recently, the spread of dowry system helps negatively to rise their age in marriage. Besides spread of education may have some effect on this.

6.2.6. Dower:

Provision for dower (*mehr*) is one of the Islamic orientations for the Muslim Community. Dower is a sum of money sanctioned to the wife from the husband at the time of marriage before or after the consumption of marriage. It may be either 'prompt' or 'deferred'. Few men and women are aware that it is a 'token of honor' to the bride as well as security money for the future, especially for any misfortunes of marital dissolution. The people have been observing this custom since their inception in Tripura. It is observed and the data supports that the Muslims of north district are very particular to this rules of religion in comparison to other districts. Hunter wrote that 'it is a customary to register a certain document by which a dower of about Rs. 100 is settled upon the bride, and among the respectable classes, such a paper carries with it a certain legal rights and duty laid down in 'Mohamadan law book'. But among the poorer classes, it is so much a waste paper and that the bride is simply bought by her future husband' (Hunter: 1874). The price value of dower was Rs. 30 to Rs. 60.

Even after the fifty years of Independence, the nature and amount of the fixation of dower has not been changed much. However the amount varies according to the socio-economic status of both parties. It is observed that a tendency to fix small amount of money as dower exists among the people of towns and villages. Among the old and middle aged people, the amount varies from Rs. 45 to 501; among the economically sound people, the amount may be Rs 1,001 to 10,000/ ; and the highest amount of dower money is found Rs. 1,00,000. Dower is usually found in terms of land property. The highest quantity of land as dower was found ^{to be} one acre ^{of} cultivable land including tilla and lunga or forest in a village of north district. The ornaments presented as gifts are mostly silver made. Use of gold as dower or dowry is found less among the Muslims. The people of upper level of social status use to follow the rate of middle amount dower in accordance with their economic ability. Obviously most of these are deferred dower.

The common people follow the custom only for formality-sake and they give no importance to it as an “effective means” to check divorce or polygyny. The Table no 6.9 shows that a large number of people in villages (93.94%) and towns (95.21%) of Tripura remain out of any transaction of dower money either because of their ignorance or because of their negligence to this ritual agreement. Being asked about the amount of dower promised in their marriage, they answered “nothing” or “do not know”; more wonder that they did not know whether their marriage was written or oral. Some women informants told that they did not heard about ‘*Kabinnama*’. Therefore it can be assumed on the basis of given data that most of the marriages were ‘oral’; there was no evidence of any written documents as a proof of transaction of dower - whether prompt or deferred.

The Table no.6.9 shows that out of the total explicit transaction of dower payment, the number of prompt dower is 3.02% which is pushed by the percentage of one village Yeajekhowra. That village holds 32 prompt dowers out of 251 marriages (12.74%). The nature of the payment was mostly in kinds of land and ornaments. The total number of transaction in towns is 25 out of 522 (4.21%) and in village 55 out of 799 (6.88%); among the total transaction cases of 80, fifty percent are deferred dower. The percentage of deferred dower is higher in towns (3.02%) than in villages (2.25%). As regards the

prompt dower, the status of village, especially Yeajekhowra is better. The percentage of transaction may be a little higher than this displayed in the table as many women informants were not aware of this. However, the poor percentage of this transaction of dower is evident from the table. The majority people were unaware of the importance of dower as a compulsory part of Muslim marriage. Some aged women in villages told that in their times, it was father-in-law who brought the daughter-in-law giving her required ornaments, clothes etc. and the parents of the brides were used to give only one or two articles of gift in their options. Such marriages are also found still today.

In ^{the} present study, women were asked about their right on deferred dower (e.g. whether they did receive the *mehr* money), some of them reacted in reply. They considered it as the payment after dissolution of marital bond. Most of them had withdrawn their demand on *mehr* money by mutual understanding between husband and wife. But why they have remitted this? They replied that as they trust ^{ed} their husband, as the husbands are entrusted all the responsibility of the wives, so they did not like to see them ~~as~~ a life long liability for this. None of the informants told about any pressure for remittance of dower from the in-law or husband. Hence in question of dower, the people are found not so strict, rather a bit ~~of~~ indifferent. The existing custom, to forgo her right of dower is prevalent in Tripura as found in some parts of India. Women are not very familiar ~~with~~ the dower and its associated rules. There are few cases of prompt dower among the Muslims in north Tripura. Only in case of disputes, the question of mehrana comes for discussion. The Islamic provision of maintenance for *iddat* period is rarely experienced by the people. Hence dower is going to be only a ritual value as observed by Sahay in the context of Muslim Telis of Delhi (Sahay, 1996).

6.2.7. Dowry

Dowry means institutionalized transaction of gifts and cash from the side of bride giver to the bride taken as an inevitable part of marriage. The material of daily use for the new couple is gifted to the bride from her father. It is a deep-rooted Hindu custom and introduced later in the marriage of Indian Muslims.

Like all India, the dowry practice exists among the Muslims in two common forms i.e. voluntary and on demand. Not only the economically well off people but also the poor and incapables are being habituated with dowry practice. The practice is going on from the rich to poor, from the town to village, though not flatly among all. It is reported by the villagers that since 1970, the change has come to them. The people of more than fifty years of age confirms the statement. They say that they do not believe in this practice as their own experience is opposite to this custom and they remind the practice of dower prevalent in the past. At their time, it was the only in-laws of the bride who brought their daughter-in-law giving some gifts to her. The part played by the bride-giver was nominal in this respect. But at present the young persons have viewed in favor of dowry as it is the order of the day. Different views exist not only on the basis of age group but also on the locality and personal achievements like education, service, social status etc. The demand of dowry was rare in two decades ago while it is now a common talk to the people. But still, the practice is not insisting in nature. It is still voluntary rather than compulsory. As because the Muslim marriage is very simple in character, and most of the people are poor, the custom has not rooted deep in the community. The present study shows that the demand of dowry is not in the level of compulsion in Tripura like other states of West Bengal or Delhi or Kerala. Although the

Table no.6.9
Payment of Dower among the Muslims in Villages and Towns

Villages	Types of Payment							
	Prompt Dower(in kind/cash)		Deferred Dower		Nothing		Total married	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
N.C. Nagar	3	.80	12	3.22	357	95.97	372	100.00
Khilpara	2	1.13	4	2.27	170	96.59	176	100.00
Yazekhowra	32	12.74	2	.80	217	86.45	251	100.00
Total Rural	37	4.63	18	2.25	744	93.11	799	100.00
Towns								
Agartala	0	0.00	7	3.24	209	96.76	216	100.00
Udaipur	1	0.75	5	3.73	128	95.52	134	100.00
Kailasahar	2	1.16	10	5.81	160	93.02	172	100.00
Total Urban	3	0.57	22	4.21	497	95.21	522	100.00
Grand Total	40	3.02	40	3.02	1241	93.94	1321	100.00

educated and high-income group of people is more concerned about this, but no necessary link was found between education and quantum of dowry. Some educated young men are found to marry without bothering this, as they are aware of the Islamic rules which do not permit this. At last, the deep enquiry in Tripura shows that Muslim marriage is a combination of both dower and dowry. In other words, it is a composite result of the two existing heritage of Hindu and Muslim culture i.e. Hindu culture of *Sampradana* and Muslim culture of *Mahrana*.

Table no. 6.10
Payment of Dowry among the Muslims in Village and Towns

Name of Villages	Types of Payment in Villages / Towns									
	Only Cash		Only Kind		Both Cash and Kind		No. Transaction		Total Married Population	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
N. C. Nagar	3	0.80	16	4.30	1	0.26	352	94.62	372	100
Khilpara	9	5.11	7	3.98	6	3.41	154	87.5	176	100
Yazekhowra	46	18.33	9	3.59	1	0.40	195	77.69	251	100
Total	58	7.26	32	4.00	8	1.00	711	88.98	799	100
Towns										
Agartala.	5	2.31	18	8.33	5	2.31	188	87.04	216	100
Udaipur	11	8.21	11	8.21	4	2.98	108	80.60	134	100
Kailasahar	1	0.58	10	5.81	3	1.74	158	91.86	172	100
Total	17	3.25	39	7.47	12	2.29	454	86.92	522	100
Grand Total	75	5.68	71	5.37	20	1.51	1165	88.19	1331	100

The Table no. 6.10 shows that in the payment of dowry, the percentage of 'No transaction' and 'don't know' covers 88.19 percent of 1321 married people. Dowry is still not a widespread problem in the community. The transactions in cash or kind are only 5.68 and 5.37 percent respectively. The percentage of both cash and kind is very negligible. It speaks itself about the less importance of dowry. The data also reveals the difference in cash demands between villages and towns. On the other hand, transaction in kind of gift is higher in the towns (5.37%) than those in the villages (4.0%). In fact dowry is a recent phenomena and not more than two decades. One young girl recently married, told the present researches that all the furniture e.g. motorcycle, tape recorder, T.V. etc. displayed in her room, were from her parental gifts. The parents have given

these voluntarily to have good son-in-law and to keep the daughter in comfort in the poor house of the in-laws and to show, above all, their status. Sometimes they do this by indebt also. Sometimes the new couple family is supported by some gifts like land or cash money- capital for business on the voluntary will of the bride-givers. People do not take it into the account of dowry. This may be one of the causes of high percentage of 'no transaction'.

6.2.8. Polygyny

Polygynous union is approved by Islam under certain conditions. The institution of polygyny (a husband with more than one wife) is as old as human civilization. It is a feature of patriarchy and male dominated social system (**Puri :1987, Engineer :1987, Menon; 1992**). It is no wonder that since 1941, polygamous marriage among the Muslims is lower than that of the Hindus and tribes (**Ahmed: 1976, Mondal: 2001**). The scholars opine that polygyny is not a characteristic feature of the Muslim as it is believed by the common people.

In the past, polygyny was practiced in a good number in the Tipparah district. Hunter observed "if there is great deal of household work, a second wife is required either to supplement or to act as an additional head servant"(**Hunter :1874**). Polygyny happens to day also, not always on the basis of reasonable ground sanctioned by law but on very irrational causes i.e. only for pleasure. The percentage of such happenings is obviously insignificant at present. Though there is no statistical record of the past, but the people experienced and observed the truth.

As we have seen in our earlier discussion that, out of total 1298 marriages only 30 (2.31%) are polygynous (Table no. 6.3). The shows that highest number of polygamous marriage was found at N.C. Nagar (i.e. 3.31%), while it is lowest at Khilpara village (0.58%). Almost an equal percentage of polygamy is found in Udaipur town (0.76%). But in Agartala, it is 2.36 percent and 2.40 percent at Yeajekhowra village. So it is to be noted that in comparison to west district and north district, the practice of polygyny is very insignificant in the south district. It is observed that polygamous families do not

necessarily belong to the lower income group or lower status group. This is found in all economic status of the people. It is found that a polygynous man, whatever ~~be~~ his social status, has a certain level of income to provide more than one wife and children. It is found among the politically powerful and economically well-off people like local leader or political activist, school teacher, contractor, businessman, bakery and meat-shop owner, grocer and sweet-shop owner who are able to maintain families either in the same kitchen or separate kitchen. But the people like day-labourer, rickshaw puller, raj-mistree or 'jogale', have been indulged in remarriage but not polygynous as such. They are either deserter or deserted, and they do not usually live with more than one wife. For example, in the north district, a man of lower status earned a lot of money and then leaned towards re-marriages one after another without dissolving the first and he maintained the wives secretly in separate arrangements. However polygynous marriage so far recorded in the study areas is mainly the cases of double wives except a few. One exceptional case was found in the district of north Tripura. A local leader married four times and maintained all the wives under the common hearth. Being asked about his remarriages, he justified ~~by saying~~ ^{at saying} ~~by saying~~ way that one wife was not enough to take care of him and also to protect his huge property in the village. However, the incident of double wives is found in other communities despite the laws of the country. Polygynous marriage happens mainly because of love-affairs between a married man and an unmarried girl or a deserted woman in the community or outside the community (i.e. Hindu Bengali girl). The first wife is usually bound to accept this because of her economic dependence or for the welfare of the children. But the wife who has ability or financial support from parents, lives separate from such type of husband. The practice is obviously near to be disappeared specially among the young people of less than forty years of age. They are conscious about the perception of other community towards them. . In this study, this practice is significantly absent among the educated young men. The common people, both men and women, dislike this practice as it invites so many complexities. Mother never supports their daughter to get married ~~to~~ a married man. Recently, the awareness of women, disapproval of neighbors or relatives and spread of education might have acted against the practice of polygynous marriages.

Therefore, it can safely be concluded that polygyny in Tripura is a social phenomena rather than a religious one; even if it had good in number, it will not be a normal feature of the society. Their socio-economic backwardness is mainly responsible for the social stigma against the community. There is a gradual decrease of such marriage among the Muslims of India (*Census of India: 1991*).

6.2.9. Separation, Divorce and Desertion

Separation:

The incidence of separation of the spouses cannot be neglected to assess the status of Muslim women. It is found in the present study that 17 women (0.54%) are found living in separated status. It is not a judicial separation but the spouses live in separate arrangement. A Woman lives separate from the husband because of (i) his remarriage, (ii) torture by him and his kin, (iii) some issue oriented conflict and acute tension (iv) disliking for one of the spouses. She maintains separation either by going to her natal house or by remaining in the husband's house but in a separate room and arrangement. She may or may not take the financial help from him. In this state of separation, her status is not abandoned or deserted one, because this is the mid-position between the probable re-union of the spouses and final separation (divorce) from each other. Separation happens in all levels of economic status.

The Table no. 6.1 on marital status of Muslim women in shows that percent of female is in the separate status.

Divorce (Talaq):

Talaq or Divorce is the formal separation between the spouses from their marital tie. It is the break up of the family unit or disorganization of family. Among four kinds of divorces, talaq or divorce by husband is prevalent in the community. It has been the most powerful form for the dissolution of marriage in the hands of man since the Pre Islamic days of Arab. But Islam admits divorce on certain grounds subject to certain formalities. Talaq is affected in two ways - one is 'oral talaq' and the other is 'written talaq'.

In the present data, the Table no 6.1 shows that 1.72 percent and 1.49 percent women are found as divorced by oral talaq in two villages i.e. N.C. Nagar and Khilpara respectively. From the residential point of view also, the number of female divorcee is more in village (1.16%) than that of town (0.31%). The number of male divorcee is insignificant in village (0.19%) and nil in town (Table no 6.2). It indicates that the male divorcees, in most cases, were remarried. This data refutes the popular notion about Yeazekhowra as a talaq-prone village Yeajekhowa has least percent of Talaq (0.29%). Rather, a considerable percentage of women divorcees were found in Kailasahar town i.e. (0.64 %). Remarriage of women may be a probable case for insignificant number of divorcee women at Yeajekhowra.

Islamic Laws says that if and when a woman is to be divorced by a man, she should be divorced in kindness or with a feeling of heart, not in anger and this should be in presence of two arbiters: i) one from wife's side, and ii) other from husband's side. Usually a man does not bother ^{about} these instructions. The unreasonable practice goes on though it is not in consonance with the spirit of the Quran.

The wife's right to separation is permitted by the Quran (i.e.Sura Bakra), on some grounds only to avoid the evil consequences of unhappy marriage (Sen; 1979). For present study, it is reported that a few cases are there when a woman makes bound the man to give her 'talaq' to get easy marriage with her second choice. But the incidence of woman taking initiative for talaq is limited in microscopic level. A Muslim woman may take the help of Personal law of the Dissolution of Muslim Marriage Act, 1939 which basically intended to restrain the upper hand role of man. But in present study there is no court case of women demanding divorce but mainly demanding maintenance.

The general causes of talaq observed in the present study of Tripura are:

- i) Polygynous tendency of man – his extra marital involvement and remarriage.
- ii) The dominating character of man, which often deny the personality of the other spouses and it leads to the tensed relationship damaging the normal & frank understandings.

- iii) Cruelty, selfishness, abuse of wife and above all, lack of proper understanding between the spouses.
- iv) Result of long day separation/desertion and the negative attitude towards financial responsibility for wife and children;
- v) The momentary expression of anger. This is also not rare in case of Tripura.
- vi) Pressure for bringing money from the natal house of wife. This un-Islamic influence of dowry has recently affected the position of women in the Muslim society. The local newspaper often serves the news of dowry related tortures and even death of Muslim girl like her counterpart in the Hindu society.
- vii) Lastly, it is the experience of the people that it is generally the illegal lust of man which is responsible for this tragic events of divorce, dowry-death etc.

It is relevant here to note the observation of the special judge in Delhi High Court. He says that the people marry for the sake of pleasure without the least thought about the future of their first wife and children. His statement confirms here the first and last causes of divorce. Muslim laws and customs allowed divorce as subject to certain conditions but a husband uses it more abruptly. The present investigating data confirm polygyny or adultery as one of the important causes of divorce. It is also true that remarriage of man does not necessarily lead to divorce in the Muslim community if this is not indulged or aggravated by other causes mentioned above. Muslim girls are very much tolerant about the remarriage of husband, perhaps due to the habit of traditional life. The number of 30 Polygynous families (2.31%) proves this fact where the first wife and children were dependent on the man. It also signifies the financial constraints for women in the community.

The After-effects of Talaq

Women and children are the more victims ^{rather} than the men. The sociologists agree in a point that the negative aspect of the provision of divorce is much stronger than its positive aspect. According to the Muslim Law, father is a usual custodian of children and a mother is also entitled to custody of children until they are 7 years old or they attain puberty; the father will have to pay the maintenance even if the children are not

living with ~~him~~. The court can refuse custody to the mother if it really finds that mother is of bad character or suffering from mental illness.

In this present study, only two cases are found where the divorced mothers are refused by the divorcee fathers to have any one of the several children in mothers' custody. In one case (Yeajekhowra), the woman had no means of self support except her physical labour and a piece of land from paternal property. Her ex-husband is so vindictive that he never allowed even the youngest child to meet the mother. She has no means to go to the Court and thus deprived of her right to be a custodian of children. In another case, Sofia, a mother and victim of unilateral divorce has to go back to the natal house and get married for second time. In most of the cases of desertion or formal talaq, the young children remain with their mother with or without maintenance. Sometimes it is found that the elder children remain with the father. As majority women belong to the poverty, they can not exert their right. Despite all the limitations they are able to come to court to obtain maintenance and it indicates their self awareness.

Desertion:

Muslim women are often victim of desertion. It is one of the major characteristics of their marital status. Desertion means separation from each other without reasonable cause or consent of other. It is an unofficial status of separation when either husband or wife moves out of the house. It is an Un Islamic practice not supported by the Quran or Shariat. It is an illegal practice for the believers of Islam. Generally it is the man who is deserter though woman deserter is not uncommon.. This is a kind of male's behavior, which is most unpredictable in nature. One of the apprehending factors affecting seriously the status of a married woman is desertion. No certainty is there for why and when it will happen in her life. It plays an important role in the familial disorganization of the community. It also appears to the present researcher that the deserters come from low-income group with a few exceptions. Like a Hindu counterpart belonging to low-income and low-caste group, Muslim man also prefers desertion to divorce. Though talaq is a customary privilege for Muslim man, but to avoid the religious formalities (i.e. to give dower money) and other social questions, he prefers desertion—the easiest way of

separation. As a result, desertion is higher in comparison to divorce in number. There is no wonder that no man is found in deserted status either in rural or urban sample. In contrast, 41 women (1.29%) are found as deserted in addition to 17 women (0.54%) in addition to separation status. The traditional explanation of the difference in rural-urban is not sufficient to explain the phenomenon when one sees that the number of desertion is highest in capital town Agartala (3.05%) and almost equal number is found in the remote village Yeazekhowra (2.18%). The second highest number of deserted women is found at N.C. Nagar village. The low socio-economic status of life favors desertion of women. It is very much found in the low income group both in town and villages illiteracy, poverty and other causes are responsible for the number of desertions.

The causes for desertion ~~are~~ as observed are as follows: i) A man deserts his wife when he is entangled with other woman in extra marital relation; ii) when he wants to conceal his second marriage or remarriage; iii) when he is reluctant or unwilling to bear the financial responsibility of wife and children; vi) a deserter may be a vagabond in nature and mentally or physical incapable to bear the liability of family; disliking or any kind of psychological reason may be also a factor for the incident; to evade the socio-religious pressure and the cost of talaq in financial term. Thus a man wants to escape himself from all liabilities and social disapprobation when he is lost by himself from his own house and family. The poor woman burdened with children realizes the shock after waiting a considerable time for his coming back. Desertion is not rare among the people of better socio-economic status. It also may arise from a conflict between the spouses involving two families and their ego fight and issues of conflict are many. It is reported that a newly married woman is asked to forgo her job and to ^{disown} ~~deny~~ the responsibility of her widow mother and insane sister in her natal family— even when there is no male member to look after them; ~~If~~ she is not subjugated to these inhumane demands of husband and mother-in-law, she is thrown away or threatened to be the victim of desertion. The deserted young girl may wait for long time to hear the last news of the second marriage of the husband. It is observed that a Muslim male prefers

to desert the wife rather to give talaq (divorce) as because formal talaq invites for him some religious formalities and financial responsibility and also some social criticism.

The query is whether a Muslim woman prefers desertion to divorce like her counter part in the Hindu community (Mondal: 1997). The enquiry reveals that usually a Muslim woman when she becomes a mother and financially dependent, does not want 'talaq' or 'break-off' the marital tie, rather she tolerates desertion like her counter part in Hindu community. In the first device of desertion, it is the man who leaves the house and woman is supposed to stay in the man's house with his children, parents of the man and other relatives of the in laws family. In this way, she does not become shelter-less immediately or thrown away from the known circle; though financial flow is stopped for the family, she gets time to adapt with the situation; nobody can deny also her legal claim on his property, i.e. his homestead and others. But if she is deserted in a rented house, then she falls in double strains and troubles. There is another device of desertion. It appears when she is sent to her natal house with the motive to desert her. As he does not want her coming back, he cuts off all sorts of communication with her. The husband takes this device when the wife is without issue and he has motive of second marriage. In all these devices, the marital tie is virtually broken; despite of all these, she compromises with desertion rather than talaq, which seems to her a bolt from the blue. Sometimes a woman is deserted for life long. Man does not give her formal talaq with a bad intention to give a lesson to his 'unruly and disobedient wife', so that she can not be free from the legal marital binding and seek remarriage. Most of the women of such status lose their will and test for remarriage due to their bitter experiences, as well as the hindrances to remarriage. All these are data-based statements. Most of the deserted women who are young in age, in Agartala and Yeazekhowra, belong to the poor class signifying that they are not able to secure civil divorce from the court as well as to get remarried. The case where woman deserts a husband is not very rare. Desertion is undoubtedly a social problem as it implies 'undesirable pattern of behavior of an individual living in concrete set of social life'. As the after-effect of desertion the

miserable condition of the children and mother is known to every one. A deserter man never takes the responsibility of children. If she intends re-marriage, she is either to obtain the civil divorce from the court or to make the man pressurized for giving her talaq.

6.2.10. Remarriage of Woman

When a married woman loses her husband by his death or separation, desertion or divorce, ^{she} can be remarried by Islam. Unlike the Hindu society, remarriage of an “unfortunate” woman to bring her fortune again is not an undignified matter in the Muslim society. Islam is very much sympathetic to the victims of misfortune. A man, who marries a “widow” is considered to have done something very good and he will get always the blessings of almighty God. This sanction by Islam is quite in favor of a helpless woman to provide her food, shelter and security for the rest of life. No social stigma is attached to the marriage of a widow or divorcee woman. Muslim society considers the remarriage of women as very normal. This positive attitude towards woman is based on the recognition of the womenfolk as human being. It raises her position high in contrast to the position of Hindu woman. In the 6th century A.D, though the Hindu law of “Parasar Samhita” of Hindu Dharma Shastra permitted second marriage for women under certain conditions like if he is dead or outcast or impotent, or becomes ascetic but Hindu society is conservative enough regarding the remarriage of widow even when she is economically independent. The Hindu traditional value system thus negates the position and rights of women. This prevailing social system i.e. ideas and value of the majority peoples, has also effected the Muslims of India. As a result, widow marriage has become strictly taboo among the respectable classes of the Muslims. Still today widow marriage or remarriage of woman do not happen in large number among the people of higher strata. In the lower strata also, some other constraints are on the way of remarriage of woman. In actual practice, no easy redresses is there for the unfortunate women to ensure their safety, dignity and survival. In Tripura context, till the decade of 1960, widow marriage was found in a number but majority are not. It is just from the experience of the people. No such study or statistical data is available.

Table no 6.11
Distribution of Remarried Women in Villages and Towns

Name of Town/Village	STATUS						
	Widow	Divorcee	Deserted	Separated	Total	Total Remarried (%)	Total population
N.C. Nagar	1	1	1	0	3	0.37	813
Khilpara	0	1	0	0	1	0.25	402
Yeajekhowra	1	2	1	0	4	0.58	686
Total Rural	2	4	2	0	8	0.42	1901
Agartala	1	0	1	0	2	0.38	525
Udaipur	0	0	1	0	1	0.35	283
Kailasahar	0	0	1	0	1	0.21	468
Total Urban	1	0	3	0	4	0.85	1276
Total	3	4	5	0	12	0.38	3177

The presence of quite a good number of widows both in towns and villages under the present study reveals this truth of the society. Remarriage of women in the present sample is not uncommon but insignificant in percentage. They are only 8 (0.42%) in the rural group and 4 (0.85%) in the urban group. Only 12 women out of total females (1276) are remarried, 3 of them are widow, 4 are divorced and 3 are deserted. Remarriage of woman often happened among the deserted or divorced young women, even along with her children of previous wedlock. They are married usually with the widower man, divorced or a man used to polygamy and seldom with a bachelor. The above Table no. 6.11 shows that only out of 12 remarried women, 8 women are distributed in 3,1,4, in the villages of N.C Nagar, Khilpara and Yeajekhowra respectively and 4 women distributed in 2,1,1, in Agartala, Udaipur and Kailasahar.

All of the women were married for second time and two of them were married for three times. The percentage of woman's remarriage revealed in the study indicates that remarriage of woman is not very easy and not always happy solution for the unfortunate girls. Analysis of the case studies reflects another truth that the reason of women's remarriage lies in the circumstantial causes of their ill fate. But the remarriage of man is not so. The percentage of remarried men is obviously larger than those of women. In Yeajekhowra village, they were 19, married more than once. And in most cases except

a few, they married for pleasure. For the polygamous marriages, there was no valid reason for them under study. Given data on the marital status of women make it very distinct that the status of Muslim women is low.

6.2.11. Case studies

Remarriage of Widow

Case 1. Sayeda was only twenty years old when her old husband died leaving behind his first wife with adult sons and his second wife Sayeda along with a male baby of two years. When the man was alive, Sayeda was tortured by the first wife and the man also took no care of her and made no provision for her future security. As a result, after his death she along with the baby was driven out from the house and deprived of any share from his property. She got no financial backing from her relatives who were also very poor. She became mentally upset and found no other alternative but to beg for survival. Under the condition, when she accepted this way of life (i.e. begging), she met a man named, Abu, one of her distant relative^s. He came to her as an angel from heaven and being very sympathetic, took her in his small house where he stayed only for night-halt; the whole day he wandered from village to village for his earning in the occupation of hawker. Gradually the love and affection between them led to their marital relation. Since then, Sayeda never went out of the home and she was engaged in household works and looking after her son and husband. When the present researcher met them, Abu was not present in the house. Sayeda told that she^{had} become very happy for last six years in the second marriage. Abu loved her son and considered him not as step-son but as “gift of Allah” in his words. His income^{had} increased after marriage. So, he was also very happy.

He^{had} extended his house and re-built it in a better way. They had a small yard where her “restless” son used to play and a small kitchen garden where Abu worked hard in his leisure. Sayeda’s son or their son was reading in a primary school of the village. This is an exceptional case of happy remarriage.

Case 2. Asafun Nessa Khatun was a widow of young age. So she was married with a widower, her brother-in-law. This marriage has been continuing for a long time. Now she is 63 years old. Both of them had children of their previous wedlock. Her first son of previous wedlock is a driver of government vehicles and he earns enough. He lives separately from her mother's family but maintains a good relation with her. The two houses are side by side situated on the road side of Jagaharimura. She often comes to the house of her son and passes time with the grand children. She is an illiterate woman and does not understand the urban dialect. Her calm and quiet face, her eyes speaks something which the present researcher could realize only.

Case 3. Jaheda Khatun was remarried for three times. Her first husband was an aged man and died soon. The second husband deserted her and so did the third. Out of her first wedlock she has one daughter and got her married. She had to do the arrangements all by herself and she did not get any help from the second or third husband. At present she has to manage herself on her own. For livelihood, she works as a day labour or irregular domestic maid. For her misfortunes, she blames the Muslim men who frequently desert the wives without caring her present and future. She expressed her grievances against the Muslim marriage system which gives no security and stability of women's life. Being asked about the marriage of her daughter, she reports that the in-law house of her daughter is good. The daughter along with her baby often comes to look after the mother though she lives in a distant village.

Remarriage of Divorced women

Case 4. Amirunessa in Jubarajnagar (Kailasahar) was divorced within few years, as she could not give birth of child. Then after some years, she is married with a widower named Ambar Ali at Yazekhowra village. Ambar Ali, 50 years old and well known man for his large garden of rubber plantation in the village. He also earns something from his cycle repairing shop. So he has money and Amirunessa is his third wife. He told the researcher that his first wife is still alive with their two sons in a distant house of the same village. She took separation in their early-married life. So Ambar Ali married for second time and he was happy with his second wife and their six children.

But unfortunately second wife fall on a sudden death leaving the last issue of only four years. He was shocked and he had no intention for remarriage. So when he has taken the help of the relative women or neighbor women to look after the children, then he has to face the difficulties with the criticism of illegal relation, which is totally false. In the village life there is no facility of keeping whole-timer maid as it is available in town life. So, at last, after a thought of pros and cons, he has to marry for third time. Under this condition, Amirun Nessa being divorced from the first husband is only a means to his life. She agreed to this marriage, as she needed a permanent shelter under a man of economic well being. Amirun looks like a strong healthy and tall woman and below thirty years old. She was noticed as listening to all the conversation between the present researcher and her husband but did not come in front. She was accompanied by other women, either relatives or neighbour who were moving their heads in confirmation with the talks of the present researcher.

Case 5. Pinnua Begum of Khilpara village is a graduate school teacher. It is reported that her first marriage in earlier age was durable for a short period due to some complexities among the in-laws. ^{After} Being divorced, she ~~has~~ completed her higher education and secured a job of a school teacher. After a long time of her single status, she has been involved in love with one of her colleagues. She married the man who was already a family-man of few grown up sons and daughters. This is the second marriage for both. They now live with their new born baby in a separate establishment. The first wife and the children are in their own house; some maintenance-money is sent to them. It is reported that the remarriage of Pinnua Begum with a man being already married has been criticized by the people of the community and she is cornered by many of her relatives and neighbors.

Case 6. The life story of Sofia Khatun of Sonamura is a very interesting case of remarriage. She was married two times with her same husband and once with another man for a short period. The story is that when she was a mother of two sons she was given talaq by her husband of bad temperament. After talaq, this young mother had to leave the house and children instantly. The poor guardians of Sofia in the natal house

gave her second marriage; she came to her own original house being third time married with her first husband. The fact was that her husband became repented after pronouncing talaq and her father-in-law was a very sensible and wise man who took initiative to bring her back to the home. He managed the man with whom she was married for second time, to give her 'talaq' for second time. She being free from second marital tie, was again married with her ex-husband. Father-in-law presented her a piece of land (15 ganda) for her future security. Her husband never committed such mistake again in life. Sofia said that her husband was not a bad man but because of his ill health and suffering from disease for long days, he behaved as a short-tempered man. In the later phase of their life they were happy with more three offspring. Now she is 59 years old. After the death of husband she is with her youngest son. But the other sons, though separate, take care of their mother. Sofia is an honest, simple and laborious woman.

Remarriage of Deserted Women

Case 7. Monorama Begam, a deserted woman of below 40 years of age was remarried with Kalu Mia of N.C.Nagar village. Manorama was a mother of 4 children when she was abandoned by her husband in Bangladesh. Kalu Mia, about 50 years of age, went ^{to} Bangladesh and married Monorama along with her children. After a year, he came from Bangladesh in his village, N.C.Nagar where he has his first family, his wife and grown up children. Monorama came with Kalu Mia and had to face the tension to adjust with his first families as well as with the neighbors who did not support such marriage of Kalu Mia. The immediate problem for the family was financial. Kalu Mia, being a mere small contractor, could not manage such a large family consisting of more than eight grown up children, two wives and he himself. There was always some chaos in the family, as the neighbour reported. Despite all these constraints, Monorama was trying to adjust with the new social situation. She earned security neither for present nor for the future.

Case of Separation

Case 8. Case of separation is found different from the case of desertion. Two examples of this context are to be noted here. In Sonamura sub divisional town, a wife

of a school teacher maintained separation from the husband when he remarried one of his colleagues. She did not leave the house but stayed in a separate arrangement with her son and daughter. She did not go to her natal house where her parent and brothers were well to-do and ready to help her. She thought that being financially dependent; she was to depend on someone for her children and herself. 'So it's better to take the help from children's father who is liable to maintain them'. She did not lodge any complain against husband for the sake of her children but she stopped her speaking with him. The man has to maintain two families though he has lost conjugal right over the first wife. This status of the case is neither desertion nor divorce. It is a case of 'separation' the future of which is unpredictable. At Yazekhowra village, Ambar Ali is a wealthy cultivator and has a big sized rubber garden. He has also other business. He told to the present researcher that his first wife had been living separately with their son for a long twenty years. He remarried but did not give the first wife talaq. She was not abandoned, not remarried but she used to live in the same village separately from the husband who helped them casually. Here the status of the woman is not distinct though the separation became permanent for them.

Cases of Talaq

Case 9. Here is a unique case of Talaque. This is a story of an old couple of Yazekhowra village. The man is seventy five years old. He pronounced Talaque three times at a stretch to his wife of sixty years old. It is a tragedy for the couple that they are to live ^dseparate now when they need more their mutual companionship. The cause of anger was the difference of opinion on some issues related to their married sons who live separate with their families and ~~do~~ not care for the old parents. The old man ~~was~~ ^{still} to earn money to maintain them. So on such a touchy issue, the man being frustrated and disgusted, could not control himself and commit^{ed} a fatal wrong by pronouncing talaque to his whole life partner –his only wife. The man now moves to and fro. He remains fast in most of the days of the week as it is reported by the neighbors. The young people of the village make fun ~~of~~ him for this case and the man remains silent. The kind hearted neighbors like to give him some food but he often refuses to take. He

casually earns something to maintain himself. On the other hand, the old woman is alone in the house shedding her tears everyday. She is the victim of some religious formalities.

Case 10. The case of Aasia Khatun is a typical example of unilateral right of Muslim men to divorce their wives. Aasia Khatun, born in a Sayad family, was married in a distant village of north district like Yeajekhowra from her natal house in west Tripura.. After several years of her married life she was divorced by her angry and cruel husband. Her husband was accused with the charge of murder of a neighbour man and had been sent to jail for a period of one year. In the mean time, out of financial necessities, Aasia had to do a 'Kaola' to sell a piece of their land. On his return from jail, the man came to know about the matter which made him furious with rage, resulting in a *Talaq*. He had a deaf ear to her pleadings. She was given Talaq in front of the senior villagers. Tears rolled down her cheeks, when she recalled the memory of leaving her four issues at a very tender age. She had to find a shelter through her hard earnings in a piece of land provided by her parents near her natal house. She had been living there alone since then. No maintenance for the *Iddat* period was observed in her case. She is sixty years old (1999). Still she takes her daily life with a hard work labour. At the dawn she cooks her food and then goes to work as agri-labourer or maid. She has been provided Rs.100 p.m. as financial help for destitute woman from the gram Panchayat.

She possesses of good health i.e. ^{has a} strong built body. She is an ordinary looking woman but ^{an} extraordinary reserved personality with a tender heart inside for the people around her. She is very popular among her neighbors as she is ever ready with helping hands when ^{ever} ~~any~~ ^{is in} one ~~need~~. Though misfortune engulfed her, fortune blesses her in her mind and soul.

Cases of Polygyny^(us) Marriages

Case 11. Sukurun Nessa lives in Yeajekhowra village. She looks as old as 25 years. . She is the first wife of her husband and living with his second wife named Anwara Begum aged only 20 years having now two children i.e. one is 4 years old and

the next is of four months old. Sukurn has two children e.g. daughter is of eight years and son is of seven years. Her husband Asuk Ali 35 years old, was not unhappy with the first family but suddenly he married for second time. According to Sukurn, her husband is not a bad man and Anwara is also an innocent type of girl and she was a minor when she was married to her husband. She being primary educated does not blame Asuk but the Muslim society which, as she thinks, indulges polygyny and invites so many problems for the wives and children. Her husband is a rickshaw puller and he is in financial hardship to bear a big budget of 'two families' under same roof and same hearth. The perception of the second wife is different. She blames the callousness of the first wife for polygyny. She adds that wife should be strict and have control over the man, otherwise all people suffer.

Case 12. Jobeda Begam, aged 42, is an illiterate woman but Indian in behavioral characteristics i.e. in her patience and tolerance. She was married in 1980. Her natal house is at Charipara, an outskirt village of Agartala. After marriage she with her husband came in Dharmanagar for business purpose. They got a piece of land at *purbabazar* from the WAKF Board on which they started their business. During the flood of 1984 they were the worst sufferer and lost their youngest child along with other assets. They were provided govt. help of Rs. 5000. By that money they again opened a bakery and earned a lot. Within seven years they became rich people in the locality. They purchased a paddy land as well as some livestock for more income. Jobeda worked laboriously for the economic development of the family. Under these circumstances, when her husband got enough leisure he was exposed to the second phase of his nature i.e. indulging him in polygyny. Jubeda remained in the dark about his second marriage. The incident came into light after one year when he brought his second wife as being pregnant, in the main family. After two-and-half years of second marriage, the man married for the third time, and only after six months of that marriage, he married for the fourth time. He did not stop and married for the fifth time after a gap of one-and-half years of fourth marriage. His fifth wife was a deserted woman and Hindu by religion. Within five years he married four times and lived with them without doing any financial activities but only breaking

the hard earned cash savings and Jubeda could not resist him. The entire household property which was built by her hard labour of fifteen years is now in an overall crisis. To maintain the wives along with more four issues, he sold their paddy land and other wealth also. Not only this, the man used to take away all the money which Jubeda with her eldest son earned from the bakery. This cruel and selfish man has no religious or social punishment for doing such misdeeds against his family. Jubeda couldn't resist the man and was helpless with her two children of minor age. She had no brother who could have stood by her. Her father though alive was a very gentle and good man. Her uncle was a wealthy man and holds political power as being a Panchayat member. He could fight for her but Jubeda did not want to ask his help. At last the man insisted for selling the bakery and the homestead also. Jubeda and her grown up son of 18 years, resisted this attempt anyhow. Her son and daughter were to drop out in the primary level of education. The son is engaged in a workshop of grill factory. Jubeda herself is engaged in some participatory activities of society. She associated herself with the *Nari samiti* of the local branch of CPI(M) party. She received training under the "SwarnaYojana" Scheme. In spite of long struggle and gray days in the near past, she seems to be hopeful for the future.

Cases of Desertion

Case 13. Aleya Begam, a young woman of 22 years old was married with Abu Kaosar, the son of Jaru in SonamuraMia. From the beginning she was tortured by her husband and in-laws. She had to take police protection to save herself from their torture. After the birth of her two children, the marital tie was break-off, but no formal talaq was there. The man remarried and Aleya was deserted along with children. She stayed in the same home stead in separate arrangement. She has got no maintenance either by religious provision or by the civil laws of the country i.e. Cr. Pc. 125. She had neither any man- power nor money- power from her parental side. Only under the pressure of local public opinion which was fully in her favour, Abu Kaosor was forced to give her a negligible amount of money which was too small to be finished in one month. Kaosar and his parent did not take any responsibility of her children. So to survive, she has to

take the job of domestic maid in the neighbors' houses. For the interim period, when she took shelter in a small but separate house of the same homestead, her in-laws are too cruel to drive her out from the homestead. Thus the legal rights of the children were denied. Aleya was offered a remarriage proposal from a neighbour of Bangladesh adjacent to the border of the village, she refused it for her children. The neighbors felt for her and helped her in different ways. She went out for work at 8 A.M. and come back around 12 A.M.; again in the afternoon she has to go keeping her children under the safe custody of the kind neighbour. During the tour, I met Abu Kaosar and talked with him. Being asked about the reason, he blamed her and tried to justify himself but about the duties to the children, he remained silent and avoided the answer.

Case 14. Tasmina Begam in Udaipur is a good looking young woman of 26 years old. She was married at the age of 14. She has education of primary standard. She gave birth of two children, but after a few years, she had to come back to her natal house at Udaipur. Her husband was entangled with illicit relationship with other woman and she tried to resist but failed. The man fled away into Bangladesh and married there for second time. He did not take any responsibility of his wife and two children. Tasmina's father-in-law and mother-in-law were also not good people. They tortured her, drove her out of the home and kept her second baby (son) with them. After six days she was able to bring back her baby by the help of police, but she could not bring her clothes and the household articles of her own. Now she is seeking for any kind of job; she is working as domestic maid in two Muslim households keeping the babies under her mother's care. She filed a maintenance suit against her husband. Some Swapan 'Muhori' and Shekhar 'Okil'— her lawyer in Udaipur, helped her a lot. But she did not become successful, because the man did not come India, so to arrest him was next to impossible. Her father-in-law was arrested but got release by the verdict ion of the court. Tasmina was conscious about legal rights, she married by registration and when the marital tie was broken down she tried utmost to get legal protection by the Indian Law, but it is an irony of fate that no Indian law could give her protection from the misfortune of her children and herself. When she was asked by the present researcher that whether she did approve the second time marriage for herself, she said very explicitly 'No'. Now she wants to obey her fate after a lot of struggle against the fate of an Indian girl.

Case 15. The case of Ranjuta Begam of Udaipur Nagar Panchayat is one of those desertion cases where the husband remarried and gave occasional visit and financial help and gradually this help went stopped. When she was a mother of two years old baby her husband remarried elsewhere But he used to visit Ranjuta and gave rupees 200/- to 300/- per month. But gradually her son has grown up and she needs money for his study but the flow of money from him turned casual. The sixteen years old son has to run his study by the help of relatives in both cash and kind.

Ranjuta has been searching job for long days but frustrated. She looks very ill health and not smart up to the mark. However, she has got a piece of land as her share in parental property. On that land, a construction of house is provided by the Nagar Panchayat office. Thus, being a beneficiary of the Nagar Panchayat and share-holder of parental property, Ranjuta has got protection to some extent, but she is not escaped from hardship of daily life. Her ill fate is the result of man's bigamy and the only son is to depend on the help of others in spite of his able father.

Case 16. Asharun Bibi, East Durgapur, Kailasahar, is a 36 years old woman. She was abandoned along with her two young children by the husband. She was at a loss to face the misfortune which came all on a sudden. Her husband married second time and settled with the second wife. He did never come back to his home where his old father, wife and children were. Asarun has no alternative source of income by which they could survive. She has joined in a home- based earning centre of *Dhup stick* but the income is too little to maintain the family. Now her son is twenty years old and earning something by day labour. Her daughter of 17 years old is to manage all the household chores as her mother is engaged for earning. Asharun has lost a little of her mental balance as her daughter says. She remains always silent and indifferent to her son and daughter. They have no BPL card or any help from the Nagar Panchayat; the family is deprived from any kind of financial assistances for the repairing of their old house which is in very bad condition. But they do not know what to do. They have no requisite food, clothes and security. Asarun Bibi did not get formal talaq which would enable her to retain the mehr fixed at the time of marriage or get new marriage. No elders' association or panchayat would come forward to do justice for her arranging punishment to the man for this cruel deeds or un- Islamic activity.

Case 17. Bapi Begam, 36 years, is an illiterate woman. She works as brick breaker at South Ramnagar. She was abandoned by the man to whom she was married. After two years of marriage, the man gave her formal 'talaq' but did not take the responsibility of their daughter. Bapi did not get any maintenance of 'three months' *Iddat* period. The man remarried and resides in his home which is not distant from her rented house. Her daughter is now 16 years old. She has never sent her daughter to her father's house; now the daughter likes to go there and brings some gifts from father. Bapi Begam is silent in nature. She is in broken-health and not good looking. She did not like to remember the horrible past memory of her short span married life. She said in soft voice that the man was very cruel in behaviour and used to beat her.

When she was given talaq, she was to change her status from a 'shy-housewife' to a 'day labourer'. She had none from her parental side to take her responsibility; why she was not remarried? She remained silent few minutes to this question and said that she did not think about this. She became used to go to the labour market in every morning and came back at evening and the baby was under the care of neighbours. It was not possible for her to send the girl in school. Now she is grown up and Bapi is always now in tension. She wants to marry her soon to protect her from the unwanted happening in the surrounding area. But how she will collect dowry money and a good son-in-law? This is now a constant headache to her.

A case of woman Deserter

Case 18. Here is a case of women deserter. The story is told by an old woman at N. C. Nagar that she was married in early age (child marriage) and went to her in-law house. But she came back from that house because of her simple non-likings to the man (husband). When he with her in-laws came to take her back, she refused them, as she did not feel any attraction to those people. This separation in primary status led ultimately to the divorce. Being very favored of her parents and brothers, she was happy with them and though they tried to get her remarried, she refused. She contributed to this house by her physical labour and thus she faced no economic problem so long. But

now, when she is physically weak, she wants some support from governmental help for her maintenance.

6.2.12. Studies on Maintenance Cases of women

Table no 6.12
Suit of Maintenance cases filed by Muslim women in Tripura
(1999 to 2005)

Year	Case No.	Court No.	No. of Mahame-dan Cases	% of Total Cases
AGARTALA				
1999	Misc 24/99	6	1	
2000	Misc 45/2k	0	4	
	Misc 109/2k	2		
	Misc 112/2k	5		
	Misc 193/2k	3		
2001	Misc 58/01	2	3	
	Misc 75/01	2		
	Misc 131/01	5		
TOTAL			8	N.A.
UDAIPUR				
2002	Misc.../ 02	N.A	16	
2003	Misc. .../ 03		15	
2004	Misc..../04		23	
2005	Misc..../05		11	
TOTAL			65	23.08
SONAMURA				
2005	Misc .../05	N.A.	27	
TOTAL			27	62.79
Grand Total			100	

A survey was conducted in the Judicial Magistrate Court of Agartala Sonanura (west) and Udaipur (south-west), to assess the position of women in their exertion of legal rights e.g., right to obtain maintenance and the right to divorce under the Muslim Law of Marriage dissolution Act of 1939. Table 6.12 shows that a number of women go to the local courts to obtain divorce and to secure the maintenance by the article Cr. Pc. 125. Her right to maintenance is dealt in Article 488; it is effective by the Criminal court under section 125 of Criminal Procedure Code.

Under the Muslim Law, a woman has right a) to get a sum equal to the Dower settled at the time of marriage; b) maintenance for the children till they are two years of age; c) all gifts given to her by anyone at the time of marriage; d) maintenance as is necessary for her needs during the period of *Iddot*. Under the Muslim Law she can get maintenance from husband even after the period of *Iddot* by filing a petition under section 125 of the Cr Pc. If this law (Muslim) is violated or if she is not given the maintenance, she can file a petition in the court of a First class Magistrate who will order the husband to pay all these. Sometimes, woman does not seek talaq because of her emotional biasness but claims for maintenance. An investigation was done on the maintenance cases filed by the Muslim women in Agartala, Sonamura, Udaipur and Kailasahar. The cases cover the women of all statuses like deserted, separated and divorcee. The cases shown in table no.6.12 are issued for maintenance and obviously most of them are in the status of desertion and informal talaq.

The fact is that all cases filed have no guarantee to be successful in its effect. The verdict of the court may be violated and then the court has to enforce it by order. It is reported by the Sonamura Judicial Magistrate Court (First class) that in 2005, out of total 43 cases of Maintenance, 27 are Mohamadan cases (i.e. 62.79%); out of 43 disposed cases, 13 are under the enforcement order; of these 13 cases, 9 are Mohammedans' (i.e. 69.23%). An investigation in ^{the} Udaipur Court shows that out of total 208 Maintenance cases during 2002 to 2005. The number of Hindu cases are 208 i.e. 76.19 percent and 65 are Muslim cases i.e. 23.8 percent. The Table no.6.12 shows that till 27th December, 2005, the number of cases has been hopefully reduced in comparison to the previous years for both Hindu and Muslim cases.

To do petition in the court is not so easy for women. Because this can be done smoothly if the couple had joint declaration in the court opting to be governed by this law or, if this condition was included in the 'Nikahanama' at the time of marriage. After the *Iddot* period, the Magistrate can order for her maintenance to the following parties: her parents, children, the relatives who are entitled to inherit her property and the State Wakf Board. If the divorced woman has no supporting relatives, the local Wakf Board (as per Article 9 of the Wakf Act) may be directed by the Magistrate to provide maintenance to that woman (**Muslim Women Act: 1986**). All this protection of law is often failed for those women who are poor in man-power, money-power and literacy.

Findings

Marital status is an important indicator of women's status in society. In the forgoing discussion on marriage and marital status of women, it is observed that many socio-cultural traits of the pre-independence days have not been yet changed much. As a result, the progress of Muslim women is very slow with the change of time.

In selection of mate, they are much dependent on the arrangement of the guardians. ~~The~~ Marriage is still found within the cousin relatives and within the village or neighbor villages and towns. The age at first marriage for the girls of present generation has been increased to some extent in comparison to their mother or grand mother. But still the mean age for the girls is below 18 years, while this average age for boy is above 21 years. Sometimes, the age of girls for marriage ~~increases~~ ^{even} due to the new pressure of dowry system both in villages and towns. Dowry has become a part of Muslim marriage specially in the fringe villages and towns and ~~the~~ ^{even} interior villages are not ~~free~~ from this.. However, 88.00 percent people still remain out of any dowry transaction. The custom of dower has become only a formality for majority people. Only a microscopic minority and pious people of old generation are trying to retain this Islamic culture though ^{a few} young men ^{are} not rare to advocate this Islamic culture.

Women literacy and employment is better in Udaipur town and its fringe village Khilpara. On the other hand the prevalent dowry system ⁱⁿ Udaipur and Khilpara indicates that education and employment do not necessarily mean the higher status of women. Socio-cultural factors may surpass her education and employment. Like many Hindu girls, they are also not aware about the social significance of the dowry system.

Position of Muslim women is inevitably lower in polygynous marriage, though they are few in number. Their silent suffering has no easy outlet. Polygamous marriage happens not only among the people of low income and low status group but also in the high income and status group. The economic ^{only} well off rural families may indulge the polygynous marriage. Man maintains the family of double wives either in the common hearth and roof or in separate arrangement.

The lower status of Muslim women is exposed much in their status of desertion, separation and divorce. Desertion is a most un-Islamic and illegal practice for the believers but it is the highest social reality (1.29%) in the villages and towns. Desertion is mostly the ~~result~~ ^{result} of irresponsibility and callousness of men belonging to the low socio-economic status. It is not rare in the literate and high status family also. On the excuse of some point of differences women are left in the natal house for indefinite time without any intimation of formal talaq or legal separation.

Divorce or talaq is a legal practice. Formal and instant talaq happens less in number but ~~larger~~ ^{number} number of desertion ^{cases} lead to divorce in reality. Informal talaq may supersede the formal talaq. Number of court cases filed by women confirms our statement. Divorce is often practiced without caring the rules of *Shariat* i.e., maintenance of Iddat period etc. Separation is found from the wife's side among a few women of self respect and personality. Either they take shelter in the natal house or ~~stay~~ remain in the husband's house ~~but~~ ⁱⁿ a separate arrangement.

The higher percentage of widow and few remarriages indicates the significant influence of Hindu society and culture. Muslim women as the Hindu women devoted themselves to their responsibility for children. In fact remarriage of women unlike the men, reveals the circumstantial causes of their ill fate. While for polygynous marriage, ~~men~~ ^{women} have no valid reason. The lower marital status of Muslim women has become more distinct with few case studies served for the purpose.

All these cases make it clear that status of women in Muslim society is not at all high what they have been conferred by the Quran. The subordinate position of women in the beginning of married life may turn them to the most humiliating and miserable ~~condition~~ along with their children.

Chapter -7

Family and Women

7.1. Family and Muslim Women

Family as fundamental institution of society goes through continuity and change. Both for developed and underdeveloped countries in the past and present, women have been performing a lion share a 'disproportionate share' of responsibility for domestic work and children. (Bhattacharya:1969). So there is no doubt that Women perform a key-role in surviving and developing functions of family life.

The functions of women in family are threefold: i) Domestic function or household activities contributing to the survival of the family unit; ii) Function of Socialization of children performing the role as maker of future generation; iii) Function of supplementary contribution to the financial budget of the family through different economic activities in the household management and sometimes full participation as bread-earner of family. The function of women in family is marked by a gender based division of labour. Daily works of women in ^{the} villages and towns are not different except a few. According to the economic conditions of family, the size, number and structure of family, their pattern of household functions may vary ^{from} house to house. It is observed that from dawn to dusk, women have some common functions like: cleaning the house, washing the utensils, clothes, fetching water, milking the cow and caring the domestic birds and animals, collect^{ion} of fire wood, preparing breakfast, lunch and dinner and serve the family members. They do some kitchen garden^{ing} as well as other agricultural works in the house and sometimes in the field also. They do care the child, aged member and husband. When they are engaged in paid work outside the home, they are not spared to do the household duties. In the towns or in the fringe villages, sometimes the working women take the help of maid. In modern society, the way of house keeping business has been changed due to the effect of modernisation. Modern housewives have time-saving devices for household works. But it is observed that such modern equipments are not available for the Muslim women ^{either} in the villages

or in the towns. However in leisure period, they enjoy television and radio. But in the house of orthodox houselord, they remain deprived of this enjoyment also. The role and status of Muslim women in family is to be understood by the types, structures, composition and forms of family; by the *pardah* system which she is bound to observe in family-rules, by participation in socio-religious and economic functions as a part of family life, by her ownership position in family property and at last by her decision making function in the authoritative family structure for the welfare of the children and family unit.

7.2. Family-types

On the basis of structure, size and composition, four types of family are found among the Muslims of the study areas. These are: i) Incomplete family; ii) Nuclear family; iii) Supplementary nuclear family; iv) Joint family. The data shows that the total number of households is (1235) distributed into 717 rural and 518 urban families. As regards the types, they are in total 130 (9.72%) Incomplete families, 791 (64.05%) Nuclear families, 168 (13.60%) supplementary families and 146 (11.82%) Joint families. This is shown in figure no.3. Table no. 7.1 and 7.2 shows the types of family among the villagers and urban dwellers respectively.

Fig.no.4: Types of family among the Muslims (Total)

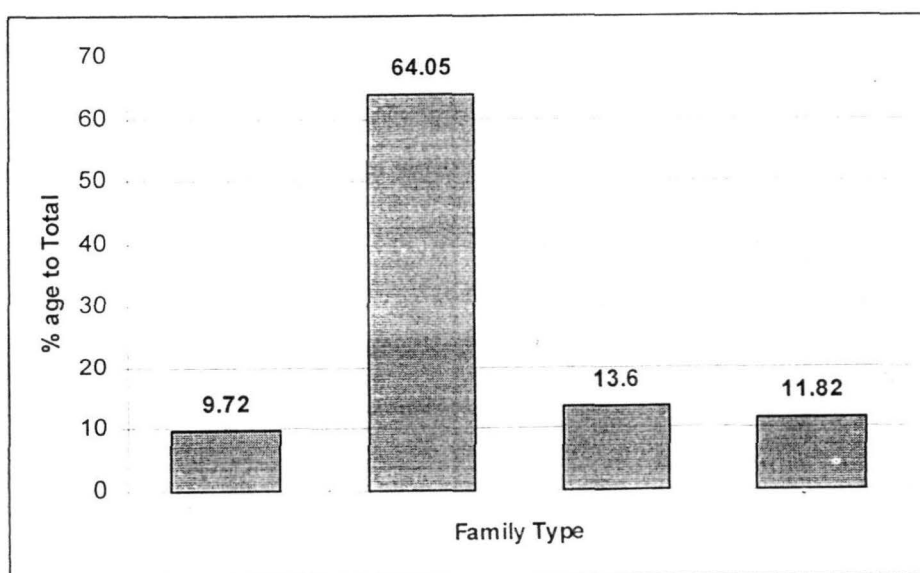


Table no. 7.1
Family Types among the Muslims in Villages Under Study

Sl. No.	Types of Families	Number of Families							
		N.C. Nagar		Khilpara		Yazekhowra		Total	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
1	Incomplete Family	25	8.65	19	11.05	26	10.16	70	9.76
2	Nuclear Family	170	58.82	105	61.04	190	74.21	465	64.85
3	Supplementary Nuclear Family	53	18.34	23	13.37	19	7.42	95	13.25
4	Joint Family	41	14.19	25	14.53	21	8.20	87	12.13
	Total Households	289	100	172	100	256	100	717	100

Table no. 7.2
Family Types among the Muslims in Towns

Sl. No.	Types of Families	Number of Families							
		Agartala		Udaipur		Kailashahar		Total	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
1	Incomplete Family	29	13.68	09	7.44	22	11.89	60	11.58
2	Nuclear Family	137	64.62	70	57.85	119	64.32	326	62.93
3	Supplementary Nuclear Family	20	9.43	25	20.66	28	15.14	73	14.09
4	Joint Family	26	12.26	17	14.05	16	8.65	59	11.39
	Total Households	212	100	121	100	185	100	518	100

i). Incomplete Nuclear family

This type of family is an incomplete nuclear or a broken nuclear unit. The very word incomplete means that this is not a complete nuclear group. This type of family arises when either of the spouses dies and the living partner lives alone with the dependent children. In a particular cases it happens that both of the parents dies or remain absent by whatever reasons and only the elder brother lives with the younger brothers and sisters. In total, the incomplete type of families are 130 (9.72%). In villages they are 9.76 percent and in towns, they are 11.58 percent. The frequency of this family is highest in Agartala (13.68%) and Kailasahar has the second highest (11.89%) among all. In the incomplete families, there is a number of 'single person households' or 'single-man family' which is regarded as "non-familial unit." (Mukherjee; 1966, Jahangir; 1991). They are 26 out of 1235 total households (i.e.2.11%). It deserves to

be mentioned that majority of this unit consists of females in the status of widow, deserted or divorced and separated, 5 of them are males in the status of widower and unmarried. The frequency of this 'non-familial' unit found highest in Kailasahar followed by N.C.Nagar. It is higher in towns than villages. The men and women constituting this non-familial unit live alone and independent due to some socio-economic causes and therefore the data suggests that the socio-economic condition of women is worse than men.

ii). Nuclear family

Nuclear family is a group consisting of married couple and their children or any adopted children. In the present study. The number of nuclear family in total is 791 out of 1235; they are 64.04% of the total households. This is a simple family of two generations, economically independent and fairly well separated from other relatives'. So it is 'isolate' nuclear family" (Parsons: 1951). But in the villages of Tripura, they are not as such "economically independent and fairly well-separated from other relatives". Though the kitchen is separate, some nuclear units are found dependent on the help of parents and common source of income as agricultural land. Property is not still divided and they do not own separate share of property. They are also not isolated as they are living in the single homestead compound sharing with each other, yet they are in the separate kitchen and separate financial budget of their own. This is because the Muslim Nuclear families under study are mainly from agricultural and declining economy. Poverty is the important cause for the emergence of a large number of a nuclear family in Tripura. The data furnished in Table nos. 7.1 and 7.2 reveals that the frequency of nuclear family is highest in every village and town. It is also notable that the percentage of nuclear family is higher in villages (64.85%) than that of the towns (62.93%). Like other communities in India, in the Muslim Community also, the family is increasingly shaping^{up} as a small unit composed of husband, wife and their unmarried children. In few cases parents of the husband stay with them.

iii). Supplementary Nuclear Family

Supplementary nuclear family or Intermediate family arises when a main nuclear unit is supplemented by the members of a broken family unit. So this type of family is the outcome of the breakdown of an extended family due to death of its some important members or breakdown of a nuclear unit due to marital separation, desertion, divorce or death; then the remaining and effected members such as widow, widower and divorcee, dependent brothers and sisters, nephew and nieces, grandson and daughter are to join with the main nuclear unit in a secondary role and position. Some intermediary forms of family are found to subsist between the classical joint family on the one hand and nuclear family on the other. [In the present work, the total number of supplemented nuclear families (intermediary forms) are in a good number among the Muslims i.e.13.60%]. It is named as supplemented nuclear because here the main component is simple nuclear type but some other members are supplemented to this in secondary role. This kind of family is neither nuclear nor joint but an intermediate type.

The data shows that the frequency of supplemented nuclear family is highest in Udaipur town (20.66%) and N.C.Nagar village (18.34%) in the urban and rural samples respectively. There is no significant difference in the rate of percentage between urban (14.09%) and rural (13.25%) samples.

iv) Joint Family

The traditional type of social unit is consanguine family known as joint family or 'extended' or 'allied' family. Joint family consists of more than one family staying together or live ^{ing} under one roof, or ⁱⁿ close proximity to one another, eat food cooked at one hearth, hold ^{ing} property in common, participate ^{ing} in common worship. The members are related to each other as some particular type of kindred. In this traditional joint family, ^{ing} relationships among the members are guided by gender, age and kin status. In the present study, they constitute 11.82% of the total households (1235). The number of very large and complex type of extended family is found insignificant in number. There is a certain number of lineally joint families limited within three generations

like grandfather, father and son in lineal order. A few families are also found consisting of two or more married brothers and their wives and children. Thus the lineally and laterally joint families form the joint family structure in Tripura. From the residential point of view, the data shows, the frequency of joint family is larger in villages (12.13%) than that of the towns (11.39%). It is notable that its frequency is higher in Udaipur town (14.05%) in comparison to other towns; similarly it is higher at Khilpara village (14.53%) in comparison to other villages; at N. C. Nagar village it is 14.19%. The people of these three places are better in socio-economic condition. So the data suggest that joint family is more accepted in the better economic condition of agrarian economy.

The nuclear type and also supplemented nuclear type of family are prevalent in both urban and rural samples. It can be said that the Muslim families are not exception to the wide-spread trend of nuclear type and the declining trend of joint traditional family. But a good number of supplementary nuclear family (13.65%) occupying second positions among all the types of Muslim families under study may be noted as a new aspect of socio-economic status of Muslim women in the community.

7.3. Family Structure and Composition

In a given family structure, a Muslim woman is related with three fold kin, e.g. primary, secondary and tertiary kin. In a nuclear structure, she is related directly to husband and children; as a daughter with parents, brothers and sisters. In an intermediary structure, she is related to a number of close relatives who move inside the family and with whom marriage is forbidden in Islam. This relation is based on blood-connection, affinity and foster relation. In the third fold, she is related to a group of persons who are her secondary kin of primary kin and primary kin of secondary kin. This is found in the joint structure of family.

The data on the composition of family among the Muslims of three villages and towns is furnished in the Table no 7.3 to 7.8. It reveals that a Muslim woman lives in a wider range of kin composition. This is more reflected in the supplementary (intermediary) and joint family structure e.g. husband's parents and grand parents, unmarried and married brothers, deserted sisters, grand son, daughter along with their

deserted mother, husband's nephew and nieces, with his second wife and children, son-in-law along with the married daughter and many others in connection of blood and affinity- relationship. Sometimes her own mother, brother or sister who have no male head in their family, come to have shelter in her family under the care of son-in-law.

In the context of authority structure, the Muslim patriarchal family is obviously under male headship and women's position is secondary. This patrilineal set up of social structure provides man^{with} certain privileges to command and take final decision of the family. Despite this, it is noted that the main factor of authority lies in the interpersonal relationship depending on interpersonal characteristics. When a woman in the position of wife or daughter-in-law or mother-in-law, possesses intelligence with strong personality and leading capacity she can hold her commanding voice in the family. Adjusting with the male dominating structure, women play indirect but firm role in the family. It is also observed that both in village and town, woman is the center of domestic life. Along with the superior position and status of male members she enjoys her rights in family, manages the house and maintains the social relations and attends religious functions as being the in-charge of domestic front. A mother enjoys usually more freedom than the wife and daughter. She is regarded as guardian of her son's family. It does not matter whether she is titular head or real head.

Due to various reasons when male member is absent, woman turns to be guardian of the family playing a central role in her position as mother or as financial contributor partially or fully. "There can be cases where wife is holding the financial responsibility for various reasons—husband is sick and physically unfit to earn ; or has divorced the wife and left children alone ignoring his legal financial responsibility over them ; or has expired. In all such cases, even if the father, brother or the near relatives of the women would legally or normally support her children , yet she would have to take the over all headship of the family." (Kausar:2004).

Table no. 7.3
Family Composition among the Muslims of N.C.Nagar

SI No.	Under Male Headship	No. of Families	
		No.	%
1	Father with married son	7	2.42
2	Father with children & married brother	1	0.35
3	Man unmarried	2	0.69
4	Couple without any issue	8	2.77
5	Couple with husband's mother	4	1.38
6	Couple with children	152	52.60
7	Couple with children & married son	28	9.69
8	Couple with children & husband's mother	20	6.92
9	Couple with married son	6	2.08
10	Couple with children & husband's unmarried brother	4	1.38
11	Couple with children & husband's unmarried sister	1	0.35
12	Couple with children & husband's deserted sister	3	1.04
13	Couple with children & husband's mother & nephews	1	0.35
14	Couple with adopted son	1	0.35
15	Couple with children, married son & husband's parents	1	0.35
16	Brother with yongers	2	0.69
17	Couple with married daughter	2	0.69
18	Husband with two wives, their children, married son & husband's mother	1	0.35
19	Husband with two wives & married sons	2	0.69
20	Husband with two wives & their children	8	2.77
21	Husband with two wives, their children & wife's sons of previous wedlock	1	0.35
22	Couple with children & wife's mother	1	0.35
23	Couple with children & husband's mother & his sister	1	0.35
24	Couple with children & husband's father & sister	1	0.35
25	Couple with children & husband's mother, brother, married sister & her husbands	1	0.35
26	Couple with married brother	1	0.35
27	Couple with children & married brother	1	0.35
28	Man with married brothers	1	0.35

262 90.65

Under Female Headship

1	Widow	2	0.69
2	Divorcee	4	1.38
3	Mother with son	7	2.42
4	Mother & married son	2	0.69
5	Mother with son & daughter	5	1.73
6	Mother with son & married daughter & her husband	1	0.35
7	Mother with children & married step son	2	0.69
8	Mother with daughter	1	0.35
9	Mother & deserted daughter with grand daughter	1	0.35
10	Mother with divorced daughter & grandson	1	0.35
11	Mother with son & unmarried son	1	0.35

27 9.34
Total Household 289 100.00

Table no. 7.4
Family Composition among the Muslims of Khilpara

Sl No.	Under Male Headship	No. of Families	
		No.	%
1	Father with daughter	1	0.58
2	Father with children & married son	1	0.58
3	Couple with husband's mother & brothers	1	0.58
4	Couple with a maid	1	0.58
5	Couple with husband's parents	1	0.58
6	Couple with children & parents	1	0.58
7	Couple with children & husband's mother & brother	2	1.16
8	Couple with children & unmarried brothers	2	1.16
9	Couple with children & married brother	1	0.58
10	Couple with children & married daughter	2	1.16
11	Couple with married sons & adopted son	1	0.58
12	Couple with unmarried sons, daughters & grandson	1	0.58
13	Couple with children & married sons	8	4.65
14	Couple with married son	2	1.16
15	Couple with husband's mother	2	1.16
16	Couple with children & husband's mother	10	5.81
17	Couple with children	95	55.23
18	Couple without any issue	8	4.65
19	Man (unmarried)	1	0.58
20	Husband with two wives & children	1	0.58
21	Couple with children & wife's mother	1	0.58
22	Couple with husband's grandma	1	0.58

144 83.72

Under Female Headship

1	Mother with separated son & grandma	1	0.58
2	Mother with sons & daughter	2	1.16
3	Mother with son	8	4.65
4	Mother & daughter	3	1.74
5	Mother and son & her mother in law	1	0.58
6	Mother with children & married son	11	6.40
7	Woman(Widow/Divorcee)	2	1.16

28 16.28
Total Households 172 100.00

Table no. 7.5
Family Composition among the Muslims of Yeajekhowra

Sl No.	Under Male Headship	No. of Families	
		No.	%
1	Father with children	1	0.39
2	Couple without any issue	12	4.69
3	Couple with children	171	66.80
4	Couple with children & husband's mother	5	1.95
5	Couple with children & husband's mother & grandmother	1	0.39
6	Couple with children & husband's mother & unmarried brothers & nephews	3	1.17
7	Couple with husband's mother, sister's son & maid	1	0.39
8	Couple with husband's mother, younger brother & sister	1	0.39
9	Couple with children & husband's younger brother	1	0.39
10	Couple with children & husband's brother/sister & divorced sister with nephew	1	0.39
11	Couple with children & husband's married & unmarried brothers	1	0.39
12	Couple with children & husband's parents	1	0.39
13	Couple with married son	4	1.56
14	Couple with children & married daughter	1	0.39
15	Couple with children & married son	14	5.47
16	Couple with children & deserted daughter with grandson	1	0.39
17	Couple with children & husband's mother & divorced sister	1	0.39
18	Couple with children & maid	1	0.39
19	Couple with children, husband's mother & mother in law & maid	1	0.39
20	Husband with two wives & children	5	1.95
21	Husband with three wives & children	1	0.39

228 89.06

Under Female Headship

1	Mother & son	10	3.91
2	Mother with children	11	4.30
3	Mother with son & step daughter	1	0.39
4	Mother with children & married sons	2	0.78
5	Mother with married daughter	1	0.39
6	Mother(Beggar) with deserted daughter	1	0.39
7	Woman(Widow)	2	0.78

28 10.94

Total Households 256 100.00

Table no. 7.6
Family Composition among the Muslims of Agartala (M.C.)

Sl No.	Under Male Headship	No. of Families	
		No.	%
1	Father with son	1	0.47
2	Father with married son	1	0.47
3	Couple without any issue	7	3.30
4	Couple with unmarried children	127	59.91
5	Couple with unmarried children & married son	14	6.60
6	Couple with children & husband's father	2	0.94
7	Couple with children & parents	1	0.47
8	Couple with children & husband's mother	5	2.36
9	Couple with wives mother	1	0.47
10	Couple with children & wife's mother	1	0.47
11	Couple with children, married son & wife's mother	1	0.47
12	Couple with children, husband's mother & married/unmarried brothers	2	0.94
13	Couple with children & husband's brother & maid servant	1	0.47
14	Couple with children & husband's mother & brother	1	0.47
15	Couple with unmarried brother	2	0.94
16	Couple with husband's nephews	1	0.47
17	Couple with married son	2	0.94
18	Couple with grandson	1	0.47
19	Brother & deserted sister with her children	1	0.47
20	Brother with divorced brother with children & widow mother	1	0.47
21	Unmarried brother & sister	1	0.47
22	Husband with 2 wives & children	3	1.42
23	Husband with 2 wives, their children, married sons & widow mother	2	0.94
24	Couple with children & unmarried brother	1	0.47
25	Couple with children & married brother	1	0.47

181 85.38

Under Female Headship

1	Mother with married son	1	0.47
2	Mother with unmarried children	10	4.72
3	Mother with children & married sons	5	2.36
4	Mother & daughter	5	2.36
5	Mother & son	2	0.94
6	Mother with children & young brothers	1	0.47
7	Mother with children & married daughter	1	0.47
8	Grandma with grand daughter	1	0.47
9	Widow/deserted women	5	2.36

31 14.62
212 100.00

Total Households

Table no. 7.7
Family Composition among the Muslims of Udaipur (N.P.)

SI No.	Under Male Headship	No. of Families	
		No.	%
1	Father with unmarried sons	1	0.83
2	Father with married sons	2	1.65
3	Couple with unmarried children	64	52.89
4	Couple with married son & unmarried children	10	8.26
5	Couple with married son	2	1.65
6	Couple with children & husband's father	2	1.65
7	Couple with children, husband's mother	12	9.92
8	Couple with husband's unmarried brothers	1	0.83
9	Couple with husband's married brothers	1	0.83
10	Couple with husband's unmarried sister	1	0.83
11	Couple with deserted daughter & grandsons	1	0.83
12	Couple without any issue	6	4.96
13	Couple with children, husband's mother & nephew/niece	1	0.83
14	Couple with children & husband's divorced sister	1	0.83
15	couple with children & married sons & husband's parents	2	1.65
16	Couple with children & husband's brother & mother	2	1.65
17	Couple with children & husband's married brother & widow mother	1	0.83
18	Husband with two wives, their children & married sons	1	0.83

111 91.73

Under Female Headship

1	Mother & son	2	1.65
2	Mother & daughter	1	0.83
3	Mother with sons & step sons	1	0.83
4	Mother with children	2	1.65
5	Mother with children & married son	2	1.65
6	Woman (Seperated)	2	1.65

10 8.26

Total Households 121 100.00

Table no. 7.8
Family Composition among the Muslims of Kailasahar (N.P.)

Sl No.	Under Male Headship	No. of Families	
		No.	%
1	Father with son & deserted daughter	1	0.54
2	Father with children & married son	2	1.08
3	Couple with husband's mother	2	1.08
4	Couple without any issue	13	7.03
5	Couple with children	101	54.59
6	Couple with children & husband's mother	11	5.95
7	Couple with children & unmarried brothers	2	1.08
8	Couple with children & wife's children of her first wedlock	1	0.54
9	Couple with children & wife's mother	1	0.54
10	Couple with unmarried & married sons	7	3.78
11	Couple with married son	2	1.08
12	Couple with children & husband's mother & married sister	1	0.54
13	Couple with children & husband's mother & unmarried brothers	3	1.62
14	Couple with husband's mother & divorced sister	1	0.54
15	Couple with children & husband's married brother & sister's son	1	0.54
16	Couple with husband's stepson	1	0.54
17	Couple with children & adopted son	1	0.54
18	Couple with children & deserted & widow daughters & grandson	2	1.08
19	Couple with children, married son & deserted daughter & grandson	1	0.54
20	Husband with two wives & children	5	2.70
21	Man (widower)	2	1.08
22	Brother with unmarried sisters & brothers	2	1.08
		163	88.10

Under Female Headship

1	Mother with children	11	5.95
2	Mother with children & married son	3	1.62
3	Mother with unmarried daughter	1	0.54
4	Mother with married son	1	0.54
5	Mother with married daughter	1	0.54
6	Mother with daughter & grandson	1	0.54
7	Woman(Widow/Divorcee/Deserted)	4	2.16
		22	11.89
Total Households		185	100.00

The table no 7.3 to 7.8 on the composition of family shows that there is a number of Muslim families under female leadership in all villages and towns. In three villages, out of total 96 compositions this number of family is 25 (i.e. 26.04%); in three towns they are 22 (i.e. 25.29%). The families consist of mainly widow or deserted or divorcee women with children and other dependents; in some cases the married sons live under her guardianship. The women are given honor by their independent sons and their families as they did sacrifice for their bringing up and settlement in life. Sometimes, these women possess ownership of some land^{ed} property including the homestead inherited from her parents or from some kind-hearted relative. Besides, this female headship-group consists of a number single man or (non- familial unit) where woman lives alone or in single status. They are 21 and larger in number than that of man (i.e. single man families of man are only five). The percentage of total female headed family under study is about 26 percent. They are 28.20, 24.00 and 25.00 percent in the villages of N.C. Nagar, Khilpara and Yazekhowra respectively. Similarly in the towns they are 26.47, 25.00 and 24.14 percent in the towns of Agartala, Udaipur and Kailasahar respectively.

Despite the residential differences, female headed families are below 29.00 percent. However, it reveals patriarchal rule in the community.

7.4. Family Size

The data on the family size among the people of three villages and three towns are given in the table nos. 7.9 and 7.10. On the basis of given data, it is noted that in the villages and towns, there are four categories of family among the Muslims, (i) small size consisting of 1 to 4 members, (ii) medium size of 5 to 8 members, (iii) large size of 9 to 12 members and (iv) very large of 13 to 16 members. However, no category of very-very large sized family consisting of 17 members is found except only in the villages.

In order of predominance, it is seen that the Muslim families are mainly medium in size in both villages (50.63%) and towns (49.81%). The succeeding majority families are small in size (e.g., 35.43% in villages and 40.73% in towns). The tables 7.9 and

Table no. 7.9
Family Size among the Muslims in Villages

Sl No.	Categories of Family size	Name of the Towns						Total	
		N.C. Nagar		Khilpara		Yazekhowra			
		No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
1	Small (1 - 4)	86	29.76	73	42.44	95	37.11	254	35.43
2	Medium (5 - 8)	153	52.94	86	50.00	124	48.44	363	50.63
3	Large (9 - 12)	43	14.88	9	5.23	31	12.11	83	11.58
4	Very Large (13 - 16)	6	2.08	4	2.33	6	2.34	16	2.23
5	Very Very large (17+)	1	0.35	0	0.00	0	0.00	1	0.14
Total		289	100.00	172	100.00	256	100.00	717	100.00

Table no. 7.10
Family Size among the Muslims in Towns

SI No.	Categories of Family size	Name of the Towns						Total	
		Agartala		Udaipur		Kailashahar			
		No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
1	Small (1 - 4)	86	40.57	52	42.98	73	39.46	211	40.73
2	Medium (5 - 8)	103	48.58	65	53.72	90	48.65	258	49.81
3	Large (9 - 12)	17	8.02	4	3.31	20	10.81	41	7.92
4	Very Large (13 - 16)	6	2.83	0	0.00	2	1.08	8	1.54
5	Very Very large (17+)	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00
Total		212	100.00	121	100.00	185	100.00	518	100.00

7.10 shows that the number of large sized family is highest in Kailasahar (10.81%) but the very large families are highest in Agartala (2.83%). In the rural group, the large size families are found highest in N.C.Nagar followed by Yeajakhowra. Thus the data suggests that about fifty percent families belong to medium size and about forty-one percent of small size. The data also suggests that there is no extra-ordinary large sized

Table no. 7.11
Mean Family Size among Muslims in Villages

N.C. Nagar			Khilpara			Yazekhowra		
x (Size)	f (Freq)	fx (Size & Freq)	x (Size)	f (Freq)	fx (Size & Freq)	x (Size)	f (Freq)	fx (Size & Freq)
2	86	172	2	73	146	2	95	190
6	153	918	6	86	516	6	124	744
10	43	430	10	9	90	10	31	310
14	6	84	14	4	56	14	6	84
17	1	17	Total	172 (n)	808	Total	256 (n)	1328
Total	289 (n)	1621						

$$\text{Mean family size} = \frac{fx}{n} = 5.61 \quad \text{Mean family size} = \frac{fx}{n} = 4.70 \quad \text{Mean family size} = \frac{fx}{n} = 5.19$$

$$\text{Mean Family Size of Total Villages} = 5.23$$

Table no. 7.12
Mean Family Size among Muslims in Towns

Agartala			Udaipur			Kallasahar		
(Size)	f (Freq)	fx (Size & Freq)	x (Size)	f (Freq)	fx (Size & Freq)	x (Size)	f (Freq)	fx (Size & Freq)
2	86	172	2	52	104	2	73	146
6	103	618	6	65	390	6	90	540
10	17	170	10	4	40	10	20	200
14	6	84	14	0	0	14	2	28
Total	212 (n)	1044	Total	121 (n)	534	Total	185 (n)	914

$$\text{Mean family size} = \frac{fx}{n} = 4.92 \quad \text{Mean family size} = \frac{fx}{n} = 4.41 \quad \text{Mean family size} = \frac{fx}{n} = 4.94$$

$$\text{Mean Family Size of Total Towns} = 4.81$$

family among the Muslims. Mean family size among the villagers and urban dwellers is shown in the following Table no. 7.11 and 7.12. The data shows that the smallest family size is found in Khilpara village among three villages and in Udaipur among the towns. For the rural families, it is 5.23 and for the urbans it is 4.81. Due to a comparative large number of joint families and ploygamous families among the villagers, the average family size has increased more than that of the towns.

7.5. Women and Property Rights

Property Right of Muslim women is to be understood in a wide spectrum. The important sources of their property are of three kinds: the succession right, right of dower and own earning as wage laborer. Firstly, it is found that a Muslim woman is a legal heir of the property of parents, husband, children and other relatives recognized by the community law. Those who have wealth resource, they can't ^{ignore} their daughter, wife and mother in the time of distribution of their wealth. In Muslim law, a daughter has right of residence as well as maintenance until she is married. A divorcee daughter has also right over parental family after the Iddot period is over. A mother is entitled to the right of maintenance from the children capable of supporting and to inherit 1/6th of her deceased child's estates. A Muslim wife retains control over the goods and properties of the husband. She inherits from the husband one eighth of shares of his property if there are children but one fourth if there is none. The wife may inherit a greater amount of property in his estates by Will.

This is found true in some cases of Tripura under study. For example, Maya Chowdhury is a widow and resident of N.C.Nagar village. She has got the share of her husband's property along with her homestead and her in-laws can't deny her. Similarly, another widow of same village, an ex-member of the gram Panchayat, has got a good share of land^{ed} property from her parent-in law and parent after the death of her husband. In another case under Udaipur Nagar Panchayat, Ranjuta Begum being deserted by husband has received the share of land property from the parent to build a house for living. But this is not found very frequent^{ly} in the society. Though Islamic law is liberal to treat her as the legal heir of property, practically she enjoys only the right of possession, not ownership if the concerned male person does not make a 'will' in her favour which is effective only after the death of the concerned person. Parents or husbands can offer any share of property as gift before the death of the person. But this is not frequent in practice. No homestead or any immoveable property was found in the name of women under present study of Tripura. The widow and deserted women are often deprived of their legal share to husband's property.

The second source of her wealth is dower or Mahr—whether in cash or kind which she is entitled at the time of marriage. Her Mahr has to be satisfied out of her husband's property even after his death. She can satisfy her Mahr debt out of the rents and profits of the property' (Muslim Law). Dower in terms of land or jewelry (very little in quantity) or both is found to be received by women of Tripura, especially in the north district. With the increase^d of the price of land, it is offered rare^{ly}. Dower, either in the form of cash money or land, is only a written matter today utilizing the provision of 'deferred dower' even in case of crisis period. The foregoing discussion of the previous chapter confirms this truth. The third source is the savings from her wage or salary. Sometimes it comes from her income from extra domestic labour—kitchen garden, rearing the domestic animals etc. but this is a weak source for the majority women who belong to the marginal level of earning. Besides, what is still worse that even when women do earn, they have little control over their income. Muslim woman is found rare to deal with 'Bank-balance'. They hand over their salary or they spend

the entire amount for the daily expenses of family. Family assets generally belong to the male members from the practical point of possession. A Muslim woman is found rare to execute over her property e.g. to purchase, dispose or spend the share according to her own choice and decision. Her intelligence and capabilities to deal this is underestimated or ignored. It is observed that most of them are not aware of savings in the bank which is not easy available to the women of the villages. Due to lack of banking facility in the rural areas the women with the urge of savings are often cheated by the women cheaters. Some women told that they were cheated by some female cheaters who came from town and promised them to deposit their money in the bank. Besides their men are not very interested to deposit their money for savings. So legal rights and practical situation do not go equally. The women sometimes forgo their share of parental property either voluntarily or under pressures. Sometimes they are given minimum share in the excuse of dowry or dower system. Very few women have access to their own earning or income from property. Muslim woman is found rare to deal with 'Bank-balance'. Even regarding her Jewelry etc., it is the husband who generally self for mortgage these whenever they like. As the overall execution is vested in the hands of men, the property right of women has very little practical value.

In this way, women belong to the marginal group among the owner-groups of National wealth. Woman contributes to the accumulation of wealth, saves wealth at her own cost of life but owns near about zero. She works more but consumes less; she works for the wellbeing of the family of the parents, husbands and children but she owns nothing. Muslim women is poorer in the poor community.

7.6. *Pardah (Hijab) practices*

Pardah is identified with Islamic culture and it is deep rooted in the tradition of the Muslims. But the interesting thing is that it is a pre-Islamic culture prevailed among the Persians. The Prophet only recommended the culture in its positive meaning for the followers of Islam with great modification of the then existing custom prevalent in

the neighbour^{wg} countries of Mecca and Madina. But in the post- prophet period, the seclusion of woman became gradually widespread and 'harem' became an institution for the upper class women like the princess and aristocrats. Since then, pardah is known as elite custom. Gradually it has contraminated to the life of common people. (Mustafa:1989). The institution has great effects on status of women.

It is observed that the aged people under study have regards for *pardah* as a symbol of 'genuine Muslim culture' and the family observing this is respected as the genuine Muslim. *Pardah* is meant for them a protection of women from the public gaze, annoyance from bad people and to maintain "gender discipline" in the community. It is a particular behaviour pattern applicable not only to the women but to the men also in some extent. It is observed in rural areas, that the menfolk maintain quite distance from the womenfolk. They often speak to the women (who are not close kin) indirectly, via their men. It is obviously a process of socialization of the gender division i.e. the recognition of femininity for women and masculinity for men. This institution controls the outward behaviour and inward set of thinking of both men and women

In the present study areas *pardah* is observed in two ways – external and internal. The external *pardah* means wearing of burqua while going out or covering the head and face by the end of saree, chaddar and 'dopatta', 'ghomta'. Majority women and their unmarried girls in Tripura—in village or town are accustomed with 'ghomta' while staying^{within} the house. As a substitute of burqua, most of the women in villages and towns, cover their head up to forehead by the end of saree or scarf. *Pardah* is explicit in the door partition, door curtain, fencing of the courtyard by bamboo or jute made and plastic made articles. Internal *pardah* means *pardah* in silence and it does not necessarily mean explicit in external dress or fencing, rather, it is implicit in the way of daily life, in the set up of thinking, believing and doing all activities. It rules the Muslim girls in different ways. They are supposed to speak very gently, laugh not loudly, raise not voice outside the room, argue not with elder persons, come out not before the strangers or any public gatherings, mix not with the people of opposite sex, participate not with extra curricular activities of the family-need. They are not allowed

to go for higher education staying in the Girls Hostel even, and to go out of Tripura as champion and athlete. This internal pardah rules the people more than the external pardah.

The degree of external pardah varies in accordance with the age-group, education, economic status, working status, residential environment, attitude and opinion of the people with whom women interact daily. For example, some aged women in rural Tripura are found wearing burqua at N.C.Nagar, in the west and Yeazekhowra in the north, and when they go out, their rickshaw is also covered by clothes. When they remain in home, they cover their head and half of the face by the "ghomta" in front of some relatives, strangers and neighbors. The young girls of the village wear salwar and pajama with a 'Dopatta'. In contrast, a good number of aged women as well as the young girls at Khilpara village of south district, are comparatively free in dress and behaviour and they are rarely distinguished from the Hindu women of their age. The girls of young generation particularly in towns discard *burqua* totally. If they are from economically well-off families, they wear the dresses like they read in co-ed schools colleges; go alone to the coaching centers, private tutors without covering the head. The girls of present generation reading in the schools and colleges can not be distinguished from others. On the other hand, in Agartala, a graduate young woman who never used pardah before marriage is persuaded for wearing burqua by the insistence of her husband who is a post graduate in Science, and a teacher by occupation. In fact, he is a devoted worker of *Tabliqi Jamaet* and ^{of} ~~out~~ his ~~religious~~ religious belief; he resists his wife and son ^{from} ~~from~~ purchase and to ^{observe} ~~to~~ the television. Similarly, some 'brothers' belong to *Tabliqi Jamaet*, and have stopped the educational carrier of their sisters who are promising and talented, only in the excuse of pardah.

The women who are associated ^{political} ~~to parties~~ and engaged in outside employment, ~~they~~ are never found as wearing burqua. They come alone to the place of employment, party office and communicate with the male members or workers in the usual pattern like others. The working women - domestic maid, day labourer, contingent worker, teacher, nurse or any office employee do not use any burqua but *ghomta* occasionally. The young women seek job and enlist their names in the Employment

Register. They occasionally visit their neighbour; participate in wedding ceremonies and religious festivals.

It is deeply observed during the study tour that a kind of silence pardah prevails everywhere in the community-life. Hence, 'home is her world' is applicable for them except a few. Her all activities-joys sorrow, success and failures are centered on the home. Though she talks with her neighbour both woman and man and send^s her daughter in the schools and colleges but in their way of life and movements they are somehow restrained by pardah. In favour of the above statement, a lot of empirical instances are as follows:

- i) Muslim women come out rarely for marketing, shopping or purchasing commodities; none will see them in a stall for purchasing saree even in the off season sale discount ;
- ii) The poor women also are not found sitting in the open market or at any sales counter like Hindu women ;
- iii) Muslim women are seldom found in the Book Fare, Science exhibition, Industry 'mela', academic seminar or meeting; all these places are reserved for their men except the place of work ;
- iv) They participate in less number in the wedding ceremonies of the society ;
- v) Even in the homes, she comes out rarely in front of the relatives or strangers (whether men or women), she responds to the out-comer remaining in the inside;
- vi) Like the Hindu women, they do not visit frequently the religious places e.g. the abode of Fakir, residence of Imam or Mulla., they never go to any Idgah or mosque. They are never found to participate actively in religious discourse but only as passive listener maintaining pardah. When the *Tabiqui* people, come to their house and talk with their men, they listen^{to from} it behind the curtain.
- vii) Work participation of the Muslim women in Tripura is lowest compared to that of other communities (**Census: 2001**).
- viii) They are not found as members organizations and associations.

In comparison to the housewives, the working women are found more smart in social interaction and free from external *pardah*. So it may be concluded that economic participation of Muslim women in the present social environment contributes to the relaxation of external *pardah*. But it has not yet helped to increase their independence of self and decision taking beyond the home. Social participation of Muslim women is utterly poor in comparison to women of other communities. In spite of outer exposure to them, their movement and social activities are very limited. Many reasons are behind the observance of *pardah*. Fear of social criticism, habits developed from the social custom, insistence by the guardians—brother or husband, the close relatives and also neighbors with whom they are to face daily, and above all, the benefits enjoyed by them as 'beneficiaries' of *pardah* (e.g. comfort, safety and security), all these may be accounted for the observance of *pardah* custom. There is no insistence of external showing but people observe it silently. Recently, the preaching of the Tabliqi Jamayat is found to influence people more in favour of wearing *Burqua* for women and other external poses of *pardah*.

7.7. Family Welfare

The role and status of Muslim women in family is closely related with the family welfare or the planned family. Family Planning means family welfare through planned number of children wanted for a family according to its providing capacity and thus resisting the unwanted pregnancies along with other related problems of the women and children for the purpose of maintaining health and hygiene of the whole family unit. Control on fertility behaviour of women is to obtain health for all. (Premula and Mistry: 2000).

An average Indian Muslim woman is known for her high fertility rate contributing to the growth of population in India. Their growth rate in U.P., Bihar and Bengal can be cited in favour of this statement. In Tripura, the decadal growth rate of Muslim population was 41.84 percent and 29.49 percent during last two decades of 1981 to 1991 and 1991 to 2001 respectively while that of the Hindus were 34.30 and 15.74. Islam can not be blamed for few small size families. As far as the religious text is

concerned, one form of birth control is ^{mentioned} in certain Hadith because it is not forbidden by the prophet. Islam does not prohibit to have a planned family ^{but} in the early period of expansion of population, it was neglected. The spirit of Islam is always in favor of family peace and welfare of children. But in practice majority ^{of the} Muslims in rural areas believe that artificial control of birth is not supported by Islam. As a result, Muslim women and children have become the ultimate sufferers; thus their socio-economic backwardness has gone cumulative in effects.

The present empirical study supports the statement said above. During the tour at Yeajekhowra village of north Tripura. The present researchers came to know the experiences of the people. One man says that though he himself and other people of the village understand the need ^{of} family planning, but they are very afraid of the ~~of~~ Ulemas who restrain them from birth control by interference. So they are to do it very secretly. Another man says that he has not faced such external monitoring but his own wife resisted him ^{from} ⁱⁿ go to a doctor and as a result, within ten years of married life she has given birth of six issues. Though her husband's income is very low, she believes that it is Allah who will protect her children. A woman of the village told that though she was ^{well} aware very much about family planning, she could not yet avail ^{of} that because of some difficulties e.g. she ~~alone~~ could not go to the hospital or distant health center ^{alone} without the co-operation of husband who had no time to accompany her. The other difficulties were related to the lack of favorable environment in the surroundings and medical facilities nearby. The last case helps to ~~be~~ enlighten that religious misguidance is not the sole factor behind the negative attitude to family planning among the Muslims so long. The prevailing explanation regarding the non-acceptance of birth control is an over simplification denying other factors which are not less responsible for this.

However, though late, the situation ^{has been} changing in Tripura for the last two decades. It may be due to spread of education and impact of mass media as well as the overall development in the situation of the larger society. The common people are not found aware of the progressive steps taken by the Muslim countries like Turkey, Malaysia, Iran, and Tunisia which have already forwarded the state policies in favour of family planning. The present Ulemas of the community in major numbers agree that Islam is

not against the family planning. Only a minority number of religious heads are still orthodox in outlook and working against this. Sometimes they are coming from the adjacent Bangladesh and influencing the people of the rural Tripura. Even today the ignorant people or the caring people are afraid of taking the measures in public knowledge or openly.

The internal socio-cultural environment of the community, poor economic condition, illiteracy, a kind of inertia to accept new way of life, lack of motivational activities of the social service agencies among them, distance of the Primary Health Centre (P.H.C.), customary restriction on the movement of Muslim women and non-cooperation of their men folk to some extent, are the main causes for non-acceptance or late acceptance of family-planning among the people.

It is said earlier that the mean size of family may be affected by the type of the family. The intermediate type or polygynous type of family may have an impact on the size of the family by increasing the number of children in a nuclear family.

The present study shows that ~~the~~ sixty percent nuclear type and nearly fifty percent medium size of Muslim family indicate^{that} the average number of children ~~in~~ a Muslim family is above four (4.96) and below six (5.19).

The mean family size of Udaipur town and Khilpara village (4.41 and 4.70) shows that these two are more advanced in accepting the Family planning in comparison to others. The larger family size of two villages like N.C.Nagar and Yeajekhowra is pushed by the supplemented nuclear type of family and polygamy and remarriage of man. For Example, a polygamous family is found having eleven children distributed between two wives. The number of children in the polygamous families generally exceeds six both in town and village. Given data highlights the fact that no polygamous marriage was done on the ground of non-fertility of the first wife. So in addition to the first wife and her children, the second wife gives birth^{to} a number of ~~more~~ children for the man who cohabits with both the wives even though in separate establishments. Remarriage of woman has also minimum effect on this. As the given data shows that in most

cases, women are remarried when she has no issue of the previous wedlock or only one issue; when she is remarried along with issues, she may not give birth to new children.

All these descriptions of fact show that no single factor can be held responsible for this. The economic well being of two agrarian villages and the dominant type of intermediate family of N. C. Nagar village may have some effect on its largest family size. It is a proximal village of Sonamura sub-divisional town, and in a short distance with the capital of the state. But the reasons behind the larger size of family at Yeazekhowra are different. There is only one Public Health Centre (P.H.C.) covering a large area of the village – east and west Yeazekhowra. The visiting doctors come there only once in a week. When the complexity arises, they do not get any doctor or even any other female health worker. Only a local club which is an old one, named, *Pushparaj* Club has extended its services to the purpose by bringing doctors more frequent in the Centre (P.H.C) but not always successful. The quantity of oral pills (contraceptive) supplied by the Centre does not always fulfill the demand. The late-comer may not get the chance. Some women have expressed their distrust of the quality of the pills. For that reason, they have brought qualitative pills from Bangladesh in their own personal efforts. Another constraint lies in the callousness or carelessness of the men folk. They do not always cooperate with their women to avail the facilities; women, the real sufferers cannot take unilateral decision in this sphere; they do not even dare to persist on the issue and move out towards the Centre; when there is cooperation from husband, they get success.

With wonder it is observed that sometimes the women do not cooperate with the initiatives taken by men for a planned family owing to the superstitions and fear – psychosis e.g. fear of the wrath of Allah and fear of death occurred in case of medical termination of pregnancies (MTP). From this perspective, the type of family whether nuclear or joint has a little to determine the adoption of planning measures. Hence, high rate of fertility among the Muslims is a composite result of so many factors. The gap between the awareness of family planning and actual practice is due

to the lack of social service, motivational functioning among the people in the interior areas and delivery of mechanism within their reach. So, extension of all these services along with the hospital and clinic facilities and ensured qualitative services can remove the gap between awareness and practice; then only it will be possible to reach the national goal of total fertility rate 2:1 or 'one mother is to be replaced by one daughter'.

The present study reveals that the Muslims are in better birth position than that of the U.P. where the birth rate of children in per family is 5.19. But it is worse than that of Kerala (i.e.2.09). The birth rate among the Muslims of Tripura is also worse than the Muslims of West Bengal. An empirical study shows that 'the mean number of children in per family is 3.8 which is higher than the national average'.

To quote Mishra (1992), the success of family planning depends on decision making at the household. But an average Muslim woman is kept far away from such decisions is to determine the number of child for her. Consequently, the large number of Muslim women both in towns and villages are in the condition of mal-nutritional motherhood, pre-mature delivery, pregnancy in short interval and also birth asphyxia, or anemia which leads to their early agedness and short span of life. To adjust with the authoritative structure of Muslim family, a woman needs to have strong personality and conscious interaction which she can acquire through the means of education, economic independence, political activities and social participation. Despite considerable progress among the Hindu communities and also some achievements in the minority communities, the result is not up to the expectation in Tripura.

7.8. Women and Religious Practices in the Family

Religion is a part of family life. The role of Muslim women is not complete without taking into account of her role in religious practices along with the family members. The believers in Islam are called Mosalmans. About two and half lakhs of Muslims in Tripura have faith in Islam which is as simple as believing in a single God Allah. They pray five times in a day and observe some community festivals, anniversaries of most important events of early history of Islam.

In the present study areas also, the women offer five times prayer – e.g. morning, noon, mid after noon, sunset and evening namaz remaining inside the house. No woman in villages and towns has visited the inside of the mosque. They offer prayer along with other female members and children. Sometimes men are also found with them praying in the house. However, with the purpose to focus the position of Muslim women in villages and towns in the ritual obligations, some queries were investigated during the study tour. The women respondents of villages and towns were asked for information about their religious life in family e.g.

They are asked that, when they do offer their regular namaz and special namaz; what are the formalities they observe before prayer; whether they face any clash between religious practice and household duty, how they manage it; ^{whether} they miss any of the prayers; how they observe '*Roja*' and Ramjan month and if there is any lapse, how they complete the course and how they enjoy the '*Iftar*' time, they are asked; whether they can name some important religious days and occasions; whether all female members of the family can read '*Kalema*'; how they participate in the festivals like *Idul-Fitar*, *Id-ud-Juha*, *Sabebarat* and *Maharram*; the more queries are whether any woman has visited or decided to visit any pilgrimage like Mecca, Madina for the celebration of '*Haz*' as their men do ; what criteria is to be fulfilled to go to Haz ;if visited, whether the women are honoured and respected in the family, whether they feel any difference from her previous status; whether they have visited any melas or visited any *Dargah* and *Fakir*; whether they can name few religious places in the locality and in Tripura; whether any woman has done any religious duty of Zakat by her own earning; whether they can read the Surahs of the Quran or participate in listening the Quran during the Ramjan month.

The information known from the respondents are as follows: Muslim women are generally pious in attitude. They try to observe the daily prayer in time, ^{even if may be} though, not ^{at ways} possible. They never miss the Morning Prayer. In addition to daily prayer, they offer special prayer to God in the special days of festivals and ceremonies. All the prayers are instituted in the home either alone or with the family members or with the neighbour-

women ^{special} on occasions. The housewives who are from economically well off families are found more particular about *namaz*. The present researcher has the experience of waiting for hour to talk with them, in the *namaz* time. On the other hand women working as day labourer or maid, have little time to offer prayer regularly. When she is under the load of household works, she finds out her suitable time for prayer; if she would miss any regular offer of prayer, she tries to cover it in another time by supplement prayers. Anyhow they are to manage it by their religious and moral obligation to God and family. When they suffer from any disease, they are helpless and seek his kindness and forgiveness.

They are to follow complete cleanliness (they wash hands, legs, face etc.) and sit on *patti* or a piece of mat, before offering their prayer. During pregnancy or monthly period, they restrain themselves from prayers. They understand the meaning of '*Kolema*' which means believe in Allah. Every Muslim girl is taught to believe it. A non-Muslim girl is converted into Islam by pronouncing the sentence which means Allah is one and almighty. They have informed that they usually try to perform thirty Rojas of the Ramjan month; ^{in case of} any lapse, they fulfill it after the Ramjan month in any day except the day of '*Id*'. They have named all the religious festivals like *Id*, *Sababarāt*, *Idul-Fitar*, *Maharrm*. Not all but many of them know that before fifteen days of the commencement of Ramjan month, the day of *Sababarāt* comes. It is the day of prayer for material prosperity of individuals and families. In this day, women do their prayer in the house and men go to the masjids.

Idul-Fitar is the last day of the completion of Ramjan month. This is the day of charity or *Zakat*. The Muslim families observe the day by giving a portion of their savings (money) to the poor, and enjoy the day having special lunch or dinner. Women cook and serve all the members with love. Men and children go to *Idgah* or *masjid* for prayer. The women whether they have own earning or not, observe '*Zakat*' with all family members together and usually it is the men who in their own hands distribute money to the poor. Women offer food to the poor in their own hands..

Id-ud-Joha known as '*Bakre-Id*' is an important day for the Muslims to sacrifice or Korban the best of own for Almighty Allah. In this day men go to masjid to read "Idar namaz" and women cook the meat of animal sacrificed as Korban and serve it to the family members and guests. In addition to prayer, this service of women is evaluated as service to God.

Maharram is oppositely a day of reminding sorrowful events, reminding the days of cruel death of Hassan and Hossen the two grandsons of Hazrat Muhammad, in the hands of the enemy at the Karbala battlefield. Muslims in Agartala observe the day in a group by the projection of Muharam *Tazia* in the open procession. They sound sorrowful cry naming Hassan and Hossen. However, it is reported that the leaders along with local people of Sonamura sub-division do not agree to the projection of 'Tazia' of Muharam. To them, Muharam is a month of sorrow to be observed by the institution of *meelad* (a get together) and "Dooya" (prayer). The people of economic solvency organize for a religious discourse (*meelad*) in the court yard 'where women seat apart partitioned by a veil'. Women are the silent participants when the men talk on the issue.

Table 7.13 *The*
Number of Muslim Women went to Pilgrimage *from Tripura*
(2001-2005)

Year	No. of Women
2001	Nil
2002	7
2003	2
2004	4
2005	4
Total	17

Source: Wakf Board, Agartala

Most of the women in villages and towns of Tripura can not read the Quran which is in Arabic version. None of the women under study have seen the Bengali translation of the Quran. Though many of them have gone to the muktab in childhood, they cannot read and understand the meaning of the Surah by themselves. During the

Ramjan month someone of them reads out and others listen to her showing respect to her. During the study tour at N. C. Nagar village of Sonamura, it was found that a woman used to read out some portion of the holy book every time at mid-day and the family neighbor women came to listen to her if they had time.

Like men, women have right to go to Mecca and Madina. Some women in Tripura have enjoyed this right. As per record of the Wakaf Board, Agartala, seventeen women in total have enjoyed this religious right in the recent years of 2001 to 2005^{as} shown in Table no. 7.13. All of them are aged women though there is no age bar. They are usually accompanied by the nearest relatives with whom marital relation is prohibited or impossible e.g. son, son-in-law and like that.

7.9. Case Studies on Status and Role of Women in Family

Despite the different types, structure, size, forms and nature – whether traditional or modern, women play an important role to sustain this universal organization. She helps to grow the child and survive all other members. As a mistress of the house, her all kinds of contribution to the well being of the family are invaluable. Even in a traditional setup, she is found not only as a bearer or ~~farer~~^{earer} of children but often she acts as remote control of the decision making functions of family. She is economically dependent but able to make all the members dependent on her^{by} rendering ~~by~~ sincere service to them. If not any critical, she is alright within this mutual dependence of family system. ~~The~~^{show} following case studies^{show} the role of women in the family ~~and~~ their persistent potentialities to adjust cordially with the traditional set up of the Muslim Society.

Case 1. Rahela Begam, forty years old, is a housewife. She lives in a fringe of village Sonamura with her husband and sons. She is born in a family of a wealthy farmer of Sonamura named Sayed Ali belonging to high social group of Muslim society. She got married at an early age of 16. Her husband is a driver of government vehicles by occupation and ~~post~~^{post}ed in Agartala town. She is blessed with two sons. Her elder one is a government servant of class III rank. He is married and he lives separately in

the same housestead. Rahela maintains a good relationship with her son and daughter-in-law. The younger son is a graduate from the local government college. She maintains a steady good relation with the people around her. She is a good neighbour to her neighbour. She often spends time in her courtyard knitting woolen articles, sewing 'katha' etc. as well as gossiping with her friends. At the dawn, she starts her hasty day by hurrying to the kitchen, preparing food for the family. She finds time for her own self mainly in the mid hours of the day. Usually, she takes tea often and also finds interest in trying out some new delicious food with the help of a cooking guidebook. Besides, she is also keen in gardening which is clearly expressed through the flowers which blooms in her neat and clean courtyard. Apart from all these, she has a habit of reading various literatures which makes Rahela outstanding from other ordinary housewives. With a qualification of up to VIIIth standard this is really appreciable. She even maintains an exercise book where she lists down the books she has read. The list shows that some books are read by her more than twice or thrice. As regards social participation, Rahela has taken a role of an honorary teacher of Tripura Literacy Campaign (TLC). She also serves the Post Literacy Campaign (PLC) in every Sunday. She keeps herself aware with the current politics through her participation in the Panchayat meetings held at an interval of 3-4 months. In 2004, she has become a member of Gram panchayat.

Case 2. Moriam is a young lady of 28 years^{old}. She is the mother of two children – Halima Akhtar of seven years (daughter) and Billal Hossain of four and half years (son). She was a promising national athlete in her school life, but this career has been doomed by an orthodox family. Several times she had gone to Agartala and out of Tripura like Ludhiana (Punjab), Uttar Pradesh and Badarpur (Assam) from her school as a champion of the sports athletic team. Her parents and her elder brother who was educated from madrasa were very much dogmatic in outlook about the women's liberty. They did not like her movement and going out with others. They insisted to stop her school going at Kulubari High School when she was in 11th standard. They also insisted

to stop her participation in sports and athletics and tried to get her married according to their choice without her consent. Within the rural environment, she was not able to fight more and ~~her~~ surrendered to fate only by choosing a mate for her own marriage. She thinks that she has given a “tit for tat” by refusing their proposed groom and ~~getting~~ married ~~with~~ her own chosen mate Abdul Latif, son of Late Idris Miya. Abdul is illiterate but a very good man, as she thinks. He is a carpenter by occupation. They live at *Karalimura* adjacent to the main road under N.C. Nagar gram panchayat. Moriam, a Madhyamik passed bright girl is now living in a status of a mere housewife. She has her own homestead and some livestock as her source of domestic earning. “What is the answer to the end of your career?”, being asked so by the present researcher she let out a long sigh and said “let me hope for the future of my two children”. She is rearing them with her full care keeping them free from the dogmatism and social superstitions. She is sorrowful for her past life – for her unfulfilled desire to be a successful athlete. But she is certainly a realistic one who knows that “this is the fate of a Muslim girl”. Otherwise, she is quite happy with her husband and children and the present life. She has taken her life like a good athlete !

Case 3. Fatima is a teen aged young housewife. Her husband is a scout master of a school in Agartala. Fatima and her husband have been living for years at Ramnagar No. 5 surrounded by the Hindu neighbour. Everyday she cooks and takes care of her children and also the in-laws who come often. She does not wear burqua but never goes out alone. Fatima was married when she was a student of class IX. Her father was financially incapable to bear the educational expenses due to his low income from cultivation. He did not discriminate between son and daughter but it is only due to the financial inabilities made him bound to get her married at the puberty age. Fatima is now a mother of a girl child and she looks fair and smart too. She says that her father is very conscious about Taslima Nasreen of Bangladesh (Feminist writer) and the bad social practices prevalent in the Muslim society of Bangladesh. She appreciates her husband for his liberal outlook and treatment. The in-laws, as she says, have standard

outlook. Her two brothers-in-law are in government service – one is a police and another is a forester. Her two sisters-in-law have got their due share from paternal property. Her husband is a non-matriculate and his job is not permanent. But they are happy with each other. He is a member of Masjid Committee of Ramnagar. He owes respect for religious rituals. Fatima and her husband confess that they are not very regular in five-times-prayer (Namaz). They think that *Mullahs* are the teachers of the Muslim community.

Being asked about some issues of Muslim community, they have expressed their clear thought to the present researcher. According to them, polygamy is now a condemned practice in the society. They do not know the Quran of Bengali version, so they do not understand the meaning of Quranic commands. But from their experience and common sense they say that Talaq was frequent in the earlier days but now people being conscious and literate have discarded the practice. Even the rich people who can afford do not follow that practice. Dower or *Mehr* is only a promising custom to them. It is negated by practice but both of them feel for the helpless women who do not usually get maintenance after divorce. A tacit support to the maintenance law, Cr. Pc. 125, was visible in their silent face. They have criticized the dowry system borrowed from Hindu society. All parents are afraid of this dowry system and the custom hinders the Muslim girls students to continue further study because their guardians think that when a girl gets higher education, then higher will be the price of bridegroom.

Case 4. Banuara Begam, 40 years old lives with her family at Khilpara village under Udaipur subdivision (R.K. Pur) of South District. About twenty five years ago, she was married with Abdul Rob who is now a retired Teacher from a government High School. Abdul Rob is a graduate but Banuara has no formal education at all. She only can read the ayats from the Quran but can not understand the meaning of those written by Arabic language. She comes of a poor family settled permanently at Chanban in Udaipur town.

Abdul Rob being an enlightened and broad-minded person has ventured to get his wife educated at the early part of their conjugal life; he certainly failed because wife preferred to make her absorbed in household works rather than practice of learning. Being a good wife as well as a good mother, she devoted all her energy to the comforts and wellbeing of her husband and five children. The children are now in the higher level of school education. In daily routine she remains busy with the household hazards, kitchen garden, care of the domestic animals and birds like duck, hen etc. these are for the domestic consumption. After his retirement Banuara has to take care of him more because of his health. She also suffered from illness for one year. For her treatment, they ^{whole} family went to south India ^{with the} last L.T.C of Mr. Rob.

Banuara is a very pious woman and very particular to the five times *namaz* and *roja* in the Ramjan month. She tries to inspire her elder daughter to learn and practice the daily namaj regularly. Her children have been taught by the father at home. Though she can not help them in their lesson or home task of school, she always take care of them so that they can learn discipline and prepare the task regularly. She feels no difficulties in decision making functions of family of her husband and never feels neglected as being always consulted by him. Her husband always cares of her opinion in important matters. She is a soft spoken woman but firm in her attitude and activity. She occasionally participates in the social functions in the neighbour house and never goes to the shop or market. She does not wear burqua but observes pardah in her behaviour.

Findings

In the study villages and towns in Tripura, the data suggests that the Muslim families are predominantly nuclear type in ~~both~~ village and town. In the situation of declining extended type of family, a good number of supplementary nuclear and Incomplete (~~broken~~) families can not be ignored. (The largest number of nuclear family in Yeajekhowra village (74.21%) proves that poverty is the main cause of increasing the nuclear set up of society). The largest number of incomplete family found in Khilpara village is consistant with the largest number of female headed families and largest number of widows in the villages. It is noted that types and composition of family affects the size of family too. The mean family size in the rural areas is more than five and it is higher than that of the urban areas (more than four). The mean family size is highest in N.C.Nagar among the villages, and it is highest in Kailasahar among the towns. The larger family size is contributed by the types of family (e.g. supplemented nuclear type) as well as by the types of marriage (e.g., ploygynous marriage) and remarriages of men. It is found that remarriages of women has little effect on the size of family. The economic wellbeing of agrarian background may also contributed to the larger family size. The data suggests that though a larger majority of Muslim families are under male headship, a number of families under female headship can not be ignored. Many of these women are not only widow but also deserted, seperated and divorced. This indicates the low status of women. It is noted that in the nuclear family, woman is the mistress of the house often with an amicable adjustment with the mother-in-law. Sometimes the additional number of in^laws family and her natal family joins to her nuclear group. She has to manage all of them. In the joint family of bilateral type, the young daughter inlaw or young mother is to remain as submissive to the aged sister-in-laws. and mother in-law. Most of the house wives are not supposed to deal with \money matters. It is ^{the}man's function. Females are expected to save the interests of males and not to spend more and waste more. The dependent housewives remain satisfied rather than expressing any grievance.

In religious function of family, women are quite cooperative with the male members. They have no significant function in the observeance of festivals as their

men have. But in the rituals (or 'lokachar') they play significant role which helps the persistence of the community cultures. Women are more particular in namaj, roja, than their men. They do not miss regular prayers. The women day labourer express their sorrows as they are not able to have regularity in prayers. They do not visit mosque and have very rare visit in the religious melas. But 17 women are found who ~~had~~^{gone} to the pilgrimage during the years of 2001 to 2005.

It is observed that Muslim women are ruled by Pardah but it is not ^{always} focussed always in appearance. Very few of them, particularly the aged women wear burqua. Fencing around the houses are like that of Hindu households. But unlike the Hindu women and girls, their movements are restricted by the internal rule of pardah. They are not ~~very~~ free to come out to the strangers or to the shops and markets in the towns. Even the women of educated families have fear of social criticism. They maintain a silent distance with the Hindu girls and women in this respect. The restriction of pardah is more prevalent in Yeajekhowra village than any other villages or towns. Though Muslim women are quite aware about family planning and welfare, ~~but~~ they often fail to take measures in proper time because of their limitation of movement, negligence of husband and in-law female members, ~~and~~ also for lack of proper medical facilities.

As regards their inheritance right, a number of women in N.C.Nagar and Udaipur have received their share in property from father or father-in-law. A good number of women in Yeajekhowra have land^{ed} property which they have received as a gift of 'dower' in time of marriage or after marriage. But very few of them handle this by themselves. Similarly, they are ^{rarely} found as owner of bank balance. No house building is ^{registered} found in the name of women. The low-level income of the wage-earning of women is spent entirely for the family. In some case studies on the housewives, we have seen that how much potentialities they have to adjust with the authoritarian family structure ^{at times} sacrificing many of their own aspirations.

Chapter - 8

Education and the Women

8.1. Female Education - the Priority of Priorities and the Indian Muslims:

Though the importance of Education is accepted since the days of the Rome but importance of women's education is a phenomenon of recent time. In Europe, '*The Admission of Women to full Citizenship*, 1790' was the first book to talk explicitly the equality of women. Besides, the "*Vindication of the Rights of Women*" by Mary Wollstonecraft in 1792, and "*Subjection of Women*" by John Stuart Mill in 1869 deserve to be mentioned for influencing the world public opinion in favor of women's education (Misra and Agarwal: 1998). The history of India witnessed many ups and downs in women's education during the period of 1800 to 1947. It is only after 1857 Muslims began to realize the need for adopting secular education and they sent their boys to English education but they as a community were not ready to send the girls for such education. As a result of this, the education of women suffered a lot (Akhtar, 2003). The Arab which is the birth place of Islam, had no dearth of prominent educated women in the medieval period. They had scholarly knowledge in different areas of study like religion, Persian language and literature, calligraphy, arithmetic and other subjects. This had inspired a little to the Muslims of India. Even in the 'dark' period of India, few Muslim women established themselves as administrator, advisor to the emperor, as gifted writer, poet etc. In 1867, the Maulavis of Calcutta Madrasa dismissed the question of education of Muslim women raised at meeting of the Bengal Science Association. Shakhawat Memorial Girls' School was the first school for the Muslim girls established by Begum Rokeya in 1911. However after the Independence, Muslims of India have to adapt with the changing situation in the larger society though in a slow process. As a result the total situation of women literacy is disheartening except few states (i.e Tamilnadu, Kerala). In Tripura the literacy data on the Muslim women, as in India, is not available except 2001. Only 51.43 percent Muslim women are found literate against 64.91 percent women literacy in National level.

8.2. Education System in Tripura :

The national pattern of 10+2+3 comprising ten years of secondary education, two years of higher secondary and three years of graduation degree has been followed in the education system of Tripura. Prior to the primary, there are pre primary, Anganwadi and Balwadi centers for the children of 3 to 6 years old age group. The first stage of education or primary education is imparted in class I-V. The next higher stage of education is upper primary or Senior Basic imparted in class VI-VIII. The secondary stage of education is in class IX and X. The next two years, class XI and XII constitute the higher secondary or +2 stages. Facilities of vocational educational are available in some post secondary level of professional courses of different duration e.g. poly technical diploma and degree courses in arts and crafts, music, pharmacy science, law and certificate courses in different trades. On the other hand, the non governmental institutions and organizations are religious in nature. They are Ramkshriha Mission, Christian Missionary School and Madrasa. The Missionary and Mission schools follow the prescribed syllabus of State government and the Central government. Their medium of instruction is English and Hindi. The Madrasas are run by private fund as well as the Wakf fund but they have no prescribed syllabus for long days. Their medium of instruction is Bengali mixed with Arabic. The role of this institution to the education of women is not at all countable. The over emphasis on Islamic education has probably kept them behind. The Non Formal Education Programme has been introduced in the state since 1986. The National Literacy Mission since 1988 and the work of Tripura Literacy Campaign as well as Post Literacy Campaign P.L.C. have become integral part of education system of Tripura.

8.3. State of Muslim Women' Education in Villages and Towns :

Within the educational structure said above, the state of education of Muslim women in villages and towns under study has been explained by their literacy status, levels of educational standard, number of enrolment and drop out with some case studies. The education status of Muslim women is related with their participation in general education as well as the Madrasa- education in the state.

However, the present study enquires into the community awareness and responsibility for religious education of girls and the application side of women's education, e.g., educational standard of working women. Enquiry is done about the women's participation, mainly as recipient in the welfare and development approach of the government.

8.3.1. Literacy Status:

The data on Literacy Status of the Muslims under study has been shown in Table no. 8.1. The table shows that :

- i) The number of literate people is more than the number of illiterate people. Of total 5,737 populations (above than five years), the total literates are 3,369 (58.72%). The rest people 2,368 (41.28%) are illiterates; the highest number of literate persons is found in Udaipur town (69.53%) followed by Khilpara (68.65%), Agartala (64.43%), Yeajekhowra (55.60%), N.C. Nagar (55.19%) and at last Kailasahar (46.28%).
- ii) The number of total female literates is lower than the number of male literates. They are 1,392 (50.97%) among total female population of 2,731 and the rest females 1,339 (49.03%) are illiterates. The total number of male literates is 1,977 (65.77%) against 1,029 (34.23%) illiterates.
- iii) The number of total literates in villages are 1977 i.e. 58.40 percent and total literates in towns are 1,392 i.e. 59.18 percent;
- iv) The number of female literates is lower than that of males in all villages and towns. The female literates in villages are 51.33 percent villages and 50.45 percent in towns.
- v) Female literacy is highest at Khilpara (60 %) followed by Yeajekhowra (49.66%) among the villages. In towns highest female literacy is found in Udaipur (59.45%) followed by Agartala (54.60%) and Kailasahar (39.85%);
- vi) Female literacy is higher in villages than in towns and the difference in literacy of the village with the corresponding town is not negligible.

Table no. 8.1
Literacy Status of the Muslims in Villages and Towns Under Study

Name of Town & Village	Population above 5 years														
	Literate						Illiterate						Total Population		
	Male		Female		Total		Male		Female		Total		Male	Female	Total
Village	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%			
N.C. Nagar	460	61.50	322	48.13	782	55.19	288	38.50	347	51.87	635	44.81	748	669	1417
Khilpara	314	76.21	216	60.00	530	68.65	98	23.79	144	40.00	242	31.35	412	360	772
Yazekhowra	376	61.24	289	49.66	665	55.60	238	38.76	293	50.34	531	44.40	614	582	1196
Total Rural	1150	64.82	827	51.33	1977	58.40	624	35.17	784	48.67	1408	41.59	1774	1611	3385
Town															
Agartala	370	73.56	255	54.60	625	64.43	133	26.44	212	45.40	345	35.57	503	467	970
Udaipur	230	78.23	151	59.45	381	69.53	64	21.77	103	40.55	167	30.47	294	254	548
Kailasahar	227	52.18	159	39.85	386	46.28	208	47.82	240	60.15	448	53.72	435	399	834
Total Urban	827	67.13	565	50.45	1392	59.18	405	32.87	555	49.55	960	40.82	1232	1120	2352
Gross Total	1977	65.77	1392	50.97	3369	58.72	1029	34.23	1339	49.03	2368	41.28	3006	2731	5737

Source: Field study

The empirical study points out the non-conformity of the present data on the Muslims of south district with that of the Census of 2001. In Khilpara, an outskirts village of Udaipur district is more advanced than other Muslim populated villages of south district. But the present data on the literacy ratio of west district has conformity with that of the government census data e.g. the literacy rate in the west like Agartala municipal town and N.C Nagar village stands for 55.19 percent and 64.43 percent respectively. In rural-urban consideration, it is noted that Khilpara village is at the top in female literacy (60.00%) while Kailasahar Nagar Panchayat is at the bottom (39.85%). The low literacy status of women in Kailasahar Nagar Panchayat (which is also a district head quarter) compared to a remote village Yeajekhowra, is to be noted. This needs an explanation. In fact, Yeajekhowra village is a big and old village undisturbed in settlement pattern for the past years whereas some Nagar Panchayat wards like East Durgapur was severely affected by flood in the recent past. Many old residents left the locality. The agriculture of the villagers was disturbed in every year until the dam was constructed to save the village. As a result of all these disturbances in the livelihood, remaining people are very poor in socio-educational development. Though they are within walking distance from the main town, they are unable to utilize the urban facilities of education properly. Again, the other Nagar Panchayat ward, namely, town *Kubjar* was a part of village Kubjar in the recent past. It is yet to overcome the rural characteristics.

8.3.2 Literacy and Educational Standard:

The present study on Literacy and educational standard of the people (shown in Table no.8.2 and Table 8.3) is found divided broadly into two major categories like Formal and Informal.

Formal Education :

Formal Education of the people under study is divided into six categories or levels viz. i) Primary or Junior Basic (I-V); ii) Middle school or Senior Basic (VI-VIII); iii) Secondary level (IX—X); iv) Higher Secondary (XI-XII); v) Higher Education (Graduation level) ; vi) Vocational or technical qualification.

Table no. 8.2
Educational Standard of Women in Villages and Towns

Level of literacy	N.C.Nagar		Khilpara		Yeajkhowra		Total Rural		Agartala		Udaipur		Kailasahar		Total Urban		Gross Total	
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
Junior Basic	145	21.67	53	14.72	145	24.91	343	21.29	83	17.80	24	9.45	65	16.29	172	15.36	515	18.86
Senior Basic	115	17.18	82	22.77	98	16.83	295	18.31	98	2.98	57	22.44	64	16.04	219	19.55	514	18.82
Secondary	28	4.18	31	8.61	34	5.84	93	5.77	42	8.99	46	18.11	17	4.26	105	9.37	198	7.25
Higher Secondary	07	1.04	18	5.00	06	1.03	31	1.92	06	1.28	05	1.97	03	0.75	14	1.25	45	1.65
Under Graduate	03	0.44	19	5.28	03	0.83	25	1.55	08	1.71	14	5.51	04	1.00	26	2.32	51	1.86
Post Graduate	00	0.00	01	0.27	00	0.00	01	0.062	01	0.21	01	0.39	00	0.00	02	0.18	03	0.07
Technical/Vocational	01	0.31	01	0.27	00	0.00	02	0.12	01	0.21	01	0.39	00	0.00	02	0.18	04	0.15
In Formal	23	3.43	11	2.5	03	0.51	37	2.30	16	3.43	03	1.18	06	1.50	25	2.23	62	2.27
Total Literate	322	48.13	216	60.00	289	49.66	827	51.33	255	54.60	151	59.44	159	39.84	565	50.44	1392	50.97
Total Population for Literacy	669	100.00	360	100.00	582	100.00	1611	100.00	467	100.00	254	100.00	399	100.00	1120	100.00	2731	100.00

Table no. 8.3

Educational Standard of Men in Villages and Towns

Level of literacy	N. C. Nagar		Khilpara		Yeazekhowra		Total Rural		Agartala		Udaipur		Kailasahar		Total Urban		Total	
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
Junior Basic	146	19.52	55	13.35	161	26.22	362	20.40	98	19.48	49	16.67	86	19.77	233	18.91	595	19.79
Senior Basic	158	21.12	86	20.87	103	16.78	347	19.56	133	26.44	66	22.45	74	17.01	273	22.16	620	20.62
Secondary	82	10.96	69	16.75	46	7.49	197	11.10	82	16.30	62	21.09	44	10.11	188	15.26	385	12.81
Higher Secondary	28	3.74	28	6.80	17	2.77	73	4.11	10	1.99	16	5.44	10	2.30	36	2.92	109	3.63
Under Graduate	25	3.34	58	14.08	15	2.44	98	5.52	20	3.98	24	8.16	04	0.92	48	3.90	146	4.85
Post Graduate	01	0.13	03	0.73	02	0.33	06	0.34	04	0.80	05	1.70	0	0.00	09	0.73	15	0.49
Technical / Vocational	02	0.27	08	1.94	02	0.33	12	0.68	05	0.99	02	0.68	0	0.00	07	0.57	19	0.63
In formal	18	2.41	07	1.70	30	4.89	55	3.10	18	3.58	06	2.04	09	2.07	33	2.68	88	2.92
Total literate	460	61.50	314	76.21	376	61.24	1150	64.82	370	73.56	230	73.23	227	52.18	827	67.12	1977	65.77
Total population for literacy	748	100.00	412	100	614	100.00	1774	100.00	503	100.00	294	100.00	435	100.00	1232	100.00	3006	100.00

The data presented in Table no.8.2 shows that among total 2,731 female, only 515 (18.86%) women are in primary level; 514 females (18.82%) in upper primary and 199 females (7.29%) into Secondary level ; only 45 females (1.65%) in Hr. Secondary; 53 (1.94%) in graduation level ; the post graduates and the technical or vocational educated are less than one percent. In contrast, the Table no.8.3 shows that among total male 3006 literates, 595 (19.79%) in primary, 620 (20.62%) in upper primary, 385 (12.81%) in secondary, 109 (3.63%) in higher secondary, 146 (4.85%) in graduate level. The postgraduate and vocational educated men are found less than one percent (i.e. 0.49% and 0.63%). The data compared between 8.2 and 8.3 reveals that in almost all levels of education, women are behind their men. It affirms the census report of Tripura, 2001, which says that literacy gap between male and female is high among the Muslims.

In villages, the Table 8.2 shows that at N.C.Nagar, largest number of female literates is found in primary level followed by upper primary level. This feature is followed in two other villages also. In secondary and higher secondary level, Khilpara is ahead among the three. The Table 8.3 shows that except Yeajekhowra, the highest literate males are found in upper primary level. In towns, highest female literates are found in upper primary level of education in Agartala and Udaipur, but in Kailasahar it is almost equal in primary and upper primary level, similarly for men highest literate are found in upper primary level in both Agartala and Udaipur except Kailasahar where it is almost the same.

In secondary and higher secondary level, the position of village and town in respect of female and male education deserve to be mentioned. In each village, female literates in secondary level are much higher than that of higher secondary level and for each town, the same is followed. For man also the same scenario repeats in village and towns. In the Graduation level, a considerable number of females (5.55%) is found at Khilpara. In Postgraduate level and Vocational level also, Khilpara is ahead among other villages. Among the towns, In Kailasahar, the educational level of women is much low and sometimes it is worse than the corresponding village of Yeajekhowra. The percentage of women in higher secondary level is also very poor in Kailasahar in

comparison to other towns Though for every town, educational facility is available, the difference in educational status lies in the differences of their socio-economic status.

8.3.3. Enrolment, Dropout and Stagnation:

The Table 8.4 shows that the total number of never-enrolled girls is lower than that of the boys. In other words, the number of girl students continuing study is higher than that of the boys, hence logically the rate of drop out among girls is lower compared to the boys. It indicates that once the girls are enrolled, they are found very sincere to continue study. In spite of all sincerity, majority of them cannot reach even the secondary level of education.

Table no. 8.4.
Enrolment and Drop out among the Muslim Children (Total)
(6-14 years old)

Sex	Population	Student		Drop out		Never Enrolled	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Female	833	616	73.94	37	4.44	180	21.61
Male	901	636	70.69	49	6.44	216	23.97
Total	1734	1252		86		396	

Table no 8.5 shows that for the female child of 6—14 years, non enrollment is highest in Yeajekhowra among the villages; in towns non-enrolment of female child is highest in Kailasahar. It means that to get entry into enrolment is a problem for the girls in the north district. However, the dropout of girls is found largest in the capital town of Agartala in west district. The explanation lies in the weak socio-economic condition of the majority urban dwellers. It also shows that the drop out rate of girls is less than that of non-enrolment both in village and town. The Table no 8.5 shows the comparative status of each village and town of six study areas and the collective status of rural and urban in respect of education of girl child. The Table no. 8.5 and 8.6 present a comparative study from gender- point of view as well as rural urban point of view. A significant difference in drop out scenario for both girls and boys is found between village and town; drop out is much higher in town areas. This suggests that the gender biasness in education is not significant in primary level.

Table no. 8.5
Enrolment and Dropout among the Muslim Girls in Villages and Towns
(6 -14 Years)

Name of Villages/Towns	Non Enrolled		Drop out		Student		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
N.C. Nagar	44	20.09	4	1.83	171	78.08	219	100
Khilpara	10	11.63	2	2.33	74	86.05	86	100
Yeajekhowra	46	22.33	2	0.97	158	76.70	206	100
Total Rural	100	19.57	8	1.57	403	78.86	511	100
Agartala	28	20.59	15	11.03	93	68.33	136	100
Udaipur	14	26.92	02	3.85	36	69.23	52	100
Kailasahar	38	28.36	12	8.96	84	62.69	134	100
Total Urban	80	24.84	29	9.00	213	66.15	322	100
Total	180	21.61	37	4.44	616	73.95	833	100

Table no 8. 6.
Enrolment and Dropout among the Muslim Boys in Villages and Towns
(6-14 Years)

Villages/Towns	Non Enrolled		Drop out		Student		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
N.C. Nagar	55	24.44	7	3.11	163	72.44	225	100
Khilpara	10	10.42	1	1.04	85	88.54	96	100
Yeajekhowra	62	28.70	5	2.31	149	68.98	216	100
Total Rural	127	23.65	13	2.42	397	73.93	537	100
Agartala	35	22.29	18	11.46	104	66.24	157	100
Udaipur	05	7.69	01	1.54	59	90.77	65	100
Kailasahar	49	34.51	17	11.97	76	53.52	142	100
Total Urban	89	24.45	36	9.89	239	65.66	364	100
Total (R&U)	216	23.97	49	5.44	636	70.59	901	100

The rural-urban study shows that the ratio of non-enrolment (19.57%) and drop out (1.57%) of female students is lower in the villages compared to the towns (24.84% and 9% respectively). The largest number of non- enrolled children (boys) is found in Kailasahar (i.e. 34.51), followed by Yeajekhowra (28.70%). Drop out boys are found largest number in Kailasahar (11.97%). From gender-point, the percentage of female students is better than that of the boys both in village and town (Table no. 8.6). There are significant statistical data for the study.

8.3.4. Case Studies on Enrolment of Muslim Students

In Primary and Upper primary level:

To have a more distinct idea about the enrolment scenario of Muslim children, a survey was conducted on few schools, colleges and University situated in addition to the study of villages and towns. The result is presented in the following Table no. 8.7, 8.8 and 8.9.

The investigation into the Enrollment Register of the N.C Nagar S.B School, (situated in N.C.Nagar village), in 1999, shows that there is a good number of enrollment of girl students along with the boys in the primary level. In class V, they are more than 60 percent and better than that of the boys also. But gradually, the number has decreased with a shock in the upper primary classes especially in class VIII. The number decreased from 14 to 03 in between the classes of VI to VIII. The tendency of drop out is present both for boys and girls from primary to middle level classes.

Table no 8.7.
Enrolment of Muslim Boys and Girls
N. C. Nagar, S.B School, Sonamura, West Tripura, 1999

Class	Boys		Girls		Total Students	
	No	%	No	%	No	%
I	51	56.04	40	43.96	91	100
II	32	53.33	28	46.61	60	100
III	31	39.74	47	60.26	78	100
IV	23	51.11	22	48.89	45	100
V	17	38.64	27	61.36	44	100
VI	14	50.00	14	50.00	28	100
VII	07	43.75	09	56.25	16	100
VIII	12	80.00	03	20.00	15	100
TOTAL	187	49.60	190	50.40	377	100

However, the statistical data on the enrolment number of students in the primary level cannot be taken into the account of satisfaction. The Eighth Planning Commission of the state says: "The apparent high enrolment ratio is due to enrolment of over-age and under-age children at this (pry) Stage. The net enrolment ratio will be much less and well below 100." (Sinha and others; 1996) The educationists are worried about

the condition of the primary education, which is, according to them, the most neglected area in the educational structure of the state.

In Secondary and Higher Secondary level:

The present data mentioned above (Table 8.2) suggests that less than half of the girls enrolled in primary school can reach to the secondary stage (7.25%) and then only 1.65 percent can continue study in the H.S. level. The number and percent is something better among the urban girls than those of the village. Facility for girl's education in secondary classes is undoubtedly limited in village. Many villages like N.C. Nagar, Khilpara and Yeajekhowra have no girls' school. They are to study either in the co-ed arrangement or to go the girl's school of town. Under the same situation, many girls belonging to the scheduled caste and scheduled tribe, can avail the facility of secondary education, while the Muslim girls lag behind. The data on investigation into the present situation of the Muslim girl students in the Secondary and Higher secondary examination has been presented in the Table no. 8.8. It reveals that the number of Muslim girls appeared in the Secondary Examination is only 2.78 percent and passed out 2.19 percent. In case of Higher Secondary, only 1 girl among 185 (0.54%) appeared and did not passed. In the same economic status, the S.C. or S.T girls have got an incentive for students-stipend and other facilities while the Muslim girls have not. If they would have the facility, the willing girl students could motivate their parents to send them to school instead of engaging them in the thankless household works. Besides, it is noted that their stagnation in one class is frequently happened in the secondary and higher secondary classes due to the lack of proper guidance facilities for coaching in the main subjects. Muslim students, specially the Muslim girl students are to drop out in the secondary levels. Early marriage may be the result of the want of special facilities for them. which is a bare need for them. The Stipend facilities from the Wakf Board could not reach to many Muslim girls.

The Table no 8.8 illustrates the position of Muslim girl students in a girls' school of the capital town. In **Bani Vidyapith** H.S. School, Agartala for the present year 2005, only 3 Muslim girls appeared in the Secondary Examination out of 108 total girls students and passed out only 2 out of 91. In Higher Secondary Examination, the

case is more pathetic e.g. out of 185, only one is appeared but none passed out. The school is within walking distance from the Muslim dominated residential area i.e. South Ramnagar 10. The report of this school shows the very poor enrolment of Muslim girls and high rate of drop out.

Table no. 8. 8.
Enrolement of Muslim Girls in Secondary / Hr. Secondary School
(Bani Vidyapith H.S. School) Agartala, 2000

Secondary Level	Total no. Students	Muslim Girls
Appeared	108	03 (2.78%)
Passed	91	02 (2.19%)
Higher. Secondary Level	Total no. Student	Muslim Girls
Appeared	185	01 (0.54%)
Passed	164	Nil.

Source: Office of the Bani Vidyapith H.S. School

In Higher Education :

In advanced countries, one half of the boys and one third of girls are capable of higher studies. So it is not wonder that the Muslims girls of Tripura have poor representation in higher studies. In the Hr education, women are poorly represented both in village and town. In the general Degree Colleges of Tripura, participation of Muslim students was very poor till nineties, as the number of female students did not come into percentage. An enquiry into the enrolment number of Muslim students in the biggest college i.e. M.B.B. College, shows that during the years of 2001 to 2003, only 16 male students and 6 females are found in the Arts Faculty of fifteen hundred students of the college. Muslim students are 1.47 percent approximately and majority of them are boys. In the limited seats of Science Faculties, they are often found two or three in number in one academic session. The girl students are found rare in Honors courses. In last two decades, only two Muslim girls are found as Honors students in the department of political science in M.B.B College.

In the technical and professional colleges of Tripura, the Muslim students are very poor. For example, in the Government Law college of Tripura, there was only one Muslim male student admitted in 1998 and during the years of 1999 to 2003, there was none. Only in the session of 2004 –2005, there are three boys and one girl student. The past enrolment register of the Law college recorded few names of Muslim male students though not frequently.

In the Regional Pharmacy Institute at Kunjaban, Agartala, the enrolment register during 1998 to 2005 reports that there are only two Muslim students from Tripura and they are two boys of Khilpara village in Udaipur subdivision. There is no Muslim girl of Tripura though a number of Manipuri Muslim girls from Manipur have joined in this Institute. In Tripura Poly Technique College at Narsingarh, Agartala, only five Muslim students are found in the enrolment register during last few years (1998—2004) when the student's strength has increased from 88 to 225. Three of them were girls but only one has continued the study. Drop out of one girl as reported is due to financial strain of the family. Before 1998, few Muslim boys were admitted and passed the examination. Among 70 students of Women Poly Technique College, established recently in 2003, only one Muslim girl student is found there.

The participation of Muslim girls in Hr. education is presented in the enrolment record of the college register of a sub divisional college like Kazi Nazrul Mahavidyalaya located in Sonamura where Muslim population are nearly half of the total population.

The following Table no. 8.9 shows that the percentage of Muslim students is fluctuating according to the number of other non- Muslim students who are larger than the Muslim Students. For the Session of 2005 to 2006, Muslim boys are 23.94 percent of the total Boys (497), and Muslim girls are 20.56 percent of the total girls' students (248) of the college. There is 459 Muslim students in total out of 2,126 i.e. 21.59 percent during seven years.. The Muslim girls are less than Muslim boys in

every year. It is a common feature. They are in number 127 out of 459 total Muslim students i.e. 27.67 percent.

Table no. 8.9
Enrolment of Muslim Boys and Girls in a Degree College, Sonamura
(1999 to 2006)

Session	Muslim Boy	Muslim Girl	Muslim Students Total	Total No. of Students	% of Muslim Students to Total
1999 - 2000	32	14	46	223	20.62
2000 - 2001	35	15	50	194	25.64
2001 - 2002	26	11	37	207	17.87
2002 - 2003	37	08	45	252	17.86
2003 - 2004	35	08	45	244	17.62
2004 - 2005	46	20	66	261	25.29
2005 - 2006	119	51	170	745	22.82
Total	330	127	459	2126	21.59

Source: Enrolment Register of the K.N.M., Sonamura, Tripura (w)

The enquiry into the enrolment figure of Post Graduate classes of Tripura University, Agartala, during 1998 to 2001, reveals the poor number of Muslim students. In different streams of Arts, Science and Commerce, they are only 26 and three of them are girls. It is also noted that though a number of students got admitted in the IST year class in 2001, they discontinued from second year. In comparison to Muslim students, the students of S.C. community are more forward in Higher Education. It is reported however that the enrolment number of Muslim students has increased in the later years.

8.3.5. Case Studies on Drop out^{of} Girl students :

To investigate the reasons of dropout among the Muslim girls, a few case studies are given below. This study speaks the truth that pardah or poverty is not the sole cause, rather the ethno-political and socio-cultural backwardness are not less responsible for this. The cases are given below.

Case. 1. Saleha Begam, a teen-age girl of Udaipur belongs to a small family consisting of mother and one elder brother. The family migrated from Ompi Bazar to Town Sonamura located in Udaipur town, Ward no.8. Before the extremist disturbances they lived in their ancestral homestead at Ompi which is several Kms. away from Uadipur Town. At the village of Ompi, they had sufficient land property. But their present residence (homestead) is only 2 ½ *Katha* land that was purchased by her father during his acute illness. He had suffered from T.B. and had to come frequently in Udaipur Hospital. However he passed away. Saleha had to stop her school. when she was in class IV in a Senior Basic School at Ompi Bazar. Her father was then alive, but due to frequent disturbance in the interior village of Ompi including Ompi bazaar, she was stopped of school going. After the death of father, they had to shift immediately to their present residence. They have become poor because they have lost all their property and now there is no alternative source of income except the day labour of her elder brother of tender age. There is no other working hand to bear the family. Her mother has spent all the savings saved from their original homestead. Tribal disturbances at last forced them to be rooted out from the original residence where they had no poverty. Her brother, who was studying in Secondary level, had to stop study. At present this young boy has to shoulder all responsibility of the family. Saleha is to take the lion share of household works but in the rest time she spends doing nothing. She says that there is no hope and scope to continue her break-off study. They are in financial hardship. They will not go back to regain all of their cultivable land at Ompi. According to her description, she can't forget the torture of the extremists in their village. Consequently, a cultivator-family has turned into a labour-class family. Now, Saleha with her mother and brother are waiting for her Saadi (marriage).

Case. 2. Nasima Bibi is born in a Bhuia-family of Chandrapur village ^hwhich is only a few miles distant from Udaipur town. The family has a large quantity of cultivable land, i.e.20 acres. Nasima was a meritorious student of Chandrapur High School. She has obtained in the Secondary exam. first division. She has earnest will to study in college for higher education. But one of her elder brother, namely Iqbal Hossain who is a 'Maulana', did not allow her to study further Iqbal is adamant in his belief in

Pardah custom for woman. Nasima's old father^{who had} encouraged her so long to continue her study, could not override the decision of his Maulana-son. She is not even allowed to meet any visitor whether male or female. The present researcher could not talk with her. One of her brothers namely Jalal-uddin Bhuia, Arts graduates from Udaipur Government College, confessed to the researcher that he did not also protest against this negative attitude of his brother. Because he himself was a frustrated young man who did not find any job for ten years after his graduation. He is engaged in agriculture. He probably has lost hope for job in Tripura. Thus two elder brothers for two different reasons did not encourage Nasima. A promising Muslim girl has been sacrificed to the fundamental attitude and frustrated outlook of the family members..

Case 3. Khadija Begam a teen ager, is a daughter of Alkas Mia Choudhury. He is a school teacher in Sonamura. After Khadija passed the Secondary examination, she was stopped for further education. Still she is very much willing to continue study but her father is not allowing her to go to school. The reason lies in an affair of her adolescent age. She has fallen in love with a young man of N.C Nagar village. Though the boy is a graduate but he is unemployed. So Alkas Mia does not like to allow his daughter to mix with the boy whom he does not like. Apprehending something wrong for her future, he has stopped her school going for eleven classes. Being a teacher cum father, he is also found in mental agony. Whatever may be the fact, the girl is to discontinue her study, probably, forever.

Case. 4. Halima Khatun, a teen-aged girl has stopped school going while she is in class V. Her father, Abdul Chattar is employed as a driver of Police Vehicles of Agartala. He has built a decent house at Jagaharimura by the help of his government job. He likes to see his children educated and thinks himself capable to run the educational expenses with the help of his 'decent' income. Halima did not like to continue her study in school. Abdul and his wife have tried enough to get their daughter attentive to study but failed. At last they have turned their attention to their other sons and daughters. Halima is asked about the reasons of her disliking in study. She says frankly her disinterest in study. Her performance in academic session is also not good. The main reason investigated by the present researcher is that she lags behind from her classmates

in academic progress due to the lack of non-coaching in the earlier classes and thus repeated stagnation in one class has created inferior feeling in her mind. She is not able to realize the value of education living in an environment of illiterate relatives and neighbors of the community.

Case. 5. This is a case of silent girl of 17 years old, residing in Yazekhowra, a village of north district. Jyosna Begam is drop out girl from school in secondary level. She did not speak a single word in spite of insistence of the researcher to hear her voice. All information was collected from her relatives and family members. They blamed the girl that she herself was responsible for her drop out and that she had no merit, no interest for study. She is only interested to see the T.V, as they reported. Last year she failed in the annual exam. Her mother became anxious to get her married as soon as possible. Thus they arranged for her marriage and one proposal got final selection but only at the last moment it went vain. Why she has not started her study again? The question remained unanswered. It is reported that on her way to the school some teenager boys teased her. Her parents are not ready to face all these things at present situation. Quite earlier of stopping her study at school, the guardians, especially her mother started to look for a groom. This attitude and other adverse reactions from the environment, probably, have made the girl so silent and frustrated looking.

Case. 6. Md. Iarul Akhtar, a sixteen years girl is a resident of N.C. Nagar village (Karalimura) of Sonamura. She is the eldest daughter among six offspring of her parents. Due to frequent pregnancies, the health of her mother has broken down and needs household help from daughter. Because of the burden of domestic chores, the grown up daughter, Iarul Akhtar has to drop out from school at class V. The day labourer father could not provide her any facility for continuing her education. The younger brothers and sisters go to madrasa and in other general schools, though irregularly. The main cause behind her drop out from school lies in the poverty, illiteracy and ignorance of modern way of living.

Case. 7. Salma is the daughter of a school-teacher. They live at Boxonagar in Sonamura.. She has completed Secondary examination and aspired for higher education. Her father Sahajan Miya likes to get his eldest daughter higher educated. She is a good student

and never failed in the class examination. But her mother does not agree with this outlook. She is anxious for the education of other children – two daughters and son. She thinks that within such limited income of a primary school teacher, it is not possible to manage all the expenses of higher education. The other reason lies in the unfavorable situations around the village. It is reported that a friend of her who was also a very good student of the school, has eloped with a boy of below their status. That eloped girl has not only doomed her career but also ruined her life. The girl is maladjusted with that boy and his family norms after marriage. So she might have come back. This type of incident is a threatening for the guardians of the adolescent girls.

The daughter of Sahajan Miya is a pretty girl. She tries to convince her parents that she will not commit such mistakes. Though her father has trusted her, her mother doesn't. Sahajan Miya's first wife committed suicide leaving this daughter when she was only a two years baby. Sahajan married his wife's next sister for the well being of his beloved daughter. Though father has a very soft corner for the ambition of his eldest daughter, the situation does not favor her fortune. Her aspiration to study in Agartala College goes vain. The financial as well as the socio-environmental causes might have a composite result for her drop out.

8.3.6. Informal Education:

It means education earned through traditions and heritage of the group or community by the traditional or informal agencies and institutions. It has no formal certificate of recognition. It may be earned through religious scriptures and private coaching or by training in family occupation. There is no information of census data and no other source of secondary data on the number and percentage of Muslim women in different levels of this education. However, the present data furnished in Table no 8.2 reveals that out of total 1392 literate women, a small percentage (2.20%) is just literate in the sense that they can only read and write their names in any language (e.g. Bengali, Urdu or Arabic) but do not have any educational qualification as such. They are the informal literates either from the traditional muktab or adult education centre initiated by the government. The percentage of male informal literates shown in Table no.7.3, is better (i.e. 2.92 %) than women as they have more scope for education,

especially in madrasa education. In rural-urban point, the percentage of informal female literacy is better in villages (2.30%) than in towns (2.23). Similarly for men, it is 3.10 percent in village and 2.68 percent. It is noted that in the informal literacy also, the Muslim are reserved in women's education. The literacy gap between male-female is started from here and it continues to all levels of education in village and towns

Non-Formal education of recent time: It is to be noted that, a very insignificant number of non formal educated women and men are merged together with the informal educated persons. As a matter of fact, the state has launched National Adult Education Programme (N.A.E.P) in 1978–1979. There were 900 literacy centers under the central government scheme and one thousand centers under the state government scheme as per record of the government. The seventh Five year Plan covered adult literacy centre in the rural areas. So many women in the lower strata of the society have got the chance to be literate. In the nineties, Non-Formal Education Program was introduced in accordance with the N.P.E. and in 1986, this was run for those who are either drop out or never attended school. None of the present respondents availed this facility. The state launched the National Literacy Mission (N.L.M.) in May 1988 to eradicate illiteracy through the voluntary agencies and student volunteers were involved in this movement. The work of literacy mission (Tripura Literacy Campaign) continued in the end of nineties when the present field study was conducted on. The student volunteers as well as the present respondents admitted to the present researcher about the insignificance of its effect though they were enrolled in the centre, their presence was very irregular and what they learnt instantly, they forgot it at last. They can only write their names, but not know the entire alphabet. So it can be said that in the mission of government to eradicate illiteracy, Muslim women took least participation. Majority women were found literate from the family arrangement or unrecognized muktab which is only religion oriented. Majority men also learnt from private muktab and madrasa and they did not learn any general subject of modern curriculum. As there is no permanent follow-up system of education, the beneficiaries can not continue learning when they become detached from the institution. The post literacy movement in Tripura also could not touch the people effectively.

Madrasa Education contributing Women's Literacy

Once general education was not normally available to women but she had access to knowledge through religious literature. "Although formal literacy or writing capability was not normally available, yet the access to knowledge was through religious literature..... Remarkably this trend of women's education is universal in both east and west" (Gerda Lerner:1993, Basu: 2002).

In Tripura Islamic education is dated back to 18th century but there is no rational development in Madrasa education and no liberal attitude towards education for girls. Unlike the Muslims of Uttar Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh and some other states, the Muslims of Tripura shows very conservative outlook to the madrasa education for girls except the pre-primary level.. As a result, Muslim girls are only taught up to pre primary level viz. muktab education. They never get the chance to be educated in primary and upper primary level of madrasa education what is available for boys. When they are sent to the muktab at the age of six to ten, they learn up to "panch kolema" – the knowledge of primary religious book called "kaida", to read namaz five times in a day, to read Hadish, to recite few "ayats" of the Quran in Arabic language etc. All the children of the community are supposed to have this minimum level of religious education. It is not an option but rather an imperative on the community people; for a Muslim girl, this education is compulsory especially in marriage time when she is married with a Muslim boy. One of the objectives of this religious education is to prepare them able to learn the Quran and Hadith. A good number of girls in villages go to the muktab wearing formal dress covering head with the end of the scarf— 'orna'; the boys wear *lungi* and 'tupi' (cap) on their head. In towns they may be found to go with casual dress.

The present study reveals that both in towns and villages, Muslim girls are never sent to any distant and senior madrasa which are only for boys. They may drop out before the completion of muktab education. The economically well off guardians would like to arrange a private tutor – Ustadadji or Hujur for their daughter at home. Muslim widows were also found as private tutor of the Muslim girls. This is practically introducing them to the Islamic rituals. Not more than this. This indicates the negligence

of religious education for girls. No Girls' Madrasa was found in Tripura so long. Recently the names of two girls madrasa are proposed to the government for recognition. They are Ayesha Girls Madrasa at Kulubari, Sonamura and Begam Asmatun Nessa Primary Madrasa at Laxmibil, Bishalgarh in the west district. Boys are sent to high madrasa in West Bengal or Assam; they come back and get job in the muktab and madrasa. No girl is sent for such education and no woman teacher is found in any of these institutions. The community people do not expect from them any knowledge or certificate but they are expected only to obey the rituals and customs of the society.

As consequences, only a microscopic number of Muslim women of Tripura, both in town and village were found able to read or recite the Holy books written in Arabic languages; it is not wonder that they do not understand the meaning of the contents. To read out the Quran is practiced by them in the Ramjan month only. Someone read out the selected *ayats* of the Quran everyday and some women listen to her if they would have time after finishing all the daily works of the household. They read and listen as their religious duty. None of the women in present study know that the Bengali version of the Quran is available in Tripura or elsewhere. Some men only know about its availability in Bangladesh. Thus religious education of Muslim woman is neither complete nor in depth but only conventional and nursery standard. She is not expected to be scholar in madrasa education. It signifies the less value of woman's education in the community. Recently, many muktab and madrasa have come under the modernization scheme of the government. Under the scheme, the madrasa are directed to teach the general subjects of English, Bengali, Mathematics, History, and Geography along with the traditional religious subjects i.e. the Quran, Hadith, Feka and languages like Arabic, Urdu and Farsi. To obtain the grants-in-aid, many institutions are trying to follow this scheme. So the poor girls, who do not get the chance of general education, may avail this.

8.4. Education^{at} Standard of the Working Women.

This is an attempt to link the literacy and occupation of women or to look into the application side of women's education. Despite the bulk of dependent females, only 98 women have own independent source of income. Among total 98 earners, 30

(30.16%) are informal literate, 46 (46.39%) are formal literate and 22 (22.45%) are illiterate. The Table 8.10 shows the literacy standard of 81 women earners engaged in major five occupations.

Table no. 8.10
Educational Standard of Working Women

Literacy standard	Maid	Day Labour	Govt. Service	Cultivation	Business	Total
Illiterate	11	6	0	1	0	18
Informal literate	16	3	2	4	2	27
Up to Class-V	12	2	2		3	19
Up to Class-VIII	01		3		1	5
Secondary			2			2
Hr. Secondary			2			2
Graduation			4			4
Post Graduation			2			2
Technical /Professional			2			2
Total	40	11	19	05	06	81

Of the rest 17 women, 5 are private tutors distributed into 2 informal literates and 1 Higher Secondary; 2 are studying in B.A. class; 2 beggars are illiterate ; 1 surveyor is a graduate ; 1 pensioner is class VIII ; 3 renters are literates in primary level ; 1 milk woman is informal literate ; 1 Stipend holder reads in class VIII and another Stipend holder reads in secondary level ; 2 old age maintenance beneficiaries are illiterates. Thus out of 98, 22 are illiterates, 30 are informal literates and the rest minority 46 women (46.94%) have formal education.

It is to be mentioned that rent receiver, pensioner and beggar are not workers in the economic term 'unless they are engaged for some part of year in some economic activity'. These people in the present study are obviously included in this category. It is clear from the data that a large number of earners have not obtained any formal education. Among 98 earners, 22 are illiterates, 29 are informal literates. So the women with formal education are only 47 in number (i.e. 47.96%).

8.5. Incentives For Girls' Education

The status of women is very much linked with the raising of educational status, which ultimately acts as the key determinant of any sustainable development of the country. One of the indicators of development of a country is the increased rate of girls' participation in education. In fact, it is a hard task of every government to provide various financial incentives and training programmes for educational empowerment of girl students. Since the Sixth Five Year Planning, India government has been taken initiative and introduced many welfare programmes for the purpose. An enquiry to the situation of Tripura state illuminates the community consciousness about the under privileged sections of the community, specially the women.. They have some suggestions to the government for its intervention and supports (**Saptahik Jahan:1996**). Some important suggestions relating to education are: Modernisation of Madrasa education, ii) proportionate Reservation of seats in the Higher and Technical educational Institutions, iii) Stipend for Muslim girl- students iv) Girls school and Hostel for each subdivision of the district. All these need the government backing. So long they were not backed by any government policy. Recently, Tripura Government like the Government of Kerala three decades ago has taken some welfare policies for the development of the religious minority communities of Tripura. Muslims being the largest minority of Tripura are found as largest beneficiaries among the minorities. The data collected from the Wakf Board are presented in the Table no. 8.11 to 8.15

The Table shows that Muslim boys and girls students of primary and upper primary schools are aided financially on the basis of their merit i.e. scoring 55 percent marks in the school examination. The Table no 8.11 and 8.16 shows that the students of class II-VIII have been helped from the Wakf Board during 2001 to 2003. The boys and girls of any government and non-government school can avail this student stipend. The boys and girls in twelve sub divisions have obtained the stipend. The data indicates that though the number of girls' participation in education is increasing day by day, but not equal in strength with the participation of boys. The largest number of beneficiaries comes from Sonamura followed by Dharmanagar, Udaipur and Kailasahar.

Table no 8.11
Muslim Girls as Stipend Holder un the Wakf Board (Class II – VIII) - 2001

Sub-Division	No. of Boys	No. of Girls	Total
1. Sadar	84	79	163
2. Khowai	4	1	5
3. Sonamura	968	933	1901
4. Bishalgarh	149	169	318
5. Sabroom	1	4	5
6. Belonia	35	28	63
7. Amarpur	16	13	29
8. Udaipur	339	308	647
9. Kailasahar	282	268	550
10.Dharmanagar	339	359	698
11.Kamalpur	89	99	188
12. Ambassa	00	01	01
Total	2306	2262	4568

(Rupees six lakhs ten thousand eight hundred only)

Source: Tripura Wakf Board

Table no. 8.12
Muslim Girls Stipend Holder under the Wakf Board (Class II – VI11) -2002

Sub-Division	No. of Boys	No. of Girls	Total
1.Sadar	82	80	162
2. Khowai	5	2	7
3. Sonamura	963	925	1888
4. Bishalgarh	140	159	299
5. Sabroom	3	0	3
6. Belonia	38	24	62
7. Amarpur	18	14	32
8. Udaipur	309	301	610
9. Kailasahar	280	269	549
10.Dharmanagar	331	329	660
11.Kamalpur	91	98	189
12. Ambassa	00	00	00
Total	2260	2201	4461

Source: Tripura Wakf Board

Table no. 8.13
Girls Stipend Holder under the Wakf Board (Class II – VIII) - 2003

Sub-Division	No. of Boys	No. of Girls	Total
Sadar	129	112	241
Khowai	4	3	7
Sonamura	908	744	1652
Bishalgarh	232	182	414
Sabroom	8	3	11
Belonia	64	39	103
Amarpur	12	10	22
Udaipur	338	300	638
Kailasahar	200	171	371
Dharmanagar	364	269	633
Kamalpur	109	75	184
Ambassa	00	00	00
Total	2368	1908	4276

Source: Tripura Wakf Board

Table no. 8.14
Stipend for the Madrasa Students - 2002

Sub-Division	No. of Boys	No. of Girls	Total
Bishalgarh	9	5	14
Sonamura	49	11	60
Kailasahar	12	11	23
Dharmanagar	79	81	160
Total	149	108	257

Table no. 8.15
Stipend for the Madrasa Students 2003

Sub-Division	No. of Boys	No. of Girls	Total
Bishalgarh	7	5	12
Sonamura	57	11	68
Kailasahar	40	6	46
Dharmanagar	56	66	122
Total	160	88	248

The boys and girls of any government or non-government school can avail this upto upper primary level.

In case of madrasa education (Table 8.14 and 8.15), Muslim girls are aided along with the boys in the pre-primary level. But as the boys continue their education in the upper levels of madrasa, they are the major beneficiaries. The difference is very much distinct especially in Sonamura in two consecutive years i.e.2003 and 2004. When the beneficiary boys are 57 and 49 in the respective years, the corresponding numbers of females are 11 and 11.

Table No. 8.16
Special Incentive Award for Girls (2003-2004)

Sl. No.	Name of Scheme for RM Students	Number of Students	
		2002-03	2003-04
1	Special Incentive Award (for Girls)	167	273
2	Book Grant	5,280	5,874
3	Pre Metric Scholarship	812	1,084
4	Post Metric Scholarship	nil	492
5	Moulana Abul Kalam Azad Memorial Award	25	31
Total		6284	7754

Source: Directorate for Welfare of Religious Minorities.

The data (Table no 8.16) shows that the government has taken some Special Incentive Award schemes to overcome the educational backwardness of the students belonging to the Religious Minority groups. There is no break up of the minority groups, but it is very easy to assume that the major numbers of beneficiaries are Muslims as they are the largest minority group. The Special Incentive Award scheme is exclusively for the Girl- Students. From the verbal report of the office, the girls are 90% Muslims. The other scheme like pre-Matric and post Matric Scholarship indicates that majority students of the minority community become victim of stagnation in these stages. The data of the present study has also found affirmative The special incentive scheme for the girls is a growing concern among the Development Functionaries, Planners and Activists for the development of girl child.

Findings

The present study on the state of education of Muslim women is significant to unveil some important statistical data e.g. more literate persons than illiterate in the muslim community. The number of female literacy is also higher in villages than that of towns. It has become possible not only because of their good percentage in outskirts village like Khilpara (60%) but also in the remote village like Yeajekhowra (49.66%). It seems that rural-urban factor is insignificant in the primary level of education. The socio-economic factors are important to determine the higher level of education of the people.

As regards gender, the data on formal education of women reveals that in all stages of educational level, Muslim women are behind their men. The difference of gender-gap is more distinct in the higher classes. In informal education also there is nothing to be encouraging for women. So long the Madrasa education has proved to provide little contribution to the educational improvement of women. In the pre-primary stage, many of them go to muktab and learn the preliminary religious practices. After leaving the muktab, The madrasa education has little effect for them. So long there was no community arrangement for the upper level madrasa education for girls. Recently situation is going to change through establishing the separate madrasa for girls in primary level.

In Formal education, the incidence of non-enrolment as well as drop out among the girls is lower than that of the boys in the age group of 6 to 14 years age. It means that gender-biasness in education is not dominant in the primary level. The availability of schools nearby the residence and free of cost education might have increased this number. The women of earlier generation suffered from the non availability of school in the village. The present data suggest that the educational scenario among the Muslims of Kailasahar town is very poor than any other town or village even the corresponding village of Yeajekhowra. In contrast, Khilpara village is better in educational status. The difference lies in the socio-economic position of the people. The poor representation in the higher levels of school both for male and female indicates socio-

economic incapability of the Muslim students to get proper tuition or coaching class nearby of their residence. The boys may go to the distant places for tuition but it is more or less impossible for the Muslim girls in the village and even in the town. The difference of drop out between male and female is insignificant. The scope of earning attracts the boys more than to continue in the schools. The girls are supposed to be the helper of mother in domestic works. The number of non-enrolment and drop out is the outcome of some B.P.L. Muslim families. Obviously a link between poverty and non-enrolment can't be denied. Though early marriage and pardah system are held responsible for their low level education, but it is observed that the lack of proper guidance and coaching, the children of backward families are to drop out in the upper primary level or in the secondary level. This failures and stagnation affect their progress of education. It is also observed that lack of infrastructure in many schools has a negative effect on the students. Above all the drop out case studies reveals another dimension i.e. socio-political or ethno-political atrocities inflicted upon the people of Tripura since the eighties.

The reasons behind drop out and enrolment are :

- i) Lack of favorable environment for education at home i.e. large size of family, pardah restriction, early marriage, poverty etc.
- ii) Lack of proper institutional, existing unfavorable atmosphere of the schools i.e. no regular class, dearth of teacher, lack of the teachers of worth and want of discipline.
- iii) Apathetic attitude among the guardians about girls' education i.e. expense for education of girls is thought as wastage of money, lack of persuasion for study among the students themselves etc.
- iv) Stagnation in classes— frequently in the secondary level which means no promotion in the next class; lack of coaching centers / tutorials home nearby.
- v) Lack of motivational activities or social service in favour of education in the community.
- vi) At last but not least, many failures of the government during three decades, to save the life and property of the people in the ethno-political disturbed areas.

The sufferings of the internally migrated people are not less than the migrated people from foreign country. None can deny that women and children become main victim in any catastrophe of the society. Therefore, A non- conventional outlook of the community people as well as the government is the need of the day.

Chapter 9

Political Participation and Women

9.1. Political Participation of the Muslim Women :

The participation of Women in politics is felt desirable only in the first quarter of the twentieth century. The Indian women obtained the right to vote first in 1929. Political participation means involvement of individual activities with the input side of government function. Its aim is to influence the policies and to motivate the government machinery to a particular end. Political participation is multidimensional indicating a wide range of political activities e.g. political discussion, attendance of political meetings, rally, procession, posturing, joining the election campaign, taking membership in political parties, casting votes, contesting election and being elected, to hold public office doing the expected role and functions. The thrust of the present study is on the last part of various dimensions i.e. her right to vote to be elected. Though men and women participate almost equally in casting votes and India has had a female prime minister also and even the women have occupied higher position in many offices of administration, the overall participation of women is very low. Their 'participation through acts other than voting is almost nil'. Some research study on political participation of women in West Bengal has concluded the low rate of participation of women (Roy Chowdhuri: 1993)

In the present study, political participation of Muslim women adds a new phenomenon only after the introduction of Three-tier Panchayat System. Though she has had full constitutional rights for participation in politics, so long she has enjoyed only to elect her chosen candidate and exercised seldom the right to be elected. Mere right to choose the representative is not a complete political right without exercising the right to be elected. The number of Muslim women voters casting vote in favor or against of any political party is not less than the sisters of other communities but their active participation to hold public office was absolutely nil in this state so long. Due to various reasons, the representation of Muslim women in the politics of Tripura is

not found in recent past. Usually, the women irrespective of ethnic and religious identity would get rare chance to have entry in the highly competitive market of power politics.

Since the Statehood in 1970, Tripura has been represented by five female ministers and one M.P. but none of them was Muslim. Though Muslim men were found with rank and file in different level of state politics, Muslim women were far away from this. When the women of other backward communities have come forward, they have lagged behind. The socio-economic condition, religious and cultural tradition along with their minority position did not support them to step in this new dimension of life. One or two women ventured to compete in the legislative election but defeated.

But as soon as the situation is changed with the chance of 33 percent reserved quota for women in the Panchayat election, the common Muslim men— whether father-in-law or husband or community member, have allowed their women to come out of home (with reservation) to hold public office. Apparently, men are to go off from certain seats but their purpose is to keep indirect hold on public affairs which they dealt earlier directly. Thus Muslim women have appeared in the scene with the full support of the family and society. The following discussion has shown that the number of women members has increased in three terms election in almost all levels in Tripura. They have gradually made themselves adapted with new identity. As far as the report is available about their performance, they are coping up with the new situation. This is certainly a break from the traditional life so long.

However, political participation of women in three villages and towns under study is analysed in two ways: a) their representation in the urban administration like Municipal Council and Nagar Panchayat; b) representation in the villages under study. In addition to these, a survey was conducted in the state level of three tier Panchayat to have a distinct idea about the participation of Muslim women. This is a micro analysis reflected from the macro level.

9.2. Women in Local Governance :

An enquiry into the rural and urban units show that though women are now an integral part of these two administration, Muslim women are less represented in the

urban units in contrast to rural units. It is seen that in the urban administration of Agartala Municipal Council and two Nagar Panchayats of Udaipur and Kailasahar, Muslim women are found totally absent. Agartala Municipal Council consists of 14 Councilors and five of them are women (35.71%) including one Vice chairman in the reserved and general seats. There is no Muslim Councilor except a nominated man. In the Ward no. 9 of Udaipur Nagar Panchayat, two Muslim Women are found member in a Committee of Community Development Society along with other four women members'. Though the sub divisions hold a large number of population, their representation in urban administration is almost nil. In other Nagar Panchayats also, Muslims are found absent e.g. Sonamura Nagar Panchayat in west district, Dharmanagar Nagar Panchayat in north district etc.

In the rural administrative units of Panchayats, Muslim women's participation is noticeable. They have not only fulfilled the reserve quota for women but also contested in the general and unreserved seats irrespective of castes and male-female. Particularly in the Muslim dominated villages, Muslim women's participation is significant. They are elected not only member of the Panchayat but also selected Gram Pradhan in the Muslim populated villages. They are trying to contest in the upper levels and some of them have become successful to be member of Panchayat Samiti. The following study of the representation of Muslim women in three-tier Panchayat has been discussed on comparative analysis with the other community women since the election of 1994.

9.3. Women Representatives in Three tier Panchayats : Gram Panchayat, Panchayat Samiti and Zilla Parishad :

The representation of Muslim women in three Gram Panchayats of N.C.Nagar, Khilpara and Kailasahar has been shown in the following Table no. 9.1. The data on their representation in two terms election of 1999 and 2004 show that there is an increasing tendency of participation among the Muslim women in all the Panchayats from the previous years. In 1999, total number of Muslim participation was 20 (62.90%) in the three villages together and women's participation was 36.36 percent; in 2004, women's participation has increased into 70 percent with the increase of total

Muslim participation (79.31%). N.C.Nagar and Yeajekhowra villages are populated by above than 90 percent Muslims whereas Muslim population in Khilpara consists of 50 percent of total population. In 1999, there were 6 Hindu women among total 15 members but no Muslim woman was there. In the next election (2004), out of 4 women they have 2 (50%). In Yeajekhowra also, the percentage of Muslim women has increased. The most important thing noticed here is the hundred percent fulfillment of reserved seats (33.%) by the Muslim women in N.C.Nagar Gram Panchayat. Their highest participation is found in this village.

Table no. 9.1
Muslim Women in Three Gram Panchayats,

1999						
Name of Gram Panchayat	Male	Female	Total	Muslim Men	Muslim Women	Total (M)
N.C Nagar	06	03	09	05 (83.33%)	03 (100%)	08 (88.89%)
Khilpara	09	06	15	05 (55.55%)	00 (00 %)	05 (33.33%)
Yazekhowra	06	02	08	06 (100%)	01 (50 %)	07 (87.50%)
Total	21	11	32	16 (76%)	04 (36.36%)	20 (62.9%)

2004						
Name of Gram Panchayat	Male	Female	Total	Muslim Men.	Muslim Women	Total (M)
N.C Nagar	06	03	09	06 (100%)	03 (100 %)	09 (100%)
Khilpara	07	04	11	04 (57.14%)	02 (50 %)	06 (54.54%)
Yazekhowra	06	03	09	06 (100%)	02 (66.67%)	08 (100%)
Total	19	10	29	16 (84.21%)	07 (70%)	23 (79.31%)

Table no. 9.2
Women Members in Three-tier Panchayats
(1994, 1998, 2004)

1994						
Name of three tiers	Women	Men	Total	Muslim		Total
				Women	Men	
Gram Panchayats (525)	1809 (33.24%)	3618 (66.66%)	5427	119 (6.58%)	N.A.	N.A.
Panchayat Samiti(16)	67 (34.18%)	130	197	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.
Zilla Parishad (3)	24 (34.28%)	46 (65.71%)	70 (100.00)	01 (4.17%)	01 (2.17%)	02 (2.86%)
1999						
Gram Panchayat-535.	1895 (33.33%)	3790 (66.67%)	5685 (100.00)	159 (8.39%)	438 (11.56%)	597 (10.50%)
Panchayat Samiti--23.	105 (35.44%)	194 (64.88%)	299 (100.00)	06 (5.71%)	15 (7.73%)	21 (7.02%)
Zilla Parishad-4.	28 (34.14%)	54 (65.85%)	82 (100.00)	02 (7.14%)	02 (3.70%)	04 (4.88%)
2004						
Gram Panchayat-513.	1785 (33.35%)	3567	5352 (100.00)	147 (8.23%)	394 11.04%	541 10.11%
Panchayat Samiti-23.	118 (35.45%)	179	297	11 (10.38%)	13 7.26%	24 8.08%
Zilla Parishad-4.	32 (34.5%)	57	89	03 (9.37%)	02 3.51%	05 5.26%

The Table 9.2 shows that since the first Gram Panchayat election in 1994, the participation of Muslim women is found in a considerable number, 119 (6.58%). In the next succeeding elections of 1999 and 2004, they are found increased 8.39 percent and 8.23 percent respectively. The most important thing is that women in Tripura have superseded the reserved quota of 33 percent since 1994, not only in the gram panchayat level but also in two other levels of Samiti and Zilla parishad. Muslim women's participation has increased in encouraging manner in these levels also. The encouraging participation of Muslim men in general seats is to be noted.

The next Table no 9.3 shows that women were selected Gram Pradhan, Upa-Pradhan at Gram Panchayat level, Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson at Block Level and Sabhadhipati and Sahakari—Sabhadhipati at Zilla level. In several Muslim dominated gram-panchayats, Muslim women were selected as gram pradhan. The data shows

Table no 9.3
Women Office Pradhan in Three-tier Panchayat.

1994*						
Name of office	Women	Men	Total (100%)	Muslim		Total (% of total)
				Women (% of total women)	Men (% of total men)	
Gram Pradhan	184 (35.05%)	341	525			
Upa Pradhan			525			
Samiti Chair Person	06 (37.5%)	10	16	Nil		
Vice Chair Person			16	Nil		
Sabhadhipati	01 (33.33%)	02	03	Nil	Nil	
Sahakari Sabhaadhipati	01 (33.33%)	02	03	Nil	Nil	
1999						
Gram Pradhan	223 (41.68%)	312	535	12 (5.38%)	27 (8.65%)	39 (7.29%)
Upa Pradhan	45 (8.41%)	490	535	02 (4.44%)	64 (13.06%)	66 (12.34%)
Samiti Chair Person	11 (47.83%)	12	23	Nil	Nil	
Vice Chair Person	02 (8.69%)	21	23	Nil	03 (14.28%)	03 (13.04%)
Sabhadhipati	02 (50%)	02	04	Nil	Nil	
Sahakari Sabhaadhipati	01 (25%)	03	04	Nil	Nil	
2004						
Gram Pradhan	215 (41.91%)	298	513	22 (10.23%)	19 (6.37%)	41 (7.99%)
Upa Pradhan	38 (7.40%)	475	513	02 (5.26%)	51 (10.74%)	53 (10.33%)
Samiti Chair Person	09 (39.13%)	14	23	Nil	Nil	Nil
Vice Chair Person	00	23	23	Nil	02 (8.69%)	02 (8.69%)
Sabhadhipati	02 (50%)	02	04	Nil	Nil	Nil
Sahakari Sabhaadhipati	01 (33.33%)	03	04	Nil	Nil	Nil

* Note : Details information on the Muslims (1994) was not available.

that in 1999, Muslim. Women were 12 (5.38%). Muslim men were 8.65 percent Pradhan and 13.06 percent. Upa—pradhan Among 12 women Pradhans, 4 are from Melaghar block (west district) Another four gram panchayats under this blocks are headed by Muslim women. Certainly some Panchayats were headed by Hindu women belonging to SC and ST community. , The north district like the west district has also some gram panchayats dominated by the Muslim population, but none of the Panchayat was led by women.

The Table 9.3.shows that though the women are selected as Pradhan, Upa-Pradhan at Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson (Block Level) and Sabhadhipati, Sahakari—Sabhadhipati (Zilla level), Muslim women are found only as Gram Pradhan under few blocks where Muslims are in large majority; they are elected member of Samiti and Zilla Parishad but they do not represent any head of office in two higher levels. Muslim men are also not found as head of office in the higher levels except as Vice Chairman in some Samities.

Muslim women as pradhan are found often higher than that of the men who are largely found as Upa-Pradhan. The Table no 9.4 shows that women participation in almost all levels is behind their men. However, women representation in all levels of three tier Panchayats is progressive one. Some times they have exceeded the reserved quota for women. It's a remarkable point in the State politics. The representation of Muslim women in the Zilla level is only from the Paschim (west) Zilla. Among three members for 2004, one woman is re-elected from Melaghar block, another is elected from Boxonagar block of same sub-division (Sonamura) and the third one is elected from Bishalgarh block of Bishalgarh sub division. The north and south district have no Muslim woman representative in the district level indicating poor level participation in these districts.

An enquiry was done in some blocks selected for Muslim population in a considerable number for the purpose of wide knowledge about the participation rate of Muslim women in the State level. It is shown in the in the Table no. 9.4. The data shows that in 2004, the participation of Muslim women is hopeful in some blocks.

Table no 9.4
Women Representatives for Gram Panchayat under Selected Blocks

Sl. No..	Name of the Block	Women Elected	Muslim Women & % of total women
1	Dukli	17	04 (23.52)
2	Jirania	93	07 (7.53)
3	Bishalgarh	32	14 (43.75)
4	Kathalia	21	13 (61.90)
5	Boxonagar	23	19 (82.61)
6	Melaghar	23	17 (73.91)
	West district	160	123 (76.87)
1	Gournagar	55	28 (50.91)
2	Salema	11	04 (36.36)
3	Panisagar	15	05 (33.33)
4	Kadamtala	61	26 (42.62)
	North district	142	63 (43.37)
1	Matabari	14	07 (50.00)
2	Kakraban	08	02 (25.00)
3	Rajnagar	03	01 (33.33)
	South district	25	10 (40.00)

Muslim women are found there as more than 50 percent of total women participants of the concerned blocks. In the west district, out of 160, Muslim women are 123.(76.87%) but in the rest 17 blocks; they are about nil due to their absence or microscopic presence in those blocks. Similarly, in the four blocks of north district, out of 142 they are 63 (43%). In the three blocks of south district, they are 10 (40%). It means that the larger number of representation of Muslim women in the west and low percentage in the south is consistent with the ratio of population.

It is clear from the above facts and figures that along with the increased participation of women in other communities, participation of Muslim women has been increased in all levels since 1994, but they are not still able to hold the head of office in upper levels while a good number of other community women is found in the

head of offices at Samiti level. For the men also, the percentage of political participation is extensive in the Panchayat level but not so in the upper structure.

It seems that the reason lies in their low profile of socio-educational achievements. So an investigation is done to find out the link between their literacy level and political participation

9.4. Women's Position in the Structure of Political Parties :

The organizational structure of the major political parties is divided into the State level Committee, District level Committee, Division level and Local Committee.

1. In CPI (M), one woman is selected for the district level committee. She is Jasmine Sultana, a graduate young lady from N.C. Nagar, her electoral constituency. There is no Muslim woman in the state level.
2. In RSP, another Muslim woman, Momta Begum is found as member of district level. She is educated in primary level and a resident of Palatana village under Matabari block of Udaipur sub division in south district. She is known as social worker in the village. A Muslim man, namely Sardar Uddin is found as the member of the state level committee.
3. In National Congress of Tripura, no Muslim women is found in the state level.

9.5. Educational Qualification of Muslim Women Activists :

Educational qualification of the Women participants is an important factor for requisite perceptual knowledge about politics. In the hierarchical position of party structure as well as in the governmental administrative structure, low educational qualification may be a hindrance to the advancement of political carrier of the women activists. For present study, an investigation was done about the academic qualification of the Muslim women activists in the three levels of Panchayat Raj viz. Gram Panchayat, Panchayat Samiti and Zilla Parishad. It is found that in some Muslim populated villages of Tripura, a good number of Muslim women have been elected for Panchayat member and selected for Gram Pradhan. Samiti member and Zilla Parishad Member.

Table no. 9.5
Educational Status of Muslim Women Gram Pradhan in Tripura, 2004

Sl no	Name of Gram Pradhan	Education	Representation for—village	Sub division	Block	District
1	Sarifa Begum	Class 11	Bhagyapur	Dharmanagar	Kadamtala	North
2	Afia Begum	Class 11	Kurti	Dharmanagar	Kadamtala	Kadamtal a
3	Safali Begum	Class 111	Kalagangerpar	Dharmanagar	Kadamtala	North
4	Fuljan Bibi	Class 11		Dharmanagar	Kadamtala	North
5	Kamrun Necha		Fulbarikandi		Gournagar	North
6	Jahanara Khatun	Class V	Chandranagar	Bishalgarh	Bishalgarh	West
7	Chanura Begum	Class VI	Purathai	Bishalgarh	Bishalgarh	West
8	Momtaaz Begum	Class V	Uttar Charilam	Bishalgarh	Bishalgarh	West
9	Amena Bibi	Class V	Aralia	Sonamura	Melaghar	West
10	Tahera Khatun	Class VI	Paschim Durlavnarayan	Sonamura	Melaghar	West
11	Rehana Begum	B.A.	Indiranagar	Sonamura	Melaghar	West
12	Monoyara Begum	Class VIII	Durgapur	Sonamura	Melaghar	West
13	Lilufa Begum	S.F.	Bejimara	Sonamura	Melaghar	West
14	Rasonara Begum	Class V	Sonapur	Sonamura	Kathalia	West
15	Parvin Sultana	Class V	Putia	Sonamura	Boxonagar	West
16	Parvin Akhtar	Class VIII	Ashabari	Sonamura	Boxonagar	West
17	Seuli Akhtar	Class VI		Sonamura	Boxonagar	West
18	Jahanara Begum	Class V	Motinagar	Sonamura	Boxonagar	West
19	Anjara Khatun	Class V	Baspadua	Belonia	Hrishayamu	South

Source : State Election Commission Report, Directorate of Panchayat, Agartala

The result of the investigation is discussed in the below. In Zilla Parishad, the Three District level members are:

1. Jasmine Sultana, elected from Sonamura, an Arts Graduate (B.A),
2. Rehana Begum is elected from Bishalgarh. She is a Law Graduate.
3. Milanen Necha is elected from Boxonagar she is a School Final. All of them represent the west district and none is found from other three districts of Tripura.

Gram Pradhan

The following Table no.9.5 shows the educational level of women gram Pradhan in 19 Gram Panchayats of Tripura. No wonder that only 2 of them (10.53%) have finished senior basic level of education. The rest 89.47 percent remains in the primary level—either finished or drop out. These women with this low level of formal education are able to run the head of office. There is no allegation about their incapability of leading such a responsible public office. There are also two Upa-Pradhan Muslim women: Smt. Jahura Khatun is elected from Joynagar village under Jirania block of Sadar subdivision in west district. She is educated into——level. Another Upa Pradhan is elected from Khedabari under Melaghar block of Sonamura subdivision in the west district. She is qualified up to —— In the Samiti, among nine women members, three are educated up to Secondary level, two are higher secondary, one is primary and two are graduates.

As Member of Panchayat Samiti

In the Samiti level Muslim women are only nine. They are:

1. Susia Begum, an uncontested member from Kakraban block under Udaipur sub division of South district. She is a Higher Secondary in educational achievement.
2. Jubeda Begum, an elected member from the village Jarulbachai for Dukli blocks Panchayat Samiti under Bishalgarh sub division of west district. She has education in upper primary level.
3. Hasina Begum, elected for Kathalia block Panchayat Samiti under Sonamura sub division of west district. She is a Madhayamik.

4. Bilkisn Necha, elected for Kathalia Block. She is an Arts Graduate (B.A).
5. Nilu Bibi, elected for Kathalia block Samiti Member. She is only lower primary educated.
6. Milanen Necha, elected for Boxonagar block Samiti under Sonamura sub division. She is a Madhayamik(S.F)
7. Murseda Begum, elected for Boxonagar block Samiti. She is also a Madhayamik (S.F)
8. Parvin Akhtar is elected for Boxonagar block Samiti. She is a Higher Secondary
9. Dilara Sultana Mon is elected for Kadamtala block Samiti under Dharmanagar sub division of north district. She is an Arts Graduate (B.A). In Panchayat Samiti, among 9 members, 3 (33.33%) are educated up to Secondary Level, 2 (22.22%) are Hr. Secondary, 1 (11.11%) is primary and 2 (22.22%) are Graduates.

As member of Zilla Parishad, the members are:

- 1 Jasmine Sultana, elected from Sonamura, an Arts Graduate (B.A),
2. Rehana Begum is elected from Bishalgarh. She is a Law Graduate.
3. Milanen Necha is elected from Boxonagar she is a School Final. All of them represent the west district and none is found from other three districts of Tripura.

9.6. Case Studies on women Activists :

Case 1. Maya Chowdhury is a resident of N.C Nagar, Sonamura. .She is a forty years old a widow. She contested in Panchayat election as a candidate by the party, CPM (I) to contest in the Panchayat election of N.C. Nagar Gram Panchayat. But she got defeated. One of the reasons of her defeat was the hostile attitude of her in-laws. They might belong to the banner of anti political party. Though she attends the party meetings very less, she takes part in various social works of the village e.g. she is a voluntary teacher of T.L.C., teacher of a pre-primary standard school of 28 students. She has a source of income from a part time job of injection pushing. She also gets financial help from some of her relatives. Her husband had no savings of bank balance

left for her. She says that his earning was not Rs. 500 per month but their conjugal life was happy. She was the third wife of her husband. Why her husband married three times? Her answer to this question was that the first two wives were driven out by the torture of the in-law family. Both of them got no protection from the husband who was a driver by occupation and he had to remain outside the home day after day. At last he married Maya Chowdhury when she was only a 19 years old. She was educated and intelligent. She passed Matric (Secondary) examination from Comilla Board of the then East Pakistan. But her husband had only class IV standard education. After marriage she came to India and used to reside with the in-laws. She also had to bear the burns, specially from her mother-in-law, but she was a spirited girl to fight with these till the death of her husband in 1989. Now she has a son of 18 years old. She has sent the boy to his maternal uncle's house in Bangladesh for education. She live separate from the in-laws in the present homestead which she has secured as a part of her husband's property. In her daily life, she performs all the household activities. She maintains a separate kitchen from the in-laws. She maintains some religious performances. During the Ramzan month, she reads out the *Quran* regularly to her neighbors. This upright, self dependent woman with a height of 5' 5" is happy at her present life with the loveable neighbors.

Case 2. Jasmin Sultana is the first Muslim woman as member of the west district Zilla Parishad. She is from CPI (M) party, elected in 1994. In the hierarchical structure of C.P.I. (M) party, she is the only Muslim woman member in the District Committee. She is a young lady of 27 years and Arts Graduate from Sonamura College. After passing H.S. Exam she was married at *Bejimara* village of Sonamura sub-division in 1989. Her natal house is at *Dudpuskarini* situated at the village of *Jamjuri* in Udaipur sub-division. Her husband is a physical instructor by occupation under Tripura government. He is very progressive in outlook and it is only because of his support and backing of all kinds, Jasmin came forward to participate in politics through the student politics during her study time in Sonamura College.

Her father is a school teacher. He is also source of inspiration for her orientation to politics. She gets all kind of cooperation from him. Her younger sister is a M.A in

English and working as a school teacher. Her younger brother is a Graduate and earning through private tuitions for the time being of him getting a job. Her mother is also a literate one, able to read and write. Coming from this background, Jasmin is quite a forward lady. She is blessed by a son of five years old (1999). She has father-in-law, mother-in-law and also a brother-in-law in her family. When she goes out for her occupational need, her son is looked after by them. There is no problem with her in-laws because they are “very considerate” – She comments. She stays for long hours out of the house for various activities. Usually she cooks in the morning and casually in the evening. She does not get enough time to look after the family members even her husband and son. But this does not make any adverse effect on family relations as her husband manages all the things. She appreciates her husband jubilantly when it comes about his interest in politics. She says, he loves politics and wants to see his wife well ahead in political position. She herself also loves political participation which is the “need of the day” as she comments. Jasmine is tall in structure, lean and thin in appearance. She is very popular in the area, especially among the Muslim people who did caste their vote in favour of her. She obviously had to face criticism in the first stage of her career in politics.

She attends the executive meetings of the Zilla Parishad held once in a month and also the general meetings held in three months interval throughout the year. Along with other twelve female colleagues of the Zilla Parishad, she participates in decision making functions in the development Programme of the district. She is very conscious about the backwardness of the Muslim woman in Tripura and is very prompt in expression of her thoughts. She explicitly opines in favour of common civil law of the country. She thinks common civil law will be a safeguard for the Muslim girls who are the victims of early marriage and gets their future buried for any further development in life. Jasmin, without wearing any Burqua, works door-to-door in the village and listens to their problems. She has even accompanied the present researcher in the survey tour. Is she not sufficient to prove that Muslim community is not as conservative as it is supposed by the people? Jasmine has also succeeded in the next two terms election in 1999 and 2003.

Case 3. Pushpa Begam is a woman *Gram-Pradhan* in the second election term of 1999. She is thirty years old and elected as a member of the N.C. Nagar Gram Panchayat. She is selected as head of the Panchayat, called *Gram-Pradhan*. Though she had no political background, she contested for election because of the insistence of her father-in-law in reserved quota for women seat. Her father-in-law was a member of the previous Panchayat from CPM(I) party for the last ten years. Puspa won the election because of this background and influential of her father-in-law. Her husband named Abdul Kalam is a petty businessman. Puspa has her household earning from the domestic livestock business e.g. Rs 700 per month. It is absolutely her income. As a Panchayat member she draws a salary. This is her new identity.

She has no formal education except putting her signature as she has told. But it is observed that she is quite articulate and smart in nature. She has described the reasons for her educational backwardness. She was the eldest daughter of her parents who were not so much aware of girls' education to send her to school. Besides, the school was also quite distant from her residence i.e., her natal home located at *Kulubari*, a village under Sonamura sub division. She has told that her parents have now become aware of girls' education and so her younger sisters are studying in the schools at secondary level. Pushpa was married only at the age of fifteen and no dowry was given to her in laws except a 'bicycle' to her husband. Her in-laws are good people and she is quite happy with them along with her children. A few months ago, before election, she lost one of her four children by an accidental death. She was so shocked by the mishap that she was almost losing her mental balance. In the mean time, her participation in politics helped her to recover her broken mind – she expressed it in this way.

In this double role, as a housewife and as a Pradhan, she is however able to manage. She does not need to go Panchayat office daily and need not be present regularly in the meetings as because her father-in-law manages all these things. But when some issues need her presence, she visits the spots herself along with the other male members of the Panchayat. She does not wear any burqua and works with them freely as the Hindu women do.

Case 4. Kamana Begam, 45 years old, is a active party worker in the village level. She is a member of different local committees in Udaipur District. She does not face any role-conflict because her family members are very much co-operative and helpful. Her husband is a farmer but forward in his outlook. He has never raised any objection in his wife's role as activists. Kamana visits the people and tries to solve their problems with the help of others. She organises some married girls as workers in the ground level. One of her son is an Arts graduate from M.B.B. college of Agartala, another son is in North India for military training in the Force Department. Her one daughter was married when she was in tenth (class x) standard. The reason is early marriage lies in the social environment. However, the in-laws house of the daughter are also good.

Kamana Begam is simple in life style but smart up to the standard. She expressed her feeling of disgust about the educated people. She does not have formal education more than fourth standard. Usually she cooks for the family doing all the household duties. But when time demands, she leaves it and her son and husband manage all these. She is a happy woman.

9.7. Hindrances to Political Participation :

There are some hindrances also for the Muslim women participants in politics. For investigation, informal conversation was with the activists and the outcome of that discussion deserves to be mentioned here:

1) Political participation needs a person to go out and interact with people, to read newspapers regularly, to keep oneself aware of the needs of the people and the incidents or happenings in the surroundings to keep close contact with information media a supportive family and above all full cooperation from the machinery of party politics. Very few women under study have the scope of such favorable environment. e.g. most of the households are not served newspaper and other media.

2) Muslim women are still under the strong customary bindings and traditional way of life which compels them not to move out of the home or to have frequent conversation with the persons having higher knowledge. It hinders them to take part in

the instant decision making functions which is necessary for a successful political activists.

3) Educational qualification of the participants is an important factor for prompt action as well as perception politics. But Women members elected in gram Panchayats have not crossed even upper primary standard. In the hierarchal system of political position there is every chance for them to be monitored / tutored by the men.

4) Women are more committed to family and children than their men. Men spend their time either in economic pursuit or political activities or otherwise; sometimes they work as whole timer in party. Naturally, she has to protect her family first with all her time and energy and thus no time to spare for politics. In this condition, women with higher educational qualification and political aspiration need co-operation of all family members, political party and the neighbor people with whom they have daily interactions. Above all, it needs the change of role expectation of women in society.

Findings

The data on the political status of Muslim woman reveals that since 1994, they stepped to the active politics in a slow but steady process. Their participation in three tier Panchayats may be characterized in this way. In all the levels viz. Gram, Samiti and Zilla, their participation is progressing from the previous ones. In a male dominated social structure of the community life, the ordinary housewife, the shy and obedient women have come out from their traditional life and adapted with new identifiable role with the capital of mere primary education standard. No serious report of collision or conflict with colleagues is found against her. Really it is a silent revolution for women in Tripura. Obviously the credit of this goes to the laws of the country, the support of the community and the individual families too. This is a positive side of Women's empowerment in Panchayat Raj of Tripura. Any negative feature of women's empowerment in three tier Panchayat is still not experienced by the people of Tripura.

Political situation of a country i.e. laws of the state and the attitude of the community she belongs to, are the important factors to determine the level of participation of women in politics. The prevailing unawareness and apathetic attitude to politics among the Muslim women has undergone a change when the National Law provides them a chance to be elected by the guarantee of reservation of seats in three tier Panchayat system.

Muslim women are found less involved in extra household activities like association and organizations of different kinds in the society e.g. literary and cultural organizations, the NGOs. In the local governance of Urban administration, both Muslim men and women are found about nil. In the governance of Gram Panchayat, they have proved their presence, like the women of other communities. In the Muslim dominated villages, they have been selected as head of office i.e., Gram Pradhan. The increasing tendency of their number in the succeeding elections indicates the positive aspect of the women empowerment in the villages of Tripura. They are gradually becoming able to occupy the seats for representation in the upper rank of the three tier hierarchy. In some places they have exceeded the quota of (33%) reservation for women. In some

blocks and districts which are Muslim populated, Muslim women have secured 76.87 percent seats of total women elected.

Literacy and education has a relation with active participation in politics. The previous studies of scholars show that education does not necessarily mean political awareness and participation of women. Higher education does not necessarily mean higher participation in politics. The present study also confirms it. Most of the Muslim women Representatives are from the west Tripura while the female literacy percentage is highest in north Tripura (Dhali). Though there is not much difference in female literacy, but difference in participatory role of women in between south and west is significant. The demographic factor like number of the community population may be a rational cause for this, so the rate of literacy or formal education may not be treated as highly important for political participation. Often educated persons keep themselves away from politics. Rather the reverse may be true viz. political participation makes people conscious and educated providing knowledge of practical life and social reality. There is no dearth of example of this truth. The present empirical study on the political participation of women may prove this. Majority political participants under study are only primary educated. As soon as they have availed the chance of participation, they have been adapting themselves with the new role and position. They are to learn everything in the practical field. As far as the report is available about them, their political orientation is from their family background e.g. parental house and in-laws house. On the basis of family supports as well as community supports, they are able to run the responsibility of public office. Women are behind their men in political participation. Their presence is almost zero, in the associations and organizations involved in various social activities. It is seen that though some women have political aspirations but they are to withdraw or keep themselves away for the sake of children and family. Being educated and a conscious mother, she gives her first preference to the family wellbeing rather than commitment to the party-politics. Men usually spare their time in economic pursuits or whole time politics or may be busy otherwise and thus they do not give required-time for family. Hence a woman has no other alternative but to withdraw herself from politics which demands sufficient time. In Kailasahar

(Baoulabasa), a Commerce graduate woman is a mother of two children and her husband is a whole time worker in a political party; though she has joined in the women wings of the party, she can not give more time there because of her family commitment. She needs immediately a job for the economic stability of her family.

The case studies on political activities reveal that they are able to manage both the family and the public responsibility. This discussion leads to the investigation of the factors other than education as stimulant for political participation of women. These are very important to be noted: i) Party Sponsorship, ii) Co-operation from family, iii) Role Expectation of the society, iv) Law of the country, v) Economic stability of the family, vi) Leisure for extra familial works, vii) Mental orientation or attitude to think or do for the welfare of the people of the country overcoming the too much attachment to family and household works.

Chapter -10

Summary of the Findings, Concluding Remarks and Recommendations.

This study on the status role, problems and prospects of Muslim women in Tripura is rather a pioneering work so far as the study on women is concerned. The aim of this study is to examine the socio-economic role, status and problems of the Muslim women in rural and urban Tripura. In the foregoing chapters, I have tried to furnish the major facts and findings as well as analyse the socio-economic role and status of women in Muslim societies of Tripura. In this chapter, I shall present a general observation and discussion on the entire study. Some recommendations shall also be made on the basis of empirical findings.

I

The status of women is an indicator of the development of a society. The status of Muslim women in Tripura has been examined through the ascribed position of women in the ideals of religious text as well from their ascribed and achieved position in the perceptual reality of the society. It is also examined from the cross cultural perspective of some south Asian countries as because the status may vary according to the type of government and nature of law of the country. It is observed that though the ascribed status of women is high in the religious ideal but it is low in the social reality. Islamic text never prohibits women from education, employment and administration. Sura Nur in the Quran reveals the dignity of women and many incidents may be cited from the life of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) who had strong desire to educate the women. But in contradiction to the ideal, the Muslim societies in South Asian countries have maintained some reservation about the participation of women in education as free and independent being. In patriarchal societal rule, the Muslim women's social life is regulated by pardah and other social restrictions and these binding forces restrain them from free participation in the

major aspects of life activities. As a result, they have become the victim of illiteracy, poverty, dowry and related domestic violences. In India, Bangladesh and Pakistan, their suffering differ only in degree. In Nepal and Bhutan, as well as in Sri Lanka they are usually governed by the customary laws and sometime adjusting with the civil laws of the country. In a matrilineal social tradition like Maldives, the women literacy is highest among the South Asian countries. The Maldivian women are not victim of dowry or so called social pathology of rigid patriarchal rule. In spite of that they do not claim high status in the society. There is highest number of divorce to avoid domestic violences. The divorce and frequent remarriage of both men and women indicates the marital instability of their life. The gap between ideal and practice of Muslim women's status in notice is almost all south Asian countries. This is true both for the macro level of Indian Muslim society and also in the micro level of Muslim society in Tripura.

Like all over India, the low status of Muslim women in Tripura is also the legacy of history. The partition of India resulted the migration of wealthy and educated families from Tripura. It is reported that a few girls of respectable Muslim families were found as college educated in the sixties. The remaining people belong to the agrarian class of the rural community and poor occupational groups. Among the several ethnic and regional communities of Tripura, Bengali Muslims are predominant. No special identity of women is found in any social or occupational groups among the Muslims. Recently some educated and conscious women are using their group identity before or after their names, i.e. Sayeda, Khanam, Khadim, Palwan etc. In the history of the state men were found in different economic pursuits as well as, in politics and administration, but women were not. Though Muslims participated in the educational initiative of the kings, women did not. Though there were mukhtabs and madrasas since the princely rules, the women lag behind in religious education too. As a result of all these things, Muslim women in Tripura have not been found any place among the notable Muslim personalities of Tripura. The

reserved socio-cultural attitude of the Muslim men regarding their women is responsible for this low status of women in this state.

Muslims are the early settlers and largest religious minority of the state inhabiting in most of the villages and towns and even in the interior villages. After the Partition, the poor inhabitants were cornered in the border areas. However they are found concentrated in ten major subdivisions out of fifteen under four districts of Tripura. For the present research, the empirical data have been collected from extensive and intensive field studies at six Muslim settlements (three villages and three towns). The villages are N.C.Nagar, Khilpara and Yeajekhowra of the districts of West, South and North. The three corresponding district towns are Agartala, Udaipur and Kailasahar.

By summarising the physical and demographic features of the study villages and towns, some important features have been identified. All the villages and towns are old by years since the princely period. The villages are medium in size and population. Two of them i.e. N.C.Nagar and Yeajekhowra are dominated by the Muslims. The largest number of the people lives in the rural areas and the least number live in urban areas. Majority of urban dwellers live in Agartala and its sub-urban areas. Recently due to various reasons the number of urban dwellers has increased and it is reflected in the last Census of 2001.

The economic structure of the villages is mainly based on agriculture. Agricultural labour and day labour are the most dominant occupations of the village people. Women also participate in agricultural works. In towns people are engaged in various self employment. Domestic maid is the dominant occupation for women. All urban facilities are available in the towns but not widely in all areas of Muslim settlement. The interior villages are devoid of minimum facilities from electricity and drinking water. Poverty is the main cause for the large number nuclear family units, and educational backwardness of the children. Three villages represent three

different features eg. Khilpara is most advance in literacy and employment of women than that of other two villages. While N.C. Nagar is well advanced in political participation of women, the people of Yeajekhowra are struggling for employment and requisite education of their children hence the socio-economic status of Muslim women is comparatively better in two fringe villages and two district towns except Kailasahar. In spite of equal urban facilities, the people of all the ward under Agartala (MC.) Udaipur (NP) and Kailasahar (NP) have not responded equally due to the difference of socio-economic background. The empirical data on the gender-wise distribution of population shows that the number of females is lower than those of the males in all the villages and towns. But when they are divided into few standard age groups, the female population is found quite higher in some age categories particularly in the earlier age groups in the villages. The case is similar in the context of sex ratio of the Muslims living in the villages. For total population, sex ratio is 913 which is not only below the state level but also national level. In total the sex ratio is higher in villages than that of the towns, specially in the child age-group. But mortality rate of girl child is found more in village than that of the towns indicating their disability to health care in the rural areas. However, the mortality of female is lower than that of male due to various reasons.

As one of the important indicators of women status, the economic activities of Muslim women of three villages and three towns have been studied from several points of view viz. the number and percentage of their participation compared with men, their position in villages and towns, their rank and status and the range of occupational varieties etc. The economic status of women is very disheartening as only a very few among them are earners i.e. 3.08 percent only. The major economic activities of women are government service, cultivation, day labour, domestic labour, petty business, private tuition and milk selling. The low economic status of Muslim women is reflected by their highest participation in domestic labour. In the government sector also, except very few school teachers and a hospital nurse, all of them are

engaged in low rank. They belong to low economic status due to their low educational status. Only few women who have higher level of education, belong to the middle rank and status. A considerable number of people belong to BPL category. The women have contributed to the family's income not only by wage-labour but also from different domestic sources of income. This remains invisible.

The matrimonial status of Muslim women is a question of debate and discussion in the society. There is a popular criticism against the matrimonial issue of Muslim women. Monogamy (97.85%) is uniformly accepted type of marriage except a few polygynous marriage (2.15%) both in village and towns. The declining of dower and increasing of dowry, early marriage of girls, desertion of women, have serious impacts on the status of Muslim women in Tripura. It deserves to be mentioned that tendency of dowry transaction among the literate and educated people indicates that education of women is not the sole factor to raise her status if socio-cultural factor does not favour them to enhance their social position.

The empirical study shows that Muslim families are mainly of three types viz. nuclear (elementary), supplementary nuclear and joint. Nuclear type is predominant in all villages and towns. There is a good number of supplementary type of families. Joint family occupies the third place in the order of frequency. The family size is larger in villages than in towns. A number of families under female headship shows that there is a number of widows, deserted and divorced women. The largest number of nuclear family does not necessarily mean the higher status of women. Because dependents are not free to take decisions. They are always under the control of husbands and others. The legal share of property right of women seems to be effective at the time of crisis in their life. The guardians usually give their due share to rescue them from the crisis. They can enjoy their property but can not sell or dispose the property if 'father' or 'husband' does not make any "will" in their name. They are found rare to deal with Bank Account of their own. In family, women have crucial role which determines the character of family health. The women in

villages and towns are found aware about the birth control and planned family except a few who belong to the senior age group. This is an empirical truth that birth rate is decreasing among the young parents of the community.

The query about the educational status among the Muslim reveals that the number Muslim literates (58.72%) is higher than the number of illiterates. Rural-urban factor is found not significant in the primary level of education. Gender bias is not dominant in the primary level. Socio-economic factors are more important to determine higher education for Muslim girls. Muslims are literates and educated. The data suggests that about 58.40 percent literate people live in rural areas while 59.18 percent in urban areas. The total literacy rate for women is 50.97 percent. One notable demographic feature is that the female literacy is higher in villages (51.33%) than that of the towns (50.44%). Majority of women in villages and towns belong to the junior and senior basic levels. Female education start to decline abruptly in the secondary stage and declines consistently in all higher levels. Girls schools are found distant from the residents of Yeajekhowra village. So the other factors like literacy of parents and their socio-economic status may affect them. Khilpara records higher literacy for women due to their parental background. However, the literacy gap between male and female is maximum from secondary level. A few case studies on the enrolment, and drop out of girls proves the above statement. Though a few girls endeavour to get admitted in technical and professional education, but could not continue except one or two.

Political participation of Muslim women in active politics has started in a slow but steady process since 1994 through the election of three tier panchayat system. In three terms elections (i.e 1994, 1999, 2004). The women number in Panchayats have increased considerably. Even in the interior village of Yeajekhowra Grampanchayat, they are increased in number like other two Gram Panchayats of N.C Nagar and Khilpara. N.C Nagar represents the highest number of women participation of the three study villages. The selection of women as Gram Pradhan

indicates their potentiality to govern the community and the place. The prevailing unawareness and apathetic attitude to politics among the Muslim women has undergone a change. The study reveals that they are yet to occupy their position in the structure of political parties. Another important finding of the present study is that education does not always precede political participation at least in the grassroot level; rather the reverse is true. In the upper level of local governance viz urban administration, they lag behind due to their low level of education and low participation in the social associations and organisations. But they are in the path of progress. The study reveals that the Muslim women of Tripura are gradually changing and they are struggling for a new identity. Thus the conventional notion towards Muslim women as isolated, secluded and subjugated social entity has not much empirical validity.

II

In the concluding section, it is first necessary to varify the queries set before the present study. The study reveals that there exists a distinct and remarkable gap between the ascribed position of women in the Islamic text and the Muslim societies. Actually the *Quaranic* injunctions and the notion of Islam dose not creat^g any hindrance towards the status upgradation of women in the society. The data reveals that early marriage^g is rooted both in dower and dowry customs. It is a paradox. On the one hand, the prevalent form of deferred dower (mehr) and the custom of cousin marriage contributes to the easy and early marriage of Muslim girls. On the other hand, apprehending the rate of ^{the} demand (of dowry) parents like to get their daughter married off soon. Besides, the narrow network in social communication of the community having the minority status motivates them to live in the familial circle of Keith and kin and thus the marriage within the kin groups and nearest village is a common practice. This socio-cultural feature is encouraged by the socio-economic factors of the poor people. In this way the negative impact of early marriage affects marital status, employment and education as well as social and political participation of

Muslim women. Inequal social status leads to subjugation of women. Remarriages of men invites polygyny, desertion, divorce and miserable condition for women and children. All these are correlated with the early marriage of girls.

Muslim women are still governed by *Pardah* whether it is exposed or not. A deep and intensive observation confirms that the rules of *pardah* work silently amongst the women of the community. In a study among the Muslims of North India, Shibani Roy (1980) concludes by noting the negative effects of *pardah* on life of the women. The present observation differs from her to the extent that *Pardah* is not so rigid for the women in Tripura. It is observed in the entire study that opportunity is more important factor to determine the position and participation of women. Though *Pardah* rules them internally, but it is not the sole factor to be accounted for their low participation. Rather opportunity determines active participation of women in economy, education, local governance and other spheres of social activities. Opportunity with responsibility makes women active and conscious to overcome *pardah* and other customary bindings. The laws of the country and congenial atmosphere to execute the laws are found more important otherwise educational or political interests may go fruitless in the dearth of supporting base and hence *pardah* becomes excuse for the purpose. Opportunity offered by government and supports of the community seems more important for the participation of women. This empirical truth of present findings is reflected also in the queries of economic status of women. The gender biased division of labour for women absorbed fully in household occupations, customary restrictions and under estimation about the capabilities of women are responsible for low economic participation of women.

The economic activities of Muslim women in the present study has not focussed any distinct change in her status. Women's participation in economy is the result of sheer necessity rather than to improve their social status. The opportunity for work either by compulsion or situation, brings the Muslim women in a transitional

phase. Employment of women does not always lead to change of work pattern at home. It depends much on the interpersonal relationship amongst the members of the family and their perception towards household works.

The query on the educational status of Muslim women reveals that they need more support from the community and various incentive schemes for girls to overcome their low participation in different levels of formal as well as informal education. The study reveals that education is not the sole determinant factor to measure the rate of economic participation of women. Employment for women is the outcome of bare necessities of life. It is seen that when father or husband is able to afford all members, then the daughter or wife having educational qualification does not care for searching job.

Similarly the enquiry into the political participation of women, this study reveals that higher level of education is not a pre-condition of political participation. Rather the educated women maintain a distance from active politics. Women with a basic level of education, have recorded their interest in the participation of local governance under three tier panchayat system. So long they are consulted very less ^{about} community affairs ^{and} they have lesser say in public affairs. At present through the institutional involvement and social experience as well as participation in local governance they are gaining political awareness. Their political participation is also gradually increasing. In three terms panchayat election of Tripura, the women have improved their position in a considerable number. The present empirical truth does not approve that education is the sole determinant factor for political participation. Rather it is found that opportunity is more important than formal education. If one gets the chance, she can educate and improve herself.

III

On the basis of present empirical studies on Muslim Women of rural and urban Tripura, following recommendations may be suggested for enhancement of

their social status and betterment of quality of life. The problem of Muslim Women's social life is very complex and complicated. Their problems are more socio-economic rather than religious ideologies. There are various reasons behind their unequal social status and problematic social life. The reasons are historical, social, cultural and the situational. Hence there is a need of change in the mind-set of the people and the social system of the Muslim community.

The prime thing which is needed for overall development of social status of Muslim Women is the awareness of the people and which could only be achieved through motivating them in an organized manner. The issues of awareness building and motivation require community participation and for which Muslims should come forward to provide justice and equality to their women. All these requires adequate social support and dedicated leadership from within the Muslim Community. Responsibility of awakening Muslims for enhancing their women's social status should be shared by community organization as well as by government and non-government agencies. Under such situation role of Panchayat, urban civic bodies, voluntary organizations are very crucial for formulating plan and programmes to improve the social condition of the Muslim women. The study provides us informations that there is a need of realistic programmes that could truly meet up the actual needs of the women. Programmes to support economy and employment, literacy and education, awareness building and empowerment may help to improve their social position. Finally, inclusion of women's voices in formulating plans and policies for women's development is also very crucial one.

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Glos³ary of Some Muslim Terms

<i>Ajan</i>	:	Call for prayer
<i>Allah</i>	:	God
<i>Asraf</i>	:	The Muslims claiming their descent from any of the four groups of foreign origin i.e. Sayad, Shaik, Mughal and Pathan
<i>Ayat</i>	:	Stanza from the Quran
<i>Beradari</i>	:	Brotherhood based on kinship
<i>Burkha</i>	:	A type of loose garments worn by the Muslim women in black or white color and covering the entire body except the eyes
<i>Dargah</i>	:	Graveyard of Muslim pir and priest
<i>Esha</i>	:	the prayer time after sunset
<i>Hadish</i>	:	the traditions or recorded sayings of the prophet
<i>Haj</i>	:	Pilgrimage to Mecca
<i>Haji</i>	:	the person who performed haj in Mecca
<i>Hijri</i>	:	the date of prophet's journey from Medina to Mecca. The Muslim era d dates from this year
<i>Masjid</i>	:	Mosque i.e. house of prayer
<i>Maulavi</i>	:	A man learned in Islamic knowledge
<i>Mazar</i>	:	An Abode of the Muslim saint
<i>Mehar</i>	:	Dower promised by the groom to his bride at the time of marriage
<i>Millad-Un-Nabi</i>	:	Birthday of the prophet
<i>Muharram</i>	:	A Festival to commemorate the martyrdom of Hassan and Hussain – the sons of Ali and Fatima)
<i>Mulla</i>	:	Muslim priest and teacher (same as Maulavi)

<i>Namaj</i>	: The Islamic form of prayer
<i>Nawab</i>	: Muslim ruler or emperor
<i>Nikah</i>	: Marriage in Islamic way
<i>Nikah-nama</i>	: Certificate of Muslim marriage
<i>Panchayat</i>	: Informal village council
<i>Parda</i>	: Seclusion or veiling of women
<i>Pathan</i>	: An ethnic and social category of the Muslim community
<i>PBUH</i>	: It stands for "Peace Be Upon Him". It is mandatory for every muslim to use these words after uttering or writing the name of Prophet
<i>Quran</i>	: The Holy Book for the Muslims
<i>Ramjan</i>	: The nine month of the Islamic year
<i>Roja</i>	: Fasting for religious cause in a particular month of the year
<i>Shariat</i>	: It means the sacred laws of Islam
<i>Shia</i>	: One of the sects of the Muslims and followers of Ali, the fourth Calilihpha
<i>Sunna</i>	: The precepts and practice of the Prophet
<i>Sunni</i>	: It is a religious largest sect of the Muslims. The sect believes in elected Caliphate. It is regarded as traditionalist group of Islam.
<i>Sura</i>	: Any of the chapters of the Quran
<i>Tajiya</i>	: Representation of the Musolmans' tomb of Hasan and Hussain , sons of Ali, who lost their life at Karbala
<i>Triple Talak</i>	: The system of uttarances of divorce at a stretch by man to wife. It is sanctioned by Hanafi Law
<i>Zakat</i>	: An Islamic approach of tax payment from the income of rich persons for the relief of the poor

Appendices

Appendix no. I

Name of Few Mosques in the Study Areas (sub-division wise) :

Sadar, West District

- Ramnagar Agartala Mosque, Agartala
- Joypur Mosque, Joypur, Agartala
- Town Jumma Mosque, Masjid Road, Agartala
- Shibnagar Gadu Mia Mosque, Shibnagar, Agartala
- Bhati Abhoynagar, Furkania, Madrasa Mosque, Bitarban, Agartala.

Sonamura, West District

- Uttar Nabadwip Chandranagar Mosque, Sonamura
- N. C. Nagar Mosque (Maisanbari), Maisanbari, Sonamura
- N. C. Nagar Mosque (Near S. B. School), N. C. Nagar, Sonamura

Udaipur, South District

- Udaipur Town Mosque, R. K. Pur, Udaipur
- Chanban Town Mosque, R. K. Pur, Udaipur
- Sonamura Mosque, Poddar Para, Udaipur
- Sonamura Mosque, Khadim Para, R. K. Pur, Udaipur
- Khilpara West Mosque (old)
- Khilpara West Mosque (new)
- Khilpara East Mosque
- Khilpara Pucca Mosque

Kailasahar, North District

- Town Masjid, Kailasahar, North Tripura
- Rani Choiki Bazar Mosque, Kailasahar, North Tripura
- West Kubjar Mosque, Kubjar, Kailasahar, North Tripura
- East Kubjar Mosque, Kubjar, Kailasahar, North Tripura
- Baburbazar Mosque, Kailasahar, North Tripura
- Khowrabil Mosque, Khowrabil, Kailasahar, North Tripura

Appendix no. II

Name of few Madrasa in Tripura, District and Sub-division wise :

Sadar, West district

- Bhati Abhoynagar Furkaria Madarasa, Bhati Abhoynagar, Agartala.
- Samsad Ullam Goacia Sunniya Furkania Madrasa, Indranagar, Agartala.
- West Pratapgarh Kamalia Madrasa, Pratapgarh, Agartala.
- Jagaharimura Islmaic Education Centre, Collegetilla, Agartala.
- South Ramnagar Madrasa, Ramnagar, Agartala.
- Kamalia Ashewal Ulam, Agartala.
- Ramnagar Muslim Kalyan Samiti, Ramnagar, Agartala.
- Furkania Madrasa, North Joynagar, Agartala.
- Minority Development Organisation, South Ramnagar (PEC Brick field), Agartala.

Sonamura, West District

- N. C. Nagar J. D. Madrasa, N. C. Nagar.
- Janakalyan Samiti Durgapur (adjacent to N. C. Nagar).
- Karalimura Junior Madrasa, Karalimura, N. C. Nagar gram panchayat.
- Sonamura Islamic Madrasa.
- Sonapur Ahmedia Islamic Govt. aided Senior Madrasa.
- Daodarani Siddiquia Senior Madrasa, Sonamura.

Udaipur, South District

- Khilpara Quranic Madrasa, Khilpara.
- Hazrat Abubakar Siddiquia Madrasa, R. K. Pur.
- Dakshim Chandrapur Madrasa, Chandrapur, Udaipur.
- Darul Ulam Islamic Madrasa, Rajdharnagar.
- Udaipur Town.

Kailasahar, North District

- Kubjar Muktab, Kubjar, Kailasahar.
- Yazekhowra Primary Madrasa, Baburbazar, Kailasahar.
- Kubjar Junior Madrasa, Kailasahar.
- Baburbazar Jumia Islamic Islamic Harsania Madrasa, Baburbazar, Kailasahar.
- Tillabazar Islamic Senior Madrasa, Tillabazar, Kailasahar.

Appendix no. III

A few examples of ethno-political victims among the Muslims of Tripura, 1999: (The incidence ultimately has affected the family and women)

Case no. 1: Bahadur Mia, resident of Raiabari, Udaipur had large quantity of Khas land i.e. 20 acres. His family consisting of two sons, their wives and children had to face the torture and take shelter in neighbor house; at the morning, they saw that all things of the household were looted. Hence they left their homestead and took shelter in the house of a relative named Anu Mia, resident of west bank of Jagannath Dighi of Udaipur.

Case no. 2: Asman Mia was a farmer cum day laborer at Khupilong (ADC area). He and his family of eight members did not get from the TSR camp at the time of torture. Hence the also became bound to leave all moveable and unmovable property

Case no. 3: Fazlur Mia, a resident of Raiabari was also a big farmer. His daughters and daughter in-laws were raped by those so called extremists. The tribal neighbors did not dare to save them. At this unbearable point of torture, they were to leave their homestead and all property.

Case no. 4: Sultan Mia had to bear the loss of land property and rape of female members of his family. Two male members were kidnapped and murdered cruelly.

Appendix no. IV

Notable Muslim Women in the last century: [Gupta(ed.) 2001]

- Samsun Nahar Mahammad (1908-1994)
- Aruna Asaf Ali (1909-1996)
- Sufia Kamal (1911-1999)
- Layla Samad (1928-1989)
- Jahanara Imam (1929-1994)
- Gouri Ayub (1931-1998)
- Hossen Ara Begum (1916-1998)
- Usha Khan (1916-1979)

Few Women in the Muslim history of India:

- Razia Sultana and Chand Bibi as (queen) administrator
- Noorjahan, Jahanara and Jebunessa as advisors to the Emperor Jahangir
- Gulbadan (sister of Humayun) as a gifted writer and others

Few Women in the history of Arabia:

- Hazarat Ayesa, Wife of The Prophet Hazrat Mahummad.
- Fatima Al Fudalia, a famous scholar in Caligraphy, Islam and Science,
- Jobeda was a scholar and she participated in politics,
- Fazela, was a famous poet.
- Sakina and Sahula were two brilliant women who delivered speech on history and literature in Bagdad,
- Fakrun Nessa, a good orator,
- Jobaydar, famous for social service,
- Jatul Hema, an extra ordinary brave woman and many others whose names were mentioned in the Arab Biographies. At that time many women traveled for knowledge.

HOUSEHOLD CENSUS

(Data will be used in Research Work only)

Census Sl. No. Name of the Household Head Mother tongue Bilingualism
 Village Panchayet / Union Police Station District Country/State
 Religion Theological School Sect Khandan Caste/Ethnic Group
 Landholding acres 1. Homestead 2. Cultivable a. Irrigated b. Non-Irrigated
 Yearly Family Income : Rs. (Category of Family by main earning source : Agro Based / Non-Agro Based (tick marks))

A. Description of the Family Members :

Sl.No.	Name of the Family Members	Relation to the Head	Sex and Age	Formal Education	Religious/ Non-formal Education	Main Occupation	Yearly Income in Rs.	Marital Information			Formal./ Informal Position
								Status	Form	Payment (Rs.)	
1.											
2.											
3.											
4.											
5.											
6.											
7.											
8.											
9.											
10.											
11.											
12.											
13.											
14.											

B. Other Socio-Economic Indicators :

Particulars of Loan	Amount Rs.	Source		Purpose	Use	R repayment
		Institutional	Non-Institutional			

Year of death	Age during death	Sex of the deceased	Causes of Mortality			
			Natural	Accidental	Disease	Poverty

LIVESTOCK CENSUS

Cow
 Bullock
 Buffellow
 Goat
 Hen
 Duck
 Others

HOUSEHOLD AND TRANSPORT EQUIPMENT

Bi-cycle
 Motor cycle
 Car
 Radio
 Tape Recorder
 Television
 Wrist Watch
 Refrigerator
 Others

Signature of the interviewer

Date

