SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION

5.1 Introduction
5.2 Discussion
5.3 Limitations of the Study
5.4 Conclusion
5.5 Suggestions for Further Research of the Study
CHAPTER – V
SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION

5.1 Introduction

Women empowerment is very necessary for the process of nation building. They should learn participatory skills in democracy because unless they themselves share responsibility and participate in fulfilling their demand, they do not strengthen their cause, not the democratic structure of the society, nor exercise their role in the nation building. They should learn to solve their own problems. Nothing should be allowed to prevent them from playing their participatory role in the direction of social change or this will inhibit and made personal development. They are to be organised to search their goal and this is only possible when the women are empowered through education.

In the prevailing socio-political atmosphere of the time, female education of Muslim society was not considered as important as today. Muslim Ulema and reformers and now the leaders had given emphasis on girls’ education to be arranged in family homes. Some positive efforts made by the Govt. and some concerned groups for the spread of education among Indian Muslim females. The Govt. should increase the number of schools and improve the facilities in the existing ones. But there are various factors for the backwardness of Muslim women. The internal factor which is more powerful and dangerous includes Muslim community’s apathetic towards women education. Sometimes these attitudes are changed but it is not the holistic approach.

This study is an attempt to measure the empowerment achieved by the Muslim women through education in Murshidabad and Nadia districts of West Bengal. It is presented in five chapters. The study intended to know the views of Muslim girls and women of different ages regarding indicators of empowerment.

Various arenas of empowerment such as the economic, social, political and religious empowerment are explained. Different level of empowerment such as the personal, household, legal are studied in detail. Empowerment is seen as a process of transformation from a state of powerlessness to powerfulness.
Collected data were analysed logically and statistically keeping the objectives in mind. The data collected randomly from this two districts. The sample consists of 403 women. The sample was analysed on the basis of age, different types of employment, income, marital status and educational level.

The study analysed the six major indicators of women empowerment. Those are household decision making, reproduction and child care including education, economic resources, political participation, socio-cultural dimension and religious dimension.

Women’s equality in power sharing and active participation in decision making within the family and also outside the family. All measures will be taken to guarantee women equal access to and full participation in decision making bodies at every level including the legislative, executive, judicial etc. In case of reproduction women do most repetitive work has little control over decision regarding family size. Most of the case the women have no right to decide here child’s care and carrier.

The participation of women in income generating activities for the family has been increasing today. Female work participation not only increase their family income but also bring economic independence among women in the household.

Women’s political participation has been considered as a major measure of women’s empowerment. Women’s participation in the political process is critical both to the strengthening of democratic traditions and to their struggle against oppression. Women status is slowly changing with the education. But psychologically they themselves are not free from the hand of the social taboos. So social empowerment i.e. social mobility, social awareness, social respect is very much important for women empowerment.

In India, religion has always been the most important factor in defining and determining societal relations. Women since ages have been a victim of these outrageous practices wherein India being a multi-religious society, every community has its own personal laws because of which the women of that community suffer the most. The women belonging to the Muslim Community have been brought to the main stream a number of times be it because of unequal treatment during birth though the Quran gave the equal rights of men and women in every sphere.
Early marriage is also very common among the Muslim. It creates problems in acquiring education for women. After marriage, Muslim women are not allowed to move out without escort; as a result, they cannot continue their education and other economic spheres after marriage. Divorce was commonly practiced; Muslim husbands quite frequently used it. Polygamy was also prevalent among the Muslim, especially among high class Muslim. Women of high and well to do families are secluded by purdah, though the women from poorer sections had to work outside their houses for their livelihood, the purdah system isolated Muslim women from the outer world and confined them to the four walls of their houses. It has also restricted the Muslim women from making significant economic contributions, either towards hers’ own independence or towards the economic expenditure of the family.

5.2 Discussion:

According to the census of 2001, the literacy rate among Muslim women 50.1% which is far below from national average and it is also below from other religious communities in India. There is no doubt that the Muslim women are educationally backward. The literacy rate among Muslim women is 49.75% which is 28.89% lower than the average literacy rate (68.64%) of West Bengal. There is no educational indicator except literacy rate on which data are available to show the status of Muslim women or for any other religious groups.

There is also a common belief that Muslim parents feel that education is not important for girls and that is may instill a wrong set of values. Even if girls are enrolled, they are withdrawn at an early age to marry them off. This leads to a higher drop out rate of Muslim girls. The interactions with them indicate that the problem may lie in non-availability of schools within easy reach for girls at lower level of education, absence of girls hostels, absence of female teacher and availability of scholarships as they move up the education ladder.

It is found that the state of education among Muslim women is even not so remarkable though it is increased from the past. The cultural traditions do not allow Muslim girls to take advantage of co-educational schools, especially if they are far away from their homes.
The Muslims are economically disadvantage group in West Bengal as well as India enrolling girls in school is one half the battle, because it is meaningful only if they complete the minimum of 8 years of schooling which requires that their families be able to resist the pressures of income generation and work in the home. For Muslim women, not being able to enter the schooling system seems to be the first obstacle. As for the working condition of Muslim women in West Bengal are concerned, it is found that about 60.07% women were house wife and remaining 39.93% were working in different economic activities. Out of total working women maximum were engaged in agricultural activities, remaining were engaged in washing utensils, labour in breakwork, collection of polythenes, weaving of cans, swing, bidi worker etc. It is also found some Muslim women are teacher in madrassa and some of them also are teachers in general primary and secondary school, but the percentage is very low.

Participation in decision making is an important tool to facilitate democracy in the country. Women in rural areas are still fighting for their participation in decision making. The women in Muslim are usually bound to live within the walls of the house. They are not participating freely in all families and social matters are illiteracy, low family income, large family size etc. It is found in the study that Muslim women, in present study, are a part of decision making in their family. But, it appears from the data that the women have not dominating power over the family in respect of daily expenditure for the family. It indicates that majority percent women take decision for household affair, so it can be pointed out that women enjoyed empower in the sector of decision making for household affairs.

In Islam, women education is accepted. But in practice there is a religious dominance upon women. In this study shows that 37.97% women are bounded with the prejudices of their religion and other 59.06% women have no problem regarding their religious orthodoxy. Some of the Muslim women say that religious dominance is one of the obstacle of their education. In their opinion that it is one of the causes of backwardness of Muslim women. Religious education is better, but practice is not so healthy. Male member of the family in the name of religion try to dominate over women (45.91%). It is noted that the women have no desire to pray in Masjid with male members (78.66%).
In many parts of the country, here are several gender based restrictions for women at home such as observing purdah. Purdah is a system in some Muslim societies by which women live in a separate part of a house or cover their faces so that men do not see them. Purdah is the symbol of seclusion. Purdah symbolises restriction to public appearance, public speaking, mobility, and many more. It is found from the conversation with Muslim women that most of the women do not wish to leave the custom of purdah as if this custom has been proved useful for their safety while moving around here and there. From this study, it is shown that 60.30% women believe in women conservation and only 35.73% of women say negative attitude of women conservation. Only some teenagers of women wish to do away with custom of purdah. Purdah is not considered as a means to restrict the freedom of women by majority of Muslim women in study area. On the other hand, it is regarded as a precaution to protect women from eve teasing and various other kinds of sexual harassment.

A very small percentage of women expressed their opinion having freedom of movement outside the home without permission. Only 29.01% women says that they have no problem if she spent night outside their house. Freedom of movement is one of the most important indicators of domestic empowerment for the women. This movement away from the home may have important implications for exposure to information development of interpersonal skills, increased self-confidence and opportunities to take independent action.

Women are much more behind than the men in decision making of taking care of their children. It is found that mostly 77.67% women takes care according to their own decision but the upbringing of child is the decision of their husband. The respondent’s view about their daughter’s education, nearly a positive view of respondent seen towards their daughter’s education. In most cases the women gave their opinion for equal right in education of son and daughter. Even some of the Muslim women are agreed for daughter’s education more important than son because her marriage in good family and they feel that if daughter is educated then she can handle her family easily.

Political participation of women is one of the most important concerns among
scholars, academicians and government. Mahatma Gandhi also believed that full and balanced development of the nation and establishment of a society is possible only when women participation actively and fully in the political deliberations of the nation. Thus, women’s political participation has been considered as a major measure of women’s empowerment. It is noted that Muslim women are interacted in politics but not active politics in rural area. But in urban area they are conscious about politics. Some of them are played an active part of the political programmes (29.28%). They cast their vote according to their own choice (81.64%). Due to lack of education, sometimes they are influenced by their husbands and other. But the girls student are much serious about their rights and duties. They wanted to improve their condition in participation of politics.

Political activism of Muslim women as for other underprivileged groups is integral to social transformation. Unless women are brought to the decision making levels directly important Muslim issues will never be tackled with the seriousness they require. They faced many obstacles inside and outside the family. They faced many obstacles inside and outside the family. The traditional idea of most of the Muslim family tried to resist the women but they played the vital role in politics for more advantages of Muslim especially for women.

A large body of available research has argued that cultural and religious factors caused high fertility among Muslims. Education is found to be one of the most powerful indicators of fertility. The study shows 74.94% women is taken a part of family planning. But most of the women are uneducated, so they have no idea regarding Family Planning. The decline the level of education had a direct negative impact on the fertility rate of the respondents. Fertility rate also decreased gradually with the increase in the educational level of the husbands of the respondents. Higher educated husbands of Muslim religion negated the fertility. Age at marriage of females was found as one of the best indicators of status of women and variable to influence fertility. It is found that lower was the age at marriage higher was the rate of fertility. Age difference between husband and wife played a vital role in fertility.

The traditional Indian Muslim orthodoxy does not allow the women to come in contact frequently with the neighbouring people as well as outer world. In such
circumstances, media, the window to the world about their rights and updating them in accordance with the present dynamic world. At the study area only 88.09% women has come in contact with media mainly electronic and 10.17% of respondents does not access any type of media.

Since the typical Indian married women psychologically accept their husband as guardian in all aspects of her life, husband’s support and co-operation in family matter determines their levels of empowerment colossally. Almost 71.47% of respondents receives cooperation and followed by 26.30% do not receive co-operation at all. It may be ratiocinated that husband’s cooperation in family matter is an important predictor determining the empowerment of women.

5.3 Limitations of the Study:

It is true that the researcher was sincere and serious for conducting her study in the field of research, but there may have some limitations. These limitations are stated below:

- The study has been carried out in only two districts, i.e. Murshidabad and Nadia in West Bengal due to time constraint and according to the convenience of the researcher. It would be better, if it includes other districts of West Bengal.
- The study is based on the basis of the responses of the samples. The Muslim women have some conservation which might have reflection on their response.
- The study is conducted on the basis of random sampling of the two districts, Murshidabad and Nadia. It would be better if it includes more samples for this study.
- The questionnaire was administered on the target sample in a normal atmosphere as far as practicable, though there may have some extraneous variables which have some effects on the findings of the study.
- In some situations electric gadget was used at the time of collection of data, which may have some impact on the responses.
5.4 Conclusion:

Empowerment is one of the main ceremonial concern when addressing human rights and development. Women empowerment includes the capabilities to decisions about personal and collective circumstances, decision-making ability, ability to choose a range of options, ability to inform other perception through exchange, education and engagement, increasing one’s positive self-image and overcoming stigma, increasing one’s ability in discreet thinking to sort out right and wrong etc.

According to the United Nations Millennium Campaign, women work two-thirds of the World’s working hours, with growing food, cooking, raising children, caring for the elderly, maintaining a house etc. and universally is accorded by low status with no pay. This study deals with the pragmatic measurement of women empowerment within Muslim community people of India conducted over randomly chosen sample from Murshidabad and Nadia districts of West Bengal.

At the length it may be convenient to say that the task of empowering of women is not an easy task rather, it is difficult one in such typical area like Murshidabad and Nadia districts where still a major portion of Muslim women are not aware of their self identity and esteem in the pressure of family matter. Permissive poverty of people along with traditional beliefs and orthodoxy for women folk is solely responsible for such immense deplorable condition of Muslim women. Women are conscious about family welfare but still they are to depend on husband because in most of the cases they are out of the access to money. Most of the respondents agreed for existing equal rights in society but they were not enjoying freedom of exercise regarding their opinion about vote, freedom of movement away from home without husband’s permission, daily household expenditure and child health care.

Government of India and State Government of West Bengal adopted many measures regarding education and tried to empower the Muslim girls and women. Many NGOs like CINI (Child in Need Institute), Jabala Action Research Organisation, Child Welfare Home, Suprova Panchashila in Murshidabad districts are working for the improvement of minority groups, but the achievement lags far behind its aim. This may be due to greater emphasising on overall minority development in lieu of women empowerment. From this study, it is said that the literacy and decision making power in household affairs is increase, but it is not at par all over the two
districts. Self help groups that have presently emerged as an earning tool of women in rural side, it can prove as a media of empowering this deplored class by rendering various governmental as well as non-governmental aids and training them to earn by their own, which can further change the gross socio-economic condition of the Muslim community.

Education is important for everyone, but it especially significant for girls and women. This is true not only because education is an entry point to other opportunities, but also because the educational achievements of women can have ripple effects within the family and across generations. Brigham Young has therefore rightly stated: “You educate a man, you educated a man. You educate a women, you educate a generation”.

5.5 Suggestions for Further Research of the Study:
- Comparative study of two districts, i.e. Murshidabad and Nadia may be conducted on the education and empowerment of Muslim women.
- Study may be conducted on different categories of Muslim women for political empowerment.
- Comparative study may be done on educational status of boys and girls of two districts.
- Study on implementation of the programmes of Central and State Governments regarding minority girls’ education may be undertaken.
- Comparative study can be taken up on the empowerment of Muslim women of different districts of West Bengal.
- Study can be conducted to analyse the criteria of the nature of women empowerment in different fields.
- Comparative study of education of student of madrasa and mainstream school may be conducted.
- Study on religious attitude towards the status of Muslim women may be examined.
- A comparative study on awareness and empowerment may be conducted.
- A comparative study on employment and empowerment of Muslim women could be conducted.