## REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

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CHAPTER – II
REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.1 Introduction
A literature review is a written summary of books, articles of journal and other published and non-published documents that describes the past and current state of information on the particular subject of research. It may form part of a research thesis or may stand alone as a separate document. Although the second of these types of literature review is less extensive that the expected for a thesis, the skill required are identical. Its goal is to bring the reader up-to-date with current literature on a topic and form the basis for another goal, such as the subject of research. It may form part of a research thesis or may stand alone as a separate document. Although the second of these types of literature review is less extensive that expected for a thesis, the skill required are identical. Its goal is to bring the reader up-to-date with current literature on a topic and form the basis for another goal, such as the justification for further research in the particular area.

A good review might also contain other information drawn from conference papers, books, workshop activities and government documents. This term review of related literature also used to describe the written component of a research plan or report that discusses the revised documents. These documents can include abstracts, review, monographs, dissertations, other research reports and electronic media.

2.2 Purpose of Literature Review:

The literature review has several important purpose that make it well worth the time and effort.

- Its primary purpose is to provide the reader with a comprehensive background for understanding current knowledge and highlighting the significance of new research.
- The review of literature is to determine what has already been done that relates to your topic.
• It is very important that the review tells a researcher what has been done and what needs to be done.
• It can inspire research ideas by identifying research gaps or inconsistencies in a body of knowledge, thus helps a researcher to determine the research questions or hypotheses.
• The review of literature is to discover research strategies and specific data collection approaches that have or have not been productive in investigations of topic similar to researcher.

2.3 Studies Conducted in the Field of Research:


The major objective of this book is to provide a fair evaluation of what Islam contributed towards the restoration of education in general and the education of Muslim women in particular. In the field of education, as in other constructive endeavors, Islam neither confined nor restricted its space to a particular gender. Nor did it sanction its monopolisation or marginalisation of women.

Various historical, social-cultural and contemporary circumstances have contributed to the educational backwardness of Muslims in India. This fact is universally known and acknowledged even the committees and supporting evidence from any of the reports of the committee and commissions which are regularly appointed by various governments. Everyone within the community and also outside it, agrees that the situation needs to be revisited and redressed urgently.

The writers mentions that the economic and socio-cultural tradition within the vast majority of the Muslim community, for various reasons and circumstances, have not universally favored modern education in general and education of the girl child in particular. Political leadership from within the community has not given the desired primacy to education in their agenda for action. There is not much to talk about on what elected representatives have significantly contributed in improving the educational profile of the Indian Muslims.
The author expresses that over the last six decades, general awareness of the need to impart education to every child has increased in the community but the pace of this change is far too slow, and hence, largely ineffective. There has been progress in the education of women for Muslim countries in science and technology but there is still a long way to go.

Current statistics underscore the significant improvement and remarkable expansion of educational opportunities at all levels for Arab women in the last two decades. A new born girl in the Arab world today has a much better chance than her mother to attend school and finish college.

The author points out that although there is a huge gap between the male and female literacy rates, the encouraging aspect is that the gap is shrinking.

The bare scientific knowledge is deliberately overlooked because this satisfies the male ego. The writer mentions that the Quranic injunction is that the groom, instead, has to give a certain amount, whether in cash or as a promise, to his bride, it is called “mehr”. This undoubtedly was an immensely progressive law considering the age and the status of women in other religious systems of that time.

But, in reality, in the present society the ‘mehr’ is only a promise. This rationale behind this custom was women-friendly, so that the woman has something to fall back upon in case of a divorce or desertion. It is useful to point out at this juncture that Islam perhaps, is the only religion in the world which gave women the right to divorce along with the right to property, it is not seen in any other major religion, like say, Christianity and Hinduism. In case of Muslim women, the first menstruation is a kind of celebration time because she becomes marriageable. So the role of women in society is only to ‘produce’ the next generation.

The author points that several reform movements in Hindu society and the post-independence Hindu Code Bill eliminated many unfair religious injunctions against Hindu women. But in Muslim society when Taslima Nasrin raised her voice against anti-women laws of Holy Quran, she was banished from her motherland and even from her second home, Kolkata.
Kari T. Babasahab (2014), Muslim Women : Challenges and Opportunities.

The study was conducted to assess the situation of Muslim women and the problems they faced by Muslim women and the problems they faced by Muslim communities at large, specially their status as religious minorities in India. There was a dominance of patriarchy played a major role in relation to issues of Muslim women.

There always has been a confusion about Muslim women’s status and rights. The confusion arise due to the significant differences about the status and rights of Muslim women in textual Islam, in Islamic history and tradition and in Islam in practice at present. The author recognised that Islamic texts like Quran and Hadith placed women at par with men in most respects, but the background of blind patriarchy and slave like status of Muslim women in the then prevailed pre Islamic society. After the advent of Islam the teaching of Quran and Prophet were changed to suit the rulers and their culture. Some verses mainly the ones which injunctions about the status, rights and privileges the women were stated, were misinterpreted.

The status of women was inferior to that of men and for the same reason she has less rights. Women has been created for the comfort and enjoyment of man and therefore, she was destined to remain under his subjugation. Men are made governors over women, hence it is the duty of women to obey their men. It is the custom of Muslim society, a man could divorce his wife at will and deprive her of all the means of life, women could not divorce her husband, Dower is regarded as a consideration for the sexual enjoyment of woman.

Women has no need to have religious education. No arrangements were ever made for their education, this is the tradition. The duties of women are only to please their husband, to breed children, and to do the drudgery of the home. Therefore they do not require any education at all. This is why they are discouraged and prevented from higher education, and in Muslim society an educated woman is looked upon with suspicion and anger.

In above discussion the study shows a major difference between the Muslim women in text and tradition. The author also discussed the position of women and Islam in practice. Muslims are among the most marginalised communities in the country and that the position of Muslim women was pathetic. There is a tremendous
variation in the status of various types of Muslim women.

Many a women have attempted their best to highlight the reformatory dimensions about the status of Muslim women. But the present prevailing customs such as child marriage, dowry system, veiling, polygamy, oral and one-side talaq etc. is highly obstacle the upliftment of women’s position.

The author shows the transition of the status of Muslim women has began. Presently, in the changing Indian society, the Muslim women try hard to get rid of the burden of traditionalism and ritualism by way of getting themselves educated, participating in societal tasks, earning through occupying gainful employment and thus becoming self-reliant.

Kaur, Simarjeet (2013) A Study of Women’s Empowerment as Related to their Level of Education.

The author expressed that the women made almost half of the population of any country, so their involvement in developmental work of the country can not be ignored. Without educated women a nation can not be educated because the women become mother who write the future of a generation. The writer pointed out that women empowerment can have four components; these are cognitive, psychological, economic and political. Again he wrote that women empowerment means that women gain autonomy, i.e. she is able to set their own opinion and are fully involved in the economic, political and social decision-making process.

The present study tried to measure the Women’s Empowerment Scale (WES) which is constructed and standardized by the investigator. The author developed four indices, i.e. Personal Autonomy Index (PAUTI), Family Decision Making Index (FADMI), Economic Domestic Consultation Index (EDCI) and Political Autonomy Index (POAUTI) to estimate empowerment of women in relation to their level of education. The author expressed that our society is male dominated and the status of women is not equal to men. After independence Govt. has been tried to improve the condition of women, but it is enough.

The study marked that the coefficient of correlation between overall women
empowerment index and level of education of women is found to be 0.62 which is significant at 0.01 level of confidence. The study led to the conclusion that there is significant relationship between the empowerment of women and education of women. It can also be said that as the level of education increases women became personally, socially, economically and politically more empowered.

Dr. (Mrs.) Nasrin (2013), Education of Muslim Women – A Journey from Past to Present.

This study was conducted to assess the journey of Muslim women before and after independence. The author noticed that at the beginning of 19th century, when the indigenous system of education exists, the educational facilities of women were virtually non existent as per the available literature. Among upper class Muslim families girls were taught only to read the Quran in Arabic and incidentally to read Urdu and Persian. Parents were disallowed their daughter to go to school as this was considered violation of the Islamic rules.

At the end of 19th century, Sir Maulana Hali and Sheikh Abdullah took the lead to fight for the causes of education for Muslim women. They started small primary school for the daughters of their families. But this school had to close due to non-availability of female teachers for the school. Later on, the Begum of Bhopal was the first women in Indian history who believed in the emancipation of women through education. She started the first school for Muslim girls in 1903, namely Sultania School. In this school like other subjects more emphasis was given on religious education. It is noticeable that before independence Hindu freely joint Muslim institutions and Muslim learnt Sanskrit. Historically, Muslim adopted the Western System of Education at a later stage than Hindus.

Sir Syed Ahmed Khan (1817–96) was the first to recognise this contrast between two religions. He founded the Mohammedan Anglo Oriental College at Aligarh which is known as Aligarh Muslim University. The foundation of this college was a real turning point in the educational history of Muslim.

After independence, many committees and commissions were set up and they
recommended some measures for improvement of women education. But all the commissions and committees emphasised the problem of women in general but not specifically for Muslim women.

The author recognised that Muslim women today are different from yesterday in all sphere of life. They are coming out of their purdha and are sharing greater responsibilities in National reconstitution. Women are indeed moving forward with the passage of time breaking barriers to various spheres of life. Education is a significant component as well as facilitator of development of Muslim women. The efforts of the central and state governments may appear but ground reality is different. The enrolment rate of children in 6–14 years age group in primary school is high but the dropout after class V is also very high. So the benefit never reaches the target group.

The author gave some suggestion for improvement of educational status of Muslim women, i.e. eradicating ill-traditions, making girls more confident, government actions and reservation of employment such as teacher in schools and colleges, government institutes etc. Religious superstition is also an obstacle of Muslim women’s education.

Munjial Monica and Kaushik Poonam (2013). Muslim Women and Minority Rights in India.

India is one of the largest democracies in the world. It also has one of the largest minorities. A true democracy ensures not only individual rights but also rights of minorities as a community. Our Constitution also has laid down in Article 25 to 30 the rights of religious, cultural and linguistic minorities and thus made India a truly democratic and pluralist nation. But author also pointed out that there is a big gap between noble intentions and actual realism. The minorities of our country continued to face several problems specially as far as Muslim concerned. The author noted that minority rights in India have obstructed the pursuit of gender equality.

The status of women in Indian society is much debated subject. There are points of view put forth defending or condemning the position occupied by or
imposed upon women in the Indian subcontinent.

The position of women under Islam has been subject of repeated controversies. Among educated Muslims ever since they came under the impact of Western liberalisation. The controversial subject of women’s rights has assumed great importance in the Islamic world and is a burning issue today.

There is a basic gender discrimination between men and women prevailed in India. He gave an emphasised that Muslim women in India constitute one of the most deprived groups who are unable to fully enjoy their equal rights. According to the writer their deprivation derives are cultural and religious, legal, socio-economic and educational and violence against Muslim women. The problems of Muslim women are many-sided and closely related to the problems of the Muslim society as a whole. The approach to bettering the lot of Muslim women depends mainly on the approach towards solving the problem of Muslim society.

Many religious books point to the fact that women are not treated badly by Islam. Unfortunately the tendency seems to be to overlook or misinterpret the principles and orders of the Quran and consequently to accord to the woman an inferior status. The study emphasised that the role of women in Islam has been misunderstood due to the general ignorance of the true Islamic system, the Islamic way of life and because of the distortions of the media.

The need of the hour is to come together to find a new approach which will overcome the shortcomings and limitations of the former approaches.

The study came to a conclusion that it is now necessary for the Muslim women to realise and enjoy their full human rights and start a process of reform within the community and empowered them.

Bukhari Hussain Mussawar Syed (2013), Women Empowerment in a Muslim Society : A Practical Observation.

This article emphasizes on women empowerment issues in Iran. Islam gives a profound regard and immense importance for women. Women played a vital role as mother. In September, 2012 United States and 12 other countries took joint step
regarding announcing ‘Equal Futures’ for women and girls. This announcement also commits expand opportunity for women and girls in the science, technology (STEM) fields, economic security support women entrepreneurs, promote civic and public leadership for girls.

The author points out that history of women empowerment in United States has so much old roots. But till 19th century, women have no rights regarding vote, hold elective office, attend college or join workplace. Even women can not get their children or demand legal rights in case of divorce. Women empowerment in Arab world author observes that women, historically have faced and experienced huge discrimination here regarding their rights and freedoms. Some of such experiences were due to so-called religious believes, and several wee due to societal limitations and cultural barriers. Such restrictions, affected women’s life in Arab world regarding judicial, economic, educational or healthcare discrimination.

There has been so many respected and elected women in the Muslim countries. It is true, according to writer, that voting rights becomes the reason of economic rights while the traditional Arab dress is still an obstacle in female economic empowerment. The author is agreed with other several thinkers that role of religious policy in Saudi Arabia regarding imposing traditional Arab Abaya is actually an effort to keep far away the women from business or financial activities, while several other countries like Kuwait, Lebanon, Jordan, Syria and Egypt. The veil is not compulsory.

The author points out the in South Asian particularly in Afghanistan, Muslim women are in miserable condition and very much deprived. But there was a rule of King Amanullah Khan from 1919 to 1929 in Afghanistan tried to promote education of women and discouraged veiling system and encourage western dresses. But as time passed the restriction of women also imposed.

In Pakistan, the scenario is different. There are some influence of Afghanistan, but the Society of Pakistan is divided among classes, culture and rural and urban, therefore women status is different in various places within Pakistan. Fatma Jinnah, the sister of Muhammad Ali Jinnah was the first educated and women rights supporter in Pakistan. The first women university in Pakistan was inaugurated in 1998 is called Fatima Jinnah University.
In India, Constitution ensured women's rights through various articles. In recent decades, India got major achievement regarding women empowerment. The population is almost 210 million, Muslim population. They also treated like other Indian population. There are several crimes against women, but India has also generated a skill female human resource in all the fields like education, arts and entertainment, sports, politics and literature.

Before the Iranian Revolution of 1979 the women situation was very worse in Iran. Muslim women cannot get an education in the schools and universities with protecting Islamic norms and values. After revolution, women have been acquired an open opportunity regarding participation in educational, political, economic and social activities along with following Islamic norms and values.

In this article the author have been studied and observed several essential elements of countries regarding women empowerment. The author points out that Iranian society has fully paragon out that Iranian society has fully paragon to its women reflecting socio-economic and political liberalization, freedom of earning and expression and living style up to the present time has been rapidly traced. The author concludes that the Iranian feminism is a profound role model regarding women empowerment for all the Muslim countries as well as for all those countries which are called their solves democratic and liberal.

**Sen, Nabanita (2012). A Study on the Growth and Development of Madrasa Education in West Bengal and Its Impact on the Muslim Community.**

This thesis is discussed on the functions of Madrasa education and its importance on minority welfare. Researcher pointed out that the constitution of free India attempts for the well being of the minority group, but sixty five years of independence. Muslim community still a backward class in Indian society.

Education of Muslim community in our country has for centuries centered on the Madrasa system. Education becomes a very effective and in many ways the principal mirror through which the growth pattern of the community is reflected.

The study started with the address by the Chief Minister, Mr. Buddhadev
Bhattacharya, regarding the increasing fund allocation for the development of Madrasa education of Left Front Govt. of West Bengal. The researcher expressed that the Govt. is not indifferent to the Madrasa education in West Bengal and the Govt. made an attempt to bring modernisation in this type of education.

The researcher pointed out that the Madrasa education in West Bengal provides education to the most deprived people, most of whom are the first generation learners. West Bengal was the first state which recognised madrasas and took initiative to convert the Board into statutory body in 1994. Besides these state regulated madrasas, the unauthorised madrasas are also running, the exact number of which is not recorded.

This study tries to conceptualise the present madrasa system of education in West Bengal qualitatively from two angles. The growth and development of madrasa in the state along with the functioning of the same for educating the future citizens of the country and the impact of the madrasa system of West Bengal on the Muslim community from the eyes of the beneficiaries, policy framers, members of the community which can provide impetus for a rethinking about the madrasas.

The researcher described that the madrasa education along with its richness and variety not only catered religious knowledge but also produced men of learning and till date are existent all over the country. In course of time the system has undergone changes as a natural process but keep its root deeply fixed in the community’s tradition. The pull between modernity and tradition is still present in the system.

Dr. Syed Naseen, A Ashraf & Ayaz Ahmad (2012), Muslim Women Education and Empowerment in Rural Aligarh (A Case Study).

The writer tried to analyse the Muslim women education and empowerment in rural areas of Aligarh district. This study conducted in Muslim dominated village from each block. Aligarh district is one of the highly developed, prosperous and agriculturally district of Western U. P. The village survey shows a poor development and the literacy level among Muslim women. Out of total household survey about two third of them are illiterate, they can not even read write their name. And out of the
total educated women 50 percent woman was educated up to primary level, 12.50 percent was middle school and same percentage was educated up to High School and remaining 25 percent has Islamic education.

As for the working condition of women in Muslim is concern that about 60 percent were housewife and remaining were working in different economic activities. Out of total working women about half of them engaged in agricultural activities, one third were working as a labourer and remaining were engaged in other type of activities such as washing utensils, collection of polythenes etc. The author noticed that the household size of Muslim in Aligarh district is compared with literacy rate. This study reported that the household size is small in those area where the literacy rate of Muslim women is high, whereas the household size is big in those areas where the women literacy rate is low. So education is very much related with the knowledge of population.

The Muslim women in Aligarh district generally life consists of high ratio of disease, malnutrition and ill health. Her general health care is almost ignored due to inadequate nutrition, poor health, lack of maternity centers etc. A housewife who take the responsibility of health care of the family on her shoulder, there is hardly anyone to take care of hers. The writer pointed that the participation in decision making and politics is an important tool to facilitate democracy in the country. But women in rural areas are still fighting for their participation in decision making organisations. Muslim women are not participating freely in all families and social matters are illiteracy, low family income, large family size and child care etc. The author referred that the women of Aligarh are not the decision maker about their family welfare.

Regarding girls’ education, the author expressed that educational backwardness of Muslim women is the only cause of their socio-economic and political backwardness. The illiterate Muslim women were not worried about their daughter’s education. They agreed that for daughter’s education is less important than son. Some of the women gave their opinion for equal right in education of son and daughter.

The author concluded that education of women is an instrument for strengthening socially useful skills, habits and attitudes of common citizenship. The study reveals that socio-economic conditions are the major determinants of women
liberation than the religion. Muslim 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 Muslim women are housewife besides working as agricultural labourer in their own fields. A Muslim woman is by and large confined to indoor activities of condition of Muslim women in respect of education and employment and should be allowed to participate, particularly in decision making.

Md. Hossain Intekhab (2012), Muslim Women of West Bengal : An Enquiry into their Minority Status.

The writer pointed out that the social scientists, scholars, researcher, policy maker, academicians etc. who have not paid much attention to the Muslims in comparison of all religious groups. So the Muslim women of West Bengal remain unexplored.

It is estimated that ¼ of the total population of West Bengal are Muslims by religion and are the biggest and principal minority of the State. But they (Muslims) have been found most educationally backward religious minority community at national level and for which the Government of India acknowledged them ‘National Educationally Backward Minority’ in 1993. After the sixty-two years of independence the destiny of Muslims of India has not changed and it also acknowledged by the Sachar Committee Report of 2006.

The study mentioned that the Muslim women in West Bengal are lagged behind the mainstream on all human developments indicators since independence due to various external and internal factors. They are still remained socially, economically, educationally towards the back when change is the assortment of today. Muslim women’s empowerment is crucial as they continue to be victimized by traditional social structure, social systems and social institutions of the community when modernisation of women in India is a potential medium. Lack of education, economic dependency, poverty and ignorance of their rights has made them vulnerable to exploitation. The work participation of Muslim females is extremely low. Muslim women the least educated in compared with Hindu and Christian population in India.
The educational backwardness of Muslim women is a matter of particular concern, especially the high drop-out rate, resulting in subsequently fewer proportions of them managing to complete high school and even less availing of higher education. Muslim women of West Bengal has been observed that the situation are very pitiable almost in every facet of development. In respect of educational attainment, participation in gainful jobs, economic and political empowerment the women in Muslim society are most marginalised, underprivileged, secluded.

Sanjoy Kumar Bharadwaj and Sangeet Rani (2011), Empowerment of Women Through Education.

The authors put the information of five levels of women’s empowerment, i.e. framework, namely welfare, access, conscientisation, mobilisation and control. Women empowerment means the process through which women, who are currently most discriminated against, achieve gender equality. The empowerment occurs when women achieve increased control and participation in decision making that leads to their better access to resources and therefore, improved socio-economic status. According to the author, education is the most important instrument especially 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. The author finds that investing in girls education is one of the most effective ways to reduce poverty also.

Women make almost half of the population of any country, thus their involvement in the development cannot be ignored. Without educated woman a nation cannot see its distant dream as women are the mothers who write the future of a generation. In last few years there has seen considerable improvement in women education in India. the author finds that more and more women are coming out of houses and opt for education in India.

The author gave a statistics of female literacy of 2001. Female literacy was at a national average of 53.63%, whereas the male literacy was 75.26. The 2001 statistics also indicated that the total number of ‘absolute non-literate’ in the country was 304
million. India is the world’s largest democracy where billions of people live and almost half of these are women. If girls are not educated, families suffer too. Educated mothers use their knowledge to improve the health of their children and other family members. They immunize their kids against major disease. They provide better nutrition. Child mortality rate is much higher where mothers lack education than in families where mothers are educated. Girls’ education is emerging as one of the top priorities of Indian society “educating girls is not an option it is a necessary”, we all want to eliminate gender disparities in education. There are some root causes for low literacy among women in India. These are the lower enrolment, higher drop-out rate among girls from school, girl child as second mother, bonded labour system, caste system as a barrier, dowry as cordon, child labour practice, poor school environment for girls, female age at marriage, poverty as a barrier etc. They gave some remedial measures for improving the literacy level of women in India. These are check the drop-out from school, increase enrolment, remove child labour practice, remove social evils like dowry, child marriage, caste system, easy access to go to school, government, non-government and private efforts for educational improvement of girls etc. They pointed out the national and international efforts for development of women empowerment. After detailed discussion about empowerment of women, the authors suggested some way of improvement of women through education, which is the most powerful weapon for women development. But the employment of women can go to a step for economic empowerment which have a little discussion in this article.

**Workshop on Indian Muslim Women’s Struggles for Equality, Justice and Empowerment (2011).**

The Indian Institute of Advanced Study, Shimla was organised a three-day workshop on Indian Muslim Women’s Struggles for Equality. Justice for their economic, educational, social and political empowerment. The aim of the workshop is to discuss ongoing initiatives and struggles, locate crucial issues that need to be foregrounded to galvanise such struggles and promote networking between activists and scholars working on these issues who are located in different parts of the country.
In this workshop various issues related Muslim women was raised. The most important issues which was discussed is the educational backwardness of Muslim women in India. The need to critique and challenge patriarchal understanding of Islam and to promote alternate Islamic discourses based on gender equality and justice. A critique of dominant nations of multiculturalism and minority rights that pay scant attention to internal hierarchies within marginalised communities (i.e. minorities within minorities) based on class, caste and gender.

This discussion would focus that the Muslim women are assumed to have passively accepted their break lives, either because they know of no alternative or because they have no means to light this faith prescribed by God. Empowerment of Muslim women, specially rural areas, is not an easy task. Even if a great deal of awareness about the rights of women for equality and justice is imparted at different levels, they are not able to practice what they are aware of.

Women’s political participation at the highest rank coupled with the deterioration of Muslim women’s status in some Muslim societies including those who have elected a women leader illustrates the complexity and diversity of the situation of women in the Muslim world.

Alam, J. (2009), Religion vs. Women’s Empowerment.

The author points out the very beginning of the human civilisation women are treated as ‘inferior’, both in physical strength and capabilities and intelligence and potentialities. The male equated ploughing to insemination – their singular and the only contribution to the birth of the next generation or the survival and continuation of human civilization.

Before the advent of scientific knowledge, it was not known that it is the male chromosome, never the female, which determines the sex of the foetus. Such a belief has not got completely eroded even amongst the highly educated of the 21\textsuperscript{st} century. The bare scientific knowledge is deliberately overlooked because this satisfies the male ego.

The writer mentions that the Quranic injunction is that the groom, instead, has
to give a certain amount, whether in cash or as a promise, to his bride, it is called “mehr”. This undoubtedly was an immensely progressive law considering the age and the status of women in other religious systems of that time.

But, in reality, in the present society the ‘mehr’ is only a promise. This rationale behind this custom was women-friendly, so that the woman has something to fall back upon in case of a divorce or desertion. It is useful to point out at this juncture that Islam perhaps, is the only religion in the world which gave women the right to divorce along with the right to property, it is not seen in any other major religion, like say, Christianity and Hinduism. In case of Muslim women, the first menstruation is a kind of celebration time because she becomes marriageable. So the role of women in society is only to ‘produce’ the next generation.

The author points that several reform movements in Hindu society and the post-independence Hindu Code Bill eliminated many unfair religious injunctions against Hindu women. But in Muslim society when Taslima Nasrin raised her voice against anti-women laws of Holy Quran, she was banished from her motherland and even from her second home, Kolkata.

Rabindranath gave ‘individuality’ and identity to women that was path-breaking in the psyche of the typical ‘bhadralok’ of Bengal. Many social reformers like Vidyasagar or Rammohan was sincerely tried to liberate women from the unjust social bindings and realised that women have an exclusive mind and identity of their own. The writer suggested that like all oppressed groups, women have to fight their own battle. Rights are never given, got to be won over. He hoped that women got equality and rights by their own efforts.


This article aims to probe the role of education in the empowerment of women in the district of Malda, West Bengal, India. The empowerment of women in India has been obstructed for centuries owing the various reasons amongst which the initial
blow was in the form of depriving women from basic educational facilities. Women discovered their own potential and played an equal part in India’s struggle for freedom. The preamble to the Constitution of India promises full equality to all citizens in all respect.

In independent India, illiteracy is the second most important problem following poverty. Female literacy rates are very low nationally. Among the literate women only a handful of women obtain their education in order to acquire economic independence; for the majority, literate women receive an education only to become more eligible in for marriage.

The writer points out that in spite of the Indian Govt.’s effort to secure justice for women through laws against crimes, the result is far from satisfactory. Without proper education, legal literacy and social awareness it is impossible to elevate the status of women.

In spite of changes in society, its patriarchal nature continues to benefit males. Education has never been viewed as a tool to develop the overall personality and capabilities of women. More than acquiring economic and social freedom for women on par with men, the society has viewed education as a requisite for a good marital relationship, as a pre-requisite for obtaining a good match and for the better upbringing of children in the 20th century.

Even in today’s so-called highly modern society, girls are still not regarded as full persons. After independence a considerable developments have taken place in the lives of women, there remains a bleak picture. This essay is an attempt to explore the discrimination women are still facing in society, and how education has made an indelible impression in curbing the practice of dowry through creation of empowered women in society.

In Malda district, there is preference for boys in education and parents are accustomed to take their studies with more seriously than girls because it is the societal norm that boys must become economically independent. Families place that most importance on the marriage of their girls.

The author notes that it is noteworthy that a majority of the women (62%) expressed a keen interest in educating their daughters. Early marriage is another
common feature leading parents to withdraw their girls from school. In a hurry to get
them married, some girls fell into the wrong hand. As a result they have to suffer a
broken marriage at a very immature age.

**Winkelmann Jule Mareike (2007) Reaching the Minds of Young Muslim Women: Girls Madrasas in India.**

This book is a reworked edition of the writer’s published Ph. D. Thesis ‘From
Behind the Curtain. A Study of Girls Madrasas in India’. The author pointed out that
how the girls madrasas emerged in India and its impact on Muslim girls. The
improvement of literacy, emerging Urdu print culture, democratization of access to
Islamic texts, all formed the background for the development of girls madrasas.

The writer expressed that the girls madrasas are modern innovation designed to
replace home based teaching of religion to girls. Madrasas for boys have been a centre
of attraction to many but little is known about girls madrasas. Initially the experience
of girls madrasas was not comfortable, but gradually it was over. Very few days there
was a close relation with teacher and student is developed. Though the young women
were found to be aware of the happenings of the other than ‘Muslim World’. The
madrasas played a crucial role at a broader level. Teacher and students were mainly
recruited through family ties and tabligui work. Moreover, the international contacts
were maintained similarly and this was done between founder and manager.

The curriculum emphasizes reading and memorizing sections from the Koran,
learning the five daily prayers (namaz). ‘Adab’ or value education stood as an
important subject, the influence of which is indeed all-pervading. A range of related
practices like veiling, embodied ideals of Islamic womanhood, use of particular
language code, rituals and postures, purification techniques were meant for the girls.
The author gives a comparative description of two madrasas. In question of discipline,
in the former (old) one learning was not restricted to teaching hours whereas in the
later (westernised), discipline was mostly linked with classroom activities. Her
findings also suggest that the students identity as Muslim women along with the
demands laid out upon them influence their professional choices.

This thesis studied on the education and empowerment of women in the State, Tripura. The researcher pointed out that India is a democratic country and the rights of women, according to the Indian constitution, is same with men. Moreover after independence Govt. of India as well as voluntary organizations are right in paying special attention to education of women which is the key factor for bringing about social, economic, political and environmental change for the empowerment of women.

But the status of women in our society is still very low, although several measures have been adopted to improve their conditions on the basis of constitutional guarantees.. Their role outside the family has never been accepted in the same manner as men’s. The researcher expressed that the vast majority of women were not aware about their role and rights in the society.

The empowerment of women through the participation in socio-politics began to assume important in the 20th century. The researcher expressed the Indian scenario of women participation in employment and politics is not so grave at present in urban areas, but the situation has not adequately improve, in rural areas.

In India, women’s specific problems have been incorporated in the strategy of planned economic development. In the five year plans emphasis have been given on the areas of women’s education, health, child welfare programmes in every district for the development of women. But women can not achieved fullest involvement in their family or in society.

Although Tripura is a state of India, but the development programme related women has not been implemented adequately in this state. So the women of Tripura have been marked as underdeveloped class due to absence of adequate facilities, economic standard social outlook etc. Education is an important factor for the development of women. The women of Tripura is not educated as much. So this study was tried to conduct a relation between education and empowerment of women in Tripura.

Islam is a religion, and the main object and concern of a religion is not only the pattern of life but also the purpose of life on this earth in relation to God the Almighty God in the Holy Quran addressing men and women both are equal.

The author mentions that some of the Quranic verses regarding women were first and foremost intended to protect them from the prevailing customs and social and cultural effects of tribal society. But there is always a vast difference between practice and preaching.

In the West and non-Moslem countries, Islam seems to be composed of Chaddor, the marrying of four wives and the chopping off of hands. The author points out that whereas in actual fact the principles and spiritual values of Islam do not preach any of these at all. This misconception about Islam is based on sheer ignorance, not only on the part of the West, but even on the part of some so-called Moslem learned men or ulama.

The writer evaluates the legal status of a Moslem women in Islam in considering her position as a daughter, wife, mother and widow separately.

The traditional Islamic law allows a mart to have up to four wives. A Moslem man regards this right to four wives as his “entrenched” God-given right. The author mentions that he (man) forgets the Quranic injunction that is “all wives should (must) be treated equally”. In practice this condition has been interpreted as binding in conscience only and not as a legal restriction.

In many Moslem countries, polygamy was outlawed except under certain conditions and only on permission from the court.

The author points out that under Sharia law Moslem husbands have unilateral right to repudiate their marriage – called “Talaq at will”, so a blameless wife can be divorced. Morally, this is considered reprehensible and indeed in many societies there are social controls operating on this women right.

In some societies, the poor are forced by adverse circumstances to marry off their daughters instead of equipping them with the education and the independence which is theirs by rights.
Raj Kumar Pruthi et al. (2001) have looked at women’s plight and positions through the ages from the Vedic period down to the present times. Women achievers have been given their place of pride in their respective fields. The authors have attempted to explain various situations by quoting extensively from the Puranas and Smrtis. Heir findings are that the women have always been struggling for equal recognition in society.

Bhargavi V. Davar (2001) has studied the psychological, social and political forces, which have significant impacts on women’s mental health. Through examples of domestic violence and child sexual abuse she looks at the victimization of women by violence and links it to mental health. Domestic violence coupled with sexual abuse degenerates the mental health of rural women. In women, there was “a sharp rise in neuroses in the age group of 25-39 years from the previous age group of 14-24 years, and a rise of 8 per cent, compared to 4 per cent increase in the next age group of 40-49 years.

Breda Cranney (2001) has depicted the miseries of women of Himachal Pradesh through a selected number of case studies. Women of the lower socio-economic stratum of Himachal Pradesh lead a miserable life. A considerable part of her life in the hills is spent for fetching out drinking water. Her starvation at home is often unnoticed. Her lot is often subject matter of black magic.

Navinder K. Singh (2001) has portrayed the various social, cultural and functional activities of women workers of tea plantations who in reality are the backbone of the tea industry in great detail. Neglected, abused and discriminated from cradle to grave, these women desperately seek a change, which is only possible through education and social empowerment.

The study of Kaushik (2002) has also confirmed the same finding. Getting a space is only a means to empowerment. Once women get elected or selected to various positions in political structures and committees, the women should be able to exercise the power / space given to them for making themselves knowledgeable, skilled and empowered, utilizing it for the development of women, children and the society, and eventually making use of their empowerment, to empower other women.

Pande (2001) studies have been conducted to identify the factors of poor
participation of women in politics. Some reasons for lack of political participation of women are shyness, unpreparedness, effect of purdah system and personal laws, impact of religion, reaction of family members, domestic responsibilities, undue interference by the male members in the work, security problem, lack of facilities, lack of incentives, political discrimination in distribution of development schemes, criminalization of politics, official interference and corruption at grassroots level.

Mallier and Rosser (1987) made a study of the role of women in the economy of two developed countries, America and Britain. They observe that, the industries that have absorbed the growth of women workers are predominantly in the service sector. Although women are spread over a wider range of industries and occupations than in most Western countries, there is still a substantial degree of sex segregation, on a pattern similar to that found elsewhere.

Devi (1979) identifies four variables for assessing the changes in status of employed women, such as the extent of power of decision-making in family, freedom in spending, help received in household responsibilities and deviations from traditional customs. Employed women were found to have higher scores in all the four elements. Therefore it can be concluded that employment contributed significantly to the social status of employed women.

According to Sharma (1986) the three parameters for measurement of performance are qualities to be appraised, choice of the appraiser and the choice of the measure. Four variables short-listed for measurement of performance are productivity, co-operativeness, obedience and initiative. Factors such as intelligence of the worker, experience, attitude towards the organization, organizational climate, job satisfaction and certain personality variables affect the job performance of employees.

According to the Noble Laureate Amartya Sen (1992) all are deeply diverse in internal characters such as age, gender, talents etc, as well as in external circumstances such as ownership of assets, social background, environmental predicaments and so on. Inequalities related to such categories as class, gender and communities have far reaching significance in the domestic sphere and in the wider community. ‘Co-operative conflict’ exists in family and hence there is the need of empowering women.

Pruthi, Devi and Pruthi (1999) in their work, “Encyclopedia of Status and
Empowerment of Women in India, Vol. 1 & 2”, urge Indian women to come out of their cloistered lives and to live with the dignity and status they deserve. In the first volume status of Indian women has been studied with a historical perspective. The second volume discusses the present position of women and different policies and programmes for women’s welfare and development.

**Malhotra, Schuler and Boender** (2002) make a study of the various concepts of empowerment including empowerment as a process, identify a large number of variables used by many authors in measuring the status or empowerment of women’s economic contribution as an enabling factor which can predict other outcomes such as control over important decision in family.

According to **Nillesen and Gelfert** (2002) the perceived inferior status—economically, socially and religiously—of females means that families attach lower certainty to female prospects than to that of their female counterparts. In order to induce a similar level of investment between males and females, the required return for females must be greater to compensate for the perceived risk associated with investing in females. It requires either the creation of jobs for females or breaking of the patrilineal inheritance structure structure.

**Ramanathan** (2004) opines that family structures in the developing countries like India perpetuate the subordinate position of women. Several hidden social constraints and customs inhibit women’s free choice and access to education and employment opportunities.

The ideology of gender inequality is inculcated in both men and women from birth, before they can think for themselves, religion, mythology, social and cultural labour and superstitious behavioral training, seclusion, veiling, curtailment of physical mobility, distribution of work, dietary discrimination and rewards and punishment all are used to socialize girls to accept and participate in their own oppression (Batliwala 1993). Gender disparity could be seen in terms of histological advantages. Even in the womb, the male fetuses have a lower rate of miscarriage than their female counterparts, says Waldron (1983).

**Yadav** (2000) states that the quality and quantity of women’s work is governed by a host of social, religious and traditional factors. It results in constraining women
from taking up occupation and education and thereby gender discrimination has been raised. Becker (1981) views that gender division of labour is the root cause of gender discrimination.

Education is strongly related to decision making on accessing own health care, ability to set aside money for own use and mobility (Sengupta and Johnson 2003; Singh 2004). Malhotra and Mather (1997) view that education is critical in determining women’s decision-making impact on financial issues, but not on social and organizational matters. Education is related to increased decision making on economic issues in the household: very strongly in Malaysia, Thailand and Pakistan more moderately in Philippines and not at all in India Jejeebhoy (1996) observes that education is more closely related to decision-making, autonomy, mobility indicators in Tamil Nadu. The effect of education (primary and secondary) is positive on women’s decision-making authority (Kritz and Makinwa – Adebusoye, 1999).

Education is immaterial in defining control over finances or household decision-making, but does increase women’s freedom of movement (Bloom 2001). There is another view that education is positively related with women’s decision making, control of resources, and autonomy except mobility with which it is negatively associated (Balk 1997). Many studies find a positive relationship between education and women’s decision-making power (Kishor (1995) and Govindasamy and Malhotra (1996), Kritz and Makinwa – Adebusoye (1999)). Women with higher schooling are more likely to say that their opinion has weight in household decisions, and they are also more likely to think that women should have decision-making input on matters both within and outside the customary female domain. In India based on the National Family Health survey- II (NFHS-II) reports a strong and consistent positive relationship between women’s schooling and their input on health care decisions for themselves and their ability to set aside money for personal use.

Vlassoff (1994) argues that greater prosperity, modernization and more widespread education for girls have actually reinforced patriarchal structures by defining an economically dependent role for women relative to their husbands. Moreover, it is only in theory that education is seen as a means of financial independence for girls; in practice, girls are educated to secure a husband, not to get a job.
Nirmala Banerjee (1988) have identified official plans took to financial or administrative responsibility for this last sector; there was no plan provision for supplying it with inputs like capital, skill training or assistant for technological upgradation. On the other hand, the setting their sector-wise targets for employment, the plans put the onus of generating bulk of the jobs on this very unorganized sector. For example, for the second plan period, it had been estimated that an additional 80 million new jobs were needed if the backlog of those unemployment at the beginning of the plan plus those newly added to the labour force during the plan’s tenure were to be freshly employed. But, the planned Sectors were expected to generate no more than 30-32 million jobs. The rest of the jobs were to come from somewhere else, presumably in the unorganized sector. There was no acknowledgement on regret expressed that, without any plans for provision of additional resources or skills for this set of activities, the employment in unorganized sector was bound to be much less productive and rewarding than in the planned sectors. This discrimination between two sections of the economy – the traditional and the unorganized – remained built – in the Indian plant policies. It was perhaps one of the main reasons for the sharp increase over the 1950’s and the 1960’s in the incidence of poverty and in the skewness of income distribution that has been widely noted. (Shrinivasan et. al., 1974, P. K. Bardhan 1984).

Parents prefer boys to girls since boys provide more security than girls. Recent research in India shows that higher levels of education have a significantly stronger effect as compared to primary education in lowering the entrenched preference for sons. Studies suggest that it is only at high levels of education that women are successful in rejecting gender-based norms, or finding alternative opportunities, roles and support structures than those afforded by giving birth to sons (Bourne and Walker 1991; Basu 1992; Govindasamy and Ramesh 1996; Rande and Astone 2001).

Education is a fundamental right to women. The educational policies should link education to empowerment, says Ramachandran (2002), Berhman (2003). Dreze and Sen (1991) are of the view that education is likely to increase their role in household decision making which in turn increase the level of empowerment. Education is an investment, which enhances the skill and credentials of women by
increasing their knowledge. Moreover, it increases the freedom of women to choose their career, whatever they prefer. Right education is one of the most important means of empowering women with knowledge, skill and self-confidence.

**Sundaram** (2000) is of the view that education to rural women is highly essential to increase their earning activities. Learning by doing and earning is the apt way of empowering the rural women in India. Moreover employment with education augments financial position of women which in turn leads to economic independence. Thereby the productive and creative energies of women should by properly utilized and streamlined by education.

Education is an investment in opening up employment opportunities – access to credit, land ownership and power to decision-making and thereby empowerment is achieved. **Sharma** (1991) says that education is the potent instrument of empowerment, which refers to capacity building. Education is the major determinant to make the women self-reliant and pursue their goals and achieve their success in diverse fields, which they like. Careful planning on the part of women education will result in enhancing the empowerment of women (Jayanthi 2001). Educated women are the forerunner in making awareness among the other women in the society. Education equips women to assess their position and to participate in all socio-economic activities.

Women’s education increases labour market participation and provides better employment opportunities for women and hence raises their incomes (Cameron et al. 2001). **Khandeker** (1988) finds a positive relationship between women’s education and labour force participation in Bangladesh and also finds that the husband’s education is likely to reduce his wife’s labour force participation rate because of the positive wealth effects of potential earnings.

Female labour force participation is governed by the reflection of economic hardship and suggests that the female labour force participation widely differs among the states, which is due to the differences in the rate of female literacy. Education is a marginally significant determinant of female labour force participation of labour market work and earnings. Probability of participation in wage work increases with post-secondary education less so with lower levels of education (Mammen and Paxson
Empowerment is an active multidimensional process that enables women to realize their full identity and powers in all spheres of life. The dimensions of empowerment are self-perception, perception of the women in the society, economic independence, decision-making, innovativeness and attributes towards group action, communication and desire to improve living conditions (Devadas et al. 1989). Empowerment aims at changing the values and direction of systematic forces, which marginalize women and other disadvantage sections in a given context. It is a process of challenging existing power relations and of gaining greater control over the sources of power (Batliwala 1993; Sharma 1991).

2.4 Review of Ranganath Mishra Commission and Sachar Committee:

The Government of India constituted Justice Sachar Committee for preparation of a Report on the Social, Economic and Educational Status of Muslim Community of India, and Justice Ranganath Mishra Commission for identifying criteria for socially and economically backward classes among the religious and linguistic minorities, and to suggest various welfare measures for Minorities including Reservation. Both the Committee and the Commission have submitted their reports. While the Sachar Committee Report is under implementation, the Government has tabled the Justice Ranganath Mishra Report on the table of the Parliament and considering various aspects for implementation of the Report at present. It has been established by Sachar Committee and Ranganath Mishra Commission reports that Muslims in India are most backward community despite their rich cultural heritage and strong numerical presence.

Ranganath Mishra Commission Report

National Commission for Religious and Linguistic Minorities, also called as Ranganath Misra Commission was constituted by Government of India on 29 October 2004 to look into various issues related to Linguistic and Religious minorities in India. It was chaired by former Chief Justice of India Justice Ranganath Misra. The commission submitted the report to the Government on 21 May 2007.
Initially, the commission was entrusted with the following terms of reference:

(a) To suggest criteria for identification of socially and economically backward sections among religious and linguistic minorities; (b) To recommend measures for welfare of socially and economically backward sections among religious and linguistic minorities, including reservation in education and government employment; and (c) To suggest the necessary constitutional, legal and administrative modalities required for the implementation of its recommendations.

After nearly five months of its work the Commission’s Terms of Reference were modified so as to add the following to its original Terms of Reference: (d) To give its recommendations on the issues raised in WPs 180/04 and 94/05 filed in the Supreme Court of India and in certain High Courts relating to para 3 of the Constitution (Scheduled Castes) Order 1950 in the context of ceiling of 50 percent on reservations as also the modalities of inclusion in the list of Scheduled Castes.

Ranganath Mishra Commission recommended that (a) 10% quotas for Muslims and 5% for other minorities in government jobs and seats in educational institutions, (b) reserves 8.4% out of existing OBC quota of 27% for minorities, (c) SC reservation to Dalit converts.

**Review of Sachar Committee Report:**

A high level committee was constituted by the Prime Minister to prepare a report on the social, economic and educational status of the Muslim community of India under a notification (No. 850/3/C/05-Pol. Dated 9th March, 2005). This committee was headed by Justice Rajinder Sachar, retired Chief Justice of Delhi High Court. There are seven members of this committee, but no woman member of the committee.

This committee collected data from the various censuses, the National Sample Survey Organisation (NSSO), banks, various departments and agencies, of the Central and State Govt., surveying literature, research papers on related issues. The Sachar Committee has compiled data from a number of sources. The report frames these issues as related to identity, security and equity. The final report was submitted to the Prime Minister on 17th Nov., 2006 and the report was tabled in Parliament on 30th

Some issues which have been revealed by the committee presents a dismal picture in regard to varied educational achievement of Muslims in rural and urban areas, education of girls, role of madrasas in the life of Muslims, cow enrolment rate and poor performance of Muslims. The report comments that since independence the expansion of educational opportunities has not led to a convergence of girls in higher than boys in undergraduate course. But at the level of post graduate, the proportion falls except in Humanities stream. The problem of unemployment and economic backwardness is acute in the Muslim community.

In the field of literacy the Committee found that the rate among Muslims was far below the national average. The gap between Muslims and the general average is greater in urban areas and women. 25 per cent of Muslim children in the 6-14 year age group have either never attended school or have dropped out. Expansion of educational opportunities since Independence has not led to a convergence of attainment levels between Muslims and all others. Drop out rates among Muslims are higher at the level of primary, middle and higher secondary. The Committee observed that since artisanship is a dominant activity among Muslims technical training should be provided to even those who may not have completed schooling. The disparity in graduation attainment rates is widening since 1970s between Muslims and all other categories in both urban and rural areas. In premier colleges only one out of 25 undergraduate students and one out of 50 post-graduate students is a Muslim. Unemployment rate among Muslim graduates is the highest among all socio-religious communities. Only 3% of Muslim children among the school going age go to Madarsas. There is dearth of facilities for teaching Urdu. Lower enrolment in Urdu medium schools is due to limited availability of such schools at the elementary level. There were no detailed picture regards the female educational status.

The Committee found that Muslim parents are not averse to mainstream education or to send their children to affordable Government schools. But the access to government schools for Muslim children is limited. There is non-availability of schools within easy reach for girls at lower levels. Absence of girls hostels and female teachers are also impeding factors. The changes in the educational patterns across the
various religious groups and communities suggests that the schedule castes and 
schedule tribes have definitely reaped the advantages of targeted government and 
private action supporting their educational progress. This reflects the importance of 
affirmative action. The sharper focus on school education combined with more 
opportunities in higher education for Muslims seems desirable. Moreover, skill 
development initiatives for those who have not completed school education may also 
be particularly relevant for some sections of Muslims given their occupational 
structure.

There is a clear and significant inverse association between the proportion of 
the Muslim population and the availability of educational infrastructure in small 
villages. Muslim concentration villages are not well served with pucca approach roads 
and local bus stops. The concentration of Muslims in states lacking infrastructural 
facilities implies that a large proportion of the community is without access to basic 
services. In both urban and rural areas, the proportion of Muslim households living in 
pucca houses is lower than the total population. Compared to the Muslim majority 
areas, the areas inhabiting fewer Muslims had better roads, sewage and drainage and 
water supply facilities.

The committee gave a statistics of employment position of Muslim. He 
presence of Muslims has been found to be only 3% in the IAS, 1.8% in the IFS and  
4% in the IPS. The share of Muslims in employment in various departments is 
abysmally low at all levels. Muslim community has a representation of only 4.5% in 
Indian Railways while 98.7% of them are positioned at lower levels. Representation of 
Muslims is very low in the universities and in banks. In no state does the 
representation of Muslims in the government departments match their population 
share. Their share in police constables is only 6%, in health 4.4%, in transport 6.5%. 
There is need to ensure a significant presence of Muslims especially in those 
departments that have mass contact on a day to day basis or are involved in sensitive 
tasks. Targeted programmes are required to be put in place. The coverage of Muslims 
in ICDS programme is poor in most states. For the Maulana Azad Education 
Foundation to be effective the corpus fund needs to be increased to 1000 crores. Total 
allocation in the four years 2002 to 2006 for Madarsa Modernization Scheme is 106
crores. The information regarding the scheme has not adequately percolated down. Even if the share of Muslims in elected bodies is low they and other under represented segments can be involved in the decision making process through innovative mechanisms.

The committee noted that the public opinion in India was divided on reservation. Some argued that policies that promote equality must aim at a substantive equal outcome, not merely formal equal or identical treatment. Reservations or a separate quota for Muslims in employment and educational institutions was viewed as a means to achieve this. Others felt that reservations could become a thorny issue and have negative repercussions. Still others argued that good educational facilities combined with non-discriminatory practices are adequate for Muslims to compete. Those who argued for reservation policies often differed on who should be their beneficiary. Some argued that this facility should only be available to ‘dalit’ Muslims, while others suggested that the entire Community should benefit from it. For some an economic criterion was an ideal basis for reservations. They felt that this would fail to address the problem arising out of social discrimination. There were voices that questioned the non-availability of the Schedule Caste quota for Muslims while it was available to the followers of three religions.

2.5 Observation of Researcher:

Women play a vital role in family and in society also. It is also true in case of Muslim women. But the above mentioned reviewed literature show the miserable condition of Muslim women in society, economy, education, health etc.

The above review of literature is divided into three main sections:

Firstly, there was a general discussion of education of Muslim women which is very important of our society.

Secondly, role of religion in case of empowerment of women. Religious institution is played a definite role in connection with education.

Thirdly, section explain the education of Muslim women and its impact on empowerment.

Many of the writings emphasised that among the minorities, Muslim women
need special attention as compared to other minorities as they have remained socially, economically, educationally backward. Educational backwardness is one of the main causes for real and perceived alienation of Muslim women.

Prof. Amartya Sen said that the empowerment of women is one of the main issues of development and one of the factors involved in women’s education. For an educationally backward community that the Muslim are, the question of women’s education is even more contemporaneous and pressing.

Some of the books and articles dealt with the contradictory trends and development of Muslim women. In the field of education, Islam neither confined nor restricted its space to a particular gender, but in reality it is not so easy. Conservative male leaders of Muslim societies use the concept to legitimise their efforts to control women and protect their patriarchal and political privileges.

Some of the point raised by the authors that one of the reasons of the slow progress of Muslim girls is the lack of facilities for segregated female school and colleges within a reasonable distance. But most important reason is the ignorance of the parents. The parents feel educating a girl is wasting time and money as she would eventually get married and her education would benefit other people, i.e. the husband. They do not comprehend that she might need the education for their future. Many of them prefer to educate boys as they expect some support by their sons in their old age. Others just presume boys are more capable than girls when it comes to using their intellectual capabilities, even though this has been proved wrong in many cases.

The role of women in Islam has been misunderstood due to general ignorance of the true Islamic system, the Islamic way of life is distorted by the media. Many writer expressed that the need of the hour is to come together to find a new approach which will overcome the shortcoming and limitations of the situation. The rights of Muslim women is described by the Islamic law, but due to lack of education or ignorance they can not realise or enjoy their full opportunities.

Women empowerment is a dynamic process that consists of an awareness – attainment – actualization cycle. Empowerment of women would mean equipping women to be economically independent and personally self-reliant, with a positive self-esteem to enable them to face any difficult situation. Moreover, they should be
able to contribute to the development activities of the country.

Education is one factor that plays the most crucial role in empowering women keeping this view the Central Govt. and State Govt. introduced various schemes regarding the education and empowerment of Muslim women. The main objective of this schemes is to promote education among Muslim girls by generating awareness within the community, creating favourable conditions for Muslim girls’ education and acting as a facilitator that develops a system of networking among various educational institutions and agencies working in this domain.

The analysis of existing literatures on the topic of ‘Education and Empowerment of Muslim Women’ shows that such studies is given their emphasis on India and Muslim based country. But there is very little studies regarding Muslim women education and empowerment in West Bengal. The Government of India had ushered in the new millennium by declaring the year 2001 as ‘Women’s Empowerment Year’ to focus on a vision “where women are equal partners like men”. The rate of literacy of Muslim women is very low and religious conservation is high. The present study attempts to highlight on education and empowerment of Muslim women in West Bengal.