CHAPTER 2
REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The existing literature on Muslim social, economic, health and educational issues is also fairly limited in terms of scope as well as quality. Available literature on Muslims has been classified as follows:

2.1: Social Deprivation and Muslims
2.2: Economic Deprivation and Muslims
2.3: Educational Deprivation and Muslims
2.4: Health Deprivation and Muslims

2.1: Social Deprivation and Muslims

In his article ‘Identity and Social Exclusion-Inclusion: A Muslim Perspective’, Asghar Ali Engineer, had pointed out the problems associated with minority communities especially Muslims. He stated that in multi-religious, multi-cultural democracies problem of identity and social exclusion-inclusion become extremely important. Under authoritarian societies due to suppression problem of exclusion remains hidden and does not surface until it is gravely aggravated. But a democratic society, being open and based on rights, question of identity and social exclusion and inclusion becomes very important and even determines its very dynamics. A vibrant democratic society always remains sensitive to the question of exclusion of any section of society.

Several factors play their role for social exclusion. A caste hierarchy can account for neglect of those at the bottom; a class society may ignore those who belong to lower classes. A multi-religious society may work against those belonging
to religious minorities and multi-ethnic or multi-cultural societies may marginalize ethnicities which do not constitute core culture or ethnicity. He argued that, in India Christians are a small minority whereas Muslims are a very large minority and hence their exclusion from social, cultural, economic and political processes poses much greater problems. Muslims were very backward, falling behind Dalits, who at least benefited to some extent from reservation policy; Muslims could not even avail of reservation. They did avail of reservation in educational institution in some southern states like Tamil Nadu, Kerala and Karnataka and that is why educational status of Muslims in these states is far better than that of Muslims in north.

He has further argued that, it is because of this exclusion of certain castes and communities that identity becomes such an important player in democratic politics. Identities can play constructive and creative as well destructive role in democratic society (Engineer 2007).

In this paper Malika B. Mistry (2005) presents a demographic and socio-economic profile of the Muslims in India, who form the largest minority in the country. At 120 million strong, Muslims constitute 12% of the population of India. Malika tracing the origin and ethnicity of Muslims in India, the findings suggest that most Indian Muslims are ethnically Indian since they are the descendents of the early converts to Islam. Many Indians who belonged to the lower castes embraced Islam for its egalitarianism which was practiced by the local Sufi saints. The paper provides a demographic history of Indian Muslims, including the growth and distribution of the Muslim population across Indian states over the past century. Comparative fertility and mortality rates are presented for various religious communities to explain the differential growth of the Muslim population. The relative backwardness of the Muslim community, and particularly of Muslim women, is noted as a factor in the
comparatively high fertility rates observed among the Muslim population. The paper also reviews the contribution of Muslims to the politics, arts and culture of India, and then goes on to examine the problem of communalism and communal violence that has characterized the Indian political scene. The paper concludes with arguments in favour of ensuring justice and human rights for Muslims, emphasizing the importance of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and the positive role they could play in enhancing the condition of the Muslim community in India (Mistry 2005: 399-422).

Rajeev Bhargava divided this Paper into three sections. In the first section he provides a brief historical overview of Hindu-Muslim relations in India and of the condition of Indian Muslims today. He concludes by claiming that Indian Muslims are marginalized minorities who have been persistently underrepresented in political institutions, particularly in the Indian Parliament. This section is important for those who are less informed about these issues—and he assumes that most readers fall in this category. In the second section, he examines the case for political representation for Muslims. This was a much debated issue in pre-independent India. It was debated with subtlety and in considerable detail in the Constituent Assembly debates on the Indian constitution. However, with the partition of the country and the formation of the separate state of Pakistan, all debate on the political representation of Muslims ceased. He examines the merits and demerits of the case for the political representation of Indian Muslims. He also attempts a brief explanation of why this issue has virtually disappeared from the public arena in India. He concludes in the section that although political representation of Muslims qua Muslims is desirable, it is still unfeasible in the prevailing situation in India. In other words, he would support the recommendation to the Indian State that political rights not to be granted to any religious community. If political theory was to remain a handmaiden of state policy,
then the matter ends right here. However, since he believe that political theory must think for the long run and design just institutions and policies for the future, and since, there is, he claim, no principled objection to the political representation of Muslims, in the third and final section he briefly outline which of the several electoral mechanisms are best suited to ensure fair political representation for Muslims in the future. Bhargava vision is that, the principle of fair political representation for Indian Muslims is best fulfilled by a complex mechanism consisting of preferential voting in multi-member constituencies with intra-party quotas in proportion to the overall population of Muslims in the country (Bhargava 2007).

In his paper ‘Indian Muslims: Political Leadership and Ideology’, Irfan Engineer said that Islam has been a significant presence in India for longer than a millennium. According to the latest census, carried out in 2001, Muslims were the largest minority in India: 13.4% of the population and numbering close to 140 million. It is estimated that there are now 150 million Muslims in India. Muslim populations are significant in almost all geographical quarters, in many rural areas, and in all the principal metropolitan areas of India, including all the principal locations of rapid economic growth. However, Muslims in India wonder about their future role and security in the Indian culture and polity. Their detractors raise pointed questions about their loyalty and the authentically Indian character of Indian Islam. Secular Indians of all religious identities worry about the future of Indian secularism, multiculturalism, and tolerance (Engineer 2008: 93-113).

Mondal (2000) in his paper ‘Muslim Population in India: Some Demographic and Socio-economic Features’, illustrated that India is a multi-ethnic, multi-cultural and multi-linguistic country. People belonging to many religious faiths live side by side. Muslims are one of them who constitute the largest minority of the country. This
paper attempts to present a demographic and socio-economic profile of the Muslims in India. Islam entered India in the 7th century A.D. It is difficult to find out the exact date of growth of Muslim population before beginning of the census operation in 1881. He advocated three major factors, i.e., immigration of Muslims from other countries, conversion of people belonging to other religious groups into the fold of Islam and finally the natural increase of this population have contributed to their growth. India is now having second largest Muslim population in the world. The social structure of the Indian Muslims reveals that only a small section of the present day Muslims are the descendants of their earlier immigrants, while majority of their population are descendants of local converts or tile mixture of both the groups (Mondal 2000: 91-107).

Engineer (1985) in the ‘Indian Muslims’ highlighted that Muslims’ problem began with the post-mutiny period by the British with the projection of ruling class conflicts as the masses conflicts, which brought about sharp differences and discrimination between the two major communities of India that is Hindus and Muslim. The Muslim leadership is also responsible for the problem of Muslims in the country (Engineer 1985).

Waheed (2000) made a study on Muslim ‘Banjaras’ in Baheri town. He explored the socio-historical heritage of Muslim Banjaras. He tried to establish a reciprocal connection between social structure and their economy. He also emphasized that social structure is not a ‘thing’ but a ‘process’ and social structure and economy are the dynamic entity. He used the case study method. Cases were constructed either with the help of life history documents or by making genealogical charts, personal interviewees, sharing experiences with individuals of the community. Systematic random sampling method has been used. About 5% samples
were taken through interview schedule. He found that most of the Banjaras were illiterate. Marriage was thought to be most essential for each and every individual. They were suppliers and traders of food grains, over all social structure remained the same among the Banjaras. Economic changes brought about transformation in many of their social practices and institutions. Out of 109 households 50 household were found complex and joint family, which is still considered most ideal and feasible for business growth. Economic changes led to acquire modern education (Waheed 2000).

2.2: Economic Deprivation and Muslims

Omar Khalidi’s book titled Muslims in the Indian Economy (2006), providing statistics to back his point, Khalidi argues that while in recent years a few Muslims have undoubtedly witnessed some degree of improvement in their economic conditions, the majority of Muslims still remain mired in poverty. In fact, many Muslims have also witnessed deterioration in their living conditions.

Given the fact that bureaucrats charged with the responsibility of administering various governmental development schemes exercise a powerful influence at both the policy-making as well as implementation level, it is crucial Khalidi suggests examining the number of Muslim government servants in key posts. Since bureaucratic indifference or hostility to Muslims is a key factor in explaining Muslim ‘backwardness’ and the low levels of government spending and investment in Muslim localities, it appears that a greater representation of Muslims in the government bureaucracy will help address the problem of Muslim marginalization. Yet, as Khalidi points out, Muslims are far from being adequately or proportionately represented in the government jobs at all levels, even in lower paid or junior posts that do not require high educational qualifications.
Khalidi offers various reasons for the low level of Muslim representation in the civil services. These include the migration in the wake of the Partition in 1947, of a substantial number of middle-class Muslims to Pakistan, pervasive anti-Muslim discrimination as well as relative educational backwardness of Muslims. Discrimination against Muslims does not take place in theory, but there are subtle processes at work, a form of informal discrimination, that results in relatively a few Muslims being taken into the government services at various levels.

Muslims are associated with a number of handicrafts and related trades. Yet, they tend to be employed as workers, while the retailers and exporters belong to other communities. Khalidi provides the following statistics, quoting from a 1991 survey, that provide information about Muslim employment in various handicrafts in the state of Uttar Pradesh: art metal ware (76%), zari, gold thread / brocade and zari goods (89%), embroidery (87.5%), cotton rugs (67%), wood wares (72%). In several other states too Muslims are engaged in similar craftsmen activities. Yet, the state appears to have done little to help the Muslim artisan families and communities. There is a desperate need, therefore, for more active state intervention and help so that the economic conditions of these communities can be improved and the educational problems of their children addressed (Khalidi 2006).

Safdar Imam in his article ‘The Untold Story of Meershikar Community’ talks about as the Meershikar community; this community is perhaps condemned to die unnoticed. Meershikar means ‘the chief of the hunters’. Meershikars relate themselves with Bairam Khan, the Mughal army head. Their traditional profession has come to an end when in post-independent India; the government banned the buying, selling and hunting of birds and animals. According to Imam this community is a victim of continuous social, economic and cultural deprivation. According to him by this date,
Meershikar is on the margin of the social map of the Muslim community. Finally, in this paper Imam concludes by saying that how this community is struggling for survival and various kinds of crisis they undergo amidst the dual pressure of the state and community (Imam 2007: 132-139).

Neera Burra’s book entitled Born to Work: Child Labour in India (1995) is based on first hand field investigations into the employment of child labour in five industries: Brassware, Gem polishing, Lock making, Pottery, and Glass manufacturing. Burra argues that child labour was to be found mainly in industry that was heavily dependent on traditional skills. Traditional occupation passes on from father to son, generation after generation, and if child labour was banned, the craft industry would die out. In most of the industries she studied, child labour was rampant even as adult employment was high. She has pointed out, employers prefer child labour because it is cheap than adult labour and because children, unlike adults cannot question the treatment meted out to them. Evidence indicates that the child’s wage in any industry is a third to half of that of an adult for the same output, with the child working for as many, if not more hours than the adult. Neera Burra documents the hazards that these children face and argues that working from a young age leads to a shortened working life.

Burra has pointed out that full time work of children seriously jeopardized the chances of a child getting education. Evidence from the field suggested that even poor parents had a deep interest in educating their children. Education alone can provide mobility to the socially and economically disadvantaged sections. In all the industries that she studied, it was clear that the children of the master craftsman and the better-off artisans went to school regularly and spent perhaps a couple of hours a day learning the trade. It was the children of the lowest level of workers, the
underemployed or the unemployed, who did not attend school and constituted the bulk of the child labour force. By and large, such children belonged to the scheduled castes, lower castes, or the Muslim community. These groups represented a combination of economic and social disadvantages.

In addition, she examines the strategy of different groups who have successfully worked against child labour. She argues that child labour can only be reduced when civil society and the state work together to get children out of work and into school (Burra 1995).

Abusaleh Shariff, in his paper titled ‘Relative Economic and Social Deprivation of Indian Muslims’ argue that Muslims are about as organised as are the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. Some 50% of the Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe population are below the poverty line. The corresponding figure for the Muslims is 43%, while that for Hindus excluding the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes is 32%. On an average, the per capita income of Muslims is 11% less than that of the national average. While one-fifth of Hindus living in rural areas own five acres of land or more, the corresponding figure for rural Muslims is one-tenth. The work participation rate among the Muslims is also the least, both for males and females, suggesting a relatively higher unemployment rate as compared to other communities defined by religion. Access to selected basic needs for Muslims as well as Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes is also below the national average.

The Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes are the least literate communities in India, Shariff states, followed by the Muslims. Only about 40% of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes and 50% of Muslims are literate, compared to the all-India average of about 54%. The corresponding figure for the Hindus, excluding the SC and the ST is 60%. School enrolment rates among the Muslims, SC
and ST are around 62%, as compared with about 72% of India as a whole and 77% for Hindus other than SC and ST (Shariff 1998: 16-34).

Neera Burra has studied the Lock industry of Aligarh and estimated that nearly 7,000 to 10,000 children below the age of 14 years work in this industry for more than 12 hours, inhaling metal dust and emery powder and earn only Rs.5-10 per day. These children generally work on hand processes, electroplating, polishing pieces on buffing machines, in spray painting units, and in the assembling and packing of locks. All these processes are dangerous and hazardous. Children often met with accidents and lose their hands and fingers in hand processes. Inhalation of chemical fumes in buffing and polishing process also affects badly the health of these child workers. The lock industry is generally based on cottage centers situated in homes where there is no check on working conditions, hours of work or wages. Children generally work till late night. The wages are uniform and the payment is made on piece rate basis. Generally children earn Rs.15 a day in polishing for 12-15 hours a day. According to workers a child earns on an average Rs.50 a month after an initial period of apprenticeship. After a few years he starts earning Rs.125-150 per month for 9 hours work a day. There were no medical facilities provided to these children (Burra 1987: 1117-1121).

M. Akbar (1990) in his study of ‘Entrepreneurship among Muslims of Moradabad’ found that the Muslim entrepreneurs were very recently predominated in brass industry. Presently, Muslim artisans and trading groups started emerging as entrepreneurs and exporters. Through the mobility of artisans and small entrepreneurs is not considerable due to lack of savings and reinvestment among them, yet some of them have became exporters. Majority of the Muslim entrepreneurs belong to three social groups, i.e. Ansaris, Saifs and Pathan. The former two are occupational groups
whereas the later one belongs to the Muslim upper class. Among Muslims Shamsi is the predominant and traditional trading bradari (sub-group) they represent less than 3% of the total Muslim population in the town, yet most of them are either exporters by themselves or employ their own bradari (sub-group) persons in their business units. They are the most important single community in the town having largest assets and turnover in the brass industry (Akbar 1990).

Rammanohar Reddy (2003) found that the Muslims are more deprived than Hindus. He cited the NSSO Report, Which is based on a survey in 1999-2000 to portrait that the Muslims suffer greater economic deprivation than Hindus in India, especially in urban India (www.countercurrents.org/comm_reddy_070803.htm).

Sabiha Hussain (1990) in his work on ‘Modernisation among Muslim Women in India: A Case Study of Darbhanga Town in North Bihar’ indicates that Muslims rank among the most marginalized communities in the state. Hussain attributes this, in large measure, to the pre-conversion caste/class background of the vast majority of non-ashraf Muslims in the state, being mainly converts from the so-called ‘low’ caste Hindus. She also sees pre-Islamic customs, conservative interpretations of Islam and various economic and political factors as contributing to Muslim marginalization. Hussain writes that in the wake of the Partition of India many ashraf elites from Bihar migrated to Pakistan. Hence, the Muslim middle-class, which could have played a key role in promoting education in the community, was greatly reduced.

Turning to modern education among Muslim girls in Darbhanga town, Hussain notes that there is growing enthusiasm for such education, particularly among the economically more prosperous families. For such families, modern education for girls is seen in consonance with their understanding of Islam, enabling girls to be better Muslims and to distinguish between ‘right’ and ‘wrong’. Support for girls’
higher education is more evident among the younger generation respondents, an increasing number of whom see such education not only as important for girls to be better housewives but also to enable them to be economically empowered by taking up employment outside the home, usually as teachers.

Despite this growing enthusiasm for girls’ higher education among the Muslims of Darbhanga, the study notes an alarmingly high drop-out rate of girls after secondary school. This is due to several factors, including poverty, lack of separate girls’ schools, early marriage and community disapproval. Another major difficulty is the problem of finding appropriate husbands for highly educated Muslim girls. This is because relatively a few Muslim boys go in for higher education because of poverty and the perception of discrimination in government employment, forcing many Muslim boys to discontinue their education and take to some sort of private employment or self-employment in order to augment the family’s meager earnings. Considerable opposition to co-education, fearing this might lead girls astray, force many families to withdraw their girls from education after completing high school. To add to this is the fear of girls’ safety, especially if colleges are located far from their homes. Only 12.5% of the respondents interviewed in this study are not opposed to their daughters studying in co-educational institutions (Hussain 1990).

2.3: Educational Deprivation and Muslims

In ‘The state of the world’s children’, UNICEF stated that education is considering the single most vital element in combating poverty, empowering women, promoting human rights and democracy, protecting the environment, controlling population growth as well as safeguarding children from exploitative and hazardous labour and sexual exploitation. Reviews the historical context in which the right to
education has been repeatedly affirmed and identifies the elements necessary to the success of educational policies. It demonstrates that education is a multilinked variable in a country’s statistical profile, and presents basic indicators for 193 countries, including nutritional status, health status, educational levels, demographic, economic indicators, the status of women and the rate of progress on major indicators since 1960. It includes example of initiatives that meet the children’s right to education at the international, regional, national and local levels (UNICEF 1999: 131).

Mondal (1997) did a masterly exposition of the state of education among the Muslims of Bengal. The work is based on the extensive empirical study of education among Muslims of six villages in three different eco-cultural zones of West Bengal. Particular emphasis is given to education and problems of drop out, women education, religious education and constraints of educational growth (Mondal 1997).

Mushirul Hasan (2003) said that educational backwardness among the Muslims is the product of poverty and neglect by the state. Due to structural location in the economy and the perception of discrimination few Muslims can afford or aspire for the higher education. He stresses the need for affirmative action (Hasan 2003).

Begum (1998) has paying attention on rural Bengali Muslim attitudes to Muslim women’s education. Muslims account for more than 20% of the population of West Bengal and along with the Scheduled Castes they are the least educated community in the state. In 1991, the she writes, only 25.9% of the Bengali-speaking Muslims of the state were literate, while the state literacy rate was 47.15%. The literacy rate of Muslim women is awfully low, owing, among other factors, to widespread poverty, the practice of women’s seclusion and negative attitude towards their education.
Begum has observed Muslim girls’ education in two villages in the state, one in the Burdwan district and the other in the Howrah district. Many women in the villages who are officially described as ‘literate’ actually only know how to write their names. Some of them had been to primary school, but very few had gone on to secondary school and beyond. Muslim villagers generally perceive that modern education for girls’ is not an economic asset, since they believe that the proper place for women is the home. The lack of all-girls’ schools and the poor quality of teaching and infrastructural facilities in state schools are also major factors for the distinct lack of enthusiasm for girls’ education.

The drop-out rate of Muslim girls from primary schools onwards is very high as after a certain age, girls are withdrawn by their parents from the schools to help in the household tasks. Yet, she notes, a growing number of young Muslims, males as well as females, feel that girls’ education is important for the overall development of the community. The enthusiasm for modern education for girls is more evident among the economically better-off families, several of whom send their own daughters to school. If the state or Muslim organizations were to establish separate girls’ schools, the author believes, many more Muslim families would be willing to educate their daughters.

On the other hand, the study finds that many Muslim families are in favour of religious education for girls. In the maktabs in the two villages a large proportion of the students are girls. More than 60% of the women in the villages had received or were receiving some sort of religious education from such institutions. Generally, this consists of basic Islamic knowledge, including the rules of prayer, ablutions and various supplications. Only 16% of these females could, however, read the Qur’an. Since the maktabs attract a sizeable number of Muslim girls, they could be
encouraged to include basic secular subjects as well. Finally, Begum suggests the need for reforms in the management of the *maktabs*, given that, as she says, attendance is very irregular and that they have a high drop-out rate, owing partly to the fact that education imparted therein is in Arabic and not in Bengali, the mother tongue of the villagers (Begum 1998).

Zoya Hasan and Ritu Menon (2005) look at the condition of Muslim women’s education in five cities in India: Delhi, Aligarh, Hyderabad, Kolkata and Calicut (Kozhikode). They argue that given the poor condition of Muslim women’s education there is a special need for the state to take a pro-active role in this regard in order to promote social justice and empowerment of Muslim women and to remove the barriers that systematically reinforce their marginalization. Quoting their own study (2001), conducted in 42 districts of India they argue that over 75% of Muslim women are illiterate. The situation in the northern states, especially in rural areas, is said to be particularly dismal. In rural North India 85% Muslim women are said to be illiterate. On the other hand, the situation in the south, especially in urban areas, was found to be considerably better, with 88% urban South Indian women said to be literate.

In India as a whole, the authors reveal, Muslim girls’ school enrolment rates continue to be low: 40.6%, as compared to 63.2% in the case of ‘upper’ caste Hindus. In rural north India it is only 13.5%, in urban north India 23.1%, and in rural and urban south India, above 70%, which is above the all-India average for all girls. Only 16.1% of Muslim girls from poor families attend schools, while 70% of Muslim girls from economically better-off families do so, thus clearly suggesting that low levels of education of Muslim girls owes not to religion but to poverty. As many as 98% of Muslim girls are said to study in government or private schools and only 2% in *Madaris*, the majority being from poor families. Less than 17% of Muslim girls finish
eight years of schooling and less than 10% complete higher secondary education. In
the north the corresponding figures are 4.5% and 4.75% respectively, compared to the
national female average of 17.8% and 11.4% respectively. Only 1.5% rural Muslims,
both boys and girls, and 4.8% urban Muslim children are enrolled in senior secondary
schools. The average number of years that Muslim girls study is a dismal 2.7 years, as
compared to 3.8 years in the case of Hindu girls. The number of years that a Muslim
girl studies in North India is half that of her South Indian counterpart. In other words,
on the whole, Muslim girls are characterized by a very high drop-out rate from the
formal schooling system. Today, the authors argue, there is a growing enthusiasm
among many Muslims for educating their daughters, although this is hindered by
growing anxiety to preserve their cultural identity in the face of the Hindutva
onslaught and what the authors term as a ‘widely-shared lack of confidence in being
employed by the government’.

In Delhi, the authors note a growing enthusiasm for modern education among
many Muslim families, although this is generally thwarted by widespread poverty and
the fear that well-educated girls might find it difficult to find suitable husbands
because of the relative paucity of well-educated Muslim men. Another hurdle is the
desperate shortage of Urdu schools, which many parents would prefer to send their
girls to. There are only 15 Urdu-medium government primary schools in the city, and
when students pass out from these schools they are faced with either being forced to
enroll in Hindi-medium secondary schools or drop-out from the formal schooling
system. The Delhi Government has not appointed a single Urdu teacher in over a
decade, indicating its lack of interest in promoting Muslim education. There is only
one government Urdu-medium primary school in New Delhi, although a large number
of Muslims live in this part of the state as well. On the whole, Urdu schools in the
state suffer from shortage of funds, trained teachers, textbooks and inadequate infrastructure.

In Hyderabad, where Muslims form almost 40% of the population, the study found that 84% of Muslim women are illiterate. However, a growing number of girls from economically better-off families are now enrolling in English-medium schools and in colleges. Girls’ education has witnessed a considerable degree of progress in recent years due to economic prosperity among some Muslim families because of remittances from relatives working in the Gulf, reservation for girls and for Muslims in professional colleges and government jobs, state aid to Urdu schools, and recognition of Urdu as the second official language of the state of Andhra Pradesh. A similar enthusiasm among some Muslims for girls’ education was noted by the author in Calicut and Aligarh, although, for the same economic and social reasons mentioned above, the Muslim girls’ continue to be characterized by a high drop-out rate from schools. In addition, it was also found that in recent years a number of Muslim-managed girls’ schools that impart both modern as well as religious education have been set up, which make them more culturally relevant and acceptable to many Muslim families (Hasan & Menon: 2005).

Rafiq Zakaria (1995) in The Widening Divide: An Insight into Hindu-Muslim Relations argues that the educational ‘backwardness’ of the community owes as much to the community itself as to the State. He suggests that the community leaders have neither paid adequate attention to the educational problems of the community nor have they made significant efforts to mobilize resources to promote modern education at a mass level. For its part, the State, too, has made no attempt to address the problem of Muslim educational deprivation. To add to this, the economic condition of a large section of Muslims has been deteriorating over the years, principally because of the
government economic policies, the indifference of governments to Muslim concerns as well as the indifference of bureaucrats charged with the responsibility of administering various state-sponsored development schemes and the mounting power of fanatically anti-Muslim Hindu groups that are opposed to Muslim development which are forcing Muslims into ghettos. Quoting the Gopal Singh Committee Report on Muslims in India, Zakaria goes to suggest that the economic condition of the Indian Muslims today is worse than that of the Scheduled Castes.

This is evident by the fact that in 1980 the percentage of Muslims in the Indian Administrative Services had come down to 3.27%, while that of the Scheduled Castes had risen to 9.9%. In the Indian Police Service, Muslim representation was an abysmal 2.7%, while that of the Scheduled Castes was 9.8%. In the Indian Foreign Services the corresponding figures were 3.7% and 16.48% respectively. In the Central Subordinate Services, the Muslim ratio was only 1.56%, as compared to 13.1% in the case of the Scheduled Castes. In matters of placement, the figure for Muslims employed through employment exchanges came to 2%, while for Scheduled Castes it was 13.25%. In the states surveyed, of the total number of Muslims employed in the various departments of the government, the ratio came to 6.01%, as compared to 13.29% for the Scheduled Castes. In the private sector, including the two top business and industrial houses of the Tatas and Birlas, it was found that the Muslim employment came to 8.16%, while that of the Scheduled Castes it was 11.5%. In the executive cadre Muslims were only 1.5% while in the clerical class it was 8.28%.

Muslims, Zakaria argues, have also not been able to take advantage of various government schemes, particularly groups such as small farmers, marginal farmers, agricultural labourers, landless labourers, etc. This owes to discrimination and indifference on the part of planning and implementation authorities as well as lack of
awareness and knowledge of such schemes among the Muslims themselves. Consequently, the limited progress that some sections of Muslims have been able to make in recent years owes almost fully to their own efforts. Overall, Zakaria concludes, the economic condition of most Indian Muslims is unenviable, to say the least. Most of them eke out a hand-to-mouth existence either by way of self-employment in petty trade or by working in the unorganised sector. They are engaged mostly as construction labourers, rickshaw, taxi and truck drivers, handcart pullers, coolies, barbers, tailors, carpenters, pavement hawkers, or at best as mechanics, fitters, plumbers, electricians or welders (Zakaria 1995).

Siddiqui (2004) argues that in the aftermath of the partition, education among the Muslims suffered a tremendous set-back, with the dissolution of princely houses and feudal estates on which numerous Madaris had depended for patronage. To make matters worse were the discriminatory policies adopted by the state vis-à-vis the Urdu language. Siddiqui explains how Muslims have sought to maintain and promote the tradition of Islamic education in the face of tremendous challenges through novel experiments. For instance, in Uttar Pradesh, as a response to the marked Hinduisation of the government school syllabus and the numerous negative references to Islam and Muslim personages in government-prescribed textbooks, the Dini Ta’limi Council established a number of maktabs which combine religious and secular education as well as Urdu until the fifth grade and allow their students to join government schools thereafter.

Siddiqui observe the state’s discriminatory policies vis-à-vis the Urdu language as one of the major reasons for Muslim educational backwardness, particularly in North India. However, he argues, while Urdu is ‘an important element’ of Muslim identity, it is wrong to identify the language as ‘Muslim’ even though
today, for all practical purposes, non-Muslims have abandoned it, as a result of which the teaching of Urdu is today restricted largely to Madaris. This is one reason why many Muslim families prefer to send their children to Madaris instead of schools. In the Urdu ‘heartland’, Uttar Pradesh, Urdu today is languishing, dying a slow death, with hardly any Urdu medium state schools. This is a gross violation of the Constitutional right of Muslims to be taught in their own mother tongue. The situation is considerably better, however, Siddiqui points out in states beyond the Hindi-Urdu belt, such as Maharashtra, Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh, where state governments have funded several Urdu schools, although their standard is said to leave much to be desired.

Siddiqui provides detailed information on the failure of various government-funded schemes ostensibly meant for minority education as well as the routine harassment that Muslim educational institutions seeking recognition and grants-in-aid are subjected to in many states. Even schemes that were officially declared to be ‘successful’ were often a mere eye-wash. Thus, for instance, the Programme of Action 1992 claimed that all 41 districts in India with a high Muslim concentration had been covered under the community polytechnic scheme but in many districts it was found that Muslim student representation in these institutions was between 3 and 12%, which was much less than the Muslim proportion in the total population of the district. In several places it was also found that the polytechnics were located at a considerable distance from Muslim localities. Another scheme that was advertised as a ‘success story’ the setting up of resource centers in selected universities with a high Muslim presence soon turned defunct. Other schemes proved to be major flops. The scheme of providing Urdu teachers, Urdu textbooks and Urdu teachers’ training facilities, envisaged in the Revised Programme of Action, proved to be a non-starter.
A good indication of the indifference with which the government greeted the scheme, Siddiqui says, is the fact that in Uttar Pradesh, home to the largest Urdu-speaking population in the country, there is only one Junior Basic Training Institute for Urdu-medium primary school teachers. Likewise, the official three-language formula is far from adequately being followed in many states, with Urdu-speaking Muslim children being denied their right to learn the language in state schools (Siddiqui 2004).

Shah (1983) on efforts being made by Muslim organizations to promote Muslim education is based on a survey of 590 Muslim-managed schools and colleges in 16 states of India. The study states that 35% of the surveyed institutions are till class 10 and only 3.3% are till class 12. Some 47.5% of these institutions are co-educational, 33.2% for boys only and 19.8% for girls only. 95% of the principals are Muslims. 75.8% of them being males. Some 35% of the schools do not own the buildings in which they function; 89.3% have no hostel facilities, and most of those that do have very small hostels accommodating less than 30 students. Library facilities are, on the whole, inadequate. Very few of such institutions get funds from the Central Government, although 67% get some funds from the state governments. Fifty-seven percent have provision for religious education as well, 33.6% of the girl students studying in the surveyed institutions are at the primary level, 36.4% at the middle level, 23.9% at the high school level and only 6% at the higher secondary level. Generally, the performance of girls is better than that of boys.

Of the 70 Muslim-managed colleges surveyed in 13 states, it was found that very few had female principals. As many as 88% owned their own premises, and 43.2% had some hostel facilities and 32.1% of their students were Muslims, and Muslim girls accounted for 8.3% of the total students. The drop-out rate among Muslim students was considerably higher than among non-Muslims.
Shah concludes with suggestions for improving the performance of Muslim-managed educational institutions, including increased allocation of funds from the state Waqf Boards and the Muslim community for education, the setting up of teachers’ training schools, especially for Muslim women, reservation for Muslims in institutions of higher education, increase in the number of Urdu-medium schools, technical training institutes and students’ hostels in areas of Muslim concentration, better provision of Urdu textbooks, and expansion of scholarship schemes, including from zakat funds. The author suggests that the problem of such institutions should be highlighted in the press so that they receive greater attention, and warns that the ‘tendencies of withdrawal and attitudes of closed society should be avoided’ (Shah 1983).

Jameel Ur Rehman (1995) in his study examines a number of maktabs in the Walled City of Delhi, where he notes their poor infrastructural facilities, and the low pay that teachers receive, which is considerably less than the minimum statutory wage for unskilled workers. According to the study, both boys and girls study together in the maktabs, but the latter only till the age of puberty. In his conclusion, the author raises the possibility and stresses the desirability of certain ‘modern’ subjects as well as English being taught in the maktabs in order to help promote general education among Muslims (Rehman 1995).

Hafiz Abdul Mabood’s ‘A Study of Attitudes of Teachers and Parents of Azamgarh District Towards Muslim Girls’ Education’ (1993) is based on a sample of 70 Muslim teachers in government and government-aided schools and Madaris in the Azamgarh district in eastern Uttar Pradesh as well as parents of students studying in these institutions. The study notes that while male literacy is fairly high among the Muslims of Azamgarh, the female literacy rates are very low. The aim of the study is
to discover why this is so, focusing particularly on the attitudes towards Muslim women’s education.

Almost all the *madrasa* teachers surveyed believe in the importance of girls’ education but stressed that the ideal education that Muslim girls should receive is religious, plus a modicum of general subjects that can enable them to become good housewives and mothers. Eighty percent of them believe that as far as religious education is concerned, there should be no distinction between boys and girls. Some of them allow girls to study in schools, but stress that for these girls must study in all-girls schools and under female teachers and that they must discontinue their studies after the attainment of puberty. These schools should be located within the locality where the girls live.

All the school teachers stressed the importance of girls’ education. Eighty percent of them are in favour of both religious as well as secular education for Muslim girls and 70% of them are not opposed to co-education. In contrast to *madrasa* teachers, almost all of them believe that the observance of *pardah* is not an obstacle to girls’ education, and 70% of them are not opposed to girls attending school outside their locality.

Among the parents, the study found that 66.7% believe that secular education for girls is not forbidden in Islam. 83.3% support education for girls. But, only till the age of puberty. The study found that many parents were in favour of sending their girls to good schools but were unable to do so because of poverty and the lack of all-girls schools in the neighbourhood. This, and the desire on the part of most parents that their girls should have a basic grounding in Islamic learning, explains the high proportion of girls studying in *maktabs* in the district. Many parents would also support sending their girls to higher-level *Madaris* after they finish their basic Islamic
education in maktabs, but as the study notes, there are very few such institutions in the district, although there are numerous boys’ Madaris in Azamgarh. Some parents are also willing to send their girls to colleges outside their village but are unable to do so owing to the lack of proper girls’ hostels in the towns in the region where such colleges are located. Hence, the study concludes, there is an urgent need for establishing more residential girls’ Madaris that teach religious subjects as well as basic knowledge in various secular disciplines (Mabood 1993).

2.4: Health Deprivation and Muslims

The study on ‘Child Labour Aligarh Lock Industry’ by Baharul Islam Laskar (2000) reveals that household economic pressures compel children to enter into low wage, hazardous work environment, particularly Muslim children who are not able to manage job or livelihood elsewhere join degrading, sub-human task in the hazardous and low paying processes of lock making that proves detrimental to their educational and health prospects. Children suffer more in hazardous conditions, which obviously invites strong radical political interventions (Laskar 2000: 510-513).

In ‘Social exclusion, caste and health: A review based on the social determinants framework’ K. R. Nayar, (2007) stated that Poverty and social exclusion are important socio-economic variables which are often taken for granted while considering ill-health effects. Social exclusion mainly refers to the inability of our society to keep all groups and individuals within reach of what we expect as society to realize their full potential. Marginalization of certain groups or classes occurs in most societies including developed countries and perhaps it is more pronounced in underdeveloped countries. In the Indian context, Nayar argues that caste may be considered broadly as a proxy for socio-economic status and poverty. In the
identification of the poor, scheduled caste and scheduled tribes and in some cases the other backward castes are considered as socially disadvantaged groups and such groups have a higher probability of living under adverse conditions and poverty. The health status and utilization patterns of such groups give an indication of their social exclusion as well as an idea of the linkages between poverty and health. In this review, He examined broad linkages between castes and some select health / health utilization indicators and also examined data on prevalence of anaemia, treatment of diarrhoea, infant mortality rate, utilization of maternal health care and childhood vaccinations among different caste groups in India. The data based on the National Family Health Survey II (NFHS II) highlight considerable caste differentials in health.

Nayar pointed out that the linkages between caste and some health indicators show that poverty is a complex issue which needs to be addressed with a multi-dimensional paradigm. Minimizing the suffering from poverty and ill-health necessitates recognizing the complexity and adopting a perspective such as holistic epidemiology which can challenge pure techno centric approaches to achieve health status (Nayar 2007).