CHAPTER 5
CONCLUSION

It is evident from the previous chapters that in both industries (i.e. lock and lac) Muslims are relatively deprived and denied access to satisfy their basic needs in education, employment and health. They are facing various socio-economic problems because of lack of skills, resources, funds, illiteracy, exploitation, insecurity and health hazards pushing them towards social exclusion. To recapitulate the main objectives of the present study were as follows:

- Selected socio-economic indicators viz., family background, education, income, housing status, health and hygiene and political dimension of the respondents were to be assessed in Aligarh and Hyderabad.
- To explore the causes and consequences of socio-economic deprivation of Muslims in the lock and Lac industries.
- To examine, whether the Muslim children supplement to their family income?
- To assess how and why the Muslims in lock and lac industry were socially and economically deprived.

More than 90% of Indian Muslims are small and marginal farmers, artisans and workers. Arts and crafts developed, both as traditions and occupations, among Indian Muslims. Large number of natives embraced Islam in different circumstances and regions of the country. They were mostly people of artisans and service castes. As the conversion was collective, they retained their arts and crafts or occupations. Therefore innumerable groups of Muslims are artisans by traditions in different parts of the country. Until very recently arts and crafts related occupations were of Muslim bradaris (caste like groups) having low social status. Muslims of upper strata did not
engage in these occupations. For them these were menial occupations. But the socio-economic condition of Indian Muslim had changed drastically. As it has become very difficult for Muslims to make their career through education and white collar employment, Muslims of upper strata do not hesitate to adopt art and craft related occupations. In this way sizeable number of Muslims of rural and urban areas and of various states and ethnic groups, have become artisans and craftsmen in post independent India. Indeed, handicrafts and small scale industries have become a significant source of employment for Muslims. A sizeable section of Muslim population which comprises the predominant group amongst the minorities are good artisans and are involved in handloom and handicraft activities such as the lac bangle industry (Hyderabad), lock making industry (Aligarh), match and firework industry (Sivakasi), slate industry (Markapur), brassware industry (Moradabad), slate pencil (Mandsour), sports goods industry (Meerut), Gem polishing (Jaipur), Carpet industry (Kashmir, Bhadoi, Mirzapur), zari industry (Lucknow), beedi making (Trichur), diamond cutting (Surat), glass bangle industry (Firozabad), scissor and knife industry (Rampur), pottery industry (Khurja), silk industry (Banaras, Mau), wood carving and carpentry (Saharanpur) and so on. About 38% weavers of the country are Muslims. Handicrafts related occupations and industries began to grow within a decade after independence. Government of India, especially after Indo-China war, which made Indian state economically vulnerable, was forced to adopt measures to promote arts and handicrafts in order to generate employment and earn foreign exchange. The liberalized attitude of Indian government towards handicrafts and its demands both in domestic and international market dramatically boosted economic prospects of poor artisans. While quoting from Omar Khalidi (1995), Barbara Harris writes, the element that has given Muslims a distinctive role in the economy is the revival and expansion
of industries whose workforces require highly skilled craftsmen. Crafts skills are reproduced in the family of artisans which survived the decline in the 1950s and 60s of the princely patronage that had given them life. These families responded to the transformation of services and goods for a few patrons into the supply of commodities for national and international demand. As a result, many of the craft based industries have remained strikingly localized.

It is evident from the tables and case studies described in chapter 4 that due to globalization, the lock industry is undergoing change. Products based on new technology, which is capital-intensive in an organised sector (as opposed to labour-intensive in an unorganised sector) are flooded with products at very low cost than the traditional Aligarh products. Consequently, the lock industry workers are either getting low wages against their work or losing jobs due to stiff competition in the market. This kind of market regulation is adversely affecting the marginalized section of the society. The lock industry of Aligarh is under tremendous threat from the Chinese locks. Similarly, globalization has adversely impacted lac bangle industry. Earlier, gota (tiny semi-precious stone) used to import from Australia. In recent past, it is being substituted by Chinese import of gota which is cheaper than the Australian gota. However, Chinese gota is less durable, inferior in its finished product and based on the principle of use and throw. It has impacted in the earnings of bangle workers. As a result bangle workers livelihood has become more vulnerable than ever before. Artisans and small-scale entrepreneurs especially Muslims are not in a position to compete in the competitive market. The present state of the Muslim artisans and small-scale industry appear to be bleak and their future is uncertain. Many have discontinued sending their children to schools. On the contrary, they have started sending their children to work in the lock industry due to impoverishment and
poverty.

Ongoing trends of globalization and liberalization, the economic conditions of Muslims workers of lock industry of Aligarh and lac industry of Hyderabad are expected to worsen since only highly competitive and skilled individuals and industries are expected to survive in such an economy.

Some of the Muslims, of both lower and higher social strata, have become prosperous and entrepreneurs as a result of growth of small scale industries. But large number of Muslims artisans still produces goods for others. They are merely unorganised daily wagers and therefore, are always vulnerable to various forms of exploitations, to the vagaries of governmental policies and uncertainties of national and international markets. Those artisans which are not professionally skill do not have education and wealth is subjected to many socio-economic problems. Their conditions are far from satisfaction. Due to their poor financial status, they are not in a position to produce raw material and therefore they continued to be exploited by middlemen. Poor artisans are facing the problems of declining demand for their products because manufactured commodities of industry are cheap and refined as compare to goods produced by local artisans. Large number of artisans would like to employ their children and women in their own profession supplements their income and children are pathetic and they are not sufficiently paid for their work. They are also suffering from various diseases. Due to their poor economic conditions children are illiterate and their parents are forced to engage their children in lock and lac industries of Aligarh and Hyderabad respectively. Poor artisans are living in unhygienic place and they have no social security and status in the society.

The government has devised and implemented various policies and programmes for improving the socio-economic conditions of poor artisans. However,
implementation of these programmes are far from satisfaction. Economic and educational deprivations reduce the community’s ability to seek relief from government development schemes. Meanwhile, the younger generation of Muslim lock workers of Aligarh is facing more economic hardship than their counterparts in any other community. Indeed, they become the poorest of the poor, unsure of their future. Therefore, there is an urgent need for the socio-economic upliftment of Muslim lock workers. If adequate measures are not taken by the government to protect the interests of the Muslim lock and lac bangle workers especially in the unorganised sector, thousands of skilled and semi-skilled workers and small entrepreneurs will be reduced to the level of casual workers.

The study has revealed that the lock industry of Aligarh and lac industry of Hyderabad are custodians of a rich cultural heritage and offer solutions to problems like unemployment and forcing exchange crunch. But the condition of the large number of poor and illiterate artisans is pathetic. Benefits of development in handicrafts industry are not percolating down. It is not feasible without ameliorating conditions of poor artisans and providing financial and infrastructural facilities to them. It is difficult to sustain the growth of handicrafts industry in a globalised economy.

Findings showed that in both industries child labour is rampant. But the number of child labours is found higher in Hyderabad than Aligarh. In lac bangle industry (Charminar) mostly children are engaged in size banai and gota lagai that impacted on their eyes and back bone. In Aligarh majority of the children involve in hazardous work like lever chirai, bandhai and polishing. They also live in the most unhygienic condition which impacted on their respiratory functioning.

In Hyderabad female workers are higher than male workers but in Aligarh
male workers are higher than female workers. In Aligarh majority of the workers belongs to ajlaf caste but in Hyderabad majority of the workers belong to ashraf caste. In both the industries the married respondents are found higher than the unmarried respondents. Majority of the respondents reside in nuclear families as compared to joint families. The percentage of large family sized of Aligarh is greater as compare to Hyderabad. This may be because of illiteracy and poverty. In Aligarh, illiteracy is greater as compared to Hyderabad. In Aligarh post primary and primary level of education is lowest than Hyderabad. Monthly payment in Aligarh is in the household industry in the unorganized sector. But in Hyderabad monthly payment is of those workers who are engaged in gota lagai and gota banai work and most of them are daily wagers. Consequently, the former did not have to borrow money on loan for their daily expenditure. However, the latter had to borrow money from moneylenders and relatives. It has resulted into their perpetual indebtedness unlike the workers of Aligarh.

_Gota lagai and gota banai_ are hazardous process. It affects the artisans’ eye sight and generates chest related problems. Majority of the artisans are following non-traditional occupation. Subsistence of the respondents of Aligarh is higher than the respondents of Hyderabad because Hyderabad is a big city that is why the respondents have to spend more money on their daily essential necessities as compared to Aligarh. Hyderabad’s respondents are more in the household industry than Aligarh respondents. In Hyderabad, the respondents have cent percent electricity in their houses as compared to Aligarh. In Aligarh more than twenty percent of the respondents do not have electricity in their houses. It was observed that unauthorized electricity connection was glaring in Aligarh but in Hyderabad it was rare. The major
direction of migration is from the agricultural areas to the industry and the cause of migration is economic.

The organization of production of lock industry of Aligarh is more complex than the lac industry of Hyderabad. The later has only three processes, the former has many stages and processes depending on the type on the lock manufacturing. Seasons’ diseases and work related diseases are more in Hyderabad than Aligarh. In both industries child labour is rampant. In Aligarh majority of the children involve in lever chirai and polishing work that impact on their respiratory functioning. In Hyderabad mostly children are engaged in size banai and gota lagai that impact on their eyes. Lack of toilet facility is less in Hyderabad than Aligarh.

In both industries poor Muslim workers live in unhygienic conditions. The majority of the houses of workers in narrow lanes and sub lanes of congested localities, where sunlight is not available, houses have curtains made from taat (old jute sacks) often thatched roofs, and no fresh air. In the localities, women gather to collect water from public taps, there are a few shops selling basic goods. Their health condition is directly linked to poverty and the absence of basic services like clean drinking water and sanitation leading to malnutrition, anemia, a variety of diseases and poor life expectancy. Noise pollution is more in Hyderabad than Aligarh. In Hyderabad cleanliness in surroundings of respondents’ resident is more than the respondents of Aligarh. Aligarh has more water logging problem than Hyderabad. Aligarh respondents are more dissatisfied with political activists regarding developmental works. It can be concluded that the economic conditions of the Muslims in both industries is very pathetic. Economic provision and stability is the basic factor for all types of development and progress.

In view of the deprived socio-economic condition of Muslims and their
degenerating quality of life the following remedial and restorative measures both at the community level and state level may be suggested.

Most of the Muslim children and women are nearly the bonded labourers who are engaged in the skilled works for other entrepreneurs in their own houses. Labour reform schemes are urgently needed. Moreover, the financial assistance schemes for small household labourers can be introduced which could help to groom these labourers into small entrepreneurs. The inadequacy of schools is a major hurdle in Muslim children’s education. There could be policy provisions to promote the Muslim education and awareness. Ensuring that in its development schemes the state allocates resources to Muslims and Muslim-dominated localities on a scale proportionate to their population. Given the fact that Muslims are among the most marginalised communities living in the country, it is advisable that this allocation could be even higher than what is warranted by their numerical proportion. There should be proper mechanisms in place to ensure that this allocation is suitably made and implemented and in this there should be proper representation and participation of Muslims as well. Schemes for providing subsidies to artisans to enable them to upgrade production to the level of small scale industries should be worked out and implemented. Under these schemes tools, machine, raw materials etc. should be provided to them with some guidance in management. There is a pressing need to protect Muslim artisans and small scale industry from various challenges. Saving handicrafts industry from various onslaughts and economic upliftment of skilled artisans would ensure jobs to millions, prosperity of weaker sections and growth in national economy. In planning and implementing developmental schemes the participation of the local community, including Muslims and other marginalised groups, must be ensured. Preparing in-depth studies, rooted in rigorous empirical research, on various aspects related to
Muslims in contemporary India. There is a desperate shortage of such literature published by Muslim groups, the focus of whose literature still remains narrowly centred on religion and identity-related issues. Formation of non-governmental organisations and working with existing secular non-governmental organisations for mobilising community and other resources for economic and educational development and for accessing various government schemes may be worked out. Promotion of an alternative leadership, at the local, regional and national levels that takes up seriously issues of Muslim economic and educational marginalisation and makes them a central part of the agenda of the community as a whole.

It may be concluded that socio-economic deprivation of Muslims in lock and lac industries has been continuing. Due to globalization, their deprivation process has been further intensified. The concept of relative deprivation on the basis of religion provides plausible explanation for the socio-economic deprivation of Muslims in both the industries i.e. lock and lac in Aligarh and Hyderabad respectively. Corrective measures may be undertaken by the government before it is too late in turning these deprivations into a social movement.