ABSTRACT

The title of the thesis is ‘Socio-Economic Deprivation of Muslims in Lock and Lac Industries: A Comparative Study of Aligarh and Hyderabad’. The focus of the study is to examine dispossession and loss of downtrodden Muslim workers of Aligarh lock industry and Hyderabad lac industry respectively. Deprivation of Muslim workers have been examined in terms of (a) material deprivation, (b) Social deprivation, (c) multiple deprivation viz. low income, poor housing and unemployment. The present study is primarily based on field work carried out during April 2009 to March 2010 in Aligarh (U.P.) and Hyderabad (A.P.).

The objectives of this study are to explore the socio-economic deprivation of Muslims in Aligarh Lock Industry (Uttar Pradesh) and Hyderabad Lac Industry (Andhra Pradesh) within the framework of relative deprivation. Important issues in this study are as follows: (1) Selected socio-economic indicators viz., family background, education, income, housing status, health and hygiene and political dimension of the respondents are to be assessed in Aligarh and Hyderabad. (2) To explore the causes and consequences of socio-economic deprivation of Muslims in the lock and Lac industries. (3) To examine, whether the Muslim children supplement to their family income? (3) To assess how and why the Muslims in lock and lac industry are socially and economically deprived.

Researcher planned to collect data using schedule, case study and participant observation. The reason for choosing schedule is obvious. It ensures reliability of data unlike questionnaire. Besides, many respondents being illiterate, schedule is the right choice. As for as case studies is concerned researcher has chosen case study as a technique because it can help in gathering qualitative data to supplement quantitative
data related to the problem under investigation. Participant observation as a technique of data collection has been a method of enhancing understanding. It has been of great help in getting insights into the problem under investigation.

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.

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 organisation of production of lock industry of Aligarh is more complex than the lac industry of Hyderabad. The latter 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.