Chapter 1
Introduction

Education plays multifarious instrumental roles in the realization of certain ends—both at individual and societal level. A large number of researches carried out across the world have recognized and asserted a wide variety of externalities produced by education. Studies on economic return to education have established that education among farmers raises agricultural productivity as well as farm production (Harker 1973; Singh 1974; Choudhery 1979; Jamison and Lau 1982; Pudasini 1983; Jamison and Moock 1984; Lockheed 1987; Tilak 1984, 1993). It is instrumental in raising an individual’s earnings (Schultz 1961, 1971, 1982; Dutta 1985; Harris et al 1990; Pancavel 1991; Psacharopoulos 1973, 1985, 1993). It is a powerful tool for redistribution of income (Dasgupta 1979; Richards and Leonor 1981; Dasgupta and Tilak 1983; Sah and Srikantan 1984; James and Benjamin 1987) and thus helps in reduction of poverty (Coombs and Ahmad 1974; Burki 1990). Thus economic return to education is well recognized. There is no doubt though that the results of different studies on economic return to education differ slightly depending on the data and methods used, but most of the studies find clear and positive association between levels of education and rate of economic return. In the present technological age and changed economic setting education is becoming even more crucial determinant of one’s occupation and income than ever before.

The social gains of education are immense and valuable. Education is observed to be associated with lower fertility (Nair 1974; Khan 1979; Cocharne 1986, 1988; Dreze and Murthy 2000) and improvement of health (Cocharne et al 1980; Berrara 1990; Hussain 1990; Tilak 1992; Dreze and Sen 1995). The wide spread of education among different segment of population helps to overcome the traditional inequalities of caste, class, gender and so on (Ramchandran 1986). Further, it does not only alter or modify perceptions, attitudes and behaviour, but also facilitates the process of creation of awareness and personality building which is very conducive to promote development and welfare of a nation and its people. Several studies have revealed that wide spread education among the mass
not only strengthens the root of democracy, but also ensures civil liberties (Coleman et al 1965; Cutright 1969; Kamens 1988).

Thus a plethora of researches some of which being cited makes it amply clear that education is a powerful means to realize a wide variety of social, economic and other ends. Of late, however, the debate on education has shifted from ‘education as a means’ to education as an end in itself. It is argued that education is an end in itself as it has intrinsic value in terms of empowering individuals and communities for effective citizenship, consolidating democratic governance, promoting creativity and culture of peace (Dreze and Sen 1995; Rao 2000). Viewed thus, education serves human being both as means by playing instrumental roles in the achievement of certain ends and as an end in itself by having intrinsic value.

Since independence, India has come a long way to expand her literacy base and educational opportunities. Undoubtedly in the post independent era, there has been remarkable expansion of the educational system as a whole and all its stages and specialization (Kamat 1989; Tilak 1995). The enrolment in education has increased by eight fold from about 24 millions in 1950-51 to 200 millions in 2001-2002, although still India is the home of largest number of illiterates of the world (Haq and Haq 1998); still over one-third of population aged 7 years and above cannot read and write (Census 2001); one-third of children aged 6-14 do not attend school and remains outside the system of education (NFHS 1998-99). Moreover, whatever educational development India has witnessed in the last few decades is found to have taken place differentially in terms of region, caste, class, gender and religion. As a matter of fact while certain regions as well as sections of our society have acquired greater importance in the system of education, others stand deprived as the processes of socio-economic development seem to have almost bypassed them. Thus present day India exhibits marked disparities in the sphere of education. These disparities could not be done away with despite of several constitutional and legislative provisions; despite many efforts to reform. A good deal of studies have been undertaken to assess the nature and extent of such disparities in educational attainment.
Educational Disparities in India: A Review

The distribution of educational opportunities is far from equal and inequalities in educational opportunities are multi-layered. The level of and response to the educational opportunities varies a great deal over space. This phenomenon is not only the characteristic feature of India or for that matter of developing countries but prevalent in across the globe including most developed countries (Ryba 1979; Williamson 1977; Jean Freeze 1961). Consequently, it is seen that certain regions have acquired greater importance than other. Social and economic and cultural environment is yet another critical factor that wields strong impact on the spread of education (Gore 1994). Within the given space, different socio-economic groups tend to demonstrate differential response to educational opportunities (Jencks 1961; Versoff, J. et. al. 1962; Mayer and Sharp 1962; Duncan 1967; Bowels 1968; Coleman, J 1968; Boudon 1974; Craft 1970; Halsey 1972; Shortlidge 1976; Sen 1992; Gore 1994; Dreze and Sen 1995; 2002). As a result, they are found to be standing at differing stages of socio-economic development. Viewed in this context, disparities in educational opportunities are multifaceted and of course multilayered. Naik (1965:17) very cogently depicts different forms of disparities, which have appeared most spectacularly in the field of education as follows:

There remains appreciable inequality of educational opportunities at several levels and in several sectors. From the national point of view there will be wide gaps between advanced states and backward states. At the state level we find great differences of achievement between certain advanced districts and the backward districts. Even within the same district there are often large differences between one tehsil of the district and another and within the same tehsil, not all villages are equally advanced. There are still large differences between rural and urban areas. From the social point of view, there is a great inequality of educational development between boys and girls and also between the advanced communities on the one hand and the scheduled communities on the other.

Thus, the educational system of India is characterized by inequalities assuming various dimensions. The most obvious forms of disparities as well as inequalities have appeared as between regions; between rural and urban; between
male and female; between Scheduled Castes and non-Scheduled Castes (Tilak 1979). However, recent findings have revealed that vast disparity exists in educational attainment between religious groups also. In the following section, a brief review of literature on different forms of disparities in education is presented with a special focus on educational disparities between religious groups.

**Intra and Inter-regional Disparity**

Intra and inter-regional disparity is one of the most obvious forms of educational disparities. Indian scholars have undertaken a wide range of studies to examine and assess the intra and inter regional disparities in educational development. Gosal (1964) has underlined some of the essential features of inter-state variation in literacy and education for different components of population. His study is based on the results of 1961 census. Kundu and Rao (1985) have made a comparative study on the nature and pattern of inequities in literacy rates for 1961 and 1971 and also for different segments of population, viz., male-female, Scheduled and non Scheduled Caste population. Inter-state differential in rural and urban literacy rate has been examined by D’ Souza (1982). This study has looked into the nature of association between rural and urban disparities with urbanization on the one hand and industrialization on the other. Ahmad (1982) has examined inter district inequities in literacy rates of tribal population of Bihar for the year 1971. Intra-state disparities in literacy rates in terms of Scheduled Castes population have been probed into by Usha Rao (1982). Rudolph and Rudolph (1972) have examined regional disparities in education and their link with per capita income for the year 1961. Raza (1982) examines inequities in literacy levels of different components of population in regional framework. The study takes state as a unit. Sachchidanand (1989) examines the extent of disparities among different sections of population in Bihar. The unit of the study is district. Chathley (1995) in his study has examined educational disparities in ‘Border States’ of the country. Nagrajan and Madheswaran (2001) have studied the inter-district variations in school enrolment and its determinants for rural
Maharashtra. The study finds huge disparity in rural enrolment across the regions within the state.

**Gender Disparity**

Gender disparity in education has also been examined in greater length. Sopher’s (1980) study in this regard is pioneering one. He has tried to bring out the gender gap in literacy for the country as a whole fitting into regional mould. Raju (1988) has examined gender disparity in literacy rates in urban India. In another study she has tried to assess the extent of gender disparity in literacy rate in spatial perspective (Raju 1991). Singh and Shashi Parbha (1987, 1990) in their study have examined the trend of gender disparity in literacy rate and enrolment rate since independence. Reddy and Reddy (1992) have observed far lower gross enrolment ratio (GER) for girls as compared to boys in the selected villages of Andhra Pradesh. Jeemol Unni (1998) in her study of Mehsana district of Gujarat has observed gender differential of schooling. She found that girls’ schooling is positively associated with the economic status of the household. In her study Pal (2001), examines whether gender disparity exists when other household factors are held constant in a multivariate framework. He concludes that gender gap exists even after controlling for household factors. In a very recent study, Kingdon (2002) examines the determinants of educational attainment for men and women. The study applies the Blinder Oaxaca method to measure the extent of sex discrimination in the intra family allocation of education. Akila (2004) has examined gender disparity in literacy rate and enrolment rate in Tamilnadu for the period of 1991 and 2001. In her study, she concludes that while in the age group 6 – 11 gender gap in enrolment rate is too small, the same becomes large in the age group 11 – 14 in almost all the districts of the state.

**Caste/Tribe Disparity**

Disparity in literacy and education is yet another form of disparity and has caught up the attention of Indian scholars. Quite a large number of studies have been undertaken. Studies done by Sachchidanand (1974), D’ Souza (1980), Raza and Premi (1987), Aikara Jacob (1996), Dutta (1996) and Alam (1999) examine the
nature and extent of disparity between Scheduled Caste and non-Scheduled Caste population. Vemuri and Aggarwal (1989) have examined temporal changes in the disparity in literacy rates between Scheduled caste and non-Scheduled Caste population. Reddy and Reddy (1992) have found lower literacy and enrolment rate of for Scheduled Castes in comparison to non-Scheduled Caste population in some selected village of Andhra Pradesh. These studies broadly attributed the educational backwardness of Scheduled Castes to historical discrimination, poverty and other social factors.

Religious Disparity

Although a host of studies have been carried out to assess various forms of disparities in the sphere of literacy and education, studies in terms of religious groups are found to be very few. Given the nature of the present enquiry, the following section focuses on research particularly dealing with literacy and educational disparities between Muslims and Hindus.

India won independence in 1947 along with carving of a new country of Pakistan. This brought about a sea change in religious demography, more particularly of Muslims. A large number of Muslims comprised of businessmen, intelligentsia and those in the saddle migrated to Pakistan. This caused trauma for those Muslims who stayed behind (Imam 1972). Further, this was also the time that the Population Census has stopped publishing of the community wise statistics because of the sensitive nature of the information (Alam 2001). In the absence of reliable statistics, much of the discussions centred around the socio-economic and educational status of Muslims became a matter of assumptions and conjectures. Gopal Singh Report on Minorities (1983) had observed that:

There is a common belief that Muslims in India have remained largely unaffected by the economic development in the country, despite the successive Five Year Plans and further, that their general economic condition is becoming worse than before. No serious attempt has so far been made to examine the causes of their backwardness and to devise ways and means to remove them. (1983:14) (emphasis added).
The Delhi Survey (1971-72) done by Hamdard Education Society states that the percentage of enrolment to population in the relevant age groups in the surveyed areas of the city were 6.2 and 11.2 per cent for Muslims and non-Muslims respectively at the primary level; and 2.59 and 11.2 percent respectively at the middle and secondary school level. Gopal Krishna (1972) studied the socio-economic conditions of Indian Muslims in 35 districts, covering 14 states and the Union Territory of Delhi. A sample of 2995 Muslim males and 997 non-Muslim males were randomly selected. The study found that as against 55.0 percent of non-Muslims educated up to secondary level, the corresponding figure for Muslims stayed at 40.8 percent. Further, the representation of Muslims in college and technical education was even worse. While 11.0 percent of non-Muslim respondents found place in this category, the corresponding figure for Muslims was as low as 2.8 percent. The finding of the above mentioned surveys thus indicated that higher the stage the lesser was the participation of Muslims in educational attainment. Sharma’s study (1978) seems to confirm this. He found that the coefficient of equality at primary and higher secondary levels for Muslims were 74.0 and 23.6 respectively. Sexena (1983) in his study, through collation of data from a number of sources, has shown educational deficiency among Muslims as compared to other members of society at large. Likewise, Kareem (1989) in his district level study of Kerala found that Muslims were poorly represented in educational opportunities available in the State. Ahmad (1993) in his study of Kishanganj reports that the literacy rate for Muslims was 31.4 percent while the corresponding figure for Hindus was 57.1 percent. Shariff (1995) in his study based on the data provided by NSSO (43 round) has highlighted disparities in literacy and education between Muslims and non-Muslims.

Seen from gender perspective, Muslim girls seem to be the most deprived section of the population. The whole body of literature indicates that Muslim girls have a lower probability of entering schools; higher chances of dropouts and lower grade completion levels as compared to other religious communities. These facts are well documented in the work of Sarkar (1986), Sharma (1978), Kareem (1989), Engineer (1984), Ahmad (1992), Saheda Lateef (1990), Salamatullah
(1994), Shariff (1994), Menon (1961), Siddiqui (1981) and Roy (1964). In a very recent study, it is observed that the chances of school entry for Muslim girls is lower by over 10 percent as compared to those of Hindu girls (Sengupta and Guha 2002).

Besides above-mentioned micro studies, some macro level surveys have also thrown light on the educational status of Muslims. According to the Human Development Report (1999), the literacy rate for Hindus was 53.0 percent (male and female literacy rates being 65.9 and 39.2 percent respectively). The corresponding figure for Muslims was 49.4 percent and male and female literacy rates being 59.5 and 38 percent respectively. The NSSO, 1999-2000 (55th round) has given out data on educational attainment by religious groups for both rural and urban.

In rural areas, there were 36.8 and 65.8 percent males and females respectively belonging to Hindu community who were illiterate. As against this about 40.9 percent of Muslims males were illiterate (Table 1.1). However, with 66.4 percent of Muslim females being illiterate, the difference between females of the two communities was only marginal. There were about 25.5 percent and 16.9 percent Hindu males and females were educated up to primary. The corresponding figure for Muslims was 30.3 and 19.9 percent respectively. While 18.0 and 9.6 percent of Hindu males and females respectively were educated up to middle, the corresponding figures for Muslim males and females were 15.3 and 8.9 percent respectively. Educational levels also do reflect the length of schooling. Thus higher the educational attainment of an individual the longer is his or her schooling. As we move up in the scale of educational levels, the gradient of educational disparity becomes steeper between the two religious groups. About 10.8 percent of Hindu males and 4.8 percent females had attained education up to secondary level, the respective figures for Muslim males and females were 8.2 and 3.2 percent respectively. In the post-secondary stage, 10.6 percent of Hindu males and 2.8 percent of females were represented, but as compared to these figures, there were a little over 5.0 percent of Muslim males and 1.4 percent of females being placed in the same category. In other words, the
proportion being educated beyond secondary level among Hindus was just double as compared to the Muslims.

In urban areas also, Muslims lagged behind non-Muslims although from the educational demand and accessibility point of view urban areas are observed as having clear edge over the rural ones and the disparities in educational attainment among different segments of population are expected to be smaller. Although the proportion of people belonging to the two communities under study is much less in illiterate and fairly high in the categories such as primary, middle, secondary and post secondary category as compared to the rural areas, the disparities between the two with regard to educational attainment seem to be higher in urban areas. As compared to 12.9 and 30.6 percent of Hindu males and females being illiterate, the corresponding figures for Muslims were 25.9 and 44.5 percent respectively. In other words, the proportion of illiterates among Muslim males was double in relation to that of Hindus. As the levels of education increase so does the disparity between the religious groups. While up till middle level the disparities between the two communities are rather small, they turn greater as move up in the scale. As against 19.7 percent and 14.5 percent of Hindu males and females respectively who had attained secondary education, the respective percentages for Muslims were 13.7 and 9.0 percent. Thus Muslims lagged behind Hindus by 6 and 5 percentage points in terms of males and females respectively.

**Table-1.1: Percent Distribution of Persons by Educational Levels, Religion, Sex and Residence**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Educational Levels</th>
<th>Hindu Rural</th>
<th>Muslim Rural</th>
<th>Hindu Urban</th>
<th>Muslim Urban</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Literate</td>
<td>36.8</td>
<td>65.8</td>
<td>40.9</td>
<td>66.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary</td>
<td>25.5</td>
<td>16.9</td>
<td>30.3</td>
<td>19.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle</td>
<td>18.0</td>
<td>9.6</td>
<td>15.3</td>
<td>8.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary</td>
<td>10.8</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>8.2</td>
<td>3.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-Secondary</td>
<td>10.6</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>1.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


*Note: Figures pertain to persons of 15 years of age and above*
The literature cited above suggests that Muslims in the post independent era have fallen at the rear of other communities in matters of literacy and education. Several reasons operating either singly or in combination have been offered by scholars to account for their educational backwardness. The reasons advanced so far to explain the educational problems of the community. These include (a) *historical and religious factors* (Hunter 1869; Nigam 1964; Aman 1967; Baig 1974; Sharma 1978) (b) *minority complex* including latent discrimination against Muslims by larger society (Smith 1963; Shakir 1972; Malhotra 1973; Gauba 1978; Muzammil 1994) and (c) *social and economic backwardness* (Ahmad 1981; Hamid 1987; Rao and Tiwari 1987; Ansari 2001; Engineer 2001)

**Statement of the Problem**

It is evident from the literature that there exist educational disparities in education among different regions and different segments of population in India. Disparities in educational attainment among religious groups though have received scant attention of the scholars' community; the available literature seems to suggest that the Muslims of India as a whole lag behind others in the sphere of education. The reasons accounting for their educational backwardness are diverse and complex. Although almost all the scholars in the post-independent period begin with the assumption that Muslims stand deprived in matters of literacy and education, yet very few studies have systematically attempted to uncover the reasons responsible for their educational backwardness backed by empirical evidences. Consequently, the small amount of studies done in this arena is not without serious limitation. These include *one*: impressionistic and speculative observations, more often than not bereft of valid statistics. They are not only inadequate, but are also by and large polemical and one-sided (Phadke 1973); *second* studies dealing with educational backwardness of Muslims seem to overlook the social and spatial contexts in which Muslims live. It is a well known fact that Muslims in India have been living and interacting with other religious groups for over a millennium at all levels of regional hierarchy (Ahmad 1999) and in many ways they are closer to non-Muslims in a given area than
Muslims elsewhere (Engineer 2001). This suggests that rather than treating Muslims as a monolithic category, research needs to ask questions pertaining to their wider spatial context. This also implies that literacy, educational attainment as well as educational backwardness would also vary in geographically contextualized manner. That is to say, rather than metanarratives and overarching formulations, literacy and educational analysis for Muslims requires to be spatially contextualized whereby spatial specificities have to enter as one of the 'explanatory' factors in understanding the observed scenario. In this regard, it may be stated that even geographically oriented research have been inadequate (Peet 1998; Dear and Flusty 2002; Lewis 2002).

Third, most of the studies are urban centric. Much against the popular perception, the bulk of the Muslims live in the rural hinterland, with just this difference that while the overall proportion of urban population is 27 per cent and that of Muslims is 35 percent. Thus vast segment of the community just falls outside the purview of such studies. In fact no study of Indian Muslims can be objective and of course, no information about them can be complete unless we consider both the rural and urban population (Mujeeb 1967).

Fourth, Indian society is fractured one (Srinivas 1962; Mandelbaum 1970; Dumont 1980). Even within religion in the given space there are several fault lines along which the community is divided. People affiliated to same religion are divided along the lines of caste, class, sect etc. The Muslim community is no exception. The community is as diversified and segmented on the socio-economic and cultural plane as any other communities (Ansari 1960; Ahmad; 1977; Ahmad 1978; Bhattty 1978; Imam 1975; Ahmad 1978; Saiyaid 1999; Engineer 2001). In the light of above observation, any study intending to assess educational status of Muslims can not really afford to gloss over the fact that they do not constitute a homogeneous category. Otherwise the analysis would remain partial at best. So what is called for is a careful stratification of the community on the basis of socio-economic attributes so as to diagnose the problem of the community at hand properly.

Finally, the problems of Muslims in general and education in particular have been usually discussed in isolation. In a country like India where large
chunk of population is still below poverty line and illiterate, the backwardness of Muslims for obvious reasons should be studied in the context of the overall backwardness of various sections of our population. That is to say, a contextualized analysis is better placed to uncover disparities that are usually embedded in large socio-cultural milieu. It is against this backdrop along with the gaps in existing research as identified above that this research is undertaken with the following objectives.

**Objectives of the Study**

1. To assess the literacy and educational level among major religious groups i.e., Hindus and Muslims and disparity therein;

2. To identify socio-cultural and economic determinants of such disparity, and;

3. To analyze systematically literacy and educational attainment of Hindus and Muslims as socially embedded processes, influenced by broader developmental context.

**Research Questions**

1. What are the levels of literacy and education among religious groups under study and what is the extent of disparities therein?

2. What is the impact of community and household social and economic characteristics such as size of family, age and sex structure, occupational structure, size of landholdings and nature of employment on literacy and educational attainment and to what extent they determine their varying levels and disparities therein?

3. Whether, in terms of their literacy and educational attainment, communities respond (vis-à-vis each other) to broader spatial context independent of their religious locations or religion provides an overarching framework within which any understanding of literacy and education has to be necessarily placed?

**Data and Methodology**

Present study is mainly based on primary data. A questionnaire based household survey was conducted that collected information on educational, economic and demographic attributes of the population. However, qualitative and quantitative data from other sources including government publications are also used to situate the study in wider context.
Measuring disparity between two mutually exclusive sub-sets of population has been an overriding problem. It tends to pose serious methodological problems. However, a number of indices have been developed to measure both absolute and relative disparity. Sopher (1974) in his index of disparity tried to clear the infirmities of both absolute and relative measures and proposed an alternative measure of disparity, which is defined as follows:

\[
DS = \log \left( \frac{X_2}{X_1} \right) + \log \left( \frac{100-X_1}{100-X_2} \right)
\]

Where \(X_2 \geq X_1\)

However, the measure of disparity as proposed by Sopher (1974) suffers from drawbacks as it does not satisfy the axiomatic frame developed for the evaluation of disparity. The axiomatic frame is that it should satisfy the axioms of additive monotonicity, redistribution, repetitive transfers and multiplicative monotonicity (Kundu and Rao 1985). Kundu and Rao (1985) therefore suggested a modification to the Sopher’s Index which satisfies all the four axioms stated above. It is expressed as:

\[
DS = \log \left( \frac{X_2}{X_1} \right) + \log \left( \frac{200-X_1}{200-X_2} \right)
\]

Where \(X_2 \geq X_1\) and \(X_2\) and \(X_1\) are the literacy rates of two groups of people between which the disparity is calculated. Present research in order to measure disparity in literacy and educational attainment between/among the religious groups under study employs Kundu and Rao’s Index.

Educational attainment of a group or sub-group of population is conditioned a host of socio-economic factors in combination. In order to assess the net effects of selected variables logistic regression is exercised. The logistic regression estimates the likelihood of an event to occur. The generalized logistic regression can be written in the following form:

\[
\logit q = \beta_0 + \sum \beta_i X_i (i = 1, 2, \ldots \ldots, 6);
\]

Where, \(q\) is the probability that an event has occurred;
logit $q = \ln[q/(1-q)]$ and $X_i$ ($i = 1, 2, \ldots, 6$) are the predictor variables; 
\[ \beta_0 \text{ is the intercept and } \beta_i\text{'s (i = 1, 2, \ldots, 6) are the regression coefficients} \]

**Selection of the Study Area and Sampling**

In order to investigate the problem two districts – Patna and Purnea in Bihar were selected. The rationale for the choice of these two districts lies in several reasons. In the first place, a blend of a host of factors such as geographic as well as locational (Friedmann 1966), socio-economic and also some related factors not only give birth to a region different from the surrounding ones or others but also bestows it unique personality. The unique personality of a region, in turn produces unique collection of individuals with socio-economic endowments differing from those inhabiting different geographical space. Thus an inquiry into relative disparity and probably conclusions drawn out of it appear esoteric and contorted unless such a complex subject is examined with reference to space and set or sub-set of population. With this assumption, present study set before it the task to investigate whether religious groups under study respond to educational opportunities in the same way or otherwise across the space. Patna and Purnia not only differ from each other in certain geographical attributes but also stand out in sharp contrast in terms of socio-economic make up, structural conditions and cultural setting and consequently parameters of socio-economic development. Thus the two districts became the obvious choice.

Finally, since this study sought to examine the relative disparity between religious groups, it was therefore, imperative to see that the religious groups under study were fairly represented. While Purnea has comparable size of Muslims (34.5 percent), far above the state average, the proportion of Muslims in Patna district is little less than the state average. However, it was expected that there would be at least one Block and a couple of villages having the population of both the religious groups in comparable size.

Next to the selection of districts, steps were taken to select blocks out of the two districts. For this all the blocks of these two districts were listed out and followed the exercise of marking off the blocks having considerable size of
Muslim population. Hence, Phulwari and Kasba blocks in Patna and Purnia districts respectively were finally selected. After the selection of blocks was over the selection of villages stepped in. The basic consideration in selection was the religious composition of population. In other words, care was taken to see that both Hindu and Muslim population was of comparable size. Following this norm, Nohsa and Bhusola Danapur in Phulwari and Kula Khas and Lakna in Kasba block were selected. Also, keeping in view the purpose of study, hamlets closer to the villages were also included.

At the final stage households including both Hindus and Muslims were selected. Stratified sampling technique was adopted. A rough list of those involved in different occupations was prepared in consultation with the knowledgeable persons belonging to both the communities. One out of every sixth household was taken for canvassing questionnaire randomly. The head of the household was respondent in most of the cases. In some of the cases where the head of the household was not available for reasons, the next person in rank was selected as the respondent. It is in this context that few females were the respondent. A total of three hundred and seventy five households constituting about 15 percent of total households were covered under survey. However, mentioned should be made that at the end of the survey about 75 household schedules were omitted as they did not carry adequate information. It all happened solely because of the timing of survey (started from February 2, 2002) which coincided with the communal riot in Gujrat (2002) that had unfortunately broken out when the survey was in progress. Obviously it had created an atmosphere of fear and uncertainty among people. It was but natural for the respondents to leave off the exercise of filling in the schedule at the outset or in the middle or to show reluctance to give answer certain questions which were vital for the present research work. Also it cannot be ruled out that the quality of data suffered to some extent due to this reason. Thus finally 300 household schedules were found to have adequate and satisfactory information. Of the all household those of Muslims constituted 60.0 per cent and those of Hindus 40.0 per cent (Table 1.2)
Since the impact of religious location on literacy and educational attainment was one of the concerns of the present study, one of the methodological challenges was to 'check' for basal or initial differences in initial endowment of sampled population of Hindus and Muslims in terms of demographic composition, education, occupational structure and assets ownership and so on. This is because it could be argued that it is the built-in economic and social differences at the base between Hindus and Muslims and not the religious locations that had influenced the research outcomes. In order to overcome this, a social matrix including information on basic demographic parameters, educational levels, economic activities, land and assets was developed to examine if there were prior differences amongst the households of Hindus and Muslims. It was observed that there were no statistically significant differences between the two communities.

**Chapter Scheme**

Present study consists of 7 chapters. First chapter is the introduction to the study that includes statement of the problem, an overview of educational development and disparities, objectives of the study, research questions, methodology and data base and rationale of selection of study area and sampling.

Second chapter attempts at tracing the history and pattern of development of school education in India.

Third chapter deals with theoretical premises of the present research work. Theoretical framework of a problem provides a priori understanding to the nature of problem and also facilitates the way of empirical observation. Scholars

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**Table 1.2: Schematic Presentation of Sampling**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Particulars</th>
<th>Phulwari/Patna</th>
<th>Kasba/Purnia</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Bhusola Danapur</td>
<td>Nohsa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. of Household*</td>
<td>794</td>
<td>452</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. of Surveyed Household</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. of Hindu Households Surveyed</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of Hindu Households Surveyed</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>40.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. of Muslim Households Surveyed</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of Muslim Households Surveyed</td>
<td>65.3</td>
<td>59.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: District Census Handbook, Patna and Purnia, Census of India, 1991*
have tried to put the interaction between religion and educational attainment. This chapter thus presents a critical appraisal of different hypotheses dealing with religion and education.

Fourth chapter presents a general socio-economic profile of the study area. Since education is a sub-system of larger social and economic system, therefore, an attempt has been made in this chapter to locate the study area in the social, economic and educational environment of the state.

Fifth chapter deals with the educational attainment of and disparities therein between the two religious groups under study. Educational achievement of different socio-economic groups across geographical space is reported to vary a great deal. In this chapter an attempt to capture the magnitude of disparity in educational attainment between religious groups and also within the religious group across the space is made.

When valid or dependable statistics about the social institutions, economic status, religious beliefs, values and attitudes of a particular religion or more particularly of the largest religious minority group is not available, a situation is created which allows a wide variety of popular myths and stereotypes about it to persist and to be argued out.

The Sixth chapter attempts to examine the role of various factors supposed to be associated with educational attainment and inequality therein. An attempt is made to see how other variables than religion intercept and offset the influence of religious affiliation to work out the disparity in educational attainment between the two religious groups.

The Seventh, which is also the last chapter summarizes the research findings, presents broader conclusion of the study.
The term 'disparity' refers to unequal distribution of some kinds of attributes among different segments of population (Johnston, ed. 2000: A Dictionary of Human Geography). In the present research work disparity is used to mean unequal access to educational opportunities.

The concept of 'educational opportunities' has been subjected to many interpretations. They range from access to education – availability of schooling facilities and their utilization, to educational inputs – allocation of physical and material resources and to educational outputs – school achievement and life chances (Le Grand 1982; Raza 1983; Ribich 1972; Turner 1986).

In the fourth chapter a detailed account of the sample districts is presented.