CHAPTER II
THE RESEARCH PROBLEM AND
METHODS OF STUDY

Every society prescribes some specific values and behaviour patterns for its members. The social structure of Indian society, irrespective of religion and caste, is such that it doesn't promote social change easily as stated in the previous chapter. The Indian ethos makes one, by and large, passive and disinterested towards life. It has also been mentioned in the previous chapter that the Indian philosophy and religion which are the pivots of life have their influence on people and make it difficult for them to think and question dogmas. However, the economic development, demographic pressure and scientific and technological development have brought about significant changes in the social milieu. It has opened an arena in which women also can compete freely with men and prove their worth.¹ Today, the role of women has been expanded and they are in a position to take up new roles in the society. Yet, the Indian women, irrespective of their caste or religious affiliation, have suffered the evils of their lower status. This has happened also because of the socio-cultural value system prevalent in the society. Even today the Indian women do not enjoy equal status with

men. There remains a wide gap between the law conferring on them their social equality and social practice with men. In other words, social inequality still prevails between men and women in different walks of life.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM:

The position of Muslim women in India is influenced by the Islamic injunction and the impact of the Hindu tradition, on the one hand, and the forces of modernization, on the other. Along with this, the study of Muslim women in India may take into account three key elements of (i) the influence of Islam, (ii) the changing status and role of women in general in India, (iii) and finally, the extent to which they are affected by the economic, social and political conditions prevailing in the country. In other words, it is interesting to note the extent to which the status of Muslim women is affected by their being Indian, being Muslim and being women. These factors have bearings on the attitudes, practices and capacities of Muslim women to adopt social change and modernization prevalent in whatsoever form in the Indian society.

The process of modernization in any society is closely related to the orientation of its people to change. It also needs a certain type of personality structure which is conducive to innovation. As a customary, the main role of a woman is to take care of her children in their upbringing. She acts as the first teacher and guide of the
child. In this connection, it is said that, "For full development of our human resources, the improvement of homes, and moulding the character of a child during the most impressionable years of infancy, the education of a woman is of even greater importance than that of a man." 2 It is, therefore, important to know the impact of present education on modernizing the socio-cultural life and attitudes of the Indian women in general and of Muslim women in particular. Also, in defining the role and status of modern Muslim women we have to take into account their status which has been constrained by religion for a long time as stated earlier. We have also to consider the different internal and external forces which tend to bring about a new socio-psychological orientation in their outlook. In other words, a modern Muslim woman is to be regarded as a fusion of so many forces. Today, she is to be dynamic, everchanging and broadening the horizon of her intellectual firmament and is to acquire, to some extent, certain amount of upward social mobility. 3

Women as a category constitute nearly half of the mankind and it is difficult for any society to carry successfully out its programme of modernization if half of its population remains steeped into tradition. In the past

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women were confined to home and were regarded as the preserver of tradition and culture. In the modern world the role of women is not only confined to home and bringing up the children but also they have to adopt a career of their own and share equality with men. Over and above, they have to bear the responsibility for the development of society in all directions. "In the progressive society of tomorrow life should be joint venture for men and women. Man should share the responsibility of parenthood and home making with women and women should share the social and economic responsibility of men." The present study would indicate as to how far the Indian women in general and Muslim women in particular have been able to reorganize both types of roles and have undertaken a new type of role in the present time.

Further, India like any other developing countries is passing through a crucial period of transition from old social order to new modes of life. But in changing the social structure it is essential to change the personality structure too as stated earlier. The reason is that without the behavioral and attitudinal changes of individuals it is difficult to bring change in the social system. Besides this, "Unless the traditional values undergo a radical modification, an innovation, ethos and entrepreneurial and industrial ethics cannot be created. Value change is

necessary also for institutional rearrangement considered essential for modernization.\(^5\) Thus, the values and attitudes are the most important factors that determine the people's way of life. If modernization is to occur in the Indian society, a thorough overhauling of people's attitudes and values is necessary. In this regard, the present study tends to examine the existing attitudes of the Muslim women in order to understand the trends and possibilities of the process of modernization taking place among them.

Though it is not very clear as to what "modernity" really means in India, yet it is generally accepted that modern means something else than merely being contemporary. Each society follows its own pattern of modernization. The thing which is modern for one society may not be so for another. It can also be said that the levels of acceptance of modernity differ from society to society, region to region and nation to nation. Their variations provide a vast and fascinating material for the study of modernization process. According to Dube, "India is an old society but a new nation. It provides an excellent example of the puzzlement and paradox of a modernizing situation. Its small but significant pockets of modernity are set against the vast hinterlands of tradition. It has a split image of future, it cannot take

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two steps ahead without looking back at least once. The links between its modernizing elite and tradition-oriented values are tenuous. However, the differential levels of modernization of region, community and socio-economic strata need to be studied carefully. One can have better understanding of the process of modernization if a comparative approach is adopted. Therefore, the present study tends to cover the values, attitudes and behaviour of the Muslim women drawn from the different social strata found in an urban area.

Again, it is to be kept in mind that in a modernizing society all its components do not change equally and simultaneously. So is the case with the degree and pace of modernization. In other words, in certain spheres an individual becomes modernized whereas in others he remains traditional. This results into cultural lag and ambivalence. The present study attempts to measure the level of modernization that the Muslim women have achieved in the different aspects of life. It, however, proposes to analyse the social and cultural aspects of modernization among them. It has been found that education, occupation and income are positively associated with the process of modernization. The present study also attempts to analyse modernization among the Muslim

6. Ibid., p.40.

women in relation to their socio-demographic characteristics like age, family structure, place of residence, duration of stay in urban areas, etc. Besides this, the study aims to analyse modernization in terms of changes in the attitudes and behaviour towards the institutions of marriage, divorce, inheritance, purdah and so on.

As stated in Chapter I, the Indian Muslims are less responsive to the process of modernization because they seem to bear the complex of their being minority and they want to maintain their such identity.\(^8\) So, this study tends to enquire how their women react to this phenomenon. Besides, it proposes to examine the political consciousness of women and their awareness towards media behaviour. It also tries to explore the opinion and awareness of women about their constitutional and Islamic rights. In the same vein, an attempt has been made to find out the impact of preachings of the religious elite of the ulema and the Maulanas on the status of women. The aim here is to know the views of women about the changes in the roles and behaviour of the ulemas and Mualanas in improving the status of the Muslim women in the Indian society. In the case of other developing societies like Indonesia, the traditional organizations and institutional structures have done a lot in promoting modernization in a

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community which, of course, is tradition-bound. The traditional Islamic schools have played significant role in the process of modernization in such societies. In the light of this the present study, finally, tends to examine the role of traditional Islamic schools and organizations in improving the status of Muslim women in India. In other words, it seeks to analyse how far these organizations and their representatives are able to bring modernization and social change among the Muslims in general and their women in particular in India.

CONCEPTS AND MEANINGS OF MODERNIZATION:

The process of modernization and change has drawn much attention of both the scholars and laymen. The greatest challenge that developing countries are facing today is their transition from tradition to modernity which leads to dynamism and progress. Most of the societies in these countries today have become development oriented. In this way, modernization has become the prominent theme of study. The process of change in any society is the result of a number of technological and scientific achievements and advancements which have, directly or indirectly, influenced the human life and behaviour patterns. Due to this development, changes have not only influenced the material condition

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and comforts of mankind but also have influenced the attitudes, values, outlooks, approaches to look at the different problems, patterns of social interaction and behaviours of people. Thus, this trend of change in material and non-material aspects of human life has given birth to a new process which is called as "modernization".

Social scientists have focussed on different aspects of modernization. Economists commonly approach the process of modernization in terms of economic growth. They are mainly concerned with the matter of investment and savings, national income, production, etc. Some of them even go further and speak of the process of industrialization as synonym to modernization. Industrialization for them means extensive use of machines for economic production. Levy, for instance, says, "my definition of modernization hinges on the uses of inanimate source of power and the use of tools to multiply the effect of effort."10 Further, some scholars identify modernization with sophisticated technological development achieved by a society. Moore, for instance, is of this opinion when he says that "What is involved in modernization is a total transformation of a traditional or pre-modern society into the types of technology and associated organization that characterised the advanced, economically prosperous and relatively politically

stable nations of the western world." Thus, as far as the economists' views are concerned, modernization is man's application of new technologies to acquire dominance over nature and to bring about a marked increase in the gross national product per capita. Political scientists, on the other hand, describe modernization as the problem of nation and government building. As Weiner points out that, "the political scientists are concerned with the ways in which governments increase their capacity to innovate and to adopt the change to make policies for the society." Thus, political modernization refers to those processes of differentiation of political structure and socialization of political culture which enhance the capability - the effectiveness and efficiency of performance of a society's political system.

Sociologists, however, have different angle to look at the process of modernization. They think of this process in terms of social change, the way in which new social structure emerges to assume new functions or take on functions once performed by other structures. Black, for


instance, views modernization as "the process by which historically evolved institutions are adapted to the rapidly changing functions that reflect the unprecedented increase in man's knowledge permitting control over the environment that accompanied the scientific revolution." For other sociologists, the process of modernization of societies is characterised by differentiation of structure and specialization of roles. Eisenstadt's basic point in this connection is that modern societies are highly differentiated and specialized with respect to individual activities and institutional structures and the most important aspect of this differentiation is separation between the different roles held by an individual - specially among the occupational and political roles and between them the family and kinship roles. In relatively undifferentiated societies the family and kinship group perform the crucial social tasks such as finding and distributing foods and other goods, making decision about crime and punishment and educating the young. But in a modernised society, their function is no longer performed by the family and separate economic, political and educational institutions develop which occupy a distinct place in the social order.

Rustow and Wards also define modernization as an all comprehensive process that "involves a marked increase in geographic and social mobility, spread of secular, scientific and technical education, a transition from ascribed to achieved status, an increase in material standard of living and many related subsidiary phenomena." Thus, it is a process by which individuals change from a traditional way of life to a more complex, technologically advanced and rapidly changing style of life. Some scholars are of the opinion that modernization is not as much concerned with the character of society as with the character of individual. They argue that a nation cannot be modern unless its people are modern. For them, modernity is "a kind of mentality rather than a form of political or economic system." Some more attributes of modernity are given by different social scientists. Lerner, for instance, argues that "empathy", i.e. the capacity to see oneself in other fellow's situation, is the character of modern people.


But modernity, as defined by Dube, is that it "may be understood as a common behavioral system characterized by rational and scientific world view, growth and ever increasing application of science and technology, together with the continuous adoption of the institution of society to the imperatives of the new world view and the emerging technological ethos." He further describes "rationality" as the most important attribute to modernization because it changes the thinking ability of an individual and, in turn, brings about great changes in the functioning of the entire institutional framework of a society. Thus, modernization can be considered as a process that inculcates rationality and liberates a man from his age-old dogmas and obscurantist attitudes. It enables him to reinterpret his past by modifying the traditional ways of living and thinking. Events and situations are understood in terms of cause and effect and strategies of action are being thought by end-means and calculations. In the process of modernization one explains and understand more the worldly phenomenon in terms of scientific world view than other worldly idioms. Due to this scientific world view, the mythical and supernatural explanations are ignored in modernization. This transformation in the attitude of individual affects the working of the institutions. In this regard, Smith points out that "Modernity


23. Ibid., p.18.
in the world at large is in process of rendering feasible the gradual information of human life from what it has been to what we choose to make it. Our awareness that this is our choosing that we will strive for one thing rather than other and our ability of implementing our decision technically - these are the measures of our being modern.""24

Thus, it can be said that modernization is basically a process of change in the personality structure of the individual, for all changes like economic, political, social, cultural, etc. are, in the last analysis, an outcome of how individual personalities act and react to situations and challenges. However, in the words of Sethi, "we may say that modernization has two major aspects. First, there is a system of thought and values with reference to which an individual orients his activities and, secondly, a system of institutions through which he carries out his activities. The two systems together influence the behaviour of an individual with respect to his self-system and his social system."25 Hegan also concludes that personality change is typically the first step in the modernization sequence involving urbanization, increased media participation,

increased literacy and further change in personality. More so, modernization refers to the desirability for deeper changes that are conducive to development of a new way of life.26

These definitions and explanations, though reflect different social and individualistic aspects, generally consider modernization to be an evolving all comprehensive and continual process. The various approaches to conceptualise it also emphasize the fact that modernization comes from within and cannot be extraneously imposed. And since it is an evolutionary process rooted in the socio-cultural milieu, the concept of modernity along the western models can neither be assimilated in Indian culture nor can such borrowing bring any social and cultural change in our society. This, however, does not mean that there are no generalised standards of modernization. In political and economic spheres particularly certain basic features like industrialization, technological development, urbanization, distributive justice and democratic principles have universal acceptance as indicators of modernization process. Inkles and Smith, for instance, after surveying six nations have found the similarity of attributes which are shared by all men in modern societies. According to them, these attributes are dispositions to accept new ideas and try new methods, a

readiness to express opinion, a sense of time that makes men more interested in the present and future than in the past, a better sense of punctuality, a greater concern for planning organization and efficiency, a tendency to see the world as calculable, a faith in science and technology and, finally, a belief in distributive justice. 27

Nonetheless, modernization involves the emergence of a new behavioral system and a set of attitudes which make it difficult to define in precise terms as to what constitutes modernity. Tradition and modernity are not opposite to each other as modernization process does not connote complete break from the past. Rather, it is a synthesis of old and new ways of life styles that develop in particular environment and social settings. Since cultural environment differs, modernity itself can have different meanings. In the words of Sachidananda, "it is through the tradition that the process of modernization is thrown into bold relief... tradition cannot be completely identified with the past or modernity with the present. An element of modernity today can be enshrined as a tradition of tomorrow." 28 Thus, tradition and modernity are different moments of a continuous

27. Inkles, Alex and Smith, L., Becoming Modern, London: Heinemann, 1974, p. 29.

social process. The tradition and modernity infiltrate and transform each other and such infiltration and transformation make modernization as an evolutionary process and, hence, societies are a combination of tradition and modernity. 29

Modernization is a very vast term. It seems necessary to limit it for the purpose of present study. Here, the process like industrialization, scientific advancement and economic development have not been taken into account. Modernization here has been analysed in terms of social and cultural change which further affects the attitudes and behaviour of the individuals and functioning of the social structure. In the present study modernization is which regarded as a process through a new behavioral system emerges. It involves a change of outlook, inculcation of a set of attitudes, an ever widening knowledge of new possibilities and the ability to implement these.

THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVE:

The process of modernization not only involves the change in the material culture of a society but also it changes the way of thinking, values and norms cherished by the individuals. In a simple way, it can be said that modernization is a process which brings desired types of

changes in the social structure and its functioning. It is that process which transforms a society from its backward framework to the forward looking, progressive and prospering structural build up.\(^\text{30}\) In fact, modernization is a specific process of social change in which rational approach to the problems, scientific world view and socio-cultural and economic developments are included as stated above.

Models, ideologies and theoretical perspectives underlying any concept depend upon the social values and cultural heritage of a society. The models of modernization are said to be affected by the two different sets of social values and cultural heritage of U.S.A. and U.S.S.R. Thus, there are two different models of modernization namely, Marxist model and capitalist model based on two ideologies called Marxism and capitalism. According to Singh, "Marxism and capitalism are two dominant ideologies of our time which outline two ends of a continuum on which a multitude of variation on ideological themes of modernization has been formulated."\(^\text{31}\) More precisely, the models of modernization under the Marxist and capitalist ideologies can be distinguished from each other in terms of ideological framework. But this does not mean that the Marxist model is exclusively


based on structural variables and the capitalist model is based on cultural and normative variables. The actual distinction between them is in the process and not in variables. The Marxist model gives more emphasis on structural process whereas the capitalist model emphasizes more on cultural one. Basis of the two models, however, is the distinctive formulation of concepts of social structure and culture for understanding modernization. This difference is derived basically from the ideological system that two models represent. 32

On the basis of these two models of modernization two types of theoretical perspectives can be formulated namely, conflict or dissension and consensus or structural-functional perspectives. So far as the status of women and their changing role in any society is concerned, it can be looked from these two perspectives. In the former case, changes in the status of women may occur only if they reject completely the traditional social norms, values, relationships, male dominance, their social and economic exploitations, etc. These are considered as conflicting to their cherished goals as the western societies and their women think that they can get equality only by rejecting the male dominance, traditional values, norms, and relationship which are regarded as obstacles in their progress and making equality with men. But in the case of structural-functional perspective, the women may accommodate some of the traditional

32. Ibid., p.17.
values, relationships, etc. in their new set of objectives and changes may occur within the overall framework of existing norms. This is prevalent, by and large, in Indian society. Women are changing their status and expanding their roles but within the framework of existing norms which are already in the process of change. No doubt, they are fighting against the discrimination and exploitation on the basis of sex or gender yet, they are maintaining, in one way or the other, the traditional values, norms, etc.

But these two perspectives are opposite to each other. In the case of former, the traditional norms, ideas and values are rejected totally which create social disorder and ambivalence. This further affects the functioning of the society. But in the case of latter, these traditional values, norms, ideals, and customs are not rejected totally which also create social and economic problems. As a result, the socio-economic development remains slow. The women are not fully capable of sharing the economic burden; they want, to some extent, to be under the protection of men. Yet, they are not ready for discrimination against and exploitation of them. So, the changing status of women in any society can be understood properly if a comprehensive perspective is formulated in which there is a synthesis of both the traditional and modern values. This perspective consisting of some elements of conflict and some of structural-functional models would be more helpful in analysing improvements in
the status of women and their achievement of equality with men.

However, modernization of the Muslim women in India can be looked more appropriately from the structural-functional perspective. The reasons are that they have been treated as subordinate to men for a long period. And, secondly, they have been having strong belief in the tradition. It can, however, be surmised that the Muslim women in India are getting modernised within the framework of their religious orientation and culture. This is so as their status and role is clearly prescribed in religion. This does not mean that they are not given, in principle, equality with men. Yet, they have to change their status and acquire cherished goal by maintaining the religious customs and traditions. It is true that due to the changes occurred in the socio-economic condition of the society they also try to break the un-Islamic traditions and misconceptions about their status and roles. But the changes which have taken place among them are related more to their existential conditions rather than to their religious or Islamic beliefs and practices. They are also conscious about their roles in culturally prescribed patterns of behaviour. No doubt, they are not ready to accept practices and customs like those that women are supposed to go out for job and education, they are not supposed to have a say in arranging marriage or selecting their spouse, etc.
These practices and customs are loaded upon them and are not sanctioned by Islam. These are also obstacles in modernizing the Muslim social structure in general and their women in particular. The women need to adopt a rational outlook to come out of the traditional ways of life and contribute to self and social development.

HYPOTHESES:

The present analysis of modernization of Muslim women has been made along with verification of a number of hypotheses. Some of these are as follows:

1) The better the educational and occupational background of the family of a person, higher is the degree of his or her modernization.

2) Higher the level of educational and occupational achievements of persons, higher the degree of their modernization.

3) The more favourable is the socio-demographic characteristics of the persons, more is the degree of their modernization.

4) The more a person is exposed to various media of communication, more likely he or she is to adopt new ideals of life.

These and some more hypotheses have been verified, with the help of relevant data, in the chapters that follow by supplementing the analyses of various aspects of modernization of Muslim women in India.
METHODS OF STUDY:

UNIVERSE AND SAMPLE:

The present study is concerned with a sociological analysis of modernization among the Muslim women of Darbhanga town of North Bihar. Though the Muslims are spread all over the state but there are certain districts including Darbhanga in which they are in good number. According to 1971 census, the total population of Darbhanga district was registered at 132,059 out of which males were 71,519 and females were 60,540. The Muslims constituted 33,281 (25.09%) persons in the whole district, out of which males were 17,701 and females were 15,580. Contrary to this, the Hindus in the district constituted 97,914 out of which males were 53,431 and females were 44,483.* In other words, the total population of Hindu males is nearly double of the Muslim males and the population of Hindu females is nearly three times more of the Muslim females.

The present study is based on the data obtained from three categories of Muslim women namely 100 college students, 100 educated housewives (matric onwards) and 50 working women as representative of total educated Muslim women. The collection and analysis of data has been done along certain important variables like age, caste, family structure, educational level and the occupational status of the respondents and of their family members, duration of their stay in

* Religionwise population of

1981 Census not available.
Darbhanga town, besides the changes in their attitudes and behaviour towards a number of social and religious institutions.

Methods of collection and analysis of Data:

More specifically, the data have been collected, during 1987-88, mainly through the interview schedules consisting of the different social, cultural, economic and religious aspects of life of the respondents to know their awareness and attitudes towards modernization and social change taking place in the society in general and among them in particular. Besides the primary sources, the secondary sources like census material, district gazetteers and other relevant documents and reports have been used. The data have also been generated through the observation of the life patterns of the respondents and of their social milieu to re-evaluate the validity of their responses relating to their socio-cultural lives.

The data have been computed to obtain a number of relevant distribution of the responses like frequency distributions and their percentages. Also, a number of measures such as $X^2$ and co-efficient of contingencies have been calculated to obtain precisions in the descriptions and analysis of data.

Relevance of the Study:

This study has both the theoretical and practical relevances. It may contribute to the theoretical
explanations and understanding about modernization and social change taking place among the women in general and the Muslim women in particular in India. Secondly, the study may provide a policy framework for both the voluntary organizations and the Government agencies towards evolving certain strategies for modernization of Muslims particularly their women in the Indian society. Thirdly, it may inspire the Muslim women to compare themselves with the women of other communities and take initiatives for their social and cultural modernization. Finally, it may remind the Muslim men to take a fresh look at the low status of their women and to create, through liberalizing their attitudes, a conducive environment for modernization and change of their women.

Presentation of the Thesis:

The thesis is divided into eight chapters. The first three chapters consist of introduction, methods of study and research setting followed by analysis of data in the next four chapters - analysing the socio-cultural, economic and religious aspects of modernization among the Muslim women in Darbhanga town in Bihar. More precisely, chapter 3 presents the research setting and socio-personal background of the respondents. In the fourth chapter the respondents' awareness and attitudes about the women's education and employment have been measured along a number of dependent and independent variables. In other words, the respondents' views on the various aspects of the educational and occupational pursuits of the Muslim women and the role of the Islamic
principles therein have been discussed in chapter 4.

The fifth, sixth and seventh chapters analyse the institutional, political and religious awareness of the respondents and their views on the various aspects of modernization. Thus, chapter 5 examines their views on the changes occurred in institutions like family and marriage but the major emphasis here is on the attitudinal and behavioural changes among the women. Whether they view that the structure and functions of these institutions have undergone some changes and if it not, whether there is need of change in them?

Similarly, the respondents' political awareness, their political participation and their views on minority complex have been discussed in chapter 6. Chapter 7 analyses their social awareness and self-assertion for their rights relating to liberty and social equality. In other words, this chapter examines their rights of liberty and equality contained in the Islamic principles and the contradictions, if any, between their such rights and those which have been accorded to them in Constitution of India. Finally, the last chapter presents a brief summary of the discussions carried in the previous chapters and outlines a number of emerging trends pertaining to modernization of women in general and the Muslim women in particular in India.