Conclusion
CONCLUSION

During the 19th Century and even in the first two decades of the first half of twentieth century, the Muslim community of Bengal, suffered from backwardness in socio-economic and political conditions and ultimately there was all round degeneration of Bengali Muslim society. The degeneration was the product of the societies, non-acceptance of the speedy changes that had taken place and also non response to the changing need of the time. When after 1850s the British government decided to give preference in public employment to English educated persons, the Muslims of Bengal lost the prospects of Government jobs and in their retreat found comfort in alienating themselves from modern education and rather in opposing it. The causes of apathy and indifference towards the modern education or English education were different in form and nature. The common Muslim masses of Bengal specially those who were Bengali speaking Muslims e.g., the cultivators, the labourers and other artisans who formed the majority of Atraf and Arjal sections of it were hardly conscious of the locus of the authority of the country.

The generalized situation was that the Bengali Muslims as a whole refrained from accepting the new state of things because their self respect was deeply hurt. The Muslims living in the villages here isolated by medieval communication system. The peasants and weavers both from Hindu and Muslim community had no opportunity whatever to get in touch with the new ideas and forces that were making themselves felt in urban areas particularly in and around Calcutta. The Muslim masses, particularly the rural sections of them, did not turn up in large numbers to demand any kind of education, English or traditional. They were deeply attached to their land and other rural professions and world,
had no way to come out of their misfortunes. The situation, position and property of the Muslim elites of Bengal was more or less dependent on Government's patronage which they naturally received as members or beneficiaries of the ruling class during pre-British period. The changes that were introduced by the British authority had brought changes in the position and privileges of the Muslim elites. The false sense of pride and security that was created among Ashraf Muslims in general failed to adjust with the realities of the situation and also to compromise with the tradition, while the Hindus were more realistic and practical who responded positively to the call of the time and acted accordingly. The sons and daughters of the “Bhadraloks” responded greatly to the call of the time and filled up the new schools, colleges and other institutions in the Bengal.

It was on the other hand, the Ashraf Muslims lack of foresight to meet the demand of new forces could be blamed for loss of socio-economic positions of the Muslims. After 1840s, British Government decided to give preference to English educated persons in Governmental jobs the Muslims of Bengal found themselves alienated from modern and in the process also opposed it. After the Revolt of 1857 some Muslim elites of Bengal tried to ponder over their failure to accept modern form of education and causes of such failures. The post 1857 witnessed some positive shift of British attitude towards Indian Muslims. The motive behind such shift was to form a strong anti-Hindu educated middle class and to provide them a ‘separate identity’.

The British authorities diagnosed the situation and recommended that the Muslims needed religious education in order to fulfil their religious needs, “some Arabic or Urdu education for holding a good position within a society and
some English Education to share the benefits of new dispensation”. Though this particular formula was applied to the Muslims of Bengal but the results was not very successful and the majority of Muslims were remained steeped into illiteracy and poverty. During 1870s some of the enlightened sections of the Muslim community under the leadership of Nawab Abdul Latif and Ameer Ali, responded positively to the changing need of time and slowly accepted the British rule as a reality. But the general mass of the Muslims in Bengal remained untouched by the activities of the British people and continued to live in their surroundings dictated by medieval conditions and value systems. The Urdu speaking urban section of the Muslim community had little contact with Bengali speaking rural folk of Bengal. This was resulted in ‘Ashraf Atraf’ dichotomy and also ‘policy of separatism’ within the community. Hence the Muslim population of Bengal, divided by linguistic and cultural barrier remained backward in the new system.

The backwardness and the retarded growth in education was not only the failure of British authorities but the crisis in Muslim leadership. The problem was also within itself of the community. During the last quarter of 19th century, some of the enlightened Muslims of Bengal took active steps and a movement was started gradually in favour of accepting the English education as a way to improve the overall conditions of the community. The situation in Burdwan and Murshidabad was the same as that of rest of Bengal. During the last decades of 19th century, it was observed that Hindus had progressed in all aspects of life and the Muslims were not be able to reach the progress as it had been achieved by the Hindus. The condition after 1905 was somewhat as the Muslim
by the Hindus, and the Muslims in the district felt that opportunities of their employment here extremely limited. The Muslims of Burdwan and Murshidabad had deep suspicious about the discrimination against them in case of employment. Muslims of Burdwan and Murshidabad suffered from problem and crisis in socio-economic life and also in terms of employment but the Muslims of Burdwan and Murshidabad showed great unity in Anti-Partition, Non-Cooperation and Civil Disobedience Movement. The Muslims of Bengal in general and Burdwan and Murshidabad two in particular were critical of the British rule in India took part actively in Nationalized politics. The growth of consciousness towards Nationalized politics was the product of growth of modern and secular education among Muslims of Bengal. The Muslim community, though numerically superior, suffered from psychological complex of being dominated by the Hindus in matters of self government. The Muslim legislators rightly focused on tremendous inadequacy of the Muslim representation in the local bodies. The period from 1920 onwards witnessed some interesting changes in the attitude of the Muslim community towards politics. During the first quarter of first half 20th century, the Bengal Muslim society witnessed growth and progress in terms of modern education. During 1930s the growth in education brought several changes into socio-economic and political life of the Muslims of Bengal. In fact just before Independence the Muslims of Bengal and also the districts showed great interest towards modern, scientific and secular education.