Chapter-IV

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

This chapter has been divided into two parts: first part contains the summary and the second part contains the conclusion. The summary will highlight of the details discussed in the previous chapters. The summary of the major findings can be divided into two categories: (a) the occupational stratification of the Muslim household, (b) the marriage and kinship structure of the Muslim household.

The study of this research work begins with the first chapter which includes the introduction with the history, geography and demography of Assam and its people. The second chapter contains the detailed study of the occupational stratification among the Muslim of Tezpur town. The third chapter discusses the marriage and kinship structure of the Muslim household in Tezpur town. Finally the fourth chapter sums up the major findings of the previous chapters.

SUMMARY

The First chapter includes the introduction with a historical description, statement of the problem, review of literature, objectives of study, methodology and chapterisation. It begins with historical description of Assam and also explains the demography of Assam.
The second chapter discusses the occupational stratification of the Muslims of Tezpur town in Sonitpur district of Assam. The second chapter begins with the description of Sonitpur as the administrative district of Assam in India. It is third most populous district of Assam next to Nagaon and Dhubri. The administrative headquarters of Sonitpur is in Tezpur. A short description of Tezpur is also given in the second chapter. Tezpur is the seventh largest city in Assam after Guwahati, Dibrugarh, Jorhat, Nagaon and Tinsukia. Tezpur is inhabited with different communities of people. The population is largely heterogeneous in nature. Assamese, Bengali, Bihari, Marwari and Nepali form the major communities. Muslim population in Tezpur is also not homogenous in terms of language, tradition, occupation and kinship. The second chapter categorizes the Muslims of Tezpur into Assamese speaking, Bengali speaking and Hindi speaking Muslim.

1) The Assamese speaking Muslims: The Muslims whose mother tongue is Assamese is also known as Thalua Musalman i.e., native Muslims. In Tezpur, these Muslims can be seen in rural areas. The Muslims who speak Assamese as their mother tongue are largely found in Dekargaon, Diputa, Barika Chuburi and in the areas of Beseria.

2) The Bengali Speaking Muslims: The second category of Muslims is the Bengali speaking Muslims. They mainly moved to Assam
during the later part of the 19th century till the first part of the 20th century. They are also known as *Bhatiya Musalman, Mymensingiya Musalman, Charua Musalman, Pamua Musalman,* and *Miya Musalman* depending on the group’s position in the Assamese society. These Muslims are on the whole referred to as *Miya Musalman.* These Muslims are in habitat in the areas of *Dolabari, Gutlung, Bhujkhuwa, Sarimile, Panchmile, Napaam, Borghat* and *Bhujkhuwa Chapor* in Tezpur.

3) **The Hindi speaking Muslims:** The third and the last category is the Hindi speaking Muslims. Their mother tongue is either Hindi or Bhojpuri. These Muslims moved to Assam during the first part of 20th century and also after independence mainly from Bihar and Uttar Pradesh. In Tezpur they are scattered in the areas of *Darjipatty, Nepali patty, Garwanpatty* and also in *Barika Chuburi.*

This chapter also discusses a short history of the diverse population growth in Assam and the occupations of the Muslims during the period of Ahoms. During the Ahom rule Muslim artisans were brought by the Ahom rulers and were employed in skills of embroidery, etching, sculpting, sword making and crafting works.

**Findings based on data:** The second chapter discusses the occupations of the Muslims based on the data collected. The data was collected from 60 Muslim household. Out of these 60 household, 20
respondents were from Assamese speaking, 20 were from Bengali speaking and 20 were from Hindi speaking Muslim household. These 20 respondents from each household is again divided into 20 men and 20 women.

**Assamese Speaking Muslims**: In the 20 Assamese speaking Muslim household, 70% of them are Government employees, 15% of them have commercial shops, 10% of them are commercial cultivators and 5% of them are Government contractors. It has been found that the percentage of people engaged in Government services is more than the Muslims engaged in commercial works. This is because, the educational qualifications required for those services are often attained by the Assamese speaking Muslims than their Bengali and Hindi speaking counterparts. Interviewing ten women of this category, it is found that two of them are service holders. The status of women among the Assamese speaking Muslims is satisfactory compared to the Hindi speaking Muslims.

**Bengali Speaking Muslims**: Out of 20 Bengali Muslim household, 15% of them are engaged in commercial business as Government contractors, 15% are service men, 10% of them are commercial cultivators, 35% of them are daily wage construction workers, household helpers and agricultural labours and 25% of them are engaged in
commercial business like running a grocery or has commercial vehicles. The percentage of people working in Government services are less and people working as daily wage earners is high. This is because, the people in this category are educationally backward and being a daily wage earner, it is difficult to afford the educational expenses. Those who can afford higher education always prefer to do Government services. But the percentage of such persons is less in this category.

**Hindi Speaking Muslims:** Out of 20 Hindi speaking household, 50% of them are engaged in commercial business of groceries, stationeries and have book stalls, 25% of them are engaged in occupation like butcher, mechanics, tailors and drivers, 25% of them are Government employees but all the Government employees are retired servicemen from Police department, Military engineering servicemen and also from Railway department. When the civil administration, Railway Department and Police Department in Assam, was first established by the British provincial government, they had to bring lot of Hindi speaking people in the Government services, as there was no scope of higher education and technical training in Assam. Eventually these Muslims after retirement got settled in Assam. The percentage of Hindi speaking Muslims engaged in commercial business of groceries and stationeries are high. The Muslims of this category are mainly engaged in commercial activities and
their interaction with the rest of the society is confined to business activities. They have never tried to assimilate with the larger Assamese Nationality. They are mainly engaged in commercial business.

The third chapter defines marriage, interprets meaning of marriage by Islam and also explains the concept of *Mahr*. This chapter describes the marriage and kinship structure among the Muslims of Tezpur based on data.

**Interpretation of Data from the Assamese Speaking Muslims:**

Out of 60 Muslim household, 20 Assamese speaking Muslim household were interviewed, it was found that, 70% of the 20 Assamese speaking Muslim households were nuclear families and 30% of them were extended families. Out of the married respondents, 99% of these respondents’ marriage was presided over by *Maulavi* and 1% of the respondent’s marriage was presided over by *Kazi* i.e, marriage was registered. All of the 20 household preferred their daughters to get married with *mahr* and with bride price. Not a single household preferred inter-religion marriage. They even don’t prefer inter-community marriage though Islam permits because they are quite strict in following their tradition and keeping their culture within themselves. While selecting groom for their daughter, all of the 20 households preferred to see the boy’s religion first, secondly his community, thirdly his education and
finally his occupation. While selecting a bride for a son, they preferred to see the girl’s religion first, second her community and finally her education. This is because a boy’s social position is always determined by his occupation and education and the social position of the girl and her family is determined by her educational qualification. Education is always valued among this category of Muslims.

**Interpretation of Data from the Bengali Speaking Muslims:**

When the Bengali speaking Muslims were interviewed, it was found that 65% of the total respondents belong to nuclear family and the other 35% of them belong to extended family. Again out of 20 households, 75% of the respondents’ nikah (marriage) was presided over by maulavi, 15% of their nikah was presided over by Kazi, 5% of their nikah was carried out both by Kazi and in Court and the last 5% were unmarried. When asked about dowry, all of the respondents said that gifts were exchanged but not demanded like dowry. There was no system of bride price like their Assamese speaking counterparts. Only the system of mahr is common in all the Muslim communities. Inter-religion marriage is not preferred among this category. As this Bengali speaking Muslims always try to assimilate with the Assamese speaking Muslims that is why they prefer inter-community marriage. While selecting a groom for their daughter, 85% of the respondents look the religion in the first instance and then the
occupation of the boy. And other 15% of the respondents look only for the religion of the boy. These 15% is financially very weak comparing to the other 85% respondents. The priority of this 15% Muslim household is to arrange the marriage to procreate and extend their families. And while selecting a bride for their son, they just look into the religion of the girl. Here too the priority is given in conducting the marriage rather than the eligibility of the girl to get married.

**Interpretation of Data from the Hindi Speaking Muslims:**

Interviewing the Hindi speaking Muslims, it was found that, 80% of the respondents’ marriage was presided over by *Maulavi*, 10% marriage was presided over by *Kazi* and other 10% were unmarried. 60% of the total respondents belong to extended families and other 40% of the respondents belong to nuclear families. When the researcher asked about dowry, all of the respondents said that gifts are exchanged but not demanded. There is no system of bride price like their Assamese speaking counterparts. Though inter-community marriage is preferred but inter-religion marriage is not preferred by any of the respondents. While selecting groom for a daughter, they first look into the religion of the boy and then his occupation. And while selecting bride, they only look into the religion of the girl. The priority is given in conducting the marriage rather than the eligibility of the girl to get married. Occupation of the boy
is always given priority than education. Majority of them believe that occupation is important to feed one’s wife and children rather than education.

CONCLUSION

The fourth chapter finally concludes the findings of the previous chapters. From the data collected in the field, it can be said that, the Assamese speaking Muslims generally live in a nuclear family and the Hindi speaking Muslims have extended family. This is because Assamese speaking Muslims are mainly Government employees, and live in urban areas. In urban areas nuclear families are more manageable. Though the system of mahr is common to each Muslim community but the system of offering bride price to the daughter-in-law has been seen only in the Assamese speaking Muslim community. The percentage of nikah (marriage) presided over by Kazi is high in Bengali speaking Muslim community and nikah presided over by Maulavi is more among Assamese speaking Muslims. Both the communities of Hindi and Bengali Muslims prefer inter-community marriage but none prefer inter-religion marriage. Whereby, Assamese speaking community do not prefer any of the inter-religion and inter-community marriage and even while selecting a bride, the Assamese speaking Muslims look upon the girl’s religion, community and education so that they can maintain their tradition and culture.
Similarly while selecting a groom, they look upon the boy’s religion, community, occupation and even education and they do not want to mix up their family line with other community of Muslims. So they particularly look into the community of the girl and the boy while they select bride and groom for marriage. But in relation to this, the Bengali and Hindi speaking communities do not follow any such criteria. Bengali speaking Muslims have always tried to assimilate with the larger section of Assamese speaking Muslims and so they do not mind in entering with an Assamese speaking Muslims. Though they don’t mind in marrying a Non-Hindi speaking Muslim but they have never tried to assimilate deliberately and kept the interaction with the society confined to their business activities only.