2. ETHNOGRAPHIC ACCOUNT AND SOCIAL STRUCTURE OF THE POPULATION

Muslims comprise about 13% of the total population of India which thus forms the largest minority in the subcontinent. Before partition of India into the Indian union and Pakistan (including Bangladesh before 1972), Muslim populations were concentrated in Bengal, Punjab and parts of North and Central India. After independence, however, Muslims have some strongholds in Northern India. The distribution of Muslims in different states of Indian union shows that the largest number is found in the state of Uttar Pradesh (U.P.). The richness of the social and cultural heritage of some Muslim populations of this state is widely recognised. The university being located in this area, the city of Aligarh has been the most appropriate place for this investigation to fully justify the objectives of the present study. Qureshi Muslim population of Aligarh city too forms a well-defined endogamous population (with known small population in which consanguineous marriages take place frequently).

The study was conducted in Aligarh city of the UP.state. The demographic characteristics of the district are fairly typical of that prevailing in other parts of the state. As per 1981 census, Aligarh city has a population of 3.20 laks with Muslims numbering 1.10572 (or 34.5%) of the total population. The figure also includes 20,000 resident students and staff members of the Aligarh Muslim University.
According to the rough estimates, more than 70 mohallas (localities) of the Aligarh city abound in Muslim populations.

The Muslims of Aligarh city like elsewhere are predominantly Sunnis; though a considerable number of Shias are also there. Among the Sunnis, approximately, one fourth of the population represents Syed, Sheikh, Moghal and Pathan groups who have social precedence while three-fourth belong to various other endogamous groups with lower social-ranks. A sizable proportion among the latter groups of Muslims are of Ansari (weaver) and Qureshi (meat seller) groups.

The purpose of the present study is to further elucidate the effects of genotypic differences between homozygotes and/or between homozygotes and heterozygotes of involved genes of multilocus system determining various characters. Therefore, individuals of relatively higher degrees of inbreeding (as measured by F) indicating a greater proportion of homozygous loci are compared with those having lower degrees of inbreeding. The difference of the two groups can also be influenced by genes rather than genotypes and also by the environmental variation which influence the phenotypic manifestation. It is therefore necessary, to minimise the extraneous influences on gene frequencies and environmental factors between the comparable groups as much as possible. In human population (in which controlled experimental breeding is impracticable)
the only possible way of controlling for genes and environments together is to draw samples of different specific degrees of inbreeding from an endogamous population representing only a single gene pool and individual cases of pairs, from close relatives as far as practicable. From this point of view the Qureshi population of Aligarh city provides a model for such studies. There is another advantage in selecting the Qureshi population of Aligarh city. In other populations studies done so far, familial aggregation of consanguineous marriages leading to such marriages in successive generations makes it difficult to obtain adequate samples having the uniform degrees (F) of inbreeding. The same phenomenon also arises in the way of having sizable samples with suitable control for genetic and environmental variation. Therefore the endogamous Qureshi population of Aligarh city was selected for focussing the impact of inbreeding on certain quantitative traits.

2.1 Geographic Background

In view of the importance of controlling environmental variance as a potent factor influencing the characters studied, the nature of some environmental conditions of the population is outlined below. The Aligarh city is situated at latitude 27°28' and 28°10' north and longitude 77°29' and 78°36' east. The total area is 34.05 square kilometer. Aligarh has almost a dry climate throughout the year.
During the winter, the temperature is very low, though frosts are not of frequent occurrence, or of greater intensity. The mean temperature for December and January, the coldest months is 8°C. The summer is decidedly hot. The maximum temperature of the district is 44°C. The district receives normal annual rainfall of 594.1 mms. Aligarh city is having people of different religious denominations, Hindus, Muslims, Jains, Christians, Punjabis etc. The city has strong historical heritage, such that on the northern most part of the city, historical glimpses can be found for the historicity of the Agra division which lies in the doab of the Ganga and Yamuna.

2.2 Socio-Economic Characteristics of Population Samples

The Qureshis by profession are meat-sellers and lock makers. They have either their own slaughter houses or work as labourers in slaughter house, thus supplying different types of meat throughout the district. For centuries the Muslims (including Qureshi) in Aligarh have been engaged in lock making. About 95% of the Qureshi population belong to this labour class and the data for the present study have been collected from this section of the population to control for environmental variation. Health is the last priority on their expenditure budget. The gloomy economic condition has pressed the children of school going age to be engrossed into the profession so as to raise the sagging...
family income. Illiteracy and ignorance are thus widely perpetuated into the families due to this occupation. The participation of child labour is obvious in this low income stratum of workers.

About seventy four percent of the Qureshis as well as other lower caste Muslim families of Aligarh city are found to be illiterate. The percentage of literates from the forefathers has dropped from 34% to 31%. Only 3.18 percent of the population can be said to be matriculated (Siraj,1990). About 60.83% of the males are illiterate, while around 89% of females have been reported to be illiterate. On the other hand, the Aligarh Muslim University, on extreme Northern side of the city, is an island of high profile Muslims, though rarely do they reflect or identify with commonfolk. Poverty of education has a direct relationship with low income. Education occupies an extremely low priority in the scheme of domestic and financial budget.

2.3 Food and Social Activity

The prominent feature of the social life of low caste Muslims are cheap entertainment sources like cinema, music and religious rituals. Almost every male of all age groups go for compulsory Friday Prayers at mosques. Religious attachment is more or less present among all persons. Religious education is frequent and modern education is also on the increase at the present moment. The Aligarh Muslim University has set up a couple of schools especially for the
girls. Purdah (veil) is strictly followed among women for all age groups.

The food items generally include meat, rice, wheat, and pulses; vegetables are consumed in lesser quantities. Oils and fats are copiously used while the use of milk and dairy products are scarce as are beverages and drinks.

The Qureshis of Aligarh city are consolidated around a few mohallas like Sarai Mian, Delhi Darwaza, Turkman Gate, Kala Mahal, Jamalpur etc. The subjects were picked up from these mohallas for studying the impact of inbreeding on some quantitative traits. Mohallas with heterogeneous nature in terms of social group have been excluded from the present work.

3. DATA AND PROCEDURE

3.1 Samples and Subsamples

The school going boys and girls were purposively picked up from the above mentioned mohallas (colonies) for assessing their different measurements. The total number of subjects were distributed age-wise from 6 through 11 years. The age was determined to nearest birth date from the school registration book. All children were apparently healthy at the time of examination. The measurements were taken during the school hours in the leisure periods and sometimes also, at home through subsequent visits.

Total samples are divided into subsamples of annual age