CHAPTER - I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Education - it's importance:

"It is the first and foremost duty of all the well wishers of the country to strive for the welfare of all the people irrespective of their cast or religion. For just as human life and its health is not possible without the soundness of all the organs of body, the prosperity of a nation is not possible without alround progress of the country." - Sir Syed Ahmad Khan.

Education is the backbone of the nation and Mirror of the Community. In the order of priorities, education has been accorded a high priority and considered to be an integral part of a country's developmental process. Studies have demonstrated that progress and prosperity of a nation go hand in hand with the level of education of its masses. Among the important needs of mankind, education is the foremost. Only education can enable a man to become human. Hence education is a pre-requisite for progress and development.

1.2 Education - its democratic value:

India is a vast democratic country. Democracy means equal opportunities in education also. In Indian constitution it has been mentioned that equal opportunity in education and in all the other fields is bestowed to Indian citizens. This idea is conveyed by the following quotations:

"... freedom prevails and democracy flourishes only if we identify and nourish through education, the unique

and various interests, intelligences and abilities of each individual".2

Only education can create, nourish, maintain and realise the practicability of democracy in a society. Knowing the importance of education, Framers of our constitution has given due importance to education. The preamble of the constitution of India states:

"We the people of India, having solemnly resolved to constitute India into a sovereign, Democratic, Secular and Socialistic republic and to Secure all its citizens:-

JUSTICE - Social, economic and political,

LIBERTY of thought, expression, belief and worship,

EQUALITY of status and opportunity and to promote among them all.

FRATERNITY, assuring the dignity of the individual and the unity of the nation. In our constituent assembly this twenty sixth day of November 1949, to hereby adopt, enact and give to ourselves this constitution.3

Education is accepted as a fundamental right of all members of the society. Continuous efforts have been made to extend education to all children through formal and nonformal means and through special Schemes for the socially deprived groups, such as, girls, scheduled castes, scheduled tribes, under privelaged and lately for the disabled also. But much remain to be achieved to ensure acceptance of the idea and utilisation of the means provided. The problem of mass education is of national importance on which the future of democracy depends but the same is found to be neglected for a long time.


3. Ibid., p.32.
Even after forty-five years of Independence the masses neither got minimum primary education nor adequate adult education. Along with the growth of population, the number of illiterates is also increasing. The increasing rate of literacy is negligible. 'Seventy percent of the population is still illiterate and hence the educational system is also remains highly Inegalitarian'.

"An illiterate democracy is a danger not only to itself, but to the world, the higher the degree of literacy that is attained by the people, the greater the possibility of government by the people being conducted on foundations of right, justice and truth. The essential force, therefore, of educational efforts in India, should be directed towards breaking down of illiteracy of the masses".

The Report of the Director of Public Instruction, Bombay (1922-27 p. 94), contains, similar observations. It says: "the first essential for any thing in the nature of democratic government in India is a literate electorate. The cultivators are the backbone of the country and it is right that they should have a voice in the government, but they should atleast be literate if they are to take an interest in political questions". The problem of 'Mass-education is of national importance on which the future of democracy depends, but the same is found to be neglected for a long time.

1.3 Education of Muslims: (A General view).

It is a matter of regret that the percentage of illiteracy among the Muslim masses is much higher than the other communities in India. It has been taken for granted that Muslims in India are educationally and economically backward and almost all scholars begin with this

5. Ibid., p. 1
6. Ibid., p. 18
assumption. The Muslims constitute the largest minority in India. According to the 1971 census, the religion-wise distribution of the population in India showed the following figures.

Table No. 1.1


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Religious Community</th>
<th>Total Population</th>
<th>Percentage of total population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Hindus</td>
<td>45,32,92,086</td>
<td>82.72%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Muslims</td>
<td>6,14,17,934</td>
<td>11.21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Christians</td>
<td>1,42,23,382</td>
<td>2.60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Sikhs</td>
<td>1,03,78,797</td>
<td>1.89%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Buddhists</td>
<td>38,12,325</td>
<td>0.70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Jains</td>
<td>26,04,646</td>
<td>0.47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Other religion</td>
<td>22,20,639</td>
<td>0.41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Religion not stated</td>
<td>N.A.*</td>
<td>N.A.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* N.A. (Not available)

MAJOR RELIGIOUS GROUPS
IN INDIA 1981

HINDUS 82.64

OTHERS 1.62
SIKHS 1.96
CHRISTIANS 2.43
MUSLIM 11.35

FIG. 1
Table No. 1.2

Major Religious Members. Census Report 1981*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Religious Community</th>
<th>Total Population</th>
<th>Percentage of Total Population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Hindus</td>
<td>549,779,481</td>
<td>82.64%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Muslims</td>
<td>75,512,439</td>
<td>11.35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Christians</td>
<td>16,165,447</td>
<td>2.43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Sikhs</td>
<td>13,078,146</td>
<td>1.96%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Buddhists</td>
<td>4,719,796</td>
<td>0.71%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Jains</td>
<td>3,206,038</td>
<td>0.48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Other religious</td>
<td>2,766,285</td>
<td>0.42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Religion not stated</td>
<td>10,217</td>
<td>0.10%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Excluding Assam.

Once Muslims were the rulers of this country. They had a glorious past. From the point of view of their glorious, their present social and political status, their importance is much more than proportionate to this numbers, for "they are" in the words of Lord Macauley, "United, Zealous, ambitious and a war-like class".  

In the field of Education they never complained of their backwardness, until the Britishers had fully established their Government in India. Although the position of education during Muslim rule was of a high standard. Muslim has played a very significant role in the national struggle for freedom in India. They have been in the forefront of it. After all, it was from their hands that the British had wrested power. When British Imperialism was spreading its tentacles over the country and capturing one province after the other, the first man to realise the gravity of situation and the dangers of it, was the lion hearted Tipu Sultan of Mysore. His famous, historic words spoken a little before he met his death were:  

"To live for a day like a tiger is far more precious than to live for a hundred years like a jacob."  

It was the biased and Prejudiced British, who spared no effort to destroy the entire Muslim Community. "Twenty seven thousand Muslims were executed to speak nothing of those killed in the general massacre. It seemed that the British were determined to blot out of existence the entire Muslim race. They killed the children and the way they treated women simply belies description. It rends the

heart to think of it." To dominate over Muslims, the British government took the policy of 'Divide and rule'. Introduction of separate communal electorates under the Minto-Morely reforms of 1909 led Muslims themselves to feel insecure. Suddenly the proud muslims found themselves to be a minority.

Establishment of self government involved the development of representative institutions gradually developing into a full-fledged parliamentary system on the British model. "Introduction of any system of representation based upon direct election and majority rule meant a government by individuals responsible to the elected representatives of the majority. In the Indian conditions, where political action was almost bound to be an expression of religious or ethnic group consciousness, the rule of majority meant hardly anything else than the rule of the Hindu majority. In this political system, new and uncertain, the minorities being smaller in number were destined to remain in a position of disadvantage, perhaps, perpetually. The principal moving forces, thus behind the question of constitutional safeguards for minorities - were fear and insecurity, intensified, indeed, by political and economic competition. Since then, the question of minority and the constitutional safeguards is continuing. After Independence, for the satisfaction of Muslim minority, a constitutional safeguard is provided. The constitution of India, gives full guarantee of educational development of Muslims.

Article 30 of the Indian constitution, says that:

(1) All minorities whether based on religion or language shall have the right to establish and administer educational institutions of their choice and preference.


(2) The state shall not, in granting aid to educational institutions, discriminate against any educational institutions on the ground that it is under the management of a minority, whether based on religion or language.

Thus article 29(2) again imposed on a prohibition that the denial of admission in any educational institution on ground only of religion, race, caste or language.

Even so, why are Muslims of India far backward in education? What are the reasons behind this backwardness? How much did they develop educationally during the post Independence period? These are the some most important questions for the Muslims as well as for entire the nation.

Like other regions in the country, North-East India is the most picturesque, enchanting and diverse. Assam occupies a prominent position in North-East India. It is the North-Eastern frontier of India and is connected with the rest of the country through a narrow strip of land below the district of Darjelling in West Bengal. Among the different communities, Muslims are the second largest minority in Assam. Excluding tribals, once they were the majority community, when Syhet, a thickly populated Muslim district was annexed with Assam, in 12th September 1874. However, it is clear from the following table that after partition of India, Kashmir has taken the first place for its highest density of Muslim population in the North-West. Assam is at the second highest place in the North-East. The table also shows that the Muslim population is spread over all the 356 districts of India, from a high concentration of 68.3 percent of the total population in Jammu and Kashmir to a low density of 1.23 percent in Orissa.

in the following states.

Table No. 1.3

State-wise density of Muslim population in India above 10% (1971 Census)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of the State</th>
<th>Percentage of Population*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1961</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Jammu &amp; Kashmir</td>
<td>68.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Assam</td>
<td>23.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. West Bengal</td>
<td>20.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Kerala</td>
<td>17.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Uttar Pradesh</td>
<td>14.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Bihar</td>
<td>12.45</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* The 1971 figures are provisional estimates.

1.4 Education of Muslims in Assam:

The entrance of Muslims in Assam can be traced from the 12th century onwards. Muslim population consolidated during British period and established there permanently. The Muslims of Assam can be divided into three categories on the basis of its originality. They are (1) Goria & Contemporary Muslims (2) Assamese of Local converted Muslims, and (3) Miya or Bengali origin Muslims. On the basis of languages spoken at home at present the entire Muslims Community can broadly be divided into two as - (a) Assamese speaking and (b) Bengali speaking Muslims.

It is the general assumption that Assamese speaking Muslims are to some extent ahead in education than the Miyan Muslims. Bengali Muslims on the other hand are

STATE WISE DENSITY OF MUSLIM POPULATION IN INDIA 1981

- JAMMU AND KASHMIR: 61-100%
- NIL: 31-60%
- ASSAM AND W. BENGAL: 21-30%
- KERALA AND UTTAR PRADESH: 15-20%
- BIHAR AND KARNATAKA: 10-14%
- GUJARAT, MAHARASHTRA, ANDHRA PRADESH, RAJASTHAN AND DELHI: 6-9%
- TAMIL NADU, MADHYA PRADESH, HARYANA, PUNJAB, HIMACHAL AND ORISSA: 1-5%
much more in number than the Assamese Muslims. Hence the prestige and position of the Muslim leaders in Assam politics greatly depends on the hold of political leaders of Bengali Muslims.  

It is true that Muslims as a community are much backward educationally and economically. Most of the Muslims are farmers and labours. Their standard of living is very low and can not adjust to the present situation. They are too backward even if compared to Muslims of other Indian states of West Bengal, Kerala, Uttar Pradesh and Kashmir.

Keeping an eye to the importance of this aspect, the topic, "Educational Progress of Muslim Community in Assam after Independence with special Reference to Morigaon District" has been chosen. An attempt is made to find out the present position of educational progress of Muslim community which is most essential for further uplift of the community. It is not possible to study educational progress of Muslim community of India nor even in Assam, within a limited time. Therefore, the study has been confined to a particular district, "Morigaon" to represent the districts of central Assam.

Morigaon, a newly formed district of Central Assam is almost situated between the middle of the two mighty rivers, "Brahmaputra" in the north and 'Kapili' in the south. It used to be a sub-division of Nagaon district, but since last year (1989) it has become a full-fledged district. Except a great paper Mill of Jagirod it is an agricultural district. The composition of the population is mixed. Many communities live side by side. Caste-Hindus are mainly concentrated in the Eastern part, while Plain-tribes are in the western part of this district. 'Miya' Muslims are in the north-west and southern parts of this district. Assamese Muslims are concentrated in some specific areas of central part of the district. The well

known 'Nellie' where thousands of Muslims were brutally killed during the massacre of 1983 is also situated near the district headquarters of Morigaon. Like all other districts of Assam, Muslims of this district are also educationally and economically backward. Educational progress of Muslim community in Assam with special reference to Morigaon district can be discussed in the following categories:

1.4.1. **Pre-Primary Education:**

Pre-primary education for the masses which is the base of primary education is practically non-existent. There are few pre-primary schools situated mainly in cities where the children of upper class and rich people only can avail of the facility. Generally these institutions are run by some private bodies who charge heavy fees. At present, pre-primary institutions, similar to pre-primary as 'Anganwadi' institutions have been started by private bodies which are financed by Social Welfare Department of the State Government with the aid from Central Social Welfare Board. These institutions are run for the masses. However, this facility is not commonly available in Assam, specially in the areas of concentrated Muslim population. So, pre-primary education for Muslims in Assam with special reference to Morigaon district is still a dream to come true.

1.4.2. **Primary Education:**

Primary education is the foundation of educational system, which exerts a greater influence upon the child. The general condition of primary schools all over Assam is not goods and the situation is worse in the areas of Muslim population.

Hence, the schools of areas of Muslim population with special reference to the schools of Morigaon District
are inadequate and very poor. It is remarkable that even 45 years of Independence some riverine (char) areas of the state inhabited by Muslims are deprived of Primary education. The transport system of these areas is bad. Many places are in accessible. No doubt, the number of Primary School is increasing in some areas of concentrated Muslim population of the state. But due to lack of school facilities these areas are still remain backward. M.Phil thesis, of the investigator on the facilities of primary schools reveals that due to lack of various facilities provided by Government, the Muslim areas are still educationally backward.

From empirical evidence it can be said that 40 out of 100 children never enter the schools. Out of 100 only 15 students reach 8th standards. We find huge wastage and heavy stagnation specially at lower grades of Primary School. The pupils who leave schools before completing IV and VIII standards, become functionally illiterate in the future, because they do not use the knowledge which they may have gained. So the number of illiterates continues to be increasing. The children of Bengali Muslims have been suffering greatly due to the language problem. Due to lack of incentives on their part and apathy of the Government the percentage of illiteracy among Muslims has been increasing.

1.4.3 Secondary Education:

Secondary education is the most important for all-round development of the Adolescents. Secondary education includes High Schools and Higher Secondary Schools. High Schools include classes VIII to X and Higher Secondary

Schools consist of classes XI - XII. Upto the session 1987-88, there were 2,380 high schools and 365 Higher Secondary Schools in Assam. The total enrolment was 7,14,472 in high schools and 1,93,188 in Higher Secondary Schools during 1987-88. It is clear from the above figures that during the post-independence period there has been a phenomenal increase in the growth of secondary education in the state. However, it is evident from the following table that the quality of both the schools has not improved with the increase of quantity, because larger number of students are still failing every year.

Table No. 1.4


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Percentage of successful student In H.S.L.C. Exams.</th>
<th>Percentage of successful student In H.S.S.L.C. Exams.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1971-72</td>
<td>43.52</td>
<td>45.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1972-73</td>
<td>30.98</td>
<td>42.36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1973-74</td>
<td>27.50</td>
<td>61.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1974-75</td>
<td>27.39</td>
<td>34.96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1975-76</td>
<td>N.A.</td>
<td>41.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1976-77</td>
<td>32.92</td>
<td>40.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1977-78</td>
<td>36.38</td>
<td>48.34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1978-79</td>
<td>35.40</td>
<td>47.98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1979-80</td>
<td>37.80</td>
<td>54.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980-81</td>
<td>28.30</td>
<td>56.30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Director of Public Instruction, Government of Assam.

Most of the students after completion of secondary education do not go for higher education. Some of them come back to the community and start to maintain a family

17. Source: Director of Secondary Education, Govt. of Assam. Guwahati.

18. Ibid
life. Due to social, political and economical causes some of the students leave the school before completion of secondary education. There is no proper encouragement for the improvement of their education. There are very few secondary schools in the Morigaon District. Out of the established schools few are in Muslim areas. Schools which are in Muslim areas are also inadequate and insufficient. Some high schools are being run in the interior areas of this region. The transport and communication systems in these areas are not well developed. Many schools of these areas have suffered greatly due to lack of proper material conditions and teaching staff. The physical environment of secondary schools of these areas failed to motivate the students of this locality.

Economic condition of parents is related to the education of their children. Agriculture, however, is still principal Occupation of 95% of Muslims of Assam. Due to the traditional system of agriculture and cultivation methods, the economic condition of Muslim community in Assam is on the decline. Their economic condition is not improving. It has a profound effect on the percentage of Muslim students attending Secondary schools of these areas. The result is that their percentage is comparatively low.

1.4.4. Higher Education:

(a) College Education (Graduate Level): Upto the year 1988, there were 160 Degree Colleges in Assam. Some degree colleges introduced all the three faculties i.e. Arts, Science and Commerce. The total enrolment of the Arts, Science and Commerce Colleges was 45,246, 12,018 and 6,897 respectively. These are combined figures which include all the communities. There is a dearth of data on community-wise distribution of enrolments. However, it is the general assumption that Muslims are undoubtedly backward at all the stages of education. Higher education
mainly depends on economic soundness of the family. It is already pointed out that Muslims are too much backward economically, because 95% of them depend on traditional system of agriculture and daily labour. Moreover, there is no encouragement for the government job opportunities for Muslims of the state. Parents and guardians of Muslim students are frustrated and so, most of them do not send their sons and daughters for higher education. Inspite of this frustration, those who wish to send their sons and daughters for higher education, have to face obstacles in admission, as the number of Colleges is very small as compared to the number of students seeking admission. Most of the Colleges are situated in the cities/towns and specially in Hindu-concentration areas. Out of three Fulfilled Colleges of Morigaon district none is situated in Muslim populated areas.

With the beginning of communal violences from 1980 onwards and after facing many difficulties and hardships three colleges have been established in the Muslim Majority-Population areas of this district. These Colleges have been established by local donations and are waiting government grants for the last seven years. Moreover, it is learnt from the past experiences that whenever a tense situation arises Muslim students are to watch themselves in Hostels, Campus and Outside. On the basis of merit, only a few students can represent the whole Muslim Community in city/town Colleges of high standard. There is no special provision of Muslim seats for admission and hostel accommodation on the basis of their backwardness. From the various standpoints we can say that Muslims are also far backward in higher education. There are very few graduates in the Muslim areas of this district. On the average the ratio of Muslim graduates will be not more than two or three to a village.
(b) **University Education:**

The International Committee on the Development of Education in its report **LEARNING TO BE** (1972) states that "the future of our societies lies in democracy, development and change; our societies must train men for democracy humanistic development and change". 19 If this social change is to take place there is only one instrument of social change and that is education. University has taken greater share of this change. There are two universities in Assam - Guwahati and Dibrugarh. There is an agricultural University also situated at Jorhat. Dissemination of knowledge is an important function of a University. In this field the two universities have done well within a short span of time but they are yet to provide higher education to all those who seek it. Whether or not higher education should be provided to all those who seek it is a different matter. The following table shows how many applicants for admission to higher education were denied the opportunity in the year 1980-81 at Guwahati University.

**Table No.1.5**

The position of seats available and the number of Applicants of Guwahati University during the session 1980-81.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subjects of Study</th>
<th>Seats Available</th>
<th>Number of Applicants</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Men</strong></td>
<td><strong>Women</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assamese</td>
<td>142</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>114</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bengali</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Botany</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commerce</td>
<td>176</td>
<td>580</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chemistry</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From the table mentioned above, it is clear that there is a shortage of seats for Post-graduate education at the Guwahati University. Dibrugarh University is also faced the same problem. Hence the question of merit arises automatically. Admissions are given on the basis of merit. It is one of the main barrier for the Muslim students, because Muslim parents could not produce more meritorious sons and daughters, due to their weak family background. Ninetyfive percent (95%) Muslims are cultivators and Seventy percent (70%) of them are poor. Most of them are illiterates, ignorant and lathergic. Hence very few students from Muslim community are coming for post graduate education. Being a Backward community there is no special provision for them in the universities either. The number of Muslim Post-graduate can be counted on the fingerstips. In case of Morigaon District the position of Muslim Postgraduates is also poor. From empirical evidence, it can be said that on the average there will not even be a single post-graduate in each Muslim village of this district.
1.4.5 Vocational Education:

Under vocational and Professional education, one may include Legal, Medical, Engineering, Technical and Agricultural education and also different diploma courses. Upto the year 1988, there were several law Colleges, three Medical Colleges (Allopathy Colleges only), three Engineering Colleges, six Polytechnics, twenty seven technical, Industrial Arts & Craft Schools, one Indian Technical Institute (I.T.I.), one Sericulture, one Veterinary Science School, one Forest School, two Nursing and Midwifery, nine Teachers Training Colleges, Thirty two teachers training schools (including Basic & Non-Basic) and one Land Survey School were established in Assam. For an entire state these are very small numbers. The state as a whole including Morigaon district is lagging behind in vocational and Professional education compared to other states of Indian Union. The number of seats are very limited. Hostel accommodation is also not sufficient. In most of the Institutions like Medical, Engineering, Technical and Agriculture, students are admitted on the basis of merit. Sometimes, competitive written test is conducted for selection. Except a few, most of the Muslim students can not compete with their Hindu brothers. Hence, the enrolment of Muslim students in these institutions is certainly low. Morigaon district is backward in vocational education and the number of Muslim students in vocational education of this district is negligible.

1.4.6. Religious Education:

Generally, education in Maktab and Madrasah is known as religious education. During the Muslim rule in India, Maktabs provided primary and Madrasahs provided Higher

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20, Statistical Abstract, Govt. of Assam, 1978, Director of Public Instruction, Government of Assam.
education. This education was mainly religious. This education was also treated as traditional system of education of Muslims. Now, it lost its popularity and utility. With the changes in the world of education, these traditional institutions were modified by adding some modern subjects in some states of India which received Government grants. In Assam at present Maktab provides completely modern (General) education. There is no provision of classical subjects in these schools. There are some Middle English Madrasahs (M.E. Madrasah) in Assam which provide general education including Arabic as a compulsory subject for the classes V to VII. There are more than 155 High Madrasahs all over Assam, which provide general education along with two or three religious subjects. Students from all communities are allowed into these institutions from Maktab onwards. High Madrasahs of Assam are equivalent to High School. All the institutions mentioned above are receiving Government grants. However, these institutions are very few in number as compared to the Muslim population of a given area.

There is no provision by the Government for religious education in Assam. Therefore, Basic religious education remains confined to the private institutions in the Muslim majority areas only. These institutions do not get any grant from the Government. At present there are some private institutions like 'Khariji' and 'Alia' Madrasahs which have been providing religious education. These schools have to depend on Private contributions for their finances. Madrasahs which receive Government grants are very few in number at Morigaon District. There are only four High Madrasahs in the Morigaon District. These institutions cannot function effectively due to lack of material conditions of teaching. Above all there is no scope of religious education in Assam. Religious education may remain confined to the Private institutions of the Muslim Community. Thus,
religious education, is not common in Assam. Advantages of religious education for the Muslim community are limited.

1.4.7. Women Education:

Education of a boy, is an education of an individual only but education of a girl' is an education of an entire family. Emphasizing women education, Nepolean said that, "Give me an educated mother, I shall promise you birth of civilized, educated nation".21 According to Babu Jagjeevan Ram, "if a girl,' is educated the future generation will be educated".22

From the census reports of 1961 and 1971, it seems that the problem of women education is very grave in India. The census report of 1961, had pointed out that there were only 34.5% of women from urban and 8.9% from rural areas were literate. According to the census report of 1971 the corresponding figures were 41.5% and 11.2% respectively.

This indicates a rise in percentages of literacy, 70% for urban and 2.3% for rural areas respectively for the decade 1961-71.23 Assam is far lagging behind in women education. According to 1971 census, there were 25.33 lakh illiterate persons in the age group of 15-35 years in Assam, of this 62% were women.24 It means that more women as compared to men are illiterate. As Muslims of Assam are educationally backward compared to others, Muslim women are also backward in this field. This applies to Morigaon District, which is a backward area. The problems of girls/women education are many and varied. Poverty, illiteracy, low economic status of parents, social evils and cultural restrictions are mainly responsible for lack of education of Muslim women/girls in Assam. Lack of insufficient number

21. M.G. Mali, op.cit., p. 44.
22. Ibid.
24. N.M. Gogpi, op.cit., p. 85
of girls's Schools and Colleges and still fewer number of hostels for women are some of the causes. Some parents do not like to send their daughters in the co-educational institutions. Muslim women of Morigaon district are far backward even if compared to the other parts of Assam. Girls/Women of Bengali Muslims of Assam are very religious and conservative than the other Assamese or "garious" women. They want to maintain religious restrictions which will not permit co-education beyond primary stage. Religious persons like to allow marry their daughters as soon as they attain puberty. Thus early marriage can also be a cause of educational backwardness of Muslim women in Assam.

So it is a crucial question why Muslims of this state are educationally more backward in comparison to the Majority Community? If compared to larger states of the Union this backwardness will seem to be much more. Did the original pattern of Muslim settlement and the economic conditions directly influenced education of Muslims in Assam? Is giving up their own language created a setback for their education? Is it due to the fact that they are politically suppressed?

Considering these factors and the importance of education and also its effect on the development of a community, a research study is most pertinent.

1.5. Conclusion:

It is the need of the hour to present a picture of educational development of Muslims in this state. Even 45 years after the Independence no researcher has taken up this topic for detailed study. It is a matter of regret that the authorities of our country are not properly aware about this important national problem.

At present Educational Policy in India is fluid. It has not yet taken a definite shape. In 1986 the Previous
educational policies were given up in favour of the so-called 'New Educational Policy'. Conferences, Seminars, Workshops, Symposia were held in different parts of the country. The National Educational Policy or New Educational Policy hardly began to take a shape, which in 1989 there was a change of Government and leadership at the Centre and the policies once again suffered a set back. Not only were they stalled, but the Janata Dal Government wanted to make an Educational Policy of their own.

Once again Committees, counsels and debates were started but the Janata Dal government fell much before any substantial work was done. It lasted only 11 months. Janata Dal (S) Government never could find time to devote their attention to education. They were too busy with internal squabales and inter party feuds. Their tenure in office being only four months.

Since Independence of India Several Committees and Commissions have been appointed from time to time to study the conditions of the country and try to develop an improved pattern or policy. Some of them are listed below:-

1. Radhakrishnan or the Indian University Commission 1948.

Thus, the last efforts were made being the New Educational Policy of Congress Government of 1986 and an attempt towards policy making by the Janata Government of 1989. All these attempts however, were inadequate and shown no positive result.

An effort to achieve the directives of Indian Constitution for the implementation of free, compulsory and universal education for all children till they complete the age
of 14 years is still continuing. Even so, 70% of the population is still illiterate. Among this, large number of illiterate Muslims are in the fore-front. Absence of a research study about this important aspect of education has not brought the problem in the lime-light. Perhaps this is a reason why Muslims are not aware of the pathetic conditions of their own illiteracy, lack of education which contribute towards their socio-economic backwardness. Had the Muslims known these facts and factors, they would have approached perhaps pressed the Governments at the state and central levels for help.

Morigaon District of Assam has the focus of attention of researchers from the sociological point of view. The writer being a local person of this district and also belonging to the same community is naturally interested to study "the educational progress of Muslim Community in Assam with special reference to Morigaon District."

"We are passing through rather difficult times in our country. Ugly forces of communalism, separatism and fissiparous tendencies have raised heads. Selfishness and corruption are rampant -- which are to be fought against". Education may be one of the great weapons to fight against the ills mentioned above. Hence, the first and foremost duty and responsibility of Government(s) to provide equal educational opportunities to all communities of India.

Without proper education for everyone, a nation cannot prosper. This is evident by the following quotation. "Basic tenets on which the policy has been formulated may be summed up as education for all, education for material and spiritual development, education for the development of manpower for different levels of the economy, education

for national cohesion and scientific temper and education that would further the goals of socialism, secularism and democracy adopted in our constitution. Briefly, the policy seeks to achieve the objective of attaining equity with excellence in education".27

Quality education is required not only for development and prosperity, but also for peace, unity integrity, understanding and brotherhood of man. This is most important and essential in India where many communities live with their different religions, languages, cultures, customs and traditions. Kundu's advice in this regards needs attention. "There is an urgent need today to promote national unity, and national identity. A concern for national integration needs to be developed in the minds of all citizens -- citizens of today as well as those of tomorrow. The school curricula not only need to be designed for understanding the compositness of our culture but it must also be interpreted in the schools in terms of "unity in Diversity".28

Keeping all these in mind the investigator has selected this topic considering Morigaon district as a representative of other areas of Assam.

For investigation and analysis, the topic is divided into ten chapters. The first is introduction. The second chapter covers historical background of settlement of Muslims in Assam, (From 1200 to 1947 AD). Third chapter describes the problem, aims and purpose, scope of this study, related literature survey, delimitation and importance of the study. The fourth chapter gives description of development of education of Muslims (From 1200 to 1990). The fifth is concerned with causes of educational backwardness of Muslims. The sixth chapter is concerned with the

27. Ibid., p. 2.
28. Ibid., p. 2.
CHAPTER - II

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF SETTLEMENT OF MUSLIMS IN ASSAM
(1200 - 1947 AD)

Before going into details about the "Educational Progress of Muslims community in Assam after Independence with special reference to MORI GAON DISTRICT", it is most essential to know briefly about the historical background of settlement of Muslims in Assam. (a) Settlement and establishment history of Muslims in Assam; (b) Original pattern of Muslim population in Assam; and (c) Political Position of Muslims in Assam during Post-Independence Period are directly or indirectly related with the education of Muslims. Without knowing these important factors the study of the educational progress of Muslim Community in Assam would remain incomplete.

Assam is the frontier Province of India in the North-East. The boundaries of Assam lie between latitudes 28°18', and 24° North and longitudes 89°46' and 97°4 East. It contains at present an area of 54,000 square miles of which a little over 24,000 square miles constitute the Plains, 19,500 square miles the southern hill tracts, and the rest is the small hills to the North. Hemmed in, as India is by the sea on the South-East and South-West, and by the lofty chain of the Himalayas on the north, the only routes between India and the rest of Asia which is possible for migration on a large scale, lies to its north-west and north-east confines. In Assam, both Ahoms and Muslims entered as invaders. Ahoms entered Assam from the Eastern border in 1228 AD, while Muslims from the West in 1206 AD. Ahoms could establish their permanent empire, but Muslims could not do so successfully. However, Muslims were able to conquer some parts of Assam and administered them temporarily. From that time Muslims started to settle in Assam.

method and tools that are used in this study. The seventh is related with the presentation and analysis of data. The eighth is related to the findings and conclusions. The ninth chapter deals with the suggestions and recommendations and the last chapter indicates need for further research. After that, bibliography and appendices are given.

For preparing this thesis several steps have been taken. First step was library work. In the second step, Proformas were prepared to be administered to the selected households. Again a questionnaire and an opinionnaire to supplement and compliment the pro-formas, were designed. These two related tools were administered among the selected literate and non-literate persons of the state. Visits and surveys of the selected family units (households) of the selected areas of the District have been taken up to consult the literate and illiterate persons, in regard to educational progress of Muslim Community.

It is hoped that, it will be of service to the community or those who are directly or indirectly concerned with problem. Moreover, it may give inspiration to make a wide survey in Assam as well as in other states of India.

"The prosperity of a country depends, not on the abundance of its resources, nor on its strength of its fortifications, nor on the beauty of its public buildings, but it consists in the number of its cultivated citizens, in the men of education, enlightenment and character."\(^{29}\) — King, Martin Luther.

\(^{29}\) N.M. Gogoi, (Souvenir), op.cit., p. 110.