CHAPTER III

HISTORICO-GEOGRAPHICAL PERSPECTIVES OF THE STUDY AREA

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CHAPTER III

HISTORICO-GEOGRAPHICAL PERSPECTIVE OF ALIGARH

III. 1. Physical Setting of the District

Geographical personality of a region is closely associated with its physical setting. Geography as a discipline gives knowledge, understanding and skills, which help us to develop values and attitudes for an effective life in the global village. The ultimate enquiry of geography is space. The identification of spatial linkages and spatial patterns within the city provide a basic source material both for educationalists and policy makers.

Aligarh district has acquired a unique personality with the fusion of historical and geographical elements. The district lies in an alluvial plain of quaternary age, made of recent unconsolidated fluvial formations, comprising sand, silt, clay and kankar. There are subtle morphological variations in this homogeneous alluvial plain.

III. 1.a. Location, Relief, Climate, Drainage, Soils

Location

Aligarh district is situated 27°29' and 28°11' N and 77°29' and 78°38' E in western Uttar Pradesh, in the fertile area between the river Ganga and Yamuna, called as Doab. It is bounded by Bulandsahahr in the north, Mathura in the south-west, Hathras in the south, Gurgaon in the west, Etah in the south-east and Badaun in the north-east. The district is sub-divided into five tehsils, viz., Koil, Atrauli, Gabhana, Iglas and Khair. Aligarh city is the largest urban centre and the administrative headquarter of Aligarh district. Figure III.1 represents the location of Aligarh city.


Fig.III.1
Relief

Aligarh district is located in a shallow fluvial depression between the two major rivers. The vast, fertile, alluvial plain gently slopes from north to the south and south-east. The ground elevations consist merely of slight ridges of sand. There are a variety of minor landforms in this district due to the presence of several depressions by fluvial action. The prominent among them is the central depression where drainage is poor resulting in the formation of jhils (lakes) in which water gets collected. These ponds lead to salt encrustations on the surface through capillary action and causing the formation of reh or sajje (carbonate of soda).³

Climate

Illustrated with distinct seasonal rhythm, Aligarh district experiences tropical monsoon climate. Hot, dry summers start around April and continue till June with average temperature ranging from 30° to 37°C, occasionally shooting up to 45°C in late May and first half of June. This summer season extends up to September with a lower temperature due to the monsoonal rains.⁴ By the end of October rain almost ceases and winter conditions start approaching. The temperature is low during the winter season, though frosts are not of frequent occurrence or of great intensity.⁵ Day temperature in January, which is the coldest month often, touches the low mark of 10°C though the mean monthly maximum and mean monthly minimum varies between 18°C and 5°C during the winter season.

Meteorologically, Aligarh is a semi-arid district and as the provincial statistics show it is akin to Mathura and Agra in general deficiency of rainfall. The geographical position of the district renders both the Bengal and Bombay monsoon currents weak. The district lies at the tail end of the either currents. Precipitation is seldom in heavy down pours and the western current is always liable to become weaker or diverted by disturbances in central India.

**Drainage**

There are two types of rivers in this district. Perennial rivers – have their sources in snow covered Himalayas whose examples are Ganga and Yamuna. Seasonal rivers or rain-fed streams - are reduced to insignificant rivulets of water in the hot, dry season. Examples are Karvan, Sengar, Rind, Chhoya, Nim and Kali rivers.

The Nim and Kali are the only streams of some importance. The others are being drainage watercourses, flooded during the rains and soon render themselves dry for the rest of the year. The underground water table is high in this district due to the presence of streams and shallow lakes, which help the farmers to facilitate intensive agriculture through water mining.

**Soils**

The traditional and official classification of the soils of the district is as follows:

(i) Matiyar – the darkish best class loam.
(ii) Piliya – the yellowish sandy loam.
(iii) Chiknot – stiff clay soil.
(iv) Khadar – the younger alluvial silt.
(v) Bur or Bhur – the coarse sandy soil.
Most prominent among them is the alluvial deposits divided into two broad types. The younger alluvium is khaddar along the flood plains of Ganga and Yamuna rivers. The older alluvium is known as Bhangar which occupies the elevated grounds above the flood level.

III. 1.b. Landuse Pattern of the District

Aligarh is located in one of the very fertile regions of India. Therefore, we can see the varied nature of landuse pattern from Mughal period to modern period in this district.

In the second half of 16th century, commercial Indigo cultivation had reached a high level of production which made Kol (Aligarh) an important commercial centre. Indigo was also the chief export at the time of Count De Biogene.

With the commencement of the British Rule, the dense forests of the area had been ravished. The farmers sought new lands to take the best advantage of British irrigation efforts and the expanded market for crops such as indigo and cotton. With the disappearance of forest habitats also disappeared most of the wild animals like, wolves, leopards, nilgai, jackals, foxes, bears etc. Now they rarely come into human sight. At that time the field was filled with diverse crops such as golden wheat, scattered bits of pulses, maize, millets and sweet peas, barley and gram, sugar, rice, hemp and a little tobacco. The prosperity of cash crop agriculture gave new impetus to the town growth.

In the middle of 19th century, a new era of industrialization had started. Nevill writes that the most important industry in this area was that of cotton textile. Other industries were crude glass, glass bangles and bottles were made
in various parts of the districts by the beginning of the 20th century. Brass and iron lock industry was firmly established in 1907 in this region. Trade developed rapidly after the construction of canals and metalled roads. Numerous small country bazaars together with periodic markets completed the commercial hierarchy of the district.

In March 1863 the first railway line to open up was from Tundla to Aligarh which was an important hallmark of linkages in the district. The influence of this railway was very great and very helpful for the development of the markets.6

A drastic change has taken place in the landuse pattern after the Independence of the country in 1947 and with the advent of Green Revolution in the mid 1960s. Agricultural produce has increased more than three fold. These agricultural products have boosted the growth of agro-based industries in Aligarh district. Simultaneously, rapid industrialization and urbanization has also taken place in this district.

III. 2. Evolution of Aligarh City

An understanding of the historical development of a city is helpful to estimate the physical and social bases of a modern city. The city is a reflection of the socio-economic conditions of the people inhabiting in the city region. In the city, every functional characteristic is interrelated with the infrastructure in and around the city. Initially the cities of the agricultural regions, as the Aligarh city is, are a reflection of the rural-urban interface. Subsequently, the city’s functional interaction increases with other big and smaller commercial centers.

The ancient cultural history and the evolution of a medium class city on a vast Gangetic alluvial plain is a complex phenomenon. In this extensive geographical region it is difficult to find many appreciable archaeological remains, which leave some questions unanswered. Therefore, it is necessary to find an account of such an important urban centre having a long history.

III.2.a. Ancient, Medieval, Mughal and British Period

Ancient Period

Aligarh is the most recent name for the 600 BC settlement that it was. The district was a part of Pandav kingdom. Kol was the earliest known name of this place which has been spelt as Kol, Koil and Cole. The origin of the name Kol is debatable and obscure. Kol has been referred to in the sense of a tribe or caste, a place or mountain, jhil (lake), a sage or demon, capital of king of Saurath.

The most striking feature of Koil was the Balai Qila/Upper Fort, i.e, a fort on the Great Mound. The accumulation of successive settlements, going back at least, as far back as the Buddhist period in the 1st century B.C.

Later from 2nd century A.D. to 9th century A.D. this area was ruled by Mauryas, Sakas, Kushans, Guptas and Gujar-Pratihars. The Achal Tal (water tank) is known as one of the most ancient localities in Aligarh and dates back to the 10th century AD.

8. Ibid., p. 21.
Early Medieval Period

The early medieval period starts from 11th century A.D. In this period a considerable change has occurred in the socio-economic diversity and general ascendancy of the region12. The Dors embraced this district in the 11th century A.D. Mahmud Ghazni, in 1018 A.D., made no mention of Koil in his account while the capturing of Baran (Bulandshahr) by Har Datt, father of Vikramaditya, is narrated at length.13

The fortress of Koil was controlled in 1194 by Qutubuddin Aibek, the Turkish slave who assimilated North India at the end of the 12th century A.D. It marked the beginning of Muslim administration in this region. The Historian Hasan Nizami described Koil as ‘one of the most celebrated fortresses in India’. A tall minar was constructed by Balban which was demolished by the repressive British rulers in 1862.

From 1194 to 1526, this region was ruled by four dynasties namely, the slaves from 1194-1290, Khilji’s from 1290-1320, Tughlaq’s from 1320-1414, and Lodhi’s from 1451-1526.14

During the Lodhi period, the Kali Masjid was constructed in Mohalla Bani Israilan and fortifications were built round the fortress at Balai Qila, with four gates whose names survive to this day, viz. Delhi Gate, Madar Gate, Turkman Gate, and Sasni Gate. A portion of the wall and gate can still be seen on the south-eastern sides of the peripheral region of the mound where a moat existed. A full-fledged settlement known as Khai Dora can be seen.15

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12. Ibid., p. 32.
The Age of Mughal Empire

The Mughal supremacy in this region started in 16th century A.D. Babur; the first Mughal emperor visited this place. He must have erected some buildings at Koil; however, no trace of them, except a Mohalla near the centre of the town, called Babri Mandi (market), is the only reminder of his visit.16 The district remained in the hands of Humayun, the successor of Babur for quite sometime.

Under the rule of Emperor Akbar, Koil was the capital of a Sarkar, whose officer was Mir Mohammad Gesu, a Shia Muslim who built the Idgah in 1563. The Sarkar was divided into four dasturs (revenue circles) and 21 Mahalas (Parganas). At that time this district was one of the thickly populated, very highly cultivated and in a high state of tillage.17

During the reign of Jahangir and Shahjahan (1605-1655), the administrative setup was same as it was in Akbar’s period. Aurangzeb, the last powerful Mughal emperor, appointed Nand Ram Jat as the army commander of Aligarh. Aurangzeb’s death in 1707 marked the beginning of the Mughal decline.

With the rise of Jats, the earlier part of 18th century, throws light on the social and political history of the district. This big revolution ultimately created a Jat kingdom and a number of Jat zamindars in the Braj region.

At the same time, Sabit Khan, a Turani officer was appointed governor of Koil by Mohammad Shah. Sabit Khan played a very active role in the construction of buildings at Koil. The important construction of his time was

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16. Ibid., p. 68.
- the fort of Sabitgarh, the tomb of Allah Bakhsh (1717), reconstruction of Jama Masjid (1724), the founding of the Harduaganj market, construction of a tank which linked with the Jami Masjid of the Aligarh city through an underground channel near the Nandan Cinema.\textsuperscript{18}

After the Maratha incursion, in 1754 Surajmal Jat took the fort of Sabitgarh and made it his capital, changing the name to Ramgarh. In 1775 Najaf Khan, a Mughal commander, assimilated the district and sent his lieutenant, Afrasiyab who laid a seize of Ramgarh Fort and got it vacated after a few months. He renamed it as Aligarh. But finally the fort was taken by Marathas in 1788.

**The British Period**

The command of this region was being given to the French, Count De Biogene, by the Marathas. He formed a great cantonment (outside present Sulaiman Hall) in Aligarh in 1791, which became the headquarters of a large division of troops for European style training. After De Biogene, his trusted general Culier Perron was sent by Marathas to take his place. Perron in 1801 collected tribute from various Rajput chiefs. He improved the bastions of the fort and enlarged the cantonment. In the year 1802, he built a garden for his residence, still known as Sahib Bagh.

At the same time the British had extended their frontiers in North India under the command of General Lake. They besieged the fort of Sasni, Bijairgarh and Kachaura in February 1803. In September 1803 British army attacked Aligarh fort and captured it. Before the British took possession, Aligarh and its surrounding countryside had declined considerably. British

efforts to improve the situation, notably construction of Gangas canal in 1840 were of dubious value.

III 2.b. Indian Mutiny and Aligarh Movement

Indian Mutiny of 1857

The consolidation of British rule and fall of the Mughals was a prelude to some great tempest which came in the form of Mutiny of 1857. The news of this revolt reached Aligarh on 12th May 1857. The first freedom fighter in Aligarh was a Brahmin. After this the men broke into open mutiny and compelled the British civil residents to quit Aligarh. On 29th of May it was again occupied by British. On 30th June the Muslims of Koil raised up the green flag to relegiate Britishers to the city gate. A new Panchayat was established by subedar Mohammad Ghaus Khan with Nasimullah Khan Incharge of the city, Mahbub Khan the Tehsildar and Hasan Khan the Kotwal. The attempts of this mutiny eventually failed.

The Aligarh Movement

After the cataclysm of 1857, India was in a state of traditions from medievalism to modernism. British, held Muslims responsible for the revolt and they were the target of victimization and to reduce them to the lowest ebb of degradation. As a result, the Muslims resisted the British. They did not embrace western education and had confined themselves to their shells.

The second half of the 19th century was the most critical period in the history of Indian Muslims. They were steeped in ignorance, conservatism, traditionalism and superstitions. The community lost all the vitality, vigour and the creative force of a living nation. At this critical juncture Sir Syed

Ahmad Khan, a judge, appeared on the social horizon of India. With the help of his colleagues he started the Mohammadan Anglo Oriental College in 1877 at Aligarh which developed into the Aligarh Muslim University in 1920. The main aspects of Aligarh Movement were social reforms. This renaissance had changed the course of the Muslim community.

III. 3. Growth and Structure of Aligarh City

Growth of Aligarh City

Aligarh stands, at 27°53' north latitude and 78°4' east longitude. The city can be called a planned centre of Aligarh district. It is the district headquarter which is connected to major cities of the region via Grand Trunk Road and through good rail links. It is located nearly 80 miles to the south-east of Delhi, 50 miles north-west of Agra, and lies less than 40 miles east of Mathura.

A city grows as a result of growth and diversification of the industrial and commercial economy. In case of small and medium cities like Aligarh, the urban sprawl is simple rather than complex. In the initial stages of the city growth the left out open spaces near the city centre are filled up and then in the later stages the urban land extends towards the city periphery. However, in the advanced stages most of the city sprawl is an encroachment on the rural areas, particularly on the cultivable wastes. Both the population and built up densities are higher in the core area.

Internal structure of the City

The internal structure or morphology of the city is an important aspect of urban personality. It refers to the physical arrangement or structure of a

city; its pattern of roads, streets and buildings, their functions, densities and layout etc. Two types of urban structures co-exist in a city, one organized round the congested city centre and another round railway colonies and cantonments which emerged under the British influence towards the then peripheries. Morphologically, the city of Aligarh is situated in the central depression of the district. Figure III.2 shows the major strategic location of Aligarh city. It also depicts the major and minor road and railway network.

Historically, the city has developed around three distinct cultural zones. The first zone comprises south and southeastern part of the city, dating back to 10th century. It is largely inhabited by the Hindus. The most conspicuous landmark structure is the temple of Achaleshwar, on the edge of the Achal Tank, a reservoir of considerable size filled with water from the canal. Evidence of a full fledged settlement are lacking in this area. This area extended up to Manik Chowk and Madar Gate in the later periods.

The second zone is in the central and western part of the city. The city is encircled by a wall and access to it is through different city gates. This is a Medieval characteristic of most of the cities in India. Much of Aligarh has grown around a single nucleus, i.e. Upper Kot (Balai Qila) area. The city expansion has experienced a concentric growth. This core area has a very dense landuse congestion and the highest residential density. In this area the household and cottage industries have grown in the last 150 years. Ironically, there is acute shortage of open spaces, parks, playgrounds, public health and educational institutions in this locality.

Aligarh City
Administrative Map
(2004)

Source: Aligarh Municipal Board

Fig.III.2
Aligarh city had expanded considerably by adding Sarais (inns). Aligarh was an important staging post for merchants. They and their animals stayed in carvan sarais. These sarais were lying outside the walled limit of the city, along the entrance roads. These sarais have been drawn into the city web later on. There are still many mohallas in the city whose names testify to this past, such as Sarai Rehman, Sarai Hakim, Sarai Sultani, Sarai Qazi, Sarai Bhuki, Sarai Mian, Sarai Biwi, Sarai Bala, Sarai Qutub, Sarai Kaba, Sarai Vrindaban etc.

The third zone developed during British rule in a segregated northeastern part is called the Civil Lines. In the later half of 19th century the city was divided into western and eastern halves with the development of railway line. Aligarh is well connected to cities of New Delhi, Agra, Kanpur, Lucknow, Banaras, Jaipur, Kolkata and Mumbai through a cluster of super fast and express trains. It is well connected to other cities through a network of National and State Highways.

The new markets e.g. Russeullganj was built in 1805. In this extension, towards the railway station, were Faizganj, the Municipal Hall, the Mission Church, the Bramly Hospital, and the Lyall Library. The railway station of Aligarh is connected with the city by means of two main roads. One having a level crossing and the other a bridge over the railway line called Katpula. The Civil Lines area is a structural divide of the city. Residentially, this area is sparsely built. The main government offices such as the Court of Law, the Head Post Office etc. are there. Large spacious houses with lawns and kitchen gardens, present a refreshing contrast to the congested area of the old city.

23. Ibid., p. 200.
In the post Independence period certain areas which appeared in the form of small clusters and villages have developed. They were outside the city limits but the sprawling city swallowed the rural lands and changed the occupations of these areas. They have taken the form of residential and industrial units. Villages like, Kishanpur, Dodhpur, Begpur, Jamalpur, Bhamola, Dhrura Mafi, Jeewangarh, Nagla Baraula witnessed their transformation in a silent way. Many colonies have been developed like Loco Colony, Medical Colony, Industrial Colony, Tube-well Colony, Ganga Nahar Colony, Sir Syed Nagar, Janakpuri, Jawlapuri, Avas Vikas Colony, Gyansarover, Mansarover, Vikram Colony etc.

The most recently developed areas are on the periphery of the city. They are also called as fringe areas. Most of these areas are sparsely populated. Many villages have been included in the Aligarh Municipality due to expansion of the city. These are Bhujpura, Rorawar, Bhamola, Ghambhirpura, Doriang, Pala Sahibabad, Maulana Azad Nagar, Rambagh Colony, Mehboobnagar, Barula Jafrabad, and Mehfooz Nagar. All these are the newly built colonies on the fringe.

III. 4. Functional Classification of Aligarh City

Cities vary in terms of age, size, layout, function and demographic characteristics. Although various criteria have been employed for the classification of the cities ranging from, simple population size to types of geographical site. The most important system of classification, however, has been concerned with the occupational structure. In other words, systems of

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functional classification have attracted highest attention. Urban centers have
diverse functional character with the expansion of the area.

The present functional pattern of the city is an interaction of various
social and economic factors. There is scarcely any functional specialization in
this city. It has mixed landuse pattern. There are areas of functional
dominance such as commercial, industrial, educational and administrative.

The core area or the central area of the city which is an important area
is called C.B.D. It is a part of the city which contains the principal
commercial streets, where vehicular and pedestrian traffic are likely to be
most concentrated, the land values are high. The C.B.D. of Aligarh
encompasses Railway Road, Phaphala, Barahdwari and Chauraha Abdul
Karim. This is a combination of retail and wholesale trade. No clear cut
demarcation zone exists. This is a normal characteristic of the C.B.D. in the
medium size cities.\(^{25}\)

Aligarh is rapidly growing in commercial importance. Subhash Road,
Mahavirganj, Centre Point and Ramghat Road are on the top of commercial
hierarchical system. Lower down in this system are the distinct shopping
centers for local demands. Some important centers among them are Amir
Nisha, Dodhpur, Marris Road, Nai Basti, Shamshad Market, Naurangabad
etc. After Independence a large area of the city has been occupied by
Industrial activity. In the medieval time Indigo and cotton had flourished.
Subsequently, a large number of lock factories developed in the city. The city
is one of the business centres of Uttar Pradesh. Aligarh city is the only and the
largest centre of locks manufacturing in India. The city is also a major centre

for brass hardware and sculptures. In the old city, the lock industry is characterized as household industry in the outer rooms, opening on the lanes. It is popular as small household and cottage industry. Other industries are iron foundries, ferrous mines, electrical goods, cutlery, steel furniture, automobiles spare parts, brass and glass works industries. A large number of agro-based industries, namely edible oil, dairy, bakery industries have also sprung up. The work participation rate in Aligarh city is 25.36 per cent; male workers are 42.96 per cent, while female workers are only 5.27 per cent.  

Educational activity is the most specialized activity. Moving towards the 20th century, Aligarh underwent its most dramatic transformation from a small city with a respected educational institution, to a political power. The Aligarh Muslim University which is a product of "Aligarh Movement" started expanding northwards and eastwards. One of the best universities of the whole of Asia is the Aligarh Muslim University located at the heart of Aligarh. It is the second largest Muslim University in the world after the world famous and renowned Al Azhar University in Cairo.

Today it has a very large campus with different faculties, departments, centres and units. It has included both residential hostels and colonies. The whole campus is spacious and neatly laid out. There are a number of beautiful gardens and lawns and a good road network system. The other educational area is found in the south central part of the city along the railway line. The two Degree Colleges, Dharam Samaj and Varshney Degree College and many Intermediate Schools are situated in this area. Many other educational institutions are scattered over the city. In the city of Aligarh the

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total number of literates are 3, 57,267 that is 53.39 per cent of the total population. Male literacy is 59 per cent and female literacy is 46.94 per cent.\(^\text{28}\)

Administrative area is situated in the Civil Lines in the north-eastern part of the city. There is the Judges’ Court, Collectorate, District Jail, Police Line Club, Public Works Departments, Inspection House and District Election Office is situated. This is so, because of the British tradition of developing administrative offices in the Civil Lines.

**III. 5. Demographic and Economic Profile of Muslims in Aligarh City**

A reflection of Muslim culture and civilization can be seen from each corner of Aligarh city. The town due to its natural and physical conditions remained under direct contact of Delhi Sultanates. The rulers' social, cultural and religious programmes had an influence upon the life of the inhabitants of this town. In the way of Agra to Delhi, the town got much attention. There developed major highways through it. The routes made by Muslim rulers still exist today but they are now metalled. This shows that Muslim rulers were good administrators and had the idea to shape a town into an important city. In the ancient times due to the fertility and nearness from the capital, high officials and rich landlords preferred to settle in this town.

The Muslim rulers formed new methods of Public Administration to regulate the life of the people. They introduced methods of trade and industry to raise the standard of living. Famous historian Prof. Jadu Nath Sarkar marked that the Muslim rule in India brought religious and social unity, advancement of architecture and painting. In the field of science developed

\(^{28}\) Census of India, (2001).
military organization, discipline, fortification as well as the use of guns, canons etc. India made an unprecedented progress during Muslim rulers.

In Aligarh city the greater number of population is of Hindus, then comes Muslims, next to them are other religious population like Christians, Sikhs, Jains etc. Aligarh refers to the study of whole the Muslim community in its past and present perspective towards social, economic, political and religious fields. In this city there is no uniform distribution of Muslim population. There reside Muslims of different shades and class. On examination of the social organization and hierarchical order of Muslims, it is marked, that it resembles with caste system among the Hindus. The whole community is broken into different castes. Most of the Muslims borrowed social customs and traditions from the Hindus in the arrangement of marriages and other spheres of social life.

In each society there are inherent tendencies towards progress and change. The innovation of railways and city water services caused a modification in the rules of social life and traditional customs both among Hindus and Muslims in Aligarh city.

With the advancement of technology, industrialization, urbanization and modern education, the whole social structure of the Muslims has been changed. This advancement brought a revolution in the social life of the people. Some social scientists hope that the traditional extended joint families are going to disintegrate and form a new pattern of family system that is nuclear family. This development would help to understand the value of education. This would awaken the Muslim population from the slumber of
negligence. Despite all these estimates today's Muslims are not able to get such a position as their counterparts, that is, Non-Muslims have.

Table III.1 shows the population growth of Aligarh city from 1901 to 2001 with a possible projection for 2011 census. In 1901 the population of Aligarh was 70,434 persons which has increased by almost ten times to a total of 6,69,087 persons in the hundred years according to 2001 census. The census data throughout the century depicts that Aligarh has overwhelmingly been the city of two major communities who have long drawn rivalries and antagonism which eventually led to the partition of India and the creation of Pakistan in the late 1940s. The Hindus and the Muslims have together accounted for 96 per cent to 98 per cent of the city population. The population of other religious communities has remained meagre. However, the census data at several points of time appears non understandable and unexplainable even for a small but high literacy city of Aligarh Muslim University.

To begin with, the percentage population of other religious communities comprising 24.67 per cent in 1901 and 1911 census does not look convincing as against their population ranging from 1.59 to 4.19 per cent during rest of the century. Census of 1901 showed the Muslim population as 11,983 persons exceeded by others with a population of 17,375 persons. During 1901 and 1911 Muslims comprised 17 per cent of the city population. In 1911 census, the population of Aligarh city decreased to 66,344 persons with a total decrease of 4,090 persons. The population of all the religious communities had decreased during this period. Such a decrease was widespread due to the epidemics in several parts of India during 1901-1911.
However, there are several problems in 1921 census data. A net population increase of only 619 persons from 66,344 in 1911 to 66,963 in 1921 census is understandable due to the impact of 1st World War during 1914-1918. What is perplexing about the doubtful census data is that when the city is showing a total decadal growth of only 619 persons, the Muslim population growth has been shown by an alarming 15,223 heads from 11,387 in 1911 to 26,610 in 1921 which is more than double during a span of ten years only? This is the first occasion when the census of India has assigned an exponential decadal growth to Muslim population by as much as 133.68 per cent. This is a serious discrepancy in the census data with reference to the Muslims. The question which arises in the mind is that how can the population of a community grow by 15,223 persons out of a total city growth of 619 persons? Another corollary problem of 1921 data is that the population of other religious groups has shown a plummeting decrease of 14,811 persons from 16,365 persons in 1911 to 1,554 persons in 1921.

The census enumerators took a convenient course of tailoring a matching decrease in the population of other groups with the patching increase of Muslim population, that too in the wake of 1st World War and the follow up epidemics. The only imaginary alternative which could justify the massive Muslim population growth by the census is the conversion of other religious communities to Muslim community. However, even to this proposition, there are no circumstantial evidences of such conversions in the historical records of Aligarh city. Nonetheless, the census of 1921 registered the Muslim population as high as 40 per cent of the total population of Aligarh city.
Table III.1

Population Growth Trends of Two Major Social Groups in Aligarh City (1901 – 2011)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Total city population</th>
<th>Aggregate city growth</th>
<th>Hindu population</th>
<th>Muslim population</th>
<th>Others population</th>
<th>% Hindu population</th>
<th>% Muslim population</th>
<th>% Others population</th>
<th>% City growth</th>
<th>% Hindu growth</th>
<th>% Muslim growth</th>
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<td>1901</td>
<td>70,434</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>41,076</td>
<td>11,983</td>
<td>17,375</td>
<td>58.32</td>
<td>17.01</td>
<td>24.67</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1911</td>
<td>66,344</td>
<td>-4,090</td>
<td>38,592*</td>
<td>11,387*</td>
<td>16,365*</td>
<td>58.17</td>
<td>17.16</td>
<td>24.67</td>
<td>-5.80</td>
<td>-6.04</td>
<td>-4.97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1921</td>
<td>66,963</td>
<td>619</td>
<td>38,799</td>
<td>26,610</td>
<td>1,554</td>
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<td>2.32</td>
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<td>1931</td>
<td>83,878</td>
<td>16,915</td>
<td>45,859</td>
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<td>2,081</td>
<td>54.67</td>
<td>42.85</td>
<td>2.48</td>
<td>25.26</td>
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<td>28,777</td>
<td>56,220</td>
<td>51,712</td>
<td>4,723</td>
<td>49.91</td>
<td>45.90</td>
<td>4.19</td>
<td>34.30</td>
<td>22.59</td>
<td>43.89</td>
</tr>
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<td>1951</td>
<td>1,41,618</td>
<td>28,963</td>
<td>77,012*</td>
<td>59,684*</td>
<td>4,922*</td>
<td>54.38</td>
<td>42.14</td>
<td>3.48</td>
<td>25.70</td>
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<td>15.41</td>
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<td>1,85,020</td>
<td>43,402</td>
<td>1,10,044*</td>
<td>69,853*</td>
<td>5,123*</td>
<td>59.48</td>
<td>37.75</td>
<td>2.77</td>
<td>30.64</td>
<td>42.89</td>
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<td>67,294</td>
<td>1,63,462</td>
<td>83,456</td>
<td>5,396</td>
<td>64.78</td>
<td>33.08</td>
<td>2.14</td>
<td>36.37</td>
<td>48.54</td>
<td>19.47</td>
</tr>
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<td>3,20,781</td>
<td>68,467</td>
<td>2,04,605</td>
<td>1,10,572</td>
<td>5,604</td>
<td>63.78</td>
<td>34.47</td>
<td>1.75</td>
<td>27.13</td>
<td>25.17</td>
<td>32.49</td>
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<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>4,80,500</td>
<td>1,59,719</td>
<td>3,04,796*</td>
<td>1,68,069*</td>
<td>7,635*</td>
<td>63.43</td>
<td>34.98</td>
<td>1.59</td>
<td>49.79</td>
<td>48.97</td>
<td>52.00</td>
</tr>
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<td>2001</td>
<td>6,69,087</td>
<td>1,88,587</td>
<td>3,83,759</td>
<td>2,74,607</td>
<td>10,721</td>
<td>57.36</td>
<td>41.04</td>
<td>1.60</td>
<td>39.24</td>
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<td>63.39</td>
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<td>9,37,190</td>
<td>2,68,103</td>
<td>5,23,376</td>
<td>3,94,180</td>
<td>19,634</td>
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<td>42.06</td>
<td>2.09</td>
<td>41.07</td>
<td>36.38</td>
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*Projected population on Census basis.
The census of India steadily increased the Muslim population of Aligarh city to an all time high of 46 per cent by 1941. During 1931-1941 the percentage growth rate of Hindu population was 22.6 per cent while the Muslim population growth rate was shown as high as 44 per cent. During a span of ten years the Hindu population of Aligarh city increased by 10,000 while the Muslim population showed an increase of 16,000 heads over their population of 36,000 persons. This scenario of Muslim population growth appears a bit improbable because natural growth cannot be so high. Even immigration of such a high proportion cannot be considered a justification in those remote times when mobility was not very high.

In the 1951, 1961 and 1971 censuses there was a low growth of Muslim population in Aligarh city. This appears convincing as there was partition of India and creation of Pakistan on 14th August, 1947. It was a period of great turmoil. Consequently, a fairly large Muslim population migrated to Pakistan in the late 1940s and this migration continued till 1950s. Muslim migration to Pakistan considerably slowed down after 1961. During 1941-1951 the Muslim population grew by nearly 8,000 heads from 51,712 to 59,684 Muslims. During 1951-1961 the Muslim population of Aligarh city grew by some 10,000 heads from a total of 59,684 to 69,853 Muslims. During 1961-1971 the Muslim population grew by 13,600 heads from 69,853 to 83,456 Muslims. However, during 1971-1981 the Muslim population again grew by a sizeable number of 27,100 heads from 83,456 to 1,10,572 Muslims.

From 1981 to 2001 the census has once again shown an exponential growth of Muslim population in Aligarh city. During this period the aggregate
growth of Muslim population has been shown as massive as 1,64,000 heads from 1,10,572 to 2,74,607 Muslims. This exponential growth has once again shown the Muslim population more than 41 per cent of the total population of Aligarh city. This exponential growth is highly erroneous, improbable, unexplainable and a myopic manipulation. A natural growth of 1,64,000 persons that is by 148 per cent in just a period of twenty years is beyond cognisance. Even a conjectural migration does not justify such an exponential growth of Muslim population in Aligarh city because neither Aligarh Muslim University could be a sustaining reason of such a massive growth nor there is any apparent infrastructural support of industry and commerce at the disposal of Muslims which could justify a migration led growth and absorption of Muslims to such a high scale in Aligarh.

The Muslim population in Aligarh city was 34.47 per cent of the total population against a corresponding Hindu population of 63.78 per cent in 1981. The 2001 census showed the Muslim population increasing to 41.04 per cent of the total against a correspondingly decreasing Hindu population of 57.36 per cent of the total population of the city. The fact of the matter is that although Muslims are a sizeable social group in Aligarh city, their population is neither anywhere near to 41 per cent nor it has ever experienced an exponential growth. The present research, on the contrary, based on a formidable sample survey of more than 10 per cent Muslim population has convincingly revealed several evidences of declining population growth of Muslims during 1981-2001 let alone an abhorrent exponential growth of Muslims in Aligarh as shown by the dubious census records. If such an aberrant exponential growth rate of Muslim population is projected for 2011
census the Muslim population may annoyingly surpass the total population of the majority Hindu community. Under such a scenario the total population of Aligarh city is also likely to surpass a million mark by 2011 itself.

In Aligarh city there is an absolute growth of Muslim population but there is a steady relative decline of Muslim Population in the city. From this situation one can infer that there is a decrease in the gravity of Aligarh Muslim University as a mobilizing force of Muslim population, its literacy, employment and well being. There is an alarming revelation of Muslim population decline as well as the economic decline even in the index city of Indian Muslims.