ABSTRACT

The thesis is an attempt to enquire the social structure and socioeconomic profile of the Muslims in Aligarh city. The study also highlights the intra-city variation in the socioeconomic profile of Muslims in the city. The present study was undertaken against a backdrop understanding that Aligarh is the Mecca of Indian Muslims because of the social and educational gravity of the Aligarh Muslim University. Hence, the socioeconomic scenario of Muslims in Aligarh would be an important indicator of their general well-being in India. The most relevant purpose of the present study is to reveal the real status of the largest minority community of India, that is, the Muslims.

The Muslim social group faces exclusion and systematic discrimination at multiple levels. It is a victim of deprivation and poverty, lack of public services and civic amenities, a group of severe under-representation in the organized sector, government jobs and a feeble gravity in the political dispensation and decision making. Muslims are the only minority with the human development indicators considerably below the national average. The socioeconomic indicators of Indian Muslims, who ruled the country for a thousand years, are now below the scheduled castes and the scheduled tribes who remained marginalized for nearly three thousand years. The present research also challenges and breaks the various myths regarding the growth of Muslim population. The research work provides a strong set of several structural evidences of the squeezed growth of Muslim population in the city of Aligarh.

Chapter I discusses research objectives, hypothesis, questionnaire framing, sampling procedure, field experiences, research methodology and
data analysis. Family as a basic social unit as well as the primary social institution is a universally recognized entity. Although lots of useful works have been done on the family and its structure in the disciplines of Sociology, Psychology, Anthropology and Demography but in Social Geography, very meager studies have been conducted on this aspect of the society. The universal existence of family institution has considerable variations in its pattern and structure in different cultures. An interesting geographical dimension of the family composition and structure is that even in a micro region like Aligarh city, there are considerable intra - regional variations in the family size and type. Only a few geographical studies of Muslim families in India have been conducted so far.

The present study is an attempt in the direction where the field of enquiry remained rather unexplored and needs greater attention of social geographers in order to furnish a factual position of Muslim family organization and its association with the socio-economic conditions. In the present work a reciprocal relationship has been traced between the family structure and the socio-economic conditions. Space is viewed as a feature of social life. Scholars have begun to view society and space as dynamic agent rather than passive agent. The study will help us to understand the existing family systems in an urban area of a large minority community. Minorities as the Sachar Committee report highlights have three inter-related issues: (i) issues relating to Identity (ii) issues relating to Security (iii) issues relating to Equity. These enquiries are going to break various myths regarding the minority’s unfavourable demographic and economic status.
In chapter II, the researcher through the literature survey has tried to explore as well as contribute in those avenues, which were still untouched. Literature survey is also a major guideline to pursue a work with effective parameters. It helps in making comparative statements in the ongoing research with the researches already been undertaken. A wide range of studies have been conducted on family structure at different periods of time and space. Different family patterns have been noted in strong association with the varying culture forms. With the waves of Industrialization in European society the whole family system has undergone changes. 'Nuclear family' system largely came into existence in the post industrial revolution and subsequent modernization era because the small family units are both geographically and economically mobile and able to respond better in an industrial economy and the modern society.

The family type and pattern is generally an outcome of the means and methods of production as the cultural drives of a society. The nuclear family was typical among the middle class people whereas the 'single parent' and the 'extended family' system were more common among the lower classes. Nuclear family is the universal human grouping. Some of the studies have put forth the prepositions that in Indian society the traditional family system is joint family. Upper castes have a preponderance of joint families. Joint family system appears an outcome of social traditions rather than the economic compulsions. It has been found by Nimkoff (1959) that Joint family system is traditionally the most common among the elite, the higher caste and those with more property. Beteille (1964) said that the joint family is a
characteristic of landowning groups rather than of landless groups in rural areas.

Naik (1979) on the basis of 1,454 sampled households from four towns of Maharashtra viz., Aurangabad, Chanda, Nanded and Yeotmal examined the preposition that in urban areas nuclear families and in rural areas joint families are highly prevalent. Niranjan et al presented in their article ‘Family structure in India – Evidence from NFHS’ that in 1992-93 almost half of the urban population lived in nuclear family and almost 23% and 20% lived in joint and supplemented nuclear family respectively. Ramu (1988) highlighted a gradual change in the family towards a nuclear pattern. He adds that “… it appears that people believe in joint family ideals and wish to maintain close filial and fraternal solidarity when possible, while in practice prefer to live in nuclear household. Niranjan et al (2005) expressed the dynamic changes that have occurred in family structure during 1981, 1992-93 and 1998-99.

It was concluded that the household structure is independent of castes or religious affiliation but strongly dependent on economic status and agricultural landowning. Joint families are more among those who owned agricultural land or property or business. I. P. Desai (1956) concluded that nuclearity is increasing and jointness decreasing. Jyotimayer Sarma (1964) made a comparative study of rural and urban situation and assumed that nuclear families are universal in cities and more prevalent in the residential areas of the new colonies than in the older traditional walled cities. Rural family types are more influenced by the landuse and its ownership and the urban family type is influenced by the nature of employment. Morrison
(1959) studied a village Badlapur in Maharashtra and the result showed that nuclear family is the most popular and most frequent type in that village.

Khan (1973) found that the traditional Muslim family in Aligarh is the extended family. He summed up that traditional family was large, but it is growing smaller due to western influence and much more due to political and economic pressures. While the present thesis reveals a preponderance of non-nuclear family amongst the Muslims of Aligarh under growing political and economic pressures. Doranne Jacobson's study on the Muslims of Bhopal region showed joint family as the desirable form and many urban families also having the joint family. One can discern that the joint family system is largely associated with the subsistence and conventional social groups of rural areas and smaller urban centres.

Mushirul Hasan (2003) said that the educational backwardness among the Muslims is a product of poverty and neglect by the State. The Prime Minister’s High Level Committee (2005-06) essentially based on three types of issues regarding identity, security and equity. A wide range of matters were covered under this committee like perceptions about Muslims, size and distribution of population, distribution of income, employment, education, health, consumption, poverty, standard of living and access to social and physical infrastructure, civic amenities and facilities etc. The committee found that Muslims in India are the most deprived and neglected sections of population. Moinul Hassan (2006) in his article made an analysis of the socio-economic conditions of Muslims, from Hunter Commission to Sachar Committee and found the deplorable as well as deprived conditions of Muslim population in India.
Chapter III discusses the historic-geographical personality in Aligarh city. Morphologically, the city of Aligarh is situated in a shallow central depression of the district. 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 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 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. The third zone developed during the British rule in a segregated northeastern part is called the Civil Lines. The Civil Lines area is a structural divide of the city. Residentially, this area is sparsely built up. 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.

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 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. 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 areas. The C.B.D. of Aligarh encompasses Railway Road, Phaphala, Barah Dwari 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 in the region.

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. In the city of Aligarh the 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. 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.

Chapter IV discusses the social structure of the Muslims and their population growth in Aligarh city. The Demographic changes in a growing city like Aligarh are characterized by population growth and more so by migration. According to the Census of India 2001 Aligarh is a class I city. The 2001 Census of India also shows that the Muslim population of Aligarh is 41 per cent of the total population of the city. However, during the course of her survey the researcher estimated the Muslim population around 30 per cent of the total population of Aligarh city. The age structure of a population – that is
to say, the number of males and females in each age group is an expression of the process of fertility, mortality and migration. Age structure records the demographic and to some extent the socio-economic history of the population. As far as fertility, mortality and migration are concerned, they are affected by the per capita income and the standard of living which finally influence the age composition. In Aligarh city nearly 78 per cent of the total Muslim population is up to 34 years of age. Hence, the population appears fertile and young.

However, a further division of the age group reveals that the age group of 15-34 years represents a greater 40.93 per cent as against 36.92 per cent in the age group of 0-14 years. This indicates a recent trend of decreasing population growth. The lower percentage of Muslim population in the age group of 0-14 years could also be attributed to the recent trend of late marriages amongst the Muslims. The highest percentage of population falls under the 15-34 years age group. Migration does not seem a reason of this high percentage, because if higher percentage in this age group had been due to in-migration then the male population should have been higher than the female population. In fact, male population in this age group is 39.72 per cent against the female population of 42.15 per cent. The female percentage is higher in all the last three age groups but the percentage is lower in 0-14 age group. This highlights a prominent fact that the female births are less preferred and their neglect in the infant age group leads to higher female child mortality. Thus, only the genetically and biologically stronger girls survive. Hence, female longevity is universally higher than the male.
The Muslim females in Aligarh city are 1.3 per cent higher than the males in old age group. Hence, smaller population percentage in 0-14 years age group reveals a declining growth of Muslim population in Aligarh and proves the hypothesis. The wardwise age-sex pyramids of Aligarh city are a little bit different from the overall Indian age-sex pyramids. In the 100 sampled households there were a total number of 22 wards. In the 100 sampled households there were 22 wards in total. Almost all the Muslim majority wards represent a higher percentage of 15-34 years age group both for males and females in comparison to 0-14 years age group bars. This highlights a new trend among the Muslims that their birth rate is becoming lower. The wards located near the University Area represent a very low percentage of 0-14 years age group, like ward no. 44 (Lekhraj Nagar), no. 49 (Dodhpur) and no.52 (Badar Bagh). In all the three wards the educational level is very high.

This high sex ratio among the Muslims depicts a relatively higher gender justice in the Muslim society. A higher Muslim sex ratio vis-a-vis low employment scenario of Muslims indicates that the economic eligibility of Muslim males is decreasing. This structural position is inflicting a delay or denial of marital opportunities among the Muslims. This scenario is another indication of a decreasing percentage of Muslim population in Aligarh city. If we compare figures IV.16 and IV.17 of widowers and widows, one can observe at a glance that the percentage of widows is considerably higher than the widowers. Out of 44 wards only 28 wards show widowers with 0.31 to 5.88 per cent population. Most of the widower population lies into low and
very low percentage group. Whereas, the widows can be seen in as many as 41 wards. The total Muslim widowed population is 3.06 per cent.

If we separately take the widowers they are 0.61 per cent. In contrast to this the widow percentage is 2.44 per cent. It reveals a lower male longevity than the female. The widows are almost three times more than the widowers. The gender differential of the old age population can also be verified from figures IV.19 and IV.20. Both these figures show a wardwise distribution of grandfather and grandmother. It clearly upholds the hypothesis that biologically females are stronger than the males. Out of 44 wards only 24 wards have shown the presence of grandfathers. In comparison to it as many as 40 wards have the geographical distribution of grandmothers. The spatial range for the grandfathers is from 2 to 20 per cent whereas for the grandmothers it is three times more from 10 to 60 per cent.

A higher incidence of joint family system, as is the case with Muslim population in Aligarh, is indicative of stagnant or marginal growth of population. Extended joint family is negatively correlated with 35-59 years age group (r = -0.400) at 0.01 level of significance. Like the joint family system the higher incidence of extended joint family system would lead to a decrease in the adult age group as well as a decrease in the overall population of this social group. The correlation clearly proves the hypothesis that the fertility rate among the Muslims is not very high. In fact it shows a declining trend to the extent that the Muslim population in the index city of Aligarh is steadily declining due to the squeezing circumstances of their socio-economic sustainability. Therefore, the
fertility among the Muslims is not as high as it is often projected by the various rival agencies.

Chapter V deals with family structure and the levels of education. Education and social structure, particularly its basic unit the family structure, are closely associated with each other. Literacy is the foundation of education. Both are complementary to each other. Education is a state of qualified literacy with a threshold of employment requirement. Illiteracy blocks the economic and social progress and also adversely affects economic productivity, population control, improvement in health, education, social security and national integration. Basic education is integral to the well being of the people in terms of life expectancy, infant mortality, and nutritional status of children. Education is the most vital and crucial investment. Illiteracy in India is far more among the Muslims. In rural areas 48 per cent and in urban areas 30 per cent Muslims, above the age of 7, could not read or write.

Educated persons generally have better health and employment and longevity prospects and higher socio-economic status than the uneducated. Single Parent families are socially disabled families. They are the widowed or divorced families. Some women are divorced along with their children due to wayward behaviour of the husband and the loosening grip of gender-biased society. It has also been observed that the single parent families sustain better alone than in the custody of their in-laws. The percentage of single parent families ranges from 0.72 in Badam Nagar (41) to 9.09 per cent in Begpur (40) ward. A predominant nuclear family system is a sign of socio-economic betterment and the degree of modernization. It is alarming to note that even in
a city of Aligarh Muslim University, where one could presume a relatively better socio-economic condition of the Muslims and proportionately higher level of modernization, the ground truth is considerably contrary to the belief.

It has been noted that in some of the wards where the percentage nuclear family is relatively higher, the proportion of professional/technical education and college/university level education is higher as compared to secondary and primary education. The compound bar diagrams indicate that those wards where the percentage primary education is very low the young population is small and the population growth rate is also very low. On the contrary, the wards depicting higher proportion of primary education indicate a large size of young population and a higher population growth rate. The centrally located wards in the old city have higher percentage of the extended nuclear family. This shows their traditional nature in the social value systems. The peripheral wards of the city have a lower percentage of extended nuclear family even when they have low income group people. The peripheral wards are relatively newly inhabited. They scarcely inhabit the tradition of accommodating members other than the core family.

Joint family system highly undermines the prospects of higher technical or university level education. Preponderance of joint family system also reflects the socio-economic retardation of the Muslims. In a joint family system the per capita living space availability is very low and there is scarcely any congenial household environment for the children to pursue the competitive education. Most of the Muslim inhabited wards in the city have very meagre percentage of job oriented technical and college level education. This is largely due to their socio-economic retardation and high percentage of
non-congenial joint family system. Extended joint family system is socially the weakest system. It is more a system of enduring life rather than living it, let alone enjoying. The meagre per capita living space is just unmanageable.

Chapter VI studies the employment structure and the income levels of the Muslims in Aligarh city. In the present day scenario the whole socio-economic structure of any community depends on the level of employment. The data reveals a very important aspect that in the Muslim minority wards the employment rate is higher which also indicates that there are more chances of employment opportunities in these wards. As far as the Muslim female work participation rate is concerned it is very low. In Aligarh city only 5.17 per cent Muslim females are employed. In contrast to the National and State averages, the female work participation is very low. The National and State level female work participation is 25.6 and 16.5 per cent respectively. A regular salaried job is a symbol of better economic position and sustainability. Here again, Muslims are at a disadvantage.

The dominance of private services is more in the Civil Lines wards than in the old city’s wards. Aligarh city is called an industrial city due to the traditional and unique lock industry and the recently developed building fitting industry. Industry in Aligarh is more important than its commerce. The spatial pattern of industry and trade shows that in Aligarh city, the high concentration is in the old city’s wards than in the Civil Lines wards. Most of the Muslims have medium and small size shops. The total labour class among the Muslims in Aligarh city is 53.90 per cent. It means that more than half of the Muslim population works as labourers in the index city of Muslims in India. How pathetic will it be in other cities of India is hard to imagine even?
Dependency is generally inversely proportionate to employment. However, higher literacy and higher education coupled with higher dependency ratio is a highly alarming situation. It suggests that although in some wards the educated Muslims have fulfilled the threshold educational requirements for harnessing an adequate eligibility for employment but the high dependency ratio shows that the employment is far from their educational attainments and eligibility.

Chapter VII studies the nutrition, housing, health and the longevity of the Muslims. An assessment of Muslim housing and health conditions has been made on the basis of primary data. It is a widely acknowledged fact that there is a close relationship between housing conditions and the health of the inhabitants. Good quality housing is the key element to good health. Poor quality housing leads to various diseases and other health related problems. The housing quality also plays an important role in the performance of domestic and economic duties. Housing has a direct relationship with the economic, social and cultural life. House is a both shelter and symbol, physical protection and physiological identity for security and self respect.

It can be analyzed that except a few wards almost all the wards represent owned houses. This ownership status is more in the old part of city than the peripheral and the Civil Lines wards. This may be due to the fact that in peripheral and Civil Lines wards a large percentage of population consists of recent migrants who have not yet succeeded in making their own houses. Another reason may be that their financial capacity for house building is less than the standard and location of the house they envisage to build at. Hence, they compulsively resort to reside in the rented house. Whereas the average
area of the house is large and the construction of house is based on cement, stones, marbles etc. A double or multi – storeyed house will be a symbol of high socio-economic status. But it will be considered an advantage or status in case of those houses where the size is small and the houses are made of bricks and cement.

Here, the double storeys depict a housing congestion. This housing congestion shows high built up density, which is higher in the old part of the city in comparison to the Civil Lines. There is a clear intra-city variation in the built up density and the congestion. The old part of the city or the centre of the city has a congested housing structure in terms of both small house size and type of structure. Whereas, in the Civil Lines the house size is relatively large with a good housing structure. Therefore, it can be analyzed that the Muslim housing structure is better in the Civil Lines area than the old part as well as the peripheral wards of the city. Hygiene is closely related with the good housing quality and health of the inhabitants living there. Poor hygiene leads to food and water contamination within the home. From the health and hygienic point of view the number and location of the cooking place is an important consideration. The concept of separate kitchen is rare among the low to very low-income group.

Chapter VIII is on Muslim women liberation, participation, empowerment, and status in the society. In this chapter it is intended to examine their role in the decision-making in the family and social welfare. Women employment, women autonomy, and gender justice are the measures of women status. The position of women is an index of a particular society’s level of development. U.N.’s Report (1980) informed that women, who
constitute half of the world’s population, perform two-thirds of the world’s work hours, receive one tenth of the world’s income and own less than one hundredth of the world’s property. It emphasized that gender is a political, social and academic issue throughout the globe. Choudhary and et al. (2006) analyzed that Gender inequality is commonly observed in the Indian families. Though there is a provision of gender equality in the Constitution of India, gender inequality still prevails in different measure at the household level, work place and geographical regions. Gender discrimination adversely affects the performance ability.

The spatial variation in the percentage women decision-making at different levels of authority is closely related with the social pathology of every geographical unit. There is a close relationship between the social structure, social space and the level of decision-making by Muslim women. There is a strong correlation between education and status of women. Education is the most powerful cultural possession for the value preservation as well as transformation of the society and is the most effective tool for the empowerment of women. After seeing the impact of education on the decision-making power, it is also necessary to observe the employment level of Muslim women in the city as well as the corresponding economic decision making.

A working woman, who makes significant contribution to the family income, can effectively bargain in the decision-making processes. It can be observed that high female employment provides opportunity and liberty for economic decision-making. For example, ward no. 49 (Dodhpur), no. 52 (Badar Bagh) and no. 44 (Lekhraj Nagar) have very high and high female
employment rates. Therefore, the households reported a greater participation of women in the economic decision-making. However, certain wards with a high employment rate of female such as no. 36 (Hamdard Nagar) and no. 38 (A.D.A. colony) occupy low and very low level of participation of women in the decision-making processes. This is due to their labour class employment.

The employed women's empowerment and decision-making largely depend upon the nature of employment. Certain other wards such as no. 57 (University Area), no. 43 (Zohra Bagh), and no. 21 (Nai Basti) in spite of low to very low female employment, share a high to very high economic decision-making because of their employment in the higher educational sector. The reason of a paradoxical situation, where the women employment is high and the decision-making is low or where women employment is low but the economic decision-making is high is due to their location differential. In the former case it is the old city's situation. In the latter case it is a Civil Lines' scenario. Employment level influences the decision-making power of the women, if they are engaged in high income generating services.

The general impression about the Muslims is that they are conservative about their women. They do not allow their women to go outside the home as well as to do any job. That is why Muslim women's participation as a workforce is very meagre. The study reveals a finding contrary to the popular belief. Almost all the Muslim inhabited wards represent a certain percentage of job liberty to their females. The range varies from 5 per cent to 99 per cent job liberty to the Muslim women.

In fact, the gender conservatism gets weaker or eroded away under the growing economic pressures and the decreasing family sustainability.
Hence, it would be misleading to issue a blanket statement that Muslims are conservative to the employment of their women. Due to unique unemployment and underemployment and the low wages there is tremendous economic pressure and economic need. Every family is willing to allow its women for employment. Even the veil or burqa clad Muslim families, who are instantly labeled as conservative families at first sight, have a willingness to allow women employment.

The composite index has been developed to assess the overall socio-economic conditions of the Muslim community. This index provides a holistic view of the quality of life and well being of the community. Out of 44 surveyed wards only 2 wards, numbering 49 (Dodhpur) and 52 (Badar Bagh) have the highest level of social well being with an index range from 0.635 – 0.910. There are further two wards namely, Lekhraj Nagar (44) and University Area (57) in the next high category within a well being index range of 0.359-0.634. All the 4 wards are located in the Civil Lines area in the vicinity of the Aligarh Muslim University.