INTRODUCTION
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The present research is an attempt to enquire the social structure and socio-economic profile of one of the two major social groups, that is, Muslims in the city of Aligarh. The study also highlights the intra-city variation of the socio-economic profile of Muslims in the city. Aligarh city is located in western Uttar Pradesh in the central Ganga-Yamuna doab. Ganga and Yamuna are the two formidable perennial rivers and the latter eventually becomes the tributary of the former. Aligarh is an important city with a substantial population size of nearly 7 lakhs as per 2001 Population Census. However, 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 socio-economic scenario of Muslims in Aligarh would be an important indicator of their general well being in India. Aligarh has been an index city of Indian Muslims. Therefore, the present research enquires:

i) Whether Aligarh still holds a representative position of the Muslim well being.

ii) Whether Aligarh Muslim University still has a near neighbour gravity of socio-economic upliftment for the Muslim residents of the city.

iii) Whether Aligarh Muslim University educated Muslims get their public sector employment share in the Civic Administration of Aligarh city.

Keeping such points in view, the researcher has tried to present an analytical, spatial perspective of the well-being of the Muslims.
The major and the most relevant purpose of the present study are to reveal the real status of the largest minority community of India that is Muslims. It is a minority community not only in terms of numbers but also in terms of its socio-economic status. The Muslim social group faces exclusion and systematic discrimination at multiple levels, 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. In fact in India, Muslims are the only minority with human development indicators considerably below the national average. Due to a prolonged discrimination and deprivation the socio-economic indicators of Indian Muslims, who ruled the country for a thousand years, are now below the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes who remained marginalized for nearly three thousand years.

Besides this the Hindu Fundamentalists spread the canard that the minority will eventually outnumber the majority community. Muslims breed like livestock, Muslim men have four wives, they send their children to orthodoxy in the Madarsas and so on. The present study is the grass root study of Muslim social groups in their index city. It is an objective enquiry which highlights the pathetic condition of Muslims in a Muslim representative city of India. The following 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.

Demographic characteristics are the essential requirements for the assessment of socio-economic conditions of any social group. That is why, the
present work deals with the family structure and socio-economic conditions of the most deprived social group that is Muslims. Family is one of the fundamental, social and economic institutions of a group. It contributes to the reproduction of social and community structure of a social group. Social, economic and demographic changes in the society affect, and are affected by, the social and economic functioning of families. In this study the researcher has focused on the economic and social vulnerability of Muslims in different types of family systems such as; single parent family, nuclear family, extended nuclear family, joint family and the extended joint family.

This introduction gives an account of the research problem, significance of the problem, research objectives, hypotheses, database and research methodology and the major findings. The thesis comprises eight chapters excluding introduction and conclusion. In addition to three preliminary chapters, there are five analytical chapters in the thesis. The primary data has generated 47 tables, 31 diagrams and 51 maps which depict the intra-city disparity and wardwise variations in the socio-economic conditions of the Muslims and their quality of life.

Chapter I ‘Research Framework’ deals with the nature and significance of the problem. This chapter provides the basic outlines of the present research. It discusses research objectives, hypotheses, questionnaire framing, sampling procedure, field experiences, research methodology and data analysis. Details of survey have also been discussed in this chapter. This is basically the technical chapter of the present thesis.
Chapter II ‘Literature Survey’ is also a technical chapter. It is one of the important chapters of the present thesis. The approach the researcher followed in this chapter is that social geography is primarily concerned with the study of the geography of social structures, social activities and the social organizations. The chapter is basically related with the survey of relevant literature. This chapter gives a chronological account of the existing literature on the present theme. The chapter also deals with the critical assessment of the available literature as well as the conceptual design which is being evolved for the present research after the survey of the literature.

Chapter III entitled ‘Historico-Geographical Perspective of the Study Area’ provides information about the physical setting of Aligarh District, the growth trends, structural and the spatial patterns of Aligarh city. It also gives a detailed account of the evolution of Aligarh city as well as the functional classification of the city. This chapter also discusses the demographic, social and economic personality of the Muslim social group as a whole. This chapter furnishes the necessary background information of the geographical personality and potentials of Aligarh city.

Chapter IV ‘Social Structure and Muslim Population’ demonstrates the demographic profile of the study area such as, age-sex pyramids, sex ratio, household and family size, and the structural aspects of family, that is, different types of the family, and the Muslim marital status. This chapter deals with the empirical findings of the present work. It provides detailed account of the social as well as the demographic structure of Muslims in the city of Aligarh.
Chapter V ‘Family Structure and Educational Levels in Aligarh City’ enquires a correlation between the variant family structures and different educational levels among the Muslims of Aligarh. It also deals with the spatial patterns of Muslim literacy. The chapter highlights the intra-city educational variations among the Muslims in Aligarh.

Chapter VI ‘Employment Structure and Income Levels of Muslims in Aligarh City’ is one of the most important chapters of the present thesis. It enquires the employment structure and income levels. This chapter evaluates the deprived and discriminated economic conditions of Muslims in their index city. It also shows the dependency ratios and patterns among the Muslims in different parts of the city. The other aspects of this chapter are the levels of income and savings among the Muslims. Finally, it furnishes different correlations between the family structure and the employment scenario.

Chapter VII ‘Housing, Nutrition, Health and Longevity Status of Muslims’ studies the housing characteristics, such as ownership status, housing space and the residential crowding, nature of the housing, hygienic conditions of the house and nutritional and health conditions of the Muslim population. This chapter deals with an indicative, important aspect of the Muslim population that is longevity which is the ultimate index to assess the well being condition of a social group.

Chapter VIII entitled ‘Muslim Women Empowerment and Status in Aligarh City’ provides a separate account about the condition of Muslim women. This chapter assesses the socio-economic status of Muslim women in terms of their participation in the family, social, economic and the political decision making
processes. It also assesses the employment status of women and the freedom for the outdoor jobs. It also studies the role of Muslim women labour in supplementing the meager resources of the family and sustaining the family as such.