Summary
American society has witnessed an outstanding growth and development of its Muslim community which assures of a bright future for Islam in America. There has been a bipartite influence in the sense that United States of America has in many ways transformed the Muslims, and in turn stands to undergo profound transformation by their presence.

The Muslim population in America has faced a lot of hardships like other minorities but finally they have overcome all the hurdles with their optimistic and healthy approach towards their other fellow citizens. The driving force behind them was no doubt their conviction in the moral values and spiritual exercises put before them by Islam. Their firm belief of the Qura’anic injunction that "you are the best community raised up for humanity, enjoying what is right and forbidding what is wrong" promoted the Muslim community as an example that shall offer the cure for the ills of the American society.

Interaction of the American Muslims with other fellow citizens has created awareness in them regarding Islam. The knowledge also includes its conspicuous tenets along with crystal clear concepts regarding the way of a pious and clean life in this material world as well as the other world where a human being has to spiritually live eternally. The most attractive of all the messages put forth by Islam is the message of equality and brotherhood without an iota of consideration of caste, creed, race and colour. This message was well taken over by most of the new converts among American Muslims who felt socially
discriminated because of their dark colour. The numerical growth of Muslims in America has many historical backdrops but the most conspicuous factors have been pertaining to economic and social conditions. In the beginning, colonization and slave trade gave a fillip to the process of Afro-Asian Muslims to reach the land and contribute to the growth of Muslim population but later-on better economic opportunities became the main reason of heavy immigration of Muslim youths from all parts of the world towards America. America was fast developing and needed a lot of extra human resource. Immigrants knew that they can sell their occupational skills for a better standard of life. Another strong reason which can not be overlooked was the better quality of education which attracted more and more students from the Muslim world. Though the minorities in America had to face difficulties at various occasions but in spite of all the adverse situations it was the American secularism which rendered them a sense of moral and material security along with many other advantages such as freedom of speech and expression of their thoughts and peaceful propagation and practice of their religions. The majority within the Muslim minority is of Afro-Americans and native Indians. Then the Arabs from greater Syria and the Muslims of South East Asia are the most eminent as their numbers are concerned.

American Muslim population gradually received higher education. Consequently they became more disciplined, organized and conscious. The education also inculcated in them a sense of conserving their cultural and ethnic identity. The Muslims in USA formed a heterogeneous group due to being from
sixty different countries and thus belonging to different linguistic, national and racial backgrounds. The thread which keeps them bound together is the common religious following and practices. Here the Qura'anic injunction which has kept their flock together is cited “Hold fast to the rope of God all together and do not disperse”. It clearly reflects a concern for cultural survival and, unity of diverse ethnic and cultural groups of human beings who believe in Islam.

The educated lot of Muslims from abroad who came to America for a better livelihood and the educated Muslims already settled in America started thinking and planning of the institution which could cater to their social and religious needs all together and could keep their families engaged in leisure hours.

The development of institution building by the educated Muslims was clearly aimed at disseminating the common knowledge of Islamic principles to their coming generations so that they are not deviate from the main stream of Islamic following. The development of common Islamic centres helped them to remain within the folds of Islam and socialize while weddings and burials were performed according to the Islamic rituals. The American Muslims could not keep them aloof from the happenings in different parts of the Muslim world. They also started thinking to organize themselves when the revival and resurgence was a strong theme in most of the Islamic world. Various organizations started emerging and each of them helped the settled ones and also to those who were the new comers. Gradually, one can perceive that with
the emergence of various cultural and socio-political platforms, the leadership also started sprouting and this leadership imprinted on the minds of black Americans burdened down by a history of slavery and a life full of struggle against prejudice, humiliation and hatred that Islam is the only way out of their social and political miseries. As a result of these maneuverings, conversion to Islam became an important factor in history of Black Nationalism in America. Now the institution building among American Muslims had taken a concrete shape and direction. The most formidable challenge today before the American Muslims is to keep pace with modernity without any alteration in their traditional practice of religion. To perceive Islam as a complete way of life which has its own code of conduct on things like marriage, dress, diet, hygiene, worship, work and charity etc. The valuable contribution of all the Muslim organizations of America is to communicate to the present world a positive image of their religion and to counter any bias created by the media. To establish amiable relations with members of other organized religious groups is another spiritual and moral responsibility of these organizations. The American Muslims as well as the European Muslim communities make an interesting subject of study as they are among the pioneers to reconcile the principles and directives of their faith with the reality of their living in technologically advanced and pluralistic societies like America and other western countries of Europe.

The glitter of the modern societies and the openness and freedom in America is very alluring for the younger generations of the Muslims. To save
them from such immoral practices forbidden by Islam, a continuous counseling and monitoring is necessary otherwise they will lose their identity of an ideal community. To meet the challenge, spiritual growth is necessary which could create in them a sense of pride in leading a pious and clean life and become an ideal for other communities who are on the brink of a moral disaster and facing various types of social ills. The American Muslims are supposed and destined to the role of a savior of the society.

The functions of all the Islamic centres, associations and organizations is aimed at spiritual growth rather than 'cultural preservation'. Daawah, defined as providing an Islamic witness or engaging in missionary activity is the central theme of many of the Muslim organizations.

The research work: Present research aims to investigate the religious, social and political status of the American Muslim community in contemporary scenario. Furthermore, it also aims to analyze its pattern of growth from a historical viewpoint. Empirical research methodology has been followed in which a research questionnaire was developed to collect data from the American Muslims. The questionnaire and therefore, all analytical portions were divided into three major sections: section one dealt with the socio-demographic details of the respondents, section two studied religious status of Muslims. Parameters taken for such an investigation were knowledge and practice of five fundamentals of Islam. Section three enquired about the social attitudes and political involvements of the respondents. Another, fourth section was
developed through further interactive analysis of the information from these three sections.

Sample of the study was chosen through non-probability methods via internet connectivity. The questionnaire was uploaded on the internet and respondents, via email were requested to fill out the uploaded questionnaire. More than five hundred response sheets were received but only two hundred seventy were found analyzable.

Percentage, frequency and cross-tabulation were conducted using SPSS software. Results were organized in appropriate tables and illustrated through bar diagrams. The results have been discussed in the light of previous work conducted with the Muslim community in the USA.

Along with the description of the empirical data, previous literature was also analyzed with a historical perspective. The purpose of this analysis was to illustrate the patterns of growth and development of the community of American Muslims.

Results obtained indicate that majority of American Muslims are conversant with all the fundamentals of Islam. Their overall religious status is very good and they rate religious activities and obligations to be very important for them. Regarding social status which addressed issues like assimilation into the American culture, attitude towards marrying a Muslim, attitude towards dating, importance of celebrating religious festivals like Eid, controlling children’s TV watching behavior and helping children to judge appropriate TV
programs for them and maintaining family relationships with the people of local
culture etc. American Muslims are also highly sensitive towards the global issues
which are associated to the Muslim world. They prefer to participate in the
American political process and take part in different elections particularly
Presidential elections.

Respondents' information was further analyzed by studying the impact of
certain socio-demographic factors on religious and social status. Subjects'
information was further analyzed on the parameters of their gender, whether
they are converted to Islam or Muslim by birth and whether they own a house or
rent. Some of the studied dimensions were influenced by these factors, indicating
their contingent effect. Overall results indicate that American Muslims truly
reflect their socio-cultural and economic status mainly due to their sound
educational status and desire to achieve their goals with right conduct and with
Imaan.

Present research was a humble effort to briefly explain the events and
facts associated with the process of growth and development of social, religious
and to some extent economic conditions of American Muslims. If researchers,
religious leaders and policy makers use these information, which is a straight
forward and impartial presentation, many more creative developments related to
the American Muslim community may be heralded.

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