CHAPTER-I

1. Introduction:

Historically, the vulnerable groups of the Indian society, namely, SCs, STs, backwards, women and minorities, suffered backwardness in all walks of life including education. These minorities are two types – religious and linguistic. The Muslims, a religious minority, constitute 13.5 percent of the entire population of India (as per 2001 census). The Government in the post-independence period has been trying to promote the educational status of these groups through several measures especially since the announcement of education policy 1968. It then made a broad policy statement, for the first time, in respect of education of minorities, which also applies to Muslims. It said: "Every effort should be made not only to protect the rights of minorities but to promote their educational interests as suggested in the statement issued by the conference of the Chief Ministers of States and Central Ministers held in August 1961" (NCERT, 1971).

The next major policy declaration of the Government of India came in 1986 (GOI 1986). As regards education of minorities, it referred to the general principles and suggested some specific programmes. It observed that some minority groups are educationally deprived or backward. So, it affirmed the need of greater attention to the education of these groups in the interests of equality and social justice. This includes the constitutional guarantees provided for them to establish and administer their own educational institutions, and protection to their language and culture. In addition, it suggested that objectivity would be reflected in the preparation of textbooks and in all school activities, and all possible steps would be taken to promote
an integration based on appreciation of common national goals and ideals, in conformity with the core curriculum already brought by the NCERT (GOI 1986). The modifications of the National Policy on Education undertaken in 1992 reiterated the 1986 policy regarding the education of minorities (GOI 1992). The rights of religious and linguistic minorities as spelt out in the constitution and the provisions of education of minorities in education policies offer an opportunity to them to grow educationally. It also reflects the good aspiration intended for the cause of these groups. Inspite of the constitutional commitment and various policy measures adopted in the plan period the progress of education amongst the Muslims is far behind than the other communities in several educational indicators, the fact that has been established by a number of studies and reports. The Muslims lag behind in terms of education, Rao (1995) cites NSS data to show the educational backwardness of Muslims in comparison with Hindus in the country. Data from the 43rd round of the NSS reveal, as mentioned by him, that in rural India 51 per cent of Hindu males were illiterate. But the figure for Muslim males was 58 per cent. The difference was more striking for urban India. The percentage of illiteracy in urban India was 25.3 per cent for Hindu males and 42 per cent for Muslim males. Moreover, the ratio of illiteracy in urban India was 42 per cent for Hindu females and 60 per cent for Muslim females. A recent study by Ahmad (1994) also shows that Muslims are backward than Hindus regarding literacy. According to his study, the literacy rate was 32.20 per cent and 53.65 per cent among Muslims and Hindus respectively in Didwana town of Rajasthan, and 31.46 per cent and 55.17 per cent among Muslims and Hindus respectively in Kishanganj town of Bihar (Ahmad 1994). Moreover, the study reflects that the females lagged far behind the males. The literacy rate of Muslim male was 50.94 per cent and 39.73 per cent in Didwana and Kishanganj respectively. But the
The literacy rate of Muslim females was 12.18 per cent and 22.20 per cent respectively in the two towns (Ahmed 1994). The high power panel on minorities, SC/STs and other weaker sections appointed by the Ministry of Home Affairs and headed by Dr. Gopal Singh has identified Muslims, besides neo-Buddhists, as educationally backward at the national level.

The recently released Sachar Committee Report (2006) also points towards educational and economic backwardness of Muslim Communities. It reveals that 3.4 percent of Muslim population has completed graduation, whereas the corresponding figure for non-OBC, non-SC/ST Hindus is 15.3 percent. Only 59.1 percent of the community has literacy while the national average is 64.8 percent. The literacy level for non-SC/ST Hindus is 65.1 percent. In urban India, the literacy rate of Hindus is 81 percent and that of Muslims is 70 percent. While in rural India, the literacy rate of Hindus is 59 percent and that of Muslims is 53 percent. The literacy gap between the Hindus and the Muslims in Rural and Urban India is 11 percent and 6 percent respectively.

**Higher Education among Muslim Minorities**

The Muslim minorities are very much Backward, educationally. However, the publication of religion wise statistics on education has been stopped by the Government of India in the post-independence period, so that it has become difficult to speak about the educational status of a religious community. "If one scans educational writings of the post-1947 period, he/she hardly finds any serious writings on the Muslim education in India, based on factual information" (Kamath, 1989).

There is a mention of the educational backwards of the Muslims and Neo-Buddhists
in the Programme of Action, of the National Policy on Education (1986). Ahmad (1987) opines that both the Muslims and the Christians are educationally backward. He also states that during 1979-80, in Muradabad district, the percentages of enrolment of Muslims in BA and in MA were 12 and 10 percent respectively. The result of another study quoted by Ahmad (1987) shows the meagerness of the Muslims' enrolments in engineering and medical colleges: against their population percentage of 12, their percentage enrolment was less than 4.

In a survey of 44 Muslim-managed schools and colleges in New Delhi, it was found that (i) the number of Muslim students was lower than the non-Muslim students; (ii) the rate of drop-out among Muslims was higher (10.79 per cent) than that of students from other communities (10.50 per cent); and (iii) the enrolment of girls was very low (8.3 per cent) (Hamdard Education Society, 1990).

**TABLE 1.1**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Types of Institutions</th>
<th>No. of Districts Surveyed</th>
<th>% of Muslims in Surveyed Districts</th>
<th>Total No. of Students</th>
<th>No. of Muslim Students</th>
<th>% of Muslims Enrolled</th>
<th>Educational Index</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Class XII</td>
<td>5 Boards</td>
<td>10.3</td>
<td>2.26 lakhs</td>
<td>5645</td>
<td>2.49</td>
<td>0.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engineering Colleges</td>
<td>9 Universities</td>
<td>12.44</td>
<td>2698</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>3.41</td>
<td>0.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medical Colleges</td>
<td>12 Medical Colleges</td>
<td>9.55</td>
<td>2845</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>3.44</td>
<td>0.36</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: N.C. Saxena (1983).*
Table 1.1 shows that the number of students in Class – XII under five boards is 2.26 lakhs of which the number of Muslim students is 5645. The percentage of Muslim Population in the districts surveyed is 10.3 of which their percentage of enrollment is 2.49. In Engineering Colleges, under 9 Universities the number of enrolment is 2698 of which 92 students are Muslims. The percentage of Muslims enrollment is 3.41 against their population percentage of 12.44 in the districts surveyed. While in 12 Medical Colleges, the number of enrollment is 2845 of which 98 students are Muslims. The percentage of Muslims in the districts surveyed is 9.55 and the percentage of Muslim enrolment is 3.44. The corresponding educational indexes of Muslim students in Class XII, Engineering Colleges, & Medical Colleges are 0.24, 0.27 and 0.36 percent respectively.

A survey conducted by the Karnataka Minorities Commission and published in Islamic Voice (1994) found that "the illiteracy rate among the minorities was 44 percent and a high rate of drop-out left a negligible number of minority students in higher education; and nearly one third of eligible youths among the minorities were unemployed, which in absolute number amounts to 14 lakhs."

Table 1.2 provides estimates of ‘current status, of enrollment by focusing on those who are studying at present. For example, children of the age group 6-13 years should be in primary school. Similarly, higher age groups correspond to higher levels of education for the different Socio-Religious Categories (SRCs) provides each age cohort’s share in the student population along with the cohort’s share in total population. The difference between two percentages would show under or over-representation in each age category.
Table 1.2
Children Currently Studying as a Proportion of Population by Age Groups 2004-05.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl. No.</th>
<th>Age Groups (Years)</th>
<th>Hindus Gen</th>
<th>Hindus OBC</th>
<th>Hindus SCs/STs</th>
<th>Muslims Gen</th>
<th>Other Minorities Gen</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>6-13</td>
<td>19.1 (17.3)</td>
<td>36.1 (35.5)</td>
<td>25.7 (27.4)</td>
<td>14.0 (15.1)</td>
<td>5.1 (4.8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>14-15</td>
<td>24.3 (19.9)</td>
<td>36.1 (35.2)</td>
<td>21.4 (25.2)</td>
<td>12.2 (14.5)</td>
<td>6.0 (5.3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>16-17</td>
<td>28.9 (21.1)</td>
<td>33.7 (35.0)</td>
<td>20.2 (24.7)</td>
<td>10.7 (14.0)</td>
<td>6.3 (5.1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>18-22</td>
<td>34.0 (20.8)</td>
<td>30.5 (34.4)</td>
<td>17.7 (25.5)</td>
<td>10.2 (13.9)</td>
<td>7.6 (5.5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>23 &amp; above</td>
<td>35.6 (23.9)</td>
<td>29.2 (35.1)</td>
<td>18.3 (24.1)</td>
<td>7.4 (10.9)</td>
<td>9.5 (5.9)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Note: Figures in parentheses report the share of each socio-religious group in the total population of that group.

There is hardly any difference between the share in the student and the total population for different Socio-Religious Categories when one focuses on the 6-13 years age cohort. But the gap builds up as one move to higher age cohorts; the share in the student population for the SC/STs, Muslims and OBC categories become smaller than their shares in the population in the higher age cohorts. The gaps are larger for SCs/STs and Muslims than the Hindu OBCs. The current situation of
participation in education, although a significant improvement over the earlier year, would still result in large differences in educational attainments in the coming years between Muslims and the other Socio-Religious Categories, the only other group which shows larger deficits as one moves to higher age groups. But surprisingly, in some cases the deficits are greater for Muslims than for SCs/SCs in higher age groups.

Therefore, unless this section of the society is drawn into the mainstream through liberal encouragement of education, particularly higher education, they are likely to be in isolation, cut off from the programmes of development. The educational backwardness of Muslims can be analysed in the same framework of analyzing educational backwardness of children all over the world and particularly in the poor developing countries of the world.

Studies conducted by a number of social scientists have underlined the importance of different socio-economic factors that influence children's schooling. In the framework of study of Woelfel and Haller's socialization theory (1971), parental economic success is found to be relevant to children's attainment in so far as it reflects the examples that parents provide for their children. However, important studies emphasized the impact of socio-economic factors such as economic status and educational attainments of the parents rather than social factors alone, on children's schooling attainments (Simmons and Sumru, 1972; Sewell and Hauser, 1975). Tan and Naiyavitit (1984) observed that two of the commonest and strongest determinants of children's education are educational attainments and socio-economic status of the
parents. Lloyd and Blanc (1996) observed that family and household circumstances are important factors in determining whether or not a particular child is currently attending, and how rapidly children who are enrolled progress from grade to grade. Shudha's (1997) analysis provided sex as an important significant predictor of education chances.

In the economic theory of children's educational attainments, household decisions regarding children's schooling are viewed, in the same framework as other choices regarding the allocation of family resources (Becker, 1981; Becker and Tomes, 1986). The theory posited that the parents have a demand function of their children's education that depends on the family's income, the children's endowments and market opportunities. The model was also expanded to include parental fertility decisions and highlighted the 'trade off' between child quantity and quality. As an extension of such an approach several other studies have attempted to analyse children's schooling achievements in the context of developing societies of India by incorporating large number of socio-economic variables (Dutta, 2001; Nauriyal and Dutta, 2001, Nauriyal and Dutta, 2006). Such studies emphasized the role of households in educational attainments of children.

1.1. Statement of the Problem:

The role of education in the fostering of economic progress has presently received attention in the development literature. Education has intrinsic importance and instrumental role in expanding the freedoms that individual have including their ability to make use of economic opportunities (Dreze and Sen, 1995). According to
Señ (1995), illiteracy and ill health, among other factors, constraint the actual social opportunities of a large part of the population. If economic development is seen in the perspective of social opportunities in general, then the importance of variables such as education and health cannot be ignored.

As such education can be a vehicle for achieving economic development. Education is, therefore, important especially for poor states like Assam. In terms of per capita income, Assam is the poorest state in the North East region of India. As per economic survey, 2001-02, GOI, the per capita income of Assam in 1998-99 was only Rs 8,393.00, the lowest among the North-East states and also less than the all India average of Rs 14,395.00. The monthly per capita consumption expenditure was also lowest in 1993-94 in case of Assam in comparison to the other states of the region (NSSO 50th Round, 1993-94, dept of Statistics, Govt. of India). Although the effective literacy rate of 64.2 percent of Assam in 2001 is very close to that of national average, the gender disparity in it is still a deplorable reality in Assam. The rural urban disparity in effective literacy rate is also quite pronounced in Assam. While Muslims constitute near about 31 percent of the total population of Assam, one important study (East India Human Development Report 2004) indicates that the Muslims show the lowest proportion of literates and also greater gender disparity in Assam.

The Muslim community is lagging behind the other religious groups in several development indicators. The Sachar committee, in its report (2006), points out that the Muslim community in India is relatively poor, more illiterate, has lower access to education and is more poverty stricken. Only 80 percent of urban Muslim boys are
enrolled in schools, compared to 90 percent of Dalits and 95 percent of others. In the rural areas only 68 percent Muslim girls are enrolled in schools, compared to 72 percent of Dalit girls (Praful, Bidwai, Indian Muslim worse off than OBCs, The Assam Tribune Guwahati, Nov 18, 2006). The Sachar Committee has recommended that immediate affirmative actions are to be taken by the states for socio-economic upliftment of Muslims. This is also in the line of the principles of inclusive democracy that India practices and, therefore, stands to safeguard the rights of all sections of the population.

From the available data it is clear that Muslims in general are backward in the field of education in India. The situation calls for actions for the development of educational attainments of children belonging to Muslim households. Their efficient completion of critical level of schooling of adequate quality is also required to guarantee a specific level of knowledge and cognitive competency in the community. The critical level of schooling of Muslims will also enhance capabilities among Muslims to make use of economic opportunities to fight against poverty. While there is a universal consensus in the international community that government should play a primary role in making the provision of schooling, parents and other family members nevertheless, have to play the deciding role in accordance with familial resources available to them in determining whether children are actually enrolled in school and if so, how long they remain in school, and what level of education they complete. It is therefore imperative to make extensive studies from micro point of view to understand household demand for children’s education.
In view of this, the present study aims at analysing household demand for children’s education among Muslims in terms of familial resources and household socio-economic condition. The study is conducted in Barak Valley where Muslims constitute near about 45.5 percent of the total population of the area as per Census Report, 2001.

1.2 Objectives of the Study

In the perspective drawn above, the objectives of the present study are as follows:-

a) To study the schooling achievements of children belonging to Muslim households.

b) To study rural-urban as well as gender disparity, in general and age specific, in the schooling achievements of the children.

c) To study dilution of familial resources among children and its impact on the schooling achievements of the children.

d) To study and identify the socio-economic factors that influences the household demand for children’s education.

1.3 Hypotheses of the Study

In support to the objectives of the study, the following hypotheses are tested:-

a) There exist significant rural-urban and gender disparities in schooling achievements of the children.
b) Dilution of familial resources has significant impact on the schooling achievements of children.

1.4 Significance of the Study

Education plays a crucial role in human development and economic development which has been documented by a number of studies in developed and developing countries of the world.

Education represents more than an investment in human capital (Becker, 1993; Ben-Porath, 1967; Schultz, 1961) because it allows individuals to learn and acquire skills that will fundamentally shape their behavior, beliefs, and role in society (Haveman & Wolfe, 1984). Education has been recognized as the central mode whereby a developing country can increase the productivity of its workers, improve the status of health of its people, reduce the burden of overpopulation, encourage the adoption of new technologies, and act as an agent of social cohesion. Haveman & Wolfe (1984) provide a rich description of the benefits of education. To these ends, governments in developing countries invest significant resources in education systems.

Education appears to be related to people’s success in making many economic decisions; longer schooling, in particular, promotes more efficient decision-making process related to the labor market through the acquisition of information that has a positive impact on personal choices (Arrow, 1997). Longer schooling and training improve the changes of employment (Iyigun & Owen, 1999; Rivera-Batiz, 1992), reduce unemployment duration (Kettunen, 1997; Kiefer, 1985), and positively
influence income through higher labor market earnings. The estimation of monetary
returns to education has generated a vast amount of literature (see, e.g. card, 1999;
Cohn & Addison, 1998; Psacharpoulos, 1994; among others).

The raising of literacy rates and educational attainments of population will have
beneficial impacts on society that is in the process of modernization. The World Bank
has concluded that most of East Asia’s extraordinary growth is due to superior
accumulation of physical and human capital (World Bank: 1993). For countries at the
initial stages of economic development, there are a number of important ways in
which education can play a contributory role. To turn to the question of raising the
literacy level of women in the early stage of economic development, namely, the
closing of the gender gap in literacy and educational attainments: what are the
benefits a society stands to lose by denying the female population basic educational
attainments? The merits are many in number. At the very least, it is easy to teach
cleanliness and sanitation habits to the woman with some amount of educational
attainment than to one who has none. The immediate benefits as seen, for example, in
the case of Indian in districts where female literacy became widespread, is that it is
possible to check if not eliminate some of erstwhile diseases. The infant mortality
rates also come down. The most telling evidence for this comes from a recent study
that holds that higher female literacy leads to a reduction in child mortality, and anti-
female bias in child survival. Both these occur independently of male literacy. While
male literacy too has a negative effect on child mortality the effect is much smaller
than that of female literacy, and is not statistically significant (Drez et al, 1996).
A recent study on the sociological effects of literacy campaign has found that the majority of the neo-literates had achieved a high level of political consciousness, social awareness, scientific temper and functionality and health awareness. A very important finding was that the sociological impact was much greater in the case of women (Sengupta and Roy 1996).

The recent literature on development documents that education increases the productivity of labor force, improves health, enhances the quality of life, betters income distribution and advances the development potentials of the economy. Accordingly, a major goal of the governments of many developing countries has been to increase the population’s educational level. In achieving higher level of education for the population, both the supply considerations—such as the provisions of school facilities—and the demand consideration are important (Tansel, 1997).

Education is considered as one most important indicator of Human Development and Human poverty. The Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) is an index of acute multidimensional poverty. It reflects outcomes to assets and services for people across 104 countries. The MPI reveals a different pattern of poverty than income poverty, as it illuminates deprivation directly. The MPI has three dimensions: health, education and standard of living. These are measured using 10 indicators. Poor households are identified and an aggregate measure is constructed using a methodology proposed by Alkire and Foster (2007, 2009). Each dimension is equally weighted; each indicator within a dimension is also equally weighted.
A household is identified as multidimensional poor; if and only if it is deprived in some combination of indicators whose weighted sum exceeds 30 percent of all deprivations. The indicators for someone to be considered as deprived in each indicator are:

1. Education including (a). Year of schooling, (b). Child enrollment,

2. Health comprising of: (a). Child mortality (b). Nutrition,


By directly measuring the different types of poverty in each household the MPI goes beyond the HPI and other poverty measures to capture how different groups of people experience concurrent deprivations.

In Human Development Index (HDI) also, education is an important indicator because of the intrinsic and instrumental returns of education. Human Development is impossible without substantial progress of people in their educational attainments.

The significance of the present study lies in all these positive benefits of education vis-a-vis a backward religious community of a backward region of the country. The proposed study will help to identify the problem areas such as rural-urban dichotomy in educational attainments, gender biases and disparity in the schooling achievements of the children of Muslim households. It also helps in identifying proximate socio-economic determinants of schooling achievements of children at micro level. The
present study will also facilitate future comparative studies on different religious groups which will be mutually beneficial for all communities and also for gaining further insight into the problem of educational development of people.

1.5 Thesis Chapters: The thesis is organized into following chapters. The contents of the chapters are also briefly summarized below, chapter-wise, to provide a snapshot view of the entire work.

CHAPTER-I

Introduction

CHAPTER-II

Review of Literature

CHAPTER-III

Educational and Socio-economic Profile of the Study Area

CHAPTER-IV

Conceptual Framework and Methodology of the Study

CHAPTER-V

Data Analysis and Result Discussion

CHAPTER-VI

Summary, Conclusion and Suggestions
This thesis thus classified into six chapters. Chapter-I deals with the Introductory discussion, the statement of the problem, objectives of the study, hypotheses of the study and significance of the study.

The Chapter-II reviews the existing literature on Children’s Education.

The Chapter-III is Educational and Socio-economic Profile of the study area. It is split up into two sections – Section A and B. Section A deals with separately Educational and Socio-economic profile of Assam and Barak Valley since the adoption of National Policy of Education 1986 to 2002. And Section B depicts a brief Socio-economic profile of the Study area.

The Chapter-IV discusses the conceptual framework and methodology of the study. It provides a detailed idea of the model construction, selection of the variables, data and sample of the study.

The Chapter V discusses the results of the data analysis and regression analysis in two sections.

The Final Chapter i.e. Chapter VI provides a summary of the study along with the conclusion and suggestions.