EXISTING PATTERN OF MUSLIM SOCIETY IN MADHUBANI

ABSTRACT

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IN

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BY

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The Indian Muslims, along with their co-religionists elsewhere in the world, have experienced as community, a history of fourteen centuries. This historical experience of the Muslim community is nothing but their Islamic experience: Islamic faith as the living force of the communal historical experience and the various shades of local diversities within that total Islamic experience. Religion as mere creedal beliefs and cult expression or a total personal spiritual impulse for the submission to supernatural does not characterize Islam. If we take a more broader sense of religion, it is more than a cult expression or personal devotion penetrating all the dimensions of spiritual, personal, as well as social life. Islam as religion makes a demand on life which is of totalitarian in nature. In this sense Islam is more orthoprax than orthodox. This total demand on life of Muslims by their religion and the demand of day to day affair in varying exigencies have resulted into a gap between the Ideal and practices. This gap between Islamic Ideal and Muslim practices has tempted many Anthropologists and Sociologists to identify those varying local Muslim practices as local forms of Islamic faith and religion as such. This assumption about and characterization of, Islam has infused an environment of academic polemic between the specialists of two disciplines: Islamicists emphasizing the unity and continuity
while Anthropologists and Sociologists focusing more on the diversities.

Since our study is of sociological in nature and the society under study is definitely placed into a local situation dominated by an environment laden with alien values threatening its very form and shape, demanding to adapt and adjust to the need of the environment. Simultaneously the society is a part of continuos whole, sharing the similar historical experience along with the entire Muslim community bound by a common allegiance to the Islamic faith and religion.

To avoid the pitfalls of polemics and for the need to understand properly a society which is at a time united, but diverse as well, responds to the Ideal, textual norms but cherishes the local and customary practices, a reconciliatory approach of approaches are needed. Responding to this reconciliatory approach, we have tried to understand Islam as religion as it 'ought to be' and have discussed the historical experience of Islamic faith and the commulative tradition arising from thereto, as a legacy which Muslims inherit being a Muslim. Moreover, we have presented a Muslim society as 'it is'. In their general historical development or in a contextually placed, in both cases we have discovered some of the external socio-economic and political factors deciding the very course of the Muslim
societies. Muslim societies responding to these external forces, behaved in a definite pattern. The pattern of Muslim society in various settings are largely determined by the interplay of these external forces.

Theoretical approach and objective of the study:

The dichotomy between the Ideal, textual Islamic norms and local customary practices of Muslims have been emphasized by all socialoogical and Anthropological enquiries on Muslim societies. Most often it has been discovered that they are in stark contradiction with the each other. The Ideal, textual Islam is eternal, free from the limitations of time and space but when put into practice at certain time in certain locality it is bound to experience a change from the Ideal Type. Since the beginning of Muslim history, Muslims have tried to achieve the Ideal by constantly re-creating and re-producing these Ideal forms into social life. The re-creation and re-production of these Ideal forms in the social life have remained a source of dynamism for the Muslim society in history. Simultaneously the different understanding of the Ideal, to be representing true Islamic message, have resulted into diverse interpretations of Islam. The emphasis on the particular dimension of Islam has given rise to different traditions.

"Tradition: that which we have always done and believed and from which we have derived our social forms. Muslims in
the contemporary world largely derive their existential meaning from those traditions and shape the very form and structure of their society in varying situations by re-interpreting these traditions. The apparent contradiction which seems to characterize the theory and practice are largely due to the inherent contradiction between the diverse conceptions and interpretation of these traditions.

Central to the present study is addressed to this theme; the primary goal is to discovery the pattern of Muslim society, the interplay of the size of the community; its politico-economic situations and their religious attitudes, behaviours and values and the overall pattern which it makes in particular settings.

Our field of study Madhubani, a north-eastern district of Bihar, bordering Nepal, due to its geographical features remained secluded and cherished an exclusive culture of Mithila. Muslims residing in this environment of physical and cultural dominance of Hindus, it could have been expected from them to show a greater degree of assimilation in the local Hindu cultural milieu. The favourable condition for the assimilation is furthered by the absence of any major Islamic cultural centre in the near vicinity. The entire region of north Bihar lies barren in this context. But the case is not so. Why? The
answer to this question lies very much in our theoretical conception that a Muslim society placed in an alien environment if gets some favourable conditions like large size of Muslims with comparatively better economic position, accompanied by a certain degree of political independence, though locally, along with some openness to the external environment through the mobility of its members in other regions within and outside the country, for education or employment, the society will behave otherwise than without them. It also means that with these favourable conditions an awareness and consciousness will pervade the society about what is being a Muslim? and what a society should possess distinct from the locality that can be characterized as Muslim society sharing some elements in common with the entire community. In short, a sense of being Muslim - a part of the unity of world Umma, results into resistance to the local and other influences. The response to the resistance of local as well as the modern forces creates an environment of contradiction, tension and conflict between the various traditions held in the society - One tradition giving way to the another depending upon the external conditions. Simultaneously the religious attitudes, behaviours and the beliefs and values of society fluctuate between different traditions influencing in turn the socio-economic and political behaviours of Muslims.
which ultimately influence the social structure itself. There is a reciprocal relationship between them.

Malmal, the village which is the unit of our study is a large sized and Muslims constitute more than half of its population. Rest are Hindus dominated by Brahmins and to some extent the Yadavs. They live in exclusive areas and inter-course are restricted to the economic and political spheres. Economically Muslims are better off and dominate the village Panchayat. There is a long tradition of religious education among the Muslims of the village but the secular education is also two to three generations deep. These factors have brought a degree of openness to the village in the sense that Muslims are mobile enough to the different parts of the country for education and earnings as labourers and government employees added more by overseas services.

In this setting we can fairly assume that there will be an elaborate religious arrangement in the public and private spheres. Moreover there would be a considerable degree of religious influence on the behaviours and attitudes of Muslims bearing an impact upon the social structure. Manifestation of every day life in society and its religious overtones would imply that the degree of observance of Islamic norms and values will be high. If so
then the Islamic ideology of egalitarianism would be the rule of society and the social classification and notion of hierarchy based on tangible considerations will be less. But viewing the dominant Hindu environment and the growing size of the community it can be assumed that there will be some sort of social stratification operative in the society. If so then whether this pattern of social stratification is caste like or something else? This question is one of the objective of the study.

The limited resources in form of agricultural lands and growing size of the village population has left many to abandon the traditional agricultural life. Sizeable proportion of the village population is living on non-agricultural professions. In this context we can assume that the pattern of social stratification operative in the village society would be resembling something like class divisions? If so how rigid are these class or caste distinctions? How far Islamic injunctions are playing a role in minimizing the gap by loosening the class or caste boundaries? What are the chances of class or caste mobility? And what are those factors which serve as criteria for such mobilities?

The second objective of the study is to investigate the Islamic textual norms and Muslim practices in their
social life are how far corresponding and homologous? To do so, is to present the discription of their Family life, marriage rules and their life cycle rites, the ceremonies and the customs. On the other hand the local influence on these rites and ceremonies and their contradictions with Ideal Islamic norms also demands consideration.

The third objective of the study is to ascertain the relationship between Muslims religious values and their economic behaviour. Do Muslims in their economic pursuits take the Islamic imperatives as their guides or they are more influenced by the local ethos. Lastly another objective of the study is to describe the domain of religion - religion as it is viewed and acted upon, religious interpreters-their motive and purpose, religious places serving the economic and political interests of these groups and the conflict and competition arising from the control of these places.

Research Method

The data for present study was collected through the field work techniques particularly the participant observation method by living in the village Malmal of Madhubani district in the state of Bihar. The field work was carried out intermittently over a period of two years i.e. June 1986 to June 1988. I stayed in the village periodically
covering all seasons and at a stretch not more than two months, altogether, more than nine months were spent in the village.

**Conclusion**

The village life of Malmal reveals a picture not very much different from the social life led by the Indian Muslims in general. The pattern of Muslim society in the village is more or less shared by all other Muslim societies leaving apart the shades and colours of the locality. There are as much points of agreements to be shared with other Muslims as that is of the disagreements.

To summarize the study again we begin with the historical development of Muslim society in the village. Muslims came and settled into the various parts of India. Madhubani was no exception in this regard and from the various historical accounts we find their very early settlements in the region. Malmal was perhaps one of those villages where these early settlements took place. Contrary to the other northern parts of India, the region of Mithila never came into the direct rule of the Muslims except for brief interludes of dynastic changes of Mithila rulers. The predominant majority was and is of Hindus and the Brahmins dominate the socio-cultural life of the region. The traditional Hindu Sanskritic culture are still alive and
vibrant in the region. Muslims never assimilated totally into the local moulds, rather they cherished their own culture and traditions. It was further made possible by the tolerant and mutual co-existant ideology of the Hindus of the area. In this sense, unlike Meos, Tamils and other Muslim ethnic groups who are identified by their regional affiliations, the Muslims of the area are never called Maithil Muslims; they are simply Muslims.

It will be naive to undermine the influence of local geography and culture on the attitudes and perceptions of the Muslims of the locality. Muslims of Malmal being an integral part of the area were also influenced by the locality. But instead of exclusively cultivating any single tradition either of the locality or the literate high tradition of Islam, they developed historically under the influence of both the traditions. When they first settled in the village centuries ago, they carried with them the fervour of high Islamic culture. But the isolationist geographical features of the region cut them off from the outerworlds and left them almost secluded into the village and the locality. Moreover, they found themselves pitted against the cruelties of nature which has always remained uncertain and unkind to the area. The yearly natural disasters left them in economic troubles. The agriculture as profession is itself time consuming and absorbing in nature and the economic scarcity became an additional
fact which compelled them to engage themselves completely in the pursuit of their livelihood. The expensive life style of Islamic high culture was unbearable for them and it was gradually replaced by the rustic popular life style of the locality. In this way the geographical isolation, economic scarcity, educational backwardness and the small size of the community made the inner defence mechanism of the society weaker paving the way for the hordes of syncretistic elements to envade and encroach upon the very fabric of the Muslim society in the village.

Either they were cherishing the high Islamic culture or the local popular culture, a feeling of being Muslim - an integral part of the ruling community of the country was there. It was enough safe-guard for their pre-eminent status in the society - a sign of success and God's favour. With the waning of the Muslim political power in India they lost their pre-eminence and the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries are the period of demoralization as well as great vitality in the history of Indian Muslims. The self definition, identification and re-evaluation of Muslim in India began with new zeals. The search for Ideal started with great vigour and since Muslims failure was interpreted as straying from the right path so societies were reformed according to the pattern of perfection represented by the early Madinan society.
The Muslims of Malmal also experienced the currents of reformism and self-evaluation. The presence of colonial white masters in the locality has made them feel degraded. For Hindus the change of the political power in India had another connotations. Muslims who were masters now shared with them the similar status of being the subjects. Both shared the similar grievances against their rulers. The advent of the new modes of communications and the British policies helped to end the isolation of the area. The opening up of the region to the outer world helped to reach the diverse currents in the remote parts of the region. These waves also reached to the village Malmal. We see the individual effort of a single person can change the face of the society. Particularly the long and enduring change can be brought in the society by the most effective vehicle of social change like education. The establishment of 'madarsa' in the village in the mid of the nineteenth century marks the beginning of change in the life patterns of Muslims of Malmal. Surprisingly, the oldest Madarsa in the town of Darbhanga which was at the centre of Muslims' activity was established some thirty years after Malmal's madarsa.

With the spread of the religious education, the villagers after a long medieval slumber started to experience and realize 'what is being a Muslim'? and 'what
is the pattern of perfection for which a Muslim society should strive?'. After short period the major currents of the Islamic world started reaching in the village carried by those students who were getting their educations in various towns.

Anyhow, we can discern a general historical pattern of the developments of Muslim societies in the history of village Malmal - a move towards the ideal Islamic pattern and also a move away from the Ideal depending upon the factors like the communication, economic position, political situation and the level of education in the society. The size of the community is yet another important factor in this context.

The village is growing in size day by day and it has affected the villagers on their economy, occupation and life ways. The growing population and the limited land resources has forced many of them to pursue a profession other them agriculture. The agriculture which was their way of life is no longer so, which also means uprooting of them from the influence of local environments. This detachment has smoothered their ways for the adaptation of new ways.

Since they are gradually abandoning the agricultural life ways so they do not reveal a pattern of stratification
on caste basis. Rather they are stratified interns of ethnic groups with varying social statuses.

The dynamics of the ethnic dominance among Muslims are similar to that of the Family or Khandan dominances. In this way the particular Muslim ethnic group and its various Khandans dominate the village life by pursuing their own standards. In Malmal we find the interplay of the size of the groups, their politico-economic power and the level of education among its members in defining and determining their statuses. But obviously the most important criteria is their degree of Islamization. Without an Islamized life ways no ethnic groups of Muslims can achieve an eminent status in their surroundings, however they may be numerous and economically well off. In the similar fashion, the status achievement of an individual and the Family rest on the similar criterias, provided that they have right lineage and ethnic affiliation.

Paradoxically, the Islamization programs in the village have achieved success in eliminating the rigid ethnic barriers but it has itself become a criterion and symbol of status. In this sense the different Khandans of various ethnic groups are placed on different social standings according to their desired achievements on the standard status scale. In this way though all of them are
Muslims but they are differentiated in terms of Khandans with different social standings. Even within the same ethnic group the barriers of the statuses are as rigid as for the people outside the ethnic fold, to a certain limits but it becomes a social disease and a curse for society when these social inequalities are ideologized. The Muslims of Mal mal are free from any such ideologization of the inequality among themselves because of Islam's emphasis on equality.

In the fields of other social institutions much of the customary practices derived from the locality alieu to Islamic norms have been replaced under the influence of Islamization and modern secular educational impacts. The ceremonies and customs now observed by the Muslims of the village Mal mal on the occasions of child births, marriages and deaths no longer show the similarities and resemble ences with that of the Hindus. They have considerably Islamized themselves in this context. The religious personalities in the village through out the century have tried to Islamize them and succeeded to a large extent. But the replacement of a heterodox practice by an orthodox is a different proposition. With regards to the rules and regulations, Islam prescribes certain directives but the way it should be done to left to the Muslims themselves.
What is an orthodox practice and what is a heterodox is totally an absurd proposition. The local variations are very much accepted in Islam. In this sense the customary practices were thought to be contradicting the very basis of Islamic principles have been dropped from the practise of the Muslims of village Malmal.

The lower groups of Muslims in the village respond to popular beliefs interpreted by the ill-educated and Pseudo-Aalms. On the other extreme is fundamentalistic interpretations of elites. Since it has become elitistic so it has lost its strength of appeal which it had few decades ago. A reaction to this elitistic tendency has resulted into the growing popularity of conservative traditions. In this way in the village Malmal the four styles of actions which characterizes the Muslim history i.e. Personal charisma, conservatism fundamentalism and adaptation seems to contextualized.

In recent years the running of the religious institutions have become a lucrative business. The taking over of these institutions involves tension, conflict often an open war between the aspiring parties. In short much of the politics in Muslim societies are dealt in the context of such competitions at the local level. More often the religious beliefs and practices are interpreted
with the reference to the existing political scenario of the religious institutions. In this way the secular and religious interests converge upon the tangible motives and takes place an alliance between the secular and religious elites. Village Malmal provide the best example in this context.

But at the overall societal level Islamization process in the village is influencing the Muslims profoundly and with the growing size of their population accompanied by rising level of religious and secular education and economic betterment they are moving toward the ideal. It does not imply that they have achieved the perfection because attaining it is beyond the possibility but they are striving for and in the process gradually Islamizing themselves and their societies.

Pattern of Muslim societies are so ramified that discovering it properly needs a mastery over the Text, Tradition and their societies. It has remained a major handicap for the Indian sociologists to neglect the text and tradition and rely solely on the superficial image which they conceive about the field. Present study is an attempt to balance the approach for the proper understanding of a Muslim society.
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1989
CERTIFICATE

Certified that Mr. MASHHOOD AHMAD has worked under my supervision on the topic "Existing Pattern of Muslim Society, in Madhubani". His work is original and suitable for the submission for the award of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Sociology.

DR. JAMIL FAROOQUI
Supervisor
CHAPTER I
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Appendix
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P R E F A C E

Some two decades back only a handful of Sociological literatures were available on Indian Muslims. The deliberate negligence of sociological enquiries on Indian Muslims in post-independant India were felt enormously and some Indian Sociologists particularly Imtiaz Ahmad and his associates campaigned for. Their efforts have resulted into a number of sociological studies which are now available on Muslim societies in India but still it remains scanty. As the early development of sociological tradition in India was largely focused on studying the traditional Hindu societies, bulk of whom resided in the villages, the studies of Muslim societies also began on similar patterns. Major interest of Sociologists were focused on enquiring about the influence of dominant Hindu environment on the Indian Muslims and the degree of their cultural assimilations into the majority currents.

In short most of the Sociological enquiries on Indian Muslims were Unidirectional in their approach and hence the effort to gather sociological informations on Indian Muslims back-fired on them by revealing totally a distorted image of their societies. Most of the sociologists, ofcourse exception are there, approach their field with pre-conceived biased ideas about Muslims and verify their hypothetical assumptions by concluding the results full of prejudices. Their conceptions about Islam and
Muslims are rooted into the colonial distoted image by the west down the centuries and round the world. More than that, their understanding of Islam is restricted to the few works of Orientalists and in this sense they have limited understanding of Islam and its influence on Muslims. In this way the patterns of Muslim societies with all their ramifications have remained still undiscovered.

Moreover, the sociologists and anthropologists always take an extreme opposite stand of the Islamicists, and totally undermine the value of text in the life of Muslims. Their Methodological and ideological compulsions force many of them to select a semi-literate small isolated Muslim societies for their studies which constitute an ideal ethnographic setting for them. Studying such Muslim societies they emphasize context not the text and try to show that the native's point of view is real and working Islam. In this respect many of them subscribe to the idea of many forms of Islam. Since the practices of Muslims and their conceptions about Islam varies from society to society, so Islam has a plural character rather than the monolithic one. Edward Mortimer put this conception of pluralism in more better way as "one is bound to conclude that there is not one Islam but many Islams". This conception is a gross distortion of Islam, Muslims
and their society and history reveal a continuous re-
current patterns shared by all Muslims in every age and
in the every corner of the world and Islam always remains
a unifying factor for all of them. While the sociologists
and Anthropologists in their attempt to demystify the
conception of grand unity of Muslim Umma sharing the
faith, legacy and history in common, have tried to supple-
ment this unificatory view with a relativized and frag-
mentary view of Muslim societies. On the other hand the
Islamicists in their attempt to emphasize the unity, they
have totally neglected the local diversities which exists
between the Muslim societies of various regions. Moreover,
they in their endeavour never make a distinction between
Islam as faith and religion and the culture associated
with them. They use them interchangeably not making any
distinction between the religious and secular dimensions
of society which gives an impression as if all of them
go on to make up the Islam as such.

For Islamicists the normative Islam or the Text is
all decisive in the life of Muslims. While for the
Sociologists it is not so important as the knowing of
context where Muslims behave in a different manner often
contradictory to that of the textual Islam. Since socio-
logists are working in a different paradigm with different
parameters, so it does not look them convincing enough
that textual Islam can be a decisive factor in Muslim societies. But in real sense both of them are partially looking at the reality about the nature of Muslim societies. Akbar S. Ahmed's remark "In certain ways Muslims are the same everywhere and yet their societies are different everywhere", seems correct. Muslim societies are so ramified in nature that a balance of both approaches are needed to understand their true nature and forms. A balance of Text, history and community - knowing about their proper role in influencing the course of Muslim societies is the need of the time. The patterns of Muslim societies cannot be discovered without such balancing.

The present study is an effort in this direction. The Introductory chapter begins with the classification of the terms 'Islam, Islamic and Muslims' which has remained a source of confusion for all. Then we have dealt Islam as religion and faith and the Islamic legacy and historical experience of Muslim Communities down the ages. Lastly we have narrated the Indian experience of Muslims. In all these analytical narrative we have abstracted some factors like size of the group, its politico-economic power and educational level as decisive factors in patterning of Muslim societies. The role of communication in bringing about the unity and homogeneity among Muslims is emphasized.
Second chapter is a critique on the existing socio-
logical literature on Muslim societies. Third chapter
deals with the theoretical assumption and the research
method employed in the present study. Fourth chapter is
a historical narration of the region of Mithila-Madhubani
lies at the heart of Mithila which is still dominated by
Hindu traditional culture. The emphasis has been laid on
the responses of both the communities towards each other.

Fifth chapter is about the unit of the study i.e.
village Malmal - its historical settlement patterns,
topography and social structure. Sixth chapter deals with
the stratificational pattern among the Muslims of the
village and seventh chapter is an analytical discription
of family kinship and marriage patterns. Eighth chapter
is about the economic affairs of Muslims of the village
and ninth chapter deals with the domain of religion and
the role of Ulamas. Moreover it also deals the politics
in religions institutions. Lastly we have concluded the
study with brief discussions at the concerned concluding
points.
INTRODUCTION

The Indian Muslims, along with their co-religionists elsewhere in the world, have experienced as community, a history of fourteen centuries. This historical experience of the Muslim community is nothing but their Islamic experience: Islamic faith as the living force of the communal historical experience and the various shades of local diversities within that total Islamic experience. Religion as mere creedal beliefs and cult expression or a total personal spiritual impulse for the submission to supernatural, does not characterize Islam. If we take a more broader sense of religion, it is more than a cult expression or personal devotion penetrating all the dimensions of spiritual, personal, as well as social life. Islam as religion makes a demand on life which is of totalitarian in nature. In this sense Islam is more orthoprax than orthodox. This total demand on life of Muslims by their religion and the demand of day to day affair in varying exigencies have resulted into a gap between the ideal and practices. This gap between Islamic Ideal and Muslim practices has tempted many Anthropologists and Sociologists to identify those varying local Muslim practices as local forms of Islamic faith and religion as such. This assumption about and characterization of, Islam has infused an environment of academic polemic between the

specialists of two disciplines: Islamicists emphasizing the unity and continuity while Anthropologists and Sociologists focusing more on the diversities.

Since our study is of sociological in nature and the society under study is definitely placed into a local situation dominated by an environment laden with alien values threatening its very form and shape, demanding to adapt and adjust to the need of the environment. Simultaneously the society is a part of continuous whole, sharing the similar historical experience along with the entire Muslim community bound by a common allegiance to the Islamic faith and religion.

To avoid the pitfalls of polemics and for the need to understand properly a society which is at a time united, but diverse as well, responds to the Ideal, textual norms but cherishes the local and customary practices, reconciliation of approaches are needed. Responding to this reconciliatory approach, we have tried to understand Islam as religion as it 'ought to be' and have discussed the historical experience of Islamic faith and the cumulative tradition arising from thereto, as a legacy which Muslims inherit being a Muslim. Moreover, we have presented Muslim society as 'it is'. In their general historical development or in a contextually placed, in both cases we have discovered some of the external socio-economic and political factors deciding the very course of the Muslim societies. Muslim societies responding to these external forces, behaved in a definite pattern. The pattern of Muslim society in various
settings are largely determined by the interplay of these external forces.

**Islam, Islamic and the Muslims:**

Before proceeding further, it is desirable to make some clarifications about these concepts which have been the major source of confusion among the scholars. The use of the term "Islam" and "Islamic" are used in modern scholarship too casually. They do not make any distinction between "Islam" as religion and the culture associated with the Muslim societies and the role played by the religious and secular elements in the historical development of the Muslim community. As Marshall G.S. Hodgson observes that in a study of "Medieval Islam" or "Modern Islam", it has happened "that the same discussion referred to "Medieval Islam" in a broader cultural sense and to 'Modern Islam' in a more specifically religious sense, and that the fact went unobserved that different discussants or the same discussant at different times, were referring to different matters in two cases".

More often than not, it has happened that scholars studying Islamic history or civilization have dealt without any distinction the religious and the secular dimensions of Muslim societies as if, all of them go on to make up the Islam. Similarly the Sociologists and Anthropologists whom prime concern were the study of religion; its function and form in primitive

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societies, out of sheer ambition to analyse and compare various societies, have studied the semi-literate Muslim communities and have tried to show that as if the 'natives point of view' about Islam is the real and working Islam. In another words, majority of them subscribe to the idea that there are many forms of Islam. As the Islamicists use "Islam" as religion in its idealized form and the culture associated with the Muslims in historical context interchangeably. In similar fashion, Anthropologists use "Islam" in its present state of practice by Muslims in various localities and intermingle these local variations with the Ideal form, neglecting the historical continuity of the Muslim community 'as if', the community under their study have know no history and are merely a developed form of primitive and have not gone through any historical experience.

Any Muslim society of the Medieval period cannot be called Islamic society, simply because majority of them were Muslims and they were ruled by the Muslim rulers. Unless and until they have organised their societies on the Islamic patterns or most of the rules and regulations prevalent in the society were in accordance with the Islamic norms and the laws governing the societies were inspired by the Shariah laws, we can not call a Muslim society an "Islamic Society". Similarly the current practice of a Muslim community in African desert or Arabia or in Indian sub-continent can not be called Islamic in so far they do not correspond with the Ideal Islamic
patterns. Similarly any form of art or literature cannot be called Islamic unless it has been done with an 'Islamic viewpoint'. The viewpoint with which any cultural activity is performed is important in determining its being Islamic or secular. A painting of Durga goddess by M.F. Husain in modern times, or a medieval Persian poetry dealing with the subject of wine by Omar Khayyam inspite of its poetic beauty and aesthetic appeal, donot constitute an Islamic heritage. Historically it can not be denied that whatever the degree of religious attitude of a Muslim society have been, the secular activity were done and a deviation from the Islamic norms can be found in every Muslim society in every age. But what a Muslim as a member of Muslim Ummah inherit from its historical continuity is its Islamic heritage, which mean all those things which have come out of the interaction and development of Islamic faith in a historical developmental process.

While we use the term "Islam" we mean Islam as religion and faith in its Ideal form, as it is ordained in Quran and Hadith and enshrined in the legal boundaries set by Shariah laws. Then comes the term "Islamic" "as an idealized or a historical cumulative tradition of faith", and "Muslim" as all those who accept that faith. When we call an "Islamic society" we mean the society which is organized on the Islamic Ideal pattern and when we call a "Muslim society" we mean the society whose members do adhere to the religion of Islam, but the
organisation of the society is not based upon the Ideal patterns of Islam, whatever the other patterns may be.

**A Sociological Point of View:**

The most fundamental assumption which any sociological theory takes into consideration concerns with the nature of "action" and "order". Every theory of society assumes an image of man as "actor" and then tries to understand the nature of action performed by an individual in a specific situation with a particular motivation. Similarly no social theory neglects the problem of order. How is action arranged to form the patterns and institutions of everyday life? It is the degree of emphasis on either "action" or "order" which has divided the sociological theories into two fronts i.e. 'individualistic' approach and 'collectivistic' approach or micro and macro analysis. Unfortunately both the camps in sociological theories have laid emphasis upon any one, neglecting the other. In other words they have tried to conceive one side of the reality and focussed on it, as if, is the only way or the sole method to understand the reality. "A radical individualism ignores the relations that constitute men as men and that bind them in each other, focusing only on the individual terms or their relations; a radical collectivism ignores the reality or importance of the individual terms focusing only on the relations and the wholes they form". Logically it is possible to integrate these approaches but in practice it is rare.

In past the individualistic mode of theorising was very popular in social sciences because of its emphasis on "voluntarism" which is at the heart of modernity itself. But the realization that individualistic theories can not and do not stand without some reference to a collective order has always been the stimulus for social theory to move toward the perspective of social structure itself. And there grew a large body of literature which emphasized on collectivistic mode of analysis and structural perspective became the dominant way of explaining the social reality. The need and necessity to integrate these two approaches into a single body of theory is widely recognized by the social scientists and they have tried to bridge the gulf which exists between these approaches but still a long way is ahead.

Here we are not going to indulge ourselves into any sociological controversy rather we are going to have a very generalized conception of society. We begin with the assumption that social life is organized in terms of action or behaviour which is ordered patterned and continuous. The basic unit of the society is "Action" or "Unit act" in Parsons' sense. "Social action is the activity of social unit". Social actions are performed in a situation with a particular motivational-orientation and are goal directed. These actions are performed "in terms of anticipated state of affairs" and are 'normatively regulated' and proceed in action cycle. Social actions do not

occur in a social vacuum rather they occur in a particular social context which requires a plurality of actors. These social actions are reciprocated by other actors or alters. These reciprocal actions are called interactions. Sorokin defines interaction as "any event by which one party tangibly influences the overt actions or the state of mind of the other". These interactions which are outcome of biological as well as social needs, in due course of time develops uniformities or orderliness. In other words they develop some specific patterns. These patterns are recognizable ways or fixed ways of behaving which emerges from repeated actions or interactions. The particular uniform or ordered interactions involve social relations. These social relations exist between the two actors occupying different statuses and performing different roles. The bond which binds these two actors are 'social bonds' which vary in nature. Parsons says "since a social system is a system of processes of interaction between actors, it is the structure of the relations between the actors .... which is essentially the structure of the social system. The system is a network of such relationships 7".

The relative stable pattern of interactions reveals a structure. These structures are forms of relations and are called 'institutions'. In other words we may say that Institutions


represent the socially developed general pattern of inter-actlon which occurs between individuals occupying various statuses and roles in a society. "Institutionalization is the process through which organizations are given structure and social action and inter-actlon are made predictable". These inter-actlonal predictability are made possible by the fact that these institutions are made up of 'roles' which an individual performs in particular positions occupying a 'status' in the system. Position is "the total set of norms that are associated with the behaviour of a single group member; status refers to all of the norms that specify behaviour expectations a given alter actor or class of similar alter actors in a particular group". And roles are "cluster of norms organized around functions". Or 'status' refers to the positional aspect of an actor - "where the actor in question is 'located' in the social system relative to other actors". And 'roles' are "what the actor does in his relations with others seen in the context of its functional significance for the social system".

Institutionalization is a process and when roles become institutionalized an institution can be said to exist. "An institution will be said to be a complex of institutionalized role integrates, which is of strategic structural significance in the social system in question". Some of the basic functions

which an institution performs are said to be three. "First, the patterns of behaviour which are regulated by institutions ("institutionalized") deal with some perennial, basic problems of any society. Second, institutions involve the regulation of behaviour of individuals in society according to some definite, continuous and organized patterns. Finally, these patterns involve a definite normative ordering and regulation; that is, regulation is upheld by norms and by sanctions which are legitimized by these norms".

The most fundamental function of the institutions are regulative functions, which they perform by differentiating roles and allocating the positions or statuses according to the societal need and hence are determined by the particular norms and values of the society. Parsons has categorized the Institutions into the 'relational', 'regulative' and 'cultural' institutions. In short the stabilized patterns of interactions backed by norms and values of the society, becomes institutionalized clusters of roles which make up the entire social system. A society has many interrelated institutions fulfilling various functions according to the need of society. The institutions which satisfies some of those basic needs which are common to all societies and often viewed as 'sub-systems' or 'Institutional Orders' comprising many institutions.

These sub-systems or institutional orders are necessary for any society for its survival and do fulfill the functional requisites of the society. They are made of various institutions which differ from society to society.

The norms which guide, influence and even constrain the human behaviour are themselves influenced by general value system of society. The roles which are expected ways of behaviour and are normatively guided are influenced by these value system of society. Every society has its own value system which gives it a different form and structure and hence make it identifiable.

"Norms influence the range of the goal choices and govern the selection and application of facilities in the attainment of ends and goals". And "norms are more inclusive than written rules regulations, and laws; they refer to all criteria for judging the character or conduct of both individual and group actions in any social system. They constitute the standards determining what is right and wrong, appropriate and inappropriate, just and unjust, good and bad in social relationships." 15.

Every social action is motivated and goal directed. The actions, either it may be a rational objectively calculated or nonrational, subjective and emotional concerned, involve motivational orientation towards goal. While orientation towards goal may be motivated by certain needs but the standard for selection of the goal and alternative means to attain

that goal are determined by the value system of a particular society. Or better say every social action is value oriented since "all values involve what may be called a social reference".

"An element of a shared symbolic system which serves as a criterion or standard for selection among the alternatives of orientation which are interinsically open in a situation may be called a value\textsuperscript{16}. While values are of all encompassing nature and prescribe a set of preferences, norms translate these value preferences into regulative mechanism. Parsons classifies the modes of value-orientation into three categories i.e. cognitive standards, appreciative standards and moral standards. Of all these three categories of value-orientations which are in direct correspondance to the three categories of motivational-orientations i.e. cognitive, cathectic and evaluative, Parsons found moral standards as crucial in influencing the inter-actional patterns. According to him "from the point of view of any given actor, the definition of the patterns of mutual rights and obligations, and of the standards governing them in his interaction with others, is a crucial aspect of his general orientation to his situation. Because of this special relevance to the social system, moral standards become that aspect of value-orientation which is of greatest direct importance\textsuperscript{17}...".

\textsuperscript{17} Ibid P. 14.
For any meaningful inter-action and communication there must be a developed form of symbolic system shared by the individuals of a society. This shared symbolic system is called the cultural tradition of that particular society. According to Kroeber and Kluckhon, "Culture consists of patterns explicit and implicit, of and for behaviour acquired and transmitted by symbols constituting the distinctive achievement of human groups, including their embodiments in artifacts; the essential core of culture consists of traditional (i.e. historically derived and selected) ideas and especially their attached values, culture systems may, on the one hand, be considered as products of action, on the other as conditioning elements of further action."

A Normative order of a social system implies that there is certain degree of consensus among its members on 'whats' and 'hows' of the society. The solution to the problems of 'whats' and 'hows' of a society are given by the socio-cultural values of that society which prescribe the moral preferences and set some value standards to evaluate the selection of the means to achieve the societal goals. "Value consensus provides this mediating mechanism."

The socio-cultural values of a society are internalized into the personality of an individual through the process of "Socialization". In the words of Merton, Socialization "involves

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the acquisition of attitudes and values of skills and behaviour patterns making up social roles established in the social structure..... The process continues, at varying rates, throughout the life cycle. Socialization is a learning process through which a new born member of a society learns "the skills, beliefs, ends and norms of the society into which he is born; he internalizes the interaction and expectancy patterns which make status-roles and the elements of power and rank operative in society. The interaction involved in the process of socialization results in the formation of the personality.

The internalization of the socio-cultural values and norms are done through the mechanism of socializations. Socialization process of an individual is not a matter of time rather it goes on throughout the life in which he becomes socialized by interactions with the parents, teachers, bosses, colleagues and others. It usually happens that the process of socialization and personality building has some reference in whose context one develops himself and tries to achieve that perfection to whom he has made an ideal or model. This process of socialization may start either from beginning or in later ages. Also this process of socialization may be an individual or group phenomenon, as Merton's concept of "anticipatory socialization" or Backer's idea of a 'retrospective socialization' does indicate, in which a reference group or departed

ancestors may become a reference model for the socialization of a group or individual.

Social life is organized in terms of a system composed of parts or structures which serve as means and fulfill the needs for the persistence of the system as a whole. The persistence of a social system depends upon four 'functional pre-requisites' which it has to solve for its survival. These functional imperatives or pre-requisites are (i) Adaptation to the environment, (ii) Goal attainment (iii) Pattern maintenance and tension management and lastly (iv) the Integration. While first two problems are related to the external environment of the system and are "External patterns" the last two are related with the inner side of the system and are "Internal patterns". "A pattern of interaction which displays the relations necessary for the group's adjustment to its environment and for the attainment of its goals is an external pattern" and "The internal pattern is a pattern of interaction which consists of those relations that focus upon the expression of sentiments of system members toward one another".

The particular form which these patterns or structural sub-systems or Institutions take in a society are determined by particular value systems dominant in that society. These value systems and cultural traditions of a society are usually, products of religion or ideology held by the members of a

society. Two groups in a similar locality adhering to two different religion do exhibit two different sets of values and cultures. "The cultural values and norms that prevail in a society are the matrix that forms the social relations among groups and individuals." 

According to Weber, basically every human has a "metaphysical need for a meaningful cosmos". In other words, the function of religion is to satisfy this need of giving meaning to one's being, and Existence in the cosmic context. Moreover, it determines an individual's relationship with his fellow beings, the nature and the super-natural. It also provides a world-view with a uniform set of valid beliefs, values and meanings. These configuration of beliefs and values are embedded in the socio-cultural life and the various institutions of a society. The particular embedded beliefs and values differentiate a society with the another and determine its shape and form. Moreover these beliefs and values furnish the cognitive basis for the social action of its members.

A society can be identified in spatio-temporal sense. It implies that it should be territorially located and has a continuity from past to present and has a willingness to survive in future. It should have a particular size. This size or population of a society is one of the major factor in the determination of the form of a society and its level of internal differentiation. A small size will result into the

less degree of differentiation of the division of the labour in the society and will reveal solidarity of mechanical in nature and nature of relationship will be of Gemeinschaft like. While on the other hand a large sized society will have a high degree of differentiation in the division of labour and nature of solidarity will be of organic type and have a character of Gesellschaft. Since the size of a society is determined, it will have a specific boundary and each society or system with the other society or system will be linked by a mechanism of system linkage. "whereas the process of boundary maintenance refers to the limits set upon intergroup context, the process of systemic linkage refers to the organizational arrangements for group interdependencies. Without boundary maintenance social groups would be indistinguishable among a mass of individuals and interaction would be hap hazard; without systemic linkage an unthinkable parochialism would deny to groups any form of contact outside their own boundaries."  

Islam as faith and religion

The conception of religion varies from culture to culture and society to society. In its narrower sense it concerns with the personal form of spiritual devotion and one's ultimate cosmic orientation. In other words it is ultimate orientation towards cosmos giving meaning to his being and existence in this cosmic context. If religion is taken in some broader sense, then it does involve culture-

a tradition which put central to this cosmic commitments - "cumulative tradition, of personal responses to presumed possibilities of transcending the natural order\textsuperscript{26}. The response to the cosmic orientation and natural transcendence does vary from individual to individual according to one's capacity. Moreover, a person's religious experience may not start with any spiritual impulse rather it may begin with his participation in a religious tradition as it is given to him. He may not commit himself with the ultimate orientations and spiritual experiences of a religion. Instead he may concern himself with the other spheres of the religious traditions which is of secondary or supportive in nature.

All the major world faiths demand a certain degree of allegiance by the adherants --- an allegiance which can make them distinct from and homogeneous within, from the other faiths. More than that, the allegiance to a particular faith organize them in particular form of society with a distinct culture and a specific life style and regulate their daily life attitudes and conduct. Islam at personal level implies 'a sense of cosmic transcendence'\textemdash "efforts practical or symbolical, to transcend the limits of the natural order of foreseeable life --- that is, efforts based on hope from or struggle toward some sort of "supernatural" realm\textsuperscript{27}". In Islamic faith while most of the obligations rest with the

\textsuperscript{26} Hodgson, Marshall G.S. 1974\textit{ op. cit. P. 88.}

\textsuperscript{27} Hodgson, Marshall G.S., 1974, \textit{op. cit. P. 88.}
Individual it is demanded to express his faith in the form of social activity. In other words the religious conviction must be translated into social participation. In this sense, while Islam is related with a faith at personal level it also implies a whole social pattern in the name of religion. It has tended to make this kind of total demand on life. In many spheres, not only public worship but such spheres as civil law, historical teaching, or social etiquette, Muslims succeeded quite early in establishing distinctive patterns identifiable with Islam as religion.

Fundamental to any religious faith is its conception of 'man' and 'universe' which an adherent is required to internalize into his personality. This internalization of the conception of man and universe, which is principle bed-rock of any faith, is done either individually and consciously by the person who is willing to accept that particular faith or it is done by society through the process of socialization of its members in their childhood.

Fundamental to Islam is the conception of Tawhid — unity of God, which refers that there is only one God who is the Creator, Sustainer, Master and the Lord of the Universe. He is the only Creator (Khaliq) and everything in the universe is His Creation (Makhluq). Man is also one of His Creation. But Man has been created in "the best of the pattern and

28. Ibid. P. 89.
constitution" (Ahsan-e-Taqweem) (Q:45:4). "Free from original sin, he has the potential to rise above the angels and stoop below the level of the beasts". Man has a dual nature possessing both body and soul - a physical being and spirit both. "Man's purpose is to do 'ibadah' to God (51:56) and his duty is obedience (ta'ah) to God, which conforms with his essential nature (fitrah) created for him by God. But man is also "composed of forgetfulness(nisyan)" and "forgetfulness is the cause of man's disobedience and this blame-worthy nature inclines him towards injustice (Zulum) and ignorance (jahl)". But man has not been left to plunge into the darkness of injustice or ignorance, instead he has been imbued with innate qualities in his nature to correct himself and distinguish right from wrong, truth from error. It is possible that his intelligence might confuse him. In such case God has given man out of his Bounty, Mercy and Grace, his Guidance(Huda) in form of Revealed Books and the human transmitters of that Revelations, in the form of Prophets, who are the prototype of the revelation and are human perfections.

Man has been given a thirst to know his Creator which he achieves through gnosis(marifah) - "through his faith(Emaam), devoted obedience to His law(shariah) pursuit of the good and just (Maruf) and abstinence from the evil and that which leads to denial of the Divines(Al-munkar), spiritual savouring(dhawq) abundant remembrance(Zikr).


The most challenging task which man has accepted from his creator is that of becoming His Khalifah-vice-regent on earth. "This responsibility, this trust offered to man makes him the instrument of God's will on this earth. Not a helpless tool, not a machine like extension of a mythological God confined in heavens, neither a princely appointee of the God-King given authority to subjugate and plunder this earth, this remote province of His vast empire. This Khalifah, this trustee is in fact the free and creative interpreter, the intelligent strategist, these loyal implementor who 'reports' to his unseen master through his every action, every devotion, every breath. Man rises to this challenge of Khalifah through first meeting his challenge of Abu'diyah (Servitude) and striving for Irfan (gnosis). He cannot bear this trust unless he has disciplined his self through total commitment to Adl (Justice) and abhorrence and avoidance of zulm (Tyrann), practice of Ihsan (Harmony) and sabr (Steadfastness) in the fulfilment of his duties."

When man prepares himself to surrender and submit before God and accept His challenge to become his Abd and Khalifah and discipline himself accordingly then the man becomes entitled to call himself Asharaful-Makhluqat (the most Exalted of the Creation). He occupies a place in the Eye of God which Angels cannot aspire for. To occupy such a high position in the Divine Scheme one should have faith or Iman --- faith in Tawhid or Oneness of God, faith in Risalah or chain of messengers sent by

God and Muhammad (P.B.U.H.) as the last messenger and lastly faith in "Akhirah" or the final day of judgement and the life hereafter. One who has faith in Creation, guidance and judgement and proclaims --- "La-ilaha illa Allah wa asshadu anna Muhammadar Rasul Allah" (There is no divinity except Allah and I bear witness that Muhammad is the Messenger of God) --- becomes a muslim. According to Parvez Manzoor, "At the heart of Islam lies a faith that is intensely personal, moral and teleological. Epistemologically, the testimony of faith entails the assertion of a certitude - the certitude of the uniqueness and unity of God. Morally, it involves a commitment to submit oneself to the will of God and becomes the agent of His design on this earth. Teleologically, the Islam vision gazes beyond matter and history to the felicity of God. Ontologically, muslim faith places the believer within the most fateful movement in history, the leader of which is no other than the final messenger of God. The teleology of faith also engenders the view of Islam which is all-comprehensive and in as much as the Islamic telos in beyond the contingencies of time and place, ever lasting\(^{32}\)."

As stated, basis of the faith in Islam is faith in Tawhid, Risalah and Akhirah or in other words Creation, Guidance and Judgement. Tawhid denotes unity of God, the Creator, the Sustainer the Benevolent, Just, Source of every and Destination of all. It also gives the meaning of one's

being and existence — his place in the Divine design — his cosmic and ultimate orientations. The God who is just has given human being Guidances in the form of Revelations and the last and perfect being the Quran. The transmitter of the Divine Revelations are 'Rasuls' or Prophets who are themselves a living revelations and are prototype of Divine schemes. The last Messenger is Muhammad (P.B.U.H.) on whom the holy Quran has been revealed. Muslims find in him a model of perfection of human life, an Idealized pattern of conduct and human action, Khulqul-Azeem (Most excellent standard of character) and Uswat-al-Hasanah (Pattern of conduct that personifies Goodness).

Down the ages Prophet's personality — his sayings (Hadith) and doings (Sunnah) — has functioned as the basic standard for most of the Muslims in their day to day affairs. It has guided Muslims' action throughout their life and majority of them have aspired to achieve or to correspond with that Idealized standard. Lastly there comes the concept of "Akhirah" — the final day of judgement — which has special relevance to social action and order. It entails that this worldly life is insignificant in comparison of the eternal life that is to follow after this life. There is the final destination where every living being has to reach and there will be a final day of judgement when all the actions and deeds of this life will be accountable and every individual will be answerable for his deeds alone — none is going to share his responsibilities.
The death which is a necessary end for all living being, is the point where every individual feels helpless and it is that weak human area where religion comes to rescue and gives it a meaning -- a meaning which is an essential need for human being to overcome this fear Psychosis. Islam, like other revealed religions, depict a picture of the life hereafter and imposes on its adherents an attitude of answerability -- an answerability for all his personal, social and spiritual actions and deeds. Moreover the concept of Akhirah, "first of all, establishes a framework within which the human life becomes simultaneously insignificant as it is incomparable to the eternity that is to follow, and extremely precious and crucial as on its conduct will depend the final judgement eternal admittance or banishment from the Divine presence. This concept also becomes the basis for a spirit of answerability that permeates every thought and action. A mood for responsibility and an alertness for answerability to God becomes the operational atmosphere."

The above stated philosophical assumptions which are at the heart of Islamic faith is to prepare an individual to harness his potentials and to self discipline himself accordingly so that he may be able to translate his conviction into his actions. In other words it provides them a view point to see the world and act accordingly -- an orientation which is

ultimate. But it does not mean that every Muslim has same level of understanding or insight or same degree of internalization of these values. Rather the degree of insight or level of understanding or practice varies from individual to individual but Islam as 'subjective, personal religion' and as 'Objective pervading self-same religion of the community' operates as the same and despite the difference in understanding or practice "between one muslim and another yet all are Muslims and there is only one Islam, and what is common to them all is the same Islam".

The subjective and personal Islam, it is demanded, should be translated into objective and social forms. To realise this goal a recognizable social pattern is essential where an individual conviction should be translated into social expression. In Islam the bonds which relate an individual with society, nature and super-natural is denoted by 'Akhuwwah' (Man to man), 'Khilafah'(Man to Nature) 'Abudiyah' (man to God) respectively. The coordination and balance between these three relational aspect is essential because "Abudiyah" when pursued exclusively and without regard for the worldly responsibilities of Akhuwwah and Khilafah can produce individual to pious hermits. Khilafah when looked upon in isolation and without the humbling regimen of "Abudiyah" and the sobering

34. Al-Attas, S.M. Naquib, 1985, op.cit P. 63.
35. While we have already discussed the last two concepts the concept of 'Akhuwwah'(Brotherhood) needs an elaboration. Regarding philosophy of man in Islam, All Shariati writes, "The philosophy of the Creation of man suggests that all men are not only equal; they are brothers. The difference between equality and brotherhood is quite evident. Equality is a legal term; brotherhood is an affirmation of identical essence in all human beings regardless of race, sex and color, it holds that all human beings originate from the same source".
demand of "Akhuwwah" can lead to false justification for subjugating nature and other people in the name of Islam. And "Akhuwwah", without the universality inherent in "Khilafah" can easily reduce Muslims to an inward oriented, isolationist clans.

The entire Muslim history is the history of the disequilibrium of the balance of these three relational bonds. Muslim societies down the ages have experienced strengthening of a single bond at the expense of another two, at a particular time in history.

Holy Quran Proclaims about Muslims "you have become the best community raised up for mankind, enjoining the right and forbidding the wrong and having faith in God" (Q:3:10). A community of believers, accepters and submiters to Divine will --- a community ready to carry the Divine commands to establish a society based on justice (Q:3:104) --- a responsibility entrusted to Man since Adam --- a convanant reached between God and Abraham. Many Prophets came to realize the Divine will --- to establish a society based on Divine Patterns --- a pattern which is in conformity with the pattern of nature and Universe. But the followers of all prophets in subsequent development changed and corrupted the contents of Divine Message and hence became transgressors. God once again, but finally, gave human being the 'statement of the truth and His justice' in form of revelation preserved in form of Quran. According to W.C. Smith, Here was not only a restatement of

what God has to say to us, but a society developing around that restatement: a society that, grasping firmly the injunctions which are there revealed, dedicated itself to living according to them, and thereby sets forth on the reconstruction of human life on earth. In this sense while Quran is revelation the Islamic society is its expression -- an expression of Divine pattern. And muslim community is committed to that Islamic Ideal and norms held together by a consciousness --- a historical consciousness to attain the goal of the establishment of a just society Divinely patterned. While this historical consciousness is a collective phenomena it is also a personal one. Not only that being a Muslim he is taking part in the achievement of a superb Ideal but also he is personally accountable for his personal actions and community participations in the Day of judgement. In Islam the salvation rests with the individual soul -- his personal religious conviction, but it does not get validity unless it is manifested in social participation. Hence while the concept of society and community are central to Islam, personal side is not left apart rather there is a balance --- a balance of individual and the collective.

Every society has some pre-suppositions and axioms which are supposed to be true as a matter of collective belief and the pattern of society rests ultimately on those philosophical assumptions. As stated earlier, Islam views the entire cosmic

order as the expression of Divine will. Everything in the universe are in accordance with the Divine Design and hence reveals a pattern — a pattern of harmony and Orderliness. Similarly Man also must conform this pattern by creating a society which should be in conformity with this Divine patterns. An Islamic social order will be designed on this Divine pattern where God, and not man will be the Supreme Sovereign - all the laws rules and regulations of the society will be Divinely guided. Man is 'Ameen' or trustee of these Divine Ordinances and he is 'khalifah' or vicegerent who has taken the responsibility to implement these laws. According to Al-Attas, "Islam emulates the pattern or form according to which God governs His kingdom; it is an imitation of the cosmic order manifested here in this worldly life as a social as well as political order. The social order of Islam encompasses all aspects of man's physical and material and spiritual existence in a way which, here and now, does justice to the individual as well as the society; and to the individual a physical being as well as the individual as spirit, so that a Muslim is at once himself and his community, and his community is also he, since every single member strives, like him, to realize the same purpose in life and to achieve the same goal."

Holy Quran proclaims, "O mankind, we created you from a single pair of a male and a female and made you into nations and tribes that you may know one another. Verily the most
honoured of you in the sight of God is the one who is the most God-fearing of you. (Quran: S.XLIX 13-15).

Islam considers that human beings are from one source, all are descendants of Adam and Eve. All of them are from same ancestors but as population grew they settled into various geographical regions and made themselves identifiable in terms of tribes, clans and nations. Islam recognises this distinction and treats it as functional for the boundary maintenance of the system. The differentiation of the population into these categories are only to identify themselves, it must not become a source of conflict. Rather the sense of being originated from a single source should operate as a strong bond to related all those boundaries. In another words the realization of sharing the identical essence with the others should act as system linkage. Race, colour, tribal or national differences among human being are just to distinguish, any other thing more than this, are not recognized by Islam. The real difference between man and man is of moral and ethical differences. It is in this sense it advocates to establish a society which should be patterned on some supermoral and ethical injunctions --- a society which should be in accordance with the Divine will.

All human being who profess faith in oneness of God, His messengers and revelation and the day of final judgement can inter into this society without any distinction of race, colour, caste, national or his personal economic position. The society will be where there will be no hierarchy based on worldly considerations like richs and poors, high castes or low castes.
whites or blacks. The real difference will be of their degree of piety — their religious conviction, personal devotion and social participation and his knowledge and wisdom will be the sole criterion to judge his social standing. It will be a society where there will prevail a brotherhood of universal nature, it will be the community of believers. "The only institution Islam knows of is that of the Umma. The Islamic Umma is a historical community based on faith and morality; race, colour, nationality, the place of birth, sex, social position, language have no influence on its constitution. The unity of mankind is quintessential to it: it is both the umma's raison d'être and its aspired goal. The dividing line between those inside the umma and the ones outside it is purely moral and never ontological; with the simple testimony of faith, of the will, all the barriers between the two are obliterated. The unity of the umma, is not only that of faith and morality, but also, in the final resort, that of will."

As stated earlier, every society develops institutional orders to satisfy some of the basic human needs. Since the basic needs of human are universal these institutions are common to all societies. What makes a society different from another is the form of these institutions which ultimately depend on the particular socio-cultural values of that society. In other words, a society takes a definite pattern in accordance

39 Manzoor, Parvez, 1984, op. cit. P. 46.
with those philosophical assumptions which serve as the basis for such social arrangements. Ethico-moral injunctions of a society manifest itself in the form of social expressions. While the basic institutions are common to all societies the other institutions which are of secondary in nature, vary from society to society depending on the functional need of these societies. But all these institutions take a specific form according to the philosophical, ideological and religious principles on which society has been patterned.

As is the case with all human society the basic institution of Islamic society is 'Family'. At the heart of social structure of Islam lies its family arrangements. The portion of Quran which is associated with the legislation, major portion of them concern with the family. And at the centre of those family legislation are the rules on the marriages. As Abdalati states "the foundations of family in Islam are blood ties and/or marital commitments. Adoption, mutual alliance, clientage, private consent to sexual intimacy, and "common law" or "trial" marriages do not institute a family in the Islamic sense. Islam builds the family on solid grounds that are capable of providing reasonable continuity, true security, and mature intimacy. The foundations of the family have to be so firm and natural as to nurture sincere reciprocity and moral gratification". Moreover, "Islam recognizes that there is no more natural relationship than that of blood, and no more wholesome pattern of sexual intimacy than one in which morality
32

and gratification are joined\(^{40}\).

The Islamic regulation of the family life --- familial inter-action, and rights and obligations of the members of the family rests with the Islamic ultimate assumptions --- 'asserting individual rights on the basis of equality before God'. The nuclear family system\(^ {41}\) is more desireable as self sufficient unit. Authority in the family rests with the senior male member as husband or father and in this sense it is patriarchal in nature. Women are recognized as independent individual, but are placed in care of their husband or father or in the absence of both in the care of son or brother. They can have their property on which husband will have no right instead he has to maintain her on his own.

What is distinct in Islamic family system is a balance of rights and duties - individual freedom and obligations --- a balance of 'give to' and 'get from' - a right to assert and demand his/her share and simultaneously a duty to submit, give and fulfil his/her responsibility. A father has a duty towards his children. If he fulfils those responsibility he has done his job and what he has done for children was their right. Children has their duty to obey parents and take care of them. If they do so they have fulfilled their duty and if no father

\(^{40}\) Abdalati, Hammudah, 1975, Islam in Focus, Indiana; American Trust Publications, P. 114.

\(^{41}\) Ismail R. Al-Faruqi however argues that extended types of families are preferred in Islam. Se Al-Faruqi, Ismail R. 1982, op. cit.
has a right to ask for. Similarly a wife can refuse to feed her baby and even can demand for a payment from her husband for those feedings. On the other hand if her husband has got some sore on his body and if the pain can be relieved by licking those sores by her tongue she has to do it --- it is her duty.

Marriage can be solemnized by the consent of both marrying partners and husband has to pay 'mahr' at the time of marriage to her wife and in case of divorce he cannot regain his 'mahr'. In some exceptional conditions a man can have more than one wife, upto four, but "each partnership must be given equal status with the first, upto the number of four; each marriage, that is must have the same tight-knit character". The right of divorce largely rests with the man but women have also a right to initiate the divorce. The right of inheritance rest with all the offsprings but the son will have twice the share of a daughter. "One further aspect of family law received special attention in the Quran, personal etiquette. The privacy of the home was to be respected and a modest decorum was to be observed by both men and women. Though the rules laid down in the Quran were not very precise, they served to support respect for individuals in their independent private lives. After Muhammad's time, however, these rules became the starting point of a social code of very

different import* assets Hodgson⁴³. Since Quran is not a legal
code book, rather it is a divine source of guidance (Al-Huda)
so it only gives a general guide line which have been translated
into the social and legal codes by Shariah laws.

By extension next to the family comes the kins groups.
After the family members Islam has given an obligation, a duty
towards one's kinamen. Similarly the right, of neighbour is
greatly realized in Islam. Then comes general guidelines for
social and community participation —— a guideline for social
etiquettes and manners. Similarly there are some guiding
principles for the economic regulations and the economic
behaviour. Perhaps we cannot expect Quran, by and large, to be
a treatise on economics. What is more important in Islam is its
philosophical assumptions — the meaning of the cosmos and the
place of man in that meaningful cosmos, from which most of the
individual and social behaviours are regulated. In this sense
S. Amir Ali asserts, about the ethical system of Islam, as it
is "not merely a system of positive moral rules based on a
true conception of human progress, but it is also the establi-
ishment of certain principles, the enforcement of certain dis-
positions, the cultivation of certain temper of mind, which
the conscience is to apply to the ever-varying exigencies of
time and place⁴⁴". In this way while Islam has forbidden some
of the economic practices like "riba" or interest and the

⁴³. Ibid. P. 147.
Trust P. 174.
trade of wine, pigs, gambling and monopolization of essential goods for the survival of human beings, the rest are left to the conscience to determine and practice those economic activity. But those economic activity must not be in conflict with the basic Islamic principles.

According to Rodinson, Islam "solves the entire economic problem in the light of moral realities and values, puts checks on the economic strife and struggle so as to be cognizant of the permitted and the prohibited and cleanses it of injustice and high handedness. To it, what is really important, even in economics is justice." The business and commercial activities are looked upon with more favour in Islam. "Economic activity, the search for profit, trade and consequently, production for the market, are looked upon with no less favour by Muslim tradition than by the Koran itself." Similarly, there is a Hadith reported by Zaid Ibn Ali that holy prophet said "If those profit by doing what is permitted, the deed is jihad, and if thou usest it for thy family and kindred, this will be a sedaqa, and truly, a dirham lawfully gained from trade is worth more than ten dirham gained in any other way".

Although central to the Islamic commands are those which are related to the group activity and cult expression. But no faith is genuine if it does not express itself into social activity. We have seen that Islam is more unique in the sense

46. Ibid P. 25.
that it makes a total demand on life and the Individual faith is not valid until it is not expressed in communal activity. In this sense much of the Islamic activity must be a group activity which should materialize in the communal places and buildings. However, related with these activities are those areas which forms and envalops most of the aspects of human life. Islam leaves these areas with the individual and the family where these activities should materialize. Like worship is desirable and more valid if it is done in mosque but if it is done in home, except these which are essential like Friday congregational prayer, it is also valid. Similarly the physical purification, the circumcision and the naming of the newborn child are left with the family. It is this area where the personal and familial styles emerges which may in due course, out of ignorance about Islam, may be considered Islamically valid by the practitioners of those individual, familial and ethnic traditions and customs.

The Quran and Hadith form the scripture of the Muslims. On basis of these scriptures the ulamas and mujtahids have developed a code of conduct -- a correct practice which is desirable and will mean an obedience to God. This social code which deals with all the contingencies of life is called shariah law.

Coulson remarks about shariah as "Floating above Muslim society as a disembodied soul, freed from the currents and vicisitudes of time, it represents the eternally valid ideal
towards which society must aspire\textsuperscript{47}. The shariah law governs and regulates a Muslim's life from creedal to grave and it is the major tool through which the Muslim community get homogenized. The enforcement of shariah laws in the regulation of an individual's and the community's behaviour depends upon the varying individual responses and the condition in which the community is itself placed. We will be dealing with this subject as well as the development of shariah and fiqh in the subsequent analysis.

Shariah laws are detail code of conduct as approved by God and it "stipulates the law of God and provides guidance for the regulation of life in the best interest of man\textsuperscript{48}". The shariah decisions are usually reached through four fold process. The Quran, the Hadith and Sunna, Ijma or consensus by the learned and Qiyas or analogy.

Defining the reason de'ter of shariah, Pervez Manzoor asserts that "all contradictions of internalized ethics and externalised law, of concealed intentions and revealed actions are resolved in the all embracing actionalism of the shariah because it is both a doctrine and a path. It is simultaneously a manifestation of divine will and that of human resolve to be an agent of that will. It is eternal (anchored in God's revelation) and temporal(enacted in human history), stable (Quran and sunnah) and Muamallan(social interaction), Divine

\begin{itemize}
\item[48.] Mandudi, Abd Ala, 1970. Towards Understanding Islam, Gray, Ind., International Islamic Federation of Students Organization, P. 143.
\end{itemize}
gift and human prayer all at once. It is the very basis of the religion itself: to be Muslim is to accept the injunction of the shariah.  

Closely tried with Islam as religion comes the realm of Islamic culture. Some cultural elements are more closely tied with Islam as religion, like observance of purdah among women and some are less closely tied with the religion like the local customary pattern, the decorative pattern, the art and literary traditions. The local diversity in cultural traditions are accepted in Islam as far as it confirms and are not in contradiction with the Islamic norms and values. There is a unity within these diversities. This unity of the cultural tradition of Islam can only be conceived in terms of perennial values of the Islamic world-view.

The Islamic Legacy and the historical experience of Muslim community:

Muslim community came into existence in 622 AD when prophet Mohammad migrated from Mecca to Madina. Abul Qasim Muhammad b.  

Abdul Allah was born in 570 AD in a respectable but relatively poor family of Mecca. The city of Mecca was the most important trading centre and nearly monopolized the trade routes from the Indian ocean lands to the Mediterranean lands. Mecca represented a commercial milieu with paganism which was at the heart of Bedouin tribalism. It represented a tribal

49. Manzoor, Parvez, 1984, op. cit P. 46.
50. 'b' stands for 'bin' meaning in Arabic 'Son of'
society placed in a commercial setting, taking pride in ancestry, wealth and all forms of immorality. "Exclusive tribal codes, animistic practices, female infanticide, worship of some 360 competing idols were the characteristics of society."

Muhammad whose personal character was established among the Meccans and was known as al-Amin, 'The trustworthy' experienced his prophethood at the age of forty, with the first revelation at the Mount Hira — "Read in the name of your Lord, the Creator, who created man of a clot of blood. Read. Your Lord is most gracious. It is He who taught man by the pen that which he does not know". (Quran 96:1-5).

The first converts to the new faith was his wife Khadija, Ali his cousin who occupied a position next to the prophet in shiism and sufism, Zaiyd b. Haritha a freed man who later become the trusted general of Islam and Abu Bakar the first caliph of Islam. The focus of the revelation was the condemnation of the immoral practices of the pagan tribal cultural practices and the religious ethic which was based on a sort of bargain between man and God. The new faith emphasized the Oneness of God who is only to be obeyed and worshiped. The first task was to build morality among the believers — purity, chastity and generosity were emphasized. Quran calls these moral behaviours as 'al-maruf' or 'the known' — those virtues and qualities which are held to be good universally. The new faith which emphasized equality and justice was an attraction for the oppressed and hence the early converts to Islam were largely

from this class. But essentially the number of the converts were limited facing the prosecution by Meccans who took the new faith as challenge to the established system. Islam remained a private cult until some of the influential Meccans converted to Islam particularly Umar b. al-khattab who became the second caliph of Islam, public preaching of Islam started. But essentially Islam as a new faith remained as a private cult. When the prosecution for the new converts became unbearable some of them migrated to Christian Abyssinia. In 622 AD at the invitation of the new converts in Madina (Yathrib as it was called some two hundred miles north to Mecca) Prophet migrated there. Before his own migration he already sent most of his followers there, who were called 'Muhajirs' or 'immigrants' and the Madinan hosts as 'Ansar' or 'the helpers'.

The cult of the new faith, after achieving autonomy in Madina, became a community —"Ummah" establishing a new polity. The size of the new group of converts became considerably big, achieving political independence it became easy for the new ummah to establish a society on their own. "The cult of Allah as Creator demanded, in the first instance, a personal devotion to moral purity; but personal purity implied a just social behaviour: generosity to the weak and curbing the licence of the strong\textsuperscript{52}. The prophet started establishing a new society based upon Divine patterns. The objective was to attain paradise

\textsuperscript{52} Hodgson, Marshall G.S. 1974, op. cit P. 172.
in the life hereafter by creating a Paradise in this world—establishing a social order where faith and justice should prevail. The tone of the revelation in Madina changed. In Mecca it was largely concerned with the moral dimensions and spiritual appeal, it was now guiding the new community experiences. Quran is by no means a book of legislation, the revelation just provided guidelines and it was left to the prophet to act and decide. The Madinan society which was a face-to-face society was held together by the personality of prophet who was Chief in the worldly affairs as well as guide and interpreter in the religious affairs.

In the process of the establishment of the new community it faced hostilities from the Meccan and Jewish tribes in the locality and fought many battles with them particularly at Badr in 624 A.D. Uhud 625 A.D., the battle of Ditches 627 A.D. and Khayber 628 A.D. In 632 A.D. finally Mecca was taken by Muslims without bloodshed. At Badr Muslims were 313 in numbers while at Mecca some 90,000 Muslims accompanied Prophet. Simultaneously the Arabs unity under the banner of Islam added new strength to the political power of Muslims. "Before the prophet died, he had created the conditions for a universal brotherhood on the basis of faith, a principle which he vigorously substituted for the old blood-ties and tribal loyalties of the Arabs. Thus, the umma muslima, the Muslim community as a fabric of society, with its principle of internal solidarity, was brought into being under his own hands even though it underwent further
important developments later. Prophets' 'Farewell Pilgrimage' address is the last pronouncement of Islamic faith and the guide of the Muslim community emphasizing the socio-economic justice, righteousness, egalitarianism and humanism.

The expanding society of Muslims long ceased to be a homogeneous group. It included all the heterogeneous elements expanding rapidly and the polity was taking shape of a State.

The Prophet's death and unavailability of any clear directive about his succession left Muslims of Madina into a dilemma. What should be the form of the polity and who should succeed? Islam as a relationship between man and God should be left to the individuals to follow or a definite pattern which it took under the leadership of the prophet should be continued? The later version got the consensus and the early companion of the Prophet were entrusted with the responsibility to steer the community for its destination. Abu-Bakr al-Siddique, an early convert and father-in-law of the prophet succeeded, as Khalifah or the representative. His short reign saw an expansion of the Muslim state to an extent where Muslims were crossing their swords with Sasanids and Byzantinians, then the most powerful states of the world. He ruled only two years 632-634 A.D. After Abu-Bakr, Umar Al-Farooq succeeded as second caliph in 634 A.D.

Since any activity beyond the personal and familial sphere becomes a social activity and comes within the perview of religion in Islamic sense. Simultaneously the sphere which is social comes within jurisdiction of caliphal intervention. Caliph is Islam remained head of not only state but religion as such. Since revelation ceased with the prophet to guide the community the caliphs took the example of prophetic sayings and doings and Quranic message as the guiding principles in whose light all the current questions of the varying dimensions could be solved. Moreover, the shura—the assembly of the elder companions were to be consulted on each affairs. This style of reaching on a decision was to become the fundamental of the Islamic legal thinking.

Umar, whose personal character and prestige was undisputed among Muslims became one of the greatest rulers in the history of the world. His time saw more organised conquests and in the process resulted into the defeat and capture of Sasanid empire and Byzantinian provinces of Syria, Egypt, and Palestine. Rapidly expanding empire of Islam brought enormous prestige politically and economically to the Muslims. On the other hand this rapid development threatened the pattern of the Islamic system by assimilating various elements which Muslims encounter with the two great civilizations of its time. Umar whose wisdom and farsightedness sensed this problem, set out to give a definite pattern to the Islamic systems which it had achieved till now. The system of garrison towns established
by him for the maximum military effectiveness were given a
definite Islamic mould. He appointed his representatives to
each towns who were responsible for military, civil as well as
religious functioning. Muslims were not merely conquerers
inspired by material gains only rather they were representative
and bearers of God's message to the humanity. With the new
conversions to Islam it was necessary to Islamize the people.
Hence he sent regularly religious missionaries to the towns
and localities. He tightened up the family laws, punishment
for adultery and crimes, given the more security to the slaves
and discouraged the luxury which were the natural consequences
of the wealth created by conquests. 'Helped by other high-
mined associates of the Prophet, he made of Islam a puritan
standard for the Arab solidarity'.

Much to the emption to old Arab nobility, he placed
emphasis on faith rather than descent as the criteria of social
status. More than that, the primacy in accepting Islam were
given preminence -- much of whom were from Madina and weak
and oppressed sections of Mecca. In administrative affairs his
was pragmatic attitude. He adopted all those systems which were
not in conflict with the Islamic norms and Ideals. He standar-
dized the Islamic lunar calender breaking away from the local
land-scape and ignoring the seasonal years, giving it a
universal and eternal character.

As stated earlier, in Islam the bonds relating Man to
God, Man to Nature and Man to man is represented by the term
"Ubudiya" "Khilafah" and "Akhuwah". We find in Umar's own personality and on the collective level in the Muslim community of his time these three bonds in a perfect balance. Muslims viewed the success in their conquests as God's grace and approval, since society was reflecting the Divine pattern and His will. He was assassinated by a Christian Persian slave in 644 A.D. while praying in the mosque.

Umar was succeeded by Uthman b. Affan an early convert famous for his wealth and religious piety, and was also a son-in-law of Prophet. He belonged to the Ummayyad clan of the Quraysh tribe. His reign saw a gradual decline in conquests and internal strife and tribalism again started showing its ugly head in the Muslim society. The rapidly expanding empire was held together by the dynamic personality of Umar; Uthman, relatively a weak personality, was unable to cope with the problems. Umar utilized skillfully the Umayyad's energy and expertise who were old Arab nobility of Mecca and were leading the opposition in the Islam's formative period, converted to Islam after Mecca was taken. Uthman, from the same clan, placed them in key positions and in later course of development, himself was dominated by them. This made him unpopular with the Madinans. He even tolerated their religious negligences. Discontent started in most of the garrison towns particularly Kufah in Iraq. Some of the rebels from garrison town came to Madina to complain caliph on some economic issues, became violent and assassinated him in 656 A.D.
Thus started the first civil war among Muslims called the "first fitnah" which paralyzed the Muslim community for next five years and has decisive impact on Muslim history and tradition through the Ages.

There were small circle of peoples in Madina who viewed Ali, prophet's cousin and son-in-law as the legitimate successor of Prophet. The personality of first two caliphs were dominating and hence resentment were not voiced, but under the leadership of Uthman, this dimension also caught the imagination of the Muslims. Soon after Uthman's assassination, Ali was elected as fourth caliph. Ali, the great champion of Islam, due to some social circumstances and personal wisdom restrained himself from the punishment of the assassins of Uthman. The assassins justified their action on the basis of religious arguments and it become almost impossible for Ali to counter such arguments. Ali shifted to Kufa a garrison town in Iraq. His position as caliph was denied by Muawiyah the Governor of Syria. He was from Ummayad clan and cousin of assassinated caliph Uthman and son of the chief of Quraysh tribe and sworn enemy of Islam and Prophet in its formative period, Abu-Sufyan. Finally a battle took place in Ali and Muawiyah in 657 A.D. "Those who remembered the times of the Prophet were horrified. New wealth, new sects and old tribal rivalries were tearing society apart."  

Political shrewedness won over the religious righteousness. The struggle between Ali and Muawiya still agitates the mind of Muslims. Muawiya, a political pragmatist sensing his defeat 'called for arbitration according, to Quran. Through his political manipulations he triumphed. Ali, the pious, the courageous, out of his soberness, left cheated. Ali's willingness to compromise on the basis of Quran met opposition in his camp and a group rebelled, called "Kharijites" or "those who went away". Kharjis advocated for the appointment of a caliph who is willing to act and rule according to Quran and Prophetic Sunnah - a call for return to fundamental were voiced. Later it became a source of inspiration and model for political revolt in Muslim history. Those fateful days have strong bearing upon Muslim's faith and history. "It is not accidental that later Muslims have identified themselves in terms of these events and of the factions that grew out of them. They have interpreted the whole of history in symbolism derived from them, and have made the interpretation of those events and of leading personalities in them the very test of religious allegiance."  

John Obert Voll identifies four basic styles of action operative in the Islamic history i.e. Adaptationism,  

conservatism, fundamentalism and personal charisma. Adaptationism "represents a willingness to make adjustments to changing conditions in a pragmatic manner". While adaptationism has given the Muslim community a great deal of dynamism to cope with the varying degree of problems, the preservation of these achievements were done by conservatism. Also it has "helped to keep the compromises of the adaptationists within the bounds of what has become accepted as Islamic".

"When adjustments to local conditions or the adoption of new ideas and techniques threaten to obliterate the unique and authentically Islamic elements, fundamentalist pressure begins to build" asserts Voll. He makes a distinction between conservatism and fundamentalism in the sense that while former provides "a basis for the tolerant acceptance of diversity on both the doctrinal and popular levels" fundamentalism shows unwillingness to "compromise and are more often critics than defenders of existing conditions" and it serves "as a corrective adjustment mechanism". The fourth style of action places emphasis on the more personal and individual aspects of Islam. This is more dominant in Shiism and sufistic traditions.

58. Ibid P. 29.
60. Ibid P. 31.
61. Ibid P. 30.
Moreover, since the very beginning of the Muslim society we can see some of the social factors decisively influencing the course of society i.e. the size of the group, and their politico-economic power and an aspiration to achieve the ideal pattern at the individual as well as at collective levels.

To continue the story, Muawiya established himself as caliph in Syria, his stronghold, later to become the capital of Ummayyad Empire. On the other hand Ali, the legitimate caliph was still in Kufah. Kharjis in an attempt to end the dispute planned to murder both of them and succeeded in assassinating Ali while praying in mosque. Muawiya escaped. Ali's assassination gave Muawiya an opportunity to establish himself as Caliph. Majority of Muslims, horrified with these wars, sensing that Muawiya's troops can go to the extent of killing the Muslims, though forbidden by Islam, remained neutral and were willing to lend their support to him. This support to Muawiya was motivated more by saving Muslim community from utter chaos and disintegration. Unless and until Muawiya was ready to provide an umbrella of unity for Muslims as collectivity, the "jamaah", the Muslims in general remained neutral though most of them critical of him. The period saw an entire change in the course of Muslim history. Shift of capital from Madina under the shadow of prophet, to the garrison town of Damascus in Syria totally changed the character of Islamic polity. Muawiya, now no longer represented Islam or prophetic tradition as the basis of the polity, rather Empire
was held together by common interest and military power, giving a new look from which Muslim political system was never to recover.

The title of 'Khalifah' was kept as such for the head of the state, but with the succession of Muawiya's son Yazid it turned into dynastic rule. Yazid's succession led another opposition in Hijaz and Kufah where Muawiya was not been able to get his control. Husayn, the son of Ali and grandson of Prophet claimed for leadership and at Karbala near Kufa was killed by the Ummayad's Syrian troops in 680 A.D., leaving behind a new faction to emerge among the Muslims which culminated into a distinct tradition of shiism.

Under Ummayads the Caliphal States turned into absolute monarchy. Greater expansion of Ummayad Empire were carried out bringing greater economic affluence and cultural florescence. Garrison towns developed a culture of Arab nobility and commoners. Being an Arab, despite the religious association, became a criteria to be included into the leading social strata. Non-Arab Muslims were called Mawalis, represented the lower strata of the population. The negation of the basic Islamic Ideal of egalitarianism left majority discontented. Simultaneously, the development of the new administrative system required adaptation to the techniques of the old Sasanian and Byzantinian systems. This led to the revival of the Hellenistic Greek translations into Arabic which exposed the Islamic faith to the new challenges. Thus opened a new chapter in Islamic theology.
by the challenges of the Kharjis on the very legitimacy of the regime on the basis of religion. The opposition and justification of the regime were carried out by importing the philosophical speculations from whatever available sources, "Hellenism, Hellenized Christianity Gnosticism, Manichaen dualism and Buddhist elements provided the stock ideas for philosophical, religious and moral speculation".

A new generation came into being who started exploring what really the Islamic ideals are? They saw the majority not striving for the Ideal rather enjoying the fruits of the conquest. The critical mood was dominant in Hijaz and Kufa which still stood in opposition to the regime. The political opposition manifested itself in religious opposition. Instead of giving an impetus to the local rebellion, the general discontent were given a wider base provided by religious discussions which was still a great appeal to the masses. First question which initiated the dialogue concerned the definition of a Muslim. "Does a Muslim remains a Muslim after committing a grave sin? Or, is faith alone sufficient or must it express itself in works as well?" Kharjis' conception were the later stand and hence they thought the political regime and the ruler as illegitimate and hence advocated for rebellion. The religious discussions had political implications. Others maintained that 'Decision belongs to God alone' hence it should be left to the Day of Judgement. These people were called Murjis, and from this group,

63. Rahman, Fazlur, 1979, op. cit P. 89.
in future, some of the great legist of Islam was to come. Thus intiated the dialogue on predeterminism, a point of view which supported the ruling dynasties in future.

Madina once the capital of Islamic Empire now became centre of religious opposition. On the other hand the uncompromising attitude of Umayyads in accommodating religious imperatives in state policies became the basis of opposition for the religious minded people. The culture of desparity among Arabs and non-Arabs and the preference of Syrian Arabs as compared to others were adding a new fuel to the social unrest. The social inequility and the grievances of the masses reflected the inadequate and un-Islamic social policy of the regime and hence the weakness in the secular sphere was seen as religious weakness of not only the ruling class, but society as a whole. The moral laxity and a distance from the Islamic practices were thought to be a result of wealth and luxury brought by conquests. The scholars set out to define the Ideal Islamic pattern. With the rapid expansion of the Muslim Empire new converts from various shades and localities now comprised the Muslim community. To homogenize the community in a distinct cultural milieu which should represent the Islamic values was a greater need of the time. This common culture of the Umma must not be essentially an Arabism rather it must represent the original Islamic impulse, a common reference point must be the Prophet's practice. Hence Muslim's search for a context which should guide and influence the day-to-day activity of a Muslim, started. Thus grew a number
of schools in Madina, Kufa, Basra etc. interpreting Quran and Hadith according to their own point of view. Simultaneously the collection of Hadith (reports of Prophet's sayings) started.

The Murji's who were political neutralists in Ali and Muawiya's conflict and were religious moderates developed themselves into a distinct school of thought called 'Mutazila'. Shii, who were not a separate sect then, developed a school of thought called 'Ghulat' which stressed for the inward meaning 'batin' of the revelation. This attitude in later developments influenced the development of sufism. One of the greatest legal thinker of all time in Muslim history Abu-Hanifah (699-769) was from Kufah and was a well to do Mawali merchant. Hanafis, the major faction of the four sunni Madahabs adhere to the laws developed by him. It is more flexible than others.

All the schools of thoughts were advocating an anti-regime stand and in the consequence faced the persecution. On the other hand, they were getting the mass appeal. The religious opposition led by political revolt resulted into the Abbasid success. Abbasids who traced their descendancy from Prophet's uncle Abbas were from Banu-Hashim clan of Quraysh tribe. They succeeded in overthrowing the Umayyad's in 750 A.D. by the help of Shii political activist and religious scholars. As they ascended the power they turned their back on these groups lending their much support on their Khurasanian military power, much to the disgust of these groups.
Abbasid dynasty represented Monarchical Absolutism and attained great economic prosperity and cultural, artistic and educational achievements; a glory never achieved by any other Muslim Empire in history. Unlike Umayyad's they never totally rejected the implementation of religious laws in state policies. Rather they appeared to reach a compromise by appointing Qadi's from among the religious scholars and they were entrusted to look after the day-to-day affairs and market regulations of the commoners. This step broken the religious opposition by splitting the religious scholars into two groups. Hence the popular and the official version of Islamic thinking came into being. Most of the scholars who were insistant upon their independent working, distanced themselves away from the official versions. But they were in no mood to make it a rallying point against the regime. Instead they accepted it as reality 'recognizing the validity of the general community experience, however imperfect community might sometimes be'. This brought a clear cut demarcation between the general Muslims accepting the political regime and those who supported the Shi'ite point of view. This developed the two distinct sect among Muslims: former as Sunnis and later as Shi'is.

For Muslims the state of political order is an index to social health. Disillusioned with the political conditions, the religious scholars set out to develop Islamic law which can guide the Muslims in ever varying conditions free from any political dependence. Initially the political system was the
main instrument guiding the course of the religion. The separation of politics from religion by Ummayads and Abbasids created a vacuum. This vacuum came to be filled by a well defined religious laws. It also served as an instrument to check the encroachments made by the syncretistic elements on Islam. Thus developed an Islamic intellectual tradition and cult of ulama 'the religious scholars'.

Quranic message and Prophetic traditions constitute the essence of Islamic faith. Just after Prophets' death Muslim identified his practices as the normative conduct for the community. This normative code of conduct were practices by Muslims as 'living tradition'. With the rising new contingencies which the Muslims faced during their expansions demanded a context to give the meaning to the new practices. The need to collect and systematize the Prophet's saying 'Hadith' and his practice 'Sunnah' was felt enormously. Moreover the religious opposition to the regime brought a horde of fabricated Hadiths by which each party took to justify their stand. Letter of Abd al-Malik (684-8) the great Umayyad ruler to Hasan al-Basri (642-728 A.D.) a religious scholar taking stand against the regime well illustrate this phenomena. Abd al-Malik sought to clarify the stand of al-Basri by citing any prophetic hadith which al-Basri admitted that he hasn't.

Prof. Fazlur-Rahman observes that "the Sunna as a concept referred to the behaviour of the Prophet, its content, nevertheless, was bound to change and derive largely from the actual
practice of the early community. A third dimension which the Hadith and Sunna included was "from a Hadith or a sunna-report several points of practical norm were deduced by interpretation and all these points were called sunna because they were seem to be implicit in the Sunna. A very careful collection of Hadith started by religious scholars and they traveled far and wide to collect this verbal transmission of Hadiths. Now there exist six genuine collection of Hadiths. Most genuine of them is collection by Ismail al-Bukhari (810-70 A.D.) called "Sahih Bukhari". Next to this comes "Sahih Muslim" collected by Muslim Ibn al-Hajjaj (d. 875 A.D.) which comes very closer to the first. Others are, works of Ibn Maja (d. 886), Abu Daud (d. 888), al-Tirmidhi(d.892) and al-Nasai(d-916 A.D.).

Since the Hadith reports were collected over some two to three centuries after prophet, the western scholars doubt its validity. In their view it represents the general community practice of at least two to three generations after Prophet. But as we have noted it does contain not only Prophet's doing but doing of his close companions who were thought to be the best representative of Prophet's teaching and their practical derivatives from these teachings were thought to be essentially representing the practice of Prophet himself. But essentially

64. Rahman, Fazlur, 1979, op. cit P. 56.
65. Ibid. P. 57.
all of these are related to the prophet. Muslim do not doubt its validity.

1 Islam is the realization of God's will on this earth. When the original Qur'anic impulses were alive the interpretation of God's will rested with the individuals' own conscience. The early Muslims acted as they understood the meaning of God's will and it is left to the Decision of God to decide whether his act was in accordance to His will or not. With the expansion of society and expansion of religious discussions on every aspect of life in every varying contingencies, religious scholars realized that this free opinion or personal judgement 'ray' and 'ijtihad' or personal reasoning, is leading towards varying and most often conflicting point of view in religious matters. As we have noticed earlier these discussions had political implications and there grew a number of schools of thoughts in different provinces and garrison towns, each legist and scholar identified their local practices as representing the true Islamic practice. For Al-Awzai (d. 774) the Syrian practices, for disciples of Abu-Hanifa the Kufan practices and for Malik ibn Anas (d. 795) the Madinan practices were representing the true Islamic character. These were the major currents while even within each centre of learnings every individual opinion were stressed as representing the true Islamic stand. On the other hand the expanding society changed the character of face-to-face society. But this face-to-face relationships were supplemented by knowing religious scholars by their repute. In the later course of development
through 'Ijma' or the 'consensus of the scholars' a point of agreement were reached which took Madinan model as the reference point in whose context the normative Islamic practices could be derived.

In the formation of Islamic legal thinking the most decisive step was taken by Muhammad Ibn Idris al-Shafi'i (d.819) by systematically introducing Sunna in shariah law. A rigorous legal thinker, he refined the legal thinking of Abu Hanifa. By interpreting Quran he showed in his law book 'kitab al-umm' that Prophet was not only transmitter of revelation but also its interpreter. Hence he gave Prophetic tradition a theological status which it never had before. Giving more primacy to 'Ijma' or consensus, than to 'Ijtihad' or reasoning which was placed at the end of the sharia law derivations by him, he perfected and saved the law from private fancy. Although it was done out of necessity -- a necessity to save the religious law from the challenges of the alien elements and the Hellenistic philosophy which the Mutazila scholars were gradually introducing into the religious thinking, Mutazila condemned the growing number of Prophetic Hadith's and labelled it as mere fabrication which cannot be relied upon. They placed much emphasis on reasoning than relying on these Hadith. A long intellectual battle was fought on religious issues between mutazila scholars and the orthodox ulama, which resulted with the triumph of the orthodoxy. In the process, orthodoxy itself accommodated much of the stand of Mutazilites.
Al-Shafii’s motive was to save the Islamic orthodoxy from these encroachments by Mutazila philosophy or a new philosophical tendency which was to culminate into a tradition of sufism. His usul-al-fiqh established the basis of law which gave emphasis in order of preference to Quran, Sunna, ijma and lastly to ijtihad and Qiyas. This emphasis on ijma rather than ijtihad, which saved the Islamic law from 'arbitrary individual and sectarian opinions' had its negative impact too. "Islamic law and dogma have developed but little since. One of the most creative and brilliant epochs of all intellectual history came to a sudden close". The shariah seldom referred, in early Muslim community and it was denoted by the term Din. Din encompassed both law and morality. In the subsequent development of the shariah law, emphasis were placed more on law than morality. The 'Faqh' which meant initially 'understanding', was personal understanding of the scholar and was subjective. It was transformed into a concrete body of objective knowledge of religion and law validated by the consensus of ulama and community. In subsequent development the original spirit of Quranic message choked to death in the suffocating air of 'fiqh'. Often some of the religious scholars of extreme courage, like Ibn Taymiya tried to revive the original spirit but conditions which the orthodoxy placed for the 'ijtihad' was so difficult that non of the scholars could have fulfilled the criterion.

68. For the development of Islamic law see also Noel J. Coulson's (1964), 'A History of Islamic Law' Edenburg; Edenburg University Press.
Another adverse effect of the closure of the gate of ijtihad was the development of another body of law by states parallel to the shariah laws. Not finding enough flexibility in shariah laws to cope with the changing situation in matter of state regulations Abbasid caliphs and in later stage by the "Sultanate orders" developed a parallel court called the 'mazalim courts' to deal with them. These mazalim courts were of autocratic in nature, remained essentially alien to the shariah law. On the other hand Qadi courts were entrusted with the duty to see the shariah norms were implemented in the public life. While Qadi's were concerned with the public order, the interpretation and application of shariah laws in individual cases rested with the 'muftis' who gave their 'fatwa' or legal verdict. These 'fatwas' of authoritative ulamas were also gradually accommodated into Islamic laws.

Taqlid or 'imitation', rather than ijtihad, stressed by orthodox ulama reflected itself on the educational system of the period. The battle which they won over the Mutazila made them cautious enough and they erected a system in law itself which can safeguard it from the opposing and intruding elements. They developed religious sciences and distanced it away from the general intellectual climate of the time. This led to the stagnation of the Islamic intellectualism. But the positive function of this system was that orthodox view of Islam was transmitted from generation to the generation intact, and the madrasa system
developed a uniform curriculum which were taught in the length and breadth of the Muslim Empires. Moreover, there developed another system of learning which were imparted by scholars privately and seekers of 'Ilm' came to them from all the regions and localities of the Empires. This educational purpose led to greater social mobility among students and scholars alike. The elementary education whose objective was to educate the population with the essentials of religion helped in Islamizing the Muslim community. The madrasa or schools were not restricted to the important learning centres rather they were founded in every locality which provided the localities with a considerable number of people well versed in religious education.

Since the Abbasid period, Islam was not localized into garrison towns rather it spread into villages. Muslim societies reflected heterogeneity bound by common loyalty to Islam. Islam was no longer a religion of the ruling minority. The spread of Islam along with its appeal to the masses, was also facilitated by the official encouragement for the conversion. Few Umayyad caliphs like Umar Ibn Abdul Aziz and Hisham adopted the religious conversion as a matter of state policy. It was taken as full fledged policy in Abbasid times. This mass conversions to Islam undermined the number of Arab Muslims and in the process they lost the favour of the rulers and hence a new culture developed and Arabism had no longer sway over the masses. Arabian descent was now no longer the criteria for being included into the higher
strata. Rather every person from whatever descent, if gifted by talent could rise to the highest position. This brought a greater degree of mobility in the population furthered by the economic expansions. Towns and cities were an attraction for the population.

Within one 'greater cultural pattern' which Islamic Empire brought, we can discern three distinct cultural traditions operating at three different levels. One was culture of aristocracy and court, developing a distinct code of conduct and behaviour called 'Adab' which reflected much the sharia norms wrapped into the feudal aristocratic styles. "Drawing from existing, older, sources it none the less bore the characteristic imprint of Islam. The 'beau ideal' of the Arab gentleman reflected clearly Islamic ideal. In behaviour, proper (adab), in virtue namely (muruah), and in manner elegant (zarf) he made no cheap jokes and he was clean in appearance." This code of conduct became a model for upper strata of Muslims and is valid till date in Muslim societies. The concept of 'adab' "addresses all domains of life and expresses the Muslim goal of bringing all of society into consonance with a common core of values. Though domains of activity can be distinguished and expectations for specific roles vary, the concept of 'adab' reinforces the understanding that all Islam is ultimately one."

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The commercial activity fostered by the Abbasid Empire brought greater economic prosperity in towns, attracted the village population. Immigrants coming from rural settings encountered a culture of commercial milieu permeated with Islamic norms. Adaptation to the new urban environment needed not only knowing urban life ways rather, knowing Islam itself was inevitable. Ulamas who, not trusting the rulers, kept away the Mosques and madrasas from rulers interventions. Moreover the religious activity was itself patronized by the rulers, pious or debauched, both. This made mosques and the surrounding areas most lively place in town where much of the commercial and religious activities were carried out. Experiences of trade journeys in far distant lands along with folk traditions gave rise to a new professional group of story tellers (qussas) who from various Biblical and Talmudic tales, to venerate Prophet, created a popular prophetic tales which also came to be included into sufistic and later in the orthodox traditions. Being Muslim was a great advantage. Knowing Islam and its language and vocabulary was a key to rise on the social scale. Hence, Muslims and non-Muslims alike learned the culture and the language of Islam. A dominant civilization moulds the culture and language of its surroundings which results into the intellectual supremacy of that particular civilization. Such was also the case with the Muslims and their civilization, in those period.
Local landscape and seasonal cycle round the year, has strong bearing upon the people of that particular geographical region. It provides a context for meaning and references and influences the conception of Being and Existence of human. In other words it moulds the entire conception of the universe held in the minds of the people in that locality. The attachment which one has to his local landscape cannot be underestimated. In this context when Islam spread into the villages, Christians, Jews and Mazdeans converted to Islam never at once recovered from their earlier practices. Moreover the Islamic lunar calender which was not attached to any local landscape and seasonal year provided another opportunity to keep their old seasonal calenders in operation which attached them with their geographical locality. In an agrarian society agriculture was their way of life. They never supplemented this by shariah way of life rather accommodated Islamic spirit and shariah vision within the agricultural way of life. We have little source of information about this "Little traditions". Whatever information we have, it gives an idea that Muslims not at once left their old practices and the Islamization process was slow but steady. In Syria and Egypt as we are informed "the whole population, Muslims and Christians alike celebrated the return of spring with the Easter holiday, when the Christians had their processions while the Muslims looked on".

71. Hadgson, Marshall G.S., 1974, op. cit P. 300
With the popularization of religious education by establishing madrasas in every localities accompanied by the great social mobility in the society, we can discern from the random informations provided by historians of those ages, that a process of Islamization was already in progress. The search for, the Divine way and Islamic Ideal was always there. As Clifford Geertz observes, "Islamic conversion is not, as a rule, a sudden, total overwhelming illumination but a slow turning toward a new light". Taking a somewhat similar stand, Al-Attas asserts, "Islamization is the liberation of man first from magical, mythological, animistic, national-cultural tradition and then from secular control over his reason and his language". And "Islamization is a process not so much of evolution as that of devolution to original nature .... His 'evolution' towards perfection is his progress towards realization of his original nature as spirit. Thus in individual, personal, existential sense Islamization refers to what is described above in which the Holy Prophet represents the highest and most perfect Example; in collective, social and historical sense Islamization refers to the community's striving towards realization of themoral and ethical quality of social perfection achieved during the age of the Holy Prophet (may God bless and give him peace) who created it under Divine Guidance.

73. Al-Attas, S.M. Naquib, 1985, op. cit P. 42.
This pattern of Islamization can be found operative in the cities as well as in the villages, since the Abbasid's early times. Islamic teachings imparted in madrasas reached to the villages by those students who took education there. Moreover, the patronage of the local lords to the religious scholars and their own zeal for Islamic teaching made a point of contact between the illiterate peasants and the scholars. These scholars, in later development, sufis, provided the masses with the example and inspiration. Whatever carried out in the cities, through the greater social mobility, reflected itself on the every part of the Empire. Hence in heterogenous society Islam provided a basis for homogenity.

While the religious debate between mutazila philosophers and orthodox ulama were going on accompanied by the great luxury and wealth enjoyed by the nobility and commoners alike, a new trend was in offing. A sharp reaction to the political and religious controversy and economic abundance resulted into rise of the sufi order. The roots of sufism can be traced to the first generation of Muslims but till the 9th century a sharp distinction cannot be made between sufis and ulamas. Most often a person was both at a time. The degree of emphasis on personel or collective side of Islamic teaching made them distinct from each other. The emphasis on personal piety and spiritual devotion took its root, thus grew a new cult of 'sufism'.
After Al-Mamun, Abbasid Empire gradually set on decline. Debauched rulers and wicked wazirs intrigue, conspiracy and murder came to characterize the royal palaces. Slave soldiers (mamluks) became the power brokers. Gradually these Mamluks established their rules in the area where they were placed as army commanders, keeping their nominal allegiance to the Caliph. Some of these rulers, called sultans, established the great empires like 'Fatmids' in Egypt and Suljuks in South-west Asia. These developments while deteriorated the central political power on the other hand it struck its major blow on the economic fronts. The deteriorating politico-economic power accompanied by the luxurious life and extravagant life style of the ruling aristocracy also resulted into the moral decay of the Muslim society. General intellectual climate of Muslim society also stagnated.

The orthodoxy, for the purpose to bring the political stability stressed the Hadith which emphasized the ruler as 'reflection of God on earth'. This Hadith, in future provided the ground for rulers to justify their actions. The cult of 'ulma' who supported the regime came to be identified with the corruption of the rulers. Religious laws defined by ulamas and its rigidity and inadequacy to deal with the new arising situations resulted into a failure. Islamic faith was traditionalized. Instead of 'Faith' guiding the tradition, tradition itself determined the state of 'Faith'. Islamic law "definite and defined, was cast like a shell over the community". A sense of
hopelessness pervaded the Muslim mind tempting them to seek
refuge from the harshness of reality. This escapist tendency
brought them towards sufism. Sufis, who earlier were called
‘Zuhad’ were now being organised into distinct order with its
new philosophy importing elements from Gnostic, neoplatonic and
Christian philosophies. Messianic doctrine of Christianity was
imported into shiism in a situation of political hopelessness
and then to sufism, was a great attraction to the people who
hoped for a Divine intervention to bring the order back. The
genuine spiritual response and a form of political protest which
gave the initial impulse to sufism in its earlier period "was
now transformed into veritable spiritual jugglery". Sufi saints,
it was now supposed to have magico-spiritual power which can be
translated into the performance of miracles. This idea got more
acceptance in village illiterate masses who, as we have noted
earlier, never recovered from the influence of their local land­
scape. The previous gods of animis were replaced by Sufi saints.
In a morally decaying society, this attitude of the masses
provided a new opportunity to the aspirant for worldly material
gains, power and influence. Thus grew a cult of "ill balanced
majdhubs (i.e. those in perpetual trance), parasitic mendicants,
exploiting derivishes proclaimed Muhammad's faith in the heyday
of sufism. Islam was at the mercy of spiritual delinquents74".

To characterize sufism with only these notions will be an
injustice. The function it rendered to Islamic history and

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Muslims is undeniable. After the decline of Muslim political power, due to its compromising and assimilating nature, it were the sufis who became the chief vehicle for the spread of Islam in the distant lands. They were the carriers of Islamic message in their own mould. But the alien practices of the sufi ways and its accommodative character paved the way for the syncratic elements to be assimilated within the sufism 'displacing its very ideal'. The entire history of sufism reveals a struggle between orthodox and heterodox forces within sufism. According to W.C. Smith, "Sufism differs from the classical sunni weltanschaung radically; and not least in its attitude to history, the temporal mundane. It stressed the individual rather than society, the eternal rather than the historical, God's love rather than, His power, and the state of man's heart rather than behaviour".

The relational bond which bind individual and society with nature and God, which we saw in a perfect balance in the time of early Caliphs now no longer represented the similar balance. The ruler's indifference towards the demand of 'Ubudiya' and 'Akhuwa' provided the false justification for the subjugation of people in the name of Islam and individual response towards 'Ubudiya' alone cutting the bands of 'Khilafah' and 'Akhuwa' gave rise to a cult of pious hermits or sufis. Similarly the mass responding only to 'Akhuwa' made Muslim

75. Smith, W.C., 1957, op. cit P. 37.
societies into an isolationist clans, forgetting their historical task of being 'Khalifa' and 'Abd' of God, bearer and carrier of His Message to the humanity.

In all round demoralization of the Muslim world still hope was left. This age produced some of the personalities who remain ideal for Muslims in every age. The Sultanate orders which developed, out of political weakness of Abbasid Caliphate produced figures like Saladin (1138-93) (original name is Sultan Salah-al-Din Ayyubi) who reflected the ethic of Ideal Muslim ruler of the early periods. The Sultanate order was not as corrupt everywhere as it pretends to be.

"In many cases, the soldiers were not native to the areas they controlled, and their primary link to the population was a common adherence to Islam. They made no pretense of being Islamic teachers and accepted the obligations of the faith as defined by the Ulama and the other religious leaders. The ulama, in turn, recognized the need for the stability that could be provided by an effective military force in a period when the old imperial order had crumbled". It in this spirit that a scholar like Ibn Taymiya (1263-1328) experiencing the devastation brought upon Muslims by Mangol invaders lends his support to the political order of the day and proclaimed "God has imposed the duty of enjoining the good and forbidding the evil, and that is possible only with the authority of a

Chief". and "It is thus that people say, the 'Sultan is the shadow of God on earth' and 'sixty years with an unjust Imam is better than one night of monarchy,...". In later development we see that orthodox ulama always supported the regime and never experienced the persecution which the great scholars and Imams like Abu Hanifa, Malik Ibn Anas, Muhammad al Shafi and Ahmad Ibn Hanbal(780-855), the founders of the four Madhabs among sunnis, faced at the hands of the rulers of their time. The political opposition to the rulers came from orthodox sufis.

Sufism which institutionalized into different orders (tariqa) took their definite form from the ninth century onwards. Although most of the founders of the orders represented the orthodox views but in later development the particular sufi teachers assimilated alien practices within the practices of those tariqa. For instance the oldest order of sufism is Qadiriya order founded by Abd-al-Qadir al-Gilani(b/1077). In its early phases it essentially represented the orthodox view but in later development his personality over shadowed the personality of Prophet in the conception of Sufis and the third spiritual descendant of this order Shams al-Din introduced music into sufi practices. The introduction of music and dancing and changing of spiritual formulas while remained great attraction to the peasant illiterate folks, Islam was

never introduced to the new people in its original form. The new people converted to Islam by these orders identified Islam with the practices of these particular orders 78.

The symbolic unity of Muslims never to be achieved again, was broken by the sacking of Baghdad by Mangols in 1258. In the days of despair and political instability much of the Islamic discussions were carried out by the sufis. Sufism which was vehemently attacked by the orthodox ulamas got its recognition by the work of great Islamic thinker of all times Abu Hamid al-Ghazali(d.1191). Al-Ghazali himself an orthodox Sufi, brought the law, morality and Theology together which were taking their own course in the Islamic intellectual tradition. His balancing, while brought the style of individual devotion under shariah law, simultaneously sharia law got the theological and spiritual content which it had lost during its development. Orthodox version of Islam in the process, accommodated many sufistic conceptions.

On the political horizon, some of the great Empires were taking their shape culminating into the foundation of Muslim empires in India, the ottomans in Turkey and safavids in Iran. While these Empires took their birth in those areas, Islam was already introduced to the masses by the sufi saints. As the glory, these Empires achieved, Islamic intellectualism again revived. The days of humiliation and demoralization

were over, Muslim's search for Ideal again took new forms. The masses who were introduced the sufistic version of Islam, encountered the orthodox and some times fundamental version of Islam. Through religious teachings and education, interaction of Greater and Little tradition of Islam started. Many sufi scholars reformed the sufi teachings on the orthodox lines. Through systematic efforts, the deviated and distorted versions were Islamized. This religious and cultural activity remained in its full bloom till the political power was strong.

Throughout this historical development of Muslim community we have observed that Islam entered into any region either by conquests, seizing the political power of the region or by the teachings of Arab traders and sufi saints. In the former case, Islam was introduced as the 'Faith' which was the source of new ethic and morality giving the down-trodden and impoverished people of Arabia a new dynamism resulting in their political supremacy. The new faith accompanied by the political dominance became the source of inspiration to the locals for the conversion. The local converts, along with the bearers of Islamic message shared the similar experience of gradual religious and political developments. The religious scholars in the great political upheavals developed and enlarged the religious perspective and established the orthodox tradition which gave a definite and defined Ideal Islamic
practices. On the other hand the Arab traders and sufi saints travelled far and wide and propagated the Islamic teachings into the alien lands. The people who converted to Islam by them gradually experienced the true message of Islam. Initially when the number of the converts remained small, deprived of any politico-economic power, they were not been able to influence their surroundings. Rather the surrounding local environment moulded them. Islam remained for them as personal faith. As their number grew and they were able to dominate politically either by seizing the political power of the locality, as happened within the Prophet's time, or by external Muslim conquest in those lands, as it happened in latter developments, they were able to translate their personal faith into social forms by patterning society according to their own point of views largely derived from the religion itself. In later developments, with the political dominance, the society as a whole came into contact with the orthodox tradition. The political stability resulted into the economic prosperity which made them able to cultivate their religion and the culture. With the spread of religious education, the search for the Ideal pattern increased. The political order reflected the state of health of Muslim society. As the political power started declining, it has been attributed to the deviance of the society from the Ideal Islamic norms and practices. Hence a return to the fundamental version of Islam was advocated more
vigorously. On the other hand the rapid expansions while brought economic affluence, the size of the Muslim community also grew rapidly resulting into the greater degree of internal differentiation of the society. While unprivileged voiced for the observance of Islamic egalitarianism, the privileged perpetuated the inequality negating the very essence of Islamic faith. The social tensions and discrimination took the religious tone. Religion itself became the battle ground. The religious debate carried out in the diverse political, economic and social circumstances grew into historically cumulative tradition represented by the orthodoxy which Muslim mistook as representing the Islamic faith as such. Hence in this way the historical tradition of religion became confused with the original Islamic faith. Most often the need for the fundamental version were stressed. The fundamental version interpreted by reformist religious scholars, with the passage of time itself became traditionalized.

**The Indian Experience:**

Islam was introduced in the Indian sub-continent by the Arab traders, who had their trade connections with India since the pre-Islamic times. Full fledged introduction begun by the conquest of Muhammad bin Qasim in 712 A.D. But the spread of Islam was limited beyond the Sind river and in some coastal towns. With the invasion of Mahmud Ghaznavi in 1000 A.D. it started penetrating into the northern and central
India. Though till the time of Ghaznavi, the original impulse of Islamic message, as the early Arabs used to carry with them to the conquered lands, were lost. But the political dominance smoothened the way and made it easy for the bearers of the Islamic message to carry out their work. By the time sufism was taking its distinct shape in the Islamic heart lands. Hence, the prime bearers of the Islamic message in India were the wandering sufis. What they did first, "was to find points to contact and social roles within the host community. They shared their knowledge of religious experience with man of other spiritual traditions. They helped propitiate the supernatural forces which hemmed in and always seemed to threaten the lives of common folk. They interpreted dreams, brought rain, healed the sick and made the barren fertile. They mediated between rulers and ruled, natives and newcomers, weak and strong. In fact, by accommodating themselves to local needs and customs they gradually built a position from which they might draw people into an Islamic milieu and slowly educate them in Islamic behaviour 79."

The spread of Islam in India is credit to the sufi orders. We know by various accounts that when Muhammad Ghori defeated Prithvi Raj in 1192, the most venerated Sufi saint of India, Khwaaja Mu'in al-Din Chisti at Ajmer, followed him.

This incidence itself tells the story. Before the establishment of Muslim Empire in India, Sufis already converted a sizeable number of locals to Islam. But essentially, they were not Islamized, rather they had much of their old practices retained. With the establishment of Muslim Empire, the orthodox tradition came into contact with the converted local Muslims.

As stated earlier, the compromise brought by al-Ghazali between sufism and orthodoxy while lifted the face of sufism, orthodoxy within itself accommodated much of the sufistic conceptions. Moreover, the religious tradition and the dialogue was carried out much by the sufis who themselves had split into the groups of reformists representing the orthodox traditions in Sufi mould and the syncretistic and heterodoxes. Sufism carried with them these points of views into India. A land ridden with animistic devices, superstitious beliefs and conceptions, found syncretistic mode of sufism much appealing. "Magic has always been part of sufism in India. Sufi masters used magic to combat the forces of evil and darkness". And "A strong, almost blind, belief in the miraculous permeated society. The learned and the powerful were not immune. Karamat (grace, miracle) was proof that the Sufi Sheikh had attained the status attributed to him". Thus grew a vast body of folk-beliefs around the various Sufi saints, and their shrines became a place of blessing for the people. In the Sufi conception the world is polarised into two realms of the seen and

80. Ahmed, Akbar S. 1988, op. cit PP. 96-9
unseen. The sufi saints are the kings of hidden and unseen world and are responsible for the restoration of the order in the visible and seen world. In this sense, the folk belief developed a notion of parallel power of sufis along with the rulers and the sufis assumed the title of 'Shah' (King). Another special feature which characterized the Indian sufism was the development of sufi literature, poetry and music. The religious relativism introduced by Ibn al-Arabi in the thirteenth century, was a big boost for the intrusion of such syncretistic elements into sufism. Under the influence of famous Persian Sufi poet Jalal-al-Din Rumi (d. 1273 A.D.) this religious relativism got much popularity and all the Turko-Persian traditions influenced the Indian tradition. Thus developed a peculiar Indian poetic tradition at the tombs of sufis called 'sama' sung by qawals. Many deaths have been reported by the ecstasy aroused at the 'sama' organized at the annual festivals at various shrines of the sufi saints. The organization of these festivals, in most cases, matched with the Hindu, Christian or local festivals. The responsibility to arrange these festivals rested with a family who claimed to be the spiritual successors of the saint. These offerings in terms of kind or cash by the pilgrims on the occasion of festivals brought much economic gains to the family and sometimes deadly feuds have occurred among two claiming families for descendancy.
With the political expansion of the Muslim Empire, much of the Indian territory was brought under Muslim rule. The military routes, which was also the main trade routes, developed towns at strategic places. The economic success brought by the political expansion encourage the social mobility and the town became more lively where Muslims were able to develop a culture and society on their own. The local converts who were at the mercy of the local surroundings and held Islam as a matter of private and personal side of life, for the first time started to experience Islam as a faith to be expressed socially. The towns became the religious and cultural centres of Muslims. The mobility of society brought the orthodox and sycrétistic heterodox traditions together, influencing the course of each other. The orthodox trying to Islamize the heterodox, under the Hindu dominant majority themselves compromised on many fronts. The rulers, on the other hand, never tried to take the application of shariah into society in their own hands. Simultaneously they encouraged the orthodox and sufistic traditions alike, in return gaining the support of both. While orthodox ulama's were contented with the imitation of the 'shariah' and 'Fiqh' as it were given to them, it were the orthodox sufis who, in real sense developed and imparted the Islamic teachings. The major sufi orders active in India were the Chistis, Qadriya, Suhrawardiya, Naqshbandiya and others. While the Chistis' encouraged the
syncretistic and heterodox practices and got wider acceptance among illiterate folks, it were the Naqshbandiya which produced some of the eminent scholars of Islam influencing the entire thinking of the Muslim world till date.

Displaying the similar historical developmental pattern, as we have noticed earlier, court of the Muslim rulers developed a code of conduct, (this time more Persianized) called the 'Adab' to bridge the gap between the shariah demand and the varying demands of daily life. Though this 'Adab' was in consonance with the Islamic values, most often the 'Adab' observed by the ruling elite was in violation to the Islamic teachings. But the general Muslim mass under the guidance of Ulama, developed the common cultural value which while responded to the adaptationist demand to the local conditions, ultimately derived its essence from the orthodox teachings. In this way "adab can be seen pragmatically as a way of expressing and indexing a hierarchy of social relations within the community". And this "hierarchy rests on a concept of centre with those closer to the centre perceived as morally and/or socially superior. Thus, the peasant or tribesman who professes Islam but is ignorant of even the most basic tenets is not called an infidel (Kafir) by the leaders and more educated members of the Muslim community. Simply 'be-adab', he is a Muslim brother nonetheless". This attitude reflected the first theological

question about the definition of being a 'Muslim'. We have noticed earlier that the consensus developed in the early years about not calling anyone a 'kafir' unless he himself does not declare about his not believing in Islam itself. Moreover, the conception of 'Adab' was elaborated in day-to-day affairs "expressed in the relationship between khalis (pure) and roz-marra bolchal (everyday speech), pure speech originally being Arabic, the language of the Quran."

Similarly the geneological connections with the Prophet became a criterion of being 'Ashraf' (noble family).

The ambiguity which was at the heart of Islamic Ideal and Practice was tolerated until the Muslim Political order was strong enough to face the internal or external challenges. But in case of any internal or external crisis or the clearcut violation of Islamic values by the rulers themselves, Muslims throughout the history reacted positively and set themselves out to identify, locate and redefine the boundary of Muslim community and its Ideal and the normative practices. In other words they set out to rediscover the Islamic message as such. Though this process marks the entire history of Muslims but in India, the alarming situation for Muslims from their religious point of view came when Akbar the Great Mughal Emperor proclaimed a new religion called Din-e-Ilahi, which was an attempt to synthesize the all major religious traditions i.e. Islam, Christianity and Hinduism. This syncretistic
religion was proclaimed by Akbar as State religion, which not only Muslims but Hindus as well, reacted against it.

Akbar's regime marks the high noon of Muslim political power in India. The flourishing and prospering India under the Muslim rules attracted the religious scholars from every part of the world. India became the seat of high Islamic learnings. In the face of high Islamic tradition, which India was representing in the Muslim world, Akbar's new state religion put the ulama and sufi teachers alike in great embracing situation. Moreover, the ruling Muslim minority over the vast Hindu majority and the 'uncontrolled latitudinarianism' of popular sufism, encouraged the rise of the new movements of syncretistic nature like 'Bhakti' movement. Sixteenth century while saw the proclamation of a new syncretistic state religion, it also experienced the movements led by the great Bhakti leaders like Kabir and Nanak. These syncretistic tendencies switched the bell of alarm in the religious circles and the major opposition to these currents came from within the sufism. Shaykh Ahmad Sirhindi(d.1625) was a practising sufi of Naqshbandi Order. He realized the extent to which the syncretistic elements have invaded the Islamic faith and the negative role played by sufism itself in promoting such tendencies. He, in the tradition of al-Ghazali, reformed the sufism by criticising first the 'monism' of Ibn al-Arabi which was the theoretical foundation of the 'Sufi
relativism'. "In his doctrine, Sirhindi replaced the metaphysical monism of Ibn al-Arabi with an ethical dualism, while in practice a strong emphasis was placed on the sharia values, reinforced through sufi techniques. Sufism, far from being rejected, therefore, was given a new life and new direction ... " observes Prof. Fazlur Rahman. The new revival of Islamic teaching initiated by Sirhindi spread through the length and breadth of the Muslim world by the Naqshbandiyyah sufis. As Voll remarks, "The Naqshbandiyyah spread from India to the eastern mediterranean world in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and it carried with it some of the fundamentalist tone associated with the Indian Naqshbandiyah revival." The chief propagator of this ideal in those region was Murad al-Bukhari (1640-1720) who was a student of Sirhindi's son. Taj al-Din ibn Zakariya (d.1640) who propagated in Macca, was 'a fellow student with Sirhindi under Muhammad Baqi billah'. We have historical evidences that Sirhindi wrote letters to his disciples and students who were imparting the Islamic teachings in the length and breadth of India to follow specific line of actions.

The political stability, economic prosperity and social mobility encouraged the ulamas and sufis to carry out their work with great vitality and in turn their message and teachings reached into the distant lands. The movements through

the trade routes and the pilgrimage to Mecca and Madina provided another opportunity of inter-action among religious scholars. "During the hajj or pilgrimage, Muslims from all parts of the Islamic world gather. Scholars often stay for relatively long periods, teaching and studying and some settle permanently. As a results, the Harayn is a key point in the international exchange of Islamic ideas and inspirations."

The teachings of Sirhind'i while got a popular appeal in India and in the entire Muslim world as well, it also developed into a revivalist movements of neo-sufism. Moreover it also marked a religious opposition to the rulers who promoted the syneretism in Islam. The orthodox and formal tradition was always in opposition to the heterodox and syneretistic traditions. This religious opposition surfaced again, as it happened in the classical Muslim period, on the political fronts. The orthodoxy triumphed when Aurangzeb emerged victorious over Dara Shukoh who represented the syneretistic style in the tradition of Akbar. Akbar S. Ahmad thus observes, "Through the rise and fall of dynasties, the uncertainties of expanding empires, there were saints and scholars, princes and paupers--some of whom we met in these pages -- who lived according to the ideal. An in the midst of imperial developments which were a deviation from the Islamic ideal - dynastic principle, the

85. Ibdi. p. 56.
opulence of the court --- their example was reminder to the rulers and an inspiration for the population. Sometimes persecuted --- Sheikh Sirhindi jailed by one Mughal emperor, Sarmad decapitated on the orders of another - sometimes honoured - Salim Chishti by yet another - they demonstrated the possibility of living by the Ideal.86.

After Aurangzeb, Muslim political power in India rapidly declined. As we have stated earlier, the state of political order is an index to the social health for Muslims. The decline of the Muslim power was attributed to the deviation of the Muslim society from its Ideal pattern. Muslims had deserted the straight path. Restatement of Islam by going back to Quran, and Sunnah was sought and much of scholastic superstructure built up during the historical development process was rejected. Shah Wali Allah al-Dihlavi (1702-1762) was the main figure in this interpretation of Islam who sought to provide the intellectual and doctrinal unity of Islam. In his writings, he relied upon all the four Madhabs of the Sunni traditions and since then the attitude of Muslims to give allegiance to any single school and rejecting all others, changed. The differences were wreed out. Shah Wali Allah's importance lies in the fact that "On the one hand, his career was a high point in the evolution of Islam that had been set in motion by the rise of the Moghuls and the

emergence of Naqshbandiyyah revivalism, and on the other hand, his work provided the foundation for virtually every major Muslim movement in India since that time. Though a contemporary of Ibn Abd-al-Wahhab (1703-1767) Waliullah's revivalism was essentially coloured with the sufism. His teachings spread into the other parts of Muslim world by his students and the Naqshbandiya sufis.

With the waning out of the Muslim power in India, Indian Muslims were relegated to a position never experienced before. Not only Indian Muslims, but the entire Muslim world was threatened by the rising western imperialism who were colonializing and subjugating most of the Muslim lands. Nineteenth century Muslim world, along with India, saw rise of a number of reformist movements which in some cases took the form of a jihad movement like 'Mujahidin Movement' of Syed Ahmad of Rai Bareli in India. "During this period Usman Dan Fodio, Ummar Tal Al Haji and Muhammad Ahmad, the Mahdi, organized Islamic states in different parts of Africa; Imam Shamyl did likewise in the Caucasus, and Sayyed Ahmad in Peshawar; and the Akhund laid the foundations for one in Swat. And "in men with economic, social and political grievances were swept into campaigns to create a new Islamic order in which they hoped, often after a millenarian fashion, that a just order would rule the land in which they lived.

Many such movements were violent jihads (holy wars): some were peaceful. They all had the effect of spreading Islamic knowledge and bringing about a wider observance of Islamic law. The result of many have been felt right down to the present 88).

The reformist movement carried by Sayyid Ahmad interns of jihad was carried out after him by his student Mir Nithar Ali (1782-1831) in Bengal where he led a peasant revolt and was killed. Another important revivalist movement in Bengal was Faraidi movement led by Haji Sariat Allah (1764-1840) and his son Dudu Miyan (1819-1862). These movements were carried out to ride Islam of Hindu practices. On the other hand ulamas took an active role in first independence war of 1857 under the leadership of Imdad Allah (1815-1899).

The teachings of Jamal al-Din Afghani (1839-97) the first Muslim modernist who sensed the superiority of West in its philosophy, rationality and science, influenced many contemporary Muslim scholars. While in Egypt Muhammad Abduh (1845-1905) took the challenges of western modernity, in India it was responded by Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan (1817-1898). Sir Sayyid responded to the adaptationist need of the society, advocated for the application of rationality and reason in the matters of religion. He initiated the Muslim modernism in India by establishing the first modern educational institution for Muslims of India which is now Aligarh Muslim University.

The Aligarh movement helped in spreading the modern secular education among Muslims.

Sir Syed's rational attitude towards education and religion was not much acceptable to the Orthodox Ulamas and so they established the Islamic school at Deoband\textsuperscript{90} in 1867. On the other hand, though responding to the orthodox tradition but with somewhat moderate point of view Nadwat al-ulama at Lucknow was established.

Loosing the political power at the hands of British, Indian Muslims became worst victim of the political chaos adversely affecting the socio-economic structure of Muslim society. India was no longer an attraction for talents from the other parts of the Muslim world. Muslim elites lost its political and economic status. Muslim masses had yet to recover from the stupor medieval backwardness had forced on them. For Muslims, India represented a world quite different what they had experienced before - "a world where Muslim culture and power went hand in hand, comes to be dominated by a culture in part western in part secular, and in part Hindu\textsuperscript{91}.

Ulamas set out to guide the community in day-to-day affairs by again defining shariah in common languages of the masses and the period saw a number of such works produced by


\textsuperscript{91} Robinson, Francis, 1983, op. cit P. 196.
them which was made accessible to the masses through the introduction of modern printing presses. Now commoners and elites sharing the similar grievances interacted with each other on those dimensions of life which defined them as being Muslims. As Freitag observes "Despite the class gulf, there were a number of occasions and contexts in which Muslims would cooperate. Significantly, these occasions were pre-eminently those occurring in public spaces or arenas—on the city's streets and lanes or within its mosque and id-gahs (enclosed public grounds used for sacrifices and other id observances). Moreover, through perceptions of the significant issues within Indo-Islamic culture were not identical across the class divide, they overlap. Perceptions came to be expressed by a shared vocabulary emphasizing symbols such as the mosque, prayer, and the Quran, and were frequently expressed through the emerging Urdu literature (both poetry and newly shaped newspaper journalism). That these symbols could be shared, even by those widely differing notions of how they should be used, provided an effective way to imply the existence of a single identity for groups who might disagree on substantive issues.".

Political protest, socio-religious reforms carried through the media of urdu poetry and journalism reached to the wider masses. Iqbal's poetry and political movements like

that of 'khilafat' reached to the Indian Muslim masses residing in the remotest corners never like before. The age saw greater vitality in the activity of Indian Muslims. With the introduction of western education, new modern educated Muslim elite emerged to lead the Muslims. Long awaited political freedom was achieved but half hearted. After the partition of India in 1947, the Indian Muslims were put in the same situation as after the revolt of 1857. There were humiliation and demoralization all around, leaving deep scare upon the socio-psychological condition of Indian Muslims. Long contact with Hindus as rulers and subjects and with the Britishers and influence of modern western ideologies has created many social changes in the institutional values and structure of society. Under the political dominance of other community the rigidity in the identification and location of boundaries have became more and more intense. Syneretic elements have invaded with more vigour to the very structure of Muslim society. Muslim's inwardly orientation has resulted into its isolation from the rest of the world. They have become more sensitive towards outside interference, responding variably to the rising new situation and harsh realities of life.

Moreover the revivalist movements initiated in pre-independent India, with the passage of time, have developed into different distinct schools of thought, most of them mutually hostile and intolerant towards each other. The petty groupism and

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sectarianism have divided Muslims into many different sects and Jamaats giving rise to a gradual growth of hypocritical leadership with vested individualized interests, exploiting the community in general. The segmentation and isolation of the community has paved the way for the penetration of alien values and customs, sometime deliberately borrowed to draw rigidly the sectarian boundaries.

The need of adaptation to the new situation have been responded popularly by accommodating the local pattern in the Islamic milieu and the correcting mechanism was provided by orthodox conservatives and finally equilibrated by Fundamentalism. Now at the level of Greater tradition, the need of adaptation is responded by the modern and seculars. At the popular level it is local customary pattern which is in the conflict with the 'tradiotionalism' of orthodoxy while at the higher literate tradition it is again the latter which is confronting with the modernism and secularism. The relational bonds relating the individual to society, nature and supernatural, never returned into its perfect balance rather it is, as it was, swinging from one extreme to the another. The adaptationist and readjustment demand coming from the external environment in the form of absorption of local customary synergetic elements, or the assimilation of western and modern values, have been responded variably by Muslim society throughout the history. Lying at the heart of this historical response is a distinct style of interaction between the syncretism, orthodox conservatism and fundamentalism. "Islam
disintegrating in one place reviving in another, fading here, growing there: but Islam always a factor, a force providing the dynamics to society.¹⁹⁴.

Indian Muslims alongwith their coreligionists elsewhere, individually and collectively, share this historical experience. This historical consciousness have strong bearing upon the individual personality and society of Muslims everywhere, though the individual personal experience and different local need can give this consciousness different forms making them distinct from each other. But there are much more in common to share in these local diversities. At the root of variations lie some external factors like politico-economic situations, the size of the community, local environment in which society is placed, and the level of religious and secular education in society and the degree of social mobility. Moreover the search for Ideal is everywhere in every age and in every locality. Perception of the Ideal and the intensity for the striving may vary depending upon the above stated factors. But for Muslims there is a sharing of historical consciousness -- a unity within the local diversities. They view the world through the filter of the history. To quote Akbar S. Ahmad, in Islamic history "we discover a rhythm, a flux and reflux, a rise and fall, peaks and troughs, in Muslim society attempting to live by the Islamic ideal. Islamic history may be

interpreted as an attempt to live up to and by the seventh century Muslim ideal. So whereas Muslim dynasties or empires rise and fall, never to emerge again, the ideal is constantly renewed by groups and individuals in different places and in different times. The farther the ideal, the greater the tension in society. Muslims would interpret success in worldly endeavours as a sign of divine approval.

All agree on a common point of reference: Islam; though knew, their practices are not in consonance with. This diversity of the practices, all of them know, is not a normative rather a deviance. Pragmatic necessity and worldly temptation and ignorance are causing such deviances, but they hope, Allah the most gracious, the merciful, out of His Bounty will forgive. They live by such hopes.

CHAPTER - II
THE LITERATURE : A REVIEW

Studies on Muslim societies are by and large not a new phenomena. The encounter of the west with the Muslim community had initiated such studies and earlier the content and orientation of those studies were largely coloured by the types of western experiences. Hence those studies were a response to the western colonial expansionism in the form of travel accounts like Burckhardt's (1829)\(^1\) account of Bedouin customary practices, Lane's (1859)\(^2\) account of customs and manners of the people of cairo, Hurgronje's (1931)\(^3\) report on Meccans and Westermarck's (1926)\(^4\) study of the ritual and religion of Moroccan Muslims. Another form of study was the reports of various colonial settlement officers\(^5\) on the customary practices of various Muslim tribes of their colonies. While these studies are the major source of informations, the initiation of a full scale sociological and anthropological studies of the Muslim societies and the new dimension which they took, is a post independence phenomenon of the Muslim world. But the studies on the Muslims of India, even after independence is almost a neglected field. This negligence has been felt enormously by the sociologists and social anthropologists working

5. See for example the District Gazettes of British India published by Civil & Military Gazette Press.
on the Indian Muslims. Imtiaz Ahmad observes about the contemporary sociological tradition in India as "It is, however, one of the characteristic of the discipline today that it has tended to emphasise the study of Hindus and their religious tradition; the study of non-Hindus and of their traditions has been sadly neglected by both Indians and foreigners". So "both the quantum and range of sociological information on Muslims in India continue to remain Scanty".

The general intellectual climate and the sociological tradition of the post independent India was a response to the political vision of a modern India. As the bulk of the Indian population was residing in rural areas, a transformation from the traditionalism to the modernity demanded an understanding of the dimensions of the rural life and hence a number of village studies were carried out in the early years of the post independence. The focus of those studies were largely on the caste system — the crux of the traditional Hindu style of living — determining the entire course of political economic and social activities of rural India. These studies

were largely restricted to the Hindu communities and Muslims or other minorities as fringes of Indian society, it was believed, in due course will succumb to the dictates of the broader cultural policies and in the process will be assimilated in the major currents. Though some of the studies were carried out on the Indian Muslims like Gupta (1956), D'Souza (1955), Misra (1964) Guha (1965), Dube (1969), Veede-de-Steurs (1969), Aggarwal (1971), Kutty (1972), and others but the number of such studies remained handful. Imtiaz Ahmad and his contributors can largely be credited for collecting a rich ethnographic data on Indian Muslims from various region of India. The four volumes on 'case and social stratification' (1973). Family Marriage and kinship (1976).

15. Aggarwal, Partap C. 1971. Caste, Religion and Power: An Indian Case study, New Delhi; Shri Ram Centre for Industrial Relations.
Ritual and Religion (1981)\textsuperscript{19} and "Modernization and Social change"\textsuperscript{20} (1983) among Muslims in India still lies at the heart of the studies on Indian Muslims. The major interest of these sociological inquiries were the exploration of the influence of the dominant Hindu environment on the Indian Muslim societies.

Before proceeding further, Partap C. Aggarwal's (1971) study "Caste, Religion and Power: An Indian case study"\textsuperscript{21} deserves attention. Though he has also contributed to the two earlier volumes edited by Ahmad but the data on which his papers were based already appeared before. Agarwal studied a village in Mewat region. Meo society was in general, the least Islamized, more localized, responding more to the local Hindu customary practices than to Ideal Islamic norms. They were totally assimilated within, hard to be differentiated from, the dominant Hindu environment. But in post independent India, the Meo Muslims were gradually adopting the Islamic norms and life ways rather than being more rapidly assimilated into the majority currents became the major stimulus for his study. And he goes on to narrate those fateful events, those untold stories, which were already in motion on the Indian political horizon and the great sufferings which it brought to the Meos.

\textsuperscript{19} Ahmad, Imtiaz. ed. 1981. Ritual and Religion among Muslims in India. New Delhi, Manohar.
\textsuperscript{20} Ahmad, Imtiaz. ed. 1983. Modernization and Social Change among Muslims in India. New Delhi, Manohar.
\textsuperscript{21} Aggarwal, Partap C. 1971. op. cit.
which they never had experienced before. Violence, torture, death, conversion and expulsion of the Meos were carried out under the nose of the capital of modern secular India.

Aggarwal's field of study 'Chavandi Kalan' a small village in the Alwar District of Rajasthan was a society composed of semi-literate people majority of them being Muslims, were placed in isolation from the currents of the external world, sharing along with their Hindu and Sikh neighbours a culture and tradition of local landscape. The society was ideally suited for an ethnographer. Aggarwal in a genuine sympathetic attempt, tries to discover the 'ethnogenesis' of the Meos. In his historical narration of Meos as they developed into a distinct ethnic group, he unconsciously perhaps, subscribes to the Geertzian conception of the modes of Islamization, as slow though painful or not but steady, time dimension as more decisive. He observes "It is evident that the Khanzadas constituted a distinct group among the Meos. However, the fact that they were converted to Islam in the fifteenth century does not imply that all the Meos were converted also at that time. On the contrary, greater Islamization of the Khanzadas in contrast with other Meos would indicate that all the Meos were not converted to Islam at the same time as the Khanzadas". Moreover, the political consciousness education and economy, as we can conclude from his

his analysis, has greater effect on the degree of Islamization.

Aggarwal in his lucid illustration shows that Meos in general, having badly performed in these fields, were laden with the syncretistic elements importing from the local landscape and are perfectly fitted into the caste system and the elaborate Jajmani arrangements of the village. Their social life also correspond more to the local customary patterns. It is only the religious sphere where, though earlier they adhered more to the local versions, now they are consciously and slowly tilting towards the Islamic norms. They are gradually discarding the old practices which they identify as borrowed from the local, Hindu practices. Though much of the saint worships, magic and conception of omen and ill spirits are retained. Some of them participate in Hindu festivals but they 'are criticised by their more Islamized caste fellow'. Hence in this sense the local practices are not at completely ease with the more Islamized versions, whatever the versions of Islamization may be. Rather there appear a disliking— they are at odds, if not in conflict with. He attributes these changes to the exposure to the external world, through the Government policies and changing socio-economic scenes and political circumstances brought up in the early years of post-independent India which compelled them to identify themselves as being Muslims. Moreover the effect of Tablighi movement on the process of Islami-
zaïsm and a loss in their numerical strength resulting into their loss of dominant position are yet another factor.

Lastly despite Aggarwal's brilliant portrayal of the field experiences, his powerful narrative accounts and analysis, he also suffers from the same casualty which has remained a basic handicap of sociologists and social anthropologists studying Muslim societies, particularly Indians -- a lack of proper understanding of Islam itself. Taking this view in consideration, it is not much surprising that his understanding of Islam as religion and faith remains limited to the Von Grunebaum's accounts of 'Mohammadan Festivals'. This lack of proper understanding has led him to rely more on native's point of view than its original form, in which Mullah, Maulvi and Hafiz represent a hierarchy in Islamic learnings, Id-al-Azha, popularly called Baqr-Id appears as 'Bakr-Id' or 'goat-Id' and Shabe-Barat becomes a term 'term derived from Arabic', rather than Persian. It is not to say that he should not have taken into account the 'native's view' rather when defining these terms and context he should have defined it correctly.

According to Pastner, "any attempt to understand the bases of behavior in Islamic societies must necessarily look beyond "text" to "context" and must balance portrayals of ideal world-views -- whether they are propounded as adab, rewaj, or islamiya -- with detailed observation of how life is actually
lived\textsuperscript{23}. Moreover, "both informant's statements and textual exegeses must be regarded by an outsider observer with a measure of healthy skepticism\textsuperscript{24}.

The debate over the gap between Ideal Islamic norms and Muslims practices is not new. But the contradiction which exists between the Ideational and pragmatic within the Muslim Society of India has assumed in recent years a new dimension creating a theoretical controversy and has almost infused an environment of academic polemic. Charles Lindholm notes that "Among the debaters it has been recognised by all that there are many versions of Islamic practice and beliefs; the controversy is how to define these forms within an Indian context. At the centre of the debate are three Volumes edited by Ahmad (1976, 1978, 1981)\textsuperscript{25}. Imtiaz Ahmad and many of his contributors take the stand of 'Functionalist adaptive arguments 'favouring either the analysis of basic structural forms, or functional adaption of traits'. Their stand has been contended by the essentialist stand taken by Robinson\textsuperscript{26} (1983), and Carroll\textsuperscript{27} (1983). Taking this 'essentialist


\textsuperscript{24} Ibid P. 178.


nromative' stand Metcalf's\textsuperscript{28} (1984) Volume on the place of adab in South Asian Islam and Ewing's\textsuperscript{29} (1988) 'Shariat and Ambiguity in South Asian Islam' are also addressed to the similar theme. Das\textsuperscript{30} (1984) takes interpretive and constructionist stand sharing the Geertzian conceptions. We will analyse in detail what these different stands taken by them, are all about.

While Ahmad has rendered an admirable job of collecting a sizeable ethnographic data on Indian Muslims, he has also developed his own conception of Islam in Indian environment from the conclusion which he draws from these datas. In his conception, Islam appears to be of pluralistic in nature. This is not a unique stand of Ahmad rather there are many Scholars who hold the similar view. Akbar S. Ahmad comenting on these pluralistic conception of Islam observes, "Confronted by the wide range and diversity of Muslim Societies, the present generation of Writers, suggests their Categorization thus Moroccan Islam (Dale Eickelman 1976) Pakistani Islam, Malay Islam and so on. One is bound to conclude that there is not one Islam but many Islams' (Edward Mortimer, Faith and power: the politics of Islam, 1982). But the Categori-

\textsuperscript{28} Metcalf, Barbara Daly. ed. 1984. Moral Conduct and Authority: The Place of Adab in South Asian Islam, Berkeley; University of California Press.

\textsuperscript{29} Ewing, Katherine P. ed. 1988. Shariat and Ambiguity in South Asian Islam, Delhi; Oxford University Press.

\textsuperscript{30} Das, Veena. 1984. "For a folk-theology and theological anthropology of Islam", Contributions to Indian Sociology (n.s.) 18, 2; PP 293-300.
zation is not new. It is at least as old as European coloni-
ization; for instance, Indian Islam, by Murray Titus (1930).
This is the easy way out. And it not only simplifies grossly,
it also distorts. It is no answer. Imtiaz Ahmad takes one
step further and along with Smith he doubts the very concep-
tion and meaning of Islam itself.

Ahmad's conception about Islam becomes more distinct
when he sees the pluralism of Islam as "one ultimate and
formal, derived from the Islamic texts; the other proximate
and local, validated by custom" not a general phenomena of
Muslim Societies but a unique and distinctive feature of India.
Indian version of Islam in his opinion is an adaptive response
to the Hindu environment by retaining "the local cultural
traditions but adapt them to own requirements and needs by
putting an Islamic content into them". If this would not
have been the case the cost would had been Islam's own rejec-
tion. The textual norms and contextual observance or orthodox
and orthoprax and heterodox and heteroprax traditions are
living harmoniously and are completely at ease. The absence
of contradiction between these Ideal and practice is by and
large a unique Indian phenomenon in the sense that it has
existed in past and are observable at present and will persist

Muslim History and Society, London; Routledge and Kegan
Paul, P. 4-5.
33. Ibid P-15.
in future too. According to Robinson, "Ahmad can discover no
dynamic situation in which a high Islamic tradition is steadily
eating into local custom-centred traditions. Nor, for that
matter, does he discover one in which custom-centred tradi-
tions are edging into the territory of a high Islamic tradi-
tion. He would rather talk of Co-existence."  

So strong is his conviction of pluralism within Islamic
faith that through-out his four Volumes, which also marks his
own subsequent development or better say, gradual unfolding
of his conceptions, he has entered into the polemic with the
specialists of one or another disciplines. Sometimes he argues
with the Sociologists and social anthropologists or Islamicists:
all those who hold 'stereotype', 'unimaginative', 'book
view' of Islam in which it appears monolithic, fixed and
rigid. On the other hand the process of Islamization as
unilinear developmental process in which a gradual move from
syncretistic and customary practices of Muslims towards Ideal
forms as proposed and viewed by Aziz Ahmad and Clifford
Geertz, does not seems to him applicable in Indian context.
Because in his perception, "Islamization has not always been

35. For the stereotype conception about Islam and Muslims,
which the sociologists hold and their enquires perpetuate
showing biasness of their attitude, Ahmad Criticised
(a) Yogendra Singh's (1973). "Modernization of Indian
Traditions", New Delhi, Thompson Press. (b) Shushila Jains's
"Muslims and Modernization: A Study of Their Changing Role
Structure and Norms in an Urban Setting", 1986, Rawat
Publications, Jaipur, and (c) Shibani Roy, 1979,'Changing
Status of Muslim Women in North India" Delhi, D.K.Publications
36. Ahonad, Aziz, 1969. An Intellectual history of Islam in India,
Edinburgh: University of Edinburgh Press.
37. Geertz, Califford, 1965. Mo.ernization in a Muslim Society:
the Indonasion case In R.N. Bellah, ed., Religion and
found to result in the spread of orthodox Islamic beliefs and practices. Though relying more on synchronic mode of analysis, he gives importance only to the contemporary practices, but time to time manipulates the history when it suits him best.

For instance consider Ahmad's analysis of Social stratification among Indian Muslims. He holds the structural view of Caste in which certain structural properties are abstracted and compared with other Societies. He views those structural properties of Caste as endogamy hierarchy, occupational specialization and ideology. On the basis of data provided by his contributors, he found all the three structural features operative among the Indian Muslims, but the ideological justification of Caste was found to be non existant. But in any way it resembles the Caste like features and is a result of direct influence of Hinduism. Moreover, "the Muslim Social stratification elsewhere does not approximate even remotely to the Indian model." In this context Ahmad view's Caste as a unique coherent and all - encompassing phenomenon justified by Hindu Ideology; a stand taken by symbolic Schools. Again Ahmad express the possibility of "some elements within Islam itself which supports such distinctions". To explore this possibility he relied totally on Levy's 'Social structure

of Islam' which remains till his second Volume the only reference on Islam. In the process of exploration he came across with yet another fact -- "if Caste among the Muslims owed itself entirely to Hindu influence, then the Islamization of Muslim groups over the centuries should have resulted in the slow and gradual elimination of Caste principles and ideology. However, such evidence as is available suggests that Islamization serves rather than weaken or eliminate Caste distinctions. He found the ideology of rank and distinction in the Prophet's sayings and an important foundation of law of the three out of four Schools of Islamic laws. And he safely concludes that, "Caste among the Muslims in India owes itself directly to Hindu influences, but it has been reinforced by the justification offered for the idea of birth and descent as criteria of status in Islamic law." The dichotomy in Ahmad's stand on the definition of 'Caste' itself and further justification which he seeks from the in-built system of justification of such rankings by Islam and yet his insistence on the pattern of Social Stratification among Indian Muslims as unique Hindu influence gives a confusing Picture.

Though many Sociologists and anthropologists studying Muslim Societies other than Indian, have also found, on the

41. Ibid p. 15.
basis of structural similarities, the presence of Caste like features among Muslims. The concept of purity and pollution, the very basis of Caste system, has never been found among Muslims of Indian sub-continent either by Ahmad's contributors or by Barth's study of 'Swat Pathans' or Pherson's study of Marri Baluch or Gaborieau's study of Bangle-makers of Nepal. Instead English and Bujra found the conception of pollution observed by the Muslims in their studies of Kirman in Iran and in South Yeman. Lindholm contending Ahmad's stand asserts that "This hierarchy of rank may be a 'trait' adapted to India, but derived from middle East by cultural diffusion."

Now we should look at Ahmad's statement 'Islamization serves rather than weaken or eliminate Caste distinction' and re-view his own collection of ethnographic data and see whether it suggest so or anything else too.

Hasan Ali studying Muslim Societies of Hindpidi, a rural setting and It-ki an Urban settlement, found Caste like


45. English, P. 1966. City and Village in Iran, Madison; University of Wisconsin Press.


features operative. He remarks "The Hindu notion of inherent and permanent uncleanliness is foreign to Islam". But in practice certain rules regarding intercommensal distance are found to be maintained by ethnic groups of a higher status in relation to certain lower ones. This commensal distance is observed with Bhangis, who pursue an unclean occupation and hence it has nothing to do with ritual pollution. He observes, "In village, however, owing to the absence of Bhangis, no such commensal discrimination was noticed during commensal feasts". On the other hand he says "Muslims tend to classify the community into ethnic groups consisting of three broad hierarchical blocks—high, middle and low. This hierarchical ranking is largely determined by local factors like descent, traditional occupation, education, wealth numerical strength and observance of Pardah. While observance of Pardah is directly related to one's, economic condition. "A closer look" he observes" reveals that a stricter observance of the rules of the Shariat as also Pardah is positively correlated not only to ethnic groups of higher status but also to higher classes irrespective of their

49. Ibid P. 27.
50. Ibid P. 27.
51. Ibid P. 30.
ethnic background. This is generally true both in the village and in the city.\textsuperscript{52}

Ali's these observations gives a clear picture that what he is taking about is neither a Caste like nor a total class distinctions. In Barth's terminology Muslims have their own 'status summation' though influenced by local environment but simultaneously determined more by Islamic values. Moreover, the interplay of group size, economic position, education and observance of Islamic norms are more obvious factors in determining their form and nature of society. Islamization takes its course with all these factors in fore front. On the other hand Muslims do not see themselves an integral and inseperable part of the locality. Rather "At the regional level, the Muslims visualize themselves as small local unit related to a larger pan-Islamic world", remarks Ali.

D'Souza\textsuperscript{54} studying Moplahs found a notion of hierarchy among them in form of three different sections distinguishable from each other. They are largely separate endogamous units. He does not give any clear picture of the interplay of those factors which we have noted earlier but there are some hints which we can take into considerations. The order of inter-ethnic hierarchy among Moplahs are Thangal, Arabis and Malbaris.

\textsuperscript{52} Ibid P. 27.
\textsuperscript{53} Ibid P. 37.
He notes that the higher status of Thangals are mainly spiritual and the "Social difference among the Malbaris are based upon more tangible considerations like wealth, occupation, family connection and so on." Moreover, the hypergamous marriages as criterion of Social status are motivated by some other considerations too. He notes that "The higher section among the Malbaris may give their girls in marriage to the Thangals or Arabs not merely because of their higher status but only if the bridegroom comes of a rich and well-connected family." Though he has not mentioned the economic, educational positions and observance of Islamic norms by the groups in general. If he had taken these things into his account he must have found a positive relationship. He remarks about the conversion of the Moplahs and their keeping old practices, "Although the connecting bond of Islam created a new sense of fellow feeling among all Moplahs, it has not eliminated the old differences." If we take into consideration Stephen F. Dale's account of the reform movements of Moplahs in 19th and early 20th centuries, an elimination of the old differences and a move towards Islamic homogenization can be noticed. D'Souza has not taken into account those changes which may have been going on there.

55. Ibid P. 55.
56. Ibid P. 55.
57. Ibid P. 42.
Leela Dube in her study of Muslim Societies in Lakshadweep Islands found a system of Social segregation in terms of three segmented groups of 'Koyas' "Malumis" and "Melacheris" placed in an order of hierarchy. They are separate endogamous groups but hypergamy is prevalent among the status neighbours. Koyas traditionally monopolized the economic resources which gave them access to the political power and hence they also nearly monopolized the religion itself. She observes that though Islam made accessible to all its adherents its scriptures and "on the Islands, children are required to complete one reading of the Koran in Arabic". Koyas monopolized all religious positions like Kazi, Chief priest (one wonder whether the term priest can be applied either to Islam or Muslims?) of Juma Mosque. She also observes that "The actual choice of a Kazi was made, however, on the basis of his religious learning". While Dube has not taken into her account, this factor can be attributed to the pre-eminent status of Koyas who also showed the more proximity with the Islamic norms than the other groups. Their comparatively more tiltation towards Islamic Ideal along with politico-economic power might have made them accessible to the Islamic education resulting into their pre-eminent status

60. Ibid P. 75.
61. Ibid P. 76.
not only in religious but also in Secular spheres too.

Dube intelligently analysed the changing economic and political situations of the Islands resulting into the changing pattern of Muslim Societies. These changes have manifested itself more on the religious fronts. The emancipation of the Muslims in general from the Koya's monopoly can be achieved through breaking their monopolies on the religion itself. It did not turned into the rejection of religion itself, as some Social Scientists might have predicted, rather there seems to be a tendency of reform. The right perception of Islam by one single individual of considerable influence can influence the entire course of the happenings. Dube narrating the protest movement of Melacheris in 1950 against the religious disabilities enforced upon them by Koyas, writes, "The two Kavaratti Thangals or Sheikhs who owned these mosques were supposed to be against Caste distinctions and, when approached agreed to each to some Melacheri young men. During Ramadan these young men, who were trained by them, forcibly took the daffs (tambourines) from the hands of the Koyas and joined the rathib. The Koyas were extremely angry with the Melacheris for going against the established custom. They lodged a protest with the Thangal, who refused to allow any such distinction which, according to him, were against the principles of their religion. The Koyas split up: some joined the Melacheris for rathib; others established two separate mosque
for the purpose\textsuperscript{62}. Bube's account gives a picture of conflict between customary patterns and Ideal Islamic norms. Moreover, it also means that customary practices in time of internal tension becomes a device to perpetuate the status quo of the upper groups. On the other hand the lower groups of Muslims express their grievances in terms of Islamic Idioms, which unlik other ideological connotations, also have an appeal of equal strength for the upper groups. The splitting of Koyas into two factions imply this thing that at least some of them were unable to resist the appeal of Islamic egalitarianism. The changing economic opportunities, education and exposure to outer world is changing the scene of the Islands. The old boundaries are crumbling down.

A.K. Momin\textsuperscript{63} search's more vigorously, the presence of Caste among Muslims of Bhiwandi, a township in Maharashtra. Since the community under his study is not placed in isolation rather very much experiencing the diverse currents of Islamization, modernization along with local influence and is just few miles away from Bombay. The field situation demands a broader spectrum to deal with the pattern of Social Stratification. He asserts "one of the serious limitations of studies of Castes among Indian Muslims is that they ignore the dimension of Change which has given rise to new patterns

\begin{footnotes}
\item[62.] Ibid P. 85.
\item[63.] Momin, A.K. 1978. "Muslim Caste in an Industrial Township of Maharashtra", In Imtiaz Ahmad ed. op. cit PP. 117-140.
\end{footnotes}
and configurations". And he suggests that "the Ashraf - Ajlaf
dischotomization of Indian Muslim Society is no longer mean-
ingful in the context of change."

The Kokni Muslims are the old status groups and are
themselves differentiated on the basis of family lineage,
occupation and so on, into three distinct endogamous units.
The upper group observes Purdah and are more Islamized than
the others. The Islamization process began during Khilafat
movement resulting into not only Islamizing of the life
patterns but also spread of Urdu, the language considered to
be representing more Islamic values and Muslim ethos among
them, than their own local dialect. Moreover they took to
the modern education earlier than the other groups. They are
also now leading towards powerloom industries which were
looked down by them earlier as a profession of Julahas (weavers).
Momin beradri of Bhiwindi traditionally pursued this profe-
sion. The diverse currents of Islamization, industrialization
and spread of modern education has resulted into a change in
the attitude of the higher groups particularly "with regard
to giving their girls in marriage to supposedly low Caste
group". Also a gradual evaporation of old customary practices
largely derived from the local Hindu environment is taking
place.

64. Ibid P. 139.

65. On Urdu as language of Islamic faith and religion in India,
National State, Cambridge; Cambridge University Press,
(ii) W.C. Smith, 1957. Islam in Modern History, New York;
Authority in Urdu: Poetry, Oratory, and Film", In Katherine
P. Ewing. ed. Shariat and Ambiguity in South Asian Islam,
Delhi, Oxford University Press, PP. 98-113.
Mattison Mines has contributed to the all four Volumes edited by Ahmad. His study is focused on the Tamil Muslims of Pallavaram, a small town in Tamil Nadu. His complete study "Muslim Merchants: The economic behavior of an Indian Muslim Community" was already published in 1972. The study focuses on the broader attitudes inherent in the ethos of Islam which has stimulated Muslim Tamil to translate their religious impulse into economic activity. This transformation of religious ethic into economic pursuit has resulted into their betterment of economic position. He does not show the degree of assimilation rather his focus is on the divergence between Hindus and Muslims. He also shows the favourable social conditions which has facilitated the development of economic ethos of Muslims stemming directly from their religion. Though they share a culture of the locality along with their Hindu neighbours but also makes themselves distinguishable as Muslims. One of those distinguishable dimension of Muslim's attitude and behaviour is their stress on 'equilitarianism'. Mines remarks, "Equalitarianism is a strongly-held value among Muslims in Pallavaram and it forms an important part of the universalistic outlook which characterizes the orientation of Muslims". And "Muslims constantly experience expressions of Islam's universalistic orientation, which perceives all

67. Ibid P. 94.
believers as equal. This ideology is one of the first things Muslim learn. They are taught it at house; they learn it attending the Jumah Namaz (main Friday prayer), and they study about it at the madrassah (Islamic School).68"

Through the religious personalities and their movements from North India to the Pallavaram town and the activity of various reform movements like Tablighi and Jamat-e-Islami has strong influence in exposing them to the various currents from the outside world. Though the wealth, education and political power of a person is important factor in his status attainment but the degree of Islamization of his own life and family is the determinant factor in the legitimization of his status. This process of status attainment is well illustrated in case of Haneef's family status attainment.69 He observes "The two aspects of Muslim identity-religious identity and personal prestige and status --- are not mutually exclusive."70". "Typically" he remarks "the wealthier a man becomes, the harder he strives to establish an identity as an orthodox Muslim."71". And "they cannot achieve status as a Muslim among Muslims except by pursuing their own standards."72"

68. Ibid P. 95.
71. Ibid P. 80.
72. Ibid P. 81.
The Tamil Muslims of Pallavaram have organized themselves into Kin centres — the place of origin of the Merchants. Occasionally they visit the villages to observe ceremonies and festivals. The change in context changes their behaviours. The orthodox forms are liquidated by the local customary patterns. But also "the Muslim Tamils have brought back to their villages an Urban awareness of class". Moreover Mines observes, "The world-view of Muslim Tamil residing in villages is similar to the universalistic outlook of the Pallavaram merchants. While they do not as often encounter Muslims from different areas of India, they do acquire an equalitarian universalistic ideology in much the same way as the urban Muslims does. The village Muslim's Islamic education, practices of Commensalism, and his occasional contacts with newspapers and Muslims from other areas all contribute to a world view which is outwardly oriented. Mine's these observations implies that while Tamil Muslims share a culture of their locality, simultaneously they try to be identified by their Pan-Islamic attachments and commitments. Moreover, economic betterment and education along with Islamic proximity in their behaviors are determinant factors in their status evaluation. Simultaneously the Social mobility and the exposure to the other Islamic currents has initiated a change and the intensity

of these currents are not restricted to the Urban areas rather it is felt almost everywhere even in the remote villages.

M.K.A. Siddiqui\textsuperscript{75} studied the Muslim Society of Calcutta. The total inter-ethnic interactional pattern resemble much like Caste organization. He perceives the dichotomy of Ideal and practice where two different sets of values operate. He also views some secular spheres where, in his opinion, Shariah has not been able to provide the specific code of conduct. This ambiguity in the Shariat itself has resulted into the diverse customary practices. For instance the justification of endogamy is provided by arguing that "it is with in permissive range of Islamic egalitarianism to contract inter-ethnic marriages but desisting from such a practice and forming a such group for the purpose of marriage and kinship is not forbidden either. It is, however, clear that though the letter of the Shariat is not get grossly violated, the same cannot be said of the spirit, particularly in the sphere of the structural organization\textsuperscript{76}". This point, brought in focus by Siddique, is an important one but unfortunately he has nothing to say about the changes which is taking place in the Urban environment of Calcutta and the changing Socio-economic and political scene along with the spread of education in the Muslim Societies.


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Ranjit K. Bhattacharya in his good illustration shows an interplay of economic position and observance of Islamic norms; subsequently derived from them are the criteria of status. Studying the rural Bengali Muslims who are deeply immersed into their local environment sharing a culture much resembling their Hindu neighbours, Bhattacharya observes a similarity with the Caste system in their patterns of Social organization. But the absence of an Islamic justification for such Social arrangements put Muslims into a dilemma. "To my mind" he observes, "inequalities in Social status of different Muslim ethnic groups in contrast to their conscious Islamic model of an egalitarian Society, make them mentally insecure. They try to overcome this mental dilemma caused by the sharp contrast between their ideology and their practices by rethinking the undeniable Social fact of status inequality in terms of suitable idioms that can successfully be related to their traditions." Like Siddiqui he also draws our attention towards the false justification — though Muslims know to a certain degree what Islam demands and their practices are not in accordance with those demands.

On the other hand "wealth has a direct relationship with the differential position of an ethnic group in the hierarchy." And "The most common ground on which the Sayyads,
Sheikhs, Pathans and Mughals deny equal status to shahs, Patnas and Mominis is the failure of the women of these ethnic groups to observe Purdah. While "Observance of Purdah depends on One's economic condition. Though in the religious spheres the inequity is not observed but as he notes that the secular dimensions have also influenced their behaviours in the religious domains. For instance he observed that the lower status groups though not objected to stand in front lines in mosques, they themselves avoid. Similarly a wrong performance of 'Khatib' in mosque was attributed by the higher groups, though in absence, because of his being from a lower group.

In the Family, Marriage and Kinship among Muslims in India, Intiaz Ahmad again focuses our attention towards the contradiction of Ideal and practices among Muslims of India. Here he begins with taking issue with the Sociologists and Social-Anthropologists who also in his opinion hold the view that Muslims do strictly follow the Shariah' laws in their daily life, which, in his opinion is unfortunate. The debate over Muslim Personal law have polarized Muslim Intellectuals in three distinct positions of "abolition" "reform" and "Preservation". In Ahmad's opinion 'the debate over the

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80. Ibid P. 294.  
81. Ibid P. 294.  
82. Ibid P. 297.  
introduction of reform' have become 'redundant and futile' because "the antagonists as well as the protagonists of reform have based their argument on false premises". And these false premises are a result of non-availability of Sociological data on 'how far the written Islamic laws are observed' by Muslims. In his opinion 'if they are not practiced widely' those parts of law either should be reformed according to the needs of practices or it should be eliminated altogether. According to his 'functional adaptive' approach he seems to has opinion that the Sociological data on the Muslim practices should orient the course of law. Lucy Carroll has contended Ahmad on this issue. She argued that the controversy which seems to lie at the heart of contradiction observed in Law and practice of Indian Muslims is a false one. Because in her opinion the legalists and Social Scientists are talking about different things. She observes, "The point to remember is that which empirical evidence may compromise and ideal construct, it does not affect the law in a similar way. Social Scientists, with the aid of all the empirical evidence their discipline can muster, cannot of their own volition alter the law: this remains the prerogative of the Legislature and the Courts".

84. Ibid P. XIX.
86. Ibid P. 207.
The enormous variety in the religious practices and social organization of Muslims in India has led "the actual patterns of the institutions among different Muslim Communities in different parts of India and to exploring the relative impact of the Shariat and the local environment upon their structure and functioning. Though the empirical data provided by the contributors of the Volume, shows an impact of local environment upon the customary traditions of Muslims but none of them have taken into account the Shariat law influencing the behaviour of Muslims. If someone has tried to relate it, he has never bothered to indicate the School of Islamic law to which he is referring. This ill information about Shariah is furthered by the investigators' reliance upon informants who are themselves unable to differentiate between the custom and law. Carroll exploring this theme concludes that "none of the contributors to the Volume under notice considered it necessary to devote any serious scholarly attention to either classical Islamic law or to the law presently applicable to Muslims in India. With the exception of Victor D' Souza, the most any of them moved in this direction was to cite Reuben Levy's 'The Social structure of Islam' -- a work which it goes without saying, authoritative in respect of neither of these two areas."
After overviewing the ethnographic data provided by different contributors to the Volume, Ahmad comes across the Geertz's mode of Islamization as unilinear process of change which seems to him unacceptable. Alongwith Islamization, he traces the interplay of many other processes of change in the Muslim Societies of India. Moreover, "Islamization does not always result, as is implied in its unilinear conception" writes Ahmad, "in the wide spread acceptance of elements of the Shari'a. Quite often, it results in the displacement of one set of heterodox practices by another set of practices which are equally heterodox". And finally he concludes that "Far from promoting strict adherence to elements of the Sharia, Islamization has allowed the different Muslim Communities in India to either legitimize local customs and practices or to reconcile them with the Sharia".

To support his point of view Ahmad has relied upon the evidence provided by Ismail A. Lambat's study of "Marriage among the Sunni Surati Vohras of South Gujarat" in which he has noted that there is a constant struggle between custom and religion among the Vohras. While one customary practice like singing of 'Geets' by women on the occasion of marriages which were thought to be un-Islamic by the religious leaders

89. Ahmad, Imtiaz, 1976. op. cit P. XXXI.
90. Ibid P. XXXII.
was almost dropped from the practice but on the other hand they were unable to provide a substitute for the 'loudspeakers that blare out the latest film hits'. It is imperative to look afresh on some of the studies of the Volume under discussion which has led Ahmad to conclude with such propositions. Along with Lambat's study we will be reviewing Doranne Jacobson's study "The veil of virtue: Purdah and the Muslim Family in the Bhopal Region of central India" and A.R. Saiyed's "Purdah, Family structure and the Status of Woman: A Note on a Deviant case" studies by D'Souza, Aggarwal and Mines have already been discussed before.

Lambat studied Sunni Surati Vohras of Gujarat who are scattered into 114 villages. "These villages are dominated by them socially and economically and also, to some extent, politically", writes Lambat. The Islamic education, social mobility in form of migration to South Africa and East African countries and after 1950's to Great Britain is changing the scene of the villages making an impact on its social organization and institutions. More specifically the impact of these developments are giving rise to the spread of education. Though they resembled caste like organizations at the


village level but they do not fit into the caste structure as in the case of Meos noted by Aggarwal. Moreover most of the intra-village differentiations were marked in terms of families with different surnames. The ranking of those families were made on some external forces like economic position and level of Islamic education. Lambat writes, "It seems that the principle basis of Khandan rank are wealth and Islamic education and the possession of these elements elevate some Khandans above the other". The endogamous nature of the community is also influenced and differentiated on similar lines. Lambat observes, "It is indeed narrowed down to such an extent that when we speak of the group as being endogamous what is actually implied is that there are many small endogamous units within the endogamous frame work of the entire group". The rigidity of these endogamous groups are loosening as the people of lower groups, through their handsome remittance from abroad, are consequently aspiring for a higher position through the allience of marriages with the uppers. Though there are many rites and ceremonies observed at the time of Marriages which are analogous to the rites observed by middle class Hindus but there are efforts being made on the part of religious and

95. Ibid P. 60.
96. Ibid P. 58.
educated men to eliminate them. He observes, "For sometimes, the Surati Vohras have been experiencing a struggle between custom and religion and in recent years this struggle has picked up great momentum because of the increase in religious education among members of this group." He notes that some of the customs are being dropped out because of Islamization and spread of education but he predicts that others are likely to persist.

From all the above account of Lambat one can safely conclude that Sunni Surati Vohras like their Muslim Co-religionists elsewhere in India are experiencing a process of Islamization by dropping some of the syncretistic elements from their practices. This process of change brought by the Islamization is based upon some external forces and there is a conscious conflict and tension between the local customary practices and the Ideal versions. Moreover the direction of the change is unilinear in the sense that it is a move towards the realization of the possible extent, the Ideal patterns. Though this direction can be reversed or take a different course with the change in the material forces which ultimately will have a strong impact on the religious consciousness. But, as it is visible, it will never lead towards a conscious adoption of un-Islamic heterodox Practices at the expense of other.

97. Ibid P. 80.
Jacobson\textsuperscript{98} studied a small village in Bhopal region. Though Hindus in this village were numerically strong than the Muslims but the strong economic position of some Muslims have changed the complexion. Rather than being assimilated into local Hindu fold they stood as distinct, dictating the Social organization on their own terms. A single person's economic affluence and political connections have almost positive impact upon the other community members. But since his perception of religion was more traditional than original it has totally different consequences for the generation to follow. The concept of Purdah which Jacobson has viewed in her field has forced her to deal with the system of purdah as such in terms of functional perspective.

As the prosperity remains located to single ethnic group of 'Pathans' they are considered to be superior than the others even Shaikhs who as are traditionally held, hold a position superior to that of 'Pathans'. The high status of Pathans has been elevated more by their observing of some of the Islamic norms and some traditional ways which are thought to be Islamic. The other groups lack in this sphere too and hence they are looked down by the uppers as 'low quality Musalmans'\textsuperscript{99}. Though Pathans are endogamous and value the purity of blood but the scene is changing with the change

\textsuperscript{98} Jacobson, Doranne. 1976. op. cit.
\textsuperscript{99} Ibid P. 178.
in the attitude brought by the education. They observe Islamic norms in matter of marriage, divorce and inheritance but all these are done because the tradition demands. The observance of purdah in the upper and lower status groups proceeds in opposite ways as Jacobson observes, "High status Pathan girls begin to wear burkas before they are married, while the low status Muslim girls usually receive their first Burkas at their weddings, and wear the veil for the first time as they depart for their conjugal home". The function of purdah, as Jacobson perceives, is an imitation of higher status group by the lowers while higher groups observe because, since Muslim Marriage laws restricts few persons as possible marriage partners and chances of involvement of the higher group Muslim girls are high in choosing some Socially inappropriate partners. The Pardah system prohibit them from such meetings. Since it restricts such meetings the option of parents to choose a male from within the family are more easy ensuring further for the higher groups to keep their property within the fold of the family. While she perceives a change in the attitude towards Purdah and subsequently its observances are neglected by the women outside their locality.

Jacobson has a right perception as far as she has tried to portray the ideas, conceptions and practices of her informants who were the top status family of the village. The

100. Ibid P. 195-196.
101. Ibid P. 206.
behaviour of Latif Khan and Birjis Jahan, as she has focused largely upon them, are more determined and conditioned by the economic considerations. They and their family are just striving to keep themselves in the circle of Muslim elites. While their all efforts are in this direction the religious education or consciousness is negligible among them. Moreover they, for fear of discrimination, try to hide their identity as Muslims. Jacobson's understanding of Purdah is based on the perception of her field respondents. Any how her attitude are positive towards the understanding of problem and are largely unbiased.

On the other hand A.R. Saiyed's study begins with biasness and is full of prejudices when dealing with Islam and traditional practices of Muslims. Limited in his understanding of Islam, he begins with his comment on the negligence on the part of all the major religions and particularly Islam, towards their proper interest in the position of woman. These negligences are due to the confused picture of the position of woman in all the world religions he argues. He explores this confusion in Islam in the Prophet's Hadith. Then he goes on a major on slaught on the conception of Purdah; its disfunctional nature for the Society and as a bane for woman. He narrates the field situation located in Ratnagiri District of Maharashtra where 'communal harmony

and security has given the Muslims a sense of confidence in themselves. "This confidence, in its turn, has prevented an excessive concern for Islamization, and the efforts of the various Muslim fundamentalist groups have not met with any remarkable success in this region." In a sense of relief he notes that this rejection of fundamentalist conception of Islam by them have also lead to the rejection of Purdah system which has become a major source of their economic success. The Muslims residing there are Kokni Muslims and the upper groups who traces their descent from Arabs are called Jamaatis. They are largely people of low income groups living in the gulf countries remitting their earnings and their women lookafter the all economic activity in their absence. The women of the other groups like Dakhni's observes Purdah and so they are economically backwards. Subsequently he noted that Jamaatis do not care for or incline "to secure respectability in the orthodox Islamic frame work by resorting to seclusion; indeed, these Jamaatis have resisted Islamization efforts of fundamentalist groups". Moreover he observes with great pain that women in purdah cannot desplay their beauties in the public, instead it remains "for private pleasure of her husband and lord only. In the context of this conservatism, the Jamaati woman has achieved tremendous emancipation".

103. Ibid P. 247.
104. Ibid P. 255.
Indeed if the emancipation of women lies in displaying publicly their beauties, problem of women in the world wide context would never have been an issue rather it should had been limited to the Muslims only. Moreover, if we take Momin's study of Bhiwindi not far away from Saiyed's field, the Kokni Muslims were more conservative, Islamized and purdah observing than others. Saiyed's study is contaminated with his own Ideological biasness. Ahmad who had aspired from sociologists and Social anthropologists to portray the existing social reality rather than drawing a dismal picture based on unimaginative reading, such studies is bound to backfire on the Sociologists and Social anthropologists if their works are done with an ideological prejudices and biasness. Similarly it has become obligatory for sociologists to compare the uncompareable\textsuperscript{105}, such as Akram Rizvi's comprision of Muslim families and Hindu joint family does indicate. Moreover, the portrayal of Muslim Women's suffering in Purdah and sociologists' seigh of relief when they perceive that the system of Purdah is being eliminated by the effect of modernization, is itself Ideologically biased. A Muslim Woman may feel equally at home in Purdah as the Sociologists feel without that. Their conception of Muslim Women as "Frogs of the well\textsuperscript{106}" may be positive evaluation of their sufferings

\textsuperscript{105} See Carroll, Lucy, 1983. Note. 12 P. 212-213.
\textsuperscript{106} Jeffery, Patricia 1979, Frogs in a Well, New Delhi, Vikas Publishing House.
by them. On the contrary Muslim women might perceive the liberal women more exploited in the sense that they have to perform similar roles of a house-wife with an additional duty of earning outside their homes from which they are completely free. Moreover, in the context of hue and cry of Muslim women's emancipation, who are supposed to be more oppressed and downtrodden than their sisters elsewhere carroll remarks, "at a time when Western women are beginning to think in terms of marriage contracts (although the legal enforceability of such contracts in Anglo-American law is very much an open question), it is ironic to realise that the Muslim women of Southern Asia - supposedly so down trodden, if one takes seriously some of the extreme polemical literature - possesses a degree of contractual freedom in this matter that would be the envy of any Western feminist."

Ahmad in his Volume on "Ritual and Religion among Muslims in India" taking querry with the Islamicists observes. "The Islamicists vision has tended to obscure the inherent and underlying pluralism within Indian Islam as a practised religion." While Ahmad criticised them of stressing on unity and projecting a "Book view of Islam", he themself stick to the pluralistic vision and "folk view" of Islam. His perception of Islam and Muslim behaviour is rooted in the methodological

107. Carroll, Lucy, 1983. op. cit Note. 10, P. 211.
compulsion of Sociology and social anthropology and particularly his adherence to the structural functional school. In his pluralistic confusion he is unable to distinguish between Islam as religion and faith and Islamic historical cumulative tradition. Moreparamount in his conception is the uniqueness of 'Indian Islam' which is in his view has nothing in common with the Islam as believed and practiced in the other parts of the world. In this way he visualizes the Little and Greater traditions of Islam as operating side by side in complete harmony. He identifies three different "levels in the religious system of Muslim in India, and the beliefs, values and ritual practices at each level enjoy a certain degree of autonomy, being relevant for presumably different purposes, yet at the same time remaining very much integral part of Islam in India". These levels are (i) traditionally described as belonging to formal or scriptural Islam (ii) Those beliefs and values which are supposed to be Islamic by Muslims though 'antithetical' to the formal and scriptural Islam. Muslim's behaviour are more guided by such beliefs and values- (iii) Lastly are the realm of illsprits totems and exporcism which are practiced secretly.

At these distinct operational levels of Islam, Ahmad does not view the conception of Islamization viewed by Aziz Ahmad and Califord Geertz as applicable in Indian context.


110. On the similar view on Islamization see also Levtzion, Nehemia, ed. 1979, Conversion to Islam, New York: Holmes and Meier.
His view has been contended by Francis Robinson who argues that Muslim societies in History have tended constantly to more towards the ideal Islamic patterns. His arguments are supported by well documented historical evidences in which he analyses the role played by the religious personalities like Ulamas and Sufis in bringing the Muslim Community towards the pattern of perfection. Simultaneously he also deals with the role played by the constant movements of Muslims on trade routes and pilgrimage. This content movements on the routes which connects the various parts of the Muslim world helped to bring a certain degree of homogenization in the Muslim's life throughout the world. From the evidences set out by him he concludes, "it would appear to support the positions of Aziz Ahmad or more specifically of Clifford Geertz. In Islamic History, in general, there has been a movement towards, or occasionally away from, the pattern of perfection". Criticizing Ahmad's stand on the state of equilibrium between Higher and custom -- centred traditions, Robinson remarks, "to assert that there will be a permanent state of equilibrium between scriptural faith and customary practice seems fundamentally unhistorical. It is to suggest that religion in India will somehow be immune from the great economic and technological changes which have transformed

religions elsewhere in the world\textsuperscript{112}. And lastly he asserts, "there is continual, if sometimes slow and barely perceptible, movement between visions of perfect Muslim life and those which ordinary Muslims lead\textsuperscript{113}.

The normative stand of Robinson has been strongly criticized by Gail Minault and Veena Das. Minault takes a stand similar to Imtiaz Ahmad and shares the view of Islam in India as a unique and distinct, from the Islam elsewhere and argues that "various Indian resolutions (momentary though may be) to the problem of the Co-existence of scriptural norms and local practice\textsuperscript{114} as a unique. While Das\textsuperscript{115} on the other hand advocates for interpretive mode of analysis in which Islam is constantly understood and worked out at the local level and hence 'native's point' of view in giving meaning to the text assumes pre-eminence. Madan in a somewhat different tone argue to consider native's conception in any sociological discourse. Remarking about Ahmad's insistence upon caste among Muslims he observes that it depends upon 'whose point of view the anthropologists', the Hindu's or the Muslims\textsuperscript{116} it is taken.

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{112} Robinson, Francis, 1986. "Islam and Muslim Society in South Asia: a reply to Das and Minault", Contributions to Indian Sociology (n.s.) 20, 1; P. 99.
\item \textsuperscript{113} Robinson, Francis, 1983, op. cit P. 201.
\item \textsuperscript{114} Minault, Gail, 1984. "Some reflections on Islamic revivalism Vs. assimilation among Muslims in India". Contributions to Indian Sociology (n.s.) 18, 2; P. 303.
\item \textsuperscript{115} Das, Veen. 1984. op. cit.
\end{itemize}
Studying the plural Society of Kashmir, Madan indicates that while both the communities view each other in a different and derogatory manner and cherishes mutually exclusive values. On the other hand the cooperation between Hindus and Muslims are 'dependent both on ideological compromise and upon 'politico-economic power'. It is the 'empirical situation' in which Pandits find compelled to establish inter-relationships with the Muslims occupational groups. 'Muslim identify themselves with Umma, the universal Muslim brotherhood', but they also identify themselves as Kashmiris. While at theIdeological level they are mutually exclusive but at the level of locality 'Muslims view these relationships in economic terms while, Pandits regard them as ritual liturgies with an economic content'.

The compromise in economic interaction are carried out with harmony. Muslims being divided into many occupational groups, serve their Pandit patrons. But 'internal divisions among Muslims are ignored when Muslims are juxtaposed with Pandits'. The boundary is clearly defined in terms of 'believers' and 'unbelievers'. Religion, at the time of crisis, serves to distinguish the boundaries of the community and eliminate the division within themselves.

117. Ibid. P. 59.
118. Ibid. P. 58-59.
119. Ibid. P. 55.
Fruzzetti\textsuperscript{120} studying Muslims of Bishnupur town in West Bengal found the Literate and custom--Centred tradition operating at the same level and in complete harmony. Writes Fruzzetti "The Muslims of Bishnupur have forged a unique culture by combining Islamic percepts with the experience of every day life, its social context and the elements that come from a non-Islamic culture. There are points at which these two spheres overlap and, using this as a principle, the Muslims of the town see no contradiction between strictly Islamic and non-Islamic practices". And "whatever does not fit into the one fits into the other\textsuperscript{121}". As Madan sees in compromise and concession between Hindus and Muslims of Kashmir as defeat of Ideology, Fruzzetti views this compromise as limitations and uncompatibility of Islam with the ideology of modern state. This uncompatibility, in her opinion explains the negative attitude of Muslims towards Social change\textsuperscript{122}. All these imply that since Islam is a rigid and unflexible religion, so either Muslims violate the Islamic norms by reaching at compromise with the other community in the matters of economic discourse or they resist such compromise and in this way they ensure their loyalties to Islam, and hence remain backward.

\textsuperscript{120} Fruzzetti, Lina M. 1981. Muslim Rituals: The household rites Vs. the public festivals in rural India. In. Imtiaz Ahmad. ed. op. cit. PP. 91-112.

\textsuperscript{121} Ibid. P. 111.

\textsuperscript{122} Ibid P. 112.
Patricia Jaffery\textsuperscript{123} draws our attention towards the scene of conflict over the performance of rituals at the dargah of Hazrat Nizamuddin, Delhi. However the conflict on such occasion runs deep down in the economic considerations. The Pirzadas hide their economic interests under the guise of disputation over holiness and geneological closeness to Hazrat Nizamuddin. One may recall that a tension between the burden of holiness and the temptation of the material world is also noticed in the case of Sherifs of south Yemen by Michael Gilsenan\textsuperscript{124}. Beatrix Pfleiderer\textsuperscript{125} focuses on the practice of exorcism at the Shrine of Mira Datar Dargah in Gujarat. Muslim's beliefs in the curing effect of the Shrine draws them to take a pilgrimage to there. At the shrine every kind of superstitions and magical beliefs are at play in its full vigour.

Through out these various studies so far reviewed, we can discern two broader points of arguments. One point of view emphasizes the integrative role of contextual code of behaviour which are derived from the locality along with Islam and second stresses the role of Shariah in bringing out consistency in the Muslim societies. The viewers of contradiction between Ideational and pragmatic codes of

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{123} Jeffery, Patricia, 1981. "Creating a Scene: The Disruption of Ceremonial in a Sufi Shrine", In Imtiaz Ahmad, ed. op. cit. PP. 162-194.
\item \textsuperscript{125} Pfleiderer, Beatrix, 1981, "Mira Datar Dargah: The Psychiatry of a Muslim Shrine". In Imtiaz Ahmad ed. op. cit. PP. 195-233.
\end{itemize}
behaviour or the dichotomy of orthodox, orthoprax traditions and heterodox and heteroprax traditions subscribe to the former point of view. On the other hand those who hold the normative stand in which a gradual move towards custom centred tradition are emphasized, subscribes to the latter point of view.

To substantiate these two different and contradictory stands, Barbara Daly Metcalf's 126 "Moral conduct and Authority: The place of Adab in South Asian Islam" and Katherine P. Ewing's 127, "Shariat and Ambiguity in South Asian Islam" provide new grounds. Shariah - the canon law of Islam has its roots in Quran the revealed book of God, and Hadiths they sayings and Sunnah: The doings of the Prophet, subsequently defined and agreed upon by Ijma: the consensus of Ulema. It is Divine. It regulates the Muslim's life. It is expected from every Muslims to leave by these Ideals and strive to achieve these Ideals individually and socially. Simultaneously, it is believed that to achieve these Ideals are difficult, almost impossible. So only a greater degree of proximity to these Ideals are needed. To supplement the Divine Code, another operational Code was derived in the form of 'Adab' manuals for all Muslims in all positions. The 'Adab' became the moral conduct of the community which was

derived ultimately from the personality of the Prophet. This Code of conduct ultimately rested upon the core values of Islam and was defined and addressed to the every domains of Muslims life. It also became a major tool to bring the all Muslims society 'into consonance with a common core of values'. Metcalf's edited Volume is addressed to this theme and it well illustrates the dichotomy of Ashraf and Ajlaf in the Indian context. Though the violation of some fundamental rules of Islam by the Muslims, as has been noticed by many Sociologists and several Anthropologists, it would have brought them into the category of infidels. But in the operational model of Adab, they were defined simply 'be-adabs'. Sociologists' insistence upon the violation of Islamic norms by the Muslims as 'Ideological defeat' or the mode of Islamization in which Ashraf represents as reference models can be understood in this context.

Similarly some of the Sociologists and several Anthropologists have noted the mental dilemma of Muslims in defining their customary practices which lead them to the false justification on the basis of Shariat itself. Shariat as theoretical percepts and the operational Code of conduct and behaviour of 'Adab' which is also culturally comprehensive and has pragmatic value, leaves a lot of ambiguity within itself. These ambiguous meaning and symbols are used by the individuals in different manners to pursue their own
goals. Addressing to this theme, Ewing, writes, "In a stable social environment, these pragmatic meanings, though "criss-crossing, frequently contradictory, ambiguous and confusing" (Silverstein 1967: 54), can be interpreted in terms of culturally established, often implicit, rules of use, with reliable criteria for determining the appropriateness of specific acts and interpretations in a particular social situations\(^\text{128}\). But in a situation of instability or some major social upheavals which directly challenges the political power and authority threatening the very structure in these domains these ambiguous Codes no longer remains operative. Rather, a typical reaction in form of debates begins. "During this process the core values and concepts are themselves systematized and may be redefined, thus eliminating another source of ambiguity\(^\text{129}\). The practices which were tolerated earlier comes into direct scrutiny in such debates and the issues of minor importance become the focal points. Shariah limits are redefined and the boundary of the community are clearly drawn. The insiders are demanded to adhere to the new criteria replacing the older ones which are thought to be deviations from the actual Islamic practices. Hence in this situation the newly derived Codes of behavior become

\(^{128}\) Ibid P. 3.
\(^{129}\) Ibid P. 5.
the actual practices of the masses. In this way the currents of the Islamization reaches into the remote parts of the Muslim Community.

Roff analysing the Shariat debate over dog's saliva in Kelantan in 1937 argues that it was largely a product of the courses of the developments which were taking place on the Island. He writes, "Kelantan, like many other Muslim States, was caught up in processes of change not of its own choosing or direction, as colonial rule and commercialization of agriculture, and their attendant social and economic transformations, impinged increasingly or ordinary life and customary relationships. This fast changing process left undefined many issues and disagreements over the remedy, as well as over how to grasp the new opportunities afforded, were real and strong. Keeping European dog as pet initiated a public debate centred on Shariah principles and the debaters were divided into two fronts: supporting and opposing the change. The religious debate provided the platform at which such issues might be discussed. Roff Concludes, "Indeed, arguments about how to argue, arguments about how one may properly construct meaning and order from the materials available and subject to the

131. Ibid P. 29.
132. Ibid P. 29.
given constraints of culture, place, and time, seems to lie close to the heart of many and perhaps most processes of change (Ideational and actual) within societies that regard themselves as and desire to be Muslim.

Gilmartin notes that though Islam basically challenged 'tribalism' but in subsequent development it made its re-entry into the Muslim practices and was accommodated in the form of traditions. In his essay, he observes that in certain political circumstances, as was developing in pre-independence era Shariat and customary laws came into conflict in Punjab. Since the British laws in Punjab was closely tied with the customary practices of tribes, the political opposition of colonialism surfaced in the opposition of customary laws of Punjab. The political opposition initiated a debate, and "whatever the basis for debate in the council, personal adherence to Shariat in matters of inheritance was on the increase. Though application of the Shariat in inheritance matters had long been wide spread in the towns, by the 1930s the spread of education had begun to lead, as the Commissioner of Multan Division suggested, to an increasing awareness and acceptance of Shariat in the country side. The tension between Shariat and Custom was translated into political

133. Ibid. P. 41.
135. Ibid. P. 56.
idioms and the leaders whose authority were largely derived from the traditional power bases, sacrificed their local interests for a broader issue of the creation of a new political and moral order.

Rafiuddin Ahmad argued that while the general political climate in the Muslim world was stagnant in the 19th Century, Bangali Muslims were experiencing a new awareness of being Muslims during the same period and they moved gradually towards Islamization. Though he subscribes to the pluralistic conception of Islam, but he attributes the syncretistic tradition of Bangali Islam a resultant of the Geographical Compulsions. The Bangali Society was largely an agrarian Society which has remained prone to the natural vagaries. The Bangali Muslims "found themselves pitted against a nature rich but unpredictable and unkind. Their desire to tame the cruelties of nature distinctly affected and shaped their visions of religion and culture. Folk beliefs reflected these values and hence could not be instantly eliminated by the introduction of Islam." Ahmad has also analysed the gradual move of Bangali Muslims towards Islamization. During the medieval periods the religious leaders sought a point from where Bangali Muslims can be moulded into Islamic norms. The point of accommodation with


137. Ibid. P. 115.
the Hindus, as many religious 'puthis' does indicate became a point of departure in later course of developments. The religious teachers, majority of them being Sufis, first emphasised the resemblance, as the 'Nabi Vamsa' a religious puthi does indicate in which prophet assumes a position of Avtar along with the other Hindu 'dieties'. Once the concept of prophet became strong in the Bangali Muslims' conception of religion, a departure took place by discarding the other dieties — and subsequently it was reformed by the orthodoxy.

Rafiuddin Ahmad argues that the reformist movements directly challenged these conceptions and the argument about religion was centred around religious 'puthis' because of its being an integral part of the religious traditions of Bangali Muslims. The debate over the content of these 'puthis' reached to the remote villages of Bengal. These debates brought a degree of reform in Muslim's life in Bengal. Though they are still Bangalis in their culture but Muslims did not continue to observe uncritically all Bangali cultural practices. He concludes "Reformism had a great effect on the "ideologization" of Islam. By their repeated efforts to bring ordinary Muslims within the fold of what was thought

to be a pure and unalloyed Islamic way of life, reformists encouraged people to look upon themselves as Muslims. Gradual changes were introduced into aspects of external appearance such as dress. The number of mosques increased in the villages and so did the number of devotees.¹⁴⁰ Sandria B. Freitag¹⁴¹ argued that in a situation where Muslim identity was at stake in a new developing political structure by the Britishers, Muslims asserted and this assertion took its expression on issue which were not of such importance before. She examined the Kanpur riot from 1913 to 1931 and its consequences in the Muslim consciousness and identity. She observes, "It became virtually impossible for individuals, even ordinary people, to act without self consciousness. When almost every act takes on political as well as religious significance, the public context of such acts becomes crucial.¹⁴² Stephen L. Pastner¹⁴³ in his study "Sardar Hakom, Pir: leadership patterns among the Pakistani Baluch" observes that in tribal areas of Muslim world "normative Islam, with its emphasis on the brotherhood of all the faithful, seems to be the antithesis of real society". Further "In such settings

¹⁴² Ibid p. 162.
-- not withstanding the impact of Islam on the day-to-day lives of many sincere and pious individuals -- the most salient collective function of the faith seems to be as a mortar, temporarily applied to cninks in the political edifice during crisis situations, when other means of unification have failed in the face of a fissile and segmentary social life.

While Stephen L. Pastner consider custom and Religion functioning at two levels; one giving the homogenity and identity within the locality, other operate at more broader level and attach them with the wider community and provide the basis of solidarity within the ethnic group. Religion does provide a broader base to unite obliterating other considerations of locality which remains major hinderence in unity.

Carroll Mec. Pastner and Carol Prindle studying two different societies also note that two different models of ideational and pragmatic concern operate at different levels. Pastner studying the concept of honor (izzat) in 'Oasis Baluch of Makran observes that Baluch society does not consist a clear cut dichotomous model of 'religious' and

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144. Ibid P. 177.
and 'Social' but when they are juxtaposed in a pragmatic situation "In their attempt to reconcile pragmatic concern (such as the disposal or women) with values of religiosity riwaj, and haqq, they share repertoires or idioms with which they can both talk about conflict and justify behaviour in conflict situation". It is required from them to behave properly as 'Kinsmen' 'Baluch' and good 'Muslim'. A person is demanded to confirm the morality of 'Kinship', 'religiosity' and 'ethnicity'.

Prindle studying Muslims of Chittagong notes that the two models of 'religious' and 'customary' does operate and they are consciously employed by Muslims while placed in different situations. She observes "The Muslims manage contradiction between Social and religious values by juxtaposing and alternatively employing two modes of discourse -- the Samajik or community mode and the Dharmic or religious mode."

Finally Prindle concludes, "Because the two modes of discourse share certain values and because use of the two above strategies minimizes the contradiction between them, it is possible to use the religious mode in support of the Social mode. In the process a partial congruency between the two modes of discourse is achieved; at the same time sufficient ambiguity is retained to assure Social fluidity within the Muslim Community. The result is that boundaries within the Muslim community, which

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might become fixed if rank was ambiguous and totally consensual, remain fluid, while the boundary between Muslims and Hindu communities is reinforced through the exclusion of alien values and ranking strategies. 149.

Judy F. Pugh discus ses the use of astrology and practice of black magic among Muslims of Banaras which created a debate between 'traditionalists' and 'scripturalists'. This debate over the practice of black magic and astrology infused an atmosphere of religious argument on the very concept of 'Universe' 'creation' and 'knowledge' in Islam. And finally Shariat defined and limited the practice. The local practices were given an Islamic meaning different from the Hindu conceptions. She observes that such dialogue and accomodations are an indicator of the complexities of Muslim's life in India. Muslims are always faced with "the old and common dilemma between adjustment and assimilation on the one hand, and exclusion and boundary maintenance on the other. One might suggest that the existence of both more conservative and more liberal enunciatory positions within the ideologies of scripturalists and traditionalists alike has served to reflect and sustain a certain amount of flexibility in Hindu-Muslim relations. 151.

Through out the ethnographic and historical literature on Muslim society, so far reviewed, we may find a degree of similiar

149. Ibid P. 286.
151. Ibid P. 304.
though often appears to be contradictory. The studies conducted in a semi-literate rural Muslim communities reveal a custom centred and the locally oriented attitudes more in comparison to the literate Muslim community residing in the Urban environment. On the other hand we have also noticed that Muslim community residing in rural environment, having achieved certain degree of economic and political dominance in the locality behave differently in contrast to their other coreligionists residing in a similar setting but deprived of politico-economic power. This is also true in the Urban environments. As John Eade observes in case of Calcutta's Muslim middle class attitudes towards the political compulsions. They were politically competing with their Hindu counterparts in pre-partition periods and hence consciously made their identities distinct from that of the Hindus, through adoption of Urdu and culture of Ashrafs of North Indian model. But after the partition of the country this political competition changed into cooperation Those who were Islamizing themselves, out of economic and political considerations took the route of assimilation by inter-marrying with the Hindus. Eade observes, "Education,  


153. The concept of inter marriage between Caste or Status groups or between the Communities have been generally attributed to the forces of modernization by the Sociologists. But this phenomenon, in real sense, has different meanings in different context. For instance the Caste and Community inter marriage among Hindus can be looked as a result of modernization or secularization because it has an anti religious notions. But in the case of Muslims while the inter-community marriages particularly with the Hindus is against religious prescriptions, the inter-status group or inter-beraderi marriages may imply that Muslims are conforming to the more fundamental value of Islamic egalitarianism by discarding their traditional practices.
in-come and occupation were essential components of their social status and differences between themselves and non-Muslims, particularly Hindus, were relatively few. It is the internalization of Islamic values that determines Muslim's behaviour. But while the individual response may be subservient to one's personal orientation, society in general respond to the internal as well as external constraints.

Some broader generalizations which we get from these studies can be summarized as follows: Muslim society in India as elsewhere shares a degree of resemblance because of their adherence to the Islamic faith. They are placed in a locality where they share some of the culture of the local landscape but simultaneously because of their allegiance of Islamic faith they


155. One can fairly doubt Eade's remark about the Hindu-Muslim intermarriages that "their Islamic identity was still important to them and their marriages to Bengali Hindus had neither undermined that identity nor the religious identity of their children". (John Eade, op. cit. P. 76). A survey of Muslim's attitude towards the identity and prestige of such people can reveal the two version. While Muslim Male marrying a Hindu girl can be tolerated to a certain degree but in reverse case the girl never regains her identity as a Muslim Unless her husband is not converted. In case of conversion they may get more esteem and respect from their fe low Muslims. Mine's remark that a Muslim cannot achieve status as a Muslim among Muslims except by pursuing their own standards" (Mtlison Mines, 1981, op. cit. P. 80) seems to be more appropriate. Any how it is open to any empirical investigation.
are bound by a common bond with their coreligionists elsewhere and in this sense share a culture similar to them shaped by Islamic values and norms. The degree of attachment to the local environment or the Islamic Ideals depends upon certain external conditions in which the particular Muslim society is placed. The external environment of Muslim society affects its internal form and the general social pattern to a greater extent. The external influence on a social system and its reaction to those influencing forces generates pattern of social change. Usually Muslim society experience a change through the process of Islamization which proceed in a uniliner fashion towards the achievement of the Ideal. Roff remarks, "that the history of the Muslim peoples, severally and jointly has been characterized throughout by an incessant and necessary dialectic between that which ought to be (and its discovery) and that which is". The life to be governed Ideally are also 'true of many other systems of belief which rest upon transcendant authority". The dialectic between Ideational and pragmatic is the basic source of change in Muslim societies. The process of Islamization is a basic process of change in Muslim society which experiences a push and pull by the forces of modernization and local customary practices in their move towards the Ideal. The Muslim society resonates between them. The swing of Muslim

society from one position to the another depends upon the material forces of the society. The environmental setting and material forces does include the size of the community, their politico-economic power, level of education: secular and religious as well, social mobility, and many others alongwith the civilization with which they are encountering at the local as well as at the universal levels. The mode of response to these forces determine their shape and form. The move towards Ideal and the degree of proximity to that Ideal in a Muslim society is dependant upon such external forces.
Theoretical approach:

The dichotomy between the Ideal, textual Islamic norms and local customary practices of Muslims have been emphasized by all sociological and Anthropological enquiries on Muslim societies. Most often it has been discovered that they are in stark contradiction with each other. The Ideal, textual Islam is eternal, free from the limitations of time and space but when put into practice at certain time in certain locality it is bound to experience a change from the Ideal Type. Since the beginning of Muslim history, Muslims have tried to achieve the Ideal by constantly re-creating and re-producing these Ideal forms into social life. The re-creation and re-production of these Ideal forms in the social life have remained a source of dynamism for the Muslim society in history. Simultaneously the different understanding of the Ideal, to be representing true Islamic message, have resulted into diverse interpretations of Islam. The emphasis on the particular dimension of Islam has given rise to different traditions. "Tradition: that which we have always done and believed and from which we have derived our social forms". Muslims in the contemporary world largely derive their existential meaning from those traditions and shape the very form and structure of their

society in varying situations by re-interpreting these traditions. The gap between the ideational and pragmatic is filled by these traditions. The apparent contradictions which seem to characterize the theory and practice are largely due to the inherent contradiction between the diverse conceptions and interpretations of these traditions.

The illiterate masses view their popular cultural practices, which are largely derived from local traditions, as much Islamic as it is viewed Un-Islamic by the orthodox. The concept of 'salf'- doings of pious ancestors, plays most important role in defining the traditions. While the illiterate folks view the tradition of their (salf) - as they did and believed, as Islamic, the orthodoxy view these traditions as local influence, growing out of sheer ignorance. But they themselves rely more on the orthodox traditions and hence traditionalize the 'faith' according to the particular orthodox schools and hence are criticized as 'traditional' 'rewayeti' by the fundamentalists. The fundamentalists appear in traditionalists' conception as innovators-'biddati'. A fourth group are those who are much influenced by modern and secular forces and form a separate group, criticizing and being criticized by the three earlier groups. But on some issues fundamentalists share much in common with them.
Though these different traditions, often contradictory, give vitality and dynamism to the Muslim societies and subsequently determine their form and content but the course which the particular society will take and the particular tradition will be dominant at particular time are determined by the social, economic and political situations in which society is placed. In other words the political and material conditions; internal as well as external, along with other factors such as education etc. will determine the dominant mode of tradition influencing in turn the entire form and content of Muslim society. A change in the external and internal forces of and on the society will change the course of society; its inner structure and external forms by changing the dominant tradition. The particular 'tradition' dominates the society with the specific change in the economic and political order. As we have noticed in earlier chapters, the Muslim societies behave differently in different settings. A change in the tradition imply that not only one among different groups interpreting different traditions dominates the scene, rather the entire society respond to the dominant mode of tradition and moves towards that particular tradition by leaving their older allegiance to their previously held traditions. In this process Muslim societies experience homogenization in their life ways, attitudes, beliefs and behaviours. Central to the present study is addressed to this theme; the primary goal is to discover
the pattern of Muslim society: the interplay of the size of the community, its politico-economic situations and their religious attitudes, behaviours and values and the overall pattern which it makes in particular setting.

Madhubani, a north-eastern district of Bihar, bordering Nepal, due to its geographical features remained secluded and cherished an exclusive culture of Mithila. The entire Mithila region never came into direct rule of Muslim kings rather it was left to the Hindu kings of Darbhanga Raj. The priestly class of Mithila Brahmins dominated the social and cultural life of the region. The Hindu social system was and still is, rigid and traditional. Moreover the agriculture is the main source of economy, the district hardly has any sizeable industry. The trade and commerce from Nepal is so small that it can hardly make any considerable impact upon the basic economic structure of the region. Now, viewing from these perspective, Muslims residing in this environment of physical and cultural dominance of Hindus, it could have been expected from them to show a greater degree of assimilation in the local Hindu cultural milieu. The favourable condition for the assimilation is furthered by the absence of any major Islamic cultural centre in the near vicinity. The entire region of north Bihar lies barren in this context. But the case is not so. Why? The answer to this question lies very much in our theoretical conception that a Muslim society placed in an alien environment
if gets some favourable conditions like large size of Muslims with comparatively better economic position, accompanied by a certain degree of political independence, though locally, along with some openness to the external environment through the mobility of its members in other regions within and outside the country, for education or employment, the society will behave otherwise than without them. It also means that with these favourable conditions an awareness and consciousness will pervade the society about what is being a Muslim? and what a society should possess distinct from the locality that can be characterized as Muslim society sharing some elements in common with the entire community. In short, a sense of being Muslim - a part of the unity of world Umma, results into resistance to the local and other influences. The response to the resistance of local as well as the modern forces creates an environment of contradiction, tension and conflict between the various traditions held in the society--One tradition giving way to the another depending upon the external conditions. Simultaneously the religious attitudes, behaviours and the beliefs and values of society fluctuate between different traditions influencing in turn the socio-economic and political behaviours of Muslims which ultimately influence the social structure itself. There is a reciprocal relationship between them.
Mimala, the village under our study is a large sized and Muslims constitute more than half of its population. Rest are Hindus dominated by Brahmins and to some extent by the Yadavs. They live in exclusive areas and inter-course are restricted to the economic and political spheres. Economically Muslims are better off and dominate the village Panchayat. There is a long tradition of religious education among the Muslims of the village but the secular education is also two to three generations deep. These factors have brought a degree of openness to the village in the sense that Muslims are mobile enough to the different parts of the country for education and earnings as labourers and government employees added more by overseas services.

In this setting we can fairly assume that there will be an elaborate religious arrangement in the public and private spheres. Moreover there would be a considerable degree of religious influence on the behaviours and attitudes of Muslims bearing an impact upon the social structure. Manifestation of every day life in society and its religious overtones would imply that the degree of observance of Islamic norms and values will be high. If so then the Islamic ideology of egalitarianism would be the rule of society and the social classification and notion of hierarchy based on tangible considerations will be less. But viewing the dominant Hindu environment and the growing size of the community is can be assumed
that there will be some sort of social stratification operative in the society. If so then whether this pattern of social stratification is caste like or something else? This question is one of the objective of the study.

The limited resources in form of agricultural lands and growing size of the village population has left many to abandon the traditional agricultural life. Sizeable proportion of the village population is living on non-agricultural professions. In this context we can assume that the pattern of social stratification operative in the village society would be resembling something like class divisions? If so how rigid are these class or caste distinctions? How far Islamic injunctions are playing a role in minimizing the gap by loosening the class or caste boundaries? What are the changes of class or caste mobility? And what are those factors which serve as criteria for such mobilities?

The second objective of the study is to investigate the Islamic textual norms and Muslims practices in their social life are how far corresponding and homologus? To do so, is to present the discription of their Family life, marriage rules and their life cycle rites, the ceremonies and the customs. On the other hand the local influence on these rites and ceremonies and their contradictions with Ideal Islamic norms also demands consideration.
The third objective of the study is to ascertain the relationship between Muslims religious values and their economic behaviour. Do Muslims in their economic pursuits take the Islamic imperatives as their guides or they are more influenced by local ethos?

If the Muslims of the village respond to the Islamic injunctions, it will provide a wider role for religion to play in the society. Moreover the religious persons will wield greater authority and power in the society. The specialists in the religious learnings - 'Ulama' need special kind of training in Islamic texts and laws. This make them special figures in Muslim society and the masses seek from them the religious verdicts - 'fatiwa' - on their day to day affairs. In this sense they define what is Islamic and what is not. This religious roles give them a kind of authority and power to guide and control the general Muslims who do not have access to such learnings. But there are always some people in the society whom people regard as religious authority competent enough to give legal guidance. His reputation is based on his personality - personal virtues and strict religious observance, his insight and his over all status in the locality. The trained religious practisioners who monopolize the Islamic knowledge think themselves as sole guardians of Islamic message and its legitimate interpreters. The interpretations of religion by professionals and amateur religious specialists
result into tensions and conflicts. The motive behind these are based more on tangible considerations and hence an uncon- gruous alliance takes place between secular and religious forces. The competition takes place between different groups interpreting different traditions stressing their interpretations right, others' wrong - motivation is to hold the authority and power. This situation becomes more intense when there is an opportunity - the community is threatened from outside forces locally or in general. They search issues and these issues give an opportunity to develop new religious idioms. In short the contradiction, conflict and competition between the religious authorities are simply manifestations of secular dimensions of society. The religious places provide such platform.

On the other hand the change in the economic and political situations may give rise to genuine sentiments for cooperation. Usually at the religious festivals the community life is assessed and diagnosed. Revival of the Islamic norms and values are sought and some efforts are made at the community level. Such efforts help in deriving new cultural logics imported more from Islamic normative commandments than any other sources and hence it helps to replace the older practices, which are thought to be unIslamic. Since new cultural logic dominate the social environment, literate and illiterate masses together respond to the new cultural dictates.
Taking these views into consideration, another objective of the study is to describe the domain of religion - religion as it is viewed and acted upon, religious interpreters-their motive and purpose, religious places serving the economic and political interests of these groups and the conflict and competition arising from the control of these places. Lastly, issues which unite them and its impact upon the social structure.

The presuppositions and assumptions so far described, the present study is all about them dealing within the context of the village Malmal.

Field-work situation:

The data for present study was collected through the field work techniques particularly the participant observation method by living in the village Malmal of Madhubani district in the state of Bihar. The field work was carried out intermittently over a period of two years i.e. June 1986 to June 1988. I stayed in the village periodically covering all seasons and at a stretch not more than two months, altogether, more than nine months were spent in the village.

In M.N. Srinivas', opinion a productive study of a single village depends upon its selection which should be "either typical of an area or suitable for study of a particular theoretical problem". Since the present study was meant to test particular hypothetical assumptions it needed a

careful selection of the village. Though there are many Muslim
dominated villages in Madhubani district but there are only few
which are commonly known and identified as exclusively a
Muslim villages. Malmal the village under our study is commonly
taken as most famous among them, though half of its population
are Hindus. Moreover the dominant Muslim ethnic group of the
village is of Shaikhs who are endogamous and are spread in many
villages in the near vicinity. Those Shaikhs living in another
villages are also identified by their links with Malmal and
in this way their achievements are also identified as somewhat
indirectly related with the village Malmal. Its fame is fur­
thered also by its huge population density. Village is enlisted
in the places of interest' in the district Gazetteer³ of
Darbhanga. Madhubani was prior to 1972 a sub-division of the
district Darbhanga. Darbhanga is now commissionary and Madhubani
is one of its districts. All these made the village suitable
for the study. I surveyed many Muslim dominated villages of
Madhubani but non other than Malmal suited me most from my
theoretical point of view. The thing which striked me most and
aroused a curiosity about the village is its identification as
Muslim village even though half are Hindus, dominated by Brahmins
who dominate the socio-cultural life of the entire Mithila
region. The village is known for its religious and literary

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3. Roy Chaudhury, P.C. 1964, Bihar District Gazetteers
 "Darbhanga", Patna, Superintendent Secretariat Press.
activities, high degree of sophisticated culture and developing economy. More than that, prior to 1978 village Panchayat elections in Bihar, the Panchayat was (left deliberately perhaps?) under the control of Hindus. But in 1978 election, for the first time Muslims opted to contest for Panchayat election and won, capturing the posts of 'Mukhiya' and 'Sarpanch' both. The setting of the village and its new developing trends made it ideally suited for the present study.

I began my field work in June 1986. I stayed with the family of one of the most influential persons of the village and family itself was the top status family. The place of residence was just few yards away from the village chawk (cross road) where much of the public meetings, discussions and gossips take place in the tea shops. The chawk connects the approach roads of the village and the residential areas surrounding it, are privileged in the sense that it is adjacent to the main village pond. While chawk is situated at the eastern side, the all four sides of the pond are marked by the approach roads. On the western side is the grand Mosque, Musafir Khana and Madarsa of the village. So in this sense the eastern and the western sides of the pond represent secular and religious dimensions of the village and the activities carried out on the one side are also felt at the another. Pond is buffer between the worlds of sacred and profane. Living in the near vicinity was the privilege. It gives an easy access
to reach the places where most of the village public activities are carried out. The informations are easily collected at those places.

Living with the status family of the village was also advantageous in a status conscious society. Living with the commoners would not had allowed me an access to reach those families easily. Moreover, if it would have been achieved, the free interaction would have been restricted. My status in the village was that of the family with which I was staying and their acceptance means acceptance by the commoners. The co-operation of the upper elite, in a traditional society means the lower group will also follow the suit. This also means less suspicion in the minds of the villagers. I was introduced in the village by one of my distant relative known to the area. A point of further co-ordination was brought by my being a student of Aligarh Muslim University. Many young boys of the village are also getting education there and many in the old generations are products of that University. My purpose for staying in the village does not sounded bizarre to those educated people. But the real difficulty I encountered during the mixing up and formal interviewing with the general masses. Being a member of that region, the culture and the language of the villagers were not new to me and I did not felt any difficulty in conveying myself or knowing their ideas.
'Son of the soil' made a point where no other suspicions, as encountered by other ethnographers and anthropologists, was generated into their minds. Difficulty remained in convincing them about the nature and purpose of my work. I was introduced, as guest staying there for my research purposes. They were unable to understand that village can be a part of any study. "Parhne likhne se aur gaon ke bare me janne me keya taalluq hai" what is the relationship between the studies and knowing about the village?). When I explained to them that studies of villages are taught in the colleges and Universities. "Achcha aap log yeh sab bhi parhte hein", they exclaimed astonishingly.

During my stay in the village I dressed as normally villagers do - wearing Kurta and Pajama or lungi. In this respect I resembled much more like the villagers themselves. I participated in their social and religious activities but never taken the active role to the point of betraying my purpose. In one sense I was active in participation to the point of being present there and carried those activities only which a guest can do but at the most I remained observer. Anthropologists' applying 'participant observation' method in their studies, run the risk of either becoming 'participating non-observers' when excessively involved in performing active roles or detach themselves to the extent of becoming Non-participant observers'. The conscious involvement and detachment
to certain limits freed me from both. I also visited some of the villages in their relations. In a purdah society being an outsider my participation was restricted outside the home. Informal interviews with women, to a limited extent, was possible in the lower status groups where purdah was almost negligible. There too, an outsider talking with young women ran a high degree of risk. Danger involved in making myself a subject of gossips and rumours was high and keeping in view these considerations, I restricted myself to the occasional informal talks with some elderly women. With my frequent stay in the village, slowly I was accepted as being one of them and use of the kinship terms in our address to each other developed.

Research Method:

"A major advantage of the approach of participant observation as a way of obtaining information is that the researcher is able to transcend his own categories of how society is ordered." In this sense when I settled in the village for the first time, I simply roamed in the village, met the people, talked to them about themselves and the village. In the first few days I conceived the general ideal about how Muslims of the village interact, view and talk about each other. How they view the problems; internal or external, religious or secular,

economic or political, local or national and international.

After getting a general conception and preliminary informations I started my informal interviews with the people in general and people of some repute in particular. Normally evenings are a leisure period for villagers, it proved to be good time for informal interviews. With the status conscious people I normally interviewed them at their residence in perfect friendly environment with teas and some refreshment served. Sitting in open air in the bland and warm evening, talking about themselves and village proved to be good leisure activity for them. Till the time of 'Esha' (Night prayer) we had plenty of time at our disposal.

The another important place for informal interviews were the tea shops. Sitting outside the shop beside the pond in still and calm evenings was yet another good environment to carry those interviews. Advantage, some times a handicap, was the involvement of a number of people in such talks all wanted to illuminate as much as they can, from their own point of view. But this also involved heated exchanges when one wanted to counter another's stand. In such situation some remarks by a passerby embraced the interviewee or flared up exchange of indecent remarks. On the other hand, after 'Asr' and Maghrib prayers (Afternoon and evening prayers) Western side of the pond used to became more lively where people after praying in the Grand Mosque (Jaama Masjid) used to assemble. The discussion
ranged from the religious ritual particulars to the problems of managements of Mosque and Madrasa. Often the national and international issues concerning Muslims were discussed. The reference to these issues were either Urdu newspapers, or the news broadcasted by B.B.C. news services. Usually these discussions were carried by people from the western side through the northern and then down to the chowk, into the teashops. Accompanying them, discussing with them, it gave much informations not only about issues but also motives—the interplay of religious and secular dimensions.

Some of the informal interviews were carried out with the educated village elders, most of them very old, who command respect and high esteem by the villagers for their personal qualities. These interviews with them were about history of the village; its settlement, development and changes. They were links between the past and the present. Though there awareness about the name of the village and its history was vague and most of the narrations were often contradictory but since the mid-nineteenth century, the historical events were systematic and clear. In support of their narrations they provided the geneological charts. Moreover for the purpose of comparision, they narrated the history of other villages in their relations. A small village few kilometers south-east to the village Malmal was made a point of reference. From that village I collected some materials. Even one 'farman' by Abdur-Rahim Khan Khanan
of the reign of Mughal Emperor Akbar was shown to me as part of those evidences. These historical narrations, (the common versions in those narrations) and cross checking them with the historical works on Bihar, proved to be fruitful in the description of the history of the village, and the region.

Much of the informations about the village; its socio-economic and religious life, was collected on the basis of my own observations and the informations provided by the informants who were well informed about the village and locality. Some of the structured interviews were also conducted with the specialists of the fields on which I wanted very specific informations. For instance, knowing about the pattern of stratification, some forty peoples from all Muslim ethnic groups of the village were interviewed. These interviews were well in the conformity with Lloyad Warner's 'Evaluated Participation' (E.P.) method, with modification to suite the local idioms and phrases. Moreover, structured interviews with the secretaries of the committees, present and past both, of the boards of Madrasa and Mosque was carried out to know the function and power of the committees and their income, procured from different sources and the expenditures involved. More specifically informations about the politics involved with those committees were sought. Interviews with the 'Mukhiya' of the village and other persons of repute helped to illuminate the realities of the village life. All these interviews were tape-recorded and analyzed subsequently.
The 'xaramchari' who keeps the village land revenue records helped me to get informations about the land breakups—its holding individual and caste wise. The village post office served a good source of information about the people in job outside and the transaction of money through the money orders and many other important informations. Demographic informations were collected from village voter lists and ration cards for fair price shops. All informations were time and again cross-checked by the informants who were well aware and knew nearly entire village by names. Some of the informants proved to be extra-ordinary in their memories and insights.

Most of the anthropologists have experienced of 'being captured' in the sense that living with one family means involving into similar relationships with the villagers as the host family has. To break free from being captive of, and to be acceptable to all is yet another problem in the field work. I experienced such a situation when I knew about one person whose knowledge about the village life in general and familial life of people from diverse status groups in particular is established. When I contacted him, for many days he showed no inclination to cooperate but when one of his close relative pressurized him he confessed that since I am living with the family towards whom he is apathic, so he was unwilling to cooperate. Since now I approached him with a person whom he cannot say a 'No', so he is willing to cooperate. But I have to
pay a price. And the fine was, to have a dinner with him at his residence. I paid the fine.

I took more than two hundred photographs of the village life. While most of those photographs were taken by me but at certain places where my presence or photograph taking would have been embarrassing, I was assisted by my key informants. Most of them were taken by the permissions but when objected, as taking photograph of a funeral procession, I acted accordingly.

The ethnographic settings which constitute the blooming, buzzing confusion of every day life, the portrayal of the reality and its meaning for the 'natives' and for the sociologists poses a major dilemma. It does not involve only intellectual dimension but also the moral dimensions are at stake. Moreover, the anthropologists' own conception and his values colour his perceptions. Along with objectivity some subjective dimensions of his own personality may influence his views. This serious short coming, which is inescapable. Considering the human dimension of his personality involved in methodological procedures, an effort is made to overcome them. My own study may involve these short comings but consciously I have attempted to reduce the subjectivity by checking, cross-checking the data and interpreting them objectively, giving more consideration to the villagers' own conception and perceptions.
Situated between latitude 26°2' and 26°40' North and longitude 85°45' and 86°44' East is the district of Madhubani at the northern end of north Bihar bordering Nepal. It is the heart of Mithila, the land famous for its culture, religion and paintings. In the spring the country side are filled with the perfume of newly blossomed jasmine, humming of wild bees, and melodious lilts of cuckoos. Mango groves ablaze of colour dance in gentle breeze. The climatological transition from spring to summer marks the beginning of auspicious actions. As summer proceeds, dusty wind blows and heat becomes more intense. With the first monsoon shower, the country side becomes a picture of singing. Agricultural activities begin. The dark clouds wander in the sky and the rain pelt the ground. The green rice fields and water filled ponds give a picturesque appearance - an immense pleasure for one's eyes and heart. Winters are extreme cold; a time to harvest the rice fields.

Physical features:

Till 1972 Madhubani was a sub-division of the district Darbhanga. The shape of the district Madhubani resembles a parallelogram with a total area of 3501 square kilometers. Its boundaries touch in the north with the borders of Nepal, on the West, district of Sitamarhi, on the east Saharsa district and on the south it meets with its parent district.
of Darbhanga. "It consists of a rich alluvial plain intersected by numerous rivers and streams issuing from the Nepal hills and running almost parallel to each other from north to south. The chief of these are little Baghamati, Kamla, Karai, Balan and Tiljuga.\(^1\) Every year the district, which comprised of lowlying plains intersected by these rivers and streams, are threatened with floods and the country side becomes a vast sheet of water in rainy season.

The district is divided into the administrative units of three sub-divisional offices at the towns of Madhubani, Jhanjharpur and Jayanagar. The district has eighteen Blocks or Anchals. Each block or Anchal is a revenue unit under the administration of a Block Development Officer or Anchal Adhikari.

The climate of Madhubani is characterized by a pleasant cold season from mid November to the end of February, a hot and dry summer starting from March till May. The monsoon season with its heavy rains, moist heat and hot still nights, starts with the break of south-west monsoons from June till September. Coldest month is January with daily mean temperature of 9.9\(^0\)C (49.8\(^0\)F) and maximum temperature at 23.5\(^0\)C (74.3\(^0\)F). Sometimes the temperature falls to 2\(^0\)C. The month of May is the hottest when mean daily temperature is 35.8\(^0\)C (96.4\(^0\)F) and maximum is 24.3\(^0\)C (75.7\(^0\)F). Sometimes the temperature rises above 43\(^0\)C

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(109.4°F) but it is exceptional. The average rainfall of the district is 1319.9 mm and the 84 percent of the rainfall occurs between June and September. The climatic conditions and annual seasonal cycles determine much of the activities of the people of this district and influences profoundly their perceptions and attitudes. The easterly winds blowing from May to October and the westerly appearing in late winters and blowing in full in March, has especial bearing upon the Psyche and Physique of the population and has helped to develop a life style and culture unique in its content called 'Mithila'.

W.G. Archer writes "Madhubani" means "forest of honey" and the region with its great mango groves, fertile rice lands, fields of sugarcane and lotus ponds provides a perfect environment for a poet. Its seasons range from winters of sparkling cold to springs and summers of exhilarating heat. In March and April, the cotton tree is afire with scarlet bloom. Evenings are bland and warm and at night people sleep outside their houses in the hot stillness. From late June to early September, vast clouds move across the sky. Days are either dark with rain bright with steamy sunshine or livid with storm. By October the air is clear, the moon shines with dazzling brightness and at morning and evening the white peaks of the Himalayas stand along the skyline, enchanting in their frail ethereal beauty.... The country of Madhubani is part of Mithila, long renowned for its learning and culture. Its people are known as Maithils2.

Demographic and Ethnic Composition of the Population:

According to the 1981 census the total population of the district is 2,325,844. The Hindus, Muslims, Christians, Sikhs, Buddhists and Jains are the religious groups constituting the total population and their representations in number are 1,957,629; 367,771; 86; 208; 25 and 125 respectively (See Table 1).

Bulk of the population reside in the villages and these villages "could be said to be the core of Maithil culture. Ancient traditions and customs are still maintained in many of the villages." The total urban population is 72403 which constitute 3.1 percent of the total population. In the face of urban population of the state of Bihar which is 12.47 percent of the total population of the state, Madhubani's negligible urban population gives a clear picture of its being a rural society altogether. While Muslims represent 15.8 percent of the total population they share 23.9 percent of the total urban population of the district. These urban settlements are located in the two towns of Madhubani and Jaynagar. Jhanjharpur has no municipality rather it has a notified area committee. The total literate persons in the district are 505814 i.e.

21.7 percent of the population. In this regard also the district lag behind the overall literacy rate of the state of Bihar which is 26.2 per cent.

The absence of the urban centres in the district may be attributed to the absence of sizeable industries. Moreover its exposure to the natural calamities in form of yearly famine and flood has accentuated the problem further. P.C. Roy Chaudhury in the Gazetteer of district Darbhanga observes about the low increase in the population of the then sub-division Madhubani, "The low incidence of increase of the population at Madhubani is due to the fact that there are hardly any sizeable industries. It is in the centre of a rice producing area and although nearer to Nepal border the trade and commerce from Nepal side nearly pass through Madhubani but Madhubani does not handle much of them\(^6\)". The trade route between India and Nepal passes through this district and hence historically it has assumed an important trading centre\(^7\) but the industrialization of area never took place. The major export items of this district was limited to the agricultural products. Chaudhury observes, "As regards trade, this subdivision export fish, handloom cloth, makhana (water berries), mangoes, sugarcane, lichi, peddy, hide and brass metal articles\(^8\)....". Trade with Nepal makes this area prone of smugglings of foreign goods and

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Maithil Brahmins predominate in this district and are major land owning caste. The other Hindu Castes are Rajputs, Bhumihars, Kayastha, Banias and other service castes. Harijans are in fairly good number and are major agricultural labour force. Villages are usually dominated by one single caste and either Muslims or Hindus in Communal terms.

The crops of the district fall under three harvest i.e. aghani, bhadai and rabi. The aghani crop is largely rice, harvested in the winter falling in the Hindi lunar month of aghan. Bhadai is early crop sow in late summer and harvested in the month of Bhado - a Hindi monsoon month which fall in the month of August-September. The main crops of this season is rice, marua (Eleusine Coracana), maize, millets etc. Rabi crops are wheat, barley, Oats, gram, pulses, mustards etc. These crops are sow in winter and harvested in spring. The cash crops are sugarcane, Makhana ... a typical product of the area, and mangoes. L.S.S. O'Malley in the Darbhanga district Gazetteer of 1907 while commenting upon the uncultivated lands of the district Darbhanga observed" it amounts to 23 percent of the total area in Madhubani thana where it is due to the large number of mango groves which strew the country;this tract is the stronghold of Brahmanism in Darbhanga and many of the groves have been planted from religious motives".

Transportation and Communication:

The district is connected with the rest of the state with all weather metallic roads which criss crosses the entire region. These roads connect not only towns but its remote villages with the rest of the world. Buses and trucks play major role in the transportation of passengers and commodities. North-Eastern railway line also plays an important role in connecting various parts of the region ending in the boarder town of Jayanagar. From Jayanagar, Nepal Government operated its railway service to Janakpur in Nepal.

While most of the long route transportations are done on these routes, the inter-village and short route transportations are done by bullock carts. Particularly the transportation of goods and commodities from village to towns are done by these bullock carts. They also serve as means for transporting village folks particularly women from one village to the another or to towns. But with the growing number of metallic roads in the villages, rickshaws are replacing these bullock carts for human transportation. Rickshaws save more time than old fashioned and slow bullock carts. Moreover a change in wheels of these bullock carts are observable in the sense that modern rubber tyres are in more use than traditional wooden wheels.

People of this district are constantly on mobile in the various parts of the state and country for search of jobs and
other business opportunities. Particularly the agricultural labourers are preferring for towns for better payments. Earlier they were opting for Calcutta but now majority of them migrate either to Bombay or Delhi. Moreover since the late seventies the job opportunities in the oil rich Gulf Countries have attracted many, particularly Muslims have benefited from it more. This has brought a certain degree of openness in the traditional social structure of the region. The communication provided through the News medias particularly the local newspapers in Urdu and Hindi have played a role in uniting them with the outer world. The radio which is in use in the area since its inception in India are becoming more common and is accessible to all. Television is also making its inroads into the villages but is still restricted to the elites. All these are providing the people of the district, most of whom live in the villages, a window to the outer world, affecting profoundly the entire social system.

**History and culture:**

The north-eastern part of north Bihar previously called Tirhut, is the region of Mithila and the districts of Madhubani and Darbhanga its strongholds. History and culture of the district Madhubani is the history and culture of the region. The division of the region into various administrative units of the districts are recent phenomenon. Particularly the
district of Darbhanga which earlier stretched from the boarders of Nepal in the north to the district of Monghyr in south, Madhubani being a subdivision of this district till 1972 share much in common the history and culture.

Before the Aryan invasion of northern India, Madhubani was inhabited by the aboriginal population known as 'tharus' and 'kiratas'. Kiratas were the people on whom the ancient war epic of Mahabharta throws considerable light. During the Aryan expansion and settlement, they settled into these regions and it became a part of the legendary kingdom of Videhas. The kings Janaks ruled the kingdom and the place associated with the name is Janakpur which now lies in the territory of Nepal just adjacent to the town of Jaynagar in Madhubani district. Many of the villages of the area is associated with the mythological history of the Hindus. They are born of a myth and still cling tightly with those myths, drawing considerable degree of religious sanctity from the population. Lord Rama the king of Ayodhya, as the myth goes, passed through these regions on the way of Janakpur for his marriage with Sita. A village Ahiari in Darbhanga district and Adjacent to the Madhubani is the place where the legendary Ahalya wife of Gautama Rishi remained in form of a statue for centuries because of the curse inflicted upon her by her husband for her sexual indulgence with god Indra. She came to life when Rama visited the ashram of Gautama. Ramayana throws
light on this myth. Similarly 'Pandoul a place near the town of Madhubani is associated with the name of Pandavas who stayed there during their period of exile. Buddhist and Jain sources also throw light on the activities of Lord Buddha and Mahavira in these areas. Mahavira was the son of a Mithila mother. With the rise of the vrijji republic vaisali became their capital. Lichchavis ruled the entire territory of North Bihar and Madhubani was also under their rule. With the foundation of Magadh empire under Bimbisar his son Ajatasatru conquered Lichchavis and the entire region subsequently came under his rule. The region of Mithila was swinging from one hand to the another with the Change in the dynasties. The Nandas, Mauryas, Kushans and Guptas all extended their sway over the territory of Mithila. 10.

"It was under the Guptas that the famous Chinese traveller Fahien visited north Bihar during the region of king chandragupta II and found Buddhism declining. The Gupta renaissance brought in its train the revival of the classical Sanskrit language. The temple at Uchchaith in the district of Darbhanga is foundly associated with Kalidasa though there is nothing positive to show that Kalidasa was a Maithila. The Bhatta Mimam Sakas of Darbhanga played a prominent part in the development of philosophical thought in north Bihar,

Kumarila is also associated with Mithila. Observes Chaudhury in his Gazetteer of Darbhanga.

Nayadeva was perhaps the first ruler of Mithila extending his empire over the Tirhut and Nepal. He founded the dynasty of 'Karnatas' in the end of eleventh century. Famous Tibetan traveller Dharmaswami, a Buddhist monk visited Bihar between 1234 to 1238 A.D. and found Ramasimhadeva of this dynasty ruling. He was patron of several religious and literary works. On the other hand he was fortifying his capital Simaraongarh (now in Nepal) for fear of Muslim invasion. His son Sakrasimha was the strongest ruler of the dynasty. But the general political ferment of India was already changed in his time. Muslims were making their ways from North to the east particularly Bengal. Bakhtiyar Khalji annexed the territory of north Bihar. Narsimhadeva became a tributary of Ghiyasuddin Iwaz (1213-1227) but Sultan Iltutmish sent his son Nasiruddin Mahmud to Bengal and Iwaz was defeated and the region ruled by Karanatas was restored to Narsimhadeva. Under Razia Sultan he asserted his independence but his rebellion was crushed by Tughril Tughan Khan. His son Sakrasimha rebelled against Ala-uddin Khalji and a bloody battle was fought between the forces of Khalji and the Raja's army and Raja was victorious.

in that battle. But he shifted his capital to sakri a few kilometers south of Madhubani. But in another battle Raja was defeated and became the tributary to the Delhi Sultanate. His son Harisimhadeva\(^\text{13}\) was a powerful ruler and helped Bahadur Shah in seizing the Kingdom of Bengal. This ambitious role flouted the authority of Ghiyasuddin Tughlaq who during his eastern campaign of 1323-24 A.D. subdued the Tirhut and Bengal. Harisimhadeva shifted the capital, perhaps for a short while to Harisimhapur near sakri. Harisimhadeva was defeated by Tughlaq forces and he fled to Nepal and in this way the Karanata dynasty of Mithila came to an end.

In 1324 Darbhanga came under the direct rule of Tughlaq and the city was renamed as Tughlaqpur. For a brief interlude Muslims were having direct rule in this region. Haji Shamshuddin Ilyas Khan of Bengal asserted his independence and captured Bengal and Tirhut\(^\text{14}\). He divided the Tirhut into two parts and the southern side was retained by him but in north which nearly comprises new district of Madhubani and some parts of the district Darbhanga was ruled by new rising dynasty of Oinwaras\(^\text{15}\) (1325-1525 A.D.). While Haji Shamshuddin Ilyas founded two towns in the region i.e. Shamshuddinpur (now Samastipur) and Hajipur, Oinwaras shifted their capital to Sugauna near Madhubani town. Bhogiswara, the son of the founder

\(^{13}\) See Chattopadhaya, Sudhakar. 1968. Early History of North India; from the fall of Mauryas to the death of Harsha (200 B.C. - 650 A.D.) Calcutta; Academic Publication.

\(^{14}\) See Chaudhery, R.K. 1962, Early Muslim Invasion of Mithila, Journal of Indian History, August, PP. 397-98.

of the dynasty Kameshwar Thakur was conferred the throne of Mithila by Sultan Piruz Tughlaq. Arsalan Captured the kingdom of Tirhut and the rulers of this dynasty Birasimba and kirtisimha sought the help from Ibrahim shah Sharqur of Jounpur. The famous and the most venerated mystic Mithila poet Vidyapati\(^\text{16}\) accompanied them and helped to get support of Sharquis. Since then the dynasty was changing its allegiance and loyalty of the kings of Bengal, Jaunpur and Delhi. This shifting loyalties were in accordance with their survival. Tributes were paid to the Muslim Kings but the internal managements were left to them. They cultivated sanskritic culture and learnings and the court of Qlnwaras produced some of the greatest scholars of Hinduism. Vidyapati was the most important of them. In the tradition of Jayadeva of Bengal he played an active role and is second to him in popularising Vaishnava cult. The main difference between him and Jayadeva was that the later wrote his erotic poems in Sanskrit and former wrote it in Maithili. Moreover, Jayadeva idealized krishna, his sexual contacts with Radha and Gopis of Mathura. He was male chauvinist. But vidyapati proved to be great feminist and all his erotic poems are full of sweet melodious rythms and is addressed to krishna from the side of Radha his beloved. Still Vidyapati's poetries are sung with great veneration at the Weddings by Mithili Brahmin women.

\(^{16}\) For a detail account of Vidyapati see Archer, W.G. 1963, op. cit.
Ramabhadra was the second last ruler of the Oinware dynasty. He asserted his independence from the Sharquis and developed a friendly relations with Sikandar Lodi. In 1496 A.D. Sikandar Lodi and Allauddin Hussain Shah of Bengal reached an agreement in which Tirhut was retained by Lodis. Mobarak Lohani was the revenue collector of Lodis. Lakshminath Kamsanarayana succeeded Ramabhadra and did not observed the agreed settlement and hence was defeated in a battle by Nasrat Shah in 1527. The dynasty of Oinwaras came to its end.

After this dynasty Tirhut was under the direct rule of Muslim rulers, particularly the Afghans. Sher Shah Sur (1540-1545) made Tirhut as part of his Empire and his son Islam Shah was also ruling the region as some coins of his reign (1544-1555) found in Darbhanga shows. A Brahmin revenue officer popularly called Majlis Khan ruled the area for a brief period. But the Rajputs of village Bhaur in Madhubani established their dynastic rule for short period by acknowledging the sway of Afghans.

The entire north Bihar and particularly Tirhut remained beyond the control of Mughals untill 1574 when Akbar captured the fort of Hajipur. In 1540 Bahadur Badakhshi revolted and captured Tirhut but was defeated by the Mughal Chief Sadiq Khan and was killed. The Mughal Governor of Bengal in order to

17. See Tripathi, R.P. 1960, Rise and Fall of Mughal Empire, Allahabad,
strengthen their control over the region came into alliance with the local Muslims who were already settled in those regions and gave them fresh Jagirs. In this way a large number of Muslim Chiefs settled in these areas permanently. On the other hand Mughal permanently appointed Imperial Faujdars or military Governors of Sarkar Tirhut at Darbhanga. This brought a certain degree of normalcy in the region but still a vast body of Afghan Soldiers were present in this area and were permanent source of rebellions in Tirhut and Bengal.

During the reign of Akbar, Mahamahopadhyya Mahesh Thakur obtained the territory of Mithila by the Emperor and founded the dynasty called Khandwalas. This dynasty later was called Darbhanga Raj. The capital of this dynasty was in Bhawara, now southern part of Madhubani town. The rulers of this dynasty gave their loyalty to the Mughals and were tributary under control of the Imperial Faujdars. After the wanning away of Mughal power during the reign of Muhammad Shah (1719-1746) one of the ruler of this dynasty Raghava Simha asserted his independence. But Alivardi Khan of Bengal brought him under his control and conferred upon him the Title of Raja and appointed Nawab Ahmad Khan as Faujdar of Tirhut in 1741. Alivardi's son-in-law Zainuddin Ahmad Khan was placed at Bhawara to look after the managements of Tirhut.

These were the days of uncertainty. Marathas, Britishers and sikhs were fighting for a bid of supremacy while power of
Mughal Empire was declining day by day. There grew a number of local ambitious chiefs acting as power brokers engaged in conspiracy, murder and intrigues. Darbhanga Afghans played a crucial role and influenced the course of the happenings in the history of North Bihar and Bengal. Allivardi Khan took their help in crushing the rebellions of local chieftains but Darbhanga Afghans were ambitious enough to play more important role in the developing political scene of India. They began to intrigue with the Marathas against Alivardi. Mustafa Khan, the Chief of Darbhanga Afghans rebelled and brutally murdered Haibatjang the Governor of Bihar and the son-in-law of Alivardi in 1745. Marathas joined them and sacked the city of Patna. Alivardi himself led the army and defeated them, killed the leaders and brought peace to the region.

Khandwala dynasty was ruling the Tirhut. Narendra Simha supported Alivardi against the rebellious Afghans. His successor, Pratapa Simha shifted his capital from Bhawara to Jhanjharpur another town in Madhubani district. His successor Madhavasimha shifted finally to Darbhanga. In 1807 Darbhanga Raj was conferred upon Raja Madhavasimha and his successor Chatra Simha was honoured with the title of 'Maharaja' by Lord Minto for his support to the British government in the Nepal war. Finally with the abolition of Zamindari in independent India, with the death of Kameshwar Simha in 1962 the Darbhanga Raj came to an end.
These historical accounts may give a brief idea about the historical development which the region experienced politically down the ages. More than that it is also to illustrate the interaction between the Hindus and Muslims of the region. The political course has strong influence upon the attitude of the community towards each other. As we have witnessed in the history that the internal affairs were exclusively retained by the Rajas of the region who were great cultivators of Hindu religious learnings and literary traditions. In their courts poetry and learnings were honoured alone and poets and philosophers lived under their patronage in great affluence and luxuries. Moreover the Rajas of Mithila were personally practicing traditional Hindus than anything else. All around their palaces, are scattered the temple devoted to one god or another, stand looking directly into the lotus ponds. In the Raj area of Darbhanga or the remains of their capital in Bhawara and the new constructions in Rajnagar in Madhubani district ruined by earthquake, one can look and sense the predominant Hindu traditions at brilliant display. These were the artifacts of the rulers and aristocracy. C.J. Stevenson Moore in his settlement report wrote "The priority and the intellectual aristocracy was so predominant that it set itself to suppress any attempt at social and mental emancipation outside its pale; and it was able to attain its object so effectually that at the present day it is in this same ancient centre of learning that ignorant fanaticism
is most rampant and religious susceptibilities most inflamable, that the state of the lower classes is most degradad and most depressed and that the proportion of the illiterate is the greatest". This may be the experience of a British Civil servant and what he had experienced and viewed as religious fanaticism may be a dimension interlocked with the totality and exclusivity of the unique culture of Mithila. The exclusiveness of the Mithila culture is much related with the geographical situation and the climatic condition of the region. The rulers came, made an alliance with and gone, but the inner side of the region left unhampered. Their tradition in its all uniqueness and with all its ramifications, is continuous till date. Being a traditional Hindu society, Brahmins who are numerically strong and religiously privileged, dominate the socio-cultural life of the region. Their Hindu religion determine much of the life of the Hindus irrespective of caste. To a greater degree untouchability is still prevalent. Villages dominated by the Hindus reflect Hindu social system alive and vibrant. Their custom and manners are guided by the tradition. The 'Bride-groom fair' of Saurath mela in Madhubani district, held annually during marriage 'lagan' usually in the month of May are the occasions to fix the marriages among Maithil Brahmins according to the horoscopes. Even the educated and so-called modern Maithil Brahmins never violate these rules. The folk lores, customs and manners of the villagers has stemmed
from the local landscape and has strong bearing upon the attitudes and perceptions of the people and their culture is the unique culture of Mithila. The traditional styles are seen even in the foods and dresses.

**Muslims: their settlement and response:**

In the wake of the living and vibrant tradition and culture of Mithila, down the centuries, Muslims came and settled in the region. Though, traditionally held that Muslims largely settled around the towns of Darbhanga and Samastipur but there are genuine evidences to show that Muslims also settled in the remotest parts of the region with the every first encounter of the Muslim rulers. Most of the early settlers were from foreign extraction but the volume of the population speaks of greater number of conversions. Francis Buchanan in his account of the District of Bihar and Patna in 1811-12 wrote, "Converts are occasionally made from the pagans, especially by the purchase of slaves, who are treated with great kindness, as I have before mentioned; but this operation is now going on much more slowly than formerly, when the Moslems possessed the government and an enormous income, a great part of which was dissipated on the means of propagating their faith. Still however, there is reason to think, that within these 20 years a considerable increase in the number of the faithful has taken place." His observation, perhaps, can

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be held true for the region of Mithila, too.

More than by the purchase of slaves or anything like that, the local conversions were more responsible for the population of the Muslims in the area. The role of the wandering sufis, as many tombs indicate gives a pattern of conversion similar to that of the other places. But while the upper strata from the foreign extraction remained to a large extent exclusive to the local culture, the lower strata retained more of their previous customs and traditions. On the other hand the fact is undeniable that the upper strata were influenced to a certain degree by the local environments particularly in the matter of foods and dresses. They also assimilated some of the customs and beliefs derived from the locality. As the agriculture was the basis of the economy and the region fell into 'ryotwari' system they were permanently settled into the villages; agriculture not only became a means for subsistence but also a way of life. Hence while Muslims were able to keep themselves exclusive to the Mithila culture, the compulsion of the economy brought them together with the Hindus and they shared, an attitude and culture to a certain degree in common. But, by and large, Muslims of all strata remained exclusively distinct from the Mithila culture. The exposure to the outerworld and the interactions with the religious personage and education helped to remain them distinct. Time and often we find revival of the Islamic norms. Chaudhury in his Gazetteer of Darbhanga observes,
"It is remarkable that even where there are a few Muslim families, they have small mosques". The small maktabs imparting the religious education to the children in the villages, some madrasas in the towns, though established in the later part of nineteenth century, gives a picture of religious consciousness of the Muslims. Moreover these religious consciousness may be attributed to the compulsion of the dominant cultural environments. The people of the region, Hindus and Muslims both appear to be compromising. Particularly the Hindus who were a little bit too liberal or better say they cultivated an attitude of non-violence and mutual survival. This gave Muslims an encouragement to pursue their own culture and tradition. Hindu-Muslim relations in the region was always friendly. Each experience a homely environment with the another. Since centuries this mutual interaction has given the two communities an environment of trust and certainty. Irrespective of some skirmishes, the area never saw communal flare ups as witnessed by other parts of northern India. As little migration took place, the effect of partition of the country was not significant enough. Sharing with other Indian Muslims they sensed a Psychological shock but physically they remained secure.

At the village level, each villages are dominated exclusively by the either community. Muslims out of economic necessity enter into the jajmani arrangements and take the
services of the Hindu service castes much in the same manner as local Hindus do. But these services are restricted to the economic spheres. Religious and cultural spheres are exclusive domains of Muslim groups. The occupational specialization and monopoly of particular Muslim ethnic groups may give an idea of caste like tendencies but the pattern of social interaction, not only in religious places but also in day to day affairs, negate its existence. Instead some criteria endemic to the Muslims ethic regulate their social inter-course.

Francis Buchanan in his account of district Purnea in 1809-1810', One a part of the territory under Khandwala dynasty of Mithila, Observes, "In this district, especially where the proportion of Hindus is greatest, the doctrine of caste has gained a complete practical ascendency over the Moslems and has occasioned a vast number of sub-divisions, the members of which do not intermarry, and often will not eat in company. Men of rank and education laugh at this absurdity, and where the Moslems are most numerous, there are many fewer distinctions, and the number excluded from general communion is small, and is chiefly confined to those of professions that are reckoned low and dishonourable"^20^.

Madhubani not very far away from Purnea also reflect the similar style. The villages where Muslims dominate in numbers and hold the economy, reflect a pattern of distinctiveness, exclusiveness sharing much in common with the Muslims in general. They cherish the traditional values which are commonly held to be Islamic. But on the contrary, Muslims in the Hindu dominated villages respond more to the local beliefs and customs and they are looked down by other Muslims as 'Hinduized'.

But in recent years changes are observable. Modern and Islamic forces are penetrating deep down the villages influencing profoundly the traditional systems. On the other hand the rising sentiments of Hindu Unity and their attempt for cultural homogenization has brought many Hindus closer to the communal organizations and the Hindu chauvinistic ideologies are penetrating the villages replacing the old idea of folk tolerances. Muslims' response to these rising national and local tendencies and the sense of cultural and physical threat arising from them are forcing them to Islamize themselves more vigorously than before discarding the older practices. Any symbol, custom, belief and practices, if identified as carrying Hindu elements, reforms are made in those spheres. For instance, the upper strata of Muslims occasionally used the traditional Hindu dress of the region; 'dhoti' and 'kurta' and the lower strata generally used this
dress. Now the upper strata has totally left the use of this
dress and it is being abandoned by the lowers too. On the
other hand the 'lungi' a dress long associated with the
Muslims are now commonly used by the Hindu.

The abandonment of the Hindu dress by the Muslims
can also be attributed to the modern forces. Western style
pants and shifts are replacing the old traditional dresses.
The modern forces are making more impact upon their life styles
and cultural ethos. As the education is spreading in the lower
Muslim ethnic groups they are too, responding to the Islamic
and modern forces. There is an obvious change in their
perceptions and attitudes. A sense of being Muslim sharing
with the world community of Muslims— the Ummah and occupying
a status of minority in India is pervading their attitudes.
Any discussion with them carry these references. Simultane­
ously with the Islamization processes the compulsion of
survival in the dominant Hindu environment has forced them
to reconcile with the Hindus. In this sense they are strugg­
ling hard to project their identity as distinct from the
local Hindu environment. But also they are advocating for a
composite and tolerant culture as they were observing down
the centuries. The old generation Hindus has no difficulty
to accept this proposition. But the Hindu youth contaminated
with the communal hated ideologized and propagated by
communal organizations are showing a certain degree of into­
lerance. The various 'senas' and 'rathyatras' from the locality
of Muslims are irritating them but a point of conflict has
never reached.
CHAPTER - V
UNIT OF THE STUDY: MALMAL

One can catch a bus from Madhubani town destined to go either to Jaynagar town or Basopatti; a small township, and after half an hour drive he can reach to Kalwahi chowk - a junction of four directional roads on Darbhanga-Jaynagar highway. In the north direction the road goes towards Jaynagar, in the east to Khajauli, in the north-west to Basopatti and in the south to Madhubani and the rest of the state. If the destination of the bus is for Jaynagar, one can leave the bus at this stop and catch a rickshaw and proceed in the north-west direction, barely one kilometer away the boundary of the village begins. In case of the bus going for Basopatti one can continue the journey and step down at the village stop.

Crossing the iron bridge over the off-shoot of the river Giwachch, a satellite hamlet of the village Malmal comprising its administrative rather than social unit, begins. Looming in the background is white washed 'Idgah' (place for Id prayers) with its high walls and symbolic small minarets. Scattered around are rice fields and mango groves. Few hundred meters away, on the west side of the road is a timber workshop, crossing it over is a small mosque, a huge banyan tree stands opposite to the mosque on the eastern side of the road. From under the Banyan tree passes the dusty village road. Walking along the dusty road, one passes through the thickly
MALMAL VILLAGE

AREA
6.28 Sq. Mile

Fig. 3
populated residential area of the village, houses tightly crammed together. As the road bends towards more inner side of the village, one encounters yet another mosque bigger than the earlier one. Few meters walking east-ward on the road one comes across a tri-junction. On the southern side the road comes to a sudden end in front of a big pond. While walking in the north ward direction one passes through big concrete houses facing each other on the both sides of the road. Crossing some hundred meters, one reaches to the another pond in the centre of the population. The three sides of the ponds are marked by the approach roads and the residential houses stand by the side of the roads looking down into the pond. At the north-eastern corner of the pond is a cross road called 'chawk'. The chawk is the public area, constituting the 'profane' side of the existence of the villagers with its tea shops, Medical and general stores.

On the western side of the pond is the area of "sacred". Standing in the middle is the "Grand Mosque" (Jaama Masjid). On the right of the mosque is "Musafir Khana" and on the left is 'Madarsa'. Adjacent to the Madarsa on the southern side is the 'Grave Yard'. Infront of the Mosque is an enormous tree spreading its branches over the south-west corner of the pond and the south-east corner of the Mosque's courtyard. The area which marks the sacred realm of the existence is the highest plain of the village. Four feet below the Musafir Khana
crosses the approach road of three meters width. On the other side of the approach road is an open space at the similar height. It is the very place where first settlement of the village took place.

**A Glimpse of the village History:**

Though the village Malmal has no specific written record of its history. But the village elders have some knowledge about the history of the village which has come to them from their ancestors told generation to the generation. The elders' version along with some another village's account and cross checking it with yet another historical accounts of some other locality and finally verifying it with the recorded history of the area gives a picture however vague, but reliable to the large extent.

Malmal was founded by Abdul Haleem in the later part of the fourteenth century. When Haji Shamshuddin Ilyas Khan of Bengal asserted his independence and invaded the Tirhut and captured some of the parts of now Madhubani district, Abdul Haleem was accompanying him. When the town of Hajipur was founded, Haji Shamshuddin Ilyas desired from some of his companions to settle in the region. In this way Abdul Haleem came and settled here with a zamindari of seven villages. There is a myth associated with his settlement. According to this myth when he came first and was planning to settle, he
met a Muslim 'faqir' who was here for his meditations. He asked faqir's favour and his guidance in selecting the site for his residence. Faquir pointed out some area few kilometers away from the actual place of the settlement. He made a house there. It was the rainy season and in the morning when he again visited the unfinished house, he saw the impression of a jackal's or fox's paws. He told the event to the faqir who advised him to abandon the place and selected another site for his residence. This time, in the process of building his house he saw the impression of a tiger's paw. The faqir told him the place is lucky for him. And he settled there.

Viewing the present population of the shaikhs and other Muslim ethnic groups in the village, the date of the settlement does not seems exaggeration. But the genealogical charts which they have to offer does not go such deep. According to them, the actual genealogical chart is non-existant. In past many such charts were compiled but repeatedly destroyed by the yearly incidence of the fire in the village which had been a normal feature of the village till two decades ago. Moreover, this date is valid in the context of the history of another village in their relation situated in some eight kilometers south-east of the village. That village is named Dostpur, and was founded in the reign of Akbar in sixteenth century. But there presence in the area is since the period of Tughlaq's. Earlier they were settled
in the village of Harsingpur (originally Harisinghapur) some ten miles away from the township of Sakri. This Harisingpur was once the capital of Harisimbadeva, the last ruler of 'Karanata' dynasty of Mithila. In his reign, as the myth goes, the famous Muslim saint Sharfuddin Yahya Maneri, came to Harsingpur and needed a place for his meditation. But the Raja Harisimhadeva who was fighting the Tughlaq forces denied him a place. "This 'Malachcha' must be banished" ordered the Raja. Soon after leaving his place, the son of the Raja got a pain in his stomach and was about to die. Rani, the wife of the Raja, came to know the incidence and demanded saint's return. She asked him to cure her child and her son recovered. Raja Harisimhadeva out of gratitude granted him lands which the saint gave to his sister's son.

During Sher Shah's venture, they supported him but with the Mughal's return to the power they were in constant harassing situation. Some Mughal military personal developed a feud and a brief fight took place and they fled from Harsingpur. Some of them settled in Sakri and some came to the village Dostpur. The particular branch of them are still settled in Sakri and belong to the Shaikh category, also verify this account. Though they have now no relation with the each other but they talk about each other in affectionate terms. The genealogical chart provided by the shaikhs of
Dostpur goes such deep. Moreover, a grant made by Abur-Rahim Khan Khanan, the famous courtier of Akbar is still with them. I saw the 'farman' personally. This account of the settlement of Muslims in the area testifies the historical account of the settlement of the village Malmal.

Gradually they entered into the marriage alliances with some other Muslims of the area belonging to the Shaikh categories and subsequently developed into the distinct beraderi of endogamous Shaikhs scattered into some thirteen villages and are popularly referred into the locality as "Tergharya Shaikhs' or 'Shaikhs of thirteen houses".

The memory of village's past is much alive in the consciousness of the village's since the mid-nineteenth century. Since then the village has experienced the currents of the external world and the activities and behaviour of the external world and the activities and behaviour of the Muslims of the village in general and of the Shaikhs in particular, have been shaped and formed during the period with the reference to those events. The turning point in the life and attitude of the Muslims of the village can be attributed to the foundation of the village 'Madrasa' named as "Madarsa Chashma-e-Faiz" in 1853. Before that the Muslims were living in the local styles responding to the local version of Islamic faith partly guided by the traditional and partly by the popular beliefs. The customs and traditions
were the basis of their religion derived from the local environment. Such were the zeal for customary practices that an event of domestic animal's pregnancy were celebrated as an occasion.

In the village there was a lower primary school run by the Darbhanga Raj. Abdul Bari a pious and sufi type, a native of Machlishahar was appointed as head Maulvi in that school. His Islamic personality and 'taqwa' was an ideal for the villagers. Along with the teaching in the school he privately taught Muslim children of the village. Once an Inspector of schools was to visit and sent his program in advance to Maulvi Sahab. He was waiting for him till noon but when the inspector failed to reach the school, he went for Nemaz-e-Zuhar (noon prayer). During his absence for prayer inspector reached and found him guilty for not being at the campus of school during his duty hours. When Maulvi Abdul Bari reached the school, this point was made to him by the visiting inspector and he argued for his absence. In the process Maulvi Abdul Bari refused to compromise in the matter of religion and he resigned. He selected a place next to the Mosque and told the villagers that the soil of the place has a smell of 'Ilm' (knowledge). In this way he established the Madrasa. This brought a thorough formal religious education and hence begun a new chapter in the villager's life.
The imparting of the religious education brought them into contact with the orthodox tradition. Moreover a new zeal for the education developed into the families of land holders. Those who could have afforded to send their children to the cities, sent them for religious education. Maulvi Noorul Hoda was the first man who came to get education in the famous Islamic school of Deoband. From the various tales which are still alive in the villagers' mind, we get a picture of tension and conflict between the syncretistic local customary versions and orthodox traditions. When he with another youngman from the village Dostpur cameback from Deoband, both of them started a campaign against and came heavely on the syncretistic elements in the practices of the Muslims of the village. They criticised and practically violated those traditions which were a norm sacro sanct for the villagers. By applying the culture of higher tradition they also started to refine the rustic culture of the Shaikhs of the village and beraderi. Such were the power of their argument that in Juma sermon Maulvi Noorul Hoda showed the villagers, that existence of God can be proved and denied. In short, he showed them the power of knowledge (Ilm) and villagers still memorize him as great Aalim.

Maulvi Nurul Hoda was also an associate of famous congress leader Maulana Abul Kalam Azad. With Azad he was
associated with freedom struggle of India and assisted him in the publication of famous urdu magazine "Al-Hilal". It is famous that when he was in Calcutta, he went to the court of Nawab of Dacca where he lectured on Urdu literature. Famous Urdu writer and Historian Allama Shibli Naumani was present in the court and he was so pleased with his style of presentation that he embraced him.

He was a living guide for the villagers, but unfortunately he died premature. The religious and secular education started taking its roots in the village and Beraderi. In the second decade of this century we find many students of this Beraderi taking education in Patna University, Nadwatul Ulama (Lucknow) and in many other madrasas of U.P. Sanfi Ahmad from another village in their relation 'Ekhatta' went to London and obtained a degree in law and became an active congress man. After independence in the first elected government of Bihar he became a minister. These developments helped to create a degree of openness in the traditional forms of society. The three decades from twenties to forties of this century had been the periods of great activity in the history of the subcontinent. The village was also exposed to those events. We find in villagers account how the educated youths coming from the various places brought with them the stories of the national events. The famous 'khilafat' movement which stirred the nation also
stirred the villagers with the similar strength. Moreover the informations brought by the pilgrims returning from Mecca made them aware of the happenings in the Islamic heartland. In Khilafat movement the villager's along with the Muslims of the area travelled far and wide and collected large sum from the generous donations made by their relatives in the village and other villages in their relations. Similarly the call of Gandhi was responded and the late father of present Mukhiya of the village got a nickname of "Mahatama" because of his full fledged participation in Gandhian movements.

The religious and secular education which was gradually spreading into the village resulted into the movement of social reforms. Sensing the malaise of the community and women as Chief vehicle for the cure, they founded an organization for them as "Anjuman-e-Niswan". The purpose of this organization was social reform - to make women aware of and educate them to an extent of reading and writing. This brought into them a cultural florescence never witnessed before in the locality. Still the culture associated with the Malmalis are an envy to the other Muslims of their beraderi and the locality.

The period of great literary events began in the village. The literary and cultural activities were patronized
by the riches. In summer particularly in the month of June, the season of mangoes, were the occasion when the people living in the cities in distant parts of the country used to return to the village. The presence of all gave the villagers an opportunity to cherish the literary and cultural activities. The impulse generated by education and the external exposure were cultivated. 'Mushayras' were organized, literary and cultural debates were carried out and the broader reference of these debates were religion, politics, education and reform. The library in the premises of Madrasa was established in early twenties of this century and was in full bloom in late thirties. A magazine "Rahbar" - the guide, was circulated hand written and carbon copied with a subscription rate of four 'annas' per month. This magazine was widely circulated not only in the village but other villages too. I personally saw many volumes of 'Rahbar' and one collection of poetries - proceedings of a Mushyera which was published as "Guldasta-e-Adab". Going through the content of Rahbar one can contemplate the degree of awareness of the contributors, all from the Malmal. The topic covered ranged from the analysis of political events of those periods to the religious matters and health and hygiene. Particularly the presidential address of the Anjuman-e-Niswan reveals a high degree of social awareness written in Chaste Urdu. Analysis of Social problems were done in the light of Islam.
Total effort were directed towards making aware the people about what their religion prescribes and demands and what they are practicing.

The poetic tradition in village took its own form under the leadership of Maulvi Aquil Ahmad 'Aaqil Malmali'. He was educated in Jaunpur and was a friend of famous Urdu poet Shafeeq Jaunpuri. Aaqil Malmali was a sufi poet in his own right, a figure whose piety and generosity were taken in high esteem by all. His younger brother Maulvi Hafeez Ahmad "Hafiz Malmali" was educated and lived in Partapgarh and developed friendship with yet another famous Urdu poet Nazish Partapgarhi. Both of these poets along with many other Urdu poets of India fame have visited the village on the occasions of Mushyera. The struggle through which Urdu language herself was going in those periods can be seen in the poetries of the village. A transformation from the concept of "Literature for the sake of Literature" to the "Literature for Life" are clearly manifested in those poetries. Moreover the fluctuating fortune of the region with its all natural claimities and the swinging political fortune of the Muslims of Indian subcontinent were envisaged in these poetries. The chief exponent of this theme was Aafaq "Pareshan Malmali". He wrote his poetries though in Urdu but the terms, analogies and imageries were totally derived from the locality and were put into the best tradition of humour. His satirical poetries are still famous.
These literary traditions which were taking its course in the village prepared the ground for a culture of more developed form to take its roots. On the other hand the language were gradually Islamized by these literary movements. This also brought a consciousness into the minds of the Muslims of the village and the turmoil which the country experienced added much fuel to the process of identifying, knowing and behaving like a Muslim. This brought a degree of distinctiveness to the community in the village.

The village was first, as we have seen earlier, experienced sufiistic mould of Islamic tradition then to the orthodox conservative tradition steing directly from Deoband and afterwards from the moderate tradition of Nadwat-ul-Ulama. In the early years of 1940's some fundamentalist organizations were emerging on the National scene. In 1942 Jamat-e-Islami was founded. In that very year Hakim Zahoor Ahmad became the member of that organization. He was son-in-law of Maulvi Noorul Hoda and was educated from Lucknow. This dimension brought new style of fundamentalist tradition in the village.

In the subsequent years of independence, we find in the village a sizeable number of people educated from Universities and religious institutions. Many of them were in Government jobs. This also brought a certain degree of relief to many families of the village, who till then, were
totally dependent upon the lands. And agriculture was, as it is, at the mercy of the nature alone. In the post-Independence, few families migrated from the village. In the beginning, as the village elders told me, they were thinking to migrate to East Pakistan (now Bangladesh). But since they did not experienced any physical threat from the local Hindus and the constitutional provisions giving equal rights to the both communities left them with their desired option to stay at home.

Since then village has developed considerably in physical and material spheres. Particularly the growing population, the mushrooming hamlets, the in-flow of money from outside earned by its members is totally changing the complexion of society which was few decades earlier. Elers, remembering those good old days become sad and look on the current generation benignly though hopefully. But on their own part, the adjustment seems to them difficult and they thank God for those colleagues and their elders who are no longer to see these harsh times and undesired changes.

The Physical Setting of the Village:

The location of the village

The village Malmal is situated at a distance of fifteen miles in north-west from the Madhubani town and eight miles in south-west from the Jayanagar town. The village is under Khajauli Block which is some fifteen miles
away to the south-east of the village. An all weather metallic road passes through the village connecting it with Basopatti in north and K lwahi chank in south. Regular bus service plays between Darbhanga - Basopatti crosses through Malmal. Though Buses stop in the village and run with a regular frequency but when going to some distant parts of the state like Patna, people prefer to take the Bus from Kalwahi Chowk where Buses run on the highway connecting Jaynagar town at the Indo-Nepal border with the rest of the state. There is no railway station in near vicinity. People can catch a train either in Jaynagar or Madhubani, but they prefer to catch it a Darbhanga.

Viewing from this perspective Malmal is by no means an isolated and segmented. Constituting a self sufficient unit. Much of the economic activities are related to the border economic structure of the region and country. Villagers regularly visit the markets in the nearby towns of Jaynagar, Madhubani and Darbhanga. Mudhubani and Jayanagar are nearer towns and can be reached easily, but people prefer more Darbhanga town because of its big market where everything can be purchased and sold. Especially Darbhanga Medical College Hospital is the main factor for their constant visit. They go either for medical checkups, or visit the relatives who are admitted or they have settled there. Because of close knit ties, an illness in the village can give an opportunity to everyone to visit. Madhubani town is largely visited by the villagers for the purpose of administrative and court affairs.
Apart from these towns, Kalwahi Chawk offer a small market place where normally villagers go in the evening. Some of them have their own shops there. Moreover the village holds bi-weekly village market called "Heat" where necessary items for consumptions are bought, particularly meats are main attraction, otherwise every item are sold in the village shops. Some of the imported goods illegally smuggled from Nepal can also be bought in those shops.

The Plan of the village:

The village Malmal has an area of 4022 acres with a population of 10917. The settlement pattern of the village is of nucleated type. The residential area is marked by houses tightly crammed together. These clusters of houses are divided into many distinct units called 'tolas' though hard to be identified by a stranger but clearly identified by the villagers. All around these settlement areas are scattered rice fields and mango groves with some new hamlets situated far away from the main residential areas. These hamlets which stand amidst the fields though constitute the administrative unit of the village in the sense that they are an integral part of the village panchayat but they have less participation, almost negligible in the social life of the village. These mushrooming hamlets are out of the pressure of the population and those who do not find enough place in the main residential area of the village are opting for separate
settlements outside the village. In this process the village is losing its configuration long derived from the traditional in eractional pattern of the village.

Apart from these hamlets, main residential area of the village is divided into some seventeen 'tolas' or hamlets. The centre of these 'tolas' is the oldest area where first settlement took place; called 'Got'. The immediate settlement in the four directions from this area bears the directional names i.e. North, South, East and West tolas. These five hamlets which is the concentration of Muslim population particularly of shaikhs are the real unit of our study. Other than these five tolas are Gileshan tola, Chandpur, Dhunya toli, Faqir toli, Hajam toli, Mushar toli, Babhan toli, Tatam toli, Dusada toli, Telyani, Goar toli, and Halwai toli. Out of these seventeen hamlets ten are dominated by Muslims and seven by the Hindus.

In addition to these hamlets which are the main settlement areas, another hamlet nearly half kilometer away in the south of the village is called 'Khatbyya tola'. While in north some more hamlets have come into existence but till the finishing of my field survey they were not given any name; Islampur was the suggestive name. Khatbyya tola is exclusively Hindu lower caste hamlet while in the north the hamlets are Muslim dominated.
The village has six mosques including the Grand Mosque (Jama Masjid) which is situated in the middle of the population. While another five are located in the north and south tolas one each and two in the East tola and a new small mosque is at the outskirts from where one enters the village. Similarly village has six Madarsas including the main Madarsa "Chashma-e-Faiz" adjacent to the Grand Mosque. Madarsa Chashma-e-Faiz imparts religious education along with the secular curriculum up to fifth standard and a special course of 'Hifz' (memorizing Quran). While other five madarsas impart the beginner courses in Quran and Urdu. Two among them are run by Madarsa Board of the State of Bihar to the extent of paying the teachers a salary. One among them is for girls. In past it had functioned well but now the fake rolls are maintained and madarsa seldom functions. The other three madrasas are maintained by the locality in which they are situated and are a result of growing population and to an extent a repulsion and antagonism of ethnic dominance and politics in the Madarsa Chashma-e-Faiz.

Besides those madarsas village has four schools. Three of them are up to lower-primary level and one is up to eighth standard. All of these schools are maintained by the Government. Village has also one Post office with two staffs of postal and telegraph department recruited from the village. Both of them are Shaikhs. The post office does function from
a rental room of Post Master's own house. It is also connected with a telephone line, seldom in order, "Central Bank" of India has opened a branch in the village in 1987 on the metallic road which passes through the village connecting Kalwahi and Basopatti. Village was electrified in 1978 but the number of people benefitting from it has remained small. It is largely due to the shortage of power which is a normal feature of entire north Bihar. In view of the discrepancy in the power supply, the villagers do not find it feasible to take the electricity connections and pay the meter charges for no purpose. Many of them who in the initial years took the connections have now disconnected it. For this reason the rice and flour mills and the tube wells are operated by diesel engine sets rather than electricity. A large number of shops at the village bus stop are electrified by personal electric generators.

A normal feature of Indian development is its stress on quantitative achievements rather than the qualitative works. The villagers have more sense of this limping dimension of the development and are quite pessimistic about the new plan initiated by the government in the village for the running water supply. It is in the process and supply pipelines are piled up on the roads of the village but the villagers are quite sceptical about the advantage which it will bring to the village. Moreover they are worried about the undesired
taxas which these development will bring to them.

The People

The entire population of 10917 people have a sex proportion of 5451 males and 5466 females. There are 1449 households in the village. Each household normally includes three generations of lineal relatives. But in some cases it constitute single person mostly the childless widows. Normally each household has its separate house. Sometimes close kins live in different houses facing each other with common space between them called "Aangan".

Houses in the village are of many types ranging from simple mud walled with thatched roofs to the walls of fire baked bricks with tiled roofs and the concrete modern structures. The types of the houses are associated with the economic position of a person and group. For instance lower Hindu caste groups or lower Muslim ethnic groups have generally houses made of mud walled or grass walls with thatched roofs or tiled roofs. A mud walled house with tiled roofs may make them distinguishable not only among themselves but also in the village. On the other hand the upper groups normally live in the brick walled and tiled roofed houses. Though exceptions are there, but normally the demand of the status compel them to build a house looking respectable and confirming their ethnic status, no matter if personal purse exhaust in that
endeavour. Some of the new houses are built by the modern materials and architecture. Making houses out of modern materials and designs is gripping the villagers to the degree of obsession. The internal plan of the houses are not very different from the general pattern of northern India. An especial feature with the houses of Muslims particularly the upper groups are their inward looking styles. Whether they are covered with high walls or not, but stranger will have no opportunity to look inside. These styles are because of keeping in purdah to their women.

Hindus and Muslims constitute the two religious communities of the village. Muslims comprise 52.5 per cent of the total population and the rest are Hindus i.e. 47.5 per cent. Muslims are differentiated into nine different ethnic groups while Hindus are represented by eleven different castes. Though all these groups live in separate dwelling areas as it is obvious from the names of different hamlets but with the growing population this exclusive caste character in the pattern of residence is evaporating. Hindus and Muslims live in separate areas and their pattern of village interaction is limited to the economic sphere of social life. Particularly Hindus are more exclusive in nature because they need services of the Hindu castes alone. But in a traditional rural society of India, Muslims take the service of Hindu Castes and on the
other hand in other matters of social life they also take the services of occupationally specialized Muslim ethnic groups. Though many of those Muslim occupational groups are now no more in their tradition occupation but Hindus still stick much to their traditional occupations. Moreover, since the bulk of the Hindus are of lower service castes, so they provide the labour force for agricultural purposes for both Hindu and Muslim land holders. But Muslim lower ethnic groups are exclusively bound with the Muslims in patron-client relationships.

Brahmins are the highest Hindu caste in the village. All of them are the Maithil Brahmins and share with them the culture and the language. Next to them are Yadavs or popularly called Gwallas'. Their traditional occupation were selling of milks and milk products. After Gwalas, in the hierarchy of caste are Tatmas (originally Tantis or Tatwa). Both of these castes are backward castes. The remaining eight castes are in the category of Scheduled Castes.

Among Muslims Shaikhs outnumber not only other Muslim ethnic groups, but also they dominate the entire village numerically. In the traditional so-called Ashraf Categories they are next to the Sayyeds and in the village they are the dominant ethnic group. All others are subordinate ethnic groups. It is in the consonance with the general pattern of their
settlement in the region as Schwartzberg indicates. He observes,

"... were the Sheikhs Hindu, rather than Muslim, their
dominant position, regionally, would be assured, since no
other group even approaches them in numerical strength. But
as members of a communal minority the Sheikhs presumably find
their strength vitiated, since there is always the risk that
in situations of conflict the otherwise factious Hindu community
would unite against them. Yet, within their own hamlets, villages
or clusters thereof, where they tend to constitute a very large
proportion of the total population, it is probable that they
exercise authority much as they did before Indian independence.
Villages or hamlets tend to be, on the whole, clearly muslim
dominated or clearly Hindu dominated, Muslim villages having
far fewer castes in general than those dominated by Hindus.
The non-Muslim groups who are most commonly found in large
numbers in Sheikh villages are depressed Hindu Castes or tribal
or semi-tribal people, who are, for the most part, petty
cultivators, fisherman, and agricultural labourers*."

Schwartzberg's account perfectly fit into the socio-
economic and political pattern of village Malmal. All other
groups; Hindus and Muslims are dominated by them. Though in
literature on Muslims, Shaikhs are treated as one single

Indian Plains". in Milton Singer and B.S. Cohen (eds)
structure and change in Indian Society. Chicago, Aldine
homogeneous group but in fact it is not so. Rather they are subdivided into many sub-groups of not only Siddiquis, Farooqis, Usmanis and others, but also they constitute separate endogamous groups within one locality. The Shaikhs of village Malmal, though belong to the Siddiqui faction of Shaikhs, but they are United into single endogamous unit in the locality and popularly called "Tergharya Shaikhs". Because of their numerical strength in the village they also dominate in the share of the landed property of the village. As we have noticed earlier that they are more educated, Islamized and culturally sophisticated group in the village even in the locality. Francis Buchanan observed,

"These Shaykhs are in general cultivators, and seem much fonder of the plough than of any other profession. In some parts they have subdivided themselves variously, in others they are all without distinction called Shaykhs. The chief cause of difference seems to have arisen from those who as much as possible imitate the nobler tribes in concealing their women, while others are not at this pains, which to a farmer is always attended with an excessive inconvenience. The former is always attended with an excessive inconvenience. The former kind in different parts, I heard called Darbhanggiya and Bara Sheykhs, the latter were called Chahari and Kulhaiya".

Though Buchanan gave an account of the district of Purnea, but the term Darbanggiya referred by him is related with the Shaikhs migrated from Darbhanga or imitating the style of Shaikhs living in the region of Darbhanga. Almal was also a part of Darbhanga district and from Buchanan's account one can fairly conclude that even in the first decade of nineteenth century, the Shaikhs of these regions were much more Islamized than the others. As we will see in the next chapter that this excess Islamization of this group has helped them to achieve the superior status in the village. A group once accepted as superior by other groups of his community also get due recognition in other community as well. So in this respect Shaikhs of Almal are recognized as superior by the Muslims and Hindus both and equal to the Brahmins in the Brahmin's conception. This equality is not based on any ritualistic considerations but in the secular dimensions they are taken as equals sometimes even superior to the Brahmins.

Superiority lies in their village politics, where Brahmin either remain isolated because of the presence of one strong caste of Yadavs who challenge their superiority not only in the village but also in the state politics of Bihar. So on some occasions both of these caste enter into alliance with the Shaikhs mostly at personal level. Shaikhs usually act on their own. So in this sense looking at the activity of Shaikhs we
will be looking at the entire activity of the village particularly the Muslims. Since our present study is restricted to the Muslims, so we will be focusing more on the Shaikhs, other groups will be referred in their reference.

The second largest Muslim ethnic group is of Mukeris. They claim that they belong to the tribes from Makran (now major part of Makran is in Pakistan and some portion is in Iran). But their claim cannot be proved historically. In the village they occupy next of the Shaikhs in the status hierarchy, but the gap among both the groups are fairly broad. Moreover in the locality they do not occupy any distinguishable positions on the social scale. The group is in almost dark in the literature on the Indian Muslims. So far I have encountered, only Buchanan speaks of this group. He observes, "Although wholesale merchandise among the Moslems is considered an honourable profession, becoming even a Mogul, many petty dealers are considered as very low. I have already mentioned those who deal in fish. In the capital a hundred families (Mukeri) are excluded because they purchase grains in a gough state, which they beat and retail. The contempt following this profession seems to be borrowed from the Hindus".

Though most of them are still engaged in their traditional occupation of selling and buying of grains and owning

3. Ibid. P. 200.
of grocery shops but in the village neither they are excluded nor degraded. Instead they are fairly up at the social ladder. Perhaps it is because of the presence of dominant Shaikh groups in whose reference they have evaluated themselves and adopted more Islamic life styles than they would have done otherwise.

All other ethnic groups though marks some point at the social scale but in general they are treated alike. Persons from among them are treated differently because of their personal qualities. At the lowest rung are Faqirs because of their undesired profession of beggary and butchery. All the lower Hindu Castes and lower Muslim groups refer each other as defined by the village interactional patterns. In this way Muslim groups of lower strata are treated as lower by Hindus and lower Hindu castes as lower by the Muslims. Their position within their own community are taken as granted by the members of either communities. There seems to be no relative evaluation or any contradiction. Instead of segregation in social intercourse, the lower groups are fairly mixed up with each other and all of them share a culture of poverty.

**Organization of the Village Life:**

Traditionally the social structure of Indian village communities have been described from the perspective of their caste relations in the village. (see for instance Dube, 1955, 4, Tube, S.C. 1955. Indian Village, London, Routledge and Kegan Paul Ltd.)
Srinivas 1952\textsuperscript{5}, 1955\textsuperscript{6} and others. Since Muslims are outside of the Hindu fold so in the caste perspective they have remained "both part of and not part of the village\textsuperscript{7}", But this condition of Muslims, as not being a part of the village is largely due to the type of village under study. In a Hindu dominated village where usually Muslim population are negligible, their participation and influence in the social interaction cannot be over expected. But on the other hand a Muslim dominated village can reveal a different pattern. For instance Aggarwal\textsuperscript{8} showed how Muslim Meos not only fit into the village structure but also how they influence the course of life in the village. However Aggarwal's efforts are largely devoted to show the degree of fit of the Meos into the village caste structure. In this sense most of the studies treat caste structure and social structure of an Indian village as two sides of the same coin.

In Malmal where Shaikhs dominate the village life as separate ethnic group and while Muslims and Hindus are nearly equal in their share of the village population, perhaps we cannot expect the entire Muslim population to fit into the

\textsuperscript{5} Srinivas, M.N. 1952, Religion and society among the coorgs of South India, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
\textsuperscript{6} (ed) 1955, India's villages, Bombay, Asia Publishing House.
\textsuperscript{7} Ibid P. 9.
\textsuperscript{8} Aggarwal, Partap C., 1971, Caste, Religion and Power: An Indian Case study, New Delhi, Sri Ram Centre For Industrial Relations.
caste-structure of the village as a single homogeneous caste. Moreover, unlike Meos, Shaikhs are more Islamized and do not consider themselves as 'Caste', but on the other hand the entire Muslim population is also differentiated into many ethnic divisions. In this perspective the village Malmal provides a very complex picture of social interaction. F.G. Bailey remarks, "The traditional system contains one dominant caste which alone has a corporate political existence; the other castes are its dependents and are not politically corporate". In this perspective we would have assumed that Shaikhs being dominant, numerically and economically, should be the only group to exercise authority in the village. But since large number of ethnic groups and Hindu Castes are present in the village with a considerable size of the population there seems to be many levels of decision making process and structure of authority. Moreover, Shaikhs themselves are differentiated within themselves into many layers, so they themselves seldom act as a political corporate group. Here we will be dealing the organization of social life of the village in the perspective of authority and internal regulation mechanism of intra-village interactions.

All the ethnic and caste groups of the village are endogamous hence they prefer to marry within their own groups.

Village endogamy is preferred by the Muslims while Hindus prefer village exogamy. Earlier most of those groups lived in separate areas but with the growing population of the village mixed pattern of residence is emerging in the new settlement areas. Moreover, considering the centuries old settlement of the village, particularly of the Muslims who are the oldest inhabitants of the village, the old residential areas also marks a certain degree of mixed pattern of settlement. So in this sense village does not seems to give any definite plan of caste or group localities except considerably the new locality where consciously particular groups have settled and the areas bear that particular names. It is interesting to note that neither the oldest settlement areas nor the newest hamlets are caste or ethnic wise differentiated in the strict sense of the term. Instead the areas which may be said to be settled during the middle period of the village history is caste and ethnic wise segregated. It may be attributed to the fact that when the dominant group of Shaikhs patterned themselves on the Indian traditional life ways they might had needed the services of lower Hindu castes in the traditional economy of India. So they might have encouraged the Hindu service castes and occupationally specialized ethnic groups to settled into the village.

The family and Khandan:

The basic unit of decision making in the village, as happens to be in other societies too, is the household. The
households are the units where all the decisions concerning compulsion of existence are made. It ranges from economy, marriage, socialization, education down to the religion. Fathers are normally the supreme authority because of the patriarchal nature of the society. But in few cases of uxorilocal residence, mothers exercise an authority equal to, if not more than, a father. For instance, status family of the village are 'Rahmans' and three among them have uxorilocal residences. In those families mothers exercise authority because of their personal possessions of properties which are main source of income to the family.

Next to the household units are 'Khandan' or Family. A 'Khandan' usually refers to the totality of Kinsmen who have their origin from the same ancestor. This bond of kinship runs some six to seven generations deep. All the ethnic and caste groups of the village are divided into such kinship units. Here we will be largely talking about Muslims and especially Shaikhs. In taking some decision affecting the primary unit of the family some of the other families who are immediate blood relatives are also consulted. For example, in a marriage proposal of a son or a daughter, father and mother will first consult their brother and sisters. If the decision is taken in positive, then the entire 'Khandan' will be made.

10. While we will be talking about family with small letter 'f' we mean a 'household', and when it is with capital 'F' it means an aggregate of kinship Unit i.e. 'Khandan'.
known to the decision. Similarly any matter concerning the familial life will be decided within those circles. Sometimes these close circle decisions cross cut the authority and loyalty of the bonds of kinship and khandans. In such cases no harsh measures are taken, rather others reciprocate in the similar manner; by taking decisions without the consultation of entire members of the 'Khandan'. This happens when the kinship ties are more broader and the depth of the lineage are many generations deep. This helps to develop a sense of mistrust among them and becomes a major factor in the development of yet another offshoot of the Khandan which in due course becomes a separate Khandan.

Sometimes the internal feud of the 'Khandan' cuts across the boundaries of Family and involves another khandan. For instance one family member of Rahman Khandan was married into another Khandan of the village i.e. Imams. His elder son was married into their own khandan after many cancellation of the proposals, spread over many years, from the eldest sister to the third sister of the same sibling which materialized into the marriage. In this marriage the elders of Rahman khandan took interest and pleaded his case. But after marriage, due to the notoriety of the mother-in-law the girl found it difficult to adjust. During my stay a feud developed when some boys of the Rahman Family who were cousins to the girl, went to her in law's house and demand her return because of the unbearable
conditions from which she suffers in her in law's house. The in laws along with her husband refused to give her to her cousins. In the heated exchanges the boys made some indecent remarks against her mother-in-law's khandan i.e. Imams. After some hours the matter reached to the Imams and they were offended and hence rushed to the scene and promised their help. They showed the solidarity of their Khanaan by which they stand. In due course the news spread in the village and the people expected a conflict. By some means conflict was avoided, but the elders of Imam Family made it known to the elders of Rahman Khandan that they have not taken the matter kindly. On the part of the elders of Rahmans it was argued that since no senior member of them was involved, so it may be taken otherwise because of the immaturity of the boys who created such a situation. Few months after this incidence when many of the Rahman elders were present on some occasion, the matter was put before them in a meeting. They resented the involvement of Imams. Though they condemned the incident and the acts of boys involved in that incidence, but the role of the girl's in laws were condemned because of their seeking help from the outsiders.

The village conflict and hostilities swing between Rahmans and Imams. Whatever the issue, both of them take opposite stands. Usually Imams oppose every activity of Rahmans
and many other Khandans among Shaikhs side with them. It is largely due to the jealousy which they have because of Rahman's pre-eminent status. If we are allowed to talk in some different idiom and conceive the village life in Hindu world-view then Rahmans would appear the Brahmins and Imams as Kshtriyas of the village Universe. Rahmans' status are preeminent because of their educational, and economic achievements accompanied by Islamized life styles and sophisticated culture. They are taken in high esteem by the villagers. So they are very susceptible to the criticism and an error by them can expose them to a host of critical sarcasms of their opponents. On the other hand Imams lack in these spheres and exhibit a crude behaviour. They use all legal and illegal tricks in their day-to-day activities and hence their positions are not taken as sacrosact by the villagers. But they are recognized by them because of their this trickery and use of muscle power. Moreover, the both elected heads of village Panchyat are from this Khandan. Recently, when the doctors from Rahman Khandan came from Saudi Arabia for their vacations, the elders of the both Khandans held a joint meeting and an agreement was reached between them that if they will not support each other on certain issues, one of them will become neutral instead of taking some opposite stand or turning the issue in some wrong directions.
In this sense, among Shaikhs rarely any issue is referred to the village Panchyat. And if they are calling panchyat on some issue they do not bother which panchyat they are referring to, because the heads of the village panchyat are from among themselves and only there presence are needed along with other elders of their own ethnic group.

Caste and Village Panchayats:

The village panchayats and the caste councils are unique features of Indian village life. Village panchayats are territorially limited to the particular village, while caste panchayats "cuts across the narrow boundaries of the village and extends to a fairly wide geographical region". On the other hand the power and authority of caste panchayats are limited to one particular caste and demonstrated horizontal solidarity, while the vertical solidarity of the village are expressed into the village panchayats. In the village Malmal all the Hindu castes have their own caste panchayats. Muslim lower ethnic groups have also their group councils. Then some issues involve two groups then the help of village panchayat are sought. But if it involves only themselves like the violation of some caste norms by some caste member, then the caste panchayat are called. For instance, an untouchable Hindu Caste member embraced Islam few years ago. His embracing of another faith automatically excluded him from his caste.

But his this act also brought a certain degree of pollution to his family. The caste council met and demanded from his son to arrange a communal feast in which his 'Shuddhi' will be done. The boy had just started earning. But selling some of his brass utensils and taking some money on credit he arranged the feast and became pure. Most of the Hindu Castes follow the similar pattern and the authority of caste panchyat rests in the imposition of fines in cash, ex-communication and finally out casting the culprit. But these stages seldom come, rather the matters are materialized at the level of the imposition of fines.

Among the lower Muslim ethnic groups the ethnic councils barely includes the inter-village dimensions. Instead most of the decisions are reached by the elders of group living in the village. Usually heads of these ethnic councils are the people who wield some respect within their own group because of their wealth, age and wisdom. Sometimes it also depends upon the concept of 'Samang' or the strength of immediate kinsmen. For example if a person has four brothers and each of them also have many grownup sons then he will be drawing enough support from his group men and makes him influential within his ethnic group. And if he is more affluent then his position as head of the group will be taken as granted. In recent years a new dimension of religious leadership has also been included into this criteria. For instance the Dhuniyas of the village now
act under the guidance of a young person zaheer Malmali.
Zaheer has some basic madarsa education so he is also called by his own group men as 'Maulana Malmali'. A very shrewd person, he is the grandson of the deceased watchman of the village 'Musai Chawkidar'. For a certain period he lived in Patna, where he used to taught Quran to the children of some affluent Muslims. Slowly, he developed some political connections and came back to the village where he started taking interest in the village politics. He opened a small madarsa in his small house. Since he had comparatively more access to the Islamic learnings so he became the main guide in the religious matters of his own ethnic group. Dhuniyas of the village take him in high esteem. On the other hand, he has become also their leader and guide them in the village politics. He also has good relations with the elite shaikhs of the village and is invited by them in their functions. But essentially his actions as viewed by the Shaikhs of the village are against them and his every act arouse a suspicion in their minds.

In early seventies, as villagers recall, there developed a feud between the Dhuniyas and Shaikhs. Basically it was a conflict between the Shaikh patron and his Dhuniya client but it took a turn of ethnic conflict. Zaheer was too young to play the role of a leader but he played considerable role and came into lime light of the village politics. In that conflict no physical injury was reported but there was a tension all
around and other ethnic and caste groups assumed a neutral posture. But since most of the lower groups were bound to shaikhs as clients so individually all of them sided with them. In the ethnic council of Duniyas it was decided that no woman of their group will work in Shaikh lords houses and no man will work in their field. This matter was brought to the village panchayat which imposed some group line on Dunnyas.

Recently a new opportunity aroused in the village giving a chance to Zaheer to establish his position as Dhuniya leader. In a nearby village of Rasheedpur situated some ten kilometers south-east of Malmal, a sizeable proportion of Shaikhs of some beraderi and Dunnyas live. A Shaikh girl from low status group developed an affair with a Dhuniya boy and eloped with him, came to Malmal where Zaheer gave them shelter. This news spread into the village and the Shaikhs, particularly the youths reacted to this incidence. A young Imam family member Shaifi whose notority is established in the village lead a group of Shaikh boys but again the conflict was avoided because till the time the couple had court married. The matter was in court and they waited for the decision. Court gave the verdict in favour of the couple. The matter was then neither refered to the village panchayat since it did not concerned the village, nor to any other elder's council. Zaheer took hard pain in getting the couple court
married. This step while brought for him a prestige among his ethnic members, on the other hand he is a thorn in the eyes of Shaikhs and any possibility for him to play a role in village politics is totally bleak.

Sometimes as village incidence may involve the caste and village panchyats both. During my stay in the village a situation developed where both had a role to play giving a clear picture of the boundaries of authorities and jurisdictions of both the councils. A woman in late thirties from the Mukeri ethnic group lives in the near vicinity of village Chawk. Her husband is cook on some ship which runs between Calcutta and Far-East countries. He remains away from home for considerably long periods. The village chawk is the place where the unemployed village youths assemble and spends most of their time. Woman's frequent movement on the village chawk, the presence of the youths who have plenty of time at their disposal and long absneece of her husband provided an opportunity for illegitimate sexual unions. The house became a place for enjoyment for the unwanted youths of the village. Some day one boy from Shaikhs did the illegal sexual union with her and in that process either out of his notority or something else, put the hair of a horse in her genital organ. This brought for her long illness and the matter was leaked to the villagers. Meanwhile her husband returned home and came to know the incidence, became inflamed with anger. Village
Panchayat was called and the doer of that act was punished by beating by shoes in front of the mass. On the other hand the village elders warned the woman for such free unions in the future. Next day, both the husband and wife were called by the ethnic council and was imposed fine for that ill deeds which had brought onto the entire ethnic group a shame. Stern warnings were issued that such incidence in future will result into their excommunication from the ethnicity and the village. On the other hand they advised the husband, who was ready to divorce her that he should realize that it was not her fault alone, rather he too share the equal responsibility. He must visit home frequently and live here for considerable periods. In this way while village panchayat dealt with the outer dimension of resolving the issues between the two ethnic groups the inner dimensions were dealtl by the ethnic councils.

The Shaikhs do not have any such council and seldom something like exclusively ethnic panchayats takes place. But if some incidence of very bad consequence takes place and victim do not have enough kin support or is weak in any respect then he seeks the help of panchayat. This panchayat are not given the name of village or ethnic, since they are the dominant group and the people of power and prestige are from among them, so they only call those Shaikhs who have some influence and say in their own group as well as in the village. The place of such panchayats are kept at the house of the
most respected and influential person. In Malmal, Ziaur Rahman popularly known as 'Hashim babu' is the man whose house is used for such purposes.

Ziaur Rahman belongs to the upper crust of the village. As his surname indicates, he is from Rahman Khandan and in many respects he is taken as village head. He is a man who has just crossed his sixty. Since a long period he was secretary of the boards of Madrasa and the Grand Mosque and was actively engaged in the religious activities of the village. Moreover, he is also a member of Jamat-e-Islami. His Islamic personality and personal wisdom with his affluence have won for him a place incomparable in the village. He is respected by Hindus and Muslims alike. In the panchayat decisions, his neutral and just stand has given a symbolic neutrality to his house. People will talk, "Hashim babu ke derwazapar panchayat hogi", meaning the panchayat will be held at Hashim babu's house.

Earlier, all communities used to come to his place for panchayat. In this way there was and to some extent still is, the two parallel system of village panchayat. One in which the elected Mukhiya and Sarpanch take the position of head of village panchayat and in the other, the village elders from all groups are involved but the final decision rests with the real functioning head who command respect and
confidence from the villagers. The head gives his decision on the basis of four or five selected juries who after hearing the proceedings meet separately. Those juries are selected by the head on the basis of their influence and experience. In such panchayats the two elected office representatives may or most often, may not be included.

Before 1978 Panchayat elections, Mukhiya of the village were elected from Hindu community. One of the important development in post independent India is the communal solidarity. The consciousness of being from a particular community, different from another is quite recent phenomenon in the village India. So before the 1978 election, Hindus happened to be the Mukhiya of the village. Last Mukhiya was Lal Bihari, a Brahmin still respected by all. But in that election the Muslims of the village opted for contesting the election and two Shaikhs from Imam Family were filed for nomination. All the Muslims of the village voted as one block and subsequently won both of the seats. But soon after elections were over, the normal contradiction and conflict in the life of the Muslims of the village replaced the time-being solidarity. Till the time of my field work, both of them were relegated to a position of insignificance. The current Mukhiya, Wahid Husain lost his interest in the village politics and is now totally pre-occupied in his business. While the Sarpanch Rasheed Aalam have kept constantly
poking his nose in the petty issues of the village. Now most of the village Panchayats are done by the elders and community polarization is yet another dimension which has crept into that. Only when the two community members have clashed, then the village panchayat assumes an all-village character.

Recently a scene of communal conflict showed its ugly head in the village when a person named Debu who is bus conductor and is famous for his notority, persuaded some of his community members to take a religious procession from the Muslim settlement areas. He procured illegally some modern weapons which would have been used in case of a conflict. The police sub-station which is in Kalwahi became alert. Meanwhile the rumour of this preparation spread into the village and to end the matter, again Saifi led some of the Muslim youths and attacked Debu and beaten him blue. The village panchayat under the headship of village Mukhiya was called. On the other hand police raided Debu's house and arrested him. But in village panchayat the communal harmony was stressed by both the communities and the village elders from all caste and ethnic groups made a fine or Debu and the matter did not reached the court. The communal tension was relaxed and village resumed its old harmonious character. The only communal incidence which the village has seen so far, was in 1969 when two groups started fighting
each other. A Muslim from Laheri (Bangle-Makers) ethnic group was coming from some where and seeing the fight, went to settle the matter and by accident got injured and finally he succumbed to his injuries. This accident flared up communal violence and village panchayat was unable to solve the matter. The case was refered to the court where it is still in pending. Now whenever the environment becomes infused with communal tension, elders of the village stress the communal harmony and age old tradition of co-existence of both the communities is repeatedly proclaimed. But it is undeniable fact that in recent years while caste consciousness has helped to develop horizontal solidarities among Hindus, on the other hand the spread of education and media exposures are gradually rooting out the old traditional folk tolerances. Moreover the general political climate of the country has made definite impact upon the attitudes of village Muslims and a greater degree of vertical solidarity among Muslims are visible which undermines and cut across the ethnic boundaries.

Village Unity:

A village so thickly populated and where ethnic population is divided into many groups with varying backgrounds and interests, internal cleavage and inherent strife and conflict of rural life are those apparent dimensions of realities which a stranger perceives in his first
sight. But there are orders - orders and unity are those dimensions of life which held them together; their life and society. The unity of groups, factions, communities and the entire village are expressed when they encounter some external threat. Unity of the groups are expressed within the village and the unity of the village is expressed when they encounter with another village. Apart from caste and ethnic considerations, the entire village polarizes into two groups when there arises some feuds between labourers and landholders for the wages. The agriculture labourers unite irrespective of caste and religious affiliations and so is the case with the landholders. Few years ago the village was divided into the two groups with opposing economic interests. The struggle of haves and have nots was idiomized in totally secular terms. The entire activity of the village life was jeopardized by the strike of the labourers and all landholders were united against the implementation of new wage policy of the government. The demand of the labourers were though genuine, but was unbearable for the land holders in the face of the yields of their lands being not enough to meet the new labour costs. Moreover, they were and still are arguing for the number of hours which these labourers will work. One land lord expressed his argument as "all the time they will demand for more wages, but they are so lazy and talkative that they will kill the time chatting and smoking
the bedis and work for not more than three or four hours. How should we pay more?"

In this sense the village becomes on such occasions a mini theater of grand national dramas and the villagers react to the scenes and to the messages. Viewing from this perspective the Muslims of the village provide another example of the reaction to stimuli national. Though they are in dominant position in the village but also suffers from the minority complex in response to the general socio-political climate of the country. Hence in this sense, they are normally reluctant in taking steps which they would have taken in other circumstances. On the other hand, Hindus though in subordinate position but often undermine the dominance of Muslims because of their political dominance in the country. The attitude and perceptions are moulded by the happenings of the outer world and behaviours are patterned accordingly to fit and accommodate into the systems internal as well as external.

The unity of the village is seen at the occasion of marriages and funerals. At the marriages through ethnic groups alone are consulted, but the entire village takes it as an occasion of cooperation. Some are invited to attend the ceremonies and most of the villagers make courtesy calls to the place where marriage procession comes. They will say
"Samagi haisyat se jana chahiye". These are compulsions of living together. Hindu friends will cooperate, if there are Hindu guests invited and make the necessary arrangements like Yadavs whose profession is rearing cows and buffalows will provide milk to their Muslim friends. Similarly some articles like 'Shameyana', 'gas lamps' and others are given to Muslims and Hindus alike without any hesitation. Of course, personal status and rapport counts in the procurement of these articles in the village. Similarly at the funeral, while Muslims accompany the corpse to the grave yards, Hindus make their visit to the grieved family.

Another dimension of order, harmony and belongingness are the address by all to everyone with a fictitious kin terms. Even a child of status family will address the servant from scheduled castes with such terminology and will have joking relationship with the fictitious sister-in-laws, brother-in-laws and others. Particularly the villagers joke with the person who are married within the village. He is treated "Gaon ka damad" or village's son-in-law and will be called with the name of the village of his origin. Pitiable conditions are of those who have settled in the village from outside because they are married here, however he is distinguished. Even in his old ages people will joke with him.

The village unity is best expressed when they are confronted with another village. One of such occassion was
witnessed by me when I was there. It was January 1987. The village has a cricket team exclusively of Muslims. All of the players were from Shaikhs except one; a darzi. It is largely because of the time and money involved in the game, Shaikhs are the only group who can afford. Yet the team is known as the team of village Malmal. The team is organized in form of club associated with the name of a Rahman family member Zafar Aasim who was an active member of the club but few years ago, died prematurely. This team was invited to play in a tournament organized by the people of village Kalwahi. At the ground when the team was playing, I heard remarks from the spectators "Pakistani team hai". Because the players were all Muslims it became a team of Pakistan. But on the other hand the team was most favourite and all of them wished that it should win the final. Since the place is barely one and a half kilometers away from the village so a large number of people, Muslims and Hindus both from the village came to see the final. Unfortunately the team of the village Malmal lost at the hands of the team of the town Jaynagar. It was an upset for not only spectators but also the organizers. So the prize distribution ceremony which was planned to be an elaborate in nature was cut short and in this way the organizers shared the loss with the team of Malmal. This act of them was a gesture; a token of solidarity of not only the village but the immediate locality.
The expression was regionalized. The unity and solidarity are expressed in the geographical terms where religion has nothing to do, or economic interests are not at stake.

In last it would be worthy to emphasize that the village which happened to be a social unit in the past now no longer is the same. It is now no more than administrative unit than any thing else. Viewing the huge population, it was planned to divide the village into two panchayats but still the decision has not been reached by the Government. Particularly an important feature is the polarization of the village in communal terms. Sometimes the village looks as twin villages. The two sides of Hindu and Muslim Population are acting on their own less interfering into the others. The pattern of settlement of the village is such that most often Hindus going for the markets or other places crosses from the areas of the Muslims but Muslims seldom need to go in the Hindu areas. I was surprised when one of my respondents told me that it is second chance in his life when he is going to the area of Brahmins. This itself tells the story.
CHAPTER - VI
Ideally speaking, Islamic society is of egalitarian in nature. No man made barrier between man and man is valid and mutual coordination and cooperation - not hatred or repulsion - is the basis of human relationship in Islam. Quran proclaims the single source of the origination (Q : s. x 11x2 13 : 1407) of all human beings and emphasises that the basis of inequality among them should be determined on the degree of piety of every individual soul. On the other hand the physical, mental and social inequalities are recognized by Islam but the spiritual dimension is the only valid criteria of the basis of inequality in an Islamic society. But the reality of mundane side of the existence compel to behave otherwise. The Ideational and pragmatic normally remain dichotomous in the Muslim world. But it seldom happens in a Muslim society, however contradictory to the Ideal form, the social in-equality has ever been ideologized. The stigma attached with the class groups in a Muslim society, in this sense never get an ideological justification and hence the stratification system in various Muslim societies reveals different patterns. The pattern of social stratification is though much determined by the local surroundings but the push and pull of local and ideal forces makes them kaleidoscopically variable.

There is no known human society which is not differentiated or stratified upto certain levels. This level of
differentiation or stratification is directly proportional to the complexity of the society. But how the society will be differentiated or stratified depends upon the particular value system prevalent in the society. "That is, there must be consensus in a society about what sorts of activities and symbols are valued; without such consensus, the society could not operate. Given this assumption, an ongoing system of stratification requires a general set of ideological justification".

Social stratification, as a form of social inequality "refers to the fact that both individuals and groups of individuals are conceived of a constituting higher and lower differentiated strata, or classes, in terms of some specific or generalized characteristic or set of characteristic.".

Moreover, social inequality itself operate at two levels i.e. distributive and relational. "The first refers to the ways in which different factors such as income, wealth, occupation, education, power, skill etc, are distributed in the population. The second refers to the ways in which individuals differentiated by these criteria are related to each other within a system of groups and categories. The distributive aspect of social inequality provides only the

2. Ibid. p. 288-289.
basis for a proper sociological understanding of how individuals interact with each other in socially significant ways.

In sociological analysis, while former is dealt with a class model the latter is dealt with the status model. Class model considers income, wealth, and occupation of an individual as factors to analyze, while status model does consider prestige and esteem of an individual which he commands in a society. Although both are closely related to each other but are not essentially the same. Rather, "status derives from a different aspect of economic behaviour from that which determines class location itself. As Weber emphasizes, status is generally determined by style of consumption rather than source or amount of income." And moreover "what is highly esteemed varies from one society to another and depends ultimately on the value system of the society."

Islam came into being in a tribal cultural milieu of Arabia. "The life of the new Ummah was to be marked by a pervasive new moral, derived from the individuals relationship to God, but maintained by the expectations prevalent in

the group as a whole and given form in their corporate life. The new tone was contrasted to a moral orientation associated with both Bedouin pastoral life and with the settled Bedouin pagans. The new tone was summed up in key words making a wider implications for ethico-social structures. The kinoriented differentiation was transformed into religious oriented egalitarian structure of the society. During the expansion of the empire Islam came into contact with other culture and civilizations and out of the necessity to adapt to the new situations it made some changes well within the perview of Islam. But during the latter course of changes especially the claims for Khilafat, a feeling of kinorientation was again generated by the fact that the claim was itself made on the basis of being descendants of prophet. This struggle of leadership on the basis of descendency had wider implications for Ummah as a whole. The religious oriented egalitarian principle on which the society was based during the times of prophet himself went into the sea changes during the Ummayads and Abbassid periods, and a kin oriented social structure again developed among the Muslim Community.

Famous medieval historian and sociologist, Ibn Khaldun in his Muqaddimah talks about the positive function of 'Assabiyah or group-feeling in the Muslim society of his days. Though "assabiyah" is negatively referred to the tribal society of pre-Islamic Arabia but Ibn Khaldun insisted its prevalence in the Muslim societies as the basis of social organization. The kin-oriented social organization and the genealogical connections with the established personalities of Islam, in Ibn Khaldun's conception can serve a positive function unless it does not undermine the spirit of Islamic egalitarianism in Muslim societies. He says, "It is in that sense that one must understand Muhammad's remark, "Learn as much of your pedigrees as is necessary to establish your ties of blood relationship". It means that pedigrees are useful only in so far as they imply that close contact that is consequence of blood ties and that eventually leads to mutual help and affection. Anything beyond that is superfluous." The genealogical connections or claims of being descendants of prophet or his companions became established ways for the claim of leadership among Muslims of the Medieval period. The degree of the nobility of a family was measured by its connections with the established "Houses" of Islam. Since

8. Ibid P. 264-265.
prophet is the model of human perfection and his close companions proximate closely to that model so being the descendants of them is of great prestige in a Muslim society. The criteria was as much valid in the past as it is today as Ibn Khaldun's observations and current evidences imply. The degree of proximity to the Islamic Ideal and the model of human perfection of prophet is the only determinant factor of social status in Muslim societies. But in the course of development Muslims not only took the individual criteria rather the historically corresponding tendency of the families to the ideals of Islam were also valued more. In this way the historicity of the familial tradition to strive for the achievement of the ideal life ways along with many other tangible considerations became the dominant way of evaluating the social-status of an individual and the family. This historically attached notion of status evaluation succeeded in drawing the regid boundaries of false ethnic barriers among the Muslims; even within the same locality. A unique pattern of lower-groups striving to achieve the status crept into the fabric of Muslim societies in which as they gain some worldly success, they starts searching the genealogical connection with the old Arab nobility of early Islamic era. These false genealogical charts leaves as many as it includes and one finds enough difficulty to rely even the most genuine one.
Lastly, the kin and the group oriented stratification pattern of Muslim societies which has persisted and continued down the history should not be taken, as if, it has totally replaced the ideal Islamic egalitarianism from the Muslim societies. Instead there appears two levels of operation of these two bonds. The kin and group orientedness has stratified the Muslim community in spatio-temporal sense. While on the other hand the principle of Islamic egalitarianism has freed it from the contingents of time and space, making the Muslims a homogeneous community in history striving to achieve the goal of attaining the Divine perfection.

Studies on the stratification pattern of Indian Muslims: a critique:

Study of the stratification system as it operates among Indian Muslims is a new phenomenon. Traditionality it was assumed that Muslims in India respond to the normative commands of Islam and Muslim societies are completely patterned on those Islamic norms. But in recent decades the un-availability of empirical data on Indian Muslims were felt enormously. An early attempt to discover the existing stratification pattern in Indian Muslims were done by Ghaus Ansari. Though he analyzed the stratification pattern of Muslims of

10. Ansari, Ghaus, 1960, Muslim Caste in Uttar Pradesh: A Study in Culture Contact, Lucknow; Ethnographic and Folk Culture Society.
Uttar Pradesh with a point of view of caste system but his datas were derived from the secondary sources.

The existence of caste as the basis of social organization of Indian Muslims did not turned into the mainstream until Imtiaz Ahmad\(^\text{11}\) and his co-authors (1973) came out with a number of such empirical evidences. The volume "Caste and social stratification among Muslims in India" edited by Ahmad became the basis for the analysis of the stratification system among Indian Muslims. Simultaneously, it became a major issue of debate among the students of caste in Muslim societies and other non-Hindu minorities\(^\text{12}\).

The nature of caste has itself been debated and no consensus has been reached so far. The broader categories which have come out from these debates, appears to be of two types i.e. Comparative structural/diffusionist and symbolic interpretive/normative. The former views caste as a category or type, comparable in many respects to type-systems elsewhere", while "diffusionist approach uses comparison primarily to link trait complexes with one another\(^\text{13}\).

\(^{11}\) Ahmad, Imtiaz (ed) 2n. ed. 1978, Caste and Social Stratification among Muslims in India, Delhi; Manohar Publications.

\(^{12}\) See for example (1) Barnett, S.L. Fruzzetti and A. Ostor, 1976. "Hierarchy purified : notes on Dumout and his critics".


\(^{13}\) Lindholm Charles, 1988, op. cit P. 63.
"The second school understands caste as a total symbolic world, unique and not comparable with other systems.". Subscribers of this view follow Weber and view caste as 'caste system' which encompasses the totality. The major proponent of this view is Louis Dumont who views Hindu Society "divided into a large number of permanent groups which are at once specialized, hierarchized and separated" and "common basis of these three features is the opposition of pure and impure". According to Bougle, "the spirit of caste unites these three tendencies: repulsion, hierarchy and hereditary specialization". While Leach places more emphasis upon the hereditary specialization. The subscribers of the structural views place emphasis upon behavioristic patterns, on the other hand the symbolic school places emphasis upon the "Value". According to Berreman who subscribes to the structural view, "a caste system resembles a plural society whose discrete sections are all ranked vertically".


It is the structural definition of the caste which has provided sociologists and anthropologists a base to apply for the purposes of comparison, the caste model in non Hindu societies. Particularly Lloyd Warner\(^{18}\), Alison Davis and Gunar Myrdal\(^{19}\) applied the caste model on structural basis to understand the race-relations between whites and Blacks, shaping the very form of inequalities in the spheres of socio-economic and political relations reinforced by the legal systems. But this colour-caste exposition has widely been criticised on the basis of the fact that "the Indian system is a coherent social system based on the principle of inequality, while the American 'colorbar' contradicts the equalitarian system within which it occurs and of which it is a kind of disease\(^{20}\).

Similarly the studies on caste among Muslims in India is the result of broader base provided by the structural definition of the term caste. All contributors of the volume edited by Ahmad, Mines as being exception, starts with the


structural view of the caste for the purpose of comparison but gradually move towards the symbolic view as the analysis proceeds. Ahmad himself admits", The majority of them base their definition of caste on the Hindu phenomenon and then go on to examine the extent to which the social stratification of the communities studied by them corresponds to the Hindu model. Even Agarwal, who begins his analysis of the Meos with a fairly broad structural definition of caste as 'a ranked social division in which membership is determined by birth', comes increasingly, as his analysis proceeds, to see the Meo's in terms of the cultural characteristics of caste and finally employs the degree of correspondence between them and Hindu caste groups as a basis for characterizing them as a caste21. The dilemma in which the contributors are caught has resulted on account of the application of a model which is based on inequality to a society whose basis is equality.

For the purpose of comparison Ahmad and his colleagues have abstracted four characteristics 'which together constitute the real essence of caste among Hindus'... i.e. Endogamy, occupational specialization, hierarchy and ideological support. While all three characteristics are found to be existant among Muslims it is the ideological support which is absent.

Endogamy can be found in most of the stratified groups throughout the world in terms of ethnic, class, caste, race and status groups. It is, by an large, not a unique phenomena of the caste system alone. Similarly the occupational specialization of a group in any society is not unique in the sense that occupational monopoly of a group has been a historical phenomenon in most of the places and particularly it is directly related to the particular social structure and the form of economy of a society. It is "best suited for civilization in which trade requires a maximum of skill, taught from father to son and a minimum of organizational complexity" and such a system "treats the various segments of the landscape as part of a co-ordinated whole, rather than as separate realms." As far as hierarchy is concerned it may be a resultant of occupational prestige and many other criterias like wealth, life-style, religiosity and many others, varying from society to society. What is unique to caste is its ideological justification of inequality which is non-existant in the Muslim societies in the light of the ethnographic data produced by Ahmad and his colleagues.

While Ahmad and most of his colleagues show a greater degree of structural and behavioristic similarities between

23. Ibid P. 171.
caste and pattern of social stratification among the Muslims of India, Mines is the only contributor who does not find it among his Tamil Muslim respondents. Rather than searching with vigour, the similarities, he has focused more on the divergence which exists between Hindus and Muslims on the basis of world-views and religious ethos of both the communities. According to Mines, the emphasis of Islam on its egalitarian ethos gave an opportunity to those who wanted to free themselves from the restrictive bonds of Jajmani system and hence an egalitarian ethos got the preference into the mercantile community of Tamil Muslims. Similarly Barnett and his co-writers do not find caste among Indian Muslims because of 'an absence of the conceptual opposition between purity and pollution, status and power' Instead of caste, they find a fluid system of stratification among Muslim societies in India.

What is more interesting about Ahmad's stand is his treatment of the stratification system among Indian Muslims as a typical Indian phenomenon - a direct influence of Hinduism on Islam. Although he has tried to show the in-built notions of inequality in Islam itself, particularly in Islamic laws. But despite these in-built legal inequality and hierarchy "Muslim social stratification elsewhere does

not approximate even remotely to the Indian model" and "Caste among the Muslims in India owes itself directly to Hindu influences, but it has been reinforced by the justification offered for the idea of birth and descent as criteria of status in Islamic law", he asserts. His stand has been refuted by Lindholm (1988). According to Lindholm, existence of a caste like system among Indian Muslims is not entirely an Indian phenomena, rather it may "be seen as reflections of characteristics features of the Middle East". And, "hierarchy of rank may be a 'trait' adapted to India, but derived from the Middle East by cultural diffusion". He cites the studies of Barth (1959), Pehrson (1966) English (1966) Bujra (1971), Gaborieau (1978) and others, and shows that on the basis of structural similarities there also exists a caste like hierarchical gradation of the middle eastern society not only in structural sense but in some cases in the ideological sense too. But even then we cannot call them caste as such. Criticising Barth's study of Swat Pathans of North-west Frontier province of Pakistan, Dumont says "the Hindu system is here beheaded, subordinate to a different system".

29. English, P. 1966. City and village in Iran, Madison; University of Wisconsin Press.
Some of the scholars who insist on the presence of caste system among Indian Muslims, have also made a parallel of "Sanskritization" as "Ashrafization" for the study of changes in the position of so-called lower Muslim castes, on account of various socio-economic and political changes. While "Sanskritization" was coined by Srinivas out of theoretical compulsion to remedy the limitations of structural-functional perspective in dealing with the change Pocock \(^{33}\) calls it "welding of Redfield on to Radcliffe-Brown". On the other hand the term "Ashrafization" is used out of the theorist's pre-commitment with the presence of caste among Indian Muslims. Moreover, the various jatis or sub-caste among Hindus does fit into varna model as Srinivas observes, "The importance of the Varna-system consists in that it furnishes an All-India frame into which the myriad jatis in any single linguistic areas can be fitted. It systematizes the chaos of jatis and enables the sub-caste of one region to be comprehended by people in another area by reference to common scale \(^{34}\). Among Muslims this common scale or an all India frame in which all regional diversity can fit, is totally absent. Moreover, "the varna-system represents a scale of value" while Ashraf and Ajlaf

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dichotomy does not represent a scale of value. The Ashraf-Ajlaf categorization does not represent a category of value; rather this dichotomy was created by British census officials out of the necessity of specification. More than that, they were "Orders" where personal status differ from one order to another - regorously defined by law - a form of legal inequality.

Any how, the studies on caste among Muslims has itself shown a lot of ambiguities and confusion, no matter what ever theoretical perspectives have been applied. In the words of Lindholm, "if structural-functionalism errs in the direction of comparing what is not comparable and of distorting social reality for the sake of typologies, and if diffusionism ends in mere lists of traits, then the symbolic school errs in quite another direction. By stressing the unity and uniqueness of each culture, this school tends to subsume all divergence and deviance into a supposed integrated whole". It is "evident that none of these theories can deal-adequately with the particular question considered here; that of the position of Indian Muslims within the caste society".

Lindholm goes on to offer a new mode of analysis of caste in Muslim societies based on conflict model. But in my opinion this mode of analyzing the stratification among Muslims

will also be a futile attempt. Because if we take the point of view of Muslims not the sociologists we will find that they do not classify themselves so, even "they disavow the basic premises for stratification" as such. 'Self-definition of a community under study is more important than the investigator's point of view. Moreover, this 'self-definition' of a community will "discourage the tendency found in many studies of non-Hindus to generalise about entire communities, and to overlook the possibility of differences, both behavioral and ideological within them". In short we should stop searching something which is not there.

**Theoretical assumptions:**

If Muslim societies are not stratified on the caste basis, is there any other way to explain the existing pattern of social stratification among Indian Muslims? To answer this question, I would like to narrate some of the field experiences which I encountered in the village under study. Before going to the field I had assumed that I will encounter a caste like stratification among them. But when I was on the way to the field for the first time, during my bus travel from Madhubani town, next to my seat was a respectable Muslim gentleman. When he knew about my intention to go there, he gave me some of the idea about the Muslim groups residing in that village. He himself was not from that village but knew about the village well. He told me that the dominant Muslim
beradri in village is of 'Shaikhs' who are Siddiquis, but barely anyone use this name, rather they are known in the locality as "Ter-Gharya Shaikhs". I asked about what this mean, he replied that they are "Ter-Gharya Beradri" of the 'brotherhood of thirteen houses', scattered in some thirteen villages as they claim. Later on, when I reached the village I found the similar views during the preliminary round of discussions with some of the village elders. During later course of the field work, I was surprised to learn that most of the people belonging to the Shaikh group do not know that they do belong to the Siddiqui category of the Shaikhs. More than that, most of them were totally unaware about the various categories which exist among Shaikh category itself. Neither they were aware not wanted to know about. All they were interested in knowing that they do belong to the "Ter-Gharya Beradri".

Whenever I asked about the existence of Caste or Caste like features among them I got a negative answer and sometimes a long arguments and counter arguments even hostile remarks when the concept of "beradri" was itself put into question. Not only Shaikhs but all other groups gave the similar impression. The major arguments forwarded by the respondents and others with whom I interacted, was the egalitarian principle of Islam. Most of them accepted that there is a pattern of social stratification but it cannot be
paralleled with the caste system. The concept of 'beradri' which they defined, goes on to make up nothing but an ethnic group.

Moreover, during discussions or formal talks with the people, I found a developed notion of "khandan" or "Gharana" i.e. Family or House which characterises the pattern of intra-ethnic and most often inter-ethnic stratification. These "Families", as I got the impression during my initial stage of the field work, have strong bearing upon the total interactional pattern of village life, cross-cutting the ethnic boundaries even the community boundaries.

After my preliminary round of the field work, I started working on these lines and viewed the social stratificational patterns among Muslims of the village in terms of "inter-ethnic" relationships. The various ethnic groups are themselves stratified in terms of "Families" which goes on to make up the total interactional process of not only the ethnic groups but the whole of the village. Here I mean by an ethnic group "an aggregate of kinship units, the members of which either trace their origin from ancestors who all belonged to the same categorized ethnic groups". And they are "normally endogamous and recruitment is by birth, though, of course, assimilation by inter-marriage or even other

38. On the subject of the dominance of few 'Khandan' in the village life see also, Ismail A Lambat's (1976) "Marriage among the Sunni Vohras of South Gujarat" in Imtiaz Ahmed ed. Family Kinship and Marriage among Muslims In India, New Delhi; Munohar PP. 49-61.
mechanisms is in a certain proportion of cases possible\(^{39}\). Moreover "it need not be distinguishable in objective fact by any unique complex of cultural or biological traits\(^{40}\)."

The relative social standings of various Muslim ethnic groups are a regional phenomenon which usually depend upon various external as well as internal factors i.e. (i) Size of the community or group in a given locality, (ii) Their economic and political power, (iii) Level of education of its members—both secular as well as religious and (iv) their degree of proximity with the ideal Islamic norms.

It is the degree of correspondence with the ideal Islamic norms, along with other factors which gives an ethnic group a high status among the fellow coreligious ethnic groups. This process of status summation is itself marked by two levels of actions: (i) First level of action is concerned with the inter-group status crystallisation process (ii) second is concerned with the intra-group status crystallisation process.

(1) **Inter-group status crystallisation process:**

When an ethnic group makes a marked progress in the above stated domains, it asserts and claims for a superior position within that locality and, may or may not, trace their genealogy with some established "houses" or personalities of

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40. Marriott, Mckim, 1960. Caste Ranking and Community Structure in Five Regions of India and Pakistan, Deccan College Monograph Series No. 23, Poona; Deccan College Post-Graduate and Research Institute.
Islam, which can suit their claim according to their existing condition and in this way they establish a kinship association or a brotherhood ties called "Beraderi" with the others i.e. those who are already in that broader category of ethnic group or association. If they succeed in their assertion by performing well in all the four above stated domains, they achieve a status of dominant ethnic group.

(ii) **Intra-group status crystallisation process:**

When an ethnic group is in the process of status achievement, the second level of action which concerns with the Intra-group stratification, also starts. When we say that a group is doing well in the above stated domains, it means while group as a whole is doing fairly well it also means some of them are doing better than others within that group. This differences of performances in the field of education, economy backed by Islamiization process takes some of them at the top of the status scale and some of them sink in the bottom.

In this process of social placement of individuals on the status scale within an ethnic group or community; first level of action starts with the establishment of a "House". The establishment of a 'House' means a person who is counted as the nobel and prestigious by virtue of his personal qualities, his family becomes identifiable with his personality and his social position. After him, his descendants are respected
and are given high social standing among his fellows because "his fellows respect the great standing and nobility that his ancestors acquired through their (personal) qualities." After a generation or two when the members of the family grow in numbers, and if they still perform well in the above stated areas, the prestige of the family also enhances and hence the "Family" itself becomes a status symbol within the locality. Here a "House" means "the elementary family of procreation", while a "Family" means "the extended family unit or a still larger group comprising the near kin on the paternal side", or what Warner calls "The elementary family of orientation". The status of an individual becomes synonym with the status of his "Family". The status crystallisation process usually takes several generations to stabilise. Once a Family's high status within the ethnic group as well as in the locality is established and recognized, the Family's or its individual's relatively bad performance in any of the above stated fields does not matter. Usually it takes several generation for an established families to come down on the status scale.

In short we can say that an individual's status within the community are determined by his (i) Ethnic affiliation, (ii) Family lineage, (iii) Economic condition - (a) Amount of income (b) source of Income (c) possession of Landed

property (iv) Level of Education— (a) Secular education (b) knowledge of Islam, (v) Degree of proximity with the Ideal Islamic norms— (a) Life style (b) Personal qualities (c) observance of Islamic duties.

The Pattern of Stratification in the village Malmal:

To identify the various forms and different layers which go on to make up the inter and intra-ethnic stratification patterns among the Muslims of the village Malmal, I have used Lloyd Warner's "Evaluated participation" method. For an easy and quick identification of the status locations of different ethnic groups and "Families", I found this method a best choice for the purpose. According to Warner, "The method of Evaluated Participation (E.P.) comprising several rating techniques, is posed on the proposition that those who interact in the social system of a community evaluate the participation of those around them, that the place where an individual participates is evaluated, and that the members of the community are explicitly or implicitly aware of the ranking and translate their evaluations of such social participation into social-class ratings that can be communicated to the investigator." Moreover, "Each of the rating techniques combined in the E.P. method for stratifying a community and for placing families and individuals at their proper level in the status system of a community can play a decisive part in

44. Ibid P. 35.
the process of determining the social stratification of a community or determining the status of an individual or family.  

Warner has given six techniques for rating the status; i.e. Rating by (i) Matched Agreements, (ii) Symbolic placement; (iii) Status Reputation, (iv) Comparison, (v) Simple Assignment (iv) Institutional Membership.  

Another method which accompanies E.P. method is the Index of status characteristics (I.S.C.). But I.S.C. needs a careful handling and sophisticated scaling. As well as the criterion on which this Indexation rests does not apply to the present situation. Since we are not dealing stratification pattern in terms of class as such, and we need only to determine the various social rankings in terms of groups and families. For this purpose 'E.P.' method alone is sufficient to deal with the problem. According to Warner, "of the two methods, the E.P. is the more basic" and "the use of E.P. alone gives the analyst the evaluated social participation of a community."  

Since in this method the locations of the individual, family or group in the status system depend upon the opinion of the individuals or the community rather than the sociologists; the interviews with the respondents are left open. The

46. Ibid. P. 42.  
47. Ibid P. 43.
various factors which determine the status of a group, family or individual in a community are derived from the ways of placements of these units in the total status system by them and the reasons given for such placements.

It is not possible in such type of studies to use any one single rating technique exclusively rather one encounters, when analysing interviews with the respondents, all six types of ratings useful in determining social rankings. A respondent sometimes uses symbols particularly "trait symbols" which is highly developed in the village. Next time, he refers the status reputation of a particular individual or family or ethnic group and often he places an individual or family by "Simple assignments" in one status group or another. Even they make sarcastic remarks about some family for their particular 'Institutional Memberships'. As one respondent told me that since I was more occupied with the "People of Tafheen" so he was not much willing to cooperate, with me. By the "people of Tafheen" he meant those families who are members or sympathisers of Jamat-e-Islami, a fundamentalist religious party, and "Tafheem-al-Quran" is the commentary on Quran by its founder Syeed Abul Ala Mawdudi. Although this commentary of Quran is widely used by Most of the villagers but a particular family of the village who happens to be also the top status Family of the village was denoted sarcastically with this.
Anyway, I used all techniques to determine the social rankings of the various families and ethnic groups of the village. Particularly "Simple Assignment", "Matched Agreement", "Institutional Membership" and "Status reputation" was found more useful. For this purpose I interviewed forty (40) respondents from all ethnic groups of Muslims in the village. The respondents were selected because of their knowledge about the entire community of the village. Their knowledge were the result of their instinct and their abundance of leisure time not by any other necessity but by the choice of their own, except in few cases like interview with the village Makhia who is the elected head of the village. Some others who are consensual heads and the village elders, because of their personal status and knowledge were also interviewed. The composition of the respondents from various ethnic groups is given (See Table). The interviews were tape-recorded and finally analyzed.

**Inter-Ethnic Social Ranking:**

The village Malmal has nine different Muslim ethnic groups. The Shaikhs are the largest and most developed among them educationally and economically both and are traditional land holders of the village. They comprise more than half of the total Muslim population. Normally the village is identified with this group in the locality. The various Muslim
ethnic groups in the village are hierarchically ranked and are placed in vertical orders (See Table ). The rank order of these ethnic groups are determined by the respondents' evaluation of the social standings of these groups. Table shows the agreement and disagreements of the respondents on their placements. While Shaikhs are placed on top Unanimously by all the respondents, there are a little disagreements for the places of other ethnic groups. It is largely because of the assertion of the respondents of one group for the place which are generally assigned by others to the another group. The competition is among those ethnic groups who are large in their size and they have been able to gain some wealth by pursuing different occupations in the cities. For example the 10% disagreements about the second position in the relative social standing of the Mukeri's has been contended by three respondents from Dhuniya's and one by Darzi. Similarly all the three Darzi respondents have descented for Dhuniya's third position and asserted for their group to be the number three in the status rank order. All those groups who have a respectable size in the community and have achieved a certain degree of economic self-sufficiency have been able to place themselves on upper positions except the Faquirs. For instance Jolaha's i.e. Weavers are always placed on the first position among the so-called Ajlaf categories but in Malmal due to their negligible size and relatively bad performance in
educational, economic and religious fields, they are an ethnic group who are considered 'as if' they are not there. Their presence as a separate category is never felt. The relative lower position of Faquirs, despite of their large size and their better economic position is subscribed to their bad traditional occupation i.e. beggery and present occupation i.e. butchery. Moreover they are less Islamized and are victims of all bad habits which accompany the illiteracy and ignorance.

**Intra-Ethnic Social ranking:**

Shaikhs are the dominant ethnic group of the village and are traditional land holders. All other ethnic groups of the village, in past, were poors and were the agricultural labourers associated with some of the Shaikh families bound by the ties of Patron-client relationships. Since the abolition of bounded labour system and opening up of new opportunities in various cities, many people of these groups migrated to the cities in search of better payments of their labour, leaving behind them their families. This brought not only economic freedom but a degree of self reliance among the various ethnic groups. Since still these groups are under economic and educational backwardness as compared to the Shaikhs and still most of them depend upon the agricultural lands of the Shaikhs, they have not been able to assert for
the better social positions. Mukeris are exception in the sense that barely any one of them are agricultural labourers. Instead they prefer to be the Industrial labourers. Their main strong holds are calcutta's ship dock where they work as labourers or in nearby towns or in the village where they have small shops of groceries. Some of them are engaged as share-croppers on the fields of Shaikhs. They are economically rising community which Shaikhs normally do not look at kindly. But they do not aspire for a better social position. Although they occupy the second position in the status ranking of the Muslim ethnic groups of the village but the gap in the status of Shaikhs and Mukeris is very wide. It is largely because of their educational backwardness and religious ignorances. Some of them have been able to achieve a status in society because of their considerable advancement in economic fields along with observances of religious norms and they are widely respected even by the Shaikhs. Their families are also living with these expectations and they are in a process of building a family status. Similar is the case with the other ethnic groups who are even economically more backwards and educationally their performance is negligible. In this sense they all lack the socially and Islamically approved life style and hence have a lower status. Since most of them share the similar socio-economic backgrounds within themselves so the
internal differentiation among them is negligible making the groups more coherent and uniform.

The Shaikhs who were able to establish themselves as the dominant ethnic group long ago by the virtue of being the oldest settlers and traditional holders of the means of economy in the feudal society, are much more differentiated within themselves. Some times it looks as if they are more rigidly stratified among themselves as compared to the ethnic differentiations of the village. Those who were able to perform well in all the fields desired by the status criterion floated to the top status positions and those who were not fortunate enough sank is the bottom.

The respondents when asked about the relative social status of different individuals and families and were asked to rank them as they make them the total muslim community they were able to identify only those families who are normally identifyable to any one who spends some time in the village. Moreover all the upper rankers were from the Shaikh groups while some low rankers were identifyable in some other ethnic groups to. Seven different layers of statuses have been identified by the respondents which go on to make up the total status system of the village. While upper four layers are more easily identified by them, the lower three layers were difficult to the identifyable. The reason for this difficulty were the overlapping nature and
relatively large numbers of families which were to be placed by them in those layers. More often they got confused in the placements while for the upper four groups they were very clear. The relative social standing of the various families in the total system of Muslims in the village is shown in table.

The name Haveli, which means "House of the lord" is given to the Family which is the oldest 'Khandan' of the village. They were the holders of Jagir and most of the landed property of the village. Moreover they had their land in many of the nearby villages. According to the informations provided by the villagers, they are the main parent Family of the Shaikhs. All other families of the Shaikhs are their progenies. Till fifty years ago they were the only recognized status Family and were taken into very high esteem in the locality. Since centuries of keeping together under one Family name, some off-shoots developed and crystallised into another status, Families. They themselves polarized into the camps of their two off-shoots; Rahman and Imam Families. Moreover the rising number of family members, their dependence upon traditional mode of economy i.e. agriculture and the changing new socio-economic situations compelled them to sink a little low on the status scale. The maintenance of the earlier status needed more money while the limited lands were divided and redivided among the growing number of family members. The shrinking lands were unable to bear the burden of the status and in the process
of struggle to maintain their inherited status, the inherited lands were gradually sold out and they became a downward mobile Family.

While the Khandan 'Haveli' is rated as Middle upper, but out of the total 31 families of Haveli 26 have been placed in this layer and 7 are placed in the upper-middle. Among those who are placed in middle-upper, 12 of them are those who are close to the upper-upper family i.e. Rahmans and 14 of them are more close to lower-upper i.e. Imams. Most of the Haveli 'A' group have close connections with Rahmans but some of them have relations with Imams too. Similarly 'B' group of Haveli have much relations within themselves and with the Imams. But they also have connections with other layers of upper-middle groups. The seven families of Haveli Khandan who are placed in upper-middle have their illustrious background because of their being in that status Family. But since many generations before they became downward mobile because of their deteriorating economy and ill education. But now some of them are progressing well within these spheres.

The Imams are the off-shoot of Haveli. Since many generations ago they were able to maintain a separate identity but were associated as allies with the Haveli Khandan. They are sons of three brothers and still only two brother's sons use the surname of Imam. While sons of another brother use the
surname of 'Husains' but they are associated with the Imams in matter of mutual social intercourse due to their blood ties. The present 'Mukhiya' or the elected head of the village happens to be from this family, and the 'Sarpanch' is also from the Imams but he uses the surname of 'Alam'. Both are parallel second cousins. Only the son's who are in the third generation of the family lineage use the surnames of 'Imams'. While sons of the present Mukhiya whose name is Wajid Husain and the sons of his first cousins use the surname of 'Husains'. But all of them share the similar life-style, educational level and cultural proximity with the Islamic norms. All of them are regarded as one Family sharing the similar status. It is noteworthy that the political power of the village in terms of the office-bearers of the village Panchayat rests with this Khandan but they are not taken into the highest esteem. Rather they are rated as third and placed in the lower-upper status group.

The real status Family of the village are Rahmans who are also off-shoots of the Haveli. Notion of the Family as status group is more developed and elaborate among Rahmans. They also give a real picture of the ways of the establishment of a 'House' and its process of extension and transformation in a status 'Family'. They are now placed at the top of the status ladder and are rated as upper-upper in the status. The
genesis of the Family can be traced back to the sixth generation from present but its assertion and recognition as separate status Khandan is a recent phenomena. In the history of this Family we get a clear picture of the forces of break-away tendency from the parent Family and a gradual and steady progress towards the establishment of a new, leaving behind the parent Family in the total status summation.

Although the break-away tendency started nearly six generations ago, but the process of the establishment of a separate 'House' started four generations earlier, by Abdul Waheed and Abdul Aziz both step brothers. The credit goes largely to Abdul Aziz who swung the process of the establishment. When discriminated by his step brother and was denied the proper share in the property, he was established by giving lands and some money by the Haveli Family. His mother was from the Haveli Khandan. Having no much land to pursue the traditional occupation of agriculture, he turned towards business and earned a lot of money from dairy and leather business. Land was a symbol of prestige in the traditional society and to acquire the land, opportunities were there because of the repeated failure of the monsoon. Landholders needed money and he, the land. Bargain was easy. He acquired much lands. Moreover, he had six sons; another privilege for his rising tendency. Most of them got some secular education a rare thing in that time, one son got educated from "Nadwa" a high seat of religious
learning in Lucknow. This added yet another feather in his cap and he got wide respectability among the villagers. Personally he was of religious character and his personal piety became another factor for his high esteem in the eyes of the villagers. But still he was unable to get a separate recognition although he was able to achieve success in establishing a 'House'. The political leadership of the village was vested in Haveli Family. But his step brother's son was able to snatch away some of the political power from the Haveli Family. The age saw a constant struggle for power between some of the members of Haveli and his nephew. Later on, his own son became the Assesor of Darbhanga Raj giving a political edge to his family. During the course time and perhaps out of the necessity of the power struggle which demanded unity, they weeded out the differences and were united. While his son Abdur Rasheed who was Assesor became the major tool for dominance politically, his nephew Abdur-Rafeeq was a great manipulator of these political opportunities. Moreover, they were very generous in making favours to the favourable and ruthless against the enemies. They were also patrons of literary and cultural activities in the village.

Now the second phase of the development started. The next generation was given more better education and most of them graduated and post-graduated from the local and some of them from other prestigious national Universities. Since this
generation they also started keeping their surnames as 'Rahman'. Meanwhile a new trend was also in progress. One of the nearkin of their ancestors were holding the largest landed property in the village and were associated with the Haveli Khandan. He had only one daughter for succession. She was married with one of the most noble and religious scholar from the Haveli Family, Maulvi Noor-al-Hoda who was educated from Deoband and was a colleague of famous Muslim Congress leader Maulana Abdul Kalam Azad. He was held in high esteem by all. He died premature and got only one daughter who was married with Hakeem Zahoor Ahmad, a sister's son of Abdur-Rafeeq. He also was a religious scholar and became influenced by the then, newly founded Jamat-e-Islami and was taken in high esteem. His life style and delicate manners became proverbial. He also died prematurely leaving behind four daughters who were inheritors of large landed property and Islamic legacy. All these four sisters are now active members of Jamaat and are symbols of Islamic personalities in women's context.

Now two grand sons of Abdul Aziz and one son of Abdur-Rafeeq were married with them. While the youngest is married in the Haveli Family. Now the process of the establishment of family came to an end. They had economy, education, political power and Islamic normative style backed by the growing size of the Family. The transfer of status from one Khandan to the
another was complete. They out flanked Haveli Family in all aspects and established themselves as the upper-upper status Family and Haveli sank to the second position.

But recognition of the Family as separate entity was still de-facto and another generation was needed to make it a 'de-jure'. The people were still alive who saw the entire process of the establishment and were themselves a party in those struggles. They were hesitant in recognizing them as 'Rahmans' - a separate status Family. The fourth generation of the Khandan have lived to the expectations and some of them are doctors in Saudi Arabia and they have been able to accumulate more wealth, adding more prestige to the Family. Most of the members of this Khandan are educated and are employed in various higher government jobs. Some of them are opting for business and have enough money at their disposal to invest. Simultaneously, they kept themselves well within the boundaries of Islamic norms and Ideals and are constantly adopting some of the modern life ways which are permissible well within the Islamic boundaries. These factors have added to their status and they have become a Family with whom all other families try to be associated. The two other status Families compare themselves with them and try to show that they are not less in any aspect. They usually make derogatory remarks about them and try to show that though they claim to be the strict adherents of Islam but in practice they are not
so. Their life-styles and overall progress is an envy for other lower status families of Shaikhs. Now they are recognized as separate status Family and no one is hesitant about this fact. In short, it took them some four generations to build up as 'Family' of separate status since the very inception of a 'House'.

In the Upper-Middle layers are those who have some virtue attached with their personalities. Either they are economically better off or religiously pious. All of them have right lineage but have not been able to progress at a desired rate of growth. Like Maulana Hafeez and his sons are taken in high esteem. One of his son has returned from Cairo after completing his degree from Al-Azhar. His elder brother Maulvi Aquil was one of the highly respected religious personalities of the village. His poetries are sung with great admiration by the villagers because of its sufistic flavour. They are most respected people and non doubts their credibility. Moreover, they have nothing at stake in the village politics and hence they have not harmed anyone's interest which has given them a neutral status in the village. Similarly all others in the other status groups are those who are just identifiable because of some characteristics which are needed for status. But all of them have done some progress in one or two aspects while other aspects are left neglected. For instance,
some has got economy to a considerable extent but lacks the culturally desired life style. Some are religious personalities, but have not been able to do well in other fields. In short, they have not been able to translate their achievements into socially desired ways because of their uni-dimentional developments. But because of their development in at least one single dimension of the total status system, they are identifyable among non-identifyables. They have not been able to develop a surname for their family untill yet. Instead the status of the family is vested in one single personality. They are still in the process of the establishment of a status family. Among the villagers they are not treated as "Khandani log" or "people of the status Families".

In the bottom of the status ranking are those who are unfortunate lot; who make the mass of the population. They are either agricultural labourers or work in the cities as labourers or semi-skilled workers. While in cities they are "refuses of the society", in the village at least they are accepted within the social fold. So the real status group are not those who are in the dominant ethnic group by virtue of birth alone. Instead the status Families are those who have established themselves within the community and locality as well, by virtue of being the members of the dominant ethnic group backed by a number of the desired tangible and intangible factors which have been
the distinct qualities of them not only at present but these qualities were cherished by their ancestors during a long span of time and have come to them in form of an inheritance— they are inheritors of these legacies.

The lower layer of that particular ethnic group were not fortunate enough to inherit such a legacy and are subjected to similar treatment as the members of other subordinate ethnic groups. They reflect a culture of poverty which they share with the others of the similar social standings. Occasionally they are reminded of their past, sharing the same blood particularly when other ethnic groups asserts and these develops a situation of inter-ethnic conflict. Usually these are that weaker areas of the ethnic boundaries where the people of subordinate ethnic groups who are identifiable because of their considerable economic progress, find some freedom of free social intercourse, and it is that very area from where they enter into a hypogamous marriages.

The Village Inter-actional pattern:

Now we will discuss the general patterns of interactions of the village and we will focus on the endogamous nature of the various status layers, their styles and the structure of preferences and the pattern of comensality in intra and inter-ethnic terms.
As we have observed, there exist a high level of status differentiation among the Shaikhs themselves. We have found seven layers of hierarchically ranked status system operative among them. But this stratification system is not very rigid, although every one does recognize a hierarchy of status. Particularly the Rahmans, the Family of Upper-Upper social standing are preoccupied with themselves and are status conscious people. The Middle-Upper and Lower-Upper status Families i.e. Haveli and Imam Khandans are always critical about the Rahmans. They are constantly evaluating themselves and their status in Rahman's comparison. Rahmans have become a reference model for them particularly with regards to their religiosity. Not only that, they are always in search of some loopholes in Rahman Family and if they find some they make a hue and cry for that. While Upper-Middle always keep themselves aware of these happenings sometimes they also make themselves a party of that but usually keep themselves away from the limelight of any such controversies. Similarly all lower layers try to restrict themselves within themselves and keep a cordial relations with all the upper strata. The exception to these rules may occur in case of some crisis or a general feud with the members of any Upper strata family.

This system has flexibility in the sense that it is easy to climb on the status ladder for the lower strata of
the shaikhs who belong to the dominant ethnic groups. The chances for status mobility are not as fair for the subordinate ethnic groups. If the lower group among shaikhs are able to perform well in those areas which go on to make up the total status system they will be upward mobile on the status scale immediately. Particularly economy and education along with a certain degree of Islamization can be easily translated into socially approved and desired lifestyle. While this privilege is not with the other subordinate ethnic groups who, to whatever extent perform in these fields, they may be able to achieve a certain degree of status but they cannot cross the ethnic barriers. Moreover, this distinction of ethnic differences are more perpetuated by themselves who although try to imitate the highers of the dominant ethnic group, but consciously try to keep their ethnic identity intact.

Endogamy: All the ethnic groups of village are strictly endogamous. They prefer to be married within their own baraderis of the same village or from any other village in their matrimonial alliance. The economic and educational achievements along with the Islamization has never been able to eliminate the ethnic barriers. Not only the ethnic barriers but the status barriers are more compulsive for endogamous marriages.
Shaikhs who are dominant ethnic group are not only endogamous within themselves but also they practice status engogamy. First they try to find a match within the Family. The parallel cousin and cross cousin marriages are more preferable to them. If they do not find a match within themselves they try to get it from the 'Allied families' and with those Shaikhs who have similar social standing in another villages. These villages include only those which constitute the beraderi. Not only that, they are also more selective in the choice of the villages too. In this way they form marriage circles of similar social standings. Most often the considerations are place more on those who share the similar life style. But it is not necessary that if a family has entered into the marriage alliance with another family, they will also reciprocate or restrict themselves only with them. Rather, they also enter into another marriage circle out of the necessity of better match or compulsion of blood ties and many others. In this way there exist, if we look at entire beraderi, a kind of chain which bind them in a common chain united together with such marriage ties.

These points can be illustrated by the empirical realities of village. For instance, Rahmans who are top status Family of the village usually marry among themselves and hence most of the male members of the Family are married with their
parallel cousins or cross cousins. When they do not find a better match for the girls when they look into the marriage circles which constitute few status families of three villages. They are very selective in the choice of families and villages and more than anything else, they prefer the families whom they consider as proximate neighbours of their culture and life style. These life styles constitute a high degree of correspondence with Islamic normative principles and it is considered more when they search for match in their marriage circles. Sometimes this consideration is given more priority even to the economic factors. No doubt, blood ties do play an important role but most often it is subordinated to the Islamic considerations. Moreover, they have a very developed form of literary and aesthetic senses. This also makes them distinct and other families do find themselves incompetent enough in these areas. They are not only conscious of that but have a sense of pride for it.

Particularly they do not try to find a match within the village except in their own kins groups and allied families. In the current generation when they have become a real status group the selective nature has taken more rigid forms. With the Haveli's they have two marriages; one girl giving and one girl taking. Similarly with Imams they have only one instance of girl giving while in the previous generation they took one girl from haveli and two from Imams. While they have a soft
corner for the Haveli's they have very harsh attitude for Imams. According to them it is largely because of their deviance with the Islamic normative styles. Most of the marriages of the girls, who were not been able to be consumed by the Family itself, are in the four villages i.e. Dostpur, Ekhatta, Bhalni and Moreth. Dostpur is the most favourite for them and most of the marriages outside their Family are in one single Family of Dostpur, who are the status Families. Nearly six girls are married with a particular branch of that Family, while two girls are taken from another branch of the same Family. Next to Dostpur are Ekhatta where one girl is married while two are to be married. In other two villages they have given one girl each to the status Family of that village. With these two villages they have limited alliance not only in the matter of marriages only, but even in social interactions. These marriages have been arranged because of the unavailability of the match in desired other status Families. For instance, marriage in the Mooreth was a result of this compulsion. Although family is placed in top status layer of the entire beraderi, but some bad deeds of the past generation and deviant life style from the Islamic normative system had given them some bad reputations. However marriage was made possible, but the groom got a tough time in the adjustment within in-law's house and bride was herself in great difficulty in the adjustment in a less Islamic environment. Simultaneously the groom found himself less acceptable
in the Rahman family. This lead to the estrangement and some
tensions but slowly groom tried to Islamize himself; Islamized
himself to a considerable extent. Now he is well accepted and
recognized within Rahmans.

The marriage in Ekhatta negates the economic considera-
rations. The marriage ties were established largely because of
life-style proximity. Economically the groom's family is weak
but share the similar status within his in-laws house. It
will be exaggeration to say that economy has nothing to do with
the recognition of the grooms in the Rahman Family. Those who
have good economic backgrounds and avail a high status in their
respected villages and they also enjoy a high status in the
beradari. When they are married, they are easily recognised
and become popular in in-law's family.

The choice of mates within the Family is also subject
to the value preferences. More value is given to those who
are off-springs of a couple, both of whom do belong to the
same family. For instance in the previous generation one
Rahman Family member was married with an Imam girl. When
they tried to find out a match for their eldest son within
the family they faced difficulty because most of the girls
were engaged with the boys who had both the parents form
the same family. After a long time they succeeded in getting
a girl who was much younger than the boy. The girl became
available because her earlier engagement with her first parallel
cousin was broken because of the boy's bad character. So he, the son of a Union of Rahman father and Imam mother, was the second choice.

Similarly, the wives from another village enjoy a neutral or indifferent relations with the others. While the wives from Imam family do not enjoy a cordial relations, rather they are accepted with a degree of repulsive attitude. The family members do interact with them on a limited scale. There has developed a mutual mistrust between these two Families and this distrust never fades away from their mind even after marriage alliances. It lurks in their sub-consciousness and unconsciously they fall prey to these feelings, jeopardising the entire relations with those family members who have any connection with the Imams.

Rahmans have married two of their daughters in other than Haveli and Imam families. One girl is married with a doctor who does not belong to any status family, rather they are in the process of establishing a 'House'. His father is a doctor and had a very low family status and carried out his studies in abject poverty. He married with his cousin sharing the similar economic and social backgrounds. Due to his professional advantage he got the access to the top families. Since his beginning he attached himself with the Rahmans and maximized his friendship ties to the extent of unrestricted
social inter-course with that Family. Simultaneously, he
developed Islamically approved personal character and life
style. He educated his sons and daughters and his elder son
is a doctor and younger is doing a course in engineering.
His eldest daughter is the first female graduate of the
beraderi. He had occupational status, education and economy
backed by Islamic proximity—developed a friendship ties with
Rahmans at the expense of the negligences towards his own blood
ties. All he needed was a family connection. He married his
doctor son with one of the girl of the Rahman Family. By this
marriage alliance now they are recognized as possessors of
high status. However, he has married his one daughter in Imam
Family.

Second Rahman girl is married in a family of fourth
layer. This marriage was an outcome of an unfortunate circum­
tances in which girl got a bad name and hence it was not
possible to get a match form any status family. In this way a
member of the fourth layer was accepted.

Similarly other families also try to confine themselves
within themselves. All of them prefer to marry within them­
selves and if do not find a suitable match, they form a marriage
circle which constitute families of similar layer or are in
proximity to these status layers. The elders do value blood
ties, while the youngers are more inclined towards status
considerations and particularly a tendency is in the development where education and economy are being more valued than any other factors. Most of the other ethnic groups are also endogamous but since they have not an elaborate status system as it is among Shaikhs, so they usually marry within themselves and beraderi considerations along with economy are more valued by them in the matter of mate selections. Blood ties do play a role but it is growing weaker day by day.

It does not mean that there do not occur exogamous marriages. When a person married outside his ethnic group, it is generally believed that his status is degraded in the society. But in practice it is not a generalized rule; instead it varies from case to case. Many decades before this might have been so, but at that time too exogamy was not out of scene. It is noteworthy that in the village there is barely any instance of hypergamy which might have occurred between the members of Shaikhs and other lower ethnic groups. There are more instances of such hypergamous marriages in other beradri villages. On the other hand there are some cases of hypogamous marriages in the village. As stated earlier it is the lower rung of the Shaikhs where high ups of other lower ethnic groups do find a chance for free social interactions. Some of the members of the lower status groups of the Shaikhs feel disgusted by the fact that although they also do belong to the
dominant ethnic group but are subjected to the similar treat-
ments like the lower ethnic groups. The girls of that status
groups might feel the idea a little bit tempting in marrying
the people of better economic positions of lower ethnic
groups where she may find economic security and her social
status within in laws house may be elevated because of her
being a member of dominant ethnic group of the village. I
came across two such cases of marriages between Shaikh girls
of another village and Dhuniya boys of Malmal. Those Shaikh
girls belong to a village where Shaikhs are not well off and
share a culture of poverty and ignorance with other Muslim
ethnic groups. These marriages generated a lot of tension
between the Shaikhs and Dhuniyas of the Malmal. It also
involved litigation and gradually the tension died away without
involving any ethnic violence. But the girls who married with
the members of lower ethnic group in search of better status
within that ethnic group, were not been able to achieve so.
Merely being a member of dominant ethnic group is not enough
rather the status symbol is necessary. This case may be
illustrated by yet another example of such marriages. A family
of the lower-middle status group of the village has entered into
marriage alliance with a Mukeri and then with a Darzi. Usually
such types of marriages are products of love affairs rather
than of arrangements. First there starts love affairs then the
couple elope and some times the lower ethnic groups gives
protection to these couples and encourage such type of activity. The family of the girl while get a bad name they have no alternative than to accept the marriage. The girl won't be acceptable to any Shaikh. And by accepting the groom as son-in-law, they justify their act by his being a Muslim which is the sole criterion for marriage in Islam. In the similar fashion, the two marriages of the family mentioned have occurred but here the status of the girls in their respective ethnic groups of their husbands are high because they belong to at least an identifiable family of the village. The girls subsequently loses her status or recognition within their parents ethnic group i.e. Shaikhs. While Shaikh male members do prefer to marry within their own ethnic group this does not mean that they do not enter into such types of love affairs with other ethnic groups. The lower ethnic groups barely find a place of free interaction with the Shaikhs and the Shaikhs find almost everywhere such opportunities. The basic difference is that the members of the lower ethnic groups try to transform such type of relationships into a permanent marriage. On the other hand the Shaikhs, who have nothing to get from such marriages, try to keep it on the level of love affairs or in the form of extra marital relationships. But these interactions are done generally within the low status groups of Shaikhs and subordinate ethnic groups, because not a single eye brow will be
lifted in the village when a lower status group of Shaikhs will sit in the houses of lower-ethnic groups. But on the contrary, when a boy from high status family will even pass through their locality it will be a matter of concern for all. There are some other forms of exogamy among Shaikhs. Some of them who live in cities, either for the purpose of education or for jobs have entered into exogamous marriages. Earlier only the males took their wives form the Muslims of the cities, but in recent years some of the girls have been also married into the cities. These girls have been married because of the unavailability of suitable matches among themselves. These marriages are arranged affairs and are made possible by the changing attitudes of the educated people who do not have the same rigid ethnic and family considerations as it were previously held. But still these instances are largely exceptions and most of the educated people try to marry within themselves.

It is pre-mature to judge the relative status of the off-springs of these girls but it is assumed that they will be cut-off from the beraderi ties during the passage of the time and it will be hard for their children to be married again within their natal families. While the off-springs of the male members who have married outside their beraderis and mostly in the cities, are not discriminated or are subjected
to any other treatments. Rather they are being taken well within the folds of their families. There is no hesitation in marrying with them, as far as status permits. They are also placed on the similar status ranking where their families are.

Commensality:

In the village Malmal there isn't any elaborate rules of commensality between the various Muslim ethnic groups. The status summation of a family or individual guides the general pattern of commensality. There is nothing like the concept of purity or pollution, in the matter of food exchanges. Neither there is any developed notion of superiority in giving than taking of foods. One way exchange is neither a matter of preference nor a subject of value.

On many occasions the Cooked foods are sent to near relatives to show a sign of grace and belongingness. This is the best area where common ties are at display. There are many humourous jokes in the village about how a particular cooked food was sent by one family to his near kin in the morning and it circulated in the gift form from one family to the another and finally returned to the same family in the evening. This shows their oneness which tie them together. Among Shaikhs usually there is no conception or consciousness of status in the matter of food giving. Neither there is any hesitation in
dining with each other. Often there comes such occasions when feasts are arranged by some family and all of them sit together to dine. Even enter-ethnic distinctions are not observed at such occasions. If some one hesitates to sit in-front of some one, it is because of their un-desired style of eating.

Usually Rahmans are the Family who host such feasts particularly at the occasions of marriages or two Ids or when the two doctors who live in Saudi Arabia return home for vacations. In these feasts, most of the families of the Shaikhs and some families of other ethnic groups who have in their conception, achieved a certain degree of cultural attainment or desired life styles or have some influence within their respective ethnic groups or are clients or allies, are invited. In such dinners, all Shaikh invitees and those who are from other ethnic groups sit together on the same mattresses in the company of each other. But all those who have not been able to achieve such desired styles, tend to sit together in one corner of the same mattress. If they sit with others, non object, rather they themselves prefer to sit in separate corners because they feel uneasy with the upper group people out of the burden of desired etiquette and manners and hence they are not able to enjoy the food properly. These segregated style of sitting on the occasions of feasts are a resultant of psychological
considerations — a fear of violating the desired style of eating. But never pollution or uncleanliness are factors of such segregations.

Not only that, the system is more flexible in many more ways. I saw a Hindu untouchable who never have thought to dine with the Shaikhs, when he converted to Islam, he is also seen on such occasions sitting together.

It usually happens that on Idd occasions the subordinate ethnic groups of Muslims send cooked foods to the houses of those Shaikhs with whom they are related in anyway. Sometimes it happens that some one of lower ethnic group wants to host a dinner to any high up among Shaikhs but think it not proper because they won't like the preparations. So he collects all the necessary things which can be needed for a good dinner and gives it to the desired family and request to prepare it themselves and eat it in the spirit, as if, he has hosted the dinner.

To summarize, we can safely conclude that the pattern of social stratification in the village Malsal is in the form of inter-ethnic relationships. But this is extrovert expression of the system of stratification. In real sense, the internal stratification rests on the status summation endemic to them as being Muslims. The real units of social stratification are in terms of status 'Families', whose elementary form is 'House'.
While 'House' represents a household or family whose status is determined by the head of the family - his achievements in socio-economic and religious terms. When these achievements are furthered by his descendants through the generations they turn into the 'Status Family'. So the 'Status Family' is the collection of the basic units of families who have common ancestor and are related to each other with blood ties. They share the similar life-style and are collectively ranked at the social scale. The status summation of the Families rests on some factors such as their Ethnic affiliation, family lineage, economic condition, level of education and a life-style proximating the Islamic normativeness. Moreover, these status Families usually belong to the dominant ethnic group of the village or locality. The factors which make an ethnic group dominant are their size, their politico-economic power, educational levels attained by its members and their overall degree of Islamization. The logic of dominance of an ethnic group and the equation of becoming a status Family is more or less same.

The ethnic groups are divided in terms of 'Families' who are finally ranked in the total status system within and without that particular ethnic groups and Muslims of the village. When these Families become many generation old it breaks and forms two or more separate families, both marked with different social standings. They usually, tend to be
endogamous. If they do not find enough match within themselves they try to form a marriage circle with the families who are proximal neighbours within the village or from another villages in their relations. The other member families of the marriage circle does not necessarily restrict themselves to this marriage circle alone, rather they may enter into the marriage alliances with other families or marriage circles out of compulsion of better matches. These status violations are usually justified through the considerations of all of them sharing the similar blood. The functional side of this status violation is that while there is segregation or segmentation of families in status terms, simultaneously they are inter-linked with the each other with such types of marriage relations reinforcing the ethnic solidarity.

Similarly the inter-ethnic relationships are also marked by the similar processes. While each ethnic group is endogamous, often these endogamous norms are violated by Inter-ethnic marriages cutting across the ethnic boundaries. These violations result in form of some tensions. These tensions are minimized and the violations are justified by Islamic vocabularies and Idioms, stressing that it does not recognizes any such false barriers. While these violations weaken the ethnic rigidity, it also reinforces the communal solidarity.
The behaviouristic pattern of the society needs certain level of stratification for its proper functioning. In the response to these systemic needs, Muslim societies also differentiate in terms of ethnicity. But in due course this ethnic boundaries become more rigid and stand in stark contradiction to the Islamic Ideals. But the demand of Ideal and its provisions while makes a point where Muslim can rally for their legitimate demands, it also provides an opportunity to violate the existing un-Islamic rigid stratification and social discriminations. In this sense the Islamic Idealism are supported by those who are oppressed and depressed by social circumstances. These also kindle the lamps of hope in the hearts of many of the Muslim masses and provide the psychological nursing to the deep sours of unfortunate Muslims who are the victims of social circumstances. In this way constantly Islamic Ideal are re-created in the actual practice providing the vitality and dynamism to the Muslim societies.
CHAPTER VII
The Household

Every society begins with the family. It is the basic social unit where every one is born and after being socialized, he enters into the full social system. The basic social unit in the village Malmal is 'ghar' or household. The types of households range from nuclear, joint and extended to incomplete family types. Villagers do not make any distinction between these types, rather a household or 'ghar' in their conception does consists of the relatives living in one house and cooking in one kitchen and the expenditures are met by a common purse.

The common mode of residence after marriage is verilocal but uxorilocal settlements are also practiced. It happens when a person has only one daughter or many daughters without a son. In such cases, sister's son is preferred for marrying with one's daughter. After marriage the groom settles in his in-laws house and helps them in looking after lands, and property. But it is not a rule unto itself. Any son-in-law, in case of many daughters can be asked to settle with his in-laws. It also depends upon his availability and his wife's more closeness to her father than her other sisters. But in most of the cases people prefer to settle at his own parental home.

Before proceeding further we would like to make a distinction between the types of the families. When we will be
refering to an elementary/nuclear/conjugal type, we will be refering the type of household in which a father, mother and unmarried children are living together. On the other hand, a joint family means a household where father, mother and their married sons and their wives and children live together. This includes three generational structure. An extended type while involves this dimension of vertical depth, it also extends horizontally and includes married brothers their wives and children, widow mother and unmarried brothers and sisters. This is the case when father dies and elder son becomes the head of the household. Sometimes it includes also a widow sister and her children or single widow aunt and so on. The incomplete types are those households where a widow childless or with her children live managing her expenditures at her own. But usually it is only one member household.

In this sense joint families are more preferred in the village. Particularly it is more preferred among upper groups while lower Muslim ethnic groups and lower Hindu castes prefer nuclear types. It is largely because of the scarcity of resources and meagre income to meet the needs of the households. A large type family becomes unmanageable for them and soon after marriage, sons establish separate households. But the types of the households fluctuate, depending upon the varying

economic condition of the concerned family. Sometimes the new bride's behaviour or prolonged unemployment, laziness and inactivity of a son may compel a father to separate the family of his son from his own so that after sufferings he will realize the realities of life and the responsibility. In another situation the large number of children and his meager income can also become a cause of quarrels and separation.

Among higher groups, joint/extended types are more preferred because of their sizeable land holdings and income from other sources. Particularly among Shaikhs the developmental cycle of the household begins with joint type and ends in a nuclear type. They live in a joint family under the authority of father. Father has the responsibility for his sons and daughters. He marry them and accepts the responsibility of maintaining their wives and children. Normally they live together until he is alive. After his death, if all sons and daughters are married then they live together for short periods because the immediate split will be interpreted otherwise by the society. "Samaj keya kahega; baap ke marte hi sab bhai alag ho gaey". In this sense, society expect from them to live together for some period under the nominal headship of mother. Particularly because of mother's "iddat" the period of four months and ten days, it is necessary for them to live together during this period. Otherwise they would be violating Islamic norms in their conception. So, as the period of "iddat" is
over they split into separate families. Though entire society would expect this split but a voice for separation or for property distribution during this period will raise many eyebrows and their status will be degraded.

After this period they make a date of separation and it is made known to all. In the presence of Khandan elders, property is distributed according to Islamic law and father's will. According to the Islamic law all the children and his widow will inherit the left property. A son will get twice that of a daughter and the widow will get the one eighth of the property. In Malmal though all sons get the equal share but the daughters seldom receive her full share. In most cases they demand the pieces of lands which they consider important from their own point of view. For example, if a sister is married into a family which has less rice producing lands or mango groves or a good place for residence, then she is advised by her elders and her inlaws to take only such lands. Brothers usually give without any hesitation. Sometimes father himself arrange the division of property among children before his death. Rarely any dispute occurs on the division of property. Particularly among more Islamized families sisters are given their due share and it depend upon them to take or distribute it among their more needy brothers or sisters. So far no such case of litigation has reached to
to the civil courts. It is also an undeniable fact that sisters hesitate to demand more than they are given because after taking her all shares they would have no place in their brother's house.

Mothers take their share and normally opt to live with one son, eldest or youngest. Some times she prefer to live with the son with whom she has more warm relations, particularly with his wife. In some cases, if she does not take her share then she lives with all sons periodically. For instance in a status family, I came to know that mother was living with all her three sons. The year was divided into three parts and four months were allocated to all the three sons. It was left for them to opt for the seasons in which these four months will fall. The elder, out of love and devotion opted the hard months of winter. Mother was paralysed, so these hard months were a proof of his desire to serve the old mother. And hence, in this way the family got praise from the villagers and beraderi and this dimension added more to their esteem and respect in society. Moreover, their being a good Muslim was proved because Islam has given mothers a place next to the God himself. If some one fails to perform his duty in the maintaining and serving the mother, he is outrightly condemned by all and a popular Hadith of prophet is repeated according to which the paradise is said to be under the feet of the Mother.
If father dies prematurely, mother or the eldest son becomes the head of the household. His responsibility rests not only in the managements of the household affairs but also in providing facilities for the education of young brothers and sisters. Then marrying them all. When all of them are married and get settled, then they can establish their own separate households. I saw many families of such types and many stories of ideal brothers who did their job well in this respect were told by the villagers. Particularly one family in another village in their relations proved to be ideal in this sense. That family was the top most status family of beraderi. Father died suddenly of a heart attack some fifteen years ago. Two sons were married and established, while the rest two were getting education. The family functioned under the headship of second son who cheerfully accepted the burden of responsibilities. One brother completed his education and became an engineer and was married in the Rahman Family of village Malmal. Another brother completed his degree course and was married in the Haveli Family of Malmal. Last year two elder brothers made their own houses at fairly good distance from their original residence and all of them decided a date of separation some six months in advance. All the relatives came on that date, gathered together and all of them separated. Two of them shifted to their new residences and the younger
two were left in the original house. This separation became an occasion. In late night two brothers shifted accompanied by all near kinsmen. In morning at the residence of second brother the near relatives from other villages came. There was a ceremony of 'Quran Khani'; recitation of the holy Quran, in which all the villagers participated. After that, all of them took their morning breakfasts at the same place arranged by the host. During lunch all the relatives from the village and the guest relatives from another villages again took their lunch there. In the evening there was a 'Milad' arranged by the eldest brother in which all of them including the villagers participated. After Milad ceremony all of them took their dinners at the elder brother's new residence. This celebration continued for near a whole week. Break fasts, lunches and dinners were arranged by the near relatives even by some of the guest-relatives who came from other villages. Who did not get an opportunity, either sent the cooked foods to all the four new families or gave uncooked items and some money ranging from Rs. 150/- to Rs. 250/- to the each of the newly separated families. This act of them were a token of solidarity and belongingness. Moreover the week long occasion proved to be a happy event and helped to minimize the tensions which would have been otherwise. The daily dining together even after being separated totally minimized the newly created distance between the separated brothers and gave a sense and meaning that these
are false barriers. All of them are united together until they are one in their hearts.

This noted case is not an established style of separation, rather it is totally a new inclusion. Traditionally the separation of the households are meant a separation of kitchen within the same residential house. The portion of the houses are distributed among brothers, the separation of kitchens means the separation of families. In such cases relatives send the cooked foods to the newly separated families along with some useable items necessary for the establishment of a new household like utensils, beds, pillows etc. Particularly the useable items are sent by the closest kins like uncles or cousins and the inlaws of each brother. Since the cited case was dual in nature, a separation as well as the establishment of new residence, so it was such elaborate in nature. The Muslims of the village in general and Shaikhs in particular do not have an elaborate index of customs; so, on such occasions many new styles, most often indigenously invented, are included.

Moreover, in the above case mother opted to live with the third son. But in few cases it has been seen that the family remained united until the mother is alive. For instance, one of the Rahman family remained under the nominal authority of mother for some thirty years even after all the sons were
married and had their own grown up and married children. For many years mother was ill, but they waited until she died. In such cases it does not imply that there is no tension and conflict. But these conflicts particularly between the wives of the brothers are kept under check and are not allowed to surface and grow out of the proportion so that it could become a matter of gossip in the village. Though main grievances in such cases are because of the more income of one, more consumption by another and many thing else, including the rough use of the 'jahez' or dowry items. The eldest brother's wife will always complain for her loss of all those things which her father gave her. A feeling that when all the brothers will be separated the elders will be at loss, haunt the minds of their wives constantly.

In some other extended types of families, a widow sister or a widow aunt is frequently included. It happens that they live frequently together cooking their foods in common kitchen but a quarell with the wife of the head of the household may result into a temporary separation. At another time, a good relation may include her again within the same household. It is a normal feature in such cases. A clearcut distinction between such types of extended families and incomplete families are hard to make. The occasional unity and frequent splits are the parts of the rhetoric of the familial lifes. The identification of incomplete families becomes more difficult
for a researcher particularly when though all of them live together but they are enlisted as separate family units in the ration lists of the fair price shops. This is done because they get more rations of sugar and kerosin oils at controlled prices. But in any such case of living separately either single or widow with her minor children, they are looked after by close kinsmen. The immediate relative like brother manages her economic affairs and is treated as guardian of her children. In the upper groups of Shaikhs this style of authority functions well. But in the lower income groups, particularly the lower ethnic groups because of its low income and absence of father generates many evils. The matrifocality of the family and poverty results into 'strained types' of family. The children brought up in such families develop a personality deeply imbeded with a psyche of insecurity.

**Family and Kinship Structure:**

There is fairly clear division of labour among the members of a household. Father, due to the patriarchal nature of the family is the bread winner. He performs the instrumental role and commands the authority within the family. He is popularly called 'Abba' by children. Under the western influence some of them prefer to be called as 'dady' or 'Papa'. This is the case with the people who are living in the towns and are in jobs. The general mass did not look on such terms with
favour and are critical of such families. Recently a relatively new terms have been introduced, though it was in practice since a long period but in now becoming, more common i.e. 'Abbi'. Instead of traditional 'Ashraf' style of calling father 'Abbu' they are opting for this term. Perhaps it is a supplementation of the western substitute of dady and papa.

On the other hand mothers perform the expressive role and are taken in high esteem, respect and love. She is entrusted with the duty of cooking foods, rearing the children and maintaining the social relationships with the families of near kins. She is popularly referred as 'Amma' or 'Ammi'.

As the son grows up to the age of maturity he is married. If he takes a job in cities, he starts sending his earning to the family. For many years wife does not accompany him. Instead she is left in the village with her in-laws. If the eldest son is staying in the village, father normally leaves his active life and the son takes the charge of the economic affairs. But the authority and final decision rests with him. Even in his old age he remains the chief decision maker of the family.

In the similar fashion mothers gradually become inactive as the daughters grow. Until a daughter reaches her age of puberty she has known all the necessary art of cookings. Now
she is left with the duty to cook. Similarly she also takes the charge of looking after her minor brothers or sisters. Mothers totally devote their time either in socializing or managing the other affairs of the household. For instance I encountered many such families, particularly one where the elder off springs were girls. Mother left the habit of cooking many years before. Within this period one by one all of them got married and left for their conjugal homes. Again she started cooking but she found so difficult the job now that it became almost impossible for her to cook. A woman's role in maintaining the relationships with their kins are widely acknowledged by the villagers "Rishta to sirf aurat se hota hai". She knows who should be treated how. Who is nearer than the other. What is the tradition and custom which should be observed on certain occasions particularly gift givings and takings.

A mother's prime responsibility is the socialization of the children. Particularly among shaikhs of the village it is normal for mothers to make aware the child with Islamic teachings as early as he starts talking. A mother washing the face of her son will tell him to say "Ashhadu an la illah-a, ila-Allah. Similarly when the child starts eating he will be reminded to say "Bismillah" and use right hand. Sometimes minors are punished for not doing as demanded. While going to
bed, he is memorized the "Kalima Shahada" and many short Quranic suras and some urdu poetries of Islamic nature. Particularly Iqbal's poem for children "Lab pe aati hai dua ban ke tamanna meri" are very famous. In the presence of elders a child of three or four is demanded to sing those memorized poetries. If a mother fails in her duty to memorize her son or daughter, she is held as bad mannered. Particularly her mother-in-law will be very critical of her.

Among the elders, next to the father, patrilateral uncles command more respect and authority. They are the 'Chachas'. An elder brother of father will be refered as 'bare abba' or 'bare-abbi' and next to him 'menjhle-abba' and the younger to the father as 'choote-abba' etc. And for them the children of brother are bhati/a/bhatiji. The patrilateral uncles have authority to enterfere into the household affiars and in the absence of father they are the care-takers and guardians. Their spouses are 'Chachis' and called 'bari amma' 'chauti amma' etc. and are held in respect next to the mother. But the relationship remains more cooardial with the families of two brothers when their wives are also sisters. In such cases the two families though remains physically separate but the love and affection between them reduces this distance to an extent where literally they become one family.

The sister of the father is 'phuphi' and her husband 'phupha'. In a verilocal settlement 'phuphis' normally live
in the villages where they are married. But their occassional return to visit brother's families provide a happy occassions for cousins to be together. If she is married within the same village it adds more strength to the kinship solidarity.

The most helping kinsmen are the matrilateral uncles 'mamus' and their spouses are 'mamis'. For them children of sisters are 'bhegna/bhegni' in crude terms and 'bhanja/bhanji' in refined terms. Entire matrilateral relatives are look upon with more favours and are emotionally closer than the others. Father of one's mother is 'nana' and mother of one's mother is 'nani'. For them they are nati and natni. Mother's sisters are 'khalas' and their husbands are 'Khalus'. These relatives provide an emotional resorts for them. In any bad moment they can turn to them for a favour. They have obligations and duties to fulfil their demands. Moreover, the first child is normally taken care by them. Mothers leave them in their natal homes where they are brought up untill they start reading. In village Malmal most of the daughters who are married in other villages leave their children in their natal homes where they are taken care of and stay untill they have finished their basic learnings in quran and urdu. It is because of the availability of good madarsa for initial religious learnings.

Among one's consangunial relatives lineality, and laterality are ignored but age is considered. For instance one's
male siblings and male cousins refer each other as 'bhai'.
But this 'bhai' indicates simply a relationship. They would
call each other with regard to one's age like 'bare-bhyya'
'chouta bhyya' 'meyan bhyya' etc. If one is unable to
search some suitable terms then he will call by pre-fixing
the name like "Inam bhyya". But normally using name as pre-
fix is not taken as good. Rather other listener will calcu-
late the degree of closeness by such terms. For instance
calling some one 'bare bhyya' will imply that he is either
real brother or first cousin. Calling the same person "Inam
bhyya" will imply that he is a distant relative. Brothers
as the norms demand, will help each other. Sometimes they
develop tensions, jealousy and open conflict but after all
they remain brothers. In a feud with some one in the village
it is brother and his sons who will first come out for help.
Similarly when one is in need of financial support he turns
first towards his brothers. The elder brother's wife is
called 'bhabhi' and younger's 'bhabhu'.

Similarly sisters are called 'bahan'. Brothers have
always a soft corner for their 'bahans'. If she is elder,
she is referred as "baji" or 'aapa'. Sometimes the aestheti-
cally appealing terms are applied with the 'baji' like
"hena baji". If two female cousins are of the same age they
will refer each other with such terms like "Hena" "nargis"
etc. Verilocality separates them from each other after marriages making the emotional ties more strong. Particularly their homes become a place of frequent visit for each other and their grownup children.

In a family wives have a position subordinate to that of husbands. It is expected from them to show difference towards their husbands. In the village wives are called with many terms. In upper groups she is called 'biwi' 'begum' and even 'wife'. In lower groups she is referred as 'biwi' but commonly "gharwali" "joru". Husband dictates his own rights and her duties and among lower groups her position remains pathetic. Among uppers, since most of the wives are from among themselves, so she gets more favourable conditions for the demand of her rights. One can put her in unnecessary hardship at the cost of his own. It has been seen in the village that marriages with cousins have seldom been broken. In some families which are more Islamized and are status Families of the village, a wife often demands her genuine right. If a husband transgresses, then he is reminded of Islam which has given a wife such and such rights. But normally wife surrenders to her husband's will.

If a husband gives his wife her due share and recognizes her genuine rights, her is instantly labelled by the villager's as "Joru ka Ghulam hai". It more intensifies when they find in him a soft corner for in-law's. A frequent
visit to in-law's house can give birth to many gossips within the village. People will gossip as "kuch parha likha kar khiladiya hai". Father-in-law is 'Sasur' and mother-in-law 'Saas'. Since most of the marriages are within close relatives so they are referred by kintterms by which they were used to be called before the marriage. The son-in-law is 'daamad'. In affinal relations too distinctions are made. Wife's elder sister is called 'jeth-sas' and younger as "sali". Brothers of wife are called "salas". For them he is "bahnoi" and is commonly called as "dulha bhai", "nawshe bhai" etc. The relationship with 'sali' 'sala' and his wife 'Sarhoj' are the joking relationships. Similarly husband's younger brother is 'devar' and his sister 'nanad'. These two relationships are also a joking relation. A husband's sister's husband is 'nandosi' and husband's brother's wife 'deyadni'. A noteworthy thing in these relationships are concept of half share in 'bhabhi' and 'sali'. In joking with them these concepts of half share is reminded in lower ethnic groups. But for upper groups particularly among sheikhs such jokings are though permitted to a certain limit but is condemned. 'Salis' and 'bhabhis' as all of them are remained, are in the category of "mahrams". Generally held conceptions are of this nature but the influence of local environment are obvious when the youngs take the liberty and joke with the each other. Radcliff Brown's^2 analysis of the joking

relationships as the mechanism of adjustment seems to be known to the villagers though they have never heard about the anthropologists.

Marriage:

Muslims of the village Malmal consider marriage as essential for both males and females. They also recognize it as 'sunnah' and obligatory for every Muslim. So far I never encountered any individual who has not been married once in his life. Moreover, marrying any Muslim regardless of his/her ethnic affiliation, age and economic backgrounds as permissible by Islam are well recognized by them. Quran prohibits marrying 'mahrams' i.e. mother, father, brothers, sisters, Father's sister, brother's sisters, brother's daughter, sister's daughter, son's wife, wife's daughter and daughter's husband. Moreover a man can not marry two sisters at the same time, nor with his foster mother who has suckled him or the others who had been suckled by her. In the village this relationship is called "doodh shariki bhai or bahan". In selecting marriage partners it is carefully investigated and enquired with the women that she might not have suckled both of the marrying partners.

Age of the Marriage:

Among the Shaikhs the ideal age for the marriage of a girl is below twenty and for a boy below twenty five and
above twenty. Though there are a lot of marriages which do not confirm this ideal. It depends upon circumstances and availability of matches. But in any case late marriages are not looked with favour. Among lower Muslim ethnic groups child marriages are more common. Though among Shaikhs child marriages were practised some half centuries or more ago but now the marriage age is fairly rising. Most often it is now insisted that let the boy first settle. "Larke ko apne pairon par pahle khara hone dijye phir shadi ki koi bat hogi". The old conception of pleasing the elders, particularly the grand parents on whose insistence early marriages were arranged, are today gradually dying out. Even few of the grand parents wish to see their grand children married before deaths. "Marne se pahle bachcho ke sar par sehra dekhne ki tamana thi" is now no longer valid. The traditional pleas of fathers to their sons as "as we are feeding you, we will feed your wife too" are now not given.

In the changing society, from the traditionalism to the modernity, father's are well aware that their son's wife will not only demand food but many things else which they can not provide. In the changing face of the social values they are positively responding and adopting to the new demands, however they dislike personally.

Types of marriages:

The monogamy is the accepted pattern of marriage arrangements among Muslims of the village. But polygamous marriages
are also allowed and practised by them in certain cases. If a wife is unable to bear a child or she is ill behaved or a husband develops love affair with another woman then, he enters into polygamous unions. But these are not the only valid criteria for polygamy. For instance there are many old couples in the village who do not have any child. In some cases, as I came to know that husbands had genuine need to marry with another woman and he was pressurized by his family members but he refused to re-marry. But in some cases it was surprising for me to know that wife herself demanded her husband to take another wife. For instance a person of high status in the village was having many children and grand childrens. The two married daughters were living with their husbands. The remaining two sons were young. Wife's ill health left the family affairs unmanageable. The large property, heavy work loads and day by day deteriorating health of wife left the family in many difficulties. Wife advised her husband to marry another wife. Wife's patrilateral cousin's marriage proposal were broken long before and she was becoming overaged for marriage in the village. Also a suitable match for her was not available so it seemed to them to solve the problem of two families with one single act. In this way he married her. Though second marriage is not looked with favour in the village but his genuine need and personal reputation suppressed any murmur or gossip in the village.
Among the lower ethnic groups of Muslims, polygamous marriages are more frequent than among the Shaikhs. Once I was talking with an educated Shaikh from a status family of the village about the polygamous marriages in his family. Though he was single married but he justified polygamy as far as it serves a positive function. He told me that "you educated and modern people think about polygamy as a taboo, you people can tolerate extra marital sexual relationships but if a person wants to take another wife permitted by Islam, the society stigmatize him. Women today can tolerate her husband's illegal sexual affairs but she cannot tolerate legally sharing her husband with another wife. If you need and can do justice with both of them then you should marry and avoid committing sins".

His remarks give an idea that polygamy is not looked upon with favour either by men or women in general. But in polygamous marriages, wives live in a common house. This common living raises many problems and result into frequent quarells between the wives. Step brothers and sisters usually develop jealousies towards each other. Though it is a common way but there are exceptions. There are many polygamous families which have proved to be more peaceful and ideal for many monogamous families in the village.

Widow remarriages are approved by all the Muslims of the village but it is more in practice among lower ethnic groups.
Among them widow remarriages easily take place. But among Shaikhs it is less common. In past it was frequent among Shaikhs too, but now widows are getting hard time in remarrying. Such marriages do occur when a widower of middle age seek a wife. If a widow is young and childless and do belong to a reputed family then she has a good chance of being remarried. But if she is having children, she prefer to remain a widow. In few cases the children would be acceptable to her new husband and in most case they are left to the family of her deceased husband where it is unlikely that they will be treated well. I have not found any such case among Shaikhs. It was told by the villagers that such cases were in abundance in the past but now it is totally absent. Re-marriage of a childless widow often does takes place but normally the young prefer to be married with a vergin than a widow. Moreover, the scarcity of the suitable matchs compels them either to remain a widow or be married with an old widower having grown up children. In some of the villager's view this problem has taken a bad turn because of the attitude of the society in general and women in particular about polygamy. A widow will prefer to remain a widow all her life but seldom she will prefer to take the status of a second wife. In any way, widow re-marriages are approved and occurs though not so frequently.
Same situation does prevail in the village regarding the re-marriage of a **divorced woman**. It is more frequent among the lower groups so is the divorce. Since among Shaikhs divorces are less common so are the cases of the re-marriages of divorced women. The divorced women also are accepted by only widowers. The affluent and middle aged widowers prefer to re-marry a widow or a divorcee, instead of a virgin. Similarly Muslims of the village Malmal do allow **levirate** but it is also less common. Particularly among Shaikhs it is totally beyond the scence.

**Sororate system** of marriage is more preferred particularly when deceased wife has left many small children. In such cases it is found more beneficial to marry the unmarried young sister of deceased wife. In-laws also prefer to give their second daughter so that children would be looked after more carefully and they won't be victims of step motherly treatments.

**Exchange marriages** are very uncommon among them. There are only few cases of such marriages in the village. The disadvantage of exchange marriages are greatly realized by them. For instance, one family has their daughter and son married into a family of another village. A small quarrel between husband and wife quickly affects another couple. On some issue husband and wife quarrelled, during my stay in the village. Husband sent her wife to her parents home. Second
day his sister came back, in a retaliatory measure.

**Circle of Marriage Preferences:**

The general pattern of marriage preferences and the marriage circles among muslims of the village Malmal has already been discussed in the previous chapter. Here to highlight some points again, we would say that the Muslims of the village are strictly endogamous. They practice endogamy within their own ethnic groups. Ismail A. Lambat while discussing the marriage preferences among sunni surati vohras of Gujrat observes "It is indeed narrowed down to such an extent that when we speak of the group as being endogamous what is actually implied is that there are many small endogamous units within the endogamous framework of the entire group. Furthermore, the preferences for spouses belonging to each one of these units are systematically structured". Lambat's these observations equally apply in the case of Muslims of village Malmal particularly the Shaikhs. Though there are many kinds of preferential marriages but the most preferred type is between partrilateral first parallel cousins. Next to them the matrilateral first parallel and cross cousins, and then patrilateral paralleled distant cousins are prefered.

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After the consanguineal kins come the affinal kins and distant relatives. Moreover the affinal relations are not enough for the selection of marrying partners. Instead there develops a circle of marriages of equal status families within the village. The relatives scattered into other village also constitute this marriage circles if they are proximal neighbours to them in cultural sense. Becoming a cultural proximate depends upon the affinal kinship bonds with many other factors as discussed in chapter on social stratification. They are even more selective in the preference of villages. Some villages are preferred more than others, because of the identification of the village - its reputation in the locality and the culture associated with it. For instance most of the upper groups of Shaikhs prefer to marry in only three other villages i.e. Dostpur, Harpur and Ekhatta. In some cases Bhalni is also preferred. The selection of the three or four villages from the twelve, villages which constitute their beradri, itself tells the story.

Life Cycle Rites:

Muslims of the village Malmal, being the adherents of Islam which makes a total demand on one's life, also observes those religious rites and ceremonies which are prescribed by Islam encompassing the total life cycle. Though in their observances of those rites, the local shades dominate but
essentially the contents and forms are Islamic. The culture which they exhibit is though coloured with local styles but is spirited with the universality of Islam and Muslim Umma.

**Birthing:**

As soon as a woman becomes pregnant the news reaches to the every ear in the kin circle. If she is from a status family then this news spread into the village and beraderi who are awaiting the news since the very day of her marriage. Women are particularly concerned about it. If the pregnancy is first after the marriage, then it is a matter of more happiness and she is treated differently. Relatives send the gifts of cooked foods and fruits for her. It is called giving of "Sadhaur".

For her first confinement the wife goes to her parents' home. It is because of her being at more ease there than in her in-laws house. But now people more often go to Darbhanga where they consult the doctors. Even while going to Darbhanga, she is taken by her parents and all the expenditures are met by them. At the inception of labour pain she is confined into a room where her mother and other female attendants accompany her. No ritual is observed before the birth. In the village, earlier, the village midwife 'chamain' from the Hindu untouchable caste of chamars used to help the women during their labour pains. But now her services are not required. Instead, the elderly family women perform this function.
As soon as the baby is born, his Umbilical cords are cut and tied with a cotton thread. Then both mother and child are washed. Islamically there are no certain specifically prescribed rules regarding a child birth. But there are certain Hadiths concerning what Muslims should do. In this way as soon as child is washed and swaddled, he is brought into another adjoining room where a male member of the family pronounces the call to prayer (adhan) in the child's right ear and in the left ear the call to perform the prayer (iqama) is pronounced. Then he is given some drops of honey into his mouth. Honey was one of the most liked foods of prophet and the unavailability of 'dates' is now supplemented by honey. Interestingly Hindus too give the drops of honey to the new born baby.

The news of child's birth is conveyed to the father's family by any person either a younger brother or a cousin or a client working in the girl's parent's house. Among the Hindus such news are conveyed to father's family of the child by a barber. But among Muslims of the village Malmal it is not practised. If a client takes the news to the child's paternal family then he is given a 'dhoti'. Normally the clients of shaikhs are low caste Hindus so the dress is given to him according to his own tradition. Moreover the wife's family tell their client to convey the news of baby's birth to other paternal relatives. So client goes into the
houses of the baby's paternal relative. All of them give him rupees two to five and some uncooked rice and pulse. This uncooked food giving, to the clients are called in the village as 'Seedha'.

**Chatthi:**

It is a ceremony directly borrowed from the local Hindu practices. However, the conception of celebration among Muslims is quite different. Hindus hold that the convulsive seizures and many other diseases in the form of spirits may attack the child because the sixth day of his birth is full of danger for the attack of such spirits. So they worship 'Sasthidevi' (locally Chatthimai) who will save the child from such attacks. But all Muslims of the village do not celebrate the occasion in this context. Rather most of them even do not know what this ceremony does mean. Moreover, it is practiced by all Muslims of the subcontinent.

The 'chatti' is an occasion of rejoicing. In that night the female relatives both maternal and paternal, gather at the place of birth. Earlier it was the tradition that if the wife is from the same village then the husband's family brought with them the dinner for all persons from both sides, who were expected to be present at the occasion. In case of another village, they used to send one mond of uncooked rice
with mustard oils, vegetables and some money for other preparations to the girl's parents' house. Now this tradition is no longer observed. But they come with one sari suite for the mother and one suite for new born baby. In case the baby is a girl, then they also bring a silver anklets (chandi ka kara) and silver bangles (chandi ki choori). Other relatives also bring with them new dresses for the baby. They also give some money to the baby as they see him first. It has been also customary to give some quantity of grains to the barber, washerman and chamain (mid-wife). In case of a son they used to receive some ten sers of grains each and in case of a daughter some seven sers each.

Many protest movements were launched by the religious people of the village against this practice and hence most of the customary practices have been eliminated. Some of the more Islamized families do not observe this ceremony altogether. But among lower groups it is still observed with many modifications. For instance, it is an occasion of rejoicing. Female folks particularly the younger aunts of the baby sing many Ghazals composed by the poets of the village.

The conception of impurity with the mother and child is not observed as it is in the case of Hindus. Instead after completing the forty days after birth mother is purified and thus she is able to resume the ritual duties from which she
was excused during her parturition and confinement. It is Islamically approved way which they follow.

**Aqīqa**

Islamically it is desired to name the new born on the seventh day after the birth and 'aqīqa' sacrifice should be performed. But this seventh day is not compulsory. So in the village a parallel to the seventh day is 'chatthi' but most of the Muslims of the village know that it is desirable to perform the 'aqīqa' sacrifices on the seventh day.

The word 'aqīqa' refers to the infant's hair which is shaved off and weighed and the equivalent amount of silver should be given to the poor as alms. Then a sacrifice of two sheeps or goats in case of a boy and one in case of a girl should be made. It is Islamically desired way and it has been a practice to name the child at 'aqīqa'. But in the village Mālmal, on the seventh day 'aqīqa' is seldom observed. Though baby's head is shaved in the night of chatthi but it is neither weighed nor its equivalent silver is given in alms. Instead when it seems suitable to the family then 'aqīqa' sacrifices are observed. The birth of a child itself involves much expenditures so purchasing of two goats for sacrifice and arranging a feast for relatives and villagers will give the family economically a hard time. Perhaps so, they do not observe both the ceremonies at a single occasion.
Moreover, since it is also not against the Islam, so they take the advantage of this liberty.

Anyhow, when a child becomes more than one year old, the family arrange for 'aqiqa'. The date is chosen to coincide with some occasion like Ids and others, when most of the family members will be present. The sacrifices are made on the day of aqiqa and child's head is shaved. The hairs are weighed and then the cost of silver of the equivalent weight is calculated and money is distributed among poors. Most of the relatives and some villagers are invited to take the dinner of sacrificial meats. If the dinner is not arranged then the two third quantity of meat is distributed in the village, and rest are kept by the family. At the 'aqiqa' sacrifices child is named. Though naming is not a part of aqiqa but the Muslims of Malmal do not make any distinction. Instead, they mean by aqiqa a religious ceremony of naming. An important thing to note down is the relationship of economy with the observance of 'aqiqa' ceremony. The poors who do not have enough money, most often do not sacrifice. Some times it has been seen that persons who were in abject poverty in their early life, when they got some economic success in late ages then they have observed the 'aqiqa' sacrifices. One of the important notion attached with the 'aqiqa' sacrifices in the village is that after aqiqa sacrifices and naming the divine record book of one's deeds and actions are opened.
Circumcision of Boys - "Khatna"

Circumcision is an essential component of becoming a Muslim. The village Muslims use to circumcise their sons as early as possible. Earlier, as I learnt by the villagers that this ceremony was more elaborate. It accompanied a feast provided by the family to their relatives and other Muslims of the village. But now it is soberly observed.

In most cases village barber (Hajjam) performs the Khatna or circumcision. It is normally done in child's father's house. The relatives are made known that on such and such day the boy will be circumcised. Normally it is done on Friday after 'Nemaz-e-Juma' or Friday congregational prayer. Relatives gather into the internal courtyard 'Aangan' of the concerned family. The boy newly dressed is held by a relative and put on some stool. The barber with all his expertise circumcise him within few seconds. Then the boy, who is normally two years old, is taken back to his mother. In recent years more early circumcisions are being done particularly when child is barely one month old. It proves to be easy for mothers to care the wounded child at this early age.

The Hajjam before circumcising the child put a large dish full of water. After the circumcision the younger relatives particularly children throw coins into that dish, for
the barber. The father of the child gives him some twenty five to fifty one rupees and one 'lungi' depending upon his economic condition. In upper families, after circumcising the first child the barber asks for more favours. He is also given some quantity of uncooked rice and pulse.

**Shroo or Initiation:**

As soon as the child begins to talk he is taught the Islamic phrases and is memorized some of the Quranic short 'suras'. Normally when he comes to the age of three he is taught the 'Urdu Qayda' the first book of Urdu. Then he is taught the initial book containing Quranic names called "Yassarnal Quran". When he completes this book then he begins the thirteenth and the last part of Quran. (Quran is divided into thirty parts called 'paras' containing many 'suras'). In the village Malmal the average age of the child, when he begins the learning of Quran is five. When the child begins learning Quran it involves a brief ceremony, called 'shroo Quran' or the initiation of the Quranic learning. In the village the child is first enrolled into the Madrasa. The concern Maulvi or Hafiz who is to teach him the Quran becomes the focus of this ceremony. The child in new dress parade with his same aged children, normally his cousins. His father, uncles and others follow him with some rice-pudding or some sweets. In madarsa he sits in the middle, surrounded by his friends and
young brothers. Relatives are notified earlier and all of them come to the place. Maulvi or Hafiz starts teaching him his first lesson - the first sura of Quran 'The Fatiha'. Then all present pray for him for more knowledge. Then he is asked to stand up and say 'salam' to alla. Relatives give him rupees in honour of his initiating a significant chapter of his life. Rice pudding or sweets are distributed among children.

The teacher is given money and a pair of 'lungi and Kurta' and some sweets. More often the male and the female relatives also give money to the teacher. Amount of money which a teacher collects at this occasion depends upon the economic background of the child's family. The teachers teaching the children of well-off families anxiously wait for the occasion. I was present at one such occasion. The teacher expected more than he was given. He was dishearted with the paid amount which was less than his expectations. He complained to the child's father. Child's elder cousin remarked that he might have got many times less in case of the children from the lower group peoples and then he would have felt happy. He was compensated by child's father with some more rupees.

Marriage rites and ceremonies:

Marriage proposals:

Since all of the Muslim groups of the village Malmal are endogamous and their preferences are restricted to their
kin circles so the marriage proposals are relatively simple affairs. Most often the parents of the boy and girl agree to marry them when they are quite young. A brother will demand from his sister to give her daughter for his son or grand parents will make the match from the children of their sons and daughters. Sometime two close relatives will tell each other that they were unable to marry their children in past but to make the bond between the two families more strong, they give their daughter of youngest son for the son of my eldest son and sonon. In this way it will be taken as granted by all that they have been engaged with the each other. It is called 'nisbat'. In past such marriage proposals were agreed upon by the two parties, mostly between the grand parents when the children were still in their mother's wombs. But now this dimension has been totally discarded by all of them. But till a decade ago such early engagements were taken 'as if' they have already been married. In most of the cases they were cousins and there did not arise the conception of purdah between them, but if they are "mansubs" with the each other, girl usually stay away from the boy. If he would be coming into the house she will hide herself from him. Since the early childhood they know that they will be married in future. As they grew up, they visualize each other in this context and there develop into their hearts the tender love for each other.
In this sense, Islamically approved ways of taking consent with both the marrying partners were never practised by the parents. Because they viewed that if they had not liked each other they must have given any such indication during the long period of their engagement.

This type of early proposals had a positive function in a society stressing more upon kinship solidarity. Inspite of brothers, sisters and cousins being separated into different household units, since the early days of separation they felt a certain degree of belongingness with each other through the natural love strengthened more by these new relationships which bind each family with the another. The chain of such bonds unites them. Moreover, when it is sensed that the relationship is growing many generations old and the bond is being weaken, it is strengthened by such marriage relationships.

Another positive function of the this type of early arrangements is the absorption of all fit or handicaped within themselves. A physically handicap can get away with such types of arrangements. Instead of the parents of the crippled children, the near kins made the proposal for them with their children. They would argue that "if they donot, then who will care for them" "Agar in bachchon ko hamlog nahin to kon uthaega". In this way some unmatched couples can be found among them. Such couples though suffer from such types arrangements and find
hard to be adjusted in the initial years but with the passage of time they adjust and compromise with the reality of social arrangements. In some cases it has happened that some of them have rebelled by going off the way and marrying another girl or taking a second wife. But normally the people take it as granted and however he is highly educated but confirm to these expectations of their societies. Girl's education among them are limited to the religious education and knowing of Urdu. In such cases boys who are well educated find it difficult to adjust but they do adjust. There is surprisingly low incidences of divorce among them.

But in recent years a lot of change have taken place. Earlier the early engagements were taken as unbreakable but now it is no longer so. For instance, during my stay in the village the news of the breakup of a long enduring engagement of the children of two real brothers shocked the entire village. After my investigation the story came into forefront had a lot to tell about the changes. The children of two brothers of a status family of the village were engaged since their childhood. The boy since his childhood had a dwarfin tendency. Sensing this handicap his parents were not in a position to ask someone for his daughter. His paternal uncle approached his brother and proposed for him his daughter. Parents of the boy refused to accept the proposal because of his late growth. But his uncle insisted that if he is handicap who else than
him will give him his daughter. After the interference of grandmother the engagement was materialized. Since then many years passed and they reached to the age of their marriage. But boy was still very short sighted and the uncle's family realized their blunder. Many people around them persuaded him to break the engagement but he was hesitant, because of the social condemnation. At last his mother-in-law argued him that 'how he will make his daughter's future so dark'. She finally succeeded in persuading him by citing many examples of such break-ups. Moreover, they realized that the social control in their society is now no longer so much repressive and there is no danger of outright condemnation even by own kinsmen. So they took the opportunity and after many accusations and allegations, the engagement was broken down. There was an alternative in sight in whose reference the previous engagement was broken. A paternal uncle of both the brothers was the man behind the pursuasion of the break up. He along with the girl's maternal grand-mother derived the equation and selected a boy from another village who was son of the Uncle's brother-in-law. The family of the boy was eager to marry in this family. Sensing the craze of boy's parents a perfect marriage equation was derived.

Though the break-up aroused many sympathies for the boy and his parents in the village and kin circles but no kinsman,
even the nominal family head did not condemned the act openly. They lacked the normal courage. The boy's parents are not economically better off than the girl's parents. Girl's parents and maternal grand parents have made many favours to their kinsmen economically. This favour suppressed all voices of protest against them publicly. Even though boy's parents were hurted badly and they were not been able to recover from the psychological shock but it was demanded from them to attend the engagement party of the girl with another boy. Their fault lied in their poverty. In the engagement party some of the guests who came from another village with the boy's parents condoled the girl's ex-financee's parents. It is yet another form of formal show of sympathy and solidarity among them.

Now there are frequent occurrences of such cases. The chief cause of such break-ups are the availability of better matches. Now people do not favour the child engagements at all and in new generation of children who are below tens, less numbers of such engagements can be found. But it is also in practice to a limited extent. Some times it is done with quite another motive which can not be perceived by an outsider. One of my informants told me about the motive of one of the such child engagement which took place during my presence in another village in their relation. The boy's mother frequently encountered the humiliating remarks by her husband's sisters
who were also married in the same village. Particularly the
daughter of a sister was married to the son of another sister
and she along with her mother is famous for their sharp
tongues. Both of them made it difficult for the boy's mother
to live peacefully in her husband's house. Though she was herself
from the topmost status family of the village but she was
unable to combat their lethally sharpened tongues. She was advised
by her brother-in-law to engage his son with her husband's
sister's daughter's daughter, if she wants peace and an upper
hand. They concluded that their chilling remarks against her
is only to compel her to engage his son to their daughter. So
she engaged her son and her husband's sister and her daughter
now are quite friendly with her and she is now leaving not
only in peace but often she sharpens her own tongue and did
not get any reply. She has a son so she has an upper hand.

The Muslims of lower ethnic groups do not practice the
child engagements, instead child marriages are still prevalent
among them. As the villagers told me that among Shaikhs too,
child marriage was prevalent some hundred years ago. It seems
to me that in the process of Islamization Shaikhs though left
the practice of child marriage but supplemented it by the
child engagements. Any how, lower ethnic groups of Muslims in
the village do practice the child marriage. Before that they
take the help of some mediator in the marriage negotiations.
Sometimes a failure in the negotiation can take another dimension and can be politicized. Land dominance can play a significant role in forcing someone to marry his son with one's daughter. If a land holder (though all of them are small land holders) finds a boy a good match for his daughter he pursues boy's parents by promising to give some land to the boy if he marries his daughter. In most of such cases he succeeds. But if he fails he tries to compel him by his influence and tricks. I saw one such case in the village when a person from the lower group persuaded another man of his own group to marry his son with his daughter. In return he promised to give some land to the boy. The boy's parents were looking the opportunity, demanded a dowry of a cycle and a wrist watch for his son. The girl's parents refused. Now her father turned the matter in another direction. Boy's parents were living in a small house which lacked the approach path to the road. All around their house was the land of girl's father. He refused to allow them to go through his lands. The matter was referred to the panchayat but village panchayat was unable to solve the problem because the roots were lying somewhere else, which both the parties did not want to disclose. After some period, few elders from their own ethnic group advised the boy's parents that why they are taking such troubles, leave the demands and marry their son. In this way boy's parents were able to get away with the troubles.
Engagements and Fixing of date:

As we have noted earlier that most of the marriage engagements take place in childhoods so the elaborate system of engagement is not prevalent among them. In some cases of late engagements, boy's parents with some of his close kins visit the house of the girl's parents. This ceremony is called 'Ghar dekhi' but is seldom practiced. Any way, as I was told by them that if it is insisted by boy's parents that they will observe this ceremony it is not looked upon with favour since all of them know each other.

The first real ceremony begins with the fixing the date of marriage. Few decades back the form of this ceremony was different than what it is now. Earlier, boy's parents used to send some gifts to the proposed house much in the fashion of local Hindus particularly Brahmins, with some modification called 'Sala'. The gifts which comprised the sweets of local varieties called "Khaja" and "laddu", some dry fruits, sugar etc. and dress for would be bride. The status of the family were measured by the numbers of these sweets instead of its weight. But now the ceremony of 'dala' is no longer observed. Since all of them are relatives so they make a date of date fixing in advance. Usually it is kept on certain occasions when the possibility of participating of all of them would be maximum. The ceremony is called "Din Tarikh Karna".
In recent years this ceremony has achieved such a degree of elaborateness that it may be viewed as mini marriage party. If both parties are from the same village then it assumes less degree of elaborateness than in case of inter-village. Here I will narrate the case of inter-village marriage which will also include intra-village dimension. Normally boy's parents with some twenty to twenty five kinsmen go to the girl's house. The number of guests visiting the girl's house are also fixed in an earlier talk while fixing the date of this ceremony. On the number of guests, a heated exchange between both the parents is bound to take place. Moreover a distinction between the numbers of male and female guests are also made. They all arrive in the evening, usually before 'Namaz Maghrib' (evening prayer). They would be greeted by the hosts. The girl's parents also invites their relatives and some of the village elders and men of prestige. At the arrival they are treated with light refreshments. After this, most of the village guests leave the place. They are invited only to know that guests have come to fix the date of the marriage. It is a formal declaration. After that only close kinsmen are left with the guests. Guests bring with them sweets and the dress usually a pair of 'Shalwar' suit and sandals for the girl. Moreover she is given some amount of money. All of these depends upon the economic position of the boy's family.
After evening prayer the talk between the elders of both family starts. They first discuss the date of wedding, usually it is kept two to three months after. There is no superstition attached with the month or date of the marriage. The preferred day for the weddings is Saturday evening because many of the relatives who are in government jobs in nearby towns and cities can reach easily and enjoy the function on Sunday too. After fixing the date then comes the turn of fixing the amount of 'mahr'. This involves a long discussion in which girl's side demands more amount and boy's side plead for a low. The maximum 'mahr' so far fixed in the village is Rs. 5001. After fixing the amount of 'mahr' then they step into the very controversial territory of fixing the number of 'baraats', Guests accompanying the wedding procession. This step usually involves very hot talks mounting tempers and chilling remarks.

After a long heated exchanges at last it settles. In recent years the highest numbers of baraats have reached to 200, though in practice many more hundreds are added when a marriage on some grand scale is solemnized. Fixing all these three important things, a date for the purchase of cloths for the wedding dresses of bride and bride-groom is fixed when both the party will gather in certain town.

The guests are served with a very lavish dinners. If they are from the same village then they will return back to their homes. If they are from another village they will stay
in night, take the breakfast in the morning then will proceed for their village. In some cases they even stay for lunch. This ceremony is an expensive affair because the guest measure the hospitality of the girl's family by the elaborate and extensive minu of the dinners served for them.

Purchase of clothes:

About a month before the marriage the fathers of the boy and girl with few relatives reach to the agreed town. Boy also accompany them, and they purchase the cloth for wedding dress for both the boy and the girl. In a purdah society, girl's presence is not needed, instead father chooses for his daughter with the advice of some women of the family with which they have stayed. The boy's father or in his absence his guardian pay for the dress of girl and girl's father for the boy. The wedding dress includes for groom a shervani, a modern woolen suite some times two, a paygama, Imama or turban, towel, sleeping suites and many other small items are packed into a new suitcase. For bride the wedding dress constitute two 'Banarsi saris' and its other components, two pairs of sandals and some 'make-up' items, all are packed in a new suite-case. Bride's dress is take to the house of boy's and his dress to the house of the girl. New items are now being included as the economic conditions of both parties permit. Most often both the parties try to choose the costliest items.
for their side, because the opposite party is going to pay for that. But now there are some changes in this pattern of purchasing of dress and most people leave it to the both parties to purchase it as they wish. They are concerned only with the paying of bills particularly since many boys are away from their homes for their education or in jobs so money is sent to them by the girl's father to prepare his wedding dress according to his own choice.

When dresses are purchased, the near relatives visit to the houses of boy and girl to see it. It is a customary practice. If some close relative fails to visit for the purpose, it is taken as if he is not happy or has some grievances against. Most often both the parties visit the houses of each other for this purpose and would ask them to show the dress which they have purchased for their would be daughter-in-law and son-in-law. Though both are parties in the marriage but a show of oneness is formalized in this way. The wedding dresses are constantly kept at display till the time of marriage.

Salah Mashwera or Consultation:

A week before the marriage the entire society is made known in a formal declaration by the family that they are going to marry their son/daughter, and their cooperation is needed. Earlier the village barber carried the message of
'Salah Mashwera' to each household. But since the jajmani arrangements are becoming weak day by day in the village, so now commonly the small boys of the concerned family carry this message. In the evening a large number of Muslims from all ethnic groups gather at the residence of concerned family. Hindus and Muslims do not take part any active role in each others marriage ceremonies. Moreover, if a lower ethnic group of Muslims is inviting for consultation only few of the Shaikhs will go to their house.

Anyway, in such consultative meetings Shaikhs address only their group men. First it is declared that on such and such date marriage is proposed to be celebrated. Such and such numbers of guests are expected to attend and the 'samaj' should cooperate in making the occasion successful. A formal estimate of the cost involved and the menu of the dinner are made. The labour are divided by allocating the particular work to the particular man of specialization. All are just a formality, otherwise everything is already worked out in other meeting of 'Khandan' exclusively. Only the kinsmen has a right to suggests what to do and what to not.

Another day invitations are circulated, often hand written and now wedding cards are sent to the invited families within the village and in other villages in their relations. The people who are living in towns are posted the wedding
cards. There are many kinds of invitations which are given according to the degree of closeness with the families. Normally the boy's parents will invite the close kins as 'Baraati' and for 'Waleema' both. Others are invited either for both or for Waleema only. Girl's parents will invite for only to host the wedding ceremony and they are called 'Saratis'. The closest kins will be invited as 'bolai' or 'called' which means they will be expected to come at least one day before the marriage. Some will be invited "Maa wabistegan" or with the family and associates like servants and so on. A 'bolai' must be in the category of "maa wabistegan" but the later category may or may not be the first. The general invitation will for only single male member of the family called "Ek fard" or "Ek jan". A person and his family will assess their degree of closeness with the concerned family by these distinguished categories of invitations. Moreover, the girl's family will be invited by the boy's side as 'baraati' and similarly they will be invited by the girl's family as 'Saratis'.

*Ubtan* or Turmeric Smeering:

Two days before the marriage the ceremony of *Ubtan* is held. It is held in the night when some female relatives of boy particularly the 'bhabhis' (wives of brothers) visit the girl's house and smear the girl with turmeric lotion made in oil. During the application girl's friends (Sahelis) sing
the 'geets'. There are large number of geets which are sung on this occasion. These geets are quite different from that sung at the marriage ceremonies of Hindus of the village and locality. These geets are composed by the poets of the village and beraderi who had provided an alternative to the local geets. It was the influence of Islamization in the village which we have noted earlier. Another day the girl's 'bhabhis' ans sisters visit the boy's place and the one who is also close kin to the boy apply it at his forehead. Then boy's friends apply it on other parts of his body. Moreover, his bhabhis also apply it on his forehead and hands. Touching the body of another male by a woman is prohibited in Islam except the permitted one called 'mahrams'. Bhabhi is 'mahram' so she applies it at the forehead and hands of the boy.

The girl's female relatives visit only in case of the boy is from the same village. If he is from another village both parties do not visit. Instead they nominate their close kin in the village for a proxy on their part. Moreover the excessive religious conscious families donot observe the ceremony as a custom instead they realizing the function of turmeric powder in the beautification of the bride they apply it themselves.

On the wedding day, in the after noon the boy and the girl are given baths. Earlier the village barber (Hajjam) used
to give the bath to the boy but now only his friends incircle him while he is bathing and assist him in taking the water. A brother-in-law can also help but it is not necessary. During his bath his friends sing the 'sehra' composed by the village poets. Most famous of them are those composed by Maulvi Aquil Ahmad 'Aaqil Malmi'. They sing it in chorus. The 'sehras' are written in chaste Urdu and it is beyond doubt that if they are published they will be in some of the best literary traditions of Urdu.

The girl takes bath in closed bath room. Non assist her inside. After bathing they are dressed, boy in 'shervani' and 'pajama' and girl in a 'shalwar suite' made for this occasion by their own parents. The boy now sits in the open and his friends surround him. The guest who are invited to make the wedding procession also sit there. The boy's friends now sing in chorus a special 'Sehra' called 'Jhoomar'. After 'Nemaz Maghrib' (evening prayer) the wedding process on proceed for the girl's house. If the boy is from the same village then the procession is simple. Only the boy with his friends and younger brothers and other children of the family sit in a decorated car or open jeep and all other 'baraatis' follow them on foot. They drive slowly and reach the place within few minutes. If the boy is from another village then the difference is the other vehicles which carry the other guests who are going to attend the ceremony on behalf of boy's family.
In village Malmal all the 'baraats' coming from the outside of the village comes from after crossing the Kalwahi chowk and they are greeted by the hosts at the village 'Idd Gah'. Guests are requested to fresh themselves at the place and are served with light refreshments. It is a new development and has been included in the marriages of affluent families. Then again they proceed towards the marriage place. Normally they reach just before Nemaz Isha (Night prayer). Further proceedings are held up for the Nemaz. Before reaching the baraat the girl's family make it sure that invited women and children have taken their dinners. Only males are left.

The boy sits on a decorated stage under the shamiana. Now his friends are requested to sing the 'sehra' individually. Those who can sing, sing the 'sehras' made for the occasion especially. If they fail to sing even a single 'sehra' it is a matter of shame for them. The girl's family and the villagers present at the place laugh at them. They expect from them to be highly cultured and to possess a literary sense as they themselves have. Most of the villages in their relation lag behind Malmal in this respect.

During the period female guests from the boy's side change the dress of the bride by the dress which they have brought with them. This ceremony is called as 'Sari pahnana'. On the other hand the suite case packed with the dress for
the boy, given by bride's family, are brought on the stage and some time it is displayed but most often non insist to sea.

Nikah:

Now 'Nikah' the essential item of the marriage takes place. The Maulana who accompany the baraat perform this function. It is expected from the boy's parents that they will bring with them their own Maulana. But since all of them are relatives some of the most respected religious personalities of the village perform this function. He along with two witnesses usually girl's uncles, go inside the house where Maulana, mostly the close relative of the girl with whom non observe purdah, takes her consent before the two witnesses. Then they come to the boy and after reciting the "Khutba Nikah" takes his consent. Then all the present pray (dua) for the newly wedded couple. Boy's parents bring with them some dry fruits which are distributed among the present guests.

Wedding dinner:

The 'baraatis' or the guests who were in the wedding procession, take the dinner first. They are treated well and the girl's side make ti sure that nothing lacks. In serving the 'baraatis the villagers who are invited by the girl's family normally undermine their differences and show their solidarity before the guests. For instance in a recent marriage of a Rahman girl the wedding procession came from outside the
village and the Imams who are their rivals showed their unity by working day and night for the preparation of the marriage ceremony. Marriages provide such occasion for village solidarity.

It does not go without saying that Islamization processes have influenced the marriage ceremonies profoundly. Since many decades, the families particularly the Rahmans under the influence of fundamental currents have tried to break the customs and traditions associated with the marriage ceremonies. They have been succeeded in past by making marriages fairly a simple affair. Most often no ceremonies were at all observed rather boys came with the small numbers of his kinsmen and the marriages were solemnized with simplicity. In most such cases the wedding dresses were prepared for the groom and bride by their own respective families. Most often the amount of 'mahr' were offered more by the boy’s family but the girl’s parents themselves made a concession by insisting that the boy does not possess such an economic position so it will be a burdensome for him. One of the most notable developments in this process was the abandonment of the use of fire-crackers which usually boy’s friends used to fire after entering into the near vicinity of the proposed place. It is now totally dropped from the practice.

But within the last few years they themselves have revived some of the old practices though with an Islamic flavour. Those who had responded to their earlier calls now
criticise them for their extravaganzies. Any way, there is no hard and fast rules for the marriages in the village and the Shaikh beraderis. Any one can go with his own style, unless it does not betray the very Islamic Ideal. Any how earlier after dinner those guests who have been invited by the girl's family used to give some rupees ranging from Rs 5/- to Rs. 150/- depending upon the closeness of the relation. Now it is totally dropped from the practice.

Earlier the 'baraat party' used to stay at the girl's house in night and after taking their breakfasts they used to go back to their village. But now a new style is gradually replacing the old styles and only 'one meal' (ek sham) is stressed. But this change has made its impact upon the 'menu' of the dinner by replacing old traditional simple dinners. New items are being included and the services of village experts in the preparation of the dinners are no longer needed. Instead, the services of professionals are sought from the various towns. In this sense the two meals were less costly than the new concept of single dinner. The stress on the single dinner is also a result of new modes of communications which has made it easier to return back to their homes in another villages in the same night than it was earlier.
Shehwala:

If baraat is to return in the same night then after dinner and in case of next day then after morning breakfast the groom is taken inside the house of the girl. Earlier all his friends used to go inside the house but now under the impact of Islamization process only those friends who are acceptable and is in the relationship are allowed to enter the house. Inside the house the boy sits on the carpeted floor surrounded by a large number of women folk in girl's relation. There he is given money by girl's mother, sisters, aunts and others who are 'in-laws' to the boy. It is called 'Salami'. The amount of money ranges from Rs 10/- to Rs 151/- sometimes more depending upon the economic condition of girl's relatives. The total amount of 'salami' reached so far in the village is around Rs 5000/-. It goes to boy's personal purse. Along with this money he is also presented the modern gift items by his sister-in-laws and brother-in-laws. He is also offered some rice-pudding to eat. Earlier it was a practice to give a certain amount of money to the boy's parents too, called "Dali". But now it is almost dropped by the upper groups and is observed only among the lower groups who are less Islamized.

Rukhsati:

There is no elaborate ceremony attached with the departure of bride for her conjugal home. After 'Shehwala' boy goes outside the house and the girl is taken out from the
room on the varendah of the inner side of the house. There her mother, aunts and others advise her how she will live in her in-laws house. What should be her behaviour proper towards her husband and in-laws etc. A younger brother and an elder sister or some elderly lady who is well acquainted with the boy's family accompany her to her in-laws house.

During the same night the boy and the girl meet with the each other so that next day 'waleema' can be hosted. Islamically it is approved that after the meeting of new husband and wife relatives and others should be hosted a party or dinner. It is sunnah, or prophetic tradition. During the first meeting of bride and her groom, later presents some gift particularly ornaments like a golden ring or necklace. This ceremony is called 'Roonomai' or exposing the face. Usually 'mahr' is not paid to the bride in that meeting though it is desired way. Failing in the payment does not matter. A husband can pay her 'mahr' at any moment of their wedded life. But in recent years some of them try to pay it at their first meeting. During my presence in the village, out of five marriages two husbands paid the 'mahr' in their first meeting. Of course, both of them were from upper group and economically better-off than others.

Waleema:

Next day the parents of the boy host a lunch. The villagers and the relatives including other villages are
invited. Earlier it has been practiced and still some of the less Islamized families observe to accept money from the relatives, and the guests. It called 'choomauna'. A person will sit with a register and will write the names and amount paid by the guests. It also ranges from Rs 5/- to Rs 101/-. But in recent years this practice has been condemned by the people as if "it is a restaurant where one shall eat and pay for that food". And as expected this condemnation also begun from the families of those who are under the influence of fundamentalism. Most of other people have responded positively against such practices.

The girl lives in her in-laws house for two days. In some cases it extends upto a week. This period is called 'Chauthi'. While returning from her in-laws house she receives from them more or less similar gifts and money as 'roo-nomai'. Moreover she is given some ornaments by her mother-in law and a pair of sari suites or Shalwar suites with all other necessary items packed into a brief-case. She also receives a large number of dresses from her female 'in-laws'. Both side particularly the boy's family try to give more so that girl's family must know that they are better off than them. Both the sister and brother who have accompanied the girl also receive a pair of suites from the boy's family. Dowry which she brings with her are displayed but no demands are made. In some cases even the girl's parents are requested not to give such and such items because they have enough. But in all cases even the
'Samaj' (society) does not criticize her for not bringing enough dowry. They will tell "jo kuch diya hai apne beti ko diya hai" or whatever is given is given to once daughter.

Naurooz:

The day when girl is to return to her natal home, her elder brother or uncle will visit her 'in-law's' house with some quantity of sweets. Then he will ask the boy's parents that let the couple go to their house, and they will be permitted.

As the term indicate, the groom is expected to live in his 'in-laws' house for nine days, but it is not necessary to spend all the nine days; it may be less. Though the term is derived from the persian and later the Moghul practices of celebrating Jashn-e-Naurooz, meaning the new day celebration. The noted practice is also somewhat similar in nature but it is taken as new nine day celebration. The couple return to the girl's house. A younger brother or a friend of the boy who should be also in the relation to the girl's family accompany the boy. The person accompanying either girl or boy is expected to play a role of coordinator between her/him and their 'in-laws' family.

During these nine days the girl's house becomes coloured with joy and happiness. It is a time of rejoining for all. The couple becomes almost secluded in their room and privacy is
broken by the girl's sisters, brother's wife or her friends. All of them visit them all these nine days. They come out from their rooms only for taking their meals. Often it is also served in the same room where they, with other permitted companions dine together. The elder's barely interfere. But in upper families the duration of these nine days are also celebrated as occasion in the sense that since most of the families have returned from the towns, it gives them opportunity to be together and make funs. Sometimes 'moshaeyras' are organized and sometimes cricket matches are organized between the elders and youngers of the Khandan. Often the married and unmarried teams are organized. I saw such an occasion in which such matches were organized and even videographed. Since all these nine days not only the girl's family, rather the entire Khandan hosts a lunch or dinner in their honour so it also provides many other public occasions.

The functional aspect of this ceremony is that the society provides a happy environment for the newly wedded couple to understand and adjust together. Moreover, it is also an occasion to visit the 'in-laws' houses so the boy becomes well acquainted with the style of their livings, likings and dislikings and others. He adapts to the new situation quickly which he must have found difficult otherwise.

Before returning from his 'in-laws' house the boy is expected from his wife's friends to host a party. Though it is relatively a new inclusion but it is in practice since many
decades ago. The last day, boy's brother-in-law or elder brother visits the house of the girl with some sweets and ask her parents to permit them to take the boy back. The boy is given some suite and other items packed into a brief case along with again some modern gifts by the girl's younger sisters, cousins and friends. The person who accompany him as younger brother is also given a suite. With this the marriage ceremonies comes to an end.

**Rites of passage:**

If a person is about to die on his death bed, all the close kins, males and females both surround his bed. As he approaches death, he is put into north-south direction facing towards Mecca - the qibla. People starts uttering 'Shahada' loudly. Then a person of the family or a hafiz from the outside of the family in case of the non availability, recite surah" ya', sin" as Islam prescribes for such moments. There is a prophetic hadith" If anyone recites ya sin out of a desire for God's favour, his past sins will be forgiven him; so recite it over those of you who are dying.".

As soon as a person dies, in the village Malmal the Faqir family who dig the graves is informed and is directed to dig it in one particular 'Qabristan' or graveyard out of the two in the village. In case of upper groups, sites are directed

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which the deceased has suggested in his life. There are two graveyards in Maimal; one is beside the Madrasa; a small one and another is in the east, far beyond the populated area called 'sahaba'. Since the smaller one is in the midst of the population and is crowded with the graves so 'Sahaba' is preferred, unless the deceased has not willed so. The graveyards particularly in the 'Sahaba' areas are specific to particular ethnic groups even particular families. It is because of the conception of resurrection. It is believed Islamically that all the dead persons will be resurrected on the final day of judgement. So among the Muslims of the village it is strong desire to be resurrected in the company of own family and kins.

As the faqir starts digging the grave, messengers are sent to the other villages in their relations to deliver the news of the death. Moreover, if the immediate relatives are in towns they are also approached through messengers or telephones from the near-by town of Madhubani.

The dead body is given the final ablution (ghusl). Males perform the rites for the male and females for the female. Since Maimal is much more Islamized village, so the help of a monopolizing specialists are not taken. Most often close relatives perform the function. Normally the corner of the same room in which the death has occured, is used for the purpose. If the surface is of mud then it is dug but in case
of cement plaster some large tin tanks are kept under the bed of the corpse. First the clothes are removed and sheet of cloth is put on the corpse. Then the rectum is wiped with five little clods of mud and then the penis with two. Then the private parts are left covered and other parts are washed as it is washed in minor ablution (wudu) then the rest of the body is washed with the prescribed prayers uttered at appropriate places. Soaps are used for washing, while the last wash is given by scented water. Hairs are also washed and combed. Women's hair are rebraided in three braids. Body is dried with a towel and perfumes are applied. Then male's body is wrapped into three pieces and female's into five pieces of white cotton clothes. Then the body wrapped in Kafan, is placed in a big hall or on the inner varendah of the house where the relatives recite the Holy Quran.

Relatives starts to reach the place. If some close relative, like son, brother etc are awaited, then the time of burial can be longer. But in most of the cases it is quickly done because religion prescribes so. If the death occurs in the morning then during any hour of the day till night prayer (Namaz-e-Isha) the burial can take place. But if it is in the late hours of the day then the other morning is prefered. Every burial in the village takes place after some namaz.

The body is placed on to a coffin called 'Taboot' and covered with black valvet sheet embroced with Quranic verses.
The nearest relatives lift the coffin by uttering 'Kalma Shahadah' and the last journey begins. First the funeral procession reaches to the nearby mosque, most often Jama-Masjid, where it is kept outside. After Namaz, the Imam is asked to perform the funeral prayer (Namaz-e-janazah). Sometimes the died person wills in his life for certain person to perform the prayer. After that they proceed towards the graveyard. A person's popularity, status and piousness is sometimes judged by the size of the funeral procession.

The corpse is then placed into the grave by closest relatives, head in the north and legs in the south face directing towards Qibla. At the wish of the mourners the face is opened to see for the last time in case of male. Then each mourner drops three handfuls of soils in the grave. After the grave has been filled the mourners recite the 'Fatiha' and pray for him.

Coming back to home the mourners sit for a while and if they are from the same village they go back to their homes. The close relatives and the mourners coming from the outside of the village are offered their meals arranged by some close relatives. It is expected that grieved family must not be put into trouble of looking food for themselves and the mourners, so some close relative provides the food for all the family members and the guests for at least three times.
Often in the village it extends for four or five days but the established way is of three times. It is called 'bhati'.

If a female's husband has died then she goes into seclusion for the period of Iddat of four months and ten days. The concept of chehallum and Fatiha is not observed by the villagers. Rather, family members recite the Holy Quran for the peace of the departed soul individually.
CHAPTER - VIII
ECONOMIC LIFE

The village awakens to life in a pleasant rainy morning. The dark clouds wandering in the sky are making much noise. Frogs are screeching in the gentle easterly winds. The familiar voice of tinkling of the bells hanging around the necks of bullocks are more intense. The rows of ploughmen with their ploughs on their shoulders and the pair of bullocks in their front are making their way to the paddy fields. Asarh have come. The agriculture life in the village has begun.

Agriculture:

A sizeable proportion of the population of the village Malmal depend directly or indirectly on Agriculture for their living. Since Malmal is a village so the people, Hindus and Muslims both attach much value to the lands. The size of the landholdings is one of the most important criteria of social status in the village. In this sense many people who have earned a fortune in the towns try to buy some land in the village if they have non.

The major landowning group of the village is of Shaikhs who hold more than fifty percent of cultivable lands. The Mukeris are second to them. Similarly among Hindus Brahmins and Yadavs possess more lands than their proportion of the total population. All other Hindu castes and Muslim ethnic groups are under represented in this respect. It is also interesting to note that only three families of Shaikhs hold more
than twenty acres of lands and some ten families possess between ten to twenty acres. All the remaining lands posse­sessed by the Shaikhs are distributed among all of them and the families holding more than five acres are considered as middle class families of the village. The rising population of the village and the limited lands has forced many of them to pursue a profession other than agriculture. In this respect most of the families of the village have some additional source of incomes with the agricultural products of the lands.

Earlier, many Shaikh families were having fairly large size of land holdings. But in the past the repeated failures of monsoons which is a characteristic feature of the region, forced many of them to sell their lands to meet either the cost of cultivations or the other contingent expenditures. Particularly those families who depended on cultivation alone, sold more lands. The shrinking in the size of the holdings were furthered by the division and redivision of the estates among the sons of deceased fathers. The villagers tell about the worst periods in which sellings of the lands by the upper status families were done more frequently. It was in the late thirties and early forties of this century when many upper families became the victims of natural vageries and were crushed under the burden of their statuses. On the other hand, the people who were employed in the govern­ment offices or were having other sources of income, were
able to keep not only their patrimony but also they bought many of the lands being sold in the village at very cheap prices.

Among the lower groups the peasants sold their lands and became labourers. As the number of labourers were growing and employers were limited, they migrated to the towns in the search of an earning. Now a sizeable proportion of the lower groups are in towns where they relatively earn a better earnings which they send back to their homes. When they return to the village, they also work as agriculture labourers. Particularly Hindu low castes follow more this pattern of changing occupations. The lower ethnic groups of Muslims also act in a similar fashion but most of them when return to the village, they do not work on the fields of others. Instead, most of them have bought small lands through their savings from the earnings in towns and they look after their own fields. Some of them have earned considerably in the businesses and hence are the main buyers of the sellable lands in the village.

The lower-income groups among shaikhs have a hard time in this context. They are victims of their false status consciousness. Once their ancestors were holding a considerable size of lands and their status are evaluated in the context of their old status. The old status families though they were, but now sons of those families are no longer in a
position to bear the burden of the statuses of their forefathers. Their deteriorating economic conditions and the maintenance of the status has made them victims of social circumstances. Finding no other means to raise the capital to meet the contingent expenditures, their lands come into the market more frequently. The properties of such families every now and then are sold. I asked head of the one such a family that why they sell their lands. He replied me, "who wants to sell his lands but the expenditures of the family compel us to sell". The shame which the selling of the lands bring to them takes yet another course into the world of Psychological - a sense of defeat, helplessness, - where life is avenging on them with all its cruel.

One of the very important cause of selling of the lands are for the education of their children. Since they have no other means to meet the expenditures involved in the education of their sons who are living in towns, so ultimately land selling remains the only source of the raising of the capital. Most often the richs within the Khandan are the buyers of such lands. "Ghar ki zameen ghar hi merrahe to behtar hai" or it is better to keep family's lands within the family. Usually in other villages it happens that if some one is in need and wants to sell his land, the prices are deliberately kept low by the buyers. Malmal is no longer a buyers' market. In the face of many

1. On the selling of lands in the village see Bailey, F.G. 1957 Caste and the Economic Frontier: A village in highland Orissa, Manchester; Manchester University Press.
buyers the sellers have enough opportunity for a bargain. Moreover, it has been characteristic of the village India, to pay the amounts in installments which usually serve no purpose to the sellers. But in Malmal since many are in competition for the purchase of the lands, so most of them pay in hard cash in a single installement.

Villagers have totally lost their faith in agriculture. On the other hand they also realize the value of the land in an agrarian set-up. So who ever saves enough from their earnings through their jobs or business, first he tries to buy a certain amount of land, to the extent that the produce of the lands should become sufficient for the yearly consumption of the family. But beyond that, seldom anyone invests into the purchase of lands.

Among Shaikhs only two to three families pursue the cultivation by themselves. Most of them do not find it lucrative enough and hence they have given their lands to the sharecroppers. Most of the sharecroppers are those who have below the two acres of lands. These sharecroppers are either from Shaikhs, who are less in numbers in this occupation, or are from lower ethnic groups of Muslims and some Hindus who comprised majority of the sharecroppers. Giving to some one for share-cropping depends upon his honesty and his reputation. Moreover, very poor person is not preferred because the people know that he cannot raise enough capital to meet the cost of cultivations. The sharecroppers frequently
change because of the suspicions that he may capture the land if he is given opportunity for many continuous years.

In short village Malmal, day by day, is becoming less dependant upon agriculture. The number of people seeking employment in towns is growing. Now most of them are opting for business either in the village or nearby towns or even in the cities like Delhi, Bombay and Calcutta etc. It is not very far when most of villagers of Malmal will be making their livings on other than agricultures. Those who have some lands are only interested in looking their fields to the extent of not being illegally occupied by the lower groups particularly Harijans who in their conception draw much liberty and support from the existing laws. Their children are going one step further and are even not interested to know their lands. Most of the new generation of the upper groups do not know their fields. Only they know their mango groves where at least once in the year they go to collect the mangoes.

The agricultural cycle:

There are three main crop seasons in the village Malmal. The chief crop of the area and the village is Aghani. Aghani crop consists of only rice harvested in the month of 'Aghan' according to the lunar Hindi calendar and falls in between the month of November and December of Gorgian Calendar. Next to the paddy crop is of 'Rabi'. Rabi crop includes wheat, barley, oats, grams and other pulses. It is sown in the months
of November-December and harvested in the months of March and April. The third crop of the village is bhadai; the summer crops reaped in the rainy month of 'Bhadon'. This crop includes early variety of paddies prepared in sixty days, marua (Eleusine coracana), maize, millets etc. Mangoes are only source of cash to the village agriculturists though in small quantity they also grow Sugarcane, jute and tobacco etc. In past sugar cane was grown in large quantities but due to the sickness of local sugar industries and the inconsistent price policy of Bihar Government they were compelled to supplement this by another more profitable crops like wheats.

In this way the village lands are classified as 'do fasla' or two crops and 'teen fasla' or three crops lands. Do faslas are those lands which are low and the high lands are 'teen faslas' which can be used for all the three crops. These highlands are also sometime rented to the peasants who want to grow the vegetables. The rents of these lands are called 'Man Khap' and are rented for one agricultural year. The agriculture year begins after rabi harvests. The maximum 'mankhap' of any land in the village is one hundred rupees per kattha (one acre is equal to twenty two katthas).

For agricultural purposes the Muslims of the village also use the Hindi lunar calendar. In this respect their agriculture year begins with the first Hindi month of Chait
(Standard Hindi Caitra) falling in the months of March-April. From the Jeth (May-June) they even use the application of Naksatras. There are some twenty seven asterism or lunar mansion (naksatras) and each nakstra last twelve to thirteen days. Their awareness of naksatras begin with the coming of monsoons and last till the end of rainy season. It gives them an appropriate knowledge about the probability of rain falls in particular months even days and they carefully take the necessary measures accordingly. To pursue the agriculture, it is necessary for them to be aware of these seasonal cycles but the awareness remains restricted to the economic spheres and a general idea about the season. No rituals are observed as the Hindus of the village do. After the Hathia and Chitra naksatras they have no knowledge about it. Instead, afterwards they only rely upon the Hindi lunar months. In a society lacking the appropriate man-made devices to alleviate the natural conditions it is necessary to know properly the probable days of the rainfalls. Rice plantations need a careful measures for sowing and irrigating. If they fail to sow the paddies at its appropriate time with no knowledge of how the monsoon cycle will take its course it means destroying once fortune because of its being major source of food consumption.

Though the agriculture year of the village begins from the second half of the month of May but the preparation

starts from the mid January. After finishing the harvesting of rice, in the mid January they start ploughing. The beginning of the ploughing is called 'hal Khara Karna' or 'to lift the plough'. Though there is no specific day fixed for this occasion but in the locality it is done on the day of Saraswati Puja. The people use to carry their agricultural equipments and tools to the village 'iohar' or blacksmith. The blacksmith checks and repairs the tools particularly the ploughs. He is given some three kilograms of grain and if it is of some patron's then the client who carry those tools is given half kilogram of rice for that service in addition to those which they receive in a jajmani arrangement. From the next morning they start ploughing the field kept for the purpose of sowing the seeds. These are high lands and are referred as 'birar'. Ploughing of the land in one direction is called 'Ekchas'. In this way some ten to twenty chas are needed to prepare a field for sowing of seeds. The number of chas depends upon the types of the lands. Usually there are two types of lands commonly referred in the village as 'doras' and 'matyari'. Doras are the best lands for cultivation. Another type of lands is called 'balwaha' or sandy, which is almost negligible in the village.

In the month of Jeth or late May finally, two more ploughing are done in the field left for the seeds. In the
naksatra of Rohan (standard Rohini from 25 May-6 June) the seeds are sown broadcast. Some eight kilos per kattha are needed for growing fine seed. The seed field are irrigated with some artificial means. Seeds are normally picked from the harvest of rice in winters. Most of the villagers do not purchase seeds from the market. Only those people who have small holdings purchase it. The share-croppers are supplied seeds by their patrons. Patrons also share in the cost of the ploughing and irrigating. As we have noted earlier, seldom any of the big land holders themselves cultivate their lands. Sharecroppers who themselves are small land holders do not have enough resources to maintain the bullocks more than a pair. Most often they need more than a pair so they pay to another person who has borrowed from him his bullocks and plough excluding the labour cost. Sometimes plough are lend and when one needs, the person who are in debt of certain numbers of ploughs return it by giving his own bullocks and ploughs. It is a kind of village cooperation where both the communities cooperate. In recent years villagers take the help of tractors for first ploughing of the fields. Then they carry on with their own ploughs.

With the first rain in Ardra naksatra (7 June-4 July) the sowing of paddy crops begins. Normally both the Aghani and Bhadai varieties of rices are sown at the same time. The difference lies in the types of the fields. The aghani rices
are sown in low lands while bhadai are sown in the up-lands. The rice plants are sown by transplantations. The plants are pulled out and collected then again they are transplanted into the flood fields which has been prepared for the purpose. The seeds pulled out from three katthas are sown in one bigha (1 acre = 1.2 bigha) by some fifteen labourers. Sometime for a more better results it is retransplanted. It is called 'Khaarlagana'. In the month of 'Asarh' the aghani variety are sown on full scale. In the month of Bhadon (August-September) the bhadai variety of rice is harvested. The fields vacated by the bhadai variety are either left for the rabi crops or retransplanted by using Khaar Bhadai give an additional strength to the farmers who are till then nearly exhaust financially in the preparation for aghani varieties of rices. A labourer takes three and half kilos of grain for one day. In the sowing season called 'ropni' the working hours begins in the morning around 7 A.M. and normally they finish by 12 noon.

Till the end of September the fields dry down and if rains of Hathia naksatra fails, it means a total misfortune for the farmers. A good rain of Hathia may give a bumper crop. In late November or early December the paddies are harvested. The month of Aghan is of business, affluence, abundance for all in the village. The yields of the rice
ranges according to the type of the lands. Malmal's lands are more fertile in the locality and an average of eight to ten kwintals of rice per acre are grown.

Similarly wheats and pulses are sown in the month of November. Most often the lands vacated by the early harvested aghani rices are also used to grow wheats. Till a decade or more ago wheats were not grown at large scales but now it is being grown in fairly large quantities. But recently a feeling of unprofitability of the crop has taken its roots into the villagers mind. Pulses are more favoured because of its nature of 'less labour and less yield'. On the other hand wheats need more capital more labour and less yield. Among pulses most favourite are 'masoor' and 'Arhar'. While Grams are favourite but its destruction by the passersby is realized more. Anyone pull out the plant and go plucking and chewing it. All of these rabi crops are harvested in the month of March and April. Now to prepare the wheats, modern threshers are used but use of bullocks are more common for the purpose. For pulses, they are pulled out from the ground by the labourers commonly women and left to dry up in the sun then it is beaten by sticks. The service of the Western winds blowing during the period are commonly taken to separate the pulses with the wastes.

From mid April to mid-May a brief interleude falls on the activity of the farmers in the village. But on the
other hand the Mangoes starts growing and their full attentions are diverted towards the selling of the mangoes. Previously seldom anyone used to sell the mangoes. But now all of them try to sell all his mangoes, keeping only small quantity for their personal consumptions. The maximum money earned individually by the selling of groves in Malmal has reached the mark of twenty thousand rupees. Till some years ago they used to sell their mango groves when mangoes were fairly big in size. But since last few years they sell it in advance, before coming of even flowers. During my presence a very interesting religious informal debates were going on in the village about the nature of the selling of mangoes. A group led by some orthodox Ulemas were propagating that it is totally against 'Shariah' laws. According to them Islam demands from a seller to give the good into the hands of the buyer and then demand money. How the people have sold their orchads before the fruits are grown? This religious objection were circulated into the another villages into their relations and the commoners took it a new practise which is against the Islamic law. But some argued that the leasing out of the orchads were also practiced during the period of prophet and his companions. If it were wrong why they did practiced so. Any how next year many of them hesitated to sell before the mangoes were not big enough.
A Shaikhs of another village told me a very interesting story about the attitudes of people who only object because of their jealousies. He told me that their own role in such activities are always remains dubious. He narrated the story that one day he was in Darbhanga sitting with another Shaikh from the village Malmal who was there for some medical purpose. Another Shaikh of the village Malmal came there and started participating in their talks. The reference was the selling of the Mango groves. He instantly reacted and told that 'yes, it is haram, Maulana such and such has already given his fatwa. You people are totally doing a thing which is haram. After a long while when the topic of the talk was something different, the Shaikh asked him for his purpose of visit. He told him "Babu, you have sold your orchad to that person. Why not return his advance, another person is ready to give more". The Shaikh who told me the story said that I asked him that if the selling of mango groves in advance were haram then how far his own act of persuading to cancel the contact without any cause is halal?

The Jajmani Arrangements

The Muslims of Malmal now no longer pursue only agriculture for their living. In this respect agriculture no longer is their way of life. In the changing face of the society where face to face relationships are being replaced gradually by informal relations the elaborate jajmani arrangements which characterized them in the past is now totally
being eliminated. The Muslims take the service of only three service castes and occupational groups i.e. lohars, Dhobis and Hajjams. Of these three, the former two are from Hindu service castes and the village Hajjam is Muslim. One interesting thing in the village is that Muslim Hajjams only serve to the Muslims while the Hindus take the service of Hindu Hajjams from another village.

These three occupational groups, moreover, are associated as jajamans with the only high economic groups. In Malmal they are called 'Pasaris'. A lohar means blacksmith. But in Malmal he is also a carpenter. He repairs the tools for agricultural purposes and also visits the houses of Shaikhs for minor repairs. For this service he receives three paseris (one Paseri is five sers) of gains in all the three seasons. But now since the old weighing system of sers has been replaced by kilograms so he is given 12 kilos in each of the three crops. While repairing inside of the houses of his lords he received in addition some rice ranging from 250 to 500 grams. It depends upon the value of his service and labour involved in a particular work. Many of the Barhi castes who are carpenters by hereditary occupation but popularly referred as Lohars or blacksmiths run their own shops of carpentaries in their houses. The common villagers take their services by paying in cash. They make many items of furnitures and for home use purposes and sell them in the village. Usually they make them at personal orders.
Bhobis are the occupational castes of the village who are still largely in their hereditary profession and their services are required by all of the villagers. They take 1 mond (40 kgs) of grain in all the three crop seasons. Their women collect and deliver the clothes in the houses of upper group of Shaikhs. The synthetic clothes which demands a careful treatment are not given to them to wash. Instead the people wash it by themselves and given it to dhobis for only pressings. In return they are paid in cash. They normally wash the rough clothes for home use made of cottons. It happens sometimes, particularly in the upper families of Shaikhs who have taken the service of the particular family of dhobis down the generations, that the visiting dhobi woman is requested to wash the clothes in the house where she is provided the soaps of good variety. For this service she is paid in kind like some quantity rice or pulse etc.

Hajjams are another occupational groups whose services are taken in the village Malmal. As we have noted in the earlier chapters that their social services are no longer sought in the social functions. But it is desired that he will be present at the function and will help in some respect particularly in those houses where he serves as jajman. In the wake of new fashions of hair cuttings the village Hajjams are no longer relevant for the youths. Even the children refuse to trim their hairs by them. They prefer for cutting
their hairs in the hair dresser's shops in Kalwahi, where hairs are trimmed according to latest fashions. In this sense his service is now restricted to the cutting of nails of the higher family members. Women Hajjams cutts the nails of women in the village. Hajjams receives one 'paseri' of grains per head in all the three crops.

Though upper groups who have a surplus of grains to give to these servicing groups are still taking their services but in general their traditional styles of giving services in return of grains are gradually being eliminated in the village Malmal. While upper groups may take it as a symbol of status, but the lowers do not find it profitable enough. They have less works to give them but in return they have to pay more though in grains. Since all those things for which the villagers depended earlier on these groups are available in the market so the Malmalis do no find it worthy enough to continue the old traditional practices. On the other hand, the upper groups are also now looking on such arrangements as mere liability. In this way gradually all of them are breaking away from the Jajmani bonds. Moreover, these groups themselves do not find it profitable in view of new cash oriented tendencies. They are also now scared of the traditional boundations of Jajmani arrangements in which they have to go, wish or not, to the houses of lords when ever they are called for.
In this way the village Malmal has already lost much of the traditional face of an Indian village and the process are continued and days are not far enough when non will even know the meaning of 'Jajmans' and 'Pasaris'.

Non-Agricultural Occupations:

As we have stated earlier that in village Malmal agriculture is no longer the only occupation which the villagers pursue. So in this way the villagers particularly Muslims who have considerable land holdings, after a long experience in farming have nearly abandoned it because of its non-profitability. Moreover, the traditional craze of buying more and more lands have almost died down in the village. All those who have enough or not just want to keep the size of the lands to the extent of producing crops to the level of self sufficiency for the annual consumption of the family. Though still certain degree of value is attached to the land holdings in the sense that those who do not have lands are looked down by the people by saying "besah Khata hai". Meaning he has not enough land so he purchases the grains. It is a kind of stigma attached with the people who may have money more than many of the villagers but has not enough land to produce for annual consumption. So, in this regard all those who do not have enough lands if save money the first enterprise in which they invest is the land but to a limited extent, of course.

But those who have enough lands are now looking for another businesses. Islamically the trade and business are
more favoured occupation for the Muslims and is also a Sunnah. We might have expected from them to opt for business more than anything else. As Scarlet Epstein argued that the Hindus of the village Wangala of Mysore state have not responded to the opportunities of new economy of shopkeeping because of their being insiders and they respond more to the village values and social pressures. On the contrary Muslims being the outsiders have responded positively to this new economic situations. But in the village Malmal, Muslims are insiders and they also responds to the traditional values of village and hence those Muslims who want to pursue business have found a hard time. They were lacerated between the contradictory values of Islam and the locality. Now fairly large numbers of them are going towards the business but in past it was almost negligible.

The passive attitude of Muslims of Malmal, particularly of Shaikhs towards trade and business may be attributed to yet another factors, that is of local geography. Since the centuries of sufferings from the yearly natural calamities a sense of economic insecurity has pervaded their minds and it seems deeply rooted in their psyche. They can not go for risk. What

all they want is a secure income. In this way taking a job, however petty has found more acceptability than anything else. Responding to this psychological reflex the first thing which the Muslims of Malmal, particularly Shaikhs, do is to search for a job preferably in the Government offices. In past it has been a tendency that after completing the high schools the young boys used to go to Patna where first, they try to take a typing and shorthand courses. The guardians used to bear the expenditures for a short period, most often not more than a year. After completing a course in typewriting the search for job started. During the period they maintained themselves by teaching the children. So most of them took to the jobs quite early and if some one rose to the upper position it is a credit to only his own labours. The other interesting aspect was that most of the people who took their jobs quite early, during their service periods graduated from the universities. In this sense there is fairly high level of education among them.

The countable number of Muslims of Malmal employed in Government services during my field work was 68 (see table). Of these nineteen are pursuing professional occupations of doctors, engineers, junior engineers, Business trainees and other technical jobs. Two of the doctors and one engineer is now earning in Saudi Arabia. In the administrative jobs, while twelve are police constables, one is assistant sub-Inspector,
three are sub-inspectors, one is Inspector of police and two are civil administrators who have joined the service by passing the Bihar state civil service Examinations. In the teaching, some nine persons are employed, all of them are secondary school teachers except one who is a college professor. Clerical jobs are pursued by some fourteen persons and so on. It should be noted that only one Assistant sub-Inspector of Police is from Dhuniyas. Rest of them are shaiks. Other than these countable numbers of persons there are a large number of persons among Muslims who are employed in small factories or shops as skilled and semi-skilled labourers. So is the number of drivers of trucks. Moreover the labourers working in the cities are so numerous that barely any single family of lower-ethnic groups can be excluded in this respect.

All of them earn money, more often it is a surplus to the agricultural yields. While this has brought a fair degree of economic mobility among Muslims, on the other hand those who were depending upon farming only have realized the value of surplus economy. They also want to earn some money from other sources. People will say "sirf Khet se keya hoga. Jab takoppar ki aamundai nahi to tab tak koi faida nahi".

Trade and Business:

As we have stated above that in past, and to a certain degree at present Muslims of the village had a pessimistic attitude towards trade and business. Particularly among Shaiks
the unfortunates who were unable to get a job turned towards business half heartedly and failed badly. This has furthered their pessimism and it looks that though they know the potentiality of the business in making fast money and know its Islamic value but think it something beyond their reach and control. On the other hand, the Mukeris whose traditional occupation were petty business still pursue their occupation and are doing fairly well in this field. They own many small shops in the village. Some of them have their shops in Darbhanga and other local towns. Their growing number of concrete structured houses has forced many of the Shaikhs to realize the value of even small business.

Now Shaikhs are also responding to the new economic opportunities and particularly the young and educated among them forcefully argue for pursuing trade and businesses. There are some 36 small and big shops in the village owned by Muslims. Out of these shops thirteen are concentrated at village chawk, and five are at the bus-stop. The nature of shops ranges from small tea-shops to the big general stores, medical stores and groceries. While Hindus have more and less some 30 shops, out of which 25 are concentrated at the bus-stop. Only five shops, combining both of Hindus and Muslims have a capital of more than 25000 rupees. Out of them some three shops are owned by Muslims and the rest two by the Hindus. Two of the owners of the three Muslim shops are Mukeris and one is Shaikhs. In addition to this some nine shops of the villagers are at Kalwahi chawk.
All of these shops are owned by Shaikhs. It includes also the shop of cements sold at controlled and retail rates. One another general store has a capital of more than Rs. 50000/- and is developing leaps and bounds. All the rests have also fairly large capitals and most of them have been opened in the span of not more than ten years.

One of the most remarkable development in the business sphere of the village is the opening of two timber shops. Both of them is owned by Shaikhs. The first shop was opened many years ago by an elderly Shaikh Zahid babu who belongs to the middle status group of the Malmal. Earlier he was trading in mangoes but suffered a loss some ten to twelve years ago. Then he started purchasing the trees. By cutting it, he used to sell the woods for fuels and the trunks were used for the making of furnitures. He started the business from a very small capital. Now a he owns two big timber shops in Besopatti and is having a running capital of more than three to four lacks of rupees. He now supplies the fuels for the local sugar factories in which he earns a good profit and his business is spreading and growing day by day. His son now looks most of the business while he himself remains at the timber house located at the outskirt of the village in the vicinity of Iadgah. He is now planning to go for Hajj.

The other timber shop belongs to the highly respected person of the village Ziaur-Rahman. Ziaur-Rahman as we have
seen him earlier is a religious person in a fundamentalistic mould. Though he is one of the largest owner of the lands in the village, earlier for sometime he pursued the business of dairies. But during 1975 emergency he was imprisoned and freed with the coming of Janta Government in 1977. During this period, since none of other male relatives were to look after the business so he suffered a loss. Since four years back he started this new business of which he knew nothing. His elder son-in-law who is also his nephew Kaleemur-Rahman is a doctor in Saudi Arabia and his brother-in-law Hifzur-Rahman is also a doctor in Saudi. Both of them provided a capital of only fifty thousand rupees and he began the business. It may be surprising for many communal chauvinists that he kept a Hindu working partner. In the first year he was able to keep the capital running while the profit was lost when a supplier fled after taking a large amount of money from him in advance. But since then he has developed well and the total assets might be exceeding four lacks of rupees. Last year some more capital was invested by the two doctors and now the timber shop has most modernized equipments for cutting and making of planks in the locality giving an edge over the first timber shop.

Both the timber shops are in competition but the first one of Zahid babu lacks the quick mobilization of capital in respect of the later one. But on the other hand Zaur Rahman being a staunch religious person do not possess the cleverness
of Zahid Babu who knows the every art of making happy to the visiting marketing officials and sales tax officers. Moreover in signing of the contracts for the supply of fuels for sugar factories, giving certain percentage in bribe to the officials of the factories is not acceptable to Ziaur Rahman. On the other hand Zahid Babu makes much money from such contracts. For one payment Ziaur Rahman runs many times to the factories which is a loss to the business in many respect. While the son of Zahid Babu cash his payments very quickly because he knows the art of India business. But it does not go without saying that Zia-ur-Rahman popularly called 'Hashim Babu' is also adapting to the needs to the extent of making double register of sales and purchases out of the compulsion of Indian taxation system. Moreover, he has been also forced to make happy to the visiting officials who have power to close down any shop under their jurisdictions.

Many other persons from the village Malmal has made good fortunes outside the village. For instance, one Shaikh family from considerably low status group migrated to Bombay many decades ago. He has made a good fortune there and own many shops and personal flats there. Similarly another shaikh popularly called Bhola Seth has made good fortune in Calcutta where he owns a small work shop and produces suite-cases and luggage bags. His son is running another suite case workshop in Delhi. Similarly there are many other who own small shops
of garments and other items in Delhi, Calcutta and Bombay. One another person owns a private truck, two tractors are owned by yet another two.

Similarly a Moti Laheri from the ethnic group of bangle makers, as the villagers told me, is running his business in Delhi with a capital of more than five lakhs of rupees. Islamil Mukeri is yet another example of making a good fortune outland. He is just forty and now a citizen of Bangladesh. He was, in his young years a close companion of many upper group Shaikh boys; a matter of prestige for him. In a village scandal many of these Shaikh boys were involved but they escaped narrowly by making him an escape goat. He was punished in village panchayat. He was humiliated. He fled to Bangladesh (then the East Pakistan) where he worked in a jute factory. Gradually by his hard labour and honesty he won an admiration from the owner. In the due development he was married with the owner's daughter. After the death of father the two only sisters inherited one factory each and Islamil became fabulously rich. Now whenever he returns to Malmal he is not only greeted but invited by those Shaikh boys who are now themselves the family heads and belong to the upper-status groups. No Mukeri other than Islamil has a privilege to be invited in those houses. Ismail is now no longer Ismail Mukeri.

**Islamic regulations:**

Islam demands from Muslims to pay Zakat of two and half percent of the total annual savings and with the same ratio
on the amount of golds and silvers exceeding 7 tolas in case of gold and forty tolas in case of silver. Moreover, it also demands to pay one tenth of agricultural yield as 'Ushr'. It prohibits from the taking of interests.

The Muslims of the village know these regulations. I found non of them so far I met who did not know these things. But in practice the lower ethnic groups of Muslims seldom observe these rules. The problem though is located in the economic position of the ethnic groups and most of them are not in a position to pay the Zakat. Some of the Mukeris observe the rules but many of them do not. On the other hand, most of theShaikhs pay Zakat taxew on golds and silvers under their possessions. In this regard few of the Shaikh families have more gold or silver ornaments because they know the yearly Zakat giving will ultimately result into non profitability of keeping these ornaments. Non of them, as I came to know have more than 15 tolas golds. Nearly all of them are very punctual in paying the zakat dues. But conversely the Zakat payment on the savings are seldom paid except by few of the more Islamized families. The problem is more accentuated by the influx of bribe money which is a characteristics of Indian bureau cracy. They are unable to locate the 'haram' and 'halal' money. Some of them dare to give the Zakat dues but the public taunts at their back as "din duniya do no in ke hath me hai".
Any how honest employs are very prompt in giving Zakat than the corrupt ones. But in Malmö there is no such public trust which can manage those money so most of them are donated to the poor Muslims of the village personally.

The picture is more gloomy in case of 'Ushr'. Seldom any agriculturist give the 'Ushr', even more Islamized one except few. But the concept of 'Ushr' has been translated in local forms as 'mansera' meaning one ser in one month, which is less than the amount of 'Ushr' but equal to the percentage of Zakat. The 'Mansera' is collected for Madrasa funds.

Similarly the interest taking is prohibited in Islam and barely any Muslim of Malmö runs a business of money lending. Though I came to know about some people in the lower ethnic groups who are developing economically at an astonishing rates, that they take interest by lending money. But when I personally asked about the existence of such practise among the Muslims of the village in general and in their groups in particular, they refused to have any knowledge about such practise.

On the other hand they do not hesitate to keep their lands as collateralls to some of the rich Shaikhs or men from their own ethnic groups. But usually Muslims do not take interest on such collaterall securities. But some of them do not hesitate to borrow money from the professional money lenders from Hindu Banyas and some of the other high caste Hindus who also do business of money lending. One of the very
interesting story of such borrowing of money on interest was in circulation in the village during one of my stays. A poor dhuniya died in absence of his son and wife who were earning in Bombay. His daughter-in-law was the only care-taker of the family. People advised her to take the money from some personal funds of some upper-families who keep the amounts to donate for such emergency purposes. She refused to accept it and borrowed money on interest for the funeral. After his burial, some of the people told her that such money will not cause good for the departed soul. Then she apologized for her ignorance. She refused to accept the charity money because she thought it shameful and against the honour but borrowed money against the religious dictates. Most of the lower lots among Muslims are such ignorant.

Among Shaikhs seldom anyone either takes the interest or borrow money on interest. But the case of modern banks are different. While none of them accept the interests from the banks on their savings, they pay interests on loans. They give plea that taking is within our control but giving is beyond that. If we won't give, we will be unable to develop in the modern world. Earlier it was the tendency to leave the interest money in the bank accounts but now some of them cash it and donate to the poor. Asked about such practise, they replied me what is the use of leaving the money in accounts. That will be a profit for the banks. Why not give it to the
the poors. We know we will not get 'Swab' for this. But it is better". Earlier, many of the Islamized families practised 'Man-deurha' - a system of loaning the grains to the people and during crop seasons they took one and half of the amount. For a long time it was understood a correct practice. But under the Influence of Islamization and spread of religious education, it was declared as a kind of interest and was abandoned altogether. If some one tries to take interest or accept bribe he is looked down by the people. He occupy a high position on socio-economic scale but is never taken in high esteem and respect. His social position also remains ever shaky.
CHAPTER IX
RELIGION

The monotony of the village night breaks with the pre-dawn call of the Muazzin - Allah-o-Akbar, 'God is Great' - Assalat-o-Khayrum Menan Naum, 'Prayer is rewarding than the sleep. The village however awakens with the voice of Muazzin, the briskly blowing easterly wind in a tropical summer morning forces many of them to slip into the deep sleep. Rising lazily with the sun directly beating the face - the distant ringing bell of the madarsa makes one aware that the village has come to the life and the normal day-to-day activity has begun.

Watching the village in one such fine morning from the eastern side of the pond is a joyful moment of one's life. The intoxicating breeze sweeping gently across, the cool dusty roads moisten with the night dew, the shadowed pond, the glittering mosque and the children pouring out from all the directions rushing on approach roads, some of them still rubbing their eyes, some chewing hurriedly their breads, Holy Quran on their shoulders supported by their tiny hands making their ways to madrasa - all these present a scene - a sight which enthrals one's eyes and heart. The lively roads suddenly becomes deserted with the last bell of the Madarsa. Soon the 'tarana' of madarsa is heared which the children sing in chorus in the praise of the Al-mighty, the Lord, the creator - about His Majesty, Beauty and Eternity. Profundity of religion in the villagers' life can be discerned - the very first act of them of every new day begin with religion.
Calendrical rites

The Muslims of the village Malmal celebrate only the two canonical festivals in an Islamic year as it is prescribed by their religion. The two festivals are 'Id al-fitr' or feast of fast breaking and 'Id al-Azha or feast of sacrifice, popularly known as 'Baqr-Id'. In addition to these two the moments of joyful times in the context of religion are Friday prayer, Shab-e-Barat and Ramazan. In past Moharram was celebrated by the lower ethnic groups of Muslims as a joyful event in which much of their traditional martial arts were shown by playing of 'lathis' and spears, swords etc but under the influence of Islamization this practice has been dropped out altogether by the villagers.

Friday prayer

Though Muslims are required to perform prayer five times daily but on Friday the noon prayer acquires a degree of elaborateness. It is required to perform the 'Salat-a-Juma' in congregation. It has its religious and social function in the sense that at least once a week the Muslims of certain locality is desired to perform prayer together in one Mosque. It gives them an opportunity to be together, to know each other. Unlike other regular prayers the unique feature of Friday prayer is the sermon or 'khutba' performed in two parts.
In Malmal Friday looks as a holiday. The Muslims from all ethnic backgrounds prepare for the prayer and are particularly conscious about its importance. Though most of them do not perform regular prayers but on Friday normally they avoid going outside the village or to be engaged in more time consuming jobs in fear of being absent from the prayer. On Friday madarsas remain closed and till eleven in noon all shops are closed. All of them take bath and wear washed clothes, apply some perfumes and take their way to Jama Masjid. No other mosque in the village hold Friday congregation except the Jama-Masjid. In this regard they act in conformity with the Ideal Islamic prescriptions.

In one such Friday Prayer I was there. After calling of 'Azan' the people started coming into the mosque. Without any worldly distinctions they took the places in rows from the first down the courtyard of the mosque in open sun. The only consideration was of age. The children were required to sit in the back. Before starting the Khutaba the secretary of Masjid's Managing committee Mehdi Imam, a young man in his early forties rose from his place, came to the 'minbar' or pulpit facing the people and addressed them. He gave a short summary of the progress of the construction of Jama-Masjid and donations so far received. Some raised questions and he replied in brief and then went back to his seat. Then 'iqama' or the call to perform the prayer was called by Muazzin. The Imam came to the minbar and recited a verse from Holy Quran and translated it in Urdu. The Quranic verse was relevant for the days sermon which
was in connection of the then burning issue of 'Shariat Bill' which was going on the national level. He narrated the national progress and what Muslims should don in the face of the new developments. After that, he sat for a while on 'minbar' then rose and recited the second Khutaba—'Khutaba sani' in Arabic. Then prayer of two 'rakas' was offered. After performing the salat, before 'dua' or prayer a person rose from third row and asked the villagers for the donation to construct a mosque in another village. Mean while some youth rose and moved in between the rows with handkerchiefs in their hands for usual money donation by the villagers for the maintenance of the mosque. Then 'dua' was performed and prayer came to an end.

After Friday prayers people gather outside between the space of the mosque and the pond under the trees and meet the people from the village with whom they had rare opportunity to meet during the past week. Moreover the outside gathering also provided them opportunity to meet the guests of the village who have came from the outside or the persons who are living outside the village in towns. It becomes an occasion of public meeting. For children it is a holiday, enough for their making funs.

Shab-e-Barat:

Earlier the villagers celebrated the occasion with much enthusiasm but now it is observed soberly. Shab-e-Barat is a word derived from persian, meaning 'night of the joy'. It is
observed in the night of 15th of the month of 'Shaban', the eighth month of Islamic lunar calendar. Though Islamically it has no significance but in the later Sufi practices it acquired a position more than Lailat-al qadr the odd nights of the last ten days of Ramadan which are the especially blessed nights according to Quran. Importing from Sufism the orthodoxy traditionalized the night as a night of favour in which the coming annual happenings are recorded by Allah the Almighty. The night is celebrated throughout the sub-continent with many variations.

In Malmal, even earlier, Muslims particularly the upper groups had never included any alien rituals with this night. Some of them told me that some of the lower ethnic groups particularly the Faqirs believed that the souls of the departed relatives visit the houses in that night and they offered some food for them which were kept in the back of the houses. Similarly the upper groups used to carry processions of youths after namaz al-Isha to visit various graveyards in the village and then in the locality where they used to offer 'Fatihas' by reciting Quranic verses to the departed souls. Such were their craze to visit as much graveyards as possible in the locality that they travelled more than ten kilometers on foot and returned back before namaz al-fajr to their own villages.

But now most of these practices have been totally abandoned by them and no longer they make offerings to their departed
ancestors. Particularly under the Influence of Islamization programs in the village these traditional practices has been totally eliminated. The families who are under the influence of Jamat-e-Islami have gone to the yet another extreme. They totally seized to make any special preparations of foods in that night; a characteristic feature of old traditions. But in general the Muslims of the village prepare lavish dishes in the night like 'biryani' 'quorma' and 'sweet rices' or Zarda etc. Some of them distribute the foods among poors. But in contrast to the general Muslim practices in Bihar they never prepare any special item of food for the occassion as most of the Muslims in other areas prepare 'halwa' for this night.

Some times extra arrangements are made by the people for praying in the night in Jama Masjid. Particularly some of the affluent shaikhs make contributions to serve the tea for 'Nemazees' or those who are praying. Particularly after midnight the mosque becomes more lively when many people gather to offer 'tahajjud' prayer in that night.

Ramazan:

The ninth month of Islamic calendar is the holy month of Ramazan. The month long day-time fasting demands spiritual discipline and enhance's one's awareness and feelings for the poor and needy who normally starve. It is a month of spiritual and physical discipline for the Muslims.
For the Muslims of Malmal it gives joyful nights and
disserted days. Most of the elderly people keep fast and among
youths some of them observe fasting whole the month but many of
them keep with intervals. The children show more craze for
fasting because in return they get affection of elders, special
treatment by the parents and good foods are prepared in their
honour. The life’s first 'roza' or fast of a child is some time
celebrated by exchange of 'aftar' or fast breaking food items
among his family and kin groups. After 'aftar' some of the
elders visit his house and praise him for his courage.

Earlier it has been the tradition in the village to
gather in mosques with their 'aftars' to break their fast
together. The breaking of fast with the call of evening prayer
is also called 'aftar'. But now this combined 'aftar' by the
villagers are no longer observed. Instead people break their
fast in the homes and then rush to the mosque for evening
prayer. The attendance of the mosque during Ramzan are fairly
high particularly in first ten days when the people have enough
stamina. Whoever does not keep fast pretends in the public to
be fasting and an oppen taking of tea, or smoking cigarettes
in public are condemned. The man doing such thing will never
gain credibility. Normally the tea shops are closed in the
day hours.
Another special feature of the month of Ramazan is the arrangement of 'Traweeh'. Traweeh is those prayer which is performed during Nemaz Isha after 'salat fard' or obligatory prayer. The number of 'rakats' in Traweeh ranges from eight to twenty depending upon the particular law schools. Eight rakats are preferred by Shaifis and twenty by Hanafis. A Hafiz who has memorized the Holy Quran recite it in those prayers and normally single recitation of whole of the Holy Quran is done in the whole month. In Malmal all the six mosques arrange Traweeh. Since the village Malmal is famous in the locality for its Hafizs so naturally all of Hafiz of six mosques are from Malmal. The best Hafiz is appointed for the Grand Mosque. People gather for Traweeh in large numbers. Young boys of the village find an enjoyable time in the sense that going for Traweeh no guardian objects. Most of them after performing the eight rikats of Traweeh leave the mosque and sit in the company of friends in the tea shops at the village chawk. Though they are Hanafis but observing a Shaifi law does not make any difference in the religious circles.

Normally on the twenty seventh of Ramazan, Hafiz finishes his Traweeh. The finishing of the recitation of Holy Quran in Traweeh is called in the village 'Khatam'. In the night of 'Khatam' some special arrangements are made particularly the distribution of sweets among the Nemazees. Hafiz is offered some rupees and a pair of dress, depending upon the mosques locality.
In Jama-Masjid Hafiz gets some fifteen hundreds of rupees. In that mosque, since the last two years two young Rahman boys who had just finished their memorizing of the Holy Quran were given chances. But they refused to accept money. Instead their family pleaded to give the money to the previous year's Hafiz.

The last ten nights of Ramazan are more lively in Malmal. Particularly in the "Lailat-al-qadr" the "Shabeenas" are arranged in the mosques. "Shabeenas" are called in which the whole of the Quran is finished by reciting in single night. Many Hafizs take part in shabeenas. There are special arrangements for teas. The mosques during those nights usually remain packed. Even children try to live as much as possible in the mosque.

Id al-Fitr:

The villagers anxiously wait for the appearance of new moon (hilal) which marks the end of the month of Ramazan and the beginning of Shawwal, the tenth month of Islamic calendar. The first sight of 'hilal' is a moment of rejoicing for all the Muslims of the village Malmal. In recent years with the advent of modern communication system the event of the appearance of 'hilal' has also become an occasion of controversy and conflict among Muslims in the world. In similar fashion if the new moon is not clearly visible, the village also becomes infused with an environment of confusion and controversy. People look upon the religious scholars for their verdicts.
The new moon will make an end of Ramazan fasting and the next day the festival of ‘Id al-Fitr’ will be celebrated.

One one such occasion I was present in the village. Muslims of Malmal were preparing for ‘Id since many days. After passing of the twentieth fasting day of Ramazan, just after the villagers have broken their fast in the evening they started searching the new moon. Some were looking for new moon from the ground and some of them were standing on the roofs of their houses but the new moon was nowhere visible. Now they waited for the local news broadcasted from Patna at 7.30 P.M. The news also gave no indication of viewing new moon in any part of the state of Bihar. At 8.45 P.M. the national news broadcasted from All India Radio, Delhi declared that new moon was visible in some parts of the country especially Delhi. Some of the villagers rushed immediately towards mosque to congratulate the ‘Motakifs’. Motakifs are those people who is their spiritual retreat spends several days and nights in the mosque. This act is called ‘Itikaf’ which is observed by few elderly people in the village during the last ten days of Ramazan.

As some of the villagers particularly youths reached the Jama Masjid, some other elderly persons reached there and told them that they wont celebrate ‘Id’ tomorrow unless ‘Umarat-Sharia’ of Bihar does not declares so. This pacified the earlier group and the whole night the villagers spent in
listening the radio news. In morning at 6 A.M. Radio Patna
broadcasted the news refering Emarat-e-Shariah of Bihar that
the moon was viewed in Ranchi and hence today 'Id' will be
celebrated. Even then some of them showed reluctance and all
of them gathered in the mosque. One of the villagers asked
"Hashim babu aap keva kahte hain". Zia-ur-Rahman who is of
dundamentalist mould turned and lifted a jug of water and
swallowed it. It symbolized his favour of the celebration of
'Id'. But most of them still was not ready to accept his
decision. Some one cried 'there is Maulvi Baqi Sahab, ask
him what should be done? "Few of them ran towards Maulvi Baqi's
house. After some while Maulvi Baqi came smiling, his lips
were red and he was chewing 'pan' (beatles). And in this way
villagers reached at a consensus to celebrate Id in the same
morning.

For Id celebration the Muslims of MalMal like their
coreligionists elsewhere make special arrangements. New dresses
are prepared for the every member of the family particularly
for the children. Similarly many lavish dishes are prepared for
the food, particularly many varieties of Sewai "sweet shredded
wheat" are prepared. Earlier these sewais were totally home
made but now the market made has totally replaced them. The
villagers find a hard time in managing for milks. Sometimes
special attentions are paid to the arrangement of milk, in
fixing the time for Id-prayers.
The festival of Id is especially rejoicing for children who in their colourful dresses jump in joys and visit to the houses of near relatives for the demand of 'Iddy'. The elder members of khandan give them money as Iddy. The success of Id for children lies in their collection of 'Iddy'. The people before proceeding to 'Idgah' first break their fast with 'sewai' and milk in their homes and then visit the houses of the relatives to greet them. There is a pattern in such visits. The youngers visit the houses of elders first. Usually all the members of the Khandan assemble together during the course of such visits and then proceed towards the Id-gah in a procession with their children. Earlier they used to go to Idgah by bullock carts but now they prefer to go on foot.

Id-gah is situated on the out skirt of the village. There they assemble together. Outside the Id-gah a number of vendors sell the fancy items for children. Before the Id prayer some of the announcements are made particularly for the donations either for the construction and repairing of mosques or Id-gah or for another charitable funds for Muslim causes like riot victims or flood victims. The Muslims of the village Malmal are famous and are admired for their generous donations in the locality. For instance, recently a collection for the re-soiling of the grave yard and the repairing of its wells was made in which some Rs 17000/- were collected. All of them go prepared as if some demands will be made. Normally all of
them give cash donations. If some one fails he urges to write the amount which he will give after returning in to the village. After Id prayer which is performed in congregation with additional ‘takbirs’ and Khutba, all of them embrace each other without any distinction of ethnicity or other backgrounds. Particularly the lower groups rush to embrace the well to do villagers and the religious personalities.

After returnin from Id gah all of them visit the houses of their relatives which come into their ways. During their absence from the village women also arrange khutba for themselves. Earlier it was arranged in the house of Ziaur-Rahman who has woorilocal residence and his wife and three other sisters are the members of Jamat-e-Islami. They deliver the Khutba among women. Now viewing the distance and limited time at their disposal, the house of another Rahman is used for this purpose which is in the southern 'tola' of the village. But still most of the women prefer going to the earlier place.

After Id prayers the elders remain in their houses but the youngs paint the village red. Most of them visit each others houses till the noon. Rest are visited in the evening. The evening of Id also provide, an opportunity to hold some special meetings concerning religious dimension of the village Muslims.
**Id al-Asha or Bakr-Id**

The festival of Id al-Asha is the most important festival of Islamic world. 'Feast of sacrifice' is celebrated in the memory of Abraham's sacrifice of his son Ismail. For the celebration of this festival when a pilgrimage to Mecca is sought it is called Hajj; the final pillar of Islamic faith. It is celebrated on the tenth day of the last month of Islamic calendar, that is month of 'Dhu al-Hijja'.

In village Malmal the story of Ibrahim and Ismail is known to all Muslims, even children. In 1987 it was celebrated on 6th of August. On the pattern of Id al-Fitr it is also celebrated. The difference lies in the boom of sacrificial animals in the village which they purchase months ago. People especially take pride in the health of the sacrificial animals. Some of them rear goats for a whole year and make it healthy and fatty. Particularly children boast much about their goats among themselves.

After returning from the Id-gah the villagers go to their homes where the animal for sacrifice is made ready. The day remains busiest for village butchers. Sometimes some non professionals also take the job. Day before, the butchers commit their clients and give the time of their visits to their houses. Normally a butcher visits first the house of his lord with whom he has intimate relations in the day-to-day affairs of the village. The goats are first given to drink some water.
Then a small ditch is dug out and two to three persons hold it by leg and make it to fall on the ground. The goat is made to lie down north to south facing 'qibla'. Then the person who is going to perform the sacrifice recite the prescribed verses of Quran and mention the name to whom sacrifice is being made. Then he approaches the goat. A sharp bladed knife is offered by the butcher and he cuts the throat of the goat, leaving rest of the duty to perform the butcher.

After sacrificing the animal, he along with his family members break their fast. It is desirable for every Muslim particularly the person who is to make sacrifice, to keep fast in the morning of Id al-Adha till the sacrifice is made. Moreover the person who is sacrificing is also required not to shave or cut hairs, beards and nails. Except the person who has to sacrifice seldom anyone in the village observe this morning fasting. It is also desirable to break one's fast with the sacrificial meats. But villagers do not wait for the nursing of the goats. They break their fast with 'Sevai' and other special items prepared for the occasion. After few hours, relatives start coming into the house where the sacrifice has been made early. There they are treated with the meats of sacrifice. The two third of the total meats are distributed among relatives and the other Muslims of the village who have connections with the family. Sometimes Hindu servants are also given the meats because they have looked after the animal with great care for many months.
People who have more than one animal for sacrifice have some equations related with the time of sacrifices. The Id al-Azna is celebrated for three days and it is preferable to sacrifice on the first day. But if some one is to sacrifice two animals in the village he will sacrifice one on the first day and another on the third. It is done with the intention to entertain much of the guests. Since on the first day most of them have their own sacrificial meats so non pay attention to the sent meats or to the invitations. Till the third day most of the family are running short of meats and so they accept the invitations. Most of the upper families of Shaikhs host dinners in which they invite their own kinmen either exclusively or they share others too. It depends upon the number of animals sacrificed. Some of the economically well off Muslims sacrifice on the name of their departed ancestors and other alive family members. Those who do not have enough to sacrifice do not sacrifice. But the Muslims of Malmal especially try to sacrifice at least one.

In some families of the village, the departed ancestors have made some of their lands as waqf or "trust" for the purpose. Their successors purchase the animals from the income of that particular lands of waqf managed by them and sacrifice the animals by their ancestors names. Felling short in this duty is a sin Islamically and a condemnation socially. Non of
the family of the village who have such 'awqaf' fails to perform their duty.

Religious Institutions: Sacred Vs Profane:

Though the system of clergy is alien to Islam but the religious ulamas being guardians of the text and its interpretations exercise much authority in Muslim society. They draw their respect and authority from their religious learnings which needs an expertise and equally long training. Because of their trainings in the traditional Islamic learnings they have an access to the knowledge of Islam and they determine what is Islam and what is not. The Muslim mass who have neither such training nor time in this busy world seek ulamas' advice on the religious matters. Since Islam makes a total demand on one's life so ulamas authority expands to the entire social life of Muslim society. The sacred and profane sides of the reality since not been demarcated in Islam instead both are made complementary, so most often the tensions of secular dimensions surface on the religious fronts. The secular tensions and conflicts are highlighted under the guise of religion as if the religion is at stake. Moreover the religious institutions which are their areas of activity provide them a pool of resources. In a society which is developing economically these institutions provide a good sources of income, and running them may be a lucrative. They
try to control such resources for their better living and jealously guard it as their small fiefdom. The interference of others may spark off a conflict.

In this respect the village Malmal provides a good example where the Madarsa and Mosque are the two religious institutions where much of the village politics are dealt. On the other hand, the village politics itself derive much of its significance from the conflict and tension in these institutions.

The Madarsa Chashma-e-Faiz:

As we have noted in earlier chapters that this Madarsa has a history of approximately one hundred fifty years. Since then it has been managed by the villagers on their own expenses. The Madarsa has a reputation of imparting good religious education in the locality. In past the people from many distant corners of north Bihar sent their children for the religious education, in this madarsa.

Earlier the management of this madarsa were entrusted to a managing committee called 'Majlis-e-Muntazima' headed by a President. The two executive members and a working secretary and on cashier of the committee were elected every three years and in some case it has a term of five years. The members were elected from Shaikhs and were elderly people who had their says in the society. The committee was entrusted with the duty
to look after the educational affairs like appointment of teachers and the curriculum of madarsa. Moreover, they were also given the responsibility of collecting the funds for madarsa. The villagers donated one ser per month of their agricultural yields. Some of the more Islamized families donated the total amount of 'Ushr' to the madarsa. Moreover, the skin of the sacrificed animals provided another source of income to the madarsa excluding the cash donations by the villagers and nominal fee of the students. During the month of Ramazan some of the teachers were sent to the cities to collect the cash donations. Similarly in the month of 'aghan' they visited the villages of Shaikhs in their relations from where they collected large quantities of grains. This pattern is still continued and at present some five to six hundred children are enrolled in the madarsa and some fifty children from outside the village are provided free lodging and fooding facilities in madarsa campus.

For more than eighteen years Ziaur Rahman was the working secretary of madarsa managing committee. Since his personality was unchallenged Islamically and economically, he was elected and re-elected for the all-powerful post of secretary before he was imprisoned during the emergency because of his links with Jamaat-e-Islami. In 1970 Maulvi Wasi Ahmad popularly called Maulvi Nazim, returned from Deoband after
finishing his education. He was a son of Hafiz Saleem who belonged to lower status groups of Shaikhs. Because of his high religious learning he was included into the Madrasa Managing Committee and was offered a post of teacher in Madarsa. Being a shrewd person he rose to the level of Head "Mudarris" of Madarsa. But his personality was overshadowed by Ziaur Rahman popularly called Hashim babu. Maulvi Nazim is a fire brand orator and his moderate ideas were acceptable to the both youngs and olds alike. He had a charisma in mobilizing the youths of the village. He started reform programs for the Muslim Youths of the village.

The arrest of Hashim babu in 1975 and his absence for two years from the village during emergency period provided for him an opportunity for which he was waiting since long. He persuaded many influential young shaikhs who were his friends since his early childhood, to take over the Madarsa. And the broad of the managing committee was taken over by the new emerging group of youngs who were till then started to take active role in village politics. Among them Khaliqur Rahman and Wajid Huzain were the persons who were from the upper most status groups of the village, and the latter one is now Mukhiya of the village. Their this act brought them into limelight of the village politics and non interfered. They argued that the days of olds are gone and let the youths to act on their own. The villagers left them to go their own
way. Now the capture of economic resources of Madarsa was at stake. The struggle between themselves started and the case was filed in the civil court and the village even beraderi of Shaikhs polarized into two fronts headed by Maulvi Nazim and Khaliqu Rahman each. The tension and conflict reached to the extent of stabbing cases between the sympathizers of the two leaders. Maulvi Nazim who was non entity became a celebrity overnight. At last Khalique Rahman with much of his shrewdness succumbed to the cleverness of Maulvi Nazim and a compromise was reached between the two. Maulvi Nazim captured the Madarsa and now runs it as his private enterprise.

Maulvi Nazim is famous in the village and locality for his ability of fund collections. Other than the traditional style of fund collecting he introduced some new methods. Earlier, few teachers of Madrasa were selected for the fund collections from the various Indian towns and cities in the month of Ramazan. In return they were given some twenty to twenty five per cent commission of the total fund collected by them. But now Maulvi Nazim selects some teachers from Madarsa and some other people from the village who are famous for their cunningness and their persuading powers. Moreover, they are given fifty per cent of commissions which seems to them a lucrative business in the holy month when usually Muslims donate generously.

But this new high commission rates were not without his personal interests. Every year he visits Saudi Arabia for
Hajj where he earns some money personally by guiding the pilgrims and helps them in performing Hajj. Some of the villagers have opinion that he even beg alms but it is not a veryfyable fact. These earnings directly go into his personal purse. On the other hand, he collects the funds for Madarsa from affluent Arabs. His fluent Arabic helps him much in securing funds. The collected funds are divided into fifty-fifty between him and Madarsa treasury. Moreover his travel expenditures are also met by Madarsa funds. In this way he has accumulated enormous wealth and his sons are getting education in Delhi where he has rented a flat exclusively for their educational purpose. The growing wealth of Maulvi agitates the minds of villagers and he is constantly demanded by them to show the accounts but he has never been able to show Madarsa's balance sheet for public accountability. But some families of the village are with him since he profits them in either ways. For instance he appointed his deputy in Madarsa named Maulvi Makeen. After many years a voice of protest were raised by him. Two years back he also took with him Maulvi Makeen to Saudi Arabia and now he is totally silent and rally behind Maulvi Makeen. In similar style he makes many of the villagers happy. He has a charisma in winning the people even his enemies. District administrations also are not beyond his reach. His yearly visit for Hajj is unlawful
because the permission for another Hajj is granted after five years. More often local intelligence run after him and villagers feel that this time he will be arrested but he escapes. Money has a power to make impossibles the possible. But on the other hand, he has now completely lost his popularity in the village. Instead, his notoriety is more famous in the locality but he escapes successfully any village prosecution.

The Grand Mosque: Jama Masjid:

The Jama Masjid of the village is very old and earlier some families of Haveli Khandan were its sole custodian or "Motawalli". Some thirty five to forty acres of lands were donated for the purpose of maintaining the mosque by their ancestors, called "jagir". Though this jagir were distributed among them but according to the conditions of 'waqf' they were responsible to maintain the jama Masjid and Musafir Khana where the travellers used to stay and provided foods by these families. But in early forties the repeated failure of monsoon shattered the economic position of these families and it was not possible for them to look after the Mosque. So they left it to the public to manage the affairs of Mosque. A committee for the purpose was formed and the members were elected from the Muslims of the village.

The existing elected committee has nine members on its board. The tolas of north south and east are represented by
two members each and the central tola 'Got' is represented by three members. In addition to these members there is one elected secretary of the board who is all powerful. Moreover, a nominal President of the board heads the committee. The main source of income of the mosque is the fish of the pond which is just in front of it. In addition to this, public contribute in every Friday Prayer. Normally the Friday prayer contributions range from forty to fifty rupees. But it crosses the hundred mark during the vacations when the people return to the village from their respective towns and cities. Moreover, occasionally large donations are made by affluent Muslims of the village. The Mosque has one regular Muazzin and one part-time Imam. The Muazzin gets one hundred fifty rupees per month and during Ramazan he is provided meals three times a day i.e. After, Khana, Sehri and a pair new clothes. The Imam who is also a teacher in Madarsa gets one hundred fifty five rupees per month.

Hashim babu was also looking after the affairs of Mosque for many years. Being released after Janta victory in 1977 he left his interest in Madarsa affairs because it was captured by Maulvi Nazim but he remained one of the organizing members of Madarsa board. But Maulvi Nazim was also one among them. Moreover his growing notoriety left many villagers troubled and none was able to curb his influence. The search of alternate was going on among the powerholders though individually.
Few years back a clash between Maulvi Nazim and Saifi Imam took place on some different issue. Saifi Imam who is from the Imam Khandan is famous for his notorious acts and bad character. In that clash most of villagers sympathized with saifi Imam because of his heroic attempt to clash with Maulvi Nazim. But making him an alternate was not possible because of his famous bad character but nevertheless it brought him in focus.

Mehdi Imam became the alternate. A post-graduate in anthropology, he remained for some twenty years isolated from the village. While he was studying in Patna, though already married, developed an affair with a wealthy Malik girl of Gaya and married her. He settled with her in his in-laws village where her wife owned large landed property. But due to many internal familial feuds with his in-laws family he was forced to leave the village. He returned back to Malmal where he now lives with his both wives and children. He is moderate and sophisticated in his ideas and manners. He has long friendships with Rahmans and is admired by them in perfect contrast to his own Khandan of Imams. He has tried to bridge the gap between the two dominant families of the village. Moreover, he after his return started taking active interest in village politics and reforms. He is also taken in esteem by the villagers because of his selflessness, knowledge and hard work. In many of village Panchayats he decides the matter.
He is actively supported by Hashim babu for whom Mehdi Imam has much respect.

Before his coming to the village, a reform program "Islah-e-Muashra" was already in progress under the leadership of Maulvi Nazim. Maulvi was reforming the village youths and they were gradually leaving many of their bad habits. Due to their reform the attendance of Mosque rose considerably. But Maulvi Nazim had a dual purpose of reforming the youth and organizing them into a gang of his own followers. One day one of his relative quarrelled with another person in the village. Maulvi Nazim called these youths to follow him to punish the person. Mehdi Imam chided the boys and told Maulvi Nazim "why you are putting them on different track". A cold war between them started since then.

Two years back while Maulvi Nazim was out for Hajj the election of the Mosque Committee was held and in absentia he and many of his chums lost. Mehdi Imam was elected as Secretary and most of the representatives were elected from his supporters including Hashim babu. Even Shaifi Imam was elected as one of the member. Earlier there was a separate Id-gah committee of four representatives i.e. Hashim babu, Maulvi Nazim, Shaifi Imam and Hafiz Zahoor. Now a new constitution was framed in written form according to which this committee was merged into the Mosque committee.
When Maulvi Nazim returned back from Hajj he found no place in the management of any other village affairs except his private world of Madrasa. Now he started politicking into the Mosque affairs on religious issues. Maulvi Abdul Daqi an Aalim in traditional conservative mould was sworn enemy of him. He persuaded him and offered a post of teacher in Madrasa with highest paid salary. Similarly one of his near kin Maulvi Zahoorul Haq was also a sworn enemy of Maulvi Nazim. Maulvi Zahoor thought it haram to pray behind Maulvi Nazim and since for many years he was the Imam of Juma prayer so Maulvi Zahoor used to go to Kalwahi for Juma prayer. But he won over him too by offering a post with handsome salary. Now these three Maulvis are United and for Maulvi Zahoor prayer after Maulvi Nazim is no longer haram.

In one Juma prayer Hafiz Bashcer-ud-din the part-time Imam of Jama Masjid was requested by the Secretary Mehdi Imam to perform the prayer. He pointed towards Maulvi Baqi and said that in the presence of such Ulamas how I dare to lead the prayer. Since Imam was himself a teacher so his service in Madarsa was at stake. Yet in another Juma prayer he again argued for Maulvi Nazim, though in regular prayers he leads the prayer in the presence of those ulamas. At last one day Maulvi Nazim quarreled with Mehdi Imam in the Mosque and declared that 'he do not know who he is. He neither recognizes
his committee nor him as secretary'. Mehdi Imam replied that 'since he has been elected by the Public so he is responsible to them not him. Similarly the villagers do not recognize you as head of Madrasa but you are still there by sheer force. Now his days are over'.

After that happening Maulvi Nazim and other Ulamas started to propagate for the return of Mosque to its genuine custodian or 'Mutawalli', Monazir babu. But the villagers argue that since every expenditure are met by them so how Monazir babu will be given the charge, "Allah ne unhein taufeeq hi nahin deya hai". On the other hand Monazir babu is constantly encouraged to make a demand for the return of the Mosque. But this attempt of Ulamas are totally in vain. He is so miser that he has become proverbial for the entire village and beraderi.

Another example of the return of public institution to its traditional custodian is that of Musafir Khana. Musafir Khana of the village remained neglected for many decades because the deteriorating economic conditions of Naveeli Khandan. Few years ago Dr. Shabbeer Ahmad who is a military commissioned doctor and practise privately in Dhanbad came to the village. He was also polygamous for many years and at last divorced the earlier wife who was also his near kin. But after few years his second wife died leaving behind a daughter.
When he came to the village after many years he found in most of the villagers a stranger for himself. Now knew him except few. Now he determined to play with his wealth and showed his generosity to the two ulamas Maulvi Nazim and Maulvi Baqi. Both of them became his active companion and propagator of his personal virtues in the village. He also donated to a charitable fund collected for some flood reliefs an amount of ten thousand rupees. But because of the political reasons of the village the funds were collected by two groups and in this process his name was lost into the jumble of politics. Another year he made a pilgrimage to Mecca for Hajj and after his return offered the people that he wants to reconstruct the Musafir Khana. Since he is also from the Haveli Khandan so perhaps non would had objected. But the entire Haveli Khandan not only objected but took it as a matter of dishonour. All of them held a meeting and the expenditures involving in the construction were calculated and distributed on the per households of the Khandan. Even the daughters who were married in another village were not spared. And in this way hurriedly a cement structure of Musafir Khana as constructed, and an attempt of a wealthy helped by ulamas to achieve a position of Sacrosanct was demolished.

The traditional Ulamas' incogruous alliance with the wealthy is profitable for both of them. While for one it
confers status which he lacks even after enormous wealth, for another it brights favours and donations. This monopoly of religion by traditional conservative ulamas is furthered by their role as interpreters of the text and tradition. For instance the 'Dars-Quran' or lesson of Quran organized by them after nemaz fajr (morning prayer) and nemaz Asr 'afternoon prayer' in the village has strong influence upon the minds of the listeners. The listeners carry it with them to the village tea shops where others come to know about interpretations. But all of them assume this interpretations as part and parcel of religion; an eternal truth.

In Malmal the lessons of Quran were first organized by the fundamentalists. In his early days Maulvi Baqi was also a sympathiser of Jamat-e-Islami and was incharge of Public trust Bait al-Mal. But since he was trained in a conservative environment of Deoband so Maulana Mawdudi's criticism of Maulana Hasan Madeni made him furious and he has gone to the extent of becoming a sworn enemy of Jamat and its members. So most often Maulvi Baqi educates the villagers in traditional conservative styles and interprets the tradition as if it is the genuine Islamic faith and all others are wrong. For instance he will narrate many superstitious beliefs of Sufi mystics. Similarly in a death mourning where I was also present, he was narrating how a
soul passes through the different stages from the body to the questioning in grave and what angels do and how. However, one is educated, death and its after always remains a mystery for him and beyond his control. In a situation of helplessness and ignorance they look hopefully at Maulana to tell something how their departed near and dear would be there and if he can, he should help him.

Though most of the villagers know that personally these Maulanas are persona non grata in their day to day affairs and their acts are much determined by tangible considerations but they are the knowledgeable persons in the matter of religion and know what they know not. For instance the villagers know that Maulvi Baqi has illegally transferred the registration of a homestead plot of a widow on his own name and they donot rely upon him on many other accounts but they cannot escape his control since day-in and day-out they need the guidance. Such guidances are sought much by the illiterate masses. On the other hand the wealthy persons are guided as they desire, as if these Maulvis are legal lawyers giving their clients an advice how to escape the law. On the other hand, the illiterates are guided through much difficult paths where the help of Maulana will be necessary, and needed at every step.

Thus in village Mailmal we can see the four distinct styles of actions as shown by Voll1 historically i.e. personal Charisma of Maulvi Nazim, conservative traditionalism of

Maulvi Baqi, the fundamentalism of Ziaur Rahman 'Hashim Babu' and moderate adaptive response of Mehdzi Imam. The history has been contemporarized and contextualised. It is a unique feature of Muslim society. Fundamentalists and moderates most often unite on some issue while the charismatic and traditionalists unite in opposition. Iran gives a prime example of the unity of charismatic and traditional authorities. Moreover as witnessed historically which we have discussed earlier that the conservative traditional ulamas become associated with the kings and power holders of society. In similar fashion, in Malmal they most often take sides with some of the riches who want to achieve a religiously sanctified position. And the politics arising out of these alliances are motivated partially by the religious and partly by other tangible considerations. But with the rise of education, the fundamental traditions because of its simplicity and emphasis upon reason is becoming more attractive than the suffocating environment of traditional conservatism.

**Popular beliefs and Islamization:**

So far we have viewed Malmal we can observe a gradual move of the Muslims towards higher tradition of Islam. The popular local beliefs are now no longer occupies the minds of the villagers except few. For instance one morning during my stay in the village a news was circulating in the village
Some of the villagers were talking seriously and some were mocking up the event. The news was that last night Maulana Baqi saw a funeral procession of jinnis. The story was narrated as last night Maulvi Baqi was coming from the north tola. It was late night and he saw some persons were sitting on the road with gas lamps and a corpse was kept beside the road. Maulvi Baqi said Assalam-u-Alaikum to them but they did not replied. From some popular sufistic tales it is believed that jinns do not reply the 'Salams' of humans. So Maulvi doubted that they might be jinns. The illiterate Muslims took it as the specially gifted power of Maulvi Baqi who saw jinns. Though believing in the existence of jinns is not against Islam because Quran speaks of their existence. But how they behave is perhaps never described by any genuine prophetic hadith. Instead it may be found in latter sufistic tales. Another day villagers came to know that in the new Muslim settlement areas of the village some child died that day and they were carrying the corpse of the child to the graveyard. On their way some mechanical defect in the gas lamp took place which they were making on the road. The thin voice of Maulvi Baq and the darkness was the cause of their not answering his 'Salam'. While this shows the interpretive power of Maulvi Baqi and his influence on some of the villagers others who were mocking the event also indicate the influence of other tradition particularly fundamentalism which though
believe in jinn but never believe the superstitious interpretations of Maulvi. They think his interpretations as rustic and obsolete.

This style of interpretations usually result into the derogatory remarks against each other behind their backs. The illiterates or educated Muslims who find fundamentalistic version a bit radical and unacceptable turn towards such traditionalised interpretations. While fundamentalists argue for the application of reason or 'Ijtehad' the traditional conservative argue for imitation or 'taqlid'. This taqlid is the re-interpretations of the interpretations of their predecessor Ulamas. If some of the fundamentalists argue for new approach this later group will instantly reply "Tokeya yah kahna chahte hein ke hamare baap dada jo bhi karte they sab ghalat tha, Woh kafir they aap hi log sif Musalman hain".

On the other hand the influence of fundamentalism has given rise to yet another form of beliefs. For instance a villager who was influenced by fundamentalism told me that some of his grains were destroyed by insects. Though the grains were properly looked after, he thought what the causes were behind these destruction. Then he concluded that since he had not given the 'Usar' on that grains so it has been destroyed, otherwise it was impossible.

Anyhow the village has experienced a lot of religious developments and the elimination of popular beliefs from the
minds of the villagers. Most of the villagers appreciate the activity of the fundamentalists whose efforts have made them able to distinguish between the Ideal Islamic norms and their previously held rustic conceptions. Particularly the regular 'ijtima' of women and the visit of the women of upper families to the houses of the lowers for the religious reforms have contributed much in this respect. The women activists visit the lower group Muslims in night and teach their women about Islam and the other duties. They also memorise them the small Quranic suras so that they can perform 'Namaz'. Though this activity is appreciated in Malmal which is a large village but their daughter's similar efforts in their in-law's villages are not looked with favour. It is because most of the other villages are small and still cherish some of the old traditional values of feudalism. In this way their visit to the houses of lower groups are taken as a jolt upon their status.

Any how the village with the rising education and economy is moving towards the fundamental versions regardless of their personal dislikings. The dislinking becomes more apparent when they criticise their Un-Islamic practices. For instance some of the villagers who are in government jobs are against them because they are criticized for taking bribes. But in other spheres they also follow their styles. It is not restricted only to Shaikhs but all the Muslims of the village is responding
and moving towards fundamentalistic versions in their religious observances.

All these elaborate nature of religious observances and the well established religious institutions have been possible in Malmal because of the large size of their population and a fair degree of economic mobility. Moreover a long cherished tradition of religious education and now growing number of modern educated people have added in eliminating the old rustic traditions of the villagers. The Muslims of the village are fairly moving toward the higher Islamic traditions. The attitudes and perceptions are being more determined by new religious values. But simultaneously the modern values are also constantly threatening their Islamic attitudes. The tension generated by the modern and Islamic values are negotiated by new synthetic styles coloured with the geographical settings. It has also provided a new dynamism to the society.
CHAPTER - X
CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

The village life of Malmal so far discussed reveals a picture not very much different from the social life led by the Indian Muslims in general. The pattern of Muslim Society in the village is more or less shared by all other Muslim societies leaving apart the shades and colours of the locality. There are as much points of agreements to be shared with other Muslims as that is of the disagreements.

To summarize the study again we begin with the historical development of Muslim society in the village. Muslims came and settled into the various parts of India. Madhubani was no exception in this regard and from the various historical accounts we find their very early settlements in the region. Malmal was perhaps one of those villages where these early settlements took place. Contrary to the other northern parts of India, the region of Mithila never came into the direct rule of the Muslims except for brief interludes of dynastic changes of Mithila rulers. The pre-dominant majority was and is of Hindus and the Brahmins dominate the socio-cultural life of the region. The traditional Hindu Sanskrict culture are still alive and vibrant in the region. Muslims never assimilated totally into the local moulds, rather they cherished their own culture and traditions. It was further made possible by the tolerant
and mutual co-existant ideology of the Hindus of the area. In this sense, unlike Meos, Tamils and other Muslims ethnic groups who are identified by their regional affiliations, the Muslims of the area are never called Maithil Muslims; they are simply Muslims.

It will be naive to undermine the influence of local geography and culture on the attitudes and perceptions of the Muslims of the locality. Muslims of Malmal being an integral part of the area were also influenced by the locality. But instead of exclusively cultivating any single tradition either of the locality or the literate high tradition of Islam, they developed historically under the influence of both the traditions. When they first settled in the village centuries ago, they carried with them the fervour of high Islamic culture. But the isolationist geographical features of the region cut them off from the outer worlds and left them almost secluded into the village and the locality. Moreover, they found themselves pitted against the cruelties of nature which has always remained uncertain and unkind to the area. The yearly natural disasters left them in economic troubles. The agriculture as profession is itself time consuming and absorbing in nature and the economic scarcity became an additional factor which compelled them to engage themselves completely in the pursuit
of their livelihood. The expensive life style of Islamic high culture was unbearable for them and it was gradually replaced by the rustic popular life style of the locality. In this way the geographical isolation, economic scarcity, educational backwardness and the small size of the community made the inner defence mechanism of the society weaker paving the way for the hordes of syncretistic elements to evade and encroach upon the very fabric of the Muslim society in the village.

Either they were cherishing the high Islamic culture or the local popular culture, a feeling of being Muslim - and integral part of the ruling community of the country was there. It was enough safe-guard for their pre-eminent status in the society - a sign of success and God's favour. With the waning of the Muslim political power in India they lost their pre-eminence and the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries are the period of demoralization as well as great vitality in the history of Indian Muslims. The self definition, identification and re-evaluation of Muslim in India began with new zeals. The search for Ideal started with great vigour and since Muslims failure was interpreted as straying from the right path so societies were reformed according to the pattern of perfection represented by the early Madinan society.

The Muslims of Malmal also experienced the currents of reformism and self-evaluation. The presence of colonial
white masters in the locality has made them feel degraded. For Hindus the change of the political power in India had another connotations. Muslims who were masters now shared with them the similar status of being the subjects. Both shared the similar grievances against their rulers. The advent of the new modes of communications and the British policies helped to end the isolation of the area. The opening up of the region to the outer world helped to reach the diverse currents in the remote parts of the region. These waves also reached to the village Malmal. We see the individual effort of a single person can change the face of the society. Particularly the long and enduring change can be brought in the society by the most effective vehicle of social change like education. The establishment of 'madarsa' in the village in the mid of the nineteenth century marks the beginning of change in the life patterns of Muslims of Malmal. Surprisingly, the oldest Madarsa in the town of Darbhanga which was at the centre of Muslims' activity was established some thirty years after Malmal's madarsa.

With the spread of the religious education, the villagers after a long medieval slumber started to experience and realize 'what is being a Muslim'? and 'what is the pattern of perfection for which a Muslim society should strive?'. After short period the major currents of the Islamic world started reaching in the village carried by
those students who were getting their educations in the orthodox religious schools like Deoband and Nadwat-ul-Ulama. On the other hand the secular education also started taking its roots in the village. Along with the entire Indian Muslims, Muslims of Malmal also began to experience the new and wider cosmic orientations. The forces of Westernization, Islamization and that of the local landscape started influencing the very course of Muslim society of Malmal.

The westernizing forces were imposed by the alien masters and they became consciously resistant to such changes. The local forces were already influencing the attitudes and perceptions of the villagers but the influence of Islamization and its intensity were high, the zeal was unbound. In the atmosphere of all round demoralization the spirit to evaluate and pattern according to the Islamic ideals thrived. It thrived and influenced the meaning, nature and content of the Muslim society of the village. The influence of Muslim movements in particular and national movements in general were felt enormously by the villagers. The third and fourth decades of this century is a period of great cultural florescence in the village. With the establishment of the fundamentalist organization "Jamaat-e-Islami", the village experienced yet another new form of Islamic message. Thus with the folk and orthodox traditions,
The third tradition started influencing the Muslims of the village.

The partition and post-partition of India created another scene. First, Muslims were the masters and Hindus subjects. Then both of them became subjects to the alien masters. Now Muslims were to sink in the lowest position of being subjects, while Hindus were to climb the position of being masters. Though practically this is not the case, but at the deeper level of their psyche the fear lurks into the minds of the Muslims and the Hindus also take pride in their being dominants. This situation placed them, along with other Indian Muslims to again re-evaluate, self-define and re-adjust to the existing realities. As we have noted in earlier chapters that though Muslims dominate the village life but they cannot freely act on their own as would have been in the case of the particular Hindu caste dominance. The external compulsion has forced them to polarize community wise, and within themselves they are free to act. The internal freedom and external constraints and compulsions has left them in a state of dualism and the demands of inner-outer systemic adjustments has created a state of ambivalence in society.

Anyhow, we can discern a general historical pattern of the developments of Muslim societies in the history of
village Malmal - a move towards the Ideal Islamic pattern and also a move away from the Ideal. This move towards and occasional away from the Ideal depends as we have seen, upon the factors like the communication, economic position and the level of education in the society. The size of the community is yet another important factor in this context. For instance, before Islamization programs in the village the Muslims were deeply emersed into the local culture and customary practices. A pregnancy of domestic animal invoked an occasion for the exchange of gifts on the similar pattern as a female pregnancy did. Viewing these customary practices from the functionalist perspective, we see that there are only two festivals for the Muslims in an Islamic calendrical year. Since population was small and all of them lived in the village, they got no opportunity for a show of solidarity, affection and attachments with each other in the rest of the year. So taking the advantage of these opportunities, they used to celebrate it as occasions. The agricultural life of the villages are so routinized that people become annoyed and bored with the monotonous nature of the village life ways. These occasions were taken as moments of recreation in their life.

The growing size of the population has affected the villagers on their economy, occupation and life-ways. The
growing population and the limited land resources has forced many of them to pursue a profession other than agriculture. Moreover, the non-profitability of agriculture and yearly natural disasters is forcing many of those who have enough lands to look for new ways of earnings. These changing occupations is also influencing their life-ways. The agriculture which was their way of life is no longer so. It also means not only a change in their life ways but also the up-rooting of them from the influence of local landscape. The young generation of Muslims now do not know about the 'Naksatras' or Hindu lunar months. Instead they took on the entire rainy season as 'Sawan' and 'Bhadon'. Nothing beyond that they know. The uprooting of them from the influence of local landscape has been made easy by the influence of Islamic ethos which is free from any such attachments. In contrast of them their Hindu neighbours are still sticking much to their traditional agricultural life ways. It has been enhanced by their religious beliefs and customs which are locally born.

The gradual detachments of Muslims from the local popular influences has also smoothened their ways for the adaptations to the new ways. But it has also another adverse affect. Hindus feel their gradual discarding of local ways as a proff of their being an outsiders. In this sense they are sharing the dilemma as other Indian Muslim are faced
with. A move towards the different world from that of the local and traditional encourages others to accuse them of being outsiders and confirming the local popular culture may brand them as backwards.

Since Muslims of village Malmal have abandoned many of their rustic agricultural life ways so they do not fit into the traditional social structure of the Indian villages. The Jajmani arrangement, a unique traditional feature of village India has almost disappeared from the village scene. The Jajmani arrangement was one of the most important system integrating element which united and defined the caste structure and also provided a framework in which the caste system worked as a way of social arrangements in the Indian villages. Though Muslims never fitted into the "Caste system" of the villages but they confirmed the traditional patterns of village social structure. So normally the Muslim dominated villages had fewer Hindu service castes and the structural relations were based on the traditional patterns with minor alterations. The basic difference lied in the replacement of upper Hindu castes with the dominant Muslim ethnic groups. But viewing the village Malmal's changing economy and lifeways and the elimination of Jajmani arrangements, now the traditional pattern of social stratification is no longer so.
Moreover, Muslims within themselves are stratified not on the local patterns rather the inter-ethnic differentiations are based on class and status considerations.

The dynamics of the ethnic dominance among Muslims are similar to that of the family or khandan dominances. In this way the particular Muslim ethnic group and its various khandans dominate the village life by pursuing their own standards. In Malmal we find the interplay of the size of the groups, their politico-economic power and the level of education among its members in defining and determining their statuses. But obviously the most important criteria is their degree of Islamization. Without an Islamized life ways no ethnic group of Muslims can achieve an eminent status in their surroundings, however they may be numerous and economically well off. In the similar fashion, the status achievement of an individual and the Family rest on the similar criterias, provided that they have right lineage and ethnic affiliation.

Paradoxically, the Islamization programs in the village have achieved success in eliminating the rigid ethnic barriers but it has itself become a criterion and symbol of status. In this sense the different khandans of various ethnic groups are placed on different social standings according to their desired achievements on the standard status scale. In this way through all of them are
Muslims but they are differentiated in terms of Khandans with different social standings. Even within the same ethnic group the barriers of the statuses are as rigid as for the people outside the ethnic folds. But it can not be mistaken as the violation of Islamic egalitarianism altogether. The general social intercourse outside their homes are free from any taboo and no Muslim group of the village is stigmatized in this sense. Moreover, the endogamy is a rule defined into itself and may look as rigid social barrier between the groups but it is also not against the principles of Islam.

Within a particular ethnic group it is quite easy for the people of low statuses to get inside the status folds by achieving economic success and an Islamized life styles but crossing the ethnic barriers by lowers is a difficult proposition. The ethnic boundaries are crossed by the better-off people of the lower groups but their contact remains located only to the lower status groups of the dominant ethnic group. They enter into the marriage alliances violating the ethnic norms but justified by Islamic Idioms. Such violations now and then re-affirm the principle of egalitarianism which remains only an Ideal in the life of common Muslims.
It may seem an irony that Islamization has not been able to eliminate the status barriers in the village. But viewing from the functional perspectives it renders a positive function in the smooth functioning of society. No known human society is not stratified to a certain limits but it becomes a social disease and a curse for society when these social inequalities are ideologized. The Muslims of Malmal are free from any such ideologization of the inequality among themselves because of Islam's emphasis on equality.

In the fields of other social institutions much of the customary practices derived from the locality alien to Islamic norms have been replaced under the influence of Islamization and modern secular educational impacts. The ceremonies and customs now observed by the Muslims of the village Malmal on the occasions of child births, marriages and deaths no longer show the similarities and resemblances with that of the Hindus. They have considerably Islamized themselves in this context. The religious personalities in the village through out the century have tried to Islamize them and succeeded to a large extent. But the replacement of a heterodox practice by an orthodox is a different proposition. With regards to the rules and regulations, Islam prescribes certain directives but the
way it should be done is left to the Muslims themselves. What is an orthodox practice and what is a heterodox is totally an absurd proposition. The local variations are very much accepted in Islam. In this sense the customary practices were thought to be contradicting the very basis of Islamic principles have been dropped from the practice of the Muslims of Malmal. New styles of celebrations have been introduced as a substitute to the older ones. But if a custom becomes obligatory to the extent of becoming and replacing the importance of an Islamic ritual then it becomes condemnable in the village. Muslims of Malmal look quite liberal in this sense and often they observe a custom and often they violate it. Frequently one encounters in the village talks, "neya neya rasm-o-riwaj log lagate rahte hain". One may encounter a lot of variations in the customary practices of different families and villages in their relations. If a newly introduced practice crosses the well defined Islamic boundaries then it is criticized vehemently. Otherwise it is well tolerated.

The definition of Islamic boundaries of course varies because the concept of being Islamic and unIslamic are defined by the tradition rather than Islam as 'faith' as such. Moreover, the definition of 'what is Islamic and what is not' by the various traditions vary from one age
to the another and from the context to the context. Since Holy Quran is not a book on legislation, it provides only guidelines in symbolic terms. Another religious guide for Muslims is Hadith and Sunnah. From these two sources Islamic laws are derived by anological deductions (Qiyaṣ) personal reasoning (IJtehad) and consensus of Ulamas (IJma). These legal derivations vary in the face of the changing time and space. Derivations can change but the rules well articulated by the Holy Quran is unchangeable, free from the contingencies of time and space. Similarly, in Islam the behavioral actions are defined and categorized in a vertical fashion. There are five categories of individual and social acts which are classified as five principles or 'ahkam'. Those are (i) fard or wajib - the actions whose performances are rewarded and negligences are punishable, (ii) Sunna, masnun, manqub or mustahab - the acts which are recommended but not required (iii) Jaiz or Mubah are indifferent actions (iv) Makruh are the actions which are disapproved but not punishable and (v) lastly are the actions which are haram. These actions are forbidden and punishable.

The first and last categories are well defined but the rest three in between them are ambiguous enough to generate controversies and contradictions among the
specialists of the religious sciences. Moreover, the Ulamas are the specialists and custodians of Islamic learn­ings so their interpretations of such actions are only valid and other Muslims who know and have enough ability to interpret, desist from interpreting them. Ulamas' role in this respect becomes crucial in defining the premises and boundaries of Islam. More than that, they are them­selves divided on the definition of these three categorised actions. Since their decisions of placing an act in a category of actions depend upon the derivations, so these deductive derivations lead to many different conclusions. Often one finds an act placed in one category by one Aalim and in other by the another. But the upper and lower limits are agreed upon by all of them. Many of the socio­logists and Anthropologists studying Muslim societies have got confused by these three categorized actions and their placements. Their ignorance about these variations has led many of them to dichotomise the actions of Muslims as orthodox and heterodox.

In this way if a new practise of Muslims does not contradict and violate the basic principle of Islam and there is no clear directive in this regard and it is based on reason then it becomes normative. For instance the leasing out of the mango orchads and the Islamic legal controversy about their pre-mature sellings in village as
we have discussed in the chapter an economy well illustrate this point. Moreover the broadening of knowledge may place a practice into the category of 'haram' as the practise of 'Man-dcurha' by the villagers imply. The world wide debate over the concept of 'interest' has broadened the knowledge of ulamas and this traditional profitable practice is now placed into the category of haram. On the other hand an Islamic substitute has been provided by them to the people who still desire to continue the practise.

The another dimension is even categorization of the category of 'haram' in a lesser and greater harams. For instance interest taking and giving and even working in the interest based business organizations are haram in Islam. The Muslims of Malmal do not take interests even from the banks. But they do give interests on bank loans because it is beyond their controls. Even some of them are bank employees. They take it as lesser harams. Ironically, they are in favour of fixed deposits in the banks which also involves a fair amount of interest money. Similarly when a person retires from the government jobs and get the various deposited funds, they never questions the involvement of interest in those funds. On the other hand, bribe taking of the government officials are looked with disfavour but it does not invoke an out right condemnation as it should. It goes without saying that of course the
position of such persons always remain a subject of debate. But all these Islamically disapproved practices by the Muslims of Malmal are thought to be the compulsion of living under another system of government which is based on different assumptions than that of Islam. Though this debate is very old, perhaps more than a century but it is still unresolved. The working idea behind is to abide by all those rules which one possibly can. Something beyond the control of Muslims and its compulsions, however contradictory with the Islamic norms can be done with a distaste if the survival is itself at stake. In this way we have seen that the business run by an Islamist in the village also succumbed to the systemic compulsion. Though first he restrained from but was compelled by the existing corrupt norm of the government officials to conform the normative demands, otherwise suffer a loss. In this sense the Muslims of the village, desire or not, are compelled to adjust with with the existing realities. They have moulded themselves accordingly though many of them try to live by the Ideals but the success is beyond their reach. The pressure of the external environment and the temptation of mundane are the hindrances in their living by the Ideals.

The knowledge of the Islamic Ideal itself varies from society to society and the spread of such knowledge
among the general mass depends upon the active roles performed by Ulamas. But Ulamas' own importance and their vital structural roles in a society depend upon the structure of socio-economic and political system, if we take in broader sense. While at the local levels the size of the Muslim society and the level of education among its members are additional factors in determining their position, authority and power. These factorial interplays while determine the status and roles of Ulamas, their own activities influence the very course of such interplays. In this sense they variably reciprocate and influence the course of each other.

A Muslim society, however strayed from the ideal path but the influence of religion in defining the meaning and nature of the society is undeniable. The degree of influence of Islam on the different Muslim societies may vary but the prophetic traditions and Quranic message are constantly acted upon and produced in social forms. The Islamic injunctions are woven in day-to-day speeches and cultural forms and the entire social environment is flavoured with such idioms, phrases and statements. Moreover it becomes the points of reference, and the entire social and cultural activities are given meanings and are contextualized in these referential terms. Ulamas assume the role of 'mediating element between the Holy Book and the Traditions and the Community'. Their mediating
roles provide them an opportunity to monopolize the cultural capital of the Muslim society.

But the monopolization of the cultural capitals by the Ulamas are not free from strife and conflict. There takes place an intense competition between themselves to capture the sources of cultural reservoir of Muslim societies and of course, it is embedded into the text and the tradition. But the factorial interplay we have mentioned earlier, determines the type of 'Aalim' dominating the social scene. For instance in a semi-literate Muslim society, the ill balanced, mendicant sufi type religious personages and the ill-educated pretending to be all knowing 'Aalim' will dominate and define the meaning of Islam and will interpret it in a rustic manner so that it can suite the local and popular conceptions. They will wield an authority unparallel and their manipulations and interpretations of unusual events will bring the illiterate Muslim folks more under their control. Such 'Aalims' resist a reform in society. On the other hand, in a literate and economically and educationally better off societies, the genuine ulamas would wield more authority than the type of 'Aalim' we have noted in earlier case. Moreover, their monopoly on the cultural capital will be not as total as in the case of illiterate societies. Moreover, they will
be constantly scrutinized and challenged from within themselves. The external challenges provide yet another pressure upon them to re-evaluate and modify their own knowledge so that they can contextualize and contemporarize their interpretation in more better ways. The different ways in which Islamic messages are interpreted and contextualized, give rise to different traditions.

In this way considerably developed Muslim societies constitute a number of groups of varying educational and economic backgrounds responding to and acting under the influence of different traditions. But at the overall social level one particular tradition dominates subduing all the others. If the excessive dominance of one single tradition and its rigid regulations of the society becomes unbearable it may give rise to a reactionary situation where another tradition however obsolete is preferred. It becomes more intensified when the dominant tradition becomes elitistic. A situation then arises when the mass rally behind the person who challenges the existing tradition. People accept it however heterodox and accept its interpretation which seems to them as much Islamic as it is viewed heretical to the acceptors of dominant tradition. In short, the religious dimension of a Muslim society which influences the other dimensions of social life are a constant struggle of the various Islamic traditions. Ironically the original message of Islam barely comes into the
direct contact with the Muslim masses. Instead it reaches to them through the filters of religious personalities and in course loses its very spirit. Hence in this way Islamic faith and religion is traditionalized and the Muslim respond to these traditions rather than Islam as such. In the words of Gilsman, "In the name of tradition many traditions are born and come into opposition with others. It becomes a language, a weapon against internal and external enemies, a refuge, an evasion, or part of the entitlement to domination and authority over others".

Our field provides a good example in this respect. The village Malmal seems to be a stage where such sacred drama is being performed. The Ulamas making their allegiances with different traditions are constantly striving to dominate the others. Since Malmal is a large village with considerably good educational achievements in the religious and secular fields and the economic positions of Muslims are also better in respect to the locality so the dominance of a popular tradition in such a society is beyond the expectations. Instead the position of Ulamas are itself at stake though they command respect and esteem in the society. Their authority is vested into their religious learnings and day-in and day-out they are preoccupied in creating an event and making the issues, so that the mass should realize their importance and turn to them for help.

The lower groups of Muslims in the village respond to the popular traditions interpreted by the ill-educated and Pseudo-Aalims. On the other extreme is fundamentalistic interpretations of elites. Since it has become and identified with elites so it has lost its strength of appeal which it had few decades ago. A reaction of general Muslims particularly the competing groups can be seen in the growing popularity of the conservative and often rustic interpretations of Maulvi Baqi in the village. Moreover, a call to the village youths given by Maulvi Nazim may also be attributed to this factor in which all the upper groups who had no excess to be included into the elite circle and had a sense of discrimination rallied behind him. But on the other hand, at the over-all village level, the fundamentalistic tradition dominates and the people at collective level willingly or unwillingly respond to this tradition. The point can be well illustrated by the example of Maulvi Nazim and his Madarsa and Mosque take overs.

More than the cultural capitals, the religious institutions in recent years have become a source of economic betterments for the ambitious and worldly oriented 'Aalims'. In this sense running or capturing the managements of Madarsa or Mosques are lucrative business in
Muslim societies. The taking over of the managements of these institutions involve tension, conflict, often an open war between the aspiring parties. In short, much of the politics in Muslim societies are dealt in the context of such competitions at the local levels. In Malmal we can view a definite pattern of such religious politics which has influenced not only the institutions and politics only, instead the entire beliefs and practices are interpreted with the reference to the existing political scenario, stemming directly from the conflicts of the control of these religious institutions. Anything can be termed as 'haram' and again it may return into the domain of 'halal' depending upon the varying interest of the particular 'Aalim' as we have noticed in village Malmal. The mass though amused at these haram/halal controversies but they themselves are unable to escape the power and influence of Aalims and in this way they also become a party in such controversies.

In this way, the secular and religious interests converge on the tangible motives and most often the secular and religious elites act in a congruence. It assumes an unholy character when the alliances between the secular and religious forces are made because of more worldly gains and economic profits. As historically we have seen that the worldly oriented ulamas made such
alliances with the political elites and often interpreted the religion to justify the regime of the rulers. Rulers needed legitimacy and the ulamas needed favours - the interest of both the parties went hand in hand. In similar fashion the wealthy and affluent strata also acted and made favours to such Aalims. The contemporary scene of the village is also not much different from the history and in this way we see that the patterns of history of the Muslims are reproduced where ever Muslims have freedom to act on their own.

It is not to say that it is the only reality of society. Rather we have found in history and in our field that there are another patterns of alliances between the ulamas with genuine Islamic personalities and the persons who assume the character of self-less leadership. More than that the alliances we have noted earlier never get wider acceptance among the commoners, rather the people in such alliances always remain dubious and their positions in Muslim societies alway remain exposed to the public condemnations. While on the other hand the second form of alliances always get away with upper hands. We have seen in Malmal the alliance between the fundamentalists and moderates who won over the others in taking over the board of Mosque.
The self-less and good intensioned persons are valued in every society and Muslim societies are no exception in this sense. The influence of one such single personality and his efforts can change the course of society. He with many others rallying around him can get ride of worldly oriented Pseudo Ulamas who resist any change in society. He can bring back Muslims into the religious currents which stem directly from the Islamic faith. Maulvi Noorul Hoda and his associates provide such an example in the history of village Malmal. They were able to eliminate the alien syncretistic elements from the cultural practices of Muslims of the village. Gradually over a period of one century they were Islamized and the process is being continued.

While we talk of Islamization process in the village and its influence on the social structure of Muslims, it does not imply that they have achieved the pattern of perfection. Attaining the perfection is beyond the possibility in face of the pressures of the external and constraints of internal forces. But they are striving and moving towards the Ideal though the operationalization of a theoretical percept gives different results, as it is the case with the other Ideological systems too. The Muslims of the village oscillate between the geographical forces
of locality, Islamization, and modernization. One may see the influence of these forces in their use of calendars. Their agricultural life are regulated by the Hindi seasonal calendars which attach them with the locality. On the other hand, their religious life are governed by the Islamic calendar uniting them with the entire Muslim Umma of the world. Lastly, their much of the secular activities are performed according to the Gregorian calendar which has become modern and universal by sheer force of western civilizational dominance. Muslims' life are governed by these three forces and all are equally important for their placement, identification, and development. The strength of one force in comparison to the others depend upon some factors as we have mentioned earlier. At a single moment in history it looks as if one single force has pulled the society away from the influence of the other forces. But in reality it is not the case, rather the other forces are lying down beneath the strong current of major dominant force.

As we have noted in earlier chapters (chaps I & II) that Muslim societies move and progress in variably recurrent fashion in a cyclical rhythm. In this cyclical rhythm they move towards the Ideal and occasionally away from these Ideal depending upon the factorial interplays and ecological influences. In this respect this move and
progress is always in a Unilinear fashion is a doubtful proposition. On the other hand the demytifyers of the great unity of Muslim societies and their propagation of a relativized and fragmentory view of Muslim societies are based on their limited understanding of Muslim societies; their religion and history.

"Islamization", as Al-Attas defines it, "is a process not so much of evolution as that of devolution to original nature...." and "change, development and progress, according to the Islamic view point, refer to the return to the genuine Islam enunciated and practised by the Holy Prophet.... These concepts pertain to presupposed situations in which Muslims find themselves going astray and steeped in ignorance of Islam and are confused and unjust to their selves. In such situations, their endeavour to direct their selves back onto the straight and True path and to return to the condition of genuine Islam - such endeavour, which entails change, is development; and such return, which consists in development, is progress²".

In the conception of Islam, as Al-Attas defines, Islamization is a process of change from the strayed state of a society to that of the genuine Islamic and a change in this direction is the development and the new

changes brought up by such types of developments is the progress of a Muslim society in its real sense. We have seen in the history and also in our field of study that Muslims have always strived for the achieving of the Ideal though they have never succeeded. Muslim societies change, develop and progress in this fashion. According to Akbar S. Ahmed, "The ideal provides rulers with legitimacy and a rallying point for those who oppose them; for wayward sultans it is a pressure, for mindful saints a stimulus; for the learned it is a source of wonder, for the illiterate a part of mythology. All sections of society are affected by its presence, their actions to an extent determined by their understanding of it."

In this way down the ages Muslims throughout the world have strived to achieve the Ideal and their struggle to achieve the pattern of perfection reveals a rhythmic pattern of history and society shared by all of them in the every corner of the world. In this sense Muslims are united by their allegiance to their faith and Ideal. The sociologists and Anthropologists because of their commitments to the reductionist approach of Scientific Method have tried to deprive the Muslims from this grand Unity reducing them into fragments of society evolving in a relativized manner. In short they have relied more on synchronic mode of explanations when dealing with the

Muslim societies and of course, it has resulted in a failure. Moreover, apart from the theoretical compulsions it is a result of ignorance of Sociologists and Social Anthropologists about the true nature of a Muslim society. More than that it has been also coloured by the perpetual biasness and prejudices propagated under the guise of scientific rationality and neutrality.

Lastly, a true understanding of a Muslim society must involve a knowledge of Text, history and a 'practical mastery of both inner and outer realities as people perceive them'. In short it need a new paradigm much broader in scope and application than provided by the current paradigm of the social sciences. Working in a different paradigm and dealing with the realities of quite different world is bound to create confusions.
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APPENDIX
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>S. No.</th>
<th>Religious Community</th>
<th>No. of Households</th>
<th>Males</th>
<th>Females</th>
<th>Persons</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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<td>T</td>
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<td>U</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>60</td>
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<td>G. Total</td>
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<tr>
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<td>38,876</td>
<td>33,527</td>
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**T** - Total  
**R** - Rural  
**U** - Urban
Table - 2
Population break-up and Household types among Muslims and Hindus of Village Malmal

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<th>Ethnic groups/ Castes</th>
<th>Type of household</th>
<th>Total Population</th>
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<td>Joint</td>
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<td>Shaikhs</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dnuniya</td>
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<tr>
<td>Darzi</td>
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<tr>
<td>Laheri</td>
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<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mirsnikar</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jolaha</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hajjam</td>
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<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Faqir</td>
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<td>12</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
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<table>
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<th>Joint</th>
<th>Extended</th>
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<tr>
<td>Yadavs</td>
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<td>7</td>
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<td>Mochi</td>
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<td>Mushar</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Halwai</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barhi</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dhobi</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teli</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>715</td>
<td>5187</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>G. Total</strong></td>
<td>1449</td>
<td>10917</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table - 3  
Number of Agreements and Disagreements of Respondents (N=40) about the Relative Social Standings of various Muslim Ethnic groups in village Malmal

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S.No.</th>
<th>Muslim Ethnic Groups</th>
<th>Agreements</th>
<th>Disagreements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Numbers</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Shaikhs</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Mukeri</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Dhuniyan</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>92.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Darzi</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>92.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Mirshikar</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>95%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Johaha</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>92.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Hajjam</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>92.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Faqir</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>92.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Table - 4

Relative Social Standings (Status) of Identifyable Khandans and their Ethnic Affiliations Among Muslims of Village Malmal

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Status Layers</th>
<th>Surname of Family and Allies</th>
<th>Total Number of families</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Shaikhs</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upper-Upper</td>
<td>Rahmans</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle-Upper</td>
<td>(i) Haveli A</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(ii) Haveli B</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lower-Upper</td>
<td>Imams &amp; Allies</td>
<td>6+9=15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upper-Middle</td>
<td>(i) Haveli C</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(ii) Maulana Hafeez Sh.and Allied families</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(iii) Masso Babu, Brothers and allied families</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lower-Middle</td>
<td>(i) Maulvi Nazim and allied families</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(ii) Maulvi Baqi and allied families</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upper-Lower</td>
<td>(i) Takko Khaleefa, sons and Kins</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(ii) Others</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lower-Lower</td>
<td>All those who are labourers and daily wage earners</td>
<td>153</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>383</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mukers</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upper-Lower</td>
<td>1. Mullaji</td>
<td>15 Approx.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Hafiz Ghaffar</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. Haheeb</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4. Zaki Mukerri</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5. Tasleem Jahazi</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnic/Caste groups</td>
<td>Size of the landholdings (Acres)</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shaikhs</td>
<td>2026</td>
<td>50.37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mukeri</td>
<td>372</td>
<td>9.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dhuniya</td>
<td>190</td>
<td>4.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Darzi</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>1.98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laheri</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>0.39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mirshikar</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jolaha</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Majjam</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>0.39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faqir</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>0.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>2728</strong></td>
<td><strong>67.827</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brahmns</td>
<td>356</td>
<td>8.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yadav</td>
<td>369</td>
<td>9.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chamar</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>1.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Musahar</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>1.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tatma</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>1.59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mallah</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>2.36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Desadh</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>1.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Halwey</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>1.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barhi</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>1.56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dhobi</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>0.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tell</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>2.46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>1294</strong></td>
<td><strong>32.17</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>G. Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>4022</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table - 5
Size of the Landholdings by each ethnic/caste groups in village Malmal
Imam delivering the Id - Khutba

Sacrificing the goat on the eve of Idul-Azha
Cutting the trees for timber workshops
Use of modern technology in agriculture
Village Mallahs in the fishing business