

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Nepal is a landlocked Himalayan country in South Asia, bordering on the west, south, and east by India, and on the north by the Tibet region of People's Republic of China. It is located in between the latitude 26° 22' North to 30°27' North and longitude 80° 04' East to 88° 12' East and elevation ranges from 90 meters to 8848 meters. The total area of the country is 1, 47,181 Square Kilometers. Mount Everest (8848 meters), the highest peak of the world is on the border with China (CBS, 2004).

Ecologically as well as geographically, the country is divided into three regions, running east to west. They are the Mountain, the Hill and the Terai (plains). The Mountain region lies between the altitudes of 4,877 meters to 8,848 meters above the sea level. The highest peak (8,848 meters) of the world, the Mount Everest is in this region. This region accommodates 7.3 percent of the total population (CBS, 2005). This region constitutes 35 percent of the total land area (CBS, 2004). Only 2 percent of the land area in this region is suitable for cultivation. The Hill region lies between the

altitudes of 610 meters to 4,877 meters above the sea level. Share of population of this region is 44.3 percent (CBS, 2005). This region constitutes 42 percent of the total land area (CBS, 2004). 10 percent of its area is suitable for cultivation (Siddika S., 1993). The Terai region accommodates 48.4 percent population in 2001 (CBS, 2005). It lies between the altitudes of 90 meters to 610 meters above the sea level. This region constitutes 23 percent of the total land area (CBS, 2004).

The country is divided into 75 districts. There are 3,915 VDCs and 58 Municipalities including one Metropolitan and four Sub-metropolitan cities. More than 60 caste/ethnic groups are accommodated in the country (CBS, 2004). In early May 2006, Nepal was declared as a Secular Country ([http:// www. Answers.com/Nepal](http://www.answers.com/Nepal)). Nepal became member of United Nations in 1955 A.D. Nepal has established diplomatic relation with 116 countries. SAARC secretariat is in Kathmandu, the capital of Nepal (CBS 2005). In water resource, Nepal is the second richest country in the world possessing about 2.27 percent of the world water resource. It is estimated that there are altogether 6,000 rivers having about 45,000 Kilometers length (CBS 2005).

Islam is the fastest growing religion and the second largest religion in the world. Muslims have increased by over 235% in the last fifty years up to nearly 1.6 billion and they are 26 percent in the world (<http://islamicweb.com/begin/results.htm>).

Nepal has the total population of 2,31,51,423 (1,15,63,921 male and 1,15,87,502 female). 85.8 percent of people live in the rural areas. Estimated per capita GDP for the year 2004/2005 is US \$ 294. Population which is growing at the rate of 2.25 percent per annum. Literacy rate for the year 2001 is 54.1 percent. 31 percent of the population still lives below poverty line. 80.6 percent of her population is followers of Hindu religion, 10.7 and 4.2 percent are followers of Buddha and Islam religion respectively (CBS 2005).

Surkhet district is situated in the Mid-western Development region of Nepal. It is one of the five districts of Bheri zone, out of three zones in the region. Bordering on the east by Salyan district, on the west by Doti and Achham, on the north by Achham, Dailekh and Jaajarkot and on the south by Kailali and Bardia districts. It is located in between the latitude of 28° 20' North to 28°58' North and longitude 80° 59' East to 82° 2' East and elevation ranges from 198 meters to 2367 meters. The total area of the

district is 2,451 Square Kilometers. Urban area is 34 square kilometers and rural area is 2417 square kilometers. There are 50 VDCs and 1 municipality in the district. According to the Population Census of 2001, Surkhet has the total population of 2,88,527(1,42,817 male and 1,45,710 female) which is growing at the rate of 2.45 percent per annum. Literacy rate for the year 2001 is 62.7 percent (male-73.9 and female-51.7 percent). In this district, 88.37 percent of people live in the rural areas and 11.63 percent of people live in urban areas. In Surkhet district, 91.2 percent population is followers of Hindu religion, 7.53, 0.75 and 0.43 percent are followers of Buddha, Christian and Islam religion respectively. There are 1157 Muslims in Surkhet district and here, Muslims are the third largest minority after Buddhists and Christians (CBS, 2005).

The total population of the Latikoili VDC is 12,380 having male 6,118 and female 6,262. In this VDC, there are Hindus-11573, Muslims-448, Buddhists-254, Christians-102, Sikh-1 and Not stated-2 (CBS, 2002). Muslim population of Latikoili VDC is 519 in 2004(Latikoili VDC, 2004). This is the highest Muslim population out of 50 VDCs and 1 Municipality in the district. Muslims are the largest minority in the Latikoili VDC (CBS, 2002 & Latikoili VDC, 2004).

Followers of Islam religion are called Muslims. Muslims are considered as both ethnic as well as religious group. Many areas, many people, many ethnic and religious groups and many castes are still under/ undeveloped and excluded. Muslim group is one of them. Muslims live everywhere in the World. Muslims are spread all over Nepal and obviously, in Surkhet district also. No figure is available about the Muslims living below the poverty line. Extent of inequality in comparison with Hindus or Buddhists is not known on the basis of concrete data. However, as it appears prime fact that the economic position of the Muslims in Nepal is not satisfactory and the Muslims are also not rich. Rather comparatively, the Muslims appear to be poorer. No top business house in Nepal belongs to any Muslim community (Siddika S., 1993).

No study has been made about the Muslims of Surkhet district so far and this is the first approach in this scenario. This study has found answers of the research questions related to the Muslims of Latikoili VDC. It has covered 3 wards (1, 2 and 9), since Muslims live in these wards only and the findings can be generalized for the Surkhet district as well as Nepal in the similar context.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

There are more than 60 castes/ethnic groups in the country (CBS, 2004). The Muslims are very backward in knowledge and skills. They are excluded and less explored by the government and society. They are one of the least developed groups and need helping hands for their equitable development. In the field of education also, they are very behind. Most Muslims have still been unable to afford an adequate education, cloths, shelter, food and so on.

Although, Muslims having numerous problems and difficulties, rapid changes have been seen among them. In many point of views, Muslims of the study area are becoming the marginalized group of people which directly-indirectly affected the overall development of the nation as well. It created underdevelopment situation, war, unemployment, instability problems and so many social, economic and political problems as well. The Government should take it very seriously otherwise it would become worse, the present study has focused on following socio-economic questions related with the research subject and study area: Is there real socio-economic problems or else? Is there any relationship between the educational status and socio-economic condition of the Muslims? What are

the causes behind it, should be identified? How have there religious norms and values affected the educational, economic and occupational status of the Muslims? What are the types of structure of their social systems and how it controlled their overall behaviours? What can be done and how to solve the problems? These are the matter of quest for the researcher, myself.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

The general objective of the study is to explore and explain the socio-economic status of the Muslims of Latikoili VDC. The specific objectives are as follows:

1. To assess the educational status of the Muslims.
2. To assess the occupational status of the Muslims.
3. To measure the income and expenditure condition of the Muslims.
4. To evaluate the socio-institutional status of the Muslims.
5. To measure the social relationship of the Muslims.

1.4 Importance of the Study

In Surkhet district and study area, Muslims are marginalized and very backward in the educational, economic and occupational sectors, moreover, Muslims are unexplored and hence, there was a need of socio-economic study about this group. This study will be helpful for them as well as for other authorities related to them. This study has the following importance:

1. To fulfill the partial need to pursue M.A. degree in Sociology. I have done this research because the study area was known to me and I could expose their hardships and problems.
2. To make an effort to explore and explain the existing socio-economic status of the Muslim community.
3. To be helpful theoretically and practically to add up in the life literature to forthcoming researchers.
4. It will be useful to raise their voices, to create awareness among them and attract the attention of the development workers.
5. This research will be informative to policy makers, politicians and social workers for the development and welfare of the Muslims of the study area.

1.5 Limitations of the Study

Every social research has some kinds of limitations. The study was primarily conducted for the partial fulfillment of the requirement for the Master's Degree in Sociology. This is an academic work. Time and money are other limitations which put a barrier to the study in depth. Some respondents were hesitating while replying and some were expecting some kinds of benefits as human mentality and due to their excessive poverty, by this research but it was a purely academic research. Since the researcher, being a student and have no previous experiences, may suffer some sorts of methodological weaknesses. This small scale study was confined itself to 1, 2 and 3 wards of Latikoili VDC and covered all 92 households only. The findings were generalized which may not equally be applicable to the cases of other parts of the country.

1.6 Organization of the Thesis

The study has been organized into 5 chapters with required sub-topics.

It has been designed in order to make the study more specific, precise, achievable and impressive.

Chapter One: Introduction.

Chapter Two: Review of the Literatures.

Chapter Three: Research Methodology.

Chapter Four: Presentation and Analysis of Data.

Chapter Five: Summary, Conclusion and Recommendation.

1.7 Meaning of the Important Terms Used in the Study

Abubakar Siddique: The first pious Khalifah (Successor/caliph of the Holy Prophet (PBUH)) of Islam/ the Muslims.

Ali: A son-in-law of Holy Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) who became the forth pious Khalifah (Successor/caliph of the Holy Prophet (PBUH)) of Islam/ the Muslims.

Analytical Research: A type of research concerned with detailed examination of the existing situations and the factors that relate to it.

Bibliography: An alphabetical listing of authors and the titles of their work that are of relevance to the study.

Cemetery: Graveyard, burial ground or the ground where dead bodies are buried, it is also called "Kabristan".

Census: A measurement of each element in the group or population of interest.

Descriptive Research:	A type of research that focuses on providing an accurate description of the variables.
Exploratory Research:	A type of research concerned with discovering the general nature of a problem and the factors that relate to it.
Hajj:	Pilgrimage to Mecca and Medina.
Imam:	Leader, leader of the Islamic prayers.
Khalifah:	Legitimate Imam or successor to the Holy prophet (PBUH).
Madarsa:	Muslim religious/Islamic school.
Mosque:	A Place for daily and weekly prayers. Literally the place of prostration. This is also called "Masjid".
Primary Data:	Original data collected specifically for the problem at hand.
Salah:	The Prayers of the Muslims.
Secondary Data:	Data potentially useful in solving a current problem but that were collected for a different purpose.
Shiah:	Literally means "one of the paths"- "followers ". They are the followers of Hazrat Ali, the fourth

Khalifah of Islam. The Shiah maintain that Hazrat Ali was the first legitimate Imam or Khalifah or successor, to the Holy prophet (PBUH).

Sunni: Literally means "one of the paths"- traditionists". They acknowledge the first four 'Khalifahs'(Hazrat Abubakar, Hazrat Umar and Hazrat Usman and Hazrat Ali) to have been the rightful successors of Holy Prophet (PBUH).

Umar: The second pious Khalifah (Successor/ caliph of Holy Prophet (PBUH)) of Islam/ the Muslims.

Usman: The third pious Khalifah (Successor/ caliph of Holy Prophet (PBUH)) of Islam/ the Muslims.

Zakat: Compulsory charity.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURES

In this chapter, the literatures which are affiliated with the Muslims has been closely seen and depicted. The prevailing socio-economic situations of the Muslims worldwide, nationwide, district wide and in the study area have been drawn from the available literatures. Theoretical orientation and application of the Muslims have been described to analyze the parameters of socio-economic, educational status and social dynamics of the Muslims as a whole and specifically, the Muslims of Latikoili VDC in Surkhet district.

Some Operational Definitions

Social Status

Social status is the social frame and foundation of a person that is defined as where is he/she, what is his/her status of caste/ethnic group, what are his/her socio-economic status as well as cultural background.

Social status can also be defined as, "Relative rank that an individual holds, with attendant rights, duties, and lifestyle, in a social hierarchy based on honour and prestige. Status is often ascribed on the basis of sex, age, family relationships, and birth, placing one into a particular social group irrespective of ability or accomplishments. Achieved status, on the other hand, is based on educational attainment, occupational choice, marital status, and other factors involving personal effort. Status groups differ from

social classes in being based on considerations of honour and prestige rather than purely economic position. Relative status is a major determinant of people's behaviour toward one another, and competition for status seems to be a prime human motivator" (Britannica Concise Encyclopedia, 2006).

Social status is the "standing", the honour or prestige attached to one's position in society. Note that social status is influenced by social position.

In modern societies, occupation is usually thought of as the main dimension of status, but even in modern societies other memberships or affiliations (such as ethnic group, religion, gender, voluntary associations, fandom, hobby) can have an influence. A doctor will have higher status than a factory worker, for instance, but in some societies a white Protestant doctor will have higher status than an immigrant doctor of minority religion. In pre-modern societies, status differentiation is widely varied. In some cases it can be quite rigid and class based, such as with the Indian caste system.

In other cases, status exists without class and/or informally, as is true with some Hunter-Gatherer societies such as the Khoisan, and some Indigenous Australian societies. In these cases, status is limited to specific personal relationships. For example, a Kung man is expected to take his mother-in-

law (his wife's mother) quite seriously; but the mother-in-law has no "status" over anyone but her son-in-law--and only then in certain contexts. All societies have a form of social status.

Status is a key idea in social stratification. Max Weber distinguishes status from social class, but some contemporary empirical sociologists fuse the two ideas into Socio-Economic Status or SES, usually operationalised as a simple index of income, education and occupational prestige.

Status inconsistency is a situation when an individual's social positions have both positive and negative influences on his social status. For example, a teacher has a positive societal image (respect, prestige) which increases his status but may earn little money, which simultaneously decreases his status. A drug dealer, on the other hand, may have low social position but high income.

Statuses based on inborn characteristics, such as gender, are called ascribed statuses, while statuses that individuals gained through their own efforts are called achieved statuses. Certain behaviors carry social stigmas that can affect status (Michael M. & Botton A. D., 2004).

Economic Status

Economic status is the economic frame and foundation of a person, which defines his/her economic condition and composition to the society he/she belongs to.

In assessing socioeconomic status, and more particularly economic status, measuring variables other than household income may be useful, for example, assets such as inherited wealth, savings, employment benefits, or ownership of homes or motor vehicles (Berkman & Macintyre, 1997). While income represents a flow of resources over some period of time, wealth captures the stock of assets at a given point in time, and thus economic reserves. Wealth is a source of economic security providing an index of a household's ability to meet emergencies or absorb economic shocks such as unemployment. However the importance of wealth as a source of economic security may vary among societies (e.g., the vast majority of people in Sweden have relatively little wealth, but the social welfare system provides the resources to absorb economic shocks). Income and wealth are positively correlated, but they are not interchangeable, as shown by the example of an elderly person with a modest fixed income but substantial accumulated wealth (Judith S., 2002).

Socio-economic Status

Socio-economic status is an overall rank based on characteristics such as education, income and occupation, used to describe people's position in stratification system (Lawman N., 2004).

Socio-economic status is any measure which attempts to classify individuals, families, or households in Terms of indicators such as occupation, income and education. One of the first major uses of socio-economic status can be found in the social class measures introduced by British Registrar-General in 1911(Marshall G., 2004).

A family's socio-economic status is based on family income, parental education level, parental occupation, and social status in the community (such as contacts within the community, group associations, and the community's perception of the family) (Demarest E.J. & et all, 1993).

Education

Education is the transmission of knowledge to members of society. The knowledge passed on is in the form of technical and cultural knowledge, technical and social skill, as well as the norms and values of the society (Lawman N., 2004).

Education is a philosophical as well as a sociological concept, denoting ideologies, curricula, and pedagogical techniques of the inculcation and

management of knowledge and cultures. In practice, the sociology of education is mostly concerned with schooling, and especially the mass schooling systems of modern industrial societies, including the expansion of higher, further, adult, and continuing education (Marshall G., 2004).

Educational Status

Educational status is the respondent's literacy status and years of formal and informal schooling. Educational status can also be defined as, educational attainment or level of education of individuals ([http://www.biology-online.org/dictionary/Educational status](http://www.biology-online.org/dictionary/Educational%20status)).

It is widely accepted that the process of education begins at birth and continues throughout life. Some believe that education begins even earlier than this, as evidenced by some parents' playing music or reading to the baby in the hope it will influence the child's development. Education is often used to refer to formal education (see below). However, it covers a range of experiences, from formal learning to the building of understanding and knowledge through day to day experiences. Ultimately, all that we experience serves as a form of education (Wikipedia, 2006).

Occupation

An economic role separated from household activity as a result of the growth of markets for labour. Such roles form part of wider economic division of labour in an industrial enterprise, formal organization, or socio-economic structure (Marshall G., 2004).

According to the Wikipedia Encyclopedia, An occupation is the principal means by which one earns a livelihood such as trade, job, business, or vocation of an individual (Wikipedia, 2006).

Income

Payment of wages usually earned from work or investments (Kumar A., 2005).

Income represents a flow of resources over some period of time. Income and wealth are positively correlated, but they are not interchangeable (Judith S., 2002).

Islam and Muslims

In the Arabic language, the word Islam means 'surrender' or 'submission' to the will of God. A follower of Islam is called a Muslim which, in Arabic, means "one who surrenders to God" Islam's central teaching is that there is only one all-powerful, all-knowing God, and this God created the universe. Thus, all Muslims belong to one community, the 'Umma', irrespective of their ethnic or rational background (Bhattarai S., 2004).

The name of this religion is Islam, the root of which is 'Silm' and 'Salaam' which means peace. Salaam may also mean greeting one another with peace. One of the beautiful names of God is that he is the peace. It means more than that: submission to the one God, and live in peace with the Creator, within one self, with other people and with the environment. Thus, Islam is a total system of living. A Muslim is supposed to live in peace and harmony with all these segments; hence, a Muslim is any person anywhere in the world whose obedience, allegiance, and loyalty are to God, the Lord of the Universe (http://islamicweb.com/begin/introducing_islam.htm).

Within two century, after its rise in the seventh century, Islam spread from its original home in Arabia into Syria, Egypt, North Africa, and Spain to the west, and into Persia, India, and by the end of the tenth century, beyond to the east. (Bhattarai S., 2004)

Actually, Muslims worship only one God (Allah) and never worship anybody else. Muhammad (570 A.D. 632 A.D.) (Peace Be Upon Him) is their prophet and is highly honored by them. Muslims love, follow and obey Muhammad (PBUH), but never worship him. Islam is an extremely monotheistic religion and there is no room for divinity for anybody else except Allah (Siddika S., 1993).

Who are Muslims?

The Arabic word "Muslim" literally means "someone who submits to the will of God". The message of Islam is meant for the entire world and anyone who accepts this message becomes a Muslim. Some people mistakenly believe that Islam is just a religion for Arabs, but nothing could be further from the truth, since in actuality over 80% of the world's Muslims are not Arabs! Even though most Arabs are Muslims, there are Arabs who are Christians, Jews and atheists. If one just takes a look at the various peoples who live in the Muslim World - from Nigeria to Bosnia and from Morocco to Indonesia - it is easy enough to see that Muslims come from all different races, ethnic groups and nationalities. From the very beginning, Islam had a universal message for all people. This can be seen in the fact that some of the early companions of the Prophet Muhammad were not only Arabs, but also Persians, Africans and Byzantine Romans. Being a Muslim entails complete acceptance and active obedience to the revealed will of Almighty God. A Muslim is a person who freely accepts to base his beliefs, values and faith on the will of Almighty God. In the past, even though you don't see it as much today, the word "Mohammedans" was often used as a label for Muslims. This label is a misnomer and is the result of either willful distortion or sheer ignorance. One of the reasons for the misconception is that Europeans were taught for

centuries that Muslims worshipped the Prophet Muhammad in the same way that Christians worship Jesus. This is absolutely not true since a Muslim is not permitted to worship anyone or anything besides Almighty God (Abu 'Iyaad, 2006).

What is Islam?

The word "Islam" is an Arabic word that means "submitting and surrendering your will to Almighty God"(Abu 'Iyaad, 2006).

The word comes from the same root as the Arabic word "salam", which means peace (Abu 'Iyaad, 2006).

Unlike the names used for other religions, such as Buddhism, Hinduism and Christianity, the name for the religion of Islam was both revealed by God and carries a deep spiritual meaning - only by submitting one's will to Almighty God can one obtain true peace both in this life and in the life hereafter. Islam teaches that all religions originally had the same essential message - which was to submit whole-heartedly to the will of God and to worship Him and Him alone (Abu 'Iyaad, 2006).

For this reason, Islam is not a new religion but is the same divinely revealed Ultimate Truth that God revealed to all prophets, including Noah, Abraham, Moses and Jesus (Abu 'Iyaad, 2006).

Who is Allah?

Very often one will hear the Arabic word "Allah" being used in regards to Islam (Abu 'Iyaad, 2006).

The word "Allah" is simply the Arabic word for Almighty God, and is the same word used by Arabic speaking Christians and Jews (Abu 'Iyaad, 2006).

If one were to pick up an Arabic translation of the Bible, one would see the word "Allah" being used where the word "God" is used in English. Actually, the Arabic word for Almighty God, "Allah", is quite similar to the word for God in other Semitic languages - for example, the Hebrew word for God is "Elah" (Abu 'Iyaad, 2006).

For various reasons, some non-Muslims mistakenly believe that Muslims worship a different God than Jews and Christians. This is certainly not the case, since the Pure Monotheism of Islam calls all people to the worship of the God of Noah, Abraham, Moses, Jesus and all of the other prophets.

However, even though Jews, Christians and Muslims worship the same God -since there is only one God - their concepts concerning Him differ in some significant ways (Abu 'Iyaad, 2006).

Who is Muhammad (PBUH)?

The last and final prophet that God sent to humanity was the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). Muhammad (PBUH) explained, interpreted and lived the teachings of Islam (Abu 'Iyaad, 2006).

The Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) is the greatest of all prophets for many reasons, but mainly because the results of his mission have brought more people into the pure belief in One God than any other prophet (Abu 'Iyaad, 2006).

Even though other religious communities claimed to believe in One God, over time they had corrupted their beliefs by taking their prophets and saints as intercessors with Almighty God (Abu 'Iyaad, 2006).

Some religions believe their prophets to be manifestations of God, "God Incarnate" or the "Son of God". All of these false ideas lead to the creature being worshipped instead of the Creator, which contributed to the idolatrous practice of believing that Almighty God can be approached

through intermediaries. In order to guard against these falsehoods, the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) always emphasized that he was only a human-being tasked with the preaching of God's message. He taught Muslims to refer to him as "the Messenger of God and His Slave" (Abu 'Iyaad, 2006).

To Muslims, Muhammad (PBUH) is the supreme example for all people - he was the exemplary prophet, statesman, military leader, ruler, teacher, neighbour, husband, father and friend. Unlike other prophets and messengers, the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) lived in the full light of history. Muslims don't need to have "faith" that he existed and that his teachings are preserved - they know it to be a fact. Even when his followers only numbered a few dozen, Almighty God informed Muhammad (PBUH) that he had been sent as a mercy to all of mankind. Because people had distorted or forgotten God's messages, God took it upon Himself to protect the message revealed to Muhammad (PBUH). This was because Almighty God promised not to send another messenger after him (Abu 'Iyaad, 2006).

Since all of God's messengers have preached the message of Islam - i.e. submission to the will of God and the worship of God alone - Muhammad (PBUH) is actually the last prophet of Islam, not the first (Abu 'Iyaad,

2006).

What are the teachings of Islam?

The foundation of the Islamic faith is belief in the Unity of God (Abu 'Iyaad, 2006).

This means to believe that there is only one Creator and Sustainer of everything in the Universe, and that nothing is divine or worthy of being worshipped except for Him (Abu 'Iyaad, 2006).

Truly believing in the Unity of God means much more than simply believing that there is "One God" - as opposed to two, three or four (Abu 'Iyaad, 2006).

There are a number of religions that claim belief in "One God" and believe that ultimately there is only one Creator and Sustainer of the Universe. Islam, however, not only insists on this, but also rejects using such words as "Lord" and "Saviour" for anyone besides Almighty God. Islam also rejects the use of all intermediaries between God and Man, and insists that people approach God directly and reserve all worship for Him alone. Muslims believe that Almighty God is Compassionate, Loving and Merciful (Abu 'Iyaad, 2006).

The essence of falsehood is the claim that God cannot deal with and forgive His creatures directly. By over-emphasizing the burden of sin, as well as claiming that God cannot forgive you directly, false religions seek to get people to despair of the Mercy of God. Once they are convinced that they can not approach God directly, people can be misled into turning to false gods for help. These "false gods" can take various forms, such as saints, angels, or someone who is believed to be the "Son of God" or "God Incarnate". In almost all cases, people who worship, pray to or seek help from a false god don't consider it to be, or call it, a "god". They claim belief in One Supreme God, but claim that they pray to and worship others beside God only to get closer to Him. In Islam, there is a clear distinction between the Creator and the created. There is no ambiguity in divinity - anything that is created is not deserving of worship and only the Creator is worthy of being worshipped. Some religions falsely believe that God has become part of His creation, and this has led people to believe that they can worship something created in order to reach their Creator (Abu 'Iyaad, 2006).

Muslims believe that even though God is Unique and beyond comprehension - He has no "Son", partners or associates. According to Muslim belief, Almighty God "does not beget nor was He begotten" - neither literally, allegorically, metaphorically, physically or metaphysically

- He is Absolutely Unique and Eternal. He is in control of everything and is perfectly capable of bestowing His infinite Mercy and Forgiveness to whomever He chooses. That is why is called the All-Powerful and Most-Merciful. Almighty God has created the Universe for man, and as such wants the best for all human beings. Muslims see everything in the Universe as a sign of the Creatorship and Benevolence of Almighty God. Also, the belief in the Unity of God is not merely a metaphysical concept. It is a dynamic belief that effects ones view of humanity, society and all aspects of life. As a logical corollary to the Islamic belief in the Oneness of God, is its belief in the oneness of mankind and humanity (Abu 'Iyaad, 2006).

What is the Qur.aan?

It is the final revelation of the will of Almighty God's to all of mankind, which was conveyed through the Angel Gabriel, in Arabic, to the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) in its sounds, words and meanings (Abu 'Iyaad, 2006).

The Qur'aan, sometimes spelled Koran, was relayed to the Prophet's companions, which they memorised verbatim, and which has been publicly and continually recited by them and their successors until the present day.

In short, the Qur'aan is the book of guidance from God par excellence. The Qur'aan is still memorised and taught by millions of people (Abu 'Iyaad, 2006).

The language of the Qur'aan, Arabic, is still a living language to millions of people, so unlike the scriptures of other religions, the Qur'aan is still read in its original language by countless millions of people. The Qur'aan is a living miracle in the Arabic language; and is known to be inimitable in its style, form and spiritual impact. God's final revelation to mankind, the Qur'aan, was revealed to the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) over a period of 23 years. The Qur'aan, in contrast to many other religious books, was always thought to be the Word of God by those who believed in it, i.e. it wasn't something decreed by a religious council many years after being written. Also, the Qur'aan was recited publicly in front of both the Muslim and non-Muslim communities during the life of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) (Abu 'Iyaad, 2006).

The entire Qur'aan was completely written down in the lifetime of the Prophet (PBUH), and numerous companions of the Prophet memorised the entire Qur'aan word-for-word as it was revealed. So unlike other scriptures, the Qur'aan was always in the hands of the common believers, it was

always thought to be God's word and, due to wide-spread memorisation, it was perfectly preserved. In regards to the teachings of the Qur'aan - it is a universal scripture, and it is addressed to all of mankind, and not to a particular tribe or "chosen people". The message that it brings is nothing new, but the same message of all of the prophets - submit to Almighty God and worship Him alone. As such, God's revelation in the Qur'aan focuses on teaching human beings the importance of believing in the Unity of God and framing their lives around the guidance which He has sent. Additionally, the Qur'aan contains the stories of the previous prophets, such as Abraham, Noah, Moses and Jesus; as well as many commands and prohibitions from God. In modern times in which so many people are caught up in doubt, spiritual despair and "political correctness", the Qur'aanic teachings offer solutions to the emptiness of our lives and the turmoil that is gripping the world today (Abu 'Iyaad, 2006).

The Five Pillars of Islam

According to the Islam, all the Muslims believe and practice in the five pillars of Islam which are briefly explained below, although presentation of the complete explanation of Islam in a single thesis is impossible (<http://www.islamreligion.com/category/56/>).

The Five Pillars of Islam

All practicing Muslims accept belief in and are obliged to follow the 'Five Pillars' of Islam. They are:

The First Pillar of Islam: The Muslim Profession of Faith or Shahada.

The Second Pillar of Islam: The Prayer or Salah.

The Third Pillar of Islam: Compulsory Charity or Zakah.

The Fourth Pillar of Islam: The Fast of Ramadan or Sawm or Roja.

The Fifth Pillar of Islam: The Pilgrimage or Hajj.

(<http://www.islamreligion.com/category/56/>).

The First Pillar of Islam: The Muslim Profession of Faith or Shahada

The '**Shahada**' is the Muslim profession of faith and the first of the 'Five Pillars' of Islam. The word '**shahada**' in Arabic means '**testimony.**' The '**Shahada**' is to testify to two things (<http://www.islamreligion.com/category/56/>):

- (a) Nothing deserves worship except God (Allah).
- (b) Muhammad (PBUH) is the Messenger of God (Allah).

A Muslim is simply one who bears witness and testifies that **“nothing deserves worship except God and Muhammad (PBUH) is the**

messenger of God.” One becomes a Muslim by making this simple declaration (<http://www.islamreligion.com/category/56/>).

It must be recited by every Muslim at least once in a lifetime with a full understanding of its meaning and with an assent of the heart. Muslims say this when they wake up in the morning, and before they go to sleep at night. It is repeated five times in the call to prayer in every mosque. A person who utters the '**Shahada**' as their last words in this life has been promised Paradise (<http://www.islamreligion.com/category/56/>).

Many people ignorant of Islam have misconceived notions about the '**Allah**', used by Muslims to denote God. '**Allah**' is the proper name for God in Arabic, just as "**Elah**", or often "**Elohim**", is the proper name for God in Aramaic mentioned in the Old Testament. '**Allah**' is also His personal name in Islam, as "**YHWH**" is His personal name in Judaism. However, rather than the specific Hebrew denotation of "**YHWH**" as "**He Who Is**", in Arabic '**Allah**' denotes the aspect of being "**The One True Deity worthy of all worship**". Arabic speaking Jews and Christians also refer to the Supreme Being as '**Allah**'(<http://www.islamreligion.com/category/56/>).

(a) Nothing deserves worship except God (Allah)

The first part of this testimony states that God has the exclusive right to be worshipped inwardly and outwardly, by one's heart and limbs. In Islamic doctrine, not only can no one be worshipped apart from Him, absolutely no one else can be worshipped along with Him. He has no partners or associates in worship. Worship, in its comprehensive sense and all its aspects, is for Him alone. God's right to be worshipped is the essential meaning of Islam's testimony of faith: *L 'il ha 'ill ll h*. A person becomes Muslim by testifying to the divine right to worship. It is the crux of Islamic belief in God, even all of Islam. It is considered the central message of all prophets and messengers sent by God - the message of Abraham, Isaac, Ishmael, Moses, the Hebrew prophets, Jesus, and Muhammad (PBUH), may God exalt their mention. For instance, Moses declared (<http://www.islamreligion.com/category/56/>):

“Hear, O Israel The Lord our God is one Lord.”

(Deuteronomy 6:4).

Jesus repeated the same message 1500 years later when he said:

“The first of all the commandments is, “Hear, O Israel; the Lord our God is one Lord.” (Mark 12:29).

...and reminded Satan:

“Away from me, Satan! For it is written: Worship the Lord your God, and serve Him only.” (Matthew 4:10).

Finally, the call of Muhammad (PBUH), some 600 years after Jesus, reverberated across the hills of Mecca,

**‘And your God is One God: there is no god but He.’
(Quran 2:163).**

They all declared clearly:

“Worship God! You have no other God but Him.” (Quran 7:59, 60, 73, 85; 11: 50, 61, 84; 23, 32).

But by a mere verbal profession alone, one does not become a complete Muslim. To become a complete Muslim one has to fully carry out in practice the instruction given by Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) as ordained by God. This brings us to the second part of the testimony (<http://www.islamreligion.com/category/56/>).

(b) Muhammad (PBUH) is the Messenger of God (Allah)

Muhammad (PBUH) was born in Mecca in Arabia in the year 570 CE. His ancestry goes back to Ishmael, a son of Prophet Abraham. The second part of the confession of faith asserts that he is not only a prophet but also a

messenger of God, a higher role also played by Moses and Jesus before him. Like all prophets before him, he was a human being, but chosen by God to convey His message to all humanity rather than one tribe or nation from among the many that exist. For Muslims, Muhammad (PBUH) brought the last and final revelation. In accepting Muhammad (PBUH) as the “last of the prophets,” they believe that his prophecy confirms and completes all of the revealed messages, beginning with that of Adam. In addition, Muhammad (PBUH) serves as the preeminent role model through his life example. The believer’s effort to follow Muhammad’s (PBUH) example reflects the emphasis of Islam on practice and action (<http://www.islamreligion.com/category/56/>).

The Second Pillar of Islam: The Prayer or Salah

Salah (The Prayer) is the daily ritual prayer enjoined upon all Muslims as one of the five Pillars of Islam. It is performed five times a day by all Muslims. **Salah** is a precise worship, different from praying on the inspiration of the moment. Muslims pray or, perhaps more correctly, worship five times throughout the day(<http://www.islamreligion.com/category/56/>):

) Between first light and sunrise.

) After the sun has passed the middle of the sky.

) Between mid-afternoon and sunset.

) Between sunset and the last light of the day.

) Between darkness and midnight before the morning.

Each prayer may take at least 5 minutes, but it may be lengthened as a person wishes. Muslims can pray in any clean environment, alone or together, in a mosque or at home, at work or on the road, indoors or out.

Under special circumstances, such as illness, journey, or war, certain allowances in the prayers are given to make their offering easy.

Having specific times each day to be close to God helps Muslims remain aware of the importance of their faith, and the role it plays in every part of life. Muslims start their day by cleaning themselves and then standing before their Lord in prayer. The prayers consist of recitations from the Quran in Arabic and a sequence of movements: standing, bowing, prostrating, and sitting. All recitations and movements express submission, humility, and homage to God. The various postures Muslims assume during their prayers capture the spirit of submission; the words remind them of their commitments to God. The prayer also reminds one of belief in the Day of Judgment and of the fact that one has to appear before his or

her Creator and give an account of their entire life. This is how a Muslim starts their day. In the course of the day, Muslims dissociate themselves from their worldly engagements for a few moments and stand before God. This brings to mind once again the real purpose of life (<http://www.islamreligion.com/category/56/>).

These prayers serve as a constant reminder throughout the day to help keep believers mindful of God in the daily stress of work, family, and distractions of life. Prayer strengthens faith, dependence on God, and puts daily life within the perspective of life to come after death and the last judgment. As they prepare to pray, Muslims face Mecca, the holy city that houses the Kaaba (the ancient place of worship built by Abraham and his son Ishmael). At the end of the prayer, the **shahada** (testimony of faith) is recited, and the greeting of peace, “Peace be upon all of you and the mercy and blessings of God,” is repeated twice. Though individual performance of **salah** is permissible, collective worship in the mosque has special merit and Muslims are encouraged to perform certain **salah** with others. With their faces turned in the direction of the Kaaba in Mecca, the worshipers align themselves in parallel rows behind the **imam**, or prayer leader, who directs them as they execute the physical postures coupled with Quran

recitations. In many Muslim countries, the “call to prayer,” or ‘Adhan,’ echo out across the rooftops. Aided by a megaphone the muezzin calls out:

Allahu Akbar (God is the greatest),

Allahu Akbar (God is the greatest),

Allahu Akbar (God is the greatest),

Allahu Akbar (God is the greatest),

Ash-hadu an-laa ilaaha ill-Allah (I witness that none deserves worship except God).

Ash-hadu an-laa ilaaha ill-Allah (I witness that none deserves worship except God).

Ash-hadu anna Muhammad-ar-Rasool-ullah (I witness that Muhammad is the messenger of God).

Ash-hadu anna Muhammad-ar-Rasool-ullah (I witness that Muhammad is the messenger of God).

Hayya ‘alas-Salah (Come to prayer!)

Hayya ‘alas-Salah (Come to prayer!)

Hayya ‘alal-Falah (Come to prosperity!)

Hayya ‘alal-Falah (Come to prosperity!)

Allahu Akbar (God is the greatest),

Allahu Akbar (God is the greatest),

La ilaaha ill-Allah (None deserves worship except God).

Friday is the weekly day of communal worship in Islam. The weekly convened Friday Prayer is the most important service. The Friday Prayer is marked by the following features:

-) It falls in the same time as the noon prayer which it replaces.
-) It must be performed in a congregation led by a prayer leader, an **‘Imam.’** It can not be offered individually. Muslims in the West try to arrange their schedules to allow them time to attend the prayer.

) Rather than a day of rest like the Sabbath, Friday is a day of devotion and extra worship. A Muslim is allowed normal work on Friday as on any other day of the week. They may proceed with their usual activities, but they must break for the Friday prayer. After the worship is over, they can resume their mundane activities.

) Typically, the Friday Prayer is performed in a mosque, if available. Sometimes, due to unavailability of a mosque, it may be offered at a rented facility, park, etc.

) When the time for prayer comes, the Adhan is pronounced. The Imam then stands facing the audience and delivers his sermon (known as **khutba** in Arabic), an essential part of the service of which its attendance is required. While the Imam is talking, everyone present listens to the sermon quietly till the end. Most Imams in the West will deliver the sermon in English, but some deliver it in Arabic. Those who deliver it in Arabic usually deliver a short speech in the local language before the service.

) There are two sermons delivered, one distinguished from the other by a brief sitting of the Imam. The sermon is commenced with

words of praise of God and prayers of blessing for Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), may God praise him.

) After the sermon, the prayer is offered under the leadership of the Imam who recites the **Fatiha** and the other Quranic passage in an audible voice. When this is done, the prayer is completed (<http://www.islamreligion.com/category/56/>).

Special, large congregational prayers, which include a sermon, are also offered at late morning on the two days of festivity. One of them is immediately following the month of fasting, Ramadan, and the other after the pilgrimage, or hajj (<http://www.islamreligion.com/category/56/>).

Although not religiously mandated, individual devotional prayers, especially during the night, are emphasized and are a common practice among pious Muslims (<http://www.islamreligion.com/category/56/>).

The Third Pillar of Islam: Compulsory Charity or Zakah

Charity is not just recommended by Islam, it is required of every financially stable Muslim. Giving charity to those who deserve it is part of Muslim character and one of the Five Pillars of Islamic practice. **Zakat** is viewed as “**compulsory charity**”; it is an obligation for those who have

received their wealth from God to respond to those members of the community in need. Devoid of sentiments of universal love, some people know only to hoard wealth and to add to it by lending it out on interest. Islam's teachings are the very antithesis of this attitude. Islam encourages the sharing of wealth with others and helps people to stand on their own and become productive members of the society (<http://www.islamreligion.com/category/56/>).

In Arabic it is known as **Zakat** which literally means “**purification**”, because **Zakat** is considered to purify one's heart of greed. Love of wealth is natural and it takes firm belief in God for a person to part with some of his wealth. **Zakat** must be paid on different categories of property-gold, silver, money; livestock; agricultural produce; and business commodities - and is payable each year after one year's possession. It requires an annual contribution of 2.5 percent of an individual's wealth and assets (<http://www.islamreligion.com/category/56/>).

Like prayer, which is both an individual and communal responsibility, **Zakat** expresses a Muslim's worship of and thanksgiving to God by supporting those in need. In Islam, the true owner of things is not man, but God. Acquisition of wealth for its own sake, or so that it may increase a

man's worth, is condemned. Mere acquisition of wealth counts for nothing in the sight of God. It does not give man any merit in this life or in the hereafter. Islam teaches that people should acquire wealth with the intention of spending it on their own needs and the needs of others.

“Man’, said the Prophet, ‘says: My wealth! My wealth!’

Have you not any wealth except that which you give as alms and thus preserve, wear and tatter, eat and use up?”

The whole concept of wealth is considered in Islam as a gift from God. God, who provided it to the person, made a portion of it for the poor, so the poor have a right over one's wealth. **Zakat** reminds Muslims that everything they have belongs to God. People are given their wealth as a trust from God, and **Zakat** is intended to free Muslims from the love of money. The money paid in **Zakat** is not something God needs or receives. He is above any type of dependency. God, in His boundless mercy, promises rewards for helping those in need with one basic condition that zakat be paid in the name of God; one should not expect or demand any worldly gains from the beneficiaries nor aim at making one's name as a philanthropist. The feelings of a beneficiary should not be hurt by making him feel inferior or reminding him of the assistance (<http://www.islamreligion.com/category/56/>).

Money given as **Zakat** can only be used for certain specific things. Islamic Law stipulates that alms are to be used to support the poor, orphans, and widows, to free slaves and debtors, and others in need, as specifically mentioned in the Quran (9:60). **Zakat**, which developed fourteen hundred years ago, functions as a form of social security in a Muslim society (<http://www.islamreligion.com/category/56/>).

Neither Jewish nor Christian scriptures praise slave manumission by raising it to worship. Indeed, Islam is unique in world religions in requiring the faithful to financially help slaves win their freedom and has raised the manumission of a slave to an act of worship - if it is done to please God (<http://www.islamreligion.com/category/56/>).

Under the caliphates, the collection and expenditure of **Zakat** was a function of the state. In the contemporary Muslim world, it has been left up to the individual, except in some countries in which the state fulfills that role to some degree. Most Muslims in the West disperse **Zakat** through Islamic charities, mosques, or directly giving to the poor. Money is not collected during religious services or via collection plates, but some mosques keep a drop box for those who wish it to distribute **Zakat** on their behalf. Unlike the **Zakat**, Giving other forms of charity in private, even in

secret, is considered better, in order to keep one's intention purely for the God (<http://www.islamreligion.com/category/56/>).

Apart from **Zakat**, the Quran and Hadeeth (sayings and actions of the Prophet Muhammad, May God exalt his mention) also stress **Sadaqah**, or voluntary almsgiving, which is intended for the needy. The Quran emphasizes feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, helping those who are in need, and the more one helps, the more God helps the person, and the more one gives, the more God gives the person. One feels he is taking care of others and God is taking care of him (<http://www.islamreligion.com/category/56/>).

The Fourth Pillar of Islam: The Fast of Ramadan or Sawm or Roja
Fasting is not unique to the Muslims. It has been practiced for centuries in connection with religious ceremonies by Christians, Jews, Confucianists, Hindus, Taoists, and Jainists (<http://www.islamreligion.com/category/56/>).

Some primitive societies fasted to avert catastrophe or to serve as penance for sin. Native North Americans held tribal fasts to avert threatening disasters. The Native Americans of Mexico and the Incas of Peru observed penitential fasts to appease their gods. Past nations of the Old World, such as the Assyrians and the Babylonians, observed fasting as a form of

penance. Jews observe fasting as a form of penitence and purification annually on the Day of Atonement or Yom Kippur. On this day neither food nor drink is permitted. Early Christians associated fasting with penitence and purification. During the first two centuries of its existence, the Christian church established fasting as a voluntary preparation for receiving the sacraments of Holy Communion and baptism and for the ordination of priests. Later, these fasts were made obligatory, as others days were subsequently added. In the 6th century, the Lenten fast was expanded to 40 days, on each of which only one meal was permitted. After the Reformation, fasting was retained by most Protestant churches and was made optional in some cases. Stricter Protestants, however, condemned not only the festivals of the church, but its traditional fasts as well (<http://www.islamreligion.com/category/56/>).

In the Roman Catholic Church, fasting may involve partial abstinence from food and drink or total abstinence. The Roman Catholic days of fasting are Ash Wednesday and Good Friday. In the United States, fasting is observed mostly by Episcopalians and Lutherans among Protestants, by Orthodox and Conservative Jews, and by Roman Catholics (<http://www.islamreligion.com/category/56/>).

Fasting took another form in the West: the hunger strike, a form of fasting, which in modern times has become a political weapon after being popularized by Mohandas K. Gandhi, leader of the struggle for India's freedom, who undertook fasts to compel his followers to obey his precept of nonviolence (<http://www.islamreligion.com/category/56/>).

Islam is the only religion that has retained the outward and spiritual dimensions of fasting throughout centuries. Selfish motives and desires of the base self alienate a man from his Creator. The most unruly human emotions are pride, avarice, gluttony, lust, envy, and anger. These emotions by their nature are not easy to control, thus a person must strive hard to discipline them. Muslims fast to purify their soul, it puts a bridle on the most uncontrolled, savage human emotions. People have gone to two extremes with regard to them. Some let these emotions steer their life which lead to barbarism among the ancients, and crass materialism of consumer cultures in modern times. Others tried to deprive themselves completely of these human traits, which in turn led to monasticism (<http://www.islamreligion.com/category/56/>).

The fourth Pillar of Islam, the Fast of Ramadan, occurs once each year during the 9th lunar month, the month of Ramadan, the ninth month of the Islamic calendar in which:

“...the Quran was sent down as guidance for the people”

(Quran 2:185).

God in His infinite mercy has exempted the ill, travelers, and others who are unable from fasting Ramadan (<http://www.islamreligion.com/category/56/>).

Fasting helps Muslims develop self-control; gain a better understanding of God’s gifts and greater compassion towards the deprived. Fasting in Islam involves abstaining from all bodily pleasures between dawn and sunset. Not only is food forbidden, but also any sexual activity. All things which are regarded as prohibited is even more so in this month, due to its sacredness... Each and every moment during the fast, a person suppresses their passions and desires in loving obedience to God. This consciousness of duty and the spirit of patience helps in strengthening our faith. Fasting helps a person gain self-control. A person who abstains from permissible things like food and drink is likely to feel conscious of his sins. A heightened sense of spirituality helps break the habits of lying, staring with lust at the opposite sex, gossiping, and wasting time. Staying hungry and thirsty for just a day’s portion makes one feel the misery of the 800 million who go hungry or the one in ten households in the US, for example, that are living with hunger or are at risk of hunger. After all, why would

anyone care about starvation if one has never felt its pangs oneself? One can see why **Ramadan** is also a month of charity and giving (<http://www.islamreligion.com/category/56/>).

At dusk, the fast is broken with a light meal popularly referred to as **Suhoor**. Families and friends share a special late evening meal together, often including special foods and sweets served only at this time of the year. Many go to the mosque for the evening prayer, followed by special prayers recited only during Ramadan. Some will recite the entire Quran as a special act of piety, and public recitations of the Quran can be heard throughout the evening. Families rise before sunrise to take their first meal of the day, which sustains them until sunset. Near the end of Ramadan Muslims commemorate the “Night of Power” when the Quran was revealed. The month of Ramadan ends with one of the two major Islamic celebrations, the Feast of the Breaking of the Fast, called Eid al-Fitr. On this day, Muslims joyfully celebrate the completion of Ramadan and customarily distribute gifts to children. Muslims are also obliged to help the poor join in the spirit of relaxation and enjoyment by distributing zakat-ul-fitr, a special and obligatory act of charity in the form of staple foodstuff, in order that all may enjoy the general euphoria of the day (<http://www.islamreligion.com/category/56/>).

The Fifth Pillar of Islam: The Pilgrimage or Hajj

The Hajj (pilgrimage to Mecca) is the fifth of the fundamental Muslim practices and institutions known as the five pillars of Islam. Pilgrimage is not undertaken in Islam to the shrines of saints, to monasteries for help from holy men, or to sights where miracles are supposed to have occurred, even though we may see many Muslims do this. Pilgrimage is made to the Kaaba, found in the sacred city of Mecca in Saudia, the 'House of God,' whose sanctity rests in that the Prophet Abraham built it for the worship of God. God rewarded him by attributing the House to himself, in essence honoring it, and by making it the devotional epicenter which all Muslims face when offering the prayers (**salah**). The rites of pilgrimage are performed today exactly as did by Abraham, and after him by Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), may God praise them (<http://www.islamreligion.com/category/56/>).

Pilgrimage is viewed as a particularly meritorious activity. Pilgrimage serves as a penance - the ultimate forgiveness for sins, devotion, and intense spirituality. The pilgrimage to Mecca, the most sacred city in Islam, is required of all physically and financially able Muslims once in their life. The pilgrimage rite begins a few months after Ramadan, on the

8th day of the last month of the Islamic year of Dhul-Hijjah, and ends on the 13th day. Mecca is the center towards which the Muslims converge once a year, meet and refresh in themselves the faith that all Muslims are equal and deserve the love and sympathy of others, irrespective of their race or ethnic origin. The racial harmony fostered by Hajj is perhaps best captured by Malcolm X on his historic pilgrimage:

‘Every one of the thousands at the airport, about to leave for Jeddah, was dressed this way. You could be a king or a peasant and no one would know. Some powerful personages, who were discreetly pointed out to me, had on the same thing I had on. Once thus dressed, we all had begun intermittently calling out “Labbayka! (Allahumma) Labbayka!” (At your service, O Lord!) Packed in the plane were white, black, brown, red, and yellow people, blue eyes and blond hair, and my kinky red hair - all together, brothers! All honoring the same God, all in turn giving equal honors to each other . . .

That is when I first began to reappraise the ‘white man’. It was when I first began to perceive that ‘white man’, as commonly used, means complexion only secondarily; primarily it described attitudes and actions. In America, ‘white man’ meant specific attitudes and actions toward the black man, and toward all other non-white men. But in the Muslim world, I had seen that

men with white complexions were more genuinely brotherly than anyone else had ever been. That morning was the start of a radical alteration in my whole outlook about 'white' men (<http://www.islamreligion.com/category/56/>).

There were tens of thousands of pilgrims, from all over the world. They were of all colors, from blue-eyed blonds to black-skinned Africans. But we were all participating in the same ritual displaying a spirit of unity and brotherhood that my experiences in America had led me to believe never could exist between the white and the non-white... America needs to understand Islam, because this is the one religion that erases from its society the race problem. Throughout my travels in the Muslim world, I have met, talked to, and even eaten with people who in America would have been considered white - but the 'white' attitude was removed from their minds by the religion of Islam. I have never before seen sincere and true brotherhood practiced by all colors together, irrespective of their color”(<http://www.islamreligion.com/category/56/>).

Thus the pilgrimage unites the Muslims of the world into one international fraternity. More than two million persons perform the Hajj each year, and the rite serves as a unifying force in Islam by bringing followers of diverse

backgrounds together in worship. In some Muslim societies, once a believer has made the pilgrimage, he is often labeled with the title '**Hajji**'; this, however, is a cultural, rather than religious custom. Finally, the Hajj is a manifestation of the belief in the unity of God - all the pilgrims worship and obey the commands of the One God. At certain stations on the caravan routes to Mecca, or when the pilgrim passes the point nearest to those stations, the pilgrim enters the state of purity known as **ihram**. In this state, the certain 'normal' actions of the day and night become impermissible for the pilgrims, such as covering the head, clipping the fingernails, and wearing normal clothing in regards to men. Males remove their clothing and don the garments specific to this state of **ihram**, two white seamless sheets that are wrapped around the body. All this increases the reverence and sanctity of the pilgrimage, the city of Mecca, and month of Dhul-Hijjah. There are 5 stations, one on the coastal plains northwest of Mecca towards Egypt and one south towards Yemen, while three lie north or eastwards towards Medina, Iraq and al-Najd. The simple garb signifies the equality of all humanity in God's sight, and the removal of all worldly affections. After entering the state of ihram, the pilgrim proceeds to Mecca and awaits the start of the Hajj. On the 7th of Dhu al-Hijjah the pilgrim is reminded of his duties, and at the commence of the ritual, which takes

place between the 8th and the 12th days of the month, the pilgrim visits the holy places outside Mecca - Arafah, Muzdalifah, and Minaa - and sacrifices an animal in commemoration of Abraham's sacrifice. The pilgrim then shortens or shaves their head, and, after throwing seven stones at specific pillars at Minaa on three or four successive days, and heads for the central mosque where he walks seven times around the sacred sanctuary, or **Kaaba**, in the Great Mosque, and ambulates, walking and running, seven times between the two small hills of Mt. Safaa and Mt. Marwah. Discussing the historical or spiritual significance of each rite is beyond the scope of this introductory article (<http://www.islamreligion.com/category/56/>).

Apart from Hajj, the "minor pilgrimage" or **Umrah** is undertaken by Muslims during the rest of the year. Performing the **Umrah** does not fulfill the obligation of Hajj. It is similar to the major and obligatory Islamic pilgrimage (hajj), and pilgrims have the choice of performing the **Umrah** separately or in combination with the Hajj. As in the Hajj, the pilgrim begins the **Umrah** by assuming the state of **ihram**. They enter Mecca and circle the sacred shrine of the Kaaba seven times. He may then touch the Black Stone, if he can, pray behind the Maqam Ibrahim, drink the holy water of the Zamzam spring. The ambulations between the hills of Safa

and Marwah seven times and the shortening or shaving of the head complete the **Umrah** (<http://www.islamreligion.com/category/56/>).

Historical Link of the Muslims and Islam

To trace the spread of Islam throughout the world, the Arabs became Muslims in 7th century. The Arabs were great traders and along with other countries came in contact with Indian subcontinent for trade and commerce. With Nepal, through the export of Nepalese musk to Arabia, contact was established which is mentioned in an Arabic book entitled "Hudood-Al- Alam" published in 783 AD. In this book, it is mentioned that Nepalese musk was exported to Arabia (Regmi J.C., 2026 BS). So, on the basis of this proof, we can say that the Muslims had first arrived in Nepal as early as in 8th century.

1324 AD is an important year for contact between the Muslims of India and Nepal. Gyasuddin Tughlaq, the emperor of Delhi, was returning to his capital via Tirhut after crushing a rebellion in Bengal. At that time, an independent Mithila Kingdom flourished in the Simira region of Nepali Terai. King Hari Singh Dev ruled at that time and the king misunderstood that the Delhi emperor probably wanted to seize his capital Simraun Gadh also. Simraun Gadh is situated a few miles east of Birgunj. As such the

King has attacked the Emperor's force. As a result, the Emperor finally destroyed the capital of the King. The King had to move to mountains with his family and courtiers including son Hari Singh Dev (Siddika S., 1993).

Towards the end of 1349 A.D., Sultan Shamsuddin Ilyas of Bengal invaded Nepal. Sultan Shamsuddin's forces entered into Kathmandu valley through Banepa. King Rajamalla and all of his subjects were compelled to hide in forests to protect themselves. However, they (troops of Sultan Shamsuddin) left Nepal in a week because they could not endure the cold climate. The Malla king then returned to the valley along with his subjects (Acharya B. R., 1980).

Sultan Shamsuddin Ilyas attacked Bhaktapur, the capital of the Malla King. Kantipur (now Kathmandu) and Lalitpur cities were also attacked by the Sultan. Sultan Shamsuddin withdrew from Nepal after a short stay of only seven days. Despite the attack, it did not affect the social and political life of the people in general. It was in the time of Ratna Malla (1482-1520 A.D.), King of Malla dynasty in Kantipur (old name of Kathmandu) that the Muslims were permitted for the first time to come to Nepal and settle down for the purpose of trade. Their number was limited. But as they were very few in number, they could not have much influence over the politics and religion of the country (Aryal I.R. & Dhungyal T.P., 1975).

Dr. D.B. Bista in his book "People of Nepal" stated that Kashmiri Muslim traders were the first to arrive in Kathmandu during the period of King Ratna Malla in the late 15th and early 16th centuries. It is said, a few were invited to Kathmandu by an envoy of King Ratna Malla in Lhasa (Bista D.B., 1976).

According to one information, the first group of Muslims arrived in Kathmandu about 400 years ago. In the opinion of Balchandra Sharma, a Nepalese historian, Muslims first came to Kathmandu during reign of King Ratna Malla in 1491 A.D. (Siddika S., 1993).

According to another information, a Muslim saint (Muallim) came to Kathmandu in 1524 A.D. He built the first mosque in Kathmandu known as Kashmiri Taquia. The Nepali Jame Masjid was, however, built about 300 years ago from now (Siddika S., 1993).

Population of the Muslims around the World

Islam is the fastest growing religion and the second largest religion in the world. Among every four humans in the world, one of them is Muslim. Muslims have increased by over 235% in the last fifty years up to nearly 1.6 billion. By comparison, Christians have increased by only 47%, Hinduism 117%, and Buddhism by 63% (<http://islamicweb.com/begin/results.htm>). The Muslim populations in the South and East Asian countries

are: India -14%, Bangladesh- 85%, Pakistan- 97%, Bhutan-5%, Maldives- 100%, Sri Lanka- 9% and China-11% (<http://islamicweb.com/begin/population.htm>) and Nepal- 4.2% (CBS, 2005).

The population of the Muslims in the world and their manifold positions are shown in the "Table No. 1".

Table No. 1

Population of the Muslims in the World

Muslims in Asia (1996)	1,022,692,000(30%)
Muslims in Africa (1996)	426,282,000 (59%)
Total Number of Muslims on the Earth (1996)	1,482,596,925
Total Number of People on the Earth (1996)	5,771,939,007
Percentage of Muslims (1996)	26%
Islam Annual Growth Rate (1994-1995) from U.N.	6.40%
Christianity Growth Rate (1994-1995) from U.N.	1.46%
Total Number of Muslims on the Earth (1998)	1,678,442,000
Expected Number of Muslims on the Earth (2000)	1,902,095,000

Source: <http://islamicweb.com/begin/population.htm>

Muslims are the majority in 52 nations of the world. They speak about 60 languages and come from diverse ethnic backgrounds (<http://www.answers.com/topic/muslim-world>).

Muslim population is scattered unevenly all over the country, Nepal but mainly concentrated in Terai region. A considerable number of Muslims also dwell in the capital city of Kathmandu. Those dwelling in the Hills are called 'Churaute' because they are bangle sellers. Nepalese live in a multi-cultural environment. Economic backwardness and illiteracy are important holding factors (Siddika S., 1993).

In Nepal, 31 percent of the population still lives below poverty line. 85.8 percent of people live in the rural areas (CBS 2005). The revised estimates of per capita GDP and per capita GNP in terms of US Dollar are 242 and 250 respectively for the year 2002/03. Status of the Muslims is even worse (CBS, 2004).

Muslims are no exception in this story of underdevelopment; rather their problems are more acute. In the Terai region as well as hills, Muslims are generally not different from Hindus or other communities in respect of language, dress, family organization, occupation and social manners. So, they are part of the "multidimensional facets of Nepal's cultural heritage" The Muslims generally speak Urdu, Nepali, Hindi and other local dialects.

Also, in their struggle for survival against the heavy odds of meager resources, lack of skills, illiteracy and superstition; they are at one with their other fellow countrymen. Despite affinity with the fellow countrymen on many counts, the Muslims have separate distinct social and cultural traditions (Siddika S., 1993).

Economically, a bulk of this community is very poor. A very few of them belong to the middle class farmers and traders. Those who live in the Hills have little land and support themselves by selling bangles. Hence, they are known as 'Churaute' (bangle seller) in rural areas (Siddika S., 1993).

The Hill Muslims, being in insignificant number, are overwhelmed by a Non-Islamic, if not anti-Islamic, social environment. In the Hills, Muslims surrounded by non-Islamic influences observe and sometimes take part in the festivals of other communities. In some parts of Nepal, some Muslims observe marriage, birth and death ceremony, rites and rituals and other social and cultural practices of other religions. As Islamic educational facilities are not available in the Hills, many illiterate Muslims of the region have turned many social practices of Islam into un-Islamic ones. The case with Terai Muslim is a little different as they have the advantage of mixing with the Muslims of India and learning from their superior culture and society. They even avail educational facilities in India which is

not available in Nepal. Besides, a number of important Islamic institutions have been established in the Terai (Plain) where as only a few madarsas (Muslim schools) exist in the Hills. Hence, many hill Muslims are ignorant about Islamic teachings (Siddika S., 1993).

Nepali Muslims are mostly '**Sunnis**'. The minority group is '**Shia**'. These are two important theological groups, not castes as some non- Muslims think. '**Sunni**' literally means "**one of the paths**"- **a traditionalist**". This term is generally applied to the large sect of Muslims who acknowledge the first four '**Khalifahs**' to have been the rightful successors of Holy Prophet, and who receive six authentic books of tradition of Holy Prophet, and who belong to one of the four schools of jurisprudence founded by Imam Abu Hanifah, Imam Ash-Shafi, Imam Malik, or Imam Ahmed ibn Hambal. A Sunni is held to be traditionalist, not that any section of Islam rejects traditions, but merely that the Sunnis have passed themselves as "Sunnis", and the rest of the Muslims have accepted this title for this group. The '**Shias**' also believe in traditions. The Sunnis are more numerous in number. Most of the Shiahs live in Iran, Iraq and some parts of Pakistan. The theological group "**SHIAH**" literally means "**followers**". They are the followers of Hazrat Ali, the fourth Khalifah of Islam. The Shiahs maintain that Hazrat Ali was the first legitimate Imam or Khalifah or successor, to

the Holy prophet, and therefore do not accept Hazrat Abubakar Siddique, Hazrat Umar and Hazrat Usman, the first three Khalifahs of the Muslims, as Khalifahs. Despite having different groups of Muslims in Nepal from ethnic, linguistic and professional points of view, rigid caste system as prevalent amongst their Hindu neighbours is not practiced by them. All Muslims can enter into the mosque and pray sitting side by side. They also dine together during any religious and social gatherings. If suitable brides or bridegrooms are found, Muslim of one caste does not hesitate to solemnize inter-caste marriage and there is no social stigma attached to it (Siddika S., 1993).

Prof. Abdul Qayoom's comments on social status of the Nepalese Muslims are worth quoting. He says:

"Economically, the large portions of Muslim population are poor and lead a life below the poverty line. Most of them are labourers and tenants. There are few who are engaged in small scale business and trade. Of course, their number is quite negligible."

He also says: "Due to poor economic condition, most of the Muslim families can not afford to send their children to school and provide them modern education. Consequently, their number in public or

private jobs is so few that it may easily be counted in fingers"(Siddika S., 1993).

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 General background of the Study Area

3.1.1 Geographical Area

Latikoili VDC is one of the fifty VDCs and one municipality of Surkhet district. It is situated in the southern area of Birendranagar valley.

Birendranagar Municipality and Jarbuta VDC are to its north, Uttarganga and Hariharpur VDCs are to its west, Lekhparajul and Ramghat VDCs are to its south and Satakhani and Ramghat VDCs are to its east as the borders of the VDC. It is 1 kilometer far from Birendranagar. It is also linked with the Ratna Highway and several link roads run through the VDC. VDC is full of villages with the assets of very hard working people, rivers, ponds, productive lands, vegetations, forests and many more. The total area of this VDC is 65 square kilometers (BSOS, 2005). The total cultivable land is 1796 hectares; total cultivated area is 1774 hectares and total irrigated land is 1035 hectares in the VDC (DADO, 2005).

It is full of both hills and plane areas. Kankrebihar, Deutibajai temple, Bulbule Lake, Shiva temple, Narayan temple and a Muslim mosque are some of the very valuable places which have fame in the country and abroad as well. Ward number 1, 2 & 9 are situated in the northern most area of the VDC and the Muslims of Latikoili VDC live in these wards only.

3.1.2 Natural Resources

Biological diversity is found in the considerable level having various types of flowers, fruits, herbs, medicinal herbs, trees, grasses, birds, animals,

aqua animals, insects and much more both wild and domesticated. There are community forests, individual forests and public forests. Water is available in the form of small rivers and underground water. People use these forms of water for their daily needs like drinking, irrigation, sanitation, cleaning, washing and so on. Apart from all these, there are fertile land, sand, gravels, boulders, grasses, ponds, timbers, fuel wood, bright sun shine etc.

3.1.3 Ethnological Description

There are many castes and ethnic groups living in the wards 1, 2&9 of the Latikpoili VDC (study area). There are Khampa, Magar, Tharu, Chhetri, Brahman, Newar, Thakuri, VK, Gurung, Kami, Damai, Sarki, Muslim, Giri Puri, Sunar and some other castes and ethnic groups live in the VDC. Out of which, Magar, Tharu, Chhetri, Brahman, Newar, Thakuri, VK, Kami, Muslims and Sunar are the major dwellers in the study area(Latikoili VDC, 2004).

3.1.4 Developmental Infrastructure

The transportation facility is well enough in the Study area. Ratna highway passes on the north edge of the study area. There are 4 Primary schools and

1 Middle school in the study area (Latikoili VDC, 2004). The other developmental infrastructures in the study area are given in the "Table No. 2".

Table No. 2

Physical Infrastructure in the Study area (In Households).

Ward No.	Radio	TV	Telephone	Tractor	Thresher	Motorcycle	Jeep	Bus	Pump set	Bicycle
Study Area	692	477	40	3	-	22	4	4	9	10

Source: VDC Bastugat Vivaran (Latikoili), 2004.

"Table No. 2" shows that majority of the households have radios in the study area (692).

3.1.5 Climate

The climate of the study area is neither scorch hot nor very cool, rather a normal one. The average maximum temperature was 37.3 Degree Celsius in June, the average minimum temperature was 5.7 Degree Celsius in

January and the maximum rain fall was 604.3 millimeters in July, 2005(KWRBOS, 2005).

3.1.6 Possibilities on Economic Development

The people of the study area are hard working, only the need of the hours is to equip them with the knowledge and skills. They have to be included in the inclusive development approach by the GO, NGOs, INGOs, supporting organizations and the society around them. There should be an inclusive approach in the development sector, especially for those who are excluded since long. As stated above, there are many raw materials, natural resources, developmental infrastructures, favourable climate and much more. Moreover, the study area is in the Birendranagar valley. Commercial agriculture, Goat keeping, cattle rearing, trade and business, cultivation of medicinal herbs, works with forest products, workshops, meat sales, shops etc. are some of the economic developmental areas by which the people of the study area can generate their income.

3.1.7 Demographic Composition

Total population of the study area is 5546(male-2710 and female-2836).The total households in the study area are 1124 (CBS, 2002 & BSOS, 2005).The literacy rate of this VDC is 57.2 % having male 69% and

female 45.7% (BSOS, 2005).The population by religion for the VDC is: Hindus-11573, Muslims-448, Buddhists-254, Christians-102, Sikh-1 and Not stated-2 (CBS, 2002) and Muslim population of Latikoili VDC is 519(66 in ward no.-1, 37 in ward no.-2 and 416 in ward no.-9) in 2004 (Latikoili VDC, 2004). Muslims are the largest minority in the Latikoili VDC (CBS, 2002 & Latikoili VDC, 2004).

3.2 Rationale of the Selection of the Study Area

Justifications of the selection of the study area are as follows:

- ❖ The highest population of the Muslims live in this Latikoili VDC, specifically, in ward number 1, 2 and 9 (Pipira Chawk, Pipira and Belghari respectively);
- ❖ No such studies have been made about the socio-economic status of the Muslims in the study area so far;
- ❖ The researcher, myself, is a Muslim, so, it is very easy to collect the real information from the Muslim respondents;
- ❖ Study area is near from the headquarters, Birendranagar and hence easy to reach and conduct the study. The verification, addition and omission of information can immediately be done by quick consultation with the needed respondents.

- ❖ The study could be completed with fewer budgets and I could make the best use of my available time.

3.3 Research Design

This research was Descriptive, Analytical and exploratory socio-economic research approach about the Muslims of ward number 1, 2 and 9 of Latikoili VDC. It was a case study which was applied in this study area. The information was collected through field visit, questionnaire, group discussion, interview and observation schedule in the study area. The socio-economic situations of the Muslims were observed and discussed with the Muslims of the study area by the researcher.

3.4 Nature and Sources of Data

The data for the study were both primary and secondary in nature. The primary data was collected from the field work through questionnaire, interview, observation schedule, group discussion etc. The primary data was collected through the personal contact with the members of the Muslim community. The secondary data was collected from the reports and publications of Central Bureau of Statistics, Latikoili VDC reports, books, articles, journals, annual publications, population census reports, internet, etc. The authenticity of the nature and sources of data was maintained very sincerely.

3.5 The Universe and Sample Selection

The universe was of 92 Muslim households in the study area. The whole 92 households (Universe) were selected as the census survey of the study area with the aim that a comprehensive investigation could be made.

3.6 Data Collection Techniques

The data was collected by using different data collecting methods and techniques according to the need of the thesis. The following data collection techniques were applied to attain the objectives of the research.

) Questionnaire.

) Interview technique.

) Observation schedule.

) Group discussion.

3.6.1 Questionnaire

Questionnaire was used to generate basic data from the households taken under research to carry out the objectives of the study. It was designed to generate both qualitative as well as quantitative information from the respondents. It was devised to know the socio-economic status of the respondents like: population dynamics, family size, occupation, household income and expenditure, educational status, total number of households and total Muslim population and other general information. A

comprehensive questionnaire was prepared with the consultation of the thesis Supervisor (Annex I). The information through the Questionnaire was gathered by the researcher.

3.6.2 Interview Technique

All the 92 Muslim households were interviewed during fieldwork. The members of the Mosque and Madarsa (Islamic school), the Imam (prayer leader) and teachers of both the Madarsa and Nepali school were also interviewed. They all were interviewed about their socio-economic status and the prevailing institutions like Mosque, Madarsa, cemetery and all other feelings that they experienced. The information about the study area, existing situation of the area as well as the people of the study area, resources and its utilizations status and all other information required by the thesis were taken with the use of this technique.

3.6.3 Observation Schedule

This is the approach beyond the questionnaire and interview because the researcher, here, is with the reality. Both the participant and non-participant methods were applied while accomplishing observation. The information was taken in were house facility, types of house, main Occupation, housing facilities, social institutions etc by straightforward observation technique.

3.6.4 Group Discussion

Selected Muslims of the study area, the members of the Mosque, Islamic and Nepali school committees, the teachers of both the schools (Islamic and Nepali), Muslim women were requested and taken in to participate in the Focus Group discussion. The Focus Group gathered at Belghari Muslim School and an extensive discussion was held focusing the socio-economic status and other folds of life of the Muslims of the study area. The checklist for the Group Discussion was designed prior to the discussion aiming to achieve the required information (Annex II).

3.7 Experiences of the Researcher

It is my first study. I was quite thrilled about the proceeding of the study. The problem I was getting encountered was the systematic going in the research. As said by Wolff H.K. and Pant P. R., 2000, "Research is a systematic and organized investigation conducted with purpose of finding solution to the problem". Anyway, it was the task that I had to meet in accepted form. I selected the topic; Socio-economic Status of the Muslims in Surkhet District: A Case Study of Latikoili Village Development Committee. I was reasonably familiar with the socio-economic status of the Muslims of this area when I arrived here before two and half years. I had

been regularly visiting them and I became familiar with them because I am from the same Muslim community. The majority of them are very poor and their daily life is painful and difficult. Moreover, no study has been done so far about them and to make their condition known, I had selected this area as my study area. While I was in the study of this area, it was very easy for me to get information and I found them very co-operative and helpful that was because I am also a Muslim. It was really like my own home because I experienced no difference in the conduct of the respondents. I could obtain all the required information with ease. They replied all the ways with full frank mood and open mind. They told all their difficulties, problems and joys that they had with them. I must thank them for their all kinds of co-operations, response, helps, supports, brotherhood and much more which I could get from them during my study. They will, in real sense, remain in my experience and memory for ever.

3.8 Data Processing

The collected crude data from the field survey were edited, processed, tabulated, analyzed and presented. The unnecessary and insignificant information were elucidated. The relationship between qualitative and quantitative data and dependent and independent was made. The data were processed and analyzed by using different statistical modus operandi like

descriptive statistical tool such as the frequency distribution, absolute numbers and percentage. The data were arranged in a tabular form, pie chart, bar diagram etc. as per the requirements of the objectives of the research. The data were analyzed on the basis of speculation drawn from the processed data.

3.9 Reliability and Validity of Data

There was high level of reliability and validity of household selection since all the 92 Muslim households (universe) were taken in the study, so, no biasness in the sample selection and data and data collection techniques were accomplished with high care and genuine. The primary data was collected from the field work and it was done by the researcher, myself. The secondary data was collected from the reports and publications of Central Bureau of Statistics, Latikoili VDC reports, books, articles, journals, annual publications, population census report, internet, etc which all are authorized publications. Consultation with the Supervisors was made and his suggestions, directions and tips were admitted for real validation.

CHAPTER IV

PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA

In this chapter, the collected data from the field survey have been tabulated, processed, analyzed and presented. The data have been arranged in a tabular form, pie chart, bar diagram etc. as per the requirements of the objectives of the research.

This chapter comprises population composition of the Muslims in the study area, caste/ethnic composition, religion, language, marital status, family structure, size of family, educational status, occupational status, economic

(Income and expenditure) status, spending of the earning, land ownership, types of houses, housing facilities, family headship, migration specification ,socio-institutional status and social relationship of the Muslims.

There were 92 households (13, 3 and 76 households in wards 1, 2 and 9 respectively) in the study area. Their social and economic conditions and some of the other information were collected as per the objectives of the study. They were poor but hard working, very less educated and less skilled but want to learn and they were excluded but wanted to be included in all activities of development (Field Survey, 2006).

4.1. Population Composition of the Muslims in the Study Area

According to the Population Census 2001, in Surkhet district, 91.2 percent population are followers of Hindu religion, 7.53, 0.75 and 0.43 percent are followers of Buddha, Christian and Islam religion respectively (CBS 2005).

In Latikoili VDC too, the Hindus are the largest religious group. Muslims are the second highest religious group in the VDC. According to the Population Census 2001, there are Hindus-11573, Muslims-448, Buddhists-254, Christians-102, Sikh-1 and Not stated-2 in the Latikoili VDC (CBS, 2002) and Muslim population of Latikoili VDC is 519 in 2004 (Latikoili VDC, 2004).

There were all together 92 Muslim households and all were taken under the study as the census approach of data collection method. These 92 Muslim households were 8.18 percent of the total households of the study area and 3.70 percent of the total households of the Latikoili VDC (Field Survey, 2006 and CBS, 2002 & BSOS, 2005). Most of the Muslim respondents had migrated from Kushanda village of Dailekh district about 35 years ago very few had migrated from Nepalgunj and India as well (Field Survey, 2006).

4.1.1. Muslim Population by Sex

This study had taken the total Muslim population along with the sex composition of the Muslims of the study area (Field Survey, 2006). The Muslim population by sex is shown in the "Table No. 3".

Table No.3

Muslim Population by Sex

S. No.	Sex	Population	Percentage
1.	Male	268	50.76
2.	Female	260	49.24
	Total	528	100

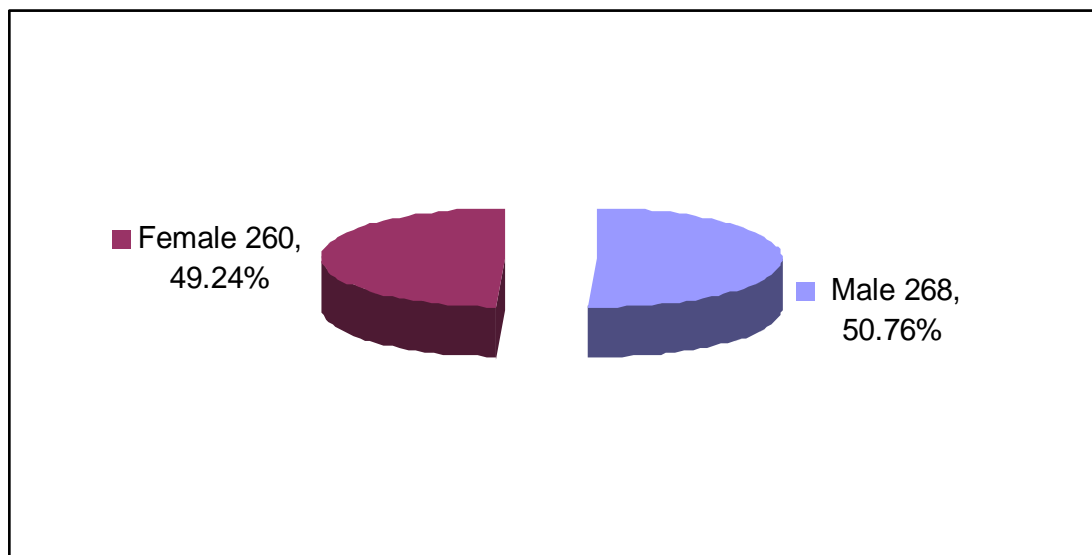
Source: Field Survey, 2006.

As shown in the "Table No.3", the total population of the study area was 528 having 268 males and 260 females. This data clearly shows that there were more males than females in the study area which is different than the national scenario. National Census 2001 showed that there were more females than males in the country as well as in the Surkhet district and in the Latikoili VDC as well. This Muslim population of the study area was 17.85 percent more than the data furnished by the National census 2001 and 1.73 percent more than the data of the Latikoili VDC population of 2004 (Field Survey, 2006, CBS, 2002 & Latikoili VDC 2004).

The Muslim population by Sex of the study area is clearly presented in the "Figure No. 1".

Figure No. 1

Muslim Population by Sex



As clearly demonstrated in the "Figure No. 1", there was 50.76 percent male and 49.24 percent female in the study area (Field Survey, 2006).

4.1.2 Muslim Population by Age Groups

This Muslim population was again divided into age groups. It is classified into 3 groups as less than 5 years, 5 to 15 years and more than 15 years of age which can be seen in the "Table No. 4".

Table No. 4

Muslim Population by Age Group

S. No.	Age Group	Population	Percentage
1	Less than 5 Years	75	14.21
2	5 to 15 Years	174	32.95
3	More than 15 Years	279	52.84
	Total	528	100

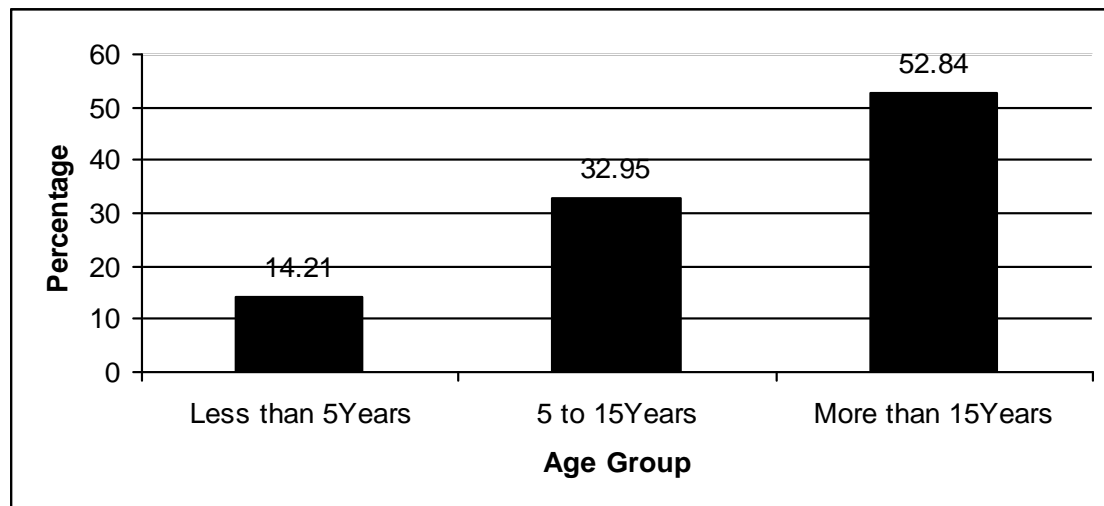
Source: Field Survey, 2006.

As given in the "Table No. 4", there were 75 Muslims of less than 5 years of age, 174 Muslims of 5 to 15 years of age and 279 Muslims were of more than 15 years of age (Field Survey, 2006).

All these age group descriptions of the Muslim population are clearly illustrated in the "Figure No. 2".

Figure No. 2

Muslim Population by Age Group



The "Figure No. 2" demonstrates as 14.21 percent Muslims were less than 5 years of age, 32.95 percent Muslims were 5-15 years of age and 52.84 percent Muslims were more than 15 years of age. Majority of the Muslims were of more than 15 years of age (Field Survey, 2006).

4.2 Caste/Ethnic Composition

All (100%) respondents belonged to the single ethnic group that is the Muslim. The respondents said that they belonged to a single caste as well. There was no caste feeling, no upper caste and lower caste, all were equal and their social practices were also occurring together with equal sense of feeling and respect. That's why the Muslims are taken as the both religious as well as ethnic group (Field Survey, 2006).

4.3 Religion

Here too, all respondents were the Muslims. They follow the one and only religion Islam. They believe in only one Almighty God that is Allah and hence, they believe in Monotheism (Field Survey, 2006).

4.4 Language

Nepali was the mother tongue of all the respondents but they could speak Hindi and Urdu as well. So, they do not feel any difficulty to communicate with the community around them (Field Survey, 2006).

4.5 Marital Status

Marital status reflects the position and the relation in the society. This also shows the status of the labour force of the family and the society in an aggregate. Muslims are allowed to marry and have offspring for the continuation of the generations. No one is allowed for the surgical and

permanent family planning. There were two categories found in the marital status of the respondents those were married and divorced (Field Survey, 2006).

This is given in the "Table No. 5".

Table No. 5

Distribution of Respondents by Marital Status

S. No.	Marital Status	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1.	Married	91	98.91
2.	Divorced	1	1.09
Total		55	100

Source: Field Survey, 2006.

The "Table No. 5" provides information about the marital status of the respondents. Out of 91 male and 1 female respondents, 91 men respondents were married and only one lady was divorced (Field Survey, 2006).

4.6 Family Structure

Family structure is the basic and universal structure. it fulfills various needs of the members. In addition, it performs several functions including continuity, integration and change in society. It is the first school for the

children and mother is the first teacher for the children. Family is the best unit for the socialization. Two types of family were found among the respondents. Nuclear and joint family types were there. Families consisting husband, wife and their unmarried children were categorized into nuclear family and joint family is a group of husband, wife, married children and in-laws living together having joint residents, kitchen and property (Field Survey, 2006). Family structure of the respondents is given in the "Table No. 6".

Table No. 6

Distribution of Respondents by Family Structure

S. No.	Family	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1.	Nuclear	77	83.69
2.	Joint	15	16.31
Total		92	100

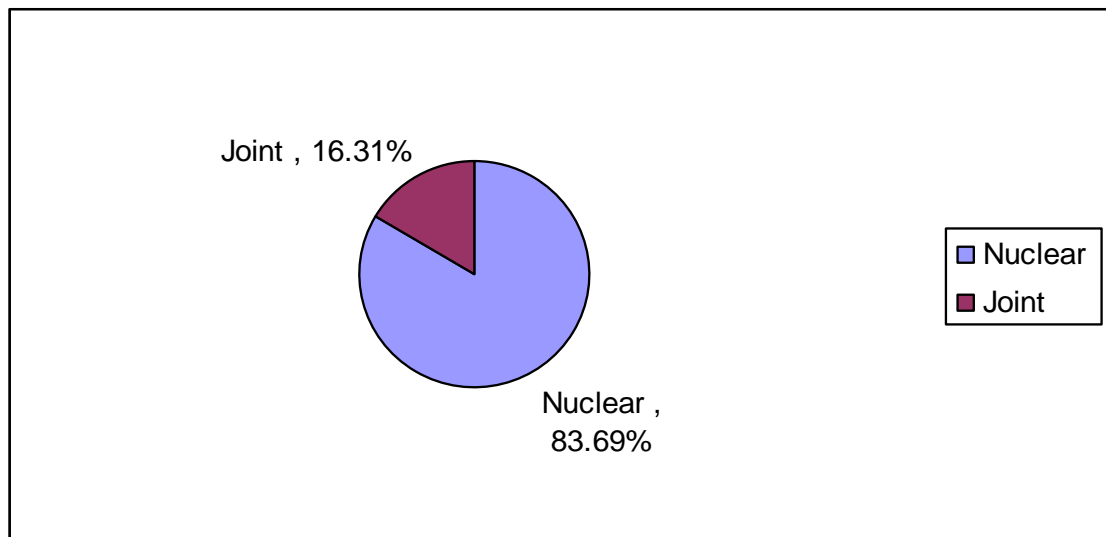
Source: Field Survey, 2006.

According to the "Table No. 6", there were 77 nuclear families and 15 joint families in the study area. No extended family was there among them (Field Survey, 2006).

The distribution of respondents by family structure is also demonstrated in the "Figure No. 3"

Figure No. 3

Distribution of Respondents by Family Structure



As illustrated in the "Figure No. 3", respondents comprised 83.69 percent nuclear families and 16.31 percent Joint families in the study area. No extended family was found among the respondents during the study. Most of the respondents preferred to live in nuclear family because of their own life style, privacy, social and economic environment. They felt less

responsibility load in nuclear family because of the smaller size of the family. They worked hard in nuclear family (Field Survey, 2006).

4.7 Size of Family

Family size is the total members in a family. The average family size is calculated by dividing the total population with the total family number. In Nepal, The average family size is 5.45 and in Surkhet district 5.32(CBS, 2005). The average family size of the respondents was 5.74(Field Survey, 2006). The family size of the respondents is categorized in to 4 heads. It is tabulated in the "Table No. 7".

Table No. 7

Distribution of the Respondents by their Family Size

S. No.	Size of Family	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1	2	1	1.09
2	3-4	33	35.87
3	5-6	27	29.35
4	7 and above	31	33.69
Total		92	100

Source: Field Survey, 2006.

The "Table No. 7" shows that only 1.09% of the total respondents' family had 2 members in the family, 35.87% had 3-4 members, 29.35% had 5-6 members and 33.69% families had 7 and above members in their families (Field Survey, 2006).

4.8 Educational Status

Education is the key factor for socio-economic development to socialize human beings. Formal education is the recent trends in the modern and industrial age. Muslims of the study area are very backward in the education. One can think that there were 2 persons, only male, who passed S.L.C. in the study area. The names of the persons who passed S.L.C. from the Muslims of the study area are Mr. Mohammad Naim and Mr. Sajjat Khan. These days, the situation is changing rapidly and most of the children are studying well but there is still a lot to do (Field Survey, 2006). There were 2 High schools, 2 Middle and 10 Primary schools in the VDC and 4 Primary schools and 1 Middle school in the study area (Latikoli VDC, 2004). There was one Islamic school and one Nepali Primary School of the Muslims' own where both the Islamic and government curriculum based education was provided to the children. Out of 228 children (108 male & 120 female), 207(95 male & 112 female) children were going to school and 21(13 male & 8 female) were not going to school. All children

went to Government schools. No student went to English Medium or English Boarding Schools.

It has been classified into 2 heads (Field Survey, 2006). It has been given in the "Table No. 8".

Table No. 8

List of Children Going/Not Going to School

S. No.	Description		No. of Students	Percentage
1.	Children Going to school	Male	95	45.89
		Female	112	54.11
		Total	207	100
2.	Children Not Going to school	Male	13	61.90
		Female	8	38.10
		Total	21	100

Source: Field Survey, 2006.

The "Table No. 8" shows that female children had more interest than the male children in going to school. Among the school going children, 45.89 male and 54.11 female children were going to school. Out of total male and

female children, 87.96 % male and 93.33 % female children were going to school (Field Survey, 2006).

The educational status of the respondents was also very poor. Only one was S.L.C. passed among the respondents (Field Survey, 2006). It has been classified into 5 groups (Field Survey, 2006). The educational status of the respondents is given in the "Table No. 9".

Table No. 9

Educational Status of the Respondents

S. No.	Education Acquired	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1.	Illiterate	0	0
2.	Literate but No Formal Education	25	27.17
3.	Up to Class Five	49	53.26
4.	Up to Class Seven	9	9.78
5.	Up to SLC	9	9.79
Total		92	100

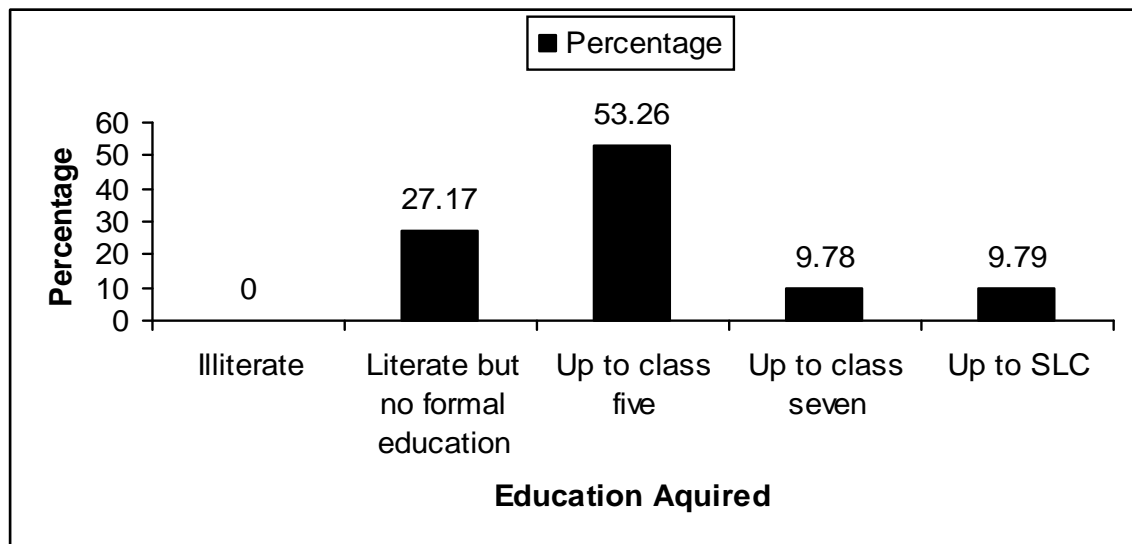
Source: Field Survey, 2006.

The "Table No. 9" shows that among the respondents, there was no one illiterate, 25 were literate but no formal education, 49 were up to class five, 9 were up to class seven and 9 were up to S.L.C (Field Survey, 2006).

The educational status of the respondents is clearly illustrated in the "Figure No. 4".

Figure No. 4

Educational Status of the Respondents



The "Figure No. 4" shows that among the respondents, there was no one illiterate, 27.17% literate but no formal education, 53.26% up to class five, 9.78% up to class seven and 9.79 % were up to S.L.C. It is also clear that

many left the school before S.L.C. and more commonly before class seven. Only one could pass S.L.C. among the 92 respondents. These all negative conditions were due to poverty and lack of awareness. The situation might continue if they would not be included by the Government, the society and all other related organizations (Field Survey, 2006).

4.9 Occupational Status

Occupation is another key factor for socio-economic development and status. Muslims of the study area had various occupations. They are poorest of the poor, so, they always try to earn money by several possible ways. They lacked investment and access to the investment. They might lack skills to make money and to succeed in their occupations (Field Survey, 2006). The occupational status of the respondents is given in the "Table No. 10" in which it is categorized into 7 groups.

Table No 10

Occupational Status of the Respondents in the Study Area

S. No.	Occupation	Total No. of the Respondents	Percentage
1.	Agriculture	6	6.52
2.	Labour	21	22.83
3.	Driver	8	8.69

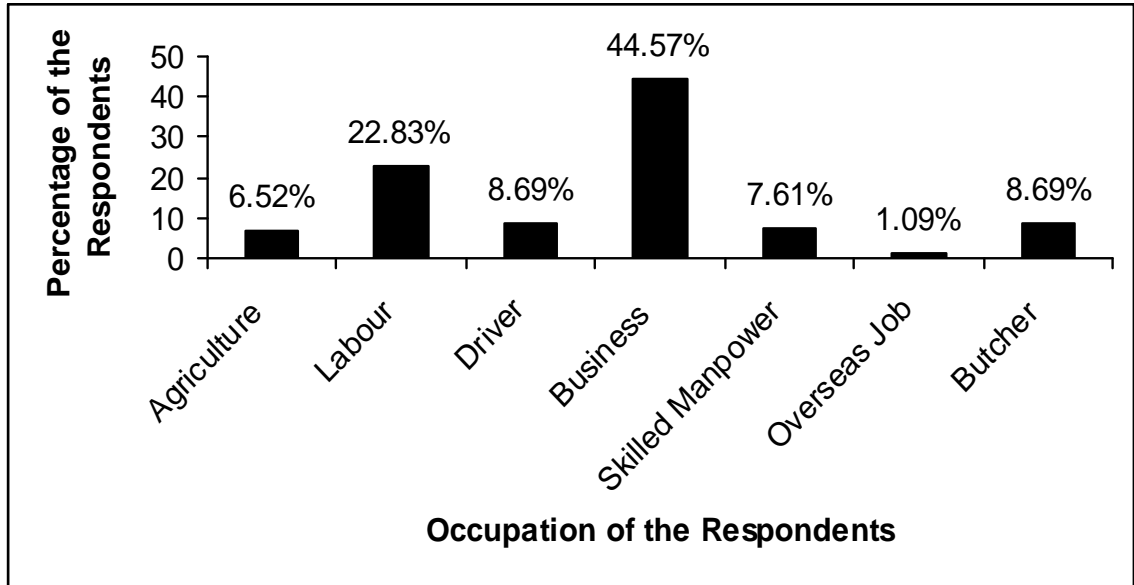
4.	Business	41	44.57
5.	Skilled Manpower	7	7.61
6.	Overseas Job	1	1.09
7.	Butcher	8	8.69
Total		92	100

Source: Field Survey, 2006.

The "Table No. 10" shows that the primary occupation of the Muslims was business especially small business like small boutique, selling cooking oil, wanderer sellers, selling fruits and vegetables, running small restaurants, only one dress material cloth shop etc. and with this occupation, 41 respondents were engaged . Second largest occupation was labour wherein 21 respondents earned their living, likewise, 8 respondents were butcher, 8 respondents were drivers, 7 respondents were skilled man power, 6 respondents were in agriculture and 1 respondent was in overseas job. Among skilled manpower, Masson, carpenter, bicycle repairer, small garage etc. were the main occupation of the respondents (Field Survey, 2006).The occupational status of the respondents is given in the "Figure No. 5".

Figure No. 5

Occupational Status of the Respondents in the Study Area



As illustrated in the "Figure No. 5", primary occupation of the Muslims was business and with this occupation, 44.57 percent respondents were engaged. Second largest occupation was labour wherein 22.83 percent of the respondents earned their living, likewise, 8.69 percent were butchers, 8.69 percent drivers, 7.61 percent skilled man power, 6.52 percent in agriculture and 1.09 percent of the respondents were in overseas job. With all these occupations, respondents found very difficult to live their life with required standard (Field Survey, 2006).

4.10 Economic (Income and Expenditure) Status

This sub-topic deals with the factors and conditions related to the economy of the Muslims of the study area. This is also one of the key factors of the

socio-economic status measurement. Muslims in the study area had very small piece of land and some had no land for cultivation of land and to keep cattle. Some had lands in others ownership. They mainly earned from the occupations like agriculture, labour, business, skilled manpower, overseas job, butcher and so on. Profit from the agricultural and live stock production was from Rs. 65 to Rs. 13200 annually. Even the highest production from the agriculture and livestock was not enough for their one month of family expenditure. It shows that all Muslims of the study area must depend on non-agricultural occupations. Because of their extreme poverty, many of them were in budget deficit and loan on them was increasing continuously. Although all the respondents, except one divorced lady, practiced allocation of their family resources jointly by both the wife and husband (Field Survey, 2006).

4.10.1 Family Income

Family income is the main base to meet the family requirement and to enjoy the life. Based on the family income only, the relative demands are created. The respondents did not have even enough income to meet their daily general needs. Development depends on the family income because if there is saving then only one can invest it for the turnover and income.

Monthly family income of the respondents is classified into 7 groups (Field Survey, 2006).

This is given in the "Table No. 11" (Field Survey, 2006).

Table No. 11

Monthly Family Income of the Respondents

S. No.	Monthly family Income	No. of the Respondents	Percentage
1.	Rs. 2000 or Below	22	23.91
2.	Rs. 2000-3000	38	41.30
3.	Rs. 3000-4000	16	17.39
4.	Rs. 4000-5000	9	9.78
5.	Rs. 5000-6000	5	5.43
6.	Rs. 6000-8000	1	1.09
7.	Rs. 8000-10000	1	1.09
Total		92	100

Source: Field Survey, 2006

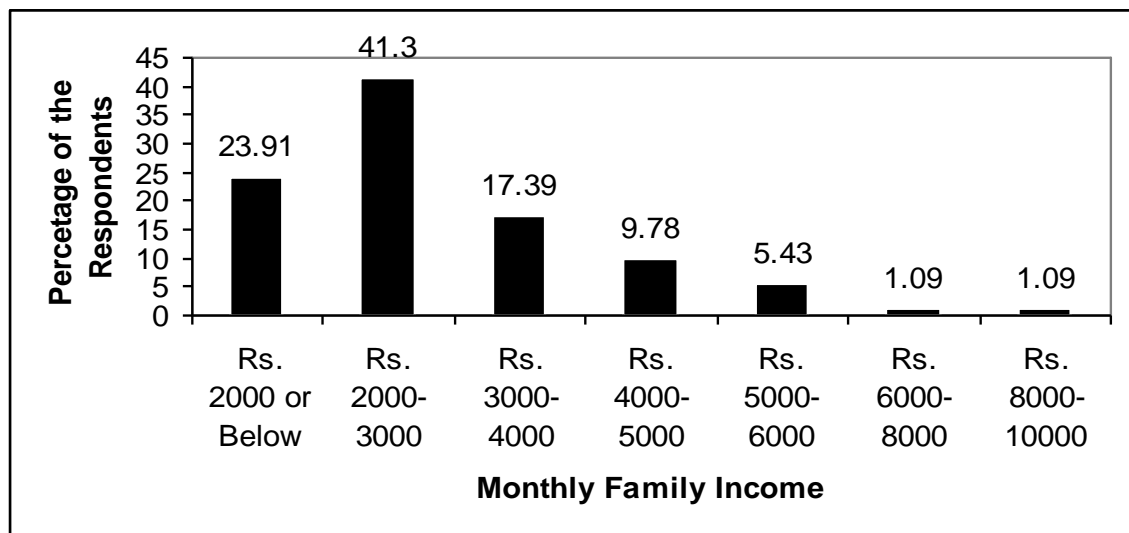
The "Table No. 11" shows that majority, 22 respondents had monthly family income of Rs. 2000-3000. Likewise, 38 respondents have Rs. 2000 or below, 16 respondents had Rs. 3000-4000, 9 respondents have Rs. 4000-5000, 5 respondents had Rs. 5000-6000, 1 respondent has Rs. 6000-8000

and 1 respondent has Rs. 8000-10000 monthly family income. These incomes were not enough to meet their family needs (Field Survey, 2006).

Monthly family income is observably presented in the "Figure No. 6".

Figure No. 6

Monthly Family Income of the Respondents



The "Figure No. 6 "shows that majority (41.3 percent) of the respondents had monthly family income of Rs. 2000-3000. Likewise, 23.91 percent of

the respondents had Rs. 2000 or below, 17.39 percent of the respondents had Rs. 3000-4000, 9.78 percent of the respondents had Rs. 4000-5000, 5.43 percent of the respondents had Rs. 5000-6000, 1.09 percent of the respondents had Rs. 6000-8000 and 1.09 percent of the respondents had Rs. 8000-10000 monthly family income (Field Survey, 2006).

4.10.2 Family Expenditure

Earning is for the family welfare as well as social welfare; expenditure is to sustain life and to run the life comfortably. Expenditure depends on the earning. If the earning is less than the expenditure family has to go for borrowing loan and same was the condition of many of the respondents of the study area (Field Survey, 2006). The monthly family expenditure is organized into 7 groups which are given in the "Table No. 12".

Table No. 12

Monthly Family Expenditure of the Respondents

S. No.	Monthly Family Expenditure	No. of Respondents	Percent
1.	Rs. 2000 or Below	8	8.70
2.	Rs. 2000-3000	23	35.87
3.	Rs. 3000-4000	22	23.91

4.	Rs. 4000-5000	20	21.74
5.	Rs. 5000-6000	6	6.52
6.	Rs. 6000-8000	1	1.09
7.	Rs. 8000-10000	2	2.17
Total		92	100

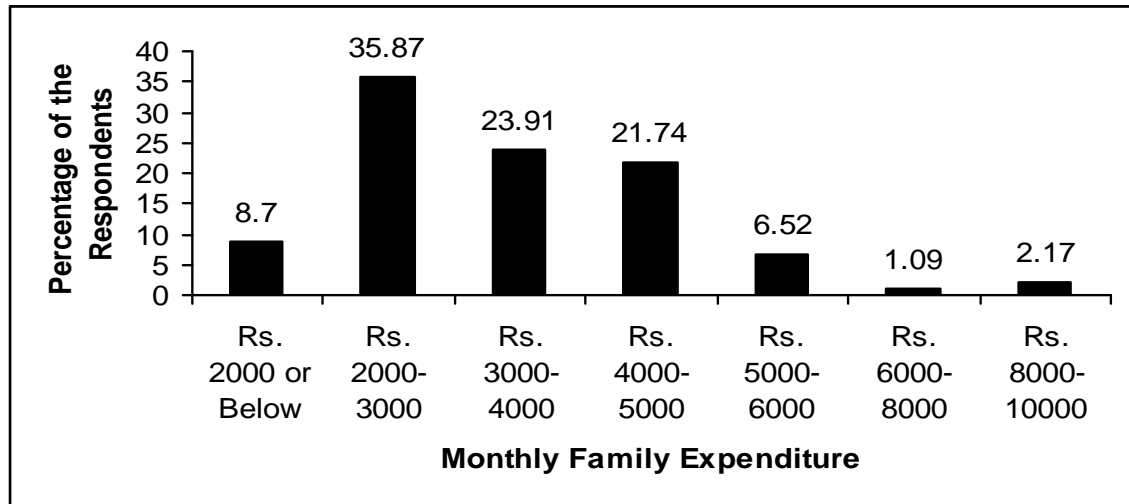
Source: Field Survey, 2006

The "Table No. 12" gives the real picture about the monthly expenditure of the respondents. 23 respondents had monthly family expenditure of Rs. 2000-3000, this was the highest number. Likewise, 22 respondents had Rs. 3000-4000, 20 respondents had Rs. 4000-5000, 8 respondents had Rs. 2000 or below, 6 respondents had Rs. 5000-6000, 2 respondents had Rs. 8000-10000 and 1 respondent had Rs. 6000-8000 monthly family expenditure (Field Survey, 2006).

Monthly family expenditure is noticeably presented in the "Figure No. 7".

Figure No. 7

Monthly Family Expenditure of the Respondents



The "Figure No. 7" gives the graphical presentation about the monthly expenditure of the respondents. 35.87 percent respondents had monthly family expenditure of Rs. 2000-3000; this was the highest percentage of the respondents. Likewise, 23.91 percent respondents had Rs. 3000-4000, 21.74 percent respondents had Rs. 4000-5000, 8.70 percent respondents had Rs. 2000 or below, 6.52 percent respondents had Rs. 5000-6000, 2.17 percent respondents had Rs. 8000-10000 and 1.09 percent respondents had Rs. 6000-8000 monthly family expenditure (Field Survey, 2006).

The monthly family expenditures were not met from the monthly family income for the 51 respondents and hence they were in budget deficit, 30 respondents' monthly family expenditure was exactly equal to the monthly family income and 11 respondents had more monthly family income than the monthly family expenditure (Field Survey, 2006).

4.11 Expenditure of the Income

Expenditure of the Income depends on many things like saving status, social status, habits of the surrounding, standard of living and awareness in the individuals and society etc. Very few of the respondents were having interest to keep their earning in the bank (Field Survey, 2006). The Expenditure of the Income is given in the "Table No. 13".

Table No. 13

Expenditure of the Income by the Respondents

S. No.	Spending Habit	No. of Respondents	Percentage of the Respondents
1.	Spending all Money for the Family	89	96.74
2.	Putting Some Money in the Bank	3	3.26
Total		92	100

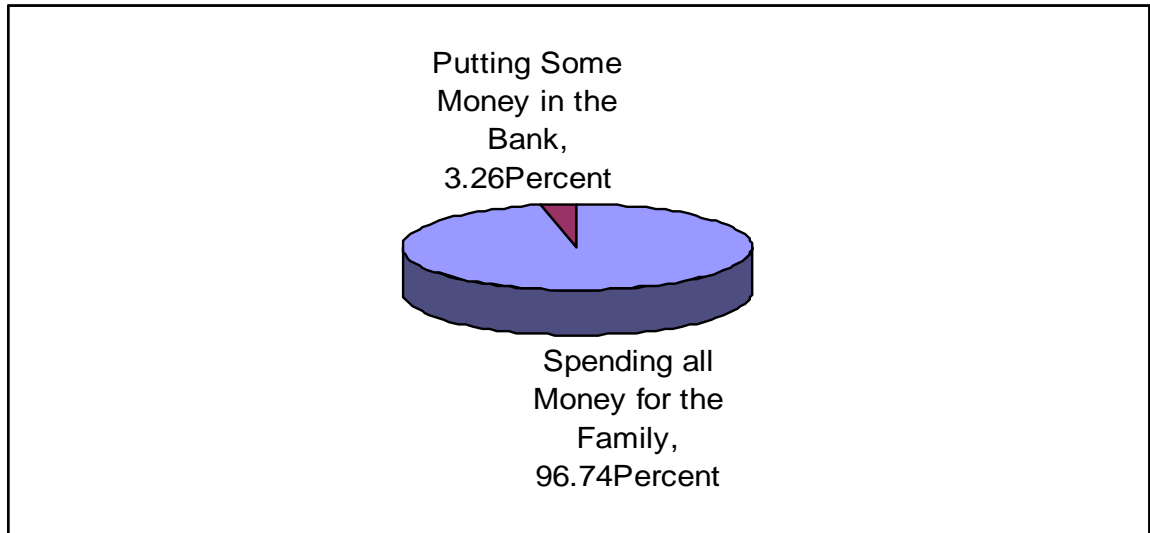
Source: Field Survey, 2006.

The "Table No. 13" shows that 89 respondents spent their all income for their family and didn't save any more but only 3 respondents did save their income and put in the banks (Field Survey, 2006).

This scenario is illustrated in the "Figure No. 8".

Figure No. 8

Expenditure of the Income by the Respondents



The "Figure No. 8" gives an idea that 96.74 percent respondents spent their all income for their family and didn't save any more but only 3.26 percent respondents did save their income and put in the banks (Field Survey, 2006).

4.12 Land Ownership

Land ownership is the legal right of an individual over the land property and the structures on the land like house, farm, and factory and so on. The respondents had very small pieces of land. They had as small piece of land as 0.05 kattha to 5 kattha as largest piece of land (Field Survey, 2006).The land ownership situation of the respondents is given in the "Table No. 14".

Table No. 14

Land Ownership Situation

S. No.	Land Ownership Situation	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1.	Land in their Own Name	75	81.52
2.	Land in Other's Name	17	18.48
Total		92	100

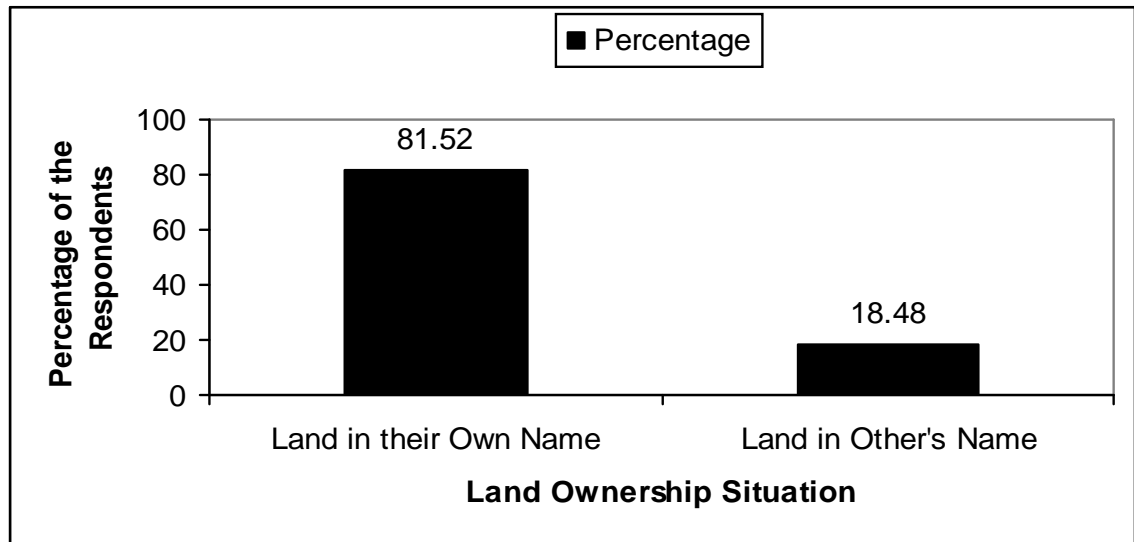
Source: Field Survey, 2006

The "Table No. 14" shows that 17 respondents had their land in other's ownership and 75 respondents had their land in their own ownership (Field Survey, 2006).

The same situation is demonstrated in the "Figure No. 9".

Figure No. 9

Land Ownership Situation



The "Figure No. 9" demonstrates that 18.48 percent of the respondents did not have their land in their ownership rather in other's ownership while 81.52 percent of the respondents had their land in their name (Field Survey, 2006).

4.13 Types of Houses

Types of houses indicate the socio-economic status of the household. One can say that the family is good in socio-economic conditions or not by having a glance at the type of the house. Four types of house were owned by the respondents as simple hut, Tile roof house, CGI sheet roofing house and RCC hose (Field Survey, 2006). The types of hose of the respondents are given in the "Table No. 15".

Table No. 15

Types of Houses

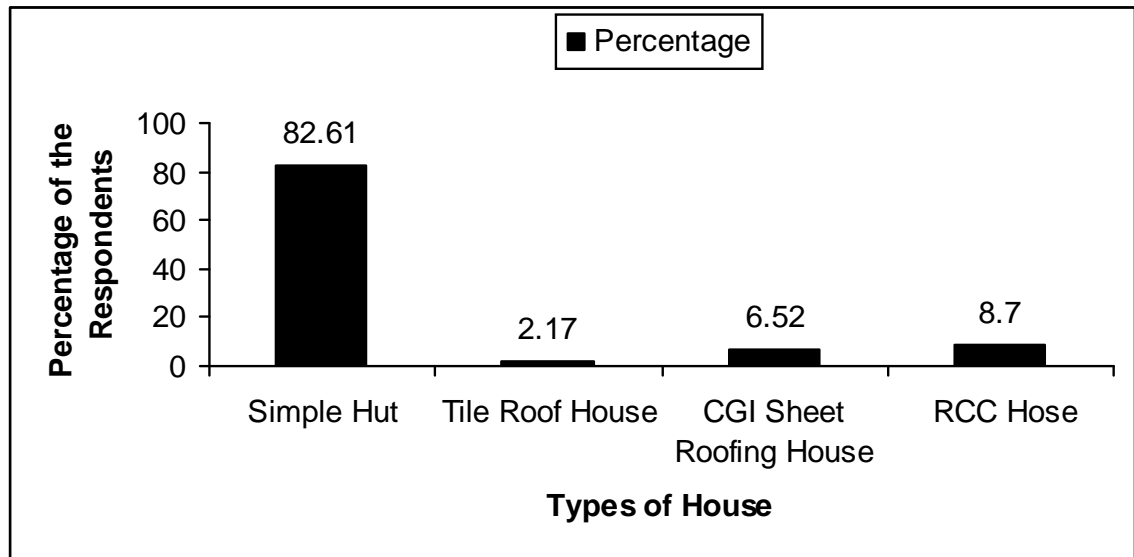
S. No.	Types of House	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1.	Simple Hut	76	82.61
2.	Tile Roof House	2	2.17
3.	CGI Sheet Roofing House	6	6.52
4.	RCC Hose	8	8.70
Total		92	100

Source: Field Survey, 2006

The "Table No. 15" shows various types of houses of the respondents but 76 of them had simple hut. 8 had RCC house, 6 had CGI sheet roofing house and 2 respondents had tile roof house (Field Survey, 2006).

The same information is demonstrated in the "Figure No. 10".

Figure No. 10
Types of Houses



The "Figure No. 10" shows that 82.61 percent of respondents had simple hut, 8.7 percent respondents have RCC house, 6.52 percent respondents had CGI sheet roofing house and 2.17 percent respondents had tile roof house. It clearly illustrates that most of them live in the simple hut which is thatched roof house. It also proves that most of them lived in very critical stage of economy and were in very poor condition (Field Survey, 2006).

Some of them did not even have their own house. 6 respondents lived in the rented house and 86 respondents had their own house. In other words, 6.52 percent of the respondents did not have their own houses and lived in the rented houses where as 93.48 percent of respondents had their own houses (Field Survey, 2006).

4.14 Housing Facilities

The housing facilities of the respondents were very fewer with them. Most of them even did not have the basic housing facilities like drinking water, radio, and toilet/bathroom (Field Survey, 2006). The housing facilities of the respondents are given in the "Table No. 16".

Table No 16

Housing Facilities of the Respondents

S. No.	Housing Facilities	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1.	Electricity	55	59.8
2.	Drinking Water	26	28.26
3.	Toilet	27	29.3
4.	Radio	28	30.43
5.	Television	33	35.9
6.	Telephone	3	3.26

Source: Field Survey, 2006

The "Table No. 16" shows, 55(59.8%) respondents had electricity, 33(35.9%) respondents had television, 28(30.43%) respondents had radio, 27(29.3%) respondents had toilet facility, 26 (28.26%) respondents had drinking water and only 3(3.26%) respondents had telephone. These housing facilities also were very normal and not having good standard. Toilets were just rough ones, drinking water mostly from the wells and

many share a single well and so on. Many had no facilities at all. We can see the data here, not even in a single housing facility; the figure goes to 100 percent (Field Survey, 2006).

4.15 Family Headship

Muslim families are normally headed by males and same was the situation in the study area. Although, in all the families of the respondents, decision making process was found to be practiced jointly by the participation of both sexes: male and female (Field Survey, 2006). The family headship by the respondents is given in the "Table No. 17".

Table No. 17

Distribution of Respondents by Family Headship

S. No.	Family Headship	No. of Respondents	Percentage	Remarks
1.	Male	91	98.91	
2.	Female	1	1.09	Divorced
Total		92	100	

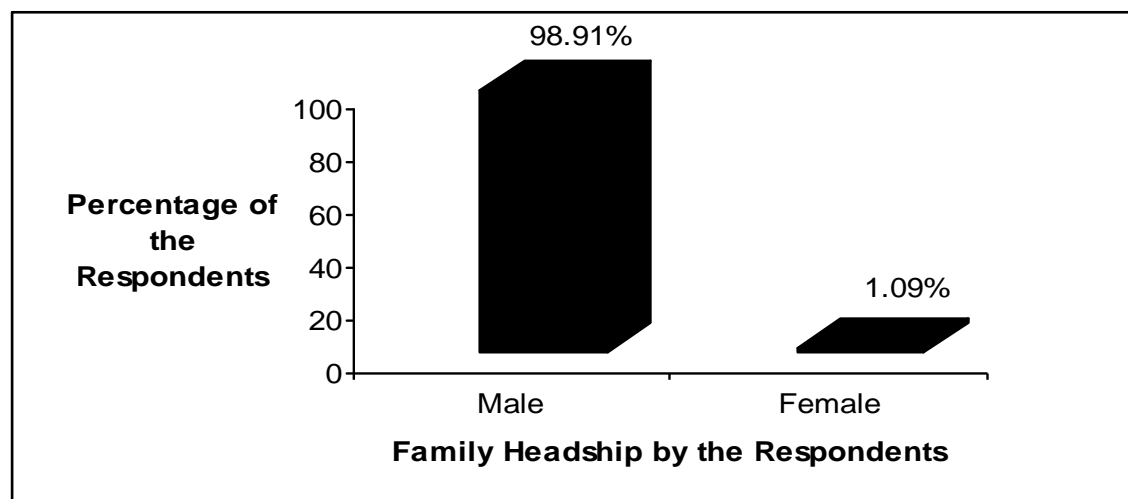
Source: Field Survey, 2006.

As shown in the "Table No. 17", only one lady was heading the family that also after her divorce otherwise rest of the 91 families were headed by male (Field Survey, 2006).

The family headship can be presented as in the "Figure No. 11".

Figure No. 11

Distribution of Respondents by Family Headship



"Figure No. 11" demonstrates the family headship in percentage of the respondents. Only 1.09% family was headed by female where as 98.91% families were headed by male (Field Survey, 2006).

4.16 Migration Specification

All 92 respondents were migrants. They had migrated from different places of Nepal as well as from India to the study area (Field Survey, 2006). The migration specification of the respondents is given in the "Table No. 18".

Table No. 18

Migration Specification of the Respondents

S. No.	Migrated From	Years	No. of	Percentage

		Before	Respondents	
1.	Kushanda, Kohalpur	35	84	91.30
2.	Nepalgunj, Banke	40	3	3.26
3.	Nepalgunj, Banke	10	1	1.09
4.	Nepalgunj, Banke	4	1	1.09
5.	Nepalgunj, Banke	1	1	1.09
6.	Kohalpur, Banke	5	1	1.09
7.	India	25	1	1.08
Total			92	100

Source: Field Survey, 2006.

"Table No. 18" shows that 84(91.30%) respondents had migrated from Kushanda village of Dailekh district before 35 years, 3(3.26%) respondents had migrated from Nepalgunj of Banke district before 40 years, 1(1.09%) respondent had migrated from Nepalgunj of Banke district before 10 years, 1(1.09%) respondent had migrated from Nepalgunj of Banke district before 4 years, 1(1.09%) respondent had migrated from Nepalgunj of Banke district before 1 year, 1(1.09%) respondent had migrated from India before 25 years (Field Survey, 2006).

4.17 Socio-institutional status of the Muslims

There were three Muslim social institutions in the study area. Those were Mosque, School (Islamic and Nepali) and Cemetery (Field Survey, 2006).

4.17.1 Mosque

Mosque is the common place to offer prayers and other social gatherings of the Muslims. There was a mosque in the study area. The mosque was situated in Belghari of the study area. It was in the area of 1 Kattha. About 200 Muslims could pray at once (annex IV). The prayer is led by the prayer leader (Imam). The mosque was not being utilized in the line of the development. This Mosque could be utilized in the awareness, training, organizing and encouraging the Muslims of the study area for their development. But it had been utilized mostly for the prayers and general discussion only (Field Survey, 2006).

4.17.2 Schools

There was a double storey building where an Islamic and a Nepali school had been run. It was in Belghari adjoining with the mosque. Both schools were in one Katthaa area and there were three rooms (annex IV). The Islamic school (Madarsa) had two teachers and Islamic training (including Arabic and Urdu language) was given to the children of the study area and there was one student from Nepalgunj as well. There were altogether 135 students in the Islamic school (Field Survey, 2006).

There was a Nepali school up to class two which followed the Government curriculum. The name of this school was Madarsa Madina Primary School. It was established in 2026 B.S. and recognized by the District Education Office Surkhet in 2062 B.S. There were 84 students in this school. There were two teachers in this school as well. The schools had much more capacity to run more classes and had more students but still much hard works were needed to do so. Awareness in the Muslims about the education was urgently needed in the study area, so that they could send their children to the schools and guardians should take the responsibilities to smoothly run the school (Field Survey, 2006).

4.17.3 Cemetery

Cemetery is the open ground where corpses are buried in the ground. This was again in Belghari of the study area and was spread in the area of 3.5 Kattha (annex IV). This was near a small stream and the land is endangered because the land was decreasing every year by the damage done by the stream. The stream cut the bank of the cemetery regularly. This had to be protected and conserved. Again, lack of awareness in the Muslims of the study area was the main obstacles. They should have the access to the related authorities to protect the cemetery (Field Survey, 2006).

These social institutions of the Muslims were working below their capacity. So, these Muslim social institutions could play the vital roles to develop the Muslims of the study area. The Muslims should be included in all activities of development and there should be awareness programs for them for all kinds of socio-economic needs and requirements. They should be understood that they could also positively, constructively and creatively contribute for the development of the society, area and the nation (Field Survey, 2006).

They had a NGO called Samaj Sudhar Sanstha in Belghari of the study area which worked for the welfare of the Muslims of the study area. But still the required momentum had not been taken by this NGO. The works of this NGO were very limited as health camp, small awareness program and so on (Field Survey, 2006).

4.18 Existing Problems of the Respondents

Followings were the existing problems of the respondents (Field Survey, 2006):

- No employments/jobs and poorly based occupations.
- Very low income.
- Extreme absolute poverty.

- Very low and deprived education and low level of knowledge and skills.
- No capital.
- Drinking water facility was very poor.
- No irrigation facility.
- Very less/no land for crop production and livestock.
- Very poor housing facilities.

4.19 Supports Provided by the GO/NGOs/INGOs to the Respondents

Followings supports were provided by the GO/NGOs/INGOs to the respondents (Field Survey, 2006):

- District Education Office provided support to run school in construction as well as recognized the school according to the curriculum of the Government of Nepal.
- Social Service Centre (SAC) provided carpet, school books, constructed toilet and latrine tanks for the school, constructed latrine tank covers and provided legal advice to some of the respondents.
- Save the Children provided child education in the study area.

Although some of the GO/NGOs/INGOs provided some support to the Muslims of the study area but these supports were very less and not enough

to raise them up and hence they should be supported very intensively and inclusively.

4.20 Social Relationship of the Muslims

There was no discrimination with respect to the gender, caste, economy, occupation and so on among the Muslims of the study area. Both male and female children equally went to school. They all could work interact and interrelate in social, cultural and religious activities and occasions with no feelings of upper and lower class. Although Muslims men have religious right to divorce but only one incidence of divorce was found among the respondents in the study area. Both men and women were working together everywhere and they allocated their resources and benefits jointly by both the male and female partners. Because of the same dress, language, feelings, geography, climate, economy and most of the socio-cultural practices of the Muslims, they had good and friendly relations with the other religious groups of the study area (Field Survey, 2006).

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

5.1 Summary

The Muslims of the study area had migrated from different places to the study area like Kushanda village of Dailekh district, Nepalgunj, Kohalpur of Banke district and India. They are religious as well as ethnic group and fall in the socially excluded group. There were 92 households in the Study area as well as in the Latikoili VDC. Muslims lived highest in number in Latikoili VDC among 50 VDCs and 1 Municipality. They were very behind socio-economically and especially in the economic and educational sectors. They didn't have good skills and are not aware of the modern technology. They were hard working group and having almost same culture and social practices. Their some of the norms, values, traditions and religious practices were different. Their occupations were just at subsistence level. They were not commercialized. Their earning or the family income was not enough to meet their inevitable expenses. They did have some of the income generating occupations but the income was meager. They are in the Birendranagar valley just adjoined to the Birendranagar municipality but they live a completely rural life. They did not have much housing facilities and some of their children did not go to school. They were in extreme absolute poverty. They had some social

institutions but they were not functioning in full capacity. Capacity building of the Muslims and income generating along with the education are the real requirements of the hours. Social inclusion development approach should include them without any doubt and hesitation.

5.1.1 The Main Findings of the Study

1. The study was conducted in all 92 Muslim households, all were Muslims and they were socially excluded group.

2. All respondents had migrated from different places to the study area. 84(91.30%) respondents had migrated from Kushanda village of Dailekh district before 35 years, 3(3.26%) respondents had migrated from Nepalgunj of Banke district before 40 years, 1(1.09%) respondent had migrated from Nepalgunj of Banke district before 10 years, 1(1.09%) respondent had migrated from Nepalgunj of Banke district before 4 years, 1(1.09%) respondent had migrated from Nepalgunj of Banke district before 1 year, 1(1.09%) respondent had migrated from India before 25 years.

3. The total population of the study area was 528 having 268 males and 260 females. There were more males than females in the study area. National Census 2001 showed that there were more females than males in the country, in the Surkhet district and in the Latikoili VDC. This Muslim

population of the study area was 17.85 percent more than the data of the National Census 2001 and 1.73 percent more than the data of the Latikoili VDC population of 2004 (Field Survey, 2006, CBS, 2002 & Latikoili VDC 2004).

4. 98.91 percent respondents were married and only 1.09 percent respondent was divorced. One lady was divorced. No respondent was unmarried.

5. Majority of the respondents, 83.69 percent were living in nuclear family and 16.31 percent respondents were living in joint family.

6. Majority (35.87 percent) families had 3-4 family size and second majority (33.69) percent families had 7 and above family size.

7. No respondent was illiterate but 49 percent (majority) of the respondents were just up to class 5 passed and 25 percent (second majority) of the respondents were just literate but no formal education. Only 2 Muslims were S.L.C. passed and no Muslim was more than S.L.C. All students went to the government schools only.

8. Majority of the respondents (96.74%) spent all money for the family and only 3.26% of the respondents kept their saving in the Bank.

9. 81.52% of the respondents had land in their own name and 18.48% of the respondents had their land in other's name.

10. 55(59.8%) respondents had electricity, 33(35.9%) respondents had television, 28(30.43%) respondents had radio, 27(29.3%) respondents had toilet facility, 26 (28.26%) respondents had drinking water and only 3(3.26%) respondents had telephone housing facilities. These housing facilities also were very normal and not having good standard. Toilets were just rough ones, drinking water mostly from the wells and many shared a single well and so on. Many had no facilities at all. We can see the data here, not even in a single housing facility; the figure goes to 100 percent.

11. Majority (41.3 percent) of the respondents had monthly family income of Rs. 2000-3000. Likewise, 23.91 percent of the respondents had Rs. 2000 or below, 17.39 percent of the respondents had Rs. 3000-4000, 9.78 percent of the respondents had Rs. 4000-5000, 5.43 percent of the respondents had Rs. 5000-6000, 1.09 percent of the respondents had Rs. 6000-8000 and 1.09 percent of the respondents had Rs. 8000-10000 monthly family income.

12. Majority (35.87 percent) of the respondents had monthly family expenditure of Rs. 2000-3000. Likewise, 23.91 percent respondents had Rs. 3000-4000, 21.74 percent respondents had Rs. 4000-5000, 8.70 percent respondents had Rs. 2000 or below, 6.52 percent respondents had Rs. 5000-6000, 2.17 percent respondents had Rs. 8000-10000 and 1.09 percent

respondents have Rs. 6000-8000 monthly family expenditure. Many were in monthly family budget deficit and they borrowed loan most of the time in a year.

13. The main occupation of the respondents was business especially small business where 44.57 % of the respondents were engaged. Second largest occupation was labour wherein 22.83 % of the respondents earned their living.

14. 82.61 percent of respondents had simple hut, 8.7 percent respondents had RCC house, 6.52 percent respondents had CGI sheet roofing house and 2.17 percent respondents had tile roof house. It clearly shows that most of them lived in the simple hut which was thatched roof house. 6.52 percent of the respondents did not have their own houses and lived in the rented houses where as 93.48 percent of respondents had their own houses.

15. Only 1.09% family was headed by female, only one lady was heading the family that also after her divorce where as 98.91% families were headed by male. It shows that the study area was male dominant area.

16. There was a mosque in the study area. The mosque was situated in Belghari of the study area. It was in the area of 1 Kattha. About 200 Muslims could pray at once. The mosque was not being utilized in the line of the required development. This Mosque could have been utilized in the

awareness, training, organizing and encouraging the Muslims of the study area for their development. But it had been utilized mostly for the prayers and general discussion only.

17. There was a double storey building where Islamic and Nepali schools have been run. It was in Belghari adjoining with the mosque. It was in one Katthaa and there were three rooms. There were two teachers and altogether 135 students in the Islamic school. There was a Nepali school up to class two which followed the Government curriculum. The name of this school was Madarsa Madina Primary School. There were two teachers and 84 students in this school. The school was running under its capacity. It could have taught more students.

18. There was a Cemetery in Belghari of the study area and was spread in the area of 3.5 Kattha. This was near a small stream and the land was endangered because the land was decreasing every year by the damage done by the stream.

19. There was a NGO called Samaj Sudhar Sanstha in Belghari of the study area which worked for the welfare and development of the Muslims of the study area. But still the required momentum had not been taken by this NGO.

20. Existing problems of the respondents were no employments/jobs and poorly based occupations, very low income, extreme absolute poverty, very low and deprived education and low level of knowledge and skills, no capital, very poor drinking water facility, no irrigation facility, very less/no land for crop production and livestock, very poor housing facilities and so on.

21. Although some of the GO/NGOs/INGOs like District Education office Surkhet, Social Service Centre and Save the Children provided some supports to the Muslims of the study area but these supports were very less, meager and not enough to raise them up and hence they should be supported very intensively and inclusively.

22. There was no discrimination with respect to the gender, caste, economy, occupation and so on among the Muslims of the study area and having the same most of the socio-economic-cultural practices, they had good and friendly relations with the other religious groups of the study area.

5.2 Conclusion

It can be concluded that the socio-economic status of the Muslims of the study area is very poor, deprived and terrible. Although the study area lies in Birendranagar valley, it does not have the bare minimum facilities which

are required to keep going the daily life. Some of them even don't have toilets, drinking water and radios. The Muslims are socially excluded group and same is the status of the Muslims of the study area.

The Muslims of the study area are at the rear in the educational sector. One can think that there are only two S. L.C. passed Muslims in the study area so far. Some of the children do not go to school and all students go to the Government schools. Because of least level of education, the Muslims of the study area feel very difficult to develop themselves in the line of these days' modern and industrial world.

Their prime occupation is business but they are very behind in the skills, proficiency, expertise and ins and outs of the business. And hence they could not run their business effectively, efficiently and successfully. The occupation of the second highest Muslim population of the study area is labour and these people live the subsistent way of life.

Most Muslim families have less income and more expenditure. This situation compels them to borrow loans to sustain the life. Due to low income and more expenditure, they can not explore themselves for the development and they lag behind. They have some institutions like mosque, schools, cemetery and NGO but they have not been working with full capacity and potentiality.

Most of them live in the simple thatched huts and some even don't have their own house. Some have their land in other's name and many don't have land for the cultivation and livestock. Their land and livestock production is insufficient for even one month family food.

On the other hand, they are hard working and they are trying hard to improve their standard of living and quality of life. They have good and friendly intra and inter religious group relationship. The situation is favourably changing a bit for them.

We can wrap up by saying that they, in real sense, are living in exclusion, poor and deprived education, extreme absolute poverty, insufficiency and problematic difficulty. And consequently we can say that they are the "Poorest of the Poor".

5.3 Recommendations

Human society is much interdependent with each other so, no group can live in isolation. Every aspect of a group or a society is very important to understand the group or the society in actual sense. Based on the observation and experiences during the study, we can say that not much consideration has been given to support them to develop and improve the

standard of living. By observing the difficult and struggling life of the Muslims of the study area, numerous works and efforts should be done to improve their prevailing socio-economic status. On the basis of the findings of this study, following recommendations are reliable to be made to uplift the socio-economic status of the Muslims of Latikoili VDC.

- ❖ Muslims should be educated through formal and non-formal education to make them capable to understand the right way to the development, to have access to the concerning authorities and organizations of development and to improve their standard of living and quality of life. The schooling of children should be made compulsory and unavoidable.
- ❖ There should be capacity building trainings for them to run their occupations efficiently, effectively, successfully, productively, fruitfully and profitably.
- ❖ Their income should be enhanced by launching income generating programs by the GO, NGOs and INGOs, so that they can increase their income, come out of budget deficit, pay back their loan and have better life.

- ❖ Their social institutions should be made capable of working with full capacity and competence by introducing capacity building programs for their social institutions.
- ❖ They should be given equal opportunity and access, fundamental human rights and they should be paid due attention because they are socially excluded and disadvantaged group.
- ❖ They should be helped in improving housing facilities and general behavioral activities like drinking water, toilet construction and use, electricity, alternative power resource use, sanitation, awareness and so on.
- ❖ The Muslims should understand their importance, quality, capabilities, knowledge and skills, confidence and they are the ones to develop themselves in the line of the modern and industrial world.

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ANNEX I

QUESTIONNAIRE

Questionnaire Model for Household Survey

Sample No:

General Questions:

1. Personal Information:

Name of the respondent:

Age:

Sex: (a) Male (b) Female

Ethnic Group/caste:

Address: Ward No..... Village:

2. Family Profile:

S. No.	Name	Relation to House Head	Sex	Age	Education	Occupation
1.						
2.						
3.						
4.						
5.						
6.						
7.						
8.						

Specific Questions:

Please, tick (✓) or Provide Short Answer.

1. House:

a) Own

b) Rented

2. Types of house:

a) RCC roofing house

b) CGI sheet roofing house

c) Tile roof house

d) Simple hut

3. Number of stories of the building:

a) One

b) Two

c) Three

4. Level of education:

a) Literate

b) Illiterate

If literate,

a) Just literate

b)

Academic

degree.....

5. Family Type:

a) Nuclear

b) Joint

c) Extended

6. Family size:

a) Under 5 years b) 5 to 15 years..... c) Above 15 years.....

7. Marital status:

a) Married

b) Unmarried

c) Divorced

d) Other.....

If married, number of children.....

a) Males..... b) Females.....

8. Do your children go to school?

a) Yes b) No

If Yes, how many? a) Male..... b) Female.....

If No, how many? a) Male..... b) Female.....

9. Why do you educate your children?

a) To literate

b) To make their future better

c) Because the school education is free

d) Because other children are sent to school

10. Types of school:

a) Government b) English/Boarding

11. Have you or your family member left school after admission?

a) Yes, Male..... b) Female..... (Why)

b) No

12. Have you or any of your family members participated in non-formal education?

a) Yes (Why).....

b) No (Why).....

13. Main Occupation:

a) Agriculture

b) Service.....

c) Business.....

d) Others.....

14. Is there equal wage for men and women?

a) Yes

b) No

If no, for male (Rs.)..... female (Rs.).....

15. Total land area in the family's ownership:

a) Khet..... b) Bari..... c) Kharbari.....

16. Total land area in other's ownership:

a) Khet..... b) Bari..... c) Kharbari.....

17. Crop description on farmland:

a) Total cropped area.....

b) Name of the crops.....

c) Total production (Rs.).....

d) Total profit (Rs.).....

18. Do you raise animals/poultry?

a) Animals.....

b) Poultry.....

c) Total profit (Rs.).....

19. Is the farm and livestock production sufficient to meet the annual family requirements?

a) Yes

b) No

If No, for how many months, the production is sufficient for your family?

.....

20. What is monthly the income of your family (approximate)?

(Rs.).....

21. What is the monthly expenditure of your family (approximate)?

(Rs.).....

22. Who allocates family resources especially income?

a) Husband b) Wife c) Both

23. Have you saved your money for future?

a) Yes b) No

24. Have you kept the money in the bank?

a) Yes b) No

25. Housing facilities:

a) Electricity

b) Drinking water

c) Latrine/ bathroom

d) Cooking gas

e) Telephone

d) Television

e) Radio

26. What is your mother tongue?

a) Nepali b) Urdu c) Hindi d) Other.....

27. Social institutions:

a) Mosque

b) Madarsa (Religious school)

c) School: level.....

d) Others.....

28. Residential specification.

- a) Permanent since long.
- b) Migrated.

If migrated, before how many years..... From where.....

29. What are your existing problems?

.....
.....

30. What type of supports is provided by the GO/NGOs/INGOs?

- a).....
- b).....
- c).....

31. Do you want to tell anything more?

.....
.....

ANNEX II

CHECKLIST FOR THE GROUP DISCUSSION

1. What are the Muslims' social institutions?
2. What is the detail about the Mosque, Madarsa, Nepali school and Cemetery?
3. How many students do study in the Madarsa and Government curriculum school (Nepali school)?
4. What is the land area of the Mosque, schools and cemetery?
5. How many teachers are there in the schools?
6. How easy is the life and socio-economic status of the respondents?

7. What is the level of knowledge and skills of the Muslims of the study area?
8. Do you have enough investment (capital) for the business and the enterprises?

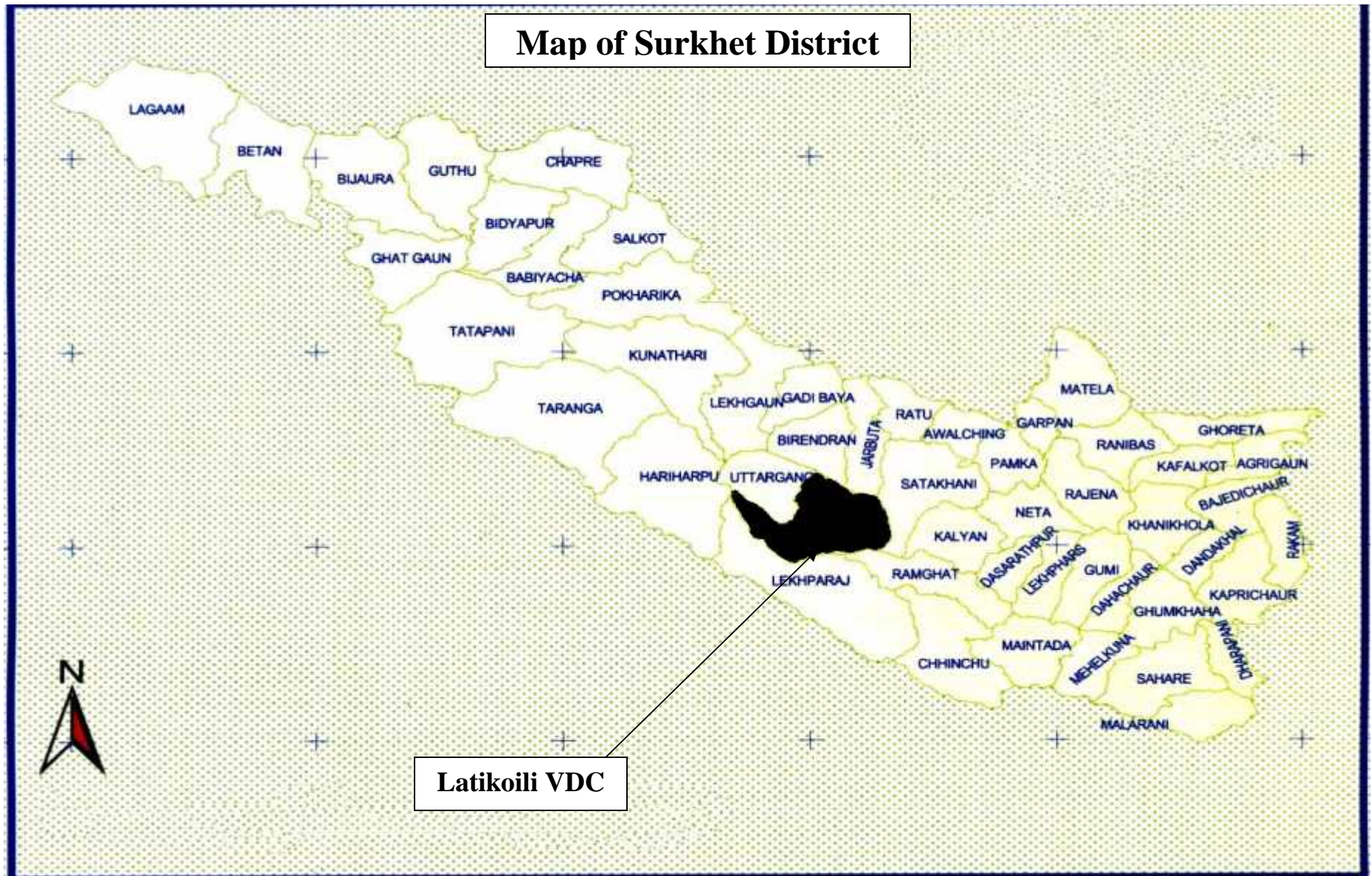
ANNEX III MAPS



Surkhet District

Map of Nepal Highlighting Surkhet District

Map of Surkhet District



Latikoili VDC

Map of Surkhet District Highlighting Latikoili VDC

ANNEX IV
PHOTOGRAPHS

Photo No. 1



Ward No. 1 of Latikoili VDC.

Photo No. 2



Ward No. 2 of Latikoili VDC.

Photo No. 3



Ward No. 9 of Latikoili VDC.

Photo No. 4



The Researcher with the Respondents in the Study Area.

Photo No. 5



A Hut of a Respondent in the Study Area.

Photo No. 6



A RCC House of a Respondent in the Study Area.

Photo No. 7



A Muslim Dress Material Cloth Shop in the Study Area.

Photo No. 8



A General Store of a Muslim in the Study Area.

Photo No. 9



A General Store of a Muslim in the Study Area.

Photo No. 10



A Tea Shop of a Muslim in the Study Area.

Photo No. 11



The Mosque in the Study Area.

Photo No. 12



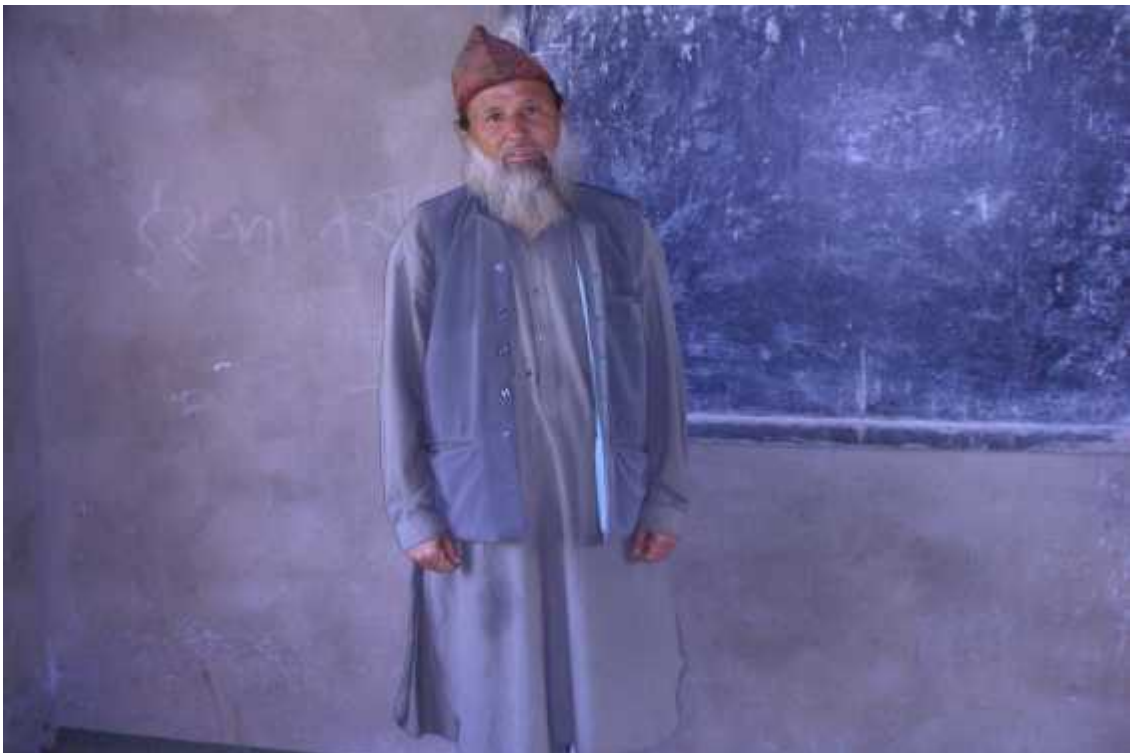
The Muslim Schools & NGO in the Study Area.

Photo No. 13



The Muslim Cemetery in the Study Area.

Photo No. 14



A Teacher of the Muslim Schools in the Study Area.

Photo No. 15



A Teacher & Imam of the Muslim Schools & the Prayer in the Study Area.

Photo No. 16



Group Discussion in the Study Area.