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Rules, regulations and rights of women in islam and its impact in the assamese muslim society

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Abstract

This paper highlight the impact of Islamic rules and regulations in Assamese Muslim Society. The paper shows the acceptance of the rights which were given to women in Islam and how far it was possible for Assamese Muslim society to accept such rights which was usually rarely prevalent among them. The work will further discuss the impact of dress code among Islamic people in Assamese society.

Keywords: Assamese, Biya, Juron Diya, Tilawat.

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Introduction

Like other major religions, Islam also have rules and regulations that gives important status to women. It was Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) who brought about a complete change in the position of women. Most Muslims are taught that Islam liberated women by giving them rights not previously enjoyed. Some examples include rights of ownership, decision-making in marriage, divorce and so on that has raised their legal status. In Islam women have some legal rights and to implement those rights they have to follow some rules and regulations. Islam gives several rights to women viz. right to education, right to marriage, right to divorce, right to property. In this chapter with this laws it may also discuss about the practice of *Polygamy* among the Muslims which is unjustified towards women, *Muslim Personal Law*, *Women Movements* etc. Further, it will analyse how far all these ideas were cohesive to the Assamese Muslim society during the period of study. The women rights have become the single most contentious

issue for Muslim societies in this century. There have been lot of debates over "The Places of Women in Islam" but has not yielded fruitful result. To show the acceptance of the rights which were given to women in Islam and how far it was possible for Assamese Muslim society to accept such rights which was usually rarely prevalent among them. The continuous process of changing psychological attitude of towards the acceptance and prevalent of such ideas among Assamese Muslim society are discussed in this paper. Women's studies have become important rising trend in contemporary social research.

Methodology

The methodology is an important part of social research. Because scientific analysis and globalisation always depends on correct application of methods. Primary as well as secondary sources are undertaken for this research purpose. Quran and Hadis were taken as a source to convey the basic ideas of Islam.

The work is based on following methodologies

1. Field Work
2. Interview Schedule
3. Content Analysis

Field Work

The field work has been undertaken to collect the information of social as well as domestic life of women in Sivasagar and various culture prevalent among the

women of Sivasagar. Observation is also made during the present time.

Verbal Interview and Written Schedule

Verbal interview and a written schedule had been prepared by interviewing some elderly ladies and written schedule had been given to some literate and cultured personalities of Sivasagar and the other parts of Assam to explore the view on the issue of changes and for the purpose of this research. In order to examine the gradual change of Assamese Muslim women social life an extensive interview was constructed researcher.

Content Analysis

Source materials preserved in the different libraries and institutions have been consulted. Articles, reports which were related to Islamic religion, Muslim society and Assamese Muslim society have also been analysed.

Review of Literature:

The review of literature is one of the important elements of any research. It helps in better understanding of the research problems. In this research the literature is collected from different sources such as internet, online journals, books etc. The issue of women has already attracted attention of a number of scholars. A number of scholar have done various research works on the status of women in India, and a few scholars on the status of Muslim women in India, and a few scholar's of Assam have done research on social status of Muslims in Assam but they failed to analyse how such changes come. In this research the literature which were collected from different sources were not directly relevant to the research topic.

Education

Allah's first order to Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) is *Iqra* (i.e. study or learn)¹. Education is mandatory in Islam for both men and women. Quranic verses clearly indicate the right for education in Islam sees no gender discrimination. Let us start with Quranic revelation:

"Read in the name of your Lord who created, created man from a clinging form. Read! Your Lord is the Most Generous, who taught by means of the pen; taught man what he did not know".(96:1-5)

These verses address humankind to seek knowledge and delve in critical thinking. The emphasis laid in the acquisition of knowledge, in the above verse, surpasses any statement or action denying girls' the

right to education. In another verses in the Quran, God says:

"This is a book the Quran which we have sent down to you, full of blessings that they may ponder over its Verses, and that men of understanding may remember"(38:29)

It is important to mention that the word "men" in the above verse refer to humankind as it does so in several other places in the Quran when God addresses humanity. These and other verses inform the readers that engaging in critical thinking is a moral obligation on both men and women. The Quran repetitively reminds people to ponder, think, analyze, thus using their mental potentiality to contemplate and understand, whilst making no distinction between men and women. Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) said "seeking knowledge is compulsory for each and every Muslim" i.e. men and women (Hadith Muslim and Sura An Nisa, 4:1). Islam has made it a duty on every Muslim male and female to gain knowledge which is considered to be a superior act of worship in Islam. In Islam therefore both men and women are created with the capacity for learning. Acquiring knowledge will enable Muslim men and women to get a better perception and understanding of the world around them and make them more conscious of almighty Allah. Education not only awakens urge for a prestigious position, whether at home or in society as a whole, but also supplies strength to retain that position against many hazards of life.¹ Islam regards women as spiritually and intellectually equal to men. Both have equal rights to receive an education and enter into gainful employment.¹ Apart from Quranic verses and *hadith* narration of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), historically it was proved that Islam gave equal right to education for both men and women. Prophet (PBUH) himself married to educated women viz. Khadiza binte Khalid (620 A.D.) Ayesha binte Abu Bakkar (678 A.D.). He educated his daughters also. Besides them other educated women in Islamic history were Nusaiba (638), Khawla Al Azwa (639 A.D.), Jainav Ali (681 A.D), Rabiya Al Adaiya (984 A.D.), Hurra Arba Al Sulaihi (1138 A.D.) In the past history several Islamic scholar founded several Islamic primary institution through this institutions they gave education for initial stages the primary educational institution was known as *Moktub* and later stages was known *Madrassa*. Besides this the world's first women university was established by a

Muslim women name Fatima Al-Fihariya in 859 A D at Fez city of Morocco which is known as Al-Qarawiyyin. It was initially part of a mosque built by Fatima Fihiriya, the daughter of a wealthy merchant.¹ According to Sunni Scholar Ibn Asakir in the twelfth century, there were various opportunities for female education in what is known as the Medieval Islamic world. he writes that women could study, earn ijazahs (religious degrees) and qualify as *ulema* and Islamic teachers [1].

If we give a look on Indian history of Muslim period we can observe that several royal Muslim women of that period were highly educated viz. Sultana Razia, Gulbadan Begum, Jahanara Begum, Nurjahan etc. But unfortunately formal education for common Muslim women is quite negligible in all phases of history. Nevertheless, it is true that Islamic education i.e. Quran *Tilawat* (reading Quranic verse), how to offer namaaz was given to every Muslim girl in all times.

In the context of Assamese Muslim women formal education has not been noticed. Every Muslim parents around 1950s to 70s send their daughter to mosque or *moktub* to acquire Islamic knowledge but they were afraid to send them to school or colleges for formal education because, at that time school and colleges were far from their houses. It was during 1970s or 80s formal education become integral part of the Muslims life in the Sivasagar district. It has been found that the proportion of female literacy is highest in eastern Assam. A large number of Muslim women in this district came forward to acquire modern education. Among the districts of Assam, the percentage of female literacy is highest in Sivasagar, i.e. 27% as per record of 1971 census.¹ The Table no 1.0 shows the increasing rate of female literacy in the district of Sivasagar

Table No.4.1.

Muslim Literacy Rate of Sivasagar District, 1971.

SEX	URBAN	RURAL	TOTAL
MALE	65.73%	45.59%	46.97%
FEMALE	52.02%	28.96%	30.20%

The importance of education of women was realised by educated Muslims of Sivasagar. Maulana Syed Kazi Ajjur Rahman of Dhahi-Ali established Girls M.E. Madrasah in 1922 for girl education later which become 4 no Dhahi-Ali Balika Parthamik Vidyalay.¹ Joshna Begum's father was gave much concentration in education of girl child. Education in former time

was depend upon the economic condition of the family. System of early marriages, dependence on husband led very much emphasis on household duties were the major impediments in getting women education. But from 1980s it was not staying in such circumstances, every Muslim person of the society in Sivasagar came to realise that with religious education, formal education also become very much important to survive in the society and to walk step by step with other neighbouring Hindus. Densely Muslim populated area like Nazira, which was one of the good example for girls education, maximum female of Nazira were educated. Eli Ahmed the renowned scholar of Assam belonging to Nazira. Buji Begum was first Matriculate from a place near Nazira and local people of Nazira can claim that maximum girl of Nazira continued schooling from early 1970s.¹ After ONGC land requisition people become wealthy they can able to gave effort on education. While the family was large or small, it was not the matter of subject for them so more or less all Muslim girls of Sivasagar are not faced any difficulty from family to continue their schooling. Around 1980's all Muslim girls were able to got educational right in Sivasagar district.

Marriage

Marriage is considered to be essential by the Muslims for both male and females. It is noble communion between man and woman, a communion which is blessed by god and based on freedom of choice. In Islam, marriage is a legal contract which is known as Nikah Namah. Under the Muslim law marriage is considered as civil contract. After marriage, a woman does not lose her individuality. She remains a distinct member of the community; her existence of personality is not merged into that of her husband. The contract of marriage gives no power to anyone over her person or property beyond what the law defines. In a genuine sense, women remain the absolute owner of her individual rights; even after marriage. She can enter into pleases without any extraneous control of her husband and proceed against him law courts, if necessary. The women enjoys this position through the injunctions of Quran. In Islam for marriage the consent of both male and female is required.¹ According to Sura Nisa (4:19), it says "You are prohibited to inherit women against their will"¹ means, to marry the permission of both the parties are required. It is compulsory that the man and women

both should agree to marry no one, not even father can forced their daughter to marry against her wishes. Inter-religious marriage is not allowed for Islamic women. It is not permissible for a Muslim women to marry a non-Muslim man.

The regional and sectional divergence in the culture of the Assamese Muslims reflected in their marriage customs which vary in detail not merely on a regional basis but also in rural-urban context. The marriage customs of the Muslims of Western Assam are often characterized by a curious mixture of Hindu and Muslim rites and practices. The indigenous folk traditions also have an applicable impact on the marriage customs of the Assamese Muslims. Muslim marriage in Sivasagar was almost same as Hindu marriage. Muslim marriage in Sivasagar consist of two formal ceremonies- the ring ceremony or *angothi pindhuwa* which is commonly called as *Juran Diya* which is followed by the actual wedding ceremony *Biya*. The ring ceremony is not performed by all; rather they celebrate the main wedding only. However, after the finalization of the negotiations between the families of the bride and the groom, a party consisting of the close family member and the parents of the groom, visit the future brides house. The party carries a gold ring, fine clothes some cosmetics and sweets as presents. Maximum items of marriage was given to the bride by the groom side in the *Juran Diya*. Putting ring in the right hand finger of the bride, this custom is played by the mother of the groom sometime in the absence of mother, elder sister or elder sister-in-law played this custom. In the early time people protested widow mothers to do it. The groom was not attended the ceremony at the day time the groom and his few friends were attended at the evening time his family members leave. But at present days the groom attended the day ceremony and exchange the ring with the bride. The *Juran Diya* ceremony is performed few months before the actual *biya* (wedding).

Now come to actual marriage ceremony, on the day of marriage ceremony the groom reaches the brides home at the day time. The party which accompanies the groom consist of family members, neighbours and personal friends. This party is called *barzatri*. One of the intimate friend of the groom remains very close to on this day is known as *Tamuli*. The *biya* was usually performed after *Juhur Naamaaz*. Although the particular ritual of the marriage is *Nikah*. Sometimes,

before the actual marriage ceremony take place, it is registered by a Qazi by signing of a legal document (*nikahnama*) by the bride and groom. But this practice is not common to all. To perform a *nikah* or *biya* the parents of the of the bride and the groom fix the *mahr* (bride's financial security). The *mahr* is generally fixed on the day of finalization of the marriage settlement. At the time of *nikah* or the actual marriage, the proposal and the acceptance are made in the presence and hearing of two adult male witnesses. Another person, known as *ukil* asks the bride and the groom for their consent to their marriage. As soon as the consent is obtained, the *Maulavi* recites some verses from the Quran. Following this, the *Maulavi* leads a supplication in which all the persons present on the occasion will participate.

The traditional customs of marriage began to change with the gradual change of time, un-Islamic Assamese culture are replaced by Islamic culture, intermingling with modern notions. Whereas inter-religious marriage is not commonly allowed to the women among the Assamese Muslim, a man can marry to the women of other community but she must be ready to converted into Islam before the commencement of *Nikah*. While Syed's were allowed to be married among the Syed's family only, They claim it that it give more preference to mother's choice. Syed's do this due to give more preference to mother's choice.

Regarding the age of the marriage of girl there is no special limitation among the Muslims of this area. Formerly the practice of child marriage (i.e. a young girl married with an old man) was prevalent among the Assamese Muslim of Sivasagar, on that time the Muslim girls were married after attaining puberty. Now a day's such marriage is disfavoured by all and found to discontinued. At the present social situation most of the marriage of Muslim girls take place at the age of 18 to 25 years.

Divorce

Divorce is termed as *talaq* in Islam. *Talaq* in its original sense means repudiation or rejection. But under Muslim law, it means a release from the marriage tie, immediately or eventually.¹ Among almost all the nations of antiquity, divorce was regarded as a natural corollary or marital rights. The provision of divorce is recognised in all religions, Islam perhaps the first religion in the world which has expressly recognised the termination of marriage by way of

divorce was introduced only hundred years back. In India among Hindus, it was allowed only by Hindu Marriage Act.¹ In Islam, a woman has right to divorce her husband on some special ground. The dissolution of the Muslim Marriage Act 1939, governs the Indian Muslims both men and women. Under the act a Muslim shall be entitled to obtain a decree of dissolution of marriage.¹ Prophet Muhammad restrained the power of divorce and gave to the women the right of obtaining separation on reasonable grounds. The Prophet (PBUH) is reported to have said, "If a woman be prejudiced by a marriage, let it be broken off".¹ Muslim marriage is over all a contract not a faith like that of the Hindus and to that extent it can be dissolved simply by writing, a deed of divorce.

Under the dissolution of Marriage ACT- VIII 1939, a woman obtains a decree under the following grounds:-

1. If her husband has not been known for a period of four years.
2. That the husband failed for her maintenance for a period of two years.
3. He is sentenced to imprisonment for a period of seven years.
4. He has failed to perform his marital obligation for a period of three years.
5. If husband is impotent
6. He has been suffering from leprosy.
7. If, he has been given in marriage before she attained the age fifteen years.¹

Provided that the marriage has not been consummated if the husband treats with cruelty or he leads an infamous life obstruct her in the observance of her religious rites, or disposes of her property or attempts to force her to lead an immoral life. On any other ground which is recognised as valid for the dissolution of marriage.¹ Marriage is considered as a civil contract in Islam. The marriage may be dissolved according to Sunnah. In Muslim law, marriage may be dissolved in any one of the following ways:-

Talaq

A talaq may be declared either orally or by written document, talqnama. Pronouncement of talaq may be either revocable (talaq-ul-*raja-i*) or irrevocable (talaq-ul-*ba'in*). In revocable talaq one does not dissolve the marriage until the period of iddat (seclusion) is over. While an irrevocable talaq may be effected in any one of the following ways:

Talaq-Ahsan

This form consists of one single pronouncement within the term of purity (tuhr) followed by abstention from sexual intercourse for the period of iddat (waiting period), which is of three months duration from the date of pronouncement, except in the case of pregnant wife. In that case, waiting period is until the birth of a baby. This kind of divorce is revocable during the period of iddat.

Talaq-Hasan

In this form of divorce a man must make three pronouncements during three consecutive terms of ritual purity (tuhrs), no biological relations having taken place in between these periods. At the pronouncement of divorce for the third time, the divorce becomes final and irrevocable. The wife should be maintained during these months. In this form of divorce there is a chance for the parties to reconcile before the third pronouncement of divorce. After the third pronouncement the wife cannot remarry her former husband.

Khula or Mubarat

This is the form of divorce by mutual consent of the husband and the wife without the intervention of the court. In khula the wife makes the proposal, while in mubarat either spouse may make the proposal. *Khula* bestows special rights to women seeking dissolution of marriage.¹ Among the divorce procedures mostly khula was prevalent among the Assamese Muslim in Sivasagar district [1].

Maintenance after divorce

After the divorce the Muslim wife is entitled to maintenance from the side of her husband but if she remarries, the husband is not bound to give her any maintenance. Quran imposes an obligation on the Muslim husband to make provision for or to provide maintenance to the divorced wife. The maintenance Act for Muslim women is changed after disposing the case of Md. Ahmed Khan Vs Shah Bano Begum. The Muslim women who have been divorced, she is entitled to claim maintenance under section 125 of the code only during the period of Iddat through Muslim Women Protection of Rights on Divorce Act 1986. The most controversial provision of the Act was that it gave a Muslim the right to maintenance for the period of iddat (about three months) after the divorce, and shifted the onus of maintaining her to her relatives or the Wakf Board [1]. Subsequently, in the Danial Latifi case, the Supreme Court creatively interpreted the Act and

upheld the Shah Bano case. Since then, maintenance has been granted to Muslim divorcees beyond the Iddat period. In the present context the same law is followed by Assamese Muslim in Sivasagar but till early 90's a very few people know about all this so there was no conflict among the people they accepted *Meher* as their alimony or take whatever have decided under the mutual consent of both boy side or girl side.

Though Muslim marriage is a social contract, divorce was not commonly practicing rights in Sivasagar from the year 1911 to 2002. In the context Assamese Muslim in Sivasagar women were like subject of misinterpreting psychological phenomena of social understanding. Misinterpreting in a sense that they don't know about their rights they believe whatever their neighbour say's, . Around 1911 women were not culturally strong due to lack of education and misunderstanding the view point of the Quran and Hadith which were the main source of Islamic law. Muslim women in Sivasagar don't want to divorce their husband because at that time it was very shameful to the women divorce her husband at any cause. Thus practicing of divorce is very rare in Sivasagar. The first case of divorce was registered in Sivasagar Qazi Office in the year 1911, no record found before 1911. A very few people divorced at that time in a year sometime one divorce case was registered sometimes not a single divorce case was registered in a year. But gradually the number of divorce case registration began to increase.

A report on divorce case registered in Sivasagar Qazi office in sivasagar from the year 1974 to 2015 is available. Whereas from 1980 sub Qazi office:

TABLE: 02

Year	Number of Divorce Register
1974-1979	8
1980-1985	7
1986-1991	3
1992-1997	2
1998-2003	11
2004-2009	13
2010-2015	26

The above table shows that the cases of divorce are rarely registered in Sivasagar district in early

time but from 2010-2015 a number of divorce cases was registered. Women themselves do not want to divorce their husband in early time because the society always put question on women, without judging the fact for which the result come out. In the early time women feel shame on doing such things but from few decades a number of women began to understand their self-respect and rights. In a common phenomenon the question of divorce arise due to the issue of domestic violence. Women organisation such as All Assam Women Organisation, Tabliqui Jamat of Women and class of educated Muslim women in Sivasagar create awareness among the women to solve their domestic problems and introduced the rights and privileges which were given to the women. In the former time a very few number of divorce's were got married but at present, a large number of divorced women got remarried.

Right to Property

In Islam, women have property rights. As for the inherit, she inherits as daughter, as wife and as mother. Thus, she inherits in three capacities. Of course she gets half of her brothers share but neither she has to pay dower (on the contrary she receives) nor has she to maintain herself. She is maintained by her father (as of right) while unmarried and by her husband after marriage (she is not obliged to give anything of her wealth, whatever she possesses, to her husband who obliged to maintain her even if she is rich and he is poor) [1]. Also, she has absolute right to property, neither her father nor her husband can claim any part of it unless she gives it by her own consent. A mother has property right of her son. A mother can claim her son's property and has the right to claim over son's property even after the death of the son. A daughter has right to parental property. Daughter even married daughters have the right to seek partition of ancestral property just like sons. They were given right to inherit half that of son. From another perspective it could be argued that it was not bias against daughters that they were given half that of son but daughters were duly compensated by mehr (dower amount at the time of marriage) whereas sons had to lose out by paying dower to their wives.¹ And the wives do not have to spend anything by way of maintenance as it is enjoined upon the husbands to maintain their wives. In Assam some parents gave

their half part of the property to their daughter in their marriage in terms of jewellery, cloths, furniture etc. Iba Qureshi lived in her father's house, Fatima Gulbadan only daughter of Syed Amin lived in her father's house. They inherit by their father's property it means though rarely but in Assam daughter got property right of their father's [1].

Polygamy

Polygamy is permitted in Islam under special circumstances, with certain terms and conditions. The reasons behind sanction of polygamy in Islam were historical and circumstantial. In abnormal circumstances like war when large number of men were decimated and balance between the sexes was seriously shaken. On such an instance polygamy was permitted to overcome the social problems.¹ Islam allows a man to marry up to four women only if he able to deal with them justly. However, it is preferable for him to have only one wife (verse 4:3) [1]. Quran is the only religious book, on this earth, that contains the phrase 'marry only one'. Polygamy is firmly established in the Islamic tradition. Underscores that a man is not able to treat multiple wives fairly. He would therefore be unable to acquire more than one wife if this were a requirement, which it is not [1]. The practice of polygamy is a mathematical contradiction of the principle that men and women are to be treated equally. The Quran's allowance of multiple wives is therefore somewhat of a challenge to the contemporary apologist, who wants his Western audience to believe that Islam encourages gender equality [1]. The daughter of our Prophet, Hazarat Fatima, objected to his husband Hazarat Ali's, marrying to a second women. If it weren't permissible to object Hazarat Fatima, who was brought up by our Prophet, would not have objected. The Messenger of Allah would have warned her and ordered her to consent to her husband's wish. However, it did not take place like that. On the contrary, the Messenger of Allah, who saw that his daughter was sorry, asked Hazarat Ali to give up, his wish and told him that if he did not give up, he could marry another women after divorcing Hazarat Fatima. He did not consent to Hazarat Ali's second marriage and to depress his daughter by considering that act of the Messenger of Allah, it can be stated that Muslim daughters and fathers may object to the husband or son-in-law [1].

It neither means Islam orders nor prohibits polygamy. It only permits it when it is necessary. It does not make it obligatory. Various causes behind the development of the misconception regarding the practice of polygamy have been put forward here and side by side with this the realistic situation has been presented.

Polygamy is legal for Muslim in India under the terms of the Muslim Personal Law (Shariat) Application Act of 1937, as interpreted by the All India Muslim Law Board (AIMLB). According to the 1961 census (the last census to record such data), polygamy was actually less prevalent among Indian Muslims (5.7%). In the context of Assamese Muslim Society and that of Sivasagar district particularly, the practice of polygamy is rarely prevalent. In Assam some people marry two women but mostly it was noted that after the death of the first wife they married second one. In the context of the Assamese Muslim in Sivasagar 1990's it was noticeable that husband's are often obliged to marry a second wife when the first wife is infertile. But till 1960's few Muslim people in Sivasagar district got married second time in the expectation of boy child sometimes by force or sometimes by own choices. By taking permission of the first wife a man can marry again. This type of second marriage was encouraged by the other female members of the family. But at present this type of practices is not prevalent due to the realisation of people about the importance of daughters, by they trying to treat them as equal to boys. As a whole, polygamy was rarely prevalent among the Muslims of Sivasagar from early time to till today.

RELIGIOUS RIGHTS OF MUSLIM WOMEN

In Islam every men and women are equally responsible for their every work to the almighty. Man and woman irrespective of sex possesses equal rights in the field of religion. In Islam woman, like man is an individual who can pray to the almighty and can hope for redemption. Islam does not consider women as impediment in the path of religion, nor does it considered her as the root cause of men's downfall. So, the holy Quran is replete with injunctions whose aim was the improvement of the life women, who in the pre-Islamic societies got a very inferior servile position, which changed later on. Islam provided a much higher status to women in terms of religious aspects. Though Islam provide

a much higher position to women yet in practical field women are deprived of getting some privileges, because the Muslim personal law on the other hand curtailed the rights of woman in many ways. But this disadvantages arose due to the interpretation of Quranic verse in the word of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) in the light of cultural norms that was prevailed in the medieval times. But in the modern days the traditions of the Prophet (PBUH) continued to validate cultural norms which were being adopted under various ways. For instance that the Muslim women are debarred from getting equal right with man in case of formal religious organisation. as they are not being allowed to perform *Jumma Namaaz* (*special prayer commencement on every Friday at Mosque) on Friday as well as the prayer of *Eid Festival* openly either in the mosque or in the Eidgah Field. Moreover, women are not being permitted to lead the prayers, which is generally performed in the mosque.

Muslim Women and Mosque

A Mosque is a sacred space dedicated to the one creator of both male and female. Under the ownership of almighty Allah his house gives all his admirer the right for refuge and prayer whether they were white or black, tall or short, young or old, male or female. The above statement proven by the following verse of Quran Surah 7 (Al-Araf) Ayat 31:

"Oh the children of Adam, take your pleasantness to every Mosque" [1]

On the other hand women have some personal problems for which they cannot proceed along with men in various, religious duties. For example, a menstruating women cannot perform neither daily prayer nor observing fasts into month of Ramjaan [1]. Usually, Muslim women perform their prayers, five times a day at home. In the opinion of Prophet Muhammad, women should not be prevented by the people from paying their visit to Mosque regularly if their husband permitted. Because along with a number of people known as *Zamat* which is not possible in their own home and by performing the prayer in Mosque which felt some pleasure and enjoyment which generally found in the Mosque only with *Zamat*. Abdur Rahman said that Muslim women offer *Naaamaz* separately to preserve their modesty during prayers but they most certainly are

welcome and encourage to come to Mosque [1]. At the Kaabaa the most sacred Mosjid in the world where both men and women are allowed equally to offer Naamaz [1].

In India normally women are offer *Namaaz* at home but at present a few women offer their *Namaaz* at Mosque. In case of Assam it become different from the part of the Muslim world. The Muslim society of Assam is almost same with the Hindu society except religious practices. Assamese Muslim women as well a Hindu women have to do very hard labour. They have to do cooking to farming, from nurturing the children and maintaining the family to domesticating the animal. So they don't have enough time to go out from the home and offer Naamaaz in mosque for five times in day so they them self were not interest to go out and offer naamaaz in Mosque so, they offer Naamaaz at home. But in course of time it become a rule or law.

Basic Principles of Muslim

The Assamese Muslims of Sivasagar district are mostly influenced by the practice of Sunni sect. Sunni practices are based on five principles of Islam. These are-Iman (faith), Naamaaz (offer praryer), Roja(fasting), Hajj (pilgrimage to mecca) and Zakat (giving charityto the poor). However Hajj and Zakat are not compulsory to the person who are not economically sound position [1].

Hajj

Hajj or the Muslim annual pilgrimage to visit the holy Kaaba Sharif of Mecca is one of the basic principles of Islam. Hajj have to be performed during life time of every Muslim man and woman, particularly those who can afford to perform such pilgrimage to Mecca. Hajj is generally regarded as the greatest gathering of the Muslims of the world. Hajj is based on two basic principles, viz. equality or brotherhood. In order to follow the basic principle of Islam, a number of Muslim women performed the hajj pilgrimage every year from different parts of the world In India also a large number of women from different parts of the country including Assam, and particularly the women of the district of Sivasagar also perform Hajj pilgrimage in every year. For example of women from Na-Ali, Nazira, Hatikosh, Amguri are going to the Hajj since independence but the number of

Alhajji (women who doing hajj) at that time was very few but from 1980s the number of Alhajji become large due to the sound economic condition of the people of Sivasagar [1]. Hajj is generally performed on the Arabic month of *Zila Hajja*. The preparation for the journey actually starts from the month of Ramjan.

It is to be noted that after hajj, a Muslim man and women generally occupies a prominent position in the society. It has been presumed that *Hajj* has already been pardoned from all her sins. after completing their *Hajj* pilgrimage, the dresses of Alhaj (men after doing Hajj) and Alhajji (women after doing Hajj) becomes different. Particularly, women are different from that of the general women, as they veiled themselves with a piece of black cloth on their head in order to identify herself as a Alhajji or Hajji.

Burqa or Hijab or the Dress Code of Women

Covering bodies, praying behind men in a Mosque etc are the rules for protecting women from other men. But they seem truly discriminatory. Wearing Hijab or Burqa is another issue in Muslim society. The Quran doesn't specifically mentioned the Burqa or tell women to wear such a confining clothes. Instead of it Quran instructs to both men and women to dress and behave modesty in society (24:31). The word Burqa is not found anywhere in Quran. On the other hand the word Hijab appear seven times in Quran, where it appears five times as hijab and twice as hijaban. None of this word used in Quran in reference what the traditional Muslim call today "the dress code for Muslim women". Hijab in the Quran has nothing to do with a women dress code. Islam has ordained hijab for both men and women. People usually only discuss Hijab in the context of women. However in the holly Quran Allah first mentions for men before women 30th Ayat of 24th chapter of Quran Surah Ai-Nur clearly indicate it.

In Assam the dress code of Muslim women was same as well as Hindu women till 1980s. In case of dresses of Assamese Muslim women the influence of local Hindu Women was notable [1]. *Patani* was very much popular among the women of lower Assam. *Mekhala* with *Chadar* was popular among the Muslim women of upper Assam. Still today old lady of the age 70 or above wear *Mekhala Chadar* in Sivasagar district. Some women wear saree in this region. Salwar

is prevalent in Assam around 1940 among the sweeper class [1]. No Assamese lady whether Hindu or Muslim, whether married or unmarried wear salwar. It was approximately 1980s salwar was prevalent among the Assamese Muslim Women of Sivasagar, and gradually it become popular among Muslims of Sivasagar and later the married women also used to wear salwar. But till 1990s married Muslim women mostly used to saree. Some people adopted Modern culture from the last decade and at the same time some people are becoming more religious So the trend of wearing *Mekhala Chadar* and Saree was replaced by salwar and as well as Burqa or Hijab. from the influence of Tablqui Jamat on Assamese Muslim the prevalent Lukhnawi dress become very popular [1].

Conclusion

Women are indeed the backbone of any society inclusive of the Muslim society. They are the one who plays a prominent role in moulding the future generation. Their social life can be determined through various economic, social, religious, cultural factors as well as political system that prevail in the society. This work shows that changes have occurred in the Assamese Muslim society into two ways. First, one is revivalism of Islamic Culture and second is leaning towards modernisation.

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