



Pratidhwani the Echo

A Peer-Reviewed International Journal of Humanities & Social Science

ISSN: 2278-5264 (Online) 2321-9319 (Print)

Impact Factor: 6.28 (Index Copernicus International)

Volume-XIV, Issue-IV, July 2026, Page No. 90-105

Published by Dept. of Bengali, Karimganj College, Sribhumi, Assam, India

Website: <http://www.thecho.in>

DOI: 10.64031/pratidhwanitheecho.vol.14.issue.04W.121



The Aftermath of the 1857 Revolt and the Situation of the People of Bengal: A Historical Review

Dr. Kabirul Haque Khan, *Counsellor of UG Course in History, Netaji Subhas Open University, (Bhanganar Mahavidyalaya), West Bengal, India*

Received: 10.06.2026; Accepted: 09.07.2026; Available online: 31.07.2026

©2026 The Author(s). Published by Dept. of Bengali, Karimganj College, Sribhumi. This is an open access article under the CC BY license (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>)

Abstract

The aftermath of the Revolt of 1857 marked a decisive turning point in the political, social, and economic landscape of British Indian Governance and had profound consequences for the Muslim Community of Bengal. In the immediate aftermath of the Revolt, the British Colonial State, deeply suspicious of Muslims due to their perceived leadership role in the uprising, introduced adopted policies that marginalized them in public employment, education, and governance. The dissolution of the Mughal Authority and the transfer of power to the British Crown in 1858 intensified these trends. With the fall of the Mughal Empire further weakened the traditional Muslim elite, leading to a decline in their political and economic status. By the late nineteenth and early twentieth century's, witnessed the beginnings of socio-religious reform and political consciousness among Muslims of Bengal through educational initiatives, reform movements, and emerging political mobilization.

The article explores the educational backwardness that emerged among Muslims of Bengal during the latter half of the nineteenth century. Muslims in Bengal were slower to adopt Western education compared to other Communities. Though, Sir Syed Ahmad Khan advocated Western education but their influence was slower to penetrate Bengal compared to North India. Consequently, Muslims lagged behind in securing positions within the colonial bureaucracy and professional sectors. By analyzing these interconnected developments, this article also explores that the post-1857 period represented both decline and gradual transformation shaped by colonial policies, socio-economic challenges, and internal reform efforts within the Muslim Community of Bengal.

Keywords: Backwardness, Bengal, Colonial Policies, Education, Muslim Community, Profession, Post 1857 Period

Introduction:

The Revolt of 1857 is one of the major attempts of the People of India to oust the British Imperial Power and to revive their lost power and position. It created a new political awakening and a strong national sentiment among the people of India which paved the way for Independence of India. Both the people from Hindu and Muslim communities cooperated with each- other in the Revolt, and fought against the British rule. Prof. Rajat

Kanta Ray described that "it signified a confederation of two separated peoples (Hindu-Muslim) bound together as one political unit by the shared perception of Hindustan as one land."¹ Professor Nandalal Chatterjee argued that, "the remarkable unity between Hindus and Muslims during the Revolt of 1857 sustained the patriotic war, which contained the seeds of political nationalism."² The Second half of the nineteenth century saw the emergence of some renowned Muslim writers in Bengal who through their writings contributed to the development of liberal and rational thoughts among the Muslims of Bengal.³ The population of Bengal is mainly composed of various religious communities, especially the Hindus and the Muslims, with minor representation of Christians, Sikhs, Buddhists and other religious communities. The Census of 1872 revealed that, the percentage of Muslims in Bengal represented 48.8% of the total population.⁴ The most striking of 1901 Census of Bengal was that, it turned out to be approximately 51% out of the total population of Bengal.⁵ British official, William Wilson Hunter remarked in his book 'The Indian Mussalmans' that, "the conditions of the Muslims were very worse to any other communities during the second half of the nineteenth century in India and as well as in Bengal." He also remarked that "A hundred years ago, the Musalmans monopolized all the important offices of the State."⁶

The majority Muslims in Bengal were mainly descended from the local inhabitants. Abdul Karim, stated in his book entitled, 'the Social History of the Muslims in Bengal', that, the Muslims of Bengal were converted from the lowborn Hindus and Buddhists.⁷ According to Herbert Risley, "Most of the Muslims of Bengal were converted from the low caste Hindus."⁸ Dr. Asim Roy accepted the view of H. Risley in his much published work, "The Islamic Syncretistic Tradition in Bengal", where he put forward the thesis of the conversion of Bengali Muslims from lower caste Hindus.⁹ According to Rafiuddin Ahmed, the two strata of Muslim society in Bengal represented two distinct strands of Muslim culture - one is "foreign" to Bengal, and another is "indigenous origin".¹⁰

Muslims of Bengal were divided into two groups Shias and Sunnis. The Census of 1921 provided information about the numerical representation of Shias at two thousand eighty (2080), out of the total Muslim population in Bengal.¹¹ Sunnis are considered to be the largest Muslim inhabitants in Bengal and mostly lived in the rural areas during post 1857 period. According to Baharuddin Ahmed Bogra, Muslim society in Bengal was divided into three categories - the 'Higher Class', the 'Middle Class', and the 'Lower Class'.¹² He classified Muslim society, which was not only based on the economic status but also on the culture and ethnicity. The Upper Class and the Middle Class Muslims were mostly the descendants of the early Muslim rulers and the lower-class Muslims were the products of the conversion of indigenous people.

In Bengal, the Muslim society was broadly classified into three main categories, i.e., Ashraf or Sharif, Atraf or Ajlaf and Arzal.¹³ The Ashraf or Sharif referred to the noble or upper-class Muslims, who claimed descent from Royal Muslim family and were of foreign origin from Persia, Arabia, Afghanistan, Northern India and Central Asia. Rafiuddin Ahmed classified that, the Ashrafs into four groups- Syeds, Shaikhs, Mughals and Pathans on the basis of racial origins.¹⁴ Syeds claimed their relationship with the Prophet's family. The Shaikhs were considered to be descendants from the Arabs. "The last two groups i.e., Mughals and Pathans were believed to be the descendants of the Mughals (Ilbari Turks)

and Afghan respectively.”¹⁵ In Bengal, the majority of the Syeds and Shaikhs were not of foreign origin.¹⁶ The urban Ashraf Muslims were very conscious of their racial superiority and set themselves apart from the indigenous converts. Ashraf Muslims from rural and Mofussil areas, including Syeds and Khondekars were considered lesser Ashrafs.¹⁷ Most of the Ashraf families in Bengal enjoyed the privileges of Lakhiraj lands which were granted by the Muslims rulers. Ajlaf or Atrap means “wretched people”, those who were converted from low caste Hindus are grouped into the second class of lower-class Muslims. The third group of Muslim society was identified as Arjal Muslims. They were considered the lower group. The people from the Hijra, Bhanr, Halalkh or Lalbegi, Kasbi, Mangta, Mehtar, Bediya and Abdal belonged to this section.¹⁸ Most of the Muslims of Bengal belonged to the non-Ashraf group and shared the same language, customs and cultural occupations in contemporary Bengali society. The Ashraf Muslims of Bengal tried to maintain their ethnic dominance in terms of customs, traditions, attitudes, and most of them spoke in Persian and Urdu languages and they kept themselves separate from the indigenous population.

During the Post 1857 period, the number of students from the Muslim community was less in various educational institutions than other communities in Bengal. From the 1860s, some initiatives were taken by the educated Muslims intellectuals of Bengal to regenerate their community.¹⁹ They turned to the western and scientific education for the development of their own community.²⁰ Abdul Lateef was one of them who advocated western and scientific education for the Muslims in order to hold their share in the British administration. He founded ‘Mohammedan Literary Society’ at Calcutta in 1863 to secure western education for Muslims.²¹ Sir Surendranath Banerjee says that “Nawab Abdul Lateef was the pioneer of English education among the Muslims of Bengal.”²² Sir Ashutosh Mukherjee regarded him “as a truly patriotic person.”²³ He raised ‘The Mohammedan Literary Society’ into a powerful agora in the development of intellectual thoughts of the Muslims of Bengal which served as the main centre for the promotion of western education among Muslims of Bengal.²⁴

Table -1

The following table provides information about the number of Students who received education in Government and Private Colleges and Schools in Bengal from 1865 to 1866.²⁵

Colleges and Schools	No. of Institutions	Students from Muslim Community	Students from Hindu Community	Students from all others Community	Total No. of Students	Percentage of Student from Muslim Community
Government College	7	14	727	2	743	1.88
Private College	5	13	294	32	339	3.83
Govt. School for Higher Class	50	1222	9176	98	10496	11.64
Private School for Higher	90	339	8972	312	9623	3.52

Class						
Govt. School for Middle Class	117	1029	6941	154	8124	12.67
Private School for Middle Class	941	3212	33956	759	37927	8.47
Govt. School for Lower Class	81	5040	32374	Nil	37414	13.47
Private School for Lower Class	1205	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil

Source: *Records on the State of Education in India during 1865-66*, Government of India, Home Political Department.

The fact revealed out of the above table (Table No.1) is that, the total number of Muslim students were 14 (1.88 percent) out of the total students in Government Colleges, a total number of twelve hundred and twenty two (1222) (11.64 percent) were in Government Schools for higher education, One hundred and twenty nine (1029) (12.67 percent) were in Govt. Schools for middle class and Five thousand and forty (5040) (13.47 percent) were in Government Schools for lower class.

The Muslims were deprived of all honourable judicial appointments through 'Indian Penal Code' which was made by the British Government in 1860. From 1852 to 1868, not a single Muslim lawyer was enrolled in the Calcutta High Court. In 1869, among the attorneys, solicitors, and proctors, there were twenty-seven (27) persons from the Hindu community and the representation of the Muslim community was nil.²⁶

Table -2

The following table provides information about the number of People representatives in different Government Services in Colonial Bengal during 1871.²⁷

Sl. No	Name of the posts	Europeans	Hindus	Muslims	Total
1	Covenanted Civil Services	260	Nil	Nil	260
2	Judicial Officers	47	Nil	Nil	47
3	Assistant Commissioners	26	7	Nil	33
4	Deputy Magistrates & Deputy Collectors	53	113	30	196
5	Income Tax Officers	11	43	6	60
6	Registration Department	33	25	2	60
7	Judges of Lower Court & Subordinate Judges	14	25	8	47
8	Munsif	1	178	37	216
9	All Grades Gazetteer in Officers in Police Department	106	3	Nil	109
10	Engineers in Public Works Department	154	19	Nil	173
11	Subordinate Establishment in Public Works Department	72	125	4	201
12	Accountant Establishment in Public Works	22	54	Nil	76

	Department				
13	Medical Department, Officers attached to Medical College, Jails, Charitable Dispensaries, Sanitation and Vaccination Establishment and Medical Officers-in-Charge of District	89	65	4	158
14	Department of Public Instruction	38	14	1	53
15	Other Departments (Customs, Marine, Survey and Opium)	412	10	Nil	422
Total		1338	681	92	2111

Source: W.W.Hunter's book entitled, *The Indian Musalmans* (1876), Trubner & Company, London, p. 101.

In Table.2, W.W. Hunter categorically illustrated the representation of Muslims of Bengal in different Services was in a very pitiable position. The table also revealed that, in Bengal, out of the total number of 2111 (Two thousand and One Hundred Eleven) Gazetted officers in which 1338 (One Thousand and Three Hundred Thirty-Eight) were Europeans (means 63.3%), 681 (Six Hundred Eighty-One) were the people from the Hindu community (means 32.3%) and 92 (Ninety-Two) were Muslims (only 4.4%) in the judicial department in the year 1871. In the list of Gazetteer officers, there was not a single Muslim judge in the Calcutta High Court as the Civil Servant Judicial officer and as Munsif.

It was also reported that, in 1871, out of the total 734 (Seven Hundred and Thirty Four) Government post in executive and sub-ordinate positions in various district headquarters of Bengal, people from the Muslim community were only 44 (Forty Four) meaning 5.9%, while the people from the Hindu community were 311 (41%) and the rest were mostly the Europeans.²⁸ At the same time, the percentage of the Muslims of Bengal were eleven percent (11%) in the higher posts of Public Service sector.²⁹

Lord Mayo's Resolution (1871) on Education had directed a shift in British Policy which encouraged primary education for Muslims of Bengal. The educational backwardness of the Muslims of Bengal existed till the first decade of the twentieth century.³⁰ The Muslims had begun acquiring general education at the beginning of the twentieth century.³¹ The Muslim aristocracies was badly affected economically under the British Rule in Bengal.³²

Table-3

The following table Provides information about the occupational engagements of the People from Muslim Community of Bengal on the Basis of First Census Report in 1872.³³

Occupation	Number
Peasants	6391074
Zamindars	42618
Itmadars	586
Thikadars	303
Ijaraders	3354
Lakherajders	23070
Jagirdars	365
Ghatowals	668
Aimaders	2004
Makrariders	9933

Talukders	96050
Pattaniders	3302
Khudkasht Projas	7552
Mahalders	1128
Jotders	19564
Gantiders	3824
Hawladars	9343
Gomastas	18402
Tahashilders	10546
Patwaris	1376
Paiks	14797
Servant of Zaminders	11030
Dafaders	202
Dewans	104
Mondals	1620
Naibs	581
Estate Managers	21

Source: *The Indian Class*, p. 137 cited by Ahmed Wakil., (2019), *Unish Shatake Bangali Musalmaner Chinta O Chetonar Dhara*, op.cit., pp.58-59

The fact revealed out of the above table (Table no.3) provides information that the large number of people from the Muslim Community was engaged in agriculture activities. Syed Ameer Ali played a vital role in the modernization of Muslim community in the last quarter of the Nineteenth century.³⁴ He founded 'The Central Mohammedan Association' in 1877, in collaboration with Nawab Abdul Lateef for the progress of Muslim community of Bengal by imparting western knowledge.³⁵ He also formed Anjumans (Associations) in different parts of Bengal to focus on the conditions of the Muslims Bengal.

Table-4

The following table provides information regarding numerical representation of the People from both Hindu and Muslim Communities in different Government Offices in Bengal During 1881.³⁶

Sl.No	Name of Government Offices	Number of Hindus	Number of Muslims
1	Officers of Central Government	7590	3351
2	Officers of Municipal & Local Government	59124	35177
3	Officers of Independent Government & Native States	11	-
Total		66725	38528

Source: The table Compiled by the Researcher on the basis of Census of Bengal in 1881, Part-III, pp.768-810.

The above table (Table No.4) provides information about the number of people from both the Hindu and Muslim Communities in different Government Offices in 1881. The fact also revealed that, the number of people from Hindu Community was almost two times in different Government Offices of Bengal than the people from the Muslim Community.

Table -5

The following table provides information about the distribution of Occupation among the two Communities (Hindus and Muslims) in Bengal during 1881.³⁷

Occupation	Number of People from Hindu Community	Percentage of Workers from Hindu Community	Number of People from Muslim Community	Percentage of Workers from Muslim Community
Professional Class	250382	2.09	82890	0.92
Domestic Class	397923	4.61	184897	2.05
Commercial Class	407998	4.76	229294	2.55
Agricultural Class	3016829	34.98	4327115	48.20
Manufacturing & Industrial Classes	950696	11.04	344123	3.82
Indefinite & Non-Productive Classes	3588733	41.61	3810103	42.44

Source: Census of Bengal, 1881.Vol.III, Pp.768-818, Table No. XXVII.

The striking facts regarding the occupational pattern, revealed out of the above table (table no. 5) is that, more than ninety percent (90.64%) of the Muslim community of Bengal were engaged in agricultural and non-productive activities. Agriculture and weaving were the sources of income of poor people. The position and conditions of the Muslim cultivators were very pathetic under Colonial Rule.

Table -6

The following table provides information about the representation of Students from Muslim Community in different Educational Institutions in the Academic Session of 1881-82 in Bengal.³⁸

Educational Institutions	Total No. of Students	Students from Muslim Community	Percentage of Student from Muslim Community
English College	2738	106	3.87
Oriental College	1089	1088	99.91
High School	43747	3831	8.76
Secondary School	37959	5032	13.26
Native Secondary School	56441	7735	13.70
Native Primary School	880937	217216	24.66
English High School for Girls	184	--	--
English Secondary School for Girls	340	6	1.76
Native Secondary School for Girls	527	6	1.14
Native Primary School for Girls	17452	1570	9.00
Teacher Training Centre (Normal school)	1007	55	5.46
Training Centre for Female Teacher	41	--	0.00

Private School	57305	25244	44.05
----------------	-------	-------	-------

Source: Haque Azizul., (1917). *History & Problems of Muslim Education in Bengal*, p.37-38 cited by Ahmed Wakil, (2019), *Unish Shatake Bangali Musalmaner Chinta O Chetonar Dhara*, Biswa Bangiya Prakashan, Kolkata, p.52

In Bengal, there were no Muslim Girl students out of the total of one hundred and eighty four (184) Girl students in English High School, the number of Girl students from Muslim community was four (4) in English Middle School out of three hundred and forty (340) Girl students, there were only six (06) Muslim Girl students out of five hundred and twenty seven (527) girl students in Secondary Girls' Schools, and one thousand five hundred and seventy (1570) Muslim Girl students were studied in Primary Girls' Schools out of seventeen thousands and four hundred and fifty two (17,452) Girl students in the session of 1881-82.³⁹ There were Eighty Six (86) Hindus, Eight (08) Mohammedans and Six (06) from other communities out of every one hundred students (100) in different educational institutions of Bengal during 1882.⁴⁰

Table -7

The following table provides information about the People who engaged in different Government Services in the year 1882 in Calcutta.⁴¹

Department	No. of Employee from Muslim Community	No. of Employee from Hindu Community	No. of Employee from Christian Community	Total No. of Employee	Percentage of Employee from Muslim Community
External Affairs	1	14	39	54	1.85
Home, Revenue & Agriculture	1	23	39	63	1.58
Law, Political & Employment	2	64	16	82	2.43
Revenue Board	1	88	24	113	0.88
Comptroller General Office	5	226	34	265	1.88
Post Master General Office	37	234	65	336	11.01
Post (Western Region of Bengal)	22	763	7	792	2.77
Post (Eastern Region of Bengal)	9	151	3	163	5.52
Post (Bihar & Orissa Circle)	37	353	19	409	9.04
General Registration	1	6	3	10	10
Education	38	421	114	573	6.63
High Court	92	131	20	243	37.86
Legal	1	11	1	13	7.69

Remembrance Office					
Lower Court	1	18	8	27	3.70
Surveyor General Office	10	18	55	83	12.04
Magistrate & Deputy Collector	22	153	41	216	10.18
Judge (Lower & Subordinate Court)	3	44	9	56	5.35
Munsef	14	247	Nil	261	5.36
Police	9	38	118	165	5.45
Public Welfare	17	217	167	401	4.23
Health	3	24	98	125	2.40
Public Education	6	98	53	157	3.82
Registration	3	18	4	25	12

Source: Aziz K K, *Ameer Ali: His Life and Works*. pp. 29-31 cited by Ahmed Wakil., (2019), *Unish Shatake Bangali Musalmaner Chinta O Chetonar Dhara*, Biswa Bangiya Prakashan, Kolkata, p.56.

The fact revealed out of the above table (Table no.7) provides information about the representation of the people from different communities in different Government Services. It is revealed out that Muslim representative in different Government Services in the year 1882 in Calcutta in much smaller numbers than people from other communities.

Hunter's Education Commission in 1882, made a survey on the condition of Muslim especially in Bengal proper and showed that the Muslims were educationally backward than the other communities of Bengal under British rule.⁴² In 1882-83, the 'Education Commission' also deliberately presented the girls from Muslim community of Bengal who were completely backward in the field of education.⁴³

The percentages of Muslims in different Government Institutions of Bengal were 4.6% in Arts Colleges, 9.6% in High English Schools, 12.3% in Middle English Schools, 13.2% in Middle Vernacular Institutions, 14.9% in Upper Primary Institutions and 31.7% in Lower Primary Institutions from 1883 to 1884.⁴⁴ In 1887, the people from the Muslim community of Bengal occupied only 3.18% of the total post in the Subordinate Judicial Service.⁴⁵ All sorts of employment, higher and lower level were being gradually snatched away within the Muslim Community in Bengal.⁴⁶

The New Revenue Policy adopted by the British Authorities led to an increase in annual tax collections. The lands were handed over to the bidders who gave the highest profits to the British authorities and at the same time all these profits were siphoned off to the distressed cultivators. According to W.W. Hunter, "the Mohammedans suffered most severely under the Colonial rule in Lower Bengal."⁴⁷

Table -8

The following table provides information about the representation of Students from Muslim Community in different Government Educational Institutions in Bengal in the Academic Session of 1890-91.⁴⁸

Educational Institutions (Govt.)	Total No. of Students	Students from Muslim Community	Percentage of Student from Muslim Community
Arts College	5232	293	5.60
High School (English)	78727	8265	10.50
Intermediate School (English)	61000	8884	14.56
Intermediate School (Bengali)	67741	10329	15.25
Upper Primary School	138950	26688	19.21
Pre Primary School	977632	271222	27.74
Professional College	1493	52	3.48
Training School	1983	220	11.09
Madrasah	2426	2279	93.94
Total	1335184	328232	24.58

Source: Karim Abdul (1900). *Mohammedan Education in Bengal*, (Appendix) cited by Ahmed Wakil., (2019), *Unish Shatake Bangali Musalmaner Chinta O Chetonar Dhara*, op.cit., p.53)

The Census Report of 1891 revealed that, there were Seven lakhs seventy-one thousand two hundred thirty-seven (771,237) Muslim weavers in Bengal and Bihar excluding Nadia, Noakhali, Tippera, Chittagong, Rangpur, Bogra, Dinajpur, and Jalpaiguri.⁴⁹ Peasants of Bengal, especially Muslims, generally had to rely on indigenous crafts, carpentry, jewellery and cabinet-making.

Table -9

The following table provides information about the representation of the Students from Muslim Community in Higher Education from 1885 to 1905.⁵⁰

Years	MA	BA (Hons)	BA (General)	BL	FA/IEA	Entrance
1885	1	1	9	3	12	44
1886	2	13	26	9	--	--
1887	3	11	21	4	31	51
1888	2	5	16	6	19	113
1889	3	7	23	3	--	54
1890	2	6	22	8	57	125
1891	2	6	12	12	16	110
1892	4	7	15	8	47	85
1893	--	6	24	3	35	172
1894	4	8	27	3	31	134
1895	4	5	23	2	59	153
1896	2	5	21	15	53	141
1897	3	4	12	12	52	241
1898	3	8	22	6	66	178
1899	3	8	28	7	68	203
1900	5	9	31	6	59	253

1901	3	6	21	8	52	209
1902	3	4	23	10	79	258
1903	5	4	21	6	65	176
1904	5	6	16	16	70	133
1905	2	6	28	7	46	180

Source: Haque Azizul., (1917). *History & Problems of Muslim Education in Bengal*, p.37-38., cited by Ahmed Wakil., (2019), *Unish Shatake Bangali Musalmaner Chinta O Chetonar Dhara*, Biswa Bangiya Prakashan, Kolkata, pp.53-54)

It is revealed out of the above table (Table No.9) about the status of Muslim Students especially in higher education in Bengal and the Students who were admitted in different educational institutions in higher education and completed several courses such as M.A., B.A., B.L., M.B., M.L.S., B.E., L.E. etc. It is important to note that the students' representation in M.A., B.A. (Hons & General) and B.L. Courses was fairly smaller than the number of Student who have taken F.A./I.E.A. and entrance examinations. The representation of the Students from Muslim Community was fairly small in M.A., B.A.(Hons) and B.A. (General) courses meaning thereby they had little opportunities for higher level of services during the period of study.

Table -10

The following table provides information about the Students from Muslim Community who received different Degrees and Certificates from 1857 to 1905 in Bengal.⁵¹

Degree	Total No. of Awardees from Muslim Community
MA	67
BA (Hons)	136
BA (General)	502
BL	168
Licentiate in Law	5
MB	1
MLS	17
BE	2
LE	1

Source: Wakil Ahmed (2019), *Unish Shatake Bangali Musalmaner Chinta O Chetonar Dhara*, op.cit., p.55.

The fact revealed out of the above table (Table no.10) that, the People from Muslim community were in worse situation in the Second half of nineteenth century as the completion of several courses in higher education in Bengal.

In Bengal, a number of Muslim writers had emerged in the late Nineteenth Century who contributed in the liberal ideas and rational thoughts among Muslims through their writings.⁵² Mir Mosaraf Hossain was one of them. He wrote many books about the situation and position of the Muslims of Bengal. He described the miserable condition of the Indigo ryotes in his 'Zamidar Darpan'.⁵³ Ghaji Miar Bastuni' is another notable work of Mir Mosaraf Hossain.⁵⁴ He criticized the degradation of the social life of the Muslims of Bengal in his writings. Dilwar Hossain Ahmed and Khan Bahadur Abdul Jabbar were notable intellectuals of Bengal who contributed in the development of Muslim Society.⁵⁵

Dilawar Hosain, a renowned writer, contributed in bringing ideological changes in the deliverance of intellect in the Muslim Society of Bengal through his writings.⁵⁶

In the last quarter of the Nineteenth century, there were some journal and periodicals edited by Muslim writers in Bengal, such as- "Mohammad -e- Akhbar" (1877), "Mussalman" (1884), "Mussalman Bandhu" (1885), "Islam" (1885), "Islam Pracharak" (1891), "Kohinoor" (1898), and "Nur-al-Imam" (1900).⁵⁷

Syed Emdad Ali was a rational writer of Bengal. "Nabanur" a monthly Bengali periodical which was first published in 1903 under the editorship of Syed Emdad Ali. He pointed out in his editorial periodical that, the Muslims of Bengal were very backward in every field and their lives became paralyzed.⁵⁸ Nationalist writer Reazuddin Ahmed Mashadi propagated the liberal and rational thoughts among the people of Bengal in the last decade of the Nineteenth century and the first decade of the twentieth century.⁵⁹ Reazuddin Ahmed was a renowned professor of Bengali and Sanskrit in Calcutta Madrasa. He inspired the Muslims of Bengal to accept scientific knowledge and western education. Munshi Mehrullah and Munshi Shaikh Muhammad Jamiruddin were prominent intellectuals from Muslim Community of Bengal who developed the political thoughts among the Muslims of Bengal through political organizations and educational conferences.⁶⁰

In 1903, Syed Wahed Hussain raised the issue of education for Muslim women on behalf of the 'Bengali Provincial Muslim Education Association' and to establish separate schools for Muslim girls.⁶¹ The foundation of Muslim Girls School had played a significant role in the expansion of education for Muslim women in the first decade of the 20th century in Bengal. Khujista Akhtar Banu established a Muslim girls' school in Calcutta in 1909, named as 'Suhrawardi Balika Vidyalaya'. She was also known as Banu Suhrawardia Begum. She eliminated the subjugations, sufferings and illiteracy of Muslim women tirelessly.⁶² The Muslims of Bengal were lagged behind from other communities in terms of higher education till 1911.⁶³

'Bangiya Musalman Sahitya Samity' played a significant role in the development of Muslim society of Bengal. It was established in 1911 in Calcutta. Mohammad Shahidullah (A renowned Linguistic) was the founding secretary of the Samity.⁶⁴ It was a non-communal institution. The prominent Muslim writers were- Moulana Maniruzzaman Islamabadi, Maulavi Majibur Rahaman, Shaikh Abdur Rahim, Mojammel Haque, Munshi Mohammad Reazuddin Ahmed, Moulana Mohammad Akram Khan, Mohammad Raoshan Ali Chaudhury.⁶⁵ The members of the Samity encouraged the volunteers to maintain harmony between Hindus and Muslims.⁶⁶

'Shakhawat Memorial Girls' School was established in 1911. The school was opened only with eight (08) students. It was regarded as a shining light in the development of education for Muslim women. The percentage of Muslim students increased to 7.2% in colleges, 14.7% in High Schools and 25% in Middle schools in Bengal in the year of 1914.⁶⁷ 'Calcutta Mohammedan Ladies' Association' (it is known as Anjuman e Khawatin Islam) established in 1915 by Begum Rokeya Shakhawat Hussain, who played a magnificent role in the development of education for Muslim women of Bengal. Shamsunnahar Mahmud was closely associated with this organization from the beginning.⁶⁸

Shamsunnahar Mahmud not only spread the education among women, but also spread the socio - political consciousness among the Muslim Women of Bengal. She had taken the

initiatives for the establishment of women's organizations in Bengal. She was actively associated with some prominent organizations such as 'All India Women's Conference', 'National Council for Women in India', 'Bengal Women's Education League', 'Bengal Provincial Council of Women' etc. for the promotion of women's education and establishment of women's rights during colonial rule.⁶⁹ She wrote in "Saugat" regarding the problem of women education under colonial rule.⁷⁰ She edited "Bulbul" magazine which was first published in 1933.

In 1935, Begum Hamid Ali and Shamsunnahar Mahmud submitted a memorandum to the Linlithgow Committee on behalf of the Women's Organizations.⁷¹ Shamsunnahar was associated with the literary magazines "Atma Shakti" and "Nowroz" which were published in Calcutta. Her notable literary works were "Rokeyajibani" (1937), "Begum Mahal" (1938), "Shishu Shiksha" (1939), "Phul Bagicha", "Amar DekhaTuraska" and numerous essays.⁷²

Conclusion:

The Muslim Community of Bengal degenerated and suffered the most in socio-economic and political fields of the society than the other communities after the Revolt of 1857. The British Authority did not provide attention in the promotion of education for Muslims in Bengal and it was allowed to decay. The newly emerged educated Muslims lost their prospects of Government jobs. The common people from Muslim community such as cultivators, labourers and artisans who formed the majority section of the society also suffered in all fields of the society of Bengal during post 1857 Revolt period. The People from Muslim Community in Bengal had to depend on various indigenous industries like Carpentry, Jewellery, Leather Manufacturing, Metal Manufacturing, Weaving and the Manufacturing of Textile Fabrics during the period of study.

The Industrial Monopoly of the British Authority overthrew the traditional handicraft industries of Bengal which greatly affected the indigenous industries of the rural Muslims in Bengal. The indigenous industry was completely destroyed which was mostly occupied by the Muslim artisans. A large number of Muslim weavers of Bengal were driven out of their profession resulting the disastrous effect upon the lives of the poor Muslims and also on the rural economy. W.W. Hunter stated that, "the Muslim merchants were greatly affected after the Revolt of 1857, when the Indian trade was controlled directly by the British Government." The progress of consciousness towards nationalized politics was an artefact of the growth of Secularism and western education among Muslims of Bengal. They took initiatives for political agitation to attain 'Swaraj' along with others.

References:

1. Ray, Rajat Kanta (2003). *Felt Community: Communalism and Mentality before the Emergency of Indian Nationalism*. Oxford University Press, New Delhi, p. 358.
2. Chatterjee, Nandalal Cited in Embree A.T. (1986), *1857 in India: Mutiny or War of Independence*. Paperback, pp.62-63.
3. Lahiri, Pradip Kumar (1991). *Bengali Muslim Thought 1818-1947*. K.P. Bagchi & Company, Kolkata, pp-39-54.
4. Gait E.A., *Report of the Census of India, 1901*, Vol.VI, Part-1, pp.439 & 451.
5. Aziz, K. K., (1968). *Amir Ali: His Life and work*. Edited volume, Lahore, p.42.
6. *Census of Bengal in 1881*, Part-III, pp.768-810.

7. Risley, Herbert (1894). *People of India*. Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal, Part-III, 2nd Edition, p.144.
8. Roy, Asim (2014). *The Islamic Syncretistic Tradition in Bengal*. Princeton University Press, Princeton, pp.19-57.
9. Ahmed, Rafiuddin (1981). *The Bengal Muslims 1876-1905: A Quest for Identity*. Oxford University Press, Delhi, p.6
10. *Report of the Census of India, 1921, Vol.V, Part-I, Chapter-IX*, p.109.
11. Bogra, Baharuddin Ahmed (1885). *The Bengal Musalmans or A short Sketch of Muhammedan Life in Bengal*. Calcutta, pp.12-13.
12. De, Amalendu (1974). *Roots of Separatism in Nineteenth Century Bengal*. Rakta Korobi Prakashani, Calcutta, pp.25-26
13. Ahmed, Rafiuddin (1981). *The Bengal Muslims 1876-1905: A Quest for Identity*. op. cit., p.6.
14. Ibid.
15. Ibid, P.10
16. Lahiri, Pradip Kumar (1991). *Bengal Muslim Thought 1818-1947*, Op.cit., P.3.
17. Ibid, p.4.
18. *Report of the Census of India, 1911, Vol. V, Bengal, Part-II*, Pp.191-198; and De Amalendu (1974), *Roots of Separatism in Nineteenth Century Bengal*, op.cit., P. 26.
19. Khan, Muinuddin Ahmed (1960). *Muslim Struggle for Freedom in Bengal 1757-1947*. Islamic Foundation, Dhaka, P.33.
20. Lahiri, Pradip Kumar (1991). *Bengali Muslim thought 1818-1947*.Op.cit., P.49.
21. Khan Muinuddin Ahmed (1960), *Muslim Struggle for Freedom in Bengal 1757-1947*. Op. cit., P.32.
22. Ibid.
23. Lahiri, Pradip Kumar (1991). *Bengali Muslim thought 1818-1947*. Op. cit., P.49.
24. Ibid, P.51.
25. Sen, Shila (1975). *Muslim Politics in Bengal 1937-1947*. Thesis, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, P.19.
26. . Hunter, W.W (1876), *The Indian Musalmans*. Trubner & Company, London, P. 101.
27. *Quarterly Civil List for the Lower Provinces of Bengal*, XVII (New Series), Calcutta, 1871, Pp.11-80.
28. Khalid, Omar (2006). *Muslims in Indian Economy*. Glorious Printers, New Delhi, P.18.
29. Hunter. W.W (1876), *The Indian Musalmans*, Op. cit., P. 101.
30. Sen. Shila (1975), *Muslim Politics in Bengal 1937-1947*, Op.cit., P.19
31. Ibid, P.24
32. Haque, Azizul. (1917). *History & Problems of Muslim Education in Bengal*. Pp.37-38 cited by Ahmed Wakil., (2019), *Unish Shatake Bangali Musalmaner Chinta O Chetonar Dhara*, Biswa Bangiya Prakashan, Kolkata, P.52.
33. Lahiri, Pradip Kumar (1991). *Bengali Muslim thought 1818-1947*. Op.cit., Pp.40-44.
34. Ibid.
35. Ibid, p.53.
36. *Public Service Commission, 1887, Part-VI*, p. 43.
37. *Census of India, 1891, Table IV, Lower Provinces of Bengal*, pp.225-351. The British Industrial policy in 1916 badly affected the rural Muslims of Bengal. Dutta R.C.

(Reprint 2006), 'The Economic History of India' Vol. II, Publication Division, Government of India, Pp.73-91.

38. *Report of Indian Education Commission, 1882*, Para 187.
39. Lahiri, Pradip Kumar (1991). *Bengali Muslim thought 1818-1947*. Op. cit., P.7.
40. *Report of the Director of Public Instructions of Bengal, 1883-1884*, p.149.
41. *The Indian Class*, P. 137 Cited by Ahmed Wakil., (2019), *Unish Shatake Bangali Musalmaner Chinta O Chetonar Dhara*, Op.cit., Pp.58-59.
42. Firdous, Shamim (2010). *Nari O Siksha*. Bulbul Prakashani, Kolkata, P.4.
43. Ahmed, Wakil. (2019), *Unish Shatake Bangali Musalmaner Chinta O Chetonar Dhara*, Op.cit. Pp. 101-102.
44. Karim, Abdul. (1900), *Mohammedan Education in Bengal*, Appendix, cited Ahmed Wakil. (2019), *Unish Shatake Bangali Musalmaner Chinta O Chetonar Dhara*, Op.cit., P.53.
45. *Report of the Durbin*, A Persian Daily, on 14th July, 1969.
46. New Zamindars were the holders and servants of East India Company who had obtained Zamindars by bidding for the payment of Revenue. They were the large number of Calcutta's Banians who had lands in the names of native Banias and Servants.
47. *Report of the Indian Famine Commission, 1880*, Vol. III, p.290.
48. Haque, Azizul. (1917) *History & Problems of Muslim Education in Bengal*. P.37-38 cited by Ahmed Wakil., (2019), *Unish Shatake Bangali Musalmaner Chinta O Chetonar Dhara*, Op.cit., Pp.53-54.
49. *Records of Government of India*, Serial No.2, CC. IV, Part- II, P.43.
50. Ahmed. Wakil (2019), *Unish Shatake Bangali Musalmaner Chinta O Chetonar Dhara*. Op.cit., P.55
51. Aziz, K. K, *Ameer Ali: His Life and Works*. Op.cit, Pp. 29-31 Cited by Ahmed Wakil. (2019), *Unish Shatake Bangali Musalmaner Chinta O Chetonar Dhara*, Op.cit., P.56.
52. Lahiri. Pradip Kumar., (1991), *Bengali Muslim thought 1818-1947*. Op. cit., P.44.
53. Ibid, P.45.
54. Ibid.
55. Ibid, P.42.
56. Anisuzzaman (1968), *Muslim Banglar Samajik Patra (1831-1930)*, Dacca, Preface, Pp.24-27.
57. *Islam Procharok*. Agrahayan Paush, 1310 Bongabdo, P. 418.
58. Lahiri. Pradip Kumar (1991), *Bengali Muslim thought 1818-1947*. Op. cit., P. 46.
59. Ibid. P.45.
60. Ghosh.Vinay., (1968), *Banglar Samajik Itihaser Dhara (1800-1900)*. Volume.V, Pathbhavan, Calcutta, P. 219.
61. Firdous. Shamim (2010), *Nari O Siksha*, Op. cit., Pp.9-10.
62. Ahmed. Sufia., (1996), *The Muslim Community of Bengal (1884-1912)*, Bangla Academy, Dhaka, P. 51.
63. Haque, Mojammeel. (1380 B.S), *Najrul Academy Patrika*. 3rd Year, Issue-I, The Initial Story of the establishment of the Bangiya Musalman Sahitya Samity, Calcutta Pp. 98-101.
64. Ibid.

65. Bahar. Mohammad Habibullah., (1336B.S), *Sahitya Samitir Itihas*, Masik Mohammadi, 14th Year, Issue.7, Pp.207-208.
66. Firdous. Shamim., (2010), *Nari O Siksha*, Op. cit., P.14.
67. Ibid
68. *General Report on Public Instructions of Bengal 1913-1914*.
69. Ibid
70. Ibid, P.15.
71. Akhtar. Shaheen and Bhowmik. Mousumi., (1998), *Janana Mohfil*, (Edited), Stri Prakashani, Kolkata, Pp. 206-207.
72. Firdous. Shamim (2010), *Nari O Siksha*, Op. cit., P.17.