CHAPTER-IV

Violence against Muslim Women in Barak Valley: A Holistic Perspective from an Empirical Study

In the preceding chapters we have discussed the international and national mechanisms dealing with the rights of women. Various rights conferred to women by various international Conventions and Declarations as human rights are discussed in details. Further, rights and privileges of women conferred by the Indian Constitution are discussed. Legislations relating to women for the protection and promotion of their rights are discussed and analyzed in great detail (Chapter II). Besides in Chapter III we have studied the origin and development of Muslim Personal Law in India and the status and rights of women in Muslim Personal Law. In addition, the movement for change in the Muslim Personal Law since independence and the issue of Shah Banu Case and the subsequent demand for a Uniform Civil Code have also been discussed.

Equality of men and women and non-discrimination on the basis of gender constitutes one of the vital human rights concerns, finding expression in all international instruments as well as in the Indian constitution. In reality, however**,** women's rights are violated in different countries all over the world. Violence against women cuts across religion, culture, race, class and geographical boundaries. India is no exception to that. But as the socio-economic fabric of the Indian society represents a multicultural and heterogeneous setting, the nature and forms of oppression and exploitation of women also differs in Indian society.

Against this background, in the present chapter an attempt has been made to study the overall situation of violence against Muslim women in Barak valley. In order to understand the real-life situations of the Muslim women victims of violence an empirical study has been

conducted on 75 respondents (Muslim women victims of violence). Besides, few case studies of women victims of violence have been conducted for an in-depth understanding of the problem. A detailed discussion about the methodology regarding the selection of respondents has been made in chapter I. The present chapter has been divided into five sections:

Section 1- Profile of the study area i.e. Barak Valley and the Socio-economic profile of the respondents.

Section 2- Nature and Forms of Violence against Muslim Women in Barak Valley.

Section 3- Causes and Consequences of Violence against Muslim Women in Barak Valley.

Section 4- Awareness and Perception of Muslim Women regarding the Socio-legal and Constitutional Protective Measures.

Section 5- Case Studies of the Victims.

SECTION I

This section deals with the profile of Barak Valley (study area) and the socio-economic background of the respondents.

Profile of the study area (Barak Valley)

The Barak Valley forms the southern part of the state of Assam in India's north eastern region and is presently comprised of three districts, namely, Cachar, Karimganj and Hailakandi. Before independence and partition of India it was a part of the larger Surma Valley (consisting of two districts, namely Sylhet and Cachar) which was transferred by the British from the Dacca Division of Bengal to Assam in 1874. The state of Assam today is composed of three

physical divisions, namely, i) The Brahmaputra Valley, ii) the Barak Valley and iii) the Hill range.[1]

Geography, Topography and Climate

The Brahmaputra Valley, which forms northern part, is the largest division comprising 71.7 percent of total geographical area of the state. On the other hand, the Barak Valley region, which forms the southern part, is comparatively smaller in size. The two Valleys derived their names from the respective main rivers, the Brahmaputra and the Barak flowing through east to west in the respective valleys. The Hills division formed by the Karbi Anglong and the North- Cachar hills stands between the two Valleys.[2]

The Barak Valley region is situated between Longitude 92° 15´ and 93° 15´ East and Latitude 24° 8´ and 25° 8´ North covering an area of 6922 sq. Km. The Valley constitutes 8.9 percent of the geographical area of the state. The region shares its border with North Cachar Hill district (present Dima Hasao district) and the state of Meghalaya in the north; the state of Manipur in the east; the state of Mizoram in the south and the state of Tripura and the Sylhet district of Bangladesh in the west. The region has an undulating topography characterized by hills hillock, wide plains and low-lying waterlogged areas. The climate of the Barak Valley region is subtropical, warm and humid. During the summer months temperature generally varies between 10° and 25° Celsius. The humidity remains high throughout the year with minor recess during the months of March and April. The relative humidity varies from 58 percent to 91 percent.[3]

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[1] Roy, S. (2009). Post-colonial land economy of Barak Valley. In J. B. Bhattacharjee (Ed.), *Development strategies for Barak Valley(Assam).* New Delhi: Akansha Publishing House, p. 22.

[2] Roy, N. (2009). Exploring Barak Valley for development strategy. In J. B. Bhattacharjee (Ed.), *Development strategies for Barak Valley (Assam).* New Delhi: Akansha Publishing House, p. 49.

[3] Ibid, pp. 49-51.

Administrative Division

Barak Valley is comprised of three districts, namely, Cachar, Karimganj and Hailakandi. The Cachar is the largest and the Hailakandi is the smallest district with total geographical areas of 3786 sq. Km. and 1327 sq. Km. respectively, and that of Karimganj district is 1809 sq. Km. The district head quarters of Cachar, Karimganj and Hailakandi are Silchar, Karimganj and Hailakandi respectively. Out of these three districts of the valley, Cachar has two subdivisions while Karimganj and Hailakandi have one sub-division each. There are three Zila Parishads in the Valley, 27 development blocks and 321 Gaon Panchayats. In each district there is one Zila parishad. Out of the 27 development blocks in the Valley, there are 15 development blocks in Cachar district and in Karimganj and Hailakandi district, there are 7 and 5 development blocks respectively. Again out of 321 Gaon Panchayats in the Valley, there are 163 Gaon Panchayats in Cachar district and in Karimganj and Hailakandi, there are 96 and 62 Gaon Panchayats respectively. Out of 2307 villages in the Valley, there are 1040 villages in Cachar district, 936 villages in Karimganj and 331 villages in Hailakandi district.[4]

Demographic and Social Profile of Barak Valley

Population: The total population of Barak Valley as per 2011 census is 3,624,599 (among which 1850038 are male and 1774561 are female). Out of the total population in the Valley, in Cachar, Karimganj and Hailakandi district it is 1736617 (886284 are male and 850333 are female), 1228686 (625864 are male and 602822 are female) and 659296 (337890 are male and 321406 are female) respectively. Thus out of total population of the Valley, the district Cachar covered 47.91 per cent, the district Karimganj covered 33.89 percent and district Hailakandi covered 18.19 per cent of population.

[4] Statistical Handbook of Assam 2014, Directorate of Economics and Statistics, Govt. of Assam, p. 2.

As per 2011 census, 11.62 percent of the total population of the state is covered by Barak Valley. The share of population of Cachar, Karimganj and Hailakandi district to the total population of Assam are 5.56, 3.94 and 2.11 respectively. The percentage of male population in the Valley is 51.04 and the percentage of female population in the Valley is 48.96.[5]

Sex Ratio: An important indicator of gender parity is the number of females per thousand males. Out of the three districts of Barak Valley, in Cachar district the sex ratio is 959 as per census 2011.[6] In Karimganj district the sex ratio is 963 as per 2011 census[7] and in Hailakandi district it is 951 as per 2011 census.[8]

Literacy rate (male and female): out of the three districts of Barak Valley, the average literacy rate of Cachar district is 79.43 per cent in 2011. As per census 2011, in Cachar district the male and female literacy rates are 84.78 percent and 73.88 per cent respectively.[9] In Karimganj district, average literacy rate in 2011 is 78.22 per cent. If things are looked out at gender wise, male and female literacy are 84.12 per cent and 72.09 per cent respectively.[10] In Hailakandi district the average literacy rate in 2011 is 74.33 per cent. Gender wise male and female literacy rate are 80.74 per cent and 67.60 per cent respectively.[11] Here an attempt has been made to find out the average literacy rates of Muslims and the district wise literacy

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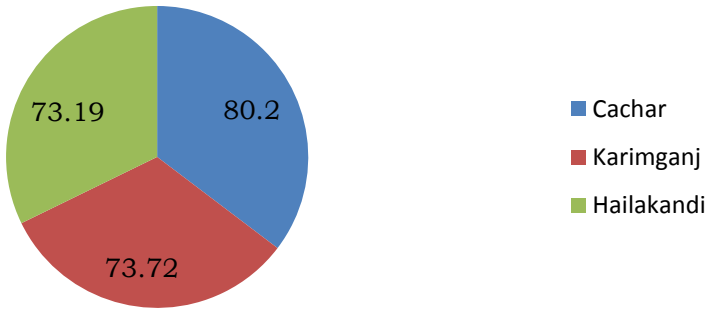
[5] Ibid, p.3-4.
[6] *Cachar District Population Census 2011*, Retrieved on 13 January 2016 from http:/ /www.census 2011.co.in/census/district/144-cachar.html.
[7] *Karimganj District Population Census 2011*, Retrieved on 14 January 2016 from http://www.census2011.co.in/census/district/158-karimganj.html.
[8] *Hailakandi District Population Census 2011*, Retrieved on 14 January 2016 http://www.census 2011.co.in/census/district/153-hailakandi.html.
[9] *Cachar District Population Census 2011*, Retrieved on 14 January 2016 from http://www.census2011.co.in/census/district/144-cachar.html.
[10] Karimganj District Population Census 2011, Retrieved on 14 Retrieved on 14 January 2016 from http://www.census2011.co.in/census/district/158-karimganj. html.
[11] *Hailakandi District Population Census 2011*, Retrieved on 14 January 2016 from http://www.census2011.co.in/census/district/153-hailakandi.html.

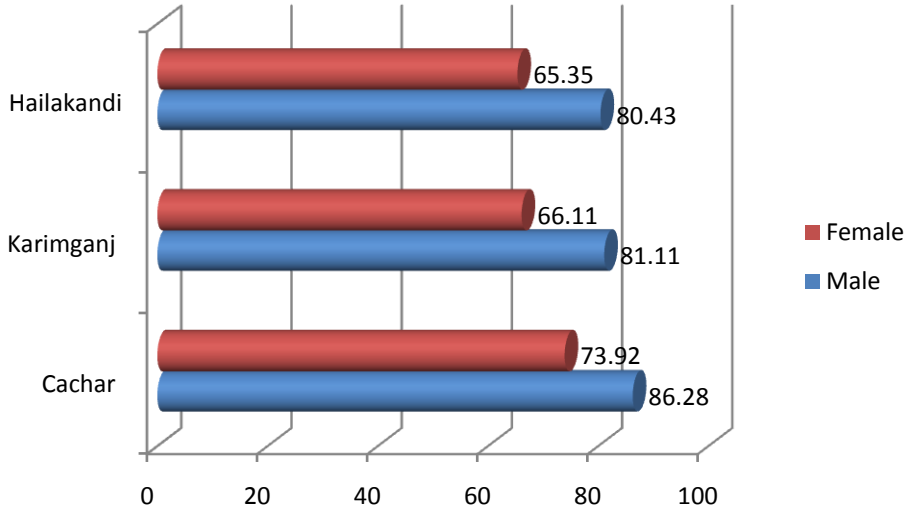
rates of Muslims by sex in Barak Valley. Figure 4.01 shows that the average literacy rate of Muslims is highest in Cachar district (80.2 percent), which is followed by Karimganj (73.72 percent) and Hailakandi (73.19 percent) districts in the Valley. Thus, the average literacy rates of Muslims in all the three districts of Barak Valley are more or less similar to the average literacy rates of all the districts in general. However, it is clear from Figure 01 that the literacy rates of Muslims in Karimgnaj district is much less than the average literacy rates of the district (for Muslims it is 73.72 percent whereas it stands at 78.22 percent as an average literacy rates of the district). In Hailakandi district also the average literacy rate of the district is slightly higher than the Muslim average literacy rates in the district (district average literacy rate 74.33 percent whereas the Muslims average literacy rate in the district is 73.19 percent). However, in Cachar district of the Valley the average literacy rate of the Muslims is little higher than the average literacy rate of the district.

Figure 4.01: Pie Diagram Showing the Average Literacy Rates of Muslims in each of the Three Districts of Barak Valley (in percentage)



Source- Calculated from Census of India, 2011, Population Enumeration Data, Religion PCA (India & States/UTs/District/Sub-Dist/Town Level), Assam, Retrieved from http://www.censusindia.gov.in/2011census/Religion _PCA. html.

Figure 4.02: Bar Diagram Showing the District Wise Literacy Rates of Muslims by Sex in Barak Valley (in percentage)



Source: Calculated from Census of India, 2011, Population Enumeration Data, Religion PCA (India & States/UTs/District/Sub-Dist/Town Level), Assam.

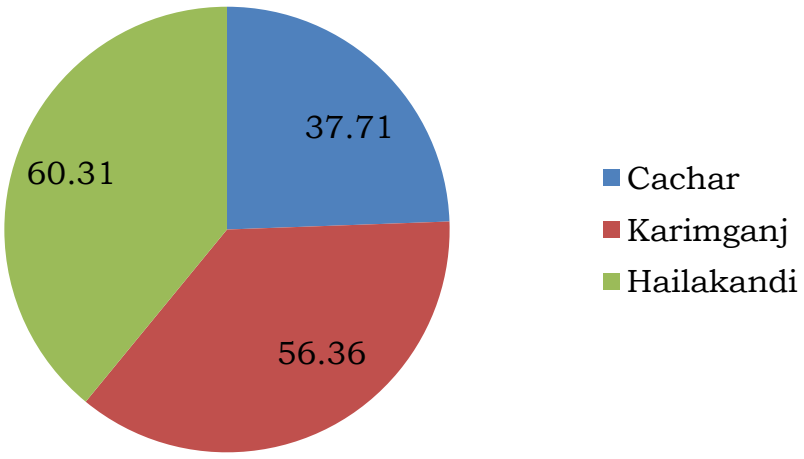
Figure 4.02 shows that the female literacy rate among Muslims in all the three districts of Barak Valley is much below than the Muslim male literacy rate. In both Hailakandi and Karimganj districts of the Valley the difference is approximately more than 15 percent. In Cachar district the difference is more than 12 percent. Again the Muslim female literacy rate is below than the average female literacy rate in Karimganj and Hailakandi districts of the Valley. However, in Cachar district the Muslim female literacy rate is almost similar to that of the average female literacy rate of the district.

Religion and Language

Out of the three districts of Barak Valley, in Cachar district, as per the data on Population by Religious Communities of Census 2011, out of total population of all religions in the district, 59.83 per cent are Hindus, 37.71 per cent are Muslims, 2.17 per cent are Christians, 0.02 per cent are Sikhs, 0.02 per cent are Buddhists, 0.10 per cent are Jains, 0.01 per cent are others and 0.16 % have not stated

religion. In Karimganj district, out of total population of all religions in the district, 42.48 % are Hindus, 56.36 % are Muslims, 0.98 per cent is Christians, 0.01 per cent are Sikhs, 0.04 per cent are Buddhists, 0.04 per cent are Jains, 0.01 per cent is others and 0.09 per cent have not stated their religion. And in Hailakandi district, out of total population of all religions in the district, 38.10 per cent are Hindus, 60.31 per cent are Muslims, 1.29 per cent are Christians, 0.01 per cent are Sikhs, 0.07 per cent are Buddhists, 0.04 per cent are Jains, 0.10 per cent are others and 0.08 per cent have not stated their religion.[12] Linguistically majority of the population of the valley are Bengali.

Figure 4.03: Pie Diagram showing the Muslim Population in Barak Valley as per 2011 Census (in percentage)



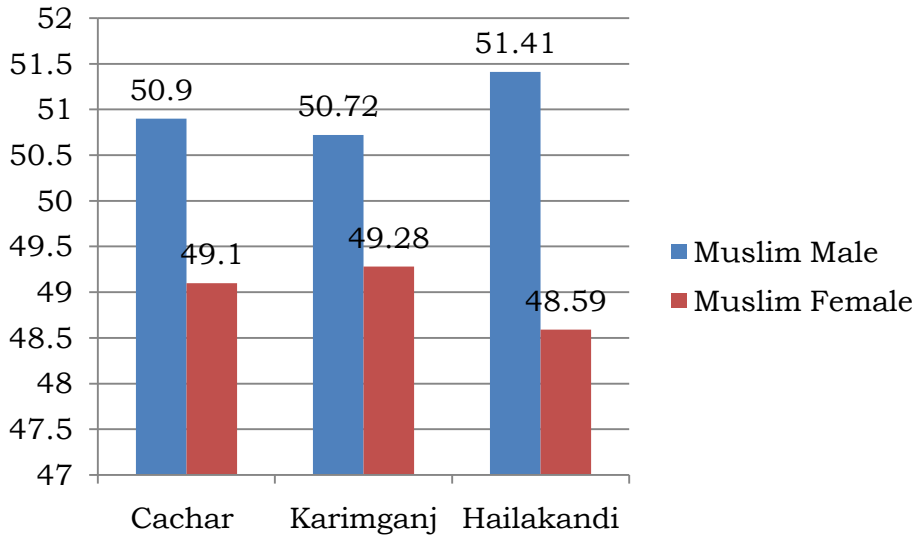
Source- Calculated from Census of India 2011, Population by Religious Communities, Assam.

Thus it is clear from Figure 4.03 that out of the three districts of Barak Valley, they are majority in two districts namely, Hailakandi and Karimganj in terms of population.

[12] Government of India, Census 2011. *Population by Religious Community*, Retrieved on 14 January 2016 from http://www.censusindia.gov.in/2011census/population_enumeration.html.

The Muslims of Barak Valley reside in the three districts of Cachar, Karimganj and Hailakandi. They constitute almost half of the total population of three districts. Almost all the Muslims of Barak Valley region are speakers of Bengali language except minority Muslim groups like Meitei speaking Manipuri Muslims and Hindi speaking migrants from North-India who are ex-tea garden labourers or their descendents.

Figure 4.04: Sex Wise (male-female) Distribution of Muslim Population in Barak Valley (in percentage)



Source: Calculated from Census of India 2011, Data on Religion,C-15 Religious Community by Age-Group and Sex (India & States/UTs/District Level), Assam.

Figure 4.04 shows that among the total Muslim population in the three districts of the Valley, in Cachar district there are 50.9 percent Muslim male and 49.1 percent Muslim females. In Karimganj district the male and female ratio among Muslims is 50.72 percent and 49.28 percent respectively. In Hailakandi district, the male and female ratio among Muslims is 51.41 percent and 48.59 percent respectively.

Socio-Economic Profile of the Respondents

The nature and intensity of violence against women are closely linked with the socio-economic background of both the victims and the culprits involved. Socio-economic status is an individual's or group's position in the social structure and an individual's behaviour is measured using its contents. Socio-economic status includes a variety of variables like age, gender, religious background, income, education etc. Violence against women is a universal phenomenon and women of all socio-economic status are victims of such violence. History tells us that violence against women were prevalent at every stage, however there were variations in the rate as well as the nature of violence. In the present study the socio-economic profile of the respondents was prepared by the variables viz. age, education, occupation, marital status, type of marriage, age at which got married, income etc.

Age of Respondents

Of the total respondents who took part in the study, a good number of the respondents (34.67%) belong to the age group between 19-25 years old, followed by 30.66 % in the age category 26-35 years and 21.33% in the age group 36-45 years. A small percentage of the respondents i.e., 2.67% and 10.67% belong to the age groups below 18, and 46 and above respectively. Table 4.01 depicts the age distribution of the respondents.

Table 4.01: Distribution of Respondents by Age

Age Group	No of Respondents	Percentage
Below 18	2	2.67
19-25	26	34.67
26-35	23	30.66
36-45	16	21.33
46 and Above	8	10.67
Total	75	100

Source- Fieldwork by the Researcher

The data clearly dispels the fact that age is not a barrier for violence and it can happen at any age level. However, from the data it is obvious that women between the age group of 19-25 and 26-35 are at a higher risk of being subjected to violence than women of other age groups.

Education of Respondents

It is often recognized that victims education have a direct bearing to their strength and capacity to fight against violence and to exercise appropriate legal measures against the culprits. The role of education as an agent of change does not need to highlight. Education creates awareness among the people of their rights in different domains of life. It is education which helps in accepting innovations, increasing response and altering attitudes and perceptions. Education plays a significant role in the life of any individual. Higher the level of education, higher is the potential for resisting any action of injustice and exploitation. As far as women are concerned, education gives them a voice against all types of evils affected on them and empowers them to fight for justice. It is generally believed that the extent of violence against women is less in cases where the woman is educated. Education helps a woman to know what is happening outside her immediate surroundings. It also facilitates her to develop rational

outlook towards life. Education widens the horizon and makes the woman more knowledgeable. Education also helps a woman to get jobs and economic returns. It also enhances social prestige of a woman. The study shows that majority of the respondents (46.67%) are illiterate, 28% have the education up to middle level, and 12% of them have the education up to secondary level. Another 8% of the respondents have the education up to primary level. 4% and 1.33% are higher secondary passed and graduate respectively. Thus it can be concluded that violence is more experienced by illiterate women. The level of education of the respondents is given in Table 4.02.

Table 4.02: Distribution of Respondents by Education

Level of Education	No of Respondents	Percentage
Illiterate	35	46.67
Primary	6	8
Middle	21	28
Secondary	9	12
Higher Secondary	3	4
Graduate	1	1.33
Total	75	100

Source: Fieldwork by the Researcher

Respondents Age at Marriage

As regards the victims' ages at the time of marriage, it has been found that (Table 4.03) 41.33% get married between the ages of 18-28 years. But it is shocking that about 36% of the women victims get married below the legal age of 18 years. As many as 6.67% of the victims do not know their age at the time of marriage and 16% are married between 29-39 years of age. Table 4.03 depicts the clear picture:

Table 4.03: Distribution of Respondents by Age at Marriage

Age Group	No of Respondents	Percentage
Under 18	27	36
18-28	31	41.33
29-39	12	16
Don't Know	5	6.67
Total	75	100

Source: Fieldwork by the Researcher

Marital Status

Of the total women victims surveyed, it has been found that (Table 4.04) out of the total respondents, 54.67% of them are married, 42.66% are separated and 2.67% are divorcee. It has been found in the course of field study that those who have taken recourse to legal assistance normally don't stay with their abusers.

Table 4.04: Distribution of Respondents by Marital Status

Marital Status	No of Respondents	Percentage
Married	41	54.67
Separated	32	42.66
Divorcee	2	2.67
Total	75	100

Source: Fieldwork by the Researcher

Occupation of the Respondents

It is generally believed that attitude of individuals generally vary with variations in their socio-economic status. Socio-economic status depends upon education, occupation and income. An occupation is an economic activity performed by an adult member of the society which

has direct or indirect social and financial consequences and that constitutes a major role in the life of a person. In terms of occupational status and usual activities of the respondents, it has been found (Table 4.05) that a vast majority of them i.e., 74.67% are housewives and the rest (25.33%) are working women.

Table 4.05: Distribution of Respondents by Occupation

Occupation	No of Respondents	Percentage
Housewife	56	74.67
Working Women	19	25.33
Total	75	100

Source: Fieldwork by the Researcher

Monthly Income of Respondents

The study indicated that the majority of women are economically dependent as they didn't have an independent income. In the present study it has been that 74.67% of the respondents have no earning source, 16% are earning less than 1000 per month and 5.33% are earning in the range of rupees 1001-2000 per month. Only 2.67 % belongs to income group of rupees 2001-3000 and 1.33% in the income group of 3001-5000.

Table 4.06: Distribution of Respondents by Monthly Income

Income per month	No of respondents	Percentage
No earning source	56	74.67
Below 1000	12	16
1001-2000	4	5.33
2001-3000	2	2.67
3001-5000	1	1.33
Total	75	100

Source: Fieldwork by the Researcher

A summary of the socio-economic profile of the respondents is given below:

- The present study includes respondents belonging to different age groups starting from below 18 to 46 years and above. Of the total respondents who took part in the study, a good number of the respondents (34.67%) belong to the age group between 19-25 years old, followed by 30.66 % in the age category 26-35 years and 21.33% in the age group 36-45 years. A small percentage of the respondents i.e., 2.67% and 10.67% belong to the age groups below 18, and 46 and above respectively.

  The data clearly dispels the fact that age is not a barrier for violence and it can happen at any age level. However, from the data it is obvious that women between the age group of 19-25 and 26-35 are at a higher risk of being subjected to violence than women of other age groups.

- Violence is seen more among the illiterate women. It is often recognised that victims education have a direct bearing to their strength and capacity to fight against violence and to exercise appropriate legal measures against the culprits. The study shows that majority of the respondents (46.67%) are illiterate, 28% have the education up to middle level, and 12% of them have the education up to secondary level. Another 8% of the respondents have the education up to primary level. 4% and 1.33% are higher secondary passed and graduate respectively.

- As regards the victims' ages at the time of marriage, it is noticed that 41.33% are married between the ages of 18-28 years. But it is shocking that about 36% of the women victims are married below the legal age of 18 years. As many as 6.67% of the victims did not know their age at the time of marriage and 16% are married between 29-39 years of age.

- Of the total women victims surveyed, 54.67% of them are married, 42.66% are separated and 2.67% are divorcee. It has been found in the course of field study that those who have taken recourse to legal assistance normally don't stay with their abusers.

- In terms of occupational status and usual activities of the respondents, it is found that a vast majority of them i.e., 74.67% are housewives and the rest (25.33%) are working women.

- The study indicated that the majority of women are economically dependent as they don't have an independent income. In the present study it is found that 74.67% of the respondents have no earning source, 16% are earning less than 1000 per month and 5.33% are earning in the range of rupees 1001-2000 per month. Only 2.67 % belong to income group of rupees 2001-3000 and 1.33% in the income group of 3001-5000.

SECTION II

Nature and Forms of Violence against Muslim Women

Violation of women human rights is a daily affair in India. Women are the subject of mistreatment both within and outside family. A large number of women are exploited and maltreated sexually, physically and even economically. This section attempts to look into the nature and forms of violence inflicted on women. Violence against women are manifested either in the form of physical, psychological, economic and sexual. Each of these is inflicted in different ways. In order to have an in-depth understanding each has been dealt separately.

Table 4.07: Respondents Relationship with the Abuser

Abuser	No of Respondents	Percentage
Husban	54	72
Both Husband and In-laws	20	26.67
Brother	1	1.33
Total	75	100

Source: Fieldwork by the Researcher

Table 4.07 shows that a majority of the respondents (72%) have been abused by their husband only. 26.67% of the respondents have been abused by both husband and in-laws. A small per cent of the respondents i.e., 1.33% of the respondents have been abused by other person (brother).

Physical Violence: Physical violence, for the purpose of the present work, is defined as any action of the perpetrator used against a woman with intent to cause her a physical injury.This includes the intentional use of physical force with the potential for causing death,

disability, injury or harm. Physical violence includes, but is not limited to scratching, pushing, shoving, throwing, grabbing, beating, choking, shaking, hair pulling, slapping, punching, hitting, burning, use of a weapon etc. As physical violence is the most common form of violence that women face in our society, respondents were asked whether they have undergo any kind of physical violence.

Table 4.08: Distribution of Respondents on the Basis of their Reply

Response	No of Respondents	Percentage
Experienced Physical Violence	61	81.33
Not Experienced Physical Violence	14	18.67
Total	75	100

Source: Fieldwork by the researcher

Table 4.08 shows that a vast majority of 61(81.33%) out of 75 respondents are found to be physically abused in one form or the other. This indicates that violence in the form of physical attack is a common feature for an overwhelming majority of the victims under study.

The respondents are asked to state the nature of physical violence faced by them.

With regard to the nature of physical violence (Table 4.09), it is found that out of 61 respondents 27(44.26%) are found to be victims of 'pushing, shaking and throwing something at victims', 21 (34.43%) reported physical violence in the form of 'slapping and twisting arm', 12 (19.67%) in the form of 'kicking or dragging', and only 1 (1.64%) is 'threatened using weapon'. Informal discussions with the victims further reveals that a good number of these women have faced the

attacks not only of one form but rather of different forms simultaneously.

Table 4.09: Nature of Physical Violence against Respondents

Indicators of Physical Abuse	No of Respondents	Percentage
Pushing, shaking or throwing something	27	44.26
Slapping or twisting arm	21	34.43
Kicking or dragging	12	19.67
Threatening using weapon (knife, gun or other weapon)	1	1.64
Total	61	100

Source: Fieldwork by the Researcher

Psychological Violence: Psychological violence means any act or conducts which is of such a nature as to cause violence on the mind. The psychological violence faced by women commonly includes: accusing on character or conduct; insult for not bringing dowry; insult for not having a male child; humiliating in front of others; limit contact with family or friends etc. Psychological violence against women can be extended to include many other types of behaviour that could be considered as psychologically abusive by the victim. Psychological violence against women may be more dangerous than physical violence because the injuries arising out of physical violence may be for a short time but the adverse effects of emotional violence may be last long, sometimes lifelong. Data reveals that a vast majority i.e., 77.33% of the respondents have experienced psychological (emotional) violence in one form or another.

Table 4.10: Distribution of Respondents According to their Experience of Psychological Violence

Response	No of Respondents	Percentage
Experienced Psychological Violence	58	77.33
Not Experienced Psychological Violence	17	22.67
Total	75	100

Source: Fieldwork by the Researcher

Table 4.10 affirms that use of psychological torture as a common feature for an overwhelming majority of women under study.

The respondents are asked to state the nature of psychological /emotional violence used against them by the perpetrators. Table 4.11 depicts the nature of psychological violence.

Table 4.11: Nature of Psychological Violence against Respondents

Indicators of psychological Abuse	No of Respondents	Percentage
Accusations on character or conduct	11	18.97
Insult for not bringing dowry	19	32.76
Insult for not having a male child	2	3.45
Humiliate in front of others	21	36.20
Limit contact with family or friends	5	8.62
Total	58	100

Source: Fieldwork by the Researcher

Table 4.11 shows that out of 58 respondents 11(18.97%) are found to be victims of 'accusations on character or conduct', 19 (32.76%) reported psychological violence in the form of 'insult for not bringing dowry', 2 (3.45%) in the form of 'insult for not having a male child', 21 (36.20%) are found victims in the form of 'humiliation in front of others' and 5 (8.62%) are abused psychologically in the form of 'limiting contact with family and friends'. Further Informal discussions with the victims further revealed that a good number of these women have faced the attacks not only of one form but rather of different forms simultaneously.

Economic Violence: Economic violence is another category of violence against women. This is perpetrated usually by an intimate partner or family member and includes economic blackmail, control over money a women earns, refuse to pay money for maintenance, refuse to provide food, cloth and shelter, prevent from carrying employment etc. In the present study respondents are asked whether they encounter any type of economic abuse.

Table 4.12: Distribution of Respondents on the Basis of their Reply

Response	No of Respondents	Percentage
Experienced Economic Violence	59	78.67
Not Experienced Economic Violence	16	21.33
Total	75	100

Source: Fieldwork by the Researcher

As seen from the above table 4.12, 59 respondents (78.67%) have been found to be economically abused in one form or the other. In order to find out the nature of economic abuse, respondents are asked to describe the economic abuse they suffered.

Table 4.13: Nature of Economic Violence against Respondents

Indicators of Economic Violence	No of Respondents	Percentage
Not providing money for maintaining wife and your children	23	38.98
Forcing wife out of the house they live in	11	18.64
Forcibly take away salary, income or wage	13	22.03
Not allowing use of clothes, articles or things of general household use	12	20.35
Total	59	100

Source: Fieldwork by the Researcher

As regards the nature of economic abuse, it has been found that (Table 4.13) out of 59 respondents who suffer economic violence, 23 respondents (38.98%) have not been provided 'money for maintenance', 11 respondents (18.64%) have been 'forced to leave the house they live in', 13 respondents (22.03%) 'salary, income or wage have been forcibly taken away', 12 respondents (20.35%) have been abused by 'not allowing use of clothes, articles or things of general household use'.

Sexual Violence: Sexual violence is another kind of violence against women. It includes: use of physical force to compel women to engage in a sexual act against her will; an attempted or completed sex act involving a women who is unable to understand the nature or condition of the act(for example, because of illness, disability).In the present study, respondents have been asked about their experiences of sexual violence.

Table 4.14: Distribution of Respondents on the Basis of their Reply

Response	No of Respondents	Percentage
Experienced Sexual Harassment	7	9.33
Not Experienced Sexual Harassment	68	90.67
Total	75	100

Source: Fieldwork by the Researcher

Tables 4.14 reveals that only small portion of the respondents i.e., 9.33% have experienced sexual harassment. Thus, the number of women suffering from this kind of violence is less as compared to the number of women suffering from other kinds of violence such as physical, psychological or economic violence.

Table 4.15 Nature of Sexual Violence against Respondents

Indicators of Sexual Violence	No of Respondents	Percentage
Husband forced wife to have sexual intercourse	4	57.14
Any other act of sexual nature to abuse, degrade, humiliate or otherwise violative of dignity	3	42.86
Total	7	100

Source: Fieldwork by the Researcher

The above table (Table 4.15) shows that out of 7 respondents who suffer sexual violence, 4 (57.14%) respondents are found to be

sexually abused 'in the form of forced sexual intercourse' and 3 (42.86%) are abused 'in the form of any other act of sexual nature to abuse, degrade, humiliate or otherwise violative of dignity'.

A summary of the nature and forms of violence against Muslim women is given below:

- It is emerged from the study that majority of the victims 72% have been abused by their husband alone. 26.67% of the respondents have been abused by their husbands and in-laws. A small per cent of the respondents i.e., 1.33% of the respondents have been abused by other person.

- A vast majority of 61(81.33%) out of total 75 respondents have been found to be physically abused in one form or the other. This indicates that violence in the form of physical attack is a common feature for an overwhelming majority of the victims under study.

- With regard to the nature of physical violence, it has been found that out of 61 respondents 27(44.26%) are found to be victims of pushing, shaking and throwing something at victims, 21 (34.43%) reported physical violence in the form of slapping and twisting arm, 12 (19.67%) in the form of kicking or dragging, and only 1 (1.64%) are threatened using weapon. Informal discussions with the victims further revealed that a good number of these women have faced the attacks not only of one form but rather of different forms simultaneously.

- 58 (73.33%) have experienced psychological/ emotional violence in one form or another.

- As regards the nature of psychological violence it is found out that out of 58 respondents 11(18.97%) are found to be victims of accusations on character or conduct, 19 (32.76%) reported

psychological violence in the form of insult for not bringing dowry, 2 (3.45%) in the form of insult for not having a male child, 21 (36.20) are found victims in the form of humiliation in front of others and 5 (8.62%) are abused psychologically in the form of limiting contact with family and friends. Further Informal discussions with the victims further reveals that a good number of these women have faced the attacks not only of one form but rather of different forms simultaneously.

- Out of the total respondents 59 respondents (78.67%) are found to be economically abused in one form or the other.

- As regards the nature of economic abuse, it has been found that out of 59 respondents 23 respondents (38.98%) have not been provided money for maintenance, 11 respondents (18.64%) have been forced to leave the house they live in, 13 respondents (22.03%) salary, income or wage have been forcibly taken away, 12 respondents (20.35%) have been abused by 'not allowing use of clothes, articles or things of general household use'.

- The study reveals that only a small portion of the respondents i.e., 9.33% has experienced sexual harassment.

- It is found that out of 7 respondents 4 (57.14%) respondents are found to be sexually abused in the form of forced sexual intercourse and 3 (42.86%) are abused in the form of any other act of sexual nature to abuse, degrade, humiliate or otherwise violative of dignity.

SECTION III

Causes and Consequences of Violence against Muslim Women

Every action must have a cause is well-known universal truth. Similar to this, violence against women must have causes that have directly or indirectly influenced the incidence of violence. In the present study the following factors have been found as the causes of violence against women.

1. Dowry Demands.
2. Extramarital Affairs of the husband.
3. Polygamy.
4. Alcoholic Nature of Husband
5. Patriarchal Structure of Society
6. Financial Stress of the family.
7. Spouse suspicion of wife.

Table 4.16: Distribution of Respondents Based on Causative Factors Leading to Violence

Causative Factors	No of Respondents	Percentage
Dowry Demands	19	25.33
Extramarital Affairs of the Husband.	5	6.67
Polygamy	3	4
Alcoholic Nature of Husband	11	14.67
Patriarchal Structure of Society	13	17.33
Financial Stress of the Family	15	20
Spouse Suspicion of Wife	9	12
Total	75	100

Source: Fieldwork by the Researcher

Dowry is exchanged in a majority of Indian weddings. Although its practice became illegal in 1961, dowry flourishes among all social classes. Families of the bride and groom negotiate transfer of assets to the groom and his family in exchange for marrying the bride, often within the context of an arranged marriage. Dissatisfaction with the amount of dowry may result in abuse of the bride. Dowry is a social issue and still a common cause of violence against women. It is generally assumed that Muslims don't have dowry problems as Islamic marriage does not recognize the institution of dowry. However, contrary to these assumptions, Muslim women too are victims of dowry practices. In contrast with the dowry situation in North-India and south-India, the epidemic of dowry is not so severe in Barak Valley of Assam. However, in the present study dowry demands emerged as a major cause of violence against women. Dowry is generally called as '*Jahez*' among the Muslims of Barak Valley. It is mainly prevalent in the form of cash or kind or both. For 25.33% of the respondents, dowry is cause of domestic violence. Economic constraint is a common problem of many families. Inadequate financial resources to meet the day to day expenditures are a source of stress and strained family relations, 20% of the respondents are victimized due to financial stress of the family, and 17.33% reported patriarchal structure of society as a reason for their victimization. Further, 14.67%, 12%, 6.67% and 4% have been found to be victims of violence because of alcoholic nature of husband, spouse suspicion of wife, extramarital affairs of the husband and polygamy respectively.

Consequences of Violence against Women: There are many consequences of the violence against women on their different facets of life. In the present study, the consequences of violence against women have been studied at three levels-at the personal level, at the family level and at the societal level.

Consequences at the Personal Level: At the personal level, the consequences of violence had been assessed by indictors such as

physical injuries, deprivation of basic needs, mental depression and the thought of suicide.

Table 4.17: Distribution of Respondents Based on their Experience of Physical Injury

Response	No of Respondents	Percentage
Yes	42	56
No	33	44
Total	75	100

Source: Fieldwork by the Researcher

The above table (Table 4.17) shows that 56% of the respondents are injured by the violence inflicted on them. Physical injury forms the visible part of the outcome of violence experienced by women.

Table 4.18: Distribution of Respondents Based on Deprivation of Basic Needs

Response	No of Respondents	Percentage
Deprived of Basic Needs	22	29.33
Not Deprived of Basic Needs	53	70.67
Total	75	100

Source: Fieldwork by the Researcher

Violence against women has its direct impact on women's health. Table 4.18 shows that 29.33% respondents are deprived of their basic needs like food, cloth and shelter.

Table 4.19: Distribution of Respondents Based on Mental Depression

Response	No of Respondents	Percentage
Suffered Mental Depression	56	74.67
Not Suffered Mental Depression	19	25.33
Total	75	100

Source: Fieldwork by the Researcher

Table 4.19 shows that 74.67% respondents have suffered mental depression.

Table 4.20: Distribution of Respondents Based on Thought of Suicide

Response	No of Respondents	Percentage
Yes	9	12
No	66	88
Total	75	100

Source: Fieldwork by the Researcher

Table 4.20 shows that 12% of the respondents have thought of suicide. It is to be noted that the mental depression associated with violence against women may go relatively unnoticed when compared to the physical injury. Nevertheless, it is as dangerous, if not more dangerous than that of physical injury.

An analysis of the consequences of violence at the personal level showed that 56% of the respondents are injured by the violence inflicted on them, 29.33% of the victims are denied of basic needs like food, cloth and shelter. Violence erodes women's self confidence and

leads to problems such as depression. The study shows that 74.67% of the victims had suffered mental depression. Suicide or attempted suicide or thoughts of it are referred in a number of studies as an aftermath of violence. It was found in the study that 12% of the victims have thought of suicide.

At the Family Level: At the family level, the consequences of violence had been assessed by indictors such as victimization affect the relationship with husband, victimization affect the relationship with children, victimization affected interaction level between family members. In this regard respondents were asked whether victimization affected their relationship with husband, with other family members, with children, and whether victimization affected their interaction level between family members or not?

Table 4.21: Muslim Women respondents Relationship with Husband

Response	No of Respondents	Percentage
Victimization has Affected Relationship with Husband	54	72
Victimization has not Affected Relationship with Husband	21	28
Total	75	100

Source: Fieldwork by the Researcher

Table 4.21 reveals that 72% of the respondents' relationships with husband have been affected in many ways.

Table 4.22 Muslim Women Respondents Relationship with Children

Response	No of Respondents	Percentage
Victimization has Affected Relationship with Children	44	58.67
Victimization has not Affected Relationship with Children	31	41.33
Total	75	100

Source: Fieldwork by the Researcher

One of the most affected groups of violence in the family is the children, who witnessed violence in the family. The presence of children in a violent relationship created additional stress for a woman, who may fear for her children's safety. As seen in table 4.22, 58.67% of the respondents' relationship with the children have been affected in many ways such as unable to give proper attention to their children, showing anger at children etc,. The dream of every woman is to give proper education to her child. Many women reported that violence against them hampers the education of their children

Table 4.23: Interaction between Family Members

Response	No of Respondents	Percentage
Violence has Affected Interaction between family Members	39	52
Violence has not Affected Interaction between family Members	36	48
Total	75	100

Source: Fieldwork by the Researcher

Family is a network of relationships and violence in the family could affect the relationships in multiple ways. Table 4.23 shows that 52% of the respondents' interaction level between family members has been affected in multiple ways.

To sum up, as regards the consequences of violence at the family level the present study shows for 72% of the victims, their relationship with husband had been affected, for 58 .67% of the victims , their relationship with the children had been affected. Family is a network of relationships and violence in the family could affect the relationship in multiple ways. For 52% of the victims their interaction level between family members has been affected.

Consequences at the Societal Level: At the societal level, the consequence of violence had been assessed by indicators such as victimization affect the relationship with neighbours, victimization affect the relationship with friends with friends, victimization affect the behaviour of general society towards victims.

Table 4.24: Muslim Women Respondents Relationship with Neighbours

Response	No of Respondents	Percentage
Victimization has Affected Relationship with Neighbours	34	45.33
Victimization has not Affected Relationship with Neighbours	41	54.67
Total	75	100

Source: Fieldwork by the Researcher

It is seen from the above Table 4.24 that 45.33% of the victims' relationship with neighbours has been affected.

Table 4.25: Muslim Women Respondents Relationship with Friends

Response	No of Respondents	Percentage
Victimization has Affected Relationship with Friends	13	17.33
Victimization has not Affected Relationship with Friends	62	82.67
Total	75	100

Source: Fieldwork by the Researcher

A friend in need is a true friend. Friend in times of stress was a blessing for most of the victimized women. Majority of the victims 82.67% stated that the relationship with their friends has not been affected as a result of violence.

Table 4.26: Attitude of Society toward Respondents

Response	No of Respondents	Percentage
Victimization has Affected the Attitude of Society towards the Victims	21	28
Victimization has not Affected the Attitude of Society towards the Victims	54	72
Total	75	100

Source: Fieldwork by the Researcher

Table 4.26 shows that a greater proportion (72%) of the victims has no complaints regarding the attitude of society towards them in the aftermath of violence.

An analysis of the consequences of violence at the societal level shows that 45.33% of the victims' relationship with neighbours has been affected. A friend in need is a true friend. Friend in times of stress was a blessing for most of the victimized women. Majority of the victims 82.67% stated that the relationship with their friends has not affected as a result of violence. A greater proportion (72%) of the victims has no complaints regarding the attitude of society toward them.

SECTION IV

Awareness and Perception of Muslim Women regarding the Socio-legal and Constitutional Protective Measures

The Indian constitution which is fundamental law of the land contains number of provisions for the benefit and protection of women. The constitution of India guarantees equality of sexes and in fact grants special favours to women. These can be found in articles of the constitution. Article 14 says that that the government shall not deny to any person equality before law or the equal protection of the laws. Art 15 declares that government shall not discriminate against any citizen on the ground of sex. Art 15(3) makes a special provision enabling the state to make affirmative discriminations in favour of women. Moreover, the government can pass special laws in favour of women. Article 16 guarantees that no citizen shall be discriminated against in matters of public employment on the grounds of sex. Article 42 directs the state to make provision for ensuring just and humane conditions of work and maternity relief.

Some specific legislations also made to ensure women's rights in India like the Dowry Prohibition Act, 1961, Medical Termination of Pregnancy Act, 1971, the Indecent Representation of Women (prohibition) Act, 1986, the Muslim Women (Protection of Rights on Divorce) Act 1986, the Immoral Traffic (prevention) Act, 1956, the Maternity benefit Act, 1961, National commission for women Act, 1990, Protection of Human Rights Act 1993, Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005, etc.

In this section, awareness of respondents on some of the important constitutional and socio-legal protective measures for women have been discussed.

Respondents have been asked whether they are aware of some of the rights guaranteed to women in Indian constitution or not? As expected, it is noticed in table 4.27 that a vast majority of the

respondents (98.67%) are unaware of rights guaranteed to women in Indian Constitution. Only 1.33% of the respondents have some knowledge on the rights of women in Indian Constitution. While asked about the source of information, education is mentioned as source of information.

Table 4.27: Muslim Women Respondents Awareness of Rights of Women in Indian Constitution

Response	No of Respondents	Percentage
Aware	74	98.67
Not Aware	1	1.33
Total	75	100

Source: Fieldwork by the Researcher

Though laws have been framed to protect the women from various types of violence being committed against them in the society, only a very limited segment of women population have been able to take the advantage of the legal weapons and measure to protect and safeguard them. Lack of awareness and knowledge among the victims about legal provisions and supports available to protect themselves is the main obstacle in the path of their efforts to fight against their exploitation, oppression and atrocities. The knowledge about legal measures and aids empower the women to resort to appropriate legal measures against the culprits involved in such crimes. Here awareness of the respondents on some of the social legislation made to protect women from oppression has been studied.According to Dowry Prohibition Act, 1961 giving or demanding dowry, agreeing to give it and taking it any form is an offence and therefore, the persons involved in the process are punishable under law. It is noticed in Table 4.28 that 14.67% of the respondents are aware of the fact that giving and taking dowry are prohibited by law while a vast majority of the respondents (85.33%) are not aware of the fact.

Table 4.28: Muslim Women Respondents Awareness of Dowry Prohibition Law

Response	No of Respondents	Percentage
Aware	11	14.67
Not aware	64	85.33
Total	75	100

Source: Fieldwork by the Researcher

Awareness of various protective measures is an important factor to deal with cases of violence against women. Further in this regard, respondents were asked whether they are aware of Domestic Violence Act, 2005 or not? Table 4.29 shows that an overwhelming majority of the respondents 78.67% are unaware where only 21.33% are found to be aware. It can be assumed that those who are aware are informed about the Act by different stake holders, whom they approached for their cases.

Table 4.29: Muslim Women Respondents Awareness of Domestic Violence Act

Response	No of Respondents	Percentage
Aware	16	21.33
Not Aware	59	78.67
Total	75	100

Source: Fieldwork by the Researcher

Law of maintenance after divorce seriously infringes the issue of gender equality in Muslim society. The example of Shah Bano case may be cited. Shah Bano, a Muslim divorced woman, approached the apex court for maintenance for her life from her former husband. The Supreme Court in its judgment applying Criminal Procedure code Section 125 accepted her appeal and delivered the judgment in her favour. The Muslim leadership in India objected to the judgment as it goes against the Muslim law, according to which a divorcee can get

maintenance only for the 'Iddat' period (i.e., a period of waiting for 3 months after divorce is pronounced). The Muslim leaders felt that the Supreme Court has no right to go against the Muslim law. The Government of India conceding to the opinion of the Muslim leaders enacted a bill in the Parliament in 1986 and according to this Act, the Muslim law on the maintenance of divorced woman was restored back. In this respect, respondents were asked some questions. As regard Shah Bano Case, it was found that all the respondents were unaware.

Table 4.30: Muslim Women Respondents Awareness of Shah Bano Case

Response	No of Respondents	Percentage
Yes	-	-
No	75	100
Total	75	100

Source: Fieldwork by the Researcher

After a brief description about Shah Bano Case, we got the opinion of the respondents.

Table 4.31: Muslim Women Respondents Opinion about the Role of Shah Bano and Supreme Court

Opinion	No of Respondents	Percentage
Both Shah Bano and the Judgement of the Supreme Court are right	21	28
According to *Shariat* (Islamic law) both are wrong	9	12
Can't say	45	60
Total	75	100

Source: Fieldwork by the Researcher

Table 4.31 shows that 28% of the respondents said that Shah Bano and the judgment of the Supreme Court are right. 12% of the respondents opined that according to *Shariat* (Islamic law) both are wrong. 60% have no opinion.

Table 4.32: Muslim Women Respondents Opinion about the Muslim Women (Protection of Rights on Divorce) Act

Opinion	No of Respondents	Percentage
Divorce Act solve problems of Muslim women	3	4
Does not solve	27	36
No opinion	45	60
Total	75	100

Source: Fieldwork by the Researcher

After a briefing regarding the Act, 4% of the respondents opined that it solved the problem of Muslim women. While a considerable percentage of respondents 36% opined that it did not solve the problems of Muslim women. The rest (60%) gave no opinion.

Table 4.33: Muslim Women Respondents Awareness of Inheritance of Property by Women

Response	No of Respondents	Percentage
Aware	34	45.33
Not Aware	41	54.67
Total	75	100

Source: Fieldwork by the Researcher

Respondents were asked whether they are aware of their inheritance rights. Table 4.33 indicates that 45.33% of the respondents are aware, while 54.67% are unaware of the right to inheritance under Islamic law.

SECTION V

Case Studies of the Victims

This section deals with the case studies of violence against Muslim women in Barak Valley. Before presenting the case studies, a brief discussion has been made on the theoretical aspects of case study method.

Case study occupies an important place in social science research. As one of the method in qualitative research, it favours intensive analysis of one or a few cases using in-depth unstructured interviews, observation, and narrative rather than depending on numerical reporting.[13] According to Ram Ahuja, case study is an intensive study of a case which may be an individual, an institution, a system, a community, an organization, an event, or even the entire culture. It is not a method of data collection; rather it is a research strategy, or an empirical enquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon by using multiple sources of evidence. While a case study can be either quantitative or qualitative, or even a combination of both, but most case studies lie within the realm of qualitative methodology.[14] According to P. V. Young, "case study is a method of exploring and analyzing the life of a social unit, be it that a person, a family, an institution, cultural group or even entire community."[15]

Merriam lists four essential characteristics of case study.[16] These are:

i) Particularistic: It focuses on a particular situation, event, programme or phenomenon.

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[13] Vijaylakshmi, B. (2008). Case study method in social work research. In D. K. Lal Das & Vanila Bhaskran (Eds.), *Research methods for social work.* Jaipur: Rawat Publications, p. 283.
[14] Ahuja, R. (2001). Research methods. Jaipur: Rawat Publications, p. 261.
[15] P. V. Young quoted in Ghosh, B. N. (1992). *Scientific method and social research.* New Delhi: Sterling Publishers Private Limited, p. 224.
[16] Merriam quoted in Vijaylakshmi, B. (2008). Case study method in social work research. In D. K. Lal Das & Vanila Bhaskran (Eds.), *Research methods for social work.* Jaipur: Rawat Publications, p. 287.

ii) Descriptive: The final result of a case study is a detailed description of the case/unit under study.

iii) Heuristic: It helps people to understand what is being studied. New interpretations, new prospective, new meaning and insights are goal of the case study.

iv) Inductive: Most case studies depend on inductive reasoning. They attempt to discover new relationships rather than verifying existing hypothesis and through transfer of concepts may develop new understanding about the case under study.

Burns has stated six types of case studies:[17]

i) Historical case studies: These studies trace the development of an organisation/ system over time. This type depends more on interviews, recording and documents.

ii) Observational case studies: These focuses on observing some activity, event, or a specific group of people. However, the researchers in this type of study are rarely total participants or total observers.

iii) Oral history case studies: These are usually first person narratives that the researcher collects using extensive interviewing of a single individual. The use of this approach depends more on the nature and cooperation of the respondent.

iv) Situational case studies: This form studies particular events. The views of all participants in the event are sought. Pulling all these views together, a depth is provided that contributes significantly to the understanding of the event.

[17] Burns quoted in Ahuja, R. (2001). *Research methods*. Jaipur: Rawat Publications, p. 264-265.

v) Clinical case studies: This approach aims at understanding in depth a particular individual such as a patient in the hospital, a prisoner in the jail, a woman in a rescue home etc. These studies involve detailed interviews, observation, going through records and reports, and so on.

vi) Multi-case studies: It is a collection of case studies or a form of replication, i.e., multiple experiments. For example, we can take three case studies and analyse the, on replication logic. This logic is that each case will either produce contrary results or similar results. The outcome will demonstrate either support for the initial propositions or a need to revise and retest with another set of case. The advantage of multi-case design is that the evidence can be more compelling. However, this approach requires more time and effort.

In the present study, case studies play an important part to understand different types and issues related to violence against Muslim women in Barak Valley. In the present study five case studies with victims of violence have been conducted. In-depth interviews were taken and observations were also made to understand the overall aspects of violence against Muslim women. It is to be noted here that all the selected cases were reported cases. The cases have been presented in a systematic manner and after the detailed description of the cases an attempt has been made to summarize all the cases. Name and specific address have not been mentioned to ensure the safety and confidentiality of the women. The qualitative facts described here are supplementary to the quantitative descriptions presented in the previous sections.

Case 1: Minara Begum (22) and Suhel Ahmed (31) (name changed) had been married off for one and half year approximately. It was a love marriage. Minara was a housewife and Suhel was a bike mechanic and he occasionally worked as carpenter and earned

Rs.6000/ per month. Both Minara and Suhel had only studied till the VIII standard. Minara was married off to Suhel Ahmed approximately at the age of seventeen.

Her husband was alcoholic in nature and much of his income had been spent on liquor consumption. Every day he used to come home in drunken state and beat his wife rudely. In his intoxication, he appeared a violent man and consequently found reasons to beat her. Even in Minara's pregnancy, her inconsiderate husband beat her. As stated by Minara, he kicked her frequently and even forced her into sexual acts against her desire. Besides on many occasions, she was denied of basic needs such as food and cloth. Moreover, if the food at home was served late due to domestic reasons, Suhel used to beat her. To mention, Minara was severely injured as she was struck by her husband with burning wood from the fireplace. She had suffered a fracture in her right hand consequently.

Minara's health had deteriorated due to the physical, psychological, economic and sexual violence inflicted by her husband regularly. She was upset and had suffered from mental stress. She is presently staying at her parental house. She approached 'District Level Committee for Crime Involving Women' for help and counselling is going on. Interestingly, she did not want divorce as she says "*if my husband comes back to me after giving up his bad habits, I will surely accept him.*"

Case 2: Amina Begum (30) was got married with Asif (35) (name changed) in the year 2009. At the time of marriage her father had given Rs. 25,000 along with furniture in form of dowry. At the initial years of their marriage, they lead their lives very happily. However, in due course Asif, husband of Amina Begum got married with another two women. Consequently, many problems such as quarrelling among the members of family started. In addition, her husband frequently asked her to bring an amount of Rs. 50,000/ from her parents but

Amina could not afford to bring the sum of money due to her humble background. As a result, she had been mentally and physically tortured by Asif. Later on, the matter was brought into the attention of the local Gram Sabha but the issue was not resolved and subsequently, mental and physical harassment on her consistently increased. As a result of her long suffering, Amina Begum succumbed to the consistent torture by her husband. At s point it appeared intolerable for her and she had left Asif's place. However, Amina could not bring her two children with her when she left husband's house. After leaving the house she took shelter in WODICHI (NGO, Primarily working for women) and later on a case had been filed in the CJM Court, Hailakandi. Further, with the help of the President of WODWICHEE she rescued her two sons. During the interview, it was revealed that she hated her husband and had lost interest in leading a life with him. She wanted her husband to be punished in accordance with law. Now she is worried about her children as she no longer has the financial security as well her family to support her in the upbringing of her children.

Case 3: Samima Begum of (26) was married off to Riajul Laskar (name changed) in the year 2006 in accordance with Muslim Law by executing a registered Kabinnama, and thereafter one daughter was born to them out of their wedlock. But after a few days, her husband started to torture her mentally and physically by demanding Rs. 1, 00,000 from her. It was narrated that her husband slapped and kicked her on many occasions and refused to provide food and cloths. One day in the year 2012 drove her out along with her minor daughter by snatching away all her valuable articles. Then she took shelter at her father's house. And her husband did not provide any maintenance for her and as well as her daughter. She is anxious about her future and that of her daughter. She had filed a petition in C.J.M court.

Case 4: Ruksana Begum (31) was married to Najimul (41) (name changed) in the year 2008 according to Islamic law by Registering a Kabinnama. *Mehr* was fixed at Rupees 33,500 and 'Jedgmal' i.e. marriage articles of Rs, 60,000 and ornaments of Rs. 35,000 were given during the marriage. She narrated that after two months of their marriage her husband demanded Rs. 50,000 as additional dowry. But as her parents expired she could not meet the demands. Subsequently, Najimul started torturing her both physically and mentally and always used abusive language. On one day in the year 2013 she was drove her out from her husband's house. After that the guardian and relatives of Ruksana tried to resolve the matter but her husband did not paid any head. Her husband did not enquire about her and did not pay any maintenance. She also filed a case in Police Station. However she was not satisfied with the police action. Then she filed a case in the Court of C.J.M demanding maintenance and *Mehr*. Currently she is in her parental house.

Case 5: Masuma (32) and Nurul (43) (name changed) have been married for seven years. Their marriage was an arranged one according to Islamic law.Masuma's family was economically weaker than that of her husband. In spite of this, Masuma's parents managed to give some 'Jedgmal' (marriage articles). At the initial few years their married life was relatively happy. The couple had a daughter and a son. Although her in-laws were not happy with the 'Jedgmal' (dowry), they did not harm her during these days. Problems started when Nurul entered into an extra-marital relationship with a girl in the neighbourhood. Then he often comes late to his home. He stopped giving financial support to his wife. Masuma was intensely hurt by her husband's conduct. When she protested against her husband on this issue, he hurt her physically. Interestingly her mother in-law and brother in-law also joined her son and started abusing her both physically and psychologically. Unable to bear all these, one day she went to stay at her parent's home. And thereafter she with the help of

a neighbour approached WODWICHEE, an NGO particularly working for women. The NGO had come forward to help her and there they gave counselling to Nurul and it worked well. Now both are living happily.

The above case studies give us a clear picture that various form of violence against women exists. Women often face multiple forms of violence-physical, psychological, economic and sexual. Moreover, women face multiple forms of violence from different people. For example, Masuma was being physically and mentally tortured both by her husband Nurul and mother in-law and brother in-law. The case studies also show that alcoholic nature of the husband, extra-marital affairs of the husband and dowry demands were the main causes of violence against women. Besides polygamy was another cause responsible for violence against women as it was found in the case of Mina's husband Asif.