



## SCENARIO OF MUSLIM COMMUNITY IN EDUCATIONAL SECTOR

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### **Abstract**

*Indeed it is the important issue to be focused on and needs attention of Educationist, Experts and Social Activist. This paper is an attempt to focus the scenario of Muslims from school level to higher education to level of professional education. Researcher has tried to draw a sketch of various factors and facts related to Muslim community's educational backwardness.*

### **Introduction**

India is the land of diversity and of different religions with Hindus as majority (85.5%) and Muslims as the largest minority (13.4%). India is a secular republic and the constitution guarantees equal rights to all its citizens without any discrimination. The Indian constitution provides many legal safeguards to the minority community and special provisions are made for their social and economic growth. Despite these, minorities in India face all types of inequity in the public sphere.

Presently we have three authentic documents the Sachar Committee Report, Ranganath Mishra Committee and NSSO which described very deplorable socio-economic conditions of Muslim Community in India.

### **The NSSO Report (2007-2008)**

The NSSO which is attached to the Union Ministry of Statistics and Program Implementation, in its report entitled "Education in India, 2007-08: Participation and Expenditure", says that of 100 Muslims in the education system, just 10 are enrolled in high school and above. Similar ratio for Scheduled Tribes (STs) is 11, Scheduled Castes (SCs) 12 and Other Backward Classes (OBCs) 14. The Muslims in India are the most backward community on the educational front. Muslims' ratio in higher education is lower than even Scheduled Tribes (STs), who are considered most backward.

10 Muslims in the education system were enrolled in high school or above as compared to 12 in rural areas.

This is because education in urban areas is highly inaccessible to the poor Muslims who are predominantly daily wage contract laborers. They are hardly able to make their both ends meet, leave alone providing education to their children.

Lack of access to education and employment is a major source of frustration for the Muslim youth. The destruction of traditional crafts and industries as a result of the neo-liberal policies pursued by the government, has hit their livelihood further.

The recommendations of Sachar Committee and the Ranganath Mishra Committee must be implemented in right earnest. The Prime Minister's 15-point program that was launched in June 2006 with physical and financial targets for minorities in all welfare programs of the Central Government is far from being implemented. The government must formulate a sub-plan for the Muslim community on the lines of the tribal sub-plan. There has to be a specific budgetary allocation in all development schemes for Muslims proportionate to their population at the all-India level. Under a special component plan, allocations may be made in the states proportionate to the percentage of Muslims in that state. Schools, including residential schools imparting modern education for both girls and boys must be built in all districts and blocks with sizable Muslim population. Muslim girls' hostels must be constructed to facilitate education among girls. There must be a substantial increase in the number of stipends and scholarships on means cum merit basis.

Muslim Society of India is very heterogeneous in nature because of the influence of caste system, which has led to Indianisation of Islam. Indian Muslims are facing various socio-economic problems in today's age, which has to be understood in terms of their educational background.

A Muslim woman suffers more because they hardly has access to higher education. Also the primary level education is not easily accessible to them.

The problem of Muslim backwardness and under representation in public services is a fact but this is not a problem of independent India. In 1878 Sir Syed had said that "Muslims had derived least benefit from European sciences and literature" and in 1882 appearing before the Education Commission of the Central Legislative Council presented voluminous evidence to show almost negligible Muslim presence among the graduates of Calcutta University. According to his memo, there was no Muslim among 6 Doctors of Law and 4 Honors in Law. Among the Bachelors and Licentiatees of Law there were 8 out of



705 and 5 out of 235 respectively. Likewise in Engineering and Medicine there was not a single Muslim graduate. In MA there were 5 Muslims out of 326 and in BA there were only 30 out of 1343. The memo pointed out that based on the population covered by Calcutta University the number of Muslim graduates should have been 1262 whereas they actually were just 57. On the basis of these figures Sir Syed pleaded not for job reservation but government help in initiating programs for their educational betterment. It is worth noting that this memorandum was presented just 24 years after the formal collapse of uninterrupted Muslim rule for almost 800 years.

There are two commonly prevalent explanations regarding educational backwardness among Muslims in contemporary India. One explanation is that they have been slow to take advantage of governmental liberal policy regarding education since the independence due to their lack of awareness, particular attitude or cultural ethos. There has been slow tendencies of the Muslims to respond positively to modern technical and professional education or take advantage of educational developments due to their ignorance or not having access and resistance to modern (scientific and professional) education.

Muslim parents generally prefer sending their children to a traditional Islamic educational institution rather than to a modern institution. Such tendencies are gradually vanishing as enlightened Muslim or Muslim institution are engaged in developing awareness among Muslim parents and their children towards the acquisition of education starting from very basic Islamic traditional schooling to the acquisition of education at college or university level.

Presently Muslims in comparison to the other communities in the country are not proportionally equal in the pursuit of modern education. Also Muslims lag much behind in terms of the acquisition of professional and technical education. The admission to these courses requires competition, where Muslims generally are not up to the mark in competing with the other community. It is a matter of concern that Muslims have far below representation proportionately in the composition for professional and technical courses. In other words there are fewer Muslims, in respect of their proportion, appearing for such courses. Thereby fair competition generating fair results does not allow the Muslim ratio to grow. Rather their percentage comes to such levels where even the single Muslim fails to occupy a seat because of the un-proportionally unequal competition. This is one of the major logical reasons for Muslim educational backwardness.

Indian Muslims are not and should not be treated as a homogeneous community. There is, for example, higher rate of literacy among the Kerala Muslims than Muslims in other regions. Similarly, the Ansari Muslims in Eastern U.P. are better off economically than other Muslims in the region. In general the artisans, Ansaris, Qureshis, Baghbans and others have made more progress economically than upper caste Muslims. In the same manner the Bohras, Khojas and Memons of Gujrat being trading communities, are much better off than Muslims in general. Thus it will be seen that regional and even sectarian and caste differences must be taken into account while trying to understand the situation of Indian Muslims.

### **Muslim Woman's Status**

Muslim women are particularly far more behind. For example among the Muslim women at all India level, according to the National Family Health Survey (NFHS-I) - 66% are illiterate and in Haryana Muslim female illiteracy is universal (98%). It is interesting to note that in Haryana most of the Muslims are Meo Muslims and Meo Muslims are quite backward on the whole. Even in Assam with the highest percentage of Muslim population the female illiteracy among Muslims is 74 per cent. In the states of West Bengal, Karnataka, Delhi and Madhya Pradesh, 60 to 65 per cent and in the states of Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh and Gujarat, 50 to 55 per cent of Muslim women are illiterate.

There is great need for Muslim artisans to upgrade their traditional skills and acquire new skills. Also, one can hardly overstate the significance of information technology or what is called the information highway. But where there is lack of even literacy there is absolutely no question of being benefited by information technology and upgrading ones skill. And yet upgrading traditional skills is a must in today's highly competitive market. Thus it is absolutely necessary to acquire not only a measure of literacy but also higher education. But real problem today is not so much of lack of consciousness about importance of education as of scarcity of economic resources. The educational backwardness reflects economic backwardness and economic backwardness perpetrates educational backwardness. Thus it has become vicious circle.

That Muslim minority is facing two separate problems; one is social and educational backwardness of the bulk of the present day Indian Muslims of indigenous origin. The other problem is of discrimination faced by all Muslims, irrespective of indigenous and non-indigenous categories. Muslim intellectuals, academicians and politicians should deal with both the problems separately. Dr. Gopal Singh High Power Committee's report. Dr. Gopal Singh Committee recommended important measures to the government for all weaker sections particularly minorities sans reservation but it could not be placed even on the table of Parliament as yet.



That Muslims are, on the whole, economically and educationally marginalized is a widely accepted fact. The National Policy on Education, formulated in 1984, recognized Muslims as one of the most educationally 'backward' communities in the country and suggested a number of strategies and programs for Muslim educational advancement. On their part, the community leadership has been arguing for provision of reservation for Muslims as a means of increasing their representation in educational institutions.

There are two commonly prevalent explanations regarding the educational 'backwardness' of Muslims in India. One explanation is that Muslims are educationally 'backward' because they have been slow to take advantage of the educational development witnessed in the country in recent decades due to their particular attitudes or cultural ethos. Some Muslims have failed to respond to secular education or take advantage of educational developments on account of their supposed resistance to 'secular' education. This is attributed to their alleged preference for madrasas over 'modern', 'secular' schools. Sections of the Ulama, for their part, have played a crucial role in promoting the view that the 'real' education is religious, not modern.

Another argument put forward by several people is that Muslims are often reluctant to take to 'secular' education because of an acute psychological complex. As religious minority, the argument runs, Muslims have coiled themselves into their cultural shell and are suffering from an acute minority complex. This psychological complex has prevented 'them from taking advantage of the expanding educational opportunities in contemporary India. Therefore, if Muslims are educationally backward or are under-represented in the educational sphere, to some extent they are themselves to blame for this sad state of affairs. Unless they come out of their narrow cultural shell, they are unlikely to be able to make any progress in the educational sphere.

According to Irshad Mohammed Khan, a law teacher in Khurja, Muslims are not reluctant to take to 'secular' education as such. Neither their presumed preoccupation with religion and religious education nor because of their being in a minority, actually dampens their enthusiasm for 'modern' education. Rather, he says, their educational 'backwardness' owes essentially to discrimination practiced against them, which has resulted in considerable Muslim marginalization. It is this reasoning that has led a section of Muslims in recent years to demand reservation for Muslims in educational institutions in order to enable them to take advantage of educational facilities.

The most important reason is that there is difficulty in finding educated groom if the girl becomes highly educated. The problem is even more severe if the girl has studied overseas. The only solution to liberate them from the shackles of ignorance, illiteracy and exploitation is through education.

Inadequate socio-economic infrastructure is the major cause for the backwardness of Muslims in the 90 Districts, which has a concentration of the community, across the country, according to a survey conducted by the Indian Council of Social Science Research (ICSSR).

The literacy rate in the high concentration Muslim areas is far less than the national average and it is less than the state average also. Despite many central and state government sponsored educational schemes for minorities, the number of illiterates among Muslims are as high as 64%. Primary to Higher Secondary 33.6%, in Higher education graduation, post - graduation and Technical, the combined figure is 2.4%. It means only 36% Muslims are literate in the state of Bihar. As per census report 2001 literacy rate for Muslim is 38% and 44.4% among general population.

#### **The Sachar Committee on Education Backwardness**

The findings are as follows

1. In the field of literacy the Committee has found that the rate among Muslims is very much below than the national average. The gap between Muslims and the general average is greater in urban areas and women. 25 per cent of children of Muslim parents in the 6-14 year age group have either never attended school or have dropped out.
2. Muslim parents are not averse to mainstream education or to send their children to affordable Government schools. The access to government schools for children of Muslim parents is limited.
3. There is a clear and significant inverse association between the proportion of the Muslim population and the availability of educational infrastructure in small villages. Muslim concentration villages are not well served with pucca approach road and local bus stops.
4. The presence of Muslims has been found to be only 3% in the IAS, IFS and 4% in the IPS.



The programs are for area development rather than programs focused on the minorities; therefore they prove blunt instruments as much of the expenditure is on general infrastructure and little to directly benefit deprived people of the community. They are not consulted about their priorities.

Thus, it can be said that Muslim Community is caught under the dilemma of 'Economic Inclusion' and 'Social Exclusion'. Social exclusion is in the form of Urdu medium education, lack of information and communication. The dilemma could be resolved only when there will be strong awareness and passion amongst Muslim people for enhancing their educational status.

### **Recommendations**

These recommendations help build Nation and increase literacy rate of our Country India.

1. The urgent cognitions to be taken to uplift of Muslim Minority Community at all level.
2. Measure to bring awareness of importance of education among Muslims.
3. At a Governmental level in fee concession to be introduced to avail the opportunity of educational facility at higher level.

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