

STATUS OF MUSLIM EDUCATION IN INDIA: PROBLEMS AND CONCERNS

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Abstract

The Indian Constitution is committed both to the idea of equality and to the preservation, protection and assurance of rights of minorities. Education remains a top priority in India and educating girls become further important in the country where women constitute fifty percent of human resources and are playing a vital role in shaping the economic, social, cultural and political fabric of the society. The National Commission for Minorities in India has identified Muslims, Christians, Sikhs, Buddhists and Parsees which constitute 20.22% of the total population of the country as religious minorities, while Hindus are the majority group. Among these various minorities, Muslims occupy an important position in Indian society. It has also been reported that the dropout of the Muslim Students from schools and other educational institutions is of higher rate. Female literacy among the Muslims is also significantly low and this is one of the important reasons of ignorance and illiteracy in Muslim community. It reveals from the present study that Muslim community in India is the most backward in terms of education as well as socio economic condition. It makes clear that the vision of Muslims is not towards modern education. The present study has identified the problems of Muslim's education in India and further address the proper suggestion and measures for improvement the status of Muslim education.

Keywords: Muslim Education, Women Education, Literacy, Religious Demographics

Introduction

The role of education in facilitating social and economic progress is well accepted today. Improvements in the functional and analytical ability of children and youth through education open up opportunities leading to both individual and group entitlements. The Indian Constitution is committed to the equality of citizen and the responsibility of the State to preserve, protect and the responsibility of the State to preserve, protect and assure the rights of minorities in matters of language, religion and culture. The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National, Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities says that the promotion and protection of the rights of persons belonging to such minorities contribute to the political and social stability of the countries in which they live (Ahmed, 2012). Meeting their aspirations and ensuring their rights acknowledge the dignity and equality of all individuals and furthers participatory development. The National Commission for Minorities in India has identified Muslims, Christians, Sikhs, Buddhists and Parsees constitute 20.22% of the total population of the country as religious minorities, while Hindus are the majority group. Among these various minorities, Muslims occupy an important position in Indian society. It is observable phenomenon that the educational status of Indian Muslims is very low (Parvez and Hasan, 2015). The status of Indian Muslims has a poor human development status because of widespread illiteracy, low income, irregular employment, high incidence of poverty. In this country the communities like Parsees, Christians and Hindus, had an earlier start in the educational field, while the Muslims entered into this field at a much later stage. Education is an indispensable means for helping the Muslims out of their economic misery because economic dependency is the major factor contributing to the low status of Muslims (Jawaid, 2007). Indian Muslims are far behind in achieving the literacy status because of their economic conditions, no availability of schools, more drop-outs, less likely to survive educationally, lack of resources in the available schools and low level of interest in education, lack of honest leadership in the community. It has also been reported that the dropout of the Muslim Students from schools and other educational institutions is of higher rate.

Female literacy among the Muslims is also significantly low and this is one of the important reasons of ignorance and illiteracy in Muslim community (Hossain, 2012). Again the adult education among the Muslims (both male and female) is significantly lacking. Beside formal education, the learning of new skills and technology is also not very satisfactory among the Muslim community. All these facts have shown that the ignorance and illiteracy are the characteristics of the Muslim society in India (Shazil and Asma, 2015).

Constitutional Provisions

The Constitution of India ensures equal opportunities for all sections of citizens without any discrimination on the basis of belief, caste, creed, race, region or gender. In the light of constitutional provisions, girls hailing from any minority community enjoy, at least in principle, equal rights in education, employment and other fruits of the national progress. The constitution of India contains many Articles protecting the well being of minorities. The **Article 14** of the Constitution of India ensures equality of all before law and equal protection by the law. **Article 15** prohibits discrimination on the grounds of religion, race, caste, sex and place of birth. **Article 16** There shall be equality of opportunity for all citizens in matters relating to employment or appointment to any office under the State. **Article 21** says that no person shall be deprived of his life or personal liberty except through the procedure by law. **Article 25** ensures freedom of conscience and the right to freely profess, practice and propagate religion. **Article 26** ensures right to manage religious institutions, religious affairs, subject to public order, morality and health. **Article 29** protects minorities' right to conserve their language, script or culture. **Article 30** provides for the protection of the interest of minorities by giving them a right to establish and administer educational institutions of their choice. **Article 39:** The State shall, in particular, direct its policy towards securing— that the citizens, men and women equally, have the right to an adequate means of livelihood. **Article 45:** The State shall endeavour to provide early childcare and education for all children until they complete the age of six years. **Article 51:** It shall be the duty of every citizen of India – to promote harmony and the spirit of common brotherhood amongst all the

people of India transcending religious, linguistic and regional or sectional diversities; to renounce practices derogatory to the dignity of women. **Article 347, 350** highlight all the matters relating to the safeguards provided for the linguistic minorities and their development.

Religious Demographics in India

The religious data on India Census 2011 was released by Government of India on 25 August 2015. Hindus are 79.8% (96.63 crore) while Muslims are 14.23% (17.22 crore) in India. First time, a "No religion" category was added in the census in 2011. 28.7 lakhs were classified as people belonging to "no religion" in India in 2011 census https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2011_Census_of_India_-_cite_note-43- 0.24% of India's population of 121 crore. Below is the decade-by-decade religious composition of India till 2011 census. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2011_Census_of_India_-_cite_note-censusindia2011-47 There are six religions in India which have been awarded "National minority" status- Muslims, Christians, Sikhs, Jains, Buddhists and Parsis (Census, 2011).

Table.1. Population trends for major religious groups in India (1951–2011)

Religious Groups	Population (%)						
	1951	1961	1971	1981	1991	2001	2011
Hinduism	84.1%	83.45%	82.73%	82.30%	81.53%	80.46%	79.80%
Islam	9.8%	10.69%	11.21%	11.75%	12.61%	13.43%	14.23%
Christianity	2.3%	2.44%	2.60%	2.44%	2.32%	2.34%	2.30%
Sikhism	1.79%	1.79%	1.89%	1.92%	1.94%	1.87%	1.72%
Buddhism	0.74%	0.74%	0.70%	0.70%	0.77%	0.77%	0.70%
Jainism	0.46%	0.46%	0.48%	0.47%	0.40%	0.41%	0.37%
Zoroastrianism	0.13%	0.09%	0.09%	0.09%	0.08%	0.06%	n/a
Other religions / No religion	0.43%	0.43%	0.41%	0.42%	0.44%	0.72%	0.9%

Literacy Status

Literacy and education are important indicators in a society and play a central role in human development that impacts overall social-economic development milieu. Higher levels of literacy and education lead to better attainment of health and nutritional status, economic growth, population control, empowerment of the weaker sections and community as a whole. Also, higher literacy rates improve development indicators consistently. Census obtains information on literacy for every individual, as this is recognised as one of the most important social characteristics.

Table.3. Literacy Rate in Comparison to other Religious Communities

Population	Hindus	Muslims	Christian	Sikhs	Buddhist	Janis	Others	Total
Male	60.78	62.41	76.78	71.32	77.87	87.86	59.58	69.76
Female	55.98	51.90	71.97	63.29	65.60	84.93	41.38	55.98
Total	63.31	57.28	74.35	67.51	71.84	86.43	50.35	63.07

The above table reveals the inter-religious disparities in literacy level of India. Condition of the Muslims is worse than that of all other religious communities, they recorded lowest literacy rate among the religious groups as only 57 of them are literate. Literacy level of Muslims are not only less than the other religious communities and national average literacy level but also national Muslim average literacy level, where only 62.41 per cent of males and 51.90 per cent of females are literate, or in vice-versa they are the most illiterate religious community in India. The highest literacy level is found among Jain (86.43 per cent), while Christian accounted for 74.35 per cent and Buddhist with 71.84 per cent literacy level respectively. Literacy rate of Muslim female is significantly very low in comparison to other religious group. The following table depicted the percentage distribution of Muslim of population, Muslim enrolment as well as Muslim girls' enrolment in India.

Table.3. Percentage Distribution of Muslim Population, Muslim Enrolment, Muslim Girl's Enrolment in India (2011-13).

State/UT	% of Muslim Population Census 2011	% of Muslim Enrolment in 2010-11	% of Muslim Enrolment in 2011-12	% of Muslim Enrolment in 2012-13	% of Girls Enrolment in 2010-11	% of Girls Enrolment in 2011-12	% of Girls Enrolment in 2012-13
A & N Islands	8.22	7.86	8.09	8.64	49.72	49.98	50.05
Andhra Pradesh	9.17	9.69	10.07	10.33	49.86	50.23	50.03
Arunachal Pradesh	1.88	0.38	0.37	0.68	47.54	43.63	47.57
Assam	30.92	40.29	40.21	40.00	50.11	50.17	49.97
Bihar	16.53	14.38	15.20	15.06	49.50	49.84	50.88
Chandigarh	3.95	5.18	5.08	3.18	48.15	47.75	48.02
Chhattisgarh	1.97	1.27	1.37	1.45	47.75	48.32	47.99
Dadra & Nagar Haveli	2.96	2.86	3.23	3.38	48.82	46.58	45.14
Daman & Diu	7.76	9.20	9.52	9.90	47.25	47.18	45.43
Delhi	11.72	15.74	13.24	16.06	49.50	49.87	48.82
Goa	6.84	9.81	9.48	9.75	47.13	43.14	48.41
Gujarat	9.06	8.58	8.57	8.70	47.72	48.12	48.35
Haryana	5.78	8.65	9.82	10.87	43.59	44.97	48.46
Himachal Pradesh	1.97	1.68	1.82	1.73	46.38	46.68	47.67
Jammu & Kashmir	66.97	67.54	68.47	67.38	48.18	48.11	48.18

Jharkhand	13.85	13.62	14.49	13.83	49.44	49.60	49.65
Karnataka	12.23	15.32	15.95	15.93	49.36	49.01	48.83
Kerala	24.70	31.67	31.29	32.04	49.18	49.27	49.01
Lakshadweep	95.47	89.10	99.38	97.70	48.73	48.83	49.15
Madhya Pradesh	6.37	4.64	4.96	5.41	50.64	49.99	48.30
Maharashtra	10.60	12.83	13.59	13.67	48.79	48.80	48.90
Manipur	8.81	7.65	8.97	9.33	50.811	50.23	50.75
Meghalaya	4.28	3.27	3.51	2.27	50.45	48.99	51.16
Mizoram	1.14	0.21	0.42	0.16	40.95	41.90	45.13
Nagaland	1.76	0.64	0.93	0.94	43.29	43.67	44.28
Odisha	2.07	1.59	1.47	1.92	49.41	48.66	48.47
Puducherry	6.09	7.54	7.63	1.41	48.99	47.28	49.67
Punjab	1.57	1.44	1.59	1.71	45.75	45.27	46.12
Rajasthan	8.47	7.29	8.43	9.24	46.00	47.00	46.81
Sikkim	1.42	0.87	1.26	1.38	40.74	44.44	44.96
Tamilnadu	5.56	5.54	5.84	5.94	49.10	49.38	49.06
Tripura	7.95	9.76	11.85	12.94	49.46	49.13	48.74
Uttar Pradesh	18.50	10.43	10.18	14.14	48.18	48.03	45.58
Uttarakhand	11.92	17.07	17.59	16.05	47.02	47.12	47.08
West Bengal	25.25	31.67	32.22	32.33	49.89	50.24	50.04
All States	13.43	13.04	13.31	14.20	49.06	49.17	49.22

Source: DISE 2012-13: Flash Statistics

From the above table it has been found that enrolment in educational institute of Muslim population is not significantly well in every state of India. In case of girls' it also depicted same picture. So, it can be stated that Muslim communities of India are educationally backward. Different literatures reported the problems of the Muslim communities for their lagging behind than the other religious communities.

Problems of Muslim Education

Indian culture is distinct in nature where each ethnic group has the liberty to maintain their Religious identity. Muslim society of India is educationally backward in India. They are not taking care of their educational advancement by the advantage of constitutional provision. The problem of backwardness is a long term process. Muslims are far lagging behind than the other communities in terms of economically, socially, educationally as well as politically (Shazli and Asma, 2015). There are various reasons for Muslim being educationally backward which are -

- The anti-Muslim attitude taken by British before independence to curtail the educational and employment opportunities of the community has laid a drastic impact on their socio-economic condition (Khan and Butool, 2013). The Muslims are facing the same problem even today. This attitude towards Muslims has pushed them in more backwardness.
- Muslims are facing socio-economic poverty from past. Their vision is blurring towards education because majority of Muslim parents are illiterate, they are unaware of the importance of modern education. They live in large family size and give greater importance to early marriages (Rehman and Hoffler, 2010). There is absence of vocation education to improve their image to develop through education.
- There is negative attitude towards girls' education among Muslims. Due to hurdles from family they lose the zeal to achieve something through education and thus they themselves do not have academic interest (GOI, 2012). If at all they are fortunate enough to go to a good school, they are often discouraged to go for higher education, especially overseas. There is often misconception regarding the "purity" of girls if they have studied in Universities, or have travelled abroad. The most important reason is that there is difficulty in finding educated groom if the girl becomes highly educated.
- As identified by Sachar Committee that normally Muslim Settlements are systematically deprived of access to infrastructure and public services like

power, piped water supplies and sewerage. Muslim community is living in low income, filthy and poor living conditions (GOI, 2006).

- Muslims are having poor facilities in their schools as well as proper education is also absent. Most of the schools are traditional, having problem of medium. The education is also not linked with employment opportunities.

Remedial Measures

Educational development of Muslims is a gradual phenomenon. The emergence of some premier Muslim educational institutions across the country has tremendously improved the prospects of the community in the sphere of both streams of education (Waheed, 2010). Some suggestions are given below regarding the educational upliftment (Shazli and Asma, 2015):

- Increase in awareness among Muslims about the importance of education, various employment opportunities, self-employment schemes as well as resultant economic well-being through it (Basant and Sharrif, 2010).
- The Government should give more emphasis towards the concept of small family size for the improvement of socio-economic condition of Muslims.
- Governmental incentives and scholarships are also necessary for the poor and deprived Muslims. Muslims should be provided reservation in higher education and elite institutions such as the IITs and IIMs. Thus access to higher education in general and the need for offering it to all at affordable cost is required.
- Modernization of Madrasah education to raise the educational status of traditional Muslims and there should be integration of vocational, science and computer education with religious instruction in Madrasahs. There is also need to link Madrasahs with higher secondary school board.
- There is need to develop more girls' school to minimize the problem of accessibility of schools. Parents should develop positive attitude towards girls' higher education (MHRD, 2013).
- Government should develop Strong organization for improving the condition of all centers of primary, secondary and higher learning in India. Various

educational schemes chalked out for implementation of recognition of minority education, coaching classes for competitive examination etc.

- There is need of genuine social and political leader to reform the backbone of Muslim community (GOI, 2006).

Conclusion

Thus, it can safely be said that the educational status of Muslims in India is not satisfactory and needs special attention. From the above results it is clear that more than eighty percent of the total population belongs to Hindu community and they need special attention. It is imperative for India to emerge as a modern, developed nation. Minorities need to be fully mainstreamed in social, political and economic spheres. The continued backwardness of a Muslim population is neither good for the country's social stability nor does it make economic sense. So, it is also goes against the constitutional principles of social justice, equity and equal opportunities for development of all. Furthermore it can be stated that upliftment of Muslims is taken up seriously by the India State. So, systematic and focused approach must be adopted to ensure their enrolment in the educational mainstream.

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