



## Religio-Socio-Economic Study on Muslims' Education in India

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**Abstract:** Education is the only way to improve a community's social, economic, and cultural development. Unfortunately, Muslims have the lowest level of education in Indian society of all religious organizations. The backwardness of Muslims in India compared to non-Muslims has recently become a topic of concern. Large family sizes, a lack of connectivity between madarsa education and modern education, economic distress, a negative attitude toward girls' education etc, are the factors to educational backwardness of Muslims. This article aims to look into the elements like religious problems, economic problems and medium of instruction are some important factors that affect Muslim education in India and also provided appropriate suggestions and measures for improvement in their Socio-Economic status and Educational Vision.

**Key Words:** Educational Status, Indian Muslims, Women's Education and Affecting factors.

### 1. INTRODUCTION :

Muslims now face several issues, including educational backwardness, which leads to marginalization in other areas of life, such as the economic and political spheres<sup>1</sup>. In today's dynamic culture, social and educational aspects interact. No community in the so-called modern democratic and competitive society can preserve its position unless it is on an equal footing with the others<sup>2</sup>. Education is critical in facilitating social and economic growth by conveying information from one generation to the next and vice versa. In an atmosphere where scientific knowledge is continually expanding, populations must study and perform effectively<sup>3</sup>.

Muslims in India confront a variety of difficulties. They have gotten themselves into a challenging predicament with limited options. However, the community's inability to articulate its concerns in specific terms and design effective remedies to these difficulties has been a fundamental failure<sup>4</sup>. Because the Muslims have not defined and formed their objectives, someone else has done so. Traditionally, the government has been in charge of this responsibility. Muslims never attempted to intervene in the argument, never acted independently, and just reacted to what they were informed was the problem, which they were never provided. Although Muslims are legitimate stakeholders in this process, they were neither involved nor made any significant effort to be included<sup>5</sup>.

In 1951, 18.53 percent of Indians were literate, rising to 64.8 per cent in 2001 and 74.04 per cent in Census 2011. India has a population of 77, 84, 54,120 individuals who are literate (2011 Census). In 2011, the literate population increased by 38.82 per cent when compared to Census 2001<sup>6</sup>. Kerala (93.91 per cent), Mizoram (91.58 per cent), Tripura (87.75 per cent), Goa (87.40 per cent), and Himachal Pradesh (87.40 per cent) have the highest literacy rates in India, according to Census 2011. (83.78 per cent). Only 2.3 percent of male Muslims and 0.8 percent of female Muslims graduated in India, according to the National Sample Survey of India (1990). According to the poll, Muslims enrolled in higher education at a rate of 3.9 per cent in urban areas and 0.8 per cent in rural regions in 1999-2000, while Hindus enrolled

<sup>1</sup> Iqbal Ahmed. Ansari (ed.), *The Muslim situation in India*, Sterling Publisher Pvt. Ltd, New Delhi (1989).

<sup>2</sup> Sachar Committee Report Ministry of Minority Affairs, Government. of India (2006).

<sup>3</sup> Saiyid. Hamid, "Educational Status of Indian Muslims", Muslim India, December (1985).

<sup>4</sup> Abdullah. Shariff, "Socio-economic and Differentials between Hindu and Muslim in India", *Economic and Political Weekly* (1995).

<sup>5</sup> Abdullah. Shariff, "Social, Economic and Social Status of Muslims in India", Government of India: New Delhi, (2006).

<sup>6</sup> Census Report (2001).



at 11.5 per cent and 1.8 per cent, respectively. In urban India, the Muslim illiteracy rate had declined to 11 per cent at the end of the decade, down from as high as 14 per cent in 1993- 94.<sup>7</sup>

## 2. Status of Muslims Education :

Muslims accounted for 13.43 per cent of India's population, making them the country's second-largest religious group behind Hindus, who account for 80.5 per cent. In India, around 35.7 per cent of Muslims live in cities, with 36.92 per cent of Muslims living in poverty. The Sachar Committee was eye-opening in that the issues were presented not in a generalized manner but with specific facts and figures to back them up.<sup>8</sup> This report was most likely the first attempt to examine the conditions of the Muslim community using large-scale empirical data. It highlighted Muslims' greater disadvantage in India in various areas, including jobs and education.

According to the Committee, Muslim school enrolment rates were among the lowest but have recently improved. This is also in line with the view that education is becoming more important in the community to enhance socio-economic position. The Muslim population in India lags behind other religious groups in most development metrics, according to the Sachar Committee Report (2006). Muslim dropout rates are likewise the highest, and they appear to rise dramatically after middle school. Muslims have among the lowest levels of secondary school completion.<sup>9</sup>

Poverty is the most significant impediment to education among Muslims, according to the committee, because young children are expected to assist their families rather than study<sup>10</sup>. Muslims mother have greater maternal mortality rates, underweight children, and anaemic-mothers<sup>11</sup>. They have a lower nutritional status than the rest of the population in terms of per capita calorie intake. Literacy is the initial stage in learning and knowledge acquisition, and hence a significant measure of human progress, as it is evident. Some states with a higher percentage of Muslims are given in Table 1.

**Table 1: States with a higher percentage of Muslims**

State	Percentage
Jammu and Kashmir	67
Assam	30.9
West Bengal	25.2
Kerala	24.7

\*Source: available at: <https://censusindia.gov.in/> (last visited on July 21, 2021)

The Sachar Committee has used a range of metrics to illustrate the Muslims' backwardness. A school is missing in about every third Muslim-dominated hamlet. Nearly 40% of Muslim-dominated areas lack access to health care. Rural Muslim worker-to-population ratios are much lower, while urban Muslim worker-to-population ratios are modestly lower. The lower ratios are mainly attributed to Muslim women's much lower economic engagement.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Census Report (2011).

<sup>8</sup> Sachar Committee Report Ministry of Minority Affairs, Government of India (2006).

<sup>99</sup> Awasthi . Salman, “ *I failed to Work Hard: Reason for Secondary School Dropout among Muslim Men in Delhi*”, Contemporary Education Dialogue, 17 (1), pp 45-69, Sage Publication, (2020).

<sup>10</sup> Tasneem . Shazli and Sana .Asma, “ *Role of Madarsa Education in Empowerment of Muslims in India*”, International Journal of Humanities and Social Science Invention, Vol. 20(2), pp 10-15, (2015).

<sup>11</sup> Tasneem . Shazli and Sana .Asma, “ *Role of Madarsa Education in Empowerment of Muslims in India*”, International Journal of Humanities and Social Science Invention, Vol. 20(2), pp 10-15, (2015).

<sup>12</sup> Sachar Committee Report Ministry of Minority Affairs, Government. of India, (2006).



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Muslims had a literacy rate of 59.1 percent, which was lower to the national average of 64.8 percent<sup>14</sup>. Only approximately 4 percent of Muslims hold a degree or diploma, compared to roughly 7 per cent of the population aged 20 and above<sup>15</sup>. According to estimations, only one out of every 25 undergraduate students and one out of every 50 postgraduate students is a Muslim. Muslim men are less likely than Muslim women to enroll in degree programmes. The Sachar Committee report, on the other hand, made it evident that the poverty that the Muslims experience has been pushed into the socio-academic arena. Many experts, policymakers, and ordinary Muslims believed that the only way to improve their socio-economic condition and obtain better-paying employment was through education. However, socio-economic status does influence whether or not a person pursues further education.<sup>16</sup> In other words, economic progress and education are two sides of the same coin.

### 3. Education and the Muslims Women :

Economic dependency is a major component of Muslim women's poor status; hence education is a critical weapon for bringing them out of poverty. After independence, women's education in India improved dramatically. The number of girls' schools and colleges has increased in recent years. Enrollment of Muslim girls in schools and colleges has expanded gradually but steadily. Muslim parents are becoming increasingly interested in teaching their daughters in the same way that they educate their sons<sup>17</sup>.

Village girls go to school, and many of them go on to further education in cities. Still, Muslim women are changing slowly, and often painfully, because they have been isolated and have lived a life of subordination for a long time, and most of them despise the thought of change. Hassan and Menon (2004) looked into Muslim girls' involvement in educational activities and discovered that there are very few Muslim women in high-level positions in India. According to the study's findings, just about 15 per cent of Muslim women report working. Muslim women, on the whole, work for themselves or do domestic work<sup>18</sup>. As a result, many Muslim girls abandon their studies.

The Sachar Committee Report (2006) echoes parents' sentiments that education for girls is unimportant. Girls are withdrawn at a young age, even if they enroll, to marry them off. As a result, the dropout rate among Muslim girls is greater. Muslim women are three times less educated than their Hindu counterparts nationally. In metropolitan regions, girls with higher education attainment are uncommon<sup>19</sup>.

According to studies on Muslim women, a lack of good quality schools and hostel facilities for girls and poor instructor quality are some of the major contributors to Muslim women's low educational attainment. It's worth highlighting that Muslim women have a strong desire for education, but challenges such as a lack of nearby schools, poverty, financial restraints, and school discrimination prohibit them from finishing their education<sup>20</sup>.

### 4. Madarsa Education :

Many educational institutions were created during the centuries of Muslim dominance in India, particularly the two centuries of the Mughal Empire. These are known as *Madarsas* and contain *Maktab*, which are the lowest level of education<sup>21</sup>. India currently has between 30,000 and 40,000 Madarsa<sup>22</sup>. In the Muslim education system, Madarsa education has major importance. Madarsa were established to teach not only Islamic knowledge but also modern

<sup>13</sup> Sachar Committee Report Ministry of Minority Affairs, Government. of India, (2006).

<sup>14</sup> Census Report (2011).

<sup>15</sup> M. H. Siddiqui, "Educational Backwardness of Muslims in India and its Possible Remedies", Indian Journal of Applied Research, Volume: 2, Issue-3, (2012).

<sup>16</sup> Sachar Committee Report Ministry of Minority Affairs, Government. of India, (2006).

<sup>17</sup> Abdullah. Shariff, "Social, Economic and Social Status of Muslims in India", Government of India: New Delhi, (2006).

<sup>18</sup> Zoya. Hasan and Ritu .Menon, "Unequal Citizen: A study of Muslim Women in India", Oxford University Press, (2004).

<sup>19</sup> Sachar Committee Report Ministry of Minority Affairs, Government. of India, (2006).

<sup>20</sup> Tasneem . Shazli and Sana .Asma, "Educational Vision of Muslims in India: Problems and concerns", International Journal of Humanities and Social Science Invention, Vol. 4(3), pp 21-27, (2015).

<sup>21</sup> Bonita. Please, "Madarsa Education, State and Communities: Muslims in West Bengal", *Economic and political weekly*, Vol. 40, pp 555-564, (2005).

<sup>22</sup> Tasneem . Shazli and Sana .Asma, "Role of Madarsa Education in Empowerment of Muslims in India", International Journal of Humanities and Social Science Invention, Vol. 20(2), pp 10-15, (2015).



things<sup>23</sup>. Neither Muslim leader nor the government is interested in changing the educational for Muslims<sup>24</sup>. *Madarsa* education must be modernized if Muslim students are to receive a good education today. In India, *madarsa* education has the potential to increase rural and low-income populations' access to an excellent education. According to research conducted in India, the lack of access to alternative educational options nearby was a factor in Muslims selecting *Madarsa*. Saxena (1983) discovered that the majority of regular schools in Moradabad were in non-Muslim communities during his research<sup>25</sup>. Another eye-opening truth is that *Madarsas* are primarily found in rural areas, and they are all state-sponsored. Only teacher salaries are covered by government aid. They rarely receive any additional cash for the teaching-learning process or increase *Madarsa* education quality. *Madarsas* are finding it difficult to compete with other schools due to a lack of these facilities and finances for quality enhancement<sup>26</sup>.

The most critical stage for *Madarsa* leaders is to obtain experience in planning and management, which necessitates capacity-building programmes. These *Madarsas* are aiming to give quality education to children of all castes and religions at the state and national levels. In order to provide acceptable, equal, and quality education to all, the Indian Parliament's Right to Education Act requires such projects<sup>27</sup>.

## 5. Factors Affected the Muslims Education :

Several elements influence Muslim educational backwardness in India, including socio-economic issues, religious education, medium of instruction, and women's education; as a result, attitude is crucial to a better understanding of Muslim educational backwardness. Therefore, the topics listed below should be thoroughly investigated. Parents blame government initiatives and apathy for the issue, while governments blame parental attitudes and the environment. In addition, the following points of view may help clarify the facts:

### 5.1 Religious Problem

They specifically target Indian Muslims who consume beef. Muslims eat beef because their religion allows it. Hindus, on the other hand, punish them for eating beef. In September 2015, a young man was killed in New Delhi because he slaughtered his calf and ate its meat. He was brutally murdered by the mob. Similarly, a bus driver in Kashmir was killed, and they spread petrol on him because they suspected he had killed and eaten a calf. In another incident, vicious Indian activists smeared black ink on the face of a young talented Muslim lawmaker in the same qualm<sup>28</sup>.

The main issue is that Indian media portrays Muslims in a negative light, and the majority of Indians trust their media. They are breaking stories without conducting any research or verifying the authenticity or nature of the news<sup>29</sup>.

If we look at the word minority in the context of the Indian Constitution, we will find that it is not clearly defined or mentioned anywhere. However, several groups have debated the status of minorities. When it comes to the Indian article, it's important to know that, according to article 29, any group residing inside the Indian borders has the right to promote its language, culture, and literature. Article 30 also states that a minority group "whether based on religion or language shall have the right to establish and administer educational institutions of their choice<sup>30</sup>," but we can still anticipate many problems for Indian Muslims. There are issues in every sector of India. One of the most serious difficulties that Muslims face is a lack of understanding of their social and cultural lives.

<sup>23</sup> Tasneem . Shazli and Sana .Asma, "Role of Madarsa Education in Empowerment of Muslims in India", International Journal of Humanities and Social Science Invention, Vol. 20(2), pp 10-15, (2015).

<sup>24</sup> Tasneem . Shazli and Sana .Asma, "Role of Madarsa Education in Empowerment of Muslims in India", International Journal of Humanities and Social Science Invention, Vol. 20(2), pp 10-15, (2015).

<sup>25</sup> S. Gupta, "The Education of Muslims in India", International Research Journal, Jaipur, India. Vol.III, Issue-35, (2012).

<sup>26</sup> Mirza Asmer Beg and A. R. Kidwai (ed.), "Empowerment of Indian Muslims, Perspectives, Planning and Road Ahead", Aftab. Alam, "Empowerment of Indian Muslims: Education is the Key", Concept Publishing House Pvt. Ltd, New Delhi, (2012).

<sup>27</sup> Mirza Asmer Beg and A. R. Kidwai (ed.), "Empowerment of Indian Muslims, Perspectives, Planning and Road Ahead", Aftab. Alam, "Empowerment of Indian Muslims: Education is the Key", Concept Publishing House Pvt. Ltd, New Delhi, (2012).

<sup>28</sup> B.Mistry, Malika. "Muslims in India: A demographic and socioeconomic profile." Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs (Taylor Francis Online), (2005).

<sup>29</sup> Narula, Manju. "Educational Development of Muslim Minority:" Journal of Education and Research, (2014).

<sup>30</sup> P.M. Bakshi. "The Constitution of India", Universal Law Publishing Co. Pvt. Ltd, New Delhi, Fifteenth Edition, (2018).



It is debatable whether the creation of a mental set as a result of religious instruction is the critical element contributing to Muslims' scholastic backwardness. In recent years, the bulk of modern Indian Muslims has gained a solid understanding of Islam, Islamic education, and western education.

## 5.2 Economic Problem

This growing minority of Muslim Indians are more economically disadvantaged and dissatisfied than Indians of other religious groups. It's essential to examine whether the economic crisis is a factor in educational performance. According to the claim, Muslims are India's most socially and economically disadvantaged population. The majorities of Muslims are self-employed or work as labourers, and their economic status and living standards are appalling. Muslims, who make up about 14.4% of India's huge population, spend an average of 32.7 rupees every day. On the other hand, India's minuscule minority of Sikhs spend an average of 55.3 rupees a day<sup>31</sup>.

## 5.3 Medium of Instruction

The medium of instruction is another aspect that contributes to Muslims' educational backwardness. Some Urdu-medium kids are thought to struggle to keep up with their English-medium peers. Many Muslim households initially teach their children in Urdu since it is culturally and Islamically relevant.

## 6. Suggestion :

Few suggestions for the improvement of Madarsa education are given below:

- Increase awareness among Muslims about the importance of education, various employment opportunities, self-employment schemes, and resultant economic well-being.
- There is a need to develop more girls' schools to minimize the accessibility of schools. Parents should develop a positive attitude towards girls' higher education.
- Government should open high-quality Urdu medium schools wherever they are in demand and ensure high-quality textbooks for students in the Urdu language.
- Quality education should be provided in Madarsas, emphasizing Information and Communication Technology.
- It should be the responsibility of the Union and State Government to provide adequate grants for these Madrasas and Maktabas.

## 7. CONCLUSION :

Considering the preceding examination of Muslim educational backwardness, it is possible to conclude that Muslims trail significantly behind other communities. Their educational method is still the same as it was before. They refuse to accept modern education, resulting in social, economic, and political consequences. For various reasons, they do not want to provide higher education for their daughters; yet, they are now pursuing education and improving day by day over the previous two decades, and are learning to stand on their own two feet; however, this effort is simply a drop in the ocean. Muslims have a lower proportion of professional education, especially in management. Their Madarsas follow antiquated and obsolete curricula in an age of globalization and digital technology. Their curriculum is entirely devoid of scientific and business expertise. Madarsas should be transformed into educational centers that may teach both religious and vocational studies. As a result, Muslims' educational viewpoints must move from traditional to contemporary. There has also been little research on Muslim educational conditions; it is the responsibility of social anthropologists and sociologists to determine the educational status of Muslims in various parts of the country and analyze the state of education among them to investigate the barriers to their educational upliftment. The government must take action to assist the Muslims in their development.

<sup>31</sup> <https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/muslims-poorest-among-religious-groups-says-nssso-survey/article5042032.ece>, (2016).