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## Educational Status of Muslims in India; Backwardness and Changing Attitude

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### Abstract:

India is a multicultural and multi religious country. People belonging to many religious faiths live side by side. Among the different religious group, Muslim constitute the largest minority group in India. However, they are socio-economically much backward than other communities. Indian Muslims are facing various socio-economic problems, which are influencing their educational backwardness. This article attempts to present educational status and changing attitude of Muslim in India. It based on secondary data obtained from various source. It has observed an uneven condition of education in India and Muslims are the most deprived minority group in this sector. Educational status of Muslims is unsatisfying. As result unemployment, poverty illiteracy is growing day by day after six decade of independence. After Sachar, committee report the Government of India has taken systematic initiatives and effective policy to improve socio-economic and educational condition of Muslims. In spite of, the educational status of Muslims unsatisfying No doubt large number of Muslims detached from school. But recent time it is finding change of attitude and generational awareness among the Muslims. As a result, a significant share of Muslim population is enrolling in education.

**Keyword:** Muslim, socio-economic, education, backward, attitude, change

### 1. Introduction

India is a land of diversity with different linguistic, ethnic, religious group and has a unique feature of “unity of diversity”. People belonging to many religious faiths live side by side. Among the different religious groups, Muslims constitute the largest minority group in India. They account for 13.4 percent of the country’s total population. In spite of largest minority group, Muslims are socio-economically much backward which are influencing their educational status. Because the educational status depend on socio-economic condition of the communities. The word ‘BACKWARD’ deeply connected with the Muslim community. The educational backwardness push them social darkness. The Sachar committee report stated “Muslims are at a double disadvantage with low levels of education combined with low quality education; their deprivation increase manifold as the level of education rises. In some instances, the relative share for Muslim is lower than SCs who are victims of a long-standing cast system. It is reality that the Muslims are the most backward in India. After six decade of independence their deprivation has been remained. Zaidi (2007) stated, “The most of the districts and states Muslims are educationally backward”. In recent times, it is finding a change of attitude and growing awareness among the Muslims to the education. As a result, the enrollment rate is increasing day by day both girls and boys. The long-standing patriarchal conservative attitude of Muslims is dissolving to day. This article tries to present the educational status, recent trends and changing attitude of the Muslims to the education in the context of Government policies.

### 2. Educational Status of Muslims

Education is the backbone of the nation. Any nation cannot be strong without universal development of education. Education is the main key for all progress, prosperity and creativity of the nation. After independence, India has given importance on education without discrimination of race, color and cast of the citizens. The constitution on India had committed to provide free and compulsory education at elementary level among the whole people of the country. At the time of adopting the constitution, the education was under Article 45 of the directive principle of state policy. Article 45 state “the state shall endeavor to provide within a period of ten years from the commencement of this constitution, for free and compulsory education for all children until the age of fourteen years.” On the other hand, Article 29 and 30 provides protection to minorities both religious and linguistic to conserve their culture and set up Institution of their choice. Further, the ‘National policy of education 1986’ stated, “some minority groups are educationally deprived or backward. Greater attention will be paid to the education of these groups in the interest of equality and social justice”. The central government passed ‘National commission for minorities’ in 1992. The Government of India took great decision about education in 2002. This year education as a fundamental right was endorsed through 86<sup>th</sup> amendment of the constitution and Article 21-A state “the state shall provide free and compulsory education to all children of the age six to fourteen years”. However, despite this commitment the large number of children has remained out of school. It is the fact that out of school rate is much high among the Muslims who is the largest minority group in India.

After six decade of independence the Muslims has been deprive in education in India. The low literacy level of Muslim is well document in various studies. The Sachar committee report revealed the socio-economic and educational backwardness of the Muslims in India. However, Muslims came in India with their educational & cultural heritage of middle Asia in past. Nevertheless, in the colonial and the postcolonial period the literacy level of Muslims has been far lower than other communities. The literacy rate of Muslims in 2001 was 59.1%, [male 67.6%, female 50%]. It is lower than other minorities and much lower than national average (64.8%). In both rural and urban areas the participation of Muslims are dissatisfactory. Compared to the over all population of the country higher percentage of Muslims live in urban areas, but participation of Muslims in education in this areas is lower [Muslim boys 57.6% & girls 49.5%]. other hand in rural areas only 52.7 percent Muslims are literate and literacy rate of Muslim women are worse in both areas. The literacy gap between Muslims and others are greater in both urban and rural areas.

It is reality that the improvement of educational status is not possible without the increase of enrollment of the children in school. Lower enrollment rate is a sign of educational backwardness. It has seen that year of schooling rate for the Muslims constantly lower. The disparity is the highest in the rural areas. In 1999-2000 Muslims had the lowest enrollment rate and 2004-05 the enrollment rate was slightly higher but lower than the national average enrollment rate. The current enrollment rate of Muslims are 74% while remaining population is 83% [NCAER survey report]. This is the fact that about 25 percent Muslim children in the 6-14 year age group have either never attended in the schools or dropped out. The share of the drop out and children who never attended in schools is still higher among the Muslims than others. The drop out rate in elementary stage is higher among the Muslim girls compared Muslim boys. Because most Muslim dominated, areas have not girls' school. The probability of completing different levels of school education has increased for all communities including Muslim. The differences still exist and Muslims are behind others. About 62% of eligible children in upper casts are likely to complete primary education whereas about 44% Muslim learners are likely to complete that level.

The Secondary education is the important phase of the education system. A significant proportion of the population remains deprived of the benefit of the secondary & the higher education and Muslim community comprise an important category of the deprived communities. It has seen that the level of matriculation education for Muslims (8%) is lower than SCs/STs [NSSO 66<sup>th</sup> ROUND] and far lower than national average (13.3%). According to the census data only about 7% (census 2001) of the population aged 20 years and above are the graduate or hold diplomas, this proportion is 4% amongst Muslims. On the other hand at the postgraduate level enrollment rate of Muslims are falls down considerably. Only 3% Muslim students continue their study in postgraduate level. While OBC (14%) and SC (13%) are much higher than Muslims. It is interesting that the enrollment rate is higher for Muslim girls than boys. In fact, Muslims are the underprivileged in education and their respective share is much lower than their share in the population. They have not been able to get the benefit of higher education despite some steps taken by the Government to address the situation.

### 3. Changing Attitude in Education

The largest minority group, Muslims is the socio-economic and educationally much backward in India. The lack of education has been increasing various problems like unemployment, inequality and lack of social awareness among the Muslims. The Sachar committee report exposed this nude picture extensively. After Sachar committee's recommendation, the Government of India (UPA Govt. under leadership Dr. Monmhon Sing) took initiatives and effective policies to improve educational status of the Muslims. In 2006, 'the national commission for minority educational institution Act 2004' was amended. According to this Act 7292, institution had granted minority status. Further Government appointed the 'Ranganath Mishra Commission' in 2007, which provide various significant recommendations about education of minorities. Then the Government announced 'prime minister 15-point program' to enhance opportunities of education for minorities. Then the planning commission had set up a steering committee on "Empowerment of minorities" for the XII five year plan which emphasized on education of the minorities. The steering committee stated that education is the main building block on with socio-economic empowerment is build. Because of Government policies and initiatives (after the Sachar committee's recommendations), it is finding a significant change and generational awareness among the Muslims. The participation of Muslims has been increasing in education, which is indicating their improvement in education.

The number of Muslim children enrolled in the schools. Access to school within a reasonable distance is important in ensuring participation of children in schooling. Table no 1 shows that nearly 92 percent of households have access to primary school within distance of one kilometer, 7 percent between 2 and 3 kms. About 68 percent of households have access to upper primary schools within a distance of less than 1 kms and 9 percent between 2 and 3 kms. The pattern with respect to Muslim households is similar. This is the positive sign for Muslims.

Primary Level			
Distance of School	Hinduism	Islam	All
Less than 1 kms	92.4	91.2	91.9
1 kms to 2 kms	6.3	6.9	6.6
2 kms to 3 kms	1.0	1.3	1.1
Upper Primary Level			
Less than 1 kms	67.7	67.3	67.5
1 kms to 2 kms	16	18	16.3
2 kms to 3 kms	9.5	.6	9.4

Table 1: Access to Elementary Education by Religious communities, 2007-08

Source: NSSO (2010)

The enrollment of Muslims has been increasing at the elementary and primary level. In the elementary education increased from 1.58 crore in 2005-07 to 2.55 crore in 2011-12. The percentage has increased from 8.84% to 12.97%. During this period, enrollment rate has increased for Muslim boys from 8.6% to 12.5% and for girls from 9.11% to 13%. At the primary level, 1.23 crore children were enrolled in 2006-07 and the number has increased to 1.82 crore in 2011-12. It has seen that the percentage of participation of the Muslim girls is higher comparing the boys at the elementary and primary level. In the both stages, the enrollment of Muslim boys is 12.5 percent whereas the enrollment of girls is 13.1 percent. At the upper primary level the enrollment has increased from 35 lakh in 2006-07 to 72 lakh in 2011-12. Consequently the total enrollment has increased from 9.35% to 13.31% at primary level and from 7.42% to 11.65% at upper the primary level during the same period. It is interesting that the participation of Muslim girls is higher than boys at upper primary level. (Table 2).

Elementary Education						
Year	Enrollment ( in crore )			Percentage		
	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total
2006-07	0.81	0.77	1.58	8.6	9.1	8.84
2009-10	1.14	1.21	2.45	12.8	13.3	13.05
2011-12	1.28	1.27	2.55	12.5	13.1	12.79
Primary stage						
2006-07	0.63	0.60	1.23	9.22	9.48	9.35
2009-10	0.92	0.89	1.80	13.35	13.70	13.52
2011-12	0.93	0.90	1.82	13.10	13.54	13.31
Upper Primary stage						
2006-07	0.18	0.17	0.35	7.03	7.87	7.42
2009-10	0.32	0.33	0.65	11.37	12.47	11.90
2011-12	0.35	0.37	0.72	11.04	12.29	11.65

Table 2: Enrollment of Muslim children in Elementary, Primary and Upper Primary stage

Source: prepared by NUEPA from DISE.

The enrollment rate of Muslims has increased in all the level of education. The enrollment rate of Muslim children has increased at Grade VI, VII and VIII. The Muslim children in Grade VII and VIII constitute 7.8% and 5.4% of total enrolment in 2006-07 and it increased to 9.6% for Grade VII and 8.4% for Grade VIII in 2011-12. Whereas in this levels the children of all communities is marginally better (Table 3). The transition rate for Muslim children has found to be around 86.87 percent in 2011-12 and no difference has not found between Muslims and others (sc, st, obc, general population) at the national and state levels

Year	Grade VI	Grade VII	Grade VIII
Muslim Children			
2006-07	9.2	7.8	5.4
2009-10	10.3	9.5	6.7
2011-12	10.4	9.6	8.4
All Children			
2006-07	10.3	9.3	7.2
2009-10	10.7	10.2	8.3
2011-12	11.0	10.6	9.5

Table 3: Distribution of Enrollment by Grades

The condition of education at the secondary and higher levels is unsatisfying until now. Abusaleh Shariff has analyzed the status of Muslims at the matriculation level in their report (released in January 2013) which stated the share of Muslims at the level of matriculation education both rural and urban areas is lower than others. Though compared to past the enrollment rate has grown at secondary and higher education. The graduation attendance ratio (GAR) for Muslims has increased from 8.5% in 2004-05 to 9.51% in 2007-08 (table 1.4); it is lower than non-Muslims (18.54 in 2007-08) are. In spite of the changes is significant for Muslims on the other hand it is important to note that of the total attendance at Diploma and Certificate courses (below graduate level) accounts 22.4 percent of the Muslims and 19.2 percent of the non Muslims (Table 5). The attendance of Muslims in this level is higher than non Muslims.

	NSSO 61 <sup>st</sup> round(2004-05)		NSSO 64 <sup>th</sup> round (2007-08)	
	Enrollment	GAR %	Enrollment	GAR %
Muslim	1308.8	8.5	1521.4	9.51
Non-Muslim	14170.9	15.1	17102.4	18.54

Table 4: Enrollments and GAR

Level of Attendance	Muslims	Non-Muslims	Total	% Of Muslims	% of Non-Muslims
Diploma& Certificate Below Graduate level	306167	2951337	3257504	22.4	19.2
Diploma at Graduate and above level	181464	2404262	2585726	13.3	15.2

Table 5: The Attendance of Muslims and Non-Muslims at Diploma & Certificate Course  
Source: NSSO 64<sup>th</sup> round.

This is the fact that after completing matriculation and higher secondary education many Muslim boys and girls give up education due to socio-economic problems. A large number of Muslim girls are forced to wed between age of 14 to 17 years abide by parent's decision. The many poor Muslim boys are taking job to earn money for their families giving up the schools. The Participation of Muslims in higher education is disappointing but recent enrollment rate is slowly increasing in higher education. To day Muslims students about 5% at graduate level and 4% at postgraduate level are studying in India. Their participation in the engineering and medical courses is lower but enrollment is growing day by day. It is significant in the context of their poor socio-economic condition.

#### 4. Change in Madrasa Education

The Madrasa have been playing important role in the Muslims education system from medieval period. The significance cannot ignore to day. Mainly the poor Muslim children go to the Madrasa. About 4 percent of all Muslim students of the school going age group are enrolled in Madrasas. So the Government of India has been taken some measures to provide quality education in the madrasas. The intensive and Madrasa modernization program was recast in 2008 as two scheme, namely, the Scheme for providing Quality Education in Madrasa (SPQM) and Infrastructure Development of private/Unaided Minority Institution (IDMI) for Elementary Secondary/Senior Secondary Schools. The SPQM seeks to bring about qualitative improvement in Madrasa to enable Muslim children attain standards of the national education system in formal education subjects. Consequently, the number of students has increased in the Madrasa. In 2011-12, about 19.85 lakh Muslim children enrolled in the recognized Madrasa and 4.89 lakh in the unrecognized Madrasa. In all, 9.7 percent of Muslim children enrolled in the Madrasa both recognized and unrecognized. Now the both categories Madrasa are following the state policy of education and providing modern education among the Muslim students who enrolled in the Madrasa.

#### 5. Conclusion

This is the reality that the Muslim community has been depriving in India from colonial period, especially socio-economic and educationally. After Independence, the Government of India took initiatives to improve their educational status but Muslims were not responding soundly. After Sachar Committee report, the Government has taken effective measures, which has brought significant change in old conservative attitude of the Muslims to the education, particularly girl's education. The parents have not objection to sent girls to co-education schools to day. The Muslims have able to understand the value of education and awareness is growing. As a result, the enrollment of the Muslims, both boys and girls are increasing in the all level of education. The picture has radically changed in the primary and the upper primary levels. In the higher education, some incentive measures have needed to enhance their participation. It can say that this trend will be better the educational status in future.

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