Educational Vision of Muslims in India: Problems and Concerns

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ABSTRACT: Education is the only mechanism that enhances the process of social, economic, and cultural development of communities. Among all the religious communities, Muslims are in the least educated section of Indian Society. The backwardness among Muslims in comparison with non-Muslims in India have become a matter of concern at present. There are several reasons for backwardness of Muslims in India such as large family size, lack of link between madarsa education and modern education, economic poverty, negative attitude towards girl's education etc. The objective of this paper is to analyze the educational vision of Muslims in India. Education is the top most priority in Islam and hence to the Muslims. It reveals from study that Muslim community in India is the most backward in terms of education. The present study has identified the problems of Muslim's education in India and further address the proper suggestion and measures for improvement in their vision.

KEY WORDS: Educational Vision, Educational status, Indian Muslims, women education, Issues and Concern.

I. INTRODUCTION

Education is the instrument of change and development for the society. It trained and develops the manpower resources, transforms the society as well as change the status of a person from one status to another in social hierarchy. Education according to Indian tradition is not merely a means of earning a living; nor is it only a nursery of thought or a school for citizenship. It is initiation into the life of spirit and training of human souls in the pursuit of truth and the practice of virtue(*Radhakrishnan*). In contemporary world particularly in developing countries modern education is seen as a means and goal for modernization (Pandey, 1988). Growth of education is considered as a sign of human growth and development. In 1951 the literacy in India was 18.53%, which increased to 64.8 % in 2001 and reached 74.04% in Census 2011. The literate population of India is 77, 84,54,120 (2011 Census). The Census 2011 shows an increase in literate population by 38.82 in comparison to Census 2001. According to Census 2011, five states in India have highest literacy rate are, Kerala (93.91 %), Mizoram (91.58 %), Tripura (87.75 %), Goa (87.40%), Himachal Pradesh (83.78 %).

The National Commission for Minorities in India has identified Muslims, Christians, Sikhs, Buddhists and Parsees which constitute 18.8% 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. India has one of the largest Muslim populations in the world about 156 million constituting about 12 per cent of total population. It is observable phenomenon that the educational status of Indian Muslims is very low. 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. 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. The 2009 CIA World Fact Book data put the Muslim population in India at 156,254,615. Muslims are found all over India, but they are largely concentrated in 12 states where the Muslim population is more than 10% of the state population. 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. 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.

Research studies on Muslims in India are rather scanty. However, it should be noted that the literature dealing with the educational backwardness of Muslims is by and large impressionistic and speculative. reflecting more the general impression of the observer. As a result, most of the writings on this subject in the post independence period are not only inadequate but are also by and large one-sided (Phadke, 1978). The study of non-Hindus and their tradition has been sadly neglected by both Indians and foreigners (Ahmed, 1976). The studies on educational status of Muslims and their constraints to educational development are practically very negligible. There are books on Muslims covering political and religious issues. But very little is known about their economic, educational and social conditions (Khan, 1984). Anthropological and Sociological researches on Muslim education in India are very meager, Some work of the following scholars are - Ahmed (1980) has analyzed the problems of Muslim educational backwardness in contemporary India. His study illustrates the educational status of the Muslims as well as the socio-cultural constraints which they are facing in the context of educational upliftment among them. Ansari (1989) critically examined the educational backwardness of the Indian Muslims. Educational situation as well as the educational problems of Muslim community of India with particular reference to West Bengal has been studied by Mondal (1989). A comprehensive and detailed account of educational growth and constraints on educational performance of the Indian Muslims has examined by Peer (1991). In recent years fresh attention has been paid on education of minorities particularly of Muslims by appointment of Sachar Committee by the Prime Minister to study the social, economic and educational status of Muslims.

Concentration of Muslim Population in India (2001)





II. **EDUCATION IN ISLAM**

To seek knowledge is a sacred duty in Islam, The first word revealed of the Quran was "Iqra" which mean 'Read' and Seek knowledge! Educate yourselves! Be educated. There is a general stereotype that the principles of Islam are responsible for educational backwardness of the Muslims. But there is no empirical basis of such a stereotype. Actually Islam does not stand against the acquisition of knowledge and education among its believers. Islam has given proper emphasis on attainment of education and has provided many guidelines for it. Islam has broader meaning of education. According to Islamic prescriptions acquisition of knowledge is compulsory for all men and women. It states that "go in quest of knowledge to as distant as a place as China". About fourteen centuries ago Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) declared that "the pursuit of knowledge is incumbent on every Muslim male and female". In the view of Islam, a society cannot flourish, unless its human resources (Abdalati, 1975). The Islam says to develop harmony, equilibrium are properly utilized through education and balance by utilizing the knowledge; still Muslims are at the bottom of educational level. Therefore, there is need for empirical research at micro level to find out the reasons behind this variation between the text of Islam and real condition of Muslims.

Table: 1	Literacy	Rate of	of Muslims	(2001)	

Rural			Urban			
All	Male	Female	All	Male	Female	
53	62	43	70	76	63	

Source: Sachar Committee Report

III. VISION OF MUSLIMS TOWARDS EDUCATION

Muslims are the largest minority in India, majority of this community is far lag behind with respect to all material benefits, particularly in education and employment. There are many reasons which are responsible for lower literacy among Muslims but the main cause is the vision of Muslims towards modern education. It is observed that the Muslims do not enthusiastically provide education to their children especially their daughters. The educational backwardness of Muslim community is generally attributed to their religious orthodoxy coupled with their emphasis on the theological education with little effort to change the traditional education system and acquire the knowledge relevant to the needs of changing world (Fahimuddin, 2004). Indian Muslims are not having positive attitude towards modern commercial education. It is universally accepted fact that education is the most potent and effective tool to achieve any section of society. Although it is right that socio-economic condition also makes a significant contribution in this regard, but the positive attitude towards education ensures the development of confidence and self -worth. Economic well-being can also be elevated naturally by development of level of education. Employment is also closely linked with the status of education. Muslim students do not have access to quality education thus end up with low paid jobs and less remunerative employment. Muslims are not only the victims of poverty; rather have accepted inequality and discrimination as their inevitable fate. They also suffer from recurring insecurity, because of devastating episode of mass communal violence. Thus they should take education as a matter of highest priority in order to improve their pathetic state of life. Majority of Muslims are leading life at periphery of well being. The benefits of mainstreams education are either not available to them or they, themselves, have decided to remain away from them (due to numerous reasons).

IV. EDUCATIONAL STATUS OF MUSLIMS IN INDIA

Muslims in India accounted for 13.43% population of the country, and the second largest denomination, after Hindus who are 80.5%. About 35.7% Muslims live in urban areas of India and 36.92% Muslims survive below poverty line. The Sachar Committee was an eye opener as the problems was brought out, not in vague, but with the support of concrete facts and statistics. This report was probably the first attempt to analyze the conditions of the Muslim community using large-scale empirical data. It clearly brought out the relative deprivation of Muslims in India in various dimensions including employment and education. Sachar Committee finds that school enrolment rates were among the lowest for Muslims but had improved in recent years. This is also consistent with the perception that the Community is increasingly looking at education as a means of improving socio-economic status. Sachar Committee Report (2006) confirmed that by most development indicators, the Muslim community is lagging behind other religious groups of India. Dropout rates are also highest among Muslims and this seems to go up significantly after middle school. Higher secondary attainment levels are also among the lowest for Muslims. The committee had identified poverty to be the major barrier to education amongst Muslims as young children are expected to support their family rather than to study. The maternal mortality rates, incidence of underweight children and anemic mothers are comparatively higher among Muslims. Their nutritional status in terms of per capita calorie intake is also lower than the rest of the population. As we know, literacy is the first step in learning and knowledge building, and therefore, an essential indicator of human development. There are some states having highest percentage of Muslims are given in Table 1.

State	Percentage
Jammu & Kashmir	67
Assam	30.9
West Bengal	25.2
Kerala	24.7
	G G 2011

Table 1: State	s with highest	t percentage	of Muslims

Source: Census 2011.

The Sachhar Committee has brought out the backwardness faced by the Muslims through various other indicators. In almost every three Muslim-dominated villages, one does not have a school. Nearly 40 per cent of the Muslim-dominated villages do not have any health facility. Worker population ratios for Muslims are significantly lower in rural areas, and marginally lower in urban areas. The lower ratios are mainly due to much lower participation in economic activity by Muslim women.

V. EDUCATION AND THE MUSLIM WOMEN IN INDIA

Education is an indispensable means for helping the Muslim women out of their economic misery because economic dependency is the major factor contributing to the low status of Muslim women. After independence women's education made considerable progress in India. The number of girl's schools and colleges increased. Muslim girls going to schools and colleges also increased slowly but steadily. Muslim parents are becoming anxious to educate their daughters along with their sons.

Village girls are going to schools while in towns many of them are seeking higher education. Still Muslim women are changing very gradually, sometimes, the change is painfully slow, because for a long time Muslim women have remained secluded and have lived the life of submission, so most of them dislike the idea of change. Participation of Muslim girls in educational activities has been studied by Hassan and Menon (2004) who found that very few Muslim women in India are in high profile jobs. The study reveals that less than 15% of Muslim women report themselves to be working. Generally, Muslim women are self-employed or engaged in home-based labor. This leads to a huge dropout of Muslim girls from schools. The Sachar Committee Report (2006) also reflects the same feeling that parents feel that education is not important for girls. Even if girls are enrolled, they are withdrawn at an early age to marry them off. This leads to a higher dropout rate among Muslim girls. At the all India level Muslim women are three times behind their Hindu sisters. The attainment of higher education among girls is a rare phenomenon ever in the urban areas. The studies done in the field of Muslim women revealed that the lack of good quality schools and hostel facilities for girls, poor quality of teacher are believed to be some of the important factors responsible for the low level of educational attainment among Muslims women. It is worthwhile to say that Muslim women has a strong desire and enthusiasm for education, but hurdles like low access to schools in the vicinity, poverty, financial constraints and discrimination faced at school prevent them from continuing education.

Determination is an element without which no person can succeed in any venture. Muslim women should create willpower or determination towards education so that they can reach to a peak of elevation. Due to the influence of ancient traditions and practices in Muslim societies especially in remote areas women loose courage from the childhood and become dependable on man, Parents also discourage their female children for higher studies. Muslim women suffer more because they are not given enough freedom and hardly have access to higher education, though even the primary level education is not easily accessible to them. There is also lack of schools and colleges in the areas where there is a higher concentration of the Muslim population. Girls are enrolled in nearby schools and are not sent far off to study due to safety reasons. Therefore, the Muslim women of the day need to develop their capabilities and making them more confident. These all demand a thorough discussion among policy makers, academician and community leaders.

Table: 2 Children currently studying as a Proportion of Population by Age-groups:(2004-05)

	(=00100)	
Age group	Muslim Percentage	
6-13	14.0(15.1)	
14-15	12.2(14.5)	
16-17	10.7(14.0)	
18-22	10.2(13.9)	
23 and above	7.4(10.9	

Source: Sachar Committee Report, Figures in parentheses show the proportion of the community in the respective age-group

State/UT	Percentage of Muslim Population Census 2011	Percentage of Muslim Enrolment in 2010-11	Percentage of Muslim Enrolment in 2011-12	Percentage of Muslim Enrolment in 2012-13	% Girls Enrolment 2010-11	% Girls Enrolment 2011-12	% Girls Enrolment 2012-13
A & N Islands	8.22	7.86	8.09	8.64	49.72	49.98	50.05
Andhra	9.17	9.69	10.07	10.33	49.86	50.23	50.03
Pradesh	1.00	0.20	0.27	0.00	17.51	10.00	17.57
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	50.81	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
Tamil Nadu	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	48.58
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

Table: 3 Percentage distribution of Muslim population, Muslim enrolment, Muslim girl's enrolment in India (2011-2013)

Source: DISE 2012-13: Flash Statistics

VI. MUSLIMS AND MADARSA EDUCATION

During centuries of Muslim rule in India, particularly during the two centuries of the Mughal period, many educational institutions were built up across the country. These institutions are generally known as Madrasah, including Maktab which are at the lowest level of education system. There are 30,000 to 40,000 Madarsa in India at present time. The Madarsa education occupies pre-eminent position in the education delivery system to Muslims. Madarsa is established not only to provide the knowledge of Islam as well as learning of contemporary subjects. Neither the Muslim leaders nor the government are serious to reform the system for the educational development of the Muslims. To provide Quality education to Muslim children, modernization of madarsa education is very important for present time. Madrasa education in India can contribute positively to provide a better access to quality education for rural and low socio-economic population. The studies conducted in India reveal that the reason for Muslims opting for Madrasa was lack of access to other educational facilities nearby. Saxena (1983), in his study on Moradabad town, observed that most of the regular schools were located in the non-Muslim localities.

Another revealing fact is that Madrasa are generally established in rural areas and all these Madrasa are Governmentaided. They receive aid from Government only for the teachers' salaries. They hardly get any other of the finances which are essential for the teaching-learning process and for the quality improvement of Madarsa education. Therefore, because of lack of these facilities and in the absence of quality improvement funds, Madrasa are struggling hard to compete with other schools. The most important step for the heads of Madrasa is to have exposure to the field of planning and management; therefore, they need capacity-building programmes. These Madrasa are trying to provide quality education at the state and national level and also offering access for education to children of all caste and religion. The Right to Education Act- passed by Indian Parliament- also needs such initiatives to provide acceptable, equal and quality education to all.

VII. PROBLEMS OF MUSLIM'S EDUCATION IN INDIA

Indian culture is distinct in nature where each ethnic group has the liberty to maintain their Religious identity. Muslim society of India is very heterogeneous in nature mainly because of the influence of caste system; Muslims are among most backwards 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. 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. The Muslims are facing the same problem even today. This attitude towards Muslims has pushed them in more backwardness.

• The Riots, communal violence and insecurity, have become the norm and a sad reality in Modern India. The majority of the victims of riots in India are Muslims. This situation is affecting their economic as well as social condition.

• Muslims are facing socio-economic poverty from past. Their vision is blurring towards education because majority of Muslim parents are illiterate, they are unaware about the importance of modern education. They live in large family size and give greater importance to early marriages. There is absent of vocation education to improve their image to develop through education.

• There is negative attitude towards girl's 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. 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 traveled 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.

• 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.

• Madarsa and Maktabs are still running at the traditional pattern. There is no influence of modern education in their syllabus. Students of Madarsa are having low level of knowledge regarding commerce and computer etc.

• There is absence of committed and genuine Muslim leadership (both social and political) in pre and post independent India

VIII. REMEDIAL MEASURES

Educational development of Muslims is a gradual phenomenon. The emergence of some premier Muslim educational institutions across the country such as Darul Ulyoom Duyuband, U.P, Aligarh Muslim University, Jamia Millia Isamia, Maulana Jauhar Ali University, Osmania University etc. have tremendously improved the prospects of the community in the sphere of both streams of education. Some suggestions are given below regarding the educational upliftment:

• 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.

• The Government should give more emphasis towards the concept of small family size for the improvement of socio-economic condition of Muslims.

• There were some concessions for Muslims to enter in Government jobs, but after 1857 these concessions were withdrawn. Government of India should again develop some concession policy and programs to increase the share of Muslim work participation in Government jobs.

• 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 Madarsa education to raise the educational status of traditional muslims and there should be integration of vocational education with religious instruction in Madarsas. There is also need to link madarsas 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 girl's higher education.

• Government should open high quality Urdu medium schools wherever they are in demand and ensuring high quality textbooks for students in the Urdu language.

• 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.

IX. CONCLUSION

Taking into consideration the above discussion on educational vision of Muslims, it can be concluded that Muslims are far behind than the other communities. Their vision towards education is still traditional. They don't want to accept modern education due to which they are suffering socially, economically and politically. They don't want to give higher education to their daughters due to many reasons, at present somehow they are now coming up for education and improving day by day for the last two decades and are learning to stand on their own feet, but this effort is just a drop in the ocean. Muslims have lower share in Professional education especially in management sector. Their Madarsa are following traditional and old syllabus in the time of globalization and information technology. Their syllabus is far away from scientific and commercial knowledge. Madarsas should transform into modern educational centers where both religious and vocational studies may be imparted. Thus there is need to change the vision of Muslims from traditional to modern education. There is also meager study on Muslim's educational condition; it is the duty of social Anthropologists and Sociologists to find out the educational status and to analyze the state of education among the Muslims of various parts of the country to explore the constraints of educational upliftment among them. It is the need of the hour, that Government should move on and do something for development of Muslims.

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