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## **Education and Development among Muslims in India**

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### **Abstract**

*According to India's constitution, the government has an obligation to preserve, safeguard, and ensure the linguistic, religious, and cultural rights of minorities. Since its independence, India has seen tremendous development and transformation. Indicators of human development and the decline of poverty have also improved as a result. However, not all socio-cultural and religious communities have benefited from progress. Muslims, the country's biggest minority at 14% of the population, lag well behind other groups in terms of human development. Many Muslims believe they are being shortchanged, but apart from the Sachar Committee, no real attempt has been taken to examine the plight of religious minorities in the nation. Both "anti-national" and "appeased" are terms the government uses to describe Muslims, and both are insulting. They struggle with their sense of self, and their participation in the development process has shown that they are economically and socially disadvantaged. Muslims feel inferior because of the way they are treated. Because of a social boycott in certain areas, Muslims have been forced to leave communities where they have resided for hundreds of years. Muslims have left several sections of the nation because of the growing hostility between different communities there. In certain regions, the Muslim minority's economy has been decimated by conflict with other communities, and they have been forced to the margins of society as a result. The economy may be booming, but the Muslims are bearing the brunt of the "competitive forces" unleashed by market liberalisation. Muslims were unable to benefit economically from globalisation and liberalisation because they lacked the necessary education and business acumen. Muslims' traditional educational system seems to place more emphasis on preserving the faith than on preparing students for the contemporary world. Loss of conventional occupations has made it tougher for Muslims to earn a livelihood, and concerns have been voiced concerning the low number of Muslims employed in the public sector. In this research, we examine the educational attainment of India's Muslim population and its implications for that population's future.*

**Keyword:** Education, Muslim Population, Minorities Education, Religious Minority

### **Introduction:**

The culture of India is a fusion of many distinct influences. There are a wide variety of racial, ethnic, and religious communities. This means that Indian culture is multiethnic in nature. Each ethnic group has its own set of distinctive cultural practises (Linton,1936). Castes, tribes, languages, ethnicities, regions, and other categories may all be used to classify cultures. Traditions, customs, and beliefs within each religious group are what set them apart from others. Interestingly, Islam regulates both religious and secular practises. Most Muslims



believe Islam to be the last and absolute truth. According to Singh's (2007) examination of the "Modernization of Indian Tradition," the Islamic tradition is an outside influence on Indian culture that has nevertheless become ingrained in the country's canon and played a significant role in the mediaeval period's revolutionary growth and development. The agreement between India and Islam dates back almost a millennium. Around the turn of the ninth century, Sind fell under Arab hegemony. The influence of Islam on Indian culture is extensive and far-reaching. The greater community also benefits greatly from it.

A good education is the best way to motivate and steer the youth of today and tomorrow. With a solid education, the next generation may create the knowledge and ideas that will propel them to new heights. Investing in a society's education is essential for its growth and transformation. Since India's independence, education has been a top priority for the government. Despite a near-maximum enrollment rate, quality education is still out of reach, as shown by indicators such as drop-out rate, out-of-school time, school infrastructure, provision of secondary schools, rural-urban disparities, gender disparities, social inequality in education, and results from recent tests of learning level. The increasing demand for a good education is a challenge for many disadvantaged groups. The government's limited ability to provide a high-quality education has led to the development of a vibrant and diversified private school sector in India. There has been considerable consensus in recent decades that education is critical to both economic and social progress. Progress toward the MDG of providing all children with access to excellent education is one of the three indicators used in the United Nations' Human Development Index. Access to food, water, healthcare, housing, and education are all examples of human rights, as are more abstract rights like the freedom to practise one's religion or speak one's thoughts. Education has the potential to have a major impact on reducing social stratification and inequality.

The Muslim population is the world's largest minority. They only make up around 14% of the population, yet experience discrimination at double the rate of the general population. They are shut out of the most basic parts of society, including the classroom, the government, and the workplace (Waheed, 2007). When it comes to important metrics of human development like literacy, education, and health, Muslims in India do poorly despite making up the largest religious minority in the country (Faisal, 2013). The Hunter Commission concluded that prejudice against India's Muslim community existed even before independence (Robinson, 1993). There was a "deep-seated bias" that "must be eliminated, top to bottom, if we want the minority to become productive members of society at large" (Singh, 1983). This proves that Muslims have always been on the margins of society and that special measures are required to fully include them (Hassan, 2009). Researchers have looked at the lives of Muslims and other economically and socially excluded groups in India. Academics and advisory organisations have long pointed out that India's Muslim population has been badly marginalised. Despite these findings, little action was taken by elected officials to increase the area's elitism. There was also a study on the Muslim community's economic and educational status in India, compiled by a panel formed by the prime minister and headed by the former chief justice of the Delhi high court, Justice Rajindra Sachar



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(Chisti, 2007). The study, which was released in November 2006, was a turning point in documenting Muslims' exclusion in India.

Without a question, Muslims are India's second largest religious group and make up the great bulk of the country's minority population. Their massive numbers have an outsized impact on national and global economic and social development. As a result of India's planned growth over the last 50 years, the country's Muslim minority has suffered greatly. Their participation in the political and economic life of the country is essential. Indian Muslims are a diverse group that includes native Indians, Turks, Afghans, Persians, and Arab immigrants, to name a few. Agriculture, artisanship, microenterprise, and trade are the backbones of their economy. Embroiderers, weavers, goldsmiths, and masons in the Muslim community may have constituted a significant segment of the economy. However, the exploitative structure and a lack of frugal practises prevented them from growing their business. Most artisans would rather work for a pay in the underground economy. Muslims in southern India, on the other hand, had a different social structure than their northern Indian counterparts. Its members were mostly Arab businessmen and converts from other faiths. The Muslim community in southern India flourished after venturing into trade and agriculture. Construction workers, rickshaw pullers, cart pullers, horse cart pullers, coolies, barbers, tailors, carpenters, sidewalk hawkers, fitters, electricians, welders, and minor merchants make up a significant portion of India's Muslim community. They earn the least of any major religious minority in India.

The improvement of one's own people should be the primary emphasis of every nation's development efforts, since this is the ultimate goal of human endeavour. The most effective strategy to raise living standards throughout a country is to help its homeless and its rural poor. Empowering individuals, and especially women, is crucial to achieving this goal. Democracy offers a reliable structure for combining material and idealistic goals. Because of this, synergy and economic development policies may swiftly raise people's quality of life within the larger democratic framework. The legal law dealing to Muslim society is going toward gender fair and equitable systems as a result of modernity, westernisation, globalisation, democracy, socio-economic advancements, and paving the way for empowerment and growth in India. Traditional Indian culture, however, seems to be based on Islam. The cultural framework of Islam has been altered by several external causes, giving rise to novel indigenous practises among Muslims. Islam has become more liberal and progressive as a result of contemporary education, secularisation, and improved communication.

### **Challenges being Faced**

The problems facing India's Muslim schools are complex and resist simple answers. Muslim students in India have a particularly difficult environment due to the country's pervasive poverty. To combat these issues, more funding and aid must be provided to schools that primarily serve minority populations. There is still cause for worry regarding the quality of Muslim education in India, despite recent government measures to improve it. More has to be



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done to protect Muslim kids from bias and bigotry. When educational opportunities are increased for India's Muslim community, the whole country benefits.

In order to achieve its educational goals, India must ensure that Muslims have the same level of education as other parts of society. It is clear that the aim of education for all in India cannot be chariest without ensuring that females have access to the same facilities as boys, especially with the new emphasis on the need to guarantee that Muslim girls have the same educational chances as boys. Historically, poverty, social and cultural barriers, and a lack of educational opportunities have all worked against the education of Muslim women in India.

However, as was previously mentioned, the Indian government has taken many steps over the years to ensure that Muslim girls in the nation have the same opportunities for a good education as Muslim boys. Government initiatives like the National Scholarship Scheme for Minority Students and the National Scheme for Incentives to Girls for Secondary Education are working to expand access to higher education for Muslim women and girls. In addition, various nongovernmental organisations in India focus on ensuring that Muslim women have equal educational opportunities. These organisations not only give monetary help in the form of scholarships and grants, but also construct schools catering exclusively to Muslim girls and women.

The education of Muslim youngsters in India is severely lacking despite these attempts. Social and cultural conventions that prevent women from seeking an education, as well as poverty and a lack of educational facilities and resources, have a role. More has to be done to ensure that Muslim women have equitable access to high-quality education so that they may reach their full potential.

Throughout conclusion, the Muslims of India have profited significantly from the government's push to improve access to education in the nation. The day when all Muslims can finish high school is yet in the future. A widespread myth is that Muslim children lag academically.

### **Educational Status among Muslims:**

In Table 1 we see the percentage of Muslim kids that are enrolled in elementary school. In 2011-2012, Muslims made up around 13% of the primary school population in India. However, it was found to be much higher in the Muslim-majority states of Jammu and Kashmir, Kerala, West Bengal, Assam, and Uttarakhand.

**Table 1:Elementary school enrollment rates for children of Muslim faith**

	<b>2006-07</b>	<b>2009-10</b>	<b>2011-12</b>	<b>Proportion of Muslims in 2001 Census (%)</b>
Andhra Pradesh	9.62	8.69	9.61	9.2
Assam	27.31	37.11	38.15	30.9
Bihar	8.73	13.63	14.73	16.5
Chhattisgarh	0.6	4	1.27	1.4 2
Gujarat	3.9	6.51	8.41	9.1
Haryana	0.51	5.69	8.18	5.8
Himachal Pradesh	1.15	1.38	1.69	2
J& K	60.8	67.52	67.66	67
Jharkhand	7.25	12.89	14.27	13.8
Karnataka	13.22	36.24	15.41	12.2
Kerala	9.71	31.77	30.44	24.7
Madhya Pradesh	2.31	4.08	4.73	6.4
Maharashtra	6.82	11.55	12.97	10.6
Orissa	7.14	1.73	1.5	2
Punjab	0.19	1.53	1.46	1.6
Rajasthan	2.1	6.26	7.66	8.5
Tamil Nadu	3.89	5.21	5.7	5.6
Uttar Pradesh	8.92	9.84	9.64	18.5
Uttaranchal	0.28	13.3	15.34	11.9
West Bengal	25.23	30.23	31.12	25.2
<b>All India</b>	<b>8.84</b>	<b>13.05</b>	<b>12.79</b>	<b>13.4</b>

**Source: DISE, Standing Committee of the National Monitoring Committee on Minority Education (NMCME), 2013 Report Prepared by NUEPA**

In Table 4 we see the distribution of Muslim education levels in India. Three-quarters of Muslims were determined to be illiterate, and just around 15% were considered to be even somewhat educated above the primary school level. About 18% of Muslims had finished





post-secondary education, while 17% had just completed the first two years of high school. This meant that only a small fraction of Muslims (less than 5%) obtained college degrees. It was shown that Muslim women had a lower average education level than Muslim males.

**Table: 2:Minority Children's Schooling in India**

<b>EducationLevel Years</b>	<b>Muslims</b>	<b>Other Minorities</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>1990-2000</b>			
Not Literate	36.0	18.8	30.9
Secondary and Below	55.5	58.7	54.0
Higher Secondary	5.8	14.6	9.5
Graduation and Above	2.7	8.0	5.5
<b>2004-2005</b>			
Not Literate	29.3	14.2	24.8
Secondary and Below	60.7	61.1	57.9
Higher Secondary	6.4	15.2	10.6
Graduation and Above	3.6	9.5	6.7
<b>2009-2010</b>			
Not Literate	22.3	8.8	17.1
Secondary and Below	63.8	56.2	58.2
Higher Secondary	9.8	22.1	15.5
Graduation and Above	4.1	13.0	9.2

**Source: Observer Research Foundation, 2012.**

According to reports, Muslims have one of the lowest rates of academic attainment of any minority group. When compared to adherents of other faiths, Jains tended to have a greater degree of education. Comparatively, 21.5% of Jains had a college degree or above, whereas just 3.8% of Muslims had (Table 3).

**Table: 3: Educational Levels by Religions in India**

Level of Education	Hindu	Muslim	Christian	Sikh	Buddhist	Jain
Up to Primary	54.9	65.3	45.8	46.2	54.7	1.5
Middle	16.1	15.1	17.1	16.9	17.5	12.2
Secondary	14.2	11.0	17.5	20.0	14.1	21.9
Senior Secondary	6.9	4.5	8.7	7.6	2.6	13.8
Diploma	0.7	0.4	2.19	0.9	0.3	1.0
Graduation and above	7.0	3.8	8.7	6.9	5.7	21.5

**Source: 2013 Planning Commission Report, Indian Government.**

The educational levels of Indian Muslims are shown in Table 4. The literacy rate among Muslims was found to be rather low, with over a third of the population unable to read or write and only around 15% having finished elementary school. Seventeen percent of Muslims had only finished the first two years of high school, while 18 percent had completed some degree of secondary or higher education. Therefore, less than 5% of Muslims have earned a degree beyond high school. Muslim women were found to have lower levels of education than Muslim males.

**Table 4: Muslim Education Levels in India**

Level of Education	Male	Female	Total
Not Literate	25.71	42.90	34.25
Literate and Below Primary	12.93	11.16	11.78
Primary	16.11	13.46	14.79
Middle	18.99	14.25	16.63
Secondary	12.67	9.78	11.73
Higher Secondary	6.98	5.09	6.04
Diploma / Certificate	1.02	0.38	0.70
Graduate	4.25	2.43	3.35
Post Graduate	0.88	0.56	0.72

**Source: Based on NSS Unit Records from the 68th Round (2011-12)**



Despite being the second biggest religious group, Muslims are the largest minority in the world. They are not only the largest minority in India, but also have a significant impact over the whole nation. Nevertheless, members of this minority group face greater rates of discrimination, social marginalisation, low levels of education and employment, and economic hardship. Because of these problems, this community has become more socially and religiously isolated (Sikand, 2007). The situation for Muslims has not improved much before or after independence. The Muslim population has a negligible effect on economic growth (Beg, 1984). While it was unfathomable for a well-born Musalman to fall into poverty in India before independence, W. W. Hunter argues that this is now practically impossible to achieve (Hunter, 1969). Muslim citizens of independent India are said to have suffered a gradual deterioration in living standards since they were mostly cut off from the benefits of India's economic progress and social revolution (Ahmed, 1975). Up until recently, there has been little reliable information on the status of Muslims and other religious minorities in India. Existing literature relies on guesswork and pilot studies (Alam and Raju, 2007). Early in 1980, in response to the growing urgency of the problem and the paucity of data, the government authorised the creation of a High Power Committee headed by Dr. Gopal Singh to examine the economic and social conditions in which this minority lived. When the panel presented its findings, it concluded that Muslims are both economically and politically backward. After 23 years, the findings of the Prime Minister's High Level Committee on the Economic and Educational Status of Muslims, directed by Justice Rajinder Sachar, support this (GOI, 2006). It would seem that India's major religious groups are underrepresented in the country's political and economic spheres.

All of the foregoing research points to the same conclusion: minorities are economically and socially excluded. This state's minority communities fare no better than those of any other. Empowering them via the establishment of welfare and development programmes has not led to ideal results, and they remain economically and socially backward. Their representation in the nation's highest levels of government, companies, and the political and administrative elite lags much below their overall population proportion. Members of marginalised groups that feel politically abandoned and alienated often appeal to religious leaders for guidance on issues of economic inclusion, educational fairness, and healthcare access. Without a shadow of a doubt, the vast majority of India's minority population consists of Muslims, who are the country's second biggest religious group. Their massive numbers have an outsized impact on national and global economic and social development. However, the plans for the future of India's Muslim community are not encouraging. Their participation in the political and economic life of the country is essential. Indian Muslims are a diverse group that includes native Indians, Turks, Afghans, Persians, and Arab immigrants, to name a few. Agriculture, artisanship, microenterprise, and trade are the backbones of their economy. Embroiderers, weavers, goldsmiths, and masons in the Muslim community may have constituted a significant segment of the economy. However, the exploitative structure and a lack of frugal practises prevented them from growing their business. Most artisans would rather work for a pay in the underground economy. Muslims in





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southern India, on the other hand, had a different social structure than their northern Indian counterparts. Its members were mostly Arab businessmen and converts from other faiths. The Muslim community in southern India flourished after venturing into trade and agriculture. Muslims in India are heavily represented in the construction industry, as well as in other trades such as barbering, tailoring, carpentry, hawking goods on the street, fitting electrical wiring, welding, and petty commerce. In comparison to other religious minorities in India, their income is the lowest.

### **Conclusion:**

Muslim women in India confront challenges that are comparable to those faced by women of other groups in India. In addition to this, the great majority of Muslim women live in impoverished conditions and lack an education. The vast majority of Muslim women are consigned to the house, where they are expected to care for and provide food for the children of the family, as well as clean, cook, and carry out other menial activities. Working outside the house as a means of actively contributing to the financial well-being of one's family is something that only a minority of Muslim women do. The difficulties of official duties and the conventional outlook of the family have also been reported to cause significant role conflict for women in this context. Formerly oppressed groups, such as Muslim women, may now have the opportunity to participate in and profit from a society that is more liberal and democratic as a result of gains in education and other factors. In addition to this, a significant number of Muslim women in more developed cultures have risen from the background to take an active part in the new economic and social realities. Young people, particularly those who were raised in the Muslim community, are challenging established norms and advocating for more personal liberty. As a consequence of this, organisations operating in both the public and commercial sectors need to collaborate in order to assist women in achieving economic and political autonomy.



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