

International Journal of Social Sciences and Management

A Rapid Publishing Journal

ISSN 2091-2986



Indexing and Abstracting

CrossRef, Google Scholar, International Society of Universal Research in Sciences (EyeSource), Journal TOCs, New Jour, Scientific Indexing Services, InfoBase Index, Open Academic Journals Index (OAJI), Scholarsteer, Jour Informatics, Directory of Research Journals Indexing (DRJI), International Society for Research Activity (ISRA): Journal Impact Factor (JIF), Simon Fraser University Library, etc.

Vol-2(2) April, 2015



Impact factor*: 3.389

*Impact factor is issued by SJIF INNO SPACE. Kindly note that this is not the IF of Journal Citation Report (JCR).



Research Article

**MUSLIMS' PARTICIPATION IN EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT AS
COMPARED TO OTHER SOCIO-RELIGIOUS CATEGORIES: AN ANALYTICAL
STUDY**

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Abstract

Since, the submission of the Sachar Committee Report (2006), several analytical and descriptive studies have been undertaken to analysis the socio-economic and educational conditions of Muslims in India. Many researchers, educationists, thinkers, politicians, policy makers and common Muslims believe that education is the only panacea to eradicate the each and every ails of Muslims, and it is the only mechanism by which not only their status can be raised but also facilitate their entry into better paid job. This paper aims to evaluate the available evidences on the pattern of Muslim participation in education and employment. It is an attempt to see the Muslims' participation in education and employment in relation to other Socio Religious Categories of India. Based on different secondary data sets, it attempts to see how the Socio Religious Categories across India have utilised the process of education and achieved educational and employment opportunity higher than the Muslims. Muslims as a homogenous group did not participate actively in the educational development, more especially in the arena of higher education whereas the other Socio Religious Categories have acquired the maximum benefits with the constitutional and political interventions that are taken place in Pre and Post- Independent era. The present paper also try to see the trend of Muslims' participation in education right from the primary education to higher education as well as sector wise employment and work activities as compared to other Socio Religious Categories.

Key words: Education; Employment; Socio-Religious Category

Introduction

Education and employment of Indian Muslims have become the matter of serious concern for the educational policy makers, planners and intellectuals of the country who very rightly believe that the country would develop optimally if it's each and every sections is empowered educationally and that would be accompanied with employment as well. Reports of several commissions on Muslim Minority's issues revealed that the continued backwardness of a large number of Muslim population as large as one seventh will be a constant lacuna on the national economic and socio-political development and will also not be in keeping with democratic principles of social justice, equality and equal opportunity of development for all citizens. This has been continuously and repeatedly highlighted ever since the report of Gopal Singh Committee (1981-1983) first brought to light on the astonishing fact that Muslims in India are educationally and economically most backward and in some parts even worse than the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes of the country. But an increasing realization has been reflected from Muslim Community about the pressing need to focus on the economic and educational concerns of the

community and to refrain from the playing into the hands of communal forces by remaining gripped and engaged in identity related concerns.

The Sachar Committe Report (2006) was probably the first attempt to analyse the conditions of Muslim Community by using a large scale empirical data. It clearly brought out the relative deprivation of Muslims in India in the various dimensions, more especially education and employment. The report highlighted the heterogeneity within the community as well as multidimensionality of issues that it has been facing for years. Broadly, the multidimensionality of the issues get reflected in two inter related ways, one, like other minority communities, Muslims simultaneously facing problems related to security, identity and equity and the interplay of these dimensions is act the core of socio-economic and political (problems) that the community is expected to on a daily basis. Two, the nature of the problems vary across the 'space'- education, employment, political and social- and probably over time. Theoretically, participation in one 'space' and another can be linked, i.e. participation in education influences participation in employment and vice versa (Basant, 2012). Thus the present paper is an attempt to analyse the Muslims'

participation in educational attainment and employment arena in relation to other socio-religious categories.

Review of Literature

Singh *et al.* (2009) carried out a study on Hindu, Muslim and Christian and aims to estimate perceived fairness scores across different areas of opportunity- social, economic, employment, education and political and came out with the few features that Hindu perceive the highest sense of fairness followed by Christian and Muslims in all the five areas. Education is the only area where Christian participants have higher scores while Muslims have much lower scores. In political space, both Muslim and Christian perceived lower sense of fairness as compared to Hindus. A very noteworthy finding of the study is that there was no significant difference in the perception in terms of gender and employment among three religious groups.

Bhalotra and Zamora (2010) conducted a study on "Social Division in Education in India." and facilitated evidence of low growth in school enrolment and completion rates among Muslims in India. The study resulted that while enrolment rate has gone up, drop out have not declined as much. It also found that one Hindu and one Muslim household with come out with varying educational gaps, depending on which states they were located and highlighted the regional characteristics in deciding human development outcomes.

Basant and Sen (2010) carried out a similar study entitled, "Who Participates in Higher Education in India? Rethinking the Role of Affirmative Action," have commented that measures of participation in higher education need to be more nuanced than they have been used in recent years. The study also highlighted the role of the supply side of factors in affecting the participation of various groups in higher education.

Bhumika and Chakraborty (2010) carried out a study, entitled as "Earnings Inequality: The Impact of the Rise of Caste and Religion-Based Politics," came out with the determinants of the differences in inter-caste and inter-religion earning in India during 1987-99. The study resulted that while earning differences between "Upper" caste and SCs/STs got declined between 1987-1999 but the earning differences between Muslims and non-Muslims have increased largely. They also found that, more than "discrimination," "education endowments" differences play a bigger role in increasing earning gaps across the groups.

Unni (2010) went on to study, entitled as Information and Gender in the Labour Market for Muslims: Has Education been a route out of Poverty," using the NSSO data revealed the labour market imperfection in terms of gender and increasing informality and also found that Muslims presence in regular job is lower than of the other groups.

In a study conducted on "Minority Status and Labour Market Outcomes: Does India Have Minority Enclave," and made argument that lower participation of Muslims with

post-primary education in regular jobs reflects discrimination. Another interpretation of the result could be that given the perceptions of discrimination, Muslims men who have some options to be self-employed choose to quit off post-primary education on a large scale. Even after primary education, Muslims are notable to build self-employed enterprises and the limited jobs opportunities/discrimination keeps them out of regular jobs. Weisskopf (2010) carried out a study on "Is Positive Discrimination a Good Way on Aid Disadvantaged Communities " examined the efficacy of positive discrimination such as reservation for reducing the social and economic marginalization of disadvantaged ethnic communities in India. His analysis suggested that apart from being time bound and flexible to the changing circumstances, the policy of 'positive discrimination' is more likely to be successful if the beneficiary community is fairly homogenous.

Fryar and Haws (2011) carried out a study, entitled as "Competing Explanation for Minority Enrolment in Higher Education," and indicated a variety of factors i.e. availability of financial assistance, parental support, political participation of minorities, and their representation in educational institutions, that influence minority enrolment in higher education in the US.

Definition of Key Terms

Education

Education is taken as a dimension for the analysis of data. It consists of all educational ladders, right from the primary to higher education.

Employment

Likewise education, employment is also taken as a dimension for the analysis of data. It includes employment, based on sector wise human activities i.e. primary, secondary and tertiary activities.

Socio-Religious Categories

Taking a lead from Sachar Committee (2005), Socio-religious Categories (SRCs) with Muslim and Non-Muslim population are sought to be defined in a fairly disaggregated manner. Using the National Sample Survey (NSS) data separate categories have been defined. These disaggregated Hindus into-

- Hindu, Upper castes-Hindu (UC).
- Hindu, Other Backward Class-Hindu (OBCs).
- Hindu, Scheduled Cates-Hindu (SC).
- Hindu, Scheduled Tribes-Hindu (ST).

Muslims are divided into General and OBC (including those Muslims that report their 'caste' as SC) groups. (Sachar Committee Report, 2006) and Historical Relevance (Saberwal, 2010).

Objectives

1. To analyse the Muslims' participation in all educational ladders in relation to other socio-religious categories.
2. To compare the Muslims' participation in higher education in relation to other socio-religious categories.
3. To analyse the Muslims' participation in employment in relation to other socio-religious categories.

Sources of data

In this paper, National Sample Survey Organisation (NSSO) data are used from three rounds of the NSSO-55th (1999-2000), 61st (2004-2005) and 66th (2009-2010). These are the largest Sample Survey in India that provides information on the caste and religion of the respondents along with information on educational and employment characteristics.

Pattern of Participation in Education

The Sachar Committee Report (2006) has brought out a clear cut picture about the deprivation of Muslims in the field of education. Table 1, representing information on the distribution of population (17-29 years) by educational attainment for each Socio-religious Categories for the

periods of 1999-2010. The above table shows that that literacy rates among Muslims are lower than the most of the SRCs (except for SCs and STs) and have not increased as fast to meet the literacy rates of high caste groups. Literacy rate shows lowest for Hindu-ST (and low for Hindu- SC) but has increased significantly in latter recent years. Among Muslims, the declining in illiteracy rate was more fluctuated for Muslim- General (37 to 19 per cent) than for the Muslim- OBCs (34 to 26 per cent) during the years of 1999-2010. The decline rate of illiteracy among Hindu-UC, OBC, SC and ST was 13.4 to 5.7, 33.7 to 16.2, 42.9 to 24.1, and 53.1 to 30.1 respectively for the years of 1999 to 2010. Nearly a similar pattern is depicting in the percentage distribution of Secondary education among all socio religious categories. But a sharp variation is found in the percentage distribution of Higher Secondary and Graduate and above Graduate Educational attainment among all socio religious categories. Hindu-UC maintained highest percentage in secondary education as well as Graduate and Graduate levels among all the SRCs for the years of 1999 to 2010. Whereas all Muslims' increasing rates of higher secondary were 5.8 to 9.8 and at graduate & above graduate was 2.7 to 4.1 during the years of 1999 to 2010.

Table 1: Percentage Distribution of Persons by Education for Each Socio-religious Category (SRC), (Rural+Urban and Male+Female), 17-29 Years

Year/ Education	Hindu- UC	Hindu- OBC	Hindu- SC	Hindu- ST	Muslim- OBC	Muslim- General	Muslim- All	Other Minorities	All
1999-2000									
Illiterate	13.4	33.7	42.9	53.1	33.7	36.9	36.0	18.8	30.9
Secondary & below	58.7	54.7	49.5	39.6	59.0	54.0	55.5	58.7	54.0
Higher Education	15.9	8.0	5.3	5.8	5.3	6.0	5.8	14.6	9.5
Graduate & above	12.0	3.6	2.3	1.5	2.1	3.1	2.7	8.0	5.5
All	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
2004-2005									
Illiterate	9.6	25.2	33.9	45.6	32.8	17.3	29.3	14.2	24.8
Secondary & above	57.1	59.9	56.4	47.5	58.8	62.1	60.7	61.1	57.9
Higher secondary	18.6	9.7	6.6	5.2	5.8	6.6	6.4	15.2	10.6
Graduate & above	14.7	5.2	3.0	1.8	2.6	4.0	3.6	9.5	6.7
All	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
2009-2010									
secondary & below	51.2	59.3	60.8	58.0	59.0	67.7	63.8	56.2	58.2
Higher secondary	24.0	16.1	10.0	8.6	10.2	9.7	9.8	22.1	15.5
Graduate & above	19.1	8.5	4.5	3.3	4.8	3.8	4.1	13.0	9.2
All	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

Source: Observer Research Foundation, India Data Labs.

Table 2: Percentage Distribution of Workers by Activity Status for Different Sectors for Each Socio-religious Category (SRC), All Workers (Rural+Urban; Male+Female), 16-64 Years, 2009-2010

Sector/Activity Status	Hindu-UC	Hindu-OBC	Hindu-SC	Hindu-ST	Muslim OBC	Muslim General	Muslim All	Other Minorities	All Persons
Primary Sector									
Self-employed	79.1	63.2	36.8	53.5	52.5	59.67	56.3	64.9	59.0
Regular	0.7	0.6	1.2	1.2	1.4	0.5	0.9	1.7	0.9
Casual	20.2	36.2	62.1	45.2	46.1	39.9	42.9	33.3	40.1
All	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Secondary Sector									
Self-employed	32.4	31.6	21.6	15.5	44.8	40.2	41.6	23.7	29.7
Regular	41.8	19.9	13.2	12.1	12.3	18.2	16.2	22.9	21.1
Casual	25.9	48.5	65.2	72.4	42.9	41.6	42.3	53.4	49.3
ALL	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Tertiary Sector									
Self-employed	46.4	51.8	44.2	36.9	63.7	58.0	60.1	37.0	48.7
Regular	50.0	39.9	43.1	48.3	23.1	31.6	28.0	54.1	43.1
Casual	3.6	8.3	12.7	14.9	13.2	10.5	11.8	8.8	8.2
All	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

Source: Observer Research Foundation, India Data Lab.

Pattern of Employment and Working Conditions

According to Sachar Committee Report (2006), the mean per capita consumption expenditure (PMCE) is lower for Muslims than for all SRCs, except SCs and STs. As Table 2 shows that as compared to other SRCs, Muslims are concentrated more in self-employed activities, and their participation in regular jobs, especially nonagricultural sector, is much less than others. A significantly higher numbers of Muslims workers can be seen in urban areas as compared to rural areas. Share of Muslims in regular job works, particularly in the government, public sector and large private sector is very low.

Table 2, shows the differences on Distribution of Workers by activity status for each sectors across SRCs. As compared to other SRCs, majority of Muslim workers are self-employed in the secondary and tertiary sectors; in the primary sectors too, self-employment is relatively high but not higher than many other SRCs like Hindu-UC, Hindu-OBC, and other minorities. In primary sector 56.3 percent Muslims are self-employed as compared to 79.1 per cent Hindu-UC, 63.2 per cent Hindu-OBC, 36.3 per cent Hindu-SC and 53.6 Hindu-ST. Muslims show 0.9 per cent share for the regular job of primary sector as compared to 0.7 Hindu-UC, 0.6 Hindu-OBC, 1.2 Hindu-SC and 1.2 Hindu-ST. Whereas in secondary sector, Muslims have higher percentage share except Hindu- UC and Hindu-OBC in regular job. In secondary sector, Muslims show 41.6 per cent share as a self-employed as compared to 32.4 per cent Hindu- UC, 31.6 per cent Hindu- OBC, 21.6 per cent Hindu-SC, 15.5 per cent Hindu- ST. It means Muslims are highly self-employed than other SRCs in secondary sector.

Hindu-UC share is higher in regular job for secondary sector than the other SRCs whereas Hindu-ST (72.4per cent) and Hindu- ST (65.2 per cent) share higher percentage than other SRCs as a casual worker. In tertiary sector, Muslims are higher (60.1 per cent) than other SRCs for the

self-employed. But for the regular work Muslims share is 28.0 per cent as compared to 50.0 per cent Hindu-UC, 51.8 per cent Hindu-OBC, 44.2 per cent Hindu SC, 36.6 per cent Hindu- ST for tertiary activity. As a casual job for tertiary activity, Muslims share is 8.8 per cent as compared to 3.6 per cent Hindu-UC, 8.3 per cent Hindu-OBC, 12.7 per cent Hindu- SC and 14.9 per cent Hindu-ST. It means Hindu- ST has higher percentage share of casual job than other SRCs for tertiary activity.

Findings

- 1) It has been found that participation of Muslims is relatively low in all the ladders of educational space in relation to other socio-religious categories, but has improved latter years.
- 2) Participation of Muslims in higher education is particularly poor than other socio-religious categories.
- 3) Muslims are found largely engaged in self-employment and their participation as regular workers is relatively low in all sectors as compared to other socio-religious categories.

Conclusion

Muslims occupy prominent position in terms of educational attainment and employment but the growth of this community is very slow as compare to the SCs and STs. In this paper attempt has been made to see that, how far Muslims in India as a homogeneous community is lagging behind from the other communities in relation to the all ladders of educational attainment, employment and how other SRCs in India have made progress in the all ladders of educational attainment, especially in higher education, than Muslims in Indian context. In employment, Muslims are much concentrated in self- employment even more than Hindu-SC and Hindu-ST in all the activity sectors. Very negligible proportion of Indian Muslims are found as a

regular job holders across all the activity sectors than other SRCs. Thus, there is a need to promote Indian Muslims for education and employment with the help of centre and state government by formulating effectual protective discrimination policy at work place and at the same time to protect the marginalisation of the Indian Muslims from the whole process of globalisation and exclusionary and discriminatory process of higher educational development.

Educational implications

The present paper has significant implications for the analysis of overall attainment of education and employment of Indian Muslims in relation other SRCs. It is also helpful to correlate the developmental process of Muslims with other SRCs in terms of education and employment. This paper can also be taken in account as reference for further research studies on Indian Muslims. Educational and vocational programmes can be mooted out in the light of this paper's findings. Thus over all expansion of education and employment opportunities can be done in the light of this study.

Suggestions for the further study

The present paper is concerned to the analysis of Muslims educational attainment and employment in relation to other SRCs at a national level. So, therefore district or state based study can be done to get more realistic results to the concerned issues.

A detail analysis can be done effectively by taking in to account the only one dimension of developmental index than two or three.

In the present paper only percentage figures are used to analyse the dimensions, other statistical techniques can be employed to get more realistic results.

Present paper has not been given separate accounts to the gender in the analysis process. Thus much effective analysis can be done by taking the gender in separate accounts. Likewise, rural and urban can also be taken as a separate dimension for the analysis.

Empirical research study can be done by using standardised research tools and techniques of the data collection.

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