

Illiteracy and Financial Problems of Muslim Women in India

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Abstract

After Independence, India was characterized by deeply entrenched social hierarchies, defined by caste, gender, region and religion. The feudal Zamindars system divided rural society in to three broad classes: landlords (zamindars), tenant's farmers, and landless laborers. Women, Untouchables, and tribal people were excluded from decision-making at both regional and national levels. The new Government of India set the goals of reducing inequality and poverty among women including Muslim women. But to what extent has it succeeded? Women's education plays a very important role in the overall development of the country. But the proportions of Muslim women have not been treated as men's equals. Certain rulers and administrators and most legal scholars imposed a system of inequality, which they justified by their interpretation of the Qur'an and the traditions of prophet. As per the data provided by 300 universities across India the literacy rate and drop out at in quite high among Muslim women.

KEYWORDS: Muslim Women, Financial Problems and Illiteracy in India

INTRODUCTION:

Women's education plays a very important role in the overall development of the country. If not only leads to the development of half of the human resources, but it also improve the quality of life, both at home and outside the female literacy male for all the communities remained lower than the male literacy rates. Even for the different age – groups, the level of literacy among females is lower than the total literacy levels. The pattern of age – wise literacy rates for female present a similar pattern to those of age – wise total literacy rates. Buddhist female record the maximum literacy rates for children and ado cents among the minorities under study. When Christian females have the higher literacy rates in the subsequent age- groups.

The proportion of Muslim women who are illiterate is substantially higher for rural North India than for the entire country more than 85 percent supported themselves to be illiterate fewer than 17 percent of Muslim women ever enrolled completed eight years of schooling and fewer than 10 percent completed higher secondary education which is below the national average.

Muslim women have not been treated as men's equals. Certain rulers and administrators and most legal scholars imposed a system of inequality, which they justified by their interpretations of the Qur'an and the traditions of the prophet. Colonial authorities challenged these views, and their western nations of the rightful position of women in society took hold among some segments of the Muslim population. Since much of the Islamic world became independent in the mid-1900s, however, women have been caught between traditionalists and reformers as they complete for dominance in Islamic society.

According to the 1991 census, there were over 48 million Muslim women in India; in 2001 the number rose to 62.5 million .In popular perception , these women are typically seen as a monolithic entity undistinguished and indistinguishable in their homogeneity . The spotlight, when it falls on them, tends to do more than view the role of religion in their lives and reinforce the usual stereotypes: pardah , multiple marriage, triple Talaq, the privilege the unilateral divorce and the bogey of personal law . The truth, however, is that like women too are differentiated across class, caste, community, and geographical Location (including the great rural-urban divide). Despite these differences within their lot, when compared to women from other faiths in India, the majority of Muslim women are among the most disadvantaged, least literate, most economically impoverished and political marginalized sections of Indian society. While debates on personal law and divorce are pertinent and timely ,and one is not for a minute running down these issues, Muslim women need to be seen as social beings too, entitled to the same rights that the constitution of India grants to all its citizens. The right to education, especially at all its primary level is mandated by the constitution, yet over six decades after Independence less than 50% Of Muslim women in India are literate compare this with other women from other minorities: 76% literacy among Christians, 64% among Sikhs, 62% among Buddhists and a whopping 90% among Jain women!

Historically, women played an important role in the foundation of many Islamic educational institutions, such as Fatima al- fihri's founding of the University of Al Karaouine in 859 CE. This continued through to the ayyubid olynasly in the 12th and 13th centuries. When 160 mosquer and madrassa were established in Damascus, 26 of which were funded by women through the Waqt (charitable trust or trust law) system. Ttalf of all the royal patrons for these institutions were also women. According to the Sunni Scholar Ibn asakir in the 12th century, there various opportunities for female education in what is known as the medieval Islamic world. This was specially the case for learned and scholarly families, who wanted to ensure the highest possible education for both their sons and daughters. Ibn Asakir had himself studied under 80 different female teachers in his time. In nineteenth century west Africa, nana Asma's was a leading Islamic Scholar, poet teachers and an exceptionally prolific Muslim female writer who wrote more than 60 works, female education in the Islamic world was inspired by Muhammad's wives: Khadijah ,a successful business women , and Aisha, a renowned hadith scholar and military Leaders. The education allowed was of in restricted to religious instruction. According to a hadith attributed to Muhammad, ha praised the women of medina become of their desire for religious knowledge.

Muslim women have played an important and historic role scholars and leaders in education. For instance, the princesses Fatima Al-Fihri establish the first degree-granting university in the world, university of Al karavine, in morocco in 859 CE. And during the ayyubid dynasty, the regent queen Dafiyah khatun buit numerous khanqas (Sufi convent) and madrasas (theological colleges) in Damascus and Aleppo.

Those involved in the education of the Muslim girl child have not been able to reach any consensus on the sort of education to be given to the Muslim girl child and ambivalence persist about the merits of Deeni Taalim vs. Duniyawi Taleem. Meanwhile, there is a growing hunger for education among Muslim girls and women that can no longer be ignored. Several initiatives have been taken by women themselves when they feel the state or patriarchal society is not giving them their due.

The minorities' vikas manch in Jaipur is doing great work to raise Muslim women's literacy levels in Rajasthan. Elsewhere, private educational institutions have stepped in providing both secular and religious education. The link between poverty and illiteracy among Muslim women cannot be over-emphasized. Regardless of whether illiteracy is a consequence of poverty or Vice versa, regardless of the debates between the 'modernists' and the 'traditionalist', regardless of the merits of an English-medium western -style education and Urdu-medium traditional education, what Muslim women want today is some form of knowledge that empowers them to better their lot.

The proportion of Muslim women who are illiterate is substantially higher for rural north India than for the entire country more than 85% reported themselves to be illiterate. Fewer than 17% of Muslim women ever enrolled completed eight years of schooling and fewer than 10% completed higher secondary education, which is below the national average.

There are around 300 universities across India. Each of these universities manages exclusive departments and a large number of affiliated colleges. All universities were asked to provide data on the socio-religious background of student on roll both at the undergraduate (UG) and post graduate (PG) levels.

Major's findings were —

- The literacy rate among Muslim in 2001 far below the national average.
- Drop-out rates among Muslim are highest at the level of primary, middle and Higher Secondary compared to all the SRCs.
- Primary education seems to be the major hurdle for school education.
- Expansion of educational opportunities since Independence has not led to a convergence of attainment levels between Muslim and 'All Others'.
- Attainment levels of Muslim are close to or slightly higher than those of SCs/STs and much lower than those of other SRCs.
- The increase in enrolments has been highest among SCs/ STs followed by Muslims.
- While some progress has been made over time, differences remain and the current generations of Muslim are lagging behind.
- Lower enrolment in Urdu medium schools is due to limited availability of such school at the elementary levels.
- The gaps across all levels of educations between Muslims and other SRC, is higher in urban areas.

According to Sujit Das in Islam, pure illiteracy is divine. The uneducated prophet of Islam called himself "a guardian of the illiterates sent by Allah" (Bukhari, 3:34:335). Another hadith (Sunaan Ibn Majah v: 4290) reveals that Allah loves illiterates peoples and hates educated peoples and he had promised the first entry to paradise to the illiterates Muslims and the last entry to the educated because he knew that his newly established religion could not survive if criticism is allowed. As Toland (Cited Gunny, 1996; P.95) wrote, ".....because he [Muhammad] clearly saw that the spirit of inquiry would not favour him. This is how island maintained itself." Qur'an (5:101, 5:102) very strictly prohibits Criticism. Diderot (1975, P.230) the same reason of Muhammad's concern to keep his followers in darkness of ignorance, because reason is the greatest enemy of Islam. He wrote "since he [Muhammad] could not

read to write, and so this had encouraged Muslims to hate and have contempt for knowledge, which in turn secured the survival of Islam”.

Allah not only loves illiteracy but poverty also. As Imam Ghazali, one of the greatest Muslim scholars of all time had pointed out; prayer, a big family and poverty will ensure paradise. To promote further admiration of poverty among the Muslims, Ghazali wrote that Allah and his prophet praised one who remains satisfied with poverty. He even goes to the extent to exhort Muslims to condemn wealth but praise poverty because it is better than wealth (cited kasem, 2006).

This is how illiteracy and poverty are glorified in Islam as Allah’s will. Illiteracy and poverty after go hand-in-hand and followed by backwardness. This is how Muslims achieve all three together. Non-Muslims will never be able to catch up the Muslims in his field. But Muhammad never wanted to remain in poverty. He was so greedy that in spite of his flourishing slave trade and plunder, he wanted to grasp the property of other Muslims also. As per Sunaan Abu Dawud, 18:2895, Muhammad was inheritor of those who had no heir.

Throughout nineteenth century, attempts were made to analyze the causes of Muslims backwardness in India. One of the reasons is that a vast number of Muslims were apathetic to any education except Qur'an. Also, their complete lack of interest in English education is another factor. When the Hindus and Christians recognized the advantages of learning English under British rule; the Muslims sat apart wrapped into the memory of their traditions and held back by the conservatism of Islam (Ahmed, 1981,p.133).Rev. long (1868,p.62) argued that Muslims community did not have the same aptitude as the Hindus for acquiring a knowledge in English. Even today, as census of India,2001 had pointed out, too many Muslims households still believe that religious education at Madrassah is a substitute for high school and college learning.

They interpreted education in terms of religious education and considered any education other instruction in the literature and principal of Islam is irrelevant and heretical. One Author went so far as to suggest that when people for sake ‘Din-i-IIm’ for wordly education it should be regarded as a sure sign of ‘Kiamat’, ie, the Day of Judgment (sattar,1877,p.26).Many Mullahs advice the parents not to send their children to the educational institutions because ‘English education was sure to interfere with their religion’. The Mullahs and Madrassah teachers had their own reasons to oppose any innovations in educations that might cost him position in society as well as his sources of income (Ahmad, 1981, p, 141).In this situation, as Ahmad (1981, p.140) I amended, it is for sure that Muslims masses have very little hope of balancing the educational statistics at par with the Hindus in the near future.

There is a silver lining in every cloud. Muslims are slowly waking up with the fact that Islam is the cause of the decadence of the Muslim world. Probably this is the reasons so many Muslims are leaving Islam everywhere. More and more Muslims are coming up with the facts and openly criticizing Islam slowly media is also gaining courage to call a spade.

Conclusion:

While there has always been a gap between the education of boys and girls in India in the case of Muslims, the gap has been a yawning chasm. The education of girls has

always demanded higher investment in terms of more facilities, more women teachers, separate schools, transport and scholarship to provide the much needed incentives.

Despite pressures of religious orthodoxies, social prejudice and class/gender bias, Muslims women at the start of the twentieth century successfully emerged from the isolation of traditional roles as self-aware individuals, determined to claim a greater role in public affairs. The theme of women's education was taken up by all communities including Muslims. To remove illiteracy and poverty among Muslim women programs to eliminate these things are required .The "dimension of poverty" including a short life, illiteracy, exclusion, and lack of material means. These concepts are consistent with the WID/GAD frame works, which seeks to elucidate the social, economic, and political positions of women by examining women's fertility, literacy, and health educational attainment, access to employment, earnings, political participations, and legal status. Attention to progress or setbacks in social indicators is also important in tracking the state of women's "practical gender need", or basic needs, and "strategic gender interests", or equality, autonomy, and empowerment.

The growing visibility of women's literacy and poverty is rooted in demographic trends, "cultural" patterns, and political economy.

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