

UNDERSTANDING THE IMPACT OF SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONDITION ON THE PERFORMANCE OF MINORITY MUSLIM GIRLS IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS

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Abstract:

Muslims constitute India's largest minority as well as the second largest Muslim population in the world after Indonesia. Regarding education, Muslims are the most backward communities. Muslim girls and women are behind in their acquisition of education and empowerment as compared to males and women belonging to other communities. Major policy and programmatic contributions are being made to upgrade the entire state of the socially and economically disadvantaged sections of the society with the primary focus on women and girls. In the last two decades with major emphasis put upon education and empowerment. Human rights research shows that the major obstacles to girl's education are child marriage and domestic chores. Ensuring that girls stay in school is one of most effective protective measure against child marriage given that child marriage has a grossly negative impact on the lives of children, adolescents and young woman specially with respect to minority Muslim girls. This paper highlights the impact of socio-economic condition on the performance of Muslim minority girls in secondary school.

Keywords: Minority Muslim girls, Socio-Economic Condition, women empowerment, Secondary School Education.

Introduction:

Education is one of the most important factors that boost up the economic development of a nation (Shaguri, 2013). Empirical studies substantiate this fact, a study conducted by Lockheed et al (1980) in 18 low-income countries shows that additional years elementary education increases farm productivity up to average 7.4% (Lockheed et al, 1980). In this regard education has a particular for developing country, since countries investing in higher education are closely connected with higher increases in labour productivity and long-term economic growth (Bank, 1994). Education has also significant role in reducing poverty.

India is developing country and education is important for the development, since it boost up the economy of nation. One of the stumbling blocks that pull back India to be a developed nation is its laming Indian education system. Indian education is suffocated with the facts like poor infrastructure, inadequate facility, poor quality of teachers and lack of financial resources (Government of India, 2015). Adding to these facts the most important issue that India faces today in the field of education is the caste based inequality, economic status and cultural characteristics. The attempts to enhance the development of education in India on one hand hampered by pernicious effect of caste and social

stratification, while on the other hand attempt to protect these students from these influence eventually brings down the quality of education.

Educational advancement and empowerment of all Indian women in the light of minority Muslim girls:

The Constitution of India grants Muslims and other minorities equality of status and opportunities with the other citizens to accelerate the process of educational and socio-economic justice. The Constitution of India grants the rights to equality and Right to Freedom of Religion and Protection of Interest of Minorities in regard to educational rights. For six decades, the nation has worked and progressed towards structuring and supporting a secular democracy and evolving the interests of the socio-economically back-ward and disadvantaged sections to include women, the Scheduled castes (SC), the Scheduled Tribes (ST) and the minorities. Determined efforts have been made towards equivalence and removal of inequalities. Major policy and programmatic contributions are being made to upgrade the entire state of the socially and economically disadvantaged sections of the society with the primary focus on women and girls. In the last two decades with major emphasis put upon education and empowerment.

Muslims constitute India's largest minority as well as the second largest Muslim population in the world after Indonesia. Regarding education, Muslims are the most backward communities. Muslim girls and women are behind in their acquisition of education and empowerment as compared to males and women belonging to other communities. The nation is dedicated to educational advancement and empowerment of all Indian women in acquirement of the Constitutional assurance of equality and life with self-respect as stated in the National Policy of Education 1986 and its Revised Programme of Action in 1992. Programme of Action, 1992, first identified the existing programs for the Muslim Minorities and suggested a large number of short term, medium term and long term measures to promote education amongst them and lead to the formulation of major programmes like the Area Intensive Educational Development and Modernization of Madrasas as Central Government Schemes of the MHRD.

Recent days Indian economic growth has created hopefulness in its social economic development,

ironically it still lags behind in comparison with other countries in the field of secondary education and youth literacy. Since the purpose of education is not only development of intellectual skill and knowledge but also for the effective growth and development of Indian economy. So there is urgency for improving Indian education system. The setbacks of Indian education system are manifold and encompass political, societal and infrastructural aspects as mentioned above.

An important ingredient of human situation is an individual's economic potential and social status. These two factors serve as vital predictors of his growth and behavior, his personal reactions and also accomplishment, his promoters as well as restrictors. Financial and material resources are on one hand and social recognition, support and freedom on the other hand would influence a man's education and opportunity of exposure to the world knowledge and personal development, intellectual and non-intellectual accomplishments and also man's potentialities in the field of vocation and the world of work. Hence this is the importance of this variable of social cum economic status in human affairs. This composite variable consists of four areas namely (a) Finance (b) Property (c) Education and (d) Social Status in life.

Addressing the impact of socio-economic conditions on the education of Muslim girls:

Socio-economic condition refers to an individual's level of income, wealth, education, and prestige. It has been clearly associated with the well-being and standard of living of an individual. It has so many indicators such as social relationship, occupation, earning capacity, acquired assets, social position, educational background of the family and political position.

The Muslim of India has not been changed in the last 75 years of independence. It is observed that there are four important point of difference in this respect and they are (1) opportunity of taking part in the economic activities, (2) political power to lead the society, (3) development of education and (4) health and span of life. In the constitution of India, it is clearly mentioned in the Article 15(A) that no difference will take place on the basis of gender and the section 16(A) in engagement in the Government Service male and female will have equal opportunity. Besides arrangement of proper

education and exercise of equal rights and respect is provided to the female both in the rural and urban area. But sometime , the socio-economic deprivation from all the basic needs specially from health , education make them completely distressed which can also be reflected in the report of Human Delopment Index (HDI). In inviting gender equality in all corners of livelihood and thus to sustainable livelihood promotion to the socially vulnerable gender section. At present, the picture of women education is being noticed brighter as a result of formation of different committees and implementation of their suggestion, The Millennium Development Goals (2000-2015) , The Subsequent Sustainable Development Goals (2016-2030), Sarva Shiksha Abhijan (2000), Operation Blackboard (1986), Right to Education Act (2009), Right of Children , District Primary Education Program(1996) and Ananda phath (under West Bengal) etc. are the most important examples of minority girls education. The condition of the general Muslim category is lower than the Hindu-OBC who has the benefit of reservation. However, the conditions of Muslim-OBC are worse than those of the general Muslim category. The three group of Muslims in India-ashrafs , ajlafs and arzals(in order of "caste "hierarchy) require different types of affirmative action.(Parker,2006). Moreover, lack of literacy ,the least number of enrolment in school, huge number of dropouts from school, child marriage etc. make the class of socio-culturally poor people extremely locked in home for which they are associated with lower participation rate in productive operation than other class of religion of women (Devi,2014; Hossain,2013; Halder,2016). The education can break through the aforesaid barriers.

Socioeconomic status is an economic and sociological combined total measure of a person's work experience and of an individual's or family's economic and social position relative to others, based on income and education, and occupation (Marmot, Michael, 2004). Most often, it is considered as a combination of education, income and occupation. Socioeconomic status can be either low or high. It is quite interesting to know that both low and high socioeconomic status affects an individual and also our society as a whole. Research indicates that a child from an educated family with high socio-economic status is more likely to perform better than a child from a less educated or illiterate family with low socioeconomic background. This is because the

child from an educated family has a lot of avenues and facilities like; a decent and good environment for academic work, parental support and guidance, enough textual and academic materials and decent feeding. Socioeconomic status is beyond the control of the child as he is never in a position to bring alterations in it. As the socioeconomic status background so shall be the educational achievement of the child. Parents' socioeconomic background play an important role in the educational attainment of the child. Their behaviour and attitudes have a significant role to play in shaping the attainment of the child (Chowdry, Crawford and Goodman, 2011).

Earlier, Becker & Tomes (1979) have asserted that it has become well recognized that wealthy and well-educated parents ensure their children's future earning by providing them a favourable learning environment, better education, and good jobs. In contrast to this belief, children from low socio-economic status parents do not have access to extra learning facilities; hence, the opportunity to get to the top of their educational ladder may not be very easy.

Drummond & Stipek (2004) have further elaborated the influence of 'Low-income Parents' on the academic achievement of the children. They maintained the fact that, a few of these parents revealed that their responsibilities were limited to meeting their children's basic and social emotional needs, such as providing clothing, emotional support, and socializing manners. Similarly, White (1982) and Srivastava (1974) have also considered Socio economic status to be strong predictor of the academic achievement of students.

Both in developed and developing countries, children from families with more socio-economic resources are more often enrolled in school (Huisman and Smits, 2009; Mingat, 2007; Shavit and Blossfeld, 1993; Jencks 1972; Coleman et al., 1966). For wealthier families, the direct costs associated with education, such as fees, books and uniforms are less likely to be an obstacle. Opportunity costs of children not being able to help at home, at the family farm or by earning additional income through child labour, are also less important to them (Evangelista de Carvalho Filho, 2008; Basu, 1999).

Besides household wealth, the educational level and labour market position of the parents is expected to play a role. There is ample evidence that children from better educated parents more often go to school and tend to drop out less (UNESCO, 2010; Huisman and Smits, 2009; Ersado, 2005; Buchmann and Brakewood, 2000; Colclough, Rose and Tembon, 2000; Shavit and Blossfeld 1993). Parents who have reached a certain educational level might want their children to achieve at least that level (Breen and Goldthorpe, 1997). For educational enrolment of girls, education of the mother might be especially important (Emerson and Portela Souza, 2007; Shu, 2004; Kambhampati and Pal, 2001; Fuller, Singer and Keiley, 1995). Mothers who have succeeded in completing a certain level of education have experienced its value and know that it is within the reach of girls to complete that level. Therefore, we expect them to use the power and insights derived from their higher education to make sure that their daughters are educated too (Smits and Gündüz-Ho gör, 2006).

Regarding father's labour market position, we expect fathers who are in salaried employment to be more aware of the importance of education and hence to invest more in their children's education (Breen and Goldthorpe, 1997). The children themselves may also be more aware of the benefits of education. On the other hand, parents are less likely to invest in their children's education when direct occupational transmission or transference of capital is a viable option to obtain a good position in society for their children (Treiman and Ganzeboom, 1990; Blau and Duncan, 1967). Hence farmers and business owners may feel less need to invest in their children's education than people in dependent employment. Also, for small farmers the opportunity costs of sending their children to school may be high, since they are more likely to expect their children to help out tending the land and rearing livestock, especially during peak working times (Bhalotra and Heady 2003; Basu, Das and Dutta, 2003).

Mother's work status may exercise an independent influence over her children's educational chances, especially those of her daughters. According to the resource theory of conjugal power (Smits, Mulder and Hooimeijer, 2003; Rodman, 1972; Blood and Wolfe, 1960) the degree to which partners can influence important household decisions depends on the extent to which they bring valued resources

into the marriage. This implies that mothers who are gainfully employed and contribute to the household income have more influence on family decisions than women who are not employed (Lakwo, 2007). More independent women may be able to create better possibilities for their children, and especially their daughters, to go to school. On the other hand, when the mother is forced to work because of poverty, the daughters may have to take over her household tasks and, therefore, have fewer chances to go to school. The effect of the mother's employment may thus be different under different circumstances and we cannot formulate a clear-cut hypothesis on this effect. The psychology of individual variation gives importance to the environmental determinants as one of the prime factors responsible for individual's personality development. The socio-economic status (SES) of the family influences the cognitive development, identity building, moral development, socio-emotional development, and all other characteristics of the individual. Among socio-economic status level the income, education, and occupation are important indices. But some and other the expenditure item is also considered the factor of measuring SES of the individual.

Major factors influencing the impact of socio-economic conditions on the education of Muslim girls:

- **Influence of parents and families:** A stronger push is given to minority ethnic groups to succeed through gaining qualifications, part of a 'drive for qualification' associated with much of the minority ethnic population. Parental influence also has a greater effect on minority ethnic young people in steering them towards certain courses, especially in the secondary education level.
- **Expectations on economic gain/career advantage:** Individual minority ethnic potential students hold more positive attitudes about outcomes and benefits of education.
- **Family Social background:** The effect of family social background, specifically parental socio-economic status and parental experience of education is also evident.

Implications for policy and further research to promote the education of Muslim girls in the secondary level:

- More needs to be done to raise earlier attainment and to close the educational performance gap among the Muslim minority girls. This could be done through various current community and school-based initiatives. More evaluation is needed of current access initiatives, about their ethnic dimension and outcomes for minority ethnic groups.

- There is also the need to better understand the influences (both positive and negative) of parents in the decision-making process about the education of Muslim minority girls. Any differences in the quality of guidance for education for potential students on different entry routes need to be identified and action taken.

- We also recommend that monitoring and evaluation of the racial equality (along with gender, age and socio-economic class).

- Further investigations into retention, through research and analysis, are needed and also into degree performance of minority ethnic student groups on different programmes in secondary education. Further research is also needed into the significance of the various contributing factors which might explain differences. Problems and issues in academic study which are likely to be more associated with minority ethnic groups also need to be better understood (*eg* through the new National Student Survey, institutional monitoring and reporting systems) and appropriate action taken at institutional and sectoral levels. The role and extent of family/parental support to students needs investigating more.

Conclusion:

The Constitution of India grants Muslims and other minorities equality of status and opportunities with the other citizens to accelerate the process of educational and socio-economic justice. The Constitution of India grants the rights to equality and Right to Freedom of Religion and Protection of Interest of Minorities in regard to educational rights. For six decades, the nation has worked and progressed towards structuring and supporting a secular democracy and evolving the interests of the socio-economically back-ward and disadvantaged sections to include women, the Scheduled castes (SC), the Scheduled Tribes (ST) and the minorities.

Deter-mined efforts have been made towards equivalence and removal of inequalities. Major policy and programmatic contributions are being made to upgrade the entire state of the socially and economically disadvantaged sections of the society with the primary focus on women and girls. In the last two decades with major emphasis put upon education and empowerment.

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