

---

## **Socio-Economic and Educational Changes of Muslim Minorities in Rural Area: a Sociological Study (With Special Reference to Davangere District, Karnataka)**

**G.B. Narasimhamurthy, E. Chandrashekar**

Department of P.G. Studies and Research in Sociology, Kuvempu University, Jnana Sahyadri, Shankaraghatta – 577 451

Received: 19 March 2013, Revised: 18 April 2013, Accepted: 20 December 2013

---

### **ABSTRACT**

The Indian constitution is committed to the equality of citizens and the responsibility of the state preserve protect and assure the rights of minorities in the matter of language, religion and culture, that is why our national leaders while forming the constitution, emphasized the doctrine of unity in diversity. The problems of minorities are worldwide and not limited to any region or country. We did not find any country who did not possess minorities. So the problems of minorities had its own structure and seriousness. For rural Muslim minorities / agriculture various business, problems of shelter are main elements. For Muslims education Government had many policies for example Government established Urdu schools. Thus communities with a relatively high literacy level have continued to improve over the years but the SCs/STs too have also benefited from affirmative action in indirect ways. Muslims, on the other hand, have not been able to respond to the challenge of improving their educational status. Consequently, their gap vis a vis the group labeled 'All Others' (with initially high literacy levels) has increased further, particularly since the 1980s On 9 March 2005, the PMO had issued the Notification for constitution of the High Level Committee for preparation of Report on the Social, Economic and Educational Status of the Muslim Community of India The Committee is an independent body of well-known experts drawn from the fields of Economics, Sociology Education, Demography, Public Administration, Development Planning and Programme Implementation.

**Keywords:** Minorities, Muslim Population, Education, Development, Policies, Programmes, Sachar Committee Report.

---

### **Introduction**

As mentioned earlier, education is an area of grave concern for the Muslim Community. The popular perception that religious conservatism among Muslims is a major factor for not accessing education is incorrect. The recognition of their

educational backwardness is quite acute amongst a large section of Indian Muslims and they wish to rectify it urgently. There is a significant internal debate about how this should be done. Private minority institutions and Madarsas are seen as the

only .this should be done. The popular perception that religious conservatism among Muslims is a major factor for not accessing education is incorrect. The recognition of their educational backwardness is quite acute amongst a large section of Indian Muslims and they wish to rectify it urgently. There is a significant internal debate about how this should be done. Private minority institutions and Madarsas are seen as the only option available to the community for improving the educational status of the Muslim community. However, others find these to be questionable alternatives pursued by the State neglecting its own responsibility. Relying predominantly on Madarsa and denominational institutions for improving the educational status of Muslims was also seen by some as violating the spirit of the Constitution. *Poverty the Main Cause of Low levels of Education* High dropout rates among Muslim students are worrisome. As with many Indians, the main reason for educational backwardness of Muslims is abject poverty due to which children are forced to drop out after the first few classes. This is particularly true for Muslim girls. Little children are expected to provide for their families by working in karkhanas (small workshops), as domestic help or by looking after their siblings while their mothers go to work. It was felt that the incidence of child labour was much higher among Muslims as compared to other SRCs. Poor and illiterate parents cannot afford tuition for their children; nor can they provide the necessary support system at home which has become so essential a part of today's educational system. The opportunity costs involved in sending children to school is also too high, making it difficult for parents to do so. *Low Perceived Returns from Education* Moreover, a community-specific factor for

low educational achievement is that Muslims do not see education as necessarily translating into formal employment. The low representation of Muslims in public or private sector employment and the perception of discrimination in securing salaried jobs make them attach less

### **Literacy and Education**

India has the second largest educational system in the world after China with a total enrolment of 222.03 million out of which 45 % are girls. Further, girls form 47% of the 128.27 million children enrolled in the primary grades Classes I-V; 44.4% of the 48.73 million at the middle stage (Classes VI-VIII); 41.12 % of the 35 million at the higher / higher secondary stage (Classes IX-XII) and 39.68% of the 10 million students enrolled in institutions of higher learning (MHRD, 2005-06). Due to the strong gender focus of the EFA initiatives during the 1990s as also the pro Girl Child, pro women policies and programmes during this decade, girls' education has progressed and the gender gaps are narrowing. Gender gap has reduced substantially and is closing in urban areas. However, the regional, rural urban and inter group disparities remain. *The Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan* is aiming at universalization of quality elementary education by 2010. Most states are nearing the quantitative targets of access and enrolments. Retention and quality still remain areas of concern and the system is gearing itself to improve teacher quality and classroom processes focusing on learners. Expansion and universalization of secondary education are now a major challenge to meet the demands of the 21st century Knowledge Society. India cannot afford to miss this opportunity to create a large body of educated and skilled youth power balancing equity and efficiency.

## A. Female Literacy

As is evident from Table 4.1, female literacy had a very poor start at the turn of the century and in a hundred years we have reached a little above the half a mark and even now females are way behind males. Female literacy has increased from 8.86% in 1951 to 54.16% in 2001. Among rural females the literacy rate has gone up from 4.87% in 1951 to 46.70% in 2001; the corresponding increase for urban females is from 22.33% to 73.20%.

### Objectives of the Study

1. A brief study of rural Muslims socio-economic and educational status.
2. To study what are the socio-economic and educational challenges faced by rural Muslim minorities and how they are different from urban areas.
3. To study the factors like socio-economic and educational factors which are responsible for the changes of rural Muslims.
4. What is the role played by Government and Non-government organizations for bringing changes among rural Muslim minorities.

### Approach and Methodology

Worldwide, minorities tend to grapple with three types of inter-related issues:

**Issues Relating to Identity:** Often differences in socio-cultural practices and of minorities make them different from the rest of the population. Given the multiplicities of identities in India communities often face problems of mutual adjustment. **Issues Relating to Security:** Given certain conditions, a distinct set of people, small in numbers relative to the rest of the society, may feel insecure about their life, assets and well-being. This sense of insecurity may get accentuated if the

relations between the minority and the majority communities are not cordial. **Issues Relating to Equity:** The minority community in a society may remain deprived of the benefits of opportunities that become available through economic development. The sense of inequity may be perceptual or a result of discrimination that the minority may face due to difference in "identity". It is also evident that identity, security and equity related concerns are not identical across all minorities. In the same vein, in a differentiated society, many of these issues are not specific to the minority communities and segments of the majority. Context, Approach and Methodology community may also have to grapple with them. Given this broad perspective, it is useful to distinguish between

### Three types of overlapping issues, that cut across the categories described above, faced by the Muslim community in India:

- \_ Issues that are common to all poor people (Muslims are largely poor)
  - \_ Issues that are common to all minorities
  - \_ Issues that are specific to Muslims
- For example, as we would argue several concerns relating to employment and education specific to Muslims may fall in the first category. Similarly, some aspects of identity and security may be common across minorities while some others may be specific to Muslims. It needs to be recognized at the outset that issues related to identity, security and equity are intricately linked in complex ways. However, many of these linkages may be empirically intractable. The mandate given to the Committee essentially focuses on "equity" related concerns. Thus, while recognizing the linkages across issues, the report focuses on equity related problems.

## Literacy and education - Focus on Female literacy

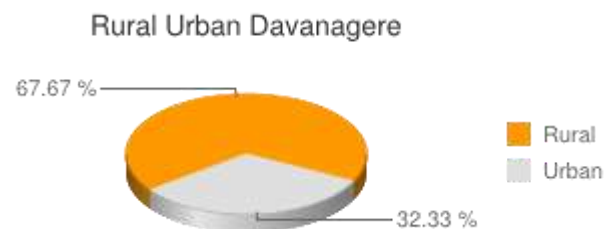
Literacy is another grey area that needs urgent attention. The literacy rate of the district 51.3 percent is well below the state average of 66.6 percent (2001) and National average of 67.3 percent. The female literacy is only 43.1 percent much lower than the State (56.6 in 2001) as well as National average (57.1 percent). The rural female literacy rate in 2001 was only 29.4 percent. The progress in literacy is very slow though the district is brought under District Primary Education Programme and Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan. Education is an important tool for empowerment of Marginalized groups therefore it should get required focus in Multi sectoral plan. The findings indicate that Muslim Households lack higher levels of skills and education which is essential for higher level of earnings. Further the asset base of these households is very low; therefore, education and skills are only the powerful tools for their empowerment. High schools for girls with Hostel facilities are very essential to promote female literacy and empowerment. Scholarships and Education loans should be given with

greater flexibility to enable the children from the poor families to get higher education. Primary schools with free food, residential facilities and sports and games facilities should be started to promote interest in education among the children- especially for the Muslim Children. The schools should start with Urdu Medium and may be slowly converted into Kannada medium at higher.

## Socio-economic Conditions and other Amenities in 2012 - Major findings of the

### Survey

In 2012 (based on survey findings), **DAVANGERE** district lagged behind the all India average in four (50 percent) out of eight indicators and also lagged behind the all India level in terms of one more health related indicator. The table below shows the gap between all India and district figures vis-à-vis ten indicators and prioritizes the development intervention vis-à-vis eight indicators. The district figure is based on the survey findings (2012) and all India figures are of 2010-11 and 2011-12. The distance from the all India figures may be higher, as all India data are a little old.



Economist Abusaleh Sharif, a Member Secretary of the Sachar Committee, has observed in an Indian newspaper, The Indian Express, that, '(These) NSSO statistics demonstrate general Muslims are well below the status of Hindu OBCs.' (See The Indian Express, 31st October, 2011). The statistical figures for Muslims in rural areas are also deeply disturbing:

A whopping 94.9 per cent of Muslims in Below Poverty Line (BPL) families in rural areas do not receive their entitlement of free foodgrains. Only 1.9 per cent of the Muslim community benefit from the Antyodaya Anna Yojana Scheme (a government programme meant to prevent starvation deaths by providing food grains at a subsidised rate);

A large percentage of rural Muslims-60.2 per cent-do not have any ownership of land;

Only 3.2 per cent of rural Muslims receive subsidised loans. The committee also found shocking instances of discrimination against the community. These include cases of Muslims not getting loans from even nationalised banks. 'There is an implicit diktat that loans should not be given in specific areas dominated by Muslims because of the high probability of default', the Committee observed after a visit to Rajasthan;

Only 2.1 per cent of Muslim farmers owning tractors (this is abysmal when seen in the context of India having about 15,25,000 tractors in the country and having the 4th largest tractor-owning population in the world after the US, Japan and Italy).

## References

Annual Meeting, Providence, Rhode Island, July 24-27, 2005.

Deshpande S. and Sethi S. (2010). Role and Position of Women Empowerment in Indian Society, *International Referred Research Journal*, Vol. 1(17), pp. 24-27.

Human Development Report (2004). Development and Planning Department, Government of West Bengal, India.

Khan T. M. and Maan A.A. (2008). Socio-cultural Milieu of Women's Empowerment in District Faisalabad, *Pakistan Journal of Agricultural Science*, Vol. 45(3), pp.78-90.

Malhotra A., Schuler S. R. and Boender C. (2003). Measuring Women's Empowerment as a Variable in International Development, paper presented at the International Council for Research on Women (ICRW), Insight and Action Seminar, Washington DC, 12 November 2003.

Parveen S. and Leonhauser I.U. (2004). Empowerment of Rural Women in Bangladesh: A Household Level Analysis, Conference on Rural Poverty Reduction through Research for Development and Transformation, Deutscher Tropentag-Berlin, 5-7 October 2004.

Sachar R. (2006). Social, economic and educational status of the Muslim Community in India, Prime Minister High Level Committee, Cabinet Secretariat, Govt. of India, New Delhi.

Tripathi T. (2011). Women's Empowerment: Concept and Empirical Evidence from India, paper presented at annual conference ('Winter School') of the Centre for Development Economics, Delhi School of Economics, December, 10-13, 2011.

Varghese T. (2011). Women Empowerment in Oman: A Study based on Women Empowerment Index, *Far East, Journal of Psychology and Business*, Vol. 2(2), pp.37-53.

**How to cite this article:** G.B. Narasimhamurthy, E. Chandrashekar, Socio-Economic and Educational Changes of Muslim Minorities in Rural Area: a Sociological Study (with Special Reference to Davangere District, Karnataka). *International Journal of Advanced Studies in Humanities and Social Science*, 2013, 2(2), 92-96. [http://www.ijashssjournal.com/article\\_83452.html](http://www.ijashssjournal.com/article_83452.html)