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A PRAGMATIC ANALYSIS OF SOCIO CULTURAL ISSUES AND CHALLENGES OF MUSLIM'S IN INDIA

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ABSTRACT

The present paper is an endeavor to examine and through light on the issues and challenges of Socio Cultural circumstances which act as hurdle for the development of Indian Muslim. The study focus on various sociological perspective of Muslims with special indication to their socio-economic, employment, educational attainment, rights and privileges, hindrances and restrictions, role and status as well as their multifarious problems from socio-religious stance at empirical context. Emphasis is also given to recognize their social position in textual and contextual spheres i.e., Islam and Muslim society. The facts and findings presented in this research paper are based on the secondary sources. The above mentioned issues are empirically examined and discussed based on data available and collected and put the facts alongside in an organized manner. Various relevant in print research references are consulted besides authors' empirical observations on the community concerned at the micro as well as macro level to

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produce this paper. There are several reasons for backwardness of Muslims in India such as large family size, lack of link between Madarsa education and modern education, economic poverty, negative attitude towards girl's education etc. It is discovered and proved from the study that Education is the only mechanism that enhances the process of social, economic, and cultural development of communities. It reveals from study that Muslim community in India is the most backward in terms of education as well as socio-economic condition. The present study has identified the problems of Muslim's socio cultural development in India and further address the proper suggestion and measures for improvement in their vision.

Keywords: Islam, Muslim society, women, affliction, privileges, restrictions, Vision, Educational status, Indian Muslims, women education, Issues and Concern.

1. INTRODUCTION:

History is witness to the fact that Indian Muslims have played a very important role in nurturing and upbringing this country, its beautification, construction and development. They have been equal partners along with other nations in introducing this country on the world map. Muslims took active part in India's regular and systematic struggle for freedom and ultimately the dawn of freedom appeared for which people had been cherishing the desire for years. Among those who played vital roles in the war of independence were Mahatma Gandhi and Pandit Nehru but Maulana Abul Kalam Azad and Maulana Hussain Ahmad Madani and other Ulama were also equal partners. India became free, people breathed in the air of freedom, Constitution and laws were framed and rights and duties of the people of India were prescribed.

Besides all the above facts one more fact about this respected religion is that they are the minorities. So far as the minorities in India are concerned, Muslims are the largest minority in the country. Educationally and Economically this community seems to be backward. Almost all other minorities are educationally and economically better off. Unfortunately Muslims have not been able to get their due share in total welfare work done by the Government, for economically weaker sections of the society in the country since independence. Different Governments appointed committees time to time to find out the causes of educational and economic backwardness of Muslims. Among these communities the latest one is the Sachar Committee.

The committee has clearly revealed that only 4 per cent Muslim population is educated and it is the most educationally and economically backward minority in the country (*Abdalati, H., 1975*).

The social and cultural life of the Muslims, living in various parts of the country, display distinctive features, as they are influenced by both the Islamic as well as regional and local traditions. Muslims are the members of Islamic community (*Umma*) out of common belief and faith. But it is not concern of everyday practical life, where they interact with the local cultures. Therefore, curiosity arises in many quarters to know the nature and character of this community with special reference to their society and culture. (*Ahmad R., 2012*)

The National Commission for Minorities in India has identified Muslims, Christians, Sikhs, Buddhists and Parsees which constitute 18.8% of the total population of the country as religious minorities, while Hindus are the majority group. Among these various minorities, Muslims occupy an important position in Indian society. India has one of the largest Muslim populations in the world about 156 million constituting about 12 per cent of total population. It is observable phenomenon that the educational status of Indian Muslims is very low. The status of Indian Muslims has a poor human development status because of widespread illiteracy, low income, irregular employment, high incidence of poverty. In this country the communities like Parsees, Christians and Hindus, had an earlier start in the educational field, while the Muslims entered into this field at a much later stage. Education , undoubtedly is an indispensable means for helping the Muslims out of their economic misery because economic dependency is the major factor contributing to the low socio cultural status of Muslims. Indian Muslims are far behind in achieving the literacy status because of their economic conditions, no availability of schools, more drop-outs, less likely to survive educationally, lack of resources in the available schools and low level of interest in education, lack of honest leadership in the community. Muslims are found all over India, but they are largely concentrated in 12 states where the Muslim population is more than 10% of the state population. It has also been reported that the dropout of the Muslim Students from schools and other educational institutions is of higher rate. Female literacy among the Muslims is also significantly low and this is one of the important reasons of low socio and cultural status in Muslim community. Again the adult education among the Muslims (both male and female) is significantly lacking. Beside formal education, the learning of new skills and technology is also not very satisfactory among the Muslim community. (*Ahmed, I., 1980*).

Being a plural community, social organizations and economic conditions of Indian Muslims differ from region to region and within a region from one social group to another. However as a religious or minority community they are found most backward and poor at national level by individual researchers and governmental agencies. (*Ahmed, I., 1976*).

Despite constitutional guarantees of equality and social justice and socio-economic and educational development in the country, large numbers of Indian Muslims are either unemployed or associated with manual low paid occupations both in villages and cities. Rapidly increasing communalism and frequently occurring communal violence in different parts of the country make their economic condition fragile and vulnerable as well as multiply their woes and agony. Concentration of Muslim Population in India (2001) is predicted in Figure 1 below:

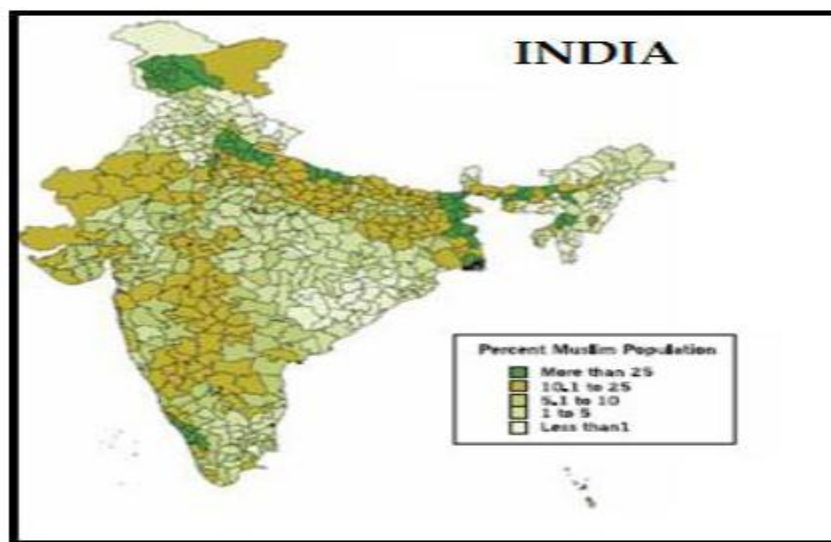


Figure 1 - Concentration of Muslim Population in India (2001)

Therefore the current research paper is to pragmatically analyze “*Socio Cultural Issues and Challenges of Muslim's in India*”

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Research studies on Muslims in India are rather scanty. However, it should be noted that the literature dealing with the educational backwardness of Muslims is by and large impressionistic and speculative, reflecting more the general impression of the observer. As a result, most of the writings on this subject in the post independence period are not only inadequate but are also by and large one-sided (*Phadke, 1978*). The study of non- Hindus and

their tradition has been sadly neglected by both Indians and foreigners (*Ahmed, 1976*). The studies on educational status of Muslims and their constraints to educational development are practically very negligible. There are books on Muslims covering political and religious issues. But very little is known about their economic, educational and social conditions (*Khan, 1984*). Anthropological and Sociological researches on Muslim education in India are very meager. Some work of the following scholars are - *Ahmed (1980)* has analyzed the problems of Muslim educational backwardness in contemporary India. His study illustrates the educational status of the Muslims as well as the socio-cultural constraints which they are facing in the context of educational upliftment among them. *Ansari (1989)* critically examined the educational backwardness of the Indian Muslims. Educational situation as well as the educational problems of Muslim community of India has been studied by *Mondal (1989)*. A comprehensive and detailed account of educational growth and constraints on educational performance of the Indian Muslims has examined by *Peer (1991)*. In recent years fresh attention has been paid on education of minorities particularly of Muslims by appointment of Sachar Committee by the Prime Minister to study the social, economic and educational status of Muslims.

3. RESEARCH GAP / PROBLEM STATEMENT

Muslims in India are the largest minority so far as the minorities of this country are concerned and the majority of this largest minority community is awfully to the rear in respect of Social status wise or education and economy where more or less all other minorities are more affluent. Moreover Muslims disappointingly have not been capable to find their due share in the entire welfare effort made by the Govt. in the country since independence for economically weaker sections of the society. To find out the causes of such backwardness of Muslims, various Governments, time to time, appointed committees which has conspicuously exposed that the Muslims of India are the most educationally and economically backward minority within whom merely four per cent population is educated (*Ahmad, 2012*). The accessible rough, statistical, and micro level studies on Muslims restate that the mass of the Muslim, at the present time, are most deprived, economically impoverished, and politically marginalized sections of the Indian society. Further the studies disclose that Muslims, like other community, are not homogeneous rather they are differentiated along the fault-lines of community, class, caste and region. Their lives are

similarly positioned at the crossroads of family, gender and community within the dynamic context of Indian society, economy and polity (*Hasan and Menon, 2004*). This creates a need to pragmatically analyze “*Socio Cultural Issues and Challenges of Muslim's in India*”

4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY	
Objectives of Research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To elucidate various factors influencing Socio Cultural Issues of Muslims in India. • To analyze various Socio Cultural Challenges for development of Muslims in India.
Hypothesis of Research	H₁ : There is a positive relation Socio Cultural Issues, Challenges and Development of Muslim Community in India.
Research Design	Exploratory & Descriptive – To know the parameters and formulate the hypotheses and to prove through description.
Data collection Techniques	Secondary Data Collection – Census Survey Data, Muslim and Other Religious Community Data, Research reports ,Government Annual reports, Psychology books, journals, research papers etc.

5. RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

5.1 Issues of Socio Cultural Challenges of Muslims in India

Every concern of the socio-economic circumstances of the Muslim minority in India needs to imply that different issues faced by the Muslims are multilateral as they at the meantime face problems pertaining to security, justice, identity and equity like all other minorities of the country and the relations of these proportions is at the axis of the socio-economic and political processes that the community is revealed to on a daily base. Because of unavailability of relevant ‘hard and unbiased’ data, an empirical searching of these multifaceted problems is typically worried and such information constraints are of course more precise for security and identity-related apprehension (*Besant and Shariff, 2010*).

Two major problems in the field of education and employment which are crucial for the socio-economic development of any individual are facing by the Muslims in India. It is evident that, in terms of quantitative and qualitative education, Muslims in India is depressing. Condition of Muslim women education is lower than their counterpart men. The key reasons among other

causes for educational backwardness of the Muslims are their underprivileged economic situation, absent of adequate number of Government and Government aided schools in Muslim concentrated areas and lack of job opportunities among the educated Muslims. Muslims are lagging behind in education probably as a consequence of socio-cultural pattern of the family and the society, the pessimistic outlook towards the education of girls and are lack of infrastructures for education in Muslim concentrated neighborhoods. Muslims have limited access to in the distance school (*Rahaman and Bhumali, 2011*).

Over the last two decades the situation of Muslims mostly their social situation have come to the notice of the academicians, policy makers and development authorities of India and it has been considered that the Muslim women are the most underprivileged segment of India's population. They take part in a crucial role in well being and especially survival of the families, yet, sorry to say, for various reasons the gender inequality is greatly prominent in Muslim society. Moreover their marginalized status is not well documented although information on Muslim women particularly their social position, problems and prospects is very necessary for the sake of their empowerment concern which is a priority area of countrywide development (*Mondal, 2005*).

Mahmood (2001) states: "*The societal pluralism of India, as fortified by the unique Constitutional concept of secularism, raises the need for the protection and development of all sorts of weaker sections of the Indian citizenry*" -whether this "*weakness*" is based on numbers or on the social, economic or educational status of any particular group. The Constitution, therefore, speaks of Religious and Linguistic Minorities, Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and Backward Classes and makes- or leaves room for making-for them special provisions of various natures and varying import." Women in Muslim communities face extensive challenges on the completion of five decades of India's independence as citizens of India and as members of India's largest and principal minority population of India. Their meager socio-economic situation exposes a lack of social prospect which, nonetheless not an attribute limited to Muslim women, is upset by their negligible position within an overall context of social disadvantage for most of the women in Indian society. Muslim women in India, so far various Government reports are concerned, are amongst the poorest, economically vulnerable, educationally disenfranchised, politically marginalized group. Furthermore, huge loophole in information on Muslim women

contributes to the reinforcement of cultural stereotypes, serving to mask their life experiences and struggles. Consequently, the perception that the Muslim women social status in India attains solely from Muslim personal laws or their status is attributable to certain intrinsic, unchangeable or binding 'Islamic' characteristics is extensively widespread (*Kazi, 1999*).

Socio-Economic Status

The social organizations and economic situations of Indian Muslims differ from region to region and within a region from one social group to another being a plural community. On the other hand, as a religious or minority community they are found most backward and poor at national level according to the report of Governmental agencies and individual researchers. Again great numbers of Indian Muslims, both in rural and urban areas, are either unemployed or subsisted on manual low paid occupations in spite of the constitutional guarantees of equality and social justice and socio-economic and educational development in the nation (*Waheed, 2006*). Muslim women have the smallest amount of work participation rate (WPR) with a huge gap between the WPRs for Muslim women and Hindu women or Christian women among all three categories of work. Muslim women in self-employed are 60% and the employment rate as regular workers in urban areas are 15.7 % for Muslim women as compared to 27.7 % for Hindu women and 51.5 % for Christian women and in rural regions there is also a more or less similar employment status for Hindu and Muslim women comprising 3.6 % and 3 % respectively. These statistics underline the marginal presence of Muslim women in salaried jobs. Muslim women's marginal presence as workers in the formal economy is pointed out through their high self-employment rates and the following low involvement in salaried job indicating their invisibility as informal employees. Again it is very difficult to pinpoint specific roots behind their skimpy employment position owing to lack of existing research and analysis in the sphere of employment of Muslim women while their educational status most apparently exercise a noteworthy pressure in both urban and rural areas on the type and ranks of their employment (*Kazi, 1999*).

Largely Worker population ratios / rates or WPRs give an idea of the extent of participation in economic activity by a specific population. Since pointed out that the ability to find work is a function of assets, both physical and others, and opportunities of work offered.

Also persons principally women belonging to healthy endowed households as large landowners, as because there is no persuasive economic want to do so may perhaps not take part in the workforce. Again given the endowments if the work available is not of the type of a person prefers, he himself may possibly not work. A multiplicity of factors is responsible behind these work preferences like the role of socio-economic and cultural. Besides, non-availability of employment may result in situations that people particularly women depart from the labour force. Consequently, differences in WPRs reflect the differences in endowment as well as the nature and quantum of service prospects and these complex links are difficult to disentangle frequently (*GOI, 2006*). In India, on the whole, about 44 per cent of women in the key age group of 15-64 years partake in the workforce whereas in case of men about 85 per cent do the same. On the other hand, the workforce participation rate (WPR) among Muslim women is only about 25 per cent on an average. In rural areas, whereas about 70 per cent of the Hindu women take part in the workforce in case of Muslim women only about 29 per cent perform so. The Hindu women from upper castes in rural areas even have a higher participation rate resembling 43 per cent. The fact partly explains regarding the lower participation of Muslim women in rural areas is that the Muslim family circles (and thus women) are fewer likely to be engaged in agricultural pursuits. The WPRs for Muslim women in urban areas are even as lower as it stands for 18 per cent, most probably, for the reason that works opportunities inside the household for women are very limited which may be rather higher in rural areas with ownership, however limited, of land making partaking of Muslim women in these areas rather higher (*GOI, 2006*).

One of the key determinants of an individual social status is her or his employment which is a social inevitability and a basis of self-esteem though it is an economic activity. To take part in the developmental activities of a country employment presents landscapes to both men and women. Likewise the productive people can contribute their mite to the income of a nation whereas the unproductive people for the most part depend on others. Hence it is very depressing to note in this context that though in the development process a great proportion of women are able to contribute their mite, they are being considered as unproductive because of the notion which is broadly prevalent that the role of women should be limited in the household and the expectation for women that they will happen to just good housewives and good mothers. But as because no development is achievable ignoring and bypassing near about half of the entire

human population, of course the women, it is essential to note that the participation in and access to social and economic activities of women is indispensable for both their own development and for the development of the nation (*Azim, 1997*).

5.2 CHALLENGES OF MUSLIM DEVELOPEMNT IN INDIA

Indian culture is distinct in nature where each ethnic group has the liberty to maintain their Religious identity. Muslim society of India is very heterogeneous in nature mainly because of the influence of caste system; Muslims are among most backwards in India. They are not taking care of their educational advancement by the advantage of constitutional provision. The problem of backwardness is a long term process. Muslims are far lagging behind than the other communities in terms of economically, socially, educationally as well as politically. There are various reasons for Muslim being educationally backward which are ---

- The anti– Muslim attitude taken by British before independence to curtail the educational and employment opportunities of the community has laid a drastic impact on their socio-economic condition. The Muslims are facing the same problem even today. This attitude towards Muslims has pushed them in more backwardness.
- The Riots, communal violence and insecurity, have become the norm and a sad reality in Modern India. The majority of the victims of riots in India are Muslims. This situation is affecting their economic as well as social condition.
- Muslims are facing socio-economic poverty from past. Their vision is blurring towards education because majority of Muslim parents are illiterate, they are unaware about the importance of modern education. They live in large family size and give greater importance to early marriages. There is absent of vocation education to improve their image to develop through education.
- There is negative attitude towards girl's education among Muslims. Due to hurdles from family they lose the zeal to achieve something through education and thus they themselves do not have academic interest. If at all they are fortunate enough to go to a good school, they are often discouraged to go for higher education, especially overseas. There is often misconception regarding the “purity” of girls if they have studied in

Universities, or have traveled abroad. The most important reason is that there is difficulty in finding educated groom if the girl becomes highly educated.

- As identified by Sachar Committee that normally Muslim Settlements are systematically deprived of access to infrastructure and public services like power, piped water supplies and sewerage. Muslim community is living in low income, filthy and poor living conditions.
- Muslims are having poor facilities in their schools as well as proper education is also absent. Most of the schools are traditional, having problem of medium. The education is also not linked with employment opportunities.
- Madarsa and Maktabas are still running at the traditional pattern. There is no influence of modern education in their syllabus. Students of Madarsa are having low level of knowledge regarding commerce and computer etc.
- There is absence of committed and genuine Muslim leadership (both social and political) in pre and post independent India.

6. REMEDIAL MEASURES

Educational development of Muslims is a gradual phenomenon. The emergence of some premier Muslim educational institutions across the country such as Darul Uloom Duyuband, U.P, Aligarh Muslim University, Jamia Millia Isamia, Maulana Jauhar Ali University, Osmania University etc. have tremendously improved the prospects of the community in the sphere of both streams of education. Some suggestions are given below regarding the educational upliftment:

- ✓ Increase in awareness among Muslims about the importance of education, various employment opportunities, self employment schemes as well as resultant economic well being through it.
- ✓ The Government should give more emphasis towards the concept of small family size for the improvement of socio-economic condition of Muslims.
- ✓ There were some concessions for Muslims to enter in Government jobs, but after 1857 these concessions were withdrawn. Government of India should again develop some

concession policy and programs to increase the share of Muslim work participation in Government jobs.

- ✓ Governmental incentives and scholarships are also necessary for the poor and deprived Muslims. Muslims should be provided reservation in higher education and elite institutions such as the IITs and IIMs. Thus access to higher education in general and the need for offering it to all at affordable cost is required.
- ✓ Modernization of Madarsa education to raise the educational status of traditional muslims and there should be integration of vocational education with religious instruction in Madarsas. There is also need to link Madarsas with higher secondary school board.
- ✓ There is need to develop more girls' school to minimize the problem of accessibility of schools. Parents should develop positive attitude towards girl's higher education.
- ✓ Government should open high quality Urdu medium schools wherever they are in demand and ensuring high quality textbooks for students in the Urdu language.
- ✓ Government should develop Strong organization for improving the condition of all centers of primary, secondary and higher learning in India. Various educational schemes chalked out for implementation of recognition of minority education, coaching classes for competitive examination etc.
- ✓ There is need of genuine social and political leader to reform the backbone of Muslim community.

7.CONCLUSION

Taking into consideration the above discussion on Socio Cultural status, issues and challenges of Muslims, it can be concluded that Muslims are far behind than the other communities. Their vision towards society, culture and particularly education is still traditional. They don't want to accept modern education due to which they are suffering socially, economically and politically. It can be postulated from the current secondary research that hypothesis of research H_1 : *There is a positive relation Socio Cultural Issues, Challenges and Development of Muslim Community in India*, holds true and a positive directly correlation can be postulated from the facts and findings of the study that if socio cultural issues and challenges are overcome by various means such as education specifically in Muslim population in India,

they can be one of the developed part of community in society. Thus there is need to change the vision of Muslims from traditional to modern education. There is also meager study on Muslim's educational condition; it is the duty of social Anthropologists and Sociologists to find out the educational status and to analyze the state of education among the Muslims of various parts of the country to explore the constraints of educational upliftment among them. It is the need of the hour that Government should move on and do something for development of Muslims.

By evaluating the overall facts and findings, it can be concluded that the situation of Muslims is not satisfactory especially regarding their socio-economic status, educational attainment, political participation, role in decision-making etc. Their status, unequal to other community, in the society is very much conspicuous in various terms.

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