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PROBLEMS OF MUSLIM GIRL STUDENTS IN RELATION TO SELECTED SOCIO-ECONOMIC AND CULTURAL ASPECTS: A CASE STUDY OF NAGAON DISTRICT

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was adopted in this study using primary data. Awareness and trend of higher education has been increasing in the Muslim community. In addition to socio-economic and cultural problems there are some more problems found available among the girl students. It needs much more research studies, awareness campaign, community participation, helping hands of developed communities and the Govt. efforts.

ABSTRACT

Women folk in all the communities have more or less been exploited and as a result they have been facing enormous problems in their socio-economic and cultural life. Even, in the age of technology too it has been remaining as a pivotal issue. Although some initiatives have been taken but still problems of Muslim girls pursuing higher education is remaining almost same for various reasons. The trend of higher education is still very slow in backward communities along with Muslim community. The educational status of girls in the Muslim community is found very deplorable due to socio-economic and cultural problems. Of course, it is possible to minimise the problems but it requires proper Govt. initiatives and active involvement of common people. Survey method

KEYWORDS- Culture, Socio-Economic, Higher Education, Technology.

INTRODUCTION :

It is a pertinent fact that in most of the educational institutions of higher learning female students faces difficulties in various aspects due shortage of material, human and economic resources. Moreover, their problems are associated with social environment, community perception and overall infrastructure, road and communication systems. Governmental schemes and policies are also found either defective or misused in different phases. These problems are much more serious among the Muslim communities. All those districts where Muslim communality people are in majority are very backward as compared to other districts in respect of health, education, living standard, life expectancy, mortality rate, per capita income, human resource development index and road and communication and much more. As per the census report of 2011 Muslim population in the state of Assam is 34.22% out of which 36.85% and 18.24% in the rural and urban area respectively. There are 8 districts (2011 Census) in our state out of 28 where Minority Muslim population is in majority and average literacy rate of Assam is 72.19%. Male literacy rate is 77.85% and female literacy is 66.27% which is 5.92% less than the average literacy rate of Assam and 11.58% less than the male literacy rate. Literacy rate in Assam has seen upward trend and is about 8.94%



more than the 2001 census. In 2001, literacy rate in Assam stood at 63.25% of which male and female were 71.28% and 54.61% literate respectively.

The average socio-economic and educational status of the Muslim minority is very much poor in all respect as compared to other communities. Studies reveal that due to very poor socio-economic and cultural status of Muslim community Muslim girls' are forced to keep away from higher education. Only a nominal percentage of Muslim women can avail the opportunity of higher education. As a result the trend of higher education among the Muslim women is still very pathetic. There are some pivotal issues and problems are found responsible. So, it requires much more specific research studies. The government should come forward with special policies and schemes for the socio-economically and educationally backward minorities through their five years plans and yearly plans. It is very much unfortunate to note that after the independence and till date only one committee had been formed by the Govt. of India in the national level to study and report about the status of Minority Muslim communities.

SACHAR COMMITTEE REPORT AND MINORITY MUSLIM

A High Level committee was formed on 9th March, 2005 under the chairmanship of Justice (Retired) Rajinder Sachar by the Prime Minister's Office for preparation of a comprehensive report on the social, economic and educational status of the Muslim community of India. It submitted its report on 17th November, 2006. The then govt. brought it in the parliament on 30th November, 2006 for its cabinet approval. The cabinet recommended list of follow-up action on recommendations approved by Cabinet on 17.05.2007. The Government took several decisions on the recommendations of the Sachar Committee and a statement in this regard was laid in both Houses of Parliament on 31st August, 2007. A total number of 76 recommendations/suggestions were included in the report and of it 72 recommendations were accepted by the Government. The report of the Sachar Committee had brought real picture about the socio-economic and educational status of the Muslim communities. Although, it has been regarded as very significant report for uplifting Muslim minority but surprisingly these had not been fully implemented till date. It was entrusted to the ministry of minority affairs, Govt. of India to follow –up recommendations but surprisingly the concerned department had exercised only few schemes as per the recommendations. It proves again about the disinclination attitude of the ruling govt towards the commitment of Muslim community. Had all these been implemented the status could have been improved in a commendable way. Furthermore, studies reveal that Muslim community people are the victims of so called politics of caste, creed and communities.

Despite negligence of the govt. a section of conscious people of our societies have come forward and they have been trying their level best to minimize the obstacles faced by the Muslim girls' students in higher education. Due to their sincere effort and cooperation, a section of Muslim families have been able to play the role of torch bearer in the history of education. It is possible only due to continuous and tired less effort made by a section of conscious and prosperous parents and guardians of our societies. It has been an unsuccessful malign effort of a section of people to keep our women deprived of higher education for the interest best known to them. But the studies reveal that it is not true that Muslim communities are against imparting women education. Further it is found that a large section of women folk are deprived and dropped out of education due to some pivotal issues and problems. It has been found from the studies that it is due to some other factors prevailing in the social systems either they are in the helpless situation or compelled to stop the education of women. All the major aspects which are found resisting in the education of Muslim women are economic aspects, educational aspects, socio-cultural aspects, parental attitude and educational environment. Likewise, studies reveal that some hundreds of thousand problems are made responsible under these above said major aspects. But it is very much praise worthy to note that despite all these obstacles found in our systems of the traditional society a section of Muslim women along with the constant support and encouragement of their parents, guardians and other well wishers they had left no stone unturned to place their name and fame in the men dominant society. It is found not only in our country but also in the other under developed and developing countries of the South East Asia. It is evident from the studies that with the help of will power and parental and social support our women can place their position in the top too in all respect.

WOMEN EDUCATION AND ISLAM

Although, education of Muslim women has been an issue since the Islamic era but still in the 21st century it is an unaddressed and unsolved fundamental problems. The Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him), the messenger of Allah (God) was appeared in the Arab to show the proper path to the mankind. He taught people about the messages of Allah in the light of the verses of the holy Qura'n. It is the greatest source of knowledge, wisdom and education forever. It is an ever clear guiding force for the people to follow required ideal path and the consequences and vice versa. It includes all the aspects of the human society may it be scientific aspects, medical, engineering and technology related along with other teachings and instructions. It guides us dawn to dusk and night to morning for developing good characters, virtues and values for building up good qualities, duties and responsibilities required for perfect human being in every walk of life. Moreover, it teaches us about the ways of living, health and hygiene, do's and don'ts of the modern society. It gives us knowledge about the process of education, development and sustainable development.

It is very unfortunate to note that problems of Muslim women still exist in the age of rapid development of science and technology. It is very ironic to mention that the developed and developing countries have been trying to establish inhabitants in the Mars and other planets but there are some evil and worst happenings are found prevailing. In some cases it is found most evil then the savage age. As a result, issues and problems of women in general and Muslim particularly have become very crucial global issue every where. It is also a pertinent fact that even educated women of every society have been facing more or less problems in their ways of life. But it is found that uneducated women are the most sufferers in today's world as compared to educated group. The Muslim women are the most sufferers as they have been lacking behind in education. It is very much interesting to note that almost all the Muslim people are very much dedicated to follow and maintain the instructions, teachings and guidance of Islam but very unfortunately most of the cruel and evil practices are found available among the people of Muslim community. It is repeatedly mentioned and emphasized in the Qur'an about the education. Even the holy Qur'an has been started in the name of Iqra means read. Moreover, it has been mentioned nowhere in the religious book of Islam about the disparity between men and women. The holy book through its different chapters and verses everywhere it emphasized equality of women along with the men. It is very important to note that whatever thinking by the modern countries of the present world regarding improving the overall status of the women all these have been mentioned in the Qur'an. But it is very useless that despite all these instructions and privileges given by the holy book these have not been practiced and as a consequences the status of the women of this community are very pathetic in all respect.

Again, problems of Muslim women are not same in all the Muslim countries. It varies from region to region. It is seen that the problems of Muslim women in India is hardly same with other South East Asian countries. But it is found that a very small percentage of special issues and facts similar to the all Muslim countries. Study also shows that some of the problems found available among all the communities of a particular area of a particular state but it is not same everywhere even within the same communities of a same country. Indian Muslims are facing various socio-economic problems in today's age, which has to be understood in terms of their educational background. Islam is perhaps the first religion which has given greater significance to learning.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Patriarchal nature of our society and orthodoxy tradition is blamed for the pathetic condition of our women. Moreover, Muslim women suffer more because of the socio-economic and cultural system of our society. They are hardly given enough freedom and hardly have access to higher education. There are various reasons for Muslim women being educationally backward and it is an attempt to study the problems of Muslim girl students in relation to socio-economic and cultural aspects. This study is an attempt to study in detail to find out truth behind it. It will help govt. and other non-government agencies to take necessary action plans and strategies for the development of women education. Likewise, Muslim women in higher education need to continue much more research studies.

OBJECTIVES

- To study the problems of Muslim girl students in relation to socio-economic and cultural aspects pursuing higher education.

HYPOTHESES

1. There is significant difference between the problems of urban and rural Muslim girls in relation to socio-economic and cultural aspects pursuing higher education.

Research Method

Descriptive survey method has been followed in order to carry out the present study.

Population and Sample

The population of this study comprises all the degree college going Muslim girls of Nagaon district of Assam. The study was carried out in the selected rural and urban degree colleges covering 200 students by convenient random sampling method.

Tool: The primary data has been collected using self-developed questionnaire.

Analysis of Data

Table 1: Rural and Urban Muslim Girls' Opinion towards Different Problems

Item	Area					Total	
	Rural			Urban			
	Responses	N	%	N	%	N (R + U)	%
Social Aspects	Yes	75	75	60	60	135	67.5
	No	25	25	40	40	65	32.5
	Total	100	100	100	100	200	
Economic Aspects	Yes	80	80	70	70	150	75
	No	20	20	30	30	50	25
	Total	100	100	50	100	200	
Cultural Aspects	Yes	60	60	55	55	115	57.5
	No	40	40	45	45	85	42.5
	Total	100	100	100	100	200	

FINDINGS

- **Social Aspects:** From Table-1, it has been found that 75% respondents of rural colleges consider social problems as one of the important hurdles in pursuing higher education and on the other hands, in urban colleges 60% respondents agree on the same. Hence, it is found that majority respondents of rural and urban area acknowledge 'social aspects' as one of the major obstruction of higher education.
- **Economic Aspects:** It is also observed that there are 80% of rural respondents who support economic problems as their hindrances and on the other hands; it goes to 70% in case of urban respondents. In this case also it is found that there is no significant difference between the problems of rural and urban areas.
- **Cultural Aspects:** It is found that 60% respondents of rural colleges agree that cultural problems have been creating obstruction in higher education and in urban area there are 55% respondents acknowledge the same.

CONCLUSION

Government should emphasis on inclusive development of socio, economic, and cultural aspects of Muslim community. We must redefine our Govt. policies, schemes, socio-cultural and political approaches. It is must to create intensive awareness of women's issues and a call for legal changes regarding the problems of

Muslim girl students.

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