Educational Status among Muslim Women: A Sociological Study in Golaghat District of Assam

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Abstract: Girls’ and women's education has always been of great concern to our country, especially the Muslim community, but it remains neglected in the history of the Indian education system relative to that of boys. Gender differences in education reflect the unequal position of women in a strongly gender-specific social order. The poor women were neglected to education. As a result, the majority of Indian women remain illiterate. Indian scholars and writers have contributed to the educational advancement of Muslim girls and women in general in India. A review of various books and writings by scholars reveals that the education of Muslim women in India in general and Assam in particular remains a major concern. This is because women are considered to be the most disadvantaged group in Assam, despite the many educational programs in place. Of all religious communities, Muslims are the least educated segment of Assamese society, and Muslim women are the least educated. The purpose of this study is to understand the educational status of Muslim women, to clarify the social and economic constraints of girls' education, and to clarify the discrimination in education in Korigaon, Golaghat District, Assam.

Keywords: Educational status, Status of Women, Gender, Socio-economic constraints, Assam.

Introduction:
The secret of human progress is education. Knowing the value of education, both the federal government and the state governments have made it a top priority to end illiteracy in the nation by initiating a nationwide literacy program. The federal government has also developed a number of programs and projects, including Operation Blackboard, the District Primary Education Programme, the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan Project, and mid-day meals, to address the needs of the educationally disadvantaged and enhance the social infrastructure of education. Every Indian kid has a fair and equal opportunity to get a basic education that is both free and required according to the Right to Education Act (RTE).

All children up to the age of 14 should get free and mandatory education, according to the national policy on education from 1986 and the 1992 program of action. Additionally, it calls for the development and advancement of education across all fields, as well as the abolition of barriers to education at all levels. However, even after more than 7 (seven) decades of planned growth in India, universal primary education is still a long way off. In many countries, although their male counterparts may access it without limitations, many females’ children are denied the right to education. In a culture like India, the concept of equal rights for men and women has become more theoretical. As a result, compared to male children, a girl's educational position is quite poor in the nation. This is due to the continued dominance of patriarchal culture, where male children are given more favor. One of the most crucial tools for the empowerment and development of any disenfranchised group is education. Sir Syed Ahmad Khan, a significant socio-religious reformer of Muslim education, stated accurately that education and training of the populace are essential for the advancement of all nations and great thinkers of the globe (Khan 2020). In tradition of Assam women in Muslim culture used to live in a very close-knit community and were primarily restricted to their houses because of social and ceremonial restrictions on their behavior and activity patterns.

After Hinduism, Muslims make up the majority of the population in India. With 14.2 percent of the total population, Muslims make up the largest religious minority, followed by Christians (1.7%), Sikhs (0.7%), Buddhists (0.5%), Jainists (0.4%), and others (0.7%). Muslims make up more than 20 percent of the population in several states, including Jammu and Kashmir, Bengal, Assam, and others (Censes, 2011). Muslim women are behind other religious minorities in all areas of human development, including living conditions, sociopolitical status, education, etc., while being the biggest religious minority in India (Khan 2020). In this regard, the Indian Prime Minister chaired a high-level committee known as the Sachar committee in 2006. They are given less access to educational opportunities, a worse standard of education, and academic backwardness that is on par with or worse than that of Scheduled Castes (SCs), Scheduled Tribes (STs), and Other Backward Classes (OBCs), according to the committee's findings. According to the research, one-fourth of Muslim children between the ages of 6 and 14 have never attended school or are dropouts. Muslims have a literacy rate of 57.3 percent, which is much lower than the 74.4 percent national average. In India, literacy rates among other minorities including the Jain are 86.4 percent, Christians are 74.3 percent, Buddhists are 71.8 percent, and Sikhs are 67.5 percent. This demonstrates that among all religious communities in India, Muslims have the greatest prevalence of illiteracy (Times of India, 2020).

According to the Times of India (2020), who cited the National Sample Survey Report of the 75th Round (2018), the GAR for Muslims at the secondary level was 71.9 percent, which was lower than the GAR for STs (70.9 percent), SCs (85.8 percent), and OBCs (also 71.9 percent). Similar to the higher secondary level, the GAR for Muslims was the lowest at 48.3 percent, below that of STs at 60 percent and SCs at 52.8 percent, as well as the lowest among other populations. Their grade point average (GAR) at the level above higher secondary was 14.5 percent, marginally above the STs 14.4 percent but behind the SCs 17.8 percent and other localities.
According to the All India Survey on Higher Education Reports (AISHE) (conducted by the Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India), the representation of Muslims in higher education is likewise the lowest compared to that of SCs, STs, and OBCs. The following table shows the survey data's supporting documentation—

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years</th>
<th>Muslims (Percent)</th>
<th>STs (Percent)</th>
<th>SCs (Percent)</th>
<th>OBCs (Percent)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2010-2011</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>11.1</td>
<td>27.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011-2012</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>12.2</td>
<td>30.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012-2013</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>12.8</td>
<td>31.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013-2014</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>13.1</td>
<td>32.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014-2015</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>13.4</td>
<td>32.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015-2016</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>4.9</td>
<td>13.9</td>
<td>33.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016-2017</td>
<td>4.9</td>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>14.2</td>
<td>34.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017-2018</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>5.2</td>
<td>14.4</td>
<td>35.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2018-2019</td>
<td>5.2</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>14.9</td>
<td>36.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: AISHE Reports,

According to the above table, Muslims' growth rate in higher education from 2010—the year in which they enrolled the fewest students through 2018 was 26.92 percent, compared to STs' 20 percent, SCs' 25.50 percent, and OBCs' 23.96 percent. The education of Indian Muslims requires special attention from both state and the national governments.

The present study intends to investigate the educational status of Muslim women in Koirigaon Village of Golaghat district in Assam. The study is based on the primary and secondary data. Primary data collected in the month of June 2023 Primary data includes interview schedule for fifty households, informal interview and observations were extensively used. The Universe of the study consists of population of the koirigaon Village. The village consists of 857 families and the population is 4380. Out of this, fifty families were selected randomly to collect the data. In order to comprehend this social issue in the society, a thorough literature investigation was also carried out using a variety of offline and online secondary sources to examine the current educational status of Muslim women. According to Census 2011 information, the Koirigaon village is located in Sarupathar sub division of Golaghat district of Assam, India. The total geographical area of Koirigaon village is 503.34 hectares. Kori gaon village has a total population of 4,380 persons, out of which male population is 2,226 while female population is 2,154. Literacy rate of Kori gaon village is 58.86 percent out of which 64.11 percent males and 53.44 percent females are literate. There are about 857 houses in Kori gaon village (Indian Village

Objectives of the Study
The present study intends to investigate the educational status of Muslim women in Assam, the root causes behind their educational deficiencies in education, and the societal barriers to girls' education.

Methodology
The present study deals with the Educational status of Muslim Women in Koirigaon Village of Golaghat district of Assam. The study is based on the primary and secondary data. Primary data collected in the month of June 2023 Primary data includes interview schedule for fifty households, informal interview and observations were extensively used. The Universe of the study consists of population of the koirigaon Village. The village consists of 857 families and the population is 4380. Out of this, fifty families were selected randomly to collect the data. In order to comprehend this social issue in the society, a thorough literature investigation was also carried out using a variety of offline and online secondary sources to examine the current educational status of Muslim women. According to Census 2011 information, the Koirigaon village is located in Sarupathar sub division of Golaghat district of Assam, India. The total geographical area of Koirigaon village is 503.34 hectares. Kori gaon village has a total population of 4,380 persons, out of which male population is 2,226 while female population is 2,154. Literacy rate of Kori gaon village is 58.86 percent out of which 64.11 percent males and 53.44 percent females are literate. There are about 857 houses in Kori gaon village (Indian Village
The education facility in Korigaon Village is not up to the standard as per 2011 census. There is only one primary school and two upper primary schools within the village are available.

**The present educational status of Muslim women in India**

Muslim women and girls fall behind women in all other groups and their male counterparts. The percentage of students who drop out is 17.6 percent among Muslims, greater than the 13.2 percent national average. In the age range of 6 to 14 years, as many as 25 percent of Muslim students have either never been to school or have dropped out. Only one out of every 25 undergraduate students and one out of every 50 graduate students are enrolled at the top universities in the nation. Muslims make up a small percentage of students in all courses, especially postgraduate programs and the scientific stream.

Table 2: Literacy Rate among Religious Communities: (in Percentage)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Religious community</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Muslims</td>
<td>51.9</td>
<td>62.41</td>
<td>57.155</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hindus</td>
<td>55.98</td>
<td>70.78</td>
<td>63.38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jains</td>
<td>84.93</td>
<td>87.86</td>
<td>86.395</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christians</td>
<td>71.97</td>
<td>76.78</td>
<td>74.375</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sikhs</td>
<td>63.29</td>
<td>71.32</td>
<td>67.305</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buddhists</td>
<td>65.6</td>
<td>77.87</td>
<td>71.735</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>41.38</td>
<td>59.38</td>
<td>50.38</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: 2011 census, Hussain, 2018

**Importance of Muslim women education in Assam**

Every kind of education that attempts to increase the knowledge and skills of women and girls are referred to as women's education. It encompasses formal schooling in schools and universities, vocational and technical training, career and health education, etc. Both literary and non-literary educations are included in women's education. Women with education may shift the socioeconomic landscape. The foundation of any community is its women. No nation or culture can deny the importance of women. A happy and healthy existence requires that women have an education. According to a well-known proverb, educating a girl kid implies educating the entire family. The first step toward empowerment is education, according to Hussain (2018). Scholars and other governmental and non-governmental organizations have not thoroughly and adequately investigated the causes of their educational underachievement. Every single individual researcher, organizational study, and commission constituted by the government concludes that Muslims are the nation's most illiterate group (Khan 2020).

**Results and Discussion**

The secret to all human progress is education. Education gives people the required information and skills to perform as well they can in society and to help it work effectively. Although education is influenced by socially constructed ideologies, its role goes beyond preserving cultural heritage and advancing societal ideas and values. Education may be a potent tool for transforming and reforming society if it has a purposeful focus. Since education is a sensitive and necessary component of society, it should be provided to everyone without distinction on the basis of gender, caste, creed, race, etc.

Girls and women have been given less priority throughout the years, and man has continued to dominate women throughout history. Since Indian society is patriarchal, boys were given greater educational priority and a substantial advantage over girls. Girls were assigned to domestic chores and were supposed to be obedient, humble, polite, and modest.

Many girls were denied access to school while their male counterparts had unrestricted access. There is a significant gender difference in education in Indian society. Gender inequality must be eliminated in order for society to advance since it not only stops girls from obtaining full human satisfaction but also slows down social advancement.

The gender gap in education can also be seen in the Korigaon village. Many parents give more preference to their male child in aspect of life. It is also found that many girls were deprived of the right to education. Our sample shows that out of fifty families, forty four families sent their child to school while, six families does not sent their child girl to school. The study also reveals that there are fifty nine girls are studying and seven girls are not studying. The study also shows that some families do not send their girls to school because children themselves have no interest in going to school and 20 percent of the families do not send as the children are below age of studying. The literacy ratio among the males and females is an important indicator of society's development.

In India different census report shows vast gender gap in education as 2001 census report said 76 percent male and 54 percent female are literate in India. According to some scholars for low level of female literacy familial factors also...
largely responsible. Girls of village areas are overburdened with work, parents are not interested to send their girl to school etc are responsible for it.

It is found that some family wants to give higher education for girl child while some family does not want to give higher education for girl child because they are searching bridegroom for their daughters. It is also found that 93.18 percent of the family wants to give higher education for girl child, while 6.82 percent of the respondent's families do not want to give higher education for girl child because they are not in a financial position to give higher education for their girl child.

On examining the school drop-out rate of girl child (5-13 yrs) from 44 families, it is found that there is not even a single case of school drop-out girl child in the village. 44 families there is no any school drop-out girl child. It shows that 100 percent of the families have no school drop-out girl child students.

All government LP and M.E.schools of Korigaon village run under Sarba Shiksha Abhiyan. The main motto of this scheme is to provide free and compulsory education to all. So that all the poor and low income families children get an opportunity to educate themselves. In Korigaon village also middle class, lower middle class, poor and below poverty levels families are benefited by the scheme. From the 50 selected families, it is found that there are 59 girls child (5-13 years of age) in the village. Of 59 girl child, 52 of them are in the school while 7 girls are not access to school. In the opinion taken from 50 families who are under assistance of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan scheme on whether the facilities provided by Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan scheme for education is satisfied, they gave the positive respond, that the scheme is quite beneficial, and they are fully satisfied with the facilities.

The study shows that 58.30 percent of the family members are male and 41.70 percent of the family members are female. The study reveals that 80 percent of the family sent their children to Govt. school and 20 percent sent their children to private school. On enquiry to what type of problem face by parent's in educating girl child, 44.44 percent of the family face problem because the girl child have no interest in studies, 33.35 face financial problem and 22.22 percent of the family face problem because of the constant failure of the girl child. The study reveals that 88.64 percent of the family sent their girl child for education within their village itself and 11.36 percent of the family sent their girl child outside their village for education.

The study shows that 80 percent of the families are assistance under Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan Scheme for education while, 20 percent do not get Sarva Shiksha Scheme as because they sent their children to private English medium school and they are comparatively wealth to do. The families who are under Sarva Shiksha Scheme are satisfied with the facilities provided to them.

CONCLUSIONS

In summary, we can say that the educational trajectory of girls in the village of Korigaon has been steadily improving and that enrollment of girls in primary and middle schools has increased significantly in recent years. However, some girls are still unable to attend school due to factors such as poverty, a high birth rate, gender stereotypes, etc. When the aforementioned debate about Muslims and education is taken into account, it is clear that Muslims lag behind other populations. Their outlook on schooling remains conventional. They suffer socially, economically, and politically because they refuse to adopt contemporary education. Muslims make up a smaller percentage of professionals, particularly in the management field.

If we're serious about advancing the status of women in our society and improving the lot of Muslim women, we need to make some significant changes to current policy in primary through higher education. Government must create certain institutions of higher learning that are solely dedicated to serving the needs of women, such as Mother Teresa Woman University, Jiyoti Vidyaapeeth University, and Assam Women University, which offers programs in every field of study, including arts, commerce, science, medicine, engineering, and others. Implementing the societal and economic improvement of Muslim women should be done strictly.

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