

EMPOWERMENT OF MUSLIM WOMEN THROUGH HIGHER EDUCATION

Dr. Ruby Kazmi

Assistant Professor, Department of Economics, Shia P.G. College

ABSTRACT:

Empowerment is the way or a measure by which the suppressed things are focused and they are helped to be in the main stream of the society. The mindset of the Indian Muslims had been a major element that had led Muslim women in a backward stage. And the financial conditions of the major Muslim population had also degraded the quality of life and the opposite inclination from higher education.

This paper focus on, first, the empowerment of women through higher education. Secondly, it focus on the fact that the Muslim women can only be uplifted or empower by providing them higher education and by changing the mindset in various ways. A certain community still exist in the country that dominates women and where Muslim women are just considered as a commodity or an asset that is meant for doing the household work nothing more than that and it highlights that the problems which are faced by the Muslim girls to get higher education . Thirdly it focus on the initiative taken by different governments to uplift the Muslim women. Then it shows the effectiveness of these policies on the Muslim education. And lastly the conclusion.

Keywords: Empowerment, Higher Education, Muslim women

INTRODUCTION

Women Empowerment pertain to the empowerment of women which in our current society has become burning issue of debate in regard of development in economics. It also point out the approaches regarding other marginal genders in a specific political and social context. Many



agencies of United Nations (U.N.) in their reports have focused on gender issues and given most priority.

India being the second country with the highest population with approximately 49% female population where India polity has been trying to cope with the contemporary need-based development of laws for the women empowerment. In Article 14 and 16(A) of constitution intend to remove social and economic inequality to make equal chances available. In fact the right to social and economic justice featured in the preamble and extended in the fundamental rights and directive principle of the constitution. More over the constitution of India is a basic document provides for women empowerment within the frame work of plenary provision of article 14, 15(3), 21, 39(A), 51A(e) and preamble. The court always try to interpret the causes which are deterrent to women within the area of social justice with these articles.

Dependent women are not empowered women. If women think just that being highly educated and employed they are empowered it is a fable. Women have to awake from deep slumber and understand the true meaning of empowerment. Everyone must understand that empowering women does not mean empowering them in a technical area only. So, higher education is an important factor for women empowerment.

Higher education is a aggregate of systematize knowledge and practical skills that permit theoretical and practical problems to be solved by a given type of training, utilizing and creatively developing the modern achievements of science, technology, and culture. The term “higher education” is also applied to the training of the highly skilled specialist in the field of Economics, science, technology and culture at various type of higher schools, which accept persons who have successfully completed secondary general education schools or secondary specialized education institution.

Comparing India with other countries the status of Indian women as a whole is not bad but it is worse. Indian society is seen as a male dominating society. There are many barriers which are faced by the Indian women like illiteracy, lack of motivation & support and many more. As I had



already mentioned that for women empowerment higher education will play a vital role for the harmonious and systematic development of the country like India.

Men's in India as a Muslims or as a as whole had always taken women as granted and had always neglected the rights and capability of Indian women. They had always suffered from superiority complex. We should not misunderstand that women empowerment means empowering women in technical activities. In the real sense empowering women means to focus on women ability, put them into main stream and consider them equal to men in the matter of employment, vote, property etc.

In Muslim community there is a lack of high skilled people and qualified people. As the name 'higher education' itself imply that it consist of specialization in particular field like economics, science, trade, financial market etc. Secondary and primary education is not considered as a higher education. So there is need for higher education the empowerment of Muslim women India.

The central theme of this paper is to examine the role of higher education in the empowerment of Muslim women and the problems or hurdles faced by them in acquiring higher education.

OBJECTIVES:

The main objective of this research paper are:

- Highlight the relevance of higher education in life of Muslim women and need for women empowerment as a whole.
- Need for empowering Muslim women in the Indian society.
- Steps taken by the government to uplift or empower the Muslim women.
- Effectiveness of these polices on Muslim women.

IMPORTANCE OF EDUCATION IN ISLAM



Islam being the finest religion should not suffer from such illness. Democracy had given equal rights to both men and women so the question arises that why there is always an inclination toward men and neglecting always women.

According to the prophet Mohammad the originator of Islam **“acquisition of knowledge is an obligatory duty on every Muslim male and female”, “seek knowledge even it be in china”, “the one who walks in search of knowledge walk in the way of Allah”, and “and to listen to the instruction of science and learning for one hour is more purposeful than attending the funeral of thousand martyrs.”** Islam accords full respect, love, kindness, equality, social justice and opportunities for the educational and cultural advancement of women. After seeing the quotes and preaching of Mohammad we can understand the importance of education in Islam both for men and women. So in every aspect of living the equal importance is given to men and women. And if we remember the daughter of Mohammed i.e. Bibi Fatima was a preacher for the women of medina. Bibi Fatima focus on the education of Muslim women at the time when there was no issue of women empowerment and the church were the superior authority and women’s were not allowed for higher education. Now if we are talking about women empowerment in Muslim in the present scenario it means that we have not understood Islam in a proper way.

NEED OF WOMEN EMPOWERMENT IN MUSLIM WOMEN

Empowerment is probably the totality of the following or similar capabilities. There are some reason or needs to empower women. And they are:

- ✓ Power of decision making
- ✓ For having access to information for taking good decision.
- ✓ Ability to change others perception through democratic means.
- ✓ Having their self-identity and overcoming stigma
- ✓ Ability to learn skills and experience

CONDITION OF INDIAN MUSLIM



Islam is about 1400 years old religion and also largest minority in India. The Muslims contributes 12.12% of the country's population according to the past reports. Muslim population is growing higher than the national population. Growing rate of approx... 23.79%. however , it is said sociological fact that Muslims in India in general and Indian Muslim women in particular have for centuries been seriously suffering from poverty ,culture and educational backwardness and several kinds of discrimination, prejudices and atrocities due to the rigid patriarchal social order and religious belief and restriction imposed on them. In the post-independence era, although education had spread among Muslim girls and many of them had reached higher education and achieved very high positions in different professional fields like teaching, medicine, judiciary, politics and social works etc. it is widely admitted sociological fact that the vast majority of Indian Muslim girls and women , even after 60 years winning freedom are struggling hard to receive basic human rights, respect ,education ,social mobility .there overall socio-economic status in regarding to other Indian minorities is certainly much lower and miserable. And only 11% percent of Muslims in India

ROLE OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN THE EMPOWERMENT OF MUSLIM WOMEN

Muslim women education plays a very important role in the overall development of the Muslim community .it not only helps in the development of half of the human resources but empowering the quality of life at home and outside. Educated women not only tend to promote the education to their girl children but can also provide better guidance to all the children. Moreover educated women can also help in reduction of infant mortality rate and growth of population.

“Higher education in Muslim women is one of the most important means of empowering them with the knowledge, skills and self-confidence compulsory to participate fully in the development process”

Higher education is important for everyone but especially significant for girls and women. This is true not only because higher education is an entry point to further opportunities, but also because the higher educational achievements of women can have ripple effects within the family



and across generations. Investing in girls education is one of the most effective way to reduce poverty.it is also a fact that girls who have been higher education are likely to marry latter and to have smaller and healthier families. Educated women can recognize the importance of health care and know how to seek it for themselves and their children's. The higher education of parents is link to their children's educational attainment, and Muslim mother's education is usually more influential than the father. And educated mother greater influence in household negotiation may allow her to secure more resources for her children.

In any religion women understand the ground level and understand human needs better. Women has better judgment power in comparison to men. Women is creative, organized and innovative. Women is economical and skeptic regarding the wastage and unnecessary expenses. She play role as mother, sister, and wife besides women is the first teacher. So, empowering women through higher education means empowering the whole generation.

Hindrance

There are many problem or obstacles faced by Indian women for acquiring higher education and they are:

✓ **Economic backwardness:** The first and foremost problem faced is the financial support i.e. Indian Muslim families basically economically low and cannot afford higher education.

✓ **Lack of basic and elementary education:** Even most of the families in India are not able to provide there wards the elementary and basic education.

✓ **Responsibility of the family:** From the beginning girls are taught that they are liabilities and the have to just marry and carry the burden of their family.

✓ **Lack of ambition:** Except few women there is a lack of ambition in the India. As the families have the mindset that girls are liabilities and they do not have their identity.so this leads to the fall in the ambition of Muslim girls.



✓ **Age criteria:** age criteria is a main problem in the Muslim community. Early marriage is a common practice which are seen in the Muslim women. Early marriage hinder the girls to go for higher education and load them with many responsibilities.

FINDINGS

In the emerging India after independence, there were many problems or challenges faced by women in the Indian society like education, poverty, health and safety. UNDP had also played an important role in empowering Indian women. More focus or primary was laid to the safety and health of the women and the secondary focus was on educating them. Now we will examine the efforts of India to empower women.

Higher education is the shared responsibilities of both the center and the states. The central government provides grants to UGC and establishes central universities in the country. Scholarship and education loans plays a crucial role in the promoting higher education.

➤ **Ministry for Women & Child Development:** This was established as a department of Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD) in the year 1985 to focus on the development of the women and child. In 2006, this department was given the status of ministry with power to formulate plans, policies and program and the enactment with implementation. As mentioned above that the empowerment of women begins with their safety and health.

➤ **Swayamsidha program:** This was implemented by the Ministry for Women and Child development. The crux of this program will be the establishment of women's self-help groups which will accredit women to have increased access to all kinds of resources that they are denied, in addition to expansion their awareness and skills. This benefitted 9,30,000 women with setting up 53,000 self-help groups.

➤ **National commission for women:** Government of India launched this commission on the international women's day in 2010. It aims at strengthening the process of overall



development of women. It deals with coordination all women welfare and socio-economic development programs across the ministries.

The National Resource Centre for Women has been set up to function as a central convergence Centre for all programs and schemes for women. This commission had around 15 major ministries who are its partner.

- Girls leadership initiative(GLI)
- Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalya(KGBV)
- Udaan
- Adolescent girl's learning Centre(AGLC)
- Sahajani shiksha Kendra(SSK)2002
- Beti Bachao Beti Padhao Yojana(2015)

Muslims are the largest minority so there should be focused on women empowerment through higher education because if we empower Muslim women as an individual the overall ratio of women empowerment should increase.

And also the harsh fact is there is not a single specific program for the empowerment of Muslim women, so there is immediate need of empowerment programs to empower Muslim women through education.

Conclusion

As understood from above discussion, women empowerment is now the need of the hour. It is high time to empower women through higher education because it is necessary that men and women should stand by each other for the development of the country but unfortunately the harsh reality is that there is a dogmas prevailing in the society that men are always considered superior



than women which is clearly evident from the fact that the ratio of men is higher than the enrolment ratio of women in higher education.

There were many programs and schemes which were implemented but were not proved effective and if we talk about Muslim women specifically there have not been even a single program which had benefitted Muslim women.

As it is known to the Indian government that Muslim community is the largest minority community in the country and unfortunately Muslim women are downtrodden as compared to other community women. So this paper leaves some never-ending questions like why government had not introduced such programmes yet which would empower Muslim women. Since higher education is important for the upliftment of any community, it is necessary to question why the government had not introduced any program exclusively for the Muslim women?

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