

An Examination of Educational Achievements in Professional Fields Among Minority Communities

Heena Kowsar, Sukesula Sudhakar, Mulla Rafiyuddin



Abstract. This research examines the professional educational achievements of minority populations, focusing on Muslim girls in Kurnool District, Andhra Pradesh, India. It explores the unique challenges and opportunities these students experience in a region marked by socio-economic diversity and varying levels of educational accessibility. Using a socio-economic and educational framework, the study investigates factors influencing Muslim girls' educational attainment in Kurnool District. It comprehensively analyzes the district's socio-economic conditions and educational infrastructure available to this specific demographic. By examining factors such as access to educational resources, the quality of teaching, and the presence of gender-related barriers, the study provides a holistic understanding of the educational landscape for minority students. The study's findings can illuminate disparities in educational outcomes and inform policies and initiatives to foster greater equity in professional education for minority communities, especially Muslim girls. By addressing the challenges and identifying the strengths of these students, this research aims to contribute to the overarching goal of creating inclusive and diverse educational environments within the region.

Keywords: Professional Education, Minority Populations, Muslim Girls, Socio-Economic Diversity, Educational Accessibility

I. INTRODUCTION

In India, Muslim girls face socio-economic and cultural obstacles to education, hindering their access to professional higher education. Gender equality and women's education are crucial for a nation's development. Women, constituting a significant portion of the population, have long faced marginalization and discrimination in various aspects of life. Their active participation is a positive indicator of societal progress. Education empowers women, allowing them to challenge traditional roles and improve their socio-economic status. Gender inequality begins in childhood, impacting survival rates. However, the empowerment of women, particularly Muslim women, is vital for societal advancement.

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Education plays a pivotal role in women's development, and the government has recognized its importance for social security and overall progress. The status of women reflects a country's development, and their engagement is essential for a modern society. Education is a passport to the future, as highlighted by Malcolm X and Sir Syed Ahmad Khan. Literacy rates vary among religious communities in India, with Muslims having higher illiteracy rates. Islamic teachings emphasize education for both genders, but disparities persist, leading to a substantial knowledge gap between men and women. Education is not just about knowledge acquisition but also personal development and leading a meaningful life.

A. Indian Women

Indian women have seen progress, with the elimination of long-standing issues like child marriage, 'sati,' and widow remarriage prohibitions. Technological advancements, education, and socio-political changes have positively impacted women's self-esteem and identity.

However, women in India still face economic, cultural, and educational disparities, particularly Muslim women. Gender inequality persists, despite constitutional safeguards. Globally, women's rights have improved, but challenges remain, as evidenced by studies and alarming statistics.

TABLE 1.1

LEVEL - WISE ENROLMENT IN EDUCATION

Level	Male	Female	Enrollment Gap
Elementary	102110	95556	6554
Secondary	20121	18180	1941
Senior Secondary	12440	11061	1379
Higher Secondary	18488	15723	2765

Source: Educational Statistics at a Glance 2014-15, MHRD

TABLE 1.2

COMMUNITY WISE ENROLMENT IN HIGHER EDUCATION FROM 2010-19

Year	Muslim (%)	STs (%)	SCs (%)	OBCs (%)
2010-11	3.8	4.4	11.1	27.6
2011-12	3.9	4.5	12.2	30.1
2012-13	4.2	4.4	12.8	31.2
2013-14	4.3	4.6	13.1	32.4
2014-15	4.5	4.8	13.4	32.8
2015-16	4.7	4.9	13.9	33.75
2016-17	4.9	5.1	14.2	34.4
2017-18	5	5.2	14.4	35
2018-19	5.2	5.5	14.9	36.3

Source: AISHE Reports

B. Education Progress of Indian Women

Women's education is a vital catalyst for empowerment, fostering socio-economic progress. It encompasses formal schooling, vocational training, and more, with the potential to transform women into agents of change, equal contributors to society.



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Gender equality and women's empowerment are essential for prosperity. India, a democratic nation, recognizes equal rights, but faces a concerning gender literacy gap due to poverty and traditional biases. Historic gender biases have restricted women's education, hindering their socio-economic independence. Post-independence, India has made strides, yet the 2011 Census shows a women's literacy rate of 65.46 percentage, below the national average of 74.04 percentage, with rural areas facing steeper disparities. Enrollment figures in 2014-15 reveal significant gender gaps. The educational system perpetuates stereotypes through curricula and attitudes, furthering gender disparities. Bridging this gap is crucial for India's future, requiring collective efforts to empower women and girls. Based on NFHS-4 (2015-16) data, women's literacy in India among those aged 15-49 stands at 68.4 percentage, while men achieve a higher literacy rate of 85.7 percentage. Kerala boasts the highest women's literacy at 91.98 percentage, while Rajasthan lags behind at 52.66 percentage. Only eight states exhibit a gender literacy gap of less than 10 percentage. In Assam, men achieve a literacy rate of 78.81 percentage, compared to women at

67.27 percentage. This disparity underscores a significant obstacle to women's education. According to the National Sample Survey Report (75th Round, 2018) published by the Times of India in 2020, Muslims face a lower Gross Attendance Ratio (GAR) compared to SCs, STs, OBCs, and minorities at various educational levels. At the secondary and higher secondary levels, Muslim GARs are consistently lower than those of SCs, STs, and OBCs. Moreover, Muslims have the highest proportion of children aged 3 to 35 who have never attended formal educational institutions or programs among all communities. Data from the All India Survey on Higher Education (AISHE) conducted by the Ministry of HRD reveals that Muslim enrollment in higher education lags behind that of SCs, STs, and OBCs, further underscoring disparities in educational access and attainment among different communities in India. Table 1.2 indicates significant disparities in educational growth rates from 2010-11 to 2018-19 among different communities. Muslims exhibit the highest growth at 26.92 percentage, despite having the lowest enrollment proportion. Education and skills are indispensable in the modern information society for a self-sufficient life. The table highlights the stark educational disparities for Muslims across all levels, from primary to higher education, in comparison to other religious groups and SCs, STs, and OBCs. This poses a major challenge for Muslim education planning, as many face poverty and limited access to education. Education options for these individuals are primarily limited to government schools, colleges, or madrasas.

C. Importance of Women's Education in India

Women's education encompasses various forms of learning, including formal schooling, vocational training, and health education, fostering both literary and non-literary skills. However, India faces challenges with Asia's lowest female literacy rate, primarily due to poverty and traditional beliefs that hinder female education. Urban areas also tend to prioritize male education. Napoleon emphasized the critical role of educated mothers in a

nation's progress, making it essential to educate women. Education empowers women by dispelling ignorance, boosting self-esteem, and enabling them to guide their families and contribute to society. Women play an integral role in every community and culture, and their education is equally significant as men's.

D. The Educational Status of Muslim Women

Muslim educational attainment has seen substantial improvements over the past few decades. The percentage of Muslim adults with formal education has risen from 46 percentages to 72 percentage across three generations. Gender disparities in education have also reduced. However, Muslim women globally lag behind men by 1.5 years in education.

Many attribute Muslim educational challenges to socio-economic factors rather than religion. Educated women positively impact family life. In India, improving Muslim women's education is a top priority due to their potential role in the nation's development. High dropout rates and conservative norms hinder their progress.

Muslim students face a dropout rate of 17.6 percentage, higher than the national average of 13.2 percentage. Legal measures and policies exist to promote women's education and empowerment, ensuring equal rights and opportunities under Indian law. These include anti-discrimination provisions, equal pay for equal work, and reserved seats for women in local authorities.

E. Historical Perspective on Muslim Women's Education in India

19th Century: Indigenous learning methods like *paatashalas*, *maktabs*, and *madrasas* were prevalent. Muslim women primarily learned the Arabic Qur'an, Urdu, and Persian.

- 1894: Sir Maulana Hali and Sheik Abdullah initiated efforts for Muslim women's education, starting a small primary school in Panipat.
- 1896: Khwaja Ghulam initiated a movement at a Muslim Education Conference to emphasize Muslim women's education.
- 1902: Sheik Abdullah was appointed Bench Secretary for Women, aiming to train middle-class Muslim females at home.
- 1903: Begum Sultan Jahan founded the Sultania Schools, the first Muslim girls' schools.
- 1904: Sheik Abdullah published the 'Khatoon' journal, promoting a Muslim girls' school in Aligarh.
- 1906: A decision to establish a girl's school in Aligarh and open a college was made at a Muslim Education Conference in Lucknow.
- 1911: Rokeya Sakhawat Hussain contributed to Muslim women's education in Bengal.
- 1912: Maulana Karamat Hussain and Mahmudabad Raja supported female education and established a girls' school in Lucknow.

The British government and notable figures like Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar, Annie Besant, and Sir Syed Ahmad Khan furthered women’s education. Sir Syed Ahmad Khan’s MAO college at Aligarh marked a pivotal moment in Muslim education.

Post-independence, various committees and policies emphasized women’s education, including the University Commission for Education (1948-49), the National Women’s Education Committee (1958-59), and the Kothari Educational Committee (1964-66). Muslim women’s education remains vital for India’s socio-cultural and economic development in the 21st century. Table 1.3 displays 2011 census literacy rates in India. Muslim women have a 51.9 percentage literacy rate, lower than all religious groups and well below the 65.46 percentage national average for women. Table 1.4 reveals that Muslims constitute 14.23 percentage of India’s population, with 23.45 percentage of Muslim females and 19.26 percentage of Muslim males being illiterate. Notably, illiteracy is higher among Muslim women compared to Muslim men in India.

TABLE 1.3
RELIGIOUS COMMUNITIES’ LITERACY RATES
(In Percentage)

Religious Community	Female	Male	Total
Muslim	51.9	62.41	57.155
Hindus	55.98	70.78	63.38
Janis	84.93	87.86	86.395
Christians	71.97	76.78	74.375
Sikhs	63.29	71.32	67.305
Buddhist	65.6	77.87	71.735
Other	41.38	59.38	50.38

TABLE 1.4
LITERACY OF MUSLIMS IN INDIA

Total Muslim population in India		17.22crore	
Illiterate	42.72%	Male	19.26%
		Female	23.45%
Literate	57.27%	Male	31.98%
		Female	25.29%

Table 1.5 illustrates the underrepresentation of Muslim women across all education levels, particularly in technical education. Only 12.88 percentage of primary school-educated authors are Muslim women, while Muslim men exhibit better education levels according to the 2011 census.

Hasan and Menon (2004) found over 75 percentage of Indian Muslim women are illiterate. In rural North India, 85 percentage are illiterate, while metropolitan South India sees 88 percentage literacy. Gender inequality in education is pronounced among Muslims due to infrastructure, female teachers, separate schools, transportation, and scholarships. Only 17 percentage of Muslim girls complete 8th grade, with fewer than 10 percentage in higher secondary education, lower than the national average.

Muslim girls’ enrollment is 40.6 percentage, with only 3.56 percentage in higher education, even lower than Scheduled Castes. Recent data for 2015-16 shows reduced dropout rates but not significantly. Muslims constitute 65.31 percentage of primary school students but decline to 10.96 percentage in secondary school and 4.53 percentage in senior secondary school. Poverty is a primary factor for academic challenges, particularly among Muslim girls.

The educational and employment status of Muslim men significantly influences women’s status. For instance, 26

percentage of educated Muslim women have illiterate husbands. Low educational levels, early marriages, orthodox parenting, and traditional education practices hinder Muslim women’s progress (Sachar report, 2006).

F. Socioeconomic Conditions of Women in the Muslim Community

The disparity in the progress of Muslim women compared to their counterparts in other religious groups in India raises critical questions. Traditional practices and religious traditions had deeply entrenched Indian society when the British arrived in the 16th century. The purdah system, child marriage, female infanticide, sati, and restrictions on widow remarriage were prevalent, and the British introduced new culture and social norms based on equality. While Hindu attitudes shifted significantly towards modernization, Muslims resisted these changes. Hindus were more receptive to Western humanistic and democratic values, while some forward-thinking Muslim leaders, like Sir Syed Ahmed Khan, were reluctant to adopt modern education and democratic principles.

TABLE 1.5
THE PERCENTAGE OF MUSLIMS IN INDIA AT VARIOUS LEVELS OF SCHOOLING.

Literate without schooling		Below Primary		Primary		Middle		Secondary		Higher Secondary		Non-Technical		Technical diploma		Graduate and above	
M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
2.8	2.2	13.5	12	15.2	12.9	9.7	7.3	6	4.63	4.4	3.3	0.2	0.1	0.4	0.1	3.1	1.8

TABLE 1.6
INDIAN POPULATION BY RELIGION

Religious group	Population						
	1951	1961	1971	1981	1991	2001	2011
Hindu	84.10%	83.45%	82.73%	82.30%	81.53%	80.46%	78.35%
Muslim	9.80%	10.69%	11.21%	11.75%	12.61%	13.43%	14.20%
Christian	2.00%	2.44%	2.60%	2.44%	2.32%	2.34%	2.34%
Sikh	1.89%	1.79%	1.89%	1.92%	1.94%	1.87%	1.87%
Buddhist	0.74%	0.74%	0.70%	0.70%	0.77%	0.77%	0.77%
Jain	0.46%	0.46%	0.48%	0.47%	0.40%	0.41%	0.41%
Parsi	0.13%	0.09%	0.09%	0.09%	0.08%	0.06%	0.06%
Animist & Other	0.43%	0.43%	0.41%	0.42%	0.44%	0.72%	0.72%

Source: census data from 2011

This divide between Hindus and Muslims contributed to a disparity in their societal status. As a minority in India, Muslims feared cultural erosion and clung to their traditions, supported by religious Ulemas, which further impeded the progress of Muslim women. Affirmative action and equal pay for equal work remained elusive for Muslim women, and the Muslim community’s backwardness has had a more significant impact on women’s development.

Despite facing socio-economic challenges, Muslim women have made strides in various fields like education, medicine, and the judiciary. Recent years have witnessed improvements in Muslim women’s education, employment, and purdah practices, with varying degrees of change in rural and urban areas. Education, reduced patriarchal norms, and a more dynamic political environment have contributed to the transformation in the status of Muslim women, albeit with variations based on socio-economic factors. India has the world’s second-largest Muslim population, constituting 14.23 percentage of the total population, as per the 2011 census. Table 1.6 displays the religious demographics in India based on the 2011 census.



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Muslims are India's second-largest religious group, accounting for 14.2 percentage of the minority population, followed by Christians (1.7 percentage), Sikhs (0.7 percentage), Buddhists (0.5 percentage), Jains (0.4 percentage), and others (0.7 percentage). States like Jammu and Kashmir, Bengal, and Assam have Muslim populations exceeding 20 percentage.

Despite being India's largest religious minority, Muslims lag behind other minority groups in various aspects of human development, including living standards, financial stability, political representation, education, employment, and more. Various government-appointed committees have recognized the social and economic backwardness of Indian Muslims and made recommendations to address these issues.

The Gopal Singh Committee (1980) highlighted the discrimination faced by minorities, especially Muslims, and recommended increased representation in government bodies and employment agencies.

The Mandal Commission (1979) recognized the backwardness of various socio-religious groups and recommended reservations and quotas to address caste-based discrimination, though it primarily considered Hindu castes.

The Sachar Committee (2006) reported on the educational, economic, and social status of Indian Muslims, revealing significant disparities in literacy rates and employment opportunities compared to other groups.

The Ranganath Mishra Committee (2007) focused on religious and linguistic minorities, particularly Muslims, highlighting their disadvantage in literacy, education, economic opportunities, and political representation.

These committees have underscored the educational and socio-economic challenges faced by Muslims in India, along with their underrepresentation in government employment and political spheres. Muslims have the highest illiteracy rate among religious communities, and their socio-economic status is often lower than other groups. This situation has prompted calls for affirmative action and equal opportunities to address these disparities.

It's evident that Muslims in India face significant challenges in education, employment, and political representation, leading to socio-economic disparities in comparison to other religious groups.

G. The Current Situation in Andhra Pradesh

Andhra Pradesh, located in southeastern India, borders Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Telangana, and Odisha. It's the seventh-largest state by area, with an estimated 2022 population of 52,972,000. The state comprises 13 districts in three main regions: - Coastal Andhra (6 districts): East Godavari, West Godavari, Krishna, Guntur, Prakasam, and Nellore. - Uttarandhra (3 districts): Srikakulam, Vijayanagaram, and Vishakhapatnam. - Rayalaseema (4 districts): Kurnool, Chittoor, Kadapa, and Ananthapuramu.

TABLE 1.7
ESTIMATES FOR THE CENSUS OF ANDHRA PRADESH IN 2011-2021

Andhra Pradesh	Census 2011	2021 Estimates
Total Population	49,386,799 (4.94 Crore)	5.27 Crore
Male Population	24,738,068	2.64 Crore
Female Population	2,46,48,731	2.63 Crore
Sex Ratio	99600.00%	99900.00%
Population Density	308/km ²	323/km ²
Total Area	162,975 km ²	
Area Rank	7 th	
Population Rank	10 th	
Average Literacy (%)	0.6741	

Source : Census 2011 and the Census Population Projection Report

TABLE 1.8
POPULATION OF ANDHRA PRADESH BY RELIGION

S. No	Religion	Population 2011	%	Rural Pop. 2011	%	Urban Pop. 2011	%
1	Hindu	4,48,75,698	90.87%	3,26,00,274	93.74%	1,22,75,424	84.02%
2	Muslim	36,17,713	7.33%	17,06,041	4.91%	19,11,672	13.08%
3	Christian	6,82,660	1.38%	3,63,754	1.05%	3,18,906	2.18%
4	Jain	27,159	0.05%	3,439	0.01%	24,136	0.17%
5	Sikh	9,904	0.02%	3,023	0.01%	6,465	0.04%
6	Buddhist	4,139	0.01%	1,955	0.01%	2,184	0.01%
7	Other religions and persuasions	4,125	0.01%	2,152	0.01%	1,973	0.01%
	Total	4,93,86,799		3,47,76,389		1,46,10,410	

Source : Census 2011 and the Census Population Projection Report

Andhra Pradesh has 13 districts, 670 tehsils, 14,514 gram-panchayats, 17,366 villages, and 195 towns. Rural households make up 70.53 percentage, while urban households constitute 29.47 percentage. Vishakhapatnam is the most urbanized district with 47.5 percentage urban population, while Srikakulam is the least urbanized with 16.2 percentage. In terms of labor population, 46.5 percentage work in Andhra Pradesh, surpassing the national average of 39.8 percentage.

Andhra Pradesh's population grew by 8.73 percentage from 2011 to 2021, reaching an estimated 52.79 million in 2021, with 70.4 percentage residing in rural areas and 29.6 percentage in urban areas. The sex ratio is 996 females per 1000 males, surpassing the national average. Table 1.7 displays the state's census figures from 2011 to 2021.

In Andhra Pradesh, Hinduism is the dominant religion, with 90.87 percentage of the population, followed by Muslims at 7.32 percentage, Christians at 1.38 percentage, and 0.43 percentage practicing other religions or having no religion. The 2011 census data revealed that Andhra Pradesh had 3.617 million Muslim residents. Table 1.8 displays the religious distribution among rural and urban populations in India, based on the 2011 census data.

In Andhra Pradesh, out of the total Muslim population of 3,617,713, accounting for 2.1 percentage of India's Muslim population, none of the 13 districts have a Muslim majority. The state's literacy rate in 2011 was 66.5 percentage, lower than the national average, but is expected to rise to 91.1 percentage by 2021. Primary school enrollment is 100 percentage, and secondary and higher secondary schools are evenly distributed across urban and rural areas.

Female Muslim literacy is 48.47 percentage in rural areas and 66.9 percentage in urban areas, with some districts falling below state and national averages. According to the AISHE 2019-20 report, Gross Enrollment Ratio (GER) improved from 30.8 percentage to 35.2 percentage in five years, with female students increasing from 26.9 percentage to 32.2 percentage during the same period.



Education is vital for Muslim women to overcome poverty and socio-economic challenges. Government efforts in India and Andhra Pradesh aim to empower minority women through education, including scholarship schemes, leadership development programs, and stipends for meritorious students. The state also provides financial aid, builds hostels, and implements programs to enhance the socio-economic status of minority women, fostering their empowerment and independence.

H. The Importance of the Research

Muslim women face obstacles in achieving educational freedom and have limited socio-economic and educational status, political representation, and decision-making participation. Their status significantly impacts a country's development, representing half the population and influencing the other half's growth.

Indian Muslim women encounter multifaceted challenges, including low social status and limited access to resources. Rural and minority women often lack basic amenities, receive minimal compensation, and are confined to traditional roles.

Muslim women in India are among the most disadvantaged groups, often from impoverished backgrounds, experiencing discrimination and second-class treatment.

To address these issues, gathering accurate and current information about the status of Muslim women in India is essential. Understanding their educational attainment, independence, and roles in family, community, and national decision-making is crucial. In-depth research is needed as a starting point for meaningful progress.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature review in this thesis provides an extensive compilation of research studies and references concerning a specific topic. It encompasses published and unpublished materials that offer insights, facts, and perspectives. This chapter, within Chapter I, delves into the concept of women's status, women's educational status, the status of Muslim women in India over time, constitutional provisions, policies, and programs safeguarding women's rights, population dynamics, education enrollment, study significance, and pertinent women's issues in India and Andhra Pradesh.

The purpose of this chapter is to examine existing literature on women's education, with a particular focus on Muslim women. It encompasses studies on demographics, socio-economics, religious customs, population data, female literacy, and access to educational resources. Reviewing literature aids in comprehending the research problem, informs the choice of research methodology, and reveals what approaches and challenges others have encountered.

The review reveals a dearth of literature on Muslim women's education, highlighting the broader issue of gender inequality in India. The United Nations Charter and the Indian Constitution emphasize gender equality, but practical implementation lags. The following section provides a chronological summary of research findings regarding the educational progress of Muslim women,

setting the foundation for the current study.

A. Research on Disparities in Gender Roles

Zarina Bhatti's 1976 study on the status of Indian Muslim women emphasizes the pivotal role of education in elevating their social standing, enabling them to grasp modern concepts and participate in nation-building activities.

Menon's 1981 research in Kerala explores how low education levels among Muslim women are linked to seclusion practices. This study reveals how the purdah system limits their access to education due to restrictions on mobility without male companions.

Siddiqui's 1987 study focuses on the literacy of Muslim women in rural areas and identifies family circumstances as a significant factor influencing their illiteracy.

Talat Ara Ashraf's 1992 survey in Patna showcases significant improvements in the educational levels of younger generations of Muslim households. The study highlights obstacles faced by Muslim women, such as illness, lack of encouragement, and reluctance to co-education.

Jeffery and Jeffery's 1997 anthropological research in rural North India delves into the personal challenges faced by women from diverse educational backgrounds, emphasizing how power dynamics in a patriarchal society impact their life decisions.

Seema Parveen's 2004 educational survey in Lucknow highlights the increasing importance of college degrees for Muslim women in improving their social status.

Hasan and Menon's 2005 study explores the educational condition of Muslim women in five Indian cities, highlighting disparities in school enrollment and completion rates.

Rekha's 2006 research in Hyderabad identifies the multiple barriers hindering Muslim women's education, including early marriage, low awareness, and conservative attitudes.

Suri's 2010 research in Jammu and Kashmir underscores the persistent educational challenges faced by women in this region, including a lack of infrastructure and professional prospects.

Aquil's 2011 study investigates the changing status of Muslim women in Australia due to higher education, emphasizing the role of family support.

John and Shinde's 2012 study highlights the educational disparities faced by Muslim women in India, particularly in rural areas.

Nasrin's 2013 research in India proposes strategies to enhance the status of Muslim women, including breaking negative traditions and providing vocational education.

Gul's 2014 research in Jammu and Kashmir discusses the low educational attainment of Muslim women, attributing it to poverty, child marriage, and cultural traditions.

Jana's 2015 research in West Bengal reveals the educational gaps among Muslim women, particularly in rural areas, highlighting the challenges they face in completing primary education.

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Holton's 2016 research underscores the educational divide between men and women in India, emphasizing the challenges faced by Muslim women due to a lack of infrastructure and scholarships.

Al-deen's 2019 narrative analysis examines the experiences and aspirations of young Australian Muslim women in higher education, highlighting their family's support.

Harvey's 2021 research focuses on the role of education in women's development, emphasizing the need for structured and practical educational programs.

Coombe's 2021 study discusses the concept of professionalization in education, where education prepares individuals for skilled work through practical design and critical thinking.

These studies collectively shed light on the educational challenges and opportunities for Muslim women in various regions and emphasize the importance of education in improving their social status and empowerment.

B. Research on Muslim Minority Communities in Post-Independence India

Various studies examined Muslim women's socio-economic status in India. Shahida Lateef (1983) found status variation based on family economics and social strata. Jain (1986) highlighted women's lower position in education, work, and authority, but noted shifts due to education. Ashrafi (1992) disproved the notion of Muslim culture's conservatism and reported lifestyle changes. Beevi (1993) discussed issues related to marriage, separation, and divorce affecting women. Sabiha Hussain (1998) observed increased mobility and influence for Muslim women. Shashi (2003) pointed to improvements due to education but noted challenges. Hasan and Menon (2004) found socio-economic barriers to women's education. Robinson (2007) noted high unemployment rates among Muslim college graduates. Siddiqui (2011) proposed an action program for economic and educational improvement. Ashraf and Ahmed (2012) suggested strategies for socio-economic development. Hossain (2012) emphasized awareness and participation. Dhawan (2013) highlighted women's struggles and the role of education in achieving equality. Hossain and Moinuddin (2013) discussed obstacles impeding social transformation. Sauna (2014) compared the status of Muslim women in India and

Pakistan. Khattab (2015) analyzed job status among women. Samirranjan Adhikari (2020) explored educational motivation among minority students. Goodson (2021) discussed professionalization's role in socio-economic growth. Hasan and Menon (2021) called for state intervention to promote education and social equity among Muslim women in India.

C. Explorations of Socio-Economic Challenges Faced by Muslim Women: A Review

Numerous studies have shed light on the various factors contributing to the educational underachievement of Muslim women in India. These studies collectively emphasize several key aspects:

1. **Poverty:** A consistent theme in these studies is the influence of economic constraints. Many Muslim families in India face financial difficulties, which often prevent

young girls from pursuing their education, especially at the higher or job-oriented levels. Economic struggles hinder their ability to achieve their educational and career goals.

2. **Traditional Practices:** Traditional customs, including early marriage and the persistence of conservative practices, have been identified as significant barriers to Muslim women's education. Early marriage often disrupts their education, while societal norms restrict women's independence and opportunities for learning.

3. **Infrastructure Deficiencies:** Many of these studies have highlighted the inadequate infrastructure in schools and educational institutions in Muslim-majority areas. The absence of essential amenities like boundary walls, clean drinking water, toilets, hostels, and libraries adds to the difficulties faced by Muslim women in accessing quality education.

4. **Male Escort Requirement:** A unique challenge is the requirement for Muslim women to have a male escort when leaving their homes, which can be a significant impediment to their regular attendance at educational institutions. This male escort necessity is often rooted in traditional norms and security concerns.

5. **Societal Constraints:** Muslim women also face various societal constraints. Parental attitudes towards co-educational institutions, the practice of purdah, and the prioritization of early marriage all hinder their educational pursuits. Furthermore, communal tensions and biases contribute to feelings of insecurity and discrimination.

Cultural and Religious Factors: Certain cultural and religious beliefs, often perpetuated by less educated religious leaders, can affect the perception of women's education. In some cases, religious institutions like Maktabas and Madarsas might not offer comprehensive education for women.

6. **Regional Disparities:** Regional disparities play a significant role, with areas of concentrated Muslim populations often facing educational disadvantages due to government policies or discrimination.

7. **Lack of Nearby Schools:** Accessibility to schools can be problematic for Muslim women, especially in rural areas, where schools may be distant, making regular attendance challenging.

While these studies have identified these challenges, it's essential to note that efforts to address these issues have also been made, and some progress has been achieved in improving the educational status of Muslim women in India.

D. Exploring the Educational Position of Muslim Women: A Review of Research

Holton (1996) found low-income women uninterested in social movements. In India, a majority of Muslim women are illiterate, with disparities in urban and rural areas. Educational barriers include the lack of facilities and gender inequality. Kazi (1999) noted similarities in attitudes towards girls' education among Hindu and Muslim communities.



Kabeer (2003) highlighted a mismatch between educational officials and family dynamics. Singh (2004) discussed women's discrimination and participation in socio-economic activities. Mukhopadhyaya (2008) emphasized the lower status of women in society and their financial constraints. Bhatt (2010) pointed out the gender gap in Muslim women's education in India. Desai, Khursid, and Hussain (2011) found poor literacy rates among Muslim women in Jammu and Kashmir. Roy (2012) discussed marital equality issues for Muslim women. Jitendra (2013) highlighted various obstacles to women's education. Ananya (2013) pointed out gender disparities in India's literacy rates. Swati (2013) discussed geographical variations in female literacy. Ruchi (2013) noted gender gaps in education in Jammu and Kashmir. Qadir (2013) explored gender disparities in higher education. Sandhya Rani (2014) linked low female literacy rates to social discrimination and other factors. Temsah and Desai (2014) highlighted security challenges faced by ethnic community women. Saxena (2014) identified gender disparities in education in India and Pakistan.

E. "Exploring Factors Contributing to the Educational Disadvantage of Muslim Women"

Madan (2003) studies Muslim women's defiance of societal norms, emphasizing education's role in their emancipation. Lerner (2005) highlights movements for civil and political equality, noting the contribution of feminist historians and civil-rights feminists. Anwar (2009) credits Sir Syed Ahmed Khan's modernization efforts and Urdu literature in Muslim women's empowerment. Knowlton (2010) discusses Muslim women's empowerment in the United States. Suguna (2011) explores gender discrimination's impact on Muslim women's education. Rahman and Bhimali (2011) suggest job-oriented education and technical institutes. Ashraf and Ahmad (2012) find socio-economic factors influencing female empowerment. Backer (2014) calls for collaboration, eliminating social bias, and increasing women's participation. Basavaraj and Girija (2014) discuss Karnataka's initiatives to improve Muslim women's education. Stichweh (2016) examines the historical development of university resources. Dhar (2015) reveals gender disparities in literacy, health, and workforce participation in North-East India.

F. Explorations into the Empowerment of Muslim Women

GOI's Towards Equality Report (1974) revealed disparities in Indian Muslim women. Gopal Singh Committee's recommendations went unheeded, PM proposed a plan. Disproportionate Muslim representation in defense sector (1995 survey). Census 1991 identified Muslim women as the most disadvantaged. Sachar Committee (2006) analyzed the Muslim minority's status.

Census 2001 showed lower Muslim literacy rates. High dropout rates at all school levels. Minimal Muslim representation in top colleges. Only 3 percentage of Muslim children attended Madrasas in the US. RTE Act (2009) provided free education.

Subramanyam Report (2018) highlighted issues with the Fifteen-Point Program. Shah Bano Women's Bill (2020) emphasized Muslim women's voices in Sharia debates. The

survey by T. Wrigley, B. Lingard, and P. Thomson (2021) discussed the challenges faced by Muslims in northern India post-partition.

Ram's survey (2021) showed eagerness for education among Muslim women and the importance of combining secular and madrasa education. It discussed the allocation of resources through Muslim NGOs and criticized the Fifteen-Point Program.

These reports and studies shed light on the challenges faced by Indian Muslim women in education and society.

G. The Research Gap

Existing research highlights the educational challenges faced by Muslim women globally. They lag behind in various aspects, facing cultural barriers. Their socio-economic status, education, political involvement, and decision-making roles need improvement. These hindrances result from social, economic, religious, and cultural factors. Both government and non-government organizations have overlooked Muslim women's education, leading to a lack of effective projects and strategies. This study aims to address these gaps, focusing on Muslim women's higher education in Andhrapradesh to reflect their current socio-economic status in rural and urban areas and fill the existing research void.

III. METHODOLOGY

Outlines the study's methodology, covering the problem statement, study area, objectives, sample, data collection techniques, analysis, and study limitations.

A. The Problem Statement

The prominence of women's education in India is undeniable, as it contributes to character development, economic empowerment, and societal progress. Gender disparities persist, particularly in rural areas. To uplift women's education, maintain existing programs, ensure educational relevance, and combat traditional barriers. A significant hindrance to education for Muslim women has been historical gender inequality. Economic dependence, lack of family support, and social awareness issues impede their progress. Enhancing higher education opportunities is vital for personal growth and societal advancement. Marginalized Muslim communities face unique challenges, including traditional practices and religious misconceptions. This research aims to address these issues and advocate for educational improvements for Muslim women.

B. The Goals of the Study

The primary aim of this research is to assess the socio-economic and educational status of Muslim girls in professional education. The specific objectives are as follows:

1. Investigate the socio-economic and demographic backgrounds of the participants.
2. Analyze the educational history and motivations that led the participants to pursue professional education.



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3. Assess the educational challenges faced by the participants and their utilization of available incentives. 4. Examine the attitudes, aspirations, and future prospects of the participants regarding professional education. 5. Identify the obstacles encountered by participants in pursuing professional education, encompassing social, economic, cultural, educational, and religious aspects. 6. Evaluate the influence of the rural-urban divide on the professional education of the participants.

C. Methodology

Research methodology is vital for shaping the study's approach. Objectives:

1. Examine socio-economic and demographic backgrounds.
2. Analyze previous education and motivations.
3. Assess educational challenges and incentives.
4. Evaluate attitudes, aspirations, and prospects.
5. Identify obstacles.
6. Study rural-urban impact.

Design: Descriptive analytics employed to understand the Muslim women population and assess professional education among minorities. Aims to offer a detailed view of Muslim women's professional education in the Kurnool District.

Data Collection: Used stratified random sampling, focusing on 300 respondents pursuing professional education in engineering, medical, pharmacy, and education.

Area: Kurnool District selected for its significant Muslim population and education challenges.

Data Processing and Analysis: Data processed using SPSS. Combines quantitative and qualitative methods for analysis, including statistical tables and comparisons.

The research examines Muslim women's professional education, emphasizing socio-economic, cultural, and religious factors in the Kurnool District. It uses a descriptive design and robust data collection and analysis techniques to meet its objectives.

D. Study Constraints

Due to resource limitations, this study is focused. The researcher established rapport with respondents for accurate data. Parental permission was often a challenge, especially for female students due to purdah. Some parents observed interviews. Finding eligible respondents was difficult as Muslim students in professional courses were underrepresented, often studying away from home. Data may be influenced by biases and lacks literature. Despite limitations, the study aims to be realistic and transferable for further investigation.

E. Demographic And Economic Characteristics of Participants

The chapter comprises two sections: 1. Introduction to Kurnool District. 2. Analysis of respondents' and their families' socio-economic backgrounds.

F. Introduction to Kurnool District

Andhra Pradesh has two regions: Coastal and Rayalaseema, which includes Kurnool, Anantapur, Kadapa, and Chittoor districts. Kurnool, known as the Gateway to Rayalaseema, served as Andhra Pradesh's capital between

October 1953 and November 1956, derived from "Kandanavolu" or "city of Kadena," meaning grease. It lies between 14°54 and 16°18 north latitudes and 76°58 to 79°34 east longitudes, with an elevation of 899 meters. It borders Tungabhadra and Krishna rivers, Mahaboob Nagar, YSR district, Anantapuramu, Bellary district, and Prakasam District.

Kurnool District is rectangular, experiencing tropical climate with monsoon rain. It comprises 3 Revenue Divisions, 55 Revenue Mandals, 12 Towns, 974 Gram Panchayats, and 921 Revenue Villages. Covering 17,658 sq. km., it is 10th in population with 4,053,463 people (2,039,227 men and 2,014,236 women). The literacy rate, as of 2011, was 59.97 percentage. Of the 21.27 lakhs literate individuals, 12.46 lakhs are men, and 8.81 lakhs are women. Male literacy is 70.1 percentage, and female literacy is 49.78 percentage, showing a 7 percentage growth overall. The district's population increased by 14.85 percentage for males and 16 percentage for females from 2001 to 2011, with a density of 230 people per sq. km.

The sex ratio in the district is 988, compared to the national average of 940, with 506,239 children aged 0 to 6 (261,217 males and 245,022 females), constituting 12.49 percentage of the total population in 2011.

48.08 percentage (3.55 lakhs) of the total SC population (7.37 lakhs) are literate. This includes 57.16 percentage (2.11 lakhs) male SC literates and 38.94 percentage (1.43 lakhs) female SC literates in Kurnool district. Refer to Table for detailed information on Kurnool district.

TABLE 4.1
PROFILE OF KURNOOL DISTRICT

S.No	Kurnool	Numbers/Units	
1	Total Area	17,658 Sq.Km	
2	Total Number of Mandals	55	
3	Number of Revenue Villages	921	
4	Number of Towns	12	
5	Population	Male	20,39,227
		Female	20,14,236
		Total	4053463
6	Number of Households	887652	
7	Population Growth	14.85%	
8	Area Sq. Km	17658	
9	Density/km ²	230	
10	Sex Ratio (Per 1000)	988	
11	Child Sex Ratio (0-6 Age)	938	
12	Average Literacy	59.97	
13	Child Proportion (0-6 Age)	12.49%	
14	Decadal Population Growth	523969	
15	ST Literate Population	39272	
16	SC Literate Population	354806	

Source: Primary Census Abstract, Census 2011, Director of Census Operations, Hyderabad. Directorate of Economics & Statistics, A.P. Vijayawada.

TABLE 4.2
RURAL AND URBAN WISE CLASSIFICATION OF KURNOOL DISTRICT

Kurnool District	Rural	Urban	Total
Total Population	2904177	1149286	4053463
Population (%)	71.65%	28.35%	100.00%
Male Population	1464569	574658	2039227
Female Population	1439608	574628	2014236
Sex Ratio	983	1000	988
Child Sex Ratio (0-6)	940	933	938
Child Population (0-6)	373171	133068	506239
Male Child (0-6)	192362	68855	261217
Female Child (0-6)	180809	64213	245022
Child Percentage (0-6)	12.85%	11.58%	12.49%
Male Child Percentage	13.13%	11.98%	12.81%
Female Child Percentage	12.56%	11.17%	12.16%
Literates	1390459	736702	2127161
Male Literates	841511	404858	1246369
Female Literates	548948	331844	880792
Average Literacy	54.94	72.49	53.22
Male Literacy	66.15	80.04	65.96
Female Literacy	43.61	65.01	40.03

Source: Primary Census Abstract, Census 2011, Director of Census Operations, Hyderabad. Directorate of Economics & Statistics, A.P. Vijayawada.

In Kurnool district, the population distribution is as follows:



1. Urban Population: 11.49 lakhs (28.37 percentage of the total population) - Men: 5.75 lakhs (50 percentage) - Women: 5.75 lakhs (50 percentage)

Rural Population: 29.04 lakhs (71.68 percentage of the total population) - Men: 14.65 lakhs (50.49 percentage) Women: 14.40 lakhs (49.51 percentage) Refer to Table 4.2 for more information

Kurnool district demographics and economic factors:

1. Population distribution: Kurnool has 2.49 lakh (28.0 percentage) urban households and 6.39 lakh (72.0 percentage) rural households, totaling 8.88 lakhs. Urbanization is limited.

2. Sex Ratio: Urban areas have a higher sex ratio (1000) compared to rural areas (983). The child sex ratio is 938 girls per 1000 boys.

3. Literacy: 7.37 lakh (72.49 percentage) literate individuals reside in urban areas, and 1.39 lakh (54.94 percentage) in rural areas. Urban areas have higher literacy rates.

4. Workforce: Male and female workforce participation rates are 57.09 percentage and 42.96 percentage, respectively. The district relies on agriculture, with 15.3 percentage as cultivators and 51.1 percentage as agricultural laborers.

5. Religion: Hindus make up 82.11 percentage of the population, while Muslims are the minority at 16.55 percentage. Other religions include Christians, Sikhs, Buddhists, Jains, and some unclassified members.

6. Mineral resources: The area has mineral resources like iron ore, dolomite, limestone, ochre, quartz satellite, and silica.

YEAR		2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21
1. Ravindra College Of Engineering For Women, Kurnool	Total Strength	205	188	195	168	229
	Muslims Females	29	27	15	21	19
2. S.V.R. Engineering College, Nandyal	Total Strength	208	226	179	194	263
	Muslims Males	35	22	16	16	29
	Muslims Females	6	1	14	13	10

Dr. K.V SUBBA REDDY COLLEGE OF PHARMACY, KURNOOL

YEAR	B-Pharmacy			D-Pharmacy		
	Total	Muslims males	Muslim Females	Total	Muslims males	Muslim Females
2016-17	92	09	04	30	02	03
2017-18	100	08	06	30	00	06
2018-19	100	08	08	30	01	05
2019-20	107	05	07	29	01	02
2020-21	107	10	09	32	04	02

7. Industries: Industries like oil mills, textile mills, stone polishing units, cement plants, and chemical industries contribute significantly to the district's economy.

8. Gross Domestic Product: The district's GDP was Rs 42,41,400 lakh at current prices.

Table statistics: Respondents' college enrollment data in specific field areas, obtained from college records.

The data reveals enrollment trends of Muslim minority students in Kurnool district's private engineering colleges for women and the MBBS program from 2016–17 to 2020–21.

In 2016–17, 29 Muslim female students joined private engineering colleges out of 205 female students. However, in

2020–21, only 19 Muslim female students enrolled out of 229 females. SVR Engineering College, Nandyal, had 1–14 Muslim female students during this period, indicating fewer female enrollments compared to males. Co-education might deter parents from enrolling their daughters.

Regarding the MBBS program, 2016–17 saw 18 male and 19 female students district-wide, with 17 male and 24 female Muslim minority students in 2020–21. This suggests an equal or increased participation of Muslim minority students, particularly females, between 2016–17 and 2020–21.

Enrollment data for Muslim minorities in B. Pharmacy at Dr. K.V Subba Reddy College Of Pharmacy, Kurnool indicates a shift. In 2016-17, there were 13 enrollees (9 male, 4 female), while in 2020-21, this increased to 19 students (10 male, 9 female), revealing a growing interest in pharmaceutical studies among Muslim minority students.

G. Analysis of Respondents' and Their Families' Socio-Economic Backgrounds

India houses a substantial Muslim population of approximately 200 million, though they are a minority compared to the majority Hindus. Historically, Muslims have faced educational disadvantages, but regional assessments reveal varying levels of western education based on socio-economic backgrounds. Despite historical challenges, Muslim communities now widely support female education. Post-independence, Muslim literacy rates have increased, yet they lag behind other socio-religious groups in basic and higher education. The 2011 Census reports that Muslims have a higher illiteracy rate (42.7 percentage) than the national average (36.9 percentage), despite increased elementary school enrollment. Access to secondary and senior secondary education remains limited for many. Since independence, Muslims have encountered unfair treatment and violence in various aspects of life, including employment, education, and healthcare. Obtaining justice after such treatment is often difficult.

The age distribution of respondents in this study is detailed in Table 4.4, which is not included here. Respondents, Muslim women in higher education, were categorized into age groups ranging from 18 to over 32 years based on their district of residence and interview scheduling.

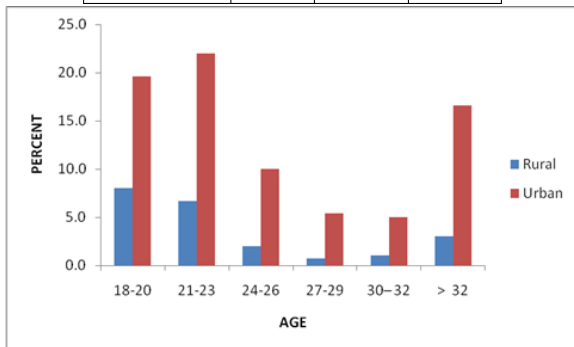
The researcher's findings show that more than half of the respondents (78.64 percentage) reside in urban areas. Among them, 19.6 percentage are aged 18-20, 22.0 percentage are aged 21-23, 10.0 percentage are aged 24-26, 5.4

percentage are aged 27-29, 5.0 percentage are aged 30-32, and 16.6 percentage are over 32 years old. Only 21.3 percentage of respondents live in rural areas, with 8 percentage aged 18-20 and 6 percentage aged 21-23. The urban respondents (28.7 percentage and 27.6 percentage) pursuing higher education are typically aged 21-23 and 18-20, while those over 24 face delays due to previous attempts or educational challenges.

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AGE WISE DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS BY THEIR AREA OF RESIDENCE

S.No	Age	Area		Total
		Rural	Urban	
1	18-20	24	59	83
		8.0%	19.6%	27.6%
2	21-23	20	66	86
		6.7%	22%	28.7%
3	24-26	6	30	36
		2.0%	10%	12.0%
4	27-29	2	16	18
		0.7%	5.4%	6.1%
5	30-32	3	15	18
		1.0%	5%	6.0%
6	> 32	9	50	59
		3.0%	16.6%	19.6%
Total		64	236	300
		21.3%	78.64%	100.0%



68.7 percentage of respondents pursuing higher education are unmarried, with 52.3 percentage from urban areas and 16.3 percentage from rural areas. 31.3 percentage continue their education after marriage, with 26.3 percentage in urban areas and 5.0 percentage in rural areas.

68.5 percentage of respondents are pursuing higher education in four major course categories: UG general, UG professional, PG general, and PG professional. 33.7 percentage are studying Pharmacy, with 25.7 percentage in urban areas and 8 percentage in rural areas.

55.7 percentage of respondents select their colleges independently, with 47 percentage from urban areas and 8.7 percentage from rural areas. Meanwhile, 44.3 percentage attend colleges assigned by authorities, with 31.7 percentage from urban areas and 12.6 percentage from rural areas.

78 percentage of respondents come from nuclear families, with 61.3 percentage residing in urban areas and 16.7 percentage in rural areas. In contrast, 19.3 percentage belong to joint families, with 15.3 percentage in urban areas and 4 percentage in rural areas. Extended families make up 2.7 percentage of the respondents.

29.7 percentage of respondents' fathers have graduated from college, 11.3 percentage hold post-graduate degrees, while 53.7 percentage didn't complete high school. This doesn't significantly affect respondents' pursuit of higher education.

45 percentage of respondents' mothers only completed schooling up to the 5th grade, with more urban residents in this group. Urban areas show higher maternal education levels, but this doesn't significantly affect the respondents' choices regarding professional education.

58.7 percentage of respondents study in private institutions, with 47.7 percentage in urban areas and 11 percentage in rural areas. 37.7 percentage attend government institutions, with 27.6 percentage in urban

areas and 10 percentage in rural areas. Only 3.7 percentage are in government-funded schools.

89.3 percentage of respondents attend co-educational institutions, with 70 percentage in urban areas and 19.3 percentage in rural areas.

18 percentage of respondents have a monthly family income exceeding 70,000, with 16.3 percentage in urban areas. Most own their homes (77.3 percentage), with 59.3 percentage in urban areas and 18 percentage in rural areas.

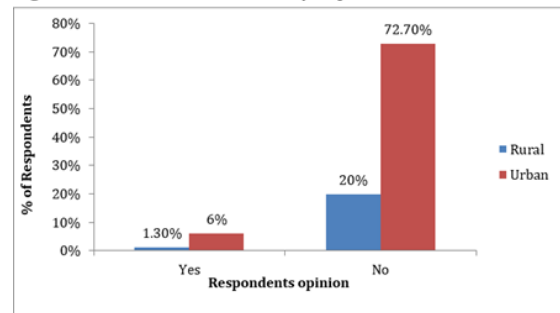
Conclusion: Muslims in India, the largest minority, face significant educational and socio-economic challenges.

TABLE 5.1

Was there any difficulty in your school studies?

S.No	Difficulty level at school responses	Area		Total
		Rural	Urban	
1	Yes	4	18	22
		1.30%	6.00%	7.30%
2	No	60	218	278
		20.00%	72.70%	92.70%
Total		64	236	300
		21.30%	78.70%	100.00%

Figure 5.1: Difficulties encountered by respondents in their school studies



Achieving full literacy remains a concern. Muslims, particularly women, lag behind in education. Education is vital for social change and national development.

Muslims in India have a lower socio-economic status compared to other religious groups. Economic well-being is linked to income generation through various employment, with urban areas offering better opportunities.

Respondents in this study mainly live in urban areas, which might provide better educational access. Family size and fathers' education have limited influence on pursuing professional education. Availability of educational institutions, parental support, and guidance impact Muslim students' educational success. Despite economic challenges, many Muslim parents encourage higher education.

IV. EXAMINING AND CONVERSING THE RESEARCH FINDINGS

A. Introduction

Education is crucial for societal progress, serving as a powerful tool for economic growth, social change, and resource utilization. In India, despite significant efforts and reforms, discrimination against women persists, particularly among Muslims.



Muslim women, in particular, lag behind in education. Their educational underachievement in comparison to non-Muslim women has raised concerns. Despite Islam's emphasis on women's education, various societal factors like large families, poverty, attitudes towards girls' education, limited connections between Madrasas and modern education, among others, contribute to this underachievement. This chapter focuses on the educational status of Muslim women in the Kurnool area and the factors affecting them in social, economic, cultural, educational, and religious aspects.

B. Maintaining Academic Performance

Respondents from diverse areas reported difficulties in school studies, with rural challenges linked to inadequate facilities. Hostel facility usage favored rural respondents (35.7 percentage). Teacher assistance was received by 88.3 percentage, highlighting their pivotal role. Interactions with other castes were mostly uninhibited (96.0 percentage). Religion's daily life influence varied (62.0 percentage no impact). Coaching attendance was common (74.3 percentage). Future aspirations were positive (92.3 percentage confident). Consistency in academic performance was indicated by 90.3 percentage. Positive attitudes prevailed (80.7 percentage). Government privileges were accepted by

67.3 percentage. Respondents desired more women's colleges (94.3 percentage). Educated women were perceived as empowered (91.3 percentage). Ample opportunities for women in professional education were acknowledged (91.7 percentage). Families generally fostered an educational environment (76.7 percentage). Concerns persisted for Muslim women facing more problems (53.0 percentage). Ambitious educational goals were set by parents (72.0 percentage). Infrastructure concerns were reported by 53.3 percentage. Gender equality in emphasizing female education was observed by 71.7 percentage, mainly in urban Muslim families. At last, respondents' experiences, aspirations, and perceptions underline the need for addressing educational disparities and promoting inclusivity.

C. Social Facets

Data indicates that 80.3 percentage of respondents (241 out of 300) identified early marriage as a significant obstacle to professional education. The majority (63.6 percentage) were from urban areas, while 9.7 percentage were from rural areas. Only 26.6 percentage disagreed with this view, and 33.0 percentage remained neutral.

In the following set, 57.7 percentage of respondents (173 out of 300) believed that social taboos hinder professional education, with 49 percentage from urban areas and 8.6 percentage from rural areas. Only 9.6 percentage disagreed, and 32.7 percentage were neutral.

It is revealed that 92.3 percentage of respondents (277 out of 300) think professional education contributes to Muslim women's social movement. The majority (72.7 percentage) were from urban areas, while 19.7 percentage were from rural areas. Only 2.7 percentage disagreed, and 5.0 percentage were undecided.

In the subsequent data, a majority agreed that prejudice and traditions affect Muslim women's professional ed-

ucation, with 30.0 percentage from urban areas and 6.7 percentage from rural areas. Neutral responses were 36.7 percentage, while 4.6 percentage disagreed.

Another set of information shows that 71.6 percentage of respondents (215 out of 300) disagreed that the purdah system hinders professional education. Among them, 57.0 percentage were from urban areas, and 14.7 percentage were from rural areas. Only 13.0 percentage agreed, and 15.3 percentage were neutral.

There is 77.3 percentage agreement among respondents that lack of awareness among Muslim parents hampers motivation toward professional education. Of these, 62.0 percentage were from urban areas, and 15.3 percentage were from rural areas. Disagreements were 13.6 percentage, and 9.0 percentage were neutral.

The data reveals that 77.4 percentage of respondents (232 out of 300) denied parents giving less importance to the education of daughters. Of these, 62.0 percentage were from urban areas, 15.3 percentage from rural areas. Yes responses were 11.7 percentage, and neutral responses were 11.0 percentage. In the next set, 85.0 percentage of respondents (255 out of 300) believe higher education is essential for women's empowerment. Among them, 65.6 percentage were from urban areas, and 9.6 percentage were from rural areas. Disagreements were 8.0 percentage, and 7.0 percentage were neutral. It is observed that 44.4 percentage of respondents disagreed that they receive less educational support. Of these,

39.7 percentage were from urban areas, and 8.7 percentage were from rural areas. Neutral responses were 39.7 percentage, and agreements were 16.0 percentage.

The majority, 88.0 percentage of respondents (264 out of 300), stated that their parents value their opinion during marriage decisions. Of these, 59.7 percentage were from urban areas, and 18.3 percentage were from rural areas. Disagreements were 4.7 percentage, and 7.3 percentage were undecided. In another set of information, 87.3 percentage of respondents (262 out of 300) believe their parents will discuss future-related decisions with them. Of these, 68.6 percentage were from urban areas. Disagreements were 6.6 percentage, and 6.0 percentage were undecided. It is indicated that 90.3 percentage of respondents (271 out of 300) stated their decision is important during marriage. Of these, 71.0 percentage were from urban areas, and 19.3 percentage were from rural areas. Disagreements were 6.3 percentage, and 3.3 percentage were undecided. In the final set of information, 87.0 percentage of respondents (261 out of 300) received assistance from male family members. Of these, 67.7 percentage were from urban areas, and 19.3 percentage were from rural areas. Disagreements were 5.7 percentage, and 7.3 percentage were undecided. 82.7 percentage of respondents (248 out of 300) disagreed that their families put pressure on them. Of these, 64.3 percentage were from urban areas, and 18.3 percentage were from rural areas. Neutral responses were 8.3 percentage, and agreements were 9.0 percentage.

D. Financial Considerations

The majority of respondents (72.0 percentage) perceive parental income as a hindrance to pursuing professional education. Of these, 55.3 percentage live in urban areas, 16.7 percentage in rural areas, 15.0 percentage face no hindrance, and 13.0 percentage are undecided. The belief that parental income impacts professional education is prevalent among 72 percentage of respondents, particularly urban ones.

Approximately 47.7 percentage of respondents believe their parents can cover educational expenses, with 37.7 percentage in urban and 10.0 percentage in rural areas. Meanwhile, 44.0 percentage are neutral, and 8.3 percentage consider their parents' income insufficient. A small number, primarily in urban areas, believes parents can cover educational costs.

A significant majority (88.3 percentage) strongly agrees that economic self-dependence leads to women's economic empowerment, with 71.0 percentage residing in urban areas. Only 7.3 percentage disagree, reflecting a widespread belief, especially among urban respondents, in the connection between economic self-sufficiency and women's empowerment. The majority (91.7 percentage), predominantly urban (71.7 percentage), believes poverty is a significant barrier to professional education, while 8.3 percentage disagree. The prevailing belief, particularly in urban areas, is that poverty poses a substantial obstacle to higher education.

Regarding the affordability of higher education expenses, 41.7 percentage of respondents state their parents cannot afford them, while 58.3 percentage claim their parents can. More than half of the parents, as per the data, are willing to bear the costs of their daughters' professional education.

A strong consensus (92.0 percentage), with 72.0 percentage from urban areas, believes professional education will lead to economic empowerment. Only 8.0 percentage disagree, suggesting a widespread agreement, particularly among urban respondents, on the positive impact of professional education. The majority (78.0 percentage) of respondents feel their parents are unwilling to enroll their daughters in professional courses due to the unemployment problem. The remaining 22.0 percentage express a desire to enroll their daughters, highlighting a nuanced perspective amid parental unemployment.

E. Cultural Considerations

The data indicates that 73.3 percentage of respondents (220 out of 300) stated that cultural restrictions didn't impact their pursuit of professional education. Among these, 57 percentage were from urban areas, 7.3 percentage from rural areas. Conversely, 26.7 percentage (80 respondents) mentioned that cultural constraints hindered their education.

Regarding the dowry system, 89 percentage (267 out of 300) considered it a significant barrier affecting their education. Among them, 69.7 percentage were from urban areas, 10 percentage from urban areas, while 11 percentage disagreed with its hindrance.

In terms of community traditions affecting professional education, 68 percentage (204 out of 300) asserted no impact. Among them, 53.7 percentage were from urban areas, and 32 percentage acknowledged these traditions as

impediments.

For cultural empowerment through professional education, 88 percentage (264 out of 300) believed it would be beneficial. The majority, 68.3 percentage, were from urban areas, while 12 percentage disagreed.

Concerning socio-cultural traditions impeding education, 43.3 percentage (130 out of 300) saw a hindrance in comparison to others. The majority, 56.7 percentage, perceived no impact, with 37.7 percentage from cities.

Regarding fears of losing Islamic identity during higher education, 77.7 percentage (233 out of 300) rejected the notion. Among them, 62.6 percentage were from urban areas, and 22.3 percentage expressed concerns.

Concerning parental cultural orthodoxy as a barrier, 61.3 percentage (184 out of 300) claimed no hindrance. Among them, 48 percentage were from urban areas, and 38.7 percentage identified it as a significant concern.

Regarding the paradigm shift encouraging parents, 81.7 percentage (245 out of 300) supported the idea. The majority, 63.7 percentage, were from cities, while 18.3 percentage disagreed. Comparing educational challenges, 53 percentage (159 out of 300) believed Muslim women face more problems than others. Notably, 47 percentage disagreed, with 35.3 percentage from urban areas and 11.7 percentage from rural areas.

F. Religious Considerations

The survey data reveals that the majority of urban Muslim parents support their children pursuing higher education while staying in hostels, with 75.7 percentage expressing no objections. However, 24.3 percentage of respondents faced parental restrictions. Concerning efforts to enhance Muslim women's education, 74.3 percentage believe that government and social organizations are insufficient, particularly in urban areas (57.3 percentage). Regarding Islamic values, 90.3 percentage agree that Islam treats men and women equally. Furthermore, 92.3 percentage consider education essential for acquiring knowledge, with urban respondents constituting a significant majority (62.0 percentage). Overall, the data suggests a need for increased initiatives to improve education for Muslim women. The study also notes urban advantages, such as better access to educational resources, and dispels myths about barriers like the dowry system or cultural traditions hindering professional education for Muslim women.

V. CONCLUSION

The findings of the study reveal several key insights. Firstly, educational setbacks for women in professional education are predominantly linked to failures in the tenth and intermediate grades. Marital status seems to have minimal impact on their pursuit of professional education. Family influence during their educational journey is negligible, and urban backgrounds are common among respondents. Various factors, including family size and caste limitations, show little influence on their educational choices.



Secondly, a majority of respondents express confidence in securing jobs related to their course of study. Positive attitudes prevail during their professional courses, emphasizing the importance of support and proper implementation for improving the educational system for Muslim women. Urban families generally do not perceive gender discrimination in education.

Thirdly, early marriage emerges as a significant impediment to professional education, while social taboos and customs have limited effect. The hijab/purdah system does not hinder educational pursuits. Economic factors play a crucial role, with parental wealth influencing career choices. Economic empowerment through professional education is viewed as a solution to poverty, and financial difficulties do not necessarily lead to study discontinuation.

Fourthly, cultural differences, traditions, and beliefs do not pose major obstacles to Muslim women's professional education. Cultural empowerment is achievable through education, and socio-cultural traditions do not significantly hinder their progress. However, the dowry system remains a barrier to higher education.

Fifthly, the study concludes that religion is not a barrier to higher and professional education, and Islam places a high value on education. Urban residents generally do not perceive religion as a hindrance, reflecting a positive shift in the Muslim community's stance on women's education. The study suggests that Islam values education for both genders. Sixthly, urban areas offer more opportunities for Muslim women to pursue professional degrees, driven by economic factors. The study indicates a changing perspective within the Muslim community, with parents in urban regions actively supporting their children's enrollment in professional courses. Urban areas witness higher enrollment due to increased earning opportunities, while rural areas show a smaller variation among respondents.

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