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## The attitude of Muslim Females towards Higher Education in India: A Literature Review

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**Abstract:** *"I gauge a community's progress based on how far women have progressed."*  
**B R Ambedkar.**

*Every individual, regardless of religion, caste, or area, has the right to an education. Female education plays an important role in all-around improvement and progress in society. If women have educated the whole family as well as society is educated. Without women education, a nation can't progress. The present study analysed thoroughly the literature review of both western and Indian contexts and found that among all Indian communities, the percentage of Muslim females with a higher level of education is quite low. Keeping this in mind, the current study highlighted many variables that are responsible for Muslim females' low educational status at a higher level of education, as well as some recommendations and ideas.*

**Key Words:** Female Education, Attitude, Islamic Perspective, Higher Education.

"Educating a man educates an individual; educating a woman educates a whole family."-Pandit Jawahar Lal Nehru.

Education is essential for all members of society. The survival of nations lies in education. India is a developing country and for rapid progress, it is needed to educate the individuals irrespective of gender, class, religion or economic difference. Muslims constitute the country's largest religious minority. Muslims' educational level in India is quite low, despite numerous efforts to enhance their educational conditions (Hussain 2013 & Naz 2017). As far as Islam is concerned, both genders have equal access to education. Islam develops the attitude of its followers to come forward to enhance knowledge.

An attitude is an individual's tendency, manner, sentiment, and position to react favourably or unfavourably to an object, behaviour, person, institution, event, or any other discernible feature of the individual's reality. It entails a complicated organisation of evaluative beliefs, sentiments, and proclivity towards certain behaviours. According to Good (1959), attitude is the willingness to react to or against a circumstance, person, or things in a specific way, such as love or hate. Allport (1935) defines attitude as a mental and neurological state of readiness that is organised through experience and has a direct or dynamic influence on an individual's response to all objects with which it is related. Kreeh and Crutchfield 1948 stressed the effective quality of attitude as well. They defined attitude as the long-term organisation of motivational, emotional, perceptual, and cognitive processes concerning particular aspects of the individual world. Some authors distinguish between a verbal attitude and a behavioural attitude; attitude cannot be immediately observed but must be inferred from overt behaviour, both verbal and nonverbal.

Islam gives a right to education to female genders. "Seeking knowledge is obligatory for every Muslim, both men and women," the Holy Prophet (PBUH) declares in Hadith literature. He who has a slave girl and teaches her good manners improves her education, and then manumits and marries her will be rewarded twice. On the day of judgement, both men and women must stand trial on an equal footing, and justice demands that neither of them is denied knowledge (Ali, 1997). Knowledge is an important part of the Islamic faith and the Quran makes no distinction between the purists of education in the acquisition of knowledge for men and women; it is a duty for every Muslim.

For example, verses, 35:280 of the Quran states that "those true faith on Allah, among his servants, who

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have knowledge." The Hadiths of the Prophet of Mohammad (PBUH) highlight the acquirement of knowledge for every Muslim. According to one Hadith, "seeking knowledge is an obligation of both men and women." Together, the Quran and the Prophet's Hadiths promote knowledge growth for everybody. There is no verse in the Quran that states that women should not be educated or denied access to knowledge. The Islamic faith recognises women's right to education and highlights the importance of education for men and women alike. This belief, however, cannot be translated, as evidenced by the current state of women's education and literacy rates in Muslim majority communities.

Education is the great engine of personal development. Education allows a peasant's daughter to become a doctor, a mine worker's son to become mine manager, and a farm worker's child to become president of a major country. What distinguishes one person from another is what we make of what we have rather than what we are given. (Nelson Mandela).

"There is no change in the welfare of the world unless the position of women is changed," Swami Vivekananda declared. A bird cannot fly with just one wing.

A nation without women education cannot develop. For the social and economic development of women, education is considered the single most important tool. The attitude of Muslim females toward higher education is essential in determining their attendance and academic accomplishment. A favourable attitude towards higher education enhances the parental involvement towards their young girls present and future studies. It is clear that without imparting education to females progress of the society will very difficult.

India is a developing country. In India Muslims are the largest religious minority in the country presently constituting 14.23% of the population in India. Gender-based impediments to higher education exacerbate Muslim girls' minority status, and Muslim access to higher education is often lower than that of Hindu caste women. According to the 2011 census the literacy rate of Muslim males and females in percentage is 62.41% and 51.9%. It can be seen that the Muslim female population is only 51.9 percent, which is lower than all other religious communities and even lower than the national female average of 65.46 percent. Educationally Muslims are considered backwards. According to the AISHE (2017-18) study, Muslims enrolled in higher education at 4.3 percent in 2013-14 and 4.5 percent in 2014-15, out of a total of 14.23 percent of the Muslim population, the lowest rate among all religions in India.

In the light of the above discussion, the main objectives of the study are to explore the attitude of Muslim females towards higher education in India. After studying the low percentage of Muslims in higher education the researcher is very positive about the implications of this research that Government attention is brought towards the minority classes in order to improve the educational status and also parents will be encouraged to send their daughters to higher education in India.

**Literature review-** According to Boote and Beile, (2005). "A researcher cannot conduct substantial study unless he or she first understands the literature in the topic." An important component of the research process is an examination of related literature in the subject of inquiry. Literature review for the present study is given below:

**Review in the Indian context-** Abbasi (2009) article revealed that, If a nation desires to be successful and develop toward a sustainable reality, the women of that community must be given every opportunity to obtain knowledge and education, which is not just her due but a right that Almighty Allah has established for her.

Hossain (2013) The study was done in Bengal to learn about the socio-economic, environmental, and educational situation of Muslim women. It is a universally accepted fact that education is the most effective tool for the empowerment of women. According to a study the percentage of Muslim women in post-high school education was stated to be 0.5 and non -Muslim women is 4.6 (census 2001). By reviewing the overall situations, it has been observed that the situations are very pitiable almost in all fields of development. The research revealed that steps



must be taken for the socio-economic and educational development of Muslim women for their progress in the given society.

Roy (2015) conducted a study on the "public's attitude toward higher education." Higher education contributes to an individual's overall quality of life. The report highlights many initiatives that might be made to close gaps in India's higher education system. A). The evolution of parents should not be interpreted negatively. B). There should be proper administration and proper implementation of rules in higher educational institutions. C). Encourage part-time courses. D). Scholarships should be provided to economically weaker students. E). Guidance and counselling services are available at all higher education institutions.

Salue (2016) The study's goal is to improve our understanding of young women's access to higher education. The study found that poor achievement of Muslim female higher education is frequently related to religious conservatism and Islamic aversion, however, this is not true because none of the Muslim participants believes that Islam places any constraints on Muslim female education attainment. Females are unable to further their education because of their poorer socioeconomic backgrounds. Due to limited finances, support is frequently oriented on sons' education, jeopardising daughters' chances of achieving higher education.

Naz (2017) The present study is conducted to examine the socio-economic conditions of Muslim women, particularly those living in rural areas of India in order to bring out the causes of their backwardness and problems faced by them. The study's overall analysis demonstrates that the situation of Muslim women is unsatisfactory, particularly in terms of socioeconomic level, educational achievement, health status, employee involvement, and so on. The results suggest that due to some awareness programmes, reservations for minorities, developmental schemes for Muslim females worked to improve the condition.

Hussain et al (2018) According to the findings of this study, education is the single most significant weapon for social and economic development. Women, in particular, should be required to play an equal role in the advancement and development of society. The study's goal is to emphasise Muslim women's educational position in India, the causes for their backwardness, the concerns and obstacles they encounter, and recommendations for their inclusion into mainstream society.

Jan et al (2019) The research was conducted in Jahangirabad (Bhopal) area in order to know the parental attitude towards girls' education. According to the survey, the residents of Jahangirabad are extremely poor. Male parents of the students are labours and Female parents are housewives. But still, the parents have a positive attitude towards girls' education. They want to educate their girls.

**Review in Foreign Context-** Zaidifer (2012) The purpose of this research is to look into the participation of women in higher education and female labour force participation in Iran. Women who are educated and working are more likely to have the information and resources they need to perform well in modern society.

Sarkar et al (2014) Present research attempts to explore the traditional social and gendered norms affecting girls' education among the marginalized households in northern rural Bangladesh. According to the findings of the study, girls' education is recognised as a crucial component of skilled human resource development and improving their socioeconomic standing in all nations around the world. It has been acknowledged as a panacea for long-term societal development.

Khosrojerdi (2015) The purpose of this study is to look at Muslim female students' perceptions of, and reactions to, prevalent preconceptions about Muslim women in Canadian colleges. This study demonstrated that none of the Muslim women in the survey was passive victims of social injustice. On the contrary, they all demonstrated that they were active agents with a strong commitment to make changes in their lives and challenge disparities at their colleges. Despite the fact that all of these ladies committed significant amounts of time and energy to this problem, none of them complained about the burden.



Khan's (2016) The goal of this work is to grasp Islam's stance on girls' education and to add to the Islamic literature. This article concluded that Islam does not forbid girls from getting an education, instead, it insists on education. It is the duty of both men and women in Islam to gain knowledge. However, poor top-level policies, culture, political interests, sexism, and the role of the media all influence how Islamic teachings are interpreted. Eram (2017) conducted a study titled "Review Article on Parents' Attitudes Toward Girls' Education." According to the findings of the study, educating a female is equivalent to educating a family, whereas educating a boy is equivalent to only educating a person. Education is a fundamental human right, independent of caste, gender, colour, or area. Progress and growth in society are impossible without female education. Schools should be safeguarded so that parents will not be afraid to send their daughters to school.

McDonnell (2017) study concluded that education is key to success throughout the world. Education is a core essential right for both men and women, and it is an equal right according to Islamic teachings. In Islamic teachings, the acquisition of knowledge and education is essential, and according to Islam, it is the duty that is imposed on every Muslim to acquire education, whether male or female.

**Research Methodology-** The purpose of this study is to conduct a literature evaluation on Muslim ladies' attitudes toward higher education. The data for this study is secondary in nature, having been gathered from several articles and journals. In this study, the researcher reviewed sixteen articles and journals from the year 2009 to 2019, Ten from the Indian context and six from the foreign context.

**Summary-** The study's goal is to investigate Muslim ladies' attitudes regarding higher education in India. According to Islamic principles, religious classes always lead the nation to growth, although they have been accused of a bad attitude toward higher education. Almighty Allah gave the right of education to women, that society should provide all opportunities to women acquire education and knowledge. (Abbasi 2009, Khan 2016 and McDonnell 2017). By considering all the above review studies given by different authors (both Indian and Foreign), it can conclude that as far as education is concerned Muslims is far behind the other communities. Without accepting modern education Muslims are socially, politically, educationally and economically suffering a lot, because their thinking is still traditional towards education. Because of their inferior socioeconomic status, parents do not prefer to send their daughters to a higher degree of school. Due to limited resources, the parent supports their son's education, reducing the daughter's chances of obtaining higher education (Salue 2016). Parents have a positive attitude towards girls' education. Parents want to educate their daughters but due to bad economic conditions, they are unable to do so. (Eram 2017 & Jan 2019).

At present Muslim women come up for education to improve their life standards (Roy 2015). In 2013-14 the enrolment of Muslims in higher education is 4.3% and in 2014-15 it is 4.5% which is lower in percentage among all other religions in India (AISHE-2017-18). In all countries, girls' education is seen as a crucial component for improving their socioeconomic standing (Sarkar 2014&Hussain 2018). Women who are well educated and employed performed effectively in all the sectors of development in society (Zahedifar-2012). In India, Muslim women are tried to perceive higher education but due to a lot of barriers like lower social economic status, lack of parental support, old traditional mindset, preference to a male child, early marriage women are unable to get higher education. As a result, several substantial steps must be done to improve the educational condition of Muslim girls in India, particularly in higher education.

**Conclusion-** Women empowerment means empowerment of the whole society. In India, the educational status of the Muslim female is very low and even at a higher educational level, it is about a drop in an ocean. It means on ground level. To overcome this problem several steps, have to be taken in order to improve the educational status of Muslim females especially at a higher level of education.

Recommendation and Suggestions



\* At the ground level, Gram Panchayat must play an active role to aware parents of the benefits of educating their daughters at a higher level of education through various awareness programmes. Gram Panchayat encourages parents to send their daughters to higher educational institutions.

\* There is a need for separate construction of educational institutions for women at all levels of education and there will be separate security arrangements for women in these institutions. As a result, neither parents nor female students need to be concerned. Muslim parents who don't want to educate their daughters in co-educational institutions or due to security reasons can send their daughters to these institutions.

\* Educated and well-trained female teachers should be appointed in these institutions. Also, provide separate transport facilities for female students in these institutions.

\* The government should provide financial assistance to parents who are unable to educate their daughters owing to a lack of funds. So that parents do not compromise on their daughter's education. Because of financial problems parents preferred to educate their sons instead of daughters. Female students should provide a scholarship at a higher level of education so that they easily completed their higher education.

\* Early marriage of the girls should be restricted till a girl complete her higher education.

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