

Salient Findings of Research Conducted by NUEPA - Participation of Muslims in Higher Education:

1. National Sample Survey 64th Round conducted in 2007-08 presents the information on participation in higher education in terms of social and religious groups. Result shows that the Gross Attendance Ratio (GAR) of Muslims stands at 8.7 percent as opposed to 16.8% GAR of Non-Muslims in higher education. If we compare the GAR of Muslims with other social groups, we observe that it is higher than the GAR of Scheduled Tribes at 6.63 percent but lower than the GAR of Scheduled Castes at 10.65% and much lower than the GAR of Other Backward Classes at 13.67 percent.

2. There is a wide variation in the participation within Non-Muslim community as we move from ST, SC, OBC and others. It varies from 6.26% in the case of ST to 10.52% in the case of SC, 14.27% in the case of OBC to 29.56% in the case of others. Thus there is a range of 23 within Non-Muslim community along different social groups. It is interesting to observe that there is no such wide variation in the participation within Muslim community as we move from ST, SC, and OBC to others. GAR of ST is 5.6%, SC is 14.2%, OBC is 8.7% and that of others is 8.6%.

3. Participation by consumption expenditure groups: An interesting question that emerges from the information is that whereas the top quartile of the Muslims does show highest participation in relation to all the bottom four quartiles, the differentiation in participation even within top quartile between communities is very high.

4. The important characteristics of Muslim participation in higher education is that at higher levels of higher education, such as, at the post graduation level, attendance of Muslims falls down considerably. Besides, higher percentage of Muslims (as compared to non-Muslims, 22.4% as compared to 19.2%) ends up doing Diploma & Certificate below Graduate Level.

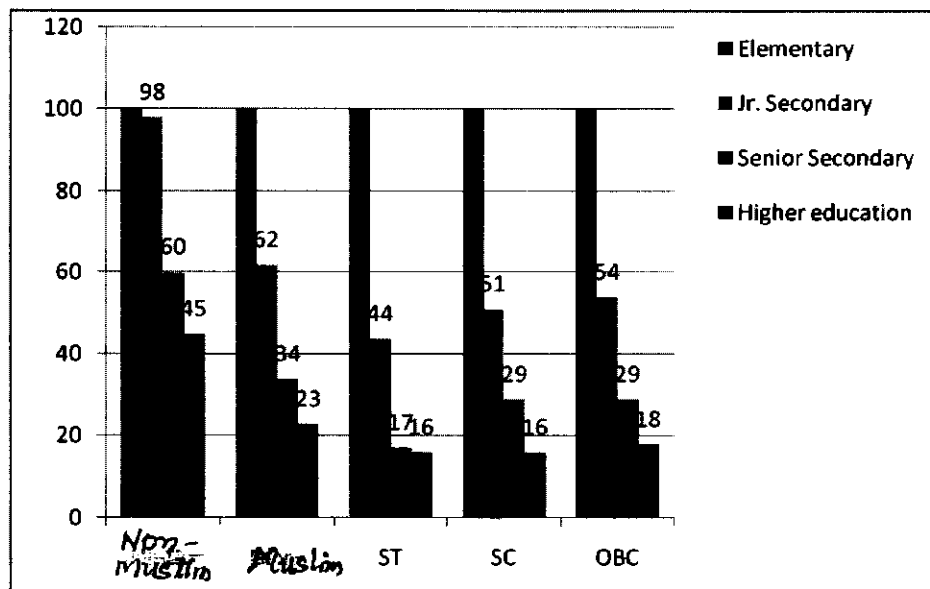
5. The third characteristics of Muslim participation in higher education is that higher overall participation of Muslim ST and SC and lower degree level participation of Muslim ST and SC as compared to Non-Muslim ST and SC only means Muslim ST and SC participation is higher in post secondary diploma and certificate. It means Muslim ST and SC prefer to join post secondary education for a short period certificate and diploma course and they have lower participation at degree level. However, overall higher participation in diploma course compensates for lower participation at degree level. As a result overall diploma and degree participation for Muslim ST and SC is higher in comparison to Non-Muslim ST and SC.

6. **Level-wise Educational Inequality of Participation: Group Analysis**

Educational participation in terms of graduates at different levels of education is presented in terms of social, religious and economic groups. In the information given in the table elementary i.e.; first stage of education is taken as the base and index of graduates at other levels of education is calculated. Graduates, at different levels of education, give the picture of stock available at a point of time. However, the comparison tells us which group at what level suffers from the deficit of graduates. As noted above, the identical stock at different levels is an ideal scenario of equality in level wise participation in education. Any deviation from the ideal is something of interest to know.

7. It is important to note that there is sharp fall in the number of graduates at junior secondary level for ST, SC and OBC social groups. In the religious group, the fall in the number of graduates at junior secondary level for the Muslims may be noted. However, the fall is not as high as ST, SC and OBC. In the religious group, Non-Muslim do not show fall at the junior secondary level. In terms of economic groups, the fall in the number of graduates at the junior secondary level is largest for I group. The fall is reduced as the consumption expenditure group increases. It may be concluded that to increase educational participation at higher levels of education the number of graduates at Jr. secondary level needs to be increased especially for ST, SC, OBC and the Muslims and income groups I, II and III as a matter of priority.

8. It is a matter of concern that a further deficit of graduates occurs for SC, ST, OBC, I and II income group at the senior secondary level and to a lesser extent for Muslims and income group III. Non-Muslim also suffers from sharp fall in the number of graduates at senior secondary level from a high number of graduates at junior secondary level.



9. Participation in higher education in terms of number of graduates very much depends on the manner in which the fall in the number of graduates in different groups take place at different levels of education. The number of graduates at different levels of school education for different social groups

10. It is thus clear from the analysis that unless the participation in terms of graduates at the first three levels of education is enhanced for SC, ST, OBC, I, II and III income group, it would be meaningless to talk of higher participation in higher education.

11. Factors Identifying Low Participation of Muslims in Higher Education

The central objective of the proposed research is to identify the factors for low participation of Muslims in higher education. Factor analysis was conducted to identify the factors responsible for low participation of Muslims. A sample of 402 Muslim students who are already studying in higher education institutions was randomly served the questionnaire. In the questionnaire participating students' perceptions were captured to understand the factors responsible for low participation of Muslims in higher education. Factor analysis was conducted with a

set of 30 questions on four point scale. Scale was given rank 1 for most agreed, rank 2 for agreed, rank 3 for somewhat agreed and rank 4 for not agreed. Question is treated as variable in factor analysis. From the responses received through the questionnaire the factor analysis facilitates in understanding the perceptions of individuals in terms of factors. The factors pool different interrelated questions (variables) together under one factor. A set of relevant factors may finally explain the perception of individuals in understanding a phenomenon.

12. Factors for Low Participation of Muslims in Higher Education

The rotation of factor structure has clarified the things considerably. The first factor pools five variables. Family expectation to take up a job (variable 26), value for traditional profession in the family(variable 27), compulsion to start earning soon to support the family(variable 15), tough to break the barrier of family profession (variable 1) and last variable with lowest factor loading can be ignored. Factor 1, therefore, turns out to be "income barrier". Under Factor-1, family profession is valued because it provides economic security. Family mode of traditional profession that is linked to the traditional occupation followed in the family might not be remunerative enough. This creates compulsion for an individual to search out for a job after school education. Hence factor-1 explains the inability of an individual to break the family profession and at the same time creates compulsion to earn early income to supplement the income from family profession. This, in the perception of an individual, income is the important deterrent for Muslims in the participation of higher education.

The second factor also pools five variables together. My religion encourages individual to have higher education (variable 23), Our religious community values higher education (variable 28), Madarsa/school education is progressive and helps one to join higher education (variable 21), My family believes that an individual must have religious values for a decent life (variable 25), Cultural values of our religious community motivates me to pursue higher education (variable 2) have all been pooled under factor 2. This is the most interesting result. It establishes the fact that in the perception of an individual religion is a facilitating factor for participation in higher education.

Under Factor- 2 religion is considered in many ways as a strength for the Muslim community for higher studies. Belief of a family that religious values and decent life go together is quite significant. Cultural values of Muslims are important in motivating individual to pursue higher education. At the level of religious community there is premium attached with higher studies. The progressive role of Madarsa/school education is accepted in helping to join higher education. We had thought this to be barrier, but to our surprise it turns out to be strength in various ways for participation in higher education.

The third factor pools four variables together. Higher education is an investment good that have high future returns (variable 7), higher education is as necessary as any other consumption good necessary for the survival (variable 8), higher education is necessary for a good marriage (variable 11), higher education provides the prestige that I need to have (variable 9). These variables point to the returns from higher education. Higher education provides an opportunity that an individual is expected to exploit. There are economic returns from investment. Higher education as consumption good is considered necessary for survival. Higher education has social return as it facilitates good marriage and earns prestige in the society.

Thus, there is the income barrier in terms of following the family profession and compulsion to earn early. Against this barrier, is the opportunity to get high

returns by investing in higher education. It is thus the interplay of two factors – cost subject to the income constraint and returns subject to the availability of finance - that to a great extent determines the participation of Muslims in higher education.

Among the five variables under fourth factor, there are two variables with high factor loadings. They are: (i) higher participation at the school level only will lead to higher participation at higher education level (variable 13), (ii) I am confident that my marks will be high to get me into higher education (variable 14). Other variables with low factor loadings can be ignored. This factor may be termed as school factor. Higher participation as well as high marks i.e both access with quality education - at school level will ensure high participation of Muslims in higher education.

The mathematical factor analysis has provided way to simplify the complexity of the data that reflects the real world.

Continuing traditional profession compelling to join the job market (Income barrier) emerges as the main factor for low participation in higher education. Expectation of social and economic return from higher education (opportunity for return) emerges as the main motivating factor for the participation of Muslims in higher education. School factor, on the other hand, shows that not only the proportion of eligible but also the performance at secondary school level is necessary for higher participation. It is important to note that religion in the perception of students plays a positive role and, therefore, Madarsas need to be modernized, mainstreamed and supported at par with any secondary schools in India, particularly so in the regions which have Muslim Concentrated Population.
