Educational Marginalization of Muslim In A Metropolitan:

A Sociological Study of Jamia Nagar Government Schools, New Delhi

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Various studies conducted during the past few decade amply show that Muslims have been increasingly, socially and economically, marginalized although there has admittedly been some progress in some small pockets. This limited progress however has been largely independent of state efforts. For its part, the state appears to have deliberately or otherwise played a somewhat indifferent role and in some states, clearly hostile attitude towards social, economic and educational advancement of Muslims. The percentage of Muslims in regular employment, in both the public as well as the private sector, has considerably dropped over the decades since 1947. Today the situation is more serious as a result of the impact of globalization and neo-liberal economic policies; landless laborers and artisans, a large proportion of whom are Muslims,are the the worst sufferers. According to official estimates, Muslims account for roughly 14% (174 million) of the Indian population (Census, 2001). Obviously, the economic and educational marginalization of such a large section of Indian society should be a matter of concern for all.

In March 2005 the prime minister of India appointed a high level committee headed by retired Justice Rajinder Sachar to report on the social, economic and educational status of the Muslims of India. It is hoped that the report will, if nothing else, sensitize policy makers to the urgent need to address Muslim concerns. The Sachar committee examined questions such as- in which state/ regions, districts and blocks of the country do Muslims mostly live? What is the geographical pattern of their economic activity? What are their asset base and income levels relative to others across various states and

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regions? What is the level of their socio-economic development in terms of relevant indicators such as literacy rate, dropout rate, maternal mortality rate (IMR) etc? How does this compare with communities in various states? What is the Muslims' relative share in public and private sector employment? What is the share of Muslim OBCs in the total public sector employment for OBCs in various states in different years? Does the Muslims community have access to education services, health services, municipal infrastructure, bank credit? What is the level of social infrastructure located in areas inhabited by Muslims?

However, there is no mention of the specific problem of Muslim women or of the dalit Muslims who are clubbed together with backward caste Muslims as other backward classes. The terms of reference ignore the deleterious impact of the liberalized economic policies of the Government on Muslim OBC artisan communities, who account for a large section of the Muslim community.

According to Imran Ali and Yogender Sikand (Action Aid India and Indian Social Institute)overall Muslim marginalization since 1947 is well known, and has been highlighted by numerous studies and even by various commissions set up by different governments. Often, these commissions were simply political gimmicks. They submitted their reports and made various recommendations to the government to address the marginalisation of the Muslims. Yet, the government took little or no heed to these suggestions, using the commissions simply as vote-grabbing gimmicks in order to give the impression of being serious about Muslim 'backwardness', but, in fact, doing precious little about it.

Many middle class Muslims, too, prefer living in such areas although the levels of infrastructural provision are poor and even though they can afford living in more 'posh', 'upper' caste Hindu-dominated areas. Often, ghettoisation is promoted by the fact that Hindu landlords simply refuse to rent out their houses to Muslim tenants. Ghettoisation has crucial consequences for the educational conditions of Muslims and for relations

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Source: http://www.muslimsocieties.org

between different communities. This fact emerged in the study on Indian Muslims in which the present authors are presently involved, and jointly undertaken by Action Aid and the Indian Social Institute, New Delhi.

A Study of the Government Schools of Jamia Nagar, New Delhi

In the present survey we have used recent 2007 NPSP and WHO data. This survey of Delhi is not funded from anywhere. We spent four months (September 2006 to December 2006) to know the educational conditions of Muslim boys and girls in the government schools of this area. For estimated population we have used NPSP, WHO 2007 data. To collect the information we used primary and secondary sources of research. We did a study in Jamia Nagar area of Delhi where Muslims live in substantial numbers. The study was also conceived of as a means to mobilize and encourage the general public, civil society activists and organizations working on issues related to the Muslim community, to become more sensitized to the dismal educational conditions of the Muslim masses. This is a desperately needed corrective, in the light of the fact that many NGOs have been indifferent to Muslim issues, while a few others that have engaged with Muslims have mostly done so simply from the point of view of countering communalism.

The important objective was also to highlight the plight of the Muslim community in arguably the most modern and the capital city of India. Through this study we tried to attract the attention of our academics as well as policy makers that the number of government schools is not sufficient and the condition of these schools is not satisfactory in the area. We have collected the data from five schools and the details are mentioned below in the following tables.

Findings of the study

Before coming to the major findings of the study, the research methodology deserves some consideration. We have collected the data through interview and

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observation and secondary sources like recent WHO sponsored Pulse Polio immunization programmes, government sources and websites.

1. In our survey we found that Okhla, a Muslim dominated area, has a Muslim representative in the Delhi assembly. The neighbourhood has only three M.C primary schools and two Govt. senior secondary schools. The population indicator clearly shows that they are simply not enough in catering to such a large population, and more so a population which is living in a very poor socio-economic condition.

Population Indicator 1: Okhla Area

S No.	Locality	Population
1.	Shaheen bagh	22800
2.	Okhla vihar	13200
3.	Noor nagar	8700
4.	Okhla village	10800
5.	Haji colony + Johri farm + Ghaffar manzil	15300
6.	Pahari 1+ Pahari 2	9600
7.	Taimoor nagar	9900
8.	Khijra bad	18600
9.	Zakir nagar +Ghafoor nagar + Mahboob nagar	28200
10.	Joga bai	25800
11.	Batla house + Azeem dairy	28980
	Total	191880

Source: Recent WHO data based on Pulse Polio activity provided by FV, WHO Delhi unit.20

Area wise break up

1. Total Population: Saheen Bagh And Abulfazal.

Total Number Of House Holds - 17888

Estimated Population = 107328

Estimated Children below Five Year= 15026

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2. Total Population: Batla House (Batla House + Azeem Dairy + Ghafoor Nagar + Ghaffar Manzil+ Noor Nagar + Okhla Vihar + Okhla Village)

Total Number Of House Holds   =   18075

Estimated Population   = 108450

Estimated Children below Five Year   -   11099

3. Total Population Zakir Nagar (Zakir Nagar, East And West, Zakir Nagar Ext, Toaiba Colony, Pahari One And Pahri Two+ Mahboob Nagar)

Total Number of House Holds ==   12688

Estimated Population ==   76128

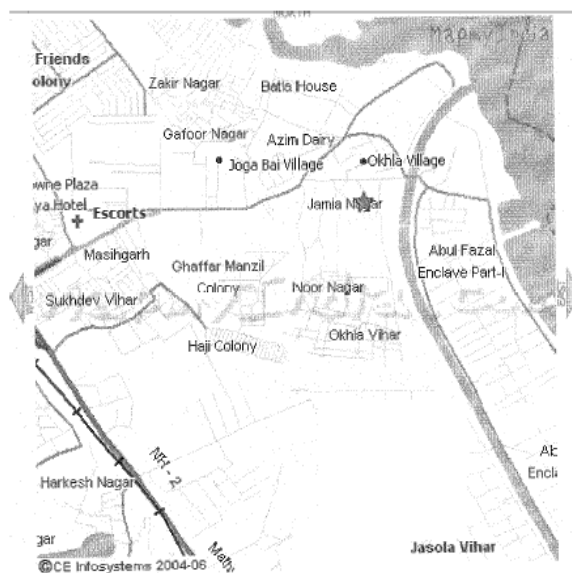Estimated Children below Five Year =   8816

Total Estimated Population of Okhla- 108450 + 76128 + 107328 =   291906

Total Number of House Holds in Okhla- 12688 + 18075 + 17888   =   48651

Estimated Children below Five Year in Okhla-   8816 + 11099 + 15026 =   34941

Source: 2007 NPSP and WHO data

Map: Okhla area

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Source: Pilot Socio-Economic Survey of Urban Okhla, SAP (UGC) Programme, Department of History and Culture, JMI, New Delhi

Enrollment of Muslim Girls and Boys in Jamia Nagar Government Schools

To know the educational condition of Muslim we did our fieldwork in Jamia Nagar area. The population of this area is 1.2 lacks approximately (Census, 2001). The main purpose of this study was to highlight the fact that government is not providing educational facility as discussed in several education policies. The limited numbers of Govt. schools in this area is the testimony to the fact.

Around 25 schools are running in the locality, some are up to 5th and 8th standard and a few others up to 10th standard but they are not recognized so the students appear in Jamia Millia Islamia Secondary Board as private candidates but students of recognized schools appear in CBSE board as regular students (it is only in one school).The present study is confined only to Government schools and our focus was mainly the total enrollment of Muslim girls and boys in five schools of Jamia Nagar area. The following tables give a breakup of enrollment in varying situations:

Table 1. M.C PRIMARY SCHOOLS

M.C PRIMARY SCHOOL ABULFAZAL BLOCK -D					M.C PRIMARY SCHOOL OKHLA			
GENDER	MEDIUM	MUSLIMS	HINDUS	TOTAL	MEDIUM	MUSLIMS	HINDUS	TOTAL
GIRLS	URDU	247	-	247	URDU	361	-	361
GIRLS	HINDI	144	56	200	HINDI	330	167	497
BOYS	URDU	152	-	152	URDU	137	-	137
BOYS	HINDI	384	16	400	HINDI	258	111	369

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Table 2. M.C PRIMARY SCHOOL BATLAHOUSE, OKHLA.

S.NO	MEDIUM	MUSLIMS	HINDUS	TOTAL
GIRLS	URDU	550	-	550
GIRLS	HINDI	936	16	952
BOYS	URDU	600	-	600
BOYS	HINDI	434	16	450

Table 3. SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOLS

NAME OF SCHOOL	SENIORSECONDARYSCHOOL NOOR NOOR NAGAR OKHLA			SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOL JOGABAI, OKHLA			
GENDER	**MUSLIMS**	**HINDUS**	**TOTAL**	**GENDER**	**MUSLIMS**	**HINDUS**	**TOTAL**
GIRLS	1900	254	2154	BOYS	1075	140	1215
BOYS	1975	410	2385	GIRLS	1440	160	1600

TABLE-4

Religion/Gender	KG To 12th Class	Total
Muslim Boys	In five govt. schools	5380
Muslim Girls	In five govt. schools	5543

Overall, therefore, a very significant proportion of Muslims has been deliberately or otherwise marginalized and left out of the development process. There is an urgent need

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for the state as well as civil society organizations to take a more pro-active role in addressing the particular concerns of Muslim community to improve their educational condition in the national capital of India.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Education is increasingly being viewed as a basic human right leading to empowerment and awareness, as opposed to being regarded solely as a means of bringing about economic growth and political stability. Such a shift in focus has questioned previously held beliefs and ideologies that regarded education as the guardian of the status quo. Increasingly, the view of education for control and containment is being replaced by considering it as a potential ally in the mobilization and empowerment of the unreached and dispossessed.

As the study suggests, Muslims are one of the marginalized communities in Delhi in terms of educational facilities being provided to them by the State Government particularly in Jamia Nagar area. This calls for urgent steps to ameliorate their conditions. Some of our recommendations are as mentioned below-

1.   The Delhi government should take immediate steps to fill the gap of educational facilities being offered to Muslim areas.

2.   The Delhi Government should do collection of data on Muslims' social, economic, educational and political conditions with reference to Muslim populated areas.

3.   Activists, organizations and policy-makers should make the data available to the general public and for use. Such information would need to be quantitative, qualitative as well as comparative, so that conditions between Muslims and other communities may be compared and policies suitably adjusted to ensure equity.

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4. Emphasis should be given to generate the data keeping in terms with gender, region, class, caste, linguistic groups etc. so that all of the Muslims are not treated as a monolith.

5. Development schemes by the government should allocate resources in Muslim-dominated localities on a scale proportionate to their population; it should be suitably made and implemented.

6. Development schemes must also be culturally sensitive so that these are acceptable to the Muslim community. For instance, enforced co-education after a certain level or Hindu tilted or anti-Muslim biases in textbooks often act as a major hindrance to Muslims, particularly Muslim girls' education. These issues need to be sensitively addressed and approached.

7. In planning and implementing development schemes participation of the local community, including Muslims and other marginalized groups, must be ensured.

8. Civil Society or NGOs should take a proactive action in the Muslim dominated areas of Delhi and make their presence felt.

9. Sensitizing the Ulema of the madrasas to the existing social, economic and educational problems of the Muslim community, particularly the poor and women, so that they can help mobilize public opinion on these through their lectures and literature.

10. Dialogue on Muslim social, economic and educational issues also needs to be initiated with the media, politicians, bureaucrats, and non-governmental organizations.

11. Provision of free coaching to Muslim students by government, NGOs and prominent member's of the Muslim community should be arranged.

12. Special literacy drives should be initiated by the government in Muslim dominated educationally backward areas.

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13. Mother tongue should be stressed as the medium of instruction for the Muslim students.

14. Setting up dedicated agencies to look after the educational needs of Muslim students by the Government is an urgent need.

15. Modern education in girl's Madarasa, with all facilities can motivate parents to send their daughters in Madarasa.

16. Muslim girls should be kept at par with the girls of other backward communities while framing policies by the government on the matter of education.

17. Provision of educational avenues and infrastructure for women's education by the prominent members of the Muslim intelligentsia.

18. Teaching material like books, copies including electronic and print materials to socially disadvantaged Muslim students should be distributed free of cost by the government.

19. Misconception on education in Islam should be removed and true message should be spread in the community as well as in other communities that Islam gives equal rights to men and women to acquire knowledge.

20. Providing scholarships and free educational loans to economically disadvantaged Muslim students from primary to higher level of education.

21. Non formal/ professional/technical education should be introduced by the the government and NGOs for the school dropout Muslim students.

22. Operation Black Board educational initiatives should be taken by the government to ensure Muslim student's education in rural and urban areas.

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