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Poverty as a Hinderance in Education among the Muslims of Rural Uttar Pradesh: An Empirical Study

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This article deals with the issue of poverty and education in two districts of Uttar Pradesh. Barabanki district in Central region of U.P. is in advantage for having common border with Lucknow district and the distance between these two respective cities is only 30 kms. While Shahjahanpur district is in an advantageous position for being a part of the affluent Western region of U.P. and located at a distance of about 180 kms. away from Lucknow in the North-West. Barabanki and Shahjahanpur districts have 2.8 and 1.9 million (2001 Census) rural population, which are 90.7 and 78.7 per cent of their total population respectively. According to 2001 Census Barabanki and Shahjahanpur districts have 22.0 and 17.9 per cent Muslim population respectively. In our random selection of 30 villages and 900 households from each Barabanki and Shahjahanpur districts surveyed (2008), 33.0 per cent or 297 households with 1769 people and 25.3 per cent or 228 households with 1398 people respectively belonged to Muslims. In Barabanki and Shahjahanpur districts among Muslims the sex ratio was 906 and 832 while sex ratio among Hindus was 826 and 809 respectively. In both the districts the average size of Muslim households is larger than the Hindus. The fact is that if we add the missing females in Hindu population then the household size of Hindus would be almost the same as of Muslims. The children of below 15 years are proportionately more among Muslim population as compared to Hindus and Sikhs in both Barabanki and Shahjahanpur. But among Muslims the old age population of 60 and above is comparatively lower than the Hindus and Sikhs in both the districts. Demographically, these proportions reflect the poor economic condition of the community where children's proportions are comparatively higher and longevity of life is comparatively lower (see Tables 1 & 2).

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Table 1: **Religion-wise Composition of Sample Households in Barabanki and Shahjahanpur**

Religion	District	Sample Households	Total Population	Household Size	Sex Ratio
Muslim	Barabanki	297	1769	6.0	906
	Shahjahanpur	228	1398	6.1	832
Hindu	Barabanki	602	3049	5.1	826
	Shahjahanpur	633	3363	5.3	809
Sikh	Barabanki	1	12	12	1000
	Shahjahanpur	39	194	5.0	780
Total	Barabanki	900	4830	5.4	885
	Shahjahanpur	900	4955	5.5	814

Source: Based on Survey conducted by the author and his team at Giri Institute of Development Studies, Lucknow, 2008.

Table 2: **Religion-wise Percentage of Age Composition of Population in Barabanki and Shahjahanpur**

Religion	District	Surveyed Population	Age Groups				
			Below 15	15 – 30	30 – 45	45 – 60	60 & above
Muslim	Barabanki	1769 (100)	41.66	26.29	16.17	9.10	6.78
	Shahjahanpur	1398 (100)	46.21	28.40	14.16	7.15	4.08
Hindu	Barabanki	3049 (100)	37.48	25.06	19.06	9.97	8.43
	Shahjahanpur	3363 (100)	40.39	28.41	16.37	9.45	5.38
Sikh	Barabanki	12 (100)	33.33	33.33	16.67	0.00	16.67
	Shahjahanpur	194 (100)	27.32	35.05	15.46	12.89	9.28
Total	Barabanki	4830 (100)	39.01	25.53	17.98	9.63	7.85
	Shahjahanpur	4955 (100)	41.52	28.67	15.71	8.94	5.16

Source: Based on Survey conducted by the author and his team at Giri Institute of Development Studies, Lucknow, 2008.

In Barabanki and Shahjahanpur districts the highest proportion of people is engaged as students which are 28.8 and 26.7 per cent respectively followed by dependent population of old,retired ,and young who are 17.2 and 17.1 per cent respectively. Thus, in both the districts the total dependents including students are 46.0

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and 43.8 per cent respectively. Among Muslims ,because of extreme poverty, the proportion of students and retired persons are comparatively less therefore total dependents among Muslims in Barabanki and Shahjahanpur are comparatively less which are 34.5 and 39.8 per cent respectively. Overall, people engaged in gainful occupation are maximum in domestic work where 21.2 and 21.3 per cent people are engaged in Barabanki and Shahjahanpur districts respectively. After domestic workers,Muslims are comparatively more as a casual labour in non-agricultural activity. Muslims are highest with 14.6 per cent in Barabanki and 16.2 per cent in Shahjahanpur when among Hindus this proportion is 8.6 and 11.5 per cent respectively. Another important occupation is of self-employed in which agriculture and trade, etc. come where in Barabanki Muslims are 9.7 per cent and in Shahjahanpur they are 4.8 per cent as compared to it Hindus are 15.9 per cent and 11.5 per cent respectively. The unemployment rate among Muslims is highest that is 2.4 per cent and 4.2 per cent in Barabanki and Shahjahanpur respectively when among Hindus this proportion is 1.0 and 1.6 per cent in both the districts respectively (see Table 3).

Table 3: **Religion-wise Percentage of People Engaged in Different Occupations in Barabanki and Shahjahanpur**

Occupation	Muslims		Hindus		Sikhs		Total	
	Barabanki	Shahjahanpur	Barabanki	Shahjahanpur	Barabanki	Shahjahanpur	Barabanki	Shahjahanpur
Self-employed	9.67	4.79	15.87	11.48	8.33	21.65	13.58	9.99
Regular salaried (government)	0.23	0.43	0.69	0.68	16.67	0.00	0.56	0.59
Regular salaried (Pvt. including domestic servants)	0.34	0.14	0.72	0.21	0.00	0.52	0.58	0.20
Casual labour non-agriculture	14.64	16.24	8.56	11.45	0.00	3.61	10.77	12.49
Casual agriculture labour	2.04	4.01	3.05	3.81	0.00	2.06	2.67	3.79
Unemployed	2.37	4.15	1.02	1.58	0.00	2.06	1.51	2.32
Only domestic work	22.56	22.03	20.40	20.93	33.33	22.16	21.22	21.29
Domestic work but also engaged in gainful economic activities	3.34	1.79	2.56	2.23	0.00	1.55	2.84	2.08

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Students	26.46	21.82	30.31	28.55	8.33	29.90	28.84	26.70
Retired/pensioners	0.06	0.43	0.39	0.15	0.00	2.06	0.27	0.30
Too old/too young (unable to work)	17.98	17.24	16.23	16.83	33.33	13.40	16.92	16.81
Others	0.34	6.94	0.20	2.11	0.00	1.03	0.25	3.43
Total Surveyed Population	1769 (100.0)	1398 (100.0)	3049 (100.0)	3363 (100.0)	12 (100.0)	94 (100.0)	4830 (100.0)	4955 (100.0)

Source: Based on Survey conducted by the author and his team at Giri Institute of Development Studies, Lucknow, 2008.

If we observe the workforce engaged in different industrial categories we find that maximum number of workers are engaged in agriculture. In Barabanki and Shahjahanpur districts Muslims engaged in agriculture are only 33.1 and 34.3 per cent respectively while among Hindus they are 62.0 and 63.9 per cent respectively in both the districts. Muslims are having very little agricultural land as compared to Hindus and Sikhs. The next important industrial category is construction where Muslims are 24.9 and 27.4 per cent respectively in both the districts while among Hindus they are only 5.5 and 7.8 per cent respectively. Similarly, manufacturing which involves cloth and carpet knitting or different types of embroideries where Muslims are 23.7 per cent engaged in Barabanki and 28.2 per cent in Shahjahanpur as compared to it Hindus are 17.5 and 19.2 per cent respectively. Muslim community is comparatively disadvantaged in economy as they don't have sufficient agricultural land and construction and manufacturing do not provide sufficient income. Therefore, the entire family members including school going children have to earn and thus education is neglected (see Table 4).

Table 4: Religion-wise Percentage of Employment by Industrial Categories of Workers in Barabanki and Shahjahanpur

Industrial categories	Muslims		Hindus		Sikhs		Total	
	Barabanki	Shahjahanpur	Barabanki	Shahjahanpur	Barabanki	Shahjahanpur	Barabanki	Shahjahanpur
Agriculture	33.08	34.29	62.04	63.90	33.33	82.46	51.64	57.22
Livestock	4.11	0.58	5.11	1.74	0.00	3.51	4.74	1.52
Fisheries	0.00	0.00	0.21	0.21	0.00	0.00	0.13	0.15

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Forestry	0.56	0.00	0.00	0.24	0.00	0.00	0.20	0.15
Construction	24.86	27.38	5.53	7.79	0.00	8.77	12.42	12.76
Manufacturing	23.74	28.24	17.52	19.18	0.00	0.00	19.71	20.67
Trade	7.29	3.17	3.96	1.44	0.00	0.00	5.14	1.81
Transport	3.18	2.88	1.46	1.33	0.00	5.26	2.07	1.89
Financial and administrative services	0.56	0.00	0.63	0.92	66.67	0.00	0.73	0.65
Education, health and other services	2.62	3.46	3.55	3.28	0.00	0.00	3.21	3.19
Total	535 (100.0)	347 (100.0)	959 (100.0)	975 (100.0)	3 (100.0)	57 (100.0)	1497 (100.0)	1379 (100.0)

Source: Based on Survey conducted by the author and his team at Giri Institute of Development Studies, Lucknow, 2008.

In our survey we found that 58.6 per cent Muslim households in Barabanki and 42.1 per cent in Shahjahanpur possess agricultural land while 86.6 and 73.0 per cent Hindus in Barabanki and Shahjahanpur respectively possess comparatively more agricultural land. The small size of land holding of less than 2.5 aces are with 93.7 per cent Muslim farmers in Barabanki and 88.5 per cent Muslim farmers in Shahjahanpur while among Hindus the same proportion is 83.3 and 78.4 per cent respectively. In Shahjahanpur Sikh community possess larger holdings and only 58.06 per cent Sikh farmers have less than 2.5 acres holding. Among Muslims the landless households are 41.4 per cent in Barabanki and 57.9 per cent in Shahjahanpur while among Hindus the landless are only 13.5 and 27.0 per cent respectively. In rural areas agricultural land is a permanent and reliable source of income for sustainable development of any community. However, among the Muslims there is a permanent drawback that either they are mostly landless or possess very small holding not sufficient to run a family (see Table 5).

Table 5: Religion-wise Percentage Distribution of Households by Size Category of Land Holdings in Barabanki and Shahjahanpur

Land Category	Muslims		Hindus		Sikhs		Total	
	Barabanki	Shahjahanpur	Barabanki	Shahjahanpur	Barabanki	Shahjahanpur	Barabanki	Shahjahanpur

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Landless Households	41.41	57.89	13.45	27.01	0.00	20.51	22.67	34.56
Households with Land	174(100) 58.89	96(100) 42.11	521(100) 86.55	462(100) 72.99	1 (100) 100.00	31 (100) 79.49	696 (100) 77.33	589 (100) 66.44
Below 1.00 Acres	70.69	50.00	49.90	32.47	0.00	12.90	55.03	34.30
1.00-2.50	22.99	38.54	33.40	45.88	0.00	45.16	30.75	44.65
2.50-5.00	4.02	8.33	10.56	15.80	0.00	6.46	8.91	14.09
5.00-7.50	1.15	2.08	2.88	3.67	0.00	3.23	2.44	3.40
7.50-10.00	0.00	1.05	2.11	1.74	100.00	12.90	1.72	2.21
10.00 & above	1.15	0.00	1.15	0.44	0.00	19.35	1.15	1.35
Total Households	297	228	602	633	1	39	900	900

Source: Based on Survey conducted by the author and his team at Giri Institute of Development Studies, Lucknow, 2008.

By summing up the above economic activities and income of different communities if we go through with the various types of assets with different communities we find that assets available with an average Muslim household is lowest in value terms. For example, with an average Muslim household the value of assets of agricultural equipments is Rs.1060 in Barabanki and in Shahjahanpur it is Rs.3476 which are about 10 times and 4 times less than the Hindu household. In transport Muslims have Rs.1487 and Rs.1099 assets in Barabanki and Shahjahanpur respectively which are roughly one-fourth and half of Hindu's respectively. If we add up all the assets we find that the total average assets of the average Muslim household comes to about Rs.4116 in Barabanki and Rs.9373 in Shahjahanpur which are about 6 and about two and a half times less than the average Hindu household respectively (see Table 6).

Table 6: Religion-wise Average Value of Assets (In rupees) per Household in Barabanki & Shahjahanpur

Asset	Muslim		Hindu	
	Barabanki	Shahjahanpur	Barabanki	Shahjahanpur
Agriculture Equipment	1060	3476	12069	12775
Transport	1487	1099	5019	2692

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Non-Agri. Equipment	136	131	547	348
Modern HH asset	323	969	1360	1307
Financial Asset	1111	3698	7458	6075
Gross Value	4116	9373	26453	23197

Source: Based on Survey conducted by the author and his team at Giri Institute of Development Studies, Lucknow, 2008.

Among the educated persons in sample villages Muslims are maximum at below primary or informal education in Barabanki and Shahjahanpur districts, i.e. 51.6 and 60.6 per cent respectively because most of the Muslim boys and girls are either not enrolled in any school or drop out after the elementary education. The result is that the proportion of Muslim students from middle school onwards go on declining. From matric onwards classes their proportion is not even half of educated Hindus. Obviously the economic hardship does not permit the Muslim population to avail the educational facilities even if these are available free of cost, with mid-day meal and scholarship (see Table 7).

Table 7: Religion-wise Percentage of Educational Level of Family Members in Barabanki and Shahjahanpur

Level of Education	Muslim		Hindu		Sikh		Total	
	Barabanki	Shahjahanpur	Barabanki	Shahjahanpur	Barabanki	Shahjahanpur	Barabanki	Shahjahanpur
Below primary or informal education	51.62	60.59	32.29	44.46	12.50	34.19	38.82	47.82
Primary	26.46	19.79	21.45	23.70	25.00	20.51	23.17	22.62
Upper primary	15.44	10.84	23.91	18.97	0.00	17.09	20.96	16.94
Matric/high school/secondary	3.35	3.61	11.68	6.06	37.50	10.26	8.91	5.67
Higher secondary/pre-university/intermediate	2.05	2.41	6.68	4.50	25.00	9.40	5.16	4.24
Technical diploma or certificate below degree	0.22	1.03	0.79	0.81	0.00	0.0	0.59	0.82
Technical/professional degree (Medical, Engineering, Law, M.A)	0.22	0.0	0.11	0.12	0.00	0.0	0.15	0.08
Graduate degree (General)	0.43	0.17	2.25	0.81	0.00	7.69	1.62	0.99
Post-graduate degree (General)	0.22	0.17	0.84	0.52	0.00	0.85	0.63	0.45
Total Educated	926	581	1781	1734	8	117	2715	2432

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100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
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Source: Based on Survey conducted by the author and his team at Giri Institute of Development Studies, Lucknow, 2008.

In Barabanki district 11.4 per cent and in Shahjahanpur 35.1 per cent Muslim children of below 15 years are never enrolled in any school while in case of Hindu children about 5.3 and 13.0 per cent are never enrolled. Among Muslims 8.3 per cent in Barabanki and 8.2 per cent in Shahjahanpur left schools after enrolment. About 74.3 per cent Muslim children go to government schools in Barabanki and 80.4 per cent in Shahjahanpur, 14.2 per cent in Barabanki and 13.5 per cent in Shahjahanpur go to private schools and 11.3 per cent in Barabanki and 6.1 per cent in Shahjahanpur go to Madarsa. Both in Barabanki and Shahjahanpur a few Hindu students are also enrolled in Madarsa. There are some Missionary school where Hindu and Sikh students go for education. Majority of schooling of all the communities is done through Hindi medium, except few schools which are mostly Madarsa are through Urdu medium. English medium schools are rare, whereas English is taught as a subject along with Hindi. A good proportion of children, most of them being Muslims, who dropped out from school revealed that they can't afford the fees/other expenses, work at home and need to earn (see Table 8).

Without raising the family income improvement of educational level among Muslims is impossible. Muslim children mostly dropout from the school for earning money to supplement the family income in order to avoid starvation. Majority of Muslims are landless or marginal farmers and therefore most of them are engaged in household industry and informal occupations where wages are squeezed by the entrepreneurs. Therefore, there is a need of easily accessible micro-financing, may be, through Shilpkar Credit Card similar to Kisan Credit Card.

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Table 8: Religion-wise Percentage of Enrollment, Dropout and Type of Education in Barabanki and Shahjahanpur

Educational Status	Muslim		Hindu		Sikh		All	
	Barabanki	Shahjahanpur	Barabanki	Shahjahanpur	Barabanki	Shahjahanpur	Barabanki	Shahjahanpur
Total Children (Below 15 year age)	520	470	830	1015	1	42	1351	1527
School going Children	460	305	786	883	1	40	1247	1228
Non School going children	60	165	44	132	0	2	104	299
Schooling Status								
Never Enrolled	11.54	35.11	5.30	13.00	0.00	4.76	7.70	19.58
Left after enrolment	8.27	8.20	6.75	5.43	0.00	0.0	7.33	5.95
Enrolled but irregular	2.31	2.95	1.33	2.38	0.00	0.0	1.70	2.44
Enrolled and regular	77.88	82.85	86.63	92.19	100.00	100	83.27	91.61
Characteristics of enrolled children								
Enrolled in Class I	21.46	26.92	20.76	18.33	100.00	29.73	21.09	20.84
Enrolled in Class II	17.80	20.83	17.13	19.23	0.00	10.81	17.36	19.38
Enrolled in Class III	16.59	15.71	14.51	12.67	0.00	10.81	15.27	13.38
Enrolled in Class IV	13.66	8.97	10.74	10.86	0.00	8.11	11.82	10.30
Enrolled in Class V	11.71	10.26	11.90	14.03	0.00	8.11	11.82	12.90
Enrolled in Class VI	7.56	6.73	12.19	7.81	0.00	5.41	10.46	7.46
Enrolled in Class VII	5.61	3.53	6.24	6.33	0.00	5.41	6.00	5.60
Enrolled in Class VIII	5.61	4.49	6.53	5.43	0.00	5.41	6.18	5.19
Left / Dropout in Class I	12	2	12	4	0.00	0.00	24	6
Left / Dropout in Class II	11	7	6	5	0	0.00	17	12
Left / Dropout in Class III	2	1	4	6	0	0.00	6	7
Left / Dropout in Class IV	1	3	3	3	0	0.00	4	6
Left / Dropout in Class V	12	5	11	11	0	0.00	23	16
Left / Dropout in Class VI	2	1	3	4	0	0.00	5	5
Left / Dropout in Class VII	0	1	3	4	0	0.00	3	5
Left / Dropout in Class VIII	2	4	14	2	0	0.00	16	6
Type of School Enrolled								
Govt	74.29	80.39	73.92	87.25	100.00	29.26	74.08	83.62
Private	14.16	13.50	25.57	12.30	0.00	63.42	21.35	14.29
Madarsa	11.33	6.11	0.38	0.34	0.00	0.00	4.41	1.77
Missionary	0.00	0.00	6.00	0.11	0.00	7.32	0.08	0.32
Medium of instruction								
Hindi	69.28	88.10	67.18	88.68	100.00	36.59	67.98	86.82
English	1.53	0.96	3.31	1.12	0.00	21.95	2.65	1.77
Hindi & English both	15.69	6.75	29.39	9.87	0.00	41.46	24.32	10.13
Urdu	13.51	4.18	0.13	0.34	0.00	0.00	5.06	1.29
Reason for Drop out								
Work at home	22.73	11.29	12.28	16.54	0.00	0.00	16.83	13.95
Need to earn	9.09	8.87	12.28	12.03	0.00	0.00	10.89	10.47

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Far distance of School	13.64	0.00	5.26	0.75	0.00	0.00	8.91	0.39
Lack facility in School	0.00	0.00	1.75	2.26	0.00	0.00	0.99	1.16
Fees/Expenditure not affordable	13.64	61.29	21.05	33.83	0.00	0.00	17.82	46.90

Source: Based on Survey conducted by the author and his team at Giri Institute of Development Studies, Lucknow, 2008.

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