

## EDUCATIONAL STATUS OF MUSLIM WOMEN IN KARNATAKA

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### ABSTRACT

Women's issues have received a lot of attention in post independence period and the nation is party to all international covenants and conventions like the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), CEDAW (1979), Protection of Rights of Children (1959, 1989) etc., Besides this the rights of women are guaranteed through the law of the land i.e. the Constitution through Right to Equality (Articles 14, 15, 16,), Fundamental Duties, Directive Principles of State Policy, etc., Apart from this, number of Commissions and Committees are also constituted to protect the rights of women and specially the Commission of Minorities, SC/ST etc., However, in spite of these pro active measures initiated by the state, we find that the position of women in general and minorities especially the Muslim women are in a deplorable position.

The sharp disparities and inequalities present in the Indian society are not free from the influence of caste, creed, religion and gender. *Gender gaps across all these layers make women and girls the most disadvantaged groups and deprived members of our society.* Any discussion on the present situation of minority women would be incomplete without looking at the situation of women in general and specifically among the minorities and the disadvantaged sections of population

Muslims constitute India's largest minority as well as the second largest Muslim population in the world after Indonesia. Educationally, Muslims constitute one of the most backward communities in the country causing concern. Muslim girls and women lag behind their male counterparts and women of all other communities. Muslims in Karnataka constitute about 12.23% in Karnataka.<sup>1</sup> Muslims and neo-Buddhists are considered as most backward in education. The 2001 census corroborates this. At the All India basis Jains have the highest literacy rate of 94.1%, followed by Christians (80.3%); Buddhists (72.7%); Sikhs (69.4%); Hindus (65.1%) and Muslims at 59.1%. The SC/ST who constitute 24.4% of the country's population have literacy rate of 52.2%.<sup>2</sup> In order to identify the socio-economic status of the minority community in the country, the Sachar Committee was constituted which made startling revelations on the conditions of the minorities in the country especially their social, economical and educational status and recommended for a 15 point program for their overall development.

“According to an ORG-Marg Muslim Women's Survey — commissioned by the Nehru Memorial Museum and Library, New Delhi — conducted in 2000-2001 in 40 districts spanning 12 states, the enrolment percentage of Muslim girl children is a mere 40.66 per cent. As a consequence, the proportion of Muslim women in higher education is a mere 3.56 per cent, lower even than that of scheduled castes (4.25 per cent).

On all-India basis, 66 per cent Muslim women are stated to be illiterate. The illiteracy is most widespread in Haryana while Kerala has least illiteracy among Muslim women closely followed by Tamil Nadu. Muslim women are

found to be more literate than their Hindu counterparts in the states of Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu. Most of the northern states are in urgent need of vigorous and sustained literacy campaigns”<sup>3</sup>

Educational and economic backwardness is not confined to any one particular religion. No religion gives equal status for women and this is true in case of Muslim women also and we find that Muslim women and girls are the most affected in terms of educational attainment when compared to all other minority sections. The reasons may be extreme poverty, educationally backwardness, religious bigotry etc. This paper hence analyses these fundamental rights of Muslim women and their educational and social status in Karnataka.

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- An Analytical Study of Muslim Women and Girls in India, Ministry of Women & Child Development
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**KEYWORDS:** Fundamental Duties, Startling Revelations



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