

# Educational Backwardness: An Analysis of Muslim Women in Dakshin Dinajpur District, West Bengal

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## Abstract:

Women Education is Very important for our country. This is not only because women constitute half of the population and therefore they naturally have a right to education but also because women's education has far reaching impact on the society as a whole. India is a country with diversities inhabiting various ethnic, cultural, linguistic and religious groups. After Independence, much emphasis was given to women's education, including Muslim women. Past researches on socio-economic profile of Muslims confirm that Muslims, especially women, remain socially, economically and educationally backward. The committee has clearly revealed that only 4 per cent Muslim population is educated and it is the most educationally and economically backward minority in the country. The present paper highlights the educational status of Muslim women of Dakshin Dinajpur District in particular. The study also draws on census data, secondary reports, and local observations to understand the patterns of literacy, enrolment, and dropout rates. It also examines the impact of government schemes such as Sarva Shiksha Mission, Kanyashree Prakalpa, and Sabuj Sathi on their educational development.

**Keyword:** Education, Muslim Women, Dakshin Dinajpur, Problem, Solution.

## Introduction:

The present paper explores the lived experiences of Muslim women. Islam has given so much importance to the education. Women empowerment is a critical development concern around the world, especially in developing nations. The prophet himself quoted that education is essential for Muslim man and woman to adequate knowledge. Women empowerment can be treated as a process by which women can enjoy greater control over material and intellectual resources that will enable themselves to have greater autonomy over household decision-making and economic resources. Women were allowed to work, subject to certain condition. It was the first time a human treatment and legal status was given to women. The Muslim women are enough educationally backward as compared to non-Muslim women. The social status of Muslim women in the Indian society is concerned that they are not fairly treated as equal to men in all the places. The best practices in Western societies are that women are recognized and given equal rights and status. Some kind of sufficient reasons behind the low literacy among Muslim women.

According to the census 2011, Muslims had a literacy rate of 59.1% which was far lower than the national average of 64.8% and the Non – Muslim community's 70.8%. The percentage of literate Muslim women was 50.1%, significantly lower than the percentage of literate Muslim men, which

was 67.6%. Muslims are the largest minority in West Bengal, where their proportion of the overall population is 27.01%. In this state, Muslim women's conditions are miserable in almost every aspect of development, including educational achievement, progressive work participation, political and economic empowerment etc. Islam does not give men the right to prioritize education over that of women. Both are encouraged to gain knowledge. Islam does not give men the right to prioritize etc. Islam emphasizes the acquisition and expansion of knowledge. Muslim women are significantly less educated than non-Muslim women. There are several reasons for Muslim women's low literacy rates, but the most important issues include poverty, domestic work, preference for male children, child marriage etc.

### **Literature Review:**

Review of related literature in this area of interest is an important part of the research process. In the present study, a review of related literature and previous research is attempted as follows:

Rahaman, H., and Barman, H. (2015) made a study on "Muslims and Education of West Bengal: Theory to Pragmatism". The main objective of the research was to highlight the educational status of Muslims in Bengal. It was sociological research based mainly on secondary sources. According to the study's conclusion, the government and NGOs must focus on the educational development of Muslims in West Bengal to achieve Socio-economic development.

Mukhopadhyay, H. (2008) conducted a study on, "The Role of Education in the Empowerment of Women in a District of West Bengal, India: Reflections on a Survey of Women". The study was to figure out the role of education in women's empowerment in the Malda district in West Bengal. The research was conducted through the survey method. According to the findings of this study, the status of women in the Malda district in West Bengal was lower than that of men.

Kumar, S. S. and Palanisamy, M. (2013), in their research paper "Impact of Education on women empowerment, in India" have highlighted, that education is crucial for women's empowerment, prosperity, welfare and development. This study focuses on how education affects women's empowerment and tries to understand the effects of Indian women's education during the Vedic, Buddhist and Muslim periods as well as the impact of Indian women's education during the British and Modern eras. This study attempts to find out the status of women in India, women's education reform etc.

Hossain, M.I (2013), in his research paper "Socio-Economic and Educational Status of Muslim Women: A Comparative Outlook" has described Muslims as the largest minority in West Bengal, with a special focus on Muslim women, who are lagging in all areas of development such as educational enrolment, socio-economic status and political participation due to a variety of factors affecting Muslim women. The author has collected data from both primary and secondary sources the census of the Government of India Report 2001 and relevant published literature.

### **Study Area:**

Dakshin Dinajpur spreads across 2162 Sq. Kms of land. It lies cushioned between Bangladesh on its east and south and Uttar Dinajpur on its north. To its west lies Uttar Dinajpur district and a part of its southern border lies adjacent to Malda district. Latitude : 26 deg 35' 15" N - 25 deg 10' 55" N, Longitude: 89 deg 00' 30" E - 87 deg 48' 37" E Geographical Area: 2162 Sq. Km

**Objectives:**

The objectives of the study are as follows:

1. To study the educational status and attainment of Muslim women of Dakshin Dinajpur district
2. To find out the factors affecting the education of Muslim women of Dakshin Dinajpur District.

**Methodology:**

Documentary studies constitute an important approach in social science research. In this study, documentary analysis has been followed. So, the study is documentary nature. It is based on official documents and secondary data. The conclusion made in the study was based on Secondary sources like books, the Journal reports, Census reports etc..

**Women Education in Dakshin Dinajpur:**

As per the 2011 Census, Dakshin Dinajpur district in West Bengal showed a literacy rate of around 73-74%, with male literacy higher than female literacy, though specific figures vary slightly between sources, with a common reported figure being 73.86% for the district, while some block-level data shows higher rates like 89.39% for Dakshin Dinajpur Block itself.

Dakshin Dinajpur showed strong female literacy in North Bengal around 2001, but efforts are now focused on reducing disparities, particularly for Scheduled Tribe and Muslim Women to achieve greater educational equity. Poor parents, village parents also arrange for girls to read and write at least some distance. However, child marriage is still prevalent in the village. Most parents in the city want their daughters to go to college. Many girls study up to secondary level in slum areas. The city also has many vocational schools for girls that help mayors become self-sufficient. However, it should be kept in mind that the education of Muslim women in Dakshin Dinajpur has improved a lot. At the moment, many measures have been taken in the West Bengal state to improve the education of Muslim women.

**Importance of Muslim Women Education:**

Women play a significant role in society – a wife, a mother, a sister, a caretaker, a nurse, etc. They have a better understanding of the social structure and are more compassionate towards the need of others. An educated mother will weigh the importance of female education, the same as boys.

- Women are progressively turning into a crucial segment of the economy and improvement through training.
- Through education, liberation and empowerment of women have to lead to economic gains in India.
- Women's education in the rural section of the country has played a crucial role in making them
- Employable.
- The government should lay essential accentuation on young lady youngster schooling and wellbeing in the country segment of India because of the high populace rate in towns contrasted with metropolitans.
- An educated woman contributes to the country's overall development through her role in the
- Army, social service, politics, education, corporate sector, etc.
- Women's education is essential for the eradication of various social crimes and evils prevalent In the society

**Dakshin Dinajpur Literacy Rate:**

Average literacy rate of Dakshin Dinajpur in 2011 were 72.82 compared to 72.82 of 2001. If things are looked out at gender wise, male and female literacy were 78.37 and 67.01 respectively. For 2001 census, same figures stood at 72.43 and 54.28 in Dakshin Dinajpur District. Total literate in Dakshin Dinajpur District were 1,083,685 of which male and female were 596,474 and 487,211 respectively. In 2001, Dakshin Dinajpur District had 799,479 in its district. But Muslim Women are not literate like this data.

**Dakshin Dinajpur District Sex Ratio:**

Dakshin Dinajpur district of West Bengal has a total population of 1,676,276 as per the Census 2011. Out of which 857,199 are males while 819,077 are females. In 2011 there were a total 396,406 families residing in Dakshin Dinajpur district. The Average Sex Ratio of Dakshin Dinajpur district is 956.



As per Census 2011 out of total population, 14.1% people live in Urban areas while 85.9% live in the Rural areas. The average literacy rate in urban areas is 88.7% while that in rural areas is 70.1%. Also the Sex Ratio of Urban areas in Dakshin Dinajpur district is 979 while that of Rural areas is 952. The population of Children of age 0-6 years in Dakshin Dinajpur district is 188135 which is 11% of the total population. There are 96143 male children and 91992 female children between the ages 0-6 years. Thus as per the Census 2011 the Child Sex Ratio of Dakshin Dinajpur is 957 which is greater than Average Sex Ratio (956) of Dakshin Dinajpur district.

**Religion-wise Population-Dakshin Dinajpur District:**

Religion	Total		Male	Female
Hindu	1,232,850	(73.55%)	630,344	602,506
Muslim	412,788	(24.63%)	211,350	201,438
Christian	24,794	(1.48%)	12,475	12,319
Sikh	276	(0.02%)	168	108
Buddhist	148	(0.01%)	64	84
Jain	323	(0.02%)	175	148
Other Religion	2,786	(0.17%)	1,400	1,386
No Religion Specified	2,311	(0.14%)	1,223	1,088

**Literacy Rate-Dakshin Dinajpur District:**

The total literacy rate of Dakshin Dinajpur district was 72.82% in 2011 which is less than average literacy rate 76.26% of West Bengal. Population-wise, out of total 1,083,685 literates, males were 596,474 while females were 487,211. Also the male literacy rate was 78.37% and the female literacy rate was 67.01% in Dakshin Dinajpur district. Muslim Women literacy rate is bellow than the average Female literacy rate.

	<b>Dakshin Dinajpur district</b>	<b>West Bengal</b>
Female	67.01%	70.54%
Male	78.37%	81.69%
Total	72.82%	76.26%

**Urban/Rural Population - Dakshin Dinajpur District:**

As per the Census 2011 out of total population of Dakshin Dinajpur, 14.1% people lived in urban regions while 85.9% in rural areas. The total urban population was 236,295 out of which 119,428 were males while the remaining 116,867 were females. In rural areas of Dakshin Dinajpur, male population was 737,771 while the female population was 702,210. The average sex ratio in urban regions of Dakshin Dinajpur was 979 females per 1000 males. Also the Child (0-6 age) sex ration of urban areas in Dakshin Dinajpur was 958 girls per 1000 boys. Thus the total children (0-6 age) living in urban areas of Dakshin Dinajpur were 18,628 which is 7.88% of total urban population. Similarly the average sex ratio in rural areas of Dakshin Dinajpur was 952 females per 1000 males. The Child sex ratio of rural areas in Dakshin Dinajpur was 957 girls per 1000 boys. The average literacy rate in Dakshin Dinajpur for urban regions was 88.68 percent in which males were 91.78% literate while female literacy stood at 85.52%. The total literate population of Dakshin Dinajpur was 1,083,685. Similarly in rural areas of Dakshin Dinajpur, the average literacy rate was 70.1 percent. Out of which the literacy rate of males and females stood at 76.11% and 63.79% respectively. Total literates in rural areas of Dakshin Dinajpur were 890,661.

	<b>Rural</b>	<b>Urban</b>
Population %	85.9%	14.1%
Total population	1,439,981	236,295
Male population	737,771	119,428
Female population	702,210	116,867
Sex ratio	952	979
Child sex ratio (0-6 age)	957	958
Child population	169,507	18,628
Literates	890,661	193,024
Average literacy	70.1%	88.68%
Male literacy	76.11%	91.78%
Female literacy	63.79%	85.52%

**Dakshin Dinajpur Census Stats:**

Total population	1,676,276
Literacy rate	72.82%
Sex ratio	956

**Problems of Muslim's Women Education in Dakshin Dinajpur:**

Muslim women are the most backward in Dakshin Dinajpur District and all over West Bengal. This backwardness has been going on for a long time. Muslim girls lag far behind other communities in education. The reasons for the backwardness of Muslim women in this regard are discussed below:

- **Poverty:** The main reason for the backwardness of Muslim women in terms of education is poverty. Most of the girls are involved in housework, so there are very few girls who go to school.
- **Conservatism:** Social conservatism is one of the obstacles to the expansion of Muslim women's education. This conservatism was especially prevalent among the Muslim backward communities and tribes.
- **Child marriage:** Child marriage is another obstacle to the expansion of Muslim women's education. Although there are laws about the rules of marriage, child marriage is still prevalent in poor families. As a result, many girls are forced to move away from education. Because of it is not possible to study after marriage.
- **Social oppression:** The social oppression on women was so strong that the society does not think about the education of women.
- **Contempt:** Women had no place of respect in society. Women were looked down upon. As a Result, no one thought about women's education.
- **Poor illiterate guardian:** Poor illiterate mothers especially in Muslim women are one of the obstacles in the way of expansion of women's education. Illiterate mothers prefer their children to do housework or to work in other families instead of studying. Mother's illiteracy is hampering children's literacy. As a result, Muslim women in West Bengal and Dakshin Dinajpur are drowning in an illiterate darkness in the society
- **Dowry system:** Dowry system is a serious problem in women's life in today's society. In many families, marriage is considered a lucrative business, and helpless fathers are forced to spend their entire lives saving their daughters in the hands of immoral young men. Failure to pay dowry can lead to domestic and psychological abuse of the bride, even brutal killings.
- **Worldly responsibilities:** Both men and women of farming and working families earn. But most of the responsibilities of the world have to be borne by women. Many women are left without treatment.
- **Lack of social awareness:** Even at the turn of the twentieth century, we have seen that despite raising awareness among Muslim women about different kinds of social awareness, they are falling into the category of those backward people. As a result, they do not have the right idea about their lives and this is why Muslim women are facing various problems.
- Many good girls are being barred from studying due to financial problems.
- It is very inconvenient for girls to get education in rural areas. Most schools do not have separate toilets for girls which is very inconvenient for girls.

The distance from the residence to the school became an obstacle in the way of education of Muslim women. Many girls are lagging behind in education due to poor transportation

### **Possible solution to the problem of Muslim women's education:**

Muslim women are lagging behind in terms of education, the Governments of India and West Bengal have taken various steps to improve their education, and many women have set up educational institutions. Below are some possible solutions to the problem of Muslim women's education:

- Everyone must come forward for the development of Muslim women's education. Those who Know the importance of education should inspire other children.
- Education needs to be made vocational. Education will increase the earning capacity of women. For this, women's education should be made vocational. One of the aims of education after women's primary education will be to build well-housewives, good mothers and good citizens.
- Parents need to be aware and send their children to school.
- Arranging various types of scholarships for the financially backward meritorious students. At Present Minority Scholarship is running on for Minority Students but Particular Scholarship is given to Minority Women for encourage the Muslim Women for Education.
- Each school has to have separate toilets for girls.
- Trained female teachers need to be recruited for teaching women.
- Provide technical education for girls. The girls will be able to be self-reliant and not dependent on anyone else.
- Family education is an important part of women's education. Women's education projects need to focus on the education of both children and parents.
- Poor students have to make arrangements to provide free clothes and books from one and a half schools. Now this facility has been implemented in elementary education in West Bengal. As a result, women who are deprived of the light of education despite their interest in education due to financial constraints will benefit a lot.
- Accommodation has to be arranged for the teacher to stay near the school without rent.
- All prejudices and conservatism must be eradicated in the field of women's education.
- We need to create opportunities for girls to do part-time jobs as well as get part time jobs. At the same time, girls need to increase their job opportunities for the whole time. In addition to teaching, nursing and social work, job opportunities need to be increased in other fields.
- Separate dormitories have to be built for girls to stay.
- Courses for older women need to be arranged for a short time.

In this way not only Dakshin Dinajpur District but also the State of Education of the whole community can be changed.

### **Conclusion:**

*“Education is the great engine of personal development. It is through education that the daughter of a peasant can become a doctor, that the son of a mineworker can become the head of the mine that a child of farm workers can become the president of a great nation. It is what we make out of what we have, not what we are given, that separates one person from another.”*

- Nelson Mandela.

A mother is said to be equal to 100 teachers. Because a mother can educate her child well and educate an entire family, so our job will be to further improve the education system for girls. The rate of female illiteracy in the country has significantly decreased since Independence; it remains a considerable challenge today. Both India as a whole and the state of West Bengal have made substantial progress in women's education. The Government of West Bengal has implemented numerous programs to further this development, including schemes such as the Aikyashree scholarship program, Kanyashree Prakalpa, and Sabooj Sathi, all of which are instrumental in promoting women's education in the Dakshin Dinajpur District.

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