

Examining the Educational Development of Muslims in Contemporary India in Alignment with the NEP 2020

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Received: 16-09-2024

Revised: 21-11-2024

Accepted: 04-12-2024

ABSTRACT

India is a country with a diverse demography, with multiple faiths, religions, castes, regions, and ethnicities and a complete package of plural societies. Minorities constitute approximately 20% of the total population, whereas Muslims constitute approximately 80% of the total minority population in India. The development of minorities in general and Muslim minorities in particular is equally important for contributing to the national economy. Education plays the most crucial role in the developmental race in the contemporary world; therefore, an examination of the educational development of Muslims and minorities is presented here. The paper also explores the financial dimensions of education in general and financing under the Ministry of Minority Affairs in particular. This paper further aims to explore the educational progress of Muslim minorities in light of the NEP-2020.

Keywords: Educational Development, Minorities & Muslims, NEP-2020

National Education Policy 2020 has given adequate emphasis to the education of SEDGs, which includes the education of all marginalized sections of society, such as SC/ST/OBC/Minorities/EWS/Divyangs/Slum Dwellers, etc. Minorities are among the significant segments of Indian demography that are given special status, constitutional safeguards and government support across policies in the post-independent era. Muslims constitute approximately 75% (3/4) of the total minority population in India; therefore, Muslims can also be considered the 2nd majority in India in terms of population. However, in regard to socioeconomic, political and educational development, Muslims could perform well neither as the majority nor as their other minority counterparts. Although the population has increased significantly, socioeconomic status has remained stagnant and has reached the level of SC/ST in India (Sachar Committee Report 2005).

Moreover, educational development among Muslims has lagged behind, but the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyaan 2001, Right to Education 2009, Rashtriya

Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan 2008 and Samagra Shiksha Scheme 2018, which cover the entire population uniformly, have resulted in the uniform educational development of Muslims and minorities along with other marginalized sections of society. The paper here makes an attempt to examine the educational development of Muslims in special education and minorities in general for both education levels: school education and higher education. Finally, it paves the way for Muslims' education to fall in alignment with the NEP 2020.

Objective of the study: The following objectives are formulated for the study.

- ❑ To find out the population growth of different religions in India and Muslim Minorities in Particular

How to cite this article: Pritam, B.P. and Shaikh, Z. (2024). Examining the Educational Development of Muslims in Contemporary India in Alignment with the NEP 2020. *Educational Quest: An Int. J. Edu. Appl. Soc. Sci.*, 15(03): 145-150.

Source of Support: None; **Conflict of Interest:** None



- ❑ To analyze the participation of Muslim minorities in different levels of schooling
- ❑ To find out drop-out rates among Muslim minorities at different levels of schooling
- ❑ To analyze the participation of Muslim minorities in copmarision with other marginalized groups at different levels of higher education
- ❑ To analyze the financial expenditure pattern across the years in education in general and through the Ministry of Minority Affairs in particular

Results and Interpretations: Results and interpretation are analyzed in the subsequent sections in a tabular form followed by the descriptive interpretations.

1. Population growth among Muslims

These data indicate that the population growth rate(%) of the Hindu community in India was 20.7 in the decade of 1951-61, and this growth rate decreased to 16.7 in 2001–11. This growth rate was less than the total population growth rate every decade. Additionally, the population growth of the Muslim community was 32.5 in 1951-61, which was 24.7 in 2011. The population growth rate of the Muslim community was significantly higher per decade than the total population growth rate of India. The data on Christian population growth indicate that it was 29.0 in 1991, which decreased to 15.7 in 2001-11. Compared with India's total population rate, it was higher in the three decades of 1951-61, 1961-71 and 1991-2001, whereas it was lower in the remaining three decades of 2001-11, 1971-81, and 1981-91.

Table 1 shows the growth of Hindu, Muslim, and Christian communities and the total population of India over the decades from 1951-2011.

Table 1: Population growth across religions

Between Census Years	Hindus	Muslims	Christians	All Population
2001-11	16.7	24.7	15.7	17.7
1991-2001	19.9	29.4	22.6	21.5
1981-91	22.7	32.9	17.8	23.9
1971-81	24.0	30.7	17.0	24.7
1961-71	23.7	30.9	33.0	24.8
1951-61	20.7	32.7	29.0	21.6

Source: Census of India 2011.

Overall, population growth is observed across religious communities and is slightly greater among Muslims than among others, whereas the trend shows that the growth rate has been decreasing across religious communities, including Muslims in India.

2. Share of Muslims with different levels of education in India

The data below show the participation of the Muslim community in education at different levels from 2013-2022. The observations clearly revealed that the participation of the Muslim community in education at the primary level was between 14.34 and 15.62 during these years. Moreover, participation at the upper primary level was between 12.52 and 14.41. At the secondary level, it is between 9.87 and 12.61. At the same time, it is between 8.27 and 10.76 at the higher secondary level. The participation of the Muslim community in total school education has been between 12.70 and 14.31. In conclusion, the participation of the Muslim community in school education has been highest in primary-level education, whereas participation in higher secondary education has been relatively lower than that in other levels and total school education.

Table 2: Participation in Muslim minorities at different levels of education

Year	Primary	Upper Primary	Secondary	Hr Secondary	Total
2021-22	15.62	14.41	12.61	10.76	14.31
2020-21	15.64	14.26	12.61	10.46	14.26
2019-20	15.38	13.87	12.27	9.89	13.95
2018-19	14.60	13.04	11.49	8.89	13.12
2017-18	14.70	13.11	11.23	9.05	13.20
2016-17	14.99	13.01	10.82	8.66	13.25
2015-16	14.43	12.60	10.24	8.05	12.72
2014-15	14.37	12.60	10.02	8.34	12.73
2013-14	14.34	12.52	9.87	8.27	12.70

Source: UDISE+ 2013-14 to 2021-22.

3. Dropout rates at different levels of education among Muslims in India

The above graph shows the dropout rate of the Muslim community in school education. According to observations, the dropout rate of Muslim

community students is 3.5 at the primary level, 5.6 at the upper primary level, and 18.6 at the secondary level. In terms of gender, the dropout rate of students is almost the same at all levels. Overall, the lowest dropout rate is at the primary level, whereas the highest dropout rate is at the secondary level.

Table 3: Drop Out among Muslim Minority

Level of Education	Boys	Girls	Total
Primary level	3.7	3.2	3.5
Upper primary level	5.6	5.7	5.6
Secondary level	18.6	18.7	18.6

Source: UDISE+ 2021-22.

4. Muslim-minority in higher education

The below given data show the percentage of participation of Muslim, SC, ST, and OBC communities in higher education from 2010-2022. In 2010, the participation of the Muslim community in higher education was 3.8, which increased 8.4 in 2022. At the same time, the participation of the STs community in higher education was 4.4 in 2010, which increased at pace to 8.1 in 2022. At the same time, the percentage of the SC community in higher education was 11.1 in 2010, which increased to 18.2 in 2022, and the percentage of the OBC community was 27.6 in 2010, which increased to 41.2 in 2022. In conclusion, the highest growth rate and participation in higher education of the above four communities were found in the OBC community, whereas the lowest growth rate and participation were found in the ST community.

Table 4: Comparative analysis of Muslims and other social categories in HE

Year	Muslim (%)	STs (%)	SCs (%)	OBCs (%)
2010-11	3.8	4.4	11.1	27.6
2011-12	3.9	4.5	12.2	30.1
2012-13	4.2	4.4	12.8	31.2
2013-14	4.3	4.6	13.1	32.4
2014-15	4.5	4.8	13.4	32.8
2015-16	4.7	4.9	13.9	33.75
2016-17	4.9	5.1	14.2	34.4
2017-18	5.0	5.2	14.4	35.0
2018-19	5.2	5.5	14.9	36.3
2019-20	5.5	5.6	14.7	37
2020-21	5.6	5.8	14.2	35.8
2021-22	8.4	8.1	18.2	41.2

Source: AISHE 2010-2011 to 2021-22.

Gender-wise GER in Higher Education among Muslims

The table 5 shows the gross enrollment ratios of women and men in the Muslim community in higher education. An observation of the graph clearly shows that from 2016-2018, the gross enrollment ratios of women and men in the Muslim community in higher education were almost the same, after which a difference in this percentage was observed from 2019-2022, and the gross enrollment ratio of women in higher education started increasing continuously. In 2018-19, the GER of men was 8.9, whereas that of women was 9.5. After this, from 2020-2021, the GER for men was 9.3, and that for women was 10.3. Furthermore, from 2021-22, the GER for men was 8.4, and that for women was 9.4. On this basis, the gross enrollment ratio of women in higher education is higher than that of men.

Table 5: GER in Higher Education for Male and Female

Year	Male	Female
2016-17	8.3	8.2
2017-18	8.4	8.9
2018-19	8.9	9.5
2019-20	9.0	9.8
2020-21	9.3	10.3
2021-22	8.4	9.4

Source: AISHE 2016-17 to 2021-22.

5. Financial Expenditure on Education (Overall and MMA)

The table below displays details of India's budget expenditures from 2006-07 to 2023-24. The following represents India's overall budget for all sectors. The plan and nonplan budget details for India's entire higher education budget are next provided. Additionally, a percentage of the overall budget explains the education budget. Additionally, the annual change in the education budget is explained via the percentage of the education budget. Following this, the (MMA) Ministry of Minority Affairs' budget is presented in its specifics. It shows the Ministry of Minority Affairs' overall budget as well as the percentage change in the ministry's budget over the last 18 years (2006-07 to 2023-24).

As far as India's total budget expenditure is concerned, according to the table data, the whole budget of India, which includes all sectors, was 563991 crores in 2006–07, and it has increased almost 8 times in 18 years, reaching 4503097 crores in 2023–24. Whereas India's Education budget, the total expenditure for schools and higher education in India was 24114.99 crores in 2006–07, and as of 2023–24, it has increased to 112899.47 crores, on the basis of the education budget of India, as displayed in the above table. During these eighteen years, India's education budget rose in certain years and fell in others. However, it is evident from looking at the percentage of India's overall budget that goes toward education that, throughout these 18 years, the percentage of the budget for education has been declining relative to the budget for the previous year.

In addition, the entire spending for education in 2006–07 constituted 4.28 % of India's overall budget of that year. Furthermore, the education budget's share of the total budget increased slightly from 2007–2008, reaching 4.75 %. Following this, the percentage of the education budget was 4.36 % in 2009–10 and 4.5 % in 2010–11. Additionally,

the education budget reached its greatest level in these 18 years from 2011–12, accounting for 5.04% of the overall budget. Following this, the budget for education decreased once more to 4.97% of the overall budget from 2012–2013. The budgets for education in the following years, 2013–2014 and 2014–2015, were 4.77% and 4.61% of India's total budget, respectively.

The data compiled on the education budget for the aforementioned years make it evident that between 4% and 5% of the entire budget was still allocated to education in India. During these eighteen years, the education budget could not exceed this threshold. Aside from the years mentioned above, India's education expenditure as a percentage of the overall budget continues to decline, reaching 2.68% from 2021–2022 and 2.64% from 2022–2023. Following this, the budgetary allocation for education fell to its lowest level from 2023–2024, remaining at 2.51 %.

India's education budget change rate

Compared with that in the previous year, the percentage of the education budget experienced a notable decline of -21.98 % from 2008–09, as shown by the change rate of the percentage of the budget.

Table 6: Financial statements: Total budget, educational budget and MMA budget

Year	India Total budget	MHRD-Total	Education %	% growth in Education	Total budget (MMA) %	Total MHRD (MMA) %	% Change MMA
2006-07	563991	24114.99	4.28	—	0.02	0.55	—
2007-08	680520	32351.72	4.75	11.18	0.03	0.61	48.94%
2008-09	750883	27850	3.71	-21.98	0.08	2.22	214.78%
2009-10	1020837	44528.21	4.36	17.61	0.17	3.84	176.15%
2010-11	1108749	49904	4.5	3.19	0.18	4.03	17.52%
2011-12	1257728	63363	5.04	11.93	0.18	3.60	13.67%
2012-13	1490925	74056	4.97	-1.4	0.14	2.91	-5.49%
2013-14	1665297	79451	4.77	-3.95	0.18	3.78	39.34%
2014-15	1794891	82771.1	4.61	-3.34	0.17	3.71	2.06%
2015-16	1777477	69074.76	3.89	-15.73	0.20	5.26	18.34%
2016-17	1978060	72394	3.66	-5.82	0.15	4.17	-16.82%
2017-18	2146734	79685.95	3.71	1.42	0.19	5.19	37.02%
2018-19	2442213	85010.29	3.48	-6.23	0.16	4.53	-6.92%
2019-20	2784199	93847.64	3.37	-3.16	0.16	4.80	16.93%
2020-21	3042230	99311.52	3.26	-3.15	0.13	4.03	0.02%
2021-22	3483235	93224.31	2.68	-18.01	0.12	4.64	0.03%
2022-23	3944908	104277.72	2.64	-1.23	0.02	0.80	-80.63%
2023-24	4503097	112899.47	2.51	-5.15	0.02	0.91	23.27%

Sources: Union Budget (2006-07 to 2023-24), Ministry of Finance.

Following this, in 2012-13, 2013-14, and 2014-15, the percentage of the education budget decreased by -1.4%, -3.95%, and -3.34%, respectively. Since 2012-2013, the percentage of the budget allocated to education has been declining. The year 2017-18 was the sole exception to this rule.

Furthermore, the education budget experienced a notable decrease of -15.73% from 2015-2016. The following year, 2016-17, had a further reduction of -5.82% in the percentage of the total educational budget. There was a decline of -6.23 % in 2018-19, -3.16 % in 2019-20, and -3.15 % in 2020-21 in the share of the education budget. Following this, there was another significant decrease of -18.01% in the share of the budget allocated to education from 2021-2022. Following the same pattern, the percentage of the education budget decreased by -1.23 and -5.15 % in 2022-2023 and 2023-2024, respectively.

Budget of the Ministry of Minority Affairs

It is evident from the Ministry of Minority Affairs' budget that, after India's overall budget and education budget were evaluated, the Ministry's overall budget in 2006-07 was 132.03 crores, and in 2023-24, it increased almost eight times to 1032.65 crores. The budget of the Ministry of Minority Affairs continued to fluctuate between rising and falling over these 18 years.

Additionally, on the basis of the table, it can be concluded that the Ministry of Minority Affairs' budget increased by 214% from 2008-09 compared with that of the previous year. The current budget increased by 176.15% from 2009-10, the following year. Furthermore, the budget of the Ministry of Minority Affairs fell by -5.49% from 2012-13. From 2016-2017, the Ministry of Minority Affairs' budget experienced an external reduction of -16.82%. In the same declining order, the budget decreased by -6.92 % in 2018-19, whereas it changed ineffectively by 0.02 % in 2020-21 and 0.03% in 2021-22. The Ministry of Minority Affairs' budget then experienced the largest decrease in 18 years from 2022-2023, with a decrease of -80.63%.

Contextualizing with NEP 2020

Analyzing the trends of financial expenditure, allocation, budgeting and enrollment trends of minorities in general and Muslims in particular,

much to be done in the coming years to achieve the goals of National Education Policy 2020 for particular subsections of society. NEP 2020 has set the target to achieve 100% GER in school education and 50% GER in higher education by the year 2035. This particular target needs higher budgetary allocations and enhancement in the enrollment of school education with immediate effects. In addition, the dropout rates should be minimized in the coming years for particular subsections of minority groups.

With respect to higher education, the educational development of Muslim minorities has lagged behind for years (Sachar Committee Report 2005). The gross enrollment ratio of Muslim minorities registered at the lowest level just above the level of scheduled tribes in India. The continuous degradation in financial allocation toward the education sector, increasing privatization in higher education, decreasing financial allocation to the Ministry of Minority Affairs, etc., are some of the significant reasons for the slower educational development of Muslim minorities in India. In addition, there is a large segment within Muslim minorities named the most backward Muslims, or "Pashmanda" Muslims have a larger share in regressive development. To meet the goals of the NEP-2020, these particular subsections among Muslim minorities need special attention.

CONCLUSION

The present scenario of the education development of Muslims is positive at the school education level, but in regard to higher education, the educational achievements are negative. Falling in line with NEP-2020, it seems difficult to achieve the larger goal of achieving 50% GER by Muslims in the year 2035. Special provisions and programmes are needed to meet GER challenges, and multiple segments of society need to contribute, such as parents. Civil society, religious and charitable organizations, state governments, etc., as well as a rethinking of whether everyone needs higher education or vocational education should also be included in the realm of higher education to address these challenges, are needed.

An increase in the financial allocation of the Ministry of Minority Affairs and the Ministry of Education needs immediate action, and policy-level

mitigations to increase enrollment and manage dropout rates are needed to meet the future challenges and goals of the NEP-2020. A special task force or subplan is also needed for “Pashmanda” Muslims to bring into mainstream society so that the holistic development of minorities in general and Muslim minorities, in particular, can be achieved, which can be in alignment with the targets of the National Education Policy 2020.

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