

# Scientific Appraisal for Minority Education: A Milestone for developing India.

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## ABSTRACT

The UN Sub-Commissions define minority as a group numerically inferior to the rest of the population of a state, which possess and wish to preserve stable ethnic, religious or linguistic traditions. According to the Union Government of India, six religious communities' viz., Muslims, Christians, Sikhs, Buddhists, Zoroastrians (Parsis), and Jains have been notified as minority communities in India. OBCs are 45-50 %, SCs around 20 % and STs around 10 % and the rest 25 % are in General category.

The Constitution states that, "The state shall promote, with special care, the education and economic interests of the weaker sections of the people, and in particular of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, and shall protect them from social injustice and all forms of social exploitation."

There are many educational policies and schemes for the upliftment of minorities in India like Nai Udaan, Seekho aur Kamao, Saakshar Bharat etc.

The University Grants Commission (UGC) provides financial assistance to the universities for the establishment of special cells for SC/STs. These cells help universities enforce the reservation policy in student admission and staff recruitment processes for teaching and non-teaching jobs. Factors for low participation of Muslims in Higher education are family expectations to take up a job, value for traditional profession in the family, compulsion to start earning soon to support the family, inability to break the chain of family profession etc.

The states of Delhi, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal etc. have set up Minorities Commission to look after the concerns related to Minorities in their respective states.

The core areas for educational advancement in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century included the universalization of elementary education, achievement of full adult literacy, raising the quality of education at all levels, upliftment of the educational status of disadvantaged groups like SCs, STs, removal of regional disparities, environment education etc.

## 1. Introduction

Minorities are an important and integral part of our country. Minority Education is a milestone in the progress of our country and it is also essential for enhancement of the living standards and the status of India.

### 1.1 Why Education?

Literacy is the first step to education. Education is a tool for socio-economic transformation. A well-educated population, adequately equipped with knowledge and skill is not only essential to support economic growth of the country, but is also a pre-requisite for growth to be inclusive since it is an educated and a skilled person who can prosper most from the employment opportunities. It is required for the long-term development of the country and for improving the living standards of people. It makes a person open-minded and ready for opportunities.

### 1.2 Different Minorities in India

The UN Sub-Commissions in Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities define minority as a group numerically inferior to the rest of the population of a state, which possess and wish to preserve stable ethnic, religious or linguistic traditions.

According to the Union Government of India, six religious communities' viz., Muslims, Christians, Sikhs, Buddhists, Zoroastrians (Parsis), and Jains have been notified as minority communities in India.

As per the Census report 2001, The percentages of minority population i.e, Muslims, Christians, Sikhs, Buddhists, Jain and Zoroastrians (Parsis) and their literacy rates are as under:

S.No.	COMMUNITIES	NO. OF PEOPLE IN INDIA	PERCENTAGE OF POPULATION	PERCENTAGE OF LITERACY
1	Muslims	17.22 crores	14.2 %	59.1 %
2	Christians	2.78 crore	2.3 %	80.3 %
3	Sikhs	2.08 crore	1.9 %	69.4 %
4	Buddhists	0.84 crore	0.8 %	72.7 %
5	Jain	0.45 crore	0.4 %	94.1 %
6	Zoroastrians (Parsis)	0.0078 crore	0.007 %	47 %

According to 'Sachar Committee Report', one-fourth of the Muslim children in the age group of 6-14 years have either never have attended school or are drop-outs. For the children above the age of 17 years, the educational acquirement of Muslims at matriculation is 17 %, as against the national average of 26 %. Only 50 % of Muslims who complete middle school are likely to complete secondary education, compared to 62 % at national level. The report has also drawn attention to the low levels of education acquirement among Muslim women, Muslims in rural areas as well as in higher studies.

The 2001 Census shows the Jains with a literacy rate of 94.1 % are the most educated. They are followed by Christians (80.3 %), Buddhists (72.7%), Sikhs(69.4%), Hindus(65.1%), and Muslims(59.1%).

OBCs are 45-50 %, SCs around 20 % and STs around 10 % and the rest 25 % are in General category.

### 1.3 Constitutional Provisions to Education

Article 46 of the Constitution states that, “The state shall promote, with special care, the education and economic interests of the weaker sections of the people, and in particular of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, and shall protect them from social injustice and all forms of social exploitation.” Articles 330, 332, 335, 338 to 342 and the entire fifth and sixth schedules of the constitution deals with special provisions for the enforcement of the aims set forth in Article 46. Article 30 (1) provides the rights to the minorities to establish and administer educational institutions of their choice. Accordingly, different minority groups in the country have set up various educational institutions. These institutions also need direction and support for improving the quality of education in these institutions. In addition, these are entitled to reserve specific quota of seats for students and belonging to their own communities. These provisions need to be fully utilized for the progress of the disadvantaged sections of the society.

Shri Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi has assumed the office as a Minister of State for Minority Affairs on Wednesday, July 13, 2016 in New Delhi.

## 2. Educational Policies And Schemes for Minorities In India

### 1. Nai Udaan

Government of India, Ministry of Minority Affairs is implementing the scheme Nai Udaan to support minority students for the preparation of Main examination, who clear Prelims conducted by Union Public Service Commission, State Public Service Commission's etc.

The aim of this scheme is to provide financial support to the minority candidates clearing prelims to prepare them to compete for appointment to Civil Services in the Union and State Governments and to increase the representation of the minority in the Civil Services.

### 2. Seekho Aur Kamao

Seekho aur Kamao (Learn and Earn) is a scheme implemented since 2013-14 for skill development of minorities, which can bring them employment or make them appropriately skilled to opt for self-employment. The scheme aims at upgrading the skills of minority youth in various modern/traditional skills depending upon their qualification, present economic trends and market potential, which can bring them appropriate profession.

### 3. Maulana Azad National Fellowship for Minority Students Scheme

The main aim of this fellowship is to provide integrated five year fellowships in the form of financial assistance to students from minority communities, as notified by the Central government to aim for higher studies in M. Phil and Ph.D. etc. The fellowship students under this fellowship are known as Ministry of Minority Affairs Scholars. This will help them to be eligible for employment to the posts with M. Phil and Ph.D. as pre-requisites, including the posts of lecturers in various academic establishments.

### 4. Right Of Minorities to establish and administer educational institutions

All minorities, whether based on religion or language, shall have the right to establish and administer educational institutions of their own choice.

#### 5. Padho Pradesh

The aim of this scheme is to provide interest subsidy to meritorious students belonging to economically weaker sections of notified minority communities so as to provide them better opportunities for higher studies abroad and hence, enhance their employability.

#### 6. Scheme of Coaching for SC/ST students and minority community candidates for National Education Testing (NET)

Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes have been identified as the most depressed and oppressed groups of Indian society constituting about 15 % and 7.5 % respectively, of the total Indian population. In order to protect their interests in this country, certain arrangements have been made to enhance the situation of these people socially and academically so that they can take their appropriate position in the community.

The main aim of this scheme is to prepare SC/ST and minority community candidates to appear in the National Educational Testing (NET) so that sufficient number of candidates becomes available for the selection of lecturer in the University.

#### 7. Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA-

Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan looks forward to the issues of access, equality and quality and makes schools open and inclusive in the civil space of our community. The coverage of the scheme has been concurrently extended to recognize volunteering Madarsas/Maktabs supported under SSA as well as those volunteering Madradsas/Maqtabs which may not be registered or recognized but supported under SSA interventions in coordination with State Project Directorates.

#### 8. Saakshar Bharat

The Ministry has launched 'Saakshar Bharat', a new wing of the 'National Literacy Mission' on 08-09-2009 with an aim to make 70 million non-literate adults literate by the end of the 11<sup>th</sup> plan. The Scheme has special attention on minority women. It is destined to cover 12 million Muslims under this program.

Saakshar Bharat has been implemented in 4210 districts where female literacy is less than 50 %.

#### 9. Scheme for providing quality education in Madrasas (SPQEM)

Under this scheme, during the year 2011-12, Rs. 139.53 crore has been released to 9 states for allocation of teachers, book bank/science kits, computer lab and teacher's training etc. to Madrasa teachers teaching modern subjects.

#### 10. Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan

The Scheme of Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan provides coverage of special focus groups viz., girls' education, children belonging to SC, ST, OBC and educationally backward minorities, which was launched in March, 2009 with the aim to enhance access to secondary education and improve its quality.

#### 11. National Commission for Minority Education Institutions (NCMEI)

The National Commission for Minority Education Institutions has been established by an act of parliament with the aim of ensuring that the educational rights dedicated in Article 30 (1) of the

Constitution is made available to the members of the notified religious minority communities, including the Muslims.

### **3. Reservation For Minorities in India**

Reservation in India is a series of affirmative action's undertaken through reserving access to seats in different legislatures, government jobs and to enrollment in higher education institutions for castes and tribes recognized in the list of scheduled castes and scheduled tribes.

The reservation is undertaken to address the historic oppression, inequality and discrimination faced by the members of dalit and other minority communities, creating great social, economic and political disadvantage against them. It has been created to realize the promise of equality dedicated in the constitution.

In India, most of the scholarships or student aid is provided to SCs, STs, and OBCs, women, Muslims and other minorities.

The University Grants Commission (UGC) provides financial assistance to the universities for the establishment of special cells for SC/STs. These cells help universities enforce the reservation policy in student admission and staff recruitment processes for teaching and non-teaching jobs.

### **4. Present Scenario in Minority Education**

The Gross Attendance Ratio (GAR) of Muslims stands 8.7 % as opposed to 16.8 % GAR of Non-Muslims in higher education. There is a wide variation in the participation within Non-Muslim community as we move from ST, SC, OBC and others. It varies from 6.26 % in the case of ST to 10.52 % in the case of SC, 14.27 % in the case of OBC to 29.56 % in the case of others. There is no such wide variation in the participation within Muslim community as we move from ST, SC, OBC and others. GAR of ST is 5.6 %, SC is 14.2 %, OBC is 8.7 % and that of others is 8.6 %.

Factors for low participation of Muslims in Higher education are family expectations to take up a job, value for traditional profession in the family, compulsion to start earning soon to support the family, inability to break the barrier of family profession etc.

The National Minority Education Monitoring Committee has been scheduled in the National Policy on Education and it will look into the affairs of acknowledgement and affiliation of minority educational institutions, problems of these institutions, enforcement of the existing schemes related to minorities and advises the government on contemporary approaches towards the traditional methods of instruction.

The Government also established a Commission for Minority Educational Institutions that will provide direct affiliation for Minority professional institutions to the Central Universities.

Districts with low female literacy and with a concentration of educationally backward sections of the society, SCs and STs were identified for enforcing District Primary Education Program (DPEP) defilement by the respective states, whereas the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) covers all the districts of the states, up to the elementary level. SSA was launched in 2001-02, and as a flagship-umbrella program, it continued to build upon other primary and elementary education projects of the Government of India like DPEP, Lok Jumbish, Janshala etc. while at the same time, extending the coverage of the initiative up to class 8<sup>th</sup> i.e., the



elementary level, beyond the primary classes. These programs address access and retention of the most disadvantaged sections of the society, like SCs, STs, OBCs and other minorities, who continue to stay out of schools for various reasons and also drop-outs before completing the first stage of elementary education, through arbitrations like Alternative Schooling.

## 5. Conclusion

To address the low participation of the minorities especially Muslims who are the largest section of the educationally backward minorities, in the national education system, The Ministry of Human Resource Development has taken several significant initiatives like Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA), Mid-day-meal (MDM), Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalayas (KGPVs), Saakshar Bharat, Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan etc.

The states of Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Karnataka, Delhi, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal etc. have set up Minorities Commission to look after the concerns related to Minorities in their respective states. All the people falling in minority communities in India get assets in education and employment opportunities.

The core areas for educational advancement in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century included the universalization of elementary education, achievement of full adult literacy, raising the quality of education at all levels, up-liftment of the educational status of disadvantaged groups like SCs, STs, removal of regional disparities, environment education etc. leading to better society and stronger India.

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