



Attitude of Muslim Women towards Education and Gender Disparity in Kashipur, Uttarakhand, India

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<p>Article Info</p> <p>Article History Received on: 25 March, 2024 Accepted in Revised Form on: 15 May, 2024 Available Online on and from: 21 June, 2024</p> <p>Keywords Education, Gender Disparity, Muslim Women, Disparity Index, Gender Gap, Gender Parity Index.</p> <p>Licenses CC: by-nc-nd/4.0/</p>	<p>Abstract</p> <p><i>In 2011, Muslims accounted for 13.95% of the total population in Uttarakhand. However, the proportion of Muslims varies by district. For instance, the majority of Muslims in Uttarakhand are concentrated in districts bordering Uttar Pradesh, located in the Bhabar - Terai regions like Udham Singh Nagar, Haridwar, Nainital, Dehradun, and Pauri Gharwal. The Muslim majority population is found in two districts of Uttarakhand, viz. Haridwar (34.28%) and Udham Singh Nagar (22.58%) respectively. The study was conducted in the Kashipur city of Udham Singh Nagar district, where Islam is known as the second major religion having approximately 35.06% followers. Education can improve the status of Muslim women by raising awareness of their rights and assisting them in making appropriate decisions. A wide gender disparity in education indicates that men and women develop differently. Making education inclusive positively impacts several developmental indicators. However, despite various efforts, Muslim women in Kashipur are on the back foot in every domain of life including education. In the present study, the factors that are responsible for this scenario have been studied. This study tries to find out the gender gap in education and the different levels of educational attainment of Muslim women in Kashipur City, Uttarakhand which ultimately leads to making appropriate policies to reduce it. To analyze gender disparity, different kinds of statistical techniques such as Percentages, Sopher's disparity index, and GPI. etc., are used.</i></p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>©All Rights Reserved: ISSS 2024</i></p>
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Introduction

According to the Census 2011, the Muslim population of Uttarakhand was 14.07 lakh out of the total population of 1.01 crore. Islam is the second major religion in the state of Uttarakhand (with 13.95% followers). However, the proportion of Muslim varies from one district to another. For instance, the majority of Muslims in Uttarakhand are concentrated in the districts bordering Uttar Pradesh. These are located in the Bhabar-Terai region, like Udham Singh Nagar, Hardwar, Nainital, Dehradun and Pauri Gharwal. Muslim majority population is found in two districts of Uttarakhand which are Hardwar (34.28%) and Udham Singh Nagar (22.58%) respectively. Less than 2% of the Muslim population share is found in the hill districts of Uttarakhand, viz., Almora, Chamoli, Bageshwar, Pithoragarh, Rudraprayag, Tehri Garhwal, and Uttarkashi. The present study has been conducted in Kashipur city (35.06% Muslim population) of Udham Singh Nagar district. As reported by the Sachar committee, Muslim girls are much

poor than girls from other castes and Muslims lack access to quality education. About 25% of Muslim children have not attended school, only 4% are graduates and only one out of every twenty Muslims is a postgraduate. Thus, Muslim girls' conditions are much worse. Education may significantly contribute to societal development. Muslim women's status can be improved through education, by raising awareness of their rights and assisting them in making appropriate decisions. A wide gender disparity in education indicates that men and women develop differently. Making education inclusive positively impacts several developmental indicators. The findings of the study show that social and economic conditions and illiteracy among the parents are the major barriers to Muslim girl's education. Education also reduces disparities and serves to improve their status within the family. It is the cornerstone of socio-economic advancement. Educated women support education for their female children and provide better direction for their entire family and society. This study aims to assist the policymakers and government in



designing specific policy measures for Kashipur, Uttarakhand, to reduce barriers to Muslim women's education and increase enrollment. 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 (Jabeen, 2008). Education leads to women's empowerment in various fields like decision-making, earning, and political participation (Tarique, 2013). Essential development policies should be made to promote gender equity and increase the welfare of women.



Fig.1: Location of the Study Area

The Study Area

Kashipur city is located in the Udham Singh Nagar district of Uttarakhand, India (Fig.1). It is situated in the western part of the district at 29°22'N and 78°95'E in the terai region of relatively low-lying land, ranging between 150m and 300 m above sea level and crossed by Kumaun's main north-south watershed between the basins of the river Ramganga and Kosi (Gazetter 1909). It is the third most populous city in Kumaun and the sixth most populous city in Uttarakhand. As per the Census 2011, the population of Kashipur was 121,623 and that of Kashipur tehsil was 283,136. Islam is the second major religion in the state of Uttarakhand (with approximately 13.95% following it) as well as in Kashipur city having 35.06 % followers. In the city of Kashipur out of the 42,640 Muslim population, 52.17% were male while 47.83% were females. The crude literacy rate was 82.5%, much higher than Udham Singh Nagar district (73.1%). The male literacy rate is 86.88%, while female literacy rate is 77.63% in Kashipur city. However, despite various efforts, Muslim women in Kashipur City are on the back foot in every domain of life including education. The present study explores the factors responsible for this scenario.

Objectives

The main objectives are - to determine the educational attainment and gender disparities among Muslim women in Kashipur city, Uttarakhand, and to analyze the factors responsible for educational attainment and gender disparity of Muslim women in Kashipur city, Uttarakhand.

Database and Methodology

This study used both primary and secondary data, and is predominantly based on primary data, gathered from field surveys using a self-made questionnaire. It covered ten wards of Kashipur

and 40 respondents were selected from each ward. Out of the total 40 wards of Kashipur, only those 10 wards whose ward members are Muslims have been selected for the study, based on the assumption that these 10 wards are representative of the Muslim majority population in Kashipur. The sample size was 400 respondents (Muslim women in the age group 18-70 years). The questionnaire contained questions regarding Muslim women's and their parents' educational level, causes or factors responsible for their educational attainment such as poor economic condition, teaching and learning procedures, separate schools for girls, other etc; health care facilities, and its relation to their education, how monthly income is related to their education and another basic factor related to their education.

It must be mentioned that in this study we have not included respondents who got education from madarasas because few madarasas are not recognized by the government in Kashipur city. Therefore, we consider only those who have studied in a government-recognized school, college, or institution as educated. For calculating gender disparity in the education of Muslim women, Sopher's Index (1974) is used, as follows:

$$\text{Disparity index (DI)} = \text{LOG}(X_2/X_1) + \text{LOG}(100 - X_1/100 - X_2)$$

Where, $X_2 > X_1$, X_2 = educated male, X_1 = educated female. The value of Sopher's disparity index ranges between 0 to 1. The greater the value of the disparity index, the greater the disparity between male and female education. Whereas, a value of 0 indicates no gender disparity, and 1 indicates perfect gender disparity in male and female educational attainment.

The gender parity index (GPI) is used for Muslim women in Kashipur city based on their educational attainment level. GPI values are used to study the level of gender parity at different levels of educational attainment, e.g., primary, secondary, graduate, postgraduate, and above between Muslim males and Muslim females. It is computed as:

$$\text{Gender Parity Index (GPI)} = \text{Educated Female} / \text{Educated Male}$$

A GPI value of 1 indicates perfect gender parity.

Results and Discussion

In India, a person aged 7 and above, having the ability to read and write with understanding, is considered as educated or literate. In this study, those respondents who are between 18 to 70 years of age, but cannot read, write, or understand any language, are considered illiterate. The present educational status of Muslim women is shown in Table - 1.

Thus, the highest percentage of Muslim women with primary education is in ward no.25, while the lowest or none is in Ward 22. The highest percentage of Muslim women having received secondary education is seen in ward no. 21, 12, 20 and 24 respectively and the lowest is found in 32 (only 5% of Muslim women received secondary education). The highest percentage of Muslim women with U.G. education is seen in Ward 32 and the lowest is found in 21. Despite all these, the percentage of Muslim women at PG. or above education level has been continuously decreasing, and at the technical and professional level significantly decreased. Illiteracy and dropout are also a significant trend seen in the educational level of Muslim women.



Table - 2 shows ward wise distribution of education and disparity index. The highest Muslim female education rate is found in Ward 31 and 21 respectively. The lowest education rate is found in Ward 22 (43.33%), whereas the lowest male education rate is found in Ward 31 (50%). A zero disparity index value is found in Ward 31, whereas Ward 22 has the highest disparity index value.

Table - 3 helps to identify the wards with various levels of disparity. Ward 20, 22, and 23 have a very high gender disparity in education while Ward 31, 21, and 24 have low gender disparity in Kashipur city. Ward 12 and 32 show moderate disparity in education in Kashipur city.

The gender parity index(GPI) measures gender disparities. In the present study, it is used to assess gender disparities at various levels of educational attainment, such as primary, secondary, and so on. Table - 4 shows the computed GPI values at different levels of educational attainment for selected 10 wards of Kashipur city. The base for further studies is provided by primary education, which is why it should also be comprehensive and high quality. In Kashipur city, gender parity at the primary level is found higher in Ward 25 (2.49). In Wards 23, 24, and 25, GPI value is more than 1 which shows that girls have relatively more access to primary education than boys. Wards 22, 31, 32, 21, 20, 5, and 12 have the lowest GPI value among all these Wards of Kashipur city. It indicates that girls have relatively poor access to primary education compared to boys. Wards 12, 20, 21, 23, and 31 have GPI values more than or equal to 1, which shows at the secondary level that girls' relative access is more than boys. The lowest GPI value at the secondary level is found in Ward 32. The highest GPI value is found in Ward 23 whereas the lowest GPI value is found in Wards 5 and 22 respectively at the graduate and above level. Four out of 10 Wards have GPI values well below 1, indicating poor access of girls to higher education. Similarly, at the technical and vocational level, we can easily understand GPI value computed in Table - 4.

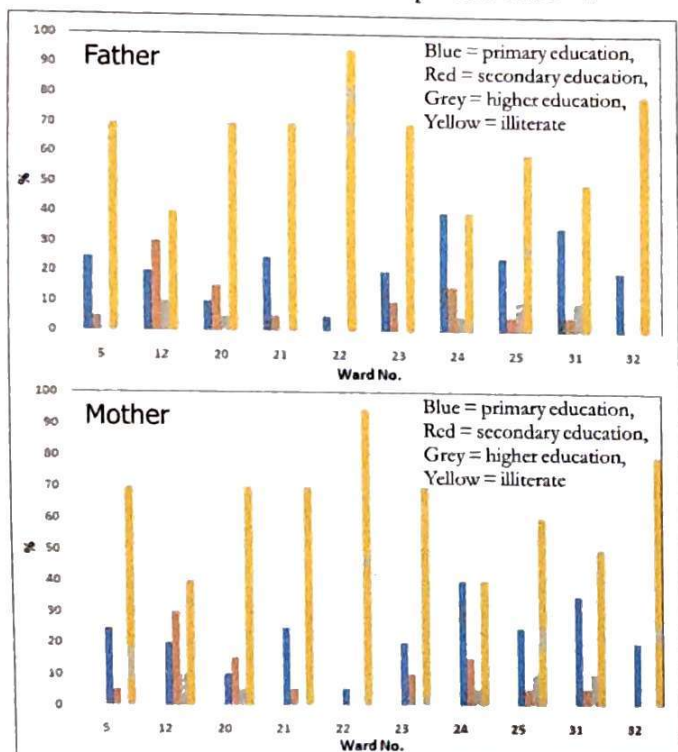


Fig.2: (above) Father's Level of Education

Fig.3: (below) Mother's Level of Education

Factors influencing Educational Attainment and Gender Disparity

Numerous factors influence the education level and gender disparity of Muslim women of Kashipur. In the present study, only the main factors have been given attention. Following are the most frequent problems or factors responsible in Kashipur, Uttarakhand-

1. *Illiteracy among the parents and ignorant about the importance of women's education:* Only 14.29% of the Muslim women said that this factor is responsible. Educated parents specially educated women support education for their female child and provide better direction for their entire family and society. The education level of mothers and fathers of Muslim women (Fig.2 and 3).
2. *Poor economic condition of the parents:* About 25.71% of parents of Muslim women are not able to educate their daughters further in Kashipur city due to their poor economic condition.
3. *Non- Non-attractive and ineffective teaching learning procedures in schools:* Presently, there is an urgent need to make the teaching and learning process more effective for Muslim female learners. Schemes like midday meals etc are playing an important role in inclusive education in Kashipur for Muslim women.
4. *Lack of female teachers and proper toilet facilities in the schools:* In Kashipur only 2.86% of Muslim women considered this factor responsible for their low education level and gender disparity.
5. *Muslim women's engagement in wage-earning activities to help their parents:* Analyzed realistically, it is their household responsibilities, such as wage earning activities (stitching, embroidery, tuition, etc.), taking care of siblings or helping in household's chores that mostly affects the education of Muslim women (34.29%). They hardly find any spare time for study and lag behind.
6. *Long walking distance from home to school:* Due to unfavourable social environment and insecurity issues, some parents do not allow their female child to go for higher education at a distance. About 5.71% of Muslim women come under this category in Kashipur, Uttarakhand.
7. *Lack of separate girl's schools:* There are only two main separate schools available for females in Kashipur (Govt. Girls Inter College, Kashipur & Chandrawati Tiwari Girls College, Kashipur).
8. *Other factors:* These are mainly related to marriage and lack of interest or motivation to gain education etc (17.14%). Due to marriage responsibilities, many Muslim women are not able to continue their studies further.

Conclusion

This study shows that Muslims- the largest religious minority in Kashipur, accounting for approximately 42, 640 of the total population, are also the most backward and underprivileged religious community in the city and state from the perspective of education. Almost all of the educational characteristics analyzed in this study continue to perform poorly and unsatisfactory, especially among Muslim women. There is a considerable educational disparity between Muslim males and females, as well as at varying levels of educational attainment. Gender disparities at



various levels of educational attainment demonstrates that girls have better access to school at the primary level in Kashipur city's Ward 23, 24, and 25. But in Ward 22, 31, 32, 21, 20, 5, and 12, girls have relatively poor access to primary education. Similarly, gender differences persist in secondary education, technical education, and professional education as well.

Thus, four types of regions have been identified for Muslim males and females in terms of education patterns based on disparity index (DI). Region of low disparity index (below 0.10), region of moderate disparity index (0.10- 0.15), region of high disparity index (0.15-0.20), and region of very high disparity index (0.20-0.25). The absolutely responsible factors for low educational attainment and gender disparity of Muslim women in Kashipur, Uttarakhand is their engagement in wage earning activities or household responsibilities (34,29%). Others are the poor economic condition of parents (14.29). To address the gender disparity in educational attainment in Kashipur, it is recommended that the government implement a more inclusive and women-centric education policy, raise awareness of the benefits of women's education, and establish girls' special schools with qualified teachers. Nothing will change unless we modify our attitudes towards girls. Our thoughts can make a difference.

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Table – 1: Educational attainment of Muslim Women in Kashipur, Uttarakhand

Ward No.	Primary Class I - V(%)	Secondary Class VI - XII(%)	U.G. (%)	P.G. & above(%)	Technical *(%)	Professional** (%)	Illiterate (%)	Drop out(%)
05	10	20	15	10	00	00	20	25
12	10	35	20	10	00	00	20	05
20	05	25	25	05	00	05	25	10
21	10	40	05	00	00	00	35	10
22	00	10	10	00	00	00	35	45
23	15	20	25	00	00	00	20	20
24	10	25	30	10	00	00	10	15
25	25	10	15	05	00	05	25	15
31	05	30	15	15	05	05	10	15
32	05	05	40	05	00	05	25	15

*means- Any kind of diploma (polytechnic, computer related O' level & medical related D – pharma etc.), degree course (B.tech./bba/bca/LLB. etc.)and certificate (ITI, beautician, stitching & computer related 'ccc' etc.).**means- B.Ed., D.El.Ed. medical related (ANM.& GNM), etc. Source- calculated from field survey



Table – 2: Gender Disparity in Education of Muslim Women in Kashipur, Uttarakhand

Sl. No.	Ward No.	Educated Male (%)	Educated Female (%)	D.I. Value
1	05	54.29	45.71	0.16
2	12	52.95	47.05	0.10
3	20	55.89	44.11	0.20
4	21	51.86	48.14	0.06
5	22	56.67	43.33	0.22
6	23	55.56	44.44	0.20
7	24	52.64	47.36	0.08
8	25	54.55	45.45	0.16
9	31	50.00	50.00	00
10	32	53.12	46.88	0.12

Source- Calculated by the authors with data collected through field survey

Table - 3: Classification of Wards based on Gender Disparity

Sl. No.	Class interval	Ward No.	Level of Disparity
1	0.20 - 0.25	20,22,23	Very high
2	0.15 - 0.20	5,25	High
3	0.10 - 0.15	12,32	Moderate
4	Below 0.10	31,21,24	Low disparity

Source- Calculated by the authors with data collected through field survey

Table – 4: GPI at different Levels of Educational Attainment of Muslim Women in Kashipur, Uttarakhand

Sl. No.	Ward No.	GPI at Primary Level	GPI at Secondary Level	GPI at UG Level	GPI at PG.& above Level	GPI at Technical Ed. Level	GPI at Professional Ed. Level
1	05	0.66	0.57	0.66	2.02	0.00	0.00
2	12	0.66	2.33	1.33	1.00	0.00	0.00
3	20	0.16	1.00	2.49	1.00	0.00	0.00
4	21	0.33	2.00	0.50	0.00	0.00	0.00
5	22	0.00	0.28	0.66	0.00	0.00	0.00
6	23	1.50	1.33	5.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
7	24	2.00	0.71	1.20	0.00	0.00	0.00
8	25	2.49	0.28	0.74	1.00	0.00	1.00
9	31	0.50	1.50	1.00	0.33	0.16	1.00
10	32	0.50	0.16	2.60	1.00	0.00	1.00

Source- Calculated by the authors with data collected through field survey



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