

# Attitude towards Education and Employment among Muslim Women

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## ABSTRACT

*The present research was an effort to examine the effects of social psychological factors such as socio-economic status (SES), Caste and family structure in relation to Educational and employment attitude of Muslim women. The subjects were 540 Muslim women in the age group of 18 to 25 years. Results have shown that all the three variables have significant effects on Muslim women's attitude towards education and employment.*

### Introduction:

In India, Muslims are considered as the largest minority. But they are very backward. The status of Muslim Women which constitutes 48% of the Muslim population in India, is far more alarming. The Muslim Women in general are a deprived lot-educationally socially, as well as economically. As per 2001 census, literacy rate of Indian Muslim Women is **50.1%**. In the rural areas, literacy rate is **42.7%** and in the urban areas, it is **63.2%** in India. In addition, the illiteracy rate among the Muslim Women is **49.9%** (Rural- 57.3%, Urban- 36.8%) According to planning Commission Report, only 1% of Muslim Women in Urban areas are graduates. In rural areas, women graduates are too few in number to even register on a survey. ([ndtv.com](http://ndtv.com), Nov 5, 2006). A majority of them are employed in the rural areas, primarily as agricultural laborers (30.8%) and cultivators (22%). In the urban areas, a part of the Muslim Women workers are employed in the unorganized sector, i.e. in household industries (19.3%), petty trades and services, buildings and construction etc. (27.9%).

In Bihar, about 16.5% of the state population is Muslim, which is 9.9% of the total Muslim population of India. In this figure (16.5), the share of Muslim women is 8% which is 4.8% of the total Muslim population in India. Literacy rate among Muslims of Bihar as per reports is about 30%. In this, the share of Muslim women literacy rate is 31.5. The work participation rate of Muslim women in Bihar is only 15.1%.

The statistics above indicate that Muslim women have not been able to take the full advantage in the society. It has been recognized that education and employment are the two basic factors in the development of any social community. The basic problem with the Muslim women in India, particularly in Bihar, is the lack of education which deprives it from employment opportunity. The question is how Muslim women in Bihar can be made educationally oriented? How they can be motivated to take up modern education and gain the necessary skills for development? These were some of the issues taken up in this research for analysis.

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## **Objective of the study-**

The present research intended to examine the effects of three social psychological factors i.e., socio-economic class, caste and family structure on the educational orientation and employment orientation in muslim women. Socio-economic class, caste and family structure have been treated as independent variables. Educational orientation and employment orientation in muslim women have been treated as dependent variables.

## **Hypothesis of the study-**

The main hypotheses of the present research were as follows:

- (a) The Muslim Women from different socio-economic classes will differ on educational orientation and employment orientation.
- (b) The Muslim Women from different castes will differ on educational orientation and employment orientation.
- (c) The Muslim Women from different family structures will differ on educational orientation and employment orientation.

## **Methodology:**

**(A) Sample-** 540 Muslim women in the age group of 18 to 25 years were selected as the sample. They were either college or university by students. Originally 630 students were approached but 540 were finally treated in the study. They were selected randomly. They were from high socio-economic class (N=180), Middle socio-economic class (N=180) and low Socio-economic class (N=180). The subjects were either from Nuclear family or joint family belonging to General Caste (N=180), Other Backward caste (N=180) and Scheduled Caste (N=180). They were assigned to different treatment conditions. The Subjects

were selected randomly from the different Muslim localities of Patna Commissionary.

**(B) Tools-** The two main dependent measures of attitude towards education and employment have been measured by means two separate questionnaires. One questionnaire named 'Muslim women orientation towards questionnaire and other is 'Attitude towards employment scale'. Both questionnaires have been structured and developed after the pilot study.

### **(1) Muslim Women Orientation Towards Education (MWOTE)**

It consists of 20 items which altogether provide the measurement of educational orientation in Muslim women. Each item is associated with five point scale. All items are related to the different aspects of education, especially in the context of Muslim women. In the 20 items, 16 were positively worded and remaining 5 were negatively worded. The responses were to be obtained on five point response format. The positively worded items of the questionnaire were given the score of 5,4,3,2,1 and the negatively worded items scored in the reverse way at 1, 2, 3, 4, 5. Scores on this questionnaire vary from 19 to 95. The more high the score, the more orientation towards education and the lower score indicates lower educational orientation.

**(2) Attitude Towards Employment Scale (A.T.E.S.)**—It consists of 16 items which measures the subjects' attitude towards employment. Each item is associated with five point scale. In this scale, the last five items describe about the subject's family support towards her employment attitude. In the 16 items, 10 items were positively worded and remaining 6 items were negatively worded. The responses were to be obtained on 5 point response format.

**(C) Data collection Procedure-**Each subject was approached individually. Before recording the responses, an attempt was made to develop a good rapport with the subjects. In course of conversation, the subjects were requested to respond honestly and genuinely on the items of the two questionnaires. Before responding, the printed instructions on each questionnaire were read out to the subjects. If the

subject needed any clarification on any item, it has been clarified to her so that she could respond with full understanding. The obtained data was subjected to statistical analysis with the use of Mean, SD, and t-ratio.

**Results-** The results of the study have been presented in Tabular forms with the help of Table 1, 2, and 3.

**Table-1**  
**Mean scores on educational and employment orientation on different socio-economic status**

	Educational orientation			Employment orientation			t-ratio
	SES	Mean	SD	t-ratio	Mean	SD	
<b>A</b>	High SES(N=180)	71.92	6.29	a-b 6.01 P<.001	55.26	8.35	a-b 5.49 P<.001
<b>B</b>	Middle SES(N=180)	76.01	6.63	b-c 5.84 P<.001	60.15	8.66	b-c 8.05 P<.001
<b>C</b>	Low SES(N=180)	71.63	7.83	a-c 0.39 P<.01	51.93	10.54	a-c 3.33 P<.001
	<b>Total (N=540)</b>	<b>73.18</b>	<b>7.25</b>		<b>55.78</b>	<b>9.6</b>	

**Table- 1** illustrates the mean scores of subjects in the High/Middle/Low socio-economics conditions on the two dependent measures. The significant mean differences have also been shown in the table. It may be seen from the table that mean educational orientation score is significantly higher in the case of middle socio-economic condition than either in the high or in the low socio-economic conditions. Noticeably, while the middle class subjects have demonstrated significantly higher educational orientation than the subjects of either high or low

classes, no significant difference on mean educational orientation has been found between the high and the low class subjects. It appears that Muslim families of lower SES have little motivation for children education, particularly the girl child. It is not surprising that the literacy rate among the women of Bihar is only 31.5%. It is largely due to socio-economic deprivations. On the other hand, Muslim women from higher classes are secluded by purdah and more conservative about religious values. (Upreti, 2000).

The middle class Muslim women, in recent years seem to have come out of their conservative orthodox cultural boundaries. In fact, the Indian Middle class as such has shown upward mobility and the Muslim women from middle class is in no exception. It is therefore not surprising if the middle class Muslim girls have demonstrated stronger orientation towards education and employment. The high class Muslim girls, perhaps, because of traditional legacy, should show low attitude. These results confirm the first hypothesis.

**Table-2:**

**Mean scores on educational and employment orientation in different caste conditions**

	Educational orientation			Employment orientation			
	CASTE	Mean	SD	t-ratio	Mean	SD	
<b>A</b>	General (N=180)	76.31	5.09	a-b 1.92 P<.05	59.26	6.54	a-b 0.34 P>.05
<b>B</b>	OBC (N=180)	77.25	4.25	b-c 20.88 P<.001	59.51	7.19	a-c 13.66 P<.001
<b>C</b>	SC (N=180)	66.00	6.15	a-c 17.47 P<.001	48.58	7.92	a-c 13.87 P<.001
	<b>Total (N=540)</b>	<b>73.18</b>	<b>7.25</b>		<b>55.78</b>	<b>9.6</b>	

Table-2 presents the mean scores of different caste's subjects on the educational and employment orientation. It can be seen from the table that subjects from general caste and other backward caste have high attitude towards education and employment than the subjects from scheduled castes. The subjects from scheduled castes have a low mean educational and employment orientation score and they are

significantly different from the subjects of General and OBC. These results indicate that caste differences on attitude towards education and employment have not emerged in the Muslim girls of General and backward castes. However the subjects from scheduled castes have low orientation towards education and employment. Therefore, the second hypothesis of this study has been partially supported by the findings.

**Table-3:**

**Mean scores on educational and employment orientation in different family structure conditions**

	Family structure	Educational orientation			Employment orientation		
		Mean	SD	t-ratio	Mean	SD	t-ratio
<b>A</b>	Nuclear(N=270)	76.56	5.49	9.93	61.73	7.34	13.84
<b>B</b>	Joint (N=270)	69.81	7.23	P<.001	49.83	9.03	P<.001
		<b>73.15</b>	<b>7.25</b>		<b>55.78</b>	<b>9.6</b>	

**Table-3** demonstrates the mean scores of Muslim Women from different family structures on the two dependent measures i.e. educational orientation and employment orientation. From the table, we can see that the subjects from Nuclear family have higher mean educational and employment score than the subjects from joint family. Both groups are significantly different. These results clearly indicate that differences in family structure did result into differences in attitude towards education and employment in Muslim women. These findings supported the third hypothesis of the study. Nuclear family provides more freedom and space for educational and employment attainment. But in the joint family, there are many obligations and responsibilities. In Nuclear families, parents can serve as a secure base as adolescents grapple with possibilities. But in joint families, members can not get much freedom and space and they often feel caught between the traditions of their culture of origin. Muslim women of joint families have to follow Purdah system and perform home duties. This system isolates them from the outer world and confines them to the four walls of their houses. It also restricts them from making significant economic contributions.

### Conclusion:

The main findings derived from the present study are as follows:

1. Socio-economic status may be a potential factor in the educational and employment orientation among young educated Muslim women. The middle class Muslim girls seem to have demonstrated a more stronger orientation towards education and employment as compared to Muslim girls from either the high or the low socioeconomic classes.

2. Caste could also be a factor in the educational orientation among educated Muslim girls. The Muslim girls from general and backward castes may have stronger orientation towards education employment than those belonging to the scheduled caste.
3. The family structure may have strong effect on the educational and employment orientations among educated Muslim girls. The Muslim girls from nuclear families are likely to have stronger orientation towards education and employment as compared to those of the joint families. This may be, perhaps, because of the possibility of greater family support in nuclear families than in the joint family.

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