

**EDUCATIONAL
ASPIRATIONS AMONG
MUSLIM GIRLS: A CASE
STUDY FROM NIZAMUDDIN
AREA OF NEW DELHI**

**KASHMIR JOURNAL OF
SOCIAL SCIENCES**

12(1) 78 - 95

ISSN: 0975-6620

© 2024 Author(s)

<https://deanss.uok.edu.in/Files/20ca8>

[6b4-9101-4485-98f9-](https://deanss.uok.edu.in/Files/20ca8)

[1beb3b33b64b/Journal/6b00c09d-](https://deanss.uok.edu.in/Files/20ca8)

[67ed-4407-ad1e-bdaa0d4b271f.pdf](https://deanss.uok.edu.in/Files/20ca8)

Asma*

Abstract

This study aims to explore the educational aspirations of Muslim girls in the Nizamuddin area of New Delhi, an ethnically and socioeconomically distinct Muslim community. Drawing on Fuller's (2009) classification of students into low, middle, and high aspirers, this research investigates how these aspirations are shaped by a complex interplay of familial, societal, and institutional factors, including cultural norms, patriarchal influences, and economic constraints. Utilizing a combination of interviews, surveys, and case studies, the study classifies Muslim girls into three categories based on their educational ambitions: low aspirers, middle aspirers, and high aspirers. The low aspirers, characterized by a lack of educational ambition, often view schooling as irrelevant to their futures, reflecting the impact of poverty, cultural conservatism, and limited educational opportunities. Middle aspirers, though they pursue vocational education, are often limited in their prospects by traditional gender roles, societal expectations, and restrictive community norms. High aspirers demonstrate a strong desire for higher education, yet face systemic barriers, including limited access to resources, societal pressure, security concerns, and discrimination. The study highlights the socio-economic challenges and cultural dynamics that constrain the educational progress of Muslim girls in this region, providing insights into the barriers and opportunities for enhancing their educational aspirations.

* S.R.F Scholar, Department of Education, Kumaun University Nainital, S.S.J. Campus Almora, Uttarakhand 263601
Email: ashu198855@gmail.com

Keywords

Muslim girls, educational aspirations, educational backwardness, low socioeconomic status

Introduction

Education serves as a catalyst for societal, economic, and intellectual development. In the contemporary world, however, this catalyst is under siege due to the forces of globalization. The repercussions of this phenomenon are further exacerbated by the rise of materialism and careerism, which often prioritize economic success over intellectual enrichment, resulting in a society where materialistic values overshadow academic and intellectual pursuits (Asma & Farooq, 2017).

The word *aspiration* can be defined as the hope or ambition to achieve something, and in the context of education, it refers to the goal of attaining a certain level of academic achievement. However, the educational aspirations of different students vary significantly across communities and gender groups. To understand why this variation exists, it is crucial to examine the environments in which these groups live. An individual's aspirations are often shaped by their surroundings, with the surrounding environment exerting significant influence over the development of aspirations. Various theoretical frameworks, such as social-cognitive and social-cognitive-ecological theories (Farmer, 1985; Bandura et al., 2001; Guerra & Huesmann, 2004), help to identify the factors that affect adolescents' educational attainment and career development.

Aspirations serve as motivational tools for achieving higher accomplishments (Sherwood, 1998). They play a critical role in determining what individuals can achieve, as they guide their efforts towards specific educational or career objectives (Kao & Thompson, 2003; MacBrayne, 1987).

Educational aspirations are influenced by a variety of factors, including family background, socioeconomic status, and the individual's living environment (Stewart et al., 2007). Research has shown that children of educated parents or those from better economic backgrounds tend to hold higher educational aspirations (Marjoribanks, 2005; MacBrayne, 1987). Additionally, urban areas often provide better educational opportunities, which can lead to higher aspirations in students (Haller & Virkler, 1993; Akande,

1987). Conversely, deprived groups, including the economically disadvantaged and youth from poorer backgrounds, tend to have lower aspirations, a phenomenon also observed in the case of Muslim girls in India (St Clair & Benjamin, 2011; Wrench et al., 2012; Quaglia & Cobb, 1996).

The study conducted by Bisht (1972) found that factors such as family size, educational facilities, recreational resources, parental education, and family income significantly influence the educational aspirations of students. Similarly, Vaidya (2006) reported a positive correlation between socioeconomic status and educational aspirations among higher secondary students.

Fuller's study, "Sociology, Gender, and Educational Aspirations: Girls and Their Ambitions" (2009), offers further insight into the gendered aspects of educational aspirations. Using case studies, observations, and interviews, Fuller categorized girls into three groups based on their aspirations: Low Aspirers, Middle Aspirers, and High Aspirers.

- **Low Aspirers** were girls who intended to leave school at the end of compulsory education, viewing schooling as largely irrelevant to their future.
- **Middle Aspirers** were those who intended to pursue vocational training after compulsory education but did not plan to continue onto higher education.
- **High Aspirers** were girls who aimed to attend university after finishing school.

This classification provides a framework for understanding the diverse educational goals within different groups of girls, highlighting how various factors such as family influence, socioeconomic conditions, and community attitudes can shape their aspirations. These insights are crucial for designing policies and interventions that can support the educational ambitions of Muslim girls and empower them to overcome the barriers they face.

Morphology of Indian Muslim Society and Educational Aspirations of Girls

A human being, much like a flower, thrives only when nurtured in a conducive environment—fertile soil, moderate sunlight, adequate

water, and regular care. In the Indian context, the educational aspirations of Muslim girls, however, are often constrained by the socio-cultural environment shaped by patriarchy within the community. These patriarchal structures significantly influence the educational, personal, and overall growth of Muslim girls, thereby affecting the socio-economic trajectory of the community at large (Shaban, 2016). Studies have consistently shown that due to the prevailing son-centric caregiving culture, male adolescents tend to possess higher educational aspirations compared to their female counterparts (Jajpreet, 2011; Verma and Ghadially, 1985). A comprehensive survey conducted by the Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai (May–November 2009), which covered 3,818 Muslim households and a total of 22,581 individuals, revealed striking findings. Among the 2,734 Muslim girls interviewed, a significant 62 percent reported having no clear aspirations, while an additional 9.3 percent expressed having no aspirations at all. Consequently, 71.3 percent of Muslim girls were found to lack clarity about their future career paths. In comparison, 62.4 percent of boys in the same survey (54.6 percent with unclear aspirations and 7.8 percent with no aspirations) also demonstrated a lack of clarity regarding their future professions. These findings underscore the significant dearth of educational aspirations within the Muslim community as a whole (Shaban, 2016).

During the survey, many parents expressed reluctance in sending their daughters to schools or colleges, primarily due to concerns over safety and societal pressures. The Muslim community, already burdened by both internal and external challenges, finds itself caught between competing forces. These challenges, which stem from both exogenous and endogenous factors, act as significant obstacles to the fulfillment of educational aspirations among Muslim girls.

Exogenic Factors:

Exogenic factors refer to the external challenges that the Muslim community faces. Historically, successive governments have failed to adequately address the needs of this community. The Sachar Committee Report (2006), appointed by the UPA Government led

by Dr. Manmohan Singh, highlighted the dire socio-economic condition of Muslims, particularly in terms of their access to basic infrastructure and services. The report revealed that Muslims lag behind in nearly every sector, including education, with inadequate educational infrastructure in many areas. Additionally, the Kunds Committee (2013) highlighted the alarming underachievement in the educational attainment of Muslim girls.

In a recent report by NitiAayog, 11 of the 20 poorest districts in India were identified as Muslim-majority areas, further illustrating the dire socio-economic conditions faced by these communities. The sense of insecurity fostered by political narratives—often stoked for electoral gains—has also contributed to a climate of fear and distrust within the community.

While there are several government schemes designed to address the issues faced by Muslim communities, they are often perceived as insufficient. These measures are likened to offering "a banana to a hungry elephant" or "ants to the mouth of a bear," signifying their ineffectiveness in truly uplifting the community. Furthermore, the rise of Islamophobia, fueled by misconceptions and prejudices against Islam, has adversely affected Muslim girls, particularly those who observe religious practices such as wearing the hijab. Many girls shared personal experiences during the survey, recounting how they were subjected to rude comments and discrimination due to their religious attire. As one respondent, Rubina, stated, "*When I wear the hijab, people pass rude comments that make me feel painful.*"

Endogenic Factors:

Endogenic factors are those that stem from within the community itself. These factors include deeply entrenched socio-economic conditions, cultural rigidity, and gender norms that significantly shape the educational aspirations of Muslim girls. One of the most prominent barriers is the low socio-economic status of many Muslim families, which affects the choice of academic streams and career aspirations. The survey revealed that many Muslim girls had to change their academic subjects due to financial constraints, as they could not afford the associated costs.

Additionally, there exists a cultural belief that pursuing higher education, particularly in co-educational institutions, tarnishes the family's honor. Some families strongly oppose the idea of their daughters attending universities, as they view it as a violation of traditional gender roles and community values. During the survey, several girls also reported being restricted from accessing social networking sites, while their male counterparts were free to use them without restraint.

The community's resistance to progressive ideas is often fuelled by religious leaders, whose influence over local populations remains substantial. These religious preachers, generally conservative in their approach, lack a broader, more sustainable vision and often adhere to a rigid interpretation of religious texts. This narrow outlook, compounded by their unquestioned authority within the community, creates an atmosphere of resistance to change. As one survey participant, a research student from Jamia Millia Islamia, New Delhi, stated, "Our society has complex disorders of different types, and therefore, it needs various and effective antidotes for remedy."

Within the context of these internal struggles, the Muslim community in India can be likened to a "frozen" entity, walled off from progressive thought. The rigidity of these mental barriers is reinforced by the perception that external cultural influences—particularly those perceived as Western or modern—threaten the community's traditional values. This phenomenon is particularly evident in areas such as Nizamuddin, Delhi, where NGOs like the Aga Khan Foundation, which work towards the upliftment of Muslim youth, face considerable resistance. Many locals, influenced by conservative views, accused these organizations of promoting "false values" and aligning with foreign interests, leading them to discourage the community from engaging with such initiatives, particularly with regard to educating girls.

The educational aspirations of Muslim girls in India are shaped by a complex web of exogenic and endogenic factors. Externally, the community faces systemic neglect, political insecurity, and societal prejudice, which stifle educational opportunities. Internally, socio-economic challenges, cultural rigidity, and gender norms perpetuate a cycle of educational deprivation. These

barriers create a fractured environment where the aspirations of Muslim girls often remain unrealized, constrained by a combination of external pressures and internal resistance. To truly address these issues, a multi-faceted approach is needed—one that not only provides access to education but also challenges the entrenched societal norms that inhibit the full realization of Muslim girls' potential.

Observations on the Educational Aspirations of Muslim Girls

In the course of our study, I have observed the Muslim community in the Nizamuddin area through a layered lens, categorizing it into three distinct social strata. These layers reflect varying degrees of access to education, socio-economic conditions, and community attitudes towards progress.

The Nucleus: At the core of the community lies a highly conservative segment, predominantly shaped by patriarchal structures. This group is largely illiterate, with minimal awareness of government initiatives or programs aimed at social upliftment. The socio-economic status of these individuals is severely constrained, and their livelihoods often depend on informal, and at times illicit, activities. These activities consume the little financial resources they possess, and their children, particularly girls, are often caught in the cycle of poverty and child labor. Despite these overwhelming challenges, the girls in this group exhibit constructive aspirations, albeit stifled by poverty and the lack of opportunities. Their daily struggle to meet basic needs often overshadows any academic ambitions they may harbor.

Intermediate Layer: Moving outward, we encounter the intermediate layer, where there is a marked difference in mindset. This group is somewhat more aware of the significance of education, with many members having attained primary or middle school education, and a few reaching the level of higher education. However, they remain heavily influenced by religious preachers, often adopting their views without critically engaging with the issues at hand. Education in this group tends to focus on memorizing religious texts, rather than understanding them in a

broader context. The economic activities of this layer are primarily centered around small businesses or traditional industries.

A defining characteristic of this layer is the prevailing sentiment of "us versus them," with a strong sense of community identity that reinforces a distinct separation from the broader society. This group is caught between two worlds—one that advocates for modernization and another that clings to traditional values. While some members are beginning to embrace the idea of progress, including the importance of educating girls, they remain conflicted between conservatism and modernity. The influence of national and international media has played a crucial role in shifting their perceptions, but their hesitancy to fully embrace change remains palpable.

The Upper Layer: At the outermost layer of the community are those who have actively engaged with modernization. This group is characterized by higher levels of education and a deep understanding of governmental programs aimed at socio-economic development. They are well-informed, progressive, and often take advantage of the opportunities provided by these programs. Importantly, they have largely accepted the notion of social engineering and development.

However, despite their relative success, this group has shown a lack of support for the less privileged segments of the community. They tend to separate themselves from the struggles of the nucleus and intermediate layers, sometimes using the community's vote bank as leverage during elections, but without meaningful efforts to address the systemic issues faced by the disadvantaged groups. Their progressive stance, while commendable, often remains isolated from the broader community, preventing a more collective approach to overcoming the challenges that hinder the educational aspirations of Muslim girls.

In conclusion, the educational aspirations of Muslim girls in Nizamuddin are shaped by deeply entrenched socio-cultural and economic factors. While there are signs of progress, particularly in the upper layers, the overwhelming challenges faced by the lower and intermediate layers of society continue to undermine the

realization of these aspirations. To foster a more inclusive educational environment, it is essential to bridge the gap between these layers and ensure that all segments of the community are provided equal access to opportunities for growth and development.

Attitudes of Muslim Girls towards Educational Aspiration

The poignant words of Meira Kumar, former Speaker of the Lok Sabha, capture the essence of the struggle faced by Muslim girls in their educational journey: *"I have the wings to fly and the open skies too, but then why this compulsion not to fly?"* As if the iron of rusted conventions has been nailed to the soul, so the wings can flutter but not fly" (Meira Kumar, 2016). This metaphor underscores the tension between innate potential and the constraints imposed by societal and cultural norms.

Recent developments in the Muslim community reveal a notable shift in the educational landscape, particularly concerning Muslim girls. There has been a steady rise in the enrollment of Muslim girls in schools, with some regions witnessing a higher enrollment rate for girls than boys. However, this progress is marred by the weak connection of education in Urdu-medium schools to state and market structures. As a result, aspirations among these girls often remain stunted, as Abdul Shaban (2016) observes, noting that a significant proportion of students from this community harbor either unclear or non-existent educational aspirations. This gap in educational ambition further jeopardizes the already marginal socio-economic standing of the Muslim community.

In my own experience speaking with Muslim girls from the Nizamuddin area, I encountered significant barriers in initiating direct communication. Initially, it was challenging to engage with the girls, as cultural norms and community dynamics posed hurdles. However, through indirect channels of contact, such as reaching out to their parents, I was able to establish a rapport and initiate conversations with these young girls. What became apparent during these discussions was the high level of educational aspiration that many of them held. These girls expressed a keen desire to pursue education and build futures beyond the limitations of their current circumstances. Yet, despite

these aspirations, a myriad of problems—rooted in socio-economic hardships, patriarchal control, and cultural constraints—significantly hindered their progress.

The aspirations of Muslim girls in this context appear to be a reflection of the wider influence of national and international media, as well as the burgeoning presence of social networks. These external forces emphasize the value of education and the potential it holds for individual and communal empowerment. Nevertheless, the educational dreams of many Muslim girls remain suppressed beneath the weight of masculine dominance and the narrow traditionalism that often prevails in their communities. While the wings to soar are present, they are constrained by a deeply ingrained set of social conventions that discourage their full realization.

There is a marked potential among Muslim girls for educational advancement, their aspirations remain submerged under the complex interplay of societal, cultural, and economic barriers. The need for comprehensive change in both mindset and infrastructural support is essential to enable these girls to fully realize their academic potential and to transform their aspirations into tangible achievements.

Study Area Description

The study was conducted in the Nizamuddin Muslim area of New Delhi, one of the most prominent Muslim-dominated neighbourhoods in the city. This area holds significant cultural, historical, and religious importance, both nationally and internationally. It is home to the revered shrine of Sufi Saint Hazrat NizamuddinAulia, the headquarters (Markaz) of Tablighi Jamaat, and the iconic tomb of Humayun.

The specific focus of the study was on Boali Gate Nizamuddin, located at GPS coordinates Lat. 28.5925N and Long. 77.24153E, an area commonly referred to as Nizamuddin Basti by local residents.

Research Methodology

Selection of the Study Area: Nizamuddin was selected as the study area using purposive sampling. The primary reason for this

selection is its status as a predominantly Muslim area in New Delhi, providing a representative context for the research on Muslim girls' educational aspirations.

Sample: The study sample consisted of 49 Muslim girls from higher secondary schools in Nizamuddin Basti. These participants were chosen using a convenience sampling technique, ensuring accessibility and relevance to the study's objectives.

Data Collection: Data was collected through structured interviews using a questionnaire, allowing the researcher to gather detailed insights into the educational experiences and aspirations of the respondents.

Barriers to Mainstream Education for Muslim Girls: Societal and Institutional Challenges

- **Unawareness about the Importance of Education:** Many Muslim families, especially in rural or conservative areas, remain unaware of the long-term benefits of education for girls. This lack of awareness contributes to a lack of motivation to send girls to school, thus limiting their opportunities for advancement.
- **Societal Bias towards Boys:** A deeply ingrained societal mindset prioritizes boys over girls when it comes to education. This bias is reinforced by the belief that males are the primary breadwinners and thus deserve greater access to education. As a result, girls are often seen as secondary to boys in the educational sphere.
- **Gender Discrimination:** The discrimination between boys and girls is particularly evident in the context of familial roles. The male members of the family are often perceived as the future providers, and as such, their educational needs are prioritized, leaving girls to take on domestic responsibilities instead of pursuing education.
- **Generational Decision-Making:** In many Muslim families, the head of the household, often the father, makes critical decisions regarding education. These decisions are frequently influenced by long-standing traditional cultural norms, which limit the educational aspirations of girls. The perpetuation of

these practices from one generation to the next ensures that these limitations remain entrenched.

- **Lack of Government Support and Safety Measures:** Many parents refrain from sending their daughters to school due to concerns about safety. The absence of adequate facilities and protective measures, such as separate toilets, safe transportation, and gender-sensitive teachers, makes girls more vulnerable to harassment and exploitation.
- **Household Responsibilities:** In many cases, girls are expected to assist with household chores, which further restricts their time and energy for academic pursuits. As a result, their educational aspirations are often sidelined in favor of familial duties.
- **Challenges in Academic Competition:** Although some Muslim families are committed to providing education, the competitive nature of the education system, combined with inadequate resources, makes it difficult for girls to excel. Additionally, many families focus solely on academic education, neglecting the importance of vocational training, which could better equip girls for a diverse range of opportunities.
- **Interfaith Marriages:** The prevalence of interfaith marriages within certain Muslim communities can further complicate the educational aspirations of girls. Parents may become more cautious about allowing their daughters to pursue education, fearing societal or familial backlash.
- **Commercialization of Private Education:** The rising cost of private education has made it less accessible to Muslim families, especially those from lower socioeconomic backgrounds. In contrast, municipal schools often suffer from poor standards, further discouraging families from pursuing formal education for their daughters. Additionally, many families prioritize marriage over education for their daughters, reinforcing traditional gender roles.
- **Economic Constraints:** The ongoing economic crisis has made it difficult for many families to afford the high fees associated with quality education. As a result, the focus shifts to more immediate concerns, such as securing a

marriage for their daughters, rather than investing in their academic and professional futures.

- **Neglected Nutritional Needs:** Girls' nutritional needs are often overlooked in favor of boys', who are seen as the future providers. This lack of attention to their physical well-being further hinders their educational performance and long-term development.
- **Early Socialization for Marriage:** From a young age, girls are often socialized to see marriage as their primary goal, while boys are encouraged to focus on education and career development. This gendered approach to upbringing significantly limits girls' aspirations and opportunities for self-empowerment.
- **Limited Importance Given to Girls' Education:** In many Muslim households, education for girls is perceived as less significant than for boys. This belief reflects broader societal attitudes that undervalue the educational potential of girls and women.
- **Lack of Emotional and Motivational Support:** Even when girls perform well academically, they often lack the emotional and motivational support from their families. This is due to limited awareness among parents about the significance of nurturing their daughters' educational ambitions and providing encouragement.
- **Language Barriers:** Urdu, which is widely spoken in Muslim households, poses a significant barrier to education, especially in environments where English is the dominant language. The prevalence of English in colleges, universities, and even commercial spaces such as shopping malls and cinemas creates a language divide, leaving Muslim girls at a disadvantage when it comes to communication and self-expression.
- **Cultural and Dress Codes:** The traditional attire worn by many Muslim girls, including the hijab, salwar kameez, and dupatta, often makes them feel less accepted in modern, westernized environments. This lack of acceptance, combined with societal pressures to conform to western standards of

beauty and dress, can result in a diminished sense of self-worth and lower confidence among Muslim girls.

Findings of the Study

- The study revealed that a significant number of girls come from families with low economic status. These girls expressed a desire to attend colleges and universities but noted that their home circumstances make it difficult for them to pursue such aspirations.
- It was found that the sense of insecurity among the parents of these girls is a major barrier to their educational aspirations. This concern was also highlighted by non-Muslim girls; for instance, Princy, a non-Muslim girl, mentioned that she wants to pursue a PhD, but her parents are unsupportive due to security concerns.
- The study also highlighted that girls are not rewarded for their academic achievements at school. In contrast, the same families tend to appreciate and reward the boys with gifts. This gender bias led to a lack of motivation among the girls, adversely affecting their educational goals.
- According to the findings, 90 percent of the girls do not have a separate study space at home.
- A significant number of Muslim girls reported that their family members do not check or assist with their homework after school.
- The responsibility of taking care of siblings has also diverted many girls from their educational pursuits. Many have dropped out of school and are now helping their mothers with household chores.

Analysis of Findings and Discussion:

The first finding of the study highlights that many girls come from families with low economic status. These girls expressed a strong desire to attend higher educational institutions, but their socio-economic backgrounds create significant barriers. This situation is reflective of the broader trend in many underprivileged communities where economic hardship often limits access to quality education. In India, poverty remains a significant factor in

determining educational outcomes, particularly for girls. Without sufficient financial resources, these girls struggle to afford tuition fees, transportation, and other costs associated with higher education. In rural areas, where most families depend on agriculture or manual labor, the priority often shifts to meeting daily needs rather than investing in a girl's education. This is especially true for Muslim communities in certain regions, where socio-economic conditions remain underdeveloped.

The second finding reveals that insecurity among parents, particularly related to safety concerns, is another major barrier. The study notes that not only Muslim girls but also non-Muslim girls like Princy feel unsupported in their educational aspirations due to these fears. This reflects a broader societal concern where parents, especially in conservative or conflict-prone areas, may view sending girls to school or pursuing higher education as unsafe. The increasing incidence of gender-based violence and the perception of unsafe environments for girls in public spaces are factors contributing to this insecurity. This insecurity is often exacerbated, leading to increased restrictions on girls' mobility and educational aspirations.

The third finding addresses gender bias in the family, where girls are not rewarded for their academic achievements, but boys receive praise and material rewards. This prejudice highlights the persistent gender inequality that many Muslim girls face, both within their households and in society at large. While some progress has been made in terms of girls' education, gender discrimination remains a critical issue. In many households, there is a belief that girls are less capable of achieving academic success than boys or that their primary role should be within the home. This not only demotivates girls but also hinders their educational growth, as seen in the study, where boys are often praised for their academic performance while girls' achievements go unnoticed. This reflects a wider patriarchal mindset that continues to limit girls' opportunities.

The fourth finding, that 90 percent of girls do not have a separate study space at home, is indicative of the lack of adequate infrastructure and support for girls' education in many households. In rural and underprivileged communities, it is

common for multiple family members to share cramped living spaces. This lack of personal space significantly affects girls' ability to focus on their studies, contributing to lower academic performance and dropping out. In many households, the space for studying is often occupied by other daily chores or shared with other family members. This is especially true for Muslim girls, who face compounded challenges of limited resources, societal expectations, and gendered domestic responsibilities.

The fifth finding, where many Muslim girls report that their family members do not assist with or check their homework, underscores the lack of support for girls' education. In many families, the focus on girls' domestic duties or the financial burden of the household limits the attention given to their academic progress. In families where educational attainment is not a priority, especially in economically disadvantaged communities, the lack of parental involvement in academics can result in poor academic outcomes. This issue is particularly acute among Muslim families in marginalized communities, where the struggle to meet basic needs can overshadow the importance of education.

Finally, the responsibility of caring for siblings has forced many girls to abandon their educational pursuits. This reflects the traditional gender roles that often place the burden of household chores and care giving solely on girls. As the study mentions, many girls are now helping their mothers in the kitchen, foregoing their academic ambitions. This situation is especially prominent in rural areas, where gendered division of labour is deeply entrenched. The role of women as primary caregivers is reinforced by societal norms, and it often leads to girls' education being deprioritized in favour of family responsibilities. This issue is exacerbated by the lack of support systems such as after-school programs, affordable childcare, or community-based initiatives that could alleviate this burden.

Conclusion

The study presents a multifaceted view of the challenges faced by Muslim girls in pursuing education. These challenges are not only the result of socio-economic factors but also deeply rooted cultural and societal norms that perpetuate gender inequality. While the

government has implemented various initiatives aimed at improving education for girls, significant gaps remain in the realization of these goals. There is a need for targeted interventions, including community-based programs that address gender bias, provide financial support, and ensure the safety of girls in educational spaces. Moreover, the involvement of parents, especially fathers, in supporting girls' education is crucial in changing entrenched attitudes. The government should adopt a holistic approach that engages not only the girls themselves but also their families and communities to foster an environment conducive to education and development.

References:

- Abdul, S. (2016). Muslim girls in Urdu medium schools of Maharashtra: Progress, retention, and aspirations. *Economic & Political Weekly*, 51(25).
- Asma, & Farooq, A. (2017). Indian higher education is lagging behind: Quality issues and reasons. *Indian Journal of Adult Education*, 78(2), 61–67.
- Bisht, G. S. (1972). A study of the level of educational aspirations in relation to socio-economic condition and educational attainment. In *The Second Survey of Educational Research (1972–1978)* (pp. 135–141). Baroda: Society for Educational Research and Development.
- Farmer, H. S. (1985). Model of career and achievement motivation for women and men. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, 32, 363–390.
- Fuller, C. (2009). *Sociology, gender and educational aspiration: Girls and their ambitions*. London: Continuum International Publishing Group.
- Haller, E., & Virkler, S. (1993). Another look at rural-nonrural differences in students' educational aspirations. *Journal of Research in Rural Education*, 9(3), 170–178.
- Huesmann, L. R. (1998). The role of social information processing and cognitive schema in the acquisition and maintenance of habitual aggressive behavior. In R. G. Geen & E. Donnerstein (Eds.), *Human aggression: Theories, research and implications for social policy* (pp. 73–109). San Diego: Academic Press.
- Kao, G., & Thompson, J. (2003). Racial and ethnic stratification in educational achievement and attainment. In

- K. S. Cook & J. Hagan (Eds.), *Annual Review of Sociology*, 29, 417–442.
- Kaur, J. (2011). Effect of gender and home environment on the educational aspirations of Indian adolescents. *Journal of Social and Psychological Sciences*.
 - MacBrayne, P. (1987). Educational and occupational aspirations of rural youth: A review of literature. *Research in Rural Education*, 4(3), 135–141.
 - Marjoribanks, K. (2005). Family background, adolescents' educational aspirations, and Australian young adults' educational attainment. *International Education Journal*, 6(1), 104–112.
 - NITI Aayog. (2018). Aspirational districts baseline ranking: March 2018. Retrieved from http://niti.gov.in/writereaddata/files/document_publication/AspirationalDistrictsBaselineRankingMarch2018.pdf
 - Quaglia, R., & Cobb, C. (1996). Toward a theory of student aspirations. *Journal of Research in Rural Education*, 12(3), 127–132.
 - Sherwood, R. (1989). A conceptual framework for the study of aspirations. *Research in Rural Education*, 6(2), 61–66.
 - St. Clair, R., & Benjamin, A. (2011). Performing desires: The dilemma of aspirations and educational attainment. *British Educational Research Journal*, 37(3), 501–517.
 - Stewart, E. B., Stewart, E. A., & Simons, R. (2007). The effect of neighborhood context on the college aspirations of African American adolescents. *American Educational Research Journal*, 44, 896–919.
 - Vaidya, S. A. (2006). A study of educational aspiration of higher secondary students in relation to different variables (Ph.D. dissertation). Gujarat University.
 - Verma, R. K., & Ghadially, R. (1985). Mothers' sex-role attitudes and demands for independence training in boys and girls. *Indian Journal of Social Work*. 46(1), 105–111.