
EDUCATION FOR MUSLIMS- WHY AND HOW?

Shahla Shabeeh Shaheen

Research Scholar , Department Of Education , Aligarh Muslim University.

Abstract:

Muslims are those, who follow Islam, who follow Allah's book-Al-Quran and sunnah of Prophet Mohammad (SAW). But, in our country majority of the Muslims are illiterate. They do not even know to read and write their mother tongue. Many Muslims do not know to read the Quran in Arabic. Therefore, they do not understand the message of the Quran. Sorry to say, but this is like 'dark age'. In present time Muslims are lagging behind in the field of education and work participation as per the data revealed in 'The First Report on Religion: Census of India 2001'. Sachar committee's report is enough to tell the position of Muslims in India. The present paper focuses on the need of general and vocational education of Muslims. From Islamic point of view, every kind of education is essential for the development of human race. It is generally observed that people want vocation, but don't strive to seek vocational education. Professional and vocational education empowers an individual. In today's time technical education is very important. Professional and vocational education, helps Muslims to better adjust to the society, and makes them sociable too. By professionally working with persons of other faiths, Muslims can show them Islam by actually practising it, which can change the grim picture that comes in one's mind after listening the word Muslim. It is highly ironical that even Muslim organisations are insincere in the matter of Muslims. As a result the condition is worsening rather than bettering. The present paper focuses on basically two aspects- why do we need education? and how it can be imparted. Educated Muslim youths can do a lot of activities that are suggested in the paper. If done sincerely these activities will definitely work in bettering the condition of Indian Muslims.

Key words: technical education , vocational education , Indian Muslims , Muslim organizations.

INTRODUCTION

Muslims are those, who follow Islam, who follow Allah's book-Al-Quran and sunnah of Prophet Mohammad (SAW). Almighty Allah in his first order said to men 'IQRA'- read , before ordering any other thing.

Proclaim! (or read!) in the name of thy Lord and Cherisher, Who created-
Created man, out of a (mere) clot of congealed blood

Proclaim! And thy Lord is Most Bountiful,
He Who taught (the use of) the pen,
Taught man that which he knew not. -Quran, sura 96 (Al-Alaq), ayat 1-5

Quran was revealed about 1432 years ago. The first revealed word was *iqra* meaning read. But, why are we Muslims lagging behind in almost every field?

Shah (1983) has stated that there has been a continuous degeneration of Muslims during the post-independence period, which has manifested itself in various forms, such as poor performance of Muslim candidates in Civil Services Examinations, lack of adequate appearance in the merit lists of high school, higher secondary and college sometimes, in the form of inferiority complex as exhibited in the state of indifference towards pressing for their rights and privileges.

According to (The First Report on Religion: Census of India 2001) published by National Commission for Minorities, Muslims population in India was 138,188,240, which account for 13.4% of India's population and constitute the major chunk of the minorities. Muslims literacy rate was 59.1 and work participation rate was 31.3, which was lowest among the minority groups. Literacy rate, female literacy rate and work participation rate of different minority communities are compared in the table given below:

CASTE	POPULATION	LITERACY RATE	FEMALE LITERACY RATE	WORK PARTICPATION RATE
India	1,028,610,328	64.84	53.67	39.1
Muslims	138,188,240	59.1	50.1	31.3
Sikh	19,215,730	69.4	63.1	37.7
Buddhist	7,955,207	72.7	61.7	40.6
Christians	24,080,016	80.3	76.2	39.7
Parsis	89,218	97.9	97.1	35.2

(Source: The First Report on Religion: Census of India 2001)

From the above data it is very clear that the condition of Muslims has been deteriorating. Sachar committee's report is enough to tell the position of Muslims in India.

Ahmed (1987) has stated, "They (Muslims) have been slow to take advantage of the vast educational development the country has witnessed since independence due to the particular ethos of their religion or a minority psychology." Two, "an invidious discrimination to which they have been subjected as a minority community' is another cause of their educational

backwardness. The present paper focuses on need of general and vocational education for Muslims. The paper has been divided into two parts-

- Why do we need general and professional education for Muslims?
- How can general and professional education be imparted to Muslim youth?

Why do we need general and professional education for Muslims?

From Islamic point of view, every kind of education is essential for the development of human race. Prophet Mohammad said, *to receive education though you have to go to China*. Islamic education is inevitable for the development of human souls. Living a dignified life by becoming an earning hand, rather than asking others is encouraged in Islam.

No work is big or small, if it is permissible in Islam. It is generally observed that people want vocation, but don't strive to seek vocational education. Vocational education is nothing but a sort of training to develop expertise of a particular skill in individuals. Professional and vocational education, on one hand empowers an individual and on the other hand makes him a contributing hand for the empowerment of others. The person helps in increasing nation's GDP also.

In today's time technical education is very important, as technology is used in every field to enhance quality and production. Therefore highly developed skill is a must. For any job now a-days one skill i.e. knowledge of computer is almost requisite. Employment helps one to move to the upper levels of socio economic strata.

Shah (1983) has further stated that, the Indian Muslims, poor, economically backward and least educated, cannot join the national mainstream unless they advance educationally in all the fields, especially, in science and technology. A nation whose 12% population is seemingly ignorant and unconcerned with national plans, programmes and progress, will logically lose 12% of its efficiency and potential strength required for countries development and progress. Therefore, it is in the wider national interest that the Muslim community is not neglected, but is educated and made economically prosperous. No country can afford to neglect its population of 90 to 100 million to exist as parasites or become a drag on the nation as a whole. This will be too heavy a burden for a developing country to bear.

Professional and vocational education, basically involves the coordination of 3H's – Hand, Head and Heart. It helps individuals to adjust better in the society, and makes them sociable too. By professionally working with persons of other faiths, Muslims can show them Islam by actually practising it. By doing their job honestly, with hard work and perfection, a Muslim can show devotion towards work, which is reflection of one's inner honesty and dedication towards oneself. These things, if done, will help Muslims become economically strong and will also change the grim picture that comes in one's mind after listening to the word Muslim.

How can we impart general and professional education to Muslim youth?

In our country majority of the Muslims are illiterate. They do not even know to read and write their mother tongue. Many Muslims do not know to read the Quran in Arabic. Therefore, they do not understand the message of the Quran. It is a sorry state. It is like 'dark age' for Muslims as they seem to have gone astray and do not know how and where to move, even when they have the fine road-map and the best guiding principles i.e. the Quran (Allah's Book). Then, how can they be able to know the value of education, when they themselves have not read the Quran in their lives and if read, they do not understand what it means. One can easily recognise a Muslim locality with open drainage system, broken roads, all rubbish littering around, biryani dhabas, where youth and kids are more busy in relishing delicacies instead of taking education. One seldom sees the thirst of education in Muslim youth. Something has gone terribly wrong with them? Why are they so passive and least interested towards education? Due to illiterate ambience and scarcity of conveniences of life, right from the school age a Muslim teenager wants to earn. Need and desire of money takes the child away from school. In this case we need to convince parents, young couples and elderly persons to promote children for going to school instead of earning. They should work to support their children morally and economically. Educated Muslim youths can do door to door canvassing and convincing of illiterate Muslims for educating their kids. Educated Muslims can address Muslim brothers in masjids after salah, especially Friday prayer, when almost everyone gathers. Educated Muslim youths can teach poor Muslim kids and can take permission of any educational institutes to use its premises in off hours.

Donations in the form of zakat, sadqua, ushra etc. can be collected and judiciously used to establish institutes for technical and vocational education especially for Muslims. Through this financial aid, we would be able to afford best trainers also. Rich Muslims should also adopt poor Muslim children for their education like engineering, medical and other higher studies to help and improve Muslim community. Educated and employed youths should patronize poor Muslim kids to take tuition, to fill forms and to take exams, to get selected in competitive exams. After getting selected the child can take scholarship for higher studies. If one child from a poor family is settled properly, his whole family will be on track .

India is the second largest population of the world but we have unskilled manpower. This needs to be converted into efficient human resource. Islamic education along with general or professional education is a must for proper human development, otherwise education deprived of religious and moral education will turn humans into beasts.

In the end it needs to be mentioned that every capable Muslim should-

- Go door to door for tableegh (canvassing for Islamic teaching and education in broader sense).
- Provide all sort of help

- a) Financial
- b) Moral
- c) Educational, technical and vocational if they are in that capacity
- d) To provide job and training if they need working hand
- e) Planning and their implementation righteously and religiously for upliftment of the community.

It is highly ironical that even Muslim organisations are insincere in the plight of Muslims. They take organisational matters as business and hence their dedication is almost artificial. As a result the condition is worsening with each passing day.

"Education is the single most important instrument for social and economic transformation. A well educated population, adequately equipped with knowledge and skill is not only essential to support economic growth, but is also a precondition for growth to be inclusive since it is the educated and skilled person who can stand to benefit most from the employment opportunities which growth will provide." (Para 10.1 of the Approach to the XIIth Five Year Plan).

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