



## SCHOOL PARTICIPATION AT PRIMARY STAGE AMONG MUSLIMS AND HINDUS IN INDIA: INSIGHTS FROM HOUSEHOLD SURVEY

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### ABSTRACT

*Study of educational attainment by different socio-religious categories in India will have important implications for educational policies and for research on the linkage between education and social exclusion. Keeping this in mind the present paper seeks to study the scenario of schooling of the Muslims in comparison with the Hindus using the education data from third round of National family Health Survey pertaining to 2005-2006 for major states in India. The major aim of the present analysis is to study the scenario of schooling by gender according to Standard of Living Index (SLI) and place of residence (Rural/Urban) among the Muslims in comparison with the Hindus. Variables considered for analysis are '% never*



*attended', 'drop out ratio' Factors considered for analysis are place of residence and standard of living index. The results indicate a distinct variation in school attendance in two socio-religious groups amongst the sample states. Results also indicate that the place of residence, and standard of living index remain as important determinants of schooling for both boys and girls. The implications of the present analysis is that it may help in scrutinizing the recent trends and may help to*

*review the policy and helps in identifying more suitable affirmative actions in order to achieve the set targets of universal education.*

**KEYWORDS:-**  
educational attainment ,  
educational policies.

### BACKGROUND AND LITERATURE:

In India, caste, tribal ethnicity, religious minorities and gender across all social groups remain strong markers of disadvantage. Muslims are one of the religious minorities in India who lag behind in the matter of taking advantage of development including

education. Achieving universal primary education (UPE) by certain target time period is one of the goals set in 'Education For All' and 'Millennium Development Goals'. India is committed to achieve the aim of universal education. Due to various interventions in the recent years, much progress towards universal education has been made. Though the recent gains are positive and encouraging but they are still falling short of the set goals. Despite the government's attempt to achieve the goal through the SSA still millions of students remain out of school for various reasons and do not take the advantage of education. Study of educational attainment by different socio-religious categories in India will have important implications for educational policies and for research on the linkage between education and social exclusion. Keeping this

in mind the present paper seeks to study the recent trends in educational attainment of the Muslims in comparison with the Hindus using the education data from a large scale household survey. The administrative data on educational attainment have limitation as they provide relatively limited information on the individual characteristics of pupils (such as age, sex and residence), and little information on the characteristic of their households. On the other hand the data from household survey provide important education data that can be analysed according to household and individual characteristics. For instance, enrolment refers to a child's name being 'on the books' i.e., first-day enrolments, while attendance refers to a child's actual presence in a classroom. School records are more likely to give figures on enrolment, while surveys are more likely to measure attendance. Household survey data therefore, can complement the school-based data by providing information on the aspects of children's background that may influence household schooling decisions.

The studies in Indian context using the data from the macro-level surveys such as the national sample survey (NSSO), the national council for applied economic research (NCAER), the national family and health survey (NFHS) I and II including the Census have identified the socio-economic factors as important determinants of schooling. For instance, Filmer & Pritchett based on NFHS I data, showed that there is a strong effect of household wealth on the probability of children's enrolment (Filmer & Pritchett, 1999). The World Bank report on primary education, quoting NCAER household data of 1992-93, states that the drop-out rate for poorer children, from families with low per capita income was higher than for the children of richer households with higher per capita income (World Bank Report, 1997). Analyzing the NFHS II data, Ramachandran, gave prominent reasons for non-attendance by children as i) high schooling costs like books, stationary and cloths ii) lack of interest in studies iii) children being used to contribute to the household income (Ramachandran, V, 2002). Tilak has analyzed the NSSO data of 1986-87 and 1995-96. According to him, the important reasons of never enrolment of children in rural areas are i) non-availability of schools in 1986-87, which was however not the case in 1995-96 ii) economic factors such as opportunity costs, participation in household economic activity, domestic chores and other economic reasons were the most important factors in 1986-87, however, the data in 1995-96 showed only 23.6% accounted for economic factors iii) another important reason being the lack of interest on the part of both child and parent in education. (Tilak, 2000). Based on census data for 1981 and 1991, Jayachandran, investigated the socio-economic determinants of school attendance in the age group 5-14 years for boys and girls. Some important results are adult female work-force participation, adult (parental) education, school accessibility, poverty, household size, gender bias etc (Jayachandran, U, 2001).

Such studies however do not shed much light on the scenario of primary schooling with a special emphasis of educational attainment by a religious minority in comparison with the Hindus. The study of scenario of schooling will be instructive in highlighting the challenges in achieving the set targets. Also Study of educational attainment by different socio-religious categories in India will have important implications for educational policies and for research on the linkage between education and social exclusion. Keeping this in mind an effort is made to understand the scenario in primary schooling among Muslims in comparison with the Hindus in the major states in India. The major states considered for analysis are Assam, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh.

### **OBJECTIVES:**

The major objective of the present paper is to study the scenario of schooling by gender according to Standard of Living Index (SLI) and Place of Residence (Rural/Urban) among the Muslims and Hindus in the major states in India.

**DATA, DEFINITION AND METHODOLOGY:**

The data for present paper is taken from the National Family Health Survey (NFHS III) corresponding to years 2005-2006. The NFHS is conducted by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare with the principal objective of strengthening the database for implementation and monitoring of population and health programmes in the country. The survey provides indicators of the quality of health and family welfare services, including information on education, status of women and the standard of living. NFHS collects data on education for the defacto and de jure household populations. Typically, for every household member and every visitor who spent the night preceding the survey in the house and who was 5 or 6 years old or older the following question is asked: Has (name of the household member) ever been to school? If the answer was affirmative, the respondent was then asked, what is the highest level (name of the household member) attended? And what is the highest grade (name of the household member) completed at that level? Additionally, for every household member older than 5 or 6 but less than 25 years, current school attendance is ascertained by asking: Is (name of the household member) still in school? With this information it is possible to examine educational attainment, enrolment levels, gender gaps and other gaps in enrolment, and continuation rates for representative samples of the total population. The present paper focuses on educational attainment of children aged 6-10 years only.

The analysis of data focused on the study of the scenario of school participation and grade attainment. Variables considered for analysis are ‘% never attended’, and ‘dropout ratios’. Factors considered for analysis are place of residence and standard of living index.

**RESULTS AND DISCUSSION:**

The table 1 shows school attendance of boys and girls according to Standard of Living Index (SLI) as per NFHS III. For this purpose two indicators are considered, they are percentage never attended school and the percentage drop out. In NFHS III, according to the SLI, the highest percent of boys never attended school was recorded in Bihar for Muslims followed by Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh. Similarly, according to the SLI, the highest percent of girls never attended school was recorded in Bihar for Muslims followed by Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh. The table reveals that both boys and girls belonging to low and medium SLI show more percentage of never attended school in comparison with boys and girls belong to high SLI group. As a whole, in comparison with Hindus the Muslim boys and girls belonging to low and medium SLI have more proportion of never attended school. The table 1 reveals the similar trend for drop out percentages. The table 2 shows school attendance of boys and girls according to place of residence. In NFHS III, according to the place of residence, the highest percent of boys never attended school was recorded in rural Bihar for Muslims followed by Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh. Similarly, according to the place of residence, the highest percent of girls never attended school was recorded in rural Bihar for Muslims followed by Uttar Pradesh and Rajasthan. The table reveals that both boys and girls belonging to rural show more percentage of never attended school in comparison with boys and girls belong to urban. As a whole, in comparison with Hindus the Muslim boys and girls belonging to rural have more proportion of never attended school. The table 2 also reveals the similar trend for drop out percentages.

**Major finding of the present analysis can be listed as below:**

1. Gender differentials in schooling participation are observed among all the sample states for Muslims according to standard of living and index (i.e., low, medium and high).
2. Gender differentials in schooling participation are observed among all the sample states for Muslims according to place of residence (i.e., rural/urban).

**CONCLUSION:**

The major aim of the present analysis is to study the scenario of schooling by Standard of Living Index (SLI) and place of residence (Rural/Urban) among the Muslims NFHS III education data. The results indicate a distinct variation in school attendance in two socio-religious groups amongst the sample states.

Results indicate that gender differentials in schooling participation are observed among all the sample states for Muslims according to standard of living and index (i.e., low, medium and high) and gender differentials in schooling participation are observed among all the sample states for Muslims according to place of residence (i.e., rural/urban). The implications of the present analysis is that it may help in scrutinizing the recent trends and may help to review the policy and helps in identifying more suitable affirmative actions in order to achieve the set targets of universal education.

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**Table 1 Primary school attendance of Hindu's and Muslim's by standard of living index (Boys and Girls):**

States	Attributes	SLI											
		Hindu						Muslims					
		Boys			Girls			Boys			Girls		
		Low	Medium	High	Low	Medium	High	Low	Medium	High	Low	Medium	High
Assam	% Never Attended	4.68	3.35	4.84	6.08	8.7	5.84	17.78	5.26	6.25	7.79	7.29	11.76
	% Drop Out	0.58	0	0	-	-	-	1.48	0.88	0	2.6	0	0
Bihar	% Never Attended	50.75	31.48	25.29	62.36	37.97	25.45	71.24	58.18	51.16	79.23	61.68	51.11
	% Drop Out	0.94	0.33	0	0	0.32	0	0.65	0.91	0	0.77	0.93	0
Madhya Pradesh	% Never Attended	36.9	18.55	8.5	34.59	24.64	10.29	66.67	34.69	14.67	52.38	21.15	13.7
	% Drop Out	0.37	0.4	0	0.17	0.21	0.42	3.7	0	0	0	7.69	0
Rajasthan	% Never Attended	19.65	12.09	6.76	42.73	24.86	10.62	65.06	19.05	16.28	76.47	42.59	18.42
	% Drop Out	0.59	0.25	0	0.89	2.6	0.29	2.41	0	0	0	3.7	2.63
Maharashtra	% Never Attended	20.65	10.73	5.26	23.79	11.33	4.01	8.33	3.36	8.79	14.81	6.8	6.11
	% Drop Out	1.21	0.26	0	0.81	0.83	0.3	4.17	0.84	0	--	--	--
Uttar Pradesh	% Never Attended	24.43	19.62	16.06	32	22.03	13.95	46.67	39.63	28.19	50.39	42.06	31.27
Pradesh	% Drop Out	0.97	0.4	0.2	0.89	0.46	0	0.67	0.79	0.53	0.78	0.26	0.59

**Table 2 Primary school attendance of Hindu's and Muslim's by Place of residence (Boys and Girls):**

States	Attributes	Place of Residence							
		Hindu				Muslims			
		Boys		Girls		Boys		Girls	
		Rural	Urban	Rural	Urban	Rural	Urban	Rural	Urban
Assam	% Never Attended	2.37	5.08	7.75	6.47	12.77	10.81	19.15	5.73
	% Drop Out	0.59	0	--	--	0	1.16	2.13	1.15
Bihar	% Never Attended	41.71	38.01	40.13	48.12	64.17	62.63	71.15	66.3
	% Drop Out	1.1	0.26	0	0.14	0.83	1.05	2.88	0
Madhya Pradesh	% Never Attended	11.25	27.58	12.57	29.51	25.21	48.48	20.49	29.63
	% Drop Out	0.18	0.3	0.59	0.1	0.84	0	--	--
Rajasthan	% Never Attended	13.92	12.27	13.81	29.06	20.78	58.24	29.69	61.73
	% Drop Out	0	0.34	0.48	1.47	0	2.2	3.13	1.23
Maharashtra	% Never Attended	4.98	15.8	5.11	16.7	6.76	5.88	6.53	12
	% Drop Out	0	0.67	0.39	0.73	0.68	0	--	--
Uttar Pradesh	% Never Attended	22.62	18.93	19.54	23.75	40.11	35.08	41.2	39.75
	% Drop Out	0.77	0.39	0.24	0.52	2.32	0.78	0.39	0.63