Education and Employment Among Muslims in India

An Analysis of Patterns and Trends

Rakesh Basant
Context & Key Questions

- Sachar Committee report clearly brought out the relative deprivation of Muslims in India in various dimensions
- What explains observed conditions of employment and education among Muslims in India?
  - Endowments
  - Discrimination (Perceptual or otherwise)/Opportunities
  - Behavioural patterns (attitudes)
  - Supply-side conditions
- Are there links between education and employment patterns?
- What are the emerging policy options to improve the situation?
The Core Argument

- Correlates of Muslim participation in education and employment are complex and multi-dimensional
  - Perceptions about discrimination interact with endowments, opportunities and attitudes to give rise to different patterns of participation
  - A comparative perspective is analytically useful
- Policy interventions need to appreciate/explore
  - Links between participation in different ‘spaces’ – education, work (employment), politics, social..
  - Need to address issues of security, identity and equity ‘simultaneously’
  - Non-quota based policy options for affirmative action
Defining socio-religious categories to implement comparative perspective

- Who do we compare Muslims with?
- Comparisons across religions
- Combining religion and caste categories
  - Hindu – SC (H-SC)
  - Hindu – ST (H-ST)
  - Hindu-OBC (H-OBC)
  - Hindu-Upper castes (H-UC)
  - Muslim – OBC (M-OBC)
  - Muslim – General (M-G)
  - Other minorities (OM)

- Data: Self reported affiliations may have a bias and with affirmative action on the anvil, enhance reporting errors
Understanding Perceptions

- Discussions with the community and perception data suggest that in their view identity based discrimination reduces access, enhances inequity and adds to insecurity.

- Identity related issues
  - Muslims carry a double burden – anti-nationalism & appeasement
  - Identity markers create suspicion and discrimination in housing, schooling, jobs etc.
  - Personal law has become the exclusive focus of gender injustice with the exclusion of generic concerns of education & employment
  - Burden of backwardness on the Community
Understanding Perceptions...

- Security related concerns
  - Security issues adversely affect mobility, especially of women
  - Ghettoization a result of insecurity and discrimination in housing, schools, jobs etc.
  - Supply of jobs and school infrastructure in the vicinity adversely affected by ghettoization

- Perceptions of fairness (social-psychological) measures
  - Perception of fairness lowest among Muslims in all ‘spaces’ (vs. Hindus, Christians)
  - Fairness scores for Muslims especially low for education and employment spaces (also, state programmes, credit)
  - Fairness perception in political space equally poor for Muslims and Christians
Trends & Patterns in Education
Broad patterns

- Enrollment and literacy rates among Muslims have been low but picked up dramatically post 2004-05, after rising more slowly than SC/ST in earlier years.
- Drop-out rates continue to be among the highest for Muslims contributing to large ‘deficits’ for the Community at the school leaving and graduating stage.
- Situation particularly bad in urban areas.
- Role of Madarsas as an educational institutions limited.
- A sharper focus on HE brings out interesting insights about ‘deficits’ among communities and the links between secondary and tertiary education.
Focus on HE: How to define participation?

- Attainment vs. Enrolment
  - Completed graduation or studying for graduation+

- Two ways of looking at such data
  - Stocks of graduates – burden of history
  - Flows – current situation and indications for the future

- Three measures make sense – for each group
  - Share of graduates in the 20+ age population – *all generations stock measure (difference in population share and share among graduates)* - AGS
  - Share of graduates in 22-35 age population – *current generation stock measure (difference in shares - deficit)* - CGS
  - Share of currently studying in the 17 – 29 (or 18-25) age population – *current generation flow measure (deficit)* - CGF
Other measures of participation in HE?

- Total vs. ‘Eligible’ population in an age group
  - Eligibility requires crossing the threshold of higher secondary education
- Three additional measures of participation
  - Share of graduates in the 20+ age *eligible* population *(difference in population share and share among graduates)*
  - Share of graduates in 22 – 35 age *eligible* population
  - Share of currently studying in the 17 – 29 age *eligible* population *(most relevant measure?)*
- Differences in the two sets of measures might suggest a shift in the relative focus of policy intervention and some interesting patterns emerge
### Deficits in Participation in Higher Education by Socio-Religious Categories (SRCs) in 2009-10

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Socio-Religious Categories</th>
<th>Share in 20+ age</th>
<th>Share in 22-35 age</th>
<th>Share in 17-29 age</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>Graduate</td>
<td>Eligible</td>
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<tr>
<td>H-SC</td>
<td>17.4</td>
<td>8.0</td>
<td>8.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H-ST</td>
<td>7.2</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>3.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H-OBC</td>
<td>35.5</td>
<td>26.5</td>
<td>29.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H-UC</td>
<td>23.2</td>
<td>50.2</td>
<td>44.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M-OBC</td>
<td>4.9</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>2.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M-G</td>
<td>6.4</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>3.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OM</td>
<td>5.4</td>
<td>7.4</td>
<td>7.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
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</table>
## Share of Population in the relevant Age Group Participating in Higher Education for each Socio Religious Category, 2009-10

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SRC</th>
<th>AGS (20+)</th>
<th>CGS (22-35)</th>
<th>CGF (17-29) (18-25)</th>
<th>AGS Eligible (20+)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>H-SC</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>5.6</td>
<td>6.4 (8.7)</td>
<td>45.2</td>
<td>49.1</td>
<td>42.8 (50.9)</td>
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<tr>
<td>H-ST</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>4.2 (5.8)</td>
<td>35.0</td>
<td>36.0</td>
<td>33.6 (42.8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H-OBC</td>
<td>6.4</td>
<td>9.6</td>
<td>10.4 (14.0)</td>
<td>44.5</td>
<td>48.4</td>
<td>40.1 (48.3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H-UC</td>
<td>18.5</td>
<td>24.4</td>
<td>18.2 (24.8)</td>
<td>57.0</td>
<td>59.4</td>
<td>41.1 (50.8)</td>
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<tr>
<td>M-OBC</td>
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<td>5.2</td>
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<td>OM</td>
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<th>2004-05</th>
<th>2009-10</th>
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<th>2009-10</th>
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<td>6.4</td>
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<tr>
<td>H-ST</td>
<td>2.1</td>
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Correlates of participation in higher education

- Inter-SRC differences decline significantly once eligibility is controlled for.
- After controlling for eligibility and other factors, differences across SRCs are not very significant, especially in rural areas where even Muslims improve probability of participation significantly, also SC and STs (especially in enrollment).
- Ensuring eligibility for marginalized groups (including Muslims) results in significant improvements in participation in HE especially in rural areas.
- Parental education enhances chances of participation in HE even after one controls for SRC status, income etc.
- Supply of educational infrastructure also important
Correlates of participation in higher education….

- Regional factors important – similarly endowed households in different communities come out with different educational gaps depending on location
- Behavioural factors also play a role – among similarly endowed households in the same state Muslims show lower enrollment
  - Less positive attitude among Muslims?
  - Poorer opportunities to attend school? Availability?
  - Discrimination against Muslims resulting in lower rewards to education (type of jobs and returns to education)
Trends & Patterns in Employment
Employment Profile

- Muslim workers concentrated more in self-employed (home based) activities especially women
- Share in regular work, especially in the public sector / large private sector and tertiary sector very low
- Larger share of Muslims in manufacturing and retail trade than other SRCs
- Conditions of work are more precarious for Muslim workers (a higher share engaged in informal work)
  - Relatively lower earnings among regular workers
  - Larger proportion of Muslim workers are engaged in street vending and are without employee benefits, written or long term contracts
Correlates of employment

- Studies show that
  - Lack of attributes (education etc.) a more important explanation for the absence of marginalized groups (Dalits and Muslims) in regular jobs
  - Also, more than ‘discrimination’, education endowment differences are critical to explain earnings differentials across groups in regular jobs (lack of access relatively less important)
  - But access disadvantage higher for Muslims after controlling for attributes, than for Hindu-OBCs, Hindu-UC
  - Returns to HE higher for Muslims than other groups
- Then why do Muslims not participate more in education
Correlates of employment..

- Do Muslims respond to discrimination in the formal labour market by building self-employed ventures?
  - Some evidence suggests that Muslims choose self-employment in non-agriculture over other work statuses (regular, casual)
  - Post primary education reduces the probability of Muslims in regular employment as well as self-employment in non-agri.
  - Given the perceptions of discrimination, do Muslims with opportunities of self-employment not opt for post-primary education?
  - Does perception of discrimination result in non-seeking of regular jobs even with requisite attributes and crossing the school threshold for HE?
Any policy lessons?
Policy implications

- Positive discrimination effective if (Weisskopf)
  - It is time-bound and flexible to changing circumstances
  - Beneficiary community is fairly homogenous and the likelihood of success of the selected ones high
  - Complemented with human and financial support post preferential selection
    - Financial support not a substitute for reservation/quotas
    - Typically, none of these conditions are satisfied and identification of the beneficiary is also problematic (e.g., OBC Muslims)

- Deficits for the under-privileged (incl. Muslims) not very high among the eligible population, even less when other factors are controlled for
  - But SC/ST and Muslims (especially M-OBCs) significantly more disadvantaged than other groups (e.g., OBCs)
  - How does one address this?
Policy implications...

- Affirmative action in the form of quotas has not been very successful
  - Discrimination may continue at the pre-HE stage
- Quotas increasingly seen as a competition between preferred and non-preferred groups
  - Minor transfers of benefits to the preferred groups result in major resentment
  - Political ramifications?
  - State sector not growing (shrinking?) resulting in limited job opportunities
  - Should private sector be brought in the ambit of quotas?
- Should policy be fine-tuned to incorporate the changing hierarchy of participation? Politically infeasible?
Policy implications...

- Can we think of dimensions other than SRCs for affirmative action?
  - Parental education seems to be a useful criterion. Parental employment needs to be explored empirically
  - Less problems of identification and easier to implement with the implementation of Aadhar (UID)
  - Should one pursue affirmative action in both employment and education?
  - What about complementary inputs – financial, human?
- Should the policy focus be on crossing the threshold?
  - Crossing threshold important for large segments across socio-economic classes
  - Incentives to cross the threshold with affirmative action in HE and/or employment or better supply of schools?
Policy implications...

- What about non-quota based affirmative action?
  - Supply of (or access to) educational institutions? Some tentative results show that they may have a significant positive impact (data limitations)
  - Utility of incentives to educational institutions for diversity in student population? (e.g., additional grants)
  - Utility of incentives for the private sector to have a more diverse workforce? (e.g., tax benefits)
  - Key policy challenge – creating a meaningful and transparent diversity index
Thank you!

Comments and Questions?