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## Attitude of Muslim Parents towards Child Education in Nadia District in West Bengal: A Study

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**Abstract:** Muslim parents' attitudes on their children's education and schooling were examined in this research. More than 600 Muslim parents with one or more school-aged children were surveyed for the research. Some 310 of the Muslim parents belonged to families descended from members of one of the Muslim tribes, while the other 290 were from non-Muslim families. Nadia district in West Bengal's tribal population comprised the sample's age range of 25 to 35 years. Personal interviews and a 23-item questionnaire were utilised to gather data. A four-point Likert type scale was used by the respondents to indicate their level of agreement or disagreement with each of the statements concerning children's education, with 1 indicating strong disagreement and 4 indicating strong agreement. For male and female respondents, the mean scores were computed separately for tribal and non-tribal Muslim groups. Using the "t" test, researchers looked at how different Muslim groups, both tribal and non-tribal, and men and women, viewed education and schooling for their children. The results revealed that the majority of respondents had a relatively good view regarding their children's education and schooling. Tribal and non-tribal Muslim parents' attitudes were found to be indistinguishable, according to the findings. Also, no significant differences were detected between the sexes in this study. The future ambitions of tribal and non-tribal Muslim respondents to offer facilities for higher education for their offspring were visible in the differences between them. Though the government's efforts to universalize education have succeeded in raising public awareness and encouraging favourable attitudes about education, the findings of the research reveal that more work has to be done. The findings of this study have consequences for policymaking and additional research.

**Key words:** The following terms describe a person's cultural background and outlook: Muslim.

### INTRODUCTION

Education is the gateway to the rest of the world, and no discussion of rural infrastructure would be complete without a look at how far we have come in helping rural Indian children get access to that door. All citizens regardless of caste, creed or religion are guaranteed social, political and economic equality under the Indian constitution that was drafted in 1950. It was clearly understood that improvements in education and related fields would be critical to the country's future groundwork for India's endeavour to bring elementary education to all of its citizens. In 1950, the goal was established to ensure that

all eligible children between the ages of 6 and 14 have access to elementary education within a period of 10 years. There was a lot of growth in educational institutions at that time. However, universalization remained a long way off. In April of that year, education was declared the 8th Fundamental Right, making it free and mandatory for all children in the nation between the ages of 6 and 14. India is ranked as the 135th nation in the world for the proportion of its population enrolled in free or nearly free primary and secondary education.

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### **Muslim Parental Attitude and Involvement in children's Education**

Children's educational success is most strongly correlated with parental participation. To put it another way, this dimension had a major impact on children's drive and attention as well as their ability to comprehend and use language. Children learn better when their families are actively involved in their schooling (National Research Council [NRC], 2001; U.S. Department of Education, 2000). Education strategies and early-childhood initiatives must thus include it. Many studies on the effects of parental participation on children's outcomes have focused on the link between certain parental involvement practises and the academic success of the children included in the studies. Students with more parental engagement in their education (e.g. participation in school events, direct connection with teachers and administration) are more likely to succeed in math and reading (Griffith, 1996; Reynolds, 1992; Sui-Chu & Willms, 1996). It has been shown that students with better reading and writing scores and higher report card grades had more involved parents in their children's educational experiences at home (e.g., supervision and monitoring, daily chats about school) (Epstein, 1991; Griffith, 1996; Sui-Chu & Willms, 1996; Keith et al., 1998). Other studies have indicated a substantial connection between children's self-perceptions of competence and accomplishment and their parents' expectations for their children's educational success (Galper, Wigfield, & Seefeldt, 1997). Volunteering in the classroom, attending educational seminars, and participating in Policy Council meetings were all ways in which Muslim parents had a positive impact on their children's social development (Parker et al., 1997). Home-based engagement was expected to have the greatest impact on classroom learning outcomes, whereas direct school-based involvement was expected to have the greatest impact on student behaviour. Studies show that activities like reading to a kid at home, setting up an area

for educational games, and questioning a child about school have the largest impact on a child's readiness for school when they enter kindergarten. These exercises were shown to have a favourable effect on receptive vocabulary and to be linked to children's learning styles, particularly motivation and focus. The Muslim parents' attitude indicates that the family's support for their children's education is evident. When it comes to parenting, there is no one-size-fits-all approach. Negative views about education and schooling held by Muslim parents might hinder their children from receiving an education. For children who have less support from their parents at school, a lack of drive and a low self-esteem might ensue. Muslim parents' positive outlook on life may benefit their children in a variety of ways, including an increase in academic success and a greater desire to study among their children. Many families now place a high value on their children's education as a result of the increased public awareness of the importance of it. Their children's futures are decided by their participation in the school's decision-making process. As a result, it's critical to gauge how successful "Sarva Sikhsha Abhiyan," or universal basic education, awareness programmes and efforts have been in tribal areas.

### **REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

Researchers Bogunovi and Blanka (2007) concluded that the stimulation of families is the outcome of the family's cultural and educational profile, as well as the active attitudes of parents toward their children's education and achievement. To find out which parts of the family setting are most conducive to the development of students' educational ambitions, such as their attitudes toward school and learning, as well as their educational interests and future goals, researchers studied the students' attitudes toward schooling. More than 1,400 eighth-graders from 34 Serbian primary schools

participated in the study. Students and school administrators completed surveys to provide the information for this report. Researchers found a correlation between cognitively and educationally advantageous household settings, as well as good attitudes about school, academic success, lofty goals, and intellectual and cognitive interests outside of the classroom. Sen (1992) showed that cultural influences may have an intermediary role in his research. Individuals' decisions are influenced by their own views and those of their immediate surroundings. Indian culture is part of the belt of classical patriarchy, which extends from North Africa to China and encompasses both Muslim, Hindu, and Confucian civilizations, according to Caldwell (1982). According to his findings, the cultural characteristics reveal that being from an impoverished caste or tribe has a detrimental impact on educational opportunities. There are fewer females in rural regions who belong to a scheduled caste or tribe than there are in urban areas who belong to either. Children whose moms had their first child at a young age and children whose mothers favour males over girls had lower attendance rates in school. In rural regions, the likelihood of a kid attending school is positively correlated with the proportion of women in the 20–59 age range relative to males; as a consequence, his findings showed that in districts with fewer "missing women," the likelihood of a child attending school was greater. According to the studies cited above, a child's education is influenced by a variety of circumstances. As a result, the review may be broken down into the following sections for easier comprehension.

#### Review of Studies on Parental Involvement in Education:

Nearly two decades of research show the relevance of parental participation for the academic performance of teenagers. According to Duncan (1969), who looked at two classes of junior high students, the attendance, achievement, and dropout rates were all compared. In one class, parents of Muslim pupils met with school counsellors one-on-one before their children started middle school. They did not have the same

opportunity in the other class. Student attendance, grade point averages, and dropout rates were all higher for Muslim students who visited with school counsellors individually over the course of three years than for the general student body. According to Lucas, Henze, and Donato (1990), schools have a significant impact on the amount of parental participation in children' education. Studying six high schools in California and Arizona, the authors discovered that the schools aggressively promoted parental engagement in the education of their kids, particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds. The high schools supported parents' involvement in their children's education via newsletters, parent advisory groups, parent evenings, and student-parent-teacher conferences. Researchers Dornbusch and Ritter (1988) looked at the impact of parental engagement in high school activities on students' performance. Six high schools in the San Francisco Bay Area participated in the research, which relied on data from students, Muslim parents, and instructors. Students with Muslim parents who attended school events obtained better marks than students with Muslim parents who did not attend school festivities. A study conducted by these authors indicated that Muslim parents of average kids, minorities, stepfamilies, and families with a single parent had the lowest levels of participation in school activities and procedures than any other group. The researchers came to the conclusion that educational and economic disparities would continue to exist for many low-income, minority kids without efforts to increase family participation. Parents' engagement in their children's education must also take race into account, according to researchers. Hill et al. (2004) found that parental engagement in schooling is influenced by the race of the parents. As a group, African Americans are more involved in their children's lives than their European counterparts (Hill et al., 2004). Although other studies have indicated the contrary (c.f. Seyfried & Chung, 2002). It's not apparent if parental participation differs by race/ethnicity, say Hill and Tyson (2009). A new research seeks to answer this question.

A research project by (George, 1995).

For example, when it comes to assisting with schoolwork or going to school meetings and activities with their children, parents are less likely to be involved in their children's education. According to the findings of the survey, only a small percentage of high school students have Muslim parents who are actively involved in their education.

### **The Importance of the Research and the Expression of the Issue**

Our country has become one of the world's fastest-growing countries as a result of the diversification seen in the 21st century. Efforts have been made by both the government and non-governmental organisations, but although the literacy rate has grown over the last several decades, it hasn't yet reached 100%. The illiteracy rate of the underprivileged is still high. In West Bengal's Nadia district, despite several constitutional guarantees and numerous state government programmes, the literacy level of the rural and underprivileged masses is far lower than that found in the rest of society. This might be due to a number of different things. Socioeconomic position, parental attitude, enthusiasm in providing education for their children, knowledge of educational issues, and other variables all have a significant impact. Despite the fact that many Muslim parents of low-income children do not place a great priority on education, the current situation may be different if the importance of education were better known. In light of this, it is critical to examine how these Muslim parents see and approach their children. According to the findings of this research, tribal Muslim parents nowadays have a more positive attitude toward their children's education because of government efforts and campaigns to raise knowledge of educational principles.

### **Objectives of The Study**

The research investigates the views of Muslim parents in West Bengal's Nadia district, which is home to a sizable tribal Muslim minority, on the importance of education in their

children's lives. The following are the precise goals:

### **Muslim parents' views about education and schooling have to be examined.**

- To compare the attitudes of Muslim parents from tribal and non-tribal areas about their children's education and schooling. Examine if Muslim parents' opinions regarding their children's education vary significantly by gender.

### **Muslim parents' educational plans and goals will be examined in this study.**

Residents of the Nadia district made up the study's sample. There are twelve blocks in this area. More than 600 people (310 tribal and 290 non-tribal) from 200 families were interviewed for this study. Three hundred and ten females and three hundred and ninety men took part in the survey. Muslim parents who had one or more school-aged children were asked to participate in the study. They were between the ages of 25 and 35. There were 23 statements in the questionnaire dealing to education and schooling for children. The questionnaire had equal amounts of positive and negative comments. Asked to score each statement on a four-point Likert scale, the responses were (where 1 denotes strongly disagree, 2 denotes disagree, 3 denotes agree and 4 denotes strongly agree). The questionnaire's final 23 assertions were culled after a comprehensive assessment of the literature, and each one underlined the importance of education for a child's future.

### **EXPERIENCES AND COMMENTARY**

#### **Involvement of Parents in the Educational Process**

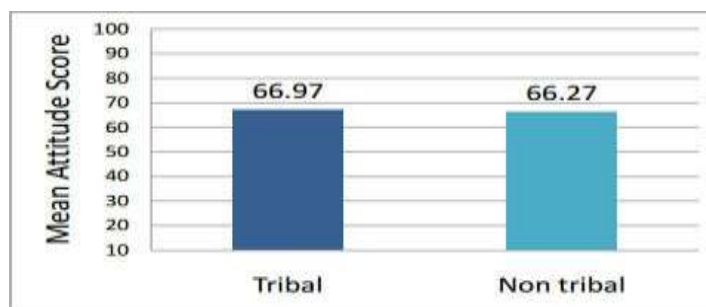
Since the scale's highest score is 92 and the lowest is 23, the mean score of the overall sample was just 66.83. According to the mean score, respondents' attitudes about the topic are neither very positive nor negative. Despite the government's efforts to provide free education for everyone, the results showed that the attitude of the respondents was not extremely positive. There were no significant differences in attitudes about schooling and education between students with and without high socioeconomic level (Evangelista de Carvalho Filho 2008; Mingat 2007; Shavit &

Blossfeld, 1993; Jenck & Coleman et al. 1966). In any case, the study's generally positive and not-so-unfavorable attitude reveals that increased awareness of literacy and education in the nation has greatly touched all parts of society, including the tribal community. The importance of education and schooling for children has greatly increased over the last several decades, compared to prior periods when it was rare to send a kid to school in a tribal Muslim community. Children were encouraged to work in their families' businesses rather to attend school, which Muslim parents saw as a waste of time and money since the results were unknown. The poor socioeconomic standing of the respondents and their parents' jobs in the labour market may be to blame for their negative attitude about education. Their

primary source of income was agriculture and non-agricultural work. The majority of respondents were poor, with monthly incomes ranging from Rs 3000 to 4000. They were unfamiliar with the amenities and conveniences available in the city and developed areas. When it comes to schooling, they may lack the ability to see the clear link between their children's education and their long-term success. The status of the father on the job market is the second factor to consider. As a result, fathers in paid jobs are predicted to be more conscious of the significance of education, and hence more inclined to invest in their children's education compared to those in dependent employment, who are more concerned with feeding their family.

**Comparison of Attitude of Tribal and Non-Tribal Muslim parents Table 1: Mean Scores of Tribal and Non-Tribal Groups**

Groups	N	Mean	SD	t	df	Significance
Tribal	310	66.97	7.12	0.29	143	p>.05
Non-tribal	290	66.27	7.59			



The average scores of Muslim parents from both the tribal and non-tribal groups were calculated separately to compare attitudes. The "t" test was used to see whether tribal students varied substantially from non-tribal students when it came to their attitudes about education. According to the findings, there was no discernible difference in attitudes toward education between parents from tribal and non-tribal backgrounds. In light of this, it is possible that living circumstances in the village that are comparable to those of the tribal and non-tribal population may be a primary factor in this similarity in attitudes toward education and schooling. Since the villages have similar

living circumstances and are located close to an urban centre for markets and other services, their degree of awareness is comparable.

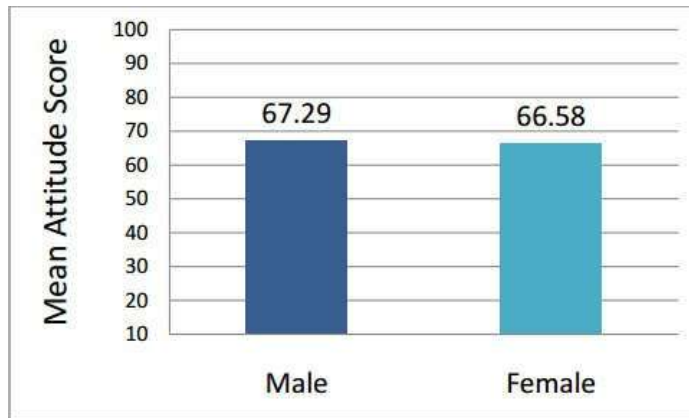
#### Differences between Men and Women

The results also showed that there was no significant difference in attitudes about education between male and female respondents (Table 2). In contrast to the past, women now possess a position of power and influence in the home that is almost on par with that of men. Until recently, women were limited to the home and had little concept of the importance of a college degree. Results indicated that moms, like dads, supported

their children's education and attendance at school.

**Table 2: Mean scores of Male and Female respondents**

Groups	N	Mean	SD	t	df	Significance
Female	390	67.29	7.16	0.57	143	P>.05
Male	210	66.58	7.24			



**Muslim parents’ Perception of Children’s Future Education and Related Issues**

Tribes and non-tribes differed in how they planned for their children's education, according to interview data acquired via open-ended questions. According to the findings, non-tribal Muslim parents were more confident in their ability to provide their children with opportunities for higher education than tribal parents. They believed that a college education would provide their children with a better standard of living, and that a high school diploma would not enough. When it came to further education, the expense to the tribal Muslim parents wasn't seen to be feasible, even though they felt education was vital. As a result, a majority of the tribal Muslim parents said that they preferred to see their children work for the family after finishing school rather than pursue further education. Non-tribal parents, on the other hand, seemed to be more upbeat about the prospects of educating their children than tribal parents.

It was also found that most Muslim parents from non-tribal communities had high expectations of their children's schools, such as enough libraries, adequate furniture and equipment as well as reasonable facilities like computer labs for vocational training like computer application. They believed that allowing girls to take part in extracurricular activities like tailoring and painting, in

addition to academics, would help them become more self-sufficient in the future. There was no ideal school in their minds for their children's education among the tribal Muslim parents.

**CONCLUSION**

Since independence, the educational system has grown rapidly in terms of enrollment, the number of institutions, the growth rate, and so on. From an elitist to an egalitarian system, the system has experienced a remarkable transition (Powar, 1997). There are benefits for everyone as a consequence of the system's expansion. Minorities continue to face discrimination, as do those who are not from disadvantaged groups (Gandhe, 1999). As a result, in a democratic society like ours, where equality, social justice, and economic progress benefit all segments of society, it is necessary to provide particular attention and chances to the traditionally disadvantaged population. In light of this, the Indian constitution gives an ideal of "Equality of opportunity." Making free ships, scholarships, and reservations available to those who are less fortunate has been a priority (Powar, 1997). Another key societal goal of education, as noted by the Education Commission (Kothari Commission 1964-65), is to level the playing field so that those from less advantaged backgrounds may utilise

education as a lever for progress. Equal access to opportunity must be guaranteed in any society that values social justice and is concerned about the well-being of its citizens. The state has set aside nearly a quarter of all government positions in order to help raise educational standards. This might serve as an incentive for Muslim women and their families to send their children to college. People from underprivileged backgrounds tend to be less educated, and as a result, fewer of them can afford college. In the future, more students may enrol in higher education as a result of primary school universalization..

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