

## STATUS AND EMPOWERMENT OF OBC MUSLIMS: A CASE STUDY OF DISTRICT BARABANKI IN UTTAR PRADESH

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**Abstract:** *Indian presents unity in diversity as many religions flourished over the period. Muslims, Jains, Buddhists, Sikhs and Parsis are categories into minority communities. Indian Constitution also provides many legal safe guards to the minority communities while special provisions are made for their social and economic growth. India has also adopted inclusive policies and programmes for overall development of the minorities. However, minority communities face several problems in their development. The condition of Muslim minority in India continues to be very complex and critical. Empowerment of the weaker sections has been the priority of government for their mainstreaming in development and governance. Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, OBCs and Minorities are included in the weaker sections of the society. In order to provide them due share in educational institutions and government services, reservations have been given to them besides introducing educational and economic empowerment programmes and schemes for their overall empowerment and development. Against this backdrop, present paper purports to examine the status of OBC Muslims in Barabanki district of Uttar Pradesh.*

**Keywords:** *Development, Empowerment, Minorities, OBCs.*

### INTRODUCTION

Among minorities Muslims are in the top in relation to the population. They constitute about 14 percent of the total population but they are more prone to the discrimination in the social institution. They are excluded from participation in the basic educational, political, social, and economic institution of the society (Waheed, 2007). As the largest minority Muslims in India are one of the most backward socio-religious communities, whose performance in the crucial

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Human Development Index such as level of literacy, education and health is far behind than other socio-religious communities (Faisal, 2013). The exclusion of Muslims is not a new phenomenon which developed after the independence of India but they were excluded before the Independence as Hunter Commission mentions in its report (Robinson, 1993). There was a “sense of discrimination prevailing among the minorities” and that it “must be eliminated, root and branch, if we want the minorities to form an effective part of the mainstream” (Singh, 1983). This shows the Muslims formed an excluded community which required special measures to bring them into the mainstream of social, economic and educational life (Hasan, 2009). There have been efforts by scholars for knowing the socio-economic conditions of excluded groups of Indian society such as Muslims. Committees and scholars have repeatedly said that the Muslims in India are facing serious exclusion in all aspects of socio-economic life. These observations could not attract the attention of policy makers on the excluded condition of this community. Further, a high level committee appointed by the prime minister under the chairmanship of Justice Rajindra Sachar, retired Chief justice of the Delhi high Court to study the socio-economic and educational status of Muslim Community in India gave a report (Chisti, 2007). This report was submitted by the committee in November 2006 and marked a turning point in documenting the exclusion of Muslims in India. Sachar Committee collected data from whole country and received oral detail and written presentation from 13 states that have significant Muslim population. The committee also collected data from Indian Air Force and the Navy on the number of Muslims in these services but did not include the same in the report on the specific request from the Defense Ministry. The report indicates the gravity of social exclusion of Muslims in India.

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

Uttar Pradesh is the most populous state of India. It is also the state with largest population of Muslims in India. About 31 million, constituting 22 percent of the total Muslims in India live in Uttar Pradesh. Although, in none of the UP districts. Muslims are in a majority; in 12 districts of the state Muslims have a substantial

presence, i.e. over 25 percent but below 50 percent. Barabanki district is located in the eastern region of the state. About 22 percent population of the district comprises of Muslims. The present paper is based on a major research work carried out by the scholar for pursuance of doctoral research. The study was conducted in minority concentrated development blocks of Banki, Sirauli Gauspur, Masauli and Fatehpur . The sample comprises of 410 Muslim families. The survey was conducted with the help of structured interview schedule containing relevant research points, scales of view points and questions pertaining to socio- economic and educational status, government welfare programmes and their impact on empowerment of Muslims. The filled in interview schedules were processed with the help of SPSS.

## DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

Class of respondents is shown in Table 1. OBCs constituted 79.5 per cent while it was found more pronouncing in SiraouliGauspur (93.3 per cent) followed by Fatehpur (84.9 per cent) and Masauli (78.6 per cent). The proportion of General caste Muslims was recorded significantly high in Banki (40.6 per cent).

**Table: 1**  
**Class of Respondents**

Block/Ward	General	OBC	Other	Total
Masauli	18 17.5%	81 78.6%	4 3.9%	103 100.0%
SirouliGauspur	7 6.7%	98 93.3%	0 0.0%	105 100.0%
Banki	39 40.6%	57 59.4%	0 0.0%	96 100.0%
Fatehpur	16 15.1%	90 84.9%	0 0.0%	106 100.0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>80</b> <b>19.5%</b>	<b>326</b> <b>79.5%</b>	<b>4</b> <b>1.0%</b>	<b>410</b> <b>100.0%</b>

Source: Field Survey.

Educational level of respondents is shown in Table 2. Educational levels among Muslims were recorded poor as more than 2/5<sup>th</sup> respondents were illiterate and 20 per cent respondents were matric pass. The proportion of illiterate Muslims was found comparatively high among OBCs while education level among General caste Muslims was recorded high as compared to OBCs. About 14 per cent OBCs were graduates and post graduates as against 32.5 per cent General caste Muslims. The respondents were asked whether they or their family members have received vocational education/skill training. About 6 per cent respondents revealed that they or their family members have received vocational education/skill training. This was found more pronouncing among OBCs as compared to other social groups

**Table: 2**  
**Educational Level of Respondents**

Class Of Respondent	Illiterate	High School	Middle School	Intermediate	Graduate	Post Graduate	Others	Total
General	28 35.0%	8 10.0%	10 12.5%	6 7.5%	18 22.5%	8 10.0%	2 2.5%	80 100.0%
OBC	145 44.5%	29 8.9%	69 21.2%	22 6.7%	21 6.4%	24 7.4%	16 4.9%	326 100.0%
Other	1 25.0%	0 0.0%	3 75.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	4 100.0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>174</b> 42.4%	<b>37</b> 9.0%	<b>82</b> 20.0%	<b>28</b> 6.8%	<b>39</b> 9.5%	<b>32</b> 7.8%	<b>18</b> 4.4%	<b>410</b> 100.0%

Source: Field Survey.

The respondents were asked whether minority educational institutions are sufficient for rendering needs of minority students. Majority of the respondents were found agreed to some extent and fully agreed on the view point. However, the level agreement varies

across the classes among Muslims. The respondents were further asked whether minority coaching institutions are sufficient for preparation and consultation for competitive examinations. About 55 per cent respondents were found agreed to some extent and agreed on the view point however, more than 1/3<sup>rd</sup> respondents were found disagreed. The level of agreement with the point varies across the social group. About 2/3<sup>rd</sup> respondents reported that scholarships have contributed to some extent and great extent in educational development of minorities. However, more than 1/3<sup>rd</sup> respondents were of the view that scholarship schemes have not contributed in educational development of minorities. This was found more pronouncing among OBCs. About 2/5<sup>th</sup> respondents were found dissatisfied with the present system of scholarship. The level of dissatisfaction was recorded high among OBCs as compared to other social groups.

Main family occupation of respondents is shown in Table 3. About 1/3<sup>rd</sup> respondents revealed that their main family occupation is labour while about 20 per cent respondents reported that their main family occupation is business. The proportion of service class respondents was reported high General caste and low among OBCs while a higher proportion of OBC respondents reported that their main family occupation is business.

**Table: 3**  
**Main Family Occupation of Respondents**

Class Of Respondent	Agriculture	Business	Labour	Service	Other	Total
General	6	15	38	10	11	80
	7.5%	18.8%	47.5%	12.5%	13.8%	100.0%
OBC	24	65	91	10	136	326
	7.4%	19.9%	27.9%	3.1%	41.7%	100.0%
Other	0	2	2	0	0	4
	0.0%	50.0%	50.0%	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%
Total	30	82	131	20	147	410
	7.3%	20.0%	32.0%	4.9%	35.9%	100.0%

Source: Field Survey.

Majority of the respondents reported that their family members are working. However, a less proportion of OBC respondents revealed that their family members are employed as compared to other social groups. Nature of employment of family members is shown in Table 4. A higher proportion of respondents from General caste were in government service and private service while a higher proportion of OBCs were in self employed, private service and business.

**Table: 4**  
**Nature of Employment of Family Members**

Class Of Respondent	Self -Employment	Government Service	Private Service	Business	Other	Total
General	18 26.1%	7 10.1%	25 36.2%	7 10.1%	12 17.4%	69 100.0%
OBC	57 27.7%	3 1.5%	45 21.8%	39 18.9%	62 30.1%	206 100.0%
Other	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	1 25.0%	2 50.0%	1 25.0%	4 100.0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>75</b> <b>26.9%</b>	<b>10</b> <b>3.6%</b>	<b>71</b> <b>25.4%</b>	<b>48</b> <b>17.2%</b>	<b>75</b> <b>26.9%</b>	<b>279</b> <b>100.0%</b>

Source: Field Survey.

Muslim population is the secondlargest group and could be more rightly addressed as largest minority group. They are not only thelargest minority group but their presence can be felt in all the districts of Indian states. Eventhen, this minority group often has to face problem of discrimination, social stagnation, illiteracy,unemployment and poverty. Such problems have cumulatively led to growing backwardness andmarginalization of this socio religious group (Sikand, 2006). The situation of Muslims has not improved much before and after independence. Muslims havenegligible influence on the process of economic development (Beg, 1989). In pre-IndependentIndia, In this regard W. W. Hunter wrote, "earlier it was impossible for a well bornMusalmanto become poor; at present it is almost impossible for him to continue rich (Hunter, 1969). There is widely held belief

that Muslims have remained largely unaffected by the process of economic development and social change that have been taking place in independent India and their general economic condition has been deteriorating progressively ( Ahmad, 1975). Until recent time there were no reliable statistics to explore the situation of Muslims including other religious minorities in India. Whatever the literature available is based on the guesstimates and micro-level study (Alam & Saraswati, 2007).

The analysis simply demonstrates that the minorities suffer from backwardness, poverty, exploitation and deprivation. The plight of minority communities is almost the same in other states. They are socially and economically backward and even their empowerment through initiating welfare and developmental programmes could not yield satisfactory results. Their representation in government jobs, business operations and politico-administrative elite is far behind their share in population. The fact remains that minority communities in some of the states feel politically dumped and isolated and are seeking religious leadership for the empowerment of the OBC Muslims in particular and enhancing their share in government jobs and business operations through easy access to opportunities and necessary inputs.

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