



Education of marginalized Muslim girls at higher secondary level in Murshidabad district, West Bengal

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Abstract

Education is the backbone of the nation just as women's education is the main tool for the development of society. Indian society is a traditionally and culturally diverse society. This society is inhabited by people of different classes, different castes, regions and different religions. Muslims are the largest minority group in India but educationally they are one of the most backward people in the country. Muslim women are far behind the boys and girls of other communities in terms of education, money and social status. Education is considered to be the only process that guides the social, economic, cultural and political development of the individual. Education is the only tool for change and development of the society. The main purpose of this research paper is to look at the reasons behind the backwardness of Muslim women in higher education. The main reasons for the backwardness of Muslim women in education are large families, ignorance about the importance of education, lack of connection between Madrasah education and modern education, poverty, negative attitude towards girl's education, lack of security for girls.

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Introduction

Women's education refers to the providing of all educational facilities and opportunities to women. Our constitution places a high value on gender equality in terms of status and opportunities. The state may not discriminate against any citizen based on religion, caste, gender, or place of birth. As a result, women receive equal educational chances and facilities as males, regardless of caste, religion, or region.

Dr.S. Radhakrishnan states, "There cannot be educated people without educated women. If general education has to be limited to mere men or women, the opportunity should be given to women, for then it would most surely be passed on to the next generation." (University Education Commission 1948—1949)

Realising the necessity and importance of women's education, the National Policy on Education (1986) states, "The education of women should receive emphasis not only on grounds of social justice, but also because it accelerates social transformation." Throughout most of human history, the status of girls has been poor and submissive. From ancient times to the current era, women's rights to dignity and independence have been violated. Girls' low involvement in school may not be linked to their low participation in economic activities, but it is worth noting that their contribution to the Indian economy is lesser. According to the 2001 Indian census, Muslims account for 13.4% of the Indian population. The literacy rate among Muslims is 59.1%, which is lower than the national literacy rate (64.8%). However, the literacy rate among Muslim girls is 50.1 percent, while males have a rate of 67.6 percent. The literacy rate among Muslim girls in rural areas is 42.7% lower than in urban areas (63.2%). Female education is critical for the development of individuality. It is also a tool for developing socially desirable abilities, habits, and attitudes towards common citizenship.

In practically all levels of education in India, girls continue to be marginalised in terms of enrolment rates. In recent years, the marginalisation of girls and the issue of educational inequality have become serious issues in India. Muslim girls are similarly marginalised in the educational arena, and multiple conversations have taken place to identify and study various causes that contribute to their marginalisation in education, ranging from the political level to general difficulties.

Review of related literature

Usha Nayar (2007) has studied Muslim women and girls who fall short of their male counterparts. With 31% of their population living in poverty, Muslims had the greatest rate of poverty. Muslim girls had an average literacy rate of 50.1%, compared to a community-wide average of 53.7%. In urban regions, the gender gap in literacy rates was 13.1%, compared to 9.67% in rural ones. Comparing Muslims to the national average of 6.7%, just 3.6% have degrees. In 2001, 3.9 years were spent in school by men aged 7 to 16 years. Muslim men had an average age of 3.26 and Muslim women had an average age of 2.7. The study's conclusions showed that the marginalisation of Muslims in education supported women's sex inequality.

Muslim Women & Girls education (2006), was a Case Study from Hyderabad, Journal of Indian Education, May, 2006. The present paper was as out the educational status of Muslim women and the attitude of parents towards education of their girls in slums of Hyderabad. According to the report, girls drop out at a lesser rate than males do in primary school, but their numbers rise as they progress through the grades. Despite the fact that basic education in public schools is free, many families prefer to send their children to madrasas. These Madrasas need to be updated and furnished to be able to offer formal education in addition to religious instruction. Wasey, A. (1997) in an article "Realising the importance of girl education" emphasised the efforts done for Muslim women's education by Sir Syed Ahmad Khan, Sheikh Abdullah, and Nawab Mohsinul Mulk. He came to the conclusion that up to 85% of lower caste Muslims were illiterate after evaluating the current situation of Muslim women's education. The primary reason Muslim parents did not educate their children was their utter financial incapacity. Marriage and the negative effects of dowry were the other factors preventing Muslim girls from pursuing higher education.

Research Gap: Pathan (1986) has done "a study on educational backwardness of the Muslim women containing economic, social, religious and political factors and other causes responsible for the educational backwardness of the Muslim women in Solhapur district". Sabiha Hussain (1990) in North Bihar has studied economic and political factors, drooping out for various factors. Manju Narula (2014) has done a study on educational development of Muslim minority containing social economic status etc. This finding are similar to Kareem, Abdul, P. (1991), Saiyed and Narain (1990). Awasthi, Surya Kiran (1992) has done a study on minority Muslim students in Bhopal containing educational opportunities, understanding school environment, role of parent, religious etc.

From the above review of literature it is known that many researchers in their research papers have done research on Muslim girls in their own area. Moreover, it is known that different authors have different factors affected on Muslim

girls in higher education. However, it goes without saying that no work has been done on Muslim girls in Murshidabad district of West Bengal. The researcher wanted to work with Muslim girls in the Beldanga 1 block of Murshidabad district in his research.

But the above researchers did not work the awareness of Muslim girls, attitude of Muslim Girls and the present situation of higher secondary education w.r.t the basic requirement of Muslim Girls and the factors effecting higher secondary education of Muslim Girls in Murshidabad, West Bengal. Therefore, the researcher has included those topics as a research gap in his research and will explain that topic in details.

Statement of the problem: So the investigator has finalised the title as "Education of Marginalized Muslim Girls at Higher Secondary level in Murshidabad district, West Bengal".

Objectives of the study

- To find out the factors affecting higher secondary education of Muslim girls.
- To study the awareness of Muslim girls towards higher secondary education.
- To find out the attitude of Muslim girls towards higher secondary education.
- To understand the current state of higher secondary education in relation to the fundamental needs of girls.

Delimitation of the study: Because of short time span present study was delimited to

1. The study was delimited to Beldanga-1 block of higher secondary schools Muslim girl students.
2. Only 4 schools were selected for purpose of data collection in Beldanga-1 block of Murshidabad.

Important Terms defined

Educational marginalization: It is a process where someone is pushed to the edge of a group getting minor importance. This is predominantly a social phenomenon by which a minority or sub-group is excluded, and their needs or desires are ignored. The prevailing circumstances and social forces of the society, which are historically and traditionally make the Muslim girls backward observed studies and researches on girl education, So, the first and all-embracing need of girls education in Muslim society today is that it should be realistic, related to life. In this study the word "marginalization" is referred to describe the educational backwardness of Muslim girl students in higher secondary education.

Women Education: Women education is one of the most important objects for the development of the country. It's because an educated woman can help to enhance their family, society and country as well. They can look after their children duly, can help their hubby to live their life happily and successfully.

Methodology of the study

The "Descriptive Survey" method was chosen in light of the demand and the nature of the investigation. The current research was a descriptive survey.

- **Population:** All higher secondary Muslim girls in Murshidabad district in West Bengal.
- **Sample:** 100 higher secondary Muslim girls from Beldanga-1 block from the district of Murshidabad.

- **Sampling procedure:** Sample was selected through purposive sampling technique as because there is less time to cover up all samples.

Tools used: There are three tools used by the researcher for fulfilment objectives in this study and all are three tools constructed by the researcher through proper standardized manner.

Table 1

Objective	Used tools	Validity & reliability
Objective:1	Focus group discussion for factors affecting in higher secondary education	Validity: face validity and expert view. Reliability: r=0.81
Objective:2 & 3	Questionnaire for to find out the awareness and attitude of Muslim girls towards higher Secondary education.	Validity: face validity and expert view. Reliability: r=0.85
Objective:4	observation schedule for basic requirements of girls in present situation	Validity: face validity and expert view. Reliability: r=0.75

Data Analysis and Interpretation

Objective: 1: To find out the factors affecting higher secondary education of Muslim girls After Focus Group discussion the researcher found the following factors for the marginalization of the Muslim girl students in higher secondary education such as:

Major factors

1. **Negative attitude of parents:** Negative parental attitude towards educating daughter can also be a barrier for a girl's education. According to many parents' educating sons are an investment because they are responsible for caring their aging parents; the education of daughters as a waste of money because daughter will eventually live with their husbands' families, and the parent will not be benefited directly from their education, or daughter with higher levels of education will likely have higher dowry express.
2. **Conservatism:** Most of the people of Muslim society feel that educated girls become morally deprived. The 'Purdah' systems among Muslim society for girls have been created great hindrances in the expansion of girl's education. The traditional prejudices still operate as sign of backwardness in rural areas to some extent. In fact, the lower and poor section of the society falls as an easy prey to these superstitions and traditional prejudices.
3. **Poverty:** The poor economic condition of parents is the greatest obstacle in the way of the development of girls' education in backward district like Murshidabad. Education has become costly affair. Hence, it is not an easy task for poor parents to make suitable arrangements for the education of their daughters.
4. **Early marriage:** The early marriages among Muslim girls were creating barriers in the expansion of girl's education. Murshidabad is the one of the backward districts in West Bengal. Parents think that the only objective of their life is to marry of their daughters. They do not even consider the fact that education is indispensable to lead an independent life.
5. **Inadequate school facilities:** An important barrier to education in Murshidabad is the lack of adequate school facilities. Many schools do not have any common rooms (separate room for girls) to accommodate all girls of the school. Furthermore, the class room that are available

often lack of basic necessities of girls such as sanitary facilities and availability of drinking water.

6. **Misinterpretation of Islamic thoughts:** Islam does not neglect women. The women are getting respect and dignified status by Islam. An influence of religion obviously with the miss interpretation of religion is the main barrier of girls' education. Many **Moulobi** (saint) misguide people in rural area. They told that Islam does not permit for girls' education but it is not realistic. Islam never even discriminates between boys and girls in getting education.

Objective 2: To find out the awareness of Muslim girls towards higher secondary education.

Analysis of Dimensions -1: Awareness of Muslim girls related to socio-economic factors affecting Higher Secondary education

1. **Parental awareness:** About 90% of girls think that parental awareness is most important for their girl's education because if the parents were aware about their girls therefore their girls would be educated but near about 10% of girls did not think like that, according to them their own awareness is most important for their educational development.
2. **Family encouragement:** Near about 54% of girls accepted that their family encourage for their education because their family know the girl's education is most important for society but round about 46% did not accept because their parents were illiterate who did not encourage their girls for getting education.
3. **Poor economic condition:** Every girl in the sample believed that poor economic condition is the main reason for backwardness of Muslim girls in getting higher secondary education. In Murshidabad district many people have to go outside for earning wages for their livelihood.
4. **Social superstition:** Round about 79% of girls described that social superstitions are one of the main reason for backwardness in higher secondary education because of **Purdah** system and every decision depends upon their own will. Where girls need to be covered in **Hizab** but approximately 21% of girls did not accept it because they think social superstition is not a barrier in getting education.

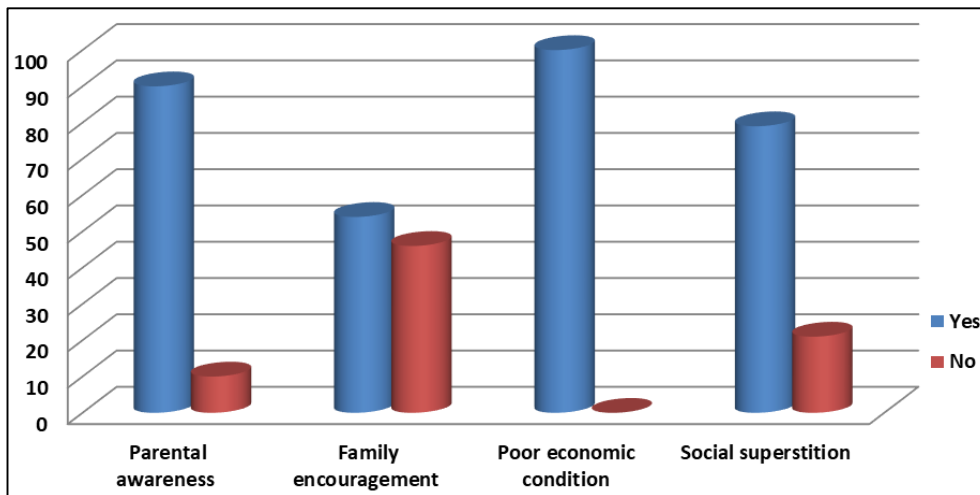


Fig 1: Awareness related to socio-economic factors affecting Higher Secondary education

Analysis of Dimensions-2: Awareness of Muslim girls related concept of Higher Secondary Education

- 1. Clear concept :** About 36% of girls express their views in favour of clear concept about higher secondary education because they know all things related about higher secondary education but Near about 64% of the girls accepted they do not have clear concept of higher secondary education because of they had no sufficient knowledge about higher secondary education.
- 2. Backwardness in Higher Secondary education:** Approximately 82% of girls agreed that Muslim girls are backward in higher secondary education because they think Muslim girls are neglected from society and their poor economic condition but about 18% of girls not agreed that Muslim girls are backward in getting higher secondary education because they think Muslim were not backward in any section.
- 3. Stream selection:** Near about 41% of girls express their views in favour of what type stream having in higher secondary education because of they know how many streams have higher secondary education but round about 59% of girls accepted they did not know what type stream having in higher secondary education because they had no information what type stream having in

higher secondary education.

- 4. Rights of girls after getting Higher Secondary education:** About 72% of girls were accepted that after getting higher secondary education they are more conscious about their rights because of only education provide information about many types of rights but approximately 28% of the girls express that higher secondary education make no effect over conscious about their rights because of they think only higher secondary education is not enough for conscious about their rights.
- 5. Vocational education :** Near about 28% girls express their views in favour of aware of getting vocational education because of they know after getting vocational education they will be self-independent but about 72% of girls accepted they did not aware of getting vocational education because of they have no sufficient information about vocational education.
- 6. Self-dependent:** Round about 58% of girls agreed that higher secondary education get self-dependent because they think after competition of higher secondary education they get a part time job but about 42% girls did not agreed that because they think only higher secondary education not provide any kind of job.

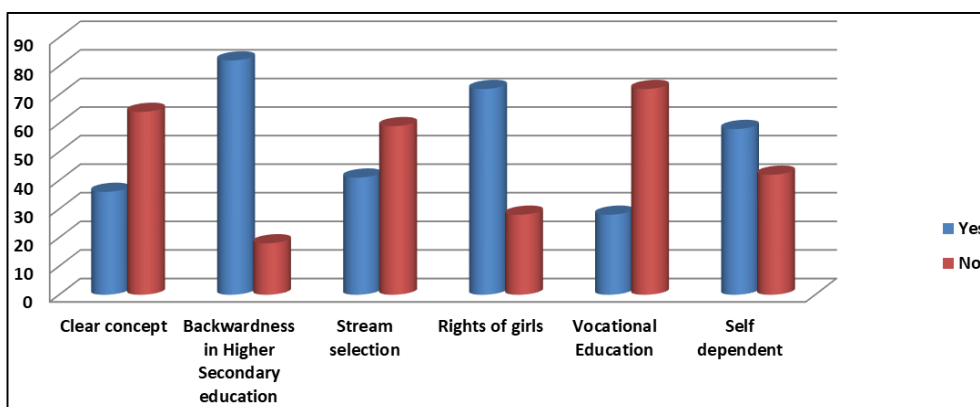


Fig 2: Awareness related concept of Higher Secondary Education

Analysis of Dimensions-3: Awareness related to facility available in Higher Secondary education.

- 1. Scholarship:** Near about 61% of girls were aware about availing scholarship at higher secondary level because

they know how many scholarship available in higher secondary education about 39% of girls were did not aware about availing scholarship at higher secondary because their lack of awareness to know how many

- scholarship available in higher secondary education.
- Computer:** Only 20% of girls have opportunity to use computer in school because of their school had computer

facility but 80% of girls do not have such facility because of their school had no computer facility.

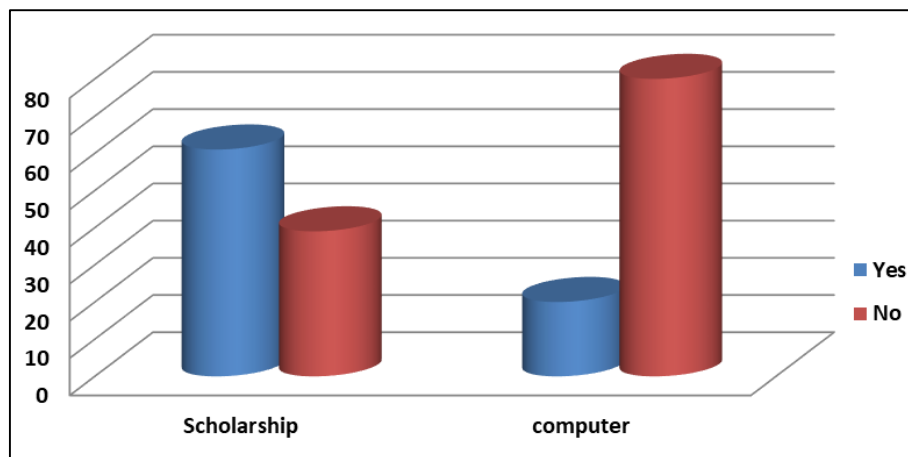


Fig 3: Awareness related to facility available in Higher Secondary education

Objective 3: To find out the attitude of Muslim girls towards higher secondary education.

Analysis of Dimensions -1: Attitude of Muslim girls related to socio-religious factors

- Family pressure:** Near about 14% of girls express their views in favour of they have admitted in higher secondary level because of their family pressure, they do not prefer any type of traditional education but approximately 86% of girls did not accept that, they think only education change their life.
- Support from school teachers:** About 34% of girls express their view in favour of their school teacher has encourage for getting higher secondary education at Secondary level because this percentage of girls had great encouragement from their teacher but round about 66% of girls did not accept that, that's mean no

cooperation from their school for admitted in higher secondary level.

- Misinterpretation of religion:** Approximately 22% of girls says that religion is the barrier to getting education because of in Murshidabad district many Moulubi's misguide them; they told only religious education fulfil your life about 78% girls says that religion is not the barrier to getting education because of their society is conscious about girls education.
- Negative behaviours from society members:** Near about 33% of girl students acknowledge they have experience negative behaviour from society members because of their living society is not accept in kind of modern education but about 67% of girl students did not acknowledge that, they told their society encourage for their education.

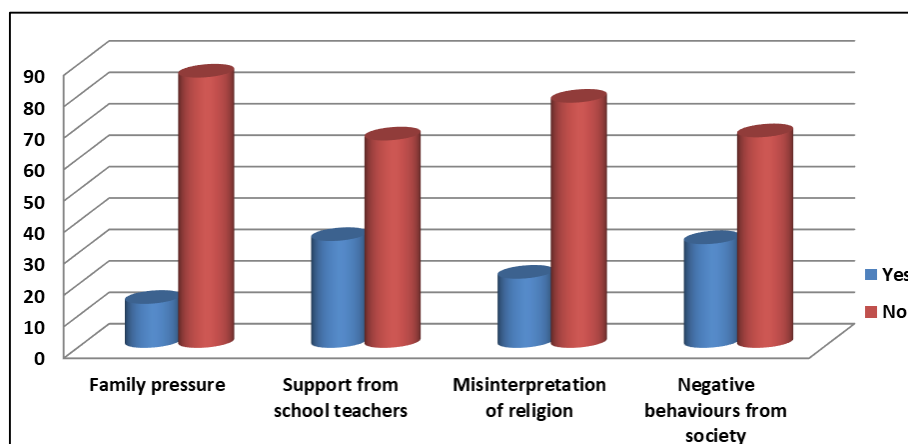


Fig 4: Attitude of Muslim girls related to socio-religious factors

Analysis of Dimensions -2: Attitude of Muslim girls related to Higher Secondary Education

- Satisfaction in Higher Secondary Education:** About 63% of girls satisfied of their stream at higher secondary level because they admitted in happily but approximately 37% Of girls did not satisfied of their stream at higher secondary level because of they did not happy with their stream. This percentage of girls had no opportunity to select other stream.

- Burdening getting Higher Secondary Education:** Near about 8% of girls student think that higher secondary education is burden because they are little more intelligent but round about 92% of girls did not think that because they are capable for higher secondary level education.
- Interested in getting Higher Secondary Education:** Approximately 86% of girls interested to getting higher secondary level education because they think education

most important for all Muslim girls but about 14% of girl's student not interested to getting higher secondary level education because they interested in vocational training.

4. **Completion of Higher Secondary Education:** Near about 98% of girls think that they should finish at least higher secondary education because they know for changing society girls education is must but about 2% of girls did not accepted that because of they should complete graduation level.
5. **Need of getting opportunity in Higher Secondary Education:** 100% of girls want much opportunity to carry out higher secondary education for Muslim girl because many Muslim families are belongs to poor economic conditions.
6. **Vocational Education as a substitute:** 11% of girls

interested in vocational education as a substitute of higher secondary education because they were accept that after getting vocational education they will must a job or work but 89% of girls are not interested in vocational education as a substitute of higher secondary education because of this percentage of girls realise that they had need to higher secondary education to change the negative views of conservative society.

7. **Home Science as a subject in Higher Secondary Education:** 21% of girls were agree with the "Home science" subject as a part of higher secondary education curriculum because of good arrangement of their living home but 79% of girls disagree with that because they acknowledge that no need to "Home science" subject as a part of higher secondary education curriculum.

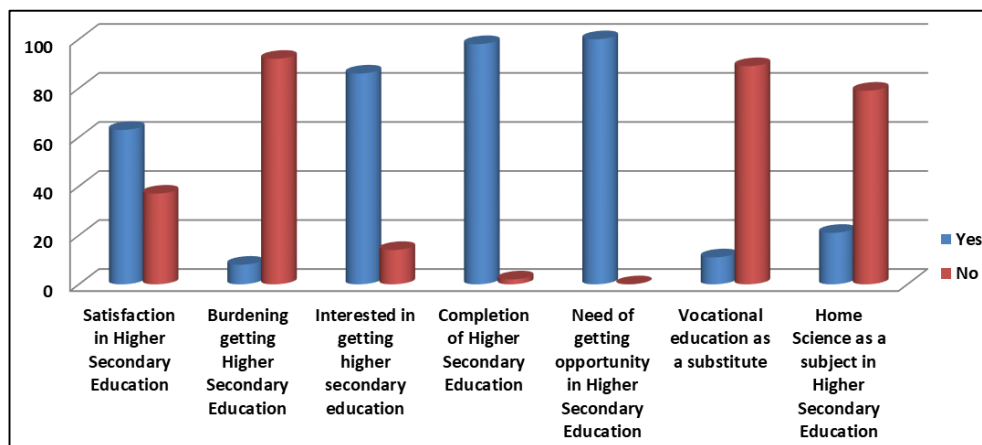


Fig 5: Attitude of Muslim girls related to Higher Secondary Education

Objective 4: To access the present situation of higher secondary education with respect to basic requirements of girls.

In the field of study the observer reached 4 schools is that conclusion that several necessities regarding the present situation of the secondary education girls have manifested can be underlined below these is as follows;

1. It is found that among 4 higher secondary schools 3 schools were nearer (within 4 K.M.) to the location of Muslim girls and 1 is far away from the area of living.
2. It is observed that 2 schools had security guard for purpose of students' security and another 2 school had not security guard.
3. The observation was done in 4 schools by the researcher out of which 1 had the facility of separate common room where as others had no separate common room facility for girls.
4. Among the 4 observed schools only 1 school had conducive environment educative students and the other 3 had lack of these facilities.
5. There was no counselling officer for the students who are suffered depressed mentally/ emotionally is any observed schools in Beldanga-1 block of Murshidabad.
6. Only 1 school had proper sanitation facilities and other 3 have poor conditions which are man at work and the toilets keeps wash once in two weeks.
7. The due observation shows that among these 4 schools 1 school had the facility of providing vocational training with the regular course and one school provide self-defence course for the girl students left 2 school had no

these kind of facilities.

8. It is observed that only 1 school had computer facility but without internet and another 3 schools had not computer facility.
9. All the observed schools organise cultural programmes, rallies, educational drama and other amusing activities in the school premises.
10. In every observed school, the schools conduct a meeting with the guardians regarding the problems of Childs, their needs and educational practices each year in the month of June.
11. Among the 4 observed schools 3 schools follows awareness and news up-to-date regarding scholarship/ fellowship for the betterment of the girl students and one school have not that kind of facilities.
12. Among the 4 observed schools only 1 school provides separate subject for the girl students like "Home science", "Home Nursing" but another 3 school did not provide any separate subjects to the girl students.
13. Among the 4 observed schools 2 schools had a appointment of special women for caring girl students but rest of 2 school did not had these opportunities.

Conclusion

Researcher attempts to find out why Muslim girls are marginalized in higher secondary education, awareness and attitude of Muslim girls' related to higher secondary education. Researcher found that several major and minor factors affecting in higher secondary education. Many girls had no clear concept, and many girls did not know how many

streams have in higher secondary education because of their lack of awareness. It is found that there is very low enrolment ratio of girls' education. Most of the girls are not aware about scholarship facilities which are given by N.G.O's and government. In this study researcher found that poor economic condition and early marriage of girls is the main barrier to getting girls' education. Thus government and society should take proper plans and policies to encourage the girls' education. It is concluded that this study will helpful to increase the awareness about girls' education.

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