

Concept Note
International Seminar
on
Building a Viksit Bharat through Inclusive Education: Challenges and Opportunities for Indian Muslims
Organized
Department of Sociology, MANUU and MSO, New Delhi
October 14th, 2025 (Wednesday)

Prologue

India's vision of *Viksit Bharat @2047* envisions a developed, equitable, and inclusive nation. Education is not merely a tool for individual advancement but a key driver of social transformation and nation-building. However, certain socio-religious communities, notably Indian Muslims, continue to face systemic barriers in accessing quality education. According to the *Sachar Committee Report (2006)* and *Post-Sachar Evaluation Committee (2014)*, Indian Muslims lag behind other communities in literacy, school enrollment, and higher education participation. The *National Education Policy (NEP) 2020* highlights equity and inclusion, but translating these goals into actionable results for the most marginalised remains an ongoing challenge. This seminar aims to critically explore the socio-educational landscape of Indian Muslims in the context of a Viksit Bharat and propose inclusive strategies that bridge this developmental gap.

As India strides toward realizing the vision of Viksit Bharat @2047, the imperative of ensuring *inclusive and equitable quality education for all* becomes central to national development. Education, as a cornerstone of social mobility and democratic empowerment, remains unevenly accessible across various socio-religious groups in India. Among these, Indian Muslims, who comprise over 14% of the population (Census of India, 2011), are disproportionately underrepresented in the educational system from primary levels to higher education and professional institutions.

Despite constitutional guarantees and targeted schemes, the community continues to face multifaceted challenges—ranging from infrastructural neglect, social stigma, intra-community stratification, to digital exclusion and gender-based educational barriers. This seminar seeks to critically engage with these dimensions to identify the sociological, political, and institutional mechanisms required for genuine educational inclusion of Indian Muslims in building a *Viksit Bharat*.

Review of Literature and Empirical Context: The Sachar Committee Report (2006) remains the most comprehensive governmental documentation of the socio-economic conditions of Indian Muslims. It identified that Muslims rank below Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes on many human development indicators. Muslim-majority areas often lack schools, colleges, libraries, and digital infrastructure. Moreover, school dropout rates among Muslims remain higher than the national average (Sachar Committee Report, 2006).

Recent data from the NSSO 75th Round (2017–18) reinforces this educational lag. The Gross Attendance Ratio in higher education among Muslims is the lowest compared to other religious groups—only around 8.5%, which is well below the national average of 25.8% (NSSO, 2018). Further, the Annual Status of Education Report (ASER, 2020) highlights that Muslim children were disproportionately affected by school closures during the COVID-19 pandemic due to limited access to smartphones, internet, and parental literacy.

Sociologists like Zoya Hasan (2009) and Tanweer Fazal (2013) argue that the marginalization of Muslims in education is both a result of historical state neglect and contemporary communal biases. While affirmative action policies have benefited Dalits and Adivasis, Muslims have largely remained excluded from such redistributive mechanisms due to their complex legal and political status as a "minority" without caste-based reservations (Hasan, 2009; Fazal, 2013).

Mainstream policy discussions often fail to adequately theorise the intersection of caste and class within the Muslim community. Researchers such as Imtiaz Ahmad (1978) and Ali Anwar (2001) have emphasised caste-based stratification among Muslims, noting that Pasmanda Muslims, classified as backward and Dalit, face dual marginalisation due to both religious and caste identities. Frequently, state policies have regarded Muslims as a homogeneous religious group, thereby obscuring internal hierarchies. Social segregation among Muslims is evident and has been empirically examined in recent studies, highlighting urban settings and segregation as a new phenomenon in Indian society affecting specific communities.

Pierre Bourdieu's (1977) concept of *cultural capital* is useful in understanding how the lack of familial educational background, exposure, and institutional mentorship among Muslim households contributes to the intergenerational reproduction of educational deprivation. Bourdieu's framework suggests that structural transformation in education must go beyond access—it must address cultural modes of learning and social embeddedness of educational institutions.

In brief, the sociological Framework and Theoretical Lens would be quite useful to examine the and understand how education could play a bridging force between Muslims Educational backwardness and nation building. Therefore, deeper inquiry could be followed by the following sociological perspectives to study Indian context;

- ✧ Bourdieu's Theory of Cultural Capital (1977): Muslim students often lack institutionalised cultural capital required to navigate formal education systems.
- ✧ Social Reproduction Theory: Educational institutions reproduce existing social hierarchies, reinforcing marginality.
- ✧ Intersectionality (Crenshaw, 1989): Muslim women face layered discrimination based on gender, religion, and class.
- ✧ Ghurye's concept of 'Plural Society': Highlights the need to recognise and accommodate India's religious diversity within state policies.
- ✧ M.N. Srinivas' concept of 'Dominant Caste': Adapted to understand the absence of a dominant Muslim leadership class in educational planning.

Methodology and Participation: This seminar will be held for two days that would include:

- ✧ Keynote lectures by renowned scholars and policy experts.
- ✧ Panel discussions involving practitioners, educationists, and civil society leaders.
- ✧ Paper presentations by researchers and postgraduate students.
- ✧ Community engagement and dialogue sessions.

Objectives of the Seminar

- ✧ To examine the educational status of Indian Muslims through empirical and sociological lenses.
- ✧ To explore the policy gaps in the implementation of inclusive education under **NEP 2020**, especially its impact on marginalized Muslim communities.
- ✧ To unpack the internal diversities—especially caste and gender—within the Muslim population in relation to educational access.
- ✧ To assess the role of civil society, madarsa reforms, and digital education in enhancing or inhibiting educational mobility.
- ✧ To contribute to the national discourse on inclusive development by proposing actionable reforms aligned with Viksit Bharat goals.
- ✧ To analyse the educational status of Indian Muslims through sociological and empirical perspectives.
- ✧ To examine structural, cultural, and institutional barriers to inclusive education.
- ✧ To evaluate policy initiatives like NEP 2020, PM-USPSE (Pradhan Mantri Uchchatar Shiksha Protsahan), and Maulana Azad Education Foundation in their outreach to Muslims.
- ✧ To generate a policy dialogue towards equitable and inclusive education.
- ✧ To contribute academic insights into the broader national vision of *Viksit Bharat 2047*.

Themes and Sub-Themes:

Inclusive Education in the Vision of Viksit Bharat

- Education as a constitutional right and development strategy.
- Bridging rural-urban, gender, and socio-religious divides.
- Muslim Educational Deprivation in India: Empirical Trends and Theoretical Reflections

Socio-Educational Status of Indian Muslims

- Historical marginalisation and the role of community institutions.
- Gendered access to education: Issues of Muslim girls and women.

Barriers to Inclusion

- Economic constraints and social stigma.
- Language, identity, and curriculum gaps.
- Discrimination and ghettoization in educational institutions.

Policy Frameworks and Gaps

- Critical assessment of NEP 2020.
- Minority scholarship schemes and their implementation.
- Role of civil society and NGOs.
- Comparative Minority Education: Global and South Asian Experiences
- Questions of Sanitation, Health and Housing in urban India

Digital Inclusion and Educational Technology

- Access to digital learning in Muslim neighbourhoods.
- Case studies of successful interventions and models.

Way Forward

- Community engagement and capacity building.
- Recommendations for policy and institutional reform.

Expected Outcomes:

- A compiled seminar volume with policy recommendations.
- Establishment of a working group on Muslim education and inclusion.
- Strengthened academic and civil society networks for advocacy.

Date and Venue: **October 14, 2025**, (Hybrid) International Seminar at Maulana Azad National Urdu University, Hyderabad, Telangana (India).

Patron

Prof. Syed Ainul Hasan
Hon'ble Vice Chancellor, MANUU

In Guidance

Prof. Ishtiaque Ahmed, Registrar, MANUU

Seminar Director

Prof. Shahida, Dean, SA&SS & Director, CWS, MANUU

Seminar Convener

Dr. K. M. Ziauddin
Dr. Shujaat Ali Quadri

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Dr. Md Ehtesham Akhtar
Dr. Hilal Ahmed War
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All scholars of Sociology Deptt. and MSO Core Members

Deadlines:

- Last date of the abstract submission: **22.8. 2025**
- Intimation of acceptance of abstract: **01.9. 2025**
- Last date of full length paper submission: **25.9. 2025**

Guidelines: All papers should adhere to the APA referencing pattern with 6000 word limits, New Times Roman.

Communication at:

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The seminar is to be jointly organized by Department of Sociology, MANUU and MSO, New Delhi in association with The Democracy Dialogue, India.