



JOURNAL OF SCIENTIFIC LETTERS
www.jslsci.com

**LITERACY RATES OF MUSLIM WOMEN IN BHAGWANGOLA II DISTRICT OF
MURSHIDABAD, WEST BENGAL**

Mou Bhattacharya

Research Scholar, Geography, Eklavya University, Damoh

Dr. Yogendra Raidas

Supervisor, Eklavya University, Damoh

ABSTRACT

Perceptions on women education has always been negative. But when it comes to Muslim women, the perceptions are strongly negative. However, government of Murshidabad, West Bengal has been proactive towards uplifting the standards of these women, especially in terms of education. Evidence of this lies in Kanyashree Prakalpa, which sponsors education for girl children. but effectiveness of these schemes and initiatives are lacking as most of the women are not yet aware of their functioning. Need of the hour is surveys for gaining insight into the cases

Key words: Literacy, Muslim women, Bhagwangola II, Murshidabad, West Bengal

1. INTRODUCTION

When it comes to literacy rate in Bhagwangola II Block of Murshidabad district, West Bengal, people get surprised. This is because literacy rate is comparatively low as compared to state and national average records. According to Census-based demographic data and reports, Muslims accumulate about 89.43% of the population in Bhagwangola II. This population makes up the educational condition of Muslim women a significant social concern for the people in the region (Majumdar & Das, 2024). Census reports reveal that overall literacy of Bhagwangola II Block is around 62.82%. Within this, female literacy is approximately 63.06%. Specifically, narrowing down the search to Muslims, the rates reach 62.66%.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

It is a surprising aspect that female literacy, as compared to the overall literacy in Murshidabad, West Bengal, is low. This literacy rate, when calculated, is above 70%, reflecting broader educational backwardness of Murshidabad district. There are certain factors which contribute to the low literacy rate among Muslim women in Bhagwangola II district, Murshidabad, West Bengal. These factors are related to the domains of social and economic. One of the reasons is poverty and social backwardness. Many families are dependent on the income generated from activities in agriculture, bidi-making, and daily wage labor. Islam and Siddiqui, (2020) stated that financial hardship creates difficulties for girls to continue education beyond the primary level. Another reason is early marriage, which is commonly seen in rural areas. Due to this, girls are compelled to discontinue their early adolescence. Many students in rural areas are exposed to improper infrastructure, which comprises of inadequate teachers, libraries with shortage of study materials, poor sanitation facilities, and transportation. All these aspects discourage female participation in education (Sk, 2018).

Social Conservatism and Gender Biases is also a significant issue, which arises on traditionalism, which is seen in some communities. These communities prioritize domestic responsibilities to be fulfilled more, as compared to higher education for girls. Having illiterate parents is also an issue, which compels students to expose situations where students in rural areas lack understanding of long-term benefits on having skilled and knowledgeable daughters. Bearing these aspects in mind,

Sarkar and Mondal, (2021) stated that government has introduced many schemes, which has induced certain improvements. Evidence of these schemes are Kanyashree Prakalpa, Mid-Day Meal Scheme, Minority scholarships, among others. Most of the students from rural areas are provided with free textbooks, and uniforms, so that attendance improves. Initiatives like Beti Bachao Beti Padhao have worked wonders in encouraging enrolment from Muslim girls in schools (Mandal, 2023). In spite of this, dropout rates, at the secondary level, is still remain a matter of concern for development of these women.

Ahmad and Jinnah, (2020) focused on regional disparities which occur due to the socioeconomic disparities in the district of Murshidabad. Levels of these disparities differ, as the women's sufferings are varied and wide ranging. This variation is due to hailing from different sociocultural and economic backgrounds. If attention is placed on the arguments of Censusofindia.net (2026), then it can be noted that population is projected to be 1.74 lakhs, which projects increase of 9.81% from the records of Bhagwangola II district separately. Anjoon, A. (2024) elaborates the study of regional disparities, to which Muslim women of this block are exposed to. Here, emphasis is on literacy rate. Roy, (2025) narrowed down the study to educational systems in the district of Murshidabad, West Bengal. These systems are of poor quality as they are not up to the mark with the current educational needs of the students.

3. METHODOLOGY

The research is conducted through primary quantitative method. In this, survey is conducted on 100 Muslim women, who are receiving education from the schools in Bhagwangola II district, Murshidabad, west Bengal. Questionnaires are prepared and sent to the samples through the platform of Google Forms, which are effective for reaching out to large number of audiences at a single time. Responses collected from samples, are analyzed through tables, charts, and graphs. This analysis helps in gaining practical insights into the quality of education to which these women are exposed. In analysis, exploratory research design seems justified, as educational issues are explored in terms of educational development aimed, from the perspective of these women.

4. CONCLUSION

After reviewing the aspects, it can be concluded that literacy rate of Muslim women in Bhagwangola II is mixed, as it comprises of progress and persistent inequality. While educational

awareness has shown some improvements over time, poverty, gender discrimination, and inadequate infrastructure continues to impede educational advancement of Muslim women in the region. As a result of this, the women are deprived of basic and elementary education. Their aspirations to become something, remains a mere distant dream. Sustained governmental and social efforts have been initiated, but most of these efforts go wasted as the women and their family members are deprived of the benefits from schemes and initiatives. Need of the hour is to upgrade infrastructure, so that the women can achieve educational empowerment. Government is to ensure that gender equality is reduced in the threshold of Murshidabad.

REFERENCES

Ahmad, M., & Jinnah, M. A. (2020). Regional Disparities in the Level of Socio-Economic Development in Murshidabad District of West Bengal. [https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Md-Jinnah-2/publication/383275666_Regional_Disparities_in_the_Level_of_Socio-Economic_Development_in_Murshidabad_District_of_West_Bengal/links/66c62ef3920e05672e432467/Regional-Disparities-in-the-Level-of-Socio-Economic-Development-in-Murshidabad-District-of-West-Bengal.pdf]

Anjoon, A. (2024). A STUDY ON GENDER DISPARITY AND LITERACY RATE IN RELATION TO POPULATION WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO MURSHIDABAD DISTRICT OF WEST BENGAL, INDIA. *International Education and Research Journal*. 10 (7). [10.21276/IERJ24791388027848]

Censusofindia.net (2026). Bhagawangola - II Population in 2026. Retrieved 21st May 2026 from <https://censusofindia.net/west-bengal/murshidabad/bhagawangola-ii/2232>

Islam, M. S., & Siddiqui, L. (2020). A geographical analysis of gender inequality in literacy among Muslims of West Bengal, India (2001–2011). *GeoJournal*, 85(5), 1325-1354. [10.1007/s10708-019-10025-1]

Majumdar, N., & Das, T. (2024). Spatial variation in literacy among the Muslim population: a block level scenario of Uttar Dinajpur District, West Bengal, India. *SN Social Sciences*, 4(6), 110. [10.1007/s43545-024-00892-y]

Mandal, R. (2023). Disparities In Female Education: A Study of Literacy Gap Among Women of Different Communities in India & West Bengal. *Development, Environment & Education: The Indian Perspective*, 131-147. [https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Jayanta-Mete/publication/370221221_DEVELOPMENT_ENVIRONMENT_EDUCATION_THE_INDIAN_PERSPECTIVE/links/644682b6d749e4340e34bac5/DEVELOPMENT-ENVIRONMENT-EDUCATION-THE-INDIAN-PERSPECTIVE.pdf#page=141]

Roy, K. (2025). An Analytical Study on the Education System in Murshidabad District (India) during Colonial Rule (1787-1947) *Research Journal of Language, Literature and Humanities*. Vol. 12(3), 16-24 [ISSN 2348-6252]

Sarkar, C. S., & Mondal, G. (2021). Women education and gender disparity in Murshidabad district of West Bengal. *IJAR*, 7(1), 18-25. [<https://doi.org/10.22271/allresearch.2021.v7.i1a.8141>]

Sk, M. M. (2018). Educational Mobility of Muslims in Rural West Bengal: A study of Villages in the District of Murshidabad. *Indian Journal of Dalit and Tribal Studies and Action*, 3(1). [https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Md-Sk-3/publication/328149314_Educational_Mobility_Of_Muslims_In_Rural_West_Bengal_A_Study_Of_Villages_In_The_District_Of_Murshidabad/links/5bcd7b3f92851cae21b8d72f/Educational-Mobility-Of-Muslims-In-Rural-West-Bengal-A-Study-Of-Villages-In-The-District-Of-Murshidabad.pdf]

Author's Declaration:

I/We, as an author/authors of the above paper/article, hereby declare that the content of this paper is prepared by me/us for publication in this journal is completely my/our own genuine paper and if any person having copyright issue or patent or anything related to the content, I/we shall always be legally responsible for any issue. If any data or information given by me/us is not correct, I/we shall always be legally responsible. With my/our whole responsibility legally and formally have intimated the publisher that the paper has been checked by guide or expert or supervisor to make it sure that paper is technically right and there is no unaccepted plagiarism. If any issue arises related to plagiarism or any issues, I/we will be solely/entirely responsible for any legal disputes or legal issues. I/we declared that if publisher finds any complication or error or anything hidden or implemented otherwise, my/our paper may be removed from the website. I/we also aware that

the publication fees is not refunded further in any circumstances. Even if anything is found illegal publisher may also take legal action against me/us. I/we also declared that this journal/publisher will not be held responsible any legal issues in future regarding this paper publication in this journal.

Mou Bhattacharya

Dr. Yogendra Raidas