

Muslim Women Education and Empowerment in Rural Aligarh (A Case Study)

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Abstract- For the development of rural environment, education should be taken on priority as it is the most important factor. Education is the basis for creativity and foresightedness that triggers change; it helps in economic growth, quality of life and quality of human resource. Education takes us away from tradition backwardness, darkness, poverty, misery and overpopulation to enlighten, prosperity and happiness. Women in India have been playing predominant role in the development of society by their direct and indirect contribution, their active participation in the economic as well as social activities would cause for the overall national development. The present study attempt to analysed the Muslim women education and empowerment in rural areas of Aligarh district. The study is mainly based on primary sources of data. The data reveals that socio economic conditions are the major determinants of women liberation than the religion. It illustrates the fact clearly that family structure has an association with the participation of women in the decision making process as well as the status of women.

Index Terms- women, employment, education, households, empowerment

I. INTRODUCTION

The status of women has been low and subordinate in major part of the human history. From the ancient times to modern period, the female component of humanity has been deprived of the basis of human right of dignity and freedom. Women's participation in education is low may not leads their low participation in economic activities, more discussing point is that their contribution is much lower in Indian economy. According to 2001 census of India the Muslim constitutes 13.4 per cent of India's population. Muslim literacy is 59.1 per cent is lower than the national average literacy rate (64.8) per cent. But it is varies within the sex that the literacy rate among Muslim women is 50.1 per cent against the male 67.6 per cent. The literacy rate in Muslim women in rural areas is 42.7 per cent lower than the urban areas which are 63.2 per cent.

Education does not merely mean the acquisition of knowledge or experience but it means the development of habits, attitudes and skills which help a person to lead a full and worthwhile life. Education plays an active role in educating women's position and promoting their rights in society. With the spread of education among women, exploitation and oppression of women will be considerably reduced. Education of women is of paramount importance for the development of individuality. It is

also an instrument for strengthening socially useful skills, habits and attitudes of common citizenship.

For the development rural environment attention is to be paid to education on priority as it is the most important factor. Education is the basis for creativity and foresightedness that triggers change; it helps in economic growth, quality of life and quality of human resource. Education takes us away from tradition backwardness, darkness, poverty, misery and overpopulation to enlightenment, prosperity and happiness.

It is the women who nurture the child and take care of his/her overall development, particularly in formative years. Hence she has to be educated to provide a sound base for upbringing of the child.

Education is an essential factor in achieving economic development, individual development and technical progress and in creating a social order founded on the values of freedom, social justice and equality of opportunities, to avoid social evils and taboos through educating them.

Education of rural women also assumes great importance to enable them to get the fullest benefit of globalization.

Empowerment is the process of gaining control over self, over ideology and the resources which determine power and it is exercised through a series of order or decision making capacity. Empowerment as a concept was introduced at the International Women's conference at Nairobi in 1985. Empowerment is a process, by which women gain greater control over material and intellectual resources which assist them to increase their self-reliance and enhance them to assert their independent right.

Women's education and empowerment is not only essential to economic development, but it will also have a transformative effect on the goals of both economic and social development. Women's participation, thus, does not mean simply increasing women members or integrating them into existing development models, rather it is part of the process of employment policies and programmes more people-oriented.

II. AVAILABLE LITERATURE

Available literature indicates that there is a close relationship between the spread of female education on the one hand and the development status on the other. As, (Sharma, 2002) says that the greatest problems discerned by the Muslim women are that women lack proper knowledge of their faith, and that this is why Muslim men sometimes mistreat their women. Decision making is the main constituent of empowerment especially in the case of household level (Blumberge, 1991; Bruce, Lloyd and Leonard, 1995; Mason, K. O. and H. L. Smith, 2003). As (Kumari, Y. I. and Sambasiva, 2005) and (Sharma, 2006) Empowerment of

Women is the key route for the development of any society in all areas including health, education, asset ownership, skills, political participation etc.

III. OBJECTIVES

The basic objectives of this study are:

1. To study the percentage of educated and uneducated Muslim women in the area.
2. To study the level of education amongst the educated women.
3. To know the family structure of the respondents.
4. To know the percentage of women involved in the economic activity.
5. To examine the rate of employment amongst Muslim women and the type of work.

IV. DATA BASE AND METHODOLOGY

The study is primarily based on mainly primary and partially secondary sources of data which were collected with the help of questionnaire and interviews from the residents living in selected villages of Aligarh district. The survey was conducted in June-July 2010 of 12 villages from 12 blocks on random sampling basis i.e., 01 Muslim dominated village from each block, selecting 30 households from each village, 360 households in total.

While secondary source of data are

- District census Handbook, Aligarh.
- Nagar Nigam Office, Aligarh.

- Suchana and Jansampark Vibhag Aligarh.

The various determinants for which questions from respondents were asked relates to socio-cultural, economic and demographic such as education, decision making and family size.

V. STUDY AREA

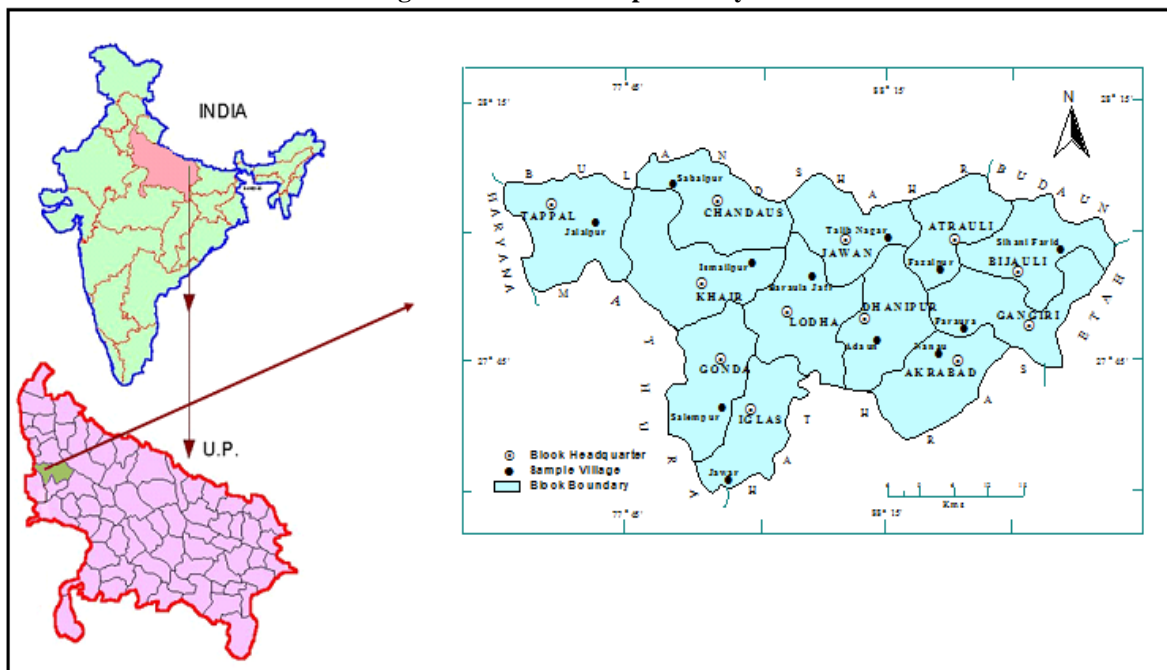
Aligarh district is one of the highly developed, prosperous and agriculturally advocated district of Western U.P. the town is located in the east from Delhi at the distance of 135 Kms. in the north from Agra at the distance of 85 Kms. and towards west from Kanpur at 288 Kms. It is on the Delhi-Howrah rail and the G.T. road which passes through middle of the city.

Aligarh is one of the important districts of Uttar Pradesh (U.P.), located in the north western part in the fertile region of Ganga and Yamuna, known as Doab. Topographically, the district represent a shallow trough like appearance, Geologically Aligarh District forms a part of the Indo-Gangetic Plain which came into existence in the Pleistocene Period.

The Density of rural population of Aligarh district is mainly influenced by soil fertility, agricultural and Industrial development and the development of transport facility.

Aligarh district is well served by road and railways. The focal point of the district is Aligarh city from where communication arteries radiate to every corner of the district is the famous Grand Trunk Road which passes through the district of Aligarh. It has played an important role in the progress and prosperity of Aligarh District.

Figure: 1 Location Map of Study Area



Sources: Census of India

VI. EDUCATIONAL STATUS OF THE RESPONDENTS

The village survey shows a poor development and so is the literacy level among Muslim women. Out of total household surveyed about two third of them are illiterate they can't even read write their name. the education status at village level is shown in table 1 that in Jalalpur (Tappal) only 26.67 per cent educated and 73.33 per cent uneducated, in Sabalpur (Chandaus) 23.33 per cent educated and 76.67 per cent uneducated, 50 per cent educated and 50 per cent uneducated in Ismailpur (Khair),

and 16.67 per cent, 30 per cent and 20 per cent educated in Fazalpur (Atrauli), Sihani Faridpur (Bijauli) and Paraura (Gangiri) respectively, and remaining are uneducated in respected villages. One third women in Salempur village of Gonda block were educated, 23.33 per cent women in Jawar (Iglas) were educated and same percentage of women also educated in Nanua (Akraabad) and Adaun (Dhanipur). Lastly Baraula Jafrabad (Lodha) had 20 per cent educated women and Talibnagar (Jawan) had 26.67 per cent educated and 73.33 per cent uneducated women among Muslim.

Table: 1

Village	Illiterate	Educated Women					Total
		Primary	Middle	H.S.	10+2	Islamic	
Jalalpur	73.33	13.33 (50.00)	3.33 (12.50)	3.33 (12.50)	-	6.67 (25.00)	100.00
Sabalpur	76.67	6.67 (28.57)	3.33 (14.29)	3.33 (14.29)	-	10.00 (42.86)	100.00
Ismailpur	50.00	30.00 (60.00)	6.67 (13.33)	3.33 (6.67)	3.33 (6.67)	6.67 (13.33)	100.00
Fazalpur	83.33	10.00 (60.00)	-	-	-	6.67 (40.00)	100.00
Sihani Faridpur	70.00	13.33 (44.44)	3.33 (11.11)	3.33 (11.11)	-	10.00 (33.33)	100.00
Paraura	80.00	10.00 (50.00)	3.33 (16.67)	-	-	6.67 (33.33)	100.00
Salempur	66.67	16.67 (50.00)	6.67 (20.00)	-	-	10.00 (30.00)	100.00
Jawar	76.67	-	6.67 (28.57)	3.33 (14.29)	-	13.33 (57.14)	100.00
Nanau	76.67	10.00 (42.86)	6.67 (28.57)	-	-	6.67 (28.57)	100.00
Talib Nagar	73.33	3.33 (12.50)	6.67 (25.00)	3.33 (12.50)	-	13.33 (50.00)	100.00
Baraura	80.00	6.67 (33.33)	3.33 (16.67)	-	-	10.00 (50.00)	100.00
Jafrabad	76.67	10.00 (42.86)	3.33 (14.29)	-	-	10.00 (42.86)	100.00
Adaun							
Total	73.61	10.83 (41.05)	4.44 (16.84)	1.67 (6.32)	0.28 (1.05)	9.17 (34.74)	100.00

Source: Based on Field Survey, 2010

VII. LEVEL OF EDUCATION

It is also depict from the table 2 that out of total literate/educated in Jalalpur (Tappal), 50 per cent woman was educated upto Primary level, 12.50 per cent was Middle School and same percentage was educated upto High School and remaining 25 per cent had Islamic education.

In Sabalpur (Chandaus), 28.57 per cent were Primary educated, 14.29 per cent were Middle School, same percentage were High School passed and remaining 42.86 per cent were

Islamic passed. In Ismailpur (Khair) out of total women, 60 per cent woman was primary educated, 13.33 per cent was Middle School passed, 6.67 per cent was High School passed, same percentage was 10+2 passed and remaining 13.33 per cent was Islamic passed. In Fazalpur (Atrauli) 60 per cent primary educated and remaining 40 per cent was Islamic passed. Out of total women educated in Sihani Faridpur (Bijauli) 44.44 per cent woman was primary educated, 11.11 per cent was Middle School, same percentage was High School passed and remaining 33.33 per cent woman was Islamic passed.

In Paraura (Gangiri) 50 per cent women were Primary educated, 16.67 per cent was Middle School and remaining 33.33 per cent was Islamic passed. In Salempur (Gonda) 50 per cent women were Primary educated, 20 per cent was Middle School and remaining 30 per cent had Islamic education. In Jawar (Iglas) 28.57 per cent women was Middle School, 14.29 per cent was High School and remaining 57.14 per cent was Islamic passed. In Nanua (Akrabad) 42.86 per cent was Primary educated, 28.57 per cent was middle school passed and 28.57 per cent was

Islamic passed. In Talibnagar (Jawan) 12.50 per cent women was Primary educated, 25 per cent was Middle School passed, 12.50 per cent was High School passed and remaining 50 per cent was Islamic passed. In Baraura Jafradad (Lodha) 33.33 per cent women was Primary educated, 16.67 per cent was Middle School passed and remaining 50 per cent was Islamic passed. In Adaan (Dhanipur) 42.86 per cent was Primary educated, 14.29 per cent was Middle School passed and remaining 42.86 per cent was Islamic passed.

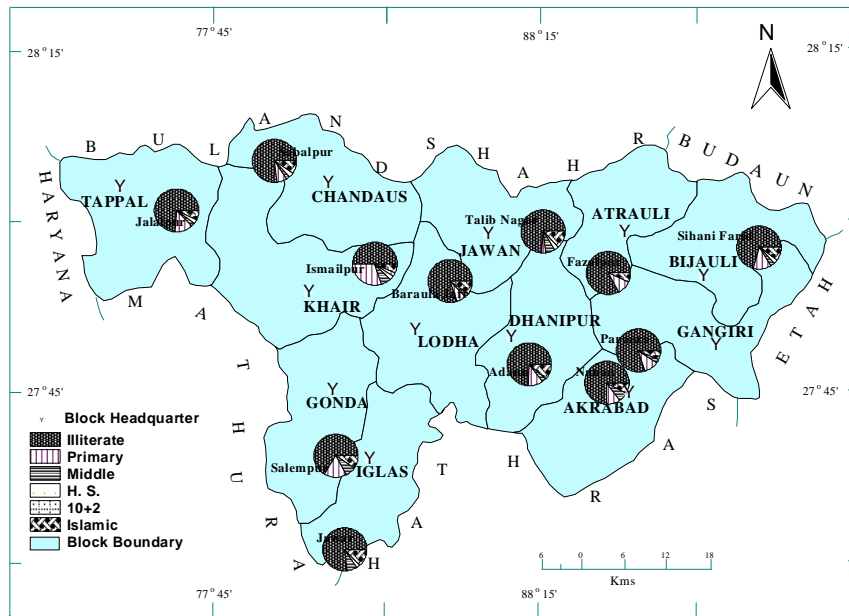


Figure: 2

VIII. WORKING CONDITION OF WOMEN ENGAGED IN DIFFERENT TYPES OF WORK

As for the working condition of women in Muslim is concern we found that about 60 per cent were house wife and remaining were working in different economic activities. Out of total working women about half percentage engaged in Agricultural activities, one third were working as a labourer and remaining were engaged in other type of activities such as washing utensils, collection of polythenes, etc.

In Jalalpur (Tappal) out of total household surveyed, 63.33 per cent women were housewife and remaining 36.67 per cent women engaged in some kind of work. Out of 36.67 per cent

16.67 per cent was in Agricultural Land, 13.33 per cent was labourer and 6.67 per cent was engaged in other working sectors.

In Sabalpur (Chandaus), 53.33 per cent women were housewife and remaining 46.67 per cent were working women, i.e., 23.33 per cent was in Agricultural Land, 13.33 per cent was labourer and 10 per cent was others. In Ismailpur (khair) 50 per cent was House Wife and remaining were working women. Out of 50 per cent working women 30 per cent was in agricultural land, 13.33 per cent was labourer and 6.67 per cent was others.

In Fazalpur (Atrauli) 90 per cent was house wife and 10 per cent was working women. Out of 10 per cent working women 6.67 per cent was in agricultural land and 3.33 per cent was others.

Table: 2

Village	House wife	Working				Total
		Agricultural Land	Labourer	Others	Total	
Jalalpur	63.33	16.67 (45.45)	13.33 (36.36)	6.67 (18.18)	36.67 (100)	100.00
Sabalpur	53.33	23.33 (50.00)	13.33 (28.57)	10.00 (6.67)	46.67 (100)	100.00
Ismailpur	50.00	30.00 (60.00)	13.33 (26.67)	6.67 (3.33)	50.00 (100)	100.00
Fazalpur	90.00	6.67	-	3.33 (33.33)	10.00	100.00

Sihani Faridpur Paraura	46.67	(66.67) 20.00 (37.50)	23.33 (43.75)	10.00 (18.75) 3.33 (6.67)	(100) 53.33 (100)	100.00
Salempur	50.00	23.33 (46.67)	23.33 (46.67)	3.33 (20.00)	50.00 (100)	100.00
Jawar	83.3	6.67 (40.00)	6.67 (40.00) 3.33 (11.11)	6.67 (22.22)	3.33 (20.00)	100.00
Nanau	70.00	20.00 (66.67)	20.00 (30.00)	6.67 (10.00)	30.00 (100)	100.00
Talib Nagar	33.33	40.00 (60.00)	13.33 (36.36)	3.33 (9.09)	66.67 (100)	100.00
Baraura Jafrabad Adaun	63.33	20.00 (54.54)	6.67 (20.00) 16.67 (29.41)	10.00 (30.00) 13.33 (23.53)	36.67 (100)	100.00
	66.67	16.67 (50.00)			33.33 (100)	100.00
	43.33	26.67 (47.06)			56.67 (100)	100.00
All	59.44	20.83 (51.37)	12.78 (31.51)	6.94 (17.12)	40.56 (100)	100.00

Source: Based on Field Survey, 2010

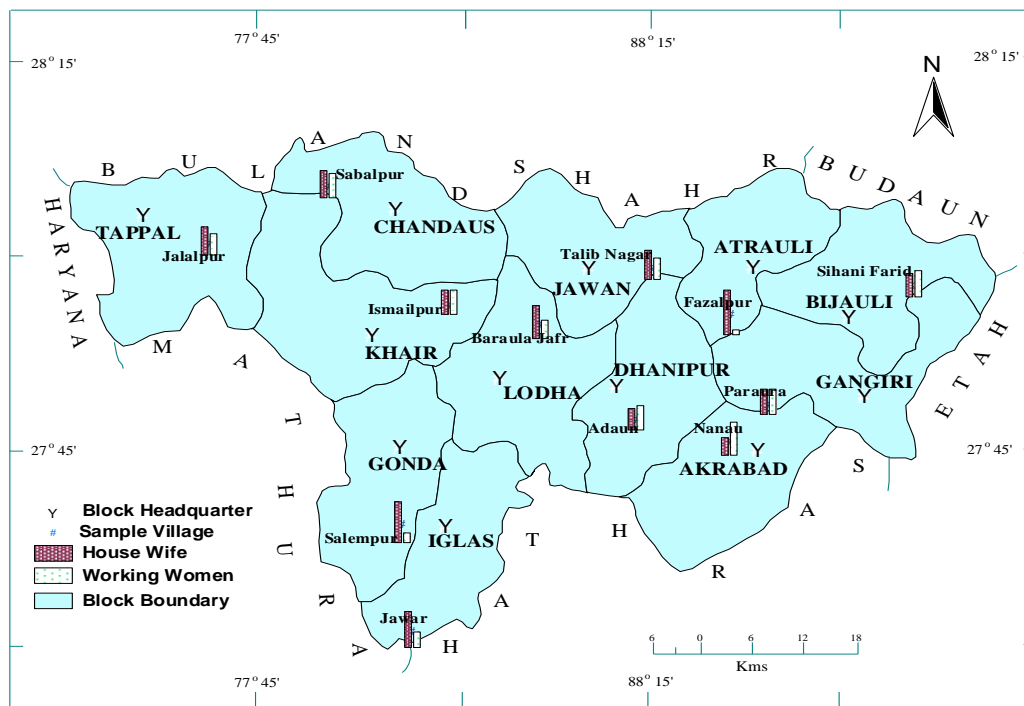


Figure: 3

In Sihani Faridpur (Bijauli) 46.67 per cent was house wife and 53.33 per cent was working women. Out of 53.33 per cent women only 20 per cent engaged in Agricultural land, 23.33 per cent was labourer and 10 per cent was others.

In Paraura (Gangiri), there are 50 per cent working women and 50 per cent housewife. 23.33 per cent was agricultural land, 23.33 per cent labourer and 3.33 per cent others. In Salempur (Gonda) it was 16.67 per cent for working women out of which 6.67 per cent was in agricultural land, 6.67 per cent was labourer and 3.33 per cent others. In Jawar (Iglas) 30 per cent was working women out of which 20 per cent agricultural land, 3.33 per cent labourer and 6.67 per cent was others. In Nanua (Akrabad) 66.67 per cent was working women. Out of 66.67 per

cent 40 per cent agricultural land, 20 per cent labourer and 6.67 per cent others. In Talibnagar (Jawan) 36.67 per cent were working women, 20 per cent was in agricultural land, 13.33 per cent was labourer and 3.33 per cent was others. In Baraula Jafrabad (Lodha) 33.33 per cent was working women out of which 16.67 per cent was in agricultural land, 6.67 per cent labourer and 10 per cent others. In Adaun (Dhanipur) 56.67 per cent working women, 26.67 per cent was in agricultural land, 16.67 per cent labourer and 13.33 per cent others.

IX. HOUSEHOLD SIZE

Table 3 and figure 4 depicts the size of households in Muslims of Aligarh district. It is found that in general the average

household size for the sampled population as a whole is 6.79, which is very high as our national average household. Our national average household is about is 5.4 (Census 2001).

Table: 3

Village	Family size				Average
	<4	4-6	7-9	>9	
Jabalpur	3.33	40.00	30.00	26.67	6.87
Sabalpur	6.67	36.67	30.00	26.67	6.83
Ismailpur	10.00	60.00	26.67	3.33	5.73
Fazalpur	6.67	43.33	23.33	26.67	6.9
Sihani Faridpur	6.67	40.00	26.67	26.67	6.73
Paraura	-	46.67	50.00	3.33	6.63
Salempur	6.67	33.33	43.33	16.67	6.79
Jawar	6.67	26.67	40.00	26.67	7.13
Nanau	3.33	36.67	26.67	33.33	7.07
Talib Nagar	-	43.33	30.00	26.67	6.97
Baraura Jafrabad	3.33	26.67	40.00	30.00	7.3
Adaun	6.67	40.00	36.67	16.67	6.47
Total	5.00	39.44	33.61	21.94	6.79

Source: Based on Field Survey, 2010

There is variation in the average household size within the Muslim villages of Aligarh. The highest average household size is reported in Jawar, which is 7.13 and lowest household size is reported in Ismailpur, which is 5.73 due to the highest and lowest illiteracy among Muslim women respectively in these areas. It is

also shows from the table that 39.44 per cent household have 4 to 6 member family and about one third have 7 to 9 family members. 21.94 per cent Muslim rural population in Aligarh have more than 9 members in their houses and only 5 per cent have less than 4 members.

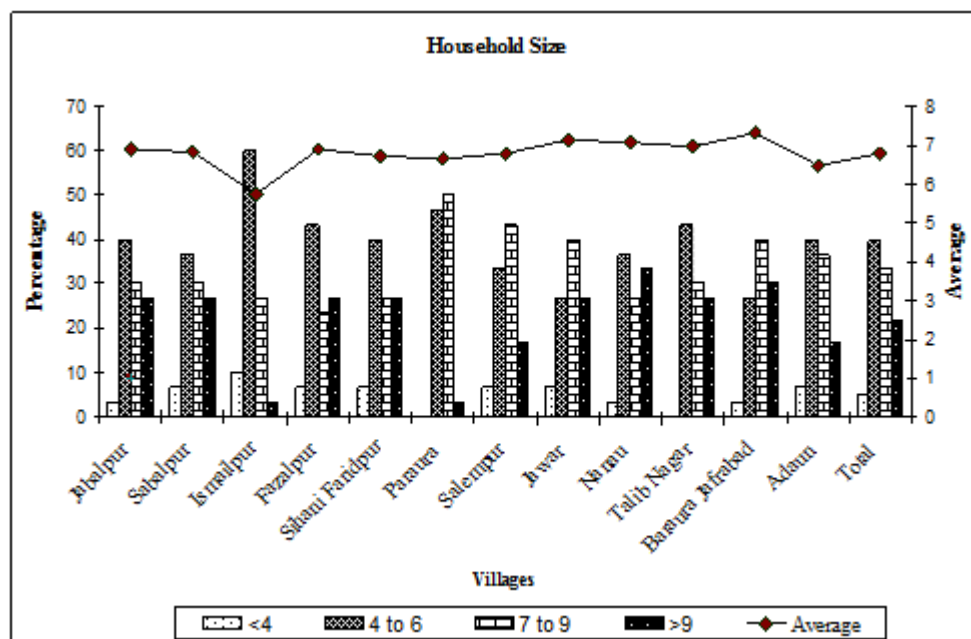


Figure: 4

X. HEALTH CONDITION

The Muslim women in Aligarh district generally life consists of high ratio of disease, malnutrition and ill health. Her general health care is almost ignored due to inadequate nutrition, poor health, lack of maternity centers etc. A house wife who take the responsibility of health care of the family on her shoulder, there is hardly anyone to take care of hers.

XI. DECISION MAKING

Participating in decision making and politics is an important tool to facilitate democracy in the country. But women in rural areas are still fighting for their participation in decision making organizations. The women in Muslim are bound to live within the walls of the house, they can't think beyond the boundary walls. Muslim women are not participating freely in all families and social matters are illiteracy, low family income, large family size and child care etc. Table 4 depicts the percentage distribution of respondent's decision making power. Women are the key decision maker about family welfare, but in Aligarh district Muslim women are more vulnerable about their equal right. It indicates from the table that majority 59.4 per cent women take decision for household affairs so it can be pointed out that women enjoyed empower in the sector of decision

making for household affairs. Only 13.1 per cent Muslim women expressed their opinion having freedom of movement outside the home without husband's permission. Freedom of movement is one of the most important indicators of domestic empowerment for the women. This movement away from the home may have important implications for exposure to information, development of interpersonal skills, increased self- confident and opportunities to take independent action (Syed H et al., 1993). It can be said that a large percentage of women got freedom from their husband to move outside the home freely. About 23.9 per cent women have controlled over daily household expenditure. Hence it appears from the data that, women have not dominating power over the family in respect of daily expenditure for the family. Women were much more behind than the men in decision-making of taking care of their children. 10 per cent of women took care of their child according to their own decision and remaining 90 per cent of respondent took care of their child with husband decision. 46.9 per cent of the respondent expressed their opinion in favour of women's participation as a representative in the society. It is also find out from the table that only 8.1 per cent Muslim women in Aligarh district cast vote by their own decision. They mainly cast their vote by the decision of husband and also head of the household.

Table: 4

S. No.	Opinions of the Respondent	Percentage
1	Household affair	59.4
2	Freedom of movement	13.1
3	Daily household expenditure	23.9
4	Child health	10.0
5	Women participation	46.9
6	Caste of vote	8.1

Source: Based on Field Survey, 2010

XII. GIRL'S EDUCATION

Mother is called as the first teacher of the child; hence she has to be educated. It is important for the proper up bringing of child and for the family as well and for the over all development of the society/ nation. Educational backwardness of Muslim women is the only cause of their socio-economic and political backwardness. Table 5 shows percentage distribution of

respondent's view about their daughter's education, nearly a positive view of respondent seen towards their daughter's education. About 65.3 per cent respondents gave their opinion for equal right in education of son and daughter and 31.4 per cent were agreed for daughter's education less than son. Only 3.3 per cent were agreed for daughter's education more than son because her marriage in good family and they feel that if daughter is educated then she can handle her family easily.

Table: 5

S. No.	Opinion of the Respondent	Percentage
1	Equal to son	65.3
2	Less than son	31.4
3	More than son	3.3
Total		100.0

Source: Based on Field Survey, 2010

XIII. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

Education of women is having supreme power for the development of individuality. It is also an instrument for

strengthening socially useful skills, habits and attitudes of common citizenship. Education of rural women also assumes great importance to enable them to get the fullest benefit of globalization. The study reveals that socio economic conditions are the major determinants of women liberation than the religion.

The data illustrates the fact clearly that family structure has an association with the participation of women in the decision making process as well as the status of women. Women are conscious about family welfare but still they are to depend on husband because in most of the cases they are out of the access to money. Most of the respondents agreed for existing equal rights in society but they were not enjoying freedom of exercise regarding their opinion about vote, freedom of movement away from home without husband's permission, daily household expenditure and child health care.

The data indicates a formidable gap between the employment eligibility and the employment availability among the educated Muslim, particularly in the public sector government employment. Most of the Muslim women are housewife besides working as agricultural labourer in their own fields. A Muslim woman is by and large confine to indoor activities. Their opinions and suggestions are not taken into consideration even for some serious families matter. A woman being a mother and a housewife is also expected to look after the domestic works that includes also the cattle feeding etc.

XIV. SUGGESTIONS

For the overall socio-economic development, women should be allowed to pursue their own path in respect of education and employment and should be allowed to participate, particularly in decision making.

1. There was a need for adopting an alternative approach to women's education particularly for women in the lower socio-economic strata in rural areas.
2. Women should be paid equal wages for equal work.
3. Women participation in hazardous work should be prohibited because it affects the health of infants and herself.
4. Skilled education should be given to women in rural areas of Aligarh district.
5. Women are given a required level of skill, education and training not only for their employment, but as necessary requirement for their independence, freedom and to become a fully developed social and cultural being.
6. Should be allowed to participate in political, social and economic activities at all level.

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