



**MUSLIM WOMEN IN HIGHER EDUCATION: A  
COMPARATIVE STUDY OF ALIGARH MUSLIM  
UNIVERSITY, ALIGARH AND JAMIA MILLIA  
ISLAMIA, NEW DELHI**

**ABSTRACT  
THESIS**

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# *Summary and Conclusion*

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## **CHAPTER 5**

### **Summary and Conclusion**

The socialization process of any individual plays a crucial role in identity formation and identifying adeptness. C. Wright Mills in his book *The Sociological Imagination* (1959) argues that sociological imagination is imperative for the understanding of the society. It allows an individual to relate to their cultural, social and historical circumstances that have affected their lives. Sociological imagination gives an individual an opportunity to surpass the narrow boundaries of their lives. The institution of school tends to be the essential part of the society and therefore takes an important position in sociology of education. While trying to look at Indian Muslim women and higher education factors like orthodoxy, patriarchy and the historical past of the community in India become significant.

The functionalist approach also propagates the social process i.e hierarchy and power relation is essential to maintain the dynamics of the social order. According to Durkheim's organic solidarity, modern society had to develop new forms of social control and cohesion that allows newly developed individualism of modernity to exist within cohesive modern society.

As far as the education of Muslim women is concerned there has been modernization within the community at a substantial level and now women can be seen in higher and professional level at an increasing pace but their representation at various levels and in many fields is still low. Therefore remain the subject of scrutiny even today to examine the institutionalized inequality and to study various forms of domination.

In the present thesis, therefore an attempt has been made to examine various considerations and factors. Tracing the historical trajectory of education and educational institutions in India in the pre and post-colonial period, this thesis has focused on the role played by Indian reformers, Christian missionaries and the traditional elite in the development of education in India. The thesis has further looked into issues of access, rights and entitlements in terms of women's education in general and Muslim women's education in particular in post-independent India. An effort has been made to study the recommendations of various committees,

commissions, plan and policies constituted to promote higher education among women.

In order to study the Muslim women's education and their contribution towards modernity, religious reforms and national making. A questionnaire method was devised to interview women students of Jamia Millia Islamia, New Delhi and Aligarh Muslim University, Aligarh. During the study many interesting intersectional paradigm come to the fore more over the study highlighted how higher education among Muslim women complicate the project of Islamic modernity in South Asia producing particular configurations of gender, caste and class. Higher education is seen as an expression of gender empowerment and a woman's subjectivity which challenges the oppressive frameworks of family, community and religion.

Gail Minault, in her work Secluded Scholar: Women's Education and Muslim Social Reform in Colonial India, opines that it was when the women belonging to the educated urban middle class families came out of the customary practice of purdah, that they became agents of socio political changes in Indian.

This act of 'coming out' mentioned a complex web of negotiation with other relation, neighbour & the public opinion at large. Renouncing purdah marked an important landmark in the lives of muslim women as for them it not only symbolized social status but religion identity as well.

Early in 1926, Sayyid Husain Bilgrami received a letter from a friend, describing a sensational event at the recent meeting of the Muhammadan Educational Conference in Aligarh that, his correspondent claimed, foretold the demise of purdah:

".. I prophesy that in the course of the next generation, it is bound to be given up, whatever the orthodox may say or do. Although you and I may not live to see it, the younger generation is bent upon getting rid of the *parda*. You know what Atiya Begum of Bombay did at the Educational Conference at Aligarh. She with some other Muslimahs cared nothing for our Sadrus Sudoor's strong protest but came up openly and got up on the dais unveiled and delivered a strong speech demanding equal rights with men to go about on God's earth freely and openly. Another lady also delivered a strong speech and the poor Sadrus Sudoor as Secretary of the Conference did his best

to send those Sufiferlettes [sic] back into their place screened up for them. Failing in his efforts he left the hall himself!! This movement among our ladies of the younger generation is very strong and men will have to give way in the end . . . Turkish women and Egyptians have led the way and I think after a time of misuse of liberty, things must settle down and *parcLa* will become ancient history.”(NMML, 1926)

At this juncture, it becomes significant to point out that apart from the support of their families, the nationalist movement too helped raise the consciousness of the Muslim women and they were at the forefront of the socio political struggle. Once their consciousness was raised & then domestic roles took a back seat the Muslim Women became important agents of change in politics, social service, medicine and teaching, among other. These educated Muslim women now became a combination of adaptability and self assertion that were emancipated individuals attaining higher education.

This accelerated social change was a result of development of women's subjectivity, growth in nationalist consciousness, reforms within Islamic law, mushrooming of Muslim women's reform association and most importantly the access and availability of higher education to Muslim women. Moreover, the effect of colonial reforms and the Indian Constitutional tenets of liberty and equality for all; also had a significant bearing on the improved status of higher education among Muslim women.

The Constitution of India grants Muslims and other Minorities equality of status and opportunities with other citizens to accelerate the process of educational and socio-economic justice. The Constitution of India grants the rights to Equality and Right to Freedom of Religion and Protection of Interest of Minorities in regard to educational rights. For six decades, the nation has worked and moved towards building and sustaining a secular democracy and advancing the interests of the historically disadvantaged sections to include women and minorities. Concerted efforts have been made towards equality and removal of disparities. Major policy and programmatic inputs are being made to ameliorate the overall situation of the socially and economically disadvantaged sections of our society with a string focus on women and girls in the last two decades with special focus on education and empowerment.