

Inclusiveness of India’s Muslim Minorities in India’s Economic Growth Process

Dr.M.A.Malik
Asst.Professor of Economics,
Govt.Degree & PG College, Gajwel,District: Siddipet,Telangana,India.
Cell:9849585332,Email:drmalik73@gmail.com

Abstract

Rapid and sustained poverty reduction requires inclusive growth that allows people to contribute to and benefit from economic growth. Rapid pace of growth is unquestionably necessary for substantial poverty reduction, but for this growth to be sustainable in the long run, it should be broad-based across sectors, and inclusive of the large part of the country’s labor force.

Social Inclusiveness: Social inclusiveness indicates how various communities are taking part in growth process and how the fruits of the growth distributed among the various communities.

Inclusiveness of Muslim Minorities in India’s Economic Growth Process: Muslims in India are largest minority group and to achieve an inclusive growth in India the Muslim minorities should be involved in growth process and they should share the growth fruits.

Objectives:
To find out the inclusiveness of Muslims in India’s economic growth process

Hypothesis:

Muslim minorities in India are one of the most exclusive communities in India’s economic growth process.

Methodology: Secondary data collected from various sources and tabled it systematically to analyze.

Findings: The framed hypothesis proved positively. Accordance with various reports the study finds that the Muslim minorities in India are one of the most exclusive community in India’s economic growth process. In the parameter of poverty, the poverty level in Muslims in India is above the average poverty level in India; in the parameters of per capita spending, education the Muslim status in India is below to India’s average.

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Introduction:

One hundred and fifty million strong Indian Muslim community is the largest Muslim minority in the world. A history of around one thousand years of coexistence with non-Muslims and interaction with Indian cultures

have given Indo-Islamic civilization its own distinctive texture, which can be seen in its arts, touched in its crafts and architecture, tasted in its food, heard in its music, read in its literature and poetry and felt in its general ethos. The socio-cultural contribution of Muslims in India far outweighs their numbers and adds richness to the multi-cultural dimensions of India's social life. The independence of the country in the wake of partition created a very difficult situation for Indian Muslims. Separated by its majority areas which constituted a separate Islamic state, Pakistan, the community's resources were further depleted by migration to Pakistan and then to the West. New opportunities in the Middle East opened avenues of financial wellbeing but they also deprived Indian Muslims their best talents.

Inclusive Growth: Rapid and sustained poverty reduction requires inclusive growth that allows people to contribute to and benefit from economic growth. Rapid pace of growth is unquestionably necessary for substantial poverty reduction, but for this growth to be sustainable in the long run, it should be broad-based across sectors, and inclusive of the large part of the country's labor force.

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India's Economic Growth Process and It's Inclusiveness:

India's Economic liberalization which began in the early 1990s has accelerated India's growth rate to an average of 7% per year since 1991, up from 3.5% in the 1970s. During this period India transformed itself from an agricultural economy to a service economy. Services now form 59% of the Indian economy. The growth and development of the Information Technology and Information Technology enabled Services have had a significant role in changing the face of the economy. The good news does not end here.

The growth rate for India is expected to overtake China's double digit growth rate in the next few years.

This news however, hides some alarming trends. Growth continues to bypass a large section of people. A large majority of Indians live in the villages and they have been excluded from India's growth story. Rural India is facing endemic problems – land holdings are shrinking, slow growth in agricultural production and limited social and economic infrastructure. Women, Children, backward castes & classes and other minorities often are excluded from the growth story. The rise of grass root militant movements which plague nearly one-tenth of India is a direct result of this economic exclusion and the unfulfilled aspirations of the bottom billion.

The India's economy is headed in a new direction - striving to touch double – digit annual growth rates, and a sustainable, equitable and inclusive growth, taking into account the needs of all sections of society. India's economic growth has passed through for major phases over the past 60 Years and is emerging to a new phase with a broad objective of "Inclusive Growth".

The 11th Plan defines inclusive growth to be "a growth process which yields broad-based benefits and ensures equality of opportunity for all". The Inclusive growth implies an equitable allocation of resources with benefits

accruing to every section of society, which is an Utopian concept. Inclusive growth is broad- based. It is concerned with the Pro-poor growth, growth with equity. Inclusive growth is aimed at poverty reduction, human development, health and provides opportunity to work and be creative. The allocation of resources must be focused on the indented short and long terms benefits and economic linkages at large and not just equitable mathematically on some regional and population criteria.

The inclusiveness involves four attributes. They are Opportunity, capability, access and security. The Opportunity attribute focuses on generating more and more opportunities to the people and focuses on increasing their income. The Capability attribute concentrates on providing the means for people to create or enhance their capabilities in order to exploit available opportunities. The Access attributes focuses on providing the means to bring opportunities and capabilities together. The Security attribute provides the means for people to protect themselves against a temporary or permanent loss of livelihood. Together Inclusive growth is a process in which economic growth measured by a sustained expansion in GDP contributes to an enlargement of the scale and scope of all four dimension.

The 12th Five Year plan (2012-2017) is talking about more inclusive growth to include

more the excluded sections, sectors and regions of the Country in ongoing India's economic growth process. As Indian economy recorded 7.9 annual growths during Eleventh Five Year plan the 12th Five Year plan has fixed a 8.2% annual growth target.

Inclusiveness of India's Muslim minorities in India's economic growth process:

We have to analyze the socio economic status of Indian Muslims to understand their inclusiveness in India's economic growth process.

The socio-economic condition of India's Muslim minorities:

As the following table explains, the socio-economic condition of India's Muslims is near

Table 1: The socio economic status of India's Muslims.

Socio-economic indicators	Muslims	All-India	SC/ST
Urban poverty(% of pop)	38	23	36
Rural poverty(% of pop.)	27	23	35
Annual per capita spending	635	712	520
Completed high school	24	43	21
Population aged over 20 years who are graduates(%)	3.6	6.7	2.4

.Source: Sachar Committee Report, p. 64, 151, 159, 299.(Government of India. 2006. Prime Minister's High-Level Committee on the Social, Economic and Educational Status of the Muslim Community in India.)

the bottom of the national ladder. Muslims are now only marginally ahead of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. The Muslims' socio-economic decline is a long-term problem. It reflects a steady decline since the country's independence in 1947 relative to all other groups. The Muslims' condition has declined even relative to the SC/ST, who jointly constitutes 22.5% of the population. These latter groups were considered so behind at the time of independence in 1947.Hence the Constitution has reserved 22.5% of all government jobs for them, along with other forms of affirmative action which helped the said communities to improve their socio economic status.

The share of Muslim population in India's law enforcing agencies is far below to their proportion to total population of India .The proportion of Muslims in the judiciary 5 percent and in Indian police services 4 percent (The Sacharreport(p.372).)

The Sachar Committee Report notes that “Fearing for their security, Muslims are increasingly resorting to living in ghettos across the country.” (p.14) India’s Muslims are thus especially excluded from national growth because of “ghettoization”, i.e., being forced to move into ghettos in order to be safe from physical

In consequence, “ghettoization” of poor Muslims means that they are among the most excluded of India’s poor from growth. As the report notes “living in ghettos... has not been to the advantage of the community... (It) has made them easy targets for neglect by municipal and government authorities. Water, sanitation, electricity, schools, public health facilities, banking facilities, anganwadis (child care centers), ration shops (subsidized public food distribution shops), roads and transport facilities are all in short supply in these areas... Increasing ghettoization of the Community implies a shrinking space for it in the public sphere”

Conclusion and Suggestions:

By keeping the above facts in consideration this study suggests some measures to include the most excluded India’s Muslim minorities in India’s overall development process. Obviously, the issue of Muslim poverty is linked to general economic policies and structures. Hence, it obviously cannot be

effectively tackled on an adequate basis without structural economic transformations the state as well as Civil society in general and Muslim Civil organizations in particular shall address some of the crucial economic and educational concerns of the Muslim community.

On the part of the state, the following steps, among others, could be considered:

1. Collection of data on Muslim social, economic, educational and political conditions, and making these available to the general public and for use by activists, organisations and policy-makers. Such information would need to be quantitative, qualitative as well as comparative, so that conditions between Muslims and other communities can be compared and policies suitably adjusted to ensure equity. This information needs also to be disaggregated in terms of gender, region, class, caste, linguistic groups etc. to avoid the pitfall of treating all Muslims as a monolith.

2. Ensuring that in its development schemes the state allocates resources to Muslims and Muslim-dominated localities on a scale proportionate to their population. Given the fact that Muslims are among the most marginalised communities living in the country, it is advisable that this allocation could be even higher than what is merited by their numerical proportion. There should be

proper mechanisms in place to ensure that this allocation is suitably made and implemented and in this there should be proper representation and participation of Muslims as well

3. Development schemes must also be culturally sensitive so that they are acceptable to the Muslim community. For instance, enforced co-education after a certain level or Hinduised or anti-Muslim biases in textbooks often act as a major hindrance to Muslim, particularly Muslim girls', education. These issues need to be sensitively addressed and approached.

4. In planning and implementing development schemes the participation of the local community, including Muslims and other marginalised groups, must be ensured.

5. The state should also work out mechanisms for ensuring adequate representation, whether through reservations or otherwise, for Muslims in government services, the police, etc..

6. The state should consider instituting reforms in the existing laws and rules regarding Waqf Boards and dargahs to ensure community participation in their functioning and use of the resources that they generate.

7. Stiff action needs to be taken by the state against communal and fascist groups.

Muslim community leaders and organisations have, of course, a crucial role to play in promoting the educational and economic development of the community, particularly of the poor, the 'low' castes and women. Some of the issues that need to be addressed in this regard include:

1. Preparing in-depth studies, rooted in rigorous empirical research, on various aspects related to Muslims in contemporary India. There is a desperate shortage of such literature published by Muslim groups, the focus of whose literature still remains narrowly centred on religion and identity-related issues

2. Formation of non-governmental organisations and working with existing secular non-governmental organisations for mobilising community and other resources for economic and educational development and for accessing various government schemes.

3. Promotion of an alternate leadership, at the local, regional and national levels that takes seriously issues of Muslim economic and educational marginalisation and makes these a central part of the agenda of the community as a whole.

4. Sensitising the ulama of the madrasas to the existing social, economic and educational problems of the Muslim community, particularly the poor and women, so that they can help mobilise public opinion on these through their lectures and literature. This might also help in the process of developing alternate forms of Islamic expression that are less theoretical and normative and more rooted in the existing reality of contemporary India.

5. Making efforts to dialogue with people of other communities, not just at the religious level or to combat communal and fascist forces, as is now often the case, but also to work together for common social concerns. Dialogue on Muslim social, economic and educational issues also needs to be initiated with the media, politicians, bureaucrats, non-governmental organizations, etc.

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