MAJOR INITIATIVES FOR EDUCATIONAL ADVANCEMENT OF MINORITIES

To address the low participation of the minorities especially Muslims who are the largest section of educationally backward minorities, in the national education system, the Ministry of Human Resource Development has taken several significant initiatives:-

- SarvaShikshaAbhiyan (SSA) addresses issues of access, equity and quality and makes schools open and inclusive in the secular space of our polity. The coverage of the Scheme has been concurrently extended to recognize volunteering Madarsas/Maktabs supported under SSA as well as those other volunteering Madrasas/Maktabs which may not be registered or recognized but supported under SSA interventions in coordination with State Project Directorates.

- Schemes amenable to earmarking of financial and physical targets for minorities, have been implemented to ensure that benefit to minority communities is beyond 15% as in case of SarvaShikshaAbhiyan (SSA) and Kasturba Gandhi BalikaVidyalaya (KGBV) where share of minorities is upto 20%. In order to enhance participation of minorities in the national education system, various initiatives have been undertaken – 121 districts with concentration of Muslim population are specifically targeted for maximising school access and eliminating infrastructure gaps through opening of 9071 new Primary Schools and 1475 Upper Primary Schools; construction of 21559 additional classrooms and recruitment of 29180 teachers.

- Mid-Day-Meal (MDM) Scheme has been extended to cover all children studying in classes I-VIII of Government, Government Aided including National Child Labour Project Schools, madarsas/maqtabs EGS/AIE Centres supported under SarvaShikshaAbhiyan without any discrimination of caste, gender, etc. Under the scheme nutritious meal of 450 calories and 12 grams of protein is provided at primary level (classes I-V) and of 700 calories and 20 grams of protein is provided at upper primary level (classes VI – VIII).

- Out of 3609 Kasturba Gandhi BalikaVidyalayas (KGBVs) sanctioned, 490 KGBVs have been sanctioned in blocks having over 20% muslim population out which 475 are operational enrolling 25% muslim girls.

- Ministry has launched ‘Saakshar Bharat’ the new variant of the National Literacy Mission on 8.9.2009 with an objective to make 70 million non-literate adults literate by the end of the 11th Plan. The scheme has special focus on women, belonging to Minorities. It is proposed to cover 12 million Muslims (10 million women +2 million men) under the programme. Saakshar Bharat is being implemented in 410 districts where female literacy is less than 50%. The programme has been rolled out in 372 districts in 25States and 1 Union Territory.
Jan Shikshan Sansthas (JSSs) are imparting vocational training in 33 out of 90 minority concentrated districts in the country.

The Centrally Sponsored Scheme of Teacher Education is under revision. Block Institutes of Teacher Education (BITEs) are proposed to be established in 196 blocks having concentration of SC/ST and Minorities.

Due to these interventions the share of Muslim children enrolled at primary & upper primary level has gone up and those out of school have decreased. According to District Information System of Education (DISE) the enrolment of Muslim children at primary and upper primary level for the year 2009-10 was 13.04% & 11.25% respectively.

Under the scheme of financial assistance for ‘Infrastructure Development for Private Aided/Unaided Minority Institutes(IDMI) during financial year 2011-12, Rs.48.43 crore has been released to 10 State Governments to 259 Minority Institutions.During 2012-13, out of budget provision of Rs.50.00 crore, an amount of Rs.2.62 crore has been released for 62 institutions in 3 States (Kerala, Sikkim and Mizoram)

Under the “Scheme for Providing Quality Education in Madrasas’ (SPQEM) during the financial year 2011-12, Rs.139.53 crore has been released to 9 States for honorarium of teachers, Book Bank/Science Kits, Computer Lab and Teachers Training etc. to Madrassa teachers teaching modern subjects in 5934 Madrassas. During 2012-13, out of budget provision of Rs.175.00 crore, Rs.31.57 crore has been released for 1348 Madrasas in 4 States (Chhattisgarh, MP, UP & Rajasthan)

The scheme of Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan, inter alia provides coverage of special focus groups viz. girls' education, children belong to SC, ST, OBC, and Educationally Backward Minorities, which was launched in March, 2009 with the objective to enhance access to secondary education and improve its quality. Since its inception, 9670 secondary schools have been approved, out of which 930 have been approved in Minority Concentration Districts (MCDs). An amount of Rs.2499.81 crore has been released out of total allocation of funds of Rs.2512.45 crore.

The certificates/ qualifications of the Madrasa Boards which have been granted equivalence by the State Education Boards to that of their Secondary and Senior Secondary qualification have been equated with corresponding certificates of the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE), Council of Board of School Education in India (COBSE) and other School Examination Boards, for the purpose of employment and entry to higher levels of education. Consequential notification by DOP&T has since been issued on 23.2.2010.

National Monitoring Committee on Minorities’ Education (NMCME):

The National Monitoring Committee on Minorities’ Education (NMCME) was revived on the 7th August, 2004 and reconstituted on expiry of its term w.e.f. 23rd August, 2007. The term of the Committee has expired on 22nd August, 2010 and has been reconstituted on 23rd December, 2012. The Committee is chaired by the Hon’ble Minister of Human Resource Development, and has representations from eminent educationists, Members of Parliament,
representatives of State Governments and representatives of Minority communities, educational institutions and other stakeholders. Besides a Standing Committee of the National Monitoring Committee on Minorities’ Education, five Sub-Committees on (i) Vocational Education & Skill Development of Minorities, (ii) Implementation of Schemes Aimed at Minorities, (iii) Mapping of Educational Requirements of Minorities – Region & District wise, (iv) Girls’ Education and (v) Promotion of Urdu language and enhance compatibility amongst minorities through knowledge of English have also been constituted. The Standing Committee and Sub-Committees have to visit States to interact with the minority communities, managements of educational institutions and other stakeholders.

- UGC has approved/sanctioned 285 Women’s Hostels during 11th Plan in Minority Concentration Districts/Areas. Out of total allocation of Rs.370.19 crore, Rs.203.69 crore have been released till 27th February, 2012.

- The UGC has approved the guidelines for establishment of centres in universities for study of Social Exclusion and Inclusive Policy and sanctioned these centres in 35 universities. Rs.21.53 crores has been released.

- UGC has established 2328 Equal Opportunity Cells for Minorities/SC/ST/OBCs in 23 Central Universities, 114 State Universities, 12 Deemed Universities and 2179 Colleges and Rs.46.07 crore has been allocated/released during the 11th Five Year Plan.

- A new scheme to assist States for establishment of a model degree college in each of the 374 identified higher educationally backward districts having Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) in higher education lower than the national GER has been operationalised. An amount of Rs.782 crore has been earmarked as the Central Government share in the 11th Five Year Plan for the Scheme. In so far as Minority Concentration Areas/Districts are concerned, 64 such areas/districts have been identified under this scheme. Approval has been granted to 15 model degree colleges in Minority Concentration Areas/Districts out of which an amount of Rs.2.67 crore has been released to 2 colleges.

- Under the Sub-Mission on Polytechnics, the Government of India provides financial assistance to the State Governments/UTs for setting up of polytechnics in the un-served and underserved districts during the 11th Plan. A sum of upto Rs.12.3 crore per polytechnic is provided to the State/UTs, subject to the condition that the land and recurring cost shall be provided by the State Governments/UTs. As per the Scheme criteria, 57 districts out of 90 Minority Concentration Districts are eligible for consideration under the Scheme. So far an amount of Rs.254.66 crore has been released as initial grants for setting up of polytechnics in 48 Districts out of 57 Districts.

- Academies for Professional Development of Urdu Medium Teachers have been set up at three Central Universities viz. Aligarh Muslim University, Aligarh, JamiaMilliaIslamia, New Delhi and Maulana Azad National Urdu University, Hyderabad. The Academy at JMI has trained 1675 teachers. MANUU has trained 3061 teachers and AMU has conducted 16 Refresher Courses/workshops for Primary/Secondary school teachers and has covered 356 teachers for teaching modern subjects in Urdu medium. An amount of Rs. 4.00 crore for each of these Universities was sanctioned by UGC for establishment of Academies for Professional Development of Urdu Medium Teachers during 11th Plan.
Rs. 61.31 crores have been sanctioned for establishment of ‘Residential Coaching Academies for Minorities, Women/SCs/STs’ in Aligarh Muslim University, Maulana Azad National Urdu University, Baba Sahib BhimraoAmbedkar, JamiaHamdard and JamiaMilliaIslamia so far, an amount of Rs. 30.66 crore has been released by University Grants Commission. JamiaHamdard has admitted 224 students(66 in 2010, 80 in 2011 & 78 in 2012), Maulana Azad National Urdu University admitted 148 students (81 in 2010 & 67 in 2011), Baba SahebBhimRaoAmbedkar has admitted 223 students (95 in 2010, 59 in 2011 & 69 in 2012), Aligarh Muslim University has admitted 96 students and JamiaMilliaIslamia has admitted 210(100 in 2010 and 110 in 2011) students.

National Commission for Minority Educational Institutions (NCMEI) has been established by an Act of Parliament with the key objective of ensuring that the true amplitude of the educational rights enshrined in Article 30 (1) of the Constitution is made available to the members of the notified religious minority communities, including the Muslims. NCMEI has issued 6305 minority status certificates as on 30.6.2012.

National Council for Promotion of Urdu Language (NCPUL) is being strengthened. The Mandate of the Council is being revisited for empowering the Council to register, examine and award approved qualifications to the students registered with it up to pre-degree level courses in the Urdu language and vocational qualifications dovetailing these with National Vocational Education Qualification Framework whether by statute or otherwise.

The programmes of the NCPUL are now available at 2009 Study Centres located in 234 Minority Concentration Districts in 26 States of the country which include one year Diploma Course in Computer Applications, Business Accounting & Multilingual DTP (CABA-MDTP), One Year Diploma Course in Urdu language, one year Certificate Course in Arabic Language and two years Diploma Course in Functional Arabic. CABA-MDTP scheme has transformed the Urdu speaking population into employable technical work force and more than 50% diploma holders are already employed. 50,000 jobs are expected for Diploma holders under the National Population Register Project.

In order to preserve and promote traditional calligraphy, a rich heritage of India and dovetailing it with the modern graphic design to create employment and entrepreneurship, the Council is running Calligraphy and Graphic Design Course at 35 locations in the country.

Scheme for Urdu Press Promotion has been strengthened to provide for capacity building of Urdu journalists. New courses on Mass Media, Script Writing and Dialogue writing are being launched to enhance employment opportunity in addition to the subsidy provided to Urdu newspapers to avail UNI Urdu News Service.

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Salient Findings of Research Conducted by NUEPA - Participation of Muslims in Higher Education:

1. National Sample Survey 64th Round conducted in 2007-08 presents the information on participation in higher education in terms of social and religious groups. Result shows that the Gross Attendance Ratio (GAR) of Muslims stands at 8.7 percent as opposed to 16.8% GAR of Non-Muslims in higher education. If we compare the GAR of Muslims with other social groups, we observe that it is higher than the GAR of Scheduled Tribes at 6.63 percent but lower than the GAR of Scheduled Castes at 10.65% and much lower than the GAR of Other Backward Classes at 13.67 percent.

2. There is a wide variation in the participation within Non-Muslim community as we move from ST, SC, OBC and others. It varies from 6.26% in the case of ST to 10.52% in the case of SC, 14.27% in the case of OBC to 29.56% in the case of others. Thus there is a range of 23 within Non-Muslim community along different social groups. It is interesting to observe that there is no such wide variation in the participation within Muslim community as we move from ST, SC, and OBC to others. GAR of ST is 5.6%, SC is 14.2%, OBC is 8.7% and that of others is 8.6%.

3. Participation by consumption expenditure groups: An interesting question that emerges from the information is that whereas the top quartile of the Muslims does show highest participation in relation to all the bottom four quartiles, the differentiation in participation even within top quartile between communities is very high.

4. The important characteristics of Muslim participation in higher education is that at higher levels of higher education, such as, at the post graduation level, attendance of Muslims falls down considerably. Besides, higher percentage of Muslims (as compared to non-Muslims, 22.4% as compared to 19.2%) ends up doing Diploma & Certificate below Graduate Level.

5. The third characteristics of Muslim participation in higher education is that higher overall participation of Muslim ST and SC and lower degree level participation of Muslim ST and SC as compared to Non-Muslim ST and SC only means Muslim ST and SC participation is higher in post secondary diploma and certificate. It means Muslim ST and SC prefer to join post secondary education for a short period certificate and diploma course and they have lower participation at degree level. However, overall higher participation in diploma course compensates for lower participation at degree level. As a result overall diploma and degree participation for Muslim ST and SC is higher in comparison to Non-Muslim ST and SC.

6. Level-wise Educational Inequality of Participation: Group Analysis

   Educational participation in terms of graduates at different levels of education is presented in terms of social, religious and economic groups. In the information given in the table elementary i.e.; first stage of education is taken as the base and index of graduates at other levels of education is calculated. Graduates, at different levels of education, give the picture of stock available at a point of time. However, the comparison tells us which group at what level suffers from the deficit of graduates. As noted above, the identical stock at different levels is an ideal scenario of equality in level wise participation in education. Any deviation from the ideal is something of interest to know.

7. It is important to note that there is sharp fall in the number of graduates at
junior secondary level for ST, SC and OBC social groups. In the religious group, the fall in the number of graduates at junior secondary level for the Muslims may be noted. However, the fall is not as high as ST, SC and OBC. In the religious group, Non-Muslim do not show fall at the junior secondary level. In terms of economic groups, the fall in the number of graduates at the junior secondary level is largest for I group. The fall is reduced as the consumption expenditure group increases. It may be concluded that to increase educational participation at higher levels of education the number of graduates at Jr. secondary level needs to be increased especially for ST, SC, OBC and the Muslims and income groups I, II and III as a matter of priority.

8. It is a matter of concern that a further deficit of graduates occurs for SC, ST, OBC, I and II income group at the senior secondary level and to a lesser extent for Muslims and income group III. Non-Muslim also suffers from sharp fall in the number of graduates at senior secondary level from a high number of graduates at junior secondary level.

9. Participation in higher education in terms of number of graduates very much depends on the manner in which the fall in the number of graduates in different groups take place at different levels of education. The number of graduates at different levels of school education for different social groups

10. It is thus clear from the analysis that unless the participation in terms of graduates at the first three levels of education is enhanced for SC, ST, OBC, I, II and III income group, it would be meaningless to talk of higher participation in higher education.

11. Factors Identifying Low Participation of Muslims in Higher Education

The central objective of the proposed research is to identify the factors for low participation of Muslims in higher education. Factor analysis was conducted to identify the factors responsible for low participation of Muslims. A sample of 402 Muslim students who are already studying in higher education institutions was randomly served the questionnaire. In the questionnaire participating students’ perceptions were captured to understand the factors responsible for low participation of Muslims in higher education. Factor analysis was conducted with a set of 30 questions on four point scale. Scale was given rank 1 for most agreed, rank 2 for agreed, rank 3 for somewhat agreed and rank 4 for not agreed. Question is treated as
variable in factor analysis. From the responses received through the questionnaire the factor analysis facilitates in understanding the perceptions of individuals in terms of factors. The factors pool different interrelated questions (variables) together under one factor. A set of relevant factors may finally explain the perception of individuals in understanding a phenomenon.

12. Factors for Low Participation of Muslims in Higher Education

The rotation of factor structure has clarified the things considerably. The first factor pools five variables. Family expectation to take up a job (variable 26), value for traditional profession in the family (variable 27), compulsion to start earning soon to support the family (variable 15), tough to break the barrier of family profession (variable 1) and last variable with lowest factor loading can be ignored. Factor 1, therefore, turns out to be “income barrier”. Under Factor-1, family profession is valued because it provides economic security. Family mode of traditional profession that is linked to the traditional occupation followed in the family might not be remunerative enough. This creates compulsion for an individual to search out for a job after school education. Hence factor-1 explains the inability of an individual to break the family profession and at the same time creates compulsion to earn early income to supplement the income from family profession. This, in the perception of an individual, income is the important deterrent for Muslims in the participation of higher education.

The second factor also pools five variables together. My religion encourages individual to have higher education (variable 23), Our religious community values higher education (variable 28), Madarsa/school education is progressive and helps one to join higher education (variable 21), My family believes that an individual must have religious values for a decent life (variable 25), Cultural values of our religious community motivates me to pursue higher education (variable 2) have all been pooled under factor 2. This is the most interesting result. It establishes the fact that in the perception of an individual religion is a facilitating factor for participation in higher education.

Under Factor- 2 religion is considered in many ways as a strength for the Muslim community for higher studies. Belief of a family that religious values and decent life go together is quite significant. Cultural values of Muslims are important in motivating individual to pursue higher education. At the level of religious community there is premium attached with higher studies. The progressive role of Madarsa/school education is accepted in helping to join higher education. We had thought this to be barrier, but to our surprise it turns out to be strength in various ways for participation in higher education.

The third factor pools four variables together. Higher education is an investment good that have high future returns (variable 7), higher education is as necessary as any other consumption good necessary for the survival (variable 8), higher education is necessary for a good marriage (variable 11), higher education provides the prestige that I need to have (variable 9). These variables point to the returns from higher education. Higher education provides an opportunity that an individual is expected to exploit. There are economic returns from investment. Higher education as consumption good is considered necessary for survival. Higher education has social return as it facilitates good marriage and earns prestige in the society.

Thus, there is the income barrier in terms of following the family profession and compulsion to earn early. Against this barrier, is the opportunity to get high returns by investing in higher education. It is thus the interplay of two factors – cost subject to the income constraint and returns subject to the availability of finance - that to a great extent determines the participation of Muslims in higher education.
Among the five variables under fourth factor, there are two variables with high factor loadings. They are: (i) higher participation at the school level only will lead to higher participation at higher education level (variable 13), (ii) I am confident that my marks will be high to get me into higher education (variable 14). Other variables with low factor loadings can be ignored. This factor may be termed as school factor. Higher participation as well as high marks i.e both access with quality education - at school level will ensure high participation of Muslims in higher education.

The mathematical factor analysis has provided way to simplify the complexity of the data that reflects the real world.

Continuing traditional profession compelling to join the job market (Income barrier) emerges as the main factor for low participation in higher education. Expectation of social and economic return from higher education (opportunity for return) emerges as the main motivating factor for the participation of Muslims in higher education. School factor, on the other hand, shows that not only the proportion of eligible but also the performance at secondary school level is necessary for higher participation. It is important to note that religion in the perception of students plays a positive role and, therefore, Madarsas need to be modernized, mainstreamed and supported at par with any secondary schools in India, particularly so in the regions which have Muslim Concentrated Population.

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