Education

Dropout as a curse: A case study of Muslim women in Kashipur, Uttarakhand

Arzoo Afroz Ansari[1*] and Dr. Anjali Punera[2]

[1] Research Scholar, Department of Geography, SBS. Govt. P.G. College, Rudrapur, District Udham Singh Nagar, Uttarakhand, India

[2] Professor, Department of Geography, Govt. Degree College, Kotabagh, Uttarakhand, India

*Corresponding author: Arzoo Afroz Ansari

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Abstract

As per census of India (2011) Islam is the second major religion in Uttarakhand, followed by 13.95 percent of the population. Most of the Muslim population of Uttarakhand state lives in the Bhaber-Terai region. The Bhabar- Terai region of Uttarakhand state includes Udham Singh Nagar, Haridwar, Dehradun, Nainital, Champawat and Pauri district. Haridwar (34.28 percent) and Udham Singh Nagar (22.58 percent) are the two districts with the largest Muslim population in Uttarakhand state. This study has been conducted in Kashipur city (having 35.06 percent Muslim population) of Udham Singh Nagar district. Education plays a crucial role in societal development and women empowerment as well. Muslim women face several obstacles in every aspect of life such as poverty, dropout (due to early marriage, domestic responsibilities, long distance to school, poor infrastructure etc,) low self-esteem, etc. Across Uttarakhand the dropout rate (between year 2020- 21) for Muslim women at the elementary level (class 1-8) is 5.30 percent; and at secondary level, it increased to more than double (12.15 percent). This shows that the dropout rate of Muslim women is increasing with the increase in educational level which is a matter of concern. Due to the high dropout rate at this level, achieving school education for all by 2030 in India will undoubtedly be challenging. Additionally, attaining a 50 percent Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) at higher education level by 2035, as envisioned in NEP 2020, will not be a simple task.

The study tries to understand the relation between gender and dropout of Muslim women in Kashipur City, Uttarakhand with the help of chi- square statistical test. Along with this, in the present study the main obstacles that are responsible for Muslim women's dropout also have been studied.

Keywords: Dropout, Obstacles, Elementary level, Chi- square, Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER)

Introduction

As per census of India (2011) Islam is the second major religion in Uttarakhand, followed by 13.95 percent of the population. Most of the Muslim population of Uttarakhand state lives in the Bhaber- Terai region, while a very small proportion of Muslims live in the hilly region. The Bhabar-Terai region of Uttarakhand state includes Udham Singh Nagar, Haridwar, Dehradun, Nainital, Champawat and Pauri district. Haridwar (34.28 percent) and Udham Singh Nagar (22.58 percent) are the two districts with the largest Muslim population in Uttarakhand state. This study has been conducted in Kashipur city (having 35.06 percent Muslim population) of Udham Singh Nagar district.

Education plays an important role in societal development. However, girls generally tend to drop out of school more often than boys due to early marriage, domestic responsibilities, long distance to school, poor infrastructure (lack of clean water, sanitation and transportation to school), poor quality of education, lack of parental involvement and safety concerns etc. Additionally, students from lower socio- economic backgrounds are more likely to dropout due to financial constraints or the need to work to support their families. Both (boys and girls) dropout rates are relatively low at the primary (class 1-5) and upper primary level (class 6-8). Elementary level combined both primary and upper primary level. Across Uttarakhand the dropout rate (between year 2020- 21) for Muslim women at the elementary level (class 1-8) is 5.30 percent; and at secondary level, it increased to more than double (12.15 percent). This shows that the dropout rate of Muslim women is increasing with the increase in educational level which is a matter of concern. Due to the high dropout rate at this level, achieving school education for all by 2030 in India will undoubtedly be challenging. Additionally, attaining a 50 percent Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) at higher education level by 2035, as envisioned in NEP 2020, will not be a simple task. The GER is a key educational statistic that measures the total enrolment in a specific level of education (such as primary, secondary, higher education) and use it to show the ratio of the number of students who in that country/ state to those who qualify for the particular grade level. The GER can be over 100 percent as it includes students who may be older or younger than the official age group.

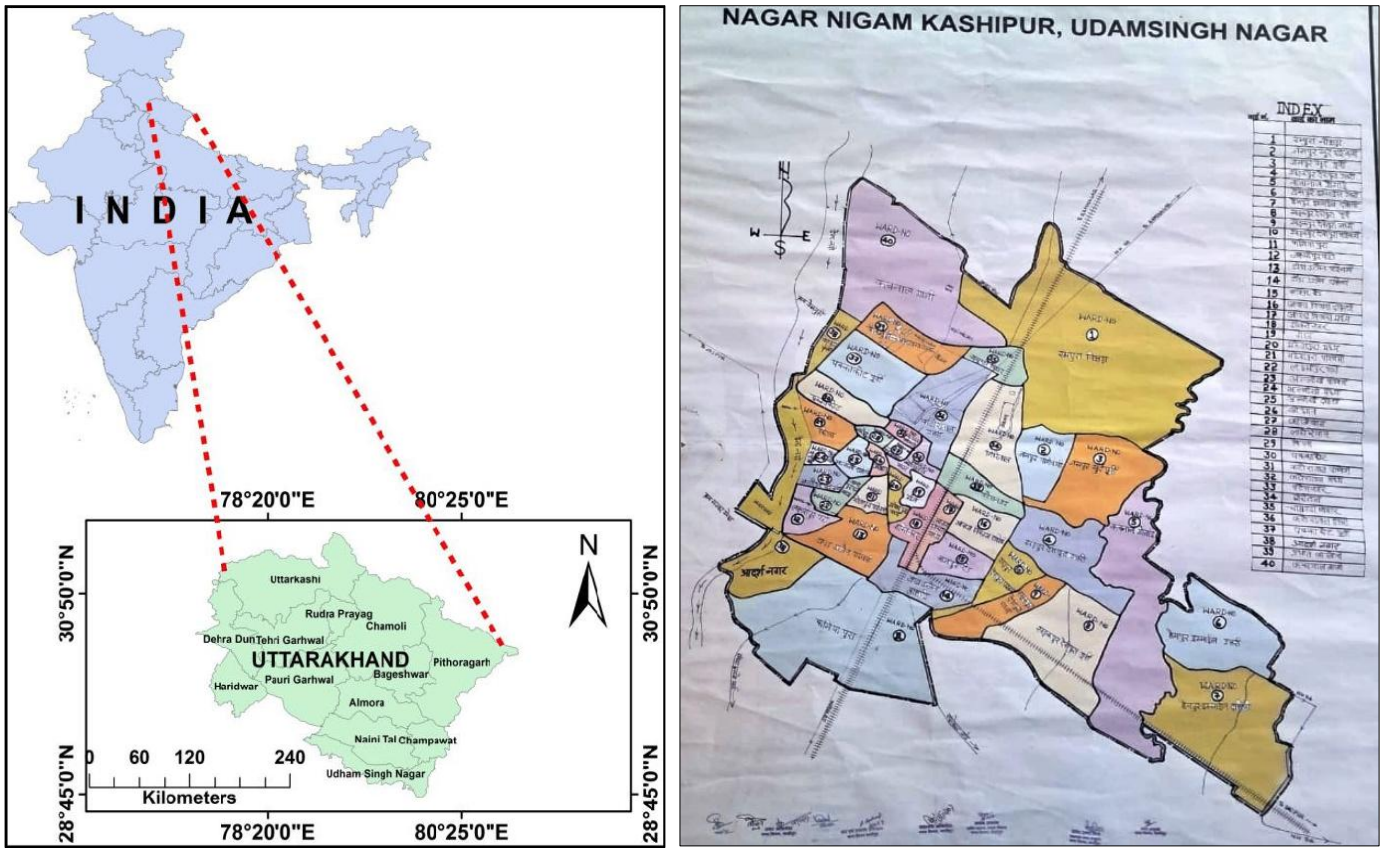
As per 2021-22 year, the GER for Muslim students in Uttarakhand were high at primary level (161.90). In contrast at higher education level, it was 11.16 only. It reflects that muslim students in Uttarakhand show high enrollment in primary education, but like national trends, they likely face increased dropout risks as they progress to secondary and higher education due to some obstacles, which are further mentioned. Ahmad (1996) in his study stated that the social background in terms of an educated family, especially the father, is a determinant factor in deciding the education level. Some

Muslim man in the community are themselves less educated and do not favour women attaining higher education. Due to this, most Muslim women dropout before reaching the level of higher education. This interpretation shows that Muslim women's education is not supported in that kind of the families. It is believed that, if the girl is more educated, it will be difficult to find a suitable groom for her and it would me more pressure on the family to find a suitable boy with equal or higher education (Hasan and Menon, 2004). According to the Sachar Committee Report (SCR) submitted in 2006, High rate of school dropouts among Muslim students in India should be a major reason of concern because it contributes to the socio-economic backwardness of the country. Muslim dropout rates stand at 23.1 percent in comparison to the national school dropout average rate of 18.96 percent. (Parveen, 2014) Lack of access to crucial support programmes deepens the marginalization of Muslim communities, especially poor Muslim women. According to Raj (2018); indicators such as poverty and deprivation have impacted the literacy rate, school dropout rate, and maternal mortality rate etc. Women belonging to the Muslim community face social and economic deprivation related to poor education, health issues and many more. Inequity is very high among Muslims due to differences in their educational status and poor access to schools.

Study Area

Kashipur is a major industrial city in Uttarakhand's Udham Singh Nagar district known for its deep-rooted history dating back to the Mahabharata era and as a key educational hub. As the third most populous city in the Kumaun region, it features a diverse, predominantly Hindu and Muslim population. It serves as a gateway to the Kumaun Himalayas, with attractions like the Drona Sagar Lake.

Kashipur city is situated in the western part of the Udham Singh Nagar district at 29.22 degree N and 78.96 degree E in the terai region of Uttarakhand. As per the census of India (2011), out of the 42,640 Muslim population, 52.17% were male while 47.83% were female. Overall Women literacy is 77.63 percent while it is lower than overall man (86.88%) in the city. The main challenge is the limited availability of religion wise relevant data in Kashipur city. The most comprehensive data on Muslim education comes from the Unified District Information System and the all-India Survey on Higher Education. However, some crucial indicators, such as enrollment ratio, dropout and retention rates are still unavailable in these sources. Thus, to find out the dropout obstacles of Muslim women in Kashipur city primary field survey has been done.



Source: Research Gate and Nagar Nigam Kashipur (Map- not to scale)

Fig 1: Location of the study area

Objectives

The objectives of the study are as follows-

- To understand the relation between dropout and gender of Muslim women in Kashipur, Uttarakhand.
- To find out the main obstacles responsible for dropout of Muslim women in Kashipur, Uttarakhand.

Database and Methodology

The present study used both primary and secondary data. Secondary data gathered from govt. reports, books, articles etc. while Primary data collected from field survey using a self-made questionnaire, out of the total 40 ward of Kashipur city only 10 wards have been made the subject of study, based on the assumption that these 10 wards are representative of the Muslim majority population. 20 respondents were selected from each ward, furthermore for the convenience of the study, we have divided the 10 wards into 5 zones. Thus 40 respondents were selected from each zone. The questionnaire contained questions regarding Muslim women's dropout their parents qualifications, causes or factors for dropout family monthly income etc.

To make the study convenient and suitable we have divided 10 wards into 5 zone, which are as follows-

Table 1: Wardwise Zoning of Kashipur, Uttarakhand

Ward no.	Zone no.
Ward 5 and ward 12	Zone 1
Ward 20 and ward 21	Zone 2
Ward 22 and ward 23	Zone 3
Ward 24 and ward 25	Zone 4
Ward 31 and ward 32	Zone 5

Source: Calculated from field survey.

It is noteworthy that in this study we consider only those who have studied in a government recognized school, college or institution. To understand the relationship between gender and dropout (zone wise) chi-square test is used.

$$\text{Chi-sqaure test } (x^2) = \Sigma\left[\frac{(O-E)^2}{E}\right]$$

Where,

Σ = sum of all values

O = observed values

E = Expected values

To perform the chi square test, we have formulated the null hypothesis which is as follows-

There is no relationship between gender and dropout.

And to analyze the obstacles responsible for dropout of Muslim women different kinds of statistical methods like Percentage and diagrams are used.

Results and Discussions

The dropout rate is measured in terms of the percentage of students who leave school before completing their level/ grade. It is a critical indicator of the effectiveness of the education system. It is the number of students who dropped out in a year divided by the total enrolment for that year, multiplied by 100. Elementary level combined both primary and upper primary level. Across Uttarakhand the dropout rate (between year 2020-21) for Muslim women at the elementary level (class 1-8) is 5.30 percent; and at secondary level, it increased to more than double (12.15 percent). This shows that the dropout rate of Muslim women is increasing with the increase in educational level which is a matter of concern (table no. 2). Table no. 3, shows that at higher levels, the dropout rate increased further to 13.94 percent in Uttarakhand, which is higher than the national level.

Table 2: Muslim dropout rate at different levels of Education, cohort 2020-21

Educational level	Primary level (class 1-5)			Upper primary (class 6-8)			Elementary level (class 1-8)		
State	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total
Uttarakhand	6.15	3.93	5.10	12.46	8.46	10.50	7.95	5.30	6.69
India	3.72	3.22	3.48	5.58	5.68	5.63	4.32	4.05	4.19

Source: Computed based on UDISE Plus 2020-21& 2021-22.

Table 3: Muslim dropout rate at different levels of Education, cohort 2020-21

Educational level	Secondary level			Higher level		
State	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total
Uttarakhand	17.09	12.15	14.55	11.16	13.94	12.48
India	18.59	18.69	18.64	9.43	8.44	8.91

***Source*:** Computed based on UDISE Plus 2020-21& 2021-22.

Table 4: Dropout Percentage of Muslim women in Kashipur, Uttarakhand

Zone no.	Percent of dropout	Dropout percent from primary	Dropout percent from secondary	Dropout percent from above
Zone 1	17.3	40	40	20
Zone 2	11.4	00	50	50
Zone 3	37.1	75	25	00
Zone 4	17.1	00	33.33	66.66
Zone 5	17.1	33.33	33.33	33.33

***Source**:* calculated from field survey

The findings provide valuable insights of educational dropout in Kashipur, Uttarakhand. Table no. 3 shows that zone 3 has the highest dropout rate (37.1 percent). It is believed that somehow gender and dropout are interlink together. Parents in Muslim community do not send their girl child to school or they send their boy child to better school. Apart from this, before reaching higher level of education or complete their primary education muslim women take care their siblings and do busy with their household chores. due to this, their dropout rate increases and they are not able to complete their further studies. As a result, Muslim women lagged behind Muslim men and other religious group. To test the relation of these two categorical variables dropout (variable 1) and gender (variable 2) chi- square method has been used. With the help of chi-square test we have formulated a null hypothesis that, there is no significant relation between gender and education.

Table 5: Observed values (O)

Gender	Zone 1	Zone 2	Zone 3	Zone 4	Zone 5	Row total
Male	8	10	28	8	6	60
Female	24	16	52	24	24	140
Column total	32	26	80	32	30	200

***Source**:* Calculated from field survey

Table 6: Expected values (E)

Gender	Zone 1	Zone 2	Zone 3	Zone 4	Zone 5
Male	9.6	7.8	24	9.6	9
Female	22.4	18.2	56	22.4	21

Table 7: Calculation of chi- square method

Gender	Zone 1	Zone 2	Zone 3	Zone 4	Zone 5	Chi-sqaure test $(x^2) = \Sigma[\frac{(O-E)^2}{E}]$
Male	0.266	0.62	0.66	0.266	01	-
Female	0.114	0.265	0.28	0.114	0.42	-
Grand total	-	-	-	-		4.005

Degree of freedom (Df)= (column-1) (row-1), Df=4, Significance level= 0.05, *p* value= 9.488, Calculated value= 4.005

Hence, *p* value or tabular value is greater than calculated value. so null hypothesis (Ho) will be accepted. It means there is no relation between gender and dropout.

The findings of the present study reveal that gender alone does not influence dropout of Muslim women in Kashipur, Uttarakhand. Apart from gender, there are many other obstacles that affect the dropout rate of Muslim women such as long distance to school, lack of female staff in schools, poor quality of education, parents educational level etc.

Obstacles responsible for dropout of Muslim women in Kashipur city

There are multiple obstacles for dropout of Muslim women in Kashipur, Uttarakhand which are as follows-

Table 8

Obstacles of drop out	% of drop out
1. Lack of separate girls school	00
2. Household's responsibility	34.29
3. Economic obstacles	25.71
4.Distance to school	5.71
5. Social obstacles	14.29
6. Poor infrastructure	2.86
7. Poor quality of education	17.14

Source: Calculated from field survey

Some common obstacles for dropout of Muslim women are as follows-

- **Lack of separate girls' school-** This obstacle is not present in Kashipur city because here both separate inter college and degree college for girls are present. For example, GGIC. Kashipur, Chandrawati Tiwari Girls degree college, TSSBVMIC Inter College etc.
- **Households' responsibility-** In some cases it has been seen that girls are forced to dropout so that they can take care of household chores and siblings. Table 8 shows that 34.29 percent Muslim women dropped out due to this obstacle in Kashipur, Uttarakhand.
- **Economic obstacles:** Many Muslim women come from low income families and are forced to drop out of school due to financial constraints. Thus, families often need their children to work to support the household. Table no. 8 demonstrates that 25.71 percent Muslim women dropout due to economic obstacles in Kashipur, Uttarakhand.
- **Distance to school:** Many student from have to travel long distances from home to school, which can be significant obstacle to regular attendance. only 5.71 percent Muslim women left their further studies due to this obstacle (table 8) in Kashipur, Uttarakhand.
- **Social obstacles:** Social norms, gender biases prevent women from continuing their education. Early marriage is also a significant cause of women dropping out of school. Thinking like there is no need to study etc. 14.29 percent of Muslim women leave their studies because of social obstacles (table no.8) in Kashipur, Uttarakhand.
- **Poor infrastructure:** Lack of basic amenities such as clean drinking water, sanitation, lack of menstruational hygiene, transportation to school can contribute to high dropout rate. As per table no. 8 only 2.86 percent Muslim women dropout due to the poor infrastructure in Kashipur, Uttarakhand.
- **Poor quality of education:** Insufficient resources, lack of female teachers & staff, outdated teaching methods, untrained teachers etc., lead to poor quality of education. According to table no. 8, 17.14 percent Muslim women quit their studies due to poor quality of education in Kashipur, Uttarakhand.
- **Lack of parental involvement:** In a few cases, parents might not be aware of the importance of education. This is because parents are either very less educated or not educated at all. Due to this, motivation among children decreases. Table no. 9 shows the education level of mother and father of Muslim women in Kashipur, Uttarakhand.

Table 9: Education level of Muslim women's parents (in %)

Zone no.	Mother's educational level				Father's educational level			
	Primary	secondary	above	Illiterate	Primary	secondary	above	Illiterate
1	22.5	17.5	5	55	35	20	10	35
2	17.5	10	2.5	70	37.5	12.5	7.5	42.5
3	12.5	5	0	82.5	35	5	5	42.5
4	32.5	10	7.5	50	25	17.5	20	37.5
5	27.5	2.5	5	65	52.5	15	7.5	25

Source: calculated from field survey

Conclusion

The findings of the present study reveal that gender alone does not influence dropout of Muslim women in Kashipur, Uttarakhand. Apart from gender, there are many other obstacles that affect the dropout rate of Muslim women such as long distance to school, lack of female staff in schools, poor

quality of education, parents educational level etc. The findings provide valuable insights of educational dropout in Kashipur, Uttarakhand. Table no. 3 shows that zone 3 has the highest dropout rate (37.1 percent).

The government has launched various school and higher educational initiatives to reduce this educational gap. For instance, the Maulana Azad Education Foundation provides scholarships to needy students of Muslim community. The Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA), a government program offers free and compulsory education to all children, including muslim students. Mid-day-meal scheme is another program provides free meals to children in government schools to improve enrolment, retention and attendance. findings shows that dropout is a matter of concern for both Muslim man and women, because like girls boys also dropped their studies for supporting their family.

In summary, these initiatives have significantly improved school education in Kashipur, Uttarakhand. But there is still a long way to go to achieve universalization of education, reducing dropout and increasing access to education for all.

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