



A brief perspective on employment structure of Muslim women in Udham Singh Nagar, Uttarakhand

Arzoo Afroz Ansari^{1*} and Dr. Anjali Punera²

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

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

*Corresponding Author: Arzoo Afroz Ansari

Received 9 March 2026; Accepted 13 Apr 2026; Published 6 May 2026

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.64171/JSRD.5.S1.136-140>

Abstract

Muslim Women are an important part of our society, And income or earning is very important part of their empowerment and upliftment. They play multiple roles inside and outside the home. This role is invisible and not recognized statistically because it is not represented officially. As per 2011 census of India, The share of Muslim population in the total population of the district Udham Singh Nagar is 22.58 percent and Islam is the second most popular religion in the district.

According to 68th NSSO round report, worker population ratio (WPR) and Labour force participation rate (LFPR) of them (148 and 151 respectively) are lower than that of women of all religious groups in Uttarakhand (361 and 373 respectively). The proportion unemployment (PU) of them is also low as compare to national level. It has been noticed that their less participation in LFPR is a subject of concern. Efforts towards gender equality and empowerment have also been made by individuals and government, to address these problems. However, despite many efforts, the workforce participation of Muslim women is still very low than that of Muslim men in the district. Due to which they lag behind in empowerment and other aspects of life. A large presence of Muslim population in informal sector, both as self- employed and casually employed.

The present study tries to analysis the gender- based employment structure for Muslim women in Udham Singh Nagar, Uttarakhand. In addition to this, factors responsible for low work participation of Muslim women also have been studied in Udham Singh Nagar, Uttarakhand.

Keywords: LFPR, WPR, PU, UR, Employment

Introduction

Muslim Women are an important part of our society, And income or earning is very important part of their empowerment and upliftment. Empowerment represents the process of enabling individuals or groups to gain control over their lives and make independent choices. Gender empowerment often refers to the empowerment of women.

Their Labour force participation is not only an important part of social and economic development, but it is also important factor for the empowerment and upliftment of Muslim women. Factors effecting the employment status of Muslim women are complex like availability of jobs, number of children, husband's education level, gender discrimination, not interested for doing job, literacy rate of Muslim women and so on. However, despite many efforts, the workforce participation of Muslim women is still very low than that of Muslim men in the district. Due to which they lag behind in empowerment and other aspects in life. A large presence of Muslim population in informal sector, both as self- employed and casually employed. It has been noticed that less participation in LFPR of Muslim women is a subject of concern. Efforts towards gender equality and empowerment have also been made by individuals and government, to address these problems.

Ahmed (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 and suitable employment prospects of the women. Hasan and Menon (2004) [8], in their book stated Muslims have poor education levels and they are working in low paid jobs. According to Sachhar report (2006), less education leading Muslim women to low skill resulting in less income and back to poverty. There is very little participation of Muslim women when it comes to their representation in programmes initiated by the government such as credit facilities forming SHGs [Self help groups].

Muslim women sometimes face barriers to employment due to discriminatory practices, lack of skills training and limited access to resources. It has been observed that Muslim women are found mostly engaged in the informal sector occupations that are low-paying (Kundu, 2007). Disparity in educational attainments at higher levels, would be reflected in the employment situation, especially in the quality of employment (Kundu, 2014)

According to Raj (2018), Muslim women depend on household activities to earn a meagre income to lead their lives.

The lack of higher and professional education deprives Muslim women an opportunity to earn decent job. The job prospects at various levels are hampered by lack of qualification required for gaining skillfull employment. In addition to this, income disparities are also a problem among Muslims. The low access

to quality education, self-employment, unskilled or semi-skilled employment, high dropout rate, etc., has pushed Muslim women to margins of employment where they are employed in informal sector or are self employed or doing petty business.

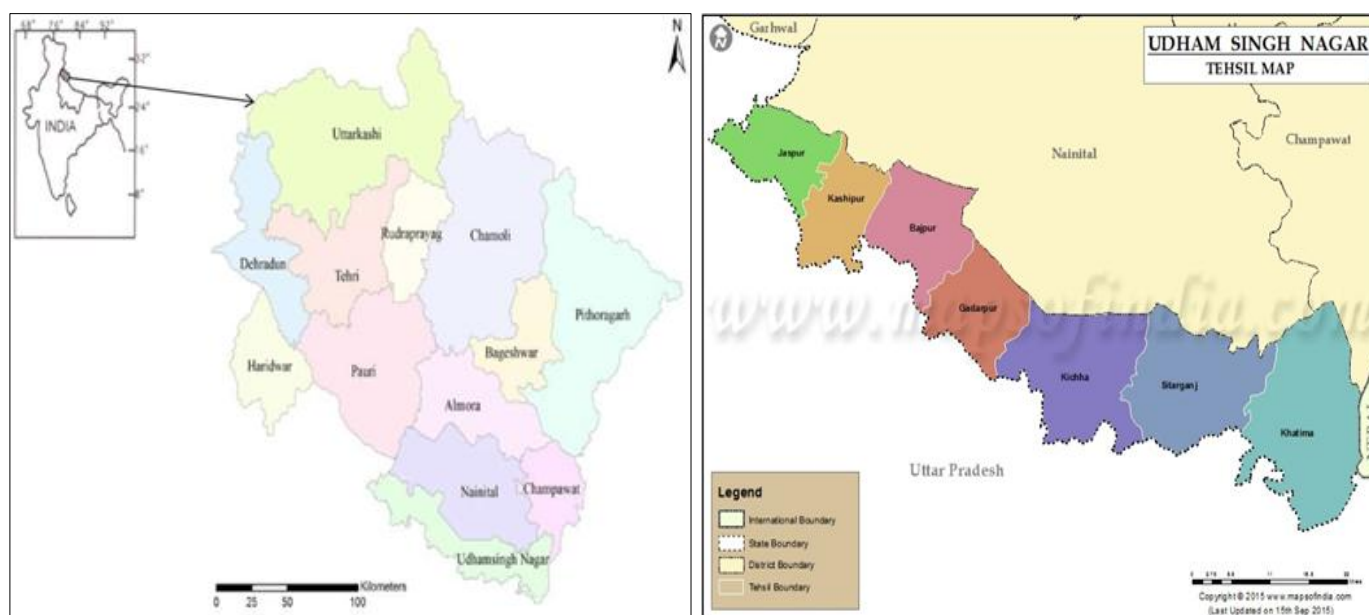
Study area

Udham singh nagar was a part of district Nainital before it gained the identity of a separate district in octobwer 1995. Accoding to 2011 census of India, the district comprises of 7 tehsils – Kashipur, Kichha, Sitarganj, Khatima, Jaspur, Bajpur, and Gadarpur. The district is situated between 28 degrees North to 58 degrees North latitude and 78 degrees East to 81 degrees East longitude.

This entire district is situated in tarai region and is a part of the Kumaon division. At the depth of 10 to 20 metres. Due to its geographical features, the district holds a leading position in

the state in terms of agriculture. The total area of district is 3055 square km, and its elevation is 550 metres. Mainly Punjabi, hindi, English and urdu languages are spoken in the district. As per 2011 census of India, The share of Muslim population in the total population of the district is 22.58 percent.

However, as per 2011 census, the highest share of Muslim population is found in Jaspur tehsil of the district (37.36 percent). But in the present study, only two tehsils of Udham Singh Nagar district have been selected as study area which are Kashipur and Kichha. The share of Muslim population in the tehsils of Kashipur and Kichha is 28.84 percent and 22.35 percent respectively. Four tehsils (Kashipiur, Kichha, Sitarganj and Khatima) of the district are old or these tehsils existed in the 2001 census, from which the present tehsils have been formed. Therefore, only these two tehsils have been selected for the study.



Source: Research gate and google.

Fig 1: Location of study area

Objectives

- To analysis the gender- based employment structure for Muslim women in Udham Singh Nagar, Uttarakhand.
- To understand the factors responsible for low work participation of Muslim women in Udham Singh Nagar, Uttarakhand.

Research methodology

Both primary and secondary data have been used in the present study. Secondary data has been obtained through various websites, journals, books, research articles, and government reports etc., whereas primary data has been obtained through primary field survey.

To conduct the field survey, a questionnaire of open and closed type questions was prepared, in which various questions were asked from the respondents, such as age, gender, religion of household's head, educational qualification, employment pattern, determinants responsible for choosing particular employment.

In this study, only 2 tehsils were taken as the study area instead of the entire tehsil of Udham Singh Nagar district. At the time of 2001 census, the district had only 4 tehsils, namely Kashipur, Kichha, Sitarganj and Khatima. Out of these 4 tehsils, only in 2 tehsils (Kashipur and Kichha) there is Muslim majority.

According to the 2011 census, the Muslim population share is concentrated in Kashipur and Kichha, which is 28.84% and 22.35% respectively. It can be noted, according to the 2011 census, the highest share of Muslim population is in Jaspur tehsil. Jaspur tehsil was created by separating it from Kashipur tehsil.

In the present study, WPR (worker population ratio), LFPR (Labour Force Participation Rate), PU (Proportion Unemployed) and UR (unemployment rate) of the selected tehsil were calculated using the formula written below:-

- $WPR = \frac{\text{no. of employed persons}}{\text{total population}} * 1000$
- $PU = \frac{\text{no. of unemployed persons}}{\text{total population}} * 1000$
- $UR = \frac{\text{no. of unemployed persons}}{\text{no. of employed persons} + \text{no. of unemployed persons}} * 1000$

- LFPR = no. of employed persons + no. of unemployed persons / total population * 1000.

From both tehsils, the total sample Muslim households in the study were 220. Of these, there were 189 Muslim men and 248 Muslim women. That is, total respondents 437 were taken as

total population (age group 0- 60 and above). Only people in the age group of 15-59 years have been selected for the employment structure.

Result and discussions

Table 1: Basic characteristics of selected tehsils of Udham Singh Nagar district

Tehsil name	Total population	Total Muslim population	Share of Muslim population (in percent)	Muslim male population	Muslim female population	Area (sq.km.)	Muslim density share (P/Sq.km.)	Sex ratio of Muslims
Kashipur	283136	81649	28.84	42423	39226	200	408.24	925
Kichha	390866	87368	22.35	46045	41323	458	190.75	897

Source: Calculated from census 2011

Table no. 2 further shows the age- gender wise structure of muslim women in the selected tehsils of Udham Singh Nagar district, Uttarakhand. As per table no. 2, percentage of dependent population (muslim male and muslim female) is 50-50 percent in Kashipur tehsil while, 43.58 percent is male

muslim and 56.42 percent is female muslim population in Kichha tehsil of district. It can be noted that child population (0-14 years age group) and old population (60 and above 60 years age group) is called dependent population.

Table 2: Age gender wise structure of Muslims in selected tehsils of Udham Singh Nagar district (in percent)

Age group	Kashipur			Kichha		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
0-14	13.20	9.17	11.06	9.64	5.47	7.10
15-18	16.98	10	13.28	13.25	18.75	16.59
19-30	20.75	30	25.67	28.91	40.62	36.02
31-49	32.07	34.16	33.18	33.74	14.06	21.81
50-59	8.5	6.67	7.52	3.61	9.38	7.10
60 & above	8.5	10	9.29	10.85	11.72	11.38
total	100	100	100	100	100	100

Source: Calculated from primary field survey

A employed person is an individual engaged in productive, paid work for at least one hour or more per week for an employer, or is self- employed. Persons who, owing to lack of work, had not worked but either sought work through intermediaries, or expressed their willingness or availability for work under the prevailing conditions of work were considered as those "seeking or available for work" (or unemployed).

Table no.3. demonstrate the employment structure and percentage of Muslim women in employment or occupational activities. In Kashipur and Kichha tehsil 33.02 percent and 31.40 percent muslim women are homemaker or housewives respectively. From the view of income generating view, they earn nothing.

Table 3: Gender based employment structure of Muslim women (in %)

S. No.	Employment structure	Percentage of Kashipur tehsil			Percentage of Kichha tehsil		
		Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	total
1.	Agriculture & allied activities	3.26	5.51	4.48	8	4.96	6.12
2.	Wage labourer	33.69	8.25	29.85	16	4.96	9.18
3.	Govt. services	3.26	5.51	4.48	12	3.30	6.64
4.	Small shop (retail)	2.17	2.75	2.48	4	2.48	3.06
5.	Private services	6.52	5.51	5.98	8	2.48	4.6
6.	Teaching (private)	3.26	2.75	2.98	8	9.92	9.18
7.	Own business	6.52	0.92	3.48	8	4.96	6.12
8.	Stiching, weaving, knitting, mehndi, beauty parlar	3.26	5.51	4.48	4	2.48	3.06
9.	Homemaker	00	33.02	17.91	00	31.40	19.39
10.	Student	6.52	8.25	7.47	4	9.92	7.65
11.	Retired	9.79	11.01	10.44	12	12.14	12.25
12.	Not working (unemployed)	21.73	11.009	15.92	16	10.74	12.75

Source: calculated from primary field survey

Table 4: Actual unemployed and total unemployed (Muslim women of age group 15-59)

Percent	Kashipur	Kichha
Actual unemployed	11.009	10.74
Total unemployed	68.68	80.77

Source: Calculated from primary field survey

Note: *Actual unemployed are those who are not working at present.
 **This includes student, homemaker and not working (actual unemployed) persons.

Table 5: Worker Population Ratio (WPR) and Labour Force Participation Rate (LFPR) of Muslim women

Tehsil	WPR	LFPR
Kashipur	333.33	808.33
Kichha	335.93	828.12

Source: Calculated from primary field survey

WPR is defined as the number of persons employed per 1000 persons while, LFPR is defined as the number of persons in the labour force per 1000 persons. These are economically active persons. Table no. 5- shows their worker population (WPR) and labour force participation rate (LFPR) in selected tehsils of the district. It can clearly see that, their participation in workforce is very low in selected tehsils. For example, in Kashipur and Kichha WPR of them are 333.33 and 335.93 respectively. If we compare Kashipur and Kichha both tehsil together, than overall Kichha 's performance is better in both WPR and LFPR. Apart from this, their performance in Kichha tehsil is better than Kashipur in both WPR and LFPR. It is a positive sign that, their participation in Kichha tehsil in LFPR is higher (828.12) than Muslim men (808.33).

Table 6: PU and UR of Muslim women in selected tehsil of the district

Tehsil	PU	UR
Kashipur	475	587.62
Kichha	492.18	594.33

Source: Calculated from primary field survey.

PU or Proportion unemployment is defined as the number of persons unemployed per 1000 persons. UR or Unemployment ratio is defined as the number of persons unemployed per 1000 persons in the labour force (which includes both the employed and unemployed). PU and UR both are more in Kichha tehsil rather than Kashipur tehsil (table no. 6). Which is a matter of concern.

Factors responsible for low work participation of Muslim women in Udhm Singh Nagar, Uttarakhand

Labour force participation of Muslim women is not only an important part of social and economic development, but it is also important factor for the empowerment and upliftment of Muslim women. Factors responsible for low work participation of them are as follows-

a) Lack of essential qualification: One of the reasons for lower workforce participation of Muslim women is lack of required trained skillpower, which needs to be addressed

by opening more industrial training hub and other technical institutes like ITIs and Politechnic colleges.

- b) High rate of dropout:** Due to marriage, poor economic condition or household responsibility or other reasons they do not able to complete their higher education. before reaching at the higher level of education they dropped out their study. At the lowest education level, their participation in labour force is the lowest and as the education level increases, it also increases the participation rate of them.
- c) Lack of professional education:** Unemployment is a burning issue among the Muslim community and it is worsen in women of Muslim community. Through short term vocational and job- oriented courses their skill could be improved.
- d) Marital status:** married Muslim women tend to have a low rate of participation especially in the presence of the small children. Men are considered to be the breadearner of the family and women are expected to take care of household activities. This leads to gender differences in employment status. Apart from this, the education level of the husband also affects the labourforce participation of Muslim women
- e) Measurement issue:** In Uttarakhand employment may be undercounted, since many Muslim women prefer home-based work, which helps them to carry out their household responsibilities. This may create difficulties in measuring the amount of paid verses unpaid work carried out by them.
- f) Gender discrimination:** they receive lower wages than their counterpart men and often do not get entry into 'decent paid jobs'. It is due to discrimination against Muslim women at the workplace. There is a gender wage gap in both the formal and informal sectors.
- g) Employment segregation:** Some industries and occupations such as agriculture, handicraft (stiching, etc.) manufacturing etc., are considered to be meant for women only. This minimizes opportunities for employment in other sectors of the economy for Muslim women.
- h) Lack of desire for a job:** The result of primary survey revealed that there were some percent of Muslim women who like staying at home, and due to the good financial condition of their father or husband, they did not like to work even though they were highly educated.

Suggestion & Conclusion

The lower workforce participation of Muslim women in district is a subject of concern (table no.5), which leads to unemployment among youth Muslims. The MNREGA needs to be implemented in a big way so that these poor households may have an opportunity to get assured employment for 100 man- days per household per annum. Given the seasonal nature of employment could be alternative to face with the issue of unemployment and poverty because unemployment leads to poverty. There is a need to implement more self- employment schemes for poor Muslims especially for Muslim women, so that they would not only generate income and support their family earnings but also would go a long way in empowerment.

Efforts should be made to increase the number of women SHGs (Self Help Group). It will minimize the dependence of its members on informal sectors for credit. By making credit easily available to Muslim women on the one hand would extend their income.

References

1. National Sample Survey Office (NSSO). Employment and unemployment situation among major religious groups in India. NSS 68th Round Report No. 568; 2011–12.
2. Vikaspedia. Available from: [Vikaspedia](#)
3. Insight Online. Available from: [Insight Online](#)
4. Borker S. Women workforce participation in India: a study. International Journal of Science and Research (IJSR).
5. Bagwan NS. Employment status of Indian Muslims. Half Yearly National Peer-Reviewed Research Journal. 2021;1. ISSN: 2231-1629.
6. Government of India, Ministry of Labour and Employment. Rajya Sabha Unstarred Question No. 401: Escalating unemployment. New Delhi: Government of India; 2024.
7. Cabinet Secretariat, Government of India. Social, economic and educational status of the Muslim community of India. Development Economics Working Papers; 2006.
8. Hasan Z, Menon R. Unequal citizens: a study of Muslim women in India. New Delhi: Oxford University Press; 2004.
9. Ansari AI. Muslim educational backwardness. In: The Muslim situation in India. New Delhi: Sterling Publishers Pvt. Ltd.; 1989.
10. Nasrin E. Education of Muslim women: a journey from past to present. International Journal of Management and Social Sciences Research. 2013;2(1).
11. Asadullah M, Yeasmin. Socio-economic impact of women's education in India. International Journal of Research Publication and Reviews. 2022;785–788. doi:10.55248/gengpi.2022.3.29.
12. Sachar Committee. Social, economic and educational status of the Muslim community of India. New Delhi: Government of India; 2006.
13. Registrar General and Census Commissioner of India. Census of India 2011. New Delhi: Government of India; 2011.
14. Husain Z. Understanding marginalisation of Muslim women: a study in Bengaluru city. ISES Working Paper. Bengaluru: Institute for Social and Economic Change; 2004.
15. Zamir S, Ilyas Z. Problems faced by Muslim girls while choosing any professional course. International Journal of Innovative Research in Technology (IJIRT). 2022;9(2).
16. Ansari AA, Shah P, Punera A. Attitude of Muslim women toward education and gender disparity in Kashipur, Uttarakhand. Indian Journal of Spatial Science. 2024;15(2):99–103.