

Introductory Booklet

VISION 2025
SOCIO ECONOMIC INEQUALITIES
*Why does India's economic growth need an
inclusive agenda*

Editors

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NEED FOR AN INCLUSIVE AGENDA

Introduction

Vision statement

We envision India in 2025, where all Muslims are assured of, and have access to, equitable and inclusive growth through public and private service delivery and are able to pursue their aspirations with optimal health, education, wellbeing and quality of life. This vision will be realised by empowering all Muslims and minorities and their institutions, through building leadership, capacity, accountability and diverse partnerships, and creating an enabling set of programmes, policies and regulatory environment.

Methodology adopted

Background papers: A set of senior academics and intellectuals working on issues of inclusion were selected to write papers on relevant topics and present them in our first seminar. These papers have been edited and compiled here in this report.

National Survey: A large survey was conducted by Bureau of Research on Industry and Economic Fundamentals (BRIEF). Its entire report is presented in this report.

National Consultation and Workshops: A number of meetings were held across the country. Each of them has been presented in this report.

Interviews: A broad spectrum of people was interviewed and their answers are also included in this report.

A Vision for 2025

Emerging from this study is a series of steps that need to be taken into consideration to ensure that Muslims in India are not only made to feel safe and secure, but also made a part of the inclusive growth agenda. We present here a set of issues that emerge from our study across the country using sample survey, expert group meetings, background papers and literature survey. An inclusive India will need to understand how to tackle the problems that its largest religious minority faces today in the backdrop of what the community sees as its aspirations in the next decade.

This Vision 2025 report brings together the popular and the specialist viewpoints on what the Indian Muslim aspires for, as the country seeks to regain its economic growth and its geo-political significance. This report focuses on the educational, economic and political upliftment as well as the issues of security for the Indian Muslim. This report therefore, seeks to bring together a vision for India for its Muslim population, focusing on the five critical areas of Health, Education, Political Representation, Employment and Security.

Background

Over the last decade, the policy framework in India has repeatedly underscored the plight of the Muslim population even as the economy soared to unprecedented heights. In the last decade, GDP growth in India went up to almost 10 percent per annum during 2006 and 2009 and India has remained among the fastest growing economies in the world despite the global downturn. However, even as the rising tide did lift all segments of the population in the country, the Muslims remained at the bottom on almost every parameter.

This is the fundamental question we are asking in this study, as we seek answers from experts, policy makers, law makers,

bureaucrats, researchers, academics, students, youth and common people. Being a private initiative, our scope is limited and we are focusing only on the last ten years. During this time, we had the Post-Sachar Evaluation Committee, also known as the Kundu Committee, making its suggestions in the aftermath of the Sachar Committee Report. As was expected, the BJP-NDA government, (and Ministry of Minority Affairs under Mrs. Najma Heptullah) has put the Kundu Committee recommendations in cold storage.

It is in this context that the Institute of Objective Studies decided to take a proactive step to envision the future for the Indian Muslim. What would it take to ameliorate the lot of this deprived community in the next decade? What are the opportunities that exist? How do Muslims leverage the strengths that Indian democracy and the Constitution provide to all its citizens? Amidst a global sense of insecurity and vulnerability, could there be a plan that would work in India? The transformation needs to be total—at the social, economic, educational and political level—just as same is happening across the country. Would these two trends contradict each other, are they in conflict?

This study seeks to bring up a vision for India for 2025. An inclusive India will need to understand how to tackle the problems that its largest religious minority faces today in the backdrop of what the community sees as its aspiration in the next decade. The vision report focuses on the social, educational, economic and political upliftment as well as the issue of security for the Indian Muslim. This report therefore, seeks to bring together a vision for India for its Muslim population, focusing on the five critical areas - Education, Health, Political Representation, Employment and Security.

Methodology

A detailed literature review was undertaken to bring together the various scholarly works published in the recent past,

exploring the ways in which Muslim India has changed. This review covers the educational, occupational, political and social changes that have been studied by various experts. The study exploits several datasets in addition to the National Institute of Educational Planning and Administration (NUEPA) School's data, the NSS employment-unemployment (and education) survey, and the Pratham Education Foundation's schooling data. The existing secondary literature on industry, exports, employment, skill and technical education was looked at closely. In addition, data on the political structure was analysed to look for trends in representation and empowerment. Each was independently used to assess separately the specific lessons on discrimination in various sectors.

The study then engaged a number of subject experts to write background papers on various specific issues that would confront Indian Muslims in the next ten years. These papers bring up certain disturbing issues and some happy news for the Vision 2025. These papers would be published separately in an edited volume. Here we give a short abstract of what the papers and the experts say. There seems to be near-consensus on the challenges that Indian Muslims face today, but some policy suggestions were made that could help the government.

A large Pan India Survey was conducted to gather primary data on a set of issues that the secondary data is silent on. While the data analysis enables a robust backgrounder on the situation in the country, it was important to follow this up with a rigorous qualitative analysis. Towards this, the study organised a series of roundtables, one-to-one interviews and focus group discussions with experts from all walks of life. Each roundtable, spread across the country brought together experts from various fields. While the focus was to be on education, health, employment and political representation, it could also pick up various other concerns that surfaced during the course of the study. Using a mix of the primary

qualitative data and secondary data analysis, a vision for 2025 was written and discussed again with select groups.

Background papers

A part of the study, specialists and experts were invited to contribute special papers that are being published in this edited volume. The topics are varied, though in no way do they cover all issues that concern the Indian Muslim. Some are controversial, while others are straight forward. Each paper carries the author's view that has in true spirit of freedom, not been edited or tampered with. The views, of course, are not necessarily what the Institute of Objective Studies or the editors stand for.

However, these are some of the most respected voices who speak on social issues in India and will therefore carry a lot of gravity in what they say.

Dr. S.Y. Quraishi examined the issue of Muslims and Family Planning in India. In his paper, he explores the myths and realities associated with the issue. His paper demolishes many existing myths associated with population. For instance, the assertion that Muslims are predominantly polygamous is a myth. The Status of Women in India Report, 1975, had revealed that all communities of India are polygamous and Muslims are indeed the least. Population explosion is a matter of immense national concern. It must be addressed urgently, yet sensitively. The paper provides many answers.

Dr. Muqtedar Khan explores the position of Muslims in Indian political landscape. He argues that Muslim communities are in a state of violent and intense political transformation across the Muslim heartland.

Prof. Abdul Shaban examines the role of Shiv Sena in his paper "Politics, Violence and Production of 'Fear': Working

of Shiv Sena in Mumbai”. He examines how democracies remain prone to negative exploitation of diversities.

Prof. Ram Puniyani, activist, author and former professor of IIT Bombay, discusses the all important issues of security and equity for Muslims in contemporary India. He attempts to outline the steps needed to strengthen the democratic rights of this biggest religious minority in India.

Dr. Britta Ohm in her paper “Majoritarian Public and Democracy: The Televised Violence in Gujarat 2002” talks about the 2002 anti-Muslim riots in Gujarat. This paper engages with the relationship between the public and democracy in the context of a particularly violent event in India.

Mr. Irfan Engineer writes on the issue of “Hindutva and Muslims”. He argues that BJP leaders appear to reach out to the Muslims during elections to confuse them and corner some votes.

Prof. Madhav Das Nalapat is an academic, columnist, strategist and advisor. He calls for development of Muslims on modern lines in his paper, “Muslims in India: Anchoring Behavior in the Word of God”. He calls on the Muslim community to emphasise the beneficence, mercy and compassion which suffuses the Word of God and which are explicitly shown to be the defining virtues of the Islamic faith.

Dr. Broto Rauth Bhardwaj of Bharati Vidyapeeth University, New Delhi discusses the issue of Muslim women. In her paper, she tries to find the role of education in improving the status of Muslim women entrepreneurs.

Prof. Vibhuti Patel Head, Department of Economics, SNDT Women's University, Mumbai and an authority on gender issues, discusses issues of Muslim women and

development in her paper “Socioeconomic Profile of Muslim Women in Maharashtra”.

Ms. Rakhshandah Hani in her paper focuses on gender related issues of labour market. Her paper titled “Employment of Muslim Women Workers in the Indian Labour Market” argues that labour force participation rate and work participation rate for Muslim women have shown a declining trend.

Mr. Abdul Azim Akhtar in his paper on “Caste Among Muslims” discusses the nature of the divide in the Muslim society and how caste shapes their lives.

Dr. Manjur Ali in his paper on “Forgotten at the Margins” talks about Muslim manual scavengers who live an undignified life.

Prof. Zafar Mahfooz Nomani teaches Law at Aligarh Muslim University, Aligarh. He discusses issues of personal law reform in his paper titled “Imperatives Of Personal Law Reform And Good Governance”. India’s continuation of trifocal legacy of recognition of traditional laws, development of powerful norms and assumption of responsibility of reform of personal laws by the state are not linked to the imperatives of inclusive growth and good governance, he argues.

Dr. Shafeeq Rahman in his paper on “Muslim Representation in Parliament” does a case study of 96 parliamentary constituencies to conclude that Indian Muslim are largely under-represented in electoral politics, as was the case during the 2009 and 2014 elections.

Prof. Vibhuti Narain Rai talks about the role of the police during communal riots. He encountered some disturbing trends himself. According to him, in most parts of the country, the relationship between the police and Muslims was

inimical and community perception of the police in situations of communal tension was that of an enemy.

Mr. Yousuf Saeed, a filmmaker, in his paper “Stereotypes of Muslim identity in India's popular media and entertainment industry” discusses the image of Muslims in the popular media. He narrates that media have been portraying the images of Muslims in somewhat stereotypical and slanted way.

Mr. Jawed Alam Khan, in his paper “Policy challenges: Have development schemes meant for Muslims worked effectively?”, highlights the impact of government schemes on Muslims.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Education, employment, self-employment schemes, minority schemes etc., poverty and literacy of the community are the main issues. Health has been a concern for Muslims as many men work in hazardous industries. On education, the state should take proper care of existing schools, madarasas, maktabas, and ensure that the Sarva Siksha Abhiyan schools have an equal presence in MCD. The overall standard of education is below international standards. Muslims are way behind the national average. People call for strengthening the education base amongst Muslims at all levels.

The Indian Muslim should be educationally, intellectually, socially and economically well advanced. More educational institutions like the Aligarh Muslim University (AMU) should be established. Modern and meaningful education should be given to all. The drop-out rate among boys and girls should be checked. In areas, and regions, which do not have school and colleges, the government should take special initiatives and provide them with an open institution system. Also, community initiatives should be encouraged to provide

affordable quality education. There should be 100 percent literacy among Muslims.

People in the community were asked as to the kind of reforms that they would expect. Many suggestions poured in from within the community for better results and development of Muslims at large. Some of the most common suggestions in the interest of the community were:

- Muslims should be motivated to join government services, especially in the fields of education and police. In judiciary too, the Muslim presence should be increased.
- It is also hoped that the community will find ways to deal with rampant corruption existing in Waqf Boards across the country. Waqf Board officials should be held accountable for its activities and it should be dealt with sternly.
- Similarly, Hajj Boards should be reformed to accommodate the public view. Hajj Boards and Waqf Boards should not be headed by political appointees, but by professionals who are accountable to the community and nation.
- The issue of Jammu & Kashmir should be resolved.
- The name “Pakistan” should not be used to stigmatise Muslims of India. The right wing groups’ attempts of linking Muslims of India with Pakistan, should be nipped in the bud once and for all.
- Former Prime Minister of India, Dr. Manmohan Singh, once talked of introducing Islamic banking in India, but it was turned down by the RBI. With Indian banking gradually shifting towards interest-free

banking, Islamic finance and banking should be introduced in phases in consultation with the RBI.

- Mainstream economy excludes Muslims from benefits of economic growth and development. That should be looked into.
- There is a need to organise a team, like the missionaries, to work for the upliftment of the community and growth of the country.
- Over all, Muslims need to be optimistic. There is a wider scope for voluntary reforms within the society. Muslims definitely have a bright future in India, but they must change their mindset and must give top priority to modern scientific education.