

(Seminar on Inclusion and Empowerment of Women in India)

WOMEN EDUCATION IN INDIA: THE ISLAMIC PERSPECTIVE

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Abstract

“Seek knowledge from the cradle to the grave”

Education and knowledge are highly emphasized in all religions as it is in Islam. At the beginning of Islam it is reported that only 17 people in Makkah could read and write. Prophet Muhammad (peace & blessings be upon him) encouraged his followers to seek knowledge even in China (a distance place). According to one of his traditions the duty, not the right, the duty of education, is a duty on every Muslim, man and woman.

Women constitute almost half of the population of the world. To acquire a better quality of life, education is highly essential for women. It is the best way to improve the health, nutrition and economic status of a household that constitute a micro unit of a nation economy. The word “education” implies the characteristics of both types of knowledge, material as well as spiritual. Women in India constitute 50% of the country’s human resources and their contributions are vital for the nation’s progress. Women achieve far less education than that of men. In all the years, male literacy rates were higher than that of female literacy rates. In the year 1981, the

male literacy rate was 56 per cent while the same for female was only 29.75 per cent. In the year 2001, the male literacy rate has reached to 76 per cent and female literacy rate to 54 per cent. As per the Census report 2001, the literacy rate of women is 54.16 per cent and that of men is 65.38 per cent and as per the Census report 2011, Literacy rate in India is just 74.04% in 2011. 82.14 males per 100 male are literate, and only 65.46 out of 100 females are literate. There has been a sincere effort to improve the education attainment of women by both government and voluntary organizations. The changes in the policies and infrastructural supports on primary, secondary and higher education reflect the initiatives of the Government of India towards women education.

Women education in India: the Islamic perspective however is the subject too big to be covered in one article or in one talk, so in this background, the paper examined the trends in women education in India, the investment on education and infrastructural support in India and, the Islamic perspective for women education. The paper is divided in to two sections. Section 1 discusses the trends in female literacy levels in India; section 2 discusses the Islamic perspective for women education, finally there will be given a brief conclusion.

Keywords: Women education, women literacy, Islamic perspective, education infrastructure, Female literacy rate, women in India, census 2011, India population, primary education, secondary education, higher education, India.
