

# **Educational & Economic Issues of Muslims in West Bengal**

Compiled

By

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## Foreword

West Bengal is an ancient and densely populated state of India. This state has been ruled by Muslim rulers and Nawabs for a long period of time, there is a large number of Muslims among those who settled here, the history of West Bengal began in 1947 when India gained independence from the British Empire and the state of Bengal was divided between West and East Bengal on religious grounds. West Bengal became a Hindu-majority region, despite the large number of Muslims living here. When this part came under the administration of the Government of India, it divided the state into 23 districts under five administrative divisions which are as follows:

- 1- Bardhaman Division: Hoogli district, East Bardhaman district, West Bardhaman district, Birbhum district .
- 2- Malda Division: Malda district, North Dinajpur district, South Dinajpur district, Murshidabad district.
- 3- Jalpaiguri Division: Alipurduar district, Coochbehar district, Darjeeling district, Jalpaiguri district. Kalimpong district.
- 4- Presidency Division: Hawrah district, Kolkata district, Nadia district, North 24 Pargana district, South 24 Pargana district.
- 5- Midnapur Division: East Midnapur district, West Midnapur District, Jhargram district, Purulia district, Bankura district.

Most parts of these districts are inhabited by Muslims, The Islamic Fiqh Academy (India) felt the need for an

Educational and Economic survey of these areas since independent India that is since 1947 and to make the Muslims here aware of the situation so that they can at least get guidance in moving forward in these two fields, therefore the responsibility for this work was assigned to Dr. Abul Kalam (Head of the Arabic Department, Shaheed Nurul Islam College, West Bengal) so that he could have the opportunity to write on this aspect, he has therefore prepared the information related to the educational and economic situation of the Muslims here in the light of the existing data and documents in a book form. This book will serve to spread awareness of the situation of Muslims of this region on the one hand and on the other it will be helpful for those who are researching on this topic. Praying that this book adorns the eyes of the people and serves as an object for reward in the hereafter for the compiler and verily Allah is the One Most Sought for Rewarding!

**Khalid Saifullah Rahmani**  
General Secretary  
**Islamic Fiqh Academy (India)**



## **Preface**

All praise is due to Allah, and Allah's Peace and Blessings be upon His Final Messenger, his pure family, his noble Companions, and all those who follow them with righteousness until the Day of Judgment.

I am highly grateful to Islamic Fiqh Academy (India), Jamia Nagar, New Delhi-110025, for appointing me to prepare a well-analyzed report on “Educational and Economic Conditions of Muslims in West Bengal” and to suggest measures for their welfare. So that the picture of Muslims of WB may come to light and some initiatives may be taken for their well-being.

The Islamic Fiqh Academy allotted 3 to 4 months time initially to complete the tasks assigned to me. It is known to all that the data and material on the subject are not easily available particularly in the lockdown period when most of the offices and libraries are closed. And the way to contact them is email or phone which sometimes didn't work. So it took me more than three months to prepare the report.

In this report I tried my best to indentify how Muslims of West Bengal are educationally and economically backward and living in a plight condition. The report brought some surprising and eye-opening facts about which most of the Bengali Muslims are not aware.

I sought information in Questionnaire form from different institutions some of them were found generous to help me in getting relevant data while some others ignored repeated request and gave no importance to an issue of this kind.

I attempted to collate data and information from primary sources and somewhere relied on secondary sources. Most of the data have been collected from Government Report while some others are taken from well known institutions and few reports have been taken from Kolkata-based English and Bengali daily news papers and some information put in the report from reputed magazines. Since the report prepared in lockdown period, only few informed-persons regarding the Muslim issues I could met and discuss.

The report is based on seven chapters and a conclusion starting from the condition of Muslims in India and then the main topic has been very particularly dealt. The second chapter dealt with how Muslims are educationally, economically and politically backward and downtrodden. And how political party used Muslims in WB as their vote-bank and how pushed into the poverty. The chapter shows almost 80% of rural Muslims in West Bengal are borderline poor and many more critical conditions of marginalized society.

The third chapter discussed the role of some Govt-institutions for the upliftment of Muslims in WB and what are the initiatives and measures have been taken by them for economically well-being of Muslim Ummah while the forth chapter takes the role of some

Government Educational Institutions for educationally upliftment of marginalized section of society. And the fifth chapter deals with key role of some eminent NGOs and educational institutions for educationally upliftment of Muslims. These institutions regionally named as Mission a kind of Residential Educational Institutions for Muslims students. In fact these educational institutions played an important role for quality education in poor Muslim in WB. And the sixth chapter takes the role some Government and non-Government scholarships which really helped poor Muslims enrolling in schools, colleges and universities. In the true sense of the word, these kinds of projects and scholarships played a great role in rising Muslim education ratio in West Bengal.

The seventh and last chapter evaluates how much the OBC Reservation benefited marginalized society and lack of good will of authority to implement OBC quota and how the Muslim candidates are neglected in personal interview after meeting all criteria of selection etc. And at the end the report comes to an end with a conclusion which gives findings of this work.

Again I would like to express my warmest thanks to management of Islamic Fiqh Academy (India) to assign me for this task of a great value. I also owe my sincere thanks to those who offered valuable suggestions and helped me during this task.

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West Bengal (India).

## **Muslims in India**

The Arab traders were frequent visitors to the Indian subcontinent even before the arrival of Islam. Islam reached India in the very early period of inception of the religion. And now Islam is the second-largest religion in India, with 14.2% of the country's population or approx. 172 million people identifying as adherents of Islam as per 2011 census. It makes India the country with the largest Muslim population outside Muslim-majority countries.

### **Muslims in India at a Glance**

According to 2001 census, out of country's total population of 10286.07 lakhs, the religious minorities are 2010.19 lakhs, which is approximately 18%. out of country's total population of 10286.07 lakhs, Muslim are 1381.88 lakhs which means (14.2%) are Muslim in India.<sup>1</sup>

According to 2011 census, West Bengal state has over 24.6 million Muslims who form 27.01% of the state's population. Muslim form the majority of the population in three districts: Murshidabad with 66.2%, Maldah with 51.3% and Uttar Dinajpur with 50%.

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<sup>1</sup> Report of the National Commission for Religious and Linguistic Minorities, prepared by Ministry of Minority Affairs- p- 13

## **Education**

Education is one of the significant social indicators having bearing on the achievement in the growth of the individual as well as community. This is perceived to be highly suitable for providing employment and thereby improving the quality of life, the level of human well being and the access to basic social services.

### **Literacy rate among Muslims**

As per census 2001, the literacy rate among the Jains is the highest at 94.1%, followed by Christians 80.3%, Buddhists 72.7% , Hindu 65.1% , Sikhs 69.4%. The lowest literary rate has been recorded at 59.1% for Muslims which is lower than the national literary rate. And in West Bengal the literacy rate among Muslims is 57.5% which is lower than the all communities except ST whose literacy rate is 43.40 in the state.<sup>2</sup>

### **Educational Status of Muslim Community at different Levels**

Percentage of Muslim upto Primary Level Education is 65.31% and in Middle class 15.14% in secondary level 10.96%, in senior secondary level 4.53, diploma level 0.41% and Graduation level 3.6%.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Ibid, p-130

<sup>3</sup> Ibid, p-131

## **Gender Gap in Literacy**

Both males and females among the Jain population have very high literacy rate of 97.4 percent and 90.6 percent respectively at the national level followed by Christians at 84.4 percent for males and 76.2 percent for females. Thus, the gender gap in male-female literacy for these two religions is less than 10. Among the six major religions at the national level, the maximum gap between male and female literacy is among Hindus (23 percent) followed by Buddhists (21.4 percent) and Muslims (17.5 percent points).<sup>4</sup>

## **Education Level**

On analyzing the distribution of literates by educational level, it was found that Jains (21.47 percent) have the highest proportion of educated persons among all the religions among those who have completed graduation stage. This is followed by Christians (8.71 percent) and Sikhs (6.94 percent). Muslims have the lowest proportion at 3.6 percent. Among Hindus, the proportion of those attaining the educational level of 'Graduate and above' is seven percent, which is more or less in the same order as the overall proportion of all religious communities taken together.

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid, p- 16-17

Further, Muslims (65.31 percent) are better off at primary level of education but their proportion goes down as we go to secondary (10.96 percent) and senior secondary (4.53 percent) stages. Though Christians at the primary level with 45.79 percent are lower than the national average but levels increases at secondary (17.48 percent) and senior secondary (8.70 percent) stages. Other religions follow almost national average level.

### **Dropout Rates**

The dropout rate indicates the wastage of school education and tends to undermine benefits of increased enrolments. According to the "Educational Statistics", published by the Ministry of Human Resource Development, during 1999-2000, out of students enrolled in classes I to V, over 40 percent dropped out. Similarly, out of students enrolled in classes I to VIII over 55 percent dropped out. The dropout rate in class's I-X was over 68 percent. Further, the dropout rate has been higher for girls.

Chief reasons for dropping out from schools could be inability of students to cope up with the studies or lack of interest among parents in the education of their children or economic considerations, like compulsion to work for augmenting family income or need for looking after younger siblings or unfriendly atmosphere in the schools etc. Among girls in rural areas, these factors mostly accounted for the dropouts.

## **Ownership of House**

Housing is a basic necessity as well as an important economic activity. According to the Tenth Five Year Plan document, around 90 percent of housing shortage pertains to the weaker sections.

According to "Socio-economic status of Minorities", Survey conducted by the Centre for Research Planning & Action, New Delhi, 2006 in the States of Maharashtra, Punjab, Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal, 45.03% Muslims owned their own house and 43.74% Muslims live in rented house.<sup>5</sup>

In the above Survey is stated that 78.78% Muslims have electricity and 23.29% Muslims are deprived from electricity and deepened on Kerosene. According to the Report of the Centre for Research Planning & Action, Muslims had a percentage of households with toilets 80.33% and the rest of them don't have toilets facility at home.<sup>6</sup>

## **Poverty & Employment**

In 1999-2000, a survey was got conducted by the Government of India for estimation of levels of poverty among various religious communities and it was noted

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<sup>5</sup> Ibid, p- 23

<sup>6</sup> Ibid, p-24



that 27.22% Muslims in rural area and 36.92% Muslims in urban area are living below poverty line.<sup>7</sup>

### **Average Income**

.According to a study conducted by Centre for Research, Planning & Action, New Delhi, in January 2006 in five states (Maharashtra, Punjab, Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal), average income per family per month is estimated at Rs. 2,103. This is the highest at Rs. 3173 in Maharashtra followed by Rs. 2274 in UP, Rs. 2155 in Punjab, Rs. 1449 in Tamil Nadu, Rs. 1324 in West Bengal. By religion, the highest income was recorded among Parsis at Rs. 3484 per month followed by Rs. 2478 among Buddhists, Rs. 2285 among Sikhs, Rs. 1906 among Christians and Rs. 1832 among Muslims.<sup>8</sup>

### **NCRLM's Findings for Muslims are as below:**

- I. Muslims are behind other religious communities in the areas of literacy and education, industrial promotion and economic pursuits. They lack technical and vocational education as well as training in trades in demand.

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<sup>7</sup> Source: NSSO 55th Round, July 1999-june 2000

<sup>8</sup> Source: "Socio-economic status of Minorities" conducted by the Centre for Research Planning & Action, New Delhi, 2006 in the States of Maharashtra, Punjab, Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh. and West Bengal.

- II. The Villages, the Tehsils and the Districts having the concentration of Muslims community many a time lack entrepreneurial ventures and market for their products.
- III. The Muslims have not been able to avail of the facilities of Waqf resources in the absence of proper management.
- IV. The work participation rate among Muslim women has been found to be low affecting the quality of their life.
- V. Among Muslims those who are known as Faqueer, Seengwala (traditional medicine practice), Arzals are both economically and socially backward.<sup>9</sup>

A High level Committee on Social, Economic and Educational Status of Muslim Community in India was set up in 2005 under the Chairmanship of Justice Rajinder Sachar by the Prime Minister and the Committee submitted its report in November, 2006. This Committee noted with concern the low socio economic status with higher poverty, lower literacy and educational attainments, higher unemployment rates, lower availability of infrastructure and lower representation in civil services including police, judiciary and in elected bodies among Muslim minority.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Report of the National Commission for Religious and Linguistic Minorities, prepared by Ministry of Minority Affairs- p- 28-29

<sup>10</sup> Ibid,p-77

## **West Bengal**

West Bengal is the eastern state of India located along the Bay of Bengal in the east, bordering Bihar, Jharkhand to the west, Odisha to the north-west, Bangladesh to the east, Nepal and Bhutan to the north. West Bengal population in 2020 is estimated to be 99 Million (9.9 Crores), According to Unique Identification Aadhar India, updated 31, May 2020, by mid of year 2020 the projected population is 99,609,303 and it is the fourth-largest populated state in India. Its area is 88,752 sq km and density is 1100 people per sq km. The British colonial rule was started in Bengal from 18th century, at the time of India Independence Bengal was partitioned into West Bengal and East Bengal, today's Bangladesh. Calcutta which is today's Kolkata served as British India capital for many years and currently the third largest metropolitan city in India. The native name of the state is 'Paschim Banga', 'Paschim' means west and 'Banga' means ancient kingdom 'vanga'.

### **Muslims in West Bengal**

Maqsood Alam, Joint Secretary to Minority Development & Welfare Department stated that Minorities are 26.4% of the total population of West Bengal. The Central Government has

notified Muslims, Christians, Sikhs, Buddhists and Zoroastrians as 5 minority communities.<sup>11</sup>

According to 2011 census, West Bengal state has over 24.6 million Muslims who form 27.01% of the state's population. Muslim form the majority of the population in three districts: Murshidabad with 66.2%, Maldah with 51.3% and Uttar Dinajpur with 50%.

### **Year wise Population in West Bengal<sup>12</sup>**

The census of Bengal was first conducted in 1872, and then in 1881 by British India was recorded as 62,705,718 before the Bengal partition. The West Bengal population was recorded in 1901 was 16.9 million, Independent India's first census in 1951 was 26 million, increase of 9 million in the span of 50 years since from 1901 to 1951. The population recorded in 2001 was 80 million, 3 times increase from 1951. By 2011, 91 million was recorded, 13.8% increase in population from 2001 census. The population in 2021 will be 99 million and the growth rate is 8.7%.

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<sup>11</sup> Annexures to the Report of the National Commission for Religious and Linguistic Minorities, Ministry of Minority Affairs , Volume II

<sup>12</sup> Source: A-2 Decadal Variation In Population Since 1901

### Year Wise Population in WB

Census year	Persons	Absolute	Percentage	Males	Females
1901	16,940,088	-	-	8,708,978	8,231,110
1911	17,998,769	1,058,681	6.25	9,349,419	8,649,350
1921	17,474,348	-524,421	-2.91	9,173,148	8,301,200
1931	18,897,036	1,422,688	8.14	9,997,035	8,900,001
1941	23,229,552	4,332,516	22.93	12,545,269	10,684,283
1951	26,299,980	3,070,428	13.22	14,105,519	12,194,461
1961	34,926,279	8,626,299	32.8	18,599,144	16,327,135
1971	44,312,011	9,385,732	26.87	23,435,987	20,876,024

Census year	Persons	Absolute	Percentage	Males	Females
1981	54,580,647	10,268,636	23.17	28,560,901	26,019,746
1991	68,077,965	13,497,318	24.73	35,510,633	32,567,332
2001	80,176,197	12,098,232	17.77	41,465,985	38,710,212
2011	91,276,115	11,099,918	13.84	46,809,027	44,467,088

Demographic Profile of West Bengal in brief:<sup>13\*</sup>

Religious Communities	Hindus	Muslims	Christians	Sikhs	Buddhists	Jains	Zoroastrians	Others
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<sup>13</sup> Annexures to the Report of the National Commission for Religious and Linguistic Minorities, Ministry of Minority Affairs , Volume II, p-206

Sex Ratio Out of 1000	Total Populati- on of the State/UT	
	In lakhs	Percent
934	100.0	801.7
932	72.47	581.0
933	25.25	202.4
1002	0.6	5.1
807	0.1	0.6
981	0.03	2.4
929	0.1	0.6
-	Negligi	Negligi
985	1.1	-

\*(2001 Census)

Year Wise Muslim population of West Bengal in % of total population<sup>14</sup>

Census year	% of total population
1946 (Before partition)	30.32%
1947 (After partition)	18.12%
1951	19.85%
1961	20%

<sup>14</sup> Saturday, 10 September, 2016, The Statement. Daily English from Kolkata.

1971	20.46%
1981	21.51%
1991	23.61%
2001	25.25%
2011	27.01%

### **District Wise Population in West Bengal<sup>15</sup>**

As of 2017, West Bengal is divided into 23 districts. The North 24 paraganas is the largest district and Dakshin Dinajpur is the smallest by Population. Kolkata district is bordered by the North 24 Parganas district on the north and on the east, South 24 Parganas district on the south. Below is the West Bengal district wise population as per Census 2011 and 2020 projection.

District	Population(2020 est.)	Population(2011)	Percentage
Darjiling	2,105,378	1,846,823	2.02
Jalpaiguri	4,415,044	3,872,846	4.24

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<sup>15</sup> Source: [2011 Census: Population Data on District/Sub-Dist Level](#)



District	Population(2020 est.)	Population(2011)	Percentage
Koch Bihar	3,213,758	2,819,086	3.09
Uttar Dinajpur	3,428,133	3,007,134	3.29
Dakshin Dinajpur	1,910,955	1,676,276	1.84
Maldah	4,547,283	3,988,845	4.37
Murshidabad	8,098,340	7,103,807	7.78
Birbhum	3,992,741	3,502,404	3.84
Bardhaman	8,798,022	7,717,563	8.46
Nadia	5,891,064	5,167,600	5.66
North Twenty Four Parganas	11,411,150	10,009,781	10.97
Hugli	6,291,825	5,519,145	6.05
Bankura	4,100,208	3,596,674	3.94
Puruliya	3,340,331	2,930,115	3.21

District	Population(2020 est.)	Population(2011)	Percentage
Haora	5,529,033	4,850,029	5.31
Kolkata	5,126,231	4,496,694	4.93
South Twenty Four Parganas	9,304,636	8,161,961	8.94
Paschim Medinipur	6,741,341	5,913,457	6.48
Purba Medinipur	5,809,298	5,095,875	5.58

### **West Bengal Population by Religion<sup>16</sup>**

Religion wise, Hinduism is the major religion in West Bengal with 70.5%, followed by Muslim with 27%. Christian and Buddhism with 0.72% and 0.31%. more than 1.1 million are others and not stated religion. The Muslim population of West Bengal is 24.6 Million is the second largest after Hindu religion of 64.3 Million.

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<sup>16</sup> Source: Details of Religion In Main Table C-1- 2011 (India & States/UTs)

### Religions in West Bengal 2011

Religion	Persons	Percentage	Males	Females
Hindu	64,385,546	70.54	33,046,557	31,338,989
Muslim	24,654,825	27.01	12,640,092	12,014,733
Christian	658,618	0.72	325,986	332,632
Sikh	63,523	0.07	34,168	29,355
Buddhist	282,898	0.31	141,388	141,510
Jain	60,141	0.07	30,718	29,423
Others	942,297	1.03	469,865	472,432
Not Stated	228,267	0.25	120,253	108,014

Literacy Rate in the state<sup>17</sup>.\*

Literacy Rate (%)	Persons	All Religious	Hindus	Muslims	Christians	Sikhs	Buddhists	Jains	Zoroastrians	Others
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<sup>17</sup> Ibid, P-207

9	Total
Female	59.6
	63.1
	49.8
	62.3
	82.0
	66.2
	88.9
	-
	34.2

\*(2001 Census)

- I. The male literacy rate of minorities is approximately 80 percent as against 77 percent of all religions. Female literacy rate of minorities is 65 percent as against 59.65 percent of all religions.
- II. Dropout rate in classes I-X in the State is higher (78.74%) compared to National Average of 62.58 percent.
- III. Number of Hindi primary schools in the State was 801, followed by 775 Nepali schools, 219 Urdu, 18 Telugu and 14 Oriya schools, admitting about 1.25 lakh students and recruiting 2862 teachers.
- IV. Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) is for all students irrespective of caste, creed/ religion.

### **Madrasa Education**

- I. There is a Madrasa Board. 508 Madrasas are affiliated to it.

- II. The syllabi and curricula of general schools are followed in Madarsas. However, in some places only religious education is imparted.
- III. 527 Madrasas are supported by the State Government under the scheme of modernisation.
- IV. Population living Below Poverty Line is 31.85 percent in rural areas and 14.86 in urban areas.
- V. Difficulties faced by the minorities in getting OBC certificate
- VI. Management of Muslims Girls hostel is unsatisfactory.
- VII. Modern education may be introduced in the Madrasa curricula and junior Madrassas be upgraded to High Madrassas.
- VIII. Urdu may be declared second language.
- IX. The State Government awards stipends to the poor and meritorious Muslim Students for acquiring higher education ranging from Rs. 1200/- to Rs. 2400/-.
- X. The State Government have constructed eight Muslim Girls Hostel in the districts for students who come from remote areas and face difficulties in pursuing higher education due to lack of accommodation. More such hostels are likely to be constructed.

**Economic Status:\***

Work Participation Rate:\*

(in percent)

	Female	Male	Persons
	18.3	54.0	All
	19.2	55.3	Religious Hindus
	14.0	50.5	Muslims
	29.2	48.6	Christians
	7.6	54.8	Sikhs
	25.8	45.0	Buddhists
	7.5	56.5	Jains
	-	-	Zoroastrians
	50.4	55.7	Others

\*(2001 Census)

Occupational Classification (%):\*

Cultivators:	Name
19.2	All
18.6	Religious Hindus
20.3	Muslims
15.3	Christians
2.8	Sikhs
21.1	Buddhists
7.8	Jains
-	Zoroastrian
32.0	Others

Othe r	Househ old	Agricul tural
48.4	7.4	25.0
51.4	5.9	24.0
40.5	12.6	26.6
62.7	2.1	19.9
91.2	1.6	4.4
66.8	2.9	9.2
85.8	1.0	5.4
-	-	-
10.6	4.5	52.9

\*(2001 Census)

#### According to the NCRLM's Report:

- (a) Population living Below Poverty Line is 31.85 percent in rural areas and 14.86 in urban areas.
- (b) Need for hostels for Muslim Working Women
- (c) Programmes and schemes of WBMDFC are not reaching the needy minorities.

#### Existing Reservation Policy

Some experts say posts reserved for SC/ST/OBC is not followed by the authority.

Development Schemes/ Programmes being implemented by the State Government

- I. State Government has undertaken a scheme for construction of boundary wall around Muslim and Christian's graveyards to prevent encroachment or misuse of such land.
- II. There are schemes for economic empowerment for SC/ST/OBC.
- III. Vocational training and self-employment through WBMFDC (West Bengal Minorities Development and Finance Corporation) are arranged.
- IV. Studies are conducted on nutritional needs of the children, Universities asked to conduct studies on child marriage, dowry and trafficking.

**Observations of the Governor/ Chief Minister in interaction with the Commission:**

The Commission called on Shri Gopalkrishna Gandhi, Governor and Shri Buddhadeb Bhattacharya, Chief Minister of West Bengal. The observations of the Chief Minister are as follows:

- (i) Main problem is poverty.
- (ii) Majority of Muslims (50%) are very poor.
- (iii) Number of Muslims in educational institutions is very less.
- (iv) SCs/ STs are getting benefits of the Government Schemes. But Muslims are unable to derive benefits as they are unaware of such schemes.
- (v) 508 Madrasas are affiliated to Madrasa Board



in the State. They follow syllabi and curricula of general schools. In some Madrassas only religious education is imparted.

- (vi) Kidwai Report on Madrasa education has not been accepted by the Muslim Community.

**Observations of NCRLM:**

- (i) The Commission clarified that there is no restriction on establishing Institutions by the minorities. The problem is only about funding. Kerala model could be adopted which enables students to avail religious education and normal education.
- (ii) The WBMFDC should make efforts to identify the beneficiaries within the existing limits by paying visits to various interior places of the State. If people belonging to these groups are identified, they will be real beneficiaries. Wide publicity should be given to the programmes of the Corporation through bulletins and brochures.
- (iii) State Minority Corporation should help the beneficiaries in getting housing loans from the banks.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> Annexures to the Report of the National Commission for Religious and Linguistic Minorities, Ministry of Minority Affairs , Volume II, p-206-10

*Even after years of independence, most of the people from the deprived communities have remained backward, living in appalling conditions in rural areas with no or little access to primary let alone secondary education. (According to Justice Ranganath Misra Commission report.)*

## Muslims & Bengal Politics

William Hunter's book *The Indian Mussalmans* written in 1871 pinpointed that it was in lower Bengal among the whole of India where "Muhammadans have suffered most severely under the British rule."

He further writes Muslims were not satisfied towards the British government and neglected education which led to the gradual decline of the Muslim society. Muslims found no employment in the Army, had no more role in the collection of taxes, found too few appointments in government offices. "If ever a people stood in need of a career, it is the Musalman aristocracy of lower Bengal," Hunter wrote, and added, "There is now scarcely a government office in Calcutta in which a Muhammadan can hope for any post of above the rank of porter, messenger, filler of ink-pots and mender of pens." This is the condition of Muslims of Bengal in the British Rule.

And with the Partition of Bengal on religious lines in 1947, a large number of the wealthy Muslims – most of who were Urdu-speaking traders – went to East Pakistan, leaving West Bengal with mostly a community of peasant Muslims.

In post-Independence West Bengal, Hindu political parties Bharatiya Jana Sangh, Akhil Bharatiya Hindu

Mahasabha and Akhil Bharatiya Ram Rajya Parishad contested the elections with little or no success. But no Muslim political party was in the fray at all, until the birth of the short-lived Progressive Muslim League in 1969. Bengal's Muslims preferred either the Congress or the communists.

However, despite the Congress's rule of two decades and a half and the Left's uninterrupted 34 years, the socio-economic status of the Muslims did not improve much, as was evident with the publication of the report of Justice Rajinder Sachar Committee in 2006. It revealed, among other aspects, that while Muslims made 25% of the state's population in 2001, Muslim representation in government jobs was a mere 4.2% and they occupied only 5% of the 'key positions' in the judiciary.

The publication of the Sachar Committee report along with the Left Front government's land acquisition drive in two areas dominated by Muslims – Nandigram and Bhangar – are mostly cited as the triggers of Muslim disenchantment with the three decade-long Left rule. Their swing towards Mamata Banerjee – with Islamic religious leaders crowding her daises onwards 2008 – played a pivotal role behind the TMC's historic success in 2011.

## **Muslim Vote-Bank**

The TMC chief, who had been in alliance with the BJP on and off between 1998 and 2007, started making overtures to the Muslim population, and especially its religious leadership, after testing her first success in getting Muslim votes – in Nandigram and Bhangar in the 2008 panchayat elections. Banerjee was seen wrapping her saree around her head emulating a hijab at Muslim functions.

Since coming to power in 2011, Mamata Banerjee announced the establishment of hundreds of new madrasas, monthly stipend for the Imams and muezzins, included majority of Bengal's Muslim population under the Other Backward Communities (OBCs) – which was a recommendation of the Sachar Committee .

It is through their campaigns against Mamata Banerjee's 'appeasement of the Muslims' that the BJP and its parent organisation, the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), started gaining grounds in West Bengal since 2013.

With the BJP's rise at the Centre and in Bengal after the 2014 Lok Sabha elections, Muslims votes further consolidated in favour of the TMC, as was evident from the 2016 Assembly election results. Analysis of the 2019 Lok Sabha election results revealed a near-complete

polarisation of Muslim votes in favour of the TMC, except in two districts. Significantly, these districts are the two of Bengal three Muslim-majority districts – Murshidabad and Malda.

The TMC, therefore, is aware that it not only has to retain the existing Muslim votes but has also to win over Malda and Murshidabad, which together have 34 of the state's 294 Assembly seats. In 2016, when the Left and the Congress fought in alliance, TMC won only six of these 34 seats. In the 2019 Lok Sabha elections, TMC won only two of the five Lok Sabha seats in these two districts, while the Congress won two and one went to the BJP, courtesy a split in the Muslim votes.

### **Electoral Equations**

Voices critical of Mamata Banerjee from among the state's Muslim leaders started getting louder soon after the BJP's stupendous electoral performance in Bengal in 2019 – when the BJP's Lok Sabha tally rose from two to 18 and the TMC's dwindled from 34 to 22.

The likes of Abbas Siddiqui and Md Kamruzzaman, the president of Minority Youth Forum, launched a sustained campaign against the Mamata Banerjee government, accusing it of giving the Muslims nothing in return despite receiving their fullest support. The

AIMIM, having stepped up activities to launch a party in Bengal, pegged their campaign on similar lines.

Recently, Abbas Siddiqui, Kamruzzaman and AIMIM's Bengal organisers expressed their deep concerns over recruitment in teaching positions in government-run English-medium madrasas. List of appointees in geography, history and English had only eight Muslim names among the 36. Muslim leaders questioned the government's decision of conducting the recruitment process through the Public Service Commission, instead of the Madrasah Service Commission.

According to Yahiya, the chairman of the Bengal Imam's Association, Muslims benefitted from Banerjee's rule as much as the Hindus did. "She did no special favour to the Muslims and there was no particular discrimination towards the Muslims either. Muslims benefited from her social welfare schemes and infrastructure development projects, and suffered from corruption and highhandedness of TMC leaders, as much as the Hindus did," Yahiya said.

According to Moidul Islam, who teaches political science at Centre for Studies in Social Sciences, Calcutta, Banerjee's nine-year rule has seen the TMC giving importance to mostly the Urdu-speaking urban Muslims as leaders, whereas more than 85% of Bengal Muslim population are Bengali-speaking and rural. "The

TMC's failure in bringing Bengali-speaking, progressive Muslim faces have left a scope for disassociation and disenchantment with the rural Muslims, said Moidul Islam.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> *Snigdhendu Bhattacharya is a Kolkata-based journalist and author, the report published in 18/AUG/2020*



## **Status of Muslims in West Bengal – Appeasement or Exclusion?<sup>20</sup>**

“Muslims constitute a very large proportion of the poor. The fact that Muslims in West Bengal are disproportionately poorer and more deprived in terms of living conditions is an empirical recognition that gives this report an inescapable immediacy and practical urgency,” said Amartya Sen while releasing the report entitled “Living Reality of Muslims in West Bengal” (The Hindu, 2016). This Report takes a stock of the condition of Muslims in West Bengal. The state of West Bengal is significant since 27.01% of its population is Muslims. Sachar Committee Report portrayed a very disturbing picture of Muslims in India. The Sachar Committee Report put forth a compelling narrative on exclusion and discrimination of Muslims in different fields including livelihood and education. Over a decade has lapsed since Sachar Committee Report was released. It is imperative that data related to socio-economic and educational status of Muslims is updated statewide. The “Living Reality of Muslims in West Bengal” (LRMWB) Report on the conditions of Muslims in West Bengal attempts precisely this.

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<sup>20</sup> This is a report of People’s Voice<sup>20</sup> prepared by Neha Dabhade,  
(Centre for Study of Society and Secularism)

### **Context of West Bengal:-Political Account**

The state of West Bengal has a rich intellectual heritage with liberal ideas and inclusive vision of Tagore and other stalwarts. The ***baul- fakir*** tradition is very popular in Bengal and reflects very strongly in different aspects of Bengali culture like songs, paintings and dance. This inclusive framework of culture and ideas has been germane for flourishing of religious reforms and progressive liberal ethos. West Bengal was ruled for 34 odd years by CPI (M), a leftist party, theoretic presumption being that it is ideologically secular and sensitive to the marginalized. Yet the Sachar Committee Report painted a rather sordid picture of the Muslims in West Bengal wherein it stated that Muslims lived in abject poverty. The Sachar Committee Report suggested that only 16.8% of the Muslim population lived in urban areas in West Bengal against 28% of general population in 2001. The infant mortality rate of Muslims in West Bengal was reported to be at 52 against 50 of the Hindu community while infant mortality rate under 5 years of age reported for Muslims was 77 against 68 amongst Hindu community. The literacy rates amongst Muslims in the state was 57.5% while that prevalent amongst Hindus was 72.4%.

In 2011, Trinamool Congress won a landslide victory and came to power in West Bengal after defeating the incumbent CPI (M). The CPI (M) evoked disaffection of

the people of West Bengal and especially the Muslims after the Nandigram incident which created insecurity about land and livelihood. One of the factors that made TMC's electoral victory in 2011 for state Assembly possible was the support of the Muslim community in the state had shifted to the TMC. **Though West Bengal never reported major riots during the Left rule, it didn't imply that Muslims had equal opportunities or that the polity was secular.** On the other hand, Mamta Banerjee has attended rallies of Jamiat- Ulema e Hind, wore Muslim *hijab*, offered *namaz* but this mere politics of tokenism hasn't translated into inclusion of Muslims. This isn't much different than the treatment of Muslims by the Left parties in West Bengal.

Three approaches have defined the policy of Trinamool and CPI (M) towards Muslims, namely, containment of communal violence so that it doesn't assume critical proportions in terms of number of casualties and loss in property, political opportunism and tokenism- **wooing powerful Muslim religious leaders for electoral gains, and not working towards the equality and inclusion of Muslims.**

The numbers can shed more light on the electoral politics and the stakes to be gained by wooing Muslim votes. In Assembly election 2011, Trinamool Congress won 184 out of 294 seats (38.9% votes), Congress won 42 seats (9.1% votes), CPM won 40 seats (30.8% votes) and BJP did not win any seats (4.1% votes). Similarly in 2014 general

elections, Trinamool Congress won 34 seats of 42 seats (39.4% votes), Congress won four seats (9.6% votes), CPM won two seats (22.7% votes) and BJP won two seats (16.84% votes) (Ibnlive, 2016). An extensive study on the Muslims of India by late Prof. Iqbal Ansari, later taken forward in West Bengal by Sabir Ahamed of Pratichi Institute, shows that 46 Assembly constituencies of the State have a Muslim “concentration” of more than 50 per cent. The figure is 40-50 per cent in about 16 seats, and 30-40 per cent in 33 seats. The data underscores that in exactly one-third of the seats, Muslim vote is the key factor to win an election. Moreover, in another 50 seats, the concentration is 20-30 per cent. Overlooking such data was possibly one of the reasons for the defeat of the Left Front in 2011. (The Hindu, 2016). This explains the scramble for Muslim votes by political parties like in West Bengal.

The LRMWB Report is particularly insightful in the wake of increasing communalization in West Bengal. The essentialization of religious identity of Muslims and stereotyping is leading to demonization of Muslims even in West Bengal where they have a sizeable population. The recent incident in Kaliachak is a case in point. The middle class urban population popularly called the **Bhadralok** (Majority of the Muslims in West Bengal reside in rural areas) in West Bengal shape the public discourse by controlling sources knowledge like media and education. The increasing presence of the Hindu

nationalists in some pockets work to polarize the attitudes along communal lines. The communalization, essentialization and demonization of Muslims help RSS strengthen its presence in W. Bengal.

The LRMWB Report in the above context is discerning. The report written by Association SNAP, Guidance Guild and Pratichi Institute, is based on primary survey covering 325 villages and 75 urban wards from a sample of 81 community development blocks and 30 municipal bodies. The main findings of the Report present an undeniable yet absorbing narrative on the situation of Muslims in West Bengal. What is perhaps useful is the construction of the Muslim community. It is not viewed as homogenous but the complexities are dealt with while studying the various aspects of the community. The Report doesn't limit the construction of Muslim identity to religion but takes into consideration other factors like region, language, occupation, educational levels amongst others which are determine access to various public services. The Report goes on to dispel many myths that are encouraged by media particularly about Muslim women and how they fall prey to the "orthodoxy" of the community. While it may have some grain of truth, the Report presents an objective picture in regard to education, livelihood, health and other amenities and how they are accessed by the Muslims. The Report goes on to assert that the particular state along with its specific socio-economic features determines the accessibility of

opportunities to any community and not the religious-cultural identity.

### **Problematizing Educational status of Muslims:**

In regard to education, the Report points out to a dismal picture. However there is a silver lining to this in the form of girls' literacy rates in the state. For instance the Muslim literacy rate is 69.5 percent as per the primary survey, 7 percent lower than the average literacy rate of West Bengal as per 2011 census. The 2011 census pitched the gender gap in literacy at 11.1 percent in West Bengal; however the primary survey showed the narrowing of this gap to 7.8 percent. Also, the 2011 census stated a difference of 2.2 percent between general and Muslim women but the primary survey found equal female literacy to general female literacy of 2011 census. This flies in the face of the social stereotyping that Muslim orthodoxy prevented girls education and underlines the grit and aspirations of Muslim girls. This is especially significant since majority of the Muslim population lives in rural areas in West Bengal. In terms of the rural-urban divide, the literacy rate of Muslims in urban areas is 75.4 percent while that in rural areas is 68.3 percent. The female literacy rate is better than male under the age of 17 since boys are forced to drop out of school to earn a livelihood. At the same time girls do domestic work which enables them to attend school. But this situation is reversed when gender roles force girls to start a family

and boys are encouraged to opt for higher education in hope of better income.

Another stereotype that is demolished through this report is that Muslim parents prefer sending their children to Madrasas since they are anti modern and against secular education. The Sachar Committee Report had pointed out that less than 4 percent of Muslim children go to Madrasas. This is not surprising given that there are never adequate numbers of schools in areas inhabited by Muslims. This is reinforced by the report which states that the number of primary schools per ten thousand population increases in blocks with a decreasing proportion of Muslims to the whole population thereby highlighting a pattern of exclusion. Further district wise distribution points out that the districts with a significant share of Muslims in their population, such as Uttar Dinajpur (6.2), Murshidabad (7.2) and Malda (8.5) perform poorly in combine secondary and higher secondary school as against 10.6 combined schools per hundred thousand population in other districts. Overall the Report alludes to the increasing aspirations of the Muslim community to get educated which is hampered by lack of higher education institutes close to Muslim majority areas in the state.

### **Status of Livelihood of Muslims:**

Work Participation Rate (WPR) for this study is defined as percentage of population belonging to the working age group of 15-65 years who are actually working. It is reported that the Muslim WPR is 45 percent. Only 8.9 percent of Muslim women were found to be working. Though the work participation rate varies widely across districts, districts like Malda (13) and Murshidabad (21.5), women are mostly engaged in bidi rolling and embroidery work. Among Muslims in rural West Bengal, about 47 percent of all who work, work as agricultural workers or daily workers in non-agriculture. Only 1.55 percent households earn income as school teachers and 1.54 percent is employed in regular public sector jobs.

### **Income levels of Muslims:**

The starkest finding of the report is perhaps the insights it gives into the income of Muslims in West Bengal. The Report spells out the extent of poverty with the finding that about 80 percent of the Muslim households in rural West Bengal report an income of Rs. 5000 or less per month which is close to the cut off level of income for poverty line for a family of five. Further, 38.3 percent Muslim households in rural West Bengal earn Rs. 2,500 or less per month. More than three-fourths of the rural Muslim households possess no land. More than half of the poor Muslim households in rural West Bengal do not



possess BPL cards or MGNREGA job cards. 23.8 percent of urban Muslim households earn Rs. 2,500 or less. This poor performance on the front of citizenship rights points to inadequacy of the State to make democracy meaningful for such a large population.

### **Amenities enjoyed by Muslims:**

The amenities available such dwelling conditions also give a glimpse into the security enjoyed by a population. It's rather disappointing to note that 59.1 percent houses of Muslims in West Bengal are built with low quality materials like straw, leaves, bamboo, plastic, polythene, soil and mud bricks. On the other hand, 47.8 percent of general households are made of such material. Alternatively, 47.9 percent of the general populace lives in homes made of concrete and baked bricks, whereas only 36.6 percent of the Muslim population can afford such homes. The Muslim community's access to tap water is nearly 40 percent less than that of the overall population. The availability of drainage system in Muslim households is meager at one third of that enjoyed by the general population.

### **Access to Healthcare:**

Healthcare, one of essential indicator of human development, accessed by the Muslim community depicts a sorry picture. The state average of the number of

hospitals per lakh population is 1.8. However in Muslim dominated regions like Uttar Dinajpur, Malda and South 24 Parganas, this number stands at 1.0, 1.4 and 1.3 respectively. Similarly, the infant mortality rate amongst the Muslim community is 23 percent higher than the infant mortality rate in the Hindu community. The data suggests that Muslims prefer institutional delivery where the hospital is within accessible distance. This poses a strong counter to the widely held belief that Muslims orthodoxy is averse to institutional delivery. A case in point is also Kerala. The Report has dedicated a separate chapter on gender which in details evaluates the condition of women under various parameters but which is not included here in greater depth due to constraint of space.<sup>21</sup>

The contribution of this Report is immense by bringing into limelight the objective truth about the Muslims backed by such forceful figures. This counter narrative about the desire of Muslims for better education, livelihood and health amongst other rights makes it morally and constitutionally obligatory on the State to take notice and enable the Muslims to come at par with others. This report coming before the state assembly elections, hopefully, will create awareness about how the ruling dispensation uses vulnerable communities as mere pawns and vote banks for political power without serious

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<sup>21</sup> <https://peoplesvoice.in/2016/04/19/status-muslims-west-bengal-appeasement-exclusion/>

intention of working for their inclusion and equality. This attempt can be duplicated by civil society organizations in other states to update the data about Muslims. Such reports will help in filling in the gaps in the data regarding vulnerable communities warped in exclusion, adverse public perception and discrimination.

## **No Jobs, Muslims Only Fobbed Off In Bengal<sup>22</sup>**

*An RTI query reveals that Muslims representation in Kolkata Police and the KMC is not even 10% despite they constituting 25% of the state's population*

The West Bengal government has often dismissed the Sachar Committee report on the condition of Muslims in the state as an exaggeration. But data related to Muslim employees in two major government departments shows how abysmally low their representation is. The data was made available by the two organizations following an RTI query filed by a Kolkata-based NGO.

Even though Muslims in the state officially represent over 27 per cent of the population, the community does not even have a representation of 10 per cent of the workforce in the Kolkata Police (KP) and Kolkata Municipal Corporation (KMC) two biggest government organizations.

The picture of Muslim women in government jobs is worse still with their representation barely touching two per cent.

According to the information revealed by the Kolkata Police, the total number of employees in the force is 24,840 of which only 2,267 are Muslims, constituting a

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<sup>22</sup> A report written by Shiv Sahay Singh , Published: February 11, 2009

mere 9.13 per cent of the overall strength. Of a total of 24,840 employees in the Kolkata Police, only 414 are women, and only 12 of them (2.9 per cent approximately) are Muslims.

The figures from the KMC paint an even grimmer picture. The municipal body has only 1,555 Muslim employees in its workforce of 34,731. Of the 4556 women employees it has, only 136 are Muslims, comprising just 2.98 per cent.

The statistics speaks for itself regarding the representation of minorities in the policing and public works," said Sabeer Ahamed, who filed the RTI application.

The Sachar Committee report, which was tabled in November 2006, had pointed out the abysmally low percentage of Muslims in government services in West Bengal.

A further scrutiny of the data shows the number of Muslim employees in higher positions that comprise Group A and Group B is about 4.7 per cent. And in the lower division (Group - C and Group- D), they are about 1.8 per cent.

The data also shows that the situation has not improved since the Sachar committee placed its report in 2006. The state government had then said it would make amends in

ensuring equal opportunities for the minorities in key areas like policing and public works.

Syed Shamshul Alam, the Former vice-chancellor of Alai University, the first Muslim University in the state, blamed the low penetration of education among the Muslim community. Alam, who was the former head of department of mathematics at IIT Kharagpur, said, "In recent times, the state government has taken some measures in the area of education, like setting up universities for Muslims and better facilities at madrasas. But it would take 10 to 20 years before the results of these efforts are actually seen."

Statistics show there are more Muslims in jails than in government jobs. This is an alarming situation for the society. If the Sachar Committee report is accepted by Parliament, what is the point of negating it in West Bengal," says A S Malihawadi, a Rajya Sabha MP from West Bengal and editor of Urdu daily, Azad Hind.

There needs to be a political will to give Muslims a proportionate representation in government jobs. Also, there is need for removing bureaucratic hurdles.

If the percentage of Muslims is as low as 3-4 per cent in certain departments, it means we have failed in setting up the secular credentials of a society as envisaged in our Constitution, he said.

You will have to compare what percentage of Muslims were in jobs in 1947 and then compare it with the figures in 1977, when the Left Front assumed power in Bengal, and the situation now. Then only one can criticize our government," said Abduss Sattar, the minister for minority development and Madrasa education.

Earlier, no one kept track of such records, but of late we have been paying attention to it and the situation is certainly improving, Sattar said.

## **Almost 80% of Rural Muslims in West Bengal are Borderline Poor<sup>23</sup>**

*In rural Bengal, nearly 47 per cent of all Muslims who work are either agricultural workers or 'daily workers' in non-agriculture sectors — "they are at the bottom of the economic ladder," says the study.*

Only 3.8 per cent of these households reported earning Rs 15,000 and above per month, according to a report released Sunday by Nobel laureate Amartya Sen on the status of Muslims in West Bengal.

Nearly eight in 10 Muslim households in rural West Bengal have a monthly family income of Rs 5,000 or less, which is barely above the cut-off level of income for poverty line for a family of five. While Muslims constitute 27 per cent of the state's population, as much as 38.3 per cent households from the minority community in rural parts of the state earn Rs 2,500 or less per month. Titled "Living reality of Muslims in West Bengal", the report has been drawn up by non-profit organizations SNAP, Guidance Guild, and Sen's own Pratichi Institute. The event was held at Gorky Sadan.

Significantly, 13.2 per cent Muslim adults in the state do not hold voter identity cards, the report has found.

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<sup>23</sup> A Report Written by Esha Roy



According to the study, there are two Muslim-majority districts in the state: Murshidabad (66.3 per cent Muslim population), and Malda (51.3 per cent); and 65 of the 341 blocks in rural Bengal are Muslim-majority.

But their large presence notwithstanding, Bengal Muslims stand deprived of basic amenities such as tap water, drainage, equal opportunities in employment and even LPG cylinders, according to the study. It found their access to tap-water (15.2 per cent) is nearly 40 per cent less than that for the state's overall population (25.4 per cent, as per Census-2011). This, in a way, displays a "combined community and class exclusion", the study says.

While there seems to be parity in electrification of Muslim-dominated areas to the rest of the population, only 12.2 per cent minority community households have access to drainage system, against 31.6 per cent overall. The use of traditional fuel for cooking is much higher among Muslims (85.9 per cent) compared to the average population of the state (68.6 per cent). In rural Bengal, nearly 47 per cent of all Muslims who work are either agricultural workers or 'daily workers' in non-agriculture sectors — "they are at the bottom of the economic ladder," says the study. A measly 1.55 per cent of the state's Muslims are school teachers, and 1.54 per cent work in the public sector.

The report states: "Regular salaried jobs in the private sector are also a rarity — only 1 per cent of the households surveyed. In the entire sample of 7,880 households only five were found to have a college or university teacher, and there was no household with any of the highest category of professionals as members, such as doctors, engineers and advocates."

Releasing the report, Sen said: "The fact that Muslims of West Bengal are disproportionately poorer and more deprived in terms of living conditions gives this report an inescapable immediacy and practical urgency."

Jahangir Hossain, who collaborated in preparing the report, said, "Most information collected by the Sachar Committee was from secondary sources. So we decided that we needed to collate data and verify information from primary sources."

On the social development front, the literacy rate for the community in the state is reported at 68.3 per cent — 4 per cent below the general population. Among literate Muslims, only 2.7 per cent hold graduate degrees.<sup>24</sup>

**Both Trinamool and Left claimed credit for the rise in the number of minorities with govt. jobs<sup>25</sup>**

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<sup>24</sup> The Indian Express 15/2/2016

<sup>25</sup> The Hindu 8/11/2016

The Trinamool Congress government in Bengal and the Left Front are both claiming credit for a rise in the percentage of Muslims in government service in the State.

A census conducted in 2016 by the State administration showed a rise in the percentage of Muslims in government jobs, but employee numbers are drastically down overall.

Of 3,31,249 government employees in Bengal, 18,991 are Muslims, making up 5.73 per cent. The Muslim population is a little over 27 per cent as per the 2011 Census.

Nearly a decade ago, during the Left Front regime, the Justice Rajinder Sachar Committee report on social, economic and educational status of Muslims created ripples. The Committee report said there were 4.7 per cent Muslims (Groups A and B) and 2.1 per cent in (Groups C and D) in government jobs, averaging about 3.4 per cent.

The number of Muslims with government jobs is a politically sensitive issue for both the Left Front and the Trinamool Congress.

“An increase of about 2.3 percentage points in a decade is significant. A part of this rise happened because a large percentage of Muslims were included

in OBC category,” Sabir Ahamed, a researcher studying Muslim issues, said.

After the Sachar Committee report, the Left Front government, as per the recommendations of the Ranganath Mishra Commission tried to include Muslims under OBC category and passed a Bill to that effect. The legislation however could not come into force.

However, soon after coming to power, the Mamata Banerjee government passed a similar legislation in July 2012, bringing the majority of Muslims under OBC category.

The TMC government claims over 90 per cent of Muslims have been included in different OBC categories to give them reservation. “The Left Front government only paid lip service. It is only after Mamata Banerjee took over that concrete steps to include Muslims as OBC were taken,” MP and TMC leader Sultan Ahmed said.

Challenging Mr. Ahmed, Abdus Sattar, CPI (M) leader and former minister for Minority Development said credit should go to the Left for declaring Muslims OBCs.

## **Role of Some Entities for Muslim Upliftment**

Some government and non- government institutions are working for the development of Muslims in West Bengal such as The West Bengal Minorities' Development and Finance Corporation and Waqf Board of West Bengal.

### **West Bengal Minorities' Development and Finance Corporation for Economic**

The West Bengal Minorities' Development and Finance Corporation (WBMDFC) was established in 1996 as per West Bengal Act XVIII of 1995, i.e. The West Bengal Minorities' Development and Finance Corporation Act, 1995. The Corporation has taken up various schemes for Economic Welfare, Scholarships, vocational training, mass awareness and career counseling which are running successfully for person belonging to the notified religious minority Communities i.e., Muslim, Christian, Buddhist, Sikh, Jain and Parsee for their economic upliftment.

#### **Some of the Function of the Corporation:-**

- To provide different scholarships (Merit-Cum-Means, Post Matric, Pre Matric and Talent support stipend) for poor and meritorious students.
- To provide Education Loans for poor and meritorious students for their studies.
- To promote training programmes for development and up gradation of skill.

- To provide training for various competitive exams.
- To undertake programmes for empowerment of minority women.

#### **Loan given by WBMDFC to the Minorities:-**

West Bengal Minorities' Development & Finance Corporation is providing the Term loan up to Rs. 5 lakh for persons belonging to the notified minority communities. Repayment with @ 6%-8% interest in equal 12 or 20 quarterly installments in 3 or 5 years.

#### **Micro Finance (Directly to SHGs)**

Small loans are required to sustain the present business, income generating economic activities & self help activities. For these purpose Micro finance is provided directly to the Self Help Groups (SHGs). At least 60% members of SHGs should be from Minority community. Upto Rs. 1,00,000/- per member of Self Help Group (SHGs) are provided directly to SHGs. Repayment at the rate of Interest @7% p.a.in 24 EMI.

#### **Minority Women Empowerment Programme**

This programme is launched by Minority Affairs & Madrasa Education Deptt., Govt. of West Bengal for providing soft loan to Minority women for any income generating activity or business such as small business, cottage industry, Handicrafts etc. at the rate of 3%

interest. Subsidy @ 50% of loan amount, subject to a maximum of Rs.15000/-, is given to each beneficiary.

### **Education Loan for Minority Students**

Maximum Rs. 20 lakhs for study within the country and Rs.30 lakh for study in abroad. Education loan is provided for pursuing professional courses like Medical, Engineering, Management, Nursing and Law etc. Repayment of the loan with interest @ 3 % p.a. in quarterly installments after 6 months of completion of the course or employment, whichever is earlier.

### **Training & Coaching**

West Bengal Minorities' Development & Finance Corporation is providing a number of Training and Coaching for Minority students such as:

### **Vocational Training Programme**

For upgrading the knowledge & skill in various trades, training Programmes are conducted mainly through reputed institutions. Vocational Training is given in the following areas:

- I. Machine Operation
- II. CNC Milling
- III. CNC Turning
- IV. Network Associate (CCNA)

- V. Room AC and Home Appliances
- VI. Audio-Video-AV
- VII. Hand -Held Product
- VIII. Welding

**Skill Training is given in the following areas:**

- I. Clothing Production Technology (CPT)
- II. Fashion Knitwear & Production Technology (FKPT)
- III. Apparel Designing and Fashion Technology (ADFT)
- IV. Fashion Leather Accessories Design (FLAD)

**Job Oriented Coaching provided by WBMDFC**

WBMDFC also provides coaching for job oriented examination like

- I. Bank Probationary Officer Examination,
- II. Police Constable Recruitment Examination,
- III. School Service Commission,
- IV. Primary TET to the minorities' candidates.
- V. Free Pre-Recruitment Coaching for **Combined Services (Competitive Exam)**



### **Haji Md Mohsin Endowment Fund Scholarship by WBMDFC**

The Haji Md. Mohsin fund scholarship is given to the meritorious students belongs to minority Muslim community on the occasion of the birth anniversary of great philanthropist.

The scholarship is provided every year on 1st of August. The birth anniversary of great Haji Md Mohsin the scholarship is awarded out of the interest accrued for the endowment fund created by Haji Md Mohsin.

The great philanthropist was born on 1st August, 1732. He got much ancestral (great grandfather) property. He donated all his wealth and property for the betterment and upliftment of the poor Muslim students.

He made a will in the year 1806 which stated he is donating a large amount of his wealth for the cause of education of meritorious Muslim students. This fund was named as Mohsin Endowment Fund. Govt. of West Bengal implemented the scholarship scheme named Haji Md Mohsin to the Muslim students.

From the year 2011 the West Bengal Minorities Development & Finance Corporation, the Govt. of West Bengal introduced and providing one time scholarship every year for maximum 100 Muslim students.

Out of which 70 (seventy) for the students passing 10th class examination, 20 (twenty) for Higher Madrasah Examination and remaining 10 (ten) for Alim Examination. 30% of scholarship is earmarked for female candidates.

The scholarship amount is given Rs.20, 000/- out of the Haji Md Mohsin fixed endowment fund and a certificate jointly signed by WBMDFC Chairman and Principal Secretary of Minority Affairs and Madrasah Education Department, Government of West Bengal.

**Year wise distribution chart of Haji Md Mohsin Endowment Fund since 2011 to 2019 is as follows:**

Year	No of Students benefited	Amount in Lacks
2011-12	95	19.00
2012-13	101	20.20
2013-14	106	21.20
2014-15	97	19.40
2015-16	99	19.80
2016-17	103	20.60 <sup>26</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> Information Booklet Pub. By WBMDFC, Kol. Page- 33

2017-18	102	20.40
2018-19	112	22.40
2019-20	107	21.40 <sup>27</sup>

### **Year wise Loans given by WBMDFC**

#### **Year wise Term Loans Distribution**

Year	No of people benefited	Amount in Lacks
2011-12	3897	2697.85
2012-13	6644	4915.80
2013-14	8830	6689.68
2014-15	9253	6977.80
2015-16	10072	7514.65
2016-17	10295	7585.00
2017-18	3216	2295.80 <sup>28</sup>
2018-19		

<sup>27</sup> <http://www.wbmdfc.org/Home/SignatureEventInner/Ng==>

<sup>28</sup> Information Booklet Pub. By WBMDFC, Kol. Page- 16

### Year wise Micro Finance Loans Distribution

Year	No of people benefited	Amount in Lacks
2011-12	61743	8599.5
2012-13	77004	10513.48
2013-14	79800	8351.70
2014-15	113585	13718.12
2015-16	107041	14377.42
2016-17	102005	14108.57
2017-18	44016	5976.33 <sup>29</sup>
2018-19		

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<sup>29</sup> Ibid 16

### Year wise Education Loan Distribution

Year	No of people benefited	Amount in Lakhs
2011-12	3015	909.99
2012-13	3076	893.28
2013-14	3493	1059.63
2014-15	3552	156.63
2015-16	3005	1065.41
2016-17	2492	1201.00 <sup>30</sup>
2017-18	2500	Date not found
2018-19		

### Year wise Pre-Metric Scholarship Distribution

Year	No of Students benefited	Amount in Lakhs
2011-12	1447413	16413.2

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<sup>30</sup> Ibid 23

2012-13	1529764	17502.64
2013-14	1890068	21728.09
2014-15	2003455	23511.13
2015-16	2022176	69484.12
2016-17	2307833	34617.50 <sup>31</sup>
2017-18	2797426	Data not found
2018-19		

#### Year wise Post Metric Scholarship Distribution

Year	No of Students benefited	Amount in Lakhs
2011-12	176127	5988.09
2012-13	125951	5695.13
2013-14	195331	9087.30
2014-15	191663	9083.45
2015-16	272792	13639.60

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<sup>31</sup> Ibid- 29

2016-17	278283	139141.50 <sup>32</sup>
2017-18	323452	Data not found
2018-19		

#### Year wise Merit Cum Means Distribution

Year	No of Students benefited	Amount in Lakhs
2011-12	9546	2484.87
2012-13	8440	2228.07
2013-14	10506	2829.03
2014-15	10447	2875.00
2015-16	12245	3230.00
2016-17	13464	2154.24 <sup>33</sup>
2017-18	18405	Data not found
2018-19		

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<sup>32</sup> Ibid

<sup>33</sup> Ibid

Year wise **TALENT SUPPORT PROGRAMME**

Year	No of Students benefited	Amount in Lakhs
2011-12	24237	2042.72
2012-13	104820	3432.00
2013-14	200292	6864.03
2014-15	343915	12261.85
2015-16	284429	9890.71
2016-17	200000	6000.00 <sup>34</sup>
2017-18	328978	Data not found
2018-19		

Present TMC Govt. is somehow helping Muslims by providing more financial support to the minorities than the Left Govt. The picture of the same would be clear in the following tables:

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<sup>34</sup> Ibid



**Comparison of Scholarship between Left Govt. and TMC Govt. 2005- 2011 (Left Govt.) *vis-a-vis* 2012-2017 (Trinomial Congress Govt.)**

Govt. with duration	Beneficiary	Amount in Crores
2005 – 2011 (Left Govt.)	857476	171.40
2012-2017 (TMC. Govt)	13663197	4221.84 <sup>35</sup>

Comparison of Education Loan between Left Govt. and TMC Govt. 2005 – 2011 (Left Govt.) *vis-a-vis* 2012-2017 (Trinomial Congress Govt)

Govt. with duration	Beneficiary	Amount in Crores
2005 – 2011 (Left Govt.)	5970	19.71
2012-2017 (TMC. Govt)	18633	62.86 <sup>36</sup>

Comparison of Term Loan between Left Govt. and TMC Govt. 2005 – 2011 (Left Govt.) *vis-a-vis* 2012-2017 (Trinomial Congress Govt)

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<sup>35</sup> Ibid 34

<sup>36</sup> Ibid

Govt. with duration	Beneficiary	Amount in Crores
2005 – 2011 (Left Govt.)	19853	118.67
2012-2017 (TMC. Govt)	48991	363.80 <sup>37</sup>

Comparison of DLS Loan to SHG between Left Govt. and TMC Govt. 2005 – 2011 (Left Govt.) *vis-a-vis* 2012-2017 (Trinomial Congress Govt)

Govt. with duration	Beneficiary	Amount in Crores
2005 – 2011 (Left Govt.)	81839	78.92
2012-2017 (TMC. Govt)	541178	696.68 <sup>38</sup>

### **Achievements of WBMDFC in 2018-2019**

In 2018-2019 fiscal year a number of 108566 people have been given Micro Finance and MWEFG to 7102 and Education Loan to 2504 and Post-Matric Scholarship to 170608 students and Pre Matric Scholarship to 2930793 students and no of State Govt Stipend is 220494.

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<sup>37</sup> Ibid

<sup>38</sup> Ibid

## **West Bengal Auqaf Board**

The West Bengal Auqaf Board is a statutory body constituted by the Government of West Bengal under the Waqf Act 1995 (Central Act 43 of 1995). Several Mosques, Kabarsthan, Dargas etc. are registered with this board in addition to the Waqf properties. The West Bengal Auqaf Board is a body with perpetual succession and a common seal with powers to acquire and hold property etc.

### **New Initiatives**

- I. Construction of a Community hall
- II. Construction of Housing for Destitute women
- III. Construction of Muslim Girls' Hostel
- IV. Establishment of Educational Institutions such as Nursing Training, D.Ed & B.Ed and Law College
- V. Organizing Awareness Camps

### **FUTURE PLAN**

- I. To establish the modern Auqaf Bhawan
- II. To increase the Waqf contribution to benefit the Muslim Community at large.
- III. To speed up the disposal of Mutawalliship, Development & Tenancy matters of Auqaf Estates.
- IV. To construct more Hostels in & around Kolkata to accommodate the intending students especially the female students to pursue their higher studies.

- V. To set up additional Guest House on Waqf land in Kolkata so as to accommodate the outsiders at nominal rate to perform their work in Kolkata.
- VI. To digitize all the Waqf records & upload the same in office website and give the larger access to Waqf matters to general public.
- VII. To establish Educational & Vocational Institutions by the Auqaf Board itself so that the Muslim youth can become self-reliant.
- VIII. To increase the number and amount of stipend for the poor & meritorious students especially encouraging education of Muslim Girls students.

#### **WELFARE SCHEME**

Distribution of honorarium to imam and muazzin

Total allocation : 393 crore since inception

Total number of imams benefited : 38,446

Total number of muazzins benefited : 25,486

#### **Establishment of Hostel & Education Institutions**

14 Hostels are running in different district and total number of boarders are 1431.

S.N.	Name of the Hostel	Seat Capacity	No. of Boarders
1.	Kolkata Muslim Girls' Hostel 43, Dilkhusha Street, Kolkata – 17.	236	236
2.	Burdwan Muslim Girls' Hostel 127, B.C Road, Dist. Burdwan.	95	95
3.	Berhampore Muslim Girls' Hostel, Berhampore, Dist. Murshidabad.	223	223
4.	Sayedul Hoque Muslim Girls' Hostel, Krishangar Narohari Mukherjee Lane, Judge Court Para, Krishanagar, Dist. Nadia.	107	100
5.	Bashirhat Begum Rokeya Muslim Girls' Hostel, Bashirhat, Dist. 24	60	50

	Parganas (N).		
6.	Midnapore Muslim Girls' Hostel Midnapore	60	60
7.	Suri Muslim Girls Hostel Suri, Birbhum	84	84
8.	Maldah Muslim Girls' Hostel , Malda, Kuttitola Lane, Dist.. Malda.	56	56
9.	Islampur Muslim Girls' Hostel P.O. Islampur, Dist, Uttar Dinajpur.	57	57
10.	Balurghat Muslim Girls' Hostel, Balurghat, Dist- Dakshin Dinajpur.	95	80
11.	A.K Fazlul Haque Muslim Girls' Hostel 31, Dilkusha Street, Kolkata- 17.	120	120
12.	Abdul Hakim Boys' Waqf Hostel 20A, Peary Mohan Roy Road,	120	120

	Kolkata – 27		
13.	Boo- Ali Muslim Boys' Hostel & Empowerment Centre, Kolkata 1, No. Kaiser Street, Kolkata – 09	120	120
14.	Suri Muslim Boys' Hostel Suri, Birbhum	30	30
	Total	1463	1431

Disbursement of stipend to the poor and meritorious students of Minority community is a regular program.

At Madhyamik (or equivalent level) the amount is Rs. 3,000/- that of H.S. (or equivalent level) is Rs. 4,000/- per year.

In addition Chairperson of the Board has been empowered by the Board to grant scholarship to the extent of Rs. 2,00,000/- (Two lakh) to the meritorious and deserving students.

An amount of Rs. Rs. 24,85,000/- has been disbursed for the year 2016-17 up to 13.12.16 to 679 students on merit basis.

### **Two Circles Net's Report Which is Made By Zaidul Haque States:**

Against 2555 Bigha's land, government only paid monthly Rs. 159 and that too until 1999. After the death of Mutawalli Maulana Abul Barkat at the age of 99, his son & heir Abu Nayeem Siddique has not been paid a single rupee by the govt. for the use of his land. Ali Vardi Khan, Nawab of Bengal, Bihar, & Orissa gifted 2555 bigha of land to the Mutawallis Maulana Amsuddin and Maulana Masiuddin Saheb, for the maintenance of Sitapur Madrasa, Mosque & support of the Mutawalli's family etc.

That land is now occupied by many government prime properties like Governor House (Raj Bhawan), Fort Willams, Maidan and adjoining areas. Sitapur Madrasa of Hooghly district is the oldest madrasa in existence since Nawab Ali Vardi Khan's period. Lack of money means that Sitapur Madrasa is being neglected. The main madrasa building and hostel building and mosque are in need of renovation. The condition of buildings is keeping the present mutawalli anxious about the future.<sup>39</sup>

The Report of the National Commission for Religious and Linguistic Minorities, Ministry of Minority Affairs states:

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<sup>39</sup>[https://twocircles.net/2012may03/rent\\_2555\\_bigha\\_waqf\\_land\\_kol\\_kota\\_wb\\_govt\\_paid\\_only\\_rs159month.html](https://twocircles.net/2012may03/rent_2555_bigha_waqf_land_kol_kota_wb_govt_paid_only_rs159month.html)



Development of Wakf property which is very necessary is affected due to lack of funds. Major problem is encroachment on the Wakf property.<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> Annexures to the Report of the National Commission for Religious and Linguistic Minorities, Ministry of Minority Affairs , Volume II, p-210

## **Role of some Educational Institutions for Muslim Upliftment**

A number of Educational Institutions are playing a viral role for the development of Muslim education in West Bengal such as:

### **Aliah University**

Aliah University – a State University under the Department of Minority Affairs and Madrasah Education, Government of West Bengal – came into existence through the Aliah University Act (Act XXVII of 2007) passed by the West Bengal Legislative Assembly. The Act came into force on 5 April 2008. However, its parent institution – from which it was upgraded to a University – was usually mentioned in various old Government records varyingly as Calcutta Mohomedan College or Calcutta Madrasah or Aliah Madrasah which was established by the British Governor-General Warren Hastings in 1780 at the request of some Muslim gentlemen of Calcutta. The newly-upgraded University started its glorious journey from the 2008-09 academic session with the hope that there would be a symbiosis of heritage and modernization here and through the participation and co-operation of people irrespective of race, caste, creed, or class, this University would play a leading role in the advancement of higher education especially of the Minorities who have for various

historical reasons remained socially and educationally backward.

Aliah University has a unique pre-history. A brief look at this will offer an understanding of its social and cultural importance. Its parent institution Aliah Madrasah was the first government-established educational institution in British India. The chief intention for establishing this institution was to educate the children of Muslim families in Arabic, Persian and Muslim Law so that they might be eligible to get jobs in different Government Departments like revenue administration and the judiciary.

A medical class, headed by Dr Peter Breton, Professor of Medicine, was started at this Madrasah in 1826 for the first time in British India. Dr Breton was authorized to purchase a skeleton and collect medical books. An anatomical work published by John Taylor was arranged to be translated into Arabic. The medical class continued here till the establishment of Calcutta Medical College in 1836. However, the students of the Madrasah were allowed to study medicine at Calcutta Medical College. This speaks for the high standard of education at the Madrasah in those days.

The university played a key role for the development of Muslims of Bengal in both field educationally and economically. Being a minority institution majority of students and teaching and non-teaching staff in various

departments are Muslims. By virtue of the university, many scholars are getting their higher education and research work in different countries such as USA, UK and Germany etc. and many of its alumni are in high level of govt. jobs in Bengal and out of Bengal, even in abroad. Thus the university has a great role for the upliftment of Muslims in Bengal.

It is worth mentioning that this institute had a great role for promotion of Muslim culture and civilization in the area as it made Arabic and Islamic Studies compulsory subjects ones a student takes admission in Aliah in any course regardless of modern sciences, social sciences, humanities, fine arts and Nursing he or she need to study these two. Moreover, in recruitment candidate having Islamic knowledge is referred.

In terms of university's location, Aliah has three campus and all campus are in Muslim area. The main Administrative building is in New Town and it is adjoining Hajj House of West Bengal. The students can perform their daily and Friday prayer in Hajj House building. By this students are getting a good environment to nurture.

I feel pleasure to state that four departments in Aliah where about 100% students a Muslims playing a vital role in promotion of Islamic education, culture and civilization. These departments are as follows:

**Department of Arabic:**

The Department of Arabic which started its glorious journey from the year 2009 with 3-years B.A. (Honours) and 2-years M. A. in Arabic. It has launched Ph. D. programme in the year 2012. At the beginning, the Department of Arabic commenced its functioning in the Old Campus in Haji Md. Mohsin Square, Kolkata-700016. In February 2015, the department has been shifted to the 5<sup>th</sup> Floor of the Park Circus Campus of Aliah University at 17, Gorachand Road, Kolkata-700014. Presently the department has seven permanent Faculty Members, one Visiting Professor and some Guest Faculties to run the Department smoothly.

The prime objective of the Department of Arabic is teaching Arabic and carrying out research in the field. The department also organizing seminar and conference regarding Muslim issues like Women in Islam and the concept of Qur'an in the risale-i nur etc.

**Dept. of Islamic Theology**

The Dept. of Islamic Theology is the origin of Aliah University. The department from the very inception concentrated on Dars - e - Nizami course with Arabic grammar, Mantiq, Hikmat, Riadi, Haiat, Fiqh, Tafsir, and Hadith. It is an undeniable fact that the department had a long history for its service to the Muslim community and for the promotion of minority.

**Department of Islamic Studies**

The department of Islamic Studies is a newly established department in Aliah University. It has started its journey from 2017. The department is spreading Islamic education and culture in the region.

**Dept. of Urdu**

The department of Urdu is playing a outstanding role to the promotion of Urdu language and culture in Bengal.

## **West Bengal Board of Madrasah Education (WBBME)**

The Madrasah Education system in Bengal was grown up and flourished with the foundation of the Calcutta Madrasah in 1780 by the British East India Company. In 1915, the new scheme of Madrasah Education was introduced by the initiatives of Moulana Abu Nasar Mohammad Waheed, I.E.S., the renowned educationist and administrator and the then Principal of Dacca Senior Madrasah. The East Bengal Secondary Education Board (1921), the Board of Islamic Intermediate and Secondary Education Dacca for High Madrasah Education (1922) and the Central Madrasah Examination Board for Senior Madrasah Education (1927) were established to conduct the Madrasah Examinations till 1947. As per recommendation of the Moazzamuddin Committee (1946), the Central Madrasah Examination Board was converted to the Madrasah Education Board, Bengal and later, in 1950 it was renamed as the West Bengal Madrasah Education Board, the oldest Board of Madrasah Education in our Country.

### **There are two types of Education system in West Bengal**

One is School Education system and other is Madrasah Education system. In Madrasah Education system two categories of institutions are functioning: one is recognized by the West Bengal Board of Madrasah

Education and aided by the Govt. of West Bengal with entire liability of Salary, Retirement and other benefits (Gratuity, Pension, Leave etc.) of teaching and non-teaching staff. The Govt. also bear financial liabilities for infrastructure development, incentives and other facilities i.e. free text books, sanitation and drinking water etc.

The other category of Madrasahs are established, run and maintained by the individual or by community or by organization etc. and those are called Muktab or Khariji Madrasahs.

For the first, institutions recognized by Board, two types of Madrasah Education are functioning in the state namely:

- i) The new scheme –High Madrasah Education System
- ii) The old scheme-Senior Madrasah Education System

### **High Madrasah Education System**

It is a modern education system which was introduced by the Government of Bengal following the recommendations of Maulana Abu Nasar Md. Waheed. To cope up with modern trends and to meet the global challenges, the Govt. of West Bengal had constituted Madrasah Education Committee under the Chairmanship of Dr. A.R.Kidwai a renowned educationist of India and also the former Governor of Haryana and West Bengal. The syllabus and subjects taught in High Madrasahs are



same as that of Madhyamik system except two subjects Arabic and Islam Parichay.

### **Senior Madrasah Education System**

This education system is a balanced blend of moral teaching-learning (Theology and Islamic Culture) with modern education (Science and Technology). The reformation and modernization has been done following the recommendations of the Review Committee 1978 (chaired by Prof. Mustafa-Bin-Quasim) and Madrasah Education Committee 2002 (chaired by Dr. A.R.Kidwai). The curriculum and syllabus ( from Primary to Post Graduate) have been restructured with a view to open access to higher education, employment possibilities and social opportunities. The Senior Madrasahs running from class I to class X are called Alim Madrasahs and the Madrasahs from class I to class XII are called Fazil Madrasahs.

At present, there are 609 recognised Madrasahs in our state. 102 Madrasahs are running under Senior Madrasah Education System and rest 493 Madrasahs are under High Madrasah Education System.

**Secular character:** The Madrasahs of West Bengal are open to all. Children from different social, economic and cultural backgrounds, disadvantaged, minority communities, landless and children with disabilities or special needs, irrespective of gender are enrolled to these

Madrasahs. Any person irrespective of cast, creed and gender may be appointed as Teacher of the Madrasah, non-teaching staff and members of the Managing Committee.

No. of students in recognised Madrasahs are 4,47,017 (approximate as on August 2010)

No. of Boys : 1,82,784 i.e. 40.89 %

No. of Girls : 2,64,233 i.e. 59.11%

### **Al-Ameen Memorial Minority College**

The Al-Ameen Memorial Minority College was established recalling Al-Ameen, the essential quality of the Prophet (P.B.U.H). The College is a notably noble achievement of the Al-Ameen Memorial Society for Education & Health Programme. It was founded in the year 2004. The College is a brain - child of its founder, Late Prof. Md. Roushan Ali, a patron of letters, a far-sighted and noble hearted philanthropist. The impediment of his old age did not stand on his way to till his demise to offer encouragement and valuable suggestions every now and then to the founder Secretary of the College to bring it to its full flaged state.

With an aim to imparting education (Higher Education) among the educationally backward minorities of West Bengal but not to the exclusion of the students of other communities, the Society humbly prayed to the Govt. of

West Bengal for according necessary permission to the establishment of a Minority College under the Article 30 of the Constitution. The state Govt. after necessary verification and with the kind recommendation of the Hon'ble National Commission for Minority Educational Institutions, New Delhi, kindly accorded requisite permission to the establishment of the College.

This is the first Muslim Minority General Degree College of West Bengal. It is affiliated to the University of Calcutta. It is a co-educational institution for higher learning. In 2008 the College was awarded Minority Status Certificate and was included U/S. 2(f) of the UGC act, 1956, in the same year.

The college offeres subjects like Arabic (Hons.), Arabic (General) and Islamic History & Culture (Hons.) along with other subjects.

### **MILLI AL-AMEEN COLLEGE For Girls**

The establishment of MILLI AL-AMEEN COLLEGE by the MILLI educational organization (registred under the west Bengal societies registration act 1961) fulfilled the long cherished desire of the the Muslims of Kolkata to have a degree college for girls belonging to educationally backward sections of the society in general and Muslim community since independence. For the purpose of establishing the same the organisation purchased a

landed property of about 15 cottaha at 43, Hare Krishna konar road, Kolkata-700014 and got constructed a new four stored building thereon according to the plan sanctioned by the calcutta municipal corporation, with donations, contributions and subscriptions collected over years from amongst the members and institution of the Muslim community.

### **Mission**

Residential Educational Institutions for Muslims boys and girls across the state. There are about 400 this kind of missions is running in WB. There is no iota of doubt that these missions played an important role for the development of Muslim education in WB. Among all these missions Al-Ameen Mission is the pioneer of the field. History and role of some missions are discussed briefly.

### **Al-Ameen Mission**

The Secretary General of the Mission, M. Nurul Islam, set up the Khalatpur Junior High Madrasa in 1976 when he was still studying his 10th Standard. In May 1984, he started the Institute of Islamic Culture, setting up a hostel for the institute in 1986 in the Madrasa building itself with the collection of one fistful of rice from every home in his village, Khalatpur. In January 1987, it was renamed as Al-Ameen Mission.

As well as being an educational institute, Al-Ameen Mission does charitable works for the Muslim community. It has helped unemployed Muslims with loans and has scholarship programs to help other communities' needy students.

Al-Ameen Mission is a residential institute located near Khalatpur, Udaynarayanpur, Howrah, West Bengal, India. Established in 1986 it is now spread across 15 districts of the state with 56 branches. It has 12 thousand residential students now. Here passed about 16 thousands students. Al-Ameen Mission follows the curriculum of WBBSE, WBHSE, CBSE Board. Al Ameen Mission has received the prestigious award "Banga Bhusan Award" in 2015.

1947 was a watershed year for India. It achieved its independence but simultaneously the western as well as its eastern side was partitioned. The Muslims were badly hit, particularly for those who remained in West Bengal. For several decades, the community remained moribund. From the mid eighties of the last century, situation began to change when Al-Ameen Mission came into existence. In the year 1986-87, Al-Ameen Mission started its journey in a humble way with only seven students. The motto was to give modern education with moral values in a fully residential system where students from all strata of the society, irrespective of their financial condition would live, learn, and grow together. The students, coming from

the poorest section of the society, were given education free of cost. Donations & Zakat were collected to meet up the expenses and gradually the name of the Mission spread far and wide and numerous people came along and a movement which has been aptly called 'the Mission Movement' started. Now, it has made its presence feel very strongly in the state of West Bengal.

It is heartening to note that Muslims of Bengal are embracing education to break free from a certain way of life and age-old stereotyping. With all humbleness we want to say that the Mission has played a pivotal role here.

Academic excellence with a religious atmosphere, this has been the mission of Al Ameen Mission, the pioneer Muslim educational institution in West Bengal since 1987. Its main campus is situated at Khalatpur, Howrah district, at least 60 km from Kolkata. Al-Ameen Mission has tried to achieve quality and excellence in the field of education following the principles of fairness, equity, equality and transparency with preferences to the poor and meritorious students. Al-Ameen defines its objectives as promoting quality education among the poor and backward class minorities of the society and developing the socio-economic condition of the Muslims. Every parent wants to send their children to school to get quality education, thorough knowledge, develop honesty, confidence and lifelong effective learning, with a

passion to excel at home, school and in the society, and for Muslims an Islamic environment. This has been the philosophy of Al Ameen Mission

After the partition the cream of the society, elite Muslim settled in Bangladesh. Rest of the Muslim potentially lagged behind in education from that period due to poor condition as a whole. But gradually they revived their situation and tried to compete in the education field. In the eighties, a new renaissance was generated in West Bengal to develop the traditional education for the Muslim children. Al Ameen Mission started in the eighties has now become a big tree with many branches.

### **A Report Regarding Al-Ameen Mission By Shefa Siddiqui**

Al Ameen Mission the West Bengal based Muslim NGO in recent years has produced numerous professionals including 2500 doctors, 4000 engineers and 65 civil servants.

This year too Al-Ameen Mission has broken all its previous records as 422 students qualified India's biggest medical entrance exam, NEET, out of which 128 (30.5%) students are from poor and BPL families, 133 (31.5%) are from middle and upper middle income group and 161 (38%) from lower middle income group.

The man behind the mission, Nurul Islam told Muslim Mirror that 62 students got AIR within 1500, 147 within

25000, 246 within 35000, 367 within 45000 and 422 within 55000 from the NGO.

The district wise record includes 105 from Murshidabad, 80 from Malda, 54 from S 24 Parganas, 34 from Birbhum, 30 from Nadia, 20 from N 24 Parganas, 17 from Burdwan, 15 from Uttar Dinajpur, 15 from Midnapore, 14 from Hoogly, 10 from Howrah, 9 from Dakshin Dinajpur, 7 from Kolkata and 12 from other districts.

Mr. Nurul Islam's vision and tenacity for the betterment and upliftment of the underprivileged has brought great results for the NGO in recent years. He told Muslim Mirror that Ramakrishna Mission truly inspired his inner spirit and compelled to follow the same during his college days in Kolkata. The Muslims in West Bengal are considered as one of the most deprived and backward section among the muslims in India whose population records to the second largest after Uttar Pradesh.

It is significant to mention that Murshidabad and Malda district being the most backward have given the highest numbers of NEET qualifiers. Out of 422 students 105 are from Murshidabad whereas 80 are from Malda.

Giving the insights M. Nurul Islam said 'Out of 422 NEET qualifiers 360 boys and 62 girls are among the NEET qualifiers this year 2019 from Al-Ameen Mission'.

According to M. Nurul Islam the results reveals that 128 students selected in NEET are the ones whose total



expenses were done by the Zakat fund of the NGO whereas 161 are those who paid half (50%) of the expense and 133 students were under the full payment category who paid the full amount of 6000 INR per month.

M. Nurul Islam, the director of the NGO started a coaching class with only eleven students in a madarsa building at the outskirts of Kolkata in 1987.

**A report regarding Al-Ameen Mission's incredible achievements , 370 students cracked NEET-2018**

It may sound incredible but it is true. A Muslim NGO in West Bengal so far produced as many as 2500 doctors , 4000 engineers and 65 civil servants. Adding one more feather in the cap, the NGO Al-Ameen Mission achieved unbelievable feat in this year's NEET, the country's biggest medical entrance exam . It may be a sort of record for a Muslim organization as 370 students of Al-Ameen Mission cracked the NEET. Out of 370 successful candidates 319 got admission in government colleges while 51 were admitted in private medical colleges in West Bengal.

The man behind these fantastic achievements is M. Nurul Islam who's missionary zeal and tenacity for upliftment of the community is yielding spectacular results from last three decades.

Revealing his inspiration behind the success story of his mission a soft-spoken but fully determined M. Nurul

Islam told Muslim Mirror that he was inspired by Ramakrishna Mission during his college days at Kolkata. Muslims in West Bengal are considered educationally one of the most backward segments of the Indian Muslims who are numerically second largest group after the Uttar Pradesh.

He said this year's NEET results are encouraging and a record for a Muslim NGO working for the socio-educational upliftment of the community.

It is worth mentioning that Murshidabad and Malda districts listed as the most backward districts in the country have cracked NEET with aplomb. Out of 370 students 111 are from Murshidabad while 82 are from Malda districts.

Giving the details of the NEET crackers of Al-Ameen Mission M.Nurul Islam said ' Out of 370 NEET crackers 289 and 81 got admission MBBS and BDS courses respectively while 282 boys and 88 girls were among the NEET crackers from Al-Ameen Mission this year'.

Furthermore, break up shows that 119 students selected in NEET are those whose total expenses were borne by the institution from Zakat fund while 176 are those who paid only 50 percent of the total expenses in half paid category' while only 75 selected students were from the full payment category who paid 6000 rupees per month.

408 students of Al-Ameen Mission also selected to get admission in engineering courses.

There are a numbers of institutions and organizations have set up coaching facility to prepare Muslim students for NEET, JEE and other competitive examinations. NGO working for the social and educational upliftment of the minority community in all 19 districts across the West Bengal.

M.Nurul Hasan started his institute with only eleven students in a Madarsa building in year 1986 at his native village Khalatpur , in Howrah district 70 km from Kolkata.

## **Maulana Azad Academy**

This is a residential school for boys from age 9 to 18 specially for poor and backward Muslim students run by Mostak Hossain – a Famous Industrialist.

Dr. Sk. Abdul Mujid Chairman of the Mission writes about the aims and objects of the Academy:

“Education is the backbone of a nation.” Keeping this idea in mind and with a vision to disseminate modern, scientific and moral value oriented education among the poor, needy, orphan, backward but promising students of our mother land India, we established an ideal educational institute named **Maulana Azad Academy** at **Hallyan, Bagnan, Howrah, West Bengal, India** on the 10th June, 2002. Maulana Azad Academy is certainly a silent revolution in the education movement of Free India. Our beloved institute has just completed glorious one 13 years of its age but it pleases us to think that within such a short span of time we have achieved spectacular and noteworthy success by dint of which its name and fame has been spread far and wide.

We have great pleasure in bringing to your kind attention that, at present more than 1136 needy, poor, orphan but meritorious students coming from almost all the districts of West Bengal have been studying here starting from class V to X+2(Science Stream) under the guidance and

supervision of 98 highly qualified, vastly experienced and whole-heartedly devoted teachers. It is to be mentioned in this connection that out of 1136 students 40 % orphan and underprivileged students are continuing their lessons enjoying free-ship.

You will be glad to learn that in Kolkata we have set up an educational centre named **Maulana Azad Academy Career Point** where our students after passing out the board exams (10+2 standard) are properly trained to sit for various competitive exams like AIPMT, JEE MAIN & ADVANCE, WBJEE and so on. Our pupils have achieved spectacular success in those exams and now they are well established in different public and private sectors.

We feel extremely happy to share you the news that a new feather of success has been added to the crown of our beloved Academy. On the last 9th March, 2013 our institute was rewarded the Indian Leadership Award For Education Excellence by All India Achievers Foundation, New Delhi.

At present a considerable number of students are working in medical, engineering and high professional field.

**The** Motto of the Academy is as follows:

- Make every student a good citizen & self-supported person through the ideal blend of the Dictum of Quran, Sunnah & Modern Education.
- Endeavour for gradual & total development of the backward and underprivileged class of people by spreading all types of Education (female education in particular).
- Work for rehabilitation and Health aid for the old and poor.
- Maintenance of communal harmony and standing against communalism by spreading the words of Tauheed among mass.
- Inspire students and the common people in the bondage of international brotherhood.

#### **Academy's Future Plans**

- Introduce coaching for MSC & SSC, WBCS, IAS, PSC, UPSC, Banking Services etc. Job oriented Examinations by Special instructors in the Kolkata Venue etc.

### **Rahmat-E-Alam Mission for Boys & Girls**

Rahmat-E-Alam Mission is run by the Rahmat-E-Alam Educational and Welfare Trust, a Not-for-profit minority charitable organization working in the field of education.

The Mission is located in North 24 Parganas District of West Bengal. It has approximately 1300 residential students now.

The Founder Secretary of the Mission, Late Alhaz Sirajul Islam, set up the Rahmat-E-Alam Mission in 2005, setting up a hostel for the institute itself with his own monetary contribution. He also donated 16 bighas of land for this purpose. And Rahmat-E-Alam Mission (Girls') was established in 2009.

As the mission is being run by a charitable trust namely Rahmat-E-Alam Educational & Welfare Trust, Rahmat-E-Alam Mission does charitable works for the Muslim community. It helps underprivileged Muslims students with its own sponsorship programme and has scholarship programs to help other communities' needy students. The Mission also provides G.D. Scholarships to the needy and meritorious students with the benevolent support from G.D. Charitable Society (a philanthropic organization which is being run under the patronage of the great benefactor of West Bengal Alhaz Mustak Hossain).

The mission is mostly run by donation and Zakat. Muslims throughout the country contribute their zakat to

the Mission, which takes care for the seats reserved for poor, destitute and orphans. It has received funding from many sources such as G.D. Charitable Society, Department of Minority Affairs and Madrasah Education, Government of West Bengal, Department of Mass Education Extension and Library Services, Government of West Bengal, BEUP, WBMDFC etc.

The Mission comprises about 30 bighas of land. It consists of a three-storied boys' hostel building, a three-storied girls' school building and a three-storey administrative building with a guest house and health Unit. It now has about 1300 students, with a residential staff of 102, and a part-time and non-residential staff of 50.

This residential school strives towards the total personality development of the pupils so as to achieve the best in this world and in the hereafter. Hence, along with school education, the school imparts moral instructions and socially useful and productive work experience to the pupils. It also fosters a learning environment which re-inforces the concepts of self discipline, human values, self motivation and duty consciousness. It puts across the principle that education is not filling of an empty vessel but kindling of flame. The management, the teachers, the support staff and the parents have dedicated themselves to nurture young boys and girls with sterling character, achievement, orientation and thirst for best quality of life.



A good number of students of this mission are in white collar job including medical, engineering and other high professional fields. The mission played a key role for the development of education in rural West Bengal.

### **G.D. Study Circle**

G.D. Study Circle started running G.D.Academy (H.S) for coaching class XI,XII & Joint Entrance Examinees in the year 2010 with 73 students at Park Circus and is now housed at 20/1B, A.K. Md. Siddique Lane, Kolkata-16 with 163 students. In addition, 34 Mission schools are working together for extending better education to the marginalized sections of the society.

In the current session, more than 10,000 students are studying in these Missions. The majority of the students are unable to pay even bare minimum concessional charges. The background and financial conditions of the families from which the students come are so poor that we need to grant financial concessions to the tune of 50%, 75% and even 100% for the prosecution of their studies. Alhaj Mustak Hossain, Industrialist and Chairman of G.D. Charitable Society<sup>41</sup>, is instrumental in undertaking

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<sup>41</sup> GD Charitable Society of Pataka group

In 1952 Pataka Industry was founded by Giasuddin Biswas, with Bharat Biri Factory as registered factory and in 1980 Mustak Hossain son of Giasuddin Biswas joined the company and undertook strategic re-alignment and in 1983 Pataka begins expansion of biri market and

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enters Northern India. And in 1989 GD Charitable Society was setup to give organized shape and growth to Group's philanthropic initiatives. And in 1993 East End Silks (P) Ltd. was setup.

Other activities of GD Charitable Society:

#### **GD Hospital & Diabetes Institute**

GD Hospital & Diabetes Institute is a dream come true for Sri Mustak Hossain, Chairman of the Pataka Group of Industries to perpetuate the dreams of his philanthropic parents.

India is soon destined to become the Diabetes capital of the world. The only way to combat this epidemic is to Know Diabetes and Know Medicine. GDDI is the first of its kind in Eastern India conceived by keeping the present and future magnitude of Diabetes in mind. By 2025 India is expected to have 57.2 Million diabetics. The rising prevalence of Diabetes is explained by the genetic predispositions and incompatible lifestyle of Indians making it the biggest silent killer of our society.

GDDI offers affordable yet state-of-the art medical solutions for a wide range of ailments with special emphasis on Diabetes care and related complications. Equipped with contemporary technology, experienced staff and reputable doctors, GDDI endeavors to reach out to wider areas of Bengal with education and improved community care of diabetes.

Headquartered in the heart of Kolkata, India, the group meets the requirements of Bengal, Bihar, Jharkhand, Orissa, the North Eastern states and Bangladesh.

This hospital aims to provide comprehensive services under one roof for diabetic care including all complications of Diabetes as well as standard hospital care for associated disease in diabetic patients. Equipped with modern technology. Experienced staff and reputed doctors, the hospital also aims to reach out to wider areas of Bengal with education to improve community care of diabetes.

such a noble work as a part of corporate social responsibility.

Several students from poorer families in West Bengal overcame a number of hurdles to outshine in the higher secondary as well as the West Bengal Joint Entrance Examination (WBJEE) for engineering and medical

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One section of the hospital will be subsidized for the economically challenged populace, where Out-patient as well as In-patient services will be provided at very nominal and affordable rates.

Commitment of GD Hospital

- Preserving the greatest gift of Almighty, health
  - Year-round supply of free medicines to remote Indian villages
  - Free treatments & healthcare solutions for the needy rural community, in distant villages
  - Free treatments, even for complicated diseases that would be otherwise almost incurable in rural India
  - Dispensing free treatment to over 10,000 people, every month in the dispensaries of Murshidabad
  - To provide treatment for diabetes, gynecology, chest, eye, pediatrics and gastroenterology
  - Providing light to more than 100 souls with eye surgeries, every month
  - To provide the above mentioned service in a much more and constructive method. Pataka has taken a challenging task of building a 50 bedded free healthcare clinic in a remote hamlet called Aurangabad in Murshidabad

courses because of scholarship from G D Charitable Society of Pataka Group of Industries.

## Scholarship

### **Kanyashree Prakalpa**

Kanyashree is an initiative taken by the Government of West Bengal to improve the life and the status of the girls by helping economically backward families with cash so that families do not arrange the marriage of their girl child before eighteen years because of economic problem.

#### **Why Kanyashree**

Under the Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, 2006 (PCMA), 18 is the legal age of marriage for girls, and 21 for boys in India. Despite several years of this Act being in existence, the early marriage of children continues to be practiced in West Bengal. According to DLHS -3, 2007-08, the state ranked fifth highest in the country when it came to the prevalence of child marriage, with almost every second girl a child bride (54.7%). Although more pervasive in rural areas, statistics revealed that even in non-slum areas of Kolkata, more than a quarter of girls are married before they reach adulthood.

Child marriage is a gendered practice, affecting far more girls than boys. It is perhaps the most prevalent form of sexual abuse of minor girls, and has a negative impact on their health and the health of their children, leaves them financially and socially disempowered, and vulnerable to child labour, trafficking and other forms of exploitation. In fact, the districts with the highest incidence of child

marriage in West Bengal are also those where trafficking is rampant.

Child marriage and school drop-outs go hand in hand. In West Bengal, attendance of girls in school drops from 85% in the age-group 6-10 years to a mere 33% in the age group 15-17 years (NFHS III, 2005-06). After the implementation of free and universal elementary education in India, progress in enrollment and completion of elementary school has been noticed, however, the transition from elementary to secondary school remains a concern. Secondary education is not free, and many impoverished parents, failing to see the economic rationale for investing in their daughters education, marry them off at this age in the belief that this will enhance the girls and the family's security. This step however, condemns the girls to a life of financial and social insecurity. Field studies show that most women have to take up some economic activity in later years, and that their lack of qualifications and work experience makes them ill-equipped for the labour market, and therefore susceptible to poverty and exploitation throughout life. As a result, poverty, a factor that fuels child marriage, in turn perpetuates the feminization of poverty.

After the enactment of the PCMA 2006, the Department of Women Development and Social Welfare and Child Development (DWD) implemented anti-child marriage campaigns spreading the message of prevention, and

endorsing enforcement of the law and its penal provisions for adults aiding and abetting child marriage,. However it quickly became evident that legal prohibition and social messaging are largely ineffective in addressing child marriage. For one, Indias multiplicity of formal and religious laws complicates the issue of what constitutes the appropriate age of marriage for girls. Secondly, because the practice is ascribed to time-honoured tradition and is justified from a patriarchal perspective as essential for protection of girls from the evils of society, eradicating it requires tangible drivers of social change that can transform victims made vulnerable by their age and gender into actors determining their own lives.

Kanyashree's core objectives are simple and focussed: it aims to ensure that girls stay in school and delay their marriages till at least age 18. Kanyashree's approach is also simple: it uses a social safety net mechanism that has shown a high degree of success in transforming the lives of children and adolescents in several countries in the world: Conditional Cash Transfers. The scheme has two cash transfer components:

- The first is an Annual incentive of Rs. 750/- to be paid annually to the girls in the age group 13 to 18 years (studying in Class VIII equivalent or above for every year that they remained in education, provided they are unmarried at the time.
- The second is a One-Time Grant of Rs. 25,000/-, to be paid after a girl turns 18, provided that she was engaged

in an academic or occupational pursuit and was unmarried.

The term 'education' encompasses secondary and higher secondary education, as well as the various vocational, technical and sports courses available for this age group. Given that children from socio-economically disadvantaged families are more vulnerable to child marriage, the scheme is open only to girls from families whose annual income is Rs. 1,20,000/- or less.

### **Objective**

Kanyashree Prakalpa seeks to improve the status and wellbeing of girls, specifically those from socio-economically disadvantaged families through Conditional Cash Transfers by:

- Incentivizing them to continue in education for a longer period of time, and complete secondary or higher secondary education, or equivalent in technical or vocational streams, thereby giving them a better footing in both the economic and social spheres.
- Disincentivising marriage till at least the age of 18, the legal age of marriage, thereby reducing the risks of early pregnancies, associated risks of maternal and child mortality, and other debilitating health conditions, including those of malnutrition.
- It was also decided that the Scheme should confer more than just monetary support; it should be a means of



financial inclusion and a tool of empowerment for adolescent girls. The schemes benefits are therefore paid directly to bank accounts in the girls names, leaving the decision of utilization of the money in their hands.

- To reinforce the positive impact of increased education and delayed marriages, the scheme also works to enhance the social power and self-esteem of girls through a targeted behaviour change communication strategy. The communication strategy not only builds awareness of the scheme, but includes adolescent-friendly approaches like events, competitions and Kanyashree clubs, and the endorsement of strong women figures as role models to promote social and psychological empowerment.

As more and more girls remain in school, it is envisaged that they will use the opportunity to gain skills and knowledge that will help them become economically independent. Even if girls do get married soon after they turn 18, it is expected that their education and enhanced social and emotional development will give them a better foundation for in their adult lives. And over time, as entire generations of women enter marriages only after they have some degree of economic independence, it is expected that the practice of child marriage is completely eradicated, and women will attain their right to health, education and socio-economic equality.

## **Awards**

Kanyashree Prakalpa has received national and international recognition for its design and features of good governance. Awards received:

- 1st Place Winner in UNPSA Award 2017
- Finalist in GEM-Tech Awards 2016 organized by ITU and UN Women
- United Nations WSIS Prize 2016 Champion in e-Government Category (WSIS Action Line C7)
- CSI-Nihilent Award, 2014-15.
- Skoch Award and Order of Merit 2015 for Smart Governance.
- National E-governance Award 2014 – 2015 awarded by the Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances, Government of India.
- Manthan Award for Digital Inclusion for Development (South Asia and Asia Pacific) 2014 under the category E-Women and Empowerment.
- West Bengal Chief Ministers Award for Empowerment of Girls, 2014

## **The Scheme was appreciated as a good practice at:**

- Trafficking in Persons (TIP) Enclave organized by U. S. Consulate & Shakti Vahini (Siliguri, February 2016).
- National Workshop on "Conditional Cash Transfers for Children: Experiences of States in India" organized by NITI Aayog, India (Delhi, December 2015).

- Consultation on "Empowerment of Adolescent Girls" organized by the World Bank (Ranchi, May 2015).
- Consultation on "Child Marriage and Teenage Pregnancies" organized Tata Institute of Social Sciences (Delhi, March 2015).
- The "Girls Summit organized by DFID and UNICEF (London, July 2014)

National Family Health Survey statistics show that the number of women married before 18 has dropped from 53.3% in 2004-05 to 40.7% in 2015-16, though still above the national average of 26.8%.

With the Mamata Banerjee government doling out freebies, starting from cycles, shoes and school bags to students, government schools have turned out to be an attractive destination for a majority of rural school-going children. However, the biggest crowd puller has turned out to be the government's direct cash transfer scheme for girls — the Kanyashree Prakalpa. Launched in 2013, it is one of the flagship schemes of the Banerjee-led government.

Data from Census 2011 suggest that West Bengal had an adolescent (10-19 years) population of 17.3 million, out of which 48.11 per cent or around 8.3 million, were girls. So far, Kanyashree has covered about 3.4 million. Under the scheme, unmarried girls aged 13-18 years enrolled in classes VIII-XII, get an annual scholarship of Rs 760. This

apart, they get a one-time grant of Rs 25,000 upon attaining the age of 18, provided they are enrolled in an education institution. The annual family income of the beneficiaries should not be above Rs 1.2 lakh.

Notably, West Bengal has a high prevalence of child marriage, leading to high school drop-outs, particularly from IX to XII classes.

According to data from District Level Household and Facility Survey, in 2007-08, West Bengal was the fifth-highest in child marriage. According to data from Census 2011, the state is home to nearly 27.45 million married women, among them 11.06 million were married below the age of 18 years. Of late, the state has seen a reduction in school drop-out ratio as well as in incidences of child marriage. "In the past two years, the number of girl students between classes VIII and XII has increased 15-20 per cent. Earlier, we would see a marked reduction in the number of girls in Classes IX and X," says Ali.

According to West Bengal government data, in the secondary level, dropouts among girls fell from 23.06 per cent in 2012-13 to 19.79 per cent in 2015-16. Further, according to Kanyashree baseline survey of June 2015, conducted with a sample size of nine schools across three districts, the enrolment of girls increased from 9,021 in 2013-14 to 9,329 in 2014-15. The increase in enrolment significantly improved in the secondary and higher

secondary levels. The number of girls dropping out of school reduced from 161 in 2013-14 to 71 in 2014-15, a reduction of 56 per cent, the survey said. Further, there was a 33 per cent drop in cases of child marriage.

The West Bengal government, too, has been increasing its budget allocation for women development and social welfare, as it increased from nearly Rs 700 crore in 2014-15 to about Rs 1,000 crore in 2016-17.

Recently, the United Nations Children's Emergency Fund applauded West Bengal for its intervention in the education sector to ensure almost 100 per cent enrolment in primary education. The scheme was also shortlisted among the best projects in public administration by the United Nations for 2014-15.

### **Aikyashree Scholarship WBMDFC - Minority Students**

West Bengal Minorities' Department & Finance Corporation (WBMDFC) started Aikyashree Scholarship Programme for the Minorities Students in West Bengal. This is a complete Scholarship Portal for WB Minorities Students developed by WBMDFC. Students from Class One to Ph.D from Minority Backgrounds can apply for various WB Government scholarship Scheme through this WBMDFC Aikyashree Scholarship Portal.

### **Objectives of Aikyashree Scholarship Scheme**

The main objective of WBMDFC Aikyashree Scholarship Scheme is to encourage the minority communities to send their children to school and to prevent dropout. This scheme also helps students to continue their higher education, increasing their employability potential.

### **WBMDFC Aikyashree Scholarship Schemes**

West Bengal Minorities' Development & Finance Corporation (WBMDFC) is providing the following scholarship.

- WB Pre Matric Scholarship
- WB Post Matric Scholarship
- WB Merit cum Means Scholarship
- WB Talent Support Scholarship
- Swami Vivekananda Merit cum Means Scholarship (SVMCM)

### **WB OASIS Scholarship for SC, ST, OBC**

The government of West Bengal providing **OASIS Scholarship** for SC, ST and OBC students, who are currently studying from class 9th to Postgraduate course. To help students financially for their higher studies, the Backward Classes Welfare Department of West Bengal **providing this Scholarship.**

Students who are belonging from SC, ST and OBC category in HS, UG, PG, Medical, Engineering, Pharmacy, B.Ed, M.Ed, Diploma, PTTI, Nursing, B.V.Sc, LLB courses, may apply for the same.

### **Some eminent libraries working for upliftment of Muslims**

According to the report entitled “Paschimbanger Sadharan Granthogar Parishebar Hal-Hakikat” – Conditions of Public Libraries in West Bengal – prepared by the Mass Education Extension & Library Services Department, Govt. of West Bengal 2018, there are 2480 public libraries under the MEELSD, out of 2480 libraries 13 are Govt. libraries, 2460 are Govt. funded libraries and 7 are govt. aided.<sup>42</sup>

The State Govt. organizes Career Counseling / Guidance Centers in different Govt. and Govt. Sponsored District and Town / Sub divisional Libraries with financial assistance of Rs. 26.05 lakh per year to help the unemployed youths by providing various information, books, journals, newspapers, periodicals etc. for appearing in competitive examinations.<sup>43</sup> Many students are availing these facilities for their education.

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<sup>42</sup> Paschimbanger Sadharan Granthogar Parishebar Hal-Hakikat, P-3

<sup>43</sup> <https://meels.gov.in/home/page/achievements>

Beside this, a number of Muslim Govt. & non-Govt. libraries are these in WB which provide books, journals, newspapers, periodicals etc to the needy students and some are providing scholarship and free training for various competitive examinations such as Haji Abdullah Library in Noor Ali Lane, Beniapukur, Kolkata, Urdu Central Library of West Bengal, Urdu Academy, Taltala, Kolkata, Muhammad Hanif Memorial Urdu Literary Society and Library, Kinber Street, Kolkata, 700017, Maulana Azad Memorial Library, Buddhu Ostagar Lane, Kolkata, 700009. Maulana Azad Educational Library, Khidirpur, Kol. 700023, Maulana Hali Academy, Topsia Road, Kol. 700039, Sayyed Amir Ali Library, Mominpur Road, Khidirpur, Kol. 700023, Hanifa Public Urdu Primary Library, Narkeldanga Road, Kol. 700011<sup>44</sup> and many more.

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<sup>44</sup> Paschimbanger Sadharan Granthogar Parishebar  
Hal-Hakikat, P-187



### **Report of the Telegraph Regarding Rise of Minority Scholarships in 2017**

According to a report published in daily The Telegraph on 29.10.2017 states that there has been a sharp rise in minority scholarships since Mamata Govt. came to power in 2011. The report said the Bengal government has registered more than 32 lakh minority students under its scholarship schemes so far this year 2017, up from 23 lakh last year 2016.

The report also illustrated that "Chief minister Mamata Banerjee believes that scholarships like these connect students and their families with the government and encourage them to continue studies. Until now, the figure has crossed the 32 lakh mark. This was possible after special camps were held in the districts".

Sources said the chief minister had repeatedly laid stress on securing government facilities for the people of Bengal since coming to power in 2011.

"Schemes like Khadya Sathi, Sabuj Sathi, Yuvashree and Kanyashree have helped the chief minister gain popularity.

A minister said the officials of the minority affairs department had been asked to help the districts administration bring more and more students under the scholarship schemes.

As of now, there are three Centre-funded schemes for minority students - pre-matric, post-matric and merit-cum-means for students in higher education institutes. About 30 lakh students from Bengal were registered under these schemes this year 2017.<sup>45</sup> It is an undeniable fact that these scholarships caused increasing number of students in West Bengal in general and particularly in Muslim community.

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<sup>45</sup> The Telegraph, 29/10/2017

## **Reality of OBC Reservation Policy in West Bengal**

According to a Notification entitled Reservation Rules published by Scheduled Castes and Tribes Welfare Department, West Bengal Govt. in 16<sup>th</sup> August, 1976, Act, 1976 (West Bengal Act XXVII of 1976), Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes are enjoying Reservation in Govt jobs and learning institutions since 1976.<sup>46</sup> And in a historic move, the Seventh Left Front Government brought 53 Muslim communities within the ambit of reservation quota as OBCs on the basis of their backwardness. Among the 53 more backward communities identified, 49 are Muslims. The remaining 4 Muslim communities have been identified as Backward. Thus Muslim community came under the OBC reservation policy in 2010 after the recommendation of Justice Rajinder Sachar Committee in 2007. It means Muslims are lacking behind in getting OBC reservation by about 34 years. And unfortunately some experts say Muslims are still not getting reservation facilities.

### **OBC Reservation Policy Amendment 2013**

The West Bengal State Higher Educational Institutions (Reservation in Admissions) Rules, 2013 enacted by the Mamata Banerjee-led Trinamool Congress government

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<sup>46</sup> Reservation Rules, Govt. Of West Bengal, Scheduled Castes And Tribes Welfare Department, P.1

mandates 17% reservation for OBC students. Of this 17%, 10% is reserved for the OBC-A category and 7% for the OBC-B category. In turn, 61 out of 81 groups listed in the OBC-A category and 38 out of 96 groups in the OBC-B category are from Muslim backgrounds.

The Trinamool thus claims that they have brought 99% of Muslims in the state under various OBC categories to give them the benefit of reservation. In 2019, Swapan Pal, the head of OBC morcha of the West Bengal BJP, even accused the state government of depriving Hindu groups by accommodating more Muslim communities in OBC quota.

If poor Muslims were allowed to access jobs and educational opportunities through OBC reservations, that could significantly change their socioeconomic status in the society. In 2016, economist Amartya Sen released a report that expressed concern about the lived realities of Muslims in Bengal. For example, only 1% of Muslim households in Bengal had a salaried employee in the private sector.<sup>47</sup> It means the OBC Reservation Policy is not followed.

How far OBC quota is followed by the authority would be crystal clear by the following report published in Muslim Mirror from Kolkata, July 27, 2020:

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<sup>47</sup> July 7, 2012 Business standard

### **‘Muslim Appeasement’: No Muslim out of 12 Madrasa Teachers Recruitment in West Bengal, 2020**

In second term Trinamool Congress in West Bengal led by Mamata Banerjee is facing allegation of discrimination against Muslim community. BJP and other saffron parties always blame West Bengal CM Mamata Banerjee for appeasement of Muslim in state. Apparently BJP has decided to play ‘Muslim appeasement’ card in coming 2021 state Assembly elections. But, reality is different. However Mamata Banerjee is working for the development of the minority communities in Bengal. Her secular image has got popularity among the Muslims in the state.

She introduced ten percent OBC-A reservation in government jobs in Bengal. OBC-A particularly covers Muslim community. So, Muslims are benefited from the reservation. But a section of communal officers in the inside the administration not willing to implement OBC-A reservation quota properly. Even recruitment of teachers in English Medium Model Madrasa which is under the Minority Affair and Madrasa Education department are not concerned with the deprived the Muslim community.

On 23rd July 2020 Public Service Commission of West Bengal Government declared the recommended teachers list of Geography subject for 12 state run English Medium

Model Madrasa in Bengal. Surprisingly all 12 recommended teachers come from Hindu community. No Muslim figures in the recommended teachers list. Some social media are protesting against the 'communal' approach of the ruling government. Even, former State Minority Affairs and Madrasa Education Minister Dr. Abdus Sattar, who is now a Congress leader, has condemned the discrimination recruitment process of Model Madrasa teachers. Not only Dr. Abdus Sattar, Member of Parliament and Congress leader Pradip Bhattacharya, MP Bikash Ranjan Bhattacharya and Pradip Bhattacharya alleged that, there is lack of transparency in recruitment of teachers in Model Madrasa. Interview panel should have Muslim representative and secular persons for proper recruitment. MLA Sujan Chakraborty condemned that saying 'absence of minority candidate in recruitment for Model Madrasa is surprising. Social Students Organisations has protested the move. Ariyan Sultan the head of organization told, that they had started campaigning against the discrimination of the Muslim candidates in Model Madrasa teacher recruitment in the state.

In West Bengal the first Government run English medium High Madrasa started functioning on 23<sup>rd</sup> June for the academic year 2014-15 in Nadia district's Paninala village. At that time for KG classes and above 5 teachers had been appointed on temporary basis. Classes were

held from 8 am to 12 noon. This Madrasa had been 'Paninala English Medium High Madrasa' and built by the state government on 187 acres of Waqf land belonging to department of Minority Affairs and Madrasa Education had spent Rs 8 Crore for the construction and basic infrastructure of Madrasa buildings . It was a great initiative by Nadia's District Magistrate P. B. Saleem who introduced first English Medium Madrasa in Bengal. But the concept to establish English Medium Madrasa was introduced during Left Front regime in early 2010 at that time Dr. Abdus Sattar was State Minority Affairs minister . According to Abdus Sattar 'in the first phase 'the Madrasa Education department planned to open 12 English Medium Madrasa in 11 minority-dominated districts.

However, State Minority Affairs and Madrasa Education Department took initiatives to establish at least 14 Model Madrasa which is English medium. This initiative has been rapidly increased when Chief Minister announced allocation of sufficient fund in state Budget for Minority development.

## List of Successful Candidates:


**PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION, WEST BENGAL**  
161A, S.P. MUKHERJEE ROAD, KOLKATA – 700 026

Name of the candidates recommended for recruitment to 12 (twelve) permanent posts of Assistant Master/Mistress in Geography in English Medium Govt. High Madrasah under the Minority Affairs & Madrasah Education Department, Govt. of West Bengal [Advt. No. 4(6)/2017].

Sl. No.	Roll No.	Name
1	4100730	Soumen Ghosh
2	4101032	Moumita Sar
3	4100076	Baishali Kundu
4	4100503	Sushobhan Majumdar
5	4100428	Meghdut Show
6	4100552	Suraj Ghosh
7	4100129	Shuvasish Karmokar
8	4100299	Sanjib Chakraborty
9	4100027	Pallab Nandi
10	4100723	Chandradip Paul
11	4100146	Mrinmoy Pal
12	4100590	Rekha Mondal

N.B. Candidates are hereby informed that no separate intimation letter will be sent in this regard.

By order of the Commission

 24/7/2020

Assistant Secretary  
Public Service Commission, West Bengal

PSC called for interview for different subject to recruit Assistant Master/ Mistress Against the Advt 4 (2) 2017



for English, Advt 4 (3) 2017 for Bengali, Advt 4 (4) 2017 for Mathematics, Advt 4 (5) 2017 for Chemistry/Physics and Advt 4 (6) 2017 for Geography. The interview was called in March, 2020 on separate dates. After the interview only Geography subject result has been declared on 24<sup>th</sup> July, 2020. Result show, for 12 permanent post of Geography subject all recommended teachers are from Hindu Community, none of them is Muslim. However, interview was held on 2nd to 5th March, 2020, in which out of 64 candidates 14 were Muslims. They are, Firdausi Rahman Siddika, Joynab Khatun, Rozina Khatun, Mehedi Hasan Mandal, Sairuddin Sk, Bulbul Hasan, Md, Nasibul Hoque, Munshi Md. Amim, Tarikul Islam, Ariful Mallick, Md Hafizur Rahman, Iman Sk, Md. Juber Alam and Md. Azizul Hossain.

These Muslim was called as OBC (A) category. But, when result declared on 24<sup>th</sup> July, no Muslim got the chances. The successful candidates are from Hindu community: Soumen Ghosh, Moumita Kar, Baishali Kundu, Shishovan Majumder, Meghdut Shaw, Suraj Ghosh, Shuvasish Karmokar, Sanjib Chakraborty, Pallab Nandi, Chandradip paul, Mrinmoy pal and Rekha Mondal..<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> Muslim Mirror, July 27, 2020, by Zaidul Haque

- **Only one Muslim among 12 teachers appointed in Bengali for English Medium Madrassas in West Bengal**
- The Mamata Banerjee-led government in West Bengal has come under criticism in connection with fresh appointments for English medium madrassas in the state.
- The state's Public Service Commission has published a list of 12 teachers recruited for the said madrassas. However, the list includes the name of only one Muslim.
- In a similar manner, no Muslim teacher was mentioned on the list of 12 teachers appointed in Geography for English medium madrassas in July 2020.
- Scores of activists and politicians have raised their concern over declining representation of Muslim teachers in government-run English medium madrassas in West Bengal. Qaumi Awaz, an Urdu news portal, quoted Communist Party of India politician, Dr Fuad Halim, as saying that the TMC government has never been serious for the educational development of Muslims.
- Reacting to the development, Mohammad Reyaz, assistant professor at Kolkata-based Aliah University suggested that the recruitment of teachers for English medium madrassas should be done by the state's Madrasah Service Commission and not by Public Service Commission.

- After the Sachar Committee exposed the hypocrisy of the Left Government and how they kept the Muslims in a perpetual backward state in Bengal, the so-called champions of secularism grudgingly acceded to some of the measure demands of the community, including setting up Aliah University and model English medium madrasahs (WB is one of few states where Madrasa Board is successfully running Higher Madrasahs with degrees equivalent to senior secondary).
- 12 such English medium madrasahs were to be set up as announced by the then Minority Minister Abdus Sattar in 2009. Finally, English medium madrasah began operating from 2014-15.
- In the name of merit, 12 teachers appointed for Geography in June 2020, not a single one was Muslim. And now out of 12 Bengali teachers appointed, only one is a Muslim, selected under OBC-A category.
- It should be noted that in the advertisement for these madrasah teachers, one of the desired qualifications is the basic knowledge of Islamic culture.
- This is the kind of minority appeasement that Muslims get in Bengal that some people do not get tired of talking about.


- Even in other Madrasahs, teachers recruited through Madrasah Commission, there are several non-Muslim teachers, but they do not act in such a biased manner where Muslims are systematically being left out.

**PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION, WEST BENGAL**  
161A, S.P. MUKHERJEE ROAD, KOLKATA – 700 026

Name of the candidates recommended for recruitment to 12 (twelve) permanent posts of Assistant Master/Mistress in Bengali in English Medium Govt. High Madrasah under the Minority Affairs & Madrasah Education Department, Govt. of W.B. against Commission's Advertisement No. 4(3)/2017.

Sl. No.	Roll No.	Name
01.	2101115	Chandrani Dutta
02.	2100386	Saswati Das
03.	2101170	Amit Adhikary
04.	2101123	Arbab Samanta
05.	2100557	Sudipta Patra (OBC-B)
06.	2101762	Sovan Ghosh
07.	2101697	Ratul Das (OBC-B)
08.	2100436	Koushik Panday
09.	2102506	Raju Kar
10.	2101877	Rony Hazra
11.	2100491	Santanu Mondal
12.	2100340	Akhtarul Shaikh (OBC-A)

N.B. Candidates are hereby informed that no separate intimation letter will be sent in this regard.

By order of the Commission  
  
Assistant Secretary

- Newly established Murshidabad University gave admission notice for PG course 14 subjects in July 2021. And unfortunately PG course for Arabic was not included in spite of a high demand. As we know Murshidabad is a minority dominated district and Arabic Honours & General courses are being taught in near about 15 colleges in the district. Apart from this, there are numerous Govt.

schools, High Madrasas and Senior Madrasas in Murshidabad where Arabic language and literature is being taught. So not including Arabic in PG course was a great deprivation for the students and teachers of Arabic community in the entire state in general and Murshidabad in particular.

- When this discrimination came to light a number of organizations particularly Arabic Alumni Association of Calcutta University under the leadership of Prof. Mohammad Isharat Ali Molla started movement to introduce PG course in Arabic in the university. And after a combined concerted efforts of all Arabic well-wishers of West Bengal, Murshidabad University included Arabic in PG programme.
- Below is the first notice made by the Murshidabad University:



Government of West Bengal  
Department of Higher Education  
University Branch

BikashBhavan, 6<sup>th</sup> Floor, Bidhannagar, Kolkata – 700 091.

No. 691 – Edn (U)/HED-12016(55)/4/2021-UNV SEC-Dept. of HE Date: 14.7.2021

From: Special Secretary to the Government of West Bengal.

To: The Vice-Chancellor,  
Murshidabad University, Berhampore,  
Murshidabad.

Sub: Starting of academic activities of Murshidabad University from the academic session 2021-22.

Ref: Your Letter bearing no. MU VC/21/2021 dated 07.07.2021.

Sir,

With reference to the above, I am directed to communicate 'IN PRINCIPLE' approval of this Department to start PG courses in your University from the academic session 2021-22 with the following 14 subjects as stated below:

Sl.	PG course in	Seat capacity
1.	Bengali	60
2.	Political Science	60
3.	History	60
4.	Philosophy	60
5.	Sanskrit	80
6.	Education	40
7.	English	40
8.	Mathematics	40
9.	Law	40
10.	Physiology	25
11.	Sericulture	25
12.	Physics	25
13.	Botany	25
14.	Geography	25

This is issued with the approval of Hon'ble Minister-in-Charge of this Department.

Yours faithfully,  
  
Special Secretary

- Below is the second notice made by the Murshidabad University after including Arabic in PG course.



Government of West Bengal  
Department of Higher Education  
University Branch  
BikashBhavan, 6<sup>th</sup> Floor, Bidhannagar, Kolkata – 700 091.

No. 739 – Edn (U)/HED-12016(55)/4/2021-UNV SEC-Dept. of HE Date: 13.08.2021

From: Special Secretary to the Government of West Bengal.

To: The Vice-Chancellor,  
Murshidabad University,  
Berhampore, Murshidabad.

Sub: Introduction of new P. G. course from academic session 2021-22 in respect of  
Murshidabad University, Berhampore, Murshidabad.

Ref.: Your Letter No. MU(VC)/108/2021-22 dated 11.08.2021.

Madam,

With reference to the above, I am directed to communicate 'IN PRINCIPLE' approval of this Department to introduce P. G. Course in Arabic in your University from the academic session 2021-22 with intake capacity of 80 students.

This is issued with the approval of Hon'ble Minister-in-Charge of this Department.

Yours faithfully,

  
Special Secretary

Date: 13.08.2021

No. 739/1(2) – Edn (U)

Copy forwarded for information to:-

1. Private Secretary to the Hon'ble Minister-in-Charge of this Department;
2. Sr. P. S. to the Principal Secretary of this Department.

  
Special Secretary

### Arabic Subject in Murshidabad Colleges

Sl. No	Name of Colleges	Address	UG(Honors) Intake	UG(Gen) Intake
1.	Lalgola College	P.O.- Lalgola, Dist.- Murshidabad, Pin-742148	60	80
2.	Sewnarayan Rameswar Fatepuria College	P.O.- Beldanga, Dist.- Murshidabad, Pin-742133	60	120
3.	Prof. Sayed Nurul Hassan College	P.O.- Farakka, Dist.- Murshidabad, Pin-742212	50	65
4.	Muzaffar Ahmed Mahavidyalaya	P.O.- Salar, Dist.- Murshidabad, Pin-742401	30	80
5.	Rajendra Mahavidyalaya,	Amtala, Dist.- Murshidabad	60	60
6.	Shiekpara GD College	Shiekpara, Dist.- Murshidabad	150	280
7.	Nagar College	Nagar, Dist.- Murshidabad	40	60
8.	Panchthupi Haripada Gouribala College	Panchthupi, Dist.- Murshidabad	NA	490
9.	Haji A.K. Khan College	Hariharpara, Dist.- Murshidabad	NA	35



10.	Noor Muhammad Memorial Mahavidyalaya	Dhuliyani, Murshidabad	Dist.-50	150
11.	DN College, Aurangabad.	Aurangabad, Murshidabad	Dist.-NA	65
12.	Sagardighi Kamoda Kinkar Smriti Mahavidyalaya	Sagardighi, Murshidabad	Dist.-	75
13.	Jangipur College	Jangipur, Murshidabad	Dist.-NA	150
14.	Amar Chand Kundu College,	Nabagram, Murshidabad	Dist.-NA	80
15.	Kandi Raj College	Kandi, Murshidabad	Dist.-NA	50

- Below are the some pictures of students' movement for introducing PG course in the university





- Much-awaited SET in Arabic gets UGC nod in 2021
- After a long time The West Bengal College Service Commission (WBCSC) got permission from the University Grants Commission (UGC) for including Arabic subject in State Level Eligibility Test (SET) along with Environmental Science and Management. The commission, which was hosting recruitment tests in 30 subjects, for assistant professors in government-aided colleges, got nod of UGC for inclusion Environmental Science,

Management and Arabic from 2021. The test will be held in January 2022.

- In addition to this there are a number of colleges affiliated to different state universities where like other subjects, presently Arabic Language is being taught at the Under Graduate level from their inception in both Honours and General.
- After having B.A. degree from those universities many students are facing difficulties in pursuing their Masters Degree in Arabic in other universities due to limited seats and internal reservation policies. Presently Aliah University and the University of Calcutta are offering Masters Degree in Arabic. In addition to this many aspirant girl students are facing problems in getting admission to other Universities located in far-off places due to long traveling, unavailability of hostel facilities and poor economic conditions for which they deprive from pursuing higher educations.
- Presently growing demands for Arabic language is increasing day by day and more students are showing interests in pursuing higher degrees in Arabic language. So, it is dare need of more Departments where Arabic Language may be taught at PG level to meet the recent crisis. And this demand was made to different authorities but

they turned a deaf ear to this. In the same manner some colleges offer UG course in Arabic General only and there are huge demand to introduce UG Honours course but all efforts in vain. In this way Muslim community is depriving from education too.

### **Conclusion:**

The 'Living Reality of Muslims in West Bengal' places them in ghettos without amenities and at the bottom of the economic ladder with little more than Rs 5000 (or less) a month to manage a family of at least five members.

Nobel Laureate Amartya Sen released a reality report in Kolkata that feeds into the first such study by Justice Rajinder Sachar that spoke of the sub-subsistence statistics of the minorities in West Bengal. Almost 80% rural Muslims in the state are borderline poor with the new study placing them at "the bottom of the economic ladder."

The study points out that while Muslims constitute 27% of the state's population, 38.3% of the rural households earn less than Rs. 2500 a month. The study has been undertaken by nonprofit organisation SNAP, Guidance Guild and Amartya Sen's Pratichi Institute.

The report makes clear that the fairly substantial minority population has had no bearing on their uplift, quite the contrary in fact, with basic amenities not made available to areas with dense Muslim areas. Tap water, drainage, employment and even LPG cylinders are the casualty, with access to tap water dropping to 15.2, 40% less than the state average of 25.4%. The study citing these statistics points out, that the overall low statistics in terms of essential amenities for the Muslims points to "a combined community and class exclusion." In government jobs the figures are absurdly low, with the study recording a 1.55% of Muslims as school teachers and 1.54% with jobs in the public sector. In the private sector, the report notes, salaried jobs are rare as well. "In the entire sample of 7,880 households only five were found to have a college or university teacher, and there was no household with any of the highest category of professionals as members, such as doctors, engineers and advocates."

Amartya Sen expressed deep concern about the living conditions of the Muslims in West Bengal. It was pointed out that the study was a step further than the Sachar Committee report as while that had relied on secondary sources, this had attempted to collate data and information from primary sources.

The report makes the following points as per a summary prepared by Catch News:

- Only 1.5% of rural Muslims in West Bengal have a regular salaried job in private sector.
- In the public sector, the share of Muslims with regular salaried jobs is much less at 1%.
- At least 13.2% of Muslim adults do not even have a voter card.
- Some experts say posts reserved for SC/ST/OBC is not followed by the authority such a case happened in recruitment of teachers in Geography subject for English Medium Model Madrasa under Public Service Commission of West Bengal Government where there is not a single Muslim candidate out of 12. This is the case in Madrasa recruitment, not to talk of other fields.
- 12.2% of Muslim households have drainage facility as against 31.3% in the state.
- The level of urbanisation - their shift towards cities, that is - among Muslims is 19%. The state average is 32%.
- At least 15% of Muslim children aged 6-14 years are out of school. A third of them suffer from lack of motivation and "see no future benefits" in getting an education. Of the 15% children who are out of school, 9.1% never enrolled while 5.4% dropped out.
- There are 10.6 secondary and higher secondary schools for every 100,000 people in West Bengal, but in the three Muslim-dominated districts of Murshidabad, Malda and North Dinajpur, this rate is 7.2%, 8.5% and 6.2% respectively.
- Some 82.1% of Muslims in the state source their information from the "local informed person" and

political people. The culture of gathering information from radio, newspaper, television is absent.<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>49</sup> The conclusion is a Report of Amartya Sen entitled as Abysmal Condition of Muslims in West Bengal

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