

### CHAPTER III

#### THE EMPIRICAL STUDY

The preceding chapter traces in brief the history of Muslim education of the British rule in India. It was found that Muslims were under-represented in proportion to their numerical strength as compared to the other communities at higher stages of education, but they almost compared well and sometimes better than the others at lower stages of education. In special schools and unrecognized schools their number was overwhelmingly large. The state of Muslim education during British rule presented a landscape which ranged from the disheartening isolation to an active involvement depending on the area and circumstances. As years rolled by the Muslims began to appreciate the advantages of higher education. Thus they overcame past resistance to modern education and strived to catch up with the other communities in the realm of higher education.

The events that took place at the time of declaration of Indian independence, gave a rude shock to Indian Muslims. They more than any other community passed through traumatic experiences and drifted farther away from the national life, and this trend seems to continue even now, although over a quarter of century has already passed since India achieved independence. Notwithstanding the fact that the Indian Constitution provides equal opportunities to all citizens for their betterments, it is suspected that the Muslims do not enjoy this right. In fact equalization of

opportunity has never solved and will never solve the problem of inequality unless it is accompanied by the restructuring of the social and economic system; so that the gains secured by the country are not monopolized by a particular section of the people. To achieve real equality of opportunity, we have to establish political control over the economic institutions that shape our society. Even so it is worth-while to examine how far the principle of providing equal opportunities to the people of India has been actually implemented. From this point of view the present study has attempted to investigate the status of Muslims in the area of education with Delhi as the focal point.

#### Need for the Study

India is a multi-religious, multi-racial and multi-linguistic country. It has accepted democracy as its guiding social philosophy. In a democratic system progress in social, economic and cultural spheres depends, to a great extent, on the harmonious development of its different communities. This implies provision of equal opportunity of advancement for all. Today education is looked upon as a necessary condition for all-round development of the individual and society. Schultz pleads relatively more investment on human material than on physical plants for securing more solid gains (1). Hence the need for raising the educationally backward community of Indian Muslims.

Moreover, education is a sine qua non of democratic way of life. The school in a democracy is considered as the primary

institution where the future citizens learn to respect individual freedom, where emphasis is placed on rational ends, persuasion and discussion are the methods used for resolving differences and where above all the basic equality of man is stressed. Education is the means by which men become qualified to rule themselves and to share and participate in governing. To break the present impasse the schools must assume responsibility both for the application and exemplification of democracy as a distinctive way of life (2). Rightly implemented, the principle of equalization of opportunity can lead to a dynamic and mutually fruitful interaction of the different communities that constitute India, and to an era of all-round progress; economic development, political consciousness and social solidarity. The Education Commission (1964-66) categorically observes:

...society that values social justice and is anxious to improve the lot of the common man and cultivate all available talent; must ensure progressive equality of opportunity to all sections of the population. This is the only guarantee for building up of an egalitarian and human society in which the exploitation of the weak will be minimised(3).

Our national policy on education formulated in 1968, and more recently the Fifth Plan reiterated the pledge to correct the imbalances of educational opportunities as essentials for promoting social cohesion and national integration. / But there is a widespread grievance among the Muslims who constitute about 11 percent of the population, second only to the Hindus, that they are not treated equally in the educational, political,

social and economic matters. They complain that their position is in no case better (and in some cases more deplorable) than the members of the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes who at least enjoy constitutional protection to improve and raise themselves to catch up with the other communities. In the years after independence the trend of upward mobility is seen among scheduled castes and scheduled tribes because of special treatment meted to them through reservations, liberal financing of scholarships in the pursuit of study in educational institutions and government jobs. The Muslims on the contrary are found to be constantly deteriorating in all walks of life.

The significant role which the Muslim community has to play in strengthening our democracy, secularism and socialism can hardly be exaggerated. Nor can <sup>w</sup>be ignore the grievances this community is nursing over the lack of educational facilities and the adverse conditions under which they find it difficult even to utilize the educational opportunities whatever they are. Since the solution of various problems relating to the socio-psychological adjustment and the development of the Muslims very largely depends upon the type, quantum and quality of educational opportunities utilized by them, the need for the present study is quite obvious. The grievance of the minority community regarding discrimination in the field of education needs a thorough examination; for a feeling of discrimination may be subjective and its validity doubtful. Therefore, there is a

need for an objective study of the situation as it exists and draw reliable conclusions. It is with this objective in view that the present study has been undertaken.

### Delimitation of the Problem :

The scope of the study has been delimited to Delhi - the capital of India. The study is confined to the students of grade V, VIII and XI as these classes represent different end points in the continuum of the educational process in the schools of Delhi.

Primary education (grade I-V) covers 6-11 age-group and is the first stage of education included in the free and compulsory schooling.

Middle education (grade VI-VIII) is important in two ways. Firstly, it is the upper stage of the free and compulsory schooling. Secondly, after this stage majority of students have to leave their schools and enter the world of work.

Higher secondary stage (till today grade IX-XI) is the accepted pattern in Delhi, but the Central Advisory Board of Education has recommended a uniform pattern of 10+2+3 for the whole of the country, to be implemented in the Fifth Plan and government has stamped its approval on the decision. It is important in two ways. Firstly, it leads to the entry into the university education. Secondly, it marks the end of the academic life for a majority of our students as most of them enter the occupational world.

Obviously the study covers only the Urdu-medium primary, middle and higher secondary schools because it is in these schools that Muslim children mostly study. Besides, some other schools

(Hindi-medium) have been taken for the purpose of comparing them with the Urdu-medium schools on different sets of variables.

The study has been conducted in Delhi for several reasons. Firstly, it is the capital of India. Any event which takes place here instantaneously attracts the attention of people both inside this country and abroad. Secondly, departure from the path of justice in the sense of a favourable treatment meted out to one section at the expense of another may evoke criticism of government by the aggrieved section and its supporters more vehemently in the capital city than anywhere else. For this reason it is likely that the principle of providing equal opportunities of education to all sections of people would be implemented more seriously in Delhi. So the study of the problem in this city would probably present somewhat a better picture that is expected to be in anyother part of the country. Therefore, if it is revealed by the study that even in Delhi, the Muslims lag behind in the matter of education, there is more likelihood of their being educationally backward in other states of India. Thirdly, the population of Delhi is more compact and its small size gives an advantage of access to the researcher. Fourthly, Muslims of all socio-economic status are found in Delhi.

### MEANINGS OF EQUALITY

#### Growth of the Concept of Equality

(a) The western concept. Equality eludes a rigorous and clear definition because it has always been interpreted in the

context of a particular social and political system. Etymology of the term equality can be traced from the word 'ισότης' which was used twenty five centuries ago by the Greeks. Since then it has been elaborated and refined, to a great extent, by the philosophical, political, social, economic and religious thought. The seeds of equality in Greek thought were discernible in Socrates famous dictum 'Γνοθι σεαυτόν' - know thyself, Plato's idea of 'philosopher kings' that insists on the democratization of values by the impersonal and impartial selection of individuals to man positions strictly on the basis of merit and Aristotle's principle of 'proportional equality' which sought to confer honours on individuals commensurate with differences in abilities (4). The Greeks divided men into civilized and barbarian; the right of equality was conferred only on the civilized.

The credit goes to the Stoic philosophy of Roman civilization which freed the concept of equality from the long standing restrictions of caste, race, state and creed. The doctrine believed that all men had the gift of rational faculty, therefore, fundamentally equal both in nature and before the law.

In the 17th and 18th century, the focus of attention was individual - his nature, his interests and his rights. The thought of equality got new depth and new dimension from the English practice and the French Revolution. Voltaire and Rousseau both were contemporaries and staunch believers of equality; though

they interpreted it in their individual way. Voltaire believed that all men have equal right to property, liberty and to the protection of law. But he dismissed the notion of equality as a leveller of goods, possessions and powers because he thought it to be unnatural and puerile. Whereas, Rousseau spoke for the man, His concept of equality was impregnated with the idea of levelling the possessions.

It cannot be overlooked that behind the concept of equality there were currents and cross currents both perceptible and imperceptible which in no less way contributed to create proper soil and climate for the growth of the sapling of equality. Discoveries, intellectual awakening and scientific inventions were responsible for making a major crack in man's blind faith and narrow vision. Man was forced to come out of the shell.

In the 20th century the major world political systems, advocated equality and sought to achieve it in the context of their own respective systems. However, its keynote in the democratic countries was the provision of equal opportunities irrespective of caste, class, sex or any other consideration.

(b) The eastern concept. Basically, the Hindu society was caste-ridden. The system flourished on maintenance of the status quo. This hierarchical differentiation of status produced gross inequalities of absolute nature. Davis sums up the essentials of the Hindu social order in the following words:



....It was the most thorough attempt known in human history to introduce inherited inequality as the guiding principle of social relations (5).

The Pūrva Sūkta in Rig Veda (X, 90, 12) describes that Brahmans, Ksatryas, Vaisyas and Sudras originated respectively from the mouth, arms, thighs and feet of the Creator.

ब्रह्मर्षिर्वाक् कृत्वाः कृत्वाः कृत्वाः कृत्वाः ॥  
उग्रं वाक् कृत्वाः कृत्वाः कृत्वाः कृत्वाः ॥

Budha was the first Indian saint who revolted against the established caste based on inequalities by birth. In India, he may be called the fore-runner of the modern egalitarian society conceived in the spirit of liberty, equality and fraternity. The flourishing Indian Republics of Mala, Vijji, Kapil Vastoo and Lachhavi during Buddhist period bear ample testimony to the existence of the democratic nature of the political set up, however, limited in scope.

Equality before Allah is the basic tenet of Islam. But with the rise of the institution of kingship in India it became perverted. Thus in India Islam in practice did not coincide with Islam in principle.

The medieval period of Indian history saw the degeneration of caste system in its most diabolical form, though here and there, teachings and preachings of saints like the Alvars of the South, Kabir, Nanak and Sufis did plough a lonely furrow and gave a jolt to the tradition ridden and caste-bound Indian society.

With the march of time, when the wind of modernism after sweeping the western hemisphere, reached the Indian shore in the later half of the 19th century, it found the spirit of inequality inexorably woven within the warp and woof of Indian social fabric, so much so, that travail of great reformers like Raja Mohan Roy, Sir Syed Ahmad Khan, Swami Viveka Nand and Mahatma Gandhi failed to rescue the Indian society from this abominable curse.

The caste system is so deep-rooted in India that even after 27 years of independence and inspite of the laws forbidding all kinds of discrimination, the evils of caste system still persist. Paradoxically enough the election battles, aiming at providing equal opportunities to all are fought with the weapons of inequality like caste and religion.

In fact the history of egalitarianism finds its basic material outside the eastern hemisphere.

The concept of equality often refers to the treatment that an individual should be accorded. The treatment has been viewed differently by various thinkers. It should be impartial, based on the principle of 'equal shares to all,' 'equal shares to equals,' 'proportional equality,' 'unequal shares corresponding to relevant differences' and 'to each one according to his desert (7).' Thus we find that the term 'equality' in its process of growth and development has traversed varied stages and received treatment ranging from denouncement and lukewarm acceptance to whole-hearted support. To Rousseau and Schmoller, man 'by nature is essentially good and loves to breath the air free from

unlawful inhibitions and restraints. Whatever inequality, range of differentials and gross disparity we witness on the earth is historically built up and, therefore, subject to elimination. On the contrary, to Davis and Moore inequality is basic to man. It is a functional necessity and indispensable for the evolution of human society. In the modern sense, equality denotes the equalization of significant differences at the start, thus leaving the field open to biological differences which, with appropriate efforts, the individual can transmute into social advancement. That is, it favours the equalization of social chances by narrowing down the range of differentials and providing unrestricted opportunity to the individual to develop himself as best as he can. To achieve this, backward sections not only need political rights but also sufficient economic support and educational facility to catch up with the developed sections of the society. For equality in political power is closely connected with equality in economic and educational opportunity.

#### **Equality in Constitutional Framework**

The main provisions in our Constitution protecting the rights to equality are contained in Part III (under Fundamental Rights) and Part IV (under Directive Principles of State Policy). Some of these articles are given below:

**Article 15(1)** The state shall not discriminate against any citizen on grounds only of religion, race, caste, sex, place of birth or any of them.

- (4) Nothing in this article or in clause (2) of article 29 shall prevent the state from making any special provision for the advancement of any socially and educationally backward classes of citizens or for the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes.

**Article 29(1)** Any section of the citizens residing in the territory of India or any part thereof having a distinct language, script or culture of its own shall have the rights to conserve the same.

- (2) No citizen shall be denied admission into any educational institution maintained by the state or receiving aid out of state funds on grounds only of religion, race, caste, language or any of them, is also a protection to citizens against discrimination in the matter of admission to educational institutions on the grounds specified in it.

**Article 30(1)** All minorities, whether based on religion or language, shall have the right to establish and administer educational institutions of their choice.

- (2) The state shall not, in granting aid to educational institutions, discriminate against any educational institution on the ground that it is under the management of a minority, whether based on religion or language (8).

**Article 46** The state shall promote with special care the educational and economic interests of the weaker sections of the people, and in particular of the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes, and shall protect them from social injustice and all forms of exploitation (9).

It may be said that all minorities whether based on religion or language apart from other fundamental rights enjoy special guarantees to protect the educational interests.

#### Equalization and Utilization of Educational Opportunity

Equalization and utilization are the extensions of nouns equality and utility respectively. A democratic society which believes in the basic worth of all individuals is committed to the provision of all kinds of facilities for the flowering of all-round personality, so that with his abilities the individual may become an asset to the society. In fact, there cannot be equality without utilization and vice-versa. / Equalization of opportunity takes content and form from the utilization without which it is a farce and a meaningless term. / In a country like India equalization and utilization of educational opportunity means that all sections of the society irrespective of religion, caste, colour, sex and status have an equal access to and make equal use of educational institutions. It is not sufficient to be satisfied with constitutional guarantees, but to be sure that no one is deprived of its utilization on account of economic factors or any other disadvantages like poor self-concept, poor education, poor aspirational level or some other psychological blocking like cultural repulsion which are handed down to posterity. /

Successful parents will try to pass along their advantages to their children.

Unsuccessful parents will inevitably pass along some of their disadvantages. Unless a society completely eliminates ties between parents and children, inequality among parents guarantees some degree of inequality in the opportunities available to children (10).

It is not only enough that the State eliminates economic disabilities (provision of freeships and scholarships, legal enforcement of compulsory education and compensating parents' loss of income through legal measures etc.) but ensures that no cultural barriers (text-books containing lessons which belittle and distort the cultural heritage of the minority communities) go against their religious susceptibilities, beliefs and values. It is not that cultural disabilities are removed but what is important is that the minority gets a fair opportunity to educate their children through the medium of their own mother tongue. Slightest apprehension of this sort will make them despondent and prejudiced against the system of education. Lastly, it is generally felt by the Muslim community that partiality is practised in extending grants-in-aids to denominational institutions. Such lurking suspicion retards the growth of democratic system.

/The meaning of the term 'equalization of opportunity' is not static but functional to the needs, aspirations and programmes of the society. Absence of discrimination and of inequality constitutes 'equality of educational opportunity' in a country. In the U.S.A. the concept of educational

opportunity includes the following elements:

i) To provide free education upto a given level which enables one to enter the labour force.

ii) To provide common curriculum for all children, regardless of background.

iii) To provide that children from diverse background attend the same school (11).

It was on December 10, 1948, the General Assembly of the United Nations adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights which advocated the principles of non-discrimination and right to education. On December 14, 1960, the General Conference of UNESCO discussed and studied the concept of 'equality of opportunity' in education and stated:

Any distinction, exclusion, limitation or preference based on race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, economic condition or birth, has the purpose or effect of nullifying or impairing equality of treatment in education (12).

#### Definition of Educational Opportunity

Equal opportunity for education means that

i) Schools are provided for the benefit of all citizens irrespective of their caste, religion, social and economic status or any other attribute.

ii) It is ensured that the wherewithals needed to make the utilization of the educational opportunity possible are available to all.

iii) The school programme offers equal attraction to the members of the different cultural and religious communities in terms of their heritage a thing which is held dear and of abiding value by them.

iv) There is nothing in the school curriculum and text-books, its procedures and practices, its rites and rituals, its cultural functions and re-creational programmes, that is, in the total environment of the school that discriminates against any cultural or religious community and is repugnant or abhorrent to the community's accepted beliefs, attitudes, and practices, thus repelling it from the school.

#### Objectives of the Study

The study seeks to answer the following questions:

1) In what respects are the educational opportunities equal for the Muslims and the non-Muslims in the public institutions of Delhi? (vide Definition (i) and (iii) given under definition of educational opportunity).

ii) What are the factors that militate against the opportunities being utilized by the Muslims on an equal basis with the non-Muslims (vide definition (iii) and (iv) as given above).

iii) What needs to be done to improve the situation?



## Hypotheses

1) Other things being equal, the Muslim community tends to have less than its proportional share of educational opportunities as compared with the majority community.

ii) There is something inherent in the educational programmes itself which discourages Muslims from taking advantage of the opportunity in an equal measure with non-Muslims.

iii) The comparative backwardness of Muslims in the social, economic and cultural fields makes them utilize educational opportunities to a less degree than non-Muslims.

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