Muslims in Indian Administrative Service

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ABSTRACT *Islam is a religion which emphasizes the importance of acquiring knowledge to man and woman. But Muslims who follow Islam does not understand its importance. They have completely neglected the first message of Allah. Neglecting this has come as its own peril. Their condition is vulnerable all over the world. Take the case of Muslims in India. Their presence in education, employment, politics etc. is a matter of concern. In government sector their representation is not satisfactory. Muslims comprising the largest minorities in India with 14% of population have only 3% presence in the IAS over the years. This compels the investigators to find out the causes behind it and suggest possible measures to improve the overall situation. If we address the causes and implement the suggestions effectively then it is expected that it will bring about positive changes.*

1) INTRODUCTION

Read! In the name of your lord who has created. He has created man from a clot (a piece of thick coagulated blood). Read! And your Lord is the Most Generous. Who has taught (the writing) by pen. He has taught man which he knew not. (Quran 96: 1-5)

In the above verses of Quran, the first message of Allah to humankind is "to read. Reading and acquiring knowledge holds a great importance even in the Quran. This message is not only for Muslims but for the whole mankind. Because Muslims believe in Allah and Quran, they must have to practice the preaching of the Quran for their betterment. In this way they will become the role models for others.

But unfortunately, the Muslim community has forgotten the efforts, pains and sufferings taken up by our beloved Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) to spread the message of Islam to the world community. I am saying this because the condition of Muslims is deteriorating day by day. Muslims have completely ignored the first message of Allah. The Indian Muslims are the best example of it. Muslims in India are in minority. In spite of all the efforts taken by the government, the vulnerable condition of Muslim community has not changed so far in education, employment, political representation and socio-economic development.

As far as Muslim representation in government sector is concerned, the situation in not very satisfactory. Indian Administrative Service is an area of concern for Muslims because here the representation is quite few. The only way that Muslims can be mainstreamed and co-opted into the political and governance structures of the country is through the civil services. Ignoring this would come as its own peril and end up relegating Muslims to be the new Dalits of India, in terms of backwardness and discrimination.

2) INDIAN ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICE

The Indian Administrative Service (IAS) was formally constituted in 1947. It is the premier service in India and offers an attractive and challenging career. There is fame and glory associated with this service for those who have excelled in their posts. Even though most people think being

the District Magistrate or Collector is the most powerful and authoritative post, an IAS holds power at all levels of his/her job. IAS is the service that places the officer right at the top of any government organization. If you are a person of determination and want to serve your country then you can do a lot of things in this service. After Independence, it was expected that the Indian Administrative Service would promote national integration. Despite the reservation policy, this powerful body lacks representativeness.

Functions of IAS Officer:
A) **The IAS officers handle affairs of the government at centre, state, district and divisional level.**
i) At centre and state levels, it involves framing of the policies and its implementation.
ii) At the district level, IAS is concerned with district affairs, including developmental duties.
iii) At the divisional level, the IAS officers look after law and order, general administration and various developmental works. Becoming a collector is just one of the jobs an IAS officer takes up in his long career. As secretary of various departments an IAS officer heads the organisation and takes it ahead.

B) IAS officers represent Government of India at international level in bilateral and multilateral negotiations. On deputations they work at Intergovernmental organizations like World Bank and United Nations or its Agencies.
C) IAS officers at various levels of administration plays a vital role in conducting free, fair and smooth elections in India under the direction of Election Commission of India and states.
D) In the process of policy formulation and decision making, officers at various levels like joint secretary, deputy secretary make their contributions and the final shape to the policy is given or a final decision is taken with the concurrence of the minister concerned or the cabinet depending upon the gravity of the issue.

3) SACHAR COMMITTEE REPORT, 2006

The Sachar Committee was set up by the Prime Minister of India as a High Level Committee under the Chairmanship

of Justice (retd) Rajinder Sachar to examine in comprehensive detail the social, economic and education status of the Indian Muslim community in 2006. The findings of Committee have clearly indicated certain levels and forms of systemic discrimination and official prejudice operating in Indian society at almost all levels against Muslims and some of the results have shocked the whole country. The 2006 Sachar Committee Report also found clear evidence that Muslims severely lacked representation in the administrative service.

4) MUSLIMS SHOULD JOIN IAS

The goal of any government system is to bring about equitable socio-economic development and planned growth of the country. The participation of various identities in equal proportions in the governance may not be a necessary pre-condition for planned growth and development but equitable outcome is certainly desired. The IAS provides a unique model for securing national integration and providing a machinery of unbiased persons selected through an open competitive examination. They are allotted different states and union territories for carrying out good governance in unbiased and effective manner.

The representation of various communities, religious and linguistic identities in the administrative service has been an issue of debate since long. The inclusion of minorities in various services has been an important agenda of successive governments. It provides a platform for articulation of specific needs and ideas. Muslims, comprising the largest minorities in India with 14% of population, have only a 3% presence in the IAS. It is a serious cause of concern as it cultivates a sense of marginalisation. Emphasizing the importance of joining IAS by educated Muslims Syed Hamid said:

"The poor performance deprives the community of a sense of participation in the governance and management of their country. They are in the process denied a role in the existing adventure of national reconstruction and development."

The Sachar Report 2006 observes: "In a pluralistic society a reasonable representation of various communities in government sector employment is necessary to enhance participatory governance". The gross under-representation of Muslims in jobs in the government sector then is a sad comment on the partisan nature of governance in India.

5) CAUSES OF LOW REPRESENTATION OF MUSLIMS IN IAS

The Constitution of India does not grant Muslims the same safeguards as the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes. Muslims are not given reservations in employment and education. Despite the fact that the population of Muslims is very large in India but their representation in government sector is very poor. Muslims are clearly underrepresented in the IAS, with less than 3% of recruits, while population of Muslims is 14% India. Now we will discuss in detail the causes of low representation of Muslims in administrative service.

i) Socio Economic Condition of Muslims

It is never disputed that the Muslims are not better than the Dalits (Harijans) or the OBC (Other Backward Castes). As V.T. Rajshekar observes, the Muslims of India "are in many ways worse than Untouchables and in recent years they are facing dangers of mass annihilation." In India a large proportions of Muslims are poor. Earning two squares

a meal remains a challenge for them. In this condition, spending money on education is impossible for them. Due to unavailability of educational facilities, the masses remain illiterate. They cannot find better opportunities for their livelihood. That's why they remain as they were before.

ii) High dropout rate among Muslim students

The socio economic condition of Muslims is not satisfactory. And this creates other problems for them. Educational deprivation is one of them**.** According to 'Sachar Committee Report' "one-fourth of Muslim children in the age group of 6-14 years has either never attended school or is drop-outs. For children above the age of 17 years, the educational attainment of Muslims at matriculation is 17%, as against national average at 26%. Only 50% of Muslims who complete middle school are likely to complete secondary education, compared to 62% at national level".

In recent years, the Government of India has succeeded in achieving a remarkable figure for enrolment at primary school level, but to maintain that figure is a challenge due to high rate of dropout among Muslim students. This stark dropout rates explain the malaise affecting Indian Muslims, and unless that's addressed, all other solutions are ineffective.

Such low enrolment figures and high dropout rates mean that only one of 25 undergraduate students, and barely one out of 50 postgraduate students in Indian universities, is a Muslim. This dropout phenomenon truly explains the low participation of Muslims in government sector. As we know that for participating in civil service examination, the eligibility is a graduation degree. The major problems for Muslims are at the level of school education. Once the "hurdles" of school education is crossed, the difference across most SRCs in the likelihood of their completing graduation courses narrow down and are at times insignificant.

iii) Language problem

Urdu is a widely spoken language in the north of India among Muslims. But it is not a recognised official language. The reason may be the lack of population of Muslims in a specific area. The IAS candidates lose their anonymity and complain of discrimination only during interviews. The reason is that they choose to speak in their mother tongue instead of English. Yet, this choice has been authorised since the 1970s for the 18 regional languages officially recognised in the 8th schedule of the Constitution. It was done to enable the students to compete without access to English and to broaden the social and geographic basis of the recruitment. The English speaking candidates were given the preference may be on the basis of academic and professional reasons, but some people interpret it as a bias in favour of the urban middle class candidates who are already over represented in the IAS.

iv) Outlook of Muslims Towards Modern Education System

The literacy rate among Muslims is quite low. The main reason behind this state of affair is the psychology of Muslims towards modern education system. It has been observed over the years that Muslims do not enthusiastically provide education to their children, especially their daughters. Education is the only medium through which we can change the thinking of the people. It helps to develop the socio-economic condition of the society. And it increases their confidence and self-esteem. Due to unavailability of good quality education Muslims end up with low paid jobs

and less remunerative employment. Unfortunately inequality and discrimination has been accepted by Muslims as their destiny.

v) Gulf Job

A large number of Indian Muslims go to gulf countries to earn money. The main reason for this migration is the difference in wage rate as well as their culture match. In India a struggling candidate initially get a job of Rs10000 hardly. Even if he gets a job the inflation affects him badly. And this low wage means a hand-to-mouth existence for them. On the other hand if they get a job in gulf countries, most of the companies provide them fooding, lodging and transportation excluding salary. A person's more than half salary is spent on these things. But as the companies in the gulf bear these costs; they are in the position to save their salary for fulfilling their other responsibilities like housing, marriage, illness etc. it became possible because the currency of gulf countries is stronger than Indian rupee.

vi) Private Coaching

Civil services examination is a tough competition. And for cracking this competition not only hard work and dedication but proper guidance is also required. These days private coaching is doing this job efficiently. A point to be noted here is that the fees of these coachings are very high and at the same time they are located in the metropolitan cities. Those candidates who are economically backward cannot afford it. It is an important reason why instead of having talent they could not even imagine to appear in the competition.

6) SUGGESTIONS TO IMPROVE MUSLIM REPRESENTATION IN IAS

Studies have shown that the representation of Muslim students in administrative services is below 4% and they are unable to cross this mark until now. We have already discussed the reasons for this state of affairs. In spite of all the efforts, their representation is not in progressive direction. The following suggestions can improve their representation in IAS.

i) Financial Assistance to Extraordinary Muslim Students

After completing primary level of school, the students have to discontinue their studies for so many specific reasons (poverty, child labour etc.). So at this stage the Government take complete responsibility of such students who perform well in their academics. In this way, they will continue their studies till higher level, which is the eligibility of appearing for civil services in India.

ii) Revise the Pay Scale of IAS Officers

When a student completes his/her graduation, he/she is in the condition of decision making. At this point of time he/she could understand their inclination or their area of interest. Now the question is why he/she will opt for IAS as a career? As we all know that the post of an IAS officer could bring them name and fame but it could not bring them a luxurious life. Here a point to be mentioned is that IAS is a prestigious job but the pay scale is not as high as other jobs like in private sector. So it's appropriate to say that the government must revise the pay scale of IAS officers. If IAS is considered to be the most prestigious job in India, then their pay scale should be better as compared to other professions. This will be a giant step in attracting candidates to join IAS.

iii) Efficient Utilisation of Wakf Properties/ Zakat Fund

Data available with Sachar Committee shows that if the Wakf property is efficiently utilized, it can economically empower the community. At the same time, Zakat as an institution has vast potentials of a meliorating economic sickness of the community. This is high time that community think and act for productive use of Zakat fund. Wakf properties can be used to finance and sponsor the educated Muslim's foray into civil services, and expand the network of professional coaching classes and study circles to the areas where the Muslim population is higher.

iv) Organisation of Motivational/ Orientation talks with Community Role Models

Muslim elders should regularly fan out in places all over India where potential candidates are available. We should organise motivational/ orientation talks between Muslim students and public figures who can be role models for them. The community elders should come forward and participate in this noble cause of nation building.

7) CONCLUSION

Muslims form a large part of Indian population. And if Muslims remain backward it will affect the development of India, because no country can hope to progress if it leaves behind 150 million of its population. It is essential for equality and national integration. The Sachar Committee Report 2006 has made numerous recommendations to the government for the upliftment of Muslim community. The backwardness of Muslim should be taken as a national problem and not just a community specific problem. The Prime-Minister's 15-point formula specifically mentions encouragement of minorities for joining central and state services, and many initiatives in this regard have been taken. Despite such genuine efforts, the Muslims make only 3% of the IAS at present. In the UPSC civil service examination, there is no discrimination at any level. The recruiting agencies are fair and transparent.in the selection procedure. That's why educated Muslim youths should participate in this examination at large number. They should face the competition without any feeling of biasness. As Allama Iqbal said:

Na tha agar too shareek-e-mahfil, qusoor tera hai ki mera
Nahin mera ye tareeq rakh loon kisi ki khatir ma-e-shabana
(If you did not participate in the feast is it my mistake or yours. I am not accustomed to holding back the nocturnal wine for the absentees.) Muslims must try to improve their condition themselves. Because, "God does not change the condition of the people unless they change themselves."

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