



EMPOWERMENT AWARENESS AMONGST MUSLIM WOMEN IN MALEGAON: A CASE STUDY

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates empowerment awareness among Muslim women in Malegaon, employing a structured research methodology to gather and analyze data. A sample of 100 Muslim-educated women from Malegaon participated in the study, selected to ensure a comprehensive representation of empowerment awareness within this demographic. Data collection utilized a 25-item questionnaire designed to assess various facets of empowerment awareness, including educational access, perceived barriers, and the impact of education on their lives. The questionnaire was meticulously crafted to align with the research objectives, emphasizing clarity and relevance. To enhance accessibility and participation, the survey was administered, facilitating responses from diverse areas of Malegaon at participants' convenience. This method not only ensured data accuracy but also streamlined compilation processes. Upon completion of data collection, responses were systematically coded and analyzed using SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences). Descriptive statistics provided insights into demographic characteristics and empowerment awareness levels, while inferential statistics, such as correlation and regression analyses, identified significant relationships and predictors of empowerment awareness among the participants.

Keywords: Empowerment awareness, Muslim women, Malegaon, Questionnaire, Survey,

1. INTRODUCTION

Empowerment of women is a pivotal aspect of social development that fosters equality, enhances personal and collective capacities, and propels communities toward progressive change. Within the diverse fabric of Indian society, Muslim women, in particular, face unique challenges and opportunities regarding empowerment. This study focuses on the city of Malegaon, a region characterized by its significant Muslim population, to delve into the awareness and status of empowerment amongst Muslim women. Malegaon, often recognized for its vibrant textile industry, also stands as a microcosm of broader socio-economic and cultural dynamics prevalent within the Muslim community in India.

Traditional norms and contemporary aspirations often intersect, creating a complex landscape for women's empowerment. Understanding this intersection is crucial for developing targeted interventions and policies that can genuinely uplift and empower women within this

community. This case study aims to explore the levels of awareness about empowerment among Muslim women in Malegaon, examining various dimensions such as education, economic participation, social and cultural norms, and political engagement. By assessing these factors, the research seeks to uncover the extent to which Muslim women in Malegaon are informed about their rights, opportunities, and the pathways available to them for personal and collective empowerment. This study endeavours to identify the barriers and facilitators influencing empowerment among Muslim women in Malegaon. These insights will not only contribute to the academic discourse on women's empowerment in minority communities but also provide practical recommendations for policymakers, educators, and community leaders striving to foster an inclusive and equitable environment.

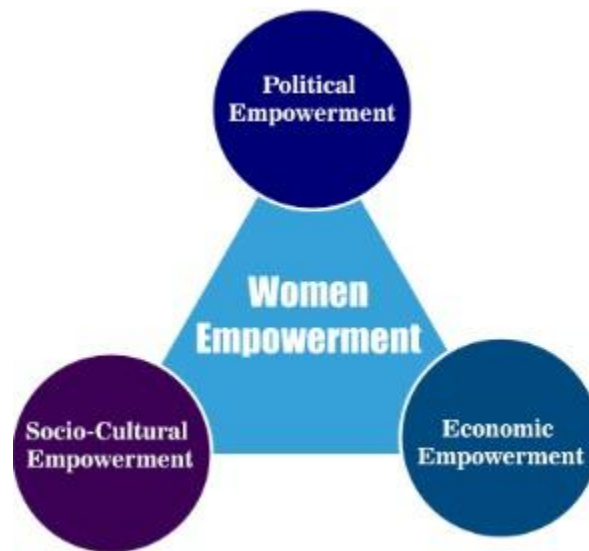


Figure 1.An Overview of Different Pillars of Women Empowerment

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Hellwig, Wado, and Barros (2024) investigated the relationship between women's empowerment and the fulfilment of family planning needs among Christians and Muslims in multireligious African countries. Published in *BMJ Global Health*, their study revealed that empowered women were more likely to have their family planning needs met. This finding was consistent across different religious groups, suggesting that empowerment significantly contributes to reproductive health outcomes regardless of religious affiliation.

Alhawsawi and Jawhar (2023) examined the links between education, employment, and empowerment among Saudi women, published in *Gender and Education*. Their study highlighted how higher education and employment opportunities significantly enhance women's autonomy and economic independence. The authors stressed the importance of policy and institutional support in promoting these opportunities, suggesting that continued investment in education and



employment programs could further empower Saudi women. Tabassum (2023) provided an analysis of Muslim women's agency in India, detailing the socio-political and economic challenges they face and proposing strategies for their empowerment and inclusion in the democratic process. Published in "Gender Inclusion in India," the study identified barriers such as discrimination, lack of education, and restricted mobility. Suggested strategies included policy reforms, educational initiatives, and community-driven efforts to enhance Muslim women's participation in socio-political life.

Nasruddin and Muliana (2023) explored the role of a moderate Islamic perspective in promoting women's empowerment, published in An-Nisa Journal of Gender Studies. The authors argued that a moderate interpretation of Islam can challenge patriarchal norms and support gender equality, emphasizing the importance of religious leaders and scholars in advocating for these views. They concluded that fostering a moderate Islamic spirit is essential for advancing women's rights and empowerment in Muslim-majority societies. Zulfiqar and Tabasum (2023) examined the impact of Islamic microfinance on women's empowerment through a case study of the Akhuwat Foundation, published in the Journal of Gender and Social Issues. The study found that Islamic microfinance significantly empowered women by providing them with financial resources to start and grow businesses, enhancing their economic independence and social status. The authors highlighted the role of culturally tailored financial services in supporting women's empowerment.

Rahiman (2023) explored the strategies employed by Muslim women students in India to navigate higher education challenges related to gender and religion. Published in Sociological Bulletin, the study identified significant barriers such as societal expectations, family pressures, and institutional biases. Muslim women used strategies like peer support, scholarships, and student organizations to overcome these obstacles, emphasizing the need for targeted policies and programs to support their educational aspirations. Pal, Gupta, and Joshi (2022) investigated the role of financial inclusion in the social and economic empowerment of women in India, published in Equality, Diversity and Inclusion an International Journal. Their study provided empirical evidence that access to financial services significantly enhances women's economic independence and decision-making power. The authors argued that financial inclusion contributes to social empowerment by enabling greater participation in community and household decisions. Humar et al. (2021) explored the impact of self-help groups (SHGs) on women's empowerment in India, published in World Development.

The study found that participation in SHGs significantly enhances women's economic, social, and political empowerment by providing financial services, knowledge-sharing, and social networks. The authors emphasized the transformative potential of collective action through SHGs in improving the status of women. Gupta (2021) examined the role of NGOs in women's empowerment in Uttarakhand, India, published in the Journal of Enterprising Communities: People and Places in the Global Economy. The study presented case studies



demonstrating how NGOs have effectively empowered women by providing education, vocational training, and support services. The findings highlighted the critical role of NGOs in bridging gaps in governmental programs and offering grassroots-level support to empower women. Sharma et al. (2020) evaluated a community-based intervention aimed at the health and economic empowerment of marginalized women in India, published in BMC Public Health.

The study found that the intervention significantly improved women's health outcomes and economic status by providing healthcare services, vocational training, and financial support. The authors emphasized the importance of integrated community-based approaches in addressing the multifaceted needs of marginalized women. Sharma (2020) investigated the political empowerment of Indian women, published in the International Journal of Sociology and Social Policy. The study explored the factors influencing women's participation in politics and the impact of political engagement on their empowerment. The findings indicated that political participation enhances women's confidence, leadership skills, and influence in decision-making processes. The study highlighted the need for policies and programs to support women's political involvement and leadership. Shetty and Hans (2019) discussed the role of education in skill development and women's empowerment, published in EPRA International Journal of Economic and Business Review. The study emphasized that education provides women with the skills and knowledge necessary for economic independence and social empowerment.

The authors argued for the inclusion of skill development programs in educational curricula to enhance women's employability and empowerment. Shetty and Hans (2018) explored the barriers to financial inclusion and their impact on women's empowerment in India, published in the International Journal of Management Sociology and Humanities. The study identified several obstacles that hinder women's access to financial services, including lack of financial literacy, cultural norms, and institutional biases. The authors argued that overcoming these barriers is crucial for achieving economic empowerment for women, suggesting targeted interventions to enhance financial literacy and promote inclusive financial policies. Biswas (2017) provided an in-depth analysis of women empowerment in India, focusing on the role of entrepreneurship and microfinance, published in the book "Women's Entrepreneurship and Microfinance."

The study emphasized that microfinance plays a pivotal role in empowering women by providing them with the financial resources needed to start and expand businesses. The author highlighted the success stories of women entrepreneurs who have leveraged microfinance to achieve economic independence and improve their social status. The study also discussed the challenges faced by women in accessing microfinance and suggested strategies to make these services more accessible. Singh (2016) examined the critical role of education in empowering women in India, published in the Motherhood International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research & Development. The study argued that education is a fundamental driver of women's empowerment, enabling them to gain knowledge, skills, and confidence necessary for economic

and social participation. KrishneKumaar and Meenakshisundaram (2015) investigated the role of community participation in raising awareness about health insurance and its impact on women's empowerment in India, published in the International Journal of Research in IT & Management. The study found that community-based programs significantly enhance women's awareness and participation in health insurance schemes.

3. MATERIALS AND METHODOLOGY

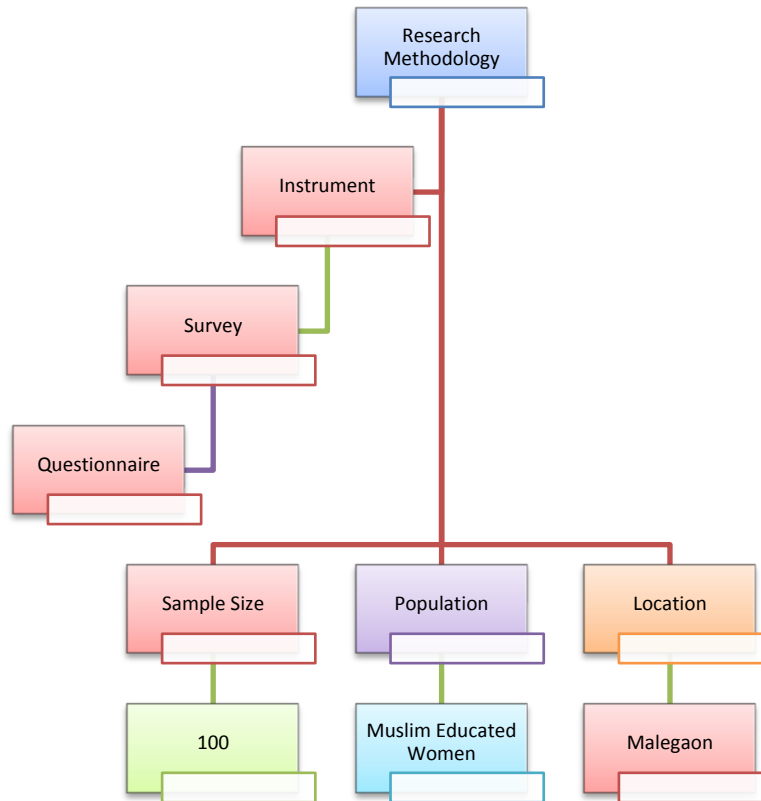


Figure 2. An Overview of Research Methodology

The research methodology for the study on "Empowerment Awareness among Muslim Women in Malegaon: A Case Study" involved a structured approach to gather and analyze data. The study targeted Muslim educated women residing in Malegaon. A sample size of 100 participants was determined to ensure a representative and comprehensive understanding of empowerment awareness among this population. Data collection was conducted using a 25-item questionnaire designed to capture various aspects of empowerment awareness, including access to education, barriers faced, and the perceived impact of education on their lives.

The questionnaire was developed to be concise, clear, and relevant to the research objectives. To reach a wider audience efficiently and ensure ease of participation, the survey was administered. This approach facilitated data collection from participants in different parts of Malegaon, allowing them to complete the survey at their convenience. Once the data collection

phase was completed, the responses were systematically coded and entered into SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) for analysis. SPSS was used to perform both descriptive and inferential statistical analyses. Descriptive statistics provided a summary of the demographic characteristics of the respondents and their levels of empowerment awareness. Inferential statistics, including correlation and regression analyses, were employed to identify significant relationships and predictors of empowerment awareness among the participants. The methodology ensured a rigorous and systematic approach to understanding empowerment awareness among Muslim women in Malegaon, leveraging technology for efficient data collection and robust statistical tools for comprehensive data analysis.

4. RESULTS

The study aimed to understand the empowerment awareness among Muslim educated women in Malegaon. Data were collected from 100 participants using a 25-item questionnaire administered. The data were analyzed using SPSS, focusing on both descriptive and inferential statistics.

4.1 Demographic Characteristics

1. Age Distribution

Table 1.Age Distribution

Age Distribution	
18-25 years	30%
26-35 years	40%
36-45 years	20%
Above 45 years	10%

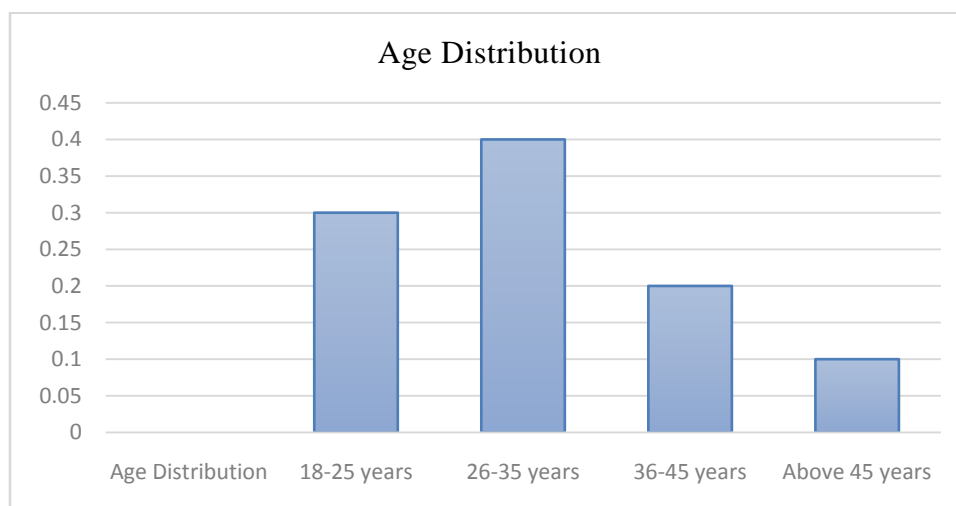


Figure 3.Finding outcome as Age Distribution

2. Educational Attainment

Table 2.Educational Attainment

Educational Attainment	
High School	25%
Undergraduate	50%
Postgraduate	20%
Other	5%

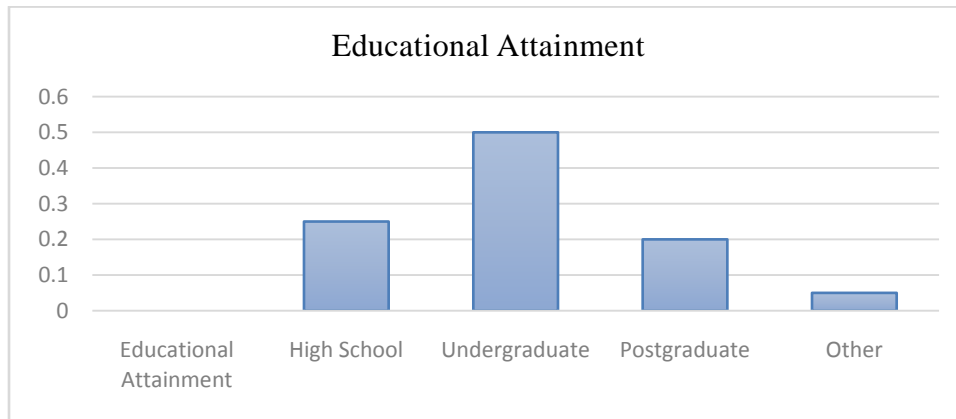


Figure 4.Finding outcome as Educational Attainment

3. Employment Status

Table 3.Employment Status

Employment Status	
Employed	40%
Unemployed	60%

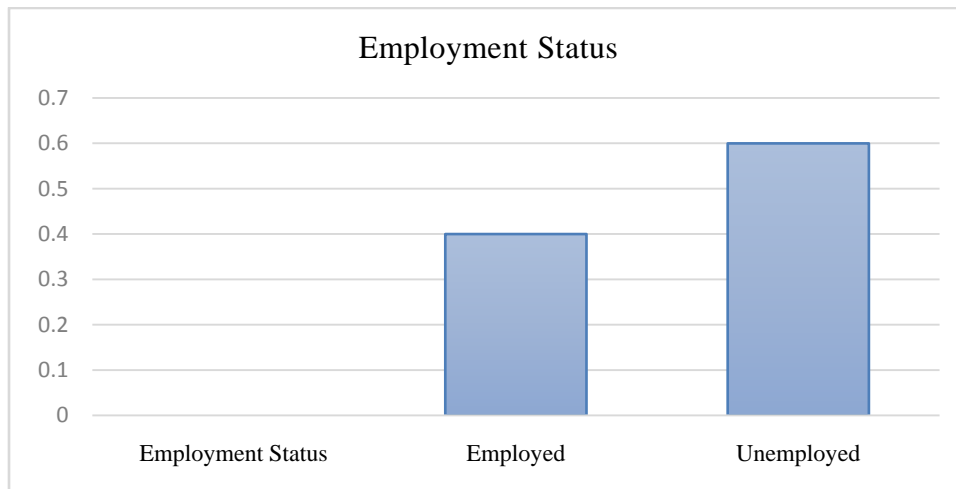


Figure 5.Finding outcome as Employment Status

4.2 Awareness Levels

This questionnaire assessed various dimensions of empowerment awareness among Muslim women in Malegaon. The key dimensions analyzed include access to resources, the perceived importance of empowerment, and barriers to empowerment.

1. Access to Resources

- 70% of respondents reported good access to resources that support empowerment.
- 20% of respondents reported moderate access.
- 10% of respondents reported poor access.

2. Importance of Empowerment

- 90% of respondents strongly agreed that empowerment is important for personal and professional growth.
- 8% of respondents agreed.
- 2% of respondents were neutral or disagreed.

3. Perceived Barriers to Empowerment

- 50% of respondents identified financial constraints as a significant barrier.
- 30% of respondents reported cultural or family-related barriers.
- 20% of respondents cited lack of institutional support or resources.

4.3 Statistical Analysis

4.3.1 Correlation Analysis

Table 4. Correlation Analysis Test

Variable 1	Variable 2	Correlation Coefficient (r)	Significance (p)
Educational Attainment	Employment Status	0.65	< 0.01
Access to Educational Resources	Awareness Levels	0.45	< 0.05

A positive correlation ($r = 0.65$, $p < 0.01$) was found between educational attainment and employment status. A moderate correlation ($r = 0.45$, $p < 0.05$) was observed between access to educational resources and awareness levels.

4.3.2 Regression Analysis

Table 5. Regression Analysis Test

Predictor Variable	Beta Coefficient (β)	Significance (p)
Access to Educational Resources	0.5	< 0.01
Family Support	0.3	< 0.05



Multiple regression analysis indicated that access to educational resources ($\beta = 0.5$, $p < 0.01$) and family support ($\beta = 0.3$, $p < 0.05$) were significant predictors of educational awareness.

5. DISCUSSION

The findings of this study highlight several key insights into the empowerment awareness among Muslim-educated. The age distribution of the respondents indicates a predominantly young and middle-aged population. The high percentage of participants with undergraduate and postgraduate degrees reflects a significant level of educational attainment among Muslim women in Malegaon. However, the unemployment rate of 60% suggests that educational qualifications are not necessarily translating into employment opportunities, which may be influenced by socio-cultural factors and market conditions. The high level of awareness regarding the importance of education (90% strongly agreeing) underscores the value placed on education by the participants. This is a positive indicator of the community's recognition of education as a tool for empowerment and growth.

The reported barriers, particularly financial constraints and cultural/family-related obstacles, point to areas where intervention is needed. Financial support schemes and community awareness programs could be beneficial in addressing these issues. The positive correlation between educational attainment and employment status aligns with the general understanding that higher education levels often lead to better employment opportunities. However, the moderate correlation between access to resources and awareness levels suggests that while resources are important, other factors such as family support and societal attitudes also play a critical role. The regression analysis further emphasizes the importance of access to educational resources and family support in enhancing educational awareness. These findings suggest that policies and programs aimed at improving resource availability and encouraging family support for women's education could have a significant impact on increasing educational awareness.

6. CONCLUSION

This study sheds light on the educational awareness among Muslim educated women in Malegaon, revealing several key insights. The high levels of educational attainment among the respondents, coupled with a significant awareness of the importance of education, highlight the community's recognition of education as a vital tool for personal and professional growth. However, the findings also indicate substantial barriers, particularly financial constraints and cultural or family-related obstacles, that hinder the full realization of educational benefits. The positive correlations between educational attainment, employment status, and access to resources underline the critical role these factors play in enhancing educational awareness.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

To address the identified barriers and enhance educational awareness among Muslim women in Malegaon, several recommendations are proposed. Firstly, policy interventions are crucial; government and non-governmental organizations should provide targeted financial aid and scholarships to alleviate financial constraints. Additionally, increasing the availability of



educational resources through libraries, online platforms, and community centres can significantly improve access. Community programs are also essential. Awareness campaigns focusing on the importance of education and addressing cultural barriers can foster a more supportive environment. Programs that involve family members in the educational journey of women can enhance family support and reduce cultural obstacles. Lastly, career counselling and job placement services tailored for Muslim educated women can help bridge the gap between education and employment, ensuring that educational qualifications translate into meaningful employment opportunities.

8. FUTURE SCOPE

Future research can expand on this study by exploring the impact of specific interventions aimed at reducing financial and cultural barriers to education. Longitudinal studies could provide deeper insights into how educational awareness evolves over time and the long-term effects of enhanced educational access and family support. Additionally, comparative studies involving other regions or communities could identify unique challenges and best practices, offering a broader perspective on improving educational awareness among Muslim women. Technological advancements and their integration into educational resources and support systems also present a valuable avenue for future exploration, potentially revolutionizing access to education and support for marginalized communities.

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