



Parental Factors and Academic Achievement of Minority Muslim Students in India

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ABSTRACT

Minority Muslim students continue to exhibit poorer academic outcomes than their peers who hail from advantageous groups, despite numerous Government initiatives. While many surveys have disclosed the potential impact of parental support and academic monitoring on their children's academic outcomes, few have disclosed insignificant findings leading to inconclusiveness. On the other end, the demographics they are imbued with, such as gender, socioeconomic status and status of exposure to Early Childhood Care and Education, will determine the pathway. The impact of two parental factors along with the students' demographic variables on the academic achievement of 151 Muslim students in the state of West Bengal was analysed. The validated versions of the Perceived Parental Support scale and Perceived Parental Academic Monitoring scale in the Indian context were utilized. The results indicated that the parental factors had a positive correlation and varied within socioeconomic status. Policymakers and educators must develop targeted interventions that address socio-economic disparities among this community.

Keywords: academic performance, muslim, parental academic monitoring, parental support, socio economic status

INTRODUCTION

Education is the sole power that awakens humans, motivates them to get free from ignorance, and fosters them in accordance with their inherent qualities and societal expectations. Without education, there can be no social growth or advancement, as it is a decisive aspect in the development process, and it has inherent significance in producing competent citizens in contemporary society. The more informed a society's individuals are, the more civilized and educated the society may be (Otani, 2020).

Following independence, the Government of India has placed a strong priority on education and has achieved great development in the same ever since. The Constitution of India offers equal opportunity to all members of society, egalitarian to caste, race, denomination, belief, or language (David, 2019). Nevertheless, the educational achievement varies between communities based on spatio-temporal characteristics. In India, multiple reports such as the numerous surveys of National Family Health Survey (NFHS) data, the National Sample Survey (NSS), Sachar Committee Report (SCR), and the Post Sachar Evaluation Committee (PSEC) Report have all revealed significant educational disparities at the cross-community level. For a variety of reasons, Muslims, a religious minority, have been failing to reap the benefits of education, and as a result, they still belong to the poorer sectors of society (Islam, 2024; Nushruth & Panakaje, 2023). They are penurious, have low educational attainments and are dependent on low-income generating self-employment (Mansoor, 2021; Times, 2024).

Understanding Minorities in India with Special Reference to Muslims

The term 'Minority' is derived from the Latin term 'minor', and the suffix '-ity' means 'fewer in number'. The National Commission for Minorities (NCM) Act of 1992 designated six religious groups as minority populations: Muslims, Sikhs, Parsis, Christians, Jains and Buddhists (Pasha, 2020; Rajagopal, 2023). Articles 29 & 30 of the Indian Constitution, which are directed towards these groups, recognize them based on language and religion, and not on the basis of standards of culture, ethnicity, or nationality. Religion is a frequent identifier across a few platforms, as witnessed above (Constitution of India, Article 29 & 30).

Though minorities constitute a small proportion of the total population (19.3% as per Census 2011), it is critical to take further efforts to protect their interests and foster a sense of concord with their fellow citizens of India (Fandy, 2023; Castelino, 2021). Recognizing this, countless brief and long-term projects in the form of equal possibilities were launched to further the educational attainment of minorities (Narula, 2014). The Ministry of

Minority Affairs budget allocation has been enhanced, and it now receives Rs 5,021 crores as of 2022-23, which is significantly more than what was allocated in 2021-2022, i.e., Rs 4,811 crores (Budget Allocation for Minorities Raised | India News - Times of India, n.d.). A few of the attempts made are the Pre and Post Matric Scholarship scheme, Pre-examination coaching, Pradhan Mantri Jan Vikas Karyakram, Madrasas, Makhtabs, Padho pardesh, etc., for weaker sections. Despite significant efforts in the sphere of educational development, the engagement of minorities is limited and insufficient (Bisht, 2018). According to the National Policy on Education (NPE) of 1996, most of the minority communities are financially disadvantaged or socially backward. Improvement of a community and societal status is difficult in the absence of education (Otani, 2020). NEP of 2020 also stated that, in furtherance of unbiased living and equality, greater emphasis ought to be placed on education in these groups (NEP_Final_English_0.Pdf, n.d.; M. H. Siddiqui, 2013).

Statistics of Muslims in India and West Bengal

As per Census 2011, Muslims constitute 14.2% of the population in India. There are numerous states where the Muslim population exceeds 20% (Census, 2011) and West Bengal is one of them with 27% Muslims in its entire population. Within the state, Murshidabad (66.3%), Maldah (51.3%) and Uttar Dinajpur (50%) are the top three districts with highest populace of Muslims (Census, 2011). Further, The Times of India published a report with the states in India having the highest Muslim population in 2024 which placed West Bengal in the fourth position (The Times of India, 2024).

Educational Status of Muslims

The total literacy rate of West Bengal is 76.26%, which stands over the country's average literacy rate of 72.98%. According to Census 2011 figures, the state's Muslim literacy rate (MLR) has grown to 68.74%, up from 57.47% in 2001. Literacy among Muslims in West Bengal has grown to 11% in the last decade, surpassing the day of the Sachar Committee assessment (The Times of India, 2016). In fact, it is also somewhat better than the country's average literacy rate of Muslims, which is 68.53%. Here ends the record of improvement because, though we document such progress, the MLR is much lower than the state's average in literacy of 76.26%, despite several national and provincial Government-sponsored educational programmes aimed at them (Census Tables | Government of India, 2001, 2011). Moreover, in the three districts with the highest Muslim-majority populations, the rate is significantly lower than the MLR. Districts having an average Muslim

population of 56%, like Uttar Dinajpur, Malda, and Murshidabad, exhibit a disheartening literacy rate of 51.6, 58.1, and 63.2 percent respectively (Census Tables | Government of India, 2011; Muslim Education Faces Tests in Bengal, 2016).

Despite being India's largest religious minority, Muslims lag behind other religious minorities on every human development metric, including standard of living, economic well-being, and political participation—resulting in poor performance across most sectors (The Hindustan Times, 2024). Their socioeconomic situation lags substantially below that of other minorities and falls short of the national average. Research studies, organisational polls, and government-appointed bodies consistently reveal that Muslims are the most educationally backward population in the country (e.g., Counter Currents, 2020). According to the Sachar Committee Report (SCR), 2006 from the Ministry of Minority Affairs, this minority group faces a twofold hardship due to inadequate access and poor quality of education; their challenges intensify as educational levels rise. (Sachar Committee Report, 2006).

Importance of Education for Muslim Community in India

Illiteracy is often considered to be the primary cause of low development in citizens, states and the nation as a whole. Only education may break down societal prejudices and fallacies, and bring about social transformation and cultural growth. It also results in increased earning potential and economic development by gaining expertise, abilities, and information for career possibilities. As a result, individuals are majorly reliant on education to advance socially and economically, more so ever since industrial growth, which was the major employment source, has begun to decline, leading to low employment opportunities for the educationally backward. This is especially true in the case of Muslims since a huge chunk of them rely on the informal sector for employment (Hussain et al., 2012; Malik, 2023). However, they continue to lag behind other socio-religious groups on education and numerous other Human Development Indicators (Islam, 2024; Khan & Butool, 2013; Kurrien, 2022; Fazal & Kumar, 2013; Hussain et al., 2012).

Recognizing its importance, National Education Policy of India-2020 is in line with the Sustainable Development Goal for education, which aims at improving the proportion of minorities in educational settings, particularly in schools. The vice chancellor further added that the policy puts down its focus on the socioeconomically disadvantaged groups irrespective of languages and religions, not overriding the provisions of the constitution.

It is also pointed out that the mother tongue, such as Urdu, Hindi or Arabic, can be included as a classic language of education in the country (though there is no common mother tongue across Muslims, it varies widely across regions), as providing education in the mother tongue can break numerous inhibitions and barriers (Ministry of Education, NEP).

Impact of Parental Factors on Education

Family is the building block of any society that not only dictates the destiny of the child but also creates the groundwork for its formation and growth. It continues to be the parents' job to raise their children to be valuable members of society. The part that parents undertake in their brood's life when granting education definitely determines how well they perform in school and be productive members of society (Otani, 2020). Parental participation is an important aspect in enhancing the children's motivation, self-worth, and independence, all of which contribute to their academic achievement. In the past couple of decades, India has adhered to international trends by improving information accessibility and revising its strategy for parental involvement in their brood's education. The Right to Education Act of 2009, which places "parents together with the state as responsible for safeguarding the child's right to education" (Maithreyi & Sriprakash, 2018) exemplifies this notion most clearly. Many Indian teachers, when it comes to this strategy, lay the weight of academic success or failure entirely on the hands of parents (Bhattacharjea et al., 2011). As most kids in India are first-generation learners (Wadhwa, 2018a, 2018b). It's crucial to consider if parents are prepared to live up to these expectations, particularly for parents in minority groups. We also notice that one of the major causes of drop-out among the minority groups is poor parental involvement and low economic status (Haque & Gour, 2021; M. H. Siddiqui, 2013).

Researchers believe that the involvement of parents in the educational process for their kids can come from their involvement in both home and school activities (Epstein, 1996; Grolnick & Slowiaczek, 1994), and that such engagement improves their educational performance (Walker et al., 2004). Parental involvement can be in the form of parental support and/or parental academic monitoring. "Parental support is commonly defined as being emotionally present and consistently dependable for the child in times of need. It is also important to a child's well-being; it has positive effects on children's self-efficacy and academic performance" (Felson & Zielinski, 1989, p. 727). According to the literature, the greater the parental support, the greater the social skills of their child, such as higher perception of self-worth, moral behaviour, educational and career achievement. Similarly, a lack of

parental support leads to pessimism and depressed symptoms (Van Roekel et al., 2011). Likewise, Parental academic monitoring is defined by Simons-Morton & Crump (2003, p. 121 as “parental academic monitoring includes knowing what classes your child is taking and knowing when your child has misbehaved at school”.

Impact of Socio-Demographic Variables

Other than the parental factors, certain demographic characteristics such as gender, socioeconomic status and exposure to early childhood care and education (ECCE) can significantly influence the academic performance of students. Gender disparities among the Muslim community, with girls facing cultural and societal barriers, often hinder their access and performance in academics compared to boys (Nayak, 2021). Likewise, low socio-economic status can limit their resources like learning materials, quality education and supplementary educational support (Kumar & Ravi, 2022). Furthermore, students who miss out on ECCE are often at a disadvantage since they lack the foundational literacy and numeracy skills that are crucial for academic success in later years. ECCE contributes to cognitive, emotional and social development, but access remains unequal for the Muslim community due to availability and location (Sengupta, 2023).

This paper aims at assessing the impact these two parental variables hold on the academic achievement of Muslim students, while taking into consideration the socio-demographic variables.

LITERATURE REVIEW

This section deals with the existing literature on the educational attainment of the minority Muslim group in India, factors that influence parents' involvement and the impact of their support and monitoring.

According to the Sachar Committee, Muslims have inadequate accessibility to educational opportunities and good quality education, and their academic backwardness is equal to or worse than that of Other Backwards Classes, Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, who are termed ‘socially disadvantaged’. Their educational participation was seen to be dropping as the grade of education increased. According to the survey, one-fourth of Muslim youngsters aged 6 to 14 have reportedly never gone to school or are dropouts. Muslims have only a 17% matriculation rate for children over the age of 17 compared to the country’s average of 26%. Only half of those who complete middle school go on to complete secondary school (Ministry of Education MyGov.In).

A multitude of studies show that involvement from parents helps students succeed (Naeem & Yousaf, 2023; Barnard, 2004; Hill & Craft, 2003; Zellman & Waterman, 1998). Waterman and Lefkowitz (2017) discovered that parenting traits can influence young adults' academic involvement. According to Howard et al. (2019), academic success was significantly predicted by parental behavior and involvement. Nevertheless, socioeconomic constraints such as poor income and long working hours cripple them from being involved in their children's education. Also, limited resources due to poor economic conditions restrict the parents from participating in school activities. Yet another factor that decides parents' involvement is their educational attainment, which is most of the time very limited in the Muslim community, hence hindering their ability to aid in their children's schooling (Khan & Mohsin, 2019).

Researchers distinguish between parental support offered at school and at home, claiming that the two have distinct impacts on children since they supply different types of support (Boonk et al., 2018; Pomerantz & Moorman, 2010). The former entails behaviors that necessitate parents' constant engagement with school, such as attending PTM (parent-teacher meeting), field excursions and sometimes even volunteering at school. The latter occurs outside of school, mostly, but not always, in their house (Mowen, 2015) such as providing a quiet study place for children, engaging in the higher education decision-making process, dealing with school-related problems, etc.

As for being involved in their children's education, parenting styles are marginally significant for authoritarianism and statistically significant for authoritativeness, according to Argyriou et al. (2016). It is often proposed that households in which both parents play authoritative and dictatorial roles (a type of parenting style), and are more involved with family activities bring about children with greater academic success (Ford & Wright, 1998). However, contradictory results were also seen when parents had an authoritative style in a few other surveys (Pinquart, 2016). The authoritative parenting style and students' drive to succeed academically are significantly correlated. Neglectful parenting practices and students' academic performance are negatively correlated (Mihret et al., 2019). The academic performance of students is significantly impacted by authoritarian and overprotective parenting approaches (Kosterelioglu, 2018).

Agarwal and Kapoor aimed to uncover the influence of parental involvement in their children's academic progress. They discovered that timely instructions and counsel from parents contributed to their children's higher academic achievement (Agarwal & Kapoor, 1998). In the same line,

Fan and Chen (2001), collected literature in a meta-analysis and discovered a low to moderate, but practically significant link between parents' academic involvement and the child's performance. Siddiqui and Ali (2017) conducted a study among school students from Moradabad, India. According to their reports, parental participation has a considerable and favorable influence on children's performance in school (M. A. Siddiqui & Ali, 2017). Pappattu and Vanitha (2017), on the other hand, stated that the family environment had no substantial influence on academic success.

Despite the growing body of literature on this subject of parental factors, the academic description of how the notion is characterized and the contributing features has yielded inconsistent conclusions, especially among Muslim minorities. Because of this, law enforcers, practitioners, and parents remain baffled. Thus, the study was undertaken with an intention of analysing the impact and relationship, if any, between parental factors (parental support and academic monitoring) along with the demographic variables (gender, socio-economic status and status of exposure to Early Childhood Care and Education) on the scholastic accomplishment of the children who belong to the Muslim community.

OBJECTIVE

To examine the various parental and demographic factors that influence the academic achievement of minority Muslim students

HYPOTHESES

Ho1 There is no significant difference in the academic performance of Muslim students w.r.t a) Gender, b) Socio-economic status and c) with and without ECCE

Ho2 There will be no significant difference in the perceived parental support by Muslim students with respect to their a) Gender b) S.E.S c) with and without ECCE

Ho3 There will be no significant difference in the parental academic monitoring perceived by Muslim students with respect to their a) Gender b) S.E.S c) with and without ECCE

Ho4 There will be no significant effect of parental factors (parental academic monitoring -PAM and parent support- PS) on the academic performance of Muslim students

METHODOLOGY

Research Design and Research Method

The study adopted Ex post Facto research design since the investigators started their survey after the event had taken place,

independently of the researcher. The current research design is also a correlational and causal-comparative design where the researcher attempted to determine the relationship between parental factors, along with demographic variables and Muslim children's academic achievement while also attempting to foretell the impact of the independent variables on the dependent variable. Likewise, as a research method Normative survey was applied to meet the objective.

Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

Inclusion

- Muslim students from co-education schools
- Muslim students at senior secondary levels
- Muslim students from Government schools

Exclusion

- Those who are not from the Muslim community
- Those who were from a high socio-economic background
- Those who are not willing to participate voluntarily

Sample and Sampling Technique

As stage one, two out of the top three districts in the state of West Bengal with the lowest literacy and the highest percentage of Muslims were chosen purposively (Malda and Uttar Dinajpur). In stage two, the list of co-education schools in the two districts was retrieved and based on proportionate sampling, the central limit theorem was applied, and 10% of the total schools in each district were selected, i.e., 87 in Malda and 70 in North Dinajpur. In stage three, simple random sampling was incorporated, and 157 Muslim students at the senior secondary level were chosen from these schools. Further, six students were removed due to poor response, and the final sample size was 151 (86 Male and 65 Female) Muslim students.

Research Tool

Two scales used to measure perceived parental support and parental academic monitoring:

1. Validated version of Perceived Parental Support scale- The original scale comprised 11 items and was developed by Jackson, Henriksen, and Foshee (1998 and later modified by Simons-Morton et al. 1999). The investigators Sourav Choudhury and Dr. Vijay Kumar Chechi validated the modified version using 264 students in five districts in the year 2022 as part of Ph.D. degree. The modified version had 10-items and a high internal

consistency of 0.983, thus proving suitability to measure perceived parental support in the Indian context. It is present in the library of the Department of Education in Lovely Professional University, Punjab.

2. Validated version of Perceived Parental Academic Monitoring scale-

The original scale consisted of 5-items on a 10-point Likert scale format developed by Simons-Morton et al. (1999). The investigators, Sourav Choudhury and Dr. Vijay Kumar Chechi, validated it using 100 students in five districts in the year 2022 (Choudhury, 2023). The updated version had 4-items and a high internal consistency of 0.936 and composite reliability of 0.940, thus proving suitability to measure perceived parental academic monitoring in the Indian context.

For scholastic achievement, the X standard West Bengal board examination grades of the sample students were retrieved from official school records and converted into numerical scores for statistical analysis. As for the demographic tool, questions were prepared to elicit gender, socio-economic status (SES) and Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE). The authors prepared the tool rather than using a pre-established one.

Process of Data Collection

Formal letters explaining the objectives of the study were drafted and sent to the school principals to gain approval. Following this, a student consent form was also prepared explaining the scope and ethical considerations. Once the principals granted permission, the schools were approached, and students at the senior secondary level who met the inclusion criteria and were willing to participate voluntarily were selected for the study. After consent was gained, the survey was undertaken for 15-20 minutes on average for each student. Teachers served as intermediaries and helped in collecting the necessary information. The demographic details are presented in Table 1.

Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics involving percentages and frequencies were performed across all the variables. Later, Independent Samples t- test and multiple linear regression was performed to test the association between the independent (parental factors, demographic variables) and dependent variable (academic performance). The hypothesis was tested at 5% level of significance. Analysis was run in SPSS throughout.

Table 1
Demographic Details of Participants

Demographic variables	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Boys	86	57
	Girls	65	43
Economic status	Above poverty line	73	48
	Below poverty line	78	52
Early childhood care and education (ECCE)	Received ECCE	124	82
	Did not receive ECCE	27	18

RESULTS

Following normality testing of academic performance, parental support and parental academic monitoring, the descriptive and inferential statistics were incorporated into the collected data.

Table 2
Descriptive Statistics of Academic Performance and Parental Factors W.R.T Gender, SES and ECCE

Variables	Demographics	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>SE</i>
Academic Performance	Gender				
	Boys	86	398.91	67.918	7.324
	Girls	65	389.02	71.308	8.845
	SES				
	Above Poverty Line	73	422.96	65.355	7.649
	Below Poverty Line	78	368.15	62.455	7.072
	ECCE				
	With ECCE	124	398.17	68.604	6.161
	Without ECCE	27	378.48	71.696	13.798
Parental Support (PS)	Gender				
	Boys	86	34.97	6.525	.704
	Girls	65	34.77	7.850	.974
	SES				
	Above Poverty Line	73	36.27	6.634	.776
	Below Poverty Line	78	33.58	7.316	.828

	ECCE				
	With ECCE	124	35.37	7.190	.646
	Without ECCE	27	32.63	6.139	1.216
Parental	Gender				
Academic	Boys	86	15.26	1.899	.205
Monitoring	Girls	65	15.06	2.384	.296
(PAM)	SES				
	Above Poverty Line	73	15.53	2.237	.262
	Below Poverty Line	78	14.83	1.950	.221
	ECCE				
	With ECCE	124	15.27	2.217	.199
	Without ECCE	27	14.70	1.514	.291

Note. n=Sample size, M= Mean, SD=Standard Deviation, SE=Standard Error

The above Table 2 displays the descriptive statistics of the three variables against the demographic variables of the students. In terms of gender, the sample of boys is 86, and the sample of girls is 65. Likewise, 73 were from above the poverty line and 78 from below the poverty line in terms of economic status. With regards to ECCE, 124 had ECCE, and the remaining 27 did not have ECCE. With regards to academic performance, we notice boys, above the poverty line and with ECCE, have better mean scores than girls, below the poverty line and without ECCE. This was the same across perceived parental support and parental academic monitoring.

1. Academic Performance across Demographic Characteristics

Levene's test was conducted to examine the assumption of homogeneity of variances prior to performing the Independent Samples t-test. Since the t-test requires equality of variances across groups, Levene's test was applied to determine whether equal variances could be assumed. The appropriate t-test results (equal variances assumed/not assumed) were interpreted accordingly.

Table 3

Summary of Independent Samples t-test on Academic Performance (AP) of Muslim Students w.r.t Gender, Socio-Economic Status, Early Childhood Care and Education

Levene's Test for Equality of Variance		t-test for Equality of Averages		
<i>F</i>	Sig.	<i>T</i>	<i>Df</i>	Sig. (2-tailed)

AP	Gender				
	Equal variance assumed	.429	.514	.867	149
	Socio-economic status				
Equal variance assumed	.452	.503	5.26	149	0.000
	Early childhood care and education				
Equal variance assumed	.222	.638	1.34	149	0.182

Note. AP=Academic Performance, F= statistical test, T=t distribution

From Table 3 above, we read that equal variance is assumed for Gender since sig. value is 0.514 (>0.05). The t-value of academic performance for the Muslim minority w.r.t gender (boys and girls) of the students is not statistically significant as the p-value is greater than 0.05 ($p=0.387$). Subsequently, for SES, we read from equal variance assumed since sig. value is 0.503 (>0.05). The t-value of academic performance for the Muslim minority w.r.t SES (above poverty line and below poverty line) of the students is statistically significant as the p-value is less than 0.05 ($p=0.000$). Likewise, in the third row, i.e., ECCE, we read from equal variance assumed since sig. value is 0.638 (>0.05). The t-value of academic performance for the Muslim minority w.r.t ECCE (with and without ECCE) of the students is statistically not significant as the p-value is greater than 0.05 ($p=0.182$).

2.Perceived Parental Support across Demographic Characteristics

From Table 4, we read that equal variance is assumed for gender, since sig. value is 0.071 (>0.05). The t-value of perceived parental support for the Muslim minority w.r.t gender of the students is not statistically significant as the p-value is greater than 0.05 ($p=0.867$). Subsequently, looking at the SES, we read from equal variance assumed since sig. value is 0.308 (>0.05). The t-value of perceived parental support for Muslim minority w.r.t SES of the students is statistically significant as the p-value is lesser than 0.05 ($p=0.019$). Similarly, in the third row i.e., ECCE, we read from equal variance assumed since sig. value is 0.306 (>0.05). The t-value of perceived parental support for Muslim minority w.r.t ECCE of the students is statistically not significant as the p-value is greater than 0.05 ($p=0.069$).

Table 4

Summary of Independent Samples t-test on Perceived Parental Support (PS) of Muslim Students W.R.T Gender, Socio-Economic Status, Early Childhood Care and Education

	Levene's Test for Equality of Variance		t-test for Equality of Averages			
	<i>F</i>	Sig.	<i>T</i>	<i>Df</i>	Sig. (2-tailed)	
PS	Gender					
	Equal variance assumed	3.311	0.071	.167	149	.867
	Socio-economic status					
	Equal variance assumed	1.047	0.308	2.368	149	.019
	Early childhood care and education					
	Equal variance assumed	1.055	0.306	1.832	149	.069

Note. PS= Parental support, F= statistical test, T=t distribution

3. Perceived Parental Academic Monitoring across Demographic Characteristics

Table 5

Summary of Independent Samples t-test on Perceived Parental Academic Monitoring (PAM) of Muslim Students W.R.T Gender, Socio-Economic Status, Early Childhood Care and Education

	Levene's Test for Equality of Variance		t-test for Equality of Averages			
	<i>F</i>	Sig.	<i>T</i>	<i>df</i>	Sig. (2-tailed)	
PAM	Gender					
	Equal variance assumed	3.582	.060	.557	149	0.578
	Socio economic status					

Equal variance assumed	2.422	.122	2.056	149	0.042
	Early childhood care and education				
Equal variance not assumed	5.380	.022	1.616	53.4	0.112

Note. PAM=Parental academic monitoring, F= statistical test, T=t distribution

From Table 5 above, we read that equal variance is assumed for gender since sig. value is 0.060 (>0.05). The t-value of perceived parental academic monitoring for the Muslim minority w.r.t gender of the students is not statistically significant as the p-value is greater than 0.05 ($p= 0.578$). Subsequently, looking at the second row for SES, we read from equal variance assumed since sig. value is 0.122 (>0.05). The t-value of perceived parental academic monitoring for the Muslim minority w.r.t SES of the students is statistically significant as the p-value is less than 0.05 ($p= 0.042$). However, in the third row i.e., ECCE, we read from equal variance not assumed since sig. value is 0.022 (<0.05). The t-value of perceived parental academic monitoring for the Muslim minority w.r.t ECCE of the students is statistically not significant as the p-value is greater than 0.05 ($p= 0.112$).

4. Parental Factors on Academic Performance

A multiple linear regression was conducted between the independent and dependent variable (Table 6). The results showcased that parental factors (parental academic monitoring and parental support) with academic performance were found to be significant at a p value at 0.00. In other words, academic performance of Muslim students was significantly predicted by parental factors with multiple linear regression coefficient $R= 0.55$ for p value at 0.00 and coefficient of determination $R^2= 0.309$, which means that 30% change is found in academic performance for unit variance in parental factors. This result is in line with another survey that concluded that parental support and monitoring is far more vital than any demographic variable and that those children who received it always outperformed the others (Makokha et al., 2018).

Table 6

Model Summary of Multiple Linear Regression of Parental Academic Monitoring and Parental Support on Academic Performance

Variable	R	R square	Adjusted R square	F	Sig. value
Parental Factors (PS and PAM)	0.55	0.309	0.299	33.01	0.000

Note. PS= Parental support, PAM= Perceived parental monitoring, R= correlation coefficient between three or more variables

CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

Policymakers in India are concerned about the current status of education among the Muslim community. They argue that the continued inferiority of a specific group, which accounts for a considerable portion of the country's population, will impede the holistic economic and political progress on the whole country. In this line, this survey was undertaken to analyse the impact of parental factors (parental support and parental academic monitoring) along with the students' demographic variables on the academic performance of 151 Muslim students in the state of West Bengal, India. The results indicated that academic performance, perceived parental support and academic monitoring varied between the SES of Muslim students through samples t-test. The dependent and independent variables were found to have a positive correlation through multiple linear regression analysis. Gender and the status of Early Childhood Care and Education were insignificant. So, the first hypothesis Ho1-a and c are accepted, that is, there is no significant difference in the Academic performance of Muslim students w.r.t Gender and ECCE. The former result is similar to studies by Pandya Prashant (2019) and Seema Desai (2016), which disclosed no significant difference between the two genders, and the latter results by Magnuson et al. (2016) and Myungkook Joo (2010), which disclosed no significance between those who received and have not received ECCE. The insignificance found with regards to gender can be explained since the enrollment ratio in 2022 for girls was 109% while it was 107.8% for boys in the state of West Bengal. Likewise, for the academic year 2019-2020, there were 2.32 lakh more girls enrolled in schools than boys (The Indian Express, 2021; Marak & Sutradhar, 2021). This stands true in the case of dropout rates also since the rate of girls is much lower than boys in the state. The factors that have contributed to such increase in girl educational attainment in the state are the Kanyashree project, campaigns by the State and Central Governments focused on girls in rural areas and the importance given by the families towards girl child education. With regards to the insignificance yielded with ECCE, it can be explained on the fact that ECCE is available free of cost to all the citizens irrespective of caste, community or religion.

Thus, majority of the respondents have received ECCE inspite of them not hailing from high socio-economic backgrounds. However, it has to be noted that the location and cultural factors can influence their access (Gontor, 2021).

Multiple research studies have found that SES and household-specific factors such as parental education and attitude, financial status of the household, and so on, may play an important role in deciding family's involvement in children's education (Borooah & Iyer, 2005; Hunt, 2008; Mugisha, 2006; Baruah & Goswami, 2012; Gouda & Sekher, 2014; Narula, 2014). Here, the first hypothesis Ho1-b is rejected based on the study results, and we conclude that there is a significant difference in the Academic performance of Muslim students w.r.t SES. This result is similar to studies by Ushaben (2017), Shi Hu et al. (2020), Kurian (2021) and Gupta (2021). Scholars such as Entwisle and Alexander have found that disparities in children's intellectual growth are influenced by their parents' socio-economic level (Entwisle & Alexander, 1995). For instance, a father's involvement with his kids is positively linked to his educational outcomes (Nord et al., 1998) and children with low SES (e.g., hailing from impoverished community) have fewer educational resources at home and are burdened with more mundane duties (Entwisle & Alexander, 1995; Shouse, 2018) that lead to poorer scholastic accomplishment. According to Feuerstein (2000), parents with a high SES status are interested in the educational progress of their kids and keep in contact with their children's school and related endeavours.

As for the second hypothesis Ho2-a and c are accepted, that is, there is no significant difference in the perceived parental support of Muslim students w.r.t Gender and ECCE, and Ho2-b is rejected and we conclude that there is a significant difference in the perceived parental support of Muslim students w.r.t SES as displayed in Table 4. Subsequently, third hypothesis Ho3-a and c are accepted that there is no significant difference in the perceived parental academic monitoring of Muslim students w.r.t Gender and ECCE, while Ho3-b is rejected, and we conclude that there is a significant difference in the perceived parental academic monitoring of Muslim students w.r.t SES as found in Table 5. As for effect of both the parental factors, Ho4 is rejected as we see both the factors have a significant effect on academic performance (Table 6).

As a result of the findings, there is an urgent need, in the opinion of the investigators, that educational institutions create mentorship programs led by the faculty who are sensitive to this minority group and provide academic guidance, career counselling, and also emotional support if necessary. Educational institutions can enable Muslim students to attain positive academic outcomes and personal development by establishing a sense of

belonging and cultural sensitivity. As for Muslims intellectuals and businessmen, an organization to make people aware of all educational plans, policies, and projects implemented by the Government of India for the minorities in specific can be set up. It is also necessary for the Waqf Board of India to establish educational institutions on its unused or abandoned properties so that Muslim parents can be educated and progress in the field of education. Their valuable involvement must be preached. State Governments, as well as the Central Government, must devote special attention to the education of Muslims through creating awareness programmes and occasions to involve parents.

Limitations and Potential Bias

The major limitation is the non-generalizable nature of the results to other minority groups or even all Muslim communities across the nation due to selection of a particular region and socio-economic criteria of the study. Likewise, the schools and students chosen for the survey may not represent the entire spectrum of the Muslim minority students since only those from Government schools were chosen (sampling bias). Further, students might have provided socially desirable expectations from their teachers and parents especially regarding parental factors (social desirability bias). Yet another limitation is the sample size of 151, that though it is statistically acceptable, a larger sample size might have yielded deeper insights.

Implications for Future Research

Investigators recommend longitudinal studies to explore enduring effects of low parental support and academic monitoring on the Muslim students' academic performance over time. Additionally, assessing cultural hindrances that may vary across Muslim communities in India, such as linguistic barriers and regional differences in cultural obligations, can yield deeper insights into localized challenges. Research studies can also explore the connection between gender, SES, and the education status of parents that can influence student outcomes. Nevertheless, qualitative studies that focus on parental aspirations, expectations, and engagement can throw light on strategies to improve their participation. These novel avenues will inform evidence-based policies and practices tailored to the diverse needs of the Muslim community.

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