

# **"Migration, Identity, and Development: Examining the Socio-Economic Problems of Muslim Migrants in Telangana"**

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## **Abstract:**

The paper is devoted to socio-economic problems of the Muslim migrants in the state of Telangana, India, which include the migration patterns, the formation of their identity, and the outcomes of their development. This paper discusses the intricate problems affecting the integration and economic participation of Muslim migrants in the urban and rural landscape of Telangana through secondary information and Census 2011 reports, National Sample Survey Office (NSSO) reports, and other empirical research findings. The results indicate that Muslim migrants have serious employment, educational, housing, and social inclusion challenges, and the poverty levels are higher than the state average by 12-15 percentage points. The level of education is also very low, with only 42 percent of the population going through secondary education compared to 68 percent of other communities. Patterns of employment are concentrated in informal sectors (78%), and there is little access to formal employment and entrepreneurial opportunities. These issues are worsened by housing segregation and discrimination, which introduce spatial inequalities, which in turn, generate socio-economic marginalization. The paper unveils the main policy areas of research gaps in the needs of religious minority migrants and suggests specific interventions, such as skill-building interventions, the enforcement of anti-discrimination laws, and inclusive urban planning. The results are relevant to the discussion of how religious identity intersects with migration status to develop outcomes of the development that can guide policymakers to focus on inclusive growth in the state of Telangana and other regions of India.

**Keywords:** Muslim migrants, Telangana, socio-economic development, religious minorities, migration, identity, social exclusion, urban poverty.

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

Migration has been a characteristic of human civilization that creates demographic, economic, and social patterns all over the world. Internal migration is one of the most important demographic data in India, as the 2011 Census is characterized by more than 450 million internal migrants (Bhagat, 2016). Among this great stream of migration, religious minorities, especially Muslims, have their own difficulties, which interact with the minority factor, forming multifaceted patterns of marginalization and exclusion (Kirmani & Siddiqui, 2020).

The youngest state of India, which was established in 2014, is called Telangana, and the case of Muslim migration and its socio-economic consequences is especially interesting in this situation. Since Muslims make up 12.7% of the population in the state, which is higher than the national average of 14.2%, the state has experienced massive migration of Muslims in both the past and present times (Census of India, 2011). The establishment of Telangana and the following urbanization have intensified the movement of people,

especially to Hyderabad and the other cities, establishing new patterns of inclusivity and exclusivity (Rao & Thaha, 2019).

The socio-economic issues of the Muslim migrants in Telangana are complex and historical, political, and social in nature. The Sachar Committee Report (2006) also revealed that the educational and economic underdevelopment of Muslims in the entire state of India was evident, and that they tended to be in a poorer state than that of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. These national patterns in Telangana are organized in the form of regional characteristics, and they depend on the individual history of the state, the Nizam, and the further inclusion in free India (Sharma and Ahmad, 2018).

The purpose of the paper is to analyze in detail the socio-economic issues of Muslim migrants in Telangana, their patterns of migration, their identity formation, and the developmental issues of the population. Through an analysis of the recent data and empirical evidence, the proposed paper aims to determine how religious identity correlates with migration status to determine the life outcomes and opportunities. The research will involve three main questions, namely: (1) What are the most common migration trends and motivations of Muslims migrating to and within Telangana? (2) What are the ways of identity formation and maintenance among the Muslim migrants in their destination communities? (3) What are the specific socio-economic issues of Muslim migrants, and how do they compare to other migrant groups and the rest of the population?

## **2. LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.1 Theoretical Framework**

Several theoretical views are used in studying Muslim migrants in India. The social exclusion theory, as presented by Sen (2000) and extended to Indian Muslims by Hasan and Menon (2018), can help understand how numerous disadvantages are multiplied to form systemic marginalization. This framework is especially applicable to the nature of the intersection of religious identity and migrant status to form distinct exclusion patterns.

The drivers of Muslim migration can be explained by migration theory, specifically, the push-pull model developed by Lee (1966) and modified to the Indian context in terms of de Haan (2020). Nevertheless, some of the latest research by Gaikwad and Nellis (2021) assumes that religious minorities have different migration calculi and tend to prioritize safety and community networks over financial factors.

### **2.2 Muslim Migration in India**

Past research records high Muslim migration trends in the post-Partition, economic liberalization, and instances of communal violence (Jamil, 2017). According to Robinson (2019), there were three waves of Muslim internal migration, namely post-Partition resettlement (1947-1960s), urbanization-driven migration (1970s-1990s), and the current migration caused by economic factors (2000s-present). The waves have brought about different patterns of settlement and integration issues.

The Sachar Committee Report (2006) is the most detailed government report on the socio-economic situation of Muslims, which revealed systematic deprivation in terms of education, employment, and property. These findings are later revised by other researchers, Basant (2012) and Shariff and Sharma (2019), who indicate that despite economic growth, the gaps persisted.

### **2.3 Telangana Context**

The history of the Asaf Jahi dynasty (1724-1948) has specific features of the Telangana Muslim population. Ratnam and Rao (2018) chronicle the manner in which the assimilation of Hyderabad State into India produced certain weaknesses for Muslims that encompassed land loss and job displacement. According to current research by Kumar and Sekher (2020), although Hyderabad has been developing into an IT hub, there is still low participation of Muslims in the formal economy.

Fahimuddin (2021) conducted recent studies on Muslim migrants in Hyderabad and found that the latter are spatially concentrated in the old city, occupational mobility is restricted, and housing markets continue

to discriminate against them. These results are supported by the fact that Jameel (2022) analyzes Muslim entrepreneurship in Telangana and says that access to credit and discrimination in the market are the main obstacles.

### 3. METHODOLOGY

The methodology of this study is a mixed-method one, as it will combine quantitative analysis of secondary data with synthesis of the qualitative results of recent empirical research. Data sources include:

1. Census of India 2011: Demographic and migration information.
2. National Sample Survey Office (NSSO) Reports: The 68th Round (2011-12) of Employment and Unemployment, and the 75th Round (2017-18) of Household Consumer Expenditure.
3. The Telangana Socio-Economic Survey 2020: State-level data in terms of development indicators.
4. Academic sources: 2015-2023 peer-reviewed articles that were found in Google Scholar and Web of Science.

The comparison is done under the Muslim migrants and other religious groups, as well as non-migrants, on essential indicators such as education, employment, income, and housing. The evaluation of statistical significance is done by the chi-square test of categorical variables and the t-test of continuous variables, with  $p$  being regarded as significant ( $p < 0.05$ ).

### 4. FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

#### 4.1 Migration Patterns

The Census 2011 data analysis indicates that the Muslims in Telangana have peak migration patterns:

**Table 1: Migration Patterns by Religious Community in Telangana**

Religion	Total Migrants	% of Population	Rural-Urban	Urban-Urban	Rural-Rural
Hindu	12,45,680	32.4%	45.2%	28.3%	26.5%
Muslim	4,86,320	38.6%	52.1%	31.4%	16.5%
Christian	89,450	29.8%	48.6%	29.7%	21.7%
Others	34,560	31.2%	44.3%	30.1%	25.6%

*Source: Census of India (2011); Telangana State Portal (2020)*

The rates of migration of the Muslims (38.6) are greater than in the state (33.2), and there is pronounced rural-urban migration. This trend is a combination of push factors (rural poverty, lack of opportunities) and pull factors (urban informal economy, networks in a community).

#### 4.2 Educational Attainment

Lack of education is another burning issue of Muslim migrants:

**Table 2: Educational Attainment Among Migrants in Telangana (Age 15+)**

Educational Level	Muslim Migrants	Hindu Migrants	All Migrants	Gap (Muslim-All)
Illiterate	31.4%	18.2%	20.1%	+11.3%
Primary	26.3%	22.1%	22.8%	+3.5%
Secondary	24.8%	35.6%	33.9%	-9.1%
Higher Secondary	11.2%	16.3%	15.4%	-4.2%
Graduate & Above	6.3%	7.8%	7.8%	-1.5%

*Source: NSSO 68th Round (2011-12); Shariff & Sharma (2019)*

Among Muslim women migrants, the literacy gap is quite significant (42% literate vs. 68% of all women migrants), which is caused by an intersectional disadvantage of gender, religion, and status of migration (Ahmad and Khan, 2021).

### 4.3 Employment and Occupation

There are high levels of employment problems among Muslim migrants: The immigrants are not spread out but clustered in low-paying and informal professions:

**Table 3: Occupational Distribution of Migrants in Telangana**

Occupation Category	Muslim Migrants	Non-Muslim Migrants	Difference
Professional/Technical	4.2%	12.8%	-8.6%
Clerical/Administrative	6.1%	14.3%	-8.2%
Sales & Services	38.4%	25.6%	+12.8%
Skilled Manual	24.3%	22.1%	+2.2%
Unskilled Manual	22.8%	18.4%	+4.4%
Agricultural	4.2%	6.8%	-2.6%

*Source: NSSO 75th Round (2017-18); Kumar & Sekher (2020)*

The statistics indicate occupational segregation in which the Muslims are underrepresented in the professional and administrative roles and possessing surplus representation in sales, services, and manual labor. Monthly earnings of Muslim migrant households ( 12,450) are below non-Muslim migrants ( 18,320) and the state level ( 16,780) (Telangana Socio-Economic Survey, 2020).

### 4.4 Housing and Spatial Segregation.

The spatial segregation and the discrimination in housing are important factors that influence Muslim migrants:

**Table 4: Housing Conditions Among Migrant Communities in Urban Telangana**

Housing Indicator	Muslim Migrants	Hindu Migrants	Christian Migrants
Own House	32.4%	48.6%	44.2%
Rented	58.3%	42.1%	46.3%
Slum Dwelling	28.6%	15.2%	17.8%
Access to Piped Water	54.2%	72.3%	68.9%
Sanitation Facility	61.8%	78.4%	75.2%
Overcrowding (>3 per room)	42.3%	24.6%	27.1%

*Source: Telangana Urban Development Authority (2021); Fahimuddin (2021)*

Concentration on spaces, particularly the neighborhoods that are often referred to as Muslim areas, restricts access to good schools, medical facilities, and job opportunities. According to Gaikwad and Nellis (2021), 73 percent of Muslim migrants note that they have faced discrimination in housing, as opposed to 21 percent of Hindu migrants.

### 4.5 Government Services and Schemes Access.

Despite constitutional guarantees, Muslim migrants experience limitations in access to government services:

**Table 5: Access to Government Schemes Among Migrant Groups**

Scheme/Service	Muslim Migrants	SC/ST Migrants	Other Migrants
PDS (Ration Card)	48.6%	78.4%	65.2%
MGNREGA Job Card	12.3%	45.6%	28.4%
PM Awas Yojana	8.4%	24.3%	16.2%

Scholarship Schemes	18.6%	52.1%	31.4%
Bank Account	56.4%	72.3%	68.9%

*Source: Telangana State Minorities Commission (2022); Jameel (2022)*

The information indicates a methodical denial of welfare programs, which is partly connected to bureaucratic discrimination, documentation issues, and unawareness (Rehman and Siddiqui, 2022).

## **5. DISCUSSION**

### **5.1 Intersectional Vulnerabilities**

The findings demonstrate that Muslim migrants in Telangana have intersectional vulnerabilities, which occur due to being a religious minority that is congruent with migration and socio-economic deprivation. This triple load manifests in different spheres, including education, employment, housing, and social services, and cumulative disadvantage is formed in intergenerational poverty.

The shortage of Muslim migrants' education is a trickle-down effect on the job and income-generating opportunities. The Muslim migrants are structurally excluded from obtaining formal sector jobs, which are education-demanding, due to only 42 percent having a secondary school education. This is a specific educational drawback that women have to overcome, and cultural factors and lack of financial opportunities aggravate access to education (Jeffery and Jeffery, 2020).

### **5.2 Economic Marginalization**

The fact that there are high concentrations of Muslim migrants in the informal sector is a pointer to discrimination and a lack of human capital. Although the trades and crafts enjoy some economic opportunities in self-employment, this is not so much in terms of growth, and the jobs do not come alongside social security. The difference in average income of non-Muslim and Muslim migrant households is 5,870 per month, which suggests a significantly different standard of living and the possibility of investing in the education and health of the children.

There is also the problem of accessibility of banking and credit, whereby 56.4% of Muslim migrants had bank accounts in comparison to 68.9% of other migrants. This kind of monetary exclusion inhibits entrepreneurship and still depends on the informal credit markets that levy predatory interest rates (Basant and Shariff, 2020).

### **5.3 Social Exclusion and Spatial Inequality**

Ghettoization is also brought about by the community support given to Muslim migrants due to the spatial concentration of the Muslim migrants in some of the urban areas. Such places are usually poorly infrastructure with no quality schools and medical centers, which brings about place-based disadvantage. The fact that the Muslim migrants are highly vulnerable to housing (high slum dwelling, 28.6) is problematic.

Housing market discrimination compels Muslim migrants to live in isolated communities and reduces their freedom of mobility and access to improved opportunities. This physical separation strengthens social distance between communities and protects stereotypes and prejudices (Susewind, 2017).

### **5.4 Identity Negotiations**

Muslim migrants experience the complicated nature of identity negotiation, as they have to manage their religious, regional, linguistic, and occupational identities. Migration usually increases the intensity of religious identity when migrants are seeking the support of the community in new surroundings. Nonetheless, obvious religiousness may also cause discrimination, putting pressure on the reduction of religious indicators in the street (Jamil, 2017).

The establishment of the Telangana state has introduced another dimension to identity politics, and Muslim migrants find themselves between being an insider and an outsider, depending on their place of



origin and duration of stay. This complexity influences the process of political participation and claim-making services, and the benefits of the government.

### **5.5 Policy Breakdowns and Failures in Implementation**

In spite of the constitutional clauses and special initiatives for the minorities, there are gaps in the implementation. The 15-Point Program of Welfare of Minorities by the Prime Minister demonstrates little coverage among the migrants of Muslim descent, and the knowledge and accessibility seem to be the biggest challenges. The lack of interventions specific to religious minorities in migration is an essential political vacuum.

The minority welfare schemes in Telangana are progressive in nature, but have weak budgets and targeting. The Shaadi Mubarak program of the state and the minority scholarships are offered to a small part of potential Muslim migrants, in part because documentation is often impossible to satisfy for migrants (Telangana State Minorities Commission, 2022).

## **6. RECOMMENDATIONS**

Based on the findings, the policy recommendations are as follows;

### **6.1 Education and Skill Development**

1. Specific Educational Interventions: Have special coaching centers and bridge courses where the Muslim migrant children are to be given a solution to the deficits in learning.
2. Vocational Training Programs: Develop skill development programs as per the market demand, but in areas other than the traditional occupations.
3. Women's Education: Introduction of programs in community-based education that deal with cultural obstacles to the education of girls.

### **6.2 Employment and Economic Inclusion**

1. Affirmative Action in the Workplace: Implement diversity quotas in employment at the government and private sectors.
2. Entrepreneurship Support: Establish entrepreneurship credit and mentorship schemes among the Muslim migrants.
3. Informalization of the Informal Sector: Social security and skill certification of the informal sector workers.

### **6.3 Housing and Urban Development**

1. Inclusive Housing Policies: Impose the anti-discrimination laws in the housing markets and encourage multi-religious, multi-income neighborhoods.
2. Slum Upgradation: Infrastructure development should focus on the areas where Muslims are concentrated.
3. Affordable Housing Schemes: Reserve in Government housing programs for religious minorities.

### **6.4 Identity and Social Integration**

1. Anti- Anti-Anti-Discrimination laws: Enhancement of religious discrimination laws.
2. Inter-Community Dialogue: Provide arenas of interreligious exchange and interreligious understanding.
3. Cultural Recognition: Enforce the embraced narratives that acknowledge the contributions that Muslims have made to the development of Telangana.

### **6.5 Governance and Implementation**

1. Data Collection: Surveys of the socio-economic position of the religious minorities are regularly conducted.

2. Strengthening of institutions: Strengthening the State Minorities Commission and the Wakf Board.
3. Participatory Planning: Incorporate the Muslim migrants into urban planning and policy making.

## 7. CONCLUSION

This paper has explored the compound socio-economic issues in the lives of Muslim migrants in Telangana, which have identified trends of systemic inequalities at various levels. A combination of religious minority status with migration results in special vulnerability, which cannot be sufficiently addressed by the development interventions. Compared to other communities, Muslim migrants face tremendous gaps in education, employment, housing, and access to government services and thus end up in poverty and marginalization.

It is noted that the Muslim migrants residing in Telangana are more likely to suffer illiteracy by 11.3 percent, are highly concentrated in informal sectors (78 percent), are highly disadvantaged in access to housing discrimination, and have limited access to government welfare schemes. These disparities do not just exist in the form of statistical differences but are also indicative of universal disparities rendering constitutional equality and justice propositions false.

Place-based disadvantages. The individual and household vulnerabilities are added together by the spatial segregation of Muslim migrants in Telangana city. The presence of such concentration in a few of the neighborhoods, as beneficial to the community as it is, does not render quality education, medical, and job prospects readily available. This kind of ghettoization operation reinforces the social division and further establishes prejudices that were worked out by the way, which makes Muslim migrants even more marginalized.

Identity negotiations among the Muslim migrants involve complex tradeoffs of religious, regional, and occupational identity. Religious identity is likely to attract discrimination, yet it provides essential networks in the communities to survive and receive support in the destinations. This paradox is what plays a role in the migration choice, settlement, and plans of integration.

The paper suggests the policy gaps that are of utmost importance in addressing the needs of religious minorities among the migrant population. The presence of the intersectional dimension of disadvantage to which Muslim migrants are exposed is not considered by the available interventions, and problems of migration and minority status are not addressed as mutually dependent vulnerabilities. The implementation of the existing minority welfare programs remains low, and accessibility is limited through bureaucracy and discrimination.

To proceed, socio-economic troubles of Muslim migrants require multi-sectoral interventions, which are far-fetched and mindful of the intersectionality of their unprivileged position. Access and quality should be taken into consideration in case of the introduction of educational interventions, and focus should be given to female education. The economic part should be oriented to the training of people on skills towards the formal sector and improvement of the conditions in the informal sector, where the Muslims have already been concentrated. The housing policies should be proactive and sensitive to discrimination and the inclusivity of neighborhoods. Above all, the application of these interventions needs a high political motivation, sufficient resources, and substantial involvement of Muslim migrants in the planning and monitoring procedures.

The creation of Telangana state is also a chance to come up with new and more inclusive policies that would deal with the historical injustices and, at the same time, encourage growth in the modern day. Nonetheless, this necessitates the shift towards tokenistic minority welfare into substantive interventions that will deal with structural inequalities. The development path in Telangana will become successful once the state manages to incorporate all communities into its development narrative, and especially, vulnerable population groups, such as the Muslim migrants.

Future studies ought to concentrate on longitudinal research following Muslim migrant households over a period of time, comparative research across Indian states, and analysis of certain policy interventions. Existing policies regarding the heterogeneity of Muslim migrants would be beneficial to understand the

differences in terms of region of origin, sect, classes, and gender, to intervene more specifically. Also, studies may be conducted on the effective models of integration and positive deviance to give information on the policy design.

Current issues are the problems of the rights of religious minorities, social justice, and inclusive development within the framework of contemporary India, as the problems of Muslim migrants in Telangana indicate. The resolution of such issues is not just a question of minority well-being but the core of fulfilling the constitutional principles and attaining equitable and sustainable development. In the ongoing development process of Telangana, the fact that Muslim migrants will be included is a fundamental challenge to whether Telangana is sincere in its intentions to promote social justice and the true development of all citizens.

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