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TOPIC : **A SOCIOLOGICAL STUDY OF FACTORS**
AFFECTING CHOICE OF MUSLIM WOMEN
STUDENTS IN CENTRAL UNIVERSITIES

ABSTRACT

The major findings of the present study are presented in the following points-

1. Women are certainly discriminated on the grounds of socio-economic status. While selecting their courses, very few girls considered their gender. Their families tried to push them in the so-called safe-streams and safe-careers. While selecting a course, about one-fourth girls had responded that they had taken the present course to become a teacher and one-third of these girls gave the reason that teacher's profession is best for girls. Thus we find that for most of the Muslim women, college education still remains confined to families having higher socio-economic status. Moreover, they also have to pass the barrier for gender bias to reach the college for higher studies.
2. The subject choices of Muslim women students are influenced by many sociological factors. The major determining factor comes out to be family influence.
 - (i) More than one-third of girls chose arts stream under family influence, similar number of girls chose science stream. One-third of girls chose their college according to their family wishes. The type of family i.e. nuclear or joint also plays an important role. About half of girls of nuclear families opted for science, and the half number of girls of joint families opted for arts. Father's and mother's education and occupation both play an important role. Highly qualified parents tend to encourage their wards to take up science. Working mothers are more aware about the education of their daughters.
 - (ii) Socio-economic status also plays an important role in choice of subjects. Out of all the girls belonging to upper class, more than half of girls chose commerce stream. Most of the girls were in second group i.e. upper middle class. Out of these girls, majority chose science and some chose arts. There were very few girls in lower middle class. Most of them chose arts.
 - (iii) Interest is also a deciding factor for choosing subjects. About one-third of girls chose their present course according to their interest and about one-fourth of girls chose their college according to their interest. Of the total factors influencing a girl to choose her subject, interest comes first in case of science students, and second after family in case of arts and commerce students.
3. A majority of girls feel the need of professional guidance and counseling in schools to guide them for their career and choice of courses. The girls responded that due to insecurity and uncertainty at that time, they often took wrong decisions which later on affected their satisfaction levels. About one-fourth of girls were moderately satisfied and very few were dissatisfied by the course being pursued by them. So they feel that there should be provision of professional guidance and counseling at school level.

4. There are various factors affecting the aspirations of Muslim women students. The major factor comes out to be 'own decision'. Due to the changing mindsets of people, girls are also becoming more confident about what they want to do in their future. About half of girls said that the decision for choosing this particular was career their own. Out of these girls, majority are from the science stream followed by commerce and arts stream.
5. (i) Another factor which determines the career choice of Muslim girls is, as expected, their family. About one-third of girls are influenced by their families while choosing their careers and most of them are from science.
(ii) Another very important factor is financial reasons, and most of girls belonged to arts.
(iii) When the relation between perception of course and occupational choice Muslim women students was calculated, it was found that both are inter-related. The perception of course was directly related to the occupational choice of Muslim women students. Most of the girls were those who wanted to take up a job after completion of the present course. Out of these girls, one-third of them want to become teachers and some want to get a government job or administrative job.
(iv) Few girls wanted to get married after completion of the course. All these girls belonged to arts stream and most of them wanted to become housewives.
(v) A very small percentage of girls wanted to study further. Out of these, most of them wanted to be teachers. Some wanted to do research or to get government jobs.
6. There are many restrictions on Muslim women students. The major restrictions come from family and society. Majority of girls said they feel restricted due to family, society and cultural issues. Some girls said that their parents do not allow them to study in co-educational institutes. Some parents do not allow their daughters to far off colleges; some girls want to go to other universities, while some girls are not allowed to do professional courses. There were certain girls who felt restricted due to the pressure of wearing hijab.
7. The perception of course is inter-related to the socio-economic status of the girls. The upper class students mostly wanted to study further. They do not have any tension for resources as they tend to be more luxurious in getting education.
The lower middle class students mostly want to improve their financial condition, so they want to do job after completion of the course. Some of the girls also want to get married so that they do not have to worry about the resources.
The upper middle class students mostly opt for science and most of them want to do job after the completion of the course.
8. (i) The perception of course is also related to socio-cultural factors. The students who have been living in Delhi for more than ten years are more practical and pragmatic. More than half of the girls want to do job after completion of their courses.
(ii) The girls coming from nuclear families are more confident than those coming from joint families. Out of these girls, about half want to take up a job after their courses.
(iii) The girls of working mothers also want to become career women. Most of them want to be teachers, some want to be government employees and a negligible number of girls also want to be businesswomen. Parental interaction is also a factor for the same. The girls whose parents regularly interact with them are more confident and career-oriented than their counterparts.
(iv) The moderately religious families allow girls to go for career along with not-religious families. Modernity of the family also plays an important role. The orthodox families do not allow their girls to get a career, while all of the modern and advanced families and most of the average families had daughters who aspire to be career women.