
EMPOWERING MUSLIM WOMEN: CHALLENGES, PROGRESS, AND PATHWAYS TO SOCIO-ECONOMIC EQUALITY IN INDIA

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ABSTRACT

This research article aims to comprehensively examine the socio-economic status of Muslim women in India, identifying the challenges they encounter and assessing the progress made towards achieving equality. Through an exploration of factors such as educational disparities, limited access to formal employment, and gender-based inequalities within families and society, the study seeks to provide a nuanced understanding of the complex dynamics shaping the lives of Muslim women in contemporary India. With a focus on demographic trends, legislative interventions, and government initiatives, the research evaluates the efficacy of existing policies and programs in empowering Muslim women. Utilizing data from the Sachar Committee's findings, the study analyzes literacy rates, educational attainment, and employment patterns among Muslim women, shedding light on the persistent disparities and areas requiring targeted intervention. Furthermore, the research delves into the practice of divorce under Muslim law, particularly the controversial issue of instant triple talaq, and its ramifications on married women. By examining significant legal cases and governmental measures aimed at addressing the challenges faced by Muslim women, the study underscores the importance of continued efforts towards promoting gender equality and socio-economic empowerment within the Muslim community in India.

Keywords: Muslim women, Socio-economic status, Gender equality, Legislative interventions, Triple Talaq

Introduction

In contemporary India, the socio-economic status of Muslim women remains a focal point of discussion, characterized by a complex interplay of cultural traditions, legal frameworks, and socio-economic dynamics. Despite the presence of legal safeguards and ongoing efforts for gender empowerment, Muslim women continue to face multifaceted challenges, including educational disparities, limited access to formal employment, and gender-based inequalities within the family and society. This paper endeavors to explore the intricate landscape of socio-economic conditions affecting Muslim women in India, delving into legislative interventions, and role of government toward equitable empowerment. In the wake of rapid modernization and globalization, the dynamics shaping the lives of Muslim women have evolved, presenting both opportunities and obstacles in their pursuit of socio-economic advancement.¹

Status of Muslim Women in India

India aims to achieve universal education, but, only a small number of Muslim women have the financial means to complete their education. Initially, there was a slight difference between Muslim and non-Muslim females in the elementary level, but this difference increased as the girls advanced in their education. While Hindus saw significant advantages from British education and other forms of modernization, Muslims exhibited a somewhat slower pace of adaptation. They adamantly clung to their rituals and values, perceiving any novel concepts as a direct challenge to their collective identity. Consequently, their adherence to traditional values resulted in a subsequent deterioration of their social and economic standing

According to a study 59.5% of Muslim women in metropolitan India lack literacy skill. The percentage of Hindu women is 42.25%, while the percentage of Christian women is 22.75%. Their underrepresentation in the workforce can be attributed to a deficiency in educational attainment. A significant proportion of Muslim women engage in employment inside the informal sector. Women are excluded from participating in the household budget due to their limited economic resources compared to men. This completely deprives them of all influence in the issue. Consequently, this finally results in a decline in one's social status.²

¹ S. Kishor, & K Gupta, "Women's empowerment in India and its states: evidence from the NFHS", *Economic and Political Weekly*, 694-712, (2004).

² Census (2011), Census Report, Government of India.

Demographics

The significant transformation in the demographic composition of Muslims in the United States is astonishing. According to a declaration released by the Central Government in 1993, the Muslim community constituted 13% of the total population. Out of the total of 593 districts, there are 9 districts where the Muslim population constitutes above 75% of the total population. Among religious groups, Muslims exhibit the highest sexual ratio. It is projected that the Muslim population will increase to a range of 18% to 19% by the conclusion of the 21st century.³

It was found that Muslims exhibit the highest rates of illiteracy among all religious groups in the country, with 76.1 percent in rural areas and 59.5 percentage in urban areas.⁴

- Muslim girls exhibit the greatest rate of dropout.
- The educational achievement of Muslims is about comparable to that of SCs/STs.

The benefits of initiatives aimed at enhancing Muslim women's educational opportunities have not been effectively disseminated, despite their extensive involvement. According to the survey, there has been a significant increase of up to 65 percentage in the population of Muslim pupils. Muslims constitute a minority proportion among graduate students.⁵

Madarasas and Maktabas continue to hold significance for contemporary Muslims. Research has demonstrated that Muslim women have the lowest levels of educational attainment. The Madarasas and Maktabas are currently the sole secure refuge for their education. Addressing the obstacles in formal education is imperative in order to enhance the accessibility of higher education for economically disadvantaged populations. The renovation of Madarasas and Maktabas is necessary to create improved learning settings, especially for individuals who are unable to afford private instruction.⁶

Pervasive qualities such as caste, religion, region, and language have been identified as significant factors contributing to numerous defeats. There exists a disproportionate burden of bad health and low income among Muslims. The Sachachar committee's findings indicate that

³ Ibid

⁴ Racolb Legal, "TRIPLE TALAQ: A CRITICAL ANALYSIS", available at <https://racolblegal.com/triple-talaq-a-critical-analysis/> (last visited on April 26, 2024)

⁵ Ataula, N., "Indian Muslims and the media. Countercurrents" available at www.Countercurrents.Org (last visited on April 24, 2024)

⁶ Supra note 1 at 1

Muslim vaccination rates were relatively low, as supported by many research and calculations. The population's precarious health is further exacerbated by the absence of clean water, sanitary services, and sufficient housing. The deterioration of health can be attributed to several significant factors, including the increasing urban populations, escalating rates of unemployment and migration, and the growth of urban slums. 16% of all villages lacking access to modern medical care are located in Muslim-majority areas. Women's reproductive system health is a significant concern. Every individual possesses an innate and non-transferable entitlement to both physical and mental welfare.⁷

Labour force participation among Muslim women is notably low. Approximately 60% of them function autonomously in small-scale sectors such as needlework and handicrafts. Their primary occupations are in the service and manufacturing sectors. Islamic women employed in the industrial sector frequently experience low wages and encounter inequitable working conditions. Muslim women have the potential to escape from abhorrent working conditions through education, and it is imperative for the government to uphold its commitment to enforce “Article 43 of the constitution”⁸, which specifically advocates for this.

Assessment of the Sachar Committee and the Socio-Economic Status of Muslim Women

The “Sachchar Committee”⁹ study provides empirical evidence that sheds light on diverse dimensions of the socio-economic and educational conditions within the Muslim minority in India, with a specific emphasis on Muslim women. The following are few significant findings:

- Muslim literacy rate: 59.1%, which is lower than national average of 64.8%.
- In comparison to the national average, the mean years of schooling (MYS) is somewhat lower.
- Approximately 25% of Muslim children between the age range of 6 to 14 years have either not received any formal education or have chosen to withdraw from school.
- The proportion of Muslims with degrees or diplomas is less than 4%, in contrast to approximately 7% of the population aged 20 years and older.

⁷ Goswami, D. , “Ban triple talaq, group of Muslim women lawyers, activists urges PM Modi”, Times of India, available at www.indiatoday.intoday.in (Last visited on April 25, 2024)

⁸ The Constitution of India, art. 42

⁹ Sachar, R. (2006), Social, Economic and Educational Status of the Muslim community in India’, Prime Minister’s High Level Committee, Cabinet Secretariat, Govt. of India, New Delhi.

- Skills development projects hold special relevance for individuals who identify as Muslims and have not completed their formal education.
- Individuals who have completed middle school education would possess the necessary skills required in the manufacturing and service industries.
- Muslims primarily rely on self-employment as their primary source of income, actively participating in self-employed manufacturing and commerce endeavours.
- A significant proportion of Muslim labourers participate in street vending and production-related endeavours.
- The level of Muslim workers' engagement in regular salaried employment is significantly lower in comparison to workers belonging to other socio-religious groups.
- Muslim individuals have a higher degree of vulnerability with regards to employment conditions, particularly within the informal sector.
- Approximately 38% of Muslims residing in urban areas and 27% of Muslims residing in rural regions experience poverty.
- Muslim populations tend to be concentrated in areas characterized by inadequate infrastructure, which consequently hampers their ability to access fundamental services such as education, healthcare, and transportation.
- Muslim individuals may not necessarily perceive education as a direct pathway to securing formal employment.
- The sex ratio of the Muslim community exhibits a notable improvement in comparison to other socio-religious societies.
- Muslim infant and childhood mortality rates are somewhat below the national norm.

The aforementioned statistics highlight the difficulties encountered by the Muslim population, including Muslim women, in their pursuit of education, employment, and essential resources. The statement underscores the necessity of implementing focused interventions and inclusive development strategies in order to effectively tackle the socio-economic inequalities and enhance the well-being of the Muslim population in India.

Divorce under Muslim Law

Divorce referred to as "Talaq" in Arabic, holds great importance in Islamic jurisprudence as a fundamental component of family law. The governance of this system is primarily based on the principles outlined in the Quran, with additional guidance from interpretations found in Hadith literature and legal rulings developed by Islamic scholars over the course of centuries.

The divorce procedure in Muslim jurisprudence is structured to establish a structure for the termination of matrimony taking into account the entitlements and obligations of both partners.¹⁰

Divorce is addressed in various chapters of the Quran, with Surah Al-Baqarah (2:229-230) and Surah At-Talaq (65:1-7) being the most prominent. These verses describe the protocols and prerequisites for commencing and concluding divorce. In general, divorce can be classified into two primary forms: Talaq, which is proclaimed by the husband, and Khula, which is initiated by the wife.¹¹

According to Islamic jurisprudence, the practice of Talaq, which refers to unilateral divorce initiated by the husband, can be implemented in several manners, contingent upon the specific school of thought. The prevailing variant is referred to as "Talaq al-Sunnah," which adheres to the prophetic tradition and entails a period of waiting (iddah) where reconciliation is promoted. The husband issues a single pronouncement of Talaq, followed by a waiting period of three menstrual cycles (about three months) prior to the completion of the divorce. This interval allows the couple an opportunity to engage in reconciliation. The act of a spouse uttering Talaq three times inside a single sitting is commonly referred to as "Talaq al-Bid'ah" and is widely seen as strongly disapproved in numerous interpretations.¹²

Conversely, Khula is instigated by the wife and usually entails the surrender of her financial entitlements in return for divorce. The implementation of this procedure may necessitate the involvement of a religious authority or legal entity in order to guarantee equity and compliance with Islamic tenets.

In Islam, divorce is considered a permissible measure to address irreconcilable problems between spouses. However, it is emphasized that divorce should only be pursued as a final recourse after all attempts at reconciliation have been thoroughly explored and exhausted. In Islamic law, there is a significant focus on safeguarding the family structure and the welfare of children. Divorce is regarded as a decision that should be made after thorough deliberation and in accordance with proper procedures.¹³

¹⁰ Z. Hasan, & R. Menon, "Unequal citizens. A Study of Muslim Women in India", Oxford University Press, New Delhi, (2004).

¹¹ Asghar Ali Engineer, "Islam Women and Gender Justice", Gyan publishers, New Delhi, (2011).

¹² Supra note 10 at 5.

¹³ S.S. Hameed, "Voice of the Voiceless: status of Muslim women in India", NCW (2000).

Under Muslim law, there are two primary categories of Talaq, namely Talaq-ul-Sunnah and Talaq-ul-Bid'ah. The aforementioned terms pertain to distinct approaches to divorce as required in Islamic jurisprudence, each characterized by its unique set of processes and criteria. Talaq-ul-Sunnah is a form of divorce that adheres to the Sunnah established by the Prophet Muhammad. It is widely regarded as the most genuine and favoured method of divorce within the Islamic faith. There are two primary versions of Talaq-ul-Sunnah. Talaq al-Hasan, commonly referred to as "the good divorce," is a divorce procedure wherein a husband pronounces Talaq once and subsequently observes the 'iddah (waiting period) until the divorce is officially concluded. During this interim phase, it is recommended to promote reconciliation, and if the couple successfully reconciles, the divorce is annulled. Talaq al-Ahsan, commonly known as "the best divorce," bears resemblance to Talaq al-Hasan, however with a lengthier delay and an additional declaration of Talaq. The husband issues a Talaq declaration on a single occasion, followed by a waiting period of three menstrual cycles, which typically spans roughly three months, prior to the completion of the divorce proceedings. In the event that reconciliation fails to transpire within this designated timeframe, the husband proceeds to utter Talaq once more, so rendering the divorce irreversible.¹⁴

The practice of Talaq-ul-Bid'ah, also referred to as "innovative divorce," is deemed unusual and disapproved of in Islamic jurisprudence. The practice entails the spouse uttering the word "Talaq" on three occasions within a single instance, frequently without considering the prescribed waiting period or potential avenues for reconciliation. Talaq-ul-Bid'ah is regarded as a deviation from the Sunnah of the Prophet Muhammad and is subject to criticism due to its capricious character and susceptibility to abuse.

Furthermore, apart from the aforementioned primary forms of Talaq, there exists the notion of Khula, which permits the wife to initiate divorce. The practice of Khula entails the wife's pursuit of divorce from her husband by the surrender of her pecuniary entitlements or the repayment of the mahr (dowry) acquired from her husband. The procedure of Khula may necessitate the involvement of a religious authority or legal entity in order to guarantee equity and compliance with Islamic tenets.

¹⁴ BC Sharma, "Can employment empower women more at the household level in India", *The International Journal of Interdisciplinary, Social Sciences*, 3(7), 43-51, (2008).

The Scope of the Sharya Bano Case In the Context of Triple Talaq

The case of "Shayara Bano" in 2017 constituted a significant legal dispute in India, focusing on the implementation of instant triple Talaq (Talaq-ul-Bid'ah) among Muslim communities. A petition was submitted by Shayara Bano, a Muslim woman hailing from Uttarakhand, to the Supreme Court of India, contesting the constitutionality of instant triple Talaq. This practice grants a husband the ability to promptly dissolve his marriage by uttering Talaq three times consecutively, often in a single instance, without adhering to the prescribed procedures outlined in Islamic literature.¹⁵

Bano posited that the engagement in quick triple Talaq contravened her inherent entitlements as enshrined in the Indian Constitution, encompassing the rights to egalitarianism, absence of prejudice, and preservation of dignity. The argument put up was that the practice of quick triple Talaq exposed women to the risk of arbitrary and unilateral divorce, devoid of any prospects for reconciliation or legal remedies.

In August 2017, a panel of five judges from the Supreme Court of India presided over the case and issued a momentous ruling in support of Shayara Bano and other individuals filing the petition. The court rendered a verdict of unconstitutionality, arbitrariness, and violation of women's rights in relation to the practice of instant triple Talaq. The ruling determined that the act of instant triple Talaq did not constitute a fundamental component of Islamic jurisprudence, and as a result, it was not afforded protection under the constitutional right to religious freedom. The ruling rendered by the Supreme Court in the Shayara Bano case garnered significant acclaim as a triumph for gender equality and the advancement of women's rights within the Indian context. It was regarded as a notable advancement in eradicating the prejudiced practice of immediate triple Talaq and guaranteeing enhanced legal safeguards for Muslim women in divorce cases.

The Effects of Triple Talaq on Married Women in Islam

The Ordinance, despite being enacted with the aim of advancing the well-being of Muslim women as a whole, is afflicted by hurried writing that has diluted the intended positive impact it aimed to achieve. The expeditiousness demonstrated in the proclamation of the Ordinance raises inquiries regarding the presence of a genuine sense of urgency that prompted the

¹⁵ WRIT PETITION (CIVIL) of 2016.

Executive to circumvent the customary process of adopting legislation. It is important to mention that there is a lack of empirical evidence to support the claim that there was a widespread occurrence of Talaq (which has the effect of immediate divorce) and that such incidents had significantly increased. Talaq can be understood as a form of repudiation of a civil contract. The Ordinance presents a unique circumstance by not only making repudiation a criminal offense, but also by establishing a stringent culpability threshold. This is because the Ordinance does not require mens-rea and solely considers mere proclamation as an offense.¹⁶

The presence of gender inequity has far-reaching consequences for the broader community, impeding their ability to fully exercise the liberties protected by a contemporary Constitution. In an effort to challenge the constitutionality of these practices, the government has asserted that reforms in Muslim personal law have not been implemented for more than six decades. Consequently, Muslim women, who constitute approximately eight percentage of the population, continue to experience significant vulnerability due to the apprehension of immediate divorce. In contrast to the prevailing perception derived from contemporary social media usage, it is important to acknowledge that patriarchy extends beyond a mere framework of male supremacy over women.¹⁷

Although numerous Muslim women may desire and require internal changes within their communities, they experience unease when it comes to legal proceedings and harbour grounds to harbour skepticism towards the government. Instances of police misconduct against Muslims have been documented, with a higher incidence of imprisonment in comparison to other populations. Frequently, women seek local remedies prior to resorting to civil litigation. Within a low-income community, a collective of advocates collaborated with Islamic judges to assist women facing marital turmoil or domestic abuse in obtaining a divorce or asserting their financial entitlements following the dissolution of their marriage. According to activists, the establishment of supportive connections with these judges has been found to yield expedited, simplified, and more cost-effective resolutions of family problems compared to the alternative of resorting to civil courts. Moreover, oral divorce is widely regarded as the most convenient and prevalent approach to obtaining a divorce within the Muslim community. Among all

¹⁶ Geetangali Gangoli, "Indian Feminisms: Law, Patriarchies and Violence in India", Routledge, 2016.

¹⁷ Aarefa Johari, "Twelve years since the Domestic Violence Act, how well do protection officers help women in need?" Scroll (2018), available at: <https://scroll.in/article/830882/twelve-years-since-the-domestic-violence-act-how-well-do-protection-officers-help-women-in-need> .(last visited on April 26, 2024).

women who were divorced, 65.9 percentage were divorced through oral means. Lately, this phenomenon has been occurring through both text and email communication. Two women residing in Hyderabad were recently divorced through WhatsApp by their husbands.¹⁸

Measures Implemented By the Indian Government to Alleviate the Distress Experienced By Muslim Women

The government has implemented legislative measures aimed at safeguarding the rights of Muslim women and tackling concerns related to immediate triple talaq. The enactment of the “Muslim Women (Protection of Rights on Marriage) Act, 2019”¹⁹, represents a significant milestone in the legislative framework of India, specifically pertaining to the rights and safeguards granted to Muslim women. The Act was implemented to tackle the highly controversial matter of instant triple talaq. It clearly makes the practice illegal, making it unlawful for a Muslim husband to divorce his wife by saying "talaq" three times in a single session, whether spoken, written, or through electronic means. The aforementioned legislation not only functions as a preventive measure against capricious divorces, but also establishes a legal structure to protect the rights and welfare of Muslim women. The Act aims to establish accountability and deter the continuation of this unfair conduct by imposing severe penalties, such as imprisonment and fines, on violators. In addition, the legislation grants women who have been impacted the authority to pursue legal remedies and assistance, allowing them to approach Magistrate courts for restitution and relief, such as subsistence allowance and custody of underage children. By declaring any declaration of talaq that violates its provisions as null and unlawful, the legislation safeguards the inherent rights and dignity of Muslim women, providing them with the essential legal safeguards to assert their rights and pursue justice in instances of marital dissolution.

The legislation known as the “Muslim Women (Protection of Rights on Divorce) Act of 1986”²⁰

As per this legislation, the husband is obligated to provide financial support to his wife during the period of iddat or for duration of three months following the divorce. If the divorced woman lacks immediate family members to care for her or is unable to financially sustain herself, the

¹⁸ Flavia Agnes, “From Shah Bano to Kausar Bano: Contextualising the “Muslim Woman” within Communalized Polity” in Ania Loomba and R. A. Lukose (eds.) *South Asian Feminisms* 33–53 (Duke University Press, 2012).

¹⁹ Act No. 20 of 2019

²⁰ Act no 25 of 1986

magistrate has the authority to mandate the Waqf Board to assume the duty of providing assistance to the lady and her children. The aforementioned legislation transfers the obligation of financial support from the spouse to the relatives and the Waqf Board. The husband is aware that failing to offer financial support could result in his exerting control and harassing his divorced wife, compelling her to seek financial assistance from various sources. The husband assumes the role of caretaker for the children until they reach the age of two. Subsequently, the wife assumes the task of seeking financial support for them. The endeavours of an individual woman to legitimately seek financial support following a divorce were transformed into a significant political controversy, resulting in the marginalization of the woman's concerns, despite the presence of Quranic principles promoting gender equality. Subsequently, there has been a lack of endeavour from both governmental bodies and the society to rekindle the agenda for gender-equitable reforms within the realm of Muslim personal law.²¹

Dissolution of Muslim Marriages 1939”²²

Subsequently, there has been no alteration in the legislation concerning marriages and divorces within the Muslim community. These measures have shown to be significantly insufficient in facilitating equitable treatment for women in the context of marriage and family affairs. Its objectives have not been achieved.

Survey results indicate that more over 50% of women have not received their mehr. Several individuals who did reported receiving it after their divorce. It is noteworthy that the majority of recipients of their mehr are women, with some receiving a very small amount of money, ranging from Rs 501 to Rs 786. Additionally, almost 79% of women reported not receiving any financial support from their husbands after their divorce.²³

Numerous educational projects have been implemented with the aim of empowering Muslim women via the acquisition of knowledge and skills. In order to promote educational achievement among Muslim women, initiatives like as the Begum Hazrat Mahal National Scholarship for Minority Girls offer monetary support to Muslim girls who are engaged in higher education.

²¹ Kimberley Crenshaw “Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity politics and violence against women of colour” 43Stanford Law Review 1299 (1991).

²² Act no 8 of 1939

²³ Supra note 5 at 3

The implementation of skill development programs has been undertaken with the aim of augmenting the employment prospects of Muslim women. The Skill Development Scheme for Minorities is designed to offer skill training and entrepreneurial prospects to minority communities, namely Muslim women, with the goal of empowering them to engage in the labour market and achieve self-sufficiency.

Financial inclusion has been facilitated by the government through initiatives such as the Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana (PMJDY), which seeks to ensure that all women, especially those from minority communities, have access to banking services and financial literacy.

The well-being of Muslim women and their families is the focus of several healthcare efforts in the field of healthcare and welfare. Programs such as the Janani Suraksha Yojana (JSY) offer monetary aid to expectant mothers, particularly those belonging to minority groups, in order to guarantee secure childbirth and promote maternal well-being.

Awareness and empowerment initiatives are implemented with the aim of providing education to Muslim women regarding their rights and entitlements. The Mahila Samakhya program aims to promote women's empowerment and gender equality, particularly among Muslim women, by implementing programs that enhance awareness and capacity.

Legal assistance and Support Services: Muslim women are offered legal assistance and support services to guarantee their access to justice and safeguard their rights. Women encountering challenges such as domestic violence, divorce, and property rights can receive support via legal aid clinics and helplines.

Judicial Pronouncement

In the case of "*Syed Ziauddin v. Parvez Sultana, Parvez Sultana*"²⁴, a science graduate, sought admission to a medical school. She required funds for her academic pursuits. Syed Ziauddin made a commitment to loan her money on the condition that she weds him. She did. Subsequently, she initiated divorce proceedings due to the husband's failure to uphold his commitment. The divorce was granted by the court based on the allegations of cruelty. Therefore, it can be observed that the court has adopted a broader interpretation of the term "cruelty."

²⁴ (1943) 210 IC 587

The case of “*Zubaida Begum v. Sardar Shah*”²⁵, heard in the Lahore High Court, included a situation where the husband engaged in the sale of his wife's decorations with her explicit assent. It has been argued that the behaviour exhibited by the husband does not meet the criteria for cruelty.

In the case of “*Aboobacker v. Mamukoya*”²⁶, the husband coerced his wife into wearing a sari and watching movies. The wife declined to engage in the activity due to her adherence to Islamic principles, which deemed it incompatible with the prescribed way of life. She filed for divorce based on allegations of psychological abuse. According to the ruling of the Kerla High Court, the husband's behaviour cannot be classified as cruelty because to the fact that a minor deviation from the principles of religious orthodoxy does not qualify as un-Islamic conduct.

In the case of *Itwari v. Asghari*²⁷, the Allahabad High Court noted that Indian Law does not acknowledge different forms of cruelty, such as 'Muslim cruelty' or 'Hindu cruelty'. Instead, the court based the assessment of cruelty on universal and humanitarian criteria. This means that the husband's actions must result in significant physical or mental harm that poses a threat to the wife's safety or well-being.

In Muslim Law, the concept of divorce based on irretrievable breakdown of marriage has been established by the judicial interpretation of specific clauses within the legal framework.

In the case of “*Umar Bibi v. Md. Din*”²⁸ in 1945, It was contended that the wife harboured such intense animosity towards her husband that she was incapable of cohabitating with him, resulting in a complete clash of temperaments. Based on these reasons, the court declined to issue a divorce decree.

In the case of “*Noorbibi v. PirBux*”²⁹, which occurred twenty-five years later, there was once again an endeavour to obtain a divorce based on the argument of irreparable collapse of marriage. The divorce was allowed by the court on this occasion.

In India, the aforementioned measures exemplify the government's dedication to tackling the obstacles encountered by Muslim women and fostering their socio-economic progress and

²⁵ [1] (1971) KLT 663

²⁶ AIR (1960), All, 684

²⁷ AIR(1945), Lah, 51

²⁸ AIR (1971), Ker, 261

²⁹ AIR 1950 Sind 8

empowerment.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the socio-economic status of Muslim women in India is characterized by multifaceted challenges stemming from historical, cultural, and legal factors. Despite legal safeguards provided in Islamic law, the socio-economic status of Muslim women has not witnessed significant enhancement, with issues such as low literacy rates, limited access to formal education, and underrepresentation in the workforce persisting. The Sachchar Committee's findings shed light on the pervasive inequalities faced by Muslim women, emphasizing the need for targeted interventions to address these disparities comprehensively.

Furthermore, government initiatives aimed at promoting education, skill development, financial inclusion, and healthcare access for Muslim women play a crucial role in fostering their socio-economic empowerment. These initiatives, coupled with awareness and empowerment programs, legal assistance services, and judicial pronouncements emphasizing gender justice, collectively contribute to advancing the socio-economic status of Muslim women in India.

Despite these efforts, challenges persist, necessitating continued commitment from government agencies, civil society organizations, religious leaders, and communities at large to address systemic barriers and promote gender equality and empowerment for Muslim women. By working collaboratively and prioritizing the needs and rights of Muslim women, India can move closer towards achieving inclusive development and ensuring the full realization of their socio-economic potential.