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Title: Muslim Women Entrepreneurs in Delhi: Dynamics and Prospects

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Abstract

The proliferation of Muslim women's enterprises in the past few years across Muslim localities and marketplaces in Delhi points to an increased inclination of the group towards entrepreneurship. With advancement of digital platforms and access to social media, online entrepreneurial initiatives set up by Muslim women are also gaining visibility. Yet, engagement of Muslim women in economic spheres has remained a largely unexplored subject in the academia. It is against this invisibilization of Muslim women from economic spaces that this study explored their experiences of venturing into entrepreneurship in a neoliberal milieu. The study follows a mixed methods approach which combines both quantitative and qualitative methods for data collection and analysis but is predominantly qualitative in nature.

The research study found that Muslim women belonging to different age groups and possessing diverse educational qualifications are venturing into entrepreneurship. These women are seeking autonomy, independence, and flexibility through entrepreneurship to be able to take care of their families and at the same time engage in economic work and achieve their aspirations and dreams. For women who are economically vulnerable, entrepreneurship becomes a means of survival since they are unable to get a job in the formal sector, and for others it is an opportunity to follow their passion, interest and achieve upward social mobility. Several women have left formal employment to venture into entrepreneurship as this new workplace offers them greater flexibility, choice, agency, and freedom to practice their faith. Several Muslim women consider entrepreneurship a better livelihood option, as they feel that it reduces women's risk of exposure to Islamophobic threats and help them negotiate within the families as entrepreneurship is encouraged in Islam.