SCHOOL EDUCATION IN A MUSLIM CONCENTRATED URBAN NEIGHBOURHOOD

A REPORT (2026)

AUTHOR

ABID FAHEEM

A collaborative study by
JIH Delhi and nous

SCHOOL EDUCATION IN A MUSLIM CONCENTRATED URBAN NEIGHBOURHOOD

(A CASE STUDY OF JAMIA NAGAR,
SOUTH-EAST DELHI, INDIA)

A household-level survey on schooling, learning outcomes, and socio-economic background

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Executive Overview

This report presents findings from a large-scale household survey on school education in Jamia Nagar, a Muslim-concentrated urban locality in South-East Delhi. The study was undertaken in response to a persistent lack of neighbourhood-level, disaggregated data on educational access, institutional availability, and learning outcomes in urban Muslim areas - gaps that are often inadequately captured in national and state-level surveys.

The analysis is based on primary data collected through a large-scale household survey covering 2,700 households across twelve localities, focusing on 3,872 Muslim children aged above 3 years and up to 18 years. The study adopts a structured quantitative research design, supplemented by school mapping and basic learning assessments, to capture multiple dimensions of school education. These include household socio-economic conditions and migration history, school enrolment and dropout patterns, type and medium of educational institutions, expenditure on education and coaching, access to scholarships, and foundational learning outcomes in language and mathematics.

A key analytical premise of the report is that educational disadvantage in Jamia Nagar cannot be understood solely through enrolment figures or cultural explanations. Instead, the study situates educational outcomes within broader structural and institutional contexts, including uneven public provisioning, limited availability of government secondary and senior secondary schools, spatial concentration of institutions, and the growing reliance on private schooling and supplementary coaching. Particular attention is paid to how wealth, migration background, and institutional access shape educational trajectories, even in a context of high parental aspiration.

To assist readers, a consolidated section on Key Findings and Recommendations is placed at the beginning of the report, providing an overview of the principal empirical results and policy directions. The chapters that follow present the detailed analysis underlying

these findings. The report first outlines the household and socio-economic profile of Jamia Nagar, then examines patterns of educational participation and exclusion, followed by an assessment of the distribution and nature of educational institutions, and finally evaluates learning outcomes and school quality.

By combining granular household-level evidence with institutional mapping and learning assessments, this report aims to provide a robust empirical foundation for policy intervention, civil society engagement, and community-led action. It seeks to contribute to a more informed and nuanced understanding of school education in Muslim-concentrated urban areas, and to support efforts toward building a more equitable and responsive education system.

Preface

Education is not merely a legal entitlement; it is a foundational condition for social mobility, democratic participation, and inclusive development. The opportunities available to individuals, communities, and societies are shaped decisively by the accessibility, quality, and equity of their education systems. In this context, the present report, *"School Education in a Muslim-Concentrated Areas: A Case Study of Jamia Nagar, South-East Delhi,"* examines the realities of school education in one of Delhi's most densely populated Muslim localities.

This study emerges from a shared concern among researchers, educators, and community organisations that public discourse on Muslim education in India remains insufficiently grounded in granular, empirical evidence. While landmark exercises such as the Sachar Committee Report provided a national-level diagnosis of educational disadvantage, neighbourhood-level data, particularly from urban Muslim settlements, remain sparse. This absence of localised evidence constrains the design of targeted, context-sensitive educational interventions.

Based on a large-scale, systematically designed household survey covering over 2,700 households, this report offers a detailed account of the socio-economic conditions shaping educational access, enrolment, dropout, school choice, learning outcomes, and aspirations in Jamia Nagar, Delhi. By linking household characteristics with schooling patterns and learning levels, the study enables robust disaggregation by gender, caste, wealth, and migration status.

It is hoped that the findings presented here will serve policymakers, education administrators, civil society organisations, donors, and researchers by providing credible evidence to inform planning, advocacy, and reform. More broadly, the report seeks to contribute to ongoing debates on educational equity and to strengthen efforts toward building a more inclusive and responsive education system.

Delhi Halqa – Jamaat-e-Islami Hind & nous

Foreword

Education has always been a cornerstone of Islamic tradition, deeply embedded in the teachings of the Qur'an and the life of the Prophet (PBUH). It is not simply a tool for personal success, but a means of fulfilling our obligations to society and to future generations. However, despite the emphasis on learning, the Muslim community in India continues to face systemic neglect and unequal access to quality education.

The findings of the Sachar Committee Report, and the decades of data that have followed, indicate that our community lags behind in several key indicators, including school enrolment, completion rates, and educational infrastructure. The situation calls for urgent introspection, strategic planning, and action-oriented research.

This study of Jamia Nagar is a timely and important contribution in that direction. By drawing on primary, household-level data, it moves beyond aggregate indicators to illuminate how families navigate schooling decisions, bear educational costs, and confront institutional constraints in an urban Muslim context. The report's attention to enrolment, dropout, learning outcomes, and school infrastructure provides a comprehensive basis for informed policy engagement.

I commend nous team for their commitment to methodological rigour and community engagement. It is my hope that this study will inform constructive dialogue and support collective efforts to improve educational opportunities for all children.

Md. Salimullah Khan

President,

Jamaat-e-Islami Hind Delhi

Message from nous

At nous, we believe that sustainable social change must be grounded in rigorous evidence and informed by the lived realities of communities. Our work seeks to bridge the gap between research and public discourse by producing data-driven analyses that can meaningfully inform policy, advocacy, and institutional practice.

This study on school education in Jamia Nagar reflects that commitment. Rather than relying on assumptions or generalised narratives, the report draws on extensive primary data to examine how Muslim households in an urban setting engage with education, where access has expanded, where learning has faltered, and where systemic constraints persist.

The findings reveal a community deeply invested in education, marked by high enrolment and strong aspirations, yet constrained by uneven public provisioning, growing privatisation, and significant learning deficits. By documenting these dynamics at the neighbourhood level, the report provides a foundation for targeted interventions by the state, civil society, and community institutions.

We are grateful to Delhi Halqa (Jamaat-e-Islami Hind) for supporting this initiative and to the research team for their professionalism and analytical depth. We hope this report will contribute to more equitable educational planning and encourage sustained engagement with the structural challenges facing Muslim-concentrated urban localities.

Ali Javed

Founder & CEO, nous

Message from the Researcher

This report represents a concerted effort to generate rigorous, community-level evidence on school education in Jamia Nagar—an urban Muslim-concentrated locality that embodies both educational aspiration and structural constraint. The study was conceived to address a persistent gap in neighbourhood-level data on enrolment, learning outcomes, school infrastructure, and educational trajectories, particularly in urban minority settings.

The research was guided by a systematic survey design, careful tool development, and structured data collection across diverse localities within Jamia Nagar. Particular attention was paid to data integrity, enabling meaningful disaggregation by gender, caste, wealth, and migration status. The analysis links household socio-economic conditions with schooling patterns and learning outcomes, offering insights that go beyond descriptive statistics.

As a researcher working at the intersection of education, inequality, and minority studies, this study reflects a broader commitment to grounding debates on Muslim education in empirical evidence rather than stereotypes. It is hoped that the findings will inform not only policy and programme design, but also future academic research on urban education and marginalisation.

I extend my heartfelt gratitude to nous for its steadfast commitment to socially grounded, research-driven interventions, and to Delhi Halqa (JIH), Delhi, for its generous support of this initiative.

I am deeply thankful to Dr. Javed Jamil, Professor Sanghmitra, Dr. Sania Ahmad, and Dr. Sadat Hussain for graciously sharing their time and expertise in training the field team on the issue at hand and the data collection process. A sincere thank you to our dedicated field team whose work made this study possible. Above all, I express my special appreciation to the residents of Jamia Nagar, who welcomed our teams with warmth and shared their time and experiences.

Dr. Abid Faheem *Researcher, nous*

Acknowledgment

All praise is due to Allah (SWT), whose guidance, mercy, and blessings made this work possible. It is through His will that this study was conceived, undertaken, and completed. We begin by expressing our gratitude for the strength, clarity, and perseverance granted to us at every stage of this research, from its conceptualisation to its completion.

We would like to place on record our sincere appreciation to Dr. Salimullah Khan, Ameer-e-Halqa of Jamaat-e-Islami Hind, Delhi, for his encouragement, moral support, and facilitation, which enabled the smooth execution of the fieldwork and community engagement. We are deeply grateful to Ali Javed, Founder and CEO of Nous, for his vision, intellectual leadership, and unwavering commitment to evidence-based research on Muslim social realities. His guidance and institutional support were central to shaping the direction, rigour, and purpose of this study.

This report is the outcome of a collective effort, and we are deeply indebted to all those who contributed to its successful execution. First and foremost, we extend our sincere thanks to the residents of Jamia Nagar, including parents, guardians, and children, who generously shared their time, experiences, and insights. Their openness and cooperation form the foundation of this study.

We express our deep appreciation to the field survey team, whose dedication and diligence ensured that data collection was conducted ethically, accurately, and with cultural sensitivity. The field investigators walked every lane, engaged with households patiently, and went beyond routine data collection to document lived realities. We would like to particularly acknowledge the contributions of Akhtar Raza, Amna Javed, Anam, Areesha Khan, Arjuman Habib, Fahmeen Parveen, Faiqua, Faiz Ahmed, Faiza, Gayatri, Hadiya, Hasan Ali Fawaz, Heba, Iqra Malik, Jweriya, Kirti Mittal, Kamran Saif, Madiha Javed, Mahin Fatima, Marzia Tabassum, Mehar Darakshan, Nabiya, Nasiruddin, Neha Khatoon, Nida Sheikh, Nigha Malik, Qandeela, Rahath,

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We would like to express our sincere gratitude to Areeba Khan, Councillor, for her crucial support during the fieldwork phase. Her facilitation, including the issuance of an official letter to the field team and her presence during the training session, helped ensure that the survey was conducted smoothly and without impediments.

We are grateful to Dr. Javed Jamil, Professor Sanghmitra, Dr. Sania Ahmad, and Dr. Sadat Hussain for generously sharing their expertise and time in training the field team on research ethics, survey tools, and the broader educational context. Their guidance was instrumental in strengthening the quality of data collection. We also acknowledge the significant contribution of Yusra Hasan (Nous), who played a senior role in supporting and strengthening the training process through her guidance, and close engagement with the field investigators.

We further thank Meharban (Nous) and Mohammad Imran (Jamaat-e-Islami Hind) for their support from a media and documentation perspective, ensuring that the training sessions were systematically recorded and documented.

We express our sincere thanks to Abuzar Javed and Dr. Habibullah Rahimi from nous, and Dr. Khan Yasir from Jamaat-e-Islami Hind, Delhi, for their consistent and unwavering support throughout the duration of the project.

Finally, we thank all those who reviewed drafts, cross-checked data, provided feedback, and supported the refinement of this report. This study stands as a testament to what can be achieved through collective commitment to research, justice, and social change.

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Key Findings and Recommendations

I. Key Findings:

A. Household and Demographic Profile

- The survey covered 2,700 households; after excluding 52 non-Muslim households, the final sample comprised 2,648 Muslim households.
- Nuclear families constituted 80.6% of households, while joint families accounted for only 2.8%.
- 61.8% of households resided in owned dwellings, and 36.7% lived in rented accommodation.
- Male-headed households constituted 87.2%, primarily headed by fathers, while 12.8% were female-headed households.
- Migrant households accounted for 51.7% of the sample, with the majority originating from Uttar Pradesh (56.5%) and Bihar (32.5%).
- 21.9% of respondents did not possess a Delhi voter ID; among them, 44.6% had been residing in Delhi for 5–10 years, indicating partial settlement without full civic integration.

B. Housing Conditions and Basic Amenities

- 14% of households did not have a separate kitchen.
- 6.7% of households lacked an in-house toilet facility.
- 61.8% of households did not own a computer or laptop.
- 82.3% of households did not own a four-wheeler, reflecting limited material assets and mobility.

C. Educational Attainment of Parents

- 27.8% of fathers and 27.1% of mothers reported no formal schooling.
- Madrasa education was reported by only 1.3% of fathers and 2.4% of mothers.

- English was the medium of instruction for 59.5% of fathers and 52.5% of mothers.

D. Occupation & Income of Parents

- 41.3% of fathers were employed in the private sector, and 37.9% were self-employed; only 7.0% held government jobs.
- 41.7% of fathers earned ₹20,000 or less per month, while 24.0% earned above ₹50,000.
- 90.6% of mothers were homemakers.
- Among working mothers, 48.4% were employed in the private sector, and 19.1% were self-employed.
- 34.2% of working mothers earned up to ₹10,000 per month, while 18.3% earned above ₹50,000, indicating high income dispersion.

E. Caste Composition and Wealth Stratification

- 56.3% of households belonged to the General category, and 37.1% to OBCs.
- 47.0% of General category households fell within the rich wealth index, compared to 33.4% of OBC households.

F. School Enrolment, Non-Enrolment, and Dropout

- A total of 3,942 children aged 3–18 were identified; 3,872 children were included in the analysis.
- Gender distribution was nearly equal (50.6% boys, 49.4% girls).
- 94.0% of children were currently enrolled in school.
- 3.7% of children had never been enrolled, and 2.3% had dropped out after initial enrolment.
- Never enrolment was concentrated in early childhood, reflecting delayed or missed entry rather than early exit.
- Dropout was overwhelmingly concentrated in late adolescence, particularly at ages 17 and 18, indicating difficulty sustaining education at higher levels.

- Boys constituted a higher share of dropouts (58.1%) than girls (41.9%).
- Migrant households accounted for 61.6% of all dropout cases, despite representing roughly half the population.
- Poverty was the most frequently reported reason for dropout, followed by academic difficulty, low interest, and structural constraints, with reasons often overlapping.
- Among currently enrolled children, 52.6% were enrolled at the primary level, reflecting the younger age composition of the enrolled population.

G. Educational Aspirations and Coaching

- 97.4% of children expressed a desire to pursue higher education, with no substantive variation by caste, wealth, or gender.
- 20.8% of children reported attending private coaching.
- Among children attending coaching:
  - 79.1% did so for academic support related to school learning.
  - 16.5% attended coaching for competitive or professional examinations.
- Coaching participation increased sharply with household wealth, indicating unequal capacity to invest in supplementary education.
- Gender differences in coaching participation were minimal.

H. School Type and Medium of Instruction

- 56.7% of children were enrolled in private schools, while 40.2% attended government schools.
- 84.3% of children studied in English-medium schools.
- School type and medium showed strong wealth gradients:
- 61.5% of children from the poorest households attended government schools.
- 78.6% of children from the richest households attended private schools.

- 63.8% of General category children were enrolled in private schools, compared to 45.9% of OBC children.
- Gender differences in school type and medium were negligible.

I. Distance to School

- 66.8% of children travelled less than 2 km to school.
- 12.9% travelled more than 5 km, with longer distances more common among wealthier households, indicating spatial mobility as an enabling resource rather than a universal burden.

J. School Mapping

- 125 educational institutions were identified across twelve localities.
- 84.8% of institutions were concentrated in five areas:
  - Abul Fazal Enclave (24.8%)
  - Shaheen Bagh (18.4%)
  - Batla House (16.0%)
  - Jogabai (12.0%)
  - Zakir Nagar (13.6%)
- 58.4% of institutions were established after 2013, indicating rapid recent expansion driven largely by private actors.
- Shaheen Bagh had no government school, despite high population density.
- 52.8% of institutions offered only primary education.
- Only 17.6% offered senior secondary education, highlighting a sharp institutional bottleneck.
- 63.6% of institutions offering education up to Class 12 were privately managed.

K. Learning Outcomes (Urdu, English, Math)

- Urdu Reading
  - Class 3: Only 3.6% could read a story-level text.
  - Class 8: 49.1% achieved story-level proficiency.

  - Performance lagged behind national ASER benchmarks at all levels.
- English Reading
  - Class 3: 0% could read a complete sentence.
  - Class 5: 50.5% achieved sentence-level proficiency.
  - Class 8: 52.7%, substantially below the ASER national average (67.5%).
- Mathematics
  - Class 3: 19.0% could perform division-level tasks.
  - Class 5: 45.5% achieved division proficiency.
  - Class 8: 30.9%, indicating stagnation or decline at higher grades.

II. Recommendations for Intervention and Future Study

A. Government & Public Authorities

- Expand government school infrastructure, particularly secondary and senior secondary schools, in underserved localities such as Shaheen Bagh, where public provision is entirely absent.
- Ensure equitable territorial implementation of the Delhi Education Model, with explicit monitoring of minority-concentrated and low-income neighbourhoods to prevent selective reform coverage.
- Strengthen foundational learning through targeted remedial programmes in early literacy (Urdu and English) and numeracy, especially at the primary and upper-primary levels.
- Improve scholarship coverage and delivery mechanisms, with particular attention to:
  - proactive identification of eligible students,
  - simplified application procedures,
  - timely disbursement of funds,
  - transparent monitoring to reduce exclusion errors.
- Enhance teacher capacity through regular training in multilingual pedagogy (Urdu–Hindi–English) and child-centred instructional methods.
- Strengthen school-level infrastructure, including sanitation, lighting, classroom maintenance, and access to libraries and laboratories, particularly in government schools.
- Ensure full functionality and coverage of Anganwadi Centres (AWCs) across Jamia Nagar, addressing both the absence of centres and gaps in service quality.
- Mandate accountability in education-related budget utilisation by local MLAs and MPs, with publicly available reporting on allocations and expenditures in Jamia Nagar.

B. NGOs and Civil Society Organisation

- Establish community-based remedial learning centres focusing on foundational literacy and numeracy for children lagging behind grade-level expectations.
- Develop after-school academic support programmes aimed at reducing dependence on costly private coaching.
- Facilitate structured career guidance and mentorship programmes, especially for first-generation learners navigating higher education and competitive examinations.
- Support exam-preparation hubs for senior secondary students, particularly for NEET, JEE, and public service examinations.
- Conduct evidence-based advocacy highlighting the gap between high educational aspiration and constrained institutional opportunity in Jamia Nagar.
- Partner with schools to implement value-based and civic education initiatives, reinforcing ethical reasoning, social responsibility, and community cohesion.
- Explore the feasibility of establishing or adopting a model affordable quality school in Jamia Nagar that demonstrates inclusive excellence.

C. Community and Jamaat Institutions

- Mobilise community resources to provide need-based scholarships, coaching support, and career counselling for economically vulnerable students.
- Initiate an Urdu Literacy Awareness Programme, emphasising early-grade reading proficiency alongside bilingual competence.
- Use mosques, madrasas, and community halls as spaces for supplementary education and digital literacy training.
- Strengthen parental engagement through awareness campaigns on schooling continuity, learning outcomes, and institutional navigation.
- Encourage active participation in School Management

Committees (SMCs) to enhance local accountability.

- Build alliances with other civil society groups to demand accountability from local and state authorities.
- Undertake targeted interventions in two key areas: Teachers' Training and Career Guidance.
  - Teachers' Training: Jamaat can organise regular teacher-training workshops for local schools, with syllabi developed by experts, focusing on modern teaching aids and pedagogical methods. Certificates should be provided as incentives.
  - Career Guidance: Jamaat can arrange structured counselling sessions in schools, focusing not only on career pathways but also on moral development, citizenship, and social responsibility. Competitions such as essay writing and debates, with meaningful awards and certificates, should be used to motivate participation.

D. Scholars and Researchers

- Conduct longitudinal studies tracking children's educational trajectories to identify critical transition points associated with dropout and stagnation.
- Undertake an institutional-level audits of schools in Jamia Nagar to assess infrastructure quality, teacher availability, and instructional practices.
- Develop community-friendly monitoring tools to track enrolment continuity, learning outcomes, and access to welfare schemes.
- Investigate the aspiration–achievement gap by linking educational ambitions with institutional access, learning outcomes, and labour market transitions.

1. Introduction

1.1 Background and Context

Education is widely recognised as a fundamental human right and a powerful driver of individual, social, and economic transformation (Dreze & Sen, 2002; Robeyns, 2006; Barro & Lee, 2015; Tilak, 2020). It equips individuals with knowledge and skills, fosters critical thinking, and enables meaningful participation in social, economic, and civic life. Beyond individual outcomes, education plays a critical role in dismantling structural inequalities, promoting social mobility, and advancing inclusive development (Tilak, 2020).

In India, where nearly 19 percent of the world's children reside (Chandrakant, 2008), ensuring equitable access to school education remains both a national priority and a global concern. At the time of independence, the education system was characterised by low enrolment, weak infrastructure, and pronounced inequalities across caste, class, gender, religion, and region. Successive National Policies on Education in 1968, 1986, and 1992 sought to address these challenges by emphasising universal elementary education, quality improvement, and equity. India's participation in global initiatives such as Education for All and the Millennium Development Goals further reinforced these commitments.

Major national programmes followed these policy frameworks. The launch of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan in 2001 marked a significant effort to universalise elementary education (Mehta & Shiksha, 2023). This commitment was institutionalised through the enactment of the Right to Education Act in 2009, which guaranteed free and compulsory education for children aged six to fourteen years. These initiatives substantially expanded access, and by 2020, the net enrolment ratio at the primary level had crossed 95 percent (Mehta & Shiksha, 2023). Despite these achievements, increased enrolment has not translated into commensurate improvements in learning outcomes.

Evidence from large-scale assessments highlights a persistent

learning crisis. According to the Annual Status of Education Report 2024, nearly one-third of rural Class 8 students were unable to read a Class 2-level text. Foundational deficits in literacy and numeracy remain widespread across grades, reflecting systemic issues such as teacher shortages, pedagogical limitations, outdated curricula, and weak accountability mechanisms. In the post-pandemic period, these challenges have been compounded by widening digital divides. While the National Education Policy 2020 places renewed emphasis on early childhood care and education and foundational learning, implementation gaps remain significant, particularly in resource-constrained settings.

Community-specific disparities further complicate the educational landscape. Despite the transformative potential of education, the Muslim community in India continues to face persistent educational disadvantages. The Sachar Committee Report (Government of India, 2006) provided a landmark assessment of these inequalities, demonstrating that Muslims lagged behind not only the general population but also Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in literacy, school completion, and access to higher education.

Nearly two decades after the Sachar Committee, the situation remains deeply concerning. Data from the NSSO 75th Round (2017–18) show that participation among Muslim children aged six to thirteen years increased from 80.0 percent in 2004–05 to 90.2 percent in 2017–18, narrowing the gap with the national average of 94.8 percent. However, at the fourteen to seventeen age group, enrolment among Muslims stood at only 65.3 percent, compared to 78.5 percent for all groups and 91.2 percent for Hindu Forward Castes (Ahmed, Alam, & Parveen, 2025). Among youth aged eighteen to twenty-five years, participation among Muslims declined further to 15.6 percent, against a national average of 22.0 percent.

In Delhi, these patterns are equally troubling. NSSO data indicate that only 19 percent of Muslims complete primary education and just 27 percent reach senior secondary level, while nearly 15 percent of Muslim children have never been enrolled in school. Of those enrolled,

fewer than 40 percent attend school regularly. These figures point to systemic barriers that extend beyond household income or individual motivation and reflect entrenched structural constraints in access to quality education.

Urban Muslim-concentrated localities provide a critical context for understanding these dynamics. Despite being located within relatively resource-rich cities, such neighbourhoods often experience uneven public provisioning, infrastructural neglect, and weak institutional presence. As a result, families are frequently compelled to rely on private schools of varying quality, bearing substantial financial burdens in the process (Jeffery, Jeffery, & Jeffery, 2008; Kingdon, 2020).

Jamia Nagar, a densely populated Muslim-majority locality in South-East Delhi, exemplifies this paradox. Despite its location in the national capital and its proximity to Jamia Millia Islamia, residents face limited access to government schools, inadequate early childhood education facilities, and uneven educational infrastructure. While school enrolment levels are relatively high, learning outcomes in language and mathematics remain weak, raising serious concerns about the quality and sustainability of educational progress.

A major constraint in addressing these challenges is the absence of granular, neighbourhood-level data. National surveys and administrative datasets rarely capture the diversity and complexity of urban Muslim settlements, obscuring intra-community inequalities and weakening the design of targeted interventions.

To address this gap, the present study undertakes a comprehensive household-level survey focused on children aged above three and up to eighteen years in Jamia Nagar. By linking household socio-economic characteristics with schooling patterns, learning outcomes, and educational aspirations, the study seeks to generate robust, evidence-based insights into the educational realities of this urban Muslim locality.

1.2 Study Objectives

The primary objective of this study is to generate a comprehensive understanding of the school education landscape in Jamia Nagar, with a focus on children aged above three and up to eighteen years. Specifically, the study aims to:

- Investigate the current state of education in Jamia Nagar by collecting detailed data on school enrolment rates, dropout patterns, quality of education, and the availability and condition of educational infrastructure at the primary and secondary levels.
- Assess the spatial and institutional distribution of educational facilities - both government and private - across the region, to identify accessibility gaps and patterns in school preference.
- Develop an evidence-based intervention framework to address the systemic challenges identified through the study, with the goal of promoting equitable, inclusive, and quality education for all children in the region.

These objectives are designed not only to map the existing conditions but also to inform actionable strategies for improving the educational outcomes of children living in one of Delhi's most socio-economically complex urban areas.

1.3 Significance of the Study

This study represents one of the first large-scale primary surveys focused exclusively on school education in Jamia Nagar. By adopting a household-level approach, it brings visibility to educational realities that are often obscured in national datasets. The scale of the survey and the depth of information collected allow for systematic disaggregation by gender, caste, wealth status, and migration background.

The findings are expected to be valuable for multiple stakeholders. Policymakers and education administrators can use the evidence to identify gaps in public provisioning and learning outcomes. Civil society organisations and donors may draw on the findings to design

targeted interventions. Academic researchers can build on the study to deepen scholarship on urban education, minority schooling, and educational inequality. Parents and community leaders may also gain a clearer understanding of the structural challenges and opportunities shaping children's educational trajectories in Jamia Nagar.

1.4 Structure of the Report

The report is organised into the following chapters:

- Chapter 1: Introduction – Provides the context, rationale, and objectives of the study.
- Chapter 2: Methodology – Describes the research design, sampling strategy, data collection process, and analytical framework.
- Chapter 3: Household Profile – Presents demographic, economic, and social characteristics of the surveyed households.
- Chapter 4: Education Status and Patterns – Analyses school enrolment, dropouts, educational aspirations, and access to schooling.
- Chapter 5: School Infrastructure, Institutional Landscape, and Learning Outcomes – Examines the distribution of educational institutions, school infrastructure, and learning outcomes in language and mathematics.
- Chapter 6: Discussion and Way Forward – Synthesises the key findings, situates them within broader debates on educational inequality, and outlines pathways for policy intervention and community action.

2. Methodology

2.1 Study Design and Objective

The present study adopts a quantitative, cross-sectional household survey design to examine the socio-economic profile and educational patterns of Muslim households in Jamia Nagar, South-East Delhi. The primary objective of this methodological approach was to generate structured, empirical evidence on school enrolment, dropout, learning outcomes, school access, and educational aspirations among children aged above three and up to eighteen years, while situating these outcomes within broader household-level socio-economic contexts.

A household-based design was chosen to capture dimensions of educational access and exclusion that are not adequately reflected in school-based or administrative datasets. This approach enables the linking of children's educational trajectories with household characteristics such as income, parental education, migration history, and asset ownership, thereby allowing for a more comprehensive analysis of educational inequality in an urban Muslim-concentrated locality.

2.2 Study Area

The study was conducted across twelve localities within Jamia Nagar, a densely populated urban settlement in South-East Delhi known for its predominantly Muslim population. The selected localities included: Abul Fazal Enclave, Batla House, Ghaffar Manzil, Haji Colony, Jogabai, Johri Farm, Noor Nagar, Okhla Vihar, Okhla Village, Shaheen Bagh, Zakir Nagar, and Ghafoor Nagar.

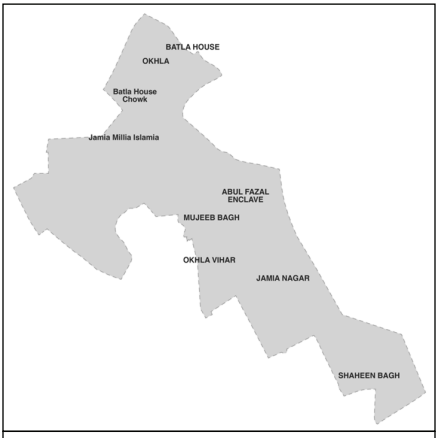

Figure 2.1: Map of Jamia Nagar

These areas were purposively selected to ensure adequate geographical coverage and socio-economic representation within the broader Jamia Nagar area.

Figure 2.2: Jamia Nagar Locality

2.3 Sample Population

The study population comprised households with at least one child in the age group above three and up to eighteen years. This age range was selected to cover the full span of school education, beginning from pre-primary and early childhood education through to senior secondary schooling. Including children below the age of six also enabled the assessment of access to early childhood education facilities,

such as Anganwadi Centres and pre-schools, which play a critical role in shaping later educational outcomes.

2.4 Sample Size

The sampling strategy was designed to ensure both statistical representativeness and operational feasibility within the socio-spatial context of Jamia Nagar. Based on demographic estimates from 2020, the adult population[1] (aged 19 years and above) in Jamia Nagar was approximately 1,04,146. Using fertility trends for Delhi from the National Family Health Survey (NFHS) 2019–21, the Total Fertility Rate (TFR) for Muslims was recorded at 2.0, suggesting that the average household consists of two adults and two children. Based on this estimate, the total number of households in Jamia Nagar was approximated at 26,000.

Standard social science sampling protocols suggest that a minimum of 5% of the population provides basic representativeness, while 10% is considered optimal for robust analysis and disaggregation. Accordingly, the target sample for this study was set at 10% of the estimated households, which is 2,600 households. To enhance representativeness and account for potential exclusions or non-response, the survey was ultimately conducted across 2,700 households.

2.5 Sampling Technique

A systematic random sampling approach was employed for household selection within each locality. The sampling procedure was implemented as follows:

- **Identification of Central Point:** Each street or section within the locality was surveyed by first locating a central point.
- **Starting Household:** From the central location, surveyors began household selection by approaching the first household on the left side. If the household met the eligibility criterion of having at

1 https://geoiq.io/places/Jamia-Nagar/VuRvO076Qd# accessed on 10th January, 2025.

least one child aged above three and up to eighteen years, it was included in the sample.

- **Systematic Interval:** Subsequently, surveyors followed a fixed interval approach by selecting every fifth household with eligible children, skipping four households in between.
- **Non-response Protocol:** In cases where the selected household was locked, declined participation, or did not have children in the specified age group, the immediately adjacent household was surveyed as a replacement.

This method ensured both randomisation and geographical dispersion within the constraints of a densely built urban environment.

2.6 Respondents

Interviews were conducted with adult household members who were most knowledgeable about the child's education and household circumstances. In most cases, respondents were parents, either mothers or fathers, or primary guardians. Information collected included household socio-economic conditions, children's schooling status, educational expenditure, and access to services. All interviews were conducted with informed consent. Participation was voluntary, and respondents were assured of anonymity and confidentiality. No personal identifiers were retained in the final dataset.

For selected questions related to educational aspirations and perceptions of schooling quality, children, were also engaged, following informed consent procedures and ethical guidelines for research involving minors.

2.7 Data Collection Tool and Procedure

Data were collected using a structured questionnaire specifically designed for this study and administered digitally using the Zoho Survey platform. The survey was conducted between June 2024 and January 2025 by a trained team of field investigators equipped with smartphones or tablets. Digital data collection enabled real-time entry of responses, reduced transcription errors, and facilitated continuous

monitoring of field progress.

Prior to full-scale implementation, the survey tool was reviewed and refined through field-level discussions and pilot testing to ensure clarity, contextual relevance, and consistency across enumerators.

The tool captured information across key domains such as:

- Household demographic details
- Housing conditions and amenities
- Educational status of children (enrolment, dropout, aspirations)
- Access to schools and educational resources
- Income, occupation, and other socio-economic indicators
- School Mapping and Quality of Education

2.8 Data Management and Analysis

Following completion of data collection, the dataset was exported from the Zoho Survey platform and imported into STATA for cleaning and analysis. The data management process involved multiple stages, including checking for missing values, identifying and correcting inconsistencies, detecting outliers, and recoding variables for analytical clarity.

The analysis employed descriptive statistical techniques, including frequency distributions, cross-tabulations, and disaggregation by gender, caste, wealth status, and migration background. For learning outcomes, performance levels were categorised using frameworks aligned with the Annual Status of Education Report methodology, enabling comparison with national benchmarks where appropriate.

2.9 Limitation of the Study

While this study provides one of the most comprehensive household-level assessments of school education in Jamia Nagar, certain limitations inherent to its design and scope must be acknowledged to ensure appropriate interpretation of the findings.

First, this study is based on a cross-sectional household survey and therefore captures educational outcomes and learning levels at a single point in time. As a result, the findings describe associations rather than causal relationships, and do not track individual educational trajectories over time.

Second, the study primarily relies on household-level reporting for information on income, educational expenditure, and reasons for dropout. While standard survey protocols were followed to minimise reporting bias, some degree of recall or response bias cannot be ruled out.

Finally, while the sample provides broad coverage of Jamia Nagar, the findings are specific to this locality and should be interpreted as a contextual case study rather than generalised to all urban Muslim settlements.

3. Household Profile

This chapter presents the socio-economic and demographic profile of households surveyed in Jamia Nagar. The household context is central to understanding educational access, school choice, learning outcomes, and dropout patterns discussed in subsequent chapters. Education-related decisions are rarely made in isolation, they are shaped by household structure, economic capacity, parental education, migration history, and access to basic amenities. By situating children's educational trajectories within these household conditions, this chapter provides the structural backdrop against which schooling outcomes must be interpreted.

The survey covered a total of 2,700 households across Jamia Nagar. After excluding 52 non-Muslim households, the analysis in this report is based on 2,648 Muslim households (Fig. 3.1). The concentration on Muslim households is analytically significant, as Jamia Nagar is a Muslim-majority locality where educational outcomes are shaped by both urban marginality and minority status. The household-level focus enables the study to move beyond aggregate enrolment figures and examine the structural conditions under which educational participation takes place.

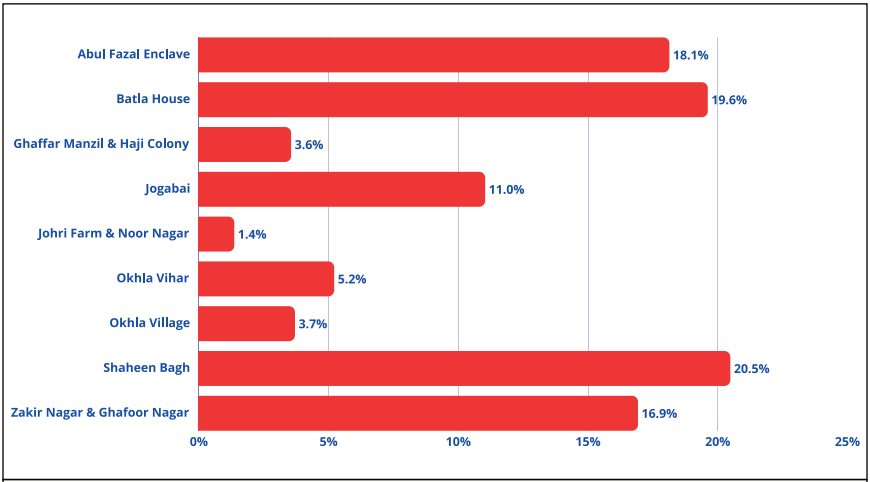

Figure 3.1: Distribution of Surveyed Households by Locality in Jamia Nagar

3.1 Type of Housing

Housing quality is a direct indicator of well-being and urban integration. The data shows that 93.2% of households live in pakka houses - permanent structures made with durable materials. Additionally, 5.7% of the houses are semi-pakka, referring to partially constructed or non-cemented homes, while 1.1% are classified as kaccha houses, which are typically made of temporary materials (Fig. 3.2).

3.2 Housing Ownership

Ownership is a key marker of economic security and social rootedness. In Jamia Nagar, 61.8% of households own their homes. However, 36.7% live in rented accommodations, reflecting housing unaffordability, migrant status, or transitional living. A minor share (0.7%) lives in government quarters and 0.8% in employer-provided or dependent housing. The high share of renters in an area suggests a bottleneck in access to housing finance or land ownership, particularly among low-income and migrant groups. (Fig. 3.3).

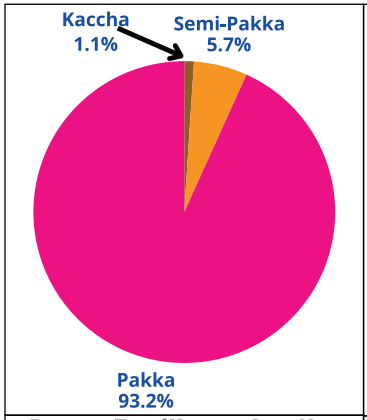

Figure 3.2: Type of Housing in Jamia Nagar

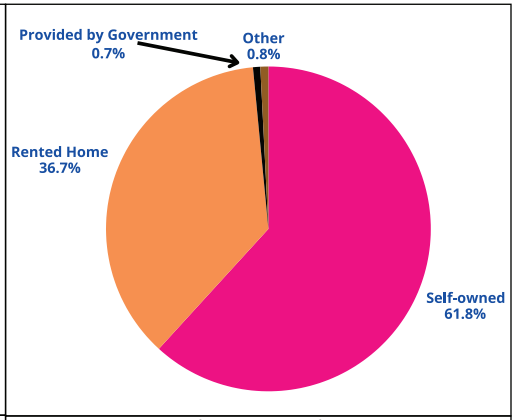

Figure 3.3: Type of Housing ownership in Jamia Nagar

Approximately 36.7% of the population in Jamia Nagar resides in rented accommodations (Fig. 3.3).

3.3 Family Structure

The data indicate a strong predominance of nuclear family structures in Jamia Nagar. As many as 80.6 percent of households were nuclear families, while only 2.8 percent were joint families. The remaining households consisted of extended or other family arrangements (Fig. 3.4). This pattern reflects both urban living constraints and migration-driven settlement, where families often relocate without extended kin networks.

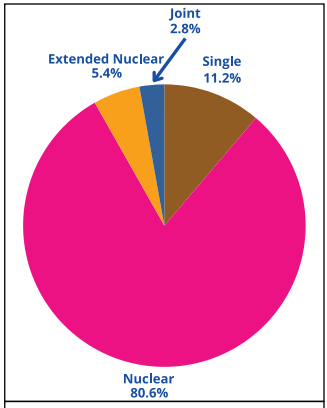

Figure 3.4: Family Structure in Jamia Nagar

The family structure in Jamia Nagar is predominantly composed of nuclear families, accounting for 80.6% of households, while only 2.8% live in joint family arrangements.

3.4 Gender of Household Head

A majority of households (87.2%) are headed by male members, most commonly the father. In some cases, particularly within extended or joint families, the role of family head is held by the grandfather. However, 12.8% are female-headed, which is slightly higher than the 11.4% urban average for Muslim households (NFHS-5) (Fig. 3.5). This indicates that women in Jamia Nagar are increasingly stepping into decision-making roles.

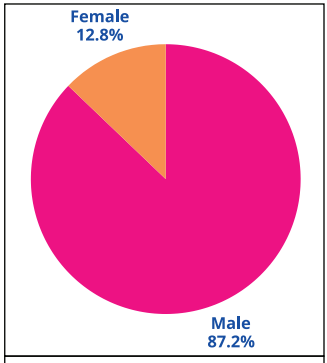

Figure 3.5: Gender of Household in Jamia Nagar

3.5 Migration Pattern

Migration is a defining characteristic of Jamia Nagar. Over 51.7% of households (Fig.3.6) migrated from other states, primarily Uttar Pradesh (56.5%) and Bihar (32.5%), with 58.9% of them coming from rural areas (Fig. 3.7 & 3.8). Notably, more than 30% of migrants

have lived in Delhi for more than 15 years (Fig. 3.9), indicating that Jamia Nagar is not merely a migrant outpost, but a deeply rooted urban settlement. This long-term urbanisation reflects stability, but also reveals the persistence of marginality, since despite decades of residence, many families still lack essential services and documentation.

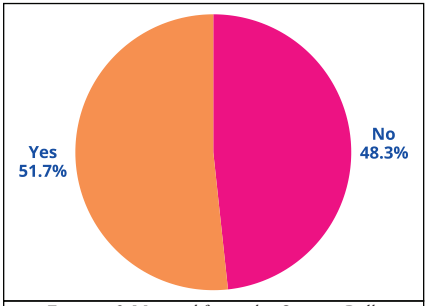

Figure 3.6: Migrated from other States to Delhi

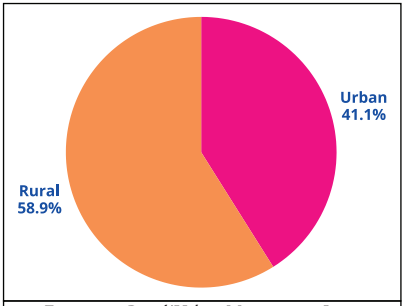

Figure 3.7: Rural/Urban Migration in Jamia

Over 51.7% of households in Jamia Nagar have migrated from other states, primarily from Uttar Pradesh (56.5%) and Bihar (32.5%), with 58.9% originating from rural areas. Notably, more than 30% of these migrant households have been residing in Delhi for more than 15 years.

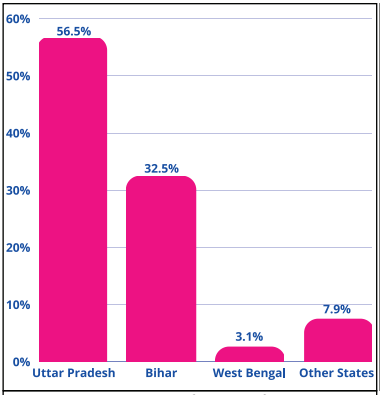

Figure 3.8: States of Origin of Migrants

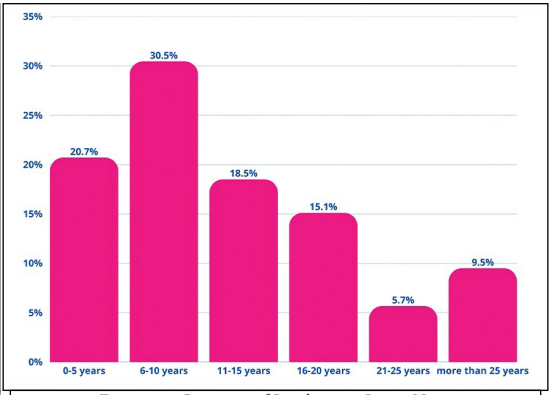

Figure 3.9: Duration of Residency in Jamia Nagar

3.6 Presence of Voter ID

A majority of respondents (78.1%) reported possessing a Delhi-issued voter ID, while a notable 21.9% stated that they do not have

one (Fig. 3.10). This relatively high proportion of individuals without a Delhi voter ID may be attributed to the substantial migrant population in the area, many of whom may still be registered in their place of origin. Among those without a Delhi voter ID, 44.6% have been residing in the city for 5 to 10 years, 29.3% for less than 5 years, and notably, 11.7% have been living in Delhi for more than 25 years (Fig. 3.11). This suggests that despite long-term residence, a segment of the population remains excluded from electoral registration, possibly due to bureaucratic, legal, or awareness-related challenges.

About 21.9% of respondents reported not having a Delhi voter ID, and among them, 44.6% have been residing in the city for 5 to 10 years.

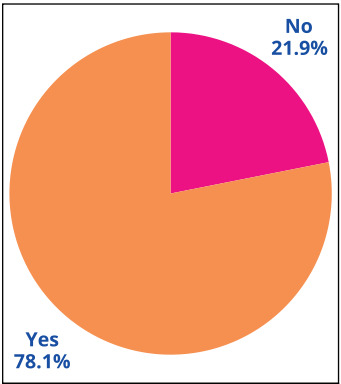

Figure 3.10: Presence of Voter ID Among Residents of Jamia Nagar

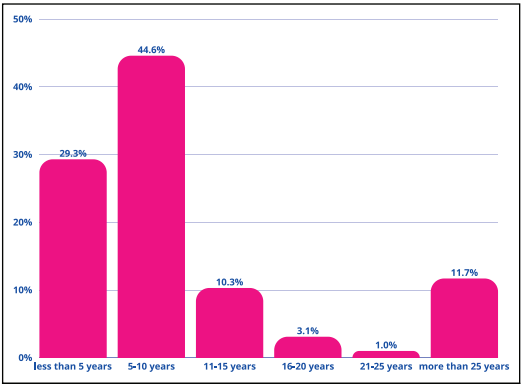

Figure 3.11: Duration of Stay in Delhi (Jamia Nagar) Among Residents Without a Voter ID

3.7 Availability of Household Amenities

Data presented in Table 3.1 reveals notable gaps in access to basic household amenities, reflecting constraints in both space and resources among residents of Jamia Nagar. Nearly 14% of households reported not having a separate kitchen, highlighting the scarcity of adequate living space in the area. Additionally, 6.7% of households lack an in-house toilet facility, indicating continued challenges in achieving basic sanitation standards.

The ownership of household appliances and digital devices further

illustrates varying levels of economic capacity. For instance, 16.9% of households do not own a fridge, and 12.2% lack a gas cylinder for cooking. Media access also appears limited, with 36.2% of households without a television and 10.5% lacking a smartphone. A significant digital divide is evident as 61.8% of households do not possess a laptop or computer, and 47.4% do not have Wi-Fi connectivity.

Other household assets are similarly scarce: 27% do not own a washing machine, 50.1% lack a geyser, 61.4% do not own a two-wheeler, and as many as 82.3% do not own a four-wheeler. Furthermore, 24.9% of households do not have an air conditioner. Traditional media consumption is also limited, with only 14.3% of respondents reporting that they read a newspaper regularly.

These indicators collectively point to economic vulnerabilities and infrastructural limitations faced by a substantial proportion of the population in Jamia Nagar.

3.1: Availability of Household Amenities

S.N.	Household Amenities	Available (Yes)	Not Available (No)
1.	Separate Kitchen	86.03%	13.97%
2.	Toilet	93.32%	6.68%
3.	Gas Cylinder	87.80%	12.20%
4.	Fridge	83.08%	16.92%
5.	Washing Machine	73.04%	26.96%
6.	Geyser	49.92%	50.08%
7.	Smart Phone	89.54%	10.46%
8.	Laptop/Computer	38.22%	61.78%
9.	TV	63.82%	36.18%
10.	AC	75.11%	24.89%
11.	Wi-Fi	52.61%	47.39%
12.	Two-Wheeler	38.56%	61.44%
13.	Four-Wheeler	17.67%	82.33%
14.	News Paper	14.31%	85.69%

Some Highlight of Availability of Household Amenities

- Nearly 14% of households reported not having a separate kitchen
- 6.7% of households lack an in-house toilet facility
- 16.9% of households do not own a fridge
- 12.2% lack a gas cylinder for cooking
- 10.5% lack a smartphone
- 61.8% of households do not possess a laptop or computer
- 47.4% do not have Wi-Fi connectivity
- 50.1% lack a geyser
- 61.4% do not own a two-wheeler
- 82.3% do not own a four-wheeler
- Only 14.3% of respondents report reading a newspaper regularly

3.8 Occupation and Income of Fathers

In Jamia Nagar, fathers—who serve as primary breadwinners in most households—are mainly employed in the informal economy and private sector. *A substantial 41.3% work in private sector jobs, while 37.9% are self-employed, typically operating small businesses or engaging in service-related enterprises. Only 7.0% hold government jobs, and 9.7% work as daily wage labourers (Fig. 3.12)*, which reflects a limited presence in formal, secure employment.

Regarding income levels, *40.7% of fathers earn ₹20,000 or less per month, indicating a large section of the population lives on modest or low incomes.* At the other end, 24.5% earn more than ₹50,000 monthly, suggesting a small but significant economically better-off group within the community (Fig. 3.13). This income spread highlights intra-community economic diversity and points to a stratified class structure within Jamia Nagar. National Sample Survey (NSS) data on urban Muslim households suggests similar patterns of income concentration

in informal sectors.

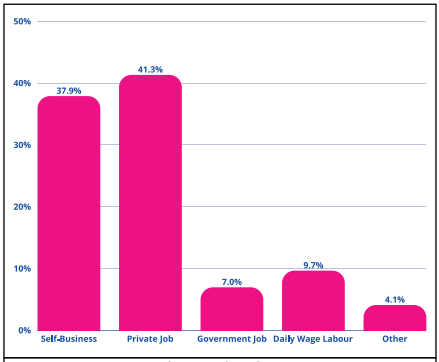

Figure 3.12: Profession of Fathers in Jamia Nagar

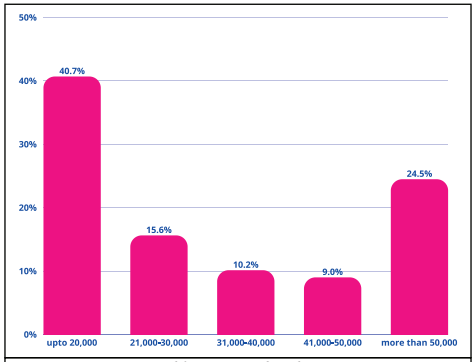

Figure 3.13: Monthly Income of Fathers in Jamia Nagar

3.9 Mother's Employment and Income

The participation of women in paid employment remains markedly low, with *only 9.4% of mothers engaged in work outside the home,* while the vast majority (90.6%) identify as homemakers (Fig. 3.14). Among the working mothers, 48.4% are employed in private sector jobs, 19.1% are self-employed or run small businesses, 6.5% work as domestic help, and 12.6% are engaged in various other occupations. Additionally, 13.4% are employed in government jobs (Fig. 3.15).

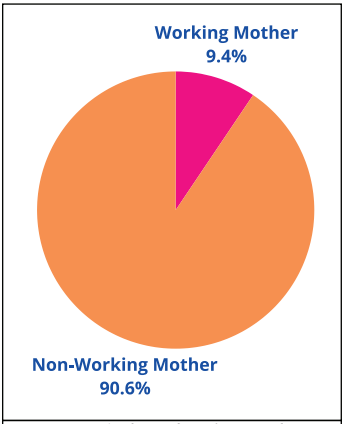

Figure 3.14: Share of Working Mother in Jamia Nagar

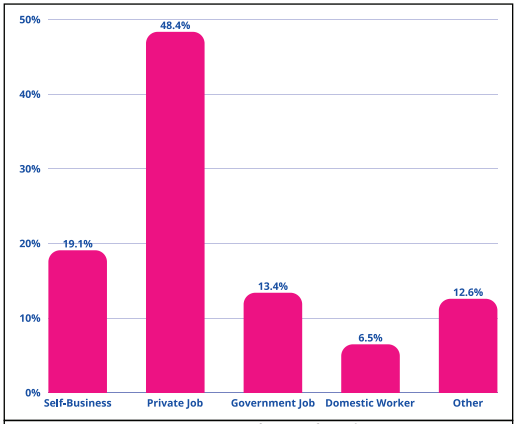

Figure 3.15: Profession of Working Women in Jamia Nagar

In terms of income, nearly 34.2% of working mothers earn

₹10,000 or less per month, and 20.8% earn between ₹10,000 and ₹20,000. Notably, 18.3% of working mothers earn more than ₹50,000 per month, suggesting a segment of economically empowered women within the community (Fig. 3.16). These figures highlight the relatively low participation of women in the workforce, but also underscore the diverse roles and income levels among those who are employed.

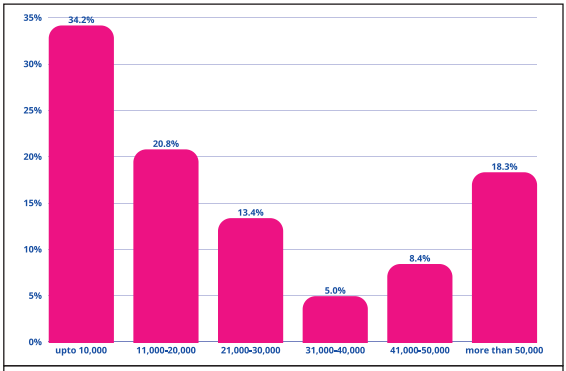

Figure 3.16: Monthly income of Working Women in Jamia Nagar

3.10 Father's Education

The data indicates that a significant proportion of fathers (27.8%) have had no formal schooling, reflecting educational disadvantages among a section of the community. However, a considerable number have attained higher education—25.7% are educated up to the graduation level, and 14.0% have completed post-graduate studies (Fig. 3.17).

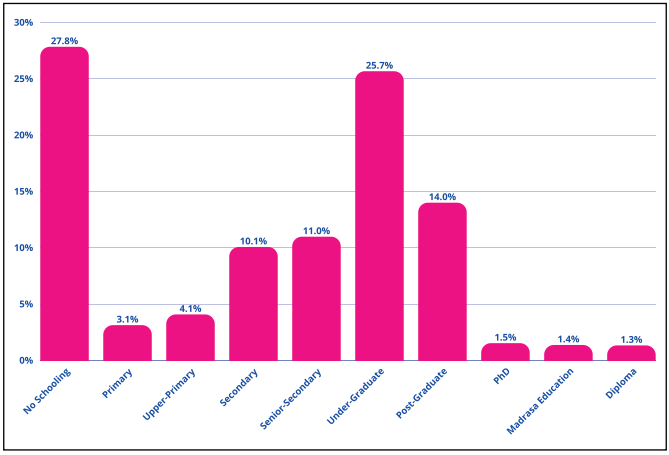

Figure 3.17: Education Status of Fathers in Jamia Nagar

The data reveals that in Jamia Nagar, 27.8% of fathers have had no formal schooling, while only 1.3% reported attending a madrasa for their education.

Contrary to the common perception that Muslim communities predominantly opt for madrasa education, only 1.3% of fathers reported having attended a madrasa (Fig. 3.18). This highlights a clear preference for mainstream, formal education among the respondents. Furthermore, the majority of fathers reported having studied in government-run institutions such as government schools and central universities.

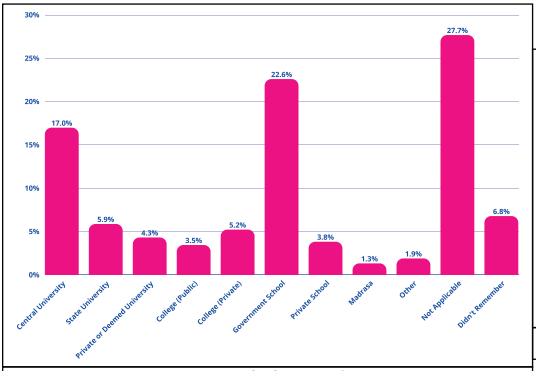

Figure 3.18: Type of Educational Institutions Attended by Fathers

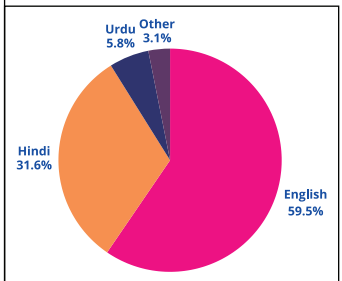

Figure 3.19: Medium of Education of Fathers

Regarding the medium of instruction, *English emerged as the most common (59.5%), followed by Hindi (31.6%) and Urdu (5.8%).* These trends collectively suggest a community that values and actively pursues modern education (Fig. 3.19).

3.11 Mother's Education

The education profile of mothers is broadly similar to that of fathers, though slightly lower in terms of higher education attainment. The data reveals that 27.1% of mothers did not receive any formal education, while 27.3% attained a bachelor's degree, reflecting a distribution pattern somewhat similar to that of fathers. However, the proportion of mothers with education beyond graduation is

comparatively lower, indicating gender disparities in access to higher education (Fig. 3.20).

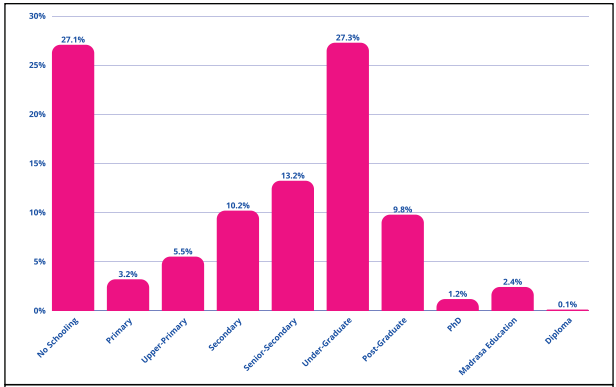

Figure 3.20: Education Status of Mothers in Jamia Nagar

The data revealed that in Jamia Nagar, 27.1% of mothers have had no formal schooling, while only 2.2% reported attending a madrasa for their education.

A small share (2.2%) of mothers reported having received madrasa education, again challenging the stereotype that madrasa education is predominant among Muslim communities (Fig. 2.21). Like their male counterparts, most mothers received education from public institutions - 23.3% attended government schools, 13.9% studied at central universities, and 6.6% at state universities (Fig. 3.21). In terms of the medium of instruction, English was the most common (51.9%), followed by Hindi (30.8%) and Urdu (11%) (Fig. 3.22).

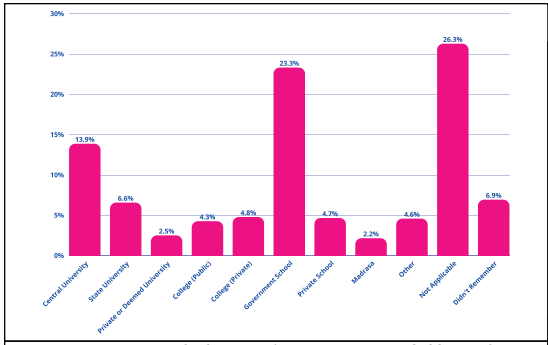

Figure 3.21: Type of Educational Institutions Attended by Mothers

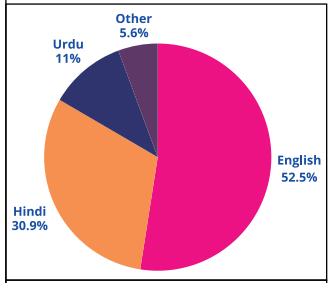

Figure 3.22: Medium of Education of Mothers

3.12 Primary Language spoken at Home

The majority of respondents reported *Hindi (53.7%) and Urdu (42.8%) as their primary languages spoken at home,* reflecting the linguistic and cultural character of the Jamia Nagar community. A small proportion (2.2%) identified English as their primary language, while 1.4% reported speaking other languages (Fig. 3.23). This indicates that while the community is rooted in regional languages, there is also a presence—albeit limited—of English and other languages, possibly due to educational exposure or professional requirements.

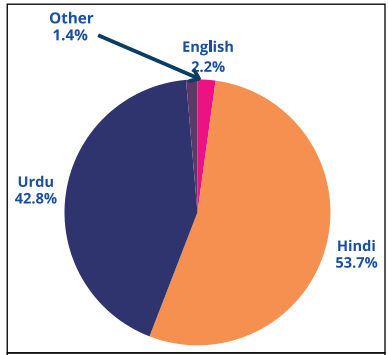

Figure 3.23: Primary Language Spoken at Home

3.13 Caste Composition

The data shows that a majority of families *(56.3%) identify as belonging to the General Category, followed by 37.1% who fall under the Other Backward Classes (OBC).* A small proportion (6.6%) reported uncertainty about their caste category (Fig. 3.24).

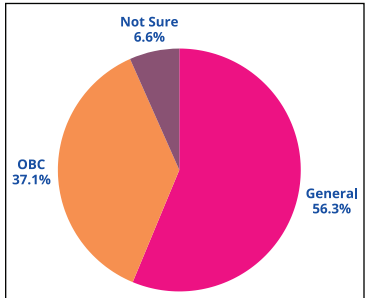

Figure 3.24: Caste Status in Jamia Nagar

3.14 Availability of Anganwadi Centres (AWC) in the Area

When asked about the presence of an Anganwadi Centre (AWC) in their locality, only 15.1% of respondents confirmed that an AWC exists in their area. In contrast, 24.7% reported that there is no AWC nearby, while a majority (60.1%), stated that they are unaware of whether an AWC is present

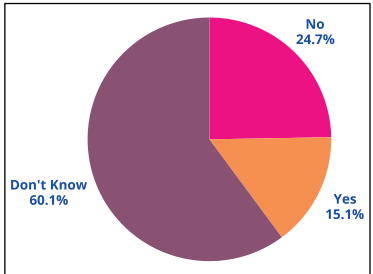

Figure 3.25: Availability of Anganwadi Centers in Jamia Nagar

in their locality or not (Fig. 3.25). This high level of unawareness may point to gaps in public awareness, outreach, or visibility of these crucial government-run childcare and nutrition centres in the Jamia Nagar area.

Only 15.1% of respondents confirmed the presence of an Anganwadi Centre (AWC) in their area, 24.7% reported that there is no AWC nearby, while the majority—60.1%—stated that they are unaware of whether an AWC exists in their locality.

3.15 Social Group-Wise Wealth Status

The data reveals a marked disparity in wealth status between families belonging to the General category and those from the Other Backward Classes (OBC). Among OBC households, nearly half (48.4%) fall within the poor wealth index - comprising 23.1% categorized as the poorest and 25.3% as poorer. An additional 18.2% belong to the middle tier, while 33.4% are classified within the rich wealth index (19.8% richer and 13.7% richest) (Fig. 3.26).

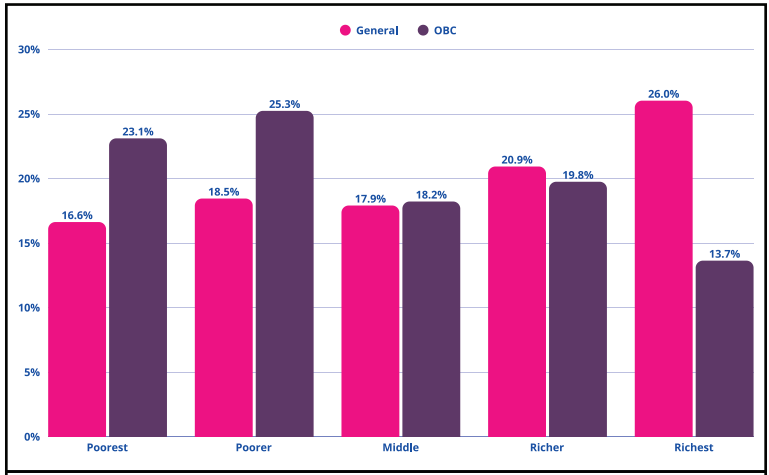

Figure 3.26: Social Group-wise Wealth Status in Jamia Nagar

In comparison, families from the General category demonstrate relatively higher economic standing. Approximately 47% are classified in the rich wealth index (20.9% richer and 26.0% richest), 17.9%

fall in the middle tier, and only 35.1% are within the poor wealth index (16.6% poorest and 18.5% poorer). These patterns suggest that households from the General category are economically more advantaged than their OBC counterparts in the Jamia Nagar area (Fig. 3.26).

Overall, the household profile of Jamia Nagar reflects a population that is urban, long-settled, and deeply invested in education, yet constrained by limited economic assets, weak public provisioning, and uneven access to state services. These conditions shape not only educational access but also the quality and continuity of children's schooling.

4. School Education Status in Jamia Nagar

This chapter examines patterns of school enrolment, dropout, educational aspirations, and schooling transitions among children in Jamia Nagar. Building on the household profile presented in Chapter 3, the analysis situates schooling decisions within broader socio-economic constraints and opportunities. The chapter examines how schooling is expected to translate into future economic and social advancement, as perceived by households and children.

Education in Jamia Nagar is characterised by high aspiration and participation at early stages, alongside growing divergence in trajectories at secondary and post-secondary levels. Understanding these patterns requires attention not only to enrolment status, but also to household expectations, perceived payoffs to education, and the extent to which schooling enables intergenerational mobility.

4.1 Child Population Profile and Baseline Characteristics

This section presents the baseline demographic and social profile of the child population covered in the survey. Establishing these characteristics is essential for interpreting patterns of enrolment, discontinuity, educational investment, return to education, and social mobility examined in subsequent sections. The indicators presented here describe the composition of the child population and do not, by themselves, explain educational outcomes or trajectories. The analysis in this section is based on 3,872 Muslim children aged 4 to 18 years residing in Jamia Nagar.

4.1.1 Age Composition of the Child Population

The age distribution of children in the sample is relatively even across cohorts, allowing for meaningful age-specific analysis. Children aged 4 years constitute 5.5 percent of the sample, while those aged 10 years form the largest single cohort at 8.7 percent. Across most

age groups between 5 and 18 years, the proportion of children ranges between approximately 5.8 percent and 7.3 percent, indicating that no single cohort disproportionately dominates the child population (Table 4.1).

In aggregate terms, children aged 4 to 9 years account for around 39 percent of the total child population, those aged 10 to 14 constitute approximately 34 percent, and adolescents aged 15 to 18 make up about 27 percent. This spread confirms that the sample includes substantial representation across early childhood, primary, upper primary, secondary, and senior secondary schooling stages (Table 4.1).

4.1: Age Composition of the Child Population

Age	Frequency (N)	Percent
4	212	5.48
5	283	7.31
6	230	5.94
7	260	6.71
8	283	7.31
9	232	5.99
10	337	8.70
11	229	5.91
12	309	7.98
13	227	5.86
14	253	6.53
15	266	6.87
16	233	6.02
17	275	7.10
18	243	6.28
Total	**3,872**	**100.00**

When age is examined alongside current schooling stage, the distribution broadly aligns with expected age-appropriate placement. Younger children are concentrated in primary grades, the share of

children in upper primary increases between ages 11 and 13, and secondary and senior secondary schooling becomes predominant from age 14 onwards. Importantly, these patterns reflect the age composition of the population at the time of survey and should be interpreted as a descriptive snapshot rather than as evidence of progression, transition, or attrition across grades (Table 4.2).

4.2: Age-wise Schooling Stage (in %)

Age	Never Enrolled	Primary	Upper-Primary	Secondary	Senior Secondary	Madrasa Education	Dropped-Out
4	27.54	72.46	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
5	9.35	88.85	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.44	0.36
6	3.18	96.36	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.45
7	2.81	96.79	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.40	0.0
8	2.19	97.08	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.36	0.36
9	2.25	97.30	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.45
10	0.93	85.98	11.21	0.0	0.0	0.62	1.25
11	0.48	63.81	33.81	0.0	0.0	0.48	1.43
12	1.36	33.56	63.05	0.0	0.0	0.34	1.69
13	1.39	5.56	86.11	6.02	0.0	0.0	0.93
14	1.24	0.0	69.83	28.10	0.0	0.0	0.83
15	1.94	0.0	28.29	61.63	5.43	0.0	2.71
16	0.88	0.0	0.0	68.28	26.43	0.88	3.52
17	1.15	0.0	0.0	32.44	59.54	0.0	6.87
18	1.67	0.0	0.0	6.28	77.82	0.42	13.81

4.1.2 Gender-wise Distribution of Children

The gender composition of the child population is nearly balanced. Of the 3,872 children covered in the survey, 1,960 are boys, accounting for 50.6 percent, and 1,912 are girls, accounting for 49.4 percent (Fig. 4.1). The near parity in gender distribution is analytically

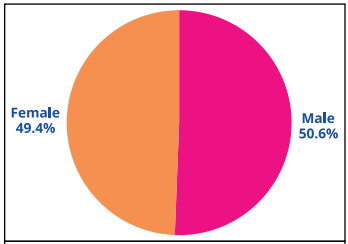

Figure 4.1: Gender-wise Distribution of School-going Children

important, as it establishes that subsequent gender differences observed in enrolment continuity, school choice, educational investment, or learning outcomes cannot be attributed to skewed population composition.

4.1.3 Area-wise Distribution of Children

Children included in the survey are distributed across all major localities within Jamia Nagar, though the concentration varies by area. The highest concentration of school-age children was found in four major localities of Jamia Nagar: Batla House, followed by Abul Fazal Enclave, Zakir Nagar, and Shaheen Bagh. Together, these four areas account for approximately 75.4% of the total school-going population in the region (Fig. 4.2).

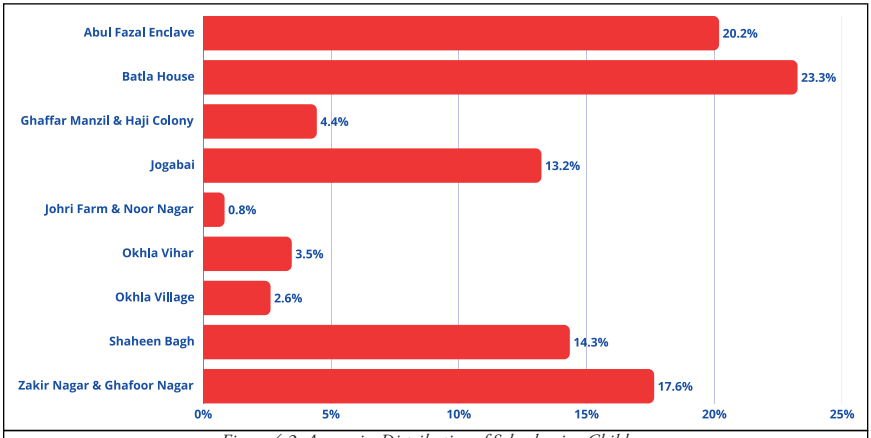

Figure 4.2: Area-wise Distribution of School-going Children

This concentration underscores the population density and family-oriented demographic structure of these neighbourhoods. It also implies that any targeted interventions in education, infrastructure, or child welfare services should prioritize these localities to achieve broader impact and coverage across Jamia Nagar.

4.1.4 Social Profile of Children

The social profile of children reflects internal diversity within the Muslim population of Jamia Nagar. In terms of caste identification,

58.4 percent of children belong to households reporting General category status, while 37.6 percent are from OBC households. A small proportion, 4.0 percent, reported uncertainty regarding caste classification (Fig 4.3).

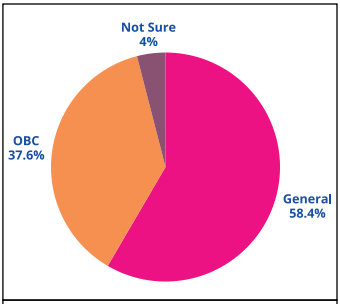

Figure 4.3: Social-group-wise distribution of School-going Children

4.2 Educational Participation and Discontinuity under Household Constraint

Educational participation in Jamia Nagar is characterised by high overall enrolment alongside persistent forms of exclusion and discontinuity that are structured by age, socio-economic position, and migration status. Among the 3,872 children covered in the survey, 94.0 percent were currently studying at the time of data collection. However, 3.7 percent had never attended school, and a further 2.3 percent had dropped out after initial enrolment (Fig. 4.4). These figures indicate that around six percent of children experience exclusion from schooling, either at the point of entry or through subsequent interruption.

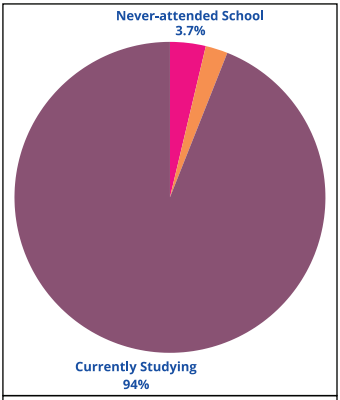

Figure 4.4: School Enrolment Status in Jamia Nagar

Importantly, these forms of non-participation are not randomly distributed. Instead, they reflect the operation of household-level constraints and structural conditions that shape educational participation over time.

3.7% of children have never been enrolled in school, while 2.3% have dropped out after initial enrolment.

4.2.1 Age Profile of Educational Participation

Age-wise analysis reveals a clear distinction between early exclusion and later discontinuity. Never enrolment is concentrated overwhelmingly among younger children. At age four, 41.3 percent, had never attended school. This proportion declines sharply to 18.8 percent at age five and further to 5.8 percent at age six (Fig. 4.5). Beyond early childhood, the share of never-enrolled children remains relatively low across age groups.

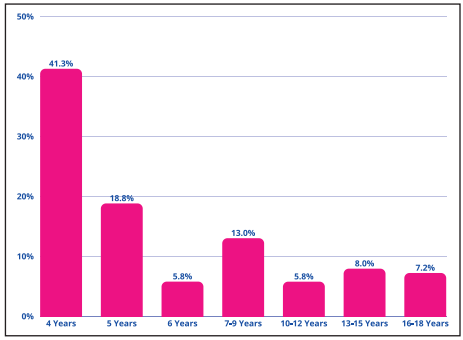

Figure 4.5: Age-wise Distribution of Children Who Never Enrolled in School

34.1% of those who never been enrolled in school are above the age of six.

In contrast to never enrolment, dropout cases are predominantly observed at older ages (Fig. 4.6). Of the total 86 children who had dropped out, only a very small number were below the age of ten. The distribution of dropout cases is concentrated in late adolescence, with 18 children at age seventeen and 33 children at age eighteen accounting together for nearly 60 percent of all reported dropouts. This concentration should be interpreted as a cross-sectional distribution of dropout cases by age at the time of the survey, rather than as evidence of age-specific dropout risk or progression over time. Nevertheless, the clustering of dropout cases in later adolescence indicates that educational discontinuity is more likely to manifest after prolonged engagement with schooling, particularly at higher levels of education.

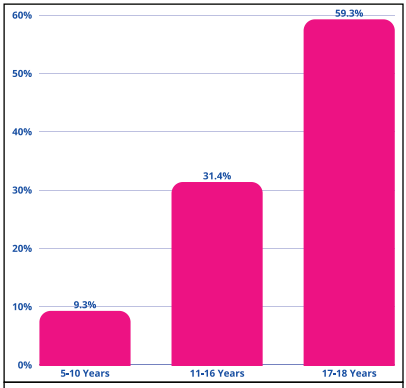

Figure 4.6: Age-wise Distribution of Dropout

4.2.2 Social Pattern of Enrolment and Exclusion

4.2.2.1 Gender

Gender differences in overall enrolment are modest but reveal distinct patterns of exclusion (Fig. 4.7). Among never-enrolled children, boys constitute a slightly higher share (52.9 percent) than girls (47.1 percent). A similar pattern is observed in school discontinuation, with boys accounting for 58.1 percent of dropout cases, highlighting greater male vulnerability to discontinuity during adolescence, likely linked to early labour market entry and income-related responsibilities.

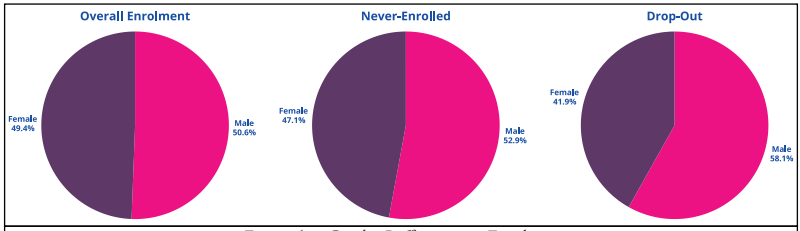

Figure 4.7: Gender Differences in Enrolment

These patterns directly challenge dominant narratives that frame Muslim girls as educationally disadvantaged. Instead, the data suggests that structural and economic factors, rather than gender norms alone, are more influential in shaping educational outcomes in Jamia Nagar.

4.2.2.2 Caste

Caste-based disparities at the point of school entry must be interpreted in relation to the underlying population composition (Fig. 4.8). Children from OBC households constitute 39.9 percent of never-enrolled children, compared to 37.6 percent of the overall child population, indicating a marginal overrepresentation of OBC children among those excluded at the point of entry. Children from General category households account for 52.9 percent of never-enrolled cases, largely reflecting their higher share in the child population, while a small proportion falls under the 'Not sure' category (Fig. 4.8).

A similar pattern is visible in school discontinuation. Children from General category households constitute 55.8 percent of dropout

cases, while OBC children account for 43.0 percent (Fig. 4.8). This pattern suggests that while caste remains a relevant axis of inequality, its role in shaping educational exclusion in Jamia Nagar is limited and intersected by broader structural and economic pressures, rather than operating as a dominant determinant on its own.

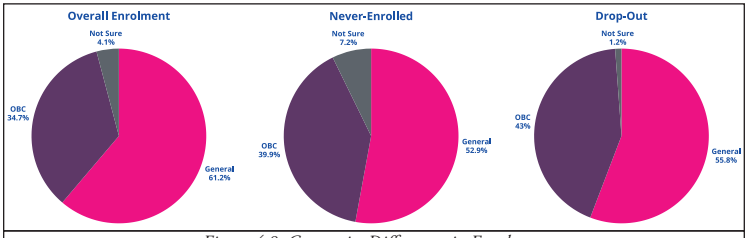

Figure 4.8: Caste-wise Differences in Enrolment

4.2.2.3 Wealth

Wealth differentials strongly shape educational participation, particularly at the point of school entry (Fig. 4.9). Among never-enrolled children, those from the poorest and poorer wealth categories together account for 56.5 percent, indicating a clear concentration of early exclusion among economically disadvantaged households. At the same time, children from middle (17.4 percent), richer (10.9 percent), and richest (15.2 percent) households together constitute a substantial minority of never-enrolment cases.

The relationship between wealth and dropout is more complex. While the poorest households account for 24.4 percent of dropout cases, children from richer households account for 25.6 percent, and those from the richest category account for 12.8 percent. This distribution indicates that dropout at higher ages is not driven solely by poverty, but also by household assessments of the cost and perceived returns of continued schooling (Fig. 4.9).

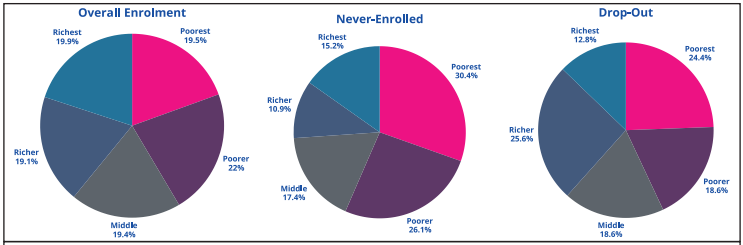

Figure 4.9: Wealth-wise Differences in Enrolment

Among children who are currently studying, enrolment is relatively evenly distributed across wealth categories (Fig. 4.9), reflecting broad-based participation, but masking differentiated risks of discontinuity.

4.2.2.4 Migration

Migration emerges as an important but differentiated axis shaping educational participation in Jamia Nagar. Rather than exerting a uniform effect, migration influences schooling outcomes through settlement stability, duration of stay, and rural or urban origin. An examination of enrolment status alongside migration characteristics indicates that educational participation among migrant households cannot be understood solely in terms of mobility, but must be situated within broader processes of settlement and adaptation.

Overall enrolment levels are broadly comparable between migrant and non-migrant households. Patterns of exclusion and discontinuity, however, differ in their distribution. Among never enrolled children, migrant households account for a slightly higher share (51.5 percent) compared to non-migrant households (48.6 percent). At the same time, migrant households constitute a disproportionately high share of dropout cases (61.6 percent), suggesting that educational discontinuity during adolescence is more strongly associated with migration-related instability, mobility, and economic precarity (Fig. 4.10).

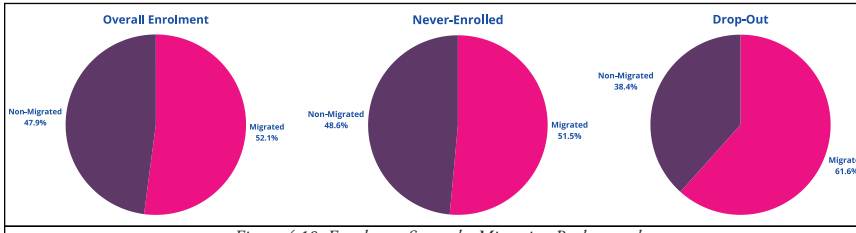

Figure 4.10: Enrolment Status by Migration Background

Educational participation among migrant households varies systematically by duration of residence in Jamia Nagar (Table 4.3). Children from households with shorter durations of stay face higher risks of early exclusion and discontinuity, though overall enrolment remains relatively high even among recent migrants. Among

households residing in Jamia Nagar for up to five years, 90.2 percent of children were currently studying, while 5.7 percent had never enrolled and 4.1 percent had dropped out. Educational participation improves markedly with longer duration of stay. For households with six to ten years of residence, current enrolment rises to 93.3 percent, accompanied by declines in both never enrolment and dropout. This trend continues among households with eleven to fifteen years of stay, where current enrolment reaches 95.5 percent (Table 4.3).

However, the relationship between settlement duration and educational continuity is not strictly linear. While households with sixteen to twenty years of residence exhibit the highest enrolment levels at 96.7 percent, households with twenty-one to twenty-five years of stay show a notable decline in current enrolment to 87.3 percent and a corresponding increase in dropout to 5.1 percent. Even among households with more than twenty-five years of residence, dropout persists at 2.2 percent, indicating that long-term settlement alone does not fully insulate children from educational discontinuity.

These patterns suggest that while settlement stability significantly enhances educational participation among migrant households, it does not eliminate vulnerability altogether. Educational discontinuity reflects not only transitional instability associated with recent migration, but also longer-term structural constraints that continue to shape schooling outcomes even after households are socially and spatially settled.

4.3: Enrolment Status by Duration of Stay After Migration

Duration of Stay	Never Enrolled (%)	Dropped-Out (%)	Currently Studying (%)	Total
0–5 years	5.73	4.06	90.21	100.00
6–10 years	4.69	1.99	93.32	100.00
11–15 years	2.54	1.98	95.48	100.00
16–20 years	0.67	2.68	96.66	100.00
21–25 years	7.63	5.08	87.29	100.00
More than 25 years	0.54	2.16	97.30	100.00

The distinction between rural- and urban-origin migrants further sharpens this analysis. Rural-origin migrant households account for a disproportionately high share of educational exclusion, constituting over 70 percent of never-enrolled migrant children and nearly 59 percent of migrant dropout cases. In contrast, urban-origin migrant households exhibit relatively higher proportions of children who are currently studying (Fig. 4.11). This suggests that prior exposure to urban schooling systems, familiarity with documentation requirements, and established educational norms may facilitate smoother educational integration among urban-origin migrants.

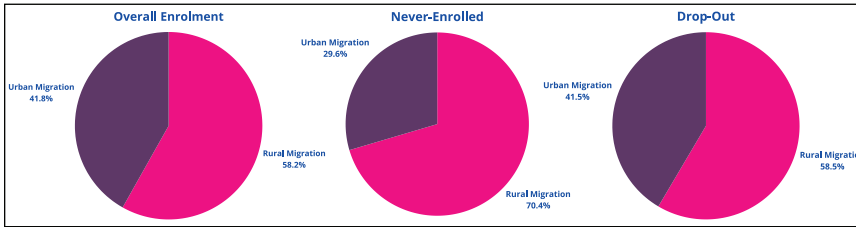

Figure 4.11: Enrolment Status by Rural and Urban Migration

These findings demonstrate that migration should not be treated as a binary risk factor for educational exclusion. Educational participation among migrant households in Jamia Nagar is shaped by the interaction of migration origin, duration of stay, and settlement stability. Early exclusion is most acute during the initial years following migration, while educational discontinuity during adolescence reflects broader constraints that persist even after households have achieved long-term residence.

4.2.3 Educational Level at Point of Dropout

An examination of the educational stage at which dropout occurs further clarifies the nature of discontinuity. Among children who dropped out, 19.8 percent exited during primary education, 25.6 percent during upper primary, and 24.4 percent during secondary education. Notably, the largest share of dropout, 29.1 percent, occurred at the senior secondary level. Only 1.2 percent of dropout cases were

associated with madrasa education (Fig. 4.12).

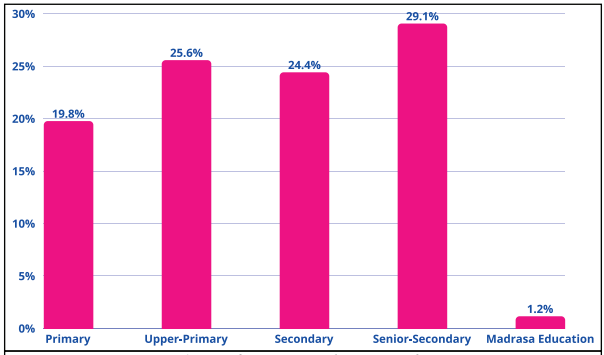

Figure 4.12: Education Level at Point of Dropout

This distribution indicates that dropout is not confined to early schooling. A substantial proportion of children exit the education system after having progressed through multiple schooling stages, including secondary education. This pattern underscores that educational discontinuity in Jamia Nagar reflects difficulties in sustaining education at higher levels, rather than failure of initial access alone.

4.2.4 Reasons for Dropout: Structural Constraint over Individual Choice

Reported reasons (Fig. 4.13) for dropout reinforce the interpretation of discontinuity as structurally constrained. Poverty is the most frequently cited substantive reason, followed by poor academic performance, preparation for competitive exams, and lack of interest in studies. Other reasons include distance to school, death of parents, marriage, and COVID-19-related disruption (Fig. 4.13).

Importantly, dropout reasons often overlap, indicating that exit from schooling is rarely the result of a single factor. Instead, dropout reflects the cumulative effect of economic pressure, academic difficulty, access constraints, and household shocks, particularly during adolescence.

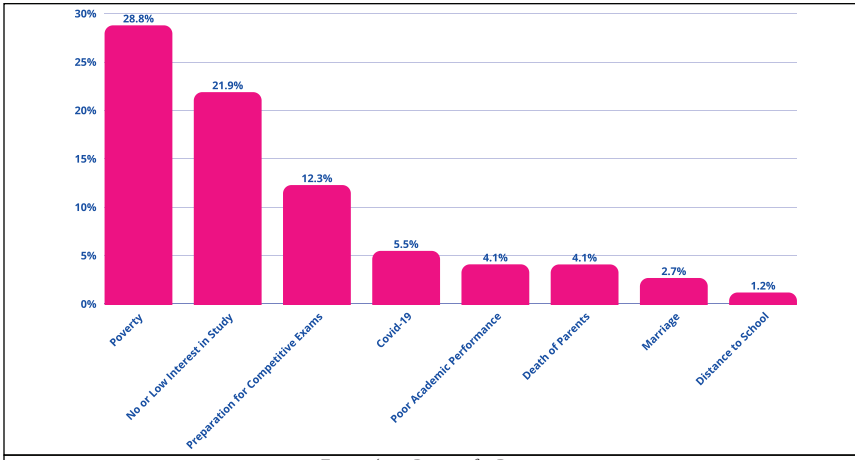

Figure 4.13: Reasons for Dropout

4.2.5 Educational Participation as Conditional Inclusion

The findings presented in this section indicate that educational participation in Jamia Nagar is widespread but fragile. Entry into schooling is relatively common, yet continuation becomes increasingly contingent as children grow older. Early exclusion reflects structural disadvantage at the point of entry, while later discontinuity reflects rising pressures associated with adolescence, household constraints, and uncertainty about the value of continued schooling.

Early exclusion is concentrated among socially and economically disadvantaged households and manifests primarily as delayed or missed entry into schooling. Later discontinuity emerges during adolescence, shaped by rising educational costs, academic pressure, migration-related instability, and uncertainty about the economic value of continued schooling.

This understanding of participation and discontinuity provides the analytical foundation for the next section, which examines how institutional pathways, school type, medium of instruction, and educational expenditure shape households' strategies for sustaining education under constraint.

4.3 Institutional Pathways, School Type, and the Cost of Staying Enrolled

While the previous section examined patterns of educational participation and discontinuity, this section shifts focus to the institutional conditions under which schooling is sustained in Jamia Nagar. Rather than asking who is excluded from education, the analysis here examines how children who remain enrolled navigate school type, medium of instruction, supplementary coaching, distance to school, and education-related expenditure. These institutional pathways shape not only access to schooling but also the quality, cost, and sustainability of continued enrolment.

4.3.1 Institutional Distribution and School Type

Among currently enrolled children, schooling is overwhelmingly concentrated in formal school institutions, with private schools accounting for 56.8 percent and government schools for 40.3 percent of enrolment. Together, government and private schools account for a remarkable 96.8% of total enrolment. *The data also shows that only 0.8% of children attend madrasas (Fig. 4.14).* This finding continues to challenge commonly held perceptions about Muslim education patterns and reinforces the reality that the vast majority of children are being educated in mainstream institutions. At the higher education level, a small segment of students is currently enrolled in Central Universities (1.3%), State Universities (0.06%), and Private or Deemed Universities (0.2%). Additionally, 0.2% of children are attending college-level institutions (Fig. 4.14).

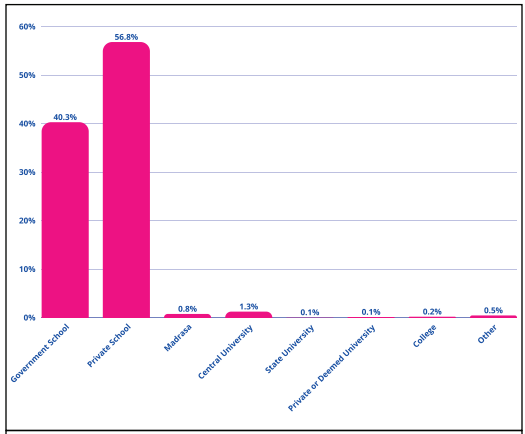

Figure 4.14: Type of Educational Institution Attended

Age-wise patterns indicate a clear institutional stratification across the schooling trajectory. Private schools dominate enrolment in early and middle childhood, particularly between ages five and ten, while government schools maintain a relatively stable presence across age groups (Fig 4.15).

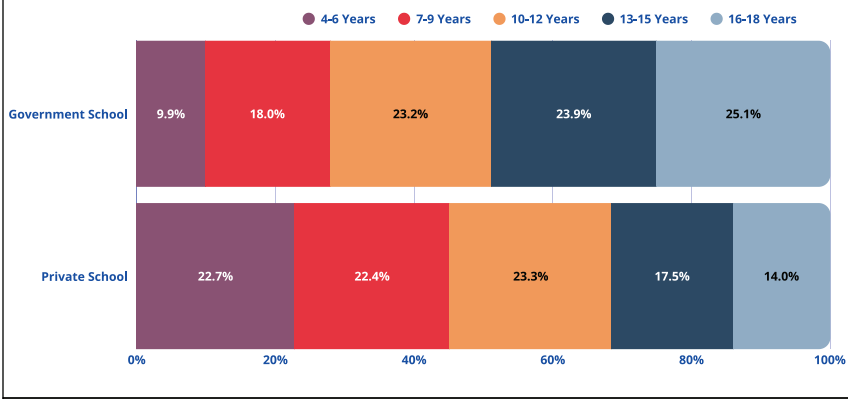

Figure 4.15: Age-wise Distribution of Children in Government & Private Schools

This institutional distribution is socially patterned. Government schools disproportionately serve children from the poorest and poorer wealth quintiles, while private schools draw increasingly from

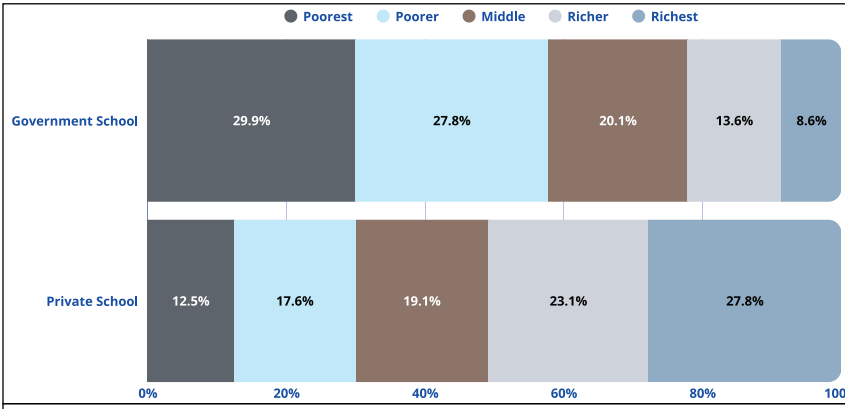

Figure 4.16: Wealth-wise Distribution of Children in Government & Private Schools

middle, richer, and richest households. Nearly 28 percent of private school students belong to the richest quintile, compared to less than 9

percent in government schools (Fig. 4.16). These patterns suggest that institutional choice is less a matter of pedagogical preference and more a reflection of household economic capacity.

Caste-wise distributions further reinforce this stratification. While General category children are overrepresented in private schools (nearly 69 percent), OBC children constitute a substantial share of government school enrolment (about 45 percent). Madrasas, though numerically small, exhibit a mixed socio-economic profile, indicating that they function more as culturally embedded alternatives than as exclusively poverty-driven institutions (4.17).

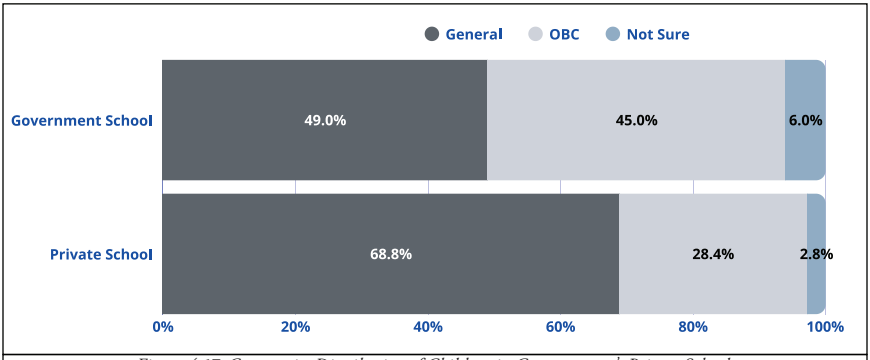

Figure 4.17: Caste--wise Distribution of Children in Government & Private Schools

4.3.2 Medium of Instruction and Social Differentiation

The medium of instruction reveals a pronounced tilt toward English-medium education, which accounts for over 84 percent of enrolment (Fig. 4.18). However, access to English-medium schooling is sharply structured by wealth. Children from the richest quintile constitute nearly 23 percent of English-medium students, compared to 16 percent from the poorest quintile. In contrast, Hindi- and Urdu-medium schooling draws disproportionately from

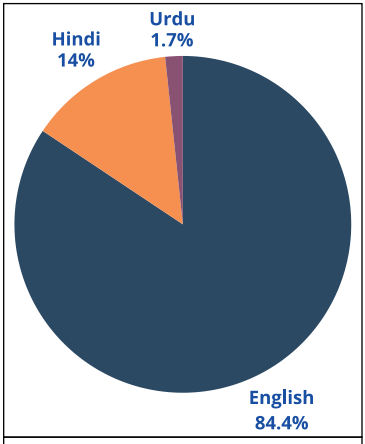

Figure 4.18: Medium of Instruction

poorer households (Fig. 4.19).

Figure 4.19: Medium of Instruction by Wealth Status

Caste-wise differences mirror these patterns. While General category children dominate English-medium schooling, Hindi-medium education displays near parity between General and OBC groups. This suggests that medium of instruction operates as a mechanism of symbolic and material stratification, mediating future educational and labour market opportunities (Fig. 4.20).

Gender differences in medium choice are relatively muted (Fig. 4.21), indicating that while gender parity exists in enrolment, qualitative dimensions of schooling remain structured primarily by class and caste rather than gender alone.

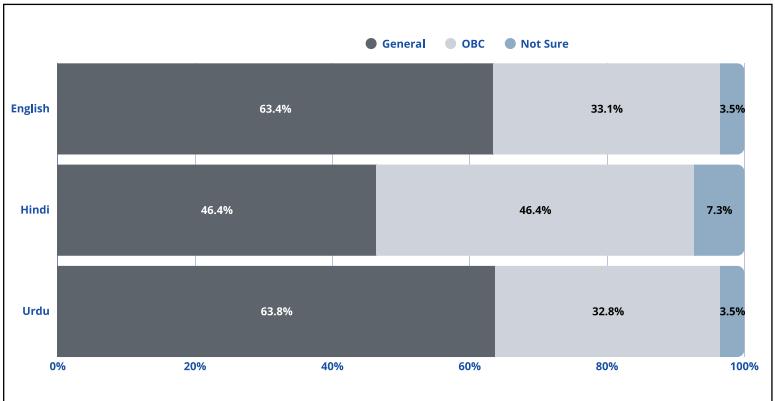

Figure 4.20: Medium of Instruction by Caste

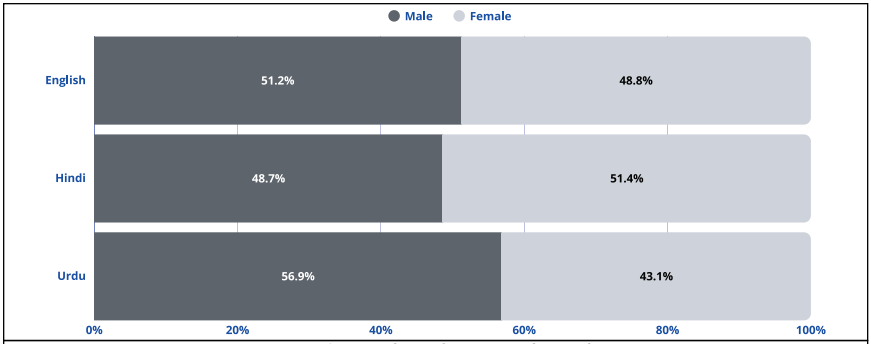

Figure 4.21: Medium of Instruction by Gender

4.3.3 Supplementary Coaching and the Shadow Education System

Nearly one in four currently enrolled children (24.2 percent) reports attending private coaching (Fig. 4.22). Coaching participation rises sharply with wealth: while only 13 percent of coached students come from the poorest quintile, nearly 29 percent belong to the richest quintile (Fig. 4.23). This gradient underscores the emergence of a shadow education system, wherein formal schooling increasingly requires parallel private investment to remain competitive.

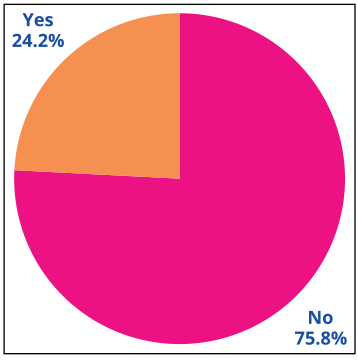

Figure 4.22:Status of Coaching

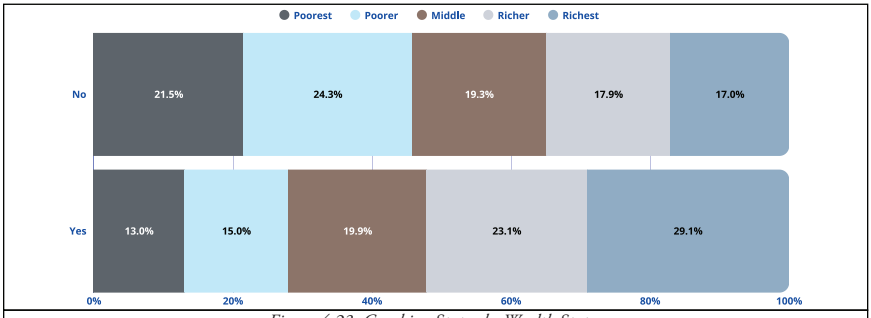

Figure 4.23: Coaching Status by Wealth Status

Caste-wise patterns indicate that General category children are more likely to access coaching than OBC children, reinforcing

cumulative advantage (Fig. 4.24). Gender differences in coaching participation are minimal (Fig. 4.25), suggesting that once families commit resources to supplementary education, investment is distributed relatively equally across sons and daughters.

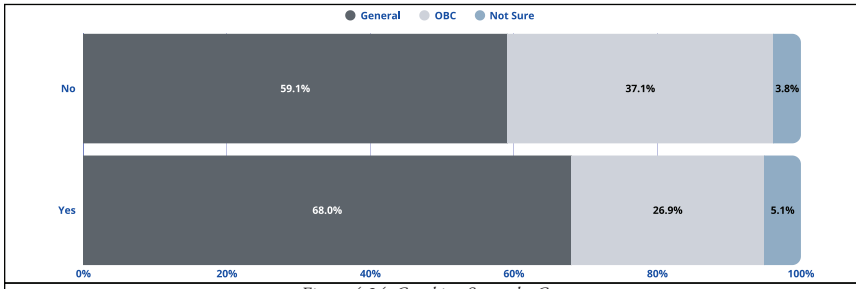

Figure 4.24: Coaching Status by Caste

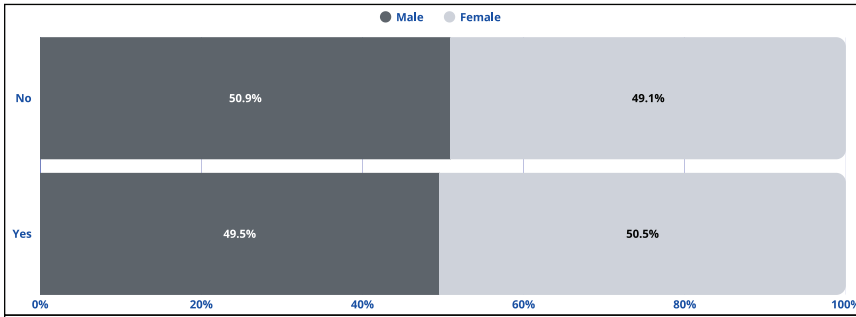

Figure 4.25: Coaching Status by Gender

4.3.4 Purpose and Orientation of Coaching Participation

An examination of the stated reasons for coaching reveals that private tutoring in Jamia Nagar functions primarily as a support mechanism rather than an aspirational accelerator. As shown in Fig. 4.26, nearly four-fifths of coached students (79.1 percent) attend coaching to assist with ongoing schooling, indicating that supplementary instruction is largely used to cope with academic demands rather than to pursue competitive advancement.

Preparation for entrance examinations accounts for 16.5 percent of coaching participation, while language learning and other purposes remain marginal. This distribution suggests that coaching is most commonly deployed to compensate for instructional gaps, curriculum

overload, or limited classroom support, effectively extending the formal school system through private means. In terms of the mode of instruction, 92.3% of children were attending coaching classes offline, reflecting the continued preference for in-person learning in the community. Only 7.7% were availing online coaching options (Fig. 4.27).

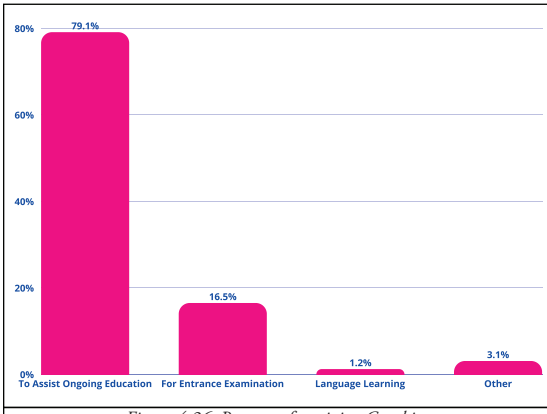

Figure 4.26: Purpose of receiving Coaching

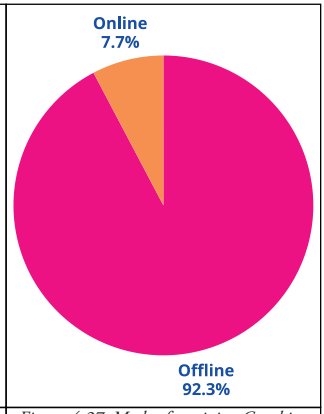

Figure 4.27: Mode of receiving Coaching

However, among students enrolled in competitive coaching, preparation for high-stakes examinations dominates. As shown in Fig. 4.28, nearly two-thirds of competitive coaching participants are preparing for NEET (64.6 percent), followed by JEE (27.6 percent). This indicates the presence of a narrow but distinct aspirational segment, where coaching is oriented toward elite higher education pathways rather than grade-level support.

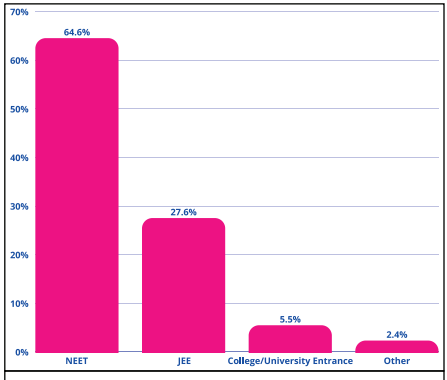

Figure 4.28: Reason of receiving Coaching for Competitive Exams

4.3.5 The Financial Burden of Supplementary Coaching

The annual expenditure on coaching among surveyed households

exhibits considerable variation (Fig. 4.29). On average, families spent approximately ₹25,469 per year, while the median expenditure stood at ₹12,000. This indicates a right-skewed distribution, where a smaller proportion of households spend significantly more than the rest.

About 25% of households spent ₹7,000 or less annually, while the top 25% spent ₹30,000 or more. At the extreme end, the top 5% spent over ₹85,000, and the top 1% reported expenditures up to ₹2,00,000 or even ₹3,00,000. The minimum recorded expenditure was ₹1,200, suggesting that a range of coaching options—possibly from informal local classes to high-end commercial institutes, are being accessed.

The high standard deviation (₹35,579), skewness (3.80), and kurtosis (21.08) reflect a sharp right tail in the distribution, indicating the presence of significant outliers. These patterns suggest that while a majority of families spend moderately on coaching, there exists a smaller, financially capable group making disproportionately large investments—possibly in pursuit of competitive success, better academic outcomes, or private entrance coaching (Fig. 4.38).

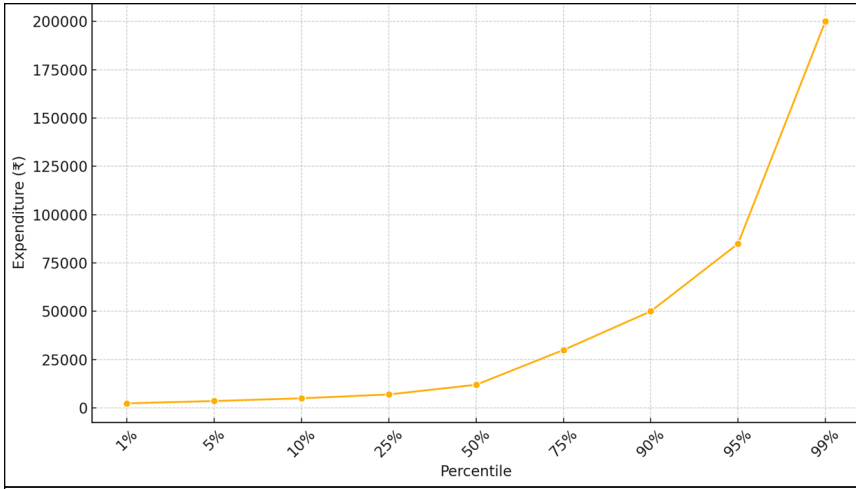

Figure 4.29: Annual Household Expenditure on Coaching (Based on Percentiles)

4.3.6 Distance to School and Spatial Constraints

Distance to school introduces an additional layer of inequality.

While most children attend schools within one kilometre of their residence, nearly 14 percent travel more than five kilometres (Fig. 4.30).

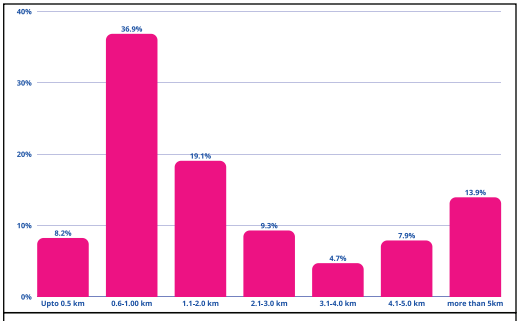

Figure 4.30: Distance to School

Longer commuting distances are disproportionately borne by children from richer households (Fig. 4.31), indicating that spatial mobility enables access to preferred institutions, particularly private schools.

Caste-wise analysis shows that General category children are overrepresented at longer distances (Fig. 4.32), again reflecting differential capacity to absorb transport costs and time burdens. Gender differences in distance are modest, but the cumulative effect of distance (Fig.4.33), cost, and safety concerns may still operate indirectly through household decision-making.

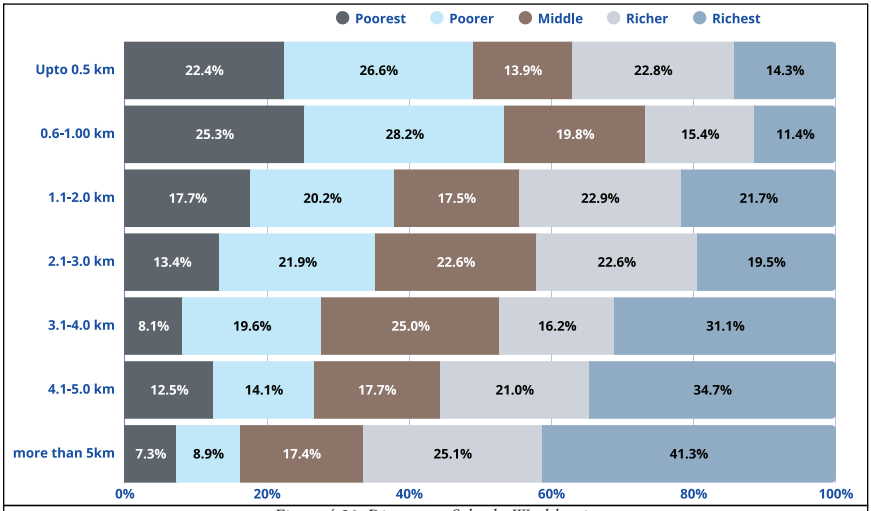

Figure 4.31: Distance to School - Wealth-wise

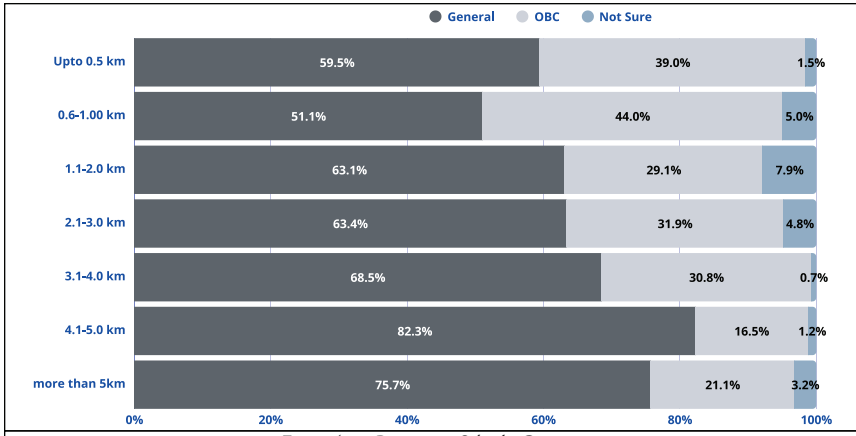

Figure 4.32: Distance to School - Caste-wise

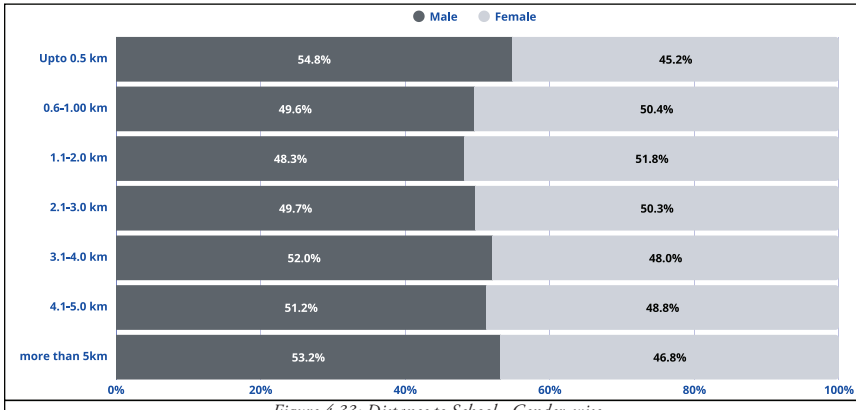

Figure 4.33: Distance to School - Gender-wise

4.3.7 Education Expenditure and the Cost of Staying Enrolled

Education-related expenditure, excluding external coaching, reveals one of the most pronounced forms of socio-economic stratification. While 30.4 percent of currently enrolled children incur no direct educational expenditure, primarily those in government schools, 43.5 percent of students report annual spending exceeding ₹1,00,000 (Fig. 4.34). This indicates that continued enrolment, particularly in private schooling, is often contingent on substantial financial investment.

Wealth gradients are evident across expenditure bands (Fig. 4.35). Higher expenditure categories are increasingly populated by

children from richer and richest households, while free or low-cost education is concentrated among poorer groups. However, the presence of poor households even in higher expenditure bands suggests significant financial stretching, likely driven by aspirations, perceived quality differentials, and competitive pressures.

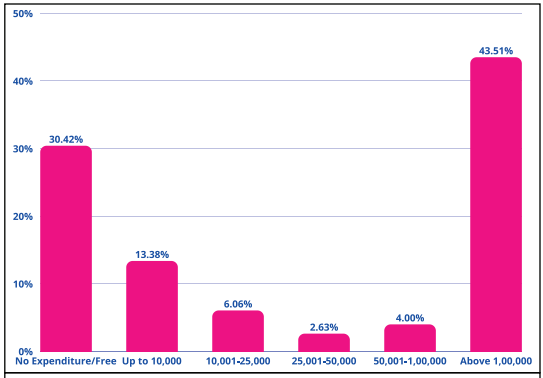

Figure 4.34: Expenditure on Education

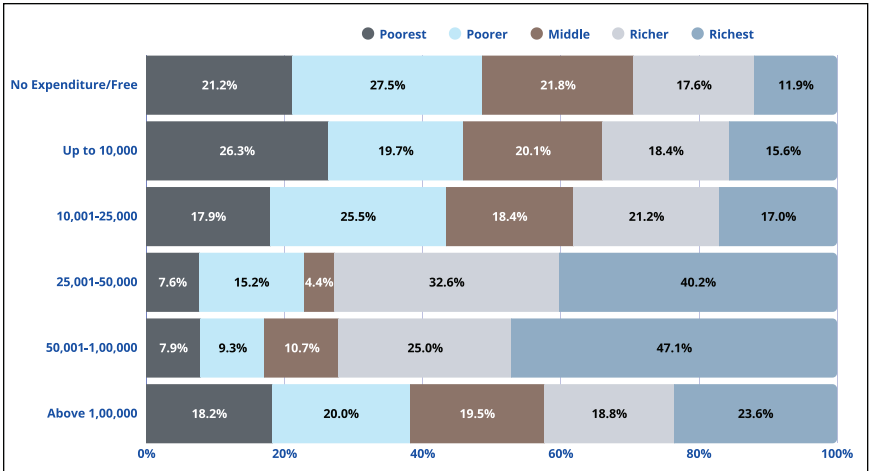

Figure 4.35: Expenditure on Education based on Wealth Status

Institution-wise, high expenditure is overwhelmingly associated with private schools, which account for over 60 percent of students in the highest expenditure category. Government schools dominate the no-expenditure category, reaffirming their role as the primary site of low-cost education (Fig. 4.36).

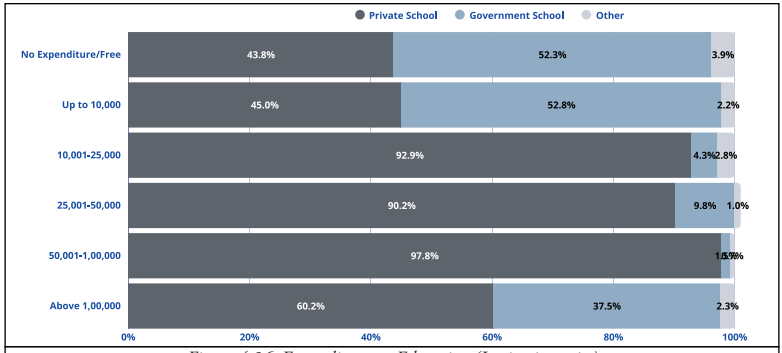

Figure 4.36: Expenditure on Education (Institution-wise)

Gender differences in expenditure are negligible (Fig. 4.37), indicating that once children are enrolled, spending decisions are largely gender-neutral. Caste-wise, higher expenditure bands show a modest overrepresentation of General category students (Fig. 4.38), reflecting the intersection of caste and economic capital.

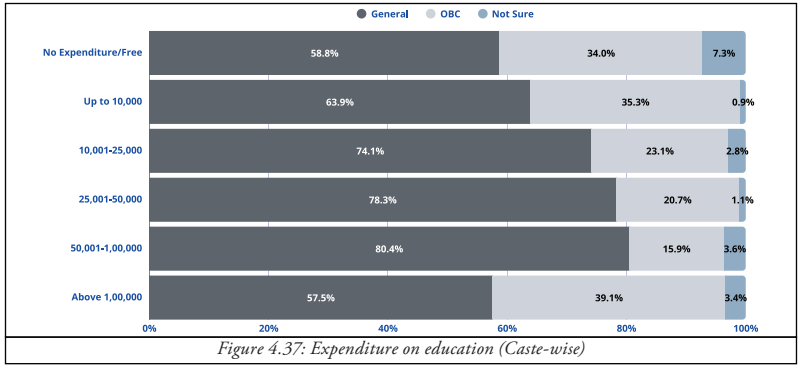

Figure 4.37: Expenditure on education (Caste-wise)

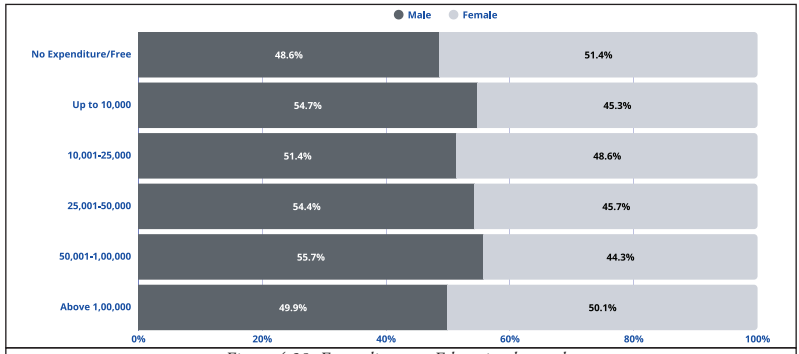

Figure 4.38: Expenditure on Education by gender

The findings presented in this section demonstrate that staying enrolled in Jamia Nagar is not merely a function of access but is sustained through a layered institutional ecosystem shaped by school type, medium of instruction, supplementary coaching, spatial mobility, and household expenditure. Educational participation thus increasingly resembles a graduated market, where continued enrolment depends on the capacity to navigate and finance a complex set of institutional demands. While government schools continue to provide a critical safety net, the growing dominance of private schooling and auxiliary educational services risks deepening inequalities within an ostensibly universal education system.

4.4 Educational Aspirations and Future Orientation

4.4.1 Aspiration for Higher Education

Findings from Jamia Nagar indicate an exceptionally high and socially convergent aspiration for higher education among children. Nearly all surveyed children (97.4 percent) report a desire to pursue education beyond the current level, with only a negligible minority expressing otherwise (Fig. 4.39). This pattern remains remarkably consistent across caste, wealth, and gender groups.

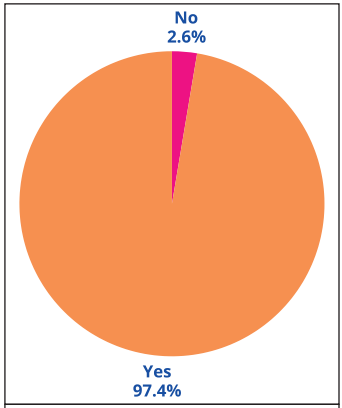

Figure 4.39: Aspiration for Higher Education

Disaggregated analysis shows no substantive variation in aspiration by caste (Fig. 4.40). Both General and OBC category children report aspiration levels exceeding 96 percent, indicating that social background does not meaningfully differentiate educational ambition. Similarly, aspiration remains uniformly high across wealth quintiles (Fig. 4.41). Even among children from the poorest

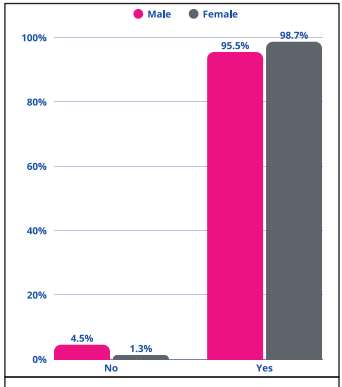

Figure 4.40: Aspiration for Higher Education by Gender

households, over 90 percent express a desire for higher education, with aspiration levels rising marginally among richer and richest groups. Gender-wise comparisons also reveal near parity (Fig.4.42), more than 95 percent of both boys and girls report aspirations for higher education, with girls displaying slightly higher reported aspiration than boys.

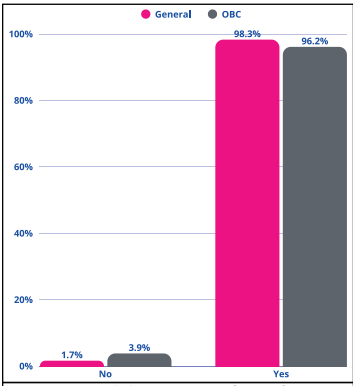

Figure 4.41: Aspiration for Higher Education by Caste

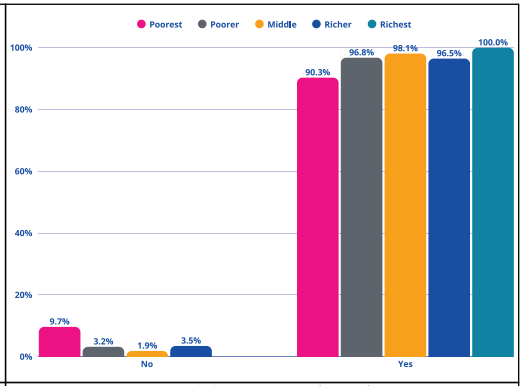

Figure 4.42: Aspiration for Higher Education by Wealth

The near-universality of aspiration is analytically significant. It suggests that differences observed later in educational participation—such as dropout, delayed progression, or unequal access to institutional pathways—cannot be attributed to deficits in motivation or ambition. Instead, aspiration appears to be a shared and stable orientation across social groups, irrespective of structural disadvantage.

4.4.2 Access to Scholarships and Financial Support

Despite near-universal aspiration for higher education among children in Jamia Nagar, access to formal financial support remains extremely limited. Only 2.5 percent of children report receiving any scholarship or financial assistance, while 97.5 percent receive none (Fig. 4.43). This sharp imbalance highlights a significant gap between educational need and the reach of welfare mechanisms intended to support continued schooling.

Among the small group of beneficiaries, schools are the primary source of support, accounting for 50.8 percent of scholarships, followed

by government schemes (22 percent), other informal or community-based sources (18.6 percent), and NGOs (8.5 percent) (Fig. 4.44). The predominance of school-level assistance points to reliance on ad hoc and discretionary mechanisms rather than systematic state provision.

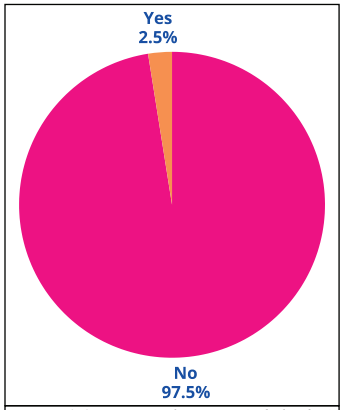

Figure 4.43: Financial Support (Scholarship) Received

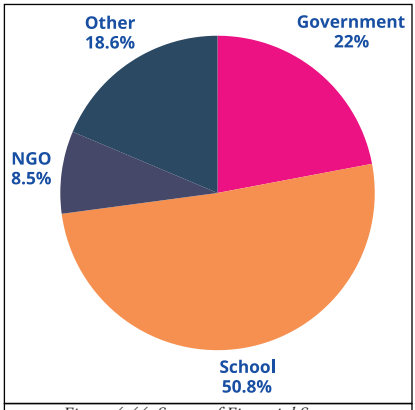

Figure 4.44: Source of Financial Support (Scholarship)

The limited reach of scholarships, despite widespread economic vulnerability, underscores persistent shortcomings in the delivery of targeted welfare schemes. This finding echoes the Sachar Committee Report (Government of India, 2006), which documented poor coverage of educational entitlements for Muslims and called for more proactive state intervention. Overall, the evidence suggests that while educational aspirations are widely shared, the financial support necessary to sustain them remains largely absent.

4.4.3 Career Aspirations and Future Occupational Imaginaries

Career aspirations reveal both ambition and uncertainty (Table 4.4). High-status professional careers dominate the aspiration landscape: doctor (21.1 percent) and engineer (7.9 percent) together account for nearly one-third of stated goals. Civil services aspirations are also prominent, with IAS (4.8 percent) and police services (3.6 percent) reflecting the appeal of state-backed employment and social mobility.

Teaching emerges as another major aspiration (12.8 percent),

suggesting the persistence of education as both a valued profession and a perceived stable livelihood. At the same time, nearly one-fifth (19.5 percent) of respondents report being "not sure," indicating significant uncertainty in career planning despite high educational ambition.

This coexistence of elevated aspirations and uncertainty reflects a broader tension: children aspire to upward mobility through education, but pathways to these futures remain opaque, competitive, and unevenly accessible.

4.4: Future Career Aspirations of Children

Future Aspiration	Frequency	Percent
Doctor	385	21.12
Not Sure	356	19.53
Teacher	233	12.78
Engineer	144	7.90
IAS Officer	88	4.83
Business	73	4.00
Police	65	3.57
Sports	37	2.03
Lawyer	36	1.97
Pilot	30	1.65
Artist	27	1.47
Army	23	1.26
Chartered Accountant	19	1.04
Scientist	18	0.99
Journalism	12	0.66
Haafiz & Aalim	9	0.49
Management	9	0.49
Fashion Designer	8	0.43

5. School Infrastructure, Institutional Landscape, and Learning Outcomes in Jamia Nagar

This chapter examines the structure and quality of school education in Jamia Nagar by mapping educational institutions, analysing their institutional characteristics, and assessing learning outcomes among enrolled children. Moving beyond enrolment figures discussed in Chapter 4, the chapter focuses on the supply-side architecture of schooling and its implications for educational quality.

The analysis demonstrates that while Jamia Nagar has experienced rapid expansion in educational institutions over the past decade, this growth has been largely driven by private provision and has not translated into commensurate learning outcomes. Persistent deficits in foundational literacy and numeracy point to systemic weaknesses in the schooling ecosystem.

5.1 Spatial Distribution and Growth of Educational Institutions

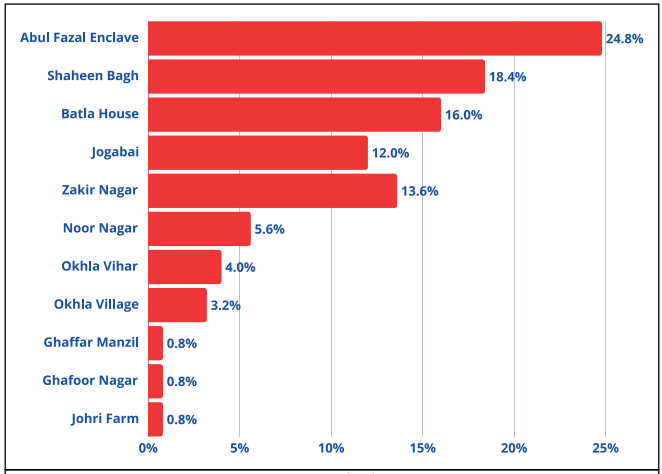

Figure 5.1: Area-wise Schools in Jamia Nagar

A total of 125 educational institutions offering education from

playgroup to Class 12 were identified across twelve localities in Jamia Nagar. Educational infrastructure is highly spatially concentrated: nearly 84.8 percent of institutions are located in five localities—Abul Fazal Enclave, Shaheen Bagh, Batla House, Jogabai, and Zakir Nagar (Fig. 5.1). This clustering also reflects population density.

Analysis of the year of establishment reveals a clear temporal pattern in the growth of educational institutions in Jamia Nagar. Of the 125 schools and madrasas identified, *41.6% were established between 1936 and 2013,* while a substantially larger share, 58.4% were founded after 2013 (Fig. 5.2). This indicates that nearly three-fifths of all existing educational institutions in the area have emerged within the last decade.

The earliest schools in the locality were established by Jamia Millia Islamia in 1936, marking the origin of institutional education in the region. However, public investment in school education remained limited for several decades thereafter. Following 1936, school establishment was sparse, with only isolated additions over the next five decades, reflecting a prolonged period of slow educational infrastructure development.

Although Jamia Nagar experienced significant urban expansion during the 1960s and 1970s, with the development of planned colonies such as Zakir Nagar, Batla House, and Abul Fazal Enclave—this demographic growth was not matched by a commensurate expansion of schooling infrastructure. After 1936, the next notable additions occurred only in 1988, when schools were established by the Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) along with Madrasa Uthman bin Affan, underscoring the limited pace of institutional growth during this period.

The most striking trend is the sharp increase in the number of schools established after 2013, accounting for nearly 58.4% of all institutions identified. This recent surge reflects a combination of rapid population growth, rising educational aspirations, and increased community-led and private investment, particularly in the context of continued inadequacy of public schooling infrastructure at the

secondary and senior secondary levels.

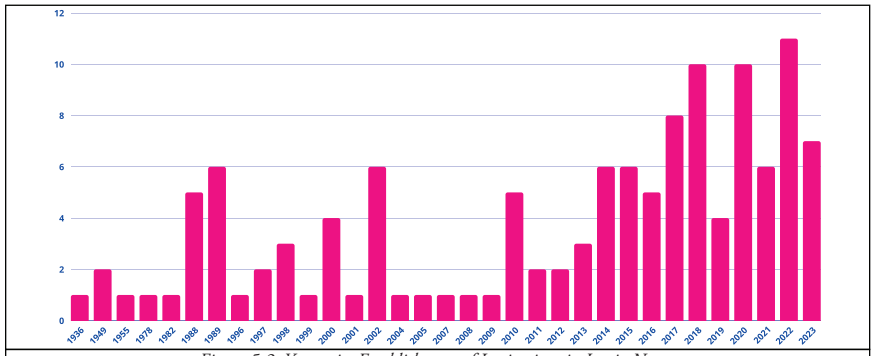

Figure 5.2: Year-wise Establishment of Institutions in Jamia Nagar

The rapid growth of educational institutions in Jamia Nagar after 2013 is driven overwhelmingly by private initiatives rather than public investment. This expansion reflects not planned educational development, but a market response to unmet demand created by prolonged underinvestment in government schooling.

The complete absence of government schools in Shaheen Bagh and the limited number of public institutions offering secondary and senior secondary education underscore the extent to which the state has ceded responsibility, leaving households to navigate education through private expenditure and long-distance travel.

5.2 Institutional Type and Levels of Education Offered

Private institutions overwhelmingly dominate the schooling landscape in Jamia Nagar, accounting for 65.6 percent of all schools offering education up to Class 12. Madrasas and government schools each constitute 15.2 percent of the total, while institutions run by Jamia Millia Islamia account for the remaining 4.0 percent (Fig. 5.3).

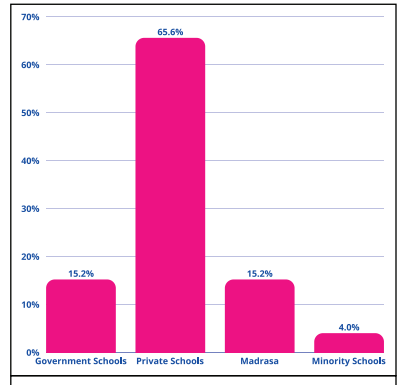

Figure 5.3: Type of Educational Institutions in Jamia Nagar

Although 19 government schools

operate in the area, most of them run by the Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD), a significant number function in multiple shifts within shared premises. This arrangement inflates the apparent availability of public schools while masking the actual scarcity of dedicated government educational infrastructure. The absence of any government school in Shaheen Bagh, one of the most densely populated localities in Jamia Nagar, further highlights a critical gap in public provisioning and underscores the uneven spatial distribution of state-supported schooling.

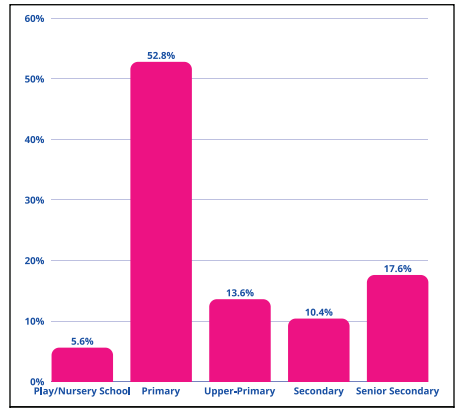

Figure 5.4: Education Levels Offered

Institutional stratification becomes increasingly pronounced at higher levels of education. While nearly half of all institutions in Jamia Nagar offer only primary-level education, very few government schools extend to the senior secondary level (Fig. 5.4). Only four government schools, operating from two buildings across morning and evening shifts, provide senior secondary education. In contrast, fourteen private schools, three institutions run by Jamia Millia Islamia, and one madrasa offer senior secondary education (Table 5.1). This underlines the dominant role of private institutions in catering to higher levels of education in the locality, while public provision remains limited.

5.1: Type of Institution and Educational Levels offered by them

Type of Inst.	Play/ Nursery	Primary	Upper-Primary	Secondary	Senior Secondary	Total
Government School	0	15	0	0	4	19
Private School	6	37	12	13	14	82
Madrasa	0	14	4	0	1	19
Minority (Jamia) School	1	0	1	0	3	5
Total	7	66	17	13	22	125

5.3 Medium of Instruction

English overwhelmingly dominates as the medium of instruction in Jamia Nagar, used by 65.6 percent of educational institutions. Urdu serves as the medium in 25.6 percent of schools, while Hindi—largely confined to government schools, accounts for only 8.8 percent. Notably, nearly 94 percent of private schools operate as English-medium institutions (Fig. 5.5). The predominance of English-medium schooling reflects strong parental aspirations and the perceived labour-market advantages associated with English proficiency. However, this pattern also raises concerns about instructional quality and language preparedness, particularly in the early grades, where many students enter school with limited exposure to English at home.

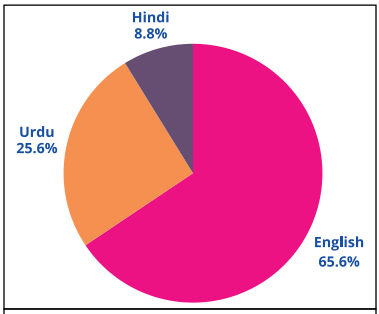

Figure 5.5: Medium of Instruction

5.4 Learning Outcomes and Educational Quality

To assess the quality of schooling beyond enrolment and institutional access, this study examines foundational learning outcomes in language and mathematics among children enrolled in Classes 3, 5, and 8. These grades correspond to critical transition points in the schooling trajectory: early primary, upper primary, and the cusp of secondary education. Learning outcomes were assessed through a diagnostic learning assessment module administered to a randomly selected subsample of children in these grades within the locality. The assessment tools were based on the ASER methodology.

5.4.1 Urdu Reading Proficiency

Urdu reading proficiency was assessed among students in Classes 3, 5, and 8 using a graded framework consistent with ASER benchmarks: Letter Level, Word Level, Paragraph Level, and Story Level, with Story Level representing age-appropriate reading fluency.

The results indicate substantial early-grade learning deficits in

Urdu literacy. In Class 3, only 3.6 percent of students were able to read a story-level text, the benchmark for reading proficiency. A large proportion of students remained at lower levels, with 41.7 percent able to read only words and 27.4 percent limited to letter recognition. Although 27.4 percent reached the paragraph level, this still falls short of full fluency. In summary, these findings indicate that over 96 percent of Class 3 students had not acquired grade-appropriate reading skills in their primary language.

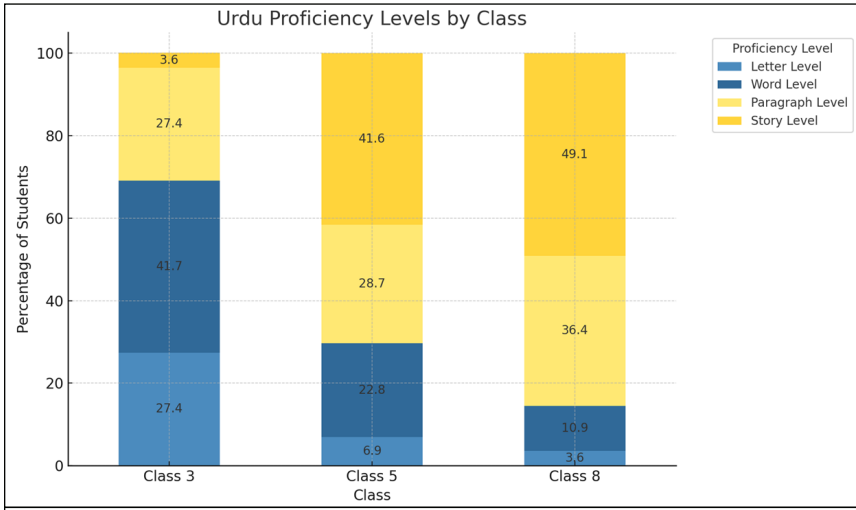

Figure 5.6: Reading Level in Urdu

By Class 5, reading outcomes improve considerably, but gaps remain pronounced. Approximately 41.6 percent of students achieved story-level proficiency, indicating successful acquisition of foundational literacy skills for a substantial segment of the cohort. An additional 28.7 percent reached paragraph-level reading, suggesting partial progression. However, nearly one-third of students (29.7 percent) remained at word or letter levels, signalling persistent learning deficits that were not resolved during the early primary years.

In Class 8, further improvement is observed, with 49.1 percent of students reaching story-level proficiency and 36.4 percent attaining paragraph-level reading. Despite this progress, 14.5 percent of students continued to struggle with basic reading, remaining at word or letter

levels. This persistence of low literacy among adolescents is particularly concerning, given that these students are approaching or entering secondary education, where curricular demands intensify sharply.

5.4.2 English Reading Proficiency

English reading proficiency was assessed among students in Classes 3, 5, and 8 using a simplified three-tier framework: Letter Level, Word Level, and Sentence Level, with Sentence Level serving as the benchmark for functional reading proficiency at these grades.

The findings reveal particularly severe learning deficits in early English literacy. In Class 3, none of the assessed students were able to read a complete sentence in English. A majority, 63.1 percent, could only recognise letters, while the remaining 36.9 percent could read individual words. The complete absence of sentence-level reading proficiency indicates that English instruction at the early primary stage is failing to translate exposure into functional literacy.

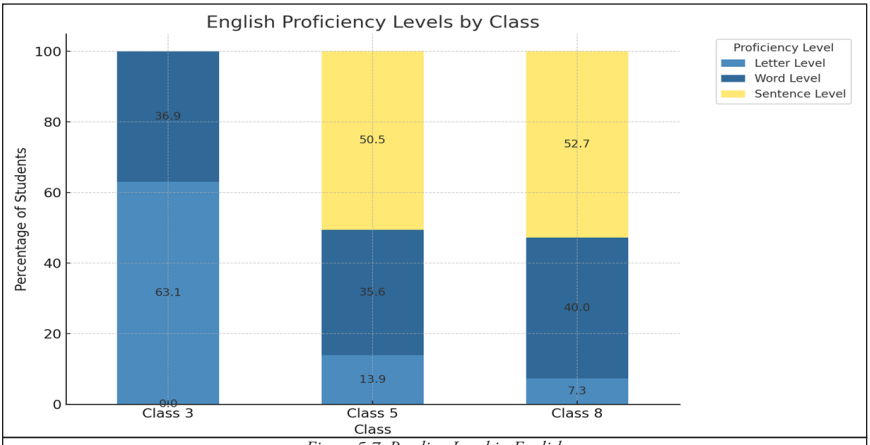

Figure 5.7: Reading Level in English

By Class 5, performance improves markedly. Just over half of the students (50.5 percent) achieved sentence-level reading proficiency, indicating substantial learning gains during the upper primary years. However, this improvement remains incomplete: 35.6 percent of students were still limited to word-level reading, and 13.9 percent remained at letter level. Thus, nearly half of Class 5 students had not

yet achieved the minimum expected proficiency in English.

In Class 8, progress continues but remains uneven. A slim majority (52.7 percent) of students attained sentence-level proficiency, while 40.0 percent were able to read words but not sentences. A smaller yet non-trivial proportion (7.3 percent) remained at letter level. These findings suggest that while English proficiency increases with schooling duration, learning gains plateau rather than accelerate in later grades.

When compared with national ASER benchmarks, the results present a mixed picture. While Class 5 students in Jamia Nagar marginally outperform the national average in English reading, Class 8 students fall significantly below the national benchmark. This divergence suggests that early gains in English literacy are not consistently consolidated as students advance, possibly due to increasing curricular complexity, limited pedagogical support, or insufficient language reinforcement beyond the primary years.

Comparison with National ASER Data

The 2024 ASER report found that at the national level:

- Only 27.1% of Class 3 children could read a Class 2-level text.
- 48.8% of Class 5 students met the benchmark.
- Among Class 8 students, 67.5% were reading at or above a Class 2 level.

In comparison:

- None of the Class 3 students were able to read a complete sentence in English.
- Among Class 5 students, 50.5% demonstrated the ability to read a full sentence, marginally outperforming the national ASER benchmark by 1.7 percentage points.
- In contrast, only 52.7% of Class 8 students achieved sentence-level proficiency, which is 14.8 percentage points below the national average reported by ASER.

5.4.3 Foundational Numeracy and Mathematics Proficiency

Foundational numeracy skills were assessed among students in Classes 3, 5, and 8 using three graded competencies aligned with ASER methodology: Number Recognition, Subtraction, and Division. Division represents the highest level of proficiency expected by the upper primary and middle school stages.

In Class 3, the findings indicate substantial deficits in basic numeracy. Only 19.1 percent of students were able to perform division tasks, while 41.7 percent demonstrated proficiency at the subtraction level. A significant proportion, 39.3 percent, remained limited to number recognition alone. These results suggest that more than four-fifths of students had not acquired full grade-appropriate numeracy skills by the early primary stage.

By Class 5, performance improves substantially. Nearly half of the students (45.5 percent) were able to solve division problems, indicating meaningful learning gains. An additional 35.6 percent demonstrated subtraction-level proficiency, while 18.8 percent remained at the number recognition stage. Despite improvement, more than half of Class 5 students still fell short of full numeracy proficiency.

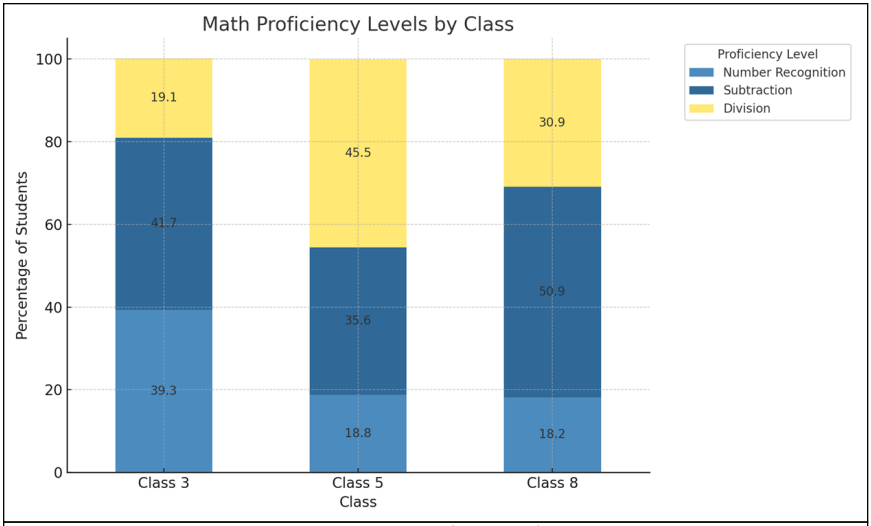

Figure 5.8: Arithmetic Level

Unexpectedly, learning outcomes decline in Class 8. Only 30.9 percent of students demonstrated division-level proficiency, while a majority (50.9 percent) remained at the subtraction level. A further 18.2 percent continued to struggle with basic number recognition. This decline suggests not merely stagnation but possible erosion of previously acquired skills, raising concerns about instructional quality, curricular alignment, and sustained learning reinforcement in the later years of schooling.

Comparisons with national ASER data reinforce these concerns. While Jamia Nagar students perform better than the national rural average in Class 3 and Class 5 numeracy, their performance in Class 8 falls substantially below the national benchmark. This pattern suggests that early advantages are not sustained, and that the schooling system struggles to support cumulative learning progression in mathematics beyond the upper primary level.

Comparison with ASER National Data

According to the ASER 2022 report, only 33.3% of Class 3 children in rural India could perform simple subtraction, while 30.7% of Class 5 and 45.8% of Class 8 students demonstrated proficiency in solving division problems. When compared with this national data, the performance of students in Jamia Nagar shows a mixed picture.

- Class 3 students in Jamia Nagar outperform the national rural average in subtraction (41.7% vs. 33.3%) and also show some presence of division-level skills (19.1%), although still limited.
- Class 5 students in Jamia Nagar perform significantly better in division (45.5%) compared to the national average of 30.7%, indicating strong gains in foundational numeracy by the middle grades.
- However, by Class 8, the proportion of students proficient in division drops to 30.9%, which is substantially lower than the ASER benchmark of 45.8%—suggesting stagnation or even regression in mathematical learning during the later years of

schooling.

While the learning assessments used in this study are aligned with ASER frameworks, they were administered locally as part of a household-based survey. The findings should therefore be interpreted as indicative of learning levels and gaps, rather than as precise comparative rankings. Nonetheless, the results clearly point to a serious foundational learning deficit that requires urgent remedial intervention.

Box 5.1: Student-Reported Institutional Conditions in Jamia Nagar Schools

To contextualise the learning outcomes presented in Section 5.4, a limited set of student interviews was conducted to document institutional conditions and everyday classroom practices across selected government and government-aided schools in Jamia Nagar. These accounts are not intended to be statistically representative; rather, they serve to illustrate the institutional environments within which schooling and learning take place.

Across schools, students consistently reported large class sizes, typically ranging between 50 and 70 students per section, often spread across multiple sections within the same grade. Teaching practices were described as largely textbook-driven and examination-oriented, with emphasis on completing the syllabus and focusing on "important questions" likely to appear in board exams. Interactive pedagogies, group activities, or conceptual engagement were rarely mentioned.

Infrastructure constraints emerged repeatedly. While most schools reported the presence of toilets, students noted inconsistent cleanliness and, in some cases, lack of water. Computer and science laboratories were either absent or infrequently used, even when formally listed as facilities. Access to sports infrastructure was uneven, with limited

playground space and irregular sports periods, particularly in densely populated localities.

Classroom environments were often described as crowded and poorly maintained, with inadequate lighting, poor ventilation, and limited renovation. Notably, none of the interviewed students reported regular use of educational technology such as smart boards or digital learning tools, with teaching relying almost exclusively on chalkboards.

Overall, these student accounts suggest that the learning deficits observed in Jamia Nagar cannot be attributed solely to household characteristics or individual student capacity. Rather, they point to structural and institutional constraints within schools themselves, including overcrowding, limited pedagogical diversity, and underutilisation of infrastructure, which collectively shape educational quality and learning outcomes.

5.5 Conclusion: Institutional Expansion, Pedagogical Constraint, and Fragile Learning Outcomes

The The analysis in this chapter reveals a fundamental disjuncture between the expansion of educational institutions in Jamia Nagar and the conditions under which meaningful learning is produced and sustained. While the last decade has seen rapid growth in the number of schools, particularly privately managed institutions, this expansion has occurred within an institutional environment marked by significant pedagogical and infrastructural constraints.

Institutional mapping shows a schooling ecosystem that is spatially concentrated, increasingly privatised, and unevenly equipped to support higher levels of education. Public provision remains limited at the secondary and senior secondary stages, compelling households to rely on private schools and supplementary educational services. At the same time, Box 5.1 highlights the everyday institutional realities within schools, including overcrowded classrooms, examination-oriented teaching practices, limited use of laboratories and educational

technology, and uneven maintenance of basic infrastructure. These conditions shape not only access to schooling but also the quality of instruction and opportunities for learning within classrooms.

Learning outcome assessments in language and numeracy reflect the cumulative impact of these institutional constraints. Across grades, students exhibit delayed acquisition of foundational skills, with substantial proportions failing to attain grade-appropriate proficiency even by upper primary and middle school. Although incremental improvements are observed as students' progress through grades, these gains remain uneven and, in some cases, deteriorate at later stages, particularly in mathematics. The persistence of learning deficits at higher grades is consistent with the institutional conditions documented by students, suggesting limited pedagogical support and weak reinforcement of foundational skills over time.

In summary, the findings indicate that schooling in Jamia Nagar is characterised by formal inclusion but pedagogical fragility. Enrolment has expanded and institutional presence has increased, yet the classroom environments and instructional practices necessary for sustained learning remain inadequately developed. The chapter thus underscores the need to move beyond a narrow focus on institutional expansion and enrolment, and toward strengthening pedagogical quality, classroom conditions, and instructional support systems that enable schooling to translate into durable learning outcomes.

6. Discussion and Way Forward

6.1 Situating Jamia Nagar within Debates on Educational Inequality

The case of Jamia Nagar offers a critical neighbourhood-level perspective on longstanding debates concerning educational inequality, minority marginalisation, and urban governance in India. While national-level inquiries such as the Sachar Committee Report (Government of India, 2006) and the Post-Sachar Evaluation Committee (2014) documented systemic disadvantages faced by Muslims across educational indicators, fine-grained empirical studies from urban Muslim-concentrated localities remain limited. This study contributes to that gap by foregrounding how national patterns of exclusion are experienced, negotiated, and reproduced at the level of everyday schooling decisions.

The findings of this study point toward a broader pattern of structural neglect, rather than community-level resistance to education. Jamia Nagar exhibits high educational aspiration, strong enrolment, and a clear preference for mainstream schooling. However, these aspirations unfold within a context marked by insufficient public schools, limited secondary-level infrastructure, weak scholarship delivery, and growing reliance on private and coaching-based solutions.

The educational challenges observed in Jamia Nagar are therefore not the result of cultural disengagement but are produced through systemic withdrawal of the state, leading to the privatisation of access and the reproduction of inequality within the community itself.

The findings from Jamia Nagar reveal a persistent paradox. Educational participation and aspiration are widespread, families make substantial private investments in schooling, and children articulate ambitious futures. Yet these commitments coexist with fragile learning outcomes, heightened dropout at later stages, and limited access to high-quality public institutions. This contradiction reflects a broader pattern of educational development in India, characterised by expansion without equity, access without quality, and aspiration

without commensurate opportunity.

6.2 State Retreat, Uneven Reform, and Urban Minority Schooling

Over the past decade, the Delhi Education Model (DEM) has gained national and international recognition for revitalising government schools through improved infrastructure, teacher training, strengthened School Management Committees, and innovative curricula such as the *Happiness Curriculum* (Anand & Lall, 2022; Khatiwada, Johnson, & Kamrah, 2022; Talreja & Bhat, 2020). However, the evidence from Jamia Nagar indicates that these reforms have been unevenly realised across the city.

Despite being located within the National Capital Territory, Jamia Nagar continues to experience acute deficits in public educational infrastructure. Several densely populated localities lack government schools altogether, while existing institutions remain overcrowded and under-resourced. As a result, families are compelled to rely heavily on private schooling, not as a matter of preference, but as a response to the absence of viable public alternatives.

This exclusion underscores the uneven geography of educational reform. While the Delhi Education Model (DEM) is hailed as a success story of urban schooling, its reach has been selectively inclusive, benefitting localities with stronger middle-class presence while neglecting peripheral and minority-dominated areas. As Gayer and Jaffrelot (2012) note, Muslim neighbourhoods frequently experience a form of "state retreat," where infrastructural neglect entrenches ghettoisation. Jamia Nagar exemplifies this retreat: excluded from the gains of reform, it continues to face inequities even as the city overall records improvements.

The situation reflects not only a failure of distributive justice but also a violation of the Right to Education (RTE) Act's commitment to universal, quality schooling within neighbourhoods. As earlier studies on Delhi (Mishra, 2025) have shown, public schools in marginalised areas are chronically underfunded and overcrowded, forcing parents to rely on private alternatives. In Jamia Nagar, where 56.7% of children

attend private schools, this reliance is less a matter of choice than a survival strategy in the face of state neglect.

These patterns reaffirm the Sachar Committee's (2006) description of Muslims as facing a "double disadvantage" - lagging behind the general population as well as other disadvantaged groups. Despite being an urban settlement adjacent to a premier central university, Jamia Nagar's families remain locked out of the benefits of educational reform, constrained by systemic neglect and inequitable governance.

6.3 Privatisation, Household Strategies, and the Burden of Aspiration

One of the most significant findings of the study is the near-universal orientation of Muslim households toward mainstream schooling. Madrasa education accounts for a negligible share of enrolment, directly challenging popular stereotypes regarding Muslim educational preferences. Instead, families overwhelmingly pursue formal, often English-medium education, even when this entails substantial financial strain.

Households adopt a range of strategies to sustain educational participation, including enrolment in low-fee private schools, investment in supplementary coaching, and, in some cases, residential mobility. These practices align with broader scholarship on the privatisation and commodification of education in India, where access to quality schooling increasingly depends on household purchasing power (Bray, 2009; Kaur & Sharma, 2025).

At the same time, aspirations for higher education are nearly universal among children, cutting across caste, wealth, and gender. This convergence of ambition underscores that educational disadvantage in Jamia Nagar is not rooted in attitudinal deficits. Rather, it reflects a growing aspiration–capacity gap, where families and children invest heavily in education without access to the institutional conditions necessary for aspirations to be realised.

6.4 Learning Outcomes and the Reproduction of Inequality

The most troubling dimension of the findings lies in the domain of learning outcomes. Assessments of reading and numeracy reveal substantial deficits at early grades and uneven accumulation of skills over time. While incremental improvements are observed as students' progress through school, a significant proportion fail to attain grade-appropriate proficiency even by upper primary and middle school.

These learning deficits cannot be understood in isolation from institutional conditions. As documented in Chapter 5, overcrowded classrooms, examination-oriented pedagogy, limited use of learning infrastructure, and minimal instructional differentiation constrain the capacity of schools to support cumulative learning. The persistence of weak foundational skills at higher grades suggests that schooling often enables progression without mastery.

From an intergenerational perspective, these patterns risk reproducing existing inequalities. Poor learning outcomes limit access to higher education, narrow occupational possibilities, and weaken the returns to educational investment. In this sense, the learning crisis in Jamia Nagar functions as a mechanism through which socio-economic disadvantage is transmitted across generations, consistent with Bourdieu's (1986) theorisation of the reproduction of social inequality through unequal access to cultural capital.

6.5 The Way Forward

The evidence from Jamia Nagar points to the urgent need for a reorientation of educational policy and practice toward equity, quality, and institutional accountability.

For the state, priority must be given to extending substantive public provisioning in minority-concentrated localities. This includes expanding government school infrastructure, strengthening secondary and senior secondary provision, addressing foundational learning deficits, and ensuring effective delivery of scholarships and entitlements. Educational reform must be evaluated not only by

aggregate indicators, but by its reach into historically marginalised neighbourhoods.

Civil society organisations and NGOs can play a complementary role by supporting remedial learning, mentoring, teacher support initiatives, and community-based academic guidance. However, such interventions should supplement, not substitute, state responsibility.

Community institutions, including religious and social organisations, possess significant potential to mobilise local trust and participation. Their role lies in facilitating parental engagement, promoting educational awareness, and supporting structured academic and career guidance, while avoiding parallel systems that further privatise educational risk.

Finally, scholars and researchers must continue to generate neighbourhood-level evidence that bridges macro-level policy debates with lived educational realities, enabling more grounded and accountable educational planning.

The way forward, therefore, lies in building an ecosystem of support - from foundational literacy to higher education pathways, where aspirations can be translated into achievement. Education must be reclaimed as both a public good and a collective responsibility: of the state, of communities, and of society at large.

6.6 Conclusion

The Jamia Nagar study highlights that Muslim families are not educationally "backward" by choice, but constrained by structural neglect, poor learning outcomes, and socio-economic vulnerabilities. The findings connect strongly with the literature on educational inequality in India, underscoring how access without quality, and aspiration without opportunity, entrench cycles of disadvantage.

To break these cycles, education must be reclaimed as a public good, backed by robust state provisioning, equity-focused policies, and community accountability. If such measures are implemented, Jamia Nagar can serve as a model of inclusive urban education, where

the aspirations of its children translate into mobility, dignity, and collective progress.

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